

## **Problems of Religious Moderation in Sooko Ponorogo District (Liberalism, Exclusivism, Extremism)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Surat Al Mumtahanah verse 8 emphasizes the need to do good and be fair to people of all religions in a social and cultural environment. When discussing one's rights and obligations as a citizen or state, one's religion becomes irrelevant. The state guarantees equality for all citizens. The purpose of this research is to open up new insights about how the values of religious moderation are applied in society. This study uses a qualitative approach by uncovering data through interviews and field observations in accordance with the facts that occur, with the support of previous research data. The results of this research have been studied and studied in depth, it is suspected that several areas in Sooko Sub-District are exposed to movements of exclusivism, extremism, and radicalism which disrupt the harmony of religious moderation. Several cases were revealed from the activities of the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia group, the LDII Islamic Defenders Front. The conclusion of this research is that there needs to be serious steps from the government in tackling movements that have the potential to divide diversity.

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## INTRODUCTION

The variety of ethnicities, races, customs, traditions, cultures, languages, beliefs, and beliefs that can be mixed in the philosophy of Pancasila distinguishes Indonesia as a nation state. Indonesia's vast anuntung is an extraordinary potential that we must be grateful for by guarding and caring for it so that it is not scattered by the extremism and radicalism that has arisen as a result of globalization and the availability of information. There must be a way to become a filter for the provisions of the nation's life, which must be embedded in the soul of the nation. In the context of religion, moderation is understood by adherents and adherents of Islam known as Wasatiyah Islam or moderate Islam, namely, namely Islam of the middle way that is far from violence, loves peace, tolerance, maintains good moral values, accepts every change and renewal for the benefit. The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia has a pluralistic society, including race, language, religion, customs, and social position. Diversity may be a “unifying force” that connects peoples, but it can also be a source of conflict across civilizations, races, ethnicities, beliefs, and values. Cultural diversity (multiculturalism) is a natural phenomenon that occurs when people from many cultures meet and interact in various ways, not only among the general public but also among political and academic elites who hold positions in various agencies.<sup>1</sup> Differences in ethnicity, race, religion, language, and culture in Indonesia can cause various conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

The conflicts within society that arise from intergroup violence that erupted irregularly in various parts of Indonesia show how fragile the sense of unity formed within the Indonesian nation state is, how thick intergroup prejudice is, and how little mutual understanding between groups is.<sup>3</sup> The culture of violence emphasizes conflict as a destroyer or destroyer. Conflict is considered a conflict between good and evil, black and white wins and loses, and gains and losses. Conflict can be considered as a necessary source of violence if viewed negatively and handled competitively. As a result, to achieve social peace, more efforts must be made to take problems more seriously.<sup>4</sup>

Textual-based teachings as a result of human creativity and initiative which are

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<sup>1</sup> Agus Akhmadi, "Religious Moderation in Indonesia's Diversity Religious Moderation in Indonesia 'S Diversity," *Journal of Religious Training* 13, no. 2 (2019): 45–55.

<sup>2</sup> Pariera Dinar Halizah, Zamzam Mustofa, and Amir Mukminin, "Implementasi Media Pembelajaran Audio Visual Sebagai Upaya Menarik Minat Belajar Siswa PAI Dalam Pembelajaran Daring Di SMPN 1 Lembayan," *JURNAL PAI: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2023): 59–72.

<sup>3</sup> Darlis., "Bringing Islamic Moderation in a Multicultural Society," *Raulyan Fiker*, Vol.13 No. (n.d.): 225–255.

<sup>4</sup> Fahrudin, "The Importance of Religious Moderation for Religious Extensionists. Republika.," n.d.

influenced by geographical, social, and cultural conditions, so that they have different wisdom and traditions which are typical practice patterns, as well as contextual-based teachings as a result of human creativity and initiative which are influenced by geographical, social, and cultural conditions, so that they have different wisdom and traditions which are typical practice patterns. designed and made by Almighty God.<sup>5</sup>

The argument for Islamic moderation or what is known as Wasatiyah Islam has recently been heating up. In the process of disclosing Islamic doctrine, several organizations are known to have extremist beliefs, which sometimes become incentives for acts of intolerance and violence. The Qur'an and Hadith are the two main sources of religious authority in Islam; nonetheless, this phenomenon shows that there are many different interpretations of Islam. There are many different Islamic organizations, each of which sometimes has its own characteristics in terms of religious practices and practices. It seems that this distinction has developed into sunatullah, common sense, and even a blessing in itself.<sup>6</sup> Conditions that Allah wills variety in life is something that must be acknowledged. This includes the variety and variety of thought in the scientific field, as well as the various human reactions to the truthfulness of sacred texts, the interpretation of their contents, and the forms that the practice of these religions might take.

In regard to religious practices, the religious teachings that appear on the surface usually have a double face. In particular, parts of *das* (moral principles) often conflict with the socio-religious reality on the ground (*das sein*). When viewed from this perspective, Islam's well-known image as a religion that contributes to the good of the universe has been fundamentally harmed as a result of the intolerance shown by extremist Muslim organizations.

The main objective of Islamic teachings, which is to defend the soul, religion, property, lineage, and reason, will surely disappear if humans continue to be intolerant and violent. In fact, the history of the actions of the Prophet Muhammad, as documented in various hadith literature, reveals a very different picture. Because the main mission of the Prophet Muhammad SAW came from God, he was entrusted with the task of perfecting morals or virtues. Under these ideal conditions, looking to the Prophet to gain insight into the Islamic concept of moderation, known as *wasatiyah*, is essential to achieve. To understand and practice, this principle requires a more in-depth study of the Prophet's

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<sup>5</sup> Mustaqim Hasan, "Principles of Religious Moderation in National Life," *Mubtadiin Journal* 7, no. 2 (2021): 110–23.

<sup>6</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *A Glimmer of Divine Light: Living With the Qur'an*. (Bandung: Mizan, 2007).

hadith. Therefore, the example set by the Prophet can be translated into noble ideas and values that are universal, and these concepts and values can then become a guideline for Muslim communities in carrying out their rituals and social religion.<sup>7</sup>

In a study entitled "Potential Conflict and Integration of Religious Life in Gorontalo Province" conducted by Abdul Jamil, it was emphasized that there were several problems that had to be anticipated early on so that they would not turn into serious problems. One of them is the potential for a pluralistic society, which is usually prone to conflicts with racial, ethnic, ethnic or religious tendencies, as well as SARA between groups. At the end of the 19th century, Sooko Village was founded at the last crossroads. Ki Suromanggolo, a former soldier from Mataram who was part of Prince Diponegoro's army, is said to be the creator of the village of Sooko Ponorogo in East Java. This knowledge comes from village elders. Because he is a descendant of Seloadji, the first Path of the Duchy of Ponorogo, he is still considered a member of the Ponorogo royal family. When the Diponegoro battle was finally won in 1830. Ponorogo Regency, which is located in East Java Province, Indonesia, has Sooko as one of its subdistricts. To the southeast of the capital city of Ponorogo Regency is this subdistrict. The distance is about 25 kilometers. Dusun Sooko serves as the administrative center for the surrounding area, which includes a total of six communities (Bedoho-Jurug-Klepu-Ngadirojo-Sooko-Suru) and three major religions (Catholic, Christian and Islamic).<sup>8</sup> Tolerance between religious communities in Indonesia is a growing concern that proponents of peace and moderation must watch out for.

The phenomenon of the second decade of the 21st century emphasizes contrast rather than defining similarities among adherents of religions, especially the majority of Muslims. Non-tolerance occurs when each religious group is unable to maintain close and respectful interreligious contact. This can be seen from the many incidents of conflict that were motivated by religion. According to the research, there have been several incidents of religious conflict in Indonesia, such as the Poso case from 1998 to 2001, which involved conflicts between youths of different religions. As the dispute grew, the local political class politicized it to gain a large following. This exacerbated the religious conflict because it was tainted by politics that favored group identification. A similar incident occurred in Singkil Aceh District. Starting from the establishment of the Indonesian Church of God (GTT) in 1979, this resulted in demonstrations by Muslims in Singkil which led to war. The burning

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<sup>7</sup> Ardiansyah, "Wasatîyah Islam in the Perspective of Hadith: From Concept to Application," *Jurnal Mutawatir* 6(2), 2016.

<sup>8</sup> "[https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sooko,\\_Ponorogo](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sooko,_Ponorogo)," n.d.

of the church occurred in 1995.<sup>9</sup> In 2016, there were two riots in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra. It all started when a resident complained that the sound of the call to prayer at the Al-makshum mosque was too loud and disturbed local residents, most of whom were non-Muslims. This comment angered the Muslims, prompting them to riot. Hundreds of Muslims launched attacks, destroying and burning local monasteries and temples. This study uses many studies as the basis for significant information about the Problem of Religious Moderation in Sooko Ponorogo District (Liberalism, Exclusivism, and Extremism).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses descriptive research and qualitative methodology. A descriptive approach will be used to describe the phenomenon of religious moderation in Sooko Ponorogo Subdistrict, which will be put into story form. The aim of qualitative research is to gain a broad understanding of social reality through the eyes of community leaders. Based on this examination, conclusions will be obtained in the form of broad abstract knowledge about reality. This research looks at data and data sources. Researchers are looking for data on: a) The Problem of Religious Moderation in the Liberalism Cluster; b) The Problem of Religious Moderation of Exclusivism Clusters; and c) The Problem of Religious Moderation of the Extremism Cluster in the Sooko District, which will later be explored from existing documents and observation of objects. Researchers grouped the data sources from the three criteria mentioned above into two categories. The following are examples of primary and secondary data that support this qualitative research data: First, the original data, namely, data sources that include the original data, namely, data collected directly in the field. Officials, Islamic religious leaders, and Catholic religious leaders are the main data sources. Second, secondary data, or complementary data sources that are not obtained directly in the field, but from sources made by other people.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Definition of Scope and Indicators of Religious Moderation**

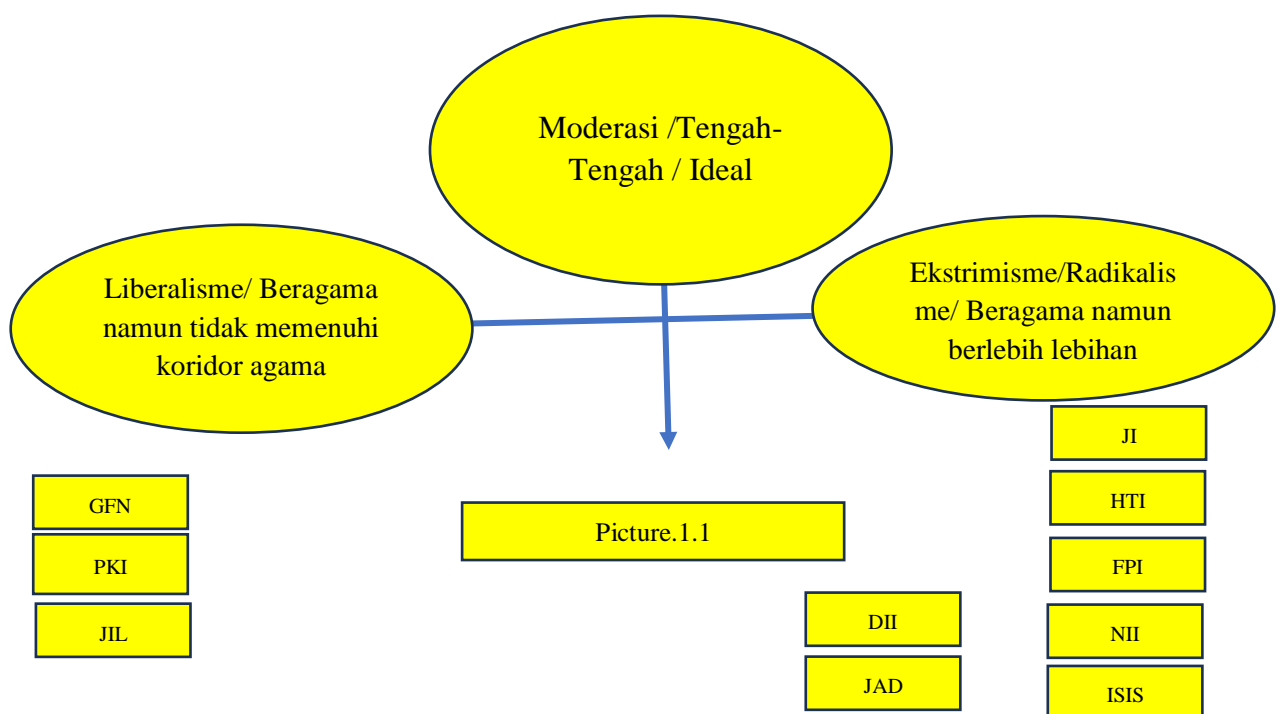
Islamic moderation developed into an Islamic religious philosophy that incorporates basic Islamic principles. Teachings that emphasize not only good relations with God, but

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<sup>9</sup> Amelia Innayah, Zamzam Mustofa, and Amir Mukminin, "UPAYA PENINGKATAN KETERAMPILAN SISWA MELALUI PROGRAM KELAS KETERAMPILAN TKR (TATA KECANTIKAN KULIT DAN RAMBUT) DAN TOKR (TEKNIK OTOMOTIF DAN KENDARAAN RINGAN) DI MAN 2 NGAWI," *Jurnal Tawadhu* 7, no. 1 (2023): 24–32.

also good interactions with all human beings. Not only to brothers and sisters, but also to other brothers and sisters<sup>10</sup>. Religious moderation does not mean that we confuse the truth and erase each other's identities. We still have a clear attitude towards the problem about the truth about the law of an issue, but in moderation in religion, we are more open to accepting that there are fellow countrymen outside of us who have the same rights as us as a sovereign society within the framework of nationality. Every individual has views outside of belief or religion that we must accept and acknowledge in order to continue to behave and practice religion properly. Moderation in Islam has been shown by our forefathers, starting from our prophet, companions, academics, and scholars, who were polite to people regardless of their religious origin, race, ethnicity, or language.<sup>11</sup>

This balance fosters openness to existing differences, which are seen as sunnatullah and kindness to others. Furthermore, Islamic moderation is expressed in an attitude that is difficult to blame, let alone disbelief in people or organizations with different views. Islamic moderation encourages brotherhood based on human values, not just creed or ethnicity. This kind of interpretation gains traction in the Islamic world in general, which is facing a humanitarian crisis, and in Indonesia in particular, which also faces many humanitarian problems as a consequence of a less moderate religious attitude. Consequently, the development of Islamic law becomes dynamic and according to the times



<sup>10</sup> RI Ministry of Religion., *Academic Text for Religious Extension Center for Religious Life*. Jakarta., 2015.

<sup>11</sup> S. Schwartz, *Two Faces of Islam: Moderateism vs. Fundamentalism in Global Discourse*. Jakarta: Belantika, n.d.

Indicators of Religious Moderation, National commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and respect for local culture are four indications.

Government involvement in realizing peace is also essential. Village management plans must be developed with a sense of justice, wisdom, and local wisdom. The government always implements policies that are just between the two religions. The development of forums for religious harmony is one of the real forms of village governance in building harmony. Another illustration of justice is when village officials are elected with 50% Muslim votes and 50% Catholic vote. When holding an activity, the committee must consist of 50% Muslims and 50% Catholics. This aims to reduce inequality or injustice. The village secretary is Muslim while the village head is Catholic.<sup>12</sup>

### **Problems of Religious Moderation in the Liberalism Cluster**

The teachings of liberalism that emerged in the 17th century have gone down in history as having some of the most important things that emerged from them. It is clear, based on the evidence provided by many different sources, that Western countries have always been associated with the rise of liberalism. Where the West has full control over every aspect of society, including the government<sup>13</sup>The development of liberalism in response to the many challenges faced by humanity throughout this historical period. At that time, the existence of humanity was seen as nothing more than a resource that had to be exploited to build a strong nation. No thought was given or compassion was shown for the suffering of these people. Not only in the West, but also in the Islamic world, especially in Arab countries, scholars have shown an interest in liberalism. This is especially true in the Arab world. Arabs are known for their practices and rituals, as well as their brutal rule.

There is a large amount of oppression and discrimination on humanity, especially women. The concept of liberalism can refer to many different things and can be subdivided as follows: Islamic liberalism can be defined as a freedom that is inherent in the Islamic faith without any restrictions being placed on that freedom. This freedom is not limited. The goal of liberal Islam is to encourage Muslims to disobey those in positions of authority within the Islamic community. Liberal Islam can be interpreted as the freedom inherent in the Islamic

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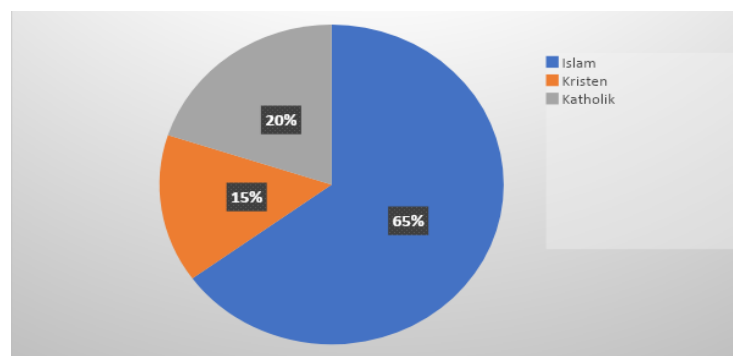
<sup>12</sup> Siti Yumni'ah, Zamzam Mustofa, and Amir Mukminin, "IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOROGAN METHOD IN DEVELOPING THE CHARACTER OF STUDENTS AT THE DARUSSALAM BANGUNSARI PONOROGO ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL," *EL-SANADI* 1, no. 1 (2023): 24–31.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Dahlan & Katimin, "Isu-Isu Islam Contemporary," in *This I* (Bandung: Cipta Pustaka Media, 2014).

creed, even though there are restrictions (based on the Koran and Hadith).

The liberalization of Islamic thought refers to the freedom of thought inherent in Muslims; this freedom of thought is not limited and regardless of the values of the surrounding environment, but is still limited by Islamic teachings. Liberalism in the Western world, more specifically the freedom that is present in the Western world, where there are no limits to the freedom that people can live with, is an example. Islam recognizes that human ontological nature is to be a subject who acts on something and always changes himself.

Therefore, make progress towards new opportunities for a more enjoyable and realistic life. Education must always open up possibilities for humans to organize and choose constructive, inventive, and productive ways of thinking and acting. However, what is happening now is that humanity has lost its dynamic, creative, and progressive qualities. A critical and in-depth study of Islamic thought cannot emerge by itself. This happens as a direct result of a mentality that rejects original and innovative human intelligence.<sup>14</sup> The research findings show that the majority of religious adherents in Sooko District, especially among young people, have a significant gap in religious knowledge. Failure to get sufficient religious instruction at home, at school, or in the community may be the cause. In fact, not a few of them openly violate the norms that have been set both in the general provisions and the Shari'a regulations themselves.<sup>15</sup>

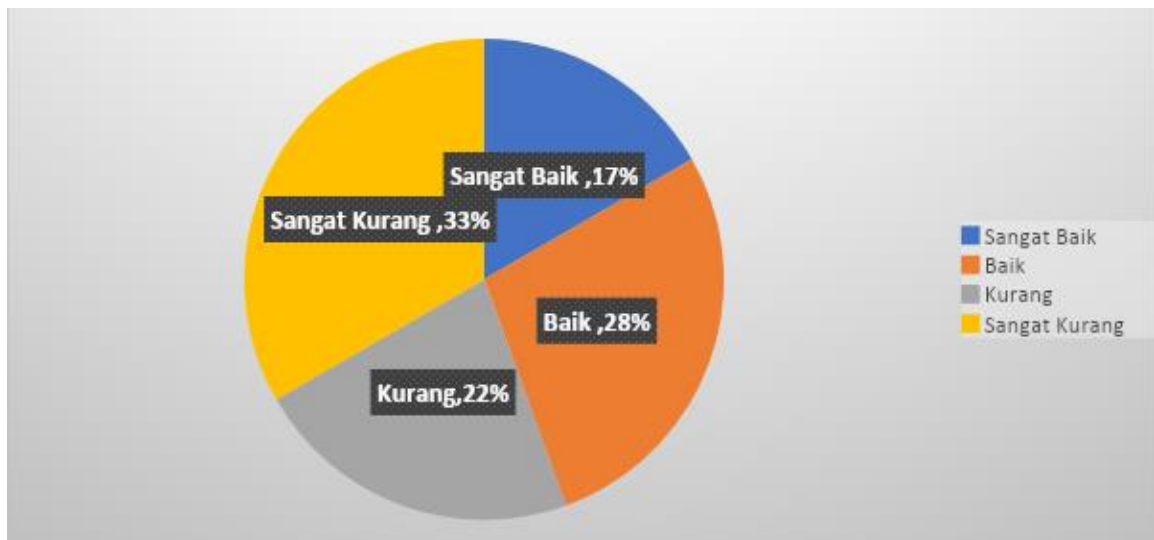


Picture.1.2

<sup>14</sup> Rahmat Rahmat, "LIBERALISM IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION (Implications for the Islamic Religion Learning System in Schools)," *Nidhomul Haque* 1, no. 2 (2016): 70–88.

<sup>15</sup> Wanagun, "Interview with Local Residents" (2023).





Picture.1.3

From the data above, it can be observed and it can be concluded that the understanding of religion in the Sooko subdistrict is very diverse and because there are many variants, it is very vulnerable to understanding Islam in a kaffah or moderate way.

### Problems of Religious Moderation in the Exclusivism Cluster

There are a number of different interpretations that can be given to the term "exclusivism", despite the fact that it can refer to the behavior of social groupings in a variety of different ways. One thing that people and organizations trying to separate themselves from the rest have in common is their mindset. On the other hand, examples of exclusivism are quite easy to find in everyday life. It is certain that within the framework of exclusivism there is or has developed a theological concept that is unable to foster a culture of debate and tolerance. This is because exclusivism prevents the formation of pluralism. This exclusivism has become an obstacle in itself, especially in the context of competition between different religions or even within each religion. Because the idea of exclusivism has created new anxiety and anxiety in the context of building a peaceful and tolerant religious life, all parties, both fundamentalists and liberalists, are imprisoned in their respective truth claims.

In Sooko District, namely, in Klepu Sooko Village, Ponorogo, the presence of several mass groups is a source of much anxiety among local residents. The Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Council (DDII) is one of the groups participating in this competition. Transliteration: Al-Majlisu Al-A'lā Al-Indūnisī Li Ad-Da'wah Al-Islāmiyyah) is

a Sunni Islamic organization in Indonesia that focuses on da'wah. The fact that there are initiatives against Christianization or Catholicization is a favorable outcome of this situation.

On the other hand, there is also a negative impact on the growth of religious moderation. For example, since DDII arrived, there has been a ban on wishing other religions, happy holidays, and coming to other religious holidays. This is just one example. Because it is not included in the Shari'a, it is forbidden to carry out customs based on local traditions that are not Islamic. Based on the description above, this is a significant challenge in cultivating religious moderation.<sup>16</sup> Indirectly, people will feel uncomfortable and even confused about how to have an ideal society according to social theory.

### **Problems of Religious Moderation in Extremism Clusters**

The word "extremism" is a word often used when discussing political or religious topics. Those who use this phrase, as well as those who subscribe to social consensus, believe that extremism is an ideology that goes far beyond the sentiments commonly shared by a society as a whole. However, extremism is also used in debates around the economy. The word "extremism" comes from the Arabic phrase "to go beyond", and in this context, "overstepping the line" means "to go beyond". Furthermore, the meaning of this concept, as explained by many academics, is "beyond something and beyond". Exaggerate project boundaries in belief or behavior in the Qur'an (O people of the book, do not exaggerate/go beyond your religion and do not say to Allah unless the truth is Surah an-nissa verse 2), Tatharruf i.e. exaggerate/twist away from something, stay away from the existence/core or center of something, the term "extremism" in Islam. Exaggerate project boundaries in beliefs or behavior. This expression is analogous to the word "tatharruf" or "ghuluw" in the lexicon of Islamic thought, respectively.

To be more specific, the practice of religious hyperbole is prohibited both in the Qur'an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. 2 Exaggeration in religion, also known as al-tatharruf, is the practice of faith that is inflexible, hard, and goes beyond what is considered acceptable. In the past, academics used the term "religious extremism" with people, views, or actions that violate sharia or which are far from the goal of realizing sharia and the spirit of Islam. Far from the intention of upholding sharia and the spirit of Islam. Community organizations are found in Sooko District. One of these organizations is LDII,

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<sup>16</sup> Isnatin Ulfah, *Disturbed Harmony (The Experience of Klepu Muslims Maintaining Harmony From the Expansion of Islamic Fundamentalism)*, ed. Mambaul Ngadimah (Stain Ponorogo Press, 2016).

which is an official social organization and has a legal entity that is subject to the provisions of Law Number 8 of 1985 concerning Community Organizations. Implementation of the law includes PP No. 18 of 1986 and Ministerial Regulation 5 of 1986, The Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute (LDII) is organized by Articles of Association (AD) and Bylaws (ART), as well as Work Programs and Management starting from the Central Level to the Village Level. LDII has successfully completed the registration process with the National Unity and Community Protection Agency (Bakesbang & Linmas), Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Islamic Employee Foundation (YAKARI) is the original name given to the organization that will later become the Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute (LDII). Founded on January 3, 1972 in Surabaya, East Java. In 2020, Muhammadiyah is of the view that LDII was previously branded as a heretical sect because it was considered a rebirth of the Islamic Community. This is Muhammadiyah's opinion about LDII. The root of the problem, among the doctrines made by LDII is the concept of takfir, which classifies any Muslim who does not join its ranks as an infidel. This is a source of misinformation. For your reference, here is a list of the principles taught by LDII and Jama'ah Islam:

1. Muslims outside the group, including both parents, are infidels and unclean.
2. If people outside the group worship at the mosque, then the place of prayer is scrubbed because it is considered unclean.
3. Obey their emir or imam.
4. You will die of stupidity (infidel) if you die without swearing allegiance to the Amir/Imam of LDII.
5. Al-Qur'an and Hadith that are allowed are those that are manqul (derived from the lips of the Imam/Amir), otherwise they are forbidden to follow.
6. Except for the Imam/Amir, it is forbidden to read the Koran and Hadith.
7. Sins can be redeemed with the Amir or Imam, and the amount of the ransom is determined by the Amir/Priest based on the magnitude of the sin committed.
8. They must be careful in giving infaq, shadaqah, and zakat to their Amir/Imam. Other than them, it's illegal.
9. It is forbidden to ask about records or the use of assets, zakat, infaq, and shadaqah given to the Amir/Imam.
10. It is forbidden to give Qurban/Zakat Fitrah meat to Muslims who are not members of their community.

11. It is forbidden to pray behind an imam who is not from the community, even though ablution is not required and the prayer must be repeated.
12. It is forbidden to marry someone who is not a member of the group.
13. LDII women must choose when they are menstruating (in a state of uncleanness) to see people other than their group.
14. If someone from outside his group comes to his residence, he has to clean the old seat because it is considered dirty.

Based on the description above, this may become a problem in society, especially in the context of religious moderation, which must be maintained and guarded by all parties. Moderation in religion is a shared obligation. Religious moderation is difficult to achieve unity if it is limited to a few people or organizations, such as the Ministry of Religion. Starting from the general public, education activists, religious mass groups, the media, politicians, the international bureaucracy, and the state's civil machinery, we must work together and join forces. Consequently, religious moderation is our identity, the identity of the Indonesian nation. We are a religious nation, and our religious people are very polite, tolerant, and used to associate with people from different ethnic, tribal, and cultural backgrounds. This tolerance is our duty (PR), because if intolerance and extremism are allowed to spread sooner or later, both of them will undermine our Indonesian roots. As a result, religious moderation becomes critical as a perspective, attitude, and action both in religion and in the state

## **CONCLUSION**

The concept of moderation in Islam develops into a theological philosophy that summarizes the basic principles of Islamic tradition. Teachings that emphasize not only a healthy relationship with God, but also a healthy relationship with everyone, are no less important. Failure to get sufficient religious instruction at home, at school, or in the community may be the cause. In fact, not a few of them openly violate the norms that have been set both in the general provisions and the Shari'a regulations themselves. Since DDII took over, there has been a ban on wishing followers of other religions, happy holidays, and visiting other religious holidays. Because it is not included in the Shari'a, it is forbidden to carry out customs based on local traditions that are not Islamic. Based on what has been discussed so far, it is clear that this presents a significant challenge to the growth of religious moderation. Indirectly, people will feel uneasy and even confused about how to have an ideal society according to social theory. This will happen because people will be confused about

how to have an ideal society. The problematic LDII group must continue to exist in society, especially in the context of religious moderation. This need must be upheld and protected by all interested parties. The practice of religious moderation is a communal obligation.

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