

ISLAM, LOCAL WISDOM AND RELIGIOUS HARMONY: RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN EAST-JAVA CHRISTIAN VILLAGE BASES

Umi Sumbulah,¹ Agus Purnomo,² and Jamilah Jamilah³

¹UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

²Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ponorogo

³Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands

Email: umisumbulah@uin-malang.ac.id

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Abstract

This article discusses the dynamics of interaction and harmony among believers in 41 Christian villages spread over 15 districts in East Java. Although called the Christian Villages, they are populated by Muslims, Catholics, Hindus, and Buddhists. The social diversity is formed through kinship and marriage. The Christian villages, which are called “Pancasila Villages” and “Villages of Diversity”, are melting pots that unite all wisdom, teachings, mythology, and religious traditions. The current qualitative research conducted in Christian villages in Jombang, Malang, and Situbondo go into the following results: first, the esoteric-inclusive interpretation that religion is a way of life that directs its adherents to achieve peace and happiness becomes the basis for religious people to respect each other and guarantee religious freedom; second, interfaith awareness that all religions have an exoteric dimension in the variety of rites to approach God is a basic principle in building harmony; third, the diversity meaning of symbols in the form of values, rituals, and sacred objects are embodied in the interactions of daily life. Religious moderation manifests in tolerance, inclusivism, equality,

and cooperation in various cultural spaces. Further researches on interaction pattern and level of religious moderation would be worth investigating.

Artikel ini membahas dinamika interaksi dan kerukunan umat beragama di basis desa Kristen yang berjumlah 41 desa yang tersebar di 15 kabupaten di Jawa Timur. Meski disebut Desa Kristen, desa ini juga dihuni pemeluk Islam, Katolik, Hindu, dan Budha. Keberagaman masyarakat terbentuk melalui kekerabatan dan perkawinan. Basis Desa Kristen yang dijuluki “Desa Pancasila” dan “Desa Keragaman” adalah titik lebur yang menyatukan semua kearifan, ajaran, mitologi, dan tradisi keagamaan. Hasil penelitian kualitatif yang dilakukan di desa-desa Kristen di Jombang, Malang, dan Situbondo ini menunjukkan: pertama, interpretasi esoteris-inklusif bahwa agama adalah cara hidup yang mengarahkan pemeluknya untuk mencapai kedamaian dan kebahagiaan, menjadi dasar bagi umat beragama untuk saling menghormati dan menjamin kebebasan beragama. Kedua, kesadaran lintas agama bahwa semua agama memiliki dimensi eksoteris dalam ragam ritus untuk mendekati Tuhan merupakan prinsip dasar dalam membangun harmoni. Ketiga, makna keragaman simbol berupa nilai, ritual, dan benda sakral diwujudkan dalam interaksi kehidupan sehari-hari. Moderasi beragama terwujud dalam toleransi, inklusivisme, kesetaraan, dan kerjasama dalam berbagai ruang budaya. Penelitian lebih lanjut tentang pola interaksi dan tingkat moderasi beragama layak dilakukan.

Keywords: *harmony; local wisdom; religious moderation; tradition*

Introduction

By 2021, Indonesia has been populated by approximately 272,229,372 people (Department of Population and Civil Registration, 2022). Based on religious affiliation, 86.88% are Muslim, 7.49% Christian, 3.9% Catholic, 1.71% Hindu, 0.75% Buddhist, and 0.04% beliefs of Confucianism and others. Based on the data released by the Ministry of Home Affairs in June 2021, the total population of East Java by religion is 97% Muslim (39.9 million), and the remaining 3% are Christian (683722), Catholic (276,882), Hindu (105,352), Buddhism (72,046), Confucianism and other beliefs (2,319) (Kusnandar, 2021). In East Java, there are 41 Christian villages spread over 14 districts. The term Christian Village refers to the villages where the population is predominantly Christian and has been founded by Christians since the Dutch era in the early 19th century. Among the Christian village bases in East Java, the oldest refers

to Mojowarno village in Jombang; then expanded to Peniwen, Suwaru and Wirotaman in Malang, and Ranurejo in Situbondo.

Mojowarno Christian village started with Coenrad Laurens Coolen, a Dutch *peranakan* who cleared the forest in Ngoro, and Ditotruno who cleared the Keracil forest in 1844. Coolen spread Christianity to the Javanese people who participated in clearing the forest through Javanese culture, such as *wayang*, *tembang* and rituals of worship with Javanese (Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Jombang, 2015). Apart from the religious diversity, Mojowarno's uniqueness is also seen in the traditions, rituals, languages, clothings, and teachings that have been acculturated with local culture and wisdom. In other words, the religions that developed in Mojowarno are not those maintaining rigid normativity but acculturative expressions and manifestation with local culture and wisdom. In subsequent developments, Mojowarno Christian Village, which was first inhabited by a Christian community, also opened to accept immigrant Hindu and Muslim communities. The city of santri, which has become an icon of Jombang because of the many considerable Islamic boarding schools, is unique because there exist the oldest Christian village around.

Mojowarno as the oldest Christian village based in Java, then expanded to Malang, namely Peniwen, a village located at the southern foot of Mount Kawi, Kromengan District, Malang Regency. The cultural exoticism of the village, which was built in 1880 by Sakejus et al., can be seen in the strength of the Peniwen community to maintain the originality of local wisdom, especially in terms of kinship, togetherness, mutual cooperation and other characteristics of communalism. The relationship between the Muslim minority and the Christian majority in this village before the reform era was nuanced with conflict and hostility. However, since the 2000s, conditions have gradually improved, so that non-Christian villagers could have ID cards according to their respective religious identities. Since the improvement of Islamic-Christian relations in the village in the reform era, the community carried out the *sonjo* (*anjangsana*) tradition during the celebration of religious holidays, *bersih desa* (village clean) rituals, salvation for the dead, *nyadran*, and mutual assistance in improving village infrastructure among the glues of harmony in this village (Assadurokhman, 2010). The relationship between Islam and Javanese Christianity in Peniwen in the 2000s was worthy of being used as an ideal role model for religious tolerance especially within the areas prone to conflict and religious violence.

Almost the same panorama also occurred in Wirotaman Village, Ampelgading District, Malang Regency, which borders Lumajang Regency. The founders and ancestors of this village consist of Muslims, Hindus and Christians. Therefore, these three religious communities have a big role in inter-religious tolerance and pass it on from generation to generation. Based on the records of the village government, which has a population of 4,144 people, there are 3,183 adherents of Islam, 659 adherents of Christianity, 298 adherents of Hinduism, and 4 adherents of Catholicism. The villagers, who are Muslim, Christian, Catholic, and Hindu, live in harmony and maintain tolerance for years. In this village, there are 11 main places of worship: 5 mosques, 3 temples, and 3 churches, which are located side by side. Religious tolerance in this village is firmly established through the traditions of *sonjo* (*anjangsana*), *nyadran*, village cleaning, and mutual cooperation in daily activities such as weddings, building houses, and other social celebrations. The bond of communalism as a society that lives in an isolated geographical area lets them more united in kinship ties even though they have different religions. Therefore, they have never been involved in a meaningful conflict. Religious leaders portray themselves as agents of harmony. They actively discuss information on conflicts that occur outside the region, and take anticipatory steps so that conflicts do not spread to the village. The life motto “harmony to death” is a principle guided by the villagers, called “Diversity” village (Panjaitan, 2018). There is no segregation of graves in the village. Everyone who died is buried in the same compound. They agree to direct the tomb to the north, following the teachings of Islam. The difference in the tomb lies only in the tombstone according to the provisions of the religion of the dead.

Another interesting locus on concern is Ranurejo Village, Situbondo because it was affected by religious violence on October 10, 1996, known as the “Peristiwa Sepuluh Sepuluh” (<http://situbondo.go.id>). Ranurejo hamlet, located in Sumberanyar Village, Banyuputih Subdistrict, is quite unique because it is the only hamlet in Situbondo Regency with a population of 2,618 people, consisting of 1977 (75.52%) Muslims and 641 (24.48%) Christian. Ranurejo was built by Christians by clearing the forest. After 2-3 years, Madurese ethnic Muslims came over, so the brotherhood between Islam and Christianity was closely intertwined. The Muslim community came from the Madurese tribe and the Christian community came from Ponorogo and its surroundings, which formed a Christian enclave in Situbondo.

The “sepuluh sepuluh” riots in 1996 did not leave a single place of worship for Christians in this city of santri (Santoso, 2002). Both Christians and Muslims strongly condemn the riots infiltrated by the interests of these irresponsible parties. The Muslim and Christian communities in this village remain good. The Situbondo riots actually become a motivation for them to continue to maintain harmony. Although two churches in Ranurejo have been burned, it does not cause any significant conflict. Celebrations of religious holidays, *slametans* and other communalist traditions are also a cultural field that unites them. The strong historical roots of togetherness between Muslims and Christians in the village of Ranurejo make interfaith marriages a common occurrence. There is a lot of religious diversity in one family. The procedure for interfaith marriage is done by submitting to one partner, or by sticking to each other’s religions. Controversy in religious law as well as prohibitions in state law regarding interfaith marriages are not effective enough to stem this phenomenon in society. Intensive interaction in daily life inevitably brings logical consequences to religious conversion and interfaith marriages. Thus, the practice of interfaith marriages which are normatively prohibited in Islam (al-Qur’an, 2:221) and Christianity (Kitab Deuteronomy 7:3), as well as the MUI Fatwa and Law No. prevent the people of Ranurejo from having interfaith marriages.

Method

This research was conducted in three (3) areas in East Java, which are inhabited by people with different religious affiliations, namely: Mojowarno Village in Jombang, Wirotaman and Peniwen Villages in Malang, and Ranurejo Village in Situbondo. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The perspective of symbolic interactionism is used to understand the behavior of religious communities from the point of view of the subject, which shapes and regulates behavior by considering the interpretation of the interaction partners. The theory is also used to portray the concept of harmony embodied in the behavior and interactions of religious communities. The basic concept of this theory is that humans have the ability to interpret symbols in the form of behavior, values, traditions, sacred objects, and perform interactions based on the interpretation of these symbols. Thus, the religious communities on the basis of these Christian villages interpret behavior, religious values, religious rites, traditions and local wisdom as the basis for interaction and building harmony. Data analysis was carried out in

a circular manner and verified through triangulation and member checks to avoid research bias.

Findings & Discussion

Javanese Islamic Identity in Christian Villages

Most of Java's rural areas are inhabited by heterogeneous communities. Many of them, if categorized there are *santri*, *abangan*, but there are also those whose Islamic identity is not clear. At least that phenomenon was found by Beatty (1999) in Banyuwangi, and because of this, a variant of "young fanatics" emerged representing *santri* Islam, hard conservatives, "hajis", and "skeptics", each of whom was willing to make a consensus to maintain social cohesion and harmony in society. In line with that, Koentjaraningrat, made the typology of Javanese religion into two, Jawi religion (or *kejawen*) which tends to be syncretic because it combines elements of pre-Hinduism, Hinduism, and Islam; and the *santri* religion (Islam) which seeks to purify pre-Islamic elements. Koentjaraningrat's claim seems different from the findings of Geertz (1982) and Anderson (2009), that the penetration of Islam in the interior of Java was not followed by resistance from local Javanese, including from the Mataram Hindu kingdom. In addition, Koentjaraningrat made a distinction between Islam on the coast of Java (coastal) and in the interior. According to Koentjaraningrat (1984), Islam on the coast of Java looks more orthodox than Islam in the interior. However, in tradition, culture and wisdom, Hindu-Buddhist, animism, Islam, and Christianity can coexist.

They have an understanding that realizing harmony and tolerance in everyday life is a part of an effort to create social harmony, so every religious community can carry out the guidance of their respective religions. It can be seen in the celebration of religious holidays, *sonjo* culture (*anjangsana*), life circle *slametan*, *nyadran* at funerals, village clean rituals, and mutual cooperation every Sunday. They are fused in the bonds of communalism and collectivity which are tied so strongly to the communities in the bases of Christian villages. Religion for Geertz (1982) is a symbol system that is practiced and expressed by society. Religion is a strong motivation to establish a relationship between humans and the absolute reality or the ultimate reality. This relationship is manifested in the form of a series of various religious rituals. Thus, religion is not something abstract but it is practiced by society. Religion is not only in the aspect of norms believed to be but on what is practiced in everyday life.

The meaning of religion for religious communities is a symbol expressed through various religious behaviors. According to Geertz (1982), religion is a symbol system that applies to set moods and strong motivations. Religion is a symbol that is a source of meaning. It is an expression manifested in diverse variations of religious rites and practices believed to be a truth, which is based on theological beliefs to maintain cosmic order. People in these villages understand religion as a symbol of peace and harmony. For them, it is the main driving force to create a harmonious life amidst differences and diversity. Religion is a strong motivation to establish a relationship between humans and absolute reality or the highest reality. This relationship is manifested in a series of various religious rituals. Therefore, it is distinctively logical when the Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities in these Christian villages can integrate through various traditions and other local wisdoms.

Tolerance and respect for religion and cultural residues, for the Javanese, is a matter of pride. This attitude, said Anderson (2009), is closely related to Javanese mythology which is described through *wayang* stories internalized in the mindset of the Javanese people. Through *wayang*, there are various people who represent the personal uniqueness of the Javanese people. *Wayang*, apart from being the center of Javanese character idols, is also a picture of the cosmic conflict between virtue and error, good and evil and so on. However, these contradictions are not meant to be distinguished from each other because they are full of ambiguity and tolerance, which can actually complement each other (Sumbulah, 2012). In this context, it can be seen that the religious communities in the Christian village, either Muslim, Christian or Hindu, prioritize social cohesion over theological barriers. Thus, folk religion in Java is a constellation of various faiths, doctrines, rituals and others practiced by the community according to local traditions or place and time along with its development and spread. In this context, the presence of Islam in Java takes the form of accommodation, integration, absorption and dialogue with non-Islamic roots and cultures, especially animism and Hinduism. Thus, it can conclude that the identity of Javanese Islam at the base of Christian villages is Islam that is accommodative to local culture, inclusive, and more concerned with harmony and social cohesion by embedding itself in the traditions of the local community.

Slametan and Local Wisdom as Symbols of Harmony in the Christian Village

Slametan is one of the most popular communal customs and rituals among Javanese, which is carried out to mark important events in one's life. These important events are related to the life cycles, such as birth, death, marriage; organizing religious holidays; community rituals for social integration; and *slametan* for other important events. In general, *slametan* is intended to create a state of prosperity, security, and freedom from all kinds of disturbances and harm. The phenomenon can also be referred to as local wisdoms, which are a views of life and knowledge as well as various life strategies in the form of activities carried out by local communities, in order to answer various problems in meeting their needs. The examples of local wisdom on the basis of Christian villages are customs, traditions, rituals, or in other forms, to honor ancestors, customs devoted to the implementation of ceremonies, such as *nyadran* and village cleans, as well as the customs related to various magical ritual behaviors.

Slametan and the ritual tradition of the life circle as an expression of Javanese religion are carried out by religious communities by following the animist tradition. Another ritual phenomenon that becomes a medium for the integration of all elements of Javanese society is the *nyadran* and *ruwatan purwokolo* traditions. People from various religions attend the rituals held at crossroads or even at funerals. The sacred caretaker who usually also leads the worship ceremony, is a person who is fluent in reading Islamic prayers, but is also fluent in reciting Javanese incantations to present spirits or supernatural powers. This view illustrates that the harmony of the religious communities on the basis of the Christian village is built with the eclecticism of pre-Islamic Javanese traditions, which form uniformity in diversity. Those who come from different elements, integrate solidly through various rituals. In this context, Weber's thesis (in Giddens, 1986) that defines rites and myths as tools of cosmic integration and harmonization finds its relevance. Therefore, the *slametan* ritual is a religious way carried out communally or together in building social order to strengthen interpersonal and social relations.

The *slametan* ritual has the following social and theological meanings: 1) theological bridge for Muslim (*santri* and *abangan*) and non-Muslim groups. With the *slametan* ritual, everyone follows the same standard of how it is carried out, without leaving the attributes of each other's differences; 2) media for community unification and integration. Therefore, some of the devout Muslims also hold various *slametan* rituals as carried out by society

in general, with the reason to maintain togetherness and cohesiveness. The writer also observes the same phenomenon in a number of villages in the Christian villages. Slametan at funerals - called *nyadran* - is also often carried out by the Muslim community, both the *abangan* and the *santri*, as well as other religious communities. Third, the *slametan* is a vehicle or forum for the meeting between the rich and the poor. In this context, *slametan* brings about economic distribution (blessing) which in the Islamic context is *sadaqah* (Woodward, 1989). Therefore, the *slametan* ritual has its theological basis in the Islamic tradition. However, the liturgical process or order of worship that begins with a prayer to God, followed by worship of the ancestral spirits, guardians and *danyang* of the village, also seems to strengthen Woodward's thesis.

Woodward's conclusion is different from the findings of Geertz (1982), Beatty (1999) and Ricklef (1979) that *slametan* is a ritual purely rooted in pre-Islamic traditions, especially Hinduism. However, it has its roots in two traditions at once, the pre-Islamic tradition and at the same time in the Islamic tradition. *Slametan*, although there included Islamic elements, is more influenced by Javanese religious philosophy, which is built on pre-Islamic traditions.

The sacred ceremonies and rituals above contain religious spirit and elements that are anthropologically referred to as part of the circle of life resulting from human interaction with the environment. Relations between religious believers in these activities, in practice, have transcended barriers and certain religious differences, not least in the death ceremony. If someone dies, residents don't need to wait for the "command" to come to give condolences through prayer (*ta'ziah*), help dig graves, and deliver the corpse to the cemetery regardless of the religion of the deceased. This attitude applies even in following the death *slametan* for up to seven days for Muslims. In this context, individual behavior is not seen as just biological behavior, but the behavior that is meaningful and dedicated to the common interest, namely maintaining social harmony and cohesion (Anwar & Adang, 2008). This tradition is reflected through several activities in almost all communities in the Christian villages, such as *slametan*, *undhuh-undhuh*, carnival of alms to the earth and the *ruwatan purwokolo* tradition as well as celebrations of religious and national holidays, such as *pitulasan* night and so on. These various traditions and local wisdom are not only a reference for one's behavior, but are also capable of dynamizing people's lives that are full of civility, especially in diverse communities. Thus, substantially local wisdom as values that apply in society, can be a support of harmony. These values are believed to be true and become a reference in the

daily life behavior of the local community. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that local traditions and wisdom are fundamental to keep human dignity in diverse communities because they are the glue of social cohesion.

The *slametans* carried out by the community in the Christian villages are religious and non-religious, related to the circle of life, religious holidays, annual rituals for social integration, as well as *slametans* for other crucial events. In this context, Geertz's categorization of *slametans* into 4 types finds relevance. Geertz (1982) categorizes it into 4, namely *slametans* related to life cycle crises (such as birth, circumcision, marriage, and death); the *slametan* which marks events in the Islamic calendar; the *slametan* to create village social integration; and *slametan* performed in connection with certain important life events. *Slametan* can be given in response to almost any event one wishes to celebrate, improve, or sanctify. In this context, in higher philosophical Javanese language, *slametan* can be interpreted as "Memayu Hayuning Bawana" (Beautifying the Beauty of the Universe).

The emergence of religious rites among society is basically related to three aspects. First, the question of meaning in which suffering, fear, crime and death cannot be separated from humans. Man tries his best to save himself. Second, the issue of charisma, which is a relational concept that arises from certain individual qualities and places them above normal expectations and has a certain authority to give certain strengths or blessings to others. This is because religion comes from a power that exceeds all the powers in the world (Bellah, 1991). It is in line with the theory developed by Cannon (1996) that sacred rites are one of the six ways of religion, which receives considerable attention in religious traditions. Religious rituals, which in this context become the religious expression of the Javanese people, pose a lot of functions: 1) providing procedures and order for religious activities; 2) enabling many people to be involved and to cooperate in carrying out complex activities; 3) preparing the context of meaningful symbols in the tradition; 4) fulfilling a need that will become a meaningful habit. Most importantly, religious rituals are symbolically a means to get closer and establish the right relationship with the absolute reality believed by the religious adherents (Cannon, 1996).

The Portrait of Religious Moderation in Christian Villages

The religious practice of the community in the Christian villages, East Java, is one of the best practices of religious moderation in Indonesia. It contains a balanced meaning in understanding religious teachings, which

is expressed consistently in adhering to the principles of each adherent's religious teachings but at the same time acknowledging the existence of the others. Thus, being moderate in religion shows a tolerant attitude, respects the diversity of views/opinions/schools, and does not impose one's will in the name of religious understanding by means of violence. Thus, someone who has a moderate religious perspective and behavior is consistent in recognizing and understanding different individuals and other groups (Ministry of Religion, 2019).

It is interesting to see the reality and expression of the diversity of the people in the Christian villages called Pancasila Villages or Villages of Diversity from the perspective of Paul Knitter, who understands that religion has two aspects of piety. For him, religion has an absolute side which is manifested as a priori religious and piety which is confined to the socio-cultural aspect of history and is therefore relative. These two aspects of religious piety can occur in all practices of religious life. All religious adherents experience the same exaltation of Ultimate Being, apart from the various expressions of symbolic-exotericism. This expression of glorification of Ultimate Being at the same time also becomes a medium for the practice of religious life at the base of these Christian villages. These two a priori piety and historical practice of religion exist together in the religious experience of society. Schuon's (1975) view on the esoteric dimension, all religions have an encounter even though each has different exoteric expressions. Based on the esoteric awareness, the encounter of religions among the community in the Christian villages is expressed in the bonds of collectivity and harmonious kinship.

In the context of social life in such a social space, every religious community can adapt to the circumstances in which they are in, as well as the meaning and effect of the actions they take. This is what Mead (Ritzer & Goodman, 2007) calls "significant gestures" and "significant communication". It explains how someone shares the meaning of symbols and reflects them in daily activities.

Local traditions and wisdom, especially in the form of *slametan* with various forms and motivations that have been practiced by the religious communities in these four regions, have become the breath that blends with their daily lives. Therefore, friction among religious communities is almost non-existent. Their sense of equality and brotherhood is greater than that of difference among religious adherents. Their commitment to practicing religious teachings is the impetus for them to respect each other's differences. They believe that no religion teaches hostility, conflict and violence. Even though

they have different beliefs, values and religious norms, these different religious communities can still interact with other norms such as culture, local wisdom, traditions and customs, as well as rational values (Knitter, 1985).

The appreciation and embodiment of religious teachings is realized in the interaction of people's lives. In this context, it is interesting to quote the voice of Glock and Stark (in Clayton & Gladden, 1974) that in the world of religions, there are five universal dimensions that can measure one's religious behavior, which are ideological (belief), intellectual (knowledge or cognitive), ritualistic, experiential, and consequential (the effect of the other four dimensions applied in the secular world). The dimensions measure the extent to which one's behavior is motivated by the teachings of his religion in social life (Kahmad, 2002). Thus, religion is a spirit that can affect one's interaction with others, which manifests itself in daily life through various cultural spaces, local wisdom and as the glue of cohesiveness, collectivity and other social categories.

Religious teachings can be reflected in the behavior of their adherents, not only as knowledge that settles in divine ideas. It can be seen in the life of the people in the Christian villages who hold very high religious tolerance. All religions teach mutual respect between religious communities, so as to create harmony and avoid conflict and violence. Various traditional rituals and celebrations of religious holidays are cultural fields that bring together and fuse existing differences. All religious people are committed to helping each other in the preparation and implementation of religious celebrations and ceremonies. These values are internalized and practiced in family life, which then becomes an important factor in realizing social and religious harmony among pluralistic societies. In this context, religious moderation is expressed in the form of high tolerance and respect between one community and another.

The basic concept of religious harmony in Indonesia refers to the Joint Ministerial Regulation between the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs, Number 9 of 2006/8 of 2006. In this case, religious harmony is described as a condition of relations between religious communities based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, respect for equality in the practice of religious teachings and cooperation in the life of society, nation and state within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Ali (2003) argues that religious harmony is a social condition in which all religious groups can live together without prejudice to the basic

rights of each to carry out their religious obligations. Each individual lives as a follower of a good religion, in a state of harmony and peace (Ali, 2003). Strengthening Ali's statement, Adeney, cited in Hayat (2012), exposes three basic principles to ensure that religion becomes a factor of national integration: accepting, respecting, and cooperating. Harmony contains the principle of reciprocity which puts forward the principles of mutual support, assistance, and benefit.

The principle of religious moderation developed by people with diverse religious bases can be seen in attitudes of tolerance (*tasamuh*), equality (*musawah*), and deliberation (*shura*). *Tasamuh* means tolerance, namely generosity, forgiveness, ease, and peace (Siradj, 2013). Etymologically, it means tolerating or accepting cases, or accepting differences lightly (Masduqi, 2011). In other words, it refers to one's stance or attitude manifested in a willingness to accept various views and opinions, diverse beliefs. Thus, the tolerance is closely related to the issue of freedom or independence of human rights and the order of social life, thus allowing tolerance for differences in opinions and beliefs of each individual. People who have *tasamuh* nature will respect and allow different stances, opinions, views, beliefs, habits, behaviors, traditions, customs and so on. The practice of religious community in the Christian villages shows an attitude of tolerance between one another.

Another moderate principle that develops around Christian villages is egalitarianism (*musawah*). *Musawah* is equality and respect for fellow human beings as God's creatures because all human beings have the same value and dignity regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. In Islam, this principle is usually rooted to the Q.S. al-Hujurat [49]: 13, which positions humans as equals before God. The price of humans before God is not determined by gender, ethnicity and nation, but is assessed in terms of commitment and consistency in carrying out religious teachings (*taqwa*). This verse emphasizes the unity of human origin by showing the equality of humanity for both men and women. The point between men and women is the same, there is no difference between one and the other. This principle of deliberation negates the privilege of one person over another. Therefore, this attitude has implications for the obligation to maintain the rights of non-Muslims, equality of men and women in religious and other obligations, differences between humans in society, equality before the law, and equality in holding public office, as well as equality based on unity of human origin. All mankind cannot turn away from the above verse regardless of their religion because it has been God's destiny (*sunnatullah*) that

humans are created in the frame of diversity. Therefore, they are required to accept these differences in their lives. In Islamic theology, tolerance between religious believers and tolerance for differences based on religion, race, gender, culture and other social classes is a highly significant treatise.

In the Christian villages, there is also another principle of religious moderation, namely deliberation (*shura*). It refers to the attitude of explaining and negotiating or asking each other and exchanging opinions on a particular issue, as in Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 159) and Q.S. al-Shura: 38. According to Shihab (2001), the attitude or ethics of deliberation is explained in Q.S. Ali-Imran: 159 that Allah commanded to the Prophet Muhammad SAW with four (4) principles of deliberation: 1) Be gentle, not rude, and not hard-hearted; 2) forgive; 3) ask for divine forgiveness as an attitude that accompanies the deliberation; 4) surrender to Allah when the deliberation has reached an agreement. The Messenger of Allah always consulted in everything because deliberation is one way to reach a mutual agreement, as in the hadith of the Prophet conveyed to Abu Bakr and Umar: "If the two of you gathered in a deliberation, I would not be different from you" (H.R. Ahmad). This attitude is also seen in joint decision making in the religious community to carry out joint activities on the basis of Christian villages in Jombang, Malang and Situbondo.

Indicators of religious moderation can also be found strongly in people's lives in the Christian villages. The indicators referred to are national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence and radicalism, and being accommodative to local culture. First, the national commitment seen in the life of the community around the Christian villages can be seen in the implementation of Pancasila values which include divinity, humanity, unity and integrity, deliberation and social justice. Their obedience to the regulations and the state constitution contained in the 1945 Constitution, as well as respect for diversity as a reflection of the value of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, and maintaining the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia. Celebrations of national holidays such as *Pitulasan* night, the basis of Pancasila values, e.g respect for adherents of other religions, the humanitarian aspect reflected in helping others, and so on, are among the expressions of religious moderation in the community. Second, tolerance, namely the attitude of accepting freely and giving freedom to the adherents of other religions to carry out the teachings of their respective religions. Tolerance is also seen in their willingness to help each other in preparation for the celebration of religious holidays, as well as their open attitude towards followers of other religions, both at the family

and community levels. This is reflected in the fact that families of different religions are created from kinship, brotherhood, and marriage.

Third, anti-violence and radicalism. All religious communities have an anticipatory attitude towards the possibility of issues of religious radicalism entering their territory, as what happened in Wirotaman for example. The issue of radicalism is immediately responded to by bringing together all elites of religions as well as young and interfaith youths, to be given insight and understanding about the dangers of radicalism, so that they have high awareness of it. In addition, interreligious conflicts are also avoided. The events of *sepuluh-sepuluh* in Ranurejo at the wider community level proved not to disturb the relationship between Islam and Christianity in the area. Fourth, accommodating to local culture. *Slametan*, local wisdom and various traditions carried out jointly by all religious communities around the diverse villages are another form of religious moderation. In this case, the religious communities in the Christian villages have the ability to put themselves in the position of others, act as the surrounding community acts and see themselves as other people see followers of other religions. It can be evidence that these religious communities have made their daily activities a symbol and a value system that internalizes them in good interactions.

The creation of a moderate religious life as expressed by the religious communities in the Christian villages is influenced by socio-historical factors related to the history of the formation of these villages which were generally opened by Christians but were built with other following religious communities. In this context, tolerance is closely related to the village ancestors who consist of three (3) religions, namely Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. They have a big role in tolerance between religious communities in these villages. Parents always instill their children to always live a peaceful life full of tolerance. Second, the same place to live, which makes them have a moral obligation to keep the village in harmony. Third, the role of religious elites who are responsive in responding to SARA-related issues that can divide unity and integrity. Fourth, there is public awareness formulated from tradition and comes from conscience to maintain diversity, equality, cooperation and tolerance in carrying out their respective religious obligations. Some of the factors that shape harmony and tolerance between religious communities in the bases of the Christian villages can be captured by Max Weber's theory of social action (Ritzer & Goodman, 2007). There are four aspects that underlie a person in determining the choice of action related to the concept

of rationality, namely acts of instrumental rationality, value rationality actions, affective actions, and traditional actions.

The existence of the same place of residence and the role of characters in maintaining harmony are examples of acts of instrumental rationality. The inheritance from ancestors and mutual care are examples of value rationality. The formation of public awareness that comes from conscience can be referred to as affective action. Meanwhile, the harmony is an example of traditional action. The best practice of religious moderation among religious communities in the Christian villages is also seen in the indicators related to the national commitment, tolerance, anti-radicalism and violence, as well as respect for traditions, culture and local wisdom.

Conclusion

Social and religious harmonization in the Christian villages in East Java has been going on for a long time and has grown a tradition applied as a common agreement. The preservation of social harmonization is manifested in traditions carried out and preserved together in living religious and social-social life. These traditions have naturally crossed their individual and emotional-religious boundaries, so they become common property regardless of religious background. They hold an understanding that realizing harmony and tolerance in everyday life is a part of an effort to create social harmony, so every religious community can carry out the guidance of their respective religions. It can be seen in the celebration of religious holidays, *sonjo* culture (anjangsana), *slametan*, *nyadran* at funerals, *bersih desa* rituals, and mutual cooperation every Sunday. They merge in the bonds of communalism and collectivity that bind social cohesion. The factors that influence tolerance between religious believers and the creation of moderate diversity are due to the similarity of residence as the ancestral heritage of religions, the active role of religious leaders, the awareness of the religious community, and mutual respect for equality, tolerance and awareness to cooperate with each other.

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