



Intercultural Communication Between Arab And Betawi Communities In Condet In Maintaining Social Harmony

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Abstract

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Condet, located in East Jakarta, is a multicultural area inhabited by Betawi communities and Arab descendants who have coexisted for generations. This study aims to examine how intercultural interaction and communication between Arab and Betawi communities in Condet contribute to the maintenance of social harmony amid cultural diversity and ongoing social change. Using a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm, this research employs field research methods through observations, in-depth interviews, and literature review. Data were collected from community leaders, religious figures, local business actors, and residents actively involved in social and religious activities. The findings reveal that social harmony in Condet is shaped by a long historical process of coexistence, strong religious values as a shared social foundation, effective everyday communication, and cultural integration through intermarriage and economic cooperation. Social interactions occur naturally without rigid ethnic boundaries, supported by shared language use and collective religious practices. Although challenges such as modernization, declining traditional social activities, and external influences exist, these issues have not led to significant conflict. Instead, they are generally resolved through open communication and communal deliberation. This study concludes that effective intercultural communication and shared social values play a crucial role in sustaining harmony in multicultural urban communities, positioning Condet as a relevant model for peaceful interethnic coexistence.

Keyword: *Intercultural Communication, Social Harmony, Arab Community, Betawi Community, Multicultural Society*

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INTRODUCTION

Condet is one of the areas in East Jakarta that is well known for its cultural diversity, particularly as a neighborhood inhabited by the Betawi community and Arab descendant communities who have long settled in the area (Rizkiyah, 2017). According to data from Rabithah Alawiyah, there are approximately 4,787 Arab-Hadrami individuals of Alawiyin descent living in Condet and other parts of East Jakarta. This area not only serves as a residential space for various ethnic groups but also represents a concrete example of how cultural diversity can coexist within an urban setting. Such diversity creates complex social interactions between the Arab community and the surrounding non-Arab population.

Social interaction among communities of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds is an important issue to examine because it produces unique social dynamics. Recent studies on intercultural communication in multicultural societies indicate that interethnic relations can become opportunities to strengthen cooperation and enrich existing cultures. However, on the other hand, cultural diversity also presents challenges which, if not properly managed, may potentially lead to social tensions or conflicts (Journal of Intercultural Communication, 2022). In Condet, the ethnic diversity between Arab and Betawi communities enriches local culture but simultaneously requires a high level of mutual understanding and tolerance to maintain social harmony.

According to Rizkiyah (2017), social changes occurring in Condet, including urbanization and the influx of migrants from outside Jakarta, have influenced patterns of social interaction within the community. Therefore, cultural adaptation and assimilation play a crucial role in preventing social friction and strengthening integration among communities. Other studies support this view, emphasizing that effective communication and intercultural acceptance are key factors in fostering harmony within diverse societies (Journal of Intercultural Communication, 2022).

The phenomenon of cultural diversity and social relations among communities in Condet is important to study because it has a significant impact on social harmony, communal cohesion, and overall social stability. In multicultural societies such as Condet, challenges in maintaining social harmony often arise from differences in values, norms, and customs among ethnic groups. If these differences are not properly managed, they may trigger social tensions or conflicts that negatively affect collective well-being.

Hartoyo (2022), in his study on strategies for managing social harmony, emphasizes that maintaining social harmony is essential to preventing interethnic conflict that may undermine shared welfare and happiness. He highlights the importance of approaches rooted in local values and effective intercultural communication to enable communities to coexist peacefully. Similarly, Umikalsum (2019) argues that strong social integration, supported by tolerance and equality, forms a fundamental foundation for building a harmonious society amid cultural plurality.

Therefore, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the social relationships between the Arab community in Condet and the surrounding non-Arab communities, as well as to identify the challenges faced in maintaining intercultural harmony and acceptance. Such understanding is essential as a basis for developing solutions or policies that can enhance social cohesion and address potential conflicts arising from cultural and ethnic differences. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers, community leaders, and other stakeholders in creating a more harmonious and inclusive social environment.

As emphasized in previous research, the processes of assimilation and tolerance occurring in Condet provide an example of how two communities with different cultural backgrounds can live harmoniously through effective communication and cultural acceptance (Widarti, 2020). Thus, this study is expected to identify relevant and contextual strategies for strengthening social harmony in multicultural societies such as Condet.

Based on the discussion in the introduction, which highlights the dynamics of ethnic diversity and the importance of intercultural communication in maintaining social harmony in Condet, the main research problem of this study focuses on how processes of interaction and intercultural communication take place between the Arab and Betawi communities. Specifically, this study is guided by the following research question: “How do interaction and intercultural communication between Arab and Betawi communities in Condet contribute to maintaining social harmony amid cultural diversity and ongoing social change?”

This study aims to examine intercultural communication practices between the

Arab and Betawi communities in Condet in maintaining social harmony within a context of cultural diversity and social change. Using a qualitative approach, this research seeks to identify forms of social interaction, strategies of cultural adaptation, and challenges encountered in the process of intercultural communication among ethnic groups. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of intercultural communication and cultural sociology studies, particularly in understanding identity dynamics and social assimilation in multicultural urban societies. In addition, this research is expected to provide practical insights for communities, local leaders, and local governments in strengthening social cohesion and harmony in diverse social environments.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as a shared construction formed through interactions among individuals and groups in everyday life. This paradigm is chosen because the research focuses on understanding meanings, experiences, and the ways Arab and Betawi communities in Condet build social relationships and maintain intercultural harmony. Under the constructivist paradigm, the study does not aim to measure phenomena quantitatively, but rather to interpret meanings emerging from social interactions and intercultural communication within the community. The research employs a qualitative approach using field research. This approach is considered the most appropriate for exploring in depth the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of the community regarding interethnic social relations. The research was conducted directly in the Condet area of East Jakarta by observing social interactions and collecting information from informants involved in local social and cultural life.

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and literature review. Observations were carried out systematically to record social phenomena, interaction patterns, and community activities related to relations between Arab and Betawi communities. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding informants' perspectives on social harmony, cultural adaptation processes, and challenges in a multiethnic environment. In addition, a literature review was conducted by examining scientific journals, books, and previous studies relevant to intercultural communication and acculturation.

The data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with community leaders such as neighborhood heads (RT/RW), religious figures, local business actors, as well as Arab and Betawi residents actively involved in social and religious activities. Observations of social, economic, and religious activities were also conducted to strengthen the primary data. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from written sources such as scientific journals, books, archives, and previous studies related to social relations, intercultural communication, and cultural acculturation.

The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling, in which informants were chosen based on specific considerations such as their level of knowledge, experience, and involvement in the social life of the Condet community. This technique was applied to ensure that the data obtained were in-depth and relevant to the research focus. The informants consisted of key informants, main informants, and supporting informants. Key informants were individuals with a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural conditions of the Condet community. Main informants were individuals directly involved in and knowledgeable about the dynamics of interethnic social relations, such as RT/RW leaders and local business actors. Supporting informants served to strengthen and verify data obtained from the main informants.

The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative content analysis with a

phenomenological approach in the form of a case study. The data analysis process consisted of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and focused data from interviews, observations, and documentation relevant to the research focus. The reduced data were then presented in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic categorization to facilitate understanding and analysis. The final stage involved drawing conclusions by formulating meanings and patterns of social relations formed within the Arab and Betawi communities in Condet.

To ensure data validity, this study applied several validation techniques, including source, technique, and time triangulation to ensure data consistency. In addition, member checking was conducted by reconfirming interview results with informants to avoid misinterpretation. The researcher also conducted peer debriefing through discussions with academic supervisors and fellow researchers to test analytical consistency. All research processes were systematically documented as an audit trail to allow data traceability when necessary.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Condet is one of the areas in East Jakarta with a strong historical and social background. Based on the interview results, Condet was formerly known as an area with a village-like environment dominated by salak plantations. Along with the development of Jakarta and the process of urbanization, Condet has experienced significant physical changes, such as the reduction of green spaces and increased residential density. Nevertheless, these environmental changes have not directly affected the social life of the community. Informants stated that relationships among residents in Condet remain safe, harmonious, and characterized by strong social bonds. The presence of historical sites and old mosques that are still actively used today also reflects the strong social and religious values embedded in the daily life of the Condet community.

The population of Condet consists of the Betawi community as the local inhabitants and the Arab descendant community that has settled in the area for a long time. The arrival of the Arab community in Condet was initially driven by trading activities, with most originating from the Hadramaut region of Yemen. Over time, the Arab community not only engaged in trade but also settled permanently and built family lives through intermarriage with the Betawi community. This process resulted in strong social integration and gave rise to Arab-Betawi generations, causing ethnic boundaries to become increasingly blurred. Furthermore, the Betawi community in Condet has never been a homogeneous group, as it was formed through the mixture of various ethnic backgrounds, such as Makassar and Banten, as well as the influence of Arab traders. This condition has accustomed the Condet community to living in diversity since its early history.

Social interaction between the Arab and Betawi communities in Condet occurs naturally without rigid boundaries. Informants explained that in everyday life, relationships among residents have become unified and are no longer distinguished by ethnic background. Interactions take place in various social spaces, including residential neighborhoods, markets, small shops, and business areas, with relationships characterized by familiarity and a strong sense of kinship. Indonesian and a softer Betawi dialect—often referred to as “intellectual Betawi”—are commonly used by all residents, including those of Arab descent. This shared language facilitates communication and strengthens the sense of togetherness. In addition, the use of traditional forms of address such as “Ntong” and “Nyai” reflects cultural blending that has become deeply rooted in the social life of the community.

Religion plays a crucial role as a space for interaction in building social harmony in Condet. Islam serves as the primary foundation of social life, with mosques functioning not only as places of worship but also as centers for social and cultural activities. Old

mosques such as Al-Khairat Mosque and Al-Hawi Mosque remain actively used to this day. Al-Khairat Mosque, which was established in the sixteenth century, serves multiple functions, including as a place of worship, an Islamic boarding school, a social foundation, an orphanage, and a historical site. Religious activities such as Quranic recitations, maulid celebrations, and other religious events provide opportunities for Arab and Betawi communities to gather without ethnic segregation, with Islamic values serving as a common ground that reinforces tolerance and social solidarity.

Economic interaction is another tangible form of intercultural interaction in Condet. Since the early period, the Arab community has been actively involved in trade, and economic activities continue today through various businesses such as shops, cafés, culinary enterprises, and service providers. Informants who operate businesses in Condet stated that economic relations run normally and harmoniously, without any discriminatory treatment between Arab and Betawi communities. Instead, economic activities foster cooperation and interdependence among residents, which further strengthens social relationships. In addition, interethnic marriages between Arab and Betawi communities have played an important role in promoting social integration, even though Arab culture traditionally recognizes a patrilineal clan system, which in practice in Condet has become increasingly flexible.

Although social relations between Arab and Betawi communities in Condet are generally harmonious, several challenges remain. Changes in social interaction patterns due to modernization have led to the decline of traditional social activities, such as youth gatherings that previously served as important spaces for social bonding. Physical environmental changes, including the reduction of open spaces, have also decreased the intensity of spontaneous social interactions. Furthermore, informants noted that when social problems do arise, they often originate from individuals outside Condet rather than from local residents. In the era of social media, the spread of negative information and external provocation poses potential threats to harmony if not addressed wisely. Nevertheless, minor misunderstandings can still be resolved through direct communication, openness, and a strong culture of deliberation that has long been embedded within the community.

Overall, the findings indicate that harmony between Arab and Betawi communities in Condet is the result of a long historical process, the role of religion as a social adhesive, effective everyday communication, and natural cultural integration. The absence of significant conflict serves as an indicator that intercultural communication in Condet functions effectively. This condition positions Condet as an example of a multicultural society that is capable of maintaining sustainable social harmony.



Figure 4.1

Documentation of the Research Group with an Arab Descendant Informant in Condet Area

Figure 4.1 shows the documentation of the research group together with a male informant of Arab descent in the Condet area, East Jakarta. This photograph was taken after

the interview session was conducted. The informant is a long-term resident of Condet who actively participates in the social life of the community. His role as an informant is significant in providing in-depth information related to social relations and intercultural interactions between Arab and Betawi communities in Condet. This documentation reflects the implementation of field research using a qualitative approach through direct interviews.



Figure 4.2

Documentation of the Research Group with Betawi Community Representatives in Condet Area

Figure 4.2 presents the documentation of the research group together with representatives of the Betawi community in the Condet area, East Jakarta. This photograph was taken during the field research process as part of data collection activities. The Betawi informants represent the local community who have long resided in Condet and actively participate in social and cultural life. Their involvement provides important insights into local perspectives, cultural values, and patterns of interaction between Betawi and Arab communities. This documentation supports the qualitative field research approach conducted through direct observation and interviews.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that interaction and intercultural communication between Arab and Betawi communities in Condet play an important role in maintaining social harmony amid cultural diversity. Social interactions occur naturally in everyday life without rigid ethnic boundaries, supported by mutual respect, shared language use, and strong religious values as a common foundation. Although social changes and external influences exist, they have not led to significant conflict. Overall, effective intercultural communication and cultural acceptance enable Arab and Betawi communities in Condet to coexist harmoniously within a multicultural urban society.

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