

Pancasila as a Moderate Ideology: Mitigating and Navigating Identity Clashes

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Abstract: This study examines the diversity and identity tensions in Indonesia and the strategic role of Pancasila as a moderate ideology in mitigating polarization and navigating plurality. As a multicultural nation, Indonesia continues to face significant challenges in managing ethnic, religious, and cultural identities, often manipulated in political and ideological contests. Using a qualitative interpretive approach through extensive literature analysis, this study concludes that the dynamics of identity conflicts are rooted not only in interpretative exclusivism and polarization but also in structural inequality. The findings indicate that identity clashes are not merely caused by differences in identity, but also by social injustice, the absence of equitable dialogical spaces, and the dominance of singular narratives that marginalize the Other. In this context, Pancasila must be positioned as a national ethos and an open value system that embraces the principle of the middle path, rejecting extremism, reaffirming social justice, and upholding unity in diversity. The study recommends strengthening transformative civic education, diversity literacy, and affirmative policy frameworks as strategic measures to mitigate and navigate identity conflicts, thereby preserving national cohesion amid intensifying global and local challenges.

Keywords: Pancasila; Moderate Ideology; Identity Clash; Middle Path; Universal Ethics.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a complex and complete mosaic of civilizations. Within this nation, thousands of ethnicities, hundreds of local languages, and diverse religious beliefs coexist under the same constitutional framework. Data from Statistics Indonesia (2020) notes that the nation is home to more than 1.300 ethnic groups, 668 regional languages, 431.465 community organizations, 6 official religions plus 184 indigenous belief systems, and many other layers of diversity. This diversity is not only a treasure but also a stage of continuous interaction, contestation, and interpretation. Within the framework of nationhood, Sapriallah (2020) asserts that identity is not a static entity but a construction that undergoes ongoing negotiation and reconstruction. According to Sabri (1999), identity can serve as a collective strength yet simultaneously become a source of friction that divides society. Identity conflicts, manifested in inter-group clashes, social polarization, and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, and ideology, are increasingly visible, particularly in a digitally interconnected world shaped by hyperreal narratives (Puryanto, 2022).

The post-truth era, reinforced by the logic of digital algorithms, has significantly intensified identity-based tensions in Indonesia. Truth is increasingly obscured by the circulation of mass-produced opinions across social media, while identity narratives are strategically exploited for electoral, economic, and ideological interests. Identity politics, which initially emerged from struggles for recognition and equality, has gradually transformed into an instrument of polarization. Differences are no longer celebrated as elements of pluralism but are instead weaponized to judge, exclude, and even marginalize others. In this context, identity becomes a political commodity—constructed, traded, and capitalized upon within competitive public discourse. The consequences are not

constructive dialogue but social fragmentation and deepening dichotomies. Such conditions foster distrust, weaken social cohesion, and pose serious threats to national integration. Therefore, Indonesia urgently requires a shared ethical foundation—a common normative anchor capable of guiding the nation through the turbulent dynamics of identity contestation while reaffirming the unifying values of Pancasila (Lim, 2017; Mietzner, 2018; Hadiz, 2016; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019; Kamalludin et al., 2025).

As the philosophical foundation and ideological backbone of the Indonesian state, Pancasila is designed to preserve and harmonize the nation's diversity. Rather than a static historical construct, it represents a dynamic embodiment of noble values deeply rooted in Indonesian socio-cultural traditions. Pancasila emerged from the founding fathers' reflections on Indonesia's pluralistic reality, encapsulating principles of inclusivity, tolerance, unity, and social justice within its five precepts. These values function not only as a formal basis for governance but also as a moral compass guiding national life. In this sense, Pancasila operates as a unifying framework that bridges differences and fosters peaceful, equitable, and dignified coexistence among citizens in a multicultural society (Azhari, 2025; Mahendra, 2026; Maswati & Hanafie Das, 2024; Zahirsyah, 2025).

However, in contemporary contexts, the meaning of Pancasila has often been diluted and reduced to a mere rhetorical slogan, lacking substantive embodiment in public consciousness. Its interpretation is frequently subject to political co-optation by dominant or hegemonic interests, thereby limiting its critical and emancipatory potential. Consequently, Pancasila faces challenges in functioning as a navigational framework for addressing current socio-political dynamics, particularly in relation to identity crises and the rise of intolerance within society. This condition reflects a growing dissonance between the normative ideals of Pancasila and its practical implementation in everyday life. Therefore, there is an urgent need to revitalize Pancasila as a reflective and moderate ideology—one that serves as an ethical framework capable of facilitating dialogical encounters among diverse individuals within equitable and inclusive public spaces (Latif, 2018; Asshiddiqie, 2020; Hosen, 2021; Mietzner, 2018).

Moderation is inherent to Pancasila, a legacy of the nation's founders. It rejects all forms of extremism (Novian, 2025), whether secular or religious. It stands firmly in the middle, not as passive compromise, but as an active force of balance, a tension-mediator, and a bridge between values. Thus, positioning Pancasila as a moderate ideology is not a novelty but a reaffirmation of its original spirit. In an ever-changing world, this reaffirmation is vital, for only through moderation can identity clashes be managed and reconciled. Pancasila does not seek to erase differences but to govern them within a just and dignified unity.

The urgency of this study lies in the escalating complexity of identity conflicts across Indonesia in recent decades. Phenomena such as religious radicalism, hate speech based on *Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Antargolongan* (SARA), and the use of digital algorithms to disseminate disinformation and reinforce identity segregation indicate that Indonesia is facing a growing ethical crisis and weakening social cohesion (Ardi, 2017; Al-Farisi, 2020; Widjaja et al., 2021; Adam, 2022). Reports from the Setara Institute (2025) and the Wahid Institute (2021) further reveal increasing trends of intolerance and violations of religious freedom. Under these conditions, Pancasila should not merely be memorized or confined to formal education, but must be actualized as a living social and public ethic. Therefore, this study aims to re-explore and reinterpret the substantive values of Pancasila as a contextual and moderate ideology capable of providing ethical direction amid the ongoing disorientation of national identity.

Although extensive literature discusses Pancasila in relation to politics, law, and education (Latif, 2011; Kaelan, 1996; Notonagoro, 1988; Al-Muchtar, 2016), studies explicitly positioning Pancasila as a moderate ideology in response to identity crises intensified by digital technology and ideological polarization remain limited. Most analyses focus on its constitutional position or as a compulsory university subject—rarely as a navigational ethic suitable for a plural and fragmented society. This creates a gap between Pancasila as an ideological document and the real social field where it should operate. Therefore, a new examination is needed, one that is reflective and solutions oriented.

This research gap becomes increasingly urgent given the rising influence of digital algorithms, which narrows public discourse and reinforces social polarization through echo chambers and filter bubbles (Yunas et al., 2023). In this digital space, moderate national narratives are overshadowed by sensational extremist content. As a result, Indonesian youth are more frequently exposed to radical and exclusionary messages than to inclusive national values. This threatens the continuity of a civilized and open national identity. Thus, reviving Pancasila as a discourse and practice of moderation is not merely an academic interest but a strategic necessity for strengthening national resilience against social and ideological disintegration.

This article aims to enrich discourse on Pancasila by offering a reflective-analytical perspective that positions it as a moderate ideology amid contemporary identity clashes. By revisiting the philosophical, historical, and contextual foundations of Pancasila, this article seeks to affirm that it is not merely an ideological text but a living ideology that must be continuously reinterpreted in response to emerging challenges. Ultimately, the study intends to broaden theoretical insights while also contributing practical implications for educators, policymakers, and society in building an inclusive and civilized public sphere.

2. Method

This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach through a library research method, characterized by reflective and philosophical analysis. It aims to explore, interpret, and reconstruct the discourse on Pancasila as a moderate ideology in responding to identity-based conflicts in Indonesia, while positioning it as a conceptual framework for formulating strategies of national mitigation and socio-political navigation. Such an approach enables a deeper understanding of values, meanings, and ideological constructions embedded within social and political realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015).

The primary data sources consist of documents, texts, and literature relevant to the topic, including scholarly works, academic journals, reference books, constitutional documents, legal frameworks, and opinion articles discussing nationalism, identity dynamics, and Pancasila ideology. The researchers also draw upon the ideas of renowned philosophers and scholars such as Soekarno, Notonagoro, Bung Hatta, Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, Yudi Latif, and Kaelan, alongside theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, Anthony Giddens, and James Banks.

Data analysis was conducted through a hermeneutic approach, involving deep textual interpretation to capture the philosophical and contextual essence of each concept examined. During the process, thematic interpretation was applied, organizing the main ideas into broader analytical categories such as *identity diversity*, *identity conflict*, *Pancasila as a middle path*, and *identity moderation*.

In addition, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach is selectively applied to examine dominant narratives surrounding identity politics and the role of the state in addressing these tensions. Through CDA, this study moves beyond descriptive analysis by

constructing critical and normative arguments on how Pancasila can be meaningfully actualized within contemporary socio-political contexts (Fairclough, 2013; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

To ensure validity and data credibility, this research employs source triangulation and cross-referencing across multiple scholarly works. A positivist and quantitative approach is deliberately avoided, as the study does not seek to measure statistical phenomena but rather to interpret values, ideological narratives, and processes of national transformation. By adopting this interpretive framework, the study aspires to generate transformative insights for strengthening national moderation grounded in Pancasila within Indonesia's complex pluralistic society (Denzin, 2017; Flick, 2018).

3. Diversity and Identity Clashes

3.1. The Landscape of Identity Diversity in Indonesia

Indonesia may be likened to a grand cultural garden adorned with a mosaic of identities shaped by ethnicity, religion, language, and cultural practice. Across the archipelago stretching from Sabang to Merauke, and from Miangas to Rote Island, lie more than 17,000 islands inhabited by over 1,300 ethnic groups—each carrying distinctive heritage, traditions, languages, philosophies, and community values. The nation is not merely a geographical entity, but a living multicultural civilization enriched by diverse epistemologies and ways of life, making it one of the most identity-diverse countries on the planet (Geertz, 1973).

This ethnic plurality—from the Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Mandar, Minangkabau, Bugis, Dayak, to numerous other indigenous communities—is complemented by smaller local traditions rooted in deep spiritual and cultural memory. At least 718 vernacular languages are actively used in daily interactions, positioning Indonesia as the second-most linguistically diverse nation after Papua New Guinea (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2014). Language here functions not only as a means of communication, but also as a marker of identity, a custodian of cosmology, and a vehicle of collective memory. While these identities create a rich symbolic tapestry and foster social belonging, they simultaneously hold the potential for contestation, especially when mobilized within political or electoral competition (Tadjoeddin, 2014).

Equally intricate is religious and belief diversity. Although the Constitution formally recognizes six religions—Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism—the lived spiritual landscape of Indonesia is far richer. Hundreds of indigenous belief systems such as *Sunda Wiwitan*, *Aluk Todolo*, *Parmalin*, and *Kaharingan* continue to survive, though often positioned at the margins of administrative recognition and cultural representation. Despite constitutional guarantees, the substantive implementation of religious freedom remains uneven, with minority communities still facing restrictions and discrimination (Crouch, 2011). Religious pluralism in Indonesia, therefore, is not static—it is a negotiated and sometimes contested social field.

Modernity and globalization introduce a new dimension of identity formation—one that is increasingly fluid and hybrid. Massive urbanization and the rise of digital ecosystems have produced generations whose identities blend local roots with global cultural flows. Labels such as *millennial Muslims*, *indie youth*, or *critical netizens* reveal how identity is no longer fixed but continuously shaped through cultural engagement, lifestyle, and mediated social interactions (Heryanto, 2008). Popular culture, social media, and online communities now serve as emerging arenas for self-articulation.

Yet, beneath Indonesia's remarkable diversity, significant challenges persist. Political polarization, the proliferation of digital hate speech, and the rise of exclusivist identity-based ideologies pose escalating threats to social cohesion. In the absence of shared ethical values that bind the nation, diversity risks transforming from a unifying asset into a source of division. Identity, in this context, may function not as a bridge but as a boundary—one that is readily instrumentalized for ideological contestation and narrow political interests. These dynamics underscores the increasing fragility of pluralism when it is not supported by a cohesive normative framework capable of fostering mutual recognition and social trust (Lim, 2017; Mietzner, 2018; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019).

Therefore, Indonesia's diversity requires not only recognition but also governance that is just, prudent, and grounded in ethical principles. It calls for a shared national narrative, a cohesive value system, and an inclusive ideological foundation capable of safeguarding pluralism. In this regard, Pancasila should be understood not merely as a symbolic or normative construct, but as a living national philosophy that actively sustains social harmony within an inherently plural society (Mietzner, 2018; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019; Lim, 2017; Hosen, 2021).

3.2. Identity, Conflict, and Power Dynamics

Identity does not merely reside as a cultural expression; it holds a strategic function within social and political dynamics. In the Indonesian context, identity often becomes a symbolic resource—mobilized, negotiated, and sometimes weaponized for political purposes. When identity intersects with power, the potential for conflict intensifies, especially within moments of national vulnerability such as elections, governance transitions, policy debates, or economic crises.

Identity conflicts in Indonesia may appear as visible confrontations—riots, sectarian violence, or hate speech—but they may also take subtler forms: symbolic exclusion, stereotyping, historical erasure, or policy discrimination. These conflicts emerge through various triggers: competition for access to resources, political legitimization, religious authority, or cultural dominance (Gurr, 2000).

The history of Indonesia provides multiple examples of identity tensions—from ethnic conflicts in Sampit and Ambon, to friction fueled by sectarian narratives during electoral cycles. Many of these conflicts originated not from inherent hostility among communities, but from deliberate instrumentalization of identity by elites seeking political advantage (Aspinall, 2019). In cyberspace, identity polarization grows sharper: social media amplifies ideological echo chambers, accelerates misinformation, and normalizes antagonistic discourse. Digital identity thus becomes a battlefield of legitimacy, morality, and symbolic superiority.

Identity conflict is significantly shaped by the circulation of global ideological currents. Transnational narratives—whether grounded in religion, nationalism, or claims of cultural supremacy—often challenge Indonesia's pluralistic foundation. Radical ideologies, identity exclusivism, and populist discourses tend to exploit societal anxieties, reframing plurality as a threat rather than a collective asset. Such ideological contestations gradually erode social trust and weaken the foundations of civic solidarity (Mietzner, 2018; Hadiz, 2016; Lim, 2017).

Nevertheless, identity conflict should not be understood solely as a destructive phenomenon. From a sociological perspective, conflict can function as a catalyst for transformation by compelling societies to renegotiate consensus, redefine national commitments, and strengthen ethical frameworks of coexistence. When managed

through inclusive dialogue, ethical leadership, and just governance, identity tensions may evolve into processes of collective learning rather than sources of violent rupture (Cosser, 1956; Dahrendorf, 1959; Wiewiorka, 2012).

In this regard, Indonesia requires not only tolerance but also a deeper ethical commitment manifested in civic empathy, shared responsibility, and dialogical citizenship. Within this framework, Pancasila retains its strategic relevance—not merely as a ceremonial doctrine, but as a guiding ethical compass capable of moderating identity tensions and transforming conflict into sustainable coexistence (Latif, 2018; Hosen, 2021; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019).

3.3. The Middle Path of Pancasila

The moderating essence of Pancasila is reflected in the grand compromise forged by Indonesia's founding figures. Rather than emerging from ideological rigidity, Pancasila was constructed through a process of intellectual flexibility that accommodated diverse social, cultural, and religious aspirations. It neither adopts a strict form of secularism that excludes religion from public life nor embraces theocratic dominance that limits civil rights beyond the majority faith. Instead, it represents a negotiated ideological foundation that affirms both religiosity and pluralism within a unified national framework (Latif, 2018; Hosen, 2021).

As a middle path, Pancasila positions itself between the extreme poles of global ideologies. It rejects radical liberalism that prioritizes unrestricted individual freedom at the expense of social responsibility, while also rejecting collectivist ideologies that suppress individual autonomy under totalizing state control. Through its five principles, Pancasila promotes a balanced ethical orientation—between divinity and humanity, freedom and responsibility, rights and obligations, as well as between individual interests and the common good. This equilibrium reflects its function as a normative framework for sustaining social cohesion in a plural society (Kaelan, 2013; Asshiddiqie, 2020).

In the context of intensifying identity politics, marked by polarization, competing value systems, and the spread of hate-based narratives rooted in religious, ethnic, and ideological claims, Pancasila assumes renewed relevance. Within this dynamic and often contentious socio-political landscape, it does not operate as a coercive instrument of power, but rather as a guiding ethical ethos that cultivates harmony within diversity. Pancasila thus serves as a mediating paradigm—situated between liberal secularism and theological fundamentalism, between unrestrained capitalism and rigid authoritarian collectivism, and between exclusive ethnocentrism and rootless cosmopolitanism. In doing so, it not only unifies but also humanizes the nation by fostering inclusive and dignified coexistence (Mietzner, 2018; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019; Hadiz, 2016).

As a formulation of national philosophy born from historical struggle, Pancasila did not emerge from a vacuum. It is the crystallization of collective wisdom from a plural society that realizes the path to shared safety is not the unilateral road of the majority, but a crossroads of noble values that honor diversity as destiny and uphold equality as foundation. Reflected within its principles is the depth of the Indonesian people's spiritual and moral reflection: the belief in One Supreme God does not serve as justification for a religious state, but as the source of public ethics inspiring a just and civilized humanity. In this sense, as asserted by Notonagoro (1975), Pancasila is not merely a normative system, but an integral philosophical system intertwining the principles of divinity, humanity, and justice into a single, inseparable ethical body.

Amid the enduring tension between religion and the state, Pancasila offers a distinctive middle path by refraining from endorsing any doctrine that claims absolute

truth. Instead, it constructs an inclusive public sphere in which diverse beliefs can coexist within a framework of civility and mutual respect. Indonesia is thus neither a strictly secular state in the Western sense nor a theocratic state; rather, it represents a form of spiritual-democratic governance that acknowledges religion as a moral foundation of public life without succumbing to majoritarian domination. In this regard, Pancasila embodies a form of “civilized religiosity,” ensuring that faith does not become an instrument of exclusion or oppression, while preventing the state from drifting into a moral vacuum (Hosen, 2021; Menchik, 2016; Latif, 2018).

Abdillah (2001) emphasizes that Pancasila creates a space where religion may exist in civic life—not as an institution of power, but as a source of inspiration for just policy. The founding fathers' decision to remove the Seven Words from the Jakarta Charter stands as a profound testament that consensus is not built upon ideological triumph, but upon honoring authentic pluralism. That removal was not a betrayal of Islamic values, but a declaration that Indonesia belongs not to one group, but to all citizens without exception.

In the realm of economics, the middle-path nature of Pancasila also finds its relevance. It does not obey the logic of capitalism that concentrates wealth in the hands of a few, yet it does not surrender economic control entirely to the state in the style of orthodox socialism. The social justice principle enshrined in the fifth sila embodies the noble pursuit of balance between efficiency and equity, between individual rights and social responsibility. The people's economy envisioned by Bung Hatta (2004) is not a mere slogan, but a practical effort to place the people as rightful owners of production instruments through cooperatives, collective enterprises, and familial principles.

From an economic perspective, Pancasila advances a vision that positions citizens as active subjects of development rather than passive objects of policy. It promotes equitable distribution within a framework of humane and socially embedded production. The state plays a strategic role as a guarantor of social justice while allowing space for market mechanisms and individual initiative. In this sense, Pancasila articulates a balanced synthesis between economic freedom and social welfare, individual entrepreneurship and collective responsibility, as well as innovation and social empathy (Rosser, 2018; Hadiz, 2016).

In the context of rapidly evolving socio-political dynamics—particularly the rise of identity politics that threatens to fragment the national fabric—Pancasila offers an inclusive narrative of citizenship that transcends primordial affiliations. It frames identity not as a hierarchical marker, but as a form of cultural wealth that enriches the nation. Within the Pancasila framework, all citizens are equal regardless of ethnicity, religion, or language. Such equality does not erase differences; rather, it affirms them as the very foundation of pluralism. Consequently, Pancasila provides a normative response to the tension between exclusive ethnocentrism and rootless universalism, positioning itself as a unifying ethical framework for sustaining inclusive and democratic coexistence (Mietzner, 2018; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019; Menchik, 2016).

The concept of loyalty in Pancasila is not tied to blood or lineage but to constitutional values. In Habermas's terms, it reflects constitutional patriotism, where love of the nation is bound to ethical commitment rather than narrow symbols of identity. Chinese-Indonesians, Minahasans, Dayaks, Madurese, Papuans, and all others hold the same standing in the republic as long as they anchor themselves in Pancasila's values. Here lies the nobility of the middle path: it does not force sameness but binds all through shared principles.

Pancasila should not be understood as a static or neutral middle ground in the sense of passive indifference. Rather, it represents a dialogical principle that demands openness to difference and a sustained commitment to public deliberation. It is not a dormant doctrine confined to the preamble of the Constitution, but a living normative framework that must be continuously reinterpreted in response to changing socio-political realities. In addressing contemporary challenges—such as digital radicalism, widening economic inequality, environmental crises, and moral decline—Pancasila remains an adaptive and relevant ethical foundation for guiding national life (Latif, 2018; Lim, 2017; Mietzner, 2018).

As Kaelan emphasizes, the longevity of Pancasila depends on the collective courage to translate its principles into concrete policies and social practices. The “middle path” embodied in Pancasila is not a path of comfort or convenience, but one of ethical struggle and continuous engagement. It requires wisdom in mediating conflict, moral clarity in recognizing others as equal members of the national community, and a firm commitment to uphold civility in the face of extremism and political opportunism. In this sense, the endurance of Pancasila rests upon society’s capacity to actively negotiate its values within ever-evolving socio-political contexts (Kaelan, 2013; Hosen, 2021).

To embody Pancasila citizenship is not to align with ideological extremes—whether on the right or the left—but to occupy a principled middle ground rooted in justice, human dignity, and unity in diversity. This middle path is not a space of ambiguity, but a normative “golden path” that balances idealism with pragmatism, and individual interests with the common good. In this sense, Pancasila constitutes both an inherited legacy and an ongoing responsibility—one that gains meaning only when actualized through public action, institutional practice, and the rhythms of everyday civic life (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019; Menchik, 2016).

3.4. The Golden Rule of Pancasila

Amidst the restless turbulence of civilization—where differences are sharpened into weapons of hostility, and boundaries of identity are erected as walls of exclusion—Pancasila stands as a bridge of virtue that reconciles dichotomies: between the self and the other, majority and minority, authority and the people. In a social landscape increasingly uprooted from the logic of civility, Pancasila conveys an enduring message grounded in universal moral wisdom: *do not do unto others what you would not want done unto you*. This is the essence of The Golden Rule, an ethical principle shared across civilizations, binding humanity with a common thread of compassion. As the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian nation, Pancasila embodies this principle not merely as moral teaching, but as an ideological, political, and cultural framework embedded in the very pulse of nationhood.

The first principle, Belief in the One and Only God, contains a message that transcends narrow sectarianism. The divinity it affirms is not a monopoly of a single creed, but a noble acknowledgment that human beings possess a transcendent consciousness—a source of ethics that grounds courtesy, empathy, and compassion. When the world’s religions articulate the Golden Rule—whether through the words of Jesus: *“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you”* (Matthew 7:12), or the teaching of Prophet Muhammad: *“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself”* (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)—Pancasila encapsulates that spirit in a more inclusive and civic form: making faith a source of illumination for social relations, not a barrier. In this spirit, divinity within Pancasila is

not merely a formal recognition of God's existence, but a profound declaration that ethical responsibility grounded in spirituality must guide human interactions.

The second principle, Just and Civilized Humanity, is the direct social articulation of The Golden Rule. It calls for just treatment toward others—not because of transactional reciprocity but because every human being possesses equal dignity. Within the ethical logic of Pancasila, individuals are never treated as mere instruments for another's goals, but as ends in themselves—a principle echoed by Immanuel Kant. Therefore, justice is not limited to equitable distribution of resources but extends to respect for difference and recognition of inherent, inalienable human rights that cannot be revoked—not even by majority rule. In this context, Pancasila acts not only as a constitutional safeguard but also as a moral compass guiding societal civility.

Meanwhile, the third principle, The Unity of Indonesia, asserts that love of homeland must never be built upon the suffering of others. Unity, in the philosophy of Pancasila, is not the enforcement of uniformity but a bond of solidarity that harmonizes diversity. It upholds *coexistence*, not *assimilation*. In this articulation, Pancasila becomes the Golden Rule of politics: placing national identity above sectarian interests without erasing the beauty of plurality. It builds consensus without suppressing freedom, akin to John Rawls's concept of overlapping consensus, where moral diversity finds shared agreement in principles of justice. With its poetic elegance and philosophical clarity, Pancasila transforms this aspiration into a lived reality—a nation that is diverse yet united.

The fourth principle, Democratic Life Led by Wisdom of Thoughts in Deliberations Amongst Representatives of The People, demonstrates how The Golden Rule takes form within democratic governance. Deliberation is not a contest of verbal dominance, but a space where minority voices are heard and respected; where decisions emerge from collective wisdom rather than superficial majoritarianism. Here, wisdom is the soul of democracy. In classical Aristotelian discourse, *phronesis*—or practical wisdom—is the ethical ability to choose what is good based on moral virtue rather than procedural formality. Guided by this spirit, Pancasila does not advocate a hollow liberal democracy, but a democracy rooted in *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), compassion for the vulnerable, and willingness to restrain personal desires for the greater good. This is what distinguishes it from democracies driven by electoral calculation and polarizing ideological battles.

Finally, the fifth principle, Social Justice for All The People of Indonesia, affirms The Golden Rule in economic and social life. It rejects stark inequality, structural corruption, and exploitation in the name of economic growth. Justice in Pancasila is not merely procedural—it is distributive, siding with the oppressed, restoring dignity to the marginalized, and ensuring fair access to well-being. Mohammad Hatta (2004) argues that the ideal of social justice is an economy imbued with the spirit of kinship—not individualistic capitalism. Through this, Pancasila manifests The Golden Rule in public policy—policies that liberate, rather than policies that enrich a select elite.

Thus, Pancasila is not merely a political ideology—it is a public ethic embodied in the Golden Rule, a moral thread stretching across civilizations, from sacred scripture to constitutional expression. It teaches the Indonesian nation to live with empathy, not hostility; emancipation, not domination; compassion, not contempt. Herein lies the greatness of Pancasila: it does not command—it awakens; it does not subjugate—it elevates. In an increasingly fragmented world—where digital algorithms divide faster than they unite, and where hate speech becomes political commodity—Pancasila, as the living embodiment of The Golden Rule, stands as a lantern of hope. A lantern that not only

guides the nation through the corridors of time, but reaffirms that kindness, justice, and humanity are the truest foundations of the Indonesian home.

3.5. Mitigating and Navigating Identity Clashes

Amid the turbulence of an era that increasingly strains the boundaries of identity, Indonesia emerges as a complex arena of interpretive contestation—where plurality, ideally a source of strength, often transforms into a locus of tension. As an archipelagic nation shaped by diverse layers of culture, ethnicity, language, and religion, Indonesia inevitably becomes fertile ground for identity-based contestation. These clashes are not merely horizontal conflicts between social groups; rather, they reflect deeper collective anxieties and unresolved historical tensions embedded within the nation’s socio-political fabric. The persistence of conflicts rooted in ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (*Suku, Agama, Ras, dan Antargolongan—SARA*), compounded by the proliferation of hate speech, discrimination against minorities, and digitally mediated radicalization, underscores the fragility of social cohesion in the contemporary era. In this context, Indonesia is not only challenged to endure such pressures but is also called to articulate a dignified middle path—one that navigates identity differences through civility, deliberation, and a normative foundation grounded in national values and inclusive citizenship (Lim, 2017; Mietzner, 2018; Menchik, 2016; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019; Kamalludin et al., 2025).

Indonesian moderation is not a normative concept repeated in ceremonial speeches or state slogans. It is a political-cultural praxis born from the realization that extremism—whether in the form of religious exclusivism, ethnic chauvinism, or toxic nationalism—is a corrosive force that erodes the pillars of nationhood. Moderation, in this context, is the process of restoring dignity within intergroup relations—not by eliminating differences, but by managing them with maturity and ethical clarity. Mitigating identity clashes requires uncovering the structural and symbolic roots of tension through reconciliation, multicultural education, and renewal of public discourse toward greater inclusivity. As Liliweri (2005) argues, identity conflicts often do not arise from the cultural substance itself, but from confrontational ways in which groups construct and assert their identities.

Therefore, Indonesian moderation must begin with a recontextualization of the national narrative—one that does not position the “other” as a threat, but as an integral part of the nation’s construct. Within this framework, identity navigation becomes essential: the capacity to steer the vessel of nationhood through the storms of sectarianism with a clear moral compass. Pancasila—with its universal and cosmopolitan values—serves as both moral and constitutional navigation, guiding every citizen toward dialogue rather than hostility; toward understanding rather than negation. The principles of Pancasila are not static norms—they are ethical horizons that allow differences to grow within a framework of mutual respect. As Kaelan (2016) affirms, Pancasila is an open value system capable of responding to the challenges of time without losing its identity.

Efforts toward mitigation also require the active presence of the state through affirmative policies and transformation of social structures that reproduce inequality among identities. When power, economic resources, and access to information are monopolized by certain groups, sentiments of injustice and marginalization become fertile soil for radicalism and separatism. Here, moderation demands courage from the state to act justly toward vulnerable groups, rebuild trust across communities, and create an open public sphere where all identities may be represented. As Giddens (2003) asserts, a modern state seeking cohesion in a multicultural society must balance national

solidarity with cultural autonomy. Indonesia, with its long history of coexistence within diversity, possesses strong historical and cultural capital to carry out this mandate—so long as political will is firmly grounded in social justice and respect for pluralism.

Furthermore, moderation through identity navigation necessitates education as its central instrument. Citizenship education grounded in tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and deliberative democratic values becomes a bulwark against disintegration. In a VUCA era—marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—Indonesian youth must be equipped with critical thinking skills, social empathy, and digital ethics. Digital literacy and diversity literacy must function as a living curriculum embedded in learning spaces. Banks (1997) reminds us that multicultural education is not merely exposure to difference—it is a transformative process that prepares learners to become agents of justice and equality. In this light, schools and universities become strategic arenas for cultivating moderate citizens—individuals confident in their identities yet never suspicious of others.

Additionally, mitigating and navigating identity dynamics in Indonesia requires the restoration of national spirituality—long fragmented by ideological contestation. This spirituality is not a rigid doctrinal structure but a noble awareness that every human being—regardless of background—possesses dignity and moral responsibility. Within such spirituality, moderation finds its essence: expressed through compassion, justice, and mutual care. If identity conflict grows from feelings of abandonment and exclusion, then moderation must reach out to those historically sidelined from the center of national narratives. As Nurcholish Madjid (2008) articulates, pluralism is not merely a condition—it is a value that must be defended and nurtured: a commitment to equal recognition and respect for diversity.

Thus, moderation in the Indonesian context should not be understood merely as a pragmatic political choice, but as a moral and strategic imperative for safeguarding national cohesion. In an era increasingly shaped by identity politics and digital populism, Indonesia requires a unifying grand narrative—one that not only manages conflict but transforms it into a source of collective resilience and shared purpose. Moderation, in this sense, represents an ethical framework for coexistence: the ability to live together without demanding uniformity, to cultivate national belonging without hostility toward difference, and to pursue justice without exclusion or vengeance. By embracing moderation, Indonesia can move beyond the risks of fragmentation and instead harness its diversity as a foundation for solidarity, where plurality becomes a source of strength sustained through civic empathy and inclusive citizenship. Consequently, moderation emerges as a transformative paradigm through which Indonesia can evolve into a cohesive yet diverse nation—one that is strengthened not despite its differences, but because of them (Mietzner, 2018; Lim, 2017; Menchik, 2016; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019).

4. Conclusion

Within a multicultural national framework and ecosystem such as Indonesia, identity diversity is an inevitable reality as well as an invaluable blessing. However, this reality also carries the potential for conflict when identity is constructed as an instrument of exclusion rather than inclusion. Identity clashes in Indonesia are manifested not only through physical conflict, but also through the polarization of public discourse, symbolic marginalization, and structural domination of particular groups. When identity becomes a political tool—propagated through social media and reinforced by exclusive narratives rooted in religious,

ethnic, or narrow nationalist sentiments—the outcome is not harmony, but social fragmentation. In this context, Pancasila emerges not merely as the foundation of the state, but as a dialogical ethos and public moral compass capable of bridging differences and mitigating conflict.

As a moderate ideology, Pancasila offers a middle path that does not align with any form of extremism—religious or secular, collectivist or individualist. It functions as an ethical guide that integrates the values of divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice into an adaptive and coherent system of values. In addressing identity conflicts, Pancasila must not remain solely a normative discourse; it must be actualized through policy practices, education, and cultural life. Indonesian moderation requires the recontextualization of national narratives that celebrate diversity as a source of collective strength rather than a threat. In a world marked by intense identity tensions, Pancasila stands as a guiding beacon leading us toward a more inclusive, just, and dignified civilization.

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