

# One Mosque

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# ONE MOSQUE, TWO QIBLAHS

## Understanding the Difference in Qiblah Direction of the Nagari Suayan Mosque in West Sumatera, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Firdaus, UIN Imam Bonjol, Padang – Indonesia

Abdul Halim, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya – Indonesia

Ahmad Wira, UIN Imam Bonjol, Padang – Indonesia

Benny Ridwan, IAIN Salatiga - Indonesia

Risman Bustaman, IAIN Batusangkar – Indonesia

Corresponding author: halim@uinsby.ac.id

**Abstract:** The difference in qiblah direction found among the congregation of the Nagari Suayan Mosque in Lima Puluh Kota Regency of West Sumatera began as there was an initiative to remeasure the qiblah direction by a caretaker and imam of the mosque. The difference had turned into a conflict between the *Straight Qiblah* congregation and the *Skenved Qiblah* congregation due to the lack of communication and dissemination regarding the change in qiblah direction. While in fact, facing the direction of qiblah during salat is a belief that both groups distinctly hold. This article explains the various contexts that underlie the difference and the idea of intragroup tolerance, which is the most significant finding in this study. Intragroup tolerance in practicing religion refers to the ability or willingness to tolerate differences in the rituals/practices found among varying congregations of the same religion. The research indicates that tolerating differences is part of a journey toward peace between two differing parties, and it may have implication on developing the definition of tolerance.

**Keywords:** Mosque, Qiblah direction, conflict, tolerance

### Introduction

Facing the qiblah is a matter of utmost importance to Muslims when conducting their prayers (ṣalāt). Ulama of the four schools of Islamic law (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali) agreed that facing the

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<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to afford our gratitude to Almenidy and Datuk Jongka who have willingly and openly participated as respondents for this research.

qiblah during salat is a requirement to those capable of seeing the structure of Kaaba, and it is a condition in the legitimacy of salat (*'ayn al-Ka'bab*).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the four schools have differing opinions regarding a person who is at a distance from the Kaaba,<sup>3</sup> and that they are to exercise discretionary judgment (*ijtihād*) by utilizing astronomical indications and any other mathematical calculation that can be used to indicate the direction of qiblah (*jibab al-Ka'bab*).<sup>4</sup> The core of their debate lies in the difference of definition relating to facing actual structure of qiblah and turning the direction of qiblah.<sup>5</sup>

Qiblah is a word of Arabic origin, **القبلة**, which means the direction one faces.<sup>6</sup> Thus, linguistically speaking, qiblah may be defined as direction or facing a point.<sup>7</sup> In performing salat, the Qiblah is understood as facing the direction of Kaaba which is located in the city of Mecca at the following coordinates: 21° 25' 21.17" N and 39° 49' 34.56" E.<sup>8</sup>

According to Ruggles,<sup>9</sup> the bearing of a direction is called azimuth, which faces towards a single point of coordinates on the surface of the earth in a horizon. Hence, facing qiblah may be construed as turning towards the coordinates of Kaaba in the city of Mecca. This perspective is often comprehended through the definition that facing

<sup>2</sup> Abdurrahman bin Muḥammad Aus al-Zazīry, *Al-Fiqh alā al-Maḏāhib al-Arba'ab*, vol. I (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2003), p. 177. Also see Waḥbah Zuḥaili, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmi wa Adillatuhu*, vol. I (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), p. 597; Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh as-Sunnah* (Egypt: Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Qāhirah, 2004), p. 90; Ibn Rusyd, *Bidāyatul Muḥtabid wa Nihayatu al-Muqtasid*, vol. I (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> Imam Zakaria Muḥyiddīn, *Kitāb Majmū Syarāḥ Muḥaddab li as-Syairāzy*, vol. III (Jeddah: Maktabah al-Irsyād, 1970), p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> Zuḥaili, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmi*, p. 597; Also see al-Zazīry, *Al-Fiqh alā al-Maḏāhib al-Arba'ab*, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Ali aṣ-Ṣābūny. *Rawā'i'ul-Bayān Tafsiḥ al-Āyāti al-Aḥkāmī min al-Qur'an* (Damascus: Maktabah al-Gazāl, 1980), p. 124.

<sup>6</sup> Ahmad Muṣṭafa al-Marāgy, *Tafsīr al-Marāgy*, vol. 2 (Egypt: Syirkah Maktabah, 1946), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmad Warson Munawir, *Al-Munawir Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 1997), p. 108.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Izzuddin, "Metode Penentuan Arah Kiblat dan Akurasinya," (Conference Proceeding of AICIS XII, UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Clive Ruggles, *Ancient Astronomy, An Encyclopedia of Cosmologies and Myth* (California: ABC-CLIO, 2005), p. 33.

qiblah is to turn one's direction towards qiblah in a horizon. Therefore, facing the direction of qiblah is construed as heading towards the direction of qiblah or the closest distance within a large circumference that passes the Kaaba from a place or city where an individual performs salat.<sup>10</sup>

In the past, people employed what is known as the traditional method in finding the direction of qiblah. One of them is by using the *istinā* pole as an instrument to determine the cardinal directions (East, West, North, South) by taking advantage of the sun's ray and observing its shadow. Before the shadow of the pole is situated exactly on top of it, the direction of the pole's shadow faces the West because the sun rises from the East. Once the shadow of the pole is situated exactly on top of it, the direction of the shadow faces the East because the sun sets in the West.<sup>11</sup>

Today, astronomy, mathematics, and technological advances have been instrumental in assisting Muslims are able to accurately locate the coordinates of Kaaba in Mecca. In addition, technology has provided a number of applications such as the Qiblah Finder, Universal Qiblah, and others to determine the direction of qiblah anywhere and anytime automatically. This modern method is easier and quicker in determining the direction of qiblah.<sup>12</sup> While the traditional method relies on clear skies and bright sunshine, the modern method is dependent upon GPS-based on internet connectivity.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, determining the direction of qiblah through science and astronomy also allows the use of numerous methods on account of the progressive growth of the latest technology and science. Differences in the method of determining qiblah direction and the general understanding of facing the qiblah being the same as turning towards the direction of qiblah often becomes a point of debate in several mosques. Particularly in mosques that are located far from the actual structure of Kaaba in Mecca and was established and

<sup>10</sup> Hudi, *Ilmu Falak dalam Metode Hitungan Praktis* (Jepara: INISNU, 2012), p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. See also M.Z. Ibrahim and M.Z. Norashikin, "Universal Qiblah and Prayer Time Finder," *International Journal of Electrical, Computer, Energetic, Electronic and Communication Engineering*, 3, 10 (2009): pp. 1816-1821.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 1816-1821.

<sup>13</sup> Kemenag RI, *Ilmu Falak Praktis* (Jakarta: Sub Direktorat Pembinaan Syariah dan Hisab Rukyat Direktorat Urusan Agama Islam & Pembinaan Syariah Direktorat Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Islam, 2013), p. 35.

constructed to face the qiblah.<sup>14</sup> The *Telegraph* even noted that as much as 200 mosques in Saudi Arabia had been facing towards the wrong qiblah direction.<sup>15</sup>

Indonesia also witnessed various debates on the difference of mosques' qiblah direction unfolding. According to Haris,<sup>16</sup> who conducted a study on the direction of qiblah at a mosque in the Sidamanik District of North Sumatera, the local mosque's qiblah direction was determined by merely facing it towards the direction of Kaaba. Meanwhile, Ngamilah<sup>17</sup> (studied the debate on the direction of qiblah following the issuance of a fatwa by the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI, *Majelis Ulama Indonesian*), namely Fatwa No. 3/2010, elaborating the perspective of various exegeses, wherein those performing salat outside of *Masjid al-Haram* are tolerated in facing qiblah. Miswanto,<sup>18</sup> who studied the accuracy of determining qiblah direction, explains that the spherical trigonometry theory is more precise and accurate compared to Napier's analogical formula in determining the direction of qiblah. Whereas Jayusman<sup>19</sup> studied conflicts relating to qiblah direction by emphasizing the importance of disseminating information to the public when reassessing the direction of qiblah to avoid potential conflict.

Conflict regarding the direction of qiblah also occurred at the Nagari Suayan mosque in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, West Sumatera, Indonesia. The dispute even led to a social conflict among the mosque's congregation. Ultimately, this one mosque has been conducting salat with two differing congregations, on account of their using different qiblah directions. Obligatory daily congregational

<sup>14</sup> Hudi, *Ilmu Falak dalam Metode Hitungan Praktis*. Also see Muhyiddin Khazin, *Ilmu Falak dalam Teori dan Praktek* (Yogyakarta: Buana Pustaka, n.d.), p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> "More Than 200 Mecca Mosques Face Wrong Direction", *Telegraph*, accessed December 8, 2016, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudi-arabia/511-0754/More-than-200-Mecca-mosques-face-wrong-direction.html>

<sup>16</sup> Rizki Muhammad Haris, "Hukum Salat yang tidak Sesuai Arah Kiblat: Studi Kasus Masjid-Masjid di Kecamatan Sidamanik," *At-Tafabum: Journal of Islamic Law*, 1, 1 (2017), pp. 136-148.

<sup>17</sup> Ngamilah, "Polemik Arah Kiblat dan Solusinya dalam Perspektif al-Qur'an," *Millati*, 1, 1 (2016), pp. 81-102.

<sup>18</sup> Miswanto, "Telaah Ketepatan dan Keakuratan dalam Penentuan Arah Kiblat," *Ta'allum*, 3, 2 (2015), pp. 220-243.

<sup>19</sup> Jayusman, "Mengurai Konflik Koreksi Arah Kiblat di Tengah-tengah Masyarakat," *Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 10, 1 (2012), pp. 53-70.

prayers, Friday congregational prayers, or Tarawih prayers performed during the month of Ramadan have been consequently held twice at the same mosque for two different congregations due to their difference in qiblah direction. This situation persists until now, but despite the difference, their social life remains undisturbed. Hence, the question posed in this article is to understand the difference in qiblah direction between two congregations at the Nagari Suayan mosque in West Sumatera.

To fully grasp the nature of conflicts two persons from opposing groups was interviewed. The first respondent (source person) in this study is Almenidy, one of caretakers of the mosque who initiated the statement that the mosque's qiblah direction was not accurate. The second respondent is Datuk Jongka, a customary leader in Nagari Suayan. He is a *Datuk* (honorary title commonly reserved for community leaders that deals with custom in Minangkabau society) who is revered by the local community and is also a caretaker of the mosque.

### **Straight Qiblah and Skewed Qiblah *Difference due to Media Influence***

According to Datuk Jongka, the Nagari Suayan mosque was founded prior to the Republic of Indonesia's independence in 1945. The initial location of the mosque was atop the Nagari Suayan hill. However, the old mosque building was damaged in the rebellion war with central government during the period of the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI, *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*) in 1956.<sup>20</sup> The community had then built a new mosque on the side of the village road in Nagari Suayan. As of

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<sup>20</sup> The Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PRRI, *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia*) is known as a separatist movement intending to secede from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI, *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*), See Audrey Kahin, *Dari Pemberontakan Ke Integrasi: Sumatra Barat dan Politik Indonesia 1926-1998* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2008), pp. 255-256. The emergence of this movement, which was centered in central (West) Sumatera, was caused among others by the consideration that the central government had broken their promise of implementing a decentralized system. Even though at the time, in accordance with Law No. 22/1948, the provincial, regional, and village governments had the authority and power to govern the affairs of their respective region, J.D. Legge, *Cultural Authority and Regional Autonomy in Indonesia: A Study in Local Administration 1950-1960* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 29 and p. 30.

current, the old mosque building has been renovated, but the Nagari Suayan mosque referred to in this research is the new mosque building constructed on the roadside.

Datuk Jongka stated that when the Nagari Suayan mosque was constructed, the direction of the qiblah was made based on sunset and sunrise calculations and the conviction of the mosque's Imam at the time (Interview). Utilizing the sun in determining the direction of qiblah is the easiest traditional method compared to using the *Rashdul Kiblat* (angle theory) or Azimuth techniques.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, employing one's conviction or faith in determining the direction of qiblah can be construed as a remission in performing salat. In the past, one's conviction reinforced their determination of qiblah direction after it had been determined through the traditional method by using the sun as a guide.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned by Datuk Jongka, when the Nagari Suayan mosque was build, the technology for determining qiblah direction was not as they are today. Performing salat is a matter of the heart, hence one's conviction becomes the most crucial aspect in the process of determining the direction of qiblah at the time. Since then the qiblah direction of Nagari Suayan mosque has always faced straight to the West, where the Kaaba structure has always been believed to be. This qiblah direction is still in use until today. However, when the conflict began, the qiblah direction facing the west is then attributed to the *Straight Qiblah* group. This term is used to differentiate the congregation that opted to face a skewed (angled) qiblah direction turning approximately 21 degrees northwest, hence attributing them with the name *Skewed Qiblah* congregation.

The difference in qiblah direction between the *Straight* and the *Skewed Qiblah* congregations began when Almenidy, another caretaker and also an imam of Nagari Suayan mosque, watched a television broadcast in 2010 about the method of measuring the direction of qiblah by using the sun as a guide.<sup>23</sup> According to Almenidy, once he

<sup>21</sup> Hudi, *Ibnu Falak dalam Metode Hitungan Praktis*.

<sup>22</sup> Istifianah Zaini dan Mutmainnah, "Pandangan Masyarakat Terhadap Arah Kiblat Masjid Bersertifikasi Dari Kementrian Agama; Studi Kasus Masjid Al-Hidayah, Blali, Desa Seloharjo, Kecamatan Pundong, Kabupaten Bantul," *Jurnal UluMuddin*, 5, 2 (2015), pp. 1-10.

<sup>23</sup> *Republika* reports that around May 28 and July 15-16 of 2010, the position of the sun is exactly above the city of Mecca so that no object would cast their shadow. The shadow of an object would then serve as a guide that leads to the city of Mecca where

gained information on the method for measuring qiblah direction, on a predetermined day and time, the qiblah direction of the Nagari Suayan mosque was remeasured. During the process, it was found that the *Straight Qiblah* direction facing to the West that has been used by the congregation for performing their prayers deviates by approximately 21 degrees. As a result, the new qiblah direction was made by orienting the old one about 21 degrees to the Northwest by making new mark on the floor. Yet, the mark of the former qiblah direction still remains on a part of the mosque floors.

### ***Conflict due to Miscommunication***

According to Datuk Jongka, the initiative of individuals redirecting the qiblah orientation at the Nagari Suayan mosque has brought about conflict among the mosque's congregation. They became polarized between the *Straight Qiblah* and the *Skewed Qiblah* groups. The polarization intensified when people intended to perform congregational prayers. The congregation that opted for the old qiblah direction maintained their *Straight Qiblah* stance, while the congregation that opted for the new qiblah direction maintained their *Skewed Qiblah* position. The tension between the two groups can be likened to opposing groups defending the respective faith they wholeheartedly believe in. Because it is a belief they consider as truth, they feel that it should be defended. According to both Almenidy and Datuk Jongka, the difference in the qiblah direction even resulted in the divorce of a married couple in the community.<sup>24</sup>

Although a belief is frequently considered as difficult to analyze,<sup>25</sup> according to Lanman<sup>26</sup> a belief may be understood as a phenomenon of the cognitive system. A belief held by a bearer of information or knowledge may lead to form one's conviction of that truth. That

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the Kaaba is located as a qiblah for salat. *Republika*, accessed December 9, 2018 <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/ensiklopedia-islam/khazanah/10/07/16/125024-cara-mudah-menentukan-arah-kiblat>

<sup>24</sup> Interview on 15 October 2018

<sup>25</sup> J.B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1930); R. Needham, *Belief, Language, and Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972); L. Steadman and C. T. Palmer, "Religion as an Identifiable Traditional Behavior Subject to Natural Selection," *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems*, 18 (1995), pp. 149-164.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan A Lanman, "In Defence of 'Belief': a Cognitive Response to Behaviourism, Eliminativism, and Social Constructivism," *Issues in Ethnology and Anthropology*, 3, 3 (2008), pp. 49-62.



conviction of truth may then take shape in the person's mind and behavior. The behavior can subsequently be observed as an implicit belief. The conflict that led to the couple's divorce, which was caused by the difference of qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque, is a form of implicit belief.

The personal belief regarding the preference for *Straight* or *Skewed Qiblah* eventually spread into religious justification of a social system, thus resulting in the desire to justify one's personal belief into the larger social sphere.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, this desire materializes into a form of behavior used to defend the belief that the *Straight Qiblah* or the *Skewed Qiblah* is the most righteous and accurate one. In this context, according to Beck,<sup>28</sup> the belief that one is the most righteous and true in their religious practice becomes defensive. Such defensive religious practice, thus, becomes one of the factors that brings about religion-based social conflicts.

Actually, the conflict of difference in qiblah direction could have been resolved if only the shift in qiblah direction had been properly disseminated to the community from the start. According to Datuk Jongka, the Nagari Suayan community is quite religious and open to changes, hence differences in religious practices can be resolved through mutual consensus. This principle is in line with the Minangkabau philosophy, that is *Bulek aia dek pambuluah, bulek kato dek mufakat* (water is bulbous due to its tubes, voices are unanimous due to consensus).<sup>29</sup> This is a philosophy of Minangkabau custom concerning consultation and tolerance based on unanimous agreements accomplished through deliberations and consensus. "*Changing qiblah direction is acceptable, even the mosque itself can be demolished if the community agree by consensus*", stated Datuk Jongka. In his opinion, the measurement and shift of qiblah direction were carried out individually by Almenidy without involving the community figures of Nagari Suayan.

Whereas according to Almenidy, as a caretaker of the Nagari Suayan mosque, he at the time had communicated the change of qiblah

<sup>27</sup> Alison Ledgerwood, Anesu N. Mandisodza and John T. Jost, "Working for the System: Motivated Defense of Meritocratic Beliefs," *Social Cognition*, 29, 3 (2011), pp. 322-340.

<sup>28</sup> R. Beck, "The Function of Religious Belief: Defensive Versus Existential Religion," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 23, 3 (2004), pp. 208-218.

<sup>29</sup> NM. Rangkoto, *Pantun Adat Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1982).

direction to Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh, who is the mosque's grand imam and is Almenidy's father-in-law. Previously, the imam of the Nagari Suayan mosque was Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh's own parent. This explanation indicates that Almenidy is within the lineage of the Nagari Suayan mosque's imam. This also indicates that there is a religious authority present in the structure of Nagari Suayan's community.

Meanwhile, as a Datuk,<sup>30</sup> Datuk Jongka represents the indigenous customary group who wields the cultural authority in the Minangkabau cultural structure. Despite representing a customary entity, the religious life of Nagari Suayan community leads their indigenous community to intermingle and melt within various religious practices, such as the practice of performing congregational prayers at the mosque. Therefore, socially speaking, the matter of qiblah direction is also a part of the customary leader's affairs. As a Nagari (customary village)<sup>31</sup> mosque, the Suayan mosque is a part of the religious indigenous Minangkabau community.

Therefore, in its development, within the context of the shift in qiblah direction, Nagari mosques are open social spaces where Minangkabau's customary and religious authorities meet. This is because the concept of Nagari mosques is the result of a consensus agreed upon by the indigenous Minangkabau community of West Sumatera. Thus, everything relating to the Nagari mosque should involve both religious and customary authorities.

<sup>30</sup> *Datuk* or *Datuak*, is a customary title given through a hereditary system passed on according to the lineage of the matrilineal culture from one house (*rumah gadang*) headed by a biological mother (*bundo kanduang*). The title of *datuak* or the position of *penghulu*, can only be held by the brother of *bundo kanduang* (MoBr), and it can only be passed down to the nephew instead of the son. Zainal Arifin, *Bundo Kanduang* (Hanya Pemimpin di Rumah (Gadang),” *Antropologi Indonesia*, 34, 2 (2013), pp. 124-133.

<sup>31</sup> According to Kato, nagari is a territorial unit that is politically and legally regulated by custom. A nagari would usually possess wealth in the form of high woodland (jungle and communal customary land) and low woodland (paddy fields, planting grounds, and residential land), nagari customary community meeting venue (*balai*), Minangkabau Custom Preservation Institution (KAN, Kerapatan Adat Nagari), a small mosque (*surau/mushalla*), mosque, small shop, and public square. See Tsuyoshi Kato, *Matrilineity and Migration* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1982). In addition, every nagari would usually consist of at least four clans. See M. Nasroen, *Dasar Falsafah Adat Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1971). Also see Harsja W. Bachtiar, *Negeri Taram: Masyarakat Desa Minangkabau dalam Masyarakat Desa di Indonesia* (Jakarta: FE UI, 1964).

The period of conflict regarding the qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque continued for a year between 2009 and 2010. At that time, the Nagari Suayan community performed salat in one mosque with two qiblah directions. According to Almenidy and Datuk Jongka,<sup>32</sup> congregational prayers, be it of large or small quantity during Friday or Tarawih prayers, were done separately with different imams and followers at the same mosque according to the qiblah direction believed by the congregation. Due to their difference in qiblah direction when performing salat, the conflict among the congregation had become more open, and the community felt the need to involve the government to mediate the conflict.

According to Almenidy and Datuk Jongka,<sup>33</sup> during that period the government had been involved five times in the attempt of resolving the conflict of qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque. The government's mediation efforts, however, did not bear fruitful results. According to Almenidy, the government's failure is considered to be politically charged as residents from the *Straight Qiblah* group intended to replace Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh as the grand Imam of Nagari Suayan mosque. Whereas according to Datuk Jongka the efforts failed because the residents were not involved in the measuring process from the beginning, and the government's involvement to mediate the conflict was considered too late as the residents had already been polarized.

The conflict had reached its peak when the local government along with the community conducted a measurement of qiblah direction. According to Almenidy,<sup>34</sup> the result of the measurement was announced openly by the government before the residents with a neutral yet confounding conclusion. After the announcement, the government stated openly that *"The qiblah is to be straightened according to the right one. Therefore, the government has decided to redirect the qiblah of the mosque to its previous or initial direction which is the direction after the qiblah direction measurement, says Almenidy. As for its implementation, we leave it to the community."* However, given the vague language used by government, Almenidy considers the conclusion and announcement would encourage the *Straight Qiblah* group to feel that they are the

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<sup>32</sup> Interview, October 2018

<sup>33</sup> Interview, October 2018

<sup>34</sup> Interview, October 2018

right. Although the word straightened in the sentence “*The qiblah is to be straightened according to the right one*” means the one that properly points straight to the structure of Kaaba, according to the result of the joint measurement. As solution cannot be reached, adherents of skewed qiblah then built a brand new mosque as a response.

### **Intragroup Tolerance in Religious Practices**

The phenomenon of one mosque two qiblahs at the Nagari Suayan mosque demonstrates that tolerance is not only found between differing faiths or religions, but also within a congregation of the same faith and religion. This phenomenon is known as intragroup religious tolerance. Intragroup religious tolerance is the attitude of being tolerant of different practices found in the same religion. This definition uses the perspective-taking approach.<sup>35</sup> This definition needs to be introduced as a contribution from this study to the numerous different religious practices found in Islam within Indonesia’s diverse cultural context.

Perspective-taking is a thought process and binary point of view to something different. On the one hand, an individual may hold the conviction that their belief is the most righteous one, yet on the other hand, they are capable of understanding the perspective of others holding opposing views. This does not mean acknowledging others’ belief, but accepting others’ differing perspective, which is the most vital aspect of tolerance. Building tolerance by using the perspective-taking approach would prove to be difficult if one does not understand the reason why the religious practice they perform or the belief they hold are different to that of others. To prevent this from happening, people should from the onset understand that differences exist and that they should be able to identify that their religious practices and beliefs are different from others so that they gain the social rights to be different. Hence, the use of perspective-taking in the context of tolerance may lessen stereotyping and enhance positive attitudes towards people or groups of differing beliefs.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Maykel Verkuyten and Kumar Yogeeswaran, “The Social Psychology of Intergroup Toleration: A Roadmap for Theory and Research,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 21, 1 (2017), pp. 72-96.

<sup>36</sup> Adam D. Galinsky and Gordon B. Moskowitz, “Perspective-Taking: Decreasing Stereotype Expression, Stereotype Accessibility, and In-Group Favoritism,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78 (2000), pp. 708-724 DOI: doi:10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.708. Also see Theresa K. Vescio and B. Gretchen, GB. Sechrist and

Studies on the process of intragroup tolerance elaborate on the relationship among different members within a single group. The process emphasizes the importance of leadership, influence, and power within the group, loyalty, solidarity, cooperation, and performance.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the focus of various studies on the process of intragroup tolerance often relate to issues of social identity, symbolic conflict, and intervention that may reduce intergroup conflicts.<sup>38</sup> According to Worchel, Coutant-Sassic, and Wong,<sup>39</sup> the orientation of group members to leadership may systematically influence the process of group maturity and development. This perspective is used to understand the conflict of qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque.

Almeni<sup>40</sup> further said that the leadership or personage factor had influenced the difference in qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque. The leadership factor emerged as a result of Datuk's identity as the customary head.<sup>40</sup> This explains the fact that the Datuk as the

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Matthew P. Paolucci, "Perspective-Taking and Prejudice Reduction: The Medial Role of Empathy Arousal and Situational Attributions," *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33 (2003), pp. 455-472, DOI: doi:10.1002/ejsp.163; C. S. Wang, G. Ku, K. Tai and AD. Galinsky, "Stupid Doctors and Smart Construction Workers: Perspective-Taking Reduces Stereotyping of Both Negative and Positive Targets," *Social Psychological & Personality Science*, 5 (2014), pp. 430-436, doi:10.1177/1948550613504968.

<sup>37</sup> Daniel J. Beal, Robin R. Cohen, and M.J. Burke, "Cohesion in groups: Meta-analytic Clarification of Construct Relations," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88 (2003), pp. 989-1004; Gilad Chen and Ruth Kanfer, "A Multilevel Study of Leadership, Empowerment, and Performance in Teams," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 2 (2007), pp. 331-346; John. M. Levine and Richard L. Moreland, "Group Reactions to Loyalty and Disloyalty," S. R. Thye & E. Lawler (eds), *Group Cohesion, Trust, and Loyalty* (New York: Elsevier, 2002), pp. 203-228.

<sup>38</sup> Robert A. Levine and Donald T Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes and Group Behavior* (New York: John Wiley, 1972). Also see T. F. Pettigrew, and Linda R Tropp, "A Meta-analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 5 (2006), pp. 751-783; John. F. Dovidio, Samuel L Gaertner and Tamar Saguy, "Another View of 'We': Majority and Minority Group Perspectives on a Common Ingroup Identity," *European review of Social Psychology*, 18, 1 (2008), pp. 296-330; Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Worchel, D. Coutant-Sassi and F. Wong, "Toward A More Balanced View of Conflict: There is a Positive Side," Stephen Worchel and Jeffrey A Simpson (eds), *Conflict Between People and Groups: Causes, Processes, and Resolutions* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1993), pp. 76-89.

<sup>40</sup> Interview, 17 October 2018.

local customary leader has influence over the community's religious practice, including in determining the mosque's qiblah direction. This means that the orientation of the mosque's congregation to perform salat in favor of the *Straight* or *Skewed Qiblah* groups was influenced by the Datuk's appeal as the customary figure. This is undoubtedly inseparable from the status of the Nagari Suayan mosque as a mosque established upon the consensus between the nagari's customary and religious figures.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, according to Datuk Jongka,<sup>42</sup> the influence of leadership or personage on the difference in qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque had appeared on account of religious identity. In his opinion, Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh was considered to have held the position of imam at the Nagari Suayan mosque for far too long. This factor encouraged some of the congregation to replace Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh as the mosque's imam. The shift of the mosque's qiblah was merely seen as a momentum for replacing Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh as Imam of the Nagari Suayan mosque although the status of Buya Marjunis Ujung Ameh as the mosque's imam (religious leader) had actually established a strong relation with the congregation favoring the *Skewed Qiblah*.

The difference in qiblah direction between the two congregations in the same mosque definitely raises a number of questions. How does each group accept or accommodate the differences of the other group in their belief and practices relating to the qiblah direction, which is not only different but considered as wrong? One group thinks and believes that the qiblah direction they had chosen is right and true, while the other qiblah direction is incorrect. In facing such a conflict, Kim and Wreen<sup>43</sup> argue that one group cannot be expected to respect all the differences they have with the opposing group. This is similarly argued by Brandt, Reyna, Chambers, Crawford, and Wetherell,<sup>44</sup> Brandt &

<sup>41</sup> Kato, *Matrilineity and Migration*.

<sup>42</sup> Interview, 12 October 2018.

<sup>43</sup> HK. Kim and M. Wreen, "Relativism, Absolutism, and Tolerance," *Metaphilosophy*, 34, 4 (2003), pp. 447-459.

<sup>44</sup> M. J. Brandt, C. Reyna, J. R. Chambers, J. Crawford, and G. Wetherell, "The Ideological Conflict Hypothesis: Intolerance among Both Liberals and Conservatives," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23 (2014), pp. 27-34. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413510932>

Van Tongeren,<sup>45</sup> it is impossible for a group member with a strong conviction, be it cultural, religious, or political, to favor and agree with the beliefs and practices of members from other groups external to theirs.

Nevertheless, according to Almenidy and Datuk Jongka,<sup>46</sup> the difference in qiblah direction among the congregation during salat at the Nagari Suayan mosque did not affect the social life of people living in the area. Local community activities such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) or *baralek* (wedding festivities) have always been carried out together among congregation members regardless their qiblah orientation. The finding of this research indicates that the difference or conflict in religious practice did not negatively influence the social life of the community at Nagari Suayan. It also shows similar inclination with previous research results that indicate positive relationship found between religious practice and prejudice towards certain group.<sup>47</sup>

Although no negative social relation was observed in the above case, this does not necessarily mean that the difference or conflict in religious practice constantly have positive impact on the social life of the Nagari Suayan community. There was a divorce case found among the residents due to their difference in qiblah direction demonstrates the negative effect it had on personal life. Thus, the finding of this research explains that the difference or conflict in religious practice did not have any negative effect on the social life of Nagari Suayan community, but it did negatively affect the emergence of personal prejudice. This means that personal prejudice had not affected social prejudice.

<sup>45</sup> M. J. Brandt, and D. R. van Tongeren, "People Both High and Low on Religious Fundamentalism are Prejudiced Toward Dissimilar Groups," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112 (2017), pp. 76–97. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000076>.

<sup>46</sup> Interview, 15 October 2018.

<sup>47</sup> CD. Batson, PA. Schoenrade, and WL. Ventis, *Religion and the individual: A social-psychological perspective* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993). Also see: DL. Hall, DC. Matz, and W. Wood, "Why Don't We Practice What We Preach? A Meta-analytic Review of Religious Racism," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14 (2010), pp. 126-139. DOI: [doi:10.1177/1088868309352179](https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309352179); MK. Johnson, WC. Rowatt, and JP. LaBouff, "Religiosity and prejudice revisited: In-group favoritism, out-group derogation, or both?," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 4 (2012), pp. 154–168. DOI: [doi:10.1037/a0025107](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025107); B. E. Whitley, "Religiosity and Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men: A Meta-analysis," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 19 (2009), pp. 21-38. DOI: [doi:10.1080/10508610802471104](https://doi.org/10.1080/10508610802471104).

This also explains that difference in religious practices plays a substantial role in aggravating interpersonal relations instead of social disintegration as proposed by Fredrickson<sup>48</sup> and Harvey,<sup>49</sup> or other previous studies indicating that identity and identification in social religious participation may be associated with rising prejudice against various different external groups.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, these differences (represented by a difference in qiblah direction in this research) can be mediated through the idea of intragroup tolerance. Tolerance among congregations with a difference of opinion regarding the qiblah direction was not observed at the onset. This study found that tolerance is a cultural journey concerning difference that brought about conflict yet it settled into a social relationship of tolerance. Historically speaking and in a broader context, the acceptance of tolerance as a concept in response to differences and diversity has also undergone a long-winded arduous journey. The concept of tolerance found its historical roots as a form of resistance against tyranny and oppression, in which subsequently the word tolerance had begun to be used in pamphlets to voice protests in Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>51</sup>

Tolerance in this research includes one group's acceptance of a difference in religious practice that they disagree with or disapprove of from another opposing group. Tolerance through this perspective is seen as a flawed virtue because it accepts differences to avoid broader conflicts. Yet under such conditions, tolerance is the only solution to differences that have been firmly embedded as beliefs. This leaves the

<sup>48</sup> GM. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short Introduction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>49</sup> P. Harvey, *Through The Storm, Through The Night: A History of African American Christianity* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> B. Altemeyer, "Why Do Religious Fundamentalists Tend To Be Prejudiced?," *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 13 (2009), pp. 17–28. DOI: doi:10.1207/S15327582IJPR1301\_03; CD. Batson, PA. Schoenrade and WL. Ventis, *Religion and the individual: A social-psychological perspective* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993). Also see: Wood, "Why Don't We Practice What We Preach?, pp. 126-139; LaBouff, "Religiosity and Prejudice Revisited, pp. 154–168; WC. Rowatt, J. LaBouff, MK. Johnson, P. Froese, and J. Tsang, "Associations among Religiosity, Social Attitudes, and Prejudice in A National Random Sample of American Adults," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 1 (2009), pp. 14–24. DOI: doi:10.1037/a0014989.

<sup>51</sup> Marjoka van Doorn. "The Nature of Tolerance and the sSocial Circumstances in which It Emerges," *Current Sociology* (2014). DOI: 10.1177/0011392114537281



concept of tolerance as essentially vital in terms of practices to those bearing irreconcilable differences. This perspective will encourage tolerance as a notion that should always be offered within social conditions susceptible to conflicts.

Based on a number of past studies, tolerance may come in the form of acculturation to differences or diversity as a reality.<sup>52</sup> The difference in qiblah direction may have been ignored or rejected in order to protect one group and support the dominant majority. In this perspective, the minority group assimilates the practices of the majority. However, the difference can be acknowledged and celebrated together in diversity. Various studies have shown that celebration of differences and diversity can be promoted as a positive thereby leading to the acceptance of others.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, Almenidy maintained that tolerance among different qiblah congregations was observed in practice in the form of the construction a new mosque for those adhering to the *Skewed Qiblah*. The building of the new mosque is a form of tolerance afforded by the *Skewed Qiblah* congregation to the *Straight Qiblah* congregation. In this context, tolerance may be construed as having a certain attitude about something that one dislikes or disapproves of. This is interesting since tolerance turns into a paradox, accepting yet rejecting differences and having a certain attitude about said acceptance and rejection. This also elucidates the argument that without tolerance, communities that value diversity, equality, and peace would be unable to survive.<sup>54</sup>

Likewise, Datuk Jongka asserted that the initiative of building a new mosque by the *Skewed Qiblah* congregation served as a conflict resolution and a form of tolerance concerning the difference in qiblah direction. Conversely, in order to respect the intention of the *Skewed Qiblah* congregation, the *Straight Qiblah* congregation assisted the

<sup>52</sup> R. Brown and H. Zagefka, "The Dynamics of Acculturation: An Intergroup Perspective," J. M. Olson & M. P. Zanna (eds), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 44 (2011), pp. 129-184.

<sup>53</sup> S. Guimond, R. de la Sablonnière and A. Nugies, "Living in a Multicultural World: Intergroup Ideologies and the Societal Context of Intergroup Relations," *European Review of Social Psychology*, 25 (2014), pp. 142-188. DOI: doi:10.1080/10463283-2014.957578. Also see: Al Makin, "Unearthing Nusantara's Concepts of Religious Pluralism: Harmonization and Syncretism in Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic Classical Texts," *Al-Jāmi'ah Journal of Islamic Studies*, 54, 1 (2016), pp. 1-32.

<sup>54</sup> WP. Vogt, *Tolerance and Education: Learning to Live with Diversity and Difference* (Thousand Oaks, CA, London and New Delhi: Sage, 1997).

construction of the new mosque for the *Skewed Qiblah* congregation. Such social participation may be regarded not only as a form of tolerance, but also respect and celebration of difference in qiblah direction and cultural strategy to reinforce social solidarity of the Nagari Suayan community.

The finding of this research can thus be used to encourage various empirical field studies on the positive or negative impacts of differing religious practices on personal or social relations. As a result, on the negative side, the difference of qiblah direction among the congregation of Nagari Suayan mosque had led to the categorization of “us” versus “them” along with a feeling of intragroup threat. Yet, on the positive side, the difference provided an opportunity to reinforce social solidarity, cultural learning, and the process of adapting to differences so that placing stereotypes or rejecting different others may be minimized.

### Conclusion

The difference in qiblah direction at the Nagari Suayan mosque had subsequently led to conflict in performing salat, particularly congregational ṣalāt among the congregation of the Nagari Suayan mosque. The difference in qiblah direction did not actually trigger a greater conflict as it was rather due to the lack of communication between the *Skewed Qiblah* and the *Straight Qiblah* groups. This confirms that communication in a conflict relating to difference in religious practices that develops into a belief is more significant than the substance of the difference itself.

Nevertheless, the difference in qiblah direction that resulted in a conflict among the congregation of the Nagari Suayan mosque had developed into what is known as intragroup tolerance. The concept of intragroup tolerance in practicing religion is the most important finding in this study. Intragroup religious tolerance entails having a tolerant attitude towards differences in religious practices performed by fellow congregation members of the same religion. This definition employed the perspective-taking approach, which is to understand differences from the perspective of others. This clarifies that tolerance among a congregation of the same religion is a journey. Tolerance does not happen at the onset as an agreement between two opposing blocs. Tolerance undergoes a journey process as a social-religious product.

The finding in this study may have implications on conflict

resolution methods among congregation members in relation to differences in religious practices found within the same religion. Additionally, the understanding of tolerance as a way or a channel to unite differences and diversity may be reexamined by using new approaches as a concept that develops from the journey of a conflict.[]

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