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ACTUALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION THROUGH THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL STORES AND COMMUNITY FIGURES IN LOMBOK

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Abstract: The purpose of this study described the roles of religious, and community figures as the vanguard in actualizing values of religious moderation. This study also described forms of religious harmony in Lombok society. This study used a qualitative and descriptive analysis method based on best practices through interviews, observations, and document studies as data collection techniques. Data research was analyzed through data reduction, data display, data conclusion, and data verification. The results of this study indicated the success of religious figures and community figures through their crusial roles as educator in providing an attitude of tolerance, facilitator in facilitating religious activities, coordinator in building harmonious communication, and mediators in resolving various problems between religious communities. The role of the spiritual, and community figures also has an impact on harmony in society in terms of religious harmony, social harmony, and cultural harmony as a form of actualization of religious moderation in Lombok society.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of issues of religious moderation is still quite popular and existent in this decade. Religious moderation provides a conceptual view that religion must be carried out moderately, namely implementing religious teachings and values in all aspects of life in a balanced and non-extreme manner (Ardi et al., 2021). Through religious moderation, the chaos in society can be overcome, especially the problem of conflict between religious communities and within religious communities. This concept is also considered adequate and provides solutions and a middle way to resolve various religious problems to guarantee freedom of religion and belief (Sutarja et al., 2024).

In its application, religious moderation must uphold some values by having a benchmark to determine its success in Indonesian society's lives (Serjeant, 2003). Therefore, four leading indicators of religious moderation values must be fulfilled: national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and acceptance

of local culture. These four indicators determine the quality of religious moderation carried out by an individual or group in Indonesia (Cansoy et al., 2022).

The factors for implementing religious moderation are caused by the emergence of religious practices that are seen as contradictory to humanitarian values, such as the rejection of the construction of houses of worship and the attitude of inclusivism in religion (Kitts & Perry, 2023). Then, the emergence of extreme understanding by certain groups because of different religious views gives rise to anarchic attitudes and actions. Finally, the emergence of religious discrimination, such as arbitrary treatment by the majority against the minority (Ghirmai & Hongde, 2023).

A study has revealed the presence of religious moderation in Indonesia to answer various challenges, such as the existence of truth claims for an individual or group that will give rise to intolerant, exclusive, and dogmatic attitudes (Carter et al., 2024). Furthermore, there is a religious understanding that is not in line with national commitments, such as the formation of a new state or caliphate and others, as well as acts of violence in the name of religion that violate human rights and human values (Parhusip, 2024). In addition, there is also the negative influence of globalization and technology on religious life, such as the spread of inaccurate, false information containing hate speech, radicalism, and terrorism (Hajovsky et al., 2020).

The concept of religious moderation is very relevant to be implemented in multicultural and multi-religious areas such as Indonesia, which has a diverse society with various tribes, languages, cultures, and religions (Aitkenhead et al., 2024). This diversity condition, especially regarding religion, is necessary to implement religious moderation in Indonesia to avoid community divisions. Moreover, Indonesian society is also religious when viewed from the daily activities of its people's lives, which are inseparable from the values of religious teachings (Marpaung et al., 2024).

One of the keys to the success of implementing religious moderation also begins with the role of central figures, such as spiritual figures and community leaders contributing to instilling moderation. However, in reality, the role of religious leaders is still considered less than optimal in creating harmony in community life (Thien & Liu, 2024). According to Strizhitskaya & Murtazina (2024)'s research, several strategies are able to be implemented by figures, such as cultural assimilation, the culture of mutual cooperation between religions, and educational communication between educational figures across religions in various community activities, to strengthen understanding and harmony in a pluralistic society.

Based on the research results, Lombok is a cultural area with exemplary implementation of moderation. This is indicated by its people who live in harmony by upholding the values of tolerance and having an attitude of mutual respect and appreciation. Records of religious conflict or terrorism in Lombok were also not found throughout 2023. Therefore, Lombok Island can be considered one area that reflects religious moderation's values with its diversity.

The assumption of Lombok as a region that upholds the values of religious moderation is also supported by several other studies (Mulyana, 2023). A study revealed that the level of tolerance of the community in East Lombok Regency is high, tending to be high with an average score of 3.79, Meanwhile, the tolerance level in Central Lombok Regency is also considered high, with a score of 3.68 (Afwadzi et al., 2024).

Lombok's success in implementing the values of moderation cannot be separated from the role of religious leaders and community leaders in guiding all religious communities. This phenomenon indicated that these figures' role significantly influences social harmony. This was also proven by various previous studies, such as the results of research by Subchi et al. (2022) that religious figures can be emulated in guiding society. Their role is to instil a positive attitude towards society regarding differences and views in worship. Meanwhile, other studies also show the role of religious figures and community leaders, such as communicating and preaching to the congregation and fostering the younger generation to always respect and appreciate differences, so that society understands religious moderation.

Based on the reasons above, research on the roles of religious figures and community leaders in Lombok society was something new in the field of religious moderation research. This research was able to provide an overview of figures in realizing religious moderation in society. Therefore, this research focused on describing and giving examples of each role they play. In addition, it also described the forms of harmony in Lombok society in actualizing the values of religious moderation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method based on best practice to identify, analyze, and document religious moderation practices carried out by the Lombok community through the role of religious leaders and community leaders. Participants in this study were village officials, religious leaders, community leaders, and the people of Lombok. Meanwhile, the location of this study was in Lingsar Village, Buwun Sejati Village, Mareje Village, Mareje Timur Village, West Lombok, Pemenang Barat Village, Pemenang Timur Village, Bentek Village, North Lombok, and Ubung Village, Central Lombok.

Data collection techniques in this study were through interviews, observations, and document studies. Interviews were conducted in-depth with village officials, 3 religious leaders, 5 community leaders, and 8 local communities, while observations were conducted directly, and analysis was conducted on document studies. The aim is to determine the role of religious leaders and community leaders in building religious harmony in Lombok society.

In this study, data analysis techniques were used through three activities: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion, and verification. The following steps of activities in data analysis were shown in the following figure.

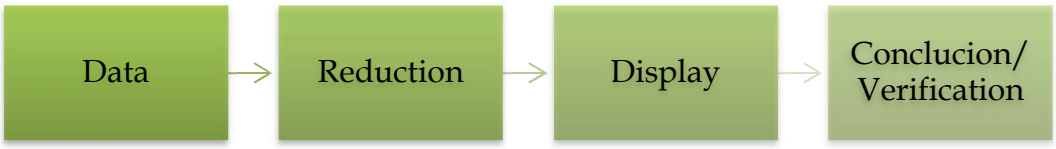


Figure 1. Data Analysis Activities

Data reduction is done by selecting and filtering data according to research needs obtained through various data collection techniques. All data that has been reduced is displayed in the data presentation stage. Data presentation by coding data. Moreover, it is grouped based on data collection techniques. Finally, the conclusion drawing and verification stage. This stage is carried out by concluding the research based on the results of the data reduction and presentation stages through valid and consistent evidence so that the findings presented are credible and accountable statements.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The strength of religious harmony in society must be distinct from the role of religious and community figures. They have become the vanguard in actualizing the values of religious moderation in Lombok society. In this regard, religious leaders are figures who can be emulated in guiding society. The roles of these figures are specifically described as follows.

Spiritual And Community Figures as Educator

Providing education to the community is the main task and role of religious and community leaders in actualizing the values of religious moderation in Lombok. Religious moderation education aims to provide understanding to the community and maintain harmony between religious communities by fostering tolerance and mutual respect for differences in beliefs. The form of education carried out by the leaders is concrete, through socialization or joint discussions, such as the Religious Harmony Seminar held in the East Pemenang area, North Lombok. Religious and community leaders were involved as speakers in providing religious moderation education to the community. The theme of the seminar was "The Role of Religious Figures, Community Figures, Youth Figures, and Women Figures in Strengthening Interfaith Harmony in Realizing Religious Tolerance."

Developing an attitude of tolerance leads society to build the values of tolerance. According to Allen et al. (2020) the attitude of tolerance or tolerance establishes an open, broad-minded, voluntary, and gentle attitude in accepting differences. Tolerance is always accompanied by respect, accepting different people as part of ourselves, and thinking positively. Therefore, tolerance is a moderate, fair attitude for all group or class interests. This is also in line with Williamson et al. (2020) which provides another idea that the attitude of tolerance does not mean equating all religions but respecting and honouring adherents of other religions without imposing the religion they believe in.

Moderation education is essential for the entire community, especially young people. So the role of youth figures who are one of the themes becomes a means of supporting it. Understanding moderation must be given to those who are more easily vulnerable to being trapped by environmental influences, such as social media (Azis et al., 2024). Ergogo et al. (2023) further explained the purpose of providing moderation education to young people, especially Muslims, so that there is no unwanted potential, such as extremism and liberalism. Regarding extremism and liberalism, such actions would not occur if society applied moderate values such as tolerance and tolerance. This is in line with the research of Aslan (2022) that applying a moderate religious attitude significantly affects deradicalization. This tolerance attitude leads society to a tolerance attitude that has a straight or middle understanding without being excessive. This attitude is in the middle, reflecting impartiality to the right or the left. This attitude can balance the afterlife and the world so that extremism and liberalism do not emerge.

Spiritual And Community Figures as Facilitator

In carrying out every religious activity in society, a figure who can facilitate the activity is needed. Therefore, religious leaders and community leaders take the initiative to take their role as facilitators, either in the form of power or material, in actualizing the values of religious moderation in the Lombok community and providing assistance in the form of manpower by overseeing and securing religious activities, while material assistance such as providing religious equipment facilities through the village budget, even personally. Another concrete form is to help establish educational institutions for children in each religion through the Village budget, regardless of their status as majority or minority. The phenomenon was found in the village of Buwun Sejati. In addition to the Al-Qur'an Education Park, there is also a religious education institution for Hindu children called Pasraman. In addition, all religious teachers and guards of places of worship, both Muslim and Hindu.

This phenomenon showed that the figures apply the principle or value of balance in their roles to actualise religious moderation. Related to this, Aslan & Aybek (2019) said that the principle of balance, by giving something its rights, without looking at its religious status, without any additions or reductions, this principle of balance will lead humans towards happiness and peace in life. The purpose of providing religious education facilities to early childhood is to educate the younger generation to avoid criminal and extremist attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, religious education is crucial in preventing such attitudes and behaviour. Deng (2019) stated that providing facilities and means is one of the steps in instilling moderation because religious education will certainly teach these things. In addition, a facilitator also plays a role in providing direction in encouraging proper interfaith understanding (Fajar, 2024).

Spiritual And Community Figures as Coordinator

Acting as an interfaith coordinator is another form of involvement by religious and community leaders in maintaining harmony among religious communities. One form is holding meetings or deliberations, such as meetings

and discussions between leaders from each representative of the religious community. This meeting aimed to discuss all problems in these leaders' communities. The role of figures as coordinators is also seen in implementing religious activities. When one religious community carries out religious activities, such as *Nyepi* activities or the like, the relevant religious leaders coordinate with other religious leaders. The results of this coordination are conveyed to the community, such as notification of rules when other religious activities are carried out. For example, in Pemenang, when Hindus and Buddhists carry out religious activities, several points are used as locations that cannot be passed. Therefore, information about these rules is conveyed to Muslims through their leaders so that their activities are not disturbed and they run peacefully and safely. Muslims also understand this as a form of respect for other religions carrying out their religious rituals. This tolerance continues to be maintained in maintaining diversity between religious communities.

Regarding the above role, the attitude of coordinating between religious figures, such as notification of all information on agreements related to religious activities to the community (Assa'idi, 2021). This attitude is critical in facilitating the process of implementing moderation in communication. This aligned with Sufanti et al. (2021) that smooth coordination between religious figures will create harmonious relationships and produce agreements for religious harmony. Other views also add that an agreement in religion must not be violated because this behaviour is also considered to lead to extremist acts.

Spiritual And Community Figures as Mediator

Every problem in the interfaith community in Lombok society is undoubtedly unavoidable, so a mediator is essential in resolving these various problems. Therefore, religious leaders and community leaders also play a role as mediators for all problems. Mediation that leaders of the Lombok community often carry out usually concerns the issue of interfaith marriage. The phenomenon of interfaith marriage in Lombok has often occurred, so prospective couples must be mediated in choosing one religion so that interfaith marriages do not occur. If an agreement is found in mediation, the conversion process is carried out first, guided by the relevant religious leader, before proceeding to the marriage process. However, if there is no agreement, then the marriage cannot be continued.

Religious diversity in a region certainly has the potential to give rise to conflict or problems, so a mediator is needed in this case. Religious leaders and community leaders have carried out this role as mediators in Lombok to resolve all issues or problems between religious communities to actualise the value of moderation in society (Nayir & Saridas, 2022). This is also in line with Wahid et al. (2020), who stated that applying the concept of religious moderation is considered adequate and provides solutions to various religious problems.

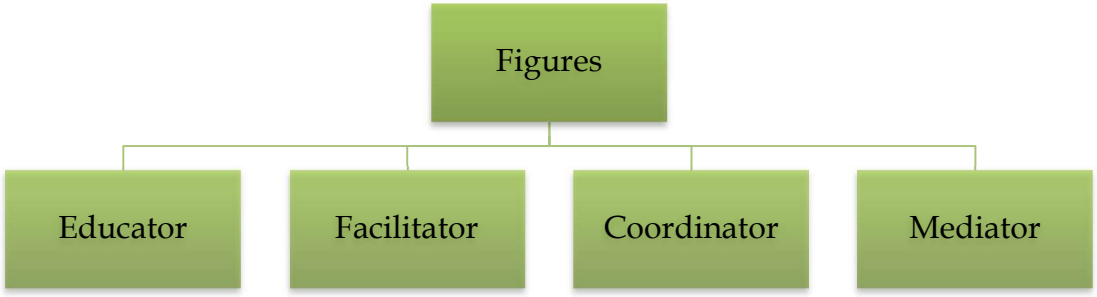


Figure 2. The role of the spiritual, and community figures

The roles played by religious and community leaders also have a positive impact on society by creating religious harmony in the Lombok community. Religious harmony has been shown in the history of Islam in the Medina community. In the time of the Prophet, the Muslim community had lived side by side with other religious communities, so harmony in society between religious communities is indeed a must because it has been given as an example from the past. The forms of harmony include Worship, Social, and Culture.

Worship Harmony

Harmony in the form of worship between Muslims and other communities was a form of tolerance in religion. Tolerance in worship is shown by the many places of worship of other religions that are close to the mosques of Muslims. This meaned that other religious communities also have places of worship like Muslims, even though they are in the minority. This showed that in religion, all people must be given rights and justice in worship. Granting these rights shows that society has an open attitude and accepts differences between religious communities.

In addition, harmony in terms of worship was also seen when there is a religious activity. Muslims highly respected the religious activities of other people by not carrying out activities that have the potential to disturb them. For example, during the implementation of *Nyepi*, several points or roads might not be passed, and the implementation is also assisted and guarded in terms of security. Harmony like this was a good thing because there is an attitude of giving space and not disturbing the rights of religious people to believe and practice their beliefs in general.

Social Harmony

The relationship between religious communities is perfect and harmonious socially. Muslims and other communities are like brothers and sisters who help and support each other in everyday life, regardless of their religious status, so when talking about tolerance, it is no longer necessary to question and debate because the social community there is far from that context. Regarding the form of social harmony through this phenomenon, the community's life that coexists and the existence of activities inviting each other when there is an event is an actualization of the principle and value of brotherhood or ukhuwah.

Furthermore, Nengah conveyed his argument that tolerance in North Lombok is not just a formality but is already ingrained in the community because all are brothers, even though they have different religions. In this case, it is crucial to understand that all people must be brothers. The Prophet Muhammad once did this, uniting various community groups in Medina through the Medina Charter. The charter succeeded in creating unity among different communities in terms of ethnicity, tribe, and various types of communities.

A concrete example of social manifestation is when there is a celebration of a community, such as a wedding. The community invites other communities to come and attend the event (Fatima et al., 2020). Likewise, when a different community is invited, they attend as a form of respect for other communities. Another social side is shown when there is sad news, such as death. The Muslim community also visits or pays respects to their brothers and sisters of different religions. This also showed the existence of a social attitude and concern in society. In addition, an attitude of social concern can also be applied by assisting other people and communities in need (Akarcay Ulutas et al., 2022).

Cultural Harmony

The culture of harmony over all the diversity in the Lombok community has always been maintained and preserved until now. The Lombok community in various regions has a variety of unique traditions and cultures. Being friendly to culture is also a valuable indicator in actualizing religious moderation in life, as it shows the extent of willingness to accept religious practices that are friendly to local culture and traditions. Moderate people tend to be friendlier in accepting local traditions and cultures.



Figure 3. Form of Community Harmony

The form of cultural harmony between religious communities built by the Lombok community is carried out by mutual cooperation. In addition, there are also joint activities to commemorate the national day by preserving the "Peresean" culture. This tradition is a fight between men from each religious representative armed with rattan sticks and thick and hard buffalo skin shields. After the fight, both of them hug and forgive each other. Another culture of harmony is also shown through the "Ngejot" tradition. This tradition is a culture of giving food to each other between communities. For example, when there is a commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday, Muslims provide dishes to others by delivering them to their homes. Islam itself views culture as the result of human

work based on religious values, so it should be able to use and utilize the wealth and abundance from Allah as best as possible based on the principle of usefulness so that humans must permanently preserve the traditions and cultures that develop in society without neglecting religious values. In other words, preserving culture and maintaining harmony is worth emulating as long as it does not conflict with religious norms and teachings. Being friendly to culture is also part of moderation.

Discussion

Religious shops and community leaders' role is crucial in building community harmony as a form of actualizing religious moderation in Lombok. Their roles are as educators through socialization in building an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect for differences in beliefs, as facilitators by providing support in the form of workforce and materials in religious activities somewhat, as coordinators in building communication between communities and ensuring that religious activities can take place safely, and as mediators in resolving problems between religious communities. These roles positively impact society, such as harmony in worship by respecting the beliefs of others and providing space to practice their beliefs, social harmony by building mutual concern, and cultural harmony by preserving traditions together as a form of cultural friendliness.

As previously studied by Chistolini (2019) that the role of religious figures to strengthen religious moderation in post-conflict societies that live in segregation within the framework of religious identity (Islam-Christian) is through constructive efforts to encourage religious moderation in Ambon City carried out by religious figures in Ambon City. This effort is still relatively small compared to the duties and responsibilities of religious figures in maintaining the continuity of religious harmony in Ambon City. The role of religious figures is very important so that it can be categorized as a reference for the government in maintaining harmony in community life.

Regardless of the focus of this research, it was chosen because the challenges of post-conflict community life are still experiencing trauma and segregation which is linked to the state's efforts through religious moderation to build a peaceful and harmonious society. Narratives with conflict themes may have unintended consequences for post-conflict generations of society. This can serve as a starting point for raising awareness of the importance of relationship restoration and trauma healing. Another legal reason is that apart from society as a whole, religious figures have the most important role in maintaining peace and religious diversity in Ambon City. This study aims to understand the views of Muslim and Protestant figures in Ambon City on religious moderation, while the research to be conducted aims to understand the understanding and attitudes of religious figures on residential segregation and its impact on strengthening religious moderation in Ambon City.

CONCLUSION

Religious shops and community leaders' role is crucial in building community harmony as a form of actualizing religious moderation in Lombok. Their roles are as educators through socialization in building an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect for differences in beliefs, as facilitators by providing support in the form of workforce and materials in religious activities somewhat, as coordinators in building communication between communities and ensuring that religious activities can take place safely, and as mediators in resolving problems between religious communities. These roles positively impact society, such as harmony in worship by respecting the beliefs of others and providing space to practice their beliefs, social harmony by building mutual concern, and cultural harmony by preserving traditions together as a form of cultural friendliness.

The implications of this study include the need to strengthen the role of religious and community leaders in the community by providing education through other means, providing various religious facilities, building effective communication between leaders, and finding new solutions to solving problems between communities. As a recommendation, this study can be developed by exploring the role of one of the religious or community leaders more deeply.

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