

# THE VALUE OF TOLERANCE IN THE HUMA BETANG PHILOSOPHY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC-DAYAK RELATIONS

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## Abstract

This study aims to identify forms of religious moderation in Islamic-Dayak relations by examining: (1) the basic concept of tolerance in Islamic-Dayak relations, and (2) how these principles are practiced in everyday interreligious interactions. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research involved 15 participants, comprising academics, religious leaders, indigenous leaders, and Muslim community members in Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) qualitative analysis model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that tolerance in Islam is grounded in the teachings of the Qur'an, while in Dayak communities, it is rooted in the Huma Betang philosophy. In practice, Islamic-Dayak tolerance is reflected through freedom of religious choice within families, mutual respect and appreciation, and efforts to maintain interfaith friendship. The study concludes that strengthening Islamic-Dayak relations requires reaffirming the values of Huma Betang and fostering creative and innovative forms of interaction that remain consistent with each community's religious doctrines.

**Keywords:** Tolerance, Islamic-Dayak, Huma Betang, Religious Moderation, Culture.

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk moderasi beragama dalam relasi Islam-Dayak dengan menelaah: (1) konsep dasar toleransi dalam hubungan Islam-Dayak, dan (2) bagaimana prinsip-prinsip tersebut dipraktikkan dalam interaksi antarumat beragama sehari-hari. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini melibatkan 15 partisipan yang terdiri atas akademisi, tokoh agama, tokoh adat, dan komunitas Muslim di Kota Palangka Raya, Kalimantan Tengah. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan dianalisis menggunakan model analisis data kualitatif Miles dan Huberman (1994), yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa toleransi dalam Islam berakar pada ajaran Al-Qur'an, sedangkan dalam masyarakat Dayak toleransi tersebut berlandaskan pada ilofosi Huma Betang. Dalam praktiknya, toleransi Islam-Dayak tercermin melalui kebebasan memilih agama dalam lingkup keluarga, sikap saling menghormati, saling menghargai, serta upaya menjaga persahabatan lintas keyakinan. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan hubungan Islam-Dayak memerlukan peneguhan kembali nilai-nilai Huma Betang serta pengembangan bentuk-bentuk relasi yang kreatif dan inovatif yang tetap selaras dengan doktrin keagamaan masing-masing komunitas.

**Kata Kunci:** Toleransi, Islam-Dayak, Huma Betang, Moderasi Beragama, budaya.

## Background

Religious moderation regulates perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors in external relations between religious communities. In these interactions, it promotes a “middle path” approach, allowing differences in understanding

to persist<sup>1</sup> while encouraging balance and restraint in religious practice. Following this approach, religious moderation emphasizes proportionality and avoids excessive attitudes in responding to

<sup>1</sup> Khadijah et.al, "Al-Wasatīyyah in the Practice of Religious Tolerance among the Families of New Muslims in Sustaining a Well-Being Society", *Humanomics*, 33.2 (2017), pp. 211–20, doi:10.1108/H-02-2017-0025.

religious diversity.<sup>2</sup> According to Christ Apandi and colleagues, religious moderation teaches individuals to respond to differences through the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, to act on the basis of equality, and to live side by side without envy. These principles are accompanied by mutual respect and empathy, which function both as commitments to national cohesion and an expressions of shared values.<sup>3</sup> Individuals who behaves in these attitudes can be considered as moderat, in the sense of acting reasonably and avoiding both extremism and bias. In this sense, religious moderation does not entail to modify the religious teachings themselves, but rather to moderate ways of viewing, responding, and behaving in religious practice, particularly within the context of relations with adherents of other faiths.

In the practice of religious moderation within Islam, one of the most prominent expressions is “tolerance.” According to Muhammad Irvan Helmy, Islam contains a concept that closely aligns with the idea of moderation, namely *wasatīyyah*. This principle, articulated in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143),<sup>4</sup> represents the core message of Islam as *rahmatan lil ‘ālamīn* (mercy for all creation).<sup>5</sup> Alongside *wasatīyyah*, the concept of *tasāmuh* (tolerance) is frequently associated with religious moderation in contemporary Islamic thought. According to Sarifuddin, as cited in Azisi, *tasāmuh* is a central value that guides openness, appreciation of differences, and readiness to coexist peacefully without

compromising fundamental religious beliefs. This perspective aligns with broader Islamic discourses on moderation, which emphasize balance (*wasatīyyah*) and *rahmah* as ethical foundations for human interaction.<sup>6</sup>

Within this framework, religious tolerance means mutual respect among followers of different religions, without coercion in matters of belief or interference in religious affairs. Tolerance in Islam is therefore understood as an attitude and form of behavior rooted in Qur’anic teachings, in which respect for others is maintained while allowing space for diverse religious communities to grow and develop according to their own traditions.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the concept of *tasāmuh* in Islam encompasses values that foster religious tolerance, grounded in mutual admonition, patience, and compassion.

At the ethical–theological level, *tasāmuh* entails respecting differences in belief without compromising one’s creed. It embodies an anti-extremist stance that serves as a safeguard against radicalism and violence, while promoting moderation. Relationally, *tasāmuh* guides social interactions based on mutual respect, understanding, cooperation, and shared humanity, thereby contributing to social harmony. In this sense, *rahmah* serves as the normative foundation of *tasāmuh* itself.

The Dayak tribe adhere to the *Huma Betang* philosophy, which represents their way of life and constitutes an important encesstral heritage. Derived from the Ngaju term *haring* (life), *Huma Betang* the fundamental values that guide Dayak social existence.<sup>8</sup> As noted by Christ Apandi, *Huma Betang* contains a set of shared values embraced by the Dayak tribe and functions as a

<sup>2</sup> Qasim Muhammad, *Membangun Moderasi Beragama Umat Melalui Integrasi Keilmuan*, Alauddin University Press, 2020, LIII <<http://ebooks.uin-alauddin.ac.id/>>.

<sup>3</sup> Chris Apandie and others, "Interrelated Values between Bhineka Tunggal Ika and Religious Moderation to Strengthen Pluralism in Indonesia," *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan*, 19.1 (2022), pp. 154–64, doi:10.21831/jc.v19i1.45174.

<sup>4</sup> Helmy, Kubro, and Ali, "The Understanding of Islamic Moderation (*Wasatīyyah Al-Islām*) and the Hadiths on Inter-Religious Relations in the Javanese Pesantrens."

<sup>5</sup> Lailial Muhtifah and others, "The Theology of Islamic Moderation Education in Singkawang, Indonesia: The City of Tolerance," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 77.4 (2021), pp. 1–10, doi:10.4102/HTS.V77I4.6552.

<sup>6</sup> Azisi, A. M., "Resolution of the Main Values of Wasathiyah Islam as an Effort to Counter the Movement of Religious Radicalism," *Indonesia Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (IJIS)*, Vol. 6 No. 2 (2023)

<sup>7</sup> Salma Mursyid, "Umat Beragama Perspektif Islam," *Aqlam*, 2 (2016), pp. 41–45.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, *Relasi Islam - Dayak* (Lembaga Literasi Dayak, 2016). Jakarta: Lembaga Literasi Dayak (LLD), 2018, 45.

moral and cultural guideline.<sup>9</sup> This philosophy reflects diversity and co-existence across multiple spheres of life, including the family, school, community, nation, and state.<sup>10</sup> *Huma Betang* culture upholds positive values, such as religious beliefs, togetherness, honesty, tolerance, mutual respect, hard work, deliberation, mutual aid, love of nature, and discipline. Within this framework, tolerance is expressed through openness to differences, respect for individuals, mutual trust, compassion and care, and the ability to face shared difficulties collectively.

Beyond its philosophical meaning, *Huma Betang*, literally referring to the long house, also functions as a powerful cultural symbol. As both a symbol and a philosophical framework, *Huma Betang* embodies five core pillars, as explained by Wilson: togetherness through communal living, equality of social status, collective work and deliberation (*gotong-royong* and *musyawarah*), tolerance and respect for religious and ethnic plurality, and social care through mutual aid.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Heva Rostiana explains that the *Huma Betang* philosophy encompasses values of honesty, equality, togetherness, tolerance, and obedience to law. These principles emerge from the lived experiences of the Dayak people within a plural social environment shaped by religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity.<sup>12</sup>

The foundation of tolerant attitudes and behaviors in Dayak society lies in the concept of *baring* (living), which evolves into *belum babadat* (civilized living). Within this worldview, tolerance emerges as awareness of life's inherent plurality. Differences are not perceived as barriers, but as conditions that must be harmonized to achieve

peaceful and respectful coexistence among community members. This principle of equality and harmony is reflected not only in the pattern of open space as a hallmark of egalitarian concepts, *belum babadat*, and harmonization of others. Spiritual harmony is likewise reflected in architectural symbolism, particularly through the presence of a central pillar within the house, marked by the *D-sift* pattern. This element is interpreted as an expression of the majesty of *Ranying Hatalla* (God in Dayak tradition), signifying the integration of divine reverence within everyday social life.

Accordingly, tolerance within the Dayak *Huma Betang* philosophy is understood as an attitude and pattern of behavior grounded in customary rules, which uphold the values of honesty, togetherness, social harmony. These values are upheld through obedience to customary law and religious principles.<sup>13</sup>

Islam has grown rapidly among the Dayak population in Central Kalimantan. With approximately 74.11% of the total population of 2,670,000 identifying as Muslim, Islam has become the majority religion in the region. In this context, Islamic-Dayak relations render tolerance not merely a normative ideal but a social necessity. Encounters between Islam and Dayak cultural life are therefore unavoidable, particularly given the substantial number of Dayak Muslims residing in Central Kalimantan, specifically in the city of Palangka Raya.

The Dayak community itself is highly diverse, consisting of seven major tribal groups encompassing hundreds of sub-tribes. Victor T. King's research on the Dayak highlights that these communities are historically associated with both terrestrial and maritime cultural traditions. Importantly, "Dayak" should not be understood as an ancient identity, but rather as a relatively modern socio-cultural construction. The term has

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<sup>9</sup>Zamroni Era Maresty, "Analisis Nilai-Nilai Budaya Huma Betang Dalam Pembinaan Persatuan Kesatuan Bangsa Siswa SMA Di Kalimantan Tengah," *Harmoni Sosial: Jurnal Pendidikan IPS*, 4.1 (2016), pp. 1–23.

<sup>10</sup>Apandie and others, "Interrelated Values between Bhineka Tunggal Ika and Religious Moderation to Strengthen Pluralism in Indonesia."

<sup>11</sup>Wilson, Rumah Panjai (Filosofi Manusia Dayak (Jakarta: Lembaga Literasi Dayak), 2021, 11.

<sup>12</sup>Heva Rostiana, dkk [https://jurnal.unipasby.ac.id/index.php/jurnal\\_budaya\\_nusantara/article/view/2543?](https://jurnal.unipasby.ac.id/index.php/jurnal_budaya_nusantara/article/view/2543?)

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<sup>13</sup>David Ricardo, "Penerapan Esensi Dasar Filosofi Huma Betang Pada Desain Interior Perpustakaan Universitas Palangkaraya," *Sinektika: Jurnal Arsitektur*, 18.1 (2021), pp. 20–29, doi:10.23917/sinektika.v18i1.13307.

often been used collectively to refer to non-Muslim or non-Malay indigenous peoples of Borneo. While some scholars interpret “Dayak,” as meaning “human,” others associate it with the interior or hinterland regions of the island.<sup>14</sup>

Hermansyah’s study on Islam and religious tolerance among the Kanayatn Dayak Muslim community in West Kalimantan provides an important comparative insight. His research examines the religious life of indigenous Kanayatn Dayak communities, particularly among recent converts to Islam. The study reveals that conversion to Islam has at times generated strong social resistance, prompting Muslim Dayak communities to promote tolerance by emphasizing their local Kanayatn identity.<sup>15</sup>

Maria Matildis Banda’s findings indicate that tolerance toward local communities is not a newly introduced concept, but one that has long been embedded in local wisdom. In several regions, particularly in Flobamora, expressions of tolerance are preserved and transmitted through poetry that reflects communal values and social harmony.<sup>16</sup> In Minahasa, Pelealu identifies a set of local slogans that serve as regional principles guiding communal life in a spirit of tolerance. These include *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou, Mapalus*, and *Torang Samua Basudara*.<sup>17</sup> In the context of Pancasila village, tolerance is understood as a fundamental human obligation. Shofa’s research examines whether local culture practices in this village incorporate Pancasila values and demonstrate how these values play a central role

in strengthening attitudes of tolerance within everyday social life.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the extensive scholarly discussion on moderation in Islam—reflected through the concepts of *wasatīyyah*, *tasāmuh*, and *rahmatan lil ‘ālamīnas* well as the recognition of the *Huma Betang* philosophy in Dayak culture as a source of tolerance and social harmony, research that directly connects these two traditions remains limited. Several studies have addressed the relationship between Islam, tolerance, and *Huma Betang*, including Isabella Jeniva’s “Fostering Harmony: Key Factors in Promoting Interfaith Unity within the Dayak Ngaju Community in Palangka Raya”;<sup>19</sup> Sharon Michelle O. Pattiasina’s “Huma Betang’s Philosophy: Interreligious Harmony and Weaving of National Identity in Palangka Raya,”<sup>20</sup> and the work of Aulia Kiftiah Kecana and Abdul Gofur, “The Philosophy of Huma Betang As a Medium for Reactualizing the Value of Religious Moderation in Central Kalimantan.”<sup>21</sup> While these studies provide valuable insights, they do not sufficiently explore the concept of tolerance in Ngaju Dayak philosophy in relation to Islamic teachings. One notable exception is the study by Aulia Kiftiah Kecana, Ahmadi, and Ajahari, titled “Instilling the Value of Multiculturalism Based on the Quran and the Huma Betang Philosophy,”<sup>22</sup> which explicitly engages the Qur’an, tolerance, and

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, *Relasi Islam - Dayak* (Jakarta: Lembaga Literasi Dayak), 2018, 56.

<sup>15</sup> Hermansyah, “Islam Dan Toleransi Beragama Dalam Masyarakat Muslim Kanayatn Dayak Kalimantan Barat,” *Islamika: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 7.2 (2013), pp. 340–59.

<sup>16</sup> Maria Matildis Banda, I.B. Jelantik Sutanegara, and I Nyoman Weda Kusuma, “The Values of Local Wisdom and Tolerance In Literary Works,” *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 27.12 (2022), pp. 15–28, doi:10.9790/0837-2712051528.

<sup>17</sup> Aldegonde Evangeline Pelealu, Aksilas Dasfordate, and Darmawan Edi Winoto, “Tolerance Based on Local Culture Of Minahasa,” *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change. Www.Ijicc.Net*, 18.1 (2024), pp. 162–76 <www.ijicc.net>.

<sup>18</sup> Abd Mu’id Aris Shofa and others, *Exploring Tolerance Practices in the Pancasila Village* (Atlantis Press SARL, 2023), doi:10.2991/978-2-38476-168-5\_17.

<sup>19</sup> Isabella Jeniva, Kurniawan Netanyahu, and Jeck Thomas Alvin, “Fostering Harmony: Key Factors in Promoting Interfaith Unity within the Dayak Ngaju Community in Palangka Raya,” *Jurnal Sosiologi Dialektika*, 20.1 (2025), pp. 61–73, doi:10.20473/jsd.v20i1.2025.61-73.

<sup>20</sup> Sharon Michelle O Pattiasina, “Huma Betang’s Philosophy: Interreligious Harmony and Weaving of National Identity in Palangka Raya,” 21.1 (2025), pp. 21–30, doi:10.23971/jsam.v21i1.9348.

<sup>21</sup> Aulia Kiftiah Kecana and Abdul Gofur, “The Philosophy of Huma Betang As a Medium for Reactualizing the Value of Religious Moderation in Central Kalimantan,” *Annual International Conference on Islamic Education for Students*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 123–27.

<sup>22</sup> Kecana and Gofur, “The Philosophy of Huma Betang As a Medium for Reactualizing the Value of Religious Moderation in Central Kalimantan.”

*Huma Betang*. However, the existing studies generally discuss tolerance as either an Islamic or a local cultural value, without adequately exploring how these two notions of tolerance interact in everyday interreligious relations at the community level.

In addition, there remains a lack of research that identifies concrete forms of Islamic–Dayak tolerance in everyday life, particularly as a foundation for religious moderation in Kalimantan. Therefore, a significant research gap exists regarding how concepts of tolerance within these two major traditions interact, mutually reinforce one another, or potentially give rise to a unique model of interreligious relations.

This qualitative research seeks to examine the practice of religious moderation as reflected in attitudes and behaviors shaped by the ‘middle way’, where Islamic values of tolerance intersect with the *Huma Betang* philosophy, especially its core pillar of tolerance. Through this encounter, the study aims to map emerging patterns IslamicDayak relations in the contemporary context. Primary data were collected using three principal methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and field documentation.<sup>23</sup>

In-depth interviews were conducted with Islamic religious leaders—including *ustādh*, *imām*, and leaders of Islamic organizations—as well as Dayak customary leaders with substantial knowledge of the *Huma Betang* philosophy. Additional participants included community members.<sup>24</sup> from both Muslim and Dayak backgrounds and engage in daily intergroup interactions. These interviews were designed to elicit detailed insights into lived experiences of religious moderation, encompassing practices of tolerance, expressions of moderate (middle-way) religiosity, communal co-existence within the

*Huma Betang* framework, and the contemporary dynamics of Muslim–Dayak relations.

Participant observation was employed to obtain direct empirical evidence of social interaction between Muslims and Dayak communities. This method involved observing traditions that embody *Huma Betang*’s tolerance values, Islamic religious activities that reflect moderate attitudes, and shared communal practices such as collective labor, customary deliberations, and village ceremonies. Through observation, the study sought to capture relational patterns and shared practices that emerge organically within everyday social life.

Field documentation supported these methods by providing visual and textual records, including photographs of rituals and community activities, as well as systematically maintained field notes derived from interviews and observations. Secondary data were utilized to construct the theoretical and contextual foundation of this research.<sup>25</sup> These data encompassed scholarly discussions on Islamic religious moderation (*wasatīyyah*), the philosophical underpinnings of *Huma Betang* within Dayak culture, and the broader socio-historical landscape of Muslim–Dayak relations. Sources were obtained through an extensive review of academic literature, including works on Islam Nusantara, moderate Islam, and theoretical conceptualizations of *wasatīyah*.

The urgency of the research lies in the fact that connections between Islam and the Dayak people constitute a core element of social peace in Kalimantan. Grasping how these two groups practice tolerance is therefore crucial for promoting religious moderation. By exploring the similarities between the Islamic concept of *tasāmuh* and the principle of tolerance in the *Huma Betang* philosophy, this study presents a model of tolerance grounded in local cultural and religious interactions that can inform policies

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<sup>23</sup>Crewell, J.W., & Poth, C.N. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.).

<sup>24</sup>Spradley, J.P. *Participant Observation*, Waveland Press, 2016.

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<sup>25</sup>Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. *Designing Qualitative*, 2016 (6<sup>th</sup> e.)

aimed at social harmony. Additionally, the results offer practical insights for spiritual leaders, community representatives, and decision-makers seeking to foster innovative and sustainable forms of relationships between Islam and the Dayak communities without undermining key theological beliefs. The increasing demand for context-specific and community-based approaches to religious moderation further highlights the importance of this study.

The research questions are as follows: (1) what are the basic concepts of tolerance in Islam and Dayak culture?; and (2) how are the forms of tolerance between Islam and Dayak reconciled within the context of Religious Moderation?

### Basic Philosophy of Islamic-Dayak Tolerance

The Quran teaches that religious tolerance entails granting freedom to others and exercising patience in the face of difference. One Muslim resource person explained that Islam regards tolerance as a necessity, because Allah created human beings in diversity and destined them to live within different communities.<sup>26</sup> In this understanding, tolerance means accepting people and religious traditions different from one's own and represents one of the highest expressions of religious civility.<sup>27</sup>

Abubakar H. explained that tolerance is *sunnatullah*, thereby demonstrating the dignity of spiritual humanity. Islam, in this view, teaches believers to live according to the will of Allah by fostering harmony and peaceful coexistence with others, beyond the boundaries of *aqidah* (religious creed).<sup>28</sup> Noor Fahmi explained that Islam frames tolerance as an obligation for religious communities. Wahyudie F. Dirun further argued that as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamīn*, Islam upholds a robust doctrine of tolerance that enables its adherents to grant freedom and maintain

amicable relations with people of other faiths.<sup>29</sup> Tolerance is also understood as a practical necessity in everyday life, particularly in families and communities characterized by religious diversity.<sup>30</sup> Overall, Muslim informants consistently Islam as a religion of tolerance, marked by key indicators such as the recognition of tolerance as *sunnatullah*, an inherent aspect of religious life, a foundation for harmony and peace, and a spiritual obligation that gives place to freedom and mutual acceptance.

The *Huma Betang* philosophy of the Dayak people affirms openness and receptivity to difference, respect for individuals, mutual trust, and compassion. Informants explained that *Huma Betang* philosophy teaches communal living grounded in openness, mutual respect, trust, and love of all beings; failure to uphold these values may result in customary sanctions.<sup>31</sup>

Mambang Tubil described tolerance among the Dayak as a “dead price,” which means a non-negotiable life value inherited from their ancestors.<sup>32</sup> In a similar vein, Wahyudie explained that in a plural urban context such as Palangka Raya, where families often consist of members from different religious backgrounds, living with tolerance is not only ethical but also a rational and necessary choice.<sup>33</sup> This means that all Dayak people, regardless of religious affiliation, including Islam, share an equal obligation to practice tolerance under the *Huma Betang* philosophy. Such tolerance is expressed through coexistence, mutual acceptance, respect, and trust, understood as a form of devotion to fellow humans and Dayak ancestors.

Christian and Hindu perspectives on Islamic-dayak relations in Palangka Raya largely converge, as most members of these communities also

<sup>29</sup> Dirun, W.F., interview by Wilson (7 September Kamis, 2023).

<sup>30</sup> Shahradi, interview by Wilson (8 September Jumat, 2023).

<sup>31</sup> Rayamasi, interview by Wilson (7 Agustus Senin, 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Tubil, Mambang, interview by Wilson (8 Agustus 2023 Selasa, 2023).

<sup>33</sup> Wahyudie, interview by Wilson (8 Agustus Selasa, 2023).

<sup>26</sup> Qodir, Abdul, interview by Wilson (5 September Selasa, 2023).

<sup>27</sup> Sibram, Ali, interview by Wilson (6 September Rabu, 2023).

<sup>28</sup> Arifin, Zainal, interview by Wilson. (7 September Kamis, 2023).

identify as Dayak. Agustin explained that, within Christianity, tolerance is inseparable from the ethic of love understood as receiving, appreciating, respecting, nurturing, and caring for fellow human beings.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Sisto Hartati explained that Hindu teaching emphasize tolerance through mutual respect and acceptance of differences, stemming from the principle of *Tat Tvam Asi*, which implies the fundamental equality of all human beings.<sup>35</sup> In other words, both Christian and Hindu traditions place tolerance as a form of ethical teaching rooted in love and human equality, fostering attitudes of respect, nurturing, and loving.

The relevance of these concepts or philosophies lies in their practical enactment through religious moderation. Tolerance in Islam and the *Huma Betang* philosophy converges in positioning human beings as both subjects and objects of ethical relations who are expected to accept and respect difference with patience. As articulated by Abdul Qadir, the Islamic teachings of tolerance and the philosophy of *Huma Betang* are fundamentally compatible and mutually reinforcing, particularly when framed within the ethos of religious moderation as middle-ground attitudes and practices. Their reconciliation is therefore not theoretical but practical, realized through everyday interfaith relations.<sup>36</sup>

Zainal Arifin further emphasized that the Islamic concept of tolerance and *Huma Betang*'s philosophy are essentially aligned and mutually relevant in shaping interreligious relations. When viewed through the lens of religious moderation, these shared principles do not require reinterpretation but simply need to be practiced consistently within their respective social and cultural contexts.<sup>37</sup> Like two sides of a coin, Islamic tolerance and *Huma Betang* philosophy

jointly sustain religious moderation among Muslim and Dayak communities in Palangka Raya.<sup>38</sup> This convergence is further reflected in the Dayak proverb "*hung kueh petak injjak, hung be telangi ti menda*" (where one stands on the earth there one upholds the sky, signifying the obligation of all regions living on Dayak land to honor *Huma Betang* values while coexisting harmoniously like a family).<sup>39</sup>

Augustiman explained that Christianity regards the Islamic concept of tolerance and the *Huma Betang* philosophy as equally strong foundations for supporting religious moderation in interfaith relations.<sup>40</sup> Together, these two traditions constitute a shared middle ground that supports harmonious interaction between Islam and the Dayak community.

In this sense, the Islamic understanding of tolerance rooted in the Quran and the Dayak philosophy embodied in *Huma Betang* can be seen as different paths that lead to the same destination. This idea is captured in the Dayak proverb *beken kamar, ije mimpi* (different room, one dream), which reflects a commitment to mutual acceptance respect, and care values that underpin moderate religious attitudes and behaviours amid diversity and difference.

### **Forms of Tolerance Between Islam and the Dayak in the Context of Religious Moderation**

In Palangkaraya, tolerance between Islam and the Dayak community takes concrete and everyday forms shaped by both Quranic values and the *Huma Betang* philosophy. Religious communities are generally free to establish houses of worship, requiring notification rather than permission from other groups, and there are no recorded cases of prohibition and closure.

During religious celebrations, communities take care of one another, offer prayers for each

<sup>34</sup>Agustiman, interview by Wilson (9 Agustus Rabu, 2023).

<sup>35</sup>Hartati, Sisto, interview by Wilson (10 Agustus Kamis, 2023).

<sup>36</sup>Qadir, Abdul, interview by Wilson (5 September Selasa, 2023).

<sup>37</sup> Arifin, Zainal, interview by Wilson (7 September Kamis, 2023).

<sup>38</sup>Wahyudie, interview by Wilson (8 Agustus Selasa, 2023).

<sup>39</sup>Rayamasi, interview by Wilson (7 Agustus Senin, 2023).

<sup>40</sup>Agustiman, interview by Wilson (9 Agustus Rabu, 2023).

other, and exchange holiday greetings. Public expressions of tolerance are also visible through banners conveying festive messages from both the government and religious communities.<sup>41</sup> In Palangka Raya, tolerance is expressed in distinctive ways, such as mosques and churches standing adjacent to one another, sometimes separated only by walls, enabling mutual support during religious holidays. On occasions such as sacrificial feasts, communities share food and exchange greetings. These practices include *halal bibalal* activities, the joint observance of various religious celebrations, the formal exchange of religious greetings, and openness toward interreligious marriages.<sup>42</sup>

Abubakar H explained that religious tolerance in Palangka Raya is reflected in practices such as *silaturahim* after religious activities, where friends of different faiths visit one another and share the joy of halal food.<sup>43</sup> This distinctive form of tolerance is deeply grounded in a strong sense of kinship, as familial relationships are readily evident within the community even though individuals adhere to distinct religious affiliations. On this basis, mutual respect emerges, allowing differences to grow and develop harmoniously. Such practices are grounded in the *Huma Betang* philosophy, which permits houses of worship to stand side by side, allows Dayak cultural symbols to be embraced by all religious groups, and encourages interreligious cooperation and safeguarding during religious celebrations.<sup>44</sup>

In Palangka Raya, the religious atmosphere is generally calm and harmonious, with no significant religious conflict. Worship across different religious groups is conducted smoothly. Muslims share sacrificial meat with their neighbors and churches are often built side by

side.<sup>45</sup> Tolerance here is based on a spirit of kinship and cooperation, where Islam and Dayak communities, along with other religious groups, support one another through friendship, mutual assistance, and the sharing of resources during religious holidays. There is no objection to Muslims using Dayak customary attributes, and deliberation is commonly practiced when religious issues arise need to be overcome collectively.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, concrete forms of religious tolerance within the framework of moderation include the coexistence of mosques and churches and other houses of worship side by side; the involvement of different religious groups in maintaining order during major religious celebrations; *silaturahim* through mutual holiday greetings and visits; the sharing of sacrificial or halal food; the expression of religious devotion based on universal values; mutual respect and appreciation; collective deliberation in resolving problems, the absence of prohibitions on establishing houses of worship for any religion; and the inclusive use of Dayak cultural attributes by followers of various religions in a spirit of good intention and harmony.

The practice of tolerance between Islam and Dayak community emphasizes how religious moderation is lived through concrete efforts to affirm tolerance, foster mutual acceptance and respect differences with great patience. According to Abdul Qodir, in a plural society, existing forms of tolerance practice need to be continuously maintained and developed to address the demands of religious moderation, that is, middle-ground attitudes and behaviors. This involves minimizing feelings of superiority over others and seeking shared ground that allows both religious traditions to coexist within the framework of the *Huma Betang* philosophy.<sup>47</sup> In this way, tolerance

<sup>41</sup> Qodir, Abdul, interview by Wilson (5 September Selasa, 2023).

<sup>42</sup> Sibram, Ali, interview by Wilson (6 September Rabu, 2023).

<sup>43</sup> Bakar, Abu, interview by Wilson (11 Agustus Jumat, 2023).

<sup>44</sup> Arifin, Zainal, interview by Wilson (7 September Kamis, 2023).

<sup>45</sup> Dirun, W.F., interview by Wilson (7 September Kamis, 2023).

<sup>46</sup> Shahradi, interview by Wilson (8 September Jumat, 2023).

<sup>47</sup> M. Fatchurahman and others, "Internalization of Huma Betang in Cultural Counselling: Learning Perspective. Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice," *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 21.1 (2021), pp. 112–30.

functions as a common space that supports a safe, harmonious, and peaceful religious life.

Zainal Arifin further explained that existing forms of tolerance remain relevant to be implemented; what is needed, however, is more intensive dialogue and deliberation to avoid potential collisions.<sup>48</sup> In Palangka Raya, tolerance between Islam and the Dayak fosters a religious spirit of mutual respect, shaping the city as an Islamic space marked by prominent values and distinctive local characteristics.<sup>49</sup> Within the framework of religious moderation, this tolerance sustains harmonious relations between Islam and the Dayak, the the extent that discussing Islam without reference to the Dayak feels incomplete, and likewise, speaking of the Dayak without Islam is equally insufficient. Above all, the spirit of family emerges as the most prominent bond connecting the two communities.<sup>50</sup>

Agustiman explained that the Dayak Christian community shares a common commitment to preserving ancestral forms of tolerance and articulating them as expressions of more moderate values in interreligious relations.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, the practice of tolerance within the framework of religious moderation in Palangka Raya is not merely relevant but necessary, as it cultivates moderate attitudes toward others grounded in a unifying spirit of kinship. Through this shared ethos, potential interreligious conflicts can be mitigated, while the distinctive encounters between Islam and Dayak (both Daya, Islam and Islam-Dayak) become a vital force in shaping religious civilization within a plural society.

The relevance of Islamic–Dayak forms of tolerance within future (modern) religious moderation underscores the needs for “middle-ground” attitudes and behaviors that sustain

diversity in meaningful ways. In this context, tolerance is not limited to patience or passive acceptance of difference, but is expected to generate tangible social benefits. According to Abdul Qodir, the continued relevance of religious tolerance between Islam and the Dayak in the modern era calls for renewed forms that preserve existing values, while responding to contemporary challenges. Such dialogue should not limited to academic circles or religious and customary elites, but must also involve grassroots communities as active participants in shaping inclusive interreligious relations.

Expanding the exploration of Dayak particularities across political, economic, cultural, artistic, and security dimensions opens space for innovative forms of “religious and cultural tourism.”<sup>52</sup> Zainal Arifin explained that, in the future, it will be necessary to continue *lampit*, symbolically “sitting together rattan mats”, as a shared practice of dialogue that involves all stakeholders and young people from diverse religious backgrounds, especially within Islam–Dayak relations. Through such collective engagement, tolerance as a “middle way” can be strengthened as the primary ethic of religious and cultural civility.<sup>53</sup> In the modern era, this vision calls for sustained discussion and collaborative action, ensuring that the dignity and vitality of Islam and Dayak communities across all religious affiliations advance together in harmony.

Encouraging the younger generation to utilize technology is essential for developing both “conventional and virtual religious tourism”.<sup>54</sup> From the perspective of the Customary Council, tolerance should not be limited to the fulfillment of customary law alone; rather, existing practices tolerance need to be developed as a concrete “pilot project” of Islam Dayak relations, so that their social benefits can be directly felt by the

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<sup>48</sup> Arifin, Zainal, interview by Wilson (7 September Kamis, 2023).

<sup>49</sup> Wahyudie, interview by Wilson (8 Agustus Selasa, 2023).

<sup>50</sup> Rayamasi, interview by Wilson (7 Agustus Senin, 2023).

<sup>51</sup> Agustiman, interview by Wilson (9 Agustus Rabu, 2023).

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<sup>52</sup> Qodir, Abdul, interview by Wilson (5 September Selasa, 2023).

<sup>53</sup> Arifin, Zainal, interview by Wilson (7 September Kamis, 2023).

<sup>54</sup> Wahyudie, interview by Wilson (8 Agustus Selasa, 2023).

wider community.<sup>55</sup> From a Christian perspective, the “middle way” of tolerance should also be consistently advocated through sermons and teachings in houses of worship.

In the modern era, this effort requires the establishment of a “house of dialogue” and continuous studies of religiosity that connects religious and cultural traditions, thereby strengthening both theological understanding and practical literacy.<sup>56</sup> In this sense, sustaining the relevance of religious tolerance within religious moderation in Palangka Raya calls for ongoing dialogue on the Dayak *lampit*, active involvement of technologically literate youth, and the participation of all stakeholders. These initiatives may extend to the initiation of “conventional and virtual religious tourism” and, symbolically, to the creation of a distinctive harmony, such as the blending of the melodious *adhān* with Dayak *karungut*, as an expression of moderate and inclusive religious life.

Based on the interview findings, it can be concluded that tolerance within the framework of religious moderation in the city of Palangka Raya takes diverse and concrete forms. Mosques (associated with Islam) and churches or other houses of worship (closely linked to the Dayak community) stand side by side; the celebration of major religious groups, including efforts to maintain order and mutual support; and *silaturahmi* is expressed through exchanging greetings, visiting one another, and sharing happiness during religious festivities. These practices also include the distribution of halal sacrificial meat or food, the expression of religious devotion based on universal religious values, mutual respect, and deliberation when problems arise. There are no prohibitions on establishing houses of worship for any religion, and individuals of different faiths are free to use Dayak cultural attributes for positive and respectful purposes.

Accordingly, sustaining the relevance of religious tolerance within religious moderation in Palangka Raya requires ongoing dialogue in the Dayak *lampit*, the active involvement of younger generations and societal stakeholders, and the initiation of both “conventional and virtual religious tourism.” In the modern era, these efforts further strengthen the distinctive uniqueness of Islamic-Dayak relations, symbolized by the harmony between melodious *adhān* and Dayak *karungut*, all framed within a civilized and inclusive practice of religious tolerance.

### **Interpreting the Basic Philosophy of Islamic Dayak Tolerance**

The findings indicate that Islam and Dayak tradition share a closely aligned philosophical basis namely the affirmation of human dignity and the acceptance of difference as fundamental cornerstones of social life. Muslim informants view tolerance as *sunnatullah*, a divine mandate that affirms human diversity as part of God’s will. This interpretation resonates with the concept of *wasatīyyah*, which contemporary scholarship defines as a moral imperative to live moderately, to accept differences, and to avoid extremism.<sup>57</sup> The informants’ assertion that “tolerance is an obligation” reinforces the view that, for Muslims, tolerance functions as a lived theological identity rather than merely a pragmatic social choice.<sup>58</sup> As a religion of *rah̄matan lil ‘ālamīn*, Islam instructs its followers to relate to people of other faiths through respect, hospitality, and the recognition of freedom.

Within the *Huma Betang* worldview, tolerance is likewise understood as a fundamental principle of life passed down from Dayak ancestors. Values such as mutual acceptance, respect, trust, openness, and compassion constitute the social structure that obliges Dayak communities to

<sup>55</sup>Rayamasi, interview by Wilson (7 Agustus Senin, 2023).

<sup>56</sup>Agustiman, interview by Wilson (9 Agustus Rabu, 2023).

<sup>57</sup>Yusop, S. H., & Musa, N., “Islamic moderation (wasatīyyah) as a framework for plural societies.” *Al-Shajarah*, 25(1), 75–100.

<sup>58</sup>Rochmawati, N., & Abdullah, M., “Wasathiyah as foundation for Islamic tolerance,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 11(1), 75–98.

maintain harmony regardless of religious affiliation.<sup>59</sup> Informants' characterization of tolerance as a "non-negotiable value" indicates that it functions as a binding customary norm rather than a voluntary ethical preference.<sup>60</sup>

Accordingly, the first research question is addressed: Islamic and Dayak understandings of tolerance converge epistemically in three key respects—(1) tolerance as a moral duty, (2) tolerance as a foundation for sustaining social cohesion, and (3) tolerance as a balanced approach to navigating differences. This shared conceptual foundation forms the essential groundwork for the practice of religious moderation in Palangka Raya.

The study shows that tolerance between Muslim and Dayak communities is not confined to abstract ideals but is actively embodied in daily social interactions. In Palangka Raya, diverse religious groups can establish houses of worship in close proximity without tension, major religious celebrations receive cross-community support, and people from various faith traditions comfortably employ Dayak cultural symbols.<sup>61</sup> These practices illustrate that tolerance operates across multiple spheres at once: structural, cultural, and interpersonal.

Kinship networks play a particularly significant role in sustaining this form of moderation. In many Dayak households, members adhere to different religions, making respect for religious difference constitutes both emotional commitment and a practical social necessity. This finding supports earlier research indicating that interreligious kinship serves as a

key stabilizing factor for social harmony in Kalimantan's plural society.<sup>62</sup>

Taken together, these insights address the second research question: religious moderation takes shape through the interplay between Islamic principles of *wasatīyyah* and the Dayak ethos of *Huma Betang*, which converge and are realized within the routines and relationships of everyday communal life.

### Synthesizing Islam and *Huma Betang* as Mutual Middle Grounds

The analysis indicates that Islam and *Huma Betang* philosophy provide distinct yet converging frameworks oriented toward a shared objective: sustaining harmony within diversity. The Dayak expression *beken kamar, ije mimpi*—meaning "different rooms, one shared dream"—reflects an ethic that corresponds with Islamic ideas of universal kinship and inclusivity. Insights from Christian and Hindu respondents further validate this synthesis, as Christian teachings on love and the Hindu concept of *Tat Tvam Asi* are understood to align with Islamic ethics and *Huma Betang* values emphasizing compassion, equality, and mutual respect.<sup>63</sup> In this way, the practice of moderation expands beyond the Muslim–Dayak relations and encompasses the broader religious landscape of Palangka Raya.

The study underscores that religious moderation in the Islamic–Dayak context evolves chiefly through the interaction of shared ethical values, rather than through top-down governmental initiatives alone. The principles of *Huma Betang* and *wasatīyyah* act as complementary pillars that nurture social cohesion and safeguard diversity.<sup>64</sup> As noted by Jamaluddin in "Social Integration in Multicultural Societies: A

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<sup>59</sup>Wahyudi, A., "The practice of religious tolerance in Central Kalimantan," *Jurnal Borneo Sociocultural Studies*, 5(2), 101–118.

<sup>60</sup>Rante, W., "Indigenous values of Huma Betang in contemporary Dayak society," *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, 3(1), 1–14.

<sup>61</sup>Setyawan, E., "Interreligious kinship in Central Kalimantan," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 20(1), 89–112.

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<sup>62</sup>Wahyudi, A., "The practice of religious tolerance in Central Kalimantan" *Jurnal Borneo Sociocultural Studies*, 5(2), 101–118.

<sup>63</sup>Schiller, A., & Garang, B. "Interethnic relations and religious cooperation in Kalimantan," *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 48, 55–74.

<sup>64</sup>Azra, A. "Wasatīyah Islam in Indonesia: A critical reflection on middle path Islam," *Studia Islamika*, 27(3), 435–458.

Qualitative Study,” plural societies are able to maintain unity when tolerance and mutual respect are present in everyday life.<sup>65</sup> Based on these findings, several practical implications emerge: (a) expanding culturally rooted interfaith dialogue spaces inspired by Dayak traditions, such as *lampit* gatherings; (b) fostering more frequent social engagement among religious communities; (c) utilizing cultural symbols as inclusive platforms for encounter, and (d) promoting cultural and religious tourism as a strategy for strengthening interfaith relationships.

The findings also highlight the need to adjust tolerance practices to the realities of younger generations and contemporary social change. Informants point to several strategic directions, including: (a) emphasizing community-level dialogue rather than restricting engagement to religious elites; (b) involving youth through digital platforms and social media initiatives; (c) expanding dialogue through tourism-based cultural religious activities; (d) establishing permanent interfaith forums; and (e) creatively digitizing Dayak cultural expressions (such as *karungut*) alongside Islamic elements (such as the *adhān*) to promote messages of moderation.<sup>66</sup> This means that, moving forward, tolerant relations between Islam and the Dayak community needs to be actively internalized by Dayak youth within the digital era. Overall, the discussion affirms that religious moderation is an evolving process that must continuously adapt to societal transformations in order to remain relevant and effective.

Drawing from these synthesized findings: (a) both Islamic and Dayak traditions rest upon parallel philosophical principles that frame tolerance as an ethical mandate and a peaceful approach to co-existence; (b) in Palangka Raya,

tolerance is manifested through consistent everyday practices supported by kinship networks, the *Huma Betang* worldview, and Islamic *wasatīyyah* values; (c) these shared principles form a locally grounded model of religious moderation anchored in indigenous wisdom; (d) ensuring its future relevance calls for revitalized dialogue, greater youth involvement, and the integration of cultural and religious expressions within public life. As such, this integrated model of Islamic–Dayak tolerance holds potential as an exemplary framework for other diverse urban contexts in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

The research reveals that the interaction between Islam and Dayak culture in Central Kalimantan has produced a hybrid model of religious moderation, shaped by the convergence of Islamic *wasatīyyah* principles and the *Huma Betang* philosophy of tolerance. The findings demonstrate that tolerance is not merely a normative concept; but is expressed through everyday social practices, such as the coexistence of places of worship, interfaith cooperation during religious celebrations, the inclusive use of Dayak cultural symbols, and the maintenance of family harmony across religious differences.

This study contributes to the existing literature in two primary ways. *First*, it establishes a more systematic understanding of the epistemological intersection between Islamic concepts of tolerance and *Huma Betang* values, showing how both traditions complement one another in forming a shared cultural and theological framework. *Second*, it offers a novel empirical perspective on religious moderation by identifying a unique and relatively understudied model of Islam–Dayak tolerance in practice. The significance of this finding lies in its confirmation that religious moderation in this context is primarily driven by social and cultural dynamics rather than by explicit state intervention. As a result, this research not only contributes conceptually and empirically to the study of tolerance and religious moderation in Indonesia,

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<sup>65</sup> Jamiludin, Alimin Alwi, Ambo Upe., “Social Integration in Multicultural Societies: A Qualitative Study,” *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, volume 12, number 2, 2023 pp. 340-349P-ISSN: 2303-2898 | E-ISSN: 2549-6662

<sup>66</sup> Sihombing, A., & Mahdi, M., “Digital culture and religious moderation among youth,” *Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences*, 15(3), 211–230.

but it also lays the groundwork for the development of interfaith programs that are more contextual, participatory, and grounded in local values.

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### **Declarations**

#### **Author Contribution Statement**

There are three authors listed in this article. Wilson is the first author, who conducted the research, conceptualized the findings, analyzed the data, and wrote the manuscript. Yane Octavia Rismawati Wainarisi, as the second author, contributed to incorporating theory and research findings as requested by the editor and journal reviewers and revised and edited the manuscript in accordance with the template. Alfonso Munte, the third author, also contributed to the Development of the references in this research.

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#### **Data Availability Statement**

The primary data in this study were obtained from direct interviews with the sources listed in the references and contained in the appendix of the written report of the research results of IAKN Palangka Raya lecturers for the 2023 academic year. Meanwhile, the secondary data for this study were obtained from reviews of various sources, including journal articles and books that are freely accessible via news search engines.

#### **Declaration of Interests Statement**

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

#### **AI Use Statement**

[1] During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used **[Grammarly + v1.2.220.1800]** solely for **language editing (grammar, clarity, and readability)**. The authors **reviewed, revised, and verified** the final text and **take full responsibility** for the content of the publication.

[2] The authors did not use generative AI or AI-assisted tools in the writing, editing, or preparation of this manuscript.

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