

The Dynamics of Managing Religious Conflicts in Multiconfessional Muslim Families and the Impact of Islamic Organizations on Children's Religious Education

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Abstract

This study investigates the shifting landscape of religious understanding within the domestic sphere by examining the dynamics of intra-faith conflict management in urban Muslim families with multi-organizational backgrounds and its subsequent impact on children's religious education. Operating within a qualitative phenomenological case study framework, this research purposively selects and analyzes urban households where parents maintain active, distinct affiliations with different major Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Data were systematically gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with parents and children, domestic participant observations, and documentary analysis, and were processed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis. The findings reveal that domestic religious friction primarily stems from differing organizational orientations regarding *furu'iyah* (non-fundamental) ritual practices and socio-political views rather than fundamental theological tenets. To preserve marital harmony and ensure family resilience, couples successfully develop collaborative coping mechanisms and adaptive communication models that operationalize the principles of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and family *maslahah* (collective welfare). Over time, this continuous domestic negotiation facilitates a profound intellectual transformation among spouses, shifting their religious outlook from exclusive-organizational rigidity to

an inclusive-substantive understanding of Islam. Consequently, this domestic pluralism acts as a strategic incubator for children's psychospiritual development, reducing initial cognitive dissonance and ultimately fostering high levels of adaptability and a robust foundation in *wasathiyah* (Islamic moderation). These insights suggest that contemporary Muslim families must prioritize substantive ethical virtues over formal organizational labels to cultivate a tolerant, progressive, and resilient future generation.

Keywords

Family Resilience, Islamic Mass Organizations, Religious Moderation, Value Transmission

Introduction

Studies on pluralism and the dynamics of Islamic thought in Indonesia generally position the public sphere, educational institutions, and political contestations as the primary loci of observation. However, contemporary sociological developments indicate that the inclusiveness and plurality of religious understanding are no longer merely consumed as discourse in the public arena, but have reduced and manifested into the domestic space or the institution of the family. Urban Muslim families in Indonesia today are no longer always monolithic in terms of their religious organization affiliations. Social reality shows a shift in relationship patterns where marriage can unite two individuals who consciously have different backgrounds in Islamic mass organizations (*ormas*), such as the intersection between Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam (Persis), or Al-Washliyah. This phenomenon of religious multi-subjectivity at the domestic level gives rise to a new type of family that is rich in dialectics yet vulnerable to internal ideological clashes (Arifianto, 2020).

Differences in religious organizations within one household are in practice not just a matter of membership cards, but include differences in doctrine, jurisprudence of worship that is *furu'iyah* (non-fundamental/branch matters), to preferences in choosing organizational recitation spaces followed by the husband or wife.

Religious friction in the household is often triggered by daily practical matters, such as the procedure for executing prayers, the recitation of certain prayers, determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, to views on local religious traditions. When each partner brings the ego of their organizational group into the husband-wife relationship, the domestic space which should be a calm shelter turns into an arena of contestation for proving theological truth. This conflict becomes more complex when the patriarchal structure that is still strong in the cultural community collides with the awareness of gender rights, where wives also demand the same space to maintain their original religious identity (Kloos, 2018)

Ideological tensions that are not resolved at the parent level will in turn have a direct impact on parenting patterns and the transmission of religious values to children. Children are often the first victims of the dualism of their parents' religious thought, which manifests in the form of psychospiritual confusion or value disorientation. Children are in a dilemmatic position when they have to choose the type of religious practice taught by their father or mother. If not managed through mature conflict management, this situation not only threatens the harmony of domestic relations, but also has the potential to blur the foundations of faith and basic religious understanding that children should receive solidly during their growth period (Minza, 2014).

Although the urgency of discussing this domestic space is very high, the existing literature on the sociology of the family and the sociology of religion still leaves a fairly large academic gap. Based on a literature search, most previous studies on religious conflict in Indonesia tend to focus on a macro scale, such as conflicts between religious communities in the public sphere, radicalism in educational institutions, or social harmony in multicultural societies. Very few studies have specifically dissected the management of *intra-religious* conflict resolution that occurs within the private sphere of Muslim families with multi-organizational backgrounds. Studies on how husbands and wives negotiate behind closed doors to align two different currents of thought for the sake of their children's education are still very limited and have not received adequate theoretical attention (Hasan, 2018).

This research gap confirms the limitations in understanding the dynamics of modern Muslim families amidst the current of pluralism. Studies on the sociology of the Islamic family so far have oversimplified that family harmony is only built upon a dogmatic uniformity of religious vision. As a result, the unique ways and local strategies used by multi-organizational families in surviving and managing these value differences escape the attention of Islamic scholars. This is where the importance of this study lies, to fill the empty space by presenting empirical data regarding domestic defense mechanisms in facing the polarization of religious understanding (Nurlaelawati, 2013).

Therefore, this article offers scientific novelty by capturing the resilience strategies of multi-organizational Muslim families from the perspective of finding shared solutions and inclusive negotiation. This study goes a step further than merely documenting conflict, instead focusing on how these families build communication bridges based on the value of collective welfare (*maslahah*). This novelty is expected to provide a new theoretical contribution to the development of the sociology of Islamic education and contemporary Islamic family law, especially regarding child rearing models in an increasingly open era (Nisa, 2018).

The main objective of this study is to analyze in depth the dynamics of religious conflict management in Muslim families with multi-organizational Islamic backgrounds, as well as to identify its impact on the sustainability of children's religious education. Specifically, this study aims to reveal how religious communication patterns are built by partners from different *ormas*, what obstacles they face in transmitting religious values, and how children construct their religious logic amidst the dualism of their parents' thoughts. Through this comprehensive understanding, the results of the research are expected to serve as a practical guide for society in realizing religious moderation starting from the smallest social unit, namely the family (French, 2020).

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach with an emic case study design, specifically incorporating a phenomenological

framework to capture and analyze the social realities of religious conflict management from the subjective viewpoints of the actors involved. The research specifically targets urban Muslim families in which the parents consciously maintain distinct affiliations with different Islamic mass organizations, such as couples representing a cross-affiliation between Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. To ensure the selection of information-rich cases, subjects were determined using a purposive sampling technique based on criteria including the duration of marriage, the presence of children currently undergoing religious education, and active involvement of both parents in their respective organizational activities. Data collection was systematically conducted through a combination of semi-structured in-depth interviews with both parents and their children, passive participant observation within the domestic environment to witness daily religious rituals, and documentary review of family learning materials or educational choices.

The collected qualitative data were systematically processed and analyzed using the interactive model of data analysis, which comprises data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the data condensation phase, the transcripts of interviews and field notes regarding family negotiations and friction were selected, focused, and transformed to identify recurring patterns of conflict and coping mechanisms. The analytical framework used to interpret these condensed patterns relies heavily on the integration of domestic conflict theory and the sociology of Islamic education, allowing for a deep exploration of how structural family dynamics intersect with the transmission of religious values. To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, data triangulation was performed by cross-checking the interview responses of the parents against the perspectives of the children and the observational data recorded within the household sphere.

Result and Discussion

Typology and Roots of Domestic Religious Conflict in Multi-Organizational Muslim Families

The mapping of religious thought contestation within multi-organizational Muslim households reveals that domestic friction is deeply rooted in differences over organizational orientation rather than fundamental theological tenets. The most visible manifestations of this contestation occur within the realm of daily practical worship, or *furu'iyah* matters, where contrasting ritual traditions of mass organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah directly collide in the shared domestic space. Disagreements frequently surface regarding specific ritualistic details such as the recitation of the *qunut* prayer during dawn prayers, the audible reading of *basmalah* in certain prayers, and the performance of traditional communal rituals like *tahlilan*. Beyond daily rituals, annual high-stakes astronomical calculations for determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal introduce heightened seasonal tension, forcing couples to navigate conflicting organizational edicts within one home. This ritual dualism eventually extends into differing socio-political views, particularly concerning how each organization positions itself relative to state policies and public religious discourse, which further complicates the intellectual and ideological mapping of the household (Fealy & White, 2008).

The intensity of these domestic frictions is significantly exacerbated by the importation of organizational group egos into the marital relationship, a dynamic that intersects directly with shifting domestic power structures. When a husband or wife conceptualizes their specific *ormas* identity as the supreme standard of religious correctness, ordinary discussions regarding family religious practices easily transform into theological standoffs. In households where traditional patriarchal cultures remain dominant, a husband's organizational affiliation is often imposed as the mandatory baseline for the entire family, viewing the wife's distinct organizational practices as a form of domestic insubordination. Conversely, when couples consciously adopt a framework of gender equality, the intensity of the conflict changes character from unilateral subjugation to active, continuous negotiation. In these egalitarian settings, wives

actively resist the total erasure of their original religious identity, turning the domestic arena into a space of intellectual contestation where both partners must constantly evaluate the boundaries of religious authority within their marriage (Rinaldo, 2013).

From a sociological perspective, the roots of these intra-household religious conflicts cannot be isolated from the powerful influence exerted by external environments, specifically the respective organizational communities to which each partner belongs. The extended family network, neighborhood religious circles, and formal organizational pengajian spaces act as external pressure cookers that can either sharply intensify or significantly mitigate internal domestic tension. When extended families or local sub-district organizational chapters demand absolute conformity and express disapproval of a cross-affiliated marriage, spouses often feel compelled to exhibit a more rigid, defensive stance at home to prove their group loyalty. On the other hand, when the surrounding community or the couple's peer networks actively champion the values of religious moderation and social inclusivity, the external environment serves as a vital stabilizing mechanism. These supportive external spaces provide the necessary social capital for the couple to reframe their organizational differences not as an existential threat to their marriage, but as a manageable form of domestic pluralism (Ricklefs, 2012).

Strategic Accommodation and Conflict Negotiation for Family Resilience

The survival of multi-organizational Muslim households amidst ideological friction relies heavily on the development of structural coping mechanisms and adaptive religious communication models. Couples facing deep-seated differences in organizational doctrines do not merely passively-aggressively tolerate each other, but rather co-construct a specialized communicative framework to bridge their differing theological stances. This dynamic involves a conscious shift from confrontational or defensive debate toward collaborative dialogue, where spouses establish clear domestic boundaries regarding when and how organizational differences may be discussed. The coping mechanisms utilized by these couples include the deliberate scheduling of religious discussions, the avoidance of highly

sensitive sectarian topics during times of family stress, and the creation of a shared language that emphasizes common Islamic values over partisan organizational slogans. Through this deliberate engineering of domestic communication, couples successfully prevent external theological polarization from fracturing their marital bond, thereby maintaining a harmonious household environment (Woodward, 2021).

A critical element in this domestic negotiation process is the practical application of *tasamuh* (tolerance) and family *maslahah* (collective welfare) as primary instruments for internal conflict resolution. Rather than treating *tasamuh* as an abstract theological concept, husbands and wives in multi-organizational settings operationalize it daily by actively respecting each other's distinct ritual preferences, such as a husband supporting his wife's attendance at a particular organizational gathering. This behavioral tolerance is further reinforced by the overarching principle of family *maslahah*, which serves as the ultimate legal and ethical benchmark for decision-making within the home. When faced with administrative or structural dilemmas, such as choosing between different organizational networks for financial or social support, couples prioritize the stability, psychological peace, and spiritual well-being of the family unit over strict loyalty to their respective *ormas*. By elevating *maslahah* to a supreme domestic guide, spouses successfully transform potential ideological battlegrounds into spaces of mutual concession and shared ethical responsibility (Ichwan et al., 2020).

Over years of continuous domestic negotiation, this collaborative arrangement facilitates a profound ideological transformation, marking a clear shift from an exclusive-organizational religious stance to a more inclusive-substantive understanding of Islam. Initially, newlyweds often enter the marriage with rigid group identities, viewing their specific organizational framework as the single correct manifestation of faith. However, the lived reality of sharing a life with an equally pious partner from a different background gradually erodes this sectarian exclusivism. Through a long process of daily compromises and intellectual exchange, spouses begin to look past the formal packaging of their respective organizations, recognizing that both entities ultimately seek to

cultivate the same core Islamic virtues. This intellectual evolution leads to a mature, substantive religious outlook within the home, where the universality of Islamic ethics takes precedence over the formal, bureaucratic boundaries of Islamic mass organizations (Menchik, 2019).

Parenting Style and the Transmission of Religious Values to Children in a Multi-Organizational Environment

The internalization of Islamic values within multi-organizational families demonstrates complex pedagogical models that depart significantly from conventional monolithic religious nurturing. When navigating different organizational backgrounds, parents generally adopt one of three primary internalization models to transmit religious values to their children. The first is a syncretic model, where parents consciously blend the practical rituals of both organizations, teaching the child to be comfortable with diverse Islamic traditions simultaneously. The second is a dominant model, wherein one organizational tradition becomes the primary baseline for the child's education, often dictated by the parent who assumes the primary role in daily religious tutoring or by a mutual agreement to avoid practical confusion. The third model emphasizes rational freedom, where parents introduce the core principles of both organizations and allow the child, upon reaching intellectual maturity, to choose their own organizational affiliation based on logical and personal conviction. These variations indicate that religious transmission in modern urban households is no longer purely dogmatic, but has transformed into an active, strategic educational project (Suyatno et al., 2022).

In executing these models, parents constantly confront significant psychological and sociological barriers that complicate the alignment of two distinct educational streams under one roof. Psychologically, parents often experience internal anxiety regarding potential value disorientation or identity confusion within the child, fearing that exposure to dualistic practices might weaken the child's foundational faith. Sociologically, the challenge intensifies when selecting formal educational institutions for the child, as choosing a school affiliated with one specific *ormas* can inadvertently marginalize

the other parent's religious tradition. Furthermore, conflicting pedagogical methods between the parents, such as differences in strictness regarding ritual compliance or varying textual interpretations, can create an inconsistent domestic environment. This educational dualism requires immense emotional regulation and continuous pedagogical adjustments from both parents to prevent domestic polarization from manifesting as chronic cognitive dissonance in the child's developing mind (Tan, 2021).

To overcome these structural and psychological barriers, the role of exemplary behavior or *uswah hasanah* from both parents becomes the ultimate catalyst in forming the basic character of the child. When parents successfully elevate universal Islamic virtues above the rigid, formal egos of their respective organizations, they provide a powerful living example of religious moderation. By witnessing parents prioritize mutual respect, compassion, and collaborative piety over sectarian debates, children learn to internalize the substantive ethical essence of Islam rather than its bureaucratic packaging. This behavioral modeling demonstrates to the child that differences in *furu'iyah* matters do not diminish one's piety or disrupt social harmony. Consequently, *uswah hasanah* functions as a structural bridge that transforms a potentially fractured domestic environment into a rich, supportive incubator for cultivating emotionally intelligent, tolerant, and spiritually resilient Muslim youth (Muttaqin et al., 2020)

Implications of Parental Dual Religious Affiliation on Children's Psychospiritual and Intellectual Development

The exposure of children to dual religious affiliations within the domestic sphere yields distinct psychological and spiritual implications that shape their inner emotional landscapes. Witnessing ongoing dualism in their parents' religious practices initially triggers a degree of psychospiritual ambivalence and identity confusion in the child during early developmental stages. This confusion arises as the child attempts to reconcile two different expressions of piety, occasionally leading to internal anxiety regarding which parent's ritual framework is more valid. However, when the home environment is characterized by emotional support and healthy negotiation rather than hostility, this initial cognitive dissonance gradually evolves into an advanced form of intellectual maturity. Rather than suffering from

a fragmented identity, children frequently develop enhanced cognitive flexibility, allowing them to view internal religious differences not as an emotional crisis, but as a normal facet of human social and spiritual existence (Inhorn, 2020)

This heightened cognitive flexibility directly influences the construction of the child's religious reasoning, which tends to become remarkably open, moderate, and tolerant from an early age. Growing up in a household with multiple organizational frameworks prevents the child from developing a black-and-white, exclusionary mindset regarding religious truth. Instead, the child naturally internalizes the core principles of *wasathiyah* (Islamic moderation), learning to appreciate the validity of diverse jurisprudential interpretations without compromising their foundational faith. This domestic pluralism trains the child to become comfortable with ambiguity and diversity in public settings, as they have already successfully navigated these dynamics within their closest social unit. Consequently, their intellectual development is marked by a deep-seated tolerance, enabling them to engage constructively with various religious movements and schools of thought without falling into sectarian prejudice (Solahudin, 2024).

Looking toward the future, the long-term projection of these children's religious trajectories suggests that they are uniquely equipped to position themselves wisely within the complex landscape of Islamic movements in Indonesia. As they transition into adulthood, individuals raised by cross-affiliated parents generally avoid joining radical or ultra-conservative factions that demand absolute sectarian exclusivity. Instead, they lean toward becoming independent, critical thinkers who evaluate religious groups based on their substantive contributions to social welfare rather than their bureaucratic labels. They possess the necessary social and cultural capital to act as natural mediators or intellectual bridges between different Islamic organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. Ultimately, their future religious orientation reflects a mature synthesis of their upbringing, embodying a progressive, inclusive, and deeply ethical understanding of Islam that is highly adaptive to the challenges of a modern, pluralistic Indonesian society (Arifianto, 2024)

Conclusion

This study concludes that religious conflict within multi-organizational Muslim households does not inevitably lead to domestic fracture, but rather transforms into a mature dialectical space through strategic accommodation and family-centered negotiation. When husbands and wives proactively develop collaborative communication models and prioritize family *maslahah* (collective welfare) over narrow sectarian pride, potential theological standoffs over *furu'iyah* (non-fundamental) matters can be effectively mitigated. Over time, this continuous process of domestic negotiation facilitates a profound intellectual evolution among spouses, shifting their religious outlook from an exclusive-organizational rigidity to an inclusive-substantive understanding of Islam. Consequently, the domestic arena becomes a resilient ecosystem where organizational differences are reframed as an enriching form of intra-faith pluralism rather than an existential threat to marital harmony.

This multi-organizational environment exerts a profound structural influence on the psychospiritual and intellectual development of children, fostering high levels of adaptability and a robust foundation in *wasathiyah* (Islamic moderation). Although children may initially experience temporary identity confusion or cognitive dissonance when exposed to dualistic religious traditions, a supportive parenting framework utilizing *uswah hasanah* (exemplary behavior) successfully sublimates this anxiety into cognitive flexibility. Looking forward, it is highly recommended that contemporary Muslim families deliberately emphasize the substantive ethical essence of Islam (*maqashid*) rather than the rigid, formal packaging of their respective mass organizations when educating youth. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to incorporate comprehensive pre-marital counseling modules that explicitly address psychological and strategic readiness for managing cross-affiliated marriages, ensuring that future domestic sp

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