Building Bridges, Not Walls: Navigating Inter-Religious Conflict Over Worship Spaces in Aceh Singkil, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the factors causing conflict, analyse conflict resolution methods, and determine the factors that hinder the resolution of conflicts related to the construction of houses of worship in Aceh Singkil District. The research employs a qualitative approach, collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The findings reveal that inter-religious conflicts, particularly between Muslims and Christians, are triggered by the construction of houses of worship that do not comply with agreed-upon terms. The Aceh Singkil government has taken several steps to address these conflicts, such as socialising regulations, promoting mutual respect among religious adherents, conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and holding dialogues with conflicting parties. However, the resolution is hindered by factors like the binding nature of the 1979 Agreement, incomplete conflict resolution efforts, political issues, suboptimal performance of relevant institutions, and the fact that the clergy are not indigenous. This research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of inter-religious conflicts in Aceh Singkil, highlighting the complex interplay of social, political, and legal factors in conflict resolution.

Keywords: Inter-Religious Conflict; House of Worship; Conflict Resolution.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor penyebab konflik, menganalisis metode penyelesaian konflik, dan mengetahui faktor-faktor yang menghambat penyelesaian konflik pembangunan rumah ibadah di Kabupaten Aceh Singkil. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konflik antarumat beragama, khususnya antara umat Islam dan Kristen, dipicu oleh pendirian rumah ibadah yang tidak sesuai dengan perjanjian yang telah disepakati. Pemerintah Aceh Singkil telah mengambil beberapa langkah untuk mengatasi konflik ini, seperti sosialisasi peraturan, mempromosikan saling menghormati antar pemeluk agama, melakukan *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD), dan mengadakan dialog dengan pihak-pihak yang berkonflik. Namun, penyelesaian konflik terhambat oleh beberapa faktor seperti keterikatan pada Perjanjian tahun 1979, upaya penyelesaian konflik yang tidak tuntas, isu politik, kinerja lembaga terkait yang belum optimal, dan pendeta bukan putra daerah asli. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga tentang dinamika konflik antarumat beragama di Aceh Singkil, menyoroti kompleksitas interaksi faktor sosial, politik, dan hukum dalam penyelesaian konflik.

Kata Kunci: Konflik Antar Agama; Rumah Ibadah; Penyelesaian Konflik.

1. Introduction

Ideally, a house of worship for every believer is a place to get the nuances of a harmonious and peaceful life to escape from the pressures of worldly life and draw oneself closer to God (Auda, 2017). Nonetheless, establishing houses of worship may cause community conflict to emerge in the public sphere (Adawiyah, Ismanto, & Yasin, 2015; Effendy & Mahfud, 2021). Many see that house of worship construction is a rapidly escalating religious sentiment in the community where certain religious dominance manifests through control over local regulations and legal products (Burhanuddin, Nurdin, & Helmy, 2019; Chiodelli & Moroni, 2017).

At a certain level, the existence of churches, temples, or synagogues may become a problem that is prone to disrupt harmony between different religions people in a dominantly Muslim country like in Indonesia, In regards to conflicts that have occurred in Indonesia due to the establishment of places of worship, these conflicts have taken place in Jawa Tengah (Fidiyani, 2016), Bekasi, Sulawesi, Aceh, and other areas (Fazriyanto, 2017). particularly in Aceh with the adoption of Islamic Law. The leading cause is that the minority's house of worship construction is inseparable from the short-term vested interests, including political interests (Lubis, 2012). Thus, inter-religious conflict can be defined as a subtype of religious conflict that refers to religious discord and tensions between at least two religions (Patel & Peace, 2018).

The house of worship is one of the religious symbols signifying the self-importance of its followers. This is what underlies the motives to construct the house of worship. For Muslims, mosques and praying rooms are established in the community, both in residential neighbourhoods, working environments, and shopping places (Abd. Hamid, Mohd Taib, Abdul Wahab, & Alias, 2015; Mustafa, Yudono, Wikantari, & Harisah, 2018). Likewise, Christians want a church in their neighborhood (Lubis, 2012). Nevertheless, the construction of houses of worship in public areas often raises problems caused by conflicts of interest, namely disrupting the ideals of religious harmony (Garadian, 2016). It involves collective action and claims-making, among others, ranging from those who question the establishment of churches to the government's decision for granting permission as a regulatory provider to build the house of worship (Ardiansah, 2018; Ropi, 2017)

In Indonesia, there are at least two legal guidelines regarding the construction of the house of worship (Marshall, 2018; Ropi, 2017). First, the decree from the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Internal State Affairs Number 01/BER/MDNMAG/1969 on the Implementation of the Task of Government Apparatus in Ensuring Order and Smooth Implementation of Development and Worship of Religion by Its Followers. Second, the decree from the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Internal State Affairs Number No.8 and 9 of 2006 on Guidelines for the Implementation of The Duties of Governors/Vice Governors in the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Empowerment of Religious Harmony Forum, and Establishment of Houses of Worship. In the context of Aceh, it is accompanied by the local regulation, Qanun Aceh Number 4 of 2016 on The Maintenance of Religious Harmony and establishment of Houses of Worship (Zain & Maturidi, 2021).

With regard to the house of worship construction in Aceh Singkil district, as one of the furthest districts in Aceh province – near the border to North Sumatra Province, there have been previous conflicts between religious people, especially between Muslims and Christians (Ansor, 2013). The conflict between religious communities triggered by this house of worship construction already occurred three times, in 1979, 2001 and 2015 (Hartani & Nulhaqim, 2020). To overcome this, reiterates that the Aceh Singkil district government has taken various efforts to address this problem, for example conducting socialization about regulations regarding the establishment of places of worship, urging followers of religions to mutually respect each other's beliefs, and organizing Focus Group Discussions (FGD) for the resolution of conflicts between religious communities (Ahmad, 2016), although they have not hitherto found satisfactory results.

In this light, the dominant studies on the inter-religious conflict in Indonesia particularly focus on the attempts to promote communal peace, community harmonization, religious pluralism, or intercultural competence (Eko & Putranto, 2019; Naim & Qomar, 2021; Pedersen, 2016; Robinson, 2016). The relationship between the majority and the minority group is particularly argued as an issue to

address to stop the spread of intolerance, violence and damaging acts between the conflicting religions, also considering the relationship between the state and religion in Indonesia in a bigger context (Prasetyo, 2014). For many observers, the inter-religious conflict caused by the construction of the house of worship is therefore developed within majority religion towards their minority counterpart is sometimes linked to identity and Islamophobia (Dauda, 2020). Nevertheless, inter-religious conflict is often seen as an ever-present occurrence and could develop in different directions, including in the formerly unobtrusive society. In this light, research has highlighted that in such cases where latent conflict is looming, local custom and wisdom can play an essential role to revitalize peace in the community (Pahruddin & Halim, 2019).

Expanding the discussion on inter-religious conflict in the sharia-based province like Aceh, the collective action in the conflict is still very much relevant (Anshori, 2012). In the case of Aceh, some studies have tried to track down the dispute settlement mechanism for handling the inter-religious tension (Arumbinang, 2021; Zain, Harahap, Harahap, Nasution, & Nasution, 2019). Inayatillah (2021) argues that social harmony in Aceh was righteously maintained between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Banda Aceh, for example. She further maintains that Acehnese inherited the pluralistic society, and its inter-religious harmony remained closely intertwined in the dominant Muslim society. Therefore, inter-religious conflict should be understood in the context of Aceh, as an accumulation of the long-standing cosmopolite culture of hospitality and civilization of Acehnese society eroded by the long-protracted civil war (Missbach, 2017). In the context of Aceh, as Manan, Hadi & Saputra (2021) notice, perspectives from the victims during post-conflict/post-war reconcilitiation were rarely considered, causing the basic human values are substanstially failed and divisions within the society is becoming more and more exposed.

Conflict means fights, wars or disputes in the form of physical conflicts between several parties (Fruit & R, 2011). Coser defines conflict as a struggle against values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources to neutralize or eliminate rivals (Coser, 2011). Three factors are the source of conflict. First, everyone has these aspirations and aspirations can grow and develop then into a conflict. Second, the perception of the other party`s aspirations. Having high aspirations is not enough to cause a person or group of people to get involved in conflict. Third, there is no acceptable alternative for all parties (Fruit & R, 2011). Thus, a well-managed conflict can provide significant change for the parties involved, but if not handled properly the conflict will only have a bad impact on the people involved.

However, conflict has several positive functions. First, it is considered as the forerunner or the initial process of social change. Lederach (2014) asserts that conflict can lead to transformation if the guiding principles in conflict management are clearly articulated. Second, it can be a medium for achieving reconciliation of various interests. In the same light, Maddison (2016) believes that conflict transformation can eventually trigger a complete reconciliation between the opposing parties. Third, conflict can bind and strengthen the unity of the group as it educate people to educate on the importance of diversity and respect (Asmara, 2020; Bazzi, Gaduh, Rothenberg, & Wong, 2019; Perwita, 2015).

There are various types of conflict, namely, racial and inter-tribal conflicts, inter-religious conflicts and conflicts between states/ nations (E M Setiadi, 2020). The racial conflict is characterized by the emergence of skin color and ethnic-based tensions in the community. In industrial communities, this type of conflict oftentimes is driven by practical causes and hegemonic culture over the other race (Freeman, 2016). On the other hand, inter-religious conflict takes place amid religious identification and contact in society (Kanas, Scheepers, & Sterkens, 2016). Inter-religious conflict may also be triggered by different political beliefs and different framing leading to dispute and disengagements (Fong & Kit, 2016).

While conflict resolution in the view of experts who focus on conflict research, says that conflict resolution has different meanings, conflict resolution also suggests using more democratic and constructive ways to resolve conflicts. This is done by giving the parties to the conflict the opportunity to solve their problems or by involving wise, neutral and fair third parties to help the parties to the conflict solve their problems (Wisnu, 2015).

Leiner & Schliesser (2017) said that conflict resolution can be done in several approaches. First is negotiation, the process of bargaining by negotiating to reach a mutual agreement between one party and another party (Barsky, 2017; Harinck & Druckman, 2017). Thus, there is conciliation, the control of conflict through certain institutions that enables the growth of patterns of discussion and decision-making among the parties to the conflict (Fazaluddin, 2016; Honeycutt, Sheldon, Pence, & Hatcher, 2015). Mediation is the following conflict resolution approach where the parties to the conflict agree to appoint a third party who will provide advice; regarding the best resolution to the conflict they are experiencing (Malizia & Jameson, 2018). In arbitration, the approach is then revolved around the effort to encourage the conflicting parties to accept third parties, which will play a role in making decisions, to resolve existing conflicts (Moza & Paul, 2017). In contrast to mediation, arbitration requires the parties to the conflict to accept decisions taken by arbitrary parties (Irwandi & Chotim, 2017). Therefore, the essence of conflict resolution is the ways taken by the warring parties in resolving conflicts between them, either independently or through third parties that they agreed together.

The diversity of ethnic and religious groups in Aceh Singkil District, which is part of Aceh province and borders North Sumatra province, has resulted in dynamic and social changes, most notably identity transformation. There is a belief that the inhabitants of this district are no longer identifiable as a tribe, even within the community (Al-Fairusy & Abdullah, 2020). However, the harmonious relationship is subsequently disturbed by the conflict between religious communities caused by the establishment of houses of worship (Zain et al., 2019). The roots of the conflict in Aceh Singkil district were caused by the establishment of a Christian house of worship. The establishing of houses of worship in the area was illegal as they did not get the prerequisite permission from the authorities. The conflict continues to this day due to various factors, one of which is because the inter-religious forum (FKUB) designed to prevent and resolve various religious communities' problems was doing nothing to prevent, mediate and resolve the tension (Hanafiah, 2016).

Thus, in the same light, this paper aims to analyze the factors behind the construction of Christians' houses of worship that trigger the inter-religious conflict in Aceh Singkil district, where the majority of the population are Muslim. In addition, this paper will look closely at any conflict resolution used by the Aceh Singkil district government to resolve the interreligious conflict caused by the construction of Christian's houses of worship. Third, we also pose the question of the factors that hinder the resolution of conflicts in Aceh Singkil district.

2. Method

The author employs a qualitative method for this research. Qualitative research can be methodologically designed because it contributes to theory, practice, policies, social issues, and actions (Albi & Setiawan, 2018). Primary data sources are obtained from the field research, while secondary data sources are derived from literature. Primary data is collected through in-depth interviews with key informants. In this study, there are a total of 16 informants, including the regent of Aceh Singkil, the Chairman of FKUB Aceh Singkil, the head of Kesbangpol (National Unity and Political Body) Aceh Singkil, the Secretary of Kesbangpol Aceh Singkil, the Head of Conflict Division Kesbangpol Aceh Singkil, three Islamic religious figures, three Christian religious figures, three members of the Islamic community, and two members of the Christian community. Additionally, non-participant observation and media documentation are used to reinforce the primary data collected through interviews. The data analysis stages, as outlined by Sugiyono, include data reduction, data visualization, and conclusion/verification (Sugiyono, 2009). Data reduction involves sorting, simplifying, and organizing data to better interpret it. Data visualization helps present findings graphically, while conclusion/verification involves an interpretative process to conclude research findings holistically. This research method is expected to make a significant contribution to the understanding of social conflicts in Aceh Singkil by highlighting the diverse perspectives of those involved in addressing the conflict.

3.   Result and Discussion

Roots of Interreligious Conflict in Aceh Singkil district

Church Burning in 1979

The Aceh Singkil conflict began in 1979, with the proposed construction of the Church of the Indonesian God (Gereja Tuhan Indonesia or GTI) and the issue of Christianization in Aceh Singkil. This sparked reactions among the local Muslim community, leading to the burning of churches (Ahmad, 2016). This conflict resulted in a joint statement and agreement between Muslims and Christians in the Simpang Kanan sub district to implement the peace consensus in order to avert further conflict. This statement is intended to restore security order following the church's destruction by irresponsible individuals. The joint statement was referred to Indonesian National Ideology of Pancasila attended by political figures and community leaders from both Muslims and Christian's communities (Birchok, 2021).

This document was signed in Lipat Kajang on July 11, 1979, by representatives of Muslims and church administrators, witnessed by the Three Regional Leaders (Tripida) of Simpang Kanan sub-district, namely the sub-district head of Simpang Kanan, Local Police Commander, and Military Branch Commander (Danramil) of Simpang Kanan sub-district. In addition, on October 13, 1979, Tripida also proclaimed mutual harmony signed by community leaders from Muslim and Christian representatives. The joint statement contained the declaration of Simpang Kanan district residents, both Muslim and Christian, who sincerely pledged allegiance and responsibility to live in harmony to the dispute that occurred since June 6, 1979 (Ansor, 2013).

Conflict of Rehabilitation and Church Expansion in 2001

The issue of rehab and construction of a new church re-emerged in Aceh Singkil with Islamic religious leaders and community leaders of Simpang Kanan subdistrict and Gunung Meriah sub-district protesting about the church expansion (Abigoyo, 2020). This official declaration was made in Lipat Kajang on September 15, 2001, signed by religious leaders and Islamic figures of Simpang Kanan sub-district represented by traditional Islamic boarding school leaders, imams, and community leaders. Among those conveyed is that the HKBP church in Kuta Kerangan district of Simpang Kanan District of Aceh Singkil district. They have carried out heavy rehabilitation and construction together with many other newly established churches, such as in Siompin village, Tuhtuhan, Kuta Tinggi, Pertabas, Sanggaberu, Keras, and others. According to this document, the construction and expansion of the churches have violated the joint statement of Muslims with Christians of Simpang Kanan district signed on July 11, 1979, and the pledge of mutual harmony on October 13, 1979.

House of Worship Conflict in 2015

On October 13, 2015, another incident of church burning occurred in Suka Makmur, Gunung Meriah Subdistrict (Ichwan, Salim, & Srimulyani, 2020). The church burning in Aceh Singkil was triggered by a demonstration at the Aceh Singkil Regent's office conducted by the APPI (Alliance of Islamic Care Youth) group, demanding the Aceh Singkil government to dismantle the church, considered an unauthorized construction due to the lack of a building permit (Nusyur, 2017; Sakinah & Sulhan, 2017; Setyawan & Triyono, 2020). Dissatisfied with the government's handling of the church regulation in Aceh Singkil, the protesters then proceeded to the HKI church in Suka Makmur and set it on fire. During the burning process, clashes ensued between the APPI protesters and those defending the church (Triyono & Setyawan, 2021). The incident resulted in one fatality and dozens of other casualties (Hartani & Nulhaqim, 2020).

Conflict Resolution of Aceh Singkil District Government

The Aceh Singkil district government, through related agencies, FKUB, community leaders and religious leaders, has taken various steps in preventing conflict between religious communities (Ferdian, 2018). Among these measures are organizing the campaign and socialization of the guidelines of the construction of houses of worship, calling for mutual respect between believers, conducting FGD activities to solve conflicts between religious communities, conducting dialogue with the parties to the conflict (Riza, 2019), conducting the closure of churches built not in accordance with the rules, conducting dialogue with the Governor of Aceh and related agencies at the provincial level and finally forming the Ad hock Team at the district level between religious communities (Ahmad, 2016).

Many parties are involved in resolving the conflict, either through religious institutions established by the government such as the FKUB or through representatives of the disputed religions (Sahputra, 2017). Another step taken by the Aceh Singkil district government is establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Team for Religious Harmony of Aceh Singkil District. Most conflict resolution initiative in Aceh Singkil district involved many parties such as FKUB, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Community Leaders, Islamic Sharia Office, Islamic Scholars Consultative Assembly, and Representatives from National and Political Unitary Body (Bakesbang and Politik) Aceh Singkil (Darmawan, 2019).

Looking at the conflict resolution initiatives that the Aceh Singkil district government has taken, it is clear that they did not to resolve the conflict through mediators (Shea, 2016). Reflecting on the case of conflict between the Indonesian Government and the Free Aceh Movement or GAM that lasted relatively long, this was done by establishing Mediator Team approved by the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari (Ahtisaari, 2008). The team successfully conducted a peace agreement signed by both parties in Helsinki on August 15, 2005. This peace agreement was first initiated by the Vice President, Jusuf Kalla. At that time, Indonesia was represented by the Minister of Law and Human Rights, Hamid Awaludin, while Malik Mahmud Al Haytar represented GAM. Both declared their commitment to resolving the conflict in Aceh with respect and dignity for all parties, with a peaceful, comprehensive, and sustainable solution (Rood, 2005).

Reflecting on the case of RI and GAM, the Aceh Singkil district government should consider the steps of appointing mediators. Although the mediator team here does not have to be international mediator, but it must involve third party intervention. The provincial mediator team may come from intellectuals and academics from the two most respected universities, Syiah Kuala University and Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry and some other influential figures in the Aceh province (Shafiee, 2021; Vericat & Hobrara, 2018).

Conflict Resolution Barriers

Internal Barriers

First, the Muslims of Aceh Singkil Regency are bound by an agreement made in 1979. The agreement stated that they could only build one church. This agreement continues to be followed by Muslims to this day (Pratiwi, 2021). They understood that taking actions against the agreement means betraying the history. However, for the Islamic community of Aceh Singkil, especially religious figures, giving permission for the construction of new house of worship (churches) for Christians is still regarded as a psychological burden, as they believe that Aceh Singkil district is the birthplace of famous Acehnese scholar, Sheikh Abd Rauf as-Singkili (Wirianto, 2013). This condition becomes very problematic not only for religious leaders, but also for the Aceh Singkil district government.

Second, the lack of effort and initiative from government institutions such as Kesbangpol and FKUB that specifically deals with religious harmony (Mudhia, 2017). These institutions have not been able to unite religious communities and its practices in Aceh Singkil. They claimed that their unresponsiveness was caused by limited financial sources and human resources incompetence (Vidia, 2016). If so, then the Aceh Singkil district government is obliged to budget funds that can support the

activities programs of these institutions or agencies and provided skilled and responsive human resources in those units.

Third is the weak law enforcement from Aceh Singkil district government. This is especially directed towards institutions responsible to track down those who violate the law and provoke the community (Marzuki, 2019). The parties who provoked were directly involved in the physical contact between Muslims and Christians in the October 13, 2015 conflict. One of the most dangerous effects is when a malicious third-party intervention, or provocateur came into frame. They act in secret, both behind the scenes of conflict that occurs (Kleden, 2019). They try to provoke so that the atmosphere of conflict gets hotter. They seek to pit the parties to the conflict against each other, to create significant damage to achieve their evil goals (Nadlir, 2013).

Fourth, the process of resolving conflicts is not carried out continuously, but only done at the time of the emergence of the conflict. The process also did not address the root of the problem. This means that the settlement of cases is conditional so that it does not touch the substance of the problem namely the establishment of a place of worship (church) that is not in accordance with the agreed agreement and is not in accordance with existing regulations. If this condition is maintained, it can be ascertained that this case will continue and will never be resolved. Ideally, sensitive cases like this that disturbs the harmony of national and state life is not only for the people of Aceh Singkil, even Indonesia generally must be responded to quickly so that it does not become a prolonged conflict. In this sense, building multicultural and muti-faith understanding between faith-based actors are instrumental to avoid future tensions on religious matters (Setiawan & Amal, 2016).

Fifth is the dysfunction of religion as a medium for strengthening social relations. In social life, religion can be used as a medium of social solidarity, but sometimes religion is used as a tool of social disintegration (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2009; Nazmudin, 2018). The existence of differences in the beliefs of religious believers on the absolute truth of their religious teachings and consider the teachings of other religions wrong has become one of the factors triggering conflict between religious believers (Fanani, 2018). Even among advocates of one religion, groups or schools, often have differences in the substance of religious teachings and non-fundamental differences (Elly M Setiadi & Kolip, 2011).

External Barriers

First, the data reveals that the existing rules of houses of worship construction have not been sufficiently used as the guideline (Sukandi, 2020). Currently, there are regulations on the establishment of houses of worship made based on the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 8 and No. 9 of 2006 on Guidelines for the Implementation of the Duties of regional leader/deputy heads of Regions in Maintaining Religious Harmony, Empowerment of Religious Harmony Forum, and Establishment of Houses of Worship. As for the Aceh context, there is Qanun Aceh Number 4/2016 concerning Guidelines for The Maintenance of Religious Harmony and the Establishment of Houses of Worship. Those regulations supposed to serve as the standard guidelines and fundamental reference for the government in Aceh Singkil to resolve the conflict.

Second, new pastors and Christian's communities in Aceh Singkil are mostly non-local residents. This creates greater dislikes and disappointments in many parts of dominant Muslim community in Aceh Singkil, seeing their land and jobs are gradually taken by the Christians (Hartani & Nulhaqim, 2020). In contrast to the Muslim, the new Christian arrivals resided in remote yet in closed communities of palm oil plantation area. It must be understood that the beginning of the conflict in Aceh Singkil was due to the construction of a house of worship, there other reasons were result of the increase of population and economic development.

Third, conflict resolution is often raised at certain times, such as during the election activities of regional heads or members of the parliament (Hutabarat & Panjaitan, 2019). Religious issues arose ahead of regional head elections. The emergence of The Islamic-Christian problem in Aceh Singkil is always ahead of the district election, because of the fast spreading nature issue about religion during those moments. The speed of news spread is timely frightening because Aceh Singkil borders the

province of North Sumatra, especially the Central Tapanuli District for potentially far more serious clashes and tensions to take place.

Pathway for Peace: Government Readiness and Community Participation

However, there is something interesting about the conflict between religious communities in Aceh Singkil district that has not been previously revealed. This interfaith conflict may occur between those who have the same tribe (Pratiwi, 2021). It is not surprising that the Islamic and Christian figures interviewed had the same surname. According to their statements, the conflicting parties even had a familial relationship such as uncle-nephew relationship. It is important to note that some of those involved in conflict come from the same clan but they have different religions. That some of the people of Aceh Singkil have clans like those in North Sumatra province.

In Aceh Singkil district, the only Aceh-speaking sub-district is Kuala Baru and is one of the sub-districts that do not have a non-Muslim population and therefore they are less-prone to conflict, with a more matured behavior as the late settlers in Singkil (Sakdiah, 2020). The location of this sub-district is relatively far from conflict vulnerable sub-districts such as Simpang Kanan and Gunung Meriah.

In light of this, the government needs to pay attention and consider community regulations, such as facilitating mutual agreements of the community in conflict areas (Parekh, 2001). These agreements must remain under existing regulatory corridors to not cause new conflicts in the future, thus local wisdom in conflicting societies is importantly considered (Abidin, 2014; Pahruddin & Halim, 2019). Local wisdom is a culture or, borrowing the term from (Mungmachon, 2012), a community treasure, that refers to the various cultural wealth itself, which grows and develops in society, is recognized, trusted, and recognized as an essential element that can strengthen social cohesion among citizens. Local wisdom when translated freely can be interpreted as good cultural values that exist in a society. This means that, to know a local wisdom in a region, we must understand the good cultural values that exist in the region (Bakri, 2015).

Ideally, if the settlement agreement is conducted by the full initiative of religious community leaders where local customs and the importance of local culture in maintaining and ensuring the integrity of the community must be very well considered (Suprapto, 2015). In the stages of conflict resolution, John Burton entering the completion of the nuanced cultural; this shows that the conflicts that occur in society can also be solved by fusing culture and customs adopted by the local community. Resolve the conflict by using the local customs or local wisdom can be said to be effective because it is already entrenched and deep-rooted as well as being a guideline in society in general strategy of conflict resolution should be started with sufficient knowledge about the map or profile of the social conflicts that occur in an area. All the possibilities and opportunities of conflict resolution are taken into account carefully, so that each benefit and disadvantages can be calculated. Often found in many cases that a choice of solutions-rational action to resolve social conflicts is not really able to abolish the root-matter of the conflict completely and thoroughly. In such cases the resolution of the conflict should be managed (conflict management) in such a way so that the explosion in the form of clash-social can impact very destructive can be avoided (Dharmawan, 2006).

The government of Aceh Singkil, needs to initiate the establishment of joined forum with the involvement of institutions, social organizations, Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), Christian representative organization and Islamic organizations like the Nahdatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah and other Islamic organizations. With the involvement of these organizations, then this heavy burden will be divided and will think together to find a way out which is better. For this organization that intensely follows the development of this problem are the FPI and a few other local organizations. The more elements involved, the more ideas generated (Rokhmad, 2016). Thus the psychological burden of the government will be lighter in overcoming conflict.

The government of Aceh Singkil district is also important to involve religious education institutions in the local area, such as traditional Islamic boarding schools that have the figures of the charismatic and influential in the community. They are assets to the government, the assets of the religious and assets of the community, so it is important to be involved because knowledge certainly

has a perspective that can be considered. Additionally, the traditional Islamic school can implement the curricula that provide peace education and religious moderation content for more sustainable peace process (Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008; Helmy, Jumadil Kubro, & Ali, 2021).

The government of Aceh Singkil needs to do significance investment and diversity promotion to the community by providing public space of dialogue (Dewi, Sunarimahingsih, & Nurhayati, 2017). Although in the world of education conflicts between students or between teachers are not always found, even in social life in general. Instill an attitude of tolerance, respect, and appreciation to other people need to be imparted to all layers of society. Hence life in the group must have rules of its own so it does not conflict with the other party differently. Tolerance is an attitude of life in words, deeds, and behavior that reflects respect for others (Ismail, 2012). Through tolerance, we can feel or maintain the feelings of other people so that other people will not feel offended. The attitude of tolerance is the attitude that has the value of good morals. With an attitude of tolerance, they can position themselves correctly in the social environment to create a harmonious and balanced life.

4.   Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, there are several correlations between the theory of conflict between religious communities and the data outcomes observed in the field, particularly in the Aceh Singkil Regency. *Firstly*, the theory of conflict between religious communities often creates tension when disputes arise concerning the construction of places of worship that do not adhere to existing agreements and regulations. This aligns with the field data results in the Aceh Singkil Regency, where conflicts between Islamic and Christian communities arise due to non-compliance in establishing churches according to applicable regulations. *Secondly*, the efforts made by the Aceh Singkil Regency Government to resolve conflicts also reflect the theory of conflict resolution between religious communities. Activities such as the socialization of regulations for the establishment of places of worship, fostering mutual respect among religious communities, focus group discussions (FGD), and dialogues with conflicting parties are steps that align with the theory of social conflict resolution.

Thirdly, the identified constraints in conflict resolution can also be linked to social conflict theory. For instance, adherence to the 1979 Agreement creates obstacles in conflict resolution, consistent with the theory stating that disagreements over rules or agreements can prolong conflicts. Moreover, the correlation between conflict and political issues, employment status, and religious imbalance as a means of social cohesion also illustrates the interconnection between social conflict theory and the reality in the field. This indicates that conflict resolution not only requires a legal or policy-based approach but also needs to consider the social, political, and economic aspects involved. Thus, this analysis indicates that conflicts between religious communities in the Aceh Singkil Regency can be understood through the lens of social conflict theory, and resolution requires a holistic and integrated approach to address various factors contributing to and hindering these conflicts.

This article reports a small part of research that explains the conflict over houses of worship in Aceh Singkil district. Thus, this paper is not sufficient to fully and thoroughly explain the case. Because of this there are still many other aspects of the conflict in Aceh Singkil that are very likely to be investigated such as the problem of house construction rules, the problem of law enforcement against violators of collective agreements and the revival of local wisdom.

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