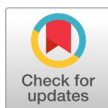
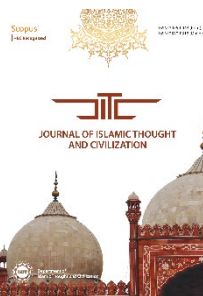


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Exploring Conflict Resolution Technology in Islamic Perspective: Lessons from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for Practising Peace

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Abstract

The persistently high conflict index in numerous Muslim-majority nations necessitates resolution frameworks rooted deeply in indigenous Islamic values. This research investigates the specific "conflict resolution technology" pioneered by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who successfully navigated complex socio-political tensions. It presents his methodology as a viable, contextual, and religiously aligned alternative to contemporary secular models. Employing a qualitative literature study, data were synthesized from primary classical *sīrah* texts—Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham—alongside modern scholarly analyses by al-Buthy and Haykal. The framework involved tracing underlying ideological structures and strategic mediation patterns within 7th-century contexts to identify repeatable, structured methodologies. The study identifies four distinct technologies: (1) participatory principles fostering stakeholder engagement; (2) inclusive collaboration integrating diverse social and religious elements; (3) pragmatic orientation toward real-world problem-solving; and (4) an ethics of reconciliation grounded in forgiveness, empathy, and universal respect. This approach avoids "finishing strikes" for concessions, favouring collaborative dignity over unilateral victory. These technologies offer a robust, adaptable framework for modern conflict management. By positioning Islam as an inclusive space for sharing rather than a conservative norm, the Prophet's methodology remains a transformative source for culturally relevant peacebuilding. It prioritizes patience and respect for all parties, providing a sustainable path for diplomacy across the modern Islamic world and ensuring that available resources are balanced.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, historical exploration, Muhammad PBUH, Muslim world

Introduction

Over the past two decades, data released by various international peace monitoring agencies, such as the Conflict Barometer by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK)¹ and the Global Peace Index (GPI) by the Institute for Economics and Peace show a worrying trend: countries with Muslim-majority populations are consistently at the bottom of the global peace index. In fact, in the last 20 years, no Muslim-majority country has made it to the top 10 most peaceful countries in the world.²

In contrast, some Muslim countries are recorded as the regions with the highest and most prolonged levels of conflict. Syria and Iraq, for example, have remained in the "very low" category

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¹Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), *Conflict Barometer 2023* (Heidelberg: HIIK, 2023), <https://hiik.de/conflict-barometer/current-version/?lang=en/> (accessed May 5, 2025).

²Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index 2017: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (Sydney: Institute for Economics and Peace, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1038/nmeth1014-1000> (accessed May 5, 2025).

of the Global Peace Index since the outbreak of conflict in the early 2010s. Syria even ranks at the bottom several times, making it the least peaceful country in the world. The multidimensional conflict, involving domestic, regional, and international actors in the country, has systematically destroyed social, economic, and political structures, making it a failed state according to an index released by the Fund for Peace.³

The prolonged conflict in Iraq in the aftermath of the 2003 U.S. invasion generated conditions conducive to political disorder and the rise of radical groups, most notably داعش (ISIS). Iraq experienced not only the weakening of central state authority, but also the erosion of a cohesive national identity, increasingly fractured along ethnic and sectarian lines. In parallel, Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Yemen, which began in 2015, has further aggravated the humanitarian catastrophe and amplified regional tensions. Yemen now endures one of the most severe humanitarian crises globally, with millions lacking access to food, healthcare, and essential services.⁴

Moreover, the unresolved conflict between Israel and the Palestinians continues to destabilize the region, while the significant escalations between 2021 and 2025 have intensified civilian suffering and further diminished the possibility of a just and lasting resolution.⁵ This demonstrates how fragile regional stability is. Israel's massive military action against the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has sparked a wave of anger in different parts of the Islamic world. However, the response from the Islamic world itself appears to be divided and uncoordinated. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), as a collective of Muslim countries, has not played a significant role in formulating an effective, integrated peace solution.⁶

One striking feature of the conflict trend in Muslim countries is the absence of an Islamic approach as an epistemological and normative basis for formulating conflict-resolution strategies. Many of the reconciliation and peace diplomacy processes are driven by non-Muslim actors, such as the United States⁷, and China.⁸ This indicates a vacuum in Islamic thought regarding the resolution of contemporary conflicts. Even when Muslim actors such as Qatar or Turkey are involved, their role is still limited as facilitators, not as drafters of peace proposals rooted in Islamic values.

In the midst of this multidimensional crisis, there is an urgent need to explore and reformulate conflict-resolution technologies drawn from Islamic treasures. In fact, in Islamic history, the tradition of conflict resolution has been widely recognised, particularly in the form of "sulh" (reconciliation),

³The Fund for Peace, "Fragile State Index," 2024, <https://fragilestatesindex.org/> (accessed May 5, 2025).

⁴Saleh Zaid Al-Otaibi, "The Impact of Arab Revolution on the Security of the Arabian Gulf," *Review of Economics and Political Science* 5, no. 2 (2020): 136–48, <https://doi.org/10.1108/reps-02-2019-0022>.

⁵Hanan Ali Amaireh, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Al Jazeera's Reporting of the 2021 Israel–Palestine Crisis," *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 24, no. 1 (2024): 21–40, <https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes.v24i1.559>.

⁶Ghaffar Khan, "Israel–Palestine Conflict and the Role of International Organizations," *Pakistan Review of Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2022): 1–12; Ibrahim Sharqieh, "Can the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Resolve Conflicts?" *Peace and Conflict Studies* 19, no. 2 (2012): 219–36, <https://doi.org/10.46743/1082-7307/2012.1139>.

⁷Stephen Zunes, "Peace Process," in *Handbook of US–Middle East Relations: Formative Factors and Regional Perspectives*, ed. Robert Looney (London: Routledge, 2014), 135–50, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203859377-12>.

⁸Benjamin Houghton, "China's Balancing Strategy between Saudi Arabia and Iran: The View from Riyadh," *Asian Affairs* 53, no. 1 (2022): 124–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2022.2029065>.

“*tahkīm*” (arbitration), and deliberation as part of the principle of “*shur*”. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as a leader and statesman, has put forward many visionary, inclusive, and conflict-resolution approaches. Nevertheless, the legacy has not been widely developed into a conceptual and operational framework that Muslim countries can adapt to modern conflict resolution. The Islamic world needs a breakthrough: an Islamic peace technology that is not only normative but also practical, operationalizable in real-world contexts, and capable of competing with Western-based conflict-resolution approaches.

This article aims to address the gap in the discourse of Islamic-based conflict resolution by drawing on several experiences of Muhammad (PBUH) in managing conflicts. The exploratory process for the institutionalization of Islamic conflict resolution is examined through the constructivist theories of Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckman. This study examines the process of externalising the reality of the conflicts faced by Muhammad (PBUH). It analyses how he developed conflict-resolution strategies as part of the objectification of the concept of Islamic peace. The study further evaluates the productivity of this conceptual framework through a balanced analysis of classical and modern Islamic historiography. Additionally, it explores how the moral foundations of Islamic peace, a central catalyst, become the epicentre of its intellectual productivity and its relevance to contemporary conflicts.

2. Literature Review

An interesting study by Jonathan Fox shows that the relationship between Islam, conflict, and peace in international relations is a complex contemporary discourse that often presents profound paradoxes in global socio-political life. On the one hand, religion is considered a noble source of moral inspiration. However, it is often accused of being the primary trigger of various very destructive inter-group tensions.⁹ The literature on this topic is generally divided into two major opposing currents, which, despite their differences, collectively offer a comprehensive understanding of the religion's position in the public sphere.

The first argument in this study is that religion inherently has the potential to be a structural cause of horizontal and vertical conflicts in the broader society. William Polk, who discussed jihad and crusade, found that religion's tendency to define oneself and others in opposed terms often creates a very thick wall of separation between groups of different faiths.¹⁰ The process of recognizing external entities is very low due to claims of absolute truth that often deny the existence of other perspectives outside the group's internal circle. This is emphasized by research from Svensson, who found that a particular kind of religious exclusivism creates conditions in which prejudices and stereotypes thrive, allowing minor frictions to escalate rapidly into significant conflicts that are very difficult to reconcile both structurally and culturally.¹¹

Several empirical studies by Jonathan Fox, based on global conflict datasets, strengthen the thesis that religion often complicates the dynamics of conflict between people. Fox points out that religious factors not only trigger conflicts but also tend to make their duration more persistent and

⁹Jonathan Fox, “Is Islam More Conflict Prone than Other Religions? A Cross-Sectional Study of Ethnoreligious Conflict,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 2 (2000): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537110008428593>.

¹⁰David Cook, “review of *Crusade and Jihad: The Thousand-Year War between the Muslim World and the Global North*, by William R. Polk,” *Church History* 87, no. 3 (2018): 937–39, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640718002196>.

¹¹Isak Svensson, “One God, Many Wars: Religious Dimensions of Armed Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa,” *Civil Wars* 15, no. 4 (2013): 411–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2013.853409>.

difficult to end completely¹². A conflict arising due to deep emotional and spiritual interest in religious issues makes the negotiation process much more difficult as compared to conflicts based purely on economic or territorial interests. This is why religion-based conflicts are often considered the most challenging to resolve because they touch on the most fundamental dimension of identity for every human being emotionally involved.¹³

Instead, the second argument emphasizes that religion has a strong potential to serve as an effective catalyst in the global sustainable peace process. A study by Nayef al Shamari shows that religion carries a powerful value identity, emphasizing the principle of justice in all forms of social relations among humans on this earth.¹⁴ In line with Shamari's findings, a study by Wahid and Ikeda shows that spirituality not only serves as a means of personal worship but also functions as a moral compass that encourages its adherents to actively be engaged in efforts to reconcile and empower marginalized communities. By leveraging a vast network of communities and religious institutions, these institutions can mobilize significant resources to mediate and promote intercultural dialogue, fostering a universal spirit of fraternity that is inclusive of all.¹⁵

In-depth studies of figures such as Mohammed Abu-Nimer,¹⁶ Said Abdul Aziz¹⁷ and Qamar al-Huda¹⁸ provide valuable insights into how religious traditions offer methodological resources for peacebuilding. Abu-Nimer emphasises that the practice of nonviolence and forgiveness lies at the core of religious teachings - principles often overlooked in mainstream media narratives which tend to be systemically biased. Meanwhile, al-Huda highlights how social justice values can be integrated into a more inclusive and transformative framework for conflict resolution that benefits all parties involved. Both scholars argue that without the active involvement of moderate religious elements, global peace efforts will lose their strong ethical foundations and fail to address the root causes of fundamental social problems.

This article aims to further explore the role of religion in conflict resolution by employing Peter L. Berger's social construction theory as the primary analytical framework.¹⁹ This theory serves as a tool for examining how social reality is formed through a dialectical process involving three main stages: externalization, objectification, and continuous internalization. Through Berger's perspective, we can understand how religious values are constructed, nurtured, and transformed by individuals and groups in their daily interactions in dynamic public spaces. This constructionist approach allows

¹²Jonathan Fox, "Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (2001): 53–73, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1521-9488.00244>.

¹³Fox, "Is Islam More Conflict Prone than Other Religions? A Cross-Sectional Study of Ethnoreligious Conflict," 1–24.

¹⁴Nayef Al-Shamari, "Islamic Paradigm of International Relations in Times of Peace and Conflict: A Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 14, no. 1 (2024): 40–54, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.141.03>.

¹⁵Abdurrahman Wahid and Daisaku Ikeda, *The Wisdom of Tolerance: A Philosophy of Generosity and Peace* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

¹⁶Mohammed Abu Nimer, "Religion and Peacebuilding: Reflections on Current Challenges and Future Prospects," *Journal of Interreligious Studies* 16 (2015): 14–29.

¹⁷Abdul Aziz Said, Nathan C. Funk, and Ayse S. Kadayifci-Orellana, *Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam: Precept and Practice* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001).

¹⁸Qamar-ul Huda, *Reenvisioning Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution in Islam* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9798216426745>.

¹⁹Donald W. Light, "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge," *Sociological Analysis* 28, no. 1 (1967): 55, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3710424>.

us to understand religion not as a static entity, but as a social process that constantly evolves, providing meaning to human actions in addressing crises and tensions that arise among groups.²⁰

In the externalization stage, we can examine the conflict-resolution model of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as an example of channelling human energy into the social world in practice. His historical efforts to reconcile the warring tribes in Medina show that Islam possesses a rich and enduring social capital that remains highly relevant today. This externalization clearly shows that Islamic teachings extend beyond theological dogma, but actively shapes a more harmonious social reality through intelligent diplomatic measures. This historical experience provides a strong foundation for rearticulating how the values of peace should be embodied in real-life practice by every Muslim individual, across different parts of the world, when facing conflict.²¹

Islamic values that emphasise justice in conflict resolution are the result of a deliberate process of externalization carried out by the predecessors for the benefit of humanity. Justice is not merely an abstract concept but a practical instrument for balancing conflicting interests within a pluralistic and culturally diverse society. By prioritizing justice, the conflict resolution process can achieve outcomes for all parties involved, ensuring that no one feels disadvantaged.²² History records that the success of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, in establishing a stable social order relied heavily on his consistent application of this principle of justice in every political and social decision he made.

The concept of objectification in this context is used to measure and analyse the structural problems that have contributed to the low peace index in many Islamic countries in recent decades. Objectively, the reality of peace today seems disconnected from the noble values taught in the sacred texts that are highly revered by the Muslim community. In this regard, Asfaruddin shows a sharp disconnection between religious idealism and sociological realities of daily public life,²³ which has subsequently led to conflicts in the Islamic world.

The internalisation stage provides proof that the social capital, in the form of conflict-resolution technology, inherited by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH remains highly relevant for implementation today. Internalisation allows individuals to absorb these historical values into their consciousness and apply them to resolve several ongoing conflicts in the Islamic world. This resolution technology includes negotiation, mediation, and trust-building techniques grounded in empathy and respect for human dignity, values highly appreciated in Islamic teachings.²⁴

This structural problem is closely related to the low articulation of the value of justice in social practice, which should be the main foundation for genuine peace for all.²⁵ When justice is limited to

²⁰Claire Hancock, "Accommodating Islamophobia: How Municipalities Make Place for Muslims in Paris," *Social and Cultural Geography* 21, no. 4 (2020): 527–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2019.1616808>.

²¹Al-Shamari, "Islamic Paradigm of International Relations," 40–54.

²²Shameer Modongal, "Justice ('Adl) through Forgiveness ('Afw): Islamic Ethics for Qisas as an Alternative to the Western Conflict Resolution Mechanism," *Islamic Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2020): 147–58.

²³Asma Afsaruddin, "'Be Inclined to Peace!' An Ethics of Peacemaking and Non-Violent Conflict Resolution in the Islamic Milieu," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 51, no. 4 (2025): 597–608, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01914537251326207>.

²⁴Imron Sahoh, and Yasmin Sattar, "The Idea of Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam," *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 37, no. 3 (2016): 333–44, <https://doi.org/10.34044/j.kjss.2016.37.3.09>.

²⁵Yoav Kapshuk and Mora Deitch, "Religion, Peace and Justice: The Effects of Transitional Justice on Religious Armed Conflict Resolution," *Peacebuilding* 11, no. 1 (2023): 78–103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2022.2065791>.

discourse on religious pulpits, without affecting real public policy, the potential for conflict will always be high in society. Weak objectification causes society to lose its moral grip on peaceful dispute resolution, leading it to prefer violent paths that are highly detrimental to all parties. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed to re-strengthen the articulation of this value of justice so that it becomes an objective reality felt across all levels of society, thereby maintaining social stability for a very long time.

This literature review emphasises that the relationship between religion, conflict, and peace is a dynamic process of social construction that continues to merit in-depth study. Despite arguments that place religion as a trigger for conflict, the potential of religion as a catalyst for peace through the value of justice remains a great hope for the future of human civilisation. Within the framework of Peter L. Berger's theory, we can see a clear way out through the processes of externalisation, objectification, and internalisation of noble prophetic values. A harmonious integration of historical social capital with the needs of modern society will create a more just world order for all. Thus, the re-strengthening of religion's role in conflict resolution is a very urgent agenda.

3. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach, with the library research method as the primary data-collection technique. The main focus of this research is to trace the practice of conflict resolution carried out by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH across various socio-political contexts, including Makkah, Medina, and the Arabian Peninsula as a whole.²⁶ The primary materials for this research consist of historical documents and texts from both classical and modern sources. Classical sources include the works of Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, which document important events in the Prophet's life, especially those related to conflict management. Meanwhile, modern sources used as references include works such as *Fiqh as-Sīrah* by Said Ramadhan al-Buthy and *Hayat Muhammad* by Muhammad Hussein Haykal, which provide a contemporary perspective on prophetic historical narratives.

The data were analysed using an interpretive approach that situates the historical practices of the Prophet Muhammad within the broader theoretical framework of modern conflict resolution. In particular, the analysis engages concepts such as participatory approaches, conflict transformation, reconciliation, and mediation. To deepen this reading, Peter L. Berger's²⁷ constructivist perspective was applied to examine the realities of conflict and peace as embodied in the Prophet's conduct through the processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization. On this basis, the study identifies several clusters of conflict: economic conflict, exemplified by the reconstruction of the Kaaba; interstate conflict, reflected in the Makkah–Madinah relationship, including the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the conquest of Makkah; political conflict, represented by the Charter of Madinah; and migrant or diasporic conflict (Unite *Muhajirun* (immigrant/diaspora) and Anshar (domestic people or recipient countries), demonstrated through the integration and reconciliation of the *Muhajirun* and the Ansar within the social order of Madinah. This study also seeks to relate the findings to the dynamics of contemporary conflicts in the Islamic world, such as sectarian conflicts, power struggles, and social inequality. The aim is to demonstrate the practical relevance of the Prophet's conflict-resolution model in the current context, and to open space for the reconstruction of an Islamic conflict-resolution model that is contextual and applicable.

²⁶Suleyman Sertkaya, "Sīrah Philosophy: A Modern Trajectory for Sīrah Studies," *Religions* 14, no. 11 (2023): 1440, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14111440>.

²⁷Light, "The Social Construction of Reality," 55.

4. Results and Discussion

Ibn Ishaq (d. 768 AD) and his disciple Ibn Hisham (d. 833 AD) were two important figures in early Islamic historiography, especially in the writing of the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Unfortunately, Ibn Ishaq's original work has not reached us in its entirety, and the version we have today is the result of Ibn Hisham's editorial selection.²⁸ The main strength of the work of these two historians lies in the comprehensive, orally-based narrative documentation traced through the *isnad* (narrative chain). Alfred Guillaume, who translated Ibn Hisham's work into English, considers that "without the contributions of both of them, our understanding of the early history of Islam would be minimal."²⁹

Said Ramadhan al-Buthy (1929–2013) and Muhammad Hussein Haykal (1888–1956) are two prominent figures in the modern-era writing of the history of the Prophet Muhammad, representing different but complementary approaches. Haykal, in his work *Hayat Muhammad* (1935), presented the biography of the Prophet with a rational-modernist approach, seeking to reconcile prophetic grandeur with the logic of modern history. On the other hand, Said Ramadhan al-Buthy in *Fiqhus Sirah* (1968) wrote with strong traditional-scientific nuance, emphasising the spiritual aspect, Islamic law, and the exemplary dimension of the Prophet in the lives of the people.³⁰ According to the State Information Service of Egypt, it assessed that, "Haykal writes for the intellectuals, while al-Buthy writes to guide the people."³¹ Thus, these two figures present the complementary faces of the Prophet: between the historical-critical dimension and the spiritual-normative dimension.³²

4.1. Historical Reality of Conflict in the Times of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The conflict over the reconstruction of the Kaaba during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, PBUH, is one of the important moments that reflect the socio-political dynamics in Quraish society before the prophethood. When a great flood damaged the Kaaba's structure, the leaders of the Quraysh tribe agreed to undertake a complete renovation of the holy building. However, at the stage of laying "Hajar Aswad" (black stone), tensions peaked as each clan felt most entitled to place the stone as a symbol of honour. This conflict almost triggered bloodshed among the tribes in Mecca, given the strong sense of honour among them at the time.³³ Modern historians interpret this event as evidence of Muhammad's recognised moral leadership across tribes even before the prophethood, and as an early form of conflict resolution based on participatory collaboration among tribal communities.³⁴

²⁸Masmuni, Mahatma. "Muhammad in the West: Analysis of the Historical Description of the Prophet Muhammad in Armstrong's Writings," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 6, no. 3 (2022): 331–40, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v6i3.22139>.

²⁹Nabia Abbott, "(Ibn Hisham, 1990)," *The Journal of Religion* 36, no. 4 (1956): 261–62, <https://doi.org/10.1086/484817>.

³⁰Muhammad Yunus Anis, Arifuddin, and Waskito Widi Wardojo, "Exploring the Noble Values of Humanism in Said Ramadhan Al-Buthi's *Syarah Al-Hikam: A Systemic Functional Translation Studies Approach*," *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 15, no. 1 (2025): 141–47, <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1501.16>.

³¹State Information Service Egypt, "Mohammad Hussein Heikal," 2009, <https://sis.gov.eg/Story/1352/Mohammad-Hussein-Heikal?lang=en-u> (accessed May 5, 2025).

³²State Information Service Egypt, "Mohammad Hussein Heikal," 2009, <https://sis.gov.eg/Story/1352/Mohammad-Hussein-Heikal?lang=en-u> (accessed May 5, 2025).

³³Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah li Ibn Hisham* [The History of Prophet by Ibn Hisham], vol. 4 (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1990).

³⁴Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 2005), iv.

The relationship between the people of Makkah and Medina before the Prophet Muhammad's hijrah was neither entirely harmonious nor entirely hostile. Mecca, as an economic and spiritual centre with the Kaaba at its centre of worship, exerted substantial influence over the surrounding area, including Medina. Ibn Ishaq and al-Waqidi note that before the *hijrah*, several Medina figures already knew the Prophet Muhammad and began to be interested in the moral message of Islam he offered, especially after the Battle of Bu'ats, which weakened the local social structure. Thus, despite the strong cultural background of hostility, there was also a gap for harmonisation and a desire for a more just social order. Modern historians view this condition as a political and social opportunity that the Prophet Muhammad used to build a faith-based cross-identity society, not just tribal affiliation.³⁵

The history of conflicts among the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities in Medina during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) cannot be separated from the city's socio-political and religious context before the arrival of Islam. The city of Medina, formerly known as Yathrib, has a long history of intertribal conflicts, especially between the Aus and Khazraj tribes, reflecting the social disorder and high levels of violence that plagued the city before Islam³⁶. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Medina introduced the *Misāq al-Madinah* or the Charter of Medina—an early constitution guaranteeing the right to coexistence between Muslims, Jews, and other groups. Tensions arose between the Muslim and Jewish communities.

The experience of intense conflict between the people of Makkah and Medina was externalized in three major wars: Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq. In the series of wars, each faction experienced significant defeats and victories. This condition is in William Zartman's logic, a point of ripeness conflict, where both sides begin to realize that perpetuating a continuous cycle of conflict will actually cause mutual catastrophe. In this context, Muhammad (PBUH)'s idea of making a breakthrough to visit Makkah with a peace mission through the Umrah paved the way for the Hudaibiyah agreement, which is historically recognised as an effective agreement in stopping the conflict between Makkah and Medina.

The event of Fath Makkah (Liberation of Makkah) in 8 AH (630 AD) is one of the most monumental moments in the history of the conflict between Islam and Quraish. After years of fierce battles such as Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq, and through various treaty dynamics, such as Hudaibiyah, the Muslims finally entered Makkah with about 10,000 troops. Militarily, this power was vastly superior to the defences of the Quraysh, which had been weakened morally and politically. In this context, the Fath of Makkah can be categorized as an asymmetrical war, in which the Muslims held the upper hand in terms of numbers, military readiness, and spiritual and psychological support. The possibility of genocide is enormous, but history shows that genocide did not occur.³⁷

4.2. Externalization of Muhammad (PBUH) on Conflict Resolution Technology

After a detailed reading of biographical books on Muhammad, both written by classical Islamic scholars such as Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, and by modern Islamic scholars such as Ramadan al Buty

³⁵ibid.

³⁶Sa'id Amir Arjomand, "The Constitution of Medina: A Sociolegal Interpretation of Muhammad's Acts of Foundation of the Umma," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 4 (2009): 575, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380999033X>.

³⁷Ibn Hisyam, *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah li Ibn Hisham*; Muhammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān Al-Būfī, *Fiḡhus Sīrah: Dirāsāt Minhājiyyah 'Ilmiyyah li Sīrat al-Muṣṭafā 'Alayhi al-Ṣalātu wa al-Salām [The Jurisprudence of the Prophetic Biography: A Systematic and Scientific Study of the Life of the Chosen One]* (Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1977).

and Hussian Haykal, several conflict-resolution models were identified as offered by Muhammad PBUH, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The Externalization of Muhammad (PBUH) on Conflict Resolution

No.	Methods	Objectives	Focus Approach	Strategic Benefits
1	Participatory Technology	Breaking the deadlock of mutual choice	Collective and deliberative participation	Increasing a sense of belonging and the legitimacy of decisions, and avoid majority domination.
2	Inclusive Melting-Pot	Building the principle of cross-ethnic mutual understanding	Cultural integration and strengthening of dual identities	Reducing stereotypes, strengthening social cohesion, and creating new solidarity.
3	Constitutionalism	Arranging coexistence peacefully and equally	Mutually agreed-upon rules of the game	Avoiding structural violence and ensuring the protection of the rights of all groups.
4	Problem-Solving Negotiation	Making the negotiation process productive	Focus on interests, not positions	Generating win-win solutions and avoid political deadlocks
5	Forgive and Forget	Building a total civil reconciliation	Forgiveness and recovery of collective self-esteem	Breaking the cycle of revenge and paving the way for post-conflict peaceful integration.

Based on Peter L Berger's logic³⁸ in the social reality of the reconstruction of Ka'bah, Muhammad PBUH was introduced as a neutral mediator agreed upon by all parties. This is a key moment in easing the de-escalation. He proposed placing the Hajar Aswad on a piece of cloth, with each tribal representative holding one end of the cloth and lifting it together to its original position. When he arrived, the Prophet Muhammad himself took the stone and placed it with his hands. It is in line with a modern, effective mediation articulated by a neutral mediator³⁹.

In modern conflict resolution theory, this approach reflects the use of social capital, i.e., values, trust, and social networks already available in society, to build peaceful solutions. It means that Muhammad (PUBH) used local and social engineering to build peace.⁴⁰ By not imposing foreign aid or external intervention, Muhammad operated the resolution from within the Quraysh social system itself, which was still very much based on honour and symbolism. Through a simple piece of cloth, the social conflicts ignited by ethnocentrism were successfully resolved in a peaceful and dignified manner—representing the essence of the Islamic approach to conflict resolution: participatory, contextual, and rooted in living social values.⁴¹

In uniting a divided society between the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar*, the Prophet Muhammad developed a ‘melting pot’ approach that emphasized the fusion of sectarian identities into a common

³⁸Light, “The Social Construction of Reality,” 55.

³⁹Isak Svensson, “Who Brings Which Peace? Neutral versus Biased Mediation and Institutional Peace Arrangements in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 446–69, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002709332207>.

⁴⁰Birgit Bräuchler, “Social Engineering the Local for Peace,” *Social Anthropology* 25, no. 4 (2017): 437–53, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12453>.

⁴¹Al-Buty, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

religious identity (ummah) that transcended geographical and genealogical boundaries. Among the key strategies adopted by the Prophet was the institutionalization of *ukhuwwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), realized through the one-to-one fraternization of the *Muhajirun* and the Ansar. This model was grounded in social, economic, and emotional partnership,⁴² thereby creating a strong basis for communal integration and mutual support. As observed in the study by Appollonia and Reich, the melting pot model is significant not only for minimizing the risk of conflict emerging from diverse backgrounds, but also for strengthening social cohesion and promoting a shared sense of belonging.⁴³

In the early history of Islam, the drafting of the Constitution of Medina by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) became an important milestone in resolving conflicts among the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities in Medina.⁴⁴ This document is a political and social agreement that, through constitutional regulation, governs relations among groups of different faiths and ethnicities, emphasising peaceful coexistence. Through the establishment of constitutive rules of the game, various sources of conflict, such as divided loyalty, dominance, and religious prejudice, have been successfully mitigated and redirected towards cooperation in dealing with external threats and managing internal dynamics.

This approach aligns with Charles and Kupchan's theory of how enemies become friends, in which shared norms and rules mark the initial stage of building trust and shifting relationships from competitive to cooperative. Kupchan emphasises that enemies are not always eternal; through the institutionalisation of rules and mutual commitments, hostile narratives can be eroded and replaced with bonds of common interest.⁴⁵ Thus, Medina's experience became an early model of how constitutionalism can be an effective mechanism for resolving identity-based conflicts and for managing plurality within the framework of mutually agreed norms in an inclusive and participatory manner.⁴⁶

Acute conflict resolution requires a problem-solving, negotiation-based approach.⁴⁷ The Hudaibiyah Agreement is a clear example of the problem-solving negotiation approach, which focuses on problem-solving rather than merely articulating a position, in the context of the diplomatic conflict between the Muslims of Medina and the Quraysh of Makkah. In a tense situation, when the Muslims wanted to perform Umrah in Makkah but were blocked by the Quraysh, the Prophet chose the path of negotiation rather than open confrontation. In this negotiation process, Muhammad adopted a yielding strategy – making a strategic concession on material aspects – in order to achieve long-term goals. This triggered considerable disappointment among the companions, including Umar bin Khattab, who questioned the Prophet's decision as it appeared that the Muslim side was being placed in a weak and submissive position.⁴⁸

⁴²Al-Buthy, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

⁴³Ariane Chebel D'Appollonia and Simon Reich, "Quandaries of Integration in America and Europe: An Introduction," in *Managing Ethnic Diversity after 9/11: Integration, Security, and Civil Liberties in Transatlantic Perspective*, ed. Ariane Chebel D'Appollonia and Simon Reich (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813549422-004>.

⁴⁴ Al-Buthy, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

⁴⁵Charles A. Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s28g>.

⁴⁶Al-Buthy, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

⁴⁷Oliver Ramsbotham, *Transforming Violent Conflict: Radical Disagreement, Dialogue and Survival* (London: Routledge, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203859674>.

⁴⁸Al-Buthy, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

This strategy is in line with Roger Fisher and Ury's theory of Getting to Yes,⁴⁹ which emphasises the importance of focusing on long-term interests rather than short-term positions. Muhammad understood that the true victory was not dominance in treaties, but the creation of new opportunities to build relationships, de-escalate tensions, and peacefully expand the influence of Islam. By adopting a problem-solving approach that prioritises substance over symbols, Muhammad (PBUH) did not only avoid bloodshed but also showed that in peace negotiations, true strength lies in patience, long-term vision, and the courage to make concession for the common good.⁵⁰

After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH held political and military power. At that time, there was a wide opportunity to take revenge against the Quraysh figures who had tortured, expelled, and even tried to kill him and his followers for many years. In traditional political logic, especially in Arab tribal societies that uphold honour and revenge (*tha'r*), this moment is very likely to result in structural violence and even genocide as compensation for the collective memory of past suffering. However, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH chose a different path: total reconciliation. Instead of taking revenge, he declared a general pardon: "*Idzhabu fa antumuth-thulaqaa*" ("Go, you are free").⁵¹ He practised the idea of forgiveness and forgetting as an effective mechanism for managing conflict. In a recent study conducted by Sami in Burundi, Hutu-Tutsi conflicts were effectively resolved through a reconciliation mechanism grounded in the norms of forgiveness and forgetting.⁵²

4.3. The Internalization of Respect to Others as a Peace Catalyst

Reviewing the technology of conflict resolution practiced by Muhammad PBUH, the data provides a profound insight: peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice grounded in universal respect, or respect for all. At each step of his approach, he demonstrates that the conflicting party, regardless of his background, is a subject with basic dignity that must be maintained. This respect even extends to the management of available resources, ensuring they are not exploited for purely selfish interests.

This reflection also highlights how he transcends the trap of rigid right-and-wrong narratives. Often, protracted conflicts occur because each side imposes its perspective as the sole absolute truth. The Hulsman study shows that a fair attitude toward other parties, both enemies and friends, creates space for understanding and peace.⁵³ Muhammad (PBUH) mainstreamed a collaborative approach, creating a forum where solutions were sought together rather than dictated from positions of authority. By breaking down the wall of claims to absolute truth in the public sphere, he paved the way for the birth of an inclusive agreement that could accommodate diverse interests without sacrificing the principle of justice.

One of the most impressive aspects is his self-control in refraining from a finishing strike or final strike when the opponent is in a pinched position.⁵⁴ Even when he had a strategic advantage to

⁴⁹Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In* (London: Penguin Books, 1997).

⁵⁰Al-Buthy, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

⁵¹Al-Buthy, *Fiqhus Sirah*.

⁵²Cyrus Samii, "Who Wants to Forgive and Forget? Transitional Justice Preferences in Postwar Burundi," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 2 (2013): 219–33, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343312463713>.

⁵³Cornelis Hulsman, "From Religious Bubble to Interreligious Dialogue: A Personal Story of Transformation," *Religions* 15, no. 1 (2024): 28, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010028>.

⁵⁴Irwan Abdullah et al., "The Existence of Social Boundaries as a Factor of Violent Conflict in a Pluralistic Society," *International Journal of Diverse Identities* 24, no. 2 (2024): 23–42, <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7866/CGP/v24i02/23-421>.

demand significant concessions, he chose the path of forgiveness and generosity. This attitude demonstrates that the true aim of conflict resolution is not conquest, but complete reconciliation. By allowing his opponents to keep their honour in retreat, he ensured that the flame of revenge would not be rekindled in the future.

Furthermore, this analysis confirms that Muhammad did not impose conservative norms on Islam that isolated it from the outside world. Instead, he situated religious teachings in a broad, inclusive space for sharing benefits. Religious values are not used as exclusive barriers, but rather as a moral guideline that embraces differences.⁵⁵ A study by Bensala shows that an attitude of respect for diverse religious principles helps create inclusivity in policymaking.⁵⁶ This inclusivity is the key to why his vision of peace can cross the ages, because it stands on the foundation of universal humanity and openness to the contributions of every society.

5. Conclusion

The article demonstrates that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) successfully developed four conflict-resolution technologies rooted in Islamic values and relevant to the socio-political realities today in Muslim-majority countries. The four approaches are: participatory principles that encourage the involvement of all parties; inclusive collaboration that embraces diverse social elements; a practical focus on solving real-world problems; and reconciliation ethics that emphasize forgiveness, justice, and humanity. These approaches show that the Prophet's conflict-resolution strategy is adaptive and holistic, and can serve as inspiration for resolving modern conflicts in a more humane and just manner.

Muhammad PBUH's conflict-resolution pattern arises from intellectual and spiritual courage to place respect for others not merely as an ethical principle, but as the driving force of peace. By viewing the opposing side—including pagans and political enemies—as partners with rights and dignity, he succeeded in breaking down the “ego wall” that is usually the first obstacle in negotiations. This approach proves that when a person feels acknowledged, their existence is acknowledged and when their voice is recognised, defensive reaction is softened, allowing previously deadlocked communication to be open and honest.

Through the strategic cycle of respect -> open Communication -> inclusion -> accommodation -> sustainable Peace, Muhammad PBUH transforms structural and cultural barriers into bridges of collaboration. From rebuilding the Ka'bah to the Charter of Medina, he did not impose authority but fostered diverse interests through inclusion. Tribal and class barriers were addressed by fair accommodation, giving everyone a stake in the solution. This is what makes his conflict resolution organic and enduring since it addresses the root with respect, not oppression.

Author's Contribution

Surwandono: Writing – Original Draft, Methodology, Formal Analysis. **Takdir Ali Mukti:** Writing – Review & Editing

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

⁵⁵M. A. Hermawanlla, M. Masruri, and J. Hasse, “Reviving Religious Moderation for World Peace from the Religious Moderation House in Indonesia,” *Journal of Ecohumanism* 3, no. 3 (2024): 295–307, <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i3.3343>.

⁵⁶Youcef Bensala et al., “The Possibility of Rapprochement and Peaceful Coexistence between Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam in Light of the Qur'an: A Case Study of Legislative Sources,” *Quranica* 17, no. 1 (2025): 80–100.

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The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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