



Received: 15-09-2022

Accepted: 23-06-2023

Published: 30-06-2023

Social Construction of Religious Attitude towards Disaster among Victims of Natural Disasters in Palu and Lombok

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Abstract

Every religion has teachings related to the best ways to cope with problems, including those caused by natural disasters. Thus, natural disasters can reshape the construction of religious attitudes among the community. Therefore, this research aims to understand how natural disasters are perceived by religious leaders in the aftermath of earthquakes in Palu and Lombok and how these perceptions impact the community's views on ideal religious attitudes after a disaster.

This research employs a phenomenological approach with thematic data analysis techniques applied to research data collected through interviews with various religious leaders and community members in Lombok Island and Palu City, two regions that experienced natural disaster events in 2018.

The research findings suggest that, despite the resurgence of a back-to-nature sentiment following the disasters in Lombok, for the Wetu Telu Muslim community, this sentiment carries a deeper meaning than merely promoting an environmentally conscious way of life. It signifies a return to a way of life rooted in traditions passed down through generations, a way of life that has been eroded by the modernization brought about by the proselytizing efforts of the majority Muslim group over the past five decades. In Palu City, the earthquake and tsunami disaster in 2018 has also shaped the community's perception of disasters and influenced their religious behaviors in the post-disaster society. In general, three common perspectives were identified. First, a majority believes the disaster is a form of divine admonition from Allah due to various deviant behaviors in the society. Second, some believe the disaster is a result of the shifting of the Palu-Koro fault plates, an unavoidable natural event, grounded in empirical knowledge sources and disaster facts. Third, Muslim groups view the disaster as a test from Allah. These three perspectives have essentially shaped a unique religious attitude among the community expressed in various forms of religiosity.

Keywords: Construction of religiosity, earthquake, natural disaster, tsunami, Lombok Island, and Palu.

Abstrak

Setiap agama memiliki seperangkat ajaran tentang cara paling tepat dalam menghadapi kesulitan dalam hidup, termasuk yang disebabkan oleh bencana alam. Kejadian bencana alam, dengan demikian, dapat membentuk kembali konstruksi sikap beragama di kalangan masyarakat. Penelitian ini, oleh sebab itu, bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana bencana alam dipersepsikan oleh tokoh agama pasca bencana gempa bumi di Palu dan Lombok, dan bagaimana persepsi tersebut berdampak pada pandangan masyarakat tentang sikap beragama yang ideal pasca bencana.

Penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan fenomenologis dengan teknik analisis data secara tematik terhadap data penelitian yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan sejumlah tokoh agama dan masyarakat di pulau Lombok dan Kota Palu, yaitu dua daerah yang mengalami kejadian bencana alam pada dua tahun silam.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terlepas dari menguatnya sentimen kembali ke alam yang menguat pasca terjadinya bencana di pulau Lombok, bagi masyarakat muslim wetu telu di sana, sentimen tersebut pada dasarnya mengandung makna yang lebih dalam daripada sekedar mempromosikan cara hidup yang sadar akan kelestarian lingkungan. Bagi masyarakat muslim wetu telu, hal ini berarti kembali pada cara hidup yang diturunkan dari tradisi turun temurun yang telah lama mulai digerus oleh modernisasi yang turut serta dibawa oleh gelombang dakwah dari kelompok muslim mayoritas waktu lima. Di Kota Palu, bencana gempa dan tsunami yang terjadi pada tahun 2018 juga turut membentuk persepsi masyarakat tentang bencana dan memengaruhi perilaku beragama mereka di masyarakat pascabencana. Secara garis besar, ada tiga pandangan umum yang kita temukan. Pertama, sebagian besar menyakini bencana tersebut sebagai bentuk teguran dari Allah Swt atas berbagai perilaku menyimpang di masyarakat. Kedua, bencana tersebut adalah akibat dari pergeseran lempengan sesar Palu Koro yaitu suatu peristiwa alam yang tidak bisa dihindari. Pandangan seperti ini umumnya didasarkan pada sumber-sumber pengetahuan empiris dan fakta-fakta bencana yang selama ini terjadi di Sulawesi Tengah. Ketiga, pandangan kelompok muslim yang melihat bencana tersebut sebagai bentuk ujian dari Allah Swt. Pada dasarnya, ketiga pandangan tersebut telah membentuk suatu sikap beragama yang unik di kalangan masyarakat yang diekspresikan dalam berbagai bentuk religiusitas.

Kata kunci: Bencana alam, gempa bumi, konstruksi sikap beragama, Lombok, Palu, dan tsunami.

A. Introduction

Natural disaster occurrences in Indonesia over the past few decades have exhibited an increased frequency. Indonesia's geographical location, situated along the Pacific Ring of Fire, renders it naturally susceptible to various forms of natural calamities, including tsunamis, earthquakes, landslides, and other types of natural disasters (Novia Budi Parwanto and Tatsuo Oyama 2014:122–23).

Indonesia's status as a nation with a considerable potential for natural disasters has prompted its populace to develop various forms of indigenous wisdom to anticipate and mitigate the adverse impacts of natural disasters on community life. One facet of this indigenous wisdom is exemplified by religion's significant role in disaster preparedness and response. In this regard, faith is vital in aiding disaster victims in coping with the psychological stress from such calamities.

The role of religion in assisting natural disaster victims to resume normalcy in their lives is highly significant (Wignyo Adiyoso and Hidehiko Kanegae 2013). Victims of natural disasters typically experience social and psychological upheaval resulting from the loss of loved ones and material possessions as a consequence of the disaster's impact. In this context, religion is regarded as capable of playing a pivotal role because religious teachings frequently address concepts of patience, the afterlife, and sacrifice.

Nearly every religion has a unique conception of natural disasters that occur in the world. In the Holy Quran, for instance, verses related to natural occurrences that can be categorized as disasters are often accompanied by explanations regarding the causes of such events. Nevertheless, these verses fundamentally elucidate that disasters occur due to human actions that harm the environment (Agus Indiyanto and Arqom Kuswanjono 2012).

The interpretation of Quranic verses related to disasters resulting from human actions that harm the Earth is, however, not devoid of controversy. Some scholars and individuals believe that the acts of causing harm to the

Earth mentioned in these verses are a divine warning for humanity to be mindful and not to exploit nature recklessly. On the other hand, others argue that causing harm to the Earth not only encompasses physical environmental damage but also encompasses all forms of sinful actions, such as neglecting Allah's commands and transgressing His prohibitions (Roni 'Abdul Fattah n.d.).

The evolving interpretations of natural disasters from a religious perspective fundamentally possess both positive and negative aspects in the context of disaster preparedness and response within society (Lei Sun, Yan Deng, and Wenhua Qi 2018). Nonetheless, the narratives that emerge within community through disseminating the latter form of interpretation invariably tend to culminate in political debates, more precisely, debates revolving around the politicization of religious teachings concerning natural disasters (Djadjat Sudradjat 2018).

In the context of Indonesia, a nation located in a disaster-prone zone (the Pacific Ring of Fire) and characterized by a highly diverse religious and belief landscape, the dissemination of disaster-related interpretations by religious leaders to the public has the potential to hinder post-disaster mitigation efforts undertaken by both the government and the private sector. Furthermore, the combination of these factors also makes Indonesia vulnerable to various forms of horizontal conflicts stemming from the politicization of religious teachings.

One way to understand the dynamics and shifting religious paradigms regarding disasters is by examining the religious ideologies that shape the interpretations of religious leaders about disasters. This approach is crucial because many religious scholars focus on interpreting the causes of disasters and religious responses to them, often overlooking the more fundamental factors that influence these responses, both on an ideological and practical level. In this context, religious doctrines' role in shaping religious leaders' perspectives on disasters becomes paramount.

Studies on religion and disasters, as well as their influence on the construction of religious knowledge in Indonesian society regarding disasters, can be classified into two main areas of focus: religious interpretations of disasters and disasters as social-religious phenomena. Literature on the interpretations of religion on disasters places particular emphasis on the exegesis or viewpoints of religious scholars and leaders regarding the causes of disasters, religious institutions, and the adherents of religions, extending to the study of religious scriptures concerning disasters (Suranto 2012).

These studies endeavor to trace the religious interpretations of disasters and promote the role of religion as a new force in the post-disaster recovery and resilience-building process for the victims (Imron and Hidayat 2012; Umi Rohmah 2012). Other efforts also encompass initiatives to construct a more contextual concept of Islamic eco-theology, aiming to make a significant contribution to understanding disasters within the framework of religious law and fostering social activism within the community (Ikhwan dan Rubaidi : 2012). Religion also actively responds to disasters through the engagement of religious organizations in the form of faith-based social activism (Dani Muhtada 2012; Mohammad Rokib 2012), or religious activities such as religious gatherings, *istighasah* (supplication), and repentance prayers as a means of seeking closeness to God. This study model emphasizes the importance of considering religious factors in comprehending disasters or supporting disaster victims.

In contrast to previous literature studies that primarily focused on the interpretation and religious responses to disasters, recent studies have broadened their scope to examine the changes in post-disaster communities. This expansion is evident in creating new spaces for various social-religious groups (with diverse backgrounds) to interact with each other. These new interaction spaces can bridge the stereotypes that often hinder social integration (Agus Indiyanto and Arqom Kuswanjono 2012). However, on the contrary, these open interaction spaces are also susceptible to triggering

conflicts, mainly when religion cannot maintain its neutrality in disaster victim assistance.

For instance, Nur Wahid Sofyan and Laila Kholid Alfirdaus have demonstrated how the eruption of Mount Merapi in Yogyakarta and the earthquake in Padang had the potential to create new conflicts between the Islamic and Catholic communities and were susceptible to discriminatory treatment of minority Chinese groups in the context of victim assistance. The fragile psychological condition of the community, post-disaster economic competition, and various negative stigmas against minority groups often act as triggers for these conflicts and discriminatory actions (Nur Wahid Sofyan 2012).

Building upon earlier studies, this research endeavor aims to comprehensively map and analyze the knowledge constructs that shape the perceptions of religious leaders and the community regarding disasters and their influence on the religious attitudes of the people in Eastern Indonesia (Lombok and Palu). Furthermore, this study will explore whether, in the aftermath of disasters, the community becomes more tolerant or, conversely, whether disasters lead individuals to become more fervent in their devotion to their religion.

B. Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach to delve more deeply into the meanings ascribed by religious leaders to post-disaster events. This approach is considered more relevant for obtaining valuable insights into paradigm shifts within the community concerning religion and natural disasters. Through the insights gathered from the religious leaders involved in this study, we can understand the dynamic processes that underlie their views on natural disasters and how these views shape the religious attitudes of the community towards natural events in general.

The data analysis technique employed in this research is thematic analysis with a phenomenological approach. Data from interviews are categorized based on in-vivo themes that emerge from the interview results. Through these themes, connections between topics are established to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the religious attitudes of the community following a disaster event.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Religious Attitudes Following Natural Disasters in Lombok

In Lombok, Muslim communities adhering to the Wetu Telu tradition view earthquakes as tests of their beliefs. The Muslim Wetu Telu community has long been recognized as a group that firmly holds on to indigenous traditions that are harmonious with nature. The environmental-conscious outlook of the indigenous community, which can be categorized as highly concerned about the environment, places the Muslim Wetu Telu group in Lombok in diametrical opposition to the general public. This is because the general public, by and large, is not as aware of the importance of environmental preservation and tends to prioritize economic development.

The Muslim Wetu Telu community in Lombok is unique in various aspects. Socially, this community represents the religio-cultural dimension of the Sasak people in Lombok, often overshadowed by Balinese culture. Regarding religiosity, the Muslim Wetu Telu community is frequently referred to as a manifestation of the cultural diversity found on the island of Lombok concerning religious expression.

Nonetheless, one often overlooked aspect of the Muslim Wetu Telu community is their role in environmental conservation within their society. Generally, the Muslim Wetu Telu community resides in the northern regions of Lombok. In recent years, this area has expanded to become its own regency, North Lombok Regency. As the youngest regency, North Lombok Regency is one of the relatively underdeveloped areas compared to other regencies on the

island of Lombok. Interestingly, this corresponds to the Muslim Wetu Telu community's conditions. Economically, the Muslim Wetu Telu community is primarily an agricultural group that still relies on traditional agriculture as its leading economic activity.

The presence of several phenomena claimed as sacred evidence of the truth of their beliefs, such as places of worship remaining intact during earthquakes, further strengthens their conviction in the Wetu Telu tradition. The earthquake that occurred on the island of Lombok in mid-2018 significantly impacted the community's views regarding disaster events in Lombok.

The Muslim Wetu Telu community has long been a target of proselytization efforts by more orthodox Muslim groups, often referred to as the "waktu lima" Muslims. This is due to the perspective held by the "waktu lima" group, who view Wetu Telu as a symbol of heterodoxy. For the wider population outside of the Muslim Wetu Telu community, the religious practices of Wetu Telu Muslims are considered incomplete. Several explanations attempt to understand how this situation has arisen. One of the most popular explanations is the assumption that "Wetu Telu," which literally means 'three times,' signifies a condition where the group has not fully embraced Islamic proselytization and is considered incomplete. Completeness in this context is often associated with the phrase 'waktu lima,' which represents the broader Muslim population on the island of Lombok.

With the support of the New Order government through its development programs, the Muslim Wetu Telu community faced significant challenges. Many members of the Muslim Wetu Telu group converted to other beliefs and left their community to join the majority Muslim group, the "waktu lima." The positioning of the Muslim Wetu Telu community as a target for proselytization placed them in a dilemma. On the one hand, proselytization is an activity that carries numerous benefits since the activities under

proselytization essentially lead to an invitation to improve and continuously strive for betterment.

On the other hand, being the target of proselytization also places the Muslim Wetu Telu group in a perpetual state of conflict. The Islamic teachings promoted by the da'is, who the government has supported since the New Order era, are fundamentally at odds with the traditions, beliefs, and religious practices of the Wetu Telu community. As a result, programs aimed at proselytizing them are often interpreted as efforts to erase the existence of the Wetu Telu Muslim tradition on the island of Lombok.

The natural disaster of earthquakes that struck several areas in eastern Indonesia, including Lombok, in mid-2018 revealed numerous deficiencies in the island's infrastructure. The modernization efforts in rural areas of Lombok are often carried out without careful consideration of the potential environmental changes that may be brought about by such development.

The longstanding modernization efforts in the villages have transformed the rural landscape, traditionally characterized by paddy fields and simple residential structures, into miniature urban areas complete with modern concrete buildings. For the Muslim Wetu Telu community, modernization is often presented as part of proselytization to encourage them to align with the mainstream Islam in Lombok, known as "waktu lima." This has been ongoing for a while, leading to a perception among the community that embracing modernity is synonymous with shedding their Wetu Telu identity.

The Muslim Wetu Telu community often confronts this situation with a sense of inferiority. Additionally, the real-world situation shows that modernization is typically associated with the "waktu lima" Muslim community. In contrast, the Muslim Wetu Telu group predominantly resides in areas closely connected to nature, in regions that have seen less development.

Despite often being indirectly marginalized, the government typically utilizes the positive image of the Muslim Wetu Telu community to promote a perception of tolerance among the Sasak people. This is because the Muslim Wetu Telu community is known for its close and harmonious relationship with the Hindu community on the island of Lombok. This is evident, for example, through traditional practices that involve both religious groups, Muslim Wetu Telu and Hindu. Consequently, the Muslim Wetu Telu community is also frequently promoted as a tourist attraction on the island of Lombok.

The earthquake that struck Lombok in 2018 uniquely impacted the Muslim Wetu Telu community in Lombok. The earthquake of 2018 was one of the most devastating earthquakes ever experienced by the people on the island of Lombok. However, earthquakes' physical and social impacts were felt differently from one place to another.

The foothills of Mount Rinjani were among the areas most seriously affected by the earthquake. In the eastern part of Lombok, specifically in the village of Sembalun, the earthquake led to several significant landslides on the slopes at the base of Mount Rinjani. The same held true for the northern foothills of Mount Rinjani on the island of Lombok.

However, the conditions in which the Muslim Wetu Telu community lives more traditionally have provided certain advantages for them in coping with the earthquake. They tend not to experience significant damage because there are not many concrete structures in their area. Instead, the Muslim Wetu Telu community typically resides in traditional wooden and bamboo houses, which were relatively unaffected by the earthquake.

One intriguing example of this can be seen in the condition of the main mosque of the Muslim Wetu Telu community, the Ancient Mosque of Bayan Beleq, which remained standing strong after being struck by the major earthquake. However, several additional facilities built around the mosque, such as toilets, were damaged and collapsed due to the earthquake.

The houses of the Muslim Wetu Telu community, predominantly made of wood, generally escaped severe damage. This starkly contrasts the conditions found in more modern settlements where residents' houses are constructed from brick walls. Such a situation has significant psychological impacts that, in turn, prompt the Muslim Wetu Telu community to reflect on natural disasters.

After the earthquake, the Muslim Wetu Telu community became increasingly convinced of the importance of environmental preservation, which has long been associated with their existence on the island of Lombok. They believe that nature possesses greater power than humans, and therefore, humans must adapt to nature.

For example, the Muslim Wetu Telu community around the Ancient Mosque of Bayan Beleq plans not to rebuild additional facilities such as public toilets and others that were destroyed by the earthquake. According to them, this is done as a reminder that during the earthquake, only the original structure of the ancient mosque dating back to the 16th century survived. At the same time, the modern buildings around it crumbled.

The sentiment of returning to nature among the Muslim Wetu Telu community essentially holds a deeper meaning than simply returning to a more traditional way of life. Moreover, the strengthening sentiment of returning to nature after the earthquake on the island of Lombok refers to a collective awareness of rediscovering social and religious identities that go hand in hand with environmental preservation.

The natural disaster of an earthquake on the island of Lombok provides its own justification for the Muslim Wetu Telu community to strengthen their determination to preserve their distinctive religious traditions, which tend to differ from the religious traditions of the majority Muslim community on the island of Lombok. This determination is not only supported by the fact that traditional ways of life are more resilient in the face of disasters compared to modern lifestyles, which often do not consider environmental conditions.

2. The Perception and Religious Attitudes after the Earthquake and Tsunami in Palu

Natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis bring socio-religious changes within a community. Natural disasters have led to changes in geographical conditions and population composition, both on small and large scales. Moreover, disasters cause damage, not only in terms of infrastructure and buildings but also psychological damage to the victims, leaving deep scars, especially for those who have lost family members (fatalities). The disaster also shapes the public's perception of disasters and influences their religious behavior in post-disaster communities.

a. Religiosity

The earthquake and tsunami event in Palu in 2018 has shaped various religious perceptions among the people of Palu City. In general, we can identify three common viewpoints. First, the majority believe that the disaster is a form of warning from Allah for various deviant behaviors in society. Therefore, they consider it necessary to continually draw closer to Allah and distance themselves from various acts of polytheism (shirk). They believe that the closer they are to God, the further they are from disasters. Second, some believe that the disaster results from shifting the Palu-Koro fault line, a natural event that cannot be avoided. Views like this are generally based on empirical sources of knowledge and the facts of disasters in Central Sulawesi. Third, the perspective of a Muslim group that sees the disaster as a test from Allah. These three viewpoints have shaped a unique religious attitude among the community, expressed in various forms of religiosity.

One form of deviance believed by most Palu City residents is the *balia* ritual, a traditional healing ritual of the Kaili tribe for diseases that do not seem to heal or are believed to be disturbances of supernatural forces. Practitioners of this ritual believe that fire can drive away the disease. This ritual practice typically involves various offerings as a form of homage and a means of

healing. The ritual can last for seven days and seven nights, as described below:

...There are ten rituals involved in the balia procession, which consist of the pompoura or tala bala'a ritual, adat enje da'a ritual, tampilangi ulujadi ritual, pompoura vunja ritual, symbol viata ritual, adat jinja ritual, balia topoledo ritual, vunja ntana ritual, tampilangi ritual, and nora binangga ritual. These various rituals can take up to seven days and seven nights, depending on the severity of the disease to be treated. The process begins with the preparation of various ceremonial materials, including incense, a bier, fruits, and sacrificial animals like chickens, goats, or buffalo, depending on the social status of the procession's organizer. Once the preparations are complete, the shaman, typically a male, starts reciting incantations and mantras. He chants various mantras to summon spirits and provides a different offering for each stage of the ceremony, which is placed near the incense. The unique balia dance must be continuously performed to accompany the sick person being carried throughout the event until the climax, the ritual slaughter of the sacrificial animals. These animals symbolize the hope for the earnestness of healing." (CNN, July 2021)

The belief held by some Muslim groups in Palu, stating that the balia ritual is the main cause behind the earthquakes in the city, is based on the notion that this practice is considered shirk. They believe that seeking help from other than Allah and offering sacrifices to ancestral spirits is a violation of Islamic teachings, and this is seen as the reason for God's anger. This belief is further reinforced by the occurrence of natural disasters that have coincided with the practice of the balia ritual, which they consider as a form of warning or punishment from God. Events such as the earthquakes in 2016, the strong winds and heavy rain in 2017, and the earthquake and tsunami in 2018 are viewed as events related to this practice.

However, the fact remains that the balia ritual practice is actually quite rare among the Kaili people themselves. In fact, it is claimed that only a few elders from the regions of Balaroa, Donggala, and the West Coast continue to perform these rituals.

Another form of deviation believed by the community is the neglect of Islamic practices and values in everyday life. This is exemplified by SA (35 years old), who stated:

... Before the earthquake, I used to be someone who neglected matters of worship because I was too busy working and making money. But after the earthquake, my wealth disappeared in an instant. From there, I realized that wealth is just a trust and can disappear at any time. Alhamdulillah, now I realize that matters of worship should be the top priority because that's the only thing that can save us in the Hereafter.

Based on these facts, researchers understand that disaster events have given rise to a new awareness and various forms of personal experiences among disaster victims, shaping religious attitudes through internalizing religious values within an individual.

Differing from the initial perspective, some believe that the aforementioned disaster constitutes a natural event that is unavoidable, precisely due to the shifting of the Palu-Koro fault plates. Such a viewpoint is typically grounded in information provided by disaster experts and pertinent geographical facts in the Central Sulawesi region. Scientific explanations, for instance, are conveyed by the Chairman of the Indonesian Association of Geologists, Sukmandaru Prihatmoko:

... that the earthquake that struck Donggala, Central Sulawesi, is associated with the Palu-Koro fault or fault line. The Palu-Koro fault line extends from the city of Palu both to the south and to the north. The Palu-Koro fault is a fault line that trends primarily to the northwest and south. This fault line traverses the city of Palu, extending northward along the coast before eventually entering the sea. Meanwhile, the southern portion of the fault divides the island of Sulawesi, then veers eastward towards the Matano fault. According to the theory, it is the movement of these tectonic plates that serves as the primary cause of the earthquake and tsunami (CNN, July 2021).

The awareness of disasters as a part of the natural life cycle is indeed a crucial aspect of the collective memory of the Palu community. The people of Palu are quite familiar with calamitous events such as earthquakes and tsunamis. The recorded seven major disaster events from 1905 to the present

are integral to their life cycle. Research on disaster occurrences further reinforces the fact that Palu City is a disaster-prone region, necessitating effective and sustainable mitigation efforts. This awareness is exemplified by SR (45 years old), who stated:

We must acknowledge that Palu City is situated in an earthquake-prone area, and this is an inevitability. What is most crucial, in my opinion, is to educate the community that, residing in a disaster-prone region, we must always be prepared to face all potential worst-case scenarios. Therefore, we should have faith in science and not neglect religious values. Both should go hand in hand.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the awareness of the Palu community regarding disasters as natural events is inseparable from their awareness of religious values. Therefore, the connection between the two is needed as part of the effort to build community preparedness in facing unpredictable natural disasters.

In addition to these two perspectives, the majority of individuals regard the earthquake and tsunami disaster as a divine test from Allah. This prevailing viewpoint is strongly influenced by Muslim groups, which constitute the majority population in the city of Palu. They believe that earthquakes and tsunamis are part of God's "scenario" to test the Islamic community. This group also believes that scientific and religious explanations regarding disasters do not need to be in conflict; they can coexist and complement each other. In this way, religious expression based on knowledge/science can become a primary asset in preparing for and responding to disasters.

b. Solidarity

Disaster events alter religious behaviors and foster a new awareness in post-disaster communities, namely social solidarity. Solidarity is a consciousness of shared interests, an empathetic disposition as a part of the same group/community working together. Past experiences in facing disasters have played a role in shaping this awareness. Communities are beginning to formulate their own knowledge in an effort to minimize the impact of future

disasters and comprehend their existence in this world. People are also starting to change their perceptions of disasters. They are not just seen as warnings and tests; disasters must be confronted as a facet of life. Communities should be more prepared for the worst possible outcomes of any disaster. This awareness is exemplified by AH (47 years old):

... as residents living in a disaster-prone region, we must always be on high alert when facing disaster risks. We should be prepared from now, before disaster strikes. We must unite, avoid selfishness, and refrain from blaming one another. In addition to having faith in knowledge, we should also strive to improve ourselves in the eyes of the Creator, so that our lives are blessed and protected from all forms of disaster.

Disaster events have the capability to foster community solidarity in efforts to aid victims and mitigate potential future disasters. Disasters also provide new opportunities for communities to become more caring and creative, thus forming strong and resilient social bonds. This community solidarity is also evident in the increased vibrancy of religious activities in the aftermath of disasters. For example, it can be observed through the heightened intensity and number of Muslim community members attending places of worship. Communities are also becoming more active in organizing Quranic lessons, Islamic law classes, regular religious gatherings, recitation of the Quran (Yasinan), and remembrance ceremonies (Tahlilan). This solidarity is further demonstrated through the caring for those affected by adversity or illness. Another form of solidarity is exhibited by fishermen who give away their catch or monetary donations to orphans, mosques, and Islamic study centers (Darmawansyah and Cikka, 2020).

c. Interreligious Relation

In the context of interreligious relations, the Palu community appears highly heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity and the religions and beliefs they follow. Nevertheless, competition between missionary groups and proselytizing efforts aimed at converts (Muallaf) continues to persist, particularly in mountainous regions inhabited by indigenous communities.

Generally, these indigenous communities do not adhere to the official religions recognized by the state but rather hold on to animistic and dynamistic beliefs. The contest for followers is ongoing to this day, as BD (37 years old) explains:

... in the Lauje Tribe's mountainous region in Babong Village resides a group of indigenous people. They generally do not adhere to any official religion. Access to the village is exceedingly difficult. However, foreign and local missionaries employ myriad methods to reach this area, including the use of helicopters to access the village. They recruit local residents, train them to become pastors, and then send them back to the village. In contrast, as proselytizers for converts (Muallaf), we can only utilize trail motorcycles. Even then, it carries the risk of accidents or slipping.

Following the arrival of missionaries and Muslim proselytizers, the majority of the Lauje tribe members have begun to adhere to one of the two official religions, Islam and Christianity. Generally, they choose the religion of their own volition, often with the blessing of their Tuaka (elders). Occasionally, there are instances of rejection, although they do not typically lead to conflict or division. Despite differing religious choices, their familial and friendly relationships remain intact. In fact, during religious celebrations and life cycle rituals, for instance, they continue to cooperate and assist each other. BD (37 years old) exemplifies that during the distribution of sacrificial meat by the Muslims, those who follow Christianity also receive a share.

Following the 2018 earthquake, those who converted to Islam (Muallaf) actively participated in a joint prayer held at the Ar-Rayan Islamic boarding school in Babong Village. The event was attended by approximately 700 households and several national and local religious figures. In their perspective, the earthquake and tsunami that occurred in Palu cannot be separated from the three mainstream views outlined earlier. Although speculative, they also consider the Kaili tribe's Balinese ritual as one of the triggers for the disaster, whether as a warning or a test.

d. Ecological Awareness

Natural disasters have led to changes in geographic conditions. The natural environment and ecosystems have also experienced degradation, posing potential threats to human safety, such as landslides and floods, both on a small and large scale. Therefore, ecological awareness is crucial for the community. In their research, Hutabarat et al. (2019) found that, in general, residents of Palu and its surroundings in Central Sulawesi still do not fully understand the concept of earthquake-resistant buildings, especially for simple residential houses. Consequently, the community has been educated and assessed regarding their residential buildings. As a result, residents have gained a good understanding of the concept of earthquake-resistant construction in general. They have also become aware of the importance of reconstructing their residential houses to make them more earthquake-resistant.

This heightened awareness has prompted local authorities and non-governmental organizations to collaborate on initiatives to promote sustainable and resilient housing solutions in the region. These efforts involve disseminating knowledge on earthquake-resistant building techniques, providing financial incentives for retrofitting or rebuilding, and establishing local building codes and regulations prioritizing safety. The collective action taken by the community and these organizations not only contributes to safeguarding lives and property in the face of future natural disasters but also serves as a valuable example of how ecological awareness can lead to tangible improvements in disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts.

Furthermore, the positive shift in residents' understanding of earthquake-resistant construction has fostered a sense of community solidarity and resilience. As neighbors come together to share knowledge and support one another in adopting safer building practices, a stronger bond has formed, creating a network of mutual aid that can be relied upon in times of crisis. Additionally, this heightened ecological awareness has had broader

implications for sustainability, with residents increasingly embracing environmentally friendly building materials and methods, reducing their carbon footprint, and contributing to the long-term health of the region's ecosystems. By recognizing the interplay between ecological consciousness and disaster resilience, these communities are not only better prepared for the challenges of the present but are also actively shaping a more sustainable and secure future for themselves and generations to come.

D. Conclusion

The natural disaster event, an earthquake that struck the island of Lombok in 2018, provided an opportunity for the Wetu Telu Muslim community there to reflect on their way of life, which is based on traditions passed down through generations. Their way of life, closely connected to nature, such as building environmentally friendly houses, has given them distinct advantages in terms of disaster mitigation. In this regard, even though they reside in a geographical area hit by the most severe earthquakes, the Wetu Telu Muslim community tends to cope with disasters relatively more efficiently compared to the general population of Lombok.

Aside from the growing sentiment of returning to nature that has strengthened after the disaster on the island of Lombok, for the Wetu Telu Muslim community there, this sentiment fundamentally carries a deeper meaning than merely promoting an environmentally conscious way of life. For the Wetu Telu Muslim community, it signifies a return to a way of life that has been passed down through generations, one that has long been eroded by the modernization brought about by the proselytizing efforts of the majority Muslim group over the past five decades.

In Palu, the earthquake and tsunami disaster in 2018 has also shaped the community's perception of disasters and influenced their religious behaviors in the post-disaster society.

In general, three common perspectives have been identified. First, a majority believes that the disaster is a form of divine admonition from Allah due to various deviant behaviors in society. Therefore, they consider it necessary to draw closer to Allah and abstain from acts of polytheism. They believe that the closer they are to God, the further they are from all disasters. Second, some believe that the disaster is a result of the shifting of the Palu-Koro fault plates, an unavoidable natural event. This perspective is generally grounded in empirical knowledge sources regarding disaster in Central Sulawesi. Third, the Muslim groups view the disaster as a test from Allah. Essentially, these three perspectives have shaped a unique religious attitude among the community, expressed in various forms of religiosity.

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