

THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT: MAPPING AND INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS IN ACEH SINGKIL

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the root causes of interreligious conflict in Singkil at the grassroots level and to examine the mechanisms for conflict resolution in order to achieve mutual respect and prevent intolerance among religious adherents. The central argument of this research is that the emergence of sentiments and frictions among religious communities is driven by various factors, including differences in interfaith beliefs, politics, economics, ethnicity, and other forms of provocation that trigger conflict. The research seeks to map and categorize the root causes of conflict at the grassroots level and to explore the mechanisms for conflict resolution through various alternative conflict resolution approaches. This study employs a qualitative method, beginning with field observations and followed by in-depth interviews with key informants to uncover the causes of conflict and the mechanisms used for its resolution in the Singkil region. The findings indicate that the root causes of interreligious conflict stem from issues related to the establishment of houses of worship since the 1960s, differing interpretations of religious teachings, specific agendas that provoke conflict, the spread of misinformation, and provocative statements disseminated through social media alongside the advancement of information technology. Conflict resolution mechanisms have been implemented through cultural and customary approaches, deliberation and consensus, adherence to agreed-upon regulations and norms, the active and committed role of local government in addressing the conflict, and the development of mutual acceptance and respect among the conflicting parties.

Keywords: Conflict Roots; Conflict Mapping; Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi penyebab terjadinya konflik antarumat beragama di Singkil hingga ke akar rumput, serta mengkaji mekanisme penyelesaian konflik dalam rangka mencapai kesepakatan yang saling menghargai guna mencegah terjadinya intoleransi antar pemeluk agama. Argumentasi utama dalam penelitian ini adalah bahwa munculnya sentimen dan gesekan antarumat beragama disebabkan oleh berbagai faktor, seperti perbedaan keyakinan lintas agama, politik, ekonomi, etnis, serta bentuk-bentuk provokasi lainnya yang memicu konflik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan pemetaan dan kategorisasi penyebab konflik hingga ke tingkat akar

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Citation: Zulfatmi, Zulfatmi, Muji Mulia, Zakki Fuad Khalil, Muhajir Al Fairusy, Reza Idria, Husnul Khatimah, and Ade Faizah. "The Roots of Conflict: Mapping and Inter-Religious Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Aceh Singkil" *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 26, no. 1 (2026): 124–137

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rumpit, serta melakukan pemetaan mekanisme penyelesaian konflik dengan pendekatan alternatif resolusi konflik. Studi ini menggunakan metode kualitatif, dimulai dari observasi lapangan yang dilanjutkan dengan wawancara mendalam kepada informan untuk mengungkap penyebab konflik dan mekanisme penyelesaiannya di wilayah Singkil. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa akar penyebab konflik antarumat beragama dilatarbelakangi oleh persoalan pendirian rumah ibadah sejak tahun 1960, perbedaan interpretasi terhadap ajaran agama, adanya misi tertentu yang memicu konflik, penyebaran informasi yang tidak benar, serta pernyataan provokatif di media sosial yang berkembang seiring kemajuan teknologi informasi. Adapun mekanisme penyelesaian konflik dilakukan melalui pendekatan adat dan budaya, musyawarah dan mufakat, berpegang pada regulasi dan aturan yang telah disepakati, peran aktif serta keseriusan pemerintah daerah dalam menangani konflik, serta tumbuhnya sikap saling menerima dan menghargai antar pihak yang terlibat dalam konflik.

Kata Kunci: Akar konflik; Pemetaan konflik; Mekanisme Penyelesaian konflik.

مستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد الأسباب الكامنة وراء نشوء النزاعات بين أتباع الأديان في منطقة سينكيل حتى المستوى القاعدي، بالإضافة إلى دراسة آليات حل النزاعات بهدف التوصل إلى اتفاق قائم على الاحترام المتبادل، بما يساهم في الوقاية من مظاهر التعصب الديني بين أتباع الديانات المختلفة. وتكمن الحجة الأساسية في هذا البحث في أن بروز المشاعر السلبية والاحتكاكات بين أتباع الأديان يعود إلى عدة عوامل، من بينها الاختلافات في المعتقدات الدينية بين الأديان، والسياسة، والاقتصاد، والانتماءات العرقية، فضلاً عن أشكال أخرى من التحريض التي تؤدي إلى نشوء النزاعات. يهدف هذا البحث إلى رسم خريطة وتصنيف أسباب النزاع حتى مستوى القاعدة الشعبية، بالإضافة إلى دراسة آليات حل النزاعات باستخدام مقاربات بديلة لتسوية النزاعات. وقد اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على المنهج النوعي، بدءاً من الملاحظة الميدانية، تلاها إجراء مقابلات معمقة مع عدد من المخبرين لاكتشاف الأسباب التي أدت إلى نشوء النزاع وآليات حله في منطقة سينكيل. وقد أظهرت نتائج البحث أن جذور النزاع بين أتباع الأديان تعود إلى قضايا تتعلق ببناء دور العبادة منذ ستينيات القرن الماضي، والاختلاف في تفسير التعاليم الدينية، ووجود أجنداث معينة تؤدي إلى تأجيج النزاع، وانتشار المعلومات المضللة، بالإضافة إلى التصريحات التحريضية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، بالتزامن مع تطور تقنيات المعلومات. أما آليات حل النزاع، فقد تم تنفيذها من خلال الاعتماد على المقاربات الثقافية والعرفية، ومبدأ التشاور والتوافق، والالتزام بالقوانين والأنظمة المتفق عليها، والدور الفعّال والجدي للحكومة المحلية في معالجة النزاع، إلى جانب تنمية روح القبول المتبادل والاحترام بين الأطراف المتنازعة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: جذور الصراع; رسم خرائط الصراع; آليات حل النزاعات

A. Introduction

Indonesia is a nation characterized by its diversity in ethnicity, religion, culture, and language¹. While this diversity is a valuable asset, it also poses a significant potential for conflict. At various levels, interreligious tensions continue to surface within the discourse on

¹ Gina Lestari, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Khasanah Multikultural," *Jurnal Pendidikan Pancasila Dan Kewarganegaraan* I, no. 1 (2015).

interfaith relations in Indonesia². In the context of Aceh, interreligious conflicts frequently occur in border areas, particularly in Aceh Singkil Regency³. One major conflict in this region took place in 2015 between Muslim and Christian communities concerning plans to build a church⁴. The tension escalated into violence in October 2015, resulting in the death of a Christian religious leader and injuries to several others⁵.

According to various scholarly sources, the triggers of interreligious conflict in Singkil include: (1) intergroup prejudice, (2) levels of tolerance, (3) socioeconomic welfare, and (4) inter-community cooperation⁶. Among these factors, the issue of tolerance appears to be the most dominant cause. Nonetheless, the conflict is rooted in more complex issues involving religious, cultural, and political differences. Aceh Singkil is predominantly inhabited by Muslims, while several areas within the region are home to Christian communities, most of whom are of Nias ethnic origin⁷. Tensions between these two communities have persisted for a long time, even before and after the end of the separatist conflict in Aceh in 2005⁸.

Following the 2015 incident, the situation in Aceh Singkil remained relatively stable, although friction between communities continued. However, in July 2020, another violent outbreak occurred, leading to the death of a Christian man and the displacement of several individuals⁹. This episode of conflict was driven by tensions between indigenous populations and migrant communities, predominantly of Javanese descent¹⁰.

The disharmony among religious adherents in Singkil can be attributed to a range of internal and external factors¹¹. Internal factors are primarily related to individual religious understanding, including tendencies toward radical-extremist ideologies, subjective fundamentalism, exclusivism, literalism, and misinterpretation of one's own religious

² Firdaus M Yunus, "Konflik Agama Di Indonesia Problem Dan Solusi Pemecahannya," *Substantia* 16, no. 2 (2014).

³ Mallia Hartani and Soni Akhmad Nulhaqim, "Analisis Konflik Antar Umat Beragama Di Aceh Singkil," *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik* 2, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkrk.v2i2.28154>.

⁴ Winda Ika Pratiwi, "Dialog Antar Agama-Konflik: Jalan Damai Konflik Islam-Kristen Di Aceh Singkil Tahun 2015," *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 4, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.2020.0401-02>.

⁵ Agus Triyono and Ahmad Joko Setyawan, "Aceh Dan Konflik Agama: Konstruksi Pada Harian Republika," *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam* 22, no. 1 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v22i1.14773>.

⁶ Muji Mulia et al., "Fungsi Komunikasi Lintas Budaya Dalam Konflik Agama Masyarakat Perbatasan Aceh," *Aceh Anthropological Journal* 6, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.29103/aaj.v6i2.8116>.

⁷ Sahrul, "Religion and Social Conflict in Aceh Singkil, Nanggroe Aceh Darusalam, Indonesia," *Astra Salvensis* 2017 (2017).

⁸ Hartani and Nulhaqim, "Analisis Konflik Antar Umat Beragama Di Aceh Singkil."

⁹ *Angga Prasetya and Soma Surya Persada, "Membaca Konflik: Problematika Dan Refleksi Atas Kehidupan Beragama Masyarakat Aceh Singkil," *JIM: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah* 7, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.24815/jimps.v7i3.21212>.

¹⁰ Hartani and Nulhaqim, "Analisis Konflik Antar Umat Beragama Di Aceh Singkil."

¹¹ Abdul Aziz and Ahmad Muhajir, "Perspektif Sosiologi Agama" (Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Peringatan Hari Besar Keagamaan (PHBA)," *JDARISCOMB: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam* 1, no. 01 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.30739/jdariscomb.v1i01.800>.

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teachings. Such orientations can lead to religion being perceived as a threat, both to other faith communities and to groups within the same religion.

External factors include hedonistic and opportunistic attitudes that commodify religion for personal or political gain, contributing to prolonged humanitarian crises. Theoretically, fundamentalism suggests that conflict arises from an absolute adherence to religious beliefs and a rejection of religious pluralism¹². This rigid stance can provoke tensions among different religious or belief groups.

Bernard Lewis, a British-American historian and Middle East scholar¹³, is considered one of the key proponents of fundamentalist theory. Within this framework, conflict is seen as emerging from differences in the interpretation and application of religious doctrines¹⁴. In the Indonesian context, interreligious rivalry often involves adherents who defend their faith with absolute certainty while rejecting pluralistic values, thereby igniting intergroup conflicts¹⁵.

In religious discourse, fundamentalism refers to societal groups that rigidly uphold their religious tenets and reject religious diversity. Such a stance is a significant driver of conflict among religious or belief-based communities. This study, therefore, seeks to identify the root causes of conflict using a fundamentalist theoretical approach. Given that conflicts in Aceh Singkil tend to stem from interreligious tensions, it is crucial to examine these underlying factors. Mapping out the conflict clearly will facilitate the development of mutual solutions (win-win solutions) to de-escalate and resolve conflicts in a sustainable manner.

Conflict resolution becomes imperative to prevent further fragmentation of society. One of the most prominent figures in conflict resolution studies is Johan Galtung¹⁶, a Norwegian sociologist recognized for his international contributions. He developed several key concepts in conflict resolution, including *peacebuilding* and *conflict transformation*¹⁷.

In explaining the mechanisms for resolving religious conflicts, Galtung emphasizes the importance of understanding root causes and transforming the sources of conflict. He argues

¹² Mohammad Asrori Alfa, "Modernisme Dan Fundamentalisme Sebagai Fenomena Gerakan Keagamaan Dalam Sosial Masyarakat," *El-HARAKAH* 8, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v8i2.4749>.

¹³ Ihab Shalbak, "The Roots of Bernard Lewis' Rage," *Postcolonial Studies*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2018.1548889>.

¹⁴ Zainuddin Syarif and Abd Hannan, "Fundamentalism and the Challenges of Religious," *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 25, no. 1 (2021).

¹⁵ Syarif and Hannan.

¹⁶ Fajar Khaswara and R. Yuli Ahmad Hambali, "Conflict Theory According to Johan Galtung," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 4 (2021).

¹⁷ Galbani Fadilah and Ilim Abdul Halim, "Potential for Peacebuilding in Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka Based on the Thoughts of Johan Galtung," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 4 (2021).

that religious conflicts can be resolved through the transformation of underlying issues, which often stem from social, political, economic, and cultural factors¹⁸.

Based on the issues and literature review above, this study is categorized as both sociological and phenomenological research¹⁹. The research was conducted in Aceh Singkil Regency, a region with a long history of interreligious conflict. The primary data sources for this study are informants who were directly involved in religious conflicts in the area.

Data collection was conducted using three primary methods: documentation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). First, document analysis covered materials related to public perceptions of interreligious conflict in Aceh. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with informants to explore the empirical realities behind the conflict, the nature of interfaith relations, and previous resolution efforts. Third, FGDs were used to verify or expand upon preliminary findings from interviews and document analysis.

Using these methods, this study aims to examine the root causes of interreligious intolerance in Aceh Singkil. Although Indonesia is widely regarded as a nation that upholds religious pluralism and diversity, interfaith conflict remains a recurring issue²⁰. For instance, the religious conflict between Christian and Muslim communities in Maluku, which was driven by ethnic and religious issues, highlights the ongoing fragility of interreligious solidarity in Indonesia²¹.

In light of this phenomenon, the present article seeks to uncover empirical realities that constitute the root causes of interfaith conflict. It is hoped that this will allow for the development of a conflict map and the exploration of locally grounded cultural principles and conflict resolution mechanisms, ultimately contributing to a peaceful and sustainable resolution of religious conflict in Aceh Singkil.

B. Discussion

1. Mapping the Roots of Conflict in Singkil

The society of Aceh Singkil is pluralistic and multireligious. All five officially recognized religions in Indonesia—Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are present in this region²². Islam constitutes the majority religion among the

¹⁸ Fadilah and Halim.

¹⁹ Ririn Handayani, *Metode Penelitian Sosial, Bandung*, 2020.

²⁰ Muji Mulia et al., "Conflict and Consensus in Fiqh Siyasah: The Practice of Islamic Law Across Various Cultures," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 12, no. 3 (2024): 1263–88, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1363>.

²¹ Thoha Hamin, Khoirun Niam, and Akh Muzakki, *Resolusi Konflik Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Sosial LSAS dan IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2007).

²² Muhajir Al Fairusy, *Singkel, Sejarah, Enisitas, Dan Dinamika Sosial* (Denpasar Bali: Pustaka Larasan, 2016).

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population. In addition to religious diversity, the community is ethnically heterogeneous, comprising individuals from various ethnic backgrounds such as Minangkabau, Pakpak, Javanese, Nias, Batak, and others, which contributes to a rich and vibrant socio-cultural landscape. Among these groups, the Minangkabau and Pakpak communities are the most dominant²³.

Such diversity, while a strength, also holds the potential for conflict, particularly in matters related to religion. In Aceh Singkil, religious tensions often center around issues of faith, where some members of the Muslim majority perceive the presence of churches and Christian religious activities as a threat to Islamic identity and dominance²⁴. Interreligious conflicts in this area are typically triggered by noncompliance with regulations and procedural mechanisms regarding the establishment of places of worship²⁵.

Based on findings from direct interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), the conflict in Aceh Singkil can be mapped into five major issues: (1) the establishment of places of worship, (2) missionary activities, (3) political tensions, (4) the spread of provocative information by irresponsible individuals and media, and (5) competition over community economic resources.

Investigative reports from the Forum for Religious Harmony and the Aceh Singkil Regency Government indicate that a primary catalyst of the conflict is the construction of Christian houses of worship without adherence to the prevailing licensing procedures. Such actions have sparked anger among Muslim communities, leading to incidents of church burnings—events that have drawn both national and international attention²⁶.

According to religious leaders and civil society organizations involved in FGDs, political dynamics often serve as the underlying cause of interreligious tensions. Campaign promises made by candidates during local elections frequently escalate personal rivalries into broader religious conflicts. For example, in legislative elections, Muslim candidates often compete with non-Muslim candidates. In some areas, the latter are elected due to greater financial resources, even in regions with a Muslim-majority base²⁷.

²³ Muhajir Al-Fairus and Irwan Abdullah, “‘Enda Kalak Singkel’ Strengthening Consciousness of Community Identity of Aceh’s Border; Ethnic Contestation and Religion in Singkil,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 20, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v0i0.6862>.

²⁴ Edi Yuhermansyah and Mukhlis Mukhlis, “Implementasi Qanun Jinayah Di Aceh Singkil Perspektif Multikulturalisme,” *LEGITIMASI: Jurnal Hukum Pidana Dan Politik Hukum* 7, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.22373/legitimasi.v7i2.3973>.

²⁵ Muhammad Hatta, Zulfan, and Masriadi, “Peranan Tokoh Masyarakat (Tomas) Dalam Mencegah Konflik Antar Agama Di Kabupaten Aceh Singkil,” *Jurnal Kolaborasi Resolusi Konflik* 2, no. 2 (2020).

²⁶ FKUB, “Laporan FKUB Kabupaten Aceh Singkil Atas Peristiwa Tanggal 13 Oktober 2015 Terkait Konflik Rumah Ibadah” (Singkil, February 2020).

²⁷ Mawardi Mawardi et al., “Harmony in Diversity: An Exploration of Peaceful Coexistence between Muslim and Christian Communities in Aceh, Indonesia,” *Khazanah Sosial* 5, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.15575/ks.v5i1.25168>.

A notable example occurred in Suka Makmur Village, Gunung Meriah Subdistrict, where the non-Muslim community constitutes approximately 60% of the population, compared to 40% Muslims. This demographic imbalance influences local policymaking, and if not addressed with prudence, may lead to social unrest²⁸.

This finding is consistent with the view of Thoha Hamim, who asserts that violence committed in the name of religion is often driven by the manipulation of religious interpretation and the politicization of religion²⁹. Structural policies also contribute to conflict, as seen in the appointment of village heads (*keuchik*) and village secretaries (*sekdes*). In some cases, non-Muslim *keuchik* appoint *sekdes* from their own religious group, despite the Muslim community's preference for a Muslim appointee. Since the appointment of the *sekdes* falls under the authority of the *keuchik*, this practice has further intensified community tensions.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the root of interreligious conflict in Aceh Singkil most frequently relates to the establishment of places of worship. The primary issue arises when such establishments are constructed without adherence to formal regulations and mutual agreements. As for the motivations behind the construction of houses of worship by the Christian community, one Christian religious leader explained as follows:

*"Saya mewakili umat Kristen dalam pertemuan antar umat beragama, dalam pertemuan berikut saya menyampaikan bahwa sebelum berlakunya Qanun syariat islam di Aceh, Gereja sudah dulu ada di Kabupaten Aceh Singkil. Secara muamalah kami masyarakat masih rukun antar pemeluk lintas agama. Selain itu juga, bahwa umat Kristen di Singkil jumlahnya mencapai sekitar 18 ribu."*³⁰

"I represented Christians in an interfaith meeting, in the next meeting I conveyed that before the implementation of Islamic law in Aceh, the Church had already existed in Aceh Singkil Regency. In terms of social interaction, we are still harmonious between adherents of different religions. In addition, the number of Christians in Singkil reaches around 18 thousand"

The statement above indicates that the establishment of places of worship by the Christian community in Singkil is primarily driven by the need for adequate worship facilities. Nevertheless, Christian leaders acknowledge that such actions violated existing regulations and mutually agreed provisions between religious communities in Singkil.

According to records from the Aceh Singkil Police and reports from local residents, the conflict originated from the construction of houses of worship, missionary activities, and other

²⁸ Muji Mulia, "Relasi Muslim Dan Non Muslim Di Aceh Dalam Konteks Negara Bangsa" (UIN Ar-Raniry, 2017).

²⁹ Akh Muzakki, Thoha Hamim, Khoirun Niam, *Resolusi Konflik Islam Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Sosial LSAS dan IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2007).

³⁰ Results (Forum Group Discussion on the Roots of Interreligious Conflict in Aceh Singkil), March 17, 2020

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complex issues such as competition over economic resources, political interests, and local socio-cultural dynamics. These issues later escalated into interreligious conflict.

Hendropuspito identifies several causes of interreligious conflict, including religious sentiment, imposition of religious doctrines, claims of absolute truth, missionary activities, mutual suspicion, and tensions between majority and minority religious groups³¹. When compared with the case in Aceh Singkil, many of these factors are evidently similar. Conflicts are often triggered by provocative issues and violations of regulations agreed upon by both the community and the authorities.

Based on findings from interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) involving interfaith leaders in Singkil, the main sources of interreligious conflict include the construction of places of worship without official government permits, provocative preaching, and misinterpretations of religious teachings. These factors have contributed to religious violence and radical actions committed in the name of religion.

According to Jakfar, violence in the religious context stems from the absence of critical reflection on religious doctrines by their adherents. Because religious leaders operate within their respective doctrinal frameworks, they often struggle to transcend rigid theological boundaries³². Hery Nugroho conceptualizes conflict as part of a "regime of significance" within socio-political and cultural practices, or as a consequence of social injustice. Divergent cultural backgrounds, which give rise to different values and identities, can also serve as sources of conflict. From the perspective of M. Dawan Rahardjo³³, interreligious conflict is the result of the politicization of religion.

Bernard Lewis offers a more complex perspective on the causes of conflict, including those related to religion³⁴. He emphasizes the importance of developing a deeper understanding of religious teachings and beliefs among all parties involved. One proposed solution is the promotion of sincere and open interfaith dialogue, along with efforts to foster equality and tolerance among religious groups. However, Lewis also acknowledges that religious conflict can become particularly intractable when it is longstanding and compounded by political, social, and economic factors. Therefore, effective conflict resolution must be structured and involve multiple stakeholders to achieve sustainable outcomes³⁵.

³¹ Hendropuspito, *Sosiologi Agama* (Yogyakarta: Lanisius, 1983).

³² Alamsyah M.D Jakfar, *Dekonstruksi Agama Untuk Demokratisasi* (Jakarta: Media Indonesia, 2001).

³³ M. Dawan Rahardjo, *Merayakan Kemajemukan Kebebasan Dan Kebangsaan* (Jakarta: Kencana Pranada Media Group, 2010).

³⁴ Inam Ullah Wattu and Abida Naseem, "Critical Approach to Perceptions of Bernard Lewis Regarding Islamic Political & Social Practices.," *IQAN* 1, no. 01 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.36755/iqan.v1i01.38>.

³⁵ Wattu and Naseem.

Field data indicates that the conflict in Singkil cannot yet be classified as a manifestation of extreme religious fundamentalism. This finding supports Lewis's view that fanaticism and rigid interpretations of religious teachings can trigger interreligious conflict. In other words, the conflict in Singkil is more accurately attributed to violations of shared principles and agreements by certain groups, rather than to extreme intolerance per se. This also demonstrates that the Muslim community in Singkil generally respects the existence and beliefs of other religious groups, including Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians³⁶.

Based on these findings, the interreligious conflict in Aceh Singkil can be characterized by several key features. First, religious conflict, marked by the perception among some Muslims that the presence of churches and Christian religious activities constitutes a threat to Islam. Second, violence and intimidation, whereby conflicts frequently culminate in acts of violence and coercion against individuals or groups, causing harm to both parties. Third, discrimination against minority groups, particularly Christians, in terms of access to resources and social rights. Fourth, the involvement of external actors, including civil society organizations and interest groups from outside the region, who exacerbate tensions and complicate the conflict resolution process.

Thus, the challenges in resolving the conflict in Aceh Singkil include limited resources and institutional capacity, low levels of mutual trust, and differing perspectives on viable solutions. In this context, a holistic and integrated approach is essential—one that actively engages all stakeholders and prioritizes sustainable, peace-oriented models of conflict resolution.

2. Interreligious Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Singkil

The interreligious conflicts occurring in Singkil stem from various underlying factors. If these conflicts are not properly addressed, they may escalate into a ticking time bomb, potentially igniting friction and even physical confrontations between religious communities. To foster lasting interreligious harmony in Aceh, a comprehensive, sustainable conflict resolution strategy is urgently needed—one that aims to establish enduring peace³⁷.

Field observations reveal that the root causes of interreligious conflict in Aceh often remain unresolved due to the absence of approaches that address the core issues comprehensively. In Singkil, such conflicts are predominantly related to the establishment of houses of worship, which frequently serve as the main trigger for tensions and disputes³⁸.

³⁶ Syarif and Hannan, "Fundamentalism and the Challenges of Religious."

³⁷ Mulia et al., "Fungsi Komunikasi Lintas Budaya Dalam Konflik Agama Masyarakat Perbatasan Aceh."

³⁸ Muji Mulia, "Relasi Muslim Dan Non Muslim Di Aceh Dalam Konteks Negara Bangsa."

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Based on field research, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis, several models and mechanisms for resolving interreligious conflicts have been identified. These include: (1) Approaches grounded in local customs and cultural traditions, (2) Deliberative dialogue, (3) Adherence to existing regulations and legal frameworks, and (4) Mutual respect and acceptance between conflicting parties.

Conflict resolution through traditional and cultural approaches has emerged as a key strategy for promoting social harmony in Aceh Singkil, particularly when tensions involve groups with different religious backgrounds. From a cultural standpoint, religious conflicts are often driven by deep-seated intrinsic motivations or desires within certain religious adherents³⁹.

In addition to cultural approaches, deliberation has been promoted as a conflict resolution mechanism by the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB) and the Aceh Singkil Regency Government. This forum allows for peaceful resolution efforts that do not always require strict adherence to regional regulations (*qanun*). FKUB serves as a mediator between Muslim and non-Muslim communities, facilitating dialogue to explore peaceful solutions.

Dialogue—or *shura* in Islamic tradition—can also be understood as a form of dialogue. Within such dialogue, it is vital for all parties to recognize that each religion possesses absolute tenets that must be respected. Consequently, the dialogue process must be grounded in mutual understanding and tolerance for religious differences⁴⁰.

Another key mechanism is strict compliance with the legal and regulatory provisions regarding the establishment of houses of worship. The conflict in Singkil—including incidents such as the burning of worship facilities—should not be interpreted as an expression of hatred by Muslims toward other religions. Rather, it reflects efforts to regulate unauthorized religious buildings. Such conflicts could have been avoided if all parties adhered to applicable laws, regional regulations (*qanun*), and national legislation.

To achieve sustainable peace in Aceh, all stakeholders must uphold the agreed-upon regulations and communal accords. Furthermore, the dissemination of honest and accurate information is crucial, along with efforts to prevent the spread of manipulative data or provocative statements that may aggravate the situation.

Researchers also found that mutual respect and acceptance between both religious communities is essential in resolving interreligious conflicts in Singkil. Muslims and Christians are expected to honor and accept jointly agreed decisions. This attitude forms the foundation

³⁹ Muhajir Al Fairusy, “Model Konsensus Dan Rekonsiliasi Konflik Antar-Umat Beragama Di Aceh Singkil,” *Al-Ijtima’i: International Journal Government and Social Science FISIP UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh* 1, no. 1 (2015).

⁴⁰ Thoha Hamin, Khoirun Niam, and Akh Muzakki, *Resolusi Konflik Islam Indonesia*.

for fostering a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere, a point that has also been emphasized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Aceh Singkil.

Another equally important aspect is the seriousness of government involvement in managing interreligious conflicts. Field data indicates that both the provincial and regency governments have demonstrated limited commitment in this regard. There is even a perception that local authorities have allowed such conflicts to persist without adequate intervention.

Several figures interviewed during the study, as well as participants in discussion forums, expressed concerns about the lack of commitment and seriousness on the part of local governments—particularly regional leaders—in resolving the prolonged conflict. This suggests that any conflict resolution mechanism will be ineffective without strong governmental will and engagement.

A comprehensive conflict resolution process is essential to preserve interreligious harmony. Johan Galtung's *Transcend Method*⁴¹ offers a holistic approach to conflict resolution by addressing three key dimensions: culture, structure, and attitudes⁴². First, the cultural dimension emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural factors that influence conflict, including religious beliefs, values, and practices. Respect for cultural and religious diversity is fundamental to achieving sustainable peace. Second, the structural dimension highlights the need to address structural injustices such as discrimination, socio-economic inequality, and imbalances of power. A more equitable and inclusive system must therefore be established. Third, the attitudinal dimension focuses on fostering mutual respect and tolerance among religious communities. Dialogue and negotiation are critical tools for overcoming differences and achieving shared understanding.

Within the Transcend Method framework, Galtung stresses the importance of constructive cooperation and participatory decision-making. Conflict resolution efforts will only succeed when all stakeholders feel respected, heard, and meaningfully included in the process. In conclusion, Galtung's approach offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and resolving conflict, making it particularly relevant to the situation in Singkil, where resolution efforts must address the root causes.

Based on field data, the most effective conflict resolution mechanism involves a strong commitment from the government combined with the active participation of religious leaders in maintaining interfaith harmony. The government is responsible for enforcing regulations,

⁴¹ Percy Calderón Concha, "Teoría de Conflictos de Johan Galtung," *Revista de Paz y Conflictos* 2 (2009).

⁴² Johan Galtung, "Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means (the Transcend Method) Participants' & Trainers' Manual," *Management*, 2000.

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overseeing implementation, and serving as a mediator. Meanwhile, religious leaders—highly respected within their communities—play a vital role in offering guidance and promoting reconciliation amidst religious diversity.

C. Conclusion

The factors that trigger interreligious conflicts in Singkil are as follows. First, the establishment of places of worship without official permits. Second, the emergence of issues related to disputes over the interpretation or understanding of religious teachings within a religious community, as well as leadership status within certain religious groups. Third, the presence of missions by certain groups aiming to disrupt interreligious harmony through proselytizing activities. Fourth, the spread of false and inaccurate information that provokes conflicts among religious communities. Fifth, the lack of serious conflict resolution efforts from the government. Sixth, provocative and divisive statements disseminated by foreign media with the intent to destabilize interreligious harmony.

The mechanisms and models for resolving interreligious conflicts in Aceh include several approaches: first, a customary and cultural approach that emphasizes the role of local traditions in conflict resolution. Second, conflict resolution through deliberation as a forum for dialogue and mutual consensus. Third, adherence to regulations and laws governing the establishment of places of worship by all parties. Fourth, an attitude of acceptance, mutual respect, and tolerance from both disputing parties. Fifth, the government's seriousness in addressing and resolving interreligious conflicts.

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