

**LOCAL WISDOM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MALAY
RIAU CULTURAL WISDOM, TRI HITA KARANA IN BALI, AND PELA GANDONG IN
MALUKU**

Kartika Septiani^{1*}, Arifuddin Uksan², Yusnaldi³, Rachmat Setiawibawa⁴

¹²Program Studi Damai dan Resolusi Konflik, Fakultas Keamanan Nasional, Universitas
Pertahanan Indonesia, Bogor, Indonesia

³Program Studi Keamanan Maritim, Fakultas Keamanan Nasional, Universitas Pertahanan
Indonesia, Bogor, Indonesia

⁴Program Studi Magister Strategi Pertahanan Darat, Fakultas Keamanan Nasional, Universitas
Pertahanan Indonesia, Bogor, Indonesia

*Correspondence Email: kartika.septiani@kn.idu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The role of local wisdom as an instrument of peace has become increasingly relevant in addressing conflicts within Indonesia's multicultural society. This study analyzes three forms of local wisdom: the philosophy of adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah among the Malay Riau community, Tri Hita Karana in Bali, and Pela Gandong in Maluku. Using a qualitative library research method, the study applies Johan Galtung's conflict and peace theory as well as John Paul Lederach's peacebuilding from below to examine how local cultural practices contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Findings reveal that each tradition provides distinctive yet interconnected approaches: Malay Riau emphasizes deliberation and social reconciliation through adat institutions, Tri Hita Karana stresses the balance of spiritual, social, and ecological relations, while Pela Gandong fosters solidarity and interfaith brotherhood across villages. The analysis further demonstrates that these traditions collectively embody principles of harmony, consensus, and collectivism while differing in their religio-cultural foundations and practical mechanisms. Through Galtung's framework, these practices can be understood as efforts to build positive peace, while Lederach's perspective highlights the significance of grassroots actors and local legitimacy in sustaining peace. The study concludes that revitalizing local wisdom as a peace strategy is essential to strengthening social cohesion, ensuring national stability, and providing models for global peacebuilding.

Keywords: Local Wisdom; Conflict Resolution; Peacebuilding; Galtung; Lederach.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as one of the countries with the highest levels of cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity in the world. The country consists of approximately 7,508 islands inhabited by more than 300 different ethnic groups. More specifically, there are 1,340 ethnic groups that speak over 1,001 regional languages (Mazya dkk., 2024). Moreover, this diversity is also manifested in the religious sphere, where six religions are officially recognized by the state: Islam as the majority faith, followed by Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. While this plurality undoubtedly represents an invaluable asset, it simultaneously contains latent potential for the emergence of social conflict. Such conflicts may occur in the form of horizontal disputes, namely tensions between community groups with differing ethnic or religious identities, as well as vertical conflicts, referring to disputes between society and the state or formal institutions (Bai dkk., 2020).

In the context of Indonesia, emerging conflicts can be related to issues of ethnicity, religion, land, politics, and natural resources, which are often difficult to resolve thoroughly if relying solely on formal legal mechanisms (Puryanto, 2024). For example, the religiously charged riots in Poso in the early 2000s were resolved through approaches that tended to draw on local wisdom values within the community, aiming to achieve reconciliation, mutual understanding, and sustainable social harmony (Ristanti, 2022). Therefore, it can be concluded that formal legal resolution alone is not always sufficient to establish peace rather, it also requires a more inclusive approach that is rooted in the values of local wisdom.

Formal legal mechanisms do provide an institutional framework for conflict resolution, however, they have several limitations that often render them inadequate for establishing long-term peace (Hermansyah, 2009). First, formal law tends to be rigid and procedural, making it less responsive to social dynamics and the emotional needs of the parties involved in the conflict. Second, access to judicial mechanisms is not always equitable, especially for marginalized groups or communities in remote areas, who face barriers due to economic factors, bureaucracy, or power imbalances. Third, formal resolution models typically emphasize a 'win-lose' or adversarial approach, which prevents social relations between the parties from fully recovering. This situation risks leaving dissatisfaction and may even trigger recurring conflicts in the future. Therefore, conflict resolution in Indonesia needs to consider alternative approaches that are more inclusive, participatory, and rooted in local realities (Aprita & Purwasi, 2025).

It is within this context that local culture emerges as a potentially relevant instrument of peace. Since the pre-colonial era, the communities of the Nusantara archipelago have developed customary mechanisms to resolve disputes occurring between individuals or groups. Values such as deliberation, consensus, mutual cooperation, reconciliation, and the principle of social harmony have been integral to conflict resolution practices at the local level. This approach differs from the logic of formal law, which is oriented toward sanctions or punishment, as local wisdom prioritizes the restoration of relationships, the repair of social bonds, and the achievement of balance within the community. Thus, local wisdom is not merely a relic of the past, but a social asset that can serve as a foundation for sustainable peacebuilding (Astri, 2011).

One important conceptual framework that underscores the urgency of local approaches is the theory of positive peace, as proposed by Johan Galtung. According to Galtung (Galtung, 1969), Peace does not merely mean the absence of direct violence (negative peace), but must also encompass the establishment of just social structures, harmonious relationships, and the guaranteed fulfillment of basic human rights (positive peace). Within this framework, sustainable peace can only be achieved if the structural roots of conflict are addressed, including social injustice, marginalization, and identity-based discrimination. Local wisdom, grounded in values of collectivity, consensus, and harmony, has the potential to strengthen positive peace, as it not only addresses surface-level issues but also fosters collective awareness and social solidarity.

In addition to Galtung, John Paul Lederach (Lederach, 1997) Through his concept of peacebuilding from below, Lederach emphasizes the importance of the role of local actors in conflict resolution. He argues that lasting peace cannot be achieved solely through the intervention of political elites or formal institutions, but must be built from the grassroots level by involving communities and local values. This perspective aligns with the ideas of Roger Mac Ginty (Ginty & Richmond, 2013) Regarding the local turn in peacebuilding, Mac Ginty critiques the dominance of top-down approaches and emphasizes the necessity of integrating local peace practices into national and global strategies. Consequently, research on local wisdom is not only academically valuable but also offers a practical framework for strengthening conflict resolution strategies in Indonesia.

Within the Nusantara context, there are various local culture-based conflict resolution practices that reflect the nation's intellectual richness. This study specifically highlights three local wisdom traditions, namely:

a. Riau Malay Wisdom

The Malay community upholds the concept of life known as 'adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah,' which emphasizes a balance between customary law, religion, and social morality (Syahrial, 2015). In conflict resolution, the Malay community emphasizes deliberation, consensus, and the role of customary institutions as facilitators of reconciliation. This approach not only restores relationships between parties but also upholds collective honor and the dignity of the community.

b. Tri Hita Karana in Bali

This concept emphasizes three main harmonies: the relationship between humans and God (parhyangan), the relationship between humans and fellow humans (pawongan), and the relationship between humans and nature (palemahan) (Suarniati dkk., 2019). In practice, Tri Hita Karana serves as the basis for conflict resolution in Bali, as every dispute is understood as a disruption to the cosmic balance that must be promptly restored

c. Pela Gandong in Maluku

Pela Gandong is a bond of brotherhood between different villages (customary villages) with varying religions and ethnicities. Pela Gandong functions as a social mechanism that prevents conflict while also serving as an instrument of reconciliation (Ismail dkk., 2022). Values such as brotherhood, reciprocal obligations, and solidarity serve as the main resources for managing tensions, including during the conflicts in Maluku in the late 1990s.

These three local wisdom traditions differ contextually in their cultural and socio-religious expressions, yet they share common principles of collectivity, consensus, and harmony. This commonality demonstrates the existence of universal principles within Indonesian local cultures that can serve as instruments of national peace. The urgency of this research is further heightened by contemporary conditions in Indonesia, which face the complexity of new conflicts, such as agrarian disputes arising from investment expansion, identity-based political polarization, and social tensions due to digital developments. Formal legal approaches often prove inadequate in responding to these phenomena, whereas local wisdom can offer solutions that are more flexible, inclusive, and contextually grounded.

Based on this background, this study has several objectives. First, to describe conflict resolution practices rooted in local wisdom across three regions, namely the Riau Malay community, Tri Hita Karana in Bali, and Pela Gandong in Maluku. Second, to compare the values, principles, and practices among these three cultures in addressing conflicts. Third, to evaluate the relevance of these local wisdom traditions as a model for peacebuilding strategies that can be applied more broadly in Indonesia.

The hypothesis proposed in this study is that, although local cultures differ in terms of religious, cultural, and social contexts, they share universal principles of collectivity, consensus, and harmony, which can serve as effective instruments for national peacebuilding. Therefore, this research is expected not only to provide an academic contribution in the form of a comparative study but also to offer practical implications for the revitalization of local cultures in addressing modern conflicts, both at the community and national levels.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative comparative approach with a focus on comparative cultural study to understand, describe, and compare conflict resolution practices rooted in local wisdom in Riau Malay, Bali, and Maluku. A qualitative approach is chosen for its ability to explore meanings, values, and social practices, while the comparative nature of the study is used to identify similarities and differences that can serve as a basis for developing a culture-based conflict resolution model in Indonesia.

Data were collected through literature review, document analysis, and observation of conflict resolution practices utilizing Riau Malay cultural wisdom, the Tri Hita Karana concept in Bali, and Pela Gandong solidarity in Maluku. Secondary data were obtained from journals, books, research reports, and relevant customary archives. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive-analytical methods with cross-case comparison to identify similarities and differences, which were then

interpreted through Johan Galtung's theoretical framework, particularly the concepts of positive peace and cultural peacebuilding.

The research locations are focused on Riau, examining conflict resolution practices based on Riau Malay cultural wisdom; Bali, exploring human-God-community-nature harmony through Tri Hita Karana; and Maluku, studying the Pela Gandong system that strengthens solidarity across religions and ethnicities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Peace Values in the Practice of Local Cultural Wisdom in Riau, Bali, and Maluku

Riau

The Riau Malay community adheres to the life philosophy of 'adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah,' which emphasizes the integration of customary law, Islamic teachings, and social morality as the foundation of communal life (Trirahmayati & Yasnel, 2025). This philosophy forms the basis that every social action, including conflict resolution, must be grounded in both religious values and harmonious customary norms. From this foundation emerge the core principles of Riau Malay culture, namely collectivity, deliberation, consensus, and basalam (living in harmony), which underscore the importance of togetherness, openness in dialogue, and avoiding the domination of one party to maintain social equilibrium (Yanti dkk., 2024).

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts in Riau Malay culture involve multiple parties, including religious leaders, families, the community, and government authorities, so that this collaboration can strengthen harmony and social resilience. In practice, the resolution mechanisms can also be facilitated by the Riau Malay Customary Institution (LAMR), which acts as a mediator through customary deliberations, community meetings, and platforms such as the Bilik Damai. The entire process is conducted without a focus on punishment, but rather on reconciliation, relationship restoration, and the reestablishment of social harmony to preserve communal cohesion. This approach is encapsulated in Malay proverbs, as documented by Tenas Effendy (Musa, 2017):

Kato ukum kato bono (The word 'hukum' (law) also carries the meaning of 'truth'); Kato bono kato adat (The word of truth, the word of custom);

Kato adat kato mufakat (The word of custom, the word of consensus); Tediri adat atas mufakat (Adat consists of consensus);

Tuah rajo dalam dolatnya, tuah ayat dalam mufakatnya (The ruler's fortune lies in his sovereignty, the people's fortune lies in their consensus);

Besulao ke mato ai, bepayang ke mufakat (Seek guidance from the sun, seek protection through consensus);

Togak adat pado mupakat (Custom stands on consensus); Dalam mupakat, salah boso dipekocik, salah kocik Diabisi (In consensus, major mistakes are mitigated, minor mistakes are corrected);

Bulat kaji dalam uji, bulat aei dalam pembulou, bulat kato dalam mupakat (Thorough in examination, round like water in a vessel, unified in words through consensus);

Mengaji dii dalam dii, mengaji adat dalam mupakat (Reflect on oneself within oneself, reflect on custom through consensus);

Mupakat membuang kosat, unding membuang ucing (Consensus removes roughness, deliberation removes sharpness);

Usai mupakat, boat engan samo diangkat (After reaching consensus, burdens are shared equally);

Dimano unding selosai, disitu adat dipakai (Where deliberation has concluded, there custom is applied);

Kalau unding sudah selesai, pantang diungkai (Once deliberation is concluded, it must not be reopened)

The proverbs above illustrate that noble values are embedded in the principles of deliberation and consensus in Malay life, which then serve as guidelines for resolving conflicts that arise within Riau communities. This conflict resolution concept has come to be known as Penal Mediation or Alternative Dispute Resolution.

This approach reflects the social values upheld in Riau Malay culture, namely preserving collective honor, community dignity, tolerance, and strengthening social bonds. The concept of restorative justice is embodied through customary sanctions that do not merely punish, but focus on restoring relationships, resolving issues fairly, and repairing the harm suffered by the aggrieved

parties. The Riau Malay customary-based conflict resolution model remains relevant in contemporary contexts due to its inclusive, sustainable nature, and its ability to maintain social harmony amid diversity. In an era of globalization, which is prone to identity-based tensions, Riau Malay customary practices can serve as an example of community-based conflict resolution that upholds togetherness, justice, and long-term peace (Effendy, 2012).

Bali

In Balinese society, the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana is known, which literally means 'three causes of happiness or harmony' (Konsep Tri Hita Karana: Harmoni dalam Kehidupan Menurut Tradisi Bali – Sistem Informasi Wilayah dan Tata Ruang Bali, t.t.). This concept emphasizes the importance of maintaining three dimensions of relationships in life, namely (Sanjaya, 2022): a) Parahyangan It teaches harmony between humans and God, manifested through the practice of religious teachings, mutual respect among fellow human beings as His creations, and the promotion of peace in life; b) Pawongan emphasizes harmony among human beings through mutual respect, social solidarity, cooperation, and deliberation, even in the presence of many differences. Differences are viewed as a gift from God that allows people to understand and complement one another, with the aim of creating peace and collective well-being; meanwhile c) Palemahan teaches harmony between humans and nature, manifested in the careful preservation and management of the environment, including land, water, and forests, in ways that do not contradict norms, laws, customs, or religious teachings. By maintaining environmental sustainability, a peaceful, safe, and harmonious life is created for both present and future generations.

Tri Hita Karana teaches that true peace can only be achieved when there is spiritual, social, and ecological balance. Conflict is seen as a form of imbalance in one or more of these dimensions, so its resolution is directed toward restoring harmony among humans, fellow human beings, and the environment. In practice, conflict resolution efforts in Bali are carried out through community deliberations within the desa pakraman to reach consensus, purification rituals as a means to restore spiritual balance, and the role of the pakraman as a mediator in inter-resident disputes. Additionally, jointly conducted religious activities strengthen the sense of togetherness, solidarity, and spiritual connectedness among individuals, thereby maintaining social harmony.

The social values upheld in Tri Hita Karana are the integration of morality, spirituality, and ecology. Conflict resolution is not merely about law or punishment, but about restoring social relationships and preserving community dignity. Deliberation, consensus, and relational restoration are prioritized over punishment. In a contemporary context, the Balinese approach is relevant due to its holistic and sustainable nature. It not only resolves conflicts among individuals or groups but also considers environmental and spiritual aspects. Amid global ecological crises and increasing identity-based conflicts, the Tri Hita Karana model can serve as an inspiration for inclusive, community-based conflict resolution aligned with the principles of sustainable development.

Maluku

In Maluku society, the local wisdom of Pela Gandong is known. Pela Gandong is a Maluku local wisdom that has been rediscovered and revitalized to resolve conflicts in Maluku, particularly in Ambon. Etymologically, 'gandong' means a brotherhood bond like biological siblings, while 'pela' means a brotherhood bond like foster siblings. When combined as Pela Gandong, the concept refers to a brotherhood agreement between villages, usually across religions (Muslims and Christians), which regulates rights, obligations, commands, and prohibitions with the aim of fostering mutual care like that among biological siblings. This bond becomes a symbol of sibling relationships between villages and serves as a medium for cultural conflict resolution (Ismail dkk., 2022).

The principles and social values in the local wisdom of Pela Gandong emphasize the importance of brotherhood, equality, parity, togetherness, and tolerance among residents. Brotherhood serves as the foundation for conflict resolution, teaching mutual care and affection like biological siblings. Equality eliminates the domination of one village over another, with all villages positioned as equal regardless of social status or public office of their citizens. Parity is realized through the principle of 'what is mine is yours,' encouraging sharing and cooperation, including in the construction of interfaith places of worship such as mosques and churches. Togetherness is manifested through the tradition of visiting each other's villages and providing assistance and gifts during major religious holidays. Meanwhile, tolerance emphasizes respect for cultural and religious differences, reflected in

the construction of schools, mosques, churches, as well as the preservation of local languages and customs.

Conflict resolution in the local wisdom of Pela Gandong is carried out through Pela agreements, customary ceremonies, and mediation facilitated by customary leaders and religious figures (Masringor & Sugiswati, 2017). All these practices aim to restore relationships between groups and prevent disputes from escalating into larger conflicts. In a contemporary context, the Pela Gandong customary mechanism remains relevant as a foundation for inclusive and sustainable cross-community peacebuilding, serving as a conflict resolution model that upholds togetherness, justice, and long-term peace.

Comparative Analysis of Peace Values in the Practice of Local Cultural Wisdom in Riau, Bali, and Maluku

Comparative analysis of these three local wisdoms shows significant similarities and differences in conflict resolution approaches and peacebuilding efforts, while also highlighting how local culture shapes dispute resolution strategies that are socially adaptive and relevant. Their similarity lies in the fundamental values upheld, namely social harmony, consensus, and collectivity. These values form the foundation for communities to resolve conflicts peacefully and prevent the escalation of disputes that could disrupt community cohesion.

For example, the Riau Malay community emphasizes tolerance, deliberation, and consensus in conflict resolution, where the process is initially not directed toward punishment but toward reconciliation and restoration of relationships among residents. Similarly, in Bali, through the philosophy of Tri Hita Karana, the emphasis is on balancing three dimensions of relationships: humans with God (Parhyangan), humans with fellow humans (Pawongan), and humans with nature (Palemahan), so that conflict resolution is not only social but also considers spiritual and ecological balance. Meanwhile, in Maluku, Pela Gandong serves as the main instrument for building brotherhood among villages of different ethnicities and religions. The values of brotherhood, equality, togetherness, and tolerance in Pela Gandong ensure that cultural conflicts can be mitigated through sibling-like relationships maintained through rituals and customary agreements.

In addition to shared values, the three also have notable differences, particularly in their religio-cultural basis and practical mechanisms. Riau Malay relies on adat and Islamic values, Bali on Hindu philosophy, while Maluku draws on Maluku local wisdom that is then transformed across religions. The mechanisms of conflict resolution also differ: the Riau Malay community uses customary deliberation as a mediation forum; the Balinese integrate customary rituals, pakraman deliberations, and religious activities to uphold social and spiritual harmony; whereas the Maluku community uses Pela Gandong agreements and Panas Pela rituals as a means to maintain inter-village relationships and ensure that solidarity commitments remain intact.

In terms of social impact, these three local wisdoms shape collective habits that strengthen community cohesion. In Riau, emerging conflicts can be resolved peacefully through deliberation and mediation by customary leaders, thus maintaining harmonious relationships among residents. In Bali, Tri Hita Karana teaches that spiritual, social, and ecological balance not only creates internal peace but also encourages community participation in environmental preservation. In Maluku, the Pela Gandong bond prevented large-scale conflicts following the Ambon conflict of 1999–2002; many villages bound by pela remained peaceful and mutually supportive, making the role of this local wisdom highly effective in building sustainable peace.

Moreover, the modern relevance of these three local wisdoms is evident in their capacity to manage diversity and foster community-based peace. The Riau Malay cultural approach can serve as a model for inclusive, local-wisdom-based social dispute resolution. Tri Hita Karana offers a holistic paradigm that integrates spiritual, social, and ecological aspects into social development planning. Meanwhile, Pela Gandong exemplifies how an interfaith customary system can maintain peace in a multicultural society. Thus, although rooted in different local contexts, all three remain relevant as adaptive, sustainable conflict resolution models that respect cultural values.

Table 1. Comparison of Peace Values

| Aspect | Riau - Melayu Culture | Bali - Tri Hita Karana | Maluku - Pela Gandong |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Religio-cultural basis | Adat Melayu & Islam | Hindu Philosophy | Maluku Local Cultural Wisdom |
| Core values | Social harmony, reconciliation, collectivity | Spiritual, social, and ecological balance | Brotherhood, equality, parity, togetherness, and tolerance |
| Peace principles | Customary deliberation, reconciliation, restoration of relationships | Tri Hita Karana: Parhyangan, Pawongan, Palemahan | Inter-village brotherhood bonds, interfaith cooperation |
| Practical mechanisms | Customary deliberation, community leader mediation | Customary rituals, pakraman deliberation, religious activities | Pela Gandong agreements, Panas Pela rituals, customary/religious leader mediation |
| Modern relevance | Community-based conflict resolution, inclusive | Maintaining social harmony while ensuring environmental balance | Long-lasting cross-community peacebuilding |

Analysis of Peace Values in the Practice of Local Cultural Wisdom in Riau, Bali, and Maluku Based on the Theories of Galtung and Lederach and Their Relevance to the Present

In peace studies, Johan Galtung emphasizes the importance of positive peace, which is peace that not only entails the absence of violence (negative peace) but also the creation of justice, equality, social harmony, and the overall well-being of society. According to Galtung, conflict is not merely a phenomenon of physical violence or hostility between individuals, but often arises from structural and cultural imbalances within society.

In this context, Indonesian local wisdom, such as Tri Hita Karana in Bali, Malay Culture in Riau, and Pela Gandong in Maluku, serves as concrete examples of how communities practice structural and cultural approaches to mitigate conflict. Tri Hita Karana emphasizes the balance between humans and God, humans and fellow humans, and humans and nature, resulting in holistic peace. On the other hand, Riau Malay Culture emphasizes reconciliation, tolerance, and restoration of social relationships as the core of conflict resolution. Meanwhile, Pela Gandong in Maluku reinforces inter-village, inter-ethnic, and inter-religious bonds, fostering solidarity, equality, and tolerance among residents. All these practices reflect positive peace because they not only stop violence but also cultivate social cohesion, cross-group understanding, and repair relationships damaged by conflict.

In line with this, John Paul Lederach, through the concept of peacebuilding from below (Lederach, 1997) emphasizes that the sustainability of peace highly depends on the role of local actors and grassroots communities. Lederach stresses that local actors who understand the cultural context, history, and social values of the community possess a unique capacity to design and implement effective and sustainable conflict resolution mechanisms.

In practice, the communities of Riau Malay, Bali, and Maluku indeed act as mediators and determinants of local peace. For instance, in Riau Malay customary deliberations, customary leaders, families, and community members together discuss conflicts openly, emphasizing reconciliation and the restoration of social relationships. In Bali, pakraman and customary rituals are not only religious means but also social instruments to balance spiritual, social, and ecological dimensions, allowing the community to restore harmony after disputes occur. Meanwhile, in Maluku, Pela Gandong and Panas Pela rituals function as regular forums to ensure that inter-village bonds remain strong, helping to resolve violations or social issues before they escalate into larger-scale conflicts.

These two theoretical perspectives, Galtung and Lederach, provide a foundation for understanding the strategic function of local wisdom in sustainable peacebuilding. Local practices are not merely symbolic traditions but mechanisms for social reconciliation, collective protection, and strengthening community cohesion. They demonstrate that genuine peace also arises from social

interactions that are conscious of cultural values, equality, and shared responsibility, not merely from external interventions or formal mechanism decisions. Moreover, these practices show how communities internalize norms and rituals as preventive conflict tools, allowing conflicts to be addressed peacefully before escalation occurs.

Overall, the integration of Galtung's and Lederach's perspectives illustrates that local wisdom functions as a bridge between the universal values of peace and the specific practices of communities. On one hand, the principle of positive peace emphasizes justice, harmony, and social well-being as the ultimate goal, while the peacebuilding-from-below approach shows that local actors are the main drivers in achieving this goal. Thus, Tri Hita Karana, Riau Malay Culture, and Pela Gandong are not only historically relevant but also have contemporary relevance in inclusive, sustainable, and community-based peacebuilding.

Integration of Local Wisdom as a Strategy for Sustainable Peace in Indonesia

Local wisdom as a model for peace strategy offers a perspective that is not only historical and cultural but also relevant in the context of contemporary conflict resolution. In various studies, local wisdom is viewed as a source of living values within the community, encompassing principles of harmony, togetherness, reconciliation, and restoration of social relationships. This aligns with the concept of positive peace proposed by Johan Galtung, in which true peace not only means the absence of violence (negative peace) but also the presence of justice, mutual trust, and collective well-being.

When applied to the context of local wisdom in Indonesia, such as Riau Malay Customary Law, the Tri Hita Karana philosophy in Bali, and Pela Gandong in Maluku, it is evident that all three contain values that can serve as a foundation for a peace strategy that is both contextual and universal. Thus, local wisdom is not only relevant as cultural heritage but also as a social capital that can be institutionalized within the framework of modern conflict resolution.

In line with Galtung, John Paul Lederach, through the concept of peacebuilding from below, emphasizes that sustainable peace arises from the involvement of local actors, not merely from the intervention of political elites or international institutions. According to Lederach (1997), the peace process must begin from the local capacities possessed by the community, as they are the parties who best understand the root causes of conflict and simultaneously hold legitimacy in seeking solutions. Local wisdom in this context becomes a significant entry point, as it contains a set of values, norms, and social practices that communities have long used to mitigate conflict. For example, the deliberation system in the Riau Malay tradition is not only a deliberative forum but also a mechanism for building mutual respect among differing parties. Similarly, Tri Hita Karana in Bali is not merely a philosophical teaching but a life framework that integrates the relationships of humans with God, humans with humans, and humans with nature, all three being essential dimensions for long-term peace. Meanwhile, Pela Gandong in Maluku demonstrates that customary bonds of brotherhood can overcome religious and ethnic divisions, allowing potentially destructive communal conflicts to be reduced through culturally accepted mechanisms.

Local wisdom also offers high flexibility and relevance in facing contemporary challenges. Modernization and globalization often bring the risk of eroding traditional values, yet at the same time, these values can be revitalized to respond to the needs of the times. For instance, the principle of deliberation in Riau Malay customary law, which emphasizes consensus, can be combined with the restorative justice approach that is currently developing within the Indonesian legal system. Tri Hita Karana can serve as a foundation for sustainable development that emphasizes ecological balance amid the global climate crisis, while also maintaining social and spiritual harmony within Balinese society. Meanwhile, Pela Gandong serves as an example of how cross-religion and cross-ethnic customary agreements can function as a model of interfaith peacebuilding, which is relevant in an era of increasing intolerance. Thus, local wisdom is not static but dynamic, capable of adapting while simultaneously providing inspiration for modern peace strategies.

Local wisdom also has a significant contribution in strengthening national peace and even inspiring at a global scale. In Indonesia, religious, ethnic, and cultural plurality is often a source of conflict, but at the same time, it can become a source of strength if managed wisely. Riau Malay customary law, the balance of Tri Hita Karana in Bali, and the solidarity of Pela Gandong in Maluku can strengthen social cohesion, which has implications for national security. By maintaining social cohesion from the smallest community level, the state can prevent the escalation of conflicts to broader scales. In the global context, this model can serve as an inspiration for other multicultural countries facing similar challenges, such as South Africa with post-apartheid reconciliation or

Bosnia-Herzegovina after ethnic conflicts. Through its local wisdom, Indonesia can present itself as a global peace laboratory that teaches the importance of synergy between traditional values and formal mechanisms.

However, the utilization of local wisdom as a peace strategy is not free from challenges. First, the younger generation faces the realities of modernization and globalization, which tend to distance them from tradition. This potentially weakens the sustainability of local wisdom as a conflict resolution mechanism. Second, there is a risk of politicization of customary institutions by local elites for certain political interests, which can diminish the noble values that should be upheld. Third, in the context of more complex conflicts involving transnational actors, local wisdom may require additional support from the state and international institutions to remain relevant.

Therefore, an integration strategy becomes important, where local wisdom is preserved in its authenticity while also being accommodated within the formal legal framework, as regulated in Law Number 7 of 2012 concerning the Handling of Social Conflicts, which recognizes the role of customary institutions in conflict resolution. Considering these potentials and challenges, local wisdom can be positioned not only as cultural heritage but also as a model of peace strategy that can be applied at various levels. At the community level, it serves to strengthen social cohesion and prevent conflict escalation. At the national level, it supports stability by providing culturally-based alternative mechanisms that are closer to the people. At the global level, Indonesia's local wisdom can become an important reference in the discourse of culture-based peacebuilding. In other words, local wisdom is not merely a part of identity, but a strategic instrument capable of supporting the realization of sustainable peace, both in Indonesia and internationally

CONCLUSION

Riau Malay with the philosophy of “adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi Kitabullah,” Bali with Tri Hita Karana, and Maluku with Pela Gandong have different religio-cultural contexts, yet share common principles of harmony, collectivity, consensus, and reconciliation. The Riau Malay culture emphasizes deliberation, consensus, and the restoration of social relationships facilitated by customary institutions in conflict resolution; Bali, through Tri Hita Karana, underscores the importance of spiritual, social, and ecological balance; while Maluku, with Pela Gandong, emphasizes inter-village and interfaith brotherhood bonds that maintain solidarity and social cohesion. From a theoretical perspective, Johan Galtung's concept of positive peace and John Paul Lederach's notion of peacebuilding from below demonstrate the significant relevance of these local wisdom practices. Galtung emphasizes true peace as not merely the absence of violence but the presence of justice, harmony, and the restoration of social relations. Lederach asserts that sustainable peace must be built from local actors and grassroots communities who understand the cultural context and possess social legitimacy. These three local wisdoms also demonstrate flexibility and relevance in addressing contemporary challenges. The customary deliberation of Riau Malay can be integrated with restorative justice; Tri Hita Karana serves as a foundation for sustainable development amid ecological crises; while Pela Gandong becomes a model of interfaith peacebuilding in an era of increasing intolerance. Thus, local wisdom is not only a cultural heritage but also a strategic social asset that can strengthen social cohesion, national stability, and serve as an inspiration for global peacebuilding.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aprita, S., & Purwasi, O. (2025). Peran Kearifan Lokal dalam Penyelesaian Sengketa: Integrasi Nilai Tradisional dengan Proses Hukum Modern. *JArBI: Jurnal Arbitrase Indonesia*, 1(2), 102-???
- Astri, H. (2011). Penyelesaian Konflik Sosial Melalui Penguatan Kearifan Lokal. *Jurnal Aspirasi*, 2(2), 151-162.
- Duis, J. M. (2008). Acid/base chemistry and related organic chemistry conceptions of undergraduate organic chemistry students. (Publication No. 3348786) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Northern Colorado]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. → Disertasi/ Tesis Dari Database
- Effendy, T. (2012). *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu*. Balai Kajian Budaya Melayu.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Ginty, R. M., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(5), 763-783. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.800750>

- Hermansyah. (2009). Penyelesaian Konflik Etnis dan Institusionalisasi Pengadilan Lokal yang Berbasis Budaya. *Jurnal Media Hukum*, 16(3), 600-630
- Huang, S., Pierce, R., & Stamey, J. (Eds.). (2006). Proceedings of the 24th annual ACM international conference on the design of communication. ACM Digital Library. <https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1166324&picked=prox> → Prosiding Konferensi
- Ismail, R., Wakano, A., & Leasiwal, G. (2022). Resolusi Konflik Keagamaan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal: Studi Pela Gandong di Ambon. *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses*, 5(1), 93–108. <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v5i1.3012>
- Konsep Tri Hita Karana: Harmoni dalam Kehidupan Menurut Tradisi Bali – Sistem Informasi Wilayah dan Tata Ruang Bali. (t.t.). Diambil 17 September 2025, dari <https://tarubali.baliprov.go.id/konsep-tri-hita-karana-harmoni-dalam-kehidupan-menurut-tradisi-bali/>
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Masringor, J., & Sugiswati, B. (2017). Pela Gandong Sebagai Sarana Penyelesaian Konflik. *Perspektif: Kajian Masalah Hukum dan Pembangunan*, 22(1), 66–79.
- Mazya, T. M., Ridho, K., & Irfani, A. (2024). Religious and Cultural Diversity in Indonesia: Dynamics of Acceptance and Conflict in a Multidimensional Perspective. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 07(07), 4932–4945. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V7-i7-32>
- Musa, M. (2017). Tunjuk Ajar Adat Melayu sebagai Instrumen Alternatif dalam Menyelesaikan Konflik Lahan Perkebunan di Riau. *UIR Law Review*, 1(2), 214–229.
- Puryanto, S. (2024). Reconciliation in Indonesia: Local Wisdom as the Key to Conflict Resolution. *GATR-Global Journal of Business and Social Science Review*, 12(4), 197–208. [https://doi.org/10.35609/gjbssr.2024.12.4\(4\)](https://doi.org/10.35609/gjbssr.2024.12.4(4))
- Ristanti, D. N. (2022). Interreligious Violent Conflict Resolution: Discoursing Communal Violence between Christians and Moslems in Poso City, Indonesia. *Hasanuddin Journal of Strategic and International Studies*, 1(1), 31–38. <https://doi.org/10.20956/hjsis.v1i1.24845>
- Samson, J. M. (2016). *Human trafficking and globalization* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. → Disertasi atau Tesis Magister Tidak Dipublikasikan
- Sanjaya, P. (2022). Peran Generasi Muda Sebagai Agent Of Change Guna Membangun Kearifan Budaya Lokal Dalam Ajaran Tri Hita Karana. *Jurnal Penelitian Agama Hindu*, 186–196.
- Suarniati, I. G. A., Anom, I. G. A., & Hengki, I. G. B. (2019). Reflection of Tri Hita Karana Philosophy as A Local Wisdom of Bali Communities in Responding to Social Conflict in The Global Reform Era. *Sociological Jurisprudence Journal*, 2(2), 127–133. <https://doi.org/10.22225/scj.2.2.1246.127-133>
- Syahrial, M. T. bin J. (2015). *Adat dalam Peradaban Melayu* [Laporan Penelitian]. Program Studi Etnomusikologi, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Sumatera Utara dan Majelis Adat Budaya Melayu Indonesia.
- Trirahmayati, T. & Yasnel. (2025). Tata Cara Hidup Orang Melayu Riau: Warisan Budaya yang Lestari. *Multidisciplinary Indonesian Center Journal (MICJO)*, 2(1), 376–384. <https://doi.org/10.62567/micjo.v2i1.409>
- United States Government Accountability Office. (2019). Performance and accountability report: Fiscal year 2019. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/702715.pdf> → Dokumen Pemerintah
- Yanti, A. D., Andriani, T., & Syafiuddin, F. A. (2024). Toleransi dan Tenggang Rasa: Kajian Budaya Melayu Riau dalam Dinamika Multikulturalisme. *Toleransi: Media Ilmiah Komunikasi Umat Beragama*, 16(1), 13–21.