

Religious Privatization in the UDI Community: Implications for Contemporary Islamic Education

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Abstract: Religious privatization is a key phenomenon in contemporary transformations of religious authority, marked by epistemic fragmentation and growing exclusivism in Islamic knowledge production. It reshapes community relations and redefines boundaries between formal and non-formal Islamic education, with implications for national education policy, curriculum integration, and socio-religious polarization. The UDI community represents a critical case through closed religious spaces and an internally governed educational system autonomous from mainstream institutions such as madrasahs, pesantren, and universities. This study examines the production and reproduction of religious privatization in the UDI community and its implications for Islamic education. It employs a qualitative exploratory case study design, based on in-depth interviews with 20 key informants and participant observation in Kampung Baru, Lamongan, Indonesia. Data analysis follows an abductive approach integrating perspectives on religious privatization, authority, boundary-making, and critical Islamic education. Findings identify eight mechanisms producing a closed knowledge regime, centralized authority, and restricted epistemic access, generating a homogeneous, inward-looking educational model and contributing to fragmentation, institutional delegitimization, and polarization risks. The study reconceptualizes religious privatization beyond decentralization, arguing it is a productive institutional mechanism that generates, stabilizes, and normalizes epistemic boundaries restructuring relations among authority, knowledge, and Islamic education.

Keywords: Islamic education, religious authority, religious privatization, UDI community

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Introduction

Religiosity within many contemporary Muslim communities is no longer shaped solely through formal institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), madrasahs, or mosques; rather, it is increasingly constructed within private and communal non-institutional spaces (Possamai et al., 2016; Khan, 2013; Wanto et al., 2022). This shift indicates that religious practices are no longer entirely determined by institutional authority, but are instead influenced by the dynamics of personal interpretation and community-based social networks. This phenomenon is significant to examine because it has the potential to transform the landscape of Islamic education, particularly in relation to curriculum design, scholarly authority, gender access, and the intellectual diversity that has traditionally been understood as the domain of formal institutions.

The concept of religious privatization explains the shift of religious authority from institutions to individuals, whereby religious beliefs and practices are increasingly determined on a personal basis as a response to modernity, rendering religion more pluralistic, fluid, and diverse (Pessi, 2013; Baubérot, 2006; Pollack, 2014). Partially rooted in secularization theory, which positions religion as a private matter in the interest of civil equality, this concept has also been criticized for oversimplifying the complexity of religiosity and overlooking the persistence of communal identities (Gülalp, 2023; Rashover, 2017). Within privatized contexts, individuals seek authentic spiritual experiences through negotiations between personal values and community expectations, such that religiosity is shaped

more by subjective interpretation than by rigid institutional doctrines (Pessi & Jeldtoft, 2017; Denny, 2019). Its implications extend into the sphere of public policy, particularly in secular states where religious groups have re-entered the public domain in areas such as education, family law, and social services (Huseynova, 2025; Stopler, 2017). Privatization also promotes religious pluralism through the flexibility to adopt, combine, or shift between traditions; however, it simultaneously carries the potential to weaken collective traditions and intensify internal fragmentation (Míguez, 2004; Denny, 2019). Thus, although secularization may reduce the institutional authority of religion, it concurrently stimulates a more reflective and subjective form of personal spirituality (Pollack, 2014; Zhou, 2025).

Although the literature on Islamic education reform has addressed the challenges of modernity and emphasized the importance of curriculum renewal through the integration of modern sciences with religious studies (Barid et al., 2025), as well as compared educational models across public and private institutions (Larsen et al., 2023), studies that specifically examine the impact of privatized-communitarian forms of religiosity on the structure and quality of Islamic education remain markedly limited. This limitation is particularly evident in the Indonesian context and within pesantren-based communities rooted in traditional coastal societies. In such contexts, religious practices such as *sedekah laut*, *slametan*, village *pengajian*, communal *gotong royong*, and collective work ethics do not merely function as ritual expressions. Rather, they operate as social mechanisms for the intergenerational transmission of values, knowledge, and learning processes that occur beyond the boundaries of formal educational institutions (Barid et al., 2025). This condition reveals a significant gap between the theoretical expectation of Islamic education as an institutional domain and the empirical reality in which value formation and learning processes are also strongly embedded within communal spaces. Nevertheless, most existing studies continue to position Islamic education primarily within formal institutional frameworks, thereby failing to adequately explain how the transmission of values, knowledge, and religious learning practices takes place intensively within privatized communitarian spaces, particularly among pesantren-based Muslim communities shaped by Indonesia's coastal traditions.

Within this framework, the present study deliberately positions religious privatization not merely as a phenomenon of changing religiosity, but as an analytical lens through which to understand how the structures of knowledge and the practices of Islamic education are formed, regulated, and reproduced within non-institutional religious communities. This phenomenon can be observed concretely in the emergence of the UDI¹ community in Sugihan, Lamongan, which originated from an internal conflict at the Pondok Pesantren Umar bin Khottob between its founder, Su'udi, and Nur Yaqin. Ideological, pedagogical, and institutional governance differences, ranging from the rejection of mixed-gender classes, state ceremonial rituals, and general subjects, to proposals for integrating formal education (MI, MTs, and MA Tahfidz Tunas Santri) and the acceptance of local religious traditions such as *tahlilan*, *diba'an*, and *mauludan*, ultimately led to organizational fragmentation and the formation of the UDI community as a distinct religious entity. Su'udi, who had previously been affiliated with Muhammadiyah, maintained an exclusive Salafi orientation and rejected external intervention, including government assistance. In contrast, Nur Yaqin advocated for a more moderate, open, and socially adaptive approach that was responsive to the broader needs of the community.

In a broader context, this debate directly intersects with the discourse of Contemporary Islamic Education, an approach that integrates the foundational principles of Islam with modern pedagogical frameworks to cultivate holistic individuals capable of balancing religious and secular domains (Hashim & Jemali, 2017; Baiza, 2022). This approach emphasizes holistic development (Zayed & Al-

¹ The term UDI is derived from the name of its founder, Su'udi. The last three letters of his name, "udi," were subsequently adopted as the designation of this religious community, forming the name UDI.

Mizan, 2014), the integration of knowledge (Baiza, 2022), and adaptability to technological and pedagogical change (Romlah et al., 2025; Rashed et al., 2025). Its implementation encompasses curriculum reform, learner-centered pedagogical innovation (Rohana et al., 2024), and the utilization of educational technology (Ahmad et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2025; Mintasih & Purnama, 2024). The pressures of globalization further demand multicultural adaptation, the strengthening of twenty-first-century skills (Ochwo-Oburu, 2020; Badriyah & Wardi, 2026), and policy frameworks that safeguard foundational values while encouraging innovation (Arim et al., 2024). Variations in implementation are shaped by cultural and socio-economic factors (Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019), while engagement with Western secular educational models generates both conceptual tensions and contextual reinterpretations within Islamic education (Sahin, 2018).

In contrast to previous studies that focus on formal institutions or mainstream Islamic schools, this research selects the UDI community as its locus of inquiry to examine how religious privatization operates at the micro-communal level and how it shapes everyday informal practices of Islamic education. The primary distinction of this study lies in its effort to bridge the socio-communitarian context with the discourse of contemporary Islamic education, thereby enabling a deeper understanding of how privatized knowledge structures, internal community control, gender-based access restrictions, the homogenization of religious interpretation, and epistemic isolation influence religious learning processes. Unlike earlier research that examines Islamic education reform through the lenses of curriculum, institutional design, or formal educational policy, this study positions the UDI community as an empirical site to investigate how religious privatization functions at the micro-community level and directly forms the texture of daily informal Islamic educational practices.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) describe the characteristics of religious privatization within the UDI community; and (2) analyze its implications for Islamic education, particularly regarding gender access, diversity of thought, and socio-cultural integration within the framework of Contemporary Islamic Education. The contributions offered by this research include providing empirical insight at the micro-communal level, which remains relatively underexplored; strengthening the conceptual foundation for understanding how privatized knowledge structures can generate alternative models of Islamic education, whether tending toward exclusivity and homogeneity or, conversely, demonstrating pedagogical and social accountability; and serving as a reference for the formulation of Islamic education policies capable of bridging religious traditions with the demands of inclusivity, pluralism, and social relevance.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a critical case study design focused on the UDI religious community in Sugihan Village, Solokuro District, Lamongan Regency, East Java, Indonesia (N. I. Khan, 2022). The research site was selected through a purposive critical case sampling strategy (Patton, 2014), as the UDI community is considered to possess high analytical significance for examining the dynamics of religious privatization. This significance is reflected in four principal characteristics: (1) the formation of a distinctive religious identity through community consolidation; (2) a visible divergence in religious interpretation and practice compared to mainstream local Islam; (3) the emergence of institutional separation through the construction of spatial and social boundaries in the Kampung Baru settlement; and (4) ongoing contestation concerning religious authority and the orientation of Islamic education. These four characteristics position the research site as an analytically rich context for understanding how religious privatization reconstructs social and educational organization at the micro level.

Research participants were selected using a combination of purposive maximum variation sampling and criterion-based sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This strategy was intended to recruit informants who had direct experience with the UDI community while also representing diverse social

positions within the community structure. The inclusion criteria comprised: (1) direct involvement in or sustained interaction with the UDI community; (2) familiarity with religious and educational practices within the community context; and (3) diversity of social positions to capture multiple epistemic perspectives. A total of 20 participants were involved in this study, including local government actors, *ulama/kyai*, family members of the UDI founders, a pesantren administrator, active members of the UDI community, and Muslims from the surrounding non-UDI population. This composition was designed to strengthen analytical depth and triangulation of perspectives rather than to achieve statistical representativeness.

Data were collected over a two-month period through a multi-method qualitative approach comprising semi-structured in-depth interviews and non-participant observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a duration of 60–90 minutes per session, guided by a flexible protocol covering themes such as religious authority and legitimacy, educational practices and curriculum orientation, the construction of social boundaries between the UDI and non-UDI communities, and interpretations of Islamic tradition in relation to modern educational systems. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure analytical accuracy. Non-participant observation was carried out in *Kampung Baru* as the primary area of the UDI community. The focus of observation included daily religious ritual practices, informal learning processes, patterns of internal and external social interaction, the formation of symbolic and spatial boundaries, and the expression of religious identity in everyday life. Observational data were recorded systematically using a structured fieldnote format to ensure consistency and traceability of analysis.

The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis as developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006), combined with an abductive reasoning approach as introduced by Charles Sanders Peirce (Peirce, 1934), which involves an iterative process between empirical data and theoretical frameworks. The analytical procedure was conducted through three main stages. The first stage involved open coding to identify meaningful units related to religious authority, educational practices, the formation of social boundaries, as well as patterns of epistemic inclusion and exclusion. The second stage consisted of axial coding, in which the initial codes were grouped into broader analytical categories, such as the privatization of religious authority, educational exclusivity and curricular resistance, community boundary formation, and the competition of Islamic epistemologies. The third stage involved selective (theoretical) coding, integrating these categories into core themes by situating them within relevant theoretical frameworks, including the theory of religious privatization, the theory of authority fragmentation, boundary-making theory as formulated by Michèle Lamont and Virág Molnár, critical Islamic education theory, and theories of religious exclusivism.

Results and Discussion

Religious Privatization in the UDI Community and Its Implications for Contemporary Islamic Education

The findings indicate that religious privatization within the UDI community unfolds through eight structured mechanisms that shape members' mindsets, knowledge systems, social relations, and lived spaces. To provide a more comprehensive interpretation, the results are examined through several relevant theoretical lenses: religious privatization theory, religious authority theory, cultural boundary-making, critical Islamic education, and theories of religious exclusivism.

1. Knowledge Privatization and Its Implications for Islamic Education

The findings indicate that knowledge privatization within the UDI community is constructed through a rigid epistemological bifurcation between religious sciences and general sciences. This configuration resonates with Casanova's framework of religious privatization, wherein religion withdraws from the public sphere while simultaneously producing epistemic boundaries that

differentiate “legitimate” from “illegitimate” forms of knowledge (Casanova, 1994). Within this configuration, religious sciences are exclusively positioned as the primary source of moral legitimacy, whereas general sciences are rendered devoid of religious value. Empirically, this pattern is grounded in Su’udi’s interpretive articulation of the obligation to seek knowledge, as reported by EF, who stated that obligatory knowledge is confined to the religious sciences, such as tafsir, hadith, fiqh, usul al-fiqh, nahwu, and sarf, while disciplines such as physics, biology, and mathematics are not included within this category (EF, 7 July 2025).

The rejection of general scientific legitimacy, as demonstrated by the community leader Su’udi, corresponds with Hefner’s critique of revivalist Islamic groups’ tendency to create closed epistemologies (Hefner, 2010). Under such a framework, religious authorities hold full control over knowledge production, while modern rationality and empirical sciences are placed outside the community’s boundaries. This approach also resonates with Markin’s concept of epistemic enclosure, which emphasizes how exclusive religious groups construct internal knowledge spaces to protect group identity from external influence (Markin, 2025).

This mode of knowledge privatization has significant implications for the development of contemporary Islamic education. First, the separation of religious and general sciences contradicts the idea of knowledge integration promoted in modern Islamic educational discourse. The Islamization of knowledge advocated by al-Faruqi and the integrative-interconnective paradigm of Amin Abdullah both highlight the need to integrate religious disciplines with empirical sciences in response to social change (Abdullah, 2004). A privatized model that prioritizes literalism and normative texts without contextual understanding risks hindering curriculum reform in pesantren and madrasah. Second, the exclusive dominance of religious knowledge within certain epistemic constructions may have implications for the limited integration of general sciences, including science and technology, which in turn can affect learners’ adaptive capacity in responding to the dynamics of modern society. Third, such an epistemic orientation may also constrain the development of progressive Islamic education, particularly in relation to the constructive reinterpretation of religious values within changing social contexts. From another perspective, a more integrative approach between religious and general sciences is often considered to potentially strengthen critical reasoning skills and contextual interpretation as core competencies in contemporary Islamic education (Daulay et al., 2025; Muslim et al., 2024; Irham, 2025). Ultimately, a tendency toward literalist understandings can be seen as one epistemic orientation among others, although within contemporary Islamic educational discourse there are also traditions that emphasize the importance of critical reasoning and contextualization.

2. Restriction of Women’s Education

Findings indicate that women’s access to higher education within the UDI community is shaped by patriarchal religious constructs that position formal education as potentially detrimental to women’s moral and social roles. As articulated by Mnr, higher education is perceived as potentially “corrupting” for women and therefore deemed irrelevant, given their primary social positioning as homemakers; consequently, parental responsibility is understood to entail early marriage arrangements, with the path to spiritual merit framed through service to the husband and child-rearing (Mnr, 7 July 2025). This empirical pattern demonstrates that restrictions on women’s educational access are closely intertwined with gendered religious interpretations. It aligns with the broader literature on gendered religious conservatism, which conceptualizes the domestication of women as an expression of piety (Santing, 2024; Kolakkadan, 2024). Within this framework, women are largely confined to domestic roles as wives and caregivers, while formal education is framed as unnecessary or even incongruent with prevailing religious ideals.

The community’s literal interpretation of gender roles reinforces a social structure that positions men as the locus of moral and intellectual authority. This phenomenon resonates with Kandiyoti’s concept of patriarchal religious enclosure, whereby religious institutions create boundaries that limit

women's access to educational resources and public spaces (Kandiyoti, 1988). Thus, restrictions are not merely theological; they function as mechanisms of social control that sustain male dominance within the community.

Such restrictions carry serious implications for the advancement of Islamic education in the modern era. First, these practices contradict principles of justice and equality in Islamic education as embodied in the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly the protection of intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*) and the pursuit of social justice. Education is an essential means for empowering all members of society, regardless of gender (Kayadibi, 2019; Baharuddin et al., 2019).

Second, the exclusion of women from higher education limits their potential contributions to Islamic educational leadership. Numerous studies show that women play strategic roles in pedagogical innovation, strengthening religious literacy, and fostering moderate religious culture in Islamic educational institutions (Wardiana & Fadli, 2024; Zain et al., 2025).

Third, such practices hinder gender-sensitive religious moderation initiatives promoted by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs and contradict the principles of Islamic gender equality (Margot Badran, 2017). Therefore, restricting women's education not only perpetuates patriarchal structures but also weakens reform efforts toward an inclusive, adaptive, and progressive Islamic educational framework.

3. Doctrination of a Single Religious Understanding and the Loss of Intellectual Diversity

The findings reveal that indoctrination of a single religious understanding is a key mechanism in shaping religious identity within the UDI community. This pattern reflects Markin's concept of epistemic closure, an intentional limitation of members' access to alternative sources of knowledge to preserve ideological consistency (Markin, 2025). In this context, religious authorities establish a hierarchical and closed knowledge structure that leaves no room for diverse interpretations.

Additionally, the community's indoctrination practices exhibit characteristics of religious authoritarianism described by Altemeyer and Hunsberger, a model of religiosity requiring absolute obedience to authority, rejecting interpretive diversity, and demanding uncritical adherence to a single doctrinal system. The strategy of "de-learning," removing prior religious knowledge viewed as inconsistent with community doctrines, serves as an integral mechanism for producing cognitive uniformity (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Such practices are common among exclusivist religious groups seeking to eliminate members' previous epistemological frameworks and replace them with a new ideological structure.

This doctrinal homogenization has significant implications for contemporary Islamic education. First, it erodes Islam's plural intellectual tradition, including the rich legacies of Ash'ari, Maturidi, and diverse *fiqh* schools (Büyük, 2019; Biçer & Sezgin, 2017), traditions that historically nourished Islamic intellectual dynamism.

Second, indoctrination that rejects dialogue and critical reflection contradicts the principles of religious moderation curricula, which emphasize epistemological tolerance, critical thinking, and acceptance of diversity (Armstrong, 2022). A closed intellectual environment undermines efforts to cultivate learners capable of engaging with traditions outside their group.

Third, learners raised within such closed epistemic systems are often unprepared for complex and diverse social realities. They struggle to understand the diversity of Islamic thought and are more susceptible to exclusivism and social polarization (Altinyelken, 2022). This undermines the role of Islamic education as a means for building social cohesion and inclusive religiosity.

4. Knowledge Isolation through Qur'an Memorization

The findings indicate that the UDI community mandates early Qur'anic memorization, even when students' recitation skills have not yet reached a proficient (*mutqin*) level. Memorization is positioned as both a protective and epistemic mechanism aimed at fostering the community's autonomy from external scholarly authorities. In practice, the scope of students' knowledge is strictly

confined to texts selected and authorized by the community, resulting in limited exposure to tafsir literature and hadith commentaries commonly taught in other Islamic boarding schools (EF, 7 July 2025). This pattern reflects a form of knowledge privatization that prioritizes memorization and internal doctrinal transmission over critical and discursive modes of inquiry (Romeiro Hermeto, 2025).

5. Rejection of Wider Community Religious Practices

The findings show that the UDI community consistently rejects broader Muslim practices, particularly local Islamic traditions embedded in *Nahdlatul Ulama* and Muhammadiyah communities. These include rituals such as *maulid*, *tahlilan*, *ziarah kubur*, and other forms of religious-cultural expression deemed to lack textual basis in the Qur'an and Hadith. This posture illustrates boundary making (Lamont et al., 2015), constructing symbolic and social boundaries to differentiate an "authentic in-group" from an "erroneous out-group" (Lamont et al., 2015).

In the UDI context, such boundary making strengthens exclusive religious identity, restricts social interaction, and preserves doctrinal purity. This reflects characteristics of puritan groups as described by Headley, who tend to reject religious traditions blended with local culture and view their own interpretation as the only legitimate form of Islamic practice (Headley, 2018). These boundaries are not merely theological but also social, reinforcing separation from the wider community.

This rejection carries significant implications for contemporary Islamic education. First, it reduces tolerance for the diversity of Islamic practices within the Indonesian archipelago. Yet such diversity constitutes a hallmark of Islamic history and development in Indonesia. Denying this plurality weakens learners' understanding of the many legitimate expressions of Islamic religiosity (Tuna, 2024).

Second, delegitimizing local traditions may strengthen mild radicalization, a binary worldview that narrows space for dialogue and intergroup cooperation. While not necessarily leading to violence (Atalay & Korkut, 2025), such cognitive rigidity promotes exclusivism and resistance to difference, contrary to the aims of humanistic and inclusive Islamic education.

Third, rejecting local traditions obstructs the implementation of Indonesia's religious moderation curriculum, which prioritizes openness, tolerance, and engagement with diverse religious traditions (Mahmudah et al., 2025). A closed attitude toward religious diversity reduces the curriculum's effectiveness and limits the formation of learners equipped for multicultural environments.

6. Dominance of Tawhid Studies and Neglect of Social Issues

The findings demonstrate that the UDI community positions *tawhid* studies at the center of all intellectual and spiritual activities while largely neglecting social, economic, and civic issues. This pattern reflects a salafi-puritan orientation emphasizing doctrinal purification as the core of Islamic identity. Theoretically, this corresponds to Brahim et al.'s notion of narrow religious orientation, in which *tawhid* becomes the sole reference point, excluding social dimensions from the scope of Islamic teaching (Brahim et al., 2022).

Such an orientation disregards *mu'āmalah* and *'imārah al-ardh*, two major Islamic concepts concerning social responsibility, civilizational development, and stewardship of the earth. Reducing Islam to solely theological dimensions produces a narrow and non-contextual religiosity detached from the realities of a rapidly changing society (Bouzar & Bouzar, 2022).

This theological reduction has major implications for contemporary Islamic education. First, it undermines educational models aimed at Islamic social development, which seek to balance spiritual formation with community empowerment, through economic literacy, technological innovation, and national participation (Amin et al., 2025).

Second, an exclusive focus on doctrine diminishes the relevance of Islamic education to contemporary challenges such as digital transformation, creative economies, demographic shifts, and

global interdependence. Learners trained only in theological perspectives lack the social competencies necessary for modern life (Abubakari & Kalinaki, 2024).

Third, this orientation limits young Muslims' engagement in community development. Educational environments that exclude social values and 21st-century skills produce graduates who are passive, non-critical, and unable to serve as agents of change (Mardatillah et al., 2025). Yet modern Islamic education emphasizes integrating spiritual and social dimensions as foundations for cultivating a civilizational community.

7. Privatization as an Effort to Preserve Doctrinal Purity

The privatization of knowledge in the UDI narrative, grounded in the logic of "doctrinal purification," can be understood as an ideological response to the perceived necessity of preserving the purity of religious teachings within the community. This process operates through a discursive mechanism that reconstructs Islamic teachings in what is considered their most authentic form by rejecting external influences, consistent with Headley's concept of a discourse of purification (Headley, 2018). This phenomenon emerges from an internal drive to maintain clear group boundaries and to secure epistemic authority within the community, thereby reducing dependence on external sources of religious knowledge. As a result, doctrinal privatization functions not only as a theological orientation but also as a social strategy for identity consolidation, which in turn fosters tendencies toward religious exclusivism when truth claims are monopolized.

In the context of Islamic education, this purification logic has direct implications for curriculum design and pedagogical orientation. Curricula tend to be constructed in a closed epistemic framework, where only a single interpretive stance is regarded as legitimate, thereby limiting exposure to interpretive plurality. This can be explained as a consequence of an internal imperative to preserve doctrinal coherence, which indirectly constrains the integration of approaches such as social fiqh and contemporary Islamic thought that require engagement with evolving social realities. Consequently, learners formed within such an epistemic environment are more likely to internalize rigid and exclusive modes of thinking, which restrict their capacity for dialogical engagement within plural religious discourses. In a broader perspective, as noted by Hashemi & Taavoni, such forms of privatization reduce the relevance of Islamic education outcomes in addressing global societal demands that increasingly emphasize moderation, inter-traditional dialogue, and adaptive social problem-solving competencies (Hashemi & Taavoni, 2023).

8. Establishment of the Exclusive Social Space "*Kampung Baru*"

The establishment of "*Kampung Baru*" by the UDI community represents a deliberate production of social space designed to sustain intensive religious formation, uniformity of religious practice, and effective social control. Empirically, this space is maintained as relatively insulated from external interaction and functions as a medium for the intergenerational reproduction of religious identity, accompanied by strict monitoring of newcomers and residents' activities (Fer; Mnr, 7 July 2025). Theoretically, this practice can be interpreted through Henri Lefebvre's concept of the production of space, which asserts that space is not merely a physical location but a social construct that organizes relations, meanings, and practices (Lefebvre, 2014). "*Kampung Baru*," therefore, operates as a produced space that conditions a particular religious habitus through the regulation of social proximity, rhythms of activity, and boundaries of interaction.

This phenomenon also corresponds with Fredrik Barth's notion of boundary maintenance, in which the persistence of group identity is sustained through the reinforcement of symbolic and social boundaries toward "others" (Barth, 1998; Barth, 2010). The spatial insulation and control of mobility strengthen these boundaries, such that collective identity is not only transmitted doctrinally but also experienced spatially in everyday life. At the same time, this configuration reflects Michel Foucault's logic of disciplinary space, wherein spatial arrangements enable visibility, surveillance, and the

normalization of behavior in a continuous manner without necessarily requiring direct coercive intervention (Foucault & Mailänder, 1975).

The emergence of a strongly ideological social architecture within the community can be explained by several underlying conditions. First, there is a perceived need to preserve doctrinal purity against external influences viewed as potentially diluting internal religious authority. Second, in a rural setting marked by strong social cohesion, spatial clustering intensifies value transmission through continuous everyday interaction. Third, limited access to external scholarly authorities encourages reliance on proximity-based mechanisms of control and legitimacy. Fourth, collective memory of divergent religious practices relative to surrounding communities reinforces spatial separation as a strategy of identity protection.

Accordingly, “Kampung Baru” functions not merely as geographic segregation but as a socio-ideological infrastructure enabling the reproduction of doctrine, consolidation of authority, and maintenance of identity boundaries. Ideology is thus institutionalized not only through discourse but also through spatial organization that structures interaction, visibility, and intergenerational religious continuity.

This study contributes to theorizing religious privatization as a multi-mechanism process operating across knowledge construction, gender regulation, doctrinal authority, ritual boundaries, spatial organization, and education. Integrating religious privatization theory, boundary-making, epistemic enclosure, and educational analysis, it shows privatization as simultaneously epistemological, social, and spatial. The UDI case demonstrates how ideology becomes institutionalized through curriculum control, gendered access, memorization regimes, rejection of local traditions, and the production of an exclusive living space, offering insight beyond studies focused on formal Islamic institutions.

The study is limited by its single-case design in a rural Indonesian context, restricting generalizability. Its reliance on qualitative data may involve interpretive bias and lacks longitudinal measurement, while limited comparative analysis constrains external validation. Future research should employ comparative, mixed-method, and socio-historical approaches to refine the proposed framework.

Conclusion

This study concludes that religious privatization in the UDI community operates as a multi-mechanism social process manifested through eight interrelated domains: epistemological separation of knowledge, restriction of women’s education, doctrinal homogenization, memorization-based knowledge isolation, rejection of broader Muslim practices, theological reductionism centered on *tawhid*, purification-driven curriculum closure, and the production of an exclusive social space (“Kampung Baru”). Collectively, these mechanisms demonstrate that privatization is not merely a withdrawal of religion from the public sphere, but an active reorganization of knowledge, authority, gender roles, ritual boundaries, spatial arrangements, and educational practices within a tightly regulated community environment.

The case shows how religious ideology becomes institutionalized through everyday educational processes, shaping learners’ cognitive frameworks, social relations, and lived experiences. Privatization thus functions simultaneously as an epistemological strategy (controlling legitimate knowledge), a social strategy (regulating interaction and gender access), and a spatial strategy (structuring an insulated living environment) that together influence the orientation of Islamic education at the community level.

Global contribution. This research advances the study of Islamic education and religious privatization by offering an empirically grounded model that connects theories of religious privatization, epistemic enclosure, boundary maintenance, and disciplinary space within a single

analytical framework. It shifts the focus of Islamic education studies beyond formal institutions to enclosed religious communities, demonstrating how curriculum control, gender regulation, memorization regimes, ritual boundary-making, and spatial engineering can serve as instruments of ideological consolidation. The findings provide a conceptual lens applicable to the analysis of similar exclusivist religious communities worldwide, contributing to broader debates on religion, education, social control, and the challenges of fostering inclusive, adaptive, and dialogical religious learning in contemporary societies.

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