

Dynamics of Mosque Authority as a Religious-Social Space in East Java

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Abstract

Mosques as religious spaces function not only as sites of worship but also as social arenas shaped by power relations and governance structures. In the context of waqf, ambiguous legal status and weak management mechanisms frequently generate contests of authority among stakeholders. This article analyzes how overlapping authority claims in waqf mosque governance produce social conflict and how mediation mechanisms respond to such tensions. The study employs a qualitative case study approach focusing on waqf mosque governance in urban Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, and examined using a thematic-inductive strategy. Georg Simmel's social conflict theory is applied to interpret the intensity and functions of conflict, enriched by Max Weber's perspective on authority to understand the interplay between traditional, communal, and legal-rational forms of governance. Findings indicate that conflicts in mosque management are not merely driven by differences in religious practice but by the absence of integration among competing authority regimes within waqf governance. Mediation by state actors and local leaders tends to be effective in reducing short-term tensions but has yet to address the structural roots of the problem. The study underscores the importance of transparent, participatory, and legally grounded waqf mosque governance to sustain the mosque as an inclusive religious space. **Keywords:** mosque authority, social conflict, sociology of religion, waqf governance, East Java

Abstrak

Masjid sebagai ruang keagamaan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tempat ibadah, tetapi juga sebagai arena sosial yang diwarnai oleh relasi kuasa dan tata kelola. Dalam konteks wakaf, ketidakjelasan status legal dan lemahnya mekanisme pengelolaan kerap memunculkan kontestasi otoritas antar-aktor. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis bagaimana tumpang tindih klaim otoritas dalam pengelolaan masjid wakaf memproduksi konflik sosial serta bagaimana mekanisme mediasi merespons ketegangan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi kasus pada pengelolaan masjid wakaf di wilayah perkotaan Indonesia. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan telaah dokumen, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik-induktif. Kerangka teori konflik sosial Georg Simmel digunakan untuk membaca intensitas dan fungsi konflik, serta diperkaya dengan perspektif otoritas Max Weber untuk memahami relasi antara otoritas tradisional, komunal, dan legal-rasional. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konflik pengelolaan masjid tidak semata dipicu oleh perbedaan praktik keagamaan, melainkan oleh absennya integrasi antar-rezim otoritas dalam tata kelola wakaf. Mediasi yang dilakukan oleh aktor negara dan tokoh lokal cenderung efektif meredam konflik jangka pendek, namun belum menyentuh akar struktural persoalan. Studi ini menegaskan pentingnya tata kelola masjid wakaf yang transparan, partisipatif, dan berbasis kepastian hukum guna menjaga masjid sebagai ruang keagamaan yang inklusif.

Kata Kunci: otoritas masjid, konflik sosial, sosiologi agama, tata kelola wakaf, Jawa Timur.

Introduction

When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) performed the *hijrah* (migration) from Mecca to Medina, the first act he undertook upon arrival was the construction of a mosque.¹ This foundational gesture illuminates the centrality of the mosque in early Muslim life: it was never merely a place of ritual prayer, but a hub of communal organization and collective life.² The Prophet himself demonstrated this dual vocation by using the mosque for preaching,

¹ Ahyuni, A. (2019). Konteks hijrah nabi Muhammad SAW dari Mekkah ke Madinah melalui dakwah individual ke penguatan masyarakat. *Mamba'ul'Ulum*, 163–168; Basit, A., Rifa, I., & Suntiati, R. (2024). Peradaban Islam Pada Masa Nabi Muhammad Saw. *Tazkiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 13(1), 54–65.

² Hidayat, R. (2019). Fungsi Masjid Terhadap Pengelolaan Pengembangan Masyarakat Islam. *Journal of Da'wah and Communication Studies*, 1(2), 33–43; Afif, M. (2020). Fungsi masjid dalam mengelola dana ziswah. *Journal of Islamic Economics and Philanthropy*, 2(4); Putra, A., & Rumondor, P. (2019). Eksistensi masjid di era rasulullah dan era millennial. *Tasamuh*, 17(1), 245–264.

education, and an array of social activities, including the distribution of *zakat*, sacrificial offerings, marriage ceremonies, and community deliberation.³

In contemporary Indonesia, mosques occupy a similarly pivotal position in the social and religious lives of Muslim communities. As centers of worship, education, and civic engagement, they are widely regarded as symbols of unity and peace.⁴ In practice, however, mosque governance is frequently shaped by complex dynamics rooted in competing interests and contested claims of authority among individuals and groups. This phenomenon is not confined to local disputes; it reflects broader structural challenges in religious governance across the country.

Conflicts over mosque management in Indonesia often originate from ambiguous land tenure. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2002) recorded 741,991 mosques and prayer halls (*mushola*), yet 85 percent of houses of worship lacked a valid building permit (*Izin Mendirikan Bangunan/IMB*). The majority of mosque land has not been formally certified as *waqf* (Islamic endowment), despite MUI Fatwa No. 54/2014 mandating such certification. This legal ambiguity generates disputes among *waqf* administrators (*Nazhir*), successive generations of *waqf* beneficiaries, and external parties. Without formal legal recognition, mosques remain vulnerable to ownership claims, land repurposing, and legal uncertainty risks that intensify during leadership transitions or nearby infrastructure development.

Beyond land disputes, KH Cholil Nafis, the MUI Chair for Preaching and Islamic Solidarity Affairs, has observed that mosque conflicts frequently surface in the second or third generation of administrators, largely due to inadequate *waqf* documentation.⁵ Land donations are commonly made verbally, without notarial records, leaving the original intent of the endowment open to contested interpretation. Descendants of the donor may assert managerial rights or claim a share of revenue from mosque-based economic activities. These tensions are compounded by the absence of clear internal governance frameworks particularly regarding the division of authority, financial management, and building renovation alongside limited administrative capacity among *Nazhir*.

Such conflicts carry real consequences for the mosque's social and religious functions, including disruption to educational programs and

³ Sutrisno, B. (2023). Meningkatkan Kemakmuran Masjid Melalui Regulasi Pemilihan Ketua BTM dan Imam. *Transformasi*, 5(1), 178–202.

⁴ Kabir, F., & Aji, W. T. (2025). Masjid dalam Kitab Suci Negara. *WISSEN: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 3(1), 335–358; Hayadi, M. A. et al. (2023). Pemanfaatan Ruang Masjid Suatu Kajian. *CBJIS: Cross-Border Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5(2), 63–70.

⁵ BWI. (2023). BWI Ungkap Persoalan Wakaf Masjid dan Solusinya. <https://www.bwi.go.id/8889/2023/06/07/bwi-ungkap-persoalan-wakaf-masjid-dan-solusinya/>

community assistance. Resolution efforts have involved collaboration among the MUI, the Indonesian *Waqf* Board (*Badan Wakaf Indonesia/BWI*), and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, through initiatives such as *waqf* certification campaigns, legal assistance, and the development of transparent governance guidelines, including the *waqf* land registration program under the Waqf Information System (SIWAK) and structured *Nazhir* training. A persistent challenge, however, lies in cultivating public awareness of the importance of formal documentation while navigating cultural resistance that frames *waqf* as a purely spiritual matter rather than a legal obligation.

The city examined in this study is among the most religiously tolerant in East Java, making it a compelling site for analyzing the vulnerabilities of *waqf* governance systems that lack legal clarity and adequate inter-stakeholder coordination. Despite its record of promoting inter-religious harmony, a mosque governance conflict that emerged in late 2023 exposed deeper structural problems beneath this surface of tolerance.

Scholarly engagement with mosque-related conflicts is not sparse. Saipullah (2018), Arifinsyah et al. (2021), and Ramadhan & Lubis (2024) have examined legal disputes over *waqf* land, while Pohan (2024), Yazenda (2018), and Siregar (2021) have focused on external mediation involving bodies such as the Inter-Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB) and government agencies. What remains underexplored is the internal dynamics of authority within mosque governance. This article addresses that gap by examining how power relations among residents, heirs, Islamic organizations, government bodies, and the BWI shape both the emergence and resolution of conflict. It also explores the constructive function of conflict in clarifying competing interests and catalyzing structural reform, and considers mediation as a mechanism for restoring the mosque as an inclusive communal space.

This article does not seek to rehearse conflict narratives that risk deepening polarization. Rather, it offers a balanced analytical perspective mapping the structural factors underlying such disputes to inform policy recommendations for more transparent and participatory mosque governance. In doing so, it contributes to the academic literature on religious conflict while offering practical insights for sustaining social harmony amid Indonesia's diversity. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, treating the subject in its natural setting with the researcher as the primary instrument. Data were gathered through triangulation combining interviews, observation, and document analysis and examined inductively, with findings oriented toward the meanings and phenomena observed in context.⁶

⁶ Sugiyono. Memahami Penelitian Kualitatif. Bandung: Alfabeta, 2010, 1.

Methods

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design grounded in a case study approach. The research site is an urban mosque in East Java, selected for the specificity and sociological significance of the governance conflict it experienced in late 2023. Data were collected through three principal techniques: in-depth interviews with key informants including residents, heirs, mosque administrators, community leaders, and representatives of state institutions; direct observation of mosque activities and community dynamics; and systematic review of relevant documents, including correspondence, legal records, and institutional decisions.

A triangulation strategy was applied to cross-validate data from these multiple sources, thereby strengthening the credibility and depth of the findings. Data analysis proceeded inductively using a thematic framework, moving from field observations to conceptual categories and interpretive patterns. The theoretical apparatus draws on Georg Simmel's sociology of conflict particularly his propositions on conflict intensity, intra-group function, and systemic function and on Max Weber's typology of authority (traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational) to interpret the relational dynamics among the actors involved. All informant identities have been anonymized in compliance with research ethics protocols.

Results and Discussion

Genealogy of Conflict: Oral Waqf and the Absence of Legal Documentation

Conflicts over mosque governance frequently originate in complex, historically rooted disputes over ownership claims and governance authority concerning mosques established on family *waqf* land.⁷ In the case examined here, a family donated land for the construction of a mosque intended to serve the surrounding community as a center of worship and religious activity. Over time, however, diverging interpretations of the endowment's purpose and governance arrangements emerged between the donor's heirs and the local community.

Tensions surfaced when the original mosque administrator passed away, leaving a structural vacancy in the leadership framework.⁸ This absence of governance generated competing claims of authority: the heirs asserted a primary right to determine the mosque's direction on the basis of their direct descent from the *waqif* (donor), while local communities contended that governance of the mosque belonged to the community that had continuously

⁷ Abasi, M. (2024). Penyelesaian Sengketa Wakaf di Kotamobagu: Analisis dan Prospek. *Al-'Aqdu: Journal of Islamic Economics Law*, 4(1), 30–43.

⁸ Hafifa, N. (2023). Analisis Manajemen Konflik Pengurus Masjid di Kecamatan Patampanua Kabupaten Pinrang. Doctoral dissertation, IAIN PAREPARE.

inhabited and worshipped in it. Local community leaders reinforced this position, arguing that the mosque had become an integral part of collective life and that its administration should therefore remain anchored in the local neighborhood rather than transferred to an external party, even one composed of legitimate heirs.

Conflict intensified when the heirs moved unilaterally to establish a new mosque committee (*takmir*) drawn exclusively from their own ranks, without consulting community leaders or obtaining communal consent. Residents perceived this as an act of exclusion that disregarded the congregation's established stake in the mosque.⁹

Compounding the tension was the absence of a definitive ruling from the Indonesian *Waqf* Board (BWI) on the question of ownership and governance entitlement. Residents called for the formation of any new administrative body to be deferred until the BWI issued an official determination regarding the mosque's custodial status. Nevertheless, the heirs proceeded with establishing their own internal governance structure.¹⁰

The dispute eventually escalated into physical confrontation, involving parties on opposing sides of the dispute. The incident provoked widespread anger among community members, who viewed violence on mosque premises as a profound violation. The conflict culminated in a community protest at the mosque demanding both governance clarity and accountability for the violence.¹¹ As the matter grew more complex implicating ownership rights, governance authority, and the relational standing of *waqf* heirs vis-à-vis the community local police and community leaders undertook sustained mediation efforts to prevent further escalation.

An informant referred to here as Johan (a pseudonym) provided a detailed account of the dispute's trajectory.¹² He explained that the *waqf* was originally established through an oral declaration, witnessed only by local community leaders and accompanied by no formal documentation or notarized *ikrar wakaf* (deed of endowment). For years, this informal arrangement posed no difficulties: the mosque was managed through informal social trust mechanisms, the family of the donor remained disengaged from day-to-day operations, and the community used the mosque freely. The situation began to

⁹ Mustanir, A. (2024). Reformulasi Hukum Penyelesaian Sengketa Wakaf (Studi Kasus Pemikiran Tuan Guru di Lombok). Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Indonesia.

¹⁰ Fauzia, A., Almuin, N., Rohayati, T., & Garadian, E. A. (2016). Fenomena wakaf di Indonesia: Tantangan menuju wakaf produktif. Badan Wakaf Indonesia.

¹¹ Hengky, S. (2024). Resolusi Konflik Berbasis Relasi Agama. Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung; Dekawati, B. (2025). Peran Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB) Pesawaran dalam Resolusi Konflik Sosial Keagamaan. Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung.

¹² Interview conducted on 23 July 2024 via WhatsApp.

change when the first-generation administrator died and a leadership vacuum emerged.

According to Johan, the heirs then advanced a claim grounded not merely in symbolic terms but in practical governance: they sought to constitute a new administrative structure dominated by family members, asserting that the land's origin in family *waqf* gave them paramount standing. This move met with resistance from residents who had developed deep social and emotional ties to the mosque as a shared space of collective religious practice.

Johan emphasized that the conflict did not erupt suddenly but accumulated over time. Tensions escalated as residents challenged the legal basis of the heirs' claims, while the heirs responded that the community failed to honor the legacy and intentions of the original donor. The absence of legally recognized *waqf* documentation meant that each side relied on a different form of legitimacy: the heirs on genealogical and historical grounds, the community on social practice and continuous religious engagement.

Attempts at internal resolution through *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus) repeatedly reached an impasse, largely because no mutually recognized authority existed to render a binding determination. One party ultimately escalated the dispute to the State Administrative Court (PTUN), specifically contesting administrative decisions related to land registration and governance recognition.

Johan noted that the entry of the dispute into formal legal proceedings deepened polarization rather than resolved it. The community perceived litigation as the criminalization of a socio-religious conflict, while the heirs viewed the courts as the only path to legal certainty. From that point forward, social relations in the community fractured: religious activities continued, but in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and fragmented authority. This case illustrates that mosque governance conflict is not reducible to administrative or *waqf* law questions; it constitutes a contest of authority among three competing legitimacy regimes familial, communal, and state-legal.¹³ When these regimes are unintegrated, conflict tends to escalate and resist resolution through informal means alone.

To deepen the analysis, this section examines the case through four structural elements of conflict: the facilitating context, the core of conflict, the fuse factor, and the triggering factor.

Facilitating Context

The conflict unfolded within a setting shaped by the mosque's dual significance as both a site of religious practice and a repository of historical and

¹³ Tandos, R. et al. (2020). Indonesian Mosques: Current Issues, Management, and Institutions in Indonesia and the United States. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 8(2), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jisc.v8n2a1>

cultural meaning for the local community.¹⁴ Demographic growth and urbanization had intensified the mosque's centrality as a hub of community life, reinforcing residents' sense of collective ownership. The presence of heirs asserting governance rights grounded in *waqf* inheritance created a structural tension with community members who regarded participatory governance as both their right and their obligation.

Core Conflict

The fundamental dispute concerned control over mosque governance.¹⁵ The heirs grounded their claim in the familial origin of the *waqf* land, while the community grounded theirs in the mosque's function as public collective infrastructure. A sense of ownership existed on both sides: the heirs in relation to ancestral endowment, the community in relation to shared public interest. The BWI's failure to issue a definitive ruling on governance entitlement left this core dispute unresolved, marginalizing residents as the heirs pressed forward with establishing their own administrative structure.¹⁶

Fuse Factors

The latent tension derived from incompatible conceptions of governance legitimacy and the social identity of the mosque.¹⁷ The mosque carried layered significance as a site of religious identity, social belonging, and historical memory making it particularly susceptible to emotionally charged contestation. The absence of any BWI determination left the conflict without institutional resolution, while religion and social identity added further combustibility to the situation.

Triggering Factors

The immediate catalyst was a physical altercation within the mosque between the caretaker (*marbot*) and a member of the congregation aligned with the heirs, precipitated by a dispute over the appointment of the prayer leader (*imam*). This localized incident ignited widespread community anger that had been building through months of unresolved mediation. The physical confrontation mobilized hundreds of residents who gathered at the mosque to demand accountability, while dissatisfaction with the mediation process further obstructed their dispersal even after police arrived.

¹⁴ Mustanir, A. (2024). Reformulasi Hukum Penyelesaian Sengketa Wakaf. Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Indonesia.

¹⁵ Hafifa, N. (2023). Analisis Manajemen Konflik Pengurus Masjid di Kecamatan Patampanua Kabupaten Pinrang. Doctoral dissertation, IAIN PAREPARE.

¹⁶ Rimanto, Y. (2021). Revitalisasi Otoritas Badan Wakaf Indonesia. Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung; Fauzia, A. et al. (2016). Fenomena Wakaf di Indonesia. Badan Wakaf Indonesia.

¹⁷ Wina, A. (2025). Perubahan Sosial Keagamaan Pasca Konflik Tanah Wakaf. Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung.

Georg Simmel's sociology of conflict offers three analytical propositions that illuminate the dynamics of this case: conflict intensity, the function of conflict for the parties involved, and the function of conflict for the broader social system.

Conflict Intensity.

For Simmel, conflict intensity is proportional to the depth of emotional investment among the parties.¹⁸ In this case, that investment was profound on both sides. For the heirs, the dispute engaged matters of ancestral honor and family legacy, not merely property rights. For the community, the mosque was not simply a building but the spatial anchor of their collective religious and social identity. Emotional intensity escalated sharply when the physical confrontation occurred, transforming latent grievances into open mobilization.¹⁹ Simmel's framework predicts that such elevated emotional stakes significantly raise the likelihood that conflict will escalate into violence a dynamic borne out by this case.

Functional Role of Conflict for the Parties.

Simmel recognized that conflict carries positive functions alongside its destructive ones: it provides a channel through which groups articulate grievances and clarify the boundaries of their interests.²⁰ For the heirs, conflict served as a mechanism for pressing recognition of their genealogical claim to *waqf* governance asserting that the family's foundational contribution to the mosque warranted preferential authority.²¹ For the community, conflict functioned as a vehicle for articulating the principle that mosque governance must be participatory and inclusive, not monopolized by any single genealogical faction. In this sense, the conflict clarified the normative stakes of both parties and surfaced demands that had previously remained unvoiced.

Functional Role of Conflict for the Social System.

At the systemic level, Simmel argued that managed conflict can strengthen social cohesion by enabling communities to renegotiate boundaries and recalibrate institutional structures.²² The conflict in this case generated pressure for institutional clarification: it exposed the inadequacy of informal governance arrangements and created an opening for the BWI to assert its regulatory authority. In the long term, a successfully mediated resolution could

¹⁸ Susan, N. (2019). *Sosiologi konflik: teori-teori dan analisis*. Kencana.

¹⁹ Nurjaman, A. et al. (2025). *Konflik sosial dan resolusi konflik: Kajian sosiologi perspektif pendidikan, ekonomi, dan hukum*. Star Digital Publishing.

²⁰ El Amady, M. R. (2024). *Resolusi Konflik Lingkungan Pendekatan Luar Pengadilan*. Deepublish.

²¹ Bahri, R. S. S. (2020). *Penyelesaian Sengketa Tanah Wakaf Masjid Al-Falah Perspektif Hukum Islam*. Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Metro.

²² Hidayat, A. K. (2024). Bugis Philosophy of Life in Religious Harmony: George Simmel's Perspective. *HISTORICAL: Journal of History and Social Sciences*, 3(3), 181–191.

produce a more equitable and formally grounded governance structure, accommodating both the heirs' historical claims and the community's participatory interests. This would not merely restore the mosque's function as a place of worship, but reconstitute it as an institution of social integration.

Authority Contestation in Mosque Governance

Drawing on Max Weber's typology, the conflict can be read as a collision between three distinct regimes of authority: traditional authority (resting on genealogical ties to the founding waqif), communal authority (derived from continuous social participation and religious practice), and legal-rational authority (vested in state institutions, including the BWI and the courts). In practice, however, none of these forms of authority was fully capable of resolving the dispute on its own. Their coexistence without institutional integration was the structural condition that made sustained conflict both probable and difficult to resolve.

Figure 1. Authority Contestation Map in Mosque Governance



In practice, the dispute gradually positioned the mosque as a contested social arena involving at least five interconnected actor groups, each advancing different claims, interests, and sources of legitimacy.

1. Residents as Collective Stakeholders

Residents regarded the mosque as a collectively owned religious space to which they had both practical and normative claims through sustained participation and collective use. In the language of social conflict theory, they constituted a group defending collective rights of access and governance against what they perceived as exclusive domination over mosque governance by the heirs. Their sense of injustice was activated when these rights were effectively bypassed by unilateral heir action.

2. Heirs and the Claim to Waqf Authority

The heirs grounded their authority in a historical claim: as descendants of the original donor, they considered themselves the rightful custodians of a family endowment. This claim operated within the logic of traditional authority rooted in genealogy rather than law or communal mandate. However, the *waqf* institution, by design, operates as a public trust rather than private property; the heirs' assertion of exclusive custodial rights therefore stood in structural tension with the public character of the endowment, generating the social friction that defined the conflict.

3. Islamic Organizations as Interested Mediators

Civil Islamic organizations (*ormas*) played an occupied a dual and often ambivalent position functioning simultaneously as potential advocates for one party and as potential mediators. Their capacity to shape public opinion gave them considerable influence over the conflict's trajectory. Organizations that positioned themselves as neutral facilitators contributed to de-escalation, while those that aligned with a particular claim risked intensifying the dispute. For this reason, the ability of these organizations to maintain neutrality became essential to any meaningful mediation effort..

4. The State as Regulator of Social Order

The government, in its role as guarantor of public order, was expected to intervene with sufficient legitimacy to prevent conflict escalation and ensure that all parties operated within legal parameters. In pluralist democratic contexts, the state bears particular responsibility for ensuring that houses of worship remain safe, accessible, and free from sustained contestation. Failure to resolve the dispute in a timely and credible manner risked not only local instability but also a wider erosion of public confidence in state institutions' capacity to manage religious governance conflicts.

5. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and BWI as Arbiters of Waqf Legality

Of all the institutional actors, the BWI held the most decisive formal custodianship over the central question in dispute: the legal status of the *waqf* and the legitimate governance rights associated with it. A clear, timely, and well-grounded ruling from the BWI would have provided the authoritative framework within which both heirs and community could anchor their claims and, ideally, arrive at a negotiated resolution. The BWI's prolonged silence was itself a structural condition enabling the conflict's persistence.

The Urgency of Conflict Resolution

The analysis makes clear that prompt and structurally adequate resolution of this conflict was essential to prevent further escalation. Left unresolved, the dispute risked not only sustained fragmentation within the community but a broader erosion of trust in religious institutions, local governance structures, and state oversight mechanisms. As a public religious institution, the mosque should function as a space of unity and collective

worship rather than becoming trapped in prolonged governance disputes.. In a religiously plural society such as Indonesia, this protection is not merely desirable but foundational to social cohesion.

The immediate consequences of unresolved conflict are visible: declining communal participation in mosque activities, relational fractures among neighbors, and the risk of sectarian polarization. The longer-term consequences are structural: Over time, unresolved disputes of this kind may normalize governance conflict within waqf institutions, deepen distrust between families and local communities, and gradually erode the integrative role historically played by religious institutions. Effective resolution therefore requires not merely surface-level mediation but institutional reform. What is needed is not only clearer legal recognition of waqf status, but also a governance structure that allows broader community participation and a more active institutional role from the BWI..

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *waqf* mosque governance conflicts in urban East Java are rooted in the misalignment among three sources of legitimacy: genealogical-familial institutional power, communal-participatory legitimacy, and legal-rational state governance mandate. When *waqf* endowments remain undocumented and mosque governance is not institutionally formalized, religious spaces become arenas of power contestation involving residents, heirs, Islamic organizations, and state institutions. The conflict examined here is not primarily a dispute over religious practice; it is a struggle for symbolic, social, and material control over mosque resources, conducted in the absence of integrating institutional power.

Applying Simmel's sociology of conflict, the findings reveal that the dispute carried a dual function: it simultaneously produced social fragmentation and disrupted the mosque's religious purpose while also clarifying competing interests, opening space for negotiation, and generating demands for more accountable governance. Mediation by state agents and local leaders proved effective in reducing immediate escalation but fell short of addressing the structural roots of the problem particularly the unresolved legal status of the *waqf*, the absence of distributed governance authority, and the lack of a recognized framework for communal participation in mosque management.

The sustainable function of the mosque as an inclusive religious-social space therefore requires the integration of religious norms, positive law, and community practice. Legal certainty in *waqf* documentation, strengthened *Nazhir* capacity, and participatory governance models are not supplementary reforms but structural prerequisites for preventing recurrent conflict and ensuring that mosques continue to serve as institutions of social solidarity rather

than sites of disintegration. Future research should examine comparative cases across Indonesian cities to assess the generalizability of these findings and to evaluate the effectiveness of governance reform initiatives in practice.

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