

Religious Moderation: The Concepts and Implementation of Local Traditions in Karimunjawa

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Abstract

This research highlights the emergence of social friction brought about by different perspectives on religious issues in Indonesia. An example of cultural ceremony that sparks social friction is sedekah laut (coastal thanksgiving). Another example is the rejection of a leader from different religious affiliation and an attempt to establish a caliphate system. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a religion moderation to create a peaceful and harmonious life. This condition can be found in Karimunjawa, where various ethnic and religious groups live together in harmony. Thus, this research attempts to investigate religious moderation in Karimunjawa and its contestation in local traditions. This study employs a qualitative research paradigm by using a case study approach. The results show that, although most Karimunjawa people do not know religious moderation concept theoretically, the practice of such concept can be observed in their everyday life. The implementation of moderation values is carried out from one generation to another through acculturation of local wisdom and religious values. Some practices that reflect such harmony are barikan kubro, mudunke kapal, kumpulan, and sambatan. Hence cultural manifestations among the people are evidence of religious moderation in the island of Karimunjawa.

Keywords: religious moderation, local tradition, Karimunjawa

Introduction

The discourse of religious moderation is being intensively spoken and rolled out by the Indonesian government. Even the RPJMN/Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional (National Medium-Term Development Plan) for 2020-2024 provides a large portion of religious moderation. One of the reasons for such development plan is the fact that religious extremism has become a national and even global phenomenon since two decades ago. Violence in the name of religion creates tension for all groups, which to a certain extent causes suspicion in a religious group toward one another. It becomes a source of violence (Kementerian Agama, 2019, p. 51). It is, of course, very worrying because religious ties

could pose extraordinary attraction to gain the sympathy of fellow believers. At the same time, those unfamiliar with the background of the conflict would voluntarily participate in fighting for the religion.

The phenomenon of extremism is also a bitter experience for Indonesia. The past acts of terrorism had cost hundreds of innocent lives. They targeted not only religious but also racial and ethnic differences. It is also very concerning in terms of nationality, which by nature, Indonesia is a pluralistic country. Moreover, religion tends to trigger conflicts between ethnic groups and races, and caused more turbulent clashes. For this reason, a comprehensive understanding of religious moderation in society is essential. It is an attitude to take a

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middle ground between two opposing or excessive perspectives (Suharto, 2019, p. 21). Thus, strengthening such attitude of moderation could make the community to be more open to, and comprehend ethnic and religious differences. As the motto of Indonesia, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, Indonesians are indeed different but they must remain as one.

It is a fact that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim. However, it should also be noted that Indonesian Muslims consist of various tribes and practice cultures of different religious traditions. If each of these cultural tribes behaves selfishly and demands their spiritual practices as a benchmark in implementing religious activities in Indonesia, it would be highly chaotic. Furthermore, although most people are Muslim, Indonesia has other religious communities whose existence is recognized by the state. So whatever the religion, ethnicity, or culture, everyone possesses the rights and should carry out similar obligations as fellow Indonesians. Herein lies the importance of religious moderation.

On the other hand, some groups reject the existence of religious moderation because it reduces the essence of religion itself. For example, Muslim activist Ustazah Ratu Erma Rachmayanti emphasized that Muslims must reject religious moderation because it perpetuates Islamic secularization (muslimahnews.com, n.d.). The concept of religious moderation is not a moderated religion. Religion does not need to be negotiated because it has taught the principles of moderation, justice, and balance. So it is not their religion that must be moderated, but instead, the way the adherents practice their religion (Kementerian Agama, 2019, p. 15). If they do not take the path of moderation in their faith, there will be selfishness and a desire to make everyone the same as themselves.

Another thing that arises due to anti-religious moderation is the growing occurrence of terrorism-related incidents. One of the acts of terrorism that caught the public's attention in 2021 was the bomb explosion in front of the Makassar Cathedral Church on a Sunday in March 2021 (28/3/2021). It was reported that this

incident was resulted in 20 people being injured (Luthfiya, n.d.). In 2019, SETARA Institute recorded 200 violations of freedom of religion/belief, with 327 acts spread across 28 provinces in Indonesia. This number has increased compared to 2018, where there were 160 events with 202 actions (Institut, 2020, p. 28). Therefore, it is vital to strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia for all groups. It will create peace and harmony in life. Indonesia is a pluralistic country with two essential assets in shaping its multicultural character, namely democracy and local wisdom. These are the values that are believed and understood to maintain religious harmony (Akhmadi, 2019, p. 49)

One of the proposed solutions to bridge the differences in Indonesia is to bring together local wisdom with the idea of moderation as a strategic instrument to avoid conflict and create integration. According to Haba John (2008, p. 334), local wisdom provides a cohesive aspect in an adhesive element across religions, citizens, and beliefs. Local wisdom can be interpreted as a space or a dialogical arena to flex all kinds of identity politics exclusivity inherent among various groups. In addition, local wisdom is also an approach that can resolve conflicts and frictions by prioritizing positive emotional aspects that are cultural and pluralist that the local community can readily accept.

Implementing local wisdom in religious moderation is vital because it has successfully become an effective *da'wah* (propaganda) brought by the Walisongo. These Walisongo developed a friendly cultural Islam (now known as Islam Nusantara). Walisongo's indigenization of Islam teaches tolerance, substance, and cultural awareness in Islamic *da'wah*. This pattern of Islamic indigenization has ultimately formed the embodiment of Islamic culture, a cultural model of Islam that meets Islamic normative values and local traditions (Milal, 2016, p. 5). The theory of Indigenization of Islam, first proposed by Gus Dur (Abdur Rohman Wahid) in the 1980s, will be the basis of this research. This theory postulates that Islam is a religion that can be accommodated as a culture by humans without losing their identity. The essence of the indigenization of Islam is the need

not to avoid polarization between religion and culture (Wahid, 2001, p. 111).

One distinctive example of the implementation of local wisdom in religious moderation is in the people of Karimunjawa, Central Java. Various ethnic groups, such as Javanese, Bugis, Madurese, Bajo, Butonese, and Mandar, lived on the island. Based on data from (disdukcapil.jepara.go.id, n.d.) the religion adopted by the Karimunjawa society is predominantly Muslim, and only a small number of Christians and Catholics. There are also members of the society who observe Kejawen beliefs. It should be noted that despite the fact that Karimunjawa is a small island, the people can express and practice their own traditions, culture, and religion well. Such cultural and religious differences are not a nuisance to the people. All live harmoniously under the name of local wisdom.

No one forces their religious traditions as a benchmark in implementing belief in Karimunjawa. The Regent of Jepara, Dian Kristiandi, had praised this condition when he opened a Wayang Kulit performance at the Karimunjawa Square on March 12, 2022. He likened Karimunjawa to a miniature of Indonesia which consists of various ethnic groups, religions, cultures, and languages but always maintains harmony (Jawa Pos, 2022). Each ethnic group can naturalize their respective cultures but can still mingle. Shouldn't this kind of thing be used to reference how to assist the Indonesian people to become moderate religious people?

Admittedly, many previous researches on the implementation of local wisdom in religious moderation have been done. An article written by Sitti Arafah in 2020 entitled "Moderasi Beragama: Pengarusutamaan Kearifan Lokal dalam Meneguhkan Kepelbagaian (Sebuah Praktek pada Masyarakat Plural)" was published in the *Mimikri* journal (Journal of Religion and Culture). It used a literature study approach to describe an understanding and moderate religious behavior by looking at local wisdom as a meeting point in affirming diversity in plural societies in several regions in Eastern Indonesia. The results of this study

indicate that local wisdom is still widely found in our community. It is implemented in active tolerance practices (Arafah, 2020, p. 71).

There is also a proceeding of the Annual Conference for Muslim Scholar Kopertais Region IV Surabaya in 2022 adjacent to this research, written by Zaitur Rahem entitled "Teachings of Religious Moderatism in the Ngunjeng Tandhe Tradition." This study showed that the tradition of Ngunjeng Tandhe had a message of moderatism in the Madurese community. Even though the Ngunjeng Tandhe tradition was born from a culture outside the beliefs of Sumenep Regency, it can be powerfully implemented along with many religious practices of the majority Muslim community. The form of anti-radicalism education is openness in juxtaposing culture and spiritual teachings for a long time (Rahem, 2022, p. 548). In addition, a journal article entitled "Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama melalui Penanaman Nilai Budaya Lokal Tama Umma Kalada" or "Building an Attitude of Religious Moderation Through Instilling Local Cultural Values Tama Umma Kalada" by Yohanes Umbu Lede showed the inculcation of local cultural values to build an attitude of religious moderation through adhering to cultural values in traditional rituals such as the values of obedience, solidarity, unity, cooperation, hard work, religious tolerance, and respect for ancestors (Lede, 2022, p. 243).

From the three studies above, it can be said that what the researchers do will be different. The researchers not only theoretically reveal the values of moderation in local traditions but will conduct field studies to find out the Karimunjawa people's understanding of religious moderation and its implementation in local traditions. Interestingly, the researchers will attempt to discover the roots of religious moderation in Karimunjawa, which come from local traditions, including myths. Uniquely, they believe in the myth that the citizens of Karimunjawa must behave properly and adequately. If an individual acts improperly, they would get direct karma such as a long-term illness. This myth is a centrum of local wisdom that becomes a community controller so that the

people would always be kind and act in harmony with local tradition.

The people of Karimunjawa highly uphold religious moderation by acknowledging the existence of other parties, being tolerant, and not imposing their will through violence. For instance, the implementation of the Barikan Kubro tradition is followed by the whole community regardless of their religion, ethnicity, culture, and language. Even though this tradition is heavily imbued with Javanese Islamic culture, the types of Nasi Tolak Balak (rice to reject lousy luck) in the Barikan Kubro can be different, depending on the food tradition of each tribe. It has become a cohesive bond to the differences that existed in Karimunjawa. They will eat together and exchange side dishes. It is one of the reasons for the researchers to find the facts behind this extraordinary practice of religious moderation in Karimunjawa. Based on this background, the researchers will reveal the concept and implementation of local traditions in the religious moderation of the Karimunjawa community.

Research Method

This research is field research in which researchers come to the field of study (Rakhmawati, 2011, p. 10). This research is a case study that collects or analyzes existing cases (Sukmadinata, 2004, p. 77). The source of data in this study is in the form of field data related to strengthening religious moderation through local traditions in Karimunjawa. The Karimunjawa Island was chosen because of its uniqueness, including the population consisting of various tribes, cultures, and religions. Besides that, they still maintain their respective local cultures, such as the existence of many traditional houses and different nearby worship houses. The data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation. For observation, researchers came directly to the research location and visited the tomb of Sunan Nyamplungan, residential areas, and houses of worship. Then, interviews were obtained from research subjects or direct informants, such as the surrounding community, including youth, village government, caretakers of the tomb, kyai

(religion leader), community leaders, and academics who have conducted research in Karimunjawa. On the other hand, the documentation data comprised the history of the island of Karimunjawa and other supporting files. Further, to analyze the data, the researcher used data reduction, data display, then conclusion and verification. The verification was conducted by doing a recheck through triangulation.

Results and Discussion

Religious Moderation in Karimunjawa

1. The Roots of Religious Moderation in Karimunjawa

The moderate attitude of the people of Karimunjawa is not a new thing. Around the 15th century, Karimunjawa was inhabited by many tribes, even more than the number of tribes nowadays. Since then, people have become accustomed to the existence of cultural and religious differences and can respond well to them. This harmonious condition still survives and has been practiced by the people of Karimunjawa until now. However, these very slick multicultural conditions have not been widely exposed. It should be noted that, although this island is dwelled by various tribes, such as Javanese, Bugis, Makassar, Madurese, Buton, Bajo, and Mandar. Karimunjawa has no original or indigenous tribe. All the tribes were originally the immigrants who later settled and had children in the island. Besides the ethnic multiplicity, Karimunjawa also has religious diversity. Most people are Muslim, which is fronted by two large organizations, namely Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Some people are Christians, and there are two churches for them to worship and practice their religious allegiance.

One of the uniqueness of the tribes in maintaining cultural diversity is shown in their daily language. For example, the Bugis communicate with their fellow Karimunjawa by using the Bugis language but adapt to communicate with other tribes eventually. Even more unique for the Karimunjawa people is that, the people can comprehend other languages even though they do not possess the linguistic

proficiency (Widyawati, 2015, p. 606). Another harmonious diversity is that there are still stilt houses owned by the Bugis people. The real effort they make to maintain the traditions of each tribe to stay alive is to form associations. For example, the existence of the Bugis community in Kemujan village called Kabug (community of Bugis children).

There are also differences in religious rituals even when they profess similar religions, such as Islam. In fact, it is natural to see the differences because the Karimunjawa people come from distinct tribes. For instance, the people recite Al-Quran verses with different accents. The other examples are that not all people read the *wirid* after the prayer or use *qunut* in the morning prayer. There is also a difference in terms of gratitude. Javanese people generally celebrate with *banca'an*. It is an activity to pray together and then distribute food as a form of appreciation without any calculation or measurement. Meanwhile, the Bugis community has an even-odd gratitude tradition that refers to the food served. Even so, people feel happy and comfortable with these differences.

The moderate attitude formed in Karimunjawa stems from the patterns instilled by Shaykh Amir Hassan, known as Sunan Nyamplungan. He was a great scholar of the 15th century who discovered Karimunjawa. He has several versions of lineage. Some said that he is the son of Sunan Muria. However, another version says that he is a descendant of Sunan Kudus. Even the caretaker of the tomb of Sunan Nyamplungan, who has reached 100 years of age, cannot provide clear information about the origin of his lineage. What is clear, he is the figure of the ulama who discovered and opened the island of Karimunjawa and instilled a tolerant Islam.

He taught the Islamic tolerance attitude with a cultural approach to the people of Karimunjawa through local arts. His teaching styles are still practiced and firmly held by the Karimunjawa Muslim community, particularly by his students. One of them is KH. Abdul Mun'im, whose teacher was a direct student of Shaykh Amir Hasan.

The teachings introduced by Sunan Nyamplungan addressed woods as something that has specific messages. There is a wood called Kalimosodo, which means a self-commitment to serve Allah SWT. There is also Dewandaru wood which means humans do not have power and effort other than the will of Allah SWT, so people do not deserve to be arrogant. And there is also Stigi Wood which contains the message that a perfect human must combine three elements, namely Iman, Islam, and Ihsan. These teachings became the forerunner of moderation in Karimunjawa.

In addition, the religious moderation of the Karimunjawa community comes from understanding the concept of *tawasuth* (moderate) promoted by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Considering the majority of the Muslim community in Karimunjawa are followers of NU, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia founded by Kyai Hasyim Asy'ari. This concept is used as a guideline by the people of Karimunjawa in understanding moderation. This *attawassuth* character is an essential character for NU members. So, all members of NU have a point of view of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah that must be applied in daily life with an attitude based on the character of *tawassuth* (Shiddiq, 2005, p. 38).

As the followers of NU, the Karimunjawa community has role models in thinking moderately, namely kyai. Kyai is a community leader who has an essential role in shaping the moderate attitude of the Karimunjawa community. He has an extensive control over forming a change in society because of his charismatic leadership. Referring to Weber's theory¹, charismatic leaders are individuals who have special abilities or extraordinary characteristics that are believed by their followers and can create a radical and dynamic change (Upe, 2010, p. 207). So, people have very high trust in the kyai. Without any

¹ The term "charisma" is used to describe someone's traits that are generally different from others. Thus, people treat them as the one who has supernatural abilities, superhuman abilities, or at least has special powers or abilities. Some of these privileges cannot be obtained by ordinary people. Thus, people are treated as leaders (Weber, 1968, p. 48).

consideration, people will believe and follow what the kyai preach and convey.²

The position of the kyai in a society is a strategic one, which can lead Muslims to be tolerant. There is also a vast range of a kyai - from a child to an adult and even an elderly. In general, all of them studied with the kyai and always received a spiritual shower to balance the world and the hereafter. Not a single villager dares to argue and even act rudely to a kyai. Uniquely, this kyai can give blessings to his people. Thus, there are many unexpected blessings because of *takdzim* (devotion) to the kyai.

This moderate attitude, rooted in the teachings of Sunan Nyamplungan, is increasingly present in Karimunjawa in this modern era. It is supported by Nahdliyyin residents who believe that the brotherhood forged is not only internal or fellow Muslims. Among NU, a model of brotherhood is not only limited to religion but also includes brotherhood among nations and all mankind, known as *ukhuwah islamiyah*, *ukhuwah wathoniyah*, and *ukhuwah basyariyah* (Salik, 2020, p. 110). On the other hand, Muhammadiyah followers in Karimunjawa are particularly significant. Thus, this composition strengthens the moderation attitude of the community due to the support of moderate religious understanding from NU and Muhammadiyah. In Indonesia, moderate Islam that implements the *washaton ummatan* is found in two groups, namely Nahdlatul Ulama' and Muhammadiyah. Both reflect the teachings of Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah which identify tolerance and peace in preaching (Fahri, 2019, p. 98).

2. Understanding the Concept of Religious Moderation

The people of Karimunjawa have a good understanding of moderation that is manifest in everyday life. It starts from the awareness of all elements of society that differences are a necessity and could bring benefits if appropriately addressed. On the other hand,

² Leaders, like the kyai, base their power on their ability to create and mobilize people. Compliance with this kind of leader is related to emotional factors they own (Giddens, 2004, p. 38).

they realize that humans are social creatures who need one another.

Starting from the thought that every effort, action, and activity carried out to achieve specific goals must have a solid and foundational basis, this understanding of moderation in Karimunjawa is based on QS al-Hujurat: 13, "O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware."

The application of religious moderation in Karimunjawa must always be based on the verse, which views diversity and difference as follows:

a. The principle of "plural is common"

Beliefs and practices of living together that emphasize pluralism as commonplace do not need to be debated or contradicted. The people of Karimunjawa are fully aware that the population of Karimunjawa is very diverse, so it is natural for differences to appear. However, they can respond to these differences very positively. One of the local residents said about the normality of differences in Karimunjawa, "*uwong iku pancen bedho-bedho. Raine menungso yo bedho kabeh ra ono sing podu. Dadi ura usah kaget nek ning dunyo iki akeh sing ora podu.*" It means that humans are different. The human face is also not the same, and nothing is the same. So there is no need to be surprised if you find dissimilarities in this world. The tangible manifestation of this principle is that people can live well even though they have different ethnicities.

b. The principle of "equal is usual"

Humans are born with advantages over other creatures, in which humankind has rationality. And the people of Karimunjawa agreed that no religion teaches violence. Even Islam, as the main religion adopted by the people of Karimunjawa, asserts in QS al-Kafirun: 6, which means "For you your religion and for me my religion." The people of Karimunjawa have reached the stages that explain that their duty as humans is to have social and ritual purity. How other people carry

out their religious rituals is entirely his business with God. The important thing is to have good social relations and support each other. The tangible manifestation of this principle is the opening of equal opportunities for Karimunjawa residents to become RT and RW heads regardless of ethnicity and religion.

c. The principle of “modesty in diversity”

Modesty in diversity means to have a moderate attitude that guarantees wisdom (open mind) and acts away from fanaticism that often legitimizes the use of instruments (Rahman, 2012, p. 31). The tangible manifestation of this principle is the existence of people's narratives that every time there is an event in Karimunjawa, there is no specialization for certain ethnicities and religions because every event or activity is for all Karimunjawa residents. For example, the implementation of the Barikan Kubro tradition, which is typical of Javanese Islam tradition, is followed by the people of Karimunjawa regardless of ethnicity and religion.

People in moderate societies apply the principles above. The acknowledgment of religious moderation in the Karimunjawa community follows the concept of *tawassuth* in the morality (*tasawwuf*) promoted by Nahdlatul Ulama, which is, first, do not feel that you are better than others. Second, be polite, humble (*tawadlu'*) and keep your heart (*khusyu'*) with anyone and be in the correct position. Third, always try to create a sense of security, peace in yourself in particular and in society in general. Third, they are not easily swayed and consumed by misleading and irresponsible issues. Fourth, not too excessive in judging something, calm and wise in taking a stand and considering the benefit (Mannan, 2012, p. 33).

This understanding of the moderation of the Karimunjawa community is not necessarily compromising, and one should not lose the identity. However, the people of Karimunjawa always uphold the values of justice and avoid all forms of *tathorruf* (extreme) approaches. This is because they believe in what the kyai in Karimunjawa suggests, that among the thoughts that the devil uses is exaggeration in religion and recklessness in carrying out religious laws.

The effect that appears on the understanding of religious moderation in Karimunjawa is that the community has a very tolerant attitude towards the various expressions and spiritual traditions of the tribes in Karimunjawa. No one has ever accused or blamed each other. They are free and mutually support one another. The people of Karimunjawa have never been extreme in inviting Christians, who are a minority, to convert to Islam. The form of a good understanding of moderation can also be seen in the absence of mutual disbelief from fellow Muslims due to differences in religious knowledge. The people of Karimunjawa position themselves in social life by upholding brotherhood, tolerance, and living in peace without considering their ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This condition seems to align with the spirit of tolerance by Gus Dur, namely tolerance of religious nationality. It means that in addition to building dynamic relationships in response to other religions, it must also lead to how to create a peaceful, equal, and just life in the life of the nation (Suwardiyansyah, 2017, p. 157).

This condition is in line with the view of moderation in Islam. In viewing and solving a problem, moderate Islam always tries to compromise and take a middle position. In differences, be it differences in religion or *madhab*, Islam is an attitude of tolerance, respect for each other with the beliefs of the faith of each religion and *madhab* followed. Hence, all decisions in society can be accepted with a cool head and not in anarchic action (Darlis, 2017, p. 231). Regarding tolerance, the people of Karimunjawa also have limitations as regulated in Islam. In Islam, tolerance only applies to the *muamalah*/social area and does not involve matters of faith (Mursyid, 2016, p. 47)

Amid excellent inter-ethnic and religious tolerance in Karimunjawa, the community tries to defend themselves so as not to lose their original identity. One of the efforts to keep the teachings held by each individual in Karimunjawa is through education in institutions such as TPQ and reciting the Al-Quran in the prayer room. Islamic religious

traditions are taught to the children so that they get used to their religious rituals. In addition, the values of religious moderation are also instilled in TPQ. It is a preventive effort for the people to relay religious moderation. This effort is very effective because the transmission of religious moderation values is very suitable to be given from an early age. The local tradition of saying goodbye to each other, which is often done by the Javanese when they want to separate, is applied in implementing the value of tolerance for early childhood at TPQ. Apparently, this characterizes the value of adjustment that has been assembled from the values of tolerance and justice (Rahmatika, 2021, p. 165)

Meanwhile, to foster a sense of brotherhood and tolerance, the community holds a meeting at the RT level to meet and discuss things that need to be managed regularly in rotation from one house to another, which is called Kumpulan RT or RT gathering. Apparently, the older generation also needs a place to cultivate moderate attitudes, especially for Muslims who make up the majority in Karimunjawa. Furthermore, the *takrim* assembly turned out to be an effective place. The *taklim* assembly has a significant role in increasing the religious understanding of the community and fostering harmony among people with friendship (Munawaroh & Zaman, 2020, p. 390).

Theoretically, the people of Karimunjawa do not know much about the theoretical concept of religious moderation. But in reality, they have been practicing it in their daily life in the first place. They do not understand that what they are doing is called religious moderation. They realize that they live in diverse environments, so differences are natural to occur. And as did their predecessors, they seem only to follow and continue the patterns of life that their predecessors have carried out. That is by respecting and appreciating these differences as humans who need each other. The people of Karimunjawa realize that society's most fundamental aspect of religion is the human side. It is the basic foundation of social life in a pluralistic environment. As Gus Dur made pluralism a place to invite religious people to

sit down and make peace together regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or skin color. Everything in Gus Dur's view is humanity (Zainuri, 2021, p. 175)

The Implementation of Local Traditions in Religious Moderation

Karimunjawa is an archipelago of 27 islands inhabited by various tribes from ancient times until now. However, Karimunjawa does not have any indigenous tribes. The inhabitants are immigrants from different regions who later settled and lived on the island. Therefore, the local traditions in Karimunjawa are the adoption of practices they brought. Even though they have different traditions and cultures, they look after and preserve each other's traditions without losing their authenticity. Interestingly, this local tradition in Karimunjawa has become a means of implementing the values of religious moderation for the surrounding community.

Within the scope of Islam in Karimunjawa, they have an Islam Nusantara, a form of Islamic moderation in Indonesia that is peaceful, friendly, and polite. Islam respects tradition and culture but is firm in upholding Islamic law. Islam Nusantara is the embodiment of Islam *rahmatan lil alamin*, or Islam which brings peace and happiness to all people in the world (Agis et al., 2018, p. 166). The embodiment of Islam Nusantara in Karimunjawa is seen in the harmonious social, cultural, and religious conditions between religious communities and internally within religious communities, especially in Islam. Ethnic differences certainly give rise to various kinds of Islamic traditions according to the customs of each tribe. Even though Islam is the majority religion in Karimunjawa, its adherents have a very high tolerance, so the intern and internal life of religious people are very well established based on a moderate understanding of religion.

In terms of tradition, the people of Karimunjawa still hold tightly to their respective traditions and yet, they can also blend in with other traditions in their surrounding environment. The house's structure is one of the uniqueness in maintaining these traditions. For example, in the Kemujan area, the Bugis tribes

still build traditional stilt houses by following the construction rules. They made the Rakkeang section (the section that functions to store food and heirlooms), the Ale Bola (residential space) and the Awaso (room at the bottom of the stage used for livestock and a place to store agricultural tools, (Pelras, 2006, p. 265). Uniquely, other ethnic groups, such as Javanese, help them to build the house.

The diversity of traditions in Karimunjawa also presents something extraordinary because sometimes people celebrate two traditions in one event. For example, the marriage ceremony between the Javanese and the Bugis tribes will carry out wedding practices with Javanese nuances, whereas the choice of colors is typical of the Bugis. Such practice also illustrates that no culture is superior to another. All traditions are equal. Even the preparation for the wedding ceremony usually involves all community members regardless of ethnicity or religion. Hence, the key to the moderate attitude of Karimunjawa communities is the high spirit of cooperation. As in the Indonesian tradition, the nature of *gotong royong* (cooperation) is a characteristic of this nation. With the existence of high citizen solidarity, it will realize the ideal social order (Pongsibanne, 2017, p. 17).

Currently, Karimunjawa Island is one of the tourist destinations in the Jepara district, popular amongst domestic and foreign tourists. Interestingly, despite being a bustling and modern island, local people still believe in myths. This myth has become one of the people's control to behave. They think anyone from Karimunjawa who acts unkindly towards other residents will receive a direct warning from their local ancestors through calamities such as chronic illness. Although it sounds strange, the community has repeatedly proven this myth's truth. It is natural because myth is a story woven into their culture, speaks their beliefs, acts as a map of social rules, and is a permanent model of their moral behavior (Dhavamony, 1995, p. 150).

The caretaker of the tomb of Sunan Nyamplungan said that, in Javanese, "*Sopo wae sing nglakoni perkoro olo ning Karimun, mongko bakal keno wala.*" This means that every people

of Karimunjawa who commit a crime will get compensation in the form of evil. This verbal tradition strengthens religious moderation because people believe that these myths can control society's behavior every day. On the other hand, they fear getting evil retribution if they act crossing the religious and social norms. Thus, the people of Karimunjawa always choose the middle way.

Tepo Seliro tradition is also a local tradition of the Javanese community as a medium for strengthening religious moderation in Karimunjawa. With a sense of mutual love, mutual honing, and care, a feeling of belonging and brotherhood arises with fellow human beings. One small thing that can be seen from the success of the Tepo Seliro tradition in embracing the community to become a moderate figure is the belief in others wholeheartedly. It is common for people to leave the key of their motorcycle hanging while parking in the yard without any security. Uniquely, there has never been a case of losing a motorbike. This attitude of Tepo Seliro is used as the essential foundation by parents in introducing religious moderation to children early.

Another tradition that is full of moderate values is Barikan Kubro. This tradition is carried out on Thursday before the Wage Friday in the month of Shuro. It is a form of gratitude for the produce of the land and sea they get. In addition, this tradition is also to welcome the arrival of the western season (the season of wind and big waves). They hope that the community will be protected from danger. Hence, this tradition is also known as the "rejection" tradition. It is followed by the entire Karimunjawa community regardless of age, ethnicity, and religion.

This tradition is carried out by parading a large cone to the fishing port, and later to pass some of them to the inhabitants of the sea. The surrounding community rejects the term "*melarung*" because the intent and purpose are to share with other living creatures in the ocean, not as a form of offering. Then eight other cones were paraded to the center of the Karimunjawa square, which was not too far from the fishing port.

At the Karimunjawa square, two hundred impromptu dancers consisting of children and women are divided into four groups that form positions according to the cardinal directions. They were waiting for the arrival of the male dancers comprised of young men and gentlemen who brought the *tumpeng* to the square. Here, men and women have the same opportunity to get involved and make the Barikan Kubro successful. Indirectly, this tradition transmits the values of moderation to society about how men and women have the same opportunities and positions in social life.

On the other hand, residents come to each other's square Karimunjawa with rice as a symbol to reject lousy luck (*tolak balak*). It is where the tolerance of various tribes in Karimunjawa appears. The rice they bring is different because each tribe has other habits. This rejecting-lousy-luck rice contains white rice, *urab* (a combination of toasted coconut and vegetable salad), boiled eggs, and salted anchovies. The side dishes they bring are usually varied because they will eat the rice together. On top of it was a plastic bag full of salt and raw green beans to symbolize rejecting-lousy luck. It shows their moderate attitude by accepting and supporting the existing differences. Due to ethnic differences, there are differences in traditions related to food offerings. And they seemed to be enjoying and tasting and even exchanging menus with great joy. People realize that differences are unavoidable, so they must be treated positively and happily.

Even though it is an annual event, the Barikan Kubro tradition is full of values of religious moderation. One of its characteristics is the *tumpeng*. The mention of this *tumpeng* has an abbreviation, namely "*yen metu kudu sing mampeng*", which means "life is to be lived with full sincerity". Then there is salted fish which means cooperation, and boiled eggs which mean strong determination. It shows the principle of the Karimunjawa community in taking a stand on the existence of differences to achieve a moderate attitude. The people of Karimunjawa have a high spirit of cooperation so that one community and another feel mutual love. This

tradition makes people's hearts and minds open because they feel cared for and cared for by the surrounding community so a good attitude will be reciprocal to this tradition.

The tradition of cooperation in Karimunjawa communities can be seen in various activities. First, the Mudunke Kapal (drop the boat). Dropping the boat to the sea is a hereditary tradition and has become a common sight in Karimunjawa. Only males will carry out this tradition because it requires intense energy. The people conduct this tradition when a new ship begins to be lowered to the sea. So, residents usually build a boat on land near the sea. When the building of the boat completes, the men work together to push it into the sea so that the owner can use the boat. From the Barikan Kubro tradition, it can also be seen how the interactions between the Javanese as the majority and other tribes are very kind and open (Benardi et al., 2020, p. 51). The community works together by preparing coconut fronds and wooden sticks the size of an adult calf. Then the materials are arranged at the bottom of the ship, which is rather sharp. Later, this serves as a wheel when pushing the boat into the ocean and making the bottom of the boat not scratched. The front of the boat is tied with a large rope that is roughly the size of an adult's arm. Then the residents will be divided into four parts. The front part is in charge of pulling the ship, the back is pushing it, and the left and right sides are balancing so that the boat does not roll over while increasing the strength to move it.

The Mudunke Kapal shows the need for cooperation from all parties to achieve a peaceful and harmonious life amidst multiculturalism. You cannot be selfish and want to win alone, but all must work together, hand in hand, and balance each position so that the ship does not roll over, said a head of neighborhood in a village in Karimunjawa. These values indirectly spread to the community that they must not be selfish and win alone and live, mingle with the whole society and always be moderate. It aligns with the principle of religious moderation presented in the question and answer booklet (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019, p. 7), which is fair and balanced. The

people of Karimunjawa balance ritual practices with social righteousness. They carry out humanitarian missions through this cooperation with the intention of worship because helping others is part of religious teachings.

The second is moving the Bugis house. The Karimun community has a high spirit of cooperation regardless of ethnicity and religion. In the village of Kemojan, there are still many stilt houses belonging to the Bugis tribe. In some cases, the Bugis people have to move them. And the residents will cooperate to lift them to a new place desired by the owner. Third, the Mlandang. This tradition is an activity to help each member of the Karimunjawa community who has a special occasion. For example, when a family holds a wedding ceremony, their neighbors will help them to carry out domestic chores, such as cooking, cleaning the house and others.

Fourth, the Sambatan. This tradition is cooperation in building houses. Generally, the community will help each other in the final stage of house construction, which is the installation of tiles. The male will flock to assist in building the house without any reward. And the ladies will help to prepare the dishes.

Another tradition that serves as a bridge of moderation amid differences in Karimunjawa is *kumpulan*. It has become a tradition for the people of Karimunjawa to hold group events. This event brings together residents and neighbors in several activities, such as reciting the Al-Quran and *tahlil*, a short lecture from the local kyai, and finally, a *jagongan* to exchange stories while enjoying the tea. People later will go back home with snacks in hand. This event rotates from one house to another. Sometimes, if something needs to be discussed, then this tradition will become an occupation for meetings and discussions. This activity is also sometimes referred to as the *kumpulan* RT-nan.

Apparently, the tradition of this group has considerable power as a medium to maintain religious moderation. It is because moral values have been developed very well as Gus Dur proposed four moral obligations that bind humans universally, including: first, the obligation always to be consistent in thinking

and looking for solutions to the problems faced. Second, the obligation to uphold the primary purpose of life. Third, the obligation to provide the necessary means for achieving life's goals, and finally, the obligation to take responsibility for implementing social life entirely and honestly (Alif Pratama Susila, 2017, pp. 120–121)

The people of Karimunjawa also have a *ziarah* tradition or a journey to a holy place (later will be called pilgrimage). The Muslim community in Karimunjawa only carries out this activity. Even so, the Muslim community who makes pilgrimages is not only from the Javanese but also from other tribes. Like a usual pilgrimage, the community performs this tradition every Thursday afternoon. There, people generally read Yasin and *tahlil*. The tomb of Sunan Nyamplungan is located at the top of the mountain in the village of Nyamplungan. To reach it, people have to go through stairs. The visited tomb is the figure of the first ulama' who taught religious moderation in Karimunjawa. The community believes that the blessings of Sunan Nyamplungan or Shaykh Amir Hassan flow until now so that life in Karimunjawa is always harmonious.

Sunan Nyamplungan teaches a tolerant Islam to the people of Karimunjawa. He transmitted Islamic values through local arts. In addition, he also used media that was easy for the public to remember. Among the most popular is the use of wood media by giving names that contain a specific purpose. Among the types of woods that are still sacred today are Kalimosodo wood, Dewandaru wood, and Setigi wood. These woods, especially those in the tomb, should not be taken out of Karimunjawa. Because people believe that the ship that sailed out of Karimunjawa island with one of these types of wood (which came from the gravesite), the boat will sink. So, the use of local traditions as a medium of diverse moderation in Karimunjawa is not new but since time immemorial. And it is considered very effective because there have never been conflicts under the guise of religion in Karimunjawa.

The results of cultural da'wah form the moderate attitude of the Karimunjawa community. Da'wah carried out by Islamic

propagators in Indonesia generally shows a solid accommodation to the local community. Thus, Islam is not present as a threat religion but as a religion that has a vital role in cultural transformation. It shows that the character of Islam in Indonesia can go along with the traditions of the community and the culture of the local community (Octalia, 2020, p. 176). Apparently, this kind of model of Cultural da'wah is very effective in developing a moderate attitude in the community, and its effects can still be felt today in Karimunjawa.

Conclusion

Religious moderation in Karimunjawa is not new to the society. Although the majority are Muslims, ethnic differences give them diverse religious traditions. It could be seen that most people of Karimunjawa do not establish a theoretical understanding of the religious moderation concept. They only know that their environment is diverse, so they must respect and support each other's differences. Nevertheless, the moderate attitude has practically been reflected in daily life based on the spirit of active tolerance. They have different principles but still unite. Accordingly, they can live in harmony and peace amid diversity while still being able to express religious rituals according to their respective beliefs.

The implementation of moderation values in Karimunjawa is passed down from an early age from one generation to another through acculturation of local wisdom and religious values. This method has been developed for a long time by Sheikh Amir Hassan. He introduced Islam with a cultural approach. Moderation values are transmitted through various traditions such as *barikan kubro*, *mudunke kapal*, *tepo seliro*, *rewang*, *sambatan*, and grave pilgrimages. Admittedly, not all traditions keep the moderation values. There is also a local tradition of Karimunjawa which is only ceremonial, so the impact on the formation of moderation is not significant as in the tradition of Lombo. It tends to become an annual activity to attract tourists. Uniquely, one of the powerful controllers for people to be moderate is the belief in myths. In this modern era, they still believe

that anyone in Karimunjawa who misbehaves will get a hardship from Allah SWT.

Based on the above findings, several recommendations can be put forward, especially for stakeholders, in this case, the government and the community. First, the government should pay more attention to the harmony and moderation of religion that has grown in the community. It could be done by intensifying and maximizing the role of government officials to protect and maintain harmony by collaborating with the community in certain activities or events. Due to the rapid flow of information and technology, if no antidote or extra attention is given, it is feared that the attitude of moderation, sense of harmony, unity, and integrity of society in Karimunjawa will erode. The second is for the community to be closer and more harmonious in maintaining a moderate attitude and harmony. The community should not be easily ignited or divided because of the acceleration of technology. The extraordinary flow of information can easily affect the resilience of a community. It is a crucial thing that the government should pay attention to, so that the high heterogeneity level in the people's lives in Karimunjawa can be maintained.

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