

Tresno Mergo Kulino (Know Then Loved)

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ABSTRACT

The present article aims to discuss focus the concept of religion as well as the role of religious leaders as agents of dialogue to maintain religious harmony and tolerance. The present study applies a qualitative study by investigating several literatures related to the subject of research. The findings of the present study indicate that the concept of religion needs to be rejuvenated. In addition, religious leaders should get involved in efforts to spread moderate religious values, tolerance and peace, to practice the fiqh (theory or philosophy of Islamic law) that promotes the coexistence between religions, spreading inclusive and tolerant ideas, reducing prejudiced political movement, (5) istiqomah (steadfastness) towards the constitution in order to care for diversity, and (6) maintain a cool atmosphere. Finally, this study concludes that religious leaders have a very strategic role and task to channel positive energy to their followers so that they can collaborate to build a common ground with a solid humanistic foundation.

Keywords: Religion, Religious Leaders, Roles Of Religious Leaders



INTRODUCTION

Two things inspire the writer to study the topic of religion and the role of religious leaders as "a beacon in the midst of darkness". First, this article is inspired by a clever idea put forward by Hendrik Maku, a participant in the Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation Forum at the Merapi-Merbabu Hotel, Yogyakarta (19-20 November 2019). Maku stated that there are not a few people who practice their religion not based on the knowledge they have obtained from formal educational institutions and/or from the results of their own reflections, but based on what religious leaders have conveyed on various occasions. The reference to religiosity is not from objective and authoritative primary sources but from secondary sources which tend to be subjective (Maku, 2019). The event is organized by the DIAN/Interfidei Institute as a national response to the rampant intolerance that has occurred so far. The event is also a response toward tolerance act that is not accompanied by a critical and constructive way of thinking and being. The participants are active participants in discussions with a number of public intellectuals, academics, journalists, religious leaders, and other interfaith activists. Their dialogue resulted in a number of recommendations, among others, increasing the role of religious leaders in building tolerance education in society, and encouraging them to utilize social media in spreading messages of tolerance in society (PCPI, 2019).

Secondly, the present study covers a number of points presented in the webinar on Interfaith Nationality in Welcoming the 76th Commemoration of Indonesian Independence held by the Baitul Muslimin Indonesia Central Board (Bamusi), on Wednesday (18/08/2021). In the webinar, the Minister of Religion, Yaqut Cholil Qoumas said that religious leaders are the most trusted source of information by the public. Therefore the role of religious leaders is very important in socializing and educating people. This statement was based on the results of a 2020 survey conducted by the Ministry of Religion's Research and Development and Training Agency which concluded that religious leaders were considered by the public to be the most trusted source of information. In the case of Covid-19, for example, the percentage level of public trust in religious leaders is very significant as it reached 37.16%. The number

ranks third after health workers (84.18%) and the government (58.51%). Similar results were also revealed by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) in a 2020 survey. SMRC stated that religious leaders were the most trusted party to explain Covid-19 prevention after doctors and the president. Likewise with the Indonesian Digital Literacy National Survey (Kemenkominfo, 2020). The results show that religious leaders are the most trusted source of information (61.7%). Qoumas invites religious leaders to continue to enlighten their followers (Qoumas, 2021).

In addition to Qoumas, the Chairperson of PP Bamusi, Hamka Haq, in the same webinar said that the presence of religious leaders is very necessary in countering rumors that are not true (hoaxes) that are developing in society. "Religious figures have a big influence on opinions that arise in society, they are considered calm and can create a peaceful atmosphere and we need to maintain this." According to Haq, misleading issues have a major contribution in creating social conflict, both horizontal conflict among community members, as well as vertical conflict that deconstructs the relationship between the community and the government (Ahsanulhaq, 2019).

The above points suggest a positive attitude towards the contribution of religious leaders. As described earlier, such positive attitude is in stark contrast to the attitude of a handful of religious leaders who like to sow the seeds of conflict in the midst of a nation-state which is very diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, race and customs (SARA). This splinter group is not without ideology which is the motor of its struggle. "Multiculturalism, no! Monoculturalism, yes" is a slogan they preach. According to Azra, to realize his idealism, these elements always take advantage of various opportunities, and the best condition for them is an unstable socio-political situation. When the socio-political situation changes, society experiences dislocation and disorientation (Azra, 2007). These conditions, according to Azra, will be exploited by those who from the beginning wanted to uphold the principles of 'oneness', uniformity and uniformity, even if they justify all means, including acts of violence. Instead of saving the "pagans" with their exclusive teachings, they are trapped in counter-productive ways. They do not hesitate to use vulgar means to oppose pluralism and/or plurality.

The phenomenon of religious leaders with double faces "tempts" the writer to provide answers regarding the nature of the real religious leaders and also the urgency in rejuvenating the concept of religion. Previous researchers have discussed these two points specifically and with a local pattern (Aula, 2020; Fahham, 2010; Umami, 2018). The present study focuses on discussing religion and six points related to the role of religious leaders. The substance of the discussion of the two points is holistic and not casuistic.

Religion

According to KBBI V, religion is a belief system that regulates the procedures for faith (belief) and worship of God and the rules relating to the association of humans and humans and humans with their environment. The term religion in socio-anthropological studies some important elements such as beliefs and rituals - which are shared by a community group. Religion is related to 'transcending experience' (experience with 'That which is above'), or something that is beyond, something that is intangible beyond. Therefore, religion can be considered important in human life as it contains sublime human aspirations as well as the source of all high culture, even opium for humans as mentioned by Marx (O'Dea, 1969). On the other hand, Spiro, defines a religion an institution consisting of patterns of cultural interaction with culturally believable supernatural beings (Spiro, 2013). While Geertz refers a religion to a set of symbolic systems that act in certain ways, maintain a powerful and long-lasting motivation as well as mood among people, create an origin story that drapes that belief with an aura of factuality and realistic (Geertz, 2013). It can be said that a religion can be defined as a set of symbols with psychological, cultural, and social roles that decorate moods and motivation of followers to be realistic.

Furthermore, scholars have different definitions toward religion. Yinger (1957) holds an opinion that religion is a set of cultural knowledge about the supernatural beings which are used by humans to deal with the most important problems regarding human existence on this earth. On the other hand, Firth maintains that a religion is a part of human artistic creation that is capable of reaching the greatest intellectual and artistic level, but also capable of achieving complex manipulation work to meet the

needs of believing humans (Firth, 2013). Similarly, Wallace defines a religion as a set of rituals, rationalized by myth, which mobilizes supernatural powers for the purpose of achieving or preventing transformations of states in man and nature (Jackson, 2017). It can be concluded that a religion covers two main points; rituals and beliefs.

The best way to understand the phrase “religious figure” is to separate the two words and examine them separately. The previous description of "religion" was too wide to be widened. It is why in the present sub-topic needs to focus on term "figure" and the phrase "religious figure." According to KBBI V, the word "figure" has several meanings, including: (1) a prominent and well-known person in a particular field (politics, culture, religion, etc.) and (2) a role holder (main role). If the term is "married" with the term "religion", then the phrase "religious figure" can be understood as someone who has an important role in the area of religion. The role that is owned by someone who is considered a religious figure can have a great influence caused by the charismatic leadership model they have. Likewise, the struggle to uphold religion is the main attraction that makes a religious figure a role model for the religious community to always emulate and follow (Bin Nabi & Adhiem, 1994). In the structure of social life, the relationship between religious leaders and citizens is in a patron-client relationship. Religious figures are accepted as the center of authority originating from religious beliefs and have absolute authority over the interpretation of religious sources. The relationship that is constructed is the obedience relationship (Muhaimin & Mudzakkir, 2014).

The intensity of the relationship between religious leaders and the community is very significant because they are bound by solid religious emotions. The charismatic power possessed by religious leaders strengthens the bond between the two. The answers they give to religious issues are accepted by the community as an authoritative solution (Turmudi, 2004, p.97). Religious figures are able to provide major changes to the social conditions of society. According to Achidsti, religious leaders are able to change the direction of community action in the desired direction. Factors that led to the success of the changes desired by religious leaders apart from being caused by obedience were their ability to describe complex problems for the

community to make it easier. This communication ability is an added value for religious leaders to influence public awareness so they can do what they are told (ACHIDSTI, 2011).

Some of the points that are systematically described in this article are (1) rejuvenation of religion, (2) lawsuits against religion, and (3) strengthening of several roles of religious leaders. By elevating the six roles of religious figures, the author pretends to introduce their identities as well as humanistic faces to the public. According to the author, religious figures, as well as humans in general, are vicegerents of Allah on earth. However, what distinguishes them from other humans is that with the authority they have, they can help others to be able to realize the same task, namely to realize prosperity on earth (Q.S. Hud: 61), as well as to realize safety and happiness in life on earth (Q.S. Al-Maidah: 16), by means of faith and good deeds (Q.S. al-Ra'd: 29), working together in upholding the truth and working together in upholding patience (Q.S. al-'Asr: 1- 3). Thus, the duty of religious leaders is something sacred and that matter must be interpreted as a mandate that is original from God. That is why the author covers this entire discussion under the title *Tresno Mergo Kulino* (known then loved).

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study uses a qualitative research method (Sugiyono, 2018). This method is used to find results or conclusions from the object under study, namely religion and the role of religious leaders as agents of dialogue for the sake of harmony and religious tolerance. Data for the present study is taken from various literatures that specifically discuss religion and religious figures. Some of the references used in this research include journals, books, and research papers related to the core topic. Therefore, I explore various existing data, both primary and secondary data. After extracting the main ideas from the sources studied, I develop an analysis of the existing data by conducting academic processing before arriving at a conclusion (Arikunto, 2009; Hasanah, 2017; Putra & Sawarjuwono, 2019). The method used in analyzing abstracted data is a descriptive-analytic approach. I use a term 'descriptive' because

with this method I can find facts to be interpreted appropriately. I use the term 'analysis' because with this method, I can describe something carefully and directed to the point. Data is then presented deductively. The analysis of the present study leads to the conclusion that can be an answer to the problems raised in the present research.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Rejuvenating the Concept of Religion

If culture is purely a human product, religion can be considered as one. Religion is a divine teaching whose age is no younger than the human breath itself. Religion and religious life have existed and developed since the early stages of cultured humans under this sky. Schmidt, as quoted by Saloom, emphasized that religious ideas such as monotheism are the oldest creations of ratios in human history (Saloom, 2016). Saloom (2016) develops the ideas of religiosity as a series of symbolic forms and actions that connect humans with the peak condition of one's existence. Meanwhile, James is of the view that diversity includes feelings, actions and human experiences in solitude to affirm the reciprocal relationship between humans and something that is believed to be divine.

By referring to the thesis of Bellah and James, Saloom (2016) more specifically argues that Islam as a religion emphasizes a two-way relationship, vertical and horizontal. Saloom affirms that worship is the application of an understanding of how Muslims interact with the Creator and how they interact with the social and natural environment (*muamalah ma'a al-nas*). The process of interaction involving humans as the main actors in worship on the one hand, and God, the social and natural environment on the other hand provides an understanding that humans cannot free themselves from divine values and environmental values (local, place) (Sunarso, 2020).

In line with the views of the scholars above, Maku clearly states that in actualizing themselves, humans (religious people) generally always need religion to illuminate the way of life, inspire ideas of peace, and build civilization. Religion, can establish a balanced relationship with political affairs that are oriented towards the benefit of many people (Maku, 2019). Because humanistic values contained in religion

can be an ethical framework in building civilization. Then, religion can be a positive source of inspiration in constructing a country and culture (Maku, 2019).

The elegant function of religion, as stated above, has often been distorted in its development. Religion is often used as a political tool and hegemonic power (political interests). The Roman Empire for example used religion as a political language for oppression. Then Europe was confined by the church inquisition which became a symbol of the restraint of society in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, imperial authorities in much of Europe including Turkey used religion to legitimize war and expansion. The historical trauma of war, oppression and restraint that drags down religion, in turn, becomes a trend that leaves pain, so that the flames of rejection of the politicization of religion are continuously ignited throughout the planet. However, this gray history did not disappear from the collective record, at least until the end of World War II.

The collective memory of the pain of incidents clothed in religion makes the world enter a post-religion phase. It is a phase in which some countries no longer display the characteristics of a religious empire, whether they are Christian in nature and/or contain an Islamic caliphate. The movement to establish a religious state is also considered a fringe movement, especially since the birth of the nation state and the rapid advancement of technology. Nevertheless the activism that injects and seeks to revive certain religious values as the ideology of hegemonic power is not completely extinguished. The seed of a conservative religious ideology continues to exist even on rocky ground. The rocky land could one day turn into fertile land when the modern world is apathetic towards the threats that come from this phase. Because in reality, the politicization of religion shows symptoms that have become a phenomenon, not only in Indonesia but also on a global scale today.

The conditions described above then became a *sine qua non* condition for the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU) in initiating a collective dialogue that brought together all religious leaders in the world in the religion twenty (R20) forum which took place in Bali some time ago (2-3 November 2022). The chairman of NU, Yahya Cholil Staquf, does not want religion to be seen as traumatic and a trigger for

conflict. It is why he encourages all religious leaders in various countries to unite to realize religion as a global solution. According to Staquf, future threats have many potential variables which are not only related to the energy crisis, global warming and food scarcity, but also to issues of religious conservative movements which could disrupt world stability. Therefore, religious issues and social issues that have a religious flavor, no matter how sensitive they are, must be formulated and openly dialogued so that this does not metamorphose into a movement of religious conservatism in all dimensions of life.

In light of the R20, religion is seen as an ethical resource for the global community. Quoting Patnistik, religion is a guide or source of ethics used in establishing a life of harmony between nations and countries. All the participants in the forum seek to open up and maybe even transform global views in seeing religion which is no longer accepted as a source of threat associated with political movements. But on the other hand, religion is a source of inspiration in reconciling people and organizing world society in a better direction. Furthermore, one of the wise first steps to make this dream come true is the meeting of world religious leaders to have a dialogue in order to create a better world life. Because religion, according to Kant, does not only function as a means of validating scattered truths, but also becomes a moral movement in anticipating humans not to act wrongly (Azra, 2020a).

The Role of Religion is Sued

The thesis that religion is an ethical source in illuminating the path of life, creating peace, constructing civilization, and inspiring harmony, still needs proof. The role of religion is sued and challenged. Can religion still be relied on in creating peace, resolving conflicts, and overcoming environmental crises? According to Muhaimin, it is not difficult to find evidence that everywhere there is cynicism and even skepticism about the existence and negative contributions of religion, which not only has a dark history in the past, but also tensions between religious communities that have contributed to creating an uncomfortable world (Muhaimin & Mudzakkir, 2014).

It is undeniable to say that every religion still has internal conflicts. Some examples of cases that trigger these conflicts are the problem of disbelief, claims of

truth, and claims of ownership of heaven. Nafi is of the view that even if internal conflict issues, for example, can be managed properly, there is no guarantee that efforts to build cooperation and relations with other religions can be realized easily. In addition, differences in beliefs that are not managed wisely will trigger the presence of negative prejudice and mutual suspicion among adherents of religions. Various forms of prejudice and suspicion will be a time bomb that can explode at any time. Thus, such unhealthy social conditions must be restored as soon as possible so that later it does not injure the ethical principles that support social life (Nafi, 2018).

The holding of R20 initiated by NU is the best response to the lawsuit against the role of religion. The commitment built by the participants includes developing mutual understanding and respect for differences in beliefs, as well as being able to collaborate in creating a world as a better, safer, and peaceful shared home. The religious leaders agreed to transform the role of religion again as a teacher who teaches kindness, nobility, and respect for fellow creatures, humans and nature. They believe that interaction and cooperation, healthy dialogue and communication will eliminate various bad prejudices that haunt relations between religious communities. For this reason, according to Staquf, as quoted by Trinugroho, every religion needs to improve itself and religious leaders must speak honestly about religious problems. In these ways, a new dawn of hope will emerge and become a source of positive energy in stimulating mutual understanding, respect and acknowledging differences, but at the same time encouraging cooperation for a better civilization and humanity.

Revitalizing the Role of Religious Leaders as Dialogue Agents for Harmony and Tolerance of Religious Life

Bridging the gap between the nature of religion and religious practice, the active role and positive contribution of religious leaders can be an alternative. What has been done by religious leaders so far needs to be revitalized so that it has a greater impact in managing differences for the common good. The roles of religious leaders need to be strengthened by following steps:

Spreading Moderate Religious Values, Tolerance, and Peace

The efforts of religious leaders to spread moderate religious values, tolerance and peace are an essential part of their degree of piety. According to Azra, piety means 'fear of Allah' in the sense of protecting believers from worldviews, thoughts and actions that are not in accordance with Allah's commands. In other words, a pious person always controls himself by only carrying out the commands of Allah and His Messenger (Azra, 2020a). For the piety mission, as described above, for a week, since Tuesday (1/11/2022), Vice President Ma'ruf Amin visited the United Arab Emirates and Egypt. Amin attended the COP 27 Climate Change Summit (Summit) in Egypt, consolidated cooperation between Mohamed bin Zayed University, Abu Dhabi and Nahdlatul Ulama University (NU) Yogyakarta, and was involved in activities initiated by the Abu Dhabi Peace Forum (ADFP). Amin took advantage of some of these agendas as a stage to spread moderate Islamic values, tolerance and peace. Amin, as quoted by Nugroho, clearly said that strengthening the vision to develop tolerance and moderate Islam would not only be carried out by Indonesia and the UAE, but also be transmitted to other countries around the world. ADFP, according to Amin, is not an exclusive organization, but he opens himself up to be joined by a number of world countries and not only Muslims (Nugroho, 2022). In an effort to develop peace and tolerance, the UAE has been recorded in world history when in 2019, the Leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis made his episcopal trip to Abu Dhabi and had an audience with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb and religious leaders other. In that audience, the Pope and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar signed a historic document on human fraternity for world peace and coexistence in order to ward off radicalism and terrorism. According to Wibowo, one of the meeting points of the religions contained in the document is that the values of human brotherhood for peace and living together are the most fundamental teachings of all religions and beliefs (Wibowo, 2007). The Fraternity of Man document has become the most important in the history of the relationship between Al-Azhar and the Vatican as well as the relationship between Islam and Christianity. The document contains seven calling points, among others, inviting world leaders in various fields to work hard and work effectively to spread the culture of living in a peaceful and tolerant neighborhood

with others, upholding the values of peace and human brotherhood, protecting the rights of women and children, and call for reconciliation and care for human fraternity. According to Ignatius Cardinal Suharyo, the content contained in the Abu Dhabi Document is a burning ember that continues to burn the enthusiasm of every person with good will to endlessly try to manifest love into various creative movements in response to various humanitarian challenges that are implicitly described in the document (Fathurrohman, 2016).

Practicing Jurisprudence of Coexistence Between Religions

The positive energy that flows from the R20 forum in Bali, surges in every heart of peace lovers. PBNU was very smart when it chose Bali as the venue for the event. According to M. Taufiq, apart from being the venue for the G20 Summit, Bali is also known as an archipelago which clearly contextualizes the fiqh of coexistence between religions (*Fikih al-Ta'âyus bayna al-Adyân*). There is a Puja Mandala, a place of worship for five religions in one complex (Taufiq, 2022). The main objective of the R20 forum is to reaffirm the role of religious leaders in realizing tolerance (*al-tasâmuh*), conflict reconciliation (*fikih al-mushâlah*), and realizing world peace (*al-salâm al-'âmalamî*). Together with the World Muslim League (Moslem World League/*Râbithah al-'Âlam al-Islâmî*), this forum strengthens NU's consistency in maintaining global political stability and building a new civilizational fiqh. The new civilization meant by the R20 forum is a civilization without conflict, full of peace and mutual respect; civilization without extremism (*al-tatharruf*) which ends in radicalism and ends in terrorism (*al-Irhâbiyah*); a civilization that respects human values, promotes morals; civilization that can bring global change in realizing world peace (*al-salâm al-'Âlami*). According to Maku, the key word for all these endeavors is peace in several Islamic senses, including, peace as a Divine name, the affirmation of Mercy-Love-Altruism and Piety, the universal humanity in Islamic societies, the concept on the absolute equality, and Islam as a religion of Mercy (MAKU, 2019). The R20 Forum was also initiated to reconcile the recent conflicts. The conflict in the Middle East has not ended, the war between Russia and Ukraine has not been stopped. This proves that the triggering factors for conflict are not only due to misunderstandings and

misunderstandings about religion and religious practices, but also due to global political issues. With R20, PBNU gathered religious leaders from around the world to think about finding the best solution and the right path of reconciliation. PBNU wants to ensure that religion is an inspiration for peace, not just adding to the problem. The virus of extremism, radicalism and terrorism in the name of religion must be cleaned up immediately so that it does not attack the heart of global peace.

Spreading Inclusive and Tolerant Thought

Buya Ahmad Syafii Maarif is an exemplary figure in terms of spreading inclusive and tolerant thoughts. Suhaimi and Raudhonah explained, during his lifetime Buya Syafii had gone through a long process of intellectual evolution, had made such a large contribution of thought in Islamic sciences, nationality, humanity and diversity in Indonesia. Buya Syafii's long struggle with themes around Islam and politics and his desire to maintain religious values, while adopting theories, methodologies and concepts of modern statehood, continued to make him anxious and disturb his mind throughout his life. It is not surprising that questions about the basis of the state, models of government, and important concepts such as democracy, tolerance, freedom of religion, social justice, radicalism and terrorism are the main focus in many of his works and writings (Suhaimi & Raudhonah, 2020). Buya Syafii often reminds the public of the threats and dangers that will be posed by radicalism and terrorism. According to Muthoi, Buya is very concerned about protecting Pancasila and being wary of terrorism that threatens this country. Buya Syafii is worried about the "theology of death" which can monopolize the truth against other groups. The adherents of that understanding dare to take extreme paths such as ending their lives in order to defend their teachings. The theology of death, daring to die for not daring to live, monopolizes the truth that outside of us, blood is unclean and lawful (Muthoi, 2017, p.117-132). At the University of Chicago, Buya Syafii studied and had intensive dialogue with Fazlur Rahman. From this learning activity, according to Mohammad Ali, his heart became so open. For Buya, the meaning and message of the Koran is not only for consumption exclusively by Muslims, but also for the entire universe (rahmatan lil 'alamin). Buya Syafii believes that the principle of universal

brotherhood and the recognition of the principle of human unity, even if they consist of various ethnicities, nations and historical backgrounds, must be accompanied by a willingness to uphold justice and genuine brotherhood between people (Ali, 2016, p.1-14). Buya Syafii, in various writings and opportunities, has never stopped calling for the expression "rahmatan lil 'alamin" to be used as a basic philosophy for understanding and carrying out all religious activities. He always advised, there must be courage to make a breakthrough based on religious arguments that are understood correctly and intelligently, textually as well as contextually. Buya wants Islam that is grounded in Indonesia to be one that is friendly, open, inclusive, and able to provide solutions to various problems of the nation and state. Indonesia, in the eyes of Buya Syafii, is a very diverse nation. Pluralism is analogous to a giant ship with a lot of passengers. According to the 2020 Indonesian population census published by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in January 2021, Indonesia's population reached 270.20 million people. Indonesia thus becomes the fourth largest country after China, India and the US. In addition, Indonesia is the largest maritime continental or archipelagic country in the world which includes more than 17,000 islands, in which there are more than 1,300 ethnic or ethnic groups. According to Azyumardi Azra, this diversity is a blessing in disguise for this nation and therefore every member of the nation needs to celebrate it. In Azra's perspective of multiculturalism, diversity is a sunatullah, natural law, which this nation and state are very lucky to have. Azra unequivocally said that there are not many nation-states that are as lucky as Indonesia, which has a diversity full of invaluable socio-cultural wealth (Azra, 2007). Therefore, it is hoped that religious leaders can inherit and continue Buya Syafii's ideals and thoughts. Also, it can spread Islamic thoughts that are inclusive, tolerant, moderate, and side with humanity, statehood, and Indonesia.

Inflame the SARA Anti-political Movement

According to Azra, Indonesia is certainly not heaven. In the midst of a strong political reality with a post-truth scent, far from civilization, and ignoring values that respect humanity, religious leaders need to start an anti-political SARA movement. Religious leaders must be aware that SARA politics does not only harm cross-ethnic,

religious, racial and inter-group brotherhoods, but can also deconstruct social cohesion through primordial sentiments that tear apart national life. By not negating the explosive power of money politics in elections and local elections, SARA politics is becoming a serious threat in the 2024 elections. Religious leaders must have the same commitment and boldly and openly say "no" to SARA political practices so that the 2024 elections and local elections can take place safe, peaceful, and full of civility (Azra, 2020, p.42). Religious leaders along with religious organizations, democracy activists, and groups across racial and ethnic groups must be able to create conducive conditions and unite their determination and commitment to support elections and peaceful local elections with dignity. Religious leaders must be able to channel positive energy to related parties to maintain solidity and shared commitment, respect political choices and the diversity of the Indonesian nation so that all constituents can use their voting rights intelligently in choosing leaders who are ready to serve the nation and state.

Istiqomah (Steadfastness) towards the Constitution for the sake of Caring for Diversity

In order to care diversity, religious leaders are expected to be able to voice the voices of minorities who are victims of injustice and discrimination. It has become a classic narrative that the construction of houses of worship is often a complicated problem. The guarantee of equal and fair freedom of belief as contained in the 1945 Constitution, Article 29 Paragraphs (1) and (2) is very relative in its implementation. This is what makes Indonesia a "soft country" or soft state, borrowing Myrdal's term (1968). In fact, according to Azra, the state should always be present to uphold the constitution equally for the advancement of Indonesia as a nation state (Azra, 2020, p.63-65). Without a consistent and firm enforcement of the constitution, uncivilized people become accustomed to committing open violations of the constitution. This immoral practice can turn into mere common sense because upholding the constitution is not the first and foremost priority in administering the state. In a problematic condition like this, a critical attitude and voice from religious leaders would be a solution (Ali, 2017).

Keeping the Cool Atmosphere

As the 2024 election approaches, the political temperature in this country is starting to warm up. On the one hand, in the eyes of the political elite, elections are seen as a means to control political and economic resources. Meanwhile, from a different point of view, the public interprets elections as a momentum for their participation in determining government policies, part of the community's control over government policies, and a venue for healthy competence to select and obtain quality leaders. For the public, a quality leader is not a leader who is only loyal to the supporting party and his political "companions" but a leader who consistently pays attention to the welfare of the people (Azra, 2020b). This kind of clash of expectations is not without consequence. Therefore, religious leaders are expected to always remind the people they lead to be able to do politics in a cool and calm atmosphere. Religious messages from religious leaders may inspire political elites and political parties to engage in politics in a healthy manner, by praising each other, not putting each other down, and for all parties to keep the political situation cool. Don't let political storms complement other storms, such as the post-pandemic world, a world full of uncertainty, the threat of global recession, and the climate change factor. Critical voices from religious leaders should be an inspiration for elites and political parties in offering productive ideas or narratives, especially to respond to the public's needs after the downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic so that they can recover faster and rise stronger. Baihaki and Mahpudi added that religious leaders must be responsive to the reality of injustice by providing input to party elites regarding the idea of returning Indonesia's ideals of becoming a rule of law country in the midst of a legal situation that has been held hostage and has not succeeded in bringing justice. This nation needs alternative ideas from religious leaders to maintain a cool atmosphere in the common home, Indonesia (Baihaki & Mahpudi, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The study of the role of religious leaders in creating harmony within the nation-state is summarized in several points of discussion. First: rejuvenation of religion,

second: lawsuit against the role of religion, and third: revitalization of the role of religious leaders. The description of the six roles of religious leaders is an answer to the question that the expression known then loved (*tresno mergo kulino*) is still relevant. The roles of religious leaders are (1) spreading moderate religious values, tolerance and peace; (2) practicing the *fiqh* (Islamic laws) of coexistence between religions, (3) spreading inclusive and tolerant thoughts, (4) inflaming anti-SARA anti-political movements, (5) *istiqomah* (steadfastness) towards the constitution in order to care for diversity, and (6) maintaining a cool atmosphere. By carrying out these several roles consistently, religious leaders will be increasingly known and loved, not only by their followers but also by the public in general (*tresno mergo kulino*).

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