

Negotiating Religious Coexistence in a Multi-religious Community: The Genealogical, Cultural and Institutional Dimensions of Tolerance in Cigugur, West Java

Deni Miharja*¹, Andini², Kustana³, Doli Witro⁴, Nurul Alamin⁵, Mohamad Dindin Hamam Sidik⁶, Ayendha Pangesti⁷

^{1,2,3,4,5} Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University Bandung, Indonesia

⁶ Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University, Brunei Darussalam

⁷ University of Sydney, Australia

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ABSTRACT

Religious coexistence within multireligious societies is a key issue in the study of religion and pluralism, particularly amidst rising identity polarisation and religion-based conflicts. Although a number of studies have examined tolerance and interfaith harmony in Cigugur, West Java, most have focused on the role of local culture and have not comprehensively explained how religious coexistence is constructed, maintained and reproduced in the social life of the community. This study aims to analyse the social mechanisms that shape and sustain religious coexistence within a multi-religious community in Cigugur, Kuningan Regency, West Java. The research employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with religious leaders, community leaders, educators, village officials and local residents, as well as documentation of various social and religious activities within the community. The findings indicate that religious coexistence in Cigugur is constructed through the interaction of three main dimensions: genealogical, cultural and institutional. The genealogical dimension is reflected in inter-religious kinship ties that strengthen social cohesion. The cultural dimension is rooted in collective memory and values passed down through the Sunda *Wiwitan* tradition. Meanwhile, the institutional dimension is realised through the roles of families, schools, religious leaders, the village administration, and the Forum for Interfaith Harmony in reproducing the values of tolerance and communal living. These three dimensions are maintained through mechanisms of social negotiation that enable the community to manage differences whilst sustaining harmony. This study offers a multidimensional model of religious coexistence that broadens our understanding of interfaith relations within a multireligious society.

*Correspondence Author:

Deni Miharja, Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, denimiharja@uinsgd.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Religious pluralism is one of the key characteristics of contemporary society, marked by the coexistence of diverse belief systems, cultural identities and social practices within the same social space. In an increasingly interconnected society, encounters between religious groups have become an inevitable phenomenon, shaping complex social dynamics. On the one hand, pluralism can be a source of social and cultural richness; on the other hand, it also has the potential to give rise to tensions, exclusivism and conflict if not accompanied by social mechanisms capable of managing differences constructively (Forst, 2013). In this context, religious tolerance has become a key issue in the study of religion and society. However, developments in the study of tolerance indicate that tolerance is no longer understood merely as an attitude of accepting the existence of other groups or refraining from interfering with the religious practices of others (Asa'ari et al., 2022). A number of recent studies emphasise that tolerance is a social practice that is continuously produced through everyday interactions, social relations, cultural memory, and the institutions that regulate communal life (Forst, 2013; Verkuyten et al., 2018). Thus, tolerance is not only related to normative values, but also to the social processes that enable different groups to sustain their communal life over the long term (Witro, 2024).

Indonesia is one of the countries with a high level of religious diversity (Witro et al., 2023). In addition to the six religions recognised by the state, Indonesia also has various local belief systems that developed long before the formation of the modern state. These conditions mean that inter-religious relations in Indonesia are not only concerned with theological issues, but also involve cultural identity, political recognition, citizenship rights, and power relations between majority and minority groups (Hefner, 2011; Mujiburrahman, 2006). Consequently, studies on religious tolerance in Indonesia must consider how practices of coexistence are constructed within specific social and historical contexts. One area of particular interest for such a study is Cigugur, in Kuningan Regency, West Java. This area is known as a multi-religious community inhabited by followers of Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and adherents of the Sunda *Wiwitan* belief system. This diversity is not only present within the same social sphere, but is also frequently found within the same family through interfaith marriages and kinship ties.

The uniqueness of Cigugur is inextricably linked to the history of the development of Sunda *Wiwitan*, which has deep roots in the lives of the local community. *Sunda Wiwitan* particularly as developed through the teachings of Pangeran Madrais and the Agama Djawa Sunda (ADS) community serves not only as a belief system but also as a source of cultural values that shape the collective identity of the people of Cigugur (Rostiyati, 2019). Throughout its history, this community has experienced various dynamics related to state policies on religion and belief, including administrative requirements that compelled the community to choose a religion formally recognised by the state (Bakhtiar, 2016). Nevertheless, the various religious groups in Cigugur have continued to demonstrate an ability to maintain relatively harmonious social relations. Practices of mutual assistance during religious celebrations, shared participation in the *Seren Taun* tradition, and the existence of interfaith families demonstrate that religious coexistence in Cigugur is not merely symbolic but is also manifested in the daily lives of the community. These conditions make Cigugur an important social context for understanding how religious tolerance is formed and maintained within a multi-religious community.

Although Cigugur is often regarded as a successful example of multi-religious coexistence in Indonesia, a deeper understanding of the social mechanisms that enable this coexistence to endure is still required. Therefore, this study not only seeks to describe the practices of tolerance that have developed within the community but also to analyse the social processes underpinning the formation of such tolerance. Studies on Indonesian local religious traditions show that coexistence is often sustained not only through formal tolerance, but also through culturally embedded practices that transmit ethical values, communal spirituality, and shared social responsibility. The *Atib Koambai* tradition in Riau demonstrates how collective religious ritual can strengthen social cohesion and local Islamic identity, while *Sendratari Kadita* shows how cultural performance can function as ethical pedagogy and a medium for pluralistic coexistence (Sukmawaty et al., 2025; Tambunan et al., 2025).

Studies on the Cigugur community have been conducted by a number of researchers from various perspectives. Research carried out by Marpuah shows that inter-religious tolerance in Cigugur has developed through intense social interaction and close kinship ties amongst community members.

This research confirms that religious diversity does not act as a barrier to the development of social cooperation in everyday life (Marpuah, 2019). Meanwhile, Rostiyati highlights the importance of the cultural values inherited from the *Sunda Wiwitan* community in shaping the collective identity of the Cigugur community. These values serve as an ethical foundation that fosters respect for diversity and coexistence amongst religious groups (Rostiyati, 2019).

Other research emphasises the role of multicultural education and local wisdom in fostering a tolerant attitude amongst the community. Setiawatri and Kosasih demonstrate that values of tolerance are instilled through both formal and informal educational processes taking place within the family and community environments (Setiawatri & Kosasi, 2019). Arif also explains that local wisdom serves as an important form of social capital in strengthening relationships between different groups (Arif, 2017). Furthermore, a number of studies on *Sunda Wiwitan* have focused more on cultural identity, the history of the community, and its relationship with state policies regarding religion and belief (Bakhtiar, 2016; Prayitno, 2020). These studies provide important insights into the position of *Sunda Wiwitan* within Indonesia's religious landscape.

Generally speaking, previous research has made a significant contribution to explaining the forms of tolerance, local wisdom, cultural identity and social relations that have developed within the Cigugur community. Although various previous studies have provided a rich picture of the socio-religious life of the Cigugur community, the majority of these studies still treat tolerance as a pre-existing social condition. Consequently, attention has been directed more towards the manifestations of harmony and the values of tolerance than towards the social processes that produce and sustain these conditions.

Furthermore, previous studies have tended to treat interfaith relations, local wisdom, multicultural education and *Sunda Wiwitan* as stand-alone themes. There remain limitations in explaining how inter-religious kinship ties, the cultural heritage of *Sunda Wiwitan*, and local social institutions interact with one another in shaping sustainable religious coexistence. These limitations highlight the need to shift the focus of research from questions regarding the existence of tolerance to questions regarding how tolerance is produced, negotiated, and reproduced in the daily lives of a multi-religious society. This shift in perspective is important because tolerance cannot be understood merely as a normative value, but rather as a social practice that is continually constructed through social relations, cultural memory and the institutional structures that exist within society (Forst, 2013; McGuire, 2008; Verkuyten et al., 2018).

Building on this gap, this article offers a new perspective by analysing religious tolerance in Cigugur through three interrelated dimensions: the genealogical, cultural and institutional dimensions. The genealogical dimension refers to the role of interfaith kinship ties in fostering mutual trust and social solidarity. The cultural dimension refers to the function of *Sunda Wiwitan* values and shared cultural traditions such as Seren Taun as spaces for interfaith encounter. Meanwhile, the institutional dimension refers to the role of schools, religious leaders, the village government, and local consultative forums in maintaining the sustainability of communal life.

Specifically, this research aims to answer questions such as: how is religious coexistence constructed and practised in the daily lives of the multi-religious community of Cigugur; what social factors play a role in shaping and maintaining religious tolerance in Cigugur; and how the relationship between genealogical ties, the cultural heritage of *Sunda Wiwitan*, and local social institutions contributes to the production of religious tolerance in Cigugur?

Based on these questions, this study aims to analyse the social mechanisms that shape and sustain religious coexistence within the Cigugur community, as well as to explain the factors contributing to the continuity of religious tolerance in everyday life. Thus, the main theoretical contribution of this article lies in the development of the Genealogical–Cultural–Institutional Tolerance model, which explains that religious coexistence in a multi-religious society does not arise naturally, but is rather the result of ongoing social negotiation through family relations, cultural practices, and institutional mechanisms. It is hoped that this model will enrich academic discussions on religious tolerance, lived religion, local belief systems, and inter-religious coexistence in multicultural societies.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to understand how religious coexistence is constructed and maintained in the life of a multi-religious community in Cigugur, Kuningan Regency, West Java. The qualitative approach was chosen as it enables the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, meanings and social practices that shape inter-religious relations in the context of everyday life (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Meanwhile, a case study design was employed because Cigugur constitutes a unique social context, characterised by the presence of various religious and belief groups living side by side within a single community, including Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sunda Wiwitan.

The research was conducted in Cigugur Sub-district, Kuningan Regency, West Java, in October 2022. Field data collection took place over a two-week period through the researcher's direct involvement in the lives of the local community. During this period, the researcher observed the community's social activities, patterns of interaction between members of different faiths, interfaith kinship ties, and various forms of social cooperation that develop in everyday life.

The selection of Cigugur as the research location was based on its characteristics as a multi-religious community with a long history of managing religious and belief diversity. In addition to being home to followers of various religions, Cigugur is also known as a centre for the development of Sunda Wiwitan, which to this day remains an important part of the local community's cultural identity.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, that is, the deliberate selection of participants based on the relevance of their knowledge, experience and involvement in the socio-religious life of the Cigugur community (Patton, 2015). This strategy was employed to obtain in-depth information regarding the practices of tolerance and interfaith relations developing within the community.

The research involved a number of key informants representing various social and religious positions within the community, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Characteristics of Research Informants

Informant Code	Social Position
A	Islamic figure
RAD	Catholic Figure
E	Sunda Wiwitan Practitioner
D	Muslim resident
N	Primary school teacher
Primary	Village Secretary
T	Newcomer

The diversity of the informants' backgrounds enabled the research to gain a variety of perspectives on inter-religious relations, shared cultural practices, the role of social institutions, and the dynamics of life in the multi-religious community of Cigugur.

Research data were obtained through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. The use of various data collection techniques was intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study whilst supporting the process of data triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

Participatory observation was carried out by following the community's daily activities to gain a first-hand understanding of forms of social interaction, interfaith cooperation, kinship patterns, and shared practices within the community. In addition to observing daily life, the researcher also gathered information on the observance of the Seren Taun tradition as one of the cultural practices involving interfaith participation in Cigugur.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach based on a pre-prepared interview guide. This approach enabled the researcher to maintain the focus of the discussion in line with the research objectives whilst allowing informants the space to explain their experiences and views in

greater depth (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All interviews were recorded with the informants' consent and subsequently transcribed for the purposes of data analysis.

In addition to observation and interviews, the research also utilised documentation in the form of local archives, village documents, records of community activities, and various written sources relevant to the history and socio-religious life of the Cigugur community.

Data analysis was conducted in stages by adapting the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, which comprises data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). All interview data were first transcribed and compiled alongside field observation notes and supporting documents.

In the initial stage, the researcher carried out open coding to identify themes emerging from the field data. This process yielded a number of initial categories such as interfaith kinship ties, mutual aid, religious celebrations, Seren Taun, education, the role of religious figures, and the role of the village government.

This was followed by axial coding to group these categories into broader themes. Through this process, three main dimensions were identified that shape religious coexistence in Cigugur: the genealogical dimension, the cultural dimension, and the institutional dimension. These three dimensions were then used as an analytical framework to understand how religious tolerance is produced and maintained within community life.

The final stage of the analysis involved thematic interpretation, linking the field findings with the literature on religious tolerance, lived religion, and inter-religious coexistence. This process enabled the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the social mechanisms that shape communal life within a multi-religious community.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from informants with different social and religious backgrounds. Meanwhile, methodological triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations and documentation to ensure the consistency of the research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In addition, the researcher also cross-checked various pieces of information obtained during the fieldwork to enhance the credibility and reliability of the resulting interpretations.

This study adheres to the principles of social research ethics. Prior to the interviews, all informants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the use of data, and their right to provide or withhold information. Informants' consent was obtained voluntarily before the interview process took place. At the informants' request, personal identities are not disclosed in the article and are replaced with specific codes to maintain confidentiality and avoid any potential undesirable social consequences in the future. All data obtained is used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Genealogical Dimension: Interfaith Kinship as the Foundation of Religious Coexistence

One of the key findings of this study indicates that religious coexistence in Cigugur is not built solely through a normative commitment to tolerance, but is rooted in interfaith kinship ties that have spanned generations. In this context, religious differences are not positioned as social boundaries that segregate individuals into exclusive groups, but form part of the dynamics of family and community life, accepted as an everyday social reality.

This finding is evident in the strong kinship ties that connect individuals from different religious backgrounds. In many families in Cigugur, members of the nuclear family may practise different religions without this affecting emotional bonds or family solidarity. This phenomenon is reflected in the experience of E, a follower of *Sunda Wiwitan* who lives in a family with a husband and children who are Catholic. According to E, differences in belief have never been a source of division within family relationships because the family is built on love and emotional commitment, not on religious similarity (E, 2022).

A similar experience is found in the case of T, a Christian migrant who married a Muslim man and lives in a predominantly Muslim family environment. T explains that differences in belief are not a source of conflict within the family, but rather provide a space for learning to respect each family

member's religious choice. Indeed, the children's freedom to choose their own faith is understood as part of respecting individual rights within the family (T, 2022).

These findings suggest that the family functions as the primary social space where individuals learn to interact with religious differences. Whilst in many social contexts religion often serves as a marker of identity that distinguishes between 'us' and 'them', in Cigugur these boundaries become more fluid because religious differences are present within the family itself. In other words, religion is not perceived as an 'out-group' identity, but rather as part of the social relationships forged through family ties.

This situation can be understood through the perspective of 'lived religion' put forward by McGuire (McGuire, 2008). According to McGuire, religious practices in everyday life often do not fully adhere to the formal boundaries established by religious institutions, but are instead negotiated through concrete social experiences. In the case of Cigugur, the experience of living together in interfaith families has resulted in a more flexible and relational form of religiosity. Differences in belief are not eliminated, but are managed through interpersonal relationships built on trust and emotional closeness.

As well as serving as a space for learning tolerance, kinship ties also generate *social capital* that strengthens community cohesion. Putnam (Putnam, 2000) explains that strong social networks can foster trust and norms of reciprocity, enabling individuals to cooperate across identity differences. The findings of this research indicate that interfaith family relationships create social networks that connect various religious communities in Cigugur. Consequently, social solidarity is not built on the basis of religious commonality, but on the basis of kinship ties, social closeness, and shared life experiences.

This is evident in the practice of mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) which involves all members of the community regardless of their religious background. D, the manager of the Al-Hidayah Mosque, explained that when the mosque was built in 2005, the majority of the community members involved in the construction process actually came from non-Muslim groups (D, 2022). This finding suggests that the assistance provided by the community is not based on shared beliefs, but rather on pre-existing social relationships. In this context, the construction of places of worship is understood as a community need that must be supported collectively, rather than as the exclusive concern of a particular religious group.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that interfaith kinship ties have become a social mechanism that effectively reduces the potential for conflict. In line with the *contact hypothesis* put forward by Allport (Allport, 1954), intensive and sustained interaction can reduce intergroup prejudice. However, the findings in Cigugur reveal a deeper form of interaction than mere casual social contact. Inter-religious encounters do not only take place in public spaces, but also occur within family relationships, marriages and everyday life. Consequently, religious differences are not viewed as a threat to group identity, but rather as part of a social reality that has been normalised through shared life experiences.

In addition to family ties, the people of Cigugur have also established social mechanisms that strengthen community cohesion through deliberation and mutual agreement. Each religious group has an equal right to express its views in various community forums, whilst decisions reached through deliberation are accepted as a collective commitment that must be respected by all residents. This principle reinforces a sense of belonging to the community whilst reducing the potential for one group to dominate another.

Thus, the findings of this study indicate that religious coexistence in Cigugur cannot be explained solely through the concept of tolerance as an attitude of respecting differences. Tolerance in Cigugur is rooted in a deeper structure of social relations, namely inter-religious kinship networks that situate differences in belief within the framework of family and community ties. Through this mechanism, religious differences do not become a source of social segregation, but rather form part of a shared life experience that strengthens social cohesion. These findings demonstrate that the genealogical dimension is one of the key foundations in the formation of sustainable religious coexistence within the multi-religious community of Cigugur.

Cultural Dimension: Sunda Wiwitan as Cultural Memory and a Moral Framework for Religious Coexistence

The research findings indicate that the sustainability of religious coexistence in Cigugur is

underpinned not only by inter-religious kinship ties, but also by the existence of a collective cultural memory passed down through the traditions and values of *Sunda Wiwitan*. In this context, *Sunda Wiwitan* is not merely a belief system adhered to by a section of the community, but functions as a source of shared moral values that shape the way the community understands differences, builds social relationships, and maintains communal life amidst religious diversity.

The existence of this cultural memory is evident in the community's belief that a harmonious life is an ancestral legacy that must be safeguarded and passed on to future generations. Various informants emphasised that interfaith relations in Cigugur are not built solely through formal agreements, but through the internalisation of values that have long been embedded within the community. These values are passed down through cultural practices, family traditions, and teachings that have developed within the *Sunda Wiwitan* community. Consequently, respect for religious differences is not understood as an external demand, but rather as an integral part of the social identity of the Cigugur community itself.

This is reflected in Statement A, which states that when religious conflicts arise outside the Cigugur area, the community tends not to become embroiled in the debate or in the reproduction of such conflicts. Instead, religious and community leaders choose to continue carrying out religious activities as usual and to strengthen social bonds amongst residents (A, 2022). This finding indicates that the community possesses cultural mechanisms enabling them to distinguish between external conflicts and the social realities they experience first-hand. In other words, the communal identity forged through shared lived experiences is more dominant than the narratives of conflict emerging from outside the community.

This finding is consistent with the concept of *collective memory* put forward by Maurice Halbwachs. According to Halbwachs, collective memory does not merely serve as a recollection of the past, but also acts as a social framework that shapes the way a community understands reality and regulates the behaviour of its members (Halbwachs, 1992). In the case of Cigugur, the memory of communal life passed down by the ancestors has shaped a collective consciousness that religious diversity is an integral part of social life that must be accepted and preserved. Consequently, religious differences are not perceived as a threat to the community's identity, but rather as part of the historical experience that has long been an integral part of the community's life.

The role of this cultural memory is also evident in various social practices that bring together interfaith communities. D, the manager of the Al-Hidayah Mosque, explained that the construction of the mosque in 2005 received widespread support from the non-Muslim community. This support took the form not only of labour but also of involvement in various social and community activities involving all residents, regardless of their religious background (D, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates that social solidarity in Cigugur is not built on shared beliefs, but rather on shared human values that have become part of a common cultural heritage.

From the perspective of *cultural memory*, this situation can be understood as the result of a process of value transmission that spans generations. Jan Assmann explains that cultural memory functions as a medium linking the past to the present through symbols, traditions, rituals and narratives that are continually reproduced in social life (Assmann, 2011). In Cigugur, the values passed down through the *Sunda Wiwitan* tradition are not merely remembered as part of history but are also revived in various social practices that emphasise respect for fellow human beings, solidarity, and collective responsibility for communal life.

One form of this reproduction of cultural memory can be found in the relationship between the Sunda tradition and the community's religious practices. This is evident from the experience of RAD, a Catholic priest who explained that the celebration of the Mass of Thanksgiving at the Paseban Tri Panca Tunggal Hall was accompanied by gamelan music and Sundanese songs, whilst the congregation wore traditional Sundanese attire throughout the worship service (RAD, 2022). This practice demonstrates that religious identity and cultural identity are not positioned as two conflicting entities, but rather complement one another in the life of the Cigugur community.

From the perspective of the sociology of religion, this phenomenon illustrates *the process of religious localisation*, whereby global religious traditions interact with local culture to produce distinctive forms of religiosity. In the context of Cigugur, Sundanese culture is not viewed as a threat to

religion, but rather as a medium that enables various religious communities to find common ground in their social lives. Therefore, although the community adheres to different religions, they still share the same cultural framework as residents of Cigugur.

The most significant finding regarding the function of cultural memory as a space for interfaith encounter is evident in the organisation of the Seren Taun ceremony. This tradition is not merely a harvest festival or a traditional ritual, but a social space that brings together various religious groups in a single shared celebration. According to E, interfaith participation in the Seren Taun is a natural occurrence because the entire community views the event as part of their shared cultural heritage (E, 2022). This participation involves not only the *Sunda Wiwitan* community, but also Muslims, Catholics, Protestants and other religious groups.

In this context, the significance of Seren Taun extends beyond its ritual function as an expression of gratitude for the agricultural harvest. The tradition serves as a space for the reproduction of the collective identity of the Cigugur community, affirming that religious diversity does not negate their bonds as part of the same cultural community. Drawing on Robert N. Bellah's perspective, such rituals can be understood as mechanisms for fostering social solidarity, enabling individuals to feel connected to a wider community (Bellah, 2011). Seren Taun not only strengthens the community's cultural identity but also renews their moral commitment to communal life.

The findings of this research indicate that the humanistic values that have developed in Cigugur are not the result of a negation of religious identity, but rather the result of a process of integration between religious and cultural identities. The community is not required to diminish their commitment to their respective religions, but is encouraged to develop humanistic values that enable them to coexist with other groups. In this context, respect for fellow human beings is viewed as a more fundamental moral principle and forms the basis for the practice of tolerance in everyday life.

Consequently, religious coexistence in Cigugur cannot be understood merely as the result of tolerant attitudes between individuals. The research findings indicate that the sustainability of harmonious interfaith relations is significantly influenced by the existence of a collective cultural memory passed down through the *Sunda Wiwitan* tradition. This cultural memory provides a shared moral framework that transcends the boundaries of formal religious identities, strengthens social solidarity, and creates a space for encounter that enables various religious communities to build a sustainable shared life. Consequently, the cultural dimension serves as a second foundation explaining how religious coexistence can endure and be reproduced from one generation to the next within the multi-religious community of Cigugur.

Institutional Dimension: The Production of Religious Coexistence through Local Social Institutions

The research findings indicate that the sustainability of religious coexistence in Cigugur depends not only on interfaith kinship ties and cultural memory passed down through the *Sunda Wiwitan* tradition, but is also maintained through various social institutions that actively reproduce the values of communal living. These institutions include religious leaders, educational institutions, the village government, and interfaith dialogue forums, which serve as mechanisms for managing differences and safeguarding social stability within a multi-religious community.

a. Religious Leaders as Mediators of Community Life

One of the key findings of this research is the central role of religious leaders in maintaining interfaith relations. In the context of Cigugur, religious leaders not only function as spiritual leaders for their respective communities but also act as social mediators who help the community manage religious differences constructively.

A explains that when religious conflicts or issues arise outside the Cigugur area, the community chooses not to replicate these conflicts in their daily lives. Religious leaders actively encourage the community to remain focused on local social life and to continue their religious activities as usual. According to him, the community and religious leaders share a moral consensus not to allow external issues to become a source of division within the community (A, 2022).

These findings indicate that religious leaders act as *social stabilisers*, ensuring that external conflicts do not escalate into internal ones. From a social constructionist perspective, religious

institutions function as agents that maintain a specific social reality through processes of legitimisation and the internalisation of shared values (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Thus, tolerance in Cigugur does not merely stem from individual awareness, but is also produced and reinforced through religious leadership that prioritises community unity above all else.

The role of religious leaders is also evident in the activities of the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), which serves as a space for dialogue amongst religious leaders. Through this forum, religious leaders regularly exchange views on various social issues faced by the community and build a shared understanding of the steps needed to maintain harmony. The existence of the FKUB demonstrates that religious coexistence in Cigugur does not rely solely on informal relationships between individuals, but is also supported by institutionalised mechanisms for dialogue.

From the perspective of a deliberative public sphere, such a forum enables different groups to build consensus through rational communication and dialogue (Habermas, 1991). Consequently, the FKUB functions not only as a platform for interfaith coordination but also as an institution that strengthens the community's capacity to manage differences peacefully.

b. Schools as Spaces for the Reproduction of Values of Tolerance

In addition to religious leaders, educational institutions play a vital role in instilling the values of religious coexistence in the younger generation. Research findings indicate that schools serve not only as places for the transfer of knowledge but also as spaces for character development that instil respect for diversity from an early age.

N, a teacher at SDN 2 Cisantana, explained that pupils at the school come from diverse religious backgrounds, which is why the school prioritises character education. In her view, religious tolerance is a vital foundation for shaping pupils' character, as this value enables children to live harmoniously alongside one another in a pluralistic society (N, 2022).

The process of instilling these values is not only carried out through formal classroom learning but also through a school culture that encourages respect for religious and cultural differences. Teachers strive to develop a learning environment that reflects the spirit of *'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika'* by emphasising the importance of mutual respect, cooperation and social responsibility.

Interestingly, N explains that the process of teaching tolerance at school is relatively easier to implement because the majority of pupils have, from an early age, gained experience of living in a multi-religious environment. Children are accustomed to seeing their parents involved in various interfaith social and religious activities, such as helping to build places of worship, ensuring the safety of religious events, or supporting community initiatives. Consequently, schools do not begin the process of teaching tolerance from scratch, but rather reinforce the values previously acquired through family and community.

This finding indicates that schools function as institutions of social reproduction that transform the values of coexistence into the social habitus of the younger generation. Within the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu, habitus is formed through the process of internalising social experiences that occur repeatedly until they become part of an individual's disposition (Bourdieu, 1995). Consequently, tolerance education in Cigugur is not merely cognitive in nature, but is also manifested in social practices directly experienced by the pupils.

Field observations reinforce these findings. When the time for the Zuhr prayer arrived at the Al-Hidayah Mosque, the researcher observed a number of children running towards the mosque to perform their prayers, whilst several others waited outside, looking after the sandals of their friends who were praying. Once the prayers were over, they returned to playing together without making an issue of the religious differences amongst them. This simple practice demonstrates that the values of respect for differences have been internalised in daily life and have become part of the social habitus of the children of Cigugur.

c. The Village Government and the Guarantee of Religious Freedom

Religious coexistence in Cigugur also receives support from local government institutions. The Village Secretary explained that the village government consistently affords the community the freedom to practise their respective faiths without any pressure to adopt a particular religion (SD, 2022). This stance demonstrates that the local government acts as a guarantor of residents' religious rights whilst creating a social environment that allows diversity to flourish peacefully.

According to SD, the people of Cigugur are generally not easily provoked by religious issues arising outside their local area. One factor supporting this situation is the mutual understanding between the government, religious leaders and the community not to allow religious issues to become a source of conflict in public forums. Consequently, the village government not only carries out administrative functions but also plays a role in maintaining social stability through inclusive and non-discriminatory policies (Purwaningsih & Witro, 2020).

This finding indicates that the success of religious coexistence cannot be separated from institutional support that legitimises diversity. In this context, local government acts as the guardian of the social sphere, enabling various religious communities to practise their faith on an equal footing.

d. Social Institutions and the Reproduction of Religious Coexistence

Overall, the research findings indicate that religious coexistence in Cigugur is the result of a process of social reproduction that takes place through various local institutions. Religious leaders provide moral guidance that encourages the community to manage differences peacefully. Schools transmit values of tolerance to the younger generation through character education and everyday social experiences. The village government creates an environment that supports freedom of religion and maintains social stability. Meanwhile, dialogue forums such as the FKUB serve as communication mechanisms that enable various religious groups to build a common understanding.

These findings demonstrate that tolerance in Cigugur is not merely an individual attitude, but rather the result of an ongoing process of institutionalising the values of coexistence. Consequently, the institutional dimension serves as a vital foundation that enables harmonious inter-religious relations not only to endure, but also to be reproduced from one generation to the next. Together with the genealogical and cultural dimensions, the institutional dimension forms the social framework that explains the sustainability of religious coexistence within the multi-religious community of Cigugur.

Negotiating Religious Coexistence in Cigugur: The Interaction of Genealogical, Cultural and Institutional Dimensions

The research findings indicate that religious coexistence in Cigugur cannot be explained by a single factor. This contrasts with a number of previous studies which tended to explain religious harmony through the influence of local culture, the *Sunda Wiwitan* tradition, or everyday practices of tolerance (Lesmana & Malihah, 2021; Yusuf, 2014). This study demonstrates that the sustainability of harmonious inter-religious relations is the result of the interaction between genealogical, cultural and institutional dimensions that operate simultaneously within community life. These three dimensions do not exist in isolation, but rather reinforce one another in shaping and maintaining sustainable religious coexistence.

The first dimension is the genealogical dimension, which refers to the existence of interfaith kinship ties within the Cigugur community. The research findings indicate that many families in Cigugur comprise members who adhere to different religions, whether through interfaith marriages or differing religious choices within a single family. In this context, family identity takes precedence over exclusive religious identity. Family ties create a space for intense interaction, ensuring that religious differences do not develop into social barriers that separate individuals from one another.

These findings are consistent with the concept of '*bridging social capital*' developed by Robert Putnam (Putnam, 2000). Putnam explains that social relationships linking different groups are capable of building social *trust* and strengthening solidarity within a pluralistic society. In the case of Cigugur, interfaith family ties function as a social bridge that brings together individuals from different religious backgrounds in the context of everyday life. Consequently, religious differences are not viewed as a threat to social cohesion, but rather as part of a shared social reality.

However, genealogical ties alone are insufficient to explain the long-term sustainability of religious coexistence. Research findings indicate that these social relationships derive their moral legitimacy from cultural dimensions rooted in the heritage of *Sunda Wiwitan* values. The values inherited from ancestors are not only preserved as a cultural identity but also function as a moral framework governing relationship between individuals and between religious groups.

From the perspective of collective memory, the existence of these values can be understood as a form of *cultural memory* that is continually reproduced through the community's traditions, symbols,

rituals and social practices (Assmann, 2011). The Seren Taun, for example, functions not only as a cultural ritual but also as a social space that brings together various religious communities in a shared collective experience. Similarly, the incorporation of Sundanese cultural elements into various religious activities demonstrates that cultural identity functions as a meeting point that transcends the boundaries of formal religious identity.

This finding reinforces Maurice Halbwachs' view that collective memory shapes the way society understands social reality and determines the patterns of relationships considered ideal by a community (Halbwachs, 1992). In the context of Cigugur, the cultural memory passed down through the *Sunda Wiwitan* tradition fosters a shared awareness that religious diversity is part of a social heritage that must be preserved. Consequently, harmony is understood not only as a practical necessity but also as a moral responsibility passed down across generations.

Nevertheless, this study shows that the sustainability of religious coexistence does not depend solely on the family and culture. These harmonious relationships are also maintained through various social institutions that actively reproduce the values of communal life. The research findings show that religious leaders, educational institutions, the village government, and the Forum for Inter- t Religious Harmony (FKUB) play a vital role in maintaining the stability of inter-religious relations in Cigugur.

Religious figures act as social mediators who help the community manage differences and prevent conflicts from escalating. When religious issues or conflicts arise outside the Cigugur area, religious leaders actively encourage the community to remain focused on local social life and not to replicate those narratives of conflict within their own community. In this way, religious institutions function as guardians of social stability, ensuring that religious differences do not develop into a source of social tension.

The role of educational institutions is also crucial in fostering tolerance. Schools not only impart formal knowledge but also instil respect for diversity through character education and school culture. The experiences of children growing up in a multi-religious environment are further reinforced through educational practices that emphasise cooperation, respect for differences, and social responsibility. From Pierre Bourdieu's perspective (Bourdieu, 1995), this process demonstrates how social institutions reproduce a habitus that enables values of tolerance to become part of an individual's social disposition from an early age.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that the sustainability of religious coexistence in Cigugur is underpinned not only by social structures but also by an ongoing process of social negotiation. One of the key findings of this study is the existence of a collective agreement to maintain communal life as a shared goal of the community. A statement by an informant that "living in peace is a choice and an agreement" indicates that social harmony is understood as the result of a collective decision that must be actively maintained by all members of the community.

This finding demonstrates that religious coexistence in Cigugur is not a naturally occurring condition (*natural harmony*), but rather the result of an ongoing process of social negotiation. The agreement not to exaggerate religious issues, the community's tendency to resolve problems through deliberation, and the shared commitment to avoid conflict are forms of social negotiation that enable diversity to remain within the framework of communal life.

Another interesting aspect is the existence of social norms applicable to newcomers. Research findings indicate that the Cigugur community is open to the presence of newcomers from various regions and religious backgrounds. However, every newcomer is expected to respect and adhere to the social norms prevailing within the community. This situation demonstrates that social openness is not synonymous with the absence of rules. On the contrary, openness is maintained through the existence of shared norms accepted by all members of the community.

This phenomenon can be explained through Fredrik Barth's perspective on '*boundary maintenance*'. Barth explains that a community can remain open to outside groups without losing its identity if it possesses mechanisms capable of maintaining social boundaries and values deemed important (Barth, 1969). In the context of Cigugur, the acceptance of newcomers occurs alongside the process of internalising local norms that emphasise respect for diversity, social participation, and a commitment to communal life.

Based on these overall findings, this study proposes that religious coexistence in Cigugur is the

result of the interaction between three main dimensions genealogical, cultural and institutional which are subsequently maintained through various mechanisms of social negotiation. The genealogical dimension fosters social closeness through interfaith family ties. The cultural dimension provides a shared moral framework rooted in the cultural memory of *Sunda Wiwitan*. The institutional dimension ensures the reproduction of these values through the roles of religious leaders, schools, the village government, and interfaith dialogue forums. Meanwhile, social negotiation mechanisms enable these three dimensions to continue adapting to social change and potential conflicts arising in community life.

Thus, the main contribution of this research lies in the development of a multidimensional model of religious coexistence, demonstrating that the sustainability of harmonious relations in a multireligious society is not only determined by local culture, but also by kinship ties, social institutions, and an ongoing process of negotiation. These findings expand upon previous studies on tolerance and pluralism by demonstrating how religious coexistence is produced, reproduced and maintained in everyday social life.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explain how religious coexistence is negotiated and maintained within the multi-religious community of Cigugur, Kuningan Regency, West Java. Based on the research findings, it was found that the sustainability of harmonious inter-religious relations in Cigugur is not built on a single factor, but rather through the interaction of mutually reinforcing genealogical, cultural and institutional dimensions in the community's social life. The genealogical dimension is evident through the existence of inter-religious kinship ties, which enable individuals to build social closeness beyond the boundaries of religious identity. In many families in Cigugur, religious differences are not viewed as a source of division, but rather as part of a social reality that is accepted and managed in everyday life. Meanwhile, the cultural dimension is rooted in collective memory and values passed down through the Sunda Wiwitan tradition, including cultural practices such as *Seren Taun*, which serves as a space for interfaith social interaction. The institutional dimension is realised through the roles of the family, schools, religious leaders, the village government, and the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB), which actively reproduce the values of tolerance and communal living from one generation to the next.

Furthermore, this research demonstrates that religious coexistence in Cigugur is not a naturally occurring condition (*natural harmony*), but rather the result of an ongoing process of social negotiation. The collective agreement to maintain communal life, the community's tendency to avoid the reproduction of religious conflicts originating from outside the area, openness towards newcomers accompanied by respect for local norms, and the active involvement of various social institutions demonstrate that social harmony is the result of social choices consciously maintained by the community. Thus, religious diversity in Cigugur is not merely managed through passive tolerance, but through social practices that enable the community to build trust, solidarity and a sense of belonging to the same community.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in the development of a multidimensional model of religious coexistence. Unlike most previous studies, which have explained religious harmony in Cigugur primarily through the lens of local culture, pluralism, or interfaith tolerance, this study demonstrates that the sustainability of religious coexistence can only be understood through the interplay of genealogical, cultural and institutional dimensions, which operate simultaneously and are reinforced by mechanisms of social negotiation. These findings expand the literature on tolerance and pluralism by demonstrating that harmonious relations within a multireligious society depend not only on cultural values, but also on social relations forged within families, the reproduction of values through social institutions, and the community's ability to manage differences through mutual agreement and everyday practices. Thus, this research offers a more comprehensive perspective on understanding how religious coexistence is produced, reproduced and maintained within the context of a multicultural society.

In practical terms, the findings of this study have important implications for efforts to strengthen interfaith harmony in Indonesia. The experience of the Cigugur community demonstrates that the development of social harmony cannot rely solely on formal regulations or state policies. Rather, harmony requires the strengthening of cross-group social ties, the preservation of inclusive local cultural values, and the active involvement of educational institutions, religious leaders, local government, and

community organisations in creating spaces for equal interaction. Therefore, strategies to strengthen religious moderation and social harmony must take into account the importance of social capital, cultural memory, and dialogue mechanisms that have developed at the community level as the foundation for sustainable coexistence.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted over a relatively short period and focused on a single multi-religious community in Cigugur; consequently, the findings are not intended to be directly generalised to all multicultural communities in Indonesia. Second, this study places greater emphasis on the experiences and perspectives of local actors involved in the practice of religious coexistence; consequently, it has not yet explored in depth the influence of external factors, such as national political dynamics, digital media, or socio-economic changes that have the potential to affect interfaith relations. Third, this study focuses on conditions of relatively stable social harmony and therefore has not specifically examined how communities deal with open or protracted religious conflicts.

Given these limitations, future research could develop comparative studies of other multi-religious communities in Indonesia to test the extent to which the multidimensional model of religious coexistence identified in Cigugur can be applied in different social contexts. Future research could also explore the role of the younger generation, digital media, and local political changes in the process of negotiating interfaith relations. Furthermore, a longitudinal study conducted over a longer period would provide a deeper understanding of how values of tolerance, cultural identity, and social institutions adapt to ongoing social change. Thus, studies on religious coexistence not only contribute to the development of theories on pluralism and tolerance, but also provide an empirical basis for efforts to build an inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable society amidst the increasing complexity of social and religious diversity.

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