

Marital Conflict Resolution through *Babadan Tenan* in Banceuy Traditional Village, Subang Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the management of marital disputes in the indigenous community of Kampung Adat Banceuy, Subang Regency, which can affect social relations between families if not properly managed. Unlike previous studies that positioned Babadan Tenan within the normative perspective of customary law and Islamic law, this study aims to analyze the function of Babadan Tenan as a mediation and conflict resolution mechanism for marital disputes using Lewis A. Coser's functional conflict theory, particularly the concepts of the safety valve and the positive functions of conflict. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The findings show that marital disputes are generally triggered by household economic problems, differing views between spouses, and arranged marriages. Babadan Tenan involves a three-stage resolution mechanism, namely pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation, carried out informally and flexibly by the customary leader as mediator. Tensions are channeled through Babadan Tenan, which functions as a safety valve to prevent conflicts from escalating further. Conflicts managed through Babadan Tenan also generate positive functions, as resolutions are directed toward solutions acceptable to both parties, including amicable separation. Agreements are grounded in the moral recognition of the customary community and help maintain social relations between families. This study affirms that customary mechanisms remain relevant as an alternative for resolving family conflicts based on local wisdom amid the modernization of law.

Keywords: Babadan Tenan; Customary Institution; Conflict Resolution; Marital Disputes.

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Introduction

Conflict within marital relationships constitutes an intrinsic phenomenon within the dynamics of societal social life. Data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (2026) indicates that in 2025, the number of divorces in Indonesia reached 438,168 cases, representing an increase of approximately 43,560 cases compared to 2024, which recorded 394,608 cases. The primary catalyst was continuous disputes and arguments, accounting for 282,326 cases or approximately 64.4% of total national divorce cases, followed by economic grievances totaling 105,727 cases. At the local level, Subang Regency alone recorded 3,806 divorce cases (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Jawa Barat, 2026). These statistics underscore that marital conflict is not merely a private dilemma, but rather a pervasive social reality that necessitates effective management mechanisms. Within rural communities characterized by tight-knit social ties, the impact extends beyond the married couple, potentially disrupting inter-familial and broader communal relationships.

In rural societal life, the resolution of marital conflicts is not invariably pursued through litigation channels. Communities tend to prefer customary-based resolution as it is deemed more congruent with their social values and experiences; furthermore, it avoids framing the conflict within a formal legal structure oriented toward a win-lose outcome that could potentially sever social bonds (Darmawansyah et al., 2025). Deliberation (*musyawarah*) involving extended families and customary leaders is favored because it emphasizes the restoration of social relations and mutual adjustment between parties, rather than merely

determining fault or culpability (Kudu et al., 2025; Nazia et al., 2023). This phenomenon is similarly observed within the Banceuy Traditional Village community in Subang Regency, which utilizes the practice of *Babadan Tenan* as a customary deliberative mechanism to manage various collective issues, including marital conflicts (Kartikawati, 2019; Kusmayanti & Kania, 2024). Based on preliminary information from local customary leaders, three cases of marital conflict were recorded in this village over the past year, all of which were managed through *Babadan Tenan* before escalating into open social conflicts (Kartikawati, 2019; Kusmayanti & Kania, 2024).

The social life of the Banceuy Traditional Village community is generally characterized by robust kinship ties. Nonetheless, these strong bonds do not preclude the occurrence of conflict within marital relationships, which arises from various underlying factors, such as household economic distress, divergent perspectives between spouses, and pressure from arranged family marriages. In a highly interconnected society, marital disputes have the potential to spill over and adversely affect inter-familial social relations if not managed appropriately (Zaidah et al., 2025). *Babadan Tenan* serves as a vital avenue for this community to channel and alleviate such tensions through familial deliberation; consequently, conflict is not perceived merely as a destructive phenomenon, but rather as an integral part of the social process that must be managed to maintain order and harmony (Ashadi et al., 2022; Kardiana & Widianto, 2021; Kusmayanti & Kania, 2024; Yusri et al., 2024).

Prior research regarding customary mechanisms in local community conflict resolution has been considerably developed; however, a relevant gap remains for this study. First, a number of studies highlight the effectiveness of customary law in resolving agrarian conflicts, demonstrating that customary mechanisms are capable of aligning the resolution process with local social needs (Desky et al., 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2024). Second, within the context of familial and marital conflict, Kardiana & Widianto (2021) utilizing Lewis A. Coser's functional conflict theory found that conflict in marital relationships is not invariably destructive; rather, it can serve an integrative function in strengthening internal solidarity if appropriately managed. Third, research directly examining *Babadan Tenan* was conducted by Kusmayanti & Kania (2024) from the normative perspectives of customary law and Islamic law, focusing on legitimacy and conflict resolution procedures. These studies share a common limitation, namely the absence of research that positions customary practices of marital conflict resolution, specifically *Babadan Tenan*, as a social arena analyzed within the framework of Coser's functional conflict theory particularly regarding how the role of the customary leader as a mediator facilitates a conflict resolution process that contributes to maintaining the social cohesion of the traditional community.

Drawing upon the perspective of Lewis A. Coser, conflict within interdependent groups requires specific channels to prevent tension from escalating into a destructive force. This channel is conceptualized as a "safety valve," which functions to alleviate tension while simultaneously preserving the continuity of social relations. Grounded in this framework, this study aims to analyze *Babadan Tenan* as a social space for managing marital conflicts in the Banceuy Traditional Village, with a particular focus on the role of the customary leader as a mediator in the conflict resolution process. The novelty of this research lies in its application of Coser's functional conflict theory to analyze *Babadan Tenan*, an approach that has not been undertaken in previous scholarship. This study serves to address the gap left by Kusmayanti and Kania (2024), who merely examined *Babadan Tenan* from the standpoints of customary and Islamic law, without addressing how the mediation process therein functions to sustain the social cohesion of the traditional community.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was selected to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the marital conflict resolution practices within the customary institution of *Babadan Tenan*, which is actively sustained and practiced in the daily life of the Banceuy Village community in Subang Regency (Gunawan, 2013). The qualitative method is utilized to explore the meanings, social relations, and interactional dynamics that accompany the conflict resolution process within a customary context that is fluid and not strictly formal (Creswell, 2016). The unit of analysis in this study is the mechanism of *Babadan Tenan* as a social space that functions in marital dispute resolution, while simultaneously serving as a medium for gathering and deliberation among the indigenous community. These conflicts are conceptualized as small-scale disputes that have not escalated into open conflicts involving multiple parties. Consequently, the conflict resolution process occurs in a simple and informal manner, wherein the customary leader plays a pivotal role, with limited involvement from the families and the immediate community.

Research subjects were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in and understanding of the *Babadan Tenan* practice (Nurhayati et al., 2024). The research subjects comprise three parties: the customary leader, the wife's side, and a community member who has firsthand experience witnessing or understanding the *Babadan Tenan* process. One of the parties involved in the conflict, specifically the husband, was not interviewed due to post-conflict social conditions that precluded direct data collection. This limitation affects the perspective of the obtained data, wherein the narrative of the conflict and its resolution process is predominantly reflected from the standpoints of the wife and the customary figure. To minimize the implications of this limitation on the validity of the findings, the researcher compensated by conducting in-depth interviews with the customary leader, who maintained a neutral position during the *Babadan Tenan* process.

Data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the research subjects and direct observation of the social environment and daily practices of the Banceuy Traditional Village community related to *Babadan Tenan*. Secondary data were gathered through a document study including books, scientific journal articles, and other documents relevant to conflict resolution, customary law, and Lewis A. Coser's conflict theory. Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies. Observation was utilized to comprehend firsthand the stages, atmosphere, and social interaction patterns occurring within the practice of *Babadan Tenan* (Solissa et al., 2024). In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the experiences, perspectives, and meanings attributed by the actors to the marital conflict and its resolution process (Solissa et al., 2024). The document study was leveraged to provide supporting data in the form of activity archives and other documentation pertaining to the practice of *Babadan Tenan* (Gainau, 2021).

The acquired data were analyzed qualitatively utilizing a descriptive-interpretative analysis technique. Data analysis was performed progressively through the processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. These analytical stages refer to the qualitative data analysis model by Miles and Huberman, as cited in Haryono (2020), emphasizing the interpretation of conflict dynamics and the social function of *Babadan Tenan*. Lewis A. Coser's conflict theory framework was applied to understand conflict as an integral part of the social process that is not invariably destructive, but rather functions to maintain community integration and harmony (Tualeka, 2017). Data validity was maintained through source triangulation by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the consistency and credibility of the research findings (Gunawan, 2013).

Results and Discussion

Babadan Tenan as a Customary Institutional Mechanism for Marital Conflict Mediation

Conflicts arising within community life constitute an integral part of social dynamics that can influence the orderliness of relationships between individuals and groups (Fachrina et al., 2025). Therefore, conflict must be managed effectively to prevent it from escalating into broader social tensions. Suparman highlights that humans have developed specific methods to handle conflict in accordance with their respective traditions since the inception of communal living (Kusmayanti & Kania, 2024). Every community possesses conflict resolution patterns that grow from shared social experiences. In practice, conflict can be managed through formal state institutions as well as non-formal methods that exist within the daily life of the community. This aligns with prior research demonstrating that community- and customary-based conflict resolution mechanisms remain widely preferred by the public because they are deemed more contextualized and deeply rooted in local values (Darmawansyah et al., 2025; Desky et al., 2024; Kasim & Nurdin, 2020; Resmini & Sakban, 2019).

Babadan Tenan is a customary institution inherent in the life of the Banceuy Traditional Village community, serving as a space to discuss various social issues. In traditional village life, which is characterized by close-knit social relations and robust kinship values, *Babadan Tenan* is practiced as a means to deliberate on collective interests, including addressing problems and conflicts that arise within the community. This practice is conducted through meetings involving relevant parties within the scope of the customary community, grounded in the values of togetherness and mutual consensus. In the event of marital conflict, *Babadan Tenan* is utilized when protracted issues occur between husband and wife. Conflicts brought to *Babadan Tenan* generally relate to household economic distress and divergent perspectives between spouses. These issues prompt the conflicting parties to seek resolution assistance through the customary institution. This finding indicates that domestic conflict is one of the primary issues handled within *Babadan Tenan*.

The positioning of *Babadan Tenan* differs fundamentally from formal litigation channels. *Babadan Tenan* does not aim to render legal verdicts or determine right and wrong. Conflict resolution is achieved

through deliberation with an emphasis on peace and relationship restoration, rather than win-lose outcomes typical of judicial processes. This is reinforced by the view of [Kartikawati \(2019\)](#), who states that resolving conflicts through customary channels is considered more effective and efficient. This is further supported by the findings of [Resmini & Sakban \(2019\)](#), which confirm that customary-based conflict resolution mechanisms place greater emphasis on reconciliation and the restoration of social relations compared to the determination of win-lose outcomes found in the formal justice system.

The Banceuy Traditional Village community tends to prefer *Babadan Tenan* because this mechanism is deemed more congruent with their local values and social experiences. Resolution through *Babadan Tenan* is perceived as more efficient, cost-effective, and capable of preserving the dignity of the disputing parties. This finding is corroborated by research from [Kasim & Nurdin \(2020\)](#), as well as [Resmini & Sakban \(2019\)](#), which notes that customary mechanisms are chosen by communities because they are considered faster, less expensive, and able to maintain harmony and the social dignity of the conflicting parties. Furthermore, this mechanism ensures that familial relationships remain preserved after the conflict has been deliberated.

In terms of character, *Babadan Tenan* is informal and flexible. The conflict resolution process does not follow rigid, standardized procedures, but rather adapts to the nature of the issue at hand. Deliberations are led by customary figures who act as mediators, employing approaches rooted in moral guidance and consideration. *Babadan Tenan* is also grounded in strong customary and familial values. Marital conflict is not directed toward the imposition of sanctions, but rather toward de-escalating the situation and seeking mutual consensus. Generally, *Babadan Tenan* involves various actors directly related to the conflict, such as the married couple, extended family, and customary leaders. Each party is granted the opportunity to express their perspectives and grievances openly. The ongoing dialogue unravels tensions, which are channeled in a controlled manner without damaging established social bonds. Consequently, *Babadan Tenan* can be understood as a customary-based marital conflict management mechanism that plays a vital role in maintaining order and harmony within the Banceuy Traditional Village community. Through familial deliberation and dialogue, marital conflict is managed to prevent it from developing into open conflict, while simultaneously ensuring the continuity of social relations within the traditional village community.

The Role of the Head of the Customary Institution in Handling Marital Conflicts

In the implementation of *Babadan Tenan* within the Banceuy Traditional Village, the Customary Leader (*Kepala Adat*) occupies a central role as a mediator in managing marital conflicts. The Customary Leader is perceived as an authoritative figure possessing moral and social legitimacy to preside over the deliberative process and ensure that conflict resolution aligns with prevailing customary values. The Head of the Customary Institution is actively involved in guiding the dialogue between the disputing parties. This authority is derived from collective social recognition and consistency in upholding customary duties, rather than formal state-sanctioned power. This aligns with prior research indicating that the legitimacy of customary institutions is heavily contingent upon the collective trust and recognition of the community ([Gayo, 2024](#); [Kasim & Nurdin, 2020](#)).

The role of the mediator is executed by ensuring that each party receives an equal opportunity to articulate their perspectives, grievances, and expectations ([Pratama, 2023](#)). The neutrality demonstrated by the Customary Leader serves as a critical factor in cultivating a conducive atmosphere for dialogue, thereby preventing the conflict from escalating into an open confrontation that could exacerbate relationships between individuals or extended families. Throughout the deliberative process, the Customary Leader does not merely address the substance of the grievances presented; rather, consideration is also given to the background of familial relations, customary norms, and the social conditions of the spouses involved. This holistic approach conceptualizes the conflict as an integral part of the traditional community's social dynamics, rather than merely a private matter. Consequently, the counsel and guidance provided are anchored in customary values and familial principles, articulated through persuasive and non-judgmental language to ensure acceptance by the involved parties without provoking resistance.

Another prominent role is the ability of the Customary Leader to maintain the confidentiality of the marital conflict discussed within *Babadan Tenan*. Restricting the number of participants involved in the deliberation is implemented to prevent the issue from spilling over into the broader social sphere. This measure is deemed essential by the community as it pertains to preserving the dignity of the couple and maintaining harmonious relations between extended families within the traditional village community. Under certain circumstances, the Customary Leader also functions as a liaison between the husband's and the wife's families, thereby reconstructing communication that may have been severed or strained within a more controlled environment. This is corroborated by the findings of [Kudu et al. \(2025\)](#), which highlight the role of customary institutions in bridging familial relationships experiencing conflict.

Public trust in the Head of the Customary Institution stands as the primary factor sustaining *Babadan Tenan* as a space for marital conflict management. This condition ensures that the resolutions or directives

issued tend to be accepted and respected by the disputing parties. Through the functions of mediation, provisioning of moral guidance, and preservation of confidentiality, the Head of the Customary Institution contributes significantly to maintaining social order and preventing marital conflicts from expanding into broader societal issues within the traditional community. Ultimately, the role of the Customary Leader in *Babadan Tenan* can be understood as a key element determining the effectiveness of this customary mechanism in managing marital conflicts in the Banceuy Traditional Village.

Marital Conflict Resolution through *Babadan Tenan*

Marital conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* is conceptualized as an effort by the Banceuy Traditional Village community to manage domestic tensions to prevent them from escalating into open conflicts. Within this framework, marital disputes are not positioned merely as private matters between husband and wife, but rather as social events that have the potential to disrupt inter-familial relationships and the harmony of traditional village life. Similar findings have been observed in prior research, which indicates that marital conflict within indigenous communities is understood as a social issue involving inter-familial relations rather than strictly the business of the married couple (Kudu et al., 2025; Tiumlafu et al., 2025). Consequently, its resolution is directed toward restoring social relations and maintaining the orderliness of collective living.

Within *Babadan Tenan*, the orientation of marital conflict resolution does not emphasize determining fault or culpability. The primary focus centers on de-escalating tension and rebuilding communication between the disputing parties. This approach reflects robust familial values, wherein the continuity of social relationships is deemed more vital than achieving a unilateral victory. The resolution of marital conflicts through *Babadan Tenan* is also executed based on the principles of deliberation and voluntariness. The parties are granted a space to articulate their perspectives and emotions within a controlled and non-confrontational atmosphere. This principle ensures that conflict is channeled through dialogue, allowing tension to be released without severing established social bonds. Furthermore, *Babadan Tenan* positions confidentiality as a crucial component in managing marital disputes.

The deliberation of the conflict is kept strictly limited to prevent the issue from spilling over into the broader social sphere. This measure is deemed essential by the community as it pertains to preserving the dignity of the couple and the harmony of inter-familial relations within the traditional community. The pattern of marital conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* demonstrates that disputes are neither allowed to drag on indefinitely nor suppressed unilaterally; instead, they are channeled so that they can be discussed and managed collectively. Through this management process, tensions within the marital relationship can be alleviated. Ultimately, these findings indicate that *Babadan Tenan* plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of social relations and the sustainability of community life in the Banceuy Traditional Village.

The Mechanism of Marital Conflict Resolution through *Babadan Tenan*

The implementation of *Babadan Tenan* plays a pivotal role in the management of marital conflicts within the Banceuy Traditional Village. *Babadan Tenan* constitutes a customary institution that has been utilized transgenerationally by the local community as a deliberative space to discuss and resolve various social issues, including conflicts within domestic relationships. In marital disputes which are frequently triggered by household economic distress, divergent perspectives between spouses, or familial pressures *Babadan Tenan* provides a resolution framework deemed more congruent with the familial values and customary norms embedded within the community. The resolution of marital conflict through *Babadan Tenan* progresses through structured social stages and involves specific actors within the scope of the traditional community. This mechanism is illustrated in Figure 1.

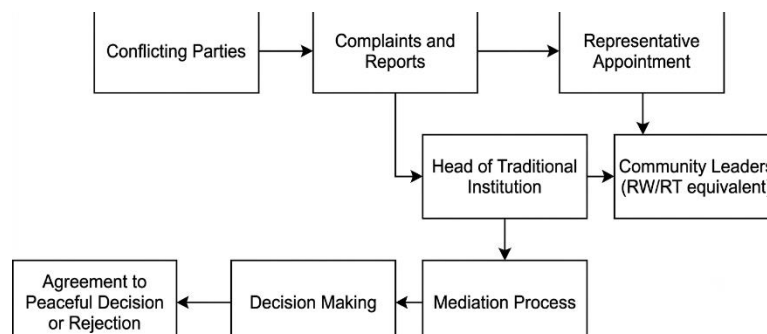


Figure 1. Sequence of the Conflict Resolution Mechanism via *Babadan Tenan*

Source: Processed from the researcher's primary data (2025)

The diagram above illustrates the operational mechanism of marital conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* in the case of the Banceuy Traditional Village. This mechanism operates in accordance with mutually understood patterns recognized by the community as an appropriate method to address marital tensions without immediate recourse to formal state institutions. This process demonstrates that the community continues to position customary institutions as a trusted arena for resolution. A detailed explanation of each stage of the mechanism is presented in Table 1.

The initial stage begins with the submission of a grievance or report by the conflicting parties or individuals associated with the conflict. The submission of this report is strictly confidential to prevent the matter from escalating into widespread public discourse within the community. Following this, individuals deemed necessary to attend are invited to participate in the deliberative process.

Once the grievance is submitted, the *Babadan Tenan* mechanism fundamentally proceeds by convening both parties, namely the husband and wife, within the deliberative forum. The presence of both parties is intended to allow the issues to be discussed directly, thereby providing an equitable opportunity for each to articulate their perspectives. Each party is permitted to explain the underlying issues occurring within the household. However, in the case under study, the narration of the problem was predominantly presented by the wife, due to the husband's absence during the initial phase of the resolution.

The subsequent stage involves the Customary Leader as the presiding figure in the conflict resolution process. Under certain circumstances, the deliberative process may also be supported by community leaders. The Customary Leader functions to regulate the progression of the discussion to ensure it remains orderly and focused. The presence of this mediating figure is deemed vital to maintain equilibrium throughout the resolution process.

The execution of the deliberation constitutes the core of the *Babadan Tenan* mechanism. In this stage, the Customary Leader listens to the testimony of the wife who is present, provides counsel, and mediates any emerging divergent perspectives. The discussion focuses primarily on identifying a mutually acceptable solution. The findings indicate that this mechanism is prioritized to prevent the conflict from escalating into open hostility. The final stage is marked by the attainment of a decision based on the outcomes of the deliberation. This decision may take the form of reconciliation, an agreement to cohabit again, or an amicable separation, depending on the specific circumstances faced by the parties. In the case documented by the researcher, the resolution resulted in an amicable separation. This outcome demonstrates that *Babadan Tenan* is utilized as a resolution space that emphasizes consensus and social acceptance.

Table 1. Stages of Marital Dispute Management

Stages	Description
Pre-implementation	It begins with the emergence of complaints or reports from the conflicting parties or their immediate families. These are conveyed informally to family elders or individuals closely connected to the customary structure. At this stage, representatives for both the husband and wife are also appointed in preparation for the conflict to be discussed within the customary forum.
Implementation	The mediation process is conducted by the Head of the Customary Institution and, under certain circumstances, involves local neighborhood (RT) or community (RW) heads. The parties are brought together for a customary deliberation held in a restricted and controlled manner. The dialogue is structured in stages, with regulated speaking turns to ensure an orderly process and prevent the conflict from escalating.
Post-implementation	It is characterized by the formulation of a joint decision based on the outcome of mediation. This decision is reached through collective deliberation and is non-coercive in nature. The parties are given the opportunity to consider and accept the mediation outcome as a form of conflict resolution that emphasizes voluntary agreement.

Source: Processed from the researcher's primary data (2025)

Overall, the mechanism of *Babadan Tenan* in managing marital conflicts demonstrates a resolution pattern grounded in the regulation of social relations, the control of interaction, and the involvement of customary actors who possess legitimacy within the community. This perspective aligns with the findings of [Yudistira et al. \(2023\)](#), who position the role of customary actors as pillars of social order through interactional control and normative legitimacy. This mechanism regulates conflict management through distinct and controlled stages without diminishing the position and voice of the parties involved in the marital dispute.

Forms of Marital Conflict Disputes

Within the past year, the number of marital disputes arising within the Banceuy Traditional Village community has not been extensive. Based on field findings, marital conflicts occurring in Banceuy Traditional Village over the last year were recorded to involve approximately three couples. Although the number is relatively small, each case reflects complex domestic relationship dynamics and holds the potential to disrupt inter-familial social relations if not managed appropriately. Field findings identified three primary forms of marital conflict handled through *Babadan Tenan*, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Forms of Marital Conflict

No.	Types of Marital Disputes Brief Explanation	Brief Explanation
1.	Household economic issues	Conflict arises from difficulties in meeting household needs or an imbalance in economic roles between husband and wife, triggering tension in the marital relationship.
2.	Differences in perspective between partners	Conflict arises from a couple's disagreement regarding decision-making and the conduct of their domestic life, thereby triggering recurring disputes.
3.	An arranged marriage	Conflict arises in couples who marry due to family pressure or decisions, resulting in a marriage entered into without adequate readiness or mutual understanding.

Source: Processed from the researcher's primary data (2025)

These conflicts stem from diverse root causes, yet they all culminate in tensions within the husband-and-wife relationship that, if left unresolved, can expand into inter-familial relationships. This indicates that marital conflict in the Banceuy Traditional Village is not merely personal in nature; rather, it possesses a broader social dimension, as also observed in other rural communities characterized by tight-knit social ties (Suteja & Muzaki, 2020). Household economic issues, for instance, are frequently not merely financial dilemmas, but rather reflect an imbalance of roles and social expectations between husband and wife in fulfilling familial responsibilities (Puji, 2021). This condition aligns with the findings of Kardiana and Widianto (2021), which demonstrate that economic pressure can trigger recurrent tension in marital relations if it is not balanced with good communication and role adjustment between spouses. Similarly, divergent perspectives between partners in household decision-making constitute a common source of conflict in societies with strong familial social structures, as individual decisions frequently intersect with the collective expectations of the extended family (Zaidah et al., 2025).

The third form of conflict, namely marriage resulting from family arrangement, illustrates the tug-of-war between individual autonomy and familial authority in determining a life partner. This condition has been widely discussed in sociological studies of rural families, which indicate that marriages lacking adequate emotional readiness and mutual understanding tend to be more vulnerable to conflict in the future (Kudu et al., 2025; Nazia et al., 2023). Drawing upon the perspective of Lewis A. Coser, these three forms of conflict can be understood as natural tensions that arise within interdependent social groups; thus, their existence does not pose a threat to the integrity of the community as long as adequate resolution channels are available. *Babadan Tenan* serves as this very channel, functioning to contain and alleviate tensions before they escalate into open conflicts that disrupt broader social relations (Darmawansyah et al., 2025; Kartikawati, 2019).

Marital Conflict Resolution

Customary law is capable of generating a sense of justice that is more deeply personal and profound, aligning with local customs and regulations that have become an intrinsic part of the community's way of life (Pratiwi et al., 2024). Within marital relationships, conflict constitutes a common and almost inevitable phenomenon, arising as an inherent part of the process of unifying two individuals with distinct backgrounds, values, and habits. The complete absence of conflict is not the hallmark of a healthy marriage; rather, it is the capacity to manage conflict effectively that serves as the definitive indicator. To achieve constructive conflict resolution, both parties must demonstrate mutual commitment.

Marital conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* in the Banceuy Traditional Village is oriented toward restoring social relations between husband and wife, rather than determining fault or culpability. This pattern of resolution aligns with the findings of Resmini & Sakban (2019), which demonstrate that customary-based conflict resolution mechanisms place greater emphasis on reconciliation and the restoration of social relations compared to the determination of win-lose outcomes typical of the formal justice system. The research findings indicate that conflict resolution is conceptualized as an effort to restore equilibrium

within domestic relations and maintain harmony in inter-familial relationships. In this context, the resulting agreements are not legally binding in a formal sense, but are instead morally and socially binding within the traditional community (Kartikawati, 2019).

The form of resolution achieved through *Babadan Tenan* generally manifests as a mutual understanding regarding steps for relational improvement, such as commitments to enhance communication, the reallocation of domestic roles, and behavioral adjustments toward each other's extended families. These agreements emerge from a deliberative process involving relevant parties and are guided by familial values; consequently, the outcomes are more readily accepted and implemented by the disputing couple. Field findings also indicate that conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* is directed toward preserving marital integrity as long as the social conditions and relationships between the parties remain rectifiable. This reflects the perspective of the Banceuy traditional community, which positions marriage as a social bond that concerns not merely individuals, but also encompasses an extended network of family and the broader community.

In addition to producing mutual agreements, conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* exerts a broader social impact, namely mitigating the potential for further conflict at both the familial and communal levels. By resolving disputes internally and confidentially, social tensions are minimized and inter-familial relationships are preserved. This perspective is congruent with research by Kasim & Nurdin (2020), as well as Kadir (2017), which demonstrates that customary-based conflict resolution mechanisms play a vital role in suppressing subsequent conflicts and maintaining harmonious social relations within the community. This condition reinforces social cohesion within traditional village life and prevents marital disputes from escalating into larger societal grievances. Therefore, marital conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* functions not only as a remedy for domestic problems but also as a mechanism for sustaining social order within the Banceuy Traditional Village community. Resolutions that emphasize deliberation, mutual understanding, and relational restoration demonstrate that *Babadan Tenan* plays a vital role in maintaining social stability through a customary approach that remains active and consistently practiced.

Discussion

Safety Valve (Katup Pengaman) in Marital Conflict Management

The pattern of marital conflict management through *Babadan Tenan* identified in this study demonstrates that the Banceuy Traditional Village community possesses a functional channel to release domestic tensions before they escalate into open conflicts. Within the framework of Coser (1956), such a channel is conceptualized as a "safety valve"—a mechanism that allows tensions to be discharged in a controlled manner without disrupting the broader social structure. The existence of *Babadan Tenan* as a socially recognized and trusted arena renders it an appropriate channel for this function, as individuals experiencing marital distress have a legitimate venue to articulate their grievances (Kusmayanti & Kania, 2024). Absent such a channel, suppressed tensions could potentially erupt into open conflicts that are far more difficult to manage and could compromise inter-familial social relations within the traditional community. This aligns with the findings of Halim & Pahrudin (2020) as well as Harahap et al. (2019), which demonstrate that local customary traditions can serve as mutually recognized conflict resolution channels, thereby preventing tensions from expanding into broader open conflicts.

The safety valve function of *Babadan Tenan* lies in its capacity to channel tension through controlled dialogue rather than unilateral actions that risk exacerbating the dispute. Coser (1956) emphasizes that an effective safety valve must be a socially approved channel within the group, ensuring that the process of releasing tension does not incur consequences that destroy intra-group relationships. *Babadan Tenan* fulfills this criterion because its mechanism is well-known, accepted, and trusted by all members of the Banceuy Traditional Village community as a legitimate method for handling domestic issues. Consequently, tensions arising within marital relationships can be channeled through orderly deliberation without involving external parties or formal litigation avenues that risk permanently severing social bonds (Tualeka, 2017). This function is similar to the findings of Kardiana & Widiyanto (2021), which indicate that deliberative mechanisms can act as safety valves that preclude greater fragmentation within communities characterized by tight-knit social ties.

The positioning of the customary leader as a mediator within *Babadan Tenan* further reinforces this safety valve function. The presence of a neutral third party who possesses social legitimacy within the community constitutes a critical factor that prevents the process of channeling tension from devolving into direct confrontation between the disputing parties. Coser (1956) explains that the efficacy of a safety valve depends on the availability of a mutually agreed-upon framework where tension can be expressed without threatening the core bonds of the group. The customary leader not only presides over the deliberation but also ensures that the dialogue remains anchored within a framework of shared customary values; thus, regardless of the final outcome, it does not leave behind animosity that would disrupt the social life of the

community (Ramadhani et al., 2025). This finding is congruent with Resmini & Sakban (2019), who state that conflict resolution based on deliberation places greater emphasis on peace and the restoration of social relations rather than merely rendering binding verdicts.

The Positive Function of Conflict and the Reproduction of Social Cohesion

Coser (1956) asserts that conflict is not inherently destructive or detrimental to the social order. Coser (1956) distinguishes between realistic conflict, which arises from concrete interests or negotiable issues, and non-realistic conflict, which merely serves as a release of tension without a clear objective. The three forms of marital disputes identified in this study household economic distress, divergent perspectives between spouses, and unreadiness due to family-arranged marriage are categorized as realistic conflicts because each involves explicit issues that can be discussed and negotiated. According to Coser (1956), this type of conflict has a higher probability of being resolved functionally compared to non-realistic conflict, as there are tangible issues that can be mutually deliberated to identify a shared solution.

Through *Babadan Tenan*, conflicting couples are encouraged to re-examine the division of responsibilities, communication patterns, and individual attitudes within domestic life. Conflict that initially held the potential to destroy the relationship is redirected into a collective opportunity to find a mutually acceptable resolution, while simultaneously fostering social adjustments that prevent tensions from developing into larger disputes. This perspective aligns with Angin et al. (2021), who state that conflict within familial relations can serve an integrative function if managed through appropriate social mechanisms. This is further reinforced by Pratiwi et al. (2024), who demonstrate that resolution through customary law produces a sense of justice that is more deeply personal and profound because it relies on local customs and values embedded within the community's way of life; consequently, conflicting couples more readily accept the outcome of the deliberation compared to formal judicial verdicts.

Similar patterns are observed in the customary practices of other communities, corroborating the notion that the integrative function of conflict is not merely a theoretical concept but can be empirically identified. Research by Nusuary & Zikriah (2024) in Aceh found that customary institutions act as mediators in domestic disputes while simultaneously strengthening communal values within society. Furthermore, studies by Fadli et al. (2024) among the Baduy and Sasak communities demonstrate that resolution led by customary leaders who treat the disputing parties humanely allows reconciliation to occur holistically, free from rejection or prejudice. Similar findings were documented by Izzuddin & Afriansyah (2025) regarding the *teprung tawar* tradition, as well as by Yasri et al. (2024) and Zubir & Alimuddin (2025) concerning other customary marital conflicts, consistently showing that conflict resolution through mutually recognized customary institutions tends to strengthen, rather than weaken, the social bonds of the community.

It is precisely at this juncture that the reproduction of social cohesion occurs—not merely as a one-time effect of a single successfully resolved case, but as an iterative process that continuously reshapes and reinforces the legitimacy of the customary institution. Each case successfully resolved through *Babadan Tenan*, including the three cases in this study, serves as empirical evidence for the community that the customary collective possesses the capacity to regulate and maintain order via informal institutions. The more frequently conflicts are successfully resolved through customary mechanisms, the stronger the public trust becomes toward customary figures and the accompanying local values. This, in turn, prompts the community to repeatedly choose *Babadan Tenan* when new conflicts arise. This cyclical pattern consistently reproduces social cohesion, preserves the value system, and sustains the authority of the customary institution as a pillar of social integration within the Banceuy Traditional Village community. This condition is congruent with the findings of Sukriono et al. (2025), which support the premise that customary institutions play a vital role in maintaining social integration through community-based conflict resolution.

Nevertheless, this positive function of conflict does not manifest automatically in every situation. Coser (1956) emphasizes that conflict can only become constructive if all parties are granted an equitable space to speak and the resolution process is entered into voluntarily, rather than out of coercion or unilateral compliance with authority. If a resolution places greater emphasis on compliance with authority rather than the parties' sense of justice, the seemingly resolved conflict risks leaving behind residual tensions that may resurface in the future. This insight is particularly relevant to the case in this study, given that the narration of the grievances was predominantly presented by the wife due to the husband's absence during the initial phase of the resolution a condition which, if not balanced with an equitable opportunity for both parties to speak in the subsequent stages, risks producing a resolution that appears peaceful on the surface but does not fully represent substantive justice for both sides. Consequently, the success of *Babadan Tenan* in reproducing social cohesion heavily depends on the equilibrium between restoring social harmony and fulfilling substantive justice for the conflicting parties (Yusri et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *Babadan Tenan* functions effectively as a customary mechanism for marital conflict resolution within the Banceuy Traditional Village. Through deliberations presided over by the customary leader, conflicts are redirected into a socially accepted resolution space. This process effectively prevents disputes from escalating into broader communal hostilities. Viewed through the theoretical lens of Lewis A. Coser, *Babadan Tenan* operates as a "safety valve" capable of alleviating tension and preserving social relations within the Banceuy traditional community. Furthermore, the findings indicate that conflict resolution through *Babadan Tenan* is not oriented toward a win-lose outcome; rather, the primary objective of this mechanism is to achieve an amicable and mutually acceptable resolution for the parties involved. The enduring existence of *Babadan Tenan* underscores the continued relevance of customary institutions in managing domestic conflicts, a position further bolstered by a process that is more expeditious, cost-effective, and congruent with local community values.

This research is subject to limitations, particularly regarding the relatively restricted number of informants. Additionally, the perspective of the husband's side could not be reached during the interview process, which consequently limited the comprehensiveness of the viewpoints obtained by the researcher. Moreover, the findings of this study are highly contextual and cannot be broadly generalized to other traditional communities. Based on these limitations, future research is advised to involve all conflicting parties more comprehensively. Subsequent studies should also conduct comparative analyses between *Babadan Tenan* and customary mediation practices in other communities. Such steps are essential to broaden the scholarly understanding of localized, wisdom-based conflict resolution. Ultimately, the outcomes of further research are expected to contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge regarding conflict resolution in Indonesia.

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