

Cultural Perspectives on Religious Tolerance: Exploring Moderation through Texts, Muslim Leadership, and Rituals in Singkawang and Salatiga

Toleransi Beragama dalam Perspektif Kebudayaan: Menggali Moderasi
melalui Teks, Kepemimpinan Muslim, dan Ritual di Singkawang dan Salatiga

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ABSTRAK

Makalah ini mengkaji toleransi dan moderasi beragama di Kota Singkawang dan Salatiga melalui perspektif kebudayaan. Studi tentang moderasi beragama di Indonesia umumnya berfokus pada dimensi regulatif, edukatif, atau teologis-normatif. Riset ini menawarkan perspektif baru dengan menganalisis moderasi beragama secara kultural, menekankan peran budaya, khususnya ritual keagamaan, sebagai instrumen dialog dan kerja kolaboratif. Penelitian lapangan kualitatif ini menggunakan teori fungsionalisme untuk menganalisis fenomena sosial-budaya yang berlangsung, dengan parameter analitis yang mencakup tiga aspek. Pertama, aspek pemahaman terhadap teks keagamaan; kedua, peran tokoh agama Muslim; dan ketiga, praktik ritual/tradisi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan tiga hal utama. Pertama, interpretasi para pemimpin Muslim di kedua kota menegaskan bahwa nilai toleransi, kesetaraan, dan koeksistensi damai yang bersumber dari teks Al-Qur'an atau Hadis tetap menjadi fondasi utama dalam merespons dinamika masyarakat plural. Kedua, pengalaman kedua kota tersebut memperlihatkan bahwa moderasi tumbuh melalui kepemimpinan yang responsif, mekanisme mediasi kelembagaan yang terkoordinasi, serta partisipasi masyarakat lintas agama, sehingga membentuk ekosistem toleransi yang tidak muncul secara spontan, melainkan dirancang, terstruktur, dan berkelanjutan. Ketiga, ritual keagamaan dan budaya menyediakan ruang sosial yang memungkinkan tumbuhnya saling percaya, kerja sama, dan juga adanya kohesi sosial. Riset ini menunjukkan bahwa moderasi beragama bukan sekadar hasil ajaran normatif, tetapi merupakan praktik hidup bersama yang terbentuk melalui sinergi antara otoritas keagamaan, kepemimpinan sosial, dan ritual budaya, yang secara kolektif menciptakan masyarakat plural yang lebih inklusif dan tangguh terhadap potensi konflik.

Kata Kunci: Perspektif Budaya; Toleransi Agama; Singkawang; -Salatiga

ABSTRACT

This paper examines religious tolerance and moderation in the cities of Singkawang and Salatiga through cultural perspective. Studies on religious moderation in Indonesia generally focus on regulatory, educational, or theological-normative dimensions. This research offers a new perspective by analyzing religious moderation culturally, emphasizing the role of culture, particularly religious rituals, as instruments of dialogue and collaborative work. This qualitative field research uses functionalism theory to analyze ongoing socio-cultural phenomena, with analytical parameters covering three aspects. First, the aspect of understanding religious texts; second, the role of Muslim religious leaders; and third, ritual/traditional practices. The research findings reveal three main points. First, the interpretations of Muslim leaders in both cities confirm that the values of tolerance, equality, and peaceful coexistence derived from the Qur'an or Hadith remain the foundational principles in responding to the dynamics of a pluralistic society. Second, the experiences of both cities show that moderation grows through responsive leadership, coordinated institutional mediation mechanisms, and interfaith community participation, thereby it forms an ecosystem of tolerance that does not arise spontaneously, but is designed, structured, and sustainable. Third, religious and cultural rituals provide a social space that allows the growth of mutual trust, cooperation, and social cohesion. This research shows that religious moderation is not merely the result of normative teachings, but a practice of living together that is formed through synergy between religious authorities, social leadership, and cultural rituals, which collectively create a more inclusive and resilient pluralistic society against potential conflicts.

Keywords: Cultural Perspectives; Religious Tolerance; Singkawang; Salatiga

INTRODUCTION

From 2015 to 2025, the SETARA Institute has released the Tolerant Cities Index (IKT) in Indonesia annually. In 2025, Singkawang (6,544) and Salatiga (6,420) received the highest scores. The indexation conducted by SETARA is based on the positive rights paradigm. Furthermore, the city government's efforts to promote tolerance can be traced through various

positive actions such as introducing policies, making official statements, responding to events, and building a culture of tolerance in the community. SETARA uses four benchmarks to evaluate this: a) government regulations; b) government policies; c) social regulations; and d) religious demographics (Halili 2018, 2–3; Google Docs, n.d.).

The SETARA indexation results have sparked controversy among government officials, academics, and researchers. Some have suggested that Anis Baswedan, the former Governor of DKI Jakarta, was concerned that external parties may have interfered with the IKT results, as DKI Jakarta was included in the list of intolerant areas. Meanwhile, Nathanael Gratias Sumaktoyo from the University of Notre Dame stated that the methodology used by SETARA was more advanced than in previous years. However, the IKT released by SETARA still has some shortcomings. Many social and cultural spaces have not been addressed by the positive rights paradigm, which primarily focuses on structural dimensions and government policies (Bhaskara 2019).

The IKT index should take cultural elements into consideration as a variable. According to Rini Fidiyani's research, the Aboge Islamic group's local wisdom includes Javanese ethical values such as mutual respect (*tepo seliro*) in differences, respect for ancestors, love of peace, and openness to outside values (Fidiyani 2013, 468). Saprih stated that customary law plays a crucial role in maintaining religious harmony in South Konawe District, Southeast Sulawesi (Saprih 2016, 269). Yulita Dewi Purmintasari mentioned the Tatung tradition in Singkawang as a means of fostering inter-ethnic harmony and reducing conflict (Yulita 2017, 1–2).

This research aims to introduce a cultural dimension that has not been addressed by the positive rights paradigm. The research paradigm emphasizes cultural rights by highlighting cultural spaces as a medium for cultivating tolerance. This indicates that the community's culture of tolerance has been deeply ingrained over time, supported by socio-cultural facilities and infrastructure. For instance, the residents of Pengilon Village in Mangunsari Sub-district, Salatiga City, hold joint celebrations such as '*Halal Bihalal Bersama*' and '*Natal*' (Christmas) *Bersama*.' Both ceremonies involve committees from different religions. Muslims participate in the Christmas committee, while Christians participate in the *Halal bi Halal* committee (Faidi 2019, 19). In Singkawang, the *Tatung* tradition during the *Cap Go Meh* celebration involves Muslims as players (Yulita 2017, 1–2). These religious ceremonies are sacred to their adherents and serve as a means to promote religious tolerance and values.

Referring to the fourth indicator of religious moderation, namely an accommodative attitude toward local culture as formulated by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the relationship between religious texts, Muslim leadership, and ritual practices forms a crucial foundation for building an ecosystem of religious moderation in Indonesia. These three elements complement one another in shaping an inclusive and culturally adaptive religious consciousness. Religious texts, particularly the Qur'an and Hadith, provide a normative framework that emphasizes the values of *tawasuth* (moderation), *tawazun* (balance), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *musawah* (egalitarianism), which serve as the basis for rejecting radicalism and intolerance (Mahfudz and Yuspianti 2023, 1463; Pajarianto et al. 2022, 2). These values do not remain confined to the theological domain but are internalized through education, preaching, and community guidance, thereby cultivating a more open and difference-friendly orientation of religiosity (Afwadzi et al. 2024, 9).

At the practical level, Muslim leadership assumes a strategic role as a bridge between normative teachings and the need for social harmony (Nugroho 2024, 34–35). Religious leaders, through their scholarly authority, fatwas, religious policies, and social exemplarity, translate the values of moderation into concrete actions (Muhtifah et al. 2021, 1). Their collaboration with local governments, Islamic organizations, and the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) (Widodo 2019, 292) further strengthens the institutionalization of religious moderation in public policy and everyday social practices.

At the same time, the performance of religious rituals becomes a cultural arena that concretely facilitates the embodiment of moderation values. The integration of Islamic rituals with local wisdom creates fluid and harmonious spaces for interreligious interaction (Pajarianto et al. 2022, 1). Socio-religious practices such as the Tatung tradition, joint halal bi

halal gatherings, or shared Christmas celebrations carry not only spiritual significance but also function as social mechanisms that reinforce community cohesion and foster a culture of tolerance. At this point, it becomes evident how accommodation of local culture plays a crucial role in expanding the scope and impact of religious moderation.

In this context, Singkawang and Salatiga serve as locus as well as best-practice models of religious moderation due to their success in managing diversity through interfaith collaboration, inclusive policies, and the active role of religious leaders. Singkawang, with its complex ethnic and religious composition, has been able to maintain social stability through the work of the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), cross-ethnic and cross-religious leadership, and the strengthening of harmony-oriented cultural symbols embedded in local traditions such as *Tatung* (Atmaja et al. 2023, 175; Muhtifah et al. 2021). Meanwhile, Salatiga demonstrates how government policies, the role of religious leaders, and the integration of tolerance values into education and social life can create a sustainable culture of peace (Nugroho 2024). These two cities illustrate that religious moderation does not rely solely on textual teachings but also requires visionary leadership and inclusive rituals that are aligned with local wisdom.

Building upon the above arguments, this study aims to examine religious tolerance and moderation from a cultural perspective, emphasizing how religious texts, Muslim leadership, and traditional practices work simultaneously to promote interfaith harmony in Singkawang and Salatiga. Through an analysis of three main aspects; 1) the understanding of sacred texts, 2) the role of religious leaders, and 3) the practice of religious rituals and traditions. By employing functionalism as its theoretical framework, this study investigates the socio-cultural dynamics that underpin the success of religious moderation in both cities (Pratiknjo 2012). Thus, this research offers a new culturally grounded perspective on how religious moderation can be effectively operationalized within the pluralistic context of Indonesian society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a well-established society, religion plays a crucial and irreplaceable role in complementing the entire social system. It does not stand apart as a mere collection of doctrines or metaphysical claims, but functions as an integral component that supports the stability, continuity, and moral cohesion of social life. Within human interactions, religion and ritual practices form a cohesive and mutually reinforcing entity, each carrying specific relational functions that are central to cultural analysis. Social anthropological studies, particularly those informed by classical theorists, have long employed the approach of structure and function, first formulated by Herbert Spencer and later refined by Emile Durkheim, to explain how religious institutions operate within the broader framework of society. Through the lens of structural functionalism, scholars examine how cultural elements (beliefs, symbols, rituals, norms) contribute to maintaining the equilibrium of the social order (Sosis and Ruffle 2003, 713; Baykal 2021, 27; Alex 1964, 34).

Durkheim's theory of functionalism places primary emphasis on the foundations of community solidarity. He sought to understand not only what constitutes society but also what binds individuals together within a shared moral universe. In his analysis, Durkheim identified specific factors and principles, such as shared beliefs, collective norms, ritual participation, that ensure the coherence and stability of the social body (Nasikun 1992, 11–12). For Durkheim, religion must possess a demonstrable social function; it cannot be dismissed as mere illusion or personal sentiment. Instead, religion is a social fact, meaning that it exists independently of individual consciousness, exerts coercive power, and can be empirically observed. Basic religious concepts such as gods, spirits, souls, breath, or totems (Durkheim 1965, 31; Pals 1996, 152–53) do not emerge spontaneously or arbitrarily; they are constructed through accumulated religious experiences and represent the symbolic expressions of a community's collective identity.

Within this framework, society is conceptualized as a system composed of interdependent parts that work together to maintain balance, continuity, and stability each part fulfilling a specific function. Religion, therefore, is indispensable to the functioning of society because it fosters social solidarity, regulates behavior, and reinforces shared values. This functional role is evident not only in religious doctrines but also in practices of tolerance and interreligious engagement (Baykal 2021). Rituals, whether performed internally within a religious community or involving participation from external groups, operate as powerful mechanisms of social cohesion. When rituals are enacted inclusively or are met with respect from outside communities, they enhance the collective consciousness of the importance of harmonious coexistence. A concrete example can be found in Singkawang, where the involvement of Muslim communities in the *Tatung* ritual during the *Cap Go Meh* celebration demonstrates how ritual participation becomes a site for integration rather than fragmentation. Such interactions transform ritual from a symbolic act into a socio-cultural bridge that reinforces intergroup trust and solidarity.

Religious experience, particularly in the context of interpreting sacred texts, can also be understood as a form of social performance shaped by the linguistic choices and interpretive frameworks used to articulate religious meaning. From a sociological standpoint, the language of religious scriptures does more than convey abstract doctrines; it serves as a medium through which ideas, emotions, moral expectations, and lived experiences are communicated. Claire Kramsch, a leading figure in applied linguistics, argues that understanding any text is fundamentally a social act because language itself is socially conditioned. This means that the interpretation of religious texts is not determined solely by the text's internal structure but also by the cultural, historical, and social contexts in which the text is read and lived. The meaning embedded within scripture is thus dynamic, negotiated through the interactions between individuals and the broader societal frameworks that shape their worldview (Kramsch 2014, 31). In this sense, religious texts gain relevance and authority not merely through their written form but through the communal processes that continually reinterpret and embody them in everyday life.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a field study employing a qualitative method, emphasizing an in-depth understanding of the socio-religious dynamics taking place within the community. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation from 2023 to mid-2024, allowing the researcher to capture social processes comprehensively over a sufficiently long period. Observations were carried out during religious activities, interfaith harmony forums, and daily social interactions within the community. In-depth interviews were conducted with various key informants to obtain diverse and complementary information.

The snowball sampling technique was used to gradually identify informants, beginning with figures considered to have authority or extensive knowledge regarding religious moderation in the research locations. These informants included the leader of Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), leader of Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), the leader of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, religious practitioners, as well as activists involved in interfaith harmony initiatives. To enrich perspectives and provide comparative arguments, the researcher also interviewed several non-Muslim religious figures, such as Catholic Romo, Christian pastors, Buddhist Bhikkhu, and Confucian clerics. All informants were drawn from the two cities that constitute the focus of the study: Singkawang and Salatiga.

Data validity was ensured through several techniques, including source and method triangulation, repeated observations, and systematic data auditing. Triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results with observational findings and documentation, enabling verification of the data from multiple perspectives. Once the data collection process was completed, analysis was carried out using an interactive analysis model, consisting of three stages: data reduction to filter essential information, data display in narrative and thematic table forms, and conclusion drawing, which occurred continuously throughout the research process.

Theoretically, this study employs a functionalist approach to examine the socio-cultural phenomena unfolding in Singkawang and Salatiga. This approach views society as a system composed of interrelated parts that work together to maintain harmony and social balance. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on three main parameters; 1) community understanding of religious texts that guide moderate attitudes; 2) the role of religious leaders in translating the values of moderation into social practices and policies; and 3) the performance of religious rituals and traditions as expressions of local wisdom that support social integration. Through this lens, functionalism helps explain how the practice of religious moderation operates not merely as a normative concept but as a social mechanism that sustains cohesion in plural communities such as Singkawang and Salatiga.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Interpreting Sacred Texts in Social Context: Muslim Leaders' Hermeneutics of Tolerance in Singkawang and Salatiga

Before examining how Muslim communities in Singkawang and Salatiga City understand and interpret the Qur'an and hadith, a crucial initial step is to situate these texts within the institutional framework of religion. In a well-organized society, religion functions as a pillar that upholds the stability and continuity of the social system. In everyday life, religion does not merely appear as a set of doctrinal teachings but also manifests in ritual practices that are closely interwoven. Together, they form an interconnected whole that serves as a cultural mechanism regulating patterns of social interaction.

The fundamental concepts within religion, such as faith, worship, and ethics, emerge from religious experiences lived by individuals and communities, and these concepts are subsequently expressed through socially observable rituals. These religious experiences are ultimately shaped by the process of interpreting sacred texts, in which language becomes the primary instrument that enables understanding. From a sociological perspective, the language of scripture is not merely a vehicle for conveying doctrinal abstraction; it serves as a medium that carries expressions of inner experience, ideas, and constructed meanings embedded within society. Claire Kramsch asserts that understanding a text through language is inherently a social process, meaning that the interpretation of sacred texts is continuously influenced by the interaction between text, reader, and socio-cultural context. Thus, the meaning contained in scripture is not static; it is the product of an ongoing interpretive process that evolves within a dynamic social sphere (Kramsch 2014, 31).

In the context of this study, Muslim religious leaders act as key figures who bridge the textual tradition with social reality through their interpretations of Qur'anic verses and hadiths related to interreligious relations. The methods, tendencies, and interpretive orientations they employ have direct consequences for patterns of interaction among religious groups. Inclusive interpretations open to diverse hermeneutical approaches tend to broaden understanding and create space for dialogue, whereas literalist interpretations may restrict the range of meaning and narrow the possibilities for tolerance. Consequently, the interpretation of verses related to religious moderation is strongly determined by the methodological choices of these interpreters. In this study, the researcher interviewed several Islamic religious figures to explore how they interpret these texts and how such interpretations are operationalized in the practice of religious moderation.

Table 1. Respondents' understanding of Qur'anic and Hadith texts regarding religious moderation

| Respondents | Date and Place | Cited Text (Qur'an/Hadith) | Respondent's Interpretation/Opinion | Core Interpretation for Tolerance & Moderation |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Ahmad Baharuddin (Leader of FKUB Singkawang) | 17 Mei 2023 in FKUB office of Singkawang | Qs. Al-Kafirun (The Disbelievers): "To you be your religion, and to me, my religion." | This verse is the basis for the legality and authenticity of every religion. The duty of Muslims is to uphold their own faith without imposing beliefs on others, leading to peaceful coexistence at the practical level. | Emphasizes the recognition and acceptance of diverse religious practices. |
| Abdul Halim (Leader of Kemenag and MUI Singkawang) | 18 Mei 2023 in Ministry of Religious Affairs office of Singkawang | Qs. Al-Kafirun (The Disbelievers): "To you be your religion, and to me, my religion." | Faith is a Private Right. Islam must not be imposed on non-Muslims, and conversely, non-Muslim beliefs must not interfere with Muslim faith. | Respects the right of non-Muslims to worship and hold their beliefs in their own domain. |
| Agus Ahmad Suaedi (Leader of MUI Salatiga) | 03 Juni 2023 in MUI office of Salatiga | Qs. Al-Kafirun (The Disbelievers): "To you be your religion, and to me, my religion." | True tolerance is rooted in respect for the human right to worship and hold beliefs. Coercing religion is a violation of rights that must be rejected to build justice-based tolerance. | Affirms the individual right to follow their own religious path without coercion (the essence of genuine tolerance). |
| Agus Ahmad Suaedi (Leader of MUI Salatiga) | 03 Juni 2023 in MUI office of Salatiga | Qs. Al-Hujurat (The Chambers): "We created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another." | The purpose of diversity is mutual recognition (ta'aruf), not mutual hatred. This stresses that wasatiah (moderation) obligates Muslims to engage with other ethnic/national groups based on principles of equality and respect. | Human diversity is a Divine plan. A person's worth is determined by piety, not ethnicity/race; fosters equality (musawah) and mutual respect. |
| Muhammad Hanif (Caretaker of the Edi Mancoro Islamic Boarding School) | 04 Juni 2023 in PP. Edimancoro office of Salatiga | Hadith: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor." | Harming a neighbor (Muslim or non-Muslim) is considered damaging to faith. Tolerance is seen as a prerequisite for faith manifested in ethics and social collaboration (symbiosis mutualism). | Emphasizes the necessity of treating neighbors with kindness and respect, regardless of their religious beliefs. |
| Muhammad Hanif (Caretaker of the Edi Mancoro Islamic Boarding School) | 04 Juni 2023 in PP. Edimancoro office of Salatiga | Hadith: "Whoever harms a non-Muslim dzimmi in a Muslim country, | This Hadith affirms the responsibility of the state and Muslims to guarantee the security of non-Muslim | Advocates for peaceful coexistence and the protection |

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|---|---|--|--|---|
| Mancoro Islamic Boarding School) | office of Salatiga | I am his enemy and I will be his enemy on the Day of Judgement." | citizens. Violating the rights of non-Muslims is considered a betrayal of the Prophet's teachings. | of the rights and welfare of non-Muslims residing in Muslim society. |
| Muhammad Hanif (Caretaker of the Mancoro Islamic Boarding School) | 04 Juni 2023 in PP. Edimancoro office of Salatiga | Qs. Al-An'am: 108, Qs. An-Nur: 30, and Al-Isra: 33. | These verses serve as a methodological guide for preaching without confrontation. The aim is to prevent horizontal conflict and maintain harmony through self-control. | Prevents provocation of other religions by prohibiting the reviling of their deities. |

The table shows that Muslim leaders from various institutions consistently interpret Qur'anic verses and hadiths using an approach that emphasizes tolerance, respect for individual rights, and moderation in religious life. They cite verses such as Surah al-Kafirun, al-Hujurat, an-Nur, and al-Isra, as well as the Prophet's hadiths, to reinforce the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity, and the protection of non-Muslim rights. As Baharuddin, leader of Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) Singkawang, notes that the Qur'an emphasizes the importance of tolerance and coexistence among people of different faiths. Surah al-Kafirun, for instance, states, "Say, 'O disbelievers, I do not worship what you worship. And you do not worship what I worship,'" advocating for the recognition and acceptance of diverse religious practices.

Agus Ahmad Suaedi, leader of Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Salatiga, interprets this verse as affirming the right of individuals to follow their own religious paths without imposing beliefs on others, a principle that he views as the foundation of true religious tolerance. Thus, the study of language, both in religious texts and in everyday use, plays a key role in fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding (Suaedi 2023).

Another verse that promotes tolerance is found in al-Hujurat, where Allah states:

O mankind, We have created you from male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.

Suaedi explains that the verse highlights that human diversity is part of God's divine plan, and that a person's worth is determined by their piety, not their ethnicity or social status. It underscores the principles of tolerance and understanding, affirming that all human beings are equal and deserving of respect, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religious background. The verse encourages Muslims to engage with individuals from different nations and tribes, promoting a sense of unity and mutual respect among all people.

Hanif (2023) underlined that the *ta'aruf* process desired by the Qur'an is one that is mutually beneficial (symbiosis mutualism). It is important to be able to create more productive collaborative work, not just to get to know one another. Additionally, M. Hanif noted that hadith literature highlights the significance of tolerance. In fact, this hadith stresses the need for Muslims to treat their neighbors with kindness and respect, regardless of their religious beliefs: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor.' This verse highlights the idea that diversity among humans is a deliberate creation of Allah, meant to foster understanding and knowledge between individuals. The language used is clear, objective, and value-neutral, with a formal register and precise word choice. The sentence structure is simple and the logical flow of information is maintained. No changes in content were made. It emphasizes the need for tolerance and acceptance of others, regardless of their religious or cultural background.

Hanif (2023) emphasizes that Islam provides guidelines on how Muslims should interact with people of different beliefs. One hadith states:

'Whoever harms a non-Muslim citizen in a Muslim country, I am his enemy and I will be his enemy on the Day of Judgement.'

It is important to note that this hadith promotes peaceful coexistence and respect for non-Muslims, which is a fundamental aspect of Islam.

The Hadith emphasizes the importance of protecting the rights and welfare of non-Muslims living in Muslim societies, highlighting the principle of religious tolerance and coexistence. Hanif also highlights that both the Quran and Hadith clearly advocate for tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and respect for people of different faiths. The foundation of tolerance in the Quran is encapsulated in the following verse:

"And do not revile those whom they worship besides Allah, for they will revile Allah beyond measure without knowledge" (verse Al-An'am: 108).

"And say to those who believe: Let them control their gaze and guard their private parts; that is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do." (verse an-Nur: 30).

"And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right. And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority, but let him not exceed limits in [the matter of] taking life. Indeed, he has been supported [by the law]." (verse al-Isra': 33).

In addition to the aforementioned Qur'anic verses, there are several traditions that reinforce the teachings of tolerance:

Anas bin Malik reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'The faith of one of you is not complete until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself' (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Whoever does not show mercy to people, neither will Allah show mercy to him' (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. I will show you something that if you do, you will love each other. Spread the greeting of peace among yourselves.' (Sahih Muslim).

The core of the Islamic principles that support religious moderation is centered on the understanding that faith is not merely a ritual, but a prerequisite for social ethics. Tolerance (*tasamuh*) is emphasized as a moral obligation rooted in the full recognition of the rights of non-Muslim individuals to worship and believe as they choose, as exemplified in Qs. Al-Kafirun, while also guaranteeing equality (*musawah*) among citizens, since a person's worth is determined by their piety, not their background. This principle is manifested through social ethics that require kindness and respect toward neighbors, along with ensuring protection and security for non-Muslims, as highlighted in various hadiths. In addition, Muslim leadership is expected to exercise self-restraint and implement non-confrontational methods of preaching, such as the prohibition against insulting the deities of other religions found in Qs. Al-An'am: 108, with the aim of preventing horizontal conflict and fostering social collaboration. Diversity is understood as part of the divine plan that guides human beings to engage in mutual recognition (*ta'aruf*) and cooperation in establishing a peaceful and inclusive social order.

From these Qur'anic and prophetic sources, it is also clear that tolerance is not a peripheral aspect of Islam but a fundamental value at the heart of the religion. The respondents interpret these texts in ways that emphasize respect for diversity and acceptance of the plural realities of human life. Their views show that authentic religious understanding is one that reflects moderation (*tawasuth*), balance (*tawazun*), justice (*i'tidal*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), equality (*musawah*), and discussion (*musyawarah*). These principles are not merely theoretical concepts but serve as the foundation for the creation of peaceful coexistence and dignified social interaction. Through the application of these values, society can build an inclusive and collaborative space for dialogue, where differences are not sources of tension but opportunities for mutual enrichment. In an increasingly plural and interconnected world,

Islam’s emphasis on moderation and tolerance becomes an essential basis for building bridges of understanding and cooperation across identities, thereby contributing to the creation of a more peaceful and united global community.

Leadership, Mediation, and Social Participation: The Architecture of Religious Moderation in Salatiga and Singkawang

In promoting religious moderation and tolerance, it is important that religious leaders and communities actively engage in interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Through interfaith dialogue, religious leaders and communities have the opportunity to come together, share their beliefs and discuss common values. This dialogue leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of different religions, breaking down stereotypes and misconceptions. By engaging in respectful and meaningful conversations, religious leaders can help build bridges of understanding and promote a culture of inclusion.

Table 2. Strategies used by religious figures to promote religious moderation

| Respondents | Date and Place | Argumentations | Real Practice |
|---|---|--|--|
| Ahmad Baharuddin (Leader of FKUB Singkawang) | 17 Mei 2023 in FKUB office of Singkawang | The success of tolerance lies in the Quick Response of the FKUB and immediate mediation of potential conflicts (e.g., food/preaching issues). | The FKUB resolved the Pork Dumplings case by summoning the relevant parties and deciding on a vendor location policy aligned with religious teachings, concluding with a jointly agreed regulation. |
| Abdul Halim (Leader of Kemenag and MUI Singkawang) | 18 Mei 2023 in Ministry of Religious Affairs office of Singkawang | Religious leaders must challenge extremist interpretations, encourage interfaith marriage, and advocate for equal rights for all. | Creation of inclusive religious narratives in the local Muslim community. Decreased resistance from the MUI on issues of social pluralism and active involvement in minority rights consultation. |
| Abdul Halim (Leader of Kemenag and MUI Singkawang) | 18 Mei 2023 in Ministry of Religious Affairs office of Singkawang | Intolerance stemming from sermons/lectures is very low because the community's collective awareness of the importance of tolerance has already formed. | Tactical Sermon Oversight: Coordination between the FKUB and MUI to promote takmir (mosque administrators) ensuring sermon content is non-divisive, thereby suppressing provocative preaching. |
| Agus Ahmad Suaedi (Leader of MUI Salatiga) | 03 Juni 2023 in MUI office of Salatiga | Promoting tolerance through institutional dialogue and long-term education (halaqah/ panel discussions and morning kajian/ religious studies). | Resolution of Internal Christian Conflict: The FKUB and MUI intervened in the case of a Jehovah's Witness sect church construction (opposed by the Catholic community), successfully reducing tension and preventing the sectarian conflict from escalating. |
| Muhammad Hanif (Caretaker of the Edi Mancoro Islamic Boarding School) | 04 Juni 2023 in PP. Edimancoro office of Salatiga | Promoting religious tolerance values among interfaith youth. | Active participation in Percik activities, which focus on interfaith events attended by young people from various religious backgrounds. |

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| Tjhai Chui Mie (Chairperson of the Vihara Development Association, Singkawang) | 18 Mei 2023 in Vihara Sui Kheu Thai Pak Kung of Singkawang | Religious moderation is a perspective, attitude, and religious behavior that upholds balance. It is neither extreme nor excessive, yet firmly adheres to one's respective religious teachings. | Actively promoting collaboration among all elements of society, including local government, the FKUB, traditional leaders, cultural associations, and youth communities. |
| Pdt. Matheos Mau, M.Pd.K (Chairperson of the Indonesian Pastors Association (API)) | 18 Mei 2023 in ELSADAI office of Singkawang | The Christmas celebration must serve as an inspiration for peace and an opportunity to strengthen the commitment to presenting peace and harmony in society. | Active involvement in the activities of the FKUB, traditional leaders, and cultural associations. |

Source: Authors' conceptualization, 2025

The table demonstrates that religious moderation in Singkawang and Salatiga is not a spontaneous social achievement but the product of structured inter-institutional cooperation, sustained civic engagement, and strategic leadership. In Singkawang, figures such as Ahmad Baharuddin and Abdul Halim emphasize the responsiveness and coordination between the FKUB and the MUI of Singkawang in anticipating and addressing potential conflict. The resolution of the *pangsit babi* incident, where Muslim concerns regarding food vendors were mediated through consultations involving sellers, religious authorities, and legal experts, illustrates how tolerance is upheld through clear administrative regulation and pragmatic, problem solving mechanisms. Likewise, FKUB's tactical monitoring of mosque sermons serves as an early warning system; if preachers deliver material that could incite division, FKUB immediately coordinates with MUI to intervene. This close institutional synergy, facilitated by personal rapport between the FKUB and MUI leaders, helps maintain Singkawang's reputation for low levels of religiously motivated intolerance in everyday religious life (Baharuddin 2023; Suaedi 2023).

Salatiga adopts a more developmental and long-range model. Under the leadership of Agus Ahmad Suaedi, the MUI cultivates interfaith understanding through *halaqah*, regular institutional dialogues involving MUI, PGI, Hindu groups, and ect; also, character education initiatives such as *kajian pagi* for junior high school students (Suaedi 2023). This strategy aims to embed the values of religious moderation at the grassroots level and among younger generations. The effectiveness of this approach is evident in the successful mediation of intra Christian tensions over the construction of a Jehovah's Witnesses worship space, a conflict that could have escalated without FKUB and MUI intervention. This case illustrates that Salatiga's mediation architecture is not only relevant for interreligious relations but also for managing sectarian tensions within religious communities themselves.

Across both cities, the involvement of non-Muslim leaders, such as Tjhai Chui Mie and pdt. Matheos Mau, reinforces the idea that moderation is a shared civic project rather than a Muslim centered initiative. Through FKUB and various cultural ritual collaborations, these actors help institutionalize interfaith trust, demonstrating that tolerance emerges not merely from doctrinal instruction but from continuous social practice, mutual engagement, and collective responsibility for public harmony.

Broader reflections from figures such as Abdul Halim expand this understanding by highlighting the moral responsibility of religious leaders to promote tolerance within their communities. This includes challenging extremist interpretations, supporting gender equity and women's education, affirming equal rights across religious boundaries, and encouraging forms of interfaith social integration (Majid 2023). Interfaith harmony in Singkawang and Salatiga thus rests on a constellation of religious actors (MUI, FKUB, pesantren leaders, Walubi, and PITI) whose joint engagement ensures that religious teachings translate into lived norms of coexistence.

Moreover, religious and community leaders wield a unique moral authority that enables them to influence not only doctrinal interpretation but also the social and humanitarian landscape. Their leadership in interfaith dialogue breaks down prejudice, nurtures empathy, and fosters a culture of inclusivity. Their advocacy of tolerance, central to the ethical frameworks of major religious traditions including Islam, provides a model for their communities to emulate. Through social welfare efforts, such as charitable programs, educational support, and poverty alleviation, these leaders bridge the gap between religious and civic spheres, helping address structural inequalities.

A promising extension of this role lies in integrating Islamic social entrepreneurship with the principles of social *fiqh*, combining ethical economic practices with community empowerment. Such initiatives can address poverty, unemployment, health disparities, and other socio-economic challenges while remaining grounded in Islamic values of justice and equity. Religious leaders, leveraging their networks and legitimacy, can mobilize communities toward sustainable, justice-oriented development.

Taken together, the experiences of Singkawang and Salatiga illustrate that religious moderation is best understood as a dynamic ecosystem shaped by policy, leadership, social engagement, and collaborative practice. It emerges from the interplay of theological authority, institutional mediation, interfaith participation, and community-based problem solving. The resulting model is adaptive, inclusive, and resilient, capable not only of preventing conflict but also of cultivating the social conditions necessary for long-term interreligious harmony and shared civic flourishing.

The experiences of Singkawang and Salatiga show that religious moderation is a deliberately constructed ecosystem sustained by leadership, institutional cooperation, and community participation. It thrives when theological authority, conflict-mediation structures, and interfaith collaboration work in tandem to translate religious values into practical social harmony. This integrated model -adaptive, inclusive, and resilient- demonstrates that sustainable interreligious peace is achieved not by chance, but through consistent collective effort and socially grounded practices.

The Role of Religious Rituals and Traditions in Singkawang and Salatiga: A Cross-Cultural and Interfaith Perspective

This study explores the significance of religious rituals and traditions in the cities of Singkawang and Salatiga, examining how they are practiced across various religions and cultures. By delving into the unique customs and practices within these communities, the research highlights the role of religious traditions in fostering social cohesion, respect, and understanding among diverse cultural and religious groups. In discussing the intersection of religion and culture, it is essential to understand the social structure of the two cities. Therefore, we begin by outlining the social structure of the people in Singkawang and Salatiga.

Based on the report by the Setara Institute, in collaboration with the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs and the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency, officially recognized Singkawang as the most tolerant city in Indonesia in 2022. This accolade underscores the city's exceptional efforts in nurturing interfaith harmony and promoting religious moderation. Singkawang's achievement reflects its successful integration of religious and cultural values within its social fabric. Located in West Kalimantan province, approximately 145 km north of Pontianak, Singkawang is surrounded by the Pasi, Poteng, and Sakkok mountains. The city's social structure is shaped by a combination of government policies, regulatory frameworks, and the socio-religious demographics of its population. Singkawang's residents are known for their acceptance of various ethnicities and subcultures, embodying Indonesia's rich cultural diversity (Setara Institute n.d.; Muhtifah et al. 2021).

Meanwhile, Salatiga, another city renowned for its steadfast commitment to interreligious dialogue and social cohesion, ranked second in the Tolerant City Index in Indonesia. This distinction highlights Salatiga's ongoing and deliberate efforts to cultivate an environment of inclusivity, where religious diversity is not only acknowledged but celebrated. The city has consistently worked to create spaces where different faiths coexist harmoniously, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Salatiga's approach to religious tolerance is

grounded in active engagement and dialogue among various religious communities, which promotes peaceful interactions and addresses potential sources of conflict in a constructive manner (Sofyan and Badi'ati 2022, 243).

The city's ranking serves as a testament to its dedication to strengthening interfaith relationships and creating a climate of social harmony. The local government, religious leaders, and community organizations in Salatiga have played key roles in this achievement, working collaboratively to ensure that the principles of tolerance, respect, and moderation are embedded in daily life. This continuous effort is reflected in the active participation of Salatiga's citizens in initiatives that promote peace, such as interfaith discussions, cultural exchanges, and joint community service projects.

Like as Singkawang, Salatiga stands as a model of religious moderation and peaceful coexistence for other regions in Indonesia. These cities demonstrate that religious diversity, when embraced and celebrated, can be a powerful force for social unity and national cohesion. They show that fostering understanding and tolerance is not only possible but essential for maintaining peace in a diverse society. The experiences of Singkawang and Salatiga offer valuable lessons on how urban spaces can become thriving centers of interfaith dialogue and mutual respect, setting a powerful example for other regions in Indonesia and beyond.

The city is recognized as having a diverse population in terms of ethnicity, religion, race, and customs (SARA) within Indonesia and the sub-district. Chinese, Dayak, and Malay, collectively known as CiDaYu. Singkawang is home to three major ethnic groups: The largest of these groups is the Chinese community, making Singkawang the largest Chinese community in Indonesia. In addition to these three groups, there are also immigrant communities from Java, Madura, Bugis, Batak, Sundanese, and Banjar (Maisonra 2023, 261).

According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Singkawang in 2021, the religious adherents in this sub-district are as follows: Buddhist (45.87%), Islam (37.76%), Christian (15.45%) - comprising of Catholic (8.16%) and Protestant (7.30%), Confucian (0.85%), and Hindu (0.07%). Singkawang's ethnic Chinese population is predominantly Buddhist and Confucian, while ethnic Dayak residents are generally Christian, and ethnic Malays, Javanese, Madurese, and Bugis are predominantly Muslim. The primary languages spoken in Singkawang are Indonesian, Malay, Dayak, and Mandarin (Juniardi et al. 2022, 38–39).

Muhtifah presents Singkawang as a model of religious tolerance and harmony in Indonesia, offering an in-depth analysis of the factors that contribute to the city's reputation for inclusivity (Muhtifah et al. 2021, 3). Key elements include its diverse religious composition, the active efforts of both the local government and community to promote interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding, and cultural practices like the annual Cap Go Meh festival. This festival, in particular, serves as a vibrant platform for people of different faiths to come together, celebrate their distinct cultures, and showcase the city's rich diversity. The report also underscores the role of education in cultivating tolerance and fostering a deeper understanding among Singkawang's younger generation, ensuring that the values of harmony continue to thrive in the future.

The report emphasizes the pivotal role of local governments in fostering religious harmony, as demonstrated by the Singkawang regulation on the protection and development of religious values. This regulation reflects the local government's dedication to ensuring that individuals of all faiths can practice their religion freely and without fear of discrimination. Singkawang's culture of tolerance is rooted not only in governmental policies but also in the deep cultural and religious values upheld by its people.

Singkawang has forums and organisations dedicated to promoting interfaith dialogue and communication. The Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) and the Interfaith Youth Communication Forum (FKPLA) encourage open dialogue and collaboration between different religious communities, fostering mutual understanding and respect. The people of Singkawang actively participate in and celebrate religious holidays and events together, fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance. The people of Singkawang actively participate in and celebrate religious holidays and events together, fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance. This

inclusive atmosphere extends beyond formal organizations. The people of Singkawang actively participate in and celebrate religious holidays and events together, fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance (Revadila et al. 2022, 1).

In contrast, Salatiga is also a diverse mix of ethnicities, races, cultures, and religions living side by side. Salatiga's population has steadily grown over the years due to natural population growth and rural-to-urban migration. The city's population is predominantly Javanese, but it also includes significant populations of Chinese, Arabs, and other ethnic groups. While Salatiga values its demographic diversity, it is important to consider whether this diversity can truly create a tolerant and inclusive city. Although the presence of two faith-based educational institutions, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) of Salatiga and Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana (UKSW), may suggest a level of tolerance, it does not necessarily ensure the harmonious coexistence of different communities. Additionally, Salatiga's historical context is crucial in comprehending its current demographic and social dynamics (Sofyan and Badi'ati 2022, 245; Faidi 2019).

Ultimately, the SETARA Institute has named Salatiga a tolerant city. Salatiga is a city that boasts religious diversity and a unique social structure that reflects the harmonious coexistence of its religious communities. This structure has been shaped over time by various factors, including the city government, religious leaders, and the community itself. As a result, the people of Salatiga have developed a strong spirit of tolerance and mutual respect, which plays an important role in maintaining harmony within the city (Sofyan and Badi'ati 2022, 242).

Religious-based educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping the social structure of Salatiga. UKSW and UIN Salatiga are two such institutions that promote understanding, acceptance, and tolerance among students from diverse religious backgrounds. These institutions function as platforms for dialogue and interaction, enabling students to learn from one another and gain a deeper understanding of diverse religious perspectives.

Strong inter-religious harmony helps to maintain social diversity in Salatiga City. Muslim students studying at UKSW have stated that Salatiga deserves the title the Most Tolerant City. In addition, Salatiga City's social diversity presents an opportunity for unique and meaningful acculturation. The presence of a significant Chinese population in Salatiga has resulted in a fusion of foreign and Javanese cultures, creating a distinct local culture. The city is adorned with buildings that showcase Javanese, Dutch, and Chinese art and architecture. The sustainable acculturation in Salatiga City is supported by the open-mindedness of its citizens, their increasingly advanced education, and their high level of respect (Rahardian, Handono 2004).

Religious rituals play a dual role in both preserving religious beliefs and traditions while also promoting religious tolerance and moderation. As Baharuddin from FKUB Singkawang highlights, these rituals provide an invaluable opportunity for individuals of different faiths to come together, interact, and communicate. This interaction fosters deeper understanding and respect, as people are able to engage with one another in a meaningful and respectful manner. In these settings, religious individuals have the chance to learn about each other's distinct practices and beliefs, which not only broadens their perspectives but also strengthens their attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect (Baharuddin 2023).

Through such engagements, religious rituals become a powerful tool in bridging divides between different religious groups, enabling them to appreciate the uniqueness of one another's faith and customs. This mutual recognition of diversity helps to nurture a sense of inclusivity and solidarity, where the emphasis shifts from religious differences to shared values of humanity and respect.

Moreover, religious rituals act as platforms for reinforcing the cohesion of religious communities themselves while simultaneously promoting cooperation and unity between these groups. In the context of religious pluralism, they serve as an essential means of fostering tolerance, understanding, and harmonious relationships among various religious communities. By participating in each other's rituals, individuals can build trust, deepen interfaith dialogue,

and develop shared experiences that reinforce the values of cooperation and peaceful coexistence.

The role of religious rituals in a pluralist society is of immense significance. These rituals not only preserve the spiritual and cultural traditions of individual communities but also serve as platforms where tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation for diversity can flourish. By recognizing and promoting the value of religious rituals in encouraging these principles, societies can build stronger social cohesion, foster interfaith solidarity, and ultimately contribute to a more peaceful and harmonious environment. Religious rituals offer unique opportunities for communities to engage with each other, learn from one another, and bridge gaps of misunderstanding, thus enhancing social harmony and cooperation across diverse groups.

For example, Baharuddin highlights the role of the Cap Go Meh celebration, which occurs ten days after Chinese New Year in Singkawang City. This celebration involves close collaboration between Muslims and non-Muslims, exemplifying the spirit of religious moderation and mutual respect. Muslims in Singkawang are frequently asked to become *Tatung* bearers (traditional ritual performers) and participate in the Cap Go Meh parade, an event that showcases interfaith cooperation. Baharuddin further notes that the procession is unique in that it pauses immediately upon hearing the call to the *Dzuhur* prayer, an act that reflects the respect for religious practices within a multicultural context. This practice is supported by various religious leaders, including the MUI and the FPI (Islamic Defenders Front), which is a notable display of religious harmony.

However, the Cap Go Meh tradition has not been free from controversy. Baharuddin recounts how, at one point, the FPI had protested against the celebration. This protest highlighted the complex dynamics of religious pluralism in Indonesia, where differences in religious practices sometimes spark tension. Nevertheless, after Singkawang was officially recognized as a tolerant city, the FPI's stance shifted, and they began to support the event as a symbol of the city's commitment to tolerance and interfaith harmony. Since then, there have been no further protests against Cap Go Meh.

The initial resistance by FPI and its subsequent acceptance of the tradition underscores the evolving nature of religious tolerance in Singkawang. It also highlights the importance of understanding the nuanced role that religious rituals play in fostering social harmony. This transformation reflects the broader societal shift toward embracing diversity and religious moderation, which is essential for maintaining peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society. The Cap Go Meh celebration thus stands as a powerful example of how religious rituals can bridge divides, create unity, and foster a deeper sense of mutual respect among different faith communities.

Muhammad Hanif, caregiver of PP. Edi Mancoro and chairman of Rijalul Ansor Central Java, shared a similar perspective on the importance of interfaith relationships in fostering harmony and understanding (Hanif 2023). He emphasized that religious leaders often maintain close friendships during religious holidays, which serves as a powerful example of mutual respect. Hanif shared that Romo Budi and Romo Kindro, along with their students, made a visit to Ponpes Edi Mancoro during *Eid al-Fitr* as a gesture of friendship. Likewise, during Christmas, several of his students accompanied him on visits to Christian homes, further fostering interfaith understanding and connection.

Hanif recounted that his father, K.H. Mahfud Ridwan, exhibited similar interfaith solidarity during the time of the Kedungombo dam construction. His father and Gus Dur, two prominent Muslim leaders, felt compelled to defend the rights of those affected by the dam project. This shared cause strengthened their bond of friendship with Romo Mangun, a Catholic priest, creating a lasting and meaningful connection between these key religious leaders. Hanif noted that Gus Dur often stayed at their home, which solidified their relationship and demonstrated the power of interfaith friendship in times of struggle.

Hanif further explained that during *Eid al-Adha*, the practice of distributing sacrificial meat to local residents as an act of charity is a common occurrence in many Muslim communities, regardless of the recipients' religious affiliation. This practice exemplifies the

social nature of religious rituals, which transcend religious boundaries to benefit the wider community. However, Hanif clarified an important distinction based on Islamic teachings. According to the Qur'an, *zakat* (almsgiving) is intended solely for Muslims and cannot be given to non-Muslim neighbors. While religious practices with a social aspect, such as charity and communal events, are open to all, Hanif stressed that matters related to *ushul* (fundamental religious practices), particularly worship, must be respected and preserved within the confines of each faith's adherents.

In this regard, Hanif argued that while the right to worship should be protected, it is equally important to create a space for interfaith dialogue and cooperation where people of all religions can engage in shared social and charitable activities. His perspective emphasizes the balance between maintaining religious integrity and fostering a spirit of inclusivity and mutual respect. He noted that non-Muslims should be encouraged to participate in social aspects of religious life, such as charity and community events, but their participation in religious rituals and acts of worship should be approached with sensitivity to the boundaries set by each religion.

Through such practices, Hanif believes that the lines of communication and cooperation between different faiths can be strengthened, contributing to the broader goal of social harmony and mutual respect. This approach encourages religious tolerance, ensuring that while each religion preserves its essential beliefs and practices, it also contributes to the common good of society, creating a culture of empathy and understanding.

Therefore, religious rituals can serve as a means to reinforce moderate values in religion. During the implementation of religious rituals, religious individuals are taught to strengthen the balance between reason and realistic thinking. Religious rituals, when performed with full awareness and a deep understanding of religious teachings, can cultivate a moderate attitude towards religion, discouraging extreme interpretations and practices. Additionally, religious rituals can help individuals respect old traditions that remain relevant while also evolving with the times. In this context, religious rituals can effectively maintain agreement in understanding and interpreting religious teachings in a moderate manner, while avoiding extremism.

CONCLUSION

The discussion of the model of religious moderation in Singkawang and Salatiga from a cultural perspective demonstrates that moderation is not merely a normative idea, but a social construct shaped by the interaction between religious texts, leadership, and cultural practices. This study shows that, first, muslim leaders in both cities affirm that the values of tolerance, equality, and peaceful coexistence derived from the text of Qur'an or Hadith remain the primary foundations for responding to the dynamics of plural societies. Second, moderation grows through responsive leadership, coordinated institutional mediation mechanisms, and interfaith community participation, thereby it forms an ecosystem of tolerance that does not emerge spontaneously but is planned, structured, and sustainable. Third, religious and cultural rituals provide social spaces that enable the development of mutual trust, cooperation, and social cohesion. Thus, this study demonstrates that religious moderation is not merely the outcome of normative teachings but a lived communal practice formed through the synergy of religious authority, social leadership, and cultural rituals, collectively creating a more inclusive and conflict resilient plural society.

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