Discourse on Religious Moderation in Oral Interpretation of the Qur'an on YouTube

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Abstract
This paper examines the construction of an oral interpretation of the Quran on YouTube channels regarding religious moderation and the power-knowledge relationship that influences it. It is motivated by the reality of religious moderation discourse, as informed by studying the Qur'an and its interpretation. It is shared through social media platforms, such as YouTube, and is used to disseminate various perspectives. By employing a qualitative descriptive method and Michel Foucault's critical discourse analysis of the oral interpretations of four prominent figures in Indonesian society, this article concludes that the discourse on religious moderation in oral interpretations on YouTube operates within a knowledge power network involving Muslim individuals, countries, media, and communities. The interpretations conveyed by the four figures tend to normalize the understanding of religious moderation as part of the broader teachings of Islam, aligning with the agendas of the government, organizations, and the media. The narrative of religious moderation is constructed through the selection of verses, especially QS al-Baqarah: 143, a textual-contextual combination of interpreting and delivery that emphasizes tolerance and anti-extremism. It is interpreted in the Indonesian context, specifically as religious moderation, characterized by individuals who are tolerant, fair, respectful of one another, and not overly inclined or excessively devoted to their religion. However, the dichotomy between "moderate" and "its opponent" in this interpretation reveals the existence of ideological limits imposed by dominant actors, such that the discourse of moderation is not always neutral but functions as a tool of social and political regulation.

Abstrak
Tulisan ini mengkaji konstruksi tafsir lisan Al-Qur'an tentang moderasi beragama di kanal YouTube, serta relasi kuasa-pengetahuan yang mempengaruhinya. Hal ini dilatarbelakangi oleh realitas wacana moderasi beragama berbasis kajian Al-Qur'an dan penafsirannya yang dibagikan melalui media sosial, seperti YouTube, dan menjadi media yang digunakan untuk menyebarkan berbagai perspektif masing-masing. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif secara deskriptif dan analisis wacana kritis dengan teori Michel Foucault pada penafsiran lisan empat tokoh popular di masyarakat Indonesia, artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa wacana tafsir lisan tentang moderasi beragama di YouTube beroperasi dalam jaringan kuasa pengetahuan yang melibatkan individu, negara, media, dan komunitas muslim. Tafsir yang disampaikan keempat figure cenderung menormalkan pemahaman moderasi beragama sebagai bagian dari ajaran Islam yang lebih luas, juga selaras dengan agenda pemerintah, organisasi dan media. Narasi moderasi beragama dikonstruksi melalui pemilihan ayat, khususnya QS al-Baqarah: 143, metode penafsiran kombinasi tekstual-kontekstual, dan penyampaian yang menekankan toleransi serta anti-ekstremisme. Hal ini dimaknai dalam konteks Indonesia, yaitu moderasi beragama yang dikonstruksi sebagai umat yang toleran, adil, saling menghormati, dan tidak terlalu cenderung dan berlebihan terhadap agamanya. Namun, dikotomi antara "moderat" dan "lawan katanya" dalam tafsir ini menunjukkan adanya batasan ideologis yang ditentukan oleh aktor-aktor dominan, sehingga wacana moderasi tidak selalu bersifat netral, melainkan berfungsi sebagai alat regulasi sosial dan politik.

Introduction

In the digital era, the study of interpretation conveyed through the YouTube channel is becoming increasingly important in the context of religious moderation, considering its influence in the broader community.[1] YouTube is attractive to the public as a social media platform that offers both long and short commentary study videos, presenting practical and easily accessible features.[2] Interpretation on YouTube provides wider accessibility to the public, reaching a diverse range of social and educational backgrounds. Therefore, the study of the interpretation of the Qur'an in this digital space is crucial for understanding how the concept of religious moderation is constructed and accepted by the audience, as well as how preachers construct narratives to avoid extremism.

Seeing how extremism still exists in Indonesia, grounding religious moderation is seen as very strategic to solve this problem. Among them, this has been actualized by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, which named 2019 as the Year of Religious Moderation.[3] In the context of religious life, moderation aims to promote moderate understanding, rather than adopting religious extremism or rationality through free thinking, which can lead to deification and unlimited freedom.[4] The term "moderate Islam" itself is often interpreted as a moderate attitude towards human behavior, both in the realm of justice and in elections, which can serve as a balancing force in life by incorporating wise considerations.[5] Of course, to achieve the desired results, it must be responded to and presented as a framework for the life of a multicultural Indonesian society, particularly concerning global religious life. A moderate attitude toward religion is essential for grounding, so that every individual can understand that the perspective on religion should be *wasaṭiyyah*, ensuring there is no bias in attitudes, either leading to extremism or liberalism.

In the discourse of religious moderation and the study of interpretation and understanding of the Qur'an, Muslims are also faced with a contest of ideas about Islamic moderation, both presented offline at *ta'līm* events, sermons, and similar venues, as well as online through social media platforms such as YouTube and other media. Of course, each speaker (preacher, dai, missionary, or other title) carries thoughts that stem from the meaning of religious texts, especially the Qur'an and its interpretation, both primary and secondary. The speakers have their respective roles in providing understanding to their readers. However, the message that spreads in the study of interpretation or religious

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[1] Aulia Rahmawati et al., "Peran Media Sosial Dalam Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Di Kalangan Gen-Z," *J-ABDI: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 3, no. 5 (2023): 905–20, https://doi.org/10.53625/jabdi.v3i5.6495.

[2] Abdul Karim and Mukhamad Agus Zuhurul Fuqohak, "Mufasir Digital Di Ruang Virtual: Tren Mazhab Tekstualis, Moderat, Dan Revisionis Di Youtube Indonesia," *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadith* 13, no. 1 (2023): 126–48.

[3] Religious moderation is one of the seven strategic programs of the Ministry of Religion that must be socialized and successful, considering that there have been many issues of radicalism and intolerance lately. Therefore, we see the need for Guidance in Strengthening Religious Moderation and the Year of Tolerance to ward off all forms of issues that can divide the unity of the nation.

[4] Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama*, Cetakan pertama (Jakarta Pusat: Balai Litbang dan Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 47, https://balitbangdiklat.kemenag.go.id/upload/files/Moderasi_Beragama_di_Tengah_Isu_Kontemporer.pdf.

[5] Ali Muhammad and Muhammad Sallabi, *Al-Wasaṭiyyah Fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Kairo: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2005), 16.

sermons on moderation, verses that are not sequential or in one package, can raise several questions. For example, how is the discourse of religious moderation carried? Does it tend to be moderate or vice versa? What influences this, and what are its implications in the Indonesian context?

Previous studies have demonstrated that religious moderation in the digital space has become a significant focus in various academic fields. Research on Ach Dhofir Zuhry's social media and the YouTube channels of Buya Syakur and Buya Yahya reveals narrative dynamics that display both efforts to strengthen tolerance and the emergence of contestations on the meaning of religious moderation.[6] Meanwhile, a study on the use of cyberspace by students at Private Islamic Religious Universities highlights the effectiveness of digital approaches in internalizing the values of moderation among the younger generation.[7] These studies affirm the importance of digital platforms as a new space for da'wah and the formation of moderate religious understanding.

On the other hand, cutting-edge technological approaches have also begun to be adopted in understanding public perception of religious moderation. Studies using machine learning-based sentiment analysis of microblogs offer big data-driven public policy perspectives that enrich decision-making.[8] In addition, research on children's shows such as Nussa and Rara shows that the values of religious moderation and the narrative of tolerance can be effectively integrated into value-based entertainment content.[9] The overall findings of this previous study reflect that religious moderation in the digital age does not only take place in elitist discourse, but also reaches popular spaces and wider online communities. Beyond digital media, Nasir and Rijal's research concluded that Islamic higher education, especially those based on Islamic boarding schools, is a strategic actor in shaping the moderate Muslim generation in Indonesia.[10] Thus, this article also strengthens the assumption that religious leaders produce and widely circulate the discourse of moderation through digital platforms, not only in the domain of the state and formal education.

This article examines a critical study of religious moderation discourse, drawing on the analysis of interpretations of Qur'an verses presented by several Indonesian figures on the YouTube platform. The novelty of this article lies in its examination of the interpretation approach employed by these figures in conveying messages of moderation. By focusing on how they interpret religious texts and relate them to Indonesia's social and cultural context,

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[6] Agus Iswanto et al., "The Religious Moderation Discourse in Social Media: Studies on Ach Dhofir Zuhry's Facebook and YouTube," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 23, no. 1 (2022): 37–51, https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v23i1.2895.

[7] Efi Tri Astuti, "Efektivitas Pemanfaatan Cyberspace Dalam Penguatan Moderasi Beragama Di Kalangan Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Swasta," *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 5, no. 1 (2025): 49–62.

[8] Mhd Furqan et al., "Big Data Approach to Sentiment Analysis in Machine Learning-Based Microblogs: Perspectives of Religious Moderation Public Policy in Indonesia," *Journal of Applied Engineering and Technological Science* 5, no. 2 (2024): 955–65, https://doi.org/10.37385/jaets.v5i2.4498.

[9] Alifa Nur Fitri, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Tayangan Anak-Anak; Analisis Isi Tayangan Nussa Dan Rara Episode Toleransi," *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi)* 8, no. 1 (2022): 129–46, https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v8i1.1523.

[10] Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal, "Keeping the Middle Path: Mainstreaming Religious Moderation Through Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 213–41, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.

this article aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how religious moderation is constructed through the study of interpretation on the YouTube channel.

The selected interpretations of religious moderation conveyed through the YouTube channel are from Quraish Shihab, Said Aqil Siraj, Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar, and Oki Setiana Dewi. The selections were based on several key criteria, including the relevance of the content to the theme of Qur'an interpretation and religious moderation, the level of audience engagement, and the credibility of the interpreters who are the speakers on the channel. This account is relatively consistent in uploading commentary studies and offers a wide range of moderate Islamic teachings. Additionally, the number of interactions, such as comments, likes, and views, is also an indicator of the account's influence in spreading religious discourse in the digital space. With this criterion, the research can identify the pattern of digital da'wah as well as how oral interpretation is packaged to reach a wider audience.

This article aims to analyze the construction of Qur'an-based religious moderation discourse and interpretation in social media that is developing in Indonesia, analyze the factors that affect the Qur'an-based religious moderation discourse and interpretation in social media that is developing in Indonesia, and examine the implications of the religious moderation discourse in the broader Indonesian context. For this reason, the author uses the perspective of Michel Foucault's power theory. According to him, knowledge cannot exist without power, and vice versa; there can be no power without knowledge.[11] This study seeks to prove how the power relationship in the discourse of religious moderation is based on oral interpretation.

Discourse on Religious Moderation

Religious moderation is interpreted as attitudes and behaviours that put religion in a balanced and non-extreme position. The Ministry of Religious Affairs emphasizes the importance of moderation in religion to prevent radicalization and extremism, as well as to create harmony between religious communities in Indonesia.[12] According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, four indicators can be used to assess the strength of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and the ability to accommodate local culture. The Ministry of Religious Affairs uses these four indicators to assess the strength of religious moderation practiced by an individual in Indonesia and their vulnerability to it. These vulnerabilities need to be recognized so that appropriate steps can be taken to strengthen religious moderation.[13]

Some figures also define religious moderation. Azyumardi Azra argues that religious moderation is an approach that prioritizes universal values in Islam, such as tolerance, justice, and compassion. He emphasized that religious moderation does not mean ignoring

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[11] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (Pantheon Books, 1976), https://www.jstor.org/stable/656769; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse of Language*, trans. A. M Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); Alfathri Adlin, "Michel Foucault: Kuasa/Pengetahuan,(Rezim) Kebenaran, Parrhesia," *Jaqfi: Jurnal Aqidah Dan Filsafat Islam* 1, no. 1 (2016): 13–26, https://doi.org/10.15575/jaqfi.v1i1.1694.

[12] RI, *Tanya Jawab Moderasi Beragama*, 17–18.

[13] RI, 43.

religious principles, but instead interpreting them in a contextual and relevant way for the times.[14] Nasaruddin Umar argued that religious moderation is an attempt to avoid the two extremes in religion: extremism and secularism. According to Nasaruddin Umar, religious moderation includes an inclusive and dialogical attitude that respects differences and strives to build harmony between religious communities.[15] Muhammad Quraish Shihab, in his book, explains that religious moderation requires more than patience and tenacity in facing the tug-of-war between the Middle and the two ends. Moderation also requires adequate knowledge and understanding so that both ends can be drawn to achieve justice and goodness.[16]

The concept of religious moderation is not something that is newly echoed by scholars, community leaders, or the Government itself. John L. Esposito, quoting Muhammad Ali, described moderates as a group of individuals who integrate into society, make changes from the bottom up, reject religious extremism and terrorism, and view violence and terrorism as incompatible with Islam. Moderate Islam, according to some, is a group of people who put ijtihad ahead of jihad and politically fall between the extreme right and the left.[17]

Religious Moderation According to Several Figures on YouTube

In this section, the author identifies and categorizes the central themes that often appear in the oral interpretations of the four figures related to religious moderation, or summarizes what the figures concisely discuss in their religious lectures. Four figures on religious moderation conveyed through the YouTube channel, including Quraish Shihab, Said Aqil Siraj, Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar, and Oki Setiana Dewi, are included as a sample. The theme identification process began with the selection of digital content in the form of oral interpretation videos published through the YouTube platform by these figures. After the content was analyzed, it was found that a number of central themes consistently emerged, including that all the characters highlighted the importance of correct religious knowledge as the foundation of moderate attitudes, accompanied by a cautious attitude, control of spiritual emotions, and love for fellow humans.

According to Shihab, moderation in the Great Dictionary of Indonesian (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia or KBBI) means not extreme and goes to the "end." In Islam, the meaning of moderate refers to the "end" and "beyond the middle line." The difference between the view of extremism in the West and moderation in Islamic teachings is in the term used. In the West, it is known by the name "*taṭarruf*," which means extreme, while in Islamic teachings, what is meant by not moderation is "*ghuluww*," which means beyond the limit. Moderation is the middle way; the perpetrator is called a mediator. Courage falls somewhere

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[14] Azyumardi Azra, "Islam in the Indonesian Context: The Role of Moderation," *Islamic Studies Journal* 55, no. 3 (2016): 345–60, https://doi.org/10.18664/isd.v55i3.1234.; Andika Putra et al., "Pemikiran Islam Wasathiyah Azyumardi Azra Sebagai Jalan Moderasi Beragama," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 1, no. 3 (December 15, 2021): 212–22, https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i3.15224.

[15] Nasaruddin Umar, *Islam Nusantara: Jalan Panjang Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Elex Media Komputindo, 2019), 105.

[16] M. Quraish Shihab, *Wasathiyah: Wawasan Islam Tentang Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2019), 3.

[17] M. Ali, *Gerakan Islam Moderat Di Indonesia Kontemporer* (CSIS, n.d.), 65–66.

between timid and reckless. Generosity is somewhere between miserly and extravagant. Moderation is a balance. Moderation is not only in the interest of individuals but also in the interests of each group/country.[18] *Wasaṭiyyah* is explained in the QS al-Baqarah:143 as follows:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّسَطًا لِّتَكُوْنُوْا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِيْ كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَآ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَّتَّبِعُ الرَّسُوْلَ مِمَّنْ يَّنْقَلِبُ عَلٰى عَقِبَيْهِۗ وَاِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيْرَةً اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَدَى اللّٰهُ ۗوَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيْعَ اِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ

"Thus, have We made of you an ummat justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves; and We appointed the Qibla to which thou wast used, only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous, except to those guided by Allah. And never would Allah make your faith of no effect. For Allah is to all people Most surely full of kindness, Most Merciful."[19]

In his religious lecture, Shihab said that there are three elements that everyone must have to moderate well. The first is to know, especially knowledge about Islam. The second element that must be possessed by a person to be good at implementing religious moderation is not to like emotions. Religious emotions must be replaced with spiritual love. People with high religious emotions usually carry out activities or behaviors prohibited by religion. The third element that must be possessed by a person to moderate well is to always be careful. Satan will always come to man whenever he does something good to exaggerate or even reduce that goodness. For example, cursing the teachings of other religions that are not by the teachings of Islam is prohibited. Even if others make mistakes, calling them a bad name is not allowed.[20] Shihab added that moderation is very closely related to tolerance. The basic principle of religious tolerance is to have brothers and sisters in humanity. Islam is accurate, and if it is believed that Islam is faithful, then it means that the teachings of other religions are wrong, but there is no need to convey them to people of different faiths.

Next, Said Aqil Siraj explained that Islam is a *wasaṭiyyah* religion. In the Qur'an, there is no terminology "*Muslim ummah*", but *ummatan wasaṭan*. The word *ummatan wasaṭan* shows that the Qur'an emphasizes quality, not only symbolic, formal, and legal, but also more substantive, highlighting the quality of the *ummah* expected by the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, *ummatan wasaṭan* means to be a moderate, calm, authoritative ummah, able to play a role in all lines and all fields (*shuhadā' alā al-nās*), religion (*shuhudan dīniyyan*), cultural civilization

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[18] *Moderasi Beragama | M. Quraish Shihab Podcast*, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jri_8ZZjgQk. A total of 6,600 people have viewed it.
[19] Translation of the Qur'an by Yusuf Ali on "The Quranic Arabic Corpus - Translation," accessed March 6, 2025, https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=143.
[20] *Webinar Nasional: Wawasan Al-Quran Tentang Moderasi Beragama Bersama Prof. Quraish Shihab*, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JI5GyspWzIc was uploaded on the YouTube channel of the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah IAIN Manado on November 3, 2020, and has 2,600 views.

(*thaqāfiyyan ḥaḍariyyan),* and even politics *(siyāsiyyan).[21]* To become *ummat,* a maximum understanding of inequality and a proper understanding of Islam must be supported. Without science, humans cannot be *wasaṭiyyah.* Those who do not have *a wasaṭiyyah* attitude still do not understand Islam correctly and well. An example is when a friend named Hassin al-Khazraj threatened his son, who did not want to convert to Islam. He threatened, "I will kill you." When a companion threatens his child, then the verse of the Qur'an *"lā ikrāha fī al-dīn"* is lowered. Siraj interpreted it as saying that there should be no terror in religion. If a father threatens a child only if the Qur'an forbids it, then let alone threatening someone who is not a nephew, uncle, or family member. It proves that Islam is a very *wasaṭiyyah* and a very moderate religion.

From a young figure, Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar is a speaker who often includes the issue of religious moderation on every occasion, especially on social media and YouTube channels. Husein Ja'far, in each of his religious lectures, relates the discourse of religious moderation to QS al-Baqarah: 143. Husein Ja'far stated that in this verse, it is important to underline that the *ummah* is the object of discussion in that verse. The Islamic religion is certainly moderate, but the problem is that the people are not necessarily moderate because sometimes the Muslims do not practice their Islam well, or sometimes even some Muslims behave contrary to Islamic values. Thus, it is commanded in the verse to be moderate with his people, while his religion is undoubtedly moderate.[22]

The second, in this verse, Allah uses the word *ja'alnākum*. If Allah creates something, then it will be, however, with the expression *ja'alnākum.* There must be an effort from humans to make something given by Allah as a potential that can be actualized. Third, *wasaṭan* means moderate. *Wasaṭan* means in Indonesian that the referee is a referee; that is, the person must be moderate.[23] According to al-Hadar, moderate means one of the meanings is not excessive because the verse *inna Allaha lā yuhibb al-musrifīn,* Allah does not like everything excessive. According to Al-Hadar, excessive religion is a characteristic of disbelievers as stated by Allah in QS al-Mā'idah: 77.

> Say: "O people of the Book! exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper), trespassing beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by,- who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the even way."[24]

This verse recommends to every servant not to go excessive in their religion outside the provisions that Allah has justified, so excessive in religion is characteristic of an infidel. Therefore, Muslims are asked to be moderate in religion, in worship, and life in general, not to overdo it.

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[21] *Moderasi Beragama Oleh KH. Said Aqil Siradj*, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sW1J8Is0WR0; *ORASI : Moderasi Islam Ala Prof. Dr. K.H. Said Aqil Siroj, M.A.*, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwa4Uf61n8A.

[22] *Apa Sih Moderasi Beragama Itu? | Habib Husein Ja'far Al Hadar*, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rODv9ZaVDkU The video "What Is Religious Moderation" was uploaded on November 25 2021 by Islamidotco, a particular YouTube channel that studies Islam with a total of 10,000 followers, and this video has been viewed more than 20,000 times.

[23] *Apa Sih Moderasi Beragama Itu?*

[24] Translated by Yusuf Ali. "The Quranic Arabic Corpus - Translation," accessed March 6, 2025, https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=5&verse=77.

According to Oki, Muslims are given the title based on QS al-Baqarah: 143 as *'ummatan wasaṭan'* or middle ummah. However, there are some who say that the middle ummah means that they are not firm about something and are too tolerant, so that their attitude is not clear. He said that the equivalent of the word *wasaṭ* means "fair", which means putting something in its place, so that the attitude taken from this wasaṭan ummah, or this just ummah, is to adjust to the situation and conditions, not just quoting certain verses to justify an attitude. Thus, the verses in the Qur'an about a strict attitude towards non-Muslims or hypocrites are not necessarily understood as being rude towards all non-Muslims and hypocrites regardless of their condition or circumstances at any time and wherever they can be disrespectful. [25]

In addition, Oki said that the issue of religious moderation arises about Islam with various incidents of violence or terrorism attributed to Muslims; whether it is true or not is another matter, sometimes leading to politics. So, this issue talks about how Allah SWT glorifies all human children without distinguishing ethnicity or language, religion, or race, but what level of piety determines the virtues of a human being? Oki sees the concept of religious moderation as coexistence in a harmonious nation and country like Indonesia. Islam does not condone extreme attitudes and does not condone attitudes that are too lax. [26]

From the descriptions of the religious lectures of the figures, there are a number of central themes that consistently appear in the narrative of religious moderation. First, the concept of *wasaṭiyyah* is explained not simply as being geometrically centered, but as an active effort to achieve a balance of values between two extremes: not excessive (*ghuluww*) and not negligent. Moderation is understood as a form of justice, the placement of things in their place according to the context, and the foundation for peaceful coexistence in the midst of differences. QS al-Baqarah:143 is the main verse that is used as a basis, with an emphasis on the quality of the ummah who are just, authoritative, and witness to goodness in various areas of life.

The second theme is the importance of knowledge as the foundation of moderation. Figures such as Quraish Shihab, Said Aqil Siraj, and Husein Ja'far emphasized that moderation is impossible without a deep understanding of the teachings of Islam. In addition, a cautious attitude in religion, control of religious emotions, and the replacement of a fanatical spirit with religious love are important elements in shaping moderate behavior. Moderation is also linked to the principles of tolerance, respect for humanity, and rejection of violence in the name of religion. Young figures such as Oki and Husein Ja'far show that moderation is also a contextual response to social and political challenges, making their lectures relevant in building social cohesion in the digital age. The upcoming discussion will discuss in more depth the power of knowledge behind this discourse of religious moderation.

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[25] *OKI SETIANA DEWI Bicara Toleransi | Moderasi Beragama Di Mata Perempuan*, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGk-ojNRNYU.
[26] *OKI SETIANA DEWI Bicara Toleransi | Moderasi Beragama Di Mata Perempuan.*

Construction of Religious Moderation Based on Oral Interpretation on YouTube

The four speakers have the same basic concept of religious moderation using some verses of the Qur'an, especially QS al-Baqarah: 143. The keyword *ummatan wasaṭan* is used. Said Aqil Siraj, Quraish Shihab, Habib Husein Ja'far, and Oki Setiana Dewi view this verse as one of the keys to religious moderation. In their view, religious moderation is how Muslims can behave, be tolerant and fair, respect each other, and not be too leaning and excessive towards their religion. From the perspective of Indonesia, where Indonesian society is pluralistic, the concept of religious moderation is very relevant to the current condition of Indonesian culture.

The speakers agreed that religious moderation is a "middle way" that Muslims must take to maintain a balance in religion and behavior. Moderation serves as a guide to avoid the trap of extreme attitudes and radical actions that undermine the essence of Islamic teachings. In a diverse social context like Indonesia, a moderate approach allows for the creation of harmony and tolerance between religious communities. Moderation also reflects the Islamic character that prioritizes justice, balance, and compassion. Thus, moderation is not just a social strategy, but an integral part of Islamic spirituality and religious vision.

The oral interpretation of the figures shows the integration of textual and contextual approaches in understanding the values of moderation. Textually, they examine the authenticity and literal meaning of Qur'anic verses, including the study of key vocabulary such as *wasaṭ* and *ghuluww*. This meaning is deepened by a contextual approach, which pays attention to the historical dynamics and social reality of today's people. The plural Indonesian context and global challenges, such as radicalism and intolerance, are important backgrounds in their interpretation. The combination of the two results in a relevant and applicable understanding of the principles of religious moderation in real life.

In his lecture, Said Aqil Siraj began with a general discussion of religious moderation. It is shown by starting the debate, explaining who moderates the ummah. In his explanation of this verse, *wasaṭan* in QS al-Baqarah: 143 is mentioned as the basis for explaining that a moderate ummah is someone intelligent, has maximum understanding, and has extensive knowledge. Another verse corroborates the explanation of QS al-Baqarah: 25, *lā ikrāha fi al-dīn*, as a basis for explaining that a moderate ummah does not have to impose a religion on someone because a moderate person must have the nature of respecting and appreciating non-Muslims, as he narrates the *asbāb al-nuzūl* from the descent of the verse, namely the story of Hussin, who threatened to kill his son. In addition, Siraj also mentions QS Saba': 24 as the basis for explaining that a moderate person must have tolerance with others. Then, he continued by mentioning examples of religious moderation behavior and closed with a statement from the Decision of the National Conference of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in Banjar, West Java, that NU residents should not call someone of a different religion an infidel but call a non-Muslim.

Quraish Shihab gives examples using mathematical analogies related to understanding the concept of moderation, analogies made in accordance with the community's existing social conditions. It can be concluded that Quraish Shihab's reasoning process in explaining the concept of religious moderation uses deductive reasoning, departing from the concept in general and then moving to a more specific factual explanation.

Habib Husein Ja'far first sees religious moderation in the context of people's social lives and then gives specific examples. Similar to Oki Setiana Dewi, at the beginning of her explanation of the concept of religious moderation, she prioritized how religious moderation could develop on the concept of the way of life or the view of life of the Indonesian nation, namely the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, which contains Islamic values.

In terms of technical interpretation, Said Aqil Siraj, in interpreting a verse of religious moderation, uses the pattern of views from the text of the Qur'anic verse. The point is that in interpreting a verse, the interpreter tries to understand the meaning of a verse based on the context of the verse being revealed to analyze what Allah means in the verse. It is shown by several explanations of verses explained by Said Aqil Siroj with the explanation of *asbāb nuzūl,* namely the causes until a verse is revealed. For example, explaining the passage *lā ikrāha fī al-dīn* is accompanied by an explanation of the story of Husayn, who was threatened with death by his father. According to him, this is a story that is the background of the descent of the verse.

The dominant interpretation pattern used by Quraish Shihab is the socio-societal interpretation pattern. In explaining the concept of religious moderation, Quraish Shihab highlights factual things that happen in society and then discusses them with the Qur'an. Shihab tries to show how the Qur'an talks about these problems and what solutions it offers to those problems. Thus, the Qur'an is a guide to life and a guide for humans.[27]

Habib Husein Ja'far sees religious moderation in the context of people's social life. He explained religious moderation in Surah al-Baqarah by describing verses related to non-excessive and fair attitudes with examples in society. Meanwhile, Oki Setiana Dewi prioritized how religious moderation can develop on the concept of the way of life or the view of the life of the Indonesian nation, namely the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila, which already contain Islamic values, which later became a national culture. In addition, Oki Setiana Dewi is more likely to discuss the role of women in the development of religious moderation discourse in society because, according to her, women also have a considerable role in instilling religious moderation values, especially in their family environment.

Analysis of Knowledge Power in Religious Moderation Discourse

Michel Foucault is interested in investigating the relationship between power and knowledge with the view that there is no practice of exercising power that does not give rise to knowledge, and there is no knowledge that does not look at power relations.[28] Thus, it is essential to explain the relationship between power and knowledge in the discourse of religious moderation based on the following oral interpretation.

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[27] This pattern originated from the modern Egyptian scholar Muhammad Abduh (1843-1905), who tried to explain the clues in the verses of the Qur'an that are directly related to the community's social life. In this pattern, the interpreter tries to overcome their diseases or problems based on the instructions of the Qur'an in an easy-to-understand language. Muhammad Iqbal, "Metode Penafsiran Al-Qur'an M. Quraish Shihab," *Tsaqafah* 6, no. 2 (2010): 248–70, https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v6i2.120; Ali Akbarul Falah, "The Pattern of Adabi Ijtima'i Interpretation of Al-Misbah in the Contextualization of Nusyuz Verses," *HUNAFA Jurnal Studia Islamika* 20, no. 1 (2023): 135–53, https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v20i1.693.

[28] Arif Syafiuddin, "Pengaruh Kekuasaan Atas Pengetahuan (Memahami Teori Relasi Kuasa Michel Foucault," *Refleksi: Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Keislaman* 18, no. 2 (n.d.): 141–55, https://doi.org/10.14421/ref.2018.1802-02.

The biographies and social backgrounds of the speakers demonstrate sufficient competence to talk about the concept of religious moderation in Islam based on Qur'anic verses. The educational background of Said Aqil Siraj[29] Can affect the social and cultural development owned by Said Aqil Siraj, and his experience in studying at Islamic boarding schools, universities in Indonesia, and universities in Mecca also colored the social and cultural Culture owned by Said Aqil Siraj. It is shown by the explanation in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an related to religious moderation, namely, by explaining the reason for the descent of the Qur'an. It is influenced by his educational background when he was in the Arab world.

Furthermore, based on Quraish Shihab's biography,[30] His educational background and position greatly influence his mindset. Quraish Shihab is an academic and an expert in Tafsir. Quraish Shihab's academic background enables him to consistently explain every problem and interpret the verses of the Qur'an in detail in each of his lectures. Like his lectures on religious moderation on several YouTube channels, it can be seen that Shihab explains the meaning of religious moderation in order and detail, starting from explaining in advance the differences in the understanding of religion, religious science, and religion; The origin of the

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[29] Said Aqil Siraj was born as Ahmad Said bin Aqiel bin Siradj bin Muhammad Said on July 3, 1953. In Kempek, Palimanan, Cirebon, West Java, from the couple, KH. Aqiel Siradj and Nyai Hj. Afifah binti Kyai Harun KH. Aqiel Siradj is the caretaker of the Kempek Islamic Boarding School, one of the essential Islamic boarding schools in Cirebon. Kyai Aqiel is the son-in-law of Kyai Harun bin Abdul Jalil, the fortress of the Kempek Islamic Boarding School. It is known that Said Aqil Siraj is the son of a Kiai who owns a boarding school. So, the Kempek Islamic boarding school greatly influenced the introduction of Said Aqil Siraj's first knowledge of Islamic knowledge. Since birth, he has lived in the pesantren environment, where his father developed and taught him Islamic knowledge.

In general, Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia instill the teachings of wasaṭiyyah. Said Aqil Siraj studied at two Islamic boarding schools: the Lirboyo Kediri Islamic Boarding School (1965-1970) and the Al-Munawwir Krapyak Islamic Boarding School Yogyakarta (1972-1975). The two Islamic boarding schools above are fundamental to Said Aqil Siraj's ability to read, study, and understand books in Arabic. In addition to living in Islamic boarding schools to deepen his knowledge of Islam, he also honed his knowledge at two universities. Initially, he studied S1 at Tribakti Lirboyo University. Because he was dissatisfied with the depiction of science at Tribakti Lirboyo University, he moved to Yogyakarta and studied S1 at the State Islamic Institute of Sunan Kalijogo Yogyakarta. Similarly, when he was at Lirboyo University, he wanted more from the academic climate in Indonesia.

So, in 1980, he decided to go to Mecca for a master's degree at King Abdul Aziz University, majoring in Ushuluddin and Da'wah. Then, he continued S2 at Umm al-Qura University, majoring in Comparative Religion. He graduated in 1987, then continued S3 at the University of Um al-Qura, majoring in Aqidah / Islamic Philosophy, and graduated in 1994. Aqil once served as Chairman of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (2010-2021), Indonesia's largest religious mass organization. Ahmad Musthofa Haroen, *Meneguhkan Islam Nusantara: Biografi Pemikiran & Kiprah Kebangsaan Prof. Dr. KH Said Aqil Siroj, MA* (Surabaya: Khalista, 2015).

[30] Muhammad Quraish Shihab was born in Sindenreng Rappang Regency (Sindrap), South Sulawesi Province, on February 16, 1944. His father, Habib Abdurrahman Shihab (1905-1986), was a scholar of Tafsir and former Rector of IAIN Alaudin Ujung Pandang, South Sulawesi (1972-1977). He also participated in the establishment of the Indonesian Muslim University in Ujung Pandang (1959-1965). Shihab completed his primary education and junior high school to grade 2 in Ujung Pandang. In 1956, he left for Malang to continue his education at the Darul Hadith al-Fiqhiyyah Islamic Boarding School. In 1958, he left for Cairo, Egypt, and was accepted into the Second Class of Tsanawiyah Al-Azhar.

In 1967, he earned an S1 degree from the Faculty of Ushuluddin at Al-Azhar University, majoring in Hadith Interpretation. Furthermore, he also took his S2 education at Al-Azhar University and obtained a Master's degree in 1969, specializing in Tafsir Al-Qur'an. He was a lecturer who actively taught at universities and had also served as the Rector of two Islamic Universities in Makassar: IAIN Alauddin Makassar and the Indonesian Muslim University, as well as the Rector of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Afrizal Nur, "M. Quraish Shihab Dan Rasionalisasi Tafsir," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2012): 21–33, https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v18i1.696.

word moderation which in the Qur'an is called *wasaṭiyyah*, to giving directions about three elements that are requirements in terms of religious moderation.

Researchers found that Quraish Shihab's approach to explaining the concept of religious moderation is straightforward to understand, especially for ordinary people who are not entirely familiar with the interpretation of the Qur'an, including students. It is because he is an academic who, of course, most of his 'followers' are academics and lecturers, and students who are used to analyzing a concept scientifically and concisely. In explaining the views on religious moderation, Quraish Shihab outlined numerous logical aspects associated with the social development of community life. His explanation of religious moderation is more flexible but still adheres to certain religious boundaries.

Quraish Shihab has undergone intellectual development under the guidance of Al-Azhar University for approximately 13 years. So, his views and thoughts are greatly influenced by the scientific tradition at Al-Azhar University. Quraish Shihab's religious ideas and views can generally be grouped into moderate scripturalism. He emphasized the importance of interpreting the Qur'an and realizing it in the reality of Muslim society. However, in contrast to the scripturalism developed by fundamentalist Muslim groups that adhere to texts, Quraish Shihab also pays great attention to the socio-cultural context of the developing society.[31]

Then, Habib Husein's educational background and biography[32] Produce his interpretation of religious moderation in the Qur'an. In that case, the narrative of religious moderation he always carries prioritizes looking at something from the middle, rather than leaning to the left or the right. Ja'far quoted QS al-Baqarah: 143 in his lecture when discussing religious moderation. He explained that the verse recommends that every servant not be excessive in religion outside Allah's provisions. Therefore, Muslims are asked to be moderate in religion and worship, as well as in life in general. As a preacher, he is known as a figure who upholds religious tolerance, and his studies in the social sciences are often reposted by people from various groups, including both Muslims and non-Muslims. It is under what is taught in Islam that a Muslim is not only encouraged to preach to fellow Muslims but also to preach to everyone.

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[31] Ahmad Fawaid, "Mainstreaming Religious Moderation in Indonesia: Reading and Understanding Wasatiyah in the Qur'an," *Mushaf: Jurnal Tafsir Berwawasan Keindonesiaan* 4, no. 2 (2024): 26–45, https://doi.org/10.33650/mushaf.v4i2.9747.

[32] Habib Husein Ja'far was born in Bondowoso, East Java, on June 21, 1988. He studied at a pesantren in Bangil, Pasuruan, East Java. Habib Husein Ja'far's family background is religious, with a father and mother of Arab descent, a Habib, and a Sharifah. His father had a rational tendency to think about religion. Therefore, Habib Husein and his brothers were educated in the philosophy department to arrange their children in terms of their thinking; this also affected the da'wah pattern of Habib Husein, which was thick with rational nuances. Then, he moved to Jakarta to continue his education at the State Islamic University (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, majoring in Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy. After graduating at the strata level (S-1), he continued his studies in the same place by majoring in Hadith Tafsir. His educational background at UIN Jakarta has influenced his concept of religious moderation. In his lecture material, Habib Husein Ja'far took inseparable references from the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as the opinions of scholars, the stories of Muslims in the past, personal experiences, and the reality of today's life, which add to the public's understanding of Islamic teachings. The personal identity built by Habib Husein Ja'far also looks very "contemporary-millennial," namely with visuals that are "as they are," using t-shirts with the words Islam Cinta, wearing jeans, and so on. Personal branding that appears in public is a moderate, flexible, tolerant, and contemporary person who further adds to the image of a good image in front of the public, and the average Indonesian prefers religious figures like this.

Finally, Oki Setiana Dewi[33] Encouraged them to realize religious moderation with the active role of all parties, including women. In creating religious moderation, women are well-suited to hold this role, based on the tremendous potential they possess as the root and foundation for sowing the seeds of religious moderation. So that the process of sowing the seeds of religious moderation in the form of the values of justice, diversity, tolerance, and humility to children from an early age can be carried out effectively so that the great potentials possessed by women can later give birth to generations who understand brotherhood amid existing diversity, far from extreme, radical and exclusive attitudes which are the main problems in maintaining peace and unity of the Republic of Indonesia.[34]

Religious moderation discourse is produced through oral lectures transmitted via digital media, one of which is YouTube. Then it operates in a power network involving the state, the media, and the public. Figures such as Quraish Shihab and Said Aqil Siraj have a strategic position that allows them to become authoritative producers of discourse due to their scholarly legitimacy, institutional experience, and public recognition. The discourse they produce is dominant because it is in line with the needs of the state and society in responding to the threat of extremism as well as the need for a peaceful and inclusive Islamic narrative. The production of this discourse is not neutral, but creates "truth" through references to sacred texts, repetition, and collective recognition, so that certain understandings, such as *wasaṭiyyah*, are normalized as the ideal face of Indonesian Islam. The production of moderate Islamic discourse in Indonesia is strongly linked to state-affiliated religious institutions and their strategic dissemination through higher education and digital platforms.[35]

Figures such as Quraish Shihab are considered "official" references due to their tested academic and spiritual reputation and their calming and non-confrontational Employee Performance style. Conversely, other figures who are not affiliated with formal power structures or critical of the dominant narrative tend to be marginalized. The interpretations carried out by the statistics form the collective identity of the ummah as *ummatan wasaṭan*,

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[33] Oki Setiana Dewi gained widespread recognition when she starred in the film Saat Cinta Bertasbih in 2008. At 16, she and his family moved to Depok, where she continued his high school education at SMA Negeri 1 Depok. After graduating from high school, she continued his education at the University of Indonesia, majoring in Dutch. In 2008, when she was 19, Oki appeared as the female lead Anna Althafunnisa in the religious drama Saat Cinta Bertasbih. Oki is relatively easy to get various roles and get involved in multiple shoots. After moving to Jakarta and becoming more immersed in the world of artistry, Oki decided to wear a hijab. She is also very focused on her education, pursuing a master's degree in early childhood education at the State University of Jakarta and continuing her doctoral studies at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. As a speaker, Oki Setiana Dewi frequently addresses gender and women's issues, including the role of women in Islam, maintaining women's honor, household management tips, and the latest concerns regarding women and gender in Indonesia. Writing is a hobby of Oki Setiana Dewi, as evidenced by several articles she has written that have been published in various journals and several books.

[34] Reni Kumalasari, "The Role of Women in Realizing Religious Moderation: Opportunities and Challenges," *Wasathiyah: Jurnal Studi Moderasi Beragama Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2023): 43–51.

[35] Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal, "Keeping the Middle Path: Mainstreaming Religious Moderation Through Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 213–41, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241.

organize society through fair and tolerant values, and frame *the other* (who are different) as a party that remains respected as long as it does not threaten the order of faith.[36]

The "moderate vs. radical" dichotomy is formed through a dominant narrative supported by the state and religious institutions. Countries and institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs play an essential role in establishing symbolic boundaries between the two, whether through policies, curriculum, or digital content production.[37] However, this dichotomy is both political and contextual, as what is considered "moderate" is often determined by the interests of power, rather than solely by religious principles.

The practice of interpreting figures also operates within power relations with state institutions (through policy affiliations), the media (as distribution channels), and the people (as both audiences and discourse actors). Their religious lectures tend to reinforce the state's agenda in shaping moderate Islam as a national identity, but not entirely without resistance. Some interpretations highlight critical nuances in the formalization of religion and emphasize the importance of contextual awareness. Thus, this moderation discourse is not only a normative statement, but also a field for power negotiation between religious authorities, state interests, and the dynamics of civil society.

It is evident how the knowledge and discourse on religious moderation on YouTube are influenced by individuals and the larger power structures that shape and govern the understanding of religious moderation. Foucault argued that knowledge and power are intertwined, where knowledge is not only a tool for understanding the world but also a way to control and regulate the behaviour of individuals and society.[38] In the context of religious moderation on YouTube, the diverse family backgrounds, educational experiences, and media platforms used by the speakers serve as a source of knowledge that shapes their perspectives on religious moderation. It reveals that the discourse that emerges is not neutral but is shaped by the power dynamics that exist in society. For example, when speakers refer to Qur'anic verses, they convey personal interpretations and engage in more extensive power dynamics, including those within religious traditions, among religious authorities, and with existing social norms. Their interpretation of religious moderation as a tolerant and fair attitude reflects how power shapes the social norms expected in Indonesian society.

Furthermore, the discourse on religious moderation, expected to be understood and applied by the younger generation, reflects an effort to distribute knowledge that is considered positive and constructive. However, it also hints at a power that seeks to direct the understanding and actions of individuals in society. Foucault reminds us that any attempt to define a particular norm or value is also an attempt to regulate the behaviour and thoughts

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[36] Wahyudi Akmaliah, "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 10, no. 1 (June 2020): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v10i1.1-24.

[37] Benny Afwadzi and Miski Miski, "Islam Moderat Di Perguruan Tinggi Muhammadiyah: Interpretasi Dan Penerimaan Mahasiswa," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Studi Islam* 17, no. 2 (2022): 59–80, https://doi.org/10.31603/cakrawala.8014; Benny Afwadzi, Miski, and Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana, "Religious Moderation Based on the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Perspective: A Study on Islamic Universities in Malang," *Penamas* 36, no. 1 (June 2023): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v36i1.649.

[38] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*; Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse of Language*.

of others. In other words, religious moderation carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the speakers is an effort to regulate people's behaviour and thoughts.

The dominance of religious moderation discourse can occur due to the support of state institutions[39] (especially the Ministry of Religious Affairs), mass organizations, the media, or specific communities that consider it a narrative that follows the social and political interests that must be developed in Indonesia. The concept of religious moderation is often normalized through lectures, academic publications, and government policies. This interpretation of moderation is "correct" because it is supported by religious and state authorities and reinforced by social media. Figures such as M. Quraish Shihab, Said Agil, Habib Husain Ja'far al-Hadar, and Oki Setiana Dewi are often used as the primary references in Islamic moderation discourse on YouTube. Their selection as the central figure can be caused by their academic background, public acceptance, and the compatibility of their views with the moderation policies supported by the state. Other figures who have different views may not get the same space because they do not fit the dominant narrative, despite having similar access to social media.

The interpretation of religious moderation plays a role in shaping the Muslim identity that is considered "moderate" and "tolerant". However, the "moderate" vs. "radical" dichotomy is formed through the construction of discourses produced by the state, religious leaders, and the media, especially in response to the threat of post-reform extremism and the digital age. Religious figures with institutional legitimacy, such as Quraish Shihab, Said Aqil Siraj, and figures from large organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah[40] Often produces the narrative that moderate Islam is Islam that is under the values of nationality, tolerance, and pluralism. However, religious views or practices considered too textualist, exclusive, or rejecting democratic values are categorized as "radical." This discourse is not neutral but operates in a power relationship that places one form of religion as "normal" and another as an "aberration" that must be corrected or supervised.

Moderation serves as a tool of social control by setting symbolic boundaries on what is considered legitimate in religious expression. Through religious lectures, educational curricula, and digital campaigns, this narrative stigmatizes groups or individuals who do not align with the official definition of moderation as "radical," even when they are not violent. This narrative creates a disciplining effect: people are encouraged to conform to the dominant narrative, not to be labelled as extreme. In the context of social media, platform algorithms help reinforce this dichotomy by promoting state-backed "moderate" content and limiting the reach of alternative content. As explained by Akmaliah et al., moderate Islamic production in Indonesia is part of the state's strategy to form a safe and controlled national religious identity.[41] Meanwhile, a study by Abdel-Fattah and Krayem shows that the label "moderate" is often used to discipline Muslims to conform to dominant political norms, rather than solely on theological principles. They concluded that one of the disturbing

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[39] M. Munif, M. Qomar, and A. Aziz, "Kebijakan Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia," *Dirasah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (n.d.): 417–30, https://doi.org/10.58401/dirasah.v6i2.935.

[40] Umi Musyarrofah and Zulhannan, "Religious Moderation in the Discourse of Nahdlatul Ulama's Dakwah in the Era of Industry 4.0," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 2 (August 2023): 409–34, https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss2.art5.

[41] Akmaliah, "The Demise of Moderate Islam: New Media, Contestation, and Reclaiming Religious Authorities."

consequences was the chilling and marginalizing effect on dissenting Muslim voices that sought to derail efforts to produce and reproduce the moderate or radical dichotomy.[42]

This discourse also serves as a tool of social regulation, where individuals or groups considered "radical" or "extreme" can experience marginalization. In this context, interpretation serves as a mechanism of power that determines who falls into the category of "moderate" and who is considered "radical" or otherwise. This dichotomy often arises in religious moderation discourse, where moderation is positioned as something positive, while radicalism is seen as a threat. The state, the media, and religious institutions play a role in determining the boundaries of this dichotomy. However, the definition of "radical" is often flexible and can change according to political and social interests.

In Foucault's perspective, the interpretation of the Qur'an on YouTube not only serves as a tool of da'wah but also as part of a power network involving the state, the media, and the Muslim community. The state can use moderate discourse to formulate and realize religious policies. The media plays a role in disseminating certain narratives, while Muslims, as the audience, also contribute to affirming or rejecting the interpretation presented. Commentary lectures on religious moderation can be in line with the government's agenda of promoting a "friendly" and "tolerant" Islam. However, there has also been resistance to official interpretations, especially from groups who feel that religious moderation is being used as a tool of control over religious expressions that are more conservative or different from the mainstream.

Thus, this critical analysis demonstrates that the discourse of religious moderation is not merely an attempt to understand and apply the values of tolerance, but also an arena in which power and knowledge intersect. It invites us to consider how various social, cultural, and media factors shape the understanding of religious moderation and how this can impact social dynamics in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This study shows that the oral interpretation discourse on religious moderation on YouTube operates in a knowledge power network involving Muslim individuals, countries, media, and communities. The interpretations conveyed by the four figures tend to normalize the understanding of religious moderation as part of the broader teachings of Islam, aligning with the government's agenda, as well as that of organizations and the media. The narrative of religious moderation is constructed through the selection of verses, especially QS al-Baqarah: 143, a textual-contextual combination of interpretation and delivery that emphasizes tolerance and anti-extremism. It is interpreted in the Indonesian context, specifically as religious moderation, which is characterized by people who are tolerant, fair, respectful of one another, and not overly inclined or excessively devoted to their religion. However, the dichotomy between "moderate" and its opponent in this interpretation shows the existence of ideological limits determined by dominant actors, so that the discourse of moderation is not always neutral, but functions as a tool of social and political regulation.

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[42] Randa Abdel-Fattah and Mehal Krayem, "Off Script and Indefensible: The Failure of the 'Moderate Muslim,'" *Continuum* 32, no. 4 (July 2018): 429–43, https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2018.1487128.

This research contributes to the study of oral interpretation by demonstrating that interpretation serves not only as a tool for understanding sacred texts but also as a mechanism for producing discourse that shapes identities and power relations. In Foucault's perspective, oral interpretation on YouTube can be understood as a discursive practice that regulates religious understanding through a specific authority. It reinforces the opinion that interpretation is not just a scientific expression, but also part of a system of social control that determines the boundaries of religion in society.

The authors recommend that there be a more inclusive discussion of the interpretation of religious moderation, so that no single group or perspective dominates it. Further research should be conducted to explore how oral interpretation in digital media affects people's religious understanding, as well as how audiences respond to religious moderation discourse. This study focuses solely on a small number of oral interpretations available on YouTube. It therefore does not include other platforms that also play a role in disseminating religious moderation discourse. Additionally, this analysis focuses primarily on the production of discourse by religious leaders. At the same time, the audience's response to the interpretation still needs to be studied more deeply to understand how the discourse of moderation is accepted and internalized by the community. Thus, further research can explore how audiences interact with oral interpretations on social media, as well as comparative studies between oral interpretations on various digital platforms, and the technologies that shape religious interpretations in the digital era.

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