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Local cultural values and Islamic values: relevance and internalization for strengthening Religious Moderation

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Abstract

As a multicultural country, Indonesia has cultural diversity spread across regions. The local culture, one of the indicators of religious moderation, has noble values that can be the force for a peaceful and tolerant religious life. Cultural unity can be a tool for uniting different religious communities. Therefore, this study aims to analyze local cultural values and their relevance to Islamic values as strengthening religious moderation. The research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observations, interviews, and documentation. The results of this study show that local cultural values are relevant to Islamic values in support of strengthening religious moderation. Therefore, there needs to be an effort to strengthen religious Moderation in heterogeneous communities by internalizing local cultural values through Religious Education and integrating religious-based cultural value in the activities of organizations and social institutions of society. The findings also suggest that greater attention be paid to local cultural development as a supportive factor in building a peaceful, moderate, and tolerant society.

Keywords:

Diversity; Islamic Values; Local culture; Religious Moderation.

Abstrak

Sebagai negara multikultur, Indonesia memiliki keragaman budaya yang tersebar di berbagai daerah. Budaya lokal yang menjadi salah satu indikator moderasi beragama memiliki nilai-nilai luhur yang dapat menjadi kekuatan untuk mewujudkan kehidupan beragama yang damai dan toleran. Kesamaan budaya dapat menjadi alat untuk menyatukan masyarakat berbeda agama. Oleh karena itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis nilai-nilai budaya lokal dan relevansinya dengan nilai-nilai Islam sebagai penguatan moderasi beragama. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis yang digunakan adalah analisis isi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai budaya lokal memiliki relevansi dengan nilai-nilai Islam dalam mendukung penguatan moderasi beragama. Sehingga perlu ada upaya penguatan moderasi beragama pada masyarakat heterogen dengan menginternalisasikan nilai budaya lokal melalui pendidikan agama, integrasi nilai budaya berbasis agama dalam aktivitas organisasi dan lembaga sosial kemasyarakatan. Hasil penelitian ini juga merekomendasikan adanya perhatian lebih terhadap perkembangan budaya lokal sebagai faktor pendukung untuk mewujudkan masyarakat yang damai, moderat, dan toleran.

Kata Kunci:

Keanaekaragaman; Nilai-Nilai Islam; Budaya Lokal; Moderasi Beragama.

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Introduction

Local cultural values are the strength to build peaceful and tolerant societies. The construction of a multicultural and multi-religious Indonesian culture is a gift of God to be used as a force in building a safe, peaceful, and tolerant society (Umar, 2017). The value of local culture as the ethnic wealth of each region can be adapted to shape the character of the Indonesian nation (Firmansyah, 2021; Zakiyah et al.), the stinging of moderate character in heterogeneous societies. Appreciation of local cultural values is an essential indicator of religious moderation (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019), particularly cultural values compatible with Islamic values. Therefore, the internalization of the local cultural values based on Islamic values should be done to strengthen the Religious Moderation Movement in Indonesia.

Cultural values are closely linked to religious values because they both have the same purpose in forming a man who is obedient to God, cares for others, loves, helps, and appreciates differences. The concept of *Rahmatan lil-Ālamîn* (welfare for the universe) has become a primary value in Islam. It can reference the primary values that inspire others, such as charity, primacy, tolerance, and *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (calling for good and preventing bad things) to create a harmonious life (Yani & Hanafi, 2022). These values are also found in local cultural values, which are expressed differently by the ethnic specificities of the region. For example, in North Sulawesi, people who have local wisdom diversity in ethnic languages with high meaning to realize a life of affection and cooperation, have a sense of unity, and remind each other of goodness like *Mapalus* (Cooperation) and the High Meaning contained in the philosophy “*Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*” (Man lives to humanize man) (Hadirman & Ardianto, 2021; Pangalila et al., 2019).

There are hundreds of ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Indonesia with high cultural values. It is supposed to be the great potential of each region to strengthen relations between members of different tribes, religions, races, and groups. In ethnic and cultural terms, at least, there are Minahasa, Gorontalo, Sangihe, Bugis Makassar, and other ethnic groups from Java and Sumatra who live and live together in North Sulawesi. In terms of religion, the population of North Sulawesi, according to 2019 data, recorded 38.47% Islamic, 55.57% Protestant, and 4.94% Catholic, while Hindu 0.22%, Buddhist 0.12%, and Confucianism 0.04% (Umar et al., 2022). Furthermore, in 2022, the Central Statistical Agency adopted from the data of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the North Sulawesi Province showing Muslims 31,80, Protestant Christians 62.95, Catholics 0,04%, Hindu 0,59, Buddha 0,14, and Konghucu 0,02% (<https://sulut.bps.go.id>).

This indicates that strengthening local cultural values based on religious values is becoming crucial and a positive step in harmonizing life in a multi-religious society because the nation's conditions can have a positive or negative impact (Supriati & Umar, 2018). It cannot be denied that differences often bring about potential conflicts (Prasojo & Pabbajah, 2020). The potential of these conflicts can occur on a small or large scale (Syahid & Daulay, 2002), especially conflicts based on religious differences. Religious and cultural conflicts have become events that accompany the journey of Indonesian people, such as the conflicts in Ambon, Poso, Sampit, Kalimantan, and others, because the potential of this conflict has always been in a crowded society. Local cultural values should be internalized systematically to strengthen religious moderation programs that concern national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture. Therefore, this research is urgent to dig and internalize local cultural values based on religious values as a fortress to maintain cross-religious and cross-cultural community relations.

Previous research emphasizes the importance of religious, cultural, and ethnic issues in the global era (Brata, 2016). In addition, other studies revealed the role of cultural accommodation in religious conflict resolution (Prasojo & Pabbajah, 2020), as well as the study of the cultural values of North Sulawesi communities as a model of tolerance education and local wisdom to build tolerant attitudes (Pangalila & Mantiri, 2020; Pangalila et al., 2019). In connection with religious values in heterogeneous societies, research into the role of communities in the harmony of life is also carried out with a focus on the Hijrah community in Muslim minority societies (Umar et al., 2022).

This is what is different from the previous study, where the focus of this study is to study the relevance of the local cultural values of the people of North Sulawesi with the Islamic religious values as well as to deduce the internalization of local cultural values as the reinforcement of religious moderation in the Muslim minority community. This study is expected to provide an overview of the pattern of internalization of local cultural values based on Islamic values to strengthen religious moderation.

Methods

This research seeks to uncover the process of internalizing local cultural values as a reinforcement of religious moderation in multi-religious societies. Therefore, the researchers use a qualitative approach to study the process of internalizing values and conduct studies and analyses according to the content of information naturally obtained at the research site, i.e., in North Sulawesi.

This research data source is obtained by researchers through observations and interviews as a primary source (Fraenkel et al., 2012) and documentation techniques as a secondary source of data. Observations are carried out to illustrate social phenomena of the North Sulawesi community in connection with the internalization of local cultural values as reinforcement of religious moderation. Interviews were conducted to dig for information directly from the data source. As for the informants, they are cultural observers, academics, and society. The study of local cultural values in the North Sulawesi Province focuses on the ethnic values of Minahasa, Bolaang Mongondow, and Manado, which are about forming moderate views and attitudes in religion and interacting with fellow community members. Documentation techniques use secondary data sources to obtain written data from journal articles, books, or research reports.

The research focuses on the local cultural values of the North Sulawesi communities, particularly in Minahasa, Bolaang Mongondow, and Manado. This research uses qualitative analysis with three activities: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Milles et al., 2014; Saldana et al., 2014). This is done so researchers can systematically compile data from interviews, field records, and other materials to present research results (Sugiyono, 2016). In addition, the researchers also used content analysis to study and interpret local cultural and Islamic values.

Results and Discussion

Relevance of local cultural values and Islamic values

The height of the meaning of the local cultural values of North Sulawesi can be seen from the preaching, motto, and philosophy of life held by the local community. They make local cultural values a guideline for living a life of society and nation in diversity. Some of the local cultural values that can serve as a force for a moderate, safe, peaceful, anti-violent, and tolerant life can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Local cultural values of North Sulawesi

No.	Region	Philosophy and Local Cultural Values	Meaning
1.	North Sulawesi.	<i>Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou</i>	Humans are born to humanize other humans.
2.	Minahasa	<i>Maesa-esa'an mapalus wo mangaley via si opo Empung.</i> <i>Tae liu-liuren maesaan no Meimo esa ta-rendem, Piaranu karia leo-leosen, Kita nuwaya, Te mo lewo .</i>	Unite, cooperate, and pray and thank God Almighty. Let's have a word. Keep your best friends, all of us, don't be evil.
3.	Bolaang Mongondow	<i>Mototompia'an, Mototabian, bo Mototanoban</i>	to do good to each other, to love one another, and to love each other.

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| 4. Manado | <i>Torang Samua Basudara, Baku-baku sayang, baku-baku bae, baku-baku kase inga. Torang samua ciptaan Tuhan.</i> | We're all brothers, we love each other, we behave well, and we remind each other. We're all God's creation. |
|-----------|---|---|

Table 1 shows that the North Sulawesi Province has local cultural values reflected in the philosophy of values raised by the local culture of each region. In general, the philosophy of life of the people of North Sulawesi refers to the *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* proposed by Sam Ratulangi. *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* has inspired and motivated the people of North Sulawesi to live well and to benefit others. These values are also at the heart of the *Mapalus* culture of the Minahasa ethnic group. Regarding *Mapalus*, it means cooperation between citizens that is implemented in all aspects of life. *Maesa-esa'an mapalus* means to unite and cooperate, becoming the local cultural value of the Minahasa community that is still awake.

The results of interviews with informants in Minahasa mentioned that the *Mapalus* culture has become the value of the life of Minahasa people in general, without seeing religious differences. (Interview with S. Kangiden, a figure in the Muslim community of Minahasa).

Besides, the cultural values that are growing and implemented by Bolaang Mongondow society are *Mototompia'an*, *Mototabian*, and *bo Mototanoban*, which means to improve one another, to love one another, and to love each other. The researchers obtained information from interviews with the Academician who also observed the culture of Bolaang Mongondow, that downward Mongondows make a sense of brotherhood and caring for fellow human beings as a noble value that continues to be preserved by generations to this day. Despite many challenges and the impact of technological developments that make human beings increasingly individualistic (interview with R. Lasabuda, Academician & Cultural Observer in Bolaang Mongondow).

In the Manado community, the slogan "*Torang Samua Basudara, Baku-Baku sayang, Baku-buku bae, and baku-baku kase inga*" (We are all brothers, we love each other, we behave well, we remind each other) was initiated by Governor E.E. Mangindaan, whom the Governor Olly Dondokambey accompanied with the addition of "We are all Creation of God." Understanding the concept of brotherhood becomes a strength and a fortress of defense from the threat of conflict or division among citizens. However, the embedded family spirit gives an intrinsic impetus that conflict and separation will only negatively impact life.

Suppose these local cultural values are combined with religious values and indicators of religious moderation, namely National Commitment (MB1), Tolerance (MB2), Anti-Violence (MB3), and Local Cultural Accommodation (MB4). In that case, their relevance is seen in building a peaceful and moderate society. It can be described in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Relevance of local cultural values to religious values and religious moderation

No.	Philosophy and Local Cultural Values	Islamic values	indicators of religious moderation
1.	<i>Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou</i>	Humanities values, <i>khairunnaas an fa'uhum linnaas</i> (H.R. Ahmad).	MB1, MB2, MB3, MB4.
2.	<i>-Maesa-esa'an mapalus wo mangaley wia si opo Empung. -Tae liu-liuren maesaan no Meimo esa ta-rendem, Piaranu karia leo-leosen, Kita nuwaya, Te mo lewo</i>	The values of unity, cooperation, helping one another (<i>ta'awun</i>), brotherhood /ukhuwah (<i>ukhuwah wathaniyah, Ukhawah insaniyah</i>). (Al-Hujurat:10; Al Qashas:77).	MB1, MB3, MB4.

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| 3. <i>Mototompia'an, Mototabian, bo Mototanoban</i> | <i>Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin</i> / to be a mercy to all the world. (Al-Anbiya':107). | MB1, MB3. |
| 4. <i>Torang Samua Basudara, Baku-baku sayang, baku-baku bae, baku-baku kase inga.</i> | Value of affection, do good to all (Al-Mumtahanah: 8), <i>amar ma'ruf nahi munkar</i> (Ali Imran: 104). | MB2, MB3 |
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According to Table 2 above, there is a relevance between the local cultural values of North Sulawesi and Islamic values in support of strengthening religious moderation. For example, the values of humanity in the *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* slogan align with the Islamic concept that humans should benefit one another. This concept supports strengthening religious moderation on all indicators of national commitment, tolerance, anti-violence, and local cultural accommodation. Likewise, the *Mapalus* culture is in harmony with the concept of cooperation, please help (ta'awun), and brotherhood. (*ukhuwah wathaniyah, Ukuwah insaniyah*). The same is true of the Mongondow Cultural Value, which aligns with the Islamic concept of *Islam rahmatan lil alamin* and the value of affection in the slogan *Torang samua basudara*.

Sam Ratulangi gave a valuable legacy to the people of North Sulawesi because "*Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*," which means man living to humanize other human beings, demonstrates a broad meaning, including in good relations with others, respecting and creating the life of advanced communities (Suleman, 2017). This culture is a philosophical expression of the Minahasa people (Tilaar, 1998). Tilaar affirmed that the local cultural values contained in the *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* became a concept and idea that became guidelines in thinking and acting as well as normative considerations for choosing attitudes and actions worthy of being done (Tilaar, 1998). It encourages tolerance and respect for tribal, religious, racial, cultural, and linguistic differences among the North Sulawesi community (Pangalila & Mantiri, 2019). The concept of "*Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*" in the reality of human life of Minahasa/North Sulawesi has, since its inception, grown and developed in the work ethos of *Mapalus* or *Maendo* (*Tountemboan* language) (Turang et al., 2012). Minahasa ethnicity describes *Mapalus* as a form of cooperation (Pangalila et al., 2019; Salaki, 2014). Umbas, as quoted by Pangalila and Mantiri, mentions that the cultural value of *Mapalus* in practice can be seen from the four foundations of its actualization, namely: 1) discourse and mutuality; 2) family; 3) religion, and 4) cooperation (Pangalila & Mantiri, 2020).

On the other hand, the Bolaang Mongondow ethnic group believes the values of Mototompiaan, mototabian, and bo mototanoban are cultural values that descend into the philosophy of society's life. The meaning contained in *Mototompiaan, mototabian, and bo mototanoban* is a mutual relationship to repair, love, and love each other. Every human being must have a responsibility to be honest in social interaction with his neighbor. This motto becomes a work ethos, identity, and social ethics facilitating mutual progress and benefit. *Mototompiaan, Mototabian, bo Mototanoban* is an invitation to the entire society of Bolaang Mongondow to be able to preserve the cultures that have been agreed. These local values are not only a unifier for the Mongondow Ballang community but also have an acculturation character between Mongondows and immigrant communities such as the Bugis tribe, Java, Gorontalo, and their ethnic Chinese.

In the Manado Society, the slogan of *Torang Samua Basudara* is a form of public awareness of the concept of brotherhood in differences, that all humans are brothers (Ismail et al., 2020). In general, the people of Manado come from all the ethnic groups that exist in North Sulawesi, such as Minahasa, Bolaang Mongondow, and Sangihe, and foreign immigrants, such as Gorontalo, Java, Sumatra, and Maluku. To bind the interaction of different tribal societies, the government launched a slogan that established the brotherhood of the same human beings and the same creation of God, contained in the motto of "We all are brother." This is the strength of the local cultural values of the North Sulawesi people.

In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Mumtahanah verse 8 is mentioned: "Allah does not forbid you to do good and to do righteousness to those who do not fight against you in matters of religion, nor expel you from your homes." According to Imam Abu Abdillah Muhammad bin Umar, bin Husain at-Taimi, this verse is the basis for doing good to other religious believers. The form of good deeds, for example, is to treat them fairly, to interact well, not to interfere with existence, and to help each other (Ar-Razi, 1999). So, it can be understood that the command to do good is general and unlimited, including against those of different religions. We are even encouraged to have good, cooperative, courteous, tolerant, fair, and wise relations.

In addition, the teaching to invite and remind each other of good is the value of Islam. An-Nawawi, in the book of Tafsir Munir, explains the Islamic principle: "*Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* must be well understood and implemented correctly in society (An-Nawawi al-Jawi, 2005). Furthermore, Asy-Syarwani mentions that inviting people to good and preventing evil should be done well, not in a rough way (Asy-Syarwani, 2003). This is the decisive reason that local cultural values are consistent with the teachings of Islam conceptually and in the social interaction of communities.

Internalizing Cultural Values in Strengthening Religious Moderation

The height of the meaning of the local cultural values of North Sulawesi can be seen from the preaching, motto, and philosophy of life held by the local community. They make local cultural values a guideline for interacting with fellow community members. Nevertheless, local cultural values can disappear over time if there is no preservation and revitalization (Fajarini, 2014), let alone the phenomena of modern society in the era of disruption no longer make cultural and religious values guidelines of life (Ali, 2020).

Therefore, preserving culture through efforts to internalize local cultural values must be done to maintain the continuity of values and their implementation. Internalization is a process of inserting values from outside an individual or group into the individual or a particular group. There are several stages of value internalization: the transformation stage of value, the transaction stage, and the trans-internalization stage (Hakam & Nurdin, 2016; Umar, Hakam, & Somad, 2020). The value transformation stage is the process by educators in informing excellent and bad values. In this phase, only verbal communication between the teacher and the student participant exists. The stage of value transaction is the process of internalizing value through two-way communication between educator and student reciprocally, so there is a process of interaction.

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Internalization of local cultural values based on Islamic religious values to strengthen religious moderation must be pursued through two paths, namely formal and non-formal. Formally, education becomes one of the containers for internalizing local cultural value to the pupils. While non-formally, cultural value needs to be implemented in social organizations of society and religion.

Education plays a vital role in managing and developing local cultural values into individual identities, groups, and even national identities. Therefore, education becomes one way of internalizing local cultural values because education is a means of cultural transformation (Kusnadi, 2023). Learning that internalizes local cultural values will allow each student to know and master all life values intensively and make them a guideline for social life. Participants are allowed to communicate and interact with friends of different religions and cultures to get to know each other and train the ability to adapt and live peacefully in differences (peaceful co-existence) (Umar, Nurhayati, & Ismail, 2023).

Internalization of values can be optimized by integrating cultural values into the subject matter to strengthen religious moderation, such as in the subjects of Citizenship Education (Thoriquattyas, Saputra, Huda, Hanafi, & Zaimatus, 2020), multicultural education and, of course, Religious Education. Setiarsih (2016) mentions that multicultural education based on local wisdom

can be done in various ways, namely, by integrating multiculturalism-based educational knowledge with curriculum design. With this step, education of local cultural and religious values will give color to the life of the Indonesian nation (Zakiyah et al., 2022). This means that education will then become a spirit that can color Indonesian people's dynamics in the future (Rosala, 2017). Learning from local wisdom is a method for building culturally inclusive learning environments and experiences. In learning founded on local expertise, culture serves as a vehicle for students to translate their observations into original ideas (Kusnadi, 2023).

The challenge of the Indonesian nation is to give more space for local cultural values to thrive and become an integral part of the nation's development. Iqbal quoted data from the Compass, noting that Indonesia's challenge is more attention to developing local culture (Iqbal, 2014; Umar & Tumiwa, 2020).

Therefore, the strengthening of a moderate and tolerant attitude in a multi-ethnic society is not enough to know and accept racial, cultural, tribal, religious, and group differences, but must be followed by the awareness that man was created by God as his best creation so that it cannot be used as an excuse for conflict (Balphanov et.al., 2018).

An effort can be made to integrate local cultural values into every activity of social and religious organizations. A moderate and tolerant attitude will not form if each interacts only with the same religions and cultures. However, there needs to be communication and interreligious and cultural interaction to create a sense of mutual appreciation of differences because tolerance is, in fact, an attitude and action that respects the religious, tribal, and ethnic opinions, attitudes, and actions of others who are different from themselves (Raihani, 2011). This is the role of local culture in shaping social cohesion in cross-religious and cross-cultural societies to realize a peaceful life in a multicultural society (Haryanto, 2013).

The North Sulawesi community is a multidimensional society formed by different beliefs, tribes, and cultures, so local cultural principles and values that advance the values of humanity, mutual respect, tolerance, and moderation must be the basis for creating harmony of life in society. To this, religious moderation as part of the medium-term long-term development plan, both conceptually and implementatively, is a positive step towards shaping Indonesian societies that live side by side deeply in differences, including religious and cultural differences.

Conclusion

There is no contradiction between cultural values and Islamic values. Both teach a way of life that respects human values and appreciates religious, ethnic, and cultural differences. It is based on the belief that the noble values of the community originate from religious and cultural values. The values of Islam, with the teachings of the Rahmatan Lil Alamin, made it possible to form a moderate and tolerant attitude of the people, especially in North Sulawesi, who have local wisdom relevant to the humanity values taught by Islam. Thus, efforts to internalize values through formal education and non-formal activities in society become a means of preserving and revitalizing values to support religious moderation in Indonesia.

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