



Collective Memory, Religious Contestation, and the Policy Agenda for Religious Harmony: A Study in Cilegon City, Banten

Kandung Sapto Nugroho¹, Agus Sjafari², Riswanto Riswanto³

^{1,2}Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University, Banten, 42163, Indonesia

³Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Ekasakti University, Padang, West Sumatra, 25113, Indonesia

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CORRESPONDENCE

Name: Kandung Sapto Nugroho
Email: kandung.sapto@untirta.ac.id

A B S T R A C T

Religious harmony is a strategic issue in social governance and public policy, particularly in regions undergoing social, economic, and demographic changes. The city of Cilegon, Banten, serves as a significant case study where industrialization and social transformation intersect with the community's history, religious identity, and collective memory. While existing research on religious harmony generally emphasizes tolerance, religious relations, regulations, and social conflict, studies linking collective memory and religious contestation to policy agenda-setting remain limited. This research aims to analyze how collective memory regarding historical experiences and religious identity is constructed and contested by various actors, and how this process influences the policy agenda for religious harmony in Cilegon. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research utilizes in-depth interviews, document analysis, and the examination of relevant historical and policy sources, analyzed through thematic and interpretive methods. The findings reveal that collective memory does not merely represent past experiences but also serves as a source for identity formation, the legitimization of interests, and the shaping of policy narratives within religious contestation. Social changes driven by industrialization, local identity dynamics, and differing interpretations of religious history influence how the issue of harmony is defined and prioritized within the policy agenda. Theoretically, this study expands the perspective of agenda-setting by integrating collective memory and religious contestation; practically, it underscores the importance of a harmony governance model that is contextual, dialogic, and sensitive to the community's history and collective memory—ensuring policies address not only conflicting interests but also narrative management, actor relations, and the formation of an inclusive harmony agenda.