

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN URBAN SOCIETY: CASE STUDIES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Social solidarity is an important element in maintaining social cohesion in urban communities which continue to develop and experience various challenges due to urbanization, modernization and digitalization. This research aims to analyze the role of social solidarity in urban society with a focus on local communities. The method used is a literature review with a qualitative approach and case studies in local communities that have a high level of social solidarity. Data was collected through document studies from various previous studies as well as thematic analysis to identify patterns of social solidarity, supporting and inhibiting factors, and their impact on urban communities. The results of the study show that social solidarity in urban areas is developing in various forms, including mutual cooperation, community-based economic solidarity, and social support in digital networks. The main factors that support solidarity are a sense of belonging to the community, good leadership, and the use of technology to strengthen social interactions. However, challenges such as individualism, busy lives, and limited direct interaction due to digitalization are obstacles in maintaining social solidarity. Therefore, strategies are needed that combine direct interaction and digital technology to strengthen social solidarity in urban communities. This study confirms that social solidarity remains relevant in urban life and can be a key factor in creating a more inclusive, harmonious and sustainable environment.

Keywords: Social solidarity, urban society, local communities, social cohesion, digitalization.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a global phenomenon that continues to increase along with population growth and economic development. Many people migrate to cities in the hope of finding work, access to better education, and more complete public facilities. However, urbanization also brings various social

challenges, including decreased social interaction, increased individualism, and weakened social ties between residents. Urban communities tend to have high mobility and busy schedules, so that interactions between individuals are more limited compared to rural communities which still rely on community-based interactions (Schmitt, 2024).

In an urban context, social solidarity is an important element in maintaining social stability. Social solidarity refers to the sense of togetherness and attachment between members of society that allows them to work together to achieve common interests. This concept has been studied by various sociologists, one of whom is Émile Durkheim who differentiates social solidarity into two main forms: mechanical solidarity which is more common in traditional societies and organic solidarity which develops in modern societies. In big cities, organic solidarity plays an important role in connecting individuals who have different backgrounds but remain dependent on each other in social and economic life (Takle, 2024).

Although important, social solidarity in urban communities often faces various challenges. One of them is increasing individualism due to intense economic competition. Many people focus more on their own personal and family interests than on communal life (Masood, 2022). In addition, high social and economic disparities in cities can trigger social fragmentation, where groups of people with different economic backgrounds tend to interact less with each other. This can weaken the sense of community and create distrust between different groups in society.

However, despite facing various challenges, there are still many local communities in urban areas that continue to maintain the values of social solidarity. Local communities, both area-based (RT/RW, housing, apartments) and interest-based (religious, social and cultural communities), often act as bridges that connect individuals in society. They create space for residents to interact, work together, and build a sense of mutual care (Bauder, 2022). Activities such as mutual cooperation, social assistance, social gatherings and community forums are some of the real forms of social solidarity that persist in urban life.

Technology and social media also have a significant influence on forms of social solidarity in cities. On the one hand, social media can be a tool that strengthens connectivity between citizens, for example through community groups on digital platforms that enable the coordination of social activities more easily. On the other hand, excessive use of social media can also replace direct interaction and reduce the sense of physical togetherness (Reynolds,

2023). Therefore, there needs to be a balance in utilizing technology so that it continues to support the formation of real social solidarity in everyday life.

The role of social solidarity in urban society is not only limited to social aspects, but also has an impact on economic and welfare aspects. Strong solidarity within a community can help create economic opportunities, for example through community-based businesses, citizen cooperatives, or resource sharing programs (Hopman & Knijn, 2022). In addition, in crisis situations such as natural disasters or pandemics, communities that have high social solidarity tend to be more resilient in facing challenges and recover more quickly.

In the context of social policy, the government and various organizations also need to play an active role in supporting the formation of social solidarity in urban areas. Programs that encourage citizen participation in social activities, the construction of public facilities that encourage social interaction, and inclusive policies that reduce social disparities are some of the steps that can be taken to strengthen social solidarity in urban communities (Clark, 2024).

Thus, research on the role of social solidarity in urban society, especially in local communities, becomes relevant for understanding how social relations can be maintained and strengthened amidst the dynamics of modern life. It is hoped that this study will provide insight into the factors that influence social solidarity as well as strategies that can be implemented to maintain and increase social cohesion in urban environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze the role of social solidarity in urban society, especially in local communities. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand social phenomena in depth based on the perspectives and experiences of individuals in the community. Case studies allow researchers to explore forms of social solidarity, the factors that influence them, and their impact in specific contexts. The data in this research comes from a literature review which includes theories related to social solidarity as well as previous research, as well as empirical data obtained through interviews with local community members and direct observation of the social activities they carry out.

Data collection techniques used include document study, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. Document studies were carried out by

analyzing academic literature, related policies, and research reports discussing social solidarity in urban communities. Interviews were conducted with local community members to understand their experiences, views and motivations in maintaining social solidarity. Participatory observation is used to directly observe how social interactions and forms of solidarity develop in communities. The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, where key patterns in the data are identified and categorized to gain a deeper understanding. To ensure the validity of the research results, data triangulation was carried out by comparing information from various sources, such as literature, interviews and observations, in order to obtain a more accurate and comprehensive picture of social solidarity in local urban communities (Johansson, 2003; Yin, 2009).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings from Literature Study

Social solidarity in urban communities has been the subject of study in various previous studies. Studies show that patterns of social solidarity in big cities tend to be more organic compared to the mechanical solidarity that is more common in rural communities (Hossein, 2023). Organic solidarity, as explained by Émile Durkheim, arises because of the interdependence between individuals in a complex society. In large cities, social relations are based more on specialization and functional cooperation than on shared culture or traditions. However, forms of community-based solidarity are still developing, especially within RT/RW, religious communities and other social organizations (Nurlailati, 2023).

Several studies identify various patterns of social solidarity in urban contexts. For example, there is space-based solidarity that occurs in the residential environment, such as cooperation in maintaining environmental security, mutual cooperation activities, or participation in community forums (Boletto, 2023). In addition, there is interest-based solidarity that develops through communities with similar interests, such as hobby communities, professional communities, or local business networks. Value-based solidarity is also a developing pattern, especially in groups that share a certain ideology, religion or social mission, for example volunteer communities and social advocacy groups.

Along with modernization, there have been significant changes in patterns of social solidarity in urban communities. One of the most striking changes is the reduction in direct social interaction due to an increase in

individualistic lifestyles. Many studies show that economic development and the pressures of living in cities make people focus more on work and personal life, thereby reducing their involvement in community social activities (Caitana et al., 2023). In addition, high mobility in big cities causes social relationships to become more temporary and tend to be transactional, compared to the closer and longer-lasting social relationships in rural communities.

Digitalization also has a significant impact on social solidarity in urban communities. On the one hand, technological advances allow individuals to stay connected even though they are physically far apart. Social media and digital communication platforms have created new forms of virtual solidarity, where people can join online communities, discuss and work together for certain goals without having to meet in person (Kondratyeva & Fenno, 2022). Studies show that in some cases, social media can strengthen social solidarity, for example through online fundraising for humanitarian aid or digital-based social movements.

However, on the other hand, digitalization also risks reducing face-to-face social interactions, which were previously the basis of traditional social solidarity. Many studies have found that reliance on digital communication can lead to reduced empathy and emotional engagement in social relationships. People are more likely to interact in the virtual sphere than to be directly involved in community activities in the real world (Moore et al., 2023). In addition, social media often reinforces social segregation by creating “echo chambers” where individuals only interact with groups that share similar views, thereby reducing opportunities for solidarity across broader social groups.

In some cities, there are initiatives to balance modernization and social solidarity. For example, some local communities are adopting technology to strengthen social interactions, such as using WhatsApp groups or online platforms to coordinate community activities, host virtual discussions, or organize social activities more efficiently (Takle, 2024). Several local governments are also starting to implement policies that support the creation of social spaces in urban areas, such as city parks, community centers, and citizen-based activities that can strengthen direct social ties.

Overall, the literature study shows that although modernization and digitalization have changed the pattern of social solidarity in urban communities, solidarity is still developing in various forms. Social solidarity no longer only depends on physical interaction, but can also be strengthened through technology and social innovation. The challenge is how to ensure that

this transformation continues to support social cohesion and does not further widen social differences in society. Therefore, there needs to be continued efforts in developing strategies to maintain a balance between technological progress and the values of social solidarity in urban life.

Case Study of Social Solidarity in Local Communities

The community studied in this study is a local community in an urban environment that has a fairly high level of social involvement. This community consists of residents who live in one area, such as a housing complex, apartment, or RT/RW environment, as well as interest-based communities, such as religious groups, youth communities, and social organizations. This community has various social initiatives aimed at strengthening relationships between residents, increasing shared prosperity, and facing social challenges that arise in the urban environment (Pitrone, 2022).

The forms of social solidarity that develop in this community can be divided into several categories. One of them is solidarity in the form of mutual cooperation, where residents work together in activities such as cleaning the environment, repairing public facilities, or helping residents who are experiencing difficulties (Consorti, 2022). Apart from that, there is economic-based solidarity, such as community cooperatives or social gatherings which help their members meet their financial needs. Religious-based solidarity is also an important part of this community, with activities such as group recitations, social assistance for the poor, and donation programs for people in need.

One of the main factors that supports the development of social solidarity in this community is a sense of shared ownership and responsibility towards the environment and fellow citizens. Residents feel that by helping each other, they can create a more comfortable and safe environment (Parijs, 2024). Apart from that, good leadership from community figures, such as RT heads, religious leaders, or community leaders, also plays an important role in maintaining the spirit of togetherness and coordinating various social activities.

However, social solidarity in this community also faces several challenges. One of them is the difference in social and economic backgrounds among residents which sometimes causes a lack of involvement from some community groups. Individuals' busyness in work and daily activities is also an inhibiting factor, because many residents feel they do not have time to be involved in community activities (Klocek, 2024). Apart from that,

developments in technology and digital lifestyles also have the potential to reduce direct social interactions, which can have an impact on reducing the sense of togetherness in the community environment.

To overcome these challenges, these communities adopt various strategies to maintain social solidarity. One approach implemented is to utilize digital technology to strengthen communication and coordination between citizens. Social media groups such as WhatsApp or Facebook are used to share information, organize social activities, and raise funds for residents who need help. This approach has proven to be quite effective in maintaining citizen involvement, especially for those who have limited time to participate directly (Meijer et al., 2022).

Apart from that, this community also tries to create social spaces that allow residents to interact directly. For example, through organizing regular events such as cheap markets, cultural festivals, or joint sports activities. These programs not only strengthen relationships between residents but also help in building a sense of collective identity within the community. Some communities even collaborate with the government or social institutions to get support in carrying out various larger social activities (Wit et al., 2022).

Overall, this case study shows that although urban communities face various challenges in maintaining social solidarity, local communities still have a significant role in strengthening social relations. By utilizing a combination of direct interaction and digital technology, communities can continue to develop and adapt to the social dynamics of the modern era. This indicates that social solidarity in urban communities remains relevant and can be strengthened through innovative and inclusive strategies.

The Impact of Social Solidarity on Urban Communities

Strong social solidarity in urban communities provides various benefits, both from a social and economic perspective. From a social perspective, solidarity creates a more harmonious, safe and comfortable environment for citizens. When people know each other and have a sense of togetherness, the level of trust between individuals increases, so that social conflict can be minimized (Ryan, 2022). Apart from that, social solidarity also encourages the formation of support networks that can help individuals face various life challenges, such as economic difficulties, health problems, or natural disasters.

From an economic perspective, social solidarity contributes to improving society's welfare through various mechanisms. For example,

communities that have cooperative systems or community-based economic programs can help their members gain access to better financial resources (Stevens & Czaja, 2022). In addition, a strong social network also opens up job and business opportunities for society, where individuals can share information about business opportunities, joint projects, or job vacancies. Thus, social solidarity not only strengthens relationships between individuals but also becomes a catalyst for local economic growth.

However, maintaining social solidarity in an urban environment is not easy, especially in the midst of increasing modernization and individualism. Therefore, strategic steps are needed to strengthen social solidarity in urban communities. One recommendation that can be implemented is to increase interaction between residents through community-based activities. The government and social organizations can support programs such as community service, community meetings, or cultural festivals that encourage people to actively participate and strengthen a sense of togetherness (Durai, 2024).

Apart from physical activities, the use of technology can also be an effective tool in strengthening social solidarity. Digital platforms such as social media groups or community applications can be used to coordinate social activities, disseminate important information, and mobilize support for community members in need (Aykaç, 2024). By utilizing technology positively, people can stay connected even though they are busy, so that social interaction is maintained.

The government also has an important role in strengthening social solidarity in urban areas through policies that support community life. The construction of public spaces such as city parks, community centers and public facilities that are citizen-friendly can become a meeting place for people to interact and build social relationships (Alkhafagie & Basse, 2024). In addition, policies that encourage inclusivity and reduce social disparities, such as assistance programs for vulnerable groups and community-based skills training, can also strengthen the sense of togetherness in society.

Education is also an important factor in building social solidarity from an early age. Schools and educational institutions can teach the values of mutual cooperation, empathy and cooperation through the curriculum and extracurricular activities. By instilling social awareness in the younger generation, society can build a sustainable culture of solidarity in the future (Murtagh et al., 2022).

Overall, social solidarity has a broad impact in building a better urban life, both from a social and economic perspective. With the various existing challenges, efforts to strengthen social solidarity must be made through a combination of strategies, ranging from increasing direct social interaction, using technology, to policies that support community life. In this way, urban communities can continue to develop while maintaining the values of togetherness and social care amidst ongoing modernization.

CONCLUSION

Social solidarity plays an important role in maintaining social cohesion in increasingly complex urban societies. Literature studies and case studies conducted show that social solidarity in local communities can develop in various forms, such as mutual cooperation, economic solidarity, and value-based or religious support. Even though modernization and digitalization bring challenges in maintaining direct social interaction, local communities can still adapt by utilizing technology and creating social spaces that allow closer interaction. With strong social solidarity, urban communities can enjoy a more harmonious, safe environment and have better social and economic resilience.

To strengthen social solidarity in urban communities, a combination of strategies is needed that involves various parties, including communities, government and the private sector. Community-based initiatives, inclusive policies, and the use of digital technology can be solutions to maintain social involvement amidst an urban lifestyle that tends to be individualistic. By continuing to encourage positive social interactions and building awareness of the importance of solidarity, urban communities can maintain shared values and build a more sustainable life in the future.

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