



## Navigating Interethnic Harmony and Social Cohesion in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities in a Diverse Archipelago

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### **Abstract**

Indonesia, an archipelagic nation with over 17,000 islands, boasts a rich tapestry of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. With more than 300 distinct ethnic groups and 1,340 tribes, each region in Indonesia is characterized by unique customs and traditions. However, managing these differences effectively is crucial to maintaining social cohesion and preventing conflicts. Studies have shown that Indonesia's cultural heterogeneity presents both opportunities for vibrant societal interactions and challenges in fostering interethnic harmony. The Karimunjawa archipelago, located in Central Java, exemplifies the complex dynamics of interethnic relations in Indonesia. Home to at least seven ethnic groups, including Javanese, Madurese, Buginese, Mandar, Butonese, Bajao, and Malay. Karimunjawa showcases diverse cultural practices, languages, and social interactions. While some ethnic groups, such as the Buginese, have maintained their cultural identity, others have assimilated to the dominant Javanese culture and language. The Javanese language plays a significant role in the archipelago, actively used in various domains and learned by non-Javanese ethnic groups. Despite linguistic assimilation, some communities, like the Bugis, still preserve their mother tongue within the family sphere, supported by cultural traditions. Understanding the dynamics of interethnic interactions and the role of government policies, societal attitudes, and educational strategies is crucial in fostering a cohesive and harmonious society in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Indonesian Archipelago; Diversity; Ethnicity; Interethnic Harmony; Social Cohesion; Culture*

### **Introduction**

The Indonesian archipelago is situated within the geographical coordinates of 5° 54' 08" north latitude to 11° 08' 20" south latitude and 95°00'38" to 141°01'12" east longitude. Indonesia holds the distinction of being the most extensive archipelago globally. There are over 17,000 islands, of which approximately 7,000 are populated. Kalimantan, Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra, and Papua are the primary islands of Indonesia.

Indonesia, a nation characterized by both societal and geographical factors, exhibits a complex and diverse nature (Arianti & Suwanda, 2020). Indonesia acknowledges six religions officially acknowledged by the government: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and

Confucianism. As for the population, Indonesia had a total of 297,120,303 people in 2024. The religious breakdown was as follows: 87.2% Islam, 6.9% Protestantism, 2.9% Catholicism, 1.7% Hinduism, 0.7% Buddhism, and 0.05% Confucianism (*Agama*, 2024).

In addition, the extensive variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, and faiths in Indonesia is demonstrated by the Central Bureau of Statistics, which reports on over 300 distinct ethnic groups, specifically comprising 1,340 tribes. Each region is characterized by the distinct traits and customs of its various tribes and cultures. This is because any culture that currently exists is constantly present and thoroughly interwoven into the lives of the people in each place where the culture is located (Isnanda, 2018)

According to Barth (Fredrik Barth, 1969), ethnicity is defined as a group of individuals that share common characteristics such as race, religion, national origin, or a mix of these factors, and are connected by a shared cultural value system. Meanwhile, as defined by the Indonesian Encyclopedia, ethnicity refers to a social group within a social or cultural system that holds a specific place based on factors such as lineage, customs, religion, language, and other similar attributes. An ethnic group is characterized by shared historical lineage, linguistic similarities, a common value system, and shared customs and traditions.

The diverse ethnicities in Indonesia are distributed throughout different regions, resulting in each region having its own distinct ethnic enclave, as well as various types of ethnic migrants. This phenomenon leads to the coexistence of local communities or ethnicities with individuals from many ethnic backgrounds, each characterized by a multitude of distinctions. Given Indonesia's diverse religious landscape and large population, failure to effectively manage the differences between ethnic groups in each region, both among local communities and migrants, can potentially lead to conflicts. Indonesia, with its diverse range of tribes and ethnicities, is susceptible to fragmentation and discord. Indonesia's geographical configuration, which is characterized by numerous islands, is also susceptible to fragmentation. For instance, nations such as Yugoslavia and the formidable Soviet Union. Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Bosnia currently face challenges in reconciling their differences, particularly in relation to their diverse ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds (Nations, n.d.).

The cultural presence and integration in the lives of Indonesian people can be attributed to the collective agreements formed by each region, which subsequently establish a set of values for local society. This is why there is frequently a problem in specific regions because of a lack of adherence to mutually agreed cultural norms. This confirms that the culture, which has been collectively accepted, transforms into a standard or conceptual framework for the local community to organize their behaviors and social lives.

The concept of interethnic harmony and social cohesion is indeed a compelling topic, particularly in the context of Indonesia, a nation characterized by its ethnic and cultural diversity (Uqbah, 2024). Studies have shown that while Indonesia's cultural heterogeneity can lead to unique and vibrant societal interactions, it also presents challenges for maintaining social cohesion and interethnic harmony (Danisworo, 2023; Hutabarat, 2023).

Interestingly, while some research highlights the negative aspects of diversity on social capital, it also points out that diversity can improve relations between ethnic groups and foster tolerance through the formation of 'bridging' ties (Laurence, 2011). This dual impact of diversity underscores the complexity of achieving social cohesion in multicultural societies. Moreover, the presence of structural and cultural issues, such as state policies and societal attitudes, can influence religious harmony, which is closely linked to interethnic relations in Indonesia (Danisworo, 2023).

In summary, scholarly discourse suggests that the pursuit of interethnic harmony and social cohesion in Indonesia is multifaceted, involving both the celebration of cultural diversity and the management of potential conflicts arising from it. This research underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics of interethnic interactions and the role of government policies, societal attitudes, and educational strategies in fostering a cohesive and harmonious society (Danisworo, 2023; Hutabarat, 2023; Uqbah, 2024).

Among the numerous islands in Indonesia, the Karimunjawa archipelago stands out as a captivating destination that showcases customs that foster interethnic harmony. The Karimunjawa Islands are situated east of the capital of the Jepara Regency, Central Java. They are bordered by the Mlonggo and Bangri sub-districts to the north, the Batealit sub-district to the east, and the Jepara sub-district to the south and west. The distance between the Jepara Regency and Karimunjawa is 14 km (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Jepara, 2023).



Picture 1<sup>1</sup>: Map of Karimunjawa Islands

These islands are a unique melting pot of ethnic diversity, with at least seven distinct ethnic groups, including Javanese, Madurese, Buginese, Mandar, Butonese, Bajao, and Malay. This diversity is reflected in various cultural practices, languages, and social interactions among inhabitants. The Buginese, for example, have maintained their cultural identity in certain areas like Batulawang, while others, such as Parang Island, have assimilated to the point of losing distinct ethnic characteristics and adopting Javanese customs and languages (Suliyati, 2016).

The Javanese language, in particular, plays a dominant role in the archipelago, is actively used in various domains, and is even learned by non-Javanese ethnic groups, indicating a linguistic shift towards Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia (Nirmala, 1970). Interestingly, despite linguistic assimilation, the Bugis community in Karimunjawa still preserves its mother tongue within the family sphere, with the head of the family playing a crucial role in the selection and preservation of language (Rahim et al., 2023). This preservation is supported by cultural traditions that are integral to maintaining the Bugis language.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Source (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Karimun+Jawa/@-6.549575,109.8832855,9z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x2e73ce4502749065:0x810dc44dc5d89f67!8m2!3d-5.81917!4d110.459!16zL20vMGY0dG5m?entry=tту>)

The Madurese language, another significant language in the region, is known for its resilience and influence on other local languages, as seen in the Bawean language, which, while heavily borrowing vocabulary from Madurese, is shaped by Javanese grammar. Genetic studies have also shown a close relationship between Malay sub-ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia, such as the Melayu Bugis, and Indonesian populations, suggesting a shared ancestral history that could be reflected in the ethnic composition of Karimunjawa (Hatin et al., 2011). However, the dynamics of ethnic interaction can vary, as seen in other regions of Indonesia, where Malay and Buton ethnic groups exhibit dissociative social processes, including competition and conflict (Anjelina, 2021).

The significance of cultural heritage in promoting interethnic harmony and social cohesion is well documented, yet there is an apparent gap in understanding how to effectively leverage this heritage. While Samiyono (Samiyono, 2017) highlights the role of local wisdom in resolving conflicts related to ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations (SARA), suggesting that cultural heritage can foster social harmony, it also implies that the potential of local wisdom is not fully realized in preventing or addressing SARA conflicts (Samiyono, 2017).

While the importance of cultural heritage in promoting social cohesion is acknowledged, there is a need for deeper understanding and more effective strategies to harness this potential. The literature suggests that while a theoretical framework exists, practical applications and the integration of cultural heritage into systems such as education and conflict resolution are areas that require further attention and development (Samiyono, 2017).

Karimunjawa is composed of four islands: Karimunjawa, Kemujan, Parang, and Nyamuk, with a combined size of 48.7 square kilometers. The population of Karimunjawa is 10,484, consisting of 5,390 males and 5,094 females (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Jepara, 2023). The Karimunjawa Islands are home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, and every ethnic group possesses a distinct culture that thrives and evolves inside their unique groups.

Based on statistic data (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Jepara, 2023), Karimunjawa are home to seven distinct ethnic groups, like Javanese, Madurese, Bugis, Mandar, Buton, Bajo, and Malay, with four of them being among the predominant ethnic groups in Indonesia. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (Indonesia, 2017), Indonesia is composed of approximately 1,340 ethnic groups, with ten prominent tribes: Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Sulawesi, Madurese, Betawi, Minangkabau, Bugis, Malay, and Sumatran.

Given these facts, the inquiry arises as to how the inhabitants of Karimunjawa, who belong to seven distinct ethnic groups, manage to sustain harmony among the many ethnics and groups residing on the islands. Do they engage in any customary practice or ceremonies? Hence, considering the aforementioned context, the author's objective is to ascertain the fundamental components involved in fostering unity, specifically among diverse ethnic groups, on the Karimunjawa Islands.

### **Barikan Kubro**

The tradition of *Barikan Kubro* has been practiced since ancient times in Karimunjawa, but its exact origin is unknown. This practice is observed once every 36 days, specifically on Thursday afternoons or Friday nights. The community congregates at the central village crossroads and offers a small *tumpang* consisting of rice and seafood dishes as a charitable gesture to avert misfortune.



Picture 2<sup>2</sup>: *Tumpeng*

The *Barikan Kubro* procession commences with the delivery of tumpeng at the village intersection, followed by a march across the village, culminating in the Karimunjawa plaza (central of region). *Tumpeng*, being the central component of this rite, embodies profound philosophical significance, encompassing a reminder of the Creator and serving as a symbol of the imperative preservation of the universe's diversity. This ritual encompasses life principles such as socializing, bestowing advantages upon others, and reflecting on the origins of life (Hutabarat, 2023).

*Barikan Kubro* serves as a platform for fostering interaction and engagement among individuals of different races and religions in Karimunjawa. This tradition encompasses many populations, comprising both local and international tourists, thus fostering a sense of community and promoting mutual comprehension. The inclusion of a wide range of participants in this event exemplifies how the utilization of local culture may effectively foster social cohesion. In this sense, interfaith discussion can be understood as a practice that fosters tolerance and comprehension across different cultures (Agius & Ambrosewicz, 2003; Hsu, 2024).

## Interfaith Dialogue

Interreligious dialogue is a crucial activity in a society characterized by multiple cultures. Interfaith dialogue, in this context, encompasses not only the exchange of ideas between followers of different religions but also fostering mutual comprehension and reverence for divergences. *Barikan Kubro*, a cultural tradition, can serve as a productive platform for fostering dialogue and promoting interaction among diverse groups, enabling them to exchange and learn from each other's experiences. The philosophy of interfaith dialogue highlights the significance of social contact and interaction in diminishing prejudice and fostering mutual understanding (Sunarko Ofm, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Source: Wong Mbolang ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXz77x\\_frqo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXz77x_frqo))

Interfaith dialogue is crucial for establishing and sustaining harmony in a diverse community. Bodman (Bodman, 2008) states in the journal *Theology Today* that interfaith dialogue encompasses more than mere linguistic exchange, encompassing endeavors to comprehend and honor theological and cultural disparities among followers of various religions. Within a social framework, this conversation is significant in establishing a secure environment for discourse and engagement, thereby mitigating the perpetuation of stereotypes and biases that frequently contribute to conflict.

Cultural practices, such as "*Barikan Kubro*" in Karimunjawa, can effectively foster interfaith dialogue. *Barikan Kubro*, as a cultural event including diverse ethnic and religious communities, provides a distinct platform for individuals of varying origins to convene, engage, and exchange their experiences. These findings align with Swidler's (Swidler, 1985) research published in the *Melanesian Journal of Theology*, which highlights that participating in cultural activities together can foster ecumenical comprehension and enhance tolerance.



Picture 3<sup>3</sup>: Dialogue between interethnic in Karimunjawa preparing *Barikan Kubro*

Moreover, the notion of interfaith dialogue emphasizes the significance of social contact and interaction in diminishing prejudice and enhancing mutual comprehension. The Contact Hypothesis, proposed by Allport (Allport, 1979), posits that direct interaction between diverse groups, when facilitated by optimal circumstances, has the potential to diminish prejudice and enhance inter-group relationships. A study conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and published in the *Personality and Social Psychology Review* revealed that engaging in pleasant and constructive interactions with persons from diverse religious origins can enhance social cohesion and alleviate tensions.

The practice of interfaith dialogue, as shown by traditions such as *Barikan Kubro*, promotes the creation of a community that is more inclusive and diverse. According to Ammerman (Ammerman, 2006), in the field of *Sociology of Religion*, participating in community events that encourage inclusivity and collaboration might decrease conflicts between different religious groups and enhance societal unity. These findings indicate that utilizing local customs and cultural activities can be highly beneficial in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding between diverse religious communities.

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://www.facebook.com/share/EcqatM78hqrM7a34/?mibextid=qi2Omg>

## **Methodology**

This study employed qualitative research methodologies and specifically utilized exploratory research, as described by Carvalho et al. (Carvalho et al., 2005) and Nam et al. (Nam et al., 2015). The primary objective of this study was to elucidate the dynamics of group communication across religious congregations inside a hamlet. The participants in this study were inhabitants of Karimunjawa Island. The data-gathering methods employed in this research include observation, interviews, and documentation (Moleong, 2017). This research aims to provide an accurate depiction of the current status of the object of study by analyzing available data. Specifically, it focuses on interfaith communication by observing community interactions on Karimunjawa Island, particularly during the *Barikan Kubro* festival.

Subsequently, the collected data are subjected to analysis using the data reduction technique, followed by data presentation and the subsequent derivation of findings. The outcomes of this study are presented as written text or spoken sentences, which may involve the observation of individuals and their behaviors (Miles et al., 2014).

## **Findings and Analysis**

*Barikan Kubro* is an enduring cultural heritage site that has been maintained in the Karimunjawa Islands for a significant period of time. This ritual occurs once every 36 days, specifically on Thursday afternoons or Friday nights. *Barikan Kubro* encompasses a diverse range of ethnic groups in Karimunjawa, such as the Javanese, Madurese, Bugis, Mandar, Buton, Bajo, and Malay.

*"They congregate at the primary junction of the village, bearing a diminutive 'tumpeng' comprising rice and seafood delicacies as a gesture of charity to ward off misfortune" (Interview with Alim Fahrul and Ust Herman).*

Alim Fahrul, the Chairman of Youth ANSOR NU Karimunjawa, states that the *Barikan Kubro* event commenced in 2015. The primary objective of the celebration was to foster unity among the six tribes of Karimunjawa and draw the attention of both local and international tourists. Alim highlighted that this endeavor aims to enhance cohesion and acquaint the external world with the splendor of Karimunjawa culture. Ustadz Herman, a prominent young scholar in Karimunjawa, asserts that *Barikan* is not merely a customary practice, but rather a profound ritual that embodies the imperative for humanity to coexist together with both nature and their fellow beings.

*The term "Barikan" is derived from the words "Barokah" or "Barik," both of which convey the meaning of being beneficial and secure. This tradition encompasses various social and spiritual activities, with the purpose of seeking blessings and redemption (Interview with Ustad Herman Ef...).*

The *Barikan Kubro* custom consists of multiple stages of processing. The event commences by transporting the tumpeng to the village junction, followed by a procession across the community, culminating at the Karimunjawa plaza (center of region). The ritual centers on Tumpeng, which holds profound philosophical significance. The cone-shaped tumpeng rice represents the mountain, serving as a reminder of the Creator and the importance of preserving the diversity of the universe (Jati, 2014; Zhang et al., 2024)



Picture 4<sup>4</sup>: *Tumpeng* that is paraded to the intersection



Picture 5<sup>5</sup>: Karimunjawa residents who are ready at the intersection

<sup>4</sup> Source: Wong Mbolang ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXz77x\\_frqo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXz77x_frqo))

<sup>5</sup> Source: Barikan Kubro (<https://www.facebook.com/share/EcqtM78hqrM7a34/?mibextid=qj2Omg>)





Picture 6<sup>6</sup>: Pray together to the Creator and serve as a symbol of the imperative to preserve the diversity of the universe.



Picture 7<sup>7</sup>: After praying, the Tumpeng is taken to the sea to be offered to other creatures besides humans.

<sup>6</sup> Source: Barikan Kubro (<https://www.facebook.com/share/EcqatM78hqrM7a34/?mibextid=qi2Omg>)

<sup>7</sup> Source: Explore Karimun Jawa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VAGguUlpis>)

The *Tumpeng* is composed of a variety of components, including *urap-urap* (vegetables) and *bucheng* (whole grilled chicken), each of which carries its own symbolic meaning. The emblem of *urap* represents the importance of benefiting others in human life, whereas *bucheng* refers to the constant remembrance of God through prayer and activity. This symbolism represents profound existential principles, such as the significance of altruism and the remembrance of life's origins.



Picture 8<sup>8</sup>: Cutting Tumpeng by four Karimunjawa figures (elders) to be given to other creatures



Picture 9<sup>9</sup>: The process of giving pieces of tumpeng to creatures other than humans

<sup>8</sup> Source: Sumarto Rofiun (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYAg-xeXP1Q&t=245s>)

<sup>9</sup> Source: Sumarto Rofiun (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYAg-xeXP1Q&t=245s>)



Picture 10<sup>10</sup>: The process of bringing the Tumpeng that has been cut back to *alun alun* (center of region)



<sup>10</sup> Source: @Koko Pengkuh/Koko Owl (<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/tJaKD0qWjN4>)



Picture 11<sup>11</sup>: Eating Tumpeng together with all of audience

*Barikan Kubro* can be conceptualized as an interfaith dialogue that aims to foster tolerance and facilitate cross-cultural comprehension. Interfaith discourse encompasses more than just the exchange of ideas between followers of different religions; it also involves endeavors to comprehend and honor theological and cultural disparities. *Barikan Kubro*, a traditional event, facilitates social interaction and promotes the exchange of experiences among diverse groups, leading to a decrease in prejudice and an enhancement of mutual understanding.

Allport's Contact Hypothesis theory (Allport, 1979) posits that direct interaction between diverse groups, when facilitated in optimal circumstances, has the potential to diminish prejudice and enhance inter-group relations (Allport, 1979; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Positive interethnic and interreligious relationships within the framework of *Barikan Kubro* have the potential to enhance social cohesion and alleviate conflict.

The practice of faith dialogue, as carried out within this tradition, fosters the creation of communities that are more inclusive and diverse. Participating in community events that encourage inclusivity and cooperation can decrease interreligious conflict and enhance social cohesion (Ammerman, 2006; Swidler, 1985, 2015). Utilizing local customs and cultural activities can be highly helpful in fostering dialogue and cultivating mutual understanding among diverse religious groups.

*Barikan Kubro* not only enhances interethnic unity in Karimunjawa but also functions as a platform for productive interfaith discourse. The wide range of people engaged in this event exemplifies how the utilization of local culture can effectively foster social cohesiveness. Interfaith dialogue in this context serves as a means of fostering tolerance and comprehension among different cultures.

Pettigrew and Tropp (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) conducted a study published in the *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, which revealed that engaging in pleasant and constructive interactions with individuals from diverse religious origins can enhance social cohesion and alleviate tensions. Interfaith dialogue, shown by practices such as *Barikan Kubro*, facilitates the creation of inclusive and diverse communities. According to Ammerman (Ammerman, 2006), in the field of Sociology of Religion,

<sup>11</sup> Source: Foryou.Picture (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqSj6QH77SU>); @Koko Pengkuh/Koko Owl (<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/tJaKD0qWjN4>); Wong Mbolang ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5\\_mmeqrCQ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5_mmeqrCQ8))

participating in community events that focus on inclusivity and collaboration might decrease conflicts between different faiths and enhance social unity.

*This ritual has evolved into a yearly event that takes place before the westerly season, typically in July. The event commences with a cultural ceremony, including performances by dance studios in Karimunjawa, accompanied by statements delivered by community and government representatives (Interview with Alim Fahrul).*

Since 2015, the *Barikan Kubro* tradition has experienced significant growth, along with the expansion of tourism in Karimunjawa. The *Barikan Kubro* event spans over a fortnight, specifically during the third and fourth weeks of July 2024. The month chosen for the execution of *Barikan Kubro* is Suro, according to the Javanese calendar. The festival showcases the rich cultural heritage of Karimunjawa, positioning it as a cultural tourism destination (Setiawan et al., 2017; Setiyanto et al., 2023).



Picture 12<sup>12</sup>: performing arts of Karimunjawa residents after the ritual is completed

According to the senior Karimunjawa authority, *Barikan* is derived from the term *barakat*, which signifies a state of being blessed. The purpose of this custom is to provide alms to prevent harm and

<sup>12</sup> Source: Barikan Kubro (<https://www.facebook.com/share/EcqtM78hqrM7a34/?mibextid=qj2Omg>) ; Apriliana Maulana (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISujNTvwpV0>)

attract blessings. The practice involves delivering a tiny tumpeng, which consists of rice, urap-urap, and bucheng, to the village intersection before dusk.

The rituals/ *Barikan Kubro's* objective is to educate youngsters and the younger generation about the significance of conserving culture and tradition. By engaging children in this activity, the aim is to develop an awareness and appreciation of their local cultural history from a young age. Furthermore, this festival serves as a platform for acquaint travelers, both domestic and international, with the cultural customs of Karimunjawa. This engagement fosters a sense of community, encouraging collaboration and the pursuit of common goals (Purworini et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024)

*Barikan Kubro* also encompasses profound spiritual principles, such as imparting the significance of prayer and submission to God. The symbolism inherent in *tumpeng*, exemplified by its cone shape and *urap-urap* filling, serves as a poignant reminder of the magnificence of God and the vastness of the cosmos. It is important for humans to have a harmonious relationship with nature and their fellow humans while also keeping in mind the origins of life. The symbolism inherent in the tumpeng serves as a poignant reminder of life's origins and the interconnectedness of all beings (Incult, 2024; Sutyono, 1998).

This tradition fosters ecumenical dialogue and mitigates tensions among diverse communities, functions as a conduit for fostering amicable connections among individuals of diverse ethnic and religious origins within a social framework. Engaging in this customary practice allows individuals to enhance their feelings of unity and shared comprehension, thereby promoting social unity and communal coherence.

*Barikan Kubro's* customs exemplify the process of transforming indigenous culture into a tourist attraction. The event drew travelers from many regions and outside, thereby enhancing the local economy and positioning Karimunjawa as a cultural tourism hotspot. It also exemplifies the use of indigenous customs to foster aith discourse and enhance social unity. The custom serves as both a means to celebrate cultural variety and a platform to foster amicable connections among individuals of various ethnic and religious origins. *Barikan Kubro* shows the significance of incorporating local culture as a means of fostering discussion and promoting mutual understanding. This highlights the value of tradition in constructing inclusive and diverse communities. This is evident in interviews with Alim Fahrul and Ust Herman Ef, as well as in the overall overview of *Barikan Kubro*.

*Barikan Kubro* played a crucial role in promoting interethnic harmony in Karimunjawa. Additionally, it acts as a venue for successful interfaith dialogue, encourages social cohesiveness, and contributes to the preservation of local cultural heritage. This information was based on interviews with Alim Fahrul and Ust Herman Ef as well as an overview of *Barikan Kubro*. It imparts the significance of mutual respect and appreciation of diversity while also serving as a reminder of the underlying principles that govern life. *Barikan Kubro* serves both as a tourist attraction and a means of reinforcing the cultural and social identity of the Karimunjawa people.

*Barikan Kubro* facilitates social cohesion by providing a safe space for open dialogue and cultural exchanges. It diminishes stereotypes and biases, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious community (Josefová, 2014; Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2024).

The festival's success demonstrates the potential of cultural traditions to act as catalysts for positive social change, reinforcing community bonds, and enhancing intercultural understanding (Anwar et al., 2023; Wohangara, 2016).

## Conclusion

*Barikan Kubro* offers a platform for individuals from all ethnic and religious backgrounds to unite and exchange their experiences. During this festival, people engage in open and candid communication as they share tales and traditions. This tradition fosters an atmosphere where individuals can interact free from bias and cultivate shared understanding. The *Barikan Kubro* event highlights the significance of honoring cultural and religious diversity. The event showcases the ability to involve diverse ethnic communities to enhance social cohesion by promoting respect for variety. Participants are urged to comprehend and value the distinct customs and beliefs of each group.

Beside a platform, *Barikan Kubro* also serves as a medium for fostering trust among diverse ethnic communities in Karimunjawa. By engaging in shared cultural and spiritual activities, communities can cultivate a deeper sense of trust, crucial for fostering harmonious relationships and facilitating future collaboration. By fostering constructive and inclusive exchanges within *Barikan Kubro*, it is possible to diminish biases and preconceived notions among different groups. When individuals with diverse backgrounds engage in a shared event and exchange experiences, they can enhance mutual understanding, diminish biases, and foster a sense of cross-cultural camaraderie.

The last one, *Barikan Kubro* custom provides an inclusive environment where all individuals can freely celebrate their culture without prejudice or bias. Individuals of all religions or ethnic origins experience acceptance and appreciation in this time and place. The festival promotes cooperation among diverse ethnic and religious groups in organizing and carrying out the event. Engaging in collective endeavors, such as the preparation of *tumpengs* and active involvement in processions, enhances inter-group collaboration and fosters the pursuit of common objectives in *Barikan Kubro*. By implementing interfaith dialogue ideas within the framework of *Barikan Kubro*, this custom functions not only as a cultural festivity but also as a means to enhance inter-group connections and foster peace and comprehension among different religious and ethnic communities in Karimunjawa.

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