

# LEARNING FROM THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS INTEGRATION IN SOLOR VILLAGE INDONESIA

## *Model Masyarakat Harmoni dalam Integrasi Sosio-Religius di Kampung Solor*

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### ABSTRAK

*Bangsa Indonesia dengan semboyan Bhineka Tunggal Ika adalah bangsa yang meyakini keindahan kemajemukan sebagai modal utama membangun persatuan. Oleh sebab itu, dibangunnya relasi yang menghasilkan integrasi sosial seharusnya bercirikan penerimaan dan penghormatan atas pluralisme dan kesediaan untuk belajar dari kemajemukan tersebut. Sayangnya, semakin tingginya angka konflik akibat ketidakmampuan masyarakat untuk bertoleransi terhadap perbedaan membuktikan bahwa identitas diri bangsa menjadi kurang kokoh. Jelas bahwa ada kebutuhan untuk menguatkan kembali identitas bangsa lewat langkah-langkah strategis yang sistematis, terarah, dan terpadu agar ke-diri-an bangsa dapat kokoh kembali, salah satunya adalah dengan belajar dari integrasi sosial yang terjadi di beberapa tempat di Indonesia, seperti misalnya di Kampung Solor, Kota Kupang.*

*Di tengah berbagai konflik bernuansa SARA yang terjadi di Indonesia relasi kaum pendatang dan pribumi sebagai model kehidupan masyarakat yang harmonis di Kampung Solor menawarkan suatu alternatif integrasi sosial yang dapat terjadi di bumi Bhineka Tunggal Ika. Inilah fokus penelitian ini, yang dengan format deskriptif-kualitatif bertujuan menganalisa isu strategis integrasi sosial antara kaum pendatang dan pribumi dengan agama dan latar belakang kebudayaan yang berbeda. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ditemukan bahwa warga Kampung Solor berhasil membangun model kehidupan yang harmonis karena dalam menghadapi kenyataan multikulturalismenya, mereka masih terus mengandalkan nilai agama dan budaya yang luhur. Kampung Solor adalah bukti bahwa integrasi sosial yang harmonis dapat terjadi ketika kelompok masyarakat menghargai keberagaman dan memandangnya sebagai kekayaan yang harus dijaga bersama.*

**Kata kunci:** integrasi sosial, agama, relasi dan perubahan sosial, masyarakat harmoni, multikulturalisme.

### ABSTRACT

*The Indonesian nation with the motto “Bhineka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity) is a nation that believes in the beauty of pluralism as the primary model to build unity. Therefore, in building relationships that produce social integration, it should be characterized by acceptance and respect of pluralism and a willingness to learn from this pluralism. Unfortunately, the increasing number of conflicts results in the inability of society to tolerate differences, as seen in the nation’s self-identity becoming unstable. It is clear that the national identity needs to be reinforced through strategic steps that are systematic, clear-cut, and integrated, so that the national unity can be strongly united again. One of the ways to accomplish this is by learning from social integration that occurs in various locations in Indonesia. One such place is in Solor Village, Kupang.*

*In the midst of various conflicts that center on ethnic groups, race, religion, and class issues in Indonesia, the relationship between the indigenous people and newcomers in Solor Village offers an alternative of social integration that can occur in this “Unity in Diversity” nation. This is the focus of this research, which uses a descriptive-qualitative format to analyze social integration strategic issues between newcomers with different religious and cultural backgrounds from the native inhabitants of Solor Village. The research shows that Solor Village residents succeed in building a harmonious life because in facing multiculturalism, religious and cultural values play an important role. Harmonious life in Solor Village confirms that social integration build on respect to pluralism is possible.*

**Keywords:** social integration, religion, relationships and social change, harmonious society, multiculturalism.

## INTRODUCTION

“Bhineka Tunggal Ika” (Unity in Diversity) is a national motto that is held in high esteem in Indonesia. This term comes from Sanskrit language which is translated as “different but one”. This motto is appropriate to be used in Indonesia, because it is able to summarize the plurality situation that is a part of the national richness by focusing on the ultimate goal, which is unity in diversity. The Republic of Indonesia earned independence on August 17th, 1945 as a united nation, due to great support from diverse societies spread all over regions in Indonesia. These diversities include tribes, cultures, religions, ethics, languages and other factors. In other words, August 17th, 1945, is the prime moment in Indonesia’s social integration as a united nation. This event is characterized by pluralism as a uniqueness of Indonesia which must be continually fostered and directed to the ultimate goal of unity as listed in this nation’s motto.

Based on the fact of the nation’s lives in Indonesia, the expectation that it is implicit in the motto of “unity in diversity” is still far from reality. There are various kinds of conflict between tribes, religious groups, races, and classes (SARA) that proved Indonesia as a country still impeded in continuing the prime moment of social integration. Indonesia has not fully able to prove its self-identity as a nation that respects diversity and accepts it in unity. The Ministry of the Interior records that from the beginning of 2013 until September of 2013, there were 351 conflicts as a result of the society’s inability to nurture diversity in the everyday life of Indonesia.

Conflicts between SARA in Indonesia show that there is an urgent need for this nation to live through harmony in diversity. Why can this be considered as pressing need? The reason is that Indonesian citizens cannot live in harmonious social integration. So it is clear that the framework in establishing this country is disintegrating and

worthy of being asked about its legitimacy. Can Indonesia still be heralded as a nation which has “unity in diversity” as its national motto if it cannot be realized in the lives of its citizens? On another side, conflicts between SARA that are ever increasing in number in Indonesia should become a motivational factor for its citizens to return to its disposition to live peacefully in diversity and respect differences. How can this be achieved? One of the ways is by ensuring that the social integration process within society runs smoothly. Social integration is a unifying process where all diverse elements in society can be adjusted with one another, so that it produces harmonious lives.

Solor Village is a densely populated region in Kota Lama Sub-District, Kupang, which has a unique aspect in its social integration process. The city of Kupang is the capital of East Nusa Tenggara Province with population coming from different tribes, cultures, and religions. The majority of ethnic groups in Kupang are Timor, Sabu, Rote, and Flores that most of them follow Protestant Christian and Catholic. The minority ethnic groups in Kupang are Javanese, Chinese, Makassar, Padang. Solor Village is located in the middle of Kupang, which is the center of commerce and business activities. The majority of the people in this village follow Islam and they are migrants to Kupang. In Solor village, there are two places of worship: a Catholic church and a mosque. The mosque is one of the oldest mosques in Kupang called Al-Fatah Mosque. Solor village is part of Kota Lama Sub-District that geographically is located beside Kupang Bay to the north; the south is beside Kota Raja Sub-District; the east is next to Kelapa Lima Sub-District; and the west is beside Alak Sub-District. Solor Sub-District is situated in the middle of the commerce and business activities in Kupang. Therefore, the primary livelihood of residents in this area is in commerce and fishery.

The number of migrants who decided to stay in Solor Village are 50 people per year. With an area of only 4.34% of all of Kota Lama Sub-

District, Solor Village has a population of 2,951 people (1,533 males and 1,418 females), and 745 families (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Kupang, 2013). The number of migrants who settle in Solor Village is very high, as about 50% decide to live in Solor Village.

Based on the recorded history of Kupang, during the war between the Netherlands and Portugal, the Netherlands brought people from Solor Island (located to the east of Flores Island). Those who were brought over were mostly Islam and settled in one of the central city areas known as Solor Village. As a densely-populated village with many activities and the majority of people being Muslim, Solor is known as a village with rare conflicts, especially a rare conflict with the indigenous people (the majority Christian ethnic groups). Before some migrants from Solor Island coming to the village, this area was inhabited by Helong people coming from Semau Island (Soh dan Indrayana, 2008: 19-20). After a number of Solor Island residents relocated to Kupang, they formed Solor Village or now known as Solor Village District. In considering this socio-historical background, the indigenous people that are meant here are Solor people who formed the village or after they came to Kupang.

The harmony between the migrants and native inhabitants of Solor Village, raises various questions as follows; how did they build harmonious lives through diversity? How did they with different religions and origins build interdependence on one another, so that it can produce a peaceful coexistence? Furthermore, the social integration between the indigenuous people and the migrants should become a model of harmonious life for the Indonesian nation which has the motto “unity in diversity”.

### **Social Contract and Multicultural Approach**

Clifford Geertz, an American anthropologist, mentioned Indonesia as a country with a complex anatomy. Indonesia “is not just multi-ethnic (Javanese, Batak, Bugis, Aceh, Flores, Balinese, and others) but it is also an arena with a multi-

mental influence (India, China, the Netherlands, Portugal, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam Christianity, Capitalism, and others)” (Kymlicka, 2002: 8). A discussion about the concept of multiculturalism is developed because of awareness that individual rights as a citizen does not have cultural differences. In a country, the majority and minority groups are subject to the same regulations (Kymlicka, 2002: 10). Charles Taylor, in his book *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*, which was published in 1992, opened the door for a discussion about multiculturalism, not just in politics, but also related to culture and philosophy (Tilaar, 2004: 82). The term multiculturalism itself has experienced developmental stages. In the beginning, the term multiculturalism had two primary characteristics, which were the need for recognition and cultural diversity as well as cultural pluralism legitimacy” (Tilaar, 2004: 83). In its development, the term multiculturalism has had at least six characteristics, which are “the influence of cultural studies, post-colonialism, globalization, feminism and post-feminism, neo-Marxism political economic theory, and post-structuralism” (Tilaar, 2004: 84).

A multiculturalism mindset also cannot be separated from the influence of John Rawls’ ideas. In his book *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls explains his theory about social contract with the basic belief that a just society does not only have to fulfill the condition of *the greatest good for the greatest number* (utilitarianism). Rawls believes that “a just principle is a common initial position of an individual who is free and rational” (Tilaar, 2004: 76). This is a hypothesis in Rawls’ idea that is supported with a field of ignorance concept. In short, Rawls depicts a social contract as a form of justice that is reached through a social integration process. In this sense, the individual interaction was not differentiated between classes, social status, intellect, ability in society. Each person has equal rights and responsibilities. From this situation, Rawls believes distributive justice can be born (Tilaar, 2004: 76).

Although Rawls' and Taylor's ideas have deficiencies, it has to be admitted that they are the two first thinkers who gave more attention to social cohesion and initiated attention to multiculturalism (Ngurah Bagus, 2003: 27). "Today's world demands multiculturalism, because humans who are different from one another have to have relationships with one another and have rights to celebrate their own differences" (Ngurah Bagus, 2003: 27). Therefore, all kinds of differences must be respected as mutual riches. Indonesian society as a country which is rich in ethnicity, languages, cultures, religions must strive to foster a peaceful attitude towards all differences. Lawrence A. Blum, in his book *Applied Ethics I, A Multicultural Approach*, as cited by Ngurah Bagus (2003) mentioned four different values but strongly related in a multiculturalism concept. Those values are "anti-racism, cultural diversity, inter-racial community, and respect towards humans as individuals" (Ngurah Bagus, 2003: 28). Multiculturalism does not suggest living without differences, where all differences merge to become one. Conversely, multiculturalism refers to fostering differences that lead to in balance harmony.

### **Social Relations, Social Changes, and Social Integration**

Humans are social creatures. This means that humans need other humans in their environment, in order that it can enrich their lives. Therefore, social interactions arise due to human needs to be with others. Social interactions between an individual with another individual, an individual with a group, or a group with another group essentially form social relationships based on the values held by the interacting parties. In other words, social relationships are made between two or more individuals, where the attitude of one can influence, change, or fix the attitude of another individual or vice versa (Hidayati, 2007: 31). Social interactions can be considered as a key of all social lives in a society (Soekanto, 2005: 60).

Furthermore, Bonner, as quoted by Waluya (2007) stated that "a social interaction is a

relationship between two or more individuals who mutually influence, change, or repair the behavior of another individual or the other way around" (Waluya, 2007: 3). A social interaction occurs when an individual or a group of individuals experiences social change due to another individual. A social interaction process occurs through at least four primary behaviors: imitation, suggestion, identification, and sympathy. When these four things occur in a society, the effect that will surface is social change. Social change is "change in the social relationship (change that is desired and change that is undesired) or as change towards social relationship equilibrium" (Waluya, 2007: 2). It is clear that social change, whether it has a positive or negative effect, occurs with the purpose to ensure equilibrium of social relationship. Gillin and Gillin as cited by Waluya (2007) mentioned that social change is "a variation from the way to live that has been accepted, whether due to changing in geographic condition, material culture, resident composition and ideology, or due to diffusion or new findings in society" (Waluya, 2007: 19). If this definition is accepted, social change is seen as an appropriate process from social interaction in society.

Two primary subjects in social change are inner society which experiences social change and outer society which influences or encourages the occurrence of social change. Therefore, there are internal and external subjects. There are many things occurred within society and outside society that cause social changes, for example, conflicts, inhabitant relocations, new findings, and wars. When social change occurs, its process goes in stages and along with special paths. The paths that are maneuvered in a general social change process are political organization, religion, economics, education, and law (Waluya, 2007: 19). Social change that gives rise to progress in society has strength to tighten relationships between one individual with another individual, an individual with a group, and a group with another group in a society. A social interaction that ends in a dynamic social relationship produces harmonious social integration.



Social integration as an effect of a social change process and social interaction can be understood as a different aspect mixture incident that forms unity. In Indonesia, these different aspects are found in social diversity, like in religion, culture, tribes, languages, and traditions. The diversity in Indonesia should be viewed as model in the formation of harmonious social integration. Unfortunately, in reality the diverse society in Indonesia is taken advantage of as an instrument to make certain parties exclusive and promote individual or group importance. A negative attitude in addressing diversity as a social fact in Indonesia can cause national disintegration. The social change process that essentially wants to be directed towards progress instead changes to regress, as a result of the inability of certain individuals or groups to view diversity as a social enrichment (Waluya, 2007: 2).

### **Harmonious Social Model**

Besides being considered as social creatures, humans are also known as conflictive creatures. Jean Baechler mentioned that humans are actually conflictive creatures, because humans possess three sources of inter-human conflict (Litaay, 2011: 67). The first one is desire, aggressive characteristic, and quarrelsome. The second one is a demand to be free. The third one is a scarcity of power, respect, and wealth. If we admit that humans are conflictive creatures, then we need to also admit that dissention is a part that cannot be willingly part of human lives. Due to the fact that humans as individuals are also a part of a group, it is natural that conflicts between groups are a social consequence of social life. David Saxe concluded that relations in social interactions have innate conflict aspects that influence social change (Litaay, 2011: 68). What is meant by innate conflict is dualism between what is desired by society to prevent conflict and what is produced by an individual in taking advantage of one's independence.

Indonesian society which holds democracy in high esteem in addressing pluralism also needs to remember that there is perennial tension

in a democratic society. In detail, Charles F. Bachmueller and John J. Patrick as cited in Litaay (2011) wrote that four democratic society tensions are majority rules versus minority rights, freedom versus commonality, freedom versus involvement, and personal importance versus common good (Litaay, 2011: 68). Knowledge and awareness of the four perennial tensions in society try to make it possible for citizens to be careful in building social relations that will result in harmonious social integration. If the citizens already know the dangerous potentials in the societal life structure that they adhere to, it is hoped that they will be able to find a way to avoid or prevent this danger. In the situation of the Indonesian nation, a dangerous potential clearly appears in individual or group activities that do not respect multiculturalism. Multiculturalism itself is a social relationship model that opens a channel for a plurality identity and at the same time links that tie these identities in social integration (Litaay, 2011: 68). In multiculturalism, citizens are heterogeneous, inclusive, united, and not easily influenced by narrow thinking from local indigenous people and migrants. A plural society develops an attitude of mutual respect, so that it creates harmony which provides prosperity for all its members. Multiculturalism ensures that ethnic groups should be able to live with others side by side in harmony that is marked by the willingness to respect other cultures (Litaay, 2011: 69). In individual or group multiculturalism, a cultural identity, respect, and desire to understand and to learn about other cultures besides one's own culture while respecting the diversity can be found. Through multiculturalism, it strives to create a harmonious society as mentioned in the motto "unity in diversity", where all Indonesian citizens respect one another, are open to differences, and are willing to learn from differences to develop themselves in society as well as the society itself.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses an interpretative qualitative method about the social integration of migrants and native inhabitants in Solor Village

that is divided into several parts. The first part describes the history of the migrants coming to Kupang. The second part covers the relationships between migrants and native inhabitants of Solor Village. The third part describes the harmonious society model between the migrants and native inhabitants of Solor Village. This research ends with a conclusion, but not a final conclusion, which certainly has the potential to be developed or further researched in an effort to realize social integration in a diverse society like in Indonesia.

The technique of collecting data from the field was done through in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentary studies, and focus group discussion in Kampung Solor, Kupang, NTT. Interviewed informants were community leaders, religious leaders, government leaders, and people as actors, that includes women, men, young, old, newcomers and native inhabitants.

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Social Contract: History of Migrants to Kupang and History of Solor Village**

The origins of Kupang originated with the arrival of Helong tribe/peoples, who were the Timor mainland founders and the first inhabitants of Kupang. During the colonial rule of the Portuguese and the Dutch, the Timor mainland was known as being a sandalwood producer that had high value in the commerce world. It is not surprising that the colonizers competed with one another to find sandalwood by controlling the commerce route by forming colonial regions to strengthen their positions. Sandalwood itself is a valuable commodity because of its fragrance and because it could be processed to become fragrant oil, accessories, and valuable instruments for European kings and princes. Sandalwood as a desired economic commodity motivated Portuguese traders to look for information about the regional sources of sandalwood production (Soh dan Indrayana, 2008: 1).

After Malacca fell and controlled by Portugal in 1511, Portuguese merchants came directly to

the sandalwood producing areas. The Portuguese actively sent expeditions to Solor Island, Sumba Island, and Timor Island to do commerce transactions by including priests from the Dominican order to do their missions. Recorded history reveals that the Portuguese are the oldest Western people to arrive in NTT. Four Portuguese missionaries: P Antonio da Cruz O P; P Simao; Chagos; and B Alexio arrived to Solor Island in 1561. Being pioneered by P Antonio da Cruz, in 1566 Lahayong Fort started to be built on Solor Island. The building of Lahayong Fort caused concern by the Dutch regarding the regional autonomy of the sandalwood producing center. Finally, Apolonius Scotte, a Dutch military figure, led an armada to attack Solor Island on April 21, 1613. This attack resulted in the fall of Lahayong Fort, and Solor Island came under Dutch control (Soh dan Indrayana, 2008: 2-12).

A Dutch company commerce alliance that was established in 1602 in Batavia called *Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* (V.O.C), tried hard to compete with the Portuguese commerce tactics. The Dutch wanted to move the control center from Solor Island to Kupang, because it was a more strategic position to facilitate its commerce business. One of the materializations of the Dutch effort to relocate its control from Solor Island to Kupang was the relocation of the inhabitants of Solor Island to Kupang during the time of VOC (Luitnan, 2012: 157-159). Interview with one of the key informants revealed that the person who was sent by the Dutch from Solor Island to Kupang was Atu Laganama (he came from East Solor - 1749-1802). He actively spread Islam religion in Kupang by establishing the first mosque and became an Islamic spiritual leader (Imam) in Solor Village and Batubesi Village. Atu Laganama was also a brave fighter who was chosen by the Dutch to begin his political expedition to Kupang by going to war with the Portuguese.

Atu Laganama, a local hero from East Solor Island, along with his troops, under the control of the Dutch succeeded to strike a blow to the Portuguese through their retreat to the border

(Kefa). In his struggle to push the Portuguese to the border, Atu Laganama and his troops recuperated to eat and drink in an area (now Oeba). According to historical accounts believed by Solor Village residents, at that time it was not easy to find drinking water. So Atu Laganama took a spear and stabbed it in the ground. At that time, water suddenly spouted out. The place where the water came out was called *Waiba*, which means spring water in Solor language. Over time, the name *Waiba* has changed to become *Oeba* by the migrants from Rote, because *oe* means water in Rote language.

On behalf of the success of Atu Laganama and his troops, the Dutch awarded him with land near the coast, because the majority of Solor residents worked as fishermen on Solor Island. After that time, Atu Laganama and his companions who came from Solor Island decided to settle in Kupang and build the Solor community. At that time, only people who came from Solor could live and be accepted in Solor Village. Despite that, in line with development over time, the Solor Village area that was also the biggest fish market (old) in Kupang developed to become a plural community because of the number of migrants who settled there. This was the first moment where migrants and new comers establish a life together in Solor village. Together they construct the basic rules for Solor Village social contract. As mentioned above, Rawls depicts a social contract as a form of justice that is reached through a social integration process where an interactive individual does not differentiate between classes, social status, intellect, ability in society; along with determine rights and responsibilities (Ngurah Bagus, 2003: 27). In today's time, the original inhabitants who came from Solor Island are rarely found in Solor Village. Usually only the offspring of those who first came from Solor Island to fight with Atu Laganama can be found.

### **Multiculturalism: Context of Inhabitant Life in Solor Village**

The residents who settle in Solor Village consist of various ethnic groups (Javanese,

Sumatera, Sulawesi, and others) and religions (Islam, Hindu, Christian, Protestant, and Catholic). In general, they are migrants who decided to live in Solor Village, which is one of the economic centers in Kupang, because they make their livelihoods as merchants and fishermen. In Solor Village, there are inter-marriages between various ethnic groups and religions that result in the formation of a collective self-identity of the individual majority and families that live in Solor Village. As an example, one of the Islamic religious leaders who lives in a neighborhood unit (RT) 12, Solor Village District, explained his self-identity by revealing the ethnic and religious diversity in his family. He has a wife from the Rote tribe; he has a father who had a Catholic background and then changed to Islam; his mother is a Protestant Christian; he has a cousin who used to be the head of a church synod in Kupang; his a step-brother is a preacher; and he has a child-in-law who is Protestant Christian. This kind of a multicultural identity is easy to find among Solor Village residents. As mentioned in the literature review, Charles Taylor (1992) stated that multiculturalism had two primary characteristics, which were the need for recognition and cultural diversity cultural pluralism legitimacy (Tilaar, 2004: 82). These two characteristics can be found among Solor Village residents. The inter-marriage process influences the formation of harmonious lives between residents of Solor Village through a process that cannot have a clear line drawn between tribe A and tribe B; all individuals are a unique mixture from various ethnic and religious backgrounds; all individuals possess a collective identity. Besides that, the inter-marriage relationships between ethnic groups and religions produce a feeling of belonging between individuals, because they feel they are a part of different religions and ethnic groups.

The social life in Solor Village was also tested against conflict. For instance, during the interview, it was revealed that in the G 30 S PKI/communism period, some community figures who will be kidnapped in Solor Village received full protection from the residents with different

religions and ethnic background, because of the close and friendly relationships and feeling of inner group identity. A similar thing was also seen during the uprising in December of 1998, as induced by the uprisings in Jakarta and Poso. On November 30, 1998, Solor Village became a target of an uprising by provocateurs that came from outside of Timor Island. This effort failed and could be neutralized quickly, because of the unity between Solor Village residents who prioritized regional peace. The Solor Village residents look at all of their members as a part of their community; community values are held in higher esteem compared with individual values. National values which are reflected in *Pancasila* (the Indonesian state philosophy) also influence the ability of the social community in Solor Village to build harmonious social lives. As a nation, Indonesia is believed to be constructed as a result of the work of many ethnic groups and religions. The majority of the population in Solor Village is Islam and according to the inhabitants, the majority group is responsible for the minority groups. One of the Solor Village societal figures stated that "being part of the majority group does not mean that the group is on top and can dominate arbitrarily, rather being part of the majority group means you have to be responsible for those who are in the minority groups."

Most of the migrants who entered Solor Village and then became permanent residents come from Java Island and are Islam. Solor Village is a desirable location for migrants because it is situated in the middle of the city. Besides, this town is safe and easy to find people of the same religion. Being located in the middle of the city makes it easier to conduct economic transactions that generally are the primary means for migrants to make a livelihood. At this time, there is even a night market in Solor Village that is conducted by Javanese people who come from Lamongan and sell baked fish. The 1998 conflict that occurred in Kupang generally also gave rise to new self-awareness of Solor Village residents about the importance of having migrants. Without the presence of migrants who primarily are involved

in commerce, the residents would experience difficulties. This is supported by during the two weeks of the 1998 conflict in Kupang, all of the commerce businesses that were run by newcomers could not operate, so the residents could not fulfill their basic household needs well. This experience gave rise to the awareness that living together harmoniously is a necessity. As a response to the Solor Village residents' concern after the 1998 conflict in Kupang, a Religious Assembly Harmony Forum was formed and is still in operation until now.

### **Harmonious Societal Model: Newcomers and Indigenous People in Solor Village**

In order to maintain harmonious relationships, the social community in Solor Village holds various supporting activities like helping to build a place of worship (churches and mosques), helping to clean and maintaining places of worship during important religious days (Muslims help to clean and maintain churches for Christians and Easter celebrations, while Christians help to clean and to maintain mosques during Ramadan month festivities and Lebaran), as well as sharing Society Empowerment Organization (LPM) activities like resident counseling, PKK, *Posyandu* (integrated health posts), and Mosque Teenagers that are all joined by residents from various ethnic groups and religions.

Social integration has occurred in Solor Village between newcomers and indigenous people, between various ethnic groups, and between people from various religions. This pluralism that has been created in this area occurred because there are some meeting and mutual acceptance between indigenous people and newcomers. Baton, a sociologist, revealed that in social integration there is respect towards pluralism as a part of social life. This is seen in the social lives of Solor Village.

In Solor Village, plurality is greatly felt; however, there are majority groups that are more dominant in social activities. These groups like religion are mostly comprised of Solor Village



residents that are Islamic. The indigenous group feels that they have lived and established themselves longer in Solor Village, so that they are more active in social activities. If the approach by Charles F. Bachmueller and John J. Patrick about tensions in a democratic society is used, then majority rules versus minority rules can occur (Litaay, 2011: 68). Nevertheless, in this area this kind of tension does not occur. Usually just small tensions occur in Solor Village due to negative behaviors of youths who like to drink alcohol and get drunk. However, this does not have much effect until there is aggressive behavior that disturbs social order. Relationships between the majority and minority groups are conducted in a harmonious way. According to one of the Solor Village residents, the culture that was established in Solor Village is a culture that was built together. There are no particular dominant ethnic groups or religious groups. In major religious events, the residents always visit each other and maintain friendly relationships. Mutual tolerance and respect are part of the culture in Solor Village. Based on findings in Focus Group Discussion, it can be seen that newcomers and indigenous people in this area have an open mindset. Adults and children easily understand the meaning of living together and how to maintain it well. According to one of the informants, who is from the Sabu ethnic group, "In the neighbors' interactions, they often ask and are asked to cook together on certain religious celebration days, and then the food is brought home to be eaten together in their respective families." It is really a harmonious lifestyle. There is no individual or group importance in these social interactions; they just think about living together. This reduces tensions in the interactions. A woman in this area revealed that during an Easter celebration for Christians, they partake in the festivities and watch the Easter parade together on the sides of the main streets. During the Imlek celebration, they are also willing to watch the Barongsai (Lion Dance) and other activities. Next, during the Idul Fitri celebration, they are also visited by and congratulated by other residents. There are

no limitations in interaction and they are living together as Solor Village residents.

As mentioned in literature review, according to Bonner, social interaction process occurs through at least four primary behaviors: imitation, suggestion, identification, and sympathy (Waluya, 2007: 3). When these four things occur in society, the effect that will surface is social change. The social integration that occurs in Solor Village is a result of solidarity between different newcomers and indigenous people. Indigenous people provide houses and boarding houses for places to live and to do businesses. Meanwhile, newcomers contribute to the economy of the indigenous people as well as provide new innovations for indigenous people to see an economic enterprise. Indigenous people who previously were not interested in commerce, now want to partake in commerce businesses. At the night market, there are also indigenous people who sell various kinds of food amongst those merchants. Besides from an economic side, integration is also seen from a religious perspective. As the majority religion in Solor Village, Islam always respects other minority religions. There are also shop owners along the main roads who are of Chinese decent and contribute to the community activities. Whenever residents want to build a social infrastructure or to do a social activity in Solor Village, the shop owners always provide assistance in the form of goods or funds. The indigenous residents also always maintain security and order around Solor Village. Many newcomers also provide new insight for residents into how to increase their prosperity, and indigenous residents allow them to live in this area. In Solor Village, there are various types of characteristics, accents, cultures, and viewpoints of people who live together with a high level of tolerance, so that it forms harmonious interactions. It is like a song that is played by various musical instruments with a beautiful symphony. These differences are able to convey harmony.

In Solor Village, the residents always have an attitude of mutual respect; therefore it creates

harmonious lives that result in social well-being for all residents. Pluralism is a richness that cannot be denied. People should be able to live together in harmony that is based on tolerance and the desire to respect others. Unity is not a hindrance, but a bridge to connect one individual with another individual. Assimilation through marriage is one of the reasons accepted in Solor Village. Acceptance of newcomers without differentiating those from one ethnic group or religion is a characteristic of the openness of indigenous people in that area. Building a harmonious life along with the feeling of togetherness, tolerance, and respect is a richness that makes the social interaction in Solor Village even richer with color and flavor. These differences have united all residents of Solor Village. This harmonious society was born from diversity.

Social interactions in Solor Village are positive. Social interactions end in dynamic social relations and create harmonious social integration. Diversity is viewed as a model that forms social integration. Differences become ingredients to bind lives that are full of an attitude of respecting others. This is not just a false sense of respect in interacting. There are no hidden meanings in their action. All social activities are done because of a shared awareness and need. During certain religious celebrations, they celebrate together and pray for the well being of all people. When a resident is grieving, other residents will visit the person and show support. When a thief breaks into a resident's home, the surrounding residents will assist them. There is an atmosphere of respecting and appreciating others through ethnic groups and religions in this region.

During Focus Group Discussion, informants revealed that togetherness is also seen when there is a wedding event. At the night time after a marriage ceremony, commonly called *pica bok*, all of the residents gather at the reception event and do a *lego-lego* dance until late night or morning hours. Males, females, children, and even older people will attend together in a joyous occasion without differentiating between ethnicity or

religion. They are all immersed in happiness until the event finished. *Lego-lego* is a kind of dancing in a circle that is found in most regions of NTT.

The social integration in Solor Village becomes strength for social development. Besides, this can assist the government in maintaining stability. According to the Solor Village Head, whenever the village district wants to hold counseling or another social activity, they just need to confirm to the heads of the neighborhood units (RT), and all of the residents will be actively involved. Independence Day activities are always enlivened by the community together. There is a community service activity to clean the environment that also involves all of the residents. There is no domination from a certain majority group; rather togetherness is felt as a big family of Solor Village. The differences become strength to complete and complement each other.

Whenever there is a threat, conflict, or tension in the community, the roles of the government, community leaders, and religious leaders become very important. When SARA issues infiltrate Solor Village, the community and religious leaders will meet together and try to maintain their unity. When this happens, all residents will work together to create a conducive atmosphere in order to create a unity. Thus, there were no social tensions that arose in Solor Village during the 1998 conflict. The religious and community leaders still acted as a role model to protect the harmonious climate in this region. Several places of worship for Christian, Catholic, and Moslem were also protected by the Solor Village residents. Religious activities do not disrupt social activities. The government has an administrative function by providing information, data, and other things, but it does not conflict with other social activities. Plurality will only appear in government administrative data, but unity will appear in the shared lives in Solor Village.

In general, the harmonious model shown by Solor Village residents was born from the ideal values that they believe in and are applied by all residents, whether they are newcomers or

indigenous residents. From these values arise positive interactions that lead to the formation of a harmonious community. Whenever a harmonious community is formed, the next needed effort is to maintain the values to ensure there is effective regeneration to protect the harmony.

In building a harmonious community in Solor Village, there are several values that have become the foundation, so that plurality can be maintained. Based on interview, Focus Group Discussion, and observation while conducting the research, several values are seen as being sources of strength in building a harmonious society. These values are divided into two big groups: individual resident identity-based values and common values built within the community.

The individual identity-based values are based on Islamic religious teachings. Islam religion demands all its practitioners to engage in *ukhuwa*. *Ukhuwa* means fellowship and unity. According to one of the religious leaders, it is a sin whenever an individual does not create *ukhuwa*. Next, he also stated that in Islamic teachings there is a verse which says, “Work for yourself as if you will live forever, and work for your afterlife as if you will die tomorrow.” This verse states that human activities in the world are a path to work for God. Therefore, you should always maintain *ukhuwa* to do God’s work. *Ukhuwa* will give birth to solidarity, love, and compassion to help others by living together. Religion is a primary source in teaching individuals to feel that other humans are their brothers and sisters in living in unity. Only humans are always trapped in aggressive attitudes, which can result in tensions in the social environment and disrupt the unity that was created. Personal or private desires (in Arab language called *nafsi*) must be discarded. Islam forbids living for oneself; you must always try to maintain unity. Striving for *ukhuwa* is a way to eliminate *nafsi* from within oneself. This confirms that in community formation, “religion can be a force that deeply influences personal and community life” (Prema Kurien, 2014)

Informant added that “Islam itself is *rachmatan lil alamin*, which means to bring mercy or peace.” Therefore, in principle, in Islam or any religious teachings there is always peace. Islam does not teach about malice, jealousy, or anger. With that in mind, for children, parents, friends, relatives, and other people, you should strive to create peace. According to one of the religious leaders, a respectful attitude in Islam can be seen through the statement, “My religion is my religion. Your religion is your religion in worship. Nevertheless, in daily interactions we do not have any problems.” Having tolerance and mutual respect in following a religion will result in harmonization in living together.

One legacy in the teachings of Prophet Muhammad SAW is, “Not Moslem, not you from my people, if your neighbor is not safe, from your mouth change it.” This legacy teaches that in order to be considered a Moslem you have to live in tolerance as a part of performing your religious worship. In building transcendental relationships, worship has to be performed in an organized manner. Meanwhile, social relationships with one’s neighbors and the people around you have to be harmonious.

One of the religious leaders added that in Islamic teachings there are two rules: the first is praying to God, and the second is interacting with our fellow humans. The term human is used to refer to people in general, but he considers it from a certain religion or ethnic group. These two rules have to be in balance. By following Islamic teachings, all people must worship God in the proper way and always do good deeds for other people. So you cannot pray well and fervently, but in social life you have feeling of jealousy and spite towards other people. Conversely, you should not just do good deeds to others, but be adverse to God. This results in an imbalanced worshipping. Balance will show a human’s earnestness in worshipping God.

These values are not just in Islam. They are also found in other religious teachings. Every

religion teaches to respect others. Christian teachings say that you should forgive others, which is taken from Jesus Christ's teachings about compassion. Buddhist teachings deal with balance, while Hindu teachings are about modesty. Every religion guide people to interact with others in harmony.

In addition to values based on religious identity, there are also general values built by the society. The Solor Village residents hold family values in high esteem. Having an awareness of being a family with differences will create. Marriage assimilations make Solor, Sabu, Rote, Timor, Makassar, Javanese, Padang, and other ethnic groups in Solor Village feel that they are part of a big family. A child will listen to advice and warnings from an older. Residents wanting to help others are seen in every interaction. An informant mentions that he often assists other residents who are suffering from having troubles in their houses. He is always willing to lend his car to be used for various purposes. This confirms "collective identity occurs when individuals organize themselves as belonging to a deprived group and therefore are able to relate to others with a sense of shared circumstances" (Mayan, 2013: 19).

Beside family values, there are also openness values. The heads of neighborhood units (RT) and district units (RW) do not experience any difficulties in holding shared social activities, like community service or other activities. This is due to the fact that all families and individuals are open and encouraged to contribute in each social activity. Whenever there is a problem in a certain environment, openness will be the determining factor in finding a resolution. In addition, indigenous residents and newcomers always apply this value. Openness has become a characteristic in living with one's neighbors in Solor Village. Being one big family has enabled them to get past differences amongst themselves.

These values are taught to each generation in the same way. Parents told these values to their children by giving advice to stay as a family and to

maintain togetherness. Informants revealed that a shared life value was given by the father when he was still alive, and that advice is still remembered and carried out until now. Parents strive to keep their children away from a life that destroys solidarity. Besides receiving advice from parents, children are also taught about the meaning of life together through religious activities like Islamic studies. According to one of the religious leaders, children are not just trained to read the Al-Quran. They are also instructed about the advantages of living together and tolerance as the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. In other words, harmonization will continue to be passed on to the next generation in the Solor Village environment.

## CONCLUSION

By discovering and understanding the conditions that cause social interactions in a society, an effort can be made to foster the nation and the society. As one of the effects of social interactions that occur in society, especially between newcomers and indigenous people in Solor Village in Kupang, it has certainly become a model for social harmony relations in a pluralistic society in Indonesia. By learning from these Solor Village residents, there are several important things that have to be given attention by all parties, in an effort that it leads to national integration and a harmonious society.

Firstly, all elements in society play significant roles. These societal elements consist of community leaders, religious figures, and certainly all its citizens. When all parties realize their respective roles and responsibilities, harmony will be created in every relationship established. Secondly, religious values are still powerful as a social control in a pluralistic society. Here, religion is not seen as a cause of disintegration; conversely religion is a source of mutual values and life motivations in *ukhuwah* or unity and love. Thirdly, it has to be admitted that economic factors also play an important role in the social harmony of Solor Village residents in Kupang. The residents earnestly realize that



when a conflict occurs, like the 1998 conflict, all community economic activities will be stalled, and it will certainly be disadvantageous to the continuation of their own social life. That is the reason why a conflict has to be minimized or resolved using a better way to build harmonious social life.

Fourthly, the socialization of values from one generation to another generation is an important thing that must be done to make social integration lead to a harmonious society. Solor Village residents really respect the traditions and cultures that have been passed down from their ancestors, especially related with shared life values. The socialization of these values is certainly supported by the good relationships between the young generation and older generation in Solor society. Through inter-generational activities, shared life values are passed down from one generation to another generation, besides through the residents' respective internal families.

These four factors must be continually observed and developed within the social interaction process in society that might lead to integration. These four factors are also essential for Solor Village residents, which will certainly become a consideration or even a model for other plural societies in Indonesia.

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