

Spatial Dynamics of Papuan Multiculturalism: Indigenous, Islamic, and Christian Interactions

Rasminto ¹, Hendrik Arwam ²

¹ Muhammadiyah University of Indonesia, Indonesia; rasminto45@unismabekasi.ac.id

² University of Papua, Indonesia; arwamhendrik79@gmail.com

Received: 22/04/2026

Revised: 19/06/2026

Accepted: 24/08/2026

Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of multiculturalism in Papua by integrating ethnographic methods and critical discourse analysis. The main focus is directed at the practices, transformation, and interaction among Papua's indigenous religion, Islam, and Christianity, as well as the role of local wisdom in strengthening social integration. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Data were analyzed using a combination of thematic ethnographic analysis and Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, enabling multi-level interpretation of social practices and discursive constructions. The findings indicate that the indigenous religion in Papua endures through the adaptation of rituals, symbols, and arts, forming patterns of coexistence, acculturation, and identity negotiation with world religions. Local wisdom, such as the philosophy of collective life, customary deliberation, and the active participation of women and youth, serves as the foundation for strengthening multiculturalism. Critical discourse analysis reveals the marginalization of indigenous religious narratives, although efforts toward formal recognition are increasing. The Papuan multiculturalism model rejects narrow assimilation and monoculturalism, emphasizing pro-existence, inclusion, and active dialogue. This study contributes to the development of a social integration model based on local wisdom, relevant for Papua and other plural regions in Indonesia.

Keywords

Interreligious Interaction; Local Wisdom; Multiculturalism; Papuan Indigenous Religion; Social Integration

Corresponding Author

Rasminto

Muhammadiyah University of Indonesia, Indonesia; rasminto45@unismabekasi.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Papua is recognized for its exceptionally complex ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity (Arifin et al., 2016; Brata & Lagendijk, 2013). Daily life in Papua is shaped by rich indigenous traditions and interactions with world religions, particularly Islam and Christianity (Ananta et al., 2016). This diversity poses both challenges and opportunities for creating an inclusive, harmonious society in line with *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Indrawan et al., 2019; Werijon et al., 2020). However, Papua continues to face crises and social fragmentation that risk local and national disintegration, necessitating serious academic attention to develop a multiculturalism model suited to its unique local wisdom.

Research urgency stems not only from indications of potential disintegration (Ismail, 2023), but also from the need to deeply understand transformations in Papuan indigenous religions as they interact with Islam and Christianity. These processes reshape social structures, values, and identities, while local wisdom—embodied in symbols, rituals, arts, and ceremonies—remains crucial for



© 2026 by the authors. This is an open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY-SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).

mediating interreligious relations and cohesion (Cahya & Syafrizal, 2022; Effendi et al., 2020; Leuwol et al., 2024; Pamungkas & Indriasari, 2021; Pekei & Sihombing, 2023; Warwer & Pontoan, 2021; Winarsih, 2019). Yet, globalization and modernization often threaten these local values.

This study, combining ethnography and critical discourse analysis, aims to describe changes in indigenous religions, analyze socio-cultural-political dynamics, and formulate a model to strengthen multiculturalism based on Papuan local wisdom. The expected result is both theoretical and practical contributions for social integration in Papua.

Conceptually, this research adopts Bhikhu Parekh and Will Kymlicka's theories that stress recognition, justice, and equal participation for minorities (Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2001; Sahira et al., 2025). Multiculturalism is not just diversity, but a socio-political project requiring state action for dialogue, equality, and anti-discrimination (Keweuel et al., 2017; Ritonga et al., 2022). In Indonesia, these values are enshrined in Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and reinforced by Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights, Law No. 21/2001 on Special Autonomy for Papua (IHCS, 2011; Lukum, 2020) and Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 20/2016 (Nurasmawi & Ristiliana, 2021; Ubadah, 2022). These frameworks require respect for diversity and inclusive integration across Indonesia, including Papua.

Papuan local wisdom is central to building and maintaining harmonious multicultural relations among indigenous, Muslim, and Christian communities (Kadir, 2017; Mulyadi, 2026; Sufiandi et al., 2025). Philosophies like "One Stove Three Stones" in Fakfak, traditional deliberation, gotong royong, Adat Sasi, and shared religious celebrations are effective for integration and conflict resolution (Amatullah et al., 2026; Qodriyah et al., 2025). In both inland and coastal settings, these values underpin tolerance, economic collaboration, and solidarity, serving as the everyday glue of Papuan multiculturalism (Abubakar et al., 2025).

Spatial dynamics in Papua shape patterns of interaction and tolerance. In inland areas, kinship, tradition, and customary deliberation sustain harmony among faiths (Ali et al., 2025; Amatullah et al., 2026). Coastal and border areas like Sota, Merauke, see indigenous and transmigrant communities—often Muslims and Christians—practicing mutual cooperation, knowledge transfer, and ecological balance through Adat Sasi. Urban settings and dormitories (e.g., Surabaya) present challenges of social segregation and cultural distance, so harmonious relations are often formal or episodic (Wardaya & Warsono, 2022). Integration is thus context-dependent, with border and transmigration areas fostering deeper collaboration.

The literature shows that multiculturalism demands not only peaceful coexistence but active pro-existence (Koli, 2022). Inclusion, interaction, and collaboration are crucial for equitable shared space (Rahmat et al., 2025). In Papua, local wisdom supports integration and prevents exclusion (Ismanto et al., 2025; Silo & Ismail, 2022), but globalization and assimilationist trends can threaten local cultures and provoke resistance.

Most studies remain descriptive or historical, rarely probing the depth of local wisdom's role in strengthening multiculturalism among indigenous, Muslim, and Christian groups. There is also a lack of research on the discourse of indigenous religions in the wider socio-cultural and political context. This research gap calls for a comprehensive approach integrating ethnography and discourse analysis.

The novelty of this research is the integration of ethnographic and discourse analysis for a holistic view of Papuan multiculturalism—an approach not found in previous studies. Prior works (Hakim, 2022; Ridwan & Khotimah, 2024) highlight the conventional nature of interfaith dialogue, while Qodriyah et al. (2025) and Wekke (2024) underscore the importance of local philosophies and minority adaptation, and Pamungkas & Indriasari (2021) emphasize grassroots cultural mechanisms as peace agents. By integrating these approaches, this study seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of practices, narratives, and representations of indigenous religions alongside Islam and Christianity, and to develop a synthesis model connecting cultural mechanisms, critical analysis, and local wisdom as the

foundation of social integration.

This research specifically aims to explore how local wisdom can be the basis for inclusive and sustainable social integration in Papua, and to provide practical policy recommendations for strengthening social cohesion and preventing disintegration. The findings are expected to enrich Indonesian multiculturalism literature and contribute to practical social development in pluralistic regions such as Papua.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach by integrating ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Ethnography is employed to understand the practices, transformations, and interactions of indigenous Papuan religions with Islam and Christianity, as well as the role of local wisdom in multiculturalism (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). CDA is applied to examine power relations, narratives, and the representation of religion and identity in public and media discourse (Fairclough, 2013). The integration of both methods enables multi-level analysis of social praxis and discourse, following contemporary social research methodology (Rachman et al., 2025).

Research Design and Subjects

The research design is explorative-reflexive. Initial stages involve mapping problems and developing a flexible conceptual framework. Subjects are selected purposively based on knowledge, social roles, and representation of Papua's socio-cultural diversity, including customary and religious leaders, government officials, NGOs, artisans, youth, women, media, and stakeholders.

The research is conducted in various customary communities and social environments in Papua Province, covering districts with significant indigenous populations and areas where major religions intersect. Fieldwork lasts six months, with 27 main informants selected according to expertise, social engagement, diversity, and willingness to participate. Participant observation, in-depth interviews (60–90 minutes each), and three FGDs (6–9 participants/group) are carried out to ensure data depth and collective validation.

Data Collection Techniques

Data are collected triangulatively: (1) participant observation; (2) in-depth interviews; (3) FGDs; (4) documentation of cultural artifacts; and (5) analysis of relevant documents/media.

Instruments and Data Analysis

Instruments include observation guides, interview guides, and FGD protocols, based on ethnographic and CDA frameworks. Data analysis is conducted in parallel through (1) thematic ethnographic analysis (open coding, categorization, interpretation with NVivo) and (2) Fairclough's CDA (text, discursive practice, social practice).

Integration between ethnography and CDA is realized by thematically analyzing observational and interview data, followed by CDA on key narratives and documents. The synthesis links practical, social, and discourse-level findings for a comprehensive understanding of Papuan multiculturalism dynamics.

Research Procedure

The research process includes formulating problems and objectives, purposive subject and location selection, field data collection, parallel data analysis, synthesis, and model/policy recommendation formulation. Each stage involves ethical reflection, triangulation, and validation to ensure credibility and integrity.

Research Ethics

This study follows social research ethics: informed consent, confidentiality, and academic use of data, in line with international guidelines. Triangulation compares results across data collection methods, while validation uses member checking and panel discussions. Reflexivity is maintained through continuous researcher reflection on positionality, bias, and subjectivity to ensure scientific integrity and transparency.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

This research was conducted in various customary communities and social environments in Papua, reflecting the region's ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. The research locations included districts with high populations of indigenous communities, as well as areas that serve as important meeting points between Papuan indigenous religions, Islam, and Christianity. A total of 27 informants participated in this study, consisting of traditional leaders, indigenous religious leaders, Islamic/Christian leaders, government officials, NGO members, artisans, youth, women leaders, and local media representatives. The distribution of informants is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Composition of Research Informants

No	Informant Category	Number of People
1	Traditional leaders	6
2	Indigenous religious leaders	5
3	Islamic/Christian leaders	5
4	Government officials	3
5	NGO members	2
6	Artisans	2
8	Women leaders	2
9	Local media representatives	2
Total		27

Sites were purposively selected to reflect both homogeneous customary communities and urban multicultural interactions. This diversity allowed observation of adaptation, identity negotiation, and social integration in real-life settings, enriching the data and increasing the relevance of the findings for current issues of integration and diversity in Papua.

Social conditions in Papua are marked by fragmentation, posing disintegration risks but also offering opportunities for strengthening communal life under the principle of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity). Despite ongoing challenges and external influences, local wisdom and indigenous religious practices endure, although they continue to transform. Data were collected via participant observation, in-depth interviews, FGDs, documentation of cultural artifacts, and analysis of documents and local media.

Indigenous Religious Practices and Their Interaction with Islam and Christianity

a. Indigenous Religious Practices in Papua

Rituals honoring ancestors, traditional ceremonies, sacred symbols, and myth preservation remain central to indigenous religion in Papua. These practices, along with arts like woodcarving, dance, and

music, reinforce collective identity and intergenerational solidarity. Example: In District Y, monthly stone-burning ceremonies and the use of noken bags and traditional instruments continue as expressions of ancestral respect. Sacred carvings on houses and boats retain deep spiritual meaning.

b. Transformation and Adaptation of Indigenous Religion

Over time, especially since the colonial era and the development of formal religious institutions, these indigenous religious practices have undergone significant transformation. The Papuan community has begun to adopt new elements into their customary practices, such as incorporating prayers from world religions into traditional ceremonies and modifying religious symbols to align with new teachings, while still maintaining strong local roots.

This transformation can be seen in several customary ceremonies in the research area, where before the stone-burning ritual begins, a Christian or Islamic prayer is recited by the local religious leader. One traditional leader (TA4) explained, *"Nowadays, in every traditional celebration, we often start with a prayer from the church or mosque, but the core of the tradition is still preserved so it doesn't disappear."* Observations in coastal communities also found that the carvings on the walls of churches and mosques are often inspired by local traditional symbols, creating a visual fusion between modern religious expression and local tradition.

c. Interaction of Indigenous Religion with Islam and Christianity

Further developments show that the interaction between indigenous religion, Islam, and Christianity in Papua forms dynamic relationship patterns through three main pathways: co-existence, acculturation, and identity negotiation. Co-existence is reflected in harmonious social life, where different religious groups live side by side tolerantly and share social spaces without significant conflict.

Observations in urban areas reveal that major Islamic and Christian religious festivals still involve the attendance of members from indigenous communities, even those who continue to practice ancestral beliefs. Acculturation can be observed in the integration of indigenous religious elements into Islamic and Christian practices, for example, through the use of traditional motifs in the architecture of places of worship or the combination of customary rituals with interfaith prayers in communal celebrations. A church leader (PK3) noted, *"We always invite traditional leaders to attend and pray together at church events, and even some hymns use local rhythms and languages."*

Meanwhile, identity negotiation arises as a community effort to build an inclusive narrative of faith, so that customary values and local wisdom can coexist with increasingly prominent world religions. A focus group discussion (FGD) with youth and women in one village revealed that the younger generation feels proud to actively participate in church or mosque activities, while still maintaining their roles in customary ceremonies. One youth (PD1) stated, *"We want to remain part of tradition, even though we are active in the church. We want both to go hand in hand."*

Figure 1 below illustrates the dynamics of interaction between indigenous Papuan religions, Islam, and Christianity through these three main patterns: co-existence, acculturation, and identity negotiation.

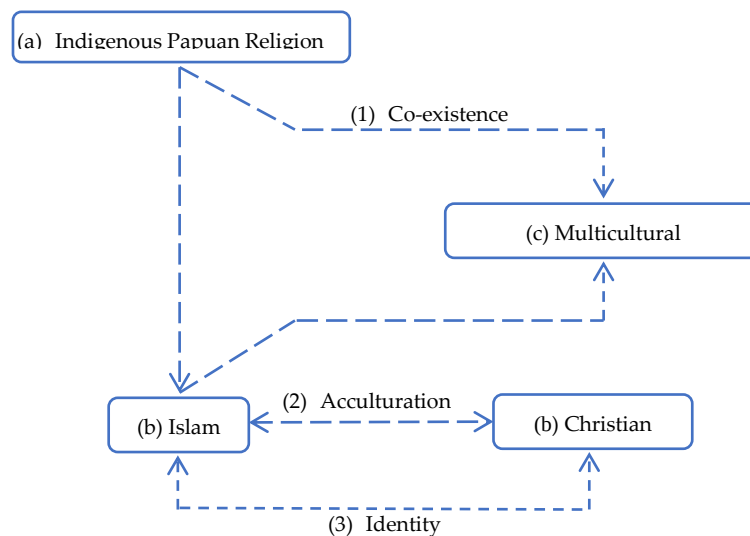


Figure 1. Patterns of Interaction and Transformation among Religions in Papua

Figure 1 illustrates that these patterns result from intertwined historical, social, and cultural processes. Inter-religious relations in Papua are reciprocal and dynamic, embodying the principle of pro-existence—where groups not only coexist peacefully but also actively share spaces and collaborate on communal challenges.

Indigenous religion serves as the foundation, with Islam and Christianity entering through processes like colonization and migration, bringing new values and structures. The multicultural community thus becomes the meeting point for these identities, enabling a society that maintains its roots while embracing diversity.

Co-existence is shown in mutual respect and shared public spaces; acculturation in the adaptation of local symbols and rituals into religious life; and identity negotiation in ongoing dialogue and the dual involvement of the younger generation in both traditional and formal religious spheres. These findings confirm that interaction and transformation among religions in Papua are not only symbolic but also visible in everyday life—making Figure 1 a reflection of real, adaptive multicultural practices.

Socio-Cultural and Political Dynamics among Religions

a. Cooperation and Social Tension

Interfaith cooperation in Papua spans economic, educational, and conflict resolution activities. In many villages, Muslims, Christians, and indigenous adherents jointly build public facilities like bridges and halls, regardless of religion. One community leader (TA3) stated, *“We usually work together to build the village, regardless of religion. During harvest or traditional celebrations, everyone comes and helps each other.”*

However, tensions can arise over resource distribution and differing religious interpretations. In District Z, some groups expressed dissatisfaction about government aid allocation, suspecting favoritism. An Islamic religious leader (IK2) noted, *“Aid issues often become a source of conflict. If it’s not fair, it can cause disputes, even if everything seems harmonious on the surface.”* This highlights that social harmony in Papua depends greatly on transparent and fair resource management.

b. Politicization of Religious Identity

The politicization of religion is evident, especially during regional elections and resource competition. Researchers observed that political elites often exploit religious issues for support, while local media amplifies religious differences as political tools. An NGO activist (LSM1) said, *“Whenever elections are coming up, religious issues are always brought up. Sometimes outsiders come and provoke division, even though previously things were peaceful.”* Fieldwork also found social gatherings and protests

sometimes divide along religious lines, showing how politicization can drive segregation.

c. The Role of Customary and Religious Institutions

Customary and religious bodies are crucial for social harmony and conflict mediation in Papua. When disputes arise between groups, the customary council and religious leaders from all sides mediate solutions. Village hall deliberations are the primary venue for consensus. A traditional leader (TA5) explained, *"If there is a problem, we call everyone to the customary hall and sit together. The church leader, mosque imam, and tribal head all speak to find a peaceful solution."*

FGDs confirm that major decisions—like development, land distribution, or setting religious holidays—always involve these institutions, ensuring legitimacy and preventing prolonged conflict. Researchers note these platforms are key to managing diversity and reinforcing social solidarity in Papua.

The Role of Local Wisdom in Strengthening Multiculturalism

a. Local Wisdom as the Basis of Integration

Local wisdom in Papua serves as a fundamental foundation for building social integration and strengthening the cohesion of multicultural society. Values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), deliberation (musyawarah), and the sasi customary system have become effective social mechanisms for managing religious and cultural diversity.

Research observations in one village show that when disputes arise between religious groups, the community always prioritizes customary deliberation before making collective decisions. A traditional leader (TA1) stated, *"We believe that without deliberation and mutual assistance, people here cannot live in peace. Custom is our common home."* The presence of strong collective values and solidarity enables communities to remain united amid social changes and external cultural influences.

b. Inclusion of Women and Youth

Women and youth in Papua play a progressive role in maintaining and developing the spirit of multiculturalism. They are active not only in cultural preservation but also as agents of social change who promote inclusion and interfaith peace. FGD results show that women often act as mediators in times of conflict and lead joint interfaith trainings on conflict resolution and tolerance education. One female leader (PM2) stated, *"We often facilitate meetings among mothers from different religions so that children also learn to live in harmony."* Similarly, youth actively participate in various dialogue forums and interfaith cultural arts activities that strengthen the narrative of social integration. A youth (PD2) added, *"We want our generation to keep our customs, but also to be open to making friends and learning from peers of different religions."*

c. Shared Symbols and Rituals

Customary symbols and joint rituals serve as key bridges for integration and pro-existence in Papua. Observations show that during harvest festivals and village celebrations, prayers from Islamic, Christian, and indigenous leaders are often combined with traditional dances and music from all religious groups. A Christian leader (PK2) shared, *"We always invite traditional leaders and leaders of other religions to church events so that everyone feels respected and accepted."* Symbols like the noken (woven bag), traditional carvings, and regional songs are featured not only in customary ceremonies but also in formal religious events, effectively fostering a shared sense of belonging.

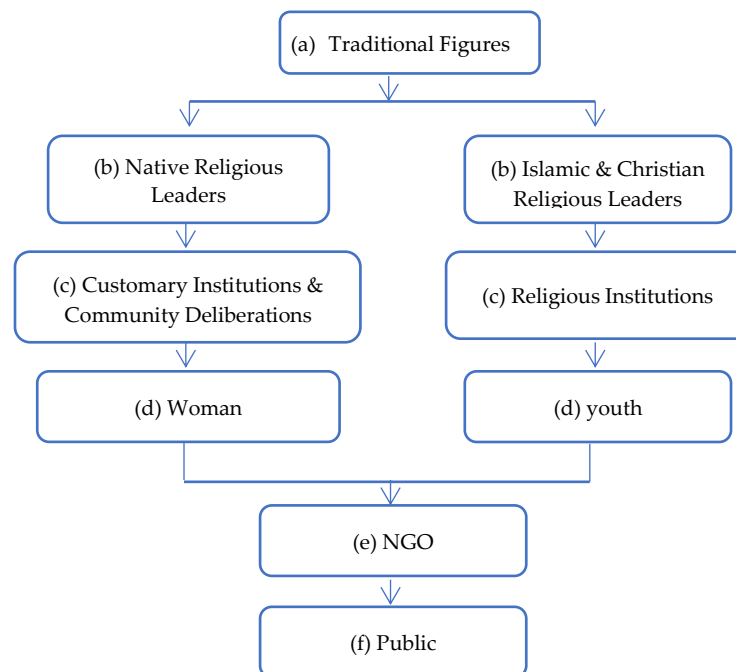


Figure 2. Key Local Actors in Strengthening Multiculturalism in Papua

Figure 2 summarizes the field data analysis and illustrates how multiculturalism in Papua is supported by the synergy of traditional leaders, religious leaders, customary and religious institutions, women, youth, and NGOs. This collaborative model—identified through interviews, FGDs, and observations—shows that each actor plays a vital role.

Traditional leaders safeguard local wisdom and legitimacy, while religious leaders bridge tradition and global faiths through dialogue and tolerance. Customary councils and religious institutions mediate conflicts and encourage joint decision-making. Women and youth are active as mediators and agents of change, preserving culture and promoting inclusion. NGOs catalyze these efforts through education, advocacy, and interfaith dialogue.

Collectively, these actors create a resilient, adaptive, and inclusive multicultural society. The process begins with local wisdom and spiritual values, is reinforced by institutions, empowered by women and youth, and facilitated by NGOs—ensuring ongoing social cohesion and genuine pro-existence across Papua's diversity.

The Discourse of Indigenous Religion and Its Relationship with World Religions

The discourse on Papuan indigenous religion and its relationship with Islam and Christianity shows complex dynamics both within communities and in public discussions. Analysis of documents, local media, and field data reveals three main narrative tendencies. Official state and religious institution narratives stress national integration and interfaith harmony, framing indigenous religion as local culture that should align with state-recognized world religions. This often leads to the unique identity of Papuan indigenous religion being diminished and not fully recognized as an independent belief system.

The study analyzed articles and reports from local media, regional regulations, government policies, interviews with religious and traditional leaders, NGO activists, and materials from advocacy campaigns and public forums—both online and in print—regarding the status of indigenous religion in Papua. Textually, official narratives prefer terms like “local belief” or “regional culture,” prioritizing “harmony,” “integration,” and “cohesion,” while rarely affirming indigenous religion’s authority as a belief system. In contrast, customary communities and NGOs use terms such as “ancestral religion” or “legitimate faith,” reject the “animism” label, and stress the need for equal, formal recognition.

At the discursive practice level, media and public forums—like seminars and advocacy campaigns—are used by customary communities and NGOs to push for rights, pluralism, and recognition, while state responses consistently emphasize national stability and integration. Socially, this tension and ongoing negotiation influence relationships in Papua. Interviews reveal a growing willingness among customary communities to seek formal recognition for ancestral religion, as seen in village meetings and hearings with local government. The issue has also entered the local political agenda, shaping policies on education, civil registration, and holidays.

Conversely, alternative narratives within customary communities emphasize resistance to marginalization, demanding state recognition of ancestral religion as legitimate and equal. As discourse has become more open, a synthetic negotiation narrative has emerged: customary communities, religious leaders, and intellectuals now advocate for equal recognition while maintaining national integration. This dialogue supports inclusivity and positions indigenous religion as a strategic partner in building multiculturalism, not as a barrier to modernization. Ultimately, the shift from subordination to recognition is vital for a truly multicultural, inclusive, and just Papuan society for all cultural and religious identities.

Model for Strengthening Multiculturalism Based on Papuan Local Wisdom

The discourse on Papuan indigenous religion and its relationship with Islam and Christianity shows complex dynamics both within communities and in public discussions. Analysis of documents, local media, and field data reveals three main narrative tendencies. Official state and religious institution narratives stress national integration and interfaith harmony, framing indigenous religion as local culture that should align with state-recognized world religions. This often leads to the unique identity of Papuan indigenous religion being diminished and not fully recognized as an independent belief system.

The study analyzed articles and reports from local media, regional regulations, government policies, interviews with religious and traditional leaders, NGO activists, and materials from advocacy campaigns and public forums—both online and in print—regarding the status of indigenous religion in Papua. Textually, official narratives prefer terms like “local belief” or “regional culture,” prioritizing “harmony,” “integration,” and “cohesion,” while rarely affirming indigenous religion’s authority as a belief system. In contrast, customary communities and NGOs use terms such as “ancestral religion” or “legitimate faith,” reject the “animism” label, and stress the need for equal, formal recognition.

At the discursive practice level, media and public forums—like seminars and advocacy campaigns—are used by customary communities and NGOs to push for rights, pluralism, and recognition, while state responses consistently emphasize national stability and integration. Socially, this tension and ongoing negotiation influence relationships in Papua. Interviews reveal a growing willingness among customary communities to seek formal recognition for ancestral religion, as seen in village meetings and hearings with local government. The issue has also entered the local political agenda, shaping policies on education, civil registration, and holidays.

Conversely, alternative narratives within customary communities emphasize resistance to marginalization, demanding state recognition of ancestral religion as legitimate and equal. As discourse has become more open, a synthetic negotiation narrative has emerged: customary communities, religious leaders, and intellectuals now advocate for equal recognition while maintaining national integration. This dialogue supports inclusivity and positions indigenous religion as a strategic partner in building multiculturalism, not as a barrier to modernization. Ultimately, the shift from subordination to recognition is vital for a truly multicultural, inclusive, and just Papuan society for all cultural and religious identities.

Discussions

Main Interpretation of Findings: The Meaning of Multicultural Practices Based on Papuan Local Wisdom

This study shows that multicultural practices in Papua are anchored in local wisdom, enabling dynamic interactions among indigenous religions, Islam, and Christianity. Rather than losing their identity, Papuan communities adapt by forming distinctive patterns of coexistence, acculturation, and identity negotiation, as seen in rituals, symbols, and intergenerational dialogue. These processes reflect active community involvement, moving beyond passive adaptation and supporting a model of pro-existence, in line with theories that highlight the importance of inclusive social integration over mere assimilation.

The emergence of these patterns is facilitated by traditions of consensus, kinship, and mutual respect embedded in Papuan social institutions. Local wisdom such as *gotong royong* and respect for differences helps prevent conflict and encourages dialogue, demonstrating that plural integration can be achieved through synthesis and flexible negotiation rather than uniformity.

Relationship of Findings to Previous Literature

These findings reinforce the view that genuine multiculturalism in Papua requires not only peaceful coexistence but also active engagement in collective problem-solving. Globalization does not erode local values; instead, Papuans integrate ancestral and universal religious teachings (Hoon, 2017). Local wisdom remains central in strengthening plural societies (Ismanto et al., 2025; Nur, 2022; Syaiful, 2025; Tabuni, 2023), and harmony is built through collaboration among state, traditional, and religious leaders (Al Hamid, 2020). Interfaith mediation, supported by Anggawirya et al. (2023), Mahmudi et al. (2024), Matulesy et al. (2025), and Sufiandi et al. (2025), is effective in reducing prejudice. Narrative negotiation, as found in critical discourse analysis, shows progress toward the formal recognition of indigenous religions (Sukirno, 2018; Utami et al., 2025).

While previous studies highlight tolerance and local wisdom, this research provides a more contextual analysis. Ridwan & Khotimah (2024), Pamungkas & Indriasari (2021), Wekke (2024), and Qodriyah et al. (2025) discuss aspects of tolerance, conflict prevention, and education. However, this study uniquely examines how coexistence, acculturation, and negotiation are actively mediated by community leaders in daily social life, offering a comprehensive model that integrates ethnography, critical discourse, and multi-track diplomacy for understanding multicultural dynamics in Papua.

Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this research advances the study of multiculturalism by contextualizing integration models that emphasize pro-existence and dialogue based on local wisdom, rather than assimilation. Methodologically, it innovates by combining ethnography and discourse analysis to examine identity and power in plural societies. Practically, it offers a model for Papua and other regions, stressing formal recognition of indigenous religions, integration of values into daily life, and empowerment of women, youth, and local mediators.

Policy recommendations are directly based on empirical findings, such as the effectiveness of customary deliberation and interfaith forums. These strategies, grounded in field evidence, support the strengthening of social forums, formal recognition of local values, and optimizing mediators' roles, ensuring recommendations are both practical and academically sound.

Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study is limited to several communities in Papua, with data mostly from adults, leaving out marginalized voices. The qualitative focus on local context makes it hard to measure longitudinal change. Future research should expand coverage, include diverse groups, use mixed methods, and

conduct longitudinal or comparative studies to better assess the long-term impact of local wisdom-based integration.

Nevertheless, this study is novel for its holistic analysis of interreligious interaction in Papua, showing that integration is driven by grassroots negotiation rooted in local wisdom. The findings enrich understanding of how multiculturalism based on local values can be a model for other plural societies, both in Indonesia and globally.

4. CONCLUSION

This study affirms that multiculturalism in Papua is shaped by complex interactions among indigenous religions, Islam, and Christianity, with local wisdom as its core foundation. Despite experiencing transformation through acculturation with world religions, indigenous religious practices in Papua remain resilient. Patterns of coexistence, acculturation, and identity negotiation illustrate the community's ability to preserve tradition while fostering inclusivity. The vital roles of customary institutions, religious leaders, women, and youth contribute significantly to social harmony and interfaith dialogue. These findings not only enhance the literature on multiculturalism but also directly achieve the research objectives by describing indigenous religious dynamics and offering a model to strengthen multiculturalism rooted in local wisdom.

This article offers a valuable contribution by presenting an integrated multiculturalism model that is both theoretically sound and practically applicable, especially for diverse societies. It highlights the importance of pro-existence, inclusive dialogue, and formal recognition of indigenous identities, providing key recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders. Moving forward, legal recognition of indigenous religions, strengthened interfaith forums, and empowerment of women and youth are essential. Future research should involve broader and more marginalized groups and utilize mixed methods to assess the sustainability of integration models. Ultimately, the Papuan multiculturalism model serves as a strategic reference for managing diversity and reinforcing national integration, laying a strong foundation for ongoing scholarly and practical efforts toward an inclusive society.

REFERENCES

- Abubakar, Fithri D, M. N., Nurqadrian, & Fitrizki, D. N. (2025). *Moderasi Beraqama*. PT Pena Persada Kerta Utama.
- Al Hamid, I. (2020). Islam, Local "Strongmen" And Multi-Track Diplomacies In Building Religious Harmony In Papu. *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 14(01), 113–138. <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2020.14.1.113-138>
- Ali, M., Rais, L., & Halik, W. (2025). Antara Integrasi dan Resistensi : Dinamika Pola Interaksi Sosial Masyarakat Asli Papua. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 14(2), 290–303. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jish.v14i2.94859>
- Amatullah, N., Putri, R. A. S., Zulfayani, Amalia, R., Khusnaeni, L., & Istiqomah, N. (2026). Socio-Economic Dynamics of Multicultural Communities in the Sota Border Region Between Indigenous Papuans and Transmigrants. *SOSHUMDIK*, 5(1), 96–110. <https://doi.org/10.56444/soshumdik.v2i2.773>
- Ananta, A., Retno, D., Wahyu, W., & Handayani, N. B. (2016). *Original Article Statistics on Ethnic Diversity in the Land of Papua , Indonesia*. 3(3), 458–474. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.143>
- Anggawirya, A. M., Floriani, R., Sijabat, S., Istiqomah, N., Giovani, E., & Hanip, R. (2023). Peningkatan Literasi Kewarganegaraan dan Kesadaran Multikulturalisme pada Masyarakat Papua Selatan. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan*, 2(2), 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v2i2.207>

- Arifin, E. N., Ananta, A., Utami, D. R. W. W., Handayani, N. B., & Pramono, A. (2016). Quantifying Indonesia's Ethnic Diversity. *Asian Population Studies*, 11(3), 233–256. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441730.2015.1090692>
- Brata, A. G., & Lagendijk, A. (2013). Diversity Issues in Local Development in Papua. *Economics, Management, and Financial Markets*, 8(2), 64–80. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=112429>
- Cahya, N., & Syafrizal. (2022). Integrating Local Wisdom In English Learning To Improve Pancasila's Student Profile. *MENDIDIK: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 8(2), 216–221. <https://doi.org/10.30653/003.202282.228>
- Effendi, M. R., Setiadi, E., & Nasir, M. A. (2020). The Local Wisdom Based On Religious Value A case Of Indigenous People In Indonesia. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 8(3), 1395–1404. <https://doi.org/10.18510/hssr.2020.83140>
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368>
- Hakim, L. Al. (2022). Multiculturalism and Allegations of Islamization at Jayapura Regency, Papua, Indonesia in the Post-Reform, 1998-2015. *Sejarah: Journal of History Department*, 31(2), 163–183. <https://doi.org/10.22452/sejarah.vol31no2.9>
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (3rd). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315146027>
- Hoon, C. (2017). Putting Religion into Multiculturalism: Conceptualising Religious Multiculturalism in Indonesia. *Asian Studies Review*, 41(3), 476–493. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2017.1334761>
- Indonesian Human Rights Committee for Social Justice (IHCS). (2011). *Human Rights in Papua 2010/2011*. Franciscans International.
- Indrawan, M., Sumule, A., Wijaya, A., Kapisa, N., Wanggai, F., Ahmad, M., Mambai, B. V., & Heatubun, C. D. (2019). A time for locally driven development in Papua and West Papua. *Development in Practice*, 29(2), 817–823. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2019.1609907>
- Ismail, F. (2023). The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution and the Potential for Disintegration in West Papua in the Context of the Unity of the Republic of Indonesia. *PASCIDEV: Pasundan Social Science Development*, 4(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.56457/pascidev.v4i1.74>
- Ismanto, T. Y., Toruan, T. S. L., Widodo, P., Taufik, R. M., & Aritonang, S. (2025). Integrating Local Wisdom into Public Policy: A Case Study of Papua Pegunungan Province. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 23(1), 5640–5647. <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2025-23.1.00440>
- Kadir, A. (2017). Melihat Indonesia dari Jendela Papua: Kebinekaan dalam Rajutan Budaya Melanesia. *Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo*, 1(2), 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.21580/jsw.2017.1.2.2034>
- Keweuel, H. K., Budiyo, A., & Fajar, Y. (2017). *Seri Studi Kebudayaan I: Pluralisme, Multikulturalisme, dan Batas-batas Toleransi*. Program Studi Antropologi Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Brawijaya.
- Koli, D. D. (2022). Menjadi Penyuluh Agama Katolik yang Moderat Dan Cakap Digital Untuk Sumba Tengah Rukun Dan Sejahtera. *Educare: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Keagamaan Katolik*, IX(1), 1–10. [https://ntt.kemenag.go.id/file/file/Educare/Jurnal Educare_Edisi Satu_2023.pdf](https://ntt.kemenag.go.id/file/file/Educare/Jurnal%20Educare_Edisi%20Satu_2023.pdf)
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Clarendon Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/0198290918.001.0001.002.015>
- Leuwol, N. V., Damima, L., Momot, Z., & Fiay, B. R. (2024). Makna Agama dalam Struktur Sosial Masyarakat Adat Papua. *Nusantara Hasana Journal*, 4(7), 165–173. <https://doi.org/10.59003/nhj.v4i7.1885>
- Lukum, R. (2020). *Membangun Tradisi Multikulturalisme di Indonesia Dalam Perspektif Ketahanan Nasional*. Ideas Publishing.
- Mahmudi, M. A., Laili, I., Suryani, I., & Ratnawati. (2024). Model Pendidikan Islam Multikultural Di Tanah Papua: Tantangan Dan Peluang. *Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Keagamaan*, 8(2), 147–155. <https://www.jurnal.fkip-uniyap.ac.id/index.php/AT-TADIB/article/view/50>

- Matulessey, P. T., Rumahuru, Y. Z., & Sopakua, S. (2025). Multikulturalisme dalam Konteks GKI di Tanah Papua. *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 5(4), 10234–10247. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v5i4.20106>
- Mulyadi. (2026). Konsep Multikultural, Multikulturalisme Di Indonesia, Pendidikan Karakter. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 11(1), 1280–1287. <https://doi.org/10.34125/jmp.v11i1.1832>
- Nur, I. (2022). Religious Education Based o f Local Wisdom “ Satu Tungku Tiga Batu ” in Fak-Fak Community West Papua. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(4), 6631–6642. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i4.2267>
- Nurasmawi, & Ristiliana. (2021). *Pendidikan Multikultural*. CV Asa Riau.
- Pamungkas, C., & Indriasari, D. T. (2021). Preventing Religious Conflict in Papua Land: Adopting Cultural Traditions of Peacebuilding. *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, 9(2), 331–356. <https://doi.org/10.18588/202108.00a119>
- Parekh, B. (2001). *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*. SAGE Publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879680100100112>
- Pekei, T., & Sihombing, A. A. (2023). Noken Local Wisdom as Representatif of God’s Love. *Al-Qalam Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Sosial Budaya*, 29(1), 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.31969/alq.v29i1.1254>
- Qodriyah, K., Asfiyah, H., & Rozi, F. (2025). Learning to Live Together: How Does Multicultural Education Build Religious Tolerance in Fakfak, West Papua? *MANAZHIM: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(2), 178–198. <https://doi.org/10.36088/manazhim.v7i2.5847>
- Rachman, Z., Hidayat, A., Hariyasin, Marifah, Karim, A. K., Qomusuddin, I. F., Aprilia, M. P., Susilawati, N., & HS, M. H. (2025). *Metode Penelitian Sosial Kontemporer*. Deepublish.
- Rahmat, A., Rahmatila, T., Saqina, S., & Arifin, R. J. (2025). Interaksi Harmonis dalam Masyarakat Plural: Tinjauan Literatur tentang Kolaborasi Antar Ras, Budaya, Agama, dan Gender. *AEJ (Advances in Education Journal)*, 1(5), 537–544. <https://journal.al-afif.org/index.php/aej/article/view/55>
- Ridwan, & Khotimah, H. (2024). Examining Islamism, Peacebuilding, and Interfaith Dialogue in Papua, Indonesia. *Societas Dei: Journal of Religion And Society*, 11(1), 24–38. <https://doi.org/10.33550/sd.v11i1.397>
- Ritonga, S., Riza, F., & Firmansyah. (2022). *Mengelola Multikulturalisme: Agama, Politik, Pendidikan , Sosial dan Budaya* (S. Ritonga (ed.); 1st ed.). CV. Literasi Nusantara Abadi.
- Sahira, E., Utami, A. A., & Aprilianata. (2025). Keberagaman dalam Masyarakat Multikultural di Indonesia : Kajian atas Pemikiran Bikhu Parekh. *Journal of Civic Education*, 8(1), 69–76. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jce.v8i1.1164>
- Silo, A., & Ismail, A. (2022). Revitalizing governance based on local wisdom in Papua. *ETNOSIA : Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia*, 7(1), 42–50. <https://doi.org/10.31947/etnosia.v7i1.20124>
- Sufiandi, A. C., Soviana, A. F., Nurkumalasari, P., Putri, A. T. S., & Khusumadewi, A. (2025a). Peran Multikulturalisme Dalam Mengikis Prasangka Orang Papua. *Jurnal Psikologi Dan Bimbingan Konseling*, 12(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.8734/liberosis.v1i2.365>
- Sufiandi, A. C., Soviana, A. F., Nurkumalasari, P., Putri, A. T. S., & Khusumadewi, A. (2025b). Peran Multikulturalisme Dalam Mengikis Prasangka Terhadap Orang Papua. *LIBEROSIS: Jurnal Psikologi Dan Bimbingan Konseling*, 12(2), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.8734/liberosis.v1i2.365>
- Sukirno. (2018). Diskriminasi Pemenuhan Hak Sipil Bagi Penganut Agama Lokal. *Administrative Law & Governance Journal*, 1(3), 231–239. <https://doi.org/10.14710/alj.v1i3.231-239>
- Syaiful, M. (2025). Kearifan Lokal Papua dan Integrasinya Dengan Nilai-Nilai Islam. *Jurnal Kependidikan Dan Keagamaan*, 9(1), 45–61. <https://www.jurnal.fkip-uniyap.ac.id/index.php/AT-TADIB/article/view/57>
- Tabuni, A. N. (2023). Nilai dan Fungsi Budaya Bakar Batu Dalam Relasi Lintas Suku di Pegunungan Tengah Papua : Sebuah Kajian Sosiologi Budaya. *Ganaya : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 6(1), 171–185. <https://jayapanguspress.penerbit.org/index.php/ganaya>

- Ubadah. (2022). *Pendidikan Multikultural: Konsep, Pendekatan , dan Penerapannya dalam Pembelajaran*. Pesantren Anwarul Qur'an.
- Utami, S. P., Juanti, H., Amelia, D., & Lestari, R. D. (2025). Pengakuan Agama Lokal Dalam Konteks Hak Asasi Manusia : Tinjauan Filsafat Hukum di Indonesia. *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan, Seni, Sains Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 3(1), 1–15. <https://journal.forikami.com/index.php/nusantara/article/view/922>
- Wardaya, V. B. E. A., & Warsono. (2022). Praktik Multikulturalisme Antara Masyarakat Surabaya Dan Mahasiswa Papua Dalam Mewujudkan Harmonisasi Sosial. *Kajian Moral Dan Kewarganegaraan*, 10(2), 304–318. <https://doi.org/10.26740/kmkn.v10n2.p304-318>
- Warwer, F., & Pontoan, D. R. (2021). Ondofolo's leadership in Christian perspective : A study based on Papuan-Indonesian local wisdom. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 44(1), a2773. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v44i1.2773>
- Wekke, I. S. (2024). Contemporary Islam in Papua : Navigating Faith, Culture, and Identity in a Diverse Landscape. In *Culture, and Identity in a Diverse Landscape* (Issue February 2024). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4779708>
- Werijon, Risman, H., & Surryanto, D. W. (2020). Developing Papua Within the Framework of Diversity : A National Defence Perspective. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(8), 547–560. <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.78.8950>
- Winarsih, S. (2019). Religious Value in Papua Traditional Dance:'Pangkur Sagu'. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology (IJMET)*, 10(03), 1860–1866. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3453586