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**MIDDLE CLASS COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN BUNTET VILLAGE, ASTANAJAPURA DISTRICT, CIREBON REGENCY**

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**Abstract**

This study focuses on religious moderation and the religious views of the middle class community in Buntet Village, Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency. The purpose of this research is to find out how the community's religious condition and how religious views are, as well as their relation to nationality. The methodology used in this study used a qualitative descriptive analysis using in-depth interview techniques, document review, observation, and holding focus group discussions. The results found in this study indicate that religious moderation for the Muslim middle class in Buntet Village, Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency is quite good. In this village, there are no members of the community who are anti-NKRI, anti-Pancasila, and anti-UUD 1945. As well as the diversity of the Muslim community in the Buntet area is classified as moderate, because of their religious understanding as developed by NU and Muhammadiyah.

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**Introduction**

One of the serious problems for citizens in Indonesia today is the spread of religious radicalism in society (Mulyono & Mulyoto, 2017). Various acts of intolerance and radicalism with religious nuances have occurred in several regions of Indonesia in recent years (Qodir, 2016). This can be seen in the bomb detonation in various areas, such as the bombing in Bali, in Jakarta, Cirebon and Surabaya. The bomb detonation in Bali occurred in 2005, which is known as the Bali Bomb 2. The bomb detonation continued for several years, such as the detonation of a bomb in the mosque complex of the Police Office in Cirebon, West Java (Triyani, 2016) and the detonation of a suicide

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bomb in Bethel Church, Solo in 2011. Then there was a bomb explosion in front of the Police Station in Poso in 2013 (Sahasrad, 2016).

In fact, in 2016, 2017, 2018, bombs were detonated in a number of places, namely at Sarinah Thamrin Jakarta, a bomb exploded in Kampung Melayu Jakarta, and a bomb exploded in Surabaya (Nainggolan, 2018). This shows that in Indonesia there have been acts of terrorism committed by members affiliated with certain groups, such as Jamaah Islamiyah and Jamaah Ansyarut Daulah (Zakiyah, 2019). It even happened recently, on November 27, 2020, the beheading and burning of seven houses by the MIT terrorist group (East Indonesian Mujahidin) in Central Sulawesi.

Violence in the name of religion occurs in various regions in Indonesia, such as the destruction of houses of worship and the expulsion of minority groups. According to The Wachid Institute's records, cases of violations of religious freedom and intolerance have continued to rise, especially in the last five years. In 2009, there were 121 violations. This number increased to 184 events in 2010, 267 events (2011), and 278 events (2012). In 2013, the number decreased slightly to 245 incidents or a 12 percent decrease compared to 2012, but the cases are increasingly spreading. In 2014, there were 158 cases of violations of religious freedom with 187 cases. Of these, 80 incidents involved 98 state actors and 78 events involved 89 non-state actors (Chia, 2019).

In line with these cases, the Setara Institute also found a trend of increasing understanding of intolerance. In 2010, the Setara Institute recorded 216 incidents of violations of religious freedom containing 286 forms of action, which were spread in 20 provinces. There are 5 provinces with the highest rate of violations, namely West Java with 91 incidents, East Java with 28 incidents, Jakarta with 16 incidents, North Sumatra with 15 incidents, and Central Java with 10 incidents. While other areas are less than 10 events. Of the 286 forms of violations of religious freedom, there are 103 state actions involving the organizers as actors. Of the 103 state actions, 79 actions are active (by commission) and 24 of them are by omission (Hasani & TigorNaipospos, 2010).

Such religious understanding has great potential for religious divisions in Indonesia (Prasojo & Pabbajah, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to discuss a new paradigm of a friendly and tolerant understanding of Islam, namely religious moderation. Moderation of religion in the Muslim middle class is important to study, because the Muslim middle class is a social group in society that shows an established economic, educational and occupational condition (Suharto, 2021).

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In terms of the family economy, they have an orientation to other activities that support their daily life, one of which is activities in the religious field.

They have access to economic, political, and information technology developments so that they have a strategic position in society.

The religious views of the Muslim middle class are very interesting to study because in general they have a big influence on people's lives in general (Permana, Mujanah, & Murgianto, 2020). In this case, the problems that need to be studied are: 1) What is the actual condition of the community's diversity in Buntet Village, Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency; 2) What are the religious views and their relation to nationality. This is important given the strategic position of those who have access to movement, social activities, and influence the views of society in general.

### **Method Research**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study of the Muslim middle class in the constellation of nationalities in Buntet Village, Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency. The method of data collection is done by using in-depth interview techniques, document review, and observation. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain data related to religious views and attitudes, as well as national values of the Muslim middle class.

Literature review is used to obtain written data related to religious moderation in the Muslim middle class in the national constellation. This data includes the activities of the Muslim middle class community, movements and religious social relations of the Muslim middle class. Observations were made to observe the socio-religious activities carried out by the Muslim middle class in the research location.

In addition, data collection was carried out by holding a Focused Group Discussion (FGD), which is generally carried out in qualitative research with the aim of finding a meaning according to the understanding of a group (Bungin, 2003). In this study, FGDs were conducted by means of directional discussions with field sources who knew the research theme. FGDs were conducted twice in each research location.

The first FGD was intended to find out preliminary information and a map of the diversity of the Muslim middle class community. From this activity, it is hoped that information will emerge about the activities of the Muslim middle class community and other sources of information. The second FGD was carried out to explore further data on religious moderation of the Muslim middle class and as a medium for cross-checking the data that had been previously obtained.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **A. Religiousness of Muslim Intermediate Communities**

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The diversity of the Muslim middle class can be seen through two religious activities, namely routine religious activities and incidental religious activities.

### **1. Routine Religious Activities**

Routine activities in Buntet Village include five daily prayers, Eid al-Adha prayers, Eid al-Fitr, solar eclipse prayers, and other sunna prayers. In the five daily prayers, the congregation only ranges from 3-4 lines per day. This is as seen in the observations of researchers, as follows:

"... The congregation prays five times a day on an average of 3-4 shaf (lines). It should be noted that the worshipers at the Dusun 01 mosque, namely the Al-Hidayah mosque are purely the people of Buntet Village. In fact, there is a possibility that around 90% are local residents, but if it is during the day (dhuhur and asyar prayer) it is possible that there will be other residents, for example people dropping by, and so on.

The community views that the mosque does not only function as a means of worship, but also as a means of gathering or meeting among congregations, so that the mosque can truly be enjoyed by the people of Buntet Village. In fact, the mosque is seen as a source of solutions, not as a source of problems. Therefore, the mosque can be used as a source of inspiration for the congregation because it can give rise to inspiration to carry out activities. This is because in this mosque there is a unique culture, namely "chatting together".

Some of the congregation of the Al-Hidayah Mosque, after carrying out congregational prayers, especially after the Asr prayer, they have free conversations, meaning that there is no specific theme on religious matters. With these chats, there is informal communication for the congregation to build understanding. Here there is a dialogue between the board and the community / congregation. In this mosque, they find their own pleasure.

### **2. Incidental Activities**

Every year the mosque management organizes insidental activities such as: commemoration of 1 Muharam, Maulid Nabi, Isra and Microj, and Nuzulul Quran. Usually this activity invites clerics from the Buntet area itself and from outside the Buntet. In the Buntet village mosque there is no affiliation to any group, such as NU and Muhammadiyah. However, their religious practices are more likely to go to NU.

"... here every time there is an isra 'mi'raj and maulid activity, the community is very supportive and enthusiastic about participating in it, both from the NU or Muhammadiyah circles

## **B. Religious Views and Attitudes**

### **1. Views and Attitudes Toward Religious Groups**

The religious groups that developed in the Muslim community consisted of several groups, such as NU, Muhammadiyah, LDII, MTA, and salafi. However, the Muslim middle class community in Buntet Village only responds to religious groups that are considered heretical by the community, namely Shia and Ahmadiyah.

Towards other religious (Islamic) groups, the people of Buntet Village consider it no problem, such as NU and Muhammadiyah. In principle, they can accept any religious group, as long as they do not disbelieve (takfiri) of other groups, because this could lead to divisions between fellow Muslims. Such understanding is important for society so as not to fall into excessive fanaticism.

The attitude of fanaticism among adherents of religions often rests on the attitude of assuming that their religious teachings are the most true (truth claim), while other religions are outside the path of truth, and are even considered heretical ([Armayanto, 2014](#)).

According to Yusuf Qordhowi in ([Putra, 2019](#)), being fanatical about one opinion, without respecting the opinions of others, is considered a radical attitude. In addition, several indicators of other radical attitudes are 1). tough and harsh attitude in socializing, tough in da'wah methods, and so on; 2). To be prejudiced against others by looking at him with black glasses, always accusing others with his badness; and 3). Likes to disbelieve others, abort others, legalize their blood and property ([Al-Qaradhawi, 2017](#)).

### **2. Views of Cultural Adat**

The nuances of local cultural customs are still thick in Buntet Village. In this case, the people of Buntet Village have the principle that they should not follow the problem of shirking. However, cultural customs that do not mix things up and have Islamic values, then they are adulterated, such as tahlilan and yasinan.

This can be seen when there was a death in one of the families of the residents of Buntet Village, then they held a death salvation from the first day to the seventh day. Likewise, when there is a bridal ceremony, they also invite their neighbors to read prayers together, such as tahlilan and yasinan. In fact, in the community there are tahlilan groups that are carried out

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routinely every Friday night at mosques and prayer rooms. In a sociological perspective, this kind of thing can foster a sense of togetherness, harmony (ukhuwah), mutual respect and mutual help between one another. This is as stated by Mr. Bagja as follows:

“... In Buntet Village there are still local traditions that continue to be carried out by the community, such as tahlil, yasinan, solawatan or tambourine. If there is death, they will come to do takziah. When there is a cultural parade, many people follow. In fact, there is a tradition of "Imtihan" which is followed by the people of Buntet Village. This is because this community wants to maintain togetherness, togetherness, and mutual cooperation,"

So, many people in Buntet Village still carry out local traditions, especially when moving house, death, and / or family celebrations. In the tradition of moving house or occupying a new house, people often invite tahlil or yasin congregations. When someone is hit by a death accident, they still carry out the tradition of telung dino, mitung dino, ripen dino, nyatus to nyewu.

### **C. Religious Relations of Muslim Intermediate Communities**

The religious relations of the community in Buntet Village are classified as good. This can be seen from the relationship between society and the government, community relations with people of different groups, and community relations with the surrounding community. In government relations, the people of Buntet Village have good relations with the government. This is very possible because the people of Buntet Village come from various groups, such as: Civil Servants, Private Employee Workers, Craftsmen, Teachers, and Entrepreneurs.

### **D. View of National Values**

In principle, citizens must recognize the superiority of national values, such as the Republic of Indonesia, Pancasila, UUD 1945, and Bhineka Tunggal Ika. These four things are known as the four pillars of nationality, namely Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and Unity in Diversity. If one of these pillars collapses, Indonesia's existence is in danger of collapsing. Therefore, the function of a pillar is as a support pillar whose strength will greatly determine the construct of the building it supports. These four pillars have historically been the basis for Indonesia's pluralistic existence (Mas'ud, 2021).

All of these things must be upheld so that it is necessary to instill national values for all Indonesian people. NKRI is a form of state which consists of one state, which only has one government, one head of state, and one center of power. The people of Buntet Village have the insight to always put the interests of the nation first, national unity and integrity and national integrity. Because of that, NKRI is a fixed price which is not in doubt by the nation's children. This can be seen in the community who often involve the government, such as arranging permits, involving RT and RW institutions for social interests.

The people of Buntet Village acknowledge and believe that Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, both of which are the ideological foundations of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, all citizens must obey Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, because the unity and harmony of the religious community will be guaranteed if Pancasila is the basis of the State. Even though people never discuss it in their daily lives, they fully accept that 'Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution are the basis of the state as agreed by the previous leaders of the nation (founding fathers).

This recognition will have an impact on the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia so that it requires continuous efforts of all elements. Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is the nation's motto and is an agreement stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. As the motto of the State, Bhineka Tunggal Ika has a wider scope, such as differences in ethnicity, nation, culture (customs), religions, and beliefs that lead to the unity and integrity of the archipelago. The concept of Bhineka Tunggal Ika can be used as a reference in the pluralistic and multicultural life of the nation and state.

Pluralistic and multicultural principles are principles that recognize the diversity of the nation in terms of religion, belief, ethnicity, cultural customs, and regional conditions. The principle of "Bhineka Tunggal Ika" is a symbol of national heterogeneity, ethnicity and diversity. Therefore, the community agrees that as developed by the government, namely that it will not change the state ideology, the basis of the Pancasila State, and the 1945 Constitution with other bases, such as Islam and / or others.

## **Conclusion**

Religious moderation for the Muslim middle class in Buntet Village, Astanajapura District, Cirebon Regency is quite good. In this village, there are no members of the community who are anti-NKRI, anti-Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution, as well as democracy. This is because the middle-class Muslim community is mostly educated and has an established economic



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capacity, both in terms of work and income. In this area, most of the Muslim middle class people work as entrepreneurs, but many members of the Muslim community have other professions, such as: Craftsmen, Teachers, and Private Employees. All of them are people whose ideology is already established, namely loyal to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

The diversity of the Muslim community in this area is classified as moderate, because of its religious understanding as developed by NU and Muhammadiyah. In fact, they have a "unique" tradition of post-congregational prayers, especially the Asr prayers. In this tradition, they gather and chat together regardless of their social status. Even those who have different religious views can mingle in an arena, such as NU and Muhammadiyah.

In principle, the Muslim middle class society can accept any religious group, as long as they do not kafir (takfiri) towards other groups. Such understanding is important so that people do not fall into excessive fanaticism. The attitude of fanaticism among adherents of religions often rests on the attitude of assuming that their religious teachings are the truth (truth claim), while other religions are outside the path of truth. Therefore, the tolerance attitude of community members is very high which can be seen in joint activities that involve all citizens regardless of ethnicity, race, and any group.

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