

MODERATION IN THE QUR'AN: BUILDING PLURALISM THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE OF WASATIYYAH (CASE STUDY OF SURAH AL-HUJURAT 49:13)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the value of moderation (wasatiyyah) in the Qur'an as a foundation for building pluralism, using Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 as the main reference. The objective is to explore how the principle of wasatiyyah contributes to fostering social harmony in a diverse society. Employing a qualitative method with a literature review and tafsir analysis, the study finds that religious moderation plays a crucial role in countering extremism and radicalism. It also promotes inclusive interfaith dialogue and mutual respect. The findings highlight that diversity, when managed with the value of wasatiyyah, becomes a source of unity rather than division. This makes moderation a strategic approach to achieving peace and justice in society.

INTRODUCTION

Moderation is at the core of Islamic teachings that emphasize balance in every aspect of life. In the Qur'an, the principle of wasatiyyah is not only a guideline in practicing religion, but also the main foundation for building an inclusive and harmonious society. Through this concept of moderation, Islam teaches the importance of tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect for diversity. This title departs from one of the fundamental teachings in Islam, which highlights how moderation can be the key to strengthening pluralism in the midst of the diverse reality of modern society. The principle of wasatiyyah emphasizes that diversity is *sunnatullah*, a divine decree that must be managed wisely through the values of moderation to realize sustainable social harmony (McNamara, 2024).

Moderation or balance is one of the core principles in Islamic teachings which is often referred to as wasatiyyah. This concept teaches the importance of being middle and avoiding extremism, both in spiritual, social, and political aspects. In Islamic teachings, moderation is a universal value that guides the ummah in living a balanced life between worldly demands and spiritual obligations. Surah Al-Hujurat verse 49:13 is one of the theological foundations that emphasizes the importance of this attitude of moderation (Husni dkk., 2023). The verse teaches that human beings, although they differ in ethnicity, nation, and identity, basically have equality before Allah SWT. Through the message of "getting to know each other" (*ta'aruf*), this verse emphasizes that diversity is not an obstacle, but rather a way to build inclusive social harmony. This concept is relevant to continue to be explored, especially in the face of the challenges of modern society which is increasingly complex and multicultural (Sutrisno dkk., 2023).

In the context of globalization and modernization, the principle of wasatiyyah has become very relevant to answer the problem of diversity in society. An increasingly connected social life brings a positive impact in the form of increased interaction between groups, but also raises challenges such as identity conflicts, religious polarization, and intolerance (Indainanto dkk., 2023). These challenges require an approach that is not only fair but also able to unite differences through dialogue and tolerance. Surah Al-Hujurat verse 49:13 offers a theological solution through the teachings of pluralism based on the value of Islamic moderation. The message "the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious" shows that piety, not tribal or national identity, is the ultimate measure of human glory. This value provides the basis for the creation of a society that respects each other and upholds the principle of justice.

Existing research, such as the article "Multiculturalism in the Qur'an (Tafsir Siyasi Analysis of Q.S Al-Hujurat Verse 13)" in *Integration: Journal of Social Sciences and Culture*, has emphasized three core human values derived from this verse: inclusiveness and plurality, equality and justice, and the acknowledgment of diversity as part of divine will (sunnatullah). These studies highlight that pluralism in Islam does not equate all religions but upholds the importance of appreciating differences in a way that promotes cooperation and mutual assistance. However, such studies tend to focus on normative interpretations and philosophical reflections (Amin & Kaunain, 2023). They do not sufficiently explore the operational role of wasatiyyah as a strategic framework to respond to real world issues like extremism, intolerance, and interfaith tension in modern pluralistic societies. This indicates a research gap that calls for further exploration of wasatiyyah not merely as an ethical idea but as a practical foundation for building inclusive communities.

To address this gap, this study aims to further explore the concept of moderation (wasatiyyah) as reflected in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 and evaluate its contemporary relevance in promoting pluralism. Using a qualitative approach with literature review and tafsir analysis, the research identifies the key values of wasatiyyah contained in the verse and assesses their implications for social harmony. This study is expected to provide both theoretical insights and practical contributions for developing a tolerant and peaceful society grounded in Islamic values.

Pluralism is a concept that not only recognizes diversity, but also encourages active interaction between social groups in society. In Islam, pluralism does not mean equating all beliefs, but acknowledging the existence of differences and making them an opportunity to learn and understand each other. In this perspective, pluralism is at the heart of harmonious social relations (Hendri dkk., 2023). Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 emphasizes the idea that differences are sunnatullah, which is part of the natural law that has been established by Allah SWT. Recent literature reviews show the importance of moderation as a foundation for creating social harmony. For example, a study from 2024 entitled "Religious Moderation In An Islamic Perspective" reveals that religious moderation is the main strategy for creating an inclusive society in the midst of religious and cultural differences. Other research from 2021 to 2025 also highlights the relevance of Islamic pluralism in the face of modern challenges, such as social conflict and intolerance.

This research aims to further explore the concept of moderation as reflected in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 and evaluate its relevance in the context of modern society. With a qualitative analysis approach based on a literature review, this study identifies the wasatiyyah values contained in the verse and its implications in building pluralism. By exploring relevant literature studies, this research is expected to be able to make a theoretical and practical contribution to society that prioritizes social harmony based on Islamic values.

This study positions itself within this discourse by offering a more focused and in depth analysis of Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 through the framework of Islamic moderation (wasatiyyah). Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize normative values such as inclusiveness and justice, this research seeks to highlight how the principle of moderation can function not only as a theological

ideal but also as a transformative approach to addressing practical challenges in contemporary pluralistic societies such as religious extremism, social polarization, and the erosion of interfaith trust. By integrating classical tafsir analysis with contemporary discourse, this study aims to bridge the gap between textual interpretation and real-world application, offering a contextualized understanding of Qur'anic guidance for social harmony. Therefore, the explicit aim of this research is to examine the concept of religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*) as derived from Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, and to evaluate its practical relevance in fostering inclusive values, peaceful coexistence, and constructive interreligious engagement in the midst of today's diverse and interconnected global society.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the literature review method to explore the concept of moderation in the Qur'an and its relevance in building pluralism. (Creswell, 2014). This study employs a qualitative method with a thematic interpretation approach (*tafsir maudhū'ī*) to explore the principle of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) in the Qur'an (Sutan dkk., 2024), focusing specifically on Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 and its relevance to socio-pluralism. The verse is selected based on its explicit reference to human diversity (*shu'ūb* and *qabā'il*), moral merit (*taqwā*), and the broader Qur'anic vision of social harmony. The process of verse selection involves identifying Qur'anic terms and concepts that align with key themes such as moderation, coexistence, and community ethics. This study exclusively uses Tafsir al-Mishbah by M. Quraish Shihab as the primary interpretive source due to its contemporary, contextual, and humanistic approach, which is particularly relevant for understanding Qur'anic guidance within modern multicultural societies.

The analytical process consists of three stages. First, a textual analysis is conducted to examine the semantic and linguistic dimensions of the key terms in the verse. Second, a contextual interpretation is carried out by engaging with Quraish Shihab's commentary in Tafsir al-Mishbah, paying close attention to the socio-ethical implications of the verse, especially regarding equality, recognition of diversity, and moral excellence. Third, the study performs an application analysis, where the interpreted message is linked to present-day issues of pluralism, tolerance, and social integration. This method allows the researcher to extract normative principles of *wasatiyyah* from the Qur'anic text and demonstrate how these principles can function as practical ethical foundations for fostering inclusive and peaceful coexistence in diverse societies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Religious Moderation in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13

Religious moderation is a fundamental principle in Islamic teachings that promotes balance and rejects all forms of extremism in various aspects of life. This principle is often referred to as *wasatiyyah* in the Qur'an, which emphasizes the importance of a middle attitude in practicing religion (Mandala & Putri, 2022). One of the verses that reflects this principle is Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13. This verse teaches equality and encourages people to know each other regardless of differences in ethnicity, nation, or identity. The universal message contained in the verse underlines that diversity is not a barrier, but rather a tool to enrich social relationships and create harmony. With the concept of religious moderation, Islam invites its people to practice tolerance, understand diversity, and respect differences as the main foundation in building a peaceful and inclusive society. Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 is not only a spiritual guide but also offers practical solutions for building harmonious social interactions in a pluralistic society (Dwi Cahyati & Ahmad Rizal, 2022). By internalizing the values of *wasatiyyah*, Muslim communities can reject radicalism, promote interfaith dialogue, and become proactive agents of harmony in their societies. In this sense, religious moderation is not a passive stance, but a dynamic and necessary approach to navigating the complexities of modern life while remaining faithful to Islamic principles.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

"O man, verily We have created you from a male and a female. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you might know one another. Indeed, the most noble among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing."

The translation of Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 shows that human diversity is part of Allah's provision that has social and spiritual goals. This verse affirms that man was created from a man and a woman, then developed into various nations and tribes (Ratnah dkk., 2024). However, these differences are not intended to trigger conflict or division, but rather as a means to get to know and understand each other. Human virtue in Islam is not determined by social or ethnic status, but by the level of piety. This reflects the principle of equality and justice taught in the Qur'an, where every individual has an equal opportunity to achieve glory in the sight of Allah, without discrimination based on racial or cultural identity. In addition, this verse emphasizes that Allah is All-Knowing and All-Knowing, showing that His wisdom encompasses all aspects of human life, including diversity as part of the Divine design that must be accepted with full awareness and respect. Thus, Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 not only provides a theological foundation for the importance of respecting differences, but also serves as a moral guideline for building a harmonious society (Arif & Noorhayati, 2024). This verse is highly relevant as a reference in modern life, which is marked by diversity at both local and global levels, to ensure that the values of tolerance, mutual respect, and justice are upheld in human interactions.

In the context of Islam, Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 is an important foundation in building a harmonious understanding of pluralism. This verse not only affirms that diversity is part of Divine provisions, but also implies the responsibility of human beings in maintaining good social relations. Islam as a religion that upholds justice and equality encourages its people to not only understand differences, but also use them as a force in creating peace and togetherness. The principle of wasatiyyah in Islam offers a balance in accepting diversity, avoiding exclusivity that limits the space for dialogue, while rejecting extremism that leads to conflict. By prioritizing values such as respect for differences, cooperation (Hasan dkk., 2024), and social justice (Kader dkk., 2024), society can build a more inclusive and highly civilized social system based on Islamic teachings. Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 ultimately becomes a moral guideline in instilling the principle of moderation as the key to maintaining diversity without causing division.

Qur'anic verses such as Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 are used not only as theological evidence, but also as an ethical guide to inspire people to prioritize human values in interfaith and cultural interactions. This indicates that Islam not only regulates the vertical relationship between man and God, but also the horizontal relationship between fellow humans. The concept of religious moderation has significant relevance to confront contemporary social challenges that are often triggered by religious and cultural differences. The principles of wasatiyyah provide a framework that helps Muslims overcome stereotypes and prejudices, and become active actors in interfaith and cultural dialogue. The presence of religious moderation allows for the creation of more harmonious interreligious relations, while paving the way to build a society that respects individual rights regardless of differences. Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13, with its message of peace, is an inspiration for efforts to create an inclusive society based on respect for human values (Jakfar, 2023).

The implementation of religious moderation also plays an important role in strengthening character through Islamic Religious Education, as stated in the vision and mission of the Ministry of Religion. Based on the Decree of the Minister of Religion No. 39 of 2015, the vision of the Ministry of Religion is "The Realization of an Indonesian Society that is Religious, Harmonious, Intelligent, and Prosperous Born Inside in order to Realize a Sovereign, Independent, and Personality Indonesia Based on Mutual Cooperation." The principle of moderation in the vision emphasizes the importance

of religious obedience that is in line with harmony in the midst of differences. Meanwhile, the mission of the Ministry of Religion includes efforts to improve the interpretation of religious teachings and strengthen harmony both within groups and between groups. The crucial element of this vision and mission became the basis for the implementation of Islamic Religious Education, which aimed to create individuals with moderate character in harmony with the principles of *wasatiyyah* (Ferdino dkk., 2024). The vision and mission of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia shows that religious moderation has been institutionalized as a pillar of national character development. This shows the seriousness of the state in instilling religious values that are not rigid but still authentic. Islamic religious education is positioned not only as an instrument for teaching doctrine, but also as a means of forming a moderate character, which is able to stand in the midst of the onslaught of extremism and secularism.

Furthermore, religious moderation requires inclusive behavior that encourages people to blend in diverse communities, adapt, and learn from each other. This behavior refers to the teachings of *salafusshalih* scholars who emphasize moderation as a commendable understanding and practice. Religious moderation helps to avoid individuals from two extreme characteristics of *madzmumah*, namely *Ifrath* (exaggeration in religion) and *Iqtashir* (reducing the essence of religion). *Ifrath* describes an attitude that is too textual, without understanding the essence of religious values in depth, thus losing contextual relevance in life. *Iqtashir*, on the other hand, simplifies religious rules under the pretext of modernity, sometimes obscuring the essential meaning of divine teachings. Therefore, religious moderation is not only a middle way but also a step to strengthen religious character based on balance (Ferdino dkk., 2024).

The discussion of *Ifrath* and *Iqtashir* illustrates that extremism can come from two different directions, too hard or too loose. This concept enhances the understanding that moderation should not be interpreted passively as an empty compromise, but as an active and critical attitude in maintaining the substance of religion as well as its relevance to the modern world. *Wasathiyah* is a reflection of maturity in religion that avoids violent or permissive attitudes, while still respecting diversity that is part of the divine will.

The application of religious moderation in Islamic Religious Education has a strategic role that is not only limited to instilling spiritual values, but also as a practical approach in harmonizing Islamic teachings with the dynamics of modern society's life. In a world that is constantly changing and colored by social, cultural, and technological complexity, religious moderation is present as a relevant guide to maintain a balance between fidelity to religious principles and the demands of the times. Through an inclusive approach, this principle instills the values of tolerance, openness to difference, and respect for plurality as part of the substantial teachings of Islam. Islamic religious education based on moderation not only teaches what is right and wrong normatively, but also shapes students to have the ability to think critically, wisely, and openly in the face of diverse social realities.

Religious moderation provides ample space for Muslims to remain firm in their religious identity, without having to be trapped in exclusivism or extreme liberalism. This concept allows the creation of social harmony by building awareness that differences are not a threat, but wealth that must be managed wisely. In both global and local contexts, where conflict is often triggered by inter-identity tensions, moderation is an approach that builds bridges between communities. Islamic religious education that emphasizes the principle of *wasathiyah* will create a generation that is not only spiritually obedient, but also able to contribute positively to creating a just, peaceful, and inclusive society. Therefore, the application of religious moderation in education is a concrete step in instilling Islamic values that are not only valid in faith, but also contextual in social life that continues to develop.

Principles and Position of Islam Wasatiyyah

Linguistically, al-wasathiyah is derived from the word wasath. Al-Asfahaniy defines wasath as sawa'un, which is something that is in the middle between two boundaries, or has the meaning of justice, which does not lean towards either side. This meaning refers to the intermediate or standard nature, neither excessive nor lacking (Arif & Chapakiya, 2024). In addition, wasathan is also interpreted as the ability to maintain an uncompromising attitude, but still uphold the line of religious truth. A similar meaning is found in Mu'jam al-Wasit, which defines wasath as adulan (justice) and khiyaran (choice), something simple but selective (Prakosa, 2022). This definition shows that wasathiyah is a concept that prioritizes harmony and balance, making it the main principle in carrying out religious life without losing the essence of truth (Husaini, 2015).

Furthermore, wasathiyah in the Qur'an has an intermediate meaning as contained in QS. Al-'Adiyat Verse 5: "Then the warhorses rushed into the midst of the enemy's band". Commentary scholars such as At-Thabari, Al-Qurtubi, and Al-Qasimi agree that the word wasatha in this context means middle or middle. The explanations of the scholars show that wasathiyah contains the most fair, best, and moderate meaning, and has a deep scientific insight. Based on this, Muslims are categorized as the most moderate among other people. The application of the concept of wasathiyah in the personality of today's millennial generation is very important, because it can maintain peace, tolerance, and harmony in the life of religious people, especially in Indonesia (Ritonga, 2021). The verses of the Qur'an and the views of scholars provide a strong foundation that moderation is the core of Islam. Internalizing this concept is key in responding to complex social dynamics in the era of globalization.

Ibn 'Assyria gave two definitions for the word wasath. Linguistically, wasath refers to something that is in the middle or has two balanced ends. In terms, wasath refers to Islamic values that are based on a straight and middle mindset, avoiding exaggeration in various aspects. This definition affirms that wasathiyah is not only morally moderate, but also includes the intellectual depth on which a Muslim thinks (Prakosa, 2022). Ibn 'Assyria's version of wasathiyah concept reinforces the argument that moderation is a form of a complete religious understanding, which governs not only spiritual life but also intellectual and social life.

The concept of washatiyatul Islam has become a universal ideal for Muslims around the world, especially after the emergence of two opposing extreme currents of thought in the name of Islam. First, there is a tendency of some Muslims to be extreme and strict in understanding religion, even imposing the application of religious rules in an anarchic manner in order to achieve their goals. Second, there are those who are too loose in understanding religion, by accepting thoughts from foreign cultures without filters that are in accordance with Islamic values (Rahman, 2014). These two currents of thought are wrong in understanding the teachings of Islam, thus giving birth to actions that are contrary to the principles of Islam. From the point of view of wasathiyah, this commendable quality reflects a middle path based on truth, free from extremism and actions that violate the boundaries set by Allah (Ritonga, 2021). This imbalance shows the urgency of wasathiyah in instilling moderate Islamic values, which encourage the ummah to return to the principle of truth without exaggeration or carelessness.

Table 1. Categorization of Islam

Islam Liberal	Islam Wasatiyyah/Moderate	Radical Islam
Emphasizing freedom of thought and flexible interpretation of religion according to the times	Being at the center, prioritizing balance, tolerance, and inclusivity without extremism	Tends to be extreme, rejects differences, and sometimes uses a violent approach in religion

Liberal Islam emphasizes freedom of thought and flexible interpretation of religious teachings according to the times. This approach often prioritizes rationality, human rights, and democracy, and rejects religious interpretations that are considered rigid or dogmatic. Liberal Islam also supports interfaith dialogue and pluralism as a form of openness in religion. Meanwhile, moderate Islam (wasatiyyah) is in the middle between extremism and liberalism (Darajat & Arif, 2024), prioritizing a balance in understanding and practicing religion. This principle rejects fanaticism and rigidity in religion, but still adheres to Islamic values without losing its essence. Moderate Islam prioritizes tolerance, inclusivity, and mutual respect, in accordance with the teachings in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 about diversity and knowing each other. However, the radical Islamic position refers to an understanding of religion that tends to be extreme, both in the imposition of teachings and in rejecting differences. Radical groups often interpret Islam with an exclusive approach, do not accept dialogue and diversity, and sometimes encourage violent acts or rigid sharia enforcement. This attitude is contrary to the values of moderation taught in Islam.

In the midst of the diversity of Indonesian society known for its tolerance and moderation, liberalism is one of the approaches that is often associated with Islam. The Liberal Network 'Islam' is a group that promotes the concept of freedom in understanding Islam by prioritizing reason as the basis for interpretation (Sahid & Nasir, 2020). Although Indonesia has a Muslim majority, this country is not an Islamic country. The moderation known among Indonesian Muslims has become a hallmark, although there are some local groups involved in religious conflicts, which demanded the forced application of Islamic law after the era of President Suharto. Terms such as liberal, progressive, conservative, fundamentalist, and Islamist need to be carefully reflected in their respective Islamic discourses so as not to cause bias (Houben, 2015). Islamic moderation in Indonesia reflects the importance of caution in using ideological labels, while adhering to inclusive values and interfaith dialogue.

Radicalism, both in language and terminology, describes an extreme approach to an ideology. Linguistically, the word "radix" means root, which indicates a tendency to return to the basis or source of thought drastically (Malthaner, 2017). In religious terms, radicalism is often characterized by a strict and intolerant interpretation of religious teachings, thus contradicting the values of moderation that are at the core of social harmony (Irawan & Arif, 2024). This attitude gives rise to conflicts in human relations, especially because radicalism prioritizes a violent and revolutionary approach to create change (Asrori, 2017). The concept of radicalism, which emerges as a form of religious understanding that is rigid, exclusive, and tends to impose the truth unilaterally, actually affirms the urgency of the presence of the concept of wasathiyah as a solution that balances the idealism of religious teachings with the reality of social life. Wasatiyyah serves as an approach that not only prevents the ummah from being excessive or underestimating in religion, but also keeps the teachings of Islam intact with universal human values such as justice, compassion, and tolerance. By upholding the principle of moderation, Muslims can understand and practice their religion in its entirety without losing its essence of spirituality, while remaining relevant and contributing positively to the pluralistic and ever-changing social dynamics.

Theoretically, the maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah (objectives of Islamic law) approach provides a strong foundation for understanding pluralism within the Islamic framework. This theory emphasizes universal values such as justice (‘adl), compassion (raḥmah), public interest (maṣlaḥah), and wisdom (ḥikmah). These values are not only the core aims of Islamic law but also reflect the spirit of Islam in responding to diversity and complex social dynamics. Maqāṣid goes beyond normative theological

discourse and serves as a practical principle that can be applied in socio political life, particularly in pluralistic societies. Within this context, the principle of wasatiyyah (moderation) becomes an essential component of maqāsid, as it calls for fairness, tolerance, and balance in dealing with differences. Thus, wasatiyyah is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic approach to nurturing harmonious coexistence in diverse communities (Zakariyah, 2015).

The thought of Muḥammad al-Ṭahir Ibn ‘Ashur, a prominent Tunisian scholar of the 20th century, significantly contributed to the modern development of maqāsid theory. In his seminal work *Maqāsid al-Shari‘ah al-Islamiyyah*, Ibn ‘Ashur argued that the primary purpose of Islamic law is to uphold social order and protect human dignity. He rejected rigid textualism and asserted that maqāsid must reflect universal human values such as religious freedom, respect for individual rights, and social justice. Ibn ‘Ashur placed ḥurriyyah (freedom) as a central objective of the Shari‘ah, which is deeply relevant in the context of pluralism. For him, freedom of belief, thought, and social interaction are essential pillars of a civilized society and must be safeguarded by Islamic law (Muchasan dkk., 2023).

This perspective aligns closely with the principle of wasatiyyah, encouraging Muslims to uphold openness and tolerance in shared life. Contemporary scholars further strengthen the link between maqāsid and pluralism (Kurniawan dkk., 2022). Yusuf al-Qaraḍawi, for instance, emphasized that maqāsid can be expanded to address the challenges of the modern era, including the need to establish tolerant and dignified societies. He argued that Islam does not aim to eliminate religious or cultural differences but to regulate them within a framework of justice and public welfare (Rasito & Mahendra, 2022). Likewise, Taha Jabir al-‘Alwani introduced the concept of al-tafahum al-maqāsid (maqasid based understanding) as a means of promoting interfaith dialogue. He viewed pluralism as a reality that must be approached through maqāsid, prioritizing peace and human dignity. Through the insights of these scholars, maqāsid al-shari‘ah proves to be both a relevant and profound framework for addressing pluralism, in line with the values of moderation (wasatiyyah) in Islam (Najidah, 2016).

In Indonesia, radicalism is a significant challenge considering the religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity that characterizes the nation. This phenomenon appears in the form of intolerance, hate speech, and violent acts that have the potential to threaten national unity. The government and the community have taken preventive measures through an educational approach, the promotion of Pancasila values, and the strengthening of religious moderation as an effort to ward off radicalism. This approach aims to maintain social stability and harmony in the midst of diversity, while protecting the integrity of the nation (Widyaningrum & Dugis, 2018). This effort shows the importance of moderation-based education to create an inclusive and peaceful society, which is in line with the principle of wasathiyah.

Moderate Islam, or wasatiyyah, occupies a central position as the principle of balance in carrying out religious teachings. This concept rejects all forms of extremism, both ifrath (exaggeration) and tafrith (disparaging), and advocates a fair and wise middle way. This principle is also the basis for building social harmony in the midst of diversity, by teaching the people to be inclusive, tolerant, and respectful of differences. Furthermore, wasathiyah is not only relevant in personal life but also a universal guide to creating social peace as well as facilitating interfaith dialogue. Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 reinforces this message by emphasizing the importance of knowing and respecting each other, regardless of differences in identity (Muaz & Ruswandi, 2022). By prioritizing the values of justice and compassion, wasathiyah plays a key role in responding to increasingly complex global challenges.

The concept of wasatiyyah in Islam is not only a moral teaching, but also a foundation of thinking and acting that reflects maturity in religion. Wasatiyyah is not just a middle ground between two extremes, but an active, intelligent, and thoughtful approach in responding to the complexities of

modern life. Wasatiyyah encourages Muslims to be fair, balanced, and open, without losing their Islamic identity. This is reflected in the recognition of diversity, respect for differences, and a critical attitude towards all forms of deviation, both those that are too harsh and too loose in understanding religion.

In the Indonesian context, wasatiyyah is very important considering the socio political challenges that often arise in the name of religion. The emergence of two major currents, exclusive radicalism and permissive liberalism, shows the urgency of returning to Islamic values that are inclusive and rooted in a wholesome understanding. Moderation is not a weakness, but a strength needed to maintain harmony in a multicultural society. This value also strengthens the position of Islam as a religion that is able to coexist and build peace in the midst of diversity.

Wasatiyyah is not just a textual teaching, but an attitude of life that must be internalized, especially by the younger generation. In the midst of the digital era and globalization, the Muslim millennial generation is faced with a very fast and diverse flow of information and ideologies. Without a strong foundation of moderation, they are easily tossed between two extremes. Thus, wasatiyyah is a strategic solution that not only maintains the purity of religion, but also its relevance in modern social life.

According to Sztompka, globalization is a process to unite the world, where all societies are interdependent in various aspects of life such as culture, economy, and politics (Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019). In this context, globalization requires a moderation attitude so that the diversity that arises from global interaction does not cause conflict, but becomes a force that strengthens relations between nations. Moderation is necessary to maintain a balance between openness to outside cultures and the preservation of local values (Arif & Kalimatusyaro, 2020). By being moderate, people can adapt to the current of globalization without losing their identity, and are able to coexist peacefully in the differences that exist globally.

This is where the role of moderation becomes very important. Moderation helps people to stay on the middle path, not extreme in rejecting or accepting global influence. By being moderate, people can maintain their local cultural identity while remaining open to innovation and positive values from outside. Moderation is a bridge that strengthens tolerance, social harmony, and peaceful coexistence in the midst of global diversity. Therefore, globalization and moderation must actually go hand in hand to produce a world that is interconnected without losing the balance of local values and wisdom.

Building Pluralism through the Message of Diversity in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13

A pluriversal approach to global ethics offers a framework that respects a diversity of worldviews, including religious views. Relying solely on secular reasons to justify an ethical stance is often not enough, especially when such views ignore the contribution of religious beliefs. For example, if someone offers a reason that stems from his or her religious beliefs, rejecting that reason simply because it is religious is not only unfair, but also reflects a lack of respect for different views (Jecker dkk., 2024). This concept is in line with the Islamic teachings in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13, which recognizes human diversity as part of Divine destiny. This approach encourages the acceptance of religious diversity as an important element in building inclusive and universal ethics.

In the Indonesian context, pluralism is a significant issue in religious education, considering that the country is one of the most geologically, historically, and culturally diverse. This diversity is reflected in the existence of thousands of islands, hundreds of ethnic groups, various local languages, and a wide spectrum of cultural practices and religious beliefs that coexist within a single national identity. Indonesia is home to six officially recognized religions Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism as well as numerous local belief systems and indigenous

spiritual traditions. Such a multifaceted societal structure makes the promotion of tolerance, mutual understanding, and peaceful coexistence an essential element in education, especially religious education. Educators are not only tasked with teaching the tenets of faith, but also with instilling values that support interreligious dialogue, respect for difference, and a sense of unity in diversity. The presence of pluralism in Indonesia is not a challenge to be feared, but a rich reality to be managed wisely and harmoniously. Therefore, it requires continuous efforts through both formal and informal education to cultivate social harmony and prevent divisions that can threaten national unity (Ritonga, 2021).

In this regard, the perspective of Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 becomes highly relevant and meaningful. This verse underscores that all human beings are created from a single pair male and female and then made into nations and tribes, not to despise one another, but to know and understand each other. It offers a divine justification for the existence of diversity and places it within a broader spiritual framework where piety is the only true measure of superiority in the sight of Allah. Within the context of Indonesian pluralism, this Qur'anic principle can serve as a theological foundation for promoting inclusivity, justice, and peaceful interaction among individuals and communities with different backgrounds. If managed with a spirit of moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and inclusivity (Arif, 2020), as the verse suggests, diversity will not become a source of conflict, but instead a medium for building stronger social relations, mutual cooperation, and a just social order. Religious moderation teaches individuals to avoid extreme attitudes either radical exclusivism or excessive liberalism—and to adopt a balanced approach in viewing differences. In doing so, Indonesian society can be directed toward becoming a model of peaceful coexistence, where the richness of pluralism is embraced as part of God's will. Thus, Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 is not merely a religious text to be read, but a profound ethical guide for constructing an inclusive society grounded in mutual respect and shared humanity.

The concept of pluralism is also widely discussed in other religious traditions, such as that proposed by John Hick in the Christian tradition. Hick rejects the exclusive paradigm of *solus Christus* that places Christ as the only way of salvation. He argued that this doctrine was contrary to Christ's teaching of the universal salvific will of God. Hick then proposed a paradigm shift from a christocentric approach to a theocentric approach. According to Hick, all religion leads to God, and it is from Him that salvation is obtained (Ritonga, 2021). In line with Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13, this view encourages mankind to emphasize more universal aspects of divinity and avoid religious exclusivism, making piety the main foundation.

As Hick further explains, through the quotation of Joas Adiprasetya, "The universe of faith is centered on God, not on Christianity or any other religion. It is the sun, the original source of light and life, reflected by religions in their own way." This quote shows that diverse religions have unique ways of reflecting the same divine truth (Hanafi, 2017). This perspective provides a philosophical basis that is in accordance with the teachings of Islam in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13, which teaches that all human beings, with differences in religion and ethnicity, ultimately lead to the same truth, namely to Allah.

In addition to Hick, similar views were also expressed by other pluralists, such as John B. Cobb and Raimundo Panikkar, who recognized the truth in every religion. In the Islamic tradition, Nurcholish Madjid emphasizes that religion is a system of symbols that, if understood to its roots, will show many fundamental similarities between religions. This view shows that truth is not monopolized by one religion alone, but is spread across various religious traditions (Hanafi, 2017). This symbolic approach is in line with the teachings of Islam which places piety as the highest value, regardless of religion, culture, or race, as explained in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13.

The above discussion shows that the pluriversal approach in global ethics has strong relevance in building inclusive pluralism, especially in the context of a multicultural society like Indonesia.

Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 is a key verse in strengthening the understanding that diversity is a divine will that must be respected, not avoided. In this verse, it is emphasized that humans were created into tribes and nations to know each other, and not to affirm each other. This concept is in line with the thinking of pluralist figures such as John Hick, John B. Cobb, and Raimundo Panikkar, who rejected religious exclusivism and emphasized the importance of divinity as the center of religious diversity.

Thus, the message of diversity in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 becomes a solid foundation in building pluralism in the midst of a global and local society. In educational, social, and religious contexts, this verse teaches universal values such as respect, inclusivity, and social justice. This approach is important to encourage constructive interfaith dialogue and erode extremism and intolerance. Therefore, building pluralism through the message of diversity in Surah Al-Hujurat Verse 13 is not only a spiritual and theological foundation, but also a cultural and social strategy in creating a peaceful, moderate, and prosperous civilization.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 conveys a profound moral message regarding the principle of wasatiyyah (moderation) as a foundation for coexistence in a diverse society. The verse affirms that human diversity in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and background is part of God's divine will, intended to foster mutual understanding rather than conflict. From its inception, Islam has upheld values of inclusivity, equality, and respect for differences. In today's globalized and multicultural world, the principle of wasatiyyah is highly relevant for maintaining social harmony and preventing extremism, particularly through interfaith dialogue and mutual respect.

Theoretically, this study draws on the maqāṣid al-sharī'ah framework as developed by thinkers such as Ibn 'Ashur, Yusuf al-Qarāḍawī, and Ṭaha Jabir al-'Alwani, emphasizing that moderation is an integral part of a dynamic and adaptive Islamic legal system that responds to contemporary challenges. The strength of this research lies in its relevance to universal values such as justice, freedom, and public welfare. However, its main limitation is that it remains conceptual and lacks empirical data on how the values of moderation are practiced in real life contexts. Future research is recommended to explore the application of wasatiyyah in public policy, education, or interreligious relations using qualitative or quantitative approaches across different social settings.

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