

# THE EXPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN LOMBOK AS NEGOTIATION STRATEGY IN INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE *TOPAT* WAR

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## **Abstract**

*While wars generally have negative implications and bring chaos, Topat War in Lingsar Village, West Lombok Regency, is an exception. Despite being called a war, this annual tradition is carried out joyfully and without the intention of hurting each other. Instead of using weapons or battling against each other, the Balinese-Hindus and the Sasak-Muslims throw food, in Indonesian called ketupat, at each other. This uniqueness creates curiosity about how two different religions celebrate the same tradition with mutual understanding. Therefore, this research will examine the prerequisites for successful interfaith engagement reflected in Perang Topat. This research was conducted qualitatively with a meta-analysis approach to find a variety of scientific documents as primary data. The results showed that the religious rituals were carried out together while faithfully upholding their respective beliefs. It refers to this society's internal and external aspects, which are the essence of religious moderation. Furthermore, the win-win solution for both religions, the "mutual" process, the accommodation process of understanding and agreement in the annual rituals are designed to maintain the memory of the importance of living in harmony with people of different religions and traditions. The decision-making and ways of preserving sustainability show a commitment to nationality, tolerance, non-violence, accommodation to local culture, and respect for minorities without exclusivity, which are indicators of moderation. Thus, moderate religious attitudes are needed as a negotiation strategy to create a compelling and harmonious atmosphere between religious communities.*

**Keywords:** Religious moderation, interfaith engagement, meta-analysis

## **INTRODUCTION**

As one of the well-known tourist destinations in Indonesia, Lombok has more than its World Halal Tourism Awards, including its religious and cultural tourism. The history of colonization and hegemony certainly influences the original culture of the Lombok people. Although there is a form of mutual acceptance of cultural

interactions in religious traditions before reaching an agreement, there were forms of resistance beforehand, such as war.

While wars generally have negative implications and bring chaos, the *Topat War* in Lingsar Village, West Lombok Regency, is an exception. Despite being called a war, this tradition is carried out joyfully and without the

intention of hurting each other (Ardhana et al., 2019). Instead of using weapons or battling against each other, the Balinese-Hindus and the Sasak-Muslims throw food at each other called *book*, a type of rice cake cooked in woven coconut leaves. The war is held every year and involves the Balinese-Hindus and the Sasak-Muslims. This uniqueness creates curiosity about how two religions celebrate the same tradition with mutual understanding, especially on how the Balinese-Hindus as migrants are willing to compromise with local traditions and how the Sasak-Muslims are willing to share the land.

Globally, for people outside Lingsar, *Topat War* is seen as a tourism attraction that is famous to foreign countries. For the locals, it is a form of gratitude to God for the abundant harvest as stated in previous studies (Ardhana et al., 2019; Julianingsih, 2020). In this study, *Topat War* has a deeper meaning as a place of interaction between two different religions and cultures with results that can survive through layers of revolutionary times. Moreover, its implementation involves two different religions, traditions, and customs in the same religious ceremony.

As the famous saying goes, *it takes to tango*. Indeed, this tradition is not merely a formality of communal activities. *Topat War* may look like a crowd of people playing ketupat throwing. However, behind the excitement, there must be an essential process that bridges two beliefs to mutual understanding and many other "mutual" values. Values that make the two different parties join hands so that they can produce a series of triumphant processions that continue to bring peace to everyday life. It is important to mark and promote this specialty as an example of a successful, harmonious life between two communities of different religions in one village that is not large, which generally can trigger conflicts easily.

However, the question is how the Lingsar community and observers perceive this quality and whether it can be used as an effective and enduring interfaith engagement negotiation strategy. Such matters have not been examined in previous studies of *the Topat War*. As well as to see whether it is possible to counter the issue of puritanical Muslims who criticize and disagree with Muslim participation in *the Topat War* (Suprpto, 2017). However, first, it needs to be explored on what modalities are

embodied in the *Topat War* tradition, along with the way these modalities contribute to interfaith engagement, and exploring on the *Topat War* as a negotiation strategy in interfaith engagement.

Thus, this research aims to show that *the Topat War* is a living monument and a powerful living tradition. It is also essential to see that the modalities contained in *the Topat War* are more than only harmony values; indirectly, it contributes to the government's program as supporting values in mainstreaming religious moderation. Then, it shows whether its sustainability tends to be practical rather than merely normative. Due to the meaning of this traditional strategy not being overtaken by the era, conventional and just revolving around it, this modality needs to be re-identified by extending its functionality as a negotiating asset in terms of interfaith engagement.

## Literature Review

In general, previous studies describe inter-religious harmony through the *Topat War*. One of them concluded that *this tradition* is a manifestation of inter-religious harmony that embraces the culture and beliefs of the Lingsar community (Marjan and Hariati, 2018). Thus, *it* is considered as a symbol of devotion to God, a form of gratitude and a gift of abundant sustenance. From this research, the religious meaning and form of accommodation to local culture are then used as basic value data for analysis towards functionality which will be integrated with the meaning of other studies towards the modality of religious moderation. One of them sees a similar thing, namely as a means of strengthening the harmony of Hindus and Muslims *wetu telu* in the *Lingsar Temple* (Pramana, 2020). His research aims to provide an understanding of the tradition of *the Topat War* in *Lingsar Temple* and increase public awareness in understanding tolerance between religious communities. With this tolerance and historical value, it will then be marked towards promoting interfaith engagement.

Another study was similar, discussing the *Topat War* as a form of harmony between Muslims and Hindus that is felt by both ethnic religions (Sarpin and Pramunarti, 2017). In addition, as in other studies that also discuss generally the meaning of *Topat War* as a form of gratitude to God (Muslim) or worship of the gods and worshipping (Hindu), as well as a

form of gratitude to K.H Abdul Malik or *Datuk Sumilir*.

These values will then be used as a starting point for data analysis in this research, which will look more broadly at the essence of the involvement of interfaith cohesion by associating it with the values of previous research.

Generally, the information from previous research has only the analysis of the values contained in *the Topat War*. It has not yet determined the strategic position of this ritual for other regions and its sustainability. For this purpose, it is related to other research on the ritual of *the Topat War* as a communication strategy for maintaining diversity (Suadnya and Paramita, 2017). This research shows that in the *Topat War*, there was a basis of a national commitment that could be used to indicate religious moderation. Therefore, this research will examine the prerequisites for efficient interfaith engagement reflected in *Topat War*. It is a way of bridging two different poles through effective active negotiation of the whole community, which generally in other areas only involves interfaith dialogue by specific figures who have a specific role.

This research aims to complement the findings of previous studies by Aryawati, Wirawan, and Wirata (2022) who observed the activities related to the *Topat War* tradition through observation. The research highlights the crucial role of communication in maintaining the continuity of the *Topat War* tradition and preserving the Lingsar Temple site as a cultural heritage. The objective is to promote harmony and mutual understanding among different ethnicities and policymakers and create a positive impact on society. To achieve this goal, this study will analyze the indicators that can make the *Topat War* a reference point for broader benefits. It will also rationalize strategies based on the extra values of the *Topat War*, which can support the government's program of religious moderation and serve as an example of best practices for interfaith engagement. Therefore, this research goes beyond the preservation of the *Topat War* tradition and its values and explores its additional benefits for society.

### Conceptual Framework

According to the book *Religious Moderation* by Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, there are four religious

moderation indicators (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). These indicators are national commitment, nonviolence, tolerance, and accommodating local traditions. National commitment refers to the willingness of an individual to contribute to the state despite differences in religion and ethnicity (Mukhibat et al., 2024). Nonviolence aims to avoid involvement with certain extreme groups (Mulyana, 2023). Tolerance means being open to accepting differences, displaying modesty, and sincerity (Nasir and Rijal, 2021). Accommodating local culture refers to the idea that religion should not eliminate cultural identity. In fact, it should lead to inclusive religion. (Khoiruddin and Khulwah, 2023; Mailin, Sazali, and Dharma, 2023).

Muslim Sasak and Balinese Hindu hold different beliefs regarding the discovery of Lingsar Temple. According to the Hindus, the ancestors of the Balinese discovered Lingsar, while the Muslims believe that a Sasak or Javanese spreader of Islam discovered it (Harnish, 2021). Despite their differing opinions, they have chosen to embrace each other as a form of negotiated interfaith engagement. This has allowed them to maintain a culture that they can internalize together. Interfaith engagement is a bridge in building harmonious and inclusive relationships between different religions. In this research, it is not only religions but also different ethnicities. Interfaith engagement is the process or efforts to facilitate dialogue, cooperation, understanding, and engagement between individuals and communities of different religions or beliefs. In the context of relations between two different religions and ethnicities, interfaith engagement focuses on building bridges between groups with different religions, beliefs, cultures, or traditions, aiming to create peace, mutual understanding, and sustainable cooperation.

Qualitative meta-analysis is a method for conducting a secondary qualitative analysis of primary qualitative findings. This approach helps to provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Timulak, 2009) as it is applied to explain a comprehensive reality issue of religious moderation attitudes (Ramadhani, 2023). In essence, meta-analysis synthesizes previous research findings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a topic (Abduh et al., 2023).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes qualitative research with a meta-analysis method to gather scientific documents as primary data. Additionally, video documentation observation is employed to enrich understanding, complemented by data sourced from local government websites.

The documents for meta-analysis were gathered from journals accessible through Google Scholar and Scopus. Following the application of relevant keywords, 70 journals published between 2010 and 2023 were identified. From this initial pool, 24 journals were meticulously selected based on their relevance, accuracy, and credibility concerning the topic under discussion. The values extracted from recurring conclusions within these journals regarding *Perang Topat* were then compared and synthesized with indicators of religious moderation outlined in the book 'Moderasi Beragama' published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This comparative analysis aimed to draw inferences regarding whether the results indicate a negotiation strategy for promoting moderate ways of living in accordance with religious principles and national.

## DISCUSSION

The *Topat War* is an annual event typically held in December or mid-November according to the AD calendar. In the Sasak indigenous calendar, it falls on the 15th day of the seventh month, known as *Purnama Sasih Kepitu*. According to the Hindu calendar, it occurs on the 15th day of the sixth month, referred to as *Purnama Sasih Kenem* (Jayadi, 2017). During a full moon night, Hindus perform the Pujawali ritual, while for Muslims, it marks the ideal moment for a self-guided journey called *Napak Tilas* at the *Kemaliq* building in the Lingsar Temple area.

### *Topat War* Contains Powerful Modalities

Social interaction in the tradition of *Topat War* in West Lombok, specifically in *Lingsar Village*, demonstrates the religious interaction between the majority and minority (Harnish, 2014). It makes this region a profound meeting point between two different religions. *Topat War* presents an unusual and sacred value that involves the religious and spiritual elements of the Balinese-Hindus and the Sasak-Muslims, who are religiously and culturally different. It is a living tradition that routinely shows the

joint synergy of the two religions during each *begawe* (preparation) every year to prepare for all ritual needs.

The *Topat War* starts with a religious ceremony held at *Lingsar Temple*, which is a sacred place for both Hindus and *Wetu Telu* Muslims. The *Topat War* is considered a celebration that illustrates interfaith and inter-ethnic unity, togetherness, and solidarity. Although it is called a war, this tradition is carried out with great joy and with no intention of hurting each other. Instead of being armed with weapons or fighting strength, they throw food at each other, such as a *ketupat*. Throwing the *ketupat* is not intended to feel victorious or superior to different religions or ethnicities but to strengthen relationships and tolerance and as a form of gratitude for the harvest that has been obtained. This ritual also aims to offer prayers together for prosperity and safety for all residents regardless of religion and ethnicity (Pramana, 2020). For this purpose, various parties continue to strive for the sustainability and preservation of the values of the *Topaz War* tradition as a cultural heritage carried out from generation to generation every year.

The annual routine of the *Topat War* is not only for the explicit purposes mentioned above but also creates intangible heritage values that have positive implications for the social life of both ethnicities. Then, what emerges from the social integration of *Balinese Hinduism* and *Sasak Muslims*? Through the research analysis, there are several values in the efforts to maintain this tradition jointly in collaboration with adherents of different religions and ethnic origins, including tolerance and integration value. (Aryawati, Wirawan, and Wirata, 2022; Pramana, 2020; Zaki, 2021). Furthermore, the values of religion, compromise, history, togetherness, equality, cooperation, deliberation, and kinship are all essential (Acim and Yaqinah, 2019; Purna, 2020; Widodo, 2020). It has been found that there are strong values of harmony and peace amongst Hindu-Islamic relations (Jayadi, 2022); additionally, social and sacred values are also important in this context (Jayadi, 2017). Religious values have also been explored (Suartana, 2022) who noted that the *Topat War* ceremony embodies diverse values such as belief, religious practice, religious experience, and religious knowledge.

These values are then categorized based on indicators of religious moderation and synthesized with the findings from previous research to show a more comprehensive understanding. Therefore, it becomes apparent that certain values are part of or not part of the indicators of religious moderation. This overall analysis demonstrates the powerful values contained within the *Topat War* and its significance in matters of religious moderation.

**Table 1:** Indicator Categorization

Values in the <i>Topat War</i> Tradition	Religious Moderation indicator
The value of compromise / mutual respect	Tolerance
Religious value	Tolerance
Historical values	Accommodative to local culture
The value of togetherness & equality	Tolerance
Mutual cooperation value	Nationality commitment
Deliberation value	Nationality commitment
Tolerance values	Tolerance
Integrational value	Nationality commitment
Harmony and peace values	Anti-violence

Source: Data Analysis and synthesis

This table presents the result of analyzing and synthesizing the data. It not only compares but also indicates which series of ceremonial sessions contain specific values and how engagement takes form in the interaction between these two ethnic-religious groups. In some previous studies, it has been suggested that the *Topat War* is part of the *Pujawali* ceremony, but it cannot be separated from a series of other processions. The entire series of traditions forming heritage treasures which entangled with each other, leading to the peak event; throwing of *ketupat*. Building upon previous research conclusions regarding the presence of harmony and peace values in the *Topat War*, this study seeks to explore the relationship between the various processions within the *Topat War* and the values they embody.

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is part of the *Pujawali* ceremony, but it cannot be separated from a series of other processions. The whole series of traditions in the form of heritage treasures are entangled to each other, continuing to the peak event, which is the throwing of *ketupat*. Due to the conclusion in previous researches saying that the value of harmony and peace is really contained in the *Topat War*, therefore in this study looking for a relationship in the series of *Topat War* processions in the form of values it contained.

#### a. Preparation

There is a value of mutual cooperation carried out in the preparation of washing and cleaning (D-3 *Topat War*) the courtyard around the temple, namely the *Topat War* arena and the ceremonial equipment (*momot* bottle, containers, ornaments, royal umbrellas, spears). On the second day, the installation of *abah-abah* (in the form of sitting mats and offering mats, layers of cloth ornaments, umbrellas as well as spears) carried out at *Kemaliq*. Religious value accommodated with local culture is shown in providing *lamak* or rolls of mats made of pandanus leaves, in which there are prayer mats and prayer tools to remind people not to forget to pray five times as an obligation of Muslims (Acim and Yaqinah, 2019). On D-1, *penaek gawe* involves filling and assembling *Kebon Odeq*, which is a small garden whose contents reflect earth and everything in it, including the container that must be assembled or woven or formed. There is a collective historical value that Muslims and Hindus believe *Kebon Odeq* to be a symbol of the king's descendants, who are sacred in the *Topat War*.

#### b. Preliminary Ceremony

The *Mendak* Ceremony, which welcomes supernatural spirits as great guests, begins on the afternoon of the D-1. This activity is conducted by both ethnic-religious groups (Suartana 2022). Additionally, the *Ngeliningan Kaoq* ceremony involves carrying a buffalo around *Kemaliq* and *Gaduh* temple three times and is performed by both ethnic-religious groups. The choice of buffalo instead of cows or pigs reflects the values of compromise, mutual respect, togetherness, and equality, deliberation, tolerance, and integration. This reasoning will be further elaborated on in discussion.

c. *The Peak of The Ceremony (Topat war)*

On the day of the *Topat War*, a series of processions begins since the early in the morning and are carried out collectively before the *ketupat* throwing war starts. The peak of the *Topat War* event occurs after Asr prayer, coinciding with the falling of the waru flowers. This event holds religious, historical, sacred, and noble values attributed to the *Rarak Kembang waru* by K.H Abdul Malik, who is credited with transforming the formerly dry area into fertile *Lingsar*. Despite the nature of the *Topat War* involving the throwing of *ketupat* at each other, it does not result in disintegration, extremism, or violence. Although there may be minor injuries such as bruises or aches, participants do not hold grudges; instead, they laugh or become more enthusiastic, like an army celebrating victory. (Sodli, 2010; Suartana, 2022).

d. *Closing Ceremony*

Like a cooling-down session in sports exercises, there are days designated for cooling-down sessions at the end of the *Topat War*. Before *Betete* (the end of the event), a night market and an entertainment night showcasing *Sasak* and Balinese dances are held for two days. This serves as a reward for the sense of pride after winning the war.

**Topat War as Negotiation Strategy of Interfaith Engagement**

Lombok is one of regions in Indonesia where society often blend religion and culture, so the wise way is to look for common ground between different religious groups (Huda, 2019). There was a transformation of the war that initially called for violent conflict, turning it into a war with *ketupat* ammunition. This shows a mutual agreement as a peaceful strategy. In this regard, *Topat War* has actually existed since before the Balinese-Hindus arrival in Lombok (Jayadi, 2017), namely the war between the pre-kings (*datu*) who dominate each part of the *Sasak* community groups. As a result, there were many internal conflicts in the *Sasak* community related to the struggle for the position of *Datu*, which was later reconciled by Sheikh KH. Abdul Malik who came to Lombok (Zidni et al., 2021). The Ulama who came initiated the *Topat War* as a substitute for the existing violent wars. This demonstrates that the *Topat War* existed long before Hinduism arrived, serving as a conflict

between groups of people who wanted to become *datu* and was mediated by K. H. Abdul Malik (either when he disappeared from his kingdom due to guilt after the death of his son or prior to that).

Thus, it indicates that early strategy or first wave strategy of interfaith engagement is among *Sasak* community before transforming to follow social change, adaptivity, and quick response from the community. The second negotiation strategy is expressed in several articles that state that the *Topat War* has existed since 1759 or the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fathoni, Sinta Dewi, and Azhari, 2023; Suadnya and Paramita, 2017). This second wave strategy showed that there was a transformation of *Topat War* which was no longer only between *Sasak to Sasak* but also between the Balinese Hindus and the *Sasak* Muslims. It was a transformative and adaptive strategy in dealing with society with different ethnic-religions. Thus, it can be said that there are two births of *Topat War* according to the urgency of the need. The third is an ongoing strategy which adjusted to the changing times as it is also beneficial economically as popular tourism. Ultimately, this research shows its powerful forces as a best practice that supports government's mainstreaming religious moderation.

Due to maintaining its high cultural, religious, and moderation values in these two ethnic-religions and even be able to adapt to the times, cannot be separated from the process of social communication as a form of rationality to avoid communal conflict. Therefore, both of this ethnic always go hand in hand in carrying out the ritual procession even though they have different beliefs. Even the Balinese-Hindus perspective sees the *Pujawali* ceremony as a commemoration of the birth of a Hindu holy place, *Pura Lingsar* (Sedyawati et al., 2002). While the *Sasak*-Muslims carry out *dhikr* and *napak tilas* commemorating the services of Raden Mas Sumilir (KH. Abdul Malik). Differences in historical origins also do not make one group feel dominant over another or feel the majority over minority. It also supports the finding on ulama of *Sasak*, who are considered friendly, tolerant, appreciating differences and caring for others (Musawar and Zuhdi, 2019) and typical muslims sasak in Lombok who consider cooperation as a in separated part from their identity (Wirata, 2018).

The *Topat War* as one of a series of *Pujawali* ceremonies (rituals to commemorate or memorialize Sheikh K.H. Abdul Malik who spread Islam on the island of Lombok) (Suadnya and Paramita, 2017)), is inseparable from the pre-war, *Topat War* and post-war ceremonies. The preparation consists of several series of processions, each of which contains a perspective on the life of the nation and state. In the initial preparation, leaders from both ethnic-religious groups make decisions through deliberation, which is enshrined in one of the Pancasila principles where the leaders (*Pengemong Pura*) conduct a series of meetings to discuss the activities to be carried out. There is also a religious value in *Penaek gawe* for Balinese Hindus (*Matur piuning*), which is asking permission from the Creator so that the activities to be carried out can run smoothly.

Likewise, the Muslim-Sasak *do mendaq kebon odeq*, a kind of *napak tilas* in memory of Sheikh K.H. Abdul Malik (Julianingsih, 2020). In the process of *ngeliningan kaok* parading buffaloes around the *kemaliq* and *Pura Gaduh* three times as a historical symbol following the preaching journey of kyai Abdul Malik/*datuk Sumilir* while in Lombok. Additionally, *haol* is a religious event based on their respective beliefs showing *internum-externum* (borrowing terms of Lukman Hakim Saifudin former religion minister on a dissemination of religious moderation). The value of tolerance in the form of an agreement with a solution that benefits both parties is also found in the decision to choose buffalo as a slaughter animal considering that cows are sacred animals for Hindus while pigs are forbidden for Muslims. The officer who slaughtered the buffalo was taken from Muslims through a mutual agreement between Muslims and Hindus. This not only shows the *Lingsar* community's awareness of cultural ethics, but also forms cultural appropriation as a strategy in dealing with unchangeable differences. In addition, the reduced size of the ketupat from the normal size of the ketupat shows the efforts of both as a form of anti-violence efforts which is an indicator of religious moderation to avoid triggering disunity. Also, the *Topat War* that can only be started after Asr prayer shows a form of negotiation of the interfaith engagement between Sasak-Muslims and Balinese-Hindus.

After all the preparations and preliminary processions, the *Topat War* is carried out by upholding the value of peace, without violence and only using ketupat as a weapon. This does not mean that this war is violent, but rather a form of gratitude to honor what was left by the ancestors and bestowed by the creator. Thus, the *Topat War* reflects the value of non-violence and historical values that are accommodating to local culture as an indicator of religious moderation. Then it is closed with one of them *beteteh* (cleaning) which is carried out by both ethnic-religious groups in mutual cooperation. Before *beteteh* there is a *lalang* containing an evening of entertainment showing an anticipatory strategy in case it requires an entertaining and calm situation after the spirit of throwing *Topat*. At the end of the *Topat war*, the community also reflects the values of the religious moderation indicator, by thanking each other and ensuring that all participants feel valued and treated well.

From early history, strategies to facilitate religious dialogue in order to coexist in religious life have been negotiated by the Karang Asem kingdom to Lombok. The leader of the troops, Anak Agung Ketut (the younger brother of the King of Karang Asem) dialogued with the Kemaliq customary leader named Indrawan and promised to build Pura Gaduh next to Kemaliq *Lingsar* when he controlled the island of Lombok. Normally, such a decision would separate the two places of worship. Unlike in the early 18th century, however, the adjoining temples may have been intended to align themselves and build a sense of unity even if they were not merged. To keep up with the social conditions of the people of Lombok who are increasingly self-aware of change, the dynamics of negotiation strategies certainly change into strategies to maintain the continuity of religious and customary ways that are in accordance with what is referred to as moderation in religion.

Through *Topat War*, two different customs and religions agree without primordialism, without feeling more appropriate, exclusive, or superior to others. In fact, they can align their positions, then unite without merge (Maćkowiak, 2022), not only among the custodians or elders but also all people in *Lingsar*. Thus, cultural and religious traditions of *Topat War* serve as effective negotiation strategies to facilitate a sustainable interfaith engagement. By emphasizing unity, respect

and mutual understanding (Asmara, 2018), this unique tradition can promote religious moderation and contribute to the peaceful co-existence among other diverse communities.

Apart from the fact that it has been initiated since a long time ago, namely interaction;

- a) Before Hindu's arrival in *Lingsar* (Sasak & Sasak);
- b) Re-born in 1759 or the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (The Balinese Hindus & The Sasak Muslims), either consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, also preserved until now which is a form of a continuous strategy adapted to various changes;
- c) On-going adjusted strategy (The Balinese Hindus & The Sasak Muslims). Here is how it can be seen as a negotiation strategy of interfaith engagement:
  1. Conflict Resolution constitute common goals: The *Topat War* serves as a platform for conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence. By engaging in a playful war, tensions and differences between religious communities can be diffused in a non-threatening manner. It creates opportunities for dialogue, understanding, and finding common ground. Indeed, from the beginning, the *Topat War* has been a negotiation strategy by changing the war of hegemony and violence using weapons into a war with *ketupat*. It is an early strategy for achieving goals by using *Ketupat* as the substitute weapon of war (Zaki, 2021).
  2. Bridge-building through cultural Integration: The *Topat War* brings together people from different religious backgrounds, primarily Muslims and Hindus, in a shared cultural celebration. By participating in the event, individuals from both communities engage in a common activity that transcends religious boundaries and promotes unity.
  3. Build trust through community Bonding: The event strengthens social cohesion and community bonding. The shared experience of participating in the *Topat War* fosters connections among individuals from different religious backgrounds. It helps build

relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging within the community.

4. Promoting understanding and encourage inclusivity represent mutual respect: The *Topat War* encourages mutual respect and acceptance of diverse religious beliefs. Participants from different faiths come together, interact, and engage in the series of event without compromising their own religious identities. It fosters an environment where individuals can appreciate and learn from each other's religious traditions.

The social integration of Hindu and Muslim communities in all processions of *Topat War* accommodates both social and sacred values, which are essential elements of a moderated perspective. In this case, it also demonstrates that both ethnic-religious groups are capable of adapting and accommodating their respective differences, both externally and internally, within their faith. These aspects reflect the essence of successful moderate thinking. This essence is not merely perceived as noble values but can also be formulated into strategies for harmonizing interfaith communities, as perceived by the Balinese Hindus and the Sasak Muslims. Thus, the strategy of interfaith life expands the range of movement areas. It is about being willing to share a space that is arguably not wide enough for differences.

## CLOSING

*Lingsar* people or world-wide view might see *Topat War* as gratitude for an abundant harvest, but in a broader and deeper sense, it is much more than that. After all, the series of religious rituals in the *Topat War* are performed together while still upholding each other's beliefs. This reflects the aspect of inclusivity and preservation of beliefs within this community. In addition, the win-win solution for both religions, the mutual benefits, and the process of accommodation of understanding and agreement in this annual ritual is designed to maintain the memory of the importance of living in harmony with people of different religions and traditions. Without moderation, there would be no way for them to unite or tolerate the presence of other religious traditions in their sacred places, let alone reach mutual understanding. All decision-making, mutual understanding,



solving problem throughout the middle way shows negotiation strategies between Balinese-Hindu and Sasak-Muslim through give and take between human to God, human to human, and human to nature.

This research can have implications as a form of religious moderation campaign through traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation effortlessly because it involves everyone, unlike interfaith dialogue, which usually only involves a few figures.

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