

MODERATING RELIGION FOR GLOBAL SECURITY: CONSTRUCTIVIST INSIGHTS

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Abstract

Religious moderation is important in state behaviour and international relations in the globalized world, impacting peace promotion and global security. The moderation of religion greatly influences the determination of state identity, adherence to international norms, and enhancement of diplomatic relations through promoting peaceful coexistence. This paper deliberates on the role of religious moderation using case studies of Indonesia, Norway, and India, referencing constructivist theory. The two most prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, actively cooperate in reducing sectarian strife and enhancing pluralism, which benefits both internal peace and the nation's improved international standing. Conversely, despite being a non-religious nation, Norway employs religious moderation as a strategic form of soft power, evidenced by its mediation efforts in the Oslo Accords. This reinforces Norway's reputation as an impartial mediator in international crises. Meanwhile, India faces a rise in religious nationalism, mainly Hindu nationalism, which has worsened social polarization and made it more challenging to enact moderation in both foreign and domestic policy. Analyzing these cases highlights the challenges of religious extremism and nationalism while emphasizing the potential of religious moderation to support domestic stability, facilitate diplomacy, and contribute meaningfully to more considerable peacebuilding efforts. Ultimately, this research underscores the critical importance of states incorporating moderate religious principles to promote internal harmony and contribute positively to international diplomacy and peace initiatives.

Keywords: Religious Moderation, Global Security, Constructivism, International Relations, Peacebuilding

Introduction

Religious extremism has emerged as a significant driver of conflict and instability on a global scale, particularly in regions such as the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Militant groups such as ISIS in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and Al-Shabaab in Somalia have destabilized national governments, resulting in widespread humanitarian crises (Haynes, 2016; Juergensmeyer, 2017). These conflicts are often fueled by radical ideologies that exploit religious narratives, exacerbating sectarian divisions and deepening social fragmentation (Kaldor, 2012). In Europe, the rise of far-right movements, driven by reactions to increasing religious pluralism, has further intensified tensions (Ronald Inglehart and Pipes Norris, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge University Press., 2016).. These developments underscore the interconnectedness of religious extremism and global security, where localized conflicts can have far-reaching impacts across borders (Piazza, 2011).

Global security refers to the collective efforts of international actors—states, organizations, and other stakeholders—to prevent conflict, safeguard human life, and ensure peace and stability worldwide. It addresses traditional threats such as war and terrorism and broader concerns such as political instability, economic disparities, and environmental crises (Barry Buzan and Lane Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies*. (Cambridge University Press., 2009).. In today's interconnected world, conflicts in one region can produce ripple effects across others, making global security a multifaceted and complex challenge.

In contrast to extremism, religious moderation—promoting balance, tolerance, and respect across diverse faiths—offers a constructive pathway

to peace and stability. Religious moderation fosters community dialogue, reduces sectarian conflict, and promotes mutual respect(Esposito & Mogahed, 2007). Unlike extremism, which perpetuates violence and long-term instability, religious moderation serves as a stabilizing force that contributes to both domestic and international security. As globalization intensifies interactions between diverse cultural and religious groups, the need for religious moderation becomes increasingly urgent(Juergensmeyer, 2017). Appleby asserts that moderate religious actors play a pivotal role in mitigating violence, illustrating how religious institutions can contribute to peace rather than conflict.(Appleby, 2000)

Historically, societies have demonstrated the positive impact of religious moderation in fostering long-term peace. For example, post-World War II, Japan adopted pacifist policies influenced by Buddhist and Shinto principles, facilitating the nation's recovery from conflict while contributing to broader international stability(Dower, 2000). Similarly, in post-apartheid South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, drew upon religious principles of forgiveness and reconciliation to heal the deep divisions caused by apartheid(Villa-Vicencio, 2006). These examples highlight how religious moderation has contributed to national and global peace, underscoring its relevance to contemporary security challengesJames. Fox, *Ethnoreligious Conflict in the Late Twentieth Century: A General Theory*. (Lexington Books., 2002)..

While significant scholarship has examined the role of religious moderation in promoting domestic peace, particularly in Muslim-majority nations, less attention has been given to its broader impact on global security. Esposito & Voll emphasize the importance of moderate religious institutions in fostering tolerance and preventing extremism(Esposito & Voll, 1996). Similarly, Kumar argues moderation counteracts radical ideologies by promoting inclusivity in religious thought and practice.

However, existing research has primarily focused on the domestic dimensions of religious moderation, leaving a gap in understanding its influence on international relations and global security(R. Kumar, 2009). Scholars such as Finnemore and Finnemore & Sikkink have demonstrated the importance of international norms in shaping state behaviour. Yet, the role of religious norms, particularly religious moderation, in influencing global security remains underexplored.(Finnemore, 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998)

This paper addresses this gap by applying Constructivist theory to analyze how religious moderation contributes to global security. Constructivism posits that state behaviour is shaped by social identities, norms, and shared understandings rather than solely by material interests(Wendt, 1999) . When states adopt religious moderation as a normative framework, they cultivate tolerance, peace, and cooperation values, reducing the likelihood of domestic and international conflict. This research examines how religious moderation shapes state behaviour, facilitates peacebuilding, and enhances international diplomatic relations, thus advancing the broader objective of promoting global security.

Research Methodology

This study employs a comparative case study approach, focusing on three countries—Indonesia, Norway, and India—representing distinct religious and geopolitical contexts. This methodology is well-suited for analyzing how religious moderation functions across diverse settings and impacts domestic stability and international diplomacy. Qualitative data will be gathered by analyzing governmental policies, religious organizations' initiatives, and international peacekeeping activities.

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has institutionalized religious pluralism through organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Fealy, 2007). Norway, a predominantly Christian nation, has leveraged its position as a neutral mediator in global conflicts by incorporating religious tolerance and inclusivity into its foreign policy, as exemplified by its role in the Oslo Accords (Boulding, 2000). Meanwhile, India, the world's largest democracy and a Hindu-majority country, enshrines religious moderation within its secular Constitution, balancing the complexities of religious diversity through legal frameworks and a longstanding commitment to non-violence (Bhargava, 2011).

Drawing on these case studies, this research provides insights into how religious moderation contributes to global security by fostering peacebuilding and reducing conflict. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the transformative role of religious moderation in shaping state behaviour, influencing international norms, and promoting stability across various geopolitical contexts.

Result and Discussion

This section addresses three central questions: (1) How does religious moderation influence state behaviour and internal stability? (2) How does it shape international norms and diplomacy? (3) How do Indonesia, Norway, and India implement religious moderation, and how does this contribute to global security? Analyzed through a constructivist lens, emphasizing the role of norms and identities in shaping state behaviour (Wendt, 1999), this study contrasts with the Realist and Liberal theories. While Realism centres on power and security (Mearsheimer, 2014), and Liberalism focuses on institutional cooperation (Keohane, 2005), Constructivism highlights the significance of socially constructed norms such as religious moderation.

Organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia advocate for pluralism and tolerance, fostering internal stability and enhancing diplomatic standing. Norway employs religious moderation as a form of soft power in international mediation, as exemplified by its involvement in the Oslo Accords. In contrast, India, despite embedding religious moderation within its secular Constitution, faces challenges from rising religious nationalism, complicating both its domestic and international posture. Constructivism offers insights into how religious moderation, as a shared norm, influences state behaviour and contributes to global peace, extending beyond the material focus of Realist and Liberal approaches.

Comparative Analysis of Religious Moderation in Indonesia, Norway, and India

The selection of Indonesia, Norway, and India as case studies is based on their distinct demographic, religious, and legal frameworks, each offering a different approach to religious moderation. As the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia exemplifies a model of pluralism shaped by a complex religious landscape. In contrast, Norway's predominantly Christian population emphasizes legal frameworks that promote religious tolerance within a relatively homogeneous society. India, the world's largest democracy, operates under a secular constitutional framework but grapples with the rise of religious nationalism, presenting unique challenges in balancing religious moderation within a pluralistic society. These distinct national contexts provide critical insights into the varied mechanisms through which religious moderation is pursued and sustained.

The analysis begins by examining the legal and institutional frameworks, the role of religious and civil society organizations, and the state's engagement in fostering religious moderation in each context. By

scrutinizing how these factors contribute to managing internal religious diversity, addressing sectarian conflicts, and influencing foreign policy, this discussion offers a comprehensive exploration of the successes and challenges encountered by each nation. Ultimately, this comparative analysis aims to elucidate broader implications for global security and diplomacy, demonstrating how religious moderation plays a key role in shaping both domestic stability and international relations.

1. Indonesia

Indonesia, characterized by vast religious diversity, is home to many faiths, including Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. This diversity is embedded in the nation's guiding philosophies of Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity), which emphasize belief in one God, justice, tolerance, and social harmony. These principles form the foundation of Indonesia's approach to fostering peaceful coexistence among its religious communities. However, managing such religious diversity in a pluralistic society poses challenges, necessitating developing and maintaining legal frameworks that promote religious moderation and protect pluralism.

Indonesia's legal framework is anchored in the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom through Articles 28E (1) and 29 (2). These provisions ensure individuals can freely practice their religion and that the state safeguards freedom of belief and worship. This is further reinforced by Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, which prohibits religious discrimination and upholds the principle of equality. However, some laws complicate this framework. The Blasphemy Law (Law No. 1/PNPS/1965), aimed at preserving religious harmony, has been criticized for disproportionately targeting religious minorities and restricting free speech. The 2017 conviction of

Jakarta's former governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), under this law illustrates the tension between protecting religious harmony and upholding individual rights (Hadiz, 2016).

In strengthening its legal commitment to religious freedom, Indonesia ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2005 through Law No. 12, aligning its national laws with international human rights standards. Additionally, Presidential Decree No. 7 of 2018 introduced the National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism, aimed at countering radicalization through collaboration among government agencies, civil society, and religious organizations. This strategy underscores religious moderation as a critical tool for combating extremism and fostering tolerance.

In recent years, Indonesia has enacted several policy changes to enhance religious moderation. The National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024 integrates religious moderation into long-term development goals, focusing on character education that promotes tolerance and pluralism (Ministry of Education, 2022). The Religious Moderation Index (Indeks Moderasi Beragama), launched in 2021, assesses how educational institutions incorporate religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence into their curricula. By 2022, 90% of Islamic schools and 60% of general schools had aligned with the standards set by the index (Indeks Moderasi Beragama, 2022). Additionally, the revised curriculum for Pesantren and Madrasah (2022) includes courses on interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and religious pluralism, ensuring students are educated on the importance of peaceful coexistence. Muhaemin et al., “Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education as a Response to Intolerance Attitudes in Indonesian Educational Institutions,” *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 14, no. 2 (2023): 253–274, www.jsser.org; M. Muhlisin, “Embedding Religious Moderation in

Indonesia's Islamic Schools," *Journal of Religious Education* 12, no. 3 (2023): 124–135.. The government has also introduced religious moderation training for civil servants (ASN), with over 150,000 trained by 2023 (Muary, 2022).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are pivotal in promoting religious moderation in Indonesia. Two of the most prominent Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah have played instrumental roles in shaping Indonesia's religious landscape. NU operates an extensive network of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), which promote moderate Islamic values and foster interfaith dialogue. These schools emphasize inclusivity and respect for other religious traditions, countering the rise of radical ideologies (Fealy, 2007). Muhammadiyah complements these efforts by advancing a modernist interpretation of Islam, focusing on education, healthcare, and social services. Its educational institutions balance religious and secular knowledge, fostering critical thinking and interfaith understanding (Latif, 2008). Both organizations have been vital in ensuring that religious tolerance remains a core principle of Indonesian society.

In addition to these prominent Islamic organizations, minority religious groups also play a significant role in promoting religious moderation. The Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI) and the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), representing the Catholic and Protestant communities, engage in interfaith dialogue and education. These organizations foster understanding and collaboration across religious lines through initiatives like the Interfaith Youth Forum. Similarly, the Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI) and Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia (Walubi) actively promote religious tolerance, especially in regions where Hindus and Buddhists coexist with Muslim-majority communities. Though smaller in scale,

these minority CSOs are essential in reinforcing Indonesia's commitment to religious pluralism(Sidel, 2007).

Despite these advances, Indonesia faces several challenges sustaining and expanding its commitment to religious moderation. One of the most significant challenges is the rise of religious conservatism, particularly in regions like Aceh, where Sharia law is implemented. Some conservative religious leaders perceive government efforts to promote moderation as conflicting with stricter interpretations of Islam(N. Hasan, 2017). This resistance complicates efforts to develop a unified national approach to religious moderation.

The influence of radical Islamist movements remains a pressing concern. Although the government banned Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) in 2017, a 2020 survey by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) revealed that 9% of Indonesians still support the idea of an Islamic caliphate(SMRC, 2020). Additionally, the rise of online radicalization presents new challenges as extremist groups increasingly use digital platforms to spread their ideologies and recruit followers(Kominfo, 2023). Addressing this threat requires a multifaceted approach, including legal measures, digital literacy education, and more robust online content regulation.

Identity politics is another challenge undermining religious moderation. The Ahok blasphemy case demonstrated how religious identity can be exploited for political gain, fueling divisions and exacerbating tensions between religious communities(Hadiz, 2016). The politicization of religion, especially during election cycles, poses a risk to national unity, as religious sentiment is often manipulated to serve political interests.

Economic inequality also threatens religious harmony, particularly in regions with a history of sectarian conflict, such as Ambon and Poso. Economic disparities often exacerbate religious tensions, with marginalized communities more vulnerable to radicalization. Addressing these inequalities is critical to fostering long-term peace and stability (Sidel, 2007). Without inclusive economic growth, efforts to promote religious moderation may fail in regions where poverty and social exclusion persist.

In conclusion, Indonesia's commitment to religious moderation is supported by a robust legal framework, proactive policy measures, and active engagement from civil society organizations. Prominent Islamic organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, alongside minority religious groups, are crucial in promoting tolerance and pluralism. However, challenges such as rising conservatism, radicalization, identity politics, and economic inequality continue to test the country's capacity to sustain religious harmony. Through continued efforts in education, legal reform, and cross-religious collaboration, Indonesia can strengthen its position as a global model for religious moderation while navigating the complexities of its diverse and evolving society.

2. Norway

Norway presents a unique model of religious moderation within a predominantly Christian society. The country has long been committed to religious freedom, a commitment enshrined in Article 16 of its Constitution, which guarantees the right to practice one's religion freely. This constitutional guarantee was further reinforced by the formal separation of church and state in 2012, marking a significant shift toward ensuring the equal treatment of all religious communities. M. Hauge, "Religious Freedom in Norway: A

Constitutional Analysis,” *Nordic Constitutional Law Review* 10, no. 1 (2017): 37–53.. In addition to its Christian majority, Norway is home to a range of religious minorities, including Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu communities. The country's legal framework, social policies, and educational initiatives all work in tandem to foster religious tolerance and integration (Haugland, 2019; Nordal, 2020).

One of the cornerstone elements of Norway's approach to promoting religious pluralism is the Anti-Discrimination Act, which explicitly prohibits discrimination based on religion or belief (Hansen, 2021). Complementing this, the Integration Act focuses on integrating immigrants and minority groups into Norwegian society while ensuring respect for their cultural and religious identities (Smith, 2018). These legislative measures collectively aim to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation among Norway's diverse communities. P. Jensen, “Legal Frameworks and Religious Integration in Norway: The Role of the Anti-Discrimination Act,” *Journal of Legal Studies in Scandinavia*, 99, no. 3 (2020): 90–106..

Norway's education system plays a vital role in promoting religious moderation. The Norwegian Education Act mandates that education fosters tolerance and respect for diversity. Subjects such as ethics, philosophy, and religious studies are designed to cultivate understanding among students from various cultural and religious backgrounds (Bjørnsen, 2019). However, challenges remain in ensuring uniform implementation of this educational content across the country, particularly when addressing religious intolerance (Larsen, 2020; Moen, 2021; Skrefsrud, 2022).

Civil society organizations and interfaith groups are also crucial in promoting religious moderation in Norway. The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and the Norwegian Institute for Human Rights are two

key organizations advancing religious freedom and advocating for the protection of minority communities(Fjeld, 2018; Gjøtterud, 2019). In addition, interfaith dialogue initiatives, such as those led by the Norwegian Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities, promote cooperation and understanding between different religious groups (Pettersen, 2021; Sæther, 2023).

Muslim organizations, such as the Islamic Council of Norway and the Norwegian Muslim League, are actively involved in promoting religious tolerance and addressing issues facing the Muslim community. These organizations play a key role in enhancing Muslim representation in public life and advocating for policies that support religious freedom and integration(Ahmed, 2021; Aslam, 2022). Similarly, Hindu and Buddhist organizations contribute to interfaith dialogue and efforts to promote mutual respect and understanding across different religious groups.

Despite these advancements, Norway still faces challenges in maintaining religious harmony. The rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and Islamophobia presents significant obstacles. Incidents of hate speech and discrimination against Muslims and other minority groups underscore the need for continued vigilance and the development of effective measures to combat prejudice(Khan, 2019; Østberg, 2021; Uzair, 2024). The 2011 Oslo and Utøya attacks, carried out by a far-right extremist, highlight the dangers posed by radicalization and hate-driven violence(Sæther, 2023; Wahl, 2012). These attacks triggered a national conversation on the necessity of more robust counter-radicalization strategies and more inclusive policies(Sæther, 2023).

Furthermore, the rise of right-wing populism has exacerbated tensions between religious communities. Anti-immigrant platforms

have influenced public attitudes toward minority groups, challenging Norway's commitment to religious pluralism and integration(Hansen, 2021). Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including enhanced educational programs, legal measures to combat discrimination, and civil society engagement to foster interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Through sustained efforts, Norway can continue to uphold its commitment to religious moderation and pluralism(Pettersen, 2021).

3. India

India represents a complex case in the context of religious moderation, given its immense religious diversity and constitutional commitment to secularism. The Constitution of India guarantees religious freedom through Articles 25 to 28, which ensure the right of every individual to profess, practice, and propagate their religion. These provisions enshrine India's secularism, which advocates equal respect for all religions. Despite these constitutional safeguards, India has been grappling with the rise of religiousnationalism, particularly the growth of Hindutva ideology, which has exacerbated tensions between the Hindu majority and religious minorities, especially Muslims(Bhargava, 2011).

Managing religious diversity in India has been increasingly challenging due to the politicization of religious identities. The rise of Hindutva, an ideology that seeks to assert the dominance of Hindu values in Indian society, has led to growing religious intolerance. Events such as the 2020 Delhi riots, which resulted in significant violence between Hindus and Muslims, underscore the fragility of religious harmony in India when faced with escalating nationalism and political manipulation of religious identities(Z. Hasan, 2020).

India's legal framework, particularly its Constitution, establishes a robust foundation for religious pluralism. Articles 25 to 28 guarantee freedom of religion, while the Directive Principles of State Policy mandate the promotion of social welfare and justice for all citizens, regardless of religion. However, these constitutional protections have been increasingly tested by incidents of sectarian violence, religious intolerance, and the instrumentalization of religious identities for political purposes(Basu, 2015; Choudhary, 2021).

In terms of policy, India has taken significant steps to address religious tensions and promote moderation. The National Commission for Minorities (NCM), established under the National Commission for Minorities Act of 1992, plays a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of religious minorities(Chatterji, 2016; Shah, 2024). Furthermore, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), formed under the Protection of Human Rights Act (1993), monitors violations of religious freedoms and works to prevent communal violence(Nair, 2014). Despite these efforts, the rise of religious nationalism continues to pose significant challenges to the country's secular ethos.

Education plays a vital role in promoting religious moderation in India. The Right to Education Act (2009) mandates free and compulsory education for all children, focusing on inclusivity and tolerance. However, implementing these values varies across states, and curricula designed to foster India's pluralistic heritage often fall short of countering entrenched religious prejudices(Nussbaum, 2007). Effective educational policies are essential in instilling values of tolerance and mutual respect among India's younger generations, but their inconsistent application hinders progress toward a more cohesive and tolerant society.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) and religious groups are pivotal in promoting interfaith dialogue and religious moderation in India. Notable among these are organizations such as the Ramakrishna Mission and the Art of Living Foundation, which emphasize interfaith understanding and the spiritual unity of humanity (Sindhura, 2023). Similarly, Muslim organizations like the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind work to foster religious moderation within the Muslim community, advocating for peaceful coexistence and dialogue with other faiths (Ahmad, 2018). Additionally, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and Sikh groups such as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) play active roles in promoting peace and reconciliation, particularly in areas affected by communal violence (Van Dyke, 2021).

Despite these efforts, India continues to face substantial challenges sustaining religious moderation. One of the most pressing issues is the rise of religious nationalism, particularly under the influence of Hindutva ideology. Hindutva, which seeks to assert Hindu cultural dominance, has led to increasing tensions between the Hindu majority and religious minorities, especially Muslims. Incidents such as mob violence, cow vigilantism, and communal riots have exacerbated these tensions, undermining India's secular principles and its commitment to religious pluralism (Jaffrelot, 2021).

Moreover, the politicization of religion remains a significant concern. During election cycles, political parties frequently exploit religious identities to mobilize voters, deepening societal divisions. For instance, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, which grants citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from neighbouring countries, has been widely criticized for discriminating against Muslims, further straining religious relations and undermining the principle of equality before the law (Amelia & Kartini, 2023), such politically motivated

actions weaken India's efforts to maintain a secular and pluralistic society.

Communal violence continues to plague certain regions of India, even as the frequency of large-scale riots has decreased. Localized violence between religious communities remains a persistent issue. Regions such as Kandhamal in Odisha and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh have witnessed severe sectarian clashes, often fueled by political manipulation of religious identities and economic disparities (Twana, 2022). Addressing these underlying socio-political and economic issues is crucial for promoting long-term stability and religious harmony in India.

Economic inequality further exacerbates religious tensions. Muslims, in particular, face higher rates of poverty and lower levels of educational attainment than the national average, which contributes to feelings of marginalization and exclusion. Addressing these socio-economic inequalities is crucial for promoting long-term peace and stability in India. Without inclusive economic growth and development, efforts to promote religious moderation may fall short, especially in regions where poverty and social exclusion persist (Alam & Abdelsalam, 2023; Malik, 2023; Tarannum, 2024).

In conclusion, India's commitment to religious pluralism is firmly embedded in its Constitution and supported by various legal frameworks and civil society initiatives. However, the rise of religious nationalism, political manipulation of religious identities, and persistent communal violence present serious challenges to sustaining religious moderation. Through continued efforts in education, legal reform, and active civil society engagement, India can work toward maintaining its

secular values and reinforcing its global reputation as a model for religious pluralism and moderation.

The comparison of the three countries is summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Comparative Overview of Religious Moderation in Indonesia, Norway, and India

Aspect	Indonesia	Norway	India
Legal Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1945 Constitution guarantees religious freedom (Articles 28E(1) and 29(2)). - Pancasila, as the state ideology, promotes religious harmony and pluralism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion (Article 16). - Legal separation of church and state in 2012. - Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits religious discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion (Articles 25-28). - Secular state promoting equal respect for all religions.
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for diverse religious groups through institutions like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah - Interfaith dialogue initiatives by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive legal protections for religious minorities. - Civil society organizations play an active role in promoting religious tolerance. - Extensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust constitutional protection of religious freedom. - Establishment of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) and other

	government and civil society organizations	educational programs promoting respect for diversity.	institutions protecting minority rights.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rising religious conservatism, particularly in regions like Aceh.- Political exploitation of religious identities in elections.- Radicalization and online extremism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rising anti-immigrant sentiments and Islamophobia.- The increasing influence of right-wing populism is affecting public attitudes.- Incidents of hate speech and discrimination against minorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Growing influence of Hindutva ideology and religious nationalism.- Persistent communal violence and religiously motivated attacks.- Politicization of religion, especially during elections.
Examples of Religious Tensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Blasphemy case of Jakarta's former governor (Ahok) in 2017.- Ongoing sectarian conflicts in some regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2011 Oslo and Utøya attacks by a far-right extremist.- Challenges related to immigration and integration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2020 Delhi riots.- Controversy surrounding the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).- Religious tensions in regions like Muzaffarnagar and Kandhamal.

Role of Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah promote religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.- Minority religious groups such as the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI) contribute to fostering religious harmony.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and other interfaith organizations actively promote dialogue and integration.- Muslim organizations like the Islamic Council of Norway advocate for religious freedom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Civil society groups like Ramakrishna Mission and All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) foster interfaith dialogue.- Prominent role of NGOs in promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding.
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Sources: Processed by the author (2024)

The table offers a comparative analysis of the legal frameworks, achievements, challenges, and the roles of civil society in promoting religious moderation across Indonesia, Norway, and India. By highlighting each country's distinctive approaches, successes, and obstacles, the table provides a structured overview of how these nations manage religious diversity and integrate moderation into their societal frameworks.

Contribution of Religious Moderation Towards Global Security

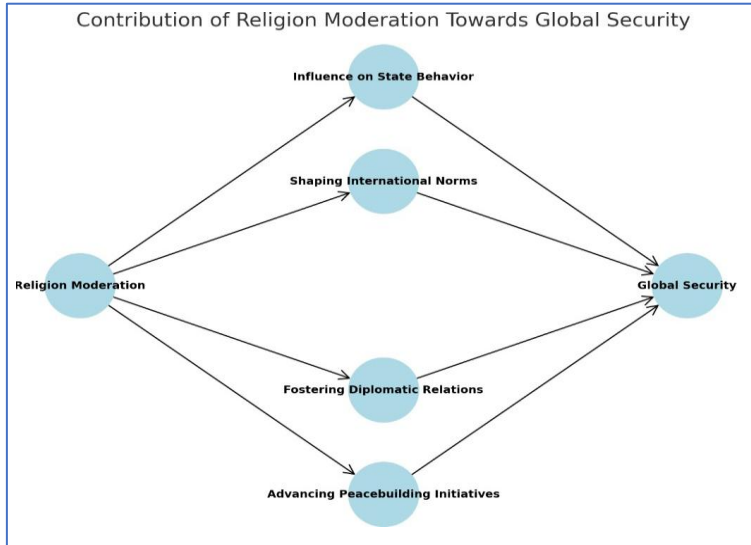
This section explores the multifaceted role of religious moderation in strengthening global security by influencing state behaviour, shaping international norms, fostering diplomatic relations, and advancing peacebuilding initiatives. Religious moderation, defined by religion's balanced and respectful practice, is a crucial foundation for ensuring

stability and promoting cooperation at national and international levels. This analysis will demonstrate how religious moderation is implemented in practice by examining case studies from Indonesia, India, and Norway. The discussion will highlight how each country leverages religious moderation to address internal and external challenges, enhance social cohesion, and contribute to a more stable and harmonious global environment by investigating these examples.

This exploration aims to shed light on the significant role that religious moderation plays in mitigating conflicts, upholding human rights, and fostering cooperative international relationships, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of reinforcing global security. By integrating religious tolerance into governance and diplomacy, states can resolve internal tensions and project these values on the global stage, leading to more peaceful international relations and a reduction in global conflicts.

The figure below (Figure 1) shows the significant contributions of religious moderation towards global security. Religious moderation, accepted as a reasonable and responsible practice, is important in forming a peaceful international environment. It shapes state behaviour through policies and circumstances fostering tolerance, pluralism, and peaceful coexistence, which can dramatically reduce the likelihood of war. Further, religious moderation nurtures global norms in the direction of a culture of respect, justice, and cooperation; it is the opposite pole of extremism and supportive of human rights. It enhances diplomatic relationships between states by establishing common ground for dialogue to further peaceful means of problem-solving. Finally, religious moderation contributes to peace-building and the promotion of understanding about diversity among religious communities, which must be taken into account as a basis for global stability and security.

Picture 1. Contributions of Religious Moderation Towards Global Security



Sources: Processed by the author (2024)

1. Religious Moderation and State Behavior

Religious moderation is pivotal in influencing state behaviour, particularly in societies characterized by significant religious diversity. From a constructivist perspective, state actions are not solely motivated by material interests but are profoundly shaped by norms, values, and collective identities that evolve within societies over time (Wendt, 1999). Constructivism posits that states operate in accordance with socially constructed identities and norms that become embedded within their populations. When a state adopts values such as tolerance, dialogue, and respect, these principles become integral to its national identity. Consequently, these values are reflected in domestic and international policies, shaping the state's approach to managing

religious diversity, mitigating sectarian conflicts, and fostering social cohesion.

Religious moderation, as a socially constructed norm, emerges from recognizing that religious diversity can fuel conflict or serve as a foundation for mutual understanding, depending on how it is managed. States that embrace religious moderation create environments conducive to interfaith dialogue, inclusive governance, and reduced extremism. Once these values become embedded in a state's identity, they guide domestic policies and global community interactions. Thus, religious moderation strengthens domestic stability and enhances a state's reputation as a responsible and inclusive actor on the international stage(Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

In states where religious moderation forms the bedrock of governance, policies tend to respect religious differences and institutionalize conflict-resolution mechanisms. Wendt emphasizes that state identities and interests are shaped by their interactions with other actors and the norms they internalize(Wendt, 1992). This process fosters a collective identity prioritizing peace, coexistence, and the recognition of religious diversity. Consequently, states integrating religious moderation into their governance structures are better equipped to manage internal religious tensions and prevent sectarian violence. For example, legal frameworks safeguarding religious freedom and protecting religious minorities contribute significantly to maintaining national unity in diverse societies(Fox, 2002).

Empirical evidence supports the view that states promoting religious moderation experience lower levels of religiously motivated violence. Case studies demonstrate that states emphasizing tolerance and moderation are better positioned to de-escalate religious conflicts. Countries like Indonesia and India, where religious diversity is integral

to national identity, have institutionalized religious freedoms and promoted interfaith dialogue to mitigate sectarian tensions. These legal and social frameworks help reduce the likelihood of violence between religious communities.

When embedded in state governance, religious moderation also plays a critical role in countering religious extremism. Organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in Indonesia exemplify this role, working closely with the state to promote tolerance and prevent radical ideologies from gaining ground (Bush, 2009). The collaboration between religious and political institutions demonstrates how religious moderation can emerge from top-down governmental efforts and bottom-up civil society initiatives, creating a robust framework for managing religious diversity and maintaining social harmony.

Moreover, religious moderation influences a state's behaviour on the international stage. States that incorporate religious moderation into their domestic policies frequently position themselves as leaders in interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution, thus enhancing their global legitimacy. Finnemore and Sikkink argue that norms internalized domestically are often reflected in a state's foreign policy (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). For instance, Norway's integration of religious moderation into its domestic governance has enabled it to play a key role in facilitating international peace processes, such as the Oslo Accords, demonstrating how religious moderation can enhance a state's soft power and diplomatic influence (Hveem, 2006; Lukianova, 2022).

Religious moderation strengthens a state's domestic stability and enhances its international standing, signalling its capacity to manage diversity and promote peace in the global community. This, in turn,

leads to stronger diplomatic relationships and greater involvement in international forums focused on human rights, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution. Indonesia's leadership in promoting religious tolerance within the ASEAN region is a prime example, underscoring how aligning domestic religious moderation with international diplomacy can elevate a state's role in the global arena (Bush, 2009).

In conclusion, religious moderation is essential for promoting domestic stability and international legitimacy. Domestically, it provides a framework for managing religious diversity, fostering national unity, and preventing violence. Internationally, it enhances a state's reputation as a responsible global actor committed to peace and tolerance. By institutionalizing religious moderation, states can navigate the complexities of religious diversity while maintaining stability and credibility worldwide.

2. Religious Moderation and International Norms

Religious moderation plays a fundamental role in shaping international norms, particularly within the framework of Constructivist theory, which emphasizes that norms are socially constructed and evolve through interactions among cultural, religious, and ideological forces. In this context, religious moderation entails the integration of religious values into global governance systems, facilitating dialogue and adaptation. States and religious actors contribute to global norms while navigating the complexities of a secular, pluralistic international environment. Countries such as Indonesia and Norway exemplify how religious moderation has contributed to shaping international norms. By contrast, India's complex internal religious dynamics highlight the challenges in this process.

A key mechanism through which religious moderation influences international norms is institutional translation, where religious norms are adapted to align with secular, liberal frameworks. For instance, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) successfully promoted the "dialogue among civilizations" norm, translating it into secular terms and institutionalizing it within the UN's Alliance of Civilizations (G. , Bettiza & Dionigi, 2013). This example illustrates how, when framed appropriately, religious values can be integrated into global institutions. However, challenges such as norm contestation arise when religious values conflict with established international norms. The OIC's attempt to institutionalize the principle of "religious defamation" met with resistance, reflecting the complexities involved in integrating religious norms within a secular global framework.

Norway's contribution to international religious moderation is significant and multifaceted, embodying institutional translation and norm entrepreneurship. A prominent example is Norway's consistent support for interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance within the United Nations framework. Norway was an early supporter of the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), established to foster dialogue and mutual understanding among diverse cultures and religions. By backing initiatives like the UNAOC, Norway has emphasized the importance of incorporating religious moderation into global frameworks, promoting dialogue and collaboration as essential components of international peacebuilding and conflict prevention. This reflects Norway's conviction that fostering religious understanding can help mitigate conflicts rooted in cultural and religious differences (Hveem, 2006).

Additionally, Norway has played a central role in mediating conflicts, such as its involvement in the Sri Lankan civil war from 2000 to 2006, where it acted as a neutral facilitator. The conflict, which

involved ethnic and religious dimensions, saw Norway focus on promoting dialogue and bridging gaps between the opposing parties, exemplifying its philosophy of moderation and respect for cultural and religious diversity. Although the peace talks eventually collapsed, Norway's dedication to promoting religious moderation in conflict resolution remains a model for fostering peace through dialogue and tolerance(Bush, 2009).

Norway's efforts extend to humanitarian initiatives to promote religious freedom, such as its work in Afghanistan, where it has partnered with international organizations to help the Afghan government establish institutions that protect religious freedom and promote inclusive governance. By encouraging moderation and religious tolerance through legal frameworks and policy development, Norway has contributed to the diffusion of norms that respect religious diversity, helping to counter extremism in conflict-prone areas(Adamson, 2005).

Norway's impact is further reflected in the work of Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), which has been instrumental in promoting religious moderation globally. NCA's peacebuilding and poverty alleviation initiatives, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, rely on partnerships with local religious leaders to facilitate interfaith dialogue, reduce tensions, and foster mutual understanding. This grassroots approach aligns with broader cross-sectoral collaborations between religious and secular actors, working together to promote religious moderation to mitigate extremism and build peace across diverse communities (McBrien, 2000).

At the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Norway has been a strong advocate for religious freedom and the protection of religious minorities. Through its contributions to human rights

discussions, Norway has consistently emphasized the importance of religious freedom as a fundamental part of the broader human rights framework. For example, Norway has co-sponsored resolutions on the freedom of religion or belief, advocating for the rights of individuals to practice their faith freely without fear of persecution. This reflects Norway's role as a norm entrepreneur. It uses its position within international organizations to champion religious moderation and protect religious diversity, thereby reinforcing its global leadership in promoting inclusive governance.

Similarly, Indonesia has been active in promoting religious moderation through initiatives such as the ASEAN Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Conference (2023), which underscored the importance of interfaith dialogue in fostering peace and stability in Southeast Asia. By institutionalizing religious moderation within ASEAN, Indonesia has established itself as a regional leader in promoting peaceful coexistence among diverse religious communities. Additionally, Indonesia's role in launching the R20 (Religion of Twenty) initiative at the G20 Summit in 2022, led by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), further highlights its global leadership in promoting religious moderation. The R20 brought together religious leaders from around the world to discuss critical issues such as religious extremism, peacebuilding, and interfaith cooperation. By integrating religious perspectives into the G20 framework, the R20 represents a significant step towards formalizing the role of religious actors in global governance (Baba et al., 2023).

Conversely, despite its religious diversity and constitutional commitment to secularism, India faces more complex challenges in promoting religious moderation on the global stage. The rise of Hindu nationalism and growing religious tensions between the Hindu majority and Muslim minority complicate India's role as an advocate for

religious tolerance. While India has historically supported interfaith dialogue, these internal dynamics limit its ability to project itself as a global leader in religious moderation(Varshney, 2013a).

In conclusion, religious moderation is a powerful tool for shaping international norms, mainly through mechanisms such as institutional translation and norm contestation. The experiences of Indonesia and Norway demonstrate how religious moderation can be effectively integrated into global governance frameworks, fostering peace, tolerance, and cooperation. Indonesia's leadership in initiatives such as the ASEAN Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Conference and the R20 (Religion of Twenty), alongside Norway's global advocacy through platforms like the UN and its mediation efforts, underscore the profound impact of religious moderation in shaping a more inclusive and just international order.

3. Religious Moderation in Diplomatic Relations and Peacebuilding

Religious moderation is essential in enhancing diplomatic relations and promoting peacebuilding efforts between nations. By advocating for tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for diverse beliefs, states that practice religious moderation position themselves as reliable and cooperative partners within the global system, where trust and stability are vital for effective diplomacy. These values align closely with broader international norms, such as human rights and peaceful conflict resolution, enabling states that embrace moderation to engage more effectively in addressing global challenges(Esposito & Mogahed, 2007; A. , Kumar, 2013).

Moreover, religious moderation plays a crucial role in mitigating the risks of radicalization and internal instability, enhancing a state's credibility on the international stage. By preventing radicalization and maintaining internal stability, moderate states strengthen their status as reliable partners in global security initiatives, including counter-terrorism efforts and peacekeeping missions. Being perceived as free from extremist threats allows these states to navigate complex diplomatic landscapes more effectively, positioning them as constructive actors in global security efforts (Kydd, 2006; Mendelsohn & Vokes, 2018).

Religious moderation is also a powerful tool for conflict resolution. States that adopt moderate stances can mediate disputes between nations with differing religious or ideological perspectives by fostering dialogue and promoting mutual understanding. Their role as neutral intermediaries helps to de-escalate conflicts and reframe disputes based on shared values and common ground. In this way, moderate states contribute to a more peaceful and cooperative international environment, fostering global stability and playing critical roles in conflict resolution efforts (Adler, 2013; G. Bettiza & Dionigi, 2015).

From a Constructivist perspective, religious moderation goes beyond a mere diplomatic strategy; it shapes the identity and behaviour of states. Constructivist theory highlights that ideational factor, including religious norms, significantly influence state actions and the international system. In this context, religious moderation becomes critical to fostering global stability and security, defining how states relate to one another, engage in diplomacy, and build peaceful relations.

Indonesia is a compelling example of how religious moderation can enhance diplomatic relations and peacebuilding. As the world's largest

Muslim-majority country, Indonesia has actively promoted religious tolerance and moderation both domestically and internationally. Indonesia's leadership in the R20 (Religion of Twenty) initiative, launched during the G20 Summit in 2023 and spearheaded by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), exemplifies this approach. The R20 brought together global religious leaders to discuss critical issues such as extremism, peacebuilding, and interfaith cooperation. By integrating religious perspectives into global governance frameworks, Indonesia has institutionalized religious moderation in global diplomacy, demonstrating its role as a leading actor in addressing global challenges through moderation (Haryanto et al., 2023; Hasyim, 2023).

Additionally, Indonesia has played a key role in driving the ASEAN Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Conference, which emphasizes religious moderation as a diplomatic strategy for managing religious diversity across Southeast Asia. These efforts have facilitated interfaith dialogue and supported peace initiatives, particularly in conflict-prone regions such as the Southern Philippines, positioning Indonesia as a central player in regional peacebuilding efforts (Bush, 2009).

Norway's contribution to religious moderation in diplomacy and peacebuilding is equally significant. Norway has played a prominent role in mediating conflicts through a combination of religious and secular dialogue, and its involvement in the Oslo Accords (1993) between Israel and Palestine is one of its most notable achievements. Norway's neutral stance and promotion of religious tolerance enabled it to mediate effectively, even in a profoundly religious and complex conflict. Norway's commitment to peacebuilding extends beyond the Middle East, with its involvement in mediating the Sri Lankan Civil War, a conflict with religious and ethnic dimensions. Although the peace process in Sri Lanka ultimately collapsed, Norway's efforts in

promoting religious moderation as a tool for diplomacy remain a model for conflict resolution(Hveem, 2006).

Furthermore, Norway has actively promoted religious freedom through platforms such as the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). By advocating for religious freedom and interfaith dialogue, Norway continues to use religious moderation to foster peace and understanding in conflict-prone region(McBrien, 2000). This approach enhances Norway's standing as a mediator in global conflicts and strengthens its role in advancing religious moderation as a tool for international diplomacy.

India, with its commitment to secularism and religious pluralism, presents a more complex case in the context of religious moderation. While India has a long history of religious diversity, with Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and other religious communities coexisting for centuries, it has faced internal challenges related to rising Hindu nationalism in recent years. Despite these challenges, India has participated in several interfaith and peacebuilding initiatives. For example, during the 2002 Gujarat riots, India sought to de-escalate religious tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities, fostering reconciliation efforts at both the community and national levels.

However, India's ability to project itself as a global leader in religious moderation is complicated by ongoing religious tensions and the rise of politically motivated religious violence. Although India's legal framework for religious freedom is robust, the rise of religiously motivated violence and political polarization limits the country's capacity to fully champion religious moderation on the global stage A. Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. (Yale University Press., 2013).

Religion has historically shaped international relations, influencing global events from anti-colonial movements to contemporary conflicts rooted in religious identities. While religion can exacerbate disputes, it also provides valuable resources for peacebuilding, such as mediation, emotional support, and moral authority. Religious leaders, often seen as trusted figures within their communities, play a crucial role in stabilizing societies during crises and supporting diplomatic efforts. As the role of religion in diplomacy evolves, there is growing recognition of its potential to influence peacebuilding efforts positively (Rosen, 2022).

Religious moderation, characterized by tolerance, balance, and inclusivity, fosters harmonious societies. By encouraging dialogue and respect for diverse religious beliefs, religious moderation can mitigate conflicts motivated by religious tensions and foster peaceful coexistence.

Despite its potential, religious moderation in diplomacy faces significant challenges. The rise of radicalism and the tendency to view religious actors as either aggressors or victims complicates efforts to engage them in diplomacy. Nonetheless, historical examples such as the Quaker missions in Nigeria and mediation efforts in Ethiopia demonstrate the effectiveness of religious peacebuilding initiatives when integrated into traditional diplomatic frameworks (Møller, 2006). Addressing the complexities of religious identities and promoting moderate religious attitudes are essential for fostering inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding efforts.

Thus, religious moderation is a powerful tool for diplomacy and peacebuilding, as illustrated by the experiences of Indonesia, Norway, and India. Indonesia's leadership in initiatives such as the R20 and

ASEAN dialogues, Norway's role in global mediation efforts such as the Oslo Accords, and India's attempts to balance its internal religious challenges demonstrate how religious moderation can enhance diplomatic relations and contribute to global peacebuilding efforts. Moderate states are crucial in mitigating religious conflicts and fostering a more peaceful international environment by promoting dialogue, tolerance, and inclusivity. Despite the challenges, religious moderation remains a valuable strategy for achieving more sustainable and effective diplomacy and conflict resolution.

To better understand the practical applications of religious moderation in various contexts, Table 2 provides a summary of key findings and examples from case studies in Indonesia, Norway, and India, highlighting its influence on state behaviour, international norms, and diplomatic relations

Table 2. Religious Moderation in State Behavior, International Norms, and Diplomacy – Case Studies of Indonesia, Norway, and India

Aspect	Key Findings	Examples
Religious Moderation and State Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shapes state identity by promoting tolerance, dialogue, and respect. - Influences domestic policies to manage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indonesia (Nahdlatul Ulama & Muhammadiyah's promotion of tolerance). - India (Secular Constitution safeguards religious freedoms).

	religious diversity and prevent conflict.	
Religious Moderation and International Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Helps integrate religious norms into global frameworks (e.g., UN's Alliance of Civilizations)- Challenges arise in balancing religious norms with secular global standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Norway's role in promoting interfaith dialogue at the UN.- Indonesia's leadership in the ASEAN Interreligious Dialogue Conference and R20 Initiative
Religious Moderation in Diplomatic Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enhances global diplomacy credibility by preventing radicalization and promoting tolerance.- Helps mediate conflicts involving religious or ideological differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Norway's mediation in the Oslo Accords.- Indonesia's R20 (Religion of Twenty) initiative during the G20 Summit as a model of religious moderation in global diplomacy.

Sources: Processed by the author (2024)

Policy Recommendations for Achieving Global Security through Religious Moderation

A constructivist theoretical framework is crucial to crafting effective policies for global security through religious moderation. This approach highlights how norms, identities, and social interactions influence state behaviour. Constructivism asserts that state actions are not solely based on material interests but are profoundly shaped by socially constructed beliefs, values, and identities(Wendt, 1992). This is particularly relevant to religious moderation, as it stresses the importance of developing inclusive norms that encourage tolerance, coexistence, and respect for religious diversity(Checkel, 1999).

Under this framework, religious moderation becomes a norm that requires deliberate and sustained state involvement. This can be achieved through educational reforms, legal structures, and civil society engagement (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Policies supporting religious moderation should reflect the state's commitment to fostering a collective identity that embraces pluralism. In this context, interfaith dialogue, legal protection for religious minorities, and international collaboration are policy tools and mechanisms to shape behaviours conducive to peace and security(Checkel, 2005). Promoting religious moderation helps establish global norms that influence domestic policies and international relations. The constructivist theory also highlights the importance of norm entrepreneurs, such as states, civil society organizations, and international institutions, in institutionalizing religious moderation as a global standard, which can reduce the risks of religious extremism and boost global security(Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998).

Policy efforts in Indonesia should emphasize broadening legal reforms and educational initiatives promoting religious moderation. The Religious Moderation Index shows promise, but its implementation must expand,

especially in areas with rising religious conservatism. Reforming the Blasphemy Law (Law No. 1/PNPS/1965) is crucial for safeguarding religious freedom and preventing the marginalization of minority groups, as seen in the Ahok case (Hadiz, 2016). Additionally, Indonesia should strengthen its National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism by collaborating more closely with civil society groups like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Amplifying moderate religious narratives across digital and traditional media platforms is also key.

In India, reinforcing the constitutional commitment to religious pluralism is essential in tackling the rise of religious nationalism. Strengthening institutions such as the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) is critical to ensuring the rights of religious minorities are not only protected legally but enforced in practice (Pande, 2020). Addressing the politicization of religion during elections requires the enforcement of legal safeguards against hate speech and discrimination. The Right to Education Act (2009), which mandates inclusive education, should be uniformly applied across all states to promote tolerance and religious coexistence in future generations.

In Norway, efforts should focus on maintaining strong legal protections for religious minorities, with an emphasis on enforcing anti-discrimination laws amid rising Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment (Hansen, 2021). Expanding integration policies is key to reducing societal divisions between native populations and immigrant communities. On the international stage, Norway should continue leveraging its leadership in forums like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) to promote global religious tolerance. Norway's role as a mediator in religiously influenced conflicts should also be bolstered to encourage dialogue and moderation in international diplomacy.

These recommendations, rooted in a constructivist theoretical framework, offer tailored approaches for Indonesia, India, and Norway. They address each country's unique challenges while promoting global security through religious moderation. By focusing on education, legal reforms, and international cooperation, each nation can enhance its internal commitment to religious pluralism and support the broader goal of fostering global peace and stability.

Table 3. Policy Recommendations for Religious Moderation in Indonesia, India, and Norway

Policy Areas	Indonesia	India	Norway
Educational Reforms	Expand the Religious Moderation Index and integrate interfaith dialogue in education.	Enforce the Right to Education Act, focusing on inclusive and tolerant narratives.	Continue integrating religious diversity into educational curricula.
Legal Reforms	Reform the Blasphemy Law to protect minority rights and religious freedom.	Strengthen legal safeguards against hate speech and religious discrimination.	Ensure vigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and protections for minorities.
Civil Society Engagement	Strengthen collaboration with Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah to promote moderation.	Support the National Commission for Minorities and grassroots interfaith initiatives.	Expand integration policies to foster cooperation between native and immigrant communities.

International Cooperation	Promote religious tolerance through regional platforms and diplomacy.	Increase participation in global forums for religious freedom and tolerance.	Leverage leadership in international forums like UNAOC to promote global religious tolerance.
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Sources: Processed by the author (2024)

The table presents a clear summary of policy recommendations customized for the distinct contexts of Indonesia, India, and Norway, focusing on advancing religious moderation in four key areas: education, legal reforms, civil society engagement, and international cooperation. Each country's recommendations address unique challenges while building upon their existing frameworks.

In Indonesia, legal reforms, such as revising the Blasphemy Law and expanding educational programs, are critical to protecting minority rights and promoting pluralism. For India, enforcing inclusive education policies and strengthening legal protections against hate speech are crucial for fostering religious harmony in the face of rising religious nationalism. Norway emphasizes the strict enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and expanding integration policies, reflecting its commitment to preserving religious diversity while tackling challenges like Islamophobia.

For all three nations, the focus on international cooperation highlights the significance of global efforts in promoting religious tolerance and contributing to global security.

Conclusion

Religious moderation shapes state behaviour, influencing domestic governance and international relations. This study shows that countries institutionalizing religious moderation are better equipped to maintain internal stability by fostering tolerance, dialogue, and respect for religious diversity. In Indonesia, organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah have been instrumental in promoting religious pluralism, helping to reduce sectarian conflict and embedding moderation within the nation's identity. Indonesia demonstrates how this approach can preserve social cohesion in diverse societies by incorporating religious moderation into its political and social structures.

On the global stage, religious moderation enhances a state's diplomatic capacity by projecting values of inclusivity and tolerance, boosting its credibility in resolving international conflicts. Norway's mediation efforts, particularly in the Oslo Accords, exemplify how religious moderation can be integrated into diplomatic strategies, enabling the country to act as a neutral mediator in religiously and ideologically charged conflicts. This highlights how moderation strengthens a state's soft power and enhances its role in international diplomacy when it becomes part of foreign policy.

In contrast, India's struggles to promote religious moderation amidst rising religious nationalism and internal tensions reveal the complexities of implementing these values in a diverse and politically polarized society. Although India has a secular constitutional framework, internal challenges have hindered its ability to project religious moderation globally, emphasizing the need for a more robust approach to managing religious diversity.

This research highlights the broader significance of religious moderation for global security. The case studies of Indonesia, Norway, and India demonstrate that, when effectively institutionalized, religious moderation can be a powerful tool for promoting domestic harmony and contributing to international peacebuilding. Religious moderation supports the larger goals of global stability and conflict resolution by encouraging interfaith dialogue, mitigating sectarian tensions, and facilitating diplomatic engagement.

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