

# Social capital in strengthening the value of gotong royong cooperation through the Sedekah Laut tradition in Munjungagung Village Tegal Regency

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<p><b>Article History</b> Accepted: February 7, 2026 Revised: February 26, 2026 Available Online: April 30, 2026</p> <p><b>*Corresponding</b> <a href="mailto:azarinecila04@students.unnes.ac.id">azarinecila04@students.unnes.ac.id</a></p> <p> <a href="https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v10i1.43971">10.22219/satwika.v10i1.43971</a></p> <p> <a href="mailto:jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id">jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id</a></p> <p><b>How to Cite:</b> Azarine, B. T. C., &amp; Wijayanti, T. (2026). Social capital in strengthening the value of gotong royong cooperation through the Sedekah Laut tradition in Munjungagung Village Tegal Regency. <i>Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial</i>, 10 (1), 178-189. <a href="https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v10i1.43971">https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v10i1.43971</a></p> 	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b></p> <p>This study aims to analyze the formation and interaction of social capital elements in the Sedekah Laut tradition in Mujungagung Village, Tegal Regency, as a mechanism for strengthening mutual cooperation among coastal communities. The study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model within the theoretical framework of Robert D. Putnam's social capital. The research findings indicate that the Sedekah Laut tradition functions as a space for the reproduction of social capital through the internalization of social norms, the development of trust, and the strengthening of social networks among residents. Social norms shape collective expectations regarding the obligation to participate; trust minimizes uncertainty in cooperation; and social networks facilitate coordination and the division of roles. The interaction of these three elements produces repeated collective actions and reinforces the practice of mutual aid in a sustainable manner. These findings confirm that local traditions function not only as cultural rituals but also as social mechanisms that maintain the cohesion and solidarity of coastal communities.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>sedekah laut, social capital, gotong royong, coastal communities</i></p> <p><b>ABSTRAK</b></p> <p>Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pembentukan dan interaksi unsur-unsur modal sosial dalam tradisi Sedekah Laut di Desa Munjungagung, Kabupaten Tegal sebagai mekanisme penguatan nilai Gotong Royong masyarakat pesisir. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman dengan kerangka teori modal sosial Robert D. Putnam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi Sedekah Laut berfungsi sebagai ruang reproduksi modal sosial melalui internalisasi norma sosial, tumbuhnya kepercayaan (trust), serta penguatan jaringan sosial antarwarga. Norma sosial membentuk ekspektasi kolektif mengenai kewajiban partisipasi, kepercayaan meminimalkan ketidakpastian dalam kerja sama, sedangkan jaringan sosial memfasilitasi koordinasi dan pembagian peran. Interaksi ketiga unsur tersebut menghasilkan tindakan kolektif yang berulang dan memperkuat praktik Gotong Royong secara berkelanjutan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa tradisi lokal tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ritual budaya, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme sosial yang menjaga kohesi dan solidaritas masyarakat pesisir.</p> <p><b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>sedekah laut, modal sosial, gotong royong, masyarakat pesisir</i></p>
<p>© 2026 This is an Open Access Research distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/</a>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original works are appropriately cited.</p> 	

## INTRODUCTION

*Gotong Royong* has long been an integral part of Indonesian society, with deep historical roots and strong social significance. This tradition is not merely a habit of helping others, but serves as the foundation that strengthens bonds among community members. Through *Gotong Royong*, communities are accustomed to working together to address shared needs and challenges. The value of togetherness inherent in this practice also reflects the social solidarity that grows and is sustained in daily life (Futri et al., 2025).

Conceptually, *Gotong Royong* is defined as a form of active community participation rooted in compassion, solidarity, and social responsibility, without prioritizing personal interests (Roba & Rippi, 2024; Wijayanti et al., 2024). In practice, *Gotong Royong* demonstrates mutual trust among residents, a habit of helping one another, and close-knit social ties within the community. These elements enable the community to act collectively and address shared interests more effectively (Lukiyanto & Wijayaningtyas, 2020).

Changes over time have also influenced the way people interact with one another. Technological advancements, economic pressures, and the rise of a more individualistic lifestyle have made social relationships less intense than they once were. Face-to-face interactions are becoming increasingly rare, and the habit of doing things together is gradually diminishing in daily life. This situation reflects a shift in the value of mutual cooperation, a characteristic long recognized as defining Indonesian society. Nevertheless, within traditional communities, particularly coastal communities, the practice of social cooperation is still upheld and considered essential for maintaining harmony and the sustainability of communal life.

Fishing activities in Munjungagung Village are highly dependent on frequently changing natural conditions. This social environment means they cannot work alone but must cooperate in various activities, ranging from preparations before setting out to sea to repairing boats and dividing the catch, to helping one another when accidents occur at sea.

Communities that have long settled in coastal areas, passed down from generation to generation, also possess a deep understanding of the characteristics of their surrounding environment. In their daily lives, residents coexist and interact based on customs and traditions that have long been established within the community (Iswatiningsih & Fauzan, 2021).

In coastal communities, the *Sedekah Laut* tradition serves as a concrete example of how solidarity grows through cultural practices. This tradition has been passed down through generations and is understood not only as a ceremonial custom but also as a means of transmitting values, norms, and social customs (Wijayanti, Irawan, et al., 2025). Research by Richmond & Casali (2022) indicates that the sustainability of fishing communities is significantly influenced by social capital, particularly through cooperation, trust, and community member engagement. Thus, the resilience of coastal communities depends not only on economic resources but also on the quality of the social relationships fostered within them.

Therefore, the value of mutual aid in Munjungagung Village, particularly for the fishermen, remains highly significant. Social capital is present in their daily lives, both in economic activities and social interactions that foster a sense of security and togetherness (Anjani et al., 2022). This is reflected in the implementation of the *Sedekah Laut* ceremony, which involves collective community participation from the formation of the organizing committee, the division of tasks, and the open management of the event. The involvement of various community members expands social networks while strengthening community solidarity through repeated interactions.

A study conducted by Afriansyah & Sukmayadi (2022) examined the *Sedekah Laut* tradition at Pelabuhan Ratu Beach using a qualitative approach. The focus of this study was on the values of local wisdom and the spirit of mutual cooperation reflected in community participation throughout the process, from preparation to the actual observance of the tradition. The results of the study indicate that *Sedekah Laut* serves as a space for social interaction that strengthens community cohesion and solidarity. However, this study emphasizes cultural values and the meaning of togetherness without specifically detailing the social mechanisms that shape mutual cooperation.

Furthermore, a study by Fachrulrozi (2024) examined the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Tegalsari Village, Tegal City, Tegal, using an ethnographic approach. The focus of this study is the symbolic meaning of the "*an cak*" offering in the *Sedekah Laut* ritual. The results indicate that the tradition is interpreted as an expression of gratitude to God, a marker of the fishing community's cultural identity, and a means of strengthening social interaction. However, this study emphasizes the culture's symbolic and religious dimensions, thereby failing to analyze in detail the formation of social capital and the value of mutual aid.

A recent study by [Hidayah et al. \(2023\)](#) examined the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Tayu and Juwana, Pati Regency, using a phenomenological approach. The focus of this study was the religious, social, economic, and cultural meanings of this tradition. The results indicate that *Sedekah Laut* serves as an expression of gratitude, a means of cultural preservation, a driver of the local economy, and a platform for community artistic performances. However, this study has not explicitly explained how social interactions within the *Sedekah Laut* practice shape and reproduce mutual aid through social norms, beliefs, and social networks.

These studies indicate that the *Sedekah Laut* tradition is generally understood as a cultural practice associated with religious, symbolic, and social solidarity values. Previous research has primarily focused on explaining the tradition's meaning, cultural functions, and social impacts on the community. However, no study has explicitly and systematically analyzed the social mechanisms underpinning the formation and operation of mutual cooperation within the *Sedekah Laut* tradition using a social capital theoretical framework. Specifically, no research has yet detailed how elements of social norms, trust, and social networks form, interact, and contribute to strengthening the value of mutual cooperation in coastal communities.

The research gap lies in the absence of studies that position the *Sedekah Laut* tradition as a space for the formation of social capital capable of conceptually explaining the process of strengthening mutual aid. To understand this mechanism, this study employs Robert D. Putnam's theory of social capital. Putnam (1995) as cited in [\(Alfitri, 2023\)](#) defines social capital as networks, norms, and trust that enable coordination and cooperation for the common good. Social capital is viewed as a collective resource that encourages collective action through reciprocal norms and relationships based on mutual trust and facilitates the achievement of common goals [\(Diana et al., 2025\)](#).

Given this gap, the research questions are: how do social norms, trust, and social networks form within the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village, and how do the interactions among these three elements strengthen the value of mutual cooperation in coastal communities? In line with these questions, this study aims to analyze the formation process and interrelationships of social capital elements within the *Sedekah Laut* tradition as a mechanism for strengthening coastal community cooperation. The study is expected to contribute to understanding the *Sedekah Laut* tradition as part of the social dynamics of coastal communities. Tradition is not merely positioned as an annual cultural

practice but as a space for social interaction involving norms, beliefs, and networks among residents. By situating tradition within the framework of social capital, this study enriches the discourse on the role of local traditions in strengthening mutual aid practices and maintaining social cohesion in coastal communities.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. According to [\(Creswell, 2014\)](#), a case study is a research strategy that explores a bounded system in depth by collecting data from various sources within a specific context. This study focuses on the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village, Tegal Regency, as a case study to examine how this tradition serves as social capital to enhance the value of community cooperation. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data.

Primary data was collected through observations conducted over a one-month period in July 2025, as well as semi-structured interviews held from January 6 to 20, 2026, with seven informants selected through purposive sampling: the Committee Chair, Committee Members, Village Elders, Religious Leaders, the Village Head, Fishermen, and Village Youth. This diversity of informants aimed to provide a comprehensive perspective, including an assessment of trust levels and the dynamics of community participation in the tradition. Secondary data were obtained through documentation of activities such as photographs and relevant literature, particularly Robert D. Putnam. In this study, data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. The use of these three techniques aligns with qualitative research that relies on primary data through direct observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information [\(Masrukhi et al., 2024\)](#). The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the informants, and the conversations were recorded as research data. The direct involvement of the informants at every stage of the sea offering activities enabled the author to understand the forms of community cooperation within this tradition [\(Nzulaika & Krisnawati, 2025\)](#).

Data analysis in this study employed the analytical model proposed by [Miles et al. \(1994\)](#), which comprises three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions. All recorded interview results were then transcribed verbatim to ensure no information was omitted. Afterward, the researcher conducted thematic coding using a deductive approach, grouping the data based on Robert D.

Putnam's indicators of social capital: trust, social norms, and social networks.

Each relevant statement from informants was coded according to these categories and then grouped to identify patterns of the relationship between social capital and mutual aid practices within the *Sedekah Laut* tradition. To ensure data validity, the researcher compared responses across informants (source triangulation) to verify the consistency of the information. Additionally, the analysis results are supplemented with direct quotes from informants as supporting evidence for the interpretation. In this way, readers can understand the analytical process from raw data to the resulting conclusions. Furthermore, conclusions were drawn based on the analysis of informant responses and data collected during the study (Lestari & Wijayanti, 2020).

## RESULTS

Based on the results of interviews and field observations, the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village, Tegal Regency, remains a collective activity involving various segments of the community. Community involvement is evident at every stage of the event, from preparation and the ritual itself to the closing activities. This participation demonstrates an annual collaboration. From the interviews and observations conducted, it is evident that community involvement does not arise suddenly but is rooted in values that have long been passed down within village life. For the villagers, the *Sedekah Laut* tradition is not merely an annual ceremonial event but a cultural practice that must be carried out collectively. This was conveyed by a village elder:

*"The history of the sea offering goes back a long way; we've simply carried on the tradition from our ancestors, from the days of using sailboats all the way to motorboats. This sea offering has been practiced since ancient times, passed down from generation to generation. The reason the community in Munjungagung Village still upholds this tradition is that it involves a spiritual ritual that must be performed. It is said that if the sea offering is not performed, it will lead to many disasters, and fishermen's catches will decrease, especially when fishing. Thus, when viewed through a religious lens, it is likened to an expression of gratitude to Allah SWT for the sustenance provided through the sea, particularly through the fishermen" (Interview with a Village Elder, January 6)*

This statement indicates that the community views the practice of the tradition as an activity tied to long-

standing beliefs and customs. Residents regard the tradition as an integral part of communal life that must be preserved. Beyond the transmission of values, community participation is also influenced by current social conditions. Some residents, particularly the younger generation, cannot always fully participate due to work commitments outside the village. A fisherman stated.

*"It's still strong, but some young people these days are busy working outside the village. So participation isn't always as high as it used to be." (Interview with a Fisherman, January 8)*

This shows that community involvement varies, even though the event is still held together every year. Community participation is also influenced by the social norms that have developed within the community. There are no written rules or official sanctions for residents who do not participate. However, there are indirect social consequences. A teenager explained

*"There are no official sanctions, but it usually becomes a topic of conversation. Residents feel uncomfortable if they don't participate because they're seen as not caring enough about tradition. Especially since this event happens only once a year." (Interview with a Teenager, January 8)*

This indicates that community participation in traditional activities is driven not only by formal invitations but also by social expectations that have developed within the community.

Local wisdom, which evolves from the collective knowledge of the community, shapes understandings of local ways of thinking and acting. This is reflected in long-standing customs and the culture of daily life that continue to be practiced within the community (Renaldi et al., 2024).

The tradition of the "*Sedekah Laut*" (sea offering) is a hallmark of the local wisdom of the coastal communities of Central Java, aimed at fostering harmonious relations between the community and the natural environment that has made a tangible contribution to their well-being. Nature has provided tangible benefits for the prosperity and well-being of coastal communities. The people of Munjungagung village recognize that this tradition is an expression of their gratitude for the natural bounty that God has bestowed upon the fishermen, who have reaped the bountiful gifts of the sea.

In addition to social norms, the practice of the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village is also supported by residents' trust. This trust is evident in the

division of roles and responsibilities throughout the event, from preparation to execution. Trust is also evident in the formation of the organizing committee. The committee chair explained that committee members are selected through mutual agreement and based on residents' willingness to participate.

*"The process of forming the Sea Offering Committee takes less than three months. Fishermen, fish vendors, and boat owners gather to discuss the formation of the committee, starting with the chairperson first, followed by the formation of the various sections for the Sea Offering. I then entrust the committee members to volunteers who are capable of taking responsibility for the divisions they have chosen." (Interview with the Committee Chair, January 6)*

In the *Sedekah Laut* tradition, the division of tasks within the committee is based on willingness and mutual familiarity among residents, so that each member carries out their role in accordance with the agreed-upon responsibilities. Trust is also evident in the management of activity funds. Funds are obtained through contributions from fishermen and fish vendors, then managed by the committee and reported to residents at a joint meeting. A fisherman stated:

*"The funds usually come from contributions by fishermen and fish vendors; here we call it 'temoan,' so it's divided equally. The management is transparent and reported during meetings. We trust the committee because its members are usually people we already know, especially since the committee chair has seven years of experience in that role." (Interview with a Fisherman, January 8)*

Additionally, any disagreements that arise during the event are resolved through joint meetings. A religious leader explained:

*"Disagreements are inevitable, especially for a major event; they usually concern the technical aspects of implementation. But we resolve them through deliberation. The principle is that we maintain unity." (Interview with a Religious Leader, January 8)*

Based on the religious leader's statement, it is evident that issues are resolved through direct communication among residents. Trust among residents is also evident in daily social life. A village elder stated:

*"In addition to collaborating on the Sedekah Laut tradition, the community in Munjungagung Village also consistently helps other residents, for example, through community service projects, building houses, or assisting with celebrations. They take the initiative to help without*

*being asked because, as villagers, they believe in mutual aid." (Interview with a Village Elder, January 8)*

Beyond norms and beliefs, the practice of the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village also involves a broad social network among various segments of the community. This activity involves not only fishermen but also religious leaders, village elders, youth, the village government, and external parties. This was conveyed by the committee:

*"Many people are involved in this tradition, such as fishermen, religious leaders, village elders, youth, the village government, the Regent, and even the Tegal City Fisheries Department also attended." (Interview with the Organizing Committee, January 8)*

The involvement of these various parties demonstrates that the event is carried out through joint coordination. Communication between residents and the organizing committee takes place through in-person meetings at the Munjungagung Village Hall or at the homes of designated committee members. Additionally, coordination was also carried out via a WhatsApp group used to share information regarding the event's preparations.

Roles are clearly defined at every stage of the activity. The village head explained:

*"This tradition wouldn't be possible without the villagers' participation. From the very beginning, residents have gathered in village meetings to determine the timing of the event, the division of tasks, and the collection of contributions. Some help prepare the boats, some women prepare offerings and food, the youth manage security and the event, while the fishermen prepare the larung procession. Because everyone has a role, they feel needed and trusted by the other residents." (Interview with the Village Head, January 8)*

This statement indicates that implementing the tradition involves cross-group cooperation within the village community. Each group has a distinct role, as agreed, spanning from the planning and preparation stages through to the execution of the event.



**Figure 1.** Boats and offerings in the Sedekah Laut tradition procession in Munjungagung Village (Source: Researcher's Documentation 2025)

As shown in [Figure 1](#), the preparation of the boat and the offerings is not carried out by a single party, but rather through the cooperation of various community groups. This cross-functional involvement demonstrates the interconnected relationships and coordination within the community, ensuring that the procession proceeds according to the plan agreed upon by all.

The *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village, Tegal Regency, demonstrates that local culture continues to play a vital role in strengthening the community's social capital. The continuity of this tradition is rooted not only in historical values and religious elements but also in social systems and dynamics that remain vibrant and are preserved within the local community. Social capital within this tradition can be observed through three mutually reinforcing elements. First, social norms emerge from customs passed down through generations, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and an unwritten system of social oversight within the community. Second, trust develops through the division of labor based on experience, credibility, and individual commitment, accompanied by transparent financial management and the resolution of issues through deliberation. Third, social networks are evident in the involvement of various community members and well-organized coordination patterns, both in formal meetings and through daily communication.

## DISCUSSION

### Social Norms as the Foundation of Social Capital in the *Sedekah Laut* Tradition

The Practice of the *Sedekah Laut* Tradition in the Village Munjungagung demonstrates that community participation is not driven by formal obligations, but rather by social norms deeply rooted in daily life. Local wisdom shapes patterns of interaction and serves as a guide for action. As in the practice of Mopalus, the values of mutual respect, togetherness, and solidarity have evolved into norms that guide collective action, so that *Gotong Royong* functions as a social glue ([Dotutinggi & Kamuli, 2024](#)). Citizen involvement occurs from the deliberation stage through to the implementation of activities, without written rules or administrative sanctions. Although informal, customary institutions remain capable of maintaining social order because they

are grounded in cultural legitimacy and values that have been collectively internalized ([Falestien et al., 2024](#)).

This situation indicates that social compliance is formed through a collective understanding that is repeatedly maintained through traditional practices. The annual repetition of participation reinforces social customs, making residents' involvement an integral part of the collective identity as a coastal community. Social control within this tradition operates informally. Residents who do not participate are not subject to formal sanctions, but they still face social consequences, such as subtle reprimands, discomfort, or negative judgment from their surroundings. In social capital studies, norms are understood as unwritten rules that shape collective behavior through shared expectations. Coleman emphasizes the existence of mutual expectations among community members, whereas, in Robert D. Putnam's perspective, norms enable more effective coordination and cooperation because each individual understands the applicable standards of behavior. Therefore, citizen participation in the *Sedekah Laut* tradition is better understood as an internalized moral responsibility, rather than merely a response to external pressure.

Research conducted by [Gerkey et al. \(2022\)](#) shows that coastal communities regulate social interactions through unwritten rules shaped by collective experience. These norms maintain the stability of collective action without relying on formal regulations. [Battaglia et al. \(2025\)](#) also emphasize that norms and social networks enable communities to resolve collective issues through a bottom-up approach. This means that the power of cooperation in traditional communities relies more on the internalization of values than on coercive formal structures. Furthermore, various studies show that local traditions function as mechanisms for reproducing values and strengthening social cohesion ([Puspita et al., 2024](#); [Cantik et al., 2024](#)). Traditions serve as spaces for the internalization of values through repeated collective participation, so that solidarity does not stop at ritual symbols but is manifested in concrete actions. Communities perceive traditions as means of maintaining togetherness and social harmony, and as expressions of gratitude ([Masruroh et al., 2021](#)). In this context, *Sedekah Laut* not only preserves culture but also sustainably reproduces social capital.

The primary motivation is purely to help one another so that life's heavy burdens feel lighter through concrete actions taken together. One concrete manifestation of social harmony in Indonesia, including among the Javanese and other ethnic groups, is the tradition of working together known as *Gotong Royong*.

In the *Sedekah Laut* tradition, *Gotong Royong* is not merely a function but a mechanism for cooperation and a means of strengthening social bonds among residents. The village community views *Gotong Royong* not simply as a form of cooperation but as a way to strengthen relationships among residents while maintaining balance, peace, and the well-being of the environment in which they live (Rahmawati et al., 2024). *Gotong Royong* is understood by the community as a form of collective work aimed at lightening shared burdens, as well as fostering a sense of solidarity, kinship, and social closeness among residents (Oktaviyani & Sukmayadi, 2020). This dynamic serves as the primary foundation enabling the sustained development of social cooperation in the practice of the *Sedekah Laut* tradition.

In Robert D. Putnam's perspective, this condition reflects bonding social capital, that is, social capital that strengthens bonds within the group through shared values, emotional closeness, and a sense of shared identity. Through the regular interactions inherent in this tradition, a sense of belonging and shared responsibility for safeguarding the community's interests develops. However, bonding social capital also has its own dynamics. Strong bonds can reinforce solidarity, but they also have the potential to create social pressure on individuals who cannot participate fully. Based on interview findings, some fishermen noted that many young people now work outside the village, limiting their participation. This situation indicates that participation norms do not always function ideally, as they are influenced by economic mobility and social change. From Putnam's perspective, if the intensity of collective interaction decreases, the reproduction of bonding social capital may face challenges. The tradition of *Sedekah Laut* serves not only as a form of collective cooperation but also as a space for negotiation between collective solidarity and the individual needs of community members. This tradition continues to demonstrate a strong capacity for maintaining social cohesion, even as it must adapt to evolving socio-economic dynamics.

## **Trust as a Catalyst for Collective Cooperation**

From the perspective of social capital, as Robert D. Putnam has pointed out, trust is a crucial element that enables cooperation within a community to function smoothly. This trust is linked to the norm of reciprocity—the belief that every contribution made for the common good will eventually be met with an equivalent return, though not necessarily immediately or simultaneously.

Because of this mutual trust, relationships among community members do not rely heavily on written rules or strict oversight. In the *Sedekah Laut* tradition, this trust is evident in the selection of committee members based on their reputation and social experience, the transparent management of funds, and the resolution of disagreements through deliberation. These practices demonstrate a shared belief that anyone entrusted with responsibility will carry out their duties diligently. This sense of trust helps reduce doubt and the potential for conflict, allowing coordination to proceed more simply without convoluted procedures. Furthermore, the trust that grows from local customs and traditions also serves as the foundation for the norms governing relationships among fishermen in daily life (Adri et al., 2021).

According to sociologist Robert Putnam, the strength of a community—which he refers to as social capital—is largely determined by the strength of the elements of trust, norms, and social networks within it. These elements are key to enabling a community to function more smoothly and effectively in facing shared challenges.

Trust is also built through repeated social interactions in daily life. The habit of residents to help one another in village activities or when facing disasters demonstrates the operation of generalized reciprocity—a pattern of reciprocity that is neither transactional nor calculated. Assistance is provided on the assumption that solidarity will be returned in the form of social support on other occasions. This phenomenon aligns with (Bashar & Bramley, 2019), who assert that sustainable social cooperation can only flourish in environments with high levels of trust. In this context, the *Sedekah Laut* tradition serves as a venue for the reproduction of trust through continuously repeated collective experiences (Bhinekawati & Yunita, 2024).

Trust and reciprocal norms strengthen collective action capacity by facilitating cooperation and enhancing social coordination among members. Social relationships grounded in trust encourage individuals to support one another in achieving shared goals. In line with this, Belard et al. (2025) emphasize that trust plays a crucial role in sustaining community cooperation, particularly in the management of shared resources. This study demonstrates that trust is not only vital in interpersonal relationships but also evolves into a social resource that facilitates cooperation. With trust in place, collective action can proceed more effectively and efficiently, as community members find it easier to understand, support, and rely on one another.

Although it strengthens solidarity, high levels of trust can also have consequences that are not always

beneficial. A trust that relies too heavily on internal reputation has the potential to strengthen relationships based on closeness (bonding) and indirectly limit opportunities for participation for individuals outside the core social circle. Under certain conditions, strong trust can narrow the space for criticism or weaken oversight mechanisms, leading to the assumption that every member has acted in accordance with collective expectations. Therefore, trust within the *Sedekah Laut* tradition serves not only as a bond of solidarity but also establishes social boundaries that require critical understanding. Overall, trust in the *Sedekah Laut* practice has evolved into a social mechanism that sustains solidarity and strengthens residents' capacity to act collectively in a sustainable manner (Sudarto et al., 2024). Trust built through repeated shared experiences serves as a crucial foundation for maintaining the social cohesion of the fishing community, particularly in navigating the dynamics of social change in its surroundings.

### **Social Networks as an Act of Mutual Aid**

From the perspective of Robert Putnam's social capital, social networks are seen as patterns of social relationships that connect individuals, facilitating coordination and cooperation in achieving common goals. Through these established networks, communities can organize themselves without always relying on formal institutional mechanisms. In the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village, social networks are evident in the involvement of various community members, such as fishermen, religious leaders, youth, the organizing committee, and the village government. These relationships are formed through deliberation, role division, and routine coordination in the lead-up to the tradition. The patterns of interaction that recur annually strengthen relationships among residents while fostering a relatively stable collective bond (Rani, 2023).

Research conducted by Diana et al. (2025) indicates that social networks formed through routine interactions and collaboration among local actors play a crucial role in sustaining community-based activities. These networks enable the distribution of responsibilities to function more effectively, as each member understands their position and role within the existing social structure. Thus, the success of a collective activity is determined not only by individual participation but also by the strength of the social relationships underpinning that cooperation. A similar point is made by Janah & Lestari (2025) who note that the relationship between

the community and local organizations in the practice of traditions forms a social network that strengthens solidarity and supports the smooth operation of joint activities. This network is realized through active participation, clear task division, and coordination through deliberation.

The strengthening of social values based on local wisdom is not only carried out through normative discourse but also through cultural practices that are alive in the community's daily lives. The internalization of these values is evident in residents' collective actions, which reflect cooperation, responsibility, and solidarity (Wijayanti et al., 2022). The tradition of the sea offering serves as a social space that enables these moral values to be realized through collective actions such as cooperation, compassion, and shared responsibility.

The strength of interpersonal relationships at the local level is also consistent with the findings of a study (Bott et al., 2020), which indicates that high levels of mutual trust and the presence of social control within a community are associated with the formation of bonding social capital, thereby fostering community engagement and collective participation. Furthermore, social relationships-both within the local community and with external parties- play a crucial role in encouraging the community to take proactive steps when facing environmental issues or challenges. In the context of *Sedekah Laut*, social networks not only bring individuals together for a ceremonial event but also serve as spaces for interaction that strengthen social bonds among residents. Through this annual collective engagement, social networks are continuously reproduced and strengthened. The *Sedekah Laut* tradition thus functions as a social medium that sustains relationships among residents while reinforcing the cohesion of coastal communities (Khayati et al., 2025).

However, strong networks also bring their own consequences. Relationships formed through shared customs and experiences tend to establish stable, familiar social patterns, so that new ideas or changes are sometimes viewed as a threat to the community's balance. Furthermore, within the *Sedekah Laut* social network, there are typically central figures-such as traditional leaders, committee chairs, or religious figures-who wield significant influence in the decision-making process. Over-reliance on such figures has the potential to become a weakness, as the sustainability of collective activities may be affected when these figures are no longer active. This situation demonstrates that social networks not only function as an integrative force but can also create structural dependencies within the community.

## **The Interaction of Social Norms, Trust, and Social Networks in Strengthening the Value of *Gotong Royong***

The research findings indicate that the reinforcement of the value of mutual cooperation within the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village is supported not only by the separate existence of social norms, beliefs, and social networks, but also by the dynamic interaction among all three. Social norms shape collective expectations regarding the obligation to participate, while beliefs foster a sense of security in cooperation and minimize the potential for conflict. At the same time, social networks provide a relational structure that enables effective coordination and distribution of roles. This interaction creates a relatively stable and recurring mechanism for collective action. In the Indonesian context, the practice of *Gotong Royong* is understood as a form of social responsibility and citizen engagement in the collective life of the community (Wijayanti & Kurniawan, 2023). These conditions demonstrate the functioning of bonding social capital, which strengthens a community's internal cohesion through shared norms, mutual trust, and the closeness of social networks, as Robert D. Putnam describes.

Conceptually, this study aligns with Robert D. Putnam's view, which holds that social capital functions optimally when norms, trust, and networks mutually reinforce one another to generate collective action. In the context of the Munjungagung coastal community, norms passed down through generations gain legitimacy through trust among social actors, and both are mobilized through kinship networks, committees, and fishermen's groups. Thus, *Gotong Royong* emerges not merely as a cultural custom but as the result of the simultaneous integration of social capital elements.

The relationship among these three elements demonstrates mutual reinforcement. The social norms that have developed within the coastal community of Munjungagung form the basis for shared expectations regarding the moral responsibility to participate in the *Sedekah Laut* ceremony. From these agreed-upon norms, a sense of mutual trust grows, as each individual believes that other community members will also act in accordance with the unwritten values and rules that govern the community. This trust reduces uncertainty in collective activities, so that community involvement depends not only on social control or pressure but more on the collective awareness and commitment ingrained in residents.

The trust that has been established then grows stronger and spreads through existing social networks, whether within the organizing committee, fishermen's groups, or kinship ties. Through these networks, information is shared, tasks are divided, and the needs of activities are coordinated collectively. Norms are not merely rules that are believed in, and trust is not merely a sense of confidence between individuals; rather, both are manifested in tangible social relationships that unfold in daily practice (Laelatus et al., 2025). This indicates that *Gotong Royong* is not merely a time-honored tradition but is formed through the interconnection of norms, trust, and mutually supportive social networks.

The findings of this study align with Robert D. Putnam's perspective, which emphasizes that the strength of social capital is evident in its ability to foster collective action. In this study, the practice of *Gotong Royong* can be understood as a form of collective action arising from shared norms, mutual trust, and active social networks. Thus, the continuity of the tradition is not solely supported by cultural values but by the ongoing interaction among these three elements in the social life of coastal communities.

This study shows that the value of mutual cooperation in the *Sedekah Laut* tradition cannot be explained by a single element of social capital. The sustainability of this practice, in fact, arises from the interplay between social norms, trust, and social networks that mutually reinforce one another. Norms provide direction and a foundation of values for the community; trust enables residents to collaborate without suspicion, while social networks serve as the framework that allows such cooperation to materialize into concrete actions. The findings of this study expand our understanding of social capital as described by Robert D. Putnam. In the context of coastal communities, these three elements do not operate in isolation but converge and are continuously reinforced through shared practices, thereby ensuring the sustainable maintenance of social solidarity.

The implication is that strengthening mutual aid does not solely depend on the preservation of traditions, but on the sustainability of social relations that maintain a balance between norms, trust, and networks. If one of these elements weakens, the capacity for collective action is likely to decline. Therefore, the *Sedekah Laut* tradition can be understood not merely as a cultural ritual but as a social arena that continuously reproduces and strengthens the social capital of coastal communities. Thus, this tradition serves as a social mechanism that consolidates the community's social capital through the continuous strengthening of trust, norms, and social

networks in a sustainable manner (Wijayanti, Kurniawan, et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the *Sedekah Laut* tradition in Munjungagung Village is not merely an annual cultural event, but a social space where the social capital of the coastal community is formed. Social norms foster a shared understanding of the moral obligation to participate; trust cultivates a sense of mutual reliance among residents; and social networks enable effective coordination, role division, and information dissemination. These three elements do not operate in isolation but are interrelated and form a mechanism for collective action in the practice of the tradition.

The interaction among norms, beliefs, and social networks enables *Sedekah Laut* to reinforce the value of mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation emerges not merely as a time-honored custom but as the result of a social process that is continuously reproduced through the community's shared experiences. Thus, the sustainability of the tradition does not rely solely on cultural values, but on the continuity of social relationships that maintain the balance among these three elements of social capital. This study confirms that local traditions can serve as social mechanisms that sustain solidarity and cohesion within coastal communities. The study has limitations in scope, as the case study focuses on a single village, limiting the ability to generalize the findings to other coastal communities. Additionally, the limited number of informants and the duration of the research prevent a full depiction of the long-term dynamics of social capital. This study also places greater emphasis on the internal dimensions of the community, so external relationships that could potentially influence the sustainability of traditions have not been analyzed in depth.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The first author conducted data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. The second author supervised the research methods and guided the data analysis.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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