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LGBT AND RELIGIOUS NEGOTIATIONS:
A CASE STUDY OF YOUTH INTERFAITH FORUM
ON SEXUALITY (YIFOS)

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ABSTRACT

Most religious perspectives, particularly the conservative interpretation, empha-size the incompatibility of being a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) and being religious. This contradiction creates internal conflicts for many LGBT individuals. In social and political spheres, many religious groups post hostility and rejection against the LGBT using the justification of their religious dogma. The position of the LGBT has been more vulnerable since the reformation peri-od (1998 to present) in Indonesia, during which Islamic conservatism is rising. Therefore, LGBT individuals perceive themselves as condemned and excluded from religious communities. Nevertheless, the existing LGBT communities and organizations focus more on campaigning social acceptance and public recog-nition through a human rights perspective. This research employs a qualitative method and addresses the Youth Interfaith Forum of Sexuality (YIFoS) in pro-viding a 'safe space' for the LGBT in negotiating their non-normative sexuality and religious values. Taking a case study of YIFoS, I argue that LGBT could also embrace their religiosity. Through the concept of 'liberation of the body and alternative religious interpretations, YIFoS believes that LGBT sexuality could be reconciled with religion. This research is divided into two parts. First is how YIFoS provide a way of reconciling of non-normative sexuality of LGBT and re-ligion. Second is what approach is employed by YIFoS in helping LGBT individ-uals negotiate their non-normative sexuality and religious values. My findings demonstrate that the YIFoS applies the concept of 'experience of the body as the main departure of liberation and employs an interfaith approach by inviting religious figures whose interpretations are more accommodative toward LGBT. The interfaith approach is aimed at building commonality on LGBT within reli-gious communities. In addition, these two approaches are used to help LGBT in-

dividuals to stimulate self-acceptance and personal reconciliation between one's religious values and their non-normative sexuality.

Keywords: LGBTIQ; sexuality; religion; reconciliation; YIFoS; interfaith

INTRODUCTION

Most religious perspectives, particularly the conservative interpretation, emphasize the incompatibility of being LGBT and religious. Religious doctrines of Islam that dominate the discourse of sexual morality in Indonesia perceive LGBT as a moral problem (Bennett, 2007; Parker, 2009; 2014; Smith-Hefner, 2006) and incommensurable with religious doctrine and teaching (Boellstorff, 2005).[1] This contradiction creates internal conflicts for many LGBT individuals because their sexuality cannot adjust with the principle that imposes heterosexuality (through marriage) as a 'normative' sexual identity and orientation (Boellstorff, 2005; Suryakusuma; 1996).[2] In social and political spheres, many religious groups post hostility and rejection against the LGBTIQ using the justification of their religious dogma (Boellstorff, 2004; Yulius, 2018). The position of the LGBT has been more vulnerable since the reformation period (1998 to present) in Indonesia, during which Islamic conservatism is rising (Platt, Davies, Bennett, 2018). Therefore, LGBTIQ individuals perceive themselves as condemned and excluded from religious communities. Consequently, LGBT individuals experience challenges finding a safe space/place to express their freedom of sexuality due to the mainstream space being heterosexually produced through 'sexual morality.'

The main departure of the conflict between LGBT and religion relies on the literal interpretation of a religious text. For instance, the conservative Islamic group and other Abrahamic religions emphasize the literal interpretation of gender and sexuality, which results in a rigid view toward the issue of sexuality (Bouhdiba, 1998). Consequently, their arrangements limit the freedom of sexual expression for LGBT. Further, it rejects the existence of religious people and LGTIQ at once. Although LGBTIQ individuals feel alienation from their religious communities, they often struggle to find ways to reconcile

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[1] In this paper, I will use the term 'LGBT' to refer to all people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Meanwhile, I realize that the diversity of sexuality and gender in Indonesia could not be limited to the categorization of LGBTIQ. Therefore, in some parts of this paper, I employ non-normative gender and sexuality to represent LGBTIQ, where in Indonesia, only 'heterosexual' relation through marriage is recognized as 'normative' sexuality (see Wieringa, 2019 and Wijaya, 2019).

[2] The religious doctrine in Indonesia perceives that heterosexuality (through marriage) as a 'normative sexuality' while the other forms of sexuality are categorized as a 'non-normative sexuality' that includes LGBTIQ

their non-normative sexuality and religion successfully. Some scholars argue that LGBT individuals make reconciliation by perceiving religion not only as a monolithic set of doctrines but also as a 'social construction' and 'culture' which may change (Schnoor, 2006, Ganzevoort, Laan, Olsman, 2011, Shah, 2018). However, their reconciliation only happens through individual perception in viewing religion since there is no public space and environment for being LGBTIQ and religious synchronously (Boellstorff, 2005). In this sense, religious doctrine creates more challenges for LGBT because there is no space where they can be LGBT and spiritual at the same time.

Amidst the growing literature on LGBT, sexuality in interplay with religion, the existing studies in Indonesia identified how LGBT are positioned as 'immoral' and 'sinfulness' (Bennett, 2007; S.G. Davies, 2011; Kailani, 2012; Parker, 2009; 2014; Smith-Hefner, 2005; 2006; van Wichelen, 2010). In Boellstorff (2005), for example, being gay and Muslim is incommensurable with religion due to the doctrine that Islam de-emphasizes male homosexuality. This idea makes it very difficult for gay people to claim their religiosity. Nevertheless, LGBT individuals can find their religious subjectivity through resistance, negotiation, and reconciliation of their sexuality toward the dominant doctrine of religion. In Mulia (2018), for example, his study explained how Christian young people – as sexual subjects - resist, negotiate and reconcile their sexuality within the dominant discourse of sexuality rooted in religious doctrine. However, the way of the negotiation is still in personal interpretation and view toward their religion. None of the studies explore the possibility of creating a safe space for LGBT to reconcile their non-normative sexuality and religion not only through liberation but also through alternative religious interpretation.

This paper focuses on the Youth Interfaith Forum on Sexuality (YIFoS) in providing space for LGBT individuals to reconcile their sexuality and religion. This paper aims to expand on current studies, which primarily focus on the individuals' struggle, by presenting the case study of the activism of community organization YIFoS in providing a space for the discourse between LGBT sexuality and religion. This study will look at the safe space and the method employed by YIFoS in reconciling LGBT sexuality and belief in its annual program called Young Queer Faith and Sexuality Camp (YQFSC). Furthermore, this study does not explain what YIFoS does but also aims to understand how its method will, on the one hand, deconstruct the dominant doctrine of religion and the body and, on the other hand, how the liberation of the body on sexuality could be justified through religious interpretation.

The study shows that the YIFoS applies self-acceptance of the individual of LGBT concerning their non-normative sexuality and faith through the

liberation of the body and making an appropriation of their sexuality with religion by inviting religious figures. The invitation is done through an interfaith approach to building commonality of faith to provide the idea of 'affirmation' and 'acceptance' of LGBT sexuality in religion. From this finding, I argue that the concept applied in YIFoS informs that the liberation of the body toward sexuality and faith of LGBT is still by religious values of an alternative interpretation of the sacred text. As a result, LGBT individuals could embrace their non-normative sexuality and religion simultaneously due to the acknowledgment of multiple variations of the religious text and their self-acceptance of the body.

To understand the way of YIFoS in reconciling the conflict between LGBT sexuality and religion, I interviewed key people within this organization as well as those involved with YIFoS's programs and activities through observation. I did fieldwork for around six months by visiting some cities, including Cirebon, Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, and Salatiga. Choosing these different cities was based on consideration after I heard that some founders, activists, and religious figures had settled in those cities. As a result of visiting these cities, I interviewed four co-founders (Edith, Anam, Jimmy, Suranto), five current activists (Jihan, Anna, Ael, Vika, Jeje), and four religious figures (Muiz, Stephen, Jojo, and Darwita) from three different religious traditions namely Islam, Christianity mainly Protestant and Buddhism. For each people, I interviewed around two hours through once to twice meeting for each interviewee.

In the observation stage, I was involved with two YIFoS programs, including Young Queer and Sexuality Camp (YQSC) and Symposium on Religion and the Diversity of Sexuality. The camp was held around October 2018 in one of the prominent cities in West Java, while the Symposium was held on April 23-24, 2018, in Jakarta. For this observation in the camp, I lived seven days with the camp's participants and engaged with the committee that mostly the alumnae of previous centers and the activists of YIFoS. Throughout the camp sessions, I could observe how YIFoS provided a method to reconcile LGBT sexuality and religion. The most important sessions are; providing individual testimony of LGBT to express their experiences as a sexual minority group in the context of a country that still represses the existence of LGBT; and inviting religious figures from different religious communities, namely Islam, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Hinduism to talk about alternative reading of the holy text about LGBT. The symposium is one of YIFoS's programs that invite religious figures from different religious traditions to give a friendly interpretation of religion toward LGBT through discussion of the paper. This

symposium is intended to make a book chapter based on the paper delivered by each religious figure. As far as I can remember, four different religious traditions are involved: Islam, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In this symposium, I was invited by YIFoS to present a paper about religion and sexuality. This symposium gave me a chance to further interview activists as well as religious figures.

YIFOS AND YOUNG QUEER FAITH AND SEXUALITY CAMP (YQFSC)

On March 7, 2010, seven young people who were former participants of "Young Interfaith Training 2010" held a meeting to continue the discussion of LGBT and religion throughout the camp. Fatimah Husein initiated the training under the subsequent 'Fulbright Interfaith Community Action Project.' This ten-day training camp aimed to create awareness and sensitivity for youth involved in the interfaith project to the issues of HIV/Aids and LGBT through a religious perspective. It was also designed to build collaboration among youth interfaith communities to beware of similar problems related to HIV/Aids.[3] However, the meeting was not part of the training because it was intended to respond to the attack against LGBT-related activities by conservative Islamic groups. The Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam*, FPI), an Islamist organization with a record of violent tactics, led the attack against the activists and participants of the fourth regional meeting of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association (ILGA). The ILGA conference was scheduled to take place in Surabaya, East Java, between March 26th-28th and supported by Indonesia's leading LGBT organization, GAYa Nusantara. The FPI members demanded the cancellation of the conference by denouncing that being LGBTIQ does not belong to Indonesia's national concept of identity and is against Islamic morality and beliefs.[4]

Regarding the attack, YIFoS co-founders responded to the use of religion as justification employed by conservative Islamic groups. Although there were some responses from the LGBTIQ communities, most of them relied on the rationale for human rights to protect LGBTIQs (Khanis, 2013). YIFoS co-founders looked at the aspect of religion as a justification for the attack as not only about the weak implementation of human rights, but also there is a problem with religion in perceiving LGBTIQ people. As explained by one

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[3] Term of References of Interfaith Youth Training 2010*, Remaja, HIV/AIDS dan LGBT: Merancang Strategi dan Aksi Lintas Iman*, (2010), Unpublished; and an Interview with Jimmy Marcos Immanuel, at PGI Office of Central Jakarta, January 21st, 2019.

[4] Jamison Liang, 'Homophobia on the Rise", *Inside Indonesia Online*, accessed May 16th, 2019: https://www.insideindonesia.org/homophobia-on-the-rise

of the YIFoS activists, religion like Islam in Indonesia is mainly used as a political tool to persecute LGBTIQ activists and communities. In this sense, the conservative Islamic group used religion as a source of fear to undermine LGBTIQ people. However, the values of peace and the diversity of religion, particularly regarding gender and sexuality, were rarely discussed in public. Some religious communities see sexuality as a taboo topic. At the same time, LGBTIQ organizations perceive that religion cannot be carried into their community because there is an assumption that religion is a source of problems for LGBTIQs. YIFoS believed that LGBTIQ and religion could be discussed together.

In response to the problem of religion, the co-founders created a community-based organization, then formalized it into a recognized organization called YIFoS, which still exists today. YIFoS is a youth organization focused on the intersection between sexuality and faith.[5] Creating discourse and action means opening a discussion about faith and sexuality in the community openly without any fear. It carried through critical dialogue, reflection, and re-examination of religious texts about sexuality and faith, and participating in actions with other caring communities in responding to the two issues.[6] According to Edith, the effort to spark safe discourse necessary due to LGBTQ issues being considered taboo within religious communities.[7] Furthermore, YIFoS was also established because the conversation on sexuality has been developed and expanded worldwide. Sexuality is not only about biological matters or sexual behavior, but also about identity and orientation. As identity and orientation, sexuality cannot be separated from other identities, including religious identity.[8]

In 2012, YIFoS held the "Young Queer Faith and Sexuality Camp," as part of its activism. The camp's initiation was due to the discussion typically carried by YIFoS as a community-based organization was productive, but not enough

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[5]   YIFoS distinguished the word 'religion' and 'faith.' In their sense, religion and faith are different but also overlap. According to one of the co-founders, YIFoS preferred to use the word 'faith' in the organization's name because faith is more fluid than religion which is rigid due to the institution established as the authority. Here, faith offers a more accommodative and broader scope than religion because it includes personal faith, non-recognized religion, and major religion. However, there is overlapping use of faith and religion within YIFoS. Religion is sometimes assumed as the source due to its rigid view toward homosexuality. At the same time, faith is part of the solution because it can cover every perspective of religion that cannot be accommodated.

[6]   YIFoS, "Sejarah YIFoS", YIFoS Official Website Online, accessed May 16th, 2019: https://yifosindonesia.org/

[7]   Interview with Yulia Dwi Andriyanti, at LBH Satu Keadilan Bogor, October 29th, 2018

[8]   YIFoS, "Sejarah YIFoS"; and Interview with Jimmy Marcos Immanuel, at Communion Church of Indonesia (*Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja Indonesia*, PGI), January 22nd, 2019.

time as it only was allowed 2-3 hours. The main objective of this camp was to provide a safe space for LGBT to self-express and self-acceptance their non-normative sexuality and religion. It aimed to create an alternative platform of education for LGBT people to build a movement from different identities, particularly sexual and religious identities. Until 2018, this camp was still organized by YIFoS, and almost 200 young LGBT people have participated. As far as I have observed, this safe space has been created to create self-acceptance for LGBT to reconcile their sexuality and religious values through alternative readings of religious text. Thus, the following sections will discuss the method of YIFoS in reconciling LGBT sexuality and religion that were manifested in the camp:

TALKING SEXUALITY AND FAITH THROUGH PERSPECTIVE OF BODY: A STEP FOR RECONCILIATION

The reconciliation between LGBTIQ sexuality and religion seems impossible since the doctrine of religions still perceives that being LGBTIQ is 'sinful' and 'abnormal. Consequently, there is a division between LGBTIQ sexual and religious identities that has been nearly impossible to bridge. Thus, a possible intersection between the two identities has not acknowledged since they are assumed to be contrasting identities. LGBTIQ people must scrutinize their sexuality identity from a religious identity or maintain a single dimension of identity (e.g., Martin, Ruble & Szkybalo; 2002; Cass; 1979; McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). However, YIFoS believes in the intersection of identity, which assumes that LGBTIQ sexual identity could be met with religious identity. To create a meeting point to reconcile a conflict between LGBTIQ sexuality and religion, YIFoS adopted a way through the perspective of the body as the starting point. They use this perspective because LGBTIQ individuals have their experience regarding the body controlled and regulated by specific power such as religion. I will argue that the concept of the perspective of the body is applied to create individual authority for LGBTIQ in determining the body where sexuality and faith are embedded. Therefore, this present part will discuss the perspective of the body employed by YIFoS, which results in the creation of the 'experience of the body as a starting point in reconciling LGBTIQ sexuality and religion.

The body perspective within YIFoS is constructed from the idea that a body is a thing close to each other because it is embedded within the individual self. At the same time, the body could also be something that far because of the inability of the individual to take control of the body. For example, a gay male body is perceived as an abnormal body under the religious doctrine, which

perceives that the body should make a relationship with the opposite body (heterosexual) and the same body (homosexual). This exemplified that the body of the gay male becomes far away even though it is embedded within a gay individual. One of the reasons because gay males can control their bodies due to the religious doctrine that limits their freedom. As Anna explained, losing control over the body is not merely the inability of LGBTIQ individuals but due to that capacity being hampered by the doctrine of religions that took over the body's power. The control of religion toward the body relates to what had been explained by Foucault (1976), that modern sexuality had demarcated the 'normal' body and the 'abnormal' one. In this sense, the discourse of sexuality is shaped by religion, which had to limit the body's diversity to specific actions, which also influences the limitation of sexuality. Consequently, the male body should become a 'heterosexual body,' not a 'homosexual' one. As a result, LGBTIQ individuals do not seem to be able to determine or even have self-control over their bodies.

However, the YIFoS prioritizes the close relationship between body and individual self as the possible way to create a link for the reconciliation of LGBTIQ non-normative sexuality and religion. Thus, it is called the 'perspective of the body' and 'experience of the body. The body's perspective aims to reflect on LGBTIQ individuals regarding their experience of the body that is prohibited and restricted by the doctrine of religion. To make a reflection on their experience, YIFoS applies the perspective of the body by making testimony for LGBTIQ individuals during the camp to tell the story of their experience of the body. Then, they were asked to understand why their body, where sexuality and faith were embedded, was prohibited. In my analysis, the idea of making a reflection is to question which power controls their body. Edith explained that religion is the primary power that controls the body of LGBTIQ. Therefore, this reflection aims to bring the authority back for the LGBTIQ individual toward their body. The doctrine of the religions that dominate the body is eliminated because it makes the body far from the LGBTIQ individual self. As a result, the perspective of the body would become the main departure in reclaiming LGBTIQ sexuality and faith by making liberation from the doctrine of religion as I will explain in the next section that this perspective of the body is intended to create individual freedom for self-acceptance of LGBTIQ individuals regarding their sexuality and faith.

FROM A FEMINIST TO QUEER PERSPECTIVE

The liberation of the body is a critical objective in YIFoS as a starting point to re-evaluate the possibility of reconciling LGBTIQ sexuality and religion.

One of the main goals of this liberation is to make self-acceptance of the body for LGBTIQ concerning their sexuality, which is currently being regulated and condemned by many powers, especially religious institutions, through the doctrine. In creating this liberation, YIFoS adopted the way of liberation through the body theology of feminism, which later included queer perspective. The queer perspective is because the body theology of feminists could not accommodate the diversity of the body for LGBTIQ people. Based on what I saw in YIFoS, the body recognized by feminists relies only on women with the purpose of awareness of their bodies. However, the purpose of creating awareness of the women's body could not be adjusted to the LGBTIQ body because LGBTIQ individuals see their bodies differently. Some of them could accept their body which might relate to the women's bodies, but many are uncomfortable with their bodies. For example, some transgender might be more respectful of their body after they change it through surgery. Therefore, this present part will explain the liberation of the body through these two approaches employed by YIFoS for LGBTIQ participants of the camp.

In this feminist theology, the body is the center of individual freedom, and self-acceptance becomes a medium of sexuality and faith. As mentioned earlier: the concept of liberation is to build authority for the individual to control their body. There are at least two feminist theologians that influence YIFoS in using body theology. This concept was introduced and developed by Anna, a supervisor of YIFoS and a feminist. The central concept of the body theology of feminism is the invitation to re-claim the body from the authority of the classical theology of the body, which still regulates women under heterosexuality. Anna sees that the theology of all religions has a similar meeting point which gives appreciation to the body but at the same time regards the body as something associated with sin. Therefore, in many religions, people should leave their bodies to enter heaven. This ambivalence of classical theology leads to the control of religion over the body on how the body should follow specific characteristics. This condition is similar to what had been felt by Indonesia's LGBTIQ, where religious doctrine, as well as the discourse of sexuality, had limited their body and forced them to be 'heterosexual' as normative sexuality.

Consequently, the body of LGBTIQ individuals no longer belongs to them because religious doctrine condemns the existence of the body as being non-normative. Through specific control and regulation of religion, Anna, as influenced by the body theology of feminist, see that the body of LGBTIQ is divided into five categories: labeled body, coded body, imprisoned body, and split body. All these types disembogue into one body type, 'broken body.'

Consequently, LGBTIQ individuals feel far away from their own body and autonomy because the body is coded through certain roles that the individual self cannot determine.

The concept of the body theology of feminism within YIFoS gave insight into reclaiming an individual's body to be free from the types of bodies currently controlled by many powers, especially religion. In this sense, YIFoS encouraged LGBTIQ individuals to take their bodies back through a reflection of their bodily experiences. Through liberation of the body categorized as a 'broken' body, I argue that YIFoS aims to construct new subjectivity for the LGBTIQ individual to take control over their body and accept their sexuality as part of reconciliation with religion. Constructing new subjectivity for LGBTIQ would allow them to determine their sexuality and religion through their experience. As Foucault theorizes, sexual subjectivity is understood as one's thoughts and emotions about one's sense of being sexual (Weedon, 1987), which is always constituted concerning particular discourses (Foucault, 1982; Rabinow, 1984). Discourses offer individuals a range of ways of being in the world, like subject positions, to be taken up (Weedon, 1987) so that individuals can construe their experiences from those positions. In the case of YIFoS, the liberation of the body can be included in creating new subjectivity for LGBTIQ in determining their sexuality and faith. As sexual subjects, LGBTIQ individuals are expected to be sexual subjects who rely on their freedom in constructing their bodies (sexuality and faith).

This part demonstrated that the liberation of the body is the crucial point of YIFoS for the self-acceptance of LGBTIQ regarding their non-normative sexuality. YIFoS assumed that this liberation was a step toward reconciling LGBTIQ sexuality and religious values. In this sense, self-acceptance is seen as the primary step for LGBTIQ individuals to reconcile their non-normative sexuality and religion because, without this liberation for self-acceptance, LGBTIQ individuals will perceive that their bodies where sexuality and faith are embedded as something that conflicts with each other.

NOT MERELY RELIGION: THE FLUIDITY OF FAITH IN RELATION TO LGBTIQ

This section explores the different definitions of faith and religion employed by YIFoS to create the possibility of reconciling sexual and religious identities. Generally speaking, YIFoS uses the term faith instead of religion because faith has more fluid characteristics than religion which contains a very rigid doctrine. The choice of the term faith is based on the consideration that religion had been assumed to have a bad image within LGBTIQ communities.

Some LGBTIQ individuals and communities perceived religion as a source of the problem because of the close any possibilities of being LGBTIQ. Therefore, employing the concept of religion is more challenging in rebuilding the relationship between LGBTIQ and religious values.

Furthermore, religion is often associated with the institution with a monolithic doctrine that is unchangeable, particularly on the issues of LGBTIQ. According to Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1991), the definition of religion had been associated with the word religion which constructs the institution and dismisses the individual faith of people more diverse than religion. Therefore, YIFoS adopted the concept of faith because it creates a possibility for the diversity of religion that not only refers to one particular religious institution but also various beliefs and interpretations of the holy text. Edith explained that faith has a broader scope of religion which can cover individual beliefs and understanding of a religious text, local or indigenous religion, and major religions such as Islam and Christianity.

Furthermore, Anna explained that the use of 'faith' is because faith has a deep meaning rather than a religion where the faith recognizes the individual relationship with God. She sees that religious institutions have distorted religion due to the use of religion for political interest. According to Boellstorff (2004), the growth of political homophobia in Indonesia was motivated by religious doctrine. The doctrines do not only undermine LGBTIQ people but are also used as justification to attack LGBTIQ-related activities. Therefore, YIFoS determines the use of faith due to its broader scope, which may acknowledge the individual interpretation of the religious texts and other forms of faith that are not included in religious communities. Thus, I argue that using faith opens the possibility that religions are not monolithic in interpretation and teaching. There are also multiple interpretations, particularly on the issues of sexuality and LGBTIQ, which also include personal interpretation. The normative interpretation that influences the doctrine and teaching of religion, which undermines the existence of LGBTIQ, could be counted as one interpretation from multiple interpretations of the text. Consequently, the use of faith within YIFoS had created the possibility of re-creating and re-evaluating the relationship between LGBTIQ and religion. Through this diversity of the meaning of faith, YIFoS built a bridge for LGBTIQ to dialogue about their non-normative sexuality and religion.

FROM LIBERATION OF THE BODY TO ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION

This last part would portray the final step on how YIFoS helps LGBTIQ

individuals reconcile their sexual identity and religious values. The previous part already explained the liberation of the body for self-acceptance of LGBTIQ toward their sexuality as the point of departure in making reconciliation with their religion. Although the primary purpose of the liberation of the body for LGBTIQ could give them the ability to control sexuality and faith by being sexual subjects, YIFoS seems to see that not all LGBTIQ individuals would have a similar capacity to make their interpretation or desacralize the normative doctrine of religion. Besides, the religious context in Indonesia is dominated by institutions where religious figures play significant roles in interpreting the holy text in religion (Boellstorff, 2005; Bouhdiba, 2007). Therefore, the alternative reading of LGBTIQ in the religious text is essential for reconciling LGBTIQ sexuality and religion. Thus, YIFoS invites religious figures whose interpretations toward LGBTIQ are more accommodative. As I will argue in this section, the invitation of religious figures would create another success in which the LGBTIQ people have various choices of the interpretation of religion. Further, the alternative arrangement would allow them to see that LGBTIQ individuals have a possible way of connecting their sexuality and religion.

According to YIFoS activists, there are frameworks of liberation on the issue of religion and LGBTIQ. *First*, YIFoS aims to give LGBTIQ individuals the freedom in seeing their religion. In this sense, YIFoS aims to create self-authority regarding their faith which is mentioned above in the liberation of the body. *Second*, since not all LGBTIQ individuals can desacralize the doctrine of the religion that limits their sexuality, YIFoS, therefore, invites religious figures who can provide alternative reading which differs from the dominant interpretation in perceiving LGBTIQ. This is one of the core missions of YIFoS, which aims to bring a different image of religion to the LGBTIQ communities and individuals that religions have peace values that can accommodate the diversity of gender and sexuality. According to Edith, this invitation is based on the consideration that those religious figures who are invited have the same mission as YIFoS. The mission here, which relates to how religious text is interpreted, is the values of humanity which bring equality to every people regardless of their sexuality. The interpretation will not exclude or undermine LGBTIQ people within the understanding of religion.

To search for this interpretation, the YIFoS employs the interfaith approach in making commonality of religious views toward LGBTIQ. Although Islam takes the dominant discourse of sexuality in Indonesia, YIFoS prefers to see all significant religions which do not include Islam which can justify the existence of LGBTIQ. This idea seems to create a counter-narrative to counter the

dominant discourse of religious doctrine that perceives LGBTIQ as sinful and excluded from the spiritual tradition. The counter-narratives are manifested in how the religious figures interpret the sacred text. Many religious figures I interviewed did not only rely on the progressive interpretation, which uses hermeneutics but also engaged with the classical way of interpreting the holy texts. The classical way here refers to analyzing the text and considering the context where the text is revealed (interview with Muiz, an Islamic religious figure, and Darwita, a Protestant priest). In Darwita's point of view, there is a different tradition of earlier Christians in looking at the issue of LGBTIQ and other forms of non-normative sexuality. The earlier Christian could not address the problems of LGBTIQ since there was no term for a related case in the past. Therefore, Darwita explains that using hermeneutics is essential to include or accommodate LGBTIQ within the tradition of Christianity. Meanwhile, Muiz used textual analysis to see how Islam could accommodate LGBTIQ. In Islam, gender and sexuality are not limited to two categories but also diverse, such as makhanas (a man who looks like a woman).

This idea of inviting religious figures through interfaith ways allowed the LGBTIQ to see religion from a different perspective. In this sense, religion or even the interpretation of its text is not monolithic. There are multiple interpretations of religious text, particularly on the issue of LGBTIQ. Here, YIFoS aims to show the LGBTIQ that they can see the diversity of religion and its interpretation of their sexuality. According to Ana, YIFoS does not force LGBTIQ individuals to choose a specific interpretation, but YIFoS gives freedom to choose among many choices of performance. In this sense, YIFoS still applies the way how sexual subject could determine their sexuality and faith for LGBTIQs themselves. Therefore, LGBTIQ individuals might have a strong justification that their non-normative sexuality could be embraced altogether with religious identity.

CONCLUSION: THE NEED FOR SAFE SPACE

This paper demonstrated the way YIFoS is helping LGBTIQ individuals to reconcile their non-normative sexuality and religion in Indonesia, a country where religion represses the existence of LGBTIQ. LGBTIQ individuals experience challenges expressing their non-normative sexuality and religious identity since the doctrine of faith perceives their sexuality as 'sinful' and 'abnormal.' By examining YIFoS as a case study that allows reconciliation between LGBTIQ sexuality and religion, this paper argues that LGBTIQ can embrace their sexuality and religion simultaneously. In this sense, LGBTIQ individuals can also be religious. To make this possible, YIFoS applies self-

acceptance of LGBTIQ individuals through the liberation of the body where sexuality and faith are embedded. In this liberation, the YIFoS adopted the body theology of feminist and queer perspective in creating a new subjectivity of LGBTIQ individuals to be able to control their bodies while simultaneously deconstructing the dominant discourse of sexuality that undermines LGBTIQ as non-normative sexuality. Besides, this liberation of the body also aims to create self-acceptance of the body for LGBTIQ regardless of the doctrine of religion. Regarding religion, YIFoS applies the interfaith approach in building the commonality of religion in perceiving LGBTIQ. Therefore, YIFoS invited religious figures whose interpretations of LGBTIQ are more accommodative. This idea is to show LGBTIQ that religious interpretations are not monolithic. There is also a peaceful value within a religion that can accommodate LGBTIQ people's existence. Consequently, LGBTIQs can embrace their sexual and religious identity simultaneously. Therefore, a camp of YIFoS where the LGBTIQ individuals could find a safe space to cultivate their sexuality and religion becomes important in Indonesia to create a small, meaningful space that allows LGBTQ individuals to embrace being both LGBTQ and religious publicly.

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PINAH LAMAN: THE CONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC IDENTITY WITHIN THE MENTUKA DAYAK OF WEST KALIMANTAN

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ABSTRACT

For the Mentuka Dayak tribe, Pinah Laman is a change in ethnic and religious identity. Pinah Laman in the Mentuka Dayak community is perceived as a cultural space for community members who convert to a particular religion. Generally, religious conversion occurs in this society from Catholicism to Islam. The new identity is given by the term 'Sinan.' But on the other hand, the Sinan identity has its own meaning. Sinan is a new identity given to those who have converted to another religion. Because of this Pinah Laman custom, they do not get their tribal rights, such as: performing the Mentuka Dayak traditional ceremonies. This article aims to explore the construction of a new identity from the construction process of religious identity, which involves custom. In addition, this article also explains the form of religious identity construction that occurs among the Mentuka Dayak tribe and the new converts who experience it. Religious conversion is inseparable from the driving factors for the emergence of a new identity and the implications of constructing a new identity due to the conversion process. This article was compiled from the results of research using the ethnographic method. The results of this research show that Pinah Laman is a conversion process of a Christian or Catholic Dayak to Islam. This impacts the social sanctions one receives from one's social group. For the Mentuka Dayak people, when someone decides to change his religion, he must be willing to give up his Dayak ethnicity. One of the social effects felt by a new convert in the Dayak tribe is that he will be given a nickname or term 'Sinan.' Based on the results of this research, the term Sinan has a negative connotation. This is because those who change their religion are ultimately not given the freedom to practice Dayak customs as usual.

Keyword: Pinah Laman; Construction; Religious and Ethnic Identity; The Mentuka Dayak

INTRODUCTION

The construction of a new religious identity after *Pinah Laman* occurs among the Mentuka Dayak tribe. The conversion of ethnic identity accompanies this construction of religious identity. *Pinah Laman* in the Mentuka Dayak community[1] is perceived as a cultural space for community members who convert to another religion (religious conversion). Generally, religious conversion occurs in this society from Catholicism to Islam.[2] The converts (people who change their religion) in this custom will be required to renounce their Dayak traditions and Catholicism. A new identity, *Sinan*[3], is then given to them. However, the *Sinan* identity has other meanings beyond the meaning of the conversation. Even though they have left Catholicism, because of this *Pinah Laman* custom, Sinan still receives the opportunity to build relationships with other family members and the community.

The Dayaks in West Kalimantan are predominantly Catholics while the Malays are Muslims. (Abdillah, 2012; Akil, 1994; Albab, 2018; Martinus et al., n.d.; Muhrotien, 2012; Muhtifah, 2013; Qodir, 2018; Riwut & Riwut, 2007; Yuswanto, 2021) The religious conversion among the Dayaks in West Kalimantan gives rise to a new identity which is generally referred to as *Senganan* (Atok, 2017; Barter, 2014; binti Bolhasan, 2019; Duile, 2017; Erni, n.d.; Halim et al., 2019, 2021; Khair & Zaki, 2018; Kustini & Pusat Litbang Kehidupan Beragama (Indonesia), 2010; Misrita & No, 2016; Nugraha, 2018; Sellato, 2021; Sulaiman et al., n.d.; Susanti, 2015; Tanasaldy, 2012; Utami, 2022; Yusriadi, 2019). The religious conversion among the Dayaks of West Kalimantan is unique because they leave their customs and daily life practice as Dayak people. This conversion is also called *turun Melayu* [becoming Malay]. (Lathifah, 2018a, 2018b). The two ethnic identities, Dayak and Malay, have developed according to the times. (Andriana, 2011; Nugraha, 2018; Yusriadi, 2018; Prasojo, 2008). Based on these views, this research found new construction of identity among the Dayaks, specifically among the Mentuka Dayak tribe. Changes in identity related to culture are also found among the Karo Batak who convert to Islam (Amin et al., 2019; Kipp, 1995; Kumbara & Anom, 2008; Mujiburrahman, 2001; Nurohman & Gunawan, 2019; Rumahuru, 2020; Sugiatno, 2016). These changes are also the case with religious conversion among the Sasak ethnic group (David Harnish, 2021; Kumbara & Anom, 2008). Religious conversion associated with ethnic identity is directly or indirectly related because it

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[1] Mentuka Dayak refers to the Dayak sub-tribe in West Kalimantan that generally live in Sekadau Regency, West Kalimantan. They are synonymous with Catholicism.

[2] Hereinafter, members of the Mentuka Dayak tribe who will convert to Islam will be referred to as *convert*.

[3] *Sinan* is a distinctive term in the Mentuka Dayak tribe to refer to the Dayaks who have changed religion from Catholicism to Islam.

involves a separate psycho-spiritual side (Hironimus, 2022; Iyadurai, 2014; Prof. Dr. H. Kurnial Ilahi et al., 2017).

The issues examined in this article are: the Dayak people who convert from Catholicism to Islam are alienated, for example: living outside of the Mentuka Dayak tribe means they cannot live with or be close to their family anymore and do not get an inheritance. Even though those who have converted (*Pinah Laman*) still identify themselves as Dayak, the social impact built in the Mentuka Dayak tribe is that those who have left the Catholic religion are no longer accepted as members of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. The reason is that those who have left Catholicism can no longer practice their ancestors' customs. This is also intended to distinguish between the Dayak people, who live in the upper reaches of the river, and the Malays, who live in the coastal areas. Other implications of this 'alienation' include not eating pork, drinking liquor, and dressing in traditional clothing (for women). From the point of view of the Catholic religion, the Catholic Church provides freedom of religion and does not give a specific label or designation for those who leave Catholicism (Halawa, 2022).

This article seeks to explore the construction of a new identity lost when someone has practiced *Pinah Laman*. The construction of this new identity includes the construction of religious identity, which involves custom. The author perceives that the problem of changing ethnic identity related to religious identity can trigger behavior of intolerance or cut off relations with other family members and the community in their hometown. The construction of a new identity among the Mentuka Dayaks needs to be examined in depth because people who change their religion and ethnic identity have new views on life in line with their new religious teachings and new customs. This can trigger conflict with each other, in which Catholicism and Islam have different patterns or ways of life, as is the case with the lifestyle of the Dayaks and Malays in West Kalimantan. This article describes the form of construction of religious identity that occurred among the Dayak Mentuka and the converts[4] who experienced it. Religious conversion cannot be separated from the driving factors for the emergence of a new identity and the implications of constructing a new identity due to the conversion process.

This article was compiled from the research results using the ethnographic method. The data were collected for approximately 3 (three) months in Nanga Mahap District, Sekadau Regency, using participant observation, in-depth interviews, and Guided Group Discussions. The data sources for this research were the converts, traditional leaders, and community leaders. This research

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[4]   *Convert* is the word used in this article to refer to *Sinan.*

found that there is new construction of religious identity in the practice of religious conversion among the Mentuka Dayak tribe in the context of spiritual life, namely *Sinan*. In particular, this research was carried out in the Lembah Beringin. Lembah Beringin is part of the Outer Mentuka, but for customs and social life, there is no difference from the Inner Mentuka people. In Lembah Beringin, the term *Sinan* is also found. *Sinan* in this place has a culture that is almost similar to that of the Mentuka Dayak people because they are also Mentuka Dayak people.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF *PINAH LAMAN*

The term *Pinah Laman* is a custom given to the Mentuka Dayaks, who will convert from Catholicism to Islam. Meanwhile, the term *Sinan* is an identity given to the Mentuka Dayaks who have converted to Islam. In addition, *Sinan* is a direct effect or social sanction given by Mentuka Dayaks to subjects who have converted from Catholicism to Islam. In other areas or Dayak tribes, the term *Sinan* is also known as *Senganan*. The Mentuka Dayak tribe is divided into two regions: Mentuka Dalam [Inner Mentuka] and Mentuka Luar [Outer mentuka]. The designations of the Inner and Outer regions indicate that the area is close to a 'lump' of land from the Majapahit Kingdom, which is recognized as the pioneer in the emergence of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. The religious, social condition of the Lembah Beringin hamlet[5] and Tanjung Melati[6] has an attachment between two different religions, namely Islam and Catholicism. Regarding inter-religious tolerance, people in the two hamlets are like brothers and sisters. When the researcher visited a funeral in Tanjung Melati, the people present were not only from Tanjung Melati, but the *Sinan* people who come from the Lembah Banyan also came and participated in the funeral ceremony and traditional events at the funeral home. It is the same case with religious holidays. The tolerance between the two hamlets is excellent and shows that the habit of living together in mutual respect is still going well.

Carrying out the traditions of the Mentuka Dayak ancestors in Lembah Beringin is inevitable for the people, especially in mystical matters such as *berobat* [traditional healing],[7] with no exception for those who are *Sinan*. This

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[5] Lembah Beringin is a location where the Mentuka Dayaks who have converted to Islam (*Sinan*) live. There are several places of worship for Muslims but no place of worship for the Catholics.

[6] Tanjung Melati or better known as Dusun Soruk is the home of the Outer Mentuka Dayak tribe. This village [hamlet] is synonymous with Catholicism. There are several places of worship for Catholics but no place of worship for the Muslims.

[7] The term *berobat* [traditional healing] in West Kalimantan has a connotation of mystical matters, such as treatment using the help of invisible beings, borrowing terms that are

is quite common in Lembah Beringin Village. An informant stated: "In Lembah Beringin there are many shamans, even more than those in Soruk. They (*Sinan*) still go to shamans and still give offerings. I also once accompanied a friend to see a shaman and look for medicinal herbs in the forest. At that time the plate we brought with us was empty. The *Sinan* shaman recited some mantra, and suddenly there appeared the bark, flowers, and seeds we were looking for." (Selin, Personal Communication, 10 October 2021). A brief description of the conditions for traditional healing above is common in West Kalimantan in general. Traditional items are needed for the treatment itself, which are difficult to find now. These rare items can be replaced with money as gratitude or a substitute for the service a person does to prepare the items. One of the same customs practiced today is the custom of *Sinan* religious conversion in Lembah Beringin. The Sinan people in Lembah Beringin also practice Pinah Laman, which is practiced by the Mentuka Dayaks. Interestingly, when the individual *Pinah Laman* was issued according to custom, the two village chiefs and customary leaders from each hamlet were present to witness the *Pinah Laman* event. *Pinah Laman* is a common thing known to the Dayak Mentuka and *Sinan*.

When the researcher collected data about *Sinan*'s life, it was illustrated that the *Sinan* tradition has the same culture or customs as the Mentuka Dayak tribe in Tanjung Melati. The thing that distinguishes it is everyday items that are replaced with money. This is in line with the healing rituals described earlier in this section. Acceptance of Salobar[8] or a joint agreement with the indigenous people indicating that the Dayak individual had converted to *Sinan* was welcomed by the *Temenggung Adat* [customary leader] of Lembah Beringin, and they continued with the *Pinah Laman* practiced by the *Sinan* people. Living together in a community in terms of unity in the management of Lembah Beringin Village does not make the Mentuka Dayaks change their religion. The new converts that we met knew Islam outside the Lembah Beringin Village. They are not afraid to change their faith because they know that by completing *Pinah Laman*, they can achieve their goal of conversion.

A convert believes that outside the Mentuka Dayaks territory, he found a religion that suits his identity, namely Islam. This is in line with the view of Lewis Rambo, who reported that the convert has goals to achieve, has future orientation, and is motivated when deciding to do a *Pinah Laman*. The experience of living in society has led the convert to find a new religion and

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generally the same as activities related to shamanism.

[8] *Salobar* is a statement or decision made by a customary council member or traditional leader declaring that a convert can become a *Sinan* and has been 'alienated' from the culture or customs of the Mentuka Dayak tribe.

provide a new path in life. *Pinah Laman* really affects the convert to strive for a better life. The fact that a Dayak individual who converts to another religion is still accepted by his family makes *Pinah Laman*, which at first looks difficult, become less complicated. The data collected during the research showed that the new convert lacked a profound understanding of the implications of *Sinan*'s identity, which should live a life according to the teachings of Islam properly. This is reflected in *Sinan*'s behavior, drinking liquor and eating pork during traditional events and private moments. (Rico and Unyil, Personal Communication, 17 March 2021)

The people in Lembah Beringin and Tanjung Melati have a similar social structure. A new life for the recent convert in Lembah Beringin as a new place to practice Islam's teachings is an appropriate description. Second, the traditional adat elders, both in Tanjung Melati and Lembah Beringin, mutually accepted those who do *Pinah Laman*, which shows that these two hamlets have solid connections or relations with each other. From the observation data collected in this research, we saw that these two hamlets' lives were going well. During religious holidays, they visited each other, and even during traditional events, they invited each other. In other words, the *Sinans*, who have new life goals by the new religion, have a place to accomplish their life goals and are protected by the customs of their respective hamlets.

> "*yang setau aku tih kesamaan adat atau ritual adat di Lembah Beringin tuk sama tamah yang ada di soruk nun, ... sistem kepengurusan adat a sama jak am, dituk pun ada gak pengurus adat a, missal a yak dituk ada gak tamongokng adat a, adat gak segala menteri-menteri adat a. tamah segala proses ngalaksana adat a yak sama jak am. Cuma yang di Soruk yak ada segala yang nama mangkok adat, babi, tuak a piak jak am. Jolu yak yang nyadi pokok adat a tih. Macam di Lembah Beringin tuk semua adat yang macam di Sotuk yak ganti tamah duit jak, misik istilah macam di Soruk yak ya. Apai jak jolu adat a yang di Lembah Beringin tuk samua di ganti tamah duit jak am. Ngalaksana a tih totap sama jak am yak a.*" (Herianto, Personal Communication, 10 oktober 2021)

Meaning:

> "as far as I know, the customs or rituals in Lembah Beringin are the same as those in Soruk, ... the conventional management system is the same, here we also have adat traditional elders, for example there is a *Temenggung Adat* [customary chief], there are also adat ministers. And the process of carrying out the custom is still the same, it's just like in Soruk, the custom is traditional bowls, pork, rice wine and the like, there must be something that serves as the main component of the

custom. Whereas in Lembah Beringin there is no such thing, here all the customs handled to the traditional elders are replaced with money, there are no other types, like in Soruk. … all the violations of customary law in Lembah Beringin shall be replaced with money. The adat procession remains the same."

The adat procession which the two Chiefs of the Villages attended is a reflection of inter-religious tolerance as well as inter-cultural tolerance. *Pinah Laman* does not alienate someone from their family or hometown. The demographic condition of West Kalimantan, which has a wide area with further development in each region, has brought a new mindset to the Mentuka Dayak community. Therefore, the Mentuka Dayak people who know a new world have new hopes too. This is manifested in their intention to change their way of life that suits them. It also happens in religious life. Those who know Islam because they study outside their hometown and feel Islam is suitable for them self-consciously declare to do *Pinah Laman*. The *Pinah Laman*, which was done by a new convert outside the territory of the Dayak Mentuka tribe, was described that outside their place of birth, they found something that moved them to have a different life with new habits. The Mentuka Dayak tribe has a religious lifestyle by the teachings of the Catholic religion, which are different from the teachings of Islam. This difference could generate new thoughts; one will do *Pinah Laman* because of the motivation to get a new and suitable life. In other words, *Pinah Laman* is also driven by inspiration, hope, orientation, and something related to one's conscience. We believe that the identity of *Sinan* is given to the Mentuka Dayak tribe. Even though a *Sinan* himself does not want to use the term. *Pinah Laman* occurs not only because of one's wish but because others make him interested and want to know more. This is not a form of the collectivity of various figures, but there is usually one figure who becomes a role model for him to change his religion. (Ritzer & Smart, 2012)

THE CONSTRUCTION OF *SINAN* IDENTITY

The construction of *Sinan* identity, particularly, had yet to be obtained during this research. Literature on *Sinan* is scarce because it is only found among the Mentuka Dayak tribe. The construction of *Sinan* identity needs to be viewed from the two designations for the two major tribes in Kalimantan, namely the Dayak and the Malay.

"In general, it can be said that the term *Dayak* is used to name non-Muslims who live in the interior of Kalimantan. This term was given by the Malays on the coast of Borneo, which means mountain. (Andriana,

2011; Mananta, n.d.; Riwut et al., 2003) This term is related to the word *Malay*, which is a term for people who come from the Malay area and speak Malay and live on the coast of Kalimantan and are Muslim."

The construction of *Sinan* identity occurs when a Dayak embraces Islam. This is in line with the general view that the Dayaks are Christians or Catholics because those who later embrace Islam are no longer called Dayaks. Some call them *Senganan* or refer to them as "becoming Malay."(Fatmawati, 2007) The term *Sinan* was used by Grandpa Akim, who reported as follows:

> "*Sinan ce naodant ka nya Melayu ce odant Bahasa saik se Sinan. Bahasa joman saik se, Bahasa Sinan ce Bahasa joman muntuh. Nya Melayu mpoda nya Dayak to kan nya doih. Nya doih to kan joman nyamuntuh saik se, nya doih to kan kayodeh monai nik tamikng sungi. Nya nik uut sungi to kan nya Dayak. Nya Melayu kan kant e se nya nik monai nik piking. Totap nik doih, nik tunu tona. Kan bala angok, banatakng ce nik piking. Nya doih ngan nik piking. Nya Melayu nik piking kan ideh uleh nsia bayunupm mpah ka Duyung …Sinan to odant panggilan e mom.*"(Akim, Personal Communication, 11 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "*Sinan refers to the Malays; formerly the word that was used [to call them] was Sinan. It was an old word. The word Sinan was [derived from] the old language. The Malays referred to the Dayaks as the Darat people. The Dayaks didn't live on the riverside; where those living on the upriver side were the Dayaks. The Malays were riverine people. According to the legend, riverine people couldn't live in the water in ancient times. [They] lived on land, on the ground. All fish and animals were in the water. Darat people lived in the water, too. The Malays couldn't swim like dugongs... Sinan was their nickname.*"

Grandpa Akim stated that the term *Sinan* is a nickname. The old language (among the Mentuka Dayak tribe) referred to the Malays *as Sinan* people, which can also be interpreted as those (Mentuka Dayaks) who embraced the Malay religion, namely Islam. This is related to the disagreement regarding the view that in the past, the Dayak people were called Darat people because they did not live on the riverside, while the Malays were said to live in the (river) water. According to Grandpa Akim, this is incorrect because the Malays can't live in the water as humans cannot live in the water like dugongs.

The interview with Grandpa Akim shed light on a unique expression in the terms *Darat* people and "water" people. In particular, the term *Sinan* is given

explicitly as a nickname only for Dayak Muslim people. The *Temenggung* of Tanjung Melati said:

> *"deent ce tintikng ka Sinan lamp Bahasa Mentuka, mungkin basa Indonesia e ce ngutan. Nik asli e deent ce saik se kan nya Dayak manto ce ikunt e Dayak, Bahasa Islam e Mualaf. Ikunt e ncela …padahal sabonar e odup e ce ikunt e Dayak tapi Sinan. Tapi padai nyonsik hal nik mpah manto dah kotui manto ce biasa mom, padai nya Dayak ngan nya Sinan sabonar e bujoi agama mom ngan pamakant e jak baloikng tapi gik cukup kuat nahan modup basama nik bake."*(Temenggung Adat Tanjung Melati, FGD II, 15 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "They are referred to as *Sinan* in the Mentuka language, possibly *ngutan* in the Indonesian language. Originally they used to be Dayaks, but now they are no longer Dayaks; in Islamic terms they are called *Mualaf* [convert]. We don't criticize... A person like that is just an assumption on his part that he is a Dayak when he is no longer one but a *Sinan*. But seeing things like this is normal so far because the Dayaks and the *Sinans* are only different in religion and food but still hold fast to tolerance."

The *temenggung* of Tanjung Melati hamlet interpreted that the term *Sinan* means *ngutan* (a term of the Mentuka Dayak language), which according to him, is a derivation of the Indonesian language. He explained that this term gives meaning to Dayak people who embrace Islam. His words can be interpreted by referring to the Mentuka Dayak tribe, who are Catholic. If the Mentuka Dayak people are not Catholic (in this case, Muslim), that person is no longer said to be a Dayak. This causes the Mentuka Dayak people who convert to Islam to be called *Sinan* or *Mualaf*. As the *Temenggung* of Tanjung Melati, he did not want the term *convert* to have a negative connotation expressed through his statement that he did not criticize.

The term *Sinan* according to the Temenggung of Tanjung Melati Hamlet, is simple. The Dayaks and the *Sinans* have differences in food and religion because, in Tanjung Melati, they hold fast to tolerance between religion and the practice of their tribal customs.

> *"kalua beda Sinan ngan doih ce memang am. Kalua odup e dah turunt Sinan, odup e dah pinah am. Kalua Melayu ngan Sinan ce odeh ga beda e, kalua nik tintikng Senganan ce nya Melayu katurunt nya Dayak. Kalua Melayu nik asl ice katurunt niti Raja, nik sobut ka Abang. Ce baka e nik sobut ka Melayu. Tapi dah baoh manto ce bacampoi am. Kalua*

nya Senganan ce kabangant e nya Dayak. Nik istilah e katurunt Melayu
kajoman Raja saik se, ce kona paksa harus turunt. Ce tintikng Sinan."

Meaning:

> "There are, in fact, differences between *Sinan* and *Doih*. If one has
> become *Sinan*, he has changed to *Sinan*. The difference between *Sinan*
> and Malay is *odeh*. If you call them *senganan*, they are Malays of Dayak
> descent. A real Malay is a descendant of a king titled *Abang*. That's a
> Malay. But now it's mixed up. For the *Senganans*, many Dayaks are said
> to be descended from the Malays because they were forced to convert
> during the time of the Kings. They are called *Sinan.*"

This is different from the views of other Mentuka Dayak traditional elders,
such as the view of the Chief of Pantok Hamlet, which is the center of the
Mentuka Dayak customary council. The chief of Dusun Pantok said that *Sinan*
is another term for *Senganan* used by the Dayaks. However, the term *Sinan* is
typical among the Mentuka Dayak tribe, so there is no equivalent of the term
with the Malay designation. This identity transformation is related to cultural
displacement. There is no prohibition on changing religion, but there are
separate warnings for people who will change religion. If the person concerned
already has a firm intention, and has been given a warning that changing faith
comes with inevitable consequences. That person will be subject to the custom
of changing culture. An informant said:

> *"padai nsia maah sabonar e ideh tao pinah budaya ce lah kakuatan e.*
> *kalau nsia longk nak nokap, odant e to kona adat. Kalau nyamuntuh*
> *e ngidah, odup e totap nak barubah, odeh adat e. kalau odup e nokap,*
> *maka kona tuntot adat."* (Husin, FGD III, 16 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "So because our people can't change culture, that's strength. If a
> community member wants to be reckless, that's what we call it. It's
> subject to customary law. If their parents forbid them, but they want
> to proceed, there is customary law. If they are reckless, they will be
> prosecuted through customary law."

The quotation above illustrates that to change religion or culture, parents have
a role in guarding or forbidding their children because of the habits practiced
in the life of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. However, a person who wants to change
religion, in this case in his position as a child, and is determined to do so, will

be prosecuted through customary law. In this case, it is also implied that the risk of religious conversion is the change of Dayak culture to a culture that is not Dayak anymore. In the Focus Group, Discussion held on March 17, 2021, in the Pantok hamlet, there was an in-depth discussion regarding the term *Sinan*, namely:

> "*kalau dah pinah, sacara identitas niti kaluarga totap, tapi agame loikng. Memang deent ce kalau dah pinah ce odant e Sinan, menurut Bahasa Mentuka e. nik sabut ka Sinan, Sanganan, atau Nyage ce talalu kasar gila bagi deent ce. Deent ce togoh narima kona sobut mpah maen. Deent ce lebih ngonal bala odup e ka Melayu.*" (Riki, FGD III, 16 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "if one has changed [religion], his family identity remains the same, but the religion is different. In fact, when they have converted [to another religion], they are called *Sinan* according to the Mentuka language. The designation of *Sinan* or Senganan or Nyage[9] is derogatory to them. They may find it difficult to accept that designation; they prefer to introduce themselves as Malays"

Riki, Head of Tanjung Melati Hamlet, argued that the Mentuka Dayaks who had changed their identity, have their family identity unchanged, in the sense that religion had changed. The ethnic identity changed to become Malay because the use of the terms *Sinan*, Senganan, or Nyage is regarded as derogatory. The converts who live in Tanjung Melati hamlet prefer to use the term Malay as their new identity.

> "*Melayu ce Bahasa alus e, Bahasa daerah. Nik tintikng nya Dayak Mentuka ce Sinan. Jadi deent nyobut bala odup e Melayu, padai deent ce pinah agama.*" (Aket, FGD III, 16 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "Malay is the appropriate term, the regional language. They call the Mentuka Dayaks *Sinan*. So they call themselves Malays, because they have converted to another religion."

According to Aket excerpted from the discussion above, the Malay term for the convert is a subtle designation in the regional language. The correct term

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[9] The term Nyage is a Muslim Dayak term in the Nanga Mahap area. This term is a term that has a negative connotation or has a rough accent when spoken among the Mentuka Dayak tribe.

is *Sinan* because it comes from the Mentuka language. The term Malay is used after a religious conversion.

> *"deent ce nik pinah niti suku Dayak Mentuka biasa e ce lebih panatik niti nya nik asli e. waktu ulang tahun dah babeda am. Deent ce mincakng bala panyantak dodup mom. Ntah padai onih deent ce. Maka e Senganan atau Sinan ce budaya, ciri khas nya Dayak ce dah ayap am. Pas dah pinah agama deent ce dah tarikat ongan ajaran agama Islam."* (Husin, FGD III, 16 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "those who change religion in the Mentuka Dayak tribe usually become more fanatical than they originally were. During the birthday party, they were different.[10] They brought their utensils. I don't know why. So Senganan or *Sinan* is a culture; their Dayak characteristics are gone. When they have changed religion, they are bound by the teachings of Islam."

Bang Jiman was not interested in discussing the use of the terms. He prefers to invite the FGD forum to discuss the conversion issue. The converts usually become more fanatical than they were initially. In other words, converts are more passionate than those born Muslim. For example, the converts' life also changes in the designation of different birthday. When they return home, they bring their own utensil. This is in line with Pak Husin's statement in the previous section. Bang Jiman also did not understand why this happened. This change in lifestyle makes the converts lose their identity. It would be difficult to call them Dayaks because the teachings of Islam bind them.

> *"Kalau odup e gulokng, balome Islam to nak pinah agama ka nya Dayak, baoh manto kalua dah lamat-lamat ce obu agik, ce odeh adat e … kalua dah pinah ka Melayu, deent ce ikunt e Dayak agik ... ce kan dah ntigal agama to odeh adat e, kalua kayodeh adat e, adat e gik odeh ... kalua odeh nik bapinah-pinah, kona adat nipu agama. Odup e nak nyaga kabagos agama e."* (Jiman, FGD III, 16 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "if he wants it, we Muslims want to convert to the Dayak religion; now it's been a long time since they've run away again; there's customary

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[10] The difference in the year among the Mentuka Dayak tribe is based on the calculation of the Hijri year and Leap year. A customary council member of the Mentuka Dayak tribe views that a person's age or the birthday of a Sinan based on the Hijri year calculation.

law for that... when they become Malay, they're not Dayak anymore... leaving religion requires customary law, if there is no customary law, this religion is useless... no longer Dayak, then after renouncing religion, the customary law is still there... if someone changes religion back and forth, he will be subject to customary law for cheating religion. It will keep the religion clean."

Grandpa Akim's statement emphasized Pinah Laman's position related to ethnic identity. If the Mentuka Dayak people want to "jump the fence," they have lost their customs as Dayak people. If the person is half-hearted in making his choice, then the customary practice will be useless because the Mentuka Dayak tribe's customs cannot be separated from their religion (Catholicism). If he changes religion, he will be subject to even more severe customs for toying with faith.

Pinah Laman brings changes in ethnic identity for the convert. In collecting data regarding this change, it was assumed that the use of the word *Sinan* for the Mentuka Dayak convert was not final because there were two conflicting parties. One party accepted the term *Sinan* because they believed that the word *Sinan* was the correct term for a convert with various supporting reasons, and one party did not use the term *Sinan* for specific reasons. "In West Kalimantan, if a Dayak converts to Islam, he tends to reject his identity as a Dayak and is considered Malay. In West Kalimantan, a Malay does not have to be someone of Malay ethnicity because a Dayak who embraces Islam also becomes a Malay... A Dayak who later converts to Islam no longer calls himself a Dayak but a Malay and no longer uses the Dayak language but Malay."(John Bamba, 2008)

The Dayak identity that is lost and becomes *Sinan* is the identity given by the traditional elders of the Mentuka Dayak tribe and the Mentuka Dayak community. However, the converts still regard themselves as Muslim Dayak. They do not want to give up their Dayak identity even though society says otherwise. Generally, society finds it difficult to accept them as Dayak because the *Sinan* are far more fanatical about implementing Islamic teachings than the Muslims themselves. For example, when the *Sinan* return home, they bring their cutlery and cooking utensils. They do not want to use their family's cutlery and cooking utensils even despite being made available to them. Families respect them by providing a separate table or place for Muslim families. But in reality, they always bring their cooking utensils and cutlery. Even though this is difficult for the family and society to accept, over time, the family and community inevitably take the habit of the *Sinan* to maintain a good relationship.

The *Sinan* identity is full of Islamic religious values, so their religious attitude is seen in their pattern of life. This spiritual attitude is maintained as their identity and personality, causing them to carry out the teachings of the religion they embrace steadily. Such a religious attitude gives rise to excessive obedience and leads to fanaticism. Therefore, the spiritual perspective of an adult tends to be based on the selection of religious teachings that can provide inner peace based on common sense considerations.(Jalaluddin, 2019; Rambo et al., 2014). Fearon's theory was used to construct the *Sinan* identity in three forms: identity legitimacy, identity resistance, and identity projects. (Fearon, 2020; Jalaluddin, 2019) This theory was used to see how the construction of the *Sinan* identity is preserved in the customs of the Mentuka and Dayak tribes and the polemic on the use of the *Sinan* identity in society. The projection of the *Sinan* identity is a symbol of the expression of traditional elders who have experience in *Pinah Laman*.

IDENTITY LEGITIMACY AND RESISTANCE

The first form of Fearon's theory is Identity Legitimacy which the traditional elders of the Mentuka Dayak tribe created. The traditional and customary elders of the Mentuka Dayak tribe in Pantok, Nanga Mahap, and Tanjung Melati address pinah laman in the customary book of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. This *pinah laman* procedure has been "patented" and cannot be contested by anyone. This custom is also used as a guide from one generation to the other. The term *Sinan* used as an identity for the convert from the Mentuka Dayak tribe is a special term given by the customary administrator to the convert. This identity is given without asking for the convert's approval but is automatically accepted by the convert. The term *Sinan* is nothing new among the Mentuka Dayak tribe, but the meaning of *Sinan* has not been adequately understood by the Mentuka Dayak people.

> "Odant Sinan ce asal e niti bahasa nya Dayak Mentuka. Ikunt e bahasa baoh tapi niti ine boyak deent ce, ideh kona nangkoingk, atau nangkoingk masyarakat adat Mentuka. ... samua masyarakat Dayak Mentuka samua e dah ngantao Sinan ce odant nik kona nambola ka osih ngan osih baka e. padai nik lamp adat pinah agama, masyarakat ongan kona nunangk ka acara dook dan saogont dook bala pamakant nik dah kona nontangk pelayan kona nampoda yoyi e onih tujuan odeh acara e ce."

Meaning:

> "The word *Sinan* comes from the native language of the Mentuka Dayak people. Not a new language but from their ancestors, not artificial or

written by the indigenous Mentuka people. ... all Mentuka Dayak people know that *Sinan* is a title or nickname given to whom and who the person is. Because of the custom of changing religion, the community is invited to a meal. Before eating the dishes provided by the waiter, they are explained the event's purpose." (Husin, FGD III, 16 March 2021)

The second form of this theory is the identity resistance generated by the convert in a position that receives *pinah laman*. Opposition arose when we asked about the convert's identity after *pinah laman* to the convert and the traditional elders of the Tanjung Melati hamlet. Opposition arose when they did not want to be called *Sinan*.

> " ... *Walaupun balome bapinah, balome totap suku Dayak padai balome katurunt nya Dayak.*" " ... *totap Dayak, sukuk an ideh tao nubah.*"(Rosa, Personal Communication, 13 Maret 2021)
> " ... *kayodeh parubah e. ome totap suku Dayak.*" (Anna, Personal Communication, 13 Maret 2021)

Meaning:

> "... even though we change [religioun], we are still Dayak because we are of Dayak descent."
> "... still Dayak, ethnicity can't be changed."
> " ... no changes. I am still a Dayak."

The same thing was stated by Utuy (70 years), who said: "they are still Dayak. In other words, Muslim Dayak." (Utuy, Personal Communication, March 16, 2021) This statement was made because his son had become a *Sinan*. The statement above is part of the resistance on the convert's side and traditional elders that we met. In an in-depth interview, among the conventional elders who said they were still Dayak, they unintentionally said their children had experienced *pinah laman*. This shows that there is a reason why the traditional elders did not give the *Sinan* identity to the convert, despite knowing the consequences of *Pinah Laman*. In interviews and FGDs held in Pantok hamlet, it was explained that the Mentuka Dayaks did not want to experience sadness because some of their tribe members left. They do not wish any Dayak people to go to their Dayakness. We found the same thing in Jenkins' explanation of the meaning of the identity (Jenkins, 2008; Maunati, 2004). The converts consciously recognize the characteristics of the ethnic identity they choose. They do not want to use the term *Sinan* because they know the meaning of *Sinan,* which is no longer Dayak. They do not want to lose their interaction with the Dayak identity. However, in this case, the traditional elders know that

the convert cannot be forced to become a Dayak again.

The Mentuka Dayak tribe releases the obligation of the convert as a Mentuka Dayak from everything related to the customs of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. A *Sinan* will not be prosecuted if he does not practice the traditions of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. For example, in the case of drinking rice wine at traditional events. Drinking rice wine in the traditional event of the Mentuka Dayak tribe is an obligation for the Mentuka Dayak people. If they do not want to practice this custom, they will receive a separate customary sanction because of their Dayak identity. *Tuak* [rice wine] is an obligation in the traditions of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. Therefore, people who do not drink it will have an issue in terms of ethnic identity. The identity issues above can be found in a *Sinan*. He is free from the custom of drinking rice wine or the like because the Mentuka Dayak tribe already knows the name Sinan as a person who has converted to Islam, and they cannot force the *Sinan* to drink rice wine. The Mentuka Dayaks respect Islamic teachings and do not want to ruin the human relationship with God. If the Mentuka Dayaks force the *Sinan* to drink rice wine, then the Mentuka Dayaks themselves will be prosecuted under the customary law by the traditional elders. Rice, wine or the like, and pork is traditional food and drink that must be present in the traditional rituals of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. These two standard items cannot be replaced because they have their essence, especially in the customs of the ancestors of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. If these two traditional items are only served without being consumed by the Mentuka Dayaks, then it can be said that they do not respect the customs of the Mentuka Dayak tribe's ancestors. They understand this as a custom that lives and is preserved for generations.

IDENTITY PROJECT

The third form of this theory is the Identity Project which refers to the conversion in terms of substituting social positions and changing social structure. Sadness because a Dayak individual who renounces his Dayakness does not need to arise because pinah laman facilitates or cures the sadness the family and the Mentuka Dayak people feel. Everyday items used to perform the *pinah laman* ceremony have the meaning of replacing the soul, locally known as *kuronkg samongatn*. This shows that one's Dayakness, or the convert's Dakakness, still exists in the village where the convert was born. The convert's Dayakness does not disappear because it is replaced with traditional items; even Pinah Laman allows the convert to explore and practice Islamic teachings even better. Changes in the social structure of the *Sinan* in their hometown are no longer a big issue but become a struggle in itself when

they meet with the community. The *Sinan* identity does not appear during a convert's socialization with people. The convert focuses on which identity makes him safe and uses it as needed. The convert we met as a Catholic said he was a Muslim Dayak.

Changes in the social structure of the *Sinan* are in part because they have left their hometown. This is supported by information regarding the difference in the customary fine imposed on the convert from the family of the customary administrator. A convert from a family of traditional elders has to pay a sizeable customary fine to ensure the traditional elders' family is not negligent in guarding his family. Traditional elders, of course, know the history of *pinah laman* very well. Therefore, their family serves as a model of the life of the Mentuka Dayak tribe. If it is found that someone deviates from the customs of the Mentuka Dayak tribe's ancestors, the special customary fine for the family of traditional elders is multiplied. The customary items are given not only to the traditional elders of the Mentuka Dayak tribe but also to other Dayak tribes, such as the Nanga Taman Dayak, Kerabat Dayak, or other Dayak tribes in Nanga Mahap Sub-District. Fearon and Afif expressed the same thing regarding the definition of identity. "Identity is one's feelings about himself, character, and origins. Although it is closer to our more recent understanding of identity than the earlier notions we have alluded to, it is still more descriptive of 'self-image'.."(Fearon & Afif, 2020)

CONCLUSION

The concept of the identity project as *Sinan* has its history based on one's character and origins. The new identity given by the traditional elders was not for nothing. *Sinan* means breaking away from the Dayak tribe by embracing Islam. The new identity as *Sinan* emerges because the teachings of Islam are not by the customs of the Mentuka Dayak ancestors. The self-image of *Sinan,* which is more oriented towards life by the teachings of Islam, should appear in the *Sinan*'s life, and the Dayak identity, which is also part of *Sinan*'s identity, as reported by a convert, makes their *Sinan* identity ambiguous. The ambiguity lies in *Sinan*'s situation, which is incompatible with the Dayak people's pork-eating and rice-wine-drinking habits. *Pinah Laman* is when a Christian or Catholic Dayak converts to Islam. It comes with social sanctions he receives from his social group. For the Mentuka Dayaks, when a person decides to change religion, he must be willing to give up his Dayak ethnicity. These social sanctions include: not living with the Dayak tribe, not being able to attend traditional Dayak ceremonies, and not wearing traditional clothes like a real Dayak (for women). The social effects experienced by those who change

religion in the Dayak tribe are, among others, they are given the nickname or term *Sinan*. Based on the research results, the word *Sinan*, according to the writer, has a negative connotation. This is because those who change religion are ultimately not given the freedom to practice the Dayak customs as usual.

Pinah Laman is a comparison between ethnicity and religion. This process of unification of customs and religion indeed results in a person not being able to use his free will as a human being to choose and determine which religion he should embrace. A Dayak is synonymous with Christianity or Catholicism, just as a Malay with Islam. This certainly hurts religious life due to dualism, where humans can no longer distinguish between custom and religion. The problems and research findings above provide ideas that can minimize social and religious issues arising from the practice of *Pinah Laman*. First, the traditional institutions should separate themselves from or not use the concept of religion in practicing their time-honored traditions; traditional institutions run by conventional leaders should strengthen the tolerance between Mentuka Dayaks and *Sinans* in terms of traditional events. The tolerance values found in the *Pinah Laman* custom is a confluence between ethnicity and religion, which leads readers to pluralism, tolerance, and religious moderation for the sake of building harmony between different nationalities, races, religions, and groups. Religious freedom, based on one's conscience, should serve as the basis that humans are created with freedom.

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FACE VEIL AND *LAWO-LAMBU*: NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AMONG MUSLIMS AND CATHOLICS IN ENDE CITY

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of wearing a face veil in Ende City has received a rather negative response from Catholics. The Catholics think that the face veil worn by Muslim women has created a social and emotional distance that disrupts the kinship system of Muslims and Catholics of the same ethnic culture. This study explores and analyzes the motivation for Muslims wearing the face veil, the reasons behind the response of Muslims and Catholics, and the negotiation efforts made by Muslims in responding to and accommodating the local culture of dressing among the Ende people. This study is qualitative research through in-depth interviews with Muslim and Catholic sources as well participant observations. This field study was conducted from July 2019 to December 2021. The data analysis process used was descriptive and interpretive. The findings of this study show that; first, the choice to wear the face veil comes from personal motivation towards piety of the faith of Muslim women. A face veil is not an expression of a suspicious radical movement and will not disrupt the kinship system as perceived by the Catholics. Second, it turns out that the response of the Catholics is due to the assumption that Muslim women who wear the face veil have left the local dress culture because they are adopting Arab culture and causing social rifts in daily life even though they are ethnically still brothers and sisters. Third, Ende Muslims combine the face veil with local clothing, the lawo-lambu, on different occasions. This combination is a negotiation process between personal autonomy towards a true Muslimah and a strategy to accommodate the beauty of the local dress, the lawo-lambu, so as not to lose their identity as Ende people who are predominantly Catholics.

Keywords: Face veil, Lawo-lambu, Negotiating Religious Practices; Ende City

INTRODUCTION

Wearing a face veil is the latest social phenomenon in Ende City, Flores. This phenomenon has become one of the most striking forms of Islamic expression since 2015. Muslims who wear the face veil can be seen among several young and adult women, certain mothers, as well as several *santri* [boarding school students] and *ustazah* [female teachers] at the *An-Nur Pesantren*, a boarding school located in Ndao Hamlet, Kota Ratu Village, North Ende Sub-District. The presence of Muslim women with the face veil can be seen in several locations, not only those who live in several urban villages where the majority of the population is Muslim, but also those who live among the Catholic majority. Some of these women choose to be alone at home or only interact with their Muslim families. Some participate regularly and are involved in social interactions and activities outside the home, such as attending family and social events and selling stuff at Mbongawani Market.

The phenomenon of Muslim women wearing the face veil in Ende City has generated a response, both from Muslims and Catholics. The Muslims and Catholics in Ende are actually of the same ethnic culture. The unity and similarity of Muslim and Catholic cultures in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) are built based on blood relations and marriage, shared customs and traditions, and the right to land ownership (Tule, 2015). These three elements unite a kinship that lasts forever (Halawa & Ahen, 2008; Howell, 1990). These kinship ties have perpetuated the harmonious life of Muslims and Catholics who share the same ethnic culture. When the face veil phenomenon began to emerge in Ende City, it caused tension, negative reactions, and rejection from the Catholic community. This is triggered by the fact that wearing the face veil is considered to have left the local dress culture.

To date, several previous studies have explained the phenomenon of veiling that departs from the concept of Islam, both from a legal-historical perspective (Diab, 2016) and the debate about the controversy over the wearing of the face veil in the political Islam movement (Islamism). Hakim (2020) shows that there is no relationship between radical ideology and the tendency among Muslim women to wear the face veil. Another study by Dzuhayatin (2020) on the face veil phenomenon in two Muslim countries, Indonesia and Egypt, indicates that it is associated with the ideology of the caliphate, which is contrary to the concept of democracy in these two republics. This research shows that the spirit of nationalism is still stronger than the Islamist movement in the two countries. This is evidenced by the objection expressed by Muslim women who wear face cover about acts of violence in the name of religion for political goals and their reluctance to affiliate with terrorist groups.

Another study adopted a historical perspective to explain that the face veil is Arab women's clothing, both worn in pre-Islamic and post-Islamic times. The wearing of the face veil does not imply a particular order, its obligations, or its sunnah (Sudirman, 2019)but does not require, appeal or circumcise the niqab to women. Suppose the niqab is perceived as clothing that can maintain women's dignity and \"wasilah\" to maintain their survival as claimed by a number of parties, surely the Prophet Muhammad. will oblige it to his wives, where they (the wives of the Prophet.

Several other studies explain the phenomenon of wearing the face veil, which is on the rise now despite its negative stigma in the community. Muslim women with face covering try to remove the negative stigma in society by showing a more inclusive attitude, such as doing various activities outside the home. The face veil not only serves as a cover for genitalia but has also become a lifestyle and fashion trend that has answered the challenges of modern times (Habibah, 2020). In addition, there are other strategies for veiled Muslim women, namely wearing a mask as a first step before wearing a veil, building social interactions, and conducting self-presentation to produce a positive self-image in front of others, as well as building social support with other veiled women for physical and psychological comfort. (Karunia & Syafiq, 2019). A study by Nonaka (2021) revealed that wearing the face veil has become so widespread that it has become a controversial issue. This development occurred due to an analysis of da'is [Islamic preachers] and influencers' posts on social media that motivate Muslim women to cover their faces. In contrast to previous studies, this study examines and analyzes other realities of face covering by viewing it from the context of Ende City, which is predominantly Catholic, and the culture of the people still firmly attached to local clothing, the *lawo-lambu*.

This study aims to explore and analyze the phenomenon of wearing face-covering among the people of Ende City. In line with that, three research questions were formulated to elaborate on this theme: first, what motivates Muslim women to wear the face veil amid a predominantly Catholic environment and an ethnic culture that shares the same local clothing? Second, how do Muslims and Catholics respond to the phenomenon of the face veil? Third, what is the negotiation strategy for Muslim women who wear the face veil in responding to the reaction of the Catholic community and local culture? The answers to these three questions will provide a profound, holistic understanding and the right solution to addressing the face-covering social phenomenon in Ende City. This study was conducted using a qualitative method. The data were collected using in-depth interview techniques involving 14 respondents, eight Muslims and six Catholics, all living in Ende City. In

addition to in-depth interviews, participant observations were carried out to understand the phenomenon of face covering. This field study was carried out from July 2019 to December 2021.

This study was prepared with the assumption that the discourse on the face veil that displays religious symbols with negative stereotypes and as an expression of the movement of radical groups still needs to be reviewed and examined further. (Dzuhayatin, 2020). The face veil is not necessarily synonymous with fundamentalism and fanaticism. The current face covering is even more widespread amid various negative societal stigmas. This study explains the motivation for wearing the face veil among Muslim women in Ende City to understand the context of the change in Muslim clothing from the perspective of understanding Muslim religiosity. An objective understanding helps Catholics get out of their biased and suspicious arguments. A face veil is a new form of distinction in the context of Muslim clothing that is not to be feared, suspected, or discontinued among Muslims. Moreover, the negotiation effort that Muslims are making is a strategic step to adapt to the context of local wisdom that accommodates local culture, such as clothing (Hermansyah, 2016; Misno, 2013) to remove the negative stigma in society.

PHENOMENON OF THE FACE VEIL IN ENDE CITY

Ende City is the capital of Ende Regency, located in the middle of Flores Island. It is a historic city that is one of the oldest of the early spread of Catholics and Muslims in Flores. According to van Suchtelen's chronicles, in 1560, Father Antonio de Taveira sailed with Portuguese traders and converted the infidels in Ende and Timor. Meanwhile, Islam began to come here in 1570 through contacts between the indigenous people of Ende Island and Muslims from Java and Makassar (van Suchtelen, 1921). As the oldest Catholic and Muslim city, religious dynamics have been going on for a long time, and Muslim and Catholic social interactions have fostered the unity of the two religions.

The Ende people have local clothing worn by women, namely *lawo* and *lambu*. *Lawo,* in the Ende language, means a woven sarong for women. *Lawo* has a motif with religious-magic values. The motifs in the *lawo* weaving are natural motifs of living things, such as humans, animals, and plants. According to the mindset, beliefs, and customs since the ancestors' time, these motifs have spiritual values that contain sacred powers. There is a religious-magic value with high protective power, which has a foretelling for an event, leading to happiness or functioning to prevent disaster. So, the *lawo* motif of purity and magic create a fantastic impression (Bao, 1992). At the same time, *lambu* in the Ende language means clothes. *Lambu* is a traditional women's dress that

has a simple shape, which is rectangular with four holes for the body, head, and arms. *Lambu* is always worn together with *lawo*. When an Ende woman wears the *lawo-lambu,* the manifestation of her local identity as an Ende woman is extreme, and her spiritual value and beauty can be seen. This *Lawo-lambu* dress is a local dress that is integrated with Ende women. When *hijab* began to develop in Ende City since the era of the 2000s, local clothing, the *lawo-lambu,* was not ignored by Ende Muslim women. They even combine *hijab* with *lawo-lambu* (13. Ende/22/7/2019). This regional style combination strengthens Muslim women's self-confidence as Ende people.

After the reform, the Islamic movement became more prominent, and it encouraged many young women activists who were committed to Islam and wanted to uphold women's rights and show more piety to women per Islam, (Rinaldo, 2013). One of which is expressed by wearing the face veil. The wearing of the face veil among Muslim women in East Nusa Tenggara is a phenomenon on the rise (Suksin et al., 2020). In Ende City, some Muslim women have begun covering their faces since 2015. These women come from different backgrounds and groups. The wearing of the face veil was initiated by several students who returned to Ende after completing their education at various Islamic boarding schools outside Flores Island and by female workers who returned from Middle Eastern countries, as well as by adult women and certain mothers. (13. Ende/13/8/2019). Face covering is quite familiar at the An-Nur Islamic Boarding School in Ndao. Muslims consider An-Nur Islamic Boarding School as one of the Islamic boarding schools based on the *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* Islamic model with a determination to promote quality Islamic *da'wah* and education. At this Islamic boarding school, several students and *ustazah* were seen wearing face veils (3. Ende/11/6/2019).

The wearing of the face veil among Muslim women in Ende City is a fact that cannot be denied anymore:

> "The face veil is currently worn by many Muslim women here. Therefore, if other Muslims say that the face veil is not suitable for us here, that is not true. In fact, many Muslim women have worn the face veil" (13. Ende/13/8/2019).

Wearing face coverings goes through a motivational stage that develops according to the understanding and appreciation of veiled Muslim women. A respondent explained her initial motivation when she decided to wear a face covering. In her statement, she said:

"Initially, during my time at the *Pondok* [Islamic Boarding School], I thought it was too extreme for those wearing face coverings. It was too self-isolated. However, I thought I judged others too harshly without knowing the point, how it feels when you wear the face veil. Finally, I tried to put myself in their position. I wore the face veil to know what it was like to be in their position without judging. Finally, since I entered my first semester of college, I tried wearing it, and it turned out to be very comfortable" (2. Ende/4/5/2021).

The first motivation to wear the face veil was to find out how it felt. Sometime later, face covering turned out she found comfort, so she decided to remain face-veiled. The comfort is specifically focused on appropriate patterns of association with the opposite sex, as described below:

"With a face veil, I can take care of myself and not get unfair treatment from male friends. I feel more comfortable and more able to take care of myself. Usually, when (if) we are face-veiled, our friends, especially males, can keep their distance, and be more respectful, then we start to have boundaries in terms of friendship and going out. From my point of view, it is comfortable like this. From that sense of comfort, it eventually forms an identity, such as personality or friendship. Because if you wear a face veil, there are consequences that need to be taken care of" (2. Ende/4/5/2021).

Wearing the face veil makes you feel comfortable. It wants to live the Sunnah of the Prophet more intensively, avoid sexual desires of the opposite sex and can regulate behavior toward goodness in the way of Allah. (Hanafiah et al., 2019). This comfort in oneself must also deal with a social environment that has not been able to accept the face veil. There is a face-veiled student who decides to adapt to the existing social conditions:

"During my holiday in Ende, I took off my face veil. After returning to college, I put it back on. So, I wear a face veil only in college. In Ende, I wear a regular hijab, which is 150 x 150" (2. Ende/4/5/2021).

The reaction to the rejection of the social environment has caused this face-veiled student to be in a dilemma between wearing the face veil and the risk of not being accepted by her family and not wearing a face veil which is contrary to her commitment. In this dilemma, the final decision was to make a choice that made her comfortable in two different environments: wearing a face veil on campus and a regular hijab in Ende.

The motivation for wearing the face veil was also born of a commitment to return to the true path of Allah. Commitment to return to Allah's path through a process that takes time as described below:

> "Wearing the face veil takes time. The process is too extraordinary regarding this veil. I usually tell stories with tears in my eyes. Why did I sin so much? What sin? I said, especially when I was young, I wore tights, with body curves, excuse me, I wore tank tops, that's a sin. We are the ones who wear it are sinful; those who see us are also sinful. So, the sin is double, making people commit adultery in their eyes. Going to the market wearing a one-shoulder dress; each time I went to work, I wore shorts. I went to the party, dressing up, even though it was a sin, attracting the attention of the opposite sex. After knowing this, oh, that was what I did anyway" (1. Ende/29/8/2019).

This face-veiled Muslim woman's expression shows the struggle at the transitional stage from a sinful past and the present when committing herself to wear the face veil. (Nisa, 2012). The woman who wears the face veil expresses herself to achieve the desire to become a true Muslim woman. By wearing the face veil, women show their obedience to actual physical practices (Nisa, 2012). Even though we must go through a crisis, it is part of the sacrifice in the quest to become a devout Muslim woman (Nisa, 2012).

Based on the various opinions and testimonies above, the motivation for wearing the face veil among Ende Muslim women is motivated by religious motivation. The wearing of the face veil is a consequence of the increasing awareness of Muslims to maintain self-purity and be committed to returning to the true path of Allah. Such motivation is part of the re-empowerment of pious faith that arises from a new awareness of her identity as a Muslim woman and her reflection on that identity (Ismail, 2004). A process of self-reflection to redefine her Islamic identity in the domain of social life through various signs and symbols related to Islamic traditions and culture. (Ismail, 2004; Yamin, 2013) includes the face veil.

WITHIN THE MUSLIMS: NEGOTIABLE RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

The face veil has also generated a different response from the internal Muslim community. These responses were classified into three categories. First, the opinion of Muslims who show a less sympathetic attitude towards the face veil. This first category of opinion explains that "The face veil is the Sunnah of the Prophet, a strict shari'a. Wearing the face veil is a problem if you live in a plural society" (3. Ende/11/6/2019). Another informant said, "The face veil is

burdensome; what I know is that women are obliged to cover their intimate parts, except for the palms and face" (4. Ende/3/5/2021). This unsympathetic attitude is triggered by the very conspicuous attribute of the face veil that seems excessive and fanatical and can interfere with kinship relations.

Some women who wear the face veil also experience and feel this rejection. One of the respondents reported as follows:

> "This society has antipathy towards me because I wear the face veil. Initially, my experience of wearing this face veil was not only among non-Muslims but also among Muslims, namely my close relatives, those who rejected it, "What do you want to cover?" The Catholics have also ridiculed me, but not in front of me. Then, some people are indifferent to me. I said that's okay. For those who don't like it, they don't talk directly; they used to greet me, now not anymore; they hardly ever do" (1. Ende/29/8/2019).

The expression of this face-veiled Muslim woman showed her struggles when she decided to change her appearance from wearing a hijab to a full-face veil. In the transition process, there is a struggle when getting adverse reactions from the social environment. There are expressions of dislike and sympathy from the surrounding community, including their own families.

Another incident happened to a face-veiled student. There are reactions of rejection and disapproval of the face veil from her family and social environment. She reported as follows:

> "When I came home from holiday to Ende, when I arrived at Ende airport, I was told to take it off by the airport staff; I started to doubt whether or not I should wear it. When I got home, my parents and family disagreed. Because I was wearing the face veil without my parents' permission, they forbade me and told me to take it off. They said I'm still unstable; the face veil doesn't suit our environment here. Moreover, I am a student teacher of the Islamic Religion. If I do da'wah later, there will be people who will not accept it" (2. Ende/4/5/2021).

The concerns of others shackle the rights and freedoms of these face-veiled students. The request to remove the face veil caused doubt within. In addition, the family also expressed disapproval of the use of the face veil. Families assume that wearing the face veil can hinder future assignments and that, at a young age is still unstable to practice religious teachings.

Second is the opinion of Muslims who critically evaluate the phenomenon of the face veil but still respect the person who wears it. "The face veil is too fanatical, especially when we are Easterners here. I don't like things like that. It doesn't fit our norm in Ende; it feels awkward, but I still appreciate those who wear it" (5. Ende/23/7/2019). The critical note of this opinion is that the face veil is not required because it is considered incompatible with the local cultural context.

Third, Muslim opinion shows a favorable acceptance. This opinion begins with an explanation of the reasons for wearing the face veil:

> "Wearing the face veil is Sunnah. It's not required. What's mandatory is the hijab. After all, a woman's intimate parts that can be seen are only the face and the palms of the hands. So, if the face veil is not mandatory, anyone who wants to wear it, go ahead; anyone who doesn't, no problem! That's the law; if we do, we get a reward; if we don't, it's also okay; it's not sinful." (13. Ende/13/8/2019).

The reason for wearing the face veil is based on the Sunnah of the Prophet. This provision of the Sunnah is highly dependent on one's free choice. On the one hand, wearing the face veil is not mandatory. On the other hand, wearing it is a person's right and freedom. Therefore, Muslims refuse if wearing the face veil is identified with radicalism or terrorism. One of the respondents explained:

> "As far as I know, the Messenger of Allah taught that women should cover their intimate parts and only see their eyes and palms. Then fashion developed. Some Muslim women wear the face veil. I don't think it's wrong because it's the Sunnah of the Prophet. Then comes the opinion of the community where some people are scared of bomb attacks, that was last year, and a woman in a face veil carried it out. It brings fear, and it's also sad for us Muslims when people's understanding has started to deviate: oh, then the face veils are scary. Don't let them be terrorists" (12. Ende/13/8/2019).

The above opinion acknowledges the development of Muslim clothing. It explains that it is natural and legal for Muslim women to wear the face veil because it is by the Sunnah of the Prophet. The adverse reaction arises because there is a negative opinion in society that associates face-veiled women with terrorists. The face veil's image is worse when social media labels women with face veils as the wives of terrorists or terrorist members (Dzuhayatin, 2020). Muslims themselves deny this terrorist label:

"It's not [like that]! It's only because certain people have such a mission. Yes, others [who wear it] do not cause any problem, but they raise suggestions from people who see that there is fear, a sense of vigilance, don't get close, don't let them be a danger to us. But in my opinion, there is no problem as long as the face-veiled woman wears it as the Sunnah of the Prophet, yes, just like that." (12. Ende/13/8/2019).

Although some Muslims show a less sympathetic attitude towards the face veil, this phenomenon is an inevitable reality in Ende City. Wearing the face veil is a religious commitment to live the Sunnah of the Prophet. This religious commitment is spiritually oriented without being trapped in anxiety and suspicious fanaticism or radicalism—the various explanations described above aim to provide a more objective understanding of the face veil phenomenon. The explanation model is not an apology but a description of the argument that comes from the experience and appreciation of Muslims themselves.

FOR THE CATHOLICS: A SHIFT IN RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES IN PUBLIC SPACE

The face veil phenomenon in Ende City received responses from the Catholic community. Such reactions are based on experience and the perceived social impact. The responses were grouped into four categories. First, the face veil causes a shock among Catholics, "How come there is a woman who wears the face veil in this Mbongawani Market?" (6. Ende/15/7/2019). Ende City can also offer a spontaneous commentary on a new, unexpected phenomenon. This surprise sparked suspicions about the face veil phenomenon: "Could it be that there is a certain scenario behind this phenomenon" (6. Ende/15/7/2019)?

Second, there is a change in the behavior and habits of a face-veiled woman. A respondent who is a neighbor of a face-veiled Muslim woman said:

"They're renting the house. I rarely see the woman out of the house. Once in a while, maybe [she's] going shopping and to the market. When she's walking, she lowers her head. [She's] always inside the house, and I have never seen her go out to chat or greet others; when I pass in front of her house, we rarely talk and greet each other" (7. Ende/2/7/2019).

Wearing the face veil has an impact on an exclusive pattern of behavior. In addition, there is also a change in the habits of face-veiled Muslim women as they no longer stay in touch to say Christmas greetings. It is allegedly forbidden to convey Christmas greetings to non-Muslims. This habit change makes Catholics reluctant to visit and greet Muslims on their religious

holidays. Catholics think that their presence would not be accepted or could be rejected (8. Ende/12/9/2019).

Third, the creation of social distance further widens the space for personal communication. The face veil has limited the space for talking to each other. "After wearing the face veil, how do we feel? It's like we don't talk anymore. I would like to greet them, but we don't know them anymore because everything is covered" (9. Ende/22/4/2021). The atmosphere of communication has become awkward and less intimate than before. The face veil began to limit interaction with Catholics. Another respondent confirmed this fact:

> "At first, I felt like it was really weird, right? I came to think like this, what is this all about, really? Those who are fully covered, even her face, we cannot see. Sometimes when we sit down for a family event, we see someone covering herself, her face, [we] look at her eyes a little. So, I was like, how is this even possible? In the past, it was more relaxed for us to talk and tell stories, but now here we are, well, that's what I see. It feels like we want to sit down, but we see their eyes. We don't know how we feel anymore" (10. Ende/30/7/2021).

Face-veiled Muslim women began to show behavioral patterns through their exclusiveness by limiting themselves in interacting with Catholics. This exclusive character begins to impact relationships and communication patterns that are not as intensive and relaxed as before. The face veil phenomenon is thought to have disrupted the kinship between the face veiled women and Catholics. Feelings of interfering with kinship ties are not in the context of separation or severance but rather emotional connections. A respondent acknowledged this situation:

> "Among those who are Muslims, they may already feel normal because they already know it better. But we don't know why? So, [we] begin to feel suspicious, [it's complicated to describe] how we feel; [We] begin to feel reluctant and can no longer hang out in a relaxed manner as before" (10. Ende/15/9/2021).

The face veil is considered to have created an emotional distance, even physically, despite their kinship relations.

Fourth, there is a shift from local clothing to Arabic-style clothing. Face-veiled Muslim women show a change in the way they dress:

"A member of my family also wears the face veil. But she wears it only when she leaves the house, goes to the market, or works in a shop. At home, she wears a large hijab and a robe, and now she no longer wears the *lawo-lambu*" (9. Ende/22/4/2021).

One of the significant changes revealed was that they no longer wear traditional clothing, *lawo-lambu*. In fact, for women in Ende, *lawo-lambu* is a local clothing that has been part of them. The Ende people still produce women's sarongs manually using traditional weaving equipment. The Ende's *lawo* sarong has natural motifs and geometric decorations and contains religious-magic aspects (Bao, 1992). The meanings and symbols in the *lawo* sarongs have made Ende women strongly attached to wearing *lawo-lambu*, both at home and out of the house, for various activities.

Catholics believe there has been a change in clothing, namely a shift that is considered displacing the beauty of the local Ende people's clothing. They assume that traditional beauty in the form of local clothing, *lawo-lambu*, which is highly admired and passed down from generation to generation, is drifting away from face-veiled Muslim women. Local dress is considered not religious clothing, as emphasized by this respondent, "They will no longer consider [wearing] the *lawo-lambu*. They assume it is not Islamic dress. And there must be a shift. If they see that [face veil] as being Islamic, but not necessarily, that one is Arab style, right?" (11. Ende/30/6/2021). Wearing the face veil, which is considered an Arab-style dress, is something new and strange, which raises many questions among Catholics:

"What's that for? Initially, people lived side by side between Muslims and Catholics. Therefore, we should adjust to the existing cultural conditions so as not to arouse suspicion. When there is something else, there will be a question: Where else? Why are they like this? While those who are there are ordinary people, right? So, if there are trends like that, if people understand, they don't have to wear them. Just go with what we have now. They take this from the outside but don't understand it, do they?" (11. Ende/1/12/2021)

Catholics think that Muslims themselves do not understand why they must wear the face veil:

"Whether they understand the Arabization, I also don't know. But when Catholics see something out of the ordinary, there must be questions. Because Catholics think this is a bit strange, right? Then Catholics began

to suspect that this should not be an Islamization process. The majority are bothered because of the Arabization phenomenon, right?" (11. Ende/1/12/ 2021)

In light of the various opinions above, Catholics consider that the face veil phenomenon has begun to cause changes in behavior and a shift in interpreting the beauty of local clothing. As the testimony of the informants above showed, from the beginning, they talked a lot, shook hands, and kept in touch as usual, but after the face veil emerged, they were more reluctant to speak and no longer shook hands; communication was not as relaxed as before; they were unwilling to consume food offered [by Catholics] and no longer wear the *lawo-lambu*. This impression began to cause negative perceptions among Catholics. The face veil has caused discomfort in the coexistence (Saiya & Manchanda, 2020). Fanatical behavior and habits began to appear in face-veiled Muslim women. The face veil involves outward things in the form of a black cloth covering the face and the nuances of religious fanaticism amid the diversity of social life. (Dzuhayatin, 2020).

The transition from the traditional environment and kinship culture attached to the lawo-lambu to the Arabized fashion shows this nuance of fanaticism. The phenomenon of Arabization is an attempt to form an identity and behavior that follows the way of life that was common in the Arab world in the Middle Ages during the early introduction of Islam. One of the external manifestations is the wearing of Middle Eastern fashion (Ghoshal, 2010). The face veil is considered an Arab attribute that is shifting local cultural clothing. Catholics deplore the shift that has reduced the beauty of local traditions and culture and disrupted the kinship between the two. The impact experienced and felt by Catholics caused a reaction of dissatisfaction, so Catholics could not accept the face veil. The face veil phenomenon striking in the Catholic majority environment is assumed to be an expression of identity politics used to convey messages in public spaces. A statement that is not only about religion itself but also about differences and claims of public recognition (Ismail, 2004; Yamin et al., 2019).

THE FACE VEIL: RELIGIOUS PRACTICE NEGOTIATION STRATEGY

The face veil phenomenon that appears in public spaces has generated various responses. These multiple responses were made because the face veil is not only a manifestation of the faith but also implies certain ideological doctrines in the form of the discourse of the Islamic Caliphate (Dzuhayatin, 2020). In European countries, there is widespread controversy over the face

veil. France was the first European country to ban the wearing of the face veil on a national scale, followed by other European countries, such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. This prohibition is solely based on national security threats that link The wearing of the face veil with radical Islamic movements and terrorism (Saiya & Manchanda, 2020). In Indonesia, there has been a rapid increase in women wearing the face veil, giving rise to various discussions and opinions. In Ende city, as described above, the face veil raises pros and cons between Muslims and Catholics.

The triggering factor behind face-veiled Muslim women starts from religious motivation. The face veil is a personal freedom for faithful Muslim women without having to be trapped in radical ideas as suspected by Catholics. Now, face-veiled Muslim women are trying to socialize the face veil image among their family and relatives, and surrounding communities, as reported by the following face-veiled informant:

> "If there is a traditional family event, a funeral, or other family events I attend, I am close to them. I wear *Lawo-lambu* and a face veil. There are times when the women sit down; I take it off, and eat the betel, as usual, with them. I often take it off to show my nephews and other families that I am their mother. If they come, I will take off the face veil; it depends on me personally" (1. Ende/29/8/2019).

Such practice is a process of self-socialization into the cultural context and living habits of the majority of the local community. This step is taken to fight the negative opinion among the public that associates the face veil with " fanaticism amid diversity"."(Dzuhayatin, 2020) as well as an effort to correct the "misunderstanding of Muslim women who wear the face veil"" (Izharuddin, 2015). This self-socialization process is one of the ways of adapting to restore the image of the face veil among non-Muslims.

The differences displayed by face-veiled circles are not a form of Arabized religious fanaticism that shifts local wisdom and kinship culture, both among Muslims themselves and with Catholics. Muslims expressed their disapproval of the face veil which Catholics consider Arabization. According to Muslims, "Actually wearing the face veil is not Arabization. It is recommended in Islam" (14. Ende/1/12/2021). Other Muslims also express disapproval of the use of the term Arabization:

> "There is no such thought. For example, we have never had contact

with Arabs. Sometimes what makes people think like that? Lack of understanding. I am afraid I have to disagree with the term Arabization. We never felt that way. Some say we are not the people of the Prophet because we are not Arabs. It is wrong! Because among us, there is nothing like that" (13. Ende/10/12/2021).

A young face-veiled Muslim woman also disagrees with the term Arabization. In her statement, she said:

> "Arabization is probably from the perspective of those who think it is too much. Oh, why do you wear the face veil? Then they interpret it as the Arab culture. It is not like that, though. Maybe they see a face veiled person practicing her religion excessively, limiting friendships with other Muslim women whose headscarves are not as big as theirs. They could not accept it and judged a face veiled person to be Arabized, too excessive in practicing religion; they saw Islam as a strict religion, and the rules should not be violated. Even though it's actually not that hard, it also depends on the personality" (2. Ende/10/12/2021).

The face veil should not be considered Arabization, which is then identified with excessive fanaticism. This notion is a prejudice that stems from the ignorance and lack of understanding among Catholics about the meaning of wearing the face veil among Muslims (Valentine et al., 2021). Wearing the face veil is a choice of faith and should not necessarily be identified with Arab culture. Muslim women who wear the face veil are a form of personal appreciation to make themselves more comfortable towards the formation of identity without having to limit themselves excessively in associating with Muslims or other non-Muslims. (Hermansyah, 2016).

Based on the statements above, Muslims express disapproval of using the term Arabization. Catholics have interpreted the term in responding to changes in Muslim clothing, especially regarding the face veil. The face veil is categorized as Arab cultural clothing, which has caused a cultural shift and undermined local wisdom. In her description of Muslims, Eck explained that non-Muslims often identify Islam with the Middle East. Islam should not be confused with a particular culture and its ways and customs. Islam is a faith and a universal vocation. Islam is not an Arab religion or a Middle Eastern cult (Eck, 2002). Therefore, Muslims believe the face veil identified with the Arabic character cannot be considered correct. This is because the reality among face-veiled Muslim women is different from what Catholics assume. According to an informant, "In fact, those who have worn the face veil also always wear a robe. But they still wear the *Lawo Lambu* dress in the face veil when attending family

events" (14. Ende/1/12/2021). Other opinions also confirm the same fact:

> "Underneath, some wear the *lawo-lambu* combined with the face veil during family events, such as weddings, funerals, or other traditional events. I saw that someone was wearing that; underneath it was not a robe but a *lawo*. It's all right. It is a mix of religion and culture. This is something positive, she is wearing a face veil, but she still wears *lawo-lambu*" (13. Ende/10/12/2021).

Some of the statements above reveal the reality of the face veil, which is still worn along with the *lawo-lambu*. The face veil combined with *lawo-lambu* is usually worn at traditional and cultural events, such as the *belis* event, customary marriage, or funeral. While for religious events, such as attending recitations in mosques or prayer rooms or internal events among Muslims, the face veil is worn with a robe (13. Ende/10/12/2021; 12. Ende/13/8/2010; 5 Ende/23/7/2019). The combination of the face veil and *lawo-lambu* is seen as something positive that does not ignore local culture but instead still accommodates it.

Catholics perceive that the face veil has impacted these two things. First, there is a change in behavior among face-veiled Muslim women. This behavior change is considered to be exclusive and excessively fanatical. Such a model of change is seen as a gap that disrupts the long-standing establishment of Muslim and Catholic kinship. The face veil phenomenon is a 'new gap' currently appearing in the public space of Ende City. Diana L. Eck's theory of pluralism, explains that pluralism uses the reality of differences as its starting point. Pluralist culture will not equalize differences but respect and reconcile them. Differences are not to be feared. Prejudice stems from ignorance, and that knowledge and understanding will be the basis for creating a positive plural society.

Without understanding, differences only create fear. With understanding, differences enrich life (Eck, 2002). The inevitable face veil phenomenon is a new form of difference amid the internal pluralism of a pluralist society. The new difference is not to be feared or suspected and should be eliminated or prohibited from being practiced by Muslims. The choice to wear the face veil is based on personal motivation towards piety of faith and not for political purposes, especially concerning radical movements. When Muslims explain the motivation behind wearing this veil, it is one way to give Catholics a new, objective understanding. Prejudice and suspicion against the face veil stem from ignorance and lack of understanding among Catholics. The wearing of the face veil for the sake of self-purity and piety of faith is a process of change

based on the context of the development of faith and religious awareness among Muslims. Therefore, differences in dress due to religious motivation for the sake of piety of faith are not up for debate (Valentine et al., 2021). Efforts to respond to this face veil phenomenon require a new commitment to respect and acknowledge the differences expressed through the face veil.

This new commitment requires active involvement and a more open attitude to understanding the face veil by building communication through theological dialogue. (Madigan, 2010). This dialogue aims to understand the religious motivation behind wearing the face veil to prevent misunderstanding and biased assumptions and correct wrong prejudice against wearing the face veil. Because the face veil phenomenon is still triggering adverse reactions from the surrounding community (Dzuhayatin, 2020). Catholics have not been able to accept the face veil as one of the "real expressions of the spirit of obedience to be a true Muslim woman" (Nisa, 2012). Therefore, at this time, it takes openness from each party in theological dialogue in order to build a shared understanding. The wearing of the face veil among Muslims in Ende City is part of the expression of the piety of faith with spiritual tendency and not for political-Islamist goals with its radicalism and terrorism. This theological dialogue is an essential form of enlightenment, especially for Catholics, which must have begun at the grassroots level because there has always been a tendency to direct the thinking about Muslim principles into social and political categories without acknowledging the centrality of Muslim religious commitments (Madigan, 2010).

According to the Catholic response, the second impact is a shift in the meaning of local traditions, namely the transition from the lawo-lambu to the face veil, considered an Arab dress style. The Muslims of Ende City does not agree with the term Arabization because, according to Muslims themselves, face-veiled Muslim women still wear the *lawo-lambu* on different events and occasions, as stated by the informants above. When attending traditional family events, such as births, weddings, funerals, or other social events, Muslim women combine the face veil with local clothing, the *lawo-lambu*. While in religious events in mosques, prayer rooms, or internal events among Muslims, Muslim women wear the face veil combined with a robe. Even though they are faced-veiled, these Muslim women are still involved in kinship traditions, both with fellow Muslims and non-Muslims. The identity negotiation theory of Stella Ting-Toomey explains that identity is structured according to a person's self-image, which is formed through individual negotiation by stating, modifying, or opposing identification with oneself or others. There is a process of adaptation by learning the value system and opening oneself to new ways to reconstruct

the identity (Hermansyah, 2016; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Wearing the face veil combined with *lawo-lambu* is a new way of reconstructing identity through negotiation efforts between Islamic identity and its sociocultural identity as Ende people. Muslim women of Ende are adaptive by adhering to the principles of maintaining a balance between two different demands. On the one hand, there are demands for religious clothing to show their Islamic identity. On the other hand, there are also demands for culturally patterned clothing so as not to lose their identity as the people of Ende (Diab, 2016).

Muslim women wearing the face veil are usually synonymous with a "new piety that rejects and challenges traditional ways of life and old identities." (Turner, 2008). This means that piety creates a special and typical identity that is different from others and shows its superiority regarding religious appreciation. The face veil is one of the characteristics of physical identity and a symbol of piety that avoids contamination with local traditions, which are considered a source of deviation in the Islam (Diab, 2016; Wahib, 2017). However, what happened in Ende is different from the concept understood by Muslims who wear the face veil. The face-veiled Muslims in Ende have made a breakthrough by combining the face veil. This means that the face veil, which Catholics in Ende consider synonymous with Arab icons, has undergone an adaptation process by accommodating the *lawo-lambu*. This combination ensures the comfort of face-veiled Muslim women in pursuing personal purity and piety of faith without making them feel alienated or fanatical from their socio-cultural environment as the people of Ende. Such a Muslim attitude is a form of Muslim appreciation and respect for local traditions, customs, and fellow Catholics (Tule, 2004; Yamin et al., 2019). Thus, wearing the face veil combined with local clothing is a new form of acculturation that is currently happening among veiled Muslim women in Ende City. (Ernas et al., 2021; Prasojo, 2017). This shows that religion is constantly in dialogue and adapting to local culture and traditions for the survival of the followers of that religion (Erawati, 2018; Pabbajah, 2020; Prasojo, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The wearing of the face veil, which is assumed by Catholics to be synonymous with fanaticism and radicalism and is considered Arabization, turns out to be different from the response from the Muslims of Ende City. The face veil in the Ende Muslim context is worn based on personal motivation towards piety. Such motivation has a spiritual tendency and is not political-Islamist with a radical pattern. The face veil phenomenon, which has a spiritual tendency, does not at all ignore the lawo-lambu as assumed by Catholics. Face-veiled

Muslim women still wear the lawo-lambu at different events and occasions. When attending tradition, family, or other social events other than religious events at the mosque or prayer room, Muslim women in Ende wear a face veil combined with the lawo-lambu. The combination of the face veil and *lawo-lambu* is a negotiation process between personal autonomy towards faithful Muslim women and a strategy to accommodate the lawo-lambu, a legacy of Ende's local tradition. On the one hand, this negotiation process is intended to make face-veiled Muslim women comfortable with their intentions and commitments toward personal piety. On the other hand, Muslim women also have not lost their identity as people of people and feel alienated from Catholics.

Wearing the face veil in Ende City is a new challenge for Catholics. This new challenge demands an active involvement and a more open attitude in understanding the face veil. In order to achieve this goal, the discussion in this article has explained the importance of holding theological dialogue to build mutual understanding between Muslims and Catholics regarding wearing the face veil. Therefore, this study recommends that further research be done on the extent to which this theological dialogue has been built and its impact on Muslim and Catholic relations in Ende City.

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PRESERVING DIVERSITY: LESSONS FROM BATANG TARANG VILLAGE OF WEST KALIMANTAN

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ABSTRACT

The recurring communal, racial conflicts in West Kalimantan have left unpleasant memories among the local community. Unfortunately, some people believe that similar events will keep happening. This article was based on field research that relied on interviews and observations involving several crucial things. This research argues that communal conflicts in West Kalimantan can be averted by empowering internal forces to maintain balance in a plural society. This article found that conflict-prone societies such as those in Batang Tarang have the capacity to build harmony through togetherness, inter-ethnic marriages, the moderate practice of Islam, fair practice of adat [customary law], and strengthening awareness of shared origins.

Keywords: Preserving Diversity; Harmony; Ethnicity; Religion; Batang Tarang

INTRODUCTION

Recurring conflicts in a plural society in West Kalimantan have brought about pessimism among some experts. Arkanudin (2006: 185), for instance, claims that it is difficult to avoid the tendency for conflict to arise in a society of different ethnic groups that could inevitably lead to recurring inter-ethnic conflicts in West Kalimantan. Arafat (1998), Alqadrie (1999), and Petebang et al. (2000) found that there were at least 10 to 12 violent clashes between 1933 and 1999. Although these three sources indicate different frequencies of conflict, all of them at least refer to the idea that disputes often occur and continue to recur. Ten to twelve wars had occurred in the previous 50 to 60 years (an average of one conflict every four to five years) (Bahari, 2005). Due

to the repetition of similar incidents, Alqadrie (2010) refers to it as a 30-year cycle of violence that has the potential to happen again. Based on these data, Human Rights Watch has classified West Kalimantan as a conflict-prone area.

Inter-ethnic relations are considered positive where different ethnic groups -- Malays, Dayaks, Madurese, Chinese, Javanese, etc. -- interact without conflict in various realms of life. However, in reality, because of the difference between what it means to be indigenous and what it means to be a migrant, the social reality of everyday life is filled with low-level hostility. Control of economic resources and natural resources that are not profitable for native people, who claim that they are indigenous people and are still under pressure from the presence and role of migrants, also contribute to the construction of ethnic identity that can be contested (Haba, 2012: 42). This unique situation, as Haba describes, occurred several years before the major ethnic riot in 1999.

Haba's findings above are supported by the fact that fights between individuals could easily lead to communalism. For example, at least until the late 1990s, people in Batang Tarang lived in a tense atmosphere. Even though the conflict did not surface, people lived in suspicion. The two main ethnic groups, namely Malays and Dayaks, felt unsafe even though they lived in the same environment. The Malays, for example, felt that they were living under the siege of the Dayaks, who could attack them at any time or impose customary law arbitrarily. The Dayaks feel suspicious of the Chinese and other migrant groups who were considered more intelligent and used their intelligence to deceive the Dayaks.

However, the Dayaks and Malays also have wisdom that can maintain the foundations of peace in society. Hermansyah (2018b) found that the Malays of West Kalimantan have inherited collective memories, including oral traditions, beliefs, and diverse ways of life, such as the agricultural system from their ancestors. Thanks partly to this piece of collective memory, they can now recognize their common ancestry with contemporary Dayaks. This collective memory is an important aspect that awakens them to be able to live together with their brothers and sisters, who were shunned by divisive colonial politics.

With a more positive perspective, a violent conflict hypothesized to recur in a 30-year cycle, as described above, can be prevented, among others, by strengthening local mechanisms. However, we must also realize that the public position that specific cultural practice is divided into small groups that support their respective sub-cultures to ensure the accommodation of individual and group interests (Abdullah, 2009, p. 7).

Community harmony in a small sub-district capital in West Kalimantan

with a population of less than 3,000 can teach how traditional values can become a local mechanism for preserving the dynamics of plural community relations. The name of this village is Batang Tarang, the capital of the Balai sub-district, Sanggau, West Kalimantan. For example, *adat* [customary law] is a trusted source of law in the community and is supported by groups from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. In fact, in other places, there are customary "thugs" who make some people lose confidence in the capacity of this traditional heritage to solve problems. Thus, due to the prevalence of this practice, the Head of the Customary Justice Division of the Central Council of the National Dayak Customary Panel of Judges (DPP MHADN), Tobias Ranggie SH, said that currently, it is challenging to eradicate customary law business practices or the "thuggery" of Dayak customary law (Suara Pemred, 20 December 2021).

Awareness of the importance of maintaining peace within the Batang Tarang community has strengthened partly due to the terrible experience of ethnic riots at the end of the 20th century in several areas in West Kalimantan. There have been reinforcements initiated by local leaders, as well as cultural movements, to maintain harmony. For example, several ethnic associations have emerged, accommodated by forums bridging this diversity. The situation is different in Enggano, where people can have harmony. However, migrants are "forced" to eliminate their original identities and be united with a new identity called Kaamay (Sari, 2020, p. 84). In Batang Tarang, inter-ethnic and religious marriages are common despite being considered a big problem in many places. Other factors contribute to maintaining harmony, such as the moderate practice of Islam by the majority group and life in an environment without segregation. In light of the explanation, the article aims to describe the values and life practices of the Batang Tarang community, which function to maintain the harmony of a plural society in the region.

SOCIAL RELATIONS IN BATANG TARANG

This article is based on a study carried out in Batang Tarang. Batang Tarang is the name of a village located in Hilir Village, where there are four hamlets: Hilir Hamlet, Hulu Hamlet, Sembatu Hamlet, and Melaban Hamlet. Batang Tarang is located in Sanggau Regency, West Kalimantan. It is located on an axis road that connects several regencies in the eastern region of West Kalimantan with Pontianak, the provincial capital. The transportation route that crosses Batang Tarang is also connected to the roads of all the main routes in the province to the east, west, and north, as well as the two districts in the south. The road is also connected to the axis that connects West Kalimantan with Sarawak,

East Malaysia. The distance from Batang Tarang to Sanggau is 78 km. It takes approximately 2 hours to Pontianak across 121 km. From Batang Tarang to the Indonesia-Malaysia border in Entikong is 124 km.

In the past, when the river was the only route to the surrounding villages and the city center, Batang Tarang was a transit point. People from villages located upstream of the river came to Batang Tarang to sell forest, agricultural, and plantation products, which intermediary merchants then sold to Tayan. In Batang Tarang, people from the villages bought groceries from Tayan. This situation made Batang Tarang a business center that attracted not only local people but also migrants. It is no wonder the people of Batang Tarang are relatively more diverse than those in other villages around it. Even though there is still a rural atmosphere, very few people work in the agricultural sector. The agricultural and plantation businesses in this place are mainly rubber and palm oil, in addition to rice farming. A famous gardening product is palm sugar, known as 'tayan sugar.' Besides that, the Batang Tarang durian is renowned in West Kalimantan, especially Pontianak. Most of the residents work in the service and trade sectors. As the center of economic life that supports the surrounding villages, there are relatively many financial institutions in Batang Tarang. There are two sub-branch offices of government-owned banks. There are at least five cooperatives in the form of Credit Unions.

The plural population of Batang Tarang, among others, can be seen from the religious followers, which amount to 2,428. Of that number, 59.76% or 585 people are Muslims, 585 Catholics or 24.09%, followed by 224 Christians (9.23%). The remaining 155 are Buddhists (6.3%), Hindus, and Confucianism less than 1%. Compared to two neighboring villages, such as Semoncol and Cowet, in the same sub-district, there are only Muslims, Catholics, and Christians[1]. Unfortunately, there needs to be official data regarding the existence of ethnically based residents in the area. Based on the oral account, the Batang Tarang population consists of Malays, Malian Dayaks, and Chinese, in addition to several other ethnic groups such as Javanese, Minang, Batak, and Flores. In recognition of the existence of this diverse population, ethnic group associations have been founded in Batang Tarang, such as the Malay Cultural Council (MABM), the Dayak Customary Council (DAD), the Chinese Cultural Council (MABT), the East Nusa Tenggara people's association (Flobamora: Flores, Sumba, Timor, and Alor), and the association of the Javanese.

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[1] See Sidompu, the official website that details the government of Sanggau Regency.

In 2016 the public in Indonesia was shocked by Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok)'s statement that Indonesians should not be deceived by those who use Surah al-Ma'idah (5:51) about the prohibition of electing non-Muslims as leaders. This statement sparked a fierce debate among Indonesia's Muslim population, leading to Ahok's two-year prison sentence for blasphemy. However, long before that, using the same method, several members of the campaign team for one of the candidates for the elections of Sanggau Regent-Deputy Regent for the 2009-2014 period had caused public unrest in Batang Tarang:

"Before the year 2000, there were problems with relations between communities. Some people often made trouble in the market, and there was no effort to prevent it. There was suspicion between people of different ethnicity and religion. There was 'segregation' between the upstream and downstream villagers, etc. In the past, there was suspicion between different ethnic groups. People here still had their own blocks, especially during a regional head election. There was once a member of the campaign team distributing leaflets containing verses from surah al-Maidah about the prohibition on electing non-Muslim leaders during the election of the Sanggau Regent. At that time, one of the candidates running for regent was a Muslim named Setiman.[2] Finally, it was found that those who created and distributed the leaflets were non-Muslims. The aim was to provoke the Dayaks not to vote for a Muslim regent candidate. In the end, three perpetrators were arrested and jailed for eight months after going through twenty times of court hearings" (Samlana, interview, 17 June 2022).

The unrest occurred because of identity politics, pitting one against the other, coupled with memories of the significant social riots with ethnic backgrounds in West Kalimantan, which has given rise to feelings of suspicion among residents. Previously, individual fights could spread to war between villages, as described by the chairman of the Dayak Customary Council as follows:

> "…once we were attacked from outside, which was known as the Jam (name of person) case. Jam was a Malay… So it was a fight between ordinary individuals, but because the situation was not conducive, the issue became big because the handling was slow. There were no devices like we have today, and communication was not working, so they used violence as revenge. Those who attacked were from the Sosok area, and those who were attacked were the Malays from Batang Tarang, and those who attacked were the Dayaks from Sosok (Salipus Sali, interview, 30 July 2022).

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[2] Elected as Regent of Sanggau for the 2009-2014 term.

Several important events that disrupted the harmony of the people of Batang Tarang have awakened the community to return to live in peace in diversity without suspicion. The conditions have changed a lot, as they live in an environment without segregation. Customary law of the Dayak people can be applied, accepted, and used as a reference outside the community. Good relations have also led to many intermarriages. Some of these factors are creating a harmony of life in Batang Tarang. In the following section, we will describe aspects of community life in Batang Tarang that have the potential and have been proven to be able to preserve diversity.

TOGETHERNESS FOR HARMONY PRESERVATION

As stated in the previous section, Batang Tarang is inhabited by a majority Muslim population of 1,451 (59.76%) and Malay ethnicity but is surrounded by non-Muslim Dayaks. Although no statistical data classifies the population based on ethnic groups, most of the areas surrounding Batang Tarang are villages where the Dayaks inhabit the majority. A statement made by the chairman of the Balai Sub-District Dayak Customary Council confirmed the fact as follows:

> "So we (Dayaks), because here we are a large ethnic group and it has been agreed that I lead the inter-ethnic forum. I will be the chairman with the consideration that it has recently been established, and we still need to work on many other things. Because when there is an inter-ethnic problem, it is easier to handle it for the time being" (Salipus Sali, interview, 30 July 2022)

The relationship situation between residents in Batang Tarang can affect those in other villages in the vicinity. Should a conflict lead to ethnic and religious issues, it will, without a doubt, spread to the surrounding areas. Realizing this, the residents of Batang Tarang do their best to maintain a conducive relationship between residents through solidarity:

> "... even though Dayak villages surround the majority of Malays in Batang Tarang, If there is a conflict related to ethnicity or religion, it will be hazardous. While the Dayaks used to feel inferior to the Malays because many did not go to school, now they are smarter and are going to school. The Dayak people in Batang Tarang also know themselves well. For example, they do not take it for granted in applying customary law. We also live here as neighbors with people of other ethnicities and religions. People here do not choose their neighbors; sometimes people in other places do not want neighbors of different religions or

ethnicities. In addition, for example, the Dayak people keep dogs; for us here, it is normal. Our father sold land near our house to Bang Baek, a Dayak. Now he is building a house there, near our house. It's the same in other villages; Malays or other people may buy land in the Dayak areas. Likewise, at the Ilek market, those who have shophouses are Chinese, Malay, Dayak, Javanese, and Batak. [There are] various ethnic groups there. In addition, business relations between the Dayak, Malay, and Chinese in Batang Tarang are mutually beneficial. The Dayak people bring agricultural and plantation products from the village. Malays and Chinese are the buyers. The Malays and Chinese buy durian, palm sugar, and vegetables from the village. The Malays and Chinese make *dodol* [pumpkin cake]*, lemang* [sticky rice cake]*,* and *lempok* [durian cake]; the ingredients are purchased from the Dayaks. Those who help cook *dodol* or roast *lemang* are the Dayak people; they are really good at it (Suhardiman, interview, 5 August 2022).

In addition to being surrounded by Dayak villages, Batang Tarang also contributes to an atmosphere of friendliness and togetherness. Residents' houses built without segregation have also strengthened community harmony. The Malays, who have lived here for a long time, provide a place for Chinese, Dayak, and other communities to build or house without questioning different backgrounds, as stated by the following informant:

> "People here are peaceful and united; it is hard to distinguish a Dayak from a Malay. Their homes are not far from each other; they blend in. For example, near my house, there are Dayaks and Malays. In the market, too. The shophouses in the market are not only owned by the Chinese; there are Malays and Dayak owners as well. We invite one another if there are wedding receptions and other events" (Khi Sen, interview, 18 June 2022).

In line with that, Amuy, a hawker, stated:

> "Relations between people here are good. When a member of someone's family dies, they usually attend the funeral. It is normal for the Chinese to give a big donation to the Malays at funerals. The Chinese also usually donate when someone is sick. People here like to open the house door to hear neighbors on the left and right. We know of the problems of our Chinese, Malay, and Dayak neighbors. My neighbor used to ask me to help clean the fish. They bring me fish to fry. Chinese, Dayak, Malay do the same" (Amuy, interview 18 June 2022)

The sense of togetherness that grows in a social environment without

segregation has strengthened harmony in Batang Tarang. The harmonious and friendly atmosphere created between plural citizens is very different from the relationship between residents in Makassar and ethnic Chinese, as reported by Darwis (2013). The report stated that because each ethnic group lived in groups, the interaction between the Chinese and Makassarese was less intense in their environment. As a result, the Makassar people have stereotypes and prejudices that the ethnic Chinese are selfish and only consider profit and loss when dealing with neighbors. Residents of Chinese descent close themselves with a closed-house model; they still uphold and maintain traditions. Disharmonies arise when two ethnic groups do not realize the importance of communicating with each other and blending in everyday life. In Batang Tarang, this sense of togetherness and kinship is manifested in the form of mutual assistance and visits between residents:

> "Togetherness in Batang Tarang is strengthened by various activities such as mutual visits and assistance when a funeral, wedding, or other events occur. In addition, people here visit each other on religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr. They come to the homes of Malays, Chinese, and Dayaks. It is the same with the Lunar New Year when Dayaks and Malays visit Chinese homes. For Christmas, the Chinese and Malays visit the Dayaks. We feel that we are one big family here despite different ethnicities and religions" (Marsudin, interview, 17 June 2022).

Segregation and lack of interaction between plural citizens have given rise to a lack of harmony among community groups. Recurring conflicts in Ambon, among others, are influenced by settlement segregation between residents of different religions, as reported by Ansori et al. (2014). As an example of this segregation, the Gunung Nona area in Ambon is inhabited by a majority of Christians, and a Muslim majority inhabits the Leihitu peninsula. Other areas, such as Passo, are synonymous with the Christian region, while Batu Merah is synonymous with the Muslim region.

INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGE AND HARMONY

Marriages between people of different religions and ethnicities sometimes go smoothly. They often face opposition from the family. Hermansyah's research (2018a) shows that there is rejection by Chinese families of their family members who marry and then follow their partner's religion—especially Malays who are Muslim. This phenomenon is different in Batang Tarang. In a small sub-district town with a population of 2,428, marriages between people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds are considered "common" by the local community:

> "There are many couples who are of different ethnic groups. For example, a Chinese marries a Dayak or a Malay. There are also Dayaks who marry Malays. For us Dayaks, Chinese and Malays are the same" (Marsudin, interview 17 June 2022).

Based on interviews with several informants, there were at least 22 married couples of different ethnicities, as shown in the following table:

Table 1
Interethnic Marriage Couple in Batang Barang

No.	Husband's name	Ethnic Group	Wife's name	Ethnic Group
1	Hardiman	Dayak	Mung	Chinese
2	Lorensius Panggel	Dayak	Lusiana	Chinese
3	Atung	Chinese	Nurfah	Malay
4	Abdul Gafur	Javanese	Vivi	Chinese
5	Abdul Gani	Malay	Aman	Chinese
6	Julkurniansyah	Malay	Selin	Dayak
7	Bujang Yahya	Javanese	Nursiah Longgil	Dayak
8	Brian	Javanese	Nurul	Malay
9	Nazirin	Malay	Juliati	Dayak
10	Lexy	Flores	Yanti	Chinese
11	Adi	Chinese	Ica	Dayak
12	Sutata	Javanese	Julita	Dayak
13	Aci	Chinese	Nikemoni	Dayak
14	Waluji	Malay	Meriam	Dayak
15	Ramlan	Malay	Ana	Dayak
16	Tan	Dayak	Titin	Malay
17	Deki	Malay	Farida	Dayak
18	Aut	Chinese	Reni	Malay
19	Surya	Malay	Amuy	Chinese
20	Dedi	Malay	Silvia	Chinese
21	Boni	Chinese	Tiara	Malay
22	Martinus Ala	Dayak	Sumaria Tobing	Batak

Source: collected from interviews with several informants

Some of these inter-ethnic marriages in Batang Tarang resulted in religious conversions. Sometimes religious conversion is one of the triggers of conflict in society (Lukito, 2008). However, it did not happen in Batang Tarang. Marriages between people of different backgrounds have strengthened the

process of integration in Batang Tarang. Customary boundaries, especially the Dayak customary law, which regards this marriage as a problem, can also be resolved through custom. If someone of a different ethnic background than the Dayak—especially non-Dayak men—intends to marry a Dayak woman, they must pay a customary fine. With the payment of the fine, the man can marry a Dayak woman and be entirely accepted in the Dayak community, as reported by the following informant:

> "Here, we live side by side without any problem. Like now, I'm hanging out and having coffee with the Hamlet Head, a Malay. If there is a problem, the leaders will solve it first. Since ancient times, the Malays have visited *tembawang* (fruit gardens), bringing salt, sugar, fermented fish, and salted fish in exchange for durian, rice, chicken, and other fruits. We help each other during the funeral. We help each other with the meals when there's a wedding. Muslims used to help cook with different utensils at a Dayak person's home. There are many couples of different ethnic groups here. The Dayaks have no problem if a member [of the Dayak ethnic group] marries a Malay as long as they pay for the customary rituals and it's considered done" (Abuer, interview, 17 June 2022).

A Chinese informant also confirmed the fact that interethnic marriages are acceptable.

> "Marrying someone of a different ethnicity is not a problem. It's the same thing. People here usually intermarry between Chinese and Dayak or Malay. God has determined destiny. Religion does not teach hostility; what we get will all return (die)" (Amuy, Interview 18 June 2022).

This phenomenon is similar to what happened in Enggano, Bengkulu, where the indigenous people have relatively no problem when marrying migrants called the Kaamay ethnic group and follow the religion of the Kaamay people (Sari, 2020). Because it is considered normal, inter-ethnic marriages in Batang Tarang have strengthened community integration. It is based on mutual respect, which helps people adapt to their environment and psychology, both of which influence cultural awareness to promote personal growth and a reduced sense of ethnocentrism so that they can learn about other cultures well through their partners. In addition, they can see other civilizations with a more open attitude, such as research findings on marriages between members of the Javanese and Chinese in Solo (Kurniawan, 2019). Interaction through marriage is a blend of cultural values, behavior, and customs. In addition,

intercultural communication in marriage influences married couples who tend to have a high tolerance level. Since there have been more and more inter-ethnic marriages, inter-ethnic relations have also grown more robust as a result of the extended family ties involved, as reported by the following informant: "Maybe more and more of our people (Malays) take (marry) village people (Dayaks). So more and more people here are related to people of different ethnic groups. Many Chinese also marry Malays or Dayaks" (Abdussamad, interview, 19 June 2022).

MODERATE ISLAMIC PRACTICES

As a religion embraced by most of the population, Islam strengthens social harmony in Batang Tarang. The religious (Islamic) ideology adhered to here is generally the same as most of its adherents in Indonesia which is moderate and accommodating to local culture. Islamic religious figures, especially preachers such as khatibs who deliver religious messages regularly on Fridays, prefer the peaceful Islamic model. Islam can coexist with people of various religions and beliefs. This fact is recorded, among others, in the following field notes:

> "After visiting the sub-district office to report the purpose of the Research Team's arrival at Batang Tarang, we decided to perform Friday prayer at the Aljihad Mosque, the oldest Muslim house of worship in Batang Tarang. Members of the research team and I went to the mosque around 11.30. Before entering the mosque, we did our ablution first while looking around the mosque. Across the small road opposite the Qibla of the mosque, there is a low-roofed building. In the building without walls and floors, there are three tombs, one of which is the tomb of Prince Saleh. According to his descendants, Prince Saleh was a community leader in Batang Tarang who was appointed by King Tayan, Gusti Tamjid, to become the representative of the Tayan kingdom in Batang Tarang. After seeing the tomb, we took ablution and entered the mosque. More and more people were coming. Not long after, the call to prayer as a marker of the start of the Friday prayer time was recited by the *muadhin* at 12.41 West Indonesia Time. After the call to prayer was recited, most of the congregation performed the *sunnah* prayer of two *rakats*. After a while, the *khatib* [person who delivers the sermon] climbed onto the pulpit. The *khatib,* also the *imam* on that day, whose name we later found out was Sukmajaya, was a former village head, giving a sermon on guarding the tongue. In his sermon, the *khatib* delivered a message about the importance of guarding one's tongue against anyone because humans are basically the same, coming from the same ancestor. Guarding one's tongue is not limited to fellow Muslims. After about 12 minutes, the sermon ended with prayer. After Friday prayer,

it was continued with *wiridan* and prayer recital. After the prayer, the congregation dispersed, and some shook hands and continued with the *sunnah* prayer. We returned to the lodging to immediately record the results of our observations" (Field Notes HR1706221).

This model of Islamic understanding refers to the fact that Islam teaches its followers to safeguard the rights and safety of the people around them and their surroundings. A person who adheres to religious rituals must also protect the honor, dignity, and property of others (Bensaid, B and Machouche, S. 2019: 59). For this purpose, the Prophet Muhammad was reported to have said: "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a Muhajir (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all that Allah has forbidden." (HR, Muslim). In line with this, the Qur'an teaches to spread peace which is symbolized by saying peaceful words, including those who are ignorant: "The true servants of the Most Compassionate are those who walk on the earth humbly, and when the foolish address them improperly, they only respond with peace." (QS. al-Furqan: 63).

Even so, in Batang Tarang, there are also followers of Islam who believe that being Muslim must be the same and compatible with their group. It is considered heretical if the religion is not like the Islamic model they practice. Only a few support this group. The supporters of such religious understanding and practice are what Bruinessen (2013: 17) refers to as "fundamentalists" because they concentrate on the Qur'an and Hadith, the two primary sources of Islamic law, and follow literal and rigid interpretations of both. They undoubtedly agree with some of the majority viewpoints, including conservatives. Like rejecting hermeneutical interpretations and rights-based ideas, perhaps these fundamentalists also conflict with conservatives about traditional values that do not have strong pillars in the holy scripture, such as *tahlilan*, *selamatan*, including practices related to formal worship, such as *wiridan* and reciting prayer together after obligatory prayers.

At first, the presence of the followers of this group caused problems in the community, as reported by an informant:

> "There is also a strong interaction with this influence, but there is no mutual understanding. For example, yesterday, there was a group of people wearing robes, and they were rejected not only by the Muslim group but also by non-Muslim groups, and there was disagreement among them here. But after we explored it further and discussed it with other groups and community groups, things like this must be 'filtered' to create peace in our place. Something like that usually gives someone

an opportunity, and it has to be under surveillance by the police so that it doesn't become a daily [concern] in conversation" (Salipus Sali, interview, 30 July 2022).

However, this style of understanding of Islam does not "sell" in Batang Tarang, as the following informant stated: "There is also one Muslim who practices a religion that points out other people's faults but has no followers. Because most people here don't fit such a religious model, he finally built a small mosque in his house. Previously, he was active in community activities. Since joining that sect, he has no longer been active in religious activities. But if someone dies, he's still involved in the funeral, for example, digging a grave" (Samlana, interview, 17 June 2022).

In the end, the group that consisted only a few people no longer participated in the activities of the Muslims in Batang Tarang, which they considered to be heretical, as reported by the following informant: "Many years ago, someone passed away studying religion at the Jamiatul Muslimin recital group in Tayan. He was a knowledgeable religious figure. After studying with the group, he forbade people here to call to prayer twice on Friday, even though people here had practiced the call to prayer twice. He forbade *dhikr* together after congregational prayers. Since then, he had hardly ever associated with people, even though previously he was very active in society. In the past, relations with non-Muslims were also good. After joining the recital group, it was not good; his female family members wore the face veil. He severely changed religious habits because, according to him, [people] deviated from the true teachings of Islam. He resigned as a civil servant to focus on preaching. During his life, there were 3-4 people who followed this ideology because he was a knowledgeable person.

However, this sect was not growing, as the people of Batang Tarang were not compatible with this model of a religious sect, because they do not respect differences and non-Muslims" (Suhardiman, interview, 5 August 2022). However, in funeral activities, these people provided help, especially as gravediggers, as seen in the following observations:

> "The brightness on Sunday morning kept us excited to collect data. Whether coincidentally or not, there was a funeral procession for a Muslim resident in Batang Tarang on that day. We also paid a visit to the funeral home at 7.30 to a resident's house not far from our lodging. We followed a series of funeral activities that day. There was something unique in that those who came to the funeral were not only Muslims but people of other religions and ethnicities who also took part in the

takziyah, except praying for the deceased. It was also seen at the funeral that several people digging the grave had a distinctive look, growing a beard and wearing cropped pants. Later we were told that one of them was a follower of the Wahhabi Salafi ideology and used to be active in almost all Islamic activities. However, he is no longer active recently; even if he prays, he does it in the small surau next to his house and the congregation with his family members. After the whole procession, we returned to the lodging to rest a while" (Field Notes HM190622).

Only when this research was conducted did residents give room for the radical and anti-diversity religious beliefs and practices in the public sphere. Exclusive religious understanding is believed to undermine community relations that have been built in harmony.

ADAT AND CUSTOMARY LAW

Traditional customs and wisdom have recently gained momentum to be revived to preserve harmony and peace. Its proponents assert that indigenous approaches to peacemaking that are relational and participatory have a higher probability of reaching peaceful solutions than peace initiatives pursued through "liberal peace" (Mac Ginty, 2008). A study conducted by Rumahuru and Gaspersz (2021) on the post-conflict Maluku community provides evidence of the social reality in the Tual area that the cultural approach is still valuable for efforts to stop inter-group conflicts and promote community peace. Meanwhile, Samiyono (2017) states that local wisdom has a significant role in building social harmony in society, although it still needs further elaboration, especially when it has a national impact. This is because local wisdom is generally still verbal and not fully documented.

In Batang Tarang, *adat* [customary law] has played an essential role in resolving disputes and problems, including those that have the potential to escalate into ethnic and religious conflicts. For example, when this research was carried out, traditional leaders were resolving the case of a Dayak woman remarrying while she was still married to a Malay man. Sensitive matters like this can lead to inter-ethnic clashes if not handled properly and thoroughly. The following is the statement by the chairman of the Balai Sub-District Dayak Customary Council:

> "Well, we have just finished dealing with the divorce between a Malay and a Dayak because the claimant is Malay and Muslim. The only two things I asked the *temenggung* [tribal chief] were, first, when the marriage was performed or not, and whether it was done according to *adat* or not; if it was, then it was legal according to *adat* if we deal with

this in accordance with *adat*. The second was that today it was legal and convincing whether or not she has remarried and left her marriage; now it cannot be denied anymore; even though he is a Malay, he still has the right to sue, and this is where we give justice. So, we do not defend that these are Malays and Dayak people, and we justify the Dayak people, and I do not justify that even though there is a tendency in it, I think there is still tolerance. If, for example, there is still tolerance, that's fine because it must follow customary rules, and then both parties must be able to accept it, and it is done. I was asked how fair this customary law is. Moreover, I answered that both parties could accept according to customary rules, that is it. That is justice, and how else do you want to seek justice" (Salipus Sali, interview, 30 July 2022).

Although the majority population in Batang Tarang are Malays, the customs and culture of other community groups have a place to live. In addition to the Malay Cultural Customary Council (MABM), which facilitates the majority of the population, there are the Dayak Customary Council (DAD) and the Chinese Traditional and Cultural Council. Several ethnic groups can also be found here. These traditional cultural institutions enliven and develop their respective customs and culture.

It has become an unwritten consensus that should an incident violate customs involving different ethnic groups; it will be resolved by applying the respective ethnic groups by prioritizing deliberation and amicability. If in this way, an agreement is not reached, the parties involved can choose to settle it through customary law or state law. Only the Dayak people have customary laws and instruments in Batang Tarang. Even though the resolution of the problem is left to the respective ethnic groups involved, the implementation of Dayak customary law, which is authoritative and is considered capable of fulfilling a sense of justice, has won the hearts of the local community, including non-Dayak people. So it is common for problems involving non-Dayaks to have a settlement with Dayak customary law. As an example, the following informant reported:

> "There were fights involving two parties; for example, Chinese and Malay had problems and complained to us (the Dayak Customary Council), asking to be resolved, and we tried to mediate them. We also let them communicate with other community leaders, and they hand it over to us, and we resolve it amicably and peacefully. Still, it must be handled in accordance with customary law. So, they agreed to [resolve the matter using] the Dayak customary law" (Salipus Sali, interview, 30 July 2022).

The resolution of problems through customary law accepted by these parties has contributed to maintaining harmony in society. A Malay informant reported that he felt safe owning property in the form of land in the Dayak area because he received protection from the Dayak customary law. Here is his statement:

> "Because according to the Dayak customary law, as far as I know, whatever happens on their land, in their area, if something happens or an accident occurs, and it bleeds, and that is obligatory to get rid of bad luck, and that is why there is a term for which is *sangka parang*, so they make offerings and keep a jar at the scene of the incident because there was blood earlier. Moreover, don't let it happen again in the future, and as a prevention…because it has always been like that, and we also do not consider it *shirk* [polytheism]. Still, we consider it their custom, which doesn't harm and disturb and actually saves [us]. For example, yesterday, I bought a piece of land in the Kampung Dalam area, where the majority are Dayak people. So when you have bought the land and the way they refer to it, there is that if you have bought this land with Person A and Person A has handed it over to you. But your land borders the land of B, C, D, etc. So they have to know too. So if something happens, local customary law will help if there is theft and, for example, the land is taken over, and we will help with that matter" (Dedi Bastian, interview, 30 July 2022).

Regarding any land that is newly owned and located in Dayak customary areas and adjacent to land owned by Dayak people, the buyer must pay *adat* for the ceremony. If the buyer complies, then after the customary ritual is held, the land he bought becomes part of the customary system, which receives protection from the local community's traditional leaders. This means that if something happens, for example, theft or someone moves the border markers, the traditional leaders are also responsible for resolving the problem. Thus, the existence of *adat* has provided a sense of security among the people. In the context of *adat*, it guarantees the safety of humans and the property they own. In addition, *adat* also serves as a means of settlement in the event of a dispute to prevent more significant conflict. This finding is in line with several other studies, such as those conducted in Enggano, Bengkulu. With their local wisdom based on customary rules, the Enggano people settled differences and turned them into peace. Ethnic and religious differences that have been seen as dividing the nation have never occurred in the case of the Enggano people (Sari, 2020, pp. 84-85). Unlike in Enggano, the people of Batang Tarang are given the freedom to assert their ethnic identity and are given room to practice their culture through their respective ethnic associations. Newcomers to

Enggano, regardless of their origins, are forced to merge their ethnic identities into the Kaamay (Sari, 2020 p. 84).

STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF COMMON ORIGINS

The politics of *divide et impera* [divide and rule] practiced by the Dutch colonialists were implemented as segregation of the ethnic population based on religious affiliation. The previously unknown labels Dayak and Malay were used to describe the indigenous people of West Kalimantan before the arrival of Europeans. Traditional tribal names associated with a person's place of origin are a general form of local identification such as language, name of a river, or village. Within certain parameters, this identification is still used as a marker of a person's origin. The Dutch came and provided the local people in Borneo with a new identity structure in the form of two main categories: Dayak and Malay.

Meanwhile, the leading indicator of the construction of ethnic identity is religion. Residents who followed traditional beliefs—and later Christianity—were called Dayaks. At the same time, those who had converted to Islam adopted Malay as their new ethnicity (Hermansyah, 2018b).

Even though people in Batang Tarang, especially Malays and Dayaks as the majority ethnic groups, are classified as members of different ethnic groups due to religious differences, most are aware of the same historical origins. There is an increase in awareness, especially when more and more local people are educated and socialize more broadly. A Dayak informant reported the following:

> "Because this religion is something of our choice, but ethnicity is not, but it's destiny. Even though today we see a Dayak marrying a Muslim or Malay, their ethnicity is still Dayak, even though their religion is Muslim or Islam. Well, this makes us harmonious, but in the past, it was different because of Dutch brainwashing; originally, a Dayak married a Malay and converted to Islam, and they said the Dayak became Malay. So, it must be fixed, and we are slowly fixing it. Moreover, it doesn't matter if we want to convert to any religion, but the ethnicity remains the same. Moreover, we start slowly so as not to question it. So if he already loves his culture, even though he is a Dayak who has converted to Islam, he will not get rid of his identity because he already loves his culture. Furthermore, I once participated in the Dayak National Congress in East Kalimantan, the Dayak Youth Movement. That was the first National Congress, and the organizers wore a turban, etc., which was not a problem because they were Muslims but also Dayaks. We also

saw that in East Kalimantan, and this is what we want to instill so that people don't clash later, we were all brothers, especially in Balai, which we are the descendants from Mangkit, from Beruak, from Birang, from Muyak and it will be a great loss if we let certain party pit us against each other because we are brothers. So, let's start slowly to open up people's insight, so we don't clash. So if it's like this, there will be no problem; no matter what religion we follow, we are still one ethnic group" (Salipus Sali, interview, 30 July 2022).

A Malay informant said, "In fact, the Dayak people and we are from the same village. Our ancestors were village people too. So we are of the same origin" (Rukiyah, Interview 19 June 2022). Because they realize that they have blood relations with each other, ethnic differences due to religious affiliation are not a barrier to living in harmony. For them, the bonds of brotherhood originating from the same ancestor cannot be removed, even though there were past colonial efforts to eliminate them. More and more educated people in the local population recognize this common origin. Understanding family relations because they originate from the same ancestor has increased their awareness to coexist sincerely with their 'distant' relatives. The fact that the people of Batang Tarang are knowledgeable about the same origins is in line with a study by Nasrullah (2014) on the Bakumpai people in South Kalimantan and Hermansyah (2018b), who researched the Malay people in West Kalimantan. Bakumpai and Malay people realize that their ancestors were local people of the same ethnicity as those called Dayak today.

CONCLUSION

In light of the aerlier description, it can be concluded that several experts are concerned that the existing forces in society can avoid recurring conflicts due to differences. Several internal forces in the Batang Tarang community have been proven to successfully preserve harmony between people who used to live in a tense atmosphere. This article argues that togetherness in various events –good and bad–, inter-ethnic marriages, moderate Islamic practice, fair implementation of *adat* [customary law], and strengthening awareness regarding the fact that the people in Batang Tarang originate from the same ancestors are among the factors of the community's strengths to build harmony: (a) despite being the majority, Malay-Muslims in Batang Tarang are aware that they should maintain good relations with other residents, especially the Dayaks because if a problem involving ethnic and religious issues occurs and spreads, there is no doubt that it will trigger major conflicts with neighboring villages where the majority are non-Muslim Dayaks. This cultural atmosphere has given rise to community solidarity to face the good and evil of fellow

community members.

In addition, the pattern of settlements that blend in without segregation strengthens the unity of the local population; (b) Inter-ethnic marriages, which are increasing and have no opposition from locals, have also contributed to the preservation of harmony in Batang Tarang; (c) The practice of moderate Islam also significantly contributes to maintaining an atmosphere of harmony, because an extreme religious model that can disrupt the community's religious life does not get the sympathy of the local people; (d) in Batang Tarang, *adat* [customary law] plays a crucial role in resolving disputes and conflicts, including those that have the potential to escalate into ethnic and religioius conflicts. Here the Dayaks have no problem applying their customs, even though most of the population is Malay. The opportunity to implement *adat* in a fair manner without discrimination, and to promote deliberation and tolerance when it comes to people outside their community, has made *adat* and its instruments a trusted reference for solving problems for all groups; and (e) recently, the people of Batang Tarang have become increasingly aware that they, in particular the Malays and Dayaks, mainly originate from the same ancestors. Religion, which was previously considered a significant factor in changing the identity of local people, is increasingly understood as an individual choice and cannot change one's origins. Therefore, differences are formed because of people's choices, and it should not create a gap between people, let alone trigger conflict. Further studies are needed to understand the findings in this research, especially on fostering inter-ethnic and religious harmony in the interior of West Kalimantan, because this article merely presents a basic portrait of it.

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CULTURAL RESISTANCE AND SHARIA-BASED ECOLOGY IN THE FISHING COMMUNITY IN ACEH

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the cultural resistance and sharia-based environmental management in the fishing community in Aceh Timur Raya, Indonesia. Aceh is a fascinating Indonesian region as the country's implementer of Islamic law. To date, Aceh's environment has yet to become an issue that needs to be immediately addressed. This study is classified as field-library research with a qualitative analysis. The data were collected using interviews, documentation, and observations of fishermen's environment in Aceh Timur Raya. These data were analyzed using a sociological approach, social theories, power-knowledge relations, and habitus. This study found several important reasons why there could be damage to Aceh Timur Raya's ecosystems. This article has produced several vital findings; First, the absence of the role of religion in maintaining and building an ecological culture in the fishing community. Second, the attitude of indifference among the fishing community towards the environment. Third, the politicization of environmental care. These three pieces of evidence state that cultural resistance and sharia-based environmental management in Aceh threaten the community's survival, especially fishermen who rely heavily on nature. Islamic law has not been able to base its teachings on the environment that must be preserved and developed.

Keywords: Cultural Resistance; Ecological Sharia; Aceh Timur Raya

INTRODUCTION

Culture and ecology based on sharia have not been part of Aceh's formalization of Islamic law. Since its preparation in 2000 and its declaration by Governor Abdullah Puteh in 2001, the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh—with its various instruments— has not made culture and sharia-based ecology part of Islamic law. The positivization of Islamic law in Aceh is still stuck with the implementation of *mahdhah* [pure] worship but does not or has not accommodated *ghairu mahdhah* [impure] social services, which have a more significant impact than religious ritual worship. Concerning the fishermen's ecosystem, for example, no less than 60 trawlers operate on the North-Eastern coast of Aceh today (Walidain, 2022; Randi, 2022; iNews.ID, 2021), not to mention the damage to various marine biota caused by trawling. In addition, the destruction of the mangrove forest should be the primary support for fishermen living on the east coast of Aceh. The large-scale logging of mangrove forests not only reduces the income of fishermen in the coastal areas but also diminishes the amount of land and threatens the existence of fishermen (Agency 2021; Fitri dan Iswahyudi 2010)

Politicians also disagree with the use of trawls, which has been part of the demands of the fishermen (*toke* [business owner]) who have been running the illegal fishing business (R 2021; www.monologis.id 2021). However, such demands cannot legalize the use of trawling ships in catching fish. On the one hand, the existence of *Panglima Laot* [the customary body that deals with marine affairs] is highly expected to help maintain the sustainability of the ecosystem for fishermen's needs. However, on the other hand, *Panglima Laot* must also face the demands of releasing fishermen who were arrested while working in the illegal fishing business.

Mangroves are supposed to be one of the sources of sustainable natural resources and higher income for coastal communities. For example, a mangrove park can serve as a tourist attraction and an educational site; it also serves as a place where marine life can be caught by fishermen, produce food and drinks that can be sold, and maintain the amount of inhabitable land for fishermen. Meanwhile, in a different case, logging of mangrove trees is common among the fishermen, as they use mangrove trunks to be sold as charcoal for additional income.

Studies on coastal community ecosystems in Aceh tend to focus on two aspects of discourse. First, the study of the culture of coastal communities regarding the existence of panglima laot; Keliat et al. argue that the existence of *Panglima Laot* is currently faced with various challenges and obstacles in maintaining the local community's culture in managing natural resources on the coast of

Aceh (Keliat, Amirudin, dan Luqman 2021). In the same tone, Nazaruddin and Gurning view *Panglima Laot* as a 'figure' that will guard the continuity of managing natural resources on the coast (Gurning, 2017). Meanwhile, Mahendra et al. view that the existence of *Panglima Laot* continues to change, both in terms of roles and responsibilities that have developed from a long history of 400 years (Utama et al., 2020). Second, many have also examined the roles and responsibilities of the *panglima laot* in Aceh. The role of *panglima laot* as the guardian of the ecosystem in Aceh, especially in Banda Aceh (Mustaqim dan Reni 2018; Rahmah, Salmarika, dan Miswar 2021). Similarly, the works of Fazriah et al. examine the role of panglima laot in Sabang (Amfar, 2015). *Panglima laot* also still plays the same role after the 2004 Tsunami and other actors who supported the recovery period in Aceh (Boyland, Nugroho, and Thomalla, 2017). Although in its journey, the Panglima Laot institution continues to experience role developments (Mujiburrahman dkk, 2021).

This article aims to complement previous research and, in addition, also to examine the extent to which the role of the positivization of Islamic law in Aceh works for environmental protection (*hifdzul bi'ah*). In particular, it also sheds light on whether the culture of loving the environment as a place of life and livelihood for fishermen is maintained or neglected. In addition, it also provides an overview of whether the attention of the government and politics leads to the preservation of nature, especially on the east coast of Aceh. In connection with this, two questions must be answered in this article; 1) What are the roles of Islamic law and the community's culture in maintaining the sustainability of the fishermen's ecosystem in Aceh Timur Raya? 2) Why is the sustainability of the fishermen's ecosystem in Aceh Timur Raya currently at a very concerning threshold?

This article stems from an argument that environmental protection (*hifdzul bi'ah*) has yet to become an essential part of the positivization of Islamic law in Aceh. Even environmental damage tends to be 'driven' and 'backed up' by religious leaders. This will not only deplete the natural resources on the East Coast but, even worse, will threaten the balance of nature, both biologically and socially. On the other hand, from a political and cultural perspective, it has not yet become an influential agenda for the politicians and the people in the area.

CULTURAL RESISTANCE AND SHARIA-BASED ECOLOGY

Experts agree that resistance tends to be interpreted as action by certain groups to make changes. The opposition does not have to be on a large scale but rather the significance of an action. These actions can also be taken at any

time in community activities. On the one hand, Islamic law in Aceh, through its *qanuns* [legislation], does not address the important things in maintaining the fishermen's ecosystem on the coast of Aceh. This is also the space for the resistance of the fishing community to Islamic law, which tends to dwell on the *mahdhah* [pure] worship only. Various fishermen's activities currently do not favor the ecosystem, in addition to people's lack of knowledge - Aceh's Islamic law also does not regulate the importance of ecosystems. The paradigm that is built tends to be: 'nature is considered and intended to be used as widely as possible for mankind' without the obligation to care for and maintain its sustainability.

Marine natural resources on the east coast of Aceh are essential not only for Aceh but also for Indonesia (Wilson dan Linkie, 2012; Yulindawati, 2018). Nationally, one of the known natural products on the coast of Aceh is the Windu Shrimp commodity—despite its scarcity nowadays (Tjahjo dkk, 2019). This shows that the existence of nature in this area is very different from other places, so Aceh's natural products, especially tiger prawns, are highly sought after by various entrepreneurs as export commodities. It is time for these commodity products to regain their 'prima donna' status, with various policies, cultures, and fishermen's activities that have disappeared all this time. Various other commodities from the nature of the east coast of Aceh are natural products and products that various policies must support community culture and fishermen's activities, especially about preserving and caring for nature there.

In light of the above, culture and Islamic law should play an essential role in sustaining coastal natural commodities in Aceh Timur Raya. Ecology, one of the sciences about nature and natural ecosystems, should be integrated as an essential part of the culture of the coastal communities in East Aceh. People's lack of knowledge about protecting and caring for nature can be answered when an ecological culture is embedded in the coastal community. In addition, the Islamic law in Aceh should also not only deal with matters of worship that are *mahdhah* in nature but also regulate and promote cultural worship that is *ghairu mahdhah* in nature—in terms of economic needs, and the survival of this *ghairu mahdhah* worship is much more necessary.

Implementing Islamic law in Aceh has yet to get an ecotheological perspective. It also builds an understanding of Islamic law in Aceh that only focuses on forms of religious rituals. Abdullah argues that protecting the environment must be in *Maqasid ash-Shariah* [purpose of applying a law according to Sharia]. Furthermore, he stated that the environmental crisis would hinder other Maqasid ash-Shariah's achievements (Abdullah, 2010, 2012; Ahmad,

2015)race, religion, or group.It has been a common problem and requires global cooperation to overcome barriers regardless ofreligion and race. Within this framework, every religion and traditions required to contribute in jointactions to overcome the environmental crisis. This is so, because the efforts of political and secular laware considered no longer sufficient to resolve the tragedies of today's ecological problem on earth.Therefore, this paper will explore the perspective of Environmental Fikih in the context of a globalmovement in overcome the environmental crisis.","container-title":"Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan","DOI":"10.18326/ijtihad.v10i2.157-173","ISSN":"2477-8036, 1411-9544","issue":"2","journalAbbreviation":"Ijtihad : Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan","page":"157","source":"DOI. org (Crossref. This means that protecting the environment must exceed Islamic law's other goals. Zubir, in his research, proposes the Eco-Ushul theory in making every decision and policy of Islamic law in Aceh. As a strong foundation in making legal decisions in Islam, Usul Fiqh must first consider eco-ushul. The concept of ecotheology is the main structure before constructing other structures (Zubir, 2021).

When we look at nature and its potential in Aceh Timur Raya, we wonder why the ecological culture of the people of the east coast of Aceh is currently experiencing resistance? This can be seen from the fact that many trawls are used in fishing (Randi, 2022). Concern for mangrove growth is almost nonexistent (Agency, 2021; Fitri dan Iswahyudi, 2010). Fishery culture and sharia-based fishery are natural resources at stake for coastal communities in the future. As for the hypothesis of this research article, why is the ecological culture of fishermen met with strong resistance on the East coast of Aceh? First is the absence of religion's role in preserving and caring for ecological culture in policy and fishing communities along the coast of Aceh. Second, the community's low awareness of the environment; and third, the marine environment, especially East Aceh, which tends only to become a political area that needs to remember natural resources that should not be politicized for the benefit of certain groups. These three big problems are crucial to address immediately—perhaps future generations will never know the types of fish commodities of the Aceh coastal communities, or it is even possible that the eastern coast of Aceh will turn into the next Bagansiapiapi City of Riau Province.

THE ABSENCE OF THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN PRESERVING THE FISHERMEN COMMUNITIES' ENVIRONMENT

Islam has become inherent in every walk of life in society in Aceh, meaning

all people are familiar with religion. This is in line with the motto of the *hadih madja* in Aceh, *Islam ngon adat, lage zat ngon sifeut. Kiban adat menan hukom, adat ban adat, hukom ban hukum, meusahoe adat ngon hukom, nanggroe teuga hana goega* (Mujiburrahman dkk. 2021; Nurdin, 2016:8). This *hadih madja* has become a civilization of Acehnese life from generation to generation so that Islamic values will continue to live in each existing system and governance. In the current era, Islam in Acehnese society has begun to be undermined by the influence of modernism which tends to be secular. This is also the highlight of this research in viewing the position of Islam in protecting and preserving the ecosystems needed for the survival of fishermen in the future.

There are at least three crucial things that contribute to the lack of the role of Islam in protecting and preserving the ecosystem of fishing communities on the east coast of Aceh; First, the lack of values of sharia-based ecology contained in Aceh's *qanuns* [legislations]— values to be included tend to be practical, pragmatic, and punitive. Second, the ulemas [Islamic scholrs] have not made ecology a religious study in coastal communities in Aceh as current conditions prove that the role of natural and human resource development has not been successful. Third, fishermen lack the knowledge and understanding of the importance of protecting and preserving the ecosystems that fishermen rely on.

Lack of Values of Sharia-based Ecology in Aceh *Qanun*

Qanun is local legislation that can regulate matters in a more detailed manner, or that has yet to be regulated in the hierarchy of the law above it. The special status of the *qanun* in Aceh is a special derivative of Law No. 11 of 2015 concerning the Government of Aceh. The Aceh government can use this legislation to implement Islamic law in Aceh. *Qanuns* in Aceh have regulated many things —just like regional regulations in other regions—but in Aceh, they can be drafted based on the values of the Islamic law that apply there. This should be an essential input in formulating and enacting qanuns in Aceh.

The following are some of the Qanuns related to fisheries and maritime affairs at the provincial and district levels in Aceh, and other policies:

1. Aceh Qanun of Number 7 of 2010 concerning Fisheries
2. East Aceh District Qanun Number 10 of 2010 concerning Fishery Business License Fee
3. Aceh Qanun Number 9 of 2008 concerning the Guidance of Customary Life and Customs
4. Aceh Tamiang District Qanun No. 3 of 2016 concerning the Protection of

Tuntong Laot Species

5. Aceh Qanun Number 11 of 2019 concerning Wildlife Management

6. Aceh Qanun Number 2 of 2011 concerning Environmental Management

7. Aceh Qanun Number 1 of 2020 concerning Zoning Plans for Coastal Areas and Small Islands of Aceh 2020-2040

8. Aceh Qanun Number 10 of 2008 concerning Customary Institutions (Panglima Laot)

9. Aceh Qanun Number 7 of 2016 concerning Aceh Forestry

In plain view, the *qanuns* formulated as political products or the fishing community's needs lack Sharia values. Some important things are required by the *qanun* or government policy; 1) Administration that fishermen, 2 must fulfill) Retribution or related to state income, 3) Protection of mangroves and certain species in Tamiang, 4. Settlement of conflict that occurs among fishermen by custom, 5. Roles and responsibilities of related parties.

The five things above are the *qanuns* formulated in Aceh and the districts/cities in the East Aceh region. So far, Islamic values have yet to be included in the points of the qanun. The values of protection and preservation contained in the *qanun* are also part of Islamic values. The nuances of Islam, divine values , and monotheism are not attached to and felt by officeholders, fishermen, or the readers of these *qanuns*. The punitive aspect of these *qanuns* is greater than the spirit of protecting and preserving the ecosystems needed by fishermen on the East coast of Aceh. The punitive spirit is different from the spirit of protecting or preserving the natural ecosystem. It is case-oriented, and the state officers take pride in the achievement; the more cases handled, the better the performance is. In fact, protecting and preserving nature should not be oriented to the officers' performance in handling cases but to the achievement of developing natural resources located on the coast, beach, or sea.

Similarly, the spirit is built on the punitive aspect such as imposing a fine for violation according to the applicable provisions. Very few potentials of natural resources and human resources can be adequately empowered—especially in protecting nature. Compensation for paying a fine is not included as a spirit in protecting nature and the environment where the perpetrator commits a violation. Fines will only be burdensome and feared by the lower-middle-class fishing community—while to the upper-middle class, fines concerns making amends, especially with bribery that is quite common there.

These two aspects: punishment and fines, certainly have the desired impact on preserving natural resources throughout the years. Policymakers should consider some things, considering that Aceh is an agricultural area where

people have powerful Islamic beliefs from generation to generation. These Islamic values, which are not stated in the *qanuns* concerning fisheries and marine affairs, let alone the ecological values in natural ecosystems in coastal communities, are not part of the *mahdah* worship that scholars frequently communicate.

On the other hand, the *qanun* also tends to refrain from involving fishermen in preserving natural ecosystems as their life necessities. It can be seen in the existence of Panglima Laot that it is nothing more than resolving conflicts that occur among fishermen (Iwan, 2022; Saifuddin, 2022; Walidain, 2022). There is no *qanun* mandate to involve Panglima Laot in various program activities to protect and preserve the fishermen's ecosystem. When Panglima Laot is involved in various program activities, it will be seen that the fishing community's understanding and responsibility will grow through Panglima Laot. Moreover, if the *qanun* contains Islamic values, it will always be observed and guarded by Panglima Laot and the fishing community.

Ulemas Have Not Made Ecology a Religious Study

Ecology, in general, is the study of the relationship between organisms, as well as between organisms and their environment. This science is not part of religious studies—even in certain studies other than religion, but it is *fardhu kifayah* [obligation] to study it in depth. The existence of ecology is a non-negotiable necessity for human life—especially for fishermen's lives. Protecting the environment is not part of a worship ritual that must be carried out at any time following established guidelines. Protecting the environment, dealing with the government, carrying out education, and various other social and cultural works are not included in the *mahdhah* worship, but the *ghairu mahdhah* worship.

Protecting and preserving natural ecosystems for the future needs of the nation's generation is *ghairu mahdhah* worship. Even though this is not a regular *mahdhah* worship where the management of natural resources will continue to be ignored, it is possible that *mahdhah* worship can no longer be carried out (Ahmad, 2015; Mudhoffir, 2011). The *ghairu mahdhah* worship, in this case, studying ecology and protecting and preserving natural ecosystems in the eastern region of Aceh, is now mandatory for all parties. The *mahdhah* and *ghairu mahdhah* worship also cannot be separated from each other. All people, especially coastal communities, are obliged to carry it out.

The *mahdhah* worship, especially protecting ecosystems among coastal communities, should be driven by the ulemas, especially those who constantly

interact with the fishing communities. In addition, the government considers that the role of the ulemas is to pursue and spread the message of the importance of performing *mahdhah* worship, not *ghairu mahdhah*. This can be seen from government programs, which have never facilitated the ulemas in socializing the importance of preserving the ecosystem in studying Islamic law. For example, the Head of the Office of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DKP) of East Aceh District admitted that he had never involved the ulemas in socialization and raising awareness about protecting and preserving natural resources (Intan, 2022). The same is also the case in Langsa City and Aceh Tamiang district; in addition to not involving the ulemas, these two heads of office also complained about the behavior of the people who did not protect the natural resources for future generations (Banta, 2022).

The government does not involve the ulemas in socializing the importance of protecting and preserving the fishermen's ecosystem because they need to gain scientific knowledge of ecology based on Islamic law. Aceh's ulemas constantly interact with the community, at least in every recitation, Friday sermon, *wirid yasin* recitation, Friday night recitation, etc. In addition, the ulemas also interact with various social rituals in coastal communities; *keunduri laot, peusijuk bot, peutron bot, peu ubat bot, takziah,* etc.[1] These various rituals have yet to be used by ulemas as a medium to propagate the importance of the natural resource ecosystem in life. Basyaruddin, an environmental NGO activist in Aceh Timur Raya, reported as follows;

> "*Since I was a child until I have my own family, I have never heard of any study of Islamic ecology. Teungkus from the past until now, from various types of fish, there are rivers and mangrove until now we have experienced difficulties and lost various types of fish. Teungkus still continue and only teach prayer, fasting, zakat, and teaching the Qur'an. Teungkus come and go, but the themes they raise in religious studies are always the same. Protecting natural resources does not seem part of Islamic studies*" (Basyaruddin 2022).

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[1]*Keunduri laot* is a religious thanksgiving ritual performed by fishermen every year in each sub-district, which is supervised or coordinated by Panglima Laot Lhok. *Rabu Abeh* is also a religious ritual that aims to ward off evil carried out by coastal communities on the beach on Wednesday at the end of the month of Safar. *Peusijuk bot - Peutron bot* is a ritual of plain flour or thanksgiving and prayer upon completion of the boat/fishing boat construction or when the boat is launched to catch fish in the sea. *Peu ubat bot* is a religious ritual performed on boats or ships that have been considered "unhealthy" or unable to provide enough catch for fishermen.

The Panglima Laot[2] of Aceh Tamiang District had a similar view, depicted here:

> "*The ulemas do not have the knowledge, let alone attention to natural resource ecosystems. These ulemas receive alms from the prayers they recite. That's what they do all the time. They don't know that these natural resources must protected, if it is not cared for then we will sin. If people cut mangroves in Aceh Tamiang, it is purely to meet their daily needs. But the ulemas have never played a role in conveying the message that the use of trawls is a big sin, why do they not convey it. Because first they don't know the laws and regulations; second, they receive a lot of alms from the toke [business owners] who use trawls*" (Muhammad 2022).

The ulemas play a crucial role in the life of the Acehnese. Obedience to the ulemas is a characteristic of the life of the Acehnese, especially given that Aceh has been designated as a special region for implementing Islamic law (Indonesia, 1999). The community's life should always be close to the ulemas in various aspects. The ulemas must also continue to improve their knowledge, not only of science and classical books that examine *mahdhah* worship. Otherwise, people will believe that ulemas cannot solve the problems people face—they even consider that protecting the environment is not the responsibility of Islam and Muslims. Of course, such a view is detrimental to natural resources and the Muslims in Aceh.

Lack of Understanding of Sharia-based Ecology among Fishermen

Sharia-based ecology is not part of other sciences but the equivalent of the words that the author summarizes to understand that ecology is a part of the study of Sharia that should be considered and remembered. If we refer to the provisions of Islamic law, both the Qur'an and Hadith, these two sources are sufficient to explain that Islam has a high concern for natural resources. Even in war, the Messenger of Allah forbade his troops to destroy plants (Abdullah, 2010; Basyar, 2020). This shows that Islam has a strong message to protect the environment. Without a healthy and comfortable environment, human life will be far from the blessings and grace of God.

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[2] Panglima Laot is a traditional structure that lives in the midst of a fishing community in Aceh Province. Its existence has been known for more than four centuries, since the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda to be precise. Structurally, Panglima Laot is the leader of *pawang-pawang* (boat owner/captain) in his area of authority, who is responsible to the sultan through the *uleebalang* intermediary. Panglima Laot then became part of a customary government structure called a *mukim*, a combination of several *gampongs* (equivalent to villages or kelurahans [urban villages]). The structure of Panglima Laot in Aceh is institutional formed from the provincial, district/city to sub-district levels.

The question is, why do fishermen who rely heavily on renewable natural resources not understand the sharia-based ecology? Understanding and awareness of protecting natural ecosystems should be the root of fishermen's understanding and "doctrine" in their daily activities. Religious understanding is rarely the subject of discussion in any religious activities. Understanding the natural resource ecosystem for fishermen is a secular science that tends to be considered separate from Islam as a religion and theology in their activities. When this science is considered secular, knowledge and understanding of ecology are not important for religious people who live on the coast.

Furthermore, understanding ecology considered secular will only relate to state law and the violations committed. Using trawls, mangrove logging, etc., is only considered a violation of state law, not Islamic theological doctrine (Asykari, 2022; Zubir, 2021:233). With such understanding, the fishermen do not feel guilty. They have become more savage in exploiting natural products as it does not violate religious law and will not be punished in the future. This impacts the boat owners' fear of losing the crew. Likewise, charcoal business owners will continue to have people stealing mangroves—after all, they are not stealing on the community's land but state-owned land (Walidain, 2022).

The fishing communities do not understand sharia-based ecology well. As far as this research is concerned, Eco-theology (Ahmad, 2015; Aman, 2016; Saddad, 2017) is one of the perspectives that should be discussed in the broader scope. The Eko-Ushul idea, proposed in Zubir's 2021 Dissertation, should also be considered.

LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG THE FISHING COMMUNITY

The environment is all external elements that affect organisms. These elements can be living organisms (biotic factors) or non-living (abiotic factors). This means that the environment as a unitary space with all objects, power, and conditions of living things, including humans and their behavior, affects nature itself. In ecology, nature is seen as a network of living systems that are interrelated with one another. This shows that every living thing is in the process of adjustment in the living system, which is affected by the principles of the sustainability of ecological life.

Fishermen are professional figures that depend on the environment they live in. Living side by side with the environment is a must to protect and preserve the environment. However, if one visits this fishing village, one will see the opposite. Fishermen's villages tend to be seen as slums—not because of poverty, but because of the fishermen's lifestyle that is not environmentally

friendly. There is an attitude of 'ignorance' toward the environment among fishing communities, especially in the Aceh Timur Raya region. This condition is a manifestation of the attitudes and behavior of the community towards the environment. The environment should be able to continue to provide for their lives; at least it does not harm them and their families.

One of the informants made a quite distressing statement: "*In the past, for daily meals, it was very easy to catch fish or shrimp around the house or in the river. Now it is very difficult, even if you want to get a little fish or shrimp in a fishing environment*" (Basyaruddin, 2022). Another informant reported: "*Nothing can be expected anymore from the sea in Langsa; the middle-lower class fishermen never get sufficient catch from their work*" (Asykari, 2022). This shows that serious problems occur between fishermen and their ecosystems. Although in various expressions, the fishing community does not really believe in bad attitudes and behavior so far, which has caused a decrease in the catch. The fishermen believe that this is the destiny of Allah Almighty that determines their daily sustenance. This could be one of the causes of the indifferent attitude commonly adopted by the fishing village community in Aceh Timur Raya.

The Fishermen's Ecosystem: between the Demand and Responsibilities of Fishermen

Marine ecosystems can be maintained sustainably if fishermen use environmentally friendly ways of working. This means that fishermen are not only concerned with the catch, but also prioritize the sustainability of the ecosystem and its resources. According to Yulia A. Hasan in her book, *Law of the Marine Conservation of Fish Resources in Indonesia* (2020), preserving marine or aquatic ecosystems is the responsibility of users of marine resources. It is the right of fishermen to capture and utilize natural resources in the sea, in the form of fish or other marine catches (Hasan, 2020). As a form of responsibility, fishermen must preserve the ecosystem and its natural resources.

Fishermen are not only a profession that catches fish or collects other marine natural resources, but also serves as guardians of nature from various damages. Fishermen often report the presence of foreign trawler ships entering Indonesian sea areas to the Marine Police, but on the other hand many fishermen also work for *toke* or boat owners where they work using trawling ships to catch fish in the sea. This means dispelling or reporting trawling vessels that plunder fish in Indonesian seas to perpetuate their livelihood, so that they can catch more fish with their toke's trawling ships (Asykari 2022; Rusyidi 2022; Zulkifli 2022).

Fishermen have many needs, including families to support. Being a fisherman and working with a trawler boat owned by a toke is hard to resist. On the one hand, fishermen feel obliged to protect nature to ensure its sustainability. On the other hand, they must meet their needs. If they refuse to work for the *toke*, other fishermen will take the job. Even one of the fishermen, let's call him Iwan, was bullied by fellow fishermen. In addition, the crew will not be detained even though the *toke's* boat is caught by the security forces while catching fish at sea (Saifuddin, 2022; Walidain, 2022).

The fishermen also have good relationship with the *toke*, as some of *toke* do not consider these crew members only as workers, but as part of their big family. The *toke* is like a parent to them. He gives loans, makes donations when there is a disaster or when there is a family celebration. It is difficult for fishermen to avoid working for the *tokes* who have trawlers. The toke and the fishermen are like a coin with two faces that cannot be separated from each other, because both will lose value if separated. But if such circumstances continue, the nature will lose its resources. Obviously, we all do not want Aceh Timur Raya to become the next Bagan Siapiapi due to the collaboration between the toke and the fishermen.

Fishermen have no responsibility to the ecosystem

The fishermen do not seem to understand the importance of protecting the ecosystem where they get a livelihood. Many fishermen use explosives or fish poison. These fishermen used to work on the toke's trawler to catch fish. They have needs to fulfill despite the destruction of natural ecosystems. In the end, it will make their own lives difficult. Understandably, they prioritize their needs. Such 'construction of needs' is not the only contributor to the environmental damage, the government, ulemas, also gives eaqual contribution especially the point of view that is adopted by fishermen today (Ahmad 2017; Muhammad 2022).

The role of religion, in this case the ulemas in Aceh Timur Raya; East Aceh, Langsa City, and Aceh Tamiang, has yet to improve the situation. The ulemas do not yet have a strong and clear view of the destruction of natural ecosystems both at sea and on land. They never talk about prohibition of destroying natural ecosystems in their religious gatherings. On the other hand, there is also a complicated problem, namely the government that do not have many programs at the grass root level of fishermen. The existence of the panglima laot institution tends to be used as a scapegoat in resolving conflicts between fishermen. The panglima laot reported the following in Aceh Timur Raya:

Customary institutions, such as the Panglima Laot, are not institutions designed to involve the community in protecting and preserving natural ecosystems. The existence of the Panglima Laot Institution tends to be politically motivated; various parties carry out many programs without informing the Panglima Laot institution. At the same time, the existence of Panglima Laot will have very different roles and responsibilities if it is involved in various roles and programs in society. At least panglima laot can be asked or controlled regarding how the economic development of fishermen, the fisherman's ecosystem to the success of government programs.

Such circumstances show that internal factors do not only cause the fishermen who seem irresponsible toward natural ecosystems. External factors are also very influential in shaping the attitude of fishermen toward protecting and preserving the natural ecosystem as a place for them to live. Currently, the state of nature in Aceh Timur Raya is still relatively good in certain places. However, the fishermen's lack of ecological awareness will inevitably turn the ecosystem into the next Bagan Siapiapi in Indonesia.

POLITIZING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

Fishermen are one of the sources of authority in creating a culture of protecting the environment, especially in coastal areas where they and their families live. Fishermen's concern for their environment is a non-negotiable necessity, and fishermen have a major interest there. Even though the coastal area is a tourist attraction, it should aim to improve the economy of the fishing community. The improvement of the fishermen's economy should always pay attention to the environment despite the presence of tourists. The coastal area that is clean of various plastic wastes before the arrival of tourists should be more well-organized because tourists will return to an environment and places that are well-organized and well-maintained. Tourists should not be scapegoats for the dirty and unmaintained coastal areas where fishermen live. The local government sometimes fails to notice this, as in Sungailiat Belitung (Putri, 2022). Also, identity politics or electability is rejected en masse due to halal tourism framing (Makhasi dan Rahimmadhi, 2020:373–74).

The government should develop the potential of the community in protecting and preserving to the environment. If the community has the potential to protect the environment, the government must play the role in supporting and assisting the community. Head of the Office of Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine Affairs of Langsa City, Banta Ahmad, reported that he had done this in empowering coastal communities. However, he has difficulty because he needs a budget for supervision, so that many programs given to the

community are not successful (Banta 2022). The Secretary of Panglima Laot, Langsa City, denied what Banta had stated, that the program activities carried out by the Office of Fishery and Marine Affairs were not on target. The Office of Fishery and Marine Affairs has never coordinated with us, so the program rotates without monitoring (Saifuddin, 2022). This condition should not have happened, given the existence of coastal communities as guardians of natural resources and ecosystems on the coast and the sea.

On the one hand, the existence of coastal communities needs serious attention from many parties. A culture of environmental care must thrive in the community there. Coastal communities sometimes need to get attention. Politicians then politicize this. As we can see in the two offices of marine affairs and fisheries in Langsa City and East Aceh Regency, there is no budget for activity programs from the City and District other than for the salaries of employees and administration. The programs of these two offices come entirely from the State Budget. This shows that the district/city's budgeting is not allocated for coastal communities.

Who Should Care about the Environment?

An environment is a place where all creatures can live. Fishermen are one of the professions that highly depend on the nature in which they live. The question is, today, who has concern for the environment? Do fishermen have concerns for the environment? Then, who should care about the environment?

Most people are aware or will be aware if they understand how important the environment is for their lives. Zubir argues that *hifdzul bi'ah* is more important than other elements of *maqasid al sharia*. How is it possible that *Hifdzul Mall, Hifdzul Aql, Hifdzul Nafs, Hifdzul Nasb, and Hifdzul Din* can take place and be prioritized if *Hifdzul Bi'ah* is not prioritized earlier (Abdullah, 2010, 2012; Zubir, 2021). This means that a safe and comfortable environment must be the basis for constructing life in maintaining religion, guarding reason, protecting offspring, protecting souls, and protecting religion.

Several searches about Aceh Timur Raya showed that environmental concern does not arise organically in fishing communities. Concern for the environment tends to grow and develop and is brought in by people from outside the fishing community; even the existence of fishermen at first was more of a figure who only exploited the nature where they are located. Exploitation here tends to use the potential of nature without caring for the development of the natural environment in the future. Recently, fishermen have begun to understand the importance of the environment in their lives. It is difficult for fishermen to

escape the trap between needs and environmental destruction.

The existence of fishing communities is in dire need of a sustainable program that is monitored at all times. Concern for the environment tends to come from outside the fishing community, not even from the government. Local governments tend to need programs to empower fishermen or maintain and care for the fishermen's environment. The government of Langsa City, Aceh Tamiang, and East Aceh Regency have yet to allocate budgets for programs for the fishing community. The programs under the marine affairs or fisheries office are based on the State budget. This indicates that the district/city government has no responsibility for the fishing communities.

Work programs for fishing communities tend to come from non-governmental organizations whose donors are foreign nationals (Wijayanto, 2018). These foreigners that provide donations are interested in preserving nature and maintaining the world's sustainability, where their country is starting to be threatened by the destruction of the world's ecology. For the government, such programs have not been deemed necessary—they have not directly impacted the community's survival in general, except for the fishing community. Therefore, the fishermen are more responsive to the work programs of the NGOs. It can be seen that the development of mangrove forests, the largest donor, is still dominated by NGOs from abroad compared to state funds, as is the case with the empowerment of coastal communities in Aceh Timur Raya.

Who is being empowered, and who is being used?

These are political questions that this research raises in this article. Considering these questions concern the existence of the fishing community. In fact, who empowers the fishing community in Aceh Timur Raya? Or, on the contrary, is the fishing community in Aceh Timur Raya more likely to be deceived by empowerment programs? Why are these questions raised? It is because government programs cannot empower the existence of this fishing community in Aceh Timur Raya. This means that there are issues that should be taken seriously by all parties as to why various programs have failed to address issues in the fishing community, which are related to poverty, health, religion, and ignorance.

Basyaruddin, an NGO activist in East Aceh and Langsa City, stated: "*There is no serious program from the government other than wasting money. We know that the institutions already have all the rules and responsibilities—but they are not implemented as they should be.*" (Basyaruddin, 2022) A member of the Panglima Laot, Birrul Walidain, reported as follows: "*We, as panglima*

laot, do not know anything about government programs in developing fishing communities. We often find out that the assistance provided by the government is not intended for fishermen." (Walidain 2022)

Perhaps it is common knowledge that the Panglima Laot institution is nothing more than a gathering place for fishermen and, at the same time resolving disputes (Amfar, 2015; Wilson dan Linkie, 2012). Thus, it is not surprising that it is not an empowerment narrative constructed in the fishing community. Conceptually, the narrative aims to develop fishing communities—but in practice, it is nothing more than deceiving them. The narration reflects that the fishing community is difficult to communicate with; typically violent and unruly; uneducated community; untrustworthy; does not understand rules; challenging to accept new things; (Banta, 2022; Intan, 2022) and various negative narratives, all of which concern the profile of the fishing community. These narratives do not empower fishermen but rather deceive them, despite programs to empower coastal communities continuing to be created.

CONCLUSION

The fisherman's ecosystem should be a concern for all stakeholders. In addition to these stakeholders, culture also contributes to the root of the problem regarding the sustainability of natural ecosystems, especially in fishing communities. This research examines how the existence of a fisherman's ecosystem should be a predictor of community life on the mainland. Among the discussions in this study is the role Panglima Laot and various government agencies and other institutions play in protecting and preserving the fishermen's ecosystem. Furthermore, it also examines how culture and sharia-based ecology play a role in the management and development of fishermen's ecosystems in Aceh Timur Raya.

This research generated several significant findings, such as why the fishermen's ecosystem on the east coast of Aceh is going through a high resistance caused by culture or Islamic law currently in effect. First, protecting and preserving the fisherman's ecosystem has yet to become part of Islamic law - Aceh's law still focuses on matters of *mahdhah* worship. In addition, scholars have yet to make sharia-based ecology part of scientific studies in fishing communities so that the culture built in society is that this universe belongs to Allah and humans are free to use it without any law to protect and preserve it. Second, the growth of a culture of indifference among fishermen towards their environment. On the one hand, fishermen are responsible for maintaining the ecosystem's sustainability. However, on the other hand, they must also meet their needs and demands of working on the trawl belonging to the *toke*. Over time, that sense

of responsibility diminishes, and they prioritize life's demands over nature's survival. This also makes the fishing environment unfriendly to fishermen in terms of economy, health, social affairs, to the continuity of education for the next generation. Third, resistance to a culture of caring for the environment is also caused by the politicization of environmental issues. Who really cares for the environment and the sustainability of the fisherman's ecosystem? It should be the fishermen themselves who care. However, those who seem to care are the politicians who allow trawlers to continue exploiting Aceh's marine resources under the pretense of welfare for the fishing community. Who is *actually* empowered? Alternatively, maybe the fishing community is more likely to be deceived by politicians who only take a pragmatic advantage.

The existence of panglima laot should be central to maintaining the fisherman's ecosystem. It turns out that what happened is still far from reality. The government, politicians, and security forces have yet to make panglima laot a suitable stakeholder. The existence of panglima laot is merely used for the needs and interests of certain groups rather than for the benefit of the ecosystem and the fishermen. The east coast of Aceh will suffer heavy damage, in addition to the absence of the role of the government and related parties, cultural resistance, and the lack of understanding of the sharia-based ecology in the community about the protection and preservation of the fishermen's ecosystem. The power relations in coastal communities with the *toke* and the rulers tend to construct a discourse on 'reaping' marine products. The discourse was not only justified by the attitude of the toke and the fishermen regarding the fishermen's catch but is also supported by the ulemas and politicians. Thus, it is widespread for trawlers to be found on the east coast of Aceh.

Such a situation should not be allowed to continue any longer, especially on the east coast of Aceh. Aceh Timur Raya should not be the next Bagan Siapi-api that no longer has marine products. The government must conduct an in-depth evaluation of the various programs implemented so far. In addition, the existence of sharia in Aceh must make the environment an essential basis for implementing Islamic law, and the paradigm of Islamic law must change, not merely focusing on mahdhah worship and religious rituals. Aceh's Islamic Sharia must move forward in responding to various future needs in the form of *ghairu mahdhah* worship, social worship, and the cultural and political needs of the people.

The research still has many shortcomings and will be very useful if future research includes several other dimensions. What is essential is to continue this research by examining in depth using the ecotheological study appropriate to be applied in the culture of Aceh. Considering several previous studies that

examined the environment in the Book of Bustanussalatin, Aceh in the past had a socio-cultural construct based on eco-theology. It would be great for future researchers to examine this theme in depth to protect environmental ecosystems in Aceh for years to come.

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ETHNICITY, RELIGION AND THE CHANGING COMMUNITY STRUCTURE WITHIN FAKFAK SOCIETY IN PAPUA

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ABSTRACT

Through in-depth research using an ethnographic method, this article seeks to show what changes are taking place in the Fakfak community regarding culture, religion, and composition. This research aims to fill the research gap from previous studies by looking at how religion has rapidly changed the structure of society (both in terms of identity and population demographics) even though they come from the same kinship in a nuclear family. This article found that religion has become society's primary agent of change, with positive and negative connotations. However, at the same time, the community has a local knowledge called "toromit wat istery" which is used as an unbreakable bond due to clashes between religions. This unity in diversity is a fundamental value that the community must observe. As an implication, these changes in the Fakfak community serve as an example of the resilience of local values in the face of the clash of global values that must be protected and maintained as the primary source of national resilience.

Keywords: Changing Community Structure; Fakfak Society; Local knowledge

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of Islam to the Fakfak Regency's Patipi Bay Community provides insight into the spread of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago and to Papua,

and the only example of the occurrence of the separation of inter-religious areas of power that is manifested in a kinship agreement between *Ade* (younger sibling) and *Kaka* (elder sibling). *Ade,* in the context of religion, transformed into Islam and in the context of geography, controlled the coastal areas, while *Kaka* turned into Christianity and controlled the Mountainous area. The transformation of kinship and identity, as in the Patipi community, has similarly occurred in the Dayak community in Kalimantan, which underwent an identity shift because of the decision to embrace religion. Those who choose Islam as their religion receive a new Malay identity, while those who adopt Christianity receive Dayak as their primary identity (Mauneti, 2004; Nugraha, 2018). Expression, change, and separation in society due to religion prove what Abdullah (2019) argues: religion is born in an erratic and frenzy manner. It has implications for losing silent space, low credibility, and weakening religion's connection power (Abdullah, 2019).

Religious encounters between Islam, Christianity, and other religions and the communities in the Indonesian Archipelago have been widely studied but tend to focus on three aspects: its historical aspect (Saprillah, 2011; Yakub, 2017), subjugation (Handoko, 2009, 2017; Sianipar et al., 2020), and assimilation between religion and culture in society (Haryanto, 2013, 2014; Indah Permata Sari, 2020; Mursyid, 2009; Muryana, 2018). Yamin (2011, 2019, 2020) illustrates how the interaction process between Islam and the Dani Community in the Central Highlands of Papua has added a new color to Islam in Indonesia. Jubba (2019) recounted the story of the subjugation of the Towani Tolotang people by religion and state in South Sulawesi, and Zainal (2015) reviewed how Katoba has become a symbol of the integration of Islam with the Muna people's culture. This research shows another reality that previous studies have not covered, the direct implication of the presence of religion in the community, the existence of divisions, and the formation of clear boundaries in society because of religion by labeling each group with a new identity as a marker of the existence of such division.

This research is based on the argument that three main factors drive community structure and identity changes due to religious reasons. *First*, the exclusive nature of religion has forced people to create boundaries between themselves even though they come from the same kinship. *Second*, the lack of religious literacy about the danger of community division, because religion is understood by its followers, will have implications for strengthening the desire to highlight the religion that each group embraces. *Third*, strengthening and weakening state (government) intervention reinforces the separation of society in the name of religion. These three religion-related factors create

division and potential disharmony in society.

Generally, the separation of society is a natural phenomenon (Abdullah, 2003; Muryana, 2018; Pabbajah et al., 2019; Wekke, 2013), but it would be unusual if the separation is driven by religious factors and occurs only in one specific family in one community. This unusual social reality occurred in Patipi Bay, Fakfak Regency, West Papua Province, so this area was selected as the focus of this research for three reasons. *First*, Patipi Bay maintains various stories about the history of interactions between new religions and local communities, which has produced a distinctive religious tradition (Amin, 2020; Haris, 2016; Mene, 2017; Saprillah, 2011). *Second*, in the Patipi Bay community, the context of *Ade* (Islam/coastal area) and *Kaka* (Christian/ inland area) continues to be revived by the community through various economic, political, and sociocultural activities as well as oral traditions that continue to be passed through generations. *Third*, the implications of the existence of separation due to religion, even though they are in the same kinship, has caused several incidents of conflict which, although they can be quickly resolved, has undoubtedly become a pseudo phenomenon that may be triggered at any time, considering that every religion continues to thrive in its spirit of expansion.

Brotherhood and separation due to religion among Patipi Bay's citizens can be explained through qualitative research that draws on primary and secondary data by covering processes that occur directly in the community that can be observed and confirmed on-site through direct observation and interviews. This research involved religious, traditional, and community leaders and local historians specializing in Patipi Bay's history, rituals, religious traditions, and cultural practices. The research was first carried out by collecting secondary data through various religious references previously written by several researchers, as well as tracing the history of Islam in the community, widely known as one of the areas that Ibn Batuta visited on his international voyage. The second step was to conduct direct research in the community by visiting the research site and observing and interviewing key figures. The interviews and observations were recorded using a recorder, photographs, and a journal, the main basis for interpreting field findings.

The data analysis process was carried out in three stages. *First* was data reduction, a process of organizing data in a more systematic form, especially thematically. The *second* step was data display to present research findings in table and graph form and excerpts from interviews with informants. The third and final was data verification to conclude the confluence of data with concepts and theories used in this study. Descriptive and interpretive data

analysis techniques then supported these three stages of analysis. The data description served as the basis for interpretation by following the trends and contexts that accompany the reality under study, as Field Clifford Geertz (1992) shows. The stages and analysis techniques are expected to lead this research to findings and conclusions that explain why brotherhood and separation co-occur among the Patipi Bay people.

FAKFAK SOCIETY AS A RESEARCH SPACE

Fakfak Regency is located in Indonesia's West Papua Province. The journey to this district begins in Sorong, a transit airport where all travelers visiting Fakfak Regency by air must stop. The journey takes approximately 60 minutes by air on a twin outer aircraft with a jet engine and double propeller. Fakfak Regency consists of 17 sub-districts, 142 villages, and seven urban villages spread over mountainous and coastal areas. Most of Fakfak residents are nutmeg farmers and fishermen. In some districts and villages, electricity is only supported by a limited number of generators from each family, which can only be turned on at 19.00 – 00.00 Central Indonesian Time Zone. It is thus very expensive. Some areas do not have electricity at all, such as Ugar village in the Kokas district, which has become an eco-tourism destination. In addition, several villages also lack communication infrastructure.

The majority religion in Fakfak is Muslim. However, there are two districts whose residents are generally Protestant Christians. The majority of the population uses Indonesian as their daily language, especially in terms of inter-ethnic communication, but in local villages we can find residents using local languages, such as Mbaham, Iha, Arguni, and Karas. The indigenous tribes that inhabit the Fakfak district are the Mbaham, Mata, and Iha tribes. The indigenous tribes live side-by-side with migrant ethnic groups originating from Sulawesi Field (Akmal & Muslim, 2019), Maluku Field (Haris, 2016), and Java Field (Paisal, 2018).

Economic growth in Fakfak Regency has been quite good, although, in some sectors, economic performance still needs to be improved, taking into account the challenges and available opportunities. One of the widely-used macro performance indicators for the economic sector is the Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). To support the GRDP of Fakfak Regency there are nine production units covering nine business fields: agriculture, mining & quarrying, manufacturing industry, electricity, and clean water, construction, trade, hotels and restaurants, transportation and communication, finance, rental and service companies, and other service establishments.

Based on 2022 population data obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Fakfak Regency, the population of Fakfak Regency is 85,817, comprising 43,963 men and 41,854 women. The total population is dominated by residents in Pariwari District with 23,729 people or 27.65%. Meanwhile, the district with the lowest population is Mbahamdandara, 1,016 people or 1.18%.

RELIGIOUS EXCLUSIVISM

Contextually, the people of Fakfak in Patipi Bay generally follow two official government-recognized religions, Christianity and Islam. However, in daily life, they hold several rituals based on ancestral traditions that they continue to practice (Amin, 2020; Wekke, 2013), especially regarding matters relating to the fulfillment of the necessities of life and the sacredness or holiness of a particular location. An informant reported straightforwardly how people overcome a natural constraint by holding a ritual of respecting the owner of a certain place believed to have supernatural powers. He said:

> *"Karena air itu mau kering ka makanya dong kasih air taparop, kasih biar lancar. Kopi yang ditaruh di batu par kasih sanang dorang, kasih dorang minum, katong sama-sama minum kopi. Karena katong tara lihat, jadi katong bicara saja, a ini kamong pu tembakau, sirih, pinang."*

> [invisible creatures have blocked the discharge of water from its source, so people give offerings in the form of coffee, tobacco, areca nut and betel leaves, which are placed in a spot where water does not flow while saying the words; this is the tobacco, areca nut and betel leaves that we offer. So, the water (afterward) flows smoothly"]

However, by looking at the composition of the villages, residents are constructed based on their religion, some villages are labeled as Islamic others villages that are labeled Christian. This labeling also aligns with the population composition, which is a religious majority. The construction of villages and districts in Fak-Fak that are divided based on religion are inseparable from the role of the state, customs, and religion, either generically or differentially, as reported by Gramci in Saptono (1999) who emphasizes the effort to construct society is one of the strategies in hegemony. In the context of the state, the omission of community grouping based on religion is a form of neglect in creating a heterogeneous and non-sectarian society. Meanwhile, in the context of custom and religion, there has been an effort to perpetuate regional dominance in the name of certain customs and religions, which will limit the capacity of the community to face global conflicts that rely on the principles of

practicality, accuracy, and tend to have unified perspectives (Humaedi, 2014).

The construction of a rigidly structured Fak-Fak community based on the religion they follow provides an important marker for the people in the Fak-fak district, which signifies that the community is not in a good state. Several socio-political events that occur in the community, which then intersect directly, show that the division of society based on religion has provided an entry point for conflicts that can occur at any time. August 2019's Tambaruni market burning incident in Fak-fak city is an example. The incident was followed by several conflicts or riots, which were seen in demonstrations triggered by the racist treatment of the Papuans in Surabaya. This case began with a protest by indigenous people against migrants, then turned into two big groups, polarizing the society into people supporting the Unitary State of Indonesia (NKRI / Islam) and those in favor of Free Papua (Christianity).

CHANGES IN IDENTITY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The selection and change of identity is a process, as Mauneti, (2004) argues that the dynamic nature seen in the construction of cultural identities is evident in many cases in Indonesia. In the same light, Hall (1990) maintains that identity is more transparent and unproblematic than we think. Identity may be regarded as something authentic, representing a new cultural practice. We should think of identity as an imperfect production, always in the making and always legalized in it, not outside of it. Within this framework, cultural identity can be seen as a collective sequence of one's truth, hidden from so many others, more superficial and artificially self-repressing, in which people with historical and ancestral ties are generally held.

Cultural identity reflects the shared historical experience and the sharing of cultural codes that have been provided to us, as an individual (with the same cultural background) with a stable, unchanging experience and a continuous frame of reference and meaning, under the shifting division of our actual history. This unity underlines all the others, more than superficial differences. In Hall's framework of thought above, we can witness it in the Balinese people, as Nordholt (2002) found that if a Balinese is asked who he is, he may start by saying he wants to explain his *linggih* by mentioning his lineage. The Balinese identify themselves generally by making references to time and place to one of their ancestors in ancient times, as well as a point of origin (kawitan) which is often stated in a sacred place of the temple.

In addition, to explain identity and its changes, Maalouf's opinion (2004) is important to note, as he argues that identity is what prevents us from being

identical to other people. However, identity is not given once and for all; it is built and changed throughout an individual's life. Identity is made up of a number of ties, but it is equally important to emphasize that identity is also singular, something we all experience. One's identity is not an assembly of separate ties or a kind of loose woven cloth. Identity is a pattern outlined on a parchment, stretched firmly. Flick a part or a connection, and the person's self will fully react (Maalouf, 2004:26).

If we use Maalouf's perspective as a reference, then identity is generally defined as awareness of personal unity and continuity. A unique entity that maintains the continuity of its past meaning for self and others; unity and continuity that integrate all self-images, either perceived by others or self-imagined about what and who he is and what he can make concerning himself and others. A person's self-identity can also be understood as the overall physical characteristics, dispositions he holds and believes in, and capacity. All of them are characteristics that distinguish the individual from others and are, at the same time, an integration of the stages of development that have been passed before.

Structurally, it can be seen that the identity changes in individuals in Fakfak society also directly affect the population demographics, such as ethnicity, which gets a lot of support from the marriages between two Papuan Indigenous, Papuan Indigenous people and migrants, and two migrants. Other population demographics that change are religious experience and practices and economic status. The rest are captured in the following chart.

Table 1:
Ethnic Identity Change

Indicator	Generic Identity	First Change Differential Identity	Second Change Differential Identity
Surname	Iribaram	Iribaram/Bauw	Iribaram/Bauw/ /Patiran/La

Source: Processed from primary data

The table above provides an important indication of how identity change occurs in the people of Fakfak. In general, each individual's identity evolves because of two factors: an identity obtained generically and one obtained because of the encountering differences. For example, the surname attached to an individual at birth will not necessarily be passed down to her descendants if she is a woman. However, in current practice, the surname can also be used to deal with pressures of political interests. The table shows the surname change

from Iribaram to Iribaram or Bauw in the first change. It may continue to shift to Iribaram, Bauw, or even Patiran, because of the marriage mechanism, where the surname is inherited in a patrilineal line. However, as aforementioned, in the context of political strategy, this surname inheritance system may turn matrilineal as an effort to maintain identity, if the marriage occurs in ethnic groups outside Papuans.

The merging of nobility titles from outside Papua with indigenous Papuan surnames is certainly a form of change due to encounters between indigenous Papuans and people outside Papua (migrants) who may have experienced resistance at the beginning. However, now it is starting to become a trend and is happening a lot in the community as an attitude of accommodation as well as a strategy in dealing with the pressure of power that comes from the rules that divide society into classifications based on the birthright inherent in indigenous Papuans. As a concrete example, some people use two surnames or ethnic titles, such as La so-and-so Woretma, which can be explained that the La title in the individual's name is one of the nobility titles for the Butonese in Southeast Sulawesi, acculturated with Woretma as one of the surnames of the original Fak-Fak people.

In a more straightforward context, changes in one's identity in society can also be influenced and shaped by the experience and practice of religious teachings. An individual raised by his parents as an ordinary believer (congregation) can transform into one who preaches religious messages (*ustad/ustadzah/pinatua*) and even at a certain point in time can turn into a religious leader (Imam of a mosque/Christian priest), as illustrated in the following table.

Table 2:
Identity change due to Religion

Indicator	Generic Identity	Change 1 Differential Identity	Change 2 Differential Identity
Islam	*Jamaah* [congregation]	Ustad/ustadzah	Imam of a mosque
Christianity	*Jemaat* [congregation]	Pinatua	Priest

Source: Processed from primary data

In addition to the change in identity due to ethnicity and religion above, the change can also occur due to an individual's economy, education, or

occupation, whose nature and form are also unchanged, determined by space or the context that follows. For example, identity due to occupations, at a certain point, an individual can be a civil servant, but in other contexts, he can also be a motor-cab driver because he has a second job to provide for his family, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 3:
Other Identity Changes

Identity Indicator	Generic Identity	Change 1 Differential Identity	Change 2 Differential Identity
Occupation	Civil Servants	Ojek	Ahli Reparasi
Economy	Poor	Rich	-
Education	No formal education	Primary School (equivalency)	Junior High School (equivalency)

Source: Processed from primary data

Changes in identity that are either fixed or depend on the context, as described in the three tables above, directly contribute to shaping and determining the demographics of the community, especially the state of the population and settlements, where new and more diverse residential spaces are created as an effort to accommodate the increasing population, as well as the birth and emergence new value which is a result of the arrival of global and market values. In such circumstances, the community then tries to produce or reproduce local knowledge in an effort to maintain identity, as well as to show its existence as the owner of the original culture that seeks to get recognition. Systematic changes in community demographics, especially as population increases, can be seen in the expansion of villages, the addition of houses of worship, as well as the emergence of religious-affiliated community organizations, such as the birth of the Maluku Pentecostal Church or the emergence of AFKN founded by Ustadz Fadlan Garamatan, a representation of native Papuan Muslims in Fak-Fak Regency.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS AND ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTIONS

As described above, the changes in identity and demographics have directly divided the community into various interests with their differing goals. In general, the society's problems today can be seen politically and the presence of several multinational companies engaged in mining and plantations —which

have encouraged people to be more exclusive in terms of land ownership— as well as the potential for capitalization and exploitation of the community and the younger generation. Iribaram reported that the community encounters at least three fundamental problems: customary leadership, customary rights, and the future of "disrupted" local children. In the context of politics and customary rights, which highlights the limits of leadership authority and territorial boundaries that pit people against each other between communities and between communities and companies. This is a crucial problem that must be resolved, as he explains:

> *The potential for conflict is increasing. We can see this from several aspects, for example, political aspects. This political aspect of the division of the regions that make up the new autonomous regions that the government had formed turned out to be in conflict. Some agree, and some disagree. That is, if we see the potential, it certainly has the potential for conflict. In addition to political issues, there are now problems regarding recognizing who is the real king and that is also a crucial problem there. There are several examples in several areas, for example in Rumbati district, Patipi Bay district. In Rumbati for example, there are two traditional leaderships: recognition. Each of these leaders has recognition of the right to be king and has followers. As we have seen, there is a rift in that district known as the Rumbati kingdom. The second example is in the Patipi Bay district; there is a conflict; there is a long story about customary law and the issues of the legitimate king and who the original king is, which is also a conflict. To date, they are enemies of each other.*

In the context of the younger generation's future, Iribaram explained how young people in the village have shifted their mindsets and future orientations. There is a strong reluctance to go to school and work in companies around Berau Bay and Patipi Bay even though they can only get a job as a contract worker for security or a cleaner. They think it is still worth it, because they can make money very quickly. On the village's streets, we can see young children walking to the kiosk to get some snacks carrying the IDR 100,000 banknote, which signifies how money has become an idol in today's society. He said:

> *Encouraging children to progress and get a good education is very unusual now. For example, if we want to see global companies' role in improving education for the community, that would be very unlikely. Companies are recruiting students to drop out… so that will ruin their future. They only recruit to be employed as laborers, security guards, and some very low-level jobs there. Furthermore, that is made possible by community activities, made possible by people who choose to get a shortcut. So, in this*

society, this is the mindset, "It's better to go to work than to go to school, we may be dead tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. So, if we're still alive, it's better for us to work so we can live." So simple. I saw this, too, when the local people who owned the nutmeg farm, they think, "well, it's like that, you don't have to go to school, later in the nutmeg season you go pick [some nutmegs] and earn money." People are like, "It doesn't matter if you want to go to school or not. The important thing is that we have a hamlet. Then, they also think we have the sea. Such mentality still exists. The worst thing is that the promises of social assistance currently create dependence for the people there.

In the religious context, the potential for conflict also shows symptoms, both internally and externally driven by religion, or between religions, which in general the triggering factor is the expansive nature of religion and also the penetration of political interests that continue to disrupt the pillars of life of the Fakfak people. Iribaram further revealed that the politics of the king's leadership in the local community has shifted the conflict from between traditional leaders to between religions. He notes:

There is a rift within that one district known as the Rumbati kingdom. The second example is in the Patipi Bay district where there is a conflict. There is a long story about customary law and the issues of the legitimate king and who the original king is, which is also a conflict. To date, they are enemies of each other. In addition, there are many other potential conflicts. It could have an impact on the issues of inter-religious harmony. Because in the areas of the kingdom, since ancient times they have been united as one kingdom. Meanwhile, the Christian group, they are supporting one of them that turns out to be opposed by the people who on the other hand think this is not true, not the king. That's what causes the conflict to break out there, and a conflict of inter-religious hostility occurs because they are no longer united in the royal system

Although the potential for conflict described above is undeniable, it turns out that there is a great power in the community that can still bind and strengthens the companionship between them. The local genius of the Fakfak (Mbaham) community seems to be able to resolve the existing rift and deserves appreciation: the existence of four community life guidelines called 1. *atanam misia, 2. aroa misia, 3. faneka misia, and 4. awkawai fafia. Atanam misia* means always asking [for more information] or confirming. *Fenaka misia* means to be tolerant. *Aroa misia* means to be prudent. *Awkawai fafia* can be translated as having honest intentions or the wide path of life in society. If the community observes these four principles, then no matter how significant the

differences, or rifts that occur, they will not be able to undermine the spirit of brotherhood and kinship among the Fakfak community.

These four life principles are then combined with a philosophy of living side-by-side in society, known as the philosophy of *satu tungku tiga batu* (three stones in one furnace). A philosophy that takes the analogy of the traditional cooking stove of the Fakfak people, which usually sits three stones, is an essential element in food making, a basic human need. This furnace philosophy is used as a reference for the philosophy of life of the local Fakfak people, which describes the integration between customs, religion, and the state. It is highly possible because the Fakfak society is plural and open, and its social structure has transformed from traditional to modern and postmodern culture.

In line with these changes, new institutions have developed which reflect the application of the life philosophy of a furnace with three stones, which in local terms is known as *toromit war istery*, which can be interpreted as unity, equality, and mutual support or in a wider context can be described as harmony between the three main stakeholders in society: customs, religion, and the state which must be integrated to create harmony in life. This spirit of *toromit war istery* also forms solidarity that makes it possible for the Fakfak community to learn and accept the differences between them.

CONCLUSION

This article has brought us an example of changes in the structure of society that are possible due to internal and external drives from the community itself, in addition to the socio-political and cultural context that follows, be it acculturation, assimilation, reception, or even resistance as critical supporting elements of a transformation. In general, the structural changes in the Fak-Fak community were triggered by two critical aspects: ethnicity and religion, which are faced with the generic (inherited) and differential (selected) cultural characteristics, forming a unique new structure and having implications for the demographics of the population. It occurs with the emergence of a new interaction space, both a physical open space in the form of settlements and a space that emerges due to shared identity.

This article also shows that there is a significant potential conflict that continuously lurks in the harmonization of people's lives triggered by local geopolitics, which is caused by the expansive nature of religion as well as the monopoly and hegemony of globalization which has channeled people to believe in two main values: capital and markets. When confronted with this

situation, the community creates a bonding mechanism that originates from local genius, which can unite the rift that continues to occur in society by continuing to promote the *Toromit War Istery* philosophy of life which was later known as the philosophy of *satu tungku tiga batu* (three stones in one furnace) that can be translated as unity in diversity.

Future researchers could continue to expand upon this article, especially in terms of the depth of analysis regarding one important factor forming the structure of society, politics, and the enactment of the special autonomy law for the province of Papua-West Papua, which directly gives some privileges to indigenous Papuans compared to migrants who live in Papua. In addition, the method, the theories, and the concepts tend to prioritize anthropological or sociological perspectives, so it may have overlooked the legal perspective, for example, which is the main factor that forms values and norms in society.

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RELIGIOUS SOLIDARITY FOR COPING WITH ECONOMIC CRISIS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated global and local economies alike. However, it has also contributed to the functioning of social solidarity in dealing with crisis pressure among local people, which became a survival strategy for various businesses. This paper aims to map the patterns of economic pressure resulting from the pandemic and analyze the social strength factor that became a survival strategy in the economic field. This research was conducted on several Chinese Indonesian converts to Islam [mu'alaf] to examine their religious solidarity that served as the strength for their survival as entrepreneurs. Therefore, qualitative research was conducted in a community of converts to Islam in Pontianak city, one of the centers with a significant Chinese population. In addition to data on the crisis they experienced during the pandemic, this research also revealed their perceptions, motivation, and actions in response to COVID-19. The research results showed that social and spiritual capital is the most important support for converts to recover from difficult times. Religion has become the moral basis of these entrepreneurs for solidarity and a source of support in coping with pressure and problems. Amid scarcity of economic resources, religion-based social resources have become the answer to the problems encountered by these entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Social Solidarity; Economic Crisis; Muslim Entrepreneurs: COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has killed not only humans, but also the economy. Therefore, various strategies have been adopted for dealing with these situations in society. People led movements to collect donations which were then distributed to those affected by COVID-19. Community solidarity, called *Tempat Nasi Gratis Jogja*

[Jogja Free Rice Venue], distributed free rice packs to the public with as many as 140 rice packs given out a day (A. Kurniawan Ulung, 2021). The Gusdurian Community raised funds to help people affected by COVID-19. In addition to raising funds, this community also helped street vendors market their wares (Aru Lego Triono, 2021). As shown by Chinmayee Mishra and Navaneeta Rath, the importance of social solidarity is that solidarity gives rise to strength to face the impact of COVID-19 (Mishra & Rath, 2020). In line with that, solidarity in social networks plays a vital role in mobilizing community force to deal with the impact of COVID-19 (Vandenberg, Berghman, & Schaap, 2021)

To date, studies on social solidarity in dealing with the economic crisis due to a pandemic have focused on two main issues; first, studies of social solidarity that view it from mechanical and organic perspectives developed by Durkheim, (Anderson, 2020; Leap & Thompson, 2018; Ritzer & Goodman, 2009). Ritzer & Goodman (2009) indicate that a society formed by mechanical solidarity is a collective consciousness encompassing the entire community and all of its members, where this condition is deep-rooted and religious in nature. While in a society that has organic solidarity, collective awareness is limited to some groups, non-obligatory, less deep-rooted, and concerns only individual interests. The same thing is also illustrated by Leap & Thomson (2018) and Anderson (2020) that mechanical solidarity gives rise to strength in dealing with difficult situations in society (Ritzer & Goodman, 2009). Second, solidarity is formed in inclusive social networking groups (Haryadi & Malitasari, 2020; (Irwan, M, Muljono, & Yonvitner, 2019; Yudina & Alekseenko, 2020). The three researchers indicate that social solidarity can be formed in social media or online communities. From the two models above, studies on social solidarity have yet to analyze the subjective perspectives of the actors involved profoundly. The actor's perspective is needed to provide a better insight even though it is very conservative to formulate the right strategies for community groups to overcome the impact of COVID-19.

This research aims to complement the existing studies that have yet to accommodate subject perspectives in analyzing social solidarity in overcoming the economic crisis due to COVID-19. In line with that, this paper aims to map the patterns of solidarity and analyze the conditions that cause solidarity to form among the Chinese Indonesian converts to Islam –, hereafter referred to as *mu'alaf*. The answer to this question allows for an in-depth insight into the correlation between social solidarity and the community's socio-economic strength in facing the economic crisis. This insight can serve as the basis for formulating more contextual and effective policies in coping with the impact

of COVID-19.

Social solidarity involving communities can be a potential social strength in dealing with crises, especially the economic crisis felt by the community. On the one hand, this social solidarity shows togetherness and solidarity that accommodates community participation in helping others. On the other hand, it is built on pragmatic interests. In addition, at the same time, these communities cannot overcome all their problems. However, in this case, social solidarity was in line with the government's policy of handling crises during the pandemic, which involved various social forces with their interests.

This research analyzed the form of solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic among the *mu'alaf* in Pontianak City, Indonesia. This solidarity was closely observed regarding the support they provided to fellow converts. Then, we also focused on the form of capital, business network, and mental-spiritual support, which aim to enable these mu'alaf to face challenges and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These *mu'alaf* are members of the Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association (PITI). This association has become the center for studying Islam for the *mu'alaf*.

The data used in this research were primary qualitative data using three types: knowledge, attitude, and practice. The data on knowledge is the conception of *mu'alaf* about their understanding of the conditions of the impact of COVID-19 and their knowledge of the importance of solidarity built on social identity (Zhong et al., 2020), while attitude is the ability to process beliefs and relevant information. It turns into an attitude responding to context (Ajzen, 1993). The data on practice is a concrete action that they take intentionally.

The source of information in this paper is in the form of primary data (Lexy J. Moleong, 2019). Information in this study was obtained from the *mu'alaf* who had converted to Islam for at least two years, who believed that they had understood Islamic teachings and often interacted with fellow *mu'alaf*. These informants are members of the PITI [Indonesian Chinese Muslim Association] in Pontianak City.

The data collection process in this study began with the collection of materials that became the central issue of research, related to social solidarity built by community groups, then continued with field observations. (Sugiyono, 2018). Field observations were mapped into three parts; first, the routine activities of the convert community at PITI; second, social movement activities; and third, individual actions. Then we also conducted in-depth interviews (A. Anggito & J. Setiawan, 2018). Informants in this study consisted of West Kalimantan PITI management, members of PITI, and *mu'alaf* retailers. It aimed to confirm the

solidarity among the *mu'alaf* community in coping with the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data analysis in this research follows the stages of Miles & Hubermann's qualitative research (1994): after data collection, we carried out data reduction, data display, and data verification. Data reduction was done according to the themes and research questions by classifying, focusing, organizing, and analyzing the data in-depth. Data display was done by displaying the data by writing it along with direct quotations from the interviews. The verification process used the method of interpretation of data with tendencies having been mapped since the beginning of data collection.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19, designated by the WHO (World Health Organization) as a pandemic as this research was conducted, had entered its second year in Indonesia (SMERU, 2021). Mascie Taylor & Moji (2021) states a pandemic is "an epidemic occurring worldwide or over a vast area." In line with this, Nossem (2020) added that a pandemic knows no administrative boundaries because of the high level of people's mobility so that the impact of its outbreak is felt by the majority of people in the world or a wide region (Iaquinto, 2020; Iacus et al., 2020). The influence of a pandemic triggers various problems (Uzun et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2021). The problems caused by this pandemic affect people who are victims of COVID-19 and the general public who live in affected regions or countries. For those who contracted COVID-19, the problems they face are threats to their health and life (Cepel, Gavurova, Dvorsky, & Belas, 2020), given that this virus attacks the human respiratory system and anyone who is infected is at high risk of death (Pascarella et al., 2020; Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020).

In addition to issues related to health and life-threatening risks, various other issues also threaten the unaffected community, including economic, social, and psychological issues. (Cepel et al., 2020). These problems then turn into a crisis that threatens people's lives (Puchkova et al., 2021). The drastic decline in income due to the termination of employment carried out simultaneously by many companies also triggered economic instability (Gassman-Pines et al., 2020; Eisenbeck et al., 2022). It didn't stop there; the economic crisis then created a series of emotional pressures such as anxiety, depression, a large responsibility burden, and mental disorders (John et al., 2019; Caffo et al., 2020). This economic, social, and psychological crisis occurred to people around the world. In a study entitled "Covid-19 Outbreak in Italy: Are We Ready for the Psychosocial and the Economic Crisis? Baseline Findings From

the PsyCovid Study" that the emergence of this crisis has fostered a sense of empathy in the community for each other as a result of awareness of the gravity of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Cerami et al., 2020).

ECONOMIC CRISIS

Economic activities are activities carried out by the community by providing input in the form of labor, material, and thoughts to produce output in the form of daily income (Saepuloh & Aisyah, 2020). In daily life, economic activities cannot be separated from people's lives, even people always seek to increase income to achieve welfare (Marlinah, 2019). This welfare is the community's desire because when it is achieved, stability in life can be ensured (Shin, 2016). On the other hand, efforts to improve the economy do not always run smoothly. Various challenges also hinder this effort, including the crisis (Buendía, Gómez Serrano, & Molero-Simarro, 2020). The economic crisis is diverse and widespread across sectors (A. Sharma & Borah, 2020). There are three forms of economic crisis: the monetary crisis triggered by the current account deficit (CAD) phenomenon caused by liquidity and solvency problems in the banking system (Bitar, 2021). Second, the global financial crisis is driven by an imbalance in global capital flows, loosening monetary policy, and inadequate supervision and regulation (Nier & Merrouche, 2012; Purwono et al., 2018). Third, the impact of the crisis caused by this pandemic has been worsened by a decrease in people's income due to policies made to reduce the rate of spread of the pandemic. (Mehta, Saxena, & Purohit, 2020).

The three forms of economic crisis mentioned above have obstacles (Irawan & Alamsyah, 2021). One of them is the COVID-19 pandemic which is capable of destabilizing the economy on a global scale and is even causing a crisis (Lucchese & Pianta, 2020). Still, the economic crisis caused by a pandemic is becoming more complex because it involves not only economic issues, but also health factors that should be considered. The economy in Indonesia has started to weaken since the implementation of social restrictions paralyzed economic sectors (Saputra & Salma, 2020). A study by Herdiana (2020) argued that the policy was ineffective in addition to the paralyzed economy, the level of public compliance was still low. This example indicates that the policy does not favor both (Lusianawati, 2020; Nasruddin & Haq, 2020).

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Social solidarity is a form of solidarity resulting from a relationship between individuals or groups based on belief in shared values and strengthened by emotional experiences. (Hanifah, 2019; Saidang & Suparman, 2019). The

emotional experiences here can be triggered by the threat of a collective enemy or the threat of disaster felt by one individual or group (Hekmatyar & Vonika, 2021). Groups in social solidarity are formed based on a shared homeland or primordialism, feelings of shared fate and responsibility, and a sense of empathy. In addition, solidarity can also be included based on religion and ethnic community (Weol et al., 2021; Tomasini, 2021). Furthermore, Morgan & Pulignano (2020) examined the performance of this social solidarity. They mentioned that the resulting performance is only sometimes optimal because it depends on other forms of capitalism. Eckenwiler (2018) added that dependence on this form of capitalism results from moral imagination in recognizing individuals or groups who need to be assisted through responsive actions. The differences in moral imagination make the performance of social solidarity dynamic.

In an era where globalization can unite these economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions, it is relatively easier to create space for social solidarity within these dimensions (Estuningtyas, 2018). In addition, the emergence of social solidarity can fill the empty space for the government's ineffectiveness in making public policies (Lee, 2020). The ineffectiveness of the government is caused by the limited space used to overcome crises, especially for vulnerable groups (Angaw, 2021). In responding to the limited space, virtual space is used as a medium to build new solidarity (Saifudin, 2018). Much convenience is offered when it comes to donations using virtual-based social solidarity, given that there are no space and time restrictions in using it (Astuti & Prijanto, 2021). Even today, *crowdfunding*, an open donation phenomenon utilizing virtual media, has become a trend in Indonesia (Sitanggang, 2018). Kitabisa. com is one of the successful crowdfunding sites in Indonesia, so many donations have been opened and channeled from this institution (Warapsari, 2020; Rachmawati & Solikhati, 2020).

CAPITAL SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the socio-economic aspects of all walks of life. The economic impacts can be seen in the form of reduced income, termination of employment, stagnancy in trade distribution channels, scarcity of raw materials for production, etc. These conditions led to the instability of the country's economy and a decrease in public consumption. It was then worsened by the government's social restriction policies, which limited the space for economic activity. This can be seen from the closing of access to public spaces. The chaos of this condition caused helplessness in the community, especially in the economic aspect, which ultimately created a sense

of solidarity in society, helping each other and overcoming problems together. Solidarity from various groups effectively deals with everyday problems, as in the *mu'alaf* community. Based on observations in the field, at least three forms of support as a form of solidarity shown by the *mu'alaf* community in dealing with the impact of the pandemic. First economic capital support; in this case, fellow members of the *mu'alaf* community provide capital support in the form of money or goods to help other *mu'alaf* in continuing business affected by the economic crisis.

(Mutiara, 2020) which was later replaced with the term of Community Activities Restrictions Enforcement (CARE) (Moegiarso, 2021), all of which aimed to limit the space for people to interact with fellow citizens in the public space (Mashabi, 2021). It is commonly known that during the pandemic, many retailers, business people, and entrepreneurs were unable to continue their business, such as the inability to extend the lease of a kiosk or shop for trading purposes due to a decrease in the number of buyers, which had caused a decreased income. This reduced sale is one of the consequences of the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (LSSR) policy issued by the government. Due to such a situation, the retailers' income decreased dramatically, so they sometimes needed help to rent their stores. AH (age 59) reported that since the Covid-19 pandemic, his income had been reduced significantly, so he could not pay the rent for his store in downtown Pontianak. He even had to lay off his employees. However, he still felt grateful because he had a friend who helped him pay the rent of IDR 90 million [USD 5,772] a year.

"I can't afford to pay the rent; I even laid off my employees because my income wasn't enough for all of that," said AH. He added, "Fortunately, there was help from Mr. A, an old friend of mine who helped me to pay for my needs so that I could continue my business." Another businessman, Al (age 45), an ornamental fish seller who experienced a shortage of capital during Covid-19, was assisted by his friend in form of fish feed. Al said: "I felt frustrated because my business could not meet my daily needs, let alone pay for the store rent after all my business fulfills people's hobby needs because today, they are more concerned with basic needs than hobbies." Al was quoted as saying. The capital support from fellow mu'alaf helped with the business continuity of other mu'alaf retailers affected by the co-19 pandemic.

In addition to the capital support from fellow *mu'alaf*, as members of West Kalimantan PITI, they also received entrepreneurship training from the Association. This training was attended by the *mu'alaf* who were laid off and women to help build the family economy. Hendris (age 49) said that this entrepreneurship training activity was to help *mu'alaf,* who had been affected

by Covid, to recover from the economic downturn. The training provided by the Association was among others making frozen chicken noodles and frozen meatballs and sewing. As a result, some *mu'alaf* were able to start new businesses. Bringing up this entrepreneurial spirit is part of organizational support to help *mu'alaf* recover economically. Meanwhile, another informant initialed, D said, "My husband was laid off, so I helped him by selling food. I was trained to sell foods online, [especially] frozen foods; what's important is we can survive in such a difficult condition."

In the short term, the solidarity movement for *mu'alaf* is to help by distributing groceries to poor *mu'alaf* families. According to Hendris, PITI's Secretary, they distributed staple food packages for poor families. These packages were donated by donors who were contacted by the PITI management. The package contains 2 liters of cooking oil, 10 kg of rice, 1 kg of sugar, ½ kg of coffee, two cans of milk, and vitamins. These staple food packages were distributed to poor *mu'alaf* families based on the data compiled at the PITI. A total of 150 packages were distributed. This concern for fellow *mu'alaf* was shown by their real actions of support in the form of the first category, namely economic capital, which indicated that it was done out of the awareness of the *mu'alaf* themselves.

SOCIAL CAPITAL SUPPORT IN BUSINESS RESILIENCE

The second form, Social Capital Support, is a support that indirectly helped members to overcome economic problems during the pandemic when the *mu'alaf* could not sell their wares. One of the solutions was to offer their wares to members of their community. Mr. NL, a food seller, often advertised his food to the *mu'alaf* community and young entrepreneurs in Pontianak City. He often shared food photos in the WhatsApp group where community members buy items from each other. Other members of the group shared their posts with other groups. Many *mu'alaf* and young entrepreneurs buy food at Mr. NL's outlets in this way. It was also the case with Mrs. N. She posted the foods she was selling to the WhatsApp group and asked group members to share her posts. Mutual buying of merchandise occurred to help fellow traders.

Additional social capital support was also given by the *mu'alaf* community using social media to market the merchandise to community members. They helped to market their merchandise by posting their fellow members' merchandise on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. They shared each other's posts and promoted and reviewed this merchandise on social media to attract social media followers. The use of social media allows for online sales to reach many groups in the hope of increasing sales which

contributes to more income.

The *mu'alaf* community often builds good relationships with fellow *mu'alaf* by visiting one another. It is not a routine but is often done in the context of strengthening solidarity. Individuals and organizations make these visits. Visiting one another is a way to chat, discuss, and exchange ideas. Mr. Um (age 56) often visits Mr. AH, and vice versa. They often exchange ideas about many things, including economic issues, which sometimes led to finding solutions to problems, ranging from capital, sales, to cooking spices. Therefore, these visits give them a feeling that they are not alone in coping with economic problems. The support of community members is important to boost the morale of fellow *mu'alaf*. Mr Um was quoted as saying, "I often visit Mr. AH. We are fellow *mu'alaf,* so we often exchange ideas to give alternative solutions to the problems we are facing."

Thus, it indicates that the community members have emotional closeness and solidarity with one another, so sharing experiences and discussing problems is a way for them to interact and find solutions.

MORAL SUPPORT IN FACING THE CRISIS

Third, Spiritual Capital Support. It is called spiritual capital because this form seeks to strengthen the mental and spiritual well-being of every *mu'alaf*. In strengthening the religiosity of the *mu'alaf*, routine Qur'anic recitation is held at the Darussalam Al Arif mosque in the center of Pontianak City, at Jl. Tanjungpura No. 340. This routine recitation is held after the noon prayer, every Thursday. This recitation also contains Islamic studies on worship, both ritual worship and social worship. In addition, this activity can also give consolation over the problems they are facing in life, especially during the pandemic. Patience, effort, power of prayer, etc., are parts of the materials discussed in the group study. This recitation activity gives spiritual support to the *mu'alaf* affected by COVID-19.

Another form of spiritual capital support during the pandemic is disaster relief which is often given during adversity, for example, cases of illness, death, etc. Thus, spiritual capital support provides moral support to one another, and they also pray for and make donations to one another. Donations are often made to the *mu'alaf* community. Voluntary donations, prayer support, and mutual moral support are family bonds built among them so that they can recover and be strong in coping with the hardship in life. Hendris (age 49) reported as follows. "If our friends who are members of the PITI get into a difficult situation, such as illness or death, then we visit them and donate. But

because we have CORONA [Covid] now, we only collect voluntary donations from members that we ask from the group. Then if it has been collected, we give it to our members who are going through hardship" (Hendris, 2021).

RELIGIOUS SOLIDARITY AS A STRATEGY FOR COPING WITH CRISIS

This study illustrates that the solidarity in the *mu'alaf* community is based on the shared identity, namely the same ethnicity and situations, as a person who converts to Islam. This solidarity is shown by the support they give one another in the form of economic, social, and spiritual capital. This support is given to ease the burden and to help recover from the economic crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The motivation to help fellow *mu'alaf* can be seen from the capital assistance to extend the rent of kiosks, assisting in the sale of merchandise, buying one another's merchandise, helping to market a member's merchandise through social media, and mutually reinforcing through gathering and religious studies which remind one another of the importance of patience and the power of God.

Such social solidarity displayed by the *mu'alaf* community above indicates that a community, no matter the size, can make its members "stand tall" even in this dark hour because there is a close friendship, togetherness, and shared conditions to give rise to a close relationship. This is an example that we should never disregard something small because it can bring members together in emotional unity.

Solidarity in the form of economic capital support in the *mu'alaf* community when economic conditions are bad, and everyone needs economic capital to do business, is very helpful as they can still give economic support by providing loans to help a fellow *mu'alaf* to continue their business. This is possible because a bond of solidarity is built for a long time, and there is trust. Because solidarity in supporting a fellow member by giving them quite a large amount of money will never happen if trust is non-existent between them. Trust is made possible by the belief that their friend is a good, honest, trustworthy person with a strong work ethic; therefore, this economic support will not be misused. It would be different should the individual not fulfill the aspect of trust. Social support among the *mu'alaf* community is given because of friendship and a sense of togetherness. It creates a feeling of being in a difficult economic situation during the pandemic. This sense of solidarity triggers mutual support to provide social capital to recover together by overcoming economic difficulties. Meanwhile, spiritual support emerges due to the need for every human being to feel calm and comfortable

to create a feeling of comfort, peace, piety, and a high sense of humanity. These psychological responses arise naturally and are reflective due to religious and human awareness.

The solidarity displayed by the *mu'alaf* community is a form of individual and collective solidarity because of unity. It arises due to the intensity of social interaction between them. In addition, it is strengthened by the same situation they are facing, namely coping with the economic crisis as an impact of the pandemic (Hekmatyar & Vonika, 2021). Besides, they also have the same emotional bond as *mu'alaf* and come from the same ethnic group. (Hanifah, 2019; Weol et al., 2021). However, this solidarity is not always static and linear. It tends to be dynamic, especially concerning coping with economic (read: financial) problems, since economic capital requires "speculation" or "guarantee" of proven trust in an individual. Not everyone will support economic (financial) capital if this "guarantee" is unmet. This aligns with what Morgan & Pulignano (2020) stated. Therefore, this research confirms previous studies that solidarity can occur spontaneously in certain conditions because its elements are fulfilled. However, in other conditions, solidarity requires a 'guarantee' to strengthen faith and trust. This research has proven that a small community's social solidarity can fill empty spaces that government authorities cannot reach. Therefore, if small communities from this society can be embraced and empowered, development can reach all walks of life in society. In this light, it is necessary to promote community-based empowerment to create an equal distribution of human development in the country.

CONCLUSION

It turns out that social solidarity has become the basis of resilience in coping with the crisis. Social solidarity in the community grows because there is an awareness, sympathy, humanity that arises due to togetherness and a need for calm and comfort. The form of support for economic capital, social capital, and spiritual capital for fellow community members proves this solidarity. However, this research shows that solidarity that requires financial sacrifices will only emerge because of a full sense of trust. This research provides a new perspective on the issue of social solidarity that community-based empowerment could potentially reach small communities that government's development programs have not touched.

This research has limitations in the number of samples, so comparison and generalization cannot be made. That being the case, further research should be conducted to accommodate more diverse communities.

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PORTRAIT OF MODERATE ISLAM WITHIN MUSLIM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The violence in the name of religion is now not only happening in the Middle East but has also penetrated Indonesia. Indonesia is not only known as a Muslim-majority country that is friendly and peace-loving but also has a diversity of religions, ethnicities, races, and cultures that have the potential to trigger conflict at any time. Violations of religious freedom in Indonesia have increased dramatically in recent years. This study is aimed to explore the understanding of Muslim students in Indonesia about Islamic moderation, the perceptions of Muslim students in Indonesia about the application of Islamic moderation, and the challenges and strategies of universities in implementing Islamic moderation on Muslim students in Indonesia. This study uses phenomenology approach with Muslim students as the object of the research. The participants were selected purposively as many as 20 students. This study finds that Muslim students in Indonesia characterize Islamic moderation as Muslims who are open to technological change, tolerant and harmonious with other Muslims and non-Muslims, non-violent, democratic, and access to comprehensive Islamic sources. Even though Muslim students in Indonesia have implemented Islamic moderation, there are still misconceptions about Islamic moderation. The challenge of implementing Islamic moderation in Muslim students is that they are easily exposed to extreme understanding through social media or the pragmatic and rational Islamic community.

Keywords*: Portrait of Moderate Islam; Muslim Students; portrait Islam, religiosity*

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of Muslims today are becoming increasingly complex, no longer limited to religious issues but have penetrated other aspects of life, including education, economics, law, society, culture, and politics. The history of Islamic

civilization records that Islam is divided into several groups. These groups were born from different understandings and perspectives on the teachings of Islam itself or political affiliations and interests. Theological issues that arise among Muslims are the result of the struggle between various Islamic notions of fundamentalism and liberalism. Islam word derived from "*aslama*," "*yuslimu*," and "*islaman*," which are Arabic words that mean submission, obedience, and protection (Manzūr & ibn Mukrin, 2003). Islam is defined as a complete surrender to Allah. People who identify as Muslim show that they have accepted and submitted to the teachings of Islam. A true Islamist implies that the individual must be able to save himself and others around him; even though it is not completely safe, its existence is still useful.

Lately, we have entered a new chapter in which violence in the name of religion exhibits various relatively more varied and extreme patterns. Perhaps, we have witnessed horrific propaganda on social media, beheadings, rapes, and tortures carried out in the name of Islam by fanatics fighting for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Quainton, 2020). The violence in the name of religion does not only occur in the Middle East but has now penetrated Indonesia, which culturally and socially is a nation that is polite, friendly, tolerant, and loves peace. Indonesia, as a country with a majority Muslim population, has a myriad of problems that intersect with religion, ethnicity, race, and class, thus forcing the government to be wise in managing diversity and potential conflicts triggered by religious sentiments.

Violations of religious freedom in Indonesia have grown dramatically in recent years, with a jump from 134 cases in 2014 to 208 cases in 2018 (Sudarto, 2022). From 2016 to 2018, there were 208 violations of freedom of religion/belief, including 270 different types of actions, spread across 24 regions in Indonesia. Of the 270 violations of freedom of religion/belief, 140 involve state authorities as to the perpetrators, 123 of 140 are active state activities (based on commissions), and 17 are passive (based on Negligence). Provocative words and violence committed by public authorities, 130 out of 270 violations of freedom of religion/belief were committed by non-state entities. Individuals and members of community groups commit violations in this category. The group of residents committed the most violations, namely 42 cases (Sudarto, 2022). Groups that receive less favorable treatment or acts of violence are Shia Islam, Ahmadiyah, Gafatar, and Salafi (Marshall, 2018; Zuhdi, 2018)

Several studies on religious study inform opinion and behavior among young Muslims in Indonesia, including high school and university students, have found a tendency to grow intolerance and religious radicalism and exposure to violent extremism and terrorism. According to Setara Institut (2019)

formalistic, conservative, and exclusive religiosity among state university students in Indonesia tends to be stronger than substantive, moderate, and exclusive religiosity (Sudarto, 2022). The Center for Islamic and Community Studies at the State Islamic University of Jakarta found an almost identical pattern. There are 58.8 percent of radical sentiments among students, although 74.5% of them prefer to take moderate action (Syafruddin et al., 2018). On the other hand, Kanafi et al. (2021) found that through the influence of the implementation of *ahlussunah waljama'ah* Islam, leaders and members of Islamic organizations in Indonesia now have a more moderate view, following the established and consistent doctrine of *ahlussunah waljama'ah* in various disciplines, Islamic organizations help promote the moderation character of Islam in a positive way. Ab Rashid et al. (2020) study reveals than moderate moslem on 319 articles published from 2001 to 2018 and a critical review of 29 scientific publications, moderate Muslims have the characteristics of non-violence, liberalism, democracy, secularism, pluralism, and tolerance.

Considering the trend of violence in the name of religion and the increasing potential for inter-religious conflict in Indonesia, the government, through the Research and Development Agency for Education and Training of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Republic Indonesia 2019 released the book "Religious Moderation," which is specifically described in the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia Number 18 of 2020 concerning the national mid-term development plan for 2020-2024, which was followed up by Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2020 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia.

Recently, Islamic Moderation in Indonesia has experienced significant opposition from various Muslim groups. Not only those who do not agree with the concept of Islamic Moderation but also those who claim to be moderate. In addition, several Muslim groups pressure the government to accommodate their interests, including sharia-based laws, Muslim leadership in Muslim-majority areas, and prohibiting the religious activities of anti-mainstream Islamic groups such as 'Shia,' 'Ahmadiyah,' Gafatar , and Salafis (Marshall, 2018; Zuhdi, 2018). This agenda is easily disseminated throughout the country due to the increasing use of social media, one of which is in universities.

From elementary school to university levels, educational institutions welcome the government's attitude towards the policy of religious Moderation in Indonesia (Arifianto, 2019). School and university leaders organize seminars, and book reviews, incorporate Islamic Moderation into the curriculum and issue a joint statement committed to instilling Islamic values that are peace-

loving, tolerant, and accepting of diversity (Arifinsyah et al., 2020). However, the school cannot rule out the possibility of becoming a vehicle for spreading various religious and political ideas, including extreme or fundamental ideologies, especially in countries with different religious education systems, such as Indonesia. Based on the results of the researcher's search, although there have been quite some studies examining Islamic Moderation, there has not been a single study that has examined the portrait of the implementation of Islamic Moderation, its obstacles, and challenges. Previous research only focused on three aspects: theoretical aspects, implementation in communities and religious groups, and micro research on high school students or Islamic boarding schools.

Borum (2011) conducted research examining the theory of Islamic Moderation, Ab Rashid et al. (2020), Kanafi et al. (2021), Mujahid (2021), and Nasir & Rijal (2021), research that examines the implementation of Islamic moderation among the Muslim community, such as in Salik's research (Salik, 2019), Syafruddin et al. (2018), and Safei (Safei, 2021), and micro research in the local scope that discusses Islamic moderation in the context of student learning in schools, among others, carried out by Hanapi (2014), Sumbulah et al. (2018), Zuhdi (2018), Susilo & Dalimunthe (2019), Sirry (2020), Siswanto (2020), Subandi et al.(2020), Helmy et al. (2021), Yahya & Rahmat (2021), Gunawan et al.(2021), and Pajarianto et al. (2022). On the other hand, students and students are the nation's next generations, so they need special attention from all parties to develop into the future generation of Islamic Moderation. Teachers and lecturers are important in determining students' understanding of Islamic Moderation because they function as interpreters and implementers. There is not much difference if the religious education curriculum is designed to be more moderate and responsive to social change, as messages can be delivered differently in the classroom depending on how a teacher presents them (Zuhdi, 2018), in line with Sirry (2020) that Muslim students can be de-radicalized through education, publication of information, support and attention, alternative approaches to religious beliefs, and involvement of family and peers, and this is because students are more critical of dogmatic patterns in interpreting religious teachings.

Other previous study also discus religious moderation phenomena, Syafruddin et al. (2018), Zuhdi (2018), Ab Rashid et al. (2020), Sirry (2020), Kanafi (2021), and Sudarto (2022), This study focus on the implementation of Islamic Moderation on Islamic students in Indonesia to answer three research questions, namely; how do students define Islamic moderation? how do students perceive Islamic moderation?, What are the challenges and strategies

used in implementing Islamic moderation for Islamic students in Indonesia? In line with the focus, this study aims to explore the understanding of Islamic students in Indonesia regarding Islamic moderation, as well as explore the perceptions of Islamic students in Indonesia regarding the implementation of Islamic Moderation, and explore the challenges and strategies undertaken by universities in implementing Islamic moderation on Muslim students in Indonesia. Islamic moderation is a manifestation of the Islamic convention known as *wasatiyyah*. *Wasatiyyah* Islam is defined as the middle way, balance, justice, implementation or extreme, tolerance, simplicity, and harmony as the embodiment of Islam as a carrier of goodness for all nature (Gunawan et al., 2021; Helmy et al., 2021; Qaraḍāwī, 2010; Safei, 2021; Salik, 2019; Siswanto, 2020; Subandi et al., 2020). Moderation is a manifestation of *wasatiyyah* Islam, positioning oneself fairly, not ignoring his religion's teachings, and not exaggerating.

Al-Wasatiyyah gives the idea of doing good with steadfastness and strength while remaining true to one's beliefs and refraining from committing any evil while avoiding evil with knowledge. A Muslim who makes Islamic moderation his lifestyle will be able to balance two opposing extremes of understanding, neither extreme-left nor extreme right (Hanapi, 2014; Safei, 2021). Islamic moderation is the opposite of Islamic extremism or Islamic radicalism; Islamic extremists are defined as "…as reactionary actors seeking direct and massive political change in the Status Quo through illegal and violent means" (Prinsloo, 2018). The term extreme left can be interpreted as behavior that is "skeptic," "apathetic," and too "permissive" so that it does not make religious teachings a guide for life. Contrary to the meaning of the extreme right, which tends to be fundamentalist, intolerant, feels the most righteous, acts beyond what is reasonable in the name of religion so that it violates the essential goals of Islam, namely, to bring about peace and safety.

Islamic moderation has several main characteristics, namely; Adhering to the philosophy of non-violence in spreading Islamic da'wah; adhering to modernity which includes science and technology, democracy, human rights, and the like; using rational thinking; using a contextual approach to understanding Islam; secular, pluralist, has a high spirit of tolerance, respects differences or diversity, and performs ijtihad (educated decisions in deciding legal opinions if there is no justification) in deciding legal opinions (Ab Rashid et al., 2020; Safei, 2021; Wibisono et al., 2019). On the other hand, radical or extreme Islam has at least 3 factors; create hostility towards the target group; provide reasons and mandates for acts of violence; remove social and psychological barriers that can prevent violence (Borum, 2011). According to the opinions of experts

and theories that have been stated above, Islamic moderation is substantially essential Islamic teaching to regulate Muslims in interactions with fellow Muslims, Muslims, and non-Muslims, the government, or the surrounding environment, so that the concept of peace and safety which is the mission of Islam can be achieved. made the best.

The experts opinions we have described in the literature review section are interpretations of the verses in the Muslim holy book (Al-Qur'an), including the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 142, Al-Qur'an Surah An-Nahl verse 90, and the Qur'an Surah Al-Mumtahanah verse 8 (Kementerian Agama, 2005), namely: "In the same way We have made you (Muslims) a middle class so that you may be witnesses of (deeds) of mankind and that the Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) may be witnesses of (deeds) you. ...". Almost the same meaning is also contained in the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl verse 90 "Verily Allah commands to be fair, to do good, and to help relatives. He (also) forbids evil, evil and enmity. He taught you a lesson so that you always remember." Al-Qur'an Surah An-Nahl verse 90 is emphasized by Allah SWT, through His words in the Qur'an Surah Al-Mumtahanah verse 8 "God does not forbid you to do good and be fair to those who do not fight you in matters of religion and does not expel you from your hometown. Verily, Allah loves those who act justly."

The Ministry of Religious Affaris of the Republic of Indonesia interprets "*umatan wasatiyyah*" in the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 142 as "middle (moderate) people, the chosen people, the best, fair, and balanced people, both in beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior." Furthermore, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia interprets the Qur'an Surah An-Nahl verse 90 "... Allah forbids all of His servants to commit heinous acts that are despicable in the view of religion, such as adultery and murder; commit bad deed, namely things that are Contrary to the values in customs and religion; and conduct enmity with others as a result of oppression and persecution. Through these commands and prohibitions, He teaches and guides you in matters relating to good and evil so that you can take valuable lessons." The meaning of the Qur'an surah Al-Mumtahanah verse 8 is that "Allah does not forbid you (Muslims) from doing good and doing justice, because goodness and justice are universal, to unbelievers who do not fight Muslims because of religion with emphasize religious freedom and tolerance; and to those who do not expel you from your hometown, because you believe in Allah. Verily, Allah loves those who are fair to themselves and to others." Prophet Muhammad SAW encouraged his followers to behave moderately and forbade his followers to be excessive in religion; this can be seen from the words of the Prophet

Muhammad in a hadith in Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal Number 3078, and Sunan An-Nasa'i Number 3007 (Lidwa, 2020), as follows; "Do not act *ghuluw* (excessive attitude in religion), because verily the destruction of those before you is due to being *ghuluw* in religion."

Universities can instill Islamic Moderation values in theoretical, practical, and ideological aspects through the development of a curriculum that contains national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, accommodates local wisdom (culture) in aspects of content, learning strategies, evaluation models, teaching materials , and references, as an effort to stem the strengthening of extremist understanding (Nasir & Rijal, 2021; Siswanto, 2020; Sumbulah et al., 2018). Building Islamic education with a local character and reducing the extreme teachings of Wahhabism and the like is an effective deradicalization strategy (Susilo & Dalimunthe, 2019). Through empirical studies conducted by Yahya & Rahmat (2021), The dialogue-argumentative method is highly recommended to develop Islamic moderation thinking among students because this technique is seen as more effective for students who are already familiar with academic discussion or critical thinking. A different method but still considered relevant as a way of inculcating Islamic Moderation values in Islamic boarding schools is through the dogma of ushul fiqh, which states "al muhafadhatu 'ala al-qadim as-sholih wal akhdu bi al-jadid al-ashlah (maintaining a good tradition and using a new, better tradition) rooted in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith." (Mujahid, 2021).

This study uses a phenomenological method with a qualitative approach. This method fits the purpose of this study, which aims to explore the experiences, perceptions, responses, and feelings of Islamic students in Indonesia towards implementing Islamic Moderation on their campuses. Phenomenology is an appropriate method used to explore a person's experience or feelings regarding the phenomena he or she experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Taylor et al., 2015). The setting of this research is Islamic students in Indonesia to explore the experiences of Muslim students in implementing Islamic Moderation, based on open interview questions formulated in such a way as to reveal in-depth their experiences and perceptions of Islamic Moderation.

Researchers set the criteria for participants to obtain complete, objective, and credible information. Participants in this study consist of 2 (two) groups, namely, (1) key participants, (2) main participants, and (3) supporting participants. The key participants in the research are the chancellor, vice-chancellor, or other parties who have general but comprehensive and complete information about religious moderation programs in universities in

Indonesia, namely, the head of the university, the head of the higher education quality assurance institution, and the head of the management of the study program at the university. The main participants are students participating in the religious moderation learning program. The main participants in this study were students at Islamic campuses in Indonesia as the object of implementing Islamic moderation learning. Supporting participants are lecturers at public universities and Islamic religious universities in Indonesia who can provide additional information related to mentoring, coaching, and monitoring the Islamic behavior of Muslim students in Indonesia. The technique of selecting research participants in this study was chosen on the condition that the adequacy of the information provided by the purposive technique was used (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Informants were selected purposively to represent campuses in Indonesia's West, Central, and East regions. The number of participants is 20 consisting of 18 main informants, 1 key informant, and 1 supporting informant.

The data collection uses in-depth interviews and focuses on group discussions (FGD). The FGD process was carried out first, followed by in-depth interviews with the same participants to explore the initial information obtained through the FGD. The data collection instrument was in the form of an open-ended interview guide (question list).The stages of data analysis in this study include data condensation, presenting data, verifying data, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was made by summarizing, coding, patterning, ranking, partitioning, or grouping each piece of information contained in the interview transcript throughout the research process. The presentation of the data is carried out on the reduced data, in the form of matrices, charts, and others, to obtain dense and integrated information that is easy to interpret. Data verification is done by checking the completeness, correctness, and suitability of the data obtained; if the data is still incomplete, the previous process is carried out until the information obtained can answer the research objectives. Checking the validity or credibility of the data using member check and triangulation with key participants (Denzin, 2012; Lub, 2015). To ensure the consistency of the process and the results of the analysis of the data obtained, the researcher carried out strict control over the dependability and confirmability of the participants. Dependability is related to participant bias and subjectivity. To make it easier to encode data (coding), researchers used the QSR International NVivo Plus 12 software free version for 14 days.

UNDERSTANDING MUSLIM STUDENTS REGARDING ISLAMIC MODERATION

To explore participants' understanding of Islamic moderation, we need to know how participants imagine Islamic moderation. Participants were asked to describe their experiences as moderate Islamists. We gave participants the freedom to define Islamic moderation based on their Muslim experiences. The definition is given by participants of Islamic moderation collectively consisting of several parameters, which we can then combine or summarize using NVIVO 12 software into a word cloud in Figure 1.
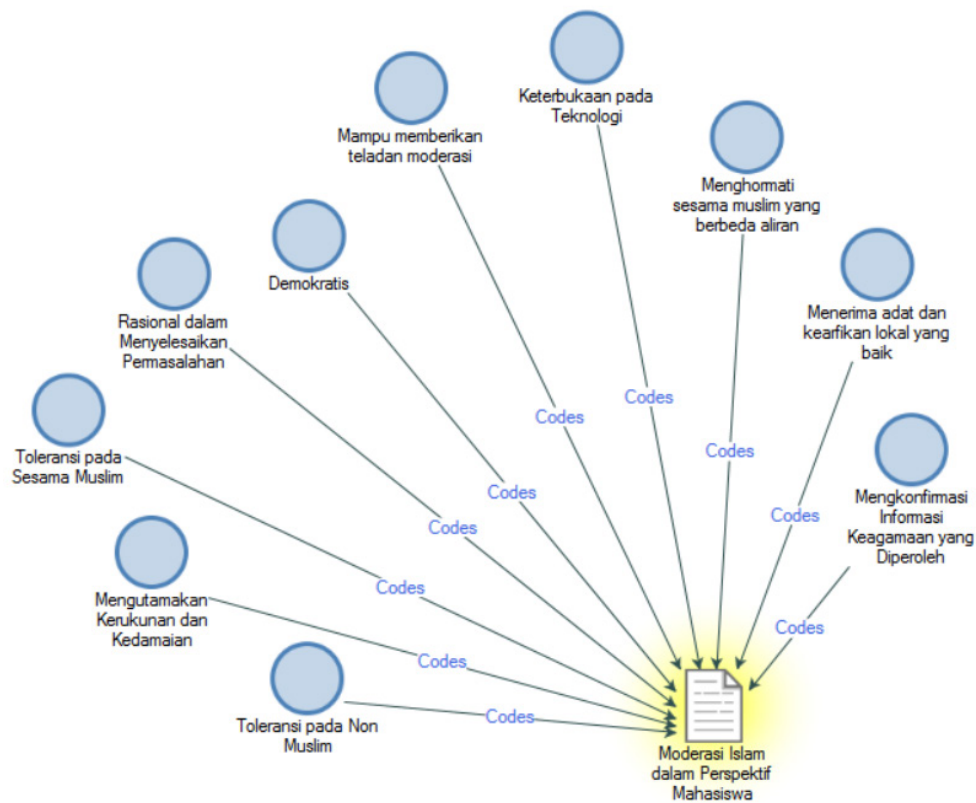

Figure 1. Word Cloud of Student Understanding of Moderate Islam

Students understand Islamic moderation as the practice of Islamic values, which refers to the definition of Islam: loving, peace-loving, tolerant, has good morals, is intellectual, by adhering to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

MODERATION OF ISLAM IN THE PERSPECTIVE MUSLIM STUDENTS

The results of interviews regarding Islamic moderation based on the perspective of Islamic students in Indonesia were analyzed using the NVIVO 12 software and presented in the form of a explorer gram (Figure 2). Cluster diagrams are formed based on the level of similarity of responses to each participant.

Figure 2. Gram's Explorer of Islamic Moderation in the Perspective of Islamic Students

Openness to Technological Development

Based on the results of interviews related to participants' experience in using information technology to facilitate access to information, understand and practice Islamic teachings, participants are open to using technology for the progress and good of the ummah. Internet-based information technology, digital technology, or other relevant technologies can make it easier to understand the holy text of the Qur'an in an attractive and flexible mobile format and can be a source of literacy to access information related to Islamic science and general sciences. However, every Muslim must use information technology wisely, filter positive information, and clarify and confirm its truth with trusted sources.

Democratic and Respect Differences of Opinion

The shared experience of participants regarding respecting democratic deliberation decisions revealed that participants had different opinions in deliberation, but even though they had different opinions, they respected

and prioritized the majority opinion as a final decision or joint decision, even though, according to personal perception, the decision was considered inappropriate.

Apply the philosophy of non-violence

In the results of in-depth interviews with participants about applying the philosophy of non-violence in upholding truth and justice, participants expressed their experiences that conveying the truth (Islamic da'wah) and fighting for justice; it must be done by prioritizing harmony, tolerance, peace, and love, and avoiding hatred, hostility, and division. Truth can only be conveyed right, and justice must be fought for in a just and wise manner. Violence and hostility will only trigger a more violent reaction of hostility and hatred from the other party.

Respect for human rights

Participants expressed their experiences in respecting human rights; according to participants, apart from the right to life, everyone also has the right to be treated non-discriminatory even though they are of different ethnicity, race, skin color, economy, political rights, and those who are very sensitive are in their beliefs and practice worship, according to their religion. Participants also revealed that in their area of origin, they had been involved in inter-ethnic wars, which later spread to political and religious issues; this was a result of the lack of awareness of certain individuals in the area on the importance of respecting human rights.

Tolerance

The results of in-depth interviews related to tolerance for fellow Muslims who have different understandings, different groups or sects, some participants revealed that they had different opinions with their friends, relatives, or parents in understanding the teachings of worship or *amaliyah* in Islam, but the differences did not reach cause quarrels or disputes, because they have adhered to the principle of mutual respect, respect, and tolerance for their fellow Muslims. Participants' experiences on how to implement tolerance to fellow Muslims who have different understandings, we summarize as follows:
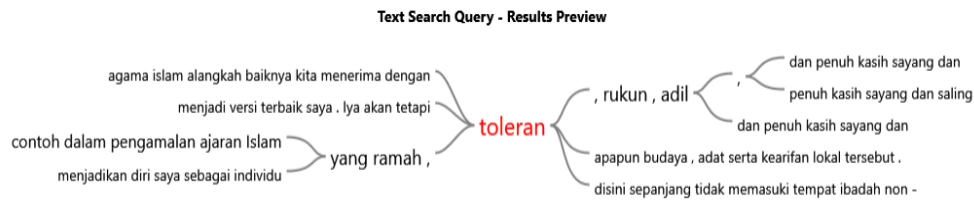
Figure 3. Word Tree of Muslim Students in Tolerance

In the interview related to tolerance, we expand on tolerance towards adherents of other religions (non-Muslims); the participants shared their experiences.
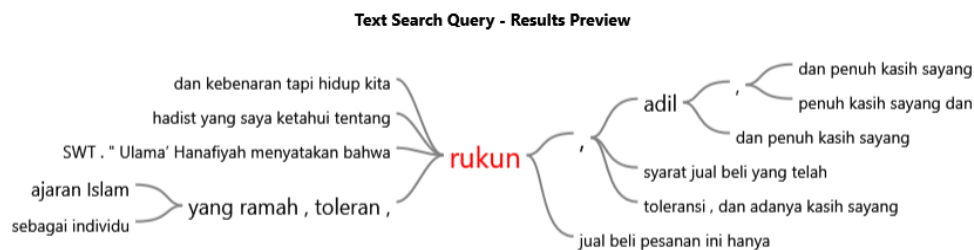

Figure 4. Word Tree of Muslim Students in Tolerance on different religions

Most participants have shown tolerance in the practice of associating with friends of the same religion or different religions as a consequence of different understandings, cultures, ethnicities, regional origins, and languages.

Appreciating differences

Participants shared their experiences regarding how they responded to the diversity of cultures, races, ethnicities, languages, groups, religions, and sects in Indonesia. Participants revealed that:

Figure 5. Word Tree of Muslim Students in Appreciating differences

The ability of participants to understand and appreciate ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity is a form of individual awareness that represents a moderate attitude as the embodiment of the values of *rahmatan lil ʿalamain*.

Accommodating local wisdom that does not conflict with Islamic teachings.

Participants' experiences in respecting local culture and wisdom, data from in-depth interviews with Muslim students in Indonesia are presented in the form of a word tree graph in Figure 6.
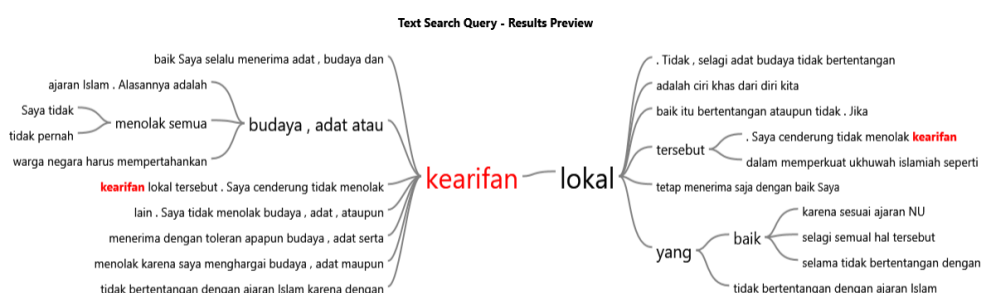

Figure 6. Word Tree of Acceptance of Muslim Students in Local Wisdom

Based on the interviews presented in Figure 6, we get information that Muslim students in Indonesia generally accept and respect local culture and wisdom

that do not conflict with religious values and Islamic beliefs.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC MODERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The results of interviews with key participants (college leaders) and supporting participants (lecturers) revealed that the implementation of Islamic moderation in universities faces several challenges and obstacles, namely:

> "[1] the low level of understanding of students and the community (student parents) towards Islamic teachings. [2] there are suspicions from students or the public, linking Islamic Moderation with political interests. [3] Islamic moderation is understood as liberal or plural Islam which is considered weak and not militant.[4] Islamic moderation is perceived as "Islam Nusantara," which is promoted by certain religious organizations, so there is resistance from people who are not from these organizations.[5] Extreme and radical notions are easily accessible by students through social media, or websites or community studies of certain religious groups."

Principally, the challenges, and obstacles to implementing Islamic moderation for Muslim students can be reduced to two factors first; internal factors, students who misunderstand (misconceptions) Islamic moderation, and second; external factors, students easily access extreme radicals from the internet or social media and through religious communities affiliated with extreme radicals.

STRATEGIES FOR ISLAMIC MODERATION IN UNIVERSITIES IN INDONESIA

The results of in-depth interviews with key participants (leaders of higher education institutions in Indonesia) revealed their experiences regarding strategies and policies for implementing Islamic moderation in universities, that.

> "The implementation of Islamic moderation in universities is an extension of the government, to create harmony, tolerance, mutual respect in order to prevent division or disintegration of the Indonesian nation which is plural in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, language and religion."

Key participants explained the efforts that have been made in universities to implement Islamic moderation, including academic and non-academic

activities. These efforts include the following:

> "[1] include Islamic Moderation as test material in the selection of new students, [2] hold public lectures on nationalism, [3] include Islamic moderation material in Islamic student character education programs, [4] include Islamic moderation study materials as part of the curriculum Islamic studies or general courses at public universities, [5] supervises student organization units so they are not exposed to extreme (radical) teachings or ideas [6] opens research opportunities for students and lecturers with the theme of Islamic moderation. [7] make leadership policies regarding the obligation of all academics to practice *wasatiyyah* (moderate) Islamic values that are harmonious, tolerant, non-violent and compassionate."

The strategies that have been used in implementing Islamic moderation in universities, in general, include academic, non-academic, and extra-curricular activities as well as policymaking for higher education leaders that require the academic community to model the practice of practicing moderate Islam.

Through this study, we have explored Muslim students' experiences in Indonesia as subjects of implementing Islamic moderation. Students have explained how they define Islamic moderation or *Wasatiyyah* Islam, which they have implemented in life within the university environment and the community. We can interpret their perception regarding how they define moderate Islam as a portrait of the implementation of moderate Islam they have practiced. This study is relevant to study of Prasojo et al. (2019), which states that "the portrait of moderate Islam can be seen from people's understanding of the practice of Islamic values, and how their efforts create harmonization, harmony, and tolerance in a pluralistic society .

When we asked students to define Islamic moderation according to their experiences, participants focused on the depth of information related to 7 (seven) issues, first; the openness of participants as Muslim students to the development of information technology and using it to understand and practice religious teachings in daily life, secondly; the democratic attitude they display in deliberation to make decisions, third; respect/respect fellow Muslims who have different understandings about the practice of Islamic teachings, third; building good relations with non-Muslims, being tolerant, and associating with good morals with non-Muslims without reducing the commitment to faith and Islamic creed, fourth; rational use in understanding and practicing religion, sixth; using multi-literacy as a source of religious information, and seventh; vigilance against detribalization by extreme/radical-minded people.

Muslim students' understanding of the concept of Islamic moderation does not merely reflect the values of moderation that they have implemented in their daily life and society. However, it also comes from external sources. The external factors that we mean in this context can be in the form of moderation learning in the university curriculum, moderate friends, community leaders, religious leaders, and the role of parents. The results of this study are relevant to the results of the Mubarak & Razali study (2019), and Susilo & Dalimunthe (2019).

The implementation of Islamic moderation on these participants is a perceptual internalization that they build about Islamic values *rahmatan lil 'alamin* through academic and non-academic activities in universities, parents, the environment, and social media. This is consistent with research conducted by Sirry (2020) that Muslim students can be de-radicalized through education, publication of information, support and attention, alternative approaches to religious beliefs, and involvement of family and peers; this is because students are more critical of dogmatic patterns in interpreting religious teachings.

This study identifies the existence of negative stereotypes in a small number of students who consider Islamic moderation as an organized effort from certain groups to undermine the originality of Islamic teachings following the Qur'an and As-Sunnah by incorporating cultural values, liberalism, pluralism, and political jargon. Islam phobia or anti-semith (anti-Arabic).

Based on the results of our confirmation with key participants, the emergence of stereotypes is caused by students' misconceptions about Islamic moderation, the large amount of media exposure that often displays radical content, and the influence of parents, society or religious communities, or religious leaders whom Muslim students follow. This is in line with the results of research by Lailial et al. (2021, p. 1) that "education plays an important role in the process of building community peace and in generating tolerance through the application of Islamic moderation values."

CONCLUSION

Understanding the concept of Islamic moderation, which directly impacts religious attitudes and practice, is based on the ability of students to reduce the Islamic values of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which is a manifestation of the Core Values of Islamic teachings originating from the Qur'an and As-Sunnah. Family, peers, and community can shape students' understanding and perception, religious communities, academic and non-academic activities in universities, as well as digital literacy (internet and social media).

The findings of this study indicate that students have strong views regarding implementing Islamic moderation in higher education. Participants expressed their understanding in understanding Islamic moderation, as Muslims who are not anti-advancement of the times who adopt modern technology from non-Muslim countries to understand and practice Islam, are tolerant and harmonious with fellow Muslims and non-Muslims, anti-violence, democratic, using comprehensive sources of Islamic law (Al-Qur'an, As-Sunnah, Ijma', and Qiyas). Muslim students in Indonesia already have a good understanding of Islamic moderation and have implemented Islamic Moderation values in the campus, family, and community environment; however, Muslim students still "misunderstand" Islamic moderation. Moderation of Islam is considered an attempt by certain parties to erode the purity of Islamic teachings by mixing culture with religious teachings, incorporating Western liberalism and pluralism into Islamic teachings as part of Islam phobia or anti-Arabs.

Challenges and obstacles to the implementation of Islamic moderation in Muslim students in Indonesia are related to the misunderstanding of students who consider the concept of Islamic moderation as an effort to erode the purity of Islam through liberalism and religious pluralism, the influence of extreme understanding from social media, or Islamic studies from certain Islamic communities in Indonesia that offer a pragmatic, rational religious concept.

The strategy of universities in implementing Islamic moderation in Indonesia is carried out in several ways, including; [1incorporating Islamic Moderation as test material in the selection of new students, [2] holding public lectures on nationalism, [3] inserting Islamic moderation material in Islamic student character education programs, [4] inserting Islamic moderation study materials as part of the Islamic studies curriculum or general courses at public universities, [5] to supervise student organization units so that they are not exposed to extreme (radical) teachings or ideas. [6] opens research opportunities for students and lecturers with the theme of Islamic moderation. [7] make leadership policies regarding the obligation of all academics to practice *wasatiyyah* (moderate) Islamic values that are harmonious, tolerant, non-violent, and compassionate."

This study suggests to improve the understanding of Muslim students to eliminate negative stereotypes about Islamic moderation, as well as how to optimize the implementation of Islamic moderation among Muslim students and students in Indonesia. These efforts can be carried out through cross-ministerial cooperation, in this case, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Republic Indonesia and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic

of Indonesia. The implementation of Islamic Moderation is not only limited to seminars or extra-curricular activities in universities but must also be included in special courses measured by valid and reliable instruments with achievements that must be monitored on an ongoing basis.

The limitation of this study is the difficulty of tracing and digging deeper into information to informants because, at the time of the research, there were still social restrictions by the government of the Republic of Indonesia to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Researchers only met face-to-face with a few participants who could be reached; the rest of the information from participants in different regions or islands was explored via WhatsApp and zoom meetings. Further studies need to be carried out quantitatively to determine the factors that influence the implementation of Islamic moderation in Muslim students in Indonesia. Sampling can be done using a cluster random sampling technique by considering the representation of students from all provinces in Indonesia, including students from public universities and Islamic religious universities.

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