

## RELIGIOUS RITUAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL HARMONY IN ARJOWILANGUN VILLAGE: A BERGER–LUCKMANN PERSPECTIVE

*Ahmad Kholil<sup>1</sup>, Yusuf Ratu Agung<sup>1</sup>, Tamim Mulloh<sup>1</sup>,  
Masrokhin<sup>2</sup>, Indah Rarasati<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Queen's University, Belfast, United Kingdom.

Email: [kholil@bsa.uin-malang.ac.id](mailto:kholil@bsa.uin-malang.ac.id)

Received: November 2, 2025

Revised: April 25, 2026

Accepted: April 27, 2026

### Abstract

Religion plays a central role in shaping communal values, rituals, and social order in Indonesian village life; however, the processes through which religious meanings become stable communal institutions remain insufficiently explained. Previous studies have mainly focused either on religious conflict or descriptive forms of social coexistence without analyzing how everyday ritual practices produce long-term social harmony. This qualitative case study examines how religious meanings and communal harmony are produced through everyday ritual governance in Arjowilangun Village, Malang Regency. Using Berger and Luckmann's social-constructionist framework (externalization, objectivation, and internalization), the study traces how private preferences regarding the annual *Selamatan Desa*—illustrated by the contested decision between buffalo and cattle—are expressed in public forums, formalized through committee records and announcements, and routinized through intergenerational socialization. It also analyzes how local Islamic traditions and ecological meanings are renegotiated and stabilized in response to modern disruptions. Data were collected through participant observation, nine in-depth interviews, meeting minutes, and documentary materials during the July–August 2021 crisis period. The findings show that, despite pandemic-related restrictions, negotiated procedural

practices—including rotating committees, transparent budgeting, symbolic reframing, and cost-sharing—transform contested choices into durable communal norms, thereby producing social harmony that functions both as a precondition for collective action and as an outcome of institutionalized ritual governance. The study argues that sustaining interreligious harmony depends on procedural fairness, systematic record-keeping, and routine socialization—mechanisms that make pluralism manageable in everyday village life. The implications of this study are relevant for scholars of ritual, social construction, and community governance.

Agama memainkan peran sentral dalam membentuk nilai-nilai komunal, ritual, dan tatanan sosial dalam kehidupan masyarakat desa di Indonesia; namun, proses bagaimana makna-makna keagamaan menjadi institusi komunal yang stabil masih belum banyak dijelaskan. Penelitian sebelumnya sebagian besar berfokus pada konflik keagamaan atau bentuk-bentuk deskriptif dari koeksistensi sosial tanpa menganalisis bagaimana praktik ritual sehari-hari menghasilkan harmoni sosial jangka panjang. Studi kasus kualitatif ini mengkaji bagaimana makna keagamaan dan harmoni komunal diproduksi melalui tata kelola ritual sehari-hari di Desa Arjowilangun, Kabupaten Malang. Dengan menggunakan kerangka konstruksionisme sosial Berger dan Luckmann (eksternalisasi, objektivasi, dan internalisasi), penelitian ini menelusuri bagaimana preferensi terkait Selamatan Desa tahunan—yang ditunjukkan melalui perdebatan penggunaan kerbau atau sapi—diungkapkan dalam forum publik, diformalkan melalui catatan dan pengumuman panitia, serta dirutinkan melalui sosialisasi antargenerasi. Penelitian ini juga menganalisis bagaimana tradisi Islam lokal dan makna ekologis dinegosiasikan dan distabilkan sebagai respons terhadap disrupsi modern. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, sembilan wawancara mendalam, notulen rapat, dan dokumen pendukung selama periode krisis Juli–Agustus 2021. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa, meskipun terdapat pembatasan terkait pandemi, praktik-praktik prosedural hasil negosiasi—termasuk sistem kepanitiaan bergilir, transparansi anggaran, pemingkakan simbolik, dan pembagian biaya—mampu mengubah pilihan yang diperdebatkan menjadi norma komunal yang bertahan lama, sehingga menghasilkan harmoni sosial yang berfungsi baik sebagai prasyarat tindakan kolektif maupun sebagai hasil dari tata kelola ritual yang terinstitusionalisasi. Penelitian ini berargumen bahwa keberlanjutan harmoni antarumat beragama bergantung pada keadilan prosedural, pencatatan yang sistematis, dan sosialisasi rutin—mekanisme yang membuat pluralisme dapat dikelola dalam kehidupan desa sehari-hari. Implikasi penelitian ini relevan bagi para akademisi di bidang ritual, konstruksi sosial, dan tata kelola komunitas.

**Keywords:** interreligious harmony, religious ritual, ritual governance, social construction, social harmony

## Introduction

Religion shapes everyday life and communal order in many Indonesian villages; it informs values, rituals, and collective decision-making. This study examines how religious meanings are produced and stabilized in Arjowilangun Village, Kalipare Subdistrict, Malang Regency, using Berger and Luckmann's social-constructionist framework (externalization, objectivation, and internalization) to trace how individual beliefs and ritual choices around the annual *Selamatan Desa* are negotiated, routinized, and legitimated (Berger & Luckmann, 2016).

Prior Indonesian research on religion has followed two main strands. One strand analyzes religion as a source of conflict, identifying triggers for interreligious tensions and disputes over worship sites (Hartani & Nulhaqim, 2020; Santoso, 2002). A second strand documents local resilience and plural coexistence, showing how communities sustain distinctive religious identities and everyday cooperation (Mukodi & Burhanuddin, 2016; Pritantia et al., 2021). While both literatures are valuable, they rarely provide a processual account that links micro-level ritual acts and governance practices to the social-construction mechanisms that produce durable communal institutions.

Although Indonesian scholars have usefully documented religion as both a source of conflict and a resource for local resilience (Hartani & Nulhaqim, 2020; Mukodi & Burhanuddin, 2016; Santoso, 2002), existing work rarely traces the process by which private religious meanings become durable communal institutions. In particular, prior studies tend to (a) emphasize triggers of conflict or descriptive accounts of plural coexistence without systematically mapping empirical ritual episodes onto a social-constructionist process, and (b) treat interview-based accounts and prolonged ritual observation as separate evidentiary streams rather than as complementary data that together reveal how externalization, objectivation, and internalization operate in practice.

The *Selamatan Desa* of Arjowilangun is an annual village celebration involving contested material choices (for example, the community's decision to use buffalo rather than cattle), rotating committee responsibilities, and explicit budgeting). With its contested material choices (buffalo vs. cattle), rotating committee system, and explicit budgeting, it provides an analytically rich case to fill the research gap by enabling a tightly integrated, processual analysis of how ritual governance, leadership, and material compromise produce legitimacy and sustain interreligious harmony. Few studies systematically map concrete ritual episodes and governance decisions onto Berger and Luckmann's

three moments, leaving the micro-to-macro process of institutionalization under-specified.

The *Selamatan Desa* of Arjowilangun offers an ideal case to trace how private meanings become shared, routinized, and legitimized. Arjowilangun Village was selected as a focal case because its annual *Selamatan Desa* is a well-documented, long-standing communal ritual that integrates religious practice, local governance, and material negotiation. Local reporting and village records indicate the ceremony has been performed for generations and continues to involve complex organizational arrangements (rotating committees, explicit budgeting, and public programs), making the village an analytically rich site for tracing how private religious meanings are externalized, objectified, and internalized into communal institutions. Prior ethnographic work on Arjowilangun's cleansing ceremony further confirms the ritual's centrality to local worldview and social life in Indonesia, providing both empirical precedent and comparative leverage for a processual social-construction analysis.

Substantially, Indonesia has long lived in diversity. The socio-anthropological concept for this diversity is often known as multiculturalism. The concept relates to certain cultures and values. According to Blum, multiculturalism includes an understanding, appreciation and valuation of one's own culture, as well as respect and curiosity about other people's ethnic cultures (Liata & Fazal, 2021). Multiculturalism is basically a worldview that can be translated into various cultural policies that emphasize acceptance of the reality of diversity (Ayzumardi, 2019).

Sociological and anthropological studies of plural societies describe multiculturalism as the ideology of a multicultural society. A multicultural society is composed of ethnic and cultural diversity. A number of operational definitions of multiculturalism confirm that multiculturalism is a concept that explains two differences with interrelated meanings. First, as a condition of cultural plurality or culture of a society. Such conditions can certainly form an attitude of tolerance (Erningtyas & Widiyanto, 2021). Multiculturalism is also a set of policies designed so that the whole society can pay attention to the cultures of all ethnic groups (Erawati, 2017). In the concept of multiculturalism, tolerance is key in creating social harmony (Setiawan et al., 2022; Sitorus, 2023; Wulandari et al., 2024). The formation of a society based on the motto of *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* has a very close relationship in realizing unity in the diversity that exists in Indonesia (Nasution, 2022).

As an effort to understand religion as well as its practice by the community,

this article explains the practice of local wisdom-based diversity in Arjowilangun Village, Kalipare District, Malang Regency. In Arjowilangun village, a peaceful and harmonious life is created amidst the religious and ethnic heterogeneity of its citizens (Listyaningrum & Sukmawan, 2025). This harmony is due to the foundation of local wisdom which becomes a value and guidance that is respected together. The local wisdom that contributes to creating a harmonious and harmonious life is the annual *Selamatan Desa*, in addition to other wisdom that has become the 'spirit' of the community's social order.

Berger and Luckmann (2016) provide a process vocabulary that links micro-level expressions (speech, ritual choices, committee decisions) to macro-level social facts (rules, norms, symbolic universes), making it possible to trace how repeated *Selamatan Desa* practices and governance arrangements (e.g., rotating committees, budgeting, material compromises) are transformed into taken-for-granted communal institutions. The problems that become the base include religious understanding, community religious practices, local wisdom, and the role of religious institutions or community figures in religious social communication. The social construction theory initiated by Berger and Luckman states that social is a dual reality, subjective and objective, which processes through three dialectical moments, namely: externalization, objectification and internalization (Hadiwijaya 2023; Mustakim et al. 2020). These moments do not necessarily take place in a time sequence, but society and the individuals who are part of it are simultaneously characterized by these three moments, so an analysis of society must go through these three moments (Dharma, 2018).

In the context of this research, the social reality studied is the community's religious understanding and its implementation in the frame of multiculturalism. The reality of the social world is a life experience that can be used as a basis for someone to form knowledge or construct something new. Social reality also requires a person to respond. A person's response to existing social institutions can be in the form of acceptance, adjustment or rejection. Diversity and differences are unavoidable realities in people's lives. This reality can be a potential for inter-religious conflict if it is not based on a pluralist and inclusive attitude by all citizens of a diverse society (Hanik & Trumudi, 2020).

Diversity, conflict, violence and multiculturalism have been examined by several researchers in Indonesia. Santoso (2002) focused on religious factors in Situbondo in 1996. He found that the trigger for conflict and violence

between Muslims and Christians was the existence of an understanding that justified the destruction of churches which became the mode of anti Christian action. Hartani and Nulhaqim (2020) analyze the causes of conflict over the establishment of houses of worship in Aceh Singkil. The conflict occurred because of the disappointment of Muslims over Christians for violating the agreement that has been agreed upon and the government's decision on the permit for the establishment of houses of worship. However, conflict and violence are not always caused by religious factors. Bhakti and Sahbudi (2001) prove this point by stating that conflict can also be caused by economic disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Socio-religious issues have also been researched by Mukodi and Burhanuddin (2016). They found that the starting point of *Islam Abangan* and nationalism in the *Samin* community of Blora Regency. They also mentioned the durability of the existence of the *Samin* community of Blora which until now has been able to survive with its distinctive character. Pritantia et al. (2021) in examining the pattern of social relations of multicultural communities in Kencana Village, Kuningan found a lifestyle of people who live side by side. Respect and compassion for others is the key applied in each religion as well as understanding that religion is a teaching to humanize humans even though they are different in their beliefs. From the explanation above, it is known that studies on religion, conflict, violence, and multiculturalism have been widely conducted. However, this does not mean that studies on these topics have no appeal and have lost their urgency. Studies on religion are still needed, especially for the development of science. Of all the topics studied, multiculturalism still requires a more in-depth study, especially to strengthen its pragmatic truth.

This research aims to describe the socio-religious life in the multicultural context of Arjowilangun Village and to analyze how everyday religious understandings are enacted and institutionalized within local ritual and governance practices. This analysis is framed by Berger and Luckmann's social-constructionist model. Previous studies have shown that Islamic values embedded in ritual practices emphasize collective safety. For instance, research on the Grebeg Suro ritual in Lumajang demonstrates that the burial of a cow's head embodies the Islamic value of *salam* (safety), symbolizing protection and gratitude to God (Yurisa et al., 2021). Similarly, studies on disaster response in Malang Raya highlight that *rukun* (social harmony) functions as social capital, enabling communities to cooperate effectively in crisis situations (Agung et al.,

2022). While these works focus on ritual symbolism and post-disaster contexts, what remains underexplored is how cohesion and harmony are negotiated in everyday ritual governance. This study addresses that gap by examining ritual decision-making in Arjowilangun Village.

This study aims to: (1) describe the lived religious meanings and ritual practices associated with *Selamatan Desa*; (2) analyze how those meanings are externalized, objectified, and internalized; and (3) explain the mechanisms of legitimation (leadership, religious institutions, and material compromises) that sustain harmony in a multicultural village. This study adopts Berger and Luckmann's (2016) social-constructionist framework because it directly addresses the central analytic task of tracing how private religious meanings become shared and institutionalized. The three-moment model (externalization, objectivation, and internalization) describes a process that links individual speech and ritual action to the emergence of durable social facts and legitimating symbolic universes. Paired with a constructivist phenomenological method, this framework justifies combining in-depth interviews (to capture lived meanings) with participant observation and documentary analysis (to capture objectified rules and practices), enabling a coherent mapping from empirical episodes of *Selamatan Desa* to the mechanisms of legitimation that sustain interreligious harmony (Berger & Luckmann, 2016).

## **Method**

This study employed a qualitative design grounded in constructivist phenomenology, aiming to produce a thick description of how residents of Arjowilangun construct religious meaning and local wisdom (the *Selamatan Desa*) in everyday social practice through the lens of Berger and Luckmann's social construction framework (externalization, objectivation, internalization) (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018; Berger & Luckmann, 2016). It adopts a constructivist phenomenological approach because it privileges participants' lived experience and the intersubjective processes by which individual meanings are externalized, objectified, and internalized into communal institutions. This orientation permits an analysis that links micro-level ritual practices and narratives to the macro-level durability of *Selamatan Desa* as local wisdom.

This constructivist phenomenological study is complemented by ethnographic components. The constructivist phenomenological stance foregrounds participants' lived meanings of religion and *Selamatan Desa*, while ethnographic methods (participant observation of rituals, committee meetings, and material practices)

document the social interactions and institutional processes through which those meanings become shared and durable. Combining these approaches enables us to link individual experience with communal practices and to map empirical material onto Berger and Luckmann's moments of externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Methodologically, interviews provided rich first-person accounts, and observations and documentary records supplied the intersubjective and institutional evidence needed for triangulation and analytic mapping.

Fieldwork was conducted in Arjowilangun Village, Kalipare Subdistrict, Malang Regency. Primary data collection took place in July–August 2021 during pandemic crisis, with brief follow-up visits for verification and member checking. Participants were selected purposively and supplemented by snowball sampling to capture diverse local perspectives. The sample reported in the manuscript comprised approximately nine informants: two religious leaders (representing the religions present in the village), one adat leaders or village officials, three adult residents representing different hamlets, two youth organization members, and one local economic/tourism actors. Inclusion criteria were: residence in the village for at least five years, direct experience with or knowledge of the *Selamatan Desa*, and willingness to participate in interviews.

Data were collected through (a) in-depth interviews (semi-structured and unstructured; 45–90 minutes; audio recorded with consent), focusing on religious understanding, *Selamatan Desa* practices, intergroup dynamics, and decision-making about ritual matters and budgeting; (b) participant observation of *Selamatan Desa* events (preparation, ritual performance, committee meetings, food/animal selection practices), with detailed field notes written immediately after events; and (c) documentary evidence (event programs, meeting minutes, local announcements, and photographs taken with permission). Interview guides and observation protocols were iteratively refined in the field (Moleong, 2007). Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and organized with field notes and documents. Analysis proceeded in stages: domain analysis to identify broad categories; structural/compensional analysis to examine relationships among categories; and theme analysis to derive central themes mapped onto Berger and Luckmann's three moments (externalization, objectivation, internalization). Coding and memoing were managed using qualitative data software Nvivo (Dharma, 2018; Muslimin et al., 2023)

As a single-site case study, findings are not statistically generalizable but are transferable to similar socio-cultural contexts. Reliance on retrospective accounts may introduce recall bias; this was mitigated through triangulation with observation and documentary sources (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). To enhance credibility and dependability the study used triangulation of sources (interviews, observation, documents), member checking (summary findings returned to 6–8 key informants for verification), peer debriefing with colleagues, and maintenance of an audit trail. The researcher practiced reflexivity by keeping analytic memos that documented positionality and potential biases (Mustakim et al., 2020). Participants received information about the study's aims and their rights; informed consent (written or oral, as appropriate) was obtained prior to interviews and recordings. Identifying information was anonymized in transcripts and reports; data were stored securely and access restricted to the research team. Ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee (institutional approval details to be inserted) or, where formal IRB review was not required, local ethical procedures and community permissions were followed. Special care was taken to respect religious sensitivities during observation and to avoid actions that might disrupt ritual practice.

### Finding and Discussion

The *Selamatan Desa* in Arjowilangun is an annual communal ceremony that brings together residents across hamlets, religious affiliations, and age groups. Fieldwork combined participant observation of preparation and performance, nine in-depth interviews with village leaders and participants, and documentary sources (event programs, meeting minutes, and photographs). These data provide a comprehensive record of the ceremony's organization, the rotating committee system, and the formal roles played by religious and civic actors.

Religious diversity in Arjowilangun is enacted through negotiated practices rather than doctrinal contestation. Committee leadership rotates among hamlets and includes representatives of different faiths; religious leaders are invited to give brief blessings in sequence; and public communications use neutral language to emphasize communal belonging. These negotiated arrangements—who speaks, which prayers are included, and how offerings are handled—set the stage for formal committee deliberations about material choices. Observational notes show that seating and procession routes are

arranged to avoid exclusive religious symbolism, and public announcements use neutral language to emphasize communal belonging [Field note, 12 July 2021; Program leaflet, 2021].

Community pluralism, such as in Arjowilangun, is one of the main characteristics of a multicultural society. In a multicultural society, there is a spirit of shared nationality while still appreciating and even taking pride in the diversity that exists. This is clearly shown in the annual village celebration in Arjowilangun such as *Selamatan Desa*. The principles of freedom to express oneself, coexist and cooperate between various groups of people make the concept of multicultural society also close to a number of concepts echoed by democratic societies and civil society today.

Decisions about material aspects of the *Selamatan Desa* (animal choosing, procurement, and budget allocation) are made in committee meetings that combine formal rules and ad hoc bargaining. Committee minutes and field notes document a clear deliberative sequence during the 5 July 2021 meeting about whether to procure buffalo or cattle. A youth representative raised cost concerns, an elder invoked customary precedent, and the village head reframed the choice as a matter of tradition and fairness. After deliberation the committee resolved to purchase one buffalo and split costs across hamlets; the decision was recorded in the minutes and announced publicly. This episode shows how procedural bargaining, symbolic reframing, and cost-sharing produce a pragmatic compromise that preserves communal legitimacy and allows diverse participants to accept a single communal outcome [Interview, Committee Chair; Meeting minutes, 05 July 2021].

These findings resonate with psychological perspectives on social cohesion. Prior work emphasizes that cohesion comprises forces that bind members to a group and motivate active participation in pursuit of collective goals (Agung & Surur, 2018). In Arjowilangun, the buffalo-versus-cattle compromise illustrates this dynamic: despite differing preferences, participants remained committed to sustaining unity and collective tradition. Cohesion thus functions both as a condition for and an outcome of successful collective action for instance to **build the spirit of togetherness in the village ceremony as stated below:**

*“In a series of clean villages there is something called the village stage, this event is a series of clean village events but is held on the night of August 17. The village stage event received assistance from the village of approximately Rp.6,000,000, the rest of the money from the youth organization. The village stage event is a turn committee system, which is rotated by each hamlet to become a committee. This year, it is the*

youth organization of Lodalem hamlet. This year, Lodalem Hamlet is the committee for the village stage and volleyball competition in Argowilangun village, each hamlet sends 3 teams.” (Kuswianto, July 5, 2021)

Villagers describe participation in Selamatan in pragmatic and relational terms—“we do this because it keeps the village together” [Participant A, 14 July 2021]—rather than as strict doctrinal obligation. Repeated participation across years, routine transfer of committee roles, and the involvement of children and youth in preparatory tasks indicate routinization. Field notes record moments when long-standing participants corrected newcomers about “how we do it here,” signaling internalized expectations. These patterns show that the ceremony’s practices have been incorporated into everyday communal life.

Taken together, the observational record, meeting minutes, and interview accounts show a consistent pattern: private preferences are voiced in public forums, negotiated through committee procedures, and converted into durable practices that participants accept as normal. These empirical patterns provide the basis for mapping the Selamatan Desa onto Berger and Luckmann’s social-construction moments.

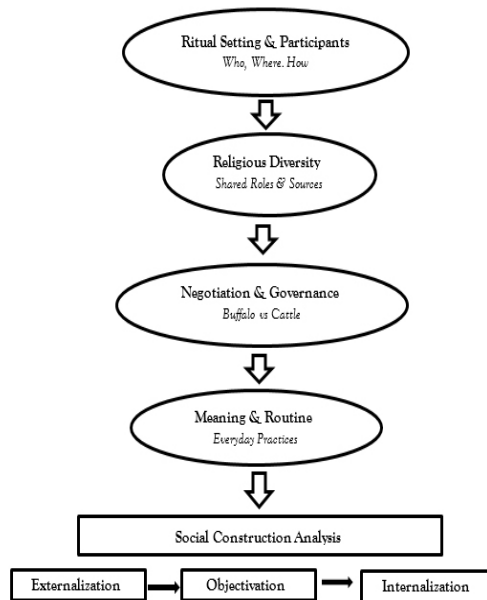


Figure 1. Flow from empirical description to social-construction model

The Arjowilangun case extends prior work on ritual symbolism and social capital by showing how cohesion and harmony are actively negotiated in everyday ritual governance. As Figure 1 summarizes, micro-level proposals and speeches are transformed into objectified rules and routinized practices; the following sections map the empirical episodes onto Berger and Luckmann's (2016) three moments and relate these mappings to existing literature on cohesion and harmony.

### ***Externalization of Religious Meanings in Selametan Desa***

Religion in Arjowilangun is understood as a guide for everyday life and social interaction. For most Muslim residents, religion functions not only as a theological belief but also as a moral framework that shapes communal attitudes, mutual respect, and collective responsibility. Religious understanding is expressed through local wisdom practices such as *silatullah*, social cooperation, artistic performances, and participation in village rituals. In Berger and Luckmann's (2016) perspective, this process reflects externalization, namely the continuous expression of subjective meanings into the social world.

Externalization appears when individual preferences and meanings are made public through proposals, speeches, and committee debate. The 5 July meeting—where cost concerns, customary arguments, and youth voices were openly aired—provides a clear instance of private meanings being expressed in a public forum. These public expressions are the raw material for subsequent institutionalization.

The process of externalization appears in the way villagers negotiate religious values within public ritual practices. Humans continuously adapt themselves to their social environment through interaction, language, and action. In Arjowilangun, respect for religious diversity is reflected in the community's decision to slaughter buffaloes instead of cattle during the annual *Selametan Desa*. Although cattle were once used, the decision generated conflict because cows are considered sacred in Hindu belief. As stated by M. Chafidz: “During village celebrations, buffaloes are the animals slaughtered for consumption. At one time it was replaced with cattle, but there was a conflict, because it contradicted Hinduism, which forbids the consumption of beef because it is a respected animal.” (Interview, July 21, 2021)

This ritual negotiation demonstrates how individual religious understandings are verbalized and transformed into shared social considerations. Externalization therefore becomes a process through which subjective beliefs

are expressed publicly and adjusted to existing socio-cultural realities. Different interpretations among villagers create intersubjective dialogue that later forms collective agreement and social harmony.

### ***Objectivation through Ritual Governance and Communal Regulation***

The second process is objectivation, namely the transformation of negotiated meanings into objective social reality through institutional arrangements and communal governance. In Arjowilangun, repeated ritual practices gradually become habitualized and institutionalized within village life. Through repetition, these practices are recognized collectively as legitimate traditions and eventually function as social norms guiding communal behavior.

The institutionalization process is maintained through ritual governance mechanisms such as rotating committees, collective budgeting, formal meetings, public announcements, and coordinated cultural programs. These organizational structures create legitimacy and reinforce the symbolic universe that sustains communal order. The symbolic universe provides moral justification for why individuals should participate in and preserve the ritual tradition.

The annual *Selamatan Desa* represents an objective social institution that integrates religious practice, local culture, and social organization. The ritual involves large-scale collective participation and significant financial management. Kuswiyanto, the Head of Arjowilangun Village, explained: “Approximately 500,000,000. It is quite large, because in addition to the village salvation event there is also a *campursari* program, *Banyuwangi* dance, orchestra, and closed with a recitation.” (Interview, July 5, 2020)

Objectivation occurs when negotiated outcomes are converted into durable social facts. In Arjowilangun, committee minutes, public announcements, and program leaflets function as objectifying artifacts: they record the buffalo compromise, formalize committee responsibilities, and present the decision as a communal fact. These records stabilize the compromise beyond the immediate meeting and make it available for public reference and enforcement.

This institutionalized governance structure transforms religious values into observable communal realities. The ritual is no longer understood merely as an individual religious expression, but as a collectively organized social institution supported by village authorities, religious leaders, and local cultural actors. Through objectivation, negotiated meanings become durable communal facts that organize social interaction and maintain social cohesion.

### ***Internalization and the Construction of Social Harmony***

The final process is internalization, namely the incorporation of objective social reality into individual consciousness through lifelong socialization. In Arjowilangun, the values embedded within *Selamatan Desa* are transmitted intergenerationally through participation, observation, language, and communal experience. Individuals gradually perceive the ritual tradition as a natural and legitimate part of village life.

Internalization occurs when community members emotionally and socially identify themselves with collective activities. Participation in village celebrations becomes a moral expectation and social responsibility. Villagers feel reluctant to distance themselves from communal events because the ritual has become part of their shared identity and social belonging. This case is evident when the committee's decisions are accepted without further dispute and when newcomers are socialized into established practices. The routine transfer of roles, the participation of youth in preparatory tasks, and the corrective interactions recorded in field notes indicate that the committee's decisions have become taken-for-granted norms—internalized by successive cohorts of participants.

The routinization of ritual practices creates harmony and cohesion within the multicultural social structure of Arjowilangun. Religious values are internalized not only through formal teaching but also through daily interaction and collective experience. The repeated performance of *Selamatan Desa* reproduces mutual respect, tolerance, and solidarity among villagers.

Through this dialectical process of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, the socio-cultural reality of Arjowilangun society is continuously constructed and maintained. Religious harmony is therefore not merely a passive condition but an actively produced social reality sustained through ritual governance, collective participation, and intergenerational socialization.

In this case, from the social construction theory which asserts that the moment of internalization is the moment of withdrawing socio-cultural reality into oneself or withdrawing socio-cultural reality into subjective reality, then the results of objectivation are re-instilled so that they structure the world of human thought, then the objective realities that underlie the construction of the meaning of religion for religious believers with personal individual understanding are internalized in the mass movement, so that it becomes a reality that can be observed and understood in the expression of harmony and harmony which can simply be concluded as a form of society that upholds local

values, without losing its footing on its sacred and personal religious basis.

These processual findings align with prior Indonesian studies that link ritual practice and social cohesion. For example, research on Grebeg Suro shows how ritual symbolism (*salam*) expresses collective safety (Yurisa et al., 2021), while disaster studies in Malang emphasize *rukun* and mutual cooperation as social capital that supports recovery (Agung et al., 2022). The Arjowilangun case complements these studies by showing how cohesion is produced through everyday governance mechanisms (committee deliberation, record-keeping, and routinized participation) rather than appearing only as ritual symbolism or post-disaster solidarity.

Religious plurality in Arjowilangun demonstrates that adherents can live with tolerance when institutional arrangements and procedural norms are in place. Freedom of religion is protected by the state, but local harmony depends on precise and inclusive management of diversity; without such efforts, pluralism can become a source of division. The Arjowilangun case shows that procedural fairness and symbolic accommodation reduce the risk that religion will be instrumentalized for narrow interests (Pahrudin & Wekke, 2021).

Analytically, the *Selamatan Desa* demonstrates that cohesion functions both as a precondition for collective action and as an outcome of institutionalized ritual governance. The findings further indicate that sustaining interreligious harmony depends on procedural fairness and transparent record-keeping. In addition, continuous intergenerational socialization enables contested choices to be transformed into shared and enduring communal practices.

The findings of this study are subject to several limitations. First, the research is based on a single qualitative case in Arjowilangun Village, which limits the generalizability of the results to other socio-cultural and religious contexts. Second, the data were collected during the July–August 2021 pandemic period, meaning that the observed forms of ritual governance and social interaction may have been influenced by exceptional circumstances rather than reflecting ordinary conditions. Third, the study primarily relies on interviews, observations, and local documents, focusing on the perspectives of community participants involved in the *Selamatan Desa* tradition. Consequently, the findings do not capture broader comparative dynamics across villages or provide quantitative measures of social harmony. Future research involving multiple sites and mixed-method approaches would help assess the wider applicability and long-term sustainability of the mechanisms identified in this study.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that religion plays a central role in shaping communal values, social behavior, and collective decision-making in Arjowilangun Village. Religion is not merely understood as a set of doctrinal teachings, but as a lived practice reflected in everyday attitudes, ritual participation, mutual cooperation, and social responsibility. The annual *Selamatan Desa* tradition illustrates how religious values are institutionalized through communal rituals that integrate sacred meaning, cultural identity, and social cohesion. Despite the multicultural structure of the village community, harmony is maintained through negotiated ritual governance, collective participation, and respect for local traditions.

This study also shows that religious leaders, mosque institutions, and local cultural figures function as important agents of social construction who shape communal norms and mediate collective responses during times of crisis. During the pandemic period, the community adapted ritual practices through procedural negotiation, symbolic reframing, transparent budgeting, and collective cost-sharing, demonstrating the community's capacity for resilience and social solidarity. In this context, Islamic ecological values emerged through communal awareness of balance, sustainability, and ethical relations between humans, religion, and the environment, particularly in discussions surrounding ritual materials and local resources.

The study contributes to broader discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), by showing how local religious traditions can strengthen social harmony, participatory governance, and community resilience in times of disruption. The findings suggest that traditional religious institutions and ritual practices remain relevant in addressing contemporary social and ecological challenges, including crisis management in the digital era.

This research acknowledges limitations in scope, as it primarily captures the initial phenomenological adaptation of socio-religious and ecological values through digital spaces during a specific crisis window (July–August 2021). Because this study focuses on immediate coping mechanisms, the researcher recommends future, more comprehensive studies to investigate the long-term sustainability of these digital-traditional hybrids. Specifically, future research should explore whether these digitally-mediated practices have permanently altered the social construction of Islamic ecology and ritual governance in

post-crisis rural societies.

## References

- Agung, Y. R., & Surur, M. (2018). Kohesi sosial dalam membentuk harmoni kehidupan komunitas. *Jurnal Psikologi Perseptual* 3(1), 37-43. <https://doi.org/10.24176/perseptual.v3i1.3679>
- Agung, Y. R., Yahya, Y., Fuaturosida, R., Ahda, M. N. F., Khotimah, K., & Hidayat, S. (2022). Peran modal sosial sebagai solusi konflik pasca gempa bumi. *Journal of Indonesian Psychological Science (JIPS)*. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jips.v2i1.16027>
- Anggito, A., & Setiawan, J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif* (E. D. Lestari, Ed.). Jejak.
- Azra, A. (2019). *Identitas dan krisis budaya: Membangun multikulturalisme Indonesia*. Universitas Indonesia Press.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (2016). The social construction of reality. In *Social theory re-wired* (pp. 110–122). Routledge.
- Bhakti, I. N., & Sahbudi, R. (2017). *Menjauhi demokrasi kaum penjahat: Belajar dari kekeliruan negara-negara lain*. Mizan.
- Dharma, F. A. (2018). The social construction of reality: Peter L. Berger's thoughts about social reality. *Kanal: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 7(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.21070/kanal.v7i1.3024>
- Erawati, D. (2017). Interpretasi multikulturalisme agama dan pendidikan. *Jurnal Studi Agama dan Masyarakat*, 13(1), 100–119. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jsam.v13i1.474>
- Erningtyas, T., & Widiyanto, A. A. (2021). Toleransi antarumat beragama dan relasinya terhadap pemeliharaan kebudayaan masyarakat Desa Pancasila. *Jurnal Integrasi dan Harmoni Inovatif Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 1(2), 142–150. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um063v1i2p142-150>
- Hadiwijaya, A. S. (2023). Sintesa teori konstruksi sosial realitas dan konstruksi sosial media massa. *Dialektika Komunika: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi dan Pembangunan Daerah*, 11(1), 75–89. <https://doi.org/10.33592/dk.v11i1.3498>

- Hanik, U., & Trumudi, M. (2020). Slametan sebagai simbol harmoni dalam interaksi sosial agama dan budaya masyarakat Desa Tanon Kecamatan Papar Kabupaten Kediri. *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman*, 31(1), 135–152. <https://doi.org/10.33367/tribakti.v31i1.860>
- Hartani, M., & Nulhaqim, S. A. (2020). Analisis konflik antar umat beragama di Aceh Singkil. *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik*, 2(2), 93–99. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkrk.v2i2.28154>
- Liata, N., & Fazal, K. (2021). Multikultural dalam perspektif sosiologis. *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 1(2), 188–201. <https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v1i2.11213>
- Listyaningrum, O., & Sukmawan, S. (2025). Uniting in Diversity: Multicultural Values in the Clean Tradition of Arjowilangun Village, Malang Regency. *Jurnal Sastra Indonesia*, 14(2), 132-148. <https://doi.org/10.15294/jsi.v14i2.24537>
- Moleong, L. J. (2007). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Mukodi, M., & Burhanuddin, A. (2016). Islam Abangan dan nasionalisme komunitas Samin di Blora. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 24(2), 379–400. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.24.2.1086>
- Muslimin, D., Majid, M. N., Simarmata, N., Ristiyana, R., Langelo, W., Safitri, T. A., & Januarsari, Y. (2023). *Metodologi penelitian kuantitatif dan kualitatif* (1st ed.; N. Mayasari, Ed.). Get Press Indonesia.
- Mustakim, Ishomuddin, Winarjo, W., & Khozin. (2020). Konstruksi kepemimpinan atas tradisi Giri Kedaton sebagai identitas sosial budaya masyarakat Kabupaten Gresik. *Media Komunikasi FPIPS*, 19(1), 11–20. <https://doi.org/10.23887/mkfis.v19i1.23250>
- Nasution, A. S. (2022). Strategi membangun nilai-nilai toleransi antar umat beragama di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar dan Sosial Humaniora*, 2(1), 123-136. <https://doi.org/10.53625/jpdsh.v2i1.5370>
- Pritantia, N. R., Kosasih, A., & Supriyono, S. (2021). Pola Hubungan Sosial Masyarakat Multikultural dalam Gaya Hidup Beragama (Studi Kasus Kampung Kencana Kabupaten Kuningan). *Ideas: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Budaya*, 7(3), 165. <https://doi.org/10.32884/ideas.v7i3.442>

- Santoso, T. (2002). *Kekerasan Politik-Agama: Suatu Studi Konstruksi Sosial tentang Perusakan Gereja di Situbondo, 1996*. Universitas Airlangga.
- Setiawan, A. B., Eskasasnanda, I. D. P., & Towaf, S. M. (2022). Konstruksi sosial toleransi keberagaman dalam pelestarian budaya multikultural di Pesarean Gunung Kawi. *Jurnal Integrasi Dan Harmoni Inovatif Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 2(9), 831–837. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um063v2i92022p831-837>
- Sitorus, G. H. (2023). Comprehending the Essence of the Parsahutaon Community in Nurturing Interfaith Solidarity in Tarutung City, North Sumatra. *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif*, 17(2), 429. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jsr.v17i2.2701>
- Wulandari, S. K., Yasmin, A. R., Sugiarti, N. P. B., Komariah, S., & Hyangsewu, P. (2024). Menggali Makna Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama dalam Kerangka Keselarasan Sosial. *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSAI)*, 5(2), 281–296. <https://doi.org/10.22373/jsai.v5i2.4845>
- Yurisa, P. R., Fu'aturosida, R., Agung, Y. R., & Muhayani, U. (2021). Islamic values behind the ritual of a cow head burial in Grebeg Suro. *El Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam*, 23(1), 1-217. <https://doi.org/10.18860/eh.v23i1.10576>