



# THE ROLE OF VILLAGE OFFICIALS IN MANAGING SOCIAL CONFLICT

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## Abstract

**Background** Social conflict in the Gampong Teungoh Iboh community, West Labuhan Haji District, South Aceh Regency occurs due to differences of opinion, misunderstandings, and interests between individuals and other community groups. The aim of this research is to find out the role of gampong officials in managing social conflict and to find out the obstacles faced by gampong officials in resolving social conflicts in Gampong Teungoh Iboh, West Labuhan Haji District, South Aceh Regency. The theories used in this research are conflict theory from Ralf Dahrendorf and Miftah Thoha's role theory, namely to analyze social conflict problems in the Gampong Teungoh Iboh community.

**Methods** This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach and data collection techniques through observation, interviews and documentation.

**Results** Based on the results of this research, it shows that gampong officials have not played a full role as mediators in resolving disputes in the community, so that gampong officials cannot realize the community's wishes to achieve peace with the disputing parties.

**Conclusions** The obstacles faced by gampong officials in resolving disputes between the two conflicting parties, one of them did not attend the settlement hearing from the gampong officials. So this social conflict cannot be resolved until now.

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## Keywords

*Key words: Keuchik, Social Conflict, Society, Conflict Management, Village Official*

## Introduction

Social conflicts in Indonesia are always happening, especially horizontal conflicts between different ethnic, tribal, religious, and other groups. Social conflicts usually occur because of different opinions, thoughts, words, and actions. As a result, social conflicts always occur, both on a small and simple scale such as within families, neighbors, playmates, groups or organizations, as well as on a larger scale such as within communities, societies, countries, or international relations ([Samsiar, 2023](#)).

Despite differences of opinion, misunderstandings, and the interests of individuals and other community groups, social conflict has arisen in Gampong Teungoh Iboh. In Gampong Teungoh Iboh, there are many social problems, including conflicts between residents and families, land disputes, theft, juvenile delinquency, and lawsuits over land and house disputes. To date, these social conflicts have not been resolved by the village customary institutions, but they are still trying to resolve them through legal institutions. In addition, resolutions made by village customary institutions to create peace can be resolved by village officials, but they cannot resolve social conflicts such as land and house disputes.

Most people believe that social conflicts usually arise from various problems. However, there are also others who believe that individual and group interests also cause conflicts, leading to debates between the two sides ([Maifizar et al., 2025](#)). Social processes caused by differences and misunderstandings between individuals and community groups are known as social conflicts. Conflicts that occur between individuals and community groups to debate and argue about various matters that are considered important or correct.

Because they deal directly with the community in providing services, village officials, as part of the government, are very important for the welfare of the community. The village chief, village secretary, hamlet head, and tuha peut are members of the village government. Village officials are state apparatus or instruments that mainly consist of institutional and administrative fields, and also in addition, staff responsible for running day-to-day government affairs. It is inevitable that social conflicts arise in human life. We may not even realize that our own mistakes can be the source of these conflicts. Conflicts often occur in personal relationships, families, and even organizations. If conflicts are not resolved, they will disrupt future communication between individuals.

Humans, as social beings, always face problems. Because problems and humans are inseparable, no one can live without problems. Problems arise from relationships with other people. Broadly speaking, there are two sources of problems: individual factors and environmental factors. When life was still relatively simple, the problems that arose tended to be simple as well. Problems have become increasingly complex and complicated as human life has progressed into the modern era.

Previous research shows that the cultural role of village elders as mediators in resolving conflicts between village government officials and the community in Sumedang Regency. Elders serve as figures who encourage community participation and can act as mediators when conflicts arise, demonstrating the synergistic relationship that must be maintained within the village social structure in order to resolve conflicts effectively ([Herdiana, 2019](#)). Furthermore, there is research that finds that customary institutions are not only recognized as protectors of traditional values but are also trusted in resolving complex community

issues. Recognition of customary institutions increases the legitimacy of the conflict resolution process, strengthens the social structure in the village, and makes the village government a collaborative partner in resolving these issues ([Dasor, 2020](#)). Without a strong and synergistic relationship, the village government's efforts to resolve conflicts may be ineffective ([Wasdi, 2022](#)).

The results of the study show that the gampong customary institution has resolved social conflicts in Gampong Teungoh Iboh. However, there is one social issue that remains unresolved, namely social conflicts related to land and house disputes. The gampong officials have tried to resolve this issue, but have not reached an agreement because both parties want to win without compromise. As a result, social conflicts over land and house disputes remain an issue. This study will analyze these issues using [Thoha \(1986\)](#) Role Theory to analyze social conflict management and [Dahrendorf \(2021\)](#) Conflict Theory to analyze social conflict constraints.

## Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to obtain in-depth and significant data. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to answer the research questions thoroughly and deeply. In this study, purposive sampling was used to find informants; this study prioritized purpose over population characteristics when selecting research samples. They were considered “key” to the research sample because they had extensive knowledge about the population ([Juliansyah Noor, 2016](#)). The main objective of research is data collection, without data collection techniques, researchers will not be able to collect data that will enable them to establish standards from the data they have collected. Sources, settings, and natural settings are some methods of data collection. This research should complement research information ([Sugiyono, 2016](#)). Qualitative data analysis is inductive, so it depends on the data collected during the research. This is then expanded into relationship patterns or hypotheses. It begins with data to create hypotheses, and after the data is processed repeatedly, it produces conclusions. [Sugiyono \(2016\)](#) states that the analysis consists of three simultaneous steps: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

## Result and Discussion

### The Role of Village Officials in Managing Social Conflict in Teungoh Iboh Village, West Labuhan Haji Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency

In Gampong Teungoh Iboh, Labuhan Haji Barat Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency, the community is facing social conflict. To prevent social conflict from disturbing other communities, village officials and other traditional leaders are responsible for handling the issue. All parties involved must support the role of village officials in managing social conflict to produce a better process that can be understood by other communities.

Actions taken by perpetrators or third parties to steer disputes toward a specific outcome are referred to as conflict control. This situation can be calm, positive, creative, consensual, or aggressive. Conflict management can include self-help, working together to solve problems (with or without the help of a third party), and using a third party to make decisions ([Ross, 1993](#)). One way to prevent social conflict from occurring in society is to control social conflict. As a result, the village apparatus created regulations that were agreed upon by the community. The Teungoh Iboh Village apparatus should create a peaceful village without disputes in order to avoid community problems.

Thoha says that leadership can be defined as the implementation of decisions and the exercise of authority. In addition, leadership can also be defined as the initiative to act that results in a consistent pattern of action in an effort to solve problems together. According to John Willey (2001), there are three types of conflict management: managing conflict (collaborating), fighting conflict (committing), and avoiding conflict ([Handayani, 2019](#)).

In addition, social conflicts in Gampong Teungoh Iboh, located west of Labuhan Haji District, South Aceh Regency, are handled in several ways, such as socializing village regulations (Qanun) to the community. Village officials also handle social conflicts through conciliation, mediation, and arbitration.

A leader who wants to be successful as a leader must do five things: invite, motivate, facilitate, and direct ([Thoha, 1986](#)). According to Law Number 7 of 2012, social conflicts in Gampong Teungoh Iboh, Labuhan Haji Barat Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency are managed and controlled by village regulations. People maintain a peaceful community, create a system for peaceful dispute resolution, reduce the possibility of conflict, and build an early warning system to prevent conflict.

In accordance with Article 2 of Law Number 6 of 2014 of the Republic of Indonesia, the village administration is responsible for administering government affairs and the interests of the local community within the government system ([Undang-Undang \(UU\) Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa, 2014](#)). Village administration is managed by the village government, which is assisted by village officials. According to Miftah Thoha's theory, a role is a regular behavior that results from a position. A person is said to perform a role if he or she exercises his or her rights and obligations in accordance with his or her position ([Thoha, 1986](#)).

This also applies to the residents of Gampong Teungoh Iboh in Labuhan Haji Barat Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency. Here, the village officials function as the village's traditional apparatus responsible for carrying out their duties related to the community. To ensure peace, prosperity, and tranquility, village officials play a crucial role in resolving community issues. The results of the study show that the people of Gampong Teungoh Iboh are able to control social conflicts because they have a strong sense of unity and kinship, enabling them to control social problems that cause disputes.

Therefore, the village officials, with the support of the local community, are able to control social conflicts in the village. Thus, efforts to manage social conflicts require community support. In order for the control process to run as effectively as possible, it is this unity that makes the community believe that the village officials can be responsible for their rights and obligations. As a result, the community willingly obeys the village regulations (Qanun) that are made based on mutual agreement. Of course, in this case, the role of village officials is increasingly evident for the benefit of the village community. Therefore, to manage social conflicts, community support is needed.

This unity is what makes the community believe that the village officials are working well so that the control process can run smoothly. They can be responsible for their rights and obligations, so that people are happy to obey the village regulations that are made collectively. In this case, the role of village officials becomes clearer for the benefit of the village community. Leadership style, according to Thoha, is a behavioral norm used by a person in an effort to influence the behavior of others as he sees fit. In other words, it is a leadership style used to encourage subordinates to achieve organizational goals. In addition, it can be

said that leadership style is a preferred pattern of behavior and strategy for leading an organization ([Thoha, 1986](#)).

### **Challenges faced by village officials in resolving social conflicts in Teungoh Iboh Village, West Labuhan Haji Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency**

This chapter discusses the findings of the research. The findings are consistent with Ralf Dahrendorf's theory of conflict. The social conflict in the community of Gampong Teungoh Iboh in Labuhan Haji Barat Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency, is a horizontal conflict that causes disputes between individuals or groups with the same social status. There are many reasons for social conflict. There are conflicts of interest between individuals and groups that cause differences in interests. When different interests arise among these groups, a special community is formed. This is very likely due to the emergence of various needs in life along with the emergence of various opportunities that can accommodate various interests.

Based on the findings from the interviews conducted regarding the challenges faced by the village government in resolving social problems, as explained by the informants, the obstacle to social conflict in Gampong Teungoh Iboh is that the disputing parties from Gampong Teungoh Iboh did not accept invitations from the village officials during the process of resolving the social conflict. Disagreement or disagreement about something significant is called a difference of opinion. In society, differences of opinion arise as a result of psychological relationships with enemies who have different goals and cannot ultimately unite. Differences of opinion always exist in human life.

1. Conflicts of interest between individuals and groups lead to differences in interests. With the emergence of different interests among these groups, the formation of special communities is very likely. This occurs because the emergence of various needs in life is accompanied by the emergence of various opportunities that can fulfill these different interests.
2. Misunderstanding occurs when someone does not understand correctly in a situation of dispute or conflict. Due to the different cultural frames of reference in multicultural societies, misunderstandings often occur in interethnic communication. Differences in thinking and intent perceived by the recipient cause misunderstandings. This happens because people are always communicating with others, which allows them to obtain information, convey messages, or simply talk to others.

According to [Dahrendorf \(2021\)](#), there are two types of social groups: consensus, which shows unity among different groups, and conflict, which shows interests that view society with coercion. Dahrendorf also says that conflict will not occur in society if there is no consensus; consensus is a necessary condition for conflict to occur. According to Dahrendorf, groups involved in conflict take actions that change the social structure. These changes occur drastically in situations of intense conflict ([Dahrendorf, 2021](#)). Interviews with informants show that social conflict issues become the interests of the conflicting parties, leading to differences of opinion about the resolution process due to egoism.

As a result, social conflicts cannot be resolved. Therefore, to explain social conflicts, Ralf Dahrendorf says that the main ideas for explaining social conflicts are hidden interests, real interests, pseudo-groups, interest groups, and conflict groups. The problem of social conflict in Gampong Teungoh Iboh can be seen from the fact that various groups with interests have developed into conflicting groups. In addition, the resolution of social conflicts is hampered

because one of the conflicting parties did not attend the settlement hearing held by the village customary institution. This caused a commotion that led to disputes, forcing the village customary officials to reach a legal settlement.

In terms of family and village customs, the two approaches that have been used to resolve this issue have not achieved satisfactory results. As a result, the village customary apparatus has handed over the conflict issue to the disputing parties. This supports Ralf Dahrendrof's theory, which states that in every association marked by conflict, there is tension between those who participate in the power structure and those who are subject to it.

Not many people realize that what is wrong should not be considered good for one's own interests, and rules remain in place if something is done that has no evidence to justify it. As explained by Ralf Dahrendrof, it is separate. That is because it gives rise to conflicting interests and roles. Sources of power and authority give rise to fear, and those who hold them seek to maintain their status. He states that it is an objective interest formed by roles, along with the function or importance of each role in maintaining the whole.

## Conclusion

Based on the research conducted by the author in the previous chapter, the author can draw several conclusions about the role of village officials in handling social conflicts in the community.

1. Village officials have not acted as mediators who would impose sanctions on parties who violate community norms, so village officials are unable to fulfill the community's wishes regarding parties in conflict.
2. One of the obstacles faced by village officials in resolving social conflicts is that one of the parties does not trust the village officials to resolve the conflict. As a result, the social conflict remains unresolved to this day.

After conducting research entitled "The Role of Gampong Officials in Managing Social Conflict in Gampong Teungoh Iboh, Labuhan Haji Barat Subdistrict, South Aceh Regency," the researcher suggests that it may be useful for all parties in managing social conflict, as follows.

1. It is hoped that the village officials of Teungoh Iboh will conduct more frequent socialization activities regarding village regulations. This will encourage the community to refrain from actions that violate the values and norms of Teungoh Iboh village.
2. In addition, the entire community should always maintain good relations with one another and comply with the regulations in the village in order to avoid social conflicts.

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