Implementation of *Wasathiyah* for Virtual Communities

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Abstract

This study discusses how the concept of *wasathiyah* in Surah Al Baqarah 143 is applied in the digitalization era. In some ways, the changes that have occurred are not accompanied by human readiness as social media users. So various problems of religious moderation arise on social media such as shifts in religious authority, distorted understanding of religion, and abnormal behavior of social media users towards religious issues. For this reason, it is necessary to explain the concept of *washatiyah* in the Qur'an as a digital literacy guide for virtual communities in the era of *society* 5.0 to shape the moderate behavior of social media users. Various previous studies have discussed religious moderation in a normative-traditional context. Therefore it is necessary to apply the *wastathiyah* which applies to virtual space in this digitalization era. This study uses library data collection, in the form of books and interpretations of verses of the Qur'an, especially surah Al Baqarah verse 143. The results of the study show that first, moderate behavior in surah Al Baqarah 143 *tawassuth ,bawazun ,*and *tasamuh*. Second, the principle of fairness in commenting on social media must be applied. Third, moderation can be implemented by filtering information before commenting.

Keywords: Implementation, Wasathiyah, Society, Virtual

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas bagaimana konsep wasathiyah dalam Surah Al Baqarah 143 diterapkan di era digitalisasi. Dalam beberapa hal, perubahan yang terjadi tidak diiringi dengan kesiapan manusia sebagai pengguna media sosial. Sehingga muncul berbagai problem moderasi beragama di media sosial seperti pergeseran otoritas keagamaan, pemahaman agama yang melenceng, dan perilaku abnormal pengguna media sosial terhadap isu keagamaan. Untuk itu, perlu dipaparkan konsep washatiyah dalam Alqur'an sebagai panduan literasi digital bagi masyarakat virtual di era society 5.0 untuk membentuk perilaku moderat pengguna media sosial. Berbagai penelitian sebelumnya membahas moderasi beragama dalam konteks normatif-tadisional. Oleh karena itu perlu adanya penerapan konsep wasathiyah yang aplikatif pada ruang virtual di era digitalisasi ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan pengumpulan data kepustakaan, berupa buku-buku dan tafsir ayat Al Qur'an khususnya surah Al Baqarah ayat 143. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pertama, perilaku moderat dalam surah Al Baqarah 143 tawassuth, bawazun, dan tasamuh. Kedua, prinsip keadilan dalam berkomentar di media sosial harus diterapkan. Ketiga, moderat dapat diimplementasikan dengan menyaring informasi sebelum memberikan komentar.

Kata kunci : *Implementasi, Wasathiyah, Masyarakat,Virtual*

Background

There are numerous races, ethnicities, civilizations, and languages in Indonesia.[1]. Seeing this reality, as a multicultural nation, we are required to always uphold the value of unity and integrity by respecting every tribe that exists.[2]

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[1]Jamie S. Davidson and David Henley, *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism*, *The Revival of Tradition in Indonesian Politics: The Deployment of Adat from Colonialism to Indigenism*,2007,https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203965498 ., p. 150-168

[2]D R S H Ahdi Makmur et al., *Relasi Antarumat Beragama di Perdesaan Multikultural (Studi di Kecamatan Basarang Kabupaten Kuala Kapuas Kalimantan Tengah dan di Kecamatan Upau Kabupaten Tabalong Kalimantan Selatan)*, (Banjarmasin : IAIN Antasari, 2016)., p. 2

The people of this country already embody the three ideals of tolerance, moderation, and discourse that are still maintained to address violent issues.[3]

Minister of Religious Affair, Yaqut Cholil Qoumas on a national lecture to PPRA participants (Regular Education Program Force) entitled 'Increasing Community Tolerance in Maintaining National Unity and Unity in the New Normal Era' said that "Diversity is *sunnatullah*,". God wants people to be diverse and not all of them are the same.

"The essence of religious teachings is to glorify humans. Understanding religion is called excessive and extreme if it denies human values in the name of religion," explained Lukman Hakim Saifuddin during an assembly to accelerate the implementation of the religious moderation programme.[4]

Yaqut also underlined that any follower of religion has the right to believe that theirs is the most authentic. However, it must also uphold the rights of followers of other religions. A moderate strategy is required in the context of this variety. We can live harmoniously by fostering tolerance and harmony, continued Yaqut. The nation's founders were well-versed in and owned by moderate religious beliefs and attitudes.[5]

Today, intolerance, radicalism, and terrorism are growing massively. Inter-religious conflicts even within certain internal religious groups are elbowing each other because they feel they are the most righteoust.[6] In addition to the real world, the virtual world also experiences conflict.

Inter-religious conflicts occur online up to 46.88% of the time, and internal conflicts within specific religions up to 67.12% of the time, according to data from APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Users) in 2021.[7] The lack of digital literacy is the primary cause of conflict spreading. The capacity to use digital media in conformity with the relevant morals and values is known as digital literacy.[8]

Some narratives are far more resonant and in demand by the digital society. Digital society can also be called human relations which occur by utilizing technology and internet networks that have the following characteristics: First, using digital technology in everyday life. Second, has a high need for information. Third, spatial or related to space and time. Fourth, require a lot of manpower in the field of information and communication. Last, change in interaction patterns from direct interactions to indirect interactions, for example through social media relationships.[9]

In the media, narratives can take many different forms, such as (1) Zionist Jews are the culprits of world destruction, (2) the need for jihad on the Rohingya, (3) looking for a smooth path to jihad media, (4) political intimidation against Muslims (5) treacherous people infidels and so on.[10]

[3] Paula Allen-Meares et al., "Embedded Foundations: Advancing Community Change and Empowerment," *Foundation Review* 2, no. 3 (2010), https://doi.org/10.4087/FOUNDATIONREVIEW-D-10-00010., p 7

[4] S Sismanto, "An Effective Religious Moderation Education Model For A Diverse Student," Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic Education (ICIED).Vol.6.No.1.2021,2021, http://conferences.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/icied/article/view/1486/704., p 145-151

[5] Junaedi, E., "Inilah Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Kemenag," Harmoni, 2019, https://jurnalharmoni.kemenag.go.id/index.php/harmoni/article/view/414/269.

[6] Said Aqil Husin Al Munawar and Abdul Halim, *Fikih Hubungan Antar Agama* (Ciputat Press, 2003), h xi

[7] https://www.apjii.com/view/2021/survey-konflik-internet-di-indonesia

[8] Fukuyama, M., "Society 5.0: Aiming for a New Human-Centered Society," *Japan Spotlight*, 2018, http://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/.

[9] Maria José Sá et al., "Digital Literacy in Digital Society 5.0: Some Challenges," *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 10, no. 2 (2021): 1–9, https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2021-0033.

[10] Rangga Eka Saputra, "Api dalam Sekam: Keberagamaan Generasi Z," *Convey Report*, vol. 1, 2018.

Visitors to media that convey these storylines are substantially higher than visitors to media that have narratives that have been controlled. Between July and September 2017, there were only 6.5 million readers of NU online media, while only 300,000 people visited Muhammadiyah online media during that time. Islamic portals saw 8.3 million visitors within the same time period, while 9.5 million people visited media from the Muslim era. More details can be seen from the data collected by PPIM.[11]

The results are reinforced by the research conducted by tracing keywords such as infidel, heretical, jihad, liberal, the enemy of Islam, and Islamic law. From the searches carried out, it was found that approximately 90 thousand social media accounts contained these keywords. On the Twitter platform, 5,173 tweets post the word infidel in one month and the word communist as many as 995 in a month. On the Facebook platform, 884 posts containing the keyword radical were found. This research also complicates several examples of religious narratives that are widely spread on social media accounts such as (1) secular capitalism has destroyed religion (2) democracy is a bad system (3) Muslims have drifted away from religious teachings (4) Islam has been wronged and (5) the way out of all of this is to re-enforce Islamic law, starting from the individual to the state.[12]

Because of a number of bad behaviours, these issues have the potential to devastate Indonesian moderation. It's difficult to imagine people fighting on social media when neither of them knows who the other is.

Given these phenomena, Islam is the answer to all problems that define space and time. Some rules can be observed in the Qur'an, including ones on moderation in religion. Wasathiyah is the name for the moderate position in Islam. A fair style of thinking does not lean too liberally or too far to the left, nor does it believe in free will or fate. This paper will examine religious moderation using QS Al Baqarah 143 as a source.

There have been many essays written about religious moderation before. Examples include Wasathiyah: Insights on Religious Moderation in Indonesia by Arifinsyah et al. These publications implicate the findings of this study shows that the construction of ideas in the formulation of the four indicators of religious moderation in Indonesia has a normative-universal value base that becomes the ideology of the Indonesian nation, not the ideology of a particular religion or group.[13]

In other research, Idris shows that The findings uncover that Islamic educational institutions have several roles in terms of religious moderation, first, educational institutions have a role in formulating or revising educational goals; second, educational institutions have a role in guiding educators; third, educational institutions have a role in synergizing religious moderation with materials/curriculum and learning processes; and fourth, educational institutions have a role in making students familiar with the applications of religious moderation through the school environment.[14]

However, these studies were normative-general to describe religious moderation with

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[11]See more on https://ppim.uinjkt.ac.id/2020/11/29/tanggapi-konservatisme-agama-ini-saran-influencer-medsos/

[12] Michael Wolfowicz et al., "Faces of Radicalism: Differentiating between Violent and Non-Violent Radicals by Their Social Media Profiles," *Computers in Human Behavior* 116 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106646.

[13] Arifinsyah Arifinsyah, Safria Andy, and Agusman Damanik, "The Urgency of Religious Moderation in Preventing Radicalism in Indonesia," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (2020): 91–108, https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v21i1.2199.

[14] Muhammad Idris and Alven Putra, "The Roles of Islamic Educational Institutions in Religious Moderation," *AJIS: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 25, https://doi.org/10.29240/ajis.v6i1.2555.

other variables. This study will focus on writings on religious moderation that are applicable in nature and need to be reproduced as an effort to strengthen religious moderation to support the National Medium-Term Development Plan.

These phenomena are the reasons that make it important to write this study. In line with this, the title of this essay is "Implementation of Washatiyah for Virtual Communities.

The methodology for this paper was qualitative. A qualitative approach is a method of problem-solving that involves thoroughly characterizing the subject of the inquiry.[15] Additionally, because the data presented are in the form of statements rather than statistics, the qualitative approach is taken into account in line with the focus of this research. This study's data collection method involved documentation studies based on library research. According to Juliansyah Noor, a documentation study is a compilation of books or other works of literature that are pertinent to the research variables or themes.[16] In this study, the authors' primary source for normative explanations and *tafseer* of the ideal *wasathiyah* paradigm was verse 143 of the Qur'an al-Baqarah. Then, the explanations relating to phenomena that occur in real-life situations.

The Idea of Wasathiyah as a Model of Community

Wasathiyah, another name for the idea of moderation, is an Arabic word that means medium, fair, and elected. Wasathiyah, also known as *wustha, wasatha*, and *awsath*a, is referenced three times in the Qur'an.[17] The Big Indonesian Dictionary defines moderate as

always avoiding excessive actions or expressions and leaning toward the medium ground.[18] Several verses in the Qur'an mention the word "wasatha," including verses 143 and 238 of Al Baqarah (2), verses 89 of Al Maidah (5), verse 28 of Al Qalam (68), and verse 5 of Al Adiyat (100).[19]

Muchlis M. Hanafi[20] in the book "Kritik Ideology Islam" claims that the radical and liberal reputations of some Muslims have obscured their fundamental moderation. Therefore, efforts to revive a moderate image of Islam ought to be supported once more. To foster harmony amongst Indonesia's various religious communities, moderation is an option. When someone practices religious teachings with extremes and radicals, then this is already contrary to the ideal attitude of a Muslim. Allah SWT has guided for us to be moderate as Allah Swt says in QS Al-Baqarah (2) verse 143:

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

"And so (also) We have made you (Muslims), a just and chosen people so that you are witnesses of (acts) of mankind and that the Messenger (Muhammad) is a witness of your deeds. And We have not set the Qibla to be your Qibla (now) but that We may know (obviously) who followed the Messenger and who turned

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[15]Juliansyah Noor, *Metodologi Peneltian*, *Kencana* (Kencana, 2012), p 146

[16]Ismail Nurdin dan Sri Hartati, *Metodologi Penelitian Sosial & Pendidikan* (Surabaya: Media Sahabat Cendekia, 2019)., p 94-95

[17]Rachma Widiningtyas Wibowo and Anisa Siti Nurjanah, "Aktualisasi Moderasi Beragama Abad 21 Melalui Media Sosial," *Madania: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 11, no. 2 (2021): 55–62, http://ejournal.uin-suska.ac.id/index.php/madania/article/view/13870.

[18]Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa Indonesia Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2018)., p 699

[19]Wibowo and Nurjanah, "Aktualisasi Moderasi Beragama Abad 21 Melalui Media Sosial."

[20]Anfasa Naufal Reza Irsali, dkk. *Kritik Ideologi Islam* (Surabaya: Inoffast Publishing Indonesia, 2021), h 9 https://www.google.co.id/books/edition/Kritik_Ideologi_Islam/BJo9EAAAQBAJ?hl=id&gbpv=1&dq=muchlis+m+hanafi&pg=PA9&printsec=frontcover.

away. And indeed (the change of Qibla) is very heavy except for those who have been guided by Allah, and Allah will not waste your faith. Verily, Allah is Most Gracious, Most Merciful to mankind. (Surah Al Baqarah (2): 143)

The verse above shows that Muslims are called *ummatan washatan,* a harmonious and balanced intermediary community because they are able to combine the two poles of the previous religion, namely the religious attitude of the Jews who are too down to earth, and the Christians who are too down-to-earth soar. When the Qibla orientation switches from facing the Aqsa Mosque in Palestine to facing the Haram Mosque in Mecca, it offers a concrete example of Muslims' commitment to accept Allah's decision. This shows the independence and integrity of the Prophet Muhammad's contribution to Islam. can act as a mediator who is unaffected by the past generations' religious idealization of the Aqsa Mosque. The essence of Islamic teachings itself has mirrored "moderation" in all of its teachings, in addition to the Al-Qur'an outlining the role of Muslims as mediators who balance the religious views of Jews and Christians. For example, Islamic teachings serve as a compromise position (*washith*) between a group of individuals who reject all things metaphysical and a group of polytheists whose views are influenced by superstition and myth. Islam's teachings strike a balance in this situation because, in addition to encouraging human reason to support its teachings rationally, it also encourages people to believe in the unseen. This shows the capacity of Islamic teachings to reconcile conflicts and speak to human nature. In concepts of worship, Islam only requires its followers to participate in a very tiny proportion of acts of worship, such as the five daily prayers, the Ramadan fast once every year, and the

pilgrimage once in a lifetime. However, the rest of Islam's teachings allow for its followers to engage in a wide range of creative endeavors and work to seek Allah's procurement on earth. Islamic teachings also create a balance between the desires that must be met in a person's body and soul in terms of morality. While the element of the spirit is urged to obey God's instructions so that in enjoying the world without forgetting the preparation for the afterlife, the element of the body in the human body is given the opportunity to enjoy the pleasures and beauty that God has given for earthly pleasures. The concept *wasatha* according to the Qurtubhi in the book *Jami' Al Ahkam* found in the verse "*wa kadzalika ja'alnakum ummatan wasatan*", which means "and thus (also) we have made you (Muslims) a just people." The passage from this verse indicates that Muslims are middle-aged people, just as the Kaaba is the center of the planet, and that the word *wasatha* is understood to signify fairly.[21]

As said by Sheikh Ali Al-Ṣābūnī, what is meant by the wasaṭan community in the verse is a just and chosen community. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, interprets the phrase as an intermediate trait between excessiveness and extravagance. He also considered that a moderate attitude is an attitude that combines knowledge and action.

Fakhrudin al-Razi mentioned four possible meanings for the term. First, wasaṭ means fair, as Allah has mentioned in QS. al-Qalam verse 28 'awasaṭuhum' the fairest among them. The meaning of wasaṭ by eating al-adl is because there is no tendency towards one option. Second, the meaning of wasaṭ is to avoid something that is considered excessive. Third, the meaning of wasaṭ is related to the meaning of the attitude that is embedded in the Muslims

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[21]Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad Al Anshori Al Qurtubhi, *Al Jami' Li Ahkam Alqur'an Jilid III.pdf* (Kairo: Dar Al Ulumi Alqur'an, n.d.)., p 359

which will later be directly witnessed by the apostle.[22]

Different terminology was expressed by Muhammad Abduh who interpreted ummah wasaṭ as an open community. According to Abduh, the nature of justice and wasaṭ also applies not only to religious life but also to social life.[23]

According to Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy[24], *ummatan wasatha* means that Muslims act as a balancer, not leaning left or right. Not excessive in religion and also not lacking in carrying out religious rituals. According to Buya Hamka, the spirit washatan was described in the revelation of Islam as a midway religion. Islam must be balanced in its approach to the world and the afterlife, if Jews are more oriented toward the world and Christians, are more inclined toward the afterlife.[25]

In Tafsir Al Misbah, Quraish Shihab[26] argues that the *ummatan wasatha* is understood as middle-aged individuals who do not take sides of the arguments to the left or the right. This interpretation is consistent with the prior belief. So that justice will be achieved when people are impartial (neutral). The *wasathan ummatan* is a characteristic of Muslims who are in a neutral stance in thinking and action, according to numerous interpretations depending on the aforementioned views. Therefore, if we continue to investigate, the following traits of Wasathan will emerge[27]: *First, tawassuth*, which implies a middle-of-the-road attitude, does not

exhibit fanaticism for various religious beliefs. *Second, Tawazun*, which signifies balance in religious knowledge and practice, is also balanced in both worldly and eternal matters and is consistent when handling disagreements. Just like someone who prays, a person needs to be able to exercise their rights and obligations simply and responsibly. *Third, Tasamuh* means tolerance, the capacity to recognize religious diversity, and the acceptance of differences in a variety of life aspects.

Maintaining the unity of Muslims inside themselves through the practice of *wasathiyah* as a model of togetherness also enables them to contribute to improving social harmony for an evolved and honorable Indonesia.[28]

Several Principles of Religious Moderation

The concepts of religious moderation found in other verses of the Qur'an are practically related to the concept of *washatiyah* that has been previously discussed. There are various principles of religious moderation, including the following, according to the Religious Moderation document released by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion[29]:

Religious moderation is not an attempt to moderate our understanding and experience in religion. There are 4 indicators in religious moderation, namely national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. In a national commitment, everyone must be able to protect and love their motherland. Furthermore, in terms of

[22]Ansani, Achmad Abubakar, and Muhsin Mahfudz, "Implementasi Nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Perspektif Al-Quran di Era Society 5.0," *Jurnal Cakrawala Ilmiah* 1, no. 3 (2021): 395–408, https://doi.org/10.53625/jcijurnalcakrawalaindonesia.v1i3.618.

[23]Abdul Fattah, "Tafsir Tematik Islam Moderat Perspektif Al-Quran," *Maghza: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (2020): 156–72, https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v5i2.3125.

[24]Kuni Khilyatal Khadrah, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Analisis Kitab Tafsir Al-Qur'anul Majid An-Nuur Karya Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy)," June 20, 2022., p 22

[25]Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Jilid 1 - Google Books* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2020), p. 4

[26]Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Misbah* (Jakarta: Mizan, 2012)., p. 415

[27]Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementrian Agama RI, 2019), p. 56

[28]Donny Khoirul Azis et al., "Pancasila Educational Values in Indicators Religious Moderation in Indonesia," *Fitrah: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 7, no. 2 (2021): 229–44, https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v7i2.4475.

[29]Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama*., p 57-58

tolerance, it is explained that everyone must have an important role as an agent of religious moderation to disseminate religious moderation values to the community by integrating religious moderation content into the madrasah curriculum.[30]

An indicator of religious moderation is anti-violence. In the pocketbook of Religious Moderation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, there is no single religion that teaches violence, therefore if there is an incident that brings up religious issues, don't quickly share it before there is truth.

The last indicator of religious moderation is accommodative to local culture, namely the diversity of tribes, cultures, and languages of the Indonesian nation which is a characteristic that other nations do not have. Therefore, this difference should not be the reason we are divided. Uphold the customs where we live so that there are no misunderstandings between us and others.[31]

The Compassionate Principle

The application of the compassion principle helps regulate people's behavior when they believe they are superior to others. As a result, there is terrorism and violence. We observe some situations, such as takfiri, which believes that people from groups other than themselves would burn in hell. In actuality, Allah SWT loves all of his creations, including the unbelievers. They are not under any pressure to practice their religion. This is seen from His words in QS Al Baqarah verse 256, which reads as follows:

قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ ۚ ۖ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ
فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ ۚ ۦّ الْغَيِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ ۗ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا
عَلِيمٌ

"There is no compulsion involved in (following) religion (Islam); in fact, it is easy to tell which road is the true one." (Q.S. Al Baqarah (2): 256)

The Belief in Diversity Principle

We must think that Allah SWT made all of this diversity, which is distinct but still enables people to coexist. This notion is alluded to in QS Yunus (10) verse 99, which reads as follows:

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا
أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ

"And everyone on earth would have believed if your Lord so desired. Do you (will) coerce people to become believers, though? (Q.S. Yunus (10) : 99)

The principle of openness in thinking

In the Qur'an, the principle of openness in thinking is contained in QS Al Hujurat (49) verse 13 which means:

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

"O mankind, indeed we created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes. tribes so that you may know each other. Verily, the most honorable of you is the most pious. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Knowing."(Surah Al Hujurat (49):13)

The Problem of Religious Moderation in Virtual Society in the Era of Society 5.0

Technology is used as the basis of civilization 5.0 to answer all current issues. Humans and machines interact in all activities. The Japanese government sponsored this era in 2019 as a response to the various problems of the 4.0 industrial revolution era.[32] The humanities' ignored component was the worst

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[30] Kementerian Agama RI., p. 23
[31] Kementerian Agama RI., p. 25

[32] Mayumi Fukuyama, "Society 5.0: Aiming for a New Human-Centered Society."

weakness of the preceding era since it caused new issues, such as the moral decay of people.[33]

According to Yusuf Amar Piliang[34], new issues including integration, unity, and solidarity have evolved in the age of society 5.0. Additionally, there is religious harmony within ever-worrisome bounds.

The digitalization of activities has grown to be a major worry for humanity to this day. Information that is widely spread can have both positive and negative impacts. including the various religious doctrines that can be found online. Therefore, we must explain moderation.[35]

In the age of civilization 5.0, there are generally three key issues with religious moderation, specifically[36]:

The Challenge of Understanding Religion

Through a variety of digital assets, the public has open access to information. Religious content is widely available and unregulated in the internet world. Religious narratives on social media frequently result in a biased understanding and have a tendency to defend particular groups. By presuming that various people have different understandings of things, a dichotomy of understanding results.

The Shifting Religious Authority

The shifting of religious authority causes unstoppable debate. Everyone is free to express their views on religious issues without having a scientific basis. This is what causes the loss of expertise so that people are confused about following the accepted religious fatwa. As well as the absence of control on social media about who deserves to be a preacher and the emergence of blind fanaticism towards one group.

Abnormally Positive Attitudes and Behavior

A gadget cannot distinguish between information that is true and that still needs to be verified because it receives too much information. Without filters, comprehending religion will reduce understanding that is reasonable, tolerant, and humane.

Therefore, to improve religious moderation, virtual communities need digital literacy rules. It seeks to promote harmony among followers of the same religion in a virtual setting, which ultimately affects the actual world.

Implementing *Wasathiyah* to Improve Media Literacy

The Wasathiyah concept found in QS Al Baqarah (2) verse 143 is the perfect framework for creating a virtual society free from extremism and radicalism. Of course, there are efforts made to put it into practice, such as promoting the idea of *wasathiyah* through media literacy to promote unity among the nation and the states.

There are three substantive values on the term "*wasatha*" based Q.S.Al Baqarah 143 with *tafseer* from some *ulama*. First, moderate behavior in surah Al Baqarah 143 *tawassuth, bawazun,* and *tasamuh*. One of the incidents of using social media for negative things that are currently being discussed is about a man who deliberately made a video harassing offerings in the Semeru eruption area, East Java. In the viral video, the man, pointing to the offerings, says: "This is what angers Allah. Rarely is it realized that this is what invites Allah's wrath so that Allah brings down his punishment. Allahu Akbar," said the man. Then, the man's hand moved to throw the fruit offerings and kicked the rice offerings. Incidentally, the location of the offerings was above ground level which was

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[33]Ahmad Iffan, Muhammad Ridho Nur, and Asrizal Saiin, "Konseptualisasi Moderasi Beragama Sebagai Langkah Preventif Terhadap Penanganan Radikalisme di IndonesiA," *Perada* 3, no. 2 (2020): 187, https://doi.org/10.35961/perada.v3i2.220.

[34]Yasraf Amir Piliang and Yasraf Amir Piliang, "Dunia Yang Dilipat : Tamasya Melampaui Batas-Batas Kebudayaan," 2011, p 508.

[35]Piliang and Piliang., p 509

[36]Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama.*, p 102-103

higher so that the two offerings immediately fell. The behavior of men who use religious symbols such as wearing caps and robes is very unfortunate.[37] If the principles of Bawazun and Tasamuh are applied, then the man will not kick the offerings because he understands that there are other religious beliefs. Moreover, shouting Allahu Akbar becomes a bad image for Islam.

Second, the principle of fairness in commenting on social media must be applied. The latest hoax case is in Southeast Maluku, Maluku Province. Hoaxes circulating on WhatsApp groups that there was a burning of mosques when clashes occurred between residents. Chairman of the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) of Kei Besar District, Sulaiman Uar, denied that a mosque was burnt in the incident. He said the information was fabricated by provocateurs.[38] (Accessed on December 9, 2022, 10.20WIB) People associate this case with inter-religious conflict even though it is purely between communities regardless of religion. If justice is applied in commenting, then there will be no provocative messages that divide religion.

Third, moderation can be implemented by filtering information before commenting. Filter before sharing, so it's important to prevent the circulation of hoax news, these days the political situation has warmed up enough that the government needs to take steps to filter information, one of which is by limiting social media activities so that political issues don't escalate.[39] Hoax becomes fatal when it can endanger someone's life. Devi Rahmawati, Chair of the UI Vocational Communication Study Program, one of the speakers in the discussion explained that hoaxes in the health sector have the opportunity to threaten a person's life. He gave an example as some time ago there was a statement that vaccines were haram.

Today's media options are extremely varied, including Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, and Whatsapp. According to the book "Moderasi Beragama" published by the Ministry of Religious Affair of RI[40] the following are some examples of how the *wasatiyyah* can be put into practice:

Maintaining the Importance of Religious Tolerance on Social Media

It is difficult to maintain the ideal of religious tolerance on social media since this ideal is one of the most fundamental human rights because it is directly related to religion and belief in the Almighty.

The practice of filtering information before sharing is a sign of an individual's informational maturity. Additionally, contributing to the social media campaign for religious moderation is a powerful method of influencing those whose social fabric has become radicalized and intolerant.

The 2020 study Social Media: Friend or Foe? was conducted by the Center for Indigenous and Cultural Psychology (CICP) of the Faculty of Psychology at Universitas Gadjah Mada with funding from the Research and Development Agency and Training of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. Using Social Media to Promote Religious Tolerance stated that social media material is crucial for preserving peace among online communities. In order to accomplish these common objectives, state policymakers are also needed to collaborate and use social media wisely.

The management of social media as an effort to strengthen tolerance amid the heterogeneity of society must not stop. He must continue to be encouraged, considering the

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[37]See more on https://www.republika.co.id/berita/r5kra6318/dua-sisi-media-sosial-terkait-aktivitas-keagamaan

[38]https://news.detik.com/berita/d-6402874/polisi-dan-mui-bantah-ada-masjid-terbakar-saat-bentrokan-warga-di-maluku

[39]https://lldikti5.kemdikbud.go.id/home/detailpost/pentingnya-saring-sebelum-sharing-untuk-cegah-penyebaran-hoaks

[40] Kementerian Agama RI. p 12

threat of intolerance itself has the potential to be widespread on social media. The research states that social media design that is intertwined with algorithms forms a recommendation-based content interaction pattern from user access to certain content. Through interaction with fellow enthusiasts on the content, of course, this activity can give birth to the strengthening of the opinions they hold.

The study added that individuals' exposure to hate speech and hoaxes circulated on social media is triggered by low levels of digital literacy. The categorization of internet users into extremist groups, can develop prejudice and religious intolerance and cause conflict.

The findings of the study indicate four policies for its implementation in order to function social media as a tool that can promote tolerance in cyberspace, such as: *First*, the government has to employ tolerant accounts on social media to increase religious believers' ability to communicate with one another. *Second*, increased lobbying is required to improve cooperation between religious adherents using the technologies used by millennials and younger. *Third*, utilizing social media for interreligious dialogue and collaborative projects. *Fourth*, there is a collaborative effort with social media parties to recommend tolerance accounts to social media users in order to create algorithmic preferences that are friendly to tolerance.[41]

For example, the Instagram accounts @maarifinstitute and @genpeace are promoting "diversity does not have to be uniform" by posting short films on their profiles. Another illustration is sitting down with followers of various religions to discuss how to best maintain the teachings of each one in order to preserve the integrity and unity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Making podcasts or videos for YouTube can help with this, as young Indonesian preacher Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar has shown through the podcast "Berbeda Tapi Bersama". When this has been fully promoted, tolerance will extend to *muamalah* issues as well as religious ones. So that interreligious individuals can maintain their composure and create a space where they can respect one another's virtues and flaws without feeling anxious or intimidated.

Spreading Love

Spreading love can be implemented by helping each other if someone is in need. For example, when a natural disaster occurs in a Christian-majority area, young people from certain regions make fundraising actions on social media simultaneously without discriminating against ethnicity and religion. After that, go to the disaster site to see their condition and show empathy that as Indonesians we are brothers. Even if you can't see them in person, then use social media as a medium to show that we are with their grief.

Peace-loving literacy education in schools can be done by intensifying the culture of peace-loving literacy. The revolution in peace-loving literacy education can also be carried out with concrete steps such as critical reading and ethical writing. Fisher said that literacy is a reading-thinking-writing activity. This means that in reading information on social media, we are not just reading, but analyzing, criticizing, and evaluating which information is positive and which is provocative information, so that the information we get is truly peaceful. Likewise, when we write everything in cyberspace, the information we sow is not hate speech, but peace-loving speech.

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[41]Firmanda Taufiq and Ayu Maulida Alkholid, "Peran Kementerian Agama Dalam Mempromosikan Moderasi Beragama di Era Digital," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 41, no. 2 (2021): 134–47, https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v41.2.9364.

The information we offer is calm and collected if critical reading and writing have been done. We'll be able to easily close the space for hate speech with our critical reading and writing. Therefore, this all calls for a massive, literacy-focused, peace-loving education movement on the internet or social media.

Meanwhile, campaigns (invitations) to promote peace-loving literacy and counter-hate speech are used to bring out peace-loving literacy education in cyberspace. By sharing cool, inspiring content that has many advantages for maintaining the unity and integrity of the country, this literacy culture can be sustained.

As another illustration, we propose that Muslims are not violent by nature. Al Haya'minal iman, as Rasulullah SAW phrased it, is a component of faith. Therefore, it is disgraceful to do wrong, act violently or bomb a place of worship.

The love that is poured down without judgment toward people is an example of a reasonable attitude. Since Allah SWT has the attribute of Ar Rahman, which is given to all beings irrespective of whether they believe in Him or not,

Establishing a Culture that Supports Religious Teachings

Traditions of religion are ways of expressing one's faith that has been passed down through the generations. As stated in Law No. 5 of 2017 Concerning Cultural Advancement, religious ritual traditions are also a part of the advancement of cultural items.

There is a chance for harmony among the existing differences when a culture that is in line with religious teachings is introduced. For instance, by creating peaceful essays about the significance of sacrifice in Muslim history and the wisdom contained within, and then sharing them via social media. so that Hindus, who regard cows as sacred animals, can have the

proper understanding. Finally, miscommunications will be prevented.

Cultivating the Value of Balance and Justice

To implement the *wasathiyah* concept, one thing that is of concern is how all religions are treated equally and fairly without discrimination as Pancasila is the basis of our country.

The Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) held a digital literacy webinar series #MakinCakapDigital with the theme "Creatively Preserving Pancasila Values in the Digital Space". The webinar which was held on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 in Tangerang Regency, was attended by dozens of online participants.

The discussions in the webinar included the values of Pancasila in the digital space, namely the first principle, fostering harmony in life, anti-blasphemy, respecting and respecting religious differences, and being tolerant. The second principle is accepting equality, acting quickly to assist, exercising respect, supporting human rights, and working together. The third principle is to love one's country, respect diversity, put the country first, and promote unity. The fourth principle is to prioritize consensus-building during discussions, respect and implement the discussions' conclusions, and respect other people's viewpoints. The fifth principle is to work hard, respect other people's rights, care about decreasing other people's suffering, and cooperate.

As a result, the media serves as a space where anyone may realize themselves without feeling inferior because they are a minority or whatever else. It is believed that by putting these ideas into practice, various issues with religious moderation in people's life will be resolved.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of *washatiyyah* concept before, there are some discussions on religious moderation. *First, wasathan ummatan* is a characteristic of Muslims who are in a neutral stance in thinking and action, according to

numerous interpretations depending on the aforementioned views. There are some types to interpret moderation such as *tawassuth*, *bawazun*, and *tasamuh*.

Second, in the age of civilization 5.0, there are generally three key issues with religious moderation: a challenge of understanding religion, the shifting religious authority, and abnormally positive attitudes and behavior.

Last, there are several things that we can do as a form of implementing the *wasathiyah* as a virtual society, including maintaining tolerance between religious communities, spreading love, caring for a culture that is in line with religious teachings, and cultivating the value of balance and justice.

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