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The Role of Kediri City Local Government in Handling Social Conflicts as a Foundation for National Security and Resilience

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a juridical review and analytical assessment of the role of local governments in managing social conflicts as a foundation for maintaining national security and resilience. The Kediri City Government, as the closest administrative structure to the community, plays a strategic role in conflict prevention, resolution, and post conflict recovery. The practical implementation of social conflict management still encounters several challenges, including budgetary limitations, suboptimal human resource capacity, weak inter agency coordination, inadequate dissemination of the Social Conflict Management, and limited community participation, particularly from customary and social institutions. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study employs in depth interviews, literature reviews, and policy analysis supported by relevant documents, legal frameworks, and prior research findings. The results reveal that the effectiveness of conflict management in Kediri City strongly depends on the integration of Social Conflict Management into regional development policies, capacity building for local officials, and the enhancement of coordination mechanisms between local agencies and vertical institutions. Furthermore, community empowerment and the revitalization of local social institutions are identified as crucial elements in establishing sustainable peace and social stability.

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Keywords: Local Government; Social Conflict Management; Kediri City; National Security.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a pluralistic nation with diverse ethnicities, religions, and cultures, possesses the potential both as a national strength and as a source of threat to national security. This diversity can be a vital national resource for building national defense and security as well as supporting sustainable development. On the other hand, it also carries the risk of triggering social conflicts rooted in differences of ethnicity, religion, and culture. Social conflicts within society not only shake communal harmony but also have direct implications for national stability; if left unaddressed, they may severely undermine public trust in government, hinder development, and weaken national integration.

Social conflict is almost always present in societal life, whether in the form of horizontal conflict between community groups or vertical conflict between society and government. These conflicts can stem from various factors including differences in ethnicity, religion, economy, politics, or access to resources. If not managed properly, such social conflicts have the potential to disrupt regional stability and even threaten national security.

The context of the (NKRI), which embraces abundant ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, the risk of social conflict is particularly high. Therefore, the active role of all elements including local government as the tier of governance closest to society is essential. Local governments are not only tasked with administrative functions, but also bear responsibility for early detection, prevention, and management of social conflicts as part of efforts to safeguard national stability (Ministry of Home Affair R.I, 2015).

The principal legal framework governing the role of local governments in handling social conflicts Regulation No. 7 (2012) handing social confilic. Within the law it is defined that social conflict is "... a dispute and physical clash with violence between two or more groups of society lasting for a certain time and broadly impacting so as to disrupt national stability and hinder national development."

Studies emphasize that while pluralism can build social cohesion and resilience, when mechanisms for managing conflict are weak such as limited institutional capacity, weak early warning systems, and low community participation diversity can become a source of division.(Simandjuntak, 2023); (Sudirman, et.al, 2025)

Indonesia, as a unitary state (NKRI) characterized by rich diversity in ethnicity, religion, and culture, holds both significant potential and inherent risks to its national security. Unmanaged

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diversity can become a catalyst for social conflict, threatening societal harmony and national stability. Social conflicts that arise within communities not only disrupt social cohesion but also directly undermine public trust in government institutions, hinder development, and weaken national integration (Irtanto, 2024).

Social conflict in Indonesia manifests in two main dimensions horizontal conflicts among community groups, and vertical conflicts between society and government institutions. These conflicts often emerge due to disparities in economic resources, ethnicity, religion, political competition, or access to public services. When not properly managed, these issues can escalate into broader security threats. Over two decades of decentralization have shown that local governance in Indonesia still struggles with uneven administrative capacity and weak intergovernmental coordination (FIA, 2024).

Local governments play a pivotal role in social conflict management. Under the decentralized governance framework, political and administrative authority is transferred from the central government to regional entities. Decentralization has also led to fragmented coordination, bureaucratic egocentrism, and overlapping authority among institutions (Silalahi & Wirman, 2015); (Pranoto, 2024). Preliminary interviews conducted in Kediri City revealed that many local leaders remain hesitant to declare a “social conflict emergency” even when public services are disrupted mainly due to unclear accountability and insufficient understanding of post-conflict recovery procedures as regulated under UU No. 7 of 2012 on Social Conflict Management.

Effective conflict management by local governments contributes not only to local stability but also to national security. National security, in this regard, is not solely a military or defense matter; it also involves the preservation of social stability, community integration, and sustainable development (Abdurrahman, 2019). Moreover, intersectoral coordination and multi level collaboration are crucial to optimize conflict prevention, mitigation, and post conflict recovery efforts (Ministry Politic & Law R.I, 2025).

Social conflicts in Indonesia often stem from structural inequality, identity based politics, and competition over economic resources. The escalation of identity politics particularly during the 2019 general election, illustrates how political polarization can evolve into social hostility, threatening national cohesion (Yoviansyah, 2025). Furthermore, the rise of digital communication and the dominance of technoculture have introduced new dimensions of conflict, where online disinformation can quickly escalate into real world violence, constituting a non-military threat to national security.

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Implementation of regional autonomy in Indonesia began during the administration of President B.J. Habibie, who led the transitional government following the resignation of President Soeharto in May 1998. During Habibie's leadership, two significant political decisions were enacted in collaboration with the Indonesian Parliament (DPR), which later became the foundation for the emergence of greater freedom, justice, and democracy in Indonesia's governance system (Sinaga, 2010); (Pratikno, 2020).

These two major political decisions were the enactment of UU. No. 22 (1999) on Regional Governance, later revised UU No. 32 (2004), and further refined by UU No. 23 (2014) on Regional Government. The issuance of these laws marked a fundamental shift from a centralized to a decentralized governance system, transferring significant administrative and fiscal authority to regional governments. This decentralization aimed to enhance public service delivery, improve local participation, and reduce socio political disparities between the capital and regional areas (Nasution & Pramusinto, 2022).

Politically and administratively, decentralization has also influenced the management of social conflict prevention and resolution. UU No. 23 (2014), particularly Article 25(1) and Article 65(1)(b), local governments are explicitly mandated to maintain public order and social stability in accordance with national laws. Consequently, regional heads are responsible for ensuring social harmony and mitigating conflicts within their jurisdictions, making local governance a vital instrument in safeguarding national stability and security (Ministry of Home Affair R.I, 2015).

The spirit of decentralization has therefore not only democratized local governance but also empowered regional administrations to play a strategic role in social conflict management. This transformation underscores the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, and local community engagement to ensure that autonomy contributes effectively to sustainable peace and national resilience (Suharyo & Haris, 2023).

THEORETICAL INSIGHT

National Security

Two fundamental needs that form the foundation of human and societal existence: need for security and need for prosperity. Both are essential for ensuring sustainability of human life and survival of a nation. Security and prosperity are interrelated goals that collectively contribute to achievement of national objectives. Any threat to national security will inevitably disrupt efforts to attain prosperity, whether at individual, communal, or national level (Sukma, 2012).

Implementation of a comprehensive national security system is therefore an integral

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component of various dimensions of national life. It should incorporate not only internal stability but also the broader national interests within the international system. From a psychological and philosophical perspective, national security is a collective commitment of the entire nation to protect its sovereignty, values, and integrity from all forms of threat both internal and external.

The contemporary global environment, national security and national prosperity are increasingly interdependent and must evolve simultaneously, consistently, and sustainably. Traditional understandings of national security have often been limited to the domains of defense and state protection. However, in a modern and holistic sense, national security encompasses a broader spectrum that includes the political, economic, social, cultural, ideological, and defense dimensions of national life (Mulyadi, 2009).

Mulyadi, (2009). emphasizes that comprehensive security represents a reorganization of the traditional security concept, extending beyond military concerns to incorporate political, economic, and socio cultural dimensions. This perspective aligns with the human security paradigm proposed. Sudarsono, (1997), the main functions of a comprehensive national security system include four interrelated domains: **National Defense**, which involves the protection of the state from external threats in order to preserve sovereignty, honor, and territorial integrity; **State Security**, which focuses on countering internal threats that endanger national stability and governance; **Public Security**, which pertains to maintaining and restoring public order through law enforcement, protection, and public service; and **Human Security**, which concerns the safeguarding of citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms as part of the state's responsibility to uphold human dignity.

In Indonesia, comprehensive national security must be understood as a dynamic condition encompassing the resilience of ideology, politics, economy, socio culture, defense, and security. (Lemhanas, 2021). It is a multidimensional system that requires cross sectoral coordination between government agencies, local governments, civil society, and the private sector to ensure stability, justice, and sustainable national development.

Conflic Social

Humans are social beings who interact with one another to fulfill various needs, interests, and goals that ensure the continuity of their existence within society (Soekanto, 2017). Through social interaction, individuals develop relationships that shape social structures and cultural norms. However, every human being also possesses individual interests that may foster egoistic tendencies, influencing patterns of social interaction (Walgito, 2020).

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Social interaction produces two main types of outcomes: associative interactions and dissociative interactions (Ritzer & Goodman, 2019). Associative interactions promote cooperation, accommodation, and assimilation that strengthen relationships among individuals or groups. In contrast, dissociative interactions lead to competition, disagreement, and conflict that weaken social bonds (Soekanto, 2017).

Social conflict arises when the interests of individuals or groups cannot be reconciled, and each party insists on pursuing its own objectives (Caser, 2019). In a pluralistic society, unmanaged differences in interests can escalate into social tensions that threaten social cohesion and community stability (Giddens & Sutton, 2021). Therefore, the ability to manage and transform conflict constructively becomes an essential factor in maintaining social harmony and supporting national resilience.

Ali (2021) aspect social conflict is **Based on their nature**, conflicts are divided into constructive and destructive types. Destructive conflicts emerge from hostility, resentment, or revenge that may lead to physical clashes and violence. In contrast, constructive conflicts arise during interaction among individuals or groups over specific issues and often lead to consensus, mutual understanding, and positive social change. **Based on the position of the actors**, conflicts can be classified as vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. Vertical conflict occurs among elements within a hierarchical social structure, such as between citizens and the government. Horizontal conflict happens between individuals or groups with relatively equal positions, such as interethnic or intergroup disputes. Diagonal conflict, on the other hand, arises from unequal distribution of resources within an organization or institution, leading to severe internal tension. **Based on the openness of the actors**, conflicts can be open or closed. Open conflicts are visible and known to the public, while closed conflicts remain hidden and are only recognized by those directly involved. **Based on the concentration of human activities**, conflicts can be divided into social, political, economic, and cultural conflicts.

In addition, Soekanto (2011) identifies specific forms of conflict that frequently occur in society. These include personal conflict, which arises between individuals due to personal disagreements or family issues such as inheritance; political conflict, resulting from ideological or power-related differences among political actors; racial conflict, emerging from tensions between racial groups; class conflict, which reflects disputes between social strata such as workers and employers; and international conflict, which involves disputes among nations with competing interests.

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Public Policy

Irawati (2015), policy refers to a series of concepts and principles that serve as a foundation and guideline for planning, leadership, and action particularly in government and organizations. It represents a statement of ideals, goals, principles, and management guidelines designed to achieve specific objectives. **Public policy** can be understood as a formal declaration government expressing best possible choice among various alternatives to resolve public problems.

Elau & Prewitt (1973), define policy as "a standing decision characterized behavioral consistency and repetitiveness on the part of both those who make it and those who abide by it." Jones (1970), conceptualizes public policy as *"the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society,"* implying that only those who possess legitimate authority within the political system, the government can decide on matters that impact society. These authoritative decisions determine how values are distributed through actions or inactions of the state (Agustino, 2015).

Hogwood & Gunn (1984), further emphasize that policy is a multifaceted concept that can be understood differently depending on the context. It may refer to: 1) Label for an activity (e.g., education policy, industrial policy); 2) An expression of general goals or desired state activities (e.g., improving public services); 3) Specific proposal (e.g., reducing fuel subsidies); 4) Government decision (e.g., presidential decrees); 5) Formal authorization (e.g., parliamentary decisions); 6) Program (e.g., gender mainstreaming programs); 7) An output (e.g., subsidy reallocation for small enterprises); 8) An outcome (e.g., economic growth from subsidy reallocation); 9) Theory or model (e.g., infrastructure investment improves regional development); and 10) Process (e.g., agenda setting, implementation, and evaluation).

According to (Anderson, 1979), public policies can be categorized based on their form, purpose, and implementation approach: **Substantive vs. procedural policies**: Substantive policies concern *what* the government does, while procedural policies concern *how* those actions are implemented. **Distributive, regulatory, and redistributive policies**: Distributive policies provide public goods or benefits; regulatory policies restrict or guide behavior; redistributive policies manage the allocation of wealth or rights among groups. **Material vs. symbolic policies**: Material policies provide tangible benefits, while symbolic policies offer intangible, value-based benefits. **Public vs. private goods policies**: Public goods policies regulate public services, whereas private goods policies address market-based goods and services.

Riant, (2004) also categorizes public policies based on their nature, institutional origin, and character. From the **meaning perspective,** public policy encompasses what governments choose to do or not to do. From the **institutional perspective**, it may originate from legislative, executive,

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or joint actions. Based on its **character**, policy may be regulatory or deregulatory, restrictive or nonrestrictive, and allocative, distributive, or redistributive. The framework of public policy is shaped by several interrelated variables. The literature on public administration identifies key determinants of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, including: 1) **Objectives**, complex policy goals are harder to achieve than simple ones. 2) **Value preferences**, policies that accommodate multiple competing values are more difficult to implement. 3) **Resources**, financial, material, and infrastructural resources determine policy performance. 4) **Actors' capability**, the quality of policymakers, defined by education, competence, experience, and moral integrity, influences policy outcomes. 5) **Environment**, social, economic, and political contexts affect policy effectiveness. 6) **Strategies**, implementation strategies top down or bottom up, authoritarian or democratic shape policy performance.

Dunn, (2003), the **public policy process** is cyclical and consists of interconnected stages: 1) **Agenda setting**, where public problems are identified and prioritized; 2) **Policy formulation**, involving the identification of possible solutions and forecasting their consequences; 3) **Policy adoption**, in which the government formally chooses a policy alternative through legislative or executive endorsement; 4) **Policy implementation**, where adopted policies are executed by administrative bodies through the mobilization of resources; and 5) **Policy evaluation**, involving the systematic assessment of policy performance and effectiveness. Through these stages, public policy becomes a dynamic and iterative process, ensuring that governmental decisions remain responsive to public needs and adaptable to societal changes.

Authority

Atmosudirdjo, (1981), *authority* refers to formal power derived from legislative or executive. In essence, authority represents an official's or institution's lawful power over a specific group of people or a particular area of governance. It generally consists of several components of power granted by law, enabling officials to carry out administrative duties legitimately.

Syafruddin, (2000), distinguishes between *authority and competence*. Authority refers to the formal power granted by law, while competence represents a specific subset of that authority essentially a particular aspect or portion of broader authority. Within authority lies competence, which defines lawful scope of public legal actions. Competence in administrative law not only includes the power to issue government decisions but also encompasses the power to perform administrative tasks and to delegate responsibilities. The distribution of competence is primarily regulated by legislation.

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Indroharto, (1994), explains from a juridical perspective, competence constitutes the legal ability granted by statutory regulations to produce legal consequences. This interpretation implies that any legitimate government decision must be based on a lawful source of authority. Manan, (2003), emphasizes that in legal terminology, authority is distinct from power. While power denotes the right to act or not to act, authority represents both a right and an obligation to perform legally recognized administrative actions.

Authority, therefore, must always be grounded in constitutional or statutory provisions, ensuring its legitimacy. Without a valid legal basis, government officials cannot issue lawful administrative decisions. Thalib, (2006), identifies three main sources from which administrative authorities or institutions may derive their authority: attribution**,** delegation**,** and mandate**.** Through attribution, authority is granted directly by law; through delegation, authority is transferred from one body to another; and through mandate, authority is exercised on behalf of another institution. Governmental authority can be characterized as binding**,** facultative, or discretionary (Indroharto, 1994). i.e : Binding authority occurs when the basic regulation explicitly determines when and under what circumstances the authority may be exercised, as well as prescribes the content or decision to be made. Facultative authority exists when administrative officials are not obliged to exercise their authority but retain limited discretion to act, provided the law specifies certain conditions. Discretionary authority arises when the basic regulation allows government officials to determine the substance of a decision independently or provides them with freedom of interpretation.

Spelt & Berge, (1993) further divide discretionary authority into two categories**:** policy discretion and assessment discretion. Policy discretion refers to the freedom to decide whether or not to act, while assessment discretion relates to the freedom to interpret vague or ambiguous legal norms. Thus, two primary types of discretionary power can be identified: the authority to make independent decisions and the authority to interpret unclear legal provisions.

METHOD

This study was designed using a qualitative descriptive approach combined with a prescriptive analytical framework. The qualitative descriptive approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of local governments in managing social conflicts to achieve national security stability. Through this approach, the study elaborates on various data and information obtained from both literature and key informants.

The collected data include laws and regulations, relevant theories and legal doctrines,

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previous research findings, and scholarly journal articles related to the topic. This approach enables the researcher to present a factual, systematic, and comprehensive understanding of the current conditions and the factors influencing the dynamics of social conflict management at the regional level (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Meanwhile, the prescriptive approach is applied to provide normative direction and strategic recommendations for addressing the identified issues. Rather than merely describing phenomena, this approach emphasizes the formulation of public policy alternatives that can be adopted in social conflict control, particularly those triggered (Neuman, 2014). Consequently, the findings are expected to contribute both analytically and practically to decision making processes within local government institutions.

In terms of data collection, this research relies primarily on secondary data obtained through a literature review of statutory regulations, legal doctrines, academic works, and previous studies relevant to the topic (Bowen, 2009). In addition, the study is strengthened by primary data gathered through indepth interviews with key informants who possess expertise and authority in social conflict management and public policy, including officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the National Unity and Political Agency of Kediri City. All collected data were analyzed using qualitative analysis with data triangulation techniques to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings. The triangulation process included source triangulation, method triangulation, and result triangulation (Denzin, 2012). This analytical process was used to map key issues, identify conflict dynamics, and assess the effectiveness of existing conflict management strategies at the local level.

RESULT

Legal and Institutional Framework for Local Government Authority

Based on interviews with Mr. Rosyid**,** a representative of the National Unity and Political Agency of Kediri City, and Mr. Miftahur Rozak, as well as observations of local practices, it is evident that the framework for local government authority in managing social conflict in Kediri is grounded in two main laws UU No. 7 (2012) Social Conflicts and UU No. 23 (2014) Regional Government**.**

UU No. 7 (2012) explicitly regulates the handling of social conflicts in three stages: *conflict prevention*, *conflict termination*, and *post conflict recovery*. The law emphasizes collaboration among the central government, local governments, and communities. Meanwhile, UU No. 23

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(2014) classifies "public order, peace, and community protection" as mandatory governmental affairs related to basic public services, which must be implemented local governments.

Mr. Miftahur Rozak, the implementation of conflict management in Kediri demonstrates a growing awareness of the importance of local autonomy and local capacity in maintaining social harmony. The regional head plays a decisive role in formulating responsive policies toward potential conflicts, including active coordination with security forces such as Yonif 521 and Brimob, and establishing *joint security patrols* as a form of direct mitigation in the field.

Challenges in the Implementation of Legal Authority

In an interview with Mr. Anug Kurniawan, Head of the Subdirectorate for the Facilitation of Social Conflict Management at the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was explained that while the legal foundation already exists, its implementation remains the responsibility of each local government. However, many governors, mayors, and regents still lack a full understanding of the contents of UU No. 7 (2012).

Mr. Anug highlighted that when a social conflict escalates and disrupts public services, local leaders often hesitate to declare a state of social conflict emergency, even though this authority is granted under the law. Coordination meetings held by the Ministry of Home Affairs have repeatedly emphasized the procedures for handling such emergencies, but the main obstacle lies in whether Kesbangpol offices at the district or city level effectively communicate this information to their respective regional heads. This communication gap has become one of the barriers in the effective implementation of UU No. 7 (2012).

Similarly, Mr. Sri Handoko Taruna, Director of Ideology, Character, and National Insight Development, also acknowledged that although the legal basis for optimizing local government authority in managing social conflicts is sufficient, implementation at the regional level remains constrained. The challenges include limited understanding of social conflict dynamics and weak inter-agency coordination, particularly regarding the integration of historical, cultural, and legal approaches in conflict management strategies.

Collaboration and Coordination Mechanisms in Conflict Management

Another key aspect revealed through interviews concerns the collaboration between local governments and other institutions through the Regional Leadership Coordination Forum (FORKOPIMDA). According to Mr. Rosyid, this collaborative spirit is manifested through regular coordination meetings involving various local agencies, community representatives,

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organizations, and religious leaders. These meetings serve as a platform for dialogue and preventive coordination to maintain security and order in the community.

In addition, digital literacy has become an emerging strategy in modern conflict mitigation. As explained Mr. Rosyid, the influence of Generation Z and the rise of digital based discourse and criticism on social media have made it increasingly important for local governments to promote collective education and responsible digital engagement**.** This approach aims to prevent disinformation and reduce the risk of provocation in the community, ensuring that online narratives do not escalate into offline tensions.

The Role of Community, Cultural, and Religious Leaders

The interviews also revealed that the involvement of community leaders, traditional figures, and religious leaders plays a crucial role in supporting local governments in calming social tensions. According to Mr. Rosyid**,** the participation of martial art team, religious figures, and local security institutions such as Yonif and Brimob in joint meetings and dialogue forums has been instrumental in maintaining peace. Their willingness to "*stand guard together*" and act as partners of the local government demonstrates tangible and effective community participation in conflict prevention.

However, Mr. Rosyid emphasized the need for formalized mechanisms to sustain and institutionalize this participation. The government should strengthen coordination frameworks and create structured partnerships with community and youth organizations, ensuring that intergenerational knowledge transfer continues and that the spirit of collective vigilance is preserved among younger generations.

Meanwhile, Mr. Anug Kurniawan explained that the Ministry of Home Affairs continues to conduct regular socialization programs and capacity building activities for local government stakeholders. These initiatives aim to strengthen the ability of local authorities to mediate disputes and engage traditional and community elders in the peaceful resolution of social conflicts before they escalate further.

Challenges and Strategies of Local Governments in Managing Social Conflict

Limitations in Budget and Financial Resources

Interviews revealed that limited funding and budget allocation significantly affect the effectiveness of social conflict prevention and management programs. According to Mr. Rosyid from the Kediri City National and Political Unity Agency, the reduction and efficiency measures in

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central to local government transfers have resulted in a smaller allocation for conflict management. Funds for social conflict handling are often deprioritized compared to other urgent needs or considered overlapping with other administrative functions, leading to budget cuts.

Mr. Rosyid also highlighted the absence of formal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for social conflict management at the local level. This absence results in reactive and uncoordinated responses, depending heavily on situational improvisation. Although integrated conflict management teams exist, they still require greater institutional strengthening, particularly in terms of emergency budgeting for social conflict.

Similarly, Mr. Anug Kurniawan**,** Head of the Sub Directorate for Social Conflict Facilitation at the Ministry of Home Affairs, confirmed that no specific emergency budget is allocated for social conflicts only for natural disasters. He noted that while Ministry of Home Affairs provides special allocation funds that can be used for post conflict recovery, local governments rarely apply for or utilize this funding. Until now, no regional government has formally requested such funds from Ministry of Home Affairs, even though they are available for conflict emergencies.

Human Resource Capacity of Local Government Apparatus

According to Mr. Rosyid**,** human resources within National and Political Unity Agency are sufficient in number but still lack competence in social conflict prevention and resolution. Training in conflict mitigation, mediation, and sensitivity to potential social tension is still needed. Most regional offices do not yet have jointly agreed upon SOPs within their coordination forums, resulting in overlapping, delayed, or uncoordinated responses among stakeholders.

Mr. Anug Kurniawan added that Ministry of Home Affairs faces challenges in maintaining adequate human resources to monitor conflict management across 512 districts and cities. Current personnel are not fully equipped to act as mediators or negotiators, which limits their ability to address the root causes of conflicts. As a result, the ministry's interventions tend to be temporary, focusing on containment rather than long-term resolution.

Mr. Sri Handoko Taruna**,** Director of Ideology, Character, and National Insight Development, emphasized that education plays a crucial role in strengthening conflict management capacity. He suggested integrating social conflict awareness programs into school curricula and FORKOPIMDA activities to prepare the younger generation to act as peace advocates.

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Coordination and Institutional Synergy Challenges

Coordination among government institutions remains one of the key obstacles in effective conflict management. Mr. Rosyid explained that many local officials still lack understanding of UU No. 7 (2012) Social Conflict Management, making consistent socialization and procedural implementation difficult. Mr. Anug Kurniawan noted that coordination between Ministry of Home Affairs and local governments is strong at the central level, but vertical communication within regional governments is often weak. Some agencies operate independently due to differing perspectives and institutional interests, reducing overall synergy.

Mr. Sri Handoko Taruna also pointed out the growing influence of fast information flow via digital media such as WhatsApp. He recommended early education and community awareness campaigns at schools and through FORKOPIMDA to build resilience against misinformation that can quickly escalate social tensions.

Community Participation and the Role of Social, Religious, and Cultural Leaders

The role of community and traditional leaders remains vital in maintaining local peace. According to Mr. Rosyid**,** social conflicts today are often triggered or amplified through digital platforms, especially social media. The spread of disinformation and rapid mobilization of youth online can lead to mass-scale tensions. Therefore, it is essential for multiple stakeholders to provide factual clarification and media literacy to prevent escalation.

Mr. Sri Handoko Taruna emphasized that while engaging traditional and religious leaders was effective in the past, it is now insufficient. A modern approach involving youth education, digital literacy, and open dialogue is needed to manage social conflict effectively in today's era.

Local Government Efforts to Prevent Recurring Conflicts

According to Mr. Miftahur Rozak**,** community participation including religious leaders, local NGOs, martial arts groups, and security forces such as Yonif and Brimob has been integrated into regular dialogue and coordination meetings every three months or annually. However, these forums often lack direct involvement from higher-level officials such as district heads or mayors, which reduces community empathy and trust. He also emphasized the importance of **e**arly warning systems based on local community monitoring and open public dialogue mechanisms, including student engagement, pre-demonstration discussions, and civic education on responsible expression of opinion.

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DISCUSSION

Social conflict management represents a crucial element in achieving national security stability. The findings of this study reveal that the role of local governments in managing social conflicts faces multiple challenges, particularly those related to budget constraints, limited human resource capacity, weak inter-agency coordination, and insufficient dissemination of regulations at the local level. These factors are interconnected and collectively influence the effectiveness of local government policies in maintaining social order and public safety.

One of the primary findings indicates that financial constraints remain a significant obstacle in implementing social conflict management programs. Interviews with officials from the National Unity and Political Agency of Kediri City revealed that the reduction and efficiency measures in fund transfers from the central to local governments often result in limited allocations for conflict prevention and management programs. Consequently, conflict management efforts are not prioritized in regional development planning. This situation aligns with the findings of Hafel & Ibrahim, (2024), who observed that budget politics in Indonesia often create sectoral imbalances, limiting local governments' flexibility to finance social programs. Therefore, it can be concluded that adequate budget allocation is a key determinant of how effectively local governments can exercise their authority in conflict management.

In addition to funding, the capacity of human resources also plays a vital role in determining the success of policy implementation. Although local apparatuses may be sufficient in number, their competencies in mediation, mitigation, and conflict resolution remain limited. The absence of standardized technical training and operational procedures often results in reactive and improvised responses rather than systematic interventions. This finding echoes the work of Sabiq (2025), who emphasized that the lack of conflict management skills among local officials remains a major obstacle to effective policy implementation. Therefore, there is a pressing need for capacity building programs and the establishment of specialized conflict management units at the district or municipal level.

Another important finding concerns the weakness of inter-agency coordination. Interviews highlighted that coordination between vertical and horizontal institutions often encounters difficulties due to differing perspectives, overlapping authorities, and the lack of regular communication forums among stakeholders. Yet, effective cross sectoral collaboration is essential for managing the dynamic and complex nature of social conflicts. Arjon, (2018) argues that synergy between central and regional institutions must be strengthened through integrated coordination mechanisms to ensure effective conflict control policies. This supports the view that weak

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institutional coordination and policy communication can exacerbate the escalation of local conflicts.

Furthermore, the study finds that awareness and understanding of regulatory frameworks governing social conflict management remain inadequate at the regional level. Although UU No. 7 (2012) provides a comprehensive legal basis, its practical implementation remains suboptimal. Many local officials still lack a thorough understanding of the law's provisions and procedural steps. Darminto, (2019), weak policy literacy often becomes the root cause of implementation failure in Indonesian public administration. Continuous legal education and policy dissemination are thus essential for improving the consistency and quality of policy implementation at the local level.

Community participation also emerges as a vital factor in the success of conflict management efforts. The study reveals that community leaders, religious figures, traditional elders, and youth groups play an essential role in preventing and de escalating conflicts. However, their involvement remains largely informal and unstructured within local government frameworks. Modern approaches such as digital literacy, intergenerational dialogue, and community based education should be developed to enhance adaptive conflict prevention strategies suited to today's technocultural context. Consistent with Salomo, (2023), civil society engagement in local governance strengthens both the legitimacy and effectiveness of public policies, ensuring more sustainable conflict resolution outcomes.

Taken together, the findings suggest that social conflict management in Indonesia depends not only on legal frameworks but also on institutional capacity, inter-agency collaboration, and community engagement. Therefore, a more comprehensive and collaborative policy approach is needed one that integrates local governments, security forces, civil society organizations, and educational institutions. The triangulated data in this study reinforce that the effectiveness of local conflict management is determined by the synergy between these structural, institutional, and social dimensions.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that the authority and performance of local governments in managing social conflicts in Indonesia, particularly as reflected in the case of Kediri City, are heavily influenced by four interrelated factors: financial capacity, human resource competence, institutional coordination, and community participation.

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1. From a fiscal standpoint, budget limitations remain the primary challenge affecting the local government's ability to implement preventive and responsive measures against social conflict. While UU No. 7 (2012) concerning the Handling of Social Conflict provides a legal basis for allocating special funds for conflict management, its implementation remains weak due to bureaucratic complexity and overlapping financial priorities at the regional level.
2. The competence of local human resources in conflict management remains suboptimal. The absence of standardized training programs and specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for conflict resolution leads to inconsistent responses. The research findings emphasize the urgent need to strengthen human capacity through education, mediation training, and conflict analysis workshops that involve both civil servants and security personnel.
3. Institutional coordination, between local agencies and vertical institutions remains fragmented. Despite the existence of the (FORKOPIMDA), coordination often occurs reactively and lacks strategic integration. This condition weakens the synergy between institutions that should work collectively in early detection, mitigation, and recovery from social conflicts.
4. Community participation, and the involvement of local leaders, traditional elders, and youth groups are key determinants of successful social conflict management. However, their participation remains informal and heavily dependent on government initiatives. In the digital era, as information spreads rapidly through social media, digital literacy and civic education become essential instruments for promoting social harmony and preventing disinformation driven conflicts

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The results of this study open several avenues for future research aimed at strengthening the theoretical and practical understanding of local government authority in managing social conflict within Indonesia's decentralized governance system. Given the evolving nature of socio political dynamics, digital communication, and local autonomy, further research should address the following directions:

1. Comparative Studies Across Regions. Future research could **undertake** comparative case studies across different provinces or municipalities to explore variations in the implementation of UU No. 7 of 2012 and UU No. 23 of 2014. Such research would help identify

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best practices and structural challenges unique to different governance contexts, particularly between urban and rural regions or between conflict-prone and stable areas.

2. Conflict-Sensitive Budgeting and Fiscal Governance**.** There is a pressing need for empirical studies focusing on conflict sensitive budgeting frameworks that align fiscal policy with local peacebuilding objectives. Researchers could examine how local governments allocate and utilize funds for conflict prevention and recovery and evaluate the impact of fiscal decentralization on social stability.
3. Capacity Building and Institutional Performance Assessment. Future research should develop measurable indicators to assess the institutional capacity of local apparatus including human resource competencies, inter-agency coordination, and the presence of early warning mechanisms. Mixed method approaches combining surveys, interviews, and participatory observation could provide a more comprehensive understanding of local institutional effectiveness.
4. Digital Peacebuilding and Media Literacy**.** The increasing role of digital platforms in shaping public perception and mobilizing social action warrants deeper inquiry into digital peacebuilding strategies. Research could explore how misinformation, hate speech, and social media mobilization contribute to conflict escalation and how digital literacy programs can mitigate such risks.
5. Community Based and Cultural Approaches to Conflict Resolution**.** Given Indonesia's cultural diversity, future studies should focus on local wisdom and traditional institutions as mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. Integrating local traditions, religious values, and community dialogue models into governance structures may offer sustainable pathways for maintaining social harmony.
6. Policy Simulation and Scenario Planning for Local Governance**.** Researchers can employ **policy** simulation and scenario modeling to predict the potential outcomes of various conflict management strategies under different socio-political conditions. This approach could guide policymakers in anticipating risks and designing adaptive, evidence based policies for social stability.
7. Youth Engagement and Education Based Peacebuilding**.** Considering the increasing involvement of younger generations in digital activism, future studies should explore the role of education, civic engagement, and social innovation in shaping youth participation in conflict prevention. Action research and longitudinal studies could examine how early education on conflict sensitivity impacts long-term social cohesion.

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