# THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

***Abstract***

*This study aims to describe the importance of religious tolerance in pluralistic societies, focusing on how tolerant attitudes can strengthen social cohesion and prevent conflict. Using a descriptive approach and a qualitative model, the study involved reading, recording, analyzing, and organizing data from various sources, including journals and online articles. The results of the study show that a tolerant view of religion and nationality must be built through a moderate strategy, away from rigid and rigid attitudes. This moderation approach does not only apply to the teachings of religion itself, but rather to the way individuals understand and practice religion. Thus, the issue of khilafiyah can be tolerated without claiming the absolute truth from one point of view. This research emphasizes that building religious tolerance requires a willingness to respect differences and find common ground, so that each individual can coexist harmoniously. Awareness of the importance of moderation in religion is key to creating an inclusive and peaceful society, where everyone feels valued and has a common place. These findings are expected to serve as a basis for further efforts to promote tolerance and diversity in Indonesia.*

***Key Words***:

*Tolerance, Pluralism, and Islamic Studies*

# Introduction

In the era of increasingly advanced globalization, the importance of religious tolerance in a pluralistic society is very important, considering the diversity that exists around the world, including in Indonesia, which is defined as a country with a diverse population of various religions, ethnicities, and cultures. Religious tolerance is defined as an attitude of mutual respect and understanding of differences in beliefs between individuals or groups, as well as being the basis for creating harmonious and stable social cohesion. In the context of pluralism, where different beliefs and practices coexist, tolerance is the key to preventing conflicts that can arise from existing differences (Casram, 2016). Societies that cannot develop tolerant attitudes risk experiencing tension, discrimination, and even violence that can damage social structures and cause insecurity. Therefore, the rich history of religious tolerance in Indonesia needs to be strengthened, especially in the midst of new challenges that arise due to political, economic, and social influences that can lead to extremism. Education is a vital means in building an attitude of tolerance, because the values of mutual respect instilled from an early age in school will give birth to individuals who not only understand diversity, but also appreciate it. Public policies that support religious freedom and protect the rights of all citizens are also important in creating an environment conducive to the growth of tolerance. On the other hand, the role of civil society, including NGOs, can enhance these efforts through interfaith initiatives that encourage positive interactions between communities. By creating a safe space to discuss differences, communities can find shared solutions to existing challenges. Finally, building religious tolerance is not only the responsibility of certain individuals or groups, but also a collective commitment that must be supported by all levels of society, because diversity is a force that can be used to create a harmonious and productive life. Religious tolerance is not only acceptance, but also celebrates differences and makes diversity a valuable asset in building a peaceful, prosperous, and mutually respectful society.

Religious tolerance is tolerance that includes the issue of trust in society related to the beliefs or divinity that they believe in. A person must be given the freedom to believe and adhere to a religion (belief) of his choice, as well as respect the implementation of the teachings he adheres to (Shofiah, 2020). Religious tolerance is the embodiment of the expression of religious experience in the form of community. Tolerance can be interpreted as an attitude of mutual recognition and respect for differences between people, both races, ethnicities, customs and religions, as well as mutual cooperation between different groups of people. Tolerance does not fall in the field of faith, but in the social field (Nimer, 2011). This statement shows that *beliefs* cannot be compromised, only in the social realm can individuals cooperate even though they are different religions. The expression of religious experience in the form of groups, according to Joachim Wach, is the response of religious people to the absolute reality that is manifested in the form of social relations between religious peoples, both the same and different, in order to prove that absolute reality for them is a vital element in the diversity of human beings in social interaction, and this is present in all religions, both living and extinct (Bader, 2015).

According to Frithof Schön, religion was apparently born in different ways in this world. But despite the differences that arise in religions, the religions in the esoteric world share the same principle of origin and guidance from the Supreme Being (Campbell, 2010). Schwon's method in distinguishing these two aspects of religion can be applied as a guideline for how people of different religions must meet each other in carrying out their roles as servants of God Almighty in this world. Tolerance is a form of adaptation in social interaction. People who are socially religious cannot deny that they have to relate not only to their own group, but also to groups of different religions. Religious people must strive to prioritize tolerance to maintain social stability so that there is no ideological and physical clash between people of different beliefs (Fikri, 2022).

This article was written with the aim of advancing a harmonious religious life. Religious life in a pluralistic society will be harmonious if all people of different beliefs have an attitude of tolerance for each other. This article also aims to enrich intellectual treasures based on religious phenomena, which affirms that the study of religious tolerance is not presented just as a puff of the thumb, but more than that, because it is able to arouse real feelings in everyone.

In this article, we show you what the situation is like. This is the basis and used as a measure to create a proportionate attitude of tolerance between religious people. By having a good attitude, religious people will easily get along with others without abandoning their religious beliefs, or even create a good understanding of other religions without feeling neglected in their understanding of the religion they adhere to.

# Review of Related Literature

Religious tolerance has become one of the important aspects in maintaining harmony in a pluralistic society. According to Bushra Naoreen (2011), acceptance of differences and diversity in a community is the main factor in creating an inclusive and peaceful environment. His research highlights the importance of education in forming tolerant attitudes among the community.

Rod Berger (2022) in his article in Forbes emphasized that a society that has a broad understanding of religious diversity will be better able to prevent social conflicts. He also emphasized that tolerance is not just accepting differences, but also respecting and embracing these diversity in daily life.

A study by Cleveland (2020) shows that in the education system, an approach based on interreligious dialogue can increase mutual respect. On the other hand, Kyle Neddenriep (2020) highlights that experiential learning, such as direct interaction between religious communities, can strengthen understanding of diversity and reduce prejudices that may arise due to a lack of social interaction.

Jothy Nirmala (2004) examined individual attitudes towards religious diversity and found that education level has a significant impact on a person's level of tolerance. The higher a person's level of education, the more likely they are to be open and accepting of differences.

# Significance of the Study

Religious tolerance is a key pillar in creating a harmonious and peaceful society, especially in countries with religious diversity. A tolerant attitude can prevent conflicts and increase cooperation between religious communities in various aspects of life, both in the social, economic, and political fields.

In many pluralistic societies, ignorance and prejudice can trigger tensions between religious groups. Therefore, it is important to instill the values of tolerance from an early age through education and positive social interactions. A lack of understanding of other religions can lead to stereotypes and misunderstandings, which can ultimately divide society.

According to CA Kumar (2025), the current generation faces various challenges in maintaining a tolerant attitude in the midst of social pressure and societal expectations. Factors such as social media and a less supportive environment can exacerbate the situation and lead to sharper polarization.

Every society needs individuals who not only have knowledge, but also an open attitude towards diversity. Religious tolerance must be developed as part of the character of society to create a more inclusive and harmonious environment. Therefore, research on the importance of religious tolerance in a pluralistic society is very relevant and crucial to ensure the continuation of a peaceful and harmonious social life**.**

# Research Methods

This research method is based on descriptive analysis. The research method in this article also uses a qualitative model, this method consists of reading, recording, analyzing and summarizing various conditions, situations from various data collected in the form of text, both from journals, books and from the internet, so that the research produced is in the form of an explanation, then focuses on the strategy of the importance of religious tolerance in a plural society (Wibowo, 2019). This writing method aims and offers benefits so that the author and readers know the strategy of the importance of religious tolerance in a pluralistic society.

# Results And Discussion

1. **Religion in a Pluralistic Society**

Every religion is born in the midst of the pressure of other major religions, and no religion is born apart from the frenzy of pluralist society. Indonesia as a multiethnic, multicultural, and multireligious nation is an inevitability that cannot be denied by anyone. The existence of these religions is a challenge that must be faced by every religious believer, because pluralism is all around us and no one is able to resist it. In conditions like this, tolerance and dialogue between religious communities are the basic capital in maintaining the integrity of a plural and multicultural religious society (Nasution, 2017).

Religion in a pluralistic society serves as one of the essential elements that shape social identity and culture, where various beliefs and spiritual practices coexist side by side. In the context of pluralism, religion is not only seen as an individual's belief system, but also as a link that facilitates interaction between different groups, creating space for dialogue and understanding (Mahmud, 2022). The existence of different religions in a single community can enrich social and cultural life, offering diverse perspectives on morality, ethics, and the meaning of life. However, pluralism also requires every individual and group to develop an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect, in order to prevent conflicts that can arise due to differences. Thus, religion in a pluralistic society plays a role as a tool to strengthen social cohesion, as long as it is balanced with respect for diversity and a willingness to learn from each other.

1. **Religious Tolerance in a Pluralistic Society**

In the reform era, social progress tends to be a burden compared to the capital of the Indonesian nation. This is evidenced by the emergence of various problems that originate from pluralism, especially in the field of religion. From a religious point of view, all religious groups are not yet convinced that the basic value of each religion is tolerance. As a result, intolerance and conflict arise. In fact, religion can be a positive energy to build the value of tolerance to realize a just and prosperous country (Sari, 2021). In this era of reform, we must uphold democracy and tolerance. Democracy without tolerance will give birth to an authoritarian political order, while tolerance without democracy will give birth to pseudo-tolerance, that is, tolerance that is vulnerable to communal conflict. Therefore, tolerance and democracy must be interrelated, both in political society and civil society. In relation to these two things, it is considered important that there is tolerance in the life of a democratic pluralistic society. The problem is that tolerance in living together is getting weaker, and anti-tolerance and anti-pluralism are getting stronger. For this reason, tolerance must be developed in a pluralistic society.

There are two types of religious tolerance: First, passive religious tolerance, which is the attitude of accepting differences as something factual. Second, active religious tolerance, which is tolerance that involves engaging with others in the midst of differences and diversity. Active tolerance is the teaching of all religions. The essence of tolerance is peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between diversity. The practice of tolerance in a country often has its ups and downs. These ups and downs are due to distinctive meanings based on the relationship between "them" and "us". Religious tolerance that is carried out with full awareness will give birth to an inclusive attitude among religious people. This attitude considers religion itself to be true, but still provides space to express the truth of other religions that are believed to be true by its adherents. The inclusive attitude of religious people will be able to destroy extremist and exclusive attitudes of religious people that usually give birth to fanaticism and blind radicalism and even prolonged terrorism against people of different faiths (Utami, 2020).

Tolerance is brought about by a consciousness that is free from any form of pressure or influence and avoids hypocrisy. Tolerance is intended to allow the formation of a system that guarantees the security of individuals, property, and minority elements in society. This is achieved by respecting religion, morality and its institutions and respecting the opinions of others and the differences that exist in their environment without clashing with each other simply because of different beliefs or religions. In relation to religion, tolerance includes matters relating to human beliefs related to faith or relating to the divinity he or she believes in. A person should be given the freedom to believe and adhere to the religion of his choice and show respect for the implementation of the teachings he or she professes or believes.

1. **Typology of Religious Attitudes**

According to Komarudin Hidayat, the attitude of pluralism is more moderate than the attitude of inclusiveness, even exclusivity. He argues that religious plurality is theologically seen as an inevitable reality, where each religion has the same position (*parallel*) so that the spirit of da'wah to preach is considered irrelevant (Ghazali, 2016). Meanwhile, another opinion says that the typology of religious attitudes can be divided into three main categories: *exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism* (Dwi, 2017). Exclusivism refers to a view that emphasizes the singular truth of a particular religion and considers the teachings of other religions to be invalid or erroneous, often leading to intolerance. In contrast, inclusivism includes the recognition of the truth in some religious traditions, in which individuals believe that despite differences, all religions have positive values that can complement each other. Finally, pluralism focuses on the acceptance and celebration of religious diversity, encourages constructive interaction between religious communities and emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and understanding of differences (Driessen, 2014). These three attitudes play an important role in shaping social dynamics and interreligious interactions in society, as well as influencing the level of tolerance that can be realized in daily life.

1. **Theological Epoche as a Paradigm for Building Religious Tolerance**

*Epoché* Originally used by Pyrrhonism, a Greek school of philosophy around the 272nd century BC, to express doubts in science, so the founder of this school of philosophy, Pyrrhon, is considered the founder of ancient Greek skepticism. Pyrrhonism greatly influenced the thinking of 17th-century European philosophers, as evidenced by the existence of the term in Kant's 1765 writings, which were later popularized by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl in his method of examining religious phenomena as a 'response to subjective judgment'. and systematic criticism of modernism (Yilmaz, 2015). *The period*  was first initiated in the study of religious phenomenology by Husserl in the 19th century, among his works "*Phenomenology and the Foundations of Science", "Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigation)* (1901, 1913) and "*Cartesian Meditations"* (1931). According to Husserl, phenomenology is the study of the structure of consciousness that allows that consciousness to refer to objects outside of itself. However, all of this still requires reflection from researchers on the phenomenon, and put everything aside. Husserl called this type of reflection "phenomenological reduction", he sought to eliminate concepts and constructions from one's view in his research.

*Epoché* is a hallmark of Husserl's phenomenology, especially in his care to point out two important points. *First*, the accuracy to show the root of the fundamental problem that exists in modern times, namely misunderstandings in understanding the basic nature of the world and the nature of man. *Second*, precision in showing the way out of these modern problems, namely through phenomenological attitudes, especially the *era.* In his work, "*Logical Investigation*", and "*Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*", Husserl shows that modern philosophy is mired in the problem of the error of categorical distinction between subject and object. According to him, all modern thought movements since Descartes, Hegel, and John Stuart Mill have only had to be 'subjective psychological movements towards all reality, then place humans as the center of all knowledge (Varshney, 2022).

*Epoché* is neutral in religious research. It is an attitude that seeks to avoid judgments that have been previously formed by a religious person who researches religious phenomena (Varshney, 2022). Thus, through *the epogee* A phenomenologist is required to describe and explain empirically a religious phenomenon, without his own subjective point of view as a religious *believer.*

*Epoché* It is indeed in the realm of philosophy and theology, but the fact is that religious people can influence their actions and behavior, so that when religious expressions emerge from them, these influences will be carried over to the factual realm. That is, a phenomenologist must still question the true nature of a religious phenomenon through principles. *epogee* without being involved in formulating the advantages and disadvantages of religiosity or morality of a goal.

*Epoché* is fundamental in the study of religion. This is the key to eliminating unsympathetic attitudes, anger and hatred or selfish approaches (the *attracted approach*), and phenomenology opens the door to the penetration of religious experience, both on a broader and more subtle scale. If all religious people living in a multicultural society are able to open up their *epogee* attitudes, they can experience suffering, joy, sorrow, or even happiness with people of different religions (Varshney, 2022). The *epogee attitude* in phenomenology is the attitude of procrastination, holding back when a religious person encounters religious teachings that are different from the religious teachings he adheres to. Religiosity is based on *the epogee* attitude of being able to respect people of different beliefs with their own consciousness and not because of coercion or threats.

1. **Religious Pluralism** and **Tolerance**

Pluralism comes from the word "plural" which means many or more than one and "ism" which relates to an ideology or trend. Pluralism is a process of value system, an attitude that becomes a sustainable social cohesion at the stage of representation of religious reality. In the Encyclopedia of Science and Religion, the term "pluralism" comes from a term used to refer to "a philosophical position that emphasizes diversity and diversity over homogeneity and unity". It first appeared in the works of Christian Wolff (1679-1754), but was later popularized by William James (1842-1910). or, the Concise Religious Dictionary defines pluralism as "a philosophical system that emphasizes every diversity and as a form of rejection of monism (Kusnadi, 2021). Many modern societies use this term to refer to a social system in which different religious communities live together in a single country.

Religious pluralism and tolerance are closely intertwined in the context of diverse societies, where pluralism refers to the recognition and acceptance of the various religions, cultures, and beliefs that exist within a community. In a pluralistic society, religious tolerance is an essential foundation to maintain harmony and prevent conflicts that can arise due to differences (Hasbullah, 2019). Religious tolerance includes mutual respect, understanding, and respect for the beliefs of others, as well as their right to practice their respective religious teachings without fear of discrimination or oppression. With pluralism, individuals can learn to see differences as a force that enriches life experiences, thereby building positive relationships between religious communities. In practice, the application of religious pluralism and tolerance not only benefits individuals, but also contributes to social stability and the progress of society as a whole, creating a more peaceful and inclusive environment.

Religious pluralism (religious pluralism) is a fact that shows the existence of a large number of traditions and various variants of traditions related to the history of religions. In order to create harmony and harmony between religious communities, pluralism exists as an effort to create harmonious and harmonious social relations between religious communities.

# Forms of Religious Pluralism

Religious pluralism can be manifested in various forms that reflect the diversity of spiritual beliefs and practices in society. One form is interreligious interaction, in which individuals from different religious backgrounds engage in dialogue and cooperation to achieve common goals, such as social or humanitarian activities, which can enhance mutual understanding and respect. Another form is *inclusivism*, which recognizes the truth in many religious traditions and encourages its followers to see value in the beliefs of others. In addition, institutional pluralism can emerge in the form of official recognition of various religions in the legal and governmental systems, which ensures religious rights and freedoms for all citizens. Through strengthening these forms of religious pluralism, society can create a harmonious and inclusive environment, which respects every difference that exists. While other opinions say that there are many different types of pluralism whose formulation depends on the pattern of approach used. Types of pluralism include secular humanism, syncretism, global theology and perennial wisdom. However, here the author only limits the discussion to two types, namely secular humanism and global theology (Hasbullah, 2019).

Tolerance and respect are moral systems that uphold human values that do not escape the beginning of the term humanism. The type of humanist religious pluralism is to position religion as a social construct that upholds a tolerant attitude between human beings who live in a diversity of social realities. In this type, the subject no longer views that religion contains elements of reality that are sacred and transcendent. In other words, religion is no longer limited to a mere call to human spirituality.

Global theological pluralism tries to strive for religion that should be understood as a tool to know the One God. In this type, it is quite evident the epistemological influence offered by Immanuel Kant, namely about *Dash ding an Sich*, that religion is a *phenomenon* (everyday reality) while God is *Noumena* (real reality). Global theology expects uniformity of religious believers towards religiosity attitudes and uniform appreciation of God (Amri, 2020).

# Challenges to Religious Pluralism

Religion and society actually have a close and continuous harmonious bond with each other. Religion is one of the orientations of moral values that shape human attitudes and behaviors in facing the challenges of their social life. The birth of awareness to build a peaceful bond of life in a complete and unanimous manner, ideas about pluralism, tolerance and religious freedom also emerged as a form of efforts to prevent and resolve the conflict. Although, this prevention effort is certainly not easy and continues to face many challenges. The spirit of religious pluralism that emerges actually faces many challenges and is a concern for certain communities (Damanhuri, 2028). Practically, the challenge to religious pluralism itself is not spared from the understanding of religious pluralism which is increasingly diverse.

Furthermore, many religious communities do not fully understand what religious pluralism is, triggering negative sentiments embedded in religious pluralism and making the tendency of exclusivism to grow and inflame among religious people. What happened next, a new problem arose that further muddy the situation, namely where the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) as an organization representing the majority religion in Indonesia gave a response and fatwa that was haram on the understanding of pluralism, in addition to secularism and liberalism (Hasbullah, 2018). Departing from this, it is necessary to strive for a complete and consistent definition of pluralism. Religious pluralism faces various challenges that can hinder the creation of a harmonious and mutually respectful society. One of the main challenges is the rise of extremism and intolerance that is often fueled by a narrow understanding of religion, where some groups feel threatened by the existence of other faiths and seek to enforce the dominance of their religion. In addition, interreligious conflicts triggered by political and social factors can also exacerbate the situation, creating tensions that damage interfaith relations. The limited education about diversity and tolerance in schools contributes to the lack of understanding among the younger generation about the importance of pluralism. On the other hand, the media often makes things worse by showing sensationalist news, which can trigger prejudices and negative stereotypes against certain groups. All these challenges show that realizing true pluralism requires a concerted effort from all elements of society to build dialogue, inclusive education, and public policies that support diversity.

Another factor that is also a challenge is the emergence of social sentiments in the economic context between religious communities caused by social stratification inequality in people's lives. Of course, this is a quite complicated problem and requires serious attention. This is because inequality or stratification of social class can affect the emergence of other more complex factors.

# Strategies of Religious Tolerance in a Pluralistic Society

Tolerant religious and national views need to be built with the right strategy on a moderate view, not on a rigid and rigid view, even must pay attention to the public interest, Building a moderate view of non-religion is not moderate. However, one's view of religion needs to be moderated. As long as the problem is that khilafiyah can be tolerated by not feeling the most correct in religious concepts and practices (Tofail, 2018).

Strategies to encourage religious tolerance in a pluralistic society include educational approaches, interfaith dialogue, and strengthening public policies that support diversity. Education plays an important role by integrating material on tolerance and diversity in the curriculum, so that the younger generation can understand and appreciate differences from an early age. Interfaith dialogue should be facilitated to build positive communication between groups, where each party can share experiences and perspectives, thus creating mutual understanding. In addition, the government and related institutions need to implement policies that protect the rights of all citizens in practicing their religion, as well as take strict action against any form of discrimination or violence that occurs. Through a combination of these strategies, the community can create an inclusive and harmonious environment, where religious tolerance becomes an integral part of daily life.

# Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion on religious tolerance in a pluralistic society, the following conclusions can be drawn: Tolerant views of religion and nationality should be built with the right strategy on moderate views, not on rigid and rigid views, and even must pay attention. . For the sake of the common good, a moderate view is not a religion that is not moderate. However, one's perspective on religion must be moderated. Through this, the problem is that khilafiyah can be tolerated by not feeling the most correct in religious concepts and practices.

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