

The Implementation of Islamic Moderation Principles in Addressing the Challenges of Political Identity Polarization

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the application of the principles of Islamic moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in addressing the challenges of identity politics, particularly in mitigating social polarization based on religion and ideology. The study employs a qualitative approach with data collection through literature review. The findings show that the values of Islamic moderation, such as balance, social justice, and compassion, play a significant role in creating inclusive and peaceful politics. The principles of *wasatiyyah* promote dialogue between groups, prevent identity-based conflicts in Indonesia, and establish fair and harmonious political policies. These findings also confirm that the implementation of Islamic moderation values can strengthen social and political stability in diverse societies. This research contributes to the development of theories and practices in politics based on the values of religious moderation and offers new perspectives for formulating strategies to address political polarization in multicultural societies.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan prinsip moderasi Islam (*wasatiyyah*) dalam mengatasi tantangan politik identitas, khususnya dalam meredakan polarisasi sosial yang berbasis agama dan ideologi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data studi literatur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai moderasi Islam, seperti keseimbangan, keadilan sosial, dan kasih sayang, memainkan peran signifikan dalam menciptakan politik yang inklusif dan damai. Prinsip *wasatiyyah* membantu mempromosikan dialog antar kelompok, mencegah konflik berbasis identitas di Indonesia, dan membangun kebijakan politik yang adil dan harmonis. Temuan ini juga menegaskan bahwa penerapan nilai-nilai moderasi Islam dapat memperkuat stabilitas sosial dan politik di tengah keberagaman

masyarakat. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori dan praktik politik berbasis nilai moderasi beragama, serta menawarkan perspektif baru dalam merumuskan strategi untuk mengatasi polarisasi politik di masyarakat multikultural.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Radicalism and identity politics have become major issues affecting Muslim societies in various countries, including Indonesia (Setia & Haq, 2023; Ziaul Haq et al., 2023). The polarization resulting from identity politics is often rooted in the use of religion as a political tool to mobilize the masses, which, in turn, triggers horizontal conflicts and exacerbates socio-political instability. In Indonesia, cases such as the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election illustrate how religion can be used to strengthen certain political identities, thus widening the gap between social groups, especially when issues of hatred strengthen political interests (Haq & Sen, 2021; Reicher et al., 2005). The consequences are evident in heightened social tensions, the erosion of mutual trust, and threats to national unity. Globally, religion-based radicalism is also a significant concern, as seen in the Middle East, where sectarian conflicts continue to escalate due to the politicization of religion (Napitsunargo, 2024; Yom, 2017).

The *das sein* (existing social reality) reveals that although Islam teaches values of moderation, balance, and peace, these teachings are not yet fully reflected in contemporary political dynamics. Instead, religion is often misused by certain groups to support exclusive or extreme political agendas (N. Hasan, 2017; Jamaludin, 2021). In contrast, the *das sollen* (normative ideal) of Islamic teachings is to foster a harmonious socio-political life, where differences in identity are viewed as a blessing rather than a threat. The concept of moderation in Islam, encompassing the principles of justice (*'adl*), balance (*wasatiyyah*), and peace (*as-salam*), holds great potential for building inclusive and just politics. However, the implementation of these values in practical politics often faces challenges, both from political actors and existing social structures (Nasr, 2009).

The concept of moderation holds significant relevance in the era of contemporary politics, which is marked by increasing ideological polarization, particularly in the Western world and the Middle East (Rasyid, 2022). Many countries face serious challenges related to identity politics, which often exacerbate social tensions, especially when religion is used as a political tool to mobilize the masses. In addressing these challenges, Islam offers a balanced and tolerant paradigm through the values embedded in the Qur'an and Hadith. Therefore, the concept of moderation in Islam is not only essential as part of its theology but also highly relevant for fostering inclusive and peaceful politics. Furthermore, this concept serves as a key to building a non-extreme political system that accommodates religious, cultural, and social differences within a diverse society.

The year 2024 marks a critical period for Indonesia, with intensifying political dynamics ahead of the general elections. Amid this turbulence, religious moderation becomes a central focus (Syahputra et al., 2024). Leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring a strategic approach to prevent polarization. In navigating the challenges of the times, especially in this era of political turmoil, there is an urgent need for solutions grounded in Islamic values of moderation. Such solutions can help ease socio-political tensions and foster harmony within society.

According to Muhammad Hashim Kamali (2008), moderation in Islam is not merely about refraining from extremism but also encompasses the acknowledgment of pluralism and diversity within society. Islam teaches that differences are part of divine destiny and should be respected and embraced as manifestations of God's wisdom. In his book *Islamic Law: A Short Introduction*, Kamali

explains that Islam encourages its followers to live in peace, avoid violence, and uphold human rights and individual freedoms (Kamali, 2008). This demonstrates that Islamic teachings inherently support the establishment of peaceful politics, even in the context of heterogeneous societies. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand that Islamic values promoting moderation and peace must be contextualized properly without being misinterpreted by groups that might attempt to narrow or radicalize its meaning. In his book *Islam and the Secular State*, An-Na'im (2008) argues that a correct understanding of Islamic teachings requires a clear separation between religion and politics while preserving the moral principles inherent in Islam. As stated by An-Na'im, Islam can serve as a robust moral foundation for peaceful and moderate politics without necessitating the transformation of a state into a religious state.

Harahap (2014) in her study on religion-based identity politics notes that religion-based identity politics in Indonesia threatens the nation's long-standing pluralism and religious harmony. Identity politics in national life creates a dominant current for group interests, often oppressing and marginalizing opposing groups or minorities. Currently, the dominant form of identity politics in Indonesia is religious identity politics, which fosters exclusivism among the Muslim majority. This is exacerbated by Indonesia's political dynamics, which frequently exploit religious issues to maintain political power, thereby fueling socio-religious conflicts.

This study aims to provide a more specific and contextual analysis of the application of Islamic values of moderation in creating peaceful and inclusive politics. By employing a comprehensive literature review approach, this research identifies key principles in Islamic teachings that are relevant to addressing the challenges of identity politics and explores how these principles can be implemented in political policies and practices. Additionally, the study seeks to demonstrate the practical contributions of Islamic values in building a harmonious and just society.

The concept of moderation in Islam is not only relevant as a theological foundation but also has the potential to serve as a practical solution for alleviating socio-political conflicts. Values such as justice, balance, and dialogue can serve as guidelines for creating politics rooted in tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for pluralism. Through a more applicative approach, this research offers novelty in the literature on moderate politics based on Islam by providing a conceptual framework that can address contemporary political challenges, particularly in multicultural nations like Indonesia. Thus, this study is expected to serve as a foundation for more moderate and inclusive political policies and practices in the future (Kurniawan, 2016).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study examines the implementation of Islamic moderation principles in addressing the growing concern of identity politics polarization in Indonesia, particularly in West Java. Using a qualitative approach based on a literature review (Samosir et al., 2023), the research aims to understand how Islamic values such as *wasatiyyah* (moderation), tolerance, and social justice can serve as normative solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of this polarization. The case of political polarization during the West Java Regional Election (*Pilkada*) serves as a supporting context, considering that debates on issues of religious freedom and tolerance were prominent during the political campaigns in this region.

The data used in this study are secondary, obtained through a review of literature from policy documents, previous research, and media reports. The research relies on an analysis of related documents, including reports on high rates of religious freedom violations in West Java, to identify the relevance and challenges of implementing Islamic moderation values. Additional information, such as the results of debates during the West Java *Pilkada* that discussed disaster mitigation and tolerance, is used to support an understanding of identity politics dynamics at the local level without being the primary focus of the analysis.

Data collection was conducted through the identification of relevant academic documents, policy reports, and news articles (Miles & Huberman, 2013). The analysis data were analyzed using data reduction techniques to identify patterns and key themes, such as how Islamic principles can serve as guidelines for formulating inclusive policies and addressing political polarization.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Principle of Moderation in Islam and Its Implications for Inclusive Politics

The principle of moderation in Islam, known as *wasatiyyah*, serves as a critical foundation for fostering peaceful and just societies. In the political realm, religious moderation emphasizes the importance of balance, avoiding extremism, and respecting pluralism and diversity. Moderation in Islamic teachings aims to counteract radicalization and promote healthy dialogue between different groups in both social and political contexts (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

Wasatiyyah, derived from the Arabic language, literally means “moderate,” “middle,” or “balanced.” Within the Islamic context, *wasatiyyah* refers to a way of life that avoids extremism or fanaticism in religious practices, social behavior, and political actions. This principle advocates for balance in all aspects of life, including religion, society, and governance. It embodies the essence of moderation, avoiding excess or deficiency, while fostering respect for diversity in pluralistic societies (Wahab, 2020). The principle is reflected in various teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, which encourage Muslims to act wisely in addressing differences and conflicts. The Qur'an explicitly calls upon Muslims to be a just and balanced community (*ummatan wasatan*), as highlighted in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143), which enjoins them to serve as mediators among other communities.

Moreover, moderation in politics also involves implementing principles of social justice, ensuring that every individual or group is granted equal rights in decision-making processes. An example of this is the Medina Charter, established by Prophet Muhammad, which embodies the principle of moderation by emphasizing cooperation among different tribes and religions to build a just and peaceful society (Meirison et al., 2020). The charter underscores that Islam not only teaches vertical relationships with God but also provides guidance for horizontal relationships among people in social and political contexts.

In the political sphere, the principle of religious moderation in Islam offers a roadmap for building inclusive politics. Islam emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony among religious communities and promoting policies that accommodate diversity. A moderate understanding of religion facilitates constructive dialogue among different societal groups without compromising the rights of individuals or minority groups. This aligns with the views of Hefner and Ali-Fauzi (2014) who argue that dialogue among diverse groups in a multicultural society is essential for fostering peace and social justice.

Identity politics in contemporary Indonesia is characterized by issues that reflect tensions between groups advocating nationalism and those promoting religious identity. In these conflicts, competing claims of truth arise as each group asserts the superiority or exclusivity of its supported identity. Historically, the struggle for Indonesian independence has demonstrated that religious foundations, particularly Islam, played a significant role in shaping the nation (Nasir, 2020), including the establishment and acceptance of *Pancasila* as the foundation of the Indonesian state. Unfortunately, the current contest for political power has revived past divisions, with religious identity politics being used as a propaganda tool to secure power.

The current fragmentation in Indonesia's identity politics cannot be separated from the political interests driven by elites seeking to gain and maintain power by manipulating identity politics. The division between nationalist and religious groups is often seen as an opportunity to obscure the ruling government's inability to address national issues, particularly in improving the welfare and prosperity of the broader population (Hasan & Juhannis, 2024; Saepudin et al., 2023). The debate regarding the relationship between religion and the state remains an ongoing and unresolved topic. Discussions on this matter continue among politicians, academics, and the general public, as if this were a newly emerging issue. However, this debate has persisted for a long time, even before Indonesia's independence. The discourse has further developed into a clash between religion and nationalism, particularly among Indonesian Muslims. Differences in views about nationalism, which is considered a Western concept, have become a major cause of this tension. Among Muslims, there are those who accept nationalism, those who reject it, and those

who remain neutral. For those who oppose it, nationalism is seen as a secular ideology that contradicts Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, for those who embrace it, nationalism is considered a positive force when aligned with the concept of *ukhuwah Islamiyyah* (Islamic brotherhood), which unites the nation. There is also a neutral group that takes an indifferent stance, viewing secular nationalism as adaptable to a country's culture, entity, and geographical conditions. However, this perspective is not always applicable to Indonesia.

The principle of moderation in Islam, known as *wasatiyyah*, significantly contributes to the formation of a peaceful, just, and tolerant society (Setia & Syarif, 2022; Syarif, 2021). This concept promotes balance in practicing religion, engaging in social life, and governing the state, while avoiding extreme behaviors that may trigger conflict. Moderate Islamic teachings emphasize respect for pluralism and diversity, which can counteract radicalization and foster constructive dialogue among different groups, both socially and politically. For instance, the Medina Charter, drafted by Prophet Muhammad, reflects the principle of moderation by accommodating various religious and tribal groups to create an inclusive society. In the political context, this moderation has a profound contribution to fostering tolerant politics, advancing fair policies that accommodate diversity, and ensuring that the rights of individuals or minority groups are respected. However, in Indonesia, the dynamics of identity politics often result in tensions between nationalist and religious groups, which are sometimes exploited by political elites to gain power. The differing perspectives on the relationship between religion and the state, as well as on nationalism, indicate that implementing inclusive and moderate politics remains a significant challenge. As Kamali (2008) highlights, moderation in Islam encompasses the recognition of pluralism within society, which is seen as a manifestation of divine wisdom. In this regard, inclusive politics based on Islamic moderation principles can make a substantial contribution to achieving common goals in a diverse society (Meirison et al., 2020).

3.2. Social Justice in Islam as a Foundation for Tolerant Politics

Social justice in Islam represents a profound fundamental value that underpins the teachings of Islam in organizing societal and state life. In Islam, justice is not limited to the relationship between individuals and God but also encompasses relationships among individuals within society. Islam emphasizes the need for equal distribution of rights and responsibilities, ensuring that everyone has the same opportunity to thrive in economic, social, and political spheres. This concept of social justice covers various aspects of life, including the distribution of resources, social rights, and equal treatment of all citizens regardless of their religious, ethnic, or social backgrounds (Rahman, 2022).

In the Qur'an, social justice is affirmed in numerous verses that encourage fair treatment toward others. Allah states, "*Indeed, Allah commands you to uphold justice, to do good, and to give to relatives*" (QS. An-Nahl: 90). This verse highlights that the principle of justice in Islam involves treating all individuals fairly and recognizing the rights of others, including their economic, social, and cultural rights. Social justice in Islam not only aims at wealth redistribution but also ensures the protection of basic rights for every individual in society.

Social justice is also reflected in the concept of *zakat*, which is an obligation for Muslims to distribute a portion of their wealth to those in need. *Zakat* is not merely a religious duty but also serves as a mechanism to reduce social inequality and improve societal welfare. As explained by Nawawi (2006), *zakat* functions as a tool for wealth redistribution within society, thereby reducing social disparities and creating economic stability. In this regard, *zakat* demonstrates how Islam promotes equity and fairness in resource distribution, making it highly relevant to the application of social justice principles in politics.

Just politics in Islam also emphasizes the importance of equal treatment for all citizens, regardless of religious or ethnic backgrounds. Islam teaches the principles of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *tawhid* (the oneness of God), which lead to the recognition of diversity and equitable treatment of all groups within society. These principles are evident in the actions of Prophet Muhammad, who implemented the Medina Charter, which prioritized justice and mutual

respect among groups of different religions, including Jews and Christians (Ali, 2015). The Medina Charter serves as a concrete example of how Islam advocates for just politics, where the rights of every individual are respected and guaranteed, regardless of religion or ethnicity.

Additionally, it is important to note that in Islam, social justice is closely related to the recognition of social and economic rights. Islam places great emphasis on the welfare of the people, stressing the state's obligation to create conditions that allow every individual to access basic rights, including education, healthcare, and decent employment. According to Sulaiman (2017), the state in Islam is responsible for establishing a system that accommodates the basic needs of all citizens, adhering to the principles of social justice and upholding human rights.

The principle of social justice in Islam is highly relevant in the context of Indonesia, a nation with a multicultural and pluralistic society. The Indonesian government is expected to implement these values of social justice in its political policies to establish an inclusive, fair, and accommodating political system for all groups. Islam, with its teachings and principles oriented toward justice, provides a strong foundation for the state to realize social justice within its governance system.

3.3. Interfaith Dialogue in Islam to Achieve Political Tolerance

Interfaith dialogue in Islam is one of the essential mechanisms for fostering harmonious relationships among religious communities worldwide. In the context of politics, interfaith dialogue is crucial not only for maintaining social harmony but also for realizing political tolerance, which allows all groups in society to coexist peacefully (Madiyono & Haq, 2023; Philips et al., 2022). Islam, as a religion that promotes peace, tolerance, and mutual respect, views interfaith dialogue as a primary means to resolve conflicts and strengthen interreligious harmony. This dialogue serves not only as a medium for communication between different groups but also as a way to understand and appreciate differences in beliefs while fostering a broader consensus on principles of justice, freedom, and respect for human rights (Haq & Sen, 2021; Yucel, 2018).

In the Qur'an, Allah emphasizes the importance of respectful dialogue with people of other faiths. As stated in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:256), "*There is no compulsion in religion*," which affirms that in Islam, every individual has the right to choose their faith, and this choice must be respected by all parties. Islam teaches that religious diversity is part of divine destiny, which must be accepted and valued. Therefore, interfaith dialogue that promotes mutual understanding and respect for these differences is vital for achieving peaceful and inclusive politics (Elius, M., Khan & Nor, 2019).

The principle of interfaith dialogue in Islam is not only seen as a religious obligation but also as an effort to create social and political peace. In the early history of Islam, Prophet Muhammad provided a tangible example of interfaith dialogue (Elius, 2023). One of the most notable examples is the Charter of Medina, which served as a foundational constitution for a society composed of various tribes and religions. In this charter, the Prophet not only ensured that the rights of Muslims were respected but also guaranteed fair treatment for non-Muslim groups, such as Jews and Christians. This demonstrates that Islam teaches the importance of dialogue as a means to establish a just and peaceful society while respecting the existing diversity.

In contemporary politics, interfaith dialogue plays a critical role in maintaining stability and peace. In many countries with heterogeneous populations, such as Indonesia, interreligious conflict often serves as a trigger for social and political tensions. Thus, interfaith dialogue based on principles of justice and mutual respect can reduce polarization and create a shared space for unity. In this regard, Islam encourages its followers to prioritize mutual understanding and respect while abandoning hostility and intolerance. According to Bakar (2006), interfaith dialogue in Islam not only prevents conflicts but also paves the way for forming more inclusive and just politics.

Social harmony fostered through interfaith dialogue also contributes to the development of fairer political policies. Islam teaches that all human beings have equal dignity in the eyes of God, which must be respected in social and political life. Therefore, in political processes, Islam emphasizes the importance of safeguarding individual rights, respecting freedom of religion, and avoiding discrimination based on religion or belief. This aligns with Rahman (2016), who states

that interfaith dialogue in Islam should aim to create a public sphere free from discrimination and radicalization.

Interfaith dialogue in Islam is also closely tied to the values of moderation (Haq et al., 2023; Rofiqi & Haq, 2022; Schneier, 2002). Islam, through the concept of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) as taught in the Qur'an, emphasizes the need to take a middle path when addressing religious and ideological differences. *Wasatiyyah* in Islam refers to a non-extremist attitude that always upholds justice and balance in all aspects of life, including interactions with other religions. This concept is highly relevant in the political context, where tensions between religious groups are often fueled by extremist attitudes that disregard the principles of dialogue and mutual understanding. Thus, interfaith dialogue based on the principle of moderation can reduce tensions and open opportunities to create more peaceful and just political policies (Islam, 2022).

In Indonesia, the principles of Islamic moderation have been applied in various policies supporting multiculturalism and religious freedom, as seen in concrete steps taken by the government to ensure constructive interfaith dialogue. For example, the 1945 Constitution recognizes religious freedom as a fundamental right of every citizen, providing space for various religious groups to coexist harmoniously and tolerably (Jati, 2022). Additionally, the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy on religious moderation, implemented through training and education programs, aims to reduce interreligious tensions and promote social harmony (Gultom & Haq, 2024; Zainiyati, 2014). This program demonstrates that interfaith dialogue based on values of justice and tolerance can create more inclusive and peaceful politics. For instance, during the 2024 West Java Regional Elections, despite issues of politicized identity politics, efforts to promote inclusive policies and respect for religious differences continued, although challenges were significant. According to Mietzner and Muhtadi, (2018), in Indonesia's multicultural political framework, Islam serves as a driving force in advancing constructive interfaith dialogue, ultimately contributing to peaceful and inclusive politics. This demonstrates that Islamic moderation can play a significant role in creating more tolerant political policies, despite ongoing challenges, especially regarding identity politics.

Effective interfaith dialogue can reduce social tensions arising from religious differences (Lindsay, 2020). In this regard, Islam teaches the importance of maintaining interreligious harmony through an approach based on universal brotherhood that transcends religious and ethnic boundaries. This is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where diverse religious groups have varying traditions and perspectives. According to Masykuri Abdillah (2014), in a plural society like Indonesia, interfaith dialogue is key to achieving peace and political stability that safeguards social and political well-being.

Overall, interfaith dialogue in Islam is a highly effective tool for fostering political tolerance and creating a peaceful and inclusive society. In facing the increasing challenges of identity politics and social polarization, Islam encourages its followers to engage in constructive communication with other religious groups based on the principles of justice, moderation, and mutual respect. By applying these principles, it is hoped that more just and peaceful politics can be achieved, where every individual can coexist harmoniously without discrimination or violence.

3.4. Islam and Religious Moderation in Addressing Political Polarization

Islam and religious moderation play a crucial role in addressing the growing political polarization, both globally and in Indonesia. Political polarization, often resulting from differences in ideology, political views, and religious identity, frequently leads to social tensions, divisions, and conflicts among groups. In this regard, Islam teaches the principle of religious moderation, or *wasatiyyah*, which offers a solution for easing political tensions and fostering a peaceful and inclusive political climate (Rosyad et al., 2022).

In Islam, *wasatiyyah* refers to a balanced and moderate approach in all aspects of life, including political matters. This principle is highly relevant in addressing political polarization, which often exacerbates social divisions by exploiting religious differences and identities. In the Qur'an, Allah states: "*And thus We have made you a just community (ummatan wasatan) that you will be witnesses over*

the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you" (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 143). This verse emphasizes that Muslims are commanded to be a balanced and moderate community, avoiding extremism or excessive behavior. Moderation highlights the importance of striking a balance between individual interests and collective welfare, as well as between rights and responsibilities in societal life (Aisyah et al., 2024).

Religious moderation in Islam also underscores the importance of respecting differences and maintaining peace among diverse groups. The concept of *wasatiyyah* is not merely about avoiding extremism but also about recognizing and embracing pluralism and diversity in society. Islam teaches that differences are part of divine destiny and should be accepted with an open heart (Islami, 2022). This aligns with the view that Islam encourages its followers to live peacefully, avoid violence, and uphold human rights and individual freedoms. Hence, religious moderation in Islam is highly applicable to politics, where inclusive, tolerant, and respectful attitudes are essential in a pluralistic society.

In Indonesia, social tensions triggered by religion have been evident in several events. One prominent example is the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election (*Pilkada*), where religion was used as a political tool. The campaign included large-scale demonstrations driven by religious sentiments, such as the *212 Action*, highlighting how religious identity can be politicized to create social polarization (Setia & Dilawati, 2024). A study by the Center for the Study of Religion and Democracy (PUSAD) Paramadina (2019) found that religious sentiments during the election heightened tensions between groups and worsened social fragmentation. Similarly, data from the Setara Institute (2022) recorded various religion-based conflicts in Indonesia, including attacks on religious minorities such as the Ahmadiyah and Shia communities in several regions. These reports illustrate how religious factors, when manipulated by certain actors, can escalate social tensions.

Historically, the Medina Charter drafted by Prophet Muhammad serves as a significant example of how dialogue and cooperation among religious groups can address social-political conflicts rooted in identity (Saunders, 2002). The charter demonstrated how Islam promotes peace and coexistence—principles that remain relevant in Indonesia today to mitigate tensions arising from the politicization of religion. In contemporary politics, where polarization is increasingly pronounced, both in the West and the Middle East, religious moderation in Islam becomes even more pertinent. Political polarization is often driven by religious or ideological extremism, which emphasizes differences and neglects shared humanity. Islam teaches that differences are not threats but part of God's plan, which must be accepted with respect. Religious moderation in Islam is thus essential for reducing tensions and fostering inclusive politics that accommodate diversity within society.

Public campaigns that promote messages of tolerance, peace, and interfaith dialogue can help spread an understanding of moderate Islam and reshape public perceptions of the religion. Strengthening the role of women in politics and society is another key aspect of propagating moderate Islam. Providing equal opportunities for women to participate in political processes will help create a more inclusive and moderate environment (Huriani et al., 2022; Islami, 2022). Promoting the enforcement of fair laws based on the principles of moderate Islamic justice is also a crucial part of implementing moderate Islamic teachings in political realities. Collaboration with other nations that also promote moderate values in politics and society can strengthen the global movement for moderate Islam. By taking these steps, the implementation of moderate Islamic teachings in political realities can become more effective and positively impact the creation of a more inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful society.

However, it is essential to understand that applying religious moderation in Islam must be contextualized and should not be misinterpreted by groups that might adopt a narrow or extremist view of Islam. As An-Na'im (2008), argues, a proper understanding of Islamic teachings requires a separation between religion and politics while maintaining the moral principles rooted in Islamic teachings. This shows that Islam can serve as a strong moral foundation for peaceful and moderate politics without transforming the state into a theocracy (Wahid, 2020).

The importance of religious moderation in Islam is also evident in efforts to prevent political polarization, which can lead to violence and social instability. Andovi (2021) cautions against political polarization, often fueled by religious or ideological tensions, which can lead to mistrust between groups, heightened hostility, and the erosion of social solidarity. Religious moderation in Islam acts as a balancing force to prevent harmful political polarization that ultimately undermines society as a whole (Andovi, 2021).

Religious moderation in Islam, as reflected in the principle of *wasatiyyah*, is highly relevant for modern politics, which is often marked by tensions and polarization. Islam teaches its followers to maintain balance, avoid extremism, and respect differences as part of divine destiny. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation can serve as a key to fostering peaceful and inclusive politics, where religion is not used as a tool to divide society but as a source of inspiration for creating social and political harmony. By applying these principles, it is hoped that political polarization can be alleviated, leading to the development of a more peaceful, just, and inclusive society.

3.5. The Relevance of Islamic Values in Addressing the Challenges of Identity Politics

The relevance of Islamic values in addressing the challenges of identity politics is crucial, particularly in multicultural countries like Indonesia. The rise of identity politics in the modern world often leads to social polarization and conflicts between groups, whether based on ethnicity, religion, or ideology. Islam, through its core principles, offers solutions grounded in inclusive values that promote peace, justice, and harmony among diverse groups. Principles such as *wasatiyyah* (moderation), *adl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion) serve as foundations to ease political tensions and encourage dialogue among different groups.

One of the key values in Islam is *wasatiyyah* or moderation, which teaches Muslims to avoid extremism. *Wasatiyyah* is not merely a religious concept but is highly relevant in the context of identity politics, where tensions often arise from rigid ideological disagreements. Islam encourages its followers to respect differences and choose a middle path filled with wisdom and peace. In this regard, *wasatiyyah* serves as a foundation for reducing tensions between groups with differing identities (Huriani et al., 2022).

Additionally, the value of justice (*adl*) in Islam is highly significant in addressing identity politics, where marginalized groups often feel neglected or undervalued. Islam teaches that every individual, regardless of their group identity, has the same right to be treated fairly (Dilawati et al., 2020). In the context of identity politics, applying justice can help create more inclusive policies and reduce inequalities within society (Habibi, 2017).

Beyond moderation and justice, the value of compassion (*rahmah*) also plays a critical role in fostering a harmonious society despite differences in identity. The compassion taught in Islam encourages individuals to view others as fellow human beings, fostering better mutual understanding between groups. In identity politics, the value of *rahmah* can help reduce tensions by promoting tolerance and empathy among different groups (Rusydi & Zolehah, 2018).

The application of these Islamic values is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where identity politics is often used to create sharp polarization among groups. By prioritizing the principles of moderation, justice, and compassion as taught in Islam, it is hoped that a more inclusive and peaceful political environment can be achieved—one that views differences not as threats but as part of the nation's richness.

3.6. The Implementation of Islamic Values in Peaceful and Just Political Policies

The implementation of Islamic values in peaceful and just political policies plays a vital role in creating an inclusive political system that prioritizes collective welfare. Islam, as a religion that teaches peace, justice, and balance, offers principles that can be applied in political policies to address various socio-political challenges such as injustice, intergroup tensions, and ideological polarization (Zaini, 2017).

The application of Islamic values in peaceful and just political policies is evident in policies emphasizing the principles of justice, moderation, and compassion. For instance, in Indonesian politics, the principle of justice is reflected in government efforts to protect the rights of all societal groups, including social welfare programs that do not discriminate based on religion or ethnicity. Additionally, the application of the principle of moderation, or *wasatiyyah*, is seen in efforts to avoid extreme political polarization and to encourage dialogue among groups with the goal of achieving peaceful and inclusive solutions. Policies rooted in compassion are reflected in social initiatives that involve marginalized and underprivileged groups, such as social assistance programs addressing their needs. Overall, these principles aim to create a political system that focuses on collective welfare, reduces social tensions, and maintains national unity, as exemplified by the foundational principles of Islam.

One fundamental value in Islam relevant to political policies is the principle of justice (*adl*). In the Qur'an, Allah emphasizes that justice is a principle that must be upheld in all aspects of life, including governance and politics. The implementation of justice in political policies ensures that all societal groups receive fair treatment, without discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or social class (Sutrisno & Putranto, 2005). Fair policies not only pay attention to individual rights, but also support common welfare, avoid exploitation, and promote equality.

Moreover, the principle of *wasatiyyah* or moderation is essential in designing peaceful political policies. Islam teaches its followers to take a middle path, avoiding extremes when addressing socio-political issues. In the context of politics, *wasatiyyah* encourages leaders and policymakers to avoid radical or polarized positions and to seek inclusive solutions that prioritize dialogue (Hidayat, 2020). The application of moderation can alleviate social tensions often caused by ideological differences and strengthen national unity.

The principle of *rahmah* or compassion in Islam also serves as an essential foundation for establishing just political policies. Islam teaches its followers to act with compassion toward others, regardless of differences in background (Nugroho & Ni'mah, 2018). Political policies based on compassion prioritize the interests of all societal groups, particularly those who are less fortunate or marginalized. The implementation of these Islamic values in political policies has the potential to create a peaceful, just, and sustainable governance system. By upholding the principles of justice, moderation, and compassion, a country can foster a harmonious society free from the social tensions caused by injustice.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This article discusses the crucial role of Islamic values in fostering peaceful and moderate politics, particularly in socially diverse countries such as Indonesia. Fundamental Islamic principles, such as moderation (*wasatiyyah*), justice (*adl*), and compassion (*rahmah*), offer solutions to political challenges often driven by polarization, identity differences, and extremism. The principle of *wasatiyyah* teaches Muslims to maintain balance and avoid excessiveness in various aspects of life, including politics, which is highly relevant in preventing conflicts and mitigating social tensions. Justice (*adl*) in Islam serves as a key value that can be applied to political policies to ensure that the rights of all groups, whether majority or minority, are respected and fulfilled equitably. Islam emphasizes the fair distribution of resources and opportunities while protecting individual rights without discrimination.

Furthermore, the value of *rahmah* (compassion) underpins Muslims' actions to show mutual respect and kindness toward others, thereby reinforcing principles of peace and tolerance in political life. The application of these Islamic values in political policies can create a more inclusive, fair, and harmonious system. Islam teaches its followers to coexist peacefully, maintain intergroup harmony, and address polarization and social tensions. Through these principles, Islam can significantly contribute to fostering peaceful and moderate politics in diverse societies.

However, there are limitations in implementing these principles across various contexts, particularly due to differences in religious interpretations and political ideologies. The challenges

of applying values such as *wasatiyyah*, *adl*, and *rahmah* are often hindered by resistance from extremist and conservative groups. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine the application of Islamic values in political policies in more diverse nations, with a focus on their impact on reducing social polarization. More empirical studies are needed to explore the interaction between these values and other ideologies, such as nationalism or liberalism, as well as to identify policies that have succeeded or failed in creating a more inclusive and peaceful society.

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