

# Confronting the Religious Extremism in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Study between The Concept of *Wasatiyyah* and Moderate

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## Abstract

The emergence of terrorism phenomena especially after the 9/11 tragedy that linked to problem of religious extremism in Islam had managed to draw the attention of scholars to study the Muslim society. In this case, the focus of their studies is the Muslim society in the Southeast Asia that had been called as the *second front* in facing the religious extremism. Throughout their studies, these scholars especially from the West tried to classify the tendency of thought among the Southeast Asian's Muslims into moderate-extreme dichotomy. Nevertheless, this dichotomy is seemingly problematic as it was biased when it tries to generalize the whole population of society that strives for sharia aspiration as extreme. As the consequence, it promotes islamophobia among the West toward Muslim societies. As the response to this issue, the Muslim scholars had brought forward the concept of *wasatiyyah* as the equivalent of the moderate concept that is more appropriate within the Islamic perspective. This research will analyse the difference between these two concept and the different that it will bring practically in preventing religious extremism in Southeast Asia. It will compare the methodology and characteristics used between these two concepts in classifying the tendency of thought among the Southeast Asian's Muslim. This research found out that the concept of *wasatiyyah* is more appropriate and precise to apply in preventing the religious extremism as compared to the moderate concept that was influenced by the islamophobia way of thinking.

**Keywords:** Islamophobia, Moderate, Religious extremism, Southeast Asia, Terrorism, *Wasatiyyah*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Terrorism had existed back in the early days of human history. The emergence of its concept and term itself had been through evolution in several phases and levels. Among the important event in its development in the late of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are the close relation between terrorism and religious extremism (Lizardo, 2008). Religion, especially Islam is seen as the main factor that promote the terrorism. The rise of Islamic radical movement that marked by the events like the rebellion of mujaheden against the Soviet in Afghanistan, the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and most importantly the tragedy of 9/11 attack only strengthened that assumption.

This problem also occurs in this region of Southeast Asia. Although the historical facts show that there are differences in the nature of the conflicts that happen in this region as compared to the others (Acharya & Acharya, 2007), but it can't be denied that the problem of religious extremism happens in this very region (Chalk et al., 2009). Because of that, Southeast Asia had been called as the second front in confronting the global terrorism (Gershman, 2002).

After the 9/11 tragedy, the concerted efforts in combating terrorism had been made as the main priority and agenda globally (global war on terror) and regionally especially in Southeast Asia. Many approach of counter-terrorism had been taken seriously that comprise of several dimension for instance the past, present, and the aftermath action after the terrorist attack (The White House, 2011). Nevertheless, all of these approaches only work to cure the symptom and not the very root cause of the problem especially that involved the religious extremism (Ramakrishna, 2004). It is due to the fact that all of these approaches failed to address the ideological aspect of the problem. These approaches failed to recognize the ideology of the terrorist and religious extremist and the narratives that they brought so that the effective counter-ideology actions can't be proceed (Ramakrishna, 2007). This is evident from the ineffectiveness of the existing approaches in preventing the process of recruitment of the new members into the group and the phenomena of 'lone wolf terrorist' and 'leaderless terrorist network' (Lum et al., 2006).

So, to conduct the proper counter-ideology actions against this extremist ideology, the Western scholarship had come out with the idea of mapping the trends of thought that existed throughout the Muslim world and classifying it into several categories: the traditionalist, fundamentalist, secularist and liberalist (Rabasa et al., 2004). The underlying ideologies behind every of these categories were analysed especially from the aspect of their stands toward the Western values and culture. As the result, they have managed to build a concept of moderation to oppose the religious extremism problem (Benard, 2003). They try to develop a network of moderate Muslim and give them support and collaboration financially and technically in fighting the problem of religious extremism (Rabasa et al, 2007).

At the same time, the Muslim scholars try to develop the concept of *wasatiyyah* as the equivalent and alternative to the concept of moderation in preventing the religious extremism (Imarah, 2004). There is an urgency in doing that because the Muslim scholars found out that

there is a fundamental difference between these two concepts, especially the connotation that they bring when applied practically in fighting religious extremism. The concept of moderate is problematic because it was developed solely from the Western point of view without taking into account the Islamic perspective as a religion believed and adhered to by those Muslims (Islam & Khaltun, 2015). Besides that, the moderate concept also contains bias and discrimination toward Islam as the religion that is promoting terrorism and extremism (Liebman, 1983).

Hence, this research is a comparative study between the concept of moderate and *wasatiyyah* to find out whether there are differences between these two concepts linguistically and terminologically. The differences in the implementation of these two concepts in Southeast Asia to combat extremism will also be observed throughout this study. As the conclusion, this study will find out which of these two concepts is more suitable and applicable in fighting religious extremism in Southeast Asia.

### **The Concept of Moderate in Confronting Religious Extremism**

Moderate as a concept in the discourse of counter-terrorism and counter-ideology started to appear in Western scholarship during the 1970's, in the upcoming of the Islamic revivalism era (Islam & Khaltun, 2015). This concept had been developed based on political reasons to understand the multitude of trends of Islamic thought and movement during that era that was seen as having a large political potential and threat (Schwedler, 2011a). These trends continued until they reached their peak in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack with the emergence of multiple extremist and terrorist movements on the global scale that clearly announced their hostility to the West (Rabasa et al., 2004).

From that moment, there was a surge of urgency among the policy maker in the West to recognize the ideological tendencies that exist in the Muslim world to differentiate between their enemies and friends, after their concentrated efforts to prevent the extremism threat from the physical security aspect failed to solve the root cause of the problem. Therefore, they started focusing their effort from the ideological aspect of extremism, by attempting to export the 'freedom agenda' to the Muslim countries. This effort was conducted by building and strengthening the network of cooperation among the government and NGOs that is seen as friendly and hospitable to the West, and ready to accept the liberal, secular and democratic values of the West (Rabasa et al., 2007).

This is evident from the definition of moderate that was put forward by the Western scholars and research centers. Although its lexical definition holds a broader meaning of moderation and modesty, terminologically its meaning has been narrowly reduced and replaced with a morally loaded and value-laden concept (Islam & Khaltun, 2015). For instance, RAND Corporation, a U.S.A.-based policy research center had put into definition of moderate as: *"Moderate Muslims are those who share the key dimensions of democratic culture. These include support for democracy and internationally recognized human rights (including gender equality and freedom of worship), respect for diversity, acceptance of non-sectarian sources of*

*law, and opposition to terrorism and other illegitimate forms of violence.”* (Rabasa et al., 2007, p. 66.)

Schwedler (2011b) agrees with this notion that *“moderation more or less amounts to upholding the norms and practices observed in Western, liberal and secular democracies.”* Therefore, this concept of moderate can be used to differentiate between radical and moderate Muslims as states by Clark (2006) that:

*“Moderate Islamists often are those who are willing to participate in the democratic system, whereas radical Islamists are deemed as those who reject participation largely due to their rejection of secularism. Islamist radicals, although divided, reject participation with any secular system-authoritarian or democratic. This moderation is deemed to express itself in terms of Islamists' greater acceptance and understanding of democracy, political liberties, and the rights of women and minorities.”*

After that, they had developed a roadmap to create a network of moderate to support and cooperates with in preventing the influence of radical and extremist Muslims, that are more advanced in term of funding and networking. To identifying these moderate Muslims groups, they had to identify the ideological tendencies that existed in the Muslim world, and trying to classify it into main ideological trends that are: traditionalist, fundamentalist, secularist and liberalist (Rabasa et al., 2004).

Each of these trends was analysed to identify their tendencies toward moderation. For that reason, some characteristics had been developed as the indicator of moderate group. The first feature is the acceptance of Western's democratic values (Benard, 2003). This is considered as the key marker in identifying the moderate Muslim. It is to ensure that these 'moderate Muslim' was among those who reject the existence of the Islamic state, particularly those that imply the exercise of political power by the self-appointed clerical elite, as in the case of Iran (Rabasa et al., 2007).

Secondly, to differentiate between radical and moderate Muslims is from the aspect of application of sharia's law in the modern world. Those moderate Muslims must believe that a conservative interpretation of sharia are incompatible with democracy and universal human rights because under sharia, those men and women, believers and unbelievers will be denied of equal rights. In addition, because of the diversities of opinion in Islamic law, the enactment of any sharia principles as law would be the same as enforcing the political will of those in power, selecting some opinions over others, therefore denying the freedom of choice (Rabasa et al., 2007). Therefore, the questions related to the implementation of Shariah like polygamy, wearing hijab, and Islamic criminal law is taken as the key indicators in distinguishing between moderate and radical Muslims (Benard, 2003).

The third characteristic of moderate Muslim is respect for the rights of women and religious minorities. To be considered as moderate, they must be hospitable to feminists and open to religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Discriminatory injunctions in the al-Quran and the al-Sunnah relating to women's position within the society and the must be reinterpreted because the difference of reality between modern world and those that prevailed in the Prophet Muhammad's day (Rabasa et al., 2007). Similarly, moderates must support and endorse the equal citizenship and legal rights for non-Muslims (Benard, 2003).

All of those characteristics must be fulfilled in order to be categorized as the moderate Muslims. Therefore, it is not enough for the Islamist like the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East and PAS in Malaysia that involved directly in the political movement and take part peacefully in the democratic process like competing in the general election to be considered as moderate Muslims as long as they still recognize sharia as the basis of law. Based on these characteristics, the groups that were recognized as suitable to be called as moderate Muslims and cooperating and receiving fully support from the West in fighting the religious extremism are those liberal Muslims, secularist and 'moderate' traditionalist (Rabasa et al, 2007). Among those who were appointed as the moderate Muslim's figure are Khalid AbouFadhI, M. Shahrur, Bassam Tibi and Ayaan Hirsi Ali (Benard, 2003).

While especially in Southeast Asia, this networking of moderate Muslims will be conducted through the organizations and institutions that were championing the agenda of democracy, liberal and human rights in Southeast Asia (Rabasa et al., 2007). The characteristics of those organizations are pro-western, non-violent, liberal and a rival to anti-western groups (Islam &Khaltun, 2015). Among those organizations and institutions are *Jaringan Islam Liberal* (Liberal Muslim Network), *LembagaKajiandanPengembanganSumberdayaManusia* (Human ResourceDevelopment and Study Institute), International Center for Islam and Pluralism (ICIP), Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy (PCID) and The Center for Moderate Muslims. While the forms of cooperation that will be held with these institutions are in the form of financial support to promote the activities that propagate the values of democracy and pluralism among the Southeast Asian's societies. Besides that, the writings and researches of these institutions will be published widely throughout the rest of Muslim world (Rabasa et al., 2007).

### **The Concept of *Wasatiyyah* in Confronting Religious Extremism**

In response to the moderate concept developed by Western scholars, Islamic scholars have come up with the concept of *wasatiyyah* as a more precise and appropriate approach. However, this does not mean that the concept of *wasatiyyah* emerges subsequently than the moderate concept and is the result of its replication. On the other hand, this *wasatiyyah* concept is already existed in the Islamic tradition and is only re-emphasized by Islamic scholars as a response to the moderate concept that attempts to dominate and forced for implementation in the Islamic world (Imarah, 2004).

The basis for the concept of *wasatiyyah* embedded in the fundamental of Islamic teaching which consists of theological and jurisprudential aspects. Muslim scholars have explored the lexical meaning of the word *wasatiyyah* which is the derivative of the word *wa-sa-ta*. It leads to some sense of welfare, intermediary, moderation, justice, and kindness (Kamali, 2008). Furthermore, the understanding of this concept is also derived from the understanding of the texts of the Qur'an and al-Sunnah containing words such as *al-usta*, *awsat* and *wasata* which generally mean the best, chosen, fair, and perfect (Hanapi, 2014).

This *wasatiyyah* principle is then used as a response to theological extremism phenomenon that evident in the conflict between *al-Qadariyyah* and *al-Jabariyyah*, and

between *al-Mu'attilah* and *al-Mushabbihah* (Islam &Khaltun, 2015). This *wasatiyyah* approach later on is adopted by the *Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* as the majority of theological sects in Muslims world to this day that seek moderation in between of these theological extremes. The understanding of this *wasatiyyah* concept is also found in Islamic law and legal thinking. For example, *wasatiyyah* attitude between those who neglected the literal meaning of the text with reason to guard the "*maqasid al-Shari'ah*" with those who neglected *maqasid al-Shari'ah* with reason to defend the textual meaning of *al-Qur'an* and *al-Sunnah* and between those who undertake a stern and intense approach although in small branches of Islamic legal matters with those who undertake a simplistic and under simplified approach although in the fundamental principles of sharia. (al-Qaradawi, 1998).

Hence, based on this understanding, Muslim scholars have given some definitions to the concept of *wasatiyyah*. According to al-Qaradawi (2010), *wasatiyyah* means intermediating or moderate position between the two sides that contradict and oppose. For example, the balance between physical and spiritual abilities, the balance between believes in the reality of the physical world and faith in unseen matters of senses. While HashimKamali (2008) defines *wasatiyyah* (Arabic synonyms: *tawassuṭ*, *i'tidāl*, *tawāzun*, *iqtiṣād*) as "*closely aligned with justice, and means opting for a middle position between two extremes, often used interchangeably with 'average' , 'standard', 'heart' and 'non-aligned'.*" Whereas according to Imarah (2004), *wasatiyyah* means the truth between the two falsehoods, and the justice between the two crimes, and the intermediate between the two extreme angles. Therefore, this does not mean that the *wasatiyyah* concept must takes a 50:50 stand, which is in the exact point that lies halfway between two locations/things, for example in the halfway between rich and poor or being wise and unwise. But according to the *wasatiyyah* concept, one can become rich but as the same time not forgetting the unfortunate and always being generous in helping them, as shown by Abdul Rahman bin 'Awfr.a (Hanapi, 2014).

However the concept of *wasatiyyah* in the context of handling the religious extremism and terrorism became the focus of attention after the 9/11 tragedy. It has become the center of attention with the unprecedented spread of extremism and violence by individuals and countries in many parts of the world (Kamali, 2008). The emergence of terrorist movements such as al-Qaeda and ISIS globally and its regional networks such as JamaahIslamiah (JI) and Katibah Nusantara in Southeast Asia using the name of Islam have worsened the situation. This phenomenon of terrorism and extremism that tried to use religious arguments to legitimate their cause has gained widespread response from contemporary Islamic scholars and *ulama*. These scholars with the *wasatiyyah* approach have tried to correct the misunderstandings and mistakes posed by these terrorist movements. In addition, they also act as spokespersons to Islam to clarify the true stand of Islam on the issue of terrorism to prevent the increasingly infectious phenomena of Islamophobia, especially in recent Western societies.

Various attempts have been made by these Islamic scholars to counter-ideology against the ideology and narrative of terrorism that these terrorist movements are trying to bring in



order to justify their brute and inhumane actions. The efforts were carried out in various forms and mediums such as the writing of books by Yusuf al-Qaradawi (*Fiqh al-Jihad*) and Abdullah bin Bayyah (*al-Irhab: al-Tashkhis wa al-Hulul & Peace in Muslim Societies*), declaring of declarations rejecting violence (Marrakesh Declaration, 2016) and media statements condemning acts of violence like the statement made by Prof. Tariq Ramadan in the aftermath of the Paris Attack (Ramadan, 2015).

Generally, these scholars are trying to promote *wasatiyyah* thinking and approach in confronting the ideology of terrorism. The problem of terrorism and religious extremism is not rooted from the fundamental teachings of Islam, but rather as a result of exploitation and misunderstanding of the true teachings of Islam. This is due to several factors. The first factor is the mistake of the extreme approach taken in bringing changes toward betterment in society. For example, the widespread of accusing of apostasy and legalization of their blood by the extremist's movement like ISIS. These approaches are opposed by contemporary Islamic scholars. This is due to the fact that Islam strongly prohibits the accusation of other people with apostasy as long they claim themselves to be believers (al-Qaradawi, 2010b). Therefore, even if the leaders of the Muslim's majority countries seem to be cruel, tyrannical and sinful, but as long as they claim to be believers and do not admit blatantly of apostasy, they can't to be condemned as an infidel (al-Qaradawi, 2010b), let alone to accuse the majority of Muslims around the world with infidelity only because they do not support their cause.

The second factor is the misconception of the main concepts such as *khilafah, jihad, dar Islam wadar al-harb, takfir* and *al-wala' wa al-bara'* found in classical *fiqh* discourses. These concepts need to be understood in the current context rather than relying solely on the classical *fiqh* framework built in a much different context of the past (al-Qaradawi, 2010b). The concept of *jihad* for example is indeed something that is demanded in Islam. However, it needs to be understood correctly to avoid extreme views (Abdullah bin Bayyah, 2007). Thus, Qaradawi (2010) for example has produced his book *Fiqh al-Jihad* to give a correct understanding of the true *jihad* concept in Islam. It is intended to answer the misconceptions caused by the negligent people (*tafrit*) who consider the concept of jihad is irrelevant at present and by the extremists (*ifrat*) who call on war and hostility all the time.

Meanwhile the third factor is the failure to understand the current context and reality. For example, the reality of today's world order has been formed based on the concepts of nation-state and nationhood. Each established state has its own sovereignty and is composed of citizens who have been guaranteed rights regardless of religion and race. Each of this country has established international relations and cooperation and is united under the auspices of the United Nations. Therefore, the origin of the relations between these nations is peace so that aggression and wars against other nations are prohibited and governed by international law (al-Qaradawi, 2010b). The dichotomy of the world into two categories namely *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* also no longer existed and not relevant anymore in today's reality after the establishment of the nation-state and the concept of citizenship (Bin Bayyah, 2016). Therefore,

the understanding of the concept of *khilafah* and *jihad* is also changing. This is because neither party can arbitrarily declare war and extend its conquest to other countries. The existence of a citizenship of various races and religions subject to the same responsibility and rights also abolished the Muslim-Kafir denominations among the citizens (Bin Bayyah, 2016).

The problems of the religious extremism and the response of these Islamic scholars have increased the urgency of the call for bridge-building by many world leaders, including former Iranian President Khatami whose call for a dialogue of civilizations in the United Nations General Assembly in 1997, and a renewed attention to the universal principles and teachings of Islam among Muslims (Kamali, 2008). The call was warmly welcomed by the leaders of the Muslim countries in Southeast Asia by trying to display and promote the Islamic face of *wasatiyyah* as the basis of the country's administration and as a national policy in counter-terrorism as it was done by the Malaysian government (Hamidi, 2016).

### **Comparative Analysis Between Moderate and *Wasatiyyah* Concepts**

In responseThus, based on the explanation of both of the moderate and *wasatiyyah* concept, there is a fundamental difference between the two concepts. Both concepts are morally loaded, value-laden and highly contextualized text. This can be seen from the background of the two emerging concepts. The moderate concept that began to develop since the 70's in response to Islamic Revivalism and the rise of political Islam is a political-oriented concept. However the concept of *wasatiyyah* was already in existence earlier and was developed based on al-Qur'an, al-Sunnah and the legacy of Islamic scholarship tradition. It was founded based on fundamental of Islam that is the discourse on theological and jurisprudential issues, and then began to turn politically oriented in response to the moderate discourse in Western scholarship.

Therefore, there are differences between the two concepts lexically and terminologically. Moderate from the lexical perspective is closely related to the moderation in the Aristotle's theory of mean that means the exact point that lies halfway between two extremes (Urmson, 1973). The intermediate position can be measured mathematically on a regular basis, with the distance equation between moderate positions with both opposite extremes. Or in other words, moderate implies a lesser quantity of something, as for example, the moderate-left ideology means a lesser leftist in quantity that the real leftist ideology (Islam &Khaltun, 2015). Thus, when applied in the context of religion, moderation in religion will bring the connotation of a believer who is in the middle position between the total commit in practicing religion and abandoning it in total.

Whereas *wasatiyyah*, even though it has the meanings of moderation and balance, but it is more subjective and cannot be measured mathematically, contrary to Aristotle's theory of moderation (Imarah, 2004). This is because, in fact, the *wasatiyyah* can mean the best, fairness, justice and perfection. This means that *wasatiyyah* does not necessarily mean to be mediocre between two opposing traits, such as between rich and poor, and between clever and stupid



(Hanapi, 2014). Therefore, when applied in the context of religiosity, *wasatiyyah* will mean the person who understands and practices his religion best, perfectly and fairly.

The differences between these two concepts can be seen more clearly when applied to the context of dealing with the problems of religious extremism especially in Islam. Based on the moderate concept, the nature of religion of Islam itself is blamed as the cause leading to extreme stance. Extremism is regarded as a result of an overly obedient attitude in religion, leading to extreme dimensions such as imposing religious law on others, social isolation and cultural rejection (Liebman, 1983). Hence, the moderate concept plays an important role in eradicating the religious obedience, and brings the Muslims to the moderation between fully obedience of Islamic practices and fully negligence of it in order to avoid engaging in religious extremism.

This is clearly contradictory to the concept of *wasatiyyah* in religion. Islam is not at all regarded as a source of extremism. Instead, full adherence to the Islamic teaching and way of life (Sharia) will lead to universal peace due to the nature of Islam that bears the meaning of peace and prosperity in its name. On the other hand, the problem of religious extremism is due to ignorance in understanding Islam. It can be seen from the factors that cause extremism and terrorism problems, that is deviation, misinterpretation, and failure to adhere the current reality of today's life. This is done by the ignorant members of the extremist movement in understanding the true teachings of Islam which are contrary to the understanding of the majority of *ulama* and Muslim's scholars (Bin Bayyah, 2007; al-Qaradawi, 2010b).

Further, this leads to a significant difference in acceptance of the sharia law. The moderate concept that brought the connotation of practicing religion half-heartedly has led to its strict rejection of the implementation of the sharia, particularly in the public domain and administration of the country. This can be seen through the characteristics set out to determine whether a Muslim is a moderate Muslim, which is to reject the implementation of sharia in the administration of the country and to assume that sharia is incompatible with the democratic and human right values (Benard, 2003; Rabasa et al., 2007). Therefore, peaceful participation in democratic and political activities such as taking part in general election as done by most of the Islamic parties and movements today are inadequate as long as they are still supporting sharia as the way of life and struggle for its cause (Rabasa et al., 2007).

This is again contrary to the concept of *wasatiyyah* which means that the practice of Islamic teachings as a whole including all the established sharia law. Implementation of the concept of *wasatiyyah* as the policy and principle in administration of the country thus implies that sharia elements are also applied as has been done by the Malaysian government (Hanapi, 2014). This is due to the fact that the concept of *wasatiyyah* as understood in the Quran is also followed by the concept of witnesses (*shuhada'*) which means to be an example to the world in promoting the justice and beauty of Islamic law (Ahmad, 2011). Meanwhile the neglect of

Islamic law is regarded as negligence in religion, which is one of the aspects of extremism in Islam (al-Qaradawi, 2010a).

The last difference between these two concepts of moderate and *wasatiyyah* is in terms of identifying the Muslim's groups and organizations that can be invited together to build the network of cooperation in confronting the religious extremism. Based on the moderate concept, those who are classified as moderate is just a minority among Muslims (Rabasa et al, 2007). There is a strong tendency to equate liberal and secular Muslims with moderate Muslims (Mazrui, 2007), with the focus of cooperation being given only to liberal and secularists, while ignoring the political Islamist, fundamentalist and traditionalist groups (Rabasa et al., 2007). This is evident from those who were appointed as moderate Muslim figures that were dominated by liberal figures such as Khalid AbouFadhl, M. Shahrur and Ayaan Hirsi Ali (Benard, 2003).

As a result based on the concept of *wasatiyyah*, the group considered as moderate is the majority of Muslims in the Muslim community. Those who are involved in the problem of religious extremism are just a minority. Hence based on the concept of *wasatiyyah*, it aims to support the majority of Muslims to play a role in combating the religious extremism and providing a true religious understanding of Islam.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, both moderate and *wasatiyyah* concepts are morally loaded and value laden concepts. It appears in different contexts and historical backgrounds. The moderate concept emerges in the political context as a response to the rise of political Islam and the emergence of a series of global terrorism. While the concept of *wasatiyyah* is already existed in the corpus of Islamic scholarship, and has been re-examined and put forward as an equivalent and alternative to the concept of moderate that is seen to contain a biased and negative view towards Islam. Although both of these concepts seem similar from the outside, there is a fundamental difference between these two concepts either from the aspect of lexical meaning, terminologically or practically in addressing the religious extremism. Thus, in an effort to confronting the religious extremism in the Southeast Asia, an approach that takes into account the background of history, community and religion of Southeast Asia. Thus, this research found out that the concept of *wasatiyyah* is more appropriate and precise to be used in confronting the religious extremism in Southeast Asia as compared to the concept of moderate, as has been successfully implemented in Malaysia.

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