

SEGREGATION OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF RELIGION PLURALISM AND CULTURAL TRAUMA IN THE TOLAKI COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

This article aimed to determine segregation between Muslims and Christians in the Tolaki ethnic community, especially in the Wolasi and Lambuya Sub-districts, Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The two areas are important to review, considering that the two populations, consisting of Muslims and Christians, come from the same ethnic group but differ in their response to religious pluralism. The method used is descriptive qualitative, utilizing observation and in-depth interviews. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using ethnography and historical approaches. The results show that the Tolaki ethnic group (Muslim and Christian) in the Lambuya community more openly responds to religious pluralism than the Wolasi community. In terms of historical perspective, the Wolasi community experienced cultural trauma from the history of Christianization during the Dutch colonies. This is because there were significant differences in perspective between religious believers, even though they were still in one ethnic group and family. In contrast, the Lambuya community prioritizes the interests of brotherhood relations within the same ethnicity and family. But the people in both subdistricts take local customs and cultures into account when trying to solve religious and social problems. If they don't get along because of their different religions, kalosara can help them work things out. This research suggests that combining faith and local wisdom is an alternative way to deal with social diversity. As an alternative way to solve conflicts between different religions, this article suggests a process of internalization between religious understanding and local wisdom.

Keywords: cultural trauma, religion pluralism, segregation, Tolaki communities.

INTRODUCTION

The plurality of the population in a country has not been able to guarantee their awareness of coexistence. One of these phenomena is illustrated by the social setting in Indonesia, where the population is approximately 238 million, spread over thousands of islands and ethnic and religious groups (Pedersen, 2016; Sunarko, 2018). Its multicultural society was confirmed as a post-independence unit through the Pancasila values program in producing “unity in diversity”, or what they

call the slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. On the one hand, the sense of togetherness over the differences in ethnicity and religion has succeeded in realizing unity in Indonesia (Van Klinken, 2003; Wasino, 2013). But on the other hand, sensitivity to religious sentiments is also not uncommon there (Dhewayani, 2016). So, religious plurality in Indonesia has two sides: the positive side as a unifying entity and the negative side as a trigger for fanaticism and religious primordialism, which is vulnerable to social conflict (Nur and Susanto 2020). This phenomenon can be seen in the social setting

of the plurality of the Tolaki people in Lambuya and Wolasi sub-districts, Southeast Sulawesi province. The residents of the two sub-districts come from the Tolaki tribe, which adheres to Islam and Christianity, but has differences in responding to religious plurality. The Muslim and Christian communities in Lambuya can live in harmony, even living under one roof (family). This differs from the case with the Muslim and Christian communities in Wolasi, which often conflict because of religious fanaticism. Therefore, this study aims to find out why there aren't as many social connections between the two regions, even though they still have similar ethnic and family ties.

This issue has been the object of various studies in the last two decades in Indonesia. Isra and Tegnan (2021) report the results of their research that the discourse of legal pluralism has not been able to help much in overcoming the difficulties faced by the pluralistic society in Indonesia, especially related to legal issues. The implication is that he offers syncretism as a more logical alternative to overcome this problem. Hasyim (2015) dan Susanto (2019) also reported on the increasing anti-multiculturalism and pluralism movement by populists after the New Order era in Indonesia. They did this because the religious authority in the political sphere was weakening, so they made fatwas to strengthen the discourse. Socioreligious organizations helped start the campaign. Such a fatwa is considered counter-productive in responding to the discourse because it has the potential to monopolize one religious view so that it is limited in accommodating religious beliefs or other religious sects. Pedersen (2016) looks at the role of government policies that contribute to shaping the discourse of pluralism in Indonesia. From the Old Order to the New Order era, pluralism became the center of government policy addressing ethnic, religious, and ethnic diversity. In contrast, multiculturalism became the focus of government policy in the reform era. The focus of these studies seems to still be on conceptual debates, so they have not looked into how local wisdom could be used to solve social problems, especially when they involve issues between religious believers.

To complement these limitations, this study aims to answer the three main

questions: First, what is the form of religious relations between Muslims and Christians in the Tolaki community? Second, why does the Tolaki in Lambuya accept religious pluralism while the Tolaki in Wolasi does not? And Third, how is local culture perceived in realizing religious pluralism? These are currently unanswered questions explored by this article using an ethnographic study and a historical approach. This research shows the basic idea of the importance of overcoming religious conflicts through the implementation of local wisdom. The interfaith community of the Tolaki tribe in Wolasi can appreciate diversity because they position religion as a bond of tribal traditions in one family. In contrast to the interfaith community in Lambuya, which sees religion as an exclusive social stratum, they view other religions as part of social inequality. The point of this research is to show how important it is to internalize local wisdom when dealing with religious diversity and to realize the values of plurality. (Ammerman, 2010)

Literatur Review

Segregation of Religious Identity

In one aspect, religious teachings play an essential role in uniting social barriers, promoting social and moral values (Atkinson and Bourrat 2011), solidarity (Sosis and Alcorta 2003), and offering the concept of peace to social disputes (Graham and Haidt 2010). But at the same time, religion also often becomes part of the most influential signifying entity in binding personal social relationships and communal social relations, which often triggers social conflicts (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010). This begins when a religious person tends to choose to be friends or neighbors with other people of the same faith, thus forming a relatively isolated pattern of community segregation (Hosu and Frunză 2013). In this regard, Hu, Zhang, and Zhou (2019) reported that segregation for different religions was much higher when compared to segregation for other races and political parties. Thus, the separation of personal or communal groups in society based on various religious backgrounds has become the main factor triggering social conflicts.

Segregation of religious identity occurs when each adherent only interacts with

their fellow religion. This condition is prone to causing various social disparities in the multicultural life space (Mionel 2019). The impact of segregation here includes ethnic, racial, and economic differences, as well as political choices with adherents of other religions, which can have implications for social inequality (Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman 2010). In general, religious segregation represents the division of the population according to the religion adopted by each community in a demographic area. This concept has been applied where religion has caused spatial divisions in global, national, regional, or local populations (Knox 1973). This phenomenon is the same as what happened in England, Northern Ireland (Smith 2001), Israel (Tabory 1989), and Indonesia (Iwamony 2020). Especially in Indonesia, the cause of conflict due to religious identity generally occurs in two residential areas of neighboring communities, one predominantly Muslim and the other predominantly Christian (Iwamony 2020). To strengthen this argument, this article attempts to portray the reality of segregation from the pluralistic life of the Tolaki people in two locations, Lambuya and Wolasi, in Southeast Sulawesi province, Indonesia.

Cultural Trauma and Inter-religious

Cultural trauma is a severe obstacle often forgotten in discussions on relations. It is as quoted by Brulle and Norgaard in *Avoiding Cultural Trauma: Climate Change and Social Inertia* as follows;

Cultural trauma is a social process that involves the systematic disruption of the cultural basis of social order. The individual routines, institutional behaviors, ideological beliefs, and overall regime of practice are subject to questioning. This leads to profound challenges in routine ways of interacting, which are often taken for granted. (Brulle & Norgaard, 2019: p. 2).

The Cultural trauma resulted from a dark past event that created a negative impression and had a cumulative impact on prolonged mental and psychological distress. In general, trauma emanates from narratives that conflict with social order and ideas of collective identity. The narrative can be in the form of defamation and can be mitigated

through an institutional approach (Alexander 2004).

According to Kevin, there are more than 160 definitions of culture, though it can be defined simply as "the way of life." A more detailed definition is in *Culture and Conflict Resolution*, which cites Schwartz's opinion as follows:

Culture consists of experience that is more or less organized. It is learned or created by the individuals, and may include images or encodements and their interpretations. It is transmitted from past generations or formed by individuals in the community. (Kevin, 2020: p. 1-6)

They also emphasized that culture consists of various elements or cultural markers. The marker consists of various social class entities, including customs, language, race, ethnicity, and religion, which are social identities in plural society groups (Schwartz 1992).

From this definition, religion is a system of cultural aspects of social class entities in society. It motivates culturalists to conceptualize religion as part of the cultural system. However, religion is also a system of beliefs and practices integrated into various traditions (Sasaki, J. Y., & Kim 2011). For this reason, it is often placed in a system of interactions that regulates the relationship between God and the faith as an expression of the beliefs of its adherents (Cohen 2009). However, it is not easy to distinguish between culture and religion since cultural practices are often regarded as a religion, while religious ideas are part of the culture (Abdulla 2018).

The paradigm of the relationship between religion and culture seems to be similar to the relationship between two relatives in conflict, even though they hope to unite one another. There is always a relationship between religion and culture, where each cannot stand alone. According to Beyers (2017), it is essential to understand religious problems to internalize cultural and ethnic values. This is a marker of cultural and religious identity that has been affected by cultural changes leading to a reciprocal relationship between them. Studying religion cannot be effective without understanding culture and vice versa. Interfaith dialogue is at

both theological and cultural levels; therefore, the two complement each other as a social order system.

Religion Pluralism

Genealogically, the term pluralism was first used to signify the metaphysical doctrine carried out by Christian Wolff (1679-1754) and popularized by William James (1842-1910) (Lengenhause 2005). However, the concept is generally used as a cultural, political, legal, and religious order. Pluralism aims to answer the question of how to build social harmony, especially in religious practices experiencing conflicts. This is a concept of society committed to recognizing and understanding others amid differences in the conceptions of religion (E. and Pamela Klassen 2010). Similarly, Formichi (2013) also defined pluralism as social and state life diversity. The philosophical perspective signifies that pluralism is an ideal solution for reducing problems arising from unilateral truths between religious believers. The concept offered by pluralism is different from other theological ideas that are still rigid, including; First, exclusivism, which claims that truth belongs to only one religion; Second, inclusivism, which claims that other religions have partial truths; Third, non-exclusivism, which states that religious truth needs to be suspended for a while; and Fourth, relativism which asserts that other religions should be tolerated only in specific domains (Pratt, 2007). The pluralism view seems more progressive since it needs to be involved in establishing a dialogue on the diversity of religious relations as a necessity. Also, it puts significant differences between religions, which are particular identities that need to be respected by each adherent (Ataman, 2007; Atoi, 2018).

The plural society can be understood as the structure of the community, consisting of various social, economic, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious strata. In a plural society, no single barrier limits social interaction between individuals, including reasons for differences in theological and ideological beliefs. This embodiment is called a religious plurality (Wirman 2017). However, Skeie (1995) stated that there are fundamental differences between plurality and pluralism. Plurality is more appropriate in a descriptive sense. It refers to the plurality of

religions that characterize modern societies and illustrates various lifestyle patterns, cultural attitudes, politics, and others. This forms the social context in which diversity exists. In contrast, pluralism is more likely to be used in a normative sense or ideological dogma. It shows various values, attitudes, and ethical implications, which exist in response to the plurality of religions.

Implementing religious pluralism in a plural society is not accessible due to various obstacles. An example is Wilfred Cantwell Smith's explanation cited by Hick in the Problem of Religious Pluralism. Specifically, Smith stated that people generally view their assessment of religious concepts. Every religion has experienced a historical, conceptual transformation along with the complexity of the social problems faced. According to Smith, the concepts of the teachings of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, or Islam are not static but dynamic entities. These religions are not homogeneous, but each has a different teaching concept variant. For instance, Buddhism in the Gautama period and Buddhism after the development of Mahayana and the expansion to North China are not considered the same entity. The historical dynamics transmitted from time to time have caused significant differences. Therefore, most individuals talk about a particular religion in a general form relating to one aspect of a religious community. For example, someone might be talking about Muslims in certain traditions but using the general diction of Islam. These are fundamental errors with significant implications (religious claims) being discussed (Hick, 1985).

The abovementioned obstacles do not show that religious pluralism is impossible to realize. The ultimate goal of religious pluralism is to create a positive awareness of the diversity that is directly proportional to harmony. Therefore, the most substantive point of religious behavior is to realize and maintain solidarity with fellow creatures, especially marginalized groups (weak, poor, neglected, and oppressed). Every religious community needs to realize that all creatures belong to God's have His love. Ignoring them is the same as spurning God's love. For this reason, religion manifests as a concept of

love for the Creator through fellow creatures (Kawangung 2019). Additionally, religion is a guideline for achieving a sense of togetherness in social life based on love and justice. It implies religious moderation, which is the attainment of the right to harmonious life by upholding the dignity of humanity (Afsaruddin 2007). Therefore, the religious community is supposedly at the forefront of protecting human rights. In this is achieved, it is not difficult to realize the values of religious pluralism in the plural society groups.

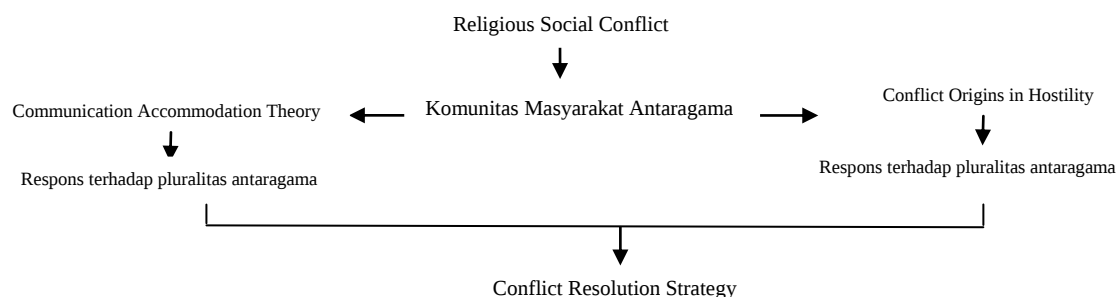
Conceptual Framework

This article applies a conceptual framework of a combination of communication theory and historical analysis theory within the framework of an interdisciplinary integration paradigm. The communication theory that we apply in this article refers to the concept of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), developed by West and Turner (2010). According to them, this concept can help researchers uncover the communication strategies the two communities apply in resolving the conflict they are currently facing. Thus, we use this concept to obtain information regarding how the Muslim and Christian communities in Lambuya and Wolasi accommodate local wisdom to prevent inter-religious conflicts. In addition, West and Turner (2010) also explain that the

term "accommodation" can be articulated as the ability to adjust, modify, or regulate one's behavior in response to the attitudes of others unconsciously. So, we use the idea of CAT as a critical-analytical process to determine how the two groups of people make accommodations to build communication and tolerance between them.

In addition to communication theory, we also apply historical analysis theory. In this case, we choose the concept of historical root analysis. Related to this concept, Anthony Black (2011), in *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, explains that a study that wants to understand a root problem that is currently emerging involves analyzing its historicity by re-digging its historical data. This argument is supported by David Garland (2014), who also states that an ideal contemporary discourse can be traced to its historicity. As a result, we not only investigate the current reality of the socio-religious conflict between the Muslim and Christian communities in Lambuya and Wolasi, but we also attempt to trace the historical roots of the emergence of such disputes. So that people who read this article can better understand how the two ideas fit together, we made a conceptual framework diagram that looks like this:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework diagram explains the main factors behind socio-religious segregation. It is caused by the conflict between two communities of different religions. Suppose we refer to the explanation of the previous relevant research results (see our review on the discussion of the literature review). In that case, we get information that one aspect that often causes

socio-religious relations segregation is miscommunication between two communities of religious adherents (Hosu and Frunză 2013). Thus, we identify that an intense communication analysis is essential in finding the underlying reasons for social segregation among religious believers in one community. Likewise, cultural trauma is an aspect that also affects the occurrence of this

segregation (Brulle & Norgaard, 2019). If this is the case, then analyzing the historical roots of the emergence of conflict is also vital to pay analytical attention to in the case we are studying. When the two ideas are worked out together, they can lead to a finding formulation that can be used as an alternative way to put conflict resolution strategies into place, especially those that fit the cases we look at in this study.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article is descriptive qualitative research that uses a case study method. In general, this approach involves a state of differences in the acceptance of religious pluralism between the Tolaki ethnic community in Lambuya and Wolasi Subdistrict, Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with 15 informants. They consisted of the general public and traditional and religious leaders of the community in Lambuya and Wolasi. The data collected was then classified into three main themes based on the formulation of the problem, including; First, the information related to inter-religious relations between Muslims and Christians in Lambuya and Wolasi; Second, details about local cultural reception used as media for conflict resolution by the two community groups; and Third, concrete reasons that underlie the acceptance or rejection of the two community groups in the implementation of religious pluralism in each region. After classification, the data analysis was carried out using an ethnography and historical perspective. Moreover, historical data analysis was also carried out by clarifying information from informants to other sources of authority through statements from historical experts and information obtained from historical literature. The data was further described systematically, structured, and logically.

DISCUSSION

Plural Settings of Tolaki Communities

The Tolaki is one of three indigenous ethnic groups living on the mainland of Southeast Sulawesi. Historically, Islam is the oldest monotheistic religion in the community, which is believed to have been practiced from the time of their ancestors.

The growth of the Christian religion is part of the latest developments in cultural history. The community has a large number of Muslims because it recognizes Islam as its religion. The Islam adhered to was received from the preachers of the Buton Islands, traders of Bugis, Ternate, and other ethnicities who came with the aim of trading. In 2011, the number of places of worship in the Lambuya Sub-district consisted of 10 mosques, 2 Mushollahs, and 1 Church. The population of the Lambuya Sub-district is Muslim (93.35%), Catholic Christian (0.36%), Protestant Christian (5.22%), and Hindu (1.07%). In Wolasi Sub-district, The total population was 4,815, consisting of 2,460 men and 2,355 women. Of this number, the Protestant Christians are 484 people or around 10.5% of the entire population of the Wolasi Sub-district.

Islam is perceived as an indigenous religion by the people of the Konawe Regency. This is shown by the acculturation results of the values of Islamic teachings carried out by King Lakidende who first accepted Islam in the Konawe royal lineage. In the sixteenth century, the king ordained Islam as the official religion, and therefore, it is culturally used as the basis of life instruction and ideology. Since 1912, Lambuya has also been one of the central areas of Zending activities, which is a legacy of Christian groups existing in this region. Concrete evidence of Zending activities in Lambuya is in several monumental buildings established as centers of Christian activity and charity. In this region, there is a building in the form of the Harapan Baru Orphanage owned by Protestant Christians. It is also one of the coaching centers for Christians on the mainland of Southeast Sulawesi, especially for generations of children from Asaki, Puriala, to Wolasi. Apart from the orphanage, there are also schools based on Christianity coaching.

Although the majority of the people are Muslims, in some regions and villages, there are Christians. For example, in Lambuya and Wolasi, there are two Muslim and Christian community groups. However, the two are different in responding to the social relations between religious believers. In the Tolaki community, there is an integration between the two religious adherents based on local culture. This is

different from the Tolaki community in Wolasi, although the Wolasi community also has the same concept of local culture as the Tolaki community in Lambuya, where Christianity is adopted as a choice of belief.

Based on the observations and in-depth interviews, the presence of Christianity in Lambuya and its surroundings was closely related to the Dutch colonial mission used by the Missionaries. The history of Christianity of the people in this region was initially attributed to the exploitation by the Zending, which refers to Christian Evangelists or Missionaries. However, there was no historical data and information about the occurrence of horizontal or physical conflict between religious believers due to the rejection of Muslim groups to the presence of the Zending mission. This is a manifestation of the pluralism paradigm embedded and rooted in the constructs of thought and action of the religious people (Islam-Christian). However, this does not necessarily mean that the entire Muslim community in Lambuya sincerely accepted Christianity missions under Dutch colonial support at that time. Christianity was caused by the cion, which was a direct implication of socio-economic pressure. Psychologically, the Muslim community in Lambuya experienced an inner conflict as a form of rejection of the phenomenon, even though it never caused horizontal conflict.

The religious groups in this region unite while dealing with differences, something that makes them unique. They live closer to each other and it is common to have two religions in one house or ethnicity. Activities in certain ritual events often involve both Muslim and Christian communities. Haslita's testimony showed the release ceremony to the final resting place of the uncle was led by a Christian family (Ir. Yahya). However, later in the evening, condolence was performed by H. Nurdin Tahir, an Islamic religious leader. Moreover, the Muslim and Christian communities participated in these activities, something that was prevalent in the entire Lambuya (Asaki) community. In family groups, some paternal relatives were Christians. A similar expression was made by Kipasbonde, as quoted below;

“The family atmosphere between Christian and Muslim families is well-established and

harmonious. Since all my maternal cousins are Muslims, no party can be discredited because of religious differences. I have lived in this region for more than 40 years, and the people around me are a family within one ethnic group, specifically Muslim. However, we have never had a conflict based on differences in belief. Although other Christians and I are a minority population, there is no discrimination on social rights. We have never won the village chief election, but it is natural. This is because, in a democracy, the chosen people are those with the most votes. In this region, the majority are Muslims, and therefore it is logical that the village chiefs are Muslims.” (Interview: KPD, 10/9/2018).

The statement shows that living among people with different religious backgrounds is not a serious problem in Lambuya. The creation of religious pluralism in a community with different beliefs is possible if case individuals acknowledge the fact that differences exist within a family and culture. The strong support of tradition and culture proves an appreciation of the values of kinship and brotherhood. Brotherhood is not lost simply because of differences in the background of belief. According to Sultrawan, harmony is based on the fact that every individual Christianized by Zending in the early days came from the aristocracy. Therefore, there was an atmosphere of mutual reluctance because they were related to the aristocrats by blood (Laembo, Konawe, interview 9/9/2013).

The majority of the Tolaki community in Wolasi is also Muslim because Islam was the first monotheistic religion in the region. The existence of the Christian community was the result of the sending mission carried by Van der Klift in 1924, a Christian religious figure who first introduced Christianity in the Sub-district. According to Su'ud, Klift's arrival had a significant influence on the development of religion. It influenced the local community to convert to Christianity (Su'ud, Konawe, interview, 19/9/2013).

Although conflict cases are not seen explicitly in the social relations between Muslims and Christians in Wolasi, there are cases of tension between each group. This is because the individuals make territory boundaries between Christians and Muslims. Ambelasakoa or Taman Sari Regions is concrete evidence of the existence of

Christian villages in Wolasi since all the citizens adhere to Christianity. Also, the region is flanked by the Aoma and Leleka villages with Muslim residents. According to Marlin, the choice to live with clear boundaries between Christians and Muslims leads to a safe and comfortable life (Priest Marlin, Konawe, interview, 26/9/2013).

Interfaith marriages (Islam-Christian) are also prevalent in the communities. In case such cases are perceived positively in Lambuya, the Wolasi community takes a different approach. For instance, suppose religious dualism in one house tends to be more pluralistic in the Lambuya community, it is rejected in Wolasi. Based on observations in this study, shows that interfaith marriages between Muslim Aoma and Christian Ambelasakoa and Taman Sari hardly exist. Ibrahim stated that "To the best of my knowledge, no one in our village has married them, even if it existed, it might have happened as an "accident". Similarly, Randelangi stated the following

Our family in this village tries as much as possible to avoid having our generations or children and grandchildren married to non-Muslims, and indeed this never happens. Here interfaith marriages usually occur with people from outside the village. If there are children in this village who choose to marry from the neighboring, then they should first be bathed and then say shahada (an Islamic creed). (Interview: RDL, 26/9/2013).

Based on the information from several informants, the Wolasi community detests interfaith marriages. There are at least two main reasons underlying their strong rejection of this issue. *First*, culturally individuals, especially those living in Aoma, have a philosophy of 'tilaka owose' which implies that a parent is unlucky in case either of the descendants does not marry Muslims. *Secondly*, the opposition is based on the fact that interfaith marriages that have taken place are hidden, aiming to convert people. In connection with this, Muhammad Ali stated the following.

An interfaith marriage that occurs here aims to Christianize us. Almost all mixed marriages include Christian men with Muslim women, and after some time, the wife usually converts. An example includes the marriage of Hasrun with Farida, but fortunately, the wife is firm not to convert. (Interview: AL, 28/9/2019)

There was a conflict within the families, as stated by Priest Marlin.

The family had two children and was ever in a mess as Hasrun that Farida becomes a Christian. However, because of the wife's steadfastness, the Church then mediated by suggesting that Hasrun accepts his wife's decision for the sake of the children." (Interview: MRL, 25/9/2019).

The Lambuya community promotes inter-religious relations, which unites the paradigm of primordialism into the concept of life unity in one tribe. In contrast, the Wolasi live in social tension. The tension can be seen in the discomfort over the reality of differences in beliefs. However, one thing they agreed upon was that avoiding conflict was a better choice, as stated by Pelita Sara in the following excerpt.

We have never felt disturbed by our beliefs. This is because most people still have and value family relations. However, we remain vigilant about the possibility of outside parties being involved. (Interview: PLT, 27/9/2019).

Since 1978,¹ cases of conflict between religious believers have never occurred. However, there are still efforts from residents to identify themselves, though not explicitly. This can be seen from their choice of residence where they build the boundaries between Muslims and Christians. Disharmony between religious believers in Wolasi, especially for the Aoma and Ambelasakoa communities, might be caused by the issue of food served at each party event. This seemingly trivial issue has been an excuse for not attending every party event held by Christians, as shown by Ali in the following statement.

Two-thirds of the Aoma (Muslim) community prefer not to attend communal events organized by the Christian community. This is attributed to the issue of safety in food serving. They could attend the event in case all the plates, vessels, pans, and

¹ The case of conflict that occurred in 1978 was a fight between village children, it just happened that they were citizens who had different beliefs, but fighting between villages like that, we prevented as much as possible, and therefore, it did not happen again because indeed it could be involved in religious matters such as in Poso or Ambon. Randelangi, Konawe, interview 26/9/2013.

spoons used in preparing the dishes came from Muslim groups, which was impossible.” (Interview: AL, 28/9/2019).

The polarization of Islam-Christian relations only occurred between Aoma and Ambelasakoa or Taman Sari Villages. The two regions are adjoining villages, and historically the population is still in one family tribe. It is strongly believed that the polarization between the inhabitants of both villages occurred because of the choice of religion. This is due to historical factors, such as the Christianization carried out by Zending on some of their family members. The act was perceived as an experience that results in cultural trauma. For this reason, they try to be acquainted with the possibility of such things happening again.

Cultural Identity for Controlling Religious Conflict

The understanding of the Tolaki community from different religious backgrounds is attributed to the historical and cultural basis of the community. Primarily, the community holds closely to the concept of culture based on the values of the *kalosara* tradition. *Kalosara* is a circular object made of three pieces of rattan, which is then wrapped around the left counterclockwise. The ends of the windings are then knotted or bound. One of the ends of the rattan is hidden in the knot, while the other end of the rattan is allowed to appear. In every customary event, especially marriage, this object is included as a symbol to unite one family. Besides, when conflicts occur in the Tolaki community, peace negotiations are carried out by sending one of the traditional elders (*pabitara*) to meet the conflict opponents or those who feel they have been harmed. *Pabitara* is considered a representative who comes with the symbol *kalosara*. Its function is as a symbol of the mediator, which is handed over to warring parties with a series of traditional rituals that are preceded by dialogues expressed in the local language. This was carried out as a form of sincerity to make peace between the two warring parties. Interestingly, if *kalosara* is presented in a dispute, then the peace needs to be agreed upon, if one party rejects it, then they are seen to have violated the customary, not only by the opponents of the conflict but also by other Tolaki communities. In the belief of the

Tolaki people, a group that rejects the *kalosara* believed they will experience disaster. That is why this object has a sacred aura for the Tolaki community. Until now, the tradition still exists to resolve a dispute in the lives of Tolaki ethnic communities in various regions in Southeast Sulawesi, including Konawe Regency, South Konawe Regency, and Kendari City.

Figure 1:

The form of *Kalosara*.



(source: personal documentation on this study)

In the Lambuya, the *kalosara* tradition is a living law and is certainly obeyed in every aspect. This is evident in their attitude in interpreting and responding to the relationship between religious beliefs that exist in the same ethnic group. Some Muslim groups felt disturbed by the implications of the Christianization program, which was initially suspected to be a form of poverty exploitation for the local community. However, the reception of a strong tradition forms a sense of brotherhood within a family, which then makes individuals respond positively to the existence of their brothers converting to other religions.

According to Abdul Manaf Baso, a traditional leader in Lambuya, an essential element that led to harmony among religious believers was the spirit of tribalism. The kinship in one tribe is bound by the values of the *kalosara* tradition, which is the main element that encourages the creation of a peaceful life (Interview, 27/9/2019). Baso shows that the reason for the success of the people in implementing an atmosphere of religious pluralism is maintained until now. In the community distinction between the Muslim and Christian communities is limited to the context of specific worship. For

example, on Friday, Muslims go to the mosque, and on Sunday, Christians worship in church. However, in cultural values, they remain harmonious in the Tolaki tradition. Additionally, Kipasbonde's statement presents an example related to the form of religious plurality. In traditional marriage rituals, the entire process is based on the values of *kalosara*. The only distinguishing element is that Muslims are married by Imams, and therefore, there is the coordination of the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). Similarly, Christians are married by Pastors, and therefore the process is carried out in the Church.

The concept of interfaith marriage seems to be a part of social history since Protestant Christianity began to exert influence. To them, marriage is not based on the principle of religious belief but kinship. This can be seen from the philosophy of ethnic marriage which is still used as a guide in society. It states that "*mata pelangguako esipi ano issue moaru-oru kiniwia taneonggo teposinggalako mata pute ano mata meet*" which means that despite disputing morning and evening, white and black eyes cannot be separated. This phrase implies that in the marriage, the brotherhood between the parties cannot disappear. Therefore, the principle of choosing a mate by prioritizing close family (endogamy) in the community is recommended. However, there is a change in the tradition of interfaith marriage within one ethnicity, not due to issues of different religions, but because it is limited by regulations issued through the *Kantor Urusan Agama* (KUA). These regulations stated that marriage services could only be carried out in case the bride and groom are of the same religion. Since the enactment of the regulation, interfaith marriages are usually conducted without the legality of the local government, mainly based on custom mechanisms (Interview: AMB, 27/9/2019).

In case differences in belief is not a complicated issue for building elegant communication in all dimensions of life in Lambuya, then it is not similar to the experience in Wolasi. In general, there appears to be tension in Wolasi, even though it is not in the form of horizontal conflicts. This is evident in the separation of population areas based on religious groups. However, the impression is different from the statement

of Priest Marlin, stating that living comfortably and safely require being in the same environment and social space. Social and cultural segregation strengthens cultural identity based on the ideology of belief of each group. This condition directly or indirectly provides educational values for each party to be a fenced community, a historical legacy that creates social spaces through physical boundaries. Among the Aoma and Ambelasakoa people, fences are used not only as a means of the territory of individual ownership but also to define community groups based on their beliefs.

In case the interfaith marriage is considered to be normal by the Lambuya community, the Wolasi community (in Aoma) responds differently. In the Aoma community, this reality has been responded to with suspicion as a form or stage of an apostasy program. Although it does not always have to be the case, sometimes suspicion is justified by experiences. Moreover, the individual in Lambuya perceives religion as an individualistic matter of belief, which does not have to be forced. Therefore, in case there are individuals with different faiths who demands family relationships, religion should not be a barrier. Conversely, in Aoma, Islam is a genealogical inheritance that needs to be maintained, and therefore religion is the most critical variable in establishing marriage relationships. Based on ideological thinking, Wolasi avoids all possibilities and opportunities for interfaith marriages. This is also used as an approach to avoid conflicts between the two neighboring communities. However, there has never been violent conflict between the Muslim and Christian communities in the region. There were only cases of latent conflicts because each party feels obliged to create a conducive atmosphere in the community. Additionally, the *kalosara* culture and tradition necessitate the regularity of life for the entire community.

The exposure to the reality of the data we have described shows that socio-religious segregation occurs because an unaccommodating communication strategy causes it. The efforts of Christian missionaries in Wolasi to build religious communication during the Dutch colonial period did not accommodate the emotional ties of kinship and local wisdom. The

missionaries there prefer to build communication-based on a religious dogma approach, thus ignoring the accommodative aspects of family and ethnic relations. That is why the Muslim community in Wolasi strongly maintains the boundaries of religious communication with the Christian community, even though they are still in the same ethnic group and family. The communication strategy applied by Christian missionaries in Lambuya puts forward a communication approach based on kinship and local wisdom so that the Christian dogma they spread does not appear on the surface as part of the missionary movement. That is why the people there can still maintain family and ethnic relations regardless of their religion.

The combination of the communication and historical analysis that we have described shows that the roots of the socio-religious segregation conflicts that occur in the two different community areas are determined by the communication strategy, resulting in different responses between the two. In line with this, Howard Giles (2016) found that a strategy for accommodative communication could determine whether or not the information is acceptable between two people who are in conflict. In addition, Bherta Sri Eko and Hendar Putranto (2019) also explained that communication between different cultures is mostly related to inappropriate emotional responses and feelings of awkwardness and anxiety, which often lead to uncertainty. With intercultural communication competence, those who differ in cultural values and upbringing can communicate and interact effectively, limiting harmful negative stereotypes. Therefore, mastering these competencies can prevent interreligious and intercultural conflicts.

Reflections on the Cultural and Religious Identity of Pluralism

The religious pluralism of Muslim and Christian community groups in Lambuya results from the internalization of cultural values created and mutually agreed upon. Therefore, it is not difficult for both parties to accept the differences. The case of social conflict can be minimized, and the harmonious relations between the two community groups are maintained in balance.

However, it seems difficult to assume that the relationship established between Muslim and Christian communities happened by chance. Local traditional reception is a significant element of the foundation and flow of integration built-in Lambuya. *Tolaki-ism* is the paradigm that underlies the mindset of the people united or no longer concerned about differences in beliefs. The concept of kinship and brotherhood in one tribe seems to be critical in the social life of the community. Nevertheless, *Tolaki-ism*, which is manifested as the main link of the values of brotherhood in one tribe, is not necessarily understood as a form of affirmation of religious values. This fact is in line with the findings of Awoh, Nkwi, Akinola, and Uzuduke on the conflicts between religious believers in Africa and Rwanda. According to them, the failure of the harmonious existence between religious believers was primarily due to the implementation of conflict resolution, which often did not consider the cultural values or traditions of local communities (Awoh and Nkwi 2017).

This is different from Glazier, which showed that the dispute between religious believers globally could be resolved in two ways, including First, involving each religious individual in peace consensus; and Second, using a religious concept strategy as a reference for creating peace (Glazier 2018). However, according to Suwarno, this approach was not appropriate in Indonesia because it could lead to a prolonged theological debate (Suwarno 2005). Similarly, Pohl established that the occurrence of religious conflicts in Indonesia is more often triggered by the conflict between cultural and religious communities (Pohl 2009). The concept of social relations between Muslims and Christians is very complex due to historical trauma because of Christianization. Therefore, internalizing culture and religion to create solutions is the best approach. The local tradition (*kalosara*) is still believed to be sacred, even though its implementation has not been carried out maximally.

There are different ways chosen by Lambuya and Wolasi people in responding to pluralism. The informants agreed to the implication of the history of the genealogy of the family tribe. According to Su'ud, Sonaru, Basrin, and Mashhur, the Lambuya people

are genealogically a group of individuals from the anakia component or the elders in the Tolaki community. Conversely, genealogically the Wolasi comes from the abangan community that combines religion and culture. The anakia directly or indirectly has implications for social order or interaction. They are mutually reluctant because each party comes from an established group. This becomes a positive path for creating a harmonious social relationship between two religious groups. Moreover, genealogically they are still in a kinship tribe kinship is the main consideration and needs to be maintained. The customary rules of the Lambuya community are very effective in managing and establishing social relations based on mutual respect.

A positive response to the values of pluralism is to keep people away from groupings based on Muslim and Christian settlement areas. The question is whether the construction of the pluralism paradigm in the social life of the Lambuya community is based on how religious values form it or are built by traditions. The reason for pluralism in the Lambuya community is more dominantly formed by tradition or cultural values they inherit across generations. The cultural values are referred to as *kalosara*. All activities of community life are based on traditional symbols, with *kalosara* as the center, so that social conflicts from any aspect can be resolved within the framework of the sacredness of local wisdom. This is one of the hallmarks of the plurality of people in Indonesia, including the Tolaki people, who uphold local wisdom as part of social status and strata that are inseparable from belief in religious dogma. If examined in the history of religions in Indonesia, it is found that scholars who spread Islam in Indonesia cannot be separated from the strategy of accommodation of local wisdom as part of the da'wah strategy (Rozi and Taufik, 2020). That is why religious discourse in Indonesia is closely related to cultural discourse or local traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation in the local community system in Indonesia (Tabroni, 2020). So, trying to reduce socioreligious conflicts in a pluralistic society cannot be separated from the role of local traditions in resolving conflicts.

The use of *kalosara* as part of resolving social conflicts in the Tolaki community has shown how important local traditions are in resolving disputes over inter-religious relations in that community. Although initially, *kalosara* only functioned in resolving customary conflicts within the traditional local order that arose in the Tolaki community. However, after they embraced different religions, socio-religious problems emerged in their interactions. When there was a socio-religious conflict between them, the religious dialogue could not resolve the dispute between them, so since then, *kalosara's* function has been to resolve customer issues and accommodate socio-religious issues. Such a phenomenon is not only known in the social system adopted by the Tolaki tribe, but almost all ethnic groups in Indonesia have a similar conflict resolution system. The Bugis-Makassar tribes in South Sulawesi also recognize a similar conflict resolution called the "*Tudang Sipulung*" tradition (Nuh, 2016). Javanese in Malang through the tradition of *Slametan Deso*, *Bantengan*, *Gonggongan*, and *Paguyuban* (Abidin, 2014). The Sasak tribe in Lombok through the traditions of *Krama*, *Sesenggak*, *Perteke*, and *Lelaqq* (Zuhdi, 2019). The Malays in Sumatra through the *Seloko Adat* tradition (Halim and Pahrudin, 2019). This shows that local wisdom is an important part of Indonesia's system for resolving conflicts, especially when bringing together people of different religions who are at odds with each other.

CLOSING

The analysis results of this study show that the Tolaki ethnic in Wolasi still finds it challenging to accept relatives converting from Islam to Christianity. In their settlement areas, they created territorial boundaries between them. Muslims live in the Aoma and Leleka villages while Christians live in the Ambelasakoa or Taman Sari. This is different from the Muslim Tolaki community in Lambuya, which is more open and welcoming to their non-Muslim relatives. They still mingle in one area, even living in a common household. The two groups still implement the local culture as part of the resolution of every conflict. However, the Wolasi differ from them in the issue of religious ideology. This is because they are

still trapped in the romanticism of dark history resulting in the cultural trauma of the history of Christianization. For this reason, they cannot create holistic religious pluralism. They are suspicious that the polarization of the mission of Christianization was another strategy of the intrigue of Dutch colonialism. Therefore, Muslim relatives need to be firm in defending and strengthening the basis of their Islamic identity through same-faith marriages. However, they still maintain non-religious social interactions. This is contrary to the Lambuya community, which considers Christianization as only a part of past events and does not have to be a barrier that can damage brotherhood in a tribe. Therefore, religion is an individualistic choice, and people can take a different way of life. This is because each religion teaches virtues that strengthen the brotherhood.

A cultural internalization project is an alternative approach to resolving conflicts between religious believers in Indonesia, especially in Muslim-Christian relations. Interfaith dialogue and the involvement of religious leaders, such as those offered by Glazier, lead to theological debates. This has an impact on worsening the relationship between the two religions. The religious communities in Indonesia have made them part of their practice of local culture so that conflict can be easily overcome. Through the internalization of culture between religious teachings and local customs or traditions, it becomes a single entity in resolving social conflicts. In the Tolaki tribe, for instance, the function of *kalosara* is regarded as a religious heritage by the locals. Therefore, when the tribal chief, as the highest customary holder, presents the object amid a conflict, everyone in conflict must make peace. If they do not, they are subject to customary sanctions as they believe.

This study is still limited to the context of two Tolaki ethnic groups living in Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. This means that the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and religions in Indonesia might cause various social conflicts, at the inter-ethnic, cultural, and religious levels. Similarly, conflicts between religious adherents on online social media have recently been found among sub-communities. Until now, no research has tried to elaborate

on the approach of internalizing local culture and religion in resolving these conflicts. Therefore, this study can be a pilot project for further development to find more mature concepts related to conflict resolution. This helps to create harmonious relationships without the primordialism bulkhead because of different ideological beliefs.

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