

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ACTORS AS AGENTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN STRENGTHENING SOCIAL COHESION IN SUDIROPRAJAN

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Abstract

This article examines the role of social actors as agents of intercultural communication in strengthening social cohesion in Sudiroprajan, Surakarta, Indonesia. Sudiroprajan is a multicultural urban community where Javanese, Chinese Indonesians, Javanese-Chinese *Peranakan*, and residents of diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds interact in everyday life. In this context, social cohesion is not formed automatically merely because of local values such as *rukun* (social harmony), *tepo seliro* (empathic self-restraint), and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). These values require social actors who are able to enact, reproduce, and manage them through everyday communication practices. This study employs a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm and applies a grounded theory strategy. Data were developed through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and interpretation of intercultural communication practices in community life. The findings show that community leaders, RT/RW neighborhood leaders, religious figures, women's groups, families, and youth play complementary roles as mediators of latent conflict, managers of community communication structures, moral legitimators, reproducers of social values, and connectors across social spaces. This article concludes that social cohesion in Sudiroprajan is the result of communicative work that takes place repeatedly, informally, adaptively, and distributively through networks of social actors. Social actors function as relational infrastructure that bridges cultural values with concrete communication practices in a multicultural community.

Keywords: social actors, intercultural communication, social cohesion, Sudiroprajan, multicultural community

1. Introduction

Multicultural societies always present two social possibilities. On the one hand, ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity can become a form of social capital that enriches collective life. On the other hand, diversity may also become a source of tension when differences are not managed through open, adaptive, and mutually respectful communication. In the Indonesian context, intergroup relations are particularly important

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because social life has been shaped by a long history of cultural encounters, migration, trade, colonialism, segregation, integration, and the dynamics of identity politics.

Surakarta is one of the Indonesian cities that reflects such complexity. The city has a long history of interaction among Javanese, Chinese Indonesian, Arab, and other migrant communities. Javanese-Chinese relations in Surakarta do not only involve trade practices, cultural blending, and acculturation, but also include social memories of conflict, discrimination, and racial violence. Sudiroprajan is a particularly important social space because it is known as a multicultural neighborhood where Javanese, Chinese Indonesians, and Javanese-Chinese descendants interact in everyday life. The area is also symbolically significant because it has developed Grebeg Sudiro, a cultural tradition that expresses Javanese-Chinese acculturation.

Intercultural communication refers to the process of exchanging meaning between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. Hall (1959) argues that culture has hidden dimensions that shape the ways human beings communicate. This means that messages are not produced only through words, but also through body language, social distance, timing, tone of voice, symbols, and social habits. In multicultural communities, differences in interpreting social actions may cause misunderstanding. For this reason, intercultural communication requires sensitivity to context, willingness to listen, and the ability to adjust messages to the cultural background of interlocutors.

Deardorff (2006) explains that intercultural communication competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. This competence includes openness, respect, curiosity, cultural knowledge, listening skills, interpretive ability, and adaptability. Sarwari et al. (2024), in their systematic review, emphasize that the main components of intercultural communication competence include cultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, empathy, flexibility, adaptation, social integration, communication effectiveness, and recognition of the host culture.

In the context of Sudiroprajan, intercultural communication competence does not always appear as an academic concept consciously recognized by residents. Rather, it emerges in simple practices: choosing words that do not offend, avoiding open confrontation, listening to complaints personally, respecting the religious holidays of others, adjusting community activities so as not to disturb other residents, and preventing differences of interest from escalating into open conflict. Thus, intercultural communication in Sudiroprajan is practical, situational, and embedded in everyday life.

Social cohesion refers to the quality of social relationships that enables residents to live together in relative harmony, trust one another, help one another, feel a sense of belonging, and manage conflict peacefully. Fonseca, Lukosch, and Brazier (2019) understand social cohesion

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as an ongoing process related to a sense of belonging, voluntary social participation, tolerance of diverse values and cultures, and equality of rights and opportunities.

In multicultural communities, social cohesion does not mean the disappearance of difference. Ethnic, religious, class, generational, and interest-based differences remain present. What matters is the community's ability to manage these differences so they do not turn into destructive conflict. Social cohesion also does not necessarily mean that all residents have the same level of emotional closeness.

Qi et al. (2024) show that social cohesion is related to spaces of encounter, shared activities, perceptions of safety, place attachment, and opportunities for interaction. This finding is relevant to Sudioprajan because the social life of residents takes place in various spaces: kampung alleys, homes, places of worship, shop-houses, markets, main roads, community halls, neighborhood forums, and cultural arenas such as Grebeg Sudiro. However, these spaces do not automatically produce cohesion. They require social actors who are able to manage interaction, reduce tension, and ensure that communication across groups remains inclusive.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, social actors can be understood as agents who assist the process of meaning negotiation. They do not merely deliver messages; they also translate interests, reformulate statements, manage emotions, reduce prejudice, strengthen shared norms, and maintain trust. In multicultural communities, social actors are important because cultural differences often do not appear directly as open conflict. Instead, they often emerge as minor discomfort, hidden prejudice, differences in perception, and unspoken social distance.

UNESCO (2025) emphasizes the importance of intercultural dialogue in rebuilding trust, strengthening social bonds, and preventing conflict. Dialogue in this context does not always refer to formal discussion. It may also take the form of everyday communication practices that allow residents to understand one another. In Sudioprajan, such dialogue is often facilitated by social actors through informal, personal, and persuasive approaches.

Sudioprajan is a social space with a long history of interaction between Javanese and Chinese Indonesian cultures. Alam (2023) explains that Javanese-Chinese acculturation was formed through a long historical process and has influenced many aspects of life, including architecture, culinary practices, literature, batik, performing arts, traditions, and religious practices. In Sudioprajan, acculturation is visible not only in cultural symbols, but also in everyday social practices and collective traditions.

Grebeg Sudiro is one of the most important expressions of this acculturation. Hakim (2020) shows that Grebeg Sudiro represents diversity that emerged from the collective consciousness of the Sudioprajan community. This collective consciousness was built through historical experience, shared needs, social acceptance, interaction, and negotiation. The tradition has

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become both a symbol of diversity and a medium through which the people of Surakarta can see that cultural difference may be celebrated collectively.

The ability of Sudiroprajan to maintain social relations cannot be understood merely from the existence of cultural diversity. Diversity in itself does not automatically produce tolerance. It may turn into social distance when there is no adequate communication, no meaningful space of encounter, and no actor capable of bridging differences. Studies on intercultural communication competence show that successful intercultural communication depends on cultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, communication effectiveness, and recognition of other cultures (Sarwari et al., 2024). Therefore, social cohesion in a multicultural community should not be understood simply as a harmonious condition, but as an ongoing social process negotiated through communication.

In Sudiroprajan, local values such as *rukun*, *tepo seliro*, *gotong royong*, and mutual respect serve as normative foundations for living together. However, these values do not operate effectively without social actors who enact, reproduce, and manage them in everyday social dynamics. Social cohesion is not formed automatically simply because residents live side by side in the same neighborhood. Rather, it is formed through communication practices that enable residents to know one another, trust one another, adjust to one another, and resolve tensions without damaging social relations.

This article is based on the finding that social actors play a strategic role in building social cohesion in Sudiroprajan. The social actors discussed in this article include community leaders, RT/RW neighborhood leaders, religious figures, women’s organizations, families, youth groups, and other informal figures who possess social legitimacy. They do not always work through formal positions, yet they influence community life because they are trusted, respected, and regarded as capable of maintaining balance in interresident relations. In many situations, social actors perform roles as mediators of latent conflict, facilitators of communication, guardians of social norms, providers of moral legitimacy, and connectors among different groups.

Research on public space and social cohesion emphasizes that spaces of encounter play an important role in building cross-group relationships. Aelbrecht and Stevens (2023) show that public spaces can encourage intercultural encounters and experiences of social cohesion in diverse urban contexts. Qi, Mazumdar, and Vasconcelos (2024) also emphasize that public spaces enable everyday engagement, cultural activities, and social interaction, all of which are important elements in the formation of social cohesion. However, in the context of Sudiroprajan, social spaces do not operate by themselves. Community meetings, women’s social gatherings, collective work, religious activities, Grebeg Sudiro, interfaith forums, and informal conversations become media of cohesion only when they are managed by social actors who possess intercultural communication capacity.

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Previous studies on Sudiroprajan have examined acculturation, cultural symbolism, Grebeg Sudiro, social integration, and representations of diversity. This article takes a more specific position by focusing on social actors as agents of intercultural communication. This focus is important because traditions, public spaces, and cultural values do not operate by themselves. They require actors who manage communication, maintain norms, preserve social memory, and ensure that differences can be negotiated peacefully.

This article therefore focuses on explaining how social actors function as agents of intercultural communication in strengthening social cohesion in Sudiroprajan. It positions social actors not merely as social participants, but as relational infrastructure that connects cultural values with concrete communication practices. The novelty of this article lies in its attempt to understand social cohesion as the result of communicative work carried out through networks of social actors within a multicultural community.

2. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm. A constructivist paradigm was chosen because this study aims to understand how residents of Sudiroprajan interpret their experiences of intercultural communication and how these meanings shape social cohesion. In the constructivist paradigm, social reality is understood as the result of intersubjective construction formed through experience, interaction, language, symbols, and social interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research strategy used in this study is grounded theory. This approach was selected because the study seeks to discover conceptual patterns emerging from field data rather than merely testing existing theory. Grounded theory enables the researcher to interpret social processes inductively through data collection, coding, categorization, constant comparison, and the formation of substantive concepts (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In this study, grounded theory is used to understand how intercultural communication operates through networks of social actors in building social cohesion.

Data were developed through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The informants included community leaders, RT/RW neighborhood leaders, religious figures, women leaders, community organization members, youth, and residents involved in the social life of Sudiroprajan. The interviews were directed toward exploring residents' subjective experiences of intercultural interaction, the roles of social actors, the resolution of tensions, experiences of togetherness, and meanings of social cohesion. Observations were conducted to examine communication practices in community social spaces, such as neighborhood activities, community forums, informal interactions, and cultural celebrations.

Data analysis was carried out through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, data were read to identify initial categories such as mediation, informal

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dialogue, personal clarification, moral legitimacy, value reproduction, actor interdependence, and management of latent conflict. In the axial coding stage, these categories were connected to identify relational patterns among social actors, communication practices, and social cohesion. In the selective coding stage, the core category was identified: social actors function as relational infrastructure for social cohesion in a multicultural community.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Social Cohesion as the Result of Communicative Work by Social Actors

The findings show that social cohesion in Sudioprajan is not formed automatically simply because residents live in a multicultural space. The coexistence of Javanese, Chinese Indonesians, Javanese-Chinese *Peranakan*, and residents from different religious backgrounds creates opportunities for encounter. However, such encounters may lead to two possibilities: strengthening solidarity or producing social distance. What determines the direction of these relations is the quality of communication among residents.

Local values such as *rukun*, *tepo seliro*, and *gotong royong* function as normative foundations for communal life. These values provide moral guidance regarding how residents should interact. However, values do not work without social actors who enact them. In practice, residents do not always face simple situations. There are differences of interest between kampung residents and shop-house owners, differences in communication styles between older and younger generations, differences in religious rituals, different perceptions regarding the use of shared spaces, and potential prejudice that may arise from historical memory. In such situations, social actors play an important role as managers of communication.

Social actors connect values with practices. They ensure that *rukun* does not remain merely a moral slogan, but is embodied in concrete actions such as inviting residents to dialogue, calming emotions, managing forums, recalling histories of togetherness, and emphasizing the importance of maintaining long-term relationships. From the perspective of intercultural communication, these actions reflect communication competence because social actors are able to understand context, read cultural sensitivities, choose appropriate approaches, and ensure that messages are received without strong resistance (Deardorff, 2006; Sarwari et al., 2024).

This finding expands the understanding of social cohesion. Social cohesion cannot only be explained through indicators such as participation, solidarity, and sense of belonging. It must also be understood through communication processes that enable residents to build trust. Social cohesion in Sudioprajan is built from below through conversation, mediation, gentle correction, greetings, clarification, community meetings, religious activities, cultural events, and collective work. In other words, social cohesion is the result of communicative work performed repeatedly by social actors.

3.2 Community Leaders as Mediators of Latent Conflict and Guardians of Social Memory

Community leaders hold a strategic position in maintaining the stability of cross-cultural social relations. They are generally respected because of age, experience, social contribution, or reputation as wise figures. Their legitimacy does not always come from formal office, but from residents' trust. In kampung communities, such trust is highly important because residents are more likely to accept advice from figures considered to understand local history, local character, and the dynamics of community relations.

The main role of community leaders is visible in situations of latent conflict. Latent conflict differs from open conflict. It appears in the form of discomfort, hidden prejudice, differences in perception, or minor complaints that have not yet been expressed directly. In multiethnic communities, such conflicts are dangerous because they may develop into larger tensions if not managed early. Community leaders play a role in reading early signs of tension and taking preventive approaches.

The communication strategies used by community leaders tend to be personal, subtle, and non-confrontational. When disagreements or minor tensions arise, community leaders often approach the parties separately, listen to each side's complaints, and invite them to understand the perspectives of others. Resolution is not always carried out through large formal meetings because open forums may make conflicting parties feel embarrassed. A personal approach is often more effective because it preserves the dignity of all parties.

This way of working reflects practical intercultural communication competence. Community leaders do not merely deliver messages. They also manage emotions, choose communicative spaces, determine the right time to speak, and use language that can be accepted by different parties. In multicultural communities, this ability is important because conflict is often not caused by bad intentions, but by differences in interpreting social actions.

Community leaders also function as guardians of social memory. They frequently remind residents of the long history of coexistence in Sudiroprajan, including collective experiences when residents protected the neighborhood during the May 1998 riots. This memory becomes a moral narrative that harmony is not something that emerges by itself, but the result of collective struggle. Local historical narratives strengthen the sense of belonging and emphasize that social stability must be maintained collectively.

In this context, social memory functions as a source of legitimacy for cohesion. Residents are not only encouraged to live harmoniously for normative reasons, but also because they share historical experience showing that harmony once protected the community. This is consistent with Hakim's (2020) finding that the collective consciousness of the Sudiroprajan community was built through historical experience, acceptance, interaction, and negotiation. This article

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adds that such collective consciousness does not endure by itself; it is continually revived by community leaders through narratives, advice, and social mediation.

3.3 RT/RW Neighborhood Leaders as Managers of Community Communication Structures

RT/RW neighborhood leaders are formal actors who play an important role in managing the communication structure of the community. They serve as connectors between residents and the government, while also functioning as facilitators of communication among residents. In the context of Sudiroprajan, the role of RT/RW leaders is not merely administrative, but also communicative. They regulate the rhythm of social communication, determine meeting agendas, provide opportunities for residents to speak, manage differences of opinion, and formulate collective decisions.

Community forums are important communication spaces, but they also have the potential to generate tension. In neighborhood meetings, residents bring different interests, backgrounds, and communication styles. RT/RW leaders play a role in ensuring that discussions do not turn into conflict. One strategy often used is reformulating residents' statements into more neutral language. A statement that initially has the potential to offend may be transformed into a proposal that can be accepted collectively. This process shows that RT/RW leaders function as managers of public communication at the micro level.

The role of RT/RW leaders is also important in bridging different social spaces. Sudiroprajan is not only composed of dense kampung areas, but also includes commercial and shop-house areas. In kampung areas, social relations tend to be more personal because residents meet frequently and know one another closely. In shop-house areas, relations tend to be more functional because many interactions are based on economic activity. These different spatial characteristics require different communication approaches. RT/RW leaders must be able to connect the social interests of kampung residents with the economic interests of business owners.

In technical issues such as parking, cleanliness, security, or the use of public facilities, RT/RW leaders often become the first actors to manage communication. They need to understand the backgrounds of the parties involved so that solutions are not only administratively appropriate, but also socially acceptable. In this regard, RT/RW leaders work as communication brokers among formal structures, local norms, and residents' interests.

This role is in line with the idea that public spaces and spaces of encounter can produce social cohesion when there are communication mechanisms that allow interaction to take place safely and inclusively (Aelbrecht & Stevens, 2023; Qi et al., 2024). RT/RW leaders become the actors who ensure that social spaces are not merely places of encounter, but also productive arenas of negotiation.

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3.4 Religious Figures as Moral Legitimizers of Social Cohesion

Religious figures play a significant role in strengthening the moral legitimacy of social cohesion. In a religiously diverse community, messages about harmony, tolerance, and mutual respect become stronger when delivered through religious language understood by each community. Religious figures can frame peaceful coexistence not only as a social norm, but also as a moral obligation.

In Sudiroprajan, religious figures do not only play roles within their own religious communities. They are also present in interfaith forums and neighborhood activities. The presence of religious figures in the Interfaith Leaders' Forum and the Religious Moderation Village program shows that religious identity does not become an obstacle to intercultural communication. On the contrary, religion can become a source of legitimacy for tolerance when religious figures construct inclusive messages.

The role of religious figures is visible in sermons, religious meetings, religious celebrations, and social activities. They remind residents to maintain good relations with neighbors regardless of ethnicity or religion. They also provide guidance so that religious activities take neighborhood comfort into consideration. Thus, religious figures help regulate the boundaries between identity expression and the interests of living together.

Abu-Nimer and Smith (2016) emphasize that interreligious and intercultural education can strengthen peace and social cohesion. In Sudiroprajan, this process takes place not only in formal education, but also in community communication practices. Religious figures help translate the value of tolerance into moral language that residents can easily accept. When messages of harmony are delivered through a religious framework, residents understand them not only as social obligations, but also as part of their faith.

Thus, religious figures function as moral legitimizers of social cohesion. They strengthen local norms through religious foundations. They also help prevent religious differences from turning into social distance. This role is highly important because in multicultural communities, social cohesion requires recognition of different identities as well as commitment to living together.

3.5 Families and Women's Communities as Reproducers of Social Values

Social cohesion is not built only in public spaces, but also in domestic spaces. The family is the first communicative unit where values such as *rukun*, *tepo seliro*, politeness, and respect for neighbors are introduced. Children learn not only through advice, but also by observing how parents interact with others. They see how parents greet neighbors, apologize, help residents affected by misfortune, and maintain speech so as not to offend others.

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In multiethnic families or families that maintain intercultural relations, this learning process becomes even more important. Children grow up with the understanding that difference is part of everyday life. They learn that respecting others does not always mean sharing the same culture, but being able to adjust to shared norms. Thus, the family functions as an initial space for the reproduction of social cohesion values.

Women’s communities, particularly through PKK, social gatherings, neighborhood activities, and informal conversations, play an important role in strengthening social values. Women often act as connectors of information among families. They understand subtle dynamics in the neighborhood, including changes in the atmosphere of interresident relations. In this context, women’s communities can be understood as social sensors that detect potential tensions at an early stage.

The role of women is often not formally visible, but it has significant impact. Through informal communication networks, they circulate norms regarding appropriate behavior, empathy, solidarity, and care. When minor problems arise, information often circulates first through women’s networks before reaching neighborhood leaders. These networks complement the formal structures of RT/RW leaders and community leaders.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, women’s informal communication is important because it works at the micro level. Social cohesion is not built only through speeches by leaders or formal policies, but also through everyday conversations that shape residents’ perceptions of one another. Such conversations may strengthen solidarity, but they may also amplify prejudice. Therefore, the role of women’s communities as guardians of communication norms is highly strategic.

3.6 Youth as Bridges Between Tradition and Modernity

Youth in Sudiroprajan live in a different social context from older generations. They are more familiar with digital media, have wider friendship networks, and are more accustomed to open communication styles. However, in kampung forums, they still adjust themselves to local norms. They learn that expressing ideas must be done in ways that continue to respect older generations.

The role of youth is important because social cohesion requires regeneration. Values such as *rukun* and *gotong royong* will not endure if they are maintained only by older generations. Youth need to be involved so that these values remain relevant in the context of social change. In Sudiroprajan, youth are involved in sports activities, collective work, national celebrations, cultural activities, and Grebeg Sudiro. Their involvement in such activities brings together residents across generations and cultural backgrounds in informal settings.

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Grebeg Sudiro becomes an important space for youth to express social participation. This tradition is not only cultural heritage, but also an arena of intercultural communication. It involves cooperation across ethnic, religious, and generational lines. Crooke et al. (2024) show that involvement in arts and cultural activities can serve as a medium for building intercultural understanding and social cohesion. In Sudioprajan, Grebeg Sudiro performs a similar function because it brings residents together through symbols, performances, collective work, and shared celebration.

Youth also bring innovation to the ways community activities are organized. They use social media, digital documentation, and broader communication networks. At the same time, they continue to negotiate with local norms. This process shows that social cohesion is not static, but is constantly negotiated between tradition and modernity. Youth become bridges that allow local values to remain alive without losing relevance in contemporary society.

3.7 Interdependence Among Social Actors as a Network of Cohesion

One important finding of this study is that social actors in Sudioprajan do not work separately. Community leaders, RT/RW leaders, religious figures, women’s communities, families, and youth form a network of interdependence. Each has different spaces, functions, and legitimacy, yet they complement one another in maintaining social cohesion.

When social problems arise, coordination among actors often occurs informally. Community leaders may conduct personal approaches, RT/RW leaders manage formal communication, religious figures provide moral legitimacy, women circulate information through domestic networks, and youth assist with technical aspects. This division of roles is not always written down, but is understood through shared experience. This shows that social cohesion in Sudioprajan does not depend on a single dominant figure, but on an integrated social system.

This network of interdependence enables the community to respond quickly to problems. In situations of misfortune, for example, information circulates through informal networks, assistance comes from various parties, and support is given regardless of ethnic or religious background. Such practices strengthen social cohesion emotionally because residents directly experience that they are part of a caring community.

In terms of social cohesion theory, this finding shows that social trust is not built only through shared identity, but also through experiences of cooperation. Residents trust the community because they see collective responses when problems occur. Thus, social cohesion is not only the result of values that are believed in, but also of social experiences that are collectively lived.

3.8 Social Actors as Relational Infrastructure of Social Cohesion

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Based on the research findings, social actors in Sudiroprajan can be understood as relational infrastructure of social cohesion. This term is used to explain that social actors are not merely individual participants, but mechanisms that enable social relations to work. They provide communication channels, spaces for clarification, moral legitimacy, coordination networks, and emotional support.

As relational infrastructure, social actors perform five main functions. First, they act as mediators of latent conflict. They read potential tensions and resolve them through personal approaches before they develop into open conflict. Second, they function as managers of public communication. They regulate community forums, reformulate statements, and maintain conducive discussion. Third, they act as moral legitimators. They provide moral foundations for *rukun*, tolerance, and mutual respect. Fourth, they function as reproducers of intergenerational values. They ensure that local values are passed down through families, women’s communities, and youth involvement. Fifth, they act as connectors across social spaces. They bridge relations between kampung and shop-house areas, older and younger generations, and different cultural groups.

The conceptual model emerging from this study can be formulated as follows:

Local values such as *rukun*, *tepo seliro*, *gotong royong*, and tolerance serve as normative foundations of the community. These values are activated by social actors who possess legitimacy, networks, and communication capacity. Social actors then carry out intercultural communication practices through mediation, informal dialogue, clarification, meaning negotiation, norm strengthening, and social coordination. These communication practices shape residents’ subjective social experiences, including feelings of safety, acceptance, trust, and belonging. These experiences then strengthen social cohesion in the form of solidarity, collective participation, relational stability, and the ability to manage conflict peacefully.

This model emphasizes that social cohesion does not emerge directly from diversity or cultural values. Social cohesion is formed when cultural values are activated by social actors through repeated intercultural communication practices. Thus, social actors become bridges between structures of value and everyday social practice.

4. Conclusion

This article shows that social actors play a central role as agents of intercultural communication in strengthening social cohesion in Sudiroprajan. Social cohesion in this area is not only supported by local values such as *rukun*, *tepo seliro*, and *gotong royong*, but also by the capacity of social actors to manage communication, reduce latent conflict, build dialogue, strengthen moral legitimacy, reproduce values, and maintain social interdependence.

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Community leaders act as mediators of latent conflict and guardians of social memory. RT/RW neighborhood leaders serve as managers of community communication structures. Religious figures act as moral legitimators of tolerance and harmonious coexistence. Families and women’s communities reproduce social values through domestic spaces and informal networks. Youth function as bridges between tradition and modernity. Together, these actors form a network of interdependence that allows social cohesion to be maintained sustainably.

The theoretical contribution of this article lies in its argument that social cohesion in multicultural communities should be understood as the result of intercultural communicative work carried out by networks of social actors. Social actors are not merely social participants, but relational infrastructure that ensures cultural values are translated into concrete communication practices. Practically, the findings suggest that strengthening social cohesion in multicultural communities requires strengthening the capacity of local actors, opening spaces for dialogue, revitalizing intercultural forums, involving youth, and sustaining inclusive collective traditions.

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