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Local Wisdom as Mechanism for Religious Pluralism: A Socio-Cultural Study of Banjarpanepen Village in Azyumardi Azra's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Religious pluralism in multi-religious communities requires effective social mechanisms to maintain harmony. This study examines how local wisdom functions as an operational mechanism of religious pluralism in Banjarpanepen Village, a multi-religious community in Banyumas, Central Java, through Azyumardi Azra's socio-cultural perspective. This qualitative case study was conducted over four months in 2025 using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Informants were selected through purposive sampling representing diverse religious backgrounds (Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Belief Adherents), including religious leaders, customary elders, village officials, and active community members. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's technique, with validity enhanced through triangulation. Local wisdom practices) including Grebeg Suran, Purnamaan, Nyadran, and Slametan (function as operational mechanisms that strengthen interfaith harmony, regulate social interactions, and build community solidarity. Religious leaders, customary elders, and village officials play complementary roles in maintaining harmony through both formal and informal networks. Banyumasan cultural values of *nrimo* and respect for others provide the ethical foundation for peaceful coexistence. Findings validate Azra's framework of moderation, cultural openness, and socio-religious networks, demonstrating that Nusantara Islam pluralism is not merely normative discourse but lived through adaptive and inclusive daily social practices, positioning village pluralism as a practical expression of institutionalized cultural harmony.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Banjarpanepen Village is a multi-religious village located in Sumpiuh District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java. The village is inhabited by four religions: Islam (1277 households), Buddhism (141 households), Christianity (77 households), and Adherents of the Belief in the One Supreme God (6 households). Generally, in a social context, multi-religious communities are often perceived as conflict-prone. However, in reality, Banjarpanepen Village shows a different phenomenon. The community, living side by side in an interfaith context, is actively involved in various communal traditions rooted in local wisdom, carried out together and sustained continuously. This social reality presents an empirical puzzle: how local wisdom practices can function as a social mechanism to maintain and nurture harmony and religious pluralism amid differences in beliefs.

In the context of communal traditions based on local wisdom that have been practiced and preserved by the Banjarpanepen Village community, such as sedekah bumi (earth almsgiving), takiran, grebeg suran, purnamaan (kungcum ritual at Kalicawang), sadranan, selamatan, and others. The village's geographic location, which is also in the mountains and features beautiful natural features, is supported by strong natural resources and local village culture, making the village a portrait of Bhineka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) (Supriyanto, 2020).

Several studies show that local wisdom plays an urgent role in maintaining social cohesion within plural communities. Asikin (2021) confirms, in his research, that local traditions such as nyadarn serve to establish social solidarity that transcends the boundaries of religious identity in plural communities. Although Asikin's study still focuses on the dimension of social cohesion, it has not generally positioned this tradition as a mechanism of religious pluralism that is analyzed in depth. The study conducted by Imroatul Azizah (2020) on Pancasila Village in Lamongan also shows that interfaith communal rituals can strengthen social harmony and interfaith tolerance, but it emphasizes a harmony model without exploring in depth the socio-cultural dynamics of ritual as a daily practice of society. Not much different from the study conducted by Muthoharoh (2024), which highlights the practice of religious moderation based on local wisdom through rituals and social interactions in Balun Village, but the study is still oriented toward the narrative of moderation and has not explicitly connected with the theoretical framework of religious pluralism. Meanwhile, Nasriandi (2023) focuses on the collaboration between local wisdom values and socio-religious organizations to strengthen social harmony and tolerance, but the study focuses on the role of social institutions rather than communal ritual practices as a social mechanism of pluralism.

Although the literature underscores the importance of local wisdom and communal rituals in maintaining social harmony in plural communities, most studies remain descriptive and normative and have not specifically analyzed communal social practices as mechanisms in the formation and maintenance of religious pluralism at the village community level. In the context of Azyumardi Azra's thought on pluralism and society, it is also more widely applied in the macro context of religion, state, and democracy, so its application in reading the daily practices of multi-religious village

communities remains relatively limited. In this regard, this research focuses on communal ritual practices based on local wisdom in Banjarpanepen Village to fill the gap left by previous studies, drawing on Azyumardi Azra's socio-cultural perspective.

Religious pluralism is a discourse that not only accepts the existence of various religions in social life but also encourages positive interaction, upholds respect, and appreciates differences in beliefs. The idea emphasizes the existence of universal values that can serve as a foundation for peaceful coexistence despite theological differences. Therefore, religious pluralism appears not only as a social phenomenon but also as an ethical and theological approach that encourages openness to interfaith dialogue and collaboration (Nendissa et al., 2025).

Religious pluralism has become an important issue in Indonesia's socio-cultural dynamics. The diversity of beliefs is not only a cultural wealth but also presents challenges in realizing a harmonious social life. This diversity can be a source of social capital for the nation if properly managed and maintained, but it also has the potential to create conflicts that can ultimately trigger division and national disintegration if not managed well. In this context, conflicts driven by religious sentimentality are still common in our society. This often occurs due to the emotional involvement of each religion's followers (Casram, 2016).

In the dynamics of social life, there is always a coloring between harmony and conflict, cooperation and contestation. This basic assumption holds that a social group's ability to coexist with other social groups is an achievement that minimizes existing potential conflicts, thereby enabling the management of diversity as a positive potential (Sabarudin, 2019). Humans as social beings cannot be separated from other humans in social community life. This social interaction greatly helps humans in social, religious, spiritual, political, economic, and defense fields. By greeting and respecting one another, a harmonious and peaceful life can be created amid diversity (Luntajo & Hasan, 2025; Zilal Afwa Ajidin, 2020).

This research contributes to pluralism studies by presenting an empirical analysis of mechanisms of pluralism at the village level, namely social practices, local wisdom, and the roles of community actors in maintaining social harmony among religious communities. This study simultaneously tests and sharpens Azyumardi Azra's concept of pluralism at the level of social praxis, thereby expanding its relevance from normative-historical discourse to pluralism that lives in contemporary local contexts.

Azyumardi Azra's thoughts on the Islamic tradition of the archipelago, in this case, are not only used as an interpretive framework but also as a basis for operationalizing the pluralism of Nusantara Islam at the level of social practice. This research shows that the principles of moderation, socio-religious networks, and openness to local culture formulated by Azra can be traced concretely in the daily mechanisms of the Banjarpanepen community. Thus, this study develops an analytical model of village pluralism grounded in local wisdom within the framework of Nusantara Islam, bridging Azra's historical-intellectual dimension with contemporary grassroots social practices. This contribution positions village pluralism not merely as a social-local phenomenon, but as a practical expression of the dynamics of Nusantara Islam that lives and is institutionalized in everyday culture. The findings of this study also offer

policy implications based on local wisdom for strengthening interfaith harmony at the village level as a sustainable social development strategy.

2. METHODS

This research is a field study with a qualitative case study approach conducted in Banjarpanepen Village, Sumpiuh District, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, in 2025 for 4 months. The data collection method uses semi-structured interviews, documentation, and semi-participatory observation, namely the researcher's involvement in several interfaith social-religious activities and rituals that occurred during the research period. Informants were selected purposively to represent diversity in religion, gender, age, and social roles (religious leaders, customary elders, village officials, and active residents), and data collection was stopped at saturation. At the interview stage, researchers focused on exploring interfaith interaction experiences, the role of local traditions, and mechanisms for forming social harmony. After the data were collected, they were processed using Miles and Huberman's analysis technique, namely data reduction, data display, and data verification (Sugiyono, 2014). Data validity was tested through source and method triangulation, audit trails, and member checking with key informants. All information provided research consent, and identities were anonymized; mention of names or positions in the article was done with explicit permission for academic purposes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local Wisdom Practices in Interfaith Interaction

Banjarpanepen Village, Sumpiuh District, Banyumas Regency, was designated a Harmony Awareness Village at the Banyumas Regency level by the Banyumas Regent in 2019. The Harmony Awareness Village is a flagship program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, delegated to the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) Banyumas. The program aims to preserve and, as an effort to develop interfaith harmony, maintain it at the village level, ensuring the message of harmony is well maintained. The harmony awareness village is expected to become a pilot village for harmony awareness, serving as a portrait of a society that respects one another and upholds a spirit of tolerance in religious life. The designation of the village is based on the level of population heterogeneity seen from the religious side they adhere to, customs and traditions that are still maintained, and the geographical condition of the village area located in the mountains with beautiful natural nuances, thus reflecting a beautiful village, supported by a portrait of harmonious diversity (Interview with the Head of FKUB Banyumas, 2025).

As for the boundaries of Banjarpanepen Village, to the North is Kemawi Village, Somagede District; to the East is Bogangin Village; to the South is Selanegara Village; to the West is Ketanda Village; and to the Southwest is Karanggintung Village, Kemranjen District. Banjarpanepen Village is dominated by highlands, with village natural resources potential, namely a village area of 1720 ha, with a land area of 520 ha, which includes dry land/fields 280 ha, settlements 240 ha, plantations (pine forest) 1200 ha, while land and public facilities include village treasury 6025 ha, government

offices 400 m², fields and cemeteries 25,200 m² (documentation of Banjarpanepen Village Profile, 2025).

Historically, Banjarpanepen was two villages: Banjaran Village, led by a Village Head named Karyandaka, who lived in Panuan Hamlet, and Penepen Village, also called Sawangan, led by a Village Head named Wirareja. According to local customary leaders, the name Panepen originated from the habit of the Panepen people, who at that time liked to nepi (meditate), so the area was nicknamed Panepen. At that time, the population was still small, and the customs of the two villages were almost the same, so there was an initiative from both leaders and community members to unite the two villages (Interview with Mad Karyonakum, Community Leader, 2025).

The next version states that Banjarpanepen originated from Banjaran and Panepen. The word Banjaran comes from the word ban, which means belt, and jaran, which means horse. The series refers to the talisman of the community's belief in the area. Meanwhile, Panepen is a place to nepi (meditate). This is because there are many places used for meditation, such as Panembahan Pring Amba, Tembelang Bopo, Penembahan Kali Tengah, Watu Jonggol, and Panembahan Mertelu. So the words Banjaran and Panepen were then combined to become Banjarpanepen (Interview with Sakin, Community Leader, 2025).

Banjarpanepen Village has a diverse religious population. It is known that the residents of Banjarpanepen Village adhere to four religions: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Belief. As for population data based on religion, there are 1277 Muslim households, 141 Buddhist households, 70 Christian households, and 6 Belief Adherent households, with various places of worship side by side without friction.

As for places of worship in the village, among others are Mosques totaling 11, Prayer Rooms totaling 11, Viharas totaling 5 (Avalokitesvara Vihara in Kalicawang Hamlet, Avalokitesvara Vihara in Panepen Hamlet, Dhamma Manggala Vihara in Banjaran Hamlet, Girinaratana Vihara in Wanarata Hamlet, and Ratna Vidya Loka Vihara in Panuhan Hamlet), Churches totaling 1 (Javanese Apostleship Church), and belief worship places totaling 1 (Sasana Adi Rasa Sasmita Bawana) (documentation and interviews with religious leaders). This diversity makes Banjarpanepen a 'miniature Indonesia' that lives side by side in daily social practice.

Based on interviews and field observation results, interfaith interaction practices are evident in social activities and local rituals. As stated by an informant, explaining: 'Here, when there are gotong royong or village cleaning activities, all residents participate, whether Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, or those who embrace other beliefs. No one feels different, and everyone respects and honors each other.' (Turimin, Community Leader, 2025). Another informant revealed, 'We visit each other during our respective religious celebrations. For example, during Christmas, Muslim residents also give congratulations and come to visit, and vice versa.' (Sakin, Community Leader, 2025).

This religious diversity reflects a harmonious community at the socio-cultural level. This togetherness is shaped by the culture of the Banjarpanepen people, who are part of the Banyumasan culture and hold the virtue of nrimo (accepting others as brothers).

So, with these differences, a cultural dialectic emerges that has implications for togetherness among religious communities.

Local traditions carried out by the community not only strengthen Javanese culture but also foster faith among adherents of various religions through social piety (Setiyani, 2018). In this case, the Banjarpanepen Village community is also socio-culturally bound to its ancestral Javanese traditions and has been assimilated into the cultures of various religions, namely Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. Belief or adherents are groups that consistently maintain ancestral beliefs and customs. As for the local wisdom ritual practices that are still maintained and preserved by the Banjarpanepen Village community include:

First, Grebeg Suran (Takiran). The takiran tradition is held on the 1st Sura or the 1st Muharram of each Hijri year. Takir here is interpreted as nata pikir in the face of the new year. The purpose of this tradition is to serve as a symbol of gratitude for the blessings of God Almighty, namely, the abundant earth yields. In this tradition, village residents each carry a tenong containing various foods they cook, which they then wrap in banana leaves. In addition, village residents will also make a mountain from various kinds of earth yields, which will later be contested by the surrounding community after being prayed for together. As for Grebeg Suran in Banjarpanepen village is held at Watu Jonggol, Sidagati Hamlet. Watu Jonggol is a sacred place for the local community, known as the meditation site of Patih Gadjah Mada. The Banjarpanepen community believes that nature and its contents must be purified so that plants grow fertile and provide sustenance, and so that disasters and disturbances, such as floods, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and others, are avoided. So the month of Sura is considered a sacred month. The sacredness of the month of Sura is not from the month but from the intention of humans who want to bring themselves closer to God Almighty and nature and its contents. Based on the spirit built together by all members of the Banjarpanepen community from various elements in maintaining traditional customs in order to purify the earth, and manage the earth as well as an expression of gratitude to the creation of God Almighty, thus yielding the strength of mutual cooperation, togetherness and increasing solidarity for fellow humans as well as increasing faith and gratitude to God Almighty. The Takiran event is not tied to any particular religion; it is a traditional event for all Banjarpanepen residents. Therefore, from various religious elements, they together carry out the Takiran traditional event. The traditional procession also features local arts such as Banyumasan Lengger, traditional creative dance, and other forms (interviews with religious and customary leaders, 2025).

Second, Purnamaan. Purnamaan is a quite unique traditional custom of Banjarpanepen Village and is still maintained to this day. Purnamaan is a traditional custom performed with the kungkum ceremony or bathing together in Kali Cawang. The tradition is carried out on every 15th of Sha'ban, exactly on the night of the full moon overhead at 12.00 WIB. The tradition is followed by community members from various walks of life, regardless of differences. While soaking, residents pray, then shower them with seven kinds of flowers. When bathing together, all lights are turned off. According to Turimin, as Chairman of the Tourism Awareness Group

(Pokdarwis), the tradition of soaking in the river is a tradition passed down from ancestors. Previously, the tradition before entering the fasting month was to bathe in seven wells and end with bathing in Kali Cawang; now it is centered solely in Kali Cawang, as the heart of the village sanctuary. The tradition stopped around the 1980s, but in 2017, customary leaders, the community, and local government agreed to revive it. The kungkum ceremony together symbolizes self-purification from all forms of bad behavior, both outward and inward. In addition, it is believed that obtaining a peaceful life, abundant sustenance, and eternal youth. The Purnamaan tradition is also accompanied by various local arts performances, such as lengger and kidungan, and a typical village culinary market, and is decorated with torches (interview with the Head of Pokdarwis, 2025).

Third, Sadranan/Nyadran comes from the word sadran, which means ruwah syakban, and is carried out through a series of activities, from grave cleaning to culminating in slametan or feast. The history of the Nyadran tradition stems from Hindu-Buddhist beliefs, which later underwent changes in practice following the spread of Islam through Walisongo. The alignment between Hindu and Islamic traditions is carried out through the recitation of Yasin-Tahlil and prayers at the communal eating event, namely, slametan or feast. The Nyadran ritual is a socio-religious activity in Javanese society, including in the Banjarpanepen Village community, which is traditional and deeply rooted in the community's hearts. Activities are carried out regularly before Ramadan. This becomes a characteristic of the Muslim community that forms religious behavior because of the religious experience they have. Religious experience through Nyadran rituals strengthens relationships among people and strengthens belief in God, who created the universe and remembers the struggles of their ancestors. Nyadran means maintaining social relationship harmony because it brings the community together for a joint activity. Emotional relationships among community members foster a sense of togetherness and ownership of the tradition being carried out.

Fourth, Slametan is a communal ritual that has been traditional in Javanese society, including Muslim communities, and is performed during important events in a person's life. Slametan is believed to be a spiritual means that can overcome all forms of crisis and bring blessings. Slametan is believed to be a way to glorify and honor ancestors' spirits. These important events include marriage, birthdays or weton, building a house, occupying a new house, death, big day celebrations, circumcision, and others. This is done as a wasilah to ensure safety and blessings, and to avoid all dangers. The form of expression depicted in the slametan event is for those who hold a slametan; they prepare various ube-rampe in the form of food, and the host invites the surrounding residents to come to the concerned house. Usually, slametan is held after Maghrib prayer. When the food has been served, a customary leader reads prayers, then continues with prayer readings by religious leaders, depending on the host's religion. When they have been prayed for, they eat together and receive blessings through the same food, even though those who come are not all from the same religion. So in Banjarpanepen Village, the slametan tradition is carried out by all residents in the village whether they are Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Belief, as for those who are appointed to submit all ube rampe and the purpose of the slametan is the customary leader, then concluded by religious leaders from each religion

according to the religion adhered to by the organizer of the slametan in the form of prayer (Interview with customary and religious leaders, 2025).

These local wisdom practices show that interfaith social life in Banjarpanepen is carried out with mutual respect and collective awareness, fostering harmonious, sustainable interaction patterns at the village community level. In this case, it also confirms that local cultural values serve as the basis for daily interaction, enabling harmony while opening space for more formal actors to maintain it.

The Role of Local Actors in Maintaining Village Social Harmony

The creation of social harmony in Banjarpanepen village certainly involves the role of various local actors, especially religious leaders, village officials, community leaders, and customary elders. These three actors carry out complementary roles in interfaith social life, both at formal and informal levels. Based on field findings, it shows that village harmony is not managed by a single actor, but through coordination and relationships woven by actors in daily social practice.

In the context of Banjarpanepen village, religious leaders are urgent actors in maintaining interfaith harmony, especially given their closeness to their respective congregations and their moral authority. In this case, religious leaders act as guardians of interfaith communication, conveyors of tolerance messages (harmonious culture), and determiners of community attitudes in responding to differences. One informant stated, 'If there are religious activities or problems among residents, usually we religious leaders coordinate with each other and deliberate regarding technical implementation, especially maintaining the community environment to remain conducive and safe.' (Interview with religious leaders, 2025).

Meanwhile, the position of village officials in this case serves as a structural facilitator, especially in decision-making and the management of joint activities. They coordinate village agendas, ensure the involvement of all religious groups, and mediate social issues through deliberation mechanisms. This role is evident when village officials arrange activity schedules to avoid conflicts with religious agendas, or when they facilitate meetings among religious leaders (Interview with Banjarpanepen Village Head, 2025).

As explained earlier, Banjarpanepen village still maintains many of its ancestral traditions, so the role of customary leaders in this case is also important as guardians of values and the community's collective memory. Through advice, example, involvement in customary and cultural activities, and social activities. These customary elders also play a role in safeguarding the standards for how customary and traditional practices are carried out, instilling local values such as *nrimo* and respect for others as part of community life. The role of customary elders tends to be symbolic and cultural, but also strongly influences the attitudes of the younger generation (Interview with village customary leaders, 2025). The relationships between actors in Banjarpanepen village are as follows:

From the diagram above, it can be seen that religious leaders occupy a dominant position as the main drivers of interfaith communication and as the moral reference for residents. Village officials act as structural pillars that facilitate, regulate, and legitimize harmony practices through formal village mechanisms. Customary and Cultural Leaders function as guardians of local cultural values that provide cultural legitimacy to social harmony practices. The relationships among these three actors lead village residents to serve as the main implementers of harmony practices in daily life.

Local Wisdom as an Operational Mechanism of Religious Pluralism at the Village Level

The religious life of the Banjarpanepen village community operates through a close interweaving between religious teachings and ancestral traditions, so that religion does not appear as a separate ritual system from social life, but as a collective practice that guides attitudes, actions, and relationships among people.

Spiritual values from each religion are transformed into shared social ethics, such as attitudes of mutual respect, mutual help, and the maintenance of harmony in interfaith community life. This value transformation makes local wisdom function as an operational mechanism, namely, concrete means that enable religious pluralism to be carried out effectively in people's daily practices (Fitria Shlaza Rahmaniar, 2020).

In Banjarpanepen, this mechanism operates through culturally formed social meeting spaces that are passed down from generation to generation. Religious diversity, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Belief in the One Supreme God is not regulated through formal regulations, but through the 'cultural fence' (Aziza, 2016) of Javanese traditions that bind all residents. The Adherent group, for example, is still recognized as an integral part of the village community, so that customs function as an inclusive medium that negotiates differences in beliefs without rigidly asserting identity boundaries. In this context, pluralism does not appear as a normative discourse, but as a social practice carried out through shared customs and habits (Fakhiratunnisa et al., 2022).

Various local traditions concretely show how these operational mechanisms work. The Grebeg Suran or Takiran tradition, held every 1 Sura in the Javanese calendar at Watu Jonggol, can be said to be a collective arena where all residents, regardless of religion, gather to express gratitude for earth's yields and to request joint safety. Interfaith participation in carrying tenong, praying, and contesting the mountain of earth confirms that this tradition does not function as a ritual of a particular religion, but as a social mechanism that cements solidarity and affirms symbolic equality among residents. The values of mutual cooperation and togetherness are internalized through shared experiences, not through formal doctrine.

A similar mechanism is also seen in the Purnamaan or Kungkum tradition in the Kalicawang River on the night of the full moon on the 15th of Sha'ban. This ritual, which was revived in 2017 by customary leaders and the village government, serves as a means of self-purification and strengthens social bonds. Residents across religions practice turning off lights, sitting together, and participating in a symbolic procession of seven kinds of flowers as a collective spiritual experience. In this context,

Purnamaan functions as an operational mechanism that reduces religious identity tension, fosters a sense of togetherness, and provides an inclusive reflection space.

Likewise, in the Nyadran and Slametan traditions, which are carried out in various social life moments, operate as mechanisms for cultural dialogue between religions. Nyadran, through grave cleaning and communal feast, enables respect for ancestors while strengthening interfaith social relations. Slametan, as a communal ritual, demonstrates the coexistence of customs and religion: customary and religious prayers are held in one space, attended by residents with diverse belief backgrounds, without causing exclusion. This pattern shows that religious differences do not negate but are managed through mutually accepted social procedures.

Overall, local wisdom in Banjarpanepen not only serves as cultural heritage but also functions as an operational mechanism of religious pluralism, shaping social interaction patterns, regulating interfaith relations, and preventing the escalation of identity-based conflict. Through collective customary practices, the community builds an inclusive social space where religious values are manifested in shared social ethics. The harmony maintained in this village is thus not the result of institutional engineering, but the fruit of a cultural mechanism that is alive, adaptive, and continuously implemented in the daily life of the Banjarpanepen community.

Azyumardi Azra's Socio-Cultural Perspective on Banjarpanepen Pluralism

The pluralism that grows in Banjarpanepen Village cannot be understood only as peaceful coexistence among religious adherents. It is a socio-cultural configuration shaped by a long history of interaction among religion, customs, and village social structure. In this context, Azyumardi Azra's thoughts provide a sharp analytical framework for reading these dynamics. Azyumardi Azra (2002) argues that the religiosity of Indonesian society is shaped by a process of historical interaction among Islam, other religions, and local traditions. This process gives rise to a moderate, open, and inclusive religious character that serves as the basis for Indonesian pluralism. This framework is very suitable for the reality of Banjarpanepen, where Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, and Belief Adherent traditions do not live separately, but are intertwined in shared living practices. This kind of pluralism also aligns with findings that religious diversity can be viewed as a social strength when managed through dialogue and mutual recognition (Mawardi, 2023).

In Azra's perspective, Indonesian Islam is cultural Islam, namely, Islam that grows in cultural space and organically interacts with local traditions. This conception of cultural Islam resonates with discussions of *wasathiyah* (Islamic moderation), which emphasizes balance, justice, and openness to diversity (Helmy et al., 2021). This concept is relevant for reading how the Muslim community of Banjarpanepen follows the Grebeg Suran, Purnamaan, and slametan traditions without seeing them as a theological threat. These traditions are understood as cultural practices that contain values of gratitude, solidarity, and respect for nature - universal values that do not contradict religious teachings. Azra emphasizes that religious attitudes like this are born of the paradigm of *wasathiyah* (moderate), *tasamuh* (tolerant), and *tawazun* (balanced), which developed since the time of Walisongo as Islam acculturated to

Javanese culture. This wasathiyah paradigm has become a characteristic of Indonesian Islam that distinguishes it from Islamic models in the Middle East, and has developed into an important instrument in Indonesian Islamic diplomacy for global peace (Seeth, 2023). Field findings show that Muslim residents of Banjarpanepen view traditions not merely as cultural rituals but as a means of maintaining harmony and strengthening relationships among people (Putera & Zamzam, 2025).

This reality shows what Azra calls historical continuity (Azra, 2017), namely, the historical continuity between ancestral customs and religious teachings that form the religious structure of society. Grebeg Suran at Watu Jonggol, for example, is equally followed by Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, and Belief Adherent residents. Mountains of earth yield are carried together, opening prayers are led by customary leaders, while closing prayers are adjusted to each religion. Patterns like this show that pluralism in Banjarpanepen is not merely tolerance, but shared ritual participation - joint participation in communal rituals that strengthen social cohesion. Joint ritual participation like this has been proven to increase social cohesion and group identity, as confirmed by cross-cultural research on the function of rituals in building social bonds (Fischer et al., 2020; Whitehouse et al., 2014). This aligns with Clifford Geertz's view (Ahmad Sugeng Riady, 2021) of Javanese religion as a social religion, but Azra offers an important addition: that this communal pluralism functions as a social glue that binds interfaith communities.

On the other hand, Banjarpanepen pluralism also embodies the concept of civic pluralism, one of the foundations of Azra's thought (Azyumardi Azra, 2014). This civic pluralism does not require uniformity of beliefs but rather encourages cooperation in public space grounded in humanitarian values and solidarity. The concept of civic pluralism finds parallelism in studies on how plural communities in Indonesia manage diversity through a religious moderation approach that bridges differences in beliefs in public space (Wajdi et al., 2024). Field data supports this. In the Purnamaan ceremony at Kalicawang, all lights are turned off, residents bathe kungkum together while carrying intentions to request good, then showered with seven kinds of flowers. Christian residents call the ritual a 'custom that purifies the soul,' while Buddhists call it 'practice to release negative energy.' Different meanings do not prevent togetherness in ritual, showing that customary space becomes a public sphere where residents from various religions interact equally.

Banyumas' local wisdom also becomes an important pillar. The values of *andhap asor*, *tepa selira*, *sarasa*, and *nguwongke uwong* function as social mechanisms that maintain social ethics (Sugeng Priyadi, 2000). These values strengthen Azra's thesis that religion cannot be separated from culture. Local wisdom as social capital for the cohesion of plural communities has been widely documented in the Indonesian context, where traditional values such as mutual cooperation and deliberation serve as the basis for social harmony across religious groups (Asikin, 2021; Ritonga et al., 2024). Banjarpanepen is an example of how local wisdom functions as a cultural framework that enables society to live in differences without conflict. Hefner emphasizes that Javanese society tends to uphold harmony as the highest value, so conflicts are resolved through deliberation rather than confrontation (Sutiyono, 2013). This is clearly seen in the deliberation structure of Banjarpanepen village, where

Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, and Adherent leaders sit together in customary forums without religious hierarchy.

The religion-custom dialogue becomes even more apparent when looking at the position of the Belief Adherent group. In many national contexts, Adherent groups often experience marginalization. But differently in Banjarpanepen, they are actually respected as guardians of customs. Adherent leaders lead the Grebeg Suran procession, but do not monopolize the ritual; leaders of other religions participate as part of the community. Recognition of the Belief Adherent group as an integral part of Indonesian diversity reflects Indonesian pluralism, which includes not only official religions but also local belief systems, although this group has historically faced recognition challenges (Telle & Samuels, 2016). Azra calls this phenomenon inclusive recognition, namely inclusive recognition of diversity of beliefs as an integral part of the nation's history (Azra, 2017). This equality is strengthened by shared historical experience: village residents acknowledge that without the Adherents' role, many traditions cannot be maintained.

In a broader perspective, the Banjarpanepen phenomenon shows that stable pluralism requires three conditions: first, the internalization of moderate religious values; second, effective social capital; and third, a shared cultural space in which society interacts. These three conditions align with findings that participation in communal rituals not only strengthens internal group cohesion but can also increase cross-group prosociality when the ritual involves shared meaning and active participation (Sohi et al., 2018). All three are present fully in Banjarpanepen. Even further, this pluralism is not only coexistence, but active pluralism, where each religious group not only accepts differences but also celebrates them through active participation in communal rituals. This aligns with Amartya Sen's view (Waarden, 2014) on plural identities, which holds that society is stable only when religious identity does not stand alone as the only social identity but coexists with civic, customary, and locality identities.

In Azra's framework, Banjarpanepen is a concrete example of how religion, especially Islam, functions as a civilizing force when it dialogues with customs (Azyumardi Azra, 1995). Local traditions are not separate from divine values but serve as a medium for expressing gratitude, protecting nature, and strengthening solidarity. This integration between religious values and local traditions reflects what scholars call 'orthopraxy' in the context of Indonesian religiosity, where ritual practices and collective actions have equal or even higher priority than theological doctrinal uniformity (Kavanagh & Jong, 2020). This is what makes pluralism in the village not only survive but also grow into a solid social system.

Thus, Azyumardi Azra's socio-cultural perspective helps us see that Banjarpanepen pluralism is not just a cultural phenomenon, but a civilizational project rooted in a long history of interaction between religion and custom. This civilization project represents what contemporary literature calls 'religious moderation,' which has become Indonesia's national agenda to promote moderate Islam as a model for the global Muslim world (Sukenda, 2022). Religion does not appear exclusively, customs are not primordial, and society does not live in isolation. All these elements blend to

form an organic, reflective, and sustainable harmony. Banjarpanepen ultimately appears as a real representation of Azra's thesis that Indonesian pluralism is not an imported good, but a product of history, culture, and social ethics of society itself - and that is why it is strong, resilient, and relevant for Indonesia's future.

4. CONCLUSION

Religious pluralism in Banjarpanepen Village emerges as a social practice grounded in local wisdom, in which Banyumasan cultural values (nrimo, respect for others) and collective traditions such as Grebeg Suran, Purnamaan, Nyadran, and Slametan serve as operational mechanisms that foster interfaith harmony, regulate social interactions, and prevent potential conflicts. Local actors, consisting of customary leaders, religious leaders, village officials, and community members, complement each other's roles. Religious and customary leaders, along with community participation, become the main drivers in this case. This study simultaneously tests Azyumardi Azra's perspective, which places moderation, cultural inclusivity, and socio-religious networks in the empirical-practical realm. The results show that Nusantara Islam pluralism lives through real social experiences, not merely normative discourse or intellectual history. Thus, Banjarpanepen serves as an example of how local wisdom and collective social practices produce a dynamic, inclusive, and adaptive pluralism.

This research still has limitations, including a limited scope of informants: customary leaders, religious leaders, village officials, and active ritual participants. In addition, some rituals were observed only once, and social desirability bias may influence the narratives of harmony. So this study still opens space for further research, both comparatively across other villages and longitudinally, to trace the transformation of pluralism and the interaction between socio-cultural mechanisms, local actors, and the broader political context.

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