

Model of Social Conflict Resolution and Resolution from the Perspective of Political Leadership with a Social and Religious Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study examines a model of social conflict resolution from the perspective of political leadership that synergizes with social and religious approaches. Social conflicts frequently emerge in pluralistic societies as a result of differences in interests, identities, and interpretations of values. Responsive and ethical political leadership is regarded as a key factor in effective conflict resolution, particularly when combined with social approaches and religious values that promote peace and tolerance. This research employs a qualitative approach by examining social phenomena within communities, supported by a literature review to analyze the underlying sources of conflict. The findings indicate that sustainable social conflict resolution requires an integrated model that positions inclusive social dialogue and religious values as moral foundations in the processes of negotiation, reconciliation, and the implementation of agreements. This model is expected to serve as a framework that can be adapted to various contemporary social conflict contexts

INTRODUCTION

Background

Social conflict is an inherent social phenomenon that is unavoidable in pluralistic societies undergoing continuous change (Setiawan, 2024). Diversity in social, economic, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds creates a high potential for conflict, particularly when such differences are not managed in a fair and inclusive manner. Numerous studies indicate that social conflicts are often triggered by economic inequality, unequal distribution of resources, differences in group identities, variations in cultural values and norms, as well as intense and competitive political rivalry (Isfahani et al., 2025). These factors are frequently interconnected, thereby complicating the root causes of conflicts occurring within society.

In the context of a pluralistic country such as Indonesia, social conflict exhibits a higher level of complexity due to the influence of ethnic, religious, racial, and group diversity, as well as political dynamics at both local and national levels. Indonesia's socio-political history demonstrates that conflicts often emerge in the form of tensions between social groups with differing religious, ethnic, or political interests. Such conflicts not only threaten security stability but also have the potential to undermine social cohesion, hinder development, and weaken public trust in political institutions and governance (Suwarno & Mawardi, 2023).

According to (Hussain dkk., 2023) efforts to resolve social conflict cannot be carried out partially or solely through formal policy approaches and state legal instruments. Although public policies and law enforcement play an important role in maintaining social order, these approaches are often insufficient if not accompanied by a deep understanding of social conditions and the values embedded within society. Therefore, a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach is required one that is not only oriented toward structural and legal aspects but also addresses social and cultural dimensions. Strengthening religious values that uphold peace, justice, tolerance, and humanity constitutes an essential element in achieving sustainable conflict resolution processes (Prasetyo dkk., 2024).

Within this framework, political leadership plays a highly strategic role in the dynamics of social conflict. Political leaders possess legitimacy and authority to influence patterns of social interaction through policy formulation, the construction of public narratives, and the facilitation of dialogue and communication among conflicting groups. Responsive and inclusive political leadership can function as a critical instrument in reducing conflict escalation and building mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution (Northouse, 2021). Conversely, leadership that is exclusive, partisan, or that exploits conflict for short-term political interests has the potential to exacerbate social tensions.

One relevant example of social conflict is the religiously nuanced communal conflict in Ambon in the late 1990s, which was triggered by social tensions, economic disparities, and weak political control in the post-reform era, eventually escalating into mass violence between community groups. From the perspective of political leadership, the resolution of this conflict demonstrates the importance of leaders who are capable of acting inclusively, decisively, and

morally by simultaneously emphasizing social and religious approaches. Furthermore, Agrarian Conflicts and the Land Crisis (2024–2025) intensified significantly throughout 2024 to 2025, particularly in the plantation and natural resource sectors, involving land disputes between local communities and corporations or the expansion of national strategic projects. These conflicts affected tens of thousands of families and were frequently accompanied by violence and the criminalization of local communities (Rendanianti, 2025). In addition, National Protests and Social Tensions (2025) occurred during August–September 2025, marked by waves of mass demonstrations in Jakarta and other cities, triggered by economic frustration, government policies, and incidents of police violence against civilians (including the death of an online motorcycle taxi driver). These events reflect social conflict between citizens and state apparatuses (Natalegawa, 2025)

A number of empirical and theoretical studies indicate that the effectiveness of political leadership in resolving social conflict is largely determined by leaders' capacity to integrate formal political strategies with humanistic social and religious approaches. Socio-religious approaches enable political leaders to build trust, strengthen social solidarity, and foster collective awareness of the importance of peace and unity (Afrihadi dkk., 2025). Therefore, the development of a social conflict resolution model that integrates political leadership perspectives with social and religious approaches has become an urgent necessity in efforts to create social stability and sustainable peace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of a pluralistic country such as Indonesia, social conflict exhibits a higher level of complexity due to the influence of ethnic, religious, racial, and group diversity, as well as political dynamics at both local and national levels. Indonesia's socio-political history demonstrates that conflicts often emerge in the form of tensions between social groups with differing religious, ethnic, or political interests. Such conflicts not only threaten security stability but also have the potential to undermine social cohesion, hinder development, and weaken public trust in political institutions and governance (Suwarno & Mawardi, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive–analytical qualitative approach based on a literature review. The data were obtained from books on leadership theory and published scientific journal articles. The research method applied in this article is library research, which involves the systematic collection of information through the examination of theories from various references relevant to the study. According to Zed (2008), as cited in (Malahati dkk., 2023), there are four main stages in library research: preparing the necessary research tools, compiling a reference list, organizing the research timeline, and reading and writing research materials.

Data collection was conducted by identifying and reconstructing information from various sources, including books, academic journals, and previous research studies. The data analysis techniques used in this study consist

of content analysis and descriptive analysis. The literature materials obtained from diverse references were critically and in-depth analyzed to support arguments and interpretations. Furthermore, thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and key concepts related to social conflict resolution, the role of political leadership, and socio-religious approaches in conflict resolution. All sources were systematically analyzed to formulate a holistic conceptual model of social conflict resolution.

The explanation of the research method, research type, approach, data sources, and data analysis techniques above does not focus on defining methodological concepts or theoretical definitions proposed by research method scholars. Instead, it emphasizes the practical implementation of data acquisition and analysis processes. The object of this research is Baubau City, as this city frequently experiences internal conflicts among its residents on an annual basis. The primary data source in this study is derived from library research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Characteristics of Contemporary Social Conflict

Social conflict in contemporary society exhibits increasingly complex and multidimensional characteristics. Rapid social, political, and economic developments have transformed the patterns and dynamics of conflict, such that conflict can no longer be understood simply as the result of a single factor. (Isfahani dkk., t.t.), emphasize that contemporary social conflict arises not only from differences in religion or belief, but is also influenced by social inequality, economic disparity, and growing public dissatisfaction with public policies perceived as favoring the interests of certain groups.

Contemporary social conflict generally originates from long-standing structural problems. Inequality in access to economic resources, education, and public services is one of the primary factors triggering perceptions of social injustice. In addition, social and political discrimination against particular groups further amplifies the potential for conflict, especially when marginalized communities feel that they lack fair channels to express their aspirations. The absence or weakness of effective dialogue mechanisms between society and policymakers further exacerbates these conditions, allowing conflicts that were initially latent to escalate into open conflict (Setiawan, 2024).

Furthermore, contemporary social conflict is strongly influenced by political dynamics at both local and national levels. Intense political competition, particularly during political events such as general elections and local leadership elections, often exploits social, identity, and religious differences as tools for mass mobilization. Such identity politicization has the potential to sharpen existing divisions and weaken social cohesion within society. Under certain conditions, political conflict can easily transform into social conflict involving religious and ethnic sentiments, thereby increasing the risk of broader conflict escalation (Suwarno & Mawardi, 2023).

Another defining characteristic of contemporary social conflict is its rapid spread and difficulty to control, especially with the development of information technology and social media. Provocative information, hoaxes, and hate speech can spread easily and shape public perceptions, accelerating conflict escalation.

In such situations, conflict occurs not only in the physical realm but also in symbolic and discursive spaces, leading to deeper social polarization.

Therefore, contemporary social conflict demands more adaptive, responsive, and comprehensive conflict resolution approaches. Public policies that are sensitive to social justice, the strengthening of inclusive dialogue mechanisms, and political leadership capable of reducing tensions and constructing narratives of unity are key factors in preventing conflict escalation and fostering sustainable social stability.

B. The Role of Political Leadership in Conflict Resolution

Political leadership plays a crucial role in the process of social conflict resolution, particularly in plural societies characterized by diverse interests. Political leaders function not only as formal decision-makers but also as strategic actors who can guide conflict mitigation through dialogical approaches, inclusive public policies, and the cultivation of social trust. The success of conflict resolution largely depends on the capacity of political leadership to manage social dynamics fairly, transparently, and in the collective interest.

1. Facilitator of Dialogue

One of the primary roles of political leadership in conflict resolution is facilitating dialogue among conflicting groups. Effective political leaders are able to create safe, open, and inclusive spaces for dialogue, ensuring that all parties have equal opportunities to express their views, aspirations, and concerns. Constructively facilitated dialogue aims to build mutual understanding, reduce prejudice and negative stereotypes, and foster empathy among groups (Northouse, 2021).

Through sustained dialogue, political leaders can help identify the root causes of conflict and bridge competing interests. Inclusive dialogue also serves to reduce emotional tension and prevent broader conflict escalation. Thus, leadership as a facilitator of dialogue functions not only reactively but also preventively in averting future conflicts.

2. Designer of Inclusive Policies

Beyond facilitating dialogue, political leadership is required to design and implement inclusive and equitable public policies. Policies sensitive to social diversity and differing group interests have significant potential to reduce structural inequalities that often underlie social conflict. Political leaders must ensure that policy formulation processes involve diverse stakeholders, including minority and marginalized groups.

Research by (Afrihadi dkk., 2025) shows that participatory and inclusive governance contributes significantly to building social legitimacy for political decisions. Such legitimacy is essential, as communities are more likely to accept policies and conflict resolution outcomes when they feel involved in decision-making processes. Inclusive policies therefore function not only as conflict resolution instruments but also as foundations for long-term social stability.

3. Builder of Social Trust

Social trust is a fundamental element in effective and sustainable conflict resolution. Without trust between society and political leaders, conflict resolution efforts risk resistance or rejection. Consequently, political leaders bear responsibility for building and maintaining social trust through transparent, accountable, and consistent leadership practices (Northouse, 2021).

Leadership that upholds transparency, honesty in decision-making, and fairness in policy implementation strengthens public trust. When communities trust their leaders, they are more willing to accept peaceful negotiation outcomes and actively participate in social reconciliation processes. Thus, political leadership as a builder of social trust enhances not only conflict resolution effectiveness but also long-term social cohesion and political stability.

C. Social Approaches in Conflict Resolution

Social approaches to conflict resolution position communities as central actors in the conflict resolution process. This approach emphasizes active community participation, social capacity building, and community empowerment as foundations for sustainable peacebuilding. Social conflict affects not only individuals or specific groups but also the broader social structure; therefore, effective conflict resolution must directly involve communities to ensure inclusive, contextual, and widely accepted solutions.

Social approaches view conflict as something that cannot be resolved unilaterally through formal authority alone. Instead, conflict must be managed through social mechanisms that encourage dialogue, cooperation, and collective responsibility. By involving communities, resistance to conflict resolution outcomes can be minimized while strengthening post-conflict social cohesion.

1. Mediation and Negotiation

Mediation and negotiation are core instruments in social approaches to conflict resolution (Lemelin, 2017). Mediation involves a neutral third party trusted by all conflicting sides to facilitate effective and constructive communication. Mediators not only convey messages but also create conducive dialogue environments, manage emotions, and ensure equal participation opportunities (Moore W., 2014)

(Wall dkk., 2001) note that well-designed mediation processes enable conflicting parties to objectively identify root causes and formulate mutually acceptable solutions. Effective mediation emphasizes voluntariness, confidentiality, and equality, increasing agreement sustainability. Negotiation, meanwhile, functions as a bargaining process allowing parties to reach fair and rational compromises.

2. Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a critical element in social approaches to conflict resolution, as it positions communities as subjects rather than objects of conflict resolution processes. Empowerment involves enhancing community capacity for active participation in decision-making, resource management, and locally appropriate solution formulation (Lederach, 2017).

(Hidayat dkk., 2025) affirm that community empowerment significantly contributes to fostering ownership and shared responsibility for conflict resolution outcomes. When communities feel involved, compliance with peace agreements increases, while social capital such as trust, solidarity, and cooperative networks is strengthened, helping prevent future conflicts.

D. The Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution

Religion holds a strategic position in social life and can serve as a powerful instrument in social conflict resolution when employed constructively and inclusively. In many societies, religion functions not only as a belief system but also as a source of moral values, ethics, and behavioral guidance. Religious values emphasizing peace, justice, and humanity have strong potential to reduce tensions, build empathy, and encourage reconciliation among conflicting groups.

Religious approaches to conflict resolution emphasize moral and spiritual dimensions often overlooked by structural or political approaches. By integrating religious values positively, conflict resolution processes focus not only on formal agreements but also on restoring social relationships and fostering moral commitments to peaceful coexistence.

1. Values of Tolerance and Compassion

Most religious teachings emphasize tolerance, compassion, and respect for human dignity as foundational social principles. These values provide strong moral foundations for reconciliation and peacebuilding. (Hussain dkk., 2023) argue that internalizing tolerance and compassion reduces hostility, suppresses violence, and opens space for more humane dialogue.

When conflicting groups interpret religious teachings inclusively and humanistically, conflict resolution becomes more peaceful and sustainable. Religious leaders play a crucial role as moral agents who promote moderate interpretations, preventing the misuse of religion as a tool for legitimizing conflict.

2. Moral Reconciliation

Moral reconciliation is a vital aspect of religious approaches to conflict resolution. (Prasetyo dkk., 2024) highlight that processes involving acknowledgment of wrongdoing, remorse, apology, and forgiveness are essential for restoring damaged social relationships. Moral reconciliation addresses not only formal conflict resolution but also emotional healing and trust restoration.

Through moral reconciliation, conflicting parties reflect ethically and spiritually, fostering collective awareness of peaceful coexistence. Religion thus provides moral legitimacy that supports long-term peace commitments and prevents conflict recurrence.

Nevertheless, religion can also exacerbate conflict if exploited politically or interpreted narrowly and manipulatively. Therefore, moderate political and religious leadership is essential to ensure religion serves as a unifying force rather than a source of new conflict.

E. A Social Conflict Resolution Model Based on Political Leadership and Social-Religious Approaches

Based on theoretical analysis and prior discussion, social conflict is a multidimensional phenomenon requiring holistic and sustainable resolution approaches. Conflict resolution cannot rely solely on legal instruments or formal policies; it requires active political leadership supported by social and religious approaches. Accordingly, this study formulates an integrative social conflict resolution model combining political leadership with social and religious approaches.

This model positions political leadership as strategic guidance, social approaches as participatory mechanisms, and religious approaches as moral and ethical foundations. The integrative model consists of three interrelated phases: pre-resolution, core resolution, and post-resolution.

1. Phase I - Pre-Resolution

The pre-resolution phase is the initial stage that critically determines the overall success of the conflict resolution process. At this stage, the primary focus is directed toward developing a comprehensive understanding of the existing conflict and building a foundation of trust among the parties involved.

a) Conflict Mapping

Conflict mapping is conducted by identifying the actors involved, the interests at stake, and the root causes of the conflict, whether structural, cultural, or situational in nature. This process is essential to ensure that the designed conflict resolution strategies address the core problems rather than merely surface symptoms. Political leadership plays a key role in coordinating this mapping process in an objective and inclusive manner.

b) Formation of a Facilitation Team

The establishment of a facilitation team is a strategic step in the pre-resolution phase. This team involves various key actors, including political leaders, community leaders, religious figures, and representatives of the

conflicting groups. The involvement of diverse actors aims to enhance the legitimacy of the conflict resolution process and ensure that different social perspectives and religious values are proportionally accommodated.

c) Initial Dialogue

Initial dialogue is conducted in an informal and non-confrontational atmosphere as an effort to build preliminary trust and reduce mutual suspicion among the parties. This dialogue does not immediately focus on problem-solving but rather on opening channels of communication, strengthening empathy, and creating a conducive environment for subsequent resolution processes. Political leadership plays a crucial role in ensuring the neutrality and security of this dialogue space.

2. Phase II - Core Resolution

The core resolution phase constitutes the main stage of the conflict resolution process, in which resolution efforts are carried out in a structured and systematic manner by integrating social and religious approaches.

a) Mediation and Negotiation

Mediation and negotiation are conducted in a structured manner by involving a neutral third party trusted by all conflicting parties. This process aims to bridge differences in interests, formulate common ground, and produce fair and acceptable mutual agreements. Social approaches play an important role in ensuring that the mediation process is participatory and respects equality among the parties.

b) Moral and Religious Reconciliation

Moral and religious reconciliation is a defining feature of this integrative model. This process involves acknowledgment of wrongdoing, expressions of apology, and efforts to restore social relationships based on religious values such as tolerance, compassion, and justice. This approach not only resolves conflict at a formal level but also addresses emotional and spiritual dimensions that are essential for preventing the recurrence of conflict.

c) Inclusive Policy Agreements

The outcomes of mediation and reconciliation processes are then formulated into inclusive policy recommendations that are responsive to the needs of all parties. Political leadership plays a vital role in ensuring that these agreements are translated into public policies that are fair, transparent, and oriented toward collective welfare.

3. Phase III – Post-Resolution

The post-resolution phase aims to sustain peace and prevent the emergence of new conflicts in the future. This stage emphasizes implementation, education, and continuous evaluation.

a) Implementation of Agreements

The implementation of agreements is carried out by strengthening the commitment of all involved parties. Political leadership bears responsibility for ensuring that negotiation outcomes are implemented consistently and not merely symbolically. Joint monitoring between the government and the community is key to the success of this phase.

b) Peace Education

Peace education is implemented through community-based programs that instill values of social tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and moderate religious ethics. These programs aim to build collective awareness of the importance of peaceful coexistence and respect for diversity in the long term.

c) Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are conducted periodically to assess the effectiveness of agreement implementation and to identify potential new issues that could trigger conflict. The results of this evaluation serve as the basis for adjusting conflict resolution strategies to ensure their continued relevance to evolving social dynamics.

This integrative conflict resolution model offers a comprehensive, adaptive, and peace-oriented framework and is expected to serve as both a practical and academic reference for managing social conflict in plural societies.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective social conflict resolution requires a model that does not focus solely on political power or formal regulations, but also integrates social and religious approaches. Political leadership plays a strategic role in facilitating dialogue, designing inclusive policies, and building social trust. Social approaches help strengthen dialogue and community empowerment, while religious values provide a strong moral foundation for reconciliation and peace. The proposed integrative model offers a practical framework for policymakers and peace practitioners to address social conflicts in a holistic and sustainable manner.

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