

Maintaining Harmonization In Preventing Potential Social-Religious Conflicts In The City of Semarang Through Community Pluralism Education

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ABSTRACT

One of the challenges and threats for religious communities today is the existence of religious fundamentalists who are trying to replace the Pancasila ideology. Apart from that, the diverse lives of the people of Semarang City intersect with differences in ethnicity, race, and culture, which can also cause social conflict. Research on mapping potential social conflict using a pluralism-based community social education approach has an urgency to be carried out to avoid social conflict. This research aims to analyze the mapping of potential social conflict in Semarang City with community social education based on pluralism education. This qualitative research uses a case study approach. Data collection techniques use observation at the research location, documentation with supporting literature, and in-depth interviews with informants. Researchers tested the validity of the data using source triangulation and technique triangulation. The research results show that community social education is one of the strategies that can be used to maintain harmony in the city of Semarang and prevent socio-religious conflict.

Keywords: Conflict Prevention, Conflict Potential, Social Conflict, Religious Conflict

A. INTRODUCTION

The lives of religious communities in Indonesia are currently facing challenges and threats due to the existence of religious fundamentalist movements, radicalism, and terrorism in the name of religion, which are trying to change the ideology of Pancasila (Supriyanto & Amrin, 2022; Tirza & Cendana, 2022). Religious understanding often triggers the birth of social conflict in society. Besides that, the diverse lives of Indonesian culture intersect with ethnic, racial, and cultural differences, which can also cause social conflict (Alfiyanto, 2020; Islam, 2020). Seeing the potential for conflict that could occur due to the diversity of the Indonesian nation, it is necessary to map the potential for conflict to mitigate the occurrence of conflict (Barron et al., 2009). The approach to mapping potential conflicts can use social education for the community (Halawa et al., 2022).

Pluralism is a view or value system that recognizes diversity within an ethnic group (Kirmayer, 2019). Pluralism within a nation needs to be seen as something positive, which is a necessity that is experienced by the people in the life of society and the state (Muhkam & Badaruddin, 2021; Simanjuntak, 2022; Skeie, 2006). The essence of pluralism is not only an acknowledgment of the diversity of nations, but also pluralism implies political, social, and economic aspects (Haryono et al., 2023; Rukiyanto & Amatnua, n.d.; Schlosberg, 2004). Cultural pluralism can be used as a basis for assimilation between ethnic cultures (Hing, 2014; Schachner, 2019). Assimilation through pluralism enables cultural fusion between immigrant communities and local culture (Van Oudenhoven & Ward, 2013). Cultural pluralism does not eliminate the identity of immigrant groups and avoids cultural pluralism as an attempt to absorb essence into its original cultural structure (Delanty, 2011).

From a sociological point of view, religious pluralism is necessary for the Indonesian people to have religious diversity and differences (Rahman & Setia, 2021). The existence of acknowledgment of religious pluralism is a simple implementation of pluralism because this acknowledgment does not mean acknowledging the truth of other religious beliefs or religious ethics. First, open to differences in religious pluralism (Seifert, 2007). The second is to understand the difference because it cannot be avoided as something natural (Smith et al., 2008). Third, there is a critical attitude of respecting differences by not belittling or being prejudiced against those who have differences (Beagan, 2003). Fourth, try dialogue to find commonalities between conversations by placing different parties in the same stratum (Schein, 1993). Fifth is the desire to understand and respect other religions' beliefs, cultures, and practices (Rai S et al., 2020). All parties are expected to try to understand pluralism in depth so that the application of pluralism is not only displayed on the outside but can be absorbed

and felt in the heart (Maria Kyed, 2009). Semarang City is the capital city of Central Java, whose people are known to be multicultural and from different ethnicities. Places of worship of various religions stand in the city of Semarang such as mosques, churches, temples, pagodas and monasteries which are relics of the past and are still part of local wisdom that are maintained today (Amaruli et al., 2020). The condition of inter-religious harmony in the city of Semarang is quite conditional.

The research method used to achieve the research objectives is qualitative, with an ethnographic approach that deeply examines social and cultural groups in society. This research was conducted in Semarang City, which is known as a multicultural city with ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Informants in this research included the Ministry of Religion of Semarang City; Semarang City Regional Secretariat Legal Section; Semarang City National Unity and Politics Agency; Semarang City Social Service; Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency; Chair of the Semarang City Public Belief Monitoring Coordination Team (PAKEM); Dean of FPIPSKR Semarang PGRI University; Chairman of the Semarang City Religious Harmony Forum; Chairman of the United Semarang Communication Forum, Semarang City; Chairman of the Semarang City National Assimilation Forum, religious leaders, community leaders and the people of Semarang city who live amidst ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Data collection techniques use observation at the research location, documentation with supporting literature, and in-depth interviews with informants.

Several previous researchers have carried out research with the themes of social conflict and pluralism. Still, the research results on the causes of social conflict in society are different, including economic, social, cultural, and religious factors. While research with the theme of pluralism produces differences, diversity has a negative impact, such as social conflict, on the one hand, but on the other hand, diversity can strengthen diversity. The difference in the results of this research shows a research gap with the themes of social conflict and pluralism. The state of the art and the novelty of this research is that it combines social conflict mapping with a pluralism-based community social education approach. The combination of the themes of this research has not been widely carried out, especially in the research location in the city of Semarang.

B. METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods, which are research methods that use data that is not in the form of numbers, such as words, images, or actions, to find themes and meanings that can improve our understanding of the world (Sugiyono, 2017). Qualitative methods uncover reasons for behavior, attitudes, and motivations rather than details about what, where, and when (Sugiyono, 2016). Qualitative methods can be used in various fields, such as social sciences, health, and business, and are a common feature in almost every work and educational environment. The steps taken by the researcher are 1) determining the research question, 2) conducting a literature review, 3) designing research, 4) collecting data, 5) analyzing data, 6) presenting data, and 7) evaluating research. The research involved in-depth interviews with stakeholders, such as religious leaders, government officials, and community activists. This research also involves participatory observations of community pluralism education activities conducted by non-governmental organizations. This study aims to explain how community pluralism education can increase harmonization, tolerance, and cooperation between different religious groups in the city of Semarang.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Semarang is one of the cities included in the ten cities with the highest tolerance score for 2022, ranking seventh. Including the city of Semarang in the top 10 manifests the seriousness of all elements of the town in arranging buildings of tolerance in the city of Semarang. The arrangement of buildings of tolerance has been seen in the city development design, which has been implemented, including the designation of several places of worship as cultural heritage to advance group rights. Minorities, grants for all religious organizations and religious backgrounds to establish mayoral regulation no. 47 of 2019 concerning strengthening national insight through Pancasila literacy in Semarang.

As a result of observations, documentation, and in-depth interviews conducted by researchers from May to September 2023, research results showed that several social conflicts were recorded in Semarang. The results of the research are that downwardly, there are more social conflicts, namely religion-based conflicts. Three things cause the type of religious conflict that usually occurs, namely 1) the establishment of places of worship, the establishment of Buddhist places of worship by Buddhists, and most importantly, the establishment of churches by Muslims, conflicts over temporary permits for the establishment of worship have occurred in Malangsari and Sendangmulyo. There was a time when NU residents rejected the

establishment of the Muhammadiyah Mosque in Mangkang, the rejection of the LDII Kalipancur mosque in the Pedalangan area, two and religious broadcasting. One of the conflicts was the annual *Ashuro* conflict activity by the Shiites, which invited all regions in Central Java. Forum of Muslims who are against the Shiites. This conflict was motivated by the fact that the Shiites invited the general public, with the title commemorating Imam Husein's grandson, but only Shiites should have been invited. Usually in October, spiritual awakening activities are carried out, in the Mugas area, there has been rejection by the Islamic Community Forum, rejection by Ustad Abdus Shomad at Mijen, approval by Salafi ustadz 3) Religious differences Rejection of Confucian universities, acceptance of the Cremation House.

Discussion

The population of Semarang City, based on data from the Population and Civil Registry Office, is very heterogeneous based on religion; the most significant percentage are adherents of Islam, and the smallest are religious beliefs. But this does not mean that Muslims are being arbitrary towards minorities. They must be able to place themselves and live side by side to realize harmony, harmony, and peace. Although the tolerance index for religious harmony in the city of Semarang in 2021 is included in the very high category, namely 77.09, this does not mean there are no obstacles to realizing religious harmony in the city of Semarang. In the current condition, there are still several obstacles to be faced, including communication and hospitality blockages, which can trigger damage to religious harmony in the city of Semarang.

On August 1, 2019, the idea of establishing an Indonesian Baptist church in Tlogosasi Kulon was rejected. This rejection was caused by accusations of no IMB for the house of worship and that residents forged signatures. On August 5, 2019, a mediation was held in Pedurungan sub-district. The mediation involved two parties who opposed the establishment of the Church: the Tlogosari Indonesian Baptist Church group, the Police, Koramil, the head of Semarang City Religious Harmony, the Semarang City Kesbangpol, and the Head of Pedurungan District as moderator. Several things that became part of the dialogue in the mediation conveyed the agreement to establish the Church because, firstly, the building permit came from signature fraud. Secondly, the building permit had expired because it had not been carried out six months after it was issued. From the GBI Tlogosari group, they said that government procedures had published the IMB.

On September 23, 2019, LBH Semarang, as GBI Tlogosari's legal advisor for this case, complained to the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia, Representative of Central Java. On October 21, 2019, GBI Tlogosari sent a letter to the Mayor of Semarang stating the option

chosen, namely continuing to build the GBI Tlogosari house of worship on Jl. Malangsari No.83 Rt.06/vii Tlogosari Subdistrict is by the IMB since 1998 with number 645/387/Year:1998 and Church Establishment Principles No. 45.2/42/1998 and welcomes objections to take legal action. GBI Tlogosari appealed to the Semarang city government to exercise their rights as religious people with a sense of security. With this option, GBI Tlogosari did not accept the offer to move the location for the construction of the house of worship to public facilities provided by the Semarang City government. The research results regarding the rejection of the Indonesian Baptist Church in Tlogosari Kulon, Semarang City, were conducted by Wijayanto (Wijayanto, 2021).

Even though the Indonesian Baptist Church in Tlogosari Kulon, Semarang City, has been established and is being used as a place of worship, based on the observations of researchers and interviews with figures who reject the establishment of the Church, they still have wounds not to accept it, so that if a complete settlement is not carried out, it could become a potential conflict in the future. Some residents felt disturbed during the worship event, most of whom were non-local residents using the shoulder of the road to park the Church congregation's vehicles. The potential for conflict due to the construction of a house of worship can also occur from a history of conflicts that have happened when NU residents rejected the establishment of the Muhammadiyah Mosque in Mangkang and rejected the LDII mosque by residents of Kalipancur, Semarang City.

The Asyuro commemoration carried out by Shia adherents at the UTC Hotel in Semarang City was rejected by hundreds of mobs on behalf of the Islamic Community Forum. The masses who demonstrated in front of the hotel gate then performed congregational prayers on the main road until the traffic flow was temporarily closed and road users could not pass. After the prayer, they returned to the action. The Islamic Ummah Forum asked for the Ashuro event held by Shiites to be disbanded because they considered it heresy. However, before the Asyuro event was finished, the Islamic Community Forum had dissolved. Even though in the past two years, the Asyuro commemoration by Shia adherents in Semarang City has not been held, it may be held in the following years, which could create the potential for religious-based social conflict.

On September 1, 2014, the construction of the first Confucian Religious High School (Stakhong) building in Indonesia was established on Jl. Singa Utara 29 Semarang was forced to stop because of resistance from residents. When the committee met the residents individually, some agreed, and others did not. On average, those who disapprove of this development say it is because the land location is very narrow if it is built like other campuses, even though the committee only wants the development on land belonging to the head of this

foundation for a start, and that it is temporary. After all, there are not many students, only 12 people. If there are thousands of students, they will build it elsewhere. Indeed, there have been rumors among residents that the building currently under construction will be used as a Confucian house of worship (Temple). Some are worried that residents will be invited to embrace the Confucian religion, but the foundation has denied this statement.

Community social education can be carried out by providing pluralism education, an educational approach encouraging recognition, respect, and understanding of the diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities, and worldviews. Pluralism education promotes tolerance, cooperation, and understanding between individuals and groups to create an inclusive, peaceful, and harmonious society (Safitri et al., 2022). This education considers that modern society consists of individuals from various cultural, religious, and traditional backgrounds. In this approach, education aims to convey academic knowledge, develop a deeper understanding of differences, and encourage intercultural dialogue. Through pluralism education, it is hoped that the community can build stronger relationships and mutual respect between individuals and groups and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Five principles form the basis of pluralism education: first, recognition and respect for differences. Pluralism education teaches the importance of recognizing and respecting differences in culture, religion, and world views—second, dialogue and communication. Pluralism education encourages dialogue and open communication between different individuals and groups. Through conversation, communities can share experiences, broaden understanding, and reach mutually beneficial agreements—third, inclusive values education. Pluralism education involves teaching inclusive values such as equality, justice, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. This helps create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all individuals. Fourth, increase cross-cultural and religious understanding. Pluralism education emphasizes the importance of studying and understanding different cultures and religions. Through deep understanding, society can overcome stereotypes, prejudices, and fears arising from ignorance—fifth, critical education. Pluralism education encourages critical and analytical thinking skills, which teach individuals to see situations from various points of view, question existing assumptions, and analyze information carefully before concluding.

The implementation of community pluralism education in Semarang City has been partly carried out by government agencies such as the Semarang City Police Binmas by the Republic of Indonesia Police Chief Regulation No. 8 of 2013 concerning technical handling of social conflict (legality, proportionality, accountability, humanism, and integration). Semarang City Binmas conducts community development through community counseling, developing

community participation in fostering security order and realizing cooperation between the Police and the community.

Efforts to prevent potential conflict in Semarang City Semarang City Binmas provide pluralism education to communities potentially vulnerable to social conflict. Implementation of community pluralism education carried out by the National Unity and Politics Agency of the City of Semarang, namely in coordination with the Ministry of Religion of the City of Semarang; Semarang City Regional Secretariat Legal Section; Semarang City Social Service; Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency; Chair of the Semarang City Public Belief Monitoring Coordination Team (PAKEM); Chairman of the Semarang City Religious Harmony Forum; Semarang United Communication Forum, Semarang City, Chair of the Intermingling Forum and various parties provide education on community pluralism by interpreting differences as a necessity to increase harmony and peace in society. The Semarang City National and Political Unity Agency and various government agencies, NGOs, religious figures, community leaders, professionals, and academics are jointly providing social education to the community to understand excessive spiritual experiences. These religious interpretations are too extreme, not imposed on others, but to be applied to himself. So, he must perform worship as best as possible according to his beliefs while prioritizing tolerance towards other people with different ideas.

D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that even though Semarang City is one of the most tolerant cities in Indonesia, social conflict has occurred. Social conflicts in the past can become potential ones if prevention efforts cannot be made. One strategy to prevent potential conflict that can be implemented is by providing education on community pluralism. The implementation of pluralism education has been carried out by the National Unity and Politics Agency of the City of Semarang, namely in coordination with the Ministry of Religion of the City of Semarang; Semarang City Regional Secretariat Legal Section; Semarang City Social Service; Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency; Chair of the Semarang City Public Belief Monitoring Coordination Team (PAKEM); Chairman of the Semarang City Religious Harmony Forum; Semarang United Communication Forum, Semarang City, Chair of the Intermingling Forum and various parties provide education on community pluralism by interpreting differences as a necessity to increase harmony and peace in society.

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