



## The Urgency of a Compassionate Attitude as a Key Pillar of Religious Moderation in Indonesia

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### Abstract

*This research examines the importance of tolerance as the main foundation for religious moderation in Indonesia. The issue raised is related to the increase in conflict and intolerance that threatens interreligious harmony. This study confirms that tasamuh, which is an attitude of tolerance and appreciation for differences, is crucial for maintaining cultural and religious diversity at the national level. The approach used includes literature reviews and literature studies. This finding indicates that the implementation of tolerance is capable of strengthening religious moderation, reducing radicalism, and increasing social harmony. Additionally, this research provides strategic recommendations for strengthening education and public policy to instill the value of tolerance in community life.*

**Keywords:** Religious Conflict, Religious Moderation, Tasamuh, Tolerance.

### PRELIMINARY

The increasing conflict and intolerance between religious groups in Indonesia creates an urgent need to strengthen the principle of religious moderation. Tolerance, which reflects respect for differences, plays a crucial role as a key pillar in maintaining peace and social harmony amidst existing cultural and religious diversity (Hadisi et al., 2024). This research is highly relevant as it seeks to address increasingly complex social and religious challenges, where intolerance and radicalism can threaten national stability and coexistence.

Building on previous research, this study extends and deepens the discussion on religious moderation, which has been extensively researched by academics, particularly in recent works focusing on the relationship between tolerance and the reduction of religious conflict. However, this study places tolerance as the central focus in a more comprehensive and practical way, with an emphasis on strengthening its application in the context of Indonesian society. The main contribution of this study is the provision of an analytical framework that incorporates the value of tolerance into efforts at religious moderation, which can serve as a foundation for educational strategies and plans aimed at increasing the understanding and application of tolerance among the wider community.

### METHOD

This research employs a literature review approach and utilizes data from scientific journal articles on tasamuh or religious tolerance. This research paper includes various articles and scientific journals suitable for use (Assingkily, 2021). The data sources for this research are literature articles available in journals. The author collected data by conducting research related to the topic discussed. The author also analyzed the obtained data and synchronized it with the discussion topic.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Behave in moderation*

Tasamuh is a concept that etymologically means tolerance (Muhidin, et.al., 2021). In social and religious terms, Tasamuh means respecting and appreciating the opinions of others, even if they differ. Its purpose is to maintain harmony and peace in society. The basis of this principle lies in verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing and appreciating the differences that exist among individuals.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا  
 إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

Meaning: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from a man and a woman. Then, We made you into nations and tribes so that you may know each other. Indeed, the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most pious. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Compliant."

One crucial aspect of creating a peaceful community is a tolerant outlook, which encourages individuals to respect and accept the beliefs of others. This approach facilitates harmonious coexistence for individuals of various religions, without compromising their personal identities and beliefs. Tasamuh also emphasizes the importance of engaging with people from diverse perspectives to help them understand and appreciate differences of opinion (Hasan & Ansori, 2024).

Humans must interact with other groups and with their own, and tolerance is a way to accommodate in social interactions (Japar, et.al., 2019). Harmony can be compared to a state where members of society respect and appreciate each other. When people have an attitude of respect and appreciation for each other, they create harmony and balance in social life. Society can live peacefully and calmly in its interactions with the social environment thanks to this harmony and compatibility. Three Javanese proverbs, "Rukun agawe santoso," which means "United we stand," and "Mangan ora mangan ngumpul," which means "We still maintain relationships even though we are not together," have the meaning and value of harmony (Saputri & Ginting, 2023).

### *Implementation of Understanding Religious Moderation*

The word "moderation" comes from the Indonesian word "moderasi," which means neither excessive nor insufficient. Islam is a religion of mercy that upholds the principles of mutual respect and appreciation (Bakar, 2015). In a religious context, moderation is a choice of attitudes, views, and behaviors that create a balance between personal beliefs and respect for the beliefs of others, reason and revelation, rights and responsibilities, individuals and society, reality and ideals, and between the past and the future. This balanced view is based on the values of justice, wisdom, courage, and honesty (Hasan & Ansori, 2024).

Three aspects of moderation can be identified in the context of nationalism in Indonesia: moderation in thinking, moderation in behavior, and moderation in religious outreach activities (Karim et al., 2021). Known as religious moderation, these three aspects encompass principles, values, and teachings that must be respected. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia also provides special oversight of this aspect.

### *Factors that Influence Tolerance*

Not every individual has a good and effective level of tolerance. Several factors influence a person's tolerance, such as:

#### **1. Cultural Theology**

Modernization theory is a well-known cultural perspective. In this context, the theory adds an additional explanatory aspect to existing models: the level of socioeconomic progress of a community. This theory posits that a community's economic development is influenced by the values held by its citizens. A society's economic growth goes hand in hand with its gratitude for freedom and tolerance. According to this theory, poor socioeconomic development is associated with low levels of tolerance in Islamic countries (Fauzi, 2017).

## 2. *Institutional*

A country's ability to treat religious minorities or those without a religion fairly is affected by the dominance of religion in government institutions. Conversely, in countries caught in religious conflict, tolerance tends to stagnate. Studies in the economics of religion show that religious life improves when the government does not provide protection or discriminatory treatment for certain religions. Various religions strive to spread their teachings and interact freely with one another in this context. A country must maintain a neutral stance (Fauzi, 2017).

## 3. *Psychological*

Psychological factors are one of the factors that influence tolerance; there are three elements that influence tolerance. The first is thinking skills, such as political knowledge and education level. Higher levels of education and political understanding can increase tolerance for differences. The second element is how people perceive threats. Intolerance can be seen as an attempt to protect themselves or a group from potential threats. The third element is individual character. A person tends to follow societal norms and rejects unconventional or opposing views.

### *Ethnic and Religious Conflict Events in Indonesia*

Following Webster's (1966) opinion, Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (2004) state that in local languages, "conflict" means war, fight, or struggle consisting of physical combat between two or more parties. According to them, this concept has evolved to include psychological aspects, so that conflict means perceptions of interests.

According to Liliweri (2004), conflict is formulated as follows: First, it is a natural form of opposition generated by individuals or groups because the parties involved have differences in attitudes, beliefs, values, or needs. Second, it is an oppositional relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have specific goals but are wrapped in incongruent thoughts, feelings, or actions. Third, conflict or dispute occurs because of differences in needs, values, or motivations of the actors or parties involved. Fourth, the process that occurs when one party negatively influences another party by committing physical violence that disrupts the feelings and physical well-being of others. Fifth, a functional form of conflict, because such conflict supports group goals and renews appearance, but is dysfunctional because it eliminates the appearance of the group. Sixth, the process of gaining monopoly values power and ownership by eliminating or weakening competitors. Seventh, a form of resistance that involves two parties antagonistically. Eighth, chaos of conflicting stimuli in the individual sense.

Conflict can occur wherever we are, whether between ethnicities, ideologies, or even religions. As mentioned earlier, every human being has a unique potential for conflict. It all depends on how we respond to current stimuli and how we react to events that can turn conflict into a dangerous one. We should have the ability to learn and understand how this transformation works, and to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Those who learn will not fall into the same trap (Harahap, 2018).

Society is a social organism that constantly interacts with one another. Humans are often involved in conflict situations (disputes/disputes). The emergence of social conflict is not as simple as it seems; many factors can be studied to explain why it arises. Conflict is generally a social phenomenon that frequently occurs in community life. Indonesian history has also been marked by numerous disputes, both within the country and with colonial powers. Social conflicts occurred in Ambon, Nangroe Aceh Darussalam, Poso, and other places during independence and the reformation era.

Several factors that allow ethnic conflict to emerge and become public are as follows: First, the changing political landscape during the reform era and the increased freedoms have led some ethnic groups to express their concerns. Second, uneven development across Indonesia has, consciously or unconsciously, polarized society along ethnic lines. Third, ethnic identity is crucial for Indonesian society, particularly in rural areas.

The causes of inter-ethnic conflict, including several cases of ethnic conflict that have occurred in various places and the ideas that have developed in society. First, the dilemma of ethnic group security. Any attempt by one group to increase security that triggers a strong reaction from another group ultimately makes that group feel less secure. This theory explains the existence of war authority that can occur if a group has distrust of another ethnic group, and this distrust develops into the mobilization of forces that confirm inter-group suspicion, also indicating aggressive intent, weak government conditions,

the central government's involvement in the conflict, and sudden changes in the situation. Second, status protection. Groups struggle to maintain their status, raising concerns that the values, way of life, and institutions of one ethnic group could become subordinate to those of another. Third, the ambition for hegemony. The ruling group is not satisfied with the continuity of its cultural values and institutions, but wants to become the dominant group that demands special treatment from the government. Fourth, the aspirations of the elite. The ambition of the elite of a particular ethnic group to gain and maintain power by exploiting the issues of fear, hatred, and ambition of the ethnic group.

## CONCLUSION

One suggestion is that in the future, more research and educational programs should emphasize the importance of *tasamuh* (religious tolerance) as part of harmony between races, ethnicities, and religions, so that the younger generation can be shaped into agents of peace. Further research could also explore effective methods for implementing *tasamuh* in various social and cultural contexts in Indonesia.

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