

GENEALOGY OF WASATIYYA WITHIN INDONESIAN SOCIETY: The Influence of Sufism in Indonesian Archipelago

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Abstract: *This article examines the genealogy of wasatiyya Islam in Indonesia. Historical processes of Islamization in the pre-Indonesia context have influenced how the Muslim majority of Indonesia demonstrates its moderate expression from historical periods to contemporary situations. The establishment of the Indonesian state has the heredity derivation from the past Islamization. The role of Sufism in the processes of Islamization is addressed here. Ash'arism or Aswaja paved the theological way for wasatiyya by choosing a position of moderation between rationalist and conservative extremist schools of thought. On a deeper level, this article concludes that the Sufi foundations of the early Islamization period are essential for establishing wasatiyya in Indonesia. When Pancasila, as the nation-state philosophy, incorporates cultural elements acknowledged by Muslim Ulama, it is evident that any attempt to undermine or pervert wasatiyya Islam in Indonesia will finally fail. This research applied qualitative methodology with an exploratory research design. The data were collected using literature studies from books, journals, and related articles.*

المخلص: تبحث هذه المقالة في أنساب الإسلام الوسطية في إندونيسيا. أثرت العملية التاريخية الإسلامية في سياق ما قبل إندونيسيا على الطريقة التي يظهرها أغلب المسلمين الإندونيسيين تعبيرهم المعتدل من الفترات التاريخية السابقة إلى المواقف المعاصرة. إن لتأسيس الدولة الإندونيسية مشتقات من العملية الإسلامية في الماضي. نوقش هنا دور الصوفية في العملية الإسلامية. ومهدت الأشعرية، أو بالأحرى أهل السنة والجماعة، الطريق اللاهوتي للوصية من خلال اختيار موقف معتدل بين المذاهب العقلانية والمحافظة

المتطرفة. وعلى مستوى أعمق، يخلص هذا المقال إلى أن الأسس الصوفية في الفترة المبكرة من الأسلمة كانت مهمة في تأسيس الوسطية في إندونيسيا. عندما أدرجت المبادئ الخمسة، كفلسفة الدولة، عناصر ثقافية حيث عرفت من قبل العلماء المسلمين، كان من الواضح أن أي محاولة لتقويض أو تحريف الإسلام الوسطي في إندونيسيا ستفشل في نهاية المطاف. يستخدم هذا البحث منهجية نوعية مع تصميم البحث الاستكشافي. تم جمع البيانات باستخدام الدراسات الأدبية من الكتب والمجلات والمقالات المتعلقة بالموضوع.

Abstrak: *Artikel ini mengkaji silsilah Islam wasatiyyah di Indonesia. Proses historis Islamisasi dalam konteks pra-Indonesia telah mempengaruhi cara mayoritas Muslim Indonesia menunjukkan ekspresi moderatnya dari periode sejarah hingga situasi kontemporer. Pendirian negara Indonesia memiliki turunan dari proses Islamisasi di masa lalu. Peran tasawuf dalam proses Islamisasi dibahas di sini. Ash'arisme, atau lebih tepatnya Aswaja, membuka jalan teologis bagi wasatiyyah dengan memilih posisi moderat di antara mazhab-mazhab rasionalis dan konservatif ekstremis. Pada tingkat yang lebih dalam, artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa dasar-dasar sufi pada periode awal Islamisasi sangat penting bagi pembentukan wasatiyyah di Indonesia. Ketika Pancasila, sebagai filosofi negara-bangsa, memasukkan unsur-unsur budaya yang diakui oleh para Ulama Muslim, terbukti bahwa setiap upaya untuk merusak atau memutarbalikkan Islam wasatiyyah di Indonesia pada akhirnya akan gagal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dengan desain penelitian eksploratif. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan studi literatur dari buku, jurnal, dan artikel yang berkaitan dengan topik tersebut.*

Keywords: wasatiyya, Sufism, Islamization, Aswaja.

INTRODUCTION

In considering the genealogy of *wasatiyya* in Muslim society, it is essential to emphasize *wasatiyya*'s theology as the Islamic orthodoxy. Islam's tenet of *wasatiyya* (the middle path) is abundantly supported by textual evidence. In fact, one of the primary characteristics of Islamic orthodoxy is the middle ground between two extreme heresies.

According to Muslim and Western academics, Islam is “just middle” (*wasat*) religion between Christianity and Judaism. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and al-Tabari (d. 923) were examples of classical Muslim thinkers who corroborated this claim. Whereas among Western scholars, Julian Baldick affirmed that Islam is a religion that tries to steer a middle course between Christian spirituality and Jewish legalism.¹

In line with the above argument, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, the contemporary Ulama who himself had vehemently promoted the *wasatīyya* principle, asserted that Islam recommends moderation and balance in everything: in belief, *ibadah*, conduct, and legislation. It is the path that Allah calls *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (straight path), one distinct from all the others that are followed by those who earn Allah’s anger and those who go astray. He then concluded that moderation or balance is a general characteristic of Islam and a fundamental landmark.²

Within Islam, Sunnis claimed the middle ground to mediate between the fractious sects of Islam, such as the Kharijites, Shi’ites, Murji’ites, Jabrites, and anthropomorphists. The Sunnis tried to do away with sectarian frictions by mapping out a middle way, broad enough to include or at least accommodate all but the most extremely deviant. Within the many Sunni schools, the Ash’arites claimed their main religious endeavor was to locate the middle ground between various extreme sectarian types. This attitude promoted its influence and elevated its status as the official representative of orthodox Islam.³

The development of Islamic orthodoxy, according to Makdisi, began with absolute faith in divine revelation, namely traditionalism, followed by an opposing current of skeptical rationalism. Finally, some kinds of orthodoxy emerged as the reasonable middle way between the two extreme camps of traditionalists and rationalists.

¹ Fauzan Saleh, “Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia: A Critical Survey,” in *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia* (Brill, 2001), 57, <https://brill.com/display/title/7455>.

² Yūsuf Qaraḍāwī, *Islamic Awakening Between Rejection and Extremism* (The Other Press, 2010), 7.

³ Saleh, “Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia,” 58.

Ash'arism had to work hard to achieve a favorable position in the development of orthodoxy. Despite claims by some scholars that attribute the triumph of Ash'arism in eleventh-century Baghdad to the patronage of *Nizām al-Mulk*, Makdisi is inclined to perceive the position Ash'arism received as a result of a long struggle and that the struggle for the complete stage of *wasatiyya* orthodoxy is still in progress.⁴

Such development shows how *wasatiyya* strives to situate itself on a center pattern and position. Even though there is no agreement on the procedure or indicator of how *wasatiyya* is to be manifested and known, we can still catch its roles “in the nature of probability.”⁵ According to Kamali’s elaboration, there are nine probability roles of *wasatiyya*. Still, the most important role of *wasatiyya*, when manifested in the reality of Islamic transmission, is its effort to balance between continuity (*thawābit*) and change (*mutaghayyirāt*) and to balance between perceiving *maṣlaha* (benefit) and avoiding *mafsada* (harms). This manifestation gives many chances for Islamic development to adapt to any situation, whereas Islam or its transmission faces local challenges or even interfaith encounters. The “willingness to engage in interfaith encounters” would be the most indicative of moderation, and this kind of awareness at least would make those handling Islamic religious transmission dialogic-minded rather than conflictual-minded.⁶ The rise of Islamic orthodoxy with its characteristics to transform Islamic teaching, in turn, colors the historical development of Islam in numerous countries outside of the Arab world.

While Indonesia is not formally organized as an Islamic state, the fact that Muslims constitute the vast majority of its population gives it a distinct personality. This issue is especially intriguing because Indonesia is far more peaceful than other Islamic countries such as Yemen, Iraq, and Syria. It is obvious that radicalism and even extremist movements threaten Indonesian Islam, but this does not make the Indonesian situation less fascinating. The reason for this is that while moderate Islam is most prevalent among Indonesian

⁴ Saleh, 60.

⁵ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation in Islam: The Qur’anic Principle of Wasatiyyah* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 49.

⁶ Kamali, 59.

Muslims today, the concept of religious moderation (*wasatiyya*) is still being debated at all levels of society, from the grassroots to the government. The current socio-religious situation in Indonesia results from several historical factors that have interacted and continue to have an impact.

In Indonesia, discussions about Islamic *wasatiyya* are inextricably linked to the historical Ash'arism movement. Burhani concluded that the meaning of moderate Islam in Indonesia has a theological foundation and thus has little correlation with new political proposals. This idea appeared because the genealogy of moderation in Indonesia is rooted in the doctrine of Aswaja, which follows Ash'arism as its theological foundation. Thus, it is unsurprising that the formation of Islamic *wasatiyya*, from pre-Indonesian independence to the present day, is based on the Ash'arite concept of balancing revelation and reason.⁷

However, Ash'arism is only one theological facet of Indonesia's Islamic *wasatiyya*'s genealogy. Sufism is the source of the deeper roots of Indonesian Islamic *wasatiyya*, which date back to the early stages of Islamization. As a result, it should be assumed that the Sufi component of *wasatiyya* has had a genealogical impact in Indonesia. There is some debate about the Sufi role in the widespread Islamization of Java, but Kersten believes there is "no reason to dismiss it out of hand."⁸ According to Kersten's argument, the pre-Indonesia phase of Islamization, which can be distinguished from other types of Islamization around the world, was most likely influenced by Sufism. According to An-Na'im, the convergence of a religious movement and a distinct culture increases the likelihood of Sufi mysticism influencing the development of Islamic *wasatiyya* in Indonesia.⁹

The formation of the nation-state philosophy, known as Pancasila, is a potential additional component that will play a significant role in developing Islamic *wasatiyya* in Indonesia. Not only does Pancasila

⁷ Ahmad Najib Burhani, "Al-Tawassuṭ Wa-l I'tidāl: The NU and Moderatism in Indonesian Islam," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 40, no. 5–6 (2012): 564, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-12341262>.

⁸ Carool Kersten, *A History of Islam in Indonesia: Unity in Diversity*, The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 23.

⁹ Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Shari'ah* (Harvard University Press, 2008), 226.

serve as the foundation for the state's legal system, but it also serves as the impetus for followers of Indonesia's official religions to view themselves as members of a pluralistic society. The consensus that Pancasila should serve as the foundation of Indonesia's democracy became a significant historical event for the growth of *wasatiyya* due to the evolution of political thought among elites immediately following the country's independence. Assyaukanie argues persuasively that the history of Islamic thought in Indonesia should be referred to as "the history of moderation and progress."¹⁰

This article intends to elucidate the genealogical significance of Sufism and Pancasila on the roots of *wasatiyya* in contemporary Indonesia. This article's background serves as the basis for its claim that Sufism and Pancasila positively contribute to the consolidation of *wasatiyya*. This article aims to locate the moderate values of Sufism influencing the establishment of Pancasila in the history of Islam in Indonesia to establish a global culture of tolerance and moderation, as opposed to arguing for one of the two as the dominating forces.

This article employed qualitative methodology with an exploratory research design. According to Brink and Wood, the exploratory research design is used to discover something that has not been previously studied.¹¹ At least two main studies address the connection between Sufism and *wasatiyya* in Indonesia. The first is by Siradj, who highlighted the feature of *tasāmuḥ* as a social capital for *wasatiyya* in society.¹² The second is by Anshori et al., who emphasized the contribution of Sufism in developing moderate Islam in Nusantara.¹³ These studies are significant to notice because they give the very first clue to understanding the role of Sufism in shaping *wasatiyya* in Indonesia. Still, they failed to explore the genealogical nature of Sufism that gradually formed the historical processes of *wasatiyya* in Indonesia, especially regarding the institutionalization

¹⁰ Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 177.

¹¹ Pamela J. Brink and Marilyn J. Wood, *Advanced Design in Nursing Research* (SAGE, 1998), 311.

¹² Said Aqiel Siradj, "Tasawuf Sebagai Basis Tasamuh," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 13, no. 1 (May 1, 2013): 87–106, <https://doi.org/10.21154/al-tahrir.v13i1.8>.

¹³ M. Anshori, Zaenuddin Prasajo, and Lailial Muhtifah, "Contribution of Sufism to the Development of Moderate Islam in Nusantara," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 19 (June 1, 2021): 40–48, <https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.19.2021.194>.

of *wasatiyya* from Sufism-based Islamization in Indonesia. Therefore, the researchers intend to investigate the historical appearance of *wasatiyya*'s concept within Indonesian society to produce new insight and understanding of this discourse. The data were collected using literature studies from books, journals, and related articles.

THE ECLECTIC AND SYNCRETIC NATURE OF SUFISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

There is no credible ulama in the history of Islam who rejected the principle of *wasatiyya*. It is, after all, a principle confirmed in the Qur'an and Hadith. However, the question of what is *wasatiyya* and what is not in concrete terms has flared fierce debates among scholars. Many believe that *wasatiyya* can only be achieved if the Islamic intellectual tradition is revitalized.¹⁴ The most representative Islamic intellectual tradition is Sufism, which Murata termed the sapiential tradition.¹⁵ Based on many Muslim scholars' arguments, Murata proposed Sufism as the Islamic orthodoxy. As in the intellectual-spiritual tradition, Sufis tend to search for deeper meaning and understanding of texts, thus leaving many spaces for intellectual and cultural diversity.¹⁶

To confirm the above argument, Corbin observed that Sufis had been able to use various concepts from different Muslim sects in their worldview. In doing so, Sufism practically diminishes the boundaries between Islamic sectarian traditions. He stated that if one goes beyond the purely juridical interpretation of the shari'a, both Sunni and Shiis assume their inner realm (*bāṭin*), then there would appear to be merely many ways of saying the same thing.¹⁷

Al-Shaybī went into more detail in proving that Sufism is a spiritual tradition that originated in Persian Sunnism. In his extensive observation of the history of the relationship between Sufism and Shiism, Al-Shaybī pointed out that Sufism is the de facto orthodoxy

¹⁴ William C. Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul: The Pertinence of Islamic Cosmology in the Modern World* (Simon and Schuster, 2013), 5–8.

¹⁵ Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (State University of New York Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁶ Murata, 5.

¹⁷ Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (Routledge, 2014), 22–29.

of Islamic sects, which can easily permeate into all Islamic sects.¹⁸ Confirming Al-Shaybī's finding, Arthur Buehler also argued that Sufism arises from several diverse and overlapping strands, making it naturally viable to be Islamic orthodoxy.¹⁹

Proofs of the eclectic nature of Sufism are present in the Islamization of South East Asia. Instead of using the term Shiism, which has recently been broadly politicized, Formichi and Feener suggested using Marshal Hodgson's term of 'Alid piety. This term, they argue, could facilitate the movement of academic discussions away from the controversial discourses of "Shi'ism versus Sunnism".²⁰ Several studies suggested that the predominant Islam in Nusantara was of eclectic and syncretic Sufi heritage. In *Atlas Wali Songo*, Agus Sunyoto has gone into great detail, proving this assumption, which one can easily observe in many Indonesian Islamic traditions and rituals.²¹ Without much effort, an observer can see the mystical and eclectic aspects of Indonesian Islam, especially in its inception, which traces back to its origin in the Sufi tradition.

Sayyed Hossein Nasr appeared to agree with Formichi and Feener on the importance of removing sectarian words to demonstrate the eclectic nature of Sufism. To accomplish this, Nasr infused the term tradition with a new philosophical meaning, symbolizing the perennial reality of *Scientia sacra* (the sacred science). Based on his talks at the prestigious Gifford Lectures in Scotland, this tradition was unpacked explicitly in one of Nasr's well-known publications, *Knowledge and the Sacred*. He investigates the concept of *Scientia sacra*, which he believes exists in all religious traditions, and discusses the issues associated with the modern desacralization of science in this work. Nasr then offered the most profound definition of tradition. In his worldview, tradition is a divinely revealed truth or principle that arises from the divine realm. It is the entire cosmos as revealed to

¹⁸ Kamil Mustafa Asy Syaibi, *As Shila Bayna Al-Tasawwuf Wa al-Tashayyu'* (Dar al-maarif, 2014).

¹⁹ Arthur BUEHLER, "OVERLAPPING CURRENTS IN EARLY ISLAM: THE SUFI SHAYKH AND SHĪ'Ī IMAM," n.d.

²⁰ Chiara Formichi and Michael Feener, *Shi'ism In South East Asia: Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 3–4.

²¹ Agus Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo: Buku Pertama Yang Mengungkap Wali Songo Sebagai Fakta Sejarah*, Cetakan I (Depok: Kerjasama Pustaka IIMaN, Trans Pustaka, dan LTN PBNU, 2012).

various people who are thought to be prophets, avatars, the Logos, or other transmitting agencies. It also includes the implications and applications of this principle in other realities, such as social and legal systems, artistic and scientific symbolism, sacred science, and the methods for obtaining it.²²

Despite the wide range of topics he explores, Nasr's worldview is rooted in traditionalism, perennialism, and the idea that science should be considered sacred (*Scientia sacra*). Huston Smith characterizes the manner of thinking that Nasr possessed as information-packed with metaphysical profundity. Indeed, Nasr's views were profoundly influenced by perennial philosophy (*Sophia perennis*). This philosophical concept, known as *Sanatana dharma* in Hinduism and *al-hikmah al-khalidah* in Islam, is based on universal and eternal truth.²³ In conclusion, Sufism is the primary source of inspiration for this way of perennial and eclectic thinking.

THE ROLE OF SUFISM IN ISLAMIZING INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO

Islamization in Southeast Asia began in the early seventh century due to the influence of Sufi missionaries on traders and travelers.²⁴ According to the Sufi theory of Umar Faruk Assegaf, Sufism existed in Indonesia during the earliest stages of Islamization.²⁵ Laffan asserted that the existence of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in Java, was mentioned in the work of 'Abdallah As'ad al-Yāfi'i, a Sufi from Aden, Yemen, who dedicated his life to writing the miracles of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī. At the beginning of the 14th century, al-Yāfi'i stated that as a youth in Aden, he had known a man from Java who was an expert in mystical dzikr. This man was called Mas'ud al-Jāwī

²² Seyyed Hossein Nasr in Asfa Widiyanto, "The Reception of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Ideas within the Indonesian Intellectual Landscape.," *Studia Islamika* 23, no. 2 (2016): 193.

²³ Widiyanto, "The Reception of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Ideas within the Indonesian Intellectual Landscape."

²⁴ Khairudin Aljunied, "Islam in Southeast Asia," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2019, 21.

²⁵ Umar Faruk Assegaf, "'Madhhab Ahl Bayt in Nusantara: The Past and Present,'" *Al-Qurba Jurnal Peradaban & Kebudayaan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2010): 60.

from the Qādiriyya Sufi order.²⁶ Hence, Islamization in the Malay Archipelago was obviously inseparable from the role of Sufism.

Furthermore, Aljunaid mentioned that in the early 16th century, Sufism had shaped the religious practices of Southeast Asians that were found through songs, poetry, text, and fables.²⁷ Sufism gained converts due to its openness, as it came with adaptation to the local culture practiced by the nine saints of Java (*Wali Songo*). Also, the oldest Islamic manuscripts from Java and Sumatra are mostly about mystical tracts and tales of Persian and Indian origins, and the standard manual on Islamic practices was tracked in the 17th century.²⁸

Although the term *wasatīyya* might have appeared in recent years, it seemed that the spirit had emerged concurrently during the early stages of Islamization in the Archipelago. Many Sufi scholars played crucial roles in popularizing the principle of *wasatīyya* which was later upheld by contemporary Ulama. Ḥamza al-Fansūrī was among the first celebrated Sufis in the archipelago who lived in Aceh in the second half of the 16th century. He was known through his poetry as an adopter of the Sufi term “*murīd*” for “student” in the Malay world.²⁹ Unlike *Mas'ud al-Jāwī*, there is no record explaining the details of the Sufi order of al-Fansūrī, but most probably, he was also influenced by *Qādiriyya*, as can be observed from his poetry, which refers to *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

Shams al-Dīn from Sumatera then continued the spread of Sufism in the 17th century by initiating the “seven stages” doctrine as an adaptation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s worldview of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Simultaneously, Islamization spread throughout Indonesia along the Gowa, Lombok, and Sumbawa trade routes. Some argue that Sulawesi’s rulers have based their authority on the Sufi model of “the perfect man” (*al-insān al-kāmil*) since the late 16th century by following Mataram and Aceh as practical models.³⁰

Moreover, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, who lived in Aceh during 1637-1644, was known to be against Shams al-Dīn’s disciples. Al-Rānīrī

²⁶ Michael Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 4–5.

²⁷ Aljunied, “Islam in Southeast Asia,” 9–10.

²⁸ M. M. van Bruinessen, “The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia,” 1994, 3.

²⁹ Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 11.

³⁰ Laffan, 11.

claimed to adhere to a more moderate variety of *wahdat al-wujūd* doctrine, which is affiliated with the *Rifā'iyya* Sufi order. *Rifā'iyya* Sufi's order flourished until the 19th in Aceh, but it is unclear whether it was ingrained in al-Rānīrī's teachings or others with the same order.³¹ The debates on the interpretation of *wahdat al-wujūd* doctrine had emerged since the Islamization periods. However, Ibrāhīm al-Kurāni, a Sufi scholar, clarified that there has been a misinterpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine that was delivered by Burhānpūrī, a teacher of Shams al-Dīn. According to him, only certain people with strong faith can grasp the doctrine. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sinkīlī, al-Kurāni's disciple, also did the same thing as he paraphrased the works of Fansuri to avoid misinterpretation in understanding God.³²

THE DA'WA STRATEGY OF WALI SONGO: A Peaceful Approach

Sufism had a significant impact on the Islamization of the Archipelago, as discussed above. Subarkah argued that certain Sufi teachers from Hadhramawt who were known as 'Alāwiyyīn sayyids (*sāda 'alāwiyyīn*) were among those who imparted the Sufistic tendency in the later periods of Islamization.³³ Southeast Asian elites and residents are intrigued by their peaceful approach to Islamization. Their Sufi method of da'wa was characterized by its adaptability to the local culture, which facilitated the inhabitants' smooth adoption of Islam. These Hadhrami sayyids have put more importance on the esoteric teachings of Sufism than on the exoteric precepts of Islamic law (*fiqhiyya*).

Some believed that the Sufi persuasive method of da'wa in the archipelago was strategized by Maulānā Imām Jamāl Al-Dīn Ḥusain also known as Shaykh Jumādī al-Kubrā in which the famous Wali Songo then came from his descendants.³⁴ Jamāl Al-Dīn Ḥusain and

³¹ van Bruinessen, "The Origins and Development of Sufi Orders (Tarekat) in Southeast Asia," 5–6.

³² Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam*, 19.

³³ M. Subarkah, "Jalur Dakwah Diaspora Hadhramaut," in *Peran Dakwah Damai: Habin Alawiyin Di Nusantara*, ed. Marzuki Alie (RausyanFikr Institute, 2013), 238.

³⁴ Muaz Tanjung, Arik Dwijayanto, and Nabil Chang-Kuan Lin, "GENEALOGY, DIASPORA, AND DA'WAH: The Religious Role of Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hadhrami in Pattani and Java," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 21, no. 2 (November 2, 2021): 185–211, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v21i2.3075>.

his family emigrated to the archipelago with a wide range of skills to enable the locals' advancement toward social welfare. Instead of disrupting local culture, they came to infuse the noble characters (*al-akhlāq al-karīmah*) taught by Islam. Thus, Wali Songo later came with a variety of expertise to complement each other in advancing their da'wa endeavors.³⁵

In addition, Subarkah said that a number of Hadhrami sayyids arrived in the archipelago several centuries after the arrival of Shaykh Jumud al-Kubra to further the process of Islamization in Javanese sections of the archipelago, such as Madura, Sunda, and other areas.³⁶ It is, therefore, essential to discuss the strategic approach that Wali Songo took when delivering da'wa if one wishes to comprehend the implementation of *wasatīyya* in the archipelago. The assimilative, syncretic, open-minded, and adaptable characteristics of Wali Songo's brand of da'wa are supported by evidence from the past.³⁷ As a result, two critical outcomes of Wali Songo's assimilative da'wa are education and arts.

First da'wa is through educational assimilation. Wali Songo redesigned the prevailing educational system according to the Islamic model. They were able to transform the Shiva-Buddhist educational institution known as "*asrama*" or "*dukuh*" into an Islamic residential school (*pesantren*). By so doing, they infuse Islamic values without undermining the social norms of the Shiva-Buddhist society.

The Madurese Muslim community, for instance, respects *ulama'*, parents, and the government (*Bhuppa' Bhabbu' Ghuru Rato*) because Wali Songo adopted this principle from the Hindu doctrine of *triguru* introduced in *Silakrama*. Students at Islamic boarding schools are familiar with the term "*santri*," derived from the Hindu word *shastri*, meaning "students of scriptures."³⁸ This strategy demonstrates that Wali Songo has significantly improved the archipelago's educational system without wrecking the old values of non-Muslim communities.

Second is da'wa through cultural and artistic assimilation. Before Islam came to the archipelago, various Buddhist and Hindu

³⁵ L. Yahya, "Metodologi Dakwah Kaum 'Alawiyyin," in *Peran Dakwah Damai Habib Alawiyyin Di Nusantara*, ed. Marzukie Alie (Rausyan Fikr Institute, 2013), 153–54.

³⁶ Subarkah, "Jalur Dakwah Diaspora Hadhramaut," 239.

³⁷ Sunyoto, *Atlas Wali Songo*, 161.

³⁸ Sunyoto, 168–69.

kingdoms, such as Majapahit, Srivijaya, and Kutai, existed there. Wali Songo seized the opportunity to absorb these kingdoms' artistic and cultural richness to advance their Islamic propagation. The art and culture of Majapahit were acknowledged as religious traditions with certain characteristics, such as a need for a sacred place, time, and actors, a requirement for a variety of offerings, and a dress code that prioritizes spirituality over aesthetics. The early 10th-century Belitung inscription identifies shadow puppetry (*wayang kulit*) as one of Indonesia's earliest Hindu artistic performances.³⁹ Wali Songo assimilated *wayang kulit* to follow Islamic law (*sharī'a*) based on its form, story, and values from that performance. Until now, *wayang kulit* has been performed in various locations throughout Java with Islamic messages.

For that reason, according to Takdir, Wali Songo became the most influential figure in disseminating peaceful Islam worldwide.⁴⁰ Their spirit of da'wa was later carried out by the Ulama through the fostered Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), such as Syaikh Nawawī al-Bantanī and Syakh Khālil. Syaikh Nawawī al-Bantanī is a prolific Sufi figure from Banten. He mastered *taṣawwuf* from the famous Sufi teacher, Shaykh Aḥmad Khāṭib Sambas, who synthesized Qadariyya and Naqshabandiyya Sufi order.⁴¹ In addition, he authored numerous works, but only twenty-two have survived.⁴²

The *taṣawwuf* of Shaykh Nawawī focuses on the integration of *sharī'a*, *ṭarīqa*, and *haqīqa*, which give significance to several mystical stations of the human spiritual journey.⁴³ Another charismatic Sufi figure in the 19th century was Syakh Khālil from Bangkalan, Madura. He was a member of *Qādiriyya* and *Naqshabandiyya* Sufi's orders who successfully harmonized *taṣawwuf* tenets with *fiqh* norms based on *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a* orthodoxy. His *taṣawwuf* has

³⁹ Sunyoto, 173.

⁴⁰ Mohammad Takdir, "Kontribusi Kiai Kholil Bangkalan Dalam Mengembangkan Tasawuf Nusantara," *'Anil Islam: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Ilmu Keislaman* 9, no. 2 (2016): 271.

⁴¹ Suwarjin Suwarjin, "Biografi Intelektual Syekh Nawawi Al-Bantani," *Tsaqofah Dan Tarikh: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Sejarah Islam* 2, no. 2 (2017): 194.

⁴² Suwarjin, 196.

⁴³ Muhammad Ridwan Hidayatulloh, Aceng Kosasih, and Fahrudin Fahrudin, "Konsep Tasawuf Syaikh Nawawi Al-Bantani Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Persekolahan," *TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (2015): 13.

influenced the development of Islamic character in the archipelago (nusantara) through his students who were pioneers in well-known Islamic boarding schools that have successfully integrated Islamic values with local tradition.⁴⁴ Both, Syaikh Nawāwī al-Bantānī and Syaikh Khālil, promoted the priority of akhlāq in spreading Islam, and by practicing it, peace and harmony will be established among the community members.

As a result, Islam arrived in the archipelago adaptively and peacefully by assimilating and embracing local cultures, traditions, and arts, which made people feel at ease with the new messages. It was the practice of *wasatīyya* brought by Sufi scholars during Islamization. Consequently, Islam in Indonesia has a unique feature from Islam in the Middle East, despite the fact that the figures of Islamization originated from Arabs. Because it is regarded as the most tolerant and appropriate for the Muslim community in Indonesia, the way of da'wa and thinking practiced by figures who were influential in Islamization continues to impact contemporary Ulama in Indonesia. This is how *wasatīyya* is intended to be implemented, given that applying Islamic teachings unique to Indonesia demonstrates Islam's universality. *Wasatīyya* is a fundamental principle that opposes violence, discrimination, extremes, and anarchy. *Wasatīyya* thus encourages justice, tolerance, and balance.

ULAMA'S FORTITUDE IN SHAPING THE RELIGIOUS NATIONAL IDENTITY IN PANCASILA

Two words have been combined to form the term *Pancasila*. The first word, *panca*, refers to the number five, and the second word, *sila*, refers to the word "principles." Pancasila has five guiding principles, and they are as follows: a belief in a single God; humanitarianism, unity, democracy, and social justice come number one, two, three, four, and five, respectively. It is possible to distinguish Indonesia from other Muslim countries on the basis of the fact that these principles serve as the philosophical foundation for both the state and the democratic system in the country. The legacy of *Pancasila* was an important factor in the post-independence establishment of Indonesia. In the world's most populous Muslim nation, it would be

⁴⁴ Takdir, "Kontribusi Kiai Kholil Bangkalan Dalam Mengembangkan Tasawuf Nusantara," 297.

interesting to investigate the significance of *Pancasila* in relation to *wasatiyya*.

After Indonesia's independence, the elite and active actors of the populace were fragmented into two major groups, the Islamic-oriented group and the secular nationalist group. Both are at odds with regard to whether Indonesia should become an Islamic or a secular state. According to Geertz, the diversity of Indonesian culture and modern political thought interacted to produce an ideological situation in which a highly generalized consensus on one level was countered on another level by accelerating dissensus regarding the direction from which the heights should be conquered and the essentials to be preserved.⁴⁵ Eventually, Soekarno proposes *Pancasila* to bridge the gap between "Muslim and secular nationalist parties",⁴⁶ which basically are mostly adherents of Islam. What Soekarno did was to represent a neutral political attitude to prevent potential disunity, although the process is not relatively easy:

While these principles were sufficiently unobjectionable and ambiguous to receive general acceptance, Islamic leaders were unhappy that Islam seemed to play no special role. Eventually, they accepted a compromise called the Jakarta Charter (*Piagam Jakarta*) which said that the state was to be based upon belief in God, with the obligation for adherents of Islam to carry out Islamic law. What this implied for the relationship between Islamic law and the state was to be a source of bitter disagreements in the coming years. The committee finished its work by drafting Indonesia's first constitution, which called for a unitary republic with an extremely powerful presidency, and by deciding that the new state should include not only Indonesia but Malaya and British territories in Borneo (Kalimantan) as well.⁴⁷

It appears that Muslim nationalists are unhappy with secular nationalist parties' maneuver to remove the "Islamic clause" from the body of the Jakarta Charter, allowing *Pancasila* to remain in

⁴⁵ Clifford Geertz in Claire Holt, *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Equinox Publishing, 2007), 330.

⁴⁶ Benyamin Fleming Intan, "*Public Religion*" and the *Pancasila*-Based State of Indonesia: An Ethical and Sociological Analysis (Peter Lang, 2006), 40.

⁴⁷ Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since C. 1200* (Stanford University Press, 2008), 245–46.

power.⁴⁸ Muslim leaders at the time displayed a moderate attitude by adhering to the principle of avoiding harm (*mafsada*), which was essential to maintaining state unity. Some representatives of Muslim leaders, including Wahid Hasjim, Ki Bagus Hadikusumo, and Kasman Singodimejo, came to an agreement to prevent the splitting of the nation by accepting the first principles of Pancasila as a monotheistic theological element.⁴⁹

When a state's constitution is founded on "belief in one God" while also establishing a democratic system, it demonstrates the state's progressive foundation. Soekarno may have simply been embracing his religious bias as a Muslim, or as most Indonesian Muslims would have a solid ability to impose their religion as the basis of the state. Except for Kartosuwirdjo and Kahar Muzakkar's attempts to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia in 1949 and 1950, the majority of Muslims' opportunity has not materialized. However, as few other Muslim leaders support it, this rebellion does not represent the wishes of the majority of Muslims in Indonesia.

The existence of Pancasila is becoming more and more entrenched when the Suharto regime imposed *asas tunggal* (single state ideology) policy in 1985, which means that Pancasila should be adopted as the only foundation for "all political parties and social and religious organizations in Indonesia".⁵⁰ Nahdatul Ulama (NU), the largest religious organization, was the first Islamic group to accept Pancasila as *asas tunggal*. However, at the time, its relationship with the government was problematic. For NU, the basic theological teaching of Islam is *tauhid* (monotheism), which is *wasatiyyah* between polytheism and atheism, so the acceptance of Pancasila indicates the *wasatiyyah* stance.⁵¹ The fact that Pancasila contains values that do not conflict with Islam is an essential argument for NU to adopt Pancasila.⁵² Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah, the second largest religious organization, seems more careful in accepting *asas tunggal*, but after several internal meetings, the organization finally

⁴⁸ Intan, "Public Religion" and the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia, 40.

⁴⁹ Intan, 42.

⁵⁰ Nadirsyah Hosen, *Shari'a & Constitutional Reform in Indonesia* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2007), 2.

⁵¹ Assyaukanic, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia*, 104–15.

⁵² Hosen, *Shari'a & Constitutional Reform in Indonesia*, 72.

accepted it.⁵³ Besides the theological value of Pancasila's first principle, other values are compatible with Islamic teaching. For example, the humanitarian principle can be interpreted as the Islamic noble spirit of *habl min an-nas* (humanitarianism).⁵⁴ Other principles like democracy and justice are not far from Islamic terms, such *shūrā* (QS. Ali Imran: 159) and *'adl* (QS. al-Nahl: 90).

As the legal, constitutional foundation, it can be asserted that Pancasila should serve as the direct guide for all of Indonesia's official religions. The first principle, belief in God, may be interpreted according to each religion's own system of faith. According to al-Khanif,⁵⁵ the flexible interpretation of Pancasila's religious principle does not have a particular designation, and hence any constructive interpretation of this principle is generally accepted by society. It means that Pancasila becomes a legal constitution creating religious pluralism in Indonesia, the right to practice every religion should always be protected. Thus, under Pancasila, religious minorities outside or within a particular religion can express their beliefs in the public sphere. As the philosophical foundation of Indonesia, Pancasila strikes a balance and provides justice for all citizens, regardless of their religious understanding. It is the guide to being a moderate and tolerant citizen, particularly for the majority of the Muslim population.

MODERATION IN INDONESIA AND CRITIQUES OF ARABIZATION TRENDS

As previously explained, Ulama has played a significant role in the Islamization of Indonesia's archipelago. The Sufis of Hadramawt, Aden and Mecca inherited a more open and persuasive form of da'wa. This method is still employed by three major Muslim institutions in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and Habāib. This section will briefly introduce three notable representatives of the aforementioned organizations: Abdurrahman

⁵³ Assyaukanic, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia*, 107.

⁵⁴ Al Khanif, *Religious Minorities, Islam and the Law: International Human Rights and Islamic Law in Indonesia*, 1st ed. (New York: New York, 2020.: Routledge, 2020), 133, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003048695>.

⁵⁵ Khanif, 134.

Wahid (Gus Dur), Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, and Habib Luthfi bin Yahya.

Gus Dur is the grandson of Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of NU. He has earned a reputation as a moderate figure due to the works he has produced on the Islamicate realm. Gus Dur, while serving as president, proposed the following Islamic universal principles designed to protect humans: equality before the law and the constitution, protection of citizens from tyranny and abuse, the right to defend the weak, and the constraint of authority.⁵⁶ He claimed that his grandfather's attitude influenced him in the spirit of tolerance and acceptance toward all organizations and religious activities.⁵⁷

Gus Dur's organizational, cultural, educational, economic, and political efforts as an ardent champion of human rights are well documented. His acceptance of others earned him the title of father of pluralism in Indonesia. His sagacity and determination to safeguard cultural diversity are well-known. Despite the controversies surrounding the term "pluralism" among current Muslim scholars, for Gus Dur it was a method to prove that Islam is universal and all-encompassing because it can be adapted to any situation, particularly the dynamic character of humans.⁵⁸

Ahmad Syafii Maarif, also known as Buya Syafii, is the second figure. He was the leader of the Muhammadiyah organization. He is a well-known contemporary scholar in Indonesia who has made numerous contributions. Buya Syafii was recognized as a scholar with a strong faith in humanity. He considers diversity to be an unavoidable *sunnatullah*.⁵⁹ It should also be noted that Buya Syafii actively responded to social issues by proposing solutions, such as the concept of justice, the role of Pancasila, religious pluralism, democracy, and gender equality. Buya Syafii advocated for the dignified practice of religion while respecting other faiths. For him,

⁵⁶ Muzayyin Muzayyin, Nadia Raifah Nawa Kartika, and Habib Habib, "In Search of Moderation of Islam Against Extremism: A Promoting 'Islam Pribumi' By Gus Dur," *FIKRAH* 9, no. 2 (2021): 208.

⁵⁷ Daisaku Ikeda and Abdurrahman Wahid, *The Wisdom of Tolerance: A Philosophy of Generosity and Peace* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 23.

⁵⁸ TAUFANI TAUFANI, "Pemikiran Pluralisme Gusdur," *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh* 19, no. 2 (2018): 203.

⁵⁹ Nuraini Nuraini, "HUMANISME ISLAM DALAM PEMIKIRAN AHMAD SYAFI'I MA'ARIF," *Jurnal Pendidikan "EDUKASIA MULTIKULTURA"* 1, no. 2 (2019): 127.

this is the essence of pluralism.⁶⁰ At the end of his book titled *Islam, Humanity, and Indonesian Identity: Thoughts on History*, Buya emphasized that Islam should be the means of establishing peace that safeguards all people and that everyone should be treated fairly and not be threatened by Islam.⁶¹ Islam is a faith that may offer peace to all people.

Habib Luthfi bin Yahya, the third and final representative Muslim figure in promoting pluralism, is a Hadhrami sayyid and master of the Sufi order in Indonesia. He led the largest Sufi order umbrella called *Jamiyya Ahl Al- Tariqa Al-Mutabara Al-Nahdliyya* (JATMAN). In 2019, JATMAN and the Ministry of Defense organized the World Sufi Forum to discuss the role of Sufism in fostering human happiness and national security. Habib Luthfi devised this plan to demonstrate that Sufi leaders could also contribute to civilization and humanity on the basis of world peace.⁶²

Often depicted as an embodiment of *Islam Jawa* (Javanese Islam), Habib Luthfi, among others, has a Javanese orientation and disposition, the ability to deliver sermons in refined Javanese, and his vast knowledge of Javanese history and mythology. For this reason, he is often portrayed as *Arab tapi njawani* (an Arab who acts more like a Javanese).⁶³ Habib Luthfi's method of da'wa strongly resembled Wali Songo's in appropriating local culture and respecting non-Muslim society, such as allowing Barongsai (Chinese lion dance) performances during the mawlid festivals.

The previous explanations make it abundantly evident that the Ulama in Indonesia have applied *wasatiyya* in a manner influenced by the founding fathers of Islamization in the archipelago. *Wasatiyya* fundamentally means not engaging in acts of prejudice or violence against other people in the process of assimilating Islam into

⁶⁰ Ahmad Syafi; Fowler Maarif, *Islam, Humanity, and the Indonesian Identity : Reflections on History* (Leiden University Press, 2018), 33, //pustaka-digital.kemdikbud.go.id/%2Findex.php%3Fp%3Dshow_detail%26id%3D950.

⁶¹ Maarif, 225.

⁶² Andi Purwono, "Diplomasi Kiai Nahdlatul 'Ulama (NU) Melalui Konferensi Ulama Internasional," *SOSIO DIALEKTIKA* 5, no. 2 (December 7, 2020): 205, <https://doi.org/10.31942/sd.v5i2.3875>.

⁶³ Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia*, Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 9.

Indonesia. Indonesia is a multiethnic nation and home to a variety of religions, cultures, and ethnicities.

In recent years, however, Arabization has emerged in Indonesia among Islamists seeking to reconstruct the world based on Saudi Arabian Wahhabism. The proponents of this movement claim it is the authentic form of Islam. Some people came to believe that to be a pure Muslim, one must have a Saudi Arabian style, especially in cultural manners. Clearly, it contradicts the local values that reflect Islam's multicultural nature.⁶⁴

Woodward⁶⁵ cited Bung Hatta and Hasyim Asy'ari as examples of individuals who strongly supported the local identity in Indonesia. Bung Hatta studied in Europe but remained Indonesian, and Hashim Ashari, studied in Saudi Arabia but continued to dress in Indonesian fashion, respectively. Due to their love and respect for Indonesia, both individuals refused to be colored by other cultures. Mustafa Bisri, also known as Gus Mus, argued that the fact that Indonesian Islam (*Islam Nusantara*) is uniquely distinct from Saudi Arabian Islam does not imply that it is invalid.⁶⁶ Instead, it reflects the historical development of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago, which respects cultural diversity. In this context, Syafiq Hasyim believes that the efforts of some extremist Salafists to Arabize Indonesian Islam will come to an end at some time in the future or may have died down sooner rather than later.⁶⁷

Madura has a unique response to the Arabization trends in Indonesia. Madura is a small island in East Java where NU has the greatest impact on the local community. The majority of the Madurese community is religious, with *pesantren* serving as the center of education and *kyai* as the center of figures.⁶⁸ *Kyai*, who foster the *pesantren* in Madura, has a strong relationship with Arabs, which enables them to travel to Arab countries for business, such as

⁶⁴ Mark Woodward, "Islam Nusantara: A Semantic and Symbolic Analysis," *Heritage of Nusantara: International Journal of Religious Literature and Heritage* 6 (December 27, 2017): 244–45, <https://doi.org/10.31291/hn.v6i2.398>.

⁶⁵ Woodward, 248.

⁶⁶ Mirjam Lücking, "Beyond Islam Nusantara and 'Arabization': Capitalizing 'Arabness' in Madura, East Java," *Asien* 139 (2016): 6.

⁶⁷ "The 212 Movement: Flagging Political Fortunes," FULCRUM, December 29, 2021, <https://fulcrum.sg/the-212-movement-flagging-political-fortunes/>.

⁶⁸ Lücking, "Beyond Islam Nusantara and 'Arabization,'" 13.

the pilgrimage industry.⁶⁹ Some traditions, such as haul and mawlid recitation, are influenced by Arabs. However, Madurese harshly criticized the Arabs' brand of Wahabism. Thus, the adoption of Arab traditions by the Madurese community does not contradict Islam Nusantara but rather enriches it. In conclusion, the unique practice of *wasatiyya* in Indonesia is a product of the Islamization of the Indonesian Archipelago and the distinctive nature of Islam in Indonesia.

WASAṬIYYA IN THE CURRENT SITUATION

As has been asserted, no credible ulama denies the importance of the middle way or *wasatiyya*, at least in principle. In fact, due to the abundant evidence from the Qur'an and Hadith, it is out of the question for any sound ulama to even challenge this very principle. However, they differ concerning what is this Islam *wasatiyya*. Some people believe it to be Sunnism with Shafi'ite jurisprudence and Ash'arite theology, but the majority believe that *wasatiyya* Islam should be built up on the great heritage of Islamic Sufism as supported by Murata, Corbin, al-Shaybī, Chittick, and some others. Therefore, they surveyed how Sufism has grown as de facto Islamic orthodoxy between two major sects, namely Sunni and Shia. Suppose one looks at Islamic institutions in Indonesia and the Muslim world, which become the backbone for spreading the Islam *wasatiyya* paradigm. In that case, one will find Sufi orders (*tariqa*) are on the front line. These Sufi orders have always been in harmony with local culture and build on what Kamali termed interfaith engagements. In addition, in the front of fighting intolerance and terrorism, Sufism has also been proactive.

Unfortunately, several factors have weakened the consolidation of Islam *wasatiyya* worldwide in recent years. Chief among them is the sectarianization of Middle Eastern conflicts. This sectarianization is a process shaped by political actors operating within specific contexts, pursuing political goals involving popular mobilization around (religious) identity markers. To put it in another way, there is thus no long-lasting hostility between Sunni and Shia sects as depicted by the media, but rather continuing geopolitical rivalries that manipulate sectarian tensions for their benefit, which is the core

⁶⁹ Lücking, 15.

reason for conflict⁷⁰ That sectarianization, consequently, spilled over here in the form of Arabization as the beacon of Islam *wasatiyya*, the Arabization of Indonesian Islam has derailed concerted efforts to consolidate Islam *wasatiyya* in Indonesia, particularly and the Muslim world in general. However, instead of looking into the current situation as a threat, one should look at it as an opportunity for Indonesian Muslim scholars to exert their version of Islam *wasatiyya*, especially at a time when others in the birth of Islam have failed.

Moreover, in Indonesia, the practice of *wasatiyya* has advanced in political, educational, and social spheres since its spirit became embedded during the early period of Islamization. Politically, the most significant manifestation is the agreement between the *Ulama* and nationalists to construct Indonesia as neither a secular nor a religious nation to respect the multicultural, multiracial, and multireligious identities of its people.⁷¹ Due to the twists and turns of political dynamics, Indonesia experienced difficulties and social unrest after the fall of Soeharto's regime as part of the transition to democracy's labor pains. The democratic system established in Indonesia encourages freedom of speech and expression, resulting in the emergence of various ideological groups, including Islamic radicalism⁷² This condition prompted the promotion of *wasatiyya* in Indonesia, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs eventually made it a government mandate to undertake the task.⁷³

The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) conducted a specific program to emphasize *wasatiyya* through the educational system by creating a curriculum for Islamic schools (*madrasa*) that emphasizes the character and mentality of the students.⁷⁴ Also, Lukman, as a

⁷⁰ Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, "Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 15, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2017.1354462>.

⁷¹ Norsaleha Mohd Salleh et al., "Wasatiyyah Discourse by the Perspective of Indonesian Muslim Scholars," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 6, no. 5 (2015): 483.

⁷² Wahyudi Akmaliah, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto, and Sukendar, "Making Moderate Islam in Indonesia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 0, no. 0 (May 10, 2022): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2022.2034224>.

⁷³ Aceng Abdul Aziz et al., "Implementasi Moderasi Beragama Dalam Pendidikan Islam," 2019, 5.

⁷⁴ Aziz et al., 154.

Minister of Religious Affairs in 2019, asserted that the Indonesian International Islamic University is expected to be a home of moderation in the context of Islam, which disseminates Islamic values as *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn*.⁷⁵ In order to foster tolerance, peace, and social harmony, a number of educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), Islamic state universities, and many others, have adopted the *wasatiyya* interpretation of Islam. According to Saenong, in accordance with this endeavor, the idea of *wasatiyya* Islam is influenced by the alumni of al-Azhar University, the professors (*shaykh*) of which firmly practiced moderate character when preaching Islam. In doing so, they contributed to the development of *wasatiyya* Islam.⁷⁶

In addition, the social and economic aspects of putting *wasatiyya* into practice are very important because it is connected to the improvement of the community in terms of both religion and culture. As a result, the two significant Muslim figures Gus Dur and Buya Syafi'i, who were discussed before, are responsible for the construction of the institutions that promote social justice and welfare.⁷⁷ Through their *da'wa*, the Ulama play a vital part in displaying social justice to the Muslim population of Indonesia, which makes up the majority of the country's total population. By the same token, prominent Hadhrami *sayyids* endorsed the peaceful practice of *da'wa* in Indonesia during a conference in 2013. The declaration outlined many principles, such as a commitment to the *taṣawwuf* tradition and moderation in spreading Islam through methods that are adaptive and appropriate to local culture, support for nationalism and the unity of Indonesia for social welfare, an emphasis on the importance of peaceful *da'wa* engagement, and a rejection of extreme and radical behaviors that monopolize the truth through coercion and oppression in religious life. These are only a few diverse themes discussed in the declaration.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ A. Mas'ud, *Moderasi Beragama* (Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), 126.

⁷⁶ Faried F. Saenong, "Embracing Moderation: Egypt's al-Azhar and Indonesia's Pesantren" (retrieved on <https://www.mci.edu/publications/embracing-moderation-egypts...>, n.d.).

⁷⁷ Akmaliah, Sulistiyanto, and Sukendar, "Making Moderate Islam in Indonesia," 9.

⁷⁸ Yahya, "Metodologi Dakwah Kaum 'Alawiyyin," 282–83.

CONCLUSION

The coming of Sufism into Indonesia has undergone a process of harmonization with the indigenous culture, resulting in a distinctive manifestation within the Islamic identity of Indonesian society. The influence of Sufis, notably the wali songo, who are deeply intertwined with the advancement of Islam in Indonesia's history through their peaceful *da'wa*, has left a significant mark on Indonesian society. Their teachings have shaped a society that is devout in its religious practices while maintaining a deep reverence for local customs and traditions.

For that reason, Indonesia has indirectly established the notion of *wasatiyya* Islam since the Islamization process in the Indonesian archipelago, characterized by a flexible religious identity that preserves its core principles. Indonesian scholars have upheld this moderate concept and is wholeheartedly endorsed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs through its various initiatives and programs. The implementation of *wasatiyya* Islam within Indonesian society has made the strong adherence to the peaceful model of religiosity, which protects them from radicalism.

Finally, it is abundantly obvious that the beginnings of *wasatiyya* Islam can be traced back to the first process of Islamization that can be found in various facets of daily life in Indonesia. The fact that *wasatiyya* has been practiced for such a long time. However, further studies about *wasatiyya* in Indonesia can be conducted especially on the specific values of *tasawwuf* that have something to do with the formation of moderate society in Indonesia.

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