

MICRO-GOVERNANCE OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN SEGREGATED URBAN SPACES: CONFLICT DE-ESCALATION IN TAMAN KOPO INDAH, BANDUNG

Muhammad Mufti Sulthanan Nasira

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia
muftisulthanannasira@gmail.com

Uwes Fathoni

Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia
kanguwes@uinsgd.ac.id

Hafizh Dhiya Ulhaq

Al-Azhar University of Cairo, Mesir
Haqhafizh13@gmail.com

Abstract

This case study investigates the intermediary strategies employed by a local administrative authority in managing interfaith conflict within the spatially segregated residential community of Taman Kopo Indah, Bandung, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative intrinsic case study design with process tracing analysis, this research examines the de-escalation mechanisms activated following a mass congregation triggered by alleged blasphemy in a residential area characterized by demographic and religious divisions. While existing scholarship on Indonesian interfaith conflict resolution has largely centered on religious figures such as kiai and formal institutions such as the Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), the role of secular local administrative actors as mediators within spatially segregated residential communities remains underexplored. Three primary informants were engaged: the Head of Neighborhood Unit (RW) 16, the leadership of the Persatuan Islam (Persis) Bojonghaur congregation, and the administrators of Baiturrahmaan Mosque. Drawing on Kriesberg's Constructive Conflict theory, this case demonstrates the potential role of four tactical strategies in de-escalation: (1) Gatekeeping, which restricted external actor intervention; (2) Saving Face, through a symbolic public apology; (3) Information Filtering, by leveraging organizational command structures to halt the spread of inflammatory social media content; and (4) Re-framing, by redefining the incident as a medical rather than theological matter. This study suggests that in segregated urban spaces where formal religious mediators lack operational reach, secular local administrators may function as insider-partial mediators, offering an empirical framework for micro-level governance of religious diversity. However, the resulting stability constitutes negative peace rather than substantive interfaith integration.

Keywords: gatekeeping, governance of religious diversity, interfaith harmony, intermediary strategy, re-framing, spatial segregation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi intermediary yang diterapkan oleh otoritas administratif lokal dalam mengelola konflik antaragama di komunitas Taman Kopo Indah yang tersegregasi secara spasial di Bandung, Indonesia. Menggunakan desain studi kasus intrinsik kualitatif dengan analisis process tracing, penelitian ini menelaah

mekanisme de-eskalasi pascapengepungan massa yang dipicu dugaan penistaan agama di kawasan perumahan dengan kontras demografis dan keagamaan yang tajam. Meskipun kajian tentang resolusi konflik antaragama di Indonesia selama ini terfokus pada tokoh agama seperti kiai dan lembaga formal seperti Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB), peran otoritas administratif lokal yang sekuler sebagai mediator dalam komunitas perumahan tersegregasi secara spasial belum pernah dikaji secara memadai. Tiga informan utama dilibatkan: Ketua RW 16, pimpinan Jemaah Persatuan Islam (Persis) Bojonghaur, dan pengurus Masjid Baiturrahmaan. Berlandaskan teori Konflik Konstruktif Kriesberg, temuan mengungkap empat strategi taktis: (1) Gatekeeping, membatasi intervensi aktor eksternal; (2) Saving Face, melalui permintaan maaf simbolis di depan publik; (3) Penyaringan Informasi, memanfaatkan struktur komando organisasi untuk menghentikan penyebaran konten provokatif di media sosial; dan (4) Re-framing, mendefinisikan ulang insiden sebagai masalah medis, bukan teologis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa administrator lokal sekuler dapat berperan sebagai mediator insider-partial yang efektif, menawarkan kerangka empiris tata kelola mikro keragaman beragama. Namun stabilitas yang tercipta merupakan perdamaian negatif yang dipertahankan melalui eksklusi sosial, bukan integrasi antaragama yang substantif.

Kata kunci: *gatekeeping, tata kelola keragaman beragama, strategi intermediary, re-framing, segregasi spasial.*

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of interfaith harmony in Indonesia's urban areas face an increasingly complex challenge: the phenomenon of spatial segregation in residential environments. Indonesia's Setara Institute documented 197 incidents of religious intolerance in 2022, with urban residential areas emerging as a growing site of interreligious friction (Setara Institute, 2023). This spatial organization of exclusion constitutes what Galtung (1996) calls structural violence, where urban planning unintentionally institutionalizes social distance and fosters prejudice, transforming physical walls into "theological walls" that obstruct interfaith dialogue and harden social boundaries between religious groups. This dynamic is particularly evident in Taman Kopo Indah, Bandung, where Block 5 (documented in RW administrative records as inhabited predominantly by non-Muslim middle-class migrants and surrounded by mosques affiliated with Persatuan Islam (Persis) Margaasih, Sarekat Islam, and Nahdlatul Ulama) represents an illustrative case of demographic contrast in a segregated space. This latent vulnerability materialized when a delivery courier recorded a non-Muslim resident making statements perceived as dismissive of Islamic practices and the sanctity of the Quran; the recording spread virally from a private WhatsApp group to Facebook and other platforms, triggering a mass congregation at the residential complex. Rather than an isolated interpersonal dispute, the incident reflected accumulated tensions rooted in spatial and symbolic segregation, illustrating how physical boundaries, when layered with religious identity politics, may contribute to broader intergroup tensions. This case suggests that the governance of religious diversity in spatially segregated urban communities may benefit from conflict management models that complement conventional institutional approaches.

Existing scholarship on interfaith conflict resolution in Indonesia has largely centered on two actor categories: charismatic religious figures such as kiai (Syihab et al., 2023; Setiawan, 2020) and formal institutions like the Religious Harmony Forum,

FKUB (Suhadi, 2020; Madjid, 2021; Hapsin, 2022). Digital dimensions of conflict have received growing attention, particularly the role of social media in accelerating religious tensions and fragmenting public trust (Iswanto, 2023; Hidayat & Panggabean, 2022; Muljana & Rahmat, 2022; Suryana, 2023). Research on residential segregation has documented patterns of spatial separation in Indonesian cities and their structural consequences (Jubba et al., 2022; Lestari, 2020; Mulya & Schafer, 2023; Roitman & Recio, 2020; Mietzner & Muhtadi, 2020). However, these bodies of scholarship share a critical collective limitation: none has examined what happens when formal religious mediators lack operational reach inside residential compounds, nor has any proposed a replicable conflict resolution model for the interior of such segregated urban spaces. The role of secular local administrative authorities, particularly the neighborhood unit (RW) head, as intermediary actors in managing interfaith conflict within gated communities remains largely unaddressed in the existing literature: prior work has documented how spatial and social homogenization in Indonesian residential areas deepens symbolic boundaries between communities, yet none has proposed an operational conflict management model applicable to the micro-dynamics within such enclosed environments (Mulya & Schäfer, 2023; Kresna et al., 2025).

This research makes a distinctive contribution by systematically examining a secular administrative actor the Head of RW 16, Taman Kopo Indah 5 performing interfaith intermediary functions within a bounded, segregated residential space, a terrain thus far insufficiently addressed in Indonesian interfaith conflict scholarship. Unlike prior studies that privilege religious or formal institutional actors, this research extends the analytical lens to include the secular insider-partial mediator as a relevant actor type in community conflict governance. Methodologically, the adoption of process tracing within a qualitative intrinsic case study framework enables granular reconstruction of the intermediary mechanism as it unfolded, complementing the predominantly descriptive or survey-based approaches in existing studies. This research also proposes the concept of micro-governance of religious diversity as a working analytical construct for understanding how non-religious local authorities navigate interfaith crises in contexts where formal mediation structures lack operational access. Given the rapid urban growth and increasing residential segregation across Indonesian cities, this research responds to an underserved scholarly and policy need.

This study aims to identify, analyze, and theorize the intermediary strategies employed by the Head of RW 16 Taman Kopo Indah 5 in de-escalating interfaith conflict within a spatially segregated urban residential community. Specifically, it seeks to answer how a secular local administrative authority operating outside formal religious or institutional mandates manages a religious crisis by deploying tactical, non-violent conflict management strategies. This objective is relevant and urgent because understanding such micro-level governance mechanisms can fill a critical gap

in both conflict resolution theory and local governance policy, particularly in urban settings where conventional institutional mediators are structurally unable to intervene.

This study is guided by three central research questions: (1) What specific intermediary strategies were employed by the Head of RW 16 to de-escalate the conflict triggered by the alleged blasphemy incident in Taman Kopo Indah 5? (2) How do these strategies align with theoretical frameworks of constructive conflict management and governance of religious diversity in spatially segregated environments? (3) What are the implications of these findings for understanding micro-level governance of interfaith harmony in gated residential communities in urban Indonesia?

This research carries dual significance. Theoretically, it proposes the concept of micro-governance of religious diversity as an analytical framework applicable beyond the Indonesian context, enriching scholarly debates on conflict governance, insider mediation, and the sociology of segregated urban spaces; it also advances understanding of negative peace as a structural outcome of residential segregation governance a dimension underexplored in Indonesian interfaith scholarship. Practically, the findings carry direct implications for policymakers at sub-district and neighborhood levels, as well as for FKUB and local governments seeking to extend conflict prevention reach into private residential communities where formal mediation lacks access, contributing to ongoing policy debates across Southeast Asia on the limits of formal peacebuilding institutions in increasingly fragmented urban environments.

This article proceeds as follows: the Methods section details the qualitative intrinsic case study design and process tracing approach; the Findings section presents empirical data organized around the four identified intermediary strategies; the Discussion section interprets these findings through the lens of micro-governance of religious diversity; and the Conclusion synthesizes contributions, acknowledges limitations, and recommends directions for future research.

METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study design. This design was selected because the research object is a phenomenon that is unique in itself and warrants deep examination on its own terms: a secular local administrative authority the Head of RW 16 successfully de-escalated a religiously charged conflict in a spatially segregated residential area without the involvement of external religious figures or formal institutional mediators. The intrinsic case study type is therefore most appropriate, as the aim is not to compare or generalize across cases, but to gain a rich, contextually grounded understanding of the specific intermediary mechanisms deployed. To trace the causal chain of de-escalation events, this research employs process tracing as its analytical technique, adopted from George and Bennett (2005), enabling the researcher to reconstruct the sequence of decisions

and interventions from the initial viral spread of the conflict-triggering video to the final referral of the resident involved to a psychiatric facility.

The research participants were determined through purposive sampling, applying the principle of information power (Malterud et al., 2016): selecting a small number of information-rich informants who held direct, authoritative, and complementary knowledge of the conflict management process. Three key informants were selected on the basis of the following inclusion criteria: (a) direct involvement in or institutional authority over the de-escalation process; (b) representing distinct nodes in the conflict network; and (c) willingness to provide detailed accounts of the event. The three informants engaged were: (1) the Head of RW 16 Taman Kopo Indah 5, as the primary intermediary actor; (2) the leadership of the Persatuan Islam (Persis) Bojonghaur congregation, as the representative of the demanding group; and (3) the management committee (DKM) of Baiturrahmaan Mosque, as the representative of the internal religious institution. These three parties represent the key nodes of the conflict network administrative authority, religious mass organization, and local mosque whose narratives collectively provide a triangulated account of the de-escalation process. The researcher acknowledges that non-Muslim residents and the family of the resident involved were not included as informants, primarily due to safety concerns and sensitivity at the time of data collection, a limitation addressed explicitly in the Discussion.

Data collection was conducted over four months following the incident, from September to December 2025, to capture the full arc of conflict management dynamics from the escalation phase to achieved de-escalation. Three main techniques were employed. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted using a developed interview guide (*pedoman wawancara*) covering themes of conflict chronology, actor roles, strategy selection, and outcomes; each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was recorded with informant consent. Second, participant observation was conducted at the research location the boundary area between RW 16 and Bojonghaur village using an observation guide (*pedoman observasi*) to empirically document the physical conditions of segregation, including the dividing wall, spatial layout, and mosque proximity, as they shape ground-level interfaith dynamics. Third, documentation study was conducted through digital tracing of the conflict-triggering video, WhatsApp group conversation screenshots, and the official peace statement letter, using a documentation checklist to verify event chronology and agreement content.

Data analysis employed the process tracing technique within the interpretive framework of Louis Kriesberg's Constructive Conflict theory. Process tracing, as adopted from George and Bennett (2005), was applied in three analytical stages: (a) within-case process tracing, which reconstructed the sequential chain of events from the initial viral spread of the video to the final medical referral, mapping each decision made by the RW head as a causal step; (b) causal mechanism identification, which

linked each observed intervention to its theoretical indicator within Kriesberg's framework, verifying whether each action constituted a gatekeeping, saving face, information filtering, or re-framing mechanism; and (c) counterfactual testing, which considered what outcomes might have occurred had each strategy been absent or reversed, strengthening the causal claim of each identified mechanism. The identified interventions were categorized into four strategic typologies: gatekeeping, saving face, information filtering, and re-framing. Data processing followed three sequential stages: data reduction (selecting relevant events and statements), data display (mapping the intervention sequence chronologically), and interpretive conclusion drawing (relating each intervention to Kriesberg's theoretical indicators). Analysis was conducted manually; data organization and timeline construction were assisted by Microsoft Word and Excel, ensuring systematic and transparent documentation.

Data validity was established through source triangulation, cross-checking the narratives of all three informants the administrative authority (RW head), the mass organization leadership (Persis Bojonghaur), and the mosque committee (DKM Baiturrahmaan) to avoid single-source bias and to ensure that claims of successful de-escalation were acknowledged by multiple parties rather than representing a unilateral account. In addition, all informant narratives were verified against documentary evidence, including WhatsApp conversation screenshots and the peace statement archive, to confirm the accuracy of event chronology and the content of agreements reached.

Ethical considerations were observed rigorously throughout the research process. This study received ethical clearance through the institutional review process of Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Prior to each interview, all informants were briefed on the study's objectives, voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any time, and provided verbal informed consent; this verbal format was selected given the informal and community-based nature of the research context. To protect participant confidentiality, individual members of mass organizations and the mosque committee are identified by institutional role rather than personal name throughout the study. The researcher explicitly acknowledges the absence of non-Muslim and perpetrator-side perspectives as a representational limitation, and discusses its implications for the scope of the findings accordingly.

FINDINGS

The research site is located at the boundary between RW 16 (Taman Kopo Indah 5 sector) and Bojonghaur village, Margaasih District, Bandung Regency. The area's defining spatial feature is a three-meter concrete wall separating two residential entities of contrasting character: an elite gated cluster with a single-entry security system on one side, and a densely populated kampung with narrow alleyways on the other. This spatial structure inadvertently institutionalizes social exclusion, with interaction between residents of the two areas occurring only at border gate points.

Demographically, RW 16 is dominated by middle-class migrants with heterogeneous ethnic and religious backgrounds including Chinese and non-Muslim residents while Bojonghaur serves as the cultural base of the Sundanese Muslim community and the organizational stronghold of Persatuan Islam (Persis), which adheres to puritanical religious traditions. This sociological contrast produces what the literature terms latent grievance, where the dividing wall is interpreted not merely as a property boundary but as a theological and economic threshold prone to friction.

The findings below are organized around four intermediary strategies identified through field research. Each strategy is presented with empirical field data; extended theoretical interpretation is reserved for the Discussion section.

To clarify the temporal sequence of de-escalation, the following chronology is reconstructed from interview data and documentary evidence: (T1) the video circulates in a courier WhatsApp group; (T2) within hours, the video spreads to Facebook and public platforms; (T3) by the same evening, a mass congregation forms at the residential complex; (T4) the RW head arrives and immediately enacts the gatekeeping and saving face strategies; (T5) within the same evening, the Persis branch leadership activates organizational command (information filtering), instructing members to stand down; (T6) over the following days, medical evidence is gathered and the re-framing strategy is formalized; (T7) the resident involved is referred to a mental health facility in Semarang, marking the resolution of the immediate crisis. This sequence is critical for understanding that the four strategies were not simultaneous but sequentially deployed in response to evolving situational demands.

Gatekeeping Strategy: Actor Isolation and Secondary Conflict Prevention

Operationally, gatekeeping is defined as a mechanism for controlling actor access aimed at limiting the scope of interaction to remain manageable (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In local conflict resolution, it functions as an effort to isolate actors and prevent third-party interventions that could aggravate the situation; the more external actors involved, the higher the complexity of conflict variables to be managed (Arifianto, 2022).

Field findings indicate that the Head of RW 16 implemented a strict gatekeeping strategy during the initial escalation phase, consciously refusing to involve external religious institutions or rival mass organizations despite their geographical proximity. This decision was grounded in accumulated historical knowledge of the area's conflict dynamics:

"In the past, there was a non-Muslim resident who asked for my signature as the RW head for the construction of a church in the TKI area, but I refused to sign it at first because I feared there would be opposition from Persis... It turned out to be true; that rejection came not only from Persis but also from SI and others... So, I know that this area is a Persis base." (Interview with the Head of RW 16, December 2025).

The selective exclusion of the internal mosque constituency also reflects deliberate actor management:

"In Taman Kopo Indah 1, there was no reaction, right? None. There were no specific instructions from the head of the DKM that we must do this or that... And as it happens, this mosque and its congregation are inclusive... We know that those who reacted were over there, from the village, those from outside the housing complex." (Interview with the Secretary of Baiturrahmaan Mosque, December 2025).

Saving Face Strategy: Emotional Management Through Symbolic Accommodation

The saving face strategy is defined as a communicative approach that preserves the dignity and collective honor of the interlocutor in public situations (Ting-Toomey, 2005). In crowd conflicts, emotional dimensions frequently override rational ones, making moral recognition and symbolic validation decisive factors in de-escalation (Syihab et al., 2023).

Rather than adopting a repressive security approach, the RW head chose a cultural approach offering a public apology and explicitly acknowledging the resident involved as his personal responsibility. This finding is captured in the following testimony:

"When I got there, it was indeed quite emotional... When I arrived, many of them already knew me, and I also recognized a few of them; they were activists from the mosque next door... Then I said, 'This is my resident, Mr. RW's resident.' The first thing I said was, 'I acknowledge that this is indeed my resident.' And at the same time, I apologized first... After that, things finally calmed down." (Interview with the Head of RW 16, December 2025).

Information Filtering Strategy: The Role of Mass Organization Command Structures

Information filtering is defined as a mechanism for verifying and screening messages to prevent distortions that trigger conflict (Hidayat & Panggabean, 2022). In contexts of religious segregation, social media penetrates physical residential boundaries and functions as an echo chamber nurturing cyber-sectarianism where sectarian narratives escalate without spatial barriers (Iswanto, 2023).

Field data confirms that the conflict trigger originated from uncontrolled social media spread. The RW head described the mechanism:

"What I heard was, he made a video and then put it in a group... There was someone else, or it spread to three accounts. Three accounts, like on Facebook... Well, from there, by that evening, it had already become crowded." (Interview with the Head of RW 16, December 2025).

This viral spread was contained through the Persis organizational command mechanism:

"Responding to the matter, the PC Persis (Branch Leadership) then took over and instructed that no one should take action individually. Everything was handed over to the PC

to be handled... He emphasized in his sermon that we should not act rashly, let alone use physical force." (Interview with the Leader of the Persis Congregation, December 2025).

The phrase *sami'na wa atho'na* 'we hear and we obey' derives from the Quranic injunction in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:285) and Al-Nur (24:51), expressing the ideal disposition of believers toward legitimate religious and communal authority. In the organizational culture of Indonesian Islamic mass organizations such as Persatuan Islam (Persis), this phrase functions as a binding command protocol that activates vertical compliance from rank-and-file members to branch leadership a structure that, in this case, was activated by the RW head to channel a potentially volatile mass into a disciplined constituency.

Re-framing Strategy: The Medicalization of Conflict

The final resolution was achieved through a radical shift in the issue's frame: the incident initially understood as "blasphemy" had its narrative transformed into a "mental health disorder," supported by medical evidence and a referral to a psychiatric hospital (RSJ), leading residents to accept a non-legal settlement:

"Initially, I also didn't know if she had a mental health condition... But it turns out she has had one since she was young... What is certain, based on conversations with the residents of the complex, the RT and RW felt restless; if she were still here, then perhaps for the time being, like it or not, she should not live here... Finally, she was taken to a psychiatric hospital in Semarang." (Interview with the Head of RW 16, December 2025).

This re-framing altered the resident involved's status from "criminal" to "patient," transforming the form of sanction from criminal prosecution to medical treatment and informal relocation, a pragmatic solution accepted by all parties as a price for dampening communal religious sentiment and safeguarding short-term interfaith harmony.

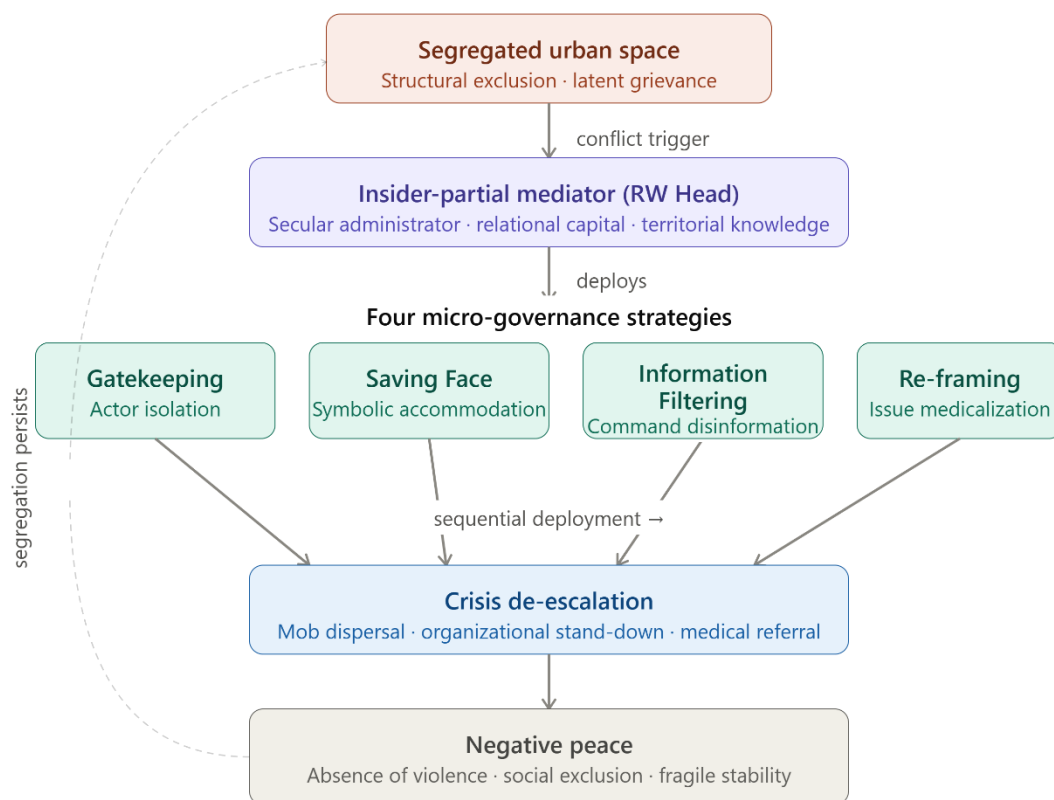
Table 1.

The Intermediary Strategy Matrix of Local Authorities in Managing Religious Conflicts

Intermediary Strategy	Operational Concept	Empirical Field Actions	Impact/Implication on Conflict Escalation	Supporting Evidence
1. Gatekeeping	Isolation of actors and restriction of external intervention access.	The Head of the RW refused to involve outside religious figures (such as NU or FKUB) and restricted negotiations solely to the Residents and the	Preventing superimposed conflicts between mass organizations which potentially expands into a city-scale interfaith crisis, thereby keeping conflict variables	Interview with Head of RW 16: refusal to involve NU/FKUB; narrative of prior church dispute in TKI area.

Intermediary Strategy	Operational Concept	Empirical Field Actions	Impact/Implication on Conflict Escalation	Supporting Evidence
		Local Mass Organization (Persis).	simple and controllable.	
2. Saving Face	Mass emotion management through symbolic accommodation and moral validation.	Local authorities issued a public apology to the masses and acknowledged the resident involved as their responsibility ('this is my resident').	Satisfying the collective ego of the masses, reducing the tension of physical aggressiveness, and building communal trust as the foundation for the micro-governance of diversity.	Interview with Head of RW 16: public apology testimony; crowd response as documented by RW secretary.
3. Information Filtering	Message verification mechanisms through community authority structures.	Collaboration with the Branch Leadership (PC) of the Mass Organization to issue command instructions (sami'na wa atho'na) via WhatsApp groups.	Breaking the chain of viral hoaxes and hate speech narratives laden with sectarian content (cyber-sectarianism) on social media, preventing further mass mobilization.	Interview with Persis congregation leader: sami'na wa atho'na instruction; WhatsApp communication screenshots.
4. Re-framing	Reframing the issue from an ideological domain to a technical or medical domain.	Transforming the narrative of 'Religious Blasphemy' (theological or criminal) into 'Mental Health Condition' (medical) requiring care through a referral to a psychiatric hospital.	Stripping away the legitimacy of violence (de-legitimization of violence), yet producing a 'negative peace' through social exclusion resulting from the robust segregation of space.	Interview with Head of RW 16: medical history disclosure; peace statement letter archive; RSJ referral documents.

Source: Interviews and personal observations in Taman Kopo Indah 5.



DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the successful de-escalation of the Taman Kopu Indah conflict was not the result of institutional intervention or formal interfaith dialogue, but of four sequentially deployed tactical strategies by a single secular local administrator: gatekeeping (actor isolation), saving face (symbolic emotional accommodation), information filtering (organizational command-based disinformation containment), and re-framing (issue medicalization). Together, these strategies constitute an empirical framework for what this study terms micro-governance of religious diversity a mode of conflict governance that operates through relational capital and contextual agility rather than formal authority or theological legitimacy.

Before interpreting each strategy, it is necessary to define the overarching analytical construct that organizes this discussion. Micro-governance of religious diversity, as proposed in this study, refers to the informal, localized, and actor-specific governance of interreligious conflict by non-institutional community administrators operating below the threshold of formal state or religious authority. It is distinguished from macro-level governance (such as FKUB or Ministry of Religious Affairs interventions) by three features: (a) it operates without formal mandate or legal authority; (b) its effectiveness is contingent on relational capital and territorial familiarity rather than institutional position; and (c) it produces crisis de-escalation

through tactical situational management rather than structural conflict transformation. Within this framework, the four identified strategies gatekeeping, saving face, information filtering, and re-framing function as operational mechanisms through which micro-governance is enacted, while the insider-partial mediator (Lederach, 1997) constitutes the actor role that performs this governance. This conceptual hierarchy micro-governance as the overarching framework, four strategies as mechanisms, insider-partial mediator as actor role structures the interpretive analysis below. Three theoretical traditions are drawn upon in the sections that follow, and each serves a distinct analytical purpose rather than competing to explain the same phenomenon. Kriesberg's Constructive Conflict theory supplies the typology of the four tactical strategies themselves. Goffman's dramaturgical framework and Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation theory account for the interactional, emotional mechanics of how those strategies were performed and received in the moment. Classical Islamic jurisprudential concepts, applied specifically to the information filtering and re-framing strategies, situate the RW head's tactics within the normative vocabulary that made them intelligible and acceptable to the Muslim-majority parties involved. Read together, these three lenses move from strategy (what was done), to interaction (how it was done), to normative legitimacy (why it was accepted), rather than offering three separate accounts of the same case.

Gatekeeping: Redefining the Boundaries of Legitimate Mediation

The gatekeeping strategy implemented by the Head of RW 16 aligns with Arifianto's (2022) conceptualization of context-sensitive authority management in Indonesian communal conflicts. By deliberately excluding external religious figures and rival mass organizations, the RW head prevented what sociologists term superimposed conflict the layering of inter-organizational rivalries onto the primary dispute. This decision constitutes a rejection of Indonesia's standard conflict resolution bureaucracy, in which the deployment of large institutional actors such as FKUB can paradoxically amplify tensions by providing a national stage for local grievances (Suhadi, 2020).

Theoretically, this finding revises Lederach's (1997) multi-track diplomacy model, which tends to privilege actors from multiple societal levels. The TKI case demonstrates that in rapid-onset conflicts within segregated spaces, a single insider-partial mediator with deep territorial knowledge and cultural capital is more effective than an array of external stakeholders. This extends the concept of local ownership in peace studies to the micro-governance of diversity, where administrative credibility and cultural familiarity prove more decisive than formal religious authority.

Saving Face: Symbolic Accommodation as Emotional De-escalation

The saving face strategy demonstrates the primacy of emotional and symbolic dimensions in crowd conflict management. The RW head's public apology and explicit

personal acknowledgment "this is my resident" functioned as a conciliatory gesture validating the crowd's moral claims without granting impunity to the resident involved. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework illuminates this dynamic: the RW head performed impression management by adopting the role of a protective father rather than a defensive official, dissolving the adversarial framing that might otherwise have escalated to physical confrontation.

Significantly, the RW head is himself a Christian minority leading a predominantly Muslim constituency enacting precisely the logic identified by Menchik (2016), whereby interfaith leadership in Indonesia gains legitimacy through visible respect for majority religious symbols. This finding contributes to the governance of diversity literature by showing how micro-level intercommunal trust can be rapidly rebuilt through symbolic accommodation, even in the absence of prior sustained interfaith dialogue.

Information Filtering: Organizational Hierarchy as a Counter-Disinformation Mechanism

The Persis branch leadership's binding veto instruction to its membership exemplifies what Zuhri (2022) terms civil society policing the capacity of mass organizations to internally regulate member behavior more effectively than external state directives. In the era of what Qodir et al. (2021) call digital jihadism, social media provocation typically outpaces institutional government responses. The TKI case reveals an important counter-mechanism: patronage structures within conservative religious organizations can function as highly effective filters against viral extremism.

This finding challenges the pessimistic reading of Islamic mass organizations as inherently volatile actors in interfaith crises. When organizational hierarchy was activated, the Persis congregation often stereotyped as a source of religious rigidity became an agent of conflict containment. This points to an understudied dimension of the governance of religious diversity: the strategic co-optation of religious authority structures by secular local administrators represents an innovative form of collaborative governance at the community level.

This dynamic can also be read through the lens of what Al-Azhar scholarship terms *al-qiyadah al-islamiyyah al-rashidah* (guided Islamic leadership), whereby organizational authority is exercised not for dominance but for the preservation of communal order and the prevention of *fitnah* (social strife) (Al-Mawardi, 1996). Read this way, the effectiveness of *sami'na wa atho'na* as an information filtering mechanism in this case demonstrates how deeply internalized religious norms within mass organizations can function as instruments of conflict de-escalation when activated by trusted intermediary actors.

Re-framing: Medicalization as a Double-Edged Resolution Strategy

The medicalization of the resident's behavior redefining her actions as symptoms of a mental health condition rather than criminal blasphemy aligns with Conrad's (1992) theory on the medicalization of deviance. By removing the theological charge, the re-framing strategy de-legitimized demands for punitive crowd justice. As Foucault cautions in *Madness and Civilization*, however, the social exclusion of individuals labeled mentally ill frequently reflects a community's desire to remove difference rather than address its root causes. This ethical dimension demands explicit acknowledgment: while the medicalization approach successfully de-escalated immediate violence and may have protected the resident from mob harm, it simultaneously enacted a form of social exclusion that bypassed due process. The informal relocation to a mental health facility, while framed as a medical intervention, functioned as a displacement mechanism removing the source of communal discomfort without addressing the structural conditions that made such discomfort possible. This double-edged quality of re-framing strategies deserves careful ethical scrutiny: crisis containment and social exclusion are not mutually exclusive outcomes, and future governance frameworks must guard against instrumentalizing medical or psychiatric categories as tools of community-level social control.

From the perspective of classical Islamic jurisprudence, the re-framing strategy deployed in Taman Kopo Indah finds a compelling parallel in the doctrine of *maslahah mursalah* the principle of unrestricted public interest which permits legal and communal authorities to pursue resolutions that prioritize collective welfare over strict punitive enforcement when the latter would generate greater social harm (Al-Qaradawi, 1994). The informal referral of the resident involved to a psychiatric facility, rather than criminal prosecution, echoes the classical *sulh* mechanism in Islamic conflict resolution: a negotiated, non-adversarial settlement that restores communal equilibrium without formal judicial proceedings (Ibn Rushd, 2000). Al-Azhar Islamic scholarship has long recognized that in contexts of fragile majority-minority coexistence, the preservation of *maqasid al-shari'ah* particularly the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*) and reason (*hifz al-'aql*) may legitimately supersede demands for retributive justice, provided that the resolution is accepted by all parties and does not perpetuate structural injustice (Al-Raysuni, 2005). Viewed through this lens, the RW head's re-framing strategy, while producing negative peace in the Galtungian sense, simultaneously reflects a pragmatic wisdom deeply embedded in Islamic communal governance traditions: that the containment of immediate violence is a necessary, if incomplete, precondition for any longer-term pursuit of substantive justice and genuine interfaith integration.

From the governance of diversity perspective, this strategy produces what Galtung (1996) classifies as negative peace the absence of direct violence achieved through the exclusion of the conflict's source rather than genuine reconciliation. The resident involved's informal relocation to a psychiatric facility in Semarang resolves

the immediate crisis but reinforces the very logic of spatial and social exclusion that produced the vulnerability in the first place. This finding underscores the structural limitations of micro-governance in segregated spaces: without addressing the architectural and social conditions that generate interfaith tension, local intermediary strategies can achieve only temporary and fragile outcomes.

The contrast between the stability achieved in Taman Kopo Indah and genuine interfaith harmony becomes sharper when set against empirical cases of organic interreligious coexistence elsewhere in Indonesia. Hanifah (2023) documents how in Kelurahan Kingking, Tuban, interfaith relations are sustained not through administrative engineering but through everyday embodied practices: neighbors across religious lines sharing coffee (*jagongan*), watching football together, exchanging casual conversation on doorsteps, and greeting one another naturally in the street habits cultivated since childhood that have made communal relationships increasingly harmonious over time. This is precisely the quality of social life that Taman Kopo Indah's three-meter wall forecloses. Where Kingking produces interfaith harmony as a lived, spontaneous social texture, TKI produces only its simulation a managed absence of violence that leaves the underlying architecture of separation intact. The re-framing strategy resolved a crisis; it did not build a community.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that effective management of religiously charged conflict in spatially segregated urban communities does not depend on formal religious mediators or theological dialogue, but on the tactical precision of a secular local administrative authority operating as an insider-partial mediator. The Head of RW 16's sequential deployment of four strategies, gatekeeping (actor isolation), saving face (symbolic emotional accommodation), information filtering (organizational command-based disinformation containment), and re-framing (issue medicalization), collectively constitutes an empirical framework for micro-governance of religious diversity: a mode of conflict governance that operates through relational capital, territorial knowledge, and contextual agility rather than formal authority or theological legitimacy.

The success of de-escalation is achieved because the intermediary is able to integrate territorial mastery to isolate external actors (gatekeeping), cultural emotion management to dampen mass anger (saving face), and control over digital information channels (filtering). Ultimately, the ability of local authorities to conduct cognitive engineering by shifting the definition of the situation from an ideological threat to a medical issue (re-framing) proves that the key to conflict resolution in segregative spaces lies in the ability to transform abstract and sensitive issues into concrete technical problems that can be resolved without violence.

The theoretical contribution of this study is twofold. First, it extends the concept of insider-partial mediation (Lederach, 1997) to include secular administrative actors

in deeply religious communities, demonstrating that the requisite capital for effective intermediary action is relational and territorial rather than theological. Second, it shows that effective governance of religious diversity does not always require a formal institutional mandate: a neighborhood administrator's situated knowledge, cultural capital, and relational credibility can substitute for, and in crisis moments may even surpass, the operational capacity of macro-level religious institutions. This finding calls for a broader reconceptualization of peacebuilding actors in urban Indonesia, extending the field's gaze beyond *kiai*, pastors, and FKUB officials toward the quiet, everyday work of local administrators who navigate the frontlines of interfaith coexistence.

This study also carries a significant methodological limitation that must be stated clearly: non-Muslim residents of the Taman Kopo Indah 5 complex and the family of the resident involved were not interviewed as independent informants. This is a substantive representational gap, not a minor constraint, since the voices of those most directly affected by the conflict, including the individual at the center of the incident and the non-Muslim community whose lived experience of segregation shapes the very dynamics this study analyzes, are absent from the primary data. The Head of RW 16's own identity as a Christian minority adds a relevant layer of perspective, but it does not substitute for direct non-Muslim testimony; his dual identity as both a local authority and a religious minority cannot stand in for accounts from non-Muslim residents whose experiences of spatial segregation and interreligious tension differ qualitatively from his administrative standpoint. The study's intrinsic case design further limits transferability. These constraints should be weighted accordingly in interpreting the conclusions presented here, and future research must actively seek non-Muslim and perpetrator-side perspectives as a priority rather than a supplementary addition.

Nevertheless, this research also underscores that such a pragmatic resolution model produces a quality of peace characterized as negative peace. Security stability in Taman Kopo Indah is restored not through social restoration or inter-group integration, but through mechanisms of social exclusion, namely by relocating the underlying issue (the resident involved) to a psychiatric hospital. This implies that micro-level intermediary strategies, however effective as emergency response instruments, still have limitations in penetrating the structural segregation walls that represent the root of the problem. Consequently, the harmony created in this urban borderland remains fragile, as it is built on a foundation of mutual avoidance rather than mutual understanding. Segregation space, in other words, is proven to produce rigid social boundaries, leaving a significant challenge for the governance of a plural society and the development of a more transformative interfaith peacebuilding in the future.

These findings also point to a critical policy gap and a question of scalability. While national frameworks for interfaith harmony in Indonesia tend to focus on

formal inter-religious dialogue platforms, the micro-dynamics of conflict and coexistence in gated residential communities remain largely unaddressed. The successful de-escalation in Taman Kopo Indah was contingent on an individual's accumulated social capital, not on any institutionalized protocol, which means that governance of diversity at the micro level is highly effective in crisis but unsustainable without structural reform, and cannot be systematically replicated through top-down policy mandates alone. The three-meter wall dividing Taman Kopo Indah from Bojonghaur functions as an enduring architecture of division that no intermediary strategy, however skilful, can permanently overcome. Sustainable interfaith harmony in Indonesian cities will therefore ultimately require both the cultivation of competent local intermediaries and macro-level urban governance reform that integrates principles of social mixing and inclusive spatial design.

Based on these findings, two sets of recommendations follow. Practically, local governments and FKUB should move beyond elite-level interfaith dialogues to invest in conflict de-escalation training, harmony literacy programs, and communal communication ethics for Neighborhood Heads (Ketua RW) in urban borderland areas, actors proven here to be decisive intermediaries in micro-level religious crises; this should include reforming Indonesia's Forum Kewaspadaan Dini Masyarakat (FKDM) to give street-level administrators a more operational role in early conflict detection and response, rather than limiting their function to administrative reporting. Academically, future research should include non-Muslim informants, conduct comparative studies across multiple gated communities to test the replicability of the TKI model, employ longitudinal designs to assess whether micro-governance interventions produce durable rather than merely situational peace, and examine how these empirical frameworks might be formalized into training curricula or governance protocols for neighborhood leaders elsewhere in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, tracing specifically how segregated residential communities might transition from negative peace sustained through exclusion toward positive peace grounded in social integration and intercommunal trust.

AI DISCLOSURE

The author used Claude (Anthropic) for language editing, grammar improvement, and formatting assistance during the preparation of this manuscript. The AI tool was used specifically for proofreading, academic style enhancement, and structural formatting to comply with the *Harmoni Journal* 2025 template. The authors reviewed and edited all AI-assisted outputs and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the content of this publication. All analytical interpretations, empirical findings, and theoretical contributions presented in this manuscript are entirely the work of the human authors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to express the highest appreciation and gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this article. Primary appreciation is directed to the Head of Neighborhood Unit (RW) 16 of the Taman Kopo Indah 5 complex, along with the members of the Neighborhood Forum (Forum RW), for granting research permission and their openness in sharing conflict management experiences within their area. The authors also express gratitude to the local leaders of the Margaasih Branch and Bojonghaur Congregation of Persatuan Islam (Persis), as well as the administrators (DKM) of the Baiturrahmaan Mosque in the Taman Kopo Indah 1 complex, for their willingness to serve as informants and provide perspectives on local religious dynamics.

REFERENCES

- Agung, D. A. G., Nasih, A. M., Sumarmi, Idris, & Kurniawan, B. (2024). Local wisdom as a model of interfaith communication in creating religious harmony in Indonesia. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 9, 100827. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100827>
- Al-Mawardi, A. H. (1996). *Al-ahkam al-sultaniyyah: The laws of Islamic governance* (A. Yate, Trans.). Ta-Ha Publishers.
- Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1994). *The lawful and the prohibited in Islam (Al-halal wal-haram fil Islam)*. American Trust Publications.
- Al-Raysuni, A. (2005). *Imam al-Shatibi's theory of the higher objectives and intents of Islamic law* (N. Roberts, Trans.). International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Alhamuddin, & Alifuddin, M. (2024). Dynamics of interfaith communication in segregated communities. *Jurnal Harmoni*, 23(1), 18–34. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v23i1.532>
- Ambardi, K., Artosa, O. A., Dewi, N. P., & Yuliarso, K. Y. (2022). Social and virtual segregation: A study of gated communities in Yogyakarta. *Masyarakat: Jurnal Sosiologi*, 27(1), 27–52. <https://doi.org/10.7454/MJS.v27i1.13551>
- Arif, M., & Lessy, Z. (2021). Another side of Balinese exoticism: Local wisdom of the Muslim community in Gelgel Village, Klungkung Regency, for preserving harmony between religious communities in Bali. *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 15(2), 185–216. <https://doi.org/10.18326/infsl3.v15i2.185-216>
- Arifianto, A. R. (2022). Rising Islamism and the struggle for Islamic authority in Indonesia. *Trans-Regional and National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 10(1), 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2021.11>
- Azmi, M. (2022). Ajaran moral Tuan Guru dan pengaruhnya terhadap laku keberagamaan masyarakat Muslim Sasak dalam perspektif Islam dan sosiologi modern. *Jurnal Harmoni*, 21(2), 265–277. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v21i2.629>

- Burhani, A. N. (2021). The toxicity of sectarianism: The usage of khawarij and its impact on the Ahmadiyya community in Indonesia. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 40(2), 244–263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103421993141>
- Conrad, P. (1992). *Medicalization and social control*. Annual Review of Sociology, 18, 209–232.
- Coser, L. A. (1956). *The functions of social conflict*. Free Press.
- Erawadi, E., & Setiadi, F. M. (2024). Exploring religious harmony through Dalihan Na Tolu: Local wisdom in peacebuilding in Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 12(3), 1379–1408. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1398>
- Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization*. Sage Publications.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Anchor Books.
- Hanifah, N. A. N. (2023). Interaksi sosial antarumat beragama di Kelurahan Kingking, Tuban. *Jurnal Harmoni*, 22(1), 187–207. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v1i22.604>
- Hapsin, A. (2022). Walisongo and the notion of abrasive strategies in countering radicalism in Indonesia. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 30(2), 215–240. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.30.2.14066>
- Hernawan, W., Riyani, I., & Busro, B. (2021). Religious moderation in naskah wawacan babad walangsungsang: A Sundanese religious diversity wisdom. *HTS Teologiese Studies*, 77(4), a6773. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6773>
- Hilmy, M. (2020). The politics of being moderate: The Nahdlatul Ulama and the state in modern Indonesia. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 14(2), 283–312. <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2020.14.2.283-312>
- Ibn Rushd. (2000). *Bidayat al-mujtahid wa nihayat al-muqtasid: The distinguished jurist's primer* (I. A. K. Nyazee, Trans.). Garnet Publishing.
- Jati, W. R. (2023). The religious moderation for Indonesia Muslim middle class: Challenges and solutions. *Penamas*, 36(1), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v36i1.647>
- Jubba, H., Awang, J., Qodir, Z., Hannani, & Pabbajah, M. (2022). The contestation between conservative and moderate Muslims in promoting Islamic moderatism in Indonesia. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2116162>
- Kresna, A. A., Wiloso, P. G., Therik, W., & Toisuta, W. (2025). Brokerage and social segregation: A case study of cluster housing environment in Gading Serpong, Indonesia. *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 25(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SEAMJ-06-2023-0051>
- Kriesberg, L., & Dayton, B. W. (2012). *Constructive conflicts: From escalation to resolution (4th ed.)*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.

- Maknun, L. (2020). Kontestasi kerukunan umat beragama di kaki Pura Arga Sunya. *Jurnal Harmoni*, 19(1), 28–48. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v19i1.413>
- Manuain, L. M. M., Mila, S., & Takoi, I. Y. (2024). Beyond religious tolerance: *Reflecting the interfaith women's dialogue*. *Penamas*, 37(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v37i1.743>
- Maulana, F., Rohman, B., Abidin Riam, Z., & Juraidi, A. (2023). Peran masjid dalam penyebaran toleransi: The role of mosques in spreading tolerance. *Jurnal Bimas Islam*, 16(2), 397–420. <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v16i2.1080>
- Mayer, B. (2012). *The dynamics of conflict resolution: A practitioner's guide*. Jossey-Bass.
- Menchik, J. (2016). *Islam and democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance without liberalism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mietzner, M. (2018). Fighting illiberalism with illiberalism: Islamist populism and democratic deconsolidation in Indonesia. *Pacific Affairs*, 91(2), 261–282. <https://doi.org/10.5509/2018912261>
- Mietzner, M., & Muhtadi, B. (2020). The myth of pluralism: Nahdlatul Ulama and the politics of religious tolerance in Indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 42(1), 58–84. <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs42-1c>
- Mulya, T. W., & Schäfer, S. (2023). Who belongs where? Geographies of (inter)religion and urban segregation in Surabaya, Indonesia. *Cities*, 141, 104476. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104476>
- Nugroho, N. D., Rabitha, D., & Ismail. (2023). Preventing radicalism through religious moderation. *Penamas*, 36(2), 250–265. <https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v36i2.678>
- Parwanto, W., Sahri, Busyara, S., Riyani, & Nadhiya, S. (2022). Religious harmonization on ethno-religious communities of Muslim and Dayak Katab-kebahan in Tebing Karangan Village, Melawi District, West Kalimantan. *Jurnal Harmoni*, 21(2), 184–200. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v21i2.638>
- Qodir, Z., Jubba, H., Hidayati, M., Abdullah, I., & Long, A. S. (2021). [Full citation to be verified by the authors against their original source for the concept of 'digital jihadism'].
- Perbawasari, S., Sjoraida, D. F., Anisa, R., Bakti, I., & Subekti, P. (2023). Communication and cultural inheritance through a traditional school in Dangiang Village Garut. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 11(1), 18–30. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkk.v11i1.45121>
- Roitman, S., & Recio, R. B. (2020). Understanding Indonesia's gated communities and their relationship with inequality. *Housing Studies*, 35(5), 795–819. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2019.1636002>
- Rouf, A. (2020). Penguatan landasan teologis: Pola mewujudkan moderasi kehidupan beragama. *Jurnal Bimas Islam*, 13(1), 105–140. <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v13i1.148>
- Shoemaker, P. J., & Vos, T. P. (2009). Gatekeeping theory. *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203931653>

- Suhadi, S. (2020). The role of FKUB in managing religious conflict in Indonesia: Challenges and opportunities. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 58(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2020.581.1-30>
- Syihab, A. (2023). Otoritas kiai kampung dan resolusi konflik: Menjembatani kesenjangan antara teks dan konteks. *Studia Islamika*, 30(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v30i1.28000>
- Tajib, F. (2021). Tolerance without acceptance: The politics of 'harmony' in Indonesia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 52(1), 89-110. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463421000023>
- Ting-Toomey, S. (2005). The matrix of face: An updated face-negotiation theory. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pp. 71-92). Sage.
- Waluyajati, R. S. R. (2022). Religious segregation in rural urban community: The experiences from Cihampelas District, Indonesia. *Khazanah Sosial*, 4(4), 765-780. <https://doi.org/10.15575/ks.v4i4.23647>
- Yahya, I., & Susilo, S. (2024). Conservative Muslims in Indonesia's religious and political landscapes: Ahok's blasphemy case as a political leverage. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2392293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2392293>
- Zuhrah, F., & Yumasdaleni. (2021). Masjid, moderasi beragama dan harmoni di kota Medan. *Jurnal Harmoni*, 20(2), 291-316. <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v20i2.512>
- Zuhri, S. (2022). [Full citation to be verified by the authors against their original source for the concept of 'civil society policing'].