

## **Harmonization of Multi-Religious Family Culture in the Religious Moderation Village of Malang City**

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**Abstract:** The Ministry of Religion of Malang City in September 2023 launched a religious moderation village. From this village, there are families who have multiple religions, whether from the father, mother, or child. In this case, the head of the Ministry of Religion hopes that there will be an emphasis on the urgency of togetherness and moderation in religion to realize harmony in the Indonesian state, because religious diversity in Indonesia has great potential that must be protected and fostered, especially through a religious moderation program that must be pursued from the smallest sector of the State, namely a multi-religious family. In this study, field research was used to obtain objective, actual, and strong data. The data source was taken directly from the research location, which was done by visiting the informants through interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with multi-religious families in the religious moderation village in Malang City. Multifaith families often face challenges both within and outside the family. The most common challenge is social pressure, meaning that in societies where interfaith marriages and families are accepted or extended families are accepted, although not common, family members may put pressure on spouses and children to choose a religion.

**Keywords:** Multifaith Family and Moderation Village

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### **Introduction**

A multi-religious family can be defined as a family that is different from families in general, namely a family that adheres to various religions, for example Islam and Christianity. Even though there are different religions in one family, they still live in harmony. In a family of different religions, there are always differences that can cause conflict. This is caused by quarrels in the family or religious conflicts. However, if a family member changes religion, there will be rejection from other family members who no

longer accept the family member who changed religion as part of the family.<sup>1</sup>

It is not uncommon for families of different religions to live in peace and harmony without conflict. Because they have been taught the principle of moderation by their parents, as is the case with multi-religious families in the three moderate religious villages in Malang City, they also understand the importance of this principle of life in order to live in harmony. In addition, a tolerant attitude plays a very important role in building a harmonious family in a multi-religious family. The most basic prerequisite for building a harmonious household in a multi-religious family is the awareness and attitude of protecting each other, respecting each other, loving each other, and most importantly, tolerance and good communication. The attitude of solidarity and moderation (*washatiyah*) is one of the general characteristics of Islam and is a fundamental feature that distinguishes Muslims from other people. Therefore, Muslims themselves should understand the nature of tolerance, but outside Islam there are still many radical Islamic groups who are unknowingly dividing their own religion.

In September 2023, the Ministry of Religion of Malang City launched five religious moderation villages, including Wagir District, Sukun District, and Ampelgading District and others. Of the five villages, there are families who have multiple religions, whether from the father, mother, or child. In this case, the head of the Ministry of Religion hopes that the urgency of togetherness and moderation in religion will be emphasized to realize harmony in the Indonesian state, because religious diversity in Indonesia has great potential that must be protected and fostered, especially through the religious moderation program.<sup>2</sup>

Islam is the majority religion in Indonesia and also as a perfect religion, a religion that completes all previous religions. The growth of Islam that was spread in Medina by the Prophet Muhammad SAW and then spread throughout the world, is none other than the process of preaching by

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<sup>1</sup> Tjiptoherijanto, Prijono & M. Prijono, Yumiko. "Demokrasi dalam Masyarakat Tradisional Jawa", *Ekonomi dan Keuangan Indonesia*, Vol. XLII, No. 4, 1994. Woodward, Mark R. "The Slametan: Textual Knowledge and Ritual Performance in Central Javanese Islam", *The University of Chicago Press*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1988. h. 54-89.

<sup>2</sup> <https://kemenag.malangkota.go.id/showNews?head=kota-malang-luncurkan-5kampung-moderasi-beragama,->, Diakses Pada 12 Januari 2025.

Muslim leaders who are the core of Islamic teachings.<sup>3</sup> Islam developed because it taught morals and behavior that did not discriminate against caste, tribe, race, and lineage. Social harmony is always maintained thanks to the solidarity of Muslims with each other. That is why, seen from a national perspective, Indonesian society is a pluralistic society, which includes many tribes, races, languages, customs, geographical areas, and even religions practiced in each society.

According to Saifuddin, pluralism is inevitable. In fact, diversity is a beautiful blend, where various tribes, religions, customs, and cultures can live side by side well in a multi-religious family. On the other hand, diversity can also be a source of conflict. Different people and cultures have different desires. Differences of opinion, differences of attitude and conflicts of interest can change calm into stiffness. Anyone who thinks like this may suddenly blame themselves.

There are currently six recognized religions in Indonesia. Religion is known for its adaptive and conflictual nature. On the one hand, religion can provide inspiration for the development of human civilization. At the same time, it is often a source of conflict and violence. Social conflicts are caused by religious fanatics who want to maintain and advance their religion.<sup>4</sup>

### **Research Methods**

The type of research used is field research. In this study, field research is used to obtain objective, actual, and strong data. This type of research is conducted to overcome cases in the field that grow in society. So the data source is directly taken from the research location, which is done by visiting the informants by means of interviews. Researchers conducted interviews with multi-religious families in the religious moderation village in the city of Malang. The things asked by researchers regarding the culture and religious traditions of multi-religious families, which later researchers will use the concept and harmonization as an approach.

### **Results and Discussion**

The family is the most important place for social interaction and learning the behavior of others. The family is also the first milestone of exposure to the culture of society, this is where family members learn about

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<sup>3</sup> Mufiqur Rahman, *Islam Madura Islam konservatif Dengan pendekatan PAI Multikultural* (Malang: Madza Media, 2023), 13.

<sup>4</sup> Harto, Kasinyo, & Tastin, T. Pengembangan Pembelajaran PAI Berwawasan Islam Wasatiyah: Upaya Membangun Sikap Moderasi Beragama Peserta Didik. *At-Ta'lim: Media Informasi Pendidikan Islam*, Vol. 18 No. 1 (Juni, 2019), 105-106.

the personalities and characteristics of others. Thus, the family is a container that has an important meaning for the formation of individual personalities, family relationships, social life, and creativity of its members.<sup>5</sup>

The meaning of family according to Wikipedia is the smallest part of the community, consisting of the head of the family and its members, namely father, mother and child, where good deeds are always present in the household, even though the bad deeds of the father, mother or child cannot be changed that we are part of them. Meanwhile, according to Salvicion and Celis, the family can be classified into two sources, namely families whose sources are from marriage or adoption, and the second family whose sources are from blood relations.<sup>6</sup>

Multi-religion can be interpreted as various religions, in this case a multi-religious family is a family consisting of people who adhere to different religions or beliefs. A multi-religious family is a group of people who are connected through relationships (marriage, adoption, birth) and have similarities, but their family members adhere to different beliefs or adhere to different religions. Factors that encourage the formation of multi-religious families include:<sup>7</sup>

- a. Indonesian society is diverse and includes many different cultures, races, ethnicities and religions.
- b. The idea that families play a decisive role in choosing their children's future partners and that they should marry people of the same faith is becoming increasingly outdated. Freedom to choose a partner based on love, not religion.
- c. Social interactions between teenagers increasingly transcend national borders, such as social interactions between Indonesian children and children abroad.
- d. Many schools have a mixed system, including religious schools, where there are no religious restrictions and there is freedom in pursuing education.

Problems arise more frequently in multi-religious families than in single-religious families. Although we cannot say for certain that this is not solely due to religious differences, it does appear to be due to differences in attitudes, opinions, frames of reference and religious traditions.

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<sup>5</sup> Syam, Nur. *Tradisi Islam Lokal Pesisiran: Studi Konstruksi Sosial Upacara Pada Masyarakat Pesisir Palang Tuban Jawa Timur* (Disertasi --- Universitas Airlangga, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Andika Putra, Atun Homsatun, Jamhari, Mefta Setiani, N. (2021). *Pemikiran Islam Wasathiyah Azyumardi Azra sebagai Jalan Moderasi Beragama*. *Riset Agama*, 1(3), 214

<sup>7</sup> Firdaus, Muhammad Anang. *Eksistensi FKUB dalam Memelihara Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Indonesia*. *Kontekstualitas*, Vol. 29, No. 01 (Juni, 2014). 58-71.

Family culture reflects the interaction between family members, and most importantly between parents and children, especially between children who have different religions. A multi-religious family is a family whose members adhere to different religions. In such a family, even though each family member has a different religious belief, they live together under one roof, respecting and accepting each other's differences. The Importance of Tolerance and Respect for Religious Differences.<sup>8</sup>

Multifaith families face major challenges in creating harmony. One of the most important values that must be fostered is tolerance. Each family member must have a deep understanding of each other's religious beliefs and respect each other's differences. Respecting differences is not limited to religious aspects alone, but also applies to culture, customs, and outlooks on life that may differ between family members. Multifaith families face challenges, especially related to differences in religious observance. Each religion has a different way of conducting worship.<sup>9</sup> This can be a major challenge, especially when the most important holidays of all religions fall at the same time. For example, Christmas, Eid al-Fitr, Nyepi and others.

In the religious education of children, parents in interfaith families must ensure that their children know both religions in the family without feeling confused or pressured to choose one religion or another. We need to think about the best way to teach religion to our children. children so that they can understand. Social and cultural conflicts in multifaith families may be pressure and discrimination from the surrounding community who are not used to multifaith families. This can affect the dynamics within the family, especially if there is a dispute within the family itself.<sup>10</sup>

The Malang City Religious Moderation Village is a program launched by the Malang City Government with the aim of displaying, communicating and practicing the values of religious moderation in society. The aim of this program is to create an atmosphere of harmony and

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<sup>8</sup> Hakam, Ahmad. "Communal Feast Slametan: Belief System, Ritual, and the Ideal of Javanese Society", *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Wahdatul Ramdhani, dkk, "Implementation of Prenuptial Certificates as a Religious and State Effort in Forming a Sakinah Family", *The Indonesian Journal of Islamic Law and Civil Law* 5, No. 1, (2024).

<sup>10</sup> Akhda, Najmu Tsaqib. "Tolerance as the Essential Key for Javanese Society in Preserving the Tradisional Cultures", *DINIKA: Academic Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2017.

tolerance between religious communities in order to reduce the possibility of radicalization and increase social peace and also to promote an attitude of mutual respect and understanding of differences in religion, culture, and customs that exist in society. As well as strengthening a sense of belonging and unity regardless of differences in religion, ethnicity, or culture. The Religious Moderation Village also aims to reduce the possibility of the emergence of extremist views through a more inclusive and peaceful approach to religious moderation.

The Ministry of Religion of Malang City has launched a religious moderation village in September 2023. The religious moderation village is located in 5 sub-districts, namely Wagir Sub-district, Sukun Sub-district, and Ampelgading Sub-district and others. From the three villages, there are families who have multiple religions, be it from the father, mother, or child. In this case, the head of the Ministry of Religion hopes that the urgency of togetherness and moderation in religion will be emphasized to realize harmony in the Indonesian state, because religious diversity in Indonesia has great potential that must be protected and fostered, especially through the religious moderation program.<sup>11</sup>

Various educational activities have been carried out in the village, such as training, seminars, workshops on the importance of religious moderation in society. Various activities such as interfaith dialogue, moderate leadership training and strengthening of national values are carried out to improve the quality of life of the community. In addition, efforts are made to involve elements of society such as religious leaders, community leaders, and educational institutions to help more people understand the importance of moderation in religious life. Moderation Village is also a real example of the embodiment of national values and diversity at the local level, in line with the spirit of Indonesian unity.

Interfaith families have positive potential in terms of fostering empathy and tolerance. Because multifaith families are a very valuable educational environment for children. They learn to live with people who have different views and beliefs, which enriches their outlook on life. To improve religious understanding, in multifaith families, family members can share knowledge about the teachings of the religion they adhere to. This broadens

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<sup>11</sup> Heri Mulyo Cahyo, *Kota Malang Luncurkan 5 Kampung Moderasi Beragama*, <https://kemenag.malangkota.go.id/showNews?head=kota-malang-luncurkan-5kampung-moderasi-beragama,-> , 2023.

perspectives and deepens understanding of universal values such as love, justice, and peace that exist in all religions. In creating a Harmonious Environment, multifaith families can be an example that religious differences do not need to be an obstacle to peaceful coexistence.<sup>12</sup>

The strategy for building harmony in multi-religious families in the religious moderation village of Malang City is by first, using Open communication, which means that good and open communication between family members is very important in multi-religious families. Members must be able to discuss their religious beliefs and practices with mutual respect. Second, increasing empathy and understanding, meaning that children must be taught from an early age to understand and respect religious differences as something natural. Parents must show empathy and not force their religion or philosophy of life on their children. Third, Flexibility in celebrating religious holidays, meaning that respecting each other's religious holidays and celebrating them in a fun and respectful way is a way to strengthen relationships within the family. Fourth, the role of society and the surrounding environment, such as the importance of social support. In interfaith families, society and the surrounding environment also play an important role. With social support from an open environment and respect for differences, interfaith families can develop more harmoniously. Fifth, increasing interfaith understanding means, We need to encourage a better understanding that religious diversity is part of the diversity of the nation. Campaigns to promote interfaith tolerance will help strengthen interfaith family relationships across society.

Religious traditions in multi-religious families are practices and rituals carried out by family members who adhere to different religions. In multi-religious families in the religious moderation village in Malang City, it is important to maintain harmony, respect each other, and support religious differences while also respecting each other's identities and beliefs. Multi-religious family members in the religious moderation village have a deep understanding of each other's religions. Everyone must respect each other's religious beliefs and practices. This includes not criticizing each other or imposing our opinions on others, and also respecting that religious

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<sup>12</sup> Firdaus, Muhammad Anang. Eksistensi FKUB dalam Memelihara Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Indonesia. *Kontekstualitas*, Vol. 29, No. 01 (Juni, 2014). 58-71.

differences in the family should be seen as an enrichment, not a source of division. Each religious tradition has values that enrich family life.<sup>13</sup>

There are many activities that multifaith families can do together, even if they have different religious beliefs, such as those below.:<sup>14</sup>

- a. Eating Together, some families with different religions eat together on religious holidays, maintaining traditions while respecting each other's differences.
- b. Celebrating Religious Holidays, meaning that families of different religions can visit each other and send greetings to each other on their respective religious holidays. For example, we celebrate Eid al-Fitr and Christmas together, or Waisakh and Easter together.
- c. Carrying out social activities together. Such as being involved in charity work or participating in religious activities and also sharing food with those in need.
- d. Religious Education in Multifaith Families, children are taught different religions, respect differences and reinforce universal values such as compassion, kindness and honesty. Families can discuss religion openly to help children understand different perspectives and teach the value of tolerance. Separate religious education, meaning some parents choose to give their children separate religious education, but still emphasize the importance of mutual respect.

Challenges Faced Differences in Rituals and Worship Conflicts in schedules or priorities in celebrating religious holidays of each religion. Disagreement about each other's religious practices. (1) Children's Education Confusion in choosing the religion to be taught to children. (2) Pressure from the extended family to choose a particular religion. (3) The risk of children experiencing an unstable religious identity or spiritual confusion. (4) Social and Cultural Pressure, Stigma from the surrounding environment or religious communities that do not accept interfaith relationships. (5) Rejection or awkwardness from the extended family or relatives. (6) Marriage and Legality (7) Administrative problems related to marriage registration, especially in countries like Indonesia that do not directly recognize interfaith marriages. (8) Discussions about burial, inheritance, or family laws based on religion. (9) Different Values and Ethics (10) Differences in views on morality, lifestyle, or decision-making based on religion.

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<sup>13</sup> Firdaus, Muhammad Anang. Eksistensi FKUB dalam Memelihara Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Indonesia. *Kontekstualitas*, Vol. 29, No. 01 (Juni, 2014). 58-71.

<sup>14</sup> Cristin, Wawawancara, pada 01 Desember 2024.



Implemented Solutions Open Dialogue and Intensive Communication (1) Establishing regular dialogue space to discuss differences with mutual respect (2) Prioritizing universal values such as compassion, honesty, and empathy. (3) Dual or Neutral Religious Education (4) Some families choose to teach their children two religions and let the children choose when they are adults. (5) Alternatively, some emphasize universal moral values without emphasizing a particular doctrine (6) Prenuptial Agreements and Legal Arrangements (7) Making a written agreement regarding the child's religion, how to celebrate important days, and conflict resolution (8) Using certain legal channels (for example, marrying abroad or through administrative conversion) to overcome legal obstacles (9) Involvement in the Interfaith Community (10) Joining an interfaith group to get support, share experiences, and expand understanding. (11) Division of Roles and Practical Tolerance Example: One partner is responsible for the child's religious education, while the other focuses on general morals and character, (12) Determining which celebrations will be held together and which will be held individually.

Multifaith families often face challenges both within and outside the family. The most common challenge is social pressure, meaning that in societies where interfaith marriages and families are accepted or extended families are accepted, although not common, family members may put pressure on spouses and children to choose a religion. Challenges also often arise from family discord, and families may feel stressed and confused about how to handle religious differences in their daily lives.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of harmonizing traditions in multi-religious families in the religious moderation village of Malang city with five stages, namely the first, using Open communication, which means that good and open communication between family members is very important in multi-religious families. Members must be able to discuss their religious beliefs and practices with mutual respect. Second, increasing empathy and understanding, meaning that children must be taught from an early age to understand and respect religious differences as something natural. Parents must show empathy and not force their religion or philosophy of life on their children. Third, Flexibility in celebrating religious holidays, meaning that respecting each other's religious holidays and celebrating them in a fun and respectful way is a way to strengthen relationships within the family.

Fourth, the role of society and the surrounding environment, such as the importance of social support. In interfaith families, society and the surrounding environment also play an important role. With social support from an open environment and respect for differences, interfaith families can develop more harmoniously. Fifth, increasing interfaith understanding means, we need to encourage a better understanding that religious diversity is part of the diversity of the nation. Campaigns to promote interfaith tolerance will help strengthen interfaith family relationships across society.

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