

The Influence of Economic Patronage on Interfaith Relations in Pusong Lama, Lhokseumawe

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Keywords

relations between religious communities;
religious tolerance;
patronase economy;
Social Harmony.

ABSTRACT

Indonesia faces increasing cases of intolerance despite its tradition of religious diversity. While cities in Aceh consistently rank low on the Tolerant City Index, Pusong Lama Village demonstrates successful management of religious tolerance. This study aims to explore how the people of Pusong Lama understand and practice tolerance in daily social activities and identify the social and institutional factors maintaining harmonious relationships. This research used a phenomenological approach to reveal the deep meaning and essential characteristics of life experiences related to religious tolerance. The subjects of the study are the head of Pusong Lama village, the youth leader, the chairman of the Tirta Lhokseumawe Buddhist Temple, FKUB, and several Muslim and non-Muslim Pusong residents. The data analysis techniques used are inductive/qualitative, data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that religious diversity in Pusong Lama Village used to have a port and became a center of trade. The influx of immigrants from various religions and regions has caused a variety of religious umar Pusong Village has several houses of worship, namely the Batak Protestant Christian Huria Church (HKBP), the Indonesian Methodist Church (GMI), the Tirta Buddha Lhokseumawe Buddhist Temple, and the Al-Azhar Pusong Mosque. The Socio-religious relations are manifested in religious holiday celebrations, child adoption, orphan donations, social services, disaster response, and patron-client relationships, particularly trade patronage between ethnic Chinese (Buddhist and Christian) patrons and Acehese Muslim clients.

INTRODUCTION

The diversity of races and religions in society in Indonesia can indirectly trigger friction in various ways because there are many differences in customs and culture in society (Kipp, 1996; Mazya et al., 2024; Schefold, 1998; Setiawan et al., 2018). In this case, tolerance and harmony between religious communities are very important to bring about peace for Indonesia itself. Despite Indonesia's long history of religious tolerance, contemporary challenges show that religious harmony is under pressure (Kamil, 2018). Intolerance is one of the problems in religious diversity.

Data from the SETARA Institute (2015-2025) highlights a staggering increase in intolerance. The data shows that cities in Aceh always occupy the bottom city as an intolerant city in Indonesia. This is due to the large number of cases related to freedom of religion and belief, as well as the number of Regional Regulations (Perda) made by local governments that are discriminatory against minority groups. In 2018, SETARA Institute ranked Banda Aceh City as the second lowest intolerant city, especially in inter-religious relations. Banda Aceh ranks second lowest as an intolerant city based on a survey on the 2018 Tolerant City Index (IKT) conducted by the SETARA Institute on 94 cities in Indonesia. This was also strengthened by the burning of a church in Aceh Singkil on October 13, 2015. The beginning of the chaos

that occurred in Singkil was a conflict over the right to build houses of worship for minorities. However, SETARA itself admits that cities in Aceh are not always worse, but stagnant, meaning that they do not produce enough innovation compared to other cities that are moving forward. In other words, the low score is not only due to active violence, but also due to the absence of tolerance policy innovations (SETARA, 2024). In addition to IKT, the KKB Report provides an overview of the frequency of concrete events. Aceh Province occupies the third position nationally with 18 incidents of KBB violations (SETARA, 2024)

Amnesty International's report tends to capture the most real and formal failures of the state. Amnesty International has consistently condemned the whipping of the Qanun as inhumane treatment in violation of article 7 of the ICCPR (Amnesty International, 2018). In addition to targeting Muslims, this practice also has an impact on non-Muslims who can choose the Sharia or civil system. Even though Aceh claims that Sharia is only for Muslims. Amnesty International notes that non-Muslims can "choose" the Sharia hukum a problematic choice in the context of social pressure and a lack of legal understanding of minority groups. Other issues such as blasphemy laws which are criticized as a tool to criminalize minorities that are considered to be contrary to international human rights are mainly used discriminate against Ahmadiyya and Shia groups (Amnesty International, 2014). Amnesty International also documented discrimination against minorities, such as denials of building permits for churches and monasteries. The state is considered to have failed to carry out its active protection obligations for religious minorities (Amnesty International, 2023; 2025)

The formalization of Islamic sharia in Aceh in 2000 reaped various kinds of discourse that caused a stereotype that Aceh was intolerant. The formalization of Islamic sharia in Aceh does not mean that non-Muslims are not allowed to settle down and carry out worship according to their beliefs, such as Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. All religions in Aceh can coexist with the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. However, various media give an image as if the application of Islamic sharia seems to be unfree and less protected in practicing their religion in Aceh.

Based on the data already mentioned IKT, KBB and Amnesty International's report show that the stigma of intolerance against Aceh has a real empirical basis at the level of formal policies and municipal regulations. At the same time, however, this data also inherently has a blind spot—that is, informal practices of tolerance that live at the community level. This research seeks to complement each other methodologically, with data from IKT, KKB and Amnesty International, not just contradict it. On the other hand, Amnesty International's report measures the state's failures in the form of discriminatory regulations and structural impunity. Meanwhile, this study aims to measure community capacity in building tolerance beyond the reach of formal regulations. The two can come together: the state fails at the formal level, but society succeeds at the informal level.

Without denying some of the discourses above, the author sees that there are several regions in Aceh that show good relations in managing religious diversity. The study focuses on Pusong Lama Village in Lhokseumawe City, where Christians, Muslims and Hindus have lived side by side peacefully for decades. Although religious intolerance is increasing in other regions of Indonesia, Pusong Lama Village remains an example of interfaith harmony. Various intolerant practices that occur in various regions still make Pusong Lama Village unaffected by provocations from the outside. This is an attraction for the author to see how the people in

Pusong Village remain in harmony between religious communities This study will look at how the residents of Pusong Lama interpret and practice tolerance in their daily lives, as well as the mechanisms and structures of the community that allow this harmony to exist. Understanding how tolerance is embedded in the lives of the Pusong Lama people is essential to identify larger solutions to maintain religious tolerance throughout Indonesia.

Pusong Lama in Lhokseumawe City is one of the villages that is tolerant of diversity. In Pusong Lama Village, there are houses of worship next to each other: one mosque, two monasteries, and two churches, namely the Protestant Batak Christian Huria (HKBP) and the Indonesian Methodist Church (GMI). The variety of houses of worship with adjacent locations still makes the community live in harmony and tolerance. Furthermore, the talk of some tolerant areas in Aceh should get more attention from the Aceh government to balance and develop information about life in tolerant Aceh. On December 17, 2019, the Lhokseumawe City Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) designated Pusong Lama as a harmony-conscious village. This is based on the harmony that exists in the community even though there are several different houses of worship. The inauguration of the harmony-aware village was filled with a dialogue of religious harmony. Dialogue of harmony between religious communities with the theme of the beauty of living in harmony within the framework of sharia.

Several studies have examined religious tolerance in Indonesia from various perspectives. Research by Kamil (2018) on cultural tolerance, diversity, and pluralism in Yogyakarta shows that recognition of cultural diversity is the key to tolerance. Research by Idris & Zubair (2019) on religious meaning in social practice in South Sulawesi found that Muslim tolerant attitudes are formed through local interpretations of religious teachings. Research by Wise & Driskell (2017) on the influence of social capital on tolerance shows that trust and social networks play an important role in building tolerance. Research by Jena (2019) highlights the importance of caring ethics in interreligious tolerance in Indonesia, while Kaha (2020) emphasizes dialogue as relational awareness between religions. Sabiq (2020) analyzes religious maturity and its contribution to tolerance. Nizar & Rofiqoh (2021) examine interpersonal communication and plurality of tolerance between religious communities. Research by Hakim et al. (t.t.) discusses the role of literature in shaping cultural and sociocultural identity. Bintoro (t.t.) described the pattern of communication between religious communities at the village level.

Although studies have examined religious tolerance, there are still some gaps: most studies have focused on tolerant areas such as Yogyakarta, while research in Aceh which consistently ranks low in the Tolerant City Index is still limited; Existing research focuses more on state failures without examining the capacity of society outside of formal regulation; and there has been no research that analyzes the role of economic patronage in inter-religious relations in Aceh. Based on these gaps, the novelty of this research lies in: first, researching tolerance practices in Aceh and finding pockets of tolerance at the village level; second, analyzing economic patronage as the main mechanism of harmonious relations between religious communities through patron-client relations between ethnic Chinese (non-Muslims) and Acehnese (Muslim) people; third, using an interpretive phenomenology (IPA) approach to explore the meaning of people's life experiences in managing religious diversity.

Based on the background and gaps that have been identified, this study aims to: first, explore how the people of Pusong Lama understand and practice the principle of tolerance in

daily social activities; second, identify social and institutional factors that are the basis for maintaining harmonious relations between religious communities; third, analyzing the role of economic patronage in shaping and strengthening inter-religious relationships in Pusong Lama Village, Lhokseumawe. This research is expected to provide benefits both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on religious tolerance and inter-religious relations in Indonesia, especially in the context of the Acehese people who have been stigmatized as an intolerant area. This research also develops the theory of economic patronage in relation to interreligious harmony, a perspective that is still rarely explored in the study of tolerance. Practically, this research can be an input for the Aceh Government and the Lhokseumawe City Government in formulating policies that support the development of religious tolerance based on local wisdom and the economic potential of the community. For the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), the results of this research can be a model for managing harmony between religious communities based on community participation. For the community and subsequent researchers, this research provides an understanding that religious tolerance can grow and develop from local socio-economic mechanisms, not solely dependent on formal government policies.

METHOD

This study used a phenomenology-based qualitative approach, which was chosen for its ability to explore the deep meaning and fundamental elements that shape the world of individual life experiences related to religious pluralism at the Pusong Lama research site. A phenomenological approach is particularly appropriate for this study given its focus on the authentic perspectives and subjective feelings of the Informants (Idris & Zubair, 2019), allowing researchers to investigate the ways in which tolerance emerges in everyday interactions between religious communities. To process and interpret the collected data, the researcher adopted Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), an analytical framework designed to dive into the way individuals construct the meaning of important events and situations in their life journey (Smith & Osborn, 2004), so that this methodology fits perfectly with the orientation of research aimed at understanding the mechanisms of tolerance in the context of interreligious relationships.

The data collection was focused on in-depth interviews with strategic local stakeholders, including village apparatus, RT/RW chairs, heads of leaders from religious communities, youth representatives. The selection of these informants is based on their position which allows broad access to empirical knowledge about the practices and dynamics of diversity at the village level. The data collection strategy involves three main techniques, namely structured interviews with participants, documentation, field observation, and document analysis. In the analysis stage, the science method is used in several stages. This includes data recognition, initial coding to identify dominant concepts, development of themes to categorize these concepts, and interpretative analysis to reveal the deeper meaning of the findings (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Various thematic constructs develop from the process of analysis, including the dimension-dimension of tolerance in the realm of economics, social relations, political contestation, and cultural expression, as well as religious interpretation. So as to produce a comprehensive understanding of the primary and secondary arenas where religious tolerance is practiced and reproduced in the life of the Pusong Lama community.

The study uses four main standards to ensure the validity of the data (Wise & Driskell, 2017): credibility, transferability, confirmation and dependability. Credibility is enhanced by extending the duration of the study and thoroughly examining the data. Transferability is presenting data thoroughly and systematically. This allows the findings to be used in other contexts. Traingulation is the process by which data is cross-verified using interview transcripts, field notes, and recordings. Finally, dependencies are maintained by documenting the research process to ensure that the results are consistent and reliable over time. These measures collectively reinforce the findings of research on religious tolerance in Pusong Lama village.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Pusong Lama Village is a village community located in the center of Lhokseumawe City, but still maintains the values of solidarity and mutual cooperation that are characteristic of traditional rural life. The community has a heterogeneous composition of the population in terms of ethnic background and religious affiliation; the essence of unity remains resulting in a social climate that favors the practices of tolerance and mutual respect among the community.

A. Profile of Pusong Lama Village in Lhokseumawe

Pusong Lama Village is one of the villages located in Banda Sakti sub-district, Lhokseumawe City, Aceh province. Banda Sakti sub-district in the capital of Lhokseumawe city consists of 2 settlements, 18 villages, and 78 hamlets. Geographically, this village is located on the coast around the Lokseumawe reservoir. The area of the village is 9.35 Ha within the scope of Lhokseumawe City with the following boundaries:

The Pusong Lama area is a traditional coastal settlement that is typologically a model of slum settlements along the coast of Lhokseumawe starting from Ujong Blang, South Hagu, Gampong Jawa Lama to Pusong Lama/Baru. The coastal mainland forms a transverse path to other areas but due to abrasion and sand dredging, this beach becomes unmaintained and the area of the beach becomes small. The position of this village is not far from the sub-district capital and also the district capital. The location of the village is adjacent to and crossed by a network of city roads with trade and service activities as well as fish auction places. The distance from the village to the sub-district capital is 1.00 Km, the distance to the Regency Capital is 1.00 Km.

The dense population of Pusong village makes this village have problems in settlements. Based on the Decree of the Mayor of Lhokseumawe No. 561 of 2016, Pusong is listed as a 'high' level of authority. House buildings are predominantly on water with high building density and building construction made of wood and zinc roofs. Generally, buildings are included in the uninhabitable category. Too dense between one house and another tends to be close, causing this area to look shabby and disorganized.

The condition of the infrastructure is quite poor, especially drainage. Residents who are on the beach, their environmental drainage directly uses the beach. The family sanitation system is not in accordance with the technicalities, namely the toilet/toilet is not connected to the septic tank either individually/domestically, communal or centrally, therapy is directly discharged to the beach. Road access has not been organized in a good transportation use structure. Likewise, waste management facilities and infrastructure in residential or residential locations. Residents generally throw garbage directly under their houses (by the beach)

expecting to be blown away by the tide. This is also seen from the amount of garbage scattered under the house and flooded.

The residents of Pusong Lama are urban settlements that come from various regions to compete against the fate of the city of Lhokseumawe. The diversity of livelihoods is quite varied, not only fishermen. The economic condition of the population is quite concerning. The majority of the villagers work as fishermen as many as 648 people, civil servants as many as 38 people, traders 79 people, private nurses 13 people, TNI and Polri 4 people, daily workers 17 people, housekeepers 1,139 people, self-employed 385 people, students and students 1,396 people. >30-60% of the population's income is worked in the informal sector and 30-60% of family income is above the provincial UMR.

Based on the graph of the livelihood of the old Pusong community above, the dominant population is student/student. The livelihood of the Pusong people is generally fishermen. This is based on the Pusong Lama area having coastal geographical characteristics. Therefore, the natural resources have a distinctive characteristic, namely fisheries, so that the dominant livelihood of the community is the use of these resources, namely as fishermen. Fishing groups are almost in all coastal areas. The typology of social structure in this study is a depiction of fishermen (dominant Muslim) and ethnic Chinese (non-Muslim) through relations between religious communities.

B. Socio-Religious Relations in the Pusong Lama Society

1. Religious Holiday Celebrations

The foundation of mutual respect and tolerance in Pusong Lama has been rooted in people's lives for many years. The real contribution of this commitment can be seen in different religious celebrations. Like the celebrations of Christmas, Eid al-Fitr and Chinese New Year, where community members from different religious backgrounds consistently show respect for each other's religious activities, these practices have become an integral part of social identity in Pusong Lama. On celebrations such as Eid al-Adha, for example, all levels of society such as non-Muslim adherents have the opportunity to receive a share of the sacrificial meat through an organized distribution system. On the other hand, when the Christian and Buddhist communities celebrate their important days, they share gifts and greetings with their Muslim neighbors who live around the site of the church and the monastery. This mutual respect is also reflected in coordinated efforts in carrying out religious activities so as not to disturb the common comfort. For example, the temple management informs the residents before the Chinese New Year celebration begins, especially related to the use of firecrackers that emit loud noises, so that the community prepares themselves psychologically and gives consent to the activity with full awareness and mutual understanding.

Other traditions such as sharing during the month of Ramadan show the community's commitment to interfaith solidarity. When Muslims perform iftar (breaking the fast) at a mosque or local place of worship, members of the non-Muslim community come down to participate by preparing food to be distributed. The preparation of this dish takes into account Muslim religious principles, ensuring that all ingredients used are in accordance with halal standards before being given to Muslims. This commitment can also be seen from the individual initiatives of local entrepreneurs; for example, a non-Muslim auto dealer business owner consistently organizes the delivery of food packages and dates to be donated to Muslims breaking their fast during the month of Ramadan.

The same is true when Buddhists hold services before the new year. This service was attended by various groups ranging from children, teenagers to adults. Activities like this are provided with food that is distributed to Buddhists who come to the temple. The temple management orders food in the form of catering for large events such as services. The food served is usually cooked by Muslims. Not only that, Muslims also maintain and distribute the consumption to Buddhists in the temple. Religious activities such as Vesak holidays, assemblies, and events organized by minority communities in Pusong Lama village, the majority community, namely Muslims, participated in the event. Youth activities were held all day, so the community who acted as security and parking attendants held two shifts. The first shift is on duty from morning to five in the afternoon, then replaced by someone else on the second shift starting after the Maghrib prayer until eleven o'clock at night. Activities are only allowed until eleven o'clock at night and every time the call to prayer is sounded, then the activity is stopped for a moment.

This perspective is in line with the analysis of Hakim (2023), who identifies that the phenomenon of mutual respect has crystallized as a fundamental characteristic of the development of archipelago civilization over time. Foreign belief systems entered the archipelago through a relatively non-coercive process, made possible by the open cultural disposition of the nation and respect for immigrant groups (Hakim et al., t.t.)

2. Multi-Faith Family Resilience

Pusong Lama demonstrates the level of maturity and depth in religious practice. One of the significant indicators of this maturity can be seen from the way the community responds to the phenomenon of changing religious affiliations. An issue that is often considered sensitive by some groups, but is generally accepted in Pusong Lama. The historical journey of Pusong Lama records several cases of religious conversion that have occurred without triggering social tensions or community fragmentation. Local conceptualization of religion and belief is individualistic; That is, society understands religious choice as a personal right, where each individual has the right to express autonomy in determining their spiritual orientation. Within this framework of understanding, communities refrain from intervening in the private domains of others, recognizing that religious decisions are areas that are not worthy of being contested or regulated by externals.

One of the interesting findings in the resilience of multi-faith families is that even when children convert, suggesting that multi-Faith families (with parents remaining Christian and Muslim children) can survive without any indication of significant fragmentation or conflict. This indicates that religious differences in multi-generational families should not be an obstacle to co-residence or intimacy. In the process of transmission through social supervision mechanisms, such as: "if the grandchild does not pray, then the grandmother (non-Muslim) commemorates her grandson to pray". This is proof that religious tolerance is not just "live and let live" at the institutional level, "but live and let live" embedded in trust-based relationships.

In his study on the dimension of religious maturity, Sabiq (2020) integrates the perspectives of various figures including Allport and James, to identify the characteristics of individu who have reached maturity in religious life. According to Allport, religious maturity is characterized by several fundamental elements such as a clear difference in religious understanding, the ability to engage in critical reflection, deep and solid motivation, consistency in moral behavior, and a well-rounded perspective on the spiritual life. In addition,

James adds another dimension of religious maturity: a deep sensitivity to the presence of the transcendent, a sustained and authentic relationship with spiritual reality. The praxis consequence of this maturity is that individuals reach this level free from negative feelings such as resentment, stereotypical judgment, and hostility towards others (Sabiq, 2020).

3. Orphan Donation

Although all religious traditions teach love and mutual respect. The practical implementation of these values often faces obstacles related to local sensitivity and theological perspectives. After the Aceh tsunami in 2004, various religious groups provided assistance to orphans. But when Christian communities distribute aid through churches, it sparks a controversial perception of potential theological risks. In response to this situation, the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) facilitated dialogue with religious leaders to design a more inclusive distribution mechanism: through village offices, community posts, or public schools. The Buddhist community's commitment to providing compensation to orphans remains sustainable every year leading up to Ramadan they distribute aid through the village office. The positive community acceptance of this coordinated distribution mechanism reflects that cross-ahama support, when managed with sensitivity, does not create social tensions but instead strengthens communal solidarity.

The data on the post-tsunami aid distribution mechanism reveals that religious tolerance in Pusong Lama is not only passive (not interfering with each other) but also proactive (actively designing mechanisms to avoid controversy). More significantly, the success of this coordination shows that institutions such as FKUB play an important role in mediating potential conflicts and creating protocols that are mutually accepted by various religious groups. An additional dimension of interfaith solidarity in Pusong Lama emerges when considering its historical-political context. During the period when communities experienced social conflict and security tensions during the period of the Free Aceh Movement, members of the Chinese ethnic community the majority of whom were from non-Muslim religions, showed material and moral support to the groups involved in the struggle. Forms of support such as financial contributions When fundraising is carried out.

4. Gotong royong

The practice of mutual cooperation in Pusong Lama village shows different characteristics from the conventional mutual cooperation pattern that generally exists in other communities. Meanwhile, traditional forms of mutual cooperation are generally focused on infrastructure activities or physical environment management (such as road construction or drainage system maintenance). Mutual cooperation in Pusong Lama has expanded beyond the material dimension to include interfaith participation. According to the village youth leader, the participation of non-Muslim community members in activities related to Islamic religious preparation reached a high level.

This pattern of mutual respect from across religions is also manifested in the context of religious celebrations that come from other religious traditions. Qualitative data from the Pusong Lama youth chairman shows that during the Christmas and Easter celebration period, members of the Muslim community, especially from the youth, are actively involved in logistical and operational functions to support the smooth running of the religious event. One of the concrete forms of this support is the participation of Muslim youth in arranging parking areas for congregations who attend religious celebrations at the old Pusong church.

In a broader dimension, this pattern of mutual respect can be seen in the context of various community social service initiatives. According to the informant (AC), when the village head organizes social service and gotong royong activities, both intended to clean public spaces and for the maintenance of religious facilities (such as mosques), non-Muslim community members consistently actively participate in these activities. They contribute to activities such as cleaning and maintenance of the mosque yard, as well as the implementation of repainting mosque facilities.

Data on mutual cooperation in Pusong Lama reveals that religious tolerance is not just a passive norm but concrete practices embedded in the daily life of the community. More significantly, these practices reflect a strong logic of mutual respect, a desire to support each other and participate in important events. Overall, the Pusong lama community developed mechanisms to manage religious pluralism through concrete activities that bring collective benefits.

Jena (2019) argues that harmony between religions emphasizes practical collaboration between religious communities. While this is important, it is equally important even more fundamental the creation and development of interactive spaces that facilitate personal encounters and interfaith dialogue. The concept of meeting space can be realized in various forms, ranging from local communal activities, to the exchange of leadership-level visits between religious communities (Jena, 2019). The significance of the creation of these meeting spaces lies in their potential to activate a shared awareness of fundamental humanity and a deeper appreciation of the spiritual dimensions of different religions (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Meeting space is a transformative process that can change fundamental perceptions between religious groups.

In a broader context, Kaha (2020) identifies that religious tolerance is more than just an interpersonal relationship. Substantive dialogue and structured cooperation between religious communities are crucial mechanisms. The main threat to the social fragmentation of multireligious societies lies not in the existence of faith itself, but in religious exclusivism the tendency of each religious tradition to claim exclusive truth and salvation. The critical point of the emergence of interreligious misunderstandings lies in this exclusive belief in social interaction in heterogeneous communities. To overcome this, there needs to be a substantive religious dialogue, not just an exchange of perspectives on formality, but a deep bond that aims to build mutual understanding (Kaha, 2020).

The above argument about the role of religious exclusivism as a potential source of conflict is relevant to understanding why the Pusong Lama community has managed to overcome the potential for social fragmentation. Research data show that although each religious community in Pusong Lama has authentic beliefs in their own doctrines, they have developed mechanisms of dialogue and mutual understanding that prevent them from developing into potential conflicts. The concept proposed by Jena (2019) which explains why the creation of 'dialogue spaces' and 'substantive dialogue mechanisms' proposed by Kaha (2020) is so crucial in maintaining religious tolerance in heterogeneous communities such as Pusong Lama.

5. Feast as a Socio-Religious Tradition

Pusong Lama Village shows a very high pattern of community participation in various social events and rituals involving all members of the community, regardless of their religious

background. This practice of inclusion is especially evident from important life events, such as wedding celebrations, where community members from different religious traditions are actively present and engaged in social activities together. An informant of a local youth leader (HB) articulated that interfaith participation does not only occur in joyful celebrations, but also in moments of grief. When a member of the Muslim community dies, members of the non-Muslim community visit (*melayat*), which is a form of emotional and moral participation. The same pattern applies the other way around: When members of the non-Muslim community die, members of the Muslim community also attend mourning ceremonies and participate in the social activities that accompany the death ritual. On the other hand, in festive events such as *kanduri* (religious celebrations), they are present and provide support. This shows that religious differences are not criteria for social exclusion.

The substance of this pattern of participation, according to the informant (SB), is rooted in the embedded understanding that social relations in the Pusong Lama community have developed beyond just joint bonds to family bonds. At the fundamental level, this pattern of high participation is made possible by the existence of collective consciousness. Individuals in this community understand that they cannot live independently and that the survival of social life requires collaboration and mutual support between all members of society. Religious tolerance in this community is the result of the logic of communal life, not just an ideology imposed from above.

6. Disaster Response

The tsunami disaster that hit the Aceh region on December 26, 2004 was a large-scale natural disaster that had an impact on the entire social, economic and psychological structure of the Acehnese people. The most significant aspect of this narrative about the tsunami disaster response, according to the perspective of local informants, is the role played by non-Muslim communities in the early phases of crisis management. According to the village head of Pusong Lama (KH), the earliest and fastest relief initiative came from the Buddhist community domiciled in the city of Lhokseumawe. Only a few days later, help came from the government. This temporal aspect becomes symbolically important: that non-Muslim communities show a faster response than formal institutional channels. A similar pattern was also observed in the context of other disasters such as the fire that hit a Muslim house in Pusong Lama. Local non-Muslim communities actively participate in emergency fundraising efforts. The funds collected are then allocated for the purchase of basic necessities.

Data on the interfaith response to tsunamis and other disasters reveal that religious tolerance in Pusong Lama is not just a passive norm or an ideology articulated verbally. Rather, this tolerance is manifested in concrete actions taken in times of crisis, when values are truly put to the test. The speed of response from non-Muslim communities, faster than formal institutional helplines, shows that interfaith solidarity has been embedded in the social structure of the community, more significantly, this pattern of response is not a single incident but a consistent practice in various types of disasters, showing that mutual care is an authentic value in the Pusong Lama community.

Openness in communication strengthens social-emotional bonds between individuals from different backgrounds, creating a sense of belonging similar to family ties that build authentic relationships (Bintoro, t.t.). In addition, in the context of multireligious societies, Nizar and Rofiqoh (2021) identified intercultural communication as the most effective model

for realizing interreligious harmony. This model is not just a verbal exchange of messages, but a process that transforms perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors through the integration of tolerance for plurality. There are two fundamental elements: empathy (the ability to understand the perspectives and feelings of other religious communities) and respect (recognition of the dignity and uniqueness of each religious tradition). When these individuals develop these two elements consistently, they create a solid foundation of substantive dialogue and cooperation between religions that are sustainable (Nizar & Rofiqoh, 2021).

7. Work Relations

The commercial landscape of Lhokseumawe city is dominated by economic actors from the ethnic Chinese community, who have a long cultural heritage in trade and entrepreneurial activities. This dominance extends into various retail sectors (hardware stores, electronics, groceries, restaurants, clothing, cakes) which is reflected in the strong work ethic and "commercial disposition" that is an integral part of the community's collective identity. The most significant aspect of this study seen from the structure of the trade economy, especially in the Pusong Lama community on the outskirts of Lhokseumawe, is the interfaith work relationship formed between ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs (majority non-Muslims) and Muslim workers, which takes place without discrimination based on religion or ethnicity. Religious tolerance serves as a concrete operational principle in this employment relationship, manifested in the accommodation of the religious needs of Muslim workers (e.g., the closure of shops before Friday prayers) and the absence of discrimination in buying and selling transactions.

In addition to work relationships in retail trade, a pattern of patronage relationships is also formed between the non-Muslim and Muslim communities in the context of major religious events. Informant (SF) explains in specific examples, when labor is needed to maintain security or organize an agenda. The compensation mechanism for this patronage relationship is not rigid. But it is based on mutual understanding between patrons and clients. This pattern of patronage relations results in a profit structure that is mutually beneficial to both parties, both non-Muslims (patrons) and Muslims (clients). Based on the perspective of the informant (SB), non-Muslim patrons derive concrete benefits from this patronage relationship, namely security and order in the management of the celebration of major religious events. On the other hand, Muslims (clients) benefit economically: they earn additional income at the moment of major celebrations and special activities that require additional labor. Thus, this patronage relationship operates as an economic mechanism that benefits both parties and at the same time strengthens interfaith social ties through mutual dependence and practical collaboration.

C. The scope of religious tolerance in Pusong Lama includes:

Religious tolerance in Pusong Lama displays complex and multidimensional characteristics, which can be analyzed through mapping of various domains. What distinguishes Pusong Lama is the concept of the organic nature of his religious tolerance, not the result of the adoption of external theoretical concepts. Rather, it develops from within the social life of the community itself. The Pusong Lama people's approach to religious tolerance can be seen from the form of tolerance that grew from the roots of local culture and the collective historical experiences of living together. The scope of religious tolerance in Pusong Lama includes:

1. Social Domain: Strong Interfaith Relations

In the Pusong Lama community, members of different religious traditions are consistently involved in the exchange of support and benefits, transcending the contexts of religious celebrations (such as Eid al-Fitr, Vesak and Christmas) to become integrated practices in the daily life of the community. Members of religious minority communities consistently express feelings that they are valued and recognized as an integral part of the community. This interfaith respect is manifested in various contexts. For example, while the Muslim community actively participates in the funeral procession of members of the non-Muslim community without considering the identity of the deceased, communities that celebrate potentially disruptive celebrations such as the Chinese New Year proactively give advance notice to neighbors of other faiths, showing their recognition of the potential negative impact and their commitment to communal harmony.

A mapping of the various concrete practices of religious tolerance in Pusong Lama reveals that tolerance in this community is not a phenomenon that arises at specific moments, but rather religious tolerance in Pusong Lama has crystallized into a "culture of tolerance" where respect for differences and commitment to social harmony are not just values articulated but practices that are regularly reproduced in communal life.

What distinguishes the "culture of tolerance" in Pusong Lama from other forms of tolerance is its proactive character, the community in Pusong Lama not only reacts to religious differences by avoiding conflict, but actively anticipates potential disturbances and devises mechanisms to manage differences, in a respectful manner. The practice of notifying before potentially disruptive celebrations is a concrete example of this proactivity. More significantly, the "culture of tolerance" in Pusong Lama has become so integrated into the daily life of the community that these practices function rather than as "special efforts to maintain tolerance". Rather, it is a normal part of the way the community lives their lives.

2. Religious Domain: Interfaith Cooperation in Worship

Pusong Lama Village is one of the models of tolerance villages in Aceh. The determination of Pusong Lama as a village aware of harmony is based on the establishment of houses of worship side by side, namely the Tirta Lhokseumawe Buddhist Temple, the Batak Protestant Christian Huria Church (HKBP) and the Indonesian Methodist Church (GMI), as well as the Al-Ahzhaz Mosque located in the village of Pusong Lama. As one of the villages known for the character of coastal communities, it has a uniqueness in maintaining tolerance, namely loyalty and remembering services. In contrast to other regions that are more plural and heterogeneous.

The concrete manifestations of interfaith cooperation in Pusong Lama include forms of active support and substantive participation in religious activities that are integral to the spiritual identity of each community. Members of the non-Muslim community are involved in the preparatory phases for the slaughter of sacrificial animals on the Eid al-Adha celebrations, while members of the young Muslim community contribute to the smooth running of Christmas celebrations through traffic and parking arrangements. The significance of this pattern of cooperation lies in its contrast to many other contexts, where efforts to organize interfaith religious activities often face resistance from groups with a more exclusive orientation, which perceive religious cooperation as a threat to pure religious identity.

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On the other hand, the residents of Pusong Lama not only passively accept the existence of other religious celebrations, but also voluntarily and proactively participate in various operational and logistical aspects necessary to ensure the smooth and successful of the celebration. This pattern of interfaith cooperation and support can be conceptualized as a unique model in the global context of interfaith relations, demonstrating that religiously diverse communities can not only live together without conflict, but also actively support activities that are spiritually important to each community.

3. The Political Domain: A Shared Political Challenge

If in the previous domains (ritual and religious, social and security), the manifestation of religious tolerance in Pusong Lama was expressed through daily practices that were relatively stable, then in the political domain, religious tolerance displayed more dynamic and complex characteristics. The political domain presents situations where community interests can potentially conflict, where political choices can have a significant impact on the community as a whole, where religious solidarity is tested through collective challenges.

In the historical period, when the Aceh community, including the Pusong Lama community, experienced political dynamics, especially in the historical period of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the material and moral support of the non-Muslim community for the struggle that was culturally and religiously tied to the Acehnese Muslim identity, showed that the non-Muslim community understood this struggle not merely as a "religious struggle" but as a "communal struggle" of a communal concern the welfare of all local communities, regardless of religious identity. In addition, the accumulation of trust and social capital has been built through long-term social interactions.

4. Economic Domain: Interfaith Economic Cooperation

Work relationships formed in trade, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims, are found in shops in every corner of the city of Lhokseumawe. Many Muslim workers work in bakeries, electronics stores, restaurants, and clothing stores. All work without any religious or ethnic discrimination. Tolerance is the main key in running a trade. For example, non-Muslims close shops before Friday prayers and shops reopen after Friday prayers. Give time for Muslims to carry out worship. Likewise, in terms of buying and selling, there is no discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In Pusong Lama, the patron-client relationship has been going on for a very long time. The Pusong community itself is divided into two classes based on general beliefs; Muslims and non-Muslims. The ruling class is represented by ethnic Chinese who are merchants there, they control the economic resources in the city. Meanwhile, Muslim society with a lower middle economy is a class that has labor to be "sold" to the ruling class. In relation to relations between religious communities, it can be related to the pattern of patron-client relations where most non-Muslims are patrons and the Pusong community as clients. is a survival guarantee system. This positive internal condition provides benefits for Pusong Lama village. The loyalty of the Muslim community with the client's background is able to foster a sense of forest of conscience towards the client as the economic savior of the Pusong community who is in the middle to lower economy. As a result, the sense of merit felt by clients is able to maintain relations between religious communities.

Analysis of the Characteristics of Tolerance Between Religions in Pusong Lama Village, Lhokseumawe

Based on this data, it shows that religious tolerance in Pusong Lama is the result of cooperation between religious leaders and various sectors of society, such as economic, social, religious and political. They work together to create a harmony of tolerance where religion is not a barrier but a medium for collaboration and the foundation of community strength. Based on the researcher's analysis, the main focus of the elements of tolerance in Pusong Lama is the economic and social domains.

The researcher divides this analysis into two parts, the primary element and the secondary element. The primary element is the basis of the elements that form the components of religious tolerance in Pusong Lama. These components consist of social and economic components. In the social structure dimension, the people of Pusong Lama village developed the principle of tolerance that is organic, which grew from local historical experience and practical learning about living together. No, it is the result of the adoption of academic discourse or the latest social trends. In the economic dimension, the local economic structure has resulted in interfaith working relationships, where business owners consistently recruit individuals from different religious backgrounds than religious preferences, furthermore, religious facilities collaborate with individuals of other faiths, in managerial and security functions, demonstrating high trust and understanding that communal interests can be facilitated by individuals of different religious traditions. This can be seen from one of the interviews with youth leaders (HB):

"If ethnic Chinese in Pusong village are disturbed by people from other villages, we are ready to defend and protect them (ethnic Chinese), if there are people who disturb ethnic Chinese at the champion dealer who worship, we are ready to go down to protect them. They do not disturb and disturb us Muslims. But if they disturb Muslims, Alhamdulillah, until now, in Pusong it is very safe, there is no religious conflict."

The concept of 'commercial disposition' embedded in China's ethnic community suggests that religious tolerance in the context of the Old Testament relies not only on ideological values, but also on economic logic. Work patronage affects the relationship between religious people in Pusong Lama village. The patrons consisted of ethnic Chinese merchants who were generally Buddhists and Christians. While the clients in general are the Acehnese and Muslim communities. The two are attracted to each other. clients are implicitly interdependent. The client's dependence on the patron occurs due to the client's indebtedness to the patron during the exchange. The exchange is reflected in social activities such as religious rituals and disaster social activities. Patrons benefit because they have greater ability to manage resources by offering goods and services to clients and clients are not always able to repay similar goods and services that have been provided by clients so that a sense of debt arises. This debt of gratitude can be an important motivation for kalien to act tolerantly, including in religion.

In addition, secondary elements help build tolerance among the Pusong Lama religious community. These secondary elements include religious and political factors. From the religious dimension, mutual cooperation between religious communities is part of hereditary history. This can be seen from the heterogeneity of beliefs. Meanwhile, from the political dimension, it can be seen from historical experience that teaches the community about the

importance of interfaith unity, and the accumulation of trust and social capital that has been built through long-term social interactions.

CONCLUSION

This research provides valuable insights into the concrete mechanisms that allow religious tolerance to flourish and be sustainable at the local community level. The main contribution in this community shows that religious tolerance is not just a phenomenon of individual values or attitudes, but is the result of a complex combination of deep local traditions, economic structures that integrate across religions, and common political-social interests that enable inclusive identities. The socio-religious relations built in the Pusong Lama community can be seen in the celebration of religious holidays, child adoption, orphan donations, social services, feasts, disaster response, and work relationships based on patronage aspects. Part of this occurs because of trade patronage relationships. However, this research also has important limitations. First, focus on local communities, limiting the ability to generalize findings to other communities that may have different characteristics. Second, this research does not systematically acknowledge external influences, such as government policies, and globalization of religious tolerance. The form of tolerance in Pusong Lama in particular and Lhokseumawe in broad scope does not have an ideal ratio between government regulation and social regulation. The people of Pusong Lama Village still have the influence of economic patronage in maintaining tolerance. Judging from several aspects, the tolerance model of Pusong Lama Village is not suitable for all regions. Third, pure qualitative methodology, although it produces in-depth understandings, has limitations in producing data that are general and quantifiable. To overcome these limitations, future research should adopt more comparative approaches, which explicitly analyze external influences, and integrate mixed methods to combine the strengths of qualitative approaches and quantitative capabilities.

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