

HARMONIZING RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND POLITICAL ECONOMY: A CASE STUDY OF PANDOWOHARJO VILLAGE

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Abstract

The life of the Pandowoharjo people in the framework of harmony has existed for a long time. Pandowoharjo Village is one of 75 villages in the Bantul district, administratively consisting of 16 hamlets and 94 RTs, with a population of 22,818 in 2023. In this village, most of the population is Muslim (93%), followed by Catholics (3%), Christians (1%), and Hindu-Buddhists (less than 1%). Despite these differences, the people live peacefully, constructing religious coexistence daily. This research aims to explore how education and political economy contribute to building coexistence within the community. The research uses a qualitative method. The results show that: 1) Education is crucial in fostering coexistence, providing understanding, and a foundation for society. Various religious organizations are actively involved in community religious activities, and religious leaders emphasize the importance of maintaining religious harmony. 2) The political economy is another key factor in sustaining a harmonious life. In Pandowoharjo Village, the entire community has equal access to various sectors, including economic, political, and educational opportunities, regardless of religious background. This demonstrates that Pandowoharjo Village has successfully constructed coexistence across all aspects of life.

Keywords: Education, Harmony Conscious Village, Pandowoharjo Yogyakarta, Political Economy, Religious Coexistence,

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known for its rich religious diversity, and one of its main challenges is fostering harmonious coexistence in a multi-religious society (Nuruddin et al., 2022). In this context, Pandowoharjo Village in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, is an interesting example, as its population includes people from various religious backgrounds, including Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, and local beliefs (Wahyono et al., 2022). The village has successfully maintained relatively harmonious relations between these religious communities despite potential conflict due to differences in beliefs.

Education shapes people's views and attitudes toward diversity (Castelino et al., 2023). Both formal and non-formal education, whether in schools or religious activities, are avenues for teaching the values of tolerance and interfaith cooperation. At the same time, the political economy also contributes to strengthening social relations among religious communities. Community involvement in joint economic activities, such as local markets or village cooperatives, provides opportunities for positive interactions that help reduce inter-religious tensions.

However, challenges persist in maintaining religious coexistence in Indonesia, particularly in addressing intolerance, extremism, and occasional social conflicts. Therefore, various parties including the government, civil society, and religious leaders continue promoting tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and mutual respect in everyday religious life (Safei, 2017).

Religious harmony in Indonesia can reflect the nation's cultural values, whereas the Indonesian people highly value harmony and peace (Rusydi et al., 2018). Indonesians generally respect one another and embrace a lifestyle characterized by harmony, peace, tolerance, cooperation, unity, and politeness (Kuswana, 2024). As such, each religious community must continue to enhance the quality of religious harmony to build a more united and tolerant nation.

The National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024 outlines policies promoting religious harmony in Indonesia. One way to measure the success of these efforts is through the Religious Harmony Index, which assesses harmony

between religious communities. The religious harmony index is the main tool used to assess how effective harmony programs are (Absor et al., 2022). The index is based on three key dimensions: tolerance, equality, and collaboration, as stipulated in the Joint Regulations of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 9 of 2006 and Number 8 of 2006 (Santoso et al., 2022).

Religious conflicts, encompassing political, social, and economic dimensions, remain a topic of ongoing discussion (Sari, 2023). Political elites, scholars, intellectuals, and religious leaders continue to focus on efforts to reconcile and promote religious coexistence in the public sphere. State political policies, interfaith dialogues, and the reinterpretation of various sacred texts have all been employed by multiple stakeholders to reconstruct religious coexistence in society. These efforts have produced numerous scholarly concepts, such as religious cosmopolitanism from a cultural perspective (Mossière, 2013), interreligious dialogue in both societal and elite circles (Abu-Nimer, 2004), religious social harmony (Ufie, et al., 2021), and emerging state-driven initiatives like religious moderation, which is now being promoted by many countries (Akmaliah, 2020).

However, achieving religious coexistence seems challenging, as narratives of religious conflict, humiliation, and hatred persist in Indonesian public discourse (Hamidah, 2016). The complexities of these societal issues require specific, nuanced solutions to foster coexistence and achieve a peaceful society. Conceptually, education and political economy are among the key factors that encourage the development of coexistence. These two elements have substantial influence and the capacity to reduce various forms of intolerance in society.

Every year, the community religiosity index for various cities is published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, survey institutions, and universities related to religious harmony (Haq, 2016; Sukestiyarno et al., 2022). However, paradoxes often arise in this context. For instance, Yogyakarta is usually called the "City of Tolerance" (Kamil, 2018). Yunianto Dwi Sutono, in the 2023 Religious Harmony Forum Community Arts Potential (FKUB) Award, emphasized that Yogyakarta was founded on the contributions

of various ethnic, cultural, and religious groups. Thus, tolerance and mutual respect must be integral to its social fabric. Yogyakarta is also recognized as one of Indonesia's top three cities for religious harmony.

However, surveys from multiple institutions reveal that religious and racial discrimination, gender inequality, and social violence, including *klitih* (street violence), continue to plague the city (Putra, 2020; Saifuddin, 2017). Despite this, a unique phenomenon can be observed in Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta, specifically in Pandowoharjo Village. This village, located on the city's outskirts with modern facilities, has transitioned into an urbanized community. Typically, areas on the city's periphery experience religious conflict due to competition for resources, including economic assets like land and power struggles (Basundoro, 2012). Such conflicts often involve disputes over public space, with the majority community marginalizing minorities to secure dominance.

Interestingly, Pandowoharjo Village defies this trend. The village is home to multiple religious groups, including Christians, Hindus, and a Muslim majority, yet religious life in the village is marked by inclusivity, as evidenced by harmonious social interactions and mutual respect among different religious communities. One notable symbol of this inclusiveness is donating Muslim-owned land to construct a Hindu temple. This event stands out as a unique example of religious harmony in Yogyakarta and has no parallel in religious relations in the region.

Second, Pandowoharjo Village, located on the outskirts of a city undergoing urbanization, has a middle-class population and a relatively well-established economy. Suburban areas are often economically dominated by specific groups. Still, this village presents a different scenario: the local economy is distributed fairly and without conflict under the supervision of the government and relevant stakeholders. *Third*, Pandowoharjo Village not only hosts several religious institutions close to each other, which benefit from mutual support, such as land endowments for places of worship, but it also has a traditional Islamic religious school.

Based on the above description, the problem statement is developed to explore how

the community of Pandowoharjo has managed to foster religious coexistence within the context of a growing suburban society, focusing on education and political economy. In summary, the problem statement is distilled into two main questions: how is religious education and knowledge contextualized to meet the community's need for building religious coexistence, and what role does the political economy play in creating spaces for democratization to support coexistence in the lives of the Pandowoharjo community?

Although there is existing literature that discusses coexistence, the findings indicate that research specifically addressing religious coexistence remains limited. Scholars tend to focus more on theories and practices of religious tolerance and moderation.

Literature Review

The following is literature that discusses coexistence: First, Hendar Riyadi's "Peaceful Coexistence in Modernist Muslim Societies," published in the Scientific Journal of Religion and Socio-Culture (Riyadi, 2016). This study argues that puritan Islam is not always a threat to pluralism. This is proven by modern Muslims (Muhammadiyah) in the Arjasari area of Bandung, whose views and attitudes tend towards peaceful coexistence. They maintain a positive outlook on religious diversity, emphasize charitable dialogue (rather than violence) in response to Christian missionary activities, and display tolerance and peaceful coexistence with non-Muslim families through their behaviour and social actions. These findings challenge the claims of some scholars who argue that puritanical Islam rarely accepts religious diversity and is often seen as a threat to pluralism. The results show that the Muslim community in Arjasari has a positive view of pluralism and peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims, illustrating that puritanical Islam is not inherently a threat to pluralism.

Second, Siti Miftahul Jannah and Muhammad Nawir's study, "Harmonization of Religion: A Case Study of Religious Coexistence in Lamasi District, Luwu Regency," published in the Journal of Sociological Education (Jannah et al., 2018), aims to understand the importance of education in fostering coexistence among religious communities in the district. The research identifies three forms of religious coexistence in Lamasi District: coexistence

between religious communities and the government, coexistence through culture, and coexistence through education.

The government's role in promoting coexistence includes encouraging participation, facilitating interfaith dialogue, monitoring services, filtering fake news, and fostering harmonious cooperation with religious communities. Cultural coexistence is achieved through the arts, traditional marriage practices, economic activities, and family systems. Education, both formal and informal, plays a key role in promoting inter-religious coexistence in the district. Formal education institutions serve as platforms for socialization, commemorating religious holidays, community development, and supporting social activities while also acting as incentives and remedies for societal harmony. Informal education is conducted through three disciplinary approaches: autocratic, authoritarian, and permissive discipline.

This research emphasizes the critical role that education, particularly formal education, plays in promoting harmony and coexistence among religious communities in Lamasi District.

This research aims to explore the importance of education in fostering religious coexistence in the district. The findings reveal three key forms of religious coexistence in Lamasi District: coexistence between religious communities and the government, coexistence through culture, and coexistence through education. The government's role includes encouraging participation, facilitating interfaith dialogue, overseeing services, filtering misinformation, and fostering harmonious cooperation with religious communities. Cultural coexistence is promoted through the arts, traditional marriage practices, economic activities, and family systems. Education plays a crucial role in inter-religious coexistence in the district. Formal education encourages schools to serve as places for socialization, forums to commemorate religious holidays, centres for community development, and platforms for social activities, acting as both a preventive and curative force for societal harmony. Informal education is conducted through three disciplinary approaches: autocratic, authoritarian, and permissive. This research underscores the vital role of education, especially formal education, in fostering

religious coexistence and promoting harmony within society.

These two articles on coexistence share similarities with the topic being discussed in this research. However, this article will focus on the coexistence of the Pandowoharjo village community, which is metamorphosing into a city. Despite facing various challenges, they have successfully created religious coexistence. Additionally, this article explores the correlation between education and political economy in fostering religious coexistence in Pandowoharjo Village, Yogyakarta.

Conceptual Framework

Religious coexistence is the concept where individuals or groups with different religious beliefs or faiths live together peacefully and harmoniously within a community or society (Saihu et al., 2020). It involves respect, tolerance, and acknowledgment of religious differences, as well as the freedom to practice one's beliefs without facing discrimination or oppression.

Religious coexistence recognizes that religious diversity is a natural part of human life and that society can be enriched through interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding. It requires openness, respect, and a willingness to learn from one another. The importance of religious coexistence lies in fostering peace, stability, and justice in societies with diverse beliefs. It forms the foundation for inclusive and sustainable social development, where human rights are respected, regardless of one's religion or beliefs.

In this research, tolerance theory is used to address the problem formulation. In the KBBI (Indonesian Dictionary), tolerance is defined as an attitude of respecting, allowing, and permitting differences in views, beliefs, and opinions, even when they contradict one's stance (KBBI 2024). According to Webster's New American Dictionary, tolerance is defined as granting freedom and being patient with others (Siregar, 2017). TM Scanlon further defines tolerance as an attitude that requires religious adherents to accept others and allow them to follow their religious beliefs, even if there are differences of opinion (Thowfeek, 2017).

Thus, there is a duality of attitude in religious individuals. On the one hand, they must accept others' beliefs, but on the other

hand, they may reject these differences. The relationship between community and religious emotions creates primary bonds and group solidarity, as religious emotions form the basis of these bonds and are a source of social sentiment. Awareness of these relationships tends to be strong and easily provoked, leading to potential offence or conflict (Azka et al., 2024). Therefore, religious individuals may be easily provoked into conflict in the name of religion.

Philosophically, the concept of tolerance is grounded in basic assumptions. Reiner Forst, based on historical records, developed four key ideas about tolerance (Rainer, 2013). First, Forst understands tolerance through the relationship between the majority and the minority, where tolerance is considered a concept of permission. Second, tolerance is seen in the interactions between social groups as a concept of coexistence aimed at preventing conflict. Third, tolerance is understood as a representation of standards and practices, defined as mutual respect for others' thoughts, beliefs, cultures, lifestyles, and ethical standards. Lastly, tolerance is framed within the idea of a multicultural society. Forst further distinguishes two types of relationships: vertical, between the state and its population, and horizontal, between individuals in society. This reciprocal respect among members of different cultural or religious groups is central to the concept of respect (Rainer, 2013).

Despite numerous studies on the importance of education and the economy in fostering social cohesion, there remains a gap in the literature that specifically addresses how these two factors work together in the context of multicultural villages in Indonesia. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how education and political economy can jointly contribute to creating harmonious coexistence in Pandowoharjo Village.

A case study approach in Pandowoharjo Village is expected to provide empirical insights into best practices for fostering religious harmony. This study will also explore the roles of religious leaders, the village government, and the community in promoting peaceful interfaith interactions through educational and economic activities. The results of this research are anticipated to inform local and national policy development

to enhance interfaith harmony in diverse communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach (Hyett et al., 2014) in Pandowoharjo Village. Data were collected through interviews with informants, observations, and documentation. The informants in this study included religious figures, the community, and the village government. The researcher used purposive sampling (Pahwa et al., 2023) to select informants who had influence or direct involvement in religious and economic education programs in the village.

Structured interviews explored the perceptions, experiences, and challenges of building religious coexistence through education and economics. In the analysis process, a data triangulation approach was used to ensure the validity of the findings. Data from interviews, observations, and documentation were compared to identify patterns, themes, and categories that supported the research hypothesis. The analysis was conducted thematically, grouping the data based on key themes related to religious coexistence and the role of education and political economy.

This study contributes to the literature on religious coexistence, particularly in pluralistic villages such as Pandowoharjo. The findings reveal that inclusive religious education and interfaith-based economic programs play a crucial role in fostering tolerance and social cohesion at the local level.

The selection of Pandowoharjo Village as the focus of this study is based on several reasons. *First*, the community in Pandowoharjo Village comprises various religious groups, including Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and a Muslim majority. The village exemplifies religious inclusiveness, as evidenced by the harmony of social interaction between religious communities that respect each other. A striking example of this inclusivity is the construction of a Hindu temple on land donated by a Muslim. Such a model of religious cooperation is rare, particularly in other villages within the Bantul Regency.

Second, Pandowoharjo Village is located on the outskirts of the city, and it has been fostering its community to transition

towards an urban middle-class society by building a stable economic foundation. The village's religious institutions have developed side by side, with a notable instance being the provision of land endowments across religious lines. Additionally, the village is home to religious groups from traditional communities, further highlighting its unique religious diversity.

DISCUSSION

Religious coexistence refers to the peaceful coexistence of various religions within a specific region or society (Jannah et al., 2018). It emphasizes the ability of individuals and groups with different religious beliefs to live together in harmony, respecting and accepting each other's religious differences. Religious coexistence can be achieved through several means, including tolerance, interfaith dialogue, cooperation in humanitarian and social activities, and recognizing human rights for all, regardless of religious belief (Riyadi, 2016).

Religious coexistence also involves government policies that uphold religious freedom and the right to worship for all citizens. Its importance is widely recognized as a foundation for peace, social stability, and progress in multicultural and multireligious societies. It demonstrates that religious differences need not be a source of conflict but can instead be a source of richness and strength when managed wisely and with mutual respect for human rights.

The people of Pandowoharjo have long embraced this framework of religious harmony. Pandowoharjo Village is one of 75 villages in Bantul district, comprising 16 hamlets and 94 neighborhood units (RTs). As of 2023, the village has a population of 22,818 people and 7,857 households, covering an area of 698.17 hectares. Below is the distribution of religious adherents in Pandowoharjo, Yogyakarta:

Table 1. Percentage of religious adherents in Pandowoharjo Village

Religion	Total population	%
Islam	21,655	93%
Catholic	709	3%
Christian	206	1%
Hindu	19	
Buddha	4	

Source: (Pandowoharjo District Data, 2023)

The data above shows that most residents in Pandowoharjo Village are Muslim, accounting for 93%, followed by Catholics at 3% and Christians at 1%, with followers of Hinduism and Buddhism making up less than 1%. Interestingly, the community in Pandowoharjo lives in harmony, free from discrimination, extremism, or other forms of intolerance. The residents have successfully fostered religious coexistence. According to informants, living side by side without distinction of race, ethnicity, or religion takes place conductively, without friction or societal issues. On this matter, the Village Head of Pandowoharjo explained that:

".....There is no conflict in the various community activities; to this day, there has been no religious conflict. In fact, despite Pandowoharjo having three houses of worship, no conflicts have ever arisen. In Pandowoharjo Village, religious harmony has existed for hundreds of years..." (interview with Village Head, 2024).

From the description above, it can be understood that harmony is the key to achieving a peaceful life. Harmony is also a driving force for establishing religious coexistence in Pandowoharjo. The Kamituwa of Pandowoharjo similarly explained:

".....To this day, there has never been any social or religious conflict in the lives of the Pandowoharjo community. The social interaction-communication relations of the Pandowoharjo community are very good, this can be proven by the absence of conflict in our area, the community lives in peace, security and peace, living in harmony side by side even though they have different beliefs.... The people have successfully built religious coexistence because they have long been accustomed to living together, even with differing faiths, and various places of worship have existed for a long time, fostering tolerance among religious groups..." (Kamituwa Interview, 2024).

The statement above clearly demonstrates that the people of Pandowoharjo have successfully built a tolerant life and fostered coexistence in their community. Pandowoharjo has also been officially designated as a "Sadar Harmony Village." A concrete example of this is the establishment of four houses of worship in one RT (neighborhood unit) located nearby and providing land endowments to the Hindu community (Pandowoharjo Village Data,

2024). The act of endowing land is particularly noteworthy in the context of religious coexistence, as no equivalent has been found in other villages, especially in Bantul Regency. In contrast, there have been intolerant incidents, such as the attempted arson of the Saman Indonesian Baptist Church in Saman Hamlet, Bangunharjo Village, Sewon District, and Bantul Regency (a neighboring village of Pandowoharjo) in 2015.

The endowment of land for the construction of the Hindu temple, Pura Karang Gede Pandowoharjo, was based on two factors: 1) family ties and 2) a will from the family to donate land for the construction of a Hindu house of worship. Regarding this matter, Slamet explained that:

".... Slamet inherited the land from his father, Harjodiyono (a religious sect member), who left a will to donate the land for the temple and instructed Slamet to continue maintaining it. Eventually, the Harjodiyono family—Slamet and his four children (all Muslims)—honored this will and settled behind the temple. The temple stands in front of their home, near the road, while the family's house is beside and behind it. "The goal was for the temple to remain standing there and for its activities to continue, with Slamet entrusted to maintain it. Naturally, it is also administrated by Karang Gede for further management....." (Slamet Interview, 2024).

In an interview with Slamet, the heir of the land donated for the construction of the Hindu temple, it was revealed that the people of Pandowoharjo have made conscious efforts to sustain religious coexistence in their social life. Donating land (waqf, an Islamic practice) for the benefit of another religion (in this case, Hinduism) reflects a high degree of tolerance. Slamet expressed that:

".... The construction of the temple did not cause any friction at all. The land for the temple came from the Slamet family (a family with members of different beliefs: traditional religion, Hinduism, and Islam). Meanwhile, the temple itself belongs to the Karang Gede Hindu community and its administrators..." (Slamet Interview, 2024).

This statement highlights that the community responded positively and without issue to the land donation for the temple's construction. Observations and interviews show that the people of Pandowoharjo have consistently upheld a peaceful life and fostered

religious coexistence. The fact that people in five different religions live harmoniously side by side is concrete evidence that Pandowoharjo has successfully become a "Sadar Harmony Village." This sentiment is further reinforced by:

".... This coexistence is reflected in various social activities, the arts, and the celebration of religious and national holidays. Examples include: 1) During the Covid-19 outbreak, the community worked together to provide food rations in shifts to support residents in self-isolation; 2) The pastor mentioned that he often joined other residents in digging graves for those who passed away, even if they had different beliefs; 3) The Panembromo arts group, whose members consist of people from various faiths; 4) During neighborhood syawalan activities, all residents participate, regardless of their religion; 5) During Eid al-Fitr, residents of other faiths visit to wish their neighbors a happy Eid; 6) Communities help ensure the security of each other's religious events—Muslims assist with parking during Christmas and Hindu celebrations, while Christian and Hindu residents also help provide equipment and support for Muslim Takbir competitions. (Kamituwa Interview, 2024)

"...The people of Pandowoharjo have a high awareness that living in a community always maintains harmony by working together in various community activities, even in practicing their respective religions. The community looks after each other, respects and even participates in the solemnity of worship by maintaining security or order through parking and securing environment...." (Slamet Interview, 2024).

The formation and development of religious coexistence in Pandowoharjo Village has undoubtedly had a positive impact on maintaining a harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous community life. However, the construction of religious coexistence does not happen without cause. It is built upon various factors, with the educational and economic-political aspects playing a significant role.

Education

Education is one of the key instruments for realizing religious coexistence. It plays a crucial role in fostering healthy and sustainable interfaith relationships. Here are some reasons why education is essential to these efforts:

1. **Deep Understanding of Other Religions:** An education that includes the study of world religions helps individuals understand the beliefs, practices, and values held by people of various religions. A deeper understanding can minimize negative stereotypes and prejudices against other religions.
2. **Respect and Tolerance:** Individuals learn to appreciate and respect religious differences through education. They understand that each religion has positive values and unique contributions to shaping society. This understanding helps foster an attitude of tolerance toward people with different beliefs.
3. **Awareness of Similarities and Similarities:** Education can highlight the similarities among various religions, such as shared human values, compassion, peace, and justice. This awareness helps build a more profound sense of brotherhood and understanding among religious communities.
4. **Prevention of Religion-Based Conflict and Violence:** Education that prioritizes inter-religious dialogue and mutual understanding plays a crucial role in preventing conflicts and violence that may arise due to religious differences. Through education, individuals learn to resolve conflicts peacefully and respect the diversity within society.
5. **Formation of a Tolerant Future Generation:** Education is essential in shaping individual values and attitudes from an early age. By incorporating the values of tolerance, respect for differences, and interfaith cooperation into the educational curriculum, we can cultivate a young generation with an open and inclusive attitude toward other religions.

Education plays a crucial role in fostering religious coexistence within the Pandowoharjo community and has a strong impact, enabling the community to build and maintain harmonious coexistence in daily life.

The village is home to the Annur Islamic Boarding School and the Al-Quran Science College. These religious institutions serve as a reference point for the community, formally—by educating children, offering consultations, and incorporating religious norms through taklim assemblies—and informally by holding religious studies for the broader community. This traditional Islamic boarding school is affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia's largest Islamic organization. The institution aims to provide religious interpretations, particularly within Islam, that are connected to the daily lives of the Pandowoharjo people (Observations and Preliminary Data, 2024). This sentiment is further supported by Kamituwa's statement, which explains that:

".... Religious figures avoid excessive fanaticism in practicing their beliefs, which helps foster a harmonious and peaceful community. The community clearly understands and can differentiate between social and religious activities, preventing friction between religious groups. Additionally, we have the FKUB organization at the sub-district level, which serves as a forum for communication between different religious communities. The village government also supports FKUB activities by facilitating regular meetings and discussions...." (Kamituwa Interview, 2024).

The same thing was also reinforced by the statement from the Head of the Village, stating that:

"...In Pandowoharjo, religious institutions such as Islamic boarding schools which are affiliated with the Nahdhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and so on... are actively involved. Then also, each religion has its own religious institution and adherents participate in every activity of their respective religious institution (activities other than celebrations or holidays; including religious studies). (Lahan Head Interview, 2024).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that education plays a crucial role in providing religious understanding to the community and establishing a foundation for maintaining harmony in Pandowoharjo. The presence of Islamic boarding schools serves as a platform for transferring knowledge and providing religious interpretations, especially in

Islam, that are contextualized within the lives of the Pandowoharjo Village community. This helps them sustain and preserve religious coexistence. Additionally, leaders of each religion actively participate in religious activities and often offer advice, emphasizing the importance of living harmoniously in a religiously diverse community. Slamet's explanation further supports this:

"...Hindu leaders actively engage in positive social interactions with the local community by participating in activities such as cleaning the RT/Dusun (neighborhood/village) environment together, assisting with celebrations, and visiting one another during times of illness or mourning, among other communal efforts...." (Slamet Interview, 2024)

The expression above highlights the significant role of religious leaders in fostering and maintaining a harmonious and peaceful community. Through education and other sources of knowledge, society can uphold religious coexistence and cultivate a more tolerant and inclusive environment. The connection between education and religious coexistence is critical, as it underscores how education can influence interfaith dynamics within a community. Education is vital in promoting religious coexistence by deepening understanding, appreciation, and tolerance for religious diversity.

Political Economy

Political economy and social harmony form a complex and interconnected whole. Various factors within the political economy can significantly influence the dynamics and level of harmony in society. Pandowoharjo, a village transforming a city, faces numerous challenges, particularly in the political-economic sphere and in efforts to minimize conflict. Despite these challenges, the people of Pandowoharjo have successfully constructed coexistence within their community, including in economic and political sectors.

The village boasts an educated population, democratic access to public services, and an equitable economy. The government has designated Pandowoharjo Village as a center for fair economic growth, reducing economic disparities and minimizing social segregation. In this context, the

government's political-economic policies aim at professional intervention, demonstrated through democratization and extensive public access. This is evident in Slamet's statement, which explains that;

"...Hindus feel that they are treated equally by the government and are recognized as equals in social, national, and civic life. There is no distinction between minorities and majorities in terms of services related to religion..." (Slamet Interview, 2024).

Kamituwa also expressed the same thing, that;

"....The Pandowoharjo Village Government has adopted several policies, including 1) providing access to sub-district building infrastructure for all religious communities to use for religious celebrations or meetings, 2) facilitating the regular Selapanan gathering for rois/imamuddin, 3) offering gifts to all religious leaders during holidays, 4) supporting FKUB (Interfaith Communication Forum) activities, and 5) promoting activities for the Harmony Awareness Village. (Kamituwa Interview, 2024).

"...In fostering a harmonious life, access to community organizations or individuals is not differentiated, everyone has equal access to all areas, including education and the political economy. In Pandowoharjo Village, while the community is predominantly Muslim, there is also an RT Head who is Christian. It indicates that there is no discrimination or disparity in the people's daily lives..." (Lahan Head Interview, 2024)

The statement above reflects the government's policy in maintaining coexistence through the political-economic sector. Additionally, Pandowoharjo Village, located on the outskirts of the city and transitioning towards urbanization, has a relatively stable economic base and middle class. Theoretically, as discussed in the previous section, suburban areas often become spaces for competition over resources, spatial control, and even economic domination by certain groups. However, this village presents a contrasting scenario where the economic distribution, guided by the government and relevant stakeholders, operates smoothly without conflict (Observations; field data, 2024).

The relationship between political-economic factors and the establishment of religious coexistence in society can be understood from several perspectives involving social conditions, power structures, resource distribution, and access to justice. Below are some ways in which political-economic factors can influence religious coexistence:

1. **Distribution of Resources and Economic Equality:** Extreme economic inequality or significant social disparities within a society can create tensions between religious groups. When certain religious groups feel that they do not have equal access to economic resources or opportunities, it can lead to interfaith conflict. Conversely, policies that promote economic equality and fair distribution of resources can help reduce tensions and strengthen religious coexistence.
2. **Identity and Religious Recognition Policies:** Identity politics, including policies that support religious recognition and freedom, play an important role in building religious coexistence. Policies that guarantee the rights of religious minorities and protect religious liberties can enhance the sense of security and inclusion among different religious groups in society.
3. **Political Participation and Representation:** When religious groups feel that they are not fairly represented in political processes or government institutions, it can create tension and dissatisfaction. Encouraging the inclusive political participation of various religious groups can strengthen religious coexistence by providing a platform for expressing their interests and needs.
4. **Law Enforcement and Justice:** A fair and effective legal system is essential for building religious coexistence. Consistent and transparent law enforcement that protects the rights of religious minorities and upholds the principles of justice can help build trust and stability in society.
5. **Use of Political Narratives and Rhetoric:** Political narratives and rhetoric that link religion to power or discriminate against certain religious groups can exacerbate conflict and undermine religious coexistence. Instead, political leaders and public figures are responsible for using language that respects and promotes religious diversity and shared values.

Thus, economic-political relations play an important role in fostering religious coexistence in society through policies that promote equality, religious freedom, inclusive political participation, fair law enforcement, and rhetoric that builds interfaith harmony. On the other hand, when examined through the lens of tolerance theory, the construction of religious coexistence in the Pandowoharjo community correlates with Reiner Forst's theoretical concepts of tolerance. Forst identified four main ideas of tolerance: the relationship between the majority and minorities, the concept of preventing conflict, the representation of standards and practices of tolerance, and tolerance as a foundation for a multicultural society. These four concepts have indeed been implemented in Pandowoharjo, as discussed above. Therefore, the tolerance and coexistence that the people of Pandowoharjo have built and maintained lead to a successful, harmonious life. Pandowoharjo can serve as a laboratory and role model for harmonious, peaceful, and prosperous community life.

Theoretically, this study enriches the academic discussion on interdisciplinary approaches that link education, political economy, and interfaith relations. In terms of policy, the findings provide recommendations for local and national governments in designing education and economic empowerment programs that can support social integration and reduce the potential for religious conflict. Additionally, this study contributes empirical evidence highlighting the importance of a bottom-up approach in building social harmony, which often receives less attention in the dominant literature that focuses more on top-down policy interventions.

CLOSING

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that: 1) Education plays an important role in building coexistence. In the Pandowoharjo community, each religion has its religious institution or organization. For example, the Muslim community has Islamic boarding schools affiliated with the Nahdlatul Ulama organization, which actively provides religious understanding and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a harmonious and peaceful life. Similarly, Hindu religious figures often conduct religious studies and

provide insights that are fundamental for maintaining harmony and mutual tolerance in social life. 2) Political economy also plays a key role in fostering a peaceful life and constructing religious coexistence. In Pandowoharjo Village, community members, and religious organizations have equal access in the political-economic sector, regardless of their religious affiliation. For instance, despite the Muslim majority, which comprises 93% of the population, there are also RT heads who are Christians, and life continues without conflict.

This research will undoubtedly contribute to the understanding of religious coexistence in Indonesia. Elites, scholars, and even the wider community can grasp that a harmonious life extends beyond merely avoiding hatred and hostility; it encompasses tangible actions to maintain this harmony. In this study, tolerance theory effectively serves as a lens through which various dynamics of social life can be viewed while operating without conflict.

On the other hand, the factors contributing to coexistence, namely education and political economy, remain complex and warrant further exploration. Thus, comprehensive and specific studies are needed to examine the education and political economy sectors in building coexistence in Indonesia, ultimately leading to a society characterized by tolerance, harmony, peace, and prosperity.

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