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Solidarity, Collective Engagement, and Kinship in a Multi-religious Community: A Case Study of Community in The Regency of Sangihe Islands, North Sulawesi

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Abstract

Religious identity-based conflicts still occur and remain challenging, including in Indonesia with pluralistic and diverse identities. However, some societies with multiple beliefs remain harmonious and stable. This study explores the Nanedakele community in the Sangihe Islands, North Sulawesi, where Christianity, Islam, and Indigenous belief Masade coexist in peace. Based on research with an ethnographic approach, this study shows that despite the different religious identities, multi-layered identities, based on kinship, islander identity, and cultural bonds, emerge as significant social glue and conflict prevention. These layered mechanical solidarities are strengthened by collective engagement in rituals, thereby fostering and extending Durkheim's conceptions, offering insights for conflict prevention, and promoting tolerance based on indigenous working experiences.

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Konflik berbasis identitas agama masih terjadi dan tetap menantang, termasuk di Indonesia dengan identitas pluralistik dan beragam. Namun, beberapa masyarakat dengan berbagai kepercayaan tetap harmonis dan stabil. Studi ini mengeksplorasi komunitas Nanedakele di Kepulauan Sangihe, Sulawesi Utara, di mana Kristen, Islam, dan kepercayaan adat Masade hidup berdampingan dalam damai. Berdasarkan penelitian dengan pendekatan etnografi, studi ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun identitas agama berbeda, identitas berlapis-lapis yang didasarkan pada kekerabatan, identitas penduduk pulau, dan ikatan budaya, muncul sebagai perekat sosial dan pencegahan konflik yang signifikan. Solidaritas mekanis berlapis ini diperkuat oleh keterlibatan kolektif dalam ritual, sehingga mendorong dan memperluas konsep Durkheim, menawarkan wawasan untuk pencegahan konflik, dan mempromosikan toleransi berdasarkan pengalaman kerja adat.

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Introduction

In Indonesia, violence in the name of religion has been occurring for a long time, but the escalation of religious violence in Indonesia increased sharply after the 1998 political reforms in line with the strengthening of the radical Islamic movement (Diana Kumalasari et al. 2022; Riyadi and Hamdi 2012). Various reports released by several institutions show the high number of cases of religious violence in Indonesia post-reformation. In 2021, a mosque belonging to the Ahmadiya community was burned by approximately 200 people from the surrounding area (Diana Kumalasari et al. 2022). Additionally, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, religion-based acts of violence, intolerance, and discrimination were increasing (Setara Institute 2021). Suheri (2024) also mentioned that the conflicts and tension towards the Shia community persist in many regions in Indonesia. There are also reports of some violent behavior towards Christian communities in many regions, especially when it comes to building a new church (Office of International Religious Freedom 2021). Moreover, although major religious conflicts have been resolved, cases like Sampit still pose a potential risk of further conflict due to insufficient conflict resolution (Raharjo and Fitriyani 2023).

Viewed from any angle, such conditions are certainly very detrimental to humanity in general and society and the Indonesian state in particular. They are stranded in a condition that makes it very difficult to deal with problems wisely, and at the same time are inert, which is not skilled at finding solutions creatively, systematically, and thoroughly (Syukron 2017). Indonesia, with its pluralistic character, has a greater potential for conflict, especially when it comes to religion and belief. However, some parts of Indonesia that also have multi-identities in religions and beliefs appear to be more stable (Saihu, 2021; Riyadi et al., 2026; Yunus & Mukoyyaroh, 2022). These social phenomena are generally found in areas where culture and social bonds are well preserved. This happens in many

areas of Indonesia, including Bali, parts of Java and Sulawesi, and many other regions.

Whereas existing literature on the dynamics of religion in post-Reformation Indonesia is mostly concerned with identifying and analyzing instances of violence and intolerance within the realm of religion, it offers little explanation for why some particular plural societies maintain stability despite structural weaknesses similar to those studied. However, the current research takes a different approach and explores the dynamics of stability by focusing on the Sangihe Islands located in North Sulawesi, a border region of Indonesia and the Philippines that has remained understudied in the religious literature. Instead of considering religion as the main, or even the only, factor affecting relations between groups, this study shows that stability in Sangihe is due to mechanical solidarities at multiple levels that involve not only religion but also kinship, islander identity, and East Malayan culture.

This paper aims to demonstrate a particular society that is still stable with at least three different beliefs. It is located in the Sangihe Islands, North Sulawesi, on the border area of Indonesia and the Philippines. Based on ethnographic research, this paper seeks to answer why and how society works, as well as identify several factors associated with a stable condition. The results of this study ultimately recognize Durkheim's conceptions of solidarity and collective engagement in rituals. As opposed to defining conflict resolution as the process of getting rid of all tension, this paper has demonstrated a more complex process where the already existing social relations have inherent sources of conflict within individual disagreements that do not escalate into community conflicts, and where kinship is explicitly defined as social capital in a religiously pluralistic society. Finally, this paper recognizes kinship as a form of social capital that binds society together.

The Context: Nanedakele, an island village in the District of Sangihe Islands

Nanedakele is located in the Sangihe Islands District, a regency in North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. With Tahuna as its capital, this regency became independent in 2000, separating from the Talaud Islands, which became another

regency. This regency covers an area of 11,863.58 km^2 and has a population of 140,614 (BPS Kabupaten Kepulauan Sangihe 2025). Sangihe Islands Regency is strategically located between Sulawesi Island and Mindanao Island (Philippines) and near the Pacific Ocean. Because of this geographic position, the government often makes special policy arrangements for the border cluster that connects international waters to the Philippines.

Because of its geographical characteristics, most of the citizens in Nanedakele are poor fishermen. They live on an island with minimal basic infrastructure. There is insufficient electricity, a very limited cellular signal in only certain areas, and limited clean water, which is obtained only from rainfall. Their culture is Sangir, with a distinct language and ties to Melayu, and has been influenced by Portuguese and Dutch colonization. Therefore, most of the Sangir people are Christians. However, in Nanedakele, three widely practiced religions are Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Christianity

Although most citizens in Sangihe, including Nanedakele, are Christian, Christian people in Nanedakele are divided into two distinct groups. The first stream of Christianity, they believe, is GMIST (Gereka Masehi Injili Sangihe Talaud). Sangihe Talaud Evangelical Church (abbreviated as GMIST) is one of the Protestant churches in Indonesia that originated in the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, North Sulawesi province. This church joined the Fellowship of Churches in Indonesia (Persatuan Gereja Indonesia, abbreviated as GPI) in 1950 and has been a member since then. Historically, GMIST was founded in 1857 with the arrival of Zending Tukang from the Netherlands and was initially intended as a service organization. Unfortunately, due to certain dynamics, the Zending service ended in 1935, and responsibility for the service was handed over to the Sangihe Talaud Committee. It was tasked with carrying out the Synod Session, which was first initiated on May 25th, 1947, and marked the birthday of GMIST. Not many congregations in the Talaud Islands attended this church in its first years. However, when the first synod was replaced by a Talaud tribal member in 1955, the remaining churches in Talaud eventually joined GMIST (PGI,n.d.). The number of GMIST members made up to nearly 80% of the population of the Sangir-Talaud

islands (BPS Kabupaten Kepulauan Sangihe 2025). The second stream of Christianity in Sangihe, including Nanedakele, is Pantekosta. Although this stream is not as large as GMIST in terms of population, it exists in almost all villages in Sangihe, including Nanedakele. In Nanedakele, these two streams have their own church and celebration, including during Christmas.

Islam

It was common knowledge in Nanedakele that the majority of the population in the Sangihe Islands used to be Muslims. Historically, it was believed that an Arabian Peninsula named Maulana Moe'min was the first to introduce Islam to the region in the 15th century AD. Trade and kinship made significant contributions to Islamization at that time and were also supported by the kingdoms around the Sulu and Mindanao islands, which are now part of the Philippines (Naufal, 2019). However, now, the people in Nanedakele who embrace Islam are only a few households. The rest of the Muslims in Nanedakele embrace a belief called Old Islam or Masade.

Even though Islam (other than Masade) is a minority, they have more communities related to them in the same way on the nearby islands, in some parts of the Big Island, and in the city of Tahuna. There are some areas in Sangihe with bigger Muslim communities. The closest one is Peta, an area across from Nusa Tabukan Island. Therefore, the Nanedakele people will mostly reach the Big Island of Tahuna through this relatively more populated area. It only takes about 30 minutes by boat. Therefore, even though the Muslim family in Nanedakele is quite small, they still have relatives who share the same belief in Peta. Other areas with more Muslim families are Kendage, the nearby areas on Tahuna Island, Lipang Island, the small island west of Nusa Tabukan, and Tahuna, where more Muslims reside in an area called Tidore.

Masade (Old Islam)

Islam Masade is a local belief embraced by many people in the villages (including Nanedakele) of the Tabukan District, located in the North of the main Island of Sangihe Regency. Its existence becomes a distinct feature of Sangihe and contributes to the diversity of the Sangihe community. Even now, Islam Masade is

still a local belief embraced and respected, and has found a place in the village community alongside Christians and the Muslim community, living side by side. The origin of the name Masade is largely unknown to the public, as it is widely known among other Sangihe communities as *Islam Tua* (Old Islam) (Naufal,2019). Nevertheless, the Islam Tua / Islam Masade community lives harmoniously with other religious communities in Sangihe Islands Regency.

Although it has the name Islam, Islam Masade is quite different from Islam in general. The belief and its rituals are passed down through oral lessons from generation to generation. They believe that the teachings are purely inherited from their ancestors and should be protected and passed down to the next generation. They do have a holy book, different from the Quran, which guides them in religious rituals. Although Islam Tua differs in many ways from Islam, some common Islamic texts and rituals are also found in Islam Tua. This is what makes Islam, this Masade, unique. Even with that distinction, the Islam Tua community still exists and survives without causing intergroup conflicts. Moreover, the community of Islam Masade in Nanedakele is larger than both the Muslim and Pentecostal communities (Patur et al. 2018).

Results

Contributing factors to the stability of the community with different beliefs

Solidarity

All existing societies substantially have some form and degree of social cohesion. Otherwise, with all social dynamics, there would be no society at all. The fact that they live alongside each other basically means that they have a certain bond between individuals and the community. This is what Durkheim means by solidarity, which is further elaborated and differentiated as mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity usually works in a traditional society that is commonly homogeneous and undifferentiated. This solidarity then works on the basis of similarities (Gofman 2014; E. Durkheim 1997). In societies with mechanical solidarity, collective or common consciousness is prominent, diffusing individual consciousnesses, meaning "*the totality of beliefs and sentiments*

common to the average members of a society" (Goffman, 2014). The term 'mechanical' does not mean that the solidarity in this kind of society is artificial or unnaturally made. The term is used "*by analogy with the cohesion that links together the elements of raw materials, in contrast to that which encompasses the unity of living organisms*" (Durkheim, 1997; Gofman, 2014).

On the other hand, in a more modern and more organized social group, solidarity is likely based more on individual autonomy, division of functions, functional interdependence, and mutual exchange. This is based on industrialized societies with divisions of labor. The type of solidarity in this kind of community is then called organic solidarity by Durkheim, which positions interdependence as an important aspect. With this organic solidarity, or solidarity by differences, the typical mechanical solidarity is not lost. The collective conscience undergoes changes, becoming more uncertain and blurred, and might still operate only within a prominent space. This is again mainly because divisions of labor are ultimately determined by increases in the volume and density of societies (Gofman 2014).

In Sangihe, especially in Nanedakele, the concept of mechanical solidarity is evident in societies characterized by multiple identities. Collective consciousness and sentiment are actually embedded deeply in the form of identities. Those identities are layered by religion, kinship, islander status, and East Melayu. Each identity has a strong sense of ownership embraced by its people and creates some kind of segregation within the community. The religious identity, for instance, makes them different in terms of activities, beliefs, and ego. However, there are other layers of identity that hold them together. Firstly, the islander identities are quite strong when confronting people in the city. They tend to help each other in the city based on the solidarity of islanders, who are sometimes discriminated against or stigmatized as stupid, uncivilized, and dirty. Another identity that is generally formed in Sulawesi in general and some other regions in Maluku, and the eastern parts of Indonesia is the identity of East Malaya. They have a tagline that labels them as family: *"Torang Samua Basudara"* ("We are all brothers and sisters").

In societies like Sangihe, where tradition and collective identity are central, mechanical solidarity plays a critical role in ensuring unity. People often share not just material resources but also emotional and moral support, as rooted in the collective conscience. In Nanedakele, communal events, such as the traditional *Lailatul Qadar* ceremony in *Islam Tua* or other cooperative sessions, can constitute mechanical solidarity insofar as they entail joint activity among people with a shared identity and cause.

However, this kind of mechanical solidarity poses a potential threat of initiating conflict, as it relies solely on shared identity. This is merely because, in modern societies, it is rare to have a single identity within a community. People always have multiple identities even within a homogeneous community. Mechanical solidarity could clash with another basis of solidarity. Therefore, the different identities embraced by the community in Nanedakele could potentially lead to conflict. However, every member of a given community within the Sangihe is integrated into the larger social structure, their participation governed by shared understandings of obligation, reciprocity, and mutual assistance. This larger social structure is another identity that creates another layer of mechanical solidarity. Therefore, the layered mechanical solidarity in Sangihe serves to create social cohesion.

Regarding social cohesion, some prominent scholars hold differing perspectives. Social cohesion could arise from intense personal communication, social dynamics characterized by resolved conflicts, and substantial time spent together (Cooley 1909). On the other hand, Freud supports Le Bon's (1896) definition of social cohesion, which places great importance on the same characteristics that, in turn, create intense emotional ties (Freud and Gay 1990). In addition, McDougall identified levels of reciprocity and a common way of feeling and thinking as essential aspects of social cohesion (McDougall 1920). These perspectives are actually similar and strengthen the idea of mechanical solidarity proposed by Durkheim. Durkheim himself defines social cohesion as an interdependence between individuals within a social group (Kawachi and Berkman 2014). Further, in order to reach social cohesion, it needs (1) the

absence of latent social conflict and (2) the presence of strong social (E. Durkheim, 1997).

In the context of the community of Nanedakele, social cohesion emerges not because of the absence of latent social conflict. In fact, people in the community possess different identities, which pose a significant threat of open conflict. Instead, layered mechanical solidarities can actually act as social bonds. People in the community sometimes clash and inevitably use certain identities. However, knowing that they have another layer of solidarity from their shared identity does not lead to open conflict based on identity. When open conflict arises, the community would label it as a personal conflict rather than a clash between different identities. Therefore, such personal conflict does not get bigger involving other people with the same identity in the name of solidarity. Hence, in Nanedakele, layered mechanical solidarity is indeed important for preventing such open social conflict. Conversely, not underestimating other contributing factors that might be true, layered mechanical solidarity builds stronger social cohesion.

This notion, although empirically and systematically different, aligns with some other similar findings. (Yamini et al. 2025) position religion as the larger social context that functions as a source of mechanical solidarity, binding people into a more cohesive society. Similar findings were reported by Kondratyeva & Fenno (2022), who stated that religion, as a basis for solidarity, can contribute to a broader outcome: Ukraine's independence. In Indonesia, even though not explicitly stated, an upper-layer identity could be more practical than an embedded one. They are working together to overcome the disaster. In Short, multi-layered mechanical solidarity indeed contributes to stronger social cohesion and prevents larger conflicts. The Nanedakele case proves that religion-based conflict can be naturally prevented by multi-layered mechanical solidarities.

Solidarity based on Kinship

Kinship terms are often tied to cultural concepts used by certain societies to refer to extended family relationships. It can be recognized by the use of certain

family-related terms, such as fathers, mothers, cousins, and uncles, as well as by groupings based on lineage or marriage (Grace et al., 2019), and it certainly varies across languages and cultures. A more detailed description can be found in the kinship system proposed by Burling (1970), who distinguishes between blood relations (consanguineal) and relationships arising from marriage (affinal).

Based on Evans-Pritchard's writings on Nuer societies, the core mechanism of kinship is segmentary or complementary opposition. (Evans-Pritchard 1987). Conflicts over resources, inheritance, or personal disputes among close kin (the minimal segment) are common and challenge immediate peace. These conflicts are generally contained and mediated by elders (Fortes 2018b). When a member of the minimal segment is threatened by a more distant relative, the internal conflict is instantly superseded. The relatives unite against the common foe. Similarly, if the threat is from a non-kin member of a neighboring group, the entire major lineage segment mobilizes as a single, unified entity (M. D. Sahlins 1961; Evans-Pritchard 1987). When a member of the minimal segment is threatened by a more distant relative, the internal conflict is instantly superseded. The relatives unite against the common foe. Similarly, if the threat is from a non-kin member of a neighboring group, the entire major lineage segment mobilizes as a single, unified entity(M. D. Sahlins 1961; Evans-Pritchard 1987).

We can also examine how Lévi-Strauss explains and exposes the kinship system. Levi-Strauss uses a structuralist approach to trace out the deep structure constitutive of social existence. Rituals are not merely symbolic acts themselves but are integral to the proper distribution of persons within the structure of kinship (Levi-Strauss 1969). Kinship and reciprocity are at the core of communal participation. Lévi-Strauss' theory of kinship as a symbolic system that binds individuals through the exchange of symbolic goods and services is directly relevant to Sangihe. While Lévi-Strauss focuses on the exchange of women in marriage as a means of building alliances, in Sangihe reciprocal labor and shared resources serve a similar purpose, fostering inter-clan and inter-family alliances. It extends beyond blood relations to include a social bond through labor investment, resource sharing, and participation in group events. An event such as preparing for a village feast would engage kins in food, time, and labor, ultimately

developing an idea of reciprocity and indebtedness in the community. Exchanges like these are symbolic acts that signal and reinforce the deeper structures of kinship and alliance. Every act of contribution is a symbolic exchange that reinforces relationships between kin groups and maintains the unity of the community (Levi-Strauss 1969). Their reciprocal nature means that every family or other kin group will, in turn, be in a position to call on others on some future occasion, since events unfold as part of a self-reinforcing circle of mutual help, vital to the cohesion of society.

Most conflicts are resolved informally through mechanisms deeply embedded in the kinship system. Various disputes are brought to rest by elders or influential persons through mediation between parties, interpreting the principles of kinship obligation and symbolic exchange to negotiate resolutions. Each social role and institution has a part to play in maintaining social order (Radcliffe-Brown 1952). Community roles in the society of Sangihe are dictated by kin and tradition, as each member has clearly assigned duties during community events. The division of labor in this systematic manner means that events such as these are adequately prepared for, where each member's contribution is noted and appreciated, as Brown mentioned. People at communitarian events have roles assigned according to their kinship status, age, and standing in the social strata. For example, the elders are tasked with officiating rites, while the younger members' responsibilities are along the lines of physical chores. It is not an arbitrary division but one that is highly representative of the community's understanding of the place of each of its members within the social strata. Brown referred to these roles as the functional parts of the social system, wherein role differentiation ensures that everything is duly arranged and social order is maintained. The division of labor also enforces social cohesion, in which every member knows his or her place within the community and has some responsibility to uphold the collective good. In this line, both Levi-Strauss (1969) and Radcliffe-Brown (1952)'s structural functionalism provide a framework for understanding how these kinship roles maintain social order and stability within the Sangihe community through modeling, known as structuralism and functional structuralism.

The division of labor in communal events serves to reinforce social status and aid in the orderly conduct of the affair. This division of labor in kin relations allows for social solidarity by diffusing power and obligation, as was observed in Sangihe regarding involvement in communal events (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Fortes 2018a). Radcliffe-Brown argued that kinship resolves tensions, as it enables one to draw a clear boundary between social obligations and authority (Radcliffe-Brown 1952). This aligns with Fortes's (2018b) observations on the role elders can play in mediating conflicts. In this regard, it offers an insightful way into how internal balance within the society of Sangihe draws on kinship obligations and ensures that interpersonal issues do not arise and destroy the social order.

Solidarity based on kinship appears to be stronger than that based on other identities. Family is what they treasure most. The concept of family expanded to include extended and more extended families with the same *marga*, called kinship. Several cases are found within a single family in a single house where two or more religions coexist. It means that a multi-religious entity remains united without religion-based conflict. There is also saying that spread among societies in Sangihe including in Nanedakele, "we cannot have conflict based on religion with those who have the same family name". It means that the kinship is stronger than religious identity. Religion is important to them, but kinship is just as important, if not more so.

Collective engagement in rituals

Many religions, especially those widely practiced, such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, have rituals performed collectively. In many ways, this collective ritual itself is a form of social cohesion, in which everyone is consciously involved and part of the collective activity. Furthermore, rituals that are performed collectively might actually catalyze psychological effects such as a sense of belonging to the community as they perform it together. Additionally, it demonstrates that religion, in itself and alongside additional collective rituals, has constructed a social group characterized by commitment, identity, loyalty, and cooperation among individuals (Power 2018).

In Nanedakele, religious rituals are not exclusive to believers. People with different beliefs actively engage in the rituals of various religions. This is called collective engagement in rituals, and it has traditionally occurred within this society. Some of the collective engagements in religious rituals are easily found. During the Eid celebration of Muslims (both mainstream and Shia Islam), Christians come to the mosque to give a communal gift. At Christmas, many Muslims and People of Masade come to the church, bringing a communal gift. The other is when there is a communal celebration or communal work, the feast in celebration will be provided by each household. In the Mourning ceremony of the dead (including *Tahlil*), feasts are provided by each household, and all people of different religions will join.

This can be seen in a variety of rituals throughout Southeast Asia, which have strong linkages with social identity and denote the shared cultural schema that binds people together within the kinship group (Carsten 2003, 1995). Collective participation in rituals creates a "collective consciousness," forming a moral code binding members together (É. Durkheim 2008; E. Durkheim 1997). Within Sangihe, this is evident in communal labor for ceremonies, where each family's contribution reaffirms their place within the broader kin network. Following Houseman and Severi, ritual action is a communicative act that creates consensus, a procedure which, in Sangihe, is brought about by obligatory contributions (Houseman and Severi 1998).

During major celebrations in Sangihe, the community shares this collective energy, deepening their shared identity and fostering interpersonal bonds. Such events emphasize the functional role of rituals in sustaining cohesion, as Turner observed in his study of ritual processes, in which people experience a transformative solidarity that extends beyond the ritual's temporal limits (Turner, Abrahams, and Harris 1969). In religious rituals, too, people in Sangihe generate a collective consciousness in which personal identity is briefly transcended in favor of communal spirituality. Events like these have the effect of creating bonds that outlast the rituals themselves, embedding a sense of collective identity and mutual responsibility in daily interactions. These events help foster a sense of community

and shared belief, reinforcing this social glue so that Sangihe people will not forget that cooperation is essential in moments of joy and hardship.

Victor Turner's work on liminality and communitas provides additional insight, suggesting that rituals create a sense of "communitas" where all participants experience social unity and equality, temporarily suspending the usual social hierarchies (Turner, Abrahams, and Harris 1969). In Sangihe, this phenomenon is evident when villagers collectively contribute to a ceremonial event. During these rituals, individual distinctions blur, fostering a communal identity that is rooted in collective action and cultural pride. Rituals in Sangihe are rich in symbolic meaning, serving as vehicles for expressing and reinforcing communal identity. Turner et al. (1969) highlighted the potency of symbols in rituals, emphasizing their capacity to condense complex societal meanings into tangible acts or objects. For example, in Sangihe, the preparation and sharing of food in ceremonies represent unity and reciprocity, which are considered critical values within the social framework (Turner, Abrahams, and Harris 1969; Gennep 2004). Traditional songs and dances performed at these events serve as links to ancestral traditions and affirm continuity and a shared sense of belonging (Le Bar 1972).

In Sangihe's multi-faith events, communitas is the intense, unifying energy that Durkheim's collective consciousness describes. It is the palpable "feeling of shared responsibility and collective identity". The collective prayers and synchrony of movement, as seen in *tahlil* (heads swinging left to right while reciting), create a shared emotional and physical experience. This collective feeling or consciousness, a term Durkheim used to describe the moral energy generated in groups, is the direct experience of communitas. This experience, born of temporary anti-structure, then infuses and renews the community's everyday social roles with a sense of shared purpose and tolerance. The ritual, in Turner et al.'s (1969) view, is fundamentally an egalitarianizing force that pushes back against the inevitable hierarchies of social life, ensuring the system serves the people.

A little reflection on the kinship concept mentioned before: in participating in communal labor, individuals create social indebtedness that results in resilient

relations of reciprocity. For Lévi-Strauss, these debts were the means of regularizing social relations as a mode of symbolic debt-creation, where a lack of immediate return compels cooperation in circumstances of dire need (Levi-Strauss 1969) Marshall Sahlins termed this scenario generalized reciprocity, in which the good ways of giving and taking are radicalized because one is driven by a form of social obligation without calculation on return (M. Sahlins 1972). As can be seen in Sangihe, whenever there are ritual or community occasions, such as Eid, mourning, or a marriage ceremony, the collective consciousness comes into being through social convention and ritual commonality, thus giving the individual a sense of place and identity within the larger group (Durkheim, 2008). Social consciousness, according to Durkheim, is the moral spine of every society that guides and governs performance, reinforces norms, and always keeps individual performance oriented toward the good of the collective. This shared moral framework is crucial for tolerance and moderation, which in turn shape the social cohesion of the Sangihe community and unite them amid religious diversity. This construct of social cohesion holds principles common to all, transcending individual differences, which is per se shaped by mechanical solidarity.

Bell (2009) has indicated that rituals are not just reflective but dynamic forces that can shape existing social structures. This sort of point aligns with the pointed use of rituals in the Sangihe tradition to make and rebuild claims of communality. Although Sangihe has diverse religious backgrounds, including Islam and Christianity, this does not create a divide between its people. In rituals and customs such as *tahlil* and *tasyakuran*, Christians and people of other faiths still participate, becoming one, and feeling a sense of belonging. Through participation in these ceremonial rites, individuals internalize and then pass on the values and norms that define their community and ensure its continuity across generations (Bell 2009). Most recent research in the field of collective consciousness shows that shared beliefs and values within societies foster a sense of shared responsibility and collective identity, which is important for building tolerance in multicultural societies (Smith, Mackie, and Claypool 2014). For example, in a society where different groups participate in common rituals or civic duties,

individuals have a greater chance to develop mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance.

Discussion

Interaction between humans, groups, or between countries has never been free from interests, control, animosity, or even oppression. Conflict-based interactions are, in principle, as old as human history. Therefore, humans are conflict creatures (*homo conflictus*), beings that are always involved in differences, disputes, and competition, both voluntary and forced (Susan 2010). From a negative perspective, conflicts between religious communities and between religions in Indonesia still seem to threaten the life of harmony that is the professed direction of national life, making it difficult to create. In a positive perspective, however, conflict can give birth to stronger social ties, affirmation of positive identity, self-criticism of religious understanding and patterns of religious and social relations, and inspiration builds the best way to forge partnerships with religious adherents and is no less important than shock therapy for building togetherness (Susan 2010). The homo conflictus perspective disputes the core optimism shared by the Durkheimian model, which is mechanical solidarity, by arguing that conflict is the main, even unavoidable characteristic of human behavior, surpassing both mere similarity and even complex interdependence.

The tension between the *homo conflictus* theses and the Durkheimian model of solidarity is precisely what the Sangihe case helps to clarify, rather than resolve in favor of either position. The ethnographic findings in this study do not deny that friction, jealousy, and disputes across religious lines occur among the Nanedakele community, consistent with the *homo conflictus* view that conflict is an intrinsic and recurring feature of social life. What the Sangihe case demonstrates, however, is that the multi-layered solidarities identified in this study (kinship, islander identity, and shared cultural bonds) do not eliminate conflict but instead function as a structural mechanism that contains its scale and prevents its escalation from a personal or interpersonal dispute into a communal inter-religious one. In this sense, the Sangihe findings offer a middle ground between the two theoretical positions; conflict is acknowledged as an ever-

present possibility, as *homo conflictus* suggests, while Durkheim's notion of solidarity is repositioned not as a guarantee of harmony but as a containment mechanism that keeps conflict at a manageable, non-destructive scale. This finding, therefore, extends rather than simply affirms Durkheim's framework, showing that mechanical solidarity in a genuinely plural society operates less as an absence of conflict and more as a structural buffer against its escalation.

In general, religion has become the primary source of values in culture. However, these values cannot manifest in human practice. In other words, the values, ideas, and spirits introduced by religion, including Islam, remain passive. Of course, the operation is a daunting task for its adherents. In the realm of such interactions, conflicts of interest and affirmation of identity will appear on a different scale. Human plurality leads to truth being interpreted differently and understood in absolute terms (Hanafi 2018). Such understanding can lead to conflict when used as the basis for movement in da'wah.

However, religious conflict appears to be eased when there is stronger solidarity based on identities other than religion. In the case of Nanedakele, there are some findings related to that. First, there is a same identity which is kinship despite different religions: *"Nyandak mungkin kita mo bapukul dorang, masih semarga"* ("Impossible for us to hit them, we are still from the same clan/family."). The family is also a stronger social glue. The findings make it evident that different religions can coexist within the same household. Other identities are also strong enough to hold back conflicts because solidarity is built based on not one but several identities: Family, Kinship, Islander, and East Melayu. Lastly, these social solidarities are strengthened by collective engagement in rituals that involve everyone.

This study finally suggests some important implications. Firstly, multi-level identities in this study are similar to the concepts of Ukhuwah Diniyyah (Solidarity based on religion), Ukhuwah Wathoniyah (solidarity based on nationalism), and Ukhuwah Basyariah (solidarity based on humanity). Secondly, this study eventually recognizes Durkheim's conceptions: Solidarity and Collective engagement/ collective conscience, working as glues in plural society. However, it applies in a broader context, not only in an industrial community (the

same identity, different class, division of labor), but also in a multi-religion community (same class, different identities).

The concept of Ukhuwah Diniyyah, Ukhuwah Wathoniyah, and Ukhuwah Basyariyah stems from the "trilogy of ukhuwah" formulated by KH. Achmad Shiddiq, a famous Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholar who was the Rais Aam of PBNU at the time of the 27th NU Congress held in Situbondo in 1984, explained ahead of the 28th NU Congress in Krapyak in 1989 (Azisi and Moefad 2022). Ukhuwah Diniyyah refers to religious solidarity among fellow Muslims grounded in shared faith; Ukhuwah Wathoniyah denotes solidarity based on shared nationhood, binding citizens together regardless of religion, ethnicity, or language, while Ukhuwah Basyariyah represents the broadest form of solidarity, rooted in common humanity. Transcending religious, ethnic, and national boundaries altogether. According to Azisi and Moefad, drawing on Bertrand's role theory, this trilogy constituted Shiddiq's conscious framework for integrating the ideals of nationalism and religious pluralism into Indonesian Muslim identity without giving preferential consideration to any one form of solidarity over others (Azisi and Moefad 2022).

It is noteworthy that the layered solidarities identified in this research among the Sangihe people, religious identity, kinship, islander identity, and shared cultural lineage, closely mirror this Islamic sociological framework, although in this case, they have been discovered through ethnographic observations rather than stemming from any religious teachings. The correspondence between these indigeneous Indonesian Islamic sociological notions and western sociological theory indicates that not only is it possible for religious identity to coexist with wider circles of solidarity on the grounds of nationality and humanity, rather than being normative and theological ideal exclusive to Islamic thought, but it can also be empirically confirmed as mechanism of social life in a religiously plural society where there is no Muslim majority population. Connection further emphasizes the theoretical implication that it is layered and nested identities rather than religious identity that allow different communities to unite, notwithstanding differences in their religious doctrines or denominations.

Conclusion

This study shows that kinship-based solidarity arises as a powerful social glue, more than religious identity, in sustaining stability in multi-faith social interactions, especially in Nanedakele. Although religion is still considered important, Nanedakele people have other significant identities – kinship, islanders, and the East Malayan cultural bond – creating multi-layered mechanical solidarities. That substantially hinders conflict from intensifying further and keeps it a personal quarrel. These multi-layered solidarities are continuously supported by collective engagement in rituals, nurturing what Durkheim calls collective consciousness, and reinforcing social cohesion within the community despite diverse religious beliefs.

This study also contributes to the expansion of Durkheim's concept of solidarity by providing empirical evidence from a multi-religious indigenous context rather than from industrial societies. In this case, mechanical solidarity even operates through multiple identities rather than homogeneity. Furthermore, these multi-layered solidarities are not static but are sustainably strengthened by collective engagement in rituals, fostering greater harmony within the community and repelling the potential for escalated personal disputes.

Finally, the Nanedakele case provides an indigenous mechanism for conflict prevention, suggesting that harmony could be sustained by strengthening general or communal identity and improving it through collective engagement in activities, including rituals, rather than relying solely on oral dialogue. It, by itself, offers more insight into national and global efforts to institutionalize tolerance and maintain cohesiveness in a diverse society.

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