

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE "PERANG TOPAT" TRADITION IN LINGSAR, WEST LOMBOK, WEST NUSA TENGGARA

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Abstract

The War Topat tradition in Lingsar, West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, represents a unique form of religious moderation, blending Islamic and Hindu elements in a ritual that promotes harmony among different faith communities. This study examines how the War Topat festival fosters interreligious understanding and tolerance, addressing concerns about preserving cultural identity while maintaining mutual respect within a diverse society. The purpose of this research is to explore the ways in which this local tradition serves as a model for religious moderation, providing insights into the role of cultural rituals in uniting distinct religious groups. The study employs qualitative methods, gathering data through interviews with community leaders, participants, and observers of the War Topat festival. Additional data are collected through participant observation and analysis of relevant documentation related to the festival's history and significance. Data analysis is conducted using descriptive-analytical techniques to interpret the collected information and identify patterns that illustrate the festival's role in promoting religious harmony. Findings indicate that the Topat War serves as a symbolic representation of religious inclusivity, where shared cultural practices bridge differences between Muslim and Hindu communities, strengthening social bonds. This ritual embodies the values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect for religious diversity, demonstrating that local traditions can reinforce religious moderation in multicultural contexts. The conclusion highlights that such traditions offer significant implications for promoting peace and social cohesion. The study suggests that fostering similar culturally embedded practices can serve as an effective approach to religious moderation, offering lessons that may inform broader efforts at fostering unity within pluralistic societies.

Keyword: *Religious Moderation, Perang Topat, Tolerance, Diversity, Social Cohesion, Local Tradition, Interfaith Harmony*

Abstrak

Tradisi Perang Topat di Lingsar, Lombok Barat, Nusa Tenggara Barat, merupakan bentuk moderasi beragama yang unik, yang memadukan unsur-unsur Islam dan Hindu dalam sebuah

ritual yang mempromosikan kerukunan di antara komunitas agama yang berbeda. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana festival Perang Topat menumbuhkan pemahaman dan toleransi antaragama, menjawab kekhawatiran tentang pelestarian identitas budaya sambil mempertahankan rasa saling menghormati dalam masyarakat yang beragam. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi cara-cara di mana tradisi lokal ini berfungsi sebagai model untuk moderasi beragama, memberikan wawasan tentang peran ritual budaya dalam menyatukan kelompok-kelompok agama yang berbeda. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara dengan tokoh masyarakat, peserta, dan pengamat festival Perang Topat. Data tambahan dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan dan analisis dokumentasi yang relevan terkait dengan sejarah dan signifikansi festival. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik deskriptif-analitis untuk menginterpretasikan informasi yang terkumpul dan mengidentifikasi pola-pola yang menggambarkan peran festival ini dalam mempromosikan kerukunan umat beragama. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Perang Topat berfungsi sebagai representasi simbolis dari inklusivitas agama, di mana praktik-praktik budaya bersama menjembatani perbedaan antara komunitas Muslim dan Hindu, memperkuat ikatan sosial. Ritual ini mewujudkan nilai-nilai toleransi, kerja sama, dan penghormatan terhadap keragaman agama, yang menunjukkan bahwa tradisi lokal dapat memperkuat moderasi beragama dalam konteks multikultural. Kesimpulannya menyoroti bahwa tradisi semacam itu menawarkan implikasi yang signifikan untuk mempromosikan perdamaian dan kohesi sosial. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa mengembangkan praktik-praktik yang tertanam secara budaya dapat menjadi pendekatan yang efektif untuk moderasi beragama, menawarkan pelajaran yang dapat menginformasikan upaya yang lebih luas dalam membina persatuan dalam masyarakat yang majemuk.

Kata kunci: Moderasi Agama, Perang Topat, Lingsar, Toleransi, Keberagaman, Islam, Hindu, Kohesi Sosial, Tradisi Lokal, Kerukunan Antarumat Beragama

INTRODUCTION

Perang Topat is a unique cultural tradition and ritual that developed in Lingsar, West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, which is a symbol of tolerance between two large religious communities, namely Islam and Hinduism. This tradition reflects spiritual and social values in harmony, as a manifestation of religious moderation amidst differences. The Perang Topat ritual involves Muslim and Hindu communities throwing ketupat at each other, a symbol of gratitude for an abundant harvest and hope for blessings in the future.(Acim & Yaqinah, 2019; Widodo, 2020). This ritual is

not just a celebration, but rather a representation of deep social cohesion and an understanding of the importance of living side by side in a multicultural society. Therefore, the Topat War in Lingsar has an important position as a phenomenon that shows how religious moderation can be carried out in the daily lives of local communities.

Religious moderation is very relevant for a diverse Indonesia, especially in facing the social challenges that arise in the modern era.(Gani et al., 2024; Nasri, 2024; Nasri et al., 2024). In the context of nationality, religious moderation is an effort to maintain a balance between the beliefs of individuals or religious groups and common interests in social and national life.(Nasri & Tabibuddin, 2023). Both the government and society have an important role in encouraging a moderate attitude in religion as a basis for unity and togetherness amidst diversity.(Abror, 2020; Apchain & MacCannell, 2024; Fahri & Zainuri, 2019; Junaedi, 2019; Syahputra, 2024). As a manifestation of religious moderation, the Topat War tradition is an interesting case study in describing how local communities are able to create harmonious social relations while adhering to tolerant religious values.

The Topat War tradition demonstrates religious moderation by inviting people to celebrate differences and build dialogue between communities with different



beliefs.(Jayadi, 2018a; Suadnya & Paramita, 2018). The uniqueness of this tradition is reflected in the active participation of both religious groups without any tension, which ultimately creates a culture of

peace. The mutual respect between the Muslim and Hindu communities in Perang

Topat shows that diversity can be celebrated and maintained through an inclusive and spiritually insightful cultural approach. (*Figure 1: Source, biroadpim.ntbprov.go.id*)

Previous research results show that Perang Topat serves as a means to raise collective awareness about the importance of living in harmony amidst religious differences. This tradition is not only a celebratory ritual, but also reflects the principle of moderation in daily religious practices. The community involved in Perang Topat believes that this activity has a positive impact on social harmony and is a medium to strengthen interfaith solidarity. Thus, this tradition provides important lessons about interfaith cooperation and shows how local wisdom can function as a solution in managing differences.

Several previous studies have discussed religious moderation and local traditions in Indonesia, but there are still gaps in the focus of the study and methodology that open up opportunities for further exploration. First, Basri's (2018) study reviews religious moderation in general in Lombok, but does not specifically explore the Perang Topat tradition. Second, Rahmawati (2020) focuses on the socio-economic aspects of this tradition without discussing its religious dimensions comprehensively. Third, Prasetyo (2019) studies moderation in the context of Balinese culture, but has not looked at how religious moderation occurs in Lombok, which has a different religious composition. Fourth, Ismail's (2021) study examines interreligious interactions in other regions in Indonesia, but does not focus on specific rituals such as Perang Topat. Fifth, Wulandari (2022) explores similar traditions in Java without considering the local context in Lombok. From these differences, this study fills the gap by offering a unique perspective on how the Perang Topat tradition is an example of religious moderation in Lombok.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach.(Cissé & Rasmussen, 2022; Mainwaring & Aujla, 2023; Mey, 2023)to understand in depth how religious moderation is reflected in the Perang Topat tradition in Lingsar, West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. This research method focuses on data collection through field studies

that include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis related to the Perang Topat tradition and the values of religious moderation. This qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore participants' views, understandings, and experiences more comprehensively in the cultural and social contexts that exist in the local community.

The first data collection technique was in-depth interviews with religious and community leaders, including Islamic and Hindu religious leaders, traditional leaders, and practitioners of the Perang Topat tradition who were considered to have knowledge regarding the meaning and history of this ritual.(Brinkmann, 2013; Dursun, 2023). This interview focuses on each figure's perspective on the concept of religious moderation, the symbolic meaning of the Topat War, and its impact on social relations between the Muslim and Hindu communities in Lingsar. The second technique is participant observation, where researchers are directly involved in the Topat War celebration to understand the dynamics of interactions between communities and how religious tolerance is implemented in the ritual activities. This observation provides a deeper contextual understanding and supports the data obtained from the interviews.

In addition, this study also conducted document analysis including local literature, historical records, journal articles, and official documents related to the Topat War tradition and religious moderation.(Elliott et al., 2023; Lerigo-Sampson, 2022; Mihas, 2023). These documents were analyzed to identify how the values of religious moderation are internalized in the tradition and how local communities view the relationship between religious practices and social cohesion. This analysis strengthens the primary data from interviews and observations by providing relevant historical background and theoretical perspectives.

The data collected was analyzed descriptively, using thematic analysis techniques to identify key themes related to religious moderation, tolerance, and social cohesion.(Gökçe, 2022; Li, 2024). This analysis process includes the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to provide a holistic picture of

how the Perang Topat tradition in Lingsar plays a role as a means of religious moderation. Through this research method, it is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of the role of local traditions in supporting interfaith harmony and provide insight into the development of policies on religious moderation in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Topat War as a Symbol of Interfaith Harmony

The Topat War tradition at Lingsar Temple, West Lombok, serves as a symbol of harmony between Muslims and Hindus who live side by side in Lombok. Through this tradition, thousands of people from the Sasak tribe (majority Muslim) and Balinese Hindus gather every year to participate in an annual ritual that combines religious and cultural elements. Wearing traditional Sasak and Balinese clothing, participants throw ketupat at each other as a symbol of togetherness, not as a form of violence. The presence of local officials and foreign tourists who attended to witness this tradition



shows that the Topat War is a cultural attraction as well as a means of promoting positive interfaith harmony in a multicultural society.(Suadnya & Paramita, 2018; Widodo, 2020). (Figure 2: Lingsar community

brings Topat to the Hindu Temple in Lingsar as a medium for topat war. Source, biradpim.ntbprov.go.id)

2. Pujawali Ceremony and the Meaning of Offerings in the Topat War

The Topat War procession begins with an offering ceremony or Pujawali, which is filled with various offerings such as food, fruit, and agricultural products, as a form of gratitude for safety and a request for blessings to the Creator. The Sasak people and Hindu figures work together in this ritual, where offerings are placed at the Kemalik Temple as a symbol of respect for ancestors and God. The Topat War then begins when the waru flowers fall, a time marker believed in local beliefs, at around 17.30. This tradition not only reflects respect for spiritual values, but also shows the existence of cultural syncretism that respects diversity, creating a sense of unity and oneness among the ritual participants.(Jayadi, 2018b; Suadnya & Paramita, 2020).

3. The Spiritual Influence of the Topat War on the Lives of Local Farmers

In addition to being a religious ritual, Perang Topat has direct implications for the agrarian practices of the local community. The ketupat used in this ritual war are considered to bring blessings if taken home and used as bubus, or fertilizer, which is sprinkled on agricultural land at night. The community believes that this ketupat will increase soil fertility and bring abundant harvests. This ritual shows that Perang Topat not only functions as a symbol of harmony, but also as a form of hope and spiritual belief in blessings and the continuity of agrarian life. This shows how this tradition has been internalized in the daily lives of the community, while also showing the connection between cultural traditions and economic well-being through spiritual practices.(Anggara, 2023; Edi Purwanto, 2023).

The three research results on the Perang Topat tradition in West Lombok provide an in-depth view of cultural values that emphasize harmony between religious communities, the meaning of offerings, and the integration of tradition into aspects of the agrarian life of the local community. The Perang Topat tradition, which involves Muslims and Hindus in Lombok, demonstrates the concept of social harmony which in Pierre Bourdieu's theory is known as *habitus*, where social practices that are carried out repeatedly create ways of thinking and acting that prioritize cooperation and solidarity. The activity of throwing ketupat at each other in Perang Topat is not only a

symbol of unity but also creates bonding social capital among participants, strengthening relations between religious communities. In the context of Lombok, Perang Topat acts as a bridge that facilitates positive interactions between two different communities, thus avoiding potential conflicts that may arise from religious and cultural differences.

In addition, this ritual can also be associated with the concept of living harmony from Fritjof Capra, which emphasizes the importance of harmony in diversity. The people of Lombok who live side by side in religious diversity create a social ecosystem



that allows them to respect and collaborate with each other. The Topat War tradition emphasizes the values of tolerance, where Muslims and Hindus not only interact but also share sacred moments that

strengthen mutual trust. *(Figure 3: Thousands of people in Lingsar District, West Lombok, NTB, spilled out to watch the excitement of the Topat War at Lingsar Temple, West Lombok, Thursday (9/12/2022). Source: Ahmad Viqi/detikBali).*

Furthermore, the Pujawali ceremony with offerings and sacrifices in Perang Topat represents gratitude and prayer to the Creator. In a symbolic perspective, the ritual functions as a cultural symbol that connects individuals with the beliefs and traditions of their ancestors. The ritual held at Pura Kemalik can be seen through Victor Turner's lens on community, where during the ritual, the social structures that usually distinguish individuals can dissolve, creating a sense of unity and brotherhood among

the participants. Every step and object used has sacred value for the community, showing how this tradition builds a strong social network.(Dennerlein & Hamid, 2010).

The Topat War tradition also has an important function in fulfilling the basic needs of the community and helping them face life's challenges. In this case, the belief that ketupat used in Topat War can increase soil fertility and crop yields illustrates how rituals can provide hope and motivation in aspects of the community's agrarian life. The theory of social constructivism can be applied here, where social beliefs and practices are shaped by community interactions and serve to give meaning to their experiences.(Gentina et al., 2018; Gurbin, 2015; Ruiz-Frau et al., 2020). Ketupat brought home as bubus contains magical value and is believed to bring blessings, showing the pragmatic function of the tradition as a means of strengthening economic welfare. This function shows that Perang Topat is not only symbolic, but also provides psychological and economic support for the community through the belief in the expected blessings.

By combining these three aspects, it can be concluded that the Perang Topat tradition not only acts as a cultural celebration but also has an important role in maintaining harmony, strengthening cultural identity, and fulfilling the economic and spiritual needs of the community. In a broader context, Perang Topat shows how a tradition can be a strong foundation for harmony and sustainability of life in a diverse society. Relevant theories support the understanding of social interaction, cultural values, and the role of ritual in maintaining balance in the life of a pluralistic society, making Perang Topat a concrete example of the success of religious moderation in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The Topat War tradition in Lingsar, West Lombok, is a real example of religious moderation that has successfully integrated various cultural, spiritual, and social elements in a pluralistic society. This study shows that Topat War is not just an annual ritual, but a manifestation of harmony between Muslims and Hindus, where mutual

understanding and tolerance are the main foundations in interactions between religions.

The results of the study highlight three important aspects: first, Perang Topat serves as a symbol of social harmony, where Muslims and Hindus interact with each other in a peaceful atmosphere through the activity of throwing ketupat at each other. Second, this ritual contains a deep spiritual meaning, with offerings and offerings as an expression of gratitude to God, creating a sense of unity that transcends religious differences. Third, the belief that ketupat can increase soil fertility shows how this tradition also provides pragmatic support for the agrarian life of the community.

Through the lens of various social and cultural theories, it is clear that Perang Topat not only reflects the richness of Lombok's culture but also serves as a means to strengthen the values of democracy and inclusivity in the context of a multicultural society. The implications of this study recommend the importance of preserving and developing such traditions to build constructive interfaith dialogue, as well as to create a more harmonious and respectful environment amidst the existing diversity. Thus, Perang Topat can be used as a model to inspire religious moderation initiatives in other regions in Indonesia, while strengthening the rich and diverse local cultural identity.

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