Research Article

Analyzing Potential Role of Advancing SDGs 16 Through Religious Moderation: Creating Social Harmony and Upholding Human Rights in the Contemporary World

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Abstract.

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) represent a global effort to address various issues, including social inequality and human rights. SDG 16 seeks to establish peaceful, inclusive societies with access to justice and accountable institutions. Religious moderation is a key means to achieve these goals, promoting dialogue, tolerance, and conflict reduction, while also supporting women's empowerment, child protection, fair institutions, and countering radicalization through education. Interfaith collaboration strengthens efforts related to the environment and poverty. It fosters community participation, contributing to peaceful society in line with SDG 16. Framed within constructivism, this research examines how religious moderation, as a balanced approach that respects different faiths while practicing one's own, can influence norms, identities, and international discourse regarding SDG 16. By analyzing interactions among religious actors, institutions, and state policies, the study assesses how religious moderation shapes societal values in support of social harmony, peace, justice, and human rights. Additionally, it highlights the role of non-state actors, like religious groups, in influencing social policies. By studying the mobilization efforts of religious organizations advocating for SDG 16, the research reveals how religious moderation promotes social harmony and human rights by using religious principles as a common basis for cooperation in today's world. This study aims to explain how religious moderation can advance SDG 16 by fostering social harmony and upholding human rights in contemporary society. To address these questions, the research utilizes constructivism theory, SDG concepts, and the concept of religious moderation. Qualitative methods and literature studies are employed for data collection and analysis, illuminating the connection between religious moderation and SDGs. The research acknowledges challenges related to cultural variations and extremist interpretations, contextualizing the application of religious moderation in diverse societies. Ultimately, the study finds that religious moderation has the potential to promote equitable access to human rights and social inclusivity under the implementation of SDG 16. It contributes to a comprehensive understanding of how religious moderation can drive social harmony and human rights in today's complex and dynamic world.

Keywords: constructivist, human rights, religious moderation, SDGs

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In an increasingly interconnected global landscape, the pursuit of sustainable development and the advancement of principles such as peace, justice, and the fortification of robust institutions have risen to a position of paramount importance. This shift is exemplified by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), acomprehensive global development agreement formally ratified by world leaders on September 25, 2015, at the United Nations headquarters. The SDGs encompass 17 overarching objectives and 169 specific targets, constituting a universal strategy to eliminate poverty, mitigate disparities, and safeguard the environment. The guiding principle of the SDGs is the active engagement of all stakeholders, encompassing governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector, academia, youth, and other entities, with the shared objective of realizing these goals and targets (UN, n.d.).

Aligned with this principle, the SDGs aim to address both Procedural Justice, which assesses the extent to which all parties, particularly marginalized groups, can participate in the entire development process, and Substantive Justice, which focuses on the effectiveness of policies and development initiatives in addressing the concerns of disadvantaged communities, particularly the most vulnerable segments. This commitment to global legal justice finds expression in the United Nations' 16th goal, aptly titled "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions." Goal 16 encompasses 10 targets dedicated to the promotion of peace, justice, and robust institutions. It envisages the nurturing of peaceful societies, the attainment of justice through equitable access to services for all, and the establishment of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions spanning all sectors.

However, in the intricate fabric of contemporary society, one influential force often overshadowed but brimming with potential to advance SDG 16 is religious moderation. Religious moderation, grounded in the values of tolerance, inclusivity, and the rejection of extremism, emerges as a compelling catalyst for realizing the ideals of SDG 16. In a world characterized by a mosaic of beliefs, cultures, and ideologies, religious moderation offers a framework for harmonious coexistence, dialogue, and collaborative action. It embodies the notion that, irrespective of religious affiliations, individuals and communities can discover common ground and collaborate to address the challenges of our era.

This article delves into the intricate interplay between religious moderation and the pursuit of SDG 16, probing how the principles of moderation can contribute to social harmony, justice, and the safeguarding of human rights. As we navigate the complexities of the contemporary world, comprehending the potential of religious moderation as a transformative force in achieving SDG 16 becomes not merely pertinent but imperative. By scrutinizing the impact of religious moderation across various facets of society, our aim is to illuminate its role in crafting a more equitable and peaceful world.

This premise is underscored by the sheer magnitude of the global religious population, estimated at approximately 6.5 billion individuals (CNN Indonesia, 2022). Religious moderation is a balanced and inclusive approach to religious beliefs and practices, characterized by endeavors to promote tolerance, harmony, and the unequivocal rejection of extremism within religious contexts. Its principal objective is to nurture an environment conducive to interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding, and peace among diverse religious communities.

This study employs a combination of SDG analysis and the Constructivist perspective to explore how religious moderation shapes societal norms, identities, and international discourse in support of social harmony, peace, justice, and human rights. Additionally, it delves into the influence of religious actors, institutions, and state policies in either advancing or impeding religious moderation within diverse societies. By offering a comprehensive understanding of its potential to foster social harmony and uphold human rights in the contemporary world, this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the role of religious moderation in our interconnected global landscape.

1.2. Significance of Study

This study holds significant implications for the global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16, which focuses on building peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice, and strengthening accountable institutions. By highlighting the role of religious moderation in this context, the research sheds light on a potential avenue for addressing complex issues such as social inequality and human rights. It emphasizes the importance of fostering dialogue and tolerance among diverse religious communities, promoting gender equality, and countering radicalization through education. Furthermore, the study underscores the interconnectedness of the SDGs by showcasing how religious moderation can facilitate interfaith collaboration in tackling global challenges, ranging from environmental sustainability to poverty reduction.

The application of the constructivist perspective in this research deepens our understanding of how religious moderation shapes societal norms and identities, particularly concerning SDG 16. By recognizing the influence of non-state actors, including religious organizations, in shaping social policies, the study offers valuable insights for policymakers and advocates seeking to advance social harmony and human rights. Through its qualitative analysis, the research provides a nuanced examination of the relationship between religious moderation and the SDGs, accounting for cultural variations and extremist interpretations that may pose challenges. Ultimately, this study not only contributes to academic discourse but also offers practical guidance for those striving to harness the potential of religious moderation in achieving the SDGs and fostering a just and peaceful world.

1.3. Research Objectives

The research aims to explore the pivotal role of religious moderation in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) – promoting peaceful, inclusive societies, access to justice, and effective, accountable institutions. Religious moderation is viewed as a potential catalyst for achieving these goals by fostering dialogue, tolerance, and conflict reduction. This study adopts a Constructivist perspective to investigate how religious moderation shapes societal norms, identities, and international discourse in support of social harmony, peace, justice, and human rights. It also delves into the influence of religious actors, institutions, and state policies in promoting or hindering religious moderation within diverse societies, offering a comprehensive understanding of its potential to engender social harmony and uphold human rights in the contemporary world.

2. Methods

The analysis in this study is conducted using a qualitative approach with a literature review method. The literature review method examines the values, culture, norms, and phenomena that develop in the social context of studying the potential role of advancing SDGs 16 through religious moderation. The formation of arguments is also supported by secondary data sourced from various journal articles and studies related to the topic of this article.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

3.1. The Concept of SDGs

The SDGs are a set of 17 global objectives established by the United Nations (UN) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals are designed to address various social, economic, and environmental challenges currently facing the world. The SDGs aim to achieve sustainable development by balancing economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental protection. They encompass various aspects of development, such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, clean energy, education, healthcare, and much more. The SDGs are designed to be universal, applicable to all countries, regardless of their level of development (United Nations, 2015).

The purpose of the SDGs is to provide a framework for governments, organizations, and individuals to collaborate in achieving a more sustainable and equitable world by the year 2030. The SDGs encourage action at the local, national, and global levels to address challenges such as climate change, inequality, social injustice, and economic uncertainty.

Sustainable Development Goal 16, titled "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions," embodies the global commitment to fostering a world characterized by peace, justice, and effective governance. SDG 16 encompasses various key aspects. Firstly, it emphasizes the need to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, seeking to reduce violence, conflict, and the suffering caused by instability. It also aims to ensure access to justice for all, encouraging the development of efficient, transparent, and accessible legal systems (United Nations, 2015).

In addition to its intrinsic value, SDG 16 is recognized as an enabler of progress across all the other Sustainable Development Goals. Without peace, justice, and strong institutions, efforts to eradicate poverty, achieve quality education, or address climate change can be hampered by instability, inequality, and insecurity. Therefore, the pursuit of SDG 16 is not only a goal in itself but also a crucial means to ensure the success of the entire sustainable development agenda. In essence, it underscores the belief that peace and justice are the foundations upon which a sustainable, equitable future can be built.

SDG 16 serves as a key benchmark for Creating Social Harmony and Upholding Human Rights in the Contemporary World. Its objective is to establish an environment conducive to social harmony and the enforcement of human rights in the contemporary

world. Achieving this goal is of paramount importance in building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable global society.

3.2. Constructivism

According to the theory of constructivism, the identity and norms/values held by a nation or international actor play a central role in determining their behaviour and interactions with other nations or international actors. This identity encompasses the beliefs, values, and self-image held by a nation or group of international actors. Constructivism posits that these identities and norms/values are shaped through social interactions and shared constructions among international actors. Identity is not static but can change over time and through interactions with other actors (Reus- Smit, 2009).

This theory highlights the role of non-material structures, such as norms, values, and identity, in shaping the behaviour of international actors. One key point in constructivism is the view that the social identity of actors, both individuals and states, is not fixed but formed through interactions with their social environment. This identity influences the interests and actions of actors, which in turn play a role in shaping the social structure within the international community (Wendt, 2000).

Constructivism also emphasizes that interests are not determined exogenously but develop as a result of social interactions. International actors articulate and defend their interests through communication with other actors and reflection on the identities they form within their social environment. This approach shifts away from the traditional rationalist view that sees interests as pre-given factors (Hadiwinata, 2017).

Constructivism regards the international community as a constitutive realm that shapes social and political actors. This means that the international community is not just a place where actors rationally pursue their interests but also a space that shapes identities and norms that influence their interactions and behaviour. Thus, constructivism opens the door to a deeper analysis of how norms, ideas, and identities play a significant role in post-Cold War world politics (Hadiwinata, 2017).

Within the framework of constructivist theory in the study of international relations, there is significant potential to analyze the role of SDGs 16 progress through religious moderation in promoting social harmony and supporting human rights in the contemporary world. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of social identity in shaping the behavior of individuals and groups in society. In the context of religious moderation, this approach allows us to understand how moderate religious practices and interfaith

dialogue can shape religious identities that support the achievement of SDGs 16 goals, such as peace and interfaith tolerance (Menchik, 2017).

Constructivism highlights that interests develop through social interaction and communication. Concerning religious moderation, this means that through interfaith dialogue and communication among relevant parties, positive norms supporting SDGs 16 can grow and influence the actions of religious actors in supporting peace and human rights. By employing a constructivist approach, we can comprehend how religious moderation practices and interfaith interactions can shape norms that support the attainment of SDGs 16 objectives and how both religious and non- religious actors can collaboratively build social identities that support efforts to create social harmony and uphold human rights in the context of our ever-evolving world (Menchik, 2017).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Religious Moderation as a Catalyst for Achieving SDGs

Religious moderation, as previously described, involves a balanced and inclusive approach to religious beliefs and practices, emphasizing tolerance, coexistence, open-mindedness, and the rejection of extremism. The correlation between religious moderation and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which is "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions," is significant, as religious moderation can contribute to the achievement of several targets under this goal (United Nations, n.d.):

Promotion of Peace (Target 16.1): Religious moderation fosters peaceful coexistence and dialogue among different religious and cultural groups. By encouraging tolerance and understanding, it can help reduce conflicts and promote peaceful societies, aligning with the goal's aim to "significantly reduce all forms of violence."

Access to Justice (Target 16.3): Moderation within religious communities often advocates for justice and fairness. This aligns with the target's objective to "promote the rule of law at the national and international levels" and ensure equal access to justice for all, regardless of their religious or cultural background.

Reduction of Corruption (Target 16.5): Religious moderates, by promoting ethical values and moral conduct, can contribute to efforts to reduce corruption and bribery. This aligns with the target's goal to "substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms."

Effective Institutions (Target 16.6): Moderation within religious institutions can encourage the development of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions. This supports the target's goal to "develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels."

Inclusive Decision-Making (Target 16.7): Religious moderation often advocates for inclusive decision-making processes, ensuring that the voices of marginalized or minority groups are heard. This aligns with the target's aim to "ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making."

Access to Information (Target 16.10): Moderation encourages open dialogue and the exchange of ideas. This aligns with the target's objective to "ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms."

Peaceful Conflict Resolution (Target 16.A): Religious moderates typically reject violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution. This aligns with the target's goal to "strengthen relevant national institutions" for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In summary, religious moderation can play a significant role in advancing the objectives of SDG 16 by promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, and by fostering an environment of tolerance, inclusivity, and ethical conduct. It contributes to the creation of societies where people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds can coexist harmoniously, thereby supporting the overall sustainable development agenda.

4.2. Challenges and Barriers to Religious Moderation for overcoming the problem generated by institutions

Religious moderation can face several challenges and barriers when trying to overcome problems generated by institutions. These challenges often arise due to complex social, political, and cultural dynamics. Here are some of the key challenges and barriers:

Extremist Influences: Extremist ideologies within religious institutions can hinder efforts at moderation. Radicalized factions may resist calls for tolerance and peaceful coexistence, making it difficult for moderates to gain influence and promote their views (Mandaville & Nozell, 2017).

Political Interference: Some governments may interfere in religious institutions to advance their political agendas, promoting extremism or suppressing moderate voices. This can limit the autonomy of religious leaders and institutions to advocate for moderation (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Lack of Religious Freedom: In some regions, religious freedom is restricted, and religious minorities may face discrimination or persecution. This makes it challenging

for religious moderates to openly promote their views and engage in interfaith dialogue (McKenna, 2016).

Institutional Inertia: Religious institutions, like any large organizations, can be resistant to change. Traditional beliefs and practices may be deeply ingrained, making it difficult for moderates to introduce more inclusive and tolerant interpretations of faith (Alidadi & Foblets, 2012).

Socioeconomic Factors: Economic disparities and social inequalities can exacerbate religious tensions. People facing economic hardship may be more susceptible to radicalization, making it harder for moderation efforts to gain traction (Jordan, 2014).

Intersecting Conflicts: In regions with multiple overlapping conflicts (e.g., ethnic, religious, political), achieving religious moderation can be especially challenging. These conflicts can fuel extremism and polarization (Stradubrovskaya, 2020).

Lack of Education: Limited access to education and information can perpetuate extremist views. Promoting religious moderation often requires improving educational opportunities and promoting critical thinking (UNESCO, 2023).

Media Influence: Biased or sensationalist media reporting can amplify extremist voices and marginalize moderates. This can make it difficult for moderation efforts to gain visibility and credibility (Ethical Journalism Network, n.d.).

Intra-religious Differences: Within a single religious tradition, there can be significant theological and doctrinal differences. These divisions can make it challenging for moderates to unite and present a cohesive message (Huang, 1995).

External Factors: International geopolitics, conflicts, and interventions can impact the dynamics within religious institutions. External actors may support extremist groups, further complicating moderation efforts (Warner & Walker, 2011).

Overcoming these challenges and barriers to religious moderation often requires a multi-pronged approach that includes education, dialogue, international cooperation, and efforts to promote religious freedom and human rights. Additionally, fostering strong, inclusive, and accountable religious institutions that support moderation is essential to addressing the problems generated by extremist elements within these institutions.

4.3. Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation

Dialogue between religions is a form of interaction that increasingly attracts public attention, especially intellectuals and scholars of religious movement (Awang et al., 2019).

The term 'Interfaith Dialogue' signifies the positive and collaborative interaction among individuals from diverse religious, faith, or spiritual backgrounds. Its purpose is to foster mutual understanding, acceptance, and tolerance between different belief systems. Interfaith Dialogue represents a manifestation of the participants' faith in action, and as a result, these interactions create communities of awareness. Establishing dialogue among followers of different religions entails cooperative efforts to grasp the distinct religious principles and teachings that can benefit all of humanity through the promotion of respect and tolerance. It involves coming together and sharing aspects of their respective faiths while making an effort to comprehend unfamiliar perspectives.

Crucially, in these dialogues, participants are encouraged to set aside any attempts to proselytize, which often involve an attitude of asserting one's own religion as the "true" or exclusive path. The power of religion can serve as a potent force for unification among diverse groups, playing a pivotal role in promoting global peace and reconciliation. By bringing together disparate factions and establishing constructive communication channels and sustainable collaborations, religion can be harnessed for the greater good. Interfaith dialogue, therefore, holds a vital position in the realm of Cultural Diplomacy, as it contributes to world peace by uniting different faiths and fostering reciprocal understanding, acceptance, and tolerance among various religious communities. In this manner, interfaith dialogue has the potential to dismantle the divisive walls and barriers at the heart of many conflicts, with the ultimate goal of achieving peace.

As an example, in a conference entitled "Why Religion and Culture in Dialogue are Important for Achieving the UN SDGs" which was held on February 3 2023, at the Vienna International Center with an audience of around 200 people. Jean-Luc Lemahieu, director of policy analysis and public affairs of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, emphasized that when confronted with multiple crises, religion and cultural diversity play a crucial role. He stressed the importance of dialogue, comprehension, and mutual respect as essential elements for attaining peace.

The significance of collaborating with faith-based and cultural groups in the effort to reduce violent crime, drug abuse, and corruption are highlighted. The successful example of countering violent extremism in Indonesia through such collaborations were cited.

Due to evolving geopolitics and the conflict in Europe, attention has shifted away from other conflict regions and underdeveloped areas, like Africa, where economic contraction has led to issues such as migration, crime, violence, and drug abuse, hindering the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Corruption, particularly in conflict zones, has impaired access to justice. Religious freedom and moderation have a critical role in promoting various aspects, including health, education, gender equality, access to justice, and climate action.

At the G20 Interfaith Summit in Istanbul, one such message of solidarity from His Excellency Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace expressed the kinship of the Catholic tradition and the Muslim tradition. "A great motivation which unites Christians, Muslims and many others is the firm belief in God. This faith compels us to care for the magnificent gift God has bestowed upon us – and, God-willing, upon those, who will follow us. Our urgent action will surely be more effective if we believers of different religious communities find ways to work together. So, it is with great joy and in a spirit of solidarity that I express to you the promise of the Catholic Church to pray for the success of your initiative and her desire to work with you in the future to care for our common home and thus to glorify the God who created us." (UNEP, 2016)

In a conference entitled "Why Religion and Culture in Dialogue are Important for Achieving the UN SDGs" which was held on February 3 2023, at the Vienna International Center, Mr. Lemahieu highlighted the importance of faith-based organizations in tackling drug addiction, considering the significant rise in drug abuse influenced by various risk factors. He concluded that interfaith efforts dedicated to promoting harmony, mutual understanding, and peace make a substantial contribution to the realization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the relief of human suffering.

King Abdullah II saw the need to promote harmony and uphold positive values entrenched in all religions to enable a secure world. Dr. Haitham quoted the king's acceptance speech for the Templeton Prize in 2018: "The great commandments to love God and love one's neighbor are found again and again in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and other faiths around the world. It is a profound message calling every one of us to struggle to look beyond ourselves and discover inside what is the source of all hope of all coexistence."

While addressing global challenges necessitates collaborative efforts on an international scale, the ambassador emphasized that this alone is insufficient. The crucial factor lies in how we effectively utilize these resources and draw lessons from one another with both respect and humility. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

are designed to bring about transformative changes in the world, but their achievement requires both faith in a higher power and cooperation with those dedicated to peace and harmony.

In reference to the Middle East, he appealed for a resolution to the Israeli- Palestinian conflict, the establishment of a two-state solution, and the pursuit of social justice for all. He concluded his remarks with a timely call to action, echoing the words of King Abdullah II once again: "Let us not ignore the alarm bells ringing around us. We must act."

Dr. Farida Valiullina, UPF's liaison at the UN Vienna office. She highlighted that faith-based organizations are particularly able to make progress toward sustainable development and that almost every religious, indigenous and spiritual tradition teaches the moral obligation to protect the planet and to live in harmony (Haidar, 2023).

In G20 Religion Forum (R20) on 2 – 3 November, 2022. This forum seeks to promote mutual understanding, a culture of peace, and harmonious co-existence among the world's diverse peoples, religions, and nations. In pursuit of this objective, the R20 is mobilizing religious, social, economic, and political leaders from throughout the world to ensure that religion functions as a genuine and dynamic source of solutions, rather than problems.

Message from KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf, Founder & Chairman of the R20 General Chairman, Nahdlatul Ulama Central Board, "The purpose of the G20 Religion Forum, or R20, is to ensure that religion functions as a genuine and dynamic source of solutions rather than problems in the 21st century. Through the R20, we hope to facilitate the emergence of a global movement, in which people of goodwill of every faith and nation will help bring the world's geopolitical and economic power structures into alignment with the highest moral and spiritual values, for the sake of all humanity".

In conclusion, interfaith dialogue plays a crucial role in fostering understanding, acceptance, and tolerance among diverse religious communities. It represents a manifestation of faith in action and creates communities of awareness. By setting aside proselytization and emphasizing cooperation, religion can become a unifying force that promotes global peace and reconciliation. Recent conferences and statements from leaders, such as Jean-Luc Lemahieu and King Abdullah II, highlight the importance of faith-based organizations in addressing global challenges and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts emphasize the moral obligation to protect the planet and promote harmony. Initiatives like the G20 Religion Forum (R20) seek to harness the positive potential of religion as a source of solutions for the challenges

facing humanity in the 21st century. It is through such collaborative endeavors that we can work towards a more peaceful and harmonious world.

4.4. Case Studies and Practical Examples

In the contemporary world, the religious aspect has played several roles in maintaining peace and harmony in the global society. It contributes towards many agendas, such as but not limited to fostering interfaith dialogue and collaboration, maintaining peace and tolerance, condemning terrorism and extremism, upholding collaboration, and also promoting religious moderation.

As a shared commitment to maintain a balance where every member of society, regardless of tribe, ethnicity, religion, and political choices must be willing to respect each other, and learn to train themselves in managing and overcoming differences between them. Religious moderation has a pivotal role to advancing the SDGs no 16 to creating harmony in society. There are some examples that show us about religious roles in supporting humanitarian values (Ministry of Religious Affairs Republic of Indonesia, 2020).

In 2019, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) declared it the "Year of Tolerance" and launched various initiatives aimed at promoting religious tolerance and moderation. They created a Ministry of Tolerance and launched programs to enhance interfaith dialogue and promote a culture of tolerance. One of the actions is signed the "Covenant for Million Tolerant". These efforts align with SDG 16 by fostering peaceful coexistence and social harmony (Ministry of Justice UAE, 2022). In the United States, numerous interfaith initiatives and organizations bring together representatives from different religious traditions to promote understanding and cooperation. These initiatives contribute to peace, justice, and strong institutions by addressing issues of discrimination and social cohesion (The Pluralism Project, 2020). Meanwhile, Malaysia initiated the Global Movement of Moderates (GMM) to combat extremism and promote religious moderation worldwide. GMM seeks to create a global network of moderates who can counter radical ideologies and promote peaceful coexistence, supporting SDG 16's goals (Yeoh, 2012).

Furthermore, in the United Kingdom, faith-based organizations are actively involved in community projects that address issues such as poverty, social justice, and education. These initiatives contribute to strong institutions and social cohesion, aligning with SDG 16 (Furness & Gilligan, 2012). In Pakistan, Sufism, a mystical and moderate Islamic tradition, plays a significant role in promoting religious moderation. Sufi orders emphasize love, peace, and tolerance and are active in interfaith dialogue and social

welfare projects, contributing to peace and justice within the country (Hodgson, 1977). Also, in Indonesia, the Indonesian Council of Religious Scholars (MUI) has issued fatwas (religious decrees) condemning extremism and promoting religious moderation. These fatwas have played a role in countering radicalism and fostering peace within the country (Lathifah et al., 2021).

Moreover, Saudi Arabia established the King Abdullah Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue to promote interfaith and intercultural dialogue. It engages religious leaders and scholars from different traditions to work towards peace and understanding, aligning with SDG 16 (Rafizadeh, 2023). Internationally, organizations like the United Religions Initiative (URI) and the Parliament of the World's Religions work globally to promote interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, and peace. They engage religious leaders and communities worldwide in activities that support SDG 16's objectives (Hailu, 2010).

In conclusion, these global efforts exemplify the power of dialogue, tolerance, and cooperation across diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. These initiatives, undertaken by countries such as the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and international organizations like the United Religions Initiative (URI) and the Parliament of the World's Religions, reflect a shared commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 16 - promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions.

In a world where religious and cultural diversity can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, these examples stand as beacons of hope. They demonstrate that by fostering mutual respect, understanding, and moderation, we can build bridges towards a more harmonious and just global society. As we continue to strive for a world characterized by tolerance, respect, and peaceful coexistence, may these initiatives serve as an inspiration and a reminder that unity in diversity is not only possible but essential for a better future for all.

4.5. Balancing Religious Freedom and Human Rights

It can be seen that the role of religious moderation has significant advantages in promoting and achieving SDG 16 goals. Efforts to achieve SDG 16 using religious moderation methods undoubtedly come with various challenges and conflicts that need to be addressed. This can be seen in the existence of conflicting norms between efforts to fulfill human rights and religious teachings.

Gopin (1997) explained that using religion to solve a problem can worsen or create new social and political issues if one does not understand the dynamics of that religion. There are norms and cultural aspects within religion that do not align with fulfilling certain human rights, making religious moderation appear less suitable for achieving SDG 16.

This certainly raises the question of how to implement religious moderation in SDG 16 without hindering one another. To understand this, the implications and understanding of religious moderation in realizing SDG 16 must be grasped first when using religious values to address issues. Understanding the values and norms of religion will facilitate understanding how and why such customs and traditions are applied.

After understanding the values and meanings within religion, it is essential to adopt a multi-pronged approach. Open and respectful dialogue between religious communities and human rights advocates is a foundational step in fostering understanding and cooperation. Simultaneously, reinforcing legal protections for both religious freedom and human rights helps create a clearer and more comprehensive framework within which disputes can be resolved (Fahed & Abboud, 2022).

International agreements and conventions also play a pivotal role in striking a balance between these two fundamental values. By encouraging countries to ratify and adhere to global agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a common international standard can be established. This standard sets the stage for nations to harmonize their legal systems with the global consensus on human rights and religious freedom.

Interfaith initiatives are another valuable tool in promoting tolerance and moderation within religious communities. These initiatives bring together religious leaders and communities to find common ground on human rights issues and foster a culture of respect for diversity.

Lastly, the role of legal frameworks cannot be overstated. They provide the clarity and enforcement mechanisms necessary for upholding religious freedom and human rights. Legal tests and standards can help courts determine whether a particular religious practice infringes upon human rights and, if so, whether such infringement can be justified (EHRC, 2016).

4.6. Policy, Implication, and Recommendations

Promoting religious moderation to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) has real-life examples that illustrate the effectiveness of such policies and initiatives. One

noteworthy example is the experience of Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim country with a diverse population of various religious and ethnic backgrounds.

In Indonesia, the government has actively pursued policies aimed at fostering religious tolerance and moderation, aligning with the principles of SDG 16. The country has implemented legislation that protects religious freedom while prohibiting hate speech and incitement to violence, which aligns with SDG 16's goal of promoting strong and just institutions. For example, Indonesia has the Blasphemy Law, which aims to prevent religious discrimination and the incitement of hatred based on religion. This legal framework reflects the country's commitment to fostering religious tolerance and moderation, in line with SDG 16.

Indonesia's Pancasila ideology, which emphasizes national unity and pluralism, serves as a foundation for inclusive policies, reflecting the SDG 16 objective of promoting strong institutions. Interfaith dialogue, actively encouraged in Indonesia through organizations like the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace, aligns with the goal of achieving peaceful societies where justice prevails (Syarifah, 2019).

Religious institutions in Indonesia have also played a vital role in promoting moderation, contributing to SDG 16's objective of fostering peace. Prominent religious leaders, such as those from the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia), have advocated for interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence, exemplifying the spirit of SDG 16 by promoting justice and strong institutions. These leaders' efforts have contributed to a climate of religious moderation and tolerance, furthering the SDG 16 goal of promoting justice and strong institutions.

Civil society organizations in Indonesia have been instrumental in community- based programs that promote religious tolerance, addressing the SDG 16 aim of building inclusive institutions. Initiatives like the Harmony in Diversity Movement work at the grassroots level to foster dialogue and understanding among different religious communities, ultimately contributing to the creation of just and peaceful societies, as emphasized in SDG 16 (Yu,2022).

Intramural cooperation within the Indonesian government is another critical factor in advancing religious moderation and achieving SDG 16. Different ministries and agencies collaborate to ensure that policies promoting religious tolerance are effectively implemented. This collaboration ensures that the government's efforts are streamlined and comprehensive, addressing the diverse aspects of SDG 16, including peace, justice, and strong institutions.

On the international stage, Indonesia's active engagement in interfaith diplomacy and support for global initiatives promoting religious moderation align with SDG 16's goal

of strengthening international partnerships for peace, justice, and strong institutions. This includes participation in forums like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and contributions to international efforts aimed at countering extremism and promoting tolerance, reflecting a commitment to the broader objectives of SDG 16.

Indonesia's experience demonstrates how a multifaceted approach involving government policies, religious institutions, civil society organizations, and international engagement can lead to greater religious moderation and contribute to achieving the goals of SDG 16, creating inclusive, just, and peaceful societies. The country's commitment to inclusivity and sustainability has paved the way for peaceful coexistence among diverse religious communities, offering a positive model for other nations striving to achieve similar outcomes.

To implement these lessons effectively, it is recommended that nations consider a range of measures, including the enactment and enforcement of legislation that safeguards religious freedom while preventing hate speech and violence. Furthermore, promoting interfaith dialogue, encouraging civil society engagement, and fostering government collaboration are key elements in achieving SDG 16's goals related to religious tolerance and moderation. International engagement and cooperation, along with support for religious leaders advocating for peace and tolerance, can further strengthen a nation's efforts in this regard. By adopting these recommendations, countries can emulate Indonesia's success and make significant strides towards the creation of inclusive, just, and peaceful societies, as envisioned by SDG 16.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Summary of the Study

The role of religious moderation in promoting and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) has both advantages and challenges. While using religious values to address issues can be effective, it may also lead to conflicts with human rights principles. Understanding religious values and norms is essential for successful implementation. A multi-pronged approach, including open dialogue between religious communities and human rights advocates, legal protections, international agreements, interfaith initiatives, and legal frameworks, can help strike a balance between religious freedom and human rights.

A real-life example of effective policies and initiatives promoting religious moderation for SDG 16 is Indonesia. The country has implemented legislation protecting religious

freedom while prohibiting hate speech and violence, aligning with SDG 16's principles. Indonesia's Pancasila ideology emphasizes national unity and pluralism, contributing to inclusive policies. Interfaith dialogue, led by organizations like the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace, promotes peaceful societies. Religious institutions and leaders in Indonesia advocate for interfaith dialogue and coexistence, fostering religious tolerance. Civil society organizations run programs promoting religious tolerance, and government ministries collaborate to ensure effective policy implementation.

Indonesia's international engagement in interfaith diplomacy and support for global initiatives reflects its commitment to SDG 16's international partnerships for peace, justice, and strong institutions. Indonesia's multifaceted approach involving government policies, religious institutions, civil society, and international engagement demonstrates how religious moderation can contribute to achieving SDG 16, creating inclusive, just, and peaceful societies. Other nations can learn from Indonesia's success by enacting and enforcing legislation, promoting interfaith dialogue, engaging civil society, fostering government collaboration, and supporting religious leaders advocating for peace and tolerance. These recommendations can help countries make significant strides towards SDG 16's goals.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

This study, rooted in a constructivist perspective, delves into the intricate dynamics of religious moderation and its role in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) – peace, justice, and strong institutions. It explores how the ideational factors of belief systems, norms, and identity construction shape the contours of religious moderation, influencing its potential as a catalyst for achieving the targets under SDG 16. In doing so, it considers the constructivist value of understanding how ideas and beliefs within religious communities can be instrumental in promoting peace, justice, and the strength of institutions on a global scale. It is anticipated that this research will not only contribute to the empirical understanding of religious moderation but also underscore the importance of ideational elements in shaping international relations. By illuminating the role of constructivist factors, such as identity, discourse, and norm diffusion, this study provides a unique lens through which to analyze the impact of religious moderation on human security and global society.

As this research sets the foundation for further exploration, it invites scholars and academics to embrace a constructivist framework in their own investigations into the relationship between religious moderation and SDG 16. Utilizing this perspective can

enhance the depth and richness of discussions on the subject, recognizing the significance of ideas, beliefs, and identity construction in influencing international outcomes.

This study aims not only to enrich academic discourse but also to resonate with policymakers, practitioners, and the broader global community. By emphasizing the constructivist dimensions of religious moderation, it offers insights into the potential for transformative change rooted in shifts of belief systems and identity construction. These insights have the potential to guide efforts towards fostering more inclusive, just, and peaceful societies. In the spirit of constructivist inquiry, the researcher welcomes constructive and comprehensive feedback from readers, acknowledging the value of varied perspectives in advancing the understanding of the complex interplay between religious moderation and the goals of SDG 16.

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