The Construction of Social Awareness in the Kei Islands: A study of Local Conflict Resolution in Southeast Maluku, Indonesia

Studia Regionalne i Lokalne
Nr 4(102)/2025

ISSN 1509-4995
E-ISSN 2719-8049
doi: 10.7366/15094995410204

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Abstract

Local communities worldwide rely on cultural values, and Indigenous institutions to recover from social conflict; however, the process by which social awareness is constructed as a peacebuilding mechanism remains insufficiently theorised, particularly in post-colonial island societies. This study examines how social awareness is constructed and mobilised in resolving recurring social conflicts in the Kei Islands, Maluku, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations involving community leaders, customary elders, religious figures, and local residents. The findings reveal six interrelated forms of social awareness – sense of brotherhood, participation in joint activities, social interaction, problem-solving through deliberation, the ability to listen and communicate, and tolerance – which collectively shape everyday peace practices in the community. Drawing on Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction, this study demonstrates that while processes of internalisation and externalisation are increasingly challenged by modernisation and social pressures, objectification through strong customary institutions functions as the primary stabilising anchor in conflict resolution. The study extends social construction theory by proposing a communal–institutional variation, in which collective institutions play a corrective role in sustaining social cohesion. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening Indigenous institutions and culturally embedded practices in locally grounded peacebuilding initiatives.

Keywords

social awareness, Indigenous conflict resolution, local peacebuilding, social construction theory, customary institutions, Kei Islands

Introduction

The construction of social awareness refers to the process through which individuals and communities develop shared understandings of values, norms, and collective responsibilities that guide social interaction and influence how conflicts are understood and addressed.

Social awareness is neither static nor purely individual; it evolves through everyday interactions, cultural transmission, and institutional practices that reinforce shared meanings and moral boundaries. Individuals with higher levels of social awareness tend to demonstrate greater sensitivity to social norms, collective interests, and the perspectives of others, enabling more constructive engagement in situations of tension and disagreement (Camocini & Dominoni, 2022; Zhihao & Kee, 2024). However, processes of modernisation, the weakening of customary authority, and widening

socio-economic disparities increasingly challenge the reproduction of these shared values, particularly in societies with histories of recurring conflict.

This study draws on Berger and Luckmann's (1991) theory of the social construction of reality, which conceptualises social order as emerging from the dynamic interaction of internalisation, objectification, and externalisation. While this framework has been widely applied, critiques from post-colonial and non-Western perspectives emphasise that social construction is deeply shaped by historical experience, power relations, and Indigenous institutions. In many Indigenous societies, collective institutions and customary authorities play a more pronounced role in stabilising social norms than individual cognition alone, suggesting a need for contextual refinement of the theory.

The Kei Islands of Southeast Maluku, Indonesia, provide a compelling context for examining these dynamics. Characterised by social, cultural, and religious plurality, the region has faced recurrent conflicts involving land disputes, clashes among youth, and inter-village rivalries. At the same time, Kei society is known for strong customary institutions and cultural values that emphasise brotherhood, mutual respect, deliberation, and tolerance. Previous studies indicate that these Indigenous mechanisms have historically functioned as social glue; however, their effectiveness has been increasingly tested by contemporary social pressures and repeated conflict episodes (Schwartz, 2006; Ufie *et al.*, 2023).

Comparative research from other post-conflict settings in Indonesia highlights the importance of locally grounded peace practices, such as communal rituals, placemaking, and everyday cooperation, in sustaining social cohesion (Guarnacci, 2016; Hartoyo *et al.*, 2020; Marchella & Rembulan, 2025). These findings suggest that in plural societies, conflict resolution often emerges not from formal institutions alone but from culturally embedded practices that regulate everyday social relations. However, there remains a limited empirical understanding of how social awareness itself is constructed, negotiated, and mobilised within Indigenous communities facing recurring conflict.

Accordingly, this study examines how the Kei community constructs and enacts social awareness in responding to recurring social conflicts. Specifically, it seeks to (1) identify the forms of social awareness that emerge in everyday social life, (2) analyse how these forms are internalised, objectified, and externalised through customary institutions and social practices, and (3) assess how the Kei case contributes to refining social construction theory within a non-Western, post-conflict context.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of the Kei community in relation to social awareness and conflict resolution. Phenomenology is particularly suitable for this research because it enables an in-depth examination of how individuals perceive, internalise, and interpret social values, norms, and conflict-related experiences. Rather than focusing solely on institutional structures, this approach prioritises participants' subjective understandings and everyday social practices, which align with the study's analytical focus on internalisation, objectification, and externalisation.

The research was conducted in the Kei Islands, specifically in Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City, over a period of approximately three months. Fieldwork was conducted by the research team across a range of social settings, including traditional houses, village halls, religious spaces, and informal community gathering sites. These locations were selected to capture diverse social interactions and customary practices relevant to conflict resolution in this post-conflict context.

Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. A total of 14 individuals took part, comprising customary elders (*soa adat*), community leaders, religious figures, youth representatives, local government officials, and people directly affected by social conflict. Participants were chosen based on their experiential knowledge, social roles, and involvement in community dynamics. Initial informants were identified for their authority and familiarity with customary practices, while additional participants were recruited through referrals to ensure a broad range of perspectives.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Thirty-five observation sessions were conducted, each lasting between 30 minutes and two hours, to capture everyday interactions, cultural expressions, and communal routines related to social awareness and conflict management. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were carried out, with durations ranging from 45 to 90 minutes. Interview questions were open-ended and focused on participants' understandings of social awareness, sources of conflict, customary mechanisms of resolution, and values guiding communal life. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent.

Data analysis followed phenomenological thematic procedures. Interview transcripts and field notes were first subjected to open coding to identify meaningful statements, followed by axial coding to examine relationships among emerging concepts. Selective coding was then applied to synthesise core themes, including sense of brotherhood, participation in joint activities, social interaction patterns, problem-solving through deliberation, listening and communication, and tolerance. Analysis was conducted through iterative engagement with the data, supported by reflexive memoing and thematic clustering to ensure analytical coherence.

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. Data triangulation was achieved by comparing information across participant groups, data collection methods, and field settings. Member checking involved sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants for confirmation and clarification. Peer debriefing with colleagues familiar with Maluku's socio-cultural context further strengthened the analytical rigour. Throughout the research process, reflexive field notes were maintained to critically assess the researcher's positionality and interpretive assumptions.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed. Ethical approval was obtained from the researcher's institution prior to data collection. All participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was ensured through the anonymisation of personal identifiers. Given the sensitivity of inter-village and inter-group tensions, cultural norms and ethical research standards guided the handling and presentation of all data.

Results

Social Awareness in the Kei Community

Analysis of field observations and interview data indicates that social awareness in the Kei community is expressed through multiple interrelated forms embedded in everyday social life and customary practices. These forms do not operate independently but instead collectively shape how individuals and groups perceive social relations and respond to conflict.

The findings reveal six dominant forms of social awareness that structure communal responses to conflict: a sense of brotherhood, participation in joint activities, social interaction patterns, collective problem-solving, communicative openness and listening, and tolerance. The following subsections elaborate on each form and illustrate how each is enacted in practice within the Kei community.

Sense of Brotherhood (Basudara)

A sense of brotherhood (*basudara*) emerged as a central form of social awareness within the Kei community. Participants described *basudara* not merely as a kinship concept but as a moral orientation that regulates social relations across village, clan, and religious boundaries. Rooted in local customary values, brotherhood emphasises mutual respect, restraint, and harmonious coexistence, and has long functioned as a normative foundation for social interaction in the Kei Islands (Schwartz, 2006; Ufie *et al.*, 2023).

Empirical evidence from interviews and observations indicates that *basudara* is cultivated through everyday socialisation within families, customary institutions, and religious settings. Customary elders and religious leaders frequently invoke narratives of shared ancestry and collective identity to reframe social tensions and remind disputing parties of their moral obligations to one another. One participant stated:

> In social life in the Kei Islands, especially in Ohoi Bombay or Kei Besar District, we see other people as our brothers as well. Whether native Kei or immigrants, we still respect each other because our customs teach that, and religion also teaches the same. (P01)

In practice, the principle of brotherhood is reinforced through communal activities such as joint ceremonies, inter-village cooperation, and voluntary mediation during periods of heightened tension. These practices function as everyday mechanisms through which social bonds are maintained and repaired, reflecting locally grounded peace processes identified in other post-conflict communities in Indonesia (Guarnacci, 2016; Hartoyo *et al.*, 2020).

However, several informants acknowledged that brotherhood does not always prevent conflict. In situations involving competition over resources, rising social inequality, or external political triggers, the moral appeal of *basudara* may be overshadowed by competing group interests. These tensions reveal a gap between the idealised value of 'everyone as kin' and lived social realities, indicating that brotherhood – while deeply internalised – cannot operate effectively in isolation.

From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's (1991) social construction of reality, *basudara* represents an internalised moral value that requires continuous objectification through customary institutions, collective practices, and deliberative mechanisms to regulate behaviour and sustain social order. When such institutional reinforcement weakens, the capacity of brotherhood to prevent or manage conflict becomes limited, underscoring the importance of embedding moral values within both formal and informal mechanisms of conflict resolution.

Participation in Joint Activities

Participation in joint activities constitutes an important form of social awareness in the Kei community. Such activities include communal work (*masohi*), religious ceremonies, sports events, village development projects, and collective responses to emergencies. These settings bring together individuals from different villages, clans, and religious backgrounds, creating shared experiences that reinforce cooperation, mutual trust, and collective responsibility.

Interview data and field observations indicate that joint activities function as informal spaces for social interaction and relationship maintenance. Participation enables community members to meet regularly, communicate across social boundaries, and reduce social distance. An informant explained how these activities are intentionally organised to foster togetherness, while also acknowledging their potential risks:

> To encourage integration between residents, we often hold joint activities to strengthen the sense of togetherness. These efforts have had a positive impact, but there are still concerns. For example, inter-village football competitions have often triggered conflicts. In daily life, however, we help each other in emergencies – such as fires – where Christians assist Muslim residents, and we also work together to repair village facilities. During *takbiran* and Christmas celebrations, Christians and Muslims mingle. Even so, crowds can still trigger conflict.

Participation in emergencies – such as cross-religious cooperation during fires – and mutual assistance in village maintenance reflect a strong moral obligation to help one another. These practices resonate with findings by Miković *et al.* (2020), who emphasise the role of joint activities in reinforcing collective cohesion, and align with Indonesian studies showing that communal participation supports social awareness and post-conflict recovery (Acep *et al.*, 2023; Yunus, 2020).

At the same time, the data reveal a clear ambivalence. While joint activities foster solidarity and social integration, they may also become flashpoints for conflict, particularly when competition, heightened emotions, alcohol consumption, or unresolved inter-village tensions are present. Sports events, in particular, illustrate how collective gatherings can shift from spaces of unity to arenas of rivalry. This duality highlights that participation is not inherently peaceful but context-dependent.

From the perspective of social construction theory, joint activities serve as processes through which social awareness becomes objectified and externalised (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Through repeated participation, norms of cooperation and collective responsibility are institutionalised, while moments of tension expose uneven internalisation of these norms among community members.

Understanding this ambivalence is essential for interpreting how social awareness is continuously negotiated and reconstructed in the Kei community's post-conflict context.

Patterns of Social Interaction

Patterns of social interaction are a key dimension of social awareness within the Kei community, shaped by everyday encounters in family networks, neighbourhood relations, customary institutions, and religious spaces. Through routine interaction, individuals learn to regulate behaviour, manage emotions, and position themselves socially in ways that sustain cohesion while minimising friction.

Interview data reveal that social interactions in Kei society encompass both associative interactions, which reinforce solidarity, and dissociative interactions, which may generate tension. Informants consistently identified several recurring triggers of conflict, including unclear land boundaries, clashes among youth, village leadership disputes, and alcohol consumption. One informant explained:

> What often triggers conflicts is the problem of juvenile delinquency (school children), and also the problem of MIRAS. There is also the issue of land boundaries. What happened in Bombay with Elat was the problem of school children fighting, so that it affected the community of the second *ohoi* (village). It also happens that the problem of liquor affects the ego of the person who consumes it.

Alcohol consumption, particularly *sopi*, frequently intensifies aggression and impairs judgment, thereby amplifying interpersonal tensions and collective disputes, a pattern consistent with previous findings on alcohol-related social conflict (Creswell, 2021). Land disputes and leadership struggles further illustrate how structural pressures can erode social harmony when communication and mutual recognition break down.

At the same time, cultural norms within Kei society encourage respectful communication, acknowledgement of social roles, and the avoidance of *primordial egoism*, the tendency to prioritise one's own group at the expense of others (Omotosho *et al.*, 2020). Observations during participation in various traditional and religious events show that such interaction patterns are continuously reinforced through shared rituals and collective decision-making processes.

Nevertheless, the persistence of dissociative interactions indicates that social awareness is not uniformly internalised across community members. This finding reflects Berger and Luckmann's (1991) notion that shared meanings are not externalised in identical ways by all individuals. While cultural ideals provide a moral framework for interaction, individual behaviour – particularly among youth and in contexts involving alcohol or competition over resources – may diverge from collective expectations.

Problem-Solving Through Customary Deliberation

Problem-solving through customary deliberation constitutes a central form of social awareness in the Kei community, particularly in responding to social conflict. Customary deliberation, commonly referred to as *tasdivun*, functions as a culturally embedded mechanism through which disputes are addressed collectively, emphasising dialogue, reflection, and the restoration of social harmony rather than punishment.

Interview data indicate that *tasdivun* operates through a tiered process, beginning at the clan level, followed by deliberation at the *ohoi* (village) level, escalation to the *Rat* (traditional authority), and, if unresolved, referral to state law. This structure allows conflicts to be managed proportionally while prioritising reconciliation within customary frameworks. One participant explained: 'Sitting together in customary deliberation is important because it brings people back as family, even when relationships have been damaged. Through this process, people forgive each other, restore dignity (*taha sak waham*), and re-establish relationships that had been strained'(P02).

Observations of deliberative processes revealed that listening, mutual acknowledgement, and emotional restraint are prioritised over the assertion of individual claims. The presence of customary elders and clan leaders serves not only as a source of moral authority but also as a stabilising

force ensuring that discussions remain respectful and oriented towards consensus. In more severe cases, customary sanctions such as *lela* or *mas adat* may be imposed, reinforcing accountability while maintaining a restorative orientation grounded in ancestral norms (Laimeheriwa & Wargadinata, 2020).

From the perspective of social construction theory, *tasdivun* represents a key process of objectification, whereby internalised values – particularly brotherhood (*basudara*), respect, and collective responsibility – are institutionalised through customary law and deliberative practices (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Through repeated engagement in these processes, moral values are externalised in concrete actions that help legitimise conflict resolution outcomes and restore social order.

Nevertheless, participants acknowledged that the effectiveness of customary deliberation depends on the continued recognition of customary authority. In conflicts involving political interests, generational tensions, or rejection of traditional sanctions, deliberative processes may lose legitimacy. This indicates that, while *tasdivun* remains central to conflict resolution in the Kei community, its authority is increasingly negotiated within changing legal and social contexts.

Ability to Listen and Communicate

The ability to listen and communicate openly reflects a crucial dimension of social awareness in the Kei community, especially during conflict resolution processes. Informants consistently emphasised that effective dialogue begins with identifying the root causes of conflict through impartial and respectful discussion, rather than assigning blame. One participant explained: 'We are looking for the root cause of the conflict. An example is the conflict between Bombai and Elat. We are trying to find the cause of the problem at school.'

This emphasis on careful listening reflects a shared understanding that unresolved grievances often escalate when parties fail to communicate openly. Indigenous language plays an important role in this process, as it conveys layered cultural meanings that shape emotional expression and social interpretation. Values such as *Ain ni Ain* (a sense of mutual belonging), *tet ya a* (respect), *ha maren* (helping one another), and *fang nanan* (loving and caring) guide how individuals speak, listen, and respond during moments of tension.

Field observations suggest that communication practices are not merely technical exchanges of information but moral performances through which social relationships are maintained or repaired. The use of respectful language, attentive listening, and controlled emotional expression is particularly emphasised during deliberative forums, where failure to communicate appropriately may intensify misunderstandings and prolong conflict.

From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's (1991) framework, listening and open communication represent a key process of internalisation, whereby cultural values are absorbed as personal orientations guiding behaviour. When these internalised values are externalised through dialogue and collective decision-making, social awareness becomes visible and actionable. Conversely, breakdowns in communication – often occurring during emotionally charged disputes – illustrate moments when internalised norms fail to translate into collective practice, thereby increasing the risk of conflict escalation.

Tolerance

Tolerance in the Kei community is deeply embedded in religious teachings and traditional cultural values and is expressed through everyday social practices. Informants consistently described tolerance not as an abstract principle, but as a lived experience manifested through cooperation across religious boundaries, particularly during communal work and major religious activities. One participant explained:

> Yes, the attitude of tolerance is shown through religious life. The Kei people's philosophy of life is clear. So, if in religious life there are social works that must be done and help is needed, people are jointly involved. For example, in the construction of mosques and churches, everyone participates together.

A prominent expression of tolerance is the practice of *Yel Lim*, which involves voluntary contributions of labour, food, money, and other forms of assistance to individuals or groups organising communal or religious events. This practice illustrates that social concern in Kei society extends beyond personal interest, kinship, or religious affiliation, fostering solidarity across both social and religious boundaries (Ufie *et al.*, 2020).

Field observations indicate that tolerance is continuously reinforced through participation in religious celebrations, communal construction projects, and collective assistance during times of need. These practices are widely understood as part of ancestral heritage and are regarded as obligations to be preserved and transmitted to future generations. In this sense, tolerance operates as a shared social norm that regulates interaction among diverse groups within the community.

However, informants also acknowledged that tolerance is not immune to disruption. Periods of resource scarcity, political mobilisation, or heightened emotional tension may challenge intergroup relations and strain established norms of coexistence. Several participants noted that identity differences can be amplified under such conditions, potentially undermining everyday practices of tolerance. These findings suggest that, although deeply rooted, tolerance in the Kei community requires continuous reinforcement through shared activities and social engagement to remain effective as a stabilising force.

From a social construction perspective, tolerance in the Kei community is internalised through religious teachings and cultural values, objectified as a shared social norm and ancestral heritage, and externalised through practices such as *Yel Lim* and interreligious cooperation (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

Discussion

This study demonstrates that social awareness in the Kei Islands is not merely an individual moral disposition but a socially constructed process sustained through the continuous interaction of internalisation, objectification, and externalisation, as conceptualised by Berger and Luckmann (1991). As illustrated in Figure 1, these processes operate dynamically and simultaneously within everyday social life, shaping how the community interprets social differences, manages tension, and responds to conflict.

At the stage of internalisation, individuals absorb core cultural values such as brotherhood (*Ain ni Ain*), respect, cooperation, and tolerance through family socialisation, religious instruction, and routine social interaction. The findings show that early exposure to these values creates a moral framework through which individuals perceive others as part of a shared social world, even across ethnic and religious boundaries. This internalised awareness influences how potential conflicts are initially interpreted, either as manageable social tensions or as threats to communal harmony.

However, the results also indicate that internalisation alone is insufficient to sustain social order, particularly in a plural and post-conflict context. As depicted in Figure 1, objectification emerges as the most influential stabilising element in the construction of social awareness in the Kei Islands. Cultural values are institutionalised through customary law, traditional leadership, religious authority, and deliberative mechanisms such as *tasdivun*. These institutions function as collective reference points that reaffirm shared norms and provide legitimate frameworks for mediating disputes when individual moral commitments weaken.

Empirical findings illustrate that customary deliberation plays a crucial role in reframing conflict as a collective concern rather than an individual grievance. Participants described how *tasdivun* restores strained relationships by emphasising dialogue, mutual recognition, and collective responsibility. This supports peacebuilding literature highlighting the effectiveness of locally grounded institutions in managing everyday conflict (Avruch, 2003; Mac Ginty, 2014). At the same time, this study extends Berger and Luckmann's framework by demonstrating that objectification in the Kei context functions not merely as a crystallisation of internalised values but as an active corrective mechanism embedded in communal institutions.

Externalisation represents the translation of internalised and objectified values into concrete social practices. As shown in Figure 1, externalisation occurs through participation in joint activities, patterned social interaction, respectful communication, and tolerance in plural social settings. The

findings indicate that cooperative work, communal gatherings, and everyday interaction provide arenas in which social awareness is enacted and reproduced. These practices align with existing scholarship on everyday peace, which emphasises routine interaction and non-confrontational behaviour as key foundations of social cohesion in post-conflict societies (Mac Ginty, 2014).

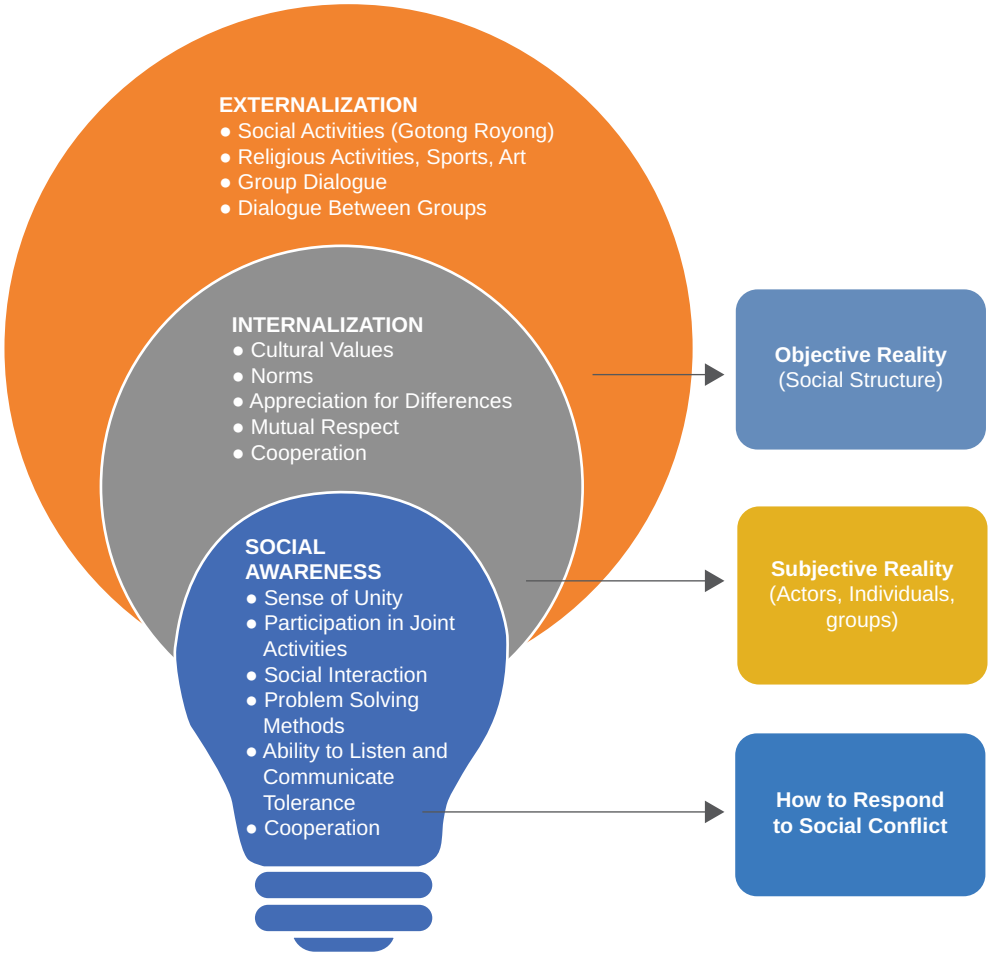

Figure 1. The Process of Social Awareness Construction of the Kei Community During Social Conflict

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Importantly, the six forms of social awareness identified in this study – a sense of brotherhood, participation in joint activities, patterns of social interaction, problem-solving through customary deliberation, the ability to listen and communicate, and tolerance – do not correspond neatly to single stages of social construction. Rather, they operate across internalisation, objectification, and externalisation. For instance, brotherhood is internalised as a moral value, objectified through customary norms, and externalised in cooperative and tolerant behaviour. This interconnectedness underscores that social awareness is continuously produced and reproduced through overlapping social processes rather than through linear stages.

The prominence of objectification in Figure 1 highlights a key empirical and theoretical contribution of this study. In the Kei Islands, customary institutions do not merely preserve tradition but actively intervene to stabilise social relations during moments of tension. When internalised values are challenged by political competition, economic inequality, or identity-based mobilisation, objectified norms and institutions serve as corrective mechanisms that restore moral boundaries and collective order. This finding resonates with critiques of purely individual-centred approaches to peacebuilding and reinforces arguments for strengthening culturally embedded institutions in post-conflict governance (Avruch, 2003; Mac Ginty, 2014).

Overall, the integration of empirical findings and theoretical analysis, as synthesised in Figure 1, demonstrates that social awareness in the Kei Islands is a socially constructed and institutionally sustained phenomenon. Rather than relying solely on individual attitudes or externally imposed interventions, the maintenance of social harmony depends on the dynamic interaction between internalised values, objectified institutions, and everyday practices of externalisation. This insight contributes to broader debates on Indigenous peacebuilding by showing how local cultural systems can function as resilient mechanisms for conflict prevention and social cohesion in plural societies.

Conclusion and Implications

This study shows that social conflict resolution in the Kei Islands emerges from a socially constructed process anchored in customary institutions and collective cultural values. Through a phenomenological exploration of community experiences, the findings show that social awareness in the Kei context is sustained through the dynamic interaction of internalisation, objectification, and externalisation, with objectification – manifested in customary institutions, traditional leadership, and deliberative mechanisms – playing the most decisive role in managing social conflict.

Empirically, this study provides a nuanced understanding of how the Kei community constructs social awareness through six interrelated forms: a sense of brotherhood, participation in joint activities, patterns of social interaction, problem-solving through customary deliberation, the ability to listen and communicate, and tolerance. These forms are enacted in everyday practices such as customary assemblies (*tasdivun*), mutual cooperation, interreligious participation, and collective rituals. At the same time, the findings reveal persistent tensions. Processes of modernisation, alcohol consumption, land disputes, and youth-related conflicts indicate that internalisation is increasingly fragile, requiring customary institutions to play a more active role in restoring social order.

Methodologically, this study highlights the value of a phenomenological approach in conflict research by foregrounding lived experiences, meanings, and local interpretations of peace and conflict. Rather than treating customary law as a static normative system, phenomenology allows a deeper understanding of how social awareness is continuously negotiated, reinforced, and challenged within everyday social life.

Theoretically, this research extends Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory by proposing a communal–institutional variation of the construction process. While the classical framework assumes a relatively balanced interplay between internalisation, objectification, and externalisation, the Kei case demonstrates that, in societies with strong communal traditions, objectification through customary institutions functions as the primary stabilising anchor. These institutions can compensate for weaknesses in internalisation and externalisation, particularly in post-conflict and rapidly changing social contexts, offering an important contribution to non-Western applications of social construction theory.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that peacebuilding initiatives in the Kei Islands – and in similar plural societies – should prioritise strengthening customary institutions rather than relying solely on generic tolerance or dialogue programs. Concrete efforts may include supporting customary deliberation forums, reinforcing the mediation capacity of traditional and religious leaders, and fostering participatory activities that enhance social interaction, communication, and collective problem-solving. Such interventions reinforce objectification processes while simultaneously revitalising internalisation and externalisation.

Finally, this study acknowledges several limitations, including its qualitative scope, the number of participants, and the limited direct observation of conflict resolution processes. Future research could expand this work through comparative studies across regions in Maluku or Indonesia, longitudinal analyses of generational change, or applied research evaluating the effectiveness of customary-based peacebuilding initiatives. More broadly, the Kei case invites scholars and practitioners to reconsider the central role of local institutions and cultural values in sustaining everyday peace within plural and post-conflict societies.

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