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Harmony and Moderation in Multi-Religious Society: Study of Interfaith Coexistence in Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java

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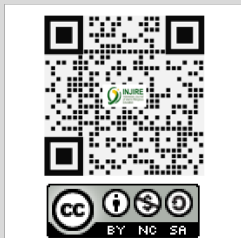
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Abstract

Indonesia is known for its diversity of religions, cultures, and ethnicities. Despite this diversity, peaceful and harmonious coexistence remains difficult due to interfaith hatred. Therefore, tolerance and moderation are essential pillars in building a peaceful social life. This harmonious coexistence is evident in Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java. All live side by side and reside in this area. Some of them even live in the same family. Most of the previous research focused on inter-religious tolerance, only a few emphasized the influence of local values and the role of religious leaders in fostering harmony in multi-religious societies. This study seeks to elucidate the manifestation of religious harmony and moderation in Cigugur, focusing on the influence of religious leaders and communal social practices. This qualitative study, employing interviews, observation, and documentation, revealed that religious leaders in Cigugur possess varied perspectives; however, they concur that tolerance, mutual respect, and the appreciation of differences constitute the foundation of a peaceful existence. Interfaith dialogue, interfaith social activities, and local values such as "Different Feelings, One Understanding" all contribute to a more harmonious society. This study demonstrates that harmony is not simply born from formal policies but rather grows from cultural awareness and the behavior of religious leaders who can serve as role models, prioritizing humanity over differences.

Keywords:

Religious Harmony, Moderation, Multireligious, Interfaith Coexistence

Abstrak

Indonesia dikenal dengan keberagaman agama, budaya, dan etnisnya. Meskipun demikian, koeksistensi yang damai dan harmonis tetap sulit dicapai karena adanya kebencian antarumat beragama. Oleh karena itu, toleransi dan moderasi merupakan pilar penting dalam membangun kehidupan sosial yang damai. Koeksistensi yang harmonis ini terlihat jelas di Cigugur, Kuningan, Jawa Barat. Semua orang hidup berdampingan dan bermukim di wilayah ini. Beberapa di antaranya bahkan tinggal dalam satu keluarga. Sebagian besar penelitian sebelumnya berfokus pada toleransi antarumat beragama, hanya sedikit yang menekankan pengaruh nilai-nilai lokal dan peran pemimpin agama dalam membina kerukunan dalam masyarakat multiagama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan manifestasi kerukunan dan moderasi beragama di Cigugur, dengan fokus pada pengaruh pemimpin agama dan praktik sosial komunal. Penelitian kualitatif ini, yang menggunakan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, mengungkapkan bahwa para pemimpin agama di Cigugur memiliki beragam perspektif; namun, mereka sepakat bahwa toleransi, saling menghormati, dan menghargai perbedaan merupakan fondasi kehidupan yang damai. Dialog antaragama, kegiatan sosial antaragama, dan nilai-nilai lokal seperti "Berbeda Perasaan, Satu Pemahaman" semuanya berkontribusi pada masyarakat yang lebih harmonis. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa harmoni tidak hanya lahir dari kebijakan formal, melainkan tumbuh dari kesadaran budaya dan perilaku para pemimpin agama yang dapat menjadi panutan, mengutamakan kemanusiaan di atas perbedaan.

Kata Kunci:

Kerukunan Beragama, Moderasi, Multiagama, Koeksistensi Antaragama

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Introduction

Indonesia is known for its diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. As a Muslim-majority country, Indonesia also has significant religious minorities, such as Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, etc. Although Indonesia is considered a country with relatively harmonious religious diversity, several problems related to interfaith intolerance still need to be resolved (Soekarba, 2018; Muslih et al., 2023). Soekarba said that the values of tolerance have existed in the archipelago for hundreds of years. Each place has local wisdom that teaches the importance of patience. Live happily, in harmony, respect each other, care for each other, and guarantee peace. This substance is transformed into various forms of tradition. Acts of intolerance that do not respect differences of opinion, equality, and diversity of aspirations must be prevented if all parties understand and practice the values of local cultural wisdom. By living up to the importance of learning derived from Pancasila's core values, we have invested in a safe, peaceful, just, and prosperous future. Accepting pluralism is a significant contribution to the life of the nation and state in Indonesia today and in the future, as well as to a world that loves peace, honor, human dignity, and other human relations (Soekarba, 2018).

In an increasingly globalized world, multireligious societies are becoming more common. People of different faiths often live and work together in one community, which can present opportunities for mutual understanding and cooperation but poses challenges such as misunderstanding, prejudice, and conflict (Colombo, 2025). Therefore, it is essential to promote harmony in multireligious societies, and religious leaders play a crucial role in this regard. Spiritual leaders are indispensable in shaping their followers' beliefs and attitudes and promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding. One of Kruja's studies on interreligious dialogue in Albania is a model of interfaith harmony. He concluded that Albanians would not have religious divisions if they believed that multiple religions were not a disaster and that the One God is the same for all Muslims and Christians. This tradition of religious tolerance among Albanians is not a product of modern times; it dates back centuries. These values, however, are certainly not guaranteed forever but must be preserved and maintained in the mentality inherited or acquired by society (Kruja, 2020).

Achieving harmony in a multireligious society requires a willingness to learn about and respect different religions, and religious leaders can help foster this attitude by promoting interfaith education and dialogue (Ifrah et al., 2025). They can also help dispel misunderstandings and stereotypes that can lead to conflict by opposing discrimination and promoting tolerance and respect for diversity. Religious harmony is the foundation of social life, bringing together rules that must be upheld and implemented as a form of citizens' responsibility for the nation's integrity (Sari & Wasi, 2022).

In addition, religious leaders can work together to address social issues and promote peace and justice in their communities. By working together across religious boundaries, they can encourage common humanity and shared responsibility for the well-being of all members of society. The religious leaders' response is significant in promoting harmony in a multireligious community. By working together to promote interfaith dialogue, understanding, and respect, they can help create a more peaceful and just world. Peacebuilding is an obligation for all elements of Indonesian society. Not only men, but women also play a leadership role, and they are even capable of serving as good role models for peacebuilding in Indonesia (Adisti, 2022).

According to data from Komnas HAM in 2021, there was intolerance and violent extremism throughout 2021, which were also marked by several events that show that the right to freedom of religion and belief still needs to be respected and protected. Including discrimination, intimidation, and violence against religious minorities (Komnasham, 2021). This shows that efforts to create a harmonious life in Indonesia's multireligious society need improvement. In this context, religious leaders play a pivotal role in fostering harmonious relations between religious communities in Indonesia.

In 2020, Indonesia had a population of around 273 million, with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. In this context, living in harmony and respecting the differences among multireligious societies is essential for creating peace and safety in Indonesia (Muslih et al., 2023). However, various social problems, such as religious conflicts and Intolerance, occur in several regions of Indonesia. One crucial factor in creating a harmonious life in a multireligious society is the role of religious leaders. The views and attitudes of people towards other religions and cultures are influenced by their religious leaders. Therefore, it is essential to understand how spiritual leaders respond to living in harmony in a multireligious community.

One of the notable programs broadcast during Ramadan 2023 was *Login* on Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel (Lusri Virga & Handayani, 2025). Aired every night throughout the entire month of Ramadan, *Login* featured in-depth discussions and dialogues involving individuals from diverse religious backgrounds. The program also invited various religious leaders to participate, offering perspectives rooted in their respective traditions. This format highlights the continuing relevance and strategic role of religious figures in the digital public sphere, particularly in promoting education on tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence within a multireligious society.

In the contextualization of religions such as Islam, that religion is fundamental in forming a family (through marriage). Islam explains that the family must be built based on nasab, the main pillars are Religion (Shah & Mustofa, 2020). Although Islam does not impose the will to convert to Islam. *Lakum dinukum waliya din* Q.S. Al-Kafirun verse 6 Allah *Subhânahu wa Ta'âla* affirms that your religion is your religion, and my religion is my religion. Marriage becomes sacred as it forms a family. The holy sense in the paradigm of World Religions is limited to matters related to the symbolization of spirituality. Often, sacred values that do not align with the characteristics required by the paradigm of World Religions are perceived as non-religious (Judge, 2022)

The family is the first time a human being experiences a relationship with another human being. The family becomes a place where the human being acquires a representation of the surroundings. Family harmony is considered capable of exploring, studying, living, and encouraging religious and human values, norms, and practices for everyone (Aqsho, 2017). Harmony tends to be judged by the representation of a commonality in building a harmonious family and society, but it escapes the value of the consciousness instilled in everyone (Shah & Mustofa, 2020). Harmony is not just a commonality, but an awareness of loving and loving each other so that there are individuals who are aware of the value of affection between fellow human beings, also in nature and all. *Irhamu man fi al-ard yarhamukum man fi as-samâ*, love the inhabitants of the earth, may the inhabitants of the heavens love you.

In the Cigugur Kuningan community of West Java, there is a community with plurality and tolerance in carrying out social life, alongside religious diversity (Farakhiyah & Irfan, 2019; Indrawardana, 2014; Marpuah, 2019; Rostiyati, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2019). Cigugur with the Karuhun Urang Indigenous people (AKUR) Sunda Wiwitan as a society with a belief in God Almighty, side by side with religions such as Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. The social life that occurs is a form of a pluralist society, coexisting and carrying out activities based on doing good. The people of Cigugur Village, Cigugur District, live side by side despite their different beliefs and religions. Even in one family, some adhere to other religions/beliefs. His parents hold the beliefs of AKUR Sunda Wiwitan; the eldest child is Muslim; the second child chooses to follow his parents' beliefs; and other relatives are Catholic or Protestant Christians.

This study aims to analyze and understand in depth how religious harmony and moderation are realized in a multireligious society, emphasizing the strategic role of religious leaders as key actors in building social and spiritual balance. This study presents a novel focus on the responses and contributions of religious leaders in creating a harmonious life amid differences in beliefs. This aspect has not been widely highlighted in previous studies, which generally focus on the roles of society or government. Through analysis of theological and social perspectives, this study explores the views of various religious leaders—not limited to Islam or Christianity—gaining a broader,

more comprehensive understanding of the practice of peaceful coexistence in Indonesia's multireligious society. The focus of this research is drawn from the reality of the lives of the Cigugur community in Kuningan, West Java, which represents plurality and harmony between religious communities. The study of family and community harmony in Cigugur provides theoretical and empirical contributions to formulating a model for maintaining harmony and tolerance across religions. Thus, this research not only enriches the academic discourse on religious moderation but also offers a new perspective on how the roles of religious leaders and local values can serve as social capital in building a harmonious, resilient, and civilized society.

Methods

This research was conducted in Cigugur, Kuningan Regency, West Java, a region known for its high religious and belief diversity (Utami et al., 2025). This location was chosen because it accurately represents a multifaith community living side by side peacefully. The approach used was a qualitative descriptive-analytical method, aimed at exploring the meanings, values, and socio-religious practices of the Cigugur community in depth. This approach allows researchers to understand social and spiritual dynamics in everyday life without altering existing realities. The research examined how religious harmony and moderation are achieved through the roles of religious leaders and the participation of interfaith communities in maintaining social harmony.

Data collection techniques used were in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with several religious and community leaders representing the multifaith community in Cigugur. The research informants included: elders from AKUR Sunda Wiwitan, the administrator of the accommodation section for the Seren Taun celebration and his wife, an Islamic religious figure who also serves as the Rector of Al-Ihya Islamic University Cigugur Kuningan, a priest from the Christ the King Catholic Parish Church, and a pastor from the Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) Cigugur. Informants were selected purposively for their involvement and influence in fostering the community's social and religious life. In addition to interviews, observations were conducted of socio-religious activities, such as the Seren Taun celebration, interfaith cooperation (gotong-royong), and joint religious events. These field observations provided a direct picture of the practice of tolerance and solidarity between religious communities.

Documentation techniques were used to supplement the interview and observation data, reviewing archives of activities, photographs, local news, and records of religious institutions related to interfaith interactions. To ensure data validity, triangulation of sources and methods was employed, confirming each interview entry with observation and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through stages of reduction, categorization, and thematic interpretation. Relevant data were grouped into main themes, including social harmony, religious moderation, interfaith tolerance, and the role of spiritual leaders. These were then interpreted to identify meaningful patterns that illustrate the relationship between religion, culture, and human values.

Throughout the research process, researchers adhered to ethical principles of social research, including maintaining informant confidentiality, respecting local beliefs and customs, and employing a dialogical and participatory approach. Researchers act not only as observers but also as reflective partners, learning from the experiences and perspectives of informants. Through this combination of methods, the research is expected to yield a comprehensive understanding of how the Cigugur community builds religious harmony and moderation through a harmonious blend of social, spiritual, and cultural practices.

Results

Cigugur Village, Cigugur District, Kuningan Regency, is one of the villages located not far from the capital of Kuningan Regency, about 3.5 km west of the government center. The location is at the foot of Mount Ciremai, and its area is 300.15 hectares. Cigugur Village is a transitional area between cities and villages and is developing towards urban areas (Rostiyati, 2019, p. 69).

Responses of Religious Leaders

Pendeta of Gereja Kristen Pasundan (GKP) Cigugur Voices

Pendeta Elfrida from Gereja Kristen Pasundan (GKP) Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java, explained that harmonious living should ideally occur in various lines of life, especially in diversity, which can cause friction and conflict. Balanced living can occur if each party always strives for it based on awareness of its importance. Living harmoniously in a multireligious society is crucial to creating peace and stability among diverse religious groups. We must respect religious differences and show mutual respect as we work together to achieve common goals.

Teachings that generate Intolerance and hatred are significant obstacles to creating harmonious living in a multireligious society. Therefore, religious shops have an essential role in teaching people about peace, mutual aid, and how to respond to different points of view of this life. The main obstacles to creating harmonious living in a multireligious society are Intolerance and injustice. Injustice can trigger tensions between religions, while Intolerance can exacerbate inequity.

Pendeta GKP and the People contribute by not building barriers and by living local values to create a conducive environment for harmonious living in a multireligious society, such as mutual aid, among others. This is done to foster and maintain a peaceful atmosphere amid religious and belief differences. At Gereja Kristen Pasundan, we foster a conducive climate for harmonious living in a multireligious society by teaching values of tolerance, organizing community events, and collaborating with other religious groups on social projects.

One form of attitude to promote a peaceful and tolerant environment is to avoid limiting associations and to welcome guests from various backgrounds. It also conducts activities that involve interfaith societies. Then publish the movement through social media or verbally. We promote tolerance and respect for religious differences by encouraging interfaith dialogue and building good relationships with other religious groups in our community.

According to one of the Pendeta of GKP Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java, building relationships and communication are steps toward strengthening relations between Christians and other religious people, at certain moments, holding a togetherness event involving the people. One of them is by having interfaith dialogue. Dialogue between religious leaders is essential in building a harmonious life, but not all who are ready to dialogue (dare to express opinions straightforwardly and humbly listen to others). There are still many people who are just brave, not humble. So those involved in the dialogue are undoubtedly ready, such as some youths at GKP Cigugur and several other adults. She said to strengthen the community's relationship with Christians and other religious groups by promoting cooperation and collaboration in social projects and organizing activities that foster solidarity and religious tolerance. She believes interfaith dialogue is essential for creating harmonious living in a multireligious society. Gereja Kristen Pasundan is involved in interfaith dialogue by organizing events and discussions that involve other religious groups.

Pendeta GKP explained that he could only direct the views of GKP followers towards people of different religions and how the people should behave and respond. The direction can be through sermons or external church activities. This is intended to address differences in religious views between GKP followers and the Cigugur people, who hold different religions and beliefs. She works on religious differences between the congregation of Gereja Kristen Pasundan and the surrounding community of other faiths by promoting mutual respect and understanding. We also encourage open and transparent dialogue to strengthen interfaith relationships.

Religious differences are not foreign to the Cigugur people. Various religions in one big family are not uncommon. Specifically, the Cigugur GKP as an institution has yet to contribute to social and economic problems in a multireligious society; however, personally, the Cigugur GKP members have contributed to these problems. This is because their family has a multireligious background. GKP continues to encourage this spirit. Our role at GKP Cigugur in addressing social and economic issues in a multireligious community is to organize social projects with the

surrounding community, promote education and skills to improve well-being, and educate the community about their rights and responsibilities in maintaining peace and religious tolerance.

These values are taught in Sunday School and Youth Fellowship for young people that the difference is a necessity and comes from God. Children and youth are taught how to behave and respond to friends with different backgrounds (religion, ethnicity, abilities, and personal circumstances/special needs). She teaches children and teenagers in the GKP Cigugur congregation about tolerance and interfaith cooperation through inclusive religious education and promoting interreligious dialogue. We also organize activities that involve children and teenagers in social projects with other religious groups.

Pendeta GKP also explained that the religious figure is a motorbike. Religious figures hold leadership authority to direct their followers. People listen to and learn from religious leaders. People believe what religious leaders teach. So, for him, religious figures have an essential role. If people want to be tolerant of plural life, then religious leaders must first be enthusiastic to promote peace in this plural life. But remember, every spiritual leader needs to keep learning to get more suitable (not misleading). She sees the role of religious leaders as crucial to creating harmonious living in Indonesia as a whole. Religious leaders must promote tolerance, build good relationships with other religious groups, and actively participate in interfaith dialogue.

Pastor of Paroki Kristus Raja Voices

When it comes to social interactions between people of different faiths and building a resilient community based on honesty and peaceful coexistence, the Cigugur community values the practice of individual religious beliefs and faith in social interaction. A Catholic pastor from the community emphasized that there should be no compulsion for people of other religions to convert to Catholicism in social life. He believes that religion is a personal matter, and the most important thing is to do good and show compassion rather than trying to force people to convert. He advocates doing good through love and respect for individual beliefs and faith rather than using coercion to achieve religious conversion. Result of the interview with Pastor on Gereja Paroki Katolik Cigugur. Interview Implementation of Gereja Paroki Katolik Cigugur on 22 June 2022.

Religious Leader of Islam Voices

According to Islamic beliefs, living in harmony in a multireligious society is crucial to creating peace, justice, and prosperity among humanity. In the Quran, Allah SWT says,

"And if Allah had not enabled some people to defend themselves against others, there would surely have been destroyed many monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is frequently commemorated." (Al-Baqarah: 251).

Therefore, as Muslims, we must strive to live harmoniously with others, including people of different religions. Some obstacles to creating harmonious living in a multireligious society in Cigugur, Kuningan, and West Java include a lack of understanding and knowledge of different religions and cultures, stereotypes and negative prejudices, and differing views and values among religious groups.

As Islamic religious figures, we help create a conducive environment for harmonious living in a multireligious society by engaging in activities such as interfaith dialogues, teaching tolerance and respecting religious differences, and strengthening relationships with other religious groups through social and humanitarian efforts.

In promoting tolerance and respect for religious differences, we uphold the values inherent in Islamic teachings, such as freedom of religion and the importance of peace and diversity as blessings from Allah SWT. We strengthen the relationship between Muslims and people of other faiths in Cigugur, Kuningan, and West Java by organizing joint religious and social events that bring together all communities. Interfaith dialogue is essential to creating harmonious living in a multireligious society in Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java. As Islamic religious figures, we engage in

interfaith conversations with people of other religions to understand differences and seek mutually beneficial common ground. In managing religious differences between Muslims and surrounding communities of different faiths, we strive to promote mutual respect and appreciation for those differences and maintain harmony across various spiritual and social activities.

The role of Islamic religious figures in addressing social and economic problems in a multireligious society in Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java, is to provide an understanding of the importance of cooperation and social solidarity, and to help facilitate programs that improve society's welfare. Islamic religious leaders in Cigugur, Kuningan, and West Java have an essential role in teaching the values of tolerance and cooperation between religious communities in their environment. They can use various means, such as providing religious education to children and youth in the area. Apart from strengthening the faith and teachings of Islam, spiritual leaders must also promote the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and cooperation among religions.

Islamic religious leaders in the Cigugur area of Kuningan, West Java, must work with other religious leaders to foster harmony and tolerance among religious communities. They can also provide real-life examples of tolerance and respect for religious differences by engaging in social activities with people of other religions. In this way, religious leaders can build a harmonious environment and strengthen relations between religious communities. From an Islamic perspective, religious leaders play a crucial role in fostering harmonious coexistence in Indonesia's multireligious society. Through good dialogue and cooperation, religious leaders can build mutual understanding and help resolve conflicts that arise.

Furthermore, Islamic religious leaders must also be able to address social and economic problems in a multireligious society, such as poverty and unemployment. This can be done by assisting and supporting those in need and by promoting programs that strengthen welfare and interfaith relations. In teaching the values of tolerance and interreligious cooperation, Islamic religious leaders must foster mutual respect, empathy, and understanding towards people of different religions. These values are essential to promoting peace, harmony, and prosperity in a multireligious society.

The personality of Akur Sunda Wiwitan Voices

The preparation for the Seren Taun tradition is currently underway among the Cigugur people. The gate-making process, a part of this tradition, involves the AKUR Sunda Wiwitan people and individuals of different religious beliefs, such as Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants. This event brings everyone together, as it represents the Sundanese culture. It doesn't matter which religion the Sundanese adhere to; the culture still belongs to them. If the Sundanese themselves do not conserve their culture, then who will?

The AKUR Sunda Wiwitan community does not aim to convert or persuade others to follow their religion. To them, their religion is a way of life in which they practice and uphold good values that positively impact others. This is also exemplified by the saying "*Beda Rasa Satu Pengertian*," which means that differences must be acknowledged and understood to foster harmonious, tolerant coexistence. It is essential to recognize and respect diversity to encourage a peaceful society.

Result of the interview with a community that embraced the flow belief, AKUR Sunda Wiwitan. Also, the Observation in Buildings Paseban Tri Panca Tunggal result was done on 21-23 June 2022. An elder from the AKUR Sunda Wiwitan community shared a story about why people of different religions in Cigugur can coexist harmoniously. According to him, all religious teachings aim to promote peace, as humans are unique beings that require guidance to live in harmony. Despite the differences in religious beliefs, people in Cigugur understand that they are all essentially humans and share the same human characteristics. These include compassion, 'Undak Usuk,' ethics, 'Budi Basa and Budi Daya,' and 'Viwaha Yuda Naraga.' For instance, humans must consider others before speaking and controlling their bodies, which can sometimes go against human

nature. The people of Cigugur value these human characteristics and use them as a basis for living in harmony with one another.

The elder then explained that the AKUR Sunda Wiwitan community refers to the human characteristics mentioned earlier as 'Pagawean Manusa,' which means human work or behavior. He believes that religion is a set of rules dictating human behavior. Individuals must abide by these five characteristics to avoid deviating from the constraints of human work or behavior, which can lead to conflict over religious doctrines instead of focusing on the truth. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each individual to practice these characteristics, which enable the people of Cigugur to coexist harmoniously.

Discussion

Social Interaction between Religious Believers: Forms of Tolerance and Harmony

Seeing the form of tolerance and harmony in the Cigugur Kuningan community, West Java is a picture of social interaction between religious believers. As an illustration, the Cigugur community coexists with religious believers, and even within one family. It's just that territorially, generally, the socio-religious environment that is seen in the Cigugur community does have visible blocks. Cigugur Village consists of 4 neighborhoods, or hamlets, namely: 1. Pahing, 2. Puhun (Block), 3. Wage, and 4. Sweet. In the four neighborhoods or hamlets, there is a harmonious life that is side by side between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Broadly speaking, the majority Muslim community occupies the Citambak block, while the Christian community (Catholicism and Protestantism) comprises the Mayotitas, who live in the Lumbu and Paleben blocks. The Sand Block is occupied by the majority of Muallaf who converted from Catholicism to Islam (See also Marpuah, 2019, p. 270).

In the context of social interaction between religious believers, primarily forming a resilient society by living in harmony with peace, and through actions based on the values of honesty (Hariyanto, 2022). The values that appear in the Cigugur community in social interaction among religious believers are to return to the practice of their respective religious values in deeds and to have faith in social interaction. One of the things stated by a Pastor from the Cigugur Catholic Church is that, in social life and social interaction, there is no compulsion on other religions to enter and want to convert to Catholicism. According to him, religion exists in a personal context, so the most important thing is to do good by cultivating a compassionate nature. According to him, compared to forcing people to convert to Catholicism, it is better to do good with love and affection by sticking to their respective beliefs and faiths.

The description of living in harmony, both within the family and in society, is based on the narrative of one of the communities with adherents of the AKUR Sunda Wiwitan belief that religion for the Cigugur community is not forced, especially in family relations. As children, most followed the religion or belief of their parents. But as an adult, the freedom to choose faith or belief is a personal space. In the AKUR Sunda Wiwitan community, there is no mission to proselytize or invite them to embrace their religion. For him, religion is pagan. Carry out and apply good values so that they can have an impact on the good of others. As also conveyed by Rama Sepuh Pangeran from AKUR Sunda Wiwitan, *"Different Recognition of Equal Understanding"*. That although the recognition of the different must be the same understanding to be able to live with a harmonious and tolerant plurality (Adisaputri et al., 2022).

One of the Muslim leaders who also did not escape was asked to give an interview about the harmonious life of the Cigugur community with religious diversity, namely the Rector of the Islamic University in Cigugur. He explained that the life of the Cigugur community, with harmony among followers of different religions, has long been a feature of the community. One of the things that strengthens the harmonious life of the Cigugur community is the spirit of tolerance and moderation, not only spoken but also practiced in deeds. It was also conveyed by the Vicar (Prospective Pastor) of the Pasundan Christian Church that the lives that took place in the Cigugur community had already converted one another. He said that the seven-daily, 40-daily to 100-daily

tradition that is common in Islamic traditions when someone dies occurs in non-Muslim communities in the Cigugur community. The AKUR Sunda Wiwitan community also justifies it at the time of his parents' death, a tradition of seven days, 40 days to 100 days, which may not happen to people outside Cigugur. Converting each other is not a fundamental matter but rather a social interaction, a form of mutual respect that builds harmony and makes a society more resilient (Agustin et al., 2024).

Building Harmony in Multireligious Society: Theosocio-Religious Perspective

Religious leaders play an essential role in shaping and strengthening harmony in multireligious communities (Abu-number, 2004), especially in areas such as Cigugur and Kuningan in West Java, which have high religious diversity. Religious leaders can mediate in resolving conflicts between people of different religions. In these contexts, religious leaders are not only spiritual authorities but also cultural brokers and moral reference points for their respective communities. Their influence enables them to promote values of tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence through sermons, religious teachings, and community-based activities. Moreover, religious leaders often function as mediators and facilitators in resolving interreligious tensions and conflicts by encouraging dialogue, reducing prejudice, and fostering understanding across religious boundaries. Through inclusive communication and exemplary attitudes, they help transform potential sources of conflict into opportunities for cooperation and social cohesion, thereby reinforcing harmony in pluralistic societies.

From a theological perspective, religious leaders have a moral responsibility to promote peace and harmony in society. They must encourage tolerance, respect, and cooperation among different religions (Sinha, 2005). Religious leaders in the Cigugur community, Kuningan, West Java, need to teach the values of tolerance and cooperation between religious communities, one of which is by providing spiritual education. In addition, they must be able to cooperate with other spiritual leaders and engage in social activities with people from different religions to foster harmony and strengthen inter-religious tolerance.

Religious leaders must deeply understand their spiritual teachings and human values and pay attention to differences in religious views in a multireligious society (Muhasim et al., 2024). They need to promote education and interreligious dialogue to create mutual respect and understanding, and show respect, tolerance, and cooperation toward people of different religions (Zulkarnain & Samsuri, 2018). Religious leaders can also facilitate meetings between people of different faiths and foster collaboration in addressing common social problems, serving as a social glue that connects various groups and communities. They must continue to improve their capacity and competence in interacting with people of different religions by deepening their knowledge of other faiths, recognizing shared values, and developing strong communication skills (Nova, 2019). To increase their capacity and competence, religious leaders can attend training and workshops organized by religious organizations or interfaith organizations and read literature discussing the theologies of other religions and spiritual practices outside their faith. In this process, religious leaders will be more open, understanding, and deepen their perspectives on diverse social backgrounds, enabling them to build harmony between people of different religions.

Conclusion

This research shows that religious harmony and moderation in the multifaith community of Cigugur, Kuningan, West Java, are fostered through a blend of spiritual, social, and cultural values embedded in people's daily lives. Harmonious living amidst religious differences is not simply born of formal policies or institutional rules but grows from a moral and cultural awareness passed down through generations. The principle that every belief stems from conscience and is a personal right serves as a strong foundation for the Cigugur community to respect each other and accept differences as part of God's will. In this context, religion is viewed as a personal spiritual space that does not hinder social relationships and cooperation among residents.

Religious leaders play a central role in strengthening this harmony. Through their teachings, role models, and socio-religious activities, they foster a collective awareness of the importance of tolerance, mutual respect, and interfaith cooperation. Various initiatives, such as interfaith dialogue, community service, and collaboration in addressing social and economic issues, serve as effective vehicles for instilling the values of religious moderation. Although religious leaders have different theological backgrounds and perspectives, there is a shared understanding that peaceful coexistence can only be achieved through respect for differences and a commitment to maintaining togetherness. In addition to leadership, the local values of the Cigugur community—such as the spirit of cooperation, a sense of family, and the principle of "Different Feelings, One Understanding"—form an essential foundation for social cohesion. Residents of various religions and beliefs can live side by side, even within the same family, by upholding solidarity and shared social responsibility. They collaborate in community activities, regardless of differences in beliefs, in both religious and social development.

Thus, religious harmony and moderation in Cigugur are not only the result of interfaith interaction but also a manifestation of the integration of spiritual values, local wisdom, and mutually reinforcing social practices. This model of religious life in the Cigugur community makes a significant contribution to the development of the concept of peaceful coexistence in Indonesia, demonstrating that true tolerance is rooted in spiritual awareness, respect for differences, and a universal human spirit.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The research focuses on the Cigugur community as a single case study, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other regions with different historical, cultural, and religious configurations. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to conduct comparative studies across multiple communities with diverse socio-religious backgrounds to examine whether similar models of spiritual integration and local wisdom operate elsewhere. Additionally, longitudinal research would be valuable to assess the sustainability of peaceful coexistence in the face of social change, generational shifts, and external influences such as modernization and digitalization.

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