

The Struggle of Local Religions to Deal with Discrimination in Religious Education: From Value Education to Social Movement

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study intends to unravel aspects related to education in local religions. There are three (3) intercorrelated things regarding education in local religions, namely discrimination, value education, and social movements.

Design/methods/approach – This study is qualitative research with a descriptive approach. The data source was obtained from the results of in-depth interviews and observations of members and traditional elders of three (3) local religions in Indonesia. The analysis used was a descriptive one.

Findings – The three local religions studied often experience discrimination, especially in the aspect of education. This discrimination encourages them to spread the values education so that its existence continues to survive. The values education is an essential vehicle in carrying out social movements.

Research implications/limitations – This study was limited to three local religions in Indonesia. The diversely abundant local religions in Indonesia allow for different dynamics between each other, related to discrimination in religious education, values education they uphold, and new social movements they bring about.

Originality/value – The majority of scholars have studied various local religions to uncover their diverse religious teachings. Additionally, numerous studies also have discussed varied discriminations against religion. However, they are mostly related to discrimination in the aspect of citizenship rights that they should have. This research is more focused on discrimination in education, as well as the related elements, namely values education and new social movements, to overcome this discrimination.

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Introduction

Although the 1945 Constitution Article 29 paragraph 2 expressly gives freedom to all citizens to embrace religion and worship following their beliefs, discrimination against local religious believers has occurred for a long time. According to Makin, the discrimination was motivated by political factors, both in the Old Order (Orla) and New Order (Orba) regimes, namely to maintain stability and harmony, as well as to gain legitimacy from mainstream religious believers (Makin 2017:355–56). Whereas, the believer community claims its existence as the guardian of the cultural heritage of the Indonesian Archipelago (Hakiki 2011:161; Maarif 2019). One of those discriminations is in the field of education. The requirement to become a teacher based on Law No. 14 of 2005 is having an S1 (Bachelor's Degree) education. Since many local religious cadres do not have S1 education qualifications, religious education of local religious communities (believers) in formal educational institutions must be taught by adherents of other religions.

As a minority, the discrimination experienced by many local religions comes from the majority community. It is in tune with Gramsci's theory, as quoted by Kholiq, that the unequal relationship between minorities and majorities always shows a significant side in cultural interaction. In this relationship context, identity articulation always has a hegemonic tendency from the super-ordinate group to the sub-ordinate group (Kholiq 2013:117).

To survive various discriminations, minority communities often maximize the facet of values education. Some scholars say that values education is often used as a strategic vehicle to defend oneself, as well as to spread an ideology so that the existence of a community can hold out (Harb 2019; Haris 2006:163; Sirozi 2005:83). According to Takwin, the similar values that originate from the same ideology is the secret to the community's survival ability. Through the struggle for believed-to-be-true values, the community will unite and continues to survive (Saltman 2014; Takwin 2009).

Discrimination and values education they carry out have encouraged local religions to unite and bring about a social movement (Miesel 2004) to get official recognition from the State. One of the examples was the successful lawsuits to the Constitutional Court (MK) filed by various local religions or believer communities, such as *Parmalim* from North Sumatra, *Sapta Darma* of Central Java, and *Agama Djawa Sunda* of West Java (Moerti 2017). Through the Constitutional Court (MK) decision No. 977/PUU-XIV/2016, the Court granted the request of the local religious communities and ruled that local religion can be included in the citizenship identity, both in the Family Card (KK) and the resident Identity Card (KTP). According to the Setara Institute, this decision is a crucial milestone in eliminating discrimination practices against the religion and beliefs of every citizen (Setara Institute 2017). Even so, the Constitutional Court's decision does not automatically end the discrimination experienced by the local believer communities. Based on the disclosures by Pungkas, Kanti (ADS), and Pagar Demanra Sirait (*Parmalim* community), discrimination after the Constitutional Court's decision is still ongoing, such as difficulties in accessing education, health, and population-based services (Renaldi 2017).

Many scholars have studied local religions in Indonesia. The majority of the studies revealed various teachings that have been performed and their relationship with the majority religion (Islam) in Indonesia (Miharja 2013; Muttaqin 2017; Sumpena 2012; Widiana 2015). Moreover, similar to various local faiths in other countries, studies on local religions in Indonesia also reveal the discrimination experienced. These varied discriminations are generally related to population rights as citizens in general (Z. Z. Mutaqin, 2014; Qodim, 2017; Sukmana, 2017, p. 189; Tendi, 2016, p. 65; Hasse, Risakotta, and Bagir 2011:180). Studies that focused on discrimination experienced by local religions in the education field have not been widely conducted by scholars. A study by Rosyid indeed revealed the aspects of local religious education. However, rather than delving into the discrimination factor, it examined the consequences of the education curriculum as part of citizens of Indonesia (Rosyid 2014:89). This study tried to complement other studies on discrimination experienced by local religions but focused more on the educational aspect. As a whole package, this study also discussed the values education and social movements to face such discrimination so that they can survive.

Methodology

This study is qualitative research with a case study design of experiences by three local religions studied. Those three local religions studied are the *Agama Jawa Soenda* in Cigugur, Kuningan; *Sapta Darma* in Yogyakarta; and *Parmalim* in Balige, North Sumatra. The selection of these three local religions was based on their persistence in fighting for the recognition of local religious identity, including the decision of Constitutional Court No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 regarding the recognition of the identity of the religious column on the ID card. In addition, the three local religions studied also represent the dispersion in Indonesia as they come from three different provinces. The ADS is centered in West Java Province, *Sapta Darma* in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, and *Parmalim* in North Sumatra Province. To borrow Creswell's term, this aspect of dispersion is to meet the saturation point principle (Creswell 2012).

By and large, the research data to be analyzed was divided into primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by visiting the research field at first, namely three locations in three different provinces, which are the center of the existing three local religions. The technique used in this primary data was in-depth interviews and observations with important actors from those three religions. The research subjects interviewed were the community leaders, the community members (often called indigenous people), local religious education leaders, and educational institutions surrounding the three local religions. In addition to primary data, secondary data was also used by searching for various documents, records, and other research results related to the three local religions. Furthermore, the two data were sorted and re-examined more in-depth, then to be re-displayed according to the focus of the research.

The analysis used was thematic analysis and triangulation. According to Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis focuses on identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) in data. The concrete steps taken are getting to know the data in depth, creating

the initial code, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing reports (Braun and Clarke 2006). As for this study, we first read a great variety of literature related to local religions, then conducted visits, dialogues, and intensive observations of the three local religions studied. The dialogue was carried out in a flowing, relaxed manner regarding numerous things experienced by local religions, from their history, teachings, social life dynamics, various discriminations they suffer, values education they carry out, etc. From the dialogue results, the study proceeded with two processes of defining and naming the theme by identifying various existing data related to the educational discrimination experienced, as well as values education and social movements they have pursued to deal with the discrimination in order to survive. Triangulation analysis was carried out to strengthen the results and to ensure the data validity. How? The trick is that we correlated data with each other to produce meaningful data related to the main issue being studied.

Result and Discussion

The educational discrimination faced by *Agama Djawa Soenda* (ADS), *Parmalim*, and *Sapta Darma* is generally related to the unavailability of religious education services in Formal Education Institutions corresponding to their beliefs. It is somewhat difficult for local religions since, on the one hand, religious education is a compulsory subject. On the other hand, there are no educators available under their religion. As a result, many adherents of the three local religions took other religious subjects. Regarding the social interaction aspect in Educational Institutions, discrimination also occurs in the form of exclusion, mockery, negative stigma, and others.

In response to this discrimination and as an effort to preserve the values and traditions of the community, the local religions have focused more on the development of values education. ADS and *Parmalim* established Formal Education Institutions to strengthen Values Education. Moreover, they also hold several community meetings regularly, including weekly, monthly, and annually, to preserve the values they believe in. The applied values education is closely related to the new social movements, considering that the new social movement is not oriented towards the structure and mobilization of resources but more towards values and ideas. Additionally, those three local religions carried out social movements through their solid organizations.

1. Discrimination in Education, Values Education, and Social Movements

In Indonesia, the limitation and definition of discrimination are formally regulated by Law No. 39 of 1999 concerning human rights article 1 paragraph (3). The law states that discrimination is any restriction, harassment, or exclusion, both directly or indirectly, based on the discrimination of human beings based on religion, tribe, race, ethnicity, group, class, social status, economic status, gender, language, belief, and politics, which results in the reduction, deviation, or elimination of the recognition, implementation, or use of human rights and fundamental freedoms in life, both individually and collectively, in the political field, economic, legal, social, cultural and other life aspects (Anon n.d.-b). According to

Fulthoni, discrimination is the unfair or disproportionate treatment of individuals or groups based on differences in race, ethnicity, and religion (Fulthoni 2009:9). Another keyword that makes it easier for us to understand discrimination is a statement by Sadily that discrimination is a difference that is detrimental to the discriminated parties (Shadily 2009:227). The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language states that the word "discrimination" means the treatment differentiation of fellow citizens (Poerwadarminta 1987:254).

Value is generally defined as something valuable, inspiring beauty, and bringing commitment, as well as being the basis for doing good deeds, the standard for determining an individual (Djemari, 2012, p. 106; Sutarjo, 2013, p. 56; Akbaba 2023:522; Oraby 2023). According to Philips, concerning the values developed by local religions, traditional values in certain societies give them an identity. Identity is essential because it distinguishes one group from another, not to mention building a special character for its members. Thus, the values that form the common religious identity of the minority will be continuously maintained and developed, allowing them to survive various pressures of the majority community (Akbaba 2023:522; Oraby 2023).

Social movements are commonly comprehended as a collective attitude to support or reject changes that occur in society or groups (Horton, 1999; Fox 2016;). Recent trends related to social movements lead to what the scholars coin as New Social Movements (NSM). If classical social movements are structure-oriented, rationalist, and based on *resource mobilization* theory (Arifianto 2017:246), new social movements believe that social movements do not have to be related to political actors who always calculate the goals of their movements only based on materials but also based on ideas. Actors involved in NSM may consist of numerous people or different groups to solve life's problems, such as democratization issues, concern for the environment, equality, race, etc. (Melucci 1989:351). Moreover, the mobilization factor in NSM is also more likely to lead to symbolic and cultural issues associated with issues of identity rather than economic grievances as marked by the working-class movement (Melucci 1989:7)

2. Getting to Know *Agama Djawa Soenda (ADS)*, *Parmalim*, and *Sapta Darma*

ADS was founded in 1848 by Prince Madrais Alibasa Widjaja Ningrat. ADS is also known as Madraism, taking the name of its founder. Prince Madrais was trusted by the Sundanese people since he was a descendant of Sultan Gebang Pangeran Alibasa I, who had a lineage with the Cirebon Sultanate (Anon, 1983). Of all the existing traditional rituals, the Madrais teachings are those fundamental to the original teachings of Sundanese, known as Sunda Wiwitan (*Agama Djawa Soenda*). The concept of Sundanese Wiwitan teachings is known as *Pikukuh tilu*, which emphasizes a high awareness of human nature (*cara ciri manusia*) and the nature of nationality (*cara ciri bangsa*), not to mention serving the right one that should be served (*madep ka ratu raja*). The key to understanding the concept of this teaching (*Pikukuh tilu*) is God, human (man), and true man. According to this school, God is above all else (Trimulya 2000:16).

Parmalim comes from the Toba Batak tribe in the southern North Sumatra Province, Toba Samosir Regency, Loguboti District. The term *Parmalim* consists of the words *Par* and *Malim*. The word *Par* in the Toba Batak language is an active prefix, which means a person who does or adheres to something. Meanwhile, *Malim* is an absorbed word from the Arabic language of *Alim*, which means a person who is knowledgeable or has religious knowledge. According to its adherents, *Parmalim* means a person who follows the guidance of the teachings of holiness (Damanik 2022). *Parmalim* (or, the Batak people commonly call it *Ugamo Malim*) is the belief to worship *Debata Mulajadi Nabolon* (God Almighty) as their god who created the universe and the spirit of the ancestors of the Toba Batak people (Gultom 2010:124–26). Formally, *Ugamo Malim* was institutionally recognized in the early 1900s, shortly after the death of Sisingamangaraja XII, as announced by the Netherlands. The existence of *Ugamo Malim* flourished with the appearance of King Nasiakbagi who was believed by the Batak people as the rebirth of Sisingamangaraja. King Nasiakbagi, through the noble king Naipospos, was the one who initiated the institutionalization of *Ugamo Malim*, through a moment of resurrection (institutionalization) known as "Marhamalimon". The famous exclamation from King Nasiakbagi to his disciples to adhere to *Ugamo Malim* is, "*Malim ma hamu*" (you, be a *malim*) (Katimin 2012:203).

The word *Sapta Dharma* comes from the Javanese language, where *Sapta* means seven and *Dharma* means obligation. As the name implies, *Sapta Dharma* is a belief system with seven sacred commitments. They are carried out by *Sapta Dharma* followers to build spirituality, virtue, and pursuit of happiness in life, both in this world and the hereafter. This school of belief first appeared in 1952 in Pare, Kediri, East Java, founded by Hardjosapuro (Santoso, 2010). The teachings of *Sapta Dharma* gradually spread throughout Indonesia, especially Central Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The *Sapta Dharma* school emerged from the spiritual experience of its founder, Hardjosapoeroe, who at that time worked as a barber and had other businesses in the field of trade. The spiritual experience occurred on December 26, 1952, when he suddenly felt that his whole body was moved against his will to prostrate himself before the Almighty. The prostration was the forerunner of the worship of the current *Sapta Darma* members. Hardjosapuro further told his friends about his spiritual experience. At first, his friends did not believe what he said. However, his friends unexpectedly experienced the same incident as well, namely prostrating before the Almighty, automatically, against their will. Eventually, word of mouth spread widely in the city of Pare about the occult experienced by Hardjosapuro and his friends. Since then, Hardjosapuro has been known as the leader of the *Sapta Dharma* school; he is known as the Father of the *Panuntun Agung Sri Gutama* (Sa'adah, 2019).

3. Educational Discrimination of the Three Local Religions

In general, the educational discrimination experienced by the three local religions studied is the unavailability of religious teaching staff under the beliefs of the local religions. Meanwhile, Permendikbud No. 27 of 2016, especially article 4, states, "Educators provide faith education lessons following the teachings of students' beliefs" (Anon n.d.-a). Moreover, according to Kanti's disclosure, the requirement to become a teacher must be

an S1 education. It also has made traditional elders in the *Agama Djawa Soenda* (ADS) unable to become formal teachers at a formal educational institution. According to him, ADS traditional elders are the ones who best understand most values of religious teachings in ADS, compared to religious teachers in formal educational institutions (Kanti, 2022).

Parmalim and *Sapta Darma* have experienced the same. Based on the statement by Sitorus, one of the *Parmalim* activists, since a long time ago, when he was in school, *Parmalim* members were forced to take Christian religious lessons, especially Protestantism as the majority religion. According to him, there were somewhat a lot of schools in Balige, both public and private, that were not willing to provide religious education services for the *Parmalim* community. These various educational institutions are excellent educational institutions targeted by many students. It has left the *Parmalim* community with a difficult choice. On the one hand, they want excellent education, hoping to make it easier to be accepted at further education with the best quality. On the other hand, *Parmalim* religious education is not available, making them sometimes even "forced" to follow mainstream religious education (Sitorus 2022). Apparently, the existence of the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, especially Article 37 paragraph 2, which requires all students in Indonesia to take religious lessons, has become difficult for the local religious community. On the one hand, the law requires their children to take religious education. On the contrary, many formal schools do not provide religious subject matter and teachers who have the same religion they adhere to.

The members of *Sapta Darma* have experienced the same thing as well. According to Purnomo's statement, *Sapta Darma* members often receive mainstream religious lessons. Even so, they relatively do not have a problem with it. We frequently convey to the students that the religious education received is just knowledge. There is no need to believe (Purnomo 2022). Furthermore, Purnomo said:

"Although Permendikbud No. 27 of 2016 has been issued concerning religious education services for believers, various social institutions have not been fully prepared. Together with Majelis Luhur Kepercayaan Indonesia, we created a joint curriculum for religious education services by uniting similar values among the believer religions. Still, not all of our members spread across many regions surely receive educational services following our religion."

Regarding the requirement that teachers must have an S1 education, the government has actually facilitated by providing technical guidance to religious teachers, consisting of *Sapta Darma*'s traditional elders. The teachers given the Technical Guidance received certification from the Ministry of Manpower, allowing them to officially perform their profession as teachers, especially for local religious lessons. Even so, it is still not ensured that all local religious members get religious education according to their beliefs in their respective schools. Traditional elders, who already have the legality, can only teach *Sapta Darma* religious education at a school close to their residence. Meanwhile, *Sapta Darma* followers are spread across various regions in Indonesia. (Suryono 2022).

Moreover, discrimination in the aspect of social interaction in the field of education is also frequently experienced by local religious communities. For example, the ADS teaching of uncircumcised is different from mainstream religions, often making ADS students bullied by their friends of other religions. Even worse, one of the ADS Indigenous people who lives and goes to school in Bandung once was asked by his school friends and his own teacher to open his pants, confirming whether the Indigenous people had been circumcised or not (Kanti 2022).

Also, local religious communities often receive negative stigma, such as "kafir", "deviant," and so on. Bullying is not only posed by schoolmates but also by teachers. There is also the coercion to use particular religious clothing, such as the veil, and being intimidated into entering one of the mainstream religions. For ADS cases, it occurred at SMK Banjar, for example. According to Kanti, let alone the believer community, one of the Muslim students, and one of his parents in the believer community was discriminating and bullying. It happened to AZ, a family in Paseban Cigugur, Kuningan (Kanti, 2022).

Based on IP's disclosure, discrimination against the ADS community in the aspect of education has also been experienced by his child. His son, who had studied at SMK 2 Kuningan, had been discriminated against in the form of the obligation to attend religious activities of other religions like Muludan, Ascension of Isa Al-Masih, etc. In class, my son and his ADS friends were locked in the classroom and not allowed to go out. However, after we dared to protest, this kind of discriminatory act did not happen again (IP, 2022). The same thing is felt by the *Parmalim* community. According to Siregar's confession, his son often gets the stigma of being "stupid", "deviant", "infidel", etc. In the Batak language, the expression to describe the stigma is "sipelebegu" (Siregar, 2022).

The above data, both in the aspect of the right to religious education in formal education and the social life aspect in the field of education, has shown discrimination. Based on the limitations of discrimination by experts presented by scholars, the presence of unequal treatment, exclusion, restriction, harassment, something detrimental, etc. (Fulthoni, 2009, p. 9; Shadily, 2009, p. 227; Poerwadarminta, 1987, p. 254) is an indicator of discrimination. Borrowing Gramsci's hegemonic theory cited by Mouffe, the discrimination experienced by local religions seems to be the impact of the unequal majority-minority relationship that always has a hegemonic tendency (Mouffe 2014). Moreover, the relationship is related to sensitive religious issues, where the sacred apparatus is sometimes carried out with different condescension, aiming at maintaining the sacredness that the majority group believes.

4. Values Education by the Three Local Religions

Value, as Halstead defined it, is something that is considered "good," such as beauty, truth, love, honesty, and commitment. Therefore, the values education means the efforts made by a person or group to maintain and preserve the values they consider "good." According to Philips, regarding local religions, traditional values in certain societies give them an identity. Identity is a fundamental element that distinguishes one group from another and forms a special character for its members (Philips 1983). Accordingly, the

values education by local religious is directed to maintain, preserve, and strengthen their group identity.

The values education by local religions is principally conducted to maintain cosmological values that are considered very useful for life. For example, in ADS, the biggest concern of indigenous elders is the fading of the community's customary values, or to borrow the term of this community, the fading of the nation's characteristics. On the other hand, the noble values of indigenous peoples are the most essential heritage for life, not to mention the identity and characteristics of the Nation (Kanti, 2022). Furthermore, found in the manuscript written by Madrais, the values that ADS teaches are to defend themselves from foreign domination. This domination can be physical, as carried out by the Netherlands colonizers, or cultural, as brought by outside cultures, including religion. Madrais rejected various teachings (religions) that came from outside, which were not necessarily in tune with Javanese culture. According to Madrais, it has been the influence of outside culture, which is destructive and creates chaos in Javanese society (Madrais, n.d, no. 4).

Similar to ADS, *Parmalim* also believes that the domination of foreign nations is the beginning of a catastrophe that damages the traditional values of the indigenous Batak people. They believed that before the arrival of the colonizers, the Batak people lived harmoniously, peacefully, and prosperously under the guidance of *Dewata Mulajadi Nabolon*, who manifested in King Sisingamangaraja. The Netherlands colonizers, who brought foreign culture, were the ones who made the Batak people abandon their noble values, making many of them no longer live under the guidance of *Mulajadi Nabolon*. However, ironically, the *Parmalim* community, which strives to maintain the noble values of society, is considered "strange," "old-fashioned," "stupid," etc. (Damanik, 2022; Monang, 2022).

In contrast to ADS and *Parmalim*, who consider outside culture as the major cause of damage and chaos to indigenous peoples, the *Sapta Darma* community does not truly care about outside culture. *Sapta Darma*'s focus is on spiritual practice through the ritual of prostration. Even more, *Sapta Darma* does not care about the aspect of religious identity embraced by its citizens. A person who is already religious, not to mention those religious leaders, when eager to perform the prostration ritual, will be recognized as a member of *Sapta Darma* (Suryono, 2022). In Indramayu, West Java, one of the *penuntun* (guides or religious leader of *Sapta Darma*) has Islam written on his ID card. All of his family also have Islamic ID card identities. Warma admitted that he never forbade his family to carry out Islamic-style worship. Even more, Warma himself had been appointed as a prayer imam. Even so, Warma admitted that he had never been absent from performing the prostration ritual. He believes that his life has changed for the better in terms of economy, health, etc., after joining *Sapta Darma*, as well as routinely performing prostration rituals.

Regarding identity, *Sapta Darma*'s values education are more flexible compared to ADS and *Parmalim*. It can be ascribed to different historical factors between them. If ADS and *Parmalim* claim to be fighting for the values of society formed before the presence of immigrant religions, *Sapta Darma* surprisingly accommodates and combines various

existing values. If ADS and *Parmalim* claim that the original cultural values they maintain are damaged by immigrant religions, *Sapta Darma* never touches on the issue. While ADS and *Parmalim* often experience conflicts with mainstream religions coming from immigrants due to identity issues, *Sapta Darma* is relatively rarely involved in conflicts, thanks to its flexibility. However, one thing that equalizes those three is to maintain the cosmological-transcendental values based on the noble values of their predecessors. For the latter, all local religions may have something in common.

Concerning the efforts to instill the values education, ADS has established a formal education institution through a foundation called Tri Mulya. This educational institution provides formal education at the junior high school level. In its development, students from this institution are not only from the *Sundanese Wiwitan* community but also from mainstream religions around Cigugur. However, the number of students in this educational institution is relatively small compared to the number of students in mainstream schools. The majority of students are indigenous *Sundanese Wiwitan*. It is rare for students who come from mainstream religions to go to the school. It could be that this is due to the issue of identity conflict.



Image 1. SMP Tri Mulya Paseban, Cigugur, kuningan.
Sumber: [google.com](https://www.google.com)

Through this formal educational institution, ADS has more flexibility in instilling community values into its members through religious lessons. Based on the admission of children in the ADS community, he and his friends who go to public schools, both public and private, cannot get religious education materials according to the beliefs of indigenous people. Consequently, to get the ADS religion, they routinely attend meetings held by indigenous elders (AS, 2022).

The routine meetings (Non-formal Education) to convey ADS values are divided into two categories. The first is a general category for anyone of all ages, even attended by ADS members who reside in Bandung, Cianjur, Tasik, Majalengka, Cirebon, or Indramayu. This general category is held once a month, every Sunday at the beginning of the month. The second category is specific to students or those in their teenage years. This second category is held once a week on weeknights and once a semester, every semester break,

usually for three consecutive days. This per-semester activity is commonly referred to as *Surasa* (AS, 2022).

Moreover, based on Kanti's statement, they use social media to preserve indigenous values. They create Instagram and community websites to arouse a sense of community confidence and to introduce their existence to the outside world. By using information technology, the *Sunda Wiwitan* community also publishes various traditional activities and the values they contain, such as *pupuhs*, dances, and more (Kanti 2022).

Similar to ADS, *Parmalim* believes that value education is a strategic means to protect and preserve *Parmalim* values, namely maintaining the noble values of the Batak community. For instance, when the policy of the Netherlands colonial government provided conditions that had to be Christian for anyone who wanted to go to school, *Parmalim* got around it by establishing the *Parmalim* school in 1939. However, this educational institution was no longer operating after the Netherlands government lifted the enrollment requirement to be Christian for those who wanted to go to school (Monang, 2022).



Image 2. *Parmalim* School

Source: *Dokumentasi Raja Monang selaku pimpinan tertinggi komunitas Parmalim* (Documentation of King Monang as the highest leader of the *Parmalim* community)

To ensure the preservation of the ancestral values and traditions of the Batak community, *Parmalim* does not only believe in formal education. They formed BAPPAR (Bale Pangaradoti Parguruan *Parmalim*), an institution that was particularly formed to manage education. In addition to preparing human resources for schools that ask for *Parmalim* religious teachers, BAPPAR also holds regular meetings to equip *Parmalim* children and adolescents to be devoted to the ancestral teachings of the Batak community. Those meetings are held regularly every Saturday afternoon (Manurung, 2022).

Furthermore, *Parmalim* has also emphasized the values education to maintain the Batak community traditions through family strengthening. *Parmalim* emphasizes that the marriage of *Parmalim* members should only be with fellow *Parmalim* members. The exception is for outsiders who are willing to enter the *Parmalim* community. The family is the main fortress to ensure *Parmalim*'s values remain intact (Monang 2022).

As for the context of *Sapta Darma*, the values education is carried out to ensure the preservation of community values through various meetings and studies. They are, among others, 1). Adult-level meetings, held once a month in each *sanggar* (workshop) of the central and branch offices; 2). Special meeting for women is held once a month in each *sanggar* (workshop) of the central and branch offices; and 3). Special meeting for children and adolescents is held once a month in each *sanggar* (workshop) of the central and branch offices. Those meetings are usually full of various moments of guidance, exploring values, and even dialogues about daily life. In essence, they are about practicing resignation to obtain spiritual guidance (Suryono, 2022).

Apart from those monthly meetings, there are also annual meetings to commemorate sacred moments. Some of them are a February meeting for *Sapta Darma* members in general, commemorating the descent of *Racut's* revelation; July meeting for youth and women, commemorating the descent of personal symbols and the *Wewarah 7*; September meeting for officers (guides in the region), commemorating the descent of the prostration revelation; and December meeting for officers (guides in the regional areas) to hone more spirituality, as a provision in guiding communities in each region (Suryono, 2022).



Image 3. Documentation of “Penggalian” Event for *Penuntun*

Sumber: Document of Nanang Hasann Susanto, taken on December 20, 2022 at the Dwi Paria workshop in Jogja

The values education taught by *Sapta Darma* is primarily about the usefulness of life. The principal doctrine of a person who joins *Sapta Darma* is: "Ing Ngendi Wae, Maring Sopo Wae, Warga *Sapta Darma* Kudu Suminar Pindho Baskoro. Or, Anywhere, to anyone, *Sapta Darma* members must shine like the sun". Simply put, the main goal of *Sapta Darma* is to provide the broadest benefit to life as possible (Engkus, 2022). It is the fundamental purpose of life called *Sesanti*. As Engkus puts it:

*“Religion should be about the direct benefits the people can obtain, in a simple and lightweight way. There is no need for debate, let alone conflict over the truth. The majority of people who choose to join *Sapta Darma* do so because they feel the benefits firsthand. It is not because they are being invited or excessively persuaded.*

The majority who joined were due to illness, could not afford to go to a doctor, finally went to a guide (a leader's sanggar) in a specific area, and ultimately recovered. After recovering, they perform the prostration ritual (sujud) regularly, feel a peaceful heart, and improve life, and finally, they become militant members. Most Sapta Darma members admit that their lives continued to improve after joining Sapta Darma. Their health improves, their fortune (rizki) is facilitated, they live harmoniously and peacefully, and more. Once their life improves, they subsequently must help anyone to make their lives better as well” (Engkus, 2022)

Sapta Darma's focus on spiritual aspects and usefulness of life, rather than identity, has made its existence relatively less likely to experience conflict with mainstream religions, especially compared to the other two local religions. As a country known for being religious, religious identity is something sensitive (Herzfeld 2019). Various conflicts between religions and beliefs often occur due to the emphasis on the identity aspect (Arifin 2016:104).

The struggle of those three local religions to preserve the noble values of their ancestors has an impactful intersection with the Living Value Education (LVE) theory. The central point in LVE is the development of human values to create a better society. In more detail, the LVE theory introduced by Tillman et al. has emphasized the aspects of developing positive values, having holistic traits, creating a supportive learning environment, interactive and participatory methodologies, collaboration with the community, and focusing on peace education (Tillman 2000). Despite all religions and values' fundamental claim on the sustainability of humanity, ADS and *Parmalim* consider that the arrival of outside religions and cultures can damage the values inherited by ancestors since they have the potential to threaten peace.

The constraints to develop the value education by those three local religions in the formal education sector have made them paying more attention to the informal education. It can be seen from various meetings held by those three local religions with community members to preserve their ancestral customary values. Moreover, value education combined with cultural elements, such as dance, *pupuh*, etc., has demonstrated an educational model with the principles of interactive and participatory, as well as collaboration with the community. It also shows a somewhat strong intersection with the Living Value Education (LVE) theory.

5. New Social Movemnts by the Three Local Religions

Following the limitations of the new social movement theory, which are not merely oriented to structure but rather to ideas and values (Arifianto 2017:246), the value education carried out by the above three local religions can be read as a new social movement to maintain its existence. Since we have discussed it earlier, the discussion of new social movements will focus on other aspects.

In terms of movement strategy, ADS has taken several steps to survive. Among them are conducting a new reorganization, reviving the Seren Taun, and reconstructing

identity. The new reorganization carried out by ADS was to change the group name officially registered with the government. It was taken as a strategy to deal with various pressures and discrimination experienced. For example, ADS was attacked by radical fundamentalists DI/TII and forced to disband and to choose an official religion. In the leadership era of Prince Djatikusumah (Madrais' grandson as the founder of ADS), ADS reorganized by forming the *Paguyuban Adat Cara Karuhun Urang* (PACKU). PACKU was registered as a formal institution with number 192/R.3/N. 1/1982 at the Directorate General of Bina Hayat with a working area in West Java and its surroundings. Furthermore, ADS also reorganized by forming the *Adat Karuhun Urang* (AKUR) (Satrio 2022)

Another strategy has been revitalizing the traditional ceremony called Seren Taun. Seren Taun is a grand harvest ceremony that displays various arts and traditions of the local community, such as dance, *pupuh*, traditional clothing, etc. Thick with cultural values, this event is considered a cultural performance, making it relatively accepted and even enjoyed by the public, including foreign people. Beyond accepted, the annual Seren Taun ceremony is also used as a cultural heritage event by the Kuningan Regency Tourism Office, allowing it as one of the prominent tourist attractions of the local government (Hasybullah, 2019; Royyani, 2017)

The next strategy is identity reconstruction. The intense pressure from the mainstream religious communities made ADS once protect themselves by including the official religion column on the ID card, namely Catholic. It was done not only personally but also encouraged the entire community. However, when the situation has been safely better, ADS again shows its true identity, namely as a believer community, in this case ADS (Kanti 2022)

As for *Parmalim*, the first and foremost social movement they did was called Marhamalimon. Through Marhamalimon, they created various rituals, built a new worship center, and established a new organizational structure (Damanik, 2022). Through this Marhamalimon social movement, *Parmalim* was able to consolidate its members. The organizational structure has allowed the community to run. A worship center has given the *Parmalim* community a symbol of unifying sacredness. The determination of worship times has made this community increasingly consolidate itself, not to mention further strengthening its identity in facing various discriminations.

Through Marhamalimon, the worship center moved from Bakara (Sisingamangaraja era) to Bale Pasogit, which is still used as a center of worship up to the present time. The institutionalization of *Parmalim* was also carried out after Marhamalimon. Before Marhamalimon, there was no institutionalization of *Parmalim*, let alone its rituals. Among *Parmalim* members, some still upheld the noble values of the Batak people and did not want to follow Marhamalimon. As a result, they did not have an organizing system that ran as they were, making them more vulnerable to extinction. On the contrary, Marhamalimon was crucial in dealing with the increasingly harsh challenges of responding to missionaries and other institutionalized religions. If Marhamalimon was not implemented, it would be difficult to preserve the noble values of the Batak people (Damanik, 2022)

Moreover, in the context of the local Agama *Sapta Darma*, the organization is divided into three forms, namely *Persada* (*Persatuan Warga Sapta Darma* or *Sapta Darma* Members' Association), spiritual organization, and the *Sapta Darma* Foundation. *Persada* is an official organizational forum that has all the necessary organizational tools, i.e. AD/ART, official permits, and a complete management structure from central to regional level. *Persada*'s management is currently spread across 13 provinces in Indonesia. Similar to other ordinary organizations, determining the chairman of *Persada* is carried out through an election hosted by member representatives. The active period of the management is once every five years, for the rest of which can be re-elected at the election forum. Even though it uses a modern organizing paradigm, the spirituality aspect remains the spirit of the organization's journey. For example, whenever electing a chairman or determining a policy, *Persada* always precedes it with silence and a prostration ritual, asking for guidance from Allah Almighty (Gatot, 2022)

Regarding the spiritual aspect, the organization in *Persada* is led by a *penuntun* (a guide). Unlike *Persada*, the *penuntun* has a valid lifetime term of service. These *penuntuns* are religious leaders at all levels, both at the central and branch offices in the Province up to the village (if there is a *Sapta Darma* community there). Usually, if a *sanggar* is established in an area, a *penuntun* will be appointed. He has the tasks of religious rituals of *Sapta Darma* members, ranging from rituals of marriages, births, deaths, etc. Moreover, the *penuntuns* also have the task of performing spiritual treatment to anyone who asks for medical help. This spiritual medicine is one of the characteristics of *Sapta Darma*. People who can perform the ritual of prostration in silence and solemnity usually have the ability to treat various diseases in a spiritual way. Since the guides are appointed as religious leaders, they are given briefings (called "*penggalian*"). They are invited to the central workshop in Jogja to conduct the "*penggalian*" off the prostration ritual in September and December every year. For each *penggalian* event, the guides from various regions are trained for seven consecutive days (Suryono, 2022)

In addition to *Persada* and *Penuntun*, the *Sapta Darma* organization also has a Foundation. The Foundation and the *Penuntun* are chaired by the same person. The foundation focuses on handling the *sanggars*, not to mention finances, more particularly donations from members. *Sapta Darma* members believe that the prostration ritual carried out with the totality of silence and resignation will bring a better life, a peaceful heart, and an impact on economic improvement. Not a few members who feel that have experienced economic improvement after joining *Sapta Darma*, are eager to donate to the Foundation. The *sanggar* building in the central office (Jogja) also spent a budget of 14 M. Almost all the funds were collected from voluntary donations of the members. The central *sanggar* has meeting rooms, dining rooms, and even lodging rooms. The doctrine in the form of members' willingness to donate to the Foundation is often referred to as "*Bokor Kencana*." It means that they are ready to donate and sacrifice for the Foundation. At the *penggalian* event, members who came from as far away as Papua, Sumatra, and Sulawesi, were willing to pay their transportation fees, as well as a minimum contribution of Rp. 250,000 for one week (Suryono, 2022)

The above values education and social movements carried out all at once by the three local religions have made their existence continue to survive up to the present day. Still, they may often experience discrimination, including in the education sector. Value education and social movements are crucial things the indigenous elders are aware of, something needs to be pursued to maintain their existence.

Conclusion

By and large, major educational discrimination experienced by ADS, *Parmalim*, and *Agama Sapta Darma* is in the form of the unavailability of religious education services in formal educational institutions that are in tune with their beliefs. It is quite difficult for local religions because, on the one hand, religious education is a compulsory subject. However, on the other hand, there is no availability of educators that is in tune with the beliefs they adhere to. As a result, a large number of adherents of the three local religions are forced to take religious lessons in the majority group. As for the social interaction aspect in educational institutions, discrimination is also felt in the form of exclusion, mockery, negative stigma, and the like. Responding to discrimination, not to mention an effort to preserve community values and traditions, local religions focus on developing value education. ADS and *Parmalim* formed formal education institutions to strengthen value education. Moreover, various community meetings are also held regularly, from weekly to monthly to annually, to sustain the values they believe in. The value education carried out is intertwined with new social movements, considering that new social movements are not merely oriented to structure and resource mobilization but to the cultivation of values and ideas. Furthermore, the three local religions have carried out social movements through various organizing strategies. ADS had organizational restructuring several times, including the revitalization of the Seren Taun's culture. *Parmalim* institutionalized religion through an effort called Marhamalimon. *Sapta Darma* also established an organization with a different system. It organizes through a modern system called Persada and the traditional system for penuntun (religious leaders) by following the spiritual aspect (guidance/revelation).

Declaration

Declaration of interests statement

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