

Values of Moderation in Local Musical Traditions: Learning Religious Moderation from the Massamper Putri Tradition in the Multireligious Sangihe Community

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Abstract

This study investigates the Massamper Putri musical tradition as a cultural medium for internalizing religious moderation within the multireligious community of the Sangihe Islands, Indonesia. This research is important because it highlights local cultural practices as effective, lived approaches to fostering interreligious harmony beyond formal religious instruction. Using a qualitative ethnographic method, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with performers, cultural leaders, and interfaith figures, as well as documentation of performances and musical scores. The findings show that the musical structure of Massamper Putri—characterized by responsorial singing, four-part vocal harmony, lyrical repetition, and participatory tempo—creates an inclusive and egalitarian social space. The lyrics convey universal spiritual values such as gratitude, togetherness, and respect, enabling participation across religious boundaries. This study concludes that Massamper Putri functions as a form of lived religious moderation that strengthens social cohesion in a multireligious society.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menyelidiki tradisi musik Massamper Putri sebagai media budaya untuk menginternalisasi moderasi beragama dalam komunitas multiagama Kepulauan Sangihe, Indonesia. Penelitian ini penting karena menyoroti praktik budaya lokal sebagai pendekatan yang efektif dan hidup untuk menumbuhkan harmoni antaragama di luar pengajaran agama formal. Dengan menggunakan metode etnografi kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi peserta, wawancara mendalam dengan pemain, tokoh budaya, dan tokoh lintas agama, serta dokumentasi pertunjukan dan partitur musik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa struktur musik Massamper Putri—yang ditandai dengan nyanyian responsorial, harmoni vokal empat bagian, pengulangan lirik, dan tempo partisipatif—menciptakan ruang sosial yang inklusif dan egaliter. Liriknya menyampaikan nilai-nilai spiritual universal seperti rasa syukur, kebersamaan, dan rasa hormat, memungkinkan partisipasi lintas batas agama. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Massamper Putri berfungsi sebagai bentuk moderasi beragama yang hidup yang memperkuat kohesi sosial dalam masyarakat multiagama.

Keywords: Massamper Putri, religious moderation, traditional music, multireligious society

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A. Introduction

Indonesia is widely recognized as a plural society characterized by religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity.¹ This plurality presents both a social asset and a potential source of tension, particularly when religious differences are not managed through inclusive and balanced approaches.² In this context, religious moderation has emerged as a key framework for sustaining social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Religious moderation is not merely a normative discourse or state policy; rather, it is most effective when it operates as a lived social practice embedded in everyday interactions within diverse communities.

One of the central concepts in the discourse of religious moderation is wasatiyyah, commonly understood as the principle of the middle path, balance, justice, and the rejection of extremism in religious life. Although wasatiyyah originates from Islamic theological discourse, its ethical substance—such as tolerance, proportionality, and social harmony—possesses universal relevance.³ As such, wasatiyyah can be articulated and practiced beyond formal religious instruction, particularly through cultural expressions that are shared across religious boundaries.

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the strategic role of local culture in fostering values of religious moderation. Cultural practices provide socially accepted and inclusive spaces in which interreligious encounters can occur without doctrinal confrontation. Local cultural traditions often function as mediators that internalize values of tolerance and coexistence more effectively than formal ideological approaches.⁴ Within this framework, traditional music holds particular potential as a medium of social learning, as it combines aesthetic experience with collective participation and emotional engagement.⁵

¹ Koentjaraningrat, *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi* (Rineka Cipta, 2009).

² Heru Nugroho, “Moderasi Beragama Dalam Kerangka Kebudayaan Indonesia,” *Jurnal Harmoni* 18, no. 2 (2019): 34–50.

³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (HarperCollins, 2002).

⁴ Irwan Abdullah, *Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Dan Transformasi* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2018).

⁵ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

The Sangihe Islands of North Sulawesi represent a socio-cultural context in which religious diversity has long coexisted with strong local traditions. Communities in this region comprise adherents of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and other religious traditions who share common cultural practices in their daily lives. Social harmony in the Sangihe Islands cannot be separated from the persistence of local traditions that function as shared cultural references across religious lines.⁶ One such tradition is Massamper, a communal vocal singing practice of the Sangihe people that has been transmitted across generations and continues to be actively performed in various social, ritual, and cultural contexts.

Among the various forms of Massamper, Massamper Putri occupies a distinctive position. Performed by female vocal groups, Massamper Putri is characterized by responsorial singing patterns, four-part vocal harmony, lyrical repetition, and a lively, participatory tempo. While Massamper historically developed within religious and customary settings, Massamper Putri in contemporary practice is not limited to a single religious domain. It is performed in interfaith celebrations, cultural festivals, communal gatherings, and customary rituals involving participants from diverse religious backgrounds. This transformation indicates that Massamper Putri has evolved into a shared cultural space that facilitates inclusive and egalitarian social interaction.

From an ethnomusicological perspective, music is understood not merely as a sonic product but as a social practice deeply embedded in cultural life. Music operates through three interconnected domains: musical concepts, musical behavior, and musical sound. Musical concepts refer to the ideas, values, and beliefs that a society holds about music; musical behavior involves the ways music is performed, who participates, and the social contexts in which it occurs; while musical sound is the audible result of these cultural processes.⁷ These three domains form an integrated system, demonstrating that music cannot be separated from the social and cultural structures surrounding it. The significance of participatory music, which prioritizes active involvement from all participants rather than individual technical virtuosity. In participatory musical practices, the primary value lies in

⁶ Abdullah, *Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Dan Transformasi*.

⁷ Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Northwestern University Press, 1964).

togetherness, social interaction, and the collective experience created through making music.⁸ This approach transforms music into an inclusive social space where every individual feels accepted and valued. In the context of multireligious societies, the concepts proposed by Merriam and Turino highlight music's potential as an effective medium for fostering social harmony. Through participatory musical practices, individuals from diverse religious backgrounds can interact on equal terms, cultivate mutual respect, maintain social balance, and strengthen a shared sense of belonging within the community.

Despite the growing body of research on Massamper as an expression of cultural identity and social cohesion, studies that explicitly analyze Massamper Putri through the framework of wasatiyyah and religious moderation remain limited. Existing research has tended to focus on aesthetic, historical, or identity-related dimensions, leaving the educational and ethical implications of this tradition underexplored. This gap is particularly significant given that Massamper Putri embodies concrete practices of balance, inclusivity, and non-exclusivism—core values of wasatiyyah—that are experienced directly through collective cultural participation rather than through formal religious instruction.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine how the local musical tradition of Massamper Putri functions as a cultural medium for internalizing wasatiyyah values and facilitating the learning of religious moderation within the multireligious society of the Sangihe Islands. By employing an ethnographic approach combined with musical analysis, this research seeks to contribute to the study of religious moderation by demonstrating how local musical traditions can operate as forms of lived cultural pedagogy. The findings are expected to enrich ethnomusicological scholarship and offer contextual insights into culture-based strategies for strengthening social harmony and peaceful coexistence in plural societies.

⁸ Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*.

The Concept Of *Wasatiyyah* In Religious Moderation

Religious moderation, conceptualized in Islamic discourse as *wasatiyyah*, constitutes a foundational ethical principle that emphasizes balance, justice, and proportionality in religious belief and social practice. The Qur'an explicitly articulates this principle by characterizing the Muslim community as *ummatan wasaṭan* (a middle or balanced community), as stated in Surah al-Baqarah (2:143). This verse positions moderation not merely as a theological ideal, but as a moral orientation that guides social responsibility, coexistence, and ethical engagement with others.⁹

The concept of *wasatiyyah* rejects both religious extremism (*ghuluw*) and negligence or excess permissiveness (*tafrīt*). Instead, it promotes a balanced approach that integrates religious commitment with social responsibility, contextual awareness, and respect for diversity.¹⁰ In this sense, *wasatiyyah* is not limited to ritual observance or doctrinal correctness, but extends to patterns of social interaction, cultural expression, and ethical conduct in everyday life. As an educational value, *wasatiyyah* emphasizes internalization through lived experience rather than coercive or dogmatic instruction, making it particularly relevant within plural and multireligious societies.¹¹

Although rooted in Islamic theology, the ethical substance of *wasatiyyah*—such as balance (*tawāzun*), justice (*'adl*), tolerance (*tasāmuḥ*), and humanity (*insāniyyah*)—possesses universal resonance.¹² These values are not exclusive to a single religious tradition, but can be articulated and embodied through various social and cultural practices shared across religious boundaries.¹³ Consequently, *wasatiyyah* functions as a conceptual bridge that connects religious teachings with broader humanistic values, enabling religious moderation to be practiced as a lived ethic rather than a formal ideological stance.

⁹ Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*.

¹⁰ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism* (Al-Falah Foundation, 2015).

¹¹ Nugroho, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Kerangka Kebudayaan Indonesia."

¹² Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*.

¹³ Abdullah, *Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Dan Transformasi*.

The theoretical formulation of al-wasatiyyah articulated by Yusuf al-Qaradawi provides an important analytical framework for understanding religious moderation in its applied dimensions.¹⁴ Wasatiyyah not as a compromising attitude that weakens religious principles, but as a methodological orientation that positions religious teachings proportionally between textual norms and empirical social realities. From an educational perspective, this approach emphasizes wisdom (*hikmah*), gradualism, and contextual sensitivity in the transmission of religious values, so that religion is experienced as a source of mercy and social harmony rather than conflict or exclusion.¹⁵

The framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* further strengthens the conceptual foundation of religious moderation by orienting religious practice toward the preservation of fundamental human interests. These objectives include the protection of religion (*hifz al-dīn*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-‘aql*), lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and property (*hifz al-māl*). Within the context of religious moderation, the *maqāṣid* perspective affirms that religious expressions—whether ritual, social, or cultural—should contribute to human well-being (*maṣlahah*) and the prevention of harm (*mafsadah*).¹⁶ This approach provides a normative-ethical justification for the integration of cultural and artistic practices into religious life, as long as they support social harmony and ethical values.¹⁷

Within this theoretical framework, cultural expressions can be understood as legitimate and effective media for religious moderation education. Religious values are not transmitted solely through formal instruction or textual interpretation, but are also internalized through meaningful social practices embedded in local cultural contexts. Such an approach aligns with the broader educational orientation of wasatiyyah, which prioritizes lived experience, ethical embodiment, and social relevance over rigid formalism.

Accordingly, wasatiyyah may be understood not only as a theological doctrine but as a practical ethical orientation that can be enacted through cultural practices

¹⁴ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh Al-Wasatiyyah al-Islamiyyah Wa al-Tajdid: Ma‘alim Wa Manarat* (Dar al-Shuruq, 2010).

¹⁵ Al-Qaradawi, *Islamic Awakening between Rejection and Extremism*.

¹⁶ Yusuf Qardhawi, *Maqasid Al-Shari‘ah al-Islamiyyah* (Dar al-Shuruq, 1996).

¹⁷ Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*.

shared by diverse communities. This perspective opens analytical space for examining local traditions—such as musical practices—as sites where religious moderation is experienced, negotiated, and sustained in everyday social life. In this sense, wasatiyyah operates as a lived social principle that bridges religious teachings, cultural expression, and communal harmony within plural societies.

1. Religious Moderation from a Christian Perspective

From a Christian theological perspective, the principle of religious moderation is deeply rooted in biblical teachings that emphasize love, peace, humility, and respect for human dignity. Although Christianity does not employ the term wasatiyyah, its ethical substance resonates strongly with Christian doctrines that promote balanced faith, non-violence, and harmonious coexistence within diverse social contexts. Religious moderation in Christianity is therefore understood not as doctrinal compromise, but as faithful obedience to the core teachings of Christ that prioritize love of God and love of neighbor.

The foundation of Christian moderation can be traced to the teachings of Jesus, particularly the commandment of love (*agapē*), as articulated in the Gospel of Matthew (22:37–39): “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” This command positions love as the central ethical orientation of Christian life, extending beyond religious boundaries and social identities.¹⁸ In this sense, moderation is expressed through attitudes of compassion, empathy, and openness toward others, including those of different beliefs.

Furthermore, Christian theology emphasizes peace (*eirēnē*) as a defining mark of faithful discipleship. The Beatitudes proclaim, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9), affirming that active efforts to sustain peace and reconciliation are integral to Christian witness. Religious moderation, from this perspective, is not passive tolerance, but an active commitment to nurturing social harmony and preventing conflict.¹⁹ This orientation

¹⁸ Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁹ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Aldine Publishing, 1969).

aligns closely with the rejection of extremism, hostility, and coercion in religious expression.

The Apostle Paul further reinforces the principle of moderation through ethical exhortations that stress self-restraint, humility, and mutual respect. In Romans 12:17–18, believers are instructed to “repay no one evil for evil” and to “live peaceably with all, so far as it depends on you.” Such teachings underline the importance of proportionality and ethical balance in responding to social differences, particularly within plural societies (Smith, 2003). Christian moderation thus involves the capacity to remain faithful to one’s beliefs while engaging others with respect and restraint.

Within Christian social theology, the concept of *imago Dei*—the belief that all humans are created in the image of God—provides a strong theological basis for inclusivity and respect for diversity.²⁰ This doctrine affirms the inherent dignity of every person regardless of religious affiliation, ethnicity, or social status. Consequently, religious moderation in Christianity entails recognizing and honoring the sacred worth of others, which discourages exclusivism and legitimizes peaceful coexistence in multireligious settings.²¹

In practical terms, Christian religious moderation is often embodied not through formal theological discourse, but through lived practices of community, service, and cultural participation. Churches and Christian communities frequently engage in local traditions, social rituals, and communal activities that foster togetherness across religious lines. Such practices reflect a contextual and incarnational understanding of faith, in which Christian values are lived out through everyday social interactions rather than imposed through doctrinal assertion.

Within the context of the Sangihe Islands, where Christianity constitutes the religious majority, this lived expression of Christian moderation is particularly significant. Participation in shared cultural traditions—such as communal music, festivals, and customary rituals—functions as a form of practical theology that affirms peace, solidarity, and mutual respect. Rather than diluting Christian identity,

²⁰ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1973).

²¹ Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*.

such engagement reflects a mature and contextual faith that prioritizes social harmony as an expression of Christian witness.

Accordingly, the Christian perspective on religious moderation converges with the ethical substance of wasatiyyah at the level of lived values, despite their distinct theological origins. Both emphasize balance, rejection of extremism, respect for human dignity, and commitment to peaceful coexistence. This convergence provides a conceptual foundation for analyzing local cultural practices—such as Massamper Putri—as shared spaces where Islamic and Christian ethical principles of moderation are enacted together through collective cultural experience.

2. Convergence of Islamic and Christian Perspectives on Religious Moderation in Multireligious Societies

Although originating from distinct theological traditions, Islamic and Christian perspectives on religious moderation share significant ethical convergence, particularly in their emphasis on balance, peace, restraint, and respect for human dignity. In Islamic thought, these values are articulated through the concept of wasatiyyah, while in Christian theology they are expressed through teachings on love (*agapē*), peace (*eirēnē*), humility, and reconciliation. Despite differences in doctrinal foundations, both traditions affirm moderation as a lived ethical orientation rather than a mere theoretical construct.

At the core of this convergence lies a shared rejection of religious extremism, coercion, and exclusivism. Islamic wasatiyyah rejects *ghuluw* (excessive rigidity) and *tafrīt* (negligence), while Christian ethics similarly caution against self-righteousness, intolerance, and the misuse of religious authority. Both traditions emphasize proportionality in religious expression and encourage believers to engage social reality with wisdom, compassion, and responsibility. In this sense, moderation is understood as fidelity to religious values that promote life, peace, and social harmony.

Furthermore, both Islamic and Christian traditions affirm the intrinsic dignity of every human being. In Islam, this dignity is grounded in the Qur'anic affirmation of human honor (*karāmah al-insān*), while in Christianity it is articulated through

the doctrine of *imago Dei*. These theological principles provide a strong ethical basis for inclusivity and coexistence in multireligious societies. Religious moderation, therefore, is not an attempt to dilute religious identity, but a commitment to honoring the humanity of others while remaining faithful to one's own beliefs.

In practical terms, this convergence becomes most visible in lived social practices rather than in formal theological discourse. In everyday communal life, values of moderation are enacted through patterns of interaction, cooperation, and shared cultural participation. Local traditions, customary rituals, and communal cultural expressions often serve as neutral yet meaningful spaces where members of different religious communities encounter one another without theological confrontation. Through such practices, moderation is learned experientially as part of social life.

Within the context of the Sangihe Islands, where Christianity constitutes the religious majority alongside significant Muslim and other religious communities, this convergence is particularly evident. Interreligious harmony in Sangihe is sustained not only through formal religious institutions, but also through shared cultural practices that function as collective social capital. These practices allow Islamic and Christian ethical values of moderation to be embodied together in everyday interactions, reinforcing peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

This shared ethical ground provides a crucial conceptual foundation for analyzing cultural expressions—such as traditional music—as media for religious moderation. When cultural practices are approached as sites of ethical convergence rather than theological competition, they reveal how moderation is lived and sustained within plural communities. Accordingly, the study of local musical traditions can be positioned as an exploration of how Islamic and Christian values of moderation intersect and are enacted through collective cultural experience.

LOCAL MUSICAL TRADITIONS AS MEDIA FOR RELIGIOUS MODERATION EDUCATION

In cultural studies and ethnomusicology, traditional music is understood not merely as an aesthetic artifact, but as a social practice embedded within systems of meaning, values, and communal relations (Merriam, 1964). Music operates as a

cultural medium through which societies articulate collective identity, negotiate social boundaries, and transmit ethical norms across generations (Geertz, 1973). As such, traditional musical practices possess significant potential as informal yet effective media for social and moral education, including the internalization of values associated with religious moderation.

Alan P. Merriam's tripartite framework—music as concept, behavior, and sound—provides an analytical foundation for understanding how music functions within social life.²² Musical sound cannot be separated from the behaviors that produce it, nor from the cultural concepts that give it meaning. Within this framework, music becomes a site where social values are both reflected and actively shaped through participation, repetition, and shared experience. In multireligious societies, this dynamic allows traditional music to operate as a culturally neutral yet ethically meaningful space for interaction among diverse religious groups.

Thomas Turino further emphasizes the social significance of participatory music, distinguishing it from presentational forms that prioritize audience-performer separation.²³ Participatory music foregrounds collective involvement, equality among participants, and process over product. Such musical practices minimize hierarchy and competition, instead fostering togetherness, mutual listening, and shared responsibility. These characteristics align closely with the core principles of religious moderation, including balance, inclusivity, and the rejection of domination or exclusion.²⁴

Within plural social contexts, local musical traditions often function as shared cultural resources that transcend religious boundaries (Abdullah, 2018). Unlike formal religious rituals that may be symbolically or theologically exclusive, traditional music frequently occupies a communal domain accessible to individuals of different faiths. Through joint participation in musical performance, members of diverse religious communities engage in embodied experiences of cooperation and coexistence. Values such as tolerance, reciprocity, and social harmony are thus

²² Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*.

²³ Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*.

²⁴ Nugroho, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Kerangka Kebudayaan Indonesia."

learned implicitly through practice rather than explicitly through doctrinal instruction.²⁵

From an educational perspective, this mode of value transmission can be understood as experiential or implicit learning. Rather than conveying ethical norms through prescriptive teaching, traditional music allows participants to internalize values through repeated, emotionally resonant, and socially meaningful experiences. In this sense, music operates as a form of cultural pedagogy, shaping attitudes and dispositions through affective engagement and collective embodiment. This approach is particularly effective in contexts where overt religious discourse may risk tension or exclusion.

In the context of religious moderation, local musical traditions offer a non-confrontational and sustainable medium for fostering peaceful coexistence. By prioritizing shared participation over ideological expression, music creates spaces in which religious differences are neither erased nor foregrounded as sources of conflict. Instead, diversity is accommodated within a framework of shared cultural practice. This dynamic supports the cultivation of moderate religious attitudes grounded in everyday social interaction rather than abstract normative ideals.

Accordingly, traditional music can be conceptualized as a form of lived ethical practice that complements formal religious education. It provides a practical arena in which principles of moderation—such as balance, restraint, mutual respect, and social harmony—are enacted and reinforced through communal experience. This perspective opens analytical space for examining specific musical traditions, such as Massamper Putri, as culturally embedded mechanisms for learning and sustaining religious moderation within multireligious societies.

Massamper Putri As A Representation Of Cultural *Wasatiyyah*

Within the theoretical framework of religious moderation developed in the preceding sections, Massamper Putri can be understood as a form of lived cultural practice through which values of moderation are embodied and sustained in everyday social life. Rather than functioning as a religious ritual tied to a specific

²⁵ Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*.

theological system, Massamper Putri operates as a shared cultural tradition that accommodates diverse religious identities within a common social space. In this sense, Massamper Putri represents a form of cultural *wasatiyyah*—a practical manifestation of balance, inclusivity, and social harmony enacted through collective musical experience.²⁶

As a communal vocal tradition of the Sangihe Islands, Massamper Putri is characterized by collective performance, female vocal leadership, and strong emphasis on togetherness. Although historically associated with religious and customary contexts, contemporary performances of Massamper Putri extend beyond confessional boundaries. Field observations indicate that Massamper Putri is regularly performed and attended by members of Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and other religious communities in contexts such as customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, communal celebrations, and interfaith gatherings. This pattern of participation suggests that Massamper Putri is socially perceived not as a marker of exclusive religious identity, but as a shared cultural heritage.

From the perspective of religious moderation, this inclusivity is highly significant. Participation in Massamper Putri does not require symbolic or theological conformity, nor does it involve the assertion of doctrinal superiority. Instead, the tradition creates a neutral yet meaningful cultural space in which individuals of different religious backgrounds engage in cooperative action. Such engagement reflects the ethical convergence discussed earlier between Islamic *wasatiyyah* and Christian principles of love, peace, and respect for human dignity. Moderation is thus enacted not through explicit religious discourse, but through embodied practices of cooperation and mutual recognition.

Musically, Massamper Putri reinforces this ethical orientation through its structural characteristics. The use of responsorial (call-response) patterns establishes dialogical interaction among singers, while four-part vocal harmony emphasizes interdependence and balance among voices.²⁷ No single vocal part dominates the performance; musical coherence emerges through coordination and mutual listening. This structure symbolically mirrors ideal social relations in a

²⁶ Abdullah, *Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Dan Transformasi*.

²⁷ Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*.

plural society, where harmony is achieved not through uniformity, but through balanced participation and reciprocal engagement.

Lyrically, Massamper Putri articulates spiritual and moral messages that are broadly accessible across religious boundaries. Rather than emphasizing confessional doctrines, the lyrics convey universal themes such as gratitude, reverence for the divine, respect for creation, humility, and communal solidarity.²⁸ These values resonate with both Islamic and Christian ethical teachings, enabling participants to engage meaningfully without compromising their respective religious identities. Through repetition and collective singing, these messages are internalized as part of shared cultural memory rather than imposed as formal instruction.²⁹

In this context, Massamper Putri functions as a medium of implicit religious moderation education. Values associated with moderation—such as restraint, tolerance, balance, and peaceful coexistence—are learned experientially through repeated participation in musical practice. This mode of learning aligns with the educational orientation of both wasatiyyah and Christian social ethics, which prioritize lived example and ethical embodiment over coercive or doctrinal approaches.

Moreover, when viewed through the lens of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* and Christian social theology, Massamper Putri contributes to the preservation of social well-being and human dignity. The tradition fosters a non-confrontational and joyful social atmosphere that supports peaceful interaction, thereby helping to prevent religious tension and strengthen communal cohesion. Cultural participation in Massamper Putri thus supports the broader ethical objective of sustaining harmonious life within a multireligious society.

Accordingly, Massamper Putri should be understood not merely as a musical or aesthetic tradition, but as a living cultural system that actively shapes patterns of moderate religious coexistence in the Sangihe Islands. By functioning as a shared cultural space grounded in collective participation, Massamper Putri demonstrates

²⁸ Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*; Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*.

²⁹ Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*.

how local musical traditions can serve as practical embodiments of religious moderation, where Islamic and Christian ethical values converge in everyday social practice.³⁰

B. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design using an ethnographic approach to explore Massamper Putri as a lived cultural practice and its role in internalizing values of religious moderation within a multireligious community. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth examination of meanings, values, and social experiences embedded in cultural practices, particularly at the intersection of music, religion, and communal life.³¹ Ethnography is used to understand Massamper Putri not merely as a musical form, but as a social practice situated within its cultural and religious context.

The research was conducted in Ulung Peliang Village, Tamako District, Sangihe Islands Regency, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. This site was purposively selected due to its active and sustained practice of Massamper Putri, as well as its multireligious social composition, which includes Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, and other religious communities. Ulung Peliang Village represents a relevant setting for examining how local cultural traditions function as media for religious moderation in everyday social life.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement, knowledge, and experience related to Massamper Putri and local interreligious relations. The participants included: (1) Massamper Putri performers, including lead singers (tahuina), vocal group members, and younger participants involved in rehearsals and performances; (2) Traditional leaders and cultural practitioners with knowledge of the history, social functions, and symbolic meanings of Massamper Putri; (3) Interfaith religious leaders from Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist communities who possess insights into patterns of interreligious interaction in Tamako District; (4) Community members who

³⁰ Abdullah, *Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Dan Transformasi*; Nugroho, “Moderasi Beragama Dalam Kerangka Kebudayaan Indonesia.”

³¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Sage Publications, 2013).

participate as audiences or supporters in communal events featuring Massamper Putri.

This diversity of participants enabled the researcher to capture multiple perspectives on the social and cultural significance of Massamper Putri within a multireligious context. Data were collected through three primary techniques :³² (1) Participant Observation, the researcher engaged directly in Massamper Putri activities, including rehearsals, performances at customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, annual competitions, and the Tulude celebration. Participant observation allowed for close examination of musical structures, performance contexts, patterns of social interaction, and forms of interreligious participation embedded in the practice of Massamper Putri. (2) In-depth Interviews, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, interpretations, and perceptions of Massamper Putri and its relationship to religious moderation. This approach provided flexibility for participants to articulate their perspectives while allowing the researcher to maintain analytical focus on issues of moderation, inclusivity, and cultural meaning. (3) Documentation Study, documentation included audio and video recordings of Massamper Putri performances, photographs of cultural events, transcriptions of song lyrics, musical scores of Pegiong Kapiane, and archival materials related to cultural festivals and competitions. These materials supported musical analysis and strengthened data triangulation.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis following the stages proposed by Braun and Clarke.³³ The analytical process involved: (1) transcription of interview data and observation notes; (2) repeated reading to achieve familiarity with the data; (3) initial coding to identify meaning units related to religious moderation, wasatiyyah, inclusivity, musical practices, and social interaction; (4) clustering codes into broader themes such as balance, tolerance, communal harmony, participatory ethics, and cultural accommodation; and (5) interpretation

³² James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980).

³³ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101, <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>.

of themes by relating empirical findings to theoretical frameworks of wasatiyyah, Christian social ethics, *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*, and ethnomusicology.

The analysis was conducted iteratively, involving continuous movement between empirical data and theoretical reflection to ensure analytical depth and conceptual coherence. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, several strategies were employed, including source triangulation by comparing information from cultural practitioners, religious leaders, and community members; methodological triangulation through observation, interviews, and documentation; and member checking by discussing preliminary interpretations with selected participants. Ethical principles of qualitative research were strictly observed. All participants were informed of the research objectives and procedures, and their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained prior to interviews and recordings. Participants' identities were protected through anonymization unless explicit permission was granted for disclosure.

C. Results and Discussion

Interreligious Participation Practices in Massamper Putri

Field observations indicate that Massamper Putri in Ulung Peliang Village is practiced as an open and participatory cultural activity. The tradition is performed by female vocal groups consisting of participants from diverse age groups, ranging from adolescents to adult and elderly women. The performers come from families with different religious backgrounds, primarily Christian and Muslim, with several Buddhist family members involved as cultural supporters. Massamper Putri is performed in various social contexts, including regular group rehearsals, customary ceremonies, district-level cultural festivals, Massamper competitions, and communal celebrations such as Tulude. In these contexts, members of different religious communities are visibly present as performers, organizers, and audience members. No spatial or symbolic segregation based on religious identity was observed during these activities. During rehearsals and performances, interactions among participants were fluid and informal. Performers coordinated voice distribution, vocal entries, and repetitions collectively, without hierarchical relations based on age or religious background. Singing positions were typically

arranged in semicircles or straight lines, allowing visual contact and direct communication among group members.

One female performer stated: "In Massamper, we do not look at which religion someone belongs to. What matters is that everyone sings together and maintains vocal balance." (*Interviewee 3, Massamper performer*). Religious leaders who attended performances as guests or audience members indicated that their presence was understood as part of shared social life rather than as participation in a specific religious activity. In several observed events, religious leaders from different faiths were seated side by side and engaged in informal conversations during the performances. These findings demonstrate that Massamper Putri is practiced as a shared social space in which interreligious participation occurs naturally within the framework of recurring and sustained cultural activities.

Musical Structure of Massamper Putri in Performance Practice

Observations of Massamper Putri performances show that the musical structure is organized in a four-part vocal format consisting of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Voice distribution is determined functionally based on vocal range rather than social status or seniority.

PEGIONG KAPIANE
Massamper Putri
Himber Apelia

Allegro

7

S. Mang - Ta-ta ghua ne nge
Alto Pe-da lo ko Areng ku
Tenor Pe-da lo-ko Areng ku
Bass Pe-da lo-ko Arengku ma- wu Pe- da lo-ko Areng ku

12

S. Ma-wu Ru-a-ta Ia-mang
A. Lu - ka - de Ta-ka-la-hum-pe - ro - nganga
T. Ma-wu Ru-a-ta Ia mang
B. Lu - ka - de Ta-ka-la-hum-pe - ro - ngang
Ma-wu Ru-a-ta Ia mang (Lu - ka - de) Lu - ka - de Ta-ka-la-hum-pe - ro - ngang (Du-den)

S. Du-den Di - nnga-a ng
A. Du - den Di - ngang
T. Du - den Di - ngang
B. Du - den Di - ngang
Ding-dang Sua-ra Le - ngang) Du - den ding Du den du den ding dang Du - de Di - ngang Du

Picture1 Pegiong Kapiane Partiture Page 1

The singing pattern follows a responsorial (call–response) form. In practice, one or two singers initiate a vocal phrase, which is then followed by other voice groups either simultaneously or in layered responses. This alternation between call and response continues throughout the song, creating a stable and easily recognizable musical flow. No single voice part dominates the performance. Each vocal section contributes proportionally to the overall sound texture. When one section weakens, other sections adjust volume and tempo to maintain musical cohesion. This pattern was clearly observed in performances of *Pegiong Kapiane*, where harmonic balance emerged from collective vocal contribution. The tempo of the songs is generally fast and steady. Rhythm is maintained through vocal accents and repeated melodic

patterns. No musical instruments are used; the entire musical structure is produced vocally. Song duration typically ranges from five to ten minutes, depending on the number of repetitions agreed upon by the group during the performance. Documentation of the *Pegiong Kapiane* score indicates consistent repetition of musical phrases from beginning to end. This repetition enables singers with varying levels of experience to follow the structure without significant technical difficulty.

Lyrical Patterns and Value Experience in Massamper Putri Practice

Lyrical analysis of Massamper Putri reveals the repeated use of specific phrases throughout the songs. In *Pegiong Kapiane*, frequently repeated phrases include “*Pe-da lo-ko Arengku*,” “*Ma-wu Ru-a-ta Ia-mang*,” and “*Du-den Di-ngang*.”

2 17
 S. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. Pe da lo ko Arengku
 A. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. Pe da lo ko Arengku
 T. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. Pe da lo ko Arengku
 B. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang (Pe da lo ko Arengku Ma wu Pe da lo ko Arengku)
 23
 S. Ma wu Ru a - ta Ia mang Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe ro ngang
 A. Ma wu Ru a - ta Ia mang Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe ro ngang
 T. Ma wu Ru a - ta Ia mang Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe ro ngang
 B. Ma wu Ru a - ta Ia mang (Lu - ka - de) Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe ro ngang (Du den)
 28
 S. Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Du
 A. Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Du
 T. Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Du
 B. Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Du
 33
 S. di ngang sua ra le ngang Du den Ding(Du den din ngang Du den di ngang Du)
 den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. Pem - pe - gi - o
 A. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o
 T. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o
 B. den di ngang Su a - ra le ngang. (Pem-pe - gi - o pem-pe gi - o)

Picture 2. *Pegiong Kapiane* Partiture Page 2

These phrases are repeated across different sections of the song, both in the call and response parts. During performances, the phrases are articulated with relatively consistent intonation and dynamics, creating a sense of regularity and continuity. Performers noted that repetition helps them remember the lyrics and maintain group cohesion.

One performer explained: "When the lyrics are repeated, we remember their meaning more easily. They do not need to be explained in detail; over time, we understand them naturally." (*Interviewee 6, Massamper performer*). Non-verbal responses were also observed during performances. Some singers smiled, nodded in time with the rhythm, or exchanged eye contact when entering specific sections of the song. Audience members were often seen moving their bodies gently with the tempo or quietly uttering familiar lyric fragments.

Performers described the lyrical meanings as conveying general messages of gratitude, togetherness, and proper communal living. This understanding was developed through repeated participation in rehearsals and performances rather than through formal explanation or structured instruction. Informants emphasized that the values embedded in Massamper Putri were experienced through direct involvement in collective singing practices.

3

39

S. Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem - pe - da - lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne

A. Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe-da-lo Pem-pe-da-lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne

T. Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe-da-lo Pem-pe-da-lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne

B. Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe-da-lo Pem-pe-da-lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne

S. Pem - pe - gi - o Pe-gi ong Ka-pi - a - ne Pem - pe - da - lo

A. Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o Pe-gi ong Ka-pi - a - ne Pem-pe - da - lo Pem-pe - da - lo

T. Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe - da - lo Pem-pe - da - lo

B. Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe - da - lo Pem-pe - da - lo

S. Pe-da-long-Ka-wa sa - ne Sen-ta ka - U la - ngi Sen-ten-de - ngu du - ni-

A. Pe-da-long Ka-wa-sa - ne Sen-ta ka - U la - ngi Sen-ten-de - ngu du - ni-

T. Pe-da-long Ka-wa-sa - ne Sen-ta ka - U la - ngi Sen-ten-de - ngu du - ni-

B. Pe-da-long Ka-wa-sa - ne Sen-ta ka - U la - ngi Sen-ten-de - ngu du - ni-

S. a Mang - ta - ta ghua-ne - nge Pe da lo ko Arengku Ma wu Ru a-ta la

A. a Mang - ta - ta ghua-ne - nge Pe da lo ko Arengku Ma wu Ru a-ta Ia

T. a Mang - ta - ta ghua-ne - nge Pe da lo ko Arengku Ma wu Ru a-ta la

B. a Mang - ta - ta ghua-ne - nge Pe da lo ko Arengku Ma wu Ru a-ta Ia

Picture 3. Pegiong Kapiane Partiture Page 3

4

65

S. mang Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe rongang Du den di

A. mang Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe rongang Du den

T. mang Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe rongang Du den

B. mang (Lu-ka de) Lu ka de Ta ka la hum pe rongang (Du den di ngang sua ra le ngang) Du den

71 S. ng a ng Du den di ng a ng Du den di ngang Su a ra le ngang.

A. di ngang Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Su a ra le ngang.

T. di ngang Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Su a ra le ngang.

B. Ding (Du den di ngang Du den) Du den di ngang Du den di ngang Su a ra le ngang. (Pem-pe

77 S. — Pem - pe - gi - o Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem - pe -

A. — Pem-pe-gi - o Pem-pe-gi - o Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe-da-lo

T. — Pem-pe-gi - o Pem-pe-gi - o Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe-da-lo

B. — Pem-pe-gi - o Pem-pe-gi - o Pe gi ong Ka pi a ne Pem-pe-da-lo

83 S. da - lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne Pem - pe - gi - o Pe -gi ong Ka - pi - a -

A. — Pem-pe - da - lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o Pe -gi ong Ka - pi - a -

T. — Pem-pe - da - lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o Pe -gi ong Ka - pi - a -

B. — Pem-pe - da - lo Pe da long Ka wa sa ne Pem-pe - gi - o Pem-pe - gi - o Pe -gi ong Ka - pi - a -

Picture 4. Peginong Kapiane Partiture Page 4

5

89

S. ne Pem - pe - da - lo Pe -da-long-Ka - wa - sa - ne Sen - ta - ka -

A. ne Pem - pe - da - lo Pem - pe - da - lo Pe -da-long-Ka - wa - sa - ne Sen - ta - ka -

T. ne Pem - pe - da - lo Pem - pe - da - lo Pe -da-long-Ka - wa - sa - ne Sen - ta - ka -

B. — U la - ngi Sen - ten - de - nge du - ni - a Mang - ta - ta ghu - ne - nge

S. — U la - ngi Sen - ten - de - nge du - ni - a Mang - ta - ta ghu - ne - nge

A. — U la - ngi Sen - ten - de - nge du - ni - a Mang - ta - ta ghu - ne - nge

T. — U la - ngi Sen - ten - de - nge du - ni - a Mang - ta - ta ghu - ne - nge

B. — U la - ngi Sen - ten - de - nge du - ni - a Mang - ta - ta ghu - ne - nge

Picture 5. Peginong Kapiane Partiture Page 5

Overall, observations and interviews indicate that value experience in Massamper Putri emerges through lyrical repetition, emotional engagement, and social interaction within the ongoing practice of the tradition.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that the local musical tradition of *Massamper Putri* in Ulung Peliang Village, Tamako District, Sangihe Islands, constitutes a lived cultural practice that plays a significant role in fostering religious moderation within a multireligious society. Rather than functioning solely as a form of musical heritage or aesthetic expression, *Massamper Putri* operates as a socio-cultural medium through which values of balance, tolerance, and social harmony are embodied and sustained in everyday communal life.³⁴ The findings demonstrate that *Massamper Putri* represents a form of lived moderation in which ethical principles from both Islamic and Christian traditions converge. From the Islamic perspective, the practice reflects the core values of *wasatiyyah*, including balance (*tawāzun*), proportionality, and the rejection of extremism in social relations. From the Christian perspective, *Massamper Putri* resonates with theological commitments to love (*agapē*), peace (*eirēnē*), humility, and respect for human dignity grounded in the doctrine of *imago Dei*.³⁵ This convergence affirms that religious moderation is not limited to doctrinal discourse, but is most effectively realized through shared ethical practice.

Musically, the structural characteristics of *Massamper Putri*—including responsorial singing, four-part vocal harmony, lyrical repetition, and participatory tempo—symbolically and practically reinforce moderation values.³⁶ The absence of dominance among voices reflects egalitarian and complementary social relations, while collective performance emphasizes cooperation and mutual listening. These musical features mirror ideal patterns of interreligious coexistence in which harmony emerges through balanced participation rather than uniformity or exclusion.

³⁴ Abdullah, *Agama Dan Budaya Lokal: Dialektika Dan Transformasi*.

³⁵ Al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh Al-Wasatiyyah al-Islamiyyah Wa al-Tajdid: Ma‘alim Wa Manarat*; Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*.

³⁶ Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*; Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*.

The lyrical content of *Massamper Putri*, which emphasizes gratitude, reverence for the divine, respect for creation, and communal togetherness, further enables inclusive participation across religious boundaries. By avoiding confessional exclusivity, the lyrics function as a shared moral language that allows diverse religious communities to engage meaningfully without compromising their respective identities.³⁷ Through repetition and embodied participation, these values are internalized as part of collective cultural memory rather than transmitted through formal or coercive instruction. Importantly, this study highlights that religious moderation in the Sangihe context is learned primarily through lived cultural experience rather than through sermons, doctrinal debates, or policy discourse. In a Christian-majority society such as Sangihe, *Massamper Putri* demonstrates how Christian ethical commitments to peace and love can coexist and intersect with Islamic principles of moderation within a shared cultural space. This finding underscores the importance of local cultural traditions as practical resources for sustaining interreligious harmony. Theoretically, this study contributes to the scholarship on religious moderation by expanding the concept of *wasatiyyah* beyond its textual and theological formulation to include its manifestation as a lived social ethic that converges with Christian social theology. It also enriches ethnomusicological perspectives by demonstrating how traditional music functions not only as cultural expression, but as a form of implicit moral and social education in plural societies. Contextually, the findings suggest that local musical traditions such as *Massamper Putri* hold strategic potential as culture-based models for strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia and other multireligious settings. Rather than replacing formal religious education, such traditions complement it by translating abstract ethical principles into concrete social practice. Accordingly, this study recommends that local cultural expressions be recognized, preserved, and integrated into broader educational and socio-religious initiatives aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

³⁷ Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*.

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