

The Tradition of Penyakap and Epe as a Space for Religious Moderation: A Study of Non-Formal Education of Multicultural Communities in Mataram City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the tradition of Penyakap and Epe as a space for religious moderation and identify the function of non-formal education in building a harmonious relationship between the Sasak and Balinese Hindu communities in Mataram City. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection methods through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the Penyakap and Epe traditions not only function as a system of agricultural economic relations, but also as a social space that forms the values of tolerance, mutual respect, cooperation, and respect for religious differences. These findings affirm the importance of preserving local traditions as a strategy to strengthen inclusive and sustainable religious life.

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly complex development of global society has made the issue of religious, cultural, and social identity diversity one of the important fields of study in the social, educational, and religious sciences. Multicultural societies face challenges in the form of increasing potential for identity conflicts due to differences in religious understanding, group exclusivism, and weakening of social interaction spaces between different communities. Religious moderation then develops as a strategic approach to build a balanced religious life through tolerance, respect for differences, rejection of violence, and acceptance of local traditions of the community (Saifuddin, 2019). The study of religious moderation is no longer only placed in the space of formal religious institutions, but also develops on the social practices of the community that form the value of tolerance through daily life experiences (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). This condition shows that local cultural practices have an important position as a social education space that is able to build awareness of diversity in society. Therefore, research on the relationship between local traditions and religious moderation is becoming increasingly relevant to understand how societies maintain social harmony in the midst of religious and cultural differences.

The life of the Indonesian people shows that religious and cultural diversity can be social capital if managed through the value of togetherness and respect for differences. Indonesia as a multicultural country has various ethnic, religious, linguistic, and traditional groups that coexist in the same social space. This diversity not only requires formal regulation, but also requires social mechanisms that grow from the community itself through cultural values and local wisdom. Cichocka (2016) explained that social relationships formed through shared experiences can strengthen collective identity and reduce the tendency of group exclusivism. In the context of Indonesian life, local traditions are often a medium of social learning that teaches cooperation, respect, and acceptance of other groups (Hidayat & Khalika, 2019). This phenomenon shows that religious moderation can be understood as a social process that takes place not only through formal education, but also through the daily cultural practices of the community.

Mataram City is one of the regions that shows the dynamics of religious and cultural diversity through the interaction between the Sasak and Balinese Hindu communities. Based on research documents, Mataram City has the character of a multicultural society consisting of various religious and ethnic groups, with the dominance of the Muslim Sasak community and the Balinese Hindu community which has a long history in the social life of the local community. The relationship between the two groups does not only take place

in the religious space, but also develops through economic, social, and cultural relations, one of which is through the Penyakap and Epe traditions. The Penyakap and Epe tradition is a system of agricultural social relations between land cultivators or Penyakap and land owners or Epe which has been going on for generations in Mataram City. This tradition shows that social relations of the community are not only built based on economic interests, but also develop into family relationships that create the value of mutual respect and tolerance between religious communities.

The Penyakap and Epe traditions show the practice of religious moderation that grows through the direct social experience of the community. Based on the results of observations and interviews in the research, the relationship between Penyakap and Epe is not limited to rice field management activities, but develops in broader social relationships. The Penyakap and Epe communities continue to maintain interpersonal relationships through social activities such as visiting each other when there are weddings, circumcision, religious celebrations, and when there is a death in the family. The results of the research interviews showed that the relationship had lasted for a long time without conflicts related to religious differences, because the two groups had mutual respect and respect for each other's religious practices. In addition, the study also found that the tradition of inviting each other in socio-religious activities is a tangible form of tolerance that develops in people's lives. This practice shows that the Penyakap and Epe traditions can be understood as non-formal educational spaces that transmit the value of religious moderation through daily social interactions.

Studies on religious moderation and local wisdom have developed in various studies over the past decade. Recent research shows that local wisdom has an important role in building social harmony because it contains the values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity. A study conducted by several researchers in 2024 shows that local cultural practices can be an instrument for strengthening religious moderation as people gain first-hand experience in managing differences through social interaction. Previous research has also found that culture-based religious moderation education has stronger effectiveness because the values taught are in accordance with people's life experiences (Sutrisno, 2022). Meanwhile, research on multicultural education explains that learning the value of diversity does not only occur through formal curriculum, but also through a social environment that provides a shared life experience between different groups (Banks, 2020). These findings show that the local cultural space is an important aspect that needs to be studied in the development of religious moderation education.

Previous research has also shown that harmonious interreligious relationships are often built through simple but consistent social practices in people's lives. Research on multicultural societies has found that intensive social interaction can create trust between groups thereby reducing prejudice and the potential for social conflict (Marchlewska et al., 2019). Another study explains that the existence of local traditions can be a social mechanism in maintaining community integration because these traditions contain the value of collectivity and social solidarity (Kamba, 2018). Studies on religious moderation in Indonesia also confirm that moderate religiosity is not only related to the doctrinal understanding of religion, but also related to the ability of the community to build peaceful social relations (Ikhwan, 2019). Although various studies have addressed religious moderation, most research still focuses on educational institutions, religious institutions, or government policies. The study of the agricultural traditions of local communities as a space for non-formal education of religious moderation is still relatively limited, so further research is needed.

The research gap shows that there is still academic space to understand how local traditions can function as a medium of religious moderation education in people's lives. Research on *Penyakap* and *Epe* has an important position because these traditions show the social relationships between different religious groups that take place through the practice of daily life. In contrast to previous research that looked at religious moderation through an institutional perspective, this study places local communities as the main actors in building the value of tolerance. Based on the results of field observations, the relationship between *Penyakap* and *Epe* shows that there is a social learning process that takes place naturally through economic cooperation, family interaction, and participation in socio-religious activities. The process shows that non-formal education can take place through cultural experiences that are passed down between generations. Thus, this research seeks to contribute to the development of educational studies, religious anthropology, and multicultural studies through understanding local traditions as a space for the formation of religious moderation.

This research uses a non-formal education perspective and multicultural theory to understand how the *Penyakap* and *Epe* traditions build the value of religious moderation in the society of Mataram City. Non-formal education in this study is understood as a learning process that takes place outside the formal education system through social, cultural, and community interaction. Multicultural theory is used to explain how people with different religious and cultural backgrounds can build equal relationships through respect for diversity. In addition, the perspective of structural functionalism is used to understand the function of tradition in maintaining the balance of social relations of the community. The *Penyakap* and *Epe* traditions not only function as an

agricultural economic mechanism, but also have a social function in maintaining solidarity, cooperation, and harmony between community groups. This approach provides a framework for analysis that local culture can become a social institution that has an educational function in building a tolerant society.

Based on these problems, this study aims to analyze the Penyakap and Epe traditions as a space for religious moderation through the perspective of non-formal education in multicultural communities in Mataram City. This research specifically aims to identify the forms of religious moderation practices that arise in the relationship between Penyakap and Epe and analyze the educational functions contained in these traditions. This research is expected to provide theoretical benefits for the development of the study of religious moderation, non-formal education, and local wisdom in a multicultural society. Practically, this research can be a reference for the government, educational institutions, and the community in developing strategies to strengthen tolerance based on local culture. This research also provides a new perspective that the value of religious moderation is not only produced through formal education, but also through social experiences inherited in people's lives.

Based on the theoretical study and initial findings of the research, this study proposes the hypothesis that the Penyakap and Epe traditions function as non-formal educational spaces that are able to form religious moderation practices in the multicultural society of Mataram City. These traditions are estimated to contribute to the formation of the value of tolerance, respect for differences, social cooperation, and strengthening relationships between religious communities. The ongoing social relationship between Penyakap and Epe shows that local culture can be an effective social education mechanism in maintaining community harmony. Thus, this study argues that strengthening religious moderation can be done through the revitalization of local traditions as a source of social learning for the community.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Multicultural Theory

Multiculturalism refers to diversity—specifically, the presence of various distinct social, cultural, and ethnic groups within a single nation, forming a unified whole. In other words, it represents a cultural diversity that characterizes the unity of these various groups within a country. Indonesian society is multicultural, as it comprises a wide array of ethnic groups, cultures, and religions; this multicultural nature results in a rich diversity of cultural expressions. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI—Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language), multicultural pertains to cultural diversity. The term is derived from the words *multi* (meaning many) and *cultural* (relating to culture), thus signifying many cultures. Multiculturalism can also be defined as a philosophy—interpreted as an

ideology – that advocates for the unity of diverse cultural groups, ensuring they possess equal rights and socio-political status within modern society; this definition is drawn from the book *Pendidikan Agama Islam di Desa Multikultural* (Islamic Religious Education in a Multicultural Village) by Dr. Sutiah, M.Pd. The term multicultural is frequently used to describe the unity of diverse ethnic groups within a single nation. Multicultural societies champion the concept of multiculturalism – an ideology emphasizing the parity and equality of various local cultures without disregarding the rights or existence of other cultures. In such societies, differences in social groups, cultures, and ethnicities are highly respected. Based on the theoretical overview above, and in relation to the issue under study, multicultural theory is employed here to examine the forms of religious moderation found in the *Penyakap* and *Epe* traditions in Mataram City.

Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural functionalism theory originated with the ideas of Emile Durkheim, who was influenced by Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. The concept known as "functional requisites" stems from Comte's organismic analogy – which Spencer further developed by identifying and comparing similarities between society and an organism. This analogy subsequently served as the guide for Spencer's substantive analysis and as a driving force for functional analysis. According to Durkheim, society is a unified whole composed of distinct parts. The system's function is to maintain a balance among these parts; an imbalance disrupts the system because the parts are interdependent and functionally linked. Durkheim contributed this foundational idea to the structural-functional theories of Parsons and Merton. Additionally, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown helped shape various modern functionalist perspectives.

Structural functionalism theory is closely linked to the structures that emerge within society – structures that are defined by their organization and function. This implies that within the societal structure, individuals hold specific roles and functions. Malinowski identified four elements of functionalism: first, the system of norms that enables cooperation among individuals in society; second, economic organizations (whether self-initiated or government-established); third, educational facilities and infrastructure; and fourth, regulations – specifically rules or policies enacted by the government or local authorities – manifested as political organizations (power structures). These subsystems (economy, culture, politics, and socialization) and structural elements (norms, economic organizations, educational tools, and government policies) require "space" when put into practice; notably, the fact that society does not abandon all traditional rituals plays a significant role in social change.

Based on the theoretical overview above, and in relation to the issue under study, the Structural-Functional theory is employed to examine the "Function of Education in Religious Moderation within the *Penyakap* and *Epe* Traditions in Mataram City." This approach aims to foster a sense of security, tranquility, and peace in the observance of religious practices, thereby enabling the realization of interfaith harmony.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the tradition of *Penyakap* and *Epe* as a space for religious moderation in the perspective of non-formal education of multicultural communities in Mataram City. The identification of the research was carried out by establishing the tradition of *Penyakap* and *Epe* as the main object of study, especially related to the form of social interaction, the practice of tolerance, and the value of education that develops in the relationship between the *Penyakap* and *Epe* communities. The research was carried out in Mataram City with the consideration that the *Penyakap* and *Epe* traditions are still ongoing in people's lives and show the social relationship between the Sasak and Balinese Hindu people who have different religious and cultural backgrounds. The research instruments used were interview guidelines, observation sheets, and research documentation used to obtain data on traditional practices, social relations, and the value of religious moderation that emerged in people's lives.

The research data was obtained through interviews with community leaders and traditional actors of *Penyakap* and *Epe*, observation of community social activities, and documentation in the form of literature and supporting documents related to the research object. Data analysis was carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner through the stages of data organization, grouping information based on the research theme, interpretation of field findings, and drawing conclusions about the form of religious moderation and the function of non-formal education in the *Penyakap* and *Epe* traditions. The analysis process was carried out by connecting empirical data in the field with the concept of religious moderation, multicultural theory, and structural functional theory so as to produce an understanding of the role of local traditions as a social mechanism in maintaining harmony between religious communities in Mataram City.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Tradition of Penyakap and Epe as a Practice of Religious Moderation in Social Relations of the Multicultural Community of Mataram City

The results of the study show that the *Penyakap* and *Epe* traditions not only function as a system of economic relations in agricultural land management, but have developed into a social space that forms the practice of religious

moderation between the Sasak and Balinese Hindu communities in Mataram City. The Penyakap and Epe traditions are the relationship between the people who cultivate agricultural land and the landowners that lasts for generations through social agreements based on trust, responsibility, and mutual need. Based on the results of field observations, the relationship between Penyakap and Epe did not stop at agricultural activities, but developed into a social relationship that resembled a family relationship. The findings of the study show that the religious differences between the Penyakap who are mostly from the Sasak Muslim community and the Epe who come from the Balinese Hindu community are not an obstacle in building harmonious social relations. This condition shows that the practice of religious diversity in society is not only influenced by the normative understanding of religion, but is also shaped through social experiences that take place in daily life.

The social relationship between Penyakap and Epe shows the characteristics of religious moderation as developed by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia through four main indicators, namely national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and respect for local culture (Saifuddin, 2019). Research data shows that the Penyakap and Epe communities are able to maintain social relations despite their differences in religious beliefs and practices. The results of the interviews showed that the two groups respected each other's religious activities and did not interfere in different worship practices. The relationship was seen when Penyakap and Epe attended social activities such as weddings, circumcision, death ceremonies, and other religious activities.

These findings reinforce previous research that explains that religious moderation is not only formed through formal religious institutions, but also through social interactions of communities that allow for encounters between different identities. Marchlewska et al. (2019) explain that intensive social relationships between different groups can build trust and reduce social prejudice. However, this study makes a different contribution because it shows that religious moderation can grow through traditional economic relations which then develop into social and cultural relationships. Thus, the Penyakap and Epe traditions expand the understanding of religious moderation that the practice of tolerance does not always emerge through formal programs, but can be born from the social system of the community that is inherited from generation to generation.

The Cooperation System of Supporters and Epe as Social Capital in Forming Harmony Between Religions

The results of the study found that the cooperation system in the Penyakap and Epe traditions has several forms, namely nyakap or profit-sharing

system, annual or contract selling, fare system, and pawn. These four forms of relationships show the existence of a social mechanism built on agreement, trust, and mutual responsibility between landowners and cultivators. In the holding system, for example, Penyakap and Epe have a share of the proceeds based on an initial agreement so that economic relations are not only profit-oriented, but also consider the sustainability of social relations. Field findings show that the relationship has been going on for decades and is shaping mutual trust between the two groups of people.

The practice of cooperation shows that local traditions can be a form of social capital that maintains the integration of a multicultural society. Putnam (2000) explains that social capital is formed through a network of relationships, beliefs, and norms that allow people to work together to achieve common goals. In the context of Penyakap and Epe, social capital is not only formed through economic relations, but also develops into interfaith social relations. The value of trust formed in agricultural cooperation then strengthens interpersonal relationships outside of economic activities.

The findings of this study differ from some previous studies on religious moderation that place more tolerance as a result of religious understanding or formal education. This research shows that the practice of tolerance can arise from people's life experiences through work relationships that take place consistently. This shows that the local economic aspect has an important role in building interfaith social relations. Thus, the Penyakap and Epe traditions can not only be understood as an agrarian system, but also as a social mechanism that produces the value of religious moderation.

The Tradition of Holding Up and Epe as Non-Formal Education for Religious Moderation

The results of the study show that the Penyakap and Epe traditions have a non-formal educational function because the value learning process takes place through the social experience of the community. Education in this tradition does not take place through classrooms or formal curriculum, but through processes of interaction, example, and daily life practices. The younger generation of people learned about tolerance, respect for differences, social responsibility, and the importance of maintaining good relations between groups through involvement in community life. Observational findings show that these values are inherited through social habits such as helping each other, attending family activities, and maintaining communication between Penyakap and Epe.

The concept is in line with Banks' (2020) view that multicultural education does not only take place through formal educational institutions, but also through social environments that allow individuals to understand diversity directly. In the context of this research, the community becomes a learning space

that produces real experiences of diversity. The tradition of Penyakap and Epe became a medium of social learning because individuals learned to appreciate other groups through ongoing relationships.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the placement of local traditions as a source of religious moderation education. Previous research has mostly discussed religious moderation education through the approach of school curriculum, Islamic boarding schools, or religious institution policies. This research shows that religious moderation education can also take place through local culture that has an internal mechanism in maintaining social harmony. Thus, the Penyakap and Epe traditions can be seen as a form of cultural pedagogy that teaches the value of diversity through the practice of community life.

The Function of the Tradition of Catcher and Epe in Maintaining the Harmony of a Multicultural Community

The results of the study show that the main function of the Penyakap and Epe traditions is not only related to the sustainability of the agricultural economy, but also has a social and cultural function in maintaining community harmony. The relationship between Penyakap and Epe creates a space of interaction that allows people from different religious backgrounds to get to know, understand, and appreciate each other. This relationship can be seen when the two groups are present in social activities and religious activities without eliminating their respective religious identities. The practice shows a balance between maintaining personal beliefs and building social relationships with other groups.

This phenomenon can be analyzed through the perspective of structural functionalism which sees society as a system consisting of interconnected parts and has a function in maintaining social balance. The Penyakap and Epe traditions have an integrative function because they are able to connect different community groups through mutually agreed social norms. This relationship shows that local traditions have the ability to be a mechanism for peaceful settlement of differences.

The findings of this study contribute to the study of religious moderation by showing that local culture has the capacity as a social infrastructure in maintaining harmony. While previous research has looked more at religious moderation through the perspective of state policy and formal education, this study offers a new perspective that local communities have their own social education systems capable of building tolerance. Therefore, the preservation of the Penyakap and Epe traditions is important not only as a cultural heritage, but also as a strategy to strengthen multicultural life.

Based on the overall results of the study, this study found that the Penyakap and Epe traditions are a form of religious moderation space based on local culture that works through three main mechanisms, namely economic

relations, social interaction, and non-formal education. These three mechanisms form a social learning process that allows the Sasak and Balinese Hindus to maintain a harmonious relationship in daily life. These findings expand the study of religious moderation by placing local traditions as important actors in the reproduction of tolerance values.

The originality of this research lies in the argument that religious moderation is not always present through formal institutions or government programs, but can grow through the cultural practices of society that have historically taken place. The Penyakap and Epe traditions show that traditional economic relations can develop into social capital and cultural education that strengthens the integration of multicultural societies. Thus, this research makes a conceptual contribution to the development of non-formal education studies, religious anthropology, and religious moderation studies by offering a perspective that local wisdom can be a strategic space in building a harmonious social life.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research shows that the tradition of Penyakap and Epe in Mataram City is not only a practice of economic relations in agricultural land management, but has developed into a space of religious moderation that builds harmonious relations between the Sasak and Balinese Hindu communities. These traditions produce the values of tolerance, mutual respect, cooperation, and respect for differences through social interactions that take place from generation to generation. The findings of the study show that the educational process of religious moderation in the Penyakap and Epe traditions takes place informally through daily life experiences, involvement in social activities, and interfaith family relationships. The new contribution of this research lies in the understanding that religious moderation is not only formed through formal educational institutions or religious policies, but also through local wisdom that functions as a social learning space for the community. Thus, the Penyakap and Epe traditions can be positioned as a model of non-formal education based on local culture that has the potential to strengthen the life of a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable multicultural society.

FURTHER STUDY

Further research may explore how the traditions of Penyakap and Epe can be sustained and developed as non-formal educational spaces for strengthening religious moderation in multicultural communities. Future studies could examine the participation of different religious, ethnic, and cultural groups, as well as the role of community leaders, religious figures, families, and younger generations in maintaining these traditions. Comparative research across

different communities in Mataram and other multicultural regions could also provide broader insights into how local cultural practices contribute to tolerance, social cohesion, mutual respect, and peaceful interreligious interaction. In addition, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess whether participation in Penyakap and Epe traditions produces lasting changes in attitudes and practices related to religious moderation among community members.

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