

Constructing Social Relation Models in Multicultural Societies Through Coffee Table Books to Strengthen Pluralism

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to construct a model of social relations of multicultural communities in Sidodadi Village, Gedangan, Malang Regency, which is known as a religious moderation village. The approach used is qualitative with phenomenological methods, data collection through interviews, observation and documentation, which is then analyzed through the stages of collection, condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that the social relations model in Sidodadi Village was formed through the integration of three Pierre Bourdieu theories, namely: 1) habitus, which is internalized from an early age through the example of religious leaders; 2) capital, based on mutual trust implemented by the location of places of worship in close proximity; and 3) arena, the existence of an inclusive arena in community activities that ensures equality without domination. This is influenced by internal factors (local actors), infrastructure and the existence of a tradition of mutual cooperation. This social relations model is constructed into visual communication media in the form of a coffee table book, which functions strategically as a practical, aesthetic, and persuasive instrument to educate the public about the value of pluralism as well as an alternative strategy for preventing intolerance in an inclusive manner.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural country, with a diverse society and always prioritizing tolerance and adhering to the notion of pluralism [1]. *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* is the motto of the life of the nation and state, as an instrument of maintaining harmony among the diversity of religions, ethnicities, and races [2][3]. However, over time, there have been

many acts of intolerance that have the potential to lead to national disintegration, such as inter-ethnic conflicts, inter-religious conflicts and so on. The SETARA Institute stated that throughout 2023-2024, the number of cases of intolerance in Indonesia has increased with a total of 477 incidents and 731 actions, recorded from the total acts of intolerance in 2024, as many as 159 of which were committed by state actors, such as public

officials or law enforcement officials [4]. Meanwhile, another 243 actions came from non-state actors, including individuals and civil society groups [5].

This phenomenon must be anticipated immediately to maintain harmony in Indonesia. All forms of discrimination against the reality of religious pluralism in Indonesia include actions that are counter-productive to the character of the nation that upholds spirituality [6][7]. Dealing with this, the value of pluralism is needed as a noble value that can solve the problem of intolerance [8]. Pluralism is a concept that recognizes and values differences as part of the nation's strengths, which is relevant to be strengthened through various approaches [9]. Pluralism is a principle that recognizes diversity from all aspects and is the foundation in creating harmony in society [10][11].

The value of pluralism can be strengthened through various approaches, one of which is through visual media that bridges communication or social relations in society with the existence of a coffee table book. The coffee table book has the potential to convey information about diversity, especially religious diversity. Coffee table book is a book that is often displayed on the table and placed in the dining area [12]. The content presented in this book is mostly nonfiction, illustrated and less textual [13]. This book not only serves as a decorative element, but also as a means to educate the public about the importance of respecting plurality [14]. In the construction of a multicultural model of social relations, coffee table books can provide a real picture of the beauty of differences in society. This coffee table book will contain the implementation of religious pluralism and moderation in the Sidodadi Village area, Gedangan District, Malang Regency, East Java, which is one of the religious moderation villages [15].

Sidodadi Village has a population of 65,033 adherents of the Islamic religion, 482 Hindus, 25 Buddhists, 599 Christians and 7 Catholics [16]. There are 3 places of worship nearby, namely Mosques, Temples and Churches that are used by the community in

worship [17]. The people in Sidodadi Village live peacefully in tolerance, by accepting, respecting and blending with each other in various activities, both in religious, social and environmental conservation events, which is a factor in this village called a religious moderation village [15] [18].

Research has also been conducted by Shofa et al in 2024 on *the reconstruction of Pancasila ideology: strengthening the value of tolerance in multicultural society through Panccasila village*, which states that synergy from the government, community leaders, and religious leaders is an effective way to strengthen the values of tolerance in the midst of a multicultural society in Pancasila village, East Java. through deliberation and interfaith dialogue activities that are carried out regularly [19]. Policies made by the government of each region can also support success in uniting a multicultural community, such as in the Singkawang City Government which effectively encourages socio-religious inclusion in its community [20].

Another research also discussed the space for dialogue between religious communities in Cigugur under the auspices of the Sunda Wiwitan community, which was successfully used in discussing or resolving problems of marriage, both from social and religious issues [7]. The same thing also happened in Sarongan Village, Banyuwangi, which carried out interfaith and ethnic dialogue and cooperation between religious people while still believing in their own religion and respecting the religion of others as a form of harmony between religious people in a multicultural society [21]. Fitri et al., stated that there are social boundaries as a flexible negotiation space, such as the limit of involvement in social activities between religious believers so that tolerance is created [22].

The novelty of this research lies in the integration between the construction of the social relations model of the multicultural community in Sidodadi Village with narrative visual media in the form of coffee table books. Generally, strengthening the value of pluralism is carried out through formal education, interfaith dialogue or programs

from the government, but this study introduces the introduction of Sidodadi Village as a role model in the coffee table book, so that it can be an example for other regions in Indonesia.

Based on this statement, Sidodadi Village is an interesting example for the construction of a multicultural community social relations model as a strategy to strengthen the value of pluralism through the coffee table book, which can reflect diversity as well as an alternative to promote the value of pluralism in Indonesian society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Relations

Social relations can be interpreted as a two-way interaction in which individuals influence each other. The basis of this relationship is a collective awareness to help each other, so that a mutually beneficial bond is created. The social relations model in sociology focuses on how individuals and groups interact, build trust, and form social networks [23].

2.2 Pluralism

Plurality and pluralism are inseparable. Simply put, plurality is the fact that we are different, both in terms of religion, ethnicity, and culture. Meanwhile, pluralism is our attitude or perspective in seeing these differences. Pluralism is not just about knowing that we are different, but daring to see that difference as a positive thing. In it, there is a process of adapting, negotiating, and accepting each other without any intention to eliminate each other [24]. Through this pluralism, diversity can be transformed into a social glue that keeps society harmonious and peaceful.

2.3 Coffee Table Book

Coffee table book is a visually rich nonfiction book that is usually placed in the living room as an attention grabber. Since the content is dominated by simple photographs and language, the design and visual aesthetic aspects are the main keys to inviting the reader's interest in reading [25].

3. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods, because this research focuses on the phenomenon of social relations models in multicultural communities in Sidodadi Village, the involvement of local actors in their social relations in strengthening the value of pluralism, and the construction of effective social relations models in the Pancasila village community. Phenomenology is the study of knowledge that comes from consciousness, or how to understand an object or event by experiencing it consciously [26]. Data collection is through interviews with informants, namely village heads, RT heads, religious leaders, community leaders, youth leaders, and community representatives of Sidodadi Village; observation of the people of Sidodadi Village, the role of local actors and activities carried out by the community in Sidodadi Village; and documentation, which is then analyzed through 4 stages, namely: a) data collection; b) data condensation; c) presentation of data and d) drawing conclusions [27].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Portrait of Sidodadi Village, Gedangan District, Malang Regency

The location of Gedangan District is about 29 Km from the capital of Malang Regency, which is geographically located 112°35'213–112°39'453 E and 8°14'483–8°22'313 S. The area is about 130.55 km² (4.38% of the area of Malang Regency) with an altitude of 0-6 M [17]. Sidodadi Village has a population of 65,033 adherents of the Islamic religion, 482 Hindus, 25 Buddhists, 599 Christians and 7 Catholics [16]. There are 3 places of worship nearby, namely Mosques, Temples and Churches that are used by the community in worship [17]. The people in Sidodadi Village live peacefully in tolerance, by accepting, respecting and blending with each other in various activities, both in religious, social and environmental conservation events,

which is a factor in this village called a religious moderation village [28]. Sidodadi Village in Gedangan District shows a real portrait of tolerance through the existence of Mosques, Temples, and Churches located close to each other. As a universal principle taught by all religions, this reality requires people of different faiths to respect each other in both religious worship and socio-cultural activities. In this village, such tolerance is actively actualized through healthy daily social interactions. The pattern of cooperation, mutual cooperation, and mutual help between residents are the main keys in maintaining religious harmony and peaceful in the region.

4.2 Construction of a Multicultural Community Social Relations Model in Sidodadi Village

The model of community social relations in Sidodadi Village, Gedangan was formed through several cultural adaptation processes that were intertwined continuously and became a habit. Referring to Pierre Bourdieu's theory, harmony in Sidodadi Village is not just a natural condition, but the result of three sociological elements, the first of which is habitus. Habitus theory is a cognitive structure or mental structure in the process of socialization in society, which means that people use habitus in social relations. Habitus in Sidodadi Village is formed through a process of internalizing values that takes place in a sustainable and structured manner. According to Bourdieu's perspective, habitus arises through the experience of each individual with other individuals in a network of objective structures that exist in social space, one of which is played by the main actors in society such as religious figures [29] [30].

The existence of religious leaders in this region acts as a driving force that instills awareness in the community, that differences in beliefs are a beautiful and equal thing. This example is not only conveyed in the pulpit of worship, but is consistently shown in the form of

attitudes in the public space and taught from an early age. This is reflected in the celebration of religious holidays or when village forums, the community works hand in hand to help each other with every activity, greets each other and pays their respects regardless of dogmatic barriers and does not interfere in the process of carrying out worship. Another simple implementation was to have children with different backgrounds playing together in the yard around the adjacent place of worship. The existence of adjacent infrastructure indirectly gives knowledge to children to be familiar with the different sounds of the call to prayer, church bells and prayer chanting in the temple. This habitus of tolerance instilled from an early age forms a solid mental disposition, so that when such children grow up, they have psychological immunity to provocations based on religious sentiments. This process then becomes habitual and forms a cognitive construct that views heterogeneity not as a threat, but as a social reality that must be respected.

The next theory is capital, which shapes social relations and ways of communication between individuals [31]. Sidodadi Village has accumulated social capital in obtaining a unique acceleration space through geographical-infrastructure factors. The physical proximity between mosques, temples, and churches is not just an architectural symbol, but functions as a daily social meeting space that can expand the volume of cross-faith social networks. This closeness triggers the birth of a sense of mutual ownership of the common living space, which becomes a solid foundation for the formation of village collective social capital. The most crucial thing about social capital in Sidodadi Village is the high *trust* or mutual trust that thrives between religions. The form of active involvement of residents in caring for the environment around houses of worship or attending traditional ceremonies together is a

concrete form of this conversion. A network of friends that provides access for citizens to deeply understand the traditional values, symbolic language, and cultural sensitivities of other groups.

Finally, the arena theory, in Pierre Bourdieu's perspective, various community activities in Sidodadi Village, such as religious holiday celebrations, social forums, to joint environmental conservation actions, function as an open arena or a meeting place for various capitals owned by residents [32]. This inclusive arena can be a forum for all religious believers and each holds an equal social position, where the applicable rules prioritize the principle of equality for the common good. As a result, this dialogue space is free from unequal power relations, so that there is no domination of the majority group or marginalization of the minority group, and vice versa, this arena succeeds in becoming a stage for harmonious cultural negotiations to maintain the values of pluralism.

The social relations model, which is a combination of habitus, capital, and arena theories, is constructed in physical form in the form of a visual communication medium called a coffee table book [25]. This step is a direct answer to the formulation of problems related to the form of model construction that is ideal for multicultural society. The coffee table book in this study has strategic functions, including: 1) visualization of the construction of the relational model, conceptual files regarding pluralist habitus and mutual cooperation in Sidodadi Village are transformed into a visual narrative with minimal texture but rich in representative photos. Images of citizen interactions, portraits of adjacent places of worship, and documentation of joint activities became empirical evidence that implemented Bourdieu's theory in a more intuitive understanding; and 2) as an instrument to prevent intolerance, the coffee table book is aesthetically designed

to be flexible to be placed in leisure spaces, such as living rooms or public areas. This casual nature of nonfiction media makes it a persuasive alternative dissemination strategy and able to educate readers about the values of pluralism in a casual manner without the impression of dictating like formal textbooks.

4.3 Factors Influencing the Dynamics of Social Interaction between Groups in a Multicultural Context in Sidodadi Village

The dynamics of social interaction in Sidodadi Village are influenced by several factors that significantly support strong social integration and are also summarized in *the coffee table book*, namely: a) internal factors (between local actors), there is a strong commitment and harmonious cooperation between the village government (village head, RT/RW), religious leaders and youth organizations in initiating routine dialogue spaces; b) infrastructure factors, related to the placement of houses of worship that are spatially adjacent to trigger the intensity of social relations between religious communities; c) cultural factors, the existence of a tradition of mutual cooperation in the routine of society that removes interreligious barriers and creates a flexible dialogue space.

5. CONCLUSION

Tolerance and religious harmony in Sidodadi Village, Gedangan District, Malang Regency, have been successfully maintained thanks to the spatial proximity of the infrastructure of houses of worship (Mosques, Temples, Churches) and the strong pattern of healthy social interaction such as mutual cooperation and mutual help between interfaith residents. Viewed from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology, harmony in this religious moderation village is systematically formed through the integration of three main elements: habitus that is internalized from an early age through

the example of religious leaders, the accumulation of social capital based on mutual trust and the availability of *an inclusive arena* in community activities that ensure equality of position without the dominance of the majority group or marginalization of minorities. The overall conceptualization of the sociological relationship model and its driving factors (local actors, infrastructure,

and culture) is then constructed into a physical form in the form of a visual communication media coffee table book, which functions strategically as a practical, aesthetic, and persuasive dissemination instrument to educate the wider community about the values of pluralism while preventing acts of intolerance in an inclusive manner.

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