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Submission date: 16-Jun-2023 06:49AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2116924350

File name: erance_in_the_29th_MTQ_in_Saumlaki,_the_Moluccas,_Indonesia.pdf (688.92K)

Word count: 6271

Character count: 34640

The Qur'an in A Christian Majority: A Case Study of Tolerance in the 29th MTQ in Saumlaki, the Moluccas, Indonesia

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Received: 2022-79-16; Accepted: 2022-12-26; Published: 2022-12-29

Abstract: This paper analyses the acceptance of the majority of Christians towards implementing the 29th Qur'anic Recitation Competition (MTQ) in Maluku Province. MTQ is a form of Islamic Awakening, an event for Muslims. However, this event was held in Saumlaki, where the Muslim population is only four percent (4%). This MTQ is an anomaly where the relationship between Muslims and Christians is mutual respect, unlike in other places that are usually in conflict. Therefore, this MTQ is unique and exciting because a Christian majority carries it out, and a pastor leads the committee of the event. In this study, the acceptance of the Christian majority toward MTQ will be further examined using qualitative research and a sociological approach. The primary sources of this research are stakeholders and parties who participated in the 29th MTQ activities of Maluku Province. The data sources were determined by purposive sampling, while the secondary sources of this research were books and articles relevant to the research theme. This research shows that there is an identity transformation carried out by the majority of Christians in accepting the implementation of the MTQ, such as the use of the hijab by event organisers, who are Christians, in each segment of the competition; the use of the Catholic Center Hall as a venue for the competition, where a cross and a painting of the Virgin Mary were displayed for the *Syarhil* (explanation) of the Qur'an competition. This research also found a convergence in the relationship between the Muslim minority and the Christian majority. As explained, religious activities such as MTQ can be an adhesive of the relationship between Islam and Christianity and an example of religious moderation.

Keywords: Christian Majority; MTQ; Qur'an; Tanimbar.

Abstrak: Tulisan ini menganalisis penerimaan mayoritas Kristen terhadap penyelenggaraan MTQ ke-29 Provinsi Maluku. MTQ yang merupakan syiar dan bentuk Islamic Awakening merupakan event umat Islam. Namun, event ini diselenggarakan di kota Saumlaki, yang penduduk Muslimnya hanya sebesar 4 persen. Hal ini merupakan anomali dimana hubungan antara umat Islam dan Kristen adalah saling curiga. Karena itu, MTQ ini menjadi unik dan menarik karena dilakukan di mayoritas Kristen dan kepanitiaannya dipimpin oleh seorang pendeta. Dengan menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dan pendekatan sosiologis, penelitian ini akan menganalisis lebih lanjut tentang penerimaan mayoritas Kristen terhadap MTQ. Adapun sumber utama penelitian ini adalah stakeholder dan pihak yang berhubungan dengan kegiatan MTQ ke-29 Provinsi Maluku, sumber data ditentukan secara purposive sampling, sedangkan sumber sekunder dari penelitian ini adalah buku dan artikel yang relevan dengan tema penelitian. Penelitian ini menunjukkan adanya transformasi identitas yang dilakukan oleh mayoritas Kristen dalam menerima penyelenggaraan MTQ, seperti: penggunaan hijab oleh penata acara beragama Kristendi setiap mata lomba; dirubahnya aula Katolik Center yang terpajang salib dan lukisan bunda maria sebagai lokasi lomba *Syarhil Qur'an*. Penelitian ini juga menemukan adanya konvergensi hubungan minoritas Muslim dan mayoritas Kristen. Kegiatan keagamaan dapat menjadi perekat hubungan antara Islam dan Kristen, hal ini dapat menjadi contoh moderasi beragama.

Kata Kunci: Mayoritas Kristen; MTQ; Qur'an; Tanimbar.

1. Introduction

The Qur'an is a Muslim guideline that guides the safety of life in this world and the hereafter. Therefore, every Muslim always reads, understands, and practices the Qur'an. Even the reading of the Qur'an is part of a competition or religious festival known as MTQ (Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an/ Qur'anic Recitation competition).

MTQ institutionally was first held in 1968 in Makassar. Previously MTQ had been carried out, especially at the *Jami'iyatul Qurro' wa al-Huffadz* of Nahdlatul Ulama (the association of Qur'anic recitation and memorisation), then institutionalised by the Minister of Religion KH. Muhammad Dahlan in 1968. Furthermore, MTQ in its development became a routine activity, which can be said as a manifestation of Islamic culture (Handayana & Rezi, 2018).

The existence of MTQ shows that the attention of Indonesian Muslims to the Qur'an is so great. The recitation competition accommodating variants of reading and calligraphy offers an aesthetic reception of the Qur'an. The Qur'an and Qur'anic interpretation competitions are a form of effort to interpret and contextualise the Qur'an. Spiritually, MTQ is expected to improve the spiritual life of Indonesian Muslims. Therefore, it can be said that MTQ is a medium for teaching the Qur'an (normative-educational) as well as a form of preaching (transformative-competitive) whose goal is to internalise the values of the Qur'an in everyday life (Rahtikawati & Abdullah Afifi, 2021).

Anna M. Gade explained that the Qur'anic reading contest is a form of Islamic awakening. It's evident from Indonesian Muslims' excitement for mastering the skill of memorising verses from the Qur'an. The existence of competition in contestation is a form of competing in piety (*fastabiq al-khairat*). Indirectly, MTQ is a form of *syiar* or invitation to glorify and instill the values of the Qur'an (Gade, 2004).

Nur Rohman explained that implementing the MTQ could increase the interest of Indonesian Muslims in reading, memorising, and studying the Qur'an. It can be seen from the emergence of the Qur'anic teaching institutions since the basic level, such as TPA (Qur'anic kindergarten), tahfiz houses (Qur'anic memorization centre), and madrasah diniyah (elementary Islamic school). Likewise, in the scope of tertiary institutions, the Qur'an with all its knowledge is studied, such as IIQ (Institute of Qur'anic Science), PTIQ (Higher Education of the Qur'an), and Islamic higher education (Rohman, 2016).

The purpose of organising MTQ is to accommodate Muslims' religious activity that is supported by the government. The government accommodates Muslims' interests in broadcasting the Qur'anic values to maintain harmony between Muslims and the government. Therefore, it rather unique phenomenon when the MTQ is held in a location where the majority are non-Muslims.

In 2022 the province of Maluku held the 29th provincial-level MTQ in the Tanimbar Islands District. The majority population of this district is Christians, and the Muslim population is only four percent, the majority of whom are immigrants from Sulawesi, Java, and Sumatra (BPS Kabupaten Kepulauan Tanimbar, 2022). With a small number of Muslim population, it is impossible to carry out MTQ at the provincial level in this area. However, the MTQ was still carried out with the majority of the committee being Christians, even the head of the committee was a priest. It makes the 29th MTQ at the provincial level a unique event.

According to Dedi (registrar), the MTQ was unique at that time because it was held by non-Muslims. There was a feeling of discomfort as it seemed that the event is being forced to do in that area. Several of the MTQ activities were conducted in the Catholic Centre hall, which contains Catholic religious symbols, and the wearing of hijab by non-Muslim contestants (Dedi, personal communication, March 22, 2022). Ustadz Hasrul Kilrey explained that the implementation of the MTQ in Tanimbar was unique implementation of the MTQ because the Muslim minority population was only four percent. In terms of religious moderation, they accepted Muslims in their places of worship and allowed them to practice worship in their locations (Kilrey, personal communication, March 22, 2022).

The acceptance of MTQ implementation by the majority of Christians is an anomaly. It is due to the history of the relationship between Muslims and Christians who are suspicious of each other,

mainly due to the politicisation of religion that emerged from the New Order era (Picard & Madinier, 2011).

Several suspicions stem from the fear of spreading Christianity through evangelistic missions (Hoon, 2013). This form of skepticism has led to objections to church construction, as happened in Cilegon, Banten (Riansyah et al., 2021), as well as in Tlogosari Semarang (Wijayanto, 2021).

Vice versa, Christians fear of Islamisation, shariatisation, and efforts to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia (Makin, 2016). This distrust may even be considered a type of Islamophobia, in which Muslims are ignored and tortured because they practice or support Islam or its culture (Bleich, 2012). Coupled with memories of the religious conflict that occurred in the Maluku region, it becomes a trauma that is not easy to forget. Islam and Christianity became triggers and drivers of violence, resulting in thousands of deaths and refugees (Al Qurtuby, 2015a).

However, it turned out that the 29th MTQ of Maluku Province in Saumlaki, Tanimbar Islands Regency, was conducted successfully. The existence of public openness is a factor in the implementation of this activity. The spirit of brotherhood is the goal of this reception. In his opening remarks at the opening of MTQ, the Regent of Tanimbar Regency said the success of holding MTQ was a historic moment that all human beings are brothers. He emphasised that Indonesian people can live in harmony regardless of diversity (Leurima, 2022).

The acceptance of MTQ implementation in Christian-majority areas shows that minorities can be accepted and served by the majority. Social integration in this context does not necessitate that minorities must submit and unite with the majority. According to Sahidin Ernas, discussions of social integration have always been influenced by discourses of power in which minorities must rise and join under the influence of the majority (Ernas, 2018). In this case, the opposite happened. The majority carried out an identity transformation following the minority.

This research will further describe the acceptance of the majority of Christians towards the MTQ event, which is a festival of the Qur'an. This research explains that the majority does not always become oppressors and threatens the existence of minorities, as is often the case. This research contributes to the mosaic of knowledge treasures regarding the relationship between Christians (the majority) to Muslims (the minority).

This research is qualitative research and a sociological approach. The primary source of this research is the result of interviews with stakeholders and several people involved in organising and observing the implementation of the 29th MTQ at the Maluku Province level in Saumlaki. They include the participants of the MTQ, the panel of judges, the committee, and supporters in the event of the 29th MTQ at the Maluku Province level in Saumlaki. The data sources in this study were determined by purposive sampling (Muhadjir, 2016). Meanwhile, the secondary sources of this research are books and articles relevant to the research theme.

2. Saumlaki Tanimbar: A Land of Many Island

Saumlaki is the capital city of the Tanimbar Islands Regency (KKT) Maluku Province. This city is in the South Tanimbar District, precisely on Yamdena Island. The geographical position of the Tanimbar Islands Regency has boundaries: North – Banda Sea; South – Timor Sea and Pacific Ocean; West – Sermatang Babar Island Cluster; East – Arafura Sea. In contrast, the total area of the Tanimbar Islands Regency is 52,995.20 km² consisting of a land area of 10,102.92 km² (19.06 percent) and a water area of ± 42,892.28 km² (80.94 percent). It is named Tanimbar Islands Regency because its territory consists of many islands. There are 81 islands within the Tanimbar Islands Regency area, consisting of islands already inhabited and islands that have not been inhabited (BPS Kabupaten Kepulauan Tanimbar, 2022).

Saumlaki, the capital of the Tanimbar Islands Regency, is being prepared as an international gateway. It is because the natural potential of this Regency is so significant, both in the fisheries, forestry, and natural resource sectors in the form of natural gas. Reporting to CNBC, the Masela Block, located in the Tanimbar Islands Regency, is expected to produce 9.5 million tons of Liquid Natural Gas

(LNG) per year and 150 standard cubic feet per day (scfd) of pipeline gas (Setiawan, 2022). It can invite large amounts of investment and make Saumlaki a heterogeneous city.

The population of the Tanimbar Islands Regency is predominantly Christian (Catholic-Protestant). From the data released by BPS, the number of Muslims is 14996, Protestants 77070, and Catholics 83052. Meanwhile, the number of mosques is only nine mosques, while the Protestant Church is 76 and the Catholic Church totaling 41 (BPS Kabupaten Kepulauan Tanimbar, 2022). Muslims are a minority in this area, and even the numbers are far away compared to Christians.

With such a small number of Muslim populations, this Regency has never had a provincial MTQ event. However, according to Haji Tamsil (chairman of the MUI Tanimbar Islands Regency), during the 28th MTQ at the provincial level in Buru Regency, the Regent of the Tanimbar Islands Regency, Petrus Fatlalon, the Regent came to our inn and discussed regarding the 29th provincial level MTQ to be held in Tanimbar. Most of the government officials at that time agreed to the Regent's opinion as there never had been this event before held in Tanimbar. The Regent aims to make changes and show the island of Tanimbar and the solidity in the practice of religious tolerance in this area. Haji Tamsil further mentioned that the people of Tanimbar are grateful to be able to carry out MTQ in the city of Saumlaki (Herman, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

The 29th MTQ at the provincial level in the city of Saumlaki has the support of the community and the government. According to Hajj Tamsil, the majority of the people in the society supports the event as well as the government employees. They support the event for the reason that the Muslims has never caused problems in society and the Christian adherents also devoted adherents and always participate in every religious activity. For several periods MTQ has never been held at the provincial level (Herman, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

Organising the 29th provincial-level MTQ in Saumlaki is a form of inter-religious tolerance and social integration. Ustaz Zein Matdoan (council of judges) responded to the implementation of the MTQ in Saumlaki, he said:

MTQ is a mission to spread Islam, and it doesn't matter why MTQ is held in a non-Muslim location. That is where the opportunity is to convey real Islam. Implementing MTQ in a location like this is vulnerable to religious values that we should protect, but what is emphasised is the problem of tolerance. Nothing is wrong if this tolerance does not conflict with the faith. I, personally and as the MTQ Southeast Maluku district chairman, feel uncomfortable. In the future, the attributes related to religious values will be tarnished. We will try to avoid not to confuse the two values because they are the location owners. We cannot force these attributes to be removed. Therefore, we should choose a place where there is no conflict so that the value of cooperation between the two groups is maintained (Matdoan, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

3. Religious Tolerance in the MTQ Event in Saumlaki, Tanimbar

Tolerance and Social Integration

The dark history of conflict between Muslims and Moluccan Christians is hard to forget. Suspicion between the two communities still lingers. It can be seen from social segregation manifested in the separation of residences. Efforts are needed to unite and build cooperation between these two communities.

Fostering an attitude of tolerance is something that Muslims and Christians must do to build harmonious relationships. Tolerance is the teaching of every religion. Mutual respect and acceptance of differences are the essences of tolerance. Casram explained that religious tolerance has two forms: first, passive religious tolerance, namely the attitude of accepting that differences are facts and reality; second, active religious tolerance, namely tolerance that not only recognises but participates in collaborating on differences (Casram, 2016).

The difference is not a barrier to being able to work together. However, there are often differences that become obstacles. Therefore, it is necessary to overcome the differences. Iwamony explained that there are three ways to deal with differences: first, recognising differences; second, respecting the

differences; third, making peace with differences (Iwamony, 2018). Those three things can create tolerance by living and working together with differences. Recognising, respecting, and making peace with differences does not mean that someone who already has an identity changes the identity to blend in with other identities or beliefs and religious rituals (Casram, 2016). The difference is a necessity that must be responded to by accepting and opening up. The attitude of accepting differences will create a form of social integration.

Social integration has two primary meanings: first, controlling conflicts and social deviations within a specific social system; and second, uniting some aspects of society to create a social order (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004). In practice, social integration seeks to unify the differences within social groups.

In social integration, society is a social unit, and this unity binds every individual. Social integration was born from the paradigm of structural functionalism initiated by Talcott Parson (1937). The forms of social integration, in general, can be seen in two states, namely: first, controlling conflicts and social deviations within a specific social system; second, unification or at least minimising differences (religion, ethnicity, interests, social class) in society to create a social order. According to Varshney, social integration can occur through recognising and acknowledging these differences, a method of mutual trust, and a process of equality (Varshney, 2001).

Sahidin Ernas (2018) claims that discourses of power, in which minorities are required to submit and band together under the influence of the majority, have always impacted ideas of social integration. As a result, there is often oppression of minorities due to suspicion and rejection of minorities. The connection between Muslims and Christians, who are wary of one another, is described by Al Makin in his article "Islamic Acehese Identity, Sharia, And Christianization Rumor: A Study of The Narratives of The Attack on The Bethel Church in Penauyong Banda Aceh." Muslims attacked the church because they feared their followers would turn to Christianity (Makin, 2016). In his article "Between Evangelism and Multiculturalism: The Dynamics of Christianity in Indonesia," Chang Yau Hoon explains the same thing: there is suspicion in the Muslim majority community that Christian missions are a threat (Hoon, 2013). Similarly, Abdul Riansyah et al. argued in their article "Factors of Refusal to Build Churches by Communities in Cilegon City" that Muslims reject church construction because the majority believe their faith to be the most accurate and feel threatened by the existence of other religions (Riansyah et al., 2021). The majority often think they are the center of society, while the minority is marginalised. Likewise, with control over other things, the majority becomes the power holder. Therefore, the majority have a privileged position (Iwamony, 2019a).

However, this did not happen in Saumlaki, Tanimbar Islands Regency. Implementing MTQ at the provincial level shows that minorities can be accepted and served by the majority. Minorities do not always submit and follow the influence of the majority. Even in implementing MTQ at the provincial level in Saumlaki, the Tanimbar Islands Regency, the majority carried out identity transformations following the minority. A form of tolerance practiced by the majority of Christians.

Identity Transformation

Christians, as the majority, in the sense that the number of adherents is greater than Muslims, accept and enthusiastically welcome implementing the provincial-level MTQ in Saumlaki, Tanimbar Islands Regency. Christians carry out identity transformation as a form of tolerance to accept MTQ implementation. Identity transformation is a process of change, especially regarding cultural elements. It can be discovery, diffusion, or acculturation (Haviland, 1990). In this case, Christians change religious symbols to become Muslim religious symbols.

The form of identity transformation that occurred in implementing the MTQ in Tanimbar was the change from a place for Christian religious rituals, which was full of Christian religious symbols, to a place for the *Syarahil* Qur'an (Explanation of the Qur'anic message) competition, which contained Islamic religious symbols. Several worship places and churches are used as the venue for MTQ.

The Nata Compu Catholic Center Building

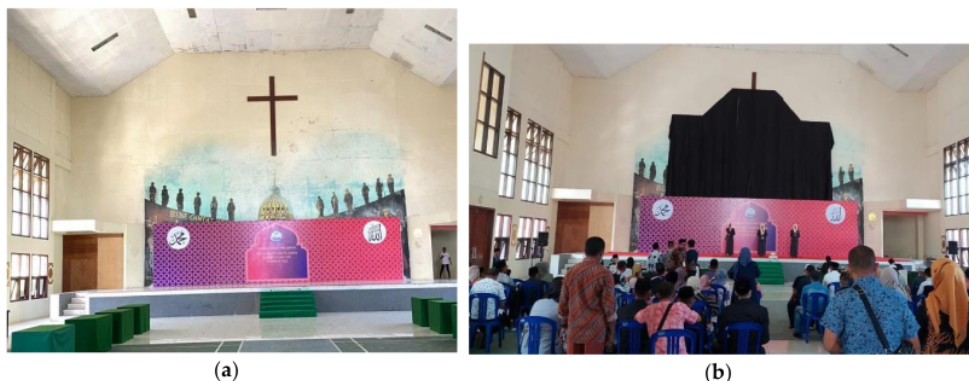


Figure 1. (a) Location of the Catholic Center before the finalisation of MTQ preparation; (b) Location of the Catholic Center at the time of the competition took place.

Using the Nata de Compu Building at the Saumlaki Catholic Center for the Qur'anic interpretation contest is exciting and unique (see Figure 1). It is due to the relationship between Muslims and Christians in other places where there is suspicion, and even there is a ban on the construction of houses of worship for Christians (Riansyah et al., 2021; Wijayanto, 2021).

Ustaz Hasrul Kilrey, a member of the panel of judges at the Catholic Center location, said he was at ease throughout the implementation of the MTQ and believed that the inclusion of non-Muslims demonstrated the moderation of their faith by allowing Muslims to use the facility they owned. Although it was ultimately permitted for the building to be closed during the competition, the building is a hall that might be used for worship because it has a cross emblem and a portrait of the Virgin Mary (Kilrey, personal communication, March 22, 2022). In line with this, Fachrurrazy Hassannusi (Council of Judges) explained that he felt comfortable as a Council of Judges at the Nata de Compu Catholic Center Building for three days. Although there are many non-Muslim symbols, such as a large cross, they were covered by the committee (Hassannusi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

According to Berto (one of the local committee coordinators of LO), covering religious symbols in the Catholic Hall is a sign of respect for MTQ activities. He further said: "We, as Christian Catholics, are very proud of and support the implementation of MTQ in Tanimbar; covering religious symbols in the Catholic Hall is a sign of respect for MTQ activities (Tupamahu, personal communication, March 21, 2022).

Wearing Hijab

In addition to using the building, identity transformation occurs in Christian youth who become an event hosts (MC) in each MTQ competition. They wear the *hijab* like female Muslims (see Figure 2). At first, no one realised they were non-Muslims. Fachrurrazy Hassannusi said that he was shocked because it turned out that they were not Muslims (Hassannusi, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

According to Juli (one of the MCs), she did not mind wearing the headscarf, and she received an understanding from the committee that this was a form of tolerance (Owandity, personal communication, March 21, 2022). Another MC, Jeni, she wore a *hijab* because the committee ordered her to respect Muslims. At first, she felt stifled when wearing the *hijab*, and there was some discomfort the first time, but she got used to it (Sumanik, personal communication, March 23, 2022).



Figure 2. Christian teenagers dressed in blue look like Muslim women by wearing *hijab*.

Christian use of Muslim symbols does not change their beliefs or affect their faith. The use of Muslim symbols like headscarves is a form of tolerance with respect to the ongoing MTQ event (Tupan, personal communication, December 13, 2022). According to Ustaz Zein Matdoan (Council of Judges), the use of the headscarf by non-Muslims is not an exaggerated tolerance because, indeed, they wear the headscarf during competitions, even in the Christian tradition, the use of the headscarf is common (Matdoan, personal communication, March 24, 2022).

The transformation of religious symbols and rituals is a unique way to unite different religions. Religious communities do it to create the potential for tolerance and dialogue (McDaniel, 2015). Religion is seen as the choice of each individual, and a religious person will ideally be open with other parties and establish communication and friendship with other parties (Wekke, 2017). In several communities in Indonesia, this is done with the same goal, namely maintaining togetherness and creating harmony (Wahid, 2022).

Convergence of Muslims and Christians

During inter-religious violence occurred in Maluku from 1999 to 2004, it resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries and displaced hundreds of thousands of others (Al Qurtuby, 2015b). Islam and Christianity contributed to the initiation and intensification of collective conflict (Al Qurtuby, 2015a). The history of the Ambon conflict has had an impact on social segregation. Suspicions between Muslims and Christians must be suppressed. Therefore, a program is needed to create meetings and interactions between Muslims and Christians. Interaction in terms of mutual support in various aspects of life is important (Iwamony, 2020).

One of the events to unite Muslim and Christian communities is MTQ. MTQ, as a festival of the Qur'an, can be used to maintain relations between Muslims and Christians. Irwan Abdullah explained that religious events are a momentum to make religious values a means of community unity (Abdullah et al., 2008). The participation of Christians in this event eliminates barriers to differences and improves social balance.

According to Rev. Tupan, MTQ is a good activity that must be done together [collaboration] (Tupan, personal communication, December 13, 2022). Because of that, the community enthusiastically welcomes and supports MTQ. The community was waiting to implement this MTQ event, but the presence of Covid-19 caused this event to be delayed for almost a year. Because of that, the public is

wondering about the certainty of MTQ implementation. The people are excited because they want to show that the Tanimbar people are open, tolerant, accepting, and genuinely practicing diversity (Jempomas, personal communication, December 12, 2022).

As for the enthusiasm of Christians in holding MTQ, they participated in choirs and dancers in the opening of MTQ; even though the choir was almost entirely Christian, they sing MTQ marches and other songs; and became a committee in organising MTQ. In the decorations, there are always put the picture of church and mosque buildings side by side, symbols of the cross and crescent moon, and a painting of Jesus (see Figure 3). In addition, the MTQ committee in Saumlaki is 95% Christian and chaired by a pastor (Haq, 2022).



Figure 3. Decoration to welcome the implementation of MTQ

This participation is a form of religious moderation, where openness and acceptance of differences are at the core of diversity. The majority and minority work together against marginalisation, working together for good. Iwamony explained that the relationship between the majority and the minority must be in terms of cooperation, namely: first, partnership to change people's views regarding the position of the majority towards minorities; second, working together to fight against discrimination, intimidation, and marginalisation to build a society where everyone is equal (Iwamony, 2019a). In this case, the Qur'an has been explained in QS. Al-Hujurat: 13. The word *لِيُتَعَارَفُوا* in this verse describes helping each other work together in goodness. There is no barrier between the minority and the majority as long as it is related to excellence (Shihab, 2005).

Implementing the MTQ in Tanimbar also shows that religious rituals can be an adhesive for harmony between Muslims and Christians. Ismail Suardi Wekke explained that religion is the glue that holds society together and is not a source of conflict. Religious identity is only a personal matter related to God, and religion is not a source to create conflict between people (Wekke, 2017). However, religion is often used as a source and legitimacy to commit acts of violence. The terms *jihad fisabilillah* and crusade became the impetus for attacking, killing, and destroying each other (Al Qurtuby, 2015b). Whereas religion teaches kindness and mercy to all nature.

Sumanto Al-Qurtuby explained that religious messages could bridge reconciliation between existing differences, namely when religion is highlighted as a carrier of mercy, a creator of compassion (Al Qurtuby, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that the messages of the Qur'an in MTQ can be a glue for differences, convey of mercy, and create peace. Religious symbols become media for integrating Muslim and Christian groups into religious-cultural awareness. It can suppress conflict and suspicion between Muslims and Christians.

The inclusiveness of the Tanimbar Christian Majority

Acceptance of the Christian Majority is a form of openness or inclusiveness of Christians. According to Kace Rumwarin (Ministry of Religion official for the Tanimbar Islands Regency):

We, as Catholics in the Second Vatican Council, do not reject what is true and holy in any religion. We appreciate respecting the religion of Islam. Even in honoring the One God, Muslims are at the forefront with the Jews. So how do we invite our people not to see other religions as rivals, let alone as rivals that must be burned down? There must be a lively dialogue, a demand that we see other religions not as enemies but as fellow human beings who need to be respected. In Catholicism, positive tolerance is taught. That is, we mingle and cooperate with other religions, not because we have similarities but because we have differences, we have to work together. Each religious dogma is an internal problem. Differences in faith are not an obstacle for us to building brotherhood and solidarity (Rumwarin, personal communication, December 13, 2022).

Openness and acceptance of Muslims show that Christians are inclusive. Rachel Iwamony explained that the Maluku Protestant Church transformed attitudes towards other religions from being initially closed to being open and encouraging interfaith cooperation, living in harmony, and sharing joy in religious events (Iwamony, 2019a, 2019b). This inclusive attitude was born from the teachings of love: love God with all your heart and mind, and love humans as yourself. Why do we have to love God and humans because humans are in the same image as God (Rumwarin, personal communication, December 13, 2022)? Through love, people build harmony. Therefore, every religious community must have this attitude, promoting dialogue, cooperation, and openness to create peace.

4. Conclusion

This research shows that the majority does not always oppress the minority. The majority can be a party that is open to differences. The spirit of integration and togetherness in goodness drives the majority's acceptance of minorities. Likewise, the inclusive attitude of Christians played a role in the tolerance of approval and support for the implementation of the 29th Moluccas Province MTQ in Saumlaki. The performance of the MTQ in Saumlaki shows that religious events can be a point of convergence between Muslims and Christians. Religious messages can unify differences, not a source of conflict and strife. It is a form of religious tolerance that can be adapted to other regions.

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