Negotiative Coexistence of the Wahabi Movement and Religious Moderation in East Lombok

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Abstract

This research was conducted in three villages in East Lombok—Suralaga, Bagik Nyaka, and Kalijaga—to understand the dynamics between the Wahabi movement and the practice of religious moderation in local Muslim communities. Using Bourdieu's theory of religious field and capital as well as Ibn Khaldun's concept of *'Ashabiyah*, this study employs a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The study finds that social interaction between Wahabi adherents and cultural Islamic communities tends to be marked by selective engagement, symbolic competition, and occasional tension in ritual and doctrinal practices. The exclusivity of Wahabi elites, supported by control over religious capital and educational networks, acts as a key driver of contestation. At the same time, grassroots members demonstrate pragmatic accommodation and openness to moderate religious values. Mosques and informal learning spaces serve as the primary media for ideological dissemination. The findings also reveal emerging patterns of dialogic tolerance and negotiated coexistence as forms of religious moderation at the community level. This research highlights the importance of strengthening inclusive religious discourse and social cohesion strategies to promote harmony amidst theological differences in East Lombok.

Keywords: Wahabi, Religious Moderation, Religious Conflict, Tolerance, Islamic Cultural

Introduction

The development of Wahabi ideology in three villages in East Lombok—Kalijaga, Suralaga, and Bagik Nyaka—has generated numerous noteworthy social and religious dynamics. The Wahabi movement, which espouses the doctrine of purifying Islamic teachings by focusing on monotheism and rejecting practices considered heretical, often sparks tension with local communities, which tend to practice a tradition-based, cultural Islam (Noorhaidi Hasan, n.d., 2006). Wahabi groups consider various local traditions, such as *nyiwak* (the procession of the Prophet Muhammad) and *maulid* (the celebration of the Prophet's birthday), to be incompatible with Islamic law (Mufid, 2014). This conflict is further exacerbated by the Wahabi group's exclusivity, evident in their distinctive lifestyle, religious symbols, and strong internal networks (Fealy et al., 2008). One manifestation of this exclusivity is their rejection of community traditions deemed inconsistent with pure Islamic teachings (Hilmy, 2010). It creates social friction and contributes to latent and open conflicts, such as the mosque burning incident (Hamdi et al., 2025) and protests against the provocative sermons of the Wahabi elite.

The primary issue addressed in this study is the tension that arises between the Wahabi group and the local Islamic community in the three villages. This phenomenon not only reflects theological differences but also indicates resistance to ideologies that are perceived as threatening

social harmony and local traditions. This conflict is further complicated because the Wahabi movement not only targets individuals but also uses institutions such as mosques and Islamic boarding schools as a medium for disseminating doctrine. The exclusivity of the Wahabi group, driven by religious doctrine and strong internal solidarity/ *ashabiyah* (Ṭībī, 2003) within the Wahabi group, has also widened the gap between them and the local community. This situation demands a moderate religious approach as an alternative to reduce conflict and promote social harmony.

However, a research gap has not been widely addressed by previous studies. Most previous studies, such as those conducted by Muhammad Sa'id (2019) in the Fikrah Journal (Said, 2019) and Saipul Hamdi (2019) in the Sangkep Journal (Hamdi, 2019a), focused on the dynamics of the Wahabi movement in general in East Lombok, without delving deeply into the patterns of social and religious interaction between the Wahabi group and the Cultural Islamic community (Abdullah, 2020) at the local level. Furthermore, these studies have not specifically examined the values of religious moderation as a middle ground for mitigating conflict. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on three villages that are the bases of the Wahabi movement and have high levels of conflict: Kalijaga, Suralaga, and Bagik Nyaka.

The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which combines Pierre Bourdieu's concept of distinction theory (Sato et al., 2016), Ibn Khaldun's concept of *ashabiyah*, and indicators of religious moderation. Using the sense of distinction theory, this study examines how the Wahhabi group constructs a distinct identity through lifestyle, dress, and religious preferences. The concept of *ashabiyah* is used to analyze the internal solidarity of the Wahhabi group, which is the foundation of their strength. Meanwhile, indicators of religious moderation serve as a framework to evaluate the extent to which values of tolerance can be applied in the context of this study of the Wahhabi movement. This study also places a special focus on the role of grassroots congregations, which are considered to have the potential to be more moderate compared to the Wahhabi elite, who tend to be extreme.

The research problem formulation includes: (1) What are the patterns of social and religious interaction between the Wahabi group and the cultural Islamic community in Suralaga, Kalijaga, and Bagik Nyaka Villages? and (2) How are the values of religious moderation applied in the relationship between the two groups? This research problem formulation aims to delve deeper into the relationship between Wahabi doctrine and the response of the local community, as well as to explore the potential of moderation as a solution to reduce tensions. The purpose of this research is to analyze the patterns of social and religious interaction between the Wahabi group and the cultural Islamic community in the three villages that serve as the research locations. This research also aims to identify the values of religious moderation that can be applied to foster harmony between different groups. In addition, this research aims to offer strategic recommendations for enhancing religious moderation as a solution to the growing problem of intolerance in society.

Overall, this research has not only academic relevance but also practical urgency. By highlighting the conflicts and tensions that arise, this study offers solutions based on the values of religious moderation that can be implemented to improve intergroup relations. The results are expected to contribute to building a more inclusive and harmonious society, while also providing a basis for policies that support strengthening tolerance and moderation at both local and national levels.

Literature Review

Examining the general trend in the study of radical groups in Indonesia, recent studies of the Salafi-Wahabi movement in Indonesia have shown a shift from the traditional focus on ideology and radicalism to a greater emphasis on social interaction, locality, and cultural negotiation. For example, (Hereyah, 2014) employs Bourdieu's perspective in a study of the Salafi community in Indonesia to highlight how Salafi members struggle for symbolic capital and construct a "Salafi" identity within the local social context (Hereyah, 2014). Furthermore, (Abhiyoga et al., 2022) through bibliometric analysis, it is evident that publications on Salafism in Indonesia from 2005 to 2021 concentrated on social studies and social sciences, indicating that the socio-cultural aspects of Salafism are now receiving increasing attention (Abhiyoga et al., 2022). This trend complements research that highlights how Salafi da'wah through digital media and radio experiences an active response from urban Muslim audiences who "negotiate" da'wah messages according to their religious habitus, indicating that acceptance is not linear but rather a complex process (Rosidi, 2024).

Meanwhile, the trend of radical studies in Lombok has specifically enabled numerous previous studies conducted by researchers from various institutions and independent research. The popularity of socio-religious movement studies has increased due to the numerous socio-religious conflicts that have occurred in recent times. In Lombok itself, the intensity of socio-religious disputes over the past 10 years has been very high. Researchers themselves have recorded dozens of socio-religious conflicts, including disputes between the Wahhabi group and surrounding community groups. The results of the work written about Wahhabism after being investigated, specifically Wahhabism in Lombok, include: A study of Wahhabism by Muhammad Sa'id published in the Fikrah Journal: Journal of Aqidah and Religious Studies entitled: "Dynamics of Wahhabism in East Lombok: Problems of Identity, Piety and Nationality" (Said, 2019). This 2019 research paper describes the emergence of Wahhabism in Lombok and the aggressiveness of its movement. Furthermore, the presentation of the media through which Wahhabism spreads in Lombok also enriches the research paper's information.

Previously, data collection was conducted using observation, interviews, and documentation. The research method used was the same, but the current study focuses specifically on three villages: Bagik Nyaka, Suralaga, and Kalijaga. The previous study was conducted in East Lombok. Although the research was conducted in general in East Lombok, the depth of the results did not delve into the relationship between Wahabis and the Cultural Islamic community. This contrasts with the previous study, which was conducted in three villages, which are the base of the Wahabi community and have a high intensity of intolerance. Therefore, this study has a novelty by examining religious moderation among the Wahabi group and the Cultural Islamic community in these three villages.

In the same year, 2019, a different journal also published an article by researchers from Lombok, similar to the previous study. This second study, entitled: "De-Culturalization of Islam and Social Conflict in Wahabi Preaching in Indonesia" (Hamdi et al., 2021), was published in the Kawistara Journal: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Gajah Mada University. This paper describes the massive Wahabi movement in preaching and the spread of its ideology. The study stated that the commitment of its congregation and the aggressiveness of its preaching have become the source of the socio-religious conflict that has emerged in East Lombok, involving the Wahabi group and confronting the cultural Muslim community. While the study generally mentions East Lombok, not all areas in East Lombok experience conflict between Wahabis and

cultural Islam. This research also discusses not only the conflict but also the middle ground and moderation between the two parties, specifically in three villages: Bagik Nyaka, Suralaga, and Kalijaga. The literature review has revealed numerous studies on Wahhabism in Lombok. However, in their context, each study's findings reflect the current situation.

The research employed a qualitative phenomenological approach with a focus on the social experiences of actors in the dynamics of the Wahabi movement and religious moderation. Informants consisted of 18 participants, including religious leaders, Wahabi adherents, cultural Islamic figures, village officials, and administrators of Islamic educational institutions. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document studies. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of stages of data condensation, data presentation, and iterative drawing of conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). This model was then applied through a thematic coding process and comparison between cases. Data validity was strengthened through the triangulation of sources, techniques, and time, as well as member checking as recommended (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the research method is now explained operationally, rather than simply listing the name of the methodological approach or figure without explaining its application.

Results and Discussion
Social and Religious Interaction Patterns

The Wahabi religious movement often has a mission of development and forming a social structure system, based on Islamic Sharia law, with an emphasis on the Salafi aspect, or using the terminology of the Salaf, which is *manhaj* based on the Qur'an and hadith (Hamdi, 2019b). The Wahabi religious community in East Lombok is a religious group that lives side by side with the majority. The social relationship between the Wahabi group and the cultural Islamic community in these three villages reflects unavoidable tensions. The Wahabi group tends to live in a pattern of exclusivity, where they clearly distinguish themselves from the rest of society through religious symbols, such as dress, religious practices, and daily life patterns (Cédric Baylock Sassoubre, 2011). For example, Wahabi members often wear wide headscarves, niqabs, and socks for women, while men wear trousers that fall above the ankles and have beards. Essentially, the use of clothing attributes is part of the identity of its teachings, which are based on Sharia. However, in other aspects, this action is a form of interaction conveyed to non-Wahhabis (mainstream religion). Interaction patterns are formed by symbolic processes in which people understand each other and consciously respond to the actions of others (Mead et al., 2015). This symbolization not only creates a solid group identity but also emphasizes the boundaries between the Wahabi group and the surrounding community. This type of consumption model is a symbolic interaction that essentially manifests the constructed identity of an individual or their community and has a strong relationship to the position of a particular individual or group (Sato et al., 2016).

The Wahabi group is considered relatively closed and lacks interaction between different religious perspectives in terms of understanding and practice. Religious perspectives can cause friction between people's beliefs, even leading to social inequality (Dillon, 2003). This exclusivist attitude also triggers conflict and builds socio-religious inequality. Sermons by Wahabi figures are often considered provocative, blaming local religious traditions such as *tahlilan* (recitation of the Qur'an), *yasinan* (recitation of the Prophet's birthday), and the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. It creates divisions in a previously harmonious society. For example, the viral sermon "Keramat

Tain Acong" (Sacred Tain Acong) sparked public anger because it was considered insulting to local traditions, destroying Wahabi facilities.

Furthermore, the As-Syafi'i Mosque and the As-Sunnah Markaz (markaz) belonging to the Wahabi group were burned by residents (Mamben Daya) following the trending insult to the tomb of the Wali Lombok (Hamdi et al., 2025). Wahhabism, as a movement, tends to be puritanical and textual in nature (Topan, 2024). This tension indicates that the pattern of interaction between the Wahabi group and the cultural Islamic community in the three villages remains dominated by resistance, despite several efforts to foster harmony.

Wahabis in East Lombok

Wahhabism is known as one of the Islamic groups that emerged after the collapse of the New Order regime (Said, 2019). This Wahhabi movement continued to spread, reaching East Lombok. Based on research and field observations, it was found that Wahhabi groups in East Lombok, particularly in the three research villages—Suralaga, Bagik Nyaka, and Kalijaga—tend to reject the label "Wahhabi" and prefer to call themselves As-Sunnah (Hasan, n.d. 2006). This name reflects their commitment to implementing the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad in their daily lives according to the context of their understanding (religious purification) (Wiktorowicz, 2006). Broadly speaking, the emergence of Wahhabism in East Lombok was influenced by the return of Indonesian students from the Middle East in the 1980s. For example, Tuan Guru Husni, the main figure who introduced Wahhabism to Lombok, began to exert his influence after returning from the Middle East. Although Tuan Guru Husni was the son of the renowned Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) figure, Tuan Guru Abdul Manan, he introduced a different ideology. The Wahabi movement began to gain a foothold in East Lombok after the construction of a magnificent mosque funded by Saudi Arabia in Bagik Nyaka. This mosque later developed into a center for preaching and education through the establishment of the As-Sunnah Islamic boarding school.

Religious groups (Wahhabis) that reject the values of local wisdom (local wisdom) have become a severe problem in coexistence with long-standing differences in religious understanding and practice. Wahabis in East Lombok have caused significant changes in the local community. Initially, this area was a strong base of NU and NW (Nahdlatul Wathan), two large religious organizations that adhere to the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah school. Historically, the birth of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization was aimed at promoting traditional Islam and reforming the pattern of educational/religious institutions in Islamic boarding schools, thereby attracting various groups to join the NU mass organization (Fealy et al., 1997). Likewise, the Nahdlatul Wathan religious organization seeks to advance Islam without eliminating the values of local wisdom and remains grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma', Qiyas, and other Islamic sources (Husni, n.d.).

Internal conflict within the NW faction, coupled with the appeal of Wahabi slogans such as "ar-Ruju' ila al-Qur'ani wa as-Sunnah" (return to the Qur'an and Sunnah), has encouraged some communities to convert to Wahabism. This ideological shift is also reinforced by sermons by Wahabi figures who emphasize the importance of purifying faith and rejecting religious traditions deemed deviant. Wahhabism is considered highly concerning in Indonesia, even though it is not affiliated with terrorist movements. However, in principle, Wahhabism provides a foundation or emphasis on divinity/theology that is strong enough to give rise to terrorism or other violent movements (Aritonang, 2020). In the local context, in the villages of Suralaga, Kalijaga, and Bagik Nyaka, the Wahabi doctrine has begun to change people's mindsets and habits. One visible impact is the emergence of the symbolization of religious identity through clothing. Wahabi women, for

example, have begun wearing niqabs, which are extensive headscarves, and socks, even while working in the rice fields. Wahhabi men tend to grow beards, wear *cingkrang* trousers, and have a black mark on their foreheads. This identity reflects the Wahhabi group's efforts to build internal solidarity while distinguishing itself from those outside its community.

The identities of individuals and groups are constructed from social structures generated by social action. This indicates that agents and structures are reproduced in specific regions (Khasri, 2021). This constructed concept of shared consciousness can give rise to a socio-religious identity practiced in everyday life. The strength of religious identity can strengthen the social cohesion of particular communities (Fauzi, 2019). The internal social cohesion of the Wahabi sect is clearly visible in maintaining the doctrines and dogmas embedded within it, despite threats from non-Wahhabi groups (mainstream religions). However, the group openly carries out religious movements. The rejection of Wahhabism by the local community is also triggered by Wahhabism's theological perspective, which opposes the local content of the Sasak Muslim community. The people of Lombok, or the local community (non-Wahhabi), continue to uphold and practice their cultural values through an acculturation model (Supartha, n.d.).

However, the exclusivity of the Wahhabi group often sparks conflict with the local community (Noorhaidi Hasan, n.d., p. 2006). Sermons by Wahhabi figures that criticize local traditions such as tahlilan (religious gatherings), tomb visits, and celebrations of the Prophet's birthday are often considered offensive by communities that have long observed these traditions as part of their religious identity (Hasan, 2007). A clear example is the controversial sermon "Keramat Tain Acong," in which a Wahhabi figure openly mocked sacred tombs in Lombok, including the tomb of a revered cleric. This sermon sparked public anger, culminating in anarchic acts such as the burning of Wahhabi facilities in Bagik Nyaka. From a social perspective, the Wahhabi presence in East Lombok exhibits complex dynamics. Although Wahhabi doctrine is often considered exclusive and confrontational, grassroots Wahhabi communities demonstrate the potential for moderate living. It is evident in their daily interactions with non-Wahhabi communities, such as in markets, health services, and other public activities. However, efforts to encourage religious moderation among Wahhabis are often hampered by the strong doctrines taught by their elites.

Religious moderation strategies are crucial in managing these differences. In the three research villages, moderation efforts can be implemented through intergroup dialogue, strengthening tolerance education, and cultural approaches (Haitomi et al., 2022). This approach aims to reduce friction and create harmony amidst diversity. In this context, mosques and education can be utilized as a medium to strengthen the values of tolerance without sacrificing religious principles. In conclusion, Wahhabis in East Lombok not only present challenges in the form of social and cultural conflict but also opportunities to build harmony through religious moderation. Although the exclusivity of the Wahhabi group often triggers tension, daily social interactions at the grassroots level demonstrate that harmony can still be achieved if moderation strategies are implemented appropriately.

Media Spreading Wahhabism in East Lombok

Wahabism with its puritanical doctrine seeks to return all religious affairs to the era of the Prophet, Companions, and Tabi'in, firmly rejecting interpretations of religious evidence and practices that are mixed with tradition. The reason behind this doctrine is that when Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703), the founder of the Wahabi movement, traveled to several areas in

Muslim countries, he saw many religious practices that were considered shirk and violated religious rules. According to Sheikh Muhammad Abu Zahrah, Wahhabism was born from the excessive cult of pious people, making their graves a glorified place and often excessive in traditions mixed with local culture. In Bagik Nyaka Village, Tuan Guru Husni, as the parent of Haji Husni, has made Bagik Nyaka Village a center for Wahabi congregations, indirectly leading the Bagik Nyaka community to adopt Wahabi congregations. This change did not occur immediately but was triggered by the dry spirituality that they rarely received from religious figures in the organizations they joined.

In Suralaga Village, which was once home to many non-Muslims, many have now become members of the Wahabi community. This change did not occur immediately, but instead was triggered by the lack of spirituality they rarely received from the religious leaders within the organizations to which they belonged. Sermons by Wahabi figures, who often criticized and even mocked the worship practices of communities practicing religious traditions that were an acculturation with Sasak culture, were considered futile and even rejected. For example, *tahlilan* (religious services) for the deceased, including those held on the 9th, 40th, and 100th days, as well as birthdays (haul), were considered futile because the prayers did not reach the deceased and were even regarded as burdensome to the deceased's family. There were also sermons discussing different ways of worship outside of their own, which were considered inconsistent with the Prophet's guidance, including the disregard for the need to recite the intention for prayer, fasting, and other matters, supported by the argument that God knows what is in the heart. The sermons of Wahhabi figures authoritatively construct their group as the ideal, while others are deemed in need of development. In the context of cultural studies, the actions of the Wahhabi group in Lombok are inseparable from their efforts to construct themselves as a distinct entity. In contrast, others are excluded as the 'other'.

The developments at the grassroots level were quite significant. The Wahhabi doctrine began to penetrate the community, leading to changes in their lifestyle. The adoption of large, plain hijabs and niqabs symbolized this shift in group identity. Women consistently wore socks, even when working in the muddy rice fields. For men, this included black marks on the forehead, beards, and *cingkrang* pants that reached above the ankles. Symbolization through this clothing is an effort to establish a solid group identity, or a network of congregations identified by costumes or symbols attached to them. In 2018, conflict arose, including the burning of a Wahabi activity center in Pringgasela, because the preaching of its leaders was considered provocative, causing divisions in the community. Similarly, the burning of a mosque (Hamdi et al., 2025) by Wahhabis in Kabar village, East Sakra, East Lombok, was a similar case because the preaching of an authoritative Wahabi figure blamed religious traditions in the established society. In 2021, opposition to the construction of a Wahabi mosque in Mamben Daya Village emerged. The community used various pretexts to thwart the mosque's construction, including concerns that the *Maraqitta'limat* congregation, with Mamben Daya Village as their base, would gradually convert to Wahabi Islam. Kroya Village, once a *Maraqitta'limat* congregation, has now become a Wahabi stronghold.

Following the emergence of opposition to the construction of a mosque in Mamben Daya, a sermon by West Nusa Tenggara Wahabi figure Ustadz Mizan Qudsiyah (hereinafter referred to as MQ) went viral, in which he stated that deliberate pilgrimages, such as visiting sacred tombs or visiting the tombs of saints, are not permitted. In the sermon, MQ mentioned several tombs that people visit before leaving for the Hajj. Ustadz MQ's sermon, as a West Nusa Tenggara Wahabi figure and the son-in-law of H. Husni, the founder of the Wahabi movement after his return from

the Middle East, not only threw criticisms against the religious traditions of the Sasak people. Even in his own village in Kalijaga, the congregation is quite large, and extremist attitudes like this are quite deep-rooted.

The Role of the Wahhabi Elite and Grassroots

The Wahhabi doctrine, which emphasizes the purification of Islamic teachings, forms the primary foundation for this group's interaction with the surrounding community. The main doctrine of the Wahhabi teachings is *al-tawḥīd al-khāliṣ*, or the purity of monotheism, which comprises three parts: *tauhid rububiyah, tauhid uluhiyah, and tauhid asma wa sifat* (DeLong-Bas, 2004). Ibn Taymiyyah as an actor shares religious enthusiasm with the mission to realize the renewal of Islam by returning to the originality of pure religion (Unggul Purnomo Aji & Kerwanto, 2023). By using a textual approach to the verses of the Quran, the Wahhabi group rejects local traditions that are considered incompatible with the sharia. One example is the rejection of tomb pilgrimages and religious practices that are mixed with customs, which they consider to be a form of heresy.

In many cases, the Wahabi sect encourages conservatism, especially in daily life practices such as dress, public etiquette, and gender. For example, women are required to cover their *aurat* (awrah) strictly and are prohibited from being active in public spaces except within certain limits and are forced to play a role in the domestic sphere. It is clearly evident in Wahabi adherents in East Lombok, as seen in their daily lives, based on the principle of diversity (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Additionally, there is a feud with the Nahdlatul Ulama organization and other traditional Islamic communities, as they oppose the practices of the Shafi'i school of thought, including *tahlilan, maulid*, and local Sufism (Bruinessen, 1995). It has led to symbolic and even physical conflicts, such as in Sampang (Shia vs. Wahabi, 2011–2012).

This view not only separates the Wahhabi group from the local community but also places them in a difficult position to be accepted by communities with strong religious traditions. In contrast, the culturally Muslim communities in the three villages tend to maintain their traditions, which are considered part of their cultural and religious identity. Traditions such as *tahlilan* (religious gatherings), grave pilgrimages, and the Prophet's birthday (Mawlid) are symbols of moderate Islamic diversity in East Lombok. This difference creates polarization, widening the gap between the Wahhabi group and the local community. Furthermore, KH. Mustofa Bisri and KH. Said Aqil Siradj believe that Wahhabi exclusivism threatens interfaith harmony and socio-religious integration within a community rich in local culture (Wahid, 2014).

Religious Moderation Strategy

The Sasak Muslim community of East Lombok is renowned for its strong kinship and family system. The local community adheres to a patrilineal kinship system, in which family identity, social status, wealth, and ancestry are transmitted through the father's line (Yulian Dewi et al., 2024). Although tensions between the Wahhabi group and the cultural Islamic community are significant, this study also found that there is potential for religious moderation to mitigate conflict. One important finding is that grassroots Wahhabi members tend to be more moderate than their elite counterparts. This is due to their more intense interaction with non-Wahhabi communities in their daily lives. These grassroots members often maintain familial and social ties with the surrounding community, even after joining the Wahhabi community. However, the strength of kinship serves as a medium for managing social conflicts in the name of religion. Religious moderation contributes significantly to the welfare of citizens, as it is, in essence, a

perspective and a religious attitude that fosters the well-being of people, humanity, and so on (Haitomi et al., 2022).

This potential for moderation can serve as a foundation for building intergroup dialogue and promoting values of tolerance. This tolerance, found in Islamic teachings, demonstrates the ability to create harmony between religious communities (Masduki, 2014). With the right approach, such as strengthening education and raising awareness of the importance of harmony, the values of moderation can be instilled in Wahhabi members and cultural Islamic communities. This approach is expected to reduce the exclusivity and resistance that have been significant obstacles to creating social harmony. Minority religions often employ resistance as a means of survival (Beckford, 2008). Wahhabis are considered a minority, and their resistance stems from the lack of recognition of their teachings by the state, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), or local communities. Recognition of their beliefs is a complex negotiation in a pluralistic society (Taylor & Gutmann, 1994). Educational institutions play a crucial role in instilling this mindset, preventing the stigma of socio-religious dehumanization (Beck et al., 2020). Multicultural-based educational institutions are very crucial for society in maintaining togetherness, introducing local wisdom, and noble values, so that their mindset can differentiate the Indonesian state system from the Middle East (Fitriah, 2015).

The results of this study indicate that the conflict between the Wahhabi group and the cultural Islamic community is not only caused by theological differences, but also by a lack of communication and understanding between the groups. The exclusivity of the Wahhabi group, reinforced by the doctrine of *ashabiyah* and a strategy of self-distinction (sense of distinction), is one of the main factors that exacerbates polarization (Khaldûn, 2014). In this context, religious moderation can be a solution to resolve this conflict. However, implementing religious moderation requires a comprehensive approach. One strategy is to build bridges of communication between groups, both through formal and informal dialogue. This approach must involve all parties, including community leaders, Wahhabi elites, and grassroots members. Furthermore, education about the values of moderation needs to be strengthened, both within families, schools, and religious institutions.

In practice, religious moderation must also consider the local context. Traditions deeply rooted in society, such as *tahlilan* (recitation of the Quran), *yasinan* (recitation of the *Yasinan*), and the Prophet's Birthday (Mawlid), need to be understood as part of Islamic diversity that does not conflict with sharia. Practices in this arena can be described as cultural and customary solidarity, which is more important than an ethos of aggressive purification (Mulasi et al., 2023). In other words, it is a characteristic of non-Wahhabi communities. Conversely, Wahhabi groups need to be made aware that their textual and puritanical approach is not always relevant in the context of multicultural Indonesian society. Tribal solidarity (*ashabiyah badawah*) refers to a community that has not yet encountered civilization, often engaging in movements to challenge the established social system (Amin, 2018). Therefore, religious moderation can serve as a means of fostering harmony without compromising the distinct religious identities of each group.

This study also provides theoretical contributions by combining Pierre Bourdieu's concept of distinction theory, Ibn Khaldun's concept of *ashabiyah*, and indicators of religious moderation. This combination provides a holistic framework for understanding socio-religious conflict in the three villages. The sense of distinction theory helps explain how the Wahabi group constructs its identity through religious symbols, while the concept of *ashabiyah* explains the internal solidarity that strengthens this group. Indicators of religious moderation provide practical guidance for

fostering harmony among diverse groups. Religious moderation occurs when the religions of Din and Mulk work together to ensure social stability (Supriatna et al., n.d.). Overall, the results of this study highlight the importance of religious moderation as a strategy for addressing socio-religious conflict. By prioritizing dialogue, education, and respect for local traditions, communities in the three villages can build more harmonious and inclusive relationships. However, the success of this approach requires a commitment from all parties to set aside differences and work together for the common good.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Wahabi movement in the villages of Suralaga, Kalijaga, and Bagik Nyaka in East Lombok exhibits intricate social and religious dynamics, characterized by underlying tensions that can sometimes escalate into open conflicts. The Wahabi group, which adheres to a puritanical interpretation of Islamic teachings, frequently encounters resistance from cultural Muslim communities that have historically engaged in local traditions. This conflict is primarily driven by the exclusive attitudes and provocative sermons disseminated by Wahabi leaders, who tend to condemn community customs as heretical. The proliferation of the Wahabi movement in this region is facilitated through various strategies, including the establishment of mosques, educational institutions, and extensive religious study groups. The group's identity is marked by distinctive symbols such as the niqab for women and *cingkrang* pants for men, which further reinforce their differences from the local populace. However, this study also reveals that at the grassroots level, members of the Wahabi community possess the potential to embrace the principles of religious moderation, given their continuous interactions with the broader community in their daily lives.

Religious moderation is essential for promoting harmony amid diverse religious beliefs. A moderate approach that emphasizes dialogue, tolerance, and respect for local traditions can effectively alleviate existing tensions. The government and traditional institutions play a vital role in facilitating these efforts, including the provision of education on the significance of religious moderation. This research underscores that the conflict cannot be solely attributed to Wahabi ideology; rather, it stems from the communication methods and exclusionary strategies employed by the group's elite. Consequently, the proposed solutions include reinforcing the values of moderation at the grassroots level, encouraging more inclusive religious leadership, and implementing regulations that can reduce the potential for provocation. Overall, the findings of this research provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for fostering religious harmony within a multicultural society. With a thoughtful and collaborative approach, it is hoped that conflict can be diminished and that communities can coexist peacefully, despite their differing religious perspectives.

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