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Wasathiyah (Islamic Moderation) and Islamophobia Mitigation: A Comparative Study in Contemporary Islamic Legal Thought in Indonesia

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Abstract

The contemporary escalation of global Islamophobia poses significant challenges not only to social cohesion but also to the legitimacy of Islamic law within modern constitutional frameworks, where it is often perceived as incompatible with universal human rights norms. Despite the expanding discourse on religious moderation, limited attention has been given to evaluating the effectiveness of Indonesia's Islam *Wasathiyah* legal framework from a comparative Islamic legal perspective. This study aims to examine the institutionalization of *wasathiyah* principles within Indonesian Islamic governance and to assess their potential in addressing Islamophobic narratives. Employing a normative juridical approach with a comparative legal framework, this research draws on primary sources including fatwas, state regulations, and policy documents, supported by relevant scholarly literature, and analyzes them through a *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*-based approach combined with doctrinal legal analysis. The findings indicate that the institutionalization of Islam *Wasathiyah* through authoritative fatwa mechanisms and state-supported policies has contributed to the development of a relatively adaptive and inclusive juridical-sociological framework; compared to more rigid approaches in several Muslim jurisdictions, the Indonesian model demonstrates a greater capacity to accommodate pluralism and respond to contemporary socio-legal challenges, including Islamophobic discourse. This study contributes to contemporary Islamic legal scholarship by offering a contextualized model of religious governance grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, which has the potential to strengthen the position of Islamic law within pluralistic societies while providing a constructive framework for mitigating Islamophobia.

Keywords: *Wasathiyah*; Islamophobia; Islamic Community Organizations; Legitimacy of Islamic Law.

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Abstract
Peningkatan Islamofobia global dewasa ini tidak hanya menimbulkan tantangan serius terhadap kohesi sosial, tetapi juga terhadap legitimasi hukum Islam dalam kerangka negara konstitusional modern, yang kerap dipersepsikan tidak selaras dengan nilai-nilai hak asasi manusia universal. Meskipun diskursus mengenai moderasi beragama terus berkembang, perhatian terhadap efektivitas kerangka hukum Islam Wasathiyah di Indonesia dari perspektif hukum Islam komparatif masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji institusionalisasi prinsip wasathiyah dalam tata kelola Islam di Indonesia serta menilai potensinya dalam merespons narasi Islamofobia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan yuridis normatif dengan kerangka perbandingan hukum, yang bertumpu pada sumber data primer berupa fatwa, regulasi negara, dan dokumen kebijakan, serta didukung oleh literatur ilmiah yang relevan, dengan analisis berbasis maqāṣid al-syarīʻah yang dikombinasikan dengan pendekatan doktrinal hukum. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa institusionalisasi Islam *Wasathiyah* melalui mekanisme fatwa otoritatif dan kebijakan negara telah berkontribusi pada terbentuknya kerangka yuridis-sosiologis yang relatif adaptif dan inklusif; dibandingkan dengan pendekatan yang lebih rigid di sejumlah yurisdiksi Muslim, model Indonesia menunjukkan kapasitas yang lebih besar dalam mengakomodasi pluralisme serta merespons tantangan sosio-legal kontemporer, termasuk wacana Islamofobia. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan hukum Islam kontemporer dengan menawarkan model tata kelola keagamaan yang kontekstual berbasis maqāṣid al-syarīʻah, yang berpotensi memperkuat posisi hukum Islam dalam masyarakat plural sekaligus menyediakan kerangka konstruktif dalam mitigasi Islamofobia.
Keywords: **Wasathiyah; Islamofobia; Maqāṣid al-Syarīʻah; Perbandingan Hukum Islam; Tata Kelola Keagamaan.**

Introduction

As the jurisdiction with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia presents a unique model of integration between Islamic values and the nation-state framework through the constitutional principle of Pancasila (Khanif, 2025; Mahfud MD & Heryansyah, 2025; Prihasmoro et al., 2026; Safa'at, 2022; Sudirta et al., 2025; Yudhyarta et al., 2025). The existence of Islamic law in Indonesia has historically not developed in isolation; rather, it has transformed into an inclusive national identity that rejects all forms of violent instrumentalization in the implementation of the Sharīʻah (Bastiar et al., 2025; Dhuhri et al., 2025; Hizbullah et al., 2025; Ma'u, 2018; Muslimin et al., 2024; Winter & Hasan, 2016). This paradigm affirms that Indonesia is neither a purely secular state nor a theocratic state, but rather a religious nation-state that positions religion as an ethical foundation in public policy (Hefner, 2021). Within this context, religious moderation, or Islam Wasathiyah (Afifah et al., 2025), emerges not merely as a theological discourse but as a non-litigation legal doctrine formally adopted by the state to maintain national stability (Idrus et al., 2022; Laman et al., 2024; Syatar et al., 2022). However, challenges arise when this inclusive character encounters global dynamics that tend to oversimplify Muslim identity into a stigma of radicalism (Basyir, 2020; Mansoor, 2025). This tension between domestic legal identity and international perception necessitates deeper examination through the lens of comparative Islamic law (Ezzerouali et al., 2024). Thus, Indonesia's legal position should be

understood as a form of syncretism between religious norms and the principles of modern democracy (Bagir et al., 2020; Barton et al., 2021; Fossati, 2019; Irwansyah et al., 2025; Isra & Tegnan, 2021; Mansoor, 2025).

The empirical urgency of this study is rooted in the shift of global security paradigms following the tragedy of September 11, 2001, which triggered a systemic escalation of Islamophobia across various parts of the world (Muzakkir et al., 2023). This phenomenon has not only resulted in social discrimination but has also infiltrated international legal policies through anti-terrorism regulations that often target specific religious symbols (Diaz, 2020; Sezgin, 2019; Sinnar, 2022; Sriram, 2016). In Indonesia, the impact of these global policies is manifested in the emergence of suspicion toward physical attributes such as the niqab or ankle-length trousers, which are frequently and erroneously associated with transnational jihadist movements (Dauda, 2020). The controversy surrounding the prohibition of the niqab in several Islamic higher education institutions in recent years serves as concrete evidence of how Islamophobic narratives have entered the realm of domestic policymaking (Aswadi et al., 2026; Marjani, 2023b) This reflects a profound collective trauma regarding the threat of extremism, leading society to engage in generalizations that undermine individual civil rights. From a juridical perspective, this phenomenon creates tension between the state's obligation to ensure national security and its duty to protect freedom of religious expression. Therefore, a legal and social instrument is required to distinguish radical ideology from mere symbolic religious expression.

Theoretically, Islam *Wasathiyah* offers a fundamental solution through the doctrines of balance (*tawāzun*) and justice (*i'tidāl*), which serve as an antithesis to both right-wing extremism and extreme liberalism. From the perspective of comparative Islamic law, the concept of *Wasathiyah* in Indonesia bears functional similarities to the principle of Islam *Hadhari* in Malaysia (Chan, 2023); however, Indonesia demonstrates a comparative advantage in terms of the involvement of non-state actors (Arif et al., 2025; Kibtiyah, 2022). Intellectual tension arises when the concept of *ṭāghūt*, promoted by radical groups, clashes with the national consensus regarding the sovereignty of positive law (Amin et al., 2024). The state seeks to bridge this tension through regulatory reinforcement, such as the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation No. 18 of 2020, which institutionalizes religious moderation as part of the national medium-term development plan. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this regulation in reducing Islamophobic prejudice at the grassroots level still requires more comprehensive empirical validation. A comparison between international human rights standards and the implementation of religious moderation becomes crucial to ensure that such policies do not violate the principle of religious freedom (Al-Billeh, 2022; Oliva, 2020; Raza, 2020; Rieffer-Flanagan, 2019; Siregar &

Sakharina, 2019; Vieytez, 2024) . Through this approach, *Wasathiyah* is positioned as a moderate legal instrument in balancing the interests of individuals, religion, and the state.

Previous studies have extensively explored the sociological dimensions of religious moderation in Indonesia but have often neglected normative-comparative analysis within the framework of Islamic law. Most studies focus on the role of mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (Riyanta et al., 2022) and Muhammadiyah (Harisudin, 2021) in maintaining social harmony without linking these roles to transformations in global legal policies (Khasan, 2021). The current literature synthesis reveals a gap in analyzing how Islam *Wasathiyah* can function as a form of legal diplomacy to counter discriminatory regulations in Western contexts (Bakry et al., 2020). Furthermore, research mapping on interfaith dialogue often remains confined to ceremonial narratives without addressing the substantive legal dimensions of conflict resolution (Marjani, 2023a). There is an urgent need to position Indonesia not merely as an object of study but as a subject advancing new norms in international Islamic law. This gap provides the entry point for this study to offer a more integrative perspective. Without a comparative understanding, Indonesia's religious moderation strategy risks remaining a purely domestic policy lacking relevance on the global stage (Alvian & Ardhani, 2023; Qurashi, 2017; Rusyana et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2024; van Es et al., 2021; Zaimina, 2025).

Based on this gap, this article aims to comparatively analyze the effectiveness of the Islam *Wasathiyah* doctrine as a non-litigation legal instrument in mitigating the escalation of Islamophobia in Indonesia. The primary focus lies in examining how Islamic civil society organizations transform the values of moderation into concrete strategies to reduce suspicion toward religious symbols. This study also evaluates the implementation of religious moderation programs in addressing the influence of transnational movements that often provoke anti-Western and anti-minority sentiments. Methodologically, this study employs a normative-comparative approach by juxtaposing Indonesian practices with those in other Muslim jurisdictions such as Egypt and Malaysia. The analysis of interfaith dialogue as a form of soft diplomacy also constitutes an integral component in addressing Islamophobia at the international level. Accordingly, this study seeks to provide a more robust conceptual framework for the development of Islamic law in the future. Its strong focus on legal and policy dimensions distinguishes it from existing purely sociological analyses.

The contribution of this study is significant to contemporary Islamic legal discourse, particularly in providing a blueprint for mitigating religion-based conflicts through non-confrontational approaches. Theoretically, this article enriches the field of Comparative Islamic Law by introducing the Indonesian *Wasathiyah* model as a potential global standard in addressing tensions between religion and the state. For policymakers, these

findings offer academic justification for strengthening religious moderation regulations to be more adaptive to global political dynamics. Moreover, this study provides intellectual support for the constitutional rights of Muslims to express religious symbols without being perceived as security threats. Through the strengthening of peace-oriented narratives grounded in a clear legal framework, Indonesia can position itself as a leader in the global anti-Islamophobia movement. Ultimately, this study affirms that the solution to the global Muslim identity crisis lies in the ability to contextualize Islamic law within an inclusive democratic space. This represents Indonesia's tangible contribution to a more harmonious and just global legal civilization.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design to integrate empirical data on public preferences regarding Islamic moderation, or *Wasathiyah*, as an instrument for mitigating the phenomenon of Islamophobia (Dauda, 2020). The selection of this method is based on the need to bridge the gap between trends in public perception and qualitative analysis of the construction of legal thought within religious institutions. This approach goes beyond mere sociological description by providing an epistemological justification that links public perceptions with a comparative framework of norms across various institutions. The primary focus of this design is to explore how the concept of *Wasathiyah* is transformed from a normative text into a measurable sociological reality. Through this integration, the study captures the complexity of religious moderation both as a product of legal reasoning and as a dynamic social phenomenon. This methodology ensures that the findings are not merely superficial but engage with the philosophical foundations of Islamic law within a contemporary comparative context. The incorporation of this mixed approach is crucial to validating whether the rhetoric of moderation at the level of legal authority aligns with its acceptance at the grassroots level.

The comparative dimension of this study is emphasized through an analysis of the *manhaj* (methodological approaches of Islamic law) adopted by Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persis in responding to the issue of Islamophobia (Ana Fardila et al., 2020). These three organizations are selected as comparative subjects because they represent a diverse spectrum of Islamic legal thought in Indonesia, ranging from traditionalist to reformist approaches. The study examines how differences in *ijtihād* methodologies within each organization influence the articulation and implementation of the *Wasathiyah* concept in society. The comparison is conducted not only on the resulting fatwas but also on the underlying legal hermeneutics employed in addressing global challenges. This comparative legal approach enables the identification of both convergence and divergence in the moderation strategies proposed by these religious authorities. Accordingly, this methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of how the dialectic between religious texts and social contexts is managed across different

organizations. This comparative analysis serves as the primary foundation for mapping the effectiveness of each institution in mitigating Islamophobic sentiments through legal and social mechanisms.

The data collection instruments are rigorously designed through the development of Likert-scale questionnaires and in-depth interview protocols, which have been validated by experts in Islamic law and sociology. Quantitative data are collected to map the broad distribution of respondents' preferences, while qualitative data are obtained through interviews with fatwa authorities and intellectuals within the respective institutions. The validity of the quantitative instruments is tested using strict reliability criteria to ensure the accuracy of primary data collected from the field. In addition, participatory observation is conducted in situ to capture actual moderation practices, or *living law*, which may differ from normative-textual statements. Data triangulation techniques are consistently applied to integrate findings from multiple sources, thereby producing a holistic and credible understanding. The research protocol also takes into account academic ethical standards and the representativeness of informants to minimize bias in data collection. The synergy among these various data collection techniques strengthens the study's position as a rigorous empirical investigation in Islamic legal studies.

The data analysis process is conducted by integrating descriptive and inferential statistical methods to provide a macro-level overview of societal tendencies, which is then enriched through qualitative narratives to uncover the underlying motives and legal foundations behind the numerical data. Correlation analysis is employed to examine the relationship between the level of understanding of *Wasathiyah* and societal resistance to Islamophobic narratives. Meanwhile, qualitative analysis of the *manhaj* of each religious organization provides theological and juridical context that enhances the interpretation of statistical findings. The mixing point of these two types of data lies in the interpretation stage, where empirical findings are synthesized with theories of comparative Islamic law. This integration aims to produce robust conclusions regarding the efficacy of the *Wasathiyah* concept in both legal and social domains at a global level. Ultimately, this methodology offers a new standard in the study of Islamic law, capable of addressing contemporary social realities through a systematic interdisciplinary approach.

Result and Discussion

The Dynamics of Urban Tolerance Practices in Indonesia: An Empirical and Juridical Analysis

Empirical findings in the 2022 Tolerant City Index (IKT) report released by SETARA Institute map a highly diverse spectrum of social coexistence across 94 cities in Indonesia. The distribution of the highest tolerance scores in cities such as Singkawang (6.583) and Salatiga (6.417) indicates stable social coexistence which, from the perspective of comparative Islamic law, reflects the implementation of the principles of *al-musawah*

(equality) and *al-tasamuh* (tolerance) that transcend the boundaries of religious primordialism (Addzaky et al., 2025; Baderin, 2013; Karimullah, 2023; Sohail et al., 2025). This phenomenon is not merely an administrative success but a manifestation of the harmonization between local wisdom values and inclusive Islamic legal principles that position justice as the primary foundation of social interaction. These data demonstrate that moderate legal interpretations are capable of creating an environment conducive to the protection of minority rights in line with the spirit of *Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat* within the context of the nation-state. The achievements of these top ten cities indicate that Indonesian constitutionalism has successfully accommodated the principle of universal citizenship (*muwātanah*) within regional governance. Therefore, the success of these cities serves as an objective standard for measuring the extent to which public regulations can guarantee religious freedom without being trapped in the majority–minority dichotomy. From a juridical-normative perspective, this stability confirms that Islamic law in its practical application in Indonesia is moving toward a more transformative and accommodative direction in responding to global plurality.

Tabel 1: Distribution of 2022 Tolerant City Index Scores by National Ranking

Ranking	Kota	Ind 1	Ind 2	Ind 3	Ind 4	Ind 5	Ind 6	Ind 7	Ind 8	Final Score
1	Singkawang	6,33	7,00	7,00	6,00	6,00	7,00	6,00	6,00	**6,583**
2	Salatiga	6,17	7,00	7,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	6,00	**6,417**
3	Bekasi	5,00	6,40	7,00	5,00	6,00	7,00	5,00	5,00	**6,080**
4	Surakarta	5,83	7,00	7,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	**5,883**
5	Kediri	4,50	6,50	6,50	6,00	6,00	5,00	5,00	6,00	**5,850**
6	Sukabumi	5,00	6,80	7,00	5,00	5,00	6,00	3,00	5,00	**5,810**
7	Semarang	4,83	7,00	7,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	**5,783**
8	Manado	4,67	7,00	7,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	**5,767**
9	Kupang	5,67	6,85	7,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	4,00	4,00	**5,687**
10	Magelang	6,00	6,35	7,00	4,00	4,00	6,00	4,00	5,00	**5,670**

Table 2: Performance of Metropolitan Cities (Population Over One Million) in the 2022 IKT

No	City	Population	2022 IKT Ranking
1	Bekasi	2.503.345	**3**
2	Semarang	1.688.981	**7**
3	Batam	1.112.583	**15**
4	Bogor	1.099.026	**17**
5	Bandung	2.518.260	**26**
6	Bandar Lampung	1.092.506	**36**

7	Tangerang	1.834.962	**39**
8	Tangerang Selatan	1.365.688	**39**
9	Pekanbaru	1.085.000	**62**
10	Surabaya	2.971.646	**68**

Source: research data

An analysis of cities with the best tolerance performance reveals that their success is driven by five strategic instruments, ranging from the clarity of program design to the strengthening of pluralism-oriented visions. Juridically, the existence of intensive dialogue policies reflects the implementation of *Siyasah Shar'iyyah*, which prioritizes public welfare (*maslahah mursalah*) over narrow sectarian interests. Metropolitan cities with large populations such as Bekasi (ranked 3rd) and Semarang (ranked 7th) demonstrate that modernity and heterogeneity can be managed through non-discriminatory legal instruments. The absence of discriminatory incidents in these regions indicates that law enforcement operates in harmony with the principles of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (Towadi, 2017), particularly in safeguarding life, religion, and intellect collectively. The strengthening of civil society in these cities functions as a counterbalance to power, ensuring that every regional legal product remains consistent with inclusivity principles. The synergy between progressive political leadership and public participation creates a legal ecosystem resilient to the pressures of identity politics, which often threaten national stability. This provides an important lesson that tolerance does not grow organically alone but must be constructed through well-planned legal policies with a long-term vision.

Conversely, the degradation of tolerance index scores in the lowest-ranked cities, such as Depok (3.610) and Cilegon (3.227), indicates serious challenges in synchronizing religious law with global human rights standards. The attributes of these lower-ranked cities, dominated by identity-based leadership and majoritarian perspectives, reveal a failure to contextualize inclusive citizenship principles. Juridically, this phenomenon suggests a distortion in the interpretation of Islamic law that tends to be exclusive and textual, thereby neglecting principles of social justice for all citizens (Ikhsan et al., 2025; Junaidi et al., 2023). The existence of segregate regional regulations in these cities often employs religious justification to restrict the movement of groups considered theologically different. From the perspective of comparative Islamic law, such exclusivist practices contradict the spirit of the Charter of Medina, which guarantees equal legal protection for all social entities. This imbalance creates social segregation that undermines the structure of Islamic governance, which should be based on respect for human dignity (*karamah insaniyah*). Therefore, the low tolerance scores in these regions reflect ongoing challenges in harmonizing local laws with constitutional commitments to diversity.

The decline in the average IKT score in 2022 by 0.21 points compared to the previous year signals fluctuations in national legal stability influenced by the dynamics of

contemporary Islamic legal sociology. This decline reflects tensions between the current of religious moderation and the strengthening of conservatism that seeks to redefine public space through exclusive legal instruments. When compared with trends in other Muslim-majority countries, Indonesia still holds a unique position but remains vulnerable to the infiltration of transnational ideologies that are not aligned with the principle of *muwatanah* (Kurniawan, 2020; Marheni Muhammad, 2024). Nevertheless, the fact that ten cities with populations exceeding one million people continue to demonstrate relatively strong tolerance performance provides hope for the resilience of national law. Cities such as Bandung, Bogor, and Tangerang remain anchors of tolerant practices despite facing complex demographic and political pressures. The significance of this decline should be viewed as a warning for the central government to strengthen evaluations of regional legal products that potentially violate citizens' constitutional rights. Global comparisons show that the sovereignty of a legal system is largely determined by its ability to protect the most vulnerable groups through a just legal framework.

As a synthesis, the results of the 2022 IKT measurement affirm that the future of tolerance in Indonesia largely depends on the reorientation of legal paradigms based on progressive *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* principles (Al-Turabi & Auda, 2025; Isman et al., 2024; Laksana et al., 2025; Muthalib et al., 2021; Yusuf et al., 2024). The synchronization between interpretations of Islamic law, the national constitution, and international legal standards is essential to overcoming the problem of majoritarianism at the local level. Cities with the highest scores demonstrate that Islam can serve as a driving force in fostering an open and egalitarian society through inclusive public policies. The challenges in cities with lower scores demand firmer juridical interventions to ensure that no regulations continue to facilitate religious-based discrimination. Strengthening moderate Islamic legal literacy among regional policymakers is a crucial step to prevent the use of religion as a tool of social fragmentation. Through a comparative Islamic law approach, it can be concluded that the protection of minorities is not merely a political concession but a legal obligation rooted in the principles of *tawhid* and universal justice. Ultimately, this study contributes theoretically to the importance of integrating inclusive values into the structure of positive law to ensure the sustainability of harmony in a pluralistic state.

Dialectics of Islam *Wasathiyah* and the Phenomenon of Islamophobia in the Perspective of Contemporary Comparative Islamic Law in Indonesia

The ontology of Islamophobia in Indonesia is multidimensional, wherein distortions of Islamic legal doctrines frequently intersect with global security narratives, thereby triggering the escalation of systemic prejudice that transcends traditional sociopolitical boundaries (Muzakkir et al., 2023; Shaker et al., 2023). This phenomenon is no longer merely a manifestation of individual sentiment; rather, it has expanded into highly complex discourses of legality and human rights within the framework of comparative

Islamic law (Ahmad et al., 2024; Almahfali & Avery, 2023; Elmahjub, 2021; Ercanbrack, 2019). Islamophobia operates through institutional policies that, either consciously or unconsciously, often marginalize the legal position of Muslims in the public sphere (Bukar, 2020; Gould, 2020; Husain, 2020). In the domestic context, factors such as radicalism and narrow doctrinal understandings are not merely sources of stigma, but variables that affect constitutional integrity and the protection of citizens' rights (Atrey, 2018; Hilal-Harvald, 2020; Kistoro et al., 2020). Therefore, an in-depth analysis of its sociopolitical roots is essential to understand how such stigma distorts the juridical position of Muslims within the national legal landscape (Alviano et al., 2025). A synthesis between the sociology of law and empirical realities is required to dissect the increasing structural complexity of prejudice. This discourse demands a reevaluation of how state legal policies can protect minority groups while simultaneously preserving harmony within a pluralistic society.

The escalation of Islamophobia in Indonesia is often driven by the securitization of religion, which places Islamic legal practices under strict surveillance by security authorities through the lens of counterterrorism (Rasyid et al., 2019). This situation creates distortions of key concepts such as jihad, which are subsequently reduced to global security threats rather than understood as noble moral and legal struggles (Faozan, 2020; Sirgy et al., 2018; Zulfarizal et al., 2026). Such systemic prejudice is frequently justified through discriminatory legal policies enacted in the name of national stability. When misconceptions about Islam dominate the public sphere, the legal position of Muslims as equal subjects before the law becomes vulnerable to political intervention. Sharp socioeconomic disparities further aggravate this condition by turning religion into a scapegoat for systemic failures in the distribution of welfare. Global media influence reinforces inaccurate perceptions that associate every expression of religiosity with the potential threat of destructive radicalism. Consequently, there has been a shift from the constitutional recognition of religious rights toward a repressive-preventive model of strict surveillance.

In responding to these sociopolitical pressures, Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia play a role as instruments of social control and extrajudicial conflict resolution through a legal functionalist approach (Agastia et al., 2020; Kasim & Nurdin, 2020; Zulfa et al., 2025). The strategies implemented by Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persatuan Islam demonstrate the existence of effective Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms in mitigating horizontal tensions. These organizations function not only as religious institutions but also as informal legal entities possessing strong moral authority over their followers (Low & Ayoko, 2020). By promoting interfaith dialogue and inclusive sociopolitical participation, they establish legal safety nets that prevent conflicts from

escalating into physical violence. Media literacy strategies and the use of digital platforms have become the frontline instruments for constructing counter-narratives against the negative stigma developing within global society. These efforts represent a form of cultural legal advocacy aimed at restoring the image of Islam as a religion compatible with universal human rights principles. The synergy between education and concrete social action has become the primary key to transforming public perceptions from fear toward mutual understanding.

The implementation of religious moderation is grounded in the rich methodological diversity found within the intellectual traditions of major Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Majelis Ulama Indonesia integrates the authority of fatwas as moral-legal guidance that harmoniously bridges the aspirations of Muslims with the interests of state stability. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah reconstructs Islamic thought through contemporary *ijtihād* within the framework of Progressive Islam, emphasizing rationality and public welfare. This approach inherently differs from that of Nahdlatul Ulama, which reinforces cultural legality through the adaptive dialectics of Islam Nusantara toward existing local traditions. At the same time, *Persatuan Islam*, through its Dewan Hisbah, offers a more textual perspective while still prioritizing rationality in responding to the dynamics of modern law. These differences in the methodology of *istinbāṭ al-aḥkām* demonstrate that pluralism within Indonesian Islamic legal thought constitutes a major strength in resisting extremist narratives. Their shared commitment to realizing *Wasathiyah* indicates that epistemological diversity actually enriches the solutions to the challenges posed by Islamophobia.

A comparative analysis of legal products such as the fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia, the Tarjih decisions of Muhammadiyah, and the Bahtsul Masail resolutions of Nahdlatul Ulama reveals a convergence of values amidst methodological diversity. These fatwas are not merely normative in nature, but constitute legal responses to global dynamics that frequently harm the image of Muslims. Muhammadiyah employs the *bayānī*, *burhānī*, and *'irfānī* approaches to ensure that Islamic law remains relevant to contemporary demands without losing its original identity. Through the Bahtsul Masail mechanism, Nahdlatul Ulama positions social reality as an essential variable in legal decision-making, thereby producing highly contextual rulings. *Persatuan Islam* contributes through its emphasis on the purification of creed while still considering sound and universally acceptable legal reasoning. The uniqueness of each organization in formulating religious moderation creates a resilient ecosystem of Islamic law capable of withstanding transnational ideological shocks. The binding force of these organizational decisions has proven more effective in transforming mass behavior than top-down state regulations.

The novelty of this research lies in identifying Islam *Wasathiyah* as a transformative force capable of reshaping the structure of public consciousness from a paradigm of exclusion toward genuine social inclusion. The transformation in question is not merely cultural at the level of ideas, but structural in nature, influencing how state legal policies are formulated. The findings indicate that religious moderation in Indonesia operates as a mechanism of collective self-defense against systematic attempts to marginalize the public role of religion. As debated in global literature by John L. Esposito (Esposito, 2022), moderation is often regarded as an apologetic endeavor; however, within the Indonesian context, it functions as an instrument of legal-formal struggle. The role of Islamic mass organizations in mainstreaming moderation has created safer spaces for all stakeholders to redefine national identity. This model of transformation involves synchronization between traditional religious authority and the demands of modern democracy, which prioritizes equality before the law. Accordingly, Islam *Wasathiyah* emerges as an important thesis within comparative Islamic legal studies, offering a solution to the failures of secularism in managing diversity.

The policy implications generated from this research include the necessity of strengthening regulations that explicitly protect religious rights from systemic stigmatization in the public sphere. The state must adopt collaborative models with Islamic organizations in formulating legal policies related to moderation to ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level. The establishment of educational institutions focusing on moderate Islamic legal literacy has become increasingly urgent in equipping younger generations with critical reasoning against radical propaganda. Legal policies must be capable of distinguishing between legitimate expressions of religiosity and genuine security threats in order to prevent unnecessary human rights violations. Strengthening the positive image of religious leaders through international public diplomacy also constitutes a strategic recommendation for improving Indonesia's bargaining position globally. Synergy between national legal instruments and the legal wisdom of religious organizations will create sustainable social stability. These concrete solutions are expected to serve as references for international stakeholders in efforts to comprehensively combat Islamophobia.

The phenomenon of Islamophobia in Indonesia must be addressed through the strengthening of a moderate and adaptive epistemology of Islamic law. The success of Islamic organizations in grounding *Wasathiyah* through diverse legal methodologies demonstrates that Islam possesses strong internal mechanisms for self-moderation. The comparison between the *ijtihād* of Muhammadiyah, the wisdom of Nahdlatul Ulama, and the rationality of *Persatuan Islam* provides a comprehensive picture of how dynamic Islamic legal responses are toward contemporary challenges. This research contributes

significantly to the fields of sociology of law and comparative Islamic law by demonstrating that non-state religious authorities play a crucial role in maintaining the national legal order. In the future, increasingly complex global challenges will require closer coordination between state policies and organizational initiatives to ensure that religious moderation is not merely a slogan, but a living legal reality. By positioning Islam *Wasathiyah* as the central axis, Indonesia can become a global model for harmonizing religious law, state law, and human rights. The collective awareness fostered through this analysis is expected to reduce prejudice and strengthen the foundations of justice for all citizens without exception.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia have transformed their strategies into a form of collective *ijtihād* that integrates the values of *Siyāsah Shar'iyyah* with the framework of positive law and universal citizenship principles. The implementation of religious moderation by these organizations is no longer understood merely as a rhetoric of tolerance, but rather as a legal instrument for the preventive mitigation of religion-based discrimination. The principal contribution of this study demonstrates that the synergy between moderation-based legal literacy and policy advocacy is capable of establishing mechanisms for the protection of minority rights that are aligned with the objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. The advocacy paradigm developed in Indonesia offers a distinctive normative model for advancing the theory of global legal pluralism in addressing extremism and discrimination simultaneously. This strategy confirms that Islamic values are compatible with international legal standards, thereby providing an important precedent for Muslim communities across various jurisdictions in confronting similar legal challenges. Future reflections necessitate the formal recognition of these moderation practices as part of a substantive legal doctrine capable of strengthening transnational social cohesion.

The government should institutionalize interfaith dialogue frameworks within inclusive public policies in order to establish legally measurable and sustainable mechanisms for conflict mitigation. These policy recommendations include the need to strengthen regulations that explicitly protect the rights of religious groups against discriminatory practices by referring to best practices from various global jurisdictions as juridical comparisons. In addition, it is necessary to integrate legal literacy curricula grounded in citizenship values into educational systems administered by Islamic mass organizations in order to reinforce the legal resilience of civil society. Synergy between judicial institutions and civil society organizations must also be enhanced in formulating legal instruments capable of bridging normative Islamic law with the demands of universal

human rights. The government is further encouraged to facilitate strategic alliances between civil society actors and international legal institutions to expand the scope of anti-Islamophobia advocacy at the transnational level. Monitoring the implementation of minority protection policies should be conducted periodically through the utilization of comprehensive legal data to ensure continued relevance amid evolving global challenges. These strategic measures are expected to strengthen Indonesia's position as a normative model for managing diversity based on the supremacy of law and substantive justice for all citizens without exception.

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