



THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN FOSTERING RELIGIOUS HARMONY IN INDONESIA: A HISTORICAL REVIEW, CHALLENGES AND POLICY TOWARDS MODERATION

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Abstrak

Kata kunci:

Moderasi
Beragama,
Indonesia,
Kementerian
Agama, Kerukunan
Agama

Artikel ini mengeksplorasi konsep moderasi yang dipegang oleh negara melalui program yang dijalankan oleh Kementerian Agama bernama Moderasi Beragama. Pembahasan terdiri dari moderasi beragama sepanjang sejarah Indonesia, dengan menyoroti moderasi yang didukung dan diorganisir oleh negara, termasuk strategi dan tantangannya. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan analisis isi sebagai metode analisis untuk mengumpulkan data dari sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Moderasi Beragama dikampanyekan oleh negara melalui beberapa program, strategi dan agenda yang diusulkan serupa bahkan sejak era Orde Baru hingga era disrupsi. Dibangun oleh konsep teologis moderasi multi-agama dan diperkuat oleh dasar konstitusional negara, program ini menghadapi tantangan yang harus mengembangkan beberapa strategi untuk mengimplementasikan moderasi agama secara efektif dan efisien. Meskipun radikalisme belum sepenuhnya dapat diberantas, setidaknya negara telah berkomitmen untuk membina kerukunan dan moderasi beragama melalui kebijakan negara yang inklusif dan upaya-upaya kolaboratif dengan berbagai pemangku kepentingan agama dan masyarakat.

Abstract**Keywords:**

Religious
Moderation,
Indonesia, Ministry
of Religious
Affairs, Religious
Harmony

This article explores the concept of moderation held by the State through the program run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs named Moderasi Beragama (Religious Moderation). The discussion consists of religious moderation throughout the history of Indonesia, highlighting it as a moderate approach supported and organised by the state, including its strategies and challenges. This qualitative research uses content analysis as an analytical method of collecting data from primary and secondary sources. The study showed that Religious Moderation was campaigned by the State through several programs, strategies and a similar proposed agenda starting even from the New Order era to the disruption era. Constructed by the multi-religious theological concept of moderation and strengthened by the State constitutional basis, the program met challenges that should develop some strategies to implement religious moderation effectively and efficiently. Although radicalism has not been completely eradicated, at least the state has committed to fostering religious harmony and moderation through inclusive state policies and collaborative efforts with various religious and community stakeholders.

Introduction

Indonesia is a multicultural and multireligious country, even though Indonesia is not a country that stands based on certain religious laws or a theocratic state, nor a secular state, Indonesia is a nation-state with theism (*berketuhanan*) or religious (*beragama*). This can be seen in the first pillar of the Five Pillars of Indonesia “Pancasila”, Belief in One Supreme God. Thus it can be understood that religion and the state are very closely related, not completely under the authority of a particular religion or vice-versa without religion at all. It is understandable how the founding fathers of the State agreed to build this nation by taking into account the diversity of religions, beliefs, cultures, ethnicities, and so on.¹

¹ Anas Saidi, “Islam and Multiculturalism: Challenge to the Future of Democracy in Indonesia,” *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya* 14, no. 2 (2012); Patrick Ziegenhain, “Islam and Nation-Building in Indonesia and Malaysia,” *ASIEN* 146, no. January (2018): 79–80; Hans-Christian Gunther, “Islamic Values in the World Today - Indonesia and the Islamic

Apart from being listed in Pancasila, the state also must provide guarantees and protect freedom of religion, as well the state is obliged to protect diversity in religion, culture, and race. Because after all, Indonesian society is plural and multicultural, it stands based on the basic principles of a state that have been built by the founding fathers of both the ideological pillars of the Pancasila and the Indonesian motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* “Unity in Diversity”. So the understanding and attitude of moderation are very possible to grow in Indonesia.²

Moderation as defined by the Oxford Dictionary is to avoid excessiveness or extremities, particularly in people’s conduct or political views, the other means the action of making something less extreme, intense, or violent. To build harmony and guarantee healthy relationships among the multi-religious in Indonesia, the government needs to perform a larger part in campaigning for religious moderation as a middle way to understand and practice religious life.³ There are questions and criticism among Muslims as the majority citizens in Indonesia, regarding the use of the term and concept of ‘Religious Moderation’ instead of *Wasatiyyah*. *Wasatiyyah* is an Arabic word from the word *wasata* and it has several meanings such as the middle of everything, justice, and good. While the Qur’anic concept of *wasatiyyah* is referred to Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 143, Q.S Al-Baqarah: 238, Q.S Al-Mādidah: 89, Q.S Al-Qalam: 28, and Q.S Al-Ādiyāt: 4-5, etc with several meanings and interpretations by the Muslim scholars and *Mufassir*.⁴

World,” *Sunan Kalijaga: International Journal of Islamic Civilization* 4, no. 1 (2021): 23–24.

² See: Mohammad Ahyan Yusuf Sya’bani, “Culture of Religious Moderation Through the Actualization of Islamic Education Wasatiyyah to Improve Religious Reconnection and Tolerance in Indonesia,” *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Reserach* 585 (2021): 528–29; Khairan M. Arif, “Concept and Implementation of Religious Moderation in Indonesia,” *Al-Risalah: Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam* 12, no. 1 (2021), <https://uia.e-journal.id/alrisalah/article/view/1212/753>.

³ Ismatu Ropi, “Whither Religious Moderation? The State and Management of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia,” *Studia Islamika* 26, no. 3 (2019): 597–601.

⁴ See: M. Quraish Shihab, *Wasathiyah Wawasan Islam Tentang Moderasi*, vol. 21

The Indonesian official state religions are Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism each has a concept of tolerance, moderation, and mutual love for other people. so the state must raise a ‘moderate concept’ of moderation that can represent the perspective of each religion. Then ‘Religious Moderation’ is a term that is considered moderate rather than *wasatiyyah* in the context of a state and nation, even though Islam is a religion that has many adherents in this country, it does not mean the state has to use an ‘Islamic’ term as exemplified by the founding fathers of the nation in determining the first pillar of ‘Pancasila’ to become ‘Belief in One Supreme God’.

There are several recent studies have discussed religious moderation in Indonesia, such as “*Penguatan Moderasi Beragama bagi Aparatur Sipil Negara (ASN) Kementerian Agama dan Tokoh lintas Agama di Sumatera Utara*” (Strengthening Religious Moderation for State Civil Apparatus (ASN) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Leaders in North Sumatra) by Rholand Muary⁵, “*Negara dan Deradikalisasi Keagamaan: Narasi Resmi Moderasi Beragama*” (The State and Religious Deradicalisation: The Official Narrative of Religious Moderation) a Master thesis by Nur Anis Rochmawati⁶, Dewi Fusvita “The Dynamics and Challenges of Religious Moderation in Muslim Majority Countries in Southeast Asia”⁷, “State Policy Towards Religious Moderation: A Review Of The Strategy For Strengthening Religious Moderation In Indonesia” by Fauzan⁸. This

(Lentera Hati Group, 2019), 1–17.

⁵ Rholand Muary, “Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Bagi Aparatur Sipil Negara (ASN) Kementerian Agama Dan Tokoh Lintas Agama Di Sumatera Utara,” *Pelita Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2022): 62–75, <https://doi.org/10.31289/pelitamasyarakat.v4i1.7748>.

⁶ Nur Anis Rochmawati, “Negara Dan Deradikalisasi Keagamaan: Narasi Resmi Moderasi Beragama” (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2023).

⁷ Fusvita Dewi, “The Dynamics and Challenges of Religious Moderation in Muslim Majority Countries in Southeast Asia” 3, no. 1 (2024): 32–42.

⁸ Fauzan, “State Policy Towards Religious Moderation: A Review Of The Strategy For Strengthening Religious Moderation In Indonesia,” *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 2, no. 1 (2023): 62–59.

article takes a gap that has not been done by previous studies, because it will focus on the history of moderation endeavour, challenges, and state policies in carrying out its role, especially through the institution of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Religious Moderation Throughout History of Indonesia

Moderation in Indonesian history did not only appear recently, but it turns out that moderation efforts have been carried out by the Government for a long time. The genealogy of moderation in Indonesia can be divided into several periods:



Image 1. Periods of moderation in Indonesia

The first period was the era of New Order, where the issue of Tribe/ethnic group, Religion, Race, and Intergroup called SARA (*Suku, Agama, Ras, Antar Golongan*) rose around the 1970s Indonesia that frightened the society, especially after the tragedy of G-30S/PKI⁹ where the President of Soeharto said that the Party of Indonesian Communism 'PKI' (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*) has tried to bring conflict against each other

⁹ The acronym of 30th September Movement, there are five different scenarios told the story of the year 1965: the murder of the generals by the PKI, an attempted coup as the struggle of internal armed forces, Soeharto was the actual instigator of the coup at least who manipulated the murder of generals for his own goal, Soekarno encouraged disaffected officers against others to be part of a secret "council of Generals", foreign intelligence operations were involved in learning Soekarno from his presidency. See: Mary S. Zurbuchen, "History, Memory, and the '1965 Incident' in Indonesia," *Asian Survey* 42, no. 4 (2002): 565–66.

between races, classes, religions, etc. Furthermore, the government also strengthened religious belief in the education aspect as an indicator of the main identity, for instance, the implementation of religious subjects of study (*Pendidikan Agama*) in school became compulsory after the tragedy of 1965.

As a result, the next effort to manage religious life during the New Order era was called the “Trilogy of Harmony” (*Trilogi Kerukunan*) which included the harmony of religious people, the harmony of inter-religious people, and harmony among inter-religious people with the government. The Constitutions Draft ‘RUU’ of KUB “*Rancangan Undang-undang Kerukunan Umat Beragama*” (Religious Harmony) and the Constitutions Draft ‘RUU’ of PUB “*Rancangan Undang-undang Perlindungan Umat Beragama*” (Protection of Religious People) were the Government roles that offered by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs at the time. Though it was criticized by several observers that instead of creating harmony (*kerukunan*) among religious people, it is the harmony compulsion through the restriction of freedom (*perukunan*).¹⁰

The second period of moderation is during the Reformation era. Referred back to the 1990s, a few years before the fall of Soeharto, the Ministry of Religious Affairs promoted a new concept of “the Middle Path”, it implemented through several programs regarding inter-religious harmony such as the Institute for the Study of Religious Harmony ‘LPKUB’ (*Lembaga Pengkajian Kerukunan Umat Beragama*) in 1993, but that is only as a forum for the study of religious thought in the context of realizing an understanding of inter-religious harmony.¹¹ After the fall of Soeharto in May 1998, the constitution amendment proceeded four times between 1999-2002 which resulted in two important points; *first*,

¹⁰ Dkk. Zainal Abidin Bagir, *Politik Moderasi Dan Kebebasan Beragama: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*, ed. Jimmy M.I. Sormin Zainal Abidin Bagir (PT Elex Media Komputindo Kompas Gramedia, n.d.), 6.

¹¹ Tim Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 86.

the separation of powers into three levels called “Trias Politica”, the independent authority of Executive, Legislative, and Judicial to avoid any absolute single authority; *second*, the democratic constitution required to guarantee and respect the human rights for all citizens. It caused a radical revolution revealed in UUD 1945 amendment result “*hak beragama*” (Religious Right), it explored in the constitution that everyone is free to embrace religion and worship according to his religion:

“ [1] *Setiap orang bebas memeluk agama dan beribadat menurut agamanya, [2] Setiap orang berhak atas kebebasan meyakini kepercayaan, menyatakan pikiran dan sikap, sesuai dengan hati nuraninya.*”¹²

The reformation era was a transitional period for Indonesia to build freedom and equality in religion and belief as a moderate government effort through the constitution, at least the state is obliged to guarantee these rights, even though there is a tug-of-war over what religion or belief is authorized by the state. On one hand, the Reformation era opened the door to freedom, for instance in the political aspect, the survey showed that no less than 181 political parties were born and 141 have been registered. On the other hand, the reformation also opened access to several ideologies, especially among the socio-political groups that offer another state Ideology instead of “Pancasila” such as “*Gerakan NKRI Bersyariah*” (NKRI Shariah movement), as well as the idea of Khilāfah that carried by Hizbu al-Tahrīr Indonesia (HTI).¹³

The third period is after the 9/11 tragedy. The international world was shocked by the incident that destroyed the biggest skyscrapers in New York, the World Trade Center (WTC) buildings in 2001. Consequently, the US government ordered a Global War on Terror (GWOT) by fighting the terrorists and destroying their bases. This agenda was then followed

¹² “Undang-Undang 1945, Pasal 29” (n.d.).

¹³ Zainal Abidin Bagir, *Politik Moderasi Dan Kebebasan Beragama: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*.

by other countries, especially by Muslim countries, as President of the US George W. Bush alerted “You’re either with us or you’re against us in the fight against terror.”¹⁴ This view later gave rise to several new terms such as “US ally” which is good and “US enemy” which is bad, continuously to the Muslim world by developing similar terms “Good Muslim” and “Bad Muslim”.¹⁵ In the Indonesian context, terrorism became an important issue, particularly after the suicide bombing in Bali in 2002, and the second Bali bombing in 2005. This incident became the top priority of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono at the time, to present moderate and democratic Islam as the face of Indonesia in the eyes of the political world because after all Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world.¹⁶ During the reign of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, he was thought of first and foremost as a ‘moderating president’. He was considered a moderate or centrist in politics:

“Yudhoyono viewed himself as leading a polity and a society...., and he believed that his most important role was to moderate these divisions by mediating between the conflicting forces and interest to which they gave rise.”¹⁷

The fourth period of Moderation in Indonesia is during the Disruption Era. According to the Cambridge dictionary, disruption means “the action of preventing something, especially a system, process, or event, from continuing as usual or as expected” In another meaning it says

¹⁴ Ahmad Rizky et al., “A Genealogy of Moderate Islam: Governmentality and Discourses of Islam in Indonesia’s Foreign Policy” 23, no. 3 (2016): 401.

¹⁵ See also: Mahmood Mamdani, “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism,” *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (2002): 766–75; Rizky et al., “A Genealogy of Moderate Islam: Governmentality and Discourses of Islam in Indonesia’s Foreign Policy.”

¹⁶ Rizky et al., “A Genealogy of Moderate Islam: Governmentality and Discourses of Islam in Indonesia’s Foreign Policy”; Zainal Abidin Bagir, *Politik Moderasi Dan Kebebasan Beragama: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*.

¹⁷ Edward Aspinall, Marcus Mietzner, and Dirk Tomsa, “The Moderating President: Yudhoyono’s Decade in Power,” *The Yudhoyono Presidency: Indonesia’s Decade of Stability and Stagnation*, 2015, 3.

“the action of completely changing the traditional way that an industry or market operates by using new methods or technology.” Consequently, disruption is closely related to the development of information and communication technology which affects radical changes in many aspects of life, including people’s religious views. One of these radical changes is the influence of the internet through various facilities such as social media, YouTube channels, websites, podcasts, etc that provide religious teaching in various ways and perspectives. Kuntowijoyo named today’s Muslims “Muslims without mosque” (*Muslim tanpa Masjid*) because contemporary Muslims will find their house of worship through digital platforms, as a consequence of that, right and false, good and bad, fact and hoax will be very subjective and hard to determine.¹⁸

A negative aspect of the digital revolution in religious life is how access to digital media has created a cultural and intellectual disruption, furthermore, it drove exclusiveness and strengthened group identity, extremism, as well terrorism. For instance, the emergence of social media accounts, sites, and online portals filled with extreme views, content, hate speech, and blasphemy, even campaigns for the establishment of an Islamic state instead of a Republic or Democratic nation. Because of the crisis of religious authority among the Millennials, they learned religious teaching, not to *Kiai*, *Ustādż*, *Guru Ngaji* anymore but through Google machine or digital account admin, hence the government has to take steps to lead the “religious literacy” movement (*Gerakan literasi keagamaan*) among the Millennials through dialogue on deradicalization because the Minister thought that the agenda is significant since the young generation are Social media activists so they will be literate in religion, which aims to strengthen the moderation in diversity.

“Agar mereka meleak agama yang semuanya bertujuan dalam rangka penguatan keberagaman yang moderat (tawassuth).”¹⁹

¹⁸ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*.

¹⁹ Kemenag RI, “Respon Era Disrupsi, Kemenag Perkuat Gerakan Literasi Keagamaan Milenial,” 2019, <https://kemenag.go.id/read/respon-era-disrupsi-kemenag-perkuat-gerakan-literasi-keagamaan-milenial-zmmke>.

Another aspect that underlies the significance of the moderation campaign in this era is during 2017, the United Nations General Assembly held a meeting and made a resolution for 2019 that was approved by all countries. The 2019 international celebrations include the International Year of indigenous languages, the International Year of Periodic Table, and the International Year of Moderation. This program formed a draft resolution entitled “Moderation” in 2017.²⁰

In Indonesia, the government has been intensively implementing the Religious Moderation campaign, especially the Ministry of Religious Affairs since 2019, one of which is in the form of a pocketbook of Religious Moderation “*Buku Saku Moderasi Beragama*”. In the Minister of Religious Affairs report, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin stated that Religious Moderation “must be widely held in developing Indonesia”. Presidential Regulation No. 18 of 2020 concerning the 2020-2024 National Medium Term Development Plan ‘RPJMN’ (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional*) included Religious Moderation as a part of “The Character Building”. To achieve that aim, several efforts have been made such as seminars, webinars, workshops, focus group discussion (FGD), and the preparation of module books and textbooks. Religious moderation has become a new jargon that is very familiar to the public.²¹

Though religious moderation has already started since the New Era order and the Ministers of Religious Affairs have held several programs but structured and systematized its concepts since Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin from 2014. He highlighted de-radicalization for two purposes; internalization of religious teaching substantively and to overcome the problems of violence in the name of religion.²² Zainul Hamdi, Head of the

²⁰ Zainal Abidin Bagir, *Politik Moderasi Dan Kebebasan Beragama: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*.

²¹ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*; Zainal Abidin Bagir, *Politik Moderasi Dan Kebebasan Beragama: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*.

²² Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*, ed. 2019. Kementerian Agama RI. Moderasi Beragama. Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI (Jakarta:

National Forum for Religious Moderation Houses and also the National Instructor for Strengthening Religious Moderation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs said that Religious Moderation must be seen as a discourse built by the Government to face three challenges: the phenomenon of violence in the name of religion, the still high level of intolerance, and the rise of religious understanding exclusive.²³

The State's Moderate Background and Approach to Religious Moderation

A. Multi-Religious Theological Perspective on Moderation

Indonesia is not a state of religion but it was built by religious people. The reason is because Indonesian society adheres to religion and adopts the understanding of their religion. The following official religions of Indonesia namely, Christianity, Catholicism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam. Religious moderation requires religious people not to isolate themselves, not to be exclusive, to merge, adapt, and associate with other communities. Thus, religious moderation will encourage each religious community not to be extreme and excessive in responding to diversity, including the variety of religions and interpretations within each religion itself.

The teaching of moderation is not an understanding owned by a particular religion. But it is taught in the tradition of every religion. This fair and balanced attitude is also highly upheld by all religious teachings because none of the religious teachings advocate doing wrong or oppression or teaching excess. Although Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country, we need to know that moderation is not only built based on Islam but also on other religions. Furthermore, moderation is a virtue that

Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

²³ Zainal Abidin Bagir, *Politik Moderasi Dan Kebebasan Beragama: Suatu Tinjauan Kritis*.

encourages the creation of social harmony and balance in personal, family, and community life to more comprehensive human relations. This notion of religious moderation emerges and is taken from the understanding of harmony, tolerance, and balance taught by every religion and then draws a red thread so that a concept of religious moderation that we know so far emerges. Every religion has introduced the seeds of religious moderation since ancient times.²⁴

In Hinduism, moderation has been practiced through the implementation of the concept of *Tat Twam Asi*, which is a concept in Hinduism that teaches humans always to love and care for other creatures. Suppose the teachings of *Tat Twam Asi* are implemented in people's daily lives thoroughly and thoughtfully, in the nature and behavior of social life. In that case, this life will be very harmonious, mutually filled, and protecting each other, ultimately achieving the welfare of life and togetherness. The principles of *Tat Twam Asi* consist of interdependence between people; respect for differences; a sense of communal ownership, you are me, and I am you, and shared social responsibility. The teaching of *Tat Twam Asi* is interpreted as a pattern of life that prioritizes togetherness based on fate and humanitarian responsibility to build a social morality among fellow community members in all aspects of their lives.

Religious moderation has been implemented massively in Hinduism so that a Hindu society is built that helps each other and gets along well with other people. This is where humans need to recognize a sense of togetherness so that no matter how heavy the problem faced will feel light. In addition, by recognizing the teaching of *Tat Twam Asi*, humans will be able to feel what others feel, love, and not easily blame others following the value of religious moderation in Indonesia.²⁵

²⁴ See: Satrio Dwi Haryono, "Potret Kelam Moderasi Beragama," *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 4, no. 1 (2023): 123, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajipp.v4i1.6498>.

²⁵ Oleh I Ida Bagus Gede Candrawan UHN Gusti Bagus Sugriwa Denpasar, *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* | Vol. 5, No. 1, November - April 2024

Similar to Hinduism, peace is an aspect that is highly valued in Christianity. In the Bible, Jesus is described as a peacemaker who always teaches peace. There is no single verse in the Bible that invites people to do damage. Some verses even teach the ideals of realizing peace by using the words of law, rights, freedom, forgiveness, honesty, justice, and truth. The concept of religious moderation in Christianity is a concept to mediate the extremity of interpretations of Christian teachings that are understood by its people.²⁶ Paul introduced the concept of religious moderation in Christianity Romans: Chapter 14 with the command phrase verse 1: (*proslambano*) or “accept”. In the context of the passage under discussion, Paul commands those who are “powerful” and “vulnerable” to accept one another. Hagelberg argues that at that time, there were majorities and minorities in religious life, so what had to be done was for them to accept each other to live as religious people. Verses 3 and 4 also show the prohibition of judging, criticizing, and exaggerating and the prohibition of insulting and rejecting. This means that Paul wants his followers to be tolerant and live in harmony with others, even if they do not share their beliefs.

Based on the explanation above, moderation in Christianity has been introduced, one of which is based on Romans: 1-4. Christianity instills an attitude in its followers; even though they are a different religion, ethnicity, tribe, and race, they are still tolerant, accepting others as they are, thus making Christians not easy to judge and insult others.²⁷

Furthermore, for adherents of Catholicism, the Catholic Church has taught religious moderation to its followers, which is stated and the attitude in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially

“Prosiding Seminar Nasional Moderasi Beragama STHD Klaten Tahun,” 2020. 135-136

²⁶ Tim Penyusun, “Moderasi Beragama (Tim Penyusun) 2019,” in *Moderasi Beragama* (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 29.

²⁷ Johannis Siahaya et al., “Menstimulasi Sikap Kerukunan Dalam Jemaat: Sebuah Model Moderasi Beragama Menurut Roma 14:1-4,” *KURIOS* 7, no. 2 (October 28, 2021), 349.

Gaudium et Spes Art, 75 which states, “The Catholic Church does not reject anything in religions that are all true and holy. With respect and sincerity, the Church contemplates ways of acting and living, rules, and teachings, which are indeed in many ways different from what it believes and teaches itself, but not infrequently reflect the light of the truth that illuminates all people “. Moreover, the Church also addresses Muslims specifically through its statement “The Church also respects Muslims, who worship the one and only God, (...). Indeed, they do not recognize Jesus as God, but honor him as a Prophet.” (Nostra Aetate art. 3)²⁸

Through the decree of Nostra Aetate, the Church has initiated a new chapter in the history of recognizing the reality of religious pluralism and wants to open itself to the truth contained in non-Christian religions. From this statement, the Catholic Church respects other religions and beliefs. The Catholic Church does not exaggerate its religion as something authentic and recognizes the existence of other religions. The term “moderate” in the Catholic Church is better known as “open” to fundamentalists and traditionalists. The most important of these was the Second Vatican Council which authorized the Catholic Church’s long journey to a more open, or “moderate,” understanding of itself and Christianity.²⁹

Similarly, in Islam, the meaning of moderation is in line with the meaning of *wasatiyyah* in Arabic, especially for those who take the Qur’an as a reference. In the Arabic dictionary, the word *wasatiyyah* is taken from the word *wasata* (وسط), which has many meanings. One of them is what is found between the two ends, and it is part of it... It also means the middle of everything.³⁰ During this period, the concept of *wasat* was also

²⁸ Afrianus Darung et al., “Keterlibatan Gereja Katolik Mendukung Moderasi Beragama Berorientasi Pada Komitmen Kebangsaan,” *Jurnal Kateketik Pastoral*, vol. 5, 2021, 92.

²⁹ Tim Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019),32.

³⁰ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wasathiyah, Wawasan Islam Tentang Moderasi Beragama*, 2nd ed. (Tangerang Selatan: Lentera Hati, 2020); See: Vitara Ridesta et al., “Moderasi Beragama Berbasis Masjid: Analisis Konten Kanal Youtube-Tv Masjid Istiqlal Jakarta,” *Academic*

commonly used by the Arabs to indicate the meaning of *khayār*. In Islamic teachings, Muslims are referred to as *ummatan wasatan*, the chosen people, hoping they can appear to be the chosen people who are always mediating or fair. Whether in individual worship or social interaction as members of society, Islam teaches its people to always be moderate in everything. If the word *wasat* is understood in the context of moderation, it requires Muslims to be an example for other people, as shown by their actions, which at the same time make the Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a role model and example for them.

A person's high and low commitment to moderation shows his commitment to justice and balance. This is because the more moderate and balanced a person is, the more open it is for him to do justice and not easily blame. Based on this, this shows that the Prophet Muhammad strongly encouraged his people to take the middle way, which is believed to be the best way. Usually, when someone is in the middle, he can mediate the problems between two parties or have a fair, balanced, or unbiased nature. As he mentioned in his hadith, "*Khair al-umūri ausatubā*" which means "*The best of affairs is the middle way.*"³¹

From the various descriptions above, the foundation of moderation has been introduced in each religion in Indonesia. This shows that Indonesia, which has been blessed with plurality, has strong cultural roots and social capital as a foundation for religious moderation. Not to be forgotten from other religions, the spirit of moderation has also been recognized in Buddhism and also introduced the concept of a religious spirit called *Metta*, a teaching that holds fast to love without favoritism based on human values: tolerance, solidarity, equality, and non-violence.

Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy 3, no. 2 (2022): 172, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajipp.v3i2.5556>.

³¹ Tim Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 26-27."

Furthermore, religious moderation has also taken root in the Confucian religious tradition. Faithful and virtuous Confucian believers often referred to as *junzhi*, view life through the lens of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin-yang* is a philosophical term in Confucianism that represents the thinking and spirituality of a Confucian who wishes to live in the *Dao*.³² *Yin-yang* is the principle of being in the middle as opposed to the extremes, which favors loving-humanity (*ren*) and justice-truth (*yi*).³³

B. Constitutional Framework of Moderation

Indonesia is a country with a very religious and pluralistic society. Although it is not a country based on a particular religion, the society is very close to religious life. There are few daily issues that are not related to religion. It is the reason for religious freedom that is guaranteed by the constitution. Although religious moderation emerged in the early 20th century, to Indonesian context, religious moderation in Indonesia is built on the Pancasila constitution. This is stated in the first Pancasila principle, “*Ketubanan Yang Maha Esa*” belief in the One and only God, and in the third principle, “*Persatuan Indonesia*” the unity of Indonesia. The first and third *Sila* can be the basis of evidence that religious moderation must be developed in Indonesia.³⁴

The need to develop religious moderation in Indonesia because Indonesia has a variety of races, tribes, islands, cultures, and religions. In addition to religion, Indonesia also has religious beliefs and beliefs expressed in hundreds of ancestral religions and indigenous faiths. In the diversity of differences in Indonesia, it can be imagined how diverse each citizen’s opinions, beliefs, views, and interests, including religion. This

³² “*Dao*” means the right path of Tian and man and the supreme and infinite reality. “*Dao*” is also referred to as “The Nameless One”. See: Daoism in Chinese Philosophical System Page 1 - Kompasiana.com

³³ Penyusun,36-37.

³⁴ Oman Fathurrohman, “Kenapa Harus Moderasi Beragama_” n.d.

could be considered fortunate if diversity can be communicated, but it can be a threat if it cannot be communicated and tries to homogenise it. Plurality or diversity is necessary so that humans are able to greet each other, communicate, and show unity. However, plurality at the spiritual level has the potential for conflict, friction, and imbalance. Therefore, a “way” is needed to reconcile and moderate these differences.

In mediating, since the beginning of the independence era, the government has offered the ideology of Pancasila and the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (It is different [yet] it is one) to unite the diversity. This was done because Indonesian founding fathers knew that Indonesia had a heterogeneous and very diverse societal pattern. Over time, this understanding of the meaning of tolerance in Indonesia diversity has faded a little until it is essential to be promoted because extremist groups have begun to emerge that can divide Unity. In addition, religion has a partisan nature full of emotional content and high subjectivity, so it almost always creates emotional ties for its adherents. Even for its fanatics, religion is a sacred, haunted and sacred object. Instead of leading to a peaceful life, extreme fanaticism can lead to hostility and fighting.³⁵

The Indonesian government promotes religious moderation to mediate the problems that arise among the diversity of thought, belief, and religion in Indonesia because diversity is necessary. People could not eliminate diversity, and need to instill an attitude of tolerance for every difference, which is recently called an attitude of moderation, a middle and fair attitude that aims to create harmony and peace in carrying out religious life.

This is one of the reasons why religious moderation was included in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) by the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS RI). The Ministry of Religious Affairs is crucial in conceptualizing the main idea

³⁵ Tim Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 62 .

and implementing moderation programs. Religious moderation is included in the Priority Programs in the 2020-2024 RPJMN and became milestone that will be utilized mainly in five Priority Activities (Priority Activities): (1) Strengthening the perspective, attitude, and practice of religious moderation; (2) Strengthening the harmony of religious communities; (3) Strengthening religious and cultural relations; (4) Improving the quality of religious life services; (5) Developing the economic capacity of religious communities and resources.³⁶

In addition, since 2019 the Director General of Islamic Education (*Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Islam*) has issued decree 7272 regarding guidelines for implementing religious moderation in Islamic Education. In the introduction to the decree, it is stated that Islamic Education significantly contributes to maintaining the spread of moderate religious understanding. A depth of religious knowledge in education is very influential in implementing moderation. The Director General of Islamic Education not only made a decree on the importance of cultivating moderation in religion. He also made a guidebook for religious moderation as a form of canalization to deal with the threats of extremism.³⁷

Through the Director General of Islamic Education, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also encourages universities (PTKI, *Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam*) to establish Religious Moderation Houses as a concrete step to strengthen religious moderation as stated in the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education number 897 of 2021. The PTKI Campus is at the forefront of guarding the thoughts and movements of religious moderation. PTKI has been tested with ideas of religious moderation, so it must be part of revitalizing religious moderation more optimally.³⁸

³⁶ Ismatu Ropi, "Whither Religious Moderation? The State and Management of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 26, no. 3 (December 31, 2019), 600-601.

³⁷ MORA, "Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Nomor 7272 Tahun 2019," n.d.

³⁸ MORA, "Keputusan Direktur Jaenderal Pendidikan Islam 897 Tahun 2021,"
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The step of religious moderation is also included in the Joint Decree (SKB) Number 021 / KB / 2021, Number 025-199 of 2021, Number 219 of 2021 issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and also the Ministry of Religion, which is considered, among others, based on the crucial role of schools and their responsibilities in maintaining the existence of ideology and basic consensus of the state, namely, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, building and strengthening religious moderation and tolerance for religious diversity adopted by students, educators and education personnel.³⁹

Even the strengthening of religious moderation is also stated in the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 93 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Strengthening Moderation for Civil Servants of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This decree contains the need for active involvement from all components of the nation to maintain religious harmony, which civil servants of the Ministry of Religious Affairs must also carry out. This is following one of the functions of ASN (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*) State Civil Apparatus or employees as stated in Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus as the adhesive and unifier of the nation. Based on statements above, the foundation of the Indonesian state constitution strongly supports the presence of moderation and the need for moderation to understand and respect each other. Especially to care for the plurality of Indonesia.⁴⁰

n.d.

³⁹ “Agenda Moderasi Beragama Dalam SKB 3 Menteri,” February 2021, <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2021/02/pemerintahaa-terbitkan-keputusan-bersama-tiga-menteri>.

⁴⁰ MORA, “Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia N0.93 Tahun. 2022,” n.d.

C. The Position and Challenges of Religious Moderation

Religious moderation as an attitude and life practice has been challenged, and that must be faced in the implementation process. Today, there are at least four challenges.

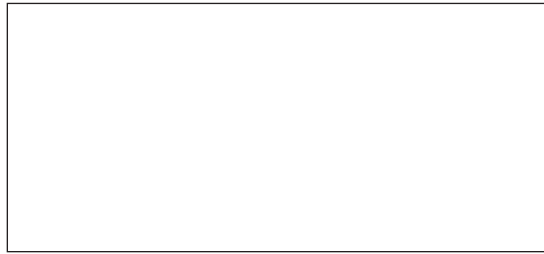


Image 2. Challenge of Religious Moderation

First, conflict and violence against religious backgrounds, acts of violence, and intolerance arise from narrow and rigid religious understanding. Groups of extremism tends to change the socio-political order of life by using verbal violence, terror, and physical violence to achieve their goals. In addition to causing physical damage and casualties, conflict and violence in the name of religion may threaten the fulfillment of the constitutional rights of every citizen and threaten the continuity of Indonesia as a nation. Religious moderation is needed to protect the constitutional rights of every people, as well as maintaining Indonesian-ness.

Second, intolerance and exclusivism which is an attitude of self-righteousness, blaming, and condemning others who have different religious views. This may further limit the space for encounters between diverse identities that can result in violations of constitutional rights and exclusion. *Third*, low digital literacy, media literacy, and instant culture. Friction between communities will be present when there is no literacy wisdom in developing communication and information technology.

Objective explanations of religious interpretations are often defeated by subjective choices obtained from non-authoritative sources on the internet and social media.

Fourth, Increased regeneration and indoctrination to students systematically and massively. The lack of role of traditional institutions makes students more easily exposed to and recruited by exclusive groups. Therefore, Islamic Religious Universities are crucial actors in instilling the values of religious moderation towards students so that they are not exposed to radicalism. *Fifth*, the identity politics of social and political aspects and society can be polarized due to the growing identity politics, as happened in the DKI elections in 2017 and the 2019 presidential election. Hate speech also reaches political practices that creates polarization in a society increasingly worrying.⁴¹

From these challenges, we can conclude that the cultivation and understanding of the concept of religious moderation in Indonesia are expected to be an effective method to respond to the issue of radical extremism, intolerance, and acts of violence in the nation's life, religion, and state. Moderation is also expected to be able to realize a peaceful society by presenting a beautiful and soothing religious face and as a strategy to maintain Indonesian identity. The existence of moderation can make people coexist with other religious adherents in harmony, religious moderation is also worthy of being a solution and formula for preventing various radical and liberal ideologies in Indonesia. This is because religious moderation reinforces the importance of active tolerance, the importance of accepting each other, and teaching harmony and peace, which is considered capable of mediating plurality as a blessing of God in Indonesia.

⁴¹ MORA, "Keputusan Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Nomor 7272 Tahun 2019," n.d.

Strategies for Strengthening and Implementing Religious Moderation

In this section, this article attempts to explore to what extent the Indonesian government has sought the implementation of religious moderation, especially through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and what strategies have been applied to be able to sustain and strengthen the idea of religious moderation. Moderation itself in practice and ideas is rooted in a collective awareness of basic human needs to be able to realize the meaning of life which is based on the same origin and goal⁴². When the state established an official “religious moderation” project, there was an opinion stating that this idea had similarities to colonial and post-colonial projects to make religion a political tool under state supervision, as well as state validation in Islamic interpretation⁴³. Nonetheless, what needs to be remembered is that the existence of religion in the Indonesian state is a fundamental matter with which the state can define its role and model of service to citizens as stated in the Constitution⁴⁴.

But in fact, the mission of the Ministry of Religious Affairs from the very beginning of the country’s independence was indeed to: (1) make the precepts of Belief in One Almighty God as a basic principle in society; (2) safeguard the rights of every citizen to be free to practice and carry out worship according to their respective religions; and (3) assist, support, protect, and promote all religious activities⁴⁵. Even though religious activity

⁴² Ropi, “Whither Religious Moderation? The State and Management of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia.”

⁴³ Syaifudin Zuhri, “Regimented Islamophobia: Islam, State, and Governmentality in Indonesia,” *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2021): 387–422, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qjijis.v9i2.8249>.

⁴⁴ Ropi, “Whither Religious Moderation? The State and Management of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia.”

⁴⁵ Jeremy Menchik, “Democratic Transition in the Muslim World,” in *Democratic Transition in the Muslim World*, ed. ALFRED STEPAN (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 187, <https://doi.org/10.7312/step18430>.

and freedom are protected by the constitution, there are loopholes in religious practices that are deemed to deviate from religious teachings that are believed to be true or not in line with public morality to be restricted, especially beliefs that do not meet three doctrinal criteria: the existence of God Almighty, a prophet or founders, and holy books besides getting international recognition⁴⁶.

The Jokowi administration's initial steps in promoting religious moderation amid public perceptions of a lack of Islamic credentials and increasing Islamic conservatism by appointing several moderate figures to join its government such as Din Syamsuddin and Ahmad Syafii Maarif from Muhammadiyah; with Said Aqil Siradj and Maruf Amin from NU⁴⁷, especially the latter who later became his representative. Apart from that, the state also facilitates mainstream Islamic organizations (especially NU and Muhammadiyah) that carry out their agenda in promoting their moderate ideas either at the grassroots level or spreading them on a global scale⁴⁸.

In the implementation of religious moderation at the state level, the nomenclature used is more towards “mainstreaming” religious moderation which later changed to the term strengthening. Among the strategies for systematically implementing religious moderation by the state are: a) disseminating the idea of religious moderation; b) institutionalization of religious moderation in government programs and policies; and c) integration of the perspective of religious moderation into the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2024⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ Robert W. Hefner, *The Religious Field: Plural Legacies and Contemporary Contestations*, *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315628837>.

⁴⁷ A Nubowo, “Jokowi’s Soft Diplomacy: Global Islamic Network of Moderation,” *R.SIS Commentary*, no. 119 (2018): 1–3.

⁴⁸ James Bourk Hoesterey, “Public Diplomacy and the ‘Moderate Islam,’” 2015, 406–16.

⁴⁹ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*.

A. Disseminating the Idea of Religious Moderation

The purpose of disseminating religious moderation narratives to the public is to raise awareness about the urgency of having a moderate religious paradigm, attitude, and behavior. The Ministry of Religion in disseminating this concept emphasizes the notion of religious moderation - not religion moderation, the urgency of the concept of religious moderation, and how to implement it in life. In addition, the Ministry of Religion strives for religious moderation to become part of the government's references, standards, and perspectives in developing human resources and planning national development⁵⁰.

In the beginning, the dissemination of the idea of religious moderation began with the initiation of dialogue between religionists, culturalists, academics, and millennials so that there were common views and mutual respect. For example, in 2018 the Ministry of Religion held dialogues across groups, across faiths, and generations in several cities in Indonesia to discuss several phenomena and realities of religious life which tend to show a reduction in noble religious values and neglect of moral and spiritual values. These meetings eventually resulted in the “*Risalah Jakarta tentang Kehidupan Beragama di Indonesia*” pact. Even the phenomenon of intolerance after the publication of this document and the Ministry of Religion's socialization of the idea of religious moderation continues to occur. such as the institute's equivalent report which summarizes intolerance cases in 2020 which recorded 180 cases with 424 violations. the summary is in the form of various cases such as the prohibition of residents from practicing worship, vandalism of places of worship, and accusations of blasphemy making up the majority of cases⁵¹.

⁵⁰ Penyusun, 111.

⁵¹ Muhammad Zulfikar Yusuf and Destita Mutiara, “Diseminasi Informasi Moderasi Beragama: Analisis Konten Website Kementerian Agama,” *Dialog* 45, no. 1 (2022): 130, <https://doi.org/10.47655/dialogv45i1.535>.

The year 2019 can be considered as the starting point for strengthening and mainstreaming the vision of religious moderation in the Ministry of Religious Affairs. At the Ministry of Religion's National Working Meeting (Rakernas), the Minister at that time, among other things, conveyed directions emphasizing religious moderation, harmony between religious communities, and togetherness in inter-community life which is in line with the United Nations agenda which made 2019 "The International Year of Moderation". To align with the United Nations agenda, Indonesia, in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs as the spearhead, continues to make efforts to socialize the idea of religious moderation to the public through Focus Group Discussions (FGD), workshops, and other activities to complete the publication of a religious moderation manual and a question-and-answer pocket book on religious moderation. Apart from that, in disseminating this idea, the Ministry of Religious Affairs also cooperates with other government institutions such as the Directorate General of Public Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by holding dialogues between civilizations and hosting the International Conference of Islamic Scholars which seeks to promote moderate aspects of Islamic Civilization. These agendas are a continuation of the previous regime's project on Moderate Islam by initiating an Interfaith Cooperation Dialogue in 2004 and several series of interfaith dialogues as well as the annual ICIS⁵².

When the International Conference of Islamic Scholars (ICIS) was held, former NU chairman Hasyim Muzadi was mandated as director, and in the Regional Interfaith Dialogue (RID), Muhammadiyah became co-host. The collaboration with these two large organizations to get support from moderate Muslims, as well as seeking support from scholars from

⁵² Ahmad Rizky Mardhatillah Umar, "A Genealogy of Moderate Islam: Governmentality and Discourses of Islam in Indonesia's Foreign Policy," *Studia Islamika* 23, no. 3 (2016): 420–21.

Islamic Universities also took part in it⁵³. In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in collaboration with the Directorate of Information and Public Diplomacy, launched various person-to-person public diplomacy programs, including the establishment of religious advisory boards, and youth and intellectuals, exchange programs⁵⁴.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs's efforts to focus on discussing this idea in depth are illustrated in a separate column when displaying content specifically for religious moderation. Based on the researcher's review, a special column with the heading of religious moderation is available on the Ministry of Religion's website, 34 articles focus on discussing religious moderation from various religious perspectives. Next, 20 articles were taken which would become the object of research regarding the Ministry of Religion's way of disseminating religious moderation with special emphasis on moderation in Islam⁵⁵. The Ministry, additionally, also conducts dissemination of religious moderation by making the State Islamic Universities (PTKIN) the center of its development. This form of moderation is by increasing the quality of research and service focused on Islamic, Indonesian-ness, and humanitarian studies⁵⁶.

B. Institutionalization of Religious Moderation

In this section, the meaning of institutionalization of religious moderation is integrating and translating the idea of religious moderation in institutions, institutions, and units so that it can be derived and applied to

⁵³ Angga Yudhiyansyah, "The Role of the State in the Formation of Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi Agama* 6, no. 1 (2014): 8–12.

⁵⁴ James Bourk Hoesterey, "Public Diplomacy and the Global Dissemination of 'Moderate Islam,'" in *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Indonesia*, 2015, 406.

⁵⁵ Yusuf and Mutiara, "Diseminasi Informasi Moderasi Beragama: Analisis Konten Website Kementerian Agama."

⁵⁶ Sean Joseph Flynn, "Debt Structure and Future Financing and Investment" (ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY, 2017), 133.

work programs and the realization of their activities, especially those that are sustainable. Strengthening the implementation of the idea of religious moderation in each unit can be done by strengthening commitment to the state, cultivating an attitude of tolerance, internalizing religious values, and rejecting violence and discrimination in the name of religion⁵⁷. the program for institutionalizing religious moderation itself, from the side of government authority, is strengthened by the existence of Article 10 paragraph (1) letter f of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning parts of Government affairs⁵⁸.

Institutionalization of the notion of religious moderation can begin with the integration of requirements on a moderate mindset and understanding of religion when selecting and recruiting state civil servants either in civilian or military circles. This is important considering that they represent the state and obtain the right to serve the state. furthermore, the state apparatus must ensure that it understands non-violence, is non-radical and promotes tolerance⁵⁹. Within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, one of the priority programs is to ensure that every state civil apparatus within the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia must be literate and understand religious moderation. With the publication of a religious moderation guidance book, it is hoped that this will become one of the important initiatives of the Ministry of Religion in initiating and realizing the strengthening of religious moderation in society so that state civil servants can be invited to collaborate in voicing counter-radicalism⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*.

⁵⁸ Tatang Sudrajat, Supiana Supiana, and Qiqi Yuliati Zakiah, "Higher Education, Nation Character, and Religious Moderation Program: A Public Policy Perspective," *Journal of Asian Social Science Research* 3, no. 1 (2021): 84, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jassr.v3i1.135>.

⁵⁹ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*.

⁶⁰ Yusuf and Mutiara, "Diseminasi Informasi Moderasi Beragama: Analisis Konten Website Kementerian Agama."

In practice, the institutionalization of religious moderation within the Ministry of Religious Affairs by initiating a Working Group (Pokja) on Religious Moderation at the Directorate General of Islamic Education (Pendis). The task of this department is to ensure the execution of the religious moderation concept in the plans, schedules, agendas, and realization of the activities of the Ministry, especially those under the coordination of the Directorate of Islamic Education⁶¹.

the institutionalization of the concept of religious moderation has quite a strong basis with the existence of previous regulations in state institutions. An example is the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 9 of 2006 and No. 8 of 2006 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the Duties of Regional Heads/Deputy Regional Heads in Maintaining Religious Harmony, Empowering Religious Community Forums and Establishing Houses of Worship and Joint Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Religion No. 01/BER.MDN-MAG/1969 dated 13 September 1969 concerning Establishment of Places of Worship and Religious Activities. This rule is a strong basis for implementing the integration of religious moderation in every state institution⁶².

There are references to the formation of the institutionalization of religious moderation in other nations. One of them is Kuwait which established a think tank under the control of the Ministry of Waqf and Islamic Affairs, The International Center for Moderation (*al-Markaz al-'Alami lil Wasathiyah*). Apart from focusing on research and academic activities, this institution also plays a role in advocacy, training, and developing moderation networks (moderation, 2019). To institutionalize religious moderation, Islamic moderation networks at both the domestic and international levels need to be complemented by consultative

⁶¹ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*.

⁶² Yudhi Kawangung, "Religious Moderation Discourse in Plurality of Social Harmony in Indonesia," *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2019): 162, <https://doi.org/10.29332/ijssh.v3n1.277>.

institutions, where state and non-state actors can jointly formulate strategies to spread Islamic moderation. Cooperation across actors and sectors will strengthen the growth and expansion of the idea of Islamic moderation both nationally and globally⁶³.

C. Integration of the Religious Moderation Perspective into RPJMN 2020-2024

The other plan in efforts to endeavor religious moderation is to seek integration of the formulation of religious moderation in the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). To reach the goal of strengthening the integration of religious moderation in the RPJMN 2020-2024, through 2019, the Ministry of Religion has conducted several Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to complete the formulation of the concept of religious moderation. The Ministry of Religion is a key institution in conceptualizing main ideas and implementing programs in moderation⁶⁴. Finally, the idea of religious moderation can be included in the Indonesian National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) for 2020-2024 by the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS RI).

After going through various discussions and meetings, Bappenas designed the 2020-2024 RPJMN with the theme “Prosperous, Just and Sustainable High-Middle Income Indonesia,” which contains five core aspects that are further broken down into seven National Priorities, namely: 1) Boosting economic stability for quality development; 2) Developing territories to reduce inequality and guarantee equity; 3) Improving quality and competitive human resources; 4) Mental revolution and cultural development; 5) Maintaining infrastructure to sustain economic development and basic services; 6) Creating the environment,

⁶³ Nubowo, “Jokowi’s Soft Diplomacy: Global Islamic Network of Moderation.”

⁶⁴ Ropi, “Whither Religious Moderation? The State and Management of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia.”

increasing stability to catastrophes and climate change, and 7) Maintaining the stability of the politics, law, defense, security and the transformation of public services. In this context, religious moderation is placed as one of the policy directions to realize the fourth National Priority, namely Mental Revolution and Cultural Development.

Some of the RPJMN realizations related to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' programs, especially the idea of religious moderation, are the establishment of the Indonesian Sharia Economic Masterplan (MESI) of 2019-2024, which is intended to control the country's economic growth. In addition, the launching of the Presidential Regulation on Halal Product Assurance indirectly provides support to the halal industry, which has implications for Islamic economic shares. In addition to these two, the operation of the Hajj finance management agency can support the management of Hajj funds in a transparent, accountable, and professional manner.⁶⁵

In addition, in the 2020-2024 RPJMN, in the context of public policy, the issuance of Circular of the Director General of Islamic Education Number B-3663.1/Dj.1/BA.02/10/2019 dated 29 October 2019, to the Chancellor of the State Islamic University to establish and organize the House of Religious Moderation also being a fundamental step. This is a space to care for, educate, guide, and strengthen the movement for religious moderation in campus life⁶⁶. Besides that, within the scope of PTKIN, the Ministry of Religion issued Regulation of the Minister of Religion (PMA) Number 13 of 2014 concerning Islamic Religious Education as the basis for establishing Ma'had Al-Jami'ah as a non-formal religious education institution that supports the mastery and understanding of knowledge about Islamic teachings. religion to further strengthen religious moderation⁶⁷.

⁶⁵ Penyusun, *Moderasi Beragama*.

⁶⁶ Sudrajat, Supiana, and Zakiah, "Higher Education, Nation Character, and Religious Moderation Program: A Public Policy Perspective."

⁶⁷ Imam Sujono et al., "Efforts to Strengthen Islamic Moderation of Islamic Religious Universities in Indonesia," in *Proceedings of the 6th Batusangkar International Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* | Vol. 5, No. 1, November - April 2024

Moreover, to strengthen the idea of religious moderation, the government sees that the existence of universities could assist to develop and disseminate this idea both at the level of national citizens and the global community. So that the establishment of the Indonesian International Islamic University is expected to be an alternative to the Islamic University of Medina, which has played a key role in the campaign for understanding Islam from Saudi Arabia, and Al Azhar, a very old Islamic learning center in Cairo⁶⁸. The explicit aim is to make Indonesia a global destination for higher religious education and to compete with both these institutions as well as other international Islamic universities in Pakistan and Malaysia⁶⁹.

Conclusion

As an effort to maintain inclusiveness, diversity and to preserve the harmony of its society, Indonesia has been actively implementing religious moderation through several programmes, and if traced further, such an agenda has existed since the early days of Indonesia. 'Trilogy of Harmony' (*Trilogi Kerukunan*), the implementation of 'religious education' (*Pendidikan Agama*) as a subject of study, building the Institute for the Study of Religious Harmony (LPKUB), the democratic constitution required to guarantee and respect the human rights including '*hak beragama*' the right to adhere any religion, the publication of a pocketbook of Religious Moderation, religious literacy movement, etc have been developed periodically.

The state must raise a 'moderate concept' of moderation that can represent the perspective of each religion. Then 'Religious Moderation' is a term that is considered moderate rather than *wasatiyyah* in the context of

Conference, 2021, 2, <https://doi.org/10.4108/cai.11-10-2021.2319459>.

⁶⁸ James M. Dorsey, "Indonesia : A Major Prize in the Battle for the Soul of Islam," 2020, 57.

⁶⁹ Peter Mandaville and Shadi Hamid, "Islam As Statecraft: How Governments Use Religion in Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy at Brookings*, no. November (2018): 25, <https://search.israelab.org/resources/40709/40709.pdf>.

a state and nation, even though Islam is a religion that has many adherents in this country, it does not mean the state has to use an ‘Islamic’ term as exemplified by the founding fathers of the nation in determining the first pillar of ‘Pancasila’ to become ‘Belief in One Supreme God’. In addition to the strategies to promote religious moderation implemented through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, collaboration with moderate communities, scholars and civic organisations is essential to support this agenda. This is where the Ministry of Religious Affairs has played a key role in implementing religious moderation by safeguarding the rights of citizens to practice their faith freely and moderately.

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