
***Sharī'ah* in the Public Sphere: The
Discourse and Practices of Islamic
Law and Inter-Religious Tolerance
and Harmony**

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Abstract

This article discusses the application of *sharī'ah* in the Indonesian public sphere. Mainly, it evaluates arguments and practices of Islamic law regarding tolerance and harmony among interreligious communities. It has been claimed as important due to it seems no scholarly works which significantly reconstruct inspirational ideas and practices of Islamic law in terms of emphasising tolerance and harmony between Muslims and believers of other religions. Applying phenomenological approach, it examines ideas and behaviour of interfaith leaders in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The leaders have been members of the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB). It arguably asserts that the interfaith leaders have played significant roles in maintaining religious harmony in the region. They have participatorily anticipated and resolved religious-based conflicts. For them, the participation is essential in order to maintain interreligious harmony born out of dialogue, acquaintance and mutual cooperation. In the practical level of *mu'āmalah*, they have tended to be tolerant and pluralist. Thus, their roles might be considered as a best practice for various peacebuilding efforts in Indonesia and other countries.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mendiskusikan penerapan *sharī'ah* di ruang publik Indonesia. Terutama, hal ini mengevaluasi argumentasi dan praktik hukum Islam yang berkaitan dengan toleransi dan harmoni di antara komunitas antar umat beragama. Artikel ini dianggap penting karena tampaknya belum ada karya-karya akademik yang secara signifikan merekonstruksi berbagai gagasan yang inspiratif yang menekankan toleransi dan harmoni antara kaum Muslim dengan para penganut agama lainnya. Dengan mengaplikasikan pendekatan fenomenologis, hal ini hendak meninjau dan menganalisis berbagai gagasan dan perilaku para pemuka lintas agama di Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia. Para tokoh tersebut merupakan para anggota Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB). Artikel ini secara argumentatif menegaskan bahwa para pemuka lintas agama memainkan peran yang signifikan dalam memelihara kerukunan antar umat beragama di wilayah di mana mereka tinggal. Mereka secara partisipatoris mengantisipasi dan berupaya menyelesaikan berbagai ketegangan dan konflik berbasis agama. Bagi mereka, partisipasi tersebut begitu penting untuk menjaga harmoni antar agama, yang bisa dicapai melalui dialog, saling memahami dan kerjasama. Dalam tataran praktis *mu'āmalah*, mereka cenderung bersifat toleran dan pluralis. Dengan demikian, peran mereka kiranya dapat dipertimbangkan sebagai praktik terbaik dalam mengupayakan pembangunan perdamaian di Indonesia dan bisa menjadi contoh bagi negara-negara lainnya.

Keywords: *Sharī'ah*; *mu'āmalah*; interreligious tolerance and harmony; the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB); interreligious communities; interfaith leaders.

Introduction

It is vital to maintain religious harmony persistently in Indonesia. It is due to its vast territory stretching from Aceh to Papua consists of the ethnic, cultural, racial, language and religious diversity. The founding fathers of the nation have thoroughly laid the foundation of diversity in the motto *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). The motto emphasises the necessity of Indonesia's diversity therefore it is to be preserved within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). In dealing with the project of maintenance, the motto needs to be applied properly into the national life of the people.

However, several reports concerning religious harmony have noted the ignorance of this principle. Nawari states that during the reformation period, religious conflict has reached 73% which is alarming even, though it has involved various aspects such as political, government policies, ethnic, economic and educational issues, and finally the strengthening of regional identity after regional autonomy.¹ The Freedom House survey reports that Indonesia ranks a "free" country in 2013, this shows Indonesia's progress in advocating for human rights (HAM) as well as its improvement in its democratic journey since the 1998 reform. Nevertheless, this achievement does not last forever. In 2014, Indonesia fell a step into a "partly free" country and continued to decline in 2015 with only four scores and then two in 2016. Even in 2016, Stara Institute gives bad performance review for Indonesia in terms of upholding the right to freedom of expression and religion.²

Another report by Setara Institute in 2017 states that the religious state in Indonesia has gradually improved compared to the previous year. Although the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) releases its annual report in January 2017 which shows alarming data. The institution reports that complaints related to the poor condition of religious harmony from January to December 2016 amounted to 97 complaints, this number increased from the number of complaints in 2015 which amounted to 87 complaints. Meanwhile, in 2014 there were 76 cases. This data

¹ Stev Koresy Rumangit. "Kekerasan dan Diskriminasi antar Umat Beragama di Indonesia", *Lex Administratum: Jurnal Elektronik Bagian Hukum Administrasi Negara Fakultas Hukum Unsrat* 1 no. 2 (2013): 57.

² Ali A Rizvi, *Sang Muslim Ateis: Perjalanan dari Religi ke Akal Budi* (Jakarta: LSM Indeks, 2017), vii.

shows a significant rise in cases of religious intolerance.³ Several reports above illustrate the persistent presence of various violations and conflict in Indonesia. The negligence of differences in religion or belief is likely to be the root cause of the problem. Even so, Indonesian society can still learn from regions where religious practices are well accomplished, one of which is Malang City. The harmonious life of religious communities is a real social phenomenon in Malang City as evidenced by several awards assigned to the city regarding religious harmony. For example, the city is awarded for being the only city in Indonesia that formed the Team for a Secure and Comfortable Environment.⁴

The city of Malang is awarded for its achievements in ensuring harmony of religious communities. This award is given by the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) East Java in 2015.⁵ In addition, Malang City receives awards from KOMNAS HAM five times in a row, namely 2015, 2016, 2017⁶ dan 2018⁷ and 2019⁸ as a city that upholds human rights which includes the preservation of religious and belief harmony. Malang City, in terms of population distribution, is a city inhabited by a diverse and multicultural society. Malang has people from all religions. According to the 2014 Ministry of Religion report, Malang City has 1,754,009 Muslims, 51,765 Christians, 38,561 Catholics in the third position, while those who adhere to Buddhism are 17,243,

³ Ferry Agusta Satrio, "KOMNAS HAM: Kasus Intoleransi Terus Meningkat," *Times Indonesia*, January 11, 2017, <https://www.timesindonesia.co.id/read/news/140290/komnas-ham-kasus-intoleransi-terus-meningkat>.

⁴ Surya Malang, "M Anton: Kota Malang Miniaturnya Indonesia, Kami Menjaganya Supaya Tetap Damai dan Rukun," *Surya Malang*, May 15, 2017. <https://suryamalang.tribunnews.com/2017/05/15/m-anton-kota-malang-miniaturnya-indonesia-kami-menjaganya-supaya-tetap-damai-dan-rukun>.

⁵ Zainul Arifin, "Masjid dan Gereja Bersanding Mesra di Malang," *Liputan 6*, August 12, 2016. <https://www.liputan6.com/regional/read/2575667/masjid-dan-gereja-bersanding-mesra-di-malang>

⁶ Koran Jakarta, "Kota Malang "Hatrick" Raih Penghargaan Peduli HAM," *Koran Jakarta*, December 11, 2017. <https://www.koran-jakarta.com/kota-malang--hatrick--raih-penghargaan-peduli-ham/>

⁷ Aziz Ramadani, "Malang Raih Penghargaan Kota Peduli HAM Tahun 2018," *Malang Voice*, December 12, 2018. <https://malangvoice.com/malang-raih-penghargaan-kota-peduli-ham-tahun-2018/>

⁸ Bakesbangpol. "Kota malang Raih Penghargaan Kota Peduli HAM 2019," *Bakesbangpol*, December 11, 2019. <https://bakesbangpol.malangkota.go.id/2019/12/11/kota-malang-raih-penghargaan-kota-peduli-ham-2019/>

Hinduism is in fourth position with 9,621 believers and lastly, Confucianism with only 800 followers.⁹

The harmony in diversity is preserved without any significant conflict. The mosque and church standing side by side in the city center illustrates the history of religious harmony. The Eid prayer Muslims who are not accommodated in the courtyard of the mosque would take place in the adjacent church yard, and vice versa during Christmas or other religious activities, they help each other in social charity without prejudice and fear of losing faith.¹⁰ The discourse of harmony between religious communities has been widely studied by scholars. With the locus of Cirebon City, Septi Gumiandari and Ilman Nafi'a states that local female ulama plays a very significant role in preventing acts of intolerance based on religion. They carry out several strategic activities, such as developing religious literacy for the community, changing communication from monologue to dialogue, reviewing various curricula and learning processes, living with different communities and beliefs and building institutional networks.¹¹

Similar to what Septi Gumiandari and Ilman Nafi'a did, Muhammad Anang Firdaus highlights the role of FKUB in fostering religious harmony in Indonesia. His study states that training is carried out by conducting dialogue with religious and community leaders, accommodating the aspirations of religious groups, channeling community aspirations by making recommendations as notes for policy makers, disseminating legislation and policies related to religious harmony and community empowerment, and providing written recommendations on applications for establishing places of worship.¹² However, the study only focuses on the role of religious harmony forum in general, not individuals i.e. interfaith leaders.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Wahidi in his study claims that mysticism is a bridge to religious harmony. According to him, mysticism is believed to be part of the esoteric

⁹ Kementerian Agama, *Laporan Tahunan Demografi Penganut Agama di Jawa Timur* (Jawa Timur: Kementerian Agama, 2014).

¹⁰ Tribun News, "Di Kota Malang Toleransi Antar-Umat Beragama Telah Berlangsung Lama," *Tribun News*, July 18, 2015. <https://www.tribunnews.com/regional/2015/07/18/di-kota-malang-toleransi-antar-umat-beragama-telah-berlangsung-lama>

¹¹ Septi Gumiandari, Ilman Nafi'a, "The Role of Cirebon Women Ulama in Countering Religious Radicalism," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies (QIJIS)* 8 no. 1 (2020): 61.

¹² Muhammad Anang Firdaus, "Eksistensi FKUB dalam Memelihara Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Indonesia," *Kontekstualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 29 no. 1 (2014): 77.

dimension. Thus, by looking at the substance of religion, each religion devotees will be able to eliminate barriers that restrict each community in terms of social relations.¹³ However, this conceptual study is not supported by factual sources nor sociologically represented.

On the other hand, Umi Sumbulah's field study finds that interreligious figures interpret pluralism differently. At least, they prioritize tolerance and mutual respect as well as realize that the existence of various religions in this world does not hinder the fact that the goal of all religions is the same. In addition, religious harmony is a condition in which there are balance between one religion and another; recognized diversity; respected human rights; and kindness and love to fellow human beings. Furthermore, all of these can be realized through internal and external efforts. Internally, each believer strengthens their faith and builds awareness to develop positive attitudes towards other religions. While externally, this can be realized through dialogue and cooperation to resolve religious conflicts.¹⁴ However, this study emphasizes "meaning" rather than the role of interfaith leaders.

Through evaluations of previous studies, there are several important things that have not been studied by scholars. When scholars study the phenomenon of tolerance and harmony between religious communities, they do not use the framework of Islamic private law (*mu'āmalāt*) enriched by social science. So far, I can claim that many scholars have put tolerance and harmony between religious communities as a common social phenomenon rather than the arguments and practices of sharia in the public sphere. Qualitatively, through a phenomenological approach, I would like to examine the role of religious leaders in applying sharia, but not in its conservative and formalistic meaning, but more of progressive and substantial. Thus, this article will discuss the role of religious figures in communal harmony, the meaning of religious harmony in the perspective of Islamic law and human rights, and the role of religious figures and the meaning of communal harmony in the city of Malang.

The harmony between religious communities in Malang City involves many parties. More specifically, it is apparent that interfaith leaders are pivotal in realizing the religious harmony. Therefore, in the framework of sharia in the public sphere and especially in the field of *mu'āmalāt* (civil transaction), this study is proposed to understand more deeply how the phenomenon actually occur. What is the role of

¹³ Ahmad Wahidi, "Mistisisme Sebagai Jembatan Menuju Kerukunan Umat Beragama," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14 no. 2 (2013): 145.

¹⁴ Umi Sumbulah, "Pluralisme dan Kerukunan Umat Beragama Perspektif Elit Agama di Kota Malang," *Analisa: Journal of Social, Science and Religion* 22 no. 1 (2015): 1.

interfaith leaders in the context of guaranteeing peace and religious harmony in Malang? What do they think of the meaning of religious harmony?

This article argues that religious harmony in the city of Malang is well guaranteed due to the important role of interfaith leaders who actively anticipate and manage conflict. In doing *mu'āmalāt*, they constantly seek dialogue, promote compassion and cooperation. In understanding the concepts and practices of religious harmony, they promote tolerance and mutual respect, as well as provide social freedom without having to unite beliefs (not syncretisation).

The Role of Religious Leaders in Community Harmony

Siti Aisyah in M. Ikhwan divides terms in role theory into four groups; first, people who take part in social interaction that consists of actors who are behaving according to a certain role and targets /objectives related to actor and behavior. Role theory can be applied to analyze any relationship between two or more (people). The actor occupies the center position (focal position), while the target occupies the equivalent position of the center (counter position). Thus, the target acts as a partner for the actor. This can be seen in the relationship between religious leaders and religious communities.

Second, the behavior that appears in interactions, namely: 1) Expectations on roles are the expectations of others about behavior attributed to certain actors such as religious leaders who must provide advice, protect and create peace, be wise and do justice in making decisions and so on. 2) Norm. It is a form of hope which is divided into two, namely hope in the form of future prediction and normative expectations. 3) Performance, in this case the role of religious figures which can be seen from their behavior and progress. 4) Evaluation and sanction regarding assessments and sanctions based on community expectations about norms. Based on the norms, people give a positive or negative impression of a behavior. Sanctions are attempts to maintain a positive value or changes in role realization in such a way that what is previously considered negative can turn to positive.

Third, the position of people in behavior. Position is a group of people who are collectively recognized as different from other groups based on the characteristics they have in common for instance the behavior they equally do and other people's reactions to them.

Fourth, the link between people and behavior, the link which existence can be proven and estimated for its strength is the relationship between people and behaviors that

take part in the interaction (actors). In role theory, actors are the movers or leaders. In this study they are religious figures.¹⁵

The mandate of Article 9, paragraph (2) Joint Regulation of the Minister for Religious Affairs and the Minister of Internal Affairs No. 8 and No. 9 of 2006 outline that the religious leaders in the forum of religious harmony have several basic tasks, First, engage in dialogue with other religious leaders and community leaders; Second, accommodating the aspirations of religious mass organizations and the aspirations of the community; Third, channel the aspirations of religious mass organizations and the community in the form of recommendations as inputs for government policies; Fourth, disseminating laws and regulations as well as policies in the religious sector related to religious harmony and community empowerment; Fifth, provide written recommendations on applications for establishing worship houses.¹⁶

Firdaus¹⁷ explains the technical implementation of the role of religious leaders in PBM is formulated in the form of the task of conducting dialogue with religious and community leaders, accommodating and channeling the aspirations of religious mass organizations and the community in the form of recommendations as policy materials for government leaders in provincial, regency or city, disseminating legislation and policies in the religious sector relating to religious harmony and community empowerment is one package deal of religious leaders. This is because these tasks are related to one another and are mutually viable.

Religious harmony has three forms: First, intra-religious harmony, this harmony is created because it seeks commonalities to avoid divisions between schools and streams in one particular religion. Second, harmony among religions, this can happen when people from different religions respect and do not distrust each other. Last, the religious harmony with the government, religious harmony is difficult to realize if the government and religious communities themselves do not cooperate to build a civil society order.¹⁸ Creating religious harmony has several important elements that

¹⁵ M. Ikhwan, *Belajar Multikultural Dari Kota Malang* (Yogyakarta: Zahir Publishing, 2019), 39-41.

¹⁶ Titik Suwaryati, Imam Syaukani, *Kompilasi Kebijakan dan Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (Jakarta: Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2008), 42-46.

¹⁷ Muhammad Anang Firdaus, "Eksistensi FKUB," 79.

¹⁸ M. Ikhwan, *Belajar Multikultural*, 29.

become the preconditions such as: respecting religious plurality, justice and openness, mutual tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and cooperation in social life.¹⁹

There are five substances of religious harmony. The first is assimilation, which is a condition of accepting differences, whether they occur in one direction or two different directions at once. The second is integration, an order of social life that is balanced without eliminating differentiation but through intensive cohesive interaction and communication. Third, agree in disagreement, an attitude that accepts the differing arguments, meaning that even though truth claims must exist in every religion, it must be accompanied by respect for other religions. Fourth, agree in agreement, namely the attitude which emphasizes equality that all humans come from Adam and Eve; that humans also admit that there is no religion without God; and that religious people certainly worship God; so that it can be inferred that worshiping God is the spirit of unity. The five agree in different, agreeing on differences in religion lead to belief that differences must be respected.²⁰

The Meaning of Religious Harmony in the Perspectives of Islamic Law and Human Rights

Religious harmony is the basis for the plurality of life so that everyone's rights and obligations can be fulfilled. Jirhanuddin explains that there are several meanings of religious harmony in general, namely increasing the piety of the people, creating national stability, succeeding in national development, creating peace in society, maintaining a sense of brotherhood, creating a sense of security, and the absence of conflict in the name of religion.²¹

Religious harmony is very synonymous with freedom of religion because freedom creates harmony for the people, so that in this discussion, the view of the first law on religious freedom and its relation to religious harmony is elaborated. Fundamentally, everyone is given independence and freedom to carry out his or her religious teachings. In the Al-Qur'an, as a source of law Islam, there are three parts of the verses related to religious harmony and freedom, namely:

First, the verses which state that each individual is given the freedom to choose either faith or disbelief with the consequences of each; The verses are as follows: (Q.S. al-Baqarah, 2: 256), (Q.S. al-Kahf, 18: 29), (Q.S. al-Rûm, 30: 44-45), (Q.S. Yûnus, 10: 108,

¹⁹ M. Ikhwan, *Belajar Multikultural*, 34.

²⁰ M. Ikhwan, *Belajar Multikultural*, 34-38.

²¹ Jirhanuddin, *Perbandingan Agama Pengantar Studi Memahami Agama-Agama* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar 2010), 193.

al-Isrâ', 17: 15 and Fâthir, 35: 39). *Second*, humans, even the Prophet Muhammad, do not have authority to force others to follow a certain religion. The Prophet acts as Messenger (*Basyīran wa Nadzīran*) of God's teachings. He did not have right to force religion upon anyone, as the following verses: (Q.S. al-Mâ'idah, 5: 99). (Q.S. al-Ra'd, 13: 40). (Q.S. Qâf, 50: 45). (Q.S. al-Syûrâ, 42: 6). (Q.S. Yûnus, 10: 41). *Third*, giving guidance or misleading humans is only the right of Allah, not the rights of humans including the Prophet PUBH (Q.S. al-Baqarah, 2: 272). (Q.S. Yûnus, 10: 99-100). (Q.S. al-Qashash, 28: 56).²²

Mohammad Elius et al, explains that al-Qur'an, Sunnah and previous Muslim rulers contribute and play an important role in the campaign of tolerance, dialogue, and inter-religious harmony in the world. Since the plurality of religions and beliefs is an inevitability as part of God's plan, Muslims need to accept differences sincerely.²³ In addition, research by M. Iqbal and M. Anwarul Husnain also states that Islam is a religion that teaches not only about peace and love, but also about the rights of other religions and emphasis on religious freedom and tolerance.²⁴ Regarding tolerance, Sahdi Nafsi divides tolerance in Islam into two, namely tolerance in belief and in behavior. This division shows that Islam does not endorse coercion in religion but the purpose of tolerance in society which is to constantly do good to each other within the existing religious plurality.²⁵

In addition, according to M. Alifudin Ikhsan, in the context of Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim state which occasionally faces rejection of establishing houses of worship for minority religious groups, there seems a contradiction to the concept of equality regulated in the Quran concerning the right to worship and minority religions. So, it is necessary to initiate human right *fiqh* which is based on *maqāshid*

²² Dede Rodin, "Riddah dan Kebebasan Beragama Dalam Alquran," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 14 no. 2 (2014), 255-256.

²³ Mohammad Elius, Issa Khan, Mohd Roslan bin Mohd Nor, Mohd Yakub Zulkifli bin Mohd Yusoff, dan Kamaruzaman bin Noordin, "Islam as a Religion of Tolerance and Dialogue: A Critical Appraisal," *Journal for the Study of Religious and Ideologies* 18 issue 52 (2019): 96-109.

²⁴ Muhammad Iqbal dan M. Anwar ul Husnain, "The Concept of Tolerance in Islamic Perspective," *Abhāt* 4 no. 15 (2019): 1-17.

²⁵ Shadi Nafsi, "Tolerance in Islam," *HTS Teologiese Studies*, 74 no. 3 (2018): 5-6.

al-syarī'ah.²⁶ Human right fiqh could be operated as a distinct study within Islamic studies to inform as well as educate Muslims that Islam is not against human rights.

These verses and researches on tolerance and religious freedom indicate the importance of harmony in practicing religion and a clear evidence that Islam does not legitimize coercion in religion. The choice to believe in a religion is left to each individual for the sake of religious harmony. In addition to reading the views of Quran, examining national and international documents on human rights is also necessary.

First international document is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 article 2 and article 18,²⁷ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, article 18,²⁸ Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 article 14,²⁹ and the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Based on Religion and Beliefs Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.³⁰

Several of the aforementioned principles have been ratified by many countries including Indonesia in a good faith to participate in the implementation of international world order. Even Indonesia has also laid sufficient foundations for the protection and fulfillment of human rights related to freedom of religion as a condition for religious harmony as clearly seen in the Constitution of 1945 section 28E, 28I, 28J, 29.³¹ Also, Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights article 22 paragraph (1) and (2) and article 24 paragraph.

According to Ani as quoted by Victorio H. Situmorang that in the context of human rights, the state is the main subject of the law. Thus, as holders of human rights, it is the core obligation of the state to respect (obligation to respect), protect (obligation to protect) and meet (obligation to fulfil) human rights.³² Therefore, state is obliged

²⁶ M. Alifudin Ikhsan, "Fiqh HAM dan Hak Kebebasan Beribadah Minoritas Dzimmi di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah pendidikan pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 1 (2017): 39.

²⁷ Adnan Buyung Nasution, A. Patra M. Zen. *Instrumen Internasional Pokok Hak Asasi Manusia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2006), 163.

²⁸ Adnan Buyung Nasution, A. Patra M. Zen. *Instrumen Internasional*, 141.

²⁹ Adnan Buyung Nasution, A. Patra M. Zen. *Instrumen Internasional*, 230.

³⁰ Adnan Buyung Nasution, A. Patra M. Zen. *Instrumen Internasional*, 392-395.

³¹ Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, *Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945* (Jakarta: Sekretariat Jendral MPR RI, 2019), 156, 158, 160, 161.

³² Victorio H. Situmorang, "Kebebasan Beragama Sebagai Bagian Dari Hak Asasi Manusia," *Jurnal HAM* 10 no. 1 (2019): 59.

to maintain religious harmony in Indonesia. Consequently, in the perspective of Islamic law and human rights, it is deemed necessary to maintain religious harmony.

The Role of Religious Figures and the Meaning of Community Harmony in Malang

The description of the role of interfaith figures in realizing religious harmony in Malang City is divided into three parts, namely:

1. The role of religious figures and the meaning of harmony in anticipating conflict;

Ida Bagus Bajera, a Hindu religious figure, states that the role of religious figures is very important in anticipating religious conflict. There are three main roles assigned to a religious figure:

“First, the way I view is that I always think positively towards other people, regardless any religion, ethnicity, race and background. Second, the way I speak is that I say things in a good, kind and polite manner and avoid offending and hurting other people. Third, the way I behave as a religious figure is that I behave positively towards friends from other religions, so that they feel comfortable and do not feel bothered when they are in the midst of people of other religions. The three things above are part of the teachings of Hinduism that I believe in relationships with other people (*tri kaye sunde*).”³³

He also states his role as a Hindu religious figure:

“In various religious activities, I always invite other religious figures, and vice versa, I am not unopen (exclusive) to other religions, I try to attend invitations to activities (religious ceremonies) from other religions.”³⁴

Bajera`s view is supported by Nugroho Sugiwijono as a Catholic religious figure who is interviewed separately. According to him, the role of religious leaders in anticipating a conflict of religious communities is embracing the principle of non-interference in other religions` issues, attending religious activities of others, learning to understand other beliefs, seeking common ground and most importantly, believing

³³ Pdt. Ida Bagus Bajera, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Hindu Kota Malang*, 9 February 2018.

³⁴ Pdt. Ida Bagus Bajera, interview, 9 february 2018.

absolutely in the teachings of each respective religion which means neither assuming all religions are the same nor condemning other religions.³⁵

Harmony always goes hand in hand with conflict, therefore conflict must always be managed and anticipated as early as possible so that it does not materialize. Another religious figure, Stefanus Hadi Prayitno, a Christian religious figure, always collaborates with related parties, especially in security.³⁶ M. Mujab, a Muslim religious figure, added that he has at least two roles as a religious figure in anticipating conflicts among religious communities in Malang:

“First is to cooperate with security, government, intelligence and other related parties. Even though there may be people who say that we are too repressive, using protection from state apparatus to avoid this unwanted thing, because building religious harmony is accommodated through the needs to anticipate conflict as early as possible, wherever, whenever and wherever. For example, keeping the conditions on the day of religious holidays, although at the community level, there is no problem, but there may be persons who commit a brutal action that can harm and tarnish the good name of the community, so the slightest potential conflict must be anticipated and managed. Second is to improve religious understanding. According to me, the understanding of religion in the sense of *aqidah* and religious teachings as a medium or basic knowledge for *mu‘āmalāt* must be distinguished properly, because it is often misunderstood especially if used in inappropriate circumstances. For example, there are people who say, “the only one true religion is Islam.” Its delivery should be softened with a friendly language “it is a matter of faiths, for you is your faith, and for me, my faith.” If it is delivered in the wider public by agitative and provocative language, it will hurt other communities. Even if that is true, it still has to be gentle. Provoking language is unnecessary. Therefore, the main task of religious leaders is to convey the message of the religion well and properly.”³⁷

³⁵ Nugroho Sugiwijono, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Katolik Kota Malang* (13 February 2018).

³⁶ Stefanus Hadi Prayitno, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Kristen Kota Malang*, 4 March 2018.

³⁷ M. Mujab, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Islam Kota Malang*, 10 February 2018.

Hariono, a Buddhist religious leader, added that in anticipating the conflict of religious communities in Malang City, all religious leaders are very active. "As a Buddhist leader, for example, on various occasions, both on internal Buddhist activities and interfaith activities, I always disseminate policies, laws and regulations related to religious harmony to the lowest level of Rukun Tetangga and Rukun Warga (RT/RW)."³⁸

The same thing is conveyed by Taufik Kusuma as a Muslim leader. He said that the role of religious leaders in anticipating religious conflict is by:

"Building good communication, not talking about sensitive matters which may lead to conflict in the public space, for that we as religious leaders always meet every Friday and coordinate at any time if there are things that are deemed important and immediate. Thus, conflicts do not occur. It also creates a sense of tolerance, mutual respect, mutual understanding in social life between religious communities."³⁹

Nursalim, another Muslim figure, explains some of his roles as a religious figure in anticipating religious conflict in Malang City:

"First, always maintain peaceful conditions so as not to cause clash. For example, not following certain religious celebrations that can lead to suspicion, because some religious community still see this as unacceptable, so to avoid distrust for the sake of safeguarding this principle, I better choose not to attend although that does not mean my lacking participation. Second, I respond to people's complaints sensibly and wisely. Sometimes there are people who say this is worrying, as religious leaders, we cannot be hot headed about it, we need to see from various angles to confirm whether it is a worrisome issue or not, if it is indeed we have to think on how to react. Acting as a religious leader, we have to solve it sensibly and wisely as I said before."⁴⁰

In line with this, Bintarto Mulyo as a Confucian religious leader, in anticipating religious conflict, he always bridges differences between religious communities by

³⁸ Hariono, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Budha Kota Malang*, 11 February 2018.

³⁹ Taufik Kusuma, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Islam Kota Malang*, 10 February 2018.

⁴⁰ Nursalim, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Islam Kota Malang*, 13 February 2018.

doing two ways, namely: *First* to instill a friendly, patient and unemotional restraint to avoid hotheadedness. *Second*, not to show arrogance, belittle other religions and say only my religion is the best. According to him, religion is only the path to God, so everyone is free to choose any way he pleases. These two things are important because people in general still find them hard to apply in real life.⁴¹

2. The role of religious figures and the meaning of harmony in resolving conflicts;

The conducive city of Malang is not without conflicts. However, when a conflict exists, interfaith leaders cooperate to solve it in a good manner. The past conflicts so far are only low level (hidden) and moderate level conflicts (verbal), while conflicts at a high level (physical) have never occurred because they are successfully resolved far before they rise to high level.

M. Mujab, Islamic religious leaders said: "Indeed, there had been no significant religious conflict in Malang. Any potential issue leading to it are always immediately addressed." He added. "Dialogue and deliberation are the keys to solve issues, as well as avoiding hegemonic attitudes towards other groups, and not accentuating the domination of the majority, since this is deemed unnecessary to show. However, it is more prudent to show a nurturing attitude and ethics. We always take the method that is considered the most conducive. The majority of the people becomes a barometer of that harmony."⁴²

There are many ways in which religious leaders resolve conflicts. Nursalim, an Islamic religious leader said conflict resolution is carried out by:

"First, dialogue between religious leaders, especially those in FKUB to manage conflict between religious groups. Alhamdulillah, each of religious figures who are members of FKUB are people who really have insight, so that interfaith dialogue results in various solutions. Second, giving the issue back to related religious leaders either members of the FKUB or others because each religious figure is responsible for their respective followers. If the conflict is an internal religious issue, the solution must be found within. This cooperative conflict resolution is aimed to maintain security, since the emergence of conflict, no matter how small it is, will likely lead to media coverage both by national and international media. This is concerning because it will give negative

⁴¹ Bintarto Mulyo, interview by M. Ikhwan. *Wawancara dengan Tokoh Agama Konghucu Kota Malang*, 15 February 2018.

⁴² M. Mujab, interview 10 February 2018.

impression to the community and it is dreaded that it could spark further conflicts.”⁴³

Similarly, Ida Bagus Bajera believes that the amicable solution to any potential conflict is always based upon deliberation and consensus, so that every problem always finds a solution.⁴⁴ Equally, Nugroho Sugiwijono also said that establishing communication with fellow religious figures, both members of FKUB and those outside FKUB, is a good way to resolve conflicts between religions.⁴⁵ Stephen Hadi Prayitno on conflict resolution: “We religious leaders communicate with each other. Let the past conflicts become a lesson for all including those who are not involved, such lesson is not intended to be imitated, but to be avoided by each religion.”⁴⁶

3. The role of religious figures and the meaning of harmony in maintaining religious harmony.

The religious harmony which has lasted a long time in Malang City is an achievement that is endeavored to maintain forever. The efforts made by interfaith figures in maintaining this harmony are as stated by M. Mujab:

“Always show a good example (uswah hasanah) to the public that we live side by side in harmony, mutual cooperation and solidarity within the framework of the state (nation), then we can draw a pattern from what is originally formal to more personal. For example, we visit sick people. If we know someone dies, we visit the mourning family. Some people celebrate some occasions, we attend them as long as they do not contradict our beliefs.”⁴⁷

Hariono added, in maintaining religious harmony: “we always emphasize dialogue among religious leaders in general and religious leaders who are members of the FKUB in particular. We accept and channel the aspirations of the community to maintain this harmony, and we provide recommendations for permits to establish houses of worship that comply with the terms and conditions set out in the PBM.”⁴⁸

⁴³ Nursalim, interview, 13 February 2018.

⁴⁴ Pdt. Ida Bagus Bajera, interview, 9 February 2018.

⁴⁵ Nugroho Sugiwijono, interview, 13 February 2018.

⁴⁶ Stefanus Hadi Prayitno, interview, 4 March 2018.

⁴⁷ M. Mujab, interview, 10 February 2018.

⁴⁸ Hariono, interview, 11 February 2018.

Taufik Kusuma also stated that dialogue between inter-religious figures accommodates and channels community aspirations, disseminates policies and legislation related to harmony and provides recommendations for permits to establish houses of worship for religious people that meet the requirements and terms of agreement.⁴⁹

Stefanus Hadi Prayitno as a Christian religious figure said that his role as a religious figure in creating and maintaining harmony is by teaching religious understanding to the people as best as possible, because he believes that no religion teaches conflict or anti-peace.⁵⁰

Religious harmony has a very broad meaning according to the perspective of interfaith figures. Although religious figures differ in interpreting harmony, the essence of each interpretation is complementary to one another such as mutual respect, mutual tolerance, mutual understanding, no suspicion, no conflict, peace, harmony, calm, comfortable and open-minded, as well as not imposing one's will and not interfering with other religious faiths.

It is therefore important to discuss the previous researches to draw understandable conclusions. The roles played by interfaith figures in Malang City are illustrated by the role theory proposed by Aisyah in M. Ikhwan, where religious figures take roles in social interaction as actors in their actions and the people as their equivalents while these two components influence each other. Religious figures who peacefully get along with one another in harmony will have an impact on their respective religious communities. As religious community itself has expectations on how religious leaders are to behave such as conveying advice, providing protection, creating peace, wisdom and justice.⁵¹

In addition, the maximum role of interfaith figures in realizing religious harmony must be in accordance with existing regulations such as state policies and laws i.e. PBM of the ministry of religious affairs and ministry of domestic affairs number 8 and 9 of 2006, articles 28E, 28I, 28J, and article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, Law number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights, Article 18 of Law number 12 of 2005 concerning the ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In some of these regulations, it is clear that mutual respect between religions (freedom of religion) is

⁴⁹ Taufik Kusuma, interview, 10 February 2018.

⁵⁰ Stefanus Hadi Prayitno, interview, 4 March 2018.

⁵¹ Siti Aisyah, "Peran Tokoh Agama dalam Membina Kerukunan antar Umat Beragama Di Kawasan Pacinan Kota Semarang" *Undergraduate Thesis, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Walisongo*, 2014.

an obligation which should exist so that each religion can freely express its religion, of course without violating the rights of other religions.

Whereas in sharia as a source of Islamic teachings, there are also many suggestions regarding harmony, peace, freedom of religion as mentioned in the above theoretical description. Religious affairs are individual matters which allows no interference, in this case, it is in line with the verse of Quran: “for you is your faith, and for me, my faith.”

Inter-religious figures of Malang City interpret religious harmony in a very diverse manner, such as mutual understanding, mutual respect, no conflict, peace, harmony, calm, comfort and tolerance, which manifest the principle of unity in diversity (plurality), refraining from disturbing or even belittling other people in carrying out their respective religious activities, as well as avoiding imposing their will.

Understanding the meaning of religious harmony is important, because the more people understand its meaning, the greater the chances for realizing it, and the higher the standards to achieve a whole and high-quality harmony.

Such harmony contributes to great benefits in creating national stability, accelerating national development, creating peace in society, strengthening and maintaining a sense of brotherhood, forming a sense of security and minimizing conflict in the name of religion. Contested issues among religious community, be it within or outside fellow believers, should be mitigated as early as possible to avoid future conflicts. The government who holds responsibility in realizing religious harmony is to remain consistent in its stand and keeping non-interference principle in religious matters considered as non-derogable and derogable right. It also needs to continue paying attention to the limitations regulated by law aimed to guarantee both recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others, meet the demands of fair morality, public order and general welfare in a democratic society.

Conclusion

There are three roles of interfaith figures in realizing religious harmony in Malang City, namely preventing future conflicts, avoiding the escalation of conflicts, and maintaining religious harmony. The implementation of such role varies from dialogue, friendship and mutual cooperation. The role of interfaith figures is evidently very important to preserve religious harmony at all times.

Interfaith figures in Malang City view religious harmony as mutual understanding, mutual respect, no conflict, peace, calm, comfort and tolerance, refraining from disturbing or even belittling other people in carrying out their respective religious

activities, and not imposing wills. In other words, harmony is not in terms of beliefs (aqidah) but in the realm of human social relations (mu'amalah) since every religion has different beliefs therefore these differences are not to be debated or forcefully united.

I personally believe that sharia in public space in the context of tolerance and harmony between religious communities is strongly influenced by the important and strategic role of progressive interfaith leaders. They are tolerant figures willing to emphasize dialogue and help each other in relations with people from different religions. In addition, they devotedly minimize any kind of potential conflict. What these interfaith leaders do, can be an ideal example in understanding and manifesting mu'āmalāt that is tolerant, pluralist and harmonious. Perhaps this is a picture of the progressive practice of Indonesian Islam which becomes a source of inspiration to guarantee peace for various Muslim communities all over the world currently plagued by religious conflicts. So, reflectively, I claim that sharia in the public space is not always a fierce hard-line, but also progressive and emphasizing the importance of peace.

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