

Constructing Religious Moderation and Multiculturalism: A Case Study of Pulukan Village, Jembrana Regency, West Bali

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24843/JKB.2026.v16.i02.p08>

Abstract: Jembrana Regency in West Bali is a multicultural region shaped by long-standing religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity, further reinforced by its historical ties with neighboring Java through migration and trade. Using Pulukan Village as a case study, this research examines how religious moderation and multiculturalism are constructed in everyday community life. The study employs a qualitative approach combining critical ethnography and ethnomethodology. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving religious leaders, customary leaders, village officials, and community members from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. The findings show that religious moderation is sustained not only through formal policies but also through everyday practices, including cooperation, interfaith participation in community activities, and dialogue-based conflict resolution. Multiculturalism is strengthened through continuous interaction, adaptation, identity negotiation, and mutual recognition of differences. This study demonstrates how locally rooted values and participatory community practices can foster social cohesion and provides insights for promoting religious moderation in other multicultural settings.

Keywords: religious moderation; articulation identity; multiculturalism; Pulukan Village

1. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the world's most culturally diverse nations, characterised by the coexistence of hundreds of ethnic groups, languages, religions, and local traditions. This diversity constitutes an important foundation of national identity but does not automatically produce harmonious social relations.

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Submitted: 14 October 2025; Accepted: 24 July 2026; Published: 5 August 2026



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Diversity develops into multiculturalism only when differences are recognised, equality is respected, and individuals and communities can maintain their identities while participating in a shared social and political order (Parekh, 2000). In this sense, multiculturalism extends beyond demographic plurality to encompass the social processes through which mutual respect, inclusion, and justice are continuously negotiated. Religious moderation complements this perspective by promoting balanced and inclusive religious attitudes that uphold both freedom of belief and respect for the rights of others. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs conceptualises religious moderation through four interrelated dimensions: national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019; Junaedi, 2019).

Rather than being shaped solely through state policies or formal religious discourse, multiculturalism and religious moderation are also constructed through everyday social practices. Wise and Velayutham (2009) describe this process as *everyday multiculturalism*, referring to routine interactions through which people from different cultural and religious backgrounds negotiate coexistence in daily life. Mutual assistance, neighbourhood cooperation, food sharing, participation in social ceremonies, and informal communication foster trust, reciprocity, and social intimacy while allowing communities to maintain their distinct identities. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding religious relations in Indonesian villages, where everyday interaction often plays a more significant role than formal institutions in sustaining social cohesion.

Jembrana Regency, located in the western part of Bali, provides an important setting for examining these processes. As the gateway connecting Bali and Java through Gilimanuk Port, Jembrana has historically experienced intensive migration, trade, labour mobility, and intercultural exchange. These historical processes have produced a socially plural region where Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and other religious communities interact in everyday life. According to population data for 2025, Hindus constitute about 71% of the regency's population and Muslims about 27%, while smaller Christian, Buddhist, and Confucian communities contribute to its religious diversity (Dinas Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil Kabupaten Jembrana, 2026a).

Within this multicultural setting, Pulukan Village represents a particularly significant case. Historical records and local oral traditions indicate that the village was established through successive waves of migration beginning in the late nineteenth century, initially by settlers from Air Kuning, followed by migrants from East Java, Madura, Karangasem, Nusa Penida, and Bugis-

Makassar communities. Consequently, Pulukan developed as a village shaped by migration rather than by a single ethnic origin. Today, approximately 70% of its residents depend on agriculture, while the population consists predominantly of Balinese Hindus (54.6%) and Javanese, Madurese, and Bugis-Makassarese Muslims (45.1%), with a small Christian minority. This relatively balanced religious composition has created an everyday social environment in which different communities interact continuously through farming, local markets, customary organisations, neighbourhood associations, and religious and cultural events. Such conditions make Pulukan an appropriate site for examining how religious moderation is embedded in everyday multicultural practices.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of local culture in maintaining interreligious harmony in Jembrana. Sabarudin and Arif (2019) found that local wisdom functions as an important social bond among religious communities in Kampung Loloan, while Gede Agung et al. (2024) showed that intercultural communication, local cultural activities, and community leadership strengthen social cohesion in multicultural communities. Focusing specifically on Pulukan, Putri et al. (2020) identified multicultural values such as *Tat Twam Asi, menyama braya*, mutual cooperation, and participation in one another's social and cultural activities as important mechanisms for maintaining harmonious relations between religious communities. Their study also explained how these values are transmitted through processes of socialisation and enculturation.

Despite these important contributions, previous studies have largely described multicultural values and educational processes without examining how everyday cultural practices actively construct religious moderation. Limited attention has been given to the ways in which local traditions are negotiated by majority and minority communities, institutionalised by families, religious leaders, customary organisations, and village authorities, and sustained amid contemporary social change. Likewise, the relationship between multicultural practices and the four dimensions of religious moderation—national commitment, tolerance, rejection of violence, and accommodation of local culture—has received little scholarly attention.

This study addresses these gaps by examining Pulukan Village as a multicultural social space in which religious moderation is continuously produced through everyday interaction. Drawing upon the perspectives of critical ethnography and ethnomethodology, it investigates how local practices such as *ngejot, menyama braya, nguwopin*, mutual cooperation, and participation in religious and cultural activities become mechanisms for negotiating religious difference and strengthening social cohesion. By connecting everyday multiculturalism with the Indonesian concept of religious moderation, this

study contributes both theoretically and empirically to understanding how interreligious harmony is socially constructed at the community level. It also offers a community-based model of religious moderation that may inform broader discussions of multicultural coexistence in Indonesia and other culturally diverse societies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Religious Moderation and Multiculturalism*

Religious moderation refers to a way of understanding and practising religion that maintains balance, justice, and proportionality while rejecting both excessive rigidity and the relativisation of religious commitment (Junaedi, 2019). It does not require believers to weaken their religious convictions; rather, it regulates how those convictions are expressed within a socially diverse environment. In Indonesia, the concept has developed from an academic and theological discourse into a national policy framework. The Ministry of Religious Affairs identifies four principal indicators of religious moderation: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation of local culture (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019). Its institutional significance was subsequently reinforced through Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023, which positions religious moderation as a shared responsibility of government institutions, religious communities, and citizens. Consequently, religious moderation should be examined not only as an individual attitude but also as a social process embedded in institutions, public policy, and everyday intergroup relations.

Religious moderation is closely related to multiculturalism, although the two concepts are analytically distinct. Multiculturalism recognises cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity as a legitimate and valuable component of collective life (Kymlicka, 1995; Hoon, 2017). It rejects forced assimilation and stresses equal recognition, participation, and access to public resources. Religious moderation provides the ethical and practical orientation through which this diversity can be managed without eliminating religious differences. In the Indonesian context, this relationship is grounded in Pancasila and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which place unity and diversity within the same national framework. Nevertheless, formal recognition alone does not automatically produce harmonious relations. Prejudice, unequal representation, social segregation, and competition over public legitimacy may continue beneath dominant narratives of tolerance.

Religious moderation should not be understood merely as a set of normative indicators or a government programme, but as a social process that is continuously constructed, negotiated, practised, and contested. Huda et al.,

(2017) and Mukhoyyaroh et al., (2025) shows that tolerance in Indonesia often operates within moral, political, and religious boundaries shaped by dominant groups. Therefore, studies of religious moderation must examine not only social harmony but also power relations, majority–minority positions, limits of social acceptance, and forms of discrimination hidden behind narratives of harmony.

Recent studies therefore emphasise the importance of lived and everyday forms of moderation. The concept of everyday multiculturalism directs attention to routine encounters in workplaces, neighbourhoods, markets, schools, and community organisations, where people learn to negotiate differences through practical interaction rather than through formal dialogue alone (Wise & Velayutham 2009). Everyday encounters may create familiarity, interpersonal trust, and a shared sense of responsibility that transcend formal religious boundaries.

Studies of Hindu–Muslim relations in Bali demonstrate that interreligious relations are dynamic. Karim (2016) found that these relations may take the form of cooperation, accommodation, and tolerance, but may also involve competition and conflict. Social harmony is supported by a history of interaction, shared economic interests, effective communication, and mechanisms of social integration.

Wiguna et al. (2024) examined the religious moderation index among 285 students at MAN 1 Jembrana using four indicators: national commitment, tolerance, nonviolence, and an accommodating attitude toward local culture. The study reported a religious moderation index of 3.45, which was classified as very high. More specifically, national commitment scored 3.10, tolerance 3.46, nonviolence 3.49, and acceptance of local culture 3.51. These findings indicate that religious moderation in Jembrana is strengthened through education, the habituation of tolerance, participation in local cultural practices, and institutional support. Nevertheless, the study recommends further strengthening Pancasila values, preventing radicalism, respecting other religious beliefs, and promoting cooperation with religious and customary leaders. Also, suggest that religious moderation becomes socially meaningful when it is enacted through repeated cooperation. Such practices transform tolerance from a passive willingness to coexist into an active capacity to communicate, cooperate, and assume responsibility for members of other religious and ethnic groups.

2.2 Articulation of Religiosity and Cultural Identity

Religiosity concerns the extent to which religious beliefs, rituals, knowledge, experiences, and ethical consequences are internalised and practised in individual and collective life (Glock & Stark, 1965). However, religiosity is never expressed in a social vacuum. Its meanings and manifestations are shaped

by language, cultural conventions, social institutions, historical memories, and relations of power. The articulation of religiosity therefore refers to the process through which religious commitments are expressed, connected to cultural meanings, and positioned within a particular social context.

Hall (1996) views articulation as a contingent process of connecting elements that do not possess a fixed or necessary relationship. Religious values, ethnic identities, local traditions, and political interests may be connected in different ways under different historical and social conditions. Similarly, Li (2000) explains identity articulation as a process of positioning and claim-making through which groups define themselves, negotiate recognition, and respond to available political and cultural opportunities. Identity is consequently not merely inherited but actively articulated in relation to other identities and structures of authority.

Cultural identity is thus not a static inheritance but an ongoing construction produced through shared memories, symbols, traditions, language, and social interaction. In multiethnic societies, identity is continually renegotiated through migration, intermarriage, generational change, economic exchange, cultural hybridity, and unequal access to authority and representation (Bhabha, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Individuals and communities may retain particular religious and ethnic affiliations while simultaneously developing a shared local identity based on residence, neighbourhood relations, economic interdependence, and participation in village life.

Recent research in Bali supports this relational understanding of cultural identity. Wulan et al. (2023) show that Muslim identity in North Bali develops through accommodation and interaction with the surrounding Balinese cultural environment. Rather than producing complete assimilation, these interactions enable Muslim communities to preserve their religious identity while participating in Balinese cultural life. Pradnyantari et al., (2025) likewise find that social harmony among Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese communities in Jembrana is sustained through acculturation, interreligious communication, shared traditions, and the formation of an inclusive local identity that crosses ethnic boundaries. Meanwhile, Sosiowati et al., (2025) examined the preservation of the Loloan Malay language through the religious rituals of Burdah and Ngelenggang. The study found that Loloan Malay, as a marker of identity among the Muslim minority community in Jembrana, is maintained through cultural materials, the recitation of religious verses, ritual communication, and the transmission of tradition to younger generations.

From a religious-political perspective, the presence of a faith-affiliated orphanage in Pulkan, despite the religion's small local following, may represent symbolic religious articulation. It does not necessarily signal conflict or deliberate

expansion, but raises questions about religious visibility, recognition, humanitarian service, institutional authority, and majority–minority interpretations of religious institutions in shared social space. Its meaning should therefore be derived from local narratives and interactions, not predetermined assumptions. The Pulukan case is analytically valuable because it examines religious moderation, multiculturalism, and identity articulation as interconnected processes. Harmony is understood not as permanent or conflict-free, but as a negotiated achievement continually reproduced through mutual recognition, equitable participation, cultural accommodation, dialogue, cooperation, and peaceful management of difference across religious and cultural groups.

3. Research Methods and Theory

3.1 Method

This study employs a multi-method approach combining critical ethnography (Madison, 2005; Thompson, 2015) and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). Critical ethnography is used to interpret the symbolic meanings embedded in everyday social actions, while ethnomethodology examines how individuals construct, maintain, and understand social order through routine practices. Social reality is therefore viewed not as an objective entity but as something continuously produced through interaction.

Ethnomethodology is applied to investigate how Pulukan residents negotiate religious and cultural values through conversations, social activities, and communal rituals. Two central concepts are indexicality and reflexivity. Indexicality refers to the context-dependent meanings of utterances and actions, whereas reflexivity indicates that social actions both reflect and actively construct reality. These concepts guide the interpretation of observations and in-depth interviews. Religious moderation, identity articulation, and multiculturalism are consequently understood not merely as internalized values but as products of everyday social practices.

Data were collected from August 10 to 25, 2025, through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of relevant socio-religious documents. Informants were purposively selected based on their structural and functional roles, including traditional village heads (*bendesa adat*), village officials, religious leaders, fishermen, farmers, and other residents. Data analysis followed three interactive stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. These processes were conducted simultaneously to ensure contextual accuracy, reliability, objectivity, and validity. Integrating these methodological perspectives enables a holistic understanding of how religious moderation and multiculturalism are experienced, negotiated, and transmitted within Pulukan's multireligious community.

3.2 Theory

This study applies Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice (1984, 1991) and Alfred Schutz's social phenomenology (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004). Bourdieu's perspective reveals that apparently harmonious religious relations may contain ideological contestation among actors seeking economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital through particular strategies and practices. His framework emphasizes the interrelationship between habitus, field, capital, agents, structures, and power.

Habitus refers to historically formed and enduring dispositions that shape how individuals perceive, think, feel, and act. Past experiences are internalized as schemes that guide individual and collective practices without completely determining them (Bourdieu, 1984, 1991). The field, represented in this study by Pulukan Village, is a structured social arena governed by particular rules and power relations. Within this arena, actors compete, exchange, and convert cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital to obtain or maintain positions and influence.

Schutz's phenomenology is used to examine how Pulukan residents construct and interpret their everyday lifeworld. It emphasizes subjectivity, common-sense knowledge, and practical reasoning through which social realities acquire meaning. Community members interpret and objectify social life through accumulated experiences, shared knowledge, and everyday interactions (Berger & Luckmann, 1973).

Phenomenology also highlights typification, through which individuals classify experiences and situations, and language, which transmits meanings and socially shared interpretations (Ritzer & Goodman, 2004). Religious practices in Pulukan are therefore understood not merely as observable activities but as cognitive and ideological constructions articulated through language. Combining social practice theory and phenomenology allows the study to analyze both power relations and subjective meanings underlying religious moderation, cultural identity, and multicultural coexistence.

4. Findings and Discussion

Before analysing religious moderation and multiculturalism in Pulukan Village, it is important to briefly describe the village as the social and historical setting of this study.

Pulkan Village is located in Pekutatan District, Jembrana Regency, West Bali, approximately 3 km from the subdistrict capital, 26 km from the regency capital, and 60 km from Denpasar. According to village records and local oral history, the area remained dense forest until around 1874, when it was opened for settlement by pioneers from Air Kuning, Jembrana, led by Pak Daris and Pak

Rais with permission from the Dutch colonial administration and the support of the King of Jembrana. A second wave of migrants from East Java and Madura arrived in 1899, followed by settlers from Karangasem, Nusa Penida, and Bugis-Makassar communities. Around 1910, the growing settlement formally established the village administration, with Pak Daris serving as the first *mekel* (village head). Local tradition also traces the name *Pulukan* to a Dutch colonial directive requiring settlers to live in a centralized settlement, reflecting the village's early colonial history.

Today, Pulukan represents a distinctive multicultural community whose social fabric has been shaped by successive waves of migration and long-term interethnic interaction. Village Profile Data (2020–2024) record a population of 5,036 in 2024. About 70% of residents depend on agriculture, including rice cultivation and plantation crops such as coconut, clove, cocoa, and vanilla, while the remainder work as labourers, artisans, private-sector employees, and civil servants. The population consists predominantly of Balinese Hindus, alongside Javanese, Madurese, and Bugis-Makassarese Muslims, with Christians forming a small minority. This ethnic and religious diversity, combined with a shared agrarian livelihood and a long history of coexistence, has created a social environment in which interfaith relations are embedded not only in formal religious practices but also in everyday cooperation, customary institutions, and local cultural values. This historical and social context makes Pulukan an appropriate case for examining the dynamics of religious moderation and multiculturalism in contemporary Bali.

4.1 Forms of Articulation of Religiosity in Pulukan Village

4.1.1 Interfaith Participation in Socio-Religious Activities

Interfaith participation in socio-religious activities represents a tangible expression of solidarity that transcends theological boundaries. In Pulukan Village, for instance, interactions between Hindu and Muslim communities extend beyond their respective ritual spheres into collaborative social practices rooted in the value of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). Activities such as the construction of *balai banjar* (community halls), road repairs, and disaster response are carried out collectively without distinction of religion. Examples of disaster-mitigation activities include those carried out in Banjar Ledok, Pulukan Village, which actively involve all community elements (the Village Apparatus, BUMDes, and the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in disaster response and risk-reduction efforts. Regular community clean-up activities, such as the Friday Clean-Up Program, are also routinely conducted in the Pulukan Village area and at the Village Monument as an expression of collective care and preparedness toward environmental changes that may increase disaster risks,

such as local flooding caused by waste accumulation. In this context, interfaith involvement demonstrates that social solidarity often outweighs identity-based divisions.

One of the primary articulations of religiosity can be observed in Hindu religious ceremonies (*odalan*), such as, subak temple ceremonies, the village office, and cremation rituals (*ngaben*), which serve to reinforce spiritual identity while maintaining social cohesion (McKay, 2023). Collaboration in *Subak* temple ceremonies in Pulukan Village reflects the deep communal values of Balinese culture, where farmers, village leaders, and temple priests work together to maintain the balance between nature, humans, and the divine. These ceremonies are organized collectively through the Subak organization, with each member contributing time and resources to prepare offerings, clean irrigation channels, and coordinate rituals offering to Dewi Shri, the goddess of fertility and prosperity. The collaboration extends beyond religious duties, strengthening social harmony and mutual trust among villagers. Through this shared responsibility, the Subak system in Pulukan not only preserves agricultural sustainability but also reinforces the living tradition of gotong royong as a form of spiritual and ecological stewardship. In this context, Nurun, a farmer originally from Madura and a member of the subak, explained:

“As residents of Pulukan and members of the *subak*, we always work together during ceremonies held at the *Subak* temple, as well as in maintaining the irrigation channels that serve our rice fields.” (Interview, August 15, 2025).

At the same time, the presence of Muslim and Christian groups in Pulukan highlights the space for diversity, where communal prayer practices (*shalat berjamaah*), Islamic religious celebrations such as Idul Fitri and Idul Adha, as well as Christian observances such as Christmas, are also recognized as integral components of the village’s religious landscape. Such interreligious cooperation can also be found in several multireligious villages in Jembrana Regency, including Ekasari, Blimbingsari, and Gumbrih Village in Pekutatan District.

This pattern of participation reflects two important dimensions. First, as a means of social integration, joint activities cultivate a sense of belonging to the village and strengthen community cohesion. Second, as a cultural strategy, interfaith cooperation articulates values of harmony and tolerance in concrete practices, thereby minimizing potential conflict. The presence of religious leaders also plays a pivotal role in directing participation, for example through calls for peace and reinforcement of the *menyama braya* principle that is widely embraced by all residents.

These practices demonstrate that religious moderation in Pulukan operates not only at the level of discourse, sermons, or government policies, but is also embodied in recurring social actions. Local traditions provide spaces of encounter that enable community members to build mutual trust without having to relinquish their religious identities. In this context, local culture is not merely a legacy of the past, but a social resource that is actively mobilized to manage differences. Interfaith participation in socio-religious activities has thus become a hallmark of Pulukan's plural society. The involvement of Hindu and Muslim communities extends beyond ritual observances into shared social engagement that reinforces togetherness. For example, Wayan Armawa as village leader, explaining that during the annual Hindu ceremonies such as *Ngerupuk* with *ogoh-ogoh* parades, and *Nyepi*, Muslim residents assist with traffic management, logistical preparations, or simply attend to offer moral support. Empirically, this phenomenon can be observed in the annual *ogoh-ogoh* procession, a Hindu ritual held on the eve of the Caka New Year (see Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. *Ogoh-ogoh* parade involving elementary school students from different religious backgrounds, fostering awareness and the practice of religious moderation from an early age in Pulukan Village (Source: Pulukan Village Profile, 2020–2024).



Figure 2. Religious moderation in practice, demonstrated through the Hindu *ogoh-ogoh* parade, which is supported by members of other religious communities in Pulukan Village (Source: Pulukan Village Profile, 2020–2024).

Conversely, during Islamic holidays such as Idul-Fitri, Idul Adha, and *Rokat Tase* (sea harvest ritual), Hindu villagers often take part in cleaning mosque compounds, preparing communal meals, and preparing ritual equipment or visiting Muslim neighbour as a gesture of fraternity. This phenomenon affirms the findings of the research Anwar in Indonesia (2021), and Wulan et al., (2023), studies et Nort Bali, that levels of religious moderation tend to be higher in societies with frequent interreligious interactions across social, economic, and cultural domains.

These patterns show that socio-religious activities provide productive spaces for interfaith interaction, strengthening social cohesion and collective belonging. Religious leaders sustain such participation by promoting *menyama braya*, enabling harmony to prevail over differences. Interfaith involvement is therefore not merely symbolic but functions as a social mechanism regulating communal ethics, negotiation, and cultural hybridity (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Bhabha, 1994). This supports Geertz (1973) and Woodward (2011), who argue that religiosity interacts with cultural identity and local norms to maintain social

4.1.2 *Integration of Local Cultural Elements in Religious Rituals*

The integration of local cultural elements into religious rituals in Pulukan illustrates the close relationship between spirituality and cultural identity. The articulation of religiosity is reflected in how religious communities adopt local cultural elements into their practices. For example, Bugis Muslims, during certain religious events, often use the Balinese language to greet participants from different faiths or adapt their dress codes in accordance with local norms of modesty when attending customary ceremonies. Similarly, Hindu communities demonstrate openness by inviting local Muslim leaders as guests at village rituals.

These practices resonate with Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2019), framework on religious moderation, which emphasizes accommodation of local culture as a pillar of interreligious harmony. Such integration not only affirms cultural adaptability but also demonstrates how religious communities in Pulukan creatively articulate their faith in ways that respect and reinforce shared cultural values. For example: *Megibung* activities are held at the time of breaking the fast to enliven the month of Ramadhan 1443 Hijriah, 2025 years. At the same moment, especially in Idul Hadha celebration, muslim residents shared various foods with their Hindu neighbours as an expression of their religious fellowship and social bonding.

The practice of *ngejot*, or the reciprocal sharing of food, constitutes an important form of everyday interreligious interaction within the community. A muslim resident Agus Muin described this practice as follows :

“As a Muslim resident who happens to live next door to Mrs. Suri, my family shares food with her family during Idul Adha and Idul Fitri. Conversely, during the Galungan celebration, Mrs. Suri also shares food, particularly traditional cakes, with our family. This practice has continued for decades, which has helped maintain harmonious relations between us as neighbors.” (Interview, August 20, 2025)

This testimony illustrates that *ngejot* is not merely an act of exchanging food, but also a socially embedded tradition that strengthens reciprocal relationships between neighbors of different religious backgrounds. Such traditions were once widely practised across Bali but have now largely disappeared in urban areas. In Pulukan, however, they remain a common part of everyday community life. The continuous exchange during Islamic and Hindu religious celebrations reflects mutual recognition, respect, and willingness to participate symbolically in one another’s moments of celebration. Through this practice, religious differences do not become barriers to social interaction but instead provide opportunities to reinforce solidarity and peaceful coexistence.

The tradition should therefore be preserved because it plays an important role in maintaining harmonious relations among neighbors despite their different religious beliefs. Its continuity over several decades demonstrates that interreligious tolerance is not only expressed through formal discourse or institutional programs, but is also practiced through simple, recurring, and meaningful acts in everyday life. In this context, *ngejot* functions as a form of social reciprocity that nurtures mutual trust, strengthens communal bonds, and contributes to the sustainability of religious moderation at the local community level.

Similarly, collectively the Java Muslim community integrates local cultural traditions into the celebration of Idul Fitri or the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*), such as through the recitation of *barzanji* and collective feasts organized through *gotong royong*. These practices demonstrate that religion and foods exchange traditions in Pulukan mutually enrich one another in sustaining social cohesion.

Thus, these practices highlight two key aspects. First, the integration of culture into rituals serves as a medium of tradition trans mission, as younger generations are not only introduced to spiritual dimensions but also to local arts, symbols, values, and identity. Second, such integration reinforces social cohesion, as rituals become venues for interaction and encounters among residents of different backgrounds. This reality is in line with the acculturation model (Barry, 1997), and the third space (Bhabha, 1994), that the integration strategy is an ideal form, because it allows society to maintain its cultural identity while building active participation in the dominant culture and building a shared social space.

4.2 Forms of Articulation of Cultural Identity

Pulukan Village, in Pekutatan District, Jembrana Regency, Bali, is not only a meeting ground for various religions but also for diverse ethnic and cultural identities. Its population consists of indigenous Balinese Hindus, Muslim communities of Bugis, Javanese, and Madurese origin, as well as a relatively small Christian community. This configuration makes Pulukan a microcosm of cultural plurality, where identities do not exist in isolation but are continuously negotiated and articulated in everyday life. The forms of articulation of cultural identity in Pulukan will be described as follows.

4.2.1 Language and Arts as Media of Integration and Differentiation

Language and the arts constitute some of the most flexible markers of cultural identity in Pulukan. Residents commonly use the Balinese language in public interactions, particularly in spaces such as markets or village meetings, even though at home they may speak their respective mother tongues (Balinese, Javanese, Bugis

and Madurese). Bilingualism or even multilingualism becomes a social skill that facilitates cross-group interactions. From S. Hall (1996) perspective, this practice represents an articulation of identity in which language serves dual functions: strengthening solidarity with the broader community while simultaneously preserving ethnic distinctiveness in private spaces. While Bourdieu (1991), through his concept of *habitus*, explains that language and the arts are everyday practices that simultaneously consolidate social and symbolic positions.

In daily interactions, Pulukan residents often use a mix of Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese. For instance, in a market conversation, a vendor might say: “*Niki murah je*” (Bali) → “This is really cheap, isn’t it?”, “*Sak akehé beli*” (Jawa) → “Just buy as much as you can.”, “*Ben mareh masak di dapur*” (Madura) → “Later you’ll get tired of cooking in the kitchen.” Such linguistic mixing is not merely practical communication but also reflects the mosaic of multiethnic identities that distinguishes Pulukan from other villages. In ritual contexts, Balinese tends to dominate, affirming cultural cohesion, while in economic spaces, mixed languages signify adaptation and openness.

Art serves to strengthen collective integration through ritual practices and creativity. The Rejang and Legong dance performed during *odalan* temple ceremonies and Gandrung dance during wedding ceremonies or national day celebrations involves women of various ages, creating intergenerational bridges. Pulukan’s *gamelan* features distinctive rhythms that combine classical Balinese patterns with improvisational beats influenced by its coastal setting. The carvings on temple shrines (*pelinggih*) also display differentiation: motifs of marine flora and small boats adorn sacred structures, signifying Pulukan’s identity as a fishing village with unique cultural character. Collaborative performances of the Hindu-Balinese: Legong dance and the Islamic Gandrung and Rebana are frequently staged together during national independence celebrations and village festivals, functioning as cultural negotiations (S. Hall, 1996) in performative spaces. Thus, the analysis of mixed languages and local arts demonstrates a performative arena and as *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1991).

In the arts, collaborations between the Banyuwangi Gandrung Dance and the Balinese Legong used *Rindik* or *Tetabuhan* (traditional Balinese gamelan music), not only performed in formal celebration, but also are often performed at weddings and cultural celebrations involving Hindus and Muslims. In Hindu religious rituals, for example, the emphasis is not solely on prayers and offerings but also on the incorporation of traditional music (*tetabuhan*), dance, and customary attire as offerings to *Sang Hyang Widhi* (God). These cultural elements render rituals not only sacred but also vital spaces for the preservation of local arts, and social integration. Empirically, this phenomenon is visually depicted in Figure 3.



Figure 3. A collaborative performance of East Java's *Gandrung* dance and the Balinese *Legong* dance during the Pulukan Youth Organization (*Karang Taruna*) anniversary and Indonesia's Independence Day celebration, 17 August 2025 (Source: Document of the Anthropology Study Program, Udayana University, 2025).

In the context of multi-ethnic interaction dynamics, Hobsbawm (1992), emphasizes that traditions are “re-invented” in response to multicultural conditions. Pulukan not only integrates its residents through language and arts but also asserts differentiated identities amidst interactions with other communities. Cultural identity here is fluid, dynamic, and continuously produced through linguistic and artistic practices rooted in daily life as well as ritual. This empirical phenomenon affirms the findings of the studies (Sosiowati et al. 2025; Sutrisno, et al., 2024; Soraya, 2023), that language serves as an effective adaptive strategy in maintaining cultural identity in cross-cultural interactions: Bali-Melayu in Jembrana, Bali-Java in Banyuwangi and Bali-Muna in Southeast Sulawesi.

4.2.2 Culinary Practices as a Space of Cultural Exchange

Culinary practices carry complex meanings because they not only serve to fulfil biological needs but also represent cultural identity, social values, historical experiences, religious symbols, and patterns of intergroup relations. Through the practices of preparing, serving, and sharing food, communities express their traditions, build solidarity, negotiate differences, and preserve collective memory (Saihu et al., 2019; Ariana et al., 2023). Culinary traditions in Pulukan provide a particularly fluid medium for articulating identity. Each ethnic group

preserves its distinctive cuisine—such as Bugis-style grilled fish, Balinese *lawar*, or Madurese *sate*—yet they also modify recipes so that dishes can be shared across religious boundaries without violating dietary restrictions. For instance, *lawar* is often prepared with chicken or vegetables so that it is permissible (*halal*) for Muslims. Food is thus not merely a means of biological sustenance but also a symbolic arena where cultural exchange unfolds dynamically. Each dish embodies narratives of identity that bring together the Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese communities who have long coexisted.

Traditional Balinese dishes such as *lawar*, *sate lilit*, and *jukut ares*, seasoned with *base genep* (a complete spice mix), frequently appear side by side with Javanese *pecel*, *rawon*, and Madurese *sate* (chicken or goat) during weddings and ritual ceremonies. This culinary juxtaposition creates a dialectic of taste that represents cultural integration. The practice of *ngejot* the sharing of food one day before celebration, during or after rituals functions not only as a religious act but also as a means of reinforcing solidarity across communities, as the shared dishes often combine elements from multiple culinary traditions.

Empirically, the interfaith and interethnic *ngejot* tradition has been practiced by the Pulukan community since the Dutch colonial period up to the present day. Informants (the hamlet head and the *bendesa adat* of Pulukan I Ketut Sarta) explained the following regarding the *ngejot* tradition:

“We, the residents of the village, especially in Pulukan Hamlet and Banjar Tinggi, where the Muslim population is larger than the Hindu population continue to carry out the *ngejot* reciprocally during annual celebrations, such as Nyepi and Galungan for Hindus, and Idul-Fitr for Muslims” So, we continue to preserve this tradition, not only because of the ancestral bonds of our forebears who worked together to build this village, but also as an expression of gratitude, fellowship, and kinship with relatives and neighbors, and in this way, *rukun* among us is sustainably maintained” (Interview, August 20, 2025).

Similarly, in public arenas, the morning market in Pulukan serves as a concrete ethnographic site. As one Balinese vendor explained: “I sell *laklak* cake here, but next to me a Madurese friend sells *sate*—Sometimes people buy both for breakfast, so we complement each other.” This statement highlights the market as not just a space of economic transaction but also a social meeting point where cultural identities are connected through cuisine. Culinary practices, therefore, operate as a form of cultural brokerage (Geertz, 1973), where identities are negotiated through taste, recipes, and the act of sharing meals.

Food promotes integration by creating shared experiences across ethnic and religious boundaries while preserving culinary distinctions, including

spicy Madurese flavors, fiery Balinese seasonings, and sweeter Javanese tastes. Within Bourdieu's (1984) framework, cuisine functions as cultural capital that expresses status and legitimizes identity. Culinary practices in Pulukan therefore facilitate cultural exchange, celebrate diversity, and strengthen a fluid collective identity rooted in multiculturalism. This process reflects cultural hybridity, through which identities evolve through adaptation, interaction, and innovation (Bhabha, 1994).

4.2.3 Participation in Intercommunity Customary and Religious Events

Another significant form of cultural identity articulation is the participation of residents across communities in customary and religious events. Although not directly involved in the rituals themselves, attendance as invited guests or as contributors of assistance is considered part of the social norm. For example, Muslims attend *ngaben* (Hindu cremation ceremonies) to provide moral support, while Hindus participate in *selamatan* gatherings held by Muslim families. Similarly, during Islamic celebrations such as *Mauludan* and *Idul-Fitri*, as well as Hindu festivities such as *Nyepi* and *Galungan*, Muslim groups both participate in and respect the norms of the celebrations. As one informant, Bu Muadah, a Muslim woman, explained:

"When Nyepi belongs to the Balinese Hindus, we respect it, even though we can still play in the street together with Balinese neighbors. Actually, during Nyepi, because it is a holiday, we have more time for social interaction. Muslim prayers also continue, with mutual tolerance." (Interview conducted on August 20, 2025).

This narrative illustrates the formation of situated identities (Yuval-Davis, 2011), where individuals adapt the expression of their identities according to the social context and the relational field in which the event takes place. Intercommunity participation in customary and religious activities in Pulukan represents a manifestation of social cohesion built on the principle of multiculturalism. The presence of Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese ethnic groups in the same social space fosters a unique pattern of participation, where cultural boundaries do not hinder involvement in public rituals. As one Madurese villager Nurun stated:

"We participate in *ngayah* (voluntary service) at the Subak Temple, even though we do not pray. It feels like a form of gratitude because we have been accepted to live here" (Interview, August 20, 2025).

This quotation illustrates that participation does not necessarily take spiritual form but rather social contribution to collective harmony. Conversely,

during the celebration of the Prophet's Birthday (*Maulid Nabi*), Balinese villagers (*pecalang*) often help by lending equipment, managing traffic, or joining communal feasts.

These practices reflect reciprocity that strengthens solidarity across religious and ethnic boundaries. Through Turner's (1969) concept of *communitas*, shared experiences transcend formal structures and reduce social segregation. Such participation creates bridging social capital and cultural capital that connect diverse groups and sustain village harmony (Putnam, 2000; Bourdieu, 1984). Although residents retain distinct religious identities, they cooperate through social contributions. Thus, Pulukan's rituals and *gotong royong* constitute social arenas where intercommunity solidarity and lived multiculturalism are continuously reproduced.

4.2.4 Inclusive Management of Social Spaces

The inclusive management of social spaces in Pulukan reflects a concrete practice of multiculturalism rooted in local wisdom. Social spaces such as *balai banjar* (community hall), the village hall, markets, and ritual areas are not owned exclusively by a single community but are managed openly for all ethnic groups coexisting in the village—Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese. For instance, the *balai banjar*, traditionally used for customary meetings, is also utilized by Muslim communities for social activities such as *pengajian* (religious study gatherings) or family weddings, with the approval and support of customary leaders. As one Balinese elder, Pak Nengah Kayun noted:

"This banjar belongs to everyone". If it is used for good purposes, it is open to all." Likewise, village roads are often lent to Muslim residents for wedding processions, illustrating flexibility in spatial governance that strengthens social cohesion. (Interview, August 20, 2025).

In the context of village government management, the village head explained that some Pulukan village employees are Muslim, even though we are the majority. The involvement of Muslims in government has been ongoing for a long time, stemming from the village's founding.

At the village market, intergroup interactions occur intensively. Madurese traders sell *sate* and other specialties, Javanese traders offer *tempeh*, while Balinese vendors sell traditional cakes (*jajan*). The market thus becomes an inclusive social space, enabling everyday cultural exchanges through transactions, conversations, and food-sharing practices. Such inclusivity not only reduces segregation but also fosters bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), which connects differences across groups. An ethnographic account highlights how inclusive space helps defuse potential conflict. A minor tension once arose

over the use of loudspeakers for a Muslim *pengajian* coinciding with Hindu *gamelan* rehearsals at the *balai banjar*. Instead of escalating, customary and religious leaders met at the *balai banjar* and agreed on an alternating schedule. As a Javanese resident, Agus Rahman, explained:

“If we had insisted, it would have led to conflict. But because we had a common space to talk, the problem was resolved.” (Interview, August 25, 2025).

This case demonstrates that inclusive spaces are not only arenas for interaction but also mechanisms of conflict resolution through deliberation. Empirically, such practices align with the frameworks of ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), the public sphere (Habermas, 1989); notion of community dynamics (Turner, 1969). The management of social spaces in Pulukan represents practical agreements that create and sustain social order while serving as arenas for inclusive identity articulation.

Open public spaces allow equal participation in social and religious activities, representing lived experiences of equality in collective domains. By reducing group dominance and opening opportunities for dialogue across identities (Barry, 1997), Pulukan’s inclusive spatial governance is not merely an adaptive strategy to diversity but a means of fostering social resilience. In this sense, inclusivity transforms social spaces (Bhabha, 1994) into collective assets where differences are not divisive but instead become sources of strength in maintaining village harmony (Hobsbawm, n.d. 2003).

4.3 Potential Drivers of Building Religious Moderation and Multiculturalism

4.3.1 Historical Factors in the Formation of Multicultural Identity

Historical factors play a crucial role in shaping multicultural identity in Pulukan Village. Its geographical location along the Jembrana coast has made it a strategic trade point since the era of the West Bali kingdom. This coastal route connected Pulukan with communities in East Java and Madura through the mobility of traders, fishermen, and migrant workers. Such historical processes created cross-ethnic interactions that continue to the present (Geertz, 1973) emphasizes that migration and economic exchanges not only affect social structures but also shape cultural patterns transmitted across generations.

In addition to migration, Dutch colonialism since 1898, significantly influenced Pulukan’s social configuration (Pulukan Village Profile, 2020-2024). The implementation of forced cultivation systems and coffee plantations in Jembrana attracted migrants from Karangasem, Nusa Penida, and Java, while the Dutch also recruited plantation laborers, further layering Pulukan’s multicultural landscape. S. Hall (1996), explains that cultural identity is shaped

by collective historical experiences, including colonialism and migration. In Pulukan, the memory of colonial history not only left an economic legacy but also fostered solidarity among groups who collectively endured injustice.

Empiric evidence reveals that the presence of Bali, Madurese, Bugis, and Javanese communities in Pulukan dates back to early 20th-century fishing migrations and continued into the Dutch colonial period. These groups settled near the coast, built modest homes, and gradually integrated into village life. As one village elder recalled: “The Madurese and Bugis have long been here, since my grandfather was a child. They joined in fishing, took part in community work, so they have long been considered part of us.” Interview conducted with Wayan Kari on August 25, 2025).

This testimony underscores that diversity in Pulukan is not a recent phenomenon but the result of a long historical accumulation of interactions. Historical factors thus form both the foundation of cohesion and social differentiation. Migration generated interethnic connections, while colonialism cultivated collective awareness of solidarity. According to Bourdieu (1984,1991), these historical experiences have been internalized into habitus, evident in practices of gotong royong, linguistic hybridity (Balinese, Javanese, Madurese), and patterns of participation in shared rituals. Pulukan therefore illustrates how history is not merely a narrative of the past but also a form of cultural capital that continues to shape the village’s multicultural identity today.

4.3.2 Inclusive Leadership in Pulukan’s Multicultural Context

Inclusive leadership is a crucial factor in maintaining social harmony within multicultural communities such as Pulukan Village. The concept emphasizes the involvement of all groups without discrimination and prioritizes equality in decision-making. In practice, inclusive leadership is not only about formal representation but also about the leader’s ability to listen, mediate, and accommodate the ethnic and religious diversity present at the local level.

Interreligious relations in Pulukan generally unfold harmoniously, yet they are not entirely free from tensions. One source of contention has been cases of interfaith marriage, which have sparked sharp differences of opinion within the community. For some residents, such marriages are perceived as challenging customary norms and religious teachings, raising concerns over the erosion of cultural identity and spiritual values. Another sensitive issue has been the scheduling of Nyepi on 2025 coinciding with Friday prayers during major Islamic celebrations, which required accommodative solutions. This event occurred in 2025, when Nyepi fell on 29 March 2025 and Idul Fitri was expected on 31 March 2025 (1 Shawwal 1446 H).

Although the two celebrations did not fall on the exact same date, they took place in very close proximity within the same festive period, which was considered to have the potential for social tensions. Therefore, preventive measures were deemed necessary beforehand. Resolving these differences sometimes generates heated discussions and potential conflicts, necessitating active mediation by village authorities, religious leaders, and customary figures to find common ground and prevent divisions. The Bendesa Adat of Pulukan, I Ketut Sarta, has been serving since 2023, explained regarding such cases:

“In resolving cases of interfaith marriage and in arranging Nyepi celebrations that coincided with communal Friday prayers in the mosque for major Islamic holidays, we always reach decisions through deliberation. If decisions were imposed from above, we might feel excluded. But because we are invited to talk and deliberate together, we feel ownership of the decisions and thus are willing to comply.” (Interview, August 25, 2025).

This illustrates how local leadership in Pulukan demonstrates inclusivity by involving village officials, religious leaders, and customary figures in safeguarding social harmony. They serve not only as moral and cultural symbols but also as facilitators of communication among residents from diverse ethnic, religious, and professional backgrounds. By prioritizing open dialogue and deliberation, these leaders ensure that every voice has space to be heard, so that decisions reflect shared interests.

Inclusive leadership in Pulukan is also visible in the management of customary activities. During *odalan* (temple ceremonies), customary leaders openly accept assistance from non-Hindu villagers, for example: they contribute by providing offerings in the form of snacks and bottled drinking water as well as participating in maintaining security in the area during festival in the *ogoh-ogoh* parade held as part of the *Ngerupuk* ceremony before Nyepi. Conversely, Muslim leaders receive support from village authorities, Customary Village Security Unit (KAMDA), when organizing Idul Fitri and Maulid Nabi celebrations. These practices resonate with Turner’s view, where collective experiences transcend structural boundaries to foster a sense of togetherness (Turner, 1969).

Findings show that inclusive leadership in Pulukan is participatory, ensuring dialogue and minority representation (Habermas, 1989); adaptive, balancing local traditions and migrant needs; and symbolic, creating shared solidarity through cultural and religious cooperation (Laksana et al., 2022; Putnam, 2000; Bourdieu, 1991).

4.3.3 Social Norms Emphasizing Harmony (*Rukun*)

Social norms centered on *rukun* (harmony) provide a foundation for multicultural life in Pulukan Village. As an unwritten guideline, *rukun* regulates interactions among Balinese, Javanese, and Madurese residents while preventing conflict. Anthropologically, it functions as social glue (Durkheim, 1912), sustaining cohesion through tolerance, compromise, and mutual respect. In everyday life, minor disputes, including land-boundary disagreements, are resolved through mediation at the *balai banjar* or village office using *musyawarah*. As one customary leader I Ketut Sarta stated, “It is better to yield a little than to insist stubbornly until relationships break apart; what matters most is staying harmonious.” This illustrates how harmony is prioritized over individual interests. *Rukun* is also expressed through *gotong royong* during religious activities. Non-Hindu residents assist with food preparation during *odalan*, while Hindu residents participate in work for Maulid Nabi celebrations. These reciprocal practices reinforce solidarity and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), allowing communities to coexist without erasing distinct identities.

Historically, *rukun* developed in the early twentieth century when Madurese fishermen and Javanese laborers migrated to the Jembrana coast. Although their arrival initially raised concerns about resource competition, customary leaders and migrant representatives formed an unwritten agreement: newcomers were accepted if they joined *ngayah* and respected local customs. This intergenerational norm performs three functions: regulative, by discouraging confrontation; integrative, by connecting communities through cooperation; and preventive, by promoting peaceful dispute resolution. In Habermas’s (1989) framework, *rukun* may be understood as a medium of rational communication through which consensus is produced.

In Pulukan, *rukun* is therefore both a cultural value and a historically reproduced social practice. It is reinforced through *gotong royong*, *menyama braya*, reciprocal visiting, and everyday interaction. Pak Ahmad explained that Hindu, Muslim, and Christian residents maintain close relations, visit during religious celebrations, discuss daily concerns, and support social welfare, including assistance provided by an orphanage to disadvantaged families (Interview, August 25, 2025). This account illustrates that social norms emphasizing harmony are not only internalized as abstract values but are actively enacted in daily communal life.

5. Conclusion

The articulation of religiosity in Pulukan village, Jembrana, Bali, represents a dynamic integration between religious values and cultural identity in the context of a multiethnic and multireligious society. By applying a multi-perspective approach in this micro study, it is found that religiosity articulation

in Pulukan is not confined to the private domain but emerges as a social force shaping norms, habitus, and interactions among residents. Here, religiosity is practiced contextually, where religious values are articulated through local cultural media and embedded in everyday interactions.

This phenomenon resonates with the principles of religious moderation—tolerance, inclusivity, cultural accommodation—as well as with multiculturalism, which regards diversity as a social asset to be managed equitably. That effective religious moderation in multiethnic societies is not solely the result of top-down approaches but emerges organically from collective experiences and social consensus. Nevertheless, the sustainability of this model faces challenges from globalization, generational shifts, and the potential politicization of identity. Therefore, strengthening multicultural education, facilitating interfaith dialogue, and promoting public policies sensitive to local contexts constitute strategic steps to preserve and expand the social harmony already established. In order to development of religious moderation in multi-ethnic societies grounded in multiculturalism, Desa Pulukan offers a micro-model of religious moderation that is potentially replicable elsewhere, provided that historical interactions, inclusive leadership, and social norms emphasizing harmony are present as prerequisites.

Acknowledgments

The research team gratefully acknowledges the support of the Institute for Research and Community Service, Udayana University (LPPM Unud), for providing funding and facilities for this research and journal preparation. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the research team members, informants from Pulukan Village, and all other contributors whose participation made this study possible. The authors used OpenAI's ChatGPT to improve the language and readability of selected sections of this article. All outputs were reviewed, verified, and approved by the authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding this article.

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