

Kumpul Kope and Pesta Sekolah as a Means of Interreligious Dialogue in Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract. Interfaith dialogue is a necessity in today's pluralistic world. Many efforts have been made to encourage interfaith dialogue. This research seeks to explore the local wisdom of the Manggarai people to develop interfaith dialogue. The local wisdom studied is the Kope Gathering and School Party traditions. The method used in data collection and analysis is qualitative research. Research data was obtained through in-depth interviews with 16 Catholic and Islamic sources. They are selected according to certain criteria. Data analysis uses the Miles and Hubermann framework which includes data collection, reduction, presentation and drawing conclusions. The results of the analysis found that the Kumpul Kope and School Festival traditions have become a means of inter-religious dialogue in Manggarai. These two traditions are a means of strengthening dialogue between Catholics and Muslims in Manggarai. However, harmony between religious communities in Manggarai could be shaken in the future due to the introduction of various exclusive and fanatical teachings. This problem can be overcome if the tradition is maintained, revitalized and modified.

Keywords: local wisdom, *kumpul kope*, *pesta sekolah*, religion, interreligious dialogue

1. Introduction

Religion is an essential part of human culture. Religion is an inherent and vital element in human life. The vitality of religion lies in its influence, which penetrates almost all areas of human life. The rise of religions marks the 21st century. Religions have become the primary reference for human beings. However, the rise of religions becomes a problem because it is not the substantive-essential aspect that is strengthening, but rather the formal-quantitative element, marked by the deification of religious symbols. Fanatical appreciation of religious symbols is worrying because it can become a source of inter-religious conflict. Religions are even capitalised for a few people's political interests and power. Misunderstanding of other religions often results in mass anger.

On the one hand, religious pluralism in Indonesia is seen as the strength and wealth of the Indonesian nation. Pluralism is the daily reality and experience of Indonesian society. Everywhere, we find a diversity of religious beliefs. Because of this, Indonesia is known as a country of religious pluralism. Apart from appreciating this diversity, we also cannot deny the fact that, on the other hand, religious pluralism in Indonesia triggers conflict, which not only damages and destroys property and costs many lives but also creates political instability. The Ambon, Poso, Sampang, Tanjung Balai, and Kupang conflicts are some examples of inter-

religious conflicts that have attracted national and international public attention. Minor interpersonal problems generally trigger these conflicts and are brought into the religious domain.

During the emergence of conflict with religious nuances in Indonesia, many people ask about the conflict's root causes. Many efforts have been made to overcome those conflicts, for example, establishing forums for religious harmony and holding meetings of interfaith leaders. These efforts are often ineffective because these activities tend to be elitist and limited. We see that inter-religious conflict can be minimised if people activate and develop the local wisdom of communities that live in religious pluralism.

Many studies have been conducted to explore inter-religious dialogue. First, research was conducted by Awang, Kasan, and Faruk in 2019 [1]. They researched interreligious dialogue as a medium for contemporary Islamic da'wah in Malaysia. This research concludes that inter-religious dialogue in Malaysia has great potential, and the Muslim community in Malaysia is interested in developing inter-religious dialogue. Second, research was conducted by Pangkey in 2020 [2]. He researched religious harmony in Mopuya village, North Sulawesi. This research shows that the Mopuya people highly value peace and mutual respect between followers of different religions. Third, research was conducted by Abdullah and Ali in 2020 regarding the concept of religious tolerance among ulama at traditional Islamic boarding schools in Sukabumi, West Java [3]. This research concluded that the ulama at traditional Islamic boarding schools in Sukabumi understand the concept of religious tolerance and have different views and moderate attitudes towards non-Muslim groups.

The following researchers researched interreligious dialogue carried out in NTT. First, research was conducted by Takdir in 2017 [4]. He explored models of inter-religious harmony based on local wisdom in East Nusa Tenggara Province. Research findings show that the local wisdom of the people of East Nusa Tenggara becomes social capital to build harmony between religious communities. Second, research was conducted by Parera, Akbar, and Marzuki in 2020 regarding the wisdom of the Kupang people in creating religious harmony [5]. Third, in 2020, Widyawati researched the *Woni* tradition in the Manggarai community [6]. Widyawati found that the *Woni* tradition applied by Manggarai Catholics in encounters with Muslim groups.

The studies above have not explicitly examined local wisdom. These studies only examine general matters related to the practice of interreligious dialogue. This research explores the local wisdom of the Manggarai people, especially the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*. Local wisdom is the wisdom of society in a particular cultural environment to maintain and guarantee social harmony. This wisdom is practised from generation to generation so that it becomes an inseparable part of society. *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* are the local wisdom of the Manggarai people. In the history of the Catholic Church, the call to study and explore the cultural values of society to advance the Church's missionary work was clearly stated in the Second Vatican Council. The Catholic Church recognises and accepts the role of culture in promoting the Catholic faith, including advancing the Church's mission work. The main question of this research is whether *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* can unite people across religions.

2. Theoretical Review

This study covers two things, namely, the concept of interreligious dialogue and the concept of local wisdom.

2.1 Interreligious Dialogue

In connection with the concept of interreligious dialogue, we quote the views of several Muslim figures and the views of the Catholic Church. These concepts are the basis for researchers to understand inter-religious dialogue.

Andrabi interprets inter-religious dialogue as a significant and urgent need currently to create harmony between religions. Dialogue can bridge differences, eliminate prejudice, and break down walls of separation between religious communities. This concept emphasizes the role and objectives of interreligious dialogue but does not display the essence of inter-religious dialogue [7]. Anwar specifically emphasized the importance of dialogue in the Indonesian context for the following three reasons: religious pluralism in Indonesia, maturation and consolidation of the faith of every religious adherent, and increasing cooperation in social life [8].

Kleden adequately describes the essence of interreligious dialogue as an exchange of experiences and understanding of God. Inter-religious dialogue is the way religions become themselves. It is not something added but inherent in every religion. Inter-religious dialogue is a process of give and take between religions in which religions shape each other. With this, each religion will understand the deepest core of other religions. Dialogue allows change to occur when dialogue participants open themselves to each other and deepen the horizon of the news their religion wants to convey [9].

The concept of interreligious dialogue in Kleden's view above emphasises three main things. First, dialogue is the communication of faith and the essential characteristics of each religion, enabling change in social life. Tule emphasised the same thing. However, Tule added that the critical attributes in interreligious communication are dynamic and full of the spirit of friendship [10].

The mission of interreligious dialogue in the history of the Catholic Church began with the renewal and change in the Church's attitude towards other religions, which was initiated in the Second Vatican Council. The Catholic Church no longer has a negative attitude towards other religions but views other religions as a way of salvation. The Second Vatican Council can be said to be the starting point for the dialogical life of the Church. However, this does not mean that dialogue is something new. The idea of dialogue in the Second Vatican Council was inspired by the teachings of its predecessors in the Church. Apostles like Paul put forward the principle of respecting other religions and cultures [11].

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has made dialogue the Church's essential attitude towards other religions. The document *Nostra Aetate*, article 1 of the Second Vatican Council, explains the historical and theological basis for the Church's dialogue. The Church's historical basis for dialogue is its openness to reading the signs of the times that today, humanity is increasingly united with one another. Its theological basis includes three things: first, its duties and responsibilities as a sacrament of salvation must promote unity and love among human beings based on the love of the Creator. Second, the Church believes that nations only form one community because they all have the exact origin and goal, namely God. Third,

humanity has long been waiting for answers from religions to various basic life questions such as human nature, the meaning and purpose of life, what is good, and what is sin[12].

The Church's positive attitude towards other religions is also emphasised in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* article 16: "Those who infallibly do not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but seek God with an honest heart, and try to carry out His will, which they know by command conscience in activities influenced by grace, can obtain eternal salvation." [13]

The encouragement for dialogue with other religions is also expressed in Decree *Nostra Aetate* article 2: "The Church encourages its sons, so that wisely and lovingly, through dialogue and cooperation with adherents of other religions, while bearing witness to the Christian faith and life, acknowledge, maintain and develop the spiritual and moral assets and socio-cultural values found in them." Appreciation and respect for other religions are because each religion has a wealth of teachings that lead people to salvation. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* article 53 states, "These religions have an awe-inspiring heritage of deep religious texts. These religions taught people from generation to generation how to pray. These religions are imbued with innumerable 'seeds of the word' and can create a good preparation for the gospel." [14].

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue interpret interreligious dialogue at the following three levels. First, at a purely human level, dialogue means mutual communication directed towards a common goal or at a deeper level toward interpersonal unity. Second, dialogue is considered an attitude of respect and friendship that permeates or should permeate all activities that make up the mission of evangelising the Church. This can rightly be called "the spirit of dialogue." Third, in religious diversity, dialogue means "all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and congregations of other religions, which are directed at mutual understanding and mutual enrichment, in obedience to truth, and respect for freedom. This includes both testimony and deepening of one's respective religious beliefs.

The Indian Catholic Theological Association interprets dialogue as a way of being and a view of life. It is a feeling of compassion and a process of mutual enrichment. Like all reality, dialogue is a paradox about rootedness and mobility, confidence and openness, commitment to one's ideals, and open respect and acceptance of others. It presupposes limitations and perfection, suffering and hope. It is a process of listening, discovering others, and restructuring and restoring human and community life [15]. According to Amalorpavadas, dialogue is a two-way communication between individuals and individuals or groups or groups and groups. Dialogue is a giving of oneself – who I am and what I have – so that a process of mutual enrichment occurs. Dialogue means openness to knowing, loving, and respecting someone with all their beliefs or ideologies [16].

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) emphasise that dialogue is, in the first place, an attitude/behaviour, an openness to others, a sharing of spiritual resources when people are faced with a significant crisis, namely life and death when they fight to uphold justice and human dignity when they yearn for peace. In dialogue, Christians and their fellow believers enter a reciprocal relationship that becomes a mutual learning and development process. Dialogue provides opportunities to bear Christian witness. While sharing ideas from their faith, Christians will be more sensitive to ideas than their sisters and brothers from other religious traditions [17].

In the Dialogue and Preaching document, article 42 [18]. Inter-religious dialogue can be carried out at four levels. First is the dialogue of life, in which people try to live in a spirit of openness and neighbourliness, sharing their joys and sorrows, human problems and concerns with each other. Second is dialogue of works, in which Christians and other people work together for humanity's total development and liberation. Third, dialogue is needed for the exchange of theological views, in which experts try to deepen their understanding of their respective religions' religious heritage and mutually appreciate their religions' spiritual values. Fourth is dialogue regarding religious experience, in which individuals who are rooted in their religious traditions share their spiritual riches with each other, for example, prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for Allah or the Absolute.

Actual dialogue presupposes that dialogue partners respect each other, that they are sincerely engaged in a common pursuit, that they want to learn from each other and that they convey what is deepest within them. There is no dialogue without accepting the equality of dialogue partners. In dialogue, there is no hidden agenda other than openness, respect, and love. Dialogue is not just an intellectual thing but is a process of liberation and a doorway into religious experience, commitment to faith and worship, as well as rooting ourselves and our society in people's religio-cultural environment [19].

Dialogue demands a balanced attitude by Christians and followers of other religious traditions. They should not be dishonest, nor should they like to criticise, but be open and ready to accept. The attitude of not remembering and not being prejudiced, acknowledging the differences and contradictions that may exist, has already been mentioned. The will to join in a commitment to the truth and the willingness to allow oneself to be changed by encounters are other attitudes required.

Nowadays, religious dialogue has a powerful influence. Its influence is not only in the context of Asian society, which adheres to pluralism but also in the lifestyle of the universal Church. The practical movement for dialogue with other religions has been and will be initiated everywhere, from the village level to the international level [20]. A particular church is a church that derives its form from a nation that is genuinely rooted in its own culture. The Church must continuously dialogue with love and humility with cultural traditions, religiosity, and local religions. Building dialogue means building the local Church. Establishing a close relationship with the traditions in which the Church is present means weaving a common thread of faith that is becoming increasingly rooted in the local community.

Dialogue between religions certainly does not run smoothly. There are many challenges faced. First, there is an insufficient basis for a person's faith. Second, not having sufficient knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of other religions. Third, cultural differences arise due to differences in educational levels or the use of different languages. Fourth, socio-political factors or various burdens in the past. Fifth, wrong understanding of the meaning of several terms. Sixth, feeling self-sufficient and lacking openness causes defensive or aggressive attitudes. Seventh, lack of confidence in the value of inter-religious dialogue. Eighth, be suspicious of other people's motives in dialogue. Ninth, a contentious spirit when expressing religious beliefs. Tenth, intolerant attitude.

Many of these difficulties arise from a lack of understanding of interreligious dialogue's true nature and goals. Obstacles to dialogue present us with a challenge to overcome to harvest the results of dialogue as fruits of the spirit. The dialogical style of human relations benefits our life together in an increasingly fragile yet interdependent world. Dialogue with brothers and

sisters of different religions challenges us to purify ourselves to become better acquainted with their religious heritage, which contains what is true and good.

Dialogue is intended to obtain more information, knowledge and a better understanding of other religious communities' religious beliefs and practices. Dialogue is also designed to establish cooperation between religious communities to achieve common societal goals. Collaboration between people of different religions and ideological beliefs should be considered dialogue. In addition, inter-religious dialogue is intended to target the essential spiritual resources of various religions based on the problems of human life.

2.2 Local wisdom

Humans are cultural creatures. With the ability of reason, feeling and will, humans can produce physical and non-physical things to maintain their lives. Culture shows the uniqueness of humans as humans. Culture is created and learned by humans. Every person is formed in the cultural context in which he is born. He becomes a human person by studying the culture in his society. Tylor defines culture as a complex whole containing other knowledge and habits acquired by humans as members of society [21].

Koentjaraningrat groups three forms of human culture, namely first, the form of culture as a complex of ideas, ideas, values, norms, regulations and so on; second, the form of culture as a complex of patterned activities and actions of humans in society; The three forms of culture are objects created by humans [22].

Local wisdom is the wisdom of society in a particular cultural environment to maintain and guarantee social harmony. This wisdom is practised from generation to generation so that it becomes an inseparable part of society. Therefore, local wisdom shows the uniqueness of the people of specific cultural groups. According to Takdir, local wisdom is the ideas, values and actions that constitute the culture of a region with its extraordinary uniqueness and distinctiveness. Local wisdom represents the ability of local culture to face external cultural influences, which increasingly put pressure on all traditions developing in society. Local wisdom can also be understood as an idea, behaviour or action that is pure from the traditions and beliefs of the community based on life experience in an area that still maintains culture due to their work, creativity and initiative [23].

According to Fajarini, local wisdom is a view of life and knowledge as well as various life strategies in the form of activities carried out by local communities in responding to multiple problems and meeting their needs. Local wisdom is human intelligence possessed by certain ethnic groups, obtained through community experience. Local wisdom results from specific communities' experiences and is not necessarily experienced by other communities. These values will be very firmly attached to a particular society, and these values have gone through a long period throughout the existence of that society [24].

According to Mitchell, there are six dimensions of local wisdom: first, the dimension of local knowledge, every community can adapt to its living environment. Second, the regional value dimension, every society has local rules or values regarding actions or behaviour that are obeyed and agreed upon by all its members. Still, these values will change according to the progress of the society. Third, the local skills dimension of each community can survive to meet their respective family needs or what is called substantial economics. Fourth is the regional resource dimension. Each community will use local resources according to their needs and will not exploit them on a large scale or commercialise them. Fifth is the dimension of local decision-

making mechanisms. Each community has its own local government, called tribal government. Sixth is the dimension of regional group solidarity: humans are social creatures who need the help of other people to do their work because humans cannot live alone [25].

Kumpul Kope and *Pesta Sekolah* as Local Wisdom of the Manggarai Community

The word *Kumpul Kope* is formed from two words, namely *kumpul* and *kope*. *Kumpul Kope* is a combination of Indonesian and Manggarai words. *Kumpul* means to collect or unite, and *kope* means machete. [26] Etymologically, *Kumpul Kope* means to collect or unite machetes. *Kope* or machete in the cultural traditions of the Manggarai people is a symbol of masculinity. There is a metaphor "*ngance pase broom selek kope*". This statement describes a man worthy of marriage or starting a new family. The *Kumpul Kope* tradition is closely related to forming a new family. In creating a new family, the groom must give a *belis* or dowry in the form of money and animals to the bride's family. *Kumpul Kope* is an activity to collect money as a form of solidarity with the groom.

Pesta Sekolah is one type of party in Manggarai. This party is something special because it only occurs in Manggarai. In other areas, we know wedding parties, birthday parties, baptism, or naming parties, etc. Manggarai people also learn and practice several types of parties, but the special one is the *Pesta Sekolah*. *Pesta Sekolah* has similarities and differences with other parties. The same thing is that there is musical accompaniment to enliven the atmosphere; there is a series or sequence of events that the invitees follow. What is different from other parties is that when attending a *Pesta Sekolah*, each invitee must bring money in the range of Rp. 150,000-200,000. The cash for shaking hands with the child being celebrated averages IDR 50,000-100,000. Apart from handshakes, there are also other types of donations. For example, adult men are given a cigarette and a little wine as a greeting when they first arrive. Those who receive cigarettes and wine usually make a voluntary donation of Rp. 20,000-50,000. The size of this donation varies. If the person receiving it is an official or wealthy person, they can give more. The amount of donations given during the *Pesta Sekolah* is undoubtedly not the same from time to time. This depends on the rupiah exchange rate and the community's economic growth. In the past, the amount of donations was undoubtedly not the same as the amount mentioned above.

Money donated during the *Pesta Sekolah* is not recorded. The money given is voluntary. The party host will repay the kindness of people who make donations when the invitees also host a *Pesta Sekolah*. However, there is no binding obligation for people who have organised a *Pesta Sekolah* to attend School Parties held by the invitees in the future. No normative-juridical sanctions are given to people who do not follow the *Pesta Sekolah*. However, there is a kind of unwritten obligation for people who have organised a *Pesta Sekolah* to attend another family's *Pesta Sekolah*. If he does not attend, the sanction he will receive is public ridicule.

Pesta Sekolah has become a part of the culture in Manggarai. The *Pesta Sekolah* is a modern form of the *Wuat Wai* event. Every Manggarai person who wants to emigrate, whether to study or earn a living, wants to compete in a political contest, etc. The *Wuat Wa'i* rite always precedes it. The *Wuat Wai* ritual aims to provide moral and material support to people who want to migrate. Especially for school purposes, guests invited to the *Wuat Wai* event convey prayers and give money. The *Wuat Wai* rite for school purposes is usually carried out from June to August every year. This is related to preparing students who want to continue their studies in college.

Around the 1970s, the *Wuat Wai* ritual was modified to become a *Pesta Sekolah*. The *Pesta Sekolah* is an event to raise funds and provide advice or guidance to village residents who want to continue their studies at university. Giving money to each invitee is voluntary. The amount of donation usually differs between adults and children or teenagers.

3. Method

The design of this research is qualitative research. The qualitative approach is intended to understand social situations, events, roles, interactions, and groups [27]. This type of research was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and obtain relevant data to explain the main problem of this research. With a qualitative research design, researchers examined the experiences, knowledge, and practices of the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* in building and developing inter-religious dialogue based on local wisdom. The research was conducted in Pota (East Manggarai) and Noa (West Manggarai). These two areas were chosen because of their heterogeneous community composition and *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* practice. Data collection was carried out for three months, from December 2021 to February 2022.

The instrument used to collect data was in-depth interviews. Interview sources were community leaders, religious figures, and residents. There were 16 resource persons. These resource persons were selected using the following criteria: have been involved in *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*; have held *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*; know *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*.

Data analysis was carried out simultaneously with data collection. This means that researchers immediately sort and select relevant data after conducting interviews. Furthermore, incomplete data was directly searched again from the sources. After returning from the research area, the researcher organises and re-systemises the data to make it easier to interpret and find its relationship with the research focus. After the data has been systematised and analysed, the final step is to draw conclusions and recommendations. Data analysis uses the data analysis flow introduced by Miles and Hubermann. The analysis flow includes data collection, reduction, presentation, and concluding [28].

4. Results

The research data presentation is framed based on the following scheme: community views about *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, implementation of the cultural practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, the impact of the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, expectations regarding the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*. It is worth noting that the data we collected regarding the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* came from two areas, namely Pota, East Manggarai and Noa, West Manggarai. We interviewed people in these two areas because their community is heterogeneous and known for its excellent inter-religious closeness.

4.1 The meaning of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

Kumpul Kope is a tradition of the Manggarai people. The *Kumpul Kope* culture is implemented in connection with forming a new family. The groom's family carries out the

practice of *Kumpul Kope*. According to Yusuf, Imam of the Pota Mosque (Interview, 29 January 2022. Cf. Ali; interview 28 January 2022. Cf. Ramlin; interview 29 January 2022; Ibrahim, interview, 29 January 2022) Pota people call the *Kumpul Kope* culture as *Keboro Weki*. *Keboro Weki* is a community meeting to collect money or goods for families experiencing difficulties. *Keboro Weki* or *Kumpul Kope* is related to marriage matters and other matters that require money. In the context of Pota society, *Kumpul Kope* is a custom passed down from generation to generation. Yusuf said:

Kumpul Kope is a community meeting in Pota village to give and receive and complement each other in matters, whether religious, marriage or other issues in Pota. Apart from that, there are donations to ease the burden for those making the celebration.

According to Mr Man, a Catholic figure in Pota (Interview 30 January 2022), *Kumpul Kope* is also called *onto leok* or *keboro weki*. In the context of Pota society, *Kumpul Kope* or *Onto Leok* has long been practised by Muslim groups in Pota. Mr Man stated:

Kumpul Kope here is called *onto leok* or *keboro weki*. As far as I have observed since 1975, *Keboro Weki* activities were only internal among Muslims, but after 1980, when Catholics also increased, these activities were carried out together. Even now, this activity involves everyone regardless of religion, ethnicity, or family. All residents are invited.

Muslims and Catholics also practise the practice of *Kumpul Kope* in Noa, West Manggarai. In the Noa-West Manggarai community context, *Kumpul Kope* is related to efforts to help grooms obtain funds or goods to pay the *belis* or dowry to the wife's family. Hanasur (Interview, 25 December 2021), explained:

Kumpul Kope means collecting funds; in this case, it can be in the form of goods or money to support the man who wants to form a new family. In this case, it helps men to pay off the *belis* for their wives. *Kumpul Kope* involves close family and other people who feel this activity is essential.

In line with Hanasur, Guntur (Interview, 25 December 2021) added that involvement in the *Kumpul Kope* event was voluntary or without coercion. For Jehudin (Interview, 26 December 2021), the *Kumpul Kope* event is not only related to money but also means increasing a sense of family and maintaining harmony between religious communities. Jehudin stated: "For me, there are several basic meanings of *Kumpul Kope*. First, establish close family relationships. Second, building harmony with other people."

Apart from *Kumpul Kope*, we also explore the cultural practices of *Pesta Sekolah*. This event is one of the cultural instruments that can strengthen and enhance interreligious dialogue. Both Catholics and Muslims hold this event. According to Hanasur (Interview 25 December 2021), *Pesta Sekolah* is an event to support children or members in a particular village or place to complete their study. This support can be in the form of prayers, money, or goods. *Pesta Sekolah* is usually held before a child continues their studies at university. Hanasur said:

Pesta Sekolah in this village is held depending on the request of the party wishing to have a *Pesta Sekolah*. It could be at the beginning of school, in the middle, or at the end before graduation. Usually, in this village, according to the general agreement, *Pesta Sekolah* is only held once for one person. The party is controlled depending on the family, whether at the beginning of the child's school trip (*wuat wai'i*) or perhaps just before graduation.

Guntur expressed the same thing as Hanasur. *Pesta Sekolah* in Noa village is held depending on the request of the party wishing to hold it. Guntur (Interview, 25 December 2021, Cf. Jehudin, Interview 26 December 2021) defines *Pesta sekolah* as:

Capital collection events to make the education of children in a particular family successful. Considering that education is one thing that is very important for life today, the *Pesta Sekolah* is an essential thing to do, and the *Pesta Sekolah* is even more important than the *Kumpul Kope* for those who want to get married.

Pesta Sekolah is also held by Catholics and Muslims in Pota, East Manggarai. According to Ali (Interview, 28 January 2022), *Pesta Sekolah* is an event to raise funds to support families who want to send their children to college. *Pesta Sekolah* in Pota is held when children are already in college. This is done to ensure that *Pesta Sekolah* is fit for school purposes. Therefore, the *Pesta Sekolah* is held when the child being celebrated has entered the second or third year of college.

Other sources from Catholic and Muslim circles in Pota admitted that the *Pesta Sekolah* was something that the people in Pota usually carried out to support families who sent their children to college. They acknowledge that this has become a habit every year. Pota and Noa Community's views on *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Community concept about *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

No	Community concept about <i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i>	
	Pota	Noa
1	Community meeting to collect money or goods for families who are having difficulty	Collecting funds or goods or animals for <i>belis</i> matters
2	The typical Pota community term for <i>KumpulKope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> is <i>keboro weki</i> or <i>onto leok</i>	The terms used are <i>KumpulKope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i>
3	<i>Kumpul Kope</i> is related to marriage matters and other matters that require costs.	<i>Kumpul Kope</i> is only for marriage matters
4	Fundraising is voluntary	Fundraising is voluntary
5	The amount of money or goods is not specified	The amount of money or goods is not specified

4.2 Involvement of Catholic and Muslim Families in *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

In the context of a pluralistic society (Islamic and Catholic) in Pota and Noa, the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* is an event commonly carried out by Catholics and Muslims. According to Yusuf, Ramlim, and Ibrahim (Interview, 29 January 2022), *Kumpul Kope* or *keboro weki* tradition is carried out by both Muslim and Catholic families in Pota. Ramlin stated:

When a Catholic family organises an event and then invites a Muslim family, we feel delighted. For example, we feel like one family during a new welcome event. We Muslims are all invited.

According to Ali (Interview, 28 January 2022), the Pota people do not differentiate or divide people based on religion. In implementing the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* culture, all Pota community members are involved, both Muslims and Catholics. Ali stated: "We often do that (*KumpulKope* and *Pesta Sekolah*). We are all invited. Do not discriminate based on religion. We're together."

The involvement of Muslim and Catholic families in *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* also occurred in Noa, West Manggarai. The practice of *KumpulKope* and *Pesta Sekolah* is not only carried out by people from one religious group but is also carried out by all religious groups (Islam and Catholicism). Hanasur (Interview, 25 December 2021; Cf. Jehudin, interview, 26 December 2021) said: "All families in this village hold *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* regardless of their religion." Hanasur explained, "During the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* for Catholics in this village, Muslim family members or neighbours were also invited to attend." Guntur (Interview 25 December 2021) added that *Kumpul Kope* activities involve all religions in his village because of the awareness that all village residents are brothers. Guntur stated: "All families in this village hold *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* regardless of their religion. There are no differences in this village because we see everyone as brothers."

According to Hanasur (Interview, 26 December 2021), "There is no difference between the *KumpulKope* and *Pesta Sekolah* traditions in this village; all families whose children want to pay for *belis* or get married and the school will invite residents to take part in fundraising events" Hanasur feels happy because of religious differences are not a barrier. Guntur also emphasised the same thing (Interview, 25 December 2021). The practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* is carried out by both Catholics and Muslims. Guntur stated that "there is no difference in the tradition of the *Pesta Sekolah* in this village; all families whose children go to school and need support through the *Pesta Sekolah* carry it out whether their religion is Muslim or Catholic."

Jehudin, a Muslim figure in Noa (Interview, 26 December 2021), stated that Muslims and Catholics carry out the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*. Jehudin is often actively involved in *KumpulKope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, which Catholics hold. Jehudin emphasised, "Yes, so far. I am actively involved in various *Pesta Sekolah* activities. I am thrilled because we do not see religious differences."

Catholics and Muslims also experienced the experiences of Catholics and Muslims in Noa West Manggarai in Pota. Catholics and Muslims are involved in *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*. They do not view religious differences as obstacles to carrying out joint activities or helping each other. Information from resource persons regarding the involvement of interreligious communities in *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* is summarised in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Involvement of Interreligious Communities in *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

No	The involvement of interreligious communities in <i>KumpulKope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i>	
	Pota	Noa
1	Catholic and Muslim families hold <i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> .	Catholic and Muslim families have <i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> .
2	Event preparation is carried out together.	Event preparation is carried out together
3	Collecting funds or giving donations for <i>Kumpul Kope</i> is carried out by adults.	Adults carry out funds collection or giving donations for <i>Kumpul Kope</i>
4	Fundraising for <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> is carried out by adults and children	Fundraising for <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> is carried out by adults and children
5	There is a difference in the amount of <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> fees for adults and children.	There is a difference in the amount of <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> fees for adults and children.

4.3 Attitudes towards the uniqueness of Other Religions at *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

Families organising *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* always prepare dishes for the guests. For Muslim groups, not all food is halal. Certain types of food are considered haram, for example, pork and dog meat. On the other hand, there is no clear distinction between halal and haram food for Catholic groups. Food is haram according to Muslims, but for Catholics, it is all fit to eat. At this point, respect for the uniqueness of other religions is worth paying attention to.

Based on interviews with informants in this research, it was acknowledged by both Muslims and Catholics that the food menu was never a problem when attending *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, whether held by Muslims or Catholics. These two religious groups respect each other. According to Ali (Interview, 28 January 2022), if a Catholic family has a *Kumpul Kope* event, the food for the Muslim family is prepared by the Muslim family. Muslims are invited to prepare food. Ali stated:

We have been doing that (preparing food) all this time. For example, if a non-Muslim family is holding the *Kumpul Kope* event, they invite the Muslim family. Then, it was agreed that this event would have two menus. Muslim families prepare menus for Muslim families. According to several Catholic figures in Pota (Benyamin Man, Interview 30 January 2022, Cf. Yanuarius Rahman, Interview, 30 January 2022), for Muslims who are old, openness and trust towards Catholics are still extreme. Older people were rarely suspicious of food prepared by Catholics. Even in the past, Muslims could freely visit Catholic homes and taste the food served by Catholic families. However, for the younger generation of Muslims in Pota recently, doubts and suspicions have emerged towards Catholic families. This is proven by practices such as not eating food given by Catholic families when visiting. They drink water if the water served is bottled water.

The practice carried out by Catholics and Muslims in Pota at *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* is also practised by Catholics and Muslims in Noa. They also prepare exceptional food for Muslims. This was acknowledged by Jehudin (Interview, 26 December 2021). Jehudin explained: "It depends on the family holding the event. "If the food is halal, then there is no need to provide it specifically. But if something is not halal then it is specifically provided by the family concerned." Information from the interviewees regarding attitudes towards the uniqueness of other religions from the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* events is summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Attitudes towards the uniqueness of other religions in the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

No	Attitudes towards the uniqueness of other religions	
	Pota	Noa
1	Respect the differences of each religion.	Respect the differences of each religion
2	Prepare special food for Muslim families Muslim families are invited to prepare food	Prepare exceptional food for Muslim families Muslim families are invited to prepare food
3	when Catholic families hold events.	when Catholic families hold events.

4.4 Hope for the Sustainability of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

Kumpul Kope and *Pesta Sekolah* are things the people of Manggarai have practised for a long time. *Kumpul Kope* was created to help people who want to form a new family, especially about paying *belis* or dowry to women's families. Likewise, the *Pesta Sekolah* is held to help families who send their children to college. Based on interviews conducted by researchers with two diverse community groups in Pota and Noa, it was found that the community saw the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* as excellent cultural practices. Therefore, the culture of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* must be maintained.

According to Ramlin (Interview 29 January 2022), the culture of *Kumpul Kope* or *Keboro Weki* must be maintained because it allows for interreligious encounters. Ramlim stated:

When we are in a gathering with non-Muslim families, we always tell them about the situation in the village. Even though we have different beliefs, we are still the same. Between us, there is marriage, so there is no separation. We are always here together.

Ali also admitted the same thing. He feels that the culture of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* or *Keboro Weki* must be maintained. The Muslim and Catholic communities in Noa, West Manggarai, also feel that the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* must continue to be maintained. Jehudin (Interview, 26 January 2022) said that the practice of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* must be held because it can strengthen brotherhood ties with people of other religions. According to Hanasur (Interview, 25 December 2022), the culture of Gathering Kope and School Parties should be maintained because it can lighten the burden on others. Hanasur said: "If only the culture or custom of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* were maintained to ease the burden on others." The responses of the interviewees regarding the hope for the sustainability of the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* are summarised in Table 4

Table 4. Expectations for the Sustainability of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*

No	Expectations for the Sustainability of <i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i>	
	Pota	Noa
1	<i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> as culture	<i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> as culture
2	<i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> must be maintained. <i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> must be maintained	<i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> must be maintained. <i>Kumpul Kope</i> and <i>Pesta Sekolah</i> must be maintained
3	The younger generation needs to be actively involved	The younger generation needs to be actively involved

5. Discussion

5.1 *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* as Dialogue of Life

The Catholic Church interprets the most basic level of dialogue as a dialogue of life. This dialogue occurs at the level where people try to live in a spirit of openness and neighbourliness, sharing their joys and sorrows, human problems, and concerns with each other. The dialogue of life is built on the awareness that no human being is perfect and that the experience of being with other people is a necessity. Therefore, differences in beliefs or faith do not separate one

human being from another. Every human being needs the presence of other humans in their life. In encounters with other humans, each person is required to show respect for the other's presence.

The togetherness of the people in Pota and Noa during the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* is a real sign of dialogue in life. Through *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, they try to develop brotherhood and kinship. They share their concerns and struggles to defend and preserve life. *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* are local wisdom of the Manggarai people, which can be used as a means of meeting across religions. Through *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, religious barriers and boundaries are opened, allowing people to live in a spirit of kinship and brotherhood. Therefore, *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* must be maintained, especially in a pluralistic society in Manggarai. *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* allow religious differences to become mutually enriching forces.

Banawiratma defines life dialogue as a meeting of followers of different religions who experience the same situation, ups and downs, worries and shared hopes. This same situation gives rise to shared human concerns [29]. In line with Banawiratma, Panda interprets dialogue of life as living together and daily friendly interactions between people of different religions who live in the same area. Panda stated that "collective celebrations and religious feasts in local communities can also be an opportunity to build stronger emotional bonds between followers of different religions [30].

Kumpul Kope and *Pesta Sekolah* traditions are a form of cooperation and shared concern in dealing with financial problems. Through these two events, Manggarai people can ease the financial burden borne by those forming new families or sending their children to college. Apart from overcoming financial problems, these two events unite and increase interfaith brotherhood and kinship in Manggarai.

5.2 Respecting the Uniqueness of Other Religions is the Basis for Interreligious Dialogue

Appreciation and respect for other religions are because each religion has a wealth of teachings that lead people to salvation. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* article 53 states, "These religions have an awe-inspiring heritage of deep religious texts. These religions taught people from generation to generation how to pray. These religions are imbued with innumerable 'seeds of the word' and can create a good preparation for the gospel."

One of the essential ideas in the 2003, 2004 and 2006 *KWI* Pastoral Notes regarding interreligious dialogue is that inter-religious dialogue must be built on an awareness of mutual respect for the uniqueness or differences with other religions. Actual dialogue presupposes that dialogue partners respect each other, that they are sincerely engaged in a common pursuit, that they want to learn from each other and that they convey what is deepest within them. There is no dialogue without accepting the equality of dialogue partners.

Kumpul Kope and *Pesta Sekolah* traditions the Manggarai community practises uphold inter-religious differences. This is demonstrated by the attitude of Catholics, who respect beliefs about halal and haram in the Islamic religion. When Muslim families are invited to *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* held by Catholics, Muslim families are given halal food. This practice has become a habit.

5.3 The Impact of Migrants on the Emergence of Religious Fanaticism and Exclusivism

When discussing or talking about the theme of interreligious dialogue, the terms exclusivism and religious fanaticism cannot be separated from it. Religious exclusivism is an ideology that closes itself off from other religions and places its religion as the only true one compared to other religions. Meanwhile, religious fanaticism is a belief that is too strong in one's religion and tends to consider the teachings of their religion to be the most correct and ignore all facts or arguments that may conflict with their beliefs.^[31] In reality, these two attitudes always haunt and even destroy the harmony of religious life. These two attitudes always hamper efforts to achieve tolerance in religious life. All groups should be advised not to get trapped in these two attitudes and find ways to break the chain of these two attitudes.

Based on research data, it was found that one of the factors that influences religious fanaticism and exclusivism is migration. This can be clearly seen from the statement of Mr. Yanuarius Rahman (Interview, 30 January 2022):

Since then and even now, especially the older generation in Pota, both Muslims and non-Muslims have had excellent relations, and various social and community activities always run harmoniously. However, recently, there seems to be an impression that this spirit of togetherness is starting to fade among the younger generation, both Muslims and non-Muslims. After I researched it, it could be that one of the causes is the result of young people going outside the area to study or earn a living. Still, after returning here, they bring a new perspective on the religious teachings they adhere to and are a little closed off to other religions.

In contrast to Rahman, *Imam Masjid Pota* (Interview, 29 January 2022) stated that "to maintain harmony, we have started from the beginning, for example, during the time of Father Saka (Priest in Pota Parish from Catholics). In the past, there was a rabies problem in Ruteng. Hearing this information, we immediately gathered religious leaders here. We agree and then carry out outreach to the community." According to *Haji Ibrahim*, to maintain inter-religious harmony in Pota, parents must involve young people in various inter-religious activities. Ibrahim stated, "What is created by the elders is also involved with the young people so that when the old people are no longer there, they will continue."

Based on the data from the informants above, it can be illustrated that the seeds of disharmony eating away at the younger generation in interfaith relations can be triggered by the factor of leaving the area (migrating). In the Indonesian Dictionary, migration is defined as going to another country/region to seek a living, knowledge, and so on. According to this definition, when referring to the informant data above, it would not be wrong to say that migrating can impact religious fanaticism and exclusivism. Interestingly, the data above shows migration in the context of education. Here, it is depicted as if education outside the region does not bring good changes but instead gives rise to harmful excesses in fanaticism and exclusivism. The spread of intolerant attitudes in Indonesia cannot be separated from the intense wave of Islamic activists who continue to socialize their existence, exclusivity, and even prejudiced attitudes both at school and university level. Thus, young people who migrate (to continue their education) may be influenced by this exclusive socialisation.

Apart from that, in another overseas context, another informant gave the following statement:

Because of the rapid development of transportation and trade, many people from outside the region from various tribes and religions come and settle here. They also not only stayed but also took part in spreading religious teachings. Some bring positive teachings but do not rule out the possibility of bringing harmful spiritual teachings.

From the data above, the concept of overseas is not only limited to people in the area who go outside but also those who enter and stay in the area. Foreigners who come from outside as immigrants influence religious life (both positive and negative). If their presence brings many positive influences on spiritual life, efforts will be made to preserve it. However, if, on the contrary, their presence has a negative effect, for example, creating space for fanaticism and exclusivism, then firm action needs to be taken. Therefore, for religious life to continue to run harmoniously, it is essential to maintain and anticipate from the start the presence of migrants who come from outside the region.

Progress in transportation and communication has helped humans escape their narrowness and limited knowledge of the outside world. With advances in transportation, people can quickly mobilise from their areas of origin to other places for various purposes, whether for educational goals or improving their welfare. Advances in communication allow people to easily access multiple information or knowledge from different parts of the world or from outside their home area; people easily imitate various life practices of people in other parts of the world through YouTube or other features. Many ideologies are quickly learned through multiple social media platforms.

One of the challenges of maintaining harmony in religious diversity in Manggarai, especially in areas with heterogeneous communities such as Pota, is young people who return from overseas. In overseas places, they learn Islamic ideologies that they have not studied in their villages. They then brought these ideologies to their hometowns. Several Catholic figures observed this we interviewed. Regarding this, Muslim statistics tend not to reveal this phenomenon. They always say that the relationship between Catholics and Muslims in Pota has always been good because the elders have maintained it.

Of course, dynamics in building interfaith relations always occur. This dynamic can develop in a good direction, but it can also develop in a negative direction. Dynamics in a good direction occur when people maintain an attitude of mutual respect between religions. On the other hand, this dynamic develops in a negative direction if people no longer show respect for other religions.

6. Conclusion

Based on the data collected and analysed, we conclude the following. *First*, the culture of *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* has become a means of inter-religious dialogue in Manggarai. *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* are explicit dialogues of life. *Second*, *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah* enable cross-religious collaboration. With these events, people try to lighten the burden or responsibility of others regardless of religious differences. *Third*, the *Kumpul Kope* and *Pesta Sekolah*, as local wisdom of the Manggarai community, must be maintained, if necessary, modified, and revitalized so that they remain in line with the times or remain up to date. *Fourth*, inter-religious harmony in Manggarai will be shaken if the younger generation cannot sort and choose the teachings or doctrines they receive and live by while abroad. The influence of the

doctrines of specific figures who tend to be exclusive and passionate, which are accepted and followed by the younger generation of Manggarai while they are overseas, will significantly influence their perspective and practice of life in society after they return to their village.

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