

One Mosque Five Pillars: Diversity of Preaching and Social Cohesion in Central Java

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Abstract

This article explores social cohesion among Muslim groups in the village of Sragen, which is home to five distinct groups: NU, Muhammadiyah, MTA, LDII, and Salafi, as well as some individuals who identify as *abangan*. Masjid Rohmat serves as the focal point for religious events, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in 2023. The data were analyzed using a qualitative approach. The study finds that, despite differing interpretations and religious practices, the village residents coexist peacefully and harmoniously. Key factors contributing to social cohesion include family ties and community activities. Many villagers share familial connections, even if they hold different religious affiliations. For instance, one mother regularly participates in Yasin and tahlil gatherings, while her son is a member of LDII. In another household, the husband is affiliated with Muhammadiyah, while the wife attends MTA public congregations. Additionally, community members collaborate on various social activities, transcending their religious differences.

Kata kunci

Masjid, kelompok Muslim, kohesi sosial

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas tentang kohesi sosial di antara kelompok-kelompok Muslim di sebuah desa di Sragen. Di desa tersebut terdapat lima kelompok Muslim: NU, Muhammadiyah, MTA, LDII dan Salafi, serta beberapa orang yang dianggap sebagai *abangan*. Di desa ini, Masjid Rohmat menjadi pusat kegiatan keagamaan, seperti Idul Fitri atau Idul Adha. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada studi lapangan yang dilakukan pada tahun 2023. Data tersebut kemudian dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menemukan, terlepas dari perbedaan pemahaman dan praktik keagamaan, masyarakat di desa ini hidup berdampingan dengan damai dan harmonis. Beberapa faktor yang mendukung kohesi sosial di antara umat Islam di desa ini adalah: ikatan kekeluargaan dan kegiatan sosial. Sebagian besar warga desa memiliki hubungan keluarga satu sama lain. Namun, anggota keluarga bisa saja memiliki afiliasi agama yang berbeda, ada seorang ibu yang secara rutin mengikuti jamaah Yasin dan tahlil, sementara anaknya menjadi anggota LDII. Di keluarga lain, sang suami adalah anggota Muhammadiyah, sementara sang istri mengikuti pengajian umum MTA. Selain itu, dalam kegiatan sosial, warga desa saling bahu-membahu tanpa memandang golongan keagamaan.

Introduction

In reformist Islam, the concept of everyday life serves as a foundation for the continual realization of opportunities that enable individuals to fulfill the commandments of Allah. As emphasized in the Quran, the ultimate purpose of creation is to facilitate the worship of Allah, extending beyond ritual prayers to encompass all human behaviors aimed at actualizing His will. In daily life, individuals encounter an abundance of opportunities to affirm the notion that all elements of the world are manifestations of Allah's creation. Those who adopt a reflective approach, informed by the initial commandment given to Prophet Muhammad to "Read", can discern the divine presence that permeates aspects of life typically taken for granted. The focus on daily life within the reformist Islamic framework advocates for the Islamization of everyday existence, entailing behavior in accordance with Islamic principles and interpreting experiences through an Islamic lens.

The Islamization of daily life transcends mere theory and is anchored in a comprehensive framework of concrete rules. This structured set of guidelines, known as Islamic law (sharia), encompasses the entirety of human existence: it addresses rituals such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, as well as worldly practices like wealth acquisition, trade, and banking. It further extends to the minutiae of daily routines—spanning sleep, personal hygiene, interpersonal relationships, and child-rearing—while also guiding individuals through each stage of the human life cycle, from birth to death. Consequently, the conventional dichotomy that separates the sacred from the profane or the religious from the secular holds little relevance in the context of reformist Islam; instead, every aspect of life is imbued with religious significance.

Case in point, Kedungdowo Village in Sragen Regency which presents a distinctive research setting due to its predominantly Muslim demographic coupled with a notable religious plurality. The community encompasses various Islamic affiliations, including Abangan, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, the Council for Qur'anic Interpretation (MTA), the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute (LDII), and Salafi groups. This diversity in religious adherence is underscored by the presence of prayer halls and centralized religious activities that cater to each group. However, significant congregational events, such as Friday prayers and the festive observances of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, predominantly occur at the Rohmat Mosque, the principal mosque in the village, thus highlighting a communal approach to worship despite the existing diversity.

Cohesion, within the linguistic domain, signifies a close relationship and a strong union, as elucidated in the KBBI (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Depdikbud, n.d.). Furthermore, Halliday and Hasan define it as the interconnection between individual words that combine to form sentences, which are subsequently linked within discourse. In this regard, cohesion is regarded as an integral component of the linguistic system. On the social dimension, social cohesion pertains to the attachment or reliance of individuals on the groups to which they belong. It encompasses a scenario

where individuals align themselves with the prevailing norms and shared values of their respective groups or environments. Social cohesion reflects the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as connected and committed to the larger societal framework (Halliday & Hasan, 2014).

The significance of social cohesion lies in its capacity to sustain the stability and sustainability of a group or society. When individuals experience a sense of belonging and adhere to collective norms, it fosters trust, promotes effective cooperation, and cultivates harmonious social interactions. Conversely, diminished social cohesion may precipitate divisions, conflicts, and instability. This individual-level connection highlights the importance of conforming to shared norms and values that underpin group or environmental contexts. Social cohesion functions as a unifying force within society, fostering harmony, a sense of community, and collective commitment to achieving of common goals. It necessitates the capacity of the community to uphold the well-being of all members, minimize disparities, and prevent marginalization (Hidayah & Ramadhany, 2022).

The focus on social cohesion highlights the potential for diverse social forces to converge and engage in coordinated action (Chisari, 2021). The critical role of social cohesion within society was emphasized by Emile Durkheim, who articulated the notion of mechanical solidarity characterized by robust bonds among community members. Additionally, the concept of organic solidarity emerges through interdependence among individuals, thus reinforcing the structure of social cohesion (Rohmah, 2016). Within organizational contexts, the cultivation of harmonious relationships significantly contributes to strong social cohesion, thereby fostering an environment conducive to a sense of social ease and a favorable democratic climate.

This assertion is grounded in the understanding that social cohesion is a multidimensional construct, embodying a sense of ownership and solidarity among organizations or groups (Handayani, 2012). A society fortified by robust social bonds is better equipped to embrace diversity and navigate conflicts through rational discourse, mitigating the risk of escalation into violent divides. Such a manifestation of social cohesion necessitates the establishment of a just society, wherein all individuals perceive equitable opportunities and face similar challenges, with the freedom to articulate their perspectives without fear of retribution or suppression.

Method

This research examines the religious life of Muslims in a village located in Sragen. The primary focus is on social cohesion among the various Islamic groups within the village. Despite their differences, these communities coexist peacefully and harmoniously. This article aims to explore the factors that contribute to social cohesion among the local Muslims. The study draws on field research conducted in 2023, with data gathered through observation and interviews. The observation phase lasted for two months, during which approximately ten informants from diverse religious backgrounds,

as well as varying ages and genders, were interviewed. The data were analyzed through a qualitative approach.

Results and Discussion

Masjid Rohmat Kedungdowo

The Rohmat Mosque is adorned with multicolored lights in anticipation of Ramadan, signifying the arrival of this significant month in the Islamic calendar. The Maghrib prayer is conducted, during which the imam recites verses from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:183) that address the obligation of fasting in Ramadan. The Isha and *Taraweeh* prayers follow, with male congregants predominantly occupying the first floor, while a limited number of female worshipers are situated on the second floor, due to insufficient space on the mosque's porch.

The distribution of space within the mosque is noteworthy: the main hall is designated exclusively for male worshipers, while the porch serves as the area for female congregants. However, the porch lacks the spaciousness of the main hall, leading to noticeable discomfort. The second floor is dusty and poorly maintained, featuring uninstalled light panels and inoperable ceiling fans. This poor air circulation poses challenges for female worshipers, who experience discomfort due to perspiration. The presence of discarded cardboard boxes and cables further contributes to the cluttered environment. The *Taraweeh* prayer is structured to include *rak'ah* eight raka'at [use standard transliteration] with two salam, while the *Witr Witr* prayer consists of *rak'ah* three raka'at with one salām. The recitation during *Taraweeh* features verses from Al-Baqarah, with the initial three verses read in the first *rak'ah* and continued in subsequent *rak'ah*. Following the *Taraweeh* prayer, the congregation listens to a ten-minute sermon delivered by Pak Misron, who discusses topics related to actions that nullify fasting. This is succeeded by announcements pertaining to mosque activities during Ramadan, including an auction for the construction of a canopy priced at IDR 100,000 per square meter, alongside additional regulations highlighting the significance of the month and the associated spiritual rewards.

After this brief sermon, the congregation participates in the *Witr* prayer, wherein the imam recites Surah Al-Ikhlās and An-Nas. Post-*Witr*, attendees hasten home, although some remain at the mosque to engage in Qur'anic studies. This study session entails one individual reciting a verse, followed by another providing its translation. The Qur'anic study progresses methodically, with the reader completing two ruku' on the first night. An audio system amplifies the recitation, making it audible to individuals outside the mosque. This study concludes at 20:44, after which a group of young men engages in *tadarrus al-Qur'an*, reciting the Quran without translations, similar to the earlier study. *Tadarrus* is exclusively conducted by males and continues until 22:00.

For approximately the past decade, Masjid Rohmat Kedungdowo has been a focal point for religious activities and congregational prayers, as noted in an interview with a local imam (Sh, April 15, 2023). The increase in mosque activities has been primarily

driven by teenagers and young adults affiliated with IRMAROHA (Ikatan Remaja Masjid Rohmat Kedungdowo) and FSPI (Forum Silaturahmi Pemuda Islam) Kedungdowo. The mosque's initiatives are actively promoted through various social media platforms, including official accounts on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. In the early hours of Ramadan, around 02:30, a "gugah-gugah" (wake-up call) initiative is implemented via loudspeakers by designated youths at the mosque. This announcement serves as a reminder for individuals to awaken and prepare for the pre-dawn meal (sahur) and is repeated every 15 minutes. At 03:30, additional reminders regarding the timing of the pre-dawn meal is disseminated. The mosque's foyer is predominantly occupied by female congregants, while male attendees primarily occupy the main prayer hall of the mosque.

Notably, the congregation for the *Fajr* prayer is relatively smaller in comparison to that of the *Taraweeh* prayer. During the first *rak'ah*, the imam recites *Surah Al-A'la*, and it is observed that several congregants exit the mosque during at the onset of the sermon. Similar to the *Taraweeh* sessions following *Taraweeh*, the sermons following the *Fajr* prayer are delivered in a bilingual format, utilizing both Indonesian and Javanese. The *Fajr* congregation comprises individuals of various ages, including older adults, adults, and children, encompassing both genders. Notably, no attendees are located on the second floor during the *Fajr* prayer. After the sermon concludes, most congregants depart; however, some choose to remain at the mosque to engage in *dhikr*. Additionally, several congregants stop to shop at vendors located at the northern road intersection of the mosque.

The Mosque and Diversity of Religious Preaching in Kedungdowo

Along with Masjid Rohmat as the central mosque, there are several *mushalla* in Kedungdowo. Interestingly, these *mushalla* represent the diversity of Islamic organizations in Indonesia, especially religious practices. The existence of Nahdlatul Ulama in Kedungdowo is represented by *Musholla Aamanah*, which performs 20 *rak'ah* of *Taraweeh* prayers during Ramadan. In addition, the community gathers for the recitation of *Tahlil* and *Yasin* every Friday evening, rotating among the residences of congregation members. This practice includes participants from neighborhoods, and involvement is voluntary. Significant commemorations, such as Asy-Syura Day, are observed with *Tasbih* prayers and the preparation of Asy-Syura porridge. All of these are associated with religious practices among Nahdlatul Ulama members.

Most of the administrators at Rohmat Mosque are affiliated with the Muhammadiyah organization, which leads to their practices aligning closely with Muhammadiyah's directives. Specifically, various religious activities at the mosque adhere to the guidance issued by Muhammadiyah's Central Leadership. For example, in cases of discrepancies regarding the commencement of 1 Ramadan or 1 Shawwal between the Ministry of Religion and PP Muhammadiyah, the administrators of Rohmat Mosque consistently follow the resolutions made by PP Muhammadiyah, including the declaration of Eid al-Fitr on 1 Shawwal and Eid al-Adha 1444 H (Interview, D, April 12, 2023).

Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama, as the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, play significant roles in the country's social, political, and educational spheres. These organizations have historically contributed to social reform and continue to influence various aspects of Indonesian society. Both organizations have been pivotal in driving social change through education, religious events, and economic empowerment initiatives (Al-Ansi et al., 2023; Fealy & Bush, 2014; Ridwan, 2022). Despite their historical influence, both NU and Muhammadiyah face challenges from newer, more conservative Islamic groups and preachers. These newer entities have gained popularity through modern methods such as social media and campus da'wa organizations (Arifianto, 2020).

The da'wa activities of Muslim organizations in Indonesia are multifaceted, involving a blend of traditional and modern approaches, moderate and conservative interpretations, and significant political and social influences. For instance, the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute (Lembaga Dakwah Islam Indonesia, LDII) maintains a strategic relationship with the state to gain recognition and protection (Muhammadiyah, 2015). LDII congregation in Kedungdowo regularly organizes *Qur'an* and *Hadith* recitations, which occur frequently. Notably, Qur'an and Al-Hadith recitations are conducted 2 to 3 times weekly at the PAC (Village/Urban Village) level and once weekly at the PC (Sub-district) level. To facilitate a deeper understanding of its teachings among the youth, the LDII has introduced a "cabe rawit" development program targeting preschool to elementary school-aged children, which is systematically coordinated across all LDII mosques. In addition to general recitations, the LDII provides specialized programs for adolescents, mothers, older adults, and specific recitations aimed at marriageable individuals, referred to as UNIK recitations (Interview, Ls, May 25, 2023).

The leaders of the MTA branch were responsible for delivering the Friday sermon (khateeb) in Masjid Rohmat. The change arose from feedback from congregants who expressed concerns about the length of the sermons. Despite this shift, the MTA congregation remains dedicated to actively participating in religious study sessions and Tahsin activities (Interview, D, July 23, 2023). Despite their smaller number of members from Kedungdowo, there is an MTA center for the congregation on the village's border. The members of the congregation come from neighboring villages.

Several young men who had migrated to the city for education or work have returned to Kedungdowo village, either temporarily or to settle in their hometown. This return has introduced new religious perspectives they acquired during their time away, such as the Salafi movement. J was a member of the Muhammadiyah organization; however, his practices sometimes lean towards Salafism, as evidenced by his children attending Salafi schools, Ar-Risalah. R, from the Sragen Da'wa Hall, and D and J identify as Salafi (Interview, Ag, April 24, 2023). Furthermore, D participates with the ustadz who reads the Qur'an at the Al-Ikhlas mosque in Gemolong (Interview, Yd, March 23, 2023). The Balai Dakwah Sragen (BDS) established a tahfid center. D was asked to teach there every weekday afternoon —specifically on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays—due

to the steady increase in students. These students, comprising primary and secondary school learners, were learning to read the Quran, and D assisted them in their memorization (tahfidz) process.

Masjid Rohmat serves as a pivotal space for accommodating the diverse religious practices of the village's Muslim community. Prominent figures of the mentioned organizations are selected either as *khatib* for Friday prayers or as members of the mosque's *takmir* (management board). They also take turns delivering short sermons during Ramadan, typically scheduled after *Taraweeh* and *Subuh* prayer. *Khatibs* and preachers are granted autonomy in choosing their sermon topics, which usually focus on *ibadah* (worship) and *mu'amalah* (social transactions). To avoid uncertainty among the jama'ah, preachers avoid choosing topics on *ikhtilaf* matters. Although Muhammadiyah members comprise most of the board, *Taraweeh* prayer is conducted in the form of 2-2 *rak'ah* sequences—a practice more common among NU—instead of 4-4 *rak'ah* format widely used in Muhammadiyah mosque. Eid al-Fitr Eid al-Adha For major celebrations like Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the *takmir* typically follows Muhammadiyah's official rulings. In instances of differing dates, *takmir* offers a compromise. For example, in 2024, when Eid al-Adha fell on different days according to Muhammadiyah and the government, Masjid Rohmat held the prayer on the Muhammadiyah date (one day earlier). However, the *kurban* (animal sacrifice) was performed the following day to ensure validity for all jama'ah, regardless of their affiliations.

The Mosque as a Nexus for Da'wa and Social Cohesion

Mosques in Indonesia function as dynamic institutions where diverse religious understandings and practices converge. They play critical roles in foresting inclusivity (Millie et al., 2014; Yusuf & Putrie, 2022), civic engagement (Lussier, 2019), socio-economic empowerment (Musahadi, 2018), and environmental conservation (McKay et al., 2014) while also being sites of identity contestation (Ikhwan et al., 2022) and ideological conflict (Chaplin, 2025). This interplay shapes the socio-religious landscape of Indonesian mosques, reflecting the broader complexities of Indonesian society. Given the presence of *jama'ah* from various religious orientations Masjid Rohmat faces the challenge of preserving its inclusive character. The mosque is required to offer a wider array of religious programs to accommodate groups seeking visibility and legitimacy. For instance, during recent Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha celebrations, prayers were held at the mosque's courtyard. Several years ago, a community dispute arose concerning the appropriate venue for *Ied* prayers. The *takmir*, following Muhammadiyah's perspective, proposed holding the prayer in an open field, citing the mosque's limited capacity, especially during the *mudik* (homecoming) period. However, some *jama'ah* from NU and LDII disagreed arguing that the mosque's cleanliness made it a more appropriate venue. After extended deliberation, da'wa a compromise was reached. The imam, khatib, and a few rows of jama'ah prayed on the mosque porch, while others occupied the courtyard and adjacent street. This conciliatory approach by the Masjid Rohmat takmir reflects the

adaptive nature of local da'wa practices. Da'wa in Indonesia is significantly shaped by political factors. Muslim preachers often use da'wa as a tool to impact politics, particularly through digital media. They criticize the secular government and aim to Islamize the state, focusing on pragmatic goals rather than the establishment of an Islamic state (Rosidi, 2021). Da'wa and Islamic organizations in Indonesia play multifaceted roles, from influencing politics and engaging in charitable activities to integrating into academic studies and promoting moderate Islam. These efforts are essential in shaping the religious and social landscape of the country.

Islamic mass organizations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama have played crucial roles in education, healthcare, economic development, while also moderation religious movements, contributing to social harmony and preventing violence and extremism. These organizations have made extensive and consistent contributions to the country's social reform movement, shaping public thought and attitudes, and addressing the harmful effects of extremist ideologies on Indonesia youth (Ridwan, 2022). Both NU and Muhammadiyah moderate Islam while integrating local cultural traditions into religious life (Azra & Hudson, 2017; Kato, 2018).

Muhammadiyah is a prominent Islamic organization known for its extensive charitable efforts in education, healthcare, social welfare, and economic empowerment (Junarti et al., 2023; Nurjanah, 2024). Alongside Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Both organizations advocate for wasatiah (moderate) Islam and promote inclusive discourse to sustain pluralistic Islamic thought (Qodir, 2024). Since the fall of Soeharto, a new generation of Arab-descended preachers (habaib) has gained popularity among Muslim youth by utilizing sermon circles and digital platforms. They leverage their status as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and their Arab heritage to gain popularity (Rijal, 2020).

In Kedungdowo, the majority are *NU kultural* (practicing NU traditions), although they do not possess an official NU membership card. Muslim practices introduced by their elders are in accordance with NU tradition, thereby reinforcing their cultural identification with NU. However, over time, young generations pursuing education and careers outside the village are engaging with other Islamic practices and traditions. Some of them are bringing back alternative religious perspectives informed by the teachings of Muhammadiyah, LDII, MTA, and Salafi. Currently, religious leaders are mostly affiliated with Muhammadiyah.

Successful preachers in Indonesia are those who adapt their messages to the evolving cultural contexts of their audiences. This includes both high-profile preachers who align with national media and commercial interests, and those who engage with local communities in more traditional settings (Julian Millie, 2012). In the case of Masjid Rohmat, most sermons address practical, everyday issues—such as fostering good relations with neighbors, parenting, and marital responsibilities. These topics rarely instigate debate between the community and do not insult any groups.

The concept of ukhuwah is linguistically rooted in the Arabic term '*akh*', which translates to "siblings." The Quran employs the singular form of *akh* (sibling) at least 52 times, encompassing a range of meanings that derive from the notion of kinship. Firstly, it can denote biological siblings sharing a direct lineage. Secondly, it signifies familial ties among relatives. Thirdly, it extends to individuals of the same nationality, irrespective of differing faiths. Furthermore, it reflects relationships within a shared community, even when beliefs diverge (Fadholi, 2014). According to Quraish Shihab, the essence of ukhuwah, interpreted as siblinghood, is embedded in an inherent meaning of attentiveness. This foundational sense emphasizes the necessity for vigilance and care among those who identify as siblings (Shihab, 1995). Within an Islamic context, ukhuwah Islamiyah is conceptualized as a bond of siblinghood informed by Islamic values. In contrast, the relationship between Muslims is denoted as ukhuwah diniyyah.

Notably, the terms ukhuwah diniyyah (siblings among Muslims), ukhuwah wathâniyyah (siblings based on national identity), and ukhuwah bashâriyyah (siblings amongst humanity) represent various dimensions of ukhuwah that possess equal potential to evolve into Ukhuwah Islamiyah. It is essential to acknowledge that Ukhuwah Islamiyah encompasses not only relationships among Muslims but also extends to all humanity, regardless of divergent beliefs, as long as these relationships are founded upon Islamic principles such as mutual reminders, respect, and appreciation (Hamidah, 2017).

The term Ukhuwah Islamiyah consists of two components: "ukhuwah" and "Islamiyah." "Ukhuwah" derives from the root word *akhun*, which conveys the idea of an intimate friend or companion. It possesses two plural forms: *ikhwat* (blood siblings) and *ikhwan* (companions). This term embodies a fundamental sense of equality that cultivates the notion of siblinghood. According to al-Ragib, a scholar of the Quran, the term sibling (*akhun*) fundamentally refers to individuals born from the same parent(s) or a common foster parent. Over time, it has also come to represent shared experiences of "togetherness" across various dimensions, including lineage, religion, profession, social interactions, and emotional connections (Nata, 2008, pp. 365–367). In this framework, the word "Islamiyah" is derived from "Islam," imparting an essential quality to the term ukhuwah, thus designating it as "Islamic siblinghood." *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* depicts the interconnectedness among Muslims, epitomizing a bond of siblinghood wherein each individual appears intrinsically linked to one another, creating a sense of unity (Thoyib I M, 2002, p. 17).

The cultivation of unity among individuals with diverse belief systems is initiated through a process of introspection. When individuals achieve a profound understanding of and recognize the importance of mutual care, tolerance, and respect, it establishes a foundation for relationships grounded in *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Bunyamin et al., n.d.). In the context of Kedungdowo village, the residents exhibit a profound sense of kinship.

Many community members engage in marital unions with neighbors and opt to reside in close proximity to their parents or extended family, thereby nurturing and reinforcing familial bonds. This strong sense of connection plays a crucial role in

fostering social cohesion among the community members, despite their varied religious affiliations. For instance, one family exemplifies this deep-rooted connection, as the mother participates in a MTA congregational recitation while her son engages in Salafi religious studies. In a contrasting family, the son is actively involved with the LDII organization, while the mother participates in the *Yasin* and tahlil congregations associated with NU. An illustrative quote from an interview state, “Kedungdowo MTA, yes, it's like Grandma Wati, her father's younger sibling, Mrs. K, Mrs. F, Mrs. Su, and they are all closely connected as a family” (Interview, Siti, May 5, 2023).

Within the framework of youth and young adult organizations, there exists a notable absence of stringent prerequisites requiring adherence to specific doctrinal ideologies. As one participant articulated,

“...in Irma itself, anyone is welcome; there is no need to restrict you to being a Muhammadiyah member, NU member, or any specific group. We provide a space for anyone who wishes to join, without judgment, just be part of the Eastern group” (Interview, Era, April 7, 2023).

This trend is similarly evident within the youth religious study groups associated with the Forum of Islamic Youth Gathering (*Forum Silaturahmi Pemuda Islam*, FSPI). These groups includemembers who may be actively engaged with the Muhammadiyah organization or participate in Salafi religious studies. However, within FSPI, which maintains a relatively smaller and more specialized membership, it is noteworthy that none of the members are affiliated with NU, MTA, or LDII.

Table 1. Overview of Muslim Groups in Kedungdowo

Muhammadiyah	NU	MTA	Salafi	LDII	Others
The majority of <i>takmir</i>	Majority of the community	Minority	Minority	Minority	Minority
Organisational and cultural affiliation	Organisational and cultural affiliation	Female members have organizational and cultural affiliations, while their husbands are not	Members of organizations	Members of organizations	Do not affiliate with any religious organization
Actively involved in mosque activities	Actively involved in mosque activities	Actively involved in mosque activities	Actively involved in mosque activities	Involved in social activities of the mosque	Rarely joint religious events, but actively contribute to the mosque construction
More authoritative	Less authoritative	Less authoritative	Rather authoritative	Less authoritative	Less authoritative

Source: Research results

Ukhuwah Islamiyah and Social Activities

The term "togetherness" encompasses a concise yet profound meaning, often misunderstood in its implications. As social beings, humans inherently rely on communal interactions, which are essential for sustaining social life. This interdependence is predicated on a framework of mutual exchange, where individuals simultaneously give and receive support within their communities. In the context of Kedungdowo, community engagement transcends organizational affiliations and religious beliefs. For instance, residents actively participate in social activities, regardless of their institutional loyalties. Yadi, in an interview conducted on April 23, 2023, remarked on the collective nature of communal events, stating,

“Such as community service, death, that's the term people have an event... outside, the meaning is social, like death, people have an event, that's called social.”

Similarly, the involvement of residents in broader religious activities, particularly those not centered on *ibadah mahdhah*, is noteworthy. Era, during an interview on April 7, 2023, highlighted that although children from the LDII community do not typically join the IRMA, they do participate in competitive events such as the Festival Muslim Cilik, organized by IRMAROHA. This event exemplifies the inclusive nature of community engagement, inviting participation from various groups, including those affiliated with the LDII and MTA congregations. The role of social media is significant in modern da'wa, facilitating economic and social exchanges between preachers and their followers. This has led to a transformation in the preacher-follower relationship, characterized by greater sensitivity to the needs of middle-class Muslims who are regularly online (Slama, 2017).

Islamic practices in Indonesia are deeply intertwined with cultural expressions (Setiarto & Herlina, 2024). Societal participation in social traditions, such as the village clean-up event known as Dekahan, underscores the communal spirit prevalent in Kedungdowo. Dekahan, a harvest celebration traditionally held during the Apit month (Dhulqo'dah) of the Hijri calendar, culminates in a night-long shadow puppet show that serves as a manifestation of gratitude for the villagers' bountiful harvests. Despite its rich cultural heritage, Dekahan has faced opposition from certain factions, who perceive the event as potentially shirk. An interview with the village head on April 23, 2023, shed light on the approach taken to address these concerns,

“They think like that syirk. But we have packed it not in the form of saying it is syirk, but we only gather to pray together, expressing gratitude to Allah SWT for the abundant harvest and good prayers, if the wayang is just talking together.”

In response to the controversy surrounding Dekahan, the village head initiated a synthesis of the shadow puppet tradition with shalawatan (the practice of sending blessings to the Prophet). As articulated, “In the past, before the puppet show we presented the shalawatan congregation, we shalawatan first and prayed together. That's why we tell residents, purely for entertainment only, we tell them like that.” This

adaptation has facilitated greater participation among different community factions, particularly the LDII and NU congregations.

In summary, the essence of togetherness in Kedungdowo is manifested not only through social and religious engagement but also through the collective effort to preserve and adapt cultural traditions in response to varying interpretations within the community. This highlights the dynamic nature of communal relationships and the importance of inclusivity in facilitating social cohesion.

The Role of Public Figure

The willingness of some individuals to engage in community activities may vary, as noted in a recent interview: "I think some of them don't want to come here, but I have to accommodate all residents. Some of them are willing, some are not, and those who are willing should not be scorned." This sentiment reflects a historical perspective in which past residents sought unity within the community, fostering a collective identity within Kedungdowo.

The resurgence of conservative understandings of Islam has posed a challenge to organizations like Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, which have committed themselves to promoting a peaceful interpretation of Islam (Jubba et al., 2022). The rise of Islamism in Indonesia can be attributed to the emergence of a 'marketplace of ideas,' the elevation of new Islamic authority figures, and the increasing influence of contemporary Islamic groups and preachers, resulting in the normalization of rigid religious attitudes (Arifianto, 2020).



Figure 1. Jamaah, despite their religious affiliation, eat breakfast after Shubuh prayer during *Jumat Berkah*

The prosperity of community life hinges upon competent leadership, which is characterized not by attempts to transform society directly but by facilitating opportunities for individuals to effect personal change through increased awareness and

understanding of their circumstances, supported by religious guidance. The legitimacy of spiritual leaders is grounded in public recognition and trust, which is cultivated through their pious behavior in worship, their interpersonal conduct, and their contributions to societal welfare. Consequently, the actions and demeanor of these leaders often become focal points within the community, influencing societal perceptions and behaviors (Kahmad, 2000).

Effective social cohesion is often predicated on a shared sense of belonging among community members. Public figures play a crucial role as facilitators of social engagement. They are responsible for inviting, coordinating, and enhancing community participation, which underscores the necessity for a collective spirit. As articulated by Noveliana et al., public figures serve as mobilizers, encouraging community involvement in various initiatives aimed at fostering togetherness. Furthermore, religious leaders possess the capacity to engage with individuals at a personal level, promoting awareness of their potential as creative agents capable of self-management and environmental stewardship. Thus, religious figures must cultivate both substantive knowledge and methodological skills. Their role encompasses embodying moral integrity, intellectual rigor, social commitment, and piety while being attuned to the societal context and employing appropriate strategies (Noveliana et al., 2021).

Conclusion

In a continuously evolving society, the unity of communities is no longer reliant on the conformity of similarities. Instead, it is the reliance on diverse and differentiated social roles that serve as the cornerstone of communal togetherness. In the Muslim community of Kedungdowo, social cohesion is influenced by various factors, including kinship, Ukhuwah Islamiyah, inclusive social activities that engage all groups, and the influential role of public figures in reinforcing social bonds. The position of a religious figure in conveying da'wa messages is crucial, as their ability to address the basic needs and current concerns of the community, such as issues they are facing, can capture the attention of the audience. For instance, during times of confusion or struggle in the community, a religious leader's message can serve as a source of motivation, encouraging individuals not to lose hope. The findings of this study lead to important conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions provide answers to the research questions posed. In contrast, the recommendations emanating from the research take the form of practical actions aimed at specific individuals or groups to enhance social cohesion and address community needs effectively.

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