

## Social-Harmony within Aceh Society: An Analysis towards Religious Tolerance of Muslim and Non-Muslim Communities in Banda Aceh

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### Abstract

This paper examines how social harmonization can be realized in Aceh since the independence of the Republic of Indonesia until now. The people of Aceh are a pluralistic society, although the majority are Muslim, the problem of conflict between religious communities is rare. Even after the province implemented Islamic Sharia, inter-religious harmony remained closely intertwined. Therefore, there is a need for a study that looks at the social harmonization aspects of religious tolerance, especially in daily behavior terms of Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Banda Aceh city. This paper shows that religious tolerance in Aceh is running as it has in other provinces even though the province has been designated as an area that implements Islamic Shari'a. This can be seen from the interactions that exist between Muslims and non-Muslims in various community activities. Based on the author's observations and experiences, it shows that the religious harmony of the Acehnese people is very deep. Some of the authors' findings in looking at the depth of tolerance include that non-Muslims can live side by side and gain freedom in carrying out their religious life. In addition, between them also established business interactions, cooperation, and involvement in socio-political life. In addition, the active role of non-Muslim communities through the association has strengthened this harmony. Non-Muslims in Aceh have developed mutual respect and compassion through social activities.

**Keywords:** *Social Harmony, Aceh Communities, and Religious Tolerance*

### Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji bagaimana harmonisasi sosial dapat diwujudkan di Aceh sejak kemerdekaan hingga sekarang. Meskipun mayoritas beragama Islam, masyarakat Aceh merupakan masyarakat yang majemuk. Terbukti dari konflik antar umat beragama yang jarang terjadi. Begitu juga setelah Aceh menerapkan Syariah Islam, kerukunan antar umat beragama tetap terjalin erat. Maka dari itu, perlu adanya kajian yang melihat aspek harmonisasi sosial dan toleransi beragama khususnya dalam perilaku keseharian masyarakat muslim dan non-Muslim di kota Banda Aceh. Tulisan ini menunjukkan bahwa toleransi beragama di Aceh berjalan seperti yang terjadi di provinsi lain meskipun provinsi tersebut telah ditetapkan sebagai daerah yang menerapkan syariat Islam. Hal ini terlihat dari interaksi yang terjalin antara umat Islam dan non-Muslim dalam berbagai aktivitas masyarakat. Berdasarkan pengamatan dan pengalaman penulis, kerukunan beragama masyarakat Aceh sangat dalam. Beberapa temuan penulis dalam melihat kedalaman toleransi antara lain bahwa non-Muslim dapat hidup berdampingan dan mendapatkan kebebasan dalam menjalankan kehidupan beragamanya. Selain itu, di antara mereka juga terjalin interaksi bisnis, kerjasama, dan keterlibatan dalam kehidupan sosial politik. Selain itu, peran aktif masyarakat non-Muslim melalui paguyuban telah memperkuat kerukunan ini. Non-Muslim di Aceh telah mengembangkan rasa saling menghormati dan kasih sayang melalui kegiatan sosial.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kerukunan Sosial, Masyarakat Aceh, Toleransi Beragama*

## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, creating a harmonious community life is not an easy matter, because it is a unitary state with plural and pluralistic society.<sup>1</sup> Indonesia has a very diverse ethnic composition with multiple languages and cultures and has adherents of different religions and beliefs (Syarif 2021). Therefore, the diversity of the Indonesian people cannot be managed properly, which will lead to potential conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Many factors can encourage the emergence of conflict in Indonesia, one of which is the conflict that occurs in the name of religion.<sup>3</sup>

Research by The Wahid Institute shows that during 2011 there has been an increase in violations of religious freedom in various regions in Indonesia. If the previous year (2010) had only 64 cases, then in the following year this number increased from 18% to 93 cases. The highest form of violation of religious freedom was the prohibition or restriction of religious activities and religious activities of certain groups which reached 49 cases (48%); acts of intimidation and threats of violence by state officials were recorded in 20 cases (20%); omission of violence 11 cases (11%), violence and coercion of belief 9 cases (9%); and criminalization and victimization of beliefs in 4 cases (4%).

In 2019 the Research and Development Agency and Training of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia conducted a study on the Index of Religious Harmony in 34 Provinces in Indonesia. This study tries to measure the relationship between religious communities that promote tolerance and equality in practicing religion and work together to build the Indonesian society, nation, and state-based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The main indicators are tolerance, equality, and cooperation.

The results of the survey stated that the index of religious harmony in Indonesia in 2019 was still running optimally with a score of 73.90 consisting of a Tolerance Score of 72.37, an Equality Score of 73, 72, and Cooperation of 75.40. If we look at these numbers, the most important thing that must be prioritized in government policies is the dimensions of tolerance and equality. Another interesting fact from the 2019 Religious Harmony index puts Aceh as the lowest province with 60.24 of the national average score of 73.83. Aceh's scores for each dimension are tolerance 52.95 (from the national average of 72.37), equality, 60.27 (from the national average of 73.72), and cooperation 67.49 (from the national average of 75,40).

The results of the survey which put Aceh as the province with the lowest index of religious harmony in Indonesia were then responded by the Aceh Religious Harmony and the Rights of Freedom (FKUB) which was then considered, "...has injured the noble values of the Acehnese people who are cultured, civilized, egalitarian, harmonious, and religious within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia". A wave of resistance also emerged from various levels of society in Aceh. They rejected the survey results because during the last post-conflict years it was believed that religious tolerance in Aceh was getting stronger.

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<sup>1</sup> Ihwan Fauzi, "Masyarakat Majemuk dan Dinamika Pendidikan Keagamaan (Kajian di Desa Putemata, Kolaka Timur)." *Jurnal Shautut Tarbiyah*, 2018:73–90.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Hifdil Islam, "Tolerance Limitation In Facing Religious Diversity Based On The Teaching Of Islam." *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3(1), 2020:1–13. doi: 10.31538/nzh.v3i1.483.

<sup>3</sup> Neti Budiwati, "The Religious Life Harmony and the Nation's Integrity in History View." *Historia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Peneliti Sejarah* 13(2) 2017:274. doi: 10.17509/historia.v13i2.6217.

Apart from the survey results and the response of the Acehnese people, historical records show that Aceh has a strong reference regarding how to create a harmonious society. Gampong Peunayong in Banda Aceh can be a real example of how tolerance and harmony between religious communities are applied, in particular, and about how inter-ethnic relations have existed since hundreds of years ago. As one of the areas with so many associations of Chinatown residents, Peunayong later became one of the business and industrial centers in Banda Aceh City.

The presence of the Chinese ethnic group in Aceh began in 1415 when Admiral Cheng Ho crossed the Malacca Strait and reached the Pasai Ocean. At that time, the admiral was greeted by the ruler of Samudera Pasai, King Zainal Abidin. Since then, Aceh has had contacts with China. In addition, another source stated that the expansion of the Chinese community to Aceh was the role of the Dutch when they brought Chinese people through Hong Kong to be employed in various sectors such as the army, opium deliverymen, house guards, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

Until now, the ethnic Chinese in Aceh are dominated by those who live in urban centers. In Aceh, the cities of Lhokseumawe and Banda Aceh are the two points with the most distribution of the Chinese community. In Banda Aceh their presence is concentrated in Kampung Mulia, Peunayong, Pasar Aceh. In Peunayong the Chinese dominate almost all types of trading activities. They manage various kinds of shops such as electronics stores, cellphone shops, building tools stores, basic food stores, textile and clothing stores, printing houses, toy shops, DVD shops, photocopies and photo printing, and so on. Furthermore, Chinese residents have also ventured into the food sector such as cake shops and food stalls.<sup>5</sup> After the tsunami, the Chinese community's business also expanded rapidly to cafes and coffee shops (warkop), where they employed local people to manage them. Warkop and Café that thrive around Banda Aceh City are suspected to involve the participation of the Chinese community.

This paper was then written to review the process of realizing social harmonization in the city of Banda Aceh by looking at the interactions that have been established between Muslim and non-Muslim communities both concerning social and religious activities. The scope of the discussion in this article will cover religious tolerance as seen from the daily activities of Muslim and non-Muslim communities, the attitude of tolerance, and the form of cooperation that exists between them.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted through a qualitative approach by conducting direct interviews with subjects related to the focus of this research. The data obtained and which will be presented in this paper are not in the form of numbers but are narrated to describe the facts that occur in the field. Meanwhile, the subjects of this study were all parties involved directly or indirectly with the focus of this research, both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, including non-Muslim food sellers and (Muslim) food buyers. Meanwhile, the research location is Banda Aceh City, especially the Peunayong area, which has a pluralistic society, consisting of various ethnicities and ethnic groups, languages, and religions. Because the people of Banda Aceh City are a pluralistic society, this area has the potential for conflict, both social conflicts and conflicts triggered in the name of religion.

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<sup>4</sup> Safuwan, and Muhammad Ali, "Personal Construct Experience of Tionghoa Community in Aceh Reality," *Emerald Reach Proceedings Series*. Vol. 1(2) 2018;193–98.

<sup>5</sup> Safuwan, and Muhammad Ali.

Therefore, research on inter-religious harmony in Aceh needs attention to understand the concept of harmony in religious life that has been running in Aceh.

This research was conducted from the beginning of December 2020 to the end of March 2021. The data collection technique used in the study was through observation or observation of the practices of religious tolerance that had been happening in Aceh. Data from observations in the field will be cross-checked with data from interviews with both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. In addition, interviews with colleagues (academics) who are also directly involved in these tolerance practices were also conducted. Researchers not only interviewed sources related to food as one of the media that often comes into contact with Muslim and non-Muslim issues but also other forms of tolerance practices. In addition, researchers also collect data in the form of documents, whether in the form of regulations, journals, or books related to the focus of this study.

Furthermore, the data analysis technique used in this research is interactive analysis. Where data analysis will be carried out throughout the research process in a continuous, repeated, and continuous process to form a cycle. The steps involved in analyzing the data are data reduction, data presentation, conclusion, and verification.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious harmony in Indonesia is an interesting issue to study considering that its pluralistic society can potentially lead to social conflict in the name of religion if it is not managed properly. Some studies on religious harmony were concerned with the concepts, strategies, and their implementation in building inter-religious harmony while others were focused on government role in maintaining religious harmony and community efforts in developing social solidarity through culture and local wisdom to form a religiously harmonious society.

There are six strategies that can be implemented to establish inter-religious harmony, namely; internalizing tolerance, maintaining kinship (*ukhuwah*), mutual respect and appreciation, maintaining mutual trust and avoidance of prejudice, clarifying and confirming the information received, and acting fairly.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, from the internal site, it is necessary to strengthen individual respective faith and develop positive attitude toward other people of different religions. Meanwhile from the external site religious harmony can be built through dialogues and collaboration in dealing with various humanitarian affairs. The dialogue carried among different religious communities will be able to grow maturity in practicing religious in the form of respecting differences in religious beliefs and avoiding egoism, truth claims, fanaticism, and exclusivism.<sup>7</sup>

In Islamic context, religious harmony is a condition of mutual acceptance, mutual respect, mutual help, and cooperation in achieving common goals. Whereas in Indonesia context, it is understood as a form of togetherness between religious communities and the government for the sake of the success of national development and safeguarding the Unitary State of the Republic of

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<sup>6</sup> K. Mayasaroh, "Toleransi Strategi Dalam Membangun Kerukunan Antarumat Beragama Di Indonesia," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies*, 3(1) 2020; 77–88.

<sup>7</sup> U. Sumbulah, "Pluralisme dan kerukunan umat beragama perspektif elite agama di Kota Malang," *Jurnal Analisa*, 22(1) 2015; 1–13.

Indonesia.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, the success of national development is dominantly influenced by government roles in building religious harmony among different religious communities. There have been a number of efforts performed by the government such as enacting laws and regulations and establishing Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) (Religious Harmony Forums) in a number of provinces.<sup>9</sup> Although the government has enacted laws and regulations concerning religious harmony, the potential of social conflicts on the name of religion may arise, triggered by issues of houses of worship construction licensing that is under the auspices of the government.

Fajriah (2019) argued that the regulations related to religious harmony and religious freedom enacted and run by the State of Republic of Indonesia do not against Islamic teachings. In fact, the rules are similar to the content and implementation of Medina charter text which gives freedom to its citizens to embrace a religion according to their respective beliefs. In addition, mutual respect for differences in social life is part of the actualization of Pancasila values that do not conflict with Islamic teachings.<sup>10</sup>

Culture and local wisdom play important roles in building a harmonious life in a society. They can serve as a unifier as well as a guard against religious differences in Indonesia. For example, the clan system in the Karo community in Kabanjahe, which is continuously maintained, has formed community solidarity in culture resulting into creating a harmonious social space that does not against religious differences.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, people of Kupang view of life, “Lil Au Nol Dael Banan” which means building dan developing a better Kupang City has served as its people duty to a life regardless of religion, ethnicity, or race. The religious harmony manifested to these days is based on mutual cooperation (Nusi), brotherly bonds (Butukila), mutual support and help (Suki Toka Apa), and a sense of belonging (Muki Nena).

The practice of building religious harmony based on local wisdom is also apparent in Jembul village community known as Gugur Gunung tradition. Initially, the tradition is an activity carried to open access, road, to the village. It was later diverted to building houses in the village together without being paid by the owner of the houses. This tradition has turned community social life become more harmonious. At this stage, the community considers that working together is necessary to solve community social problems, including the problem of unequal welfare. Gugur Gunung tradition involves all elements of the Jembul village community and has been carried out for generations. Attitudes for helping others is also practiced by the people of Jepit Banyuwangi village community, so as to encourage the growth of tolerance, acceptance, and mutual understanding toward others. The harmony and peacefulness manifested in the daily life of the Jepit Banyuwangi village community has become a role model for other villages at the surrounding.

Furthermore, the values of local wisdom that grow in a pluralistic society in Karangrowo village have strengthened social relations among them due to mutual trust and social network established. Mutual trust has encouraged the emergence of mutual cooperation, sharing, and

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<sup>8</sup> I. Rusydi, & S. Zolehah, “Makna Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Konteks Keislaman Dan Keindonesian,” *Journal for Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 2018; 170–181.

<sup>9</sup> A. Prayogo, dkk, “Peran Pemerintah dalam Upaya Menjaga Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Indonesia,” *Jurist-Diction*, 3(1),2020; 21.

<sup>10</sup>M. Hasibuan, “Aktualisasi Pancasila dan Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Kota Bengkulu,” *Jurnal Kependidikan*, 3(31), 2019; 24–28.

<sup>11</sup> M. A. Lubis, “Budaya dan Solidaritas Sosial dalam Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Tanah Karo,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Sosiologi Agama Dan Perubahan Sosial*, 11(2),2017; 239–258.

tolerance towards fellow residents of Karangrowo village. The trust among the people of Karangrowo village is strengthened through social networks in the form of vertical (social, religious and political organizations) and horizontal ties through informal activities.

In another case is the local wisdom of Bugis people which is incarnated in the concept *pesse* (empathy) comprising the values of humanizing humans (*sipakatau*), glorifying each other (*sipakalebbi*), and reminding each other (*sipakaingge*).<sup>12</sup> Likewise, the local wisdom of Jayapura people called *satu tungku tiga batu* which is the practice of inter-religious harmony integrated in thematic learning contents at elementary schools and madrasah. The practice of this tradition is described as the following: 1) celebrating holidays with family; 2) stone burning tradition where every one participates by donating food, Muslims with chicken and non-Muslim with pork.<sup>13</sup> On this consideration, it is important that the culture and local wisdom fostering tolerant values in the community be integrated into the Islamic religious education (PAI) education in both public and religious universities.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Harmony comes from the word *rukun* (Arabic) which means principle or basis. In KBBI (Indonesian language dictionary), harmonious means good, peaceful, not in dispute, one heart, and agree with each other. Meanwhile harmony means life and feelings that are intertwined with peace, kindness, not in dispute, and one heart. The term harmony is fully associated with kindness and peace. Thus, religious harmony is living together in a society without causing disputes and quarrels and has a good and peaceful meaning.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of living together in a pluralistic society, harmony is defined as unity of heart and an agreement not to create disputes and quarrels in the midst of diversity. Plurality is not a barrier to attain harmony and peace in the bonds of unity and fraternity. Awareness of religious harmony should be dynamic, humanistic, and democratic. All of the three are needed so that this transformation of awareness can expand to the community and the result is not only enjoyed by certain parties. Intensive interfaith dialogs will lead to a sense of mutual understanding, particularly those ones prioritizing a sense of awareness and humanity.<sup>15</sup>

Clifford Geertz has identified a number of factors that can encourage the growth of inter-religious harmony, among others, are upholding cultural similarities rather than emphasizing differences, minimizing missionary movements, and maintaining public order, inter-religious cooperation, maturity of thought, and an open attitude of religious adherents (inclusive). Whereas the inhibiting factors include religious fanaticism, unfriendly attitudes, and the exclusive attitudes of religious adherents.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> S. Hadi, & Y. Bayu, "Membangun Kerukunan Umat Beragama melalui Model Pembelajaran PAI Berbasis Kearifan Lokal pada Penguruan Tinggi," *Tarbiyah Wa Ta'lim: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 8(1), 2021; 23–36.

<sup>13</sup> A. A. Rofiki, "Integrasi Nilai Kearifan Lokal Dalam Pendidikan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Di Sekolah Dasar/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Sd/Mi) Kota Jayapura," *JMIE (Journal of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Education)*, 2(1), 2018; 62.

<sup>14</sup> Mayasaroh.

<sup>15</sup> A.A.Rofiki.

<sup>16</sup> Mayasaroh.

In Indonesian context, inter-religious harmony is one of the main pillars in maintaining national unity and sovereignty of the nation. Harmony is often interpreted as a living condition that reflects peace, in order, secure, prosperous, mutual respect, understanding, helping one another, and tolerance in the attempts to avoid conflicts breaking the joints of harmony in the life of pluralistic society.<sup>17</sup> The Republic of Indonesia Minister of Religious Affairs in 1978-1984 established Tri Kerukunan Beragama, three basic principles of regulation used as the foundation to build tolerance among religious believers in Indonesia. The three basic principles are: 1) Inter-religious harmony, the internal harmony of each religious community such as the harmony between different sects/ideas/schools existed within a particular religious group or community. 2) Religious community harmony, religious harmony among different religious communities that is harmony among people of different religions. 3) Religious harmony with the government, efforts to maintain harmony and congeniality among different religious adherents and officials with the government bureaucrats by understanding and respecting each other's duties to build a religious Indonesian society and nation.<sup>18</sup>

In the joint regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs number 9 and 8 of 2006, it is explained that religious harmony is a state of relationship among religious communities based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, cherishing equality in practicing their religious teachings, and cooperating with others in living a society and nation life in the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. This joint regulation shows that the ideal state of religious harmony does not only means achieving a fully tolerant mental state among religious communities but also, more importantly, to establish a cooperative relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in social life.

Religious harmony in Aceh is regulated in Aceh Qanun number 4 of 2016 concerning the nurturing of religious harmony and establishment of worship places. The themes of harmony for instance is written in article 2 stating that maintaining religious harmony is a shared responsibility of the central government, Aceh government, regency/city government, and religious communities. Likewise, article 20 also clearly explains that da'wah (missionary endeavor) should be carried out in the spirit of harmony, tolerance, mutual respect, and mutual understanding between fellow religion adherents and inter-religious believers and should be based on respect for individual rights and freedom to embrace and perform worship according to their respective religion.

Harmony and peace among religious communities in the society is not limited to mutual respect. It requires a further attempt to build a profound demeanor. In addition to respect for differences, there is also a need for understanding equality, that is when people do not discriminate themselves based on ethnicity and religion. This attitude for equality is the nation's main capital to come to a state of synergy and cooperation among religious communities to build a stable nation life. Muhammad Adlin Sila and Fakhruddin (2020) wrote how such harmony and peace can be established.

First, religious harmony is a state or condition of living of religious communities who interact harmoniously, tolerantly, peacefully, respect and cherish each other religious differences and freedom of worship. Second, in such interaction, do not demean one religion over another,

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<sup>17</sup> Sumbulah..

<sup>18</sup> Rusydi..

or in other words, treat other religions equally in practicing their worship, and do not interfere and violate religious norms. Third, work together to build the nation under the principle of take and give and mutual benefit from the shared contribution in achieving common goals of the state Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

Besides, the main foundation of religious harmony is attitude of tolerance. Linguistically, tolerance means demeanor and trait of tolerance showed by appreciating and allowing a certain stance, opinion, view, belief, other things different from their own.<sup>19</sup> In English, tolerance means to let, admit, be able to endure, be patient, and freedom. It also means ability to admit and respect other's belief and religious practices, and accepting other's ideas different from his/hers.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile in Arabic, tolerance is called *tasamuh* coming from the word *samaha* which means the attitude of letting or being open toward differences.

In principle, tolerance is the willingness of people in power not to use, negotiate, or suspend their power over others who are in powerless position. For example, the majority group who sociologically owns the power to intimidate and oppress the minority, but they do not want to. They offer lenience and freedom to them, instead.<sup>21</sup> Conversely, intolerance attitudes will arise when there is prejudice against others who are from different groups. This condition occurs when religious ties have been formed, giving rise to a feeling of in-group that causes people who are outside the bond considered as out-group who tend to receive different treatment and are even suspected to disrupt the resilience of these bonds. In such a context, conflicts and violent behaviors in the name of religion are likely to emerge.

Tolerance itself can be classified into three types,<sup>22</sup> namely: 1) political tolerance, a concept of tolerance emphasizing on how individual should respect, cherish, and maintain each respective political right, 2) cultural tolerance, an attitude of mutual respect toward the nation's culture, so that there is no attitude or behavior of superiority between cultures, ethnicities, or races. Every individual should look at other cultures as equals, 3) religious tolerance, an attitude of mutual respect and cherish any existing religious differences.

Islam implicitly acknowledges tolerance in religious life. In Islam, religious tolerance is part of social realm. This can be seen from God commandment which recognizes pluralistic in the society as contained in the Qur'an Surah Hud verses 118-119 which means:

*"And if your Lord had willed, He could have made mankind one community; but they will not cease to differ (118). Except whom your Lord has given mercy, and for that He created them. But the word of your Lord is to be fulfilled that, "I will surely fill Hell with jinn and men all together (119)."*

Furthermore, in the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, it is mentioned that Allah created various types, forms, climates, and colors. Similarly, Rasulullah SAW, the role model, had established trade relations and reciprocal provides with non-Muslims during his lifetime. This state

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<sup>19</sup> Syarif, Apipudin, "Islamic Religious Education And Multiculturalism." *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science* 2(1), 2021:73–80.

<sup>20</sup> Mayasaroh.

<sup>21</sup> N. Fajriah, "Kerukunan Umat Beragama: Relevansi Pasal 25 Piagam Madinah dan Pasal 29 UUD 1945," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 21(2),2020: 162.

<sup>22</sup> M. Ridwan Effendi, dkk. "Menjaga Toleransi Melalui Pedidikan Multikulturalisme. Al-Mutharahah," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*, 18(1),2021. 43–51.



shows that religion is a basic element of human life so that it must be respected and guaranteed. The notion of religious freedom has a broad meaning which includes worship, assembly, forming social institutions, publications, and relations with individuals and institutions on religious matters at the local, national, and international levels. This religious freedom will be able to give rise to attitudes of eliminating discrimination in the name of religion, compulsion that can restrict an individual's freedom to embrace a religion or belief, and daily interactions that show mutual understanding and tolerance.<sup>23</sup>

According to Allport (1954), community's response and attitude in implementing tolerance can be divided into six types, namely; 1) an individual becomes tolerant by accepting the established regulations (Conformity tolerance); 2) an individual who has made tolerance as the character of his/her whole personality (Character Conditioning Tolerance); 3) individual tolerance manifested in attitudes that are against the attitudes of those who are intolerant (Militant tolerance); 4) individual tolerance that strives for peaceful ways in dealing with all acts of intolerance (Passive tolerance); 5) individual tolerance that wishes for a revolutionary change in the society that behave intolerantly (Liberalism tolerance); 6) individual attitude of tolerance that radically criticizes the states considered intolerant (Radicalism tolerance).

In another case, social harmony can be defined as a duty to maintain social life to always be in harmony and peace. A condition where all social interactions run normally without any pressure and compulsion hindering freedom. Social harmony is a state showing balance in life. Harmony in the society will be realized if it is supported by attitudes of mutual respect, love between family members or the community, and cherishing differences, such as differences in religion. A harmony will never be achieved when love, peace, and mutual respect are not internalized in humans.<sup>24</sup> Also, the meaning of harmony needs to be extended to cover not only freedom of religion but also to display how in one particular community, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society can work together. Plurality should be the asset of human development in Indonesia.

Indonesian society is a plural society manifested from diverse ethnics, cultures, languages, and religions.<sup>25</sup> It is a nation built from many different ethnic groups, religions, and cultures spreading from Sabang to Merauke. This diversity is a wealth of its own for the people of Indonesia in their daily life, one community and another can interact and share information related to religion and culture.<sup>26</sup> Social diversity in the culture can affect the harmony among people in social life. Cultural acculturation can have a major impact with stronger appreciation, kinship, increased tolerance, and a sense of mutual help among the communities and between fellow ethnic groups.<sup>27</sup>

The first principal for harmony to take place is by establishing an attitude of mutual trust among the people. Lau and Lee (1999), citing Worchel's statement, pointed that trust will involve expectations from other groups, and will likely result in something positive although it may also

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<sup>23</sup> Herwindya, "Radio Komunitas dan Pelayanan Publik (Studi tentang Kiprah Radio Komunitas Difabel Sahabat Mata Mijen, Semarang dalam Pemberian Pelayanan Siaran Berbasis Kebutuhan Lokal)," *Jurnal Komunikasi Massa*, 2(2), 2021: 107-120.

<sup>24</sup> I. Setiyawan, "Harmoni Sosial Berbasis Budaya Gugur Gunung," *Empirisma: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Kebudayaan Islam*, 29(1), 2020: 29-40.

<sup>25</sup> Fajriah.

<sup>26</sup> Lubis.

<sup>27</sup> I. Wibawa, Putu Sastra, "Legal Politics of Interreligious Relations within the Pluralism Framework in Indonesia." *International Journal of Interreligious and Intercultural Studies*, 3(1), 2020: 57-65.

come with something negative. Hence, trust can be interpreted as a desire among companions to trust each other. It is not merely a prediction, but it has become a faith faced with risks. In other words, trust is a highly important basic element in the life of a pluralistic society to reduce the risk of suspicion toward others due to the barriers in communication. Sharma and Paterson (1999) argued that trust is a belief that producers can be trusted to always behave good to their customers. The biggest failure in nurturing a relationship between a seller and a customer is the lack of trust.<sup>28</sup>

In Costabile's study as cited by Suhardi (2006), trust is defined as the perception of reliability from the consumers' point of view based on their experience, or more likely from transactions orders, or interaction characterized by meeting the expectation of products' performance and satisfaction. The main indicator in the formation of trust is a positive perception manifested from experience. Suhardi (2006) contended that trust is a form of feeling that exists in every consumer's soul. This trust grows through a cognitive process in human mind. Emotions play an active role in building trust between consumers and producers. The key in this trust relationship is experience. If consumers often have positive experience, they will trust the product, and vice versa. In other words, it is justified to say that trust is a state manifested from a relationship built in certain period of time.

Trust, then naturally grows, having passed a long time with no parties feel that their trust is damaged. Mutual trust is the main principal to reach harmony and peace. If not based on mutual trust, building a harmonious and peaceful pluralistic society is hard to achieve.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Religious Tolerance and Social Interaction of Muslim and Non-Muslim Communities in Banda Aceh City

A clear picture of the condition of inter-religious harmony in Banda Aceh City can be seen from the social interactions of Muslim and non-Muslim communities in the Peunayong area. Peunayong is part of the old city of Banda Aceh which was designed by the Dutch as Chinezen Kamp or Chinatown. The ethnic Chinese who inhabit the Peunayong area consists of the Khe, Tio Chiu, Kong Hu, Hokkian, and other sub-ethnics. The Peunayong area is very prominent in its trading activities because trading is the main livelihood of the ethnic Chinese who generally grow up in the business center environment. In addition to trading activities, there are also religious activities around the Peunayong area. This can be seen from the presence of a temple between a row of houses and modern shops located on Jalan Teuku Panglima Polem Peunayong.

In Peunayong, many old buildings are a mix of Dutch-Chinese architecture from the 19th century. The old buildings that are still left after the tsunami in Peunayong are markers of the history of the past that still remains. In 1960 the market had been rehabilitated the physical part of the building and its environment. Over time, the old buildings in Peunayong have undergone changes.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Muhtar Haboddin, "Menguatnya Politik Identitas Di Ranah Lokal," *Journal of Government and Politics* 3(1), 2012: 109–26.

<sup>29</sup> M.R. Effendi, dkk, "Menjaga Toleransi Melalui Pendidikan Multikulturalisme," *Al-Mutharabah: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*, 18(1),2021: 43-51.

Meanwhile, the activities seen every day in the Peunayong area are like the Glodok area in Jakarta, or Petaling Jaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Based on the author's observations and experiences, it shows that ethnic Chinese, Batak, Javanese, Acehnese, and other ethnic traders mingle with market visitors who shop for daily necessities. The activity of loading and unloading goods and buying and selling transactions is a common sight in Peunayong because in this area there are traditional markets, both traditional markets for selling fish, meat, and vegetables. In addition to traditional markets, there are also drugstores, food stalls, coffee shops, supermarkets, grocery stores, shops selling car accessories, clothing stores, hotels, and other business centers.

Although Peunayong is a trading center dominated by ethnic Chinese, buyers who come to this area also come from various ethnicities, races, and religions. The majority of buyers who come to shop at Peunayong are Muslims and they not only buy raw materials for household needs, but they also buy food sold by non-Muslims (ethnic Chinese). There are many food stalls or restaurants whose sellers are ethnic Chinese (non-Muslims) in Peunayong and the majority of the consumers are Muslim Acehnese.

There are several ethnic Chinese food shops frequented by Muslim buyers, namely shops or stalls selling bread and wet pastries, ice cream, mixed ice, shake noodles, seafood restaurants, and others. This food stall is not only in the Peunayong area but also in the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque area which is adjacent to the Aceh market. When I was a child, in the 1980s there were several ethnic Chinese food shops around the Grand Mosque, one of which was a mie kocok and ice mix stall. Mie kocok is a typical Chinese food that has a delicious taste. The ingredients contained in the mie kocok other than noodles are minced beef, bean sprouts, soup leaves, fried onions, and beef broth. In the beginning, all sellers of mie kocok were dominated by ethnic Chinese, but several years before 2000 there were already Muslim residents selling mie kocok until now.

In addition, religious tolerance seen in this area is a sense of respect and respect between non-Muslim food sellers and Muslims by not opening their food stalls in the morning and afternoon during the fasting month of Ramadan. Even when the time for Friday prayers arrived, they temporarily closed the stalls to honor the Muslim community who wanted to perform Friday prayers.

Religious harmony is a condition of relations between religious communities based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, respect for equality in the practice of their religious teachings, and cooperation in the life of society, nation, and state within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>30</sup> Joint regulations This shows that the ideal condition of religious harmony is not only the achievement of an inner atmosphere full of tolerance between religious communities but more importantly the establishment of cooperative relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in social life.

Maintaining Religious Harmony is a shared responsibility of the Central Government, the Aceh Government, Regency/City Governments and religious communities. Likewise, Article 20 also clearly explains that the implementation of religious broadcasting/da'wah is carried out in the spirit of harmony, tolerance, mutual respect and mutual respect between fellow religious people

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<sup>30</sup> Peraturan Pemerintah. 2006. *Peraturan Bersama Menteri Agama Dan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 9 Dan 8 Tahun 2006*.

and between religious communities and based on respect for the rights and freedom of a person to embrace/follow and practice worship according to their religion.<sup>31</sup>

Harmony between religious communities in society is not limited to mutual respect. There need to be further efforts to build a deeper attitude. In addition to respect for differences, there should also be an understanding of equality, namely when people do not discriminate among themselves based on ethnicity and religion. This attitude of equality is the nation's capital to lead to synergy and cooperation between religious communities to build the life of the nation and state. Religious harmony is a condition or condition of the life of religious people who interact in harmony, tolerance, peace, mutual respect, and respect for religious differences, and the freedom to practice their respective worship.

Religious diversity contributes positively to nation-building. However, it can also be a source of potential conflict. Multi-religious communities in Indonesia face many conflicts triggered by religion. This problem requires strategic anticipation, especially juridically. The community must continue to discuss and strive to maintain inclusive relations between religious communities to achieve religious harmony in Indonesia which is based on tolerance and cooperation in the life of society, nation, and state.<sup>32</sup>

### **Muslim Community and Non-Muslim Food Vendors in Aceh**

Based on experience, observations, and interviews, it shows that the interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim communities has existed for a long time. As Esri stated that

“The people of Aceh have long been accustomed to eating in food stalls or restaurants whose owners are non-Muslims. They believe that the food they eat is halal because the raw materials for the food are purchased from Muslim sellers. Where all beef and chicken sellers in Aceh are Muslims so they have made sure that the food they make is halal. In addition, they have been living side by side with the people of Aceh so they believe that the food sold is definitely halal.”<sup>33</sup>

According to the interview, we can infer that the people of Aceh have no worries at all about the halalness of food purchased at non-Muslim stalls with the assumption that their food raw materials are purchased from markets where the sellers are Muslims.

In addition, there is a kind of belief among the Muslims in Aceh that they will not dare to mix the food sold with illegal goods because it will damage the market. If consumers find out that the food being sold is no longer halal, then the shop or restaurant will not be visited again by Muslim buyers because their beliefs have been tarnished. As Iyan's opinion follows:

“There is a kind of belief that has existed within the Acehnese people that it is impossible for them to mix food sold with haram goods because it will affect consumers' interest in buying food products made by non-Muslim sellers or in other words it will damage the market. As long as I eat at non-Muslim food stalls or restaurants in Banda Aceh, I don't

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<sup>31</sup> Peraturan Daerah. 2016. *Qanun Aceh Nomor 4 Tahun 2016 Tentang Pemeliharaan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Dan Pendirian Tempat Beribadah.*

<sup>32</sup> Wibawa.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Amri, dkk, “Interreligious Tolerance in the Perception of Maluku Muslim Society.” *Jurnal Adabiyah* 20(1), 2020:178.

really care about the existence or absence of a halal certificate. On the other hand, in the city of Medan, I do not dare to enter a stall or restaurant that is not halal.”<sup>34</sup>

Another informant also stated that he often buys bread and food at Chinese food stalls or restaurants in Banda Aceh City. Several ethnic Chinese bakeries already have a halal certificate but Cut Fitri has also bought bread or cakes that do not yet have a halal certificate. He also often eats rice at Chinese restaurants and even has time to make catering orders for several months. There are several factors that Fitri takes into consideration when choosing to eat at non-Muslim food stalls, including:

“First, is cleanliness. If the food stall looks clean, it will be an important consideration. Second, the food stall is open to the kitchen so that Muslim shoppers can access the back if they want to ensure that there are no haram items in the food. Third, usually the chefs and waiters of the food stalls are Muslims and the shop owners only make sure the taste, feel and mix the spices. Fourth, is to look at the background of visitors. Generally, if the food stall is visited by many Muslims, it means that there is a high level of confidence in the halalness of the food.”<sup>35</sup>

Ihsan also said that he often eats/drinks at a Chinese-owned food shop in Banda Aceh, and even a Chinese-owned coffee shop is his regular coffee shop. Besides that, Ihsan also often buys ice cream at their shop. Ihsan does not think that the food they serve contains haram elements because he is very sure that they cannot do that because their consumers are Muslim communities. Ihsan also added with his argument that if they are caught mixing illegal substances just once, their business will be closed and business licenses will not be granted. This also affects the food business of other ethnic Chinese. There will be stricter rules that will make it difficult for them in their food endeavors. Considering that until now there has never been a Chinese ethnic food business in Penayong and other areas in Banda Aceh that has included illegal goods in their wares, Ihsan is very confident in the halalness of the food they serve.

Ihsan also added that at his Chinese coffee shop there are also many other Muslims who drink coffee and they also don't seem to have any problem with the halal/haram food there. Ihsan once talked to ethnic Chinese in the area around Peunayong about food made from pork. Ihsan explained that “Where can they buy pork in this city of Banda Aceh. Only the rich can afford pork from Medan. Not all Chinese in Aceh are rich. So when it comes to eating pork in Aceh, it is almost impossible.”

Jannah said that she often eats noodles and drinks ice cendol which is located opposite the Grand Mosque which is sold by non-Muslim Chinese. Mie shake is a typical food of the Chinese ethnic community and in the past, the sellers of this shake were ethnic Chinese, both those who sold in the city of Banda Aceh and other areas in the province of Aceh. But now there are already shaken noodles sold by Muslim communities in several cities in Banda Aceh. However, the noodles sold by ethnic Chinese are still in demand by the Muslim community until now.

In addition, Jannah also stated that in terms of quality, the food cooked/made by the Chinese was known to be delicious and tended to have a "classy" taste. Jannah informs:

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<sup>34</sup> Hamdan, “Dayah dalam Perspektif Perubahan Sosial,” *Al-Himah: Media Dakwah, Komunikasi, Sosial Dan Budaya*, 8(1), 2018: 108.

<sup>35</sup> Teuku Saiful Bahri Johan, “International World Recognition on Indonesia’s Success in Creating Tolerance of Religion,” *IJISM*, 9(2), 2018: 34-42.

“Chinese bakeries have long been known to have a delicious and soft taste and are well packaged so that Muslim people often buy their bread. So it is not surprising that the majority of bakeries in Aceh are owned by ethnic Chinese. Miftah believes that it is impossible for the food to be sold to contain elements of haram goods. The advantages of goods made by non-Muslim sellers (ethnic Chinese) are of good quality. Meanwhile, the harmony of religious life in Aceh is also seen when the celebration of the holidays of each religion has never been heard of any incidents of conflict in Aceh.”<sup>36</sup>

Based on the results of the interview, shows that the food made by non-Muslims in the city of Banda Aceh is protected from illegal goods because the market in the city of Banda Aceh does not sell illicit goods. In addition, the majority of their consumers are Muslim communities and there are even ethnic Chinese who sell pecal and gado-gado saying that all their customers are Muslim communities so they are obliged to maintain the quality and taste of their food so as not to damage the market.

### **Chinese Community Social Activities in Banda Aceh**

The daily life of the Chinese community in Banda Aceh is mostly busy with business matters, especially trade. Such daily life makes people judge them as people who are indifferent to the lives of the people around them. But the reality on the ground is that they are also involved in social life in Banda Aceh. Various humanitarian activities were held, through the association, a lot of social assistance was then distributed.

Hakka Aceh Foundation as one of the social organizations and humanitarian institutions in Aceh, for example, regularly carries out social services in the community. This activity is a reflection of harmony to the level of cooperation. They do not isolate themselves and are separated from society. The Chinese community through the Hakka Aceh Foundation has contributed to the community.

At the beginning of the emergence of the 2020 Pandemic, the Acehnese Chinese in Banda Aceh distributed thousands of masks and hand sanitizers in Peunanyong. In addition, they also distribute boxed rice every day for online motorcycle taxi drivers and pedicab drivers whose income has been affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. In addition, to contribute to the response to the Covid-19 outbreak, the Chinese community has also built several sink points (handwashing areas) around Banda Aceh City, especially in the Peunayong area.<sup>37</sup>

In 2020, there were also low-cost stall activities supported by various ORMAS, NGOs, and Multinational Companies, namely Lakpesdam NU, ADO, PAT, PMII, PKBI, CYDC, PKK mothers (Gp. Peunayong, Gp. Muli, Gp. Laksana), Unsyiah and OPPO students. The activity which takes place every Monday to Thursday starting from June 29, 2020 to July 30, 2020, from

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<sup>36</sup> Suryan A. Jamrah, “Toleransi Antarumat Beragama: Perspektif Islam”, dalam *Jurnal Ushuluddin*, 23(2), 2015: 193.

<sup>37</sup> Umar, Raja. 2020. “Warga Tionghoa Di Aceh Bagikan Ribuan Masker Hingga Nasi Kotak Setiap Hari.” *Www.kompas.com*. Retrieved (<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/04/09/12311841/warga-tionghoa-di-aceh-bagikan-ribuan-masker-hingga-nasi-kotak-setiap-hari>).

71:30 to 74:00 WIB is held in front of the Hakka Aceh Foundation office Jln. H.T Daudsyah No. 43 Gp. Peunayong, Banda Aceh.<sup>38</sup>

The activity was carried out by buying rice from a rice stall around Peunayong for Rp. 7000/pack and reselling it at a low price, Rp. 3000/pack. This activity gave positive value to two groups of people at once, namely the general public who were affected and food traders who also felt the decline in sales as a result of the pandemic.

In their daily life, the Chinese community in Peunayong is actively involved in activities that carry the message of peace. Almost every Eid, they distribute takjil (sweet food eaten upon breaking the fast) and free food items. This fact at the same time dispels the notion that the Chinese in Banda Aceh only take care of business matters and only seek profit in their business. Evidence of their concern for the problems of the surrounding community and the efforts made to maintain harmony is by cooperating with the surrounding community.

The people of Aceh uphold an attitude of tolerance. This can be seen from the forms of activities they carry out while respecting the differences that exist in society, such as religion, race, culture, and ethnicity. In modern society, ideal religious tolerance must be built through the active participation of all members of the diverse society to achieve the same goal based on togetherness, inclusiveness, respect and mutual understanding regarding the implementation of religious rituals and certain religious doctrines adhered to.<sup>39</sup>

### **Threat of Religious Harmony in Banda Aceh**

In 2019 the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of Aceh through Decree Number 450 of 2019 concerning the Designation of Villages Aware of Harmony in the Districts/Cities in Aceh Province 2019 designated Peunayong as a village that is Aware of Religious Harmony. This award is one proof that Peunayong can be a model of inter-religious harmony in Aceh.

However, the potential threat to religious harmony in Banda Aceh, especially in Peunayong, remains to be watched out for. Although the visible social interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in the city of Banda Aceh seem very harmonious, there are still some problems that can threaten religious harmony. The life of religious harmony in Aceh began to experience turmoil when Islamic Sharia was formalized in Aceh through various regulations, including the qanun covering the genitals which required all Acehnese Muslims to wear the hijab. This condition has encouraged non-Muslim communities in Aceh to use the hijab because they feel comfortable with it.

In addition, cases of silencing of aqidah, Christianization and the construction of houses of worship also threaten the religious harmony that has been realized so far. Efforts to stop religious ritual activities in several buildings that have been used as places of worship for non-Muslim residents of the city of Banda Aceh illegally are also feared to trigger the birth of potential conflicts that will threaten religious harmony.

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<sup>38</sup> Hakkaindonesia.com. 2020. "Yayasan Hakka Aceh Bagikan Bantuan Di Tengah Pandemi: Kami Ingin Ringankan Beban Mereka." *Www.hakkaindonesia.com*. Retrieved June 29, 2020 (<https://hakkaindonesia.com/2020/06/29/yayasan-hakka-aceh-bagikan-bantuan-di-tengah-pandemi-kami-ingin-ringankan-beban-mereka/>).

<sup>39</sup> Johan.

Finally, the potential threat of identity politics also influences the threat to inter-religious harmony in Banda Aceh City. Identity politics is a political action that puts forward the interests of members of a group that has similar characteristics based on ethnicity, ethnicity, gender and religion.<sup>40</sup> Muhtar Haboddin defines that regional identity politics provides a clear line to determine who will be included and who will be rejected. Because the lines of determination appear to be irreversible, the status as a non-member immediately appears to be permanent.<sup>41</sup>

This happened evenly throughout Indonesia due to economic and political factors (especially due to the election and capitalism) as well as the government's failure to foster tolerance between religious communities. As a result, identity politics needs to be watched out for to maintain tolerance and harmony between religious communities in Aceh, especially in the Chinatown area, Peunayong. The knowledge, level of education, perceptions and attitudes of the Muslim community collectively have a positive impact on interfaith tolerance among the people.<sup>42</sup> The multiculturalism inherent in Indonesian culture provides a strong foundation for interfaith activists in addressing cultural and religious differences.<sup>43</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The life of inter-religious harmony in Banda Aceh City runs as it does in other provinces. Even so far, it is very rare to hear about conflicts in the city of Banda Aceh in the name of religion, although now the province of Aceh has implemented Islamic Sharia. The attitude of religious tolerance of Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Aceh can be seen in one of the areas in Banda Aceh City, namely Peunayong.

In this Peunayong area, Muslim and non-Muslim communities mingle both when carrying out activities as sellers and buyers. The Muslim community not only buys raw materials for household use but also often eats at ethnic Chinese food stalls in the belief that they cannot mix haram elements in cooked food. Mutual respect is also seen when celebrating religious holidays. For example, when the fasting month of Ramadan comes, non-Muslim communities close their food stalls in the morning and afternoon. Likewise, at the time of Friday prayer, they temporarily closed their food stalls.

In addition, the ethnic Chinese community is also involved in social activities in the community. Routinely in every month of Ramadan, the Chinese community carries out social service activities, distributing takzīl (sweet food eaten upon breaking the fast) and basic needs. During the Covid-19 pandemic season, ethnic Chinese community associations in Banda Aceh also helped affected communities such as cheap rice stalls, distributing masks and hand sanitizers and setting up washbasins at several points in the city of Banda Aceh. This social involvement is one of the binders of harmony and harmony between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Banda Aceh, especially the non-Muslim community of Chinese ethnicity.

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<sup>40</sup> Dadang Sudiadi, "Menuju Kehidupan Harmonis Dalam Masyarakat Yang Majemuk: Suatu Pandangan Tentang Pentingnya Pendekatan Multikultur Dalam Pendidikan Di Indonesia", *Dalam Jurnal Kriminologi Indonesia*, 5(1), 2009: 34.

<sup>41</sup> Haboddin.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Amri.

<sup>43</sup> Kusuma.



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