

## Political Moderation as a New Foundation in Indonesia: An Analysis of Deliberative Democracy Theory and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah

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### Abstract

*This study explores the concept of political moderation in Indonesia, proposing it as a crucial approach to addressing the current political polarization. As one of the world's largest democracies, Indonesia faces challenges such as political polarization, disinformation, and the risk of social disintegration, which are exacerbated by regional elections and the dominance of political dynasties. This research introduces the concept of political moderation as a ideological differences and ensuring social stability. By analyzing this concept through Jürgen Habermas's theory of Deliberative Democracy and Al-Shatibi's Maqashid Shariah, the study integrates rational discourse with Islamic principles to underscore the importance of moderation in building an inclusive and sustainable democracy. The study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing primary data from selected books, journals, and online sources, and applies descriptive-analytical analysis to examine the implications of political moderation. The findings indicate that political moderation not only prevents the escalation of conflicts but also strengthens democratic institutions by promoting dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions. Additionally, political moderation aligns with Islamic values of justice and balance, contributing to the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, as emphasized in Maqashid Shariah. The study concludes that political moderation is essential for maintaining national unity, promoting social justice, and ensuring the long-term stability and development of democracy in Indonesia.*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi konsep moderasi politik di Indonesia, mengusulkannya sebagai pendekatan penting untuk mengatasi polarisasi politik yang terjadi saat ini. Sebagai salah satu demokrasi terbesar di dunia, Indonesia menghadapi tantangan seperti polarisasi politik, disinformasi, dan risiko disintegrasi sosial, yang diperburuk oleh pemilihan daerah dan dominasi dinasti politik. Penelitian ini memperkenalkan konsep moderasi politik sebagai “fondasi baru” untuk menyeimbangkan perbedaan ideologi dan memastikan stabilitas sosial. Dengan menganalisis konsep ini melalui teori “Demokrasi Deliberatif Jürgen Habermas” dan “Maqashid Shariah Asy-Syatibi”, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan diskursus rasional dan prinsip-prinsip Islam untuk menyoroti pentingnya moderasi dalam membangun demokrasi yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan data primer dari buku, jurnal, dan sumber online yang dipilih, serta menerapkan analisis deskriptif-analitis untuk mengkaji implikasi moderasi politik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa moderasi politik tidak hanya mencegah eskalasi konflik tetapi juga memperkuat institusi demokrasi dengan mempromosikan dialog, toleransi, dan penghormatan terhadap perbedaan pendapat. Selain itu, moderasi politik sejalan dengan nilai-nilai Islam tentang keadilan dan keseimbangan, yang berkontribusi pada perlindungan agama, kehidupan, akal, keturunan, dan harta benda, sebagaimana ditekankan dalam Maqashid Shariah. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa moderasi politik sangat penting untuk menjaga kesatuan nasional, mempromosikan keadilan sosial, dan memastikan stabilitas serta perkembangan jangka panjang demokrasi di Indonesia.

### Keywords:

Political Moderation; Deliberative Democracy; Jürgen Habermas; Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah

### Kata kunci:

Moderasi berpolitik; Demokrasi deliberatif; Jürgen Habermas; Maqashid syariah

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## Introduction

The current political situation in Indonesia reflects a complex and diverse dynamic, embodying a blend of longstanding political traditions and emerging challenges<sup>1</sup>. As the world's third-largest democracy,<sup>2</sup> Indonesia continues to undergo significant political evolution, characterized by active public participation in democratic processes and the essential role of state institutions in maintaining a balance of power.<sup>3</sup> In this era, Indonesia confronts various intricate political challenges,<sup>4</sup> including issues related to political polarization<sup>5</sup> and the pursuit of welfare and social justice for all its citizens.<sup>6</sup> Political polarization, which often highlights ideological and political differences among the populace, poses a threat to the social and political unity of the nation.<sup>7</sup> For example, regional elections frequently exemplify this polarization, where negative campaigning and the spread of misinformation can undermine healthy political competition.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the tensions arising from recent elections, where various political parties and public figures vie for governance, underscore the need for a fresh approach to these issues.<sup>9</sup> In religious contexts, the concept of "religious moderation" has proven effective in accommodating diverse beliefs and promoting tolerance.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, this paper proposes a new concept: "political moderation". Just as in religion, the diversity of political views and choices is an inevitable reality in a democratic society like

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<sup>1</sup> Arif Sugitanata, "Dinamika Keputusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Terkait Batas Usia Calon Presiden Dan Wakil Presiden," *Qaumiyyah: Jurnal Hukum Tata Negara* 4, no. 2 (2023): 127–46, <https://doi.org/10.24239/qaumiyyah.v4i2.79>.

<sup>2</sup> Greg Barton, "Indonesia: Legitimacy, secular democracy, and Islam," *Politics & Policy* 38, no. 3 (2010): 471–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2010.00244.x>.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Majid dan Arif Sugitanata, "Sistem Pemilu Sebagai Wujud Demokrasi Di Indonesia: Antara Orde Lama, Orde Baru Dan Reformasi," *Qaumiyyah: Jurnal Hukum Tata Negara* 2, no. 1 (2021): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.24239/qaumiyyah.v2i1.18>.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Turner, Eko Prasjo, dan Rudiarto Sumarwono, "The challenge of reforming big bureaucracy in Indonesia," *Policy Studies* 43, no. 2 (2022): 333–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1708301>.

<sup>5</sup> Afrimadona, "Revisiting Political Polarisation in Indonesia: A Case Study of Jakarta's Electorate," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40, no. 2 (2021): 315–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211007490>.

<sup>6</sup> HS Tisnanta, James Reinaldo, dan Fathoni Fathoni, "The Dilemma of Indonesia Welfare State Challenge of Realizing Social Welfare in the Global Era," *FIAT JUSTISIA: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 11, no. 3 (2017): 231–45, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v11no3.936>.

<sup>7</sup> Afrimadona, "Revisiting Political Polarisation in Indonesia: A Case Study of Jakarta's Electorate."

<sup>8</sup> Arif Sugitanata, "Urgensi Pemilihan Pemimpin Beretika dalam Perspektif Maqashid Syariah Menuju Tatanan Sosial dan Politik yang Sehat," *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ibrahimi* 1, no. 2 (2024): 253–66, <https://doi.org/10.35316/jummy.v1i2.4591>.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Ryan Aditya, "Kubu Prabowo-Gibran Klaim Menang Satu Putaran, Ganjar: Kami Tunggu dari KPU," *kompas.com*, 15 Februari 2024, Pemilu 2024 edisi, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2024/02/15/12264581/kubu-prabowo-gibran-klaim-menang-satu-putaran-ganjar-kami-tunggu-dari-kpu>.

<sup>10</sup> Arif Sugitanata dan Lusua Nia Kurnianti, "Fikih Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Yudian Wahyudi," *At-Ta'awun: Jurnal Mu'amalah dan Hukum Islam* 2, no. 2 (2023): 143–64, <https://doi.org/10.59579/atw.v2i2.5958>.

Indonesia. Therefore, a strong foundation is needed to promote the concept of 'political moderation,' which this paper aims to establish.

Throughout the research exploration, studies related to political moderation remain largely unexplored. However, some research has touched upon this subject, albeit within the framework of religious moderation, which has been widely advocated in Indonesia. For example, efforts towards religious moderation in Indonesia within the context of democratization and the industrial era 4.0 have highlighted that strategies such as strengthening theological-national identity through "Islam Nusantara" and ceremonial dialogue approaches have proven ineffective. Despite democratization efforts aimed at supporting religious moderation through legal protection of religious freedom, both religious moderation and the democratic process itself faced significant challenges from the impact of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, religious moderation plays a crucial role in establishing democratic elections, and political parties can function as drivers of religious moderation to create a dignified and sustainable democracy.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the negative impact of polarization caused by elections in Indonesia, which leads to the emergence of intolerance phenomena that damage unity and integrity, suggests that an essential step in addressing these issues is the development of religious moderation.<sup>13</sup>

From the review of previous research, the author boldly asserts that the concept of "political moderation" proposed here is novel and represents a previously unexplored idea, considering that previous studies have focused on the synchronization of politics with the concept of religious moderation. Thus, the main issues proposed in this paper are: what is the concept and urgency of political moderation in Indonesia? How does political moderation differ from religious moderation? Based on these issues, the basic concept that has been developed is then tested using Jürgen Habermas's theory of Deliberative Democracy and Maqashid Shariah. By integrating these two theories, it is hoped that the formulated concept of political moderation will be not only theoretically relevant but also practically applicable, enabling it to be implemented and promoted more widely in society.

Therefore, this research represents an in-depth effort to explore the understanding of political moderation, a highly relevant topic in the contemporary social and political context. Through the adopted qualitative research methodology, this study focuses on exploring various primary data sources, including selectively chosen books, journals, and websites, to ensure their relevance to the research theme.

<sup>11</sup> Aulia Kamal, "Politik moderasi beragama di Indonesia di era disrupsi: menuju dialog spiritual-humanis," *Moderate El Siyasi: Jurnal Pemikiran Politik Islam* 1, no. 1 (2022): 40–57, <https://doi.org/10.30821/moderateel-siyas.v1i1.11035>.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Ardhi Razaq Abqa, "Partai Politik Dan Moderasi Beragama Sebagai Pilar Demokrasi di Indonesia," *RESIPROKAL: Jurnal Riset Sosiologi Progresif Aktual* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.29303/resiprokal.v2i1.27>.

<sup>13</sup> Dandi Kurniawan dan Abdullah A Afifi, "Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Sebagai Solusi Menyikapi Politik Identitas," *AL-IMAM: Journal on Islamic Studies, Civilization and Learning Societies* 4 (2023): 13–21, <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.58764/j.im.2023.4.30>.

The decision to use primary data provides a strong foundation for an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of political moderation.

The analysis conducted in this study does not merely compile data but also involves a careful understanding of the essence of the issues presented. By employing a descriptive-analytical approach, this research not only presents factual information but also attempts to delve into the meaning and implications of the phenomenon of political moderation. Furthermore, the use of Jürgen Habermas's theory of Deliberative Democracy provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics of political communication within the context of moderation,<sup>14</sup> while the principles of Maqashid Shariah, which protect the five essential aspects of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property as detailed by Ash-Syatibi, offer a valuable perspective in exploring the moral and ethical dimensions of political moderation within the framework of social justice.<sup>15</sup>

This research is significant because it focuses on the concept of "political moderation" in Indonesia. This topic has not been extensively explored but is becoming increasingly relevant in the contemporary social and political context. The primary reason why this research is both intriguing and essential is that Indonesia, as one of the largest democracies in the world, faces severe challenges in the form of political polarization that can disrupt social and political stability, as explained at the beginning of the introduction. By analyzing the differences between religious moderation and political moderation and testing the concept of political moderation through Jürgen Habermas's theory of Deliberative Democracy and Ash-Syatibi's Maqashid Shariah, this research provides not only theoretical insights but also practical applications that can be implemented to support a more inclusive and sustainable democracy. Additionally, understanding how political moderation can facilitate more productive dialogue and tolerance within society is crucial for building social justice and harmony in a pluralistic society like Indonesia.

## Results and Discussion

### *Mapping Political Polarisation in Indonesia*

The political landscape in Indonesia has undergone significant changes since the reform era began in the late 1990s.<sup>16</sup> The political system, initially dominated by centralistic power under the New Order, transformed into a more democratic and pluralistic structure following the fall of Soeharto in 1998.<sup>17</sup> This transformation has

<sup>14</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. oleh William Rehg (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), 1–676.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Imam Abu Ishaq Asy-Syatibi, *al-Muwafaqat fi Ushul as-Syari'ah*, II (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-Islamiyyah, 2003), 10.

<sup>16</sup> Ainur Ropik, "Islam dan Sosial Politik Dekade 1990-an (Sebuah Wacana Politik Islam Pasca Orde Baru)," *Wardah* 14, no. 2 (2013): 177–86, <https://doi.org/10.19109/wardah.v14i2.339>.

<sup>17</sup> Budi Winarno, *Sistem politik Indonesia era reformasi* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2007), 1–148.



dramatically impacted the political dynamics in Indonesia, including the emergence of new political parties, increased public participation in politics, and the implementation of decentralization, which has granted greater autonomy to regional governments.<sup>18</sup>

In the reform era, direct elections have become the norm, providing the public with the opportunity to elect presidents, governors, regents, and mayors.<sup>19</sup> This shift marks a substantial transition from an authoritarian model to a representative democracy, theoretically allowing for greater public participation in the policy-making process.<sup>20</sup> Although democracy has brought positive changes, the political system in Indonesia still faces several complex challenges, including corruption, nepotism, and political polarization.<sup>21</sup>

Corruption, in particular, remains one of the most significant challenges in Indonesian politics. Data indicates that the perception of corruption in Indonesia has remained stagnant, with a score of 34 in both 2014 and 2023. Consequently, Indonesia's position in the global rankings dropped five places, from 110th to 115th among 180 countries assessed.<sup>22</sup> Despite various measures taken to combat corruption, including the establishment of Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), the issue remains pervasive and frequently undermines public trust in political institutions.<sup>23</sup> Nepotism and cronyism also often disrupt the political process, where the interests of specific groups or families frequently dominate public policies that should be oriented toward the common good.<sup>24</sup>

Political polarization is another challenge that has emerged within the context of Indonesian politics. In recent years, political differences have often created sharp tensions, frequently accompanied by negative campaigns and even hate speech.<sup>25</sup> This phenomenon is often exacerbated by the use of social media, which, while facilitating political expression, also enables the spread of false information and reinforces echo

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<sup>18</sup> Syamsuddin Haris, *Partai, pemilu, dan parlemen era reformasi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014), 1–280.

<sup>19</sup> Putu Eva Ditayani Antari, "Interpretasi demokrasi dalam sistem mekanis terbuka pemilihan umum di Indonesia," *Jurnal Panorama Hukum* 3, no. 1 (2018): 87–104, <https://doi.org/10.21067/jph.v3i1.2359>.

<sup>20</sup> Mohamad Rosyidin, "Dari Otoritarianisme ke Demokrasi: Bagaimana Mendorong Negara Menuju Kestabilan dan Keterbukaan?," *Jurnal Penelitian Politik* | Volume 10, no. 1 (2013): 155–60, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jpp.v10i1.224>.

<sup>21</sup> Umbu Lily Pekuwaly, "Potret reformasi hukum di Indonesia pasca reformasi tahun 1998," *Masalah-masalah hukum* 41, no. 1 (2012): 153–59, <https://doi.org/10.14710/mmh.41.1.2012.153-159>.

<sup>22</sup> Susana Rita Kumalasanti, "Peringkat RI Merosot dalam Pemberantasan Korupsi," 30 Januari 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Febry Satya Wibawa Hussein, "Tinjauan Sejarah dan Dinamika Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi di Indonesia pada Periode I dan II (2003-2011)," *Khazanah: Jurnal Edukasi* 2, no. 1 (2020): 1–28, <https://www.jurnal.manlumajang.sch.id/index.php/khazanah/article/view/18>.

<sup>24</sup> Syaiful Wahab, "Birokrasi Indonesia Era Reformasi: Dilema Birokrasi dalam Proses Demokrasi," *Communitarian: Jurnal Prodi Ilmu Politik* 2, no. 1 (2019): 134–46, <https://doi.org/10.56985/jc.v2i1.94>.

<sup>25</sup> Arif Sugitanata dan Muannif Ridwan, "Menuju Keluarga yang Harmonis: Manajemen Konflik Politik dalam Keluarga di Tengah Perbedaan Pilihan Politik," *Jurnal Indragiri Penelitian Multidisiplin* 4, no. 1 (2024): 67–74, <https://ejournal.indrainstitute.id/index.php/jipm/article/view/706>.

chambers that can undermine healthy public discourse.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, the influence of political dynasties has become a concerning phenomenon in Indonesian politics.<sup>27</sup> The tendency of political families to dominate the political stage at various levels, from local to national, often raises concerns about the development of political oligarchies that can hinder democracy.<sup>28</sup> This issue brings up significant questions regarding equal political opportunities for all citizens and the potential for power monopolies that can obstruct innovation and reform in public governance.<sup>29</sup>

Decentralization, implemented as a solution to balance power and grant more rights and responsibilities to regional governments, also has a dual nature. On one hand, decentralization enhances administrative effectiveness and provides services that are more responsive to local needs. On the other hand, it also creates opportunities for regional leaders to consolidate power and sometimes misuse it, often without adequate oversight from central institutions.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, ideological battles also influence the political landscape in Indonesia. The clash between conservative and liberal values often occurs on various issues,<sup>31</sup> ranging from civil rights to public policy. This discourse can sometimes result in sharp polarization, where the differing sides not only disagree on opinions but also on fundamental values, potentially hindering productive dialogue and compromise.

Facing the complexity of political challenges in Indonesia requires an innovative and moderate approach to policymaking. This new moderate method should focus on balancing domestic needs with global demands while also respecting the diversity within Indonesian society. This approach must not only be pragmatic in addressing everyday issues but also visionary in shaping an inclusive and sustainable future. Reflecting on various political events in Indonesia, such as the post-reform period after 1998, the transition to democracy has faced challenges like increased political polarization during presidential elections, which often push society into opposing camps. Another event is the abuse of power and corruption by political officials, eroding public trust in democratic institutions.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Matteo Cinelli dkk., "The echo chamber effect on social media," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 9 (2021): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023301118>.

<sup>27</sup> Djoni Gunanto, "Tinjauan kritis politik dinasti di Indonesia," *Sawala: Jurnal Administrasi Negara* 8, no. 2 (2020): 177–91, <https://doi.org/10.30656/sawala.v8i2.2844>.

<sup>28</sup> Arif Sugitanata dkk., "Dinamika Politik Identitas dan Dinasti di Indonesia: Menuju Politik yang Ideal Melalui Eksplorasi Teori Masalah," *AL-BALAD: Jurnal Hukum Tata Negara dan Politik Islam* 2, no. 1 (2022): 81–91, <https://doi.org/10.59259/ab.v2i2.86>.

<sup>29</sup> Agus Dedi, "Politik Dinasti Dalam Perspektif Demokrasi," *Moderat: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pemerintahan* 8, no. 1 (2022): 92–101, <https://doi.org/10.25157/moderat.v8i1.2596>.

<sup>30</sup> Kristian Widya Wicaksono, "Problematisasi dan tantangan desentralisasi di Indonesia," *Jurnal Bina Praja: Journal of Home Affairs Governance* 4, no. 1 (2012): 21–28, <https://doi.org/10.21787/jbp.04.2012.21-28>.

<sup>31</sup> Ari Ganjar Herdiansah, "Politisasi identitas dalam kompetisi pemilu di Indonesia pasca 2014," *Jurnal Bawaslu* 3, no. 2 (2017): 169–83, <https://bawaslu.go.id/sites/default/files/publikasi/02%20JURNAL%20BAWASLU.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Damianus Benediktus Gene Djo Djo dan Patrisius Eduardus Kurniawan Jenila, "Pelemahan Masyarakat Sipil dan Gagalnya Desain Kelembagaan Demokrasi Pasca Reformasi 1998," *Journal of Politics and Policy* 4, no. 2 (2022): 47–63, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jppol.2022.004.02.04>.

Additionally, horizontal conflicts triggered by ethnic, religious, racial, and inter-group (SARA) issues in regional elections highlight the importance of moderation in maintaining social harmony.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, adopting a new moderate method in Indonesian politics is not just an option but a necessity for ensuring a healthy and dynamic democracy. With a more balanced and reflective approach, Indonesia can move forward with the confidence that the policies made will reflect the desires and needs of all its citizens, strengthening the nation's foundation in facing future challenges.

### **Political Moderation as a New Foundation in Indonesia**

The political spectrum is traditionally divided into left and right, with variations from liberal to conservative. This spectrum helps classify ideologies and political policies based on different social, economic, and cultural values. On one side, left-wing politics tends to support egalitarianism and government intervention to achieve equality. On the other hand, right-wing politics often prioritizes individual freedom. Liberalism and conservatism are also often associated with social and cultural aspects, where liberals tend to support progressive social change, and conservatives are more inclined to preserve traditional values.<sup>34</sup> However, political moderation as a new foundation lies in the middle of this spectrum. Political moderation is an approach that avoids extremes and seeks consensus or compromise among various political views. Moderation involves dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differences, which are essential in a democratic system where diverse voices need to be heard and valued. Moderation aims to strengthen the foundation of democracy by ensuring the sustainability of social and political stability.

Genealogically, political moderation can be considered a new foundation in political dialogue, especially when facing political polarization. Although there is no established “genealogy” in the history of Indonesian politics, this concept can find a meaningful place due to the complex social and political dynamics. Indonesia, with its wide ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, requires an inclusive approach that respects differences to ensure social integration and political stability. The context of the “new foundation” mentioned by the author relates to the recognition that traditional approaches in Indonesian politics, often sharply divided among ideological or interest groups, are no longer adequate to address current challenges. Political moderation as a “new foundation” proposes a new approach that focuses on balance, avoids extremism, and emphasizes justice and dialogue as tools to build more inclusive and representative policies. Through moderation, Indonesia can more effectively face challenges such as polarization, disinformation, and the risk of social disintegration. By

<sup>33</sup> Fariz Mahadika dan Nur Hidayat Sardini, “Radikalisasi Isu Agama Dalam Pemilihan Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur DKI Jakarta Tahun 2017,” *Journal of Politic and Government Studies* 8, no. 04 (2019): 131–40, <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/jpgs/article/viewFile/25027/22282>.

<sup>34</sup> Bambang Cipto, “Memberdayakan Partai Politik dalam Era Multipartai,” *Unisia* 39, no. 3 (1999): 34–42, <https://doi.org/10.20885/unisia.v0i39.5738>.

leveraging diversity as a strength rather than a source of division, political moderation offers a way to maintain national unity and strengthen democracy amid often unstable political conditions.

Therefore, political moderation in the current era is urgent and crucial to promote or demonstrate, especially in the context of the heated political situation in Indonesia. As explained, this approach prioritizes dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions, all of which are key to maintaining social stability and harmony. Political moderation not only avoids the escalation of conflict but also strengthens the foundation of democracy by ensuring that all voices, no matter how large or small, can be heard and valued.

In heated political conditions, emotions and group identities often dominate reason and dialogue.<sup>35</sup> It can lead to sharp polarization within society, where the space for constructive discussion and compromise becomes increasingly narrow. Political moderation emerges as a solution to overcome this challenge. By promoting an open attitude and accepting differences, society can avoid the trap of polarization and work together to find solutions to the problems faced. Additionally, political moderation is essential in ensuring that the political decision-making process reflects the interests of all segments of society. In a democratic system, it is crucial for all groups to feel that they have a voice and that their interests are acknowledged and considered.<sup>36</sup> Moderation helps build bridges between different viewpoints, facilitating productive dialogue and enabling the creation of more inclusive policies representative of the diversity within society.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, political moderation plays a significant role in maintaining national unity. Indonesia, with its vast diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, and culture, requires an inclusive approach that respects differences to ensure that every group feels part of the larger society.<sup>38</sup> Political moderation encourages unity and reduces the risk of social disintegration by emphasizing the importance of togetherness, cooperation, and mutual understanding. Political moderation also plays a crucial role in combating the spread of misinformation and hate speech that often emerge amid heated political conditions. In today's digital era, where information can quickly spread through social media and other online platforms, divisive narratives can quickly gain momentum.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Osbin Samosir dan Indah Novitasari, "Hak Politik Warga Negara Dalam Cengkeraman Politik Identitas: Refleksi Menuju Pemilu Serentak Nasional Tahun 2024," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Humaniora Dan Politik* 2, no. 3 (2022): 332–46, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jihhp.v2i3.1052>.

<sup>36</sup> Oliver Schmidtke, "The 'Will of the People': The Populist Challenge to Democracy in the Name of Popular Sovereignty," *Social & Legal Studies* 32, no. 6 (2023): 911–29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0964663923115312>.

<sup>37</sup> Moh Samhadi, "Pendidikan Moderasi & Toleransi Berbasis Hidden Curriculum," *Dirosat: Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2023): 233–46, <https://doi.org/10.28944/dirosat.v8i2.1543>.

<sup>38</sup> Vera Dwi Apriliani Acep, Etik Murtini, dan Gunawan Santoso, "Menghargai Perbedaan: Membangun Masyarakat Multikultural," *Jurnal Pendidikan Transformatif* 2, no. 2 (2023): 425–32, <https://doi.org/10.9000/jpt.v2i2.295>.

<sup>39</sup> F Budi Hardiman, "Manusia dalam prahara revolusi digital," *Diskursus-Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi Stf Driyarkara* 17, no. 2 (2018): 177–92, <https://doi.org/10.36383/diskursus.v17i2.252>.



Political moderation helps emphasize the importance of fact-checking and dialogue based on accurate information, thereby reducing the risk of society being divided by misinformation or prejudice.

Moreover, political moderation teaches the importance of patience and understanding in politics. In seeking solutions to complex national issues, there are rarely simple or quick answers. It takes time to discuss, negotiate, and ultimately reach agreements that all parties can accept. A moderate approach encourages leaders and citizens to take the necessary time for this process, avoiding rushed decisions that may have undesirable long-term consequences.<sup>40</sup> Moderation also helps strengthen democratic institutions.<sup>41</sup> By prioritizing dialogue and compromise, moderation teaches that political and legal institutions should be respected and used as means to resolve disputes. It encourages active participation in the democratic process, such as elections, legislative activities, and party involvement, responsibly and constructively.

In Islam, the concept of moderation (*al-wasathiyyah*) is a fundamental principle that is highly emphasized, supporting ideas such as balance, justice, and avoiding extremism in all aspects of life, including politics.<sup>42</sup> The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 143, states that Muslims are made to be a just and moderate community so that they may be witnesses to humanity. This verse underscores the position of Muslims as a middle nation, not leaning towards extreme right or left, reflecting the importance of balance and moderation. In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat [49]: 13, Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

The above verse underscores the importance of diversity and encourages dialogue between groups to strengthen understanding and tolerance. Then, in Surah An-Nisa' [4]: 58

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

The above verse commands Muslims to uphold justice with full responsibility. Justice is one of the fundamental principles in Islam that must be applied in all aspects of life, including politics and decision-making. Next, in the Qur'an, Surah Ali-Imran [3]: 103

<sup>40</sup> Sugitanata, "Urgensi Pemilihan Pemimpin Beretika dalam Perspektif Maqashid Syariah Menuju Tatanan Sosial dan Politik yang Sehat."

<sup>41</sup> Satish Krishnan dan Thompson SH Teo, "Moderating effects of governance on information infrastructure and e-government development," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 63, no. 10 (2012): 1929–46, <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.22660>.

<sup>42</sup> Arif Sugitanata, "Islam Wasthiyyah Dalam Kaca Mata Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Ilmu Studi Ushuluddin Dan Filsafat* 16, no. 1 (2020): 191–211, <https://doi.org/10.24239/rsy.v16i1.573>.

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ ۚ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

The above verse reminds Muslims to hold firmly to the rope of Allah and not be divided. It also emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation and avoiding division and conflict. Allah, the Almighty, also says in Surah Asy-Syura [42]: 38

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ۚ

The above verse explains those who respond to their Lord's command and establish prayer; their affairs are decided by mutual consultation among themselves. This highlights the importance of collective involvement in decision-making, a principle that strongly supports the ideas of moderation and dialogue.

The urgency of political moderation is also evident and extends to economic development. Political and social stability are prerequisites for sustainable economic growth. Investments, both domestic and foreign, tend to flow into countries where there is legal and political certainty.<sup>43</sup> By maintaining a moderate political climate, Indonesia can attract more investment, which in turn will boost economic development and the welfare of the people. Therefore, political moderation is a strategic choice that must be prioritized, especially amid heated political conditions, as seen during the 2019 general election in Indonesia with two highly competitive factions and claims of victory from both sides, followed by mass protests that resulted in riots in several places.<sup>44</sup> Through moderation, Indonesia can maintain stability, strengthen democracy, and advance collective welfare. It is a crucial step in ensuring that the country can continue to develop peacefully and harmoniously, utilizing its diversity as a strength rather than a source of division. Thus, political moderation is not only about avoiding conflict but also about building a solid foundation for a healthy democracy. It is vital to creating a bright future for Indonesia, where all its citizens can thrive together in a safe, peaceful, and prosperous environment.

### **Religious Moderation vs Political Moderation**

Moderation in religion and politics are two distinct concepts that both play crucial roles in shaping a harmonious and inclusive society. On the one hand, religious moderation emphasizes a middle-ground approach that avoids extremism, fosters tolerance, and respects diverse beliefs.<sup>45</sup> It reflects principles of balance, justice, and simplicity in practicing religious teachings. These principles are recognized in various religious

<sup>43</sup> Nizar Becheikh, "Political stability and economic growth in developing economies: Lessons from Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt ten years after the Arab Spring," *Insights into Regional Development* 3, no. 2 (2021): 229–51, [https://doi.org/10.9770/ird.2021.3.2\(5\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/ird.2021.3.2(5)).

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Basyir, "Penegakan Hukum Pidana Terhadap Pelaku Kerusuhan Massa Pasca Pilpres 2019 Di Kota Pontianak," *Jurnal Fatwa Hukum* 3, no. 1 (t.t.), <https://jurnal.untan.ac.id/index.php/jfh/article/view/38646>.

<sup>45</sup> Rohmat Mulyana, "Religious moderation in Islamic religious education textbook and implementation in Indonesia," *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8592>.

traditions, including Islam, which advocates for *al-wasatiyyah* (moderation) as a middle path in all aspects of life, including interactions with others who may hold different beliefs.<sup>46</sup>

Additionally, in the context of religion, moderation teaches believers to find a balance between spiritual and worldly life, encouraging them to practice their faith in a way that aligns with their social and cultural contexts without compromising the fundamental principles of their religion.<sup>47</sup> It is crucial in preventing religion-based polarization and strengthening the foundation of an inclusive society where various beliefs and practices can coexist peacefully. A concrete example of an inclusive society can be seen in Jakarta, where the Istiqlal Mosque, known as one of the largest mosques in Indonesia, has received international recognition and has been visited by several religious leaders from various countries. Located near this mosque is the magnificent Jakarta Cathedral. The geographical proximity of these two places of worship is often regarded as a symbol of the high level of religious tolerance in Indonesia.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, political moderation involves a balanced approach to political decision-making processes, promoting dialogue and compromise and prioritizing common interests over individual or group differences. This moderation is highly relevant in the context of democracy, where diverse opinions and interests must be managed constructively to prevent conflicts and strengthen the very foundation of democracy itself. In Indonesia, characterized by its ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, political moderation is key to maintaining unity and ensuring that all groups feel valued and represented.

The main difference between these two concepts lies in their application domains. Religious moderation focuses on how individuals and communities practice their religion in a non-extreme manner.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, political moderation focuses on the processes and practices of decision-making in the public domain, encompassing respect for plurality and differing opinions. Nevertheless, both complement each other in creating a peaceful and harmonious society. In this regard, the author argues that religious moderation can support political moderation by instilling values of tolerance and respect for differences, which are essential foundations for political dialogue and compromise. Additionally, political moderation reinforces democratic principles by promoting inclusiveness and active participation from all segments of society. It includes appreciating minority voices and encouraging policies that represent the

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<sup>46</sup> Ahmad Suharto dkk., "Positioning the Meaning of Wasatiyyah in Religious Moderation," *SANGKÉP: Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 6, no. 2 (2023): 114–30, <https://doi.org/10.20414/sangkep.v6i2.7931>.

<sup>47</sup> Dudung Abdul Rohman, *Moderasi Beragama Dalam Bingkai Keislaman Di Indonesia* (Bandung: Lekkas, 2021), 1–133.

<sup>48</sup> Eko Digdoyo, "Kajian isu toleransi beragama, budaya, dan tanggung jawab sosial media," *JPK (Jurnal Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan)* 3, no. 1 (2018): 42–59, <https://doi.org/10.24269/jpk.v3.n1.2018.pp42-59>.

<sup>49</sup> Pribadyo Prakosa, "Moderasi Beragama: Praksis Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama," *Jurnal Ilmiah Religiosity Entity Humanity (JIREH)* 4, no. 1 (2022): 45–55, <https://doi.org/10.37364/jireh.v4i1.69>.

diversity of the community. Thus, political moderation not only avoids polarization and conflict but also strengthens democratic institutions and advances collective well-being.

The author argues that religious and political moderation are mutually necessary to create a positive synergy. When society can maintain balance in both religious and political spheres, they are better equipped to face social, economic, and political challenges constructively and inclusively. Furthermore, the roles of both types of moderation in the context of Indonesia—a country with remarkable religious and ethnic diversity—cannot be overstated. Moderation, whether in religion or politics, plays a crucial role in maintaining national harmony and unity, enabling Indonesia to harness its diversity as a unifying strength rather than a source of division. Through a moderate approach, Indonesia can continue to develop as a mature democracy, valuing diversity while ensuring stability and prosperity for all its citizens.

### ***Examining Political Moderation Through the Lens of Jürgen Habermas's Deliberative Democracy and Asy-Syatibi's Maqasid Shariah***

Using Habermas's perspective in political analysis is highly beneficial for the writer, especially in the context of political moderation, as Habermas's theory emphasizes the importance of rational and discursive communication in society. Habermas views the public sphere as a vital arena where citizens can participate in free and open discussions aimed at reaching a consensus. It is highly relevant for understanding the dynamics of dialogue and consensus in political moderation, which is a crucial element in maintaining social stability and harmony, as well as ensuring that policies reflect collective interests. Habermas's approach provides deep insights into how communication and mutual understanding can facilitate a more inclusive and democratic political decision-making process,<sup>50</sup> which is crucial in a diverse country like Indonesia.

Political moderation, as emphasized, promotes dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions. It aligns with Habermas's idea of 'communicative action,' where mutual understanding is achieved through dialogue.<sup>51</sup> In the context of Indonesia, which is rich in ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, moderation serves as a vital tool for bridging differences, reducing the risk of polarization, and facilitating deliberative processes that respect diverse opinions and identities.<sup>52</sup> When emotions and group identities overshadow rationality and dialogue, the space for constructive discussion and compromise diminishes.<sup>53</sup> It leads to social polarization that can threaten the stability and integrity of democracy. Therefore, political moderation not

<sup>50</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Cambridge: MIT press, 1991), 1–326.

<sup>51</sup> Philippe Portier, "Religion and democracy in the thought of Jürgen Habermas," *Society* 48, no. 5 (2011): 426–32, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-011-9470-3>.

<sup>52</sup> Acep, Murtini, dan Santoso, "Menghargai Perbedaan: Membangun Masyarakat Multikultural."

<sup>53</sup> Samosir dan Novitasari, "Hak Politik Warga Negara Dalam Cengkeraman Politik Identitas: Refleksi Menuju Pemilu Serentak Nasional Tahun 2024."

only prevents conflict escalation but also strengthens the foundations of democracy by ensuring that all voices are heard. It creates an environment where political decisions reflect collective interests and not just the dominant majority, consistent with Habermas's principle of deliberation, which emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and participation.<sup>54</sup>

Furthermore, moderation supports national unity and social integration in Indonesia, preventing social disintegration by promoting cooperation and understanding across groups. One example of an event in Indonesia that demonstrates how moderation supports national unity and social integration is the role of major religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in mediating conflicts between groups. For instance, in conflicts between religious or ethnic groups that have occurred in some regions, these organizations often actively engage in dialogue and mediation to ease tensions.<sup>55</sup> It reflects Habermas's understanding of society as a socially integrated entity where cohesion is achieved through communicative processes.<sup>56</sup> Thus, political moderation promotes healthy deliberative democratic practices, where dialogue and compromise are seen as tools to achieve broader consensus and more inclusive policies. Additionally, the digital era adds a new dimension to this challenge, where information and misinformation can spread rapidly. Political moderation, with its emphasis on fact-checking and dialogue based on accurate information, reflects Habermas's principle of the need for rational communication in the public sphere.<sup>57</sup> It is crucial for combating misinformation and promoting a mutual understanding based on facts and evidence.

Finally, political moderation also supports the Islamic principles of balance, justice, and avoiding extremism, which intrinsically promote dialogue and cross-cultural understanding. It demonstrates the compatibility between deliberative democratic values and the principles underlying many cultural and religious traditions in Indonesia, including Islam. In the context of economic development, the stability resulting from political moderation creates a conducive environment for investment and growth. It illustrates how deliberative democracy, supported by political moderation, benefits not only the political process but also the broader economic conditions. Therefore, political moderation within the framework of Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Deliberative Democracy offers a robust framework for

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<sup>54</sup> Denise Vitale, "Between deliberative and participatory democracy: A contribution on Habermas," *Philosophy & social criticism* 32, no. 6 (2006): 739–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453706064022>.

<sup>55</sup> Amru Almu'tasim, "Berkaca NU dan Muhammadiyah dalam mewujudkan nilai-nilai moderasi Islam di Indonesia," *TARBIYA ISLAMIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 8, no. 2 (2019): 199–212, <http://ejurnal.unim.ac.id/index.php/tarbiya/article/view/474>.

<sup>56</sup> Philip Schlesinger, "The nation and communicative space," dalam *Media power, professionals and policies*, 1 ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 99–115.

<sup>57</sup> Gabriele De Angelis, "Habermas, democracy and the public sphere: Theory and practice," *European Journal of Social Theory* 24, no. 4 (2021): 437–47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310211038753>.



understanding and addressing the challenges faced by contemporary Indonesian democracy.

On the other hand, the urgency of political moderation in the current era, especially in the context of the heated political situation in Indonesia, can be deeply analyzed through the lens of the Maqashid Shariah theory developed by Asy-Syatibi. This theory, which focuses on fulfilling the objectives of Shariah to protect and preserve the interests of humanity,<sup>58</sup> provides a rich framework for understanding the value and urgency of political moderation in creating social stability and harmony. Political moderation, which prioritizes dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions, is directly related to the concept of '*daruriyyat*' (necessities) in Asy-Syatibi's Maqashid Shariah, which includes the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.<sup>59</sup> In this context, moderation serves to protect religion by promoting freedom of thought and belief, life and intellect by preventing the escalation of conflicts that could lead to physical and psychological violence, and lineage and property by creating a stable environment for the survival and well-being of future generations.

The principle of *al-wasatiyyah* (moderation) in Islam, as emphasized in Quranic verses such as Surah Al-Baqarah [2:143], underscores the position of Muslims as a moderate community, avoiding extremes on either the right or left.<sup>60</sup> It reflects the importance of balance and moderation in every aspect of life, including politics. The approach of political moderation is a manifestation of this principle, where dialogue and compromise are prioritized over confrontation and extremism. Furthermore, the concept of justice in Islam, as explained in Surah An-Nisa' [4:58], is one of the main pillars that must be applied in politics. Political moderation allows for the creation of fair and inclusive policies that consider the interests of all segments of society, thereby fulfilling the demands of Shariah justice.

Additionally, the urgency of political moderation is related to the principles of *ta'awun* (cooperation) and *musyawarah* (consultation) in Islam. As emphasized in Surah Ash-Shura [42:38], the process of collective and participatory decision-making is at the core of good governance, supporting moderation and dialogue as a means to achieve consensus and fair decisions.<sup>61</sup> In the context of economic development, political moderation contributes to stability and legal and political certainty, which are essential prerequisites for sustainable economic growth. It aligns with the objectives of Maqashid Shariah, which are to protect property and promote general welfare. Therefore, through the lens of Maqashid Shariah Theory, political moderation is not only seen as a strategy to avoid conflict but as a fundamental principle that supports the creation of a just, stable, and harmonious society. It emphasizes the importance of

<sup>58</sup> Al-Imam Abu Ishaq Asy-Syatibi, *al-Muwafaqat fi Ushul as-Syari'ah*, 10.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Imam Abu Ishaq Asy-Syatibi, *al-Muwafaqat fi Ushul as-Syari'ah*.

<sup>60</sup> Sugitanata, "Islam Wasthiyyah Dalam Kaca Mata Tafsir Al-Qur'an."

<sup>61</sup> Arif Sugitanata, Suud Sarim Karimullah, dan Rizal Al Hamid, "Hukum Positif dan Hukum Islam: Analisis Tata Cara Menemukan Hukum dalam Kacamata Hukum Positif dan Hukum Islam," *JURISY: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.37348/jurisy.v3i1.242>.

inclusive policies, intergroup dialogue, and respect for diversity, all of which are key to advancing common welfare and preserving national integrity. By applying these principles, Indonesia can navigate its political challenges in ways that strengthen democracy and leverage diversity as a source of strength.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, political moderation underscores the importance of moderation as a critical factor in maintaining social stability and harmony, particularly in today's often heated political climate. An approach to moderation that emphasizes dialogue, tolerance, and respect for differing opinions not only prevents the escalation of conflicts but also strengthens the foundations of democracy by ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. In the context of Indonesia, political moderation is essential for addressing challenges such as misinformation and hate speech in the digital era, reinforcing democratic institutions, and fostering economic development by creating an environment conducive to investment. Through the lens of Jürgen Habermas's deliberative democracy, moderation is viewed as a prerequisite for healthy democratic deliberation, facilitating rational and inclusive discussions in the public sphere.

Meanwhile, through the lens of Asy-Syatibi's Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, the fundamental framework for political moderation supports the protection of religion by promoting diversity of belief and freedom of thought. These elements are essential for preventing religious conflict and maintaining interfaith harmony. Simultaneously, political moderation is crucial for safeguarding reason by fostering rational, dialogue-based political discourse instead of conflict and polarization. This approach ensures that political decisions are made based on thoughtful and considered judgment rather than impulsiveness.

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