

Research Article

Understanding Religious Pluralism in Indonesia : Social and Religious Perspectives in the Modern Era

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Abstract: Indonesia, with its vast social, cultural, and religious diversity, faces significant challenges in managing religious pluralism in the modern era. This article explores the complexities of religious pluralism in Indonesia through both social and religious perspectives. The study employs a qualitative approach using library research methods, examining various literatures encompassing pluralism theory, social theory, and contemporary phenomena related to religious pluralism in Indonesia. The analysis reveals that religious pluralism in Indonesia involves not only religious diversity but also socio-political dynamics and the growing influence of globalization, which increasingly shapes interfaith relations. Key issues include interreligious tensions often triggered by political and economic factors, as well as conflicts stemming from differing interpretations of religious teachings. This article also highlights the vital role of religion in shaping Indonesia's social and cultural identity, along with the ongoing challenges in fostering tolerance and harmony among religious communities. Thus, the study provides insights into how religious pluralism in Indonesia can be wisely managed, considering the existing social complexities and challenges, while also offering a fresh perspective on understanding the dynamics of religious pluralism in an increasingly pluralistic Indonesian context.

Keywords: Modern Era, Religious Diversity, Religious Pluralism, Social Dynamics.

1. Introduction

Religious pluralism has long been a hallmark of Indonesia's rich cultural and spiritual heritage. With over 17,000 islands, Indonesia is home to a multitude of religions, beliefs, and traditions, making it one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world (Arrasyi, 2023). This diversity not only reflects complex social dynamics but also presents pressing challenges in the face of modernity. As Indonesia continues to grow and transform, its religious landscape has undergone various changes influenced by the interplay of historical, political, and socio-cultural forces (Intan, 2023). While Pancasila—the state ideology—emphasizes the importance of unity in diversity and religious freedom, the country is not immune to the ongoing interplay between social, political, and religious dynamics in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world (Gusman & Asbari, 2022). In this context, religious pluralism in Indonesia faces new and increasingly complex challenges, making it a compelling area of scholarly inquiry (Chia, 2022; Hermanto et al., 2020; Surawan, 2020). As Abdul A'la (2006) notes, "As a nation within a state, Indonesia must be acutely aware that it exists within a country that is highly pluralistic and diverse."

Pluralism is a value system that views religious diversity with optimism and acceptance, recognizing it as an inevitable and tangible reality. The term "pluralism" derives from the Latin *plus, pluris*, meaning "more," and from the English adjective "plural," which indicates a state of multiplicity or more than one (Ulya, 2013; English Dictionary, 2000:971). It involves benevolent engagement with this diversity while maintaining one's own theological integrity. This research aims to explore the multifaceted challenges of religious pluralism in Indonesia, focusing on both its social and religious dimensions. In the contemporary context, the study seeks to provide insight into the complexities and opportunities arising from the coexistence of multiple religious traditions in Indonesian society.

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Religiosity functions as a value system with specific behavioural guidelines. According to Glock and Stark (1965), religiosity includes various dimensions: ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential—each shaping behaviour in line with personal beliefs. Religious diversity also acts as a distinctive characteristic among adherents of different faiths (Gunawan, 2023). From a sociological standpoint, pluralism functions as a form of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Wajdi et al., 2024), extending beyond theological interpretations to become a broader ideological and ethical framework for social interaction in diverse societies. This is consistent with Berger's (1967) concept of the "sacred canopy," in which religion provides meaning and order within pluralistic contexts (Saehu & Muchtar, 2023).

Thus, pluralism should be viewed as a perspective that honours others as integral parts of the social fabric, deserving of mutual respect (Buber, 1970; Hutabarat, 2023). It lays the foundation for inclusive attitudes toward other religions, enabling society to intelligently recognize and appreciate diversity. Furthermore, Indonesian Muslim intellectual Nurcholish Madjid (2003) emphasized that religious pluralism is not about relativism, but rather about mutual understanding and the recognition of difference as divine will. In this light, Indonesia—with its *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* philosophy and Pancasila as its national ideology—presents both challenges and opportunities for advancing interreligious dialogue and social cohesion in an increasingly diverse society (Mawardi, 2023).

Understanding the challenges of religious pluralism in Indonesia is crucial for several reasons (Ma'ruf, 2024). First, it contributes to the ongoing global discourse about the role of religion in shaping socio-political landscapes, not just in Indonesia, but in other countries facing similar pluralistic challenges (Daffa, 2023). Second, the research provides valuable insights for policymakers and advocates working to promote social cohesion, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence among religious communities (Taufiqurrachman & Fauzi, 2023). Third, it informs religious leaders and institutions in their efforts to encourage interfaith dialogue and cooperation (Rezki, 2022). This study will conduct a comprehensive analysis from both social and religious perspectives, examining the dynamics of interfaith interactions—how different religious communities coexist, engage, and sometimes experience conflict. It will also assess how religious diversity impacts social cohesion, identity, and efforts to foster peaceful communal life.

The uniqueness of Indonesia's religious pluralism lies in how the society navigates and manages its vast diversity. As a nation with more than a hundred ethnic and religious groups, Indonesia elevates the principle of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* ("Unity in Diversity") as the moral basis for religious social life. Despite official recognition of religious diversity, practical challenges persist in interreligious interactions, which can sometimes lead to social tension, conflict, or fragmentation. This research is important because it delves deeper into how religious pluralism serves not only as a national identity but also as a key factor in sustaining Indonesia's increasingly fragmented and polarized socio-political environment.

This study introduces a novel approach by emphasizing the social and religious dimensions of religious pluralism within Indonesia's rapidly evolving context. Whereas prior studies have often focused on theological or philosophical aspects of pluralism, this research specifically explores how religious pluralism operates in everyday social life, particularly in interfaith interactions. The study aims to uncover the practical challenges and opportunities faced by Indonesian society in maintaining interreligious harmony amid shifting social and political realities. Moreover, the research highlights the role of Pancasila and its embedded values as foundational to ensuring that religious pluralism can function effectively, even amid rising threats such as radicalization, intolerance, and religious polarization (Surawan, 2020; Surawan, 2023). The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary framework that combines sociological and religious perspectives, with a specific focus on the effects of religious pluralism on social cohesion, identity, and the pursuit of a peaceful and harmonious shared life.

This study is also significant in supporting the development of social and religious policies in Indonesia. Its findings can aid the government and civil society in resolving interfaith tensions and promoting mutual respect and inclusive dialogue. Ultimately, this research aims to deepen our understanding of how religious pluralism can become a positive social force that enriches national life and strengthens Indonesia's unity. Key Highlights of the Study's Novelty and Uniqueness:

- a. Indonesia's Unique Context: This study highlights Indonesia's extraordinary religious diversity, with over a hundred faiths and belief systems coexisting. This makes the country a living laboratory for religious pluralism, requiring deeper analysis in light of its rapidly changing socio-political landscape.

- b. A New Perspective: Unlike most existing studies that emphasize theological dimensions, this research introduces a novel approach by integrating sociological and religious perspectives, examining how pluralism functions in daily social life and its implications for national identity and social cohesion.
- c. Policy Relevance: The findings of this study are expected to inform inclusive public policies, support interfaith harmony, and help shape educational strategies and social policies for overcoming religious pluralism challenges in Indonesia.

Thus, this research not only provides an important academic contribution, but also a practical application to create a more tolerant and harmonious Indonesia in facing the challenges of religious pluralism in the future.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

In today's diverse society, the issue of religious pluralism has become increasingly important (Soleha & Rahmawati, 2020). Religious pluralism asserts that people experience the transcendent and ultimate reality in unique ways, leading to significant variations in the objects of worship across the world's religious traditions (Rowe, 1999). The term "Religious Pluralism" is a subject of debate in political and interdisciplinary contexts. In theological discussions, it often promotes the idea of convergence, harmony, and compatibility among different religious beliefs, rejecting exclusivity (Banchoff, 2008). Religious pluralism is about fostering peaceful coexistence and interactions among various religious traditions within the same cultural sphere.

The discussion on religious pluralism in Indonesia is primarily concerned with how individuals are perceived in terms of their social rights as citizens, regardless of their underlying identities. Unlike theological pluralism, which relies on diverse theological identities to differentiate individuals, pluralism in this context adopts a non-theological approach (Gea et al., 2020). This means that various identity aspects within an individual, such as religion, ethnicity, race, and nationality, no longer serve as divisive factors, and every individual is seen as having equal status, rights, and responsibilities as a citizen. Pluralism centers on the idea of how a society composed of different identity groups can coexist, especially within a nation that unites these diverse groups. A society is referred to as civil pluralist when its members abandon efforts to suppress or diminish diversity and instead respond to its challenges peacefully and through active participation. Pluralism is achieved when the concept of embracing diversity continues to grow, leading to greater acceptance and recognition of the values of diversity. From a theological perspective, pluralism is a philosophical stance that embraces diversity in cultural, political, and religious aspects without simplifying everything into a single fundamental principle. In a sociological context, pluralism is a system that acknowledges the coexistence of various groups, even when they exhibit distinct and characteristic differences (Utoyo, 2018).

The discussion of pluralism is of great importance, especially because it touches upon sensitive subjects, particularly within the realm of theology. Not all religious communities share the belief that there can be truths outside of their own beliefs, and the teachings within each religion's sacred scriptures reinforce the notion of their correctness. In essence, complete uniformity in beliefs among adherents is not an absolute requirement (Yahya, 2010). Pluralism is a compound term, comprising "plural," which signifies diversity, and "ism," indicating understanding. Therefore, pluralism essentially denotes an appreciation for diversity. It signifies a willingness to embrace diversity (plurality) and live in harmony with different ethnicities, groups, religions, races, customs, and beliefs. It encourages actions that lead to freedom of thought, religion, and the pursuit of knowledge. Achieving pluralism, therefore, requires the maturity and mental readiness of individuals or groups, as well as communities and societies (Chia et al., 2020).

In the field of social science, pluralism refers to a framework in which groups interact with mutual respect and tolerance for one another. Importantly, these groups coexist without conflicts arising from attempts at assimilation. Religious pluralism holds a special place in the study of religions. As a distinct term, it should not be casually equated with 'tolerance' or 'mutual respect.' In discussions concerning religious perspectives, scholars have thoroughly explored the concept of religious pluralism (Gaspersz & Souisa, 2019). The concept of pluralism is being developed in alignment with neo-modernism, introducing new regulations that aim to create a fresh perspective on religion as an interactive element for the unity of the Indonesian state. During the New Order government, efforts were made to strengthen interfaith relationships. Alamsyah Ratu Perwiranegara, while serving as the Minister of

Religion, initiated the "Harmony for People of Different Religions" program, recognizing the necessity of religious harmony as a response to social conflicts partly rooted in religious factors. He emphasized that the adversaries of a diverse society are not followers of different faiths but rather ignorance, underdevelopment, and poverty (Widjaja, 2016).

In the contemporary context, pluralism is considered one of the various approaches to dealing with diversity from a theological standpoint, alongside exclusivism and inclusivism. Exclusivists tend to view their own religion as the sole truth and label other religions as false and misguided. Inclusivists, on the other hand, believe that followers of different faiths implicitly act in accordance with their beliefs and can attain salvation. The third group consists of theological pluralists. The changes in society have prompted individuals to engage in rational and scientific thinking, emphasizing the need for a more rational and scientifically informed understanding of religion, moving away from traditional dogmatic formulas (Jonathan et al., (2018).

3. Proposed Method

This research is a descriptive qualitative study, which is oriented towards theoretical analysis and scientific synthesis of relevant literature. Literature study is seen as an effective method to produce a conceptual framework based on the thoughts of experts, as well as understand social and educational dynamics comprehensively (George, 2008; Zed, 2014). According to Subekti (2021), the literature study method in qualitative research not only collects information, but also assesses, reviews and compares previous research results to produce a strong theoretical foundation.

Data sources consisted of primary literature such as reputable scientific journals, scientific proceedings articles, academic textbooks, dissertations, and official research reports; and secondary literature such as education policy documents, selected popular articles, and relevant academic news. The literature was selected based on four criteria: credibility, relevance, currency and authority of the sources (Fink, 2014; Machmud, 2023). Data was collected through literature searches using specific keywords, such as: Religious Pluralism, Indonesia, Tolerance, Social, Religious, Contemporary Dynamics, Globalization.

The search was conducted through various digital databases and scientific repositories, including: Google Scholar, Garuda Ristek-BRIN, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SINTA (Science and Technology Index), JSTOR, and DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals). A snowball sampling technique was also used, which traces references from the main literature to obtain other supporting literature (Nugroho & Santosa, 2022). Data analysis was conducted using two approaches: (1) Content Analysis: Exploring the meaning and structure of the content of the literature text to find themes and patterns of thinking. and (2) Thematic Analysis: Classifying and grouping information into major themes, such as the Islamic education system, the quality of education, the role of technology, and the synergy of educational components.

The analysis was conducted with systematic steps: (1) reading the literature thoroughly, (2) marking important information, (3) compiling thematic categories, and (4) synthesizing findings to develop arguments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sarwono, 2016). Validity and reliability in literature studies are determined by: The quality of literature sources, both in terms of content and origin of publication (Zed, 2014); Relevance of the topic to the research focus (Fink, 2014); Triangulation of literature data from various authors and disciplines (Nasution et al., 2024); Transparent synthesis that is free from interpretative bias (Ridwan, 2020); and Cross-checking between literatures to avoid errors or over-generalization (Machmud, 2023; Umam et al., 2024).

4. Results and Discussion

Pluralism in The Modern Age with Societal Changes

Pluralism and plurality are interconnected. Pluralism is the process of interpreting religion and social values, which can lead to sustained social cohesion. In contrast, plurality encompasses diversity in culture, ethics, and religion (S. Ag, 2020). Pluralism represents an ideology that views diversity as a valuable asset, recognizing it as an empirical reality. Along with this positive perspective, there is an emphasis on adaptation and negotiation among the diverse elements. Pluralism, without eliminating any aspect of this diversity, also presupposes acceptance (Rohman & Munir, 2018). At its core, pluralism extends from principles of moral tolerance and coexistence. Tolerance involves the practice of respecting superficial differences, while coexistence means acknowledging the presence of others without

provoking conflicts. In contrast, pluralism embodies the spirit of mutual safeguarding, promoting equality, and fostering a sense of fraternity among all humans, whether as individuals or within groups. Furthermore, pluralism prioritizes collaboration to shape universal human values and ensure equal opportunities for others, especially concerning their civil rights, on behalf of both national and global citizens.

Globalization has contributed to the widespread dissemination of culture and values on a global scale. Globalized capitalism, for better or worse, exerts a profound influence on the thoughts and lifestyles of individuals. It leads to the assimilation of global cultures into local contexts. Universal principles such as democracy, tolerance, and human rights are now widely embraced as common values, prompting people to consider how to integrate them into their daily lives, religious beliefs, and public interactions. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Indonesian Muslims. The expanded opportunities for discussing, debating, and contesting religious matters in a relatively autonomous and globalized public sphere have led them to reevaluate how to attain Islamic ideals within society, express their piety in light of transformative societal changes, and engage with individuals of diverse faiths. In the globalized landscape, Islam is being presented in a manner that is refined, contemporary, and a fusion of influences, making it an attractive alternative to urban, capitalist cultures (Surawan et al., 2022).

Pluralism is a contemporary and captivating concept that interprets the idea of civil society as a goal and ideology, despite its inherent contradictions. In short, pluralism is a liberal school of thought initiated by scholars such as Dahl in the United States, aiming to reconcile some of the criticisms directed at traditional liberal theories by Marxism. In the realm of politics, the distinction between pluralism and plurality within this theory lies in the fact that, according to pluralism, individuals are seen as interest groups or political parties, including interest groups within government bureaucracies. In contrast, pluralist thinking views humans as either economic actors or, at the very least, as political actors.

The concept of pluralism, as an ideology, asserts the inherent value of diversity and the possibility for positive experiences arising from differences. It emphasizes that community adaptation and constructive dialogues are essential in upholding the favorable aspects of pluralism. Although pluralism acknowledges the significance of diversity, it also places a spotlight on the notion of acceptance (Lestari, 2020). In specific segments of society, pluralism has been institutionalized and is founded on the acknowledgment of distinctions not only within their community but also in the broader global context. Pluralism stands for the ideal of equality, promoting unity and cooperation among individuals and groups. To work towards the common good, pluralism necessitates endeavours to comprehend other parties and collaborate effectively. Essentially, pluralism champions the notion that every individual holds equal rights and responsibilities as any other (Sari & Dozan, 2021). Religious pluralism is closely aligned with the prospects of a robust democratic society in the future. It can serve as a foundational framework for comprehending and adopting a stance towards various religious beliefs and the coexistence of multiple religious denominations. Furthermore, it can provide a solid underpinning for the empowerment of democratic civil society and the preservation of human dignity (Surawan, S. et al., 2023)

Opinions of Various Figures on Pluralism and Religious Pluralism

Alwi Shihab defines pluralism as a stance of tolerance aimed at self-restraint to minimize the potential for conflict. He emphasizes that pluralism is not merely about recognizing diversity but actively engaging with it. This means that followers of any religion should not only acknowledge the existence and rights of other religions but also make an effort to understand the differences and similarities to promote harmony under the concept of "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity). Alwi Shihab also distinguishes pluralism from relativism, as he believes that equating the two would lead to considering all religious doctrines as equally true, negating the existence of absolute truth and asserting that all religions are identical. Alwi contends that, while recognizing religious pluralism, there are certain boundaries and absolute aspects that cannot be merged or equated within individual religions (Shihab, 2019; Junaidi & Fatimah, 2021).

According to KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, also known as Gus Dur, the concept of pluralism is defined as the recognition of the claims to religious diversity and pluralism. Being part of a society and a nation represents the integration of Islam, the state, and people, under the leadership of individuals with unique qualities and a deep understanding of genuine life. Gus Dur introduces a novel interpretation of pluralism that leads to plurality (pluralism). This means that, apart from their own beliefs, it is an understanding that encourages people to realize that beyond their own faith, there are other beliefs related to the religion they adhere

to. According to him, pluralism imparts a lesson to all religious communities, especially to the Islamic community, to become aware of the diversity within society. In summary, Gus Dur's perspective on pluralism emphasizes that it involves recognizing the claims of religious diversity and pluralism, promoting an understanding of the coexistence of different beliefs within a society, and teaching all religious communities, particularly Muslims, to acknowledge the diversity in their communities (Wahid, 2020; Sulaiman & Rahim, 2022).

In a contemporary Indonesian context, Khairil Anwar and his colleagues at IAIN Palangka Raya (2021) emphasize that pluralism in Indonesia is an essential framework for achieving social cohesion amidst the diversity of cultures and religions. They argue that religious pluralism is deeply intertwined with democratic values, where respecting differences becomes the cornerstone of national unity. The concept of pluralism, according to Anwar et al. (2021), not only entails the recognition of religious diversity but also the active participation in interfaith dialogues to foster peaceful coexistence. They assert that pluralism requires a shift in mindset, one that transcends mere tolerance and moves towards mutual respect, engagement, and understanding.

Religious pluralism, as emphasized by both Alwi Shihab, Gus Dur, and Khairil Anwar, offers a framework for bridging differences, acknowledging diversity, and ensuring peaceful coexistence among adherents of various faiths. This recognition and acceptance of differences have become increasingly important in Indonesia's pluralistic society, where challenges related to religious conflicts persist. Through pluralism, religious communities can foster mutual respect and find common ground while preserving their unique beliefs and practices. Pluralism provides a pathway to enhancing national unity while respecting the religious rights of all individuals, supporting Indonesia's motto "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) (Surawan et al., 2022; Anwar et al., 2021).

Pluralism Through Theological and Sociological Dimensions

Religious pluralism, from a theological standpoint, allows Muslims to tolerate and respect the beliefs of others without endorsing them. This reflects Allah's guidance that different religious communities should refrain from interfering with each other's beliefs (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah: 2:51). Theologically, exclusivism views one's faith as the only truth, rejecting others, while inclusivism acknowledges truth in other religions. Exclusivism often leads to radicalism and interfaith tensions (Surawan et al., 2020).

Sociologically, religious pluralism is the acknowledgment of religious diversity as a social reality, without necessarily accepting the truths or ethics of other religions. This recognition fosters social harmony, but tensions arise when there is social or economic inequality, leading to conflict, as seen in Indonesia's interfaith relations (Madjid, 2001; Zarkasyi, 2019). Nurcholis Madjid views pluralism as a mindset that embraces religious diversity, uniting religions on a shared humanistic foundation (Achmad, 2001). Sociologist Beckford categorizes religious pluralism into three dimensions: diversity, public acknowledgment, and societal acceptance of different faiths. In Islam, pluralism is seen as a balance to prevent dominance and foster peaceful coexistence, as exemplified in the Quran and the Islamic concept of "wahdat al-Adyân" (Fayadh, 2000).

Islam encourages respect for other religions, as stated in Surah Al-An'am (6:108), but it distinguishes acknowledgment from endorsement. Social pluralism, highlighted in the Quran (Surah Al-Hujurat: 13), promotes equality, urging respect across ethnic and social backgrounds, with justice and democracy forming the basis of Islamic egalitarianism. The Prophet Muhammad's leadership exemplified these principles (Madjid, 1989). In Indonesia, religious pluralism is shaped by its diverse socio-cultural and geographic context. Misunderstandings of religious tolerance have led to conflicts, fueled by both internal and external challenges, including conservatism, liberalism, and secularism. These tensions complicate efforts to maintain harmony in a pluralistic society (Zarkasyi, 2019; Lestari, 2015).

The Issues of Religious Pluralism in the Modern Age

In the modern age, the concept of religious pluralism has emerged as a complex and pressing issue with far-reaching implications for societies worldwide. Religious pluralism refers to the coexistence of multiple religious beliefs and practices within a single society or community. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected through globalization and technological advancements, the dynamics of religious diversity have evolved, giving rise to both opportunities and challenges. In Indonesia's diverse landscape, incidents of intolerance stain the image of religions, leading to a shift from historical religious tolerance to intolerance (Misrawi, 2007: 178). Intolerance acts as a catalyst for conflicts in society under the pretext of religion. Essentially, religious conflicts often arise due to the closed-mindedness of individuals or groups towards accepting differing opinions, termed as "exclusivism" (Abd A'la, 2002: 33).

The following are some of the existing challenges related to pluralism and Islam that must be avoided.

1. Emergence of Heretical Movements

As illustrated in various studies, conflicts in society—whether in terms of quantity or typology—arise from a variety of root causes. According to Triatmo and Mukhid (2020), the origins of such conflicts can often be traced to political dynamics, economic disparities, and socio-cultural, religious, and ethnic tensions. Among these, economic and political factors tend to be the most dominant contributors. While religious issues are frequently perceived as the primary triggers—such as in cases of forced evictions, destruction of worship places, or acts of violence against adherents of particular faiths—these are often manifestations of deeper, structural problems that intersect within the complex domains of politics, economics, and societal interaction (Azra, 2007; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

In this context, ethnic and religious tensions should be seen not as root causes, but as symptomatic expressions of broader systemic injustices or failures in governance and intergroup relations. Nevertheless, it remains valid for religious communities to seek deeper theological understanding and inclusive application of their beliefs, including efforts to share values with members of different faiths in peaceful and respectful ways (Esposito, 2002). Some conflicts may also stem from the emergence of deviant or heretical movements, which can be associated with superficial or dogmatic interpretations of religion. As Effendy (2003) notes, intolerance and conflict are often exacerbated by narrow doctrinal interpretations and a lack of interfaith literacy, particularly when individuals lack comprehensive education in the foundational principles of their own faith traditions.

2. Blasphemy

Issues related to blasphemy or insulting religion, as explained by religious leaders, often trigger conflicts in the name of religion. Basically, religion is considered a blessing with the main purpose of promoting the welfare and prosperity of humanity (Hasan, 2017; Arrasyi, 2023). In the Indonesian context, religion holds an important value because of the principles it embodies. As a result, adherents of various religions seek to protect and fight for their beliefs by all means available. They react strongly when their religion is insulted by others because religion is a very personal and spiritual realm where individuals can connect with their inner self (Setiawan et al., 2023; Astuti & Septiyani, 2023).

However, the application of the blasphemy law in Indonesia, as stated in Law No. 1/PNPS/1965, often causes controversy. Research by Mufidah et al. (2023) shows that this law is often used to suppress freedom of speech and target minority groups, which can exacerbate interfaith tensions. Moreover, the application of this law in the digital context also poses new challenges, as subjective interpretations of online content can trigger disproportionate blasphemy accusations (Wardana, 2024). Blasphemy cases involving individuals from minority groups, such as those of Lina Lutfiawati and Aulia Rakhman, illustrate how the blasphemy law can be disproportionately applied to minority groups.

3. Social Inequity

Imbalances in social conditions significantly contribute to the occurrence of religious conflicts. Research indicates that disparities in access to resources, political power, and social status can exacerbate intergroup tensions, particularly between religious communities. For instance, studies have shown that perceived horizontal inequalities—such as unequal access to state resources based on religious identity—are linked to increased religious violence in certain Indonesian districts (Diprose, 2022). Additionally, the breakdown of power-sharing arrangements and the marginalization of certain religious groups can lead to weakened social cohesion and heightened intergroup distrust. This environment fosters negative stereotypes and reduces intergroup interactions, further entrenching divisions (Setiawan et al., 2021; Rohman, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, these dynamics are evident in areas like Central Sulawesi, where economic disparities and political exclusion have fueled religious conflicts. The resulting social fragmentation underscores the need for inclusive governance and equitable resource distribution to mitigate intergroup conflicts (Diprose, 2022). Therefore, addressing social imbalances through policies that promote equality and social cohesion is crucial in preventing the escalation of religious conflicts.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that religious pluralism in Indonesia is a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon. While the nation has a rich history of religious diversity and tolerance, contemporary challenges and tensions exist. Understanding and addressing these complexities are vital for promoting peaceful coexistence and fostering a society where people of diverse faiths can thrive harmoniously. This research provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of religious pluralism in Indonesia, offering a foundation for further exploration and action to sustain and enhance tolerance and coexistence in the modern age. It's an undeniable reality that Indonesia is a nation characterized by diversity, pluralism, and a rich tapestry of differences. Since its inception, it has been crucial for the people of this country to acknowledge that they are not a monolithic entity; rather, they are composed of various ethnicities, diverse religions, and a myriad of cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, in this era of globalization and evolving times, this diversity has become even more prominent. In this day and age, Indonesian society must not only learn to interact harmoniously with fellow Indonesians but also embrace other nations and their cultural influences. This leads us to an important question: how should the Islamic community, in particular, respond to this situation? If we were to choose from among various options, it appears that adopting a pluralistic approach is a suitable choice. As previously mentioned, pluralism constitutes a framework of values, attitudes, institutions, and processes that can effectively transform the reality of diversity into sustained social cohesion, political stability, and economic progress.

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