



Harmonization of Muslim and Christian Communities: Synergy of Customary and Local Wisdom-Based Economics in the Donggo Community of NTB

Ahmad Kholil¹, Amrin², Muhammad Zuardi³

Politeknik Negeri Medan, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Email: ahmadkholil@polmed.ac.id, amrin@polmed.ac.id, muhammadzuardi@gmail.com

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Abstract

The Donggo community in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, is a multireligious community inhabited by Muslims and Christians who live side by side in harmony. Their social life is governed by customary law passed down through generations and reinforced by economic practices based on local wisdom. However, modernization, globalization, and state policy intervention have begun to influence the role of customary law and threaten the sustainability of the traditional economic system. This study aims to analyze the synergy between customary law and local wisdom-based economics in strengthening social harmony between religious communities and to formulate a relevant integration model to address the challenges of the times. The research method used is a qualitative approach with field studies, involving in-depth interviews with customary leaders, religious leaders, and local economic actors, field observations, and document analysis. The results show that customary law plays a significant role in regulating social and economic interactions. In contrast, the local economic system based on cooperation serves as a glue for social cohesion across religions. The novelty of this research lies in the formulation of an integration model of customary law and local wisdom-based economics that can be replicated in other multicultural regions. The implication of this research is the need for public policy support to protect customary law while strengthening community-based economies as a social sustainability strategy amid the dynamics of global change.

Keywords: Harmonization, Customary, Economy, Local Wisdom, Multireligious Society

Abstrak

Masyarakat Donggo di Kabupaten Bima, Nusa Tenggara Barat, merupakan komunitas multireligius yang dihuni oleh penduduk Muslim dan Kristen yang hidup berdampingan secara harmonis. Kehidupan sosial mereka diatur oleh hukum adat yang diwariskan turun-temurun dan diperkuat oleh praktik ekonomi berbasis kearifan lokal. Namun, modernisasi, globalisasi, dan intervensi kebijakan negara mulai memengaruhi peran hukum adat dan mengancam keberlanjutan sistem ekonomi tradisional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sinergi antara hukum adat dan ekonomi berbasis kearifan lokal dalam memperkuat harmoni sosial antarumat beragama serta merumuskan model integrasi yang relevan untuk menghadapi tantangan zaman. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi lapangan, melibatkan wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh adat, pemuka agama, dan pelaku ekonomi lokal, observasi lapangan, serta analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hukum adat berperan penting dalam mengatur interaksi sosial dan ekonomi, sementara sistem ekonomi lokal berbasis gotong royong menjadi perekat kohesi sosial lintas

agama. Kebaruan (novelty) penelitian ini terletak pada perumusan model integrasi hukum adat dan ekonomi berbasis kearifan lokal yang dapat direplikasi di wilayah multikultural lain. Implikasi penelitian ini adalah perlunya dukungan kebijakan publik yang melindungi hukum adat sekaligus memperkuat ekonomi berbasis komunitas sebagai strategi keberlanjutan sosial di tengah dinamika perubahan global..

Kata Kunci: *Harmonisasi, Adat, Ekonomi, Kearifan Lokal, Masyarakat Multireligius*

INTRODUCTION

The Donggo community in Bima Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, is a multicultural community consisting of Muslims and Christians who have lived side by side for centuries (Belhaj, 2025; Huda et al., 2025; Mutawali, 2022). In social life, customary law plays an important role in maintaining harmony and regulating economic aspects based on local wisdom (Arsal et al., 2023; Erawadi & Setiadi, 2024; Indasari et al., 2025; Lestari et al., 2025). Customary law that is passed down from generation to generation becomes a mechanism for resolving conflicts and regulating economic activities, such as land ownership systems, trade, and resource distribution (Danilenko, 2024; Prayogi et al., 2025; Rozanita et al., 2026). However, in the modern era, various challenges have begun to emerge, including social change, state policy intervention, and economic globalization, which can shift the role of customary law (Anghie et al., 2021). Therefore, an in-depth study is needed on how customary law can synergize with an economic system based on local wisdom to maintain harmony between religious communities and improve community welfare. Many studies and research have been conducted on customary law in multicultural societies, but most of them focus more on resolving social conflicts or the relationship between customary law and state law (Aditi, 2020) (Rosyadi & Rizka, 2022). Meanwhile, the economic aspect within the context of customary law has received little attention, particularly in communities with religious diversity. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the synergy between customary law and local wisdom-based economics in the Muslim and Christian communities of Donggo.

Research conducted by Jamal in Nggeru Kopa, Bima Regency, found that local wisdom, such as *Mbolo weki*, *Tekara Ne'e*, and *Karawi Ulu Cempe*, plays a role in maintaining social harmony and resolving interfaith conflicts. These findings demonstrate that social mechanisms based on local traditions can be an effective tool in building an inclusive and democratic life amidst diversity (Jamaludin et al., 2023). In addition, research by Setinawati et al. confirms that local wisdom also has an impact in mitigating extremism and building a moderate religious life, thus contributing to social stability in society (Setinawati et al., 2025). Research conducted by Ridho and Aslam found that adapting religious teachings to local cultural values can increase social harmony and reduce intergroup tensions. This integration also enriches religious practices, making them more inclusive and appropriate to the cultural characteristics of the local community (Bahri et al., 2026; Prayogi et al., 2025; Pulungan, 2025; Ridho & Sa'ad, 2024).

In research conducted by Saleena Ham & Geoffrey Woolcock shows that communal cultural identity in agrarian societies has greater cohesive power than religious identity, thus acting as a bulwark against polarization (Ham & Woolcock, 2022). Meanwhile, Mutawali's research highlights that the practice of dual names (Islamic and Christian) in Donggo families is a cultural strategy that strengthens inclusive identity and encourages harmonious social relations across religions (Mutawali, 2021). Thus, all these previous studies confirm that the synergy between customary law, cultural identity, and contextual religious practices is a key foundation for maintaining sustainable social harmony in multireligious societies like the Donggo.

In the context of traditional society, social harmony is not only formed naturally but also maintained through customary values and economic practices based on local wisdom. Émile Durkheim, in his theory of social cohesion, explains that social balance in a community is created through shared norms, values, and practices that build solidarity among individuals (Durkheim, 2020b). This is in line with the concept of local wisdom put forward by Clifford Geertz, where local wisdom functions as an adaptive mechanism that enables communities to maintain their identity and build social harmony amidst changing times (Lystra, 1983)(Geertz, 2013). From a legal perspective, Van Vollenhoven emphasized that customary law is not only a normative instrument in regulating social life, but also represents cultural values that are passed down from generation to generation and play a role in resolving conflicts and managing economic resources (van Engelenhoven, 2021). In the context of a community-based economy, Karl Polanyi, with his concept of embedded economy, revealed that the economic system in traditional societies cannot be separated from social and cultural aspects, but rather are closely interrelated and function as a unifying tool (Polanyi, 2018).

This research highlights the gap in understanding the synergy between customary law and local wisdom-based economics in facing changing times. Previous studies have focused more on social and cultural aspects without discussing the mechanisms of customary law in economic interactions and its role in maintaining social cohesion. Modernization, globalization, and state policies have the potential to weaken customary law and the local economy, thus requiring in-depth research to assess the relevance of customary law and the role of the local economy in maintaining social harmony amidst the dynamics of change. This research offers a new perspective by connecting customary law and community-based economic systems in multireligious societies, an area that has not been widely explored in previous studies. Different from previous research that focused more on customary law as a social mechanism or conflict resolution, this study develops a model of synergy between customary law and the local economy to maintain a balance between economic sustainability and social harmony. The interdisciplinary approach used in this research also highlights how modernization affects the relationship between customary law and traditional economic practices, as well as how local wisdom can adapt to changing times. With the developed model, this research is expected to contribute to public policy in preserving customary law and strengthening the economic welfare of multicultural communities amid the challenges of globalization.

In this context, this study seeks to answer the main questions: how do customary law and local wisdom-based economics synergize in maintaining harmony between Muslim and Christian communities in Donggo? How does customary law regulate social and economic interactions to maintain social balance? And, to what extent is local wisdom able to adapt to changing times to maintain social and economic stability in a multicultural society?

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs an interdisciplinary approach, combining legal, economic, and sociological perspectives to understand the synergy between customary law and local wisdom-based economics in maintaining social harmony in the multicultural Donggo community (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). An ethnographic approach will be applied through participant observation to directly understand how customary law functions in daily life, particularly in regulating social and economic interactions. In-depth interviews with customary leaders, religious leaders, and local economic actors will also be conducted to explore their perspectives on the role of customary law in facing the challenges of modernization and globalization. Furthermore, a phenomenological approach is used to explore community experiences and perceptions regarding the application of customary law and the community's

surviving economic values. By documenting local practices such as deliberation (*Mbolo weki*), social philanthropy (*Tekara Ne'e*), and cooperation (*Karawi Ulu Cempe*), this research will identify social mechanisms that enable the community to maintain harmony amidst religious diversity and social change. Normative legal and sociological approaches will be used to analyze customary law regulations in force in the Donggo community and their interaction with state policies.

This approach aims to understand the extent to which customary law remains effective in resolving conflicts and managing economic resources in the modern era. From an economic perspective, this research draws on Karl Polanyi's concept of the embedded economy, which asserts that traditional economic systems cannot be separated from the social and cultural values of society (Polanyi, 2018). Thus, this research will examine how a local wisdom-based economy can continue to thrive without sacrificing the traditional values that underpin social harmony.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Social and Religious Profile of the Donggo Community

The social life of the Donggo people is characterized by a strong sense of tolerance. One example often cited is the practice of people from different faiths helping each other build houses of worship. Muslims were involved in renovating a church in Mbawa-Kambentu Hamlet, while Christians participated in the construction of a mosque in Tolonggeru Hamlet. This practice of interfaith cooperation demonstrates that cultural factors are more dominant as a social glue than religious barriers. Historically, before the arrival of Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism, the Donggo people adhered to a local belief system known as *Marafu*. This belief is based on respect for ancestral spirits and belief in the supernatural powers of certain objects. In local tradition, the terms *macaque* (radiant light) and *macakimbi* (shining light) mark the belief in sacred objects such as keris or large trees. However, the entry of major religions since the 20th century has made this belief slowly be marginalized (Amrin et al., 2020).

Although some elements of ancient beliefs remain in traditional traditions, the Donggo people's religious identity is more closely tied to Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Nevertheless, their cultural heritage, *Marafu*, remains alive in traditional rites such as *Kabusi Rasa* (ward off disaster), *Karawi Kabuju*, and *Raju* (agricultural ritual). This is based on an interview with AH, who is also the Head of the Donggo Customary and Sharia Institution, who emphasized that:

“Since ancient times, the Donggo people have had a strong foundation of togetherness. Culture is a unifying force, so that even though Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism are present, the spirit of *mori sama* or living together is maintained.” This shows that cultural identity is prioritized over religious barriers”. (AH; Interview, 2025).

From the Catholic community, 'T'T' revealed that traditions such as *Raju* and *Karawi Kabuju* are not just an agricultural ceremony, but a space for interfaith togetherness. He said:

“We Catholics still feel part of *Dou Donggo*. So even though we have different religions, the sense of brotherhood never disappears. This view emphasizes that local identity is stronger than differences in theological doctrine”. (T'T; Interview, 2025).

This is also supported from a Protestant Christian perspective. AA shared real-life experience of how Protestants and Muslims worked together in building a place of worship:

“When the mosque was expanded, many Christians helped. Likewise, when the church was renovated, Muslims stepped in. For us, the brotherhood of the Donggo is of higher value than religious barriers”. (AA; Interview, 2025)

This shows that the daily interactions of the Donggo people have become a living laboratory of tolerance. Cultural traditions also show how the Donggo people maintain social cohesion. For example, rituals. The event, which is held before the planting season, always involves all residents regardless of religion. According to Jamaluddin et al., *Raju* it serves as a gateway for socio-religious dialogue, where Muslim and Christian communities share prayers of thanksgiving and engage in communal activities. This culture has proven to be a social unifier that transcends religious boundaries. The phenomenon of dual naming is also a characteristic of the Donggo community. Many parents give their children names that combine Islamic and Christian identities, such as *Andreas Ahmad*, *Ignatius Ismail*, *Kristin Siti Hawa*, or *Marta Maemunah* (Jamaludin et al., 2023). According to Pajarinato's research, this naming is a cultural strategy reflecting religious moderation. The dual name symbolizes that local identity is more important than religious exclusivity (Pajarianto et al., 2022). According to Mutawali, religious moderation in Donggo is actually stronger than in Bima society in general. While in other regions religion serves as a glue for solidarity, in Donggo, it is culture and local wisdom that act as the primary binding force (Mutawali, 2021). This view is in line with Quraish Shihab's idea of *moderate*, namely balance in religion, which is realized through togetherness, justice, and respect for differences (Shihab, 2009).

This harmony is also evident in everyday practices. For example, the Donggo community does not object to interfaith marriages. Although one partner sometimes adopts the other's religion, this practice does not cause social conflict. For them, the priority is maintaining family and brotherhood. This phenomenon is rarely found in other communities in Bima, where the majority are more exclusive in matters of marriage. However, some challenges disrupt the harmony of the Donggo community. Some religious leaders from outside sometimes bring exclusivist views that reject local traditions, arguing that *they are heresy*. According to Sumanto Al Qurtuby, this kind of puritanical attitude has the potential to damage social harmony because it views local culture as something wrong (Sumanto, 2016). This has made some people worried about the erosion of Donggo's noble values. Another challenge also comes from practical politics. Administrative segregation, which separates the Tolonggeru people based on religion, presents a latent potential for conflict. Yet, historically, they share the same ancestors. This practice of identity politics actually contradicts these values. *Mori sama* which has long existed in the Donggo culture. Thus, the social and religious profile of the Donggo community shows that harmony does not always have to be built based on religious similarity.

The Role of Customary Law in the Multireligious Life of the Donggo Community

Customary law in the Donggo community of Bima Regency holds a central position as the basis for regulating social life. Since pre-Islamic times, customary law has governed social, economic, and religious relations in the community. Custom is not only a legacy from our ancestors, but also a living value system that mediates differences and maintains social cohesion to this day. The uniqueness of the Donggo community lies in its religious plurality. Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants live side by side within a shared cultural bond. Customary law serves as an umbrella covering all religious groups, preventing differences in belief from

giving rise to social fragmentation. In this respect, customary law serves more than simply as a rule; it acts as a unifying force in multi-religious life.

The core values of Donggo customary law are based on the philosophies of *maja labo dahu* (shame and fear of wrongdoing) and *mori sama* (living together). These principles are universal and not limited to any one religion. In this way, customary law is not only accepted by Muslims but also internalized by Christians. This is what makes customary law an effective social instrument for maintaining harmony. In daily practice, customary law is used to resolve disputes, both personal and communal. For example, land disputes between Muslims and Christians are more often resolved in customary forums than in court. This is because the community believes that customary decisions are wiser, fairer, and more capable of maintaining family ties than formal legal decisions.

Customary law is evident in communal rituals such as *Raju* (agricultural ritual) or *Kabusi Rasa* (warding off disaster). These traditional events are attended by the entire community, regardless of religion. Interestingly, prayers can be said according to one's own beliefs, but custom emphasizes that these rituals are shared. Thus, customary law provides an inclusive space for diverse religious expressions within a cultural framework. In addition to its integrative function, customary law also serves as a mechanism of social control. Violations of custom are punished not only with material sanctions but also with moral sanctions in the form of shame. In Donggo society, customary sanctions such as *nggahi rawi pahu* (public apology) are more feared than material fines, as they involve self-respect. This mechanism is effective in maintaining interfaith harmony. Muslim leader AB:

“Emphasized that customary law is the main bulwark of unity. For him, despite differing religions, the shared identity as Dou Donggo makes everyone feel equal”. (AB; Interview, 2025)

Catholic leader RA similarly emphasized:

“Since ancient times, we have understood that customary law belongs to all citizens, not just one group. Custom transcends all differences religion, ethnicity, and family background. Anyone living in a customary area automatically becomes part of the customary community and has the same rights and obligations”. (RA; Interview, 2025)

From the Protestant circles, MD emphasized:

“The core values of "mori sama" are mutual care, respect, and appreciation. These values were taught by our ancestors and form the basis of social relations in this village. Therefore, regardless of religion, all residents are encouraged to live in a spirit of togetherness. This "mori sama" is not just a theory, but a true reality in our social practices”. (MD; Interview, 2025)

According to Clifford Geertz, religion and culture in traditional societies are so intertwined that they are difficult to separate (Geertz, 2013)(Lystra, 1983). In the Donggo context, customary law serves as a cultural medium that can accommodate all religions without eliminating their respective identities. From an Islamic perspective, Quraish Shihab explains that religious moderation (*moderate*) demands balance, justice, and respect for differences(Rauf, 2019)(Shihab, 2009). Donggo customary legal practices reflect this value, as custom provides equal space for Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants to live together without discrimination. According to Western experts such as John Rawls, in his *overlapping consensus*, he emphasizes the importance of shared values in a plural society(Töns, 2021)(Rawls, 2011). This principle is evident in Donggo, where customary law is a consensus accepted by all religions, enabling justice and harmony to be upheld despite differing religious doctrines.

Customary law is also in line with Jürgen Habermas's views on *post-secular society*, namely modern society, which must give space to religious and traditional values to play a role in the public sphere (Jürgen, 2006). The Donggo community demonstrates how traditional customs remain relevant and accepted as a common foundation for managing religious plurality. Thus, customary law in Donggo is adaptive. It is not static, but rather evolves with the times. Despite the influx of modernization and external influences, customary law remains a social umbrella. This demonstrates a collective awareness that customs are cultural assets that must be preserved for the sake of continued multi-religious harmony. However, customary law also faces challenges. Some religious groups from outside the community bring exclusivist views that tend to reject customs because they conflict with Islamic law.

Synergy of Customary Law and Local Economy in Donggo Society

In Donggo, customary law is not only a conflict resolution mechanism but also serves as an institutional infrastructure that regulates the flow of production, distribution, and sharing of goods at the village level. Field observations show reveals two concrete examples of the strengthening of customary law that have a direct impact on social cohesion and strengthened economic cooperation. First, an agreement not to hold rawi mori (traditional religious gatherings) on Friday and Sunday nights to maintain interfaith worship; second, regulation of pig-related activities (forest clearing, meat carried covered) to respect Muslim taboos. A Christian leader, MM, said:

“If there's a big party, we already understand not to hold it on Friday night. That's a mutual agreement, not just a religious rule. We uphold it, because if we understand each other, working together in the garden also runs smoothly”.(MM; Interview, 2025)

Shame-based social discipline (*maja labo dabu*) fosters high levels of compliance without the need for formal state sanctions, a critical social capital for economic collaboration. Muslim leader HH Abdullah stated:

“If someone violates a custom, it's not just the person who feels ashamed, but the whole family feels guilty. So people are more afraid of shame than the police. This is what has kept the cooperation going until now”. (HH; Interview, 2025)

These kinds of customary rules calm relations, reduce the costs of conflict, and increase the trust that is so necessary for collective work in the fields and post-harvest.

At the cultural level, the practices of *mbolo weki*, *tekara ne'e*, and *Uma Leme*'s role as a forum for deliberation strengthen the communication networks necessary for economic coordination. For example, the allocation of shifts to work the rice fields or borrow agricultural tools is decided through customary deliberation. IM, a Catholic women's leader, said:

“In *Uma Leme*, everyone speaks, both Muslims and Christians. If there are problems with tools or harvesting, they discuss them there. So we can work without envy”. (IM; Interview, 2025)

This finding shows that "cultural capital" serves as a channel for resolving everyday economic problems, not merely as a mere identity ceremony. Literature on Donggo emphasizes local culture and wisdom (*Raju*, *Kabusi Rasa*, *Karawi Kaboju*) as meeting points that maintain social rhythms. This rhythm also supports the synchronization of economic rhythms (planting and harvest seasons). The *Raju* festival, for example, as an agricultural ritual, consolidates networks of mutual assistance, bringing together providers of land, labor, and

tools, and opening channels for symbolic redistribution (feasts and harvest sharing). MRH a Muslim farmer, said: “*At the Raju festival, everyone gets a share, even if they don't own land. So everyone feels like they own the harvest. That's what keeps us united*”. (MRH; Interview, 2025).

When “work seasons” are incorporated into the shared ritual calendar, coordination costs decrease and participation increases. Theoretically, the collective labor and profit-sharing patterns in Donggo align with Elinor Ostrom's ideas about effective management of common resources when there are clear local rules, social monitoring, and gradual sanctions (Ostrom, 1990). Donggo customary law provides all three: rules (communal prohibitions/admonitions), monitoring (community supervision), and moral sanctions (shame/praise). A traditional leader, ML, emphasized this:

“We don't need police to guard our rice fields. It's the neighbors' eyes and conscience that guard them, because if we violate these laws, the shame is far more severe than the punishment from the state”. (ML; Interview, 2025)

In institutional economic terms, custom successfully reduces “transaction costs,” enabling *Sambaka* (collective work) and profit-sharing systems to operate smoothly. With a reputation as a “role model” for culture-based moderation, Donggo demonstrates that local governance can foster both economic efficiency and social harmony. From an Islamic perspective, justice and welfare are key principles of economic governance. Wasathiyah (Islamic principle) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Religious Moderation agenda emphasize balance and social benefits, resonating with the inclusive work-sharing and profit-sharing mechanisms in Donggo. The spirit of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*, particularly *hifẓ al-māl* (protection of property) and *hifẓ al-naḥs* (protection of life), is evident in the way the community ensures access to employment and social security for all citizens, regardless of religion (Kasri et al., 2023). A Protestant youth leader, YF, emphasized: “*In the garden, there's no difference between Islam and Christianity. What's important is that we work together and harvest together. That's what keeps the village safe*.” (YF; Interview, 2025).

Research shows that when administrative politics temporarily divided regions based on religion, the Donggo culture of cooperation, including mutual assistance in building houses of worship, remained a buffer against the erosion of economic trust. Interfaith practices of mutual assistance (e.g., the concreting of mosques by Christians and assistance with church renovations by Muslims) were not merely symbolic but also strengthened a network of direct reciprocal assistance. Historically, the Donggo combined a shared cultural identity (Dou Donggo) and agricultural rituals (*Raju*) as a “common language” that effectively negotiated work calendars, risk sharing, and harvest celebrations, all integrated with the ethics of shame (*maja labo dahu*). A series of customs from upstream to downstream (work meetings and harvest festivals) created a cycle of social rewards that incentivized community contributions. Various studies have indicated that religious moderation in the Donggo is based on cultural practices that transcend religious boundaries; the impact is directly felt in daily economic collaboration. With this foundation, customary-economic integration is not a slogan, but a recurring social experience.

The integration of customary values into local economic transactions is evident in the agricultural profit-sharing system, which resembles the concept of *muzara'ah* in Islamic jurisprudence. Landowners, cultivators, and capital providers share the harvest according to their contributions, with customary law as a guideline for justice. Quraish Shihab emphasized that the principle of *'adl* (justice) in Islam applies not only to legal aspects but also to the distribution of resources (Shihab, 2009). In line with this, Donggo customary law ensures that no party is disadvantaged, thus creating a balance that supports social cohesion. The distribution of harvests in Donggo is also regulated through traditional feasts, where a portion

of the agricultural produce is shared with the wider community, including those of different faiths. This practice demonstrates the spirit of redistribution, which in Islam is closely related to the concepts of zakat and shadaqah. From a Western economic perspective, Amartya Sen describes redistribution as expanding capabilities, namely the ability of each person to enjoy a dignified life (Miletzki & Broten, 2017).

Customary regulations also play a role in controlling consumption to avoid offending certain beliefs. A concrete example is the regulation on boar hunting: clearing is carried out in the forest, and the meat is brought back to the village in private. This norm safeguards the feelings of Muslims while still respecting the consumption traditions of some Christians. Habermas, in his post-secular society concept, explains that this kind of compromise is essential so that the public space can be filled fairly by all parties without the dominance of one particular religious identity (O'Mahony & Patrick, 2021). Customary regulations in Donggo are more adhered to than formal state regulations because moral sanctions are more effective in a communal society. Shame (*maja labo dabu*) controls behavior, including in economic matters (Ruslin & Gusfa, 2019).

Discussion

Integration Model for Sustainability in Harmonizing Muslim and Christian Communities in Donggo

The Donggo people have long built strong interfaith relationships through a blend of traditional values, local culture, and inclusive practices of communal living. This harmony is not simply the result of passive tolerance, but is formed through an integrative process involving cooperation in traditional activities, mutual assistance in building houses of worship, participation in village deliberations, and the affirmation of local values such as the principle of *mori sama*, which places all residents as brothers and sisters.

Legal Integration Model

In the multireligious context of Donggo, customary law serves as a shared umbrella trusted to regulate life and mitigate daily social friction. Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants alike prefer customary forums because they are considered faster, fairer, and more inclusive than formal state legal channels. Interfaith cooperation practices, such as Christians helping to renovate mosques and Muslims helping to repair churches, demonstrate that adherence to customary law is not merely a norm but an ethos that binds interfaith relations, as articulated by field informants and documented in studies of religious moderation in Donggo. This aligns with Nurcholish Madjid's view that collectively safeguarding local wisdom can be an effective instrument for building *ukhuwah insaniyyah* (human brotherhood) amidst diversity (Madjid, 2018).

The value of *maja labo dabu* (shame and fear of doing wrong) functions as a shared moral language that crosses the boundaries of religious identity, because it is seen as a standard of nobility, not a sectarian doctrine. This principle can facilitate interfaith consensus while supporting culturally based religious moderation, including through the practice of *mori sama*, *paresa rawi rasa*, and the role of *Uma Leme*. This ethical framework is in line with the idea of *wasathiyah* (moderation) in the Islamic treasury as emphasized by Quraish Shihab, which emphasizes balance, justice, and the rejection of extreme attitudes (Shihab, 2009). In fact, Supriyanto's research also emphasizes that moderation places social welfare above the interests of certain groups, making it relevant to the multi-religious reality of Donggo (A. Supriyanto, 2022).

Conflict resolution, such as land disputes or religious practices, is carried out through deliberation that considers substantive justice, kinship, and solidarity. In Nggeru Kopa Hamlet, interfaith religious leaders agreed to a rule not to hold *rawi mori* on Friday and

Sunday nights, so that Muslims can focus on religious recitation while Christians prepare for Sunday services. Even boar hunting activities are regulated through compromise, with clearing carried out in the forest and meat brought into the village behind closed doors to maintain the dignity of differing faiths. This practice reflects John Rawls's theory of overlapping consensus, where groups with different beliefs can find common ground in mutually agreed-upon moral rules without sacrificing their respective religious identities (Töns, 2021)(Rawls, 2011).

These field findings can also be read through the social construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, which states that reconciliatory norms are born from the process of interaction and negotiation between actors, then institutionalized and finally become an objective reality that is adhered to across generations (Berger & Luckmann, 2023). In addition to providing a path for reconciliation, custom enforces social discipline through moral sanctions in the form of shame and community judgment, which have proven more effective than formal state sanctions. Local literature emphasizes the importance of a shared value system to bind the behavior of a pluralistic society, and in the Donggo context, this system takes the form of customary rules internalized through interfaith communication and embodied in communal regulations, such as the timing of socio-religious activities. From a Western perspective, this aligns with Jürgen Habermas's concept of post-secular society, which emphasizes the need for rational dialogue between religion and secular traditions as a basis for social cohesion in modern society (Jürgen, 2006)(O'Mahony & Patrick, 2021).

Ethnographic evidence in Donggo shows a configuration of three complementary axes: custom as a rule of communal life, religion as a source of ethics and spiritual motivation, and the state as an administrative umbrella. Previous studies have emphasized the role of Donggo local wisdom, such as *Raju*, *Kabusi Rasa*, and *Karawi Kabuju*, as a central space for interfaith encounters that effectively mitigates identity contestation, as also seen in Mbawa and Tolonggeru. From an educational and cultural perspective, Suharto and Purna note that religious moderation is rooted in local socio-cultural practices, making it more grounded than merely normative narratives.

Social Integration Model

The social integration of the Donggo community occurs through daily practices that emphasize interfaith togetherness. Cooperation (*gotong royong*) is the primary means of uniting residents regardless of religion, as seen when Muslims help Christians celebrate Christmas or build churches, and conversely, Christians participate in mosque renovations or Islamic religious activities. This pattern of interaction reflects the Islamic concept of *ukhuwah insaniyyah*, a human-based brotherhood that transcends religious boundaries. As emphasized by Quraish Shihab, Islam teaches the importance of building social bridges with everyone to achieve collective well-being.(Rauf, 2019)(Shihab, 2009). At the same time, this pattern also represents Émile Durkheim's idea of organic solidarity, where a pluralistic society can create bonds through interdependence in social activities (Durkheim, 2020a)(Mishra & Rath, 2020).

Custom is the most inclusive social space for fostering cohesion in the multi-religious Donggo community. Traditions such as *Raju* (common prayer), *Kabusi Rasa* (mutual sharing of suffering and joy), and *Karawi Kabuju* (genuine mutual assistance) serve as vehicles for interaction that unite religious differences. When traditional rituals are performed, all residents are present regardless of religious identity, thus allowing custom to serve as a central space that strengthens trust and solidarity. From an Islamic perspective, this aligns with al-Ghazali's view that moral values must be universal and acceptable to all groups to achieve social justice (Murdani et al., 2024). From a Western perspective, this practice parallels Talcott Parsons' idea of pattern maintenance, namely, a system of cultural values that maintains the integration of society (Ormerod, 2020).

In everyday practice, the cultural identity of the *Dou* Donggo (Donggo people) is more dominant than religious barriers. The collective awareness that they are one indigenous community creates a stronger emotional bond than distinct religious identities. This aligns with Henri Tajfel's theory of social identity, which states that individuals can position themselves within broader identity categories to reduce the potential for conflict. Within an Islamic framework, this aligns with the concept of *ummatan wahidah* (one people), which emphasizes the unity of humanity based on the values of justice and goodness, rather than merely a uniformity of faith.

Field findings also indicate the existence of interfaith "social exchange" mechanisms. For example, Muslims who helped secure Christmas mass received reciprocity from Christians who participated in Eid al-Fitr security. This practice reflects George Homans' theory of social exchange, which states that social relationships are formed through fair reciprocity between actors (Molm, 2006). In the Islamic perspective, this practice of reciprocity is in line with the principle of *al-jazā' min jins al-'amal* (reward according to deeds), which encourages the creation of balance in social relations.

Interfaith participation in religious celebrations demonstrates the most tangible form of social integration. For example, at the Prophet's Birthday celebration, Christians attend as guests, while at Christmas, Muslims attend to show respect and solidarity. This practice resonates with Hans Küng's thinking in the Global Ethic Project, which emphasizes that the world's religions share common ethical values that can serve as a foundation for peaceful coexistence (Küng, 1997). From an Islamic perspective, this concept is reinforced by the idea of *ta'āyush silmī* (peaceful coexistence), which is widely discussed by contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Amrin & Amirullah, 2022)(Qardhawi, 1993). Thus, social integration in Donggo is born not only from practical compromise but also from the internalization of universal moral and ethical values. Custom provides the platform, religion provides legitimacy, and everyday social practices serve as the medium for implementation. Western theories such as Rawls's overlapping consensus and the Islamic concept of *ukhuwah insaniyyah* both provide an academic framework that social harmony can be achieved when society shares shared values that are maintained across identities.

Economic Integration Model

The economy is the third pillar strengthening harmony in the Donggo community. Most residents depend on the communally managed agriculture and plantation sectors for their livelihood. These activities are carried out through a system of collective labor (*Sambaka*), which requires all residents, both Muslim and Christian, to participate without discrimination. This work pattern emphasizes that the Donggo economy is not merely a production area but also an arena for social integration, uniting religious differences in a common interest. In this context, collective labor serves as a tool to minimize socio-economic segregation and strengthen a sense of community.

The agricultural cooperation model in Donggo resembles the concept of *muzara'ah* in Islamic jurisprudence, namely a cooperation agreement between land owners, capital providers and cultivators with a profit-sharing system according to each person's contribution (Suherli, 2025). Classical jurists such as Imam Malik and Abu Hanifah emphasized that *muzara'ah* is a form of economic justice because all parties benefit proportionally. In the Donggo context, this practice serves as a medium for reconciliation, as Muslims and Christians are equally involved as owners, financiers, or cultivators. This demonstrates that the sharia principle of *'adl* (justice) can be implemented in an inclusive, collective work environment.

Economic integration is also evident in the harvest festival held after the planting season is over. The harvest is not only enjoyed by the landowner but also shared throughout the community through traditional ceremonies. This harvest festival serves as a moment of interfaith togetherness, with Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants all attending, eating together, and giving thanks for their blessings. According to Clifford Geertz, this tradition is a form of "integrative ceremony" that not only regulates the distribution of resources but also strengthens social cohesion (Geertz, 2013). In this way, economics and traditional rituals unite in maintaining harmony.

The pattern of sharing harvests fosters awareness that economic success never stems from individual effort alone, but rather from collective effort that unites various levels of society. In the Islamic context, this aligns with the principle of mutual assistance in goodness, which emphasizes the importance of social solidarity as a foundation for well-being (Davids & Waghid, 2019). In social capital theory, Robert Putnam explains that trust and networks of reciprocity are the main capital for driving collective development (Putnam, 2015). The economic relations of the Donggo people, through sharing harvests across faiths, represent the social capital that binds them in harmonious relationships.

This economic cooperation ultimately demonstrated the local independence of the Donggo people. Rather than being trapped in individual competition or a free market system that tends to be exploitative, they built an economic model based on solidarity and sustainability. From an Islamic perspective, this model is reminiscent of the idea of *al-'adl al-ijtima'i* (socio-economic justice), which rejects monopolies and distributive injustice. Meanwhile, the concept of the economy of solidarity introduced by Karl Polanyi emphasizes that the economy must be embedded in the social and moral life of society.

Cultural-Religious Integration Model

Indigenous culture here serves as an inclusive platform that allows every Muslim, Catholic, or Protestant to express their beliefs without losing their identity. In other words, custom acts as a neutral "space for interreligious dialogue," as its existence is not monopolized by any particular religious tradition. Clifford Geertz calls this kind of space a cultural broker, a cultural medium that bridges symbolic differences in a pluralistic society (Lystra, 1983)(Geertz, 2013). Within the Islamic framework, custom can be seen as a derivative of the principle of *'urf ṣaḥīḥ* (valid custom), namely, cultural practices that do not conflict with *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, so that they remain valid as long as they bring collective benefits (Farang & Rashed, 2023; Yono, Amrin, 2022).

Their shared identity as Dou Donggo is stronger than their religious identity. This sense of belonging to a single ethno-cultural community is a key factor in preventing divisions in the community, despite their differing faiths. Koentjaraningrat, in his research on Hambali, emphasized that cultural identity has a greater cohesive force than political or religious identity, particularly in agrarian societies based on cooperation (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Desmiati et al., 2023; Hambali, 2017; Roqib et al., 2025). From an Islamic perspective, this is in line with the concept of *ukhuwah insāniyyah* (human brotherhood) as proposed by contemporary scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who emphasizes that humanity must be the foundation of social relations, transcending religious barriers (Amrin & Amirullah, 2022). This inclusive Donggo cultural identity ultimately became a "symbolic fence" that prevented sectarian conflict.

This model of cultural-religious integration aligns with the concept of *ukhuwah insāniyyah* in Islam and the idea of overlapping consensus introduced by John Rawls. Overlapping consensus emphasizes that a pluralistic society can only live peacefully by building common ground based on shared values, not through the dominance of a particular

religious doctrine (Töns, 2021)(Rawls, 2011). Traditional practices in Donggo, such as cooperation in traditional rituals and the arrangement of interfaith sacred days, are concrete manifestations of such consensus. In Islamic literature, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) also emphasized the importance of indigenization of Islam, namely the process of integrating religious values with local culture so that Islam can be present in a friendly, moderate, and down-to-earth manner (Amalia, 2026; Ma'arif et al., 2024; S. Supriyanto, 2018; Talibo & Sutrisno, 2025).

From Habermas's perspective, Donggo society can be classified as a post-secular society, namely a society capable of integrating religion and culture in the public sphere without creating destructive conflict. Habermas argues that in a post-secular society, religion still has a role in the public sphere as long as it is present in the form of a "universal language" that can be understood across communities (Jürgen, 2006)(O'Mahony & Patrick, 2021). This is precisely what happens in Donggo, where custom acts as a neutral, fair space for all religions, while religion itself provides moral legitimacy to custom. Thus, custom is not a rival to religion, but rather a partner that strengthens social cohesion. Therefore, the model of legal, social, economic, and cultural-religious integration practiced by the Donggo community is a concrete example of how a multireligious society can live in harmony in a sustainable manner. This model simultaneously confirms Karl Polanyi's theory of embeddedness, that the economy and society are always embedded in cultural networks, and proves Quraish Shihab's thesis that *wasathiyyah* is the key to presenting religion in a just and balanced manner (Rauf, 2019)(Shihab, 2009). In the Indonesian context, the Donggo practice can serve as a national inspiration in building religious moderation based on local wisdom, in line with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' program that positions cultural wisdom as an instrument for maintaining harmony.

CONCLUSION

Customary law in Donggo has proven to be an integrative foundation capable of accommodating religious diversity while simultaneously regulating social and economic relations between Muslim and Christian communities on an equal footing. Customary mechanisms such as *mori sama*, *maja labo dahu*, *mbolo weki*, *tekara ne'e*, and *Karawi Kaboju* serve as cohesive instruments that encourage interfaith cooperation in various aspects of life, from conflict resolution and resource sharing to building houses of worship. Second, an economy based on local wisdom, operating within a framework of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), has been shown to strengthen social cohesion by creating stable networks of trust and reciprocity. Practices such as *sambaka* and the traditional profit-sharing system demonstrate that economic activities can serve as arenas for interfaith integration. Third, the dynamics of modernization and state policy intervention have begun to impact the effectiveness of customary law, but the Donggo community has demonstrated a capacity for adaptation through value negotiation and social compromise, maintaining sustainable harmony. Overall, these findings suggest that customary law and the local economy serve not only as instruments but also as social and moral capital that strengthen the resilience of multifaith societies.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in the formulation of a model of integration of customary law and economics based on local wisdom as a new approach to understanding the sustainability of harmony in multireligious societies. This model provides an interdisciplinary perspective that social integration rests not only on legal norms or religious doctrines, but also on economic practices, social mechanisms, and cultural values internalized across generations. Theoretically, this research enriches the study of plural society integration by connecting the theories of Durkheim, Rawls, Polanyi, Habermas, and the

concept of religious moderation in Islam. However, this research has several limitations. First, the empirical data still relies on a case study of Donggo, so its generalization needs to be tested in other multicultural communities. Second, this research has not yet explored in depth the dynamics of change among the younger generation of Donggo in the face of digital modernization, which could affect the sustainability of customary values. Nevertheless, this research provides a strong foundation for the development of a locally based harmonization model relevant to multireligious regions in Indonesia.

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