




# Habitus of Interreligious Harmony in a Central Java Village

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## Abstract

*The diversity present in Nalen is a blessing, as it fosters cohesion in social, cultural, and religious ties, in contrast to the various conflicts that often arise from such differences. This cohesion resulted from the formation of a habitus of peace. This study aimed to answer the question of how the habitus of peace is cultivated in Nalen, a small village in Central Java. Data were systematically collected through in-depth interviews with prominent figures and community members in Nalen, complemented by observations. The subsequent analysis of the data employed Bourdieu's theoretical framework, which delves into the intricacies of habitus development within the Nalen community. This analysis scrutinizes various forms of capital, with a particular emphasis on social and cultural capital, substantively contributing to the fortification of the habitus. This study finds that the habitus of interreligious harmony can manifest organically, devoid of external coercion, showcasing the community's robust autonomy in the formative process. Additionally, the objective and subjective structures of society, alongside historical factors, emerge as foundational elements that influence the trajectory of habitus formation. Ultimately, habitus is cultivated within the collective consciousness of the community and is sustained by the diverse capital resources at their disposal.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Capital; Habitus; Interreligious Harmony; Social Capital



## INTRODUCTION

Plurality and multiculturalism consistently give rise to challenges in public relations. Diversity predicated upon factors such as ethnicity, societal groupings, socioeconomic class, and religious affiliations invariably constitutes an intrinsic facet of contemporary global existence. Interactions among diverse groups within the framework of a globalized society necessitate the proliferation of multicultural and plural societies. The annals of human history, stretching far back in time well before the advent of advanced technologies, attest to the ubiquity of diversity. This reality has been a constant in human civilization across various geographical, social, and cultural contexts. Within the historical narratives of European societies, diversity has been a catalyst for numerous challenges, prompting extraordinary efforts to navigate and surmount them. The migration of individuals from disparate nations contributes to the proliferation of diversity, instigating adjustments that occasionally disrupt societal stability ([Grazulis & Mockiene, 2017](#); [Patrascu & Allam, 2019](#)). A parallel situation is observable in American society, where diversity stems from the migration of diverse groups and presents persistent challenges ([Malovic & Vujika, 2021](#)). In Islamic civilization, challenges arising from diversity were inexorable, even during the era of the Prophet. This is evident in various historical events within Islamic civilization ([Arjomand, 2009](#)). It is crucial to recognize that analogous potential challenges persist in various regions in other nations.

The inevitability of a multicultural and pluralistic society is concomitant with the attendant frictions that may arise within such a societal framework. In Indonesia, the manifestations of multiculturalism and pluralism have engendered challenges in inter-community relations. Particularly noteworthy is the post-reform inter-religious conflict, drawing significant scholarly attention, notably, the

conflict between Muslims and Christians (Indrawan & Putri, 2022). This study delineates the progression of the ethnic conflict of that period into religious conflict by employing Fisher's analytical framework. Lestari (2020) offers insights into the resolution of conflicts in Ambon, with a study indicating that music can mitigate conflicts, albeit on a specific scale. The distinctive fusion of music within the Islamic community, specifically *hadrah*, alongside the trumpet, music utilized by Christians, emerges as a unifying force capable of reconciling the conflicting groups in Ambon.

In contrast to the situation in Ambon, certain conflicts were successfully addressed through the intervention of religious leaders. An illustrative example is the Forum for Religious Harmony (*Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* abbreviated FKUB in Bahasa Indonesia) in West Java, which adeptly navigates conflict issues within interfaith communities in the region (Latifah et al., 2019; Miharja & Mulyana, 2019). FKUB of West Java operates with a guiding philosophy, '*someah hade kasemah, caina herang laukna benang, silih asah, silih asih, silih asuh*', which serves as a doctrinal foundation to preclude inter-communal conflicts. These teachings underscore principles of mutual advancement, harmony, cooperation, love, and nurturing. Analogous principles are discernible in diverse communities, as exemplified by the *Sipakatau* or mutual respect teachings in Bugis *Papaseng* traditions (Arisal & Syamsudduha, 2017). Correspondingly, Noviantoro et al.'s research (2023) elucidates the concept of *Bonum Comunne* as a cohesive force unifying religious communities in Lembang Uluway, Mengkendek, Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi. The concept posits that blood ties (*gemeinschaft*) and the philosophy of *misa' kada dipotuo pantan kada dipomate* serve to unite family members and provide a platform for collaborative problem-solving. This unifying construct emanates from heightened awareness of the imperative to revive these

values in response to the manifold differences prevalent within the community.

Revisiting the role of the FKUB, it becomes evident that this institution remains a potent and efficacious medium for resolving interreligious conflicts in numerous locales. The efficacy of this forum stems from its representation of various official religious institutions, including the Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI), the Association of Churches in Indonesia (Persatuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia or PGI), the Indonesian Bishops Conference (Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia or KWI), the Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI), the Representative of Indonesian Buddhists (Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia or Walubi), and the High Council of the Khonghucu Religion (Majelis Tinggi Agama Khonghucu or Matakun). The institutional dialogue model formulated by FKUBs, which employs a bridging social capital approach, plays a pivotal role in engendering norms of mutual trust, thereby fostering the creation of social benefits and operational efficiency (Asrori, 2019).

The enduring influence of religious leaders in preventing and mitigating interreligious conflict remains robust. This assertion is exemplified by the successful resolution of the conflict between religious communities in Tanon, Kediri, which was facilitated by religious leaders (Hanik & Turmudi, 2020). The resolution of such inter-religious conflicts holds paramount significance in the trajectory of community civilization development; therefore, proactive measures towards conflict resolution and prevention are imperative, as emphasized by seminal works such as Ali (1975) and Hasyim (1970). Moreover, the establishment of harmonious and cohesive coexistence among religious communities aligns with Indonesia's constitutional mandate, underscoring the broader societal imperative.

Conflict resolution, complemented by local wisdom and cultural approaches, can extend beyond the prevailing values to encompass

engagement through local forums. Examples include *Tahlilan* (dhikr and prayer), the *Eid al-Fitr* event, Christmas celebration, and events such as the Seventeenth of August celebration [Indonesian independent day] (Hanifah, 2023). This phenomenon is exemplified in Nalen, Tuntang, and Semarang, where the local populace utilizes these forums as socially cohesive mechanisms to fortify inter-religious relations. In Nalen, gatherings such as *Nyadran* (visiting ancestor grave), *Merti Dusun*, *Natalan* (Christmas celebration), *Eid al-Fitr*, and the Seventeenth of August festivities serve as platforms fostering the strengthening of inter-religious ties.

This study refrains from reiterating diverse conflict resolutions facilitated through forums, community institutions, or leaders, instead of analyzing the intricate construction and assimilation of harmony into the fabric of life within the Nalen community. Emphasis is placed on elucidating the role of capital, particularly social and cultural capital, in the formative processes. The primary focus of this research was a comprehensive analysis of the formation of the habitus of harmony within the Nalen community. This study contends that the harmony witnessed in the Nalen community undergoes a protracted and dynamic process, intricately intertwined with the subjective and objective consciousness structures of the community, originating from foundational roots. Consequently, this protracted process contributes to the fortification of harmony, culminating in the development of habitus.

## **METHOD**

This article delves into the establishment of harmony within the interfaith community situated in Nalen, Watu Agung, Tuntang, Semarang Regency. Interviews were conducted with five groups of respondents, selected based on their relevance to the research questions. These groups included Islamic religious leaders, which are

*modin, kyai, and ustadz*; Christian religious leaders; Buddhist religious leaders; community leaders such as village and hamlet officials; and the general public. It is pertinent to note that the religious figures involved are not solely confined to Nalen, but also include those actively contributing to the cultivation of recitations or guidance for the Nalen community, thereby contributing to the formation of the habitus of harmony. Simultaneously, observational methods were employed to observe the nuanced process of habitus formation within the Nalen community. The data were analyzed using Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework (1977, 1991), particularly focusing on the concepts of habitus, social capital, and cultural capital. This analytical approach is instrumental in providing a detailed explanation of the formation of awareness pertaining to harmony within the religious communities of Nalen.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **Habitus, Social and Cultural Capital**

Habitus is the culmination of social practices experienced both individually and collectively over an extended period, and manifests in perception, thought, and action. This conceptualization aids in elucidating the underlying logic of social practices that permeate society, taking roots, and becoming integral to individuals' lives. As Bourdieu (1977) posits, habitus constitutes a system of dispositions that can be inherited and structured (Haryatmoko, 2016). It guides action and embodies a purpose, devoid of conscious direction or intentional mastery to attain it. Habitus serves to direct and mold individual and collective actions through the realm of the human subconscious. Bourdieu (1990) aptly characterizes this process as analogous to an orchestra performing seamlessly without the guidance of a conductor (Jenkins, 2002).

Ritzer characterizes habitus as a 'mental or cognitive structure' employed by actors to navigate social life. These actors possess internalized schemes or patterns that enable them to perceive, comprehend, enact and evaluate the social world. Through these patterns, actors generate actions and assess them. Habitus emerges as a 'product of the internalization of structures' inherent in the social world (Ritzer & Goodman, 2003). Habitus functions both as a 'structuring structure,' meaning it is a 'structure that structures' social life, and as a 'structured structure,' denoting a structure shaped by the social world. In Bourdieu's (1977) distinctive terminology, habitus is further described as 'the dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality.'

The formation of habitus is intricately linked to the actor's behavior, capital, and the field of struggle, known as '*champ*,' wherein capital is delineated through the articulation of the actor's habitus. This implies that the disposition of actors within their field of struggle depends on both the quantity and the composition of their capital. The quantity of capital is commensurate with the actor's ownership, whereas the composition of capital pertains to a specific type of capital suitable for a particular field (Bourdieu, 1984). To illustrate, the habitus of harmony, a subject to be explored subsequently, is substantially influenced by the magnitude of social and cultural capital owned, as it determines the process of social connections and sustainability of the habitus. The accumulation and composition of capital jointly dictate an agent's capacity to navigate the field of struggle. Capital ownership further situates the agent within the field, and the agent's success in creating habitus determines the outcome of their struggle. Strategic alignment between capital and agents establishes dominance (power), ultimately culminating in the establishment of a culture of harmony.

Capital represents a resource that empowers agents to navigate and contend within the field. Bourdieu (1984, p. 113 and 315) delineates capital as “a social relation, i.e., an energy which only exists and only produces its effects in the field in which it is produced and reproduced; each of the properties attached to class is given its value and efficacy by the specific laws of each field”. Capital materializes as a repertoire of powers acquired by agents through social, economic, cultural, and symbolic resources. Bourdieu’s conceptualization of capital extends beyond Marx’s original economic focus by incorporating social, cultural, and symbolic dimensions. From Bourdieu’s perspective, an agent’s power emanates not solely from material possessions but also from socially embedded networks, knowledge, and symbols, thereby encompassing a broader spectrum of influence within the social and cultural context.

Nevertheless, this section does not aim to delve into all forms of capital; rather, it focuses on social and cultural capital as analytical tools for discerning the process of habitus formation in harmony. Social capital manifests itself through relationships and networks and serves as a valuable resource in shaping and perpetuating social positions. Social capital, synonymous with social networks, is possessed by actors (individuals or groups) in relation to other entities wielding influence (Bourdieu 1991; Haryatmoko 2003). On the other hand, cultural capital, often termed informational capital by Bourdieu, encompasses diverse forms of knowledge owned by an agent. This knowledge allows the agent to comprehend the social practices they engage in, enabling them to discern the appropriateness of actions based on the information they possess (Bourdieu, 1986). Both social and cultural capital play pivotal roles in habitus formation and perpetuation in social practice. These forms of capital can mutually complement each other or undergo transubstantiation (Bourdieu, 1986).



### **Nalen: From a Communist to a Plural Society**

Nalen, situated on a slope close to the plantation owned by Perusahaan Terbatas Perkebunan Nusantara (PTPN) IX Getas, Watu Agung, Tuntang, Semarang Regency, is a diminutive hamlet. Administratively, Nalen is a constituent of Watu Agung Village, with a population of approximately 150 households. The primary occupations of the residents of Nalen predominantly revolve around farming, sharecropping, or engaging in plantation labor. Educational attainment within a community is modest, typically culminating at the senior high school level or its equivalent. Only a limited number have pursued higher education, such as a bachelor's degree, and if so, their relocation from Nalen is commonplace after securing more promising employment opportunities in urban or other regions (as per an interview with Bekel Nalen, or the head of the hamlet, on November 15, 2021). Notably, Nalen's economic landscape predominantly offers livelihoods centered on agriculture and animal husbandry, with minimal prospects for office-based work or permanent employment.

Nevertheless, the unassumed lifestyle of the inhabitants of Nalen Hamlet does not serve as a metric for gauging the intricacies of the religious dynamics within the Nalen community. The societal evolution of Nalen has transitioned from an '*abangan*' community to a pluralistic society. The term '*abangan*', denoting the red group, carries a dual connotation. Initially, in its etymological sense, '*abangan*' derives from red, alluding to a community of followers or sympathizers of the communist party, synonymous with the red flag (Cribb et al., 2004). As highlighted by Nugroho (2008), during the 1960–65 period, the Nalen community transformed into a stronghold of Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia* abbreviated PKI in Bahasa Indonesia) sympathizers, with some individuals actively participating as members. Nugroho further noted that certain

officials (*pamong*) from Watu Agung, originating from Nalen, were affiliated with the communist party.

Historically, this progression is contextually sound, considering that during the Dutch colonization era, a considerable number of youths from Nalen Village were affiliated with the Indonesian Socialist Party (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* abbreviated PSI in Bahasa Indonesia). Notably, Nalen's youth actively participated in resisting Dutch military aggression from 1947 to 1949, as documented by Nugroho (2008). Subsequently, PSI evolved into the precursor of PKI, attaining its zenith from 1950 to 1960. According to Soedarmo & Ginanjar (2014), the 1955 election positioned PKI among the top four parties in Indonesia, securing 6,232,512 votes, equivalent to approximately 16.47 percent. Ricklefs (2008) also remarked upon the escalating membership within the communist group, noting a consistent increase since Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945.

However, the pivotal events of 1965, which implicated the PKI as 'suspects' in defiance against the Indonesian government, resulted in numerous residents becoming victims of mass killings. The PTPN IX plantation, situated near Nalen, became a site of violence and execution for the PKI members. Faced with the threat of persecution, residents of Nalen, including those sympathetic to the PKI, sought means of self-preservation through religious 'conversions,' transitioning from a state of being less religious to adopting a 'devout' stance. Some opted for conversions to Protestants, Christianity, and Buddhism, while others adhered to their Muslim faith (Nugroho, 2008). This strategic conversion served as a mechanism for seeking salvation and avoiding associations with the communist party, as elucidated by Adam (2018).

Second, *abangan*, a term articulated in Geertz's framework (1976), characterizes a demographic that identifies with Islam but lacks

sufficient familiarity with Islamic teachings and consequently fails to fully adhere to its tenets. This includes neglecting essential religious practices such as prayer and fasting and engaging in *kejawen* rituals that deviate from Islamic teachings. Leaders within the Nalen community acknowledged the prevalence of individuals who did not adhere to religious teachings (affirmed during a personal interview with Jimat and Yidin on July 23, 2021). This phenomenon was observable within the Nalen community both before and after the events of 1965, and persisted until the late 1990s. The inclination towards the 'abangan' aspect of the Nalen community can be attributed to a lack of access to comprehensive religious knowledge.

The occurrence of 1965, linked to the mass killings of PKI activists and members, significantly altered the socioreligious landscape in Nalen. Individuals initiated their religious education under the tutelage of their respective 'patrons.' Many converted to Protestantism, primarily because of affiliations with influential figures within the church community, which actively offered religious guidance. As highlighted by Nugroho (2008), by 1966, the Christian population in Nalen had reached 165 individuals, constituting approximately 82.5 percent of the 200 inhabitants (55 households). However, some later reverted to Islam or embraced Buddhism, citing reasons for discomfort or economic considerations (Nugroho 2008). Those who adhered to Islam sought counsel from local kyai, particularly in Karang Tengah, the adjacent village known for its strong religious tradition rooted in the moderate traditional Islam of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Simultaneously, the Buddhist community within Nalen continued to draw inspiration from role models to deepen their understanding and practice of their teaching.

### **Knots of Harmony**

Presently, the religious landscape in Nalen manifests itself as a tapestry woven by at least three distinct religious groups: Islam,

Protestantism, and Buddhism. Remarkably, each religious community within this rural Javanese setting exhibits profound reverence and acknowledgement of others' beliefs. Notably, devoid of ideological boundaries, this form of harmony is exemplified through collaborative endeavors in constructing places of worship, including churches, mosques, and monasteries, with overwhelming support from local residents. The construction of these three religious structures transpired seamlessly, underscoring the absence of impediments stemming from ideological disparities. Yidin, a prominent Muslim religious figure, elucidates this cooperative spirit, stating, "when we built the church, we all worked together, irrespective of being Muslims, Christians, or Buddhists. The same principle applies to mosque construction. Our collaboration extends beyond labor; we also assist each other in various aspects of daily life" (July 23, 2021). This enduring harmony is consistently evident in the ongoing practice of mutual visits and the extension of well-wishes across religious boundaries during significant religious festivities.

Furthermore, persisting to the present day are at least three enduring nodes of harmony ritually observed in Nalen-merti *dusun*, *panjatan*, and *besik makam*. These triannual activities unfold at distinct intervals throughout the year and represent communal celebrations that embody both the general and religious dimensions. *Merti dusun*, a widespread practice in rural Java, commemorates annually a historically significant day for the village. While the particulars of the process may vary, they essentially serve as an expression of gratitude and prayer for the prosperity of the local community. In Nalen, *merti dusun* is symbolically enacted through the meticulous cleaning of a spring, deemed a source of life for the community. This water reservoir, which has been utilized by the community for decades, symbolizes its sustenance. Communal cleansing of the spring is followed by a *tasyakuran* (thanksgiving), wherein participants partake

in a shared meal and culminate in the event with a shadow puppet show. Notably, these activities involve active participation from all religious communities, who collectively engage in prayers in accordance with their respective traditions, an arrangement mutually agreed upon by the community. Consequently, it is apt to view *merti dusun* not solely as a traditional ritual, but also as a concerted effort to foster and fortify social bonds (Warto & Suryani, 2020; Sobaya et al., 2023).

The second manifestation of communal harmony is evident in the *pajatan* event. The term '*pajatan*' originates from the Arabic word '*hajat*,' signifying a need, and can also be associated with the Javanese word '*manjat*,' meaning to climb. In essence, this entails offering prayers for the well-being of the community. In Nalen, the *pajatan* occurs three times: *Pajatan Suro*, commemorating the 10th Muharram for Muslims; *Pajatan Kapitadana*, celebrating Buddhist charity; and *Pajatan Easter*, marking the resurrection of Jesus after death. All these *pajatan* events transpire at the residence of *Bekel* (hamlet head), symbolizing the unity of the community. While each *pajatan* is led by religious leaders, this practice involves the collective participation of all residents. The demonstration of togetherness during *pajatan* is not confined to the joint execution of the event but is also evident in the ritual of '*berkatan*,' signifying communal dining on the dishes prepared. This term specifically refers to communal dining during the *pajatan Suro*, as the term 'blessing' is closely associated with Muslims, stemming from the Arabic word '*barakah*,' connoting an increase in goodness. The *Kapitadanan* and Easter activities are referred to as '*andum bujana*,' denoting the act of eating together from a shared vessel or tray.

Another communal activity that fosters unity within the community is the ritual of '*besik*,' which involves the cleaning of tombs. The graves in Nalen have unparalleled significance as the most

sacred symbols in the community, signifying a collective bond that extends beyond the present realm into the afterlife. Notably, the graves in Nalen do not adhere to a segregated structure based on religious affiliation, such as distinct sections for Muslims, Protestants, or Buddhist graves. Instead, they seamlessly coalesce, mirroring the inherent diversity that characterizes daily life, even within familial confines. It is not uncommon for families in Nalen to encompass individuals practicing different religions, where, for instance, parents may adhere to Christianity while their children may follow either Christian or Muslim faith. This occurrence is a testament to the historical legacy, and an ingrained sense of tolerance has passed down through generations.

In *besik makam* activities, integral to the act of cleaning the graves is a pivotal ritual: a collective prayer conducted at the graves of ancestors revered as the founders of the Nalen hamlet. Two specific ancestral graves, Wongso Nenggolo and his wife, command universal respect from all residents, irrespective of their religious affiliations, encompassing Muslims, Buddhists, and Christians. Following the tomb-cleaning process, communal prayer ensues, accompanied by a shared meal meticulously prepared by the residents. A communal meal, where food contributions are amalgamated and distributed without distinction, symbolizes a conscious or subconscious manifestation of unity and harmony. The shared prayer for ancestors, rooted in the Javanese tradition of *selamatan*, carries manifold meanings, as expounded by Geertz (1976). Among these, the act symbolizes the attainment of physical and mental security and comfort for all members of the community (Darisma et al., 2018). In the unique context of the Nalen community, this sense of security and comfort manifests as an interreligious harmony.

## **Harmony Habitus of Plural Society**

The harmony fostered by the community evolved into a habitual tradition ingrained in the fabric of Nalen's communal existence. The community leaders and residents of Nalen are keenly cognisant of the intricate tapestry of plurality that characterizes their surroundings. Consequently, the community makes a concerted effort to cultivate harmony, which manifests in both individual and collective awareness. Consequently, the habitus of residing in a state of peace, harmony, and tolerance stands as a tangible testimony that persists today. This protracted process, as delineated earlier, has spanned the 1960s, propelled by the enduring dynamics of social, cultural, and political dimensions. It aligns seamlessly with Bourdieu's assertion that habitus crystallizes through a protracted, dynamic, and adaptive process, ultimately culminating in the establishment of harmonious order, even in the absence of a formal conductor (Bourdieu, 1977; Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986).

The habitus of harmony evolves through a dialectical process that encompasses both objectification and subjectification. Bourdieu's conceptual framework embodies a harmonious synthesis emerging from the interplay between these two paradigms, wherein individuals are perceived as autonomously capable of shaping their actions while concurrently being influenced by the objective processes that envelop or impact them (Jenkins, 2002; Rey, 2007). Notably, among various phenomenologists, Bourdieu's concept is regarded as the most pragmatic for comprehending and analyzing the practices of individuals within their respective sociocultural milieus (Harker et al., 2005).

Understanding the harmonious habitus within the Nalen community can be effectively approached through Bourdieu's conceptual framework, given that habitus is consciously constructed and endured across generations. The awareness of harmony habitus

can be discerned through three interrelated processes: the matrix of perception, appreciation, and action (Bourdieu, 1977). In the academic realm, the cultivation of perspectives is shaped by struggles with books, discussions, and scholarly activities, ultimately leading to the formulation of judgments and subsequent actions. Conversely, in rural communities, such as Nalen, perceptions evolve through interactions and adherence to prevailing norms. The tolerance exhibited towards individuals of diverse religions stems from a series of perceptions of harmony that naturally emerge within their social context.

Pluralism within the Nalen community reflects the complex interplay of political, social, and cultural dynamics. The community became acutely aware of the political threat of 'genocide' targeting communist sympathizers in 1965 (Cribb et al., 2004; Nugroho, 2008), prompting them to earnestly embrace religion through affiliation and study. However, their ability to establish networks with religious groups was constrained by limited social capital as they lacked connections with individuals who could aid them during the crisis. Consequently, the nearest and most familiar groups assumed the role of alternative patrons in religious matters. Prawito, a *Bekel* during the 1960s, revealed the community's confusion in contacting religious figures and their eventual assistance from students at Satya Wacana Christian University (UKSW) in Salatiga to connect with a priest (Nugroho, 2008). Those who opted not to convert to Christianity chose to pursue Islamic studies in the neighboring Karang Tengah village, renowned for its religious fervor and adherence to the Sunni tradition of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Similarly, Buddhists endeavored to maintain their faith by embracing the peaceful teachings of the Buddha.

The religious insights imparted by religious leaders have significantly influenced the Nalen community. The period from 1966



to 1970 emerged as a highly dynamic phase in Nalen's religious life. It became commonplace for individuals to undergo religious conversions and 'return' to their original faiths. Consequently, numerous families in Nalen now coexist on a single roof, practicing diverse beliefs. The current Bekel of Nalen shared a personal anecdote, revealing that his father, a former Bekel, converted to Christianity while his four siblings held different religious beliefs. Bekel himself identifies as Christian, while his brother and sister adhere to Islam. Notably, he emphasized that his parents did not prohibit such diverse religious choices (personal interviews with Bekel Nalen on November 15, 2021). Decisions regarding religion and mutual respect for diverse faiths appear to be the outcomes of a protracted and deliberate process.

The perspective that prioritizes the 'survival' of one's religion, even when it differs from others, contributes to the Nalen community's notably high sense of tolerance. This perceptual framework is further reinforced by cultural norms rooted in the Javanese values that they uphold. For the Javanese, the belief in the paramount importance of brotherhood is central, as exemplified by expressions like '*penting seduluran, bondo iso digoleki*' (what is important is brotherhood; wealth can be sought) and '*mangan ra mangan seng penting kumpul*' (whether you eat or not, the most important thing is to live [get along] together). Javanese people are recognized for their reserved nature and inclination to internalize personal struggles to maintain harmony with others (Wijayanti & Nurwianti, 2010; Nashori et al., 2020). The prevailing values and norms within Javanese society are generally characterized by non-conflict and non-violence. According to Kurniawan & Hasanat (2007), Javanese people adhere to the principle of harmonious living by avoiding overt conflicts, demonstrating respect, fostering tolerance, and embracing friendliness.

This perspective is fortified by the teachings disseminated by leaders of the three religions. Notably, the data collectors in Nalen were profoundly moved by recitations at the Nalen Mosque, where Kyai Slamet consistently affirmed '*kito niku sedulur podo*' [we are the same brothers]. Likewise, when addressing Christians, he emphasizes that community members are brothers, acknowledging only the difference in their respective deities (*bedo sinembah*) (personal interview with Pastor Wawan, July 21, 2021). Such expressions serve as a foundational perceptual framework and a means of appreciating a community's approach to religious diversity.

The actions undertaken by the community are notably associated with religious diversity, underscoring the absence of significant conflicts. As illustrated in the earlier example, collaborative efforts to construct mosques, churches, or monasteries exemplify their harmony in collective endeavors. Their cohesive participation in activities such as *merti dusun*, *pajatan*, and *besik makam* provides a distinct illustration of how harmony manifests within the Nalen community.

### **Social and Cultural Capital in Creating Harmony**

Nalen converges three distinct religious belief systems, encapsulating the intricate dynamics of harmony inherent within them. Following Bourdieu (1977), Nalen is characterized as a cultural field dedicated to fostering unity and concord among diverse religious communities. Bourdieu conceptualizes a field as a complex amalgamation of networks, configurations, and structured social relations within which agents, be they individuals or groups, endeavor to exert influence and control over the field. This influence is exercised through various strategies aimed at dominating or mastering a field. The ensuing process of mutual influence, control, or dominance is pivotal in rendering the field a 'free' space. To simplify this concept, Jenkins (2002) characterizes the field as a social space wherein struggles and maneuvers transpire in pursuit of competing

for exclusive resources and securing access to them. Notably, Rey (2007) aptly dubs this intricate interplay as a 'battle of fields.'

As a domain marked by inherent contestation, the Nalen community comprehends the latent potential of discord. Consequently, sagacious Nalen figures adeptly navigate and oversee this domain, shaping it into a realm conducive to the exchange of religious awareness. The cultivation of awareness serves as a catalyst for fostering unity, despite the religious tensions that may arise, particularly in response to the ingress of external groups. This sentiment finds an expression in the observations of Reverend Pastor Wawan, recounted (July 21, 2021):

"Previously, there was a group known as *alkacong*, *aliran kathok congklang* (followers of Tabligh Jamaat), who slept and cooked in the mosque. They exclusively visited the homes of Muslim individuals. However, their presence somewhat disrupted interfaith relations. I am uncertain about the teachings that they have espoused. Fundamentalist groups exist in Christianity. They also visited this area, leading some Christian residents to opt for alternative churches because of disagreements over practices such as smoking, among other reasons. I warned them against coming and disturbing harmony. Currently, these groups (*alkacong* and fundamentalist Christians) no longer exist.

Functioning as a battle-of-field, the sagacity exhibited by the Nalen community appears to exert a prevailing influence in governing their societal patterns. Bourdieu (1986) posits that the regulation of a field involves the utilization and distribution of capital, encompassing both supply and demand dynamics (Rey, 2007). Consequently, control over capital plays a pivotal role in shaping sociocultural practices within a given society. Agency, as the possessor and wielder of capital, plays a decisive role in determining societal practices (Bourdieu, 1991). Furthermore, individuals strategically position themselves within this framework by comprehending the codes or rules inherent in the field (Haryatmoko 2016).

## ***Social Capital***

Within the Nalen community, social capital has emerged as the preeminent form of capital employed by agencies to assert control over the field. According to Bourdieu (1986), capital encompasses tangible and potential resources possessed by an individual, stemming from institutionalized networks, and perpetuates through ongoing mutual recognition and acquaintances, thereby affording its members diverse forms of collective support. Putnam (cited in Häuberer, 2011) simplified the concept of defining social capital as the attributes of social organizations, including trust, norms, and networks, that enhance societal efficiency by facilitating coordinated action. Social capital's influence is discernible in the cultivation of mutual trust, effective communication, openness, mutual dependence, comfort, and security among individuals within the community.

Social capital accrues through the cultivation of social networks and utilization of available media. Diverse forms of social groups serve as potent vehicles for effectively fostering social capital, and the efficacy of this process is significantly contingent upon everyone's abilities. For instance, community groups facilitate communication and contribute to the initial capital essential for social capital development. Additionally, an individual's adaptability plays a crucial role in establishing social capital, thereby constituting an asset in the construction process.

The Nalen community possesses robust social capital that facilitates the cultivation of mutual trust, effective communication, comfort, and security among its diverse religious groups. Fundamental to this social capital are the ties of brotherhood, a shared historical lineage, and a common place of residence. Functioning as a rural community with a modest population, they are united by a common genealogy, tracing their roots to Mbah Wongso Nenggolo, an

esteemed progenitor of the village. Historical records suggest that Mbah Wongso Nenggolo served as a soldier in the ranks of Prince Diponegoro or the Mataram Soldiers (Nugroho, 2008). Despite divergent ideological beliefs, the Nalen maintain interconnected genealogical ties, underscoring the enduring influence of their shared ancestry on their lives.

“My father has three siblings, two of whom are Christians, and two are Muslims. However, my grandfather was a Christian. It is just that, back in the day, he was said to be Muslim. *Pak Bekel* is my father’s elder brother and Christian. Here, there are many cases where the father is Buddhist, but the children are Muslims. As for *Pak Bekel*, he is a Christian, but he married a Muslim” (interview with Ida, resident of Nalen, November 15, 2021).

The genealogical proximity factor appears to engender favorable patterns of social relations within the community. This phenomenon is further propelled by historical affiliations among individuals who were formerly categorized as adherents of abangan groups in both the religious and political spheres. Their shared apprehension regarding the perceived 'genocide' directed at activists and sympathizers of the communist party fostered a unity of purpose, prompting them to collectively determine their religious affiliations and accord respect to individual choices. Residents recognize the necessity of coexistence and comprehend that interreligious discord would not only be detrimental, but also exacerbate the negative stereotypes associated with their respective communities. In their pursuit of religious affiliation, these individuals consciously eschew associations with fervent groups, such as Islamic revivalist or modernist movements. On an ideological plane, this demographic is deemed susceptible to posing a threat to national unity, with values considered inconsistent with the noble principles of the nation, as embodied in Pancasila (Ma'mun, 2017).

This form of social capital appears to function as a pivotal resource for the Nalen community, facilitating the growth of trust among its adherents and fostering a pervasive sense of comfort and security in their daily lives. Notably, a lack of mutual suspicion was evident, as exemplified by the diverse collaborative activities undertaken collectively. These include communal events, such as *merti dusun*, *pajatan*, *besik makam*, *pitulasan*, community service projects involving the construction of places of worship, and mutual visits during holidays.

### ***Cultural Capital***

Cultural capital, also referred to as informational capital, manifests itself as the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, or competencies. According to Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital is realized in three distinct forms: internalized within an individual's cognition, objective in nature, and institutionalized within societal structures. Individuals acquire knowledge that holds practical benefits for their lives, endowing them with a refined sense of cultural sophistication. This internalization is observable in the actions of those possessing such knowledge, wherein commendable attitudes, judicious behavior and demonstrated respectfulness are exhibited. Objectively useful knowledge is universally recognized and deemed beneficial within a given societal context. For instance, an individual's ability or knowledge of architectural design is socially valuable if it serves a practical purpose. Lastly, cultural capital also assumes an institutional dimension, as individuals possessing certain knowledge are often accorded specific titles as symbols of societal respect.

While the Nalen community may not be characterized as an academically oriented society with a focus on higher education, their knowledge base is richly steeped in the wisdom passed down from their forebears and shaped by their surroundings. Rooted in the values and life philosophy inherent in Javanese culture, inherited from their

ancestors, the Nalen people cultivate a harmonious existence despite divergent beliefs. Central to Javanese societal principles is the concept of *'tepo seliro,'* signifying tolerance and the acceptance of existing differences through the respectful acknowledgement of others' sentiments (Nugroho et al., 2019). The pervasive influence of the *'tepo seliro'* culture has far-reaching implications in fostering an attitude of empathy and care. This is evidenced by the community's ability to comprehend and share the experiences of others, thus cultivating a genuine sense of concern and consideration.

Furthermore, as previously elucidated, religious doctrines adhered to by the Nalen community serve as the foundation for the construction of societal knowledge conducive to the acceptance of others. A prevailing belief holds that religious convictions constitute personal matters and are exempt from contentious debates. Yidin, a prominent Muslim figure in Nalen, articulates his approach to handling differences grounded in religious principles: *"menawi kulo niku, lakum dinukum waliyadin mawon,"* translating to "for me, you have your religion, and for you, I have mine" (interview, July 12, 2021). Creeds and teachings of this nature contribute substantially to the cultivation of robust cultural capital in the Nalen community.

Cultural capital becomes discernible in interpersonal discourse, particularly when discussions revolve around harmony. Individuals within a community exhibit ease with differences and actively engage in reminders. Notably, young children receive encouragement to attend the mosque for Quranic recitations, a directive issued not only by their parents but also by their siblings, who adhere to differing religious beliefs. This inclusive approach extends to the unimpeded exercise of rights and fulfilment of religious obligations. Furthermore, agencies and public figures play a crucial role in shaping cultural capital, as evidenced by the deliberate linguistic choices of influential figures. For instance, Pastor Wawan often uses the term *'God'* instead

of 'Jesus,' while Kyai Slamet employs the phrase '*sedulur podo*' (same brother) (interview with Pastor Wawan, July 15, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The habitus of harmony among religious believers within the Nalen community has evolved over an extensive process, culminating in objective and subjective structuring of community consciousness. Bourdieu's matrix encompassing perception, appreciation, and action is deployed dialectically to analyze the formation of the harmonious habitus in the Nalen community, illustrating the interconnectedness of these elements. The objective structure consists of knowledge, norms, and values, serving as a matrix for public perception in appraising groups with divergent beliefs. The incorporation of noble norms and values from Javanese society, coupled with the implementation of religious teachings within the community, contributed to the cultivation of a positive perception conducive to the development of a peaceful habitus.

Nalen, functioning as a cultural field, diverges from the conventional notion of a competitive arena, necessitating that agents vie for control or dominance through their capital resources. Instead, it is construed as a space aimed at fostering unity and promoting an awareness of harmonious coexistence within a pluralistic community. This interpretation is underpinned by the communal possession of social and cultural capital in the Nalen community. Elements such as genealogical proximity, historical foundations of society, geographical contiguity, and cultural and religious values collectively constitute social and cultural capital, serving as cohesive forces that bind the community together.

The social and cultural cohesion that has developed in Nalen, resulting in peaceful habitus, offers a novel approach to mitigating conflicts, particularly those arising between religious communities.



This model has significant potential for application in various regions of Indonesia, especially in areas prone to conflict based on religious differences. Although the implementation of this method may be challenging, it is important to acknowledge, as Bourdieu argued, that habitus is not formed instantaneously but through a long, continuous process.

### **Author Contributions**

Conceptualization: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Data curation: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Formal analysis: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Funding acquisition: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Investigation: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Methodology: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Project administration: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Resources: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Software: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Supervision: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Validation: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Visualization: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Writing – original draft: I.M., A.M., & S.M.; Writing – review & editing: I.M., A.M., & S.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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### **Informed Consent Statement**

Each participant's name in this study was anonymized. All parties involved provided consent for participant interviews.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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