

**THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN MAINTAINING
MUMULATING HARMONY RELIGION IN WEWANGREWU
VILLAGE TANASITOLO WAJO DISTRICT**

*PERAN TOKOH AGAMA DALAM MENJAGA KERUKUNAN UMAT BERAGAMA
DI DESA WEWANGREWU KECAMATAN TANASITOLO KABUPATEN WAJO*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the role of religious figures in maintaining religious harmony in Wewangrewu Village, Tanasitolo District, Wajo Regency. The method used in this research is qualitative research. The author's data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation using theological, communication, and sociological approaches, then processing the data deductively and drawing conclusions. The results of the research state that religious figures play a role as implementers of da'wah, leaders, and facilitators. Apart from being implementers of da'wah, religious figures also play a role as leaders in spiritual, democratic, and social matters in society. Religious leaders can provide counseling and training by facilitating the community to present resource persons who are experts in their fields, as well as collaborating with the local government in forming youth organizations that promote moderate themes.

Keywords: roles, religious figures, harmony

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini, untuk mengetahui peran tokoh agama dalam menjaga kerukunan umat beragama di Desa Wewangrewu Kecamatan Tanasitolo Kabupaten Wajo. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ialah penelitian kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data penulis melalui observasi atau pengamatan, interview/wawancara, dan dokumentasi dengan menggunakan pendekatan teologis, komunikasi, dan sosiologis, kemudian mengolah data secara deduktif, lalu kemudian menarik kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa tokoh agama

berperan sebagai pelaksana dakwah, pemimpin, dan juga sebagai fasilitator. Selain sebagai pelaksana dakwah tokoh agama juga berperan sebagai pemimpin dalam hal spiritual, demokrasi dan sosial masyarakat. Tokoh agama dapat mengadakan penyuluhan dan pelatihan dengan memfasilitasi masyarakat untuk menghadirkan narasumber yang ahli dibidangnya, serta bekerja sama dengan pemerintah setempat dalam membentuk organisasi kepemudaan yang mengusung tema moderat.

Kata-kata kunci: Peran, Tokoh Agama, Kerukunan

A. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian nation has long been known by a motto, namely *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. This motto means that even though they are different, they are still one, meaning that this nation must remain united amidst various differences. This also includes differences in beliefs. The Indonesian people must be able to respect each other and every difference that exists in order to create peace and tranquility. Apart from the differences between each religion in Indonesia, it is necessary to understand that within the Islamic religion alone there are differences. The biggest differences in the history of Islam started from the first moment of the death of the Prophet Muhammad. At that time, friends had different opinions regarding who would be appointed as the successor caliph to the Prophet Muhammad. From the past until now, various opinions have emerged in Islam, and the existence of these differences has become a necessity.

One of the differences that is clearly visible among Muslims today is the difference in sects. This occurs because there are differences in perceptions regarding *ushul fiqh* and jurisprudence, as well as differences in interpretations of *mujtahids* regarding the synchronization of the holy book *Al-Qur'an* with conditions that continue to develop. A person needs to follow a sect because of limited knowledge to understand the sacred text itself. What is important to remember is that differences of opinion that occur among these schools of thought are natural and not something that deviates from the Islamic religion (Abdillah, 2014).

Islam is a peaceful and flexible religion because its legal basis can be viewed from various points of view, which of course follows current developments without shifting from the true meaning of the text. Through this understanding, Muslims who live side by side with those who have different opinions from their own should become a diversity that can bring grace to that place. As Allah swt. said in Q.S. *Al Anbiya/21:107*:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

Translation:

"And we did not send you (Muhammad) but to be a mercy to all the worlds." (RI, 2014).

The ideal teachings of Islam certainly require its adherents to practice its teachings in good form. However, sometimes, in reality, nowadays differences of opinion among various religious groups seem to be getting stronger, triggering friction between adherents, which makes it easy for conflict to occur.

The reality of religious texts that have multiple interpretations is supported by the opening of democratic space by guaranteeing freedom of speech by law, which provides opportunities and freedom for people to express their opinions in public spaces through da'wah, by utilizing all available media, one of which is social media, which connects its users. In cyberspace, which makes it easier to disseminate information, including Islamic da'wah, it is not surprising that nowadays various kinds of religious sects and organizations have developed. The development of various sects and the spread of da'wah through social media are occurring at all levels of society, not just people in cities; the development of these various sects has also spread to rural areas (Nurhikmah, 2022). One of them is in Wewangrewu Village. In this area, several Islamic sects and organizations have emerged. There are those who follow Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Jamaah Tabligh, and there are also a handful who follow Wahdah Islamiyah and Khalwatiyah, although the ones that dominate are NU and Muhammadiyah.

Despite the diversity of understandings or sects, Islam does not allow its adherents to force each other's will to follow a sect, because the order to convert to Islam alone cannot be forced, especially if it is in line with it. There should be no compulsion to follow a particular sect. The true value of Islam is peace, which does not teach someone to force their will to embrace Islam.

The diversity of opinions or sects that occur can also give rise to the potential for conflict if it is not properly guarded by the role of religious figures. In Wewangrewu Village, several Islamic sects or organizations have emerged; some follow Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Jamaah Tabligh, and there are also a handful who follow Wahdah Islamiyah and Khalwatiyah, although the ones that dominate are NU and Muhammadiyah. The existence of several developing sects has given rise to several differences in religious practice, for example, the difference in the pronunciation of the morning call to prayer; some are qunut and some are not; some do dhikr in congregation after the fardhu prayer; some do dhikr individually; and there are also those who, even after the greeting, imme-

diately leave. place of prayer, the difference that is very clearly visible is the determination of different days for Eid.

According to Ambo Asse, regarding the implementation of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, where the law is included in the case of *ijtihadiyah* or there is no text that explicitly recommends it and there is no obligation or prohibition on carrying it out, then the people who follow *Muhammadiyah* choose not to do it on the pretext that it is better to avoid actions that are still legally unclear. If this *sunnah* celebration has become a culture in society, it is important to pay attention to aspects that are more important than that, for example, congregational prayers in the mosque after the birthday celebration takes place. Don't let what is obligatory be neglected because of something that is *sunnah*. Apart from the issues of *Mawlid* and *Isra Mi'raj*, things that often become different are the issues of *mabbaca-baca*, *maccera*, and *mattampung*. According to the *Muhammadiyah* sect, why do you have to use certain foods in reading, even though prayer can be done after every prayer and at any time without requiring the food being prayed for and then mentioning the name of the item or treasure. Why must blood flow during *maccera*, and why must one use a cow as a sacrifice during *mattampung*. This is what makes people who follow the *Muhammadiyah* sect consider this to be ambiguous or wrong because it is almost the same as offering something to supernatural beings.

Externally, society can be said to be harmonious, but what is actually happening internally is that there are things that can trigger conflict, especially as the younger generation, who don't really understand the different sects, are confused about which one to join because they are all Muslims. These differences of opinion can give rise to the potential for conflict, so society must be protected by comprehensive Islamic knowledge so that they can live peacefully with peaceful tolerance without fanaticism, which can trigger conflict. Don't let people only become aware of the cost of harmony and peace after seeing conflicts caused by the fanaticism of one sect. This is where the role of religious figures is needed in guarding and providing an early understanding of diversity and the importance of Muslim unity. Therefore, the role of religious figures is needed in responding to this matter: how to maintain harmony in the midst of diversity with various understandings or sects (Al Wasim, 2018).

Therefore, the saying is true that prevention is better than cure. This phenomenon of the growth and development of various sects in an area should be of concern to every Muslim. This is especially true for religious figures in an area, so that these differences do not become something that can cause conflict. Likewise, the very rapid

development of technology, which makes it easier to disseminate information and da'wah through social media, must be well guarded so that people do not swallow it whole and are influenced by what is presented on social media, because even though it is da'wah, it still needs a filter so that does not cause a misunderstanding of religion. So efforts are needed to maintain Muslim harmony amidst the various sects or sects in Islam as a form of defense against beliefs or sects that would threaten societal harmony. Therefore, through this research, the author tries to reveal the role of religious figures in maintaining religious harmony in Wewangrewu Village, Tanasitolo District, Wajo Regency.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no compulsion in following a religion

Q.S. Al-Baqarah/2:256:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

Translation:

There is no compulsion to enter religion (RI, 2014).

This verse contains the message that there is no compulsion to follow a religious belief; Allah wants everyone to feel peaceful. His religion is called Islam, which means peace. Islam teaches individual responsibility and the position of humans as caliphs as well as servants (Hadi, 2016). Peace cannot be achieved without peace of mind. Coercion makes the soul restless, so there is no compulsion to accept Islamic religious beliefs. There is no compulsion to follow a religion because the right path is clear.

Prohibition on Spreading Hate

One of the teachings of Islam is to order its followers not to do evil to other people. As emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad SAW, a good Muslim is a person who does not hurt other people with words or deeds. In an authentic hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari (194–256 H), it is shown that the measure of a person's Islamic quality is seen from his attitude and behavior, namely whether he easily hurts other Muslims with his tongue and hands or not.

In the current context, this teaching is very suitable to be reaffirmed, especially to eradicate the spread of hatred or disbelief in the name of religion. Muslims must be aware and able to restrain themselves so as not to be swept away by the current of hatred and extremism. Apart from that, it is hoped that Muslims can also play an active role in fighting the rise of radicalism and extremism. Dis-

putes, no matter how complicated, must be resolved in a civilized manner, as taught by religion, not otherwise. Differences have become sunnatullah, which must be understood as a starting point for mutual learning and advice. Not to insult and envy each other. To attack and destroy each other.

C. METHOD

This research is qualitative and located in Wewangrewu Village, Tanasitolo District, Wajo Regency. Meanwhile, according to the research location, field research is used, where the author will go directly to the location to research.

Researchers will carry out several research approaches, including: First, the theological approach is a research approach based on theology, namely divine knowledge about the nature of God, the basis of belief in God, and religion, especially based on holy books. Second, the communication approach is a field research approach that will focus more on communication, namely sending and receiving news between two or more people in the right way so that what is meant is understood, which of course is through interviews. Third, the sociological approach is a research approach regarding sociology, knowledge, or science about the nature, behavior, and development of society.

In collecting data for this research, the author used observation techniques, namely observation, review, interviews, and direct surveys at the research location. In addition, the type of data that will be presented is qualitative data using collaborative data sources originating from original or primary sources and data sources collected indirectly, for example, through print media such as books, magazines, journals, or newspapers, which are often termed secondary data sources. Of course, this was obtained through field research and library research methods, namely field and library research, by conducting direct interviews with figures who are considered capable and taking references from related print media (Emzir, 2010).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Community Religious Understanding in Wewangrewu Village Tanasitolo District Wajo Regency

The religious understanding of an area is generally determined by the history, culture, and social environment of the people who live there. In this case, it is crucial to note that each religious understanding has its own special and unique characteristics. Therefore, we must respect each other and respect the differences in religious

understanding that exist in a region. The diversity of a region certainly creates its own challenges, especially in terms of establishing harmony. It is not a practical thing to unite various kinds of disparities because disparities often lead to divisions and even feuds. Moreover, when new values arrive and try to penetrate, clashes often occur, even though, in the end, there is an understanding to live side by side.

Differences are not a reason to destroy peace. On the contrary, beauty is expected from the diversity and plurality of social life. Islam places great emphasis on the importance of peace. Islam itself comes from the word "*Aslama-Yuslimu*", which means giving peace. It is somewhat ironic when we do things in the name of Islam that destroy peace, let alone create unrest and fear in other people (Umar, 2021). The existence of Islamic community organizations (Ormas) has also become a catalyst for the introduction of an inclusive style of Islam, a religious character that views religion and nationality as one unit. Like other religious organizations, Islamic mass organizations are very influential supporters of this nation. The presence of Islamic mass organizations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and other Islamic mass organizations is very important for the Indonesian government. The Indonesian nation is a nation whose population is diverse or plural, both horizontally and vertically (Firdaus, 2014).

For the Indonesian people, the state and Islamic organizations have a very close relationship. Islamic mass organizations play a fairly extensive role in various state policies. In another sense, Islamic mass organizations actively participate in government decision-making. The role of Islamic mass organizations is to help the government a lot, especially in empowering the community and community, especially community religious development. Islamic organizations operate a myriad of educational institutions, from early childhood education to tertiary institutions, both formal and informal. Countless educational institutions originate from pure community self-help (Wijaya et al., 2015).

The Role of Religious Figures in Maintaining Religious Harmony in Wewangrewu Village Tanasitolo District Wajo Regency

Religious figures have a very important role in efforts to maintain religious harmony. Religious figures have the opportunity to influence the thoughts and attitudes of their congregation and maintain harmony in society. The following are several roles that religious figures can play in an effort to maintain religious harmony in Wewangrewu Village, Tanasitolo District:

1. As a spiritual leader

Religious figures lead Muslims in spiritual aspects. They become role models in carrying out worship and inspire people to improve their relationship with Allah. Through lectures, sermons, and religious teachings, they provide spiritual direction to the congregation to strengthen their faith and piety. As spiritual leaders, they help Muslims face challenges and direct them on the right path. Religious figures lead and teach Islamic principles, which include justice, honesty, mutual assistance, and mutual respect.

By reminding people of correct moral values, religious figures help maintain good behavior in Muslim society. They provide advice and direction in dealing with moral dilemmas and provide understanding about good and bad actions (Uzma, 2019). Religious leaders have a responsibility to ensure a correct understanding of religion and counter the spread of erroneous or extremist understandings. They interpret religious teachings wisely and provide a balanced and contextual understanding. By fighting narrow or radical views that can divide people, religious figures maintain harmony and diversity in Muslim communities.

According to Ambo Asse, religious figures such as village imams, nurse priests, religious instructors, and ustad in Wewangrewu Village, Tanasitolo District, have carried out their roles as spiritual leaders because at religious events and activities, the religious leaders provide spiritual direction to the community through lectures, sermons, and recitations.

2. As a guide (preacher)

Religious figures have a role in spreading messages that emphasize the importance of tolerance and peace, as well as opposing extremist and radical views. Religious leaders must emphasize that religion actually teaches peace, love, and harmony between religious communities. To prepare an ideal khairu ummah society, there are four elements of da'wah that need to be addressed, namely the material of da'wah, the method of preaching, the subject of preaching (muballigh), and the object of preaching (society). It seems difficult to prepare a khairu ummah if you don't fix the four pillars of da'wah (Uzma, 2019).

The preaching material that should be conveyed to the public is the articulation of verses and hadiths regarding the real life of the community. What is meant by articulation here is the use of verses and hadith in everyday life. We should not directly confront or legitimize people's deeds and actions with literal verses and hadiths. We need to understand the context of the verses and hadith before conveying them to the target of the da'wah. The Prophet Muham-

mad was also taught to approach society in persuasive ways. It is unwise to introduce the laws of fiqh in detail to a community that has never had a comprehensive understanding of Islamic creeds. If you bring the ontology of fiqh and morals forward to a community without understanding the basics of faith, it is feared that they will be impressed by Islamic teachings as a burden that must be carried out rather than guidance that will guide them to experience inner peace. The guidance of Islamic teachings not only invites people to become "experts of obedience" but also "experts of worship." Firstly, the religious message will be felt as a burden, while secondly, the religious message will be felt as something enjoyable (al-Hadar, 2022). The second message is what is expected to reach the community: obedience and worship should not be obtained as a result of fear of the torment of the last day, but it is better if you obey and worship because your love has awakened a feeling of wanting to continue to get closer to Allah.

One of the preaching materials emphasizes the study of moderate teachings. Religious figures can encourage religious adherents to understand and practice religious teachings in a moderate manner. They can emphasize the values of peace, tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation of differences. This narrative emphasizes the importance of balanced understanding, open thinking, and the values of tolerance in practicing religion. In this context, emphasizing moderate religious teachings means avoiding narrow and extreme interpretations that can lead to radical actions and violence. Religious figures play an important role in conveying this message to religious adherents and society in general. They help explain that true religion is about peace, compassion, justice, and respect for others. Religious moderation refers to a balanced, open, and inclusive approach to religion. This involves a non-extreme and impartial understanding of interpreting and practicing religious teachings (Agama, 2019).

Preaching methods should be more effective in transforming the target of preaching (society) from destructive habits to constructive habits. It is time for conventional preaching methods to be adapted to current developments. Now that technology is increasingly developing, it is time for da'wah to be carried out effectively and efficiently. It is time for the one-way method of monologue and indoctrination in preaching to be varied with the dialogue method and triple helix and to accommodate more modern means of preaching.

The ideal missionary is no longer the one who succeeds in making the audience and congregation laugh out loud or cry uncon-

trollably, but how much the congregation gets provisions and guidance in living this competitive life. A preacher's confidence and mastery of the material are very necessary, considering that audiences and congregations are now increasingly smarter. Preachers must try to be wise people. Now we are not worried about the lack of smart people because every day dozens of doctors and professors are born. However, what is worrying is that wise people are increasingly rare. Just as we do not need to worry about the lack of politicians, what worries us is the lack of statesmen. We also don't need to worry about a shortage of scientists, but what worries us is the decreasing number of religious scholars (Umar, 2021).

According to Syaharuddin Darwis, I have confirmed that religious figures in Wewangrewu Village have more moderate religious knowledge because they have previously attended training on religious moderation. And this is one of the programs of the Ministry of Religion through the Office of Religious Affairs, so that in conveying the message of religious figures, especially religious figures, village Imams, and Muballigh in Wewangrewu Village, they emphasize the values of peace, tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for differences.

3. As a Facilitator

Religious figures can also act as facilitators, one of which is by collaborating with the local government. This is very important in efforts to maintain religious harmony. Religious leaders can collaborate with the government to provide education and training to imams, religious leaders, or other religious figures. This includes providing an accurate understanding of religion, maintaining harmony, preventing radicalism, and how to identify signs of radicalism among the faithful.

Through this collaboration program, religious leaders can carry out counseling or training by inviting presenters who are experts in their field regarding religious moderation. One person who can be a resource is the leader of the As'adiyah Islamic boarding school, who is the leader and vanguard of religious moderation. By inviting quality speakers, it is hoped that the community will be enthusiastic and able to understand and practice what is taught well, so that peace can be created with the beauty of tolerance and can reflect Islam rahmatan lil alamin, which brings prosperity and peace.

According to A. Abd. Maliki (Village Head), religious leaders such as the village imam, Imam Dusan, and Muballigh first collaborate with the village government to carry out outreach with the community. Previously, religious leaders carried out training first before conducting outreach to the community in Wangrewu Village.

E. CONCLUSION

In Wewangrewu Village, there are several sects or community organizations; there are those who follow Nahdatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Jamaah Tabligh, and there are also a handful who follow Wahdah Islamiyah and Khalwatiyah, although the ones that dominate are NU and Muhammadiyah. The role of religious figures in efforts to maintain religious harmony is: First, religious figures act as leaders. Religious figures play a role as leaders in spiritual matters with their religious attitudes that can be emulated by the community, as well as as democratic leaders who emphasize the importance of maintaining unity in a region or country. Religious figures also play a role as leaders in the social life of society who can help the community face, resolve, and prevent social problems in society. Second, religious figures act as implementers of da'wah. Religious figures must be wise people, wise in dealing with a pluralistic society. Religious figures must also be technologically literate and upgrade their da'wah materials in accordance with current developments so that they are not monotonous and so that the da'wah message can be conveyed well to the public. Third, religious figures act as facilitators. Religious leaders can conduct outreach by facilitating the community to present resource persons who are experts in their fields. Apart from counseling regarding religious moderation, what is also important to pay attention to is counseling wisely in using social media and forming a youth community with education and cadre formation as the vanguard of religious moderation so that harmony can be fostered from an early age so as to prevent the emergence of divisions.

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