

Active Non-Violence Education in Rural Culture: Religious Moderation Practices in Plajan Pakis Aji Jepara

Pendidikan Aktif Tanpa Kekerasan dalam Budaya Pedesaan: Praktik Moderasi Beragama di Plajan Pakis Aji Jepara

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Abstract

This article describes a portrait of peace education involving three religions (Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism) in Plajan Village, Jepara Regency, Central Java. Also, to explain the practice of religious moderation through non-violent education implemented by the religious leaders there. Through a qualitative approach, the researcher observed the interaction between religious leaders to obtain data on the practice of religious moderation. Researchers interviewed Kiai, priests, Hindu religious leaders, and village heads to reveal a portrait of non-violent education. Documentation complements research data, especially in the form of a profile of Plajan village, which is already known as a multicultural village. As a result, there are two values of religious moderation practiced by religious leaders in Plajan Village: *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *syura* (deliberation). These two values align with the concept of religious moderation initiated by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. While the value of *ukhuwwah basyariyyah*, outside the categorization of religious moderation from the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, is essentially in line with the value of *Islah* (reform) and *qudwah* (pioneering).

Keywords: *Religious moderation, Non-Violence Education, Religious leaders, Peace Education.*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan potret pendidikan perdamaian yang melibatkan tiga agama (Islam, Kristen, dan Hindu) di Desa Plajan, sebuah desa di wilayah Kabupaten Jepara, Jawa Tengah. Pula, untuk menjelaskan praktik moderasi beragama melalui pendidikan tanpa kekerasan yang diterapkan oleh para tokoh agama yang ada di sana. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif berjenis studi kasus, peneliti melakukan observasi terhadap interaksi antar tokoh agama untuk mendapatkan data tentang praktik moderasi beragama. Peneliti melakukan wawancara dengan kiai, pendeta, tokoh agama Hindu, dan kepala desa untuk menguak potret pendidikan tanpa kekerasan. Dokumentasi menjadi pelengkap data riset, khususnya berupa profil desa Plajan yang memang sudah dikenal sebagai desa multikultural. Hasilnya, ada dua nilai moderasi beragama yang dipraktikkan oleh tokoh agama di Desa Plajan, yaitu *tasamuh* (toleransi), dan *syura* (musyawarah). Dua nilai ini senafas dengan

konsep moderasi beragama yang digagas oleh Kemenag RI. Sedangkan nilai *ukhuwwah basyariyyah*, meskipun berada di luar kategorisasi moderasi beragama dari Kementerian Agama RI, secara esensial senada dengan nilai *islah* (reformasi) dan *qudwah* (kepeloporan).

Kata Kunci: *Moderasi beragama, Pendidikan Tanpa Kekerasan, Tokoh Agama, Pendidikan Perdamaian.*

Introduction

Islam as the majority religion in Indonesia sometimes appears in the public sphere in an authoritarian form so that minority groups from other religions feel socially excluded.¹ In effect, the term tolerance suddenly became an expensive item. The conservatism of the thinking of the majority makes tolerance tend to be rhetorical by denying the aspects of freedom for minorities.² The conservative paradigm fosters the roots of extremism, radicalism, terrorism, and various forms of violence in the name of religion which is currently increasingly squirming.³ Even worse, because religion is afraid of losing its ideological authority, religion's fangs are blunted. In fact, in certain cases, it seems to give legitimacy to violence.⁴ The logic of religious power defeats the validity of the normative rules of the state constitution.⁵ Finally, religion is difficult to escape from the vortex of cyclical conflicts of its adherents.⁶

Since 2013, the escalation of intolerant conflicts in Indonesia has continued to experience an increasing trend. Zuly Qodir called it a “red report card in terms of religious life”.⁷ This indication is further strengthened by the results of a national survey conducted by Burhanuddin Muhtadi in August 2018. The fact that Muslims tend to act intolerantly towards non-Muslims is difficult to refute. This practice of intolerance includes the cultural-religious domain, --such as symptoms of objection if people of

¹ Lugina Setyawati, “Keberagaman Dan Eksklusi Sosial: Simbol Identitas Dalam Ruang Publik,” *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* Edisi Khusus (2010): 117–36, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21009/10.21009/ijsep.021.00>.

² Amin Mudzakkir, “Konservatisme Islam Dan Intoleransi Keagamaan Di Tasikmalaya,” *Harmoni* 16, no. 1 (2017): 57–74, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v16i1.56>.

³ Luthfi Assyaukanie, “Akar-Akar Legal Intoleransi Dan Diskriminasi Di Indonesia,” *MAARIF Journal* 13, no. 2 (2018): 27–42, <http://www.jurnal-maarifinstitute.org/index.php/maarif/article/view/20>.

⁴ Musdalifah and Rahman Mantu Dachrud, “Legitimasi Kekerasan Dalam Ideologi Keagamaan,” *Jurnal Aqlam* 4, no. 2 (2019): 233–46.

⁵ Muhammad Ansor, “Merayakan Kuasa Agama: Etnografi Razia Penegakan Syariat Islam Di Langsa, Aceh,” *AKADEMIKA* 22, no. 1 (2017): 103–28.

⁶ Buyung Syukron, “Agama Dalam Pusaran Konflik (Studi Analisis Resolusi Terhadap Munculnya Kekerasan Sosial Berbasis Agama Di Indonesia),” *RI'AYAH* 2, no. 1 (2017): 1–28.

⁷ Zuly Qodir, “Intoleransi Dan Sektarianisme Keagamaan: Sebuah Survey Literatur,” *Konfrontasi: Jurnal Kultur, Ekonomi Dan Perubahan Sosial* 4, no. 2 (2017): 33–47.

other religions build houses of worship and hold religious rituals with large numbers of people--and the realm of political intolerance, for example, resistance to candidate leaders (president, governor, and regent). from non-Muslims.⁸ Previously, the results of the Wahid Foundation survey involving at least 1520 respondents also showed a similar phenomenon. The millennial generation is very vulnerable to intolerant behavior. The figure is close to 49%.⁹

It is not surprising then that the Government, through the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, has made religious moderation a priority program. The importance of the religious moderation program is emphasized in Presidential Regulation Number 18 of 2020 concerning the 2020-2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN). As a juridical derivative, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion prepared a strategic plan through the Minister of Religion Regulation Number 18 of 2020. Previously, the Directorate General of Islamic Education had also issued Guidelines for the Implementation of Religious Moderation in Islamic Education based on the Director General's Decree No. 7272 in the year 2019.¹⁰ Although the formulation of the values of religious moderation is not single, in principle it leads to the same goal, namely to introduce religion as an instrument of peace. Conceptually, the values of religious moderation offered by scholars are very diverse. Mohamad Fahri and Ahmad Zainuri offer nine values of religious moderation, including *tawassuth* (middle way), *tawazun* (principle of balance), *i'tidal* (perpendicular), *tasamuh* (tolerance), *musawah* (egalitarian), *shura* (deliberation), *ishlah* (reformation), *aulawiyah* (putting priority first), and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* (dynamic and innovative). This concept is almost similar to the idea of religious moderation popularized by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion. It's just that it replaces the values of *musawah*, *aulawiyah*, and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* with *qudwah* (pioneering), *muwathanah* (nationality), and *i'tiraf bi al-'urf* (respect for culture).¹¹

⁸ Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Populisme, Politik Identitas, Dan Dinamika Elektoral: Mengurai Jalan Panjang Demokrasi Prosedural* (Malang: Intrans Publishing, 2019).

⁹ Amanah Nurish, "Dari Fanatisme Ke Ekstremisme: Ilusi, Kecemasan, Dan Tindakan Kekerasan," *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya* 21, no. 1 (2019): 31–40.

¹⁰ Abdul Azis and Khoirul Anam, *Moderasi Beragama Berlandaskan Nilai-Nilai Islam*, ed. Anis Masykhur (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI, 2021).

¹¹ Tim Penyusun Kementerian Agama RI, *Moderasi Beragama* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>; Mohamad Fahri and Ahmad Zainuri, "Moderasi Beragama Di Indonesia," *Intizar* 25, no. 2 (2019): 95–100; Abdul Azis and Khoirul Anam, *Moderasi Beragama Berlandaskan Nilai-Nilai Islam*.

The concept of peace is often only identified with a condition without war and violence.¹² Violence is not only personal and direct but also structural and indirect violence. Personal and direct violence is violence that is received instantly as a result of war, torture, or harassment. Meanwhile, structural and indirect violence are poverty, hunger, discrimination, and so on, due to the absence of equal distribution of wealth, power, or resources. The social order can be categorized as peaceful if there is no manifest conflict. The term peace is not simple. The absence of various types of violence is nothing but a representation of peace on a negative level. A more substantive peace is reflected in the awareness of a community to open up to each other, meet with others, and avoid isolating characters. This kind of peaceful characteristic by Galtung is called positive peace.¹³ Furthermore, positive peace is built based on cooperation, upholding the principle of equality, presenting a culture of peace, and getting used to dialogue in diversity.¹⁴

Among the many practices of religious moderation that are interesting to be elaborated on more deeply is the practice of non-violent education carried out by religious leaders in Plajan Village, Pakis Aji District, Jepara Regency, Central Java. Known as a multicultural village, Plajan has a symbol of world peace in the form of a traditional Javanese musical instrument that was coined by Djuyoto Suntani, which was later referred to as the World Peace Gong.¹⁵ The harmony of the community can also be seen from the solidity of the three houses of worship, namely the mosque, church, and temple which stand close together. Often, the celebration of religious holidays is used as an instrument to glue the ropes of tolerance. When Hindus celebrate Nyepi, through instructions from the local village government, Muslims are temporarily relieved to call the call to prayer without loudspeakers. The same thing also happened at Christmas and Eid. The people of Plajan Village do not hesitate to stay in touch from house to house.

The results of preliminary observations on the social relations of Plajan Village residents on May 6, 2019, also showed another uniqueness that became the reason for researchers to conduct further studies. Community leaders, in this case, the Village Head

¹² Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291–307.

¹³ Johan Galtung, *Peace, Positive and Negative* (The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology, 2011); Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 16, no. 3 (1969): 167–92.

¹⁴ Webel and Johan Galtung, *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2007.

¹⁵ Ana Fajriana, "Dampak Keberadaan Wisata Religi Makam Bung Karno Terhadap Perekonomian Masyarakat Di Kota Blitar" (IAIN Tulungagung, 2019).

and his apparatus, are considered successful in protecting all religions. The proof is that the Plajan Village Government does not hesitate to facilitate meeting spaces between religious leaders through various activities, such as joint prayers, earth alms rituals, gatherings, and the like. Through the pulpit or regular religious assemblies, religious leaders always insert messages of peace to maintain harmony.

According to Syamsul Ma'arif, the portrait of harmony is closely intertwined with effective communication patterns carried out by religious leaders. At least, the clergy there have successfully implemented intensive communication strategies, including intra-interpersonal, organizational, and intercultural.¹⁶ In addition, they also put forward the reasoning of peace theology as an ideological paradigm.¹⁷

However, these two previous studies deny the role of the clerical elite as agents of peace. In the traditions of Indonesian society, religious leaders do not only act as spiritual leaders but are also role models and community references in various life problems. As people who are considered to have excellence in religious knowledge, religious leaders are expected to teach inclusive and moderate religious patterns and encourage religious people to be tolerant and respectful of each other.¹⁸

Thus, through interactional media with the community, religious leaders as cultural agents play a vital role in building a culture of peace in a diverse society. In the context of sociological studies, the clergy in this case is playing a pattern of symbolic interactionism as an active constructor of the social world.¹⁹ Through the pulpit or regular religious assemblies, religious leaders voice to their followers to always maintain inter-religious harmony.

This research does not only review the theoretical terms of religious moderation. Furthermore, the study will focus on two important questions as research problems. First, what is the portrait of peace education involving three religions in Plajan Village? Second, how is the practice of religious moderation through non-violent education

¹⁶ Syamsul Ma'arif, "Strategi Komunikasi Antar Umat Beragama Dalam," *Jurnal An-Nida* 7, no. 2 (2015): 158–59.

¹⁷ Ahmad Saefudin and Fathur Rohman, "Teologi Damai Agama Islam, Hindu Dan Kristen Di Plajan Pakis Aji Jepara," *Al-Qalam* 25, no. 2 (2019): 393–404, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>.

¹⁸ Tri Wibowo; Muhammad Turhan Yani, "Peran Tokoh Agama Dalam Menjaga Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Di Desa Sekaran Kecamatan Kayen Kidul Kabupaten Kediri," *Kajian Moral Dan Kewarganegaraan* 02, no. 04 (2016): 844–58.

¹⁹ Janet M. Alger and Steven F. Alger, "Beyond Mead: Symbolic Interaction Between Humans and Felines," *Society and Animals* 5, no. 1 (1997): 67, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853097X00222>.

implemented by religious leaders (Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism) in Plajan Village? This academic discourse has relatively escaped the observation of previous researchers. The topic of interfaith peace involving the contribution of religious leaders is often discussed in the framework of relations of legitimacy and identity of religious elites,²⁰ deradicalization based on peace education,²¹ systems analysis, and actor studies,²² and socio-economic empowerment of citizens,²³ and the perspective of multicultural theory.²⁴

In the context of this research, religious figures are the main concern of researchers. Because, they play an important role in realizing the habitus of a tolerant society, or vice versa, intolerant.²⁵ The key is to seeding peace education in a multicultural society.²⁶ Educational discourse should not be interpreted narrowly and simply as a school institution. The urgency of education here, apart from being a conscious effort to instill knowledge about the values of diversity, also refers to concrete actions that reflect these values.²⁷

Theoretically, the urgency of this research is to contribute knowledge about the discourse of religious moderation through education on the practice of non-violent education implemented by religious leaders. On a practical level, the results of this study can be replicated by peace actors wherever they are in their efforts to campaign on crucial issues of religious moderation. On a note, there are social phenomena that are similar to the phenomenon of peaceful life in Plajan Village (transferability).

²⁰ Sarmauli, "Persaudaraan Lintas Iman: Relasi Legitimasi Dan Identitas Elit Agama Kota Palangka Raya," *Al-Qalam* 21, no. 1 (2016): 169–76, <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v21i1.212>.

²¹ Imam Machali, "Peace Education Dan Deradikalisasi Agama," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (1970): 41–64, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2013.21.41-64>.

²² Hasan Sazali, "Komunikasi Pembangunan Agama Dalam Membangun Toleransi Agama (Analisis Sistem Dan Aktor)," *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora* 13, no. 2 (2016): 209–29, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v13i2.767>.

²³ Mustaqim Pabbajah, "Pemberdayaan Sosial-Ekonomi Sebagai Strategi Penanganan Gerakan Keagamaan Pada Jamaah An-Nadzir Di Kabupaten Gowa Sulawesi Selatan," *Harmoni: Jurnal Multikultural & Multireligius* 11, no. 3 (2012): 24–33.

²⁴ Faisal Rizki Pratama dan Oksiana Jatiningsih, "Peran Tokoh Agama Dalam Memperkuat Sikap Multikultural Masyarakat Di Desa Balun Kecamatan Turi Kabupaten Lamongan," *Kajian Moral Dan Kewarganegaraan* 05, no. 01 (2017): 476–91.

²⁵ Moh Sa'diyin Halimur Rosyid, Ahmad Sholikin, "Intoleransi, Radikalisme, Dan Terorisme Di Lamongan," *Jurnal Polinter Prodi Ilmu Politik FISIP UTA'45 Jakarta* 4, no. 1 (2018): 1–20.

²⁶ Bakhrudin Fannani, "Menyemai Pendidikan Agama Anti Konflik," *Nur El-Islam* 5, no. 2 (2018): 1–25.

²⁷ Zuhairi Misrawi, "Kesadaran Multikultural Dan Deradikalisasi Pendidikan Islam: Pengalaman Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Dan Qabul Al-Akhar," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2013): 197–215, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2013.21.197-215>.

Method

This article uses a qualitative approach by taking the locus of study in Plajan Village, Pakis Aji District, Jepara Regency.²⁸ The case study became the researcher's choice to see a portrait of peace education as an effort to create a culture of religious moderation in Plajan Village.²⁹ In addition, the main case that became the object of research was the practice of religious moderation through non-violent education implemented by religious leaders (Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism) in Plajan Village. Based on the source, the key instruments of this research include person, place, and paper. The person in question is a religious figure of Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism in Plajan Village. The place is limited by the context of space, namely Plajan Village with all activities in it related to inclusive expression. Meanwhile, paper is in the form of institutional documents, photos of activities, books, or writings that are directly or indirectly related to the role of religious leaders in Plajan. Data collection techniques rely on participatory observation, interviews, and documentation. As a first step, the author observes the diverse social culture of Plajan Village. Then it was elaborated by meeting research informants such as Kiai Tupomo as a Muslim religious figure, Pastor Sumihar Tambunan as a Christian priest, and Parsini and Sumiat as representatives of Hindu clergy. Through positive peace theory as an analytical tool, all data are then reduced, classified, and interpreted using qualitative descriptive techniques to be further verified and concluded.

Findings and Discussions

Portrait of Peace Education in Plajan Village

Theoretically, the term of peace is difficult to understand. However, this word can be so popular when humans are absent from harmony, love, and freedom. Johan Galtung gives a distinctive meaning between positive and negative peace. Positive peace is closely related to social harmony, the principle of justice, and the norm of equality. Meanwhile, negative peace has historically exposed conditions in which there was no war and other derivative forms of violent human conflict on a broad scale.³⁰ Because of

²⁸ Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, vol. 148 (New York: The Guilford Press, 2011).

²⁹ Bill Gillham, *Case Study Research Methods* (London: British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data, 2007), <http://library1.nida.ac.th/termpaper6/sd/2554/19755.pdf>.

³⁰ Webel and Galtung, *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 6.

this theory, Galtung became known as the Father of Peace Studies among social scientists.³¹

Without understanding positive peace, it is not impossible that harmony in society will be torn apart by the emergence of the phenomenon of social exclusion. Perspective analysis of Robert M.Z. Lawang, the exclusion does not just appear from a vacuum. The contribution of social, political, and economic structures is quite influential in the process of excluding certain groups, such as the poor, women, the elderly, and communities with stigmatization, such as adherents of the ideology of communism, drug addicts, and people with HIV Aids.³² Although Lawang does not mention religious minority groups explicitly, in practice, it is not difficult to find cases of exclusion that befell them. Like a double-edged sword, the manifestation of a group's internal solidarity creates two opposing poles. It may be that one side has an impact on an inclusive attitude, or vice versa tends to lead to social exclusion activities. This is because primordial ties based on religious attributes are very vulnerable to triggering ethnic discourse.

Religious leaders are central figures whose existence is often a reference for society in various life affairs. The existence of religious elites provides many roles and functions in the development of culture, education, society, and people's thinking patterns. Geertz said that religious leaders, take the example of the Kiai, are cultural brokers. The kiai can filter the incoming cultural stream, transmit what is considered useful, and discard what is useless.³³ From this theory, it can be said that the social system in a society cannot be separated from religious figures, either as cultural intermediaries or as cultural preservers.

Religious leaders, also called religious leaders or leaders as stipulated in the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number: 9 & 8 of 2006 are defined as religious community leaders who either lead religious organizations or do not lead mass organizations that are recognized and or respected by

³¹ Johan Galtung and Dietrich Fischer, *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research*, ed. Hans Günter Brauch, vol. 5 (New York, US: Springer, 2013).

³² Robert MZ. Lawang, "Beberapa Hipotesis Tentang Eksklusi Sosial Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Mamangan* 3, no. 2 (2015): 1–6.

³³ Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 2 (1960): 228–49.

the community local as a role model.³⁴ Kartini Kartono categorizes religious leaders as informal leaders who do not need formal recognition but gain recognition and public trust because of the advantages they have in the form of knowledge and charisma so that they reach a position that can influence the behavior of a community or society.³⁵

Nukhet A. Sandal calls religious figures by the name religious actors, namely people who are experts in religious teachings and have a religious education background as well as being able to apply these teachings in life. Religious leaders can be religious leaders such as Kiai, Pastors, Pastors, or leaders of organizations engaged in the religious field.³⁶ With this capital, religious leaders certainly have a very strong influence in determining the direction in which religion will be taken, and whether it will be brought to peace or violence. Therefore, according to Ma'ruf Amin, religious leaders have a very vital role and responsibility in efforts to build peace between religions. There are at least three steps that religious leaders need to take to build harmony and peace, including instilling moderate and tolerant religious teachings, establishing inter-religious dialogue, and building inter-religious cooperation in the humanitarian field. To carry out these three things, of course, religious leaders cannot play alone. They need cooperation from various parties such as the government, officials, and local community leaders.³⁷

Plajan Village is one of the villages in the Jepara Regency which is known to be very heterogeneous. Besides Peace Gong, some interesting natural attractions can be found there such as the thousand roots, Kedung Gong, Father Hall, Belik Sumur, and Goa Sakti. Village with an area of 1,044,500 Ha. It is located in the east of Jepara Regency with a distance of +5 km from the city center. The partly hilly village is also dubbed a forest village and won 1st place in the national level reforestation and nature conservation competition in 2011.³⁸

The Plajan people are very familiar with plural life. The village, which is famous for its Emprak art, is inhabited by residents who are affiliated with four religions, namely, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and Buddhism. The majority of Muslims are

³⁴ Benny Asrianto, "Peraturan Bersama Menteri Agama Dan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 08 Dan 09 Tahun 2006 Tentang Pendirian Rumah Ibadat (Kajian Dalam Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia)," *Toleransi* 2, no. 1 (2010): 112–23.

³⁵ Kartini Kartono, *Pemimpin Dan Kepemimpinan: Apakah Kepemimpinan Itu Abnormal* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1987).

³⁶ Nukhet A. Sandal, *Religious Leaders and Conflict Transformation: Northern Ireland and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

³⁷ Ma'ruf Amin, *Empat Bingkai Kerukunan Nasional* (Jakarta: Yayasan An-Nawawi, 2013).

³⁸ "Profil Desa Plajan, Pakis Aji, Jepara" (Jepara: Pemerintah Desa plajan, 2019).

members of the NU mass organization, followed by Muhammadiyah, and a small proportion is Shia. While Hinduism is in second place, then Protestant Christianity and the least is Buddhism. All of these sects and religions are recorded as having their respective places of worship, except for Buddhism, which does not yet have a place of worship because the number of adherents is still relatively small.

Table 1. Population Distribution by Religion in Plajan Village

No	Religion	Amount	Worship Place
1	Islam	7.551	15 mosques and 48 Prayer rooms
2	Hindu	448	4 Temple
3	Christian	53	1 Church
4	Buddha	4	-

From the table above, it can be seen that the Plajan people do not have problems regarding the fulfillment of the rights of worshipping other religions. The proof is that Hindus and Christians have the opportunity to establish places of worship just like the majority. Hindus as a minority are allowed to establish a special religious educational institution called Pasraman. Pasraman is a non-formal educational institution such as a boarding school in Islam that functions as a forum for regeneration for Hindus. This institution accommodates cadres of prospective Hindu religious leaders from various regions in Jepara.

So far, at least it can be said that the right to freedom of religion is highly respected in Plajan. All religions, not only the majority, have the freedom to practice religious teachings and even have the freedom to develop. Therefore, until now religious life in Plajan has been running peacefully. Communities can coexist in differences, without ever having any friction, let alone conflicts that divide the unity of the Plajan citizens. This is what Parsini, a Hindu Plajan figure who is the Chair of the Pasraman Foundation, feels. According to him, social relations between religious adherents in Plajan are peaceful and harmonious. This form of peace is manifested in several forms, for example, during religious holidays, each religious community visits each other to convey congratulations. Not only that, but if a neighbor or friend from another religion who is affected by the accident dies or is sick, they also do not hesitate to share their condolences at home.

In fact, during Nyepi celebrations, Muslims around the temple choose to sound the call to prayer or perform religious rituals in silence, not using loudspeakers, but only

with internal speakers which can only be heard by Muslims in the prayer room or mosque. As stated by Parsini, one of the Hindu religious leaders, that Plajan Village is a pilot project for religious peace which is an example for other villages in Jepara. The variety of religions that exist in Plajan, may not be like in other areas, always live in peace. There has never been serious inter-religious friction. Parsini experienced the phenomenon of peace with her parents. Even though his entire family embraces Hinduism, the Nyepi momentum is always celebrated together with the community, who are predominantly Muslim. "I am a Hindu, but on Nyepi, neighbors, and friends come to my house to say congratulations. Me too, when Christmas or Eid come to their house, the term "balal" if people here."³⁹ The tolerant attitude shown by religious adherents in Plajan Village confirms the thesis that civic social identity covers disparities in religious identity so that the construction of inter-religious harmony is easier to maintain.⁴⁰

Parsini's statement was confirmed by Sumiat, the Head of the Pasraman Educational Institute. According to him, diversity in Plajan has existed for a long time so inter-religious peace in Plajan is a culture that has been passed down from generation to generation. If there are issues that have the potential to provoke residents, they usually don't last long and quickly disappear over time. The Hindu religion teacher at the 1 Plajan State Elementary School gave an example of the negative issues related to religious conversion that occurred some time ago. Thanks to good education from the government, religious leaders, and the community, it didn't drag on, and this issue was successfully suppressed in a short time. Sumiat emphasized that inter-religious peace has become a culture that is deeply rooted in society so that they will not be easily tempted by provocative issues that can divide.⁴¹

On the other hand, Tupomo, one of the NU figures in Plajan Village also emphasized that inter-religious relations in Plajan are running safely and peacefully. He gave an example, during Nyepi, the prayer room around the temple was generously silent on the sound of the call to prayer and religious rituals. Likewise, during Christmas

³⁹ Interview with Parsini, a Hindu religious figure, Plajan, June 17, 2019.

⁴⁰ Aulia Rahmawati and Joko Tri Haryanto, "Penguatan Toleransi Dan Identitas Sosial Melalui Halalbihalal Lintas Agama Pada Masyarakat Kampung Gendingan, Yogyakarta," *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, Dan Tradisi)* 6, no. 1 (2020): 33, <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v6i1.988>.

⁴¹ Interview with Sumiat, Hindu religious leader, Plajan, June 17, 2019.

celebrations, Banser NU, for example, helped maintain church security and order. This peace does not only apply between religious elites but at the grassroots level can also be felt through everyday life. If a neighbor of a different religion dies, they do not hesitate to share their condolences, and even attend the *slametan* tradition. He emphasized, “in recent years, Ansor and Banser NU, if there is a Christmas celebration, have taken care of it. Yesterday there was a Melasti celebration in Bandengan, we are also involved”.⁴² From the perspective of Galtung's positive peace theory, the social actions of the Plajan residents are included in the structural and cultural category of positive peace which will protect against the symptoms of violence.⁴³

Sumihar Tambunan, pastor of the Indonesian Muria Christian Church (GKMI) Mlonggo Plajan Branch confirms the above facts. According to him, interreligious relations in Plajan are not just passive, but active. This can be proven by the cooperation and mutual assistance between religious communities that have been running for years in Plajan. He gave an example during the celebration of the holiday, every religious community in Plajan helped each other for the smooth implementation of the holiday worship. During the Christmas mass procession, for example, some young Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists helped to provide security and equipment at the church. Vice versa, during the implementation of other holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Nyepi, or Vesak, people of other religions also actively help carry out worship on holidays. For Sumihar Tambunan, the relationship between Christians and other religions in Plajan is harmonious and there is no friction to worry about. Moreover, geographically, the position of the church building is flanked by houses of Hindus. The front of the church is inhabited by a Muslim. All residents are involved in RT activities. Also, contribute to providing constructive suggestions for village progress. Sumihar said, “Yesterday Idul Fitri, our church youth took part, and Hindu youth also helped. Likewise, at Christmas, there was NU, and there was Muhammadiyah who helped how the event ran smoothly. So help each other. We are also involved in Musrenbangdes, although our input is not

⁴² Interview with Tupomo, an Islamic religious leader, Plajan, 6 May 2019.

⁴³ Baljit Singh Grewal, “Johan Galtung: Positive and Negative Peace,” *School of Social Science, Auckland University of Technology* 30 (2003): 23–26, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269107473_What_is_governance/link/548173090cf22525dcb61443/download%0Ahttp://www.econ.upf.edu/reynal/Civil_wars_12December2010.pdf%0Ahttps://think-asia.org/handle/11540/8282%0Ahttps://www.jstor.org/stable/41857625.

necessarily used, we can provide input.”⁴⁴ This practice, although not the same as the stages of peace research offered by Galtung, is increasingly clear that all religious communities in Plajan have gone through the stages of peace education content including analysis, formulation of goals, criticism, drafting of ideas in the form of idea proposals, and concrete actions.⁴⁵

Religious Moderation Practices Through Non-Violence Education

The facts of harmony in Plajan show that the practice of religious moderation in Plajan is not limited to the level of passive peace, namely, the absence of conflict in the form of violence, harassment, to religious sentiments. Moreover, peace in Plajan has reached the level of active peace, namely the realization of prosperous and just conditions that are equitable for all religious adherents, both from a social, political, and economic perspective without any distinction between one religion and another.

This kind of harmonious condition, of course, cannot be separated from the important role of religious leaders in Plajan as a representation of the practice of religious moderation. The role can be formulated as follows:

a. Teaching awareness of religious tolerance

One of the fundamental roles of religious leaders in building peace is to convey an inclusive and tolerant religious understanding so that religious people are not trapped in an extreme and exclusive understanding of religion. As is known, religion has an ambivalent character, two-faced. At one time it can look calm, cool, and peaceful, but at other times it can display a face that is violent, frightening, and scary. Because of this character, religious leaders must be extra careful in conveying the content of religious teachings. Don't let religion that is supposed to bring benefit to mankind instead spreads fear, hatred, and violence because of the presentation of wrong religious figures.⁴⁶

In carrying out this role, the religious leaders of Plajan village use various religious forums as a forum to campaign for moderate and tolerant religious teachings. In the Muslim community, for example, there are various recitation forums or regular *majlis taklim*. There is a *yasinan* forum once a week, *Lailatul Ijtima'* for male

⁴⁴ Interview with Sumihar Tambunan, a Christian religious leader, Plajan, 18 June 2019.

⁴⁵ Johan Galtung, “Form and Content of Peace,” *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*, 2008, 49–58.

⁴⁶ M. Amin Abdullah, “Dilema Antar Konservasi Nilai Tradisi Keislaman Dan Penyebaran Etos Perdamaian: Pimpinan Agama Memerlukan Kemampuan Dua Bahasa,” in *Fenomena Konflik Sosial Di Indonesia: Dari Aceh Sampai Papua*, ed. Koeswinarno dan Dudung Abdurrahman (Yogyakarta: Lemlit UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2006), 21–47.

congregations once a month, a Muslim agenda for the women's community once a month, *Syuriahan* NU's once a month, and various recitations in the prayer room or mosque. In these forums, there is a special time for *ustadz* or *kiai* to deliver *tausiyah* or *mauidlah hasanah*. It is through these activities that the *ustadz* or *kiai* in Plajan campaign for inclusive and tolerant religious teachings to maintain peace in Plajan. This is narrated straightforwardly by the NU figure. "*In many forums, it is always conveyed to be tolerant, and not to easily follow religious teachings that are not clear in their chain, which can cause division.*"⁴⁷ This effort is a form of effort to reduce what is referred to as "cultural violence", namely signs of using certain symbolic spaces, in this case, a community meeting forum, to legitimize structural violence.⁴⁸

Likewise in the Hindu community as Parsini said. He and other Hindu figures always insert themes of tolerance and religious harmony in every dharma discourse or *tausiyah* delivered in every Hindu religious forum. It was explained that the Hindus in Plajan have two regular meetings agenda every month. First, a monthly worship forum is held at the temple every 15th and 30th of every month. Second, the *Kliwonan* forum, which is a meeting held every Friday, Saturday, and *Kliwon Tuesday* in turns from house to house. In these forums, time is also provided for dharma discourse or *tausiyah* on religious teachings and themes related to harmony. It is important to do this dialogical work so that the ideas of tolerance enter the collective cognition space of the citizens.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Plajan Christian religious leader Sumihar Tambunan explained that religious studies in his community were only carried out through devotional forums. However, the service is carried out in stages according to the age of the congregation. For children, it is routinely carried out on Sundays, among youth and male parents on Saturdays, and the community of mothers once a month on Mondays. Through this devotional forum, Christian Plajan figures campaign for peaceful teachings to the congregation. He explained that in worship forums it is always conveyed to the congregation to be careful in what they say and act so as not to hurt others. This spirit is like the teachings of the Lord Jesus who said, "*If you are slapped on the right cheek, turn the left cheek*". This doctrine is intended so that Christians should not hurt others. Even if you

⁴⁷ Interview with Tupomo, an Islamic religious leader, Plajan, 6 May 2019.

⁴⁸ Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291.

⁴⁹ Galtung, "Form and Content of Peace."

are hurt, you should not retaliate by hurting him. But it is recommended to reply with kindness.⁵⁰

According to the Head of the Jepara Regency Ministry of Religion, the meaning of the term religious moderation should not be arbitrary. In essence, the subject being moderated is not the religion itself, but the religious understanding of its adherents. Habituation of tolerant behavior is also not solely the responsibility of religious leaders. But it must be supported by all parties, including religious teachers in schools. He added, *"with religious moderation, we practice getting used to respecting other people. Diversity is a fact and cannot be avoided. Moderate means positioning yourself in the middle. Not too excessive and extreme."*⁵¹

b. Initiating Interfaith Dialogue (*Shura*)

According to Sumanto Al-Qurtuby, the religious dialogue in question is not just face-to-face conversations in seminars, discussions, or formal public debate forums involving various religious groups. However, interfaith dialogue involves a continuous process of communication to understand the thoughts, teachings, traditions, cultures, and understandings of other religious communities. In the most basic and simple concept, the meaning of religious dialogue is simple, that is, each individual and group of different religions or schools of thought meets in a room or forum to have a conversation. But in practice, the nature of the meeting and the purpose of these talks are not that simple. Special requirements are needed, namely that each participant must have sincere intentions and a strong commitment to understanding the arguments and perspectives of other groups' religious thoughts.⁵² Religious dialogue is not only limited to the level of verbal dialogue. But also dialogue of life, namely by attending religious events of other people, visiting each other, giving gifts to each other, or sending congratulations.⁵³

The custom that has prevailed in Plajan is that inter-religious dialogue is carried out in various ways. Verbal dialogue is manifested in the Religious Harmony Forum

⁵⁰ Interview with Sumihar Tambunan, a Christian religious leader, Plajan, 18 June 2019.

⁵¹ Interview with Muh Habib, Head of the Jepara Regency Ministry of Religion, 11 November 2021.

⁵² Sumanto Al-Qurtuby, "Pluralisme, Dialog, Dan Peacebuilding Berbasis Agama Di Indonesia," in *Merayakan Kebebasan Beragama* (Jakarta: Yayasan Abad Demokrasi, 2011).

⁵³ Media Zainul Bahri, "Dialog Antar Iman Dan Kerja Sama Demi Harmoni Bumi," *Refleksi* 13, no. 1 (2011): 61–96, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ref.v13i1.993>.

(FKUB) which involves various religious elements in Plajan. There is also dialogue in the form of concrete actions, for example by inviting each other and attending celebrations of each other's religious holidays. Both Muslim, Christian, and Hindu religious leaders have some kind of unwritten agreement to invite each other and attend the celebration of the holiday. This was confirmed by Sumihar Tambunan that on Eid al-Fitr, he and some Christian congregations visited their Muslim neighbors to congratulate them. He was also invited and attended a *halal bi halal* event organized by the NU Plajan organization. Vice versa, during the Christmas celebrations, Muslim and Hindu religious leaders were also invited and attended the celebration at GKMI Mlonggo Plajan Branch.⁵⁴

In addition, religious leaders in Plajan do not hesitate to cooperate with the village government so that each religious person can help facilitate the celebration of other religious holidays. For example, during the Melasti, Nyepi, or Christmas celebrations, Muslim youths who are members of the NU Multipurpose Ansor Front (BANSER) help maintain security and order in the two celebrations. This is also followed by the youth of other religions, namely Christian youth, and Hindu youth. They took part in securing the Eid prayer at all mosques in Plajan Village. Not only that, but the religious leaders in Plajan also managed to invite and set an example for their people to help each other. For example, the church once donated the form of a coffin for the Muslim community in the local RW area. Meanwhile, the Muslims also helped renovate the church. So do not be surprised if the tradition of helping each other between religious communities can run well in Plajan.⁵⁵

c. Building human solidarity (*ukhuwwah basyariyyah*)

Religion is a way and a way to serve and worship God Almighty. Religion revealed by God to humans is not value-free but is bound in different historical contexts of space and time. That is why there are many religions, and none of them are the same. Nevertheless, there are universal values that are the same in the teachings of every religion, namely social values, peace, love, justice, and humanity. These values enable

⁵⁴ Interview with Sumihar Tambunan, Christian religious leader, Mlonggo, 18 June 2019.

⁵⁵ Interview with Tupomo, an Islamic religious leader, Plajan, May 6, 2019.

and underlie people of various religions and beliefs to build cooperation with one another to create goodness and benefit for all.⁵⁶

Human values are also what move religious people in Plajan village to build cooperation between people. Cooperation in the social field is carried out in the form of joint prayers at the beginning of the year and the *Sedekah Bumi* ritual. Interfaith prayer is also held in the context of the pillars of alms, namely the post-harvest prayer ritual held at the *Punden* (a kind of sacred place) Bale Romo. In this case, religious leaders collaborate with the Village Government to facilitate every religious community to pray together. In this activity, they are allowed to take turns to pray for the progress and peace of Plajan Village.

Apart from praying together, religious leaders also initiated social assistance for the poor in Plajan regardless of their religious background. A real example is the existence of compensation for the elderly and the house renovation program initiated by Christian leaders and Shia Islamic leaders. Funds from the compensation program and house renovation are sourced from donations from interfaith communities, not only from certain religions (interview with Priyatin, Head of Plajan Village, Plajan, 16 June 2019). In addition to the two forms of cooperation above, evidence of cooperation between Plajan religious communities that cannot be ignored is the existence of the Tri Tunggal tomb, which is a tomb that is used jointly by residents to bury the bodies of three religions, namely Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

Conclusion

The practice of religious moderation applied by religious leaders in Plajan Village is based on non-violent education. There are at least two values of religious moderation that are in line with the conception initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, namely *tasamuh* (tolerance) and deliberation (*shura*). Meanwhile, other moderating values are *ukhuwwah basyariyyah*, although they are not included in the category classified by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, they are substantially the same in meaning as *islah* and *qudwah*.

As a research limitation, in terms of location, this research is limited to cases experienced by religious leaders in the coastal areas of Pantura, Central Java. In the

⁵⁶ Darius Dubut, "Dari Perbedaan Menuju Kebersamaan," in *Merayakan Kebebasan Beragama: Bunga Rampai Menyambut 70 Tahun Djohan Effendi*, ed. Elza Peldi Taher (Jakarta: Democracy Project Yayasan Abad Demokrasi, 2011), 498–500, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>.

future, scholars can continue similar research by taking different loci. In the aspect of religious objects that are the focus of research, researchers only concentrate on three major religions, namely Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. Meanwhile, other religions, such as Buddhism and Confucianism, and even adherents of faith are excluded from this study. It is hoped that further research will close the literature gap.

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