

ISLAMIC COSMOPOLITANISM AS A PARADIGM FOR PEACEBUILDING: REMAKING INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES

Uswatun Hasanah¹, Muhammad Rafii^{2*}

¹ UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia

² UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, Indonesia

*Correspondence:  muhammad.rafi@uinjambi.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article examines the discourse of Islamic Cosmopolitanism within the interdisciplinary fields of Islamic Studies, Peace Studies, and Interreligious Relations, as a response to increasing global religious fragmentation and conflict. The study aims to conceptualize Islamic Cosmopolitanism as a paradigm for peacebuilding by reconstructing the ethical and theoretical foundations of interreligious relations in plural societies. This research employs a qualitative library research method using data drawn from classical Islamic texts and contemporary scholarly literature. Data analysis is conducted through thematic and critical-interpretive approaches to identify conceptual patterns related to cosmopolitan ethics, religious pluralism, and peacebuilding frameworks. The findings show that Islamic Cosmopolitanism integrates universal values such as justice, compassion, and human dignity into an ethical framework that supports the transformation of interreligious relations from mere tolerance to active collaboration. This framework reconstructs interreligious relations by emphasizing shared humanity and mutual recognition among religious communities. The article contributes to contemporary debates on religion and peace by offering a conceptual model for managing religious diversity constructively. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening cosmopolitan ethics in fostering sustainable interreligious peace in plural societies.

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji diskursus Kosmopolitanisme Islam dalam bidang interdisipliner Studi Islam, Studi Perdamaian, dan Hubungan Antaragama sebagai respons terhadap meningkatnya fragmentasi dan konflik keagamaan global. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengonseptualisasikan Kosmopolitanisme Islam sebagai paradigma pembangunan perdamaian dengan merekonstruksi landasan etis dan teoretis hubungan antaragama dalam masyarakat plural. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka dengan sumber data yang berasal dari teks-teks klasik Islam, literatur akademik kontemporer. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pendekatan tematik dan interpretatif-kritis untuk mengidentifikasi pola konseptual yang berkaitan dengan etika kosmopolitan, pluralisme agama, dan kerangka pembangunan perdamaian. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kosmopolitanisme Islam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai universal seperti keadilan, kasih sayang, dan martabat manusia ke dalam kerangka etis yang mendukung transformasi hubungan antaragama dari sekadar toleransi menuju kolaborasi aktif. Kerangka ini merekonstruksi hubungan antaragama dengan menekankan kemanusiaan bersama dan pengakuan timbal balik antar komunitas agama. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada diskursus kontemporer tentang agama dan perdamaian dengan menawarkan model konseptual dalam mengelola keberagaman secara konstruktif. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya penguatan etika kosmopolitan dalam membangun perdamaian antaragama yang berkelanjutan dalam masyarakat plural.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary global society is increasingly marked by religious plurality, intensifying identity negotiations, and recurring tensions among faith communities. In many plural societies, interreligious relations are often shaped by limited interaction that remains at the level of tolerance rather than meaningful engagement. Such conditions indicate that coexistence alone is insufficient to build sustainable social cohesion when it is not supported by deeper ethical and relational transformation among religious communities (Khan et al., 2020; Hefni et al., 2022). As a result, the challenge of religious diversity is not only theological but also social, ethical, and structural in nature.

In response to these dynamics, interreligious dialogue has been widely discussed as a mechanism to reduce tension and promote peaceful coexistence. However, several studies show that dialogue often remains formalistic and does not always translate into substantive cooperation in everyday life. Islam, in this context, has been shown to provide a normative foundation for interreligious engagement through principles of justice, equality, and recognition of religious diversity within a framework of ethical coexistence (Khan et al., 2020). This demonstrates that religious traditions already contain internal resources for peacebuilding that require further conceptual elaboration (Klaina et al, 2024).

Peacebuilding scholarship further emphasizes that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a continuous process of relational transformation. The idea of “peace by peaceful means” highlights the importance of addressing structural and cultural dimensions of conflict rather than focusing only on direct violence (Galtung, 2018). Similarly, Lederach (2019) emphasizes the role of moral imagination in transforming relationships and creating sustainable peace through long-term relational engagement. These perspectives suggest that peacebuilding must operate at both ethical and structural levels to be effective in plural societies.

Cosmopolitan thinking provides an additional lens for understanding global ethical responsibility. Cosmopolitanism highlights the moral obligation of individuals and communities to recognize shared humanity beyond cultural and religious boundaries. Delanty (2019) argues that cosmopolitan imagination enables new forms of social integration by rethinking identity through openness and relationality, while Fine (2020) emphasizes global ethics as a foundation for cross-cultural moral engagement. In Islamic intellectual traditions, these cosmopolitan orientations resonate with values of human dignity (*karāmah*), compassion (*rahmah*), and justice (*‘adl*), which provide ethical grounding for interreligious relations.

Recent scholarship has increasingly begun to connect Islamic ethical frameworks with peacebuilding and cosmopolitan discourse. Studies on Islamic cosmopolitanism

demonstrate its potential as a unifying ethical paradigm that integrates social, cultural, and political dimensions of coexistence (Fauzian et al., 2024; Ramdhani et al., 2026). Moreover, concepts such as *fiqh al-ta'āyush* highlight Islamic jurisprudential contributions to coexistence and plural governance, showing that Islamic thought contains robust foundations for managing diversity in contemporary societies (Abdullah, 2025). These developments indicate a growing academic interest in repositioning Islamic ethics within global peace discourse.

Interreligious relations in plural societies therefore require a more integrated conceptual framework that moves beyond tolerance toward active collaboration grounded in shared ethical responsibility. Islamic Cosmopolitanism offers such a framework by bridging Islamic moral principles with cosmopolitan ethics and peacebuilding theory. It reconstructs interreligious relations by emphasizing shared humanity as the basis for social cohesion and transforming diversity into a source of ethical cooperation rather than tension.

The aim of this study is to conceptualize Islamic Cosmopolitanism as a paradigm for peacebuilding by reconstructing interreligious relations in plural societies. This study contributes to the fields of Islamic Studies and Peace Studies by developing an integrative conceptual model that connects the ethical, theological, and social dimensions of peaceful coexistence. Through this framework, the study offers a comprehensive perspective for understanding how Islamic values can inform contemporary approaches to sustainable peace and interreligious engagement.

The novelty of this research lies in its synthesis of Islamic cosmopolitan ethics with contemporary peacebuilding theory, producing a conceptual framework that repositions interreligious relations from passive tolerance toward active ethical collaboration in plural societies. Unlike previous studies that primarily emphasize either theological inclusivism or practical conflict resolution, this study integrates both perspectives into a unified paradigm of peacebuilding grounded in Islamic cosmopolitanism (Galtung, 2018; Lederach, 2019; Delanty, 2019).

B. METHODH

This study employed a qualitative library research design with a normative and conceptual orientation to examine Islamic Cosmopolitanism as a paradigm for peacebuilding in interreligious relations. The study was conducted through systematic identification, selection, and analysis of scholarly literature without engaging in fieldwork or empirical data collection. This design was chosen because the research aims to construct and reconstruct conceptual knowledge rather than generate empirical findings. Library-based qualitative inquiry is particularly suitable for developing theoretical synthesis from existing academic discourse (Snyder, 2019; Paul & Criado, 2020).

The study adopted a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytical and interpretative-critical orientations. This approach was applied to examine, interpret, and synthesize conceptual ideas derived from selected academic sources into a coherent theoretical framework. The research process emphasized careful selection and organization of literature to ensure relevance, conceptual depth, and analytical contribution. Systematic procedures in literature-based research were followed to maintain transparency and rigor in source identification and selection (Tranfield et al., 2003; Munn et al., 2018).

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis combined with interpretative-critical reasoning. Thematic analysis was employed to identify, categorize, and map recurring conceptual patterns across the selected literature, while interpretative-critical analysis was used to construct deeper meaning and synthesize theoretical insights. The analytical process followed iterative stages, including familiarization with data, coding, theme development, and conceptual integration. This method allows for systematic interpretation of textual data while enabling the development of new conceptual frameworks derived from existing scholarly discourse (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Cosmopolitanism as Ethical Foundation of Interreligious Relations

Islamic Cosmopolitanism can be understood as an ethical and relational framework that positions interreligious relations within the broader discourse of shared humanity and global moral responsibility. It emphasizes that religious diversity is not a source of fragmentation but a condition for ethical engagement and social transformation. Within cosmopolitan theory, this orientation highlights the importance of relational openness and continuous identity reconstruction through interaction with others in plural societies (Delanty, 2006; Fine, 2020). In this sense, cosmopolitanism is not merely a philosophical abstraction but a lived ethical practice embedded in everyday social relations.

This ethical openness aligns with foundational values such as *rahmah* (compassion), *‘adl* (justice), and *karāmah al-insān* (human dignity), which serve as normative bases for engaging religious others. Recent scholarship on Islamic ethics demonstrates that these values are not only theological principles but also social instruments for fostering coexistence and mutual recognition in diverse societies. The concept of *fiqh al-ta’āyush* further strengthens this argument by framing coexistence as a structured ethical-legal paradigm within Islamic thought (Abdullah, 2025; Fauzian et al., 2024). This indicates that Islamic tradition inherently contains resources for cosmopolitan engagement.

Interreligious relations in contemporary plural societies often operate within a limited framework of tolerance that does not necessarily generate deep social integration. Such conditions reflect a gap between normative religious teachings and empirical social realities,

where interaction among religious groups remains minimal or symbolic. Empirical studies suggest that interreligious engagement requires more than tolerance; it demands active relational involvement and structured dialogue mechanisms that can transform social boundaries (Khan et al., 2020; Islam, 2024). Without such engagement, plural societies risk sustaining latent social distance despite formal harmony.

Islamic Cosmopolitanism provides a conceptual bridge that transforms tolerance into active ethical collaboration. It reframes interreligious relations as dynamic processes of cooperation rooted in shared moral values rather than passive coexistence. This transformation aligns with findings that Islamic-based interfaith engagement can strengthen trust and reduce social fragmentation in multicultural environments (Fauzian et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2020). Thus, interreligious relations become not only theological discourse but also social practice embedded in everyday life.

Peacebuilding theory reinforces the idea that sustainable peace cannot be achieved merely through the absence of conflict, but through the transformation of relationships and social structures. Galtung's framework of positive peace emphasizes the need to eliminate structural and cultural violence, while Lederach highlights the importance of moral imagination in rebuilding fractured relationships (Galtung, 2018; Lederach, 2019). These perspectives underline that peace is fundamentally relational and ethical in nature. Islamic Cosmopolitanism extends this understanding by embedding peacebuilding within a theological-ethical framework that emphasizes responsibility toward others. It integrates cosmopolitan ethics with Islamic moral values, creating a multidimensional approach to peace that includes spiritual, social, and structural dimensions. This synthesis allows peacebuilding to move beyond institutional mechanisms toward ethical transformation of interreligious relations (Delanty, 2006; Abdullah, 2025). Consequently, peace becomes a continuous process of ethical engagement rather than a static condition.

Reframing Interreligious Relations From Passive Tolerance to Transformative Cosmopolitan Collaboration

Interreligious relations in plural societies are often formally framed through the language of tolerance, yet in practice this concept tends to operate at a minimal ethical level. Tolerance frequently functions as a mechanism to prevent open conflict without necessarily producing meaningful social integration among religious communities. Recent studies indicate that tolerance-based frameworks may maintain surface harmony while leaving deeper relational fragmentation untouched (Khan et al., 2020). In many contexts, religious diversity is managed rather than actively engaged, resulting in coexistence without substantial cooperation or shared social responsibility (Driessen, 2025).

The limitations of tolerance become more evident when interreligious relations are examined in everyday social life. While institutional narratives often emphasize harmony, empirical realities reveal persistent social distance and limited interaction across religious boundaries. This condition suggests that tolerance alone is insufficient to construct sustainable peace in plural societies, particularly when structural inequalities and historical tensions remain unresolved (Hoffmann et al., 2024). Therefore, interreligious engagement requires a deeper relational transformation that goes beyond formal acceptance toward active participation in shared social spaces.

Interfaith dialogue has long been promoted as a primary instrument for fostering understanding among religious communities. However, its impact is often constrained by its episodic and symbolic nature, which limits its capacity to generate long-term social transformation. Studies show that dialogue initiatives frequently emphasize communication events rather than continuous collaboration in addressing collective challenges (Kwuelum, 2024). As a result, interreligious dialogue risks becoming a performative practice that does not sufficiently alter patterns of social interaction or trust-building among communities.

In response to these limitations, cosmopolitan theory offers a more transformative framework for understanding interreligious relations. Cosmopolitanism emphasizes that social identities are not fixed but continuously reshaped through encounters with cultural and religious others. Delanty argues that cosmopolitan imagination enables societies to reconstruct identity through intercultural interaction and relational openness (Delanty, 2006). Similarly, global ethics perspectives highlight the extension of moral responsibility beyond particular communities toward broader human solidarity (Fine, 2020). This theoretical orientation provides a foundation for shifting interreligious relations from tolerance to collaboration.

Empirical evidence from peacebuilding studies further supports the importance of collaborative engagement in plural societies. Research shows that communities involved in joint social, humanitarian, and economic initiatives tend to develop higher levels of trust and reduced intergroup prejudice. These findings indicate that sustained interaction in shared spaces is a key factor in building durable interreligious cohesion (Hoffmann et al., 2024; Driessen, 2025). Collaboration thus becomes not only a normative ideal but also a practical mechanism for transforming social relations in plural contexts.

Islamic intellectual tradition provides strong ethical grounding for this collaborative paradigm through principles such as *ta'aruf* (mutual recognition), *'adl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion). These values emphasize relational responsibility and active engagement with religious others rather than passive coexistence. Contemporary scholarship shows that Islamic ethical frameworks can be operationalized into inclusive social models that support

interreligious cooperation and shared governance (Abdullah, 2025). Within this framework, Islamic Cosmopolitanism emerges as a synthesis that integrates theological ethics with cosmopolitan thought, positioning collaboration as the core of sustainable peacebuilding in plural societies.

Peacebuilding as Relational Transformation in Islamic Cosmopolitan Frameworks

Peacebuilding in contemporary scholarship is increasingly understood as a relational process that extends beyond the mere absence of violence, emphasizing instead the transformation of social relations, perceptions, and patterns of interaction among communities in plural societies. Within this understanding, peace is constructed through trust-building, mutual recognition, and sustained everyday engagement rather than formal agreements alone, as relational embeddedness becomes a decisive factor in determining the durability of peace. Recent studies highlight that interreligious peace is fundamentally shaped by the quality of relational interactions and the depth of social embeddedness, suggesting that institutional arrangements without continuous interpersonal cooperation remain insufficient to sustain harmony in plural contexts. Accordingly, peace must be conceptualized as an evolving relational structure rather than a static condition (Hoffmann et al., 2025; Driessen, 2025), positioning relational transformation as the core of sustainable peacebuilding.

Classical peace theory distinguishes between negative peace and positive peace as foundational analytical categories, where negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, while positive peace involves the presence of justice, equality, and cooperative social structures. Contemporary scholarship, however, extends this framework by emphasizing cultural and relational dimensions of peace, arguing that peace cannot be fully realized without addressing symbolic violence, structural inequality, and identity-based exclusion embedded in social life. Recent studies further indicate that peacebuilding must integrate ethical, social, and cultural transformation simultaneously, as these dimensions are mutually reinforcing in shaping sustainable coexistence. Therefore, peace is not merely structural in nature but deeply embedded in lived relational practices, thereby broadening peacebuilding into a multidimensional framework of interaction and transformation (Galtung, 2018; Kwuelum, 2024).

Empirical research consistently confirms that interreligious cooperation plays a significant role in strengthening social cohesion within plural societies, particularly when such cooperation is grounded in sustained interaction rather than episodic engagement. Communities involved in joint humanitarian, educational, and socio-economic initiatives tend to demonstrate higher levels of mutual trust, alongside a marked reduction in prejudice compared to groups that rely solely on formal interfaith dialogue programs. This evidence indicates that dialogue alone is insufficient when it is not accompanied by

sustained collaborative engagement in real-life social contexts, where relational proximity and shared practices function as key determinants of durable interreligious harmony. Consequently, collaboration becomes more effective than symbolic tolerance in sustaining peace, as peace itself is socially produced through continuous interaction and shared experience (Hoffmann et al., 2025; Kwuelum, 2024).

In the Indonesian context, indigenous legal and cultural systems offer significant insights into relational mechanisms of peacebuilding, particularly through customary law practices that function as instruments of conflict resolution and communal harmony maintenance. The study of Pampeh law in Sarolangun illustrates how local wisdom effectively regulates social disputes, demonstrating that adat-based reconciliation strengthens social cohesion while preventing prolonged conflict escalation. When integrated with maqashid sharia principles, such customary mechanisms further enhance justice-oriented community governance by aligning local practices with broader ethical and normative Islamic frameworks. This integration reflects a productive synergy between local wisdom and Islamic normative thought, confirming that peacebuilding is both contextually grounded and normatively structured (Husairi et al., 2024).

Islamic Cosmopolitanism provides a robust ethical foundation for transforming interreligious relations into collaborative structures grounded in values such as *rahmah*, *‘adl*, and *ta’āruf*, which collectively emphasize compassion, justice, and mutual recognition as core ethical principles in plural societies. These values encourage active engagement with religious others rather than passive coexistence, thereby repositioning interreligious relations as a domain of ethical responsibility and social cooperation. Contemporary Islamic scholarship demonstrates that these ethical foundations can be operationalized into inclusive governance models and cooperative social systems that support shared responsibility in addressing collective challenges within diverse societies. In this framework, Islamic ethics align closely with cosmopolitan principles, positioning Islamic Cosmopolitanism as an applied ethical paradigm for constructing relational peace (Abdullah, 2025).

Peacebuilding must be understood as an ongoing process of relational reconstruction that requires continuous engagement, cooperation, and mutual accountability among diverse communities. Peace is not achieved as a final state but is continuously maintained through shared social practice, where interaction itself becomes the medium of stability and harmony. Contemporary peace research increasingly emphasizes relational transformation as the foundation of sustainable peacebuilding, integrating ethical, structural, and cultural dimensions of social interaction within plural societies. Within this framework, Islamic Cosmopolitanism synthesizes these dimensions into a unified conceptual model of peace, positioning shared humanity as the ultimate ethical horizon of interreligious relations (Galtung, 2018; Hoffmann et al., 2025)

Islamic Cosmopolitanism as an Integrative Model of Relational Peacebuilding in Plural Societies

Islamic Cosmopolitanism can be understood as an integrative conceptual model that unites ethical, relational, and structural dimensions of peacebuilding into a coherent framework for managing diversity in plural societies. Rather than treating religious plurality as a source of tension, this model redefines it as a space for constructive engagement grounded in shared humanity and ethical responsibility. Contemporary peace research increasingly emphasizes that sustainable peace emerges from relational embeddedness, trust, and continuous interaction rather than formal institutional arrangements alone. Recent studies further confirm that interreligious peace is shaped by everyday social practices and patterns of cooperation that extend beyond dialogue settings (Hoffmann et al., 2025; Driessen, 2025). Accordingly, Islamic Cosmopolitanism positions relational transformation as its epistemic and practical foundation.

The theoretical architecture of this model draws from the evolution of peace studies, particularly the distinction between negative and positive peace, where the absence of violence is insufficient without the presence of justice and cooperation. However, recent scholarship expands this framework by emphasizing that peace must also address cultural meanings, symbolic violence, and identity-based exclusion embedded in social structures. Peace is therefore understood as a dynamic process of continuous transformation involving ethical, cultural, and relational dimensions simultaneously. Empirical findings show that such multidimensional peacebuilding approaches are more effective in addressing complex intergroup conflicts in plural societies (Galtung, 2018; Kwuelum, 2024).

Empirical evidence from interreligious contexts demonstrates that cooperation plays a decisive role in fostering long-term social cohesion. Communities engaged in shared humanitarian, educational, and socio-economic activities consistently exhibit higher levels of mutual trust and lower levels of prejudice compared to those relying solely on formal interfaith dialogue initiatives. This suggests that peace is not merely discursive but deeply embedded in lived social practices and sustained interaction. Dialogue without practical collaboration tends to remain symbolic and insufficient for long-term transformation. Consequently, relational proximity and shared action become central mechanisms in sustaining interreligious harmony (Hoffmann et al., 2025; Kwuelum, 2024; Khan et al., 2020).

Islamic ethical tradition provides a strong normative foundation for this model through principles such as *rahmah* (compassion), *'adl* (justice), and *ta'āwuf* (mutual recognition), which collectively frame interreligious engagement as a moral obligation rather than an optional social practice (. These principles emphasize active engagement, justice-oriented interaction, and ethical responsibility in dealing with religious others. Contemporary Islamic scholarship demonstrates that these ethical foundations can be

operationalized into inclusive governance systems and participatory social frameworks that strengthen interreligious cooperation. Such integration reflects the compatibility between Islamic ethical thought and cosmopolitan normative frameworks in constructing peaceful coexistence (Abdullah, 2025; Omer, 2021). This positions Islamic Cosmopolitanism as an applied ethical paradigm.

The model is further strengthened by incorporating insights from interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding literature, which highlight both the potential and limitations of dialogue-based approaches. While dialogue initiatives contribute to reducing prejudice and fostering understanding, they are often insufficient without structural engagement and sustained cooperation in real-life contexts. Recent research emphasizes that effective peacebuilding requires combining dialogue with practical collaboration, institutional support, and community-led initiatives. This multidimensional approach reflects a shift from symbolic engagement to transformative relational practice in interreligious relations (Driessen, 2025; Khan et al., 2020; Pratama, 2024).

Islamic Cosmopolitanism proposes a comprehensive peacebuilding model that synthesizes ethical principles, relational dynamics, empirical cooperation, and structural transformation into a unified theoretical system (Carey, 2020). Peace is conceptualized not as a final condition but as an ongoing process of relational reconstruction sustained through continuous interaction, mutual accountability, and shared responsibility among diverse communities. Contemporary peace research increasingly supports this view by emphasizing that sustainable peace requires integration of ethical, social, and institutional dimensions in plural societies. Within this framework, Islamic Cosmopolitanism becomes a transformative paradigm that bridges normative Islamic ethics with global cosmopolitan thought (Galtung, 2018; Hoffmann et al., 2025; Omer, 2021).

D. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Cosmopolitanism serves as an effective conceptual paradigm for reconstructing interreligious relations within plural societies through a relational approach to peacebuilding. Peace is not merely understood as the absence of conflict, but as a dynamic and continuous process of social transformation shaped by trust-building, mutual recognition, and sustained intergroup engagement. Within this framework, Islamic ethical principles such as *rahmah* (compassion), *‘adl* (justice), and *ta‘āruf* (mutual recognition) function as normative foundations that strengthen cosmopolitan values and shift interreligious relations from passive tolerance toward active and meaningful collaboration.

The study further demonstrates that effective peacebuilding in plural societies depends on the integration of normative, empirical, and contextual dimensions. Empirical evidence suggests that sustained interreligious cooperation and shared social practices are significantly more effective in fostering social cohesion than formal dialogue mechanisms

alone. In addition, the incorporation of local wisdom and customary legal systems into broader ethical frameworks enhances the legitimacy and sustainability of conflict resolution processes. This confirms that peacebuilding must be understood as both socially embedded and culturally grounded, where relational proximity and shared experience become central mechanisms in maintaining long-term harmony.

The main contribution of this research lies in the formulation of Islamic Cosmopolitanism as an integrative model that bridges Islamic ethical teachings, cosmopolitan theory, and peacebuilding practice into a coherent analytical framework. This model advances contemporary scholarly discourse by shifting the focus from mere coexistence toward transformative interreligious collaboration based on shared humanity. In doing so, the study enriches academic discussions in religious studies, social sciences, and cultural studies by offering a more applied, context-sensitive, and relationally grounded approach to sustainable peace in diverse societies.

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