TOPIC

Local Traditions, Global Lessons: Models of Religious Harmony from Cigugur Indonesia and El-Gamaliya Egypt

Abd. Rahman[1], Arfian Alinda Herman[2], Muhammad Arhad[3], Fakhriyah Nur[4], Muhammad Haramain[5], Musmulyadi[6]

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Jl. Amal Bhakti No.8, Parepare City, South Sulawesi, Email: abd.rahmank@iainpare.ac.id[1] , Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Jl. Amal Bhakti No.8, Parepare City, South Sulawesi, Email: arfianalindaherman@iainpare.ac.id[2] , Al-Azhar University Cairo Egypt, Gohar Al Kaed, الدرب الأحمر، قسم الجمالية Cairo Governorate, Email: muhammadarhad2003@gmail.com[3] , Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Jl. Amal Bhakti No.8, Parepare City, South Sulawesi, Email: fakhriyahnur31@gmail.com[4] , Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Jl. Amal Bhakti No.8, Parepare City, South Sulawesi, Email: haramain@iainpare.ac.id[5] , Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Jl. Amal Bhakti No.8, Parepare City, South Sulawesi, Email: musmulyadi@iainpare.ac.id[6]

Abstract

This study explores the dynamics, dogma, and dialogue of religious harmony through a comparative case study of Cigugur Village in Indonesia—home to the Sunda Wiwitan belief system—and El-Gamaliya in Cairo, Egypt, an historic urban area inhabited by both Muslim and Christian communities. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews and participatory observation involving religious leaders and local residents. Findings reveal that in Cigugur, religious harmony has evolved from civil society initiatives through informal interfaith gatherings such as Bajigur, shared social practices, and exemplary leadership by religious figures—without direct state involvement. In contrast, El-Gamaliya sustains harmony through wasathiyah (moderate) Islamic values, everyday social interactions, and a shared sense of nationalism that bridges Muslim-Christian relations. In both settings, religious dogma tends to be inclusive, accommodating local traditions and pluralistic values. Interfaith dialogue emerges organically, often rooted in local spiritual practices such as shamanism, rather than formal institutional frameworks. This study demonstrates that sustainable religious harmony is most effectively fostered through local wisdom, grassroots engagement, and culture-based social integration—rather than through normative, top-down state policies. The findings have significant implications for policy development in the areas of religious moderation, multicultural education, and diversity management in an increasingly interconnected and complex global society.

Keywords: dogma and dialog, religious harmony, Cigugur, El-Gamaliya

Introduction

Differences often become sparks that trigger divisions in various aspects, including ethnicity, race, and religion. One example of the decline in religious tolerance is the inter-religious conflict in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, in 2016 (Asogwa & Okeke, 2021). Likewise, the conflict that occurred between the Dayak and Madurese tribes in Banjarmasin, because a Dayak resident offended the words of a Madurese resident and there were banners that provoked (Eko & Putranto, 2021). This phenomenon shows a gap in the understanding and application of moderation values that can bind diversity in a harmonious unity. However, Cigugur Village is different, an area that offers a unique attraction as a miniature Indonesia with harmonious religious diversity. Here, Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism and the Sunda Wiwitan faith coexist in social life without any

conflict or division between religious communities. They appreciate and respect each other, creating a real example of ideal plurality.

Religious harmony is a legal principle and social norm that encourages harmonious coexistence between religious groups through the management of diversity, respectful relationships, and cohesion, as well as being the basis for State obligations (Neo, 2019) . Cigugur shows that religious harmony can be the foundation for a peaceful and inclusive society. This harmony is not only built through local values, but also strengthened by the active role of religious leaders of various faiths who consistently instill the values of tolerance, love of country, and interfaith dialogue in everyday life. This has similarities with the socio-religious reality in El-Gamaliya, Cairo, Egypt, an old city that is part of the center of Islamic civilization in the Arab world. In El-Gamaliya, where clerics of wasathiyah Islam play a key role in shaping people's religious understanding through a gentle, inclusive and rational approach. Religious leaders in El-Gamaliya instill moderation through da'wah, *talaqqi* and formal education, emphasizing that religion strengthens brotherhood, not division.

In both Cigugur and El-Gamaliya, religious harmony is not just a normative slogan, but is actually practiced in social relations, interfaith interactions and acceptance of local traditions. Both areas highlight the important role of religious leaders in promoting tolerance and unity. Their experiences prove that religious harmony builds harmonious and productive societies. Like a beautiful mosaic, the diversity in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya unites rather than divides, forming a cohesive and inspiring whole.

In the context of religious life in Indonesia, efforts to build interfaith harmony are a growing challenge, especially amid the dynamics of diversity of beliefs and the increasing potential for intolerance. This research departs from the phenomenon of religious life in Cigugur Village, Kuningan, which is a unique model in maintaining harmony among five religions-Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Sunda Wiwitan believers-through the

values of religious harmony that live and continue to be passed down across generations. This model is then compared with the practice of religious life in El-Gamaliya, Cairo, Egypt-an old city area with a long history of Islamic and Christian pluralism-where the community has also managed to maintain harmony through social ties, nationalism values, and the active role of religious leaders in building wasathiyah Islam that is open to diversity. This comparison enriches the understanding that interfaith harmony can grow from different social contexts, but both are rooted in participatory and inclusive values in everyday life.

A number of studies have discussed this in various contexts, such as the low understanding of religious harmony in Desa Baru, which has implications for ethnic-based harmony (Mulyana, 2023), and the role of social interaction and cultural activities in strengthening religious harmony (Daheri et al., 2023). In addition, international studies also provide important insights into how religious harmony is affected by political dynamics, the involvement of religious parties in democracy (Brocker & Künkler, 2013), and factors such as religiosity and demographics that determine one's propensity to be moderate (Subchi et al., 2022). Other research emphasizes that local wisdom values can be the main foundation in building tolerance through social mechanisms based on family and community (Pajarianto et al., 2022).

This research explores how Cigugur Village builds interfaith harmony not only through policies, but also through local values and historical experiences. Similar to Cairo, Egypt, where interfaith harmony is shaped through education and wasathiyah scholars, Cigugur developed its own model through daily life practices that prioritize respect for differences. This research aims to look at how religious harmony is practiced in Cigugur and identify key factors that sustain religious diversity. The study analyzes how different religious dogmas coexist through constructive dialogue within the framework of religious moderation. In addition, the study also explores the role of religious leaders in balancing dogmatic beliefs with

interfaith dialog. In a broader sense, this research highlights how the values of moderation are applied in everyday life, which promotes coexistence. Ultimately, the research provides a model of religious harmony that can be adapted by Indonesia's diverse society.

It analyzes the synergy between dogma and dialogue in the pluralistic society of Cigugur, highlighting the role of religious leaders as mediators in naturally fostering interfaith harmony. Similar to Cairo, which relies on educational institutions for religious harmony, Cigugur develops spaces for dialogue through Bajigur events and social programs such as Reka Salira and waste banks. The absence of government intervention encourages community initiative, reflecting a high degree of collective consciousness in promoting interfaith cooperation. Integrating local traditions, such as Tari Buyung, strengthens multicultural harmony and local identity. By focusing on religious moderation at the grassroots, this study serves as a reference for academics, policymakers and practitioners. It enriches the discourse on religious harmony by integrating dogma and dialogue into a holistic analytical framework. This approach deepens understanding and encourages sustainable and inclusive interfaith dialog, especially in highly diverse communities such as Cigugur and Cairo.

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, which aims to deeply understand how religious diversity is managed and practiced in daily life in Cigugur Village, Kuningan Regency and El-Gamaliya Cairo, Egypt. The research lasted for 60 days, where the research in Cigugur Village took place in August 2024 and Cairo Egypt in January 2025. Both places are known as areas with a high level of religious diversity and inter-religious harmony is maintained. The paradigm used is interpretative, which assumes that social reality is formed through interactions and subjective interpretations of individuals, so this research focuses on understanding the meaning of diversity and tolerance lived by the people of Cigugur and El-Gamaliya.

Data for this research was obtained through two main techniques, namely in-depth interviews and participatory observation. Interviews were conducted with ten resource persons consisting of religious and community leaders in Cigugur Village as well as students and clerical figures in Cairo, Egypt. The religious leaders interviewed came from various backgrounds, namely Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, and Sunda Wiwitan, who have an important role in maintaining harmony amid the diversity of the Cigugur Village community. Cigugur Village was chosen as the research location because it is known to have a long history of practicing religious harmony, thus becoming a real example of managing religious differences. Meanwhile, El-Gamaliya is one of the ancient city districts in the heart of Cairo, chosen because it reflects the historical tradition of diversity that has long coexisted amid Muslim, Coptic Christian and immigrant communities.

The selection of interviewees was purposive, based on considerations of representative capacity, active involvement in the discourse of harmony, and the depth of their experience in managing religious differences in real life. In Cigugur, harmony is communitarian and participatory, requiring more interfaith and indigenous resource persons. While in Cairo, two resource persons were purposively selected, namely a cleric who is active in the religious activities of the El-Gamaliya community and an academic who is also an interfaith activist with involvement in programs to strengthen religious tolerance and interfaith social dialogue in the region.

Although the number of interviewees is not balanced, the qualitative approach emphasizes depth of information rather than quantity, and the single interviewee in Cairo still provides a representative and substantial contribution to understanding the context of pluralism there.

With a combination of local and international interviewees, this research is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of interfaith interactions and strategies for maintaining social harmony.

Semi-structured interviews provide flexibility in exploring the views and experiences of the interviewees. Second, participatory observation was conducted by directly engaging in community activities, such as the reka salira program, waste banks, and informal meetings of religious leaders. This observation aims to directly observe interfaith interactions in the daily social context.

The data obtained was analyzed thematically through a process of data reduction, categorization, and interpretation. Relevant data were grouped into categories such as the role of religious leaders, community initiatives, and respect for local traditions. This analysis was conducted with reference to theories of social tolerance and diversity to identify patterns and key factors that support interfaith harmony. Data validity was ensured through triangulation by comparing data from interviews and observations. With this explanation, this research is expected to not only provide an in-depth picture of inter-religious harmony in Cigugur and Cairo Egypt, but also facilitate other researchers to conduct similar research in the future.

Results and Discussion
Social Dynamics of Religious Communities in Cigugur Indonesia and El-Gamaliya Egypt

In Cigugur, the dynamics of religious harmony are shaped by the collective awareness of the community, not by state intervention. The lack of formal programs from the government has actually triggered the birth of local initiatives based on citizen participation. One of these concrete initiatives is the *Bajigur* event (*Badami Jeng Inahong Cigugur*), where religious leaders from various faiths gather with the community to discuss tolerance and religious issues. A Sunda Wiwitan religious leader emphasized, *"We are not only here to discuss the teachings of our respective religions, but also how to coexist without disturbing each other."* In this context, the community takes an active role in maintaining harmony, especially since the role of the government is considered passive. As expressed by one resident, *"If we just wait for the government, maybe we will just stay silent. Therefore,* *the community must act first."*

Apart from *Bajigur*, other social initiatives, such as the *reka salira* program that aims to minimize debt to moneylenders and the waste bank, also contribute greatly to strengthening religious harmony. Although these programs do not explicitly address religious issues, the interactions that occur in these activities open up space for interfaith communication. A participant of *the reka salira* program revealed, *"When we discuss financial matters, we unknowingly get to know each other's culture and customs. It makes us understand each other."*

Interfaith harmony in Cigugur is also reflected in daily religious practices. Muslims there carry out their worship without feeling threatened, and they also do not interfere with the worship of other religions. One clear example is the death announcements that are made in the mosque and involve mosque administrators from different religious backgrounds. One mosque administrator said, *"If someone dies, whoever it is, we announce it in the mosque. It's not a matter of what religion, but a matter of our concern as fellow human beings."*

The role of religious leaders in Cigugur is not only limited to the spiritual aspect, but also extends to social life. They serve as role models in the practice of religious harmony and often insert messages of tolerance in social events, such as celebrations or house construction. A Christian leader commented, *"I often attend Muslim events, and vice versa, they also come to our events. It is not about religion alone, but about togetherness."* Furthermore, a traditional leader emphasized, *"We don't need a big forum to talk about tolerance, just sitting together, chatting over coffee, is enough to maintain good relations."*

Meanwhile, in El-Gamalia, an old district in central Cairo, relations between Muslims and Christians are also peaceful and stable. They help each other in their daily lives, and show an open attitude towards differences. Muslims and Christians in this area live side by side with mutual respect and uphold the values of tolerance. Evidence of the strong relationship can be seen from the many harmonious social interactions between the two communities, such as cooperation in daily life and celebrations of

religious holidays that take place in a peaceful atmosphere. Although inter-religious relations in Cairo are relatively good, there are some challenges that threaten the tradition of tolerance. The interviewee stated *"We live in harmony here, both Muslims and Christians help each other in daily life. However, we also see challenges such as economic instability which makes some people more closed."*

Despite the challenges, the El-Gamalia community demonstrates communication-based conflict resolution mechanisms. *"We don't see any major conflicts here. If there are differences, we prefer to sit together and talk,"* says a local religious leader. Thus, the dynamics of religious harmony in Cairo remain good despite the challenges it faces. Dialogue is not formalized, but emerges in daily social practice, similar to the pattern in Cigugur. Cairo society is accustomed to coexisting in diversity, although socio-political challenges often test this stability.

Comparatively, Cigugur displays the dynamics of culture-based harmony and a strong participatory community, while El-Gamalia offers a picture of the tolerant pluralism of a metropolis made vulnerable by economic pressures. Both show that harmony can exist in different forms-Cigugur from the *grassroots*, and El-Gamalia from the social consciousness of an old city community that has long coexisted. The comparison between the dynamics of religious harmony in Cigugur Indonesia and El-Gamaliya Egypt is substantively illustrated through the following table.

The dynamics of religious harmony in Cigugur demonstrate the strength of community initiatives in managing plurality without relying on formal state structures. The absence of government intervention in promoting harmony is a strong sign that the community is able to organize itself. This situation reflects the theory of *civil society*, in which social structures can independently achieve common goals through collective consciousness (Bruijn et al., 2024) . Initiatives such as the Bajigur forum become a community space to discuss tolerance in a participatory manner. This reflects the practice of *social capital* in the form of networks, trust, and social norms

that are built from below . (Richmond & Casali, 2022) .

Table 1. Comparison of the Dynamics of Harmony in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya

Aspects of Dynamics	Cigugur, Indonesia	El-Gamaliya, Egypt
Initiator of Harmony	Local community (citizen initiative)	Local community and religious leaders
Government role	Minimal, almost non-existent	Almost none, runs naturally
Forms of Social Interaction	Bajigur forum, reka salira, waste bank, interfaith death announcements	Trade, education, participation in cross-religious celebrations
Dialogue Room	Informal meetings, chatting over coffee	Daily dialog, non-formal communication
Role of religious leaders	Social role model, active in interfaith events	Mediator between people, open in religious discussions
Threats Challenges	Lack of government structural support	Economic instability
Social Basis of Harmony	Social capital and local cultural wisdom	Old town tradition of tolerance and intergroup contact

A similar dynamic is found in El-Gamalia, an old district in the heart of Cairo, Egypt. Despite having different social and religious systems, harmony there also works not because of state policy, but through *deep-rooted social traditions*. Interaction between Muslims and Christians takes place naturally in their daily lives, such as in economic activities, education, and religious celebrations. Just like in Cigugur, this harmony shows that religious moderation is more effective when it emerges from the grassroots, not from external regulations or mandates.

Social activities such as *reka salira* and *waste banks* in Cigugur open up spaces for interaction that erode religious barriers. Although not labeled as "interfaith activities", interfaith interactions in these social spaces strengthen cohesion. This is in line with *intergroup contact theory*, which states that meaningful contact between different groups can reduce prejudice and build trust (Beelmann & Lutterbach, 2022). In Cairo, intergroup contact also occurs naturally in informal sectors such as trade and neighborly life. Both show that social interaction spaces are more effective in fostering harmony

than formal, symbolic forums.

In Cigugur, the announcement of deaths in the mosque for all residents, regardless of religion, is evidence of the practice of religious *pluralism* integrated into local culture. This is not just a form of tolerance, but active participation in the religious life of other communities (Intan & Bangun, 2022) . In El-Gamalia, participation in interfaith celebrations, such as the presence of Christians during Islamic holidays (and vice versa), reflects the practice of pluralism that is also deeply rooted in social norms (Pope & Nicolaides, 2021).

The role of religious leaders in strengthening the dynamics of harmony in both regions is crucial. In Cigugur, religious leaders act as role models who spread moderation through example. According to research, the behavior of role models can influence people's attitudes in socio-religious life (Cao et al., 2023) . Similarly, in El-Gamalia, religious leaders demonstrate a *social role* as a connector of different communities through daily dialogue and an open attitude towards differences. Informal meetings between religious leaders, both in Cigugur and Cairo, show that interfaith communication does not have to take place in formal forums. This reinforces the importance of *interfaith dialog* as a peaceful mechanism to prevent conflict and strengthen mutual understanding (Abbas et al., 2023) .

Thus, both Cigugur and El-Gamalia show that harmony does not grow from state instruments, but from citizen participation, social networks, and active religious leadership in daily life. These findings corroborate previous studies that emphasize the importance of *local wisdom and social role models* in building cohesive interfaith communities, as also seen in the Bugis Makassar community or post-conflict communities in Ambon (Fuadi et al., 2024; Helmy et al., 2021) .

The Dogma of Religious Harmony in Cigugur Indonesia and El-Gamaliya Egypt

In Cigugur Village, religious dogmas or teachings play an important role in shaping community attitudes towards religious harmony. The five religions practiced by the community - Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Sunda Wiwitan - all demonstrate a strong commitment to the principles of moderation. These values are reflected in four main indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence and cultural accommodation.

The people of Cigugur have a strong national commitment, which is reflected in their love for the country and unity. Active participation in national activities such as Independence Day celebrations and respect for state symbols, show that despite differences in religious beliefs, Cigugur residents remain united in their love for the country. This is a tangible form of religious harmony, where religious dogma does not hinder the sense of nationalism, but rather strengthens it.

Religious leaders in Cigugur Village demonstrate a strong commitment to nationalism as the basis for maintaining national unity. For example, a Muslim religious figure emphasized that "Commitment to the state is part of faith, because protecting the state means protecting the people." A figure from the Sunda Wiwitan religion stated that "Love for the *homeland* is a *form of* love for others, where we work for the welfare of all citizens." A figure from the Catholic religion emphasized that "National commitment is a moral responsibility to maintain unity as the nation's heritage." Meanwhile, a Hindu leader said that "National commitment reflects the teaching of universal love that transcends religious and ethnic boundaries." A Protestant figure added that in Protestantism, love of country is an obligation, as is the dogma that teaches submission to the government. All these statements show that the dogma of each religion does not contradict national values, but rather strengthens them.

On the aspect of tolerance, the community's attitude towards different religions and beliefs is very positive, which is shown through close social interaction and mutual support. Families with members of different religions can live in harmony without causing conflict, and this is reflected in people's daily lives. For example, during religious holidays, people of different religions visit each other and share happiness.

Every religious leader agrees that tolerance is the main pillar in maintaining harmony in a pluralistic society. A Muslim leader argued that "Tolerance in Islam is appreciating differences as a blessing, which means we must coexist with mutual respect." A Sunda Wiwitan religious leader added that "tolerance is a concrete manifestation of the teachings that teach us to love and respect others for who they are, regardless of differences." A Catholic leader emphasized that "tolerance is not only accepting differences, but also celebrating diversity as a common wealth." Hindu leaders underlined that "tolerance is a *form of* wisdom in daily life, where we avoid conflict by accepting others as they are." The Protestant leader emphasized that Protestant dogma teaches us to love our fellow human beings, which means loving God's creation regardless of differences. The dogma of these religions, although different in form, has one common point of respecting differences and building harmony.

The principle of non-violence is also strongly emphasized by religious leaders in Cigugur. The people of Cigugur show a wise attitude in addressing issues that have the potential to cause inter-religious conflict. In some cases, such as differences in views regarding the construction of houses of worship, dialogue becomes the main tool in solving problems without violence. This shows that the Cigugur community prefers the peaceful path and avoids confrontation that can damage the harmony that has been established.

In the context of non-violence, religious leaders emphasized the importance of maintaining peace through a non-violent attitude based on the teachings of their respective religions. A Muslim figure reminded that "Islam teaches its people to avoid violence and resolve conflicts peacefully and wisely." A Sunda Wiwitan religious leader said that "the principle is to always repay evil with good, so violence is never a solution in life." A Catholic leader stated that "Violence is a violation of love, which is the core of Christianity, therefore it should be avoided in all forms." A Hindu figure added that "in Hinduism, violence will only cause further suffering, therefore we must cultivate an attitude of *compassion* and peace." The Protestant figure underlined that in Protestantism, love is the main foundation to reduce and avoid conflict, and the people of Cigugur are very peace-loving and avoid violence. All this shows that the value of non-violence is not just a social norm, but part of the core teachings of each religion.

Meanwhile, in terms of cultural accommodation, the Cigugur community has shown an ability to adapt religious practices to local traditions. For example, in the *Buyung Dance* tradition performed during the *Seren Tahun* process or cultural performances in a year, where if the dancers are Muslim, the dancers still wear the headscarf as a form of adjustment to religious values. This is an example of how local traditions can be accommodated without necessarily contradicting religious dogma, thus creating harmony between culture and religion.

Acceptance of tradition is also an important topic where religious leaders recognize the importance of maintaining cultural heritage and traditions as part of a community's identity. Muslim leaders emphasized that "local traditions that do not contradict the teachings of Islam should be preserved because they are part of the nation's culture." A Sunda Wiwitan religious leader stated that "preserving traditions is how we honor our ancestors and connect the past with the present within the framework of our faith or belief system." A Catholic figure added that "the Catholic Church values tradition as a way to enrich people's spirituality and cultural identity." Hindu leaders emphasized that "Traditions are part of the spiritual journey that connects us to nature and each other, so they need to be respected and *passed* on to the next generation." Protestant religious leaders stated that in Cigugur Village, the community highly values and preserves ancestral traditions, maintaining a balance between tradition and religious values to avoid clashes that could divide the community. Religion and culture are two elements that can complement each other if they do not clash.

In El-Gamaliya, Cairo, Egypt, the teachings of moderate Islam (washatiyyah) are the main foundation of the dogma of religious harmony.

One academic stated that "People in this area understand religious harmony very well with the help of the teachings of scholars who believe in washatiyyah Islam." This shows that moderate understanding is not only limited to theory, but also applied in daily life. In addition, the religious teachings that develop in this area are also very supportive of the values of moderation, as stated by the ulama in El-Gamaliya: "The religious teachings here are very supportive of religious moderation." This confirms that there are no limitations in religious teachings that can hinder the practice of moderation in society.

The role of religious leaders in building religious harmony is significant, as they actively spread the values of tolerance through da'wah and recitation in various assemblies. The interviewee stated "Religious leaders are very influential in applying the values of religious harmony by applying them in their da'wah methods, they also teach them in several talaqqi / recitations that are manhaj washatiyyah and formal educational institutions." This proves that religious leaders act as the main mediators in maintaining religious balance in society. However, although the community generally respects the differences in religious dogma and sects within Islam, there are still certain groups that show excessive fanaticism. An interviewee from among the Ulama emphasized: "People still respect each other's differences, but sometimes there are sects that are fanatical in religion and easy to disbelieve." This condition shows that challenges in religious harmony still exist, especially in overcoming groups that have an extreme understanding of dogma. Therefore, a more effective strategy is needed to overcome potential tensions due to differences in dogma in society. The following table compares the dogmas of religious harmony in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya.

The coexistence of dogmas in Cigugur Indonesia and El-Gamaliya, Cairo, Egypt shows that religious teachings are not a barrier to peaceful coexistence. Instead, religious dogma contributes greatly to strengthening national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and acceptance of local traditions. In Cigugur,

all five religions practiced by the community - Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Sunda Wiwitan - teach values that are in line with the principles of religious moderation. National commitment, for example, is not only practiced through citizens' participation in national activities, but also explicitly affirmed as part of faith by religious leaders.

Table 2. Comparison of Cigugur and El-Gamaliya's Dogma of Harmony

Aspect of Dogma	Cigugur, Indonesia	El-Gamaliya, Egypt
National Commitment	Supported by all religions; love of country is considered part of faith and religious morality.	Supported by the teachings of washatiyyah Islam; scholars link patriotism with Islamic teachings.
Interfaith Tolerance	Tolerance is practiced as a core teaching by all religious leaders; differences are celebrated as wealth.	Tolerance is taught through da'wah and formal education; the value of moderation is disseminated through the washatiyyah manhaj.
Non-violence	Violence is explicitly rejected; all religious leaders teach peace and peaceful solutions.	Violence is rejected, but not always reached to extreme groups; peaceful principles remain dominant.
Cultural Accommodation	Local traditions such as the Buyung Dance are harmonized with religious values without conflict.	No local customs need to be adjusted; classical Islamic culture supports the dogma of tolerance.
Role of Religious Leaders	Religious leaders serve as role models and balancers between religious teachings and local wisdom.	Religious leaders are very influential in spreading the value of harmony in society.
Dogma Challenge	Minimal or no rejection of pluralism from local leaders; social structure supports moderate dogma.	Fanatics and extreme groups still emerge; some tend to paganize other groups.

Similarly, in El-Gamaliya, Cairo, Egypt, the teachings of washatiyyah Islam become the basic framework in building national commitment and tolerant social life. This reinforces the view that religious dogma can strengthen, rather than hinder, the spirit of nationalism. National commitment in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya reinforces the idea that religious harmony strengthens rather than hinders nationalism, in line with the Theory of Nationalism (Dikici, 2022) . Participation in national events and respect for state symbols in Cigugur aligned religious beliefs with national identity. Similarly, washatiyyah Islam in El-Gamaliya promotes nationalism and coexistence, proving that religious diversity enhances rather than weakens unity . (Chin & Levey, 2023).

Dogma is also the basis of tolerance values in both regions. Tolerance in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya is built on positive social interactions

between religious communities. Religious leaders in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya consistently convey that respecting differences is a religious commandment, and not just a social recommendation. In El-Gamaliya, Cairo, Egypt, the preaching of the wasathiyyah manhaj strengthens mutual respect between people, although challenges from fanatical groups remain. This is in line with Intergroup Contact Theory, which states that increased intergroup interaction reduces prejudice (Eze et al., 2023) . In Cigugur, interfaith interactions during religious celebrations and social activities foster mutual understanding and social integration. (Çaliskan Sari & Yalçinkaya Alkar, 2023). Similarly, in El-Gamaliya, religious moderation is maintained through mutual respect despite occasional fanaticism. Both communities demonstrate that positive social interactions strengthen interfaith relations and reduce divisions. The rejection of violence in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya is in line with Galtung's Peacebuilding Theory, which emphasizes that peace is more than the absence of conflict. (Olarte Delgado, 2019); (Baihuzhakava, 2022). In both places, religious leaders prioritize dialogue over confrontation, and advocate for the peaceful resolution of disputes. These approaches illustrate how dialogue fosters trust and mutual understanding, which are essential for long-term peace. (FitzGerald, 2021).

Another important aspect is the acceptance of local traditions. In Cigugur, cultural practices are harmonized with religious values, suggesting a two-way accommodation between culture and dogma. In El-Gamaliya, cultural expressions aligned with the teachings of washatiyyah Islam enrich the spirituality of the community. This phenomenon is in line with Clifford Geertz's Cultural Integration theory, which states that cultural practices can adapt to religious norms without losing identity (Bierwiaczonek & Kunst, 2021). In Cigugur, traditions such as Tari Buyung are harmonized with religious values, demonstrating how traditions can coexist within religious moderation. Similarly, in El-Gamaliya, cultural expressions complement religious beliefs, showing that tradition and religion are not mutually exclusive. (Silva et al., 2024). Geertz's theory highlights that this symbiosis enriches cultural heritage and spiritual life. (Tajdin, 2022). This approach sustains cultural and religious harmony, ensuring long-term coexistence. Some communities integrate folklore into education, fostering awareness of the noble values of tradition (Baiduri et al., 2019) . These strategies illustrate how traditions and religions can coexist, fostering respect and mutual understanding.

Interfaith Harmony Dialogue in Cigugur Indonesia and El-Gamaliya Egypt

Interfaith dialog in Cigugur is not just a discourse, but a practice that takes place naturally. The active involvement of religious leaders in various joint activities, such as Independence Day commemorations and official ceremonies, reflects a commitment to mutual respect and understanding. This dialog occurs not only at the formal level, but also in everyday interactions, such as interfaith visits during holiday celebrations, which strengthen the sense of community and reduce the potential for conflict.

The Cigugur community demonstrates open and participatory communication patterns. Religious leaders from different backgrounds - Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Sunda Wiwitan - are actively involved in interfaith social events, not only as invitees, but as part of a mutually supportive community. They are often present at ceremonies of other religious houses of worship, celebrations, house construction, and even in casual forums such as sitting together over coffee. One traditional leader stated that:

> "We don't need a big forum to talk about tolerance, just sitting together, chatting over coffee, that's enough to maintain good relations."

Dialogue does not always come in the form of discussion forums, but instead takes root through fluid and intimate social practices. Interfaith presence in these social moments strengthens the sense of belonging and emotional closeness between religious groups. Such interactions create a natural space for

dialogue that is sustainable and integrated into community life.

Meanwhile, in El-Gamaliya, in terms of interfaith dialog, there is no formal forum for interfaith meetings and discussions. An academic interviewee stated that "So far I don't see any interfaith dialog forum provided." This poses a challenge in building more open communication between people of different religions. Nonetheless, informal discussions do occur, with the most common topic of discussion being efforts to increase the value of tolerance between religions. An interviewee stated from among the ulama: "The topic that is often discussed in the informal interfaith dialog here is about efforts to increase the value of tolerance between religions." This shows that even though there is no official forum, people still try to build tolerance through small discussions.

The approach most often used in building interfaith harmony is mutual respect and avoiding negative prejudice against other groups. The interviewee adds: "The approach is to respect each other among religious communities." However, in the absence of an organized official forum, the dissemination of tolerance values relies solely on the initiative of certain individuals or small groups. This condition has the potential to narrow the reach and effectiveness of interfaith communication in the long run. Therefore, efforts are needed to build a *more inclusive and structured dialogue platform*, so that interfaith communication can be carried out more broadly and sustainably.

Overall, the comparison between Cigugur and El-Gamaliya shows two different dialog models. Cigugur develops dialog based on community and social relations, while El-Gamaliya runs dialog based on informal social ethics. Both have their strengths and limitations, but both emphasize the importance of communication as a foundation in maintaining interfaith harmony. The following table compares the dialog of religious harmony in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya.

Table 3. Comparison of Cigugur and El-Gamaliya Harmony Dialogue

Aspect of Dialogue	Cigugur, Indonesia	El-Gamaliya, Egypt
Form of Dialogue	Informal daily dialog, interfaith visits, social forums such as Bajigur.	Informal dialog in daily conversations.
Context of Interaction	Religious events, celebrations, independence, house construction, coffee together.	Neighborhood, community activities, personal relationships.
Role of Religious Leaders	Active as facilitators of interfaith dialog in social spaces.	Play a role in conveying the value of tolerance through preaching and education.
Official Forum	There is no formal forum, but dialog takes place naturally and intensely.	There is no official forum for interfaith dialog.
General Topics	Tolerance, togetherness, social harmony.	Tolerance between people, mutual respect.
Community Involvement	Very high as it involves all elements of society without religious boundaries.	Limited to individuals or small groups.
Challenges	Not significant, social structure supports continuous dialog.	The absence of an official platform limits the expansion of tolerance values.

The harmony dialogues in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya show how intergroup communication can strengthen tolerance in a pluralistic society. In Cigugur, dialogue takes place naturally and participatively in various aspects of social life - from interfaith visits during holidays, to joint involvement in national activities, to informal chats between religious leaders. These forms of dialog show that harmony is not always established through official forums, but can grow from relationships that are continuously fostered by citizens and community leaders.

In contrast, in El-Gamaliya, dialogue is more informal and has not been facilitated institutionally. Although there is no official forum for interfaith dialog, communication still occurs spontaneously through daily conversations. Topics that often arise in this dialog are the promotion of tolerance and the strengthening of mutual respect. The local community's approach of avoiding prejudice and prioritizing respect is an important social capital in maintaining interfaith coexistence.

Both locations confirm that open dialog serves not only as a tool to resolve conflicts, but

also as a means of building social trust, interfaith understanding, and strengthening social cohesion in the long term. With openness in communication, differences no longer divide, but become a source of mutual enrichment. This shows that dialog, although informal in nature, remains a key component in building religious harmony.

Harmony dialog in Cigugur and El-Gamaliya strengthens tolerance in a pluralistic society through intergroup communication. In Cigugur, dialogue occurs naturally through interfaith visits, joint national activities, and informal chats between religious leaders, in line with the view (Orton, 2016) that interfaith dialogue requires participatory spaces to build social cohesion. In El-Gamaliya, spontaneous dialogue through daily conversations emphasized tolerance, reflecting the finding (Kayaoglu, 2015) that interfaith dialogue in the Muslim world often aims to demonstrate moderation and mutual respect. Social Capital Theory (McElroy et al., 2006) explains how dialog in both locations built social networks and trust for social cohesion. Findings (Khan et al., 2020) confirm that Islam encourages interfaith dialogue through the principles of justice and acceptance of diversity, which is seen in the practice of coexistence in both communities. Thus, dialog, both formal and informal, is key to transforming differences into mutual enrichment and strengthening long-term harmony.

Conclusion

This research reveals that religious harmony in Cigugur Village, Indonesia and El-Gamaliya, Egypt is the result of a complex interaction between social dynamics, religious dogma, and intercommunal dialog that takes place naturally and contextually. The research findings show that religious harmony is a living social construction, influenced by local structures, religious values and spaces for intercommunal communication. Sustainable harmony is not determined by strong regulations, but rather by community involvement, the strength of religious leaders, and the ability to manage differences in peaceful ways. Harmony is not simply the absence of conflict, but rather the presence of cohesion, mutual understanding, and active respect for differences.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the government, religious leaders and educational institutions strengthen the social ecosystem that supports the practice of harmony based on local culture and moderate religious values. Authentic harmony can only survive if it grows from below, through healthy social interactions and recognition of diversity as a necessity of living together. This research also implies that the moderation approach is not sufficient if it is only developed normatively or regulatively, but must touch the living and dynamic social reality. Therefore, collaborative efforts across sectors are needed to build participatory dialog spaces, strengthen the capacity of local leaders as guardians of harmony, and make the practices of Cigugur and El-Gamaliya an adaptive model for other regions facing similar challenges.

Bibliography

Abbas, S. M., Falak, N., Khan, M. K., Younas, M., Riaz, T., & Asif, M. (2023). Islamic Perspective of Dialogue Among Civilizations for Global Peace and Co-

Existence. *Russian Law Journal, XI*(12), 513–519.

Asogwa, E. C., & Okeke, I. J. (2021). Religious Approach to Conflict Management. *International Journal of Management...,September.* https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ifeanyi-Okeke-3/publication/356035402_Religous_Approach_to_Conflict_Management/links/618a220f3068c54fa5c1de17/Religous-Approach-to-Conflict-Management.pdf

Baiduri, R., Puspitawati, P., Khairani, L., & Khasanah, R. (2019). The Existence of Malay Folklore in Medan. *EAI: Innovating Research.* https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.24-10-2019.2290587

Baihuzhakava, A. (2022). Realism - Forgotten Theory for Peacebuilding. *Przeglad Strategiczny,15* , 71-85. https://doi.org/10.14746/ps.2022.1.5

Beelmann, A., & Lutterbach, S. (2022). Developmental Prevention of Prejudice: Conceptual Issues, Evidence-Based Designing, and Outcome Results. *Review of General Psychology,26* (3), 298-316. https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680211056314

Bierwiaczonek, K., & Kunst, J. R. (2021). Revisiting the Integration Hypothesis: Correlational and Longitudinal Meta-Analyses Demonstrate the Limited Role of Acculturation for Cross-Cultural Adaptation. *Psychological Science,32* (9), 1476-1493. https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976211006432

Brocker, M., & Künkler, M. (2013). Religious parties: Revisiting the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. *Party Politics,19* (2), 171-186. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068812473673

Bruijn, K., Georgallis, P., Albino, J., Arno, P., & Teegen, H. (2024). MNE - civil society interactions: a systematic review and research agenda. *Journal of International Business Studies,55* (2), 136-156. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-023-00649-4

Çaliskan Sari, A., & Yalçinkaya Alkar, Ö. (2023). Mediator role of intergroup anxiety in the relationship between the social contact, intercultural sensitivity and attitudes towards Syrians among Turkish local society. *International Migration,61* (4), 257-271. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13097

Cao, H., Leerkes, E. M., & Zhou, N. (2023). Origins and development of maternal self-efficacy in emotion-related parenting during the transition to parenthood: Toward an integrative process framework beyond Bandura's model. *Psychological Review, 130*(6), 1612.

Chin, C., & Levey, G. B. (2023). Recognition as acknowledgement: symbolic politics in multicultural democracies. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,46* (3), 451-474. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2075233

Daheri, M., Warsah, I., Morganna, R., Putri, O. A., & Adelia, P. (2023). Strengthening Religious Moderation: Learning from the Harmony of Multireligious People in Indonesia Keywords. *Journal of Population and Social Studies,31*, 571-586. https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.25133/JPSSv312023.032

Dikici, E. (2022). Nationalism is dead, long live nationalism! In pursuit of pluralistic nationalism: A critical overview. *Ethnicities,22* (1), 146-173. https://doi.org/10.1177/14687968211063694

Eko, B. S., & Putranto, H. (2021). Face Negotiation Strategy Based on Local Wisdom and Intercultural Competence to Promote Inter-ethnic Conflict Resolution: Case Study of Balinuraga, Lampung. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research,50* (5), 506-540. https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2021.1898450

Eze, C., R C Nurse, J., & Jassim, H. (2023). Intergroup Contact is Reliably Associated with Reduced Prejudice Even in the Face of Group Threat and Discrimination. *Computers in Human Behavior, 2*, 197–206.

FitzGerald, G. (2021). Pluriversal Peacebuilding: Peace Beyond Epistemic and Ontological Violence. *E-International Relations*, 1–9.

Fuadi, M. A., Faishol, A., Rifa'i, A. A., Triana,

Y., & Ibrahim, R. (2024). Religious Moderation in the Context of Integration between Religion and Local Culture in Indonesia. *Journal of Al-Tamaddun,19* (1), 47-59. https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol19no1.4

Helmy, M. I., Jumadil Kubro, A. D., & Ali, M. (2021). The understanding of Islamic Moderation (wasatiyyah al-Islam) and the hadiths on inter-religious relations in the Javanese pesantrens. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies,11* (2), 377-401. https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.351-376

Intan, B. F., & Bangun, C. (2022). Principled Pluralism and the Prevention of Religious Terrorism in Indonesia. *Religions,13* (5). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050429

Kayaoglu, T. (2015). Explaining Interfaith Dialogue in the Muslim World. *Politics and Religion,8* (2), 236-262. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048315000267

Khan, I., Elius, M., Mohd Nor, M. R., Yakub zulkifli Bin Mohd yusoff, M., Noordin, K., & Mansor, F. (2020). A Critical Appraisal of Interreligious Dialogue in Islam. *Sage Open,10* (4). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020970560

McElroy, M. W., Jorna, R. J., & van Engelen, J. (2006). Rethinking social capital theory: a knowledge management perspective. *Journal of Knowledge Management,10* (5), 124-136. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270610691233

Mulyana, R. (2023). Religious moderation in Islamic religious education textbook and implementation in Indonesia. *HTS Theological Studies,79* (1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.4102/HTS.V79I1.8592

Neo, J. L. (2019). Dimensions of Religious Harmony as Constitutional Practice: Beyond State Control. *German Law Journal,20* (7), 966-985. https://doi.org/10.1017/glj.2019.78

Olarte Delgado, A. M. (2019). Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Colombia: A Dialogic and a Transformative Relationship. *Journal of Dialogue Studies,7* , 219-234. https://doi.org/10.55207/zagr1629

Orton, A. (2016). Interfaith dialogue: seven key questions for theory, policy and practice. *Religion, State and Society,44* (4), 349-365. https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2016.1242886

Pajarianto, H., Pribadi, I., & Sari, P. (2022). Tolerance between religions through the role of local wisdom and religious moderation. *HTS Theologye Studies/Theological Studies,78* (4), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7043

Pope, E. M., & Nicolaides, A. (2021). Becoming Thou as transformation in interfaith dialogue. *International Journal of Lifelong Education,40* (2), 115-128. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2021.1882596

Richmond, L., & Casali, L. (2022). The role of social capital in fishing community sustainability: Spiraling down and up in a rural California port. *Marine Policy,137* , 104934. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104934

Silva, F. B., Silva, T. R. C. C., Silva, R. B., Melo, E. K. M. de, Mello, P. R. R. O., Sousa, K. S. de O., Melo, M. H. F. de, Soares, P. G., & Matos, D. C. de. (2024). Intersections between culture and health: how the concepts of culture shape the perception of mental disorders. *Contribuciones a Las Ciencias Sociales,17* (6), e7595. https://doi.org/10.55905/revconv.17n.6-199

Subchi, I., Zulkifli, Z., Latifa, R., & Sa'diyah, S. (2022). Religious Moderation in Indonesian Muslims. *Religions,13* (5), 451. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050451

Tajdin, M. (2022). Understanding Islam between Theology and Anthropology: Reflections on Geertz's Islam Observed. *Religions,13* (3). https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13030221