

Social Harmony Between Muslims and Catholics in Reo District, Central Manggarai Regency

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to describe the forms of social relations between Muslims and Catholics, public perceptions of religious differences, and factors that influence harmony between Catholics and Muslims so that social integration is created in the midst of a religiously diverse society. This study uses a qualitative method by collecting data through observation and interviews. The results of the study show that social relations are shown in economic activities and social activities. Muslims and Catholics view diversity as a beauty, and both have an awareness of the importance of building social relations with each other and understanding each other. The factors that influence harmony between Catholics and Muslims are factors of religion, history, kinship, customs, and the natural environment

INTRODUCTION

In general, the religions recognized in Indonesia are Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, where Islam is the majority (Abidin & Saebani, 2014). However, in some areas such as Papua and NTT, the majority of the religion is Catholic, in Bali the majority of the religion is Hindu, but harmony between religious communities is harmonious and forms cooperation in various fields so that this raises awareness of attitudes and characteristics of high solidarity and tolerance which are the benchmark for the presence of social integration in the midst of a pluralistic society.

One of the areas in Reok District, Central Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, namely Reo, is one of the areas with many Muslims, but Catholicism remains the majority. Solidarity and religious harmony are clearly depicted in the community in Reo Village, Reo Subdistrict. In general, Muslims in Reo are the Bima tribe who have settled for a long time and are mostly found in coastal areas, while Catholics are local natives who are mostly found in mountainous areas but are now mixed, but still, identification between Manggarai and Bima people can be done easily. This can be seen from the physical appearance and appearance of both elements which have their own unique characteristics. Meetings at the market as the center of economic activities for the Reo community make their brotherhood even closer, Muslims sell fish and mountain people sell vegetables, complementing each other and respecting each other in the division of labor, is one basic example of the emergence of integration between Muslims and Catholics in Reo. The livelihoods of the local community are generally farming and fishing.

The Manggarai people in Reo accept and follow the flow of modernization but still do not abandon their ancestral values. The Manggarai people in Reo, both Catholics and Muslims, hold fast to the philosophy of mutual cooperation which has been passed down from generation to generation. This philosophy of life is applied by the local community in their lives where the traditional values are the values of unity and togetherness (Dagur, 1997). According to Koentjaraningrat, the system of mutual assistance (also called mutual cooperation) in social life in society has several levels of willingness, depending on the type of activity, including: mutual assistance in agricultural activities, mutual assistance in household activities, mutual assistance in preparing parties and ceremonies, and mutual assistance when disasters occur (Koentjaraningrat, 2002).

The local community realizes that the differences that occur in the community do not make them have to break up and be hostile to each other, because for them all are brothers, all have different religions, only the way is different. Unlike other areas in Indonesia, the diversity in the Reo community has never caused significant conflict. The issue of SARA which is the fuel for division has never been seen in the Reo community. The community lives with an attitude of tolerance that sets aside personal and group interests. The community respects each other where the peak of this togetherness is peace. The peace that occurs is the result of the community's adaptation pattern in adjusting

to culture, where each religion is aware of needing each other as social beings even though they have different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Social integration in the Reo community is reflected in daily life in the fields of Economy, Culture, Social Organization, and Education. The construction of a Church built adjacent to the Mosque and located in the Ngaji village is a symbol of love between religious communities. The participation of the Catholic religion in several Muslim activities and vice versa is an open attitude of each religion to respect each other in differences. Another example in the field of education, there are 7 schools built in a special complex, namely Bukit Barangkolong where the schools stand side by side between the Catholic school (SMAK St.Gregorius Reo) and the Islamic School (State Islamic High School), between SMPK Reo (Catholic Junior High School), SMPN (Junior High School), and MTSN (State Islamic Junior High School). The two religious communities work together to create a safe and prosperous community life, setting aside egoism and making tolerance and mutual cooperation a philosophy of life.

Based on the background of the problem above, the author wants to find out more about the social relations between Muslims and Catholics carried out by the community in Reo in everyday life, with different conditions of belief but living in harmony as evidence of awareness of attitudes and actions of living in society but still united as a form of social integration that is worthy of being an example, and are there opportunities that allow for indications that can cause conflict between the two communities. So the researcher conducted a study on the Harmonization of Catholics and Muslims as a study of Social Integration in Reo, Central Manggarai, West Nusa Tenggara (NTT) which is inseparable from anthropological studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Social Harmony

Different religions, organizations, ethnicities, tribes, politics, and countries are not automatically obstacles to creating harmony but can be a medium or basis for creating harmony. Harmony must first be built in the family with effective communication and closeness, then developed outside the home (Dahesihsari et al., 2019). The closeness and intimacy shown by a family show the value of harmony, just as a musical instrument shows a melodious and pleasant sound when listened to. Every harmony, warmth, integration, and harmony show the meaning of this harmony. Tracing the true meaning of harmony means referring to harmony, warmth, integration, and harmony that are deep and involve the heart and soul along with its physical evidence (Torro et al., 2013). Integration between the physical and the psychic will be manifested in the form of behavior and comfort to be side by side. A person's reluctance to listen, greet, and be side by side shows that the person's harmony is being disturbed. It may be that he looks or shows harmony towards someone but in his heart there is conflict and conflict between them. This is not the essence of harmony. Harmony actually refers to the physical and spiritual harmony that exists within a person as an individual and as a member of society (Supriatna & Atikah, 2024).

Social harmony refers to a condition in which individuals or groups in society can live together peacefully, respect each other, and build good cooperation despite their differences. This includes strong integration, tolerance of differences, and peaceful conflict resolution to create a balanced and stable social environment (Safei, 2020). Social harmony is not just about living in harmony, but also about how each individual and group can support each other in various aspects of life. In addition, social harmony is also closely related to social inclusion and social cohesion. Social inclusion ensures that everyone, without exception, feels accepted and appreciated. Meanwhile, social cohesion is a force that unites society, creating a sense of togetherness and solidarity. Both are important pillars in realizing social harmony (Wahab, 2015).

According to Emile Durkheim, Social harmony is the result of strong social integration, where individuals feel bound by the same values and norms, thus creating order in society (Rahman & Pangasih, 2020). Furthermore, Max Weber explains that social harmony is a condition in which relationships between individuals and groups are based on understanding and mutual respect for differences, both in status, power, and culture (Syawaludin, 2025). Meanwhile, Talcott Parsons states that Social harmony is a state in which the social system functions well, where every part of society contributes to overall stability and balance (Nazsir, 2008). Thus, social harmony is an important foundation for creating a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable society. By understanding the concept of social harmony, its principles, and efforts to achieve it, we can all contribute to building a more inclusive and cohesive environment. Starting from small things like tolerance, mutual cooperation, to utilizing social media to spread the message of peace, every step we take has a big impact.

The function of social harmony in society is, first, creating shared prosperity: social harmony has a positive impact on the shared prosperity of society. With harmonious relationships, society can work together to achieve common goals such as economic development, health, education, and others. Second, improving the quality of life: a harmonious social environment creates conditions that support individuals to work optimally. This can improve the overall quality of life for all members of society (Shinta & Albina, 2024).

The third function is reducing conflict and violence: social harmony helps reduce the potential for conflict and violence in society. With mutual understanding and tolerance between individuals and groups, conflicts can be resolved peacefully without triggering detrimental disputes. and fourth, encouraging a healthy multicultural life: in the era of globalization, modern societies often have a diversity of cultures, religions, and backgrounds. Social harmony allows this diversity to become a source of strength, not conflict, by respecting and promoting the values of multiculturalism (Al Hakim, 2015).

Social Harmony in the Perspective of Symbolic Interactionism Theory

In life, every human being has a different attitude and behavior. Because, humans are very mysterious creatures. No one knows what is in a person's heart. This also applies when interacting with others, either by seeing directly or through technology that is already so advanced. Even so, all human interactions have certain patterns, one of which is symbolic interaction or symbolic interactionism

In the view of Symbolic Interactionism theory, humans are creatures who make or produce symbols; a thought that reminds us of the statement of the German philosopher from the neo-Kantian camp, Ernst Cassirer, that humans are animal symbolicum (Effendy et al., 2023). Everything (objects) in human life have symbolic meanings. These meanings do not come by themselves, but are presented and then agreed upon and made into symbols. Symbols here are understood as signs that contain an agreement on meaning. Therefore, human behavior, both as individuals and groups, starts from the symbolic meanings of the objects (Smith & Purwandari, 2021).

The concept of symbolic interaction experts such as George Herbert Mead and Charles H. Cooley focused on the interaction between individuals and groups. They found that people interact primarily by using symbols that include signs, gestures, and most importantly through written and spoken words. A word does not have an inherent meaning in the word itself, but is only a sound, and will only have meaning if people agree that the sound contains a special meaning (Efendi et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, according to Harbert Blumer, symbolic interaction is described with three main ideas, namely; act, thing, and meaning. Humans act (act) towards something (thing) based on the meaning (meaning) that something has comes from social interaction between a person and others. Meaning is treated or changed through a process of interpretation, which people use in dealing with something they encounter (meaning is not simply accepted but interpreted first (Nugroho, 2021).

There are three important concepts in symbolic interaction, namely: First, Thought becomes the ability to use symbols with general social meaning. Thought cannot be understood as a separate process in social communication. There are two phases, namely conversation and language. Each individual must develop their thoughts through interaction with other individuals. Second, self becomes the ability to imagine how we see others. This means how we reflect others from the assessment of other people's opinions. Symbolic interaction theory is one of the branches of sociological theory that speaks about oneself and the surrounding environment. Third, society is a network of human social relationships that create and respond to society. Each individual is involved in behavior that is actively and voluntarily chosen by himself. Then that choice becomes the determination of the role in society. People are motivated to act based on the meaning they give to other people, objects, and events. This meaning is made in the language that people use both in communicating with others, self-talk, or their own personal thoughts (Purnomo & Indarti, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted in Reo District, Central Manggarai Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province. The type of research used in this study is descriptive research using a qualitative approach. Descriptive research aims to accurately describe the characteristics of individuals, conditions, symptoms or certain groups between one symptom and another in society (Komara, 2014). Data were collected through observation and interviews. The collected data were then sorted based on the focus of the research to be answered. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using related research results from books and journals. Furthermore, the results of the data analysis were presented in a narrative so that they could be used for the development of science, especially in the social and humanitarian fields.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Form of Social Relations between Muslims and Catholics

The relationship between Muslims and Catholics is manifested in economic activities. In interacting, Reo people who are Catholic and Muslim usually meet closely at the place where they work. Almost every day Reo people who work in the agricultural, plantation, or trade sectors can interact well. Even when Reo people of different beliefs carry out their religious activities, they do not interfere with each other, in fact they exchange ideas about the problems they each face to find a way out. This is according to an interview with Marten, he said that:

I am a native of Manggarai and most Manggarai people work as farmers and gardeners. But when I farm, I only work as a farm laborer during the harvest season or rice planting season, I often volunteer to be a daily laborer and get paid, most of the people who own the fields are Bima people. We Manggarai people are indeed experts when it comes to planting or cutting dry rice so we need each other, Bima people need us to rip rice and plant rice, we Manggarai people need money from our work to supplement our daily living expenses.

The same thing was also expressed by Marwati, that:

We have rice fields when we want to harvest we always work together with the Manggarai people so that they do the work because they are strong and good people. I myself sometimes work selling fish at the market, the buyers are mostly Manggarai people and there are also our people from Bima. At the market the Manggarai people sell tomatoes, and vegetables from their gardens and we sell fish, sometimes when it is already night and it is time to go home and they want to go home they ask to exchange their sales with fish, and we exchange rather than that fish I bring home, it is not good it is better to exchange, because they are also good and we exchange.

The well-established relationship in the economic field in the community in Reok District between the native Manggarai people and the Bima people is due to the awareness of the community to solve all problems in working by opening themselves to each other. In addition, people with different beliefs as stated by informants who are Muslim and Catholic have cooperation in the field of trade in the market. Awareness of needing each other makes the relationship between the two parties good and harmonious. The existence of a well-structured division

of labor so that both parties need each other and are interdependent makes the relationship between the two religious communities closer. This is in line with the opinion of Talcott Parson who explains integration as a system present in the midst of society and forms a social system because of the existence of a cooperative relationship in the division of labor or correlation so that a harmonious society is created.

The relationship between Muslims and Catholics is also reflected in the cultural life of the community. In carrying out relations or communication between religious communities, it runs very well, they always live side by side both in the environment where they live and in the place where they work and find food. The Manggarai people are very famous for their attitude of mutual cooperation in unity and oneness, this is proven in the social life of the Reo people who do not recognize differences. The Reo people are unique in building interfaith relations, this uniqueness makes ndai dou mbojo or Bima people and Manggarai people live in a harmonious framework. If there is a social work, we always do it together, maybe it has become a habit but there is a strong feeling that makes us feel like brothers. If there is an activity or event, the Manggarai people spontaneously mingle without being invited or told to help each other.

The Reo people build good social relationships by uniting through feelings first, and then manifesting themselves in their daily attitudes and behaviors, similar to what Durkheim explained about Integration as a moral where a society is able to give birth to moral values and feelings from the behaviors of different individuals, so that solidarity and integration will continue to exist even in the midst of changing times. Their involvement in their daily activities and interactions occurs spontaneously, be it assistance or involvement from the Manggarai people towards the Bima people or vice versa. The term Reo people is actually a term that was born by itself on the basis of the relationship built by both parties, namely the Manggarai people and also the Bima people.

A unique sight to see in the Reo community Language is a means of communication that is an important factor in carrying out an interaction, language is a symbol in starting an introduction or relationship. The Manggarai and Bima people each choose their own dialect and regional language, but language is not an obstacle for the Reo people because many Manggarai people understand the Bima language and vice versa, many Bima people understand the Manggarai language, and among those who do not know or understand the language, they communicate and relate using the unifying language, namely Indonesian.

Reo Community Perceptions About Religious Differences

The awareness and understanding of each religious community towards religion and the values contained in each religious teaching will bring positive consequences or impacts for the creation of a social order decorated with harmony and peace. This is more due to the fact that basically all religions have a number of values and ethics that are generally accepted by all religious groups, the Reo people are one example of this harmony and peace.

Living in differences is not a problem that must be debated between fellow creatures of God, we have one ancestor, namely Adam and Eve, it's just that we choose different paths to heaven, but in every religion we certainly believe that God does not want conflict between us, just like we are with Muslims or Bima people, we are brothers. The Lord Jesus said that love others as you love yourself, that is just one of God's words that teaches us that we must live in peace between fellow human beings and the natural environment. This church was built in the Ngaji area where the majority of the population is Muslim rather than Catholic. When we are praying or doing other religious activities, Muslims never disturb us or cause chaos. They greet us very well. The response we give is just a small example of how we respect each other in our daily lives in Reo.

Each religious community has its own guidelines where in each religious teaching teaches to love and accept each other as God's creations. Religious communities in Reo accept each other's differences, live in a harmonious framework and never question the background of both parties, this is evidenced by the construction of a mosque and a church close together in one village area called the Ngaji village. The form of integration in Reo is always maintained by them, each religious community does not prioritize their ego so that what is seen is an atmosphere of integration. If there are religious events, Catholics and Muslims help each other, so that the attitude of solidarity and harmony remains evident in interactions and communications until a safe and peaceful atmosphere is maintained in Reo District.

Factors Influencing Harmony between Catholics and Muslims

1. Religion

Catholics and Muslims in Reo believe that every religion has its own teachings and guidelines where every follower of a religion believes that religion provides peace, tranquility, and peace in life, each religion also has its own ways of achieving it, but religious teachings also have similarities in translating each meaning of its teachings. For example, it is recommended to love each other, help each other, assist each other, cooperate, and respect each other. Religion in its journey is usually not only used as the truth of religion, it can also be practiced or applied in everyday life, either through words, attitudes, behavior or actions. Building harmony between religions in national unity is our shared task. The church considers which things are found in the human race because all nations are one society, one origin, because God has a human race that inhabits the entire face of the earth who has one final goal, namely God. In terms of inter-religious relations, the church also respects Muslims who worship the only God, who is alive and sovereign, full of love, and Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth.

Muslims in Reo also certainly believe that we have the same God, obey all his commands, hate chaos and hostility, this is proven by the fact that we live side by side with each other without any serious disputes or problems that can damage our good relations with Muslims. Religion strengthens group norms, moral sanctions for individual actions, and becomes the basis for common goals and values that balance society. Religion can also be seen as an element of a society in addition to other elements such as art, language, livelihood systems, technology, and social organizations. Humans, society and culture are interconnected. Functionalism theory sees religion as the dominant social cause

for forming social strata and religion is also seen as a social institution that answers basic needs to fulfill worldly values.

2. History

The closeness of the relationship between Catholics and Muslims in Reo is also influenced by historical factors that through the historical process have made the bonds of brotherhood between the two communities very close. The Manggarai people, most of whom are Catholics, are the original inhabitants of the land of Manggarai, while the Bima people who are Muslims are immigrants whose history began during the Kingdom, they came by sea, sailing to the island of Flores and seeing the natural potential of Manggarai, the Bima people wanted to try their luck in the land of Manggarai and build their Kingdom (Bandur, 2023).

Actually, people who come to the Reo area, they are interested and tempted by the abundant natural wealth here, that's why they come, likewise the beginning of the Bima people came through the coast, they wanted to build their kingdom here and see the extraordinary natural potential in Reok District. They are indeed famous for being good at sailing, that's why from the Bima people, if there are many who sell fish in the market. Although in the past our history was different, but because we have similarities and seem to need each other in fulfilling family welfare, so with the same goal, the differentiating factors such as religion, social, and culture are able to maintain good relations with them.

Over time, the relationship between the two religions has become closer, this is because there are still advantages from both groups in terms of livelihoods where the Bima people are experts in fishing and the Manggarai people are experts in gardening, so that at that time there was an exchange of livelihoods known as *ngende*. The better acceptance of the Manggarai people towards the Bima people made the relationship between the two religions even closer. The frequent interactions between the two groups created a strong bond so that they felt like brothers because they needed each other. Their love for the land of Manggarai made the two religions continue to try to create good relations, the existence of several traditional events or activities that symbolized their close relationship was a symbol of the birth of integration among the Reo people. Over time, there have been several Manggarai people who have married Bima people, making the bond between them even closer.

3. Marriage

The thing that encourages harmony in a society of different religions or beliefs in Reo, both between Catholics and Muslims, is because of the family or kinship ties between the Muslim community and the Catholic community. The people of different beliefs or religions who live in Reo between Catholics and Muslims are still very much related, they have a relationship because both Muslims and Catholics have family relationships from the results of marriages between two people of different religions, one is Muslim and the other is Catholic, sometimes the Catholic converts to Islam and sometimes the Muslim converts to Catholicism. But the relationship between the two with their families who are still from different religions is still well maintained as usual. Even though sometimes one party does not want to accept it, but over time they will

return to harmony. In my own family there are Catholics because that was the result of marriage, but our relationship is still fine.

The marriage that occurred between Catholics and Muslims in Reo made the relationship between the two religions even stronger so that the expression *Ase Kae* emerged which means younger brother. *Ase kae* comes from the Manggarai language, the concept of *ase kae* is similar to the concept of *orang basudara* in Papua where this concept was born as a form of brotherhood and integration that is present in the midst of a pluralistic society. Based on information obtained during research conducted in the field that so far when there are celebrations of religious holidays such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Christmas and Easter, as well as wedding celebrations, usually the people who visit the house or residence are those who have family relationships with each other.

4. Customs

Before the rules and teachings of the Catholic and Islamic religions entered Reok District and influenced life, the Reo people were already familiar with the traditional rules and teachings which are still valid today and have been passed down from generation to generation. These teachings can be in the form of a philosophy or outlook on life of the Manggarai and Bima people. The noble values contained in the teachings of each custom are values that are created and agreed upon together so that human life can be peaceful and prosperous. The Manggarai people in general have extraordinary determination and enthusiasm in working to earn a living, their hard work and their sense of family are expressed in their philosophy of life, namely *Neka acu ngong wau, nekode ngong woe*, the meaning of this expression is do not act harshly like dogs and monkeys towards family or relatives or family, be polite to everyone, always be polite in your behavior, be polite in speaking with others. This expression illustrates that Manggarai people have a polite attitude and character towards anyone without seeing differences and this is proven in their daily actions with Bima people and anyone who comes to Manggarai land, so that it feels intimate and intense.

Similar to the Manggarai people, the Bima people also have a life principle that they consider as ancestral teachings that are carried wherever and whenever, namely *maja labo dahu* which means Shame and Fear, the meaning of these two words is very deep, the Bima people always instill a sense of shame which is interpreted as low self-esteem so that wherever they go to wander and are whether in the land of Manggarai, in Java, or in Sulawesi they are able to adapt by bringing a polite and not arrogant attitude so that they can be accepted by others, while *Maja* or fear is interpreted as their love for their God, namely Allah SWT, so that they always practice His commands and avoid His prohibitions. Both religious groups, both Catholics or Manggarai people and Muslims or Bima people, both have complementary views of life that they have carried from the past until now so that they become one of the factors that bind the relationship between the two religious communities.

5. Natural Environment

Muslims or Bima people initially came to Manggarai by sea, they sailed through the coast because of that they built settlements and lived for the first time on the coast so that the work they did was catching fish in the sea or as fishermen. While the native Manggarai people prefer to live in the hills and prefer to work as farmers and gardeners. Each of the two groups has complementary jobs. When the Manggarai people want to eat fish and the Bima people want to eat vegetables, there is a process of exchanging the results of their livelihoods, and this is an important part that makes the relationship between the two groups more harmonious because they need each other and are interdependent.

In the past, there was a big event between the Bima and Manggarai people called Ngende, the Bima and Manggarai people exchanged their livelihoods, usually the Bima people went to the Manggarai people's place, but unfortunately now there are no more events like that, at most we only meet at the market. This phenomenon explains that the rich natural environment factor and accompanied by their two skills or professions make them need each other and depend on each other, so that the relationship between the two groups or religious communities is increasingly accurate and solid. The existence of a division of labor makes the balance in the regularity of the Reo people's lives run well, because each party is aware of the importance of building relationships with each other.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The form of social relations between Catholics or Manggarai people and Muslims or Bima people in Reo Central Manggarai NTT is manifested in the form of cooperation that is apparent in the economic or livelihood sector, each party needs each other in an effort to meet daily needs. Cooperation is also apparent in the socio-cultural and community sectors such as mutual cooperation in wedding parties, mutual involvement in religious holidays, independence days, traditional celebrations, social organizations, dialogues or seminars on tolerance, social services involving religious figures, traditional figures, community leaders, young men and women, security forces, local government and other members of the general public.

Every religious community in Reo, both Catholics and Muslims, have the same point of view that religious differences in Reo are not a problem because living within a framework of differences and diversity is a beauty. The awareness of the importance of social relations between each other, makes both Catholics and Muslims learn to understand and comprehend the shortcomings of their neighbors' religions.

Integration between Catholics and Muslims is influenced by religious factors, history, family or marriage relationships, customs, the natural environment and is supported by an attitude of tolerance and awareness of differences and an open attitude are factors that influence harmony between Catholics and Muslims in Reo.

FUTURE STUDY

This research still has delays, so further research is needed on the topic of Social Harmony Between Muslims and Catholics in Reo District, Central Manggarai Regency to enhance this research and add insights for readers.

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