

# NYADRAN TRADITION AND THE DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN URBAN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY IN NGAYUNG, EAST JAVA

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*Nyadran* Tradition and the Dynamics of Religious Moderation in Urban Muslim Communities: An Ethnographic Study in Ngayung, East Java Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

## Abstract

Strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia is urgent nowadays due to the increasing level of global polarization and religious sectarianism. Here, the university and pesantren's roles are crucial. However, local tradition containing similar values has not received proper attention, both from policymakers and academia. Therefore, this article explores the *nyadran* tradition in Ngayung Village, Lamongan, East Java as an example of Islamic moderation based on Javanese wisdom. This article addresses how *nyadran* serves as a mediator to maintain interreligious harmony in an Islamic moderation perspective carried out through *tawasuth*, *tasamuh*, *i'tidal*, *al-Iṣlāḥ*, *al-quḍwah*, and *muwāṭanah*. This study utilized a qualitative ethnographic approach. During the six-month data collection, researchers employed participant observation, in-depth interviews with 18 informants, including religious leaders, village elders and youth, and document analysis. The findings indicate that *nyadran* offers a microcosmic example of Islamic dialogical life because of its inclusive nature of people from various social backgrounds and religious persuasions. Besides holding on to tradition, the community also creatively reinterprets *nyadran* as *tathawwur wa ibtikār* amidst the burgeoning influence of urban religiosity and digital religious narratives. Analytically, *nyadran* functions as a hybrid social mechanism bridging rural piety and urban religious awareness, resulting in a culturally rooted form of religious moderation. This study contributes to strengthening religious moderation discourse by demonstrating local traditions as a sustainable framework for maintaining harmony in an increasingly diverse and modern Indonesian Muslim society.

**Keywords:** Nyadran; Local Wisdom; Urban Muslim Society; Religious Moderation

## A. Introduction

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic and multicultural country in the world with diverse ethnicities, religions, and cultures (Handayani et al., 2024; Hutagalung et al.,

2022, p. 2). Indonesian society has always been dynamic with various cultures, and this has become a capital of social cohesion (Letek & Keban, 2021, p. 7). However, contextually, communities with diverse cultures result in distinct groups, creating social structures divided into non-complementary institutions (Hidayat et al., 2023, p. 229). It must be admitted that multireligious and cultural communities are one of the causes of social conflicts (Ibrahim et al., 2023, p. 1926).

Academics propose various solutions to social conflicts based on ethnicity, culture, and religion. One of them is to strengthen religious moderation containing the values of tolerance, brotherhood among human beings, regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. So far, strengthening moderation has been more charged to educational institutions, such as schools, *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools), universities, and state policy, as the main space for mainstreaming the values of tolerance and pluralism (Chadidjah et al., 2023, p. 122; Maizuddin et al., 2023, p. 257; Suparta, 2024, p. 2).

In Islamic and cultural studies, local traditions often serve as a medium for the contextual articulation of religious values. Religious practices based on local wisdom not only represent a community's spiritual expression but also serve as a means of forming social identity and strengthening community cohesion (Abidin et al., 2022, p. 315; Saputri et al., 2021, p. 100; Sobaya et al., 2023, p. 56; Widodo, 2012, p. 7). One of traditions is *nyadran*, rooted in Javanese agrarian culture and functions as a form of respect for ancestors as well as a social practice to maintain harmony.

In the context of social change and increasing population mobility from villages to cities, *nyadran* has experienced a trans-localization of meaning, a social transformation and a recontextualization of values (Abidin et al., 2022, p. 316). In an increasingly urban and digital social context, this cultural practice holds great potential as an alternative channel for cultivating the religious moderation values in an organic and participatory manner. Urban Muslim communities who are exposed to the dynamics of globalization and digitalization, find spiritual values in *Nyadran* that balance modern rationality with local wisdom (Pajariantio et al., 2022, p. 3). Through both symbolic and digital engagement, *nyadran* is presented as a space for encounter between traditional piety and modern awareness, showing how village traditions can revive in the urban Islamic narrative (Muratova, 2024, p. 5).

Furthermore, religious moderation values in *Nyadran*—such as *tawasuth* (moderate), *tasamuh* (tolerance), and *i'tidal* (balance)—are relevant in responding to the challenges of diversity in complex urban Muslim societies. Amidst the growing tendency towards exclusivism and social polarization, *nyadran* functions as a cultural practice of moderation that not only strengthens social solidarity but also affirms Islam as a religion that respects culture and plurality. Thus, *nyadran* is not just a local ritual, but a medium for socio-religious transformation that connects village spirituality with urban modernity through the spirit of religious moderation.

*Nyadran* has been the spotlight of several previous studies. Sukron Mazid explains the tradition as a local wisdom forming a civic character that is full of shared values, respect for ancestors, and gratitude for God's blessings (Mazid et al., 2024, p. 235). This is corroborated by the research of Mutahar, that *Nyadran* in Panjang village contains local wisdom values contributing to the welfare of farmers and the community through strengthening social bonds, preserving cultural identity, and adapting to changing times (Mutahar et al., 2024, p. 133). Aisyah's research reveals the values of Sufism in *nyadran* tradition (Aisyah, 2024, p. 329). Herawati highlights the traditional procession of *nyadran*, explaining the symbolic meaning of food offerings in *nyadran* in the Banyon area (Herawati, 2022, p. 137). Meanwhile, the significant relationship of the three religious values in this tradition, namely worship value, which

aims to worship Allah; and dealing value, which aims to prevent hostility between Muslims and non-Muslims, and friendship value, which aims to make relations among brothers more harmonious and peaceful (Yakin & Umiarso, 2024, p. 248).

Those preceding studies generally centered around the rural, customary, and cultural preservation dimensions. Few studies have examined the transformation of Nyadran's meaning in the context of urban Muslim communities, particularly how this ritual adapts and is represented in more modern and digital social spaces. This gap is crucial because the dynamics of urbanization and digitalization have changed the way Muslim communities understand and express religious values and religious moderation. Therefore, this study fills the gap by exploring how *nyadran* is re-contextualized as a medium of Islamic moderation in the urban-digital social landscape, while also assessing its contribution to shaping an inclusive and dialogical image of Indonesian Islam.

## B. Methods

This research used a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach – used to describe, analyze, and explain the behavior of a social group – to examine the operationalization of religious moderation values in the Nyadran tradition in Ngayung Muslim community, Lamongan, East Java. Moreover, the ethnographic approach is employed to uncover the lived experiences, symbolic meanings, and socio-religious interactions surrounding the practice of Nyadran, particularly in relation to the changing identities of rural communities and urban migrants. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how local rituals are reinterpreted in contemporary urban Muslim life (Rosi & Yousif, 2024, p. 4; Hidayah et al., 2024, p. 773; Saefudin et al., 2023, p. 304).

From January to June 2024, the researchers collected the data through participant observation, in-depth interviews, field notes, and reflections. (Goldkuhl et al., 2022; Sosseh et al., 2023, p. 349). Observations included *Nyadran* ritual activities, community preparations, and post-ritual social interactions. A total of 18 informants were purposively selected, consisting of traditional leaders, local religious leaders, traditional elders, young participants, and urban migrants. These distinct informant categories aimed to capture diverse perspectives connecting rural traditions with urban religiosity.

Data analysis was conducted through three systematic stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns of religious moderation values such as *tasamuh*, *i'tidal*, and *tawasuth*. To ensure data validity, a triangulation method was performed by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Peer discussions with three fellow researchers were also done (Donkoh, 2023, p. 8; Muzari et al., 2022, p. 16). This methodological design provides a strong theoretical basis for the selection of ethnography as the research framework, while also demonstrating its methodological contribution to understanding how local traditions, such as Nyadran, undergo transformation and recontextualization within the dynamics of urban Muslim society.

## C. Findings and Discussion

### 1. Findings

#### The Ngayung Community and the Nyadran Tradition

Any village history can certainly be traced through relics, existing inscriptions, and chain stories from ancestors, and also customs. According to Supratman, the

history of Ngayung village can be traced using two ways: first, the meaning of the term Ngayung; second, the place that is considered sacred, namely the tomb of Mbah Kati Doyok or Sheikh Abdul Kadir Hamid.

### **The History of Ngayung Village**

The name Ngayung is identical to the word Ngrayung. Ngayung and Ngrayung come from the word “kayu”, and “rayung” which means “cooperation” or “uyang uyung”. This understanding is related to the habits of the Ngayung village community who always show togetherness in all their activities, both those related to social and religious life. If there is a socio-religious activity, for example, they will easily contribute their material and energy without being asked (Supratman, personal communication, 2024). In other cases, this togetherness also applies when a few of people migrate to a certain area and are successful economically and socially. Then one or two people will follow in their footsteps to try their luck by becoming entrepreneurs in the destination city. This will be followed by a crowd in the following year.

As a traditional figure, Ali revealed that Ngayung village had been formed before Indonesia liberation, even when the Dutch colonized the village and its government already existed (A. Ali, personal communication, 2024). It is said that with the formation of the village and government at that time, there were leaders with different titles. As far as can be traced, the Head of Ngayung village from time to time includes: Masiran, H. Abdullah, H. Masyhur (1978-1993), Supriyadi SH (1993-2007), Suhidayati S.Pd (2007-2013), Supratman (2013-2019) (Supratman, personal communication, 2024)

### **The Tomb of Mbah Kati Doyok or Sheikh Abdul Kadir Hamid.**

The history of Ngayung can also be traced from the sacred tomb of Mbah Kati Doyok. According to local figures, a legend that was passed down through generations and believed by Ngayung society, said that Mbah Kati Doyok originally came from Demak (M. Madjid, personal communication, 2024). His arrival not only established settlements but also instilled values of faith and religion in Ngayung and its surrounding.

Long story short, the tomb of Mbah Kati Doyok was made sacred and worshipped by some people. The community gave offerings in the form of objects or food. This caused controversy among the community, which resulted in the demolition of the tomb (Supratman, personal communication, 2024). Currently, the tomb has been rebuilt more grandly for pilgrims to visit. However, the continuous debate still exists around who was the first to be buried in the tomb area, and who gave the name Ngayung village. In the past, the tomb was protected and worshiped since it was considered to possess extraordinary supernatural powers, and give people benefits and safety. Thus, the villagers held offerings by slaughtering chickens or goats. Even the Wedusan Rice Field, the village treasury, was used for this activity. Currently, the rice field no longer exists because its use was diverted to the construction of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Tarmuji, personal communication, 2024).

### **Socio-Cultural and Religious Conditions of Ngayung Community**

Based on 2014 data, the population of Ngayung village was 3,135 people, consisting of 855 families, and is a very potential source of capital to achieve village development goals. The agricultural sector is the main livelihood of the residents, in addition to civil services. Some farmers also raise livestock to increase household income. This can be proven by the number of rice field and dry field owners exceeding

50% of the number of families.

Ngayung Village, Maduran District has a poverty rate of around 4% of the population. This means that the village government must find ways to reduce poverty and improve the economic standard of community's life. On average, the Ngayung population's educational level is high schools, and only a few people are at college level (Marlik, personal communication, 2024). Meanwhile, the predominant religion in Ngayung village is Muslim, with most of them belongs to Nahdlatul Ulama organization, and the rests are Muhammadiyah and LDII. Only three residents are Hindu and one is Christian. Due to the multi religious population, Ngayung community holds, several religious events as a tradition and culture, for example, congregational prayers accompanied by religious studies followed by mothers and children without looking at certain sects, the distribution of zakat performed without distinguishing certain groups, and the preserved traditions, such as village cleaning, *apeman*, *slametan*, Friday Wagean, and Nyadran (MMadjid, personal communication, 2024; R. Rejo, personal communication, 2024).

The *nyadran* tradition in Ngayung Village is an annual ceremony expressing gratitude for a bountiful harvest from the Creator. For agrarian communities, harvests are the primary livelihood, so *nyadran* is seen as both an expression of gratitude and an awareness of humanity's connection to nature. This ritual outlays the strong values of togetherness and social solidarity among residents. Besides, the religious life in congregation is expressed in a daily routine, like congregational prayers at the mosque or mushalla, which serve as spiritual foundation underpinning daily lives. Culturally, Ngayung is known as a village that still maintains various local traditions. The cultural values and local wisdom that live within the community serve as unwritten norms regulating social relations and maintaining harmony. The principles of mutual respect and appreciation form the basis for religious tolerance and social harmony (Supratman, personal communication, 2024). Thus, the *nyadran* tradition and the religious life in Ngayung reflect a balance between spirituality, local culture, and social values that strengthen community cohesion.

### **Nyadran Across Rural, Urban, and Digital Communities**

The exact time of the beginning of the *nyadran* in Ngayung, Lamongan is unknown. According to Madjid, *nyadran* was a village tradition which later was realized in the form of a ceremony. *nyadran* focuses on the spiritual power of Mbah Kati Doyok, as he was considered a great role in introducing the tradition of almsgiving, which means goodness, generosity, and togetherness. This almsgiving practice later developed into the *nyadran* tradition (Supratman, personal communication, 2024). Every element of society actively participates in the celebration, not only locals who stay in the village, but also those who have migrated to the city choose to return home and join in the lively event. The presence of these migrants demonstrates the strong emotional and spiritual bonds between urban residents and their home communities. Additionally, it emphasizes *nyadran's* role as a space for togetherness that transcends geographical boundaries.

Some of the migrants come from Surabaya, Malang, Semarang, and Jakarta. Most of them have been away from home for 5–15 years and still have family in Ngayung Village. For them, the *nyadran* tradition serves as a way to reconnect and visit ancestral graves. Rachmad explained, living away from home results in a deep longing for one's hometown. *Nyadran* is a special occasion to relieve longing, reconnect with family, and visit ancestral graves (Nugroho, personal communication, 2024).

As a local, Yuniar feels responsible for preserving the traditions and cultural

identity of his ancestors. He states that the *nyadran* tradition is difficult to find in urban environments. For him, the ritual teaches people to always be grateful, feel the blessings of life, and pray for a better future (Yuniarba, personal communication, 2024). Anis, who has migrated to another city, echoed this sentiment. She believes the homecoming ritual of *nyadran* strengthens a sense of togetherness and solidarity between villagers and migrants. *Nyadran* also serves as a moment of spiritual renewal, a rare occurrence in urban environments. Jannah added that she had never encountered such tradition in her housing complex. Therefore, she is grateful that social media, particularly WhatsApp groups, consistently provide information on the annual *nyadran* schedule (Anis, personal communication, 2025; Jannah, personal communication, 2025).

Those statements indicate the migrants' various reasons of participating in *nyadran*. Some come to relieve their homesickness and reconnect with family, while others are driven by a desire to preserve ancestral traditions and cultural identity, as well as a means of spiritual reflection which expressing gratitude for their migration life. As stated by Wajdi, urban society has modern and diverse characters socially and culturally, thus requires strengthening religious values and tolerance in daily interactions (Mutaqin et al., 2024)

In the past, *nyadran*'s practice was accompanied by gongs and *tayuban*, which were an important part of the ceremony. It was often incorporated with gambling and dancing as part of the after-harvest party. Although these activities did not always have negative connotations, social changes and moral values led to the evolution of its tradition. In 1972/1973, the term "*nyadran*" was combined with "earth alms" and "haul", reflecting a deeper change in its meanings and ritual practices (Putrajaya, personal communication, 2024).

*Nyadran* traditional funding comes from "*sapen*" land (village-owned land)-rice fields managed by the village intended for *nyadran* financing. The management of "*sapen*" land is cultivated openly and in turns. 40% of the harvest is used for the *nyadran* celebration, and the remaining 60% is given to the people who managed the land. Apart from the "*sapen*" land, several *gogolan* owners contribute according to their abilities. All residents also chip in through collective donations (Supratman, personal communication, 2024).

The series of *nyadran* ceremonies begins with cleaning graves. This ritual has been done for a long time and is done every year to honor the ancestors. As expressed by local traditional figures:

"This is the first stage carried out with respect and togetherness. Villagers, both elders and youth are involved in this process. Cleaning graves is an ordinary task and a way to show respect and maintain relationships with our ancestors," (Madjid, personal communication, 2024).

Cleaning graves includes repairing gravestones and monuments. The community places ornamental plants around the graves and holds a congregation prayer at the end of the event. Next, people lift sticky rice on stretchers, carry it to the graves, and distribute it to the residents present in the ritual. This ritual has religious and social values, as stated by one of religious figures:

"The procurement of sticky rice with a stretcher is a symbol of cohesiveness and prudence, as an expression of gratitude for the blessings given. Sticky textured rice symbolizes eternity and continuity, close in the inner bond between humans and ancestors" (Tasliman, personal communication, 2024).

The next procession is the slaughter of sacrificial animals—usually a black buffalo with a minimum weight of 175 kg. According to one resident, buffalo has spiritual

values and symbols of glory in the local culture (Prastika, personal communication, 2024). Sulaiman emphasizes that choosing a black buffalo is not easy because the committee takes 1-2 months to get it. This is all done so that blessings and prosperity are bestowed on the community once *nyadran* is carried out (Sulaiman, personal communication, 2024).

The following step, each resident provides food and delivers it to the graves. Any type of food is allowed based on personal capacity and willingness. The handed over food will be replaced with meat that has been cut into six pieces. This exchanging food process becomes the core part of *nyadran* tradition. This ritual reflects the principle of mutual sharing and cooperation (Prastika, personal communication, 2024).

The peak night is the final process of *nyadran*. Villagers make a stage where *istighasah*, *tahlil*, and *sholawat* will be held together, attended by the entire community. A *kyai* leads the procession, as expressed by Suharno:

“The series of events begins with *tahlil*, *istighasah*, a congregation prayer to ask for forgiveness and blessings for the residents and deceased ancestors. The entire community unites in prayer and *dhikr* during *tahlil*, increasing solemnity, solidarity, and togetherness.” (Suharno, personal communication, 2024).

Each procession in the *nyadran* tradition contains certain symbols, meanings, and values believed by the society of Ngayung. Recently, *nyadran* does not only belong to Ngayung Village as it begins to widely expose through digital media. Several residents and event organizers record the *nyadran* procession from the grave cleaning to the celebration night, and upload the videos to some social media platforms such as YouTube. In addition, online media and local television have also covered the event several times as part of Lamongan cultural calendar. This digital exposure indicates that Nyadran's fame is now rising to people outside the village, including those who have migrated and the younger generation who follow trends through social media.

## 2. Discussion

### Implementation of Religious Moderation Values in *Nyadran* Ngayung

When discussing religious moderation, the associated values are also addressed both explicitly and implicitly. In the Nyadran Ngayung tradition, at least nine values of religious moderation are applied. Those values are *at-tawasuth*, *i'tidal*, *tasamuh*, *ash-shura*, *al-ishlah*, pioneership, nationalism, anti-violence, and culture friendliness and innovation.

#### *At-Tawasuth (Being Moderate)*

Nyadran Ngayung is a tradition rich in cultural and spiritual values. It also reflects the principle of moderation through the concept of *tawasuth* (Fadil et al., 2024; Wajdi et al., 2025). In this tradition, the word “*tawasuth*” means maintaining a balance between all aspects of life, both material and spiritual (Baba et al., 2023). In the *nyadran* tradition, people gather to clean ancestral graves, send prayers, and share food according to one's ability as a way to show respect and solidarity to ancestors. All of these activities are done modestly. Modesty is the middle piece between extravagance and stinginess. As revealed by al-Qaradawi, *wasathiyah* is the neutralization of two extreme attitudes, between spiritual and material, reason and revelation, individual and social, no more or less (Muslim, 2022, p. 45; Qardhawi, 2007, p. 111).

Tawasuth is the attitude of submission to Allah SWT and service to people. In this case, it is implemented in the form of a positive balance in various aspects, both in terms of beliefs and practices, material and meaning, worldly and hereafter balance. Tawasuth commits to justice, humanity, and equality. Balance is an attitude to create

harmony among human beings, and between humans and God.

The tradition of Nyadran Ngayung teaches the importance of living in unity with the environment and surroundings, respecting diversity, and maintaining social harmony by upholding *tawasuth*. This concept of moderation strengthens community bonds and enriches cultural heritage, ensuring that noble values can be passed on to the next generation. The *nyadran* tradition is in accordance with the value of *wasathiyah*, namely, creating and fostering a sense of unity among Muslims or other religions until interreligious harmony is formed.

#### *I'tidal (Be Proportional)*

The Nyadran Ngayung tradition also has an *i'tidal* principle or being proportional. This principle teaches to act with balance, fairness, and avoiding excess in various aspects of life (Gunawan & Khairunnisa, 2024). This attitude is seen in *nyadran* rituals, such as cleaning ancestral graves, praying together, and sharing food. Such rituals are conducted in a reasonably proportionate manner while maintaining the values and integrity of the tradition. Thus, people can show respect to their ancestors without getting caught up in excessive habits.

The way society maintaining a balance between social and spiritual obligations shows an *i'tidal* attitude. Nyadran is an important moment to strengthen social relations in the community, in addition to being a religious ritual. This tradition teaches the importance of maintaining harmonious relationships and mutual respect by gathering and interacting in a family atmosphere. Proportional theory ensures that every aspect of life does not overshadow the others, rather, everything is balanced and complementary.

*I'tidal* value is shown in the way people manage their resources. Respect for nature and the surrounding environment is shown by using the resources wisely and not excessively. It also shows that anything excessive can have a detrimental impact on a person and the community as a whole. The Nyadran Ngayung community can preserve the environment and maintain this tradition proportionally. *I'tidal* is a vital value that helps maintain harmony in personal, social, and environmental life. *Nyadran* tradition becomes a valuable cultural heritage through this proportional attitude. This is also a vivid example of how moderation can bring benefits.

#### *Tasamuh (Tolerance)*

Tasamuh or tolerance strengthens social harmony. It teaches us to respect differences and live together peacefully (Mutaqin & Jamarudin, 2023; Za et al., 2025). Tolerance in *nyadran* is seen in the way society respects various backgrounds and beliefs in the community (Arandarenko & Pavlović, 2023). Although it comes from a Javanese tradition which is rich in religious and cultural values, it does not impose one perspective, but embraces diversity as an important part of custom.

People of various faiths gather to honor ancestors and share happiness during *nyadran* celebration. It shows a strong inclusive spirit, where everyone is accepted and valued regardless of their differences. This tradition becomes an important moment to strengthen brotherhood and a sense of togetherness among citizens, showing that differences are a wealth that enriches common life rather than barriers.

The way society adapt to change and outside influences shows *tasamuh*. They continue to maintain their cultural identity. They have the ability to adjust to new, useful elements while still retaining their mind. Tolerance does not mean sacrificing basic values, rather it enriches traditions with new perspectives and experiences. Therefore, Nyadran remains relevant and survives in the midst of continuous social



change.

The attitude of *tasamuh* in *nyadran* encourages people to always experience empathy and respect others' views. This forms a safe and harmonious environment where everyone feels valued and accepted. The tolerance value in *nyadran* not only strengthens social relationships but also builds a solid foundation for people to act wisely and respect mutually when facing challenges.

In the tradition, *tasamuh* principle teaches the importance of living in harmony and respecting each other. *Nyadran* is not only a cultural ritual, but also an important lesson on how to build an inclusive and harmonious society. This heritage enriches our spiritual and cultural life and inspires the next generation to always maintain harmony in life.

#### *Ash-Shura (Deliberation)*

In the *Nyadran Ngayung* tradition, the value of *ash-shura* or deliberation is crucial to strengthen the sense of togetherness and foster a collective spirit. *Shura*, is a decision-making process that involves the entire community. It is practiced in *nyadran* to plan and carry out various activities, such as determining the time, dividing tasks, and organizing ritual needs. By involving all parties, *shura* ensures that all voices are heard and valued, so that decisions made are in accordance with common needs and interests.

The *nyadran* deliberation process also represents democratic and inclusive principles. Regardless of age, gender, or social status, every member of the community has an equal opportunity to voice their opinions. This enhances a sense of belonging and shared responsibility and encourages a diversity of constructive perspectives. To reach a beneficial and fair consensus, the community can achieve harmony and cohesion through healthy discussions and debates.

*Shura* also teaches patience and respect for differences of opinion. When participating in a deliberation, each person should listen carefully and respect others' different opinions. This helps build mutual respect and prevent conflicts that may occur due to misunderstandings. The *Nyadran* tradition, therefore, is more than only increasing harmony.

In practice, *shura* value in *nyadran* shows how society can collaborate in harmony to achieve common goals. Since the deliberation process involves active participation and collective agreement, decisions made through deliberation tend to be more accepted and supported by all parties. This process also strengthens the shared commitment, ensures its successful implementation, and maintains the values.

Overall, *shura* in the *Nyadran Ngayung* tradition shows the importance of participation, openness, and respect for differences in decision making. By implementing these principles of deliberation, the tradition not only becomes a valuable cultural heritage, but also a model for society on how to build close cooperation and social harmony through an inclusive and democratic process. This is a valuable lesson that is relevant in various aspects of life, from small communities to a wider scale.

#### *Al-Ishlah (Reformative)*

Through observation and interview, *nyadran* tradition contains the principle of *al-ishlah* in terms of religious moderation. Take an example, first, the importance of maintaining positive relationships among community members, which is the basis principle of *al-ishlah*. During an interview with one of village elders, Rejo, he emphasized that *Nyadran* is not a mere ritual (Rejo, 2024). It also improves relations, as

people can gather, talk, and get to know each other better. Sutrisno stated that maintaining harmony in the community is essential. Therefore, Nyadran Ngayung strengthens social relations and encourages positive communication among residents. This is consistent with the principle of religious moderation, which prioritizes harmony and tolerance.

Second, the principle can be seen in the community's efforts to maintain the environment around the grave. During the activity, people clean, mow grass, and repair damaged parts of the grave area. A housewife who participated in this activity, Elly said that this activity creates a sense of shared commitment to the cleanliness and tidiness. She also said, "It is not just about the graves of our ancestors, but also how we respect the place where we live and care for it." These actions demonstrate the significance of a well-maintained environment and its connection to personal and society improvement. Moreover, it is an invaluable component of religious moderation doctrine (Prastika, personal communication, 2024)

Third, inclusive religious values are strengthened by *Nyadran Ngayung*. It is an effort to preserve a tradition reinforced by religious rituals; thus, it is more meaningful as a step to avoid extremism. *Nyadran* is an example of how Islamic teaching can be applied in respecting local culture. According to Tamlihan, a local religious figure, Nyadran teaches people to apply non-extreme religious values, along with an approach that respects diversity and togetherness (Tamlihan, personal communication, 2024).

In addition, the ritual of *nyadran* is a form of applying the rule "al-muhafadhatul bil qadi al-Shalih wa kudzu bil Jadidi al-Aslah," namely, maintaining traditional practices and adopting something new and better. In this case, *nyadran*, a well-preserved ancestral culture, changes its rituals in accordance with the principles of Islam.

### *Pioneership*

Based on observations and interviews conducted with several religious leaders, traditional leaders, and the Ngayung community, this tradition shows respect for ancestors and how pioneering in society can harmonize Islam. The value of pioneering in Nyadran is identified through two aspects.

First, Nyadran Ngayung pioneers the maintenance of essential customs in the community. The society tries to be pioneers who maintain this tradition, because nyadran strengthens relationships between residents and teaches the younger generation about the worth of respecting ancestors and environment. In addition, this pioneering is aligned with religious moderation, which prioritizes local wisdom values as an integral part of a harmonious religious life (Rejo, personal communication, 2024).

Second, leaders also demonstrate the value of moderation in pioneering; how they handle differences of opinion and solve conflicts. By using a thoughtful and open approach, leaders can foster constructive discussions that resolve problems fairly and peacefully. This shows that *nyadran's* leadership has the power to achieve consensus and cooperation rather than domination. This concept enhances social cohesion and guides the importance of peaceful and efficient conflict resolution.

### *Nationalism*

Nyadran Ngayung is a spiritual and social tool that shows solid love for country (nationalism) among the community. Based on the observation and interview, this tradition shows how religious moderation leads to a sense of patriotism. One example is that Ngayung residents living in other areas are willing to return home to celebrate

this tradition, showing their devotion for their hometown. Sutikno, an immigrant who always returns home for *nyadran*, states that this activity is a way to show fondness for his hometown and traditions passed down across generations. He always visits Nyadran every year as it is more than just a ritual. It is a form of love manifestation for his place of origin and togetherness with the extended family (Sutikno, personal communication, 2024)

Nationalism in Nyadran Ngayung also reflects the community's efforts to preserve historical places and ancestral graves. Nyadran Ngayung becomes a medium to instill a sense of pride and love for the homeland through respect for ancestors and their heritage. Mas'amah says that caring for ancestral graves is a way to appreciate history and culture as part of one's identity and nation (Mas'amah, personal communication, 2024).

#### *Anti-Violence*

Supratman explains that the elimination of violent habits such as gambling and food throwing in *nyadran* is a crucial part of shifting old traditions towards a more peaceful direction. He continued, in the past, gambling was often part of the *nyadran* celebration, but now, the community eliminates it due to its negative impacts, such as quarrels and commotion (Supratman, personal communication, 2024). The community is eventually able to avoid conflicts that disrupt harmony and security in the *nyadran* celebration by eliminating gambling. This follows the principle of religious moderation, which prioritizes tolerance and anti-violence.

Tamlihan adds, education and awareness are fundamental to eliminating violence in the *nyadran* tradition. During *nyadran*, community always remembers the importance of maintaining attitudes and behavior. To ensure that the *nyadran* Ngayung tradition remains peaceful and meaningful, the community provides education on the downsides of violence and the significance of tolerance and compassion. Tamlihan stated that this tradition should be a moment of introspection and strengthen brotherhood, not to cause violence (Tamlihan, personal communication, 2024).

#### *Culture Friendliness and Innovation*

Nyadran tradition is a continuous effort to maintain and preserve village culture, respecting local wisdom in the context of religious moderation (Haidar et al., 2023). It is an example of how locals care and be responsible for their culture. Supratman states that every year, the society try to uphold *nyadran* tradition because this is an ancestral heritage that must be respected and passed on to the next generation. Therefore, Nyadran Ngayung is not only an annual ritual but also a means to instill love and pride in local culture (Supratman, personal communication, 2024).

Nyadran Ngayung is another example of how local traditions can harmonize with faith (Islam). *Tamlihan* affirms that the community learns to appreciate and preserve traditions while still inclusively practicing religious teachings. Maintaining local culture is part of worship and respect for God's creation. *Nyadran* becomes a bridge between culture and religion, complementing each other (Tamlihan, personal communication, 2024).

Nyadran in Ngayung is also dynamic and innovative. Originally, it was greatly influenced with animism and dynamism nuances, along with parties involving alcohol. In the modern era, *Nyadran* celebration shifts to a more religious nuances, full of Islamic values. The values of religious moderation are not the result of theological discourse or state policy, rather grow organically through community cultural practices. The *Nyadran* tradition demonstrates that religious moderation is deeply

rooted in local wisdom, emphasizing a balance between spiritual and social dimensions.

In Durkheim's (1912) perspective, *nyadran* functions as a ritual of social integration through symbols of togetherness, cooperation, and ancestral reverence. Through this practice, the community affirms the inclusive and tolerant values of Islam without negating local cultural heritage. *Nyadran* thus becomes a concrete manifestation of local wisdom-based religious moderation, where social harmony is built through a spirit of sharing, mutual respect, and maintaining balance between tradition and religious teachings. In urban society, this tradition demonstrates that religious moderation is not only understood normatively but is manifested in the form of social participation, cross-class collaboration, and communal solidarity transcending ritual boundaries. In other words, *nyadran* presents religious moderation as a lived practice, which functions to sustain humanitarian values, togetherness, and spirituality amidst rapid social change.

### **Recontextualization and Urban Dynamics in *Nyadran* Tradition**

The *Nyadran* tradition is a rural Javanese cultural heritage that has evolved in response to increasing social mobility and urbanization. In this context, there is a process of translocalization of meaning, where traditional values are adapted and reshaped to fit new social environments, both in urban areas and online. Appadurai defines translocalization as a global cultural flow that allows local values to adjust while maintaining their unique characteristics. He states that media and migration create social identities and behaviors exceeding geographical boundaries (Appadurai, 2008). Additionally, researchers argue that globalization fosters transnational connections that link communities across time and space (Magu, 2015; Tedeschi et al., 2020).

In practice, *Nyadran* in urban areas is viewed as not only a ritual for visiting graves and paying tribute to ancestors, but also as a form of identity negotiation and community building. *Nyadran* is a moment when residents and village diaspora participate in social relations and confirm belonging to their hometown (Saniyah & Zustiyanoro, 2025, p. 94). These migrants—who presently reside outside Lamongan, and even other countries—despite being far from hometowns, still contribute to *Nyadran* ritual in terms of financial and social (Ramona & Muhsin, 2024, p. 33). The phenomena turns *Nyadran* to be a translocal cultural practice that links rural-urban groups (Chen, 2020).

Symbolically, ritual elements such as grave pilgrimage, the tumpeng (rice cone), and communal prayer represent solidarity and collective memory within the Javanese community. In an urban context, these symbols assume new significance. For example, first, tumpeng is not simply a form of gratitude for the harvest, but also a symbol of economic success and social achievement while away from home. Next, communal prayer is interpreted not only as a tribute to ancestors but also as a spiritual expression to comprehend the fast-paced and competitive modern life. Lastly, grave pilgrimage becomes a reflection of identity and moral continuity amidst a tendentious, individualistic urban lifestyle (Beatty, 2009; Howell, 2007). Thus, the symbols of the *nyadran* ritual do not lose their meaning; instead, they undergo reinterpretation, adapting to the social realities of urban society, where spirituality, economics, and culture are intertwined.

The sociological framework of religion helps understand how religion and ritual function to maintain social order and provide collective meaning in fragmented modern life (Durkheim, 1995). From this perspective, *nyadran* serves as a socio-

religious ritual that unites urban Muslim communities through shared values, prayer, and ancestral reverence. Meanwhile, urban anthropological approaches, such as those developed by Hannerz (1980, 378) and Sharon Zukin (2010), explain that city life creates new spaces for identity negotiation, where traditions like *nyadran* serve as a medium for negotiating positions between modernity and spirituality, between tradition and urban lifestyle.

Furthermore, the translocalization of *nyadran* demonstrates the emergence of cultural hybridity, namely the intersection of traditional values and modern lifestyles. The spirit of cooperation and gratitude remains as the heart of the ritual, but its implementation has undergone adjustments, from the use of digital technology and an online fee system to the packaging of the event as an open socio-cultural activity (Jati, 2022, p. 246 ; Tuti & Safitri, 2024, p. 427). In this context, *nyadran* is no longer confined to a local sacred event but also emerges as a public cultural narrative that affirms Javanese identity amidst social change and urbanization (Wajdi et al., 2025). Thus, translocalization and urban dynamics do not eliminate *nyadran's* spiritual significance, rather expand its symbolic scope. This tradition becomes a space for negotiation between the past and the present, locality and globality, as well as ritual and cultural representation (Abidin et al., 2022). In the urban Muslim context, *nyadran* reflects the ability of local culture to adapt, innovate, and maintain its relevance amidst the flow of urbanization. It also becomes a space for the integration of spiritual, social, and cultural values in modern life.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The *nyadran* tradition in Ngayung is not merely a cultural heritage, but a concrete representation of religious moderation that grows from the social roots of the community. By harmoniously blending Islamic values and local Javanese wisdom, this practice demonstrates how moderation can be realized through communal rituals that emphasize togetherness, ancestral respect, and social solidarity. The findings of this study indicate that *nyadran* functions as a social mechanism that maintains a balance between religiosity and culture, even amidst the increasingly powerful influences of urbanization and digitalization. However, this study has methodological limitations due to its reliance on a qualitative approach with a limited number of informants and a specific local context, requiring caution in generalizing. Nevertheless, the results of this study provide important conceptual contributions to the development of strategies for strengthening religious moderation in urban areas. Nyadran can serve as a model for local culture-based policies that foster dialogue, inclusivity, and mutual respect amidst diversity. The phenomenon in Ngayung reflects dynamics parallel to those in urban Muslim communities, where the values of harmony, cooperation, and tolerance remain relevant as foundations for building a moderate religious life in the modern era.

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