

## MEDIATING PEACE THROUGH LOCAL TRADITION OF CROSS-RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN SAPARUA ISLAND, MOLUCCAS

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### **Abstract**

*On Saparua Island in the Moluccas, Indonesia, local tradition guides the interreligious community of Muslims and Christians. Issues relating to people's races, religions, and ethnic backgrounds frequently spark conflict in the community. At the moment, it is working on maintaining and advancing peace. This article presents an investigation into the factors that contribute to religious harmony in communities comprised of members of different faiths. This research was conducted on Saparua Island through observation and interviews with community figures and members of the religious, academic, youth, and female communities. It was hypothesized, and subsequent research confirmed, that the community adheres to the principles of peace and the way of life espoused by the "Basudara People" in Ale Rasa Beta Rasa, Sagu Salempeng Patah Dua, and Sei Leli Hatulo-Hatuli Eleli Esepei. Peace in the cross-religious community can be achieved through the practice of local traditions like Pela Gandong and Masohi, which are forms of community cooperation. As a consequence of this, the result demonstrates*

*the significance of having dialogues between people of different religious and cultural backgrounds to keep and maintain the viability of interreligious peace.*

*Tradisi lokal di Pulau Saparua, Maluku, Indonesia menjadi panduan moral (norma) bagi kehidupan komunitas lintas agama (Muslim-Kristiani) yang pernah terjadi konflik dipicu isu Suku, Agama, Ras dan saat ini sedang berproses merawat dan membangun perdamaian. Dalam artikel ini, perdamaian komunitas lintas agama dianalisis melalui tradisi lokal sebagai kriterianya. Penelitian ini didasari oleh observasi dan wawancara di antara tokoh adat, tokoh agama, tokoh pemuda, pemerhati perempuan, akademisi, dan masyarakat di Pulau Saparua. Diprediksi dan ditemukan bahwa prinsip perdamaian dari filosofi hidup “Basudara People” pada Ale Rasa Beta Rasa, Sagu Salempeng Patah Dua, dan Sei Leli Hatulo-Hatuli Eleli Esepei. Perdamaian melalui tradisi lokal Pela Gandong dan Masohi sebagai kerjasama untuk saling membantu komunitas lintas agama. Dengan demikian, hasil menunjukkan pentingnya dialogis tokoh lintas agama dan tokoh adat untuk menjaga dan memelihara keberlanjutan perdamaian lintas agama.*

**Keywords:** *peace; local tradition; cross-religious community*

## **Introduction**

The people of Moluccas remember 19th January, 1999, as a dark day in their history. The community of the cross-religious (Muslim and Christian) “Basudara People” faced a very random war that lasted a long time when social conflicts with religious roots broke out (Klinken, 2007; Triono, 2002; Ratnawati, 2006; Amirrachman, 2007; Bartels, 2011; Qurtuby, 2016; Okpevra, 2017; Malone, 2018; Kate et al., 2019; Torras-Gomez et al., 2019; Matakena et al., 2020; Saimima et al., 2020). The conflict started in Ambon and “burned” across all of Moluccas, all the way to the North Moluccas. The Moluccas conflict started after other conflicts in Indonesia, like the Ketapang conflict in 1998 (Septiani, 2017) and the Kupang conflict in 1998 (Elsam, 1999). It started after Indonesia left the authoritarian New Order regime and moved into the reformation era. Since the Moluccas conflict went on for a long time (more than three years), many people died and lost many things.

The conflict quickly spread from its origin in the center of the conflict to the surrounding area in the Central Moluccas, including Jazirah Leihitu on Ambon Island, Lease, and the western part of the Seram Islands. It took

place in only a matter of days. According to Sanaky's diary from 2006, the conflict was contained in Saparua Island and was sparked by ethnicity, religious, and racial tensions in Saparua (Lease). It began on 9th February, 1999, and changed throughout the dynamics of the conflict in Ambon, which was the epicenter of the conflict. According to the data collected by Sanaky (2006), 21 conflicts of varying severity broke out in Saparua between 9th February, 1999, and 18th November, 2000.

A small island known as Saparua Island is located in the Ambon row of the Lease Islands in the Central Moluccas which is divided into two subdistricts, the Saparua and East Saparua. There are 17 villages spread across these two subdistricts. However, only three are home to Moslems communities. Villages Siri Sori Islam, Kulur, and Iha. People from Iha village were forced to leave the area because of the sporadic conflict, and they now live in several different areas in Central Moluccas. These areas include Liang Village, Salahutu Subdistrict, and Sepa Village, Amahai Subdistrict, on Seram Island. The remaining 14 villages are home to communities of Christians and Protestants.

The Moluccas Conflict, which included Saparua Island, caused damage to more than lives and property; it also disrupted a community living arrangement that had been in place for hundreds of years (Saimima et al., 2020). Disruptions occurred in the local tradition's values and patterns of civility and manners (Forts, 2004; Akunnusi et al., 2018). The power of communal living was weakened due to the struggle over the importance of regional customs. Saparua Island's Salam - Sarane (Muslim-Christian) communities view and identify with one another as part of a single customary community arrangement and share the same local traditional values, despite their religious differences (Bartels, 2017; Malone, 2018). Belief in the equal value of all cultural practices breeds optimism and the will to coexist peacefully (Tanamal, 2002; Matakana et al., 2020; Saimima et al., 2020). Unfortunately, their local traditions and values were destroyed in the conflict (Akunnusi et al., 2018). Still, the conflict also gave the people renewed energy to work toward preserving their way of life and their sense of community.

The action of the interfaith community with the local tradition diversity award becomes one of the most prominent examples of communities coexisting with one another, interacting with other tradition system adherents. It is required to cultivate a sense of social solidarity identity and make peace with one another (Malawat et al., 2021). Recognizing the significance of the various principles that result from holding various beliefs is one the significances

(Sulaeman et al., 2021). As a result, many local traditions on a philosophical level contain a message to uphold and attend to mutual life in the universe.

Regarding the Moluccas after the conflict, one of the most critical questions frequently debated is whether or not the local tradition that needs to be revitalized as a functional power for peacebuilding is still relevant. This question is asked quite frequently, considering that the Moluccas conflict has been going on for the past three years. The conflict perceives the local institutions as weak in creating community defense, while democracy and modernity (Torras-Gomez et al., 2019) significantly reduce the local tradition of cross-religious communities. On the other hand, one school of thought held that the conflict in the Moluccas could be resolved relatively quickly through the utilization of the local tradition's inherent advantages (Bartels, 2011; Davey & Vallianatos, 2018; Ridwan et al., 2020; Malawat et al., 2020; Sulaeman et al., 2021). The loosening of local traditional institutions during the conflict is not in contradiction with this view at all. On the contrary, the power hegemony of the new order with its political uniformity (Malone, 2018) caused the weakening of local traditional institutions that were previously formed as an element to unite inter-religious communities. However, for them, the weakness of the institutions cannot be separated from this power hegemony of the new order. Because of this, according to the viewpoint of this group, the only way peace can develop and be maintained is through revitalizing local traditions (Forts, 2004; Wu, 2014; Kate et al., 2019).

Existing studies on the connection between religious peacebuilding have flaws. This paper aims to fill those gaps by optimizing local traditions rather than neglecting processes in historical and sociological contexts. It uses three questions to investigate the various aspects of the term "processual." First, how do religious leaders and figures react to questions about (a) the principles of local traditions that play a role in community peacebuilding on the island of Saparua, (b) the forms of local tradition that serve and ensure the sustainability of peace in Saparua, and (c) the role of local traditions in the development of peace?

Ale Rasa Beta Rasa, Sagu Salempeng Patah Dua, and Sei Leli Hatulo-Hatulo Elea Esepei are three philosophies whose values (the current value) will be examined in light of the study's three research questions. Koentjaraningrat (1990) classified the three philosophies of life as an abstract form of tradition in the form of ideas and notions. These philosophies can be understood as phrases of a game of words (lingua game) through the local language.

According to Putra (2009), this debate is a social symptom of tradition that is the actualization of a thinking framework of a set of communities whose contents and structures require elucidation. In addition, this article is significant because the *Pela Gandong* and *Masohi* forms of local tradition can embody and inspire cross-religious community arrangements. They are a social order system with all its institutions that can contribute to the sustainability of peace in Saparua by preserving the shared values of local traditions.

## **Methods**

This research is a qualitative exploratory study (Sulaeman et al., 2021). that aims to investigate the factors that contribute to the occurrence of something. In this particular instance, the researchers attempted to investigate the local traditional values as a part of the means for building sustainable peace. This study used a descriptive-qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. This type was taken to dig information widely and deeply from reliable sources supported by adequate data about the role of the subject of either a personal or institution related directly to the objects of the study. It was taken to dig information widely and deeply from reliable sources supported by adequate data. A qualitative method was used to uncover the phenomenon related to the experience of indigenous people on the island of Saparua on the values of local traditions or forms of the wisdom of life practiced. It was done to understand that the meaning of several individuals or groups of people is considered to be derived from social or humanity issues (Frihammar, 2020).

The primary data for this study came from a field study in the form of observations, interviews, and written records. The secondary data used were references related to the study's problem. The primary data were from interviews with traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, and women leaders from Saparua Island, as well as academics who knew a lot about the topic of the study. The interview was done to find out how local traditions can help build peace on Saparua Island and how well they work. In Saparua, the people who made up the community were from Muslim and Christian groups. People thought they had a part to play in promoting peace in the community by going to events, speaking up for it, and spreading the word. In the section on the results of interviews, not all of the people who were interviewed were listed. If the answers were the same, they were picked randomly. The researchers watched rituals or ceremonies that were part of

local traditions meant to help the peace process. These were then written up as documentation.

The researchers went to the area to keep a record, watched what was happening, and put the actions into categories. They also recorded and wrote down what the informants said using notes, notepads, cameras, and tape recorders. The goal was to learn as much as possible about the local traditions and values in the inter-religious communities on the island of Saparua. It also portrayed how they contributed to the long-term building of peace.

Data analysis is one of the most fundamental stages of qualitative research as it involves a complex and dynamic process of reasoning, interpreting, and theorizing, characterized by an intuitive and reflective approach to making sense of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The data analysis used in this study is the Miles and Huberman (2014) model. This interactive analysis model works through three processes: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. First, data reduction is selecting and concentrating attention on the simplification, abstraction, and transformation of “rough” data from field notes that are subsequently concluded.

The data collection outcomes were subjected to additional analysis employing the activity flow of qualitative data processing, which was carried out simultaneously. It involved data reduction, data presentation, conclusions, and verifications. The way of interpreting the data was according to the context of the issues investigated in this study. They were linked to the goals being investigated. The analysis of the study was not restricted to the individual only; rather, it also included the analysis of institutions, such as the role that the role of local traditions, educational institutions, government agencies, and others played in the study. That meant the interreligious communities' attitudes and perceptions towards the institution's policy, religion, education, and government were considered a person and an expression representing the reference group. It was the case because of the previous point.

### **Literature Review**

The process of re-constructing a conflicted society, whether domestic or international, to prevent further conflict best describes the process of building peace (Zartman, 2001). The realization that there is a limit to violent behavior is the impetus behind peacebuilding efforts (Reychler, 2006; Akunnisi et al., 2018). However, Zartman (2001) adds that the development of norms and standards that form the regime of conflict prevention is one of

the fundamental aspects of building peace. It is one of the most fundamental aspects. According to Chinkin and Charlesworth (2006), building peace is predicated on the fundamental assumptions of international human rights that maintain economic, physical, and legal security.

Building peace is pursued through dialogues and a joint project of the individual to the individual at the lower level. This project aims to change the relationship among the parties through a process of communication that is constructive, open, and mutually respectful (Maoz, 2004). In conclusion, the process of building peace includes the following four components: 1) efforts to create an agreement among the political leaders; 2) the development of law and order that is mutually agreed upon; 3) the improvement of social and economic conditions; and 4) reconciliation (McAllister & O'Reilly, 2000).

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding are essential parts of the peacebuilding process, as Balla (1996) stated. There are two phases to conflict resolution: negotiation and the end of the dispute (Akunnisi et al., 2018). Likewise, there are two parts to the peacebuilding process: the transition and the consolidation. In this case, Balla (1996) took a top-down approach, seeing formal institutions as the driving force behind peacebuilding. In the case of the Moluccas, for instance, peace was not built hierarchically; the agreement was negotiated and then handed down to the masses to be followed with humility and peace (Toisuta, 2007; Torras-Gomez et al., 2019).

Before the signing of the Agreement of Moluccas in Malino (Malino II), grassroots initiatives and elements of informal non-state groups such as *baku bae*, *jibu-jibu*, minibus drivers, inter-religious communities (Toisuta, 2007), and leaders of traditional institutions were all involved in the process of initiation informally for the sustainability of peace in the Moluccas. Therefore, peacebuilding efforts should center on establishing a network of people and organizations that value diversity and work to advance human potential (Fisher, 2000).

In his definition of peace work, Galtung (1996) argues that "peace work is work to reduce violence by peaceful means." People can investigate the significance of their cultural traditions to construct peace thanks to this conceptual framework. According to the findings of several studies conducted in the past, the local tradition's way of doing things is frequently cited by the media to explain the emergence of conflict (Amirrachman, 2007). According to Askandar (2006), a local tradition is how people think, feel, organize themselves, and share life. Therefore, it includes how they live, think, and

organize their lives. In light of this, a method based on regional traditions is significantly more significant in illustrating social harmony than conflict. It is because the community forms a system of life and conduct, which will hereafter be referred to as “local wisdom,” based on the values passed down through the local tradition.

Language, symbols, rituals, gestures, and tradition play a part in the cultural approach when looking at the local tradition from a local perspective. Stewart (2003) argued that the approach of the local traditions explained why certain antagonistic groups assume they are included in the common culture, whether in terms of religion or ethnicity and why they feud for a sense of cultural autonomy. On the other hand, the approach of local traditions allows for the optimization of awareness of shared culture, which can help build social integration. The practice, the action, the morality, and the spirituality are all intertwined with the local tradition. It plays an essential part in social relationships and reciprocity among people, as well as the connection between man and nature (Nugroho et al., 2018).

It is important to remember that local customs can catalyze peacemaking efforts. Despite the pessimistic views, as stated by Crawford (1998), that the approach of the local tradition is inadequate in explaining the roots of the conflict, many other scholars believe that the dimensions of the local tradition have a logic of its own to be able to resolve the issue in the community, no matter how crucial it may be (Geertz, 1987).

Even more explicitly, Avruch (1998) argued that no conflicts could be understood, analyzed, or permanently resolved without factoring in the local context and local traditions. In addition, familiarity with local customs plays a pivotal role in fostering mutually beneficial relationships among people and a sense of oneness between humans and the natural world (Nugroho et al., 2018). Finally, as defined by Adamski and Gorlach (2007), local knowledge is the “wisdom of the collective” in which numerous references to everyday life in the area serve as a common thread. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account local traditions when thinking about how to integrate local wisdom values in the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

## **Finding and Discussion**

In the structural-functional paradigm, one model for cultural studies was the study of peace through local traditions. Through the recitation of patterns of how people, groups, or social institutions in a community work

together, this paradigm tries to build a social system or structure in a certain amount of time (Marzali, 2006). This study talked about how local traditions help keep the peace between people of different religions on Saparua Island. The discussion starts with peace on Saparua Island based on local traditions. Then, local traditions help people of different religions live together peacefully. The researchers would also talk about what religious and customary leaders had to say about the roles and functions of local traditions in keeping peace on Saparua Island, Moluccas.

### **The Principles of Local Traditions in Saparua to Build Peace**

On the island of Saparua, many expressions of advice mean maintaining the unity of cross-religious community togetherness. One such expression is “Salam Sarane karja rame-rame,” which translates to “Prayer for peace among people of all religions” (Muslim-Christian work together). Alternatively, “Bila Salam-Sarane bersama-sama hidop jadi indah” (if Muslims and Christians get along, life turns into a beautiful place) (Tutuleley, 2006). The values of the philosophy of life derived from the roots of the local tradition are the foundation upon which the principles of togetherness and solidarity in different communities are at least built. These principles are as follows:

#### **1. Ale Rasa Beta Rasa**

Ale Rasa Beta Rasa, which means “you feel, I feel,” has become a way of life in Maluku and Saparua Island, where people of different religions live together. This saying shows how the people of Moluccas feel about each other, even though they are different. Ale Rasa Beta Rasa (Matakana et al., 2020) has a profound meaning: encouraging and loving each other while doing something. This saying became a part of the local culture in places where people of different religions lived together in peace. *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa* also has a message to bring together the different religious groups in Saparua, and Moluccas (Saimima et al., 2020), even though they come from different villages. They have different religions, genders, and social standings.

Strauss, a founder of structuralism, said in 2007 that language is the result of different processes in the human mind and is connected to local traditions, which are also the process of reasoning. For example, the phrase “Ale Rasa Beta Rasa” is an essential part of the local philosophy because it deeply explains what it means to be a true brother (Wenno, 2011). Barker

(2004) says that studies of local traditions look at how symbolic meaning is made in language as a system of meaning.

*“Ale Rasa Beta Rasa implies the meaning of the relationship of brotherhood universally beyond the boundaries of the territory, religion, or social status. From here, the awareness to cooperate for mutual help and support emerges.”* (Interview with Pattisahusiwa at Saparua Island, 22nd October 2020)

*“Awareness of the life philosophy of this Ale Rasa Beta Rasa has given birth to a mutual commitment that has been built by villages in Saparua, Salam – Sarane to attend and maintain peace in Saparua.”* (Interview with Latupatti at Saparua Island, 9th July 2020)

*Ale Rasa Beta Rasa* is not just an expression containing a historical romance. However, it should continue to live by inspiring the brotherhood building in the actual socio-cultural dimension in *Saparua* and Ambon. *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa* requires a “Basudara People” social relation system beyond narrow primordial spaces because peace can only be realized when all people have common sense and the will to make peace.

## 2. Sago Salempeng Patah Dua

Another metaphorical expression describing fellowship and brotherhood of cross-religious communities in *Saparua*, besides *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa*, is *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*. In the tradition of brotherhood life of the cross-religious community of *salam - sarane* (Muslim-Christian), *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua* contains the values of universal brotherhood that transcends the limitations of the primordial religion.

*“For people in Saparua, this expression has a philosophical meaning rooted in the culture of brotherhood in Maluku and is a legacy of the values of the ancestors.”* (Interview with Tuhaha at Saparua Island, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2020)

*Sago Salempeng Patah Dua* is an idiom with its roots in the philosophy of life, “Basudara People,” on the island of *Saparua* and Moluccas. It generally reflects the inner attitude of the cross-religious communities in the Moluccas. Fellowship awareness is the energy of the local tradition that always inspires communities in *Saparua* to build a life together in harmony in existential differences (Waer, 2017). The conception of the beauty of life in the brotherhood can be taken from the lyrics of the song often chanted by the *Saparua* cross-religious communities. It communicates the life of brotherhood and kinship.

*“Mayang pinang Mayang Kalapa, Timbang Cengkeh di Saparua, Orang Bilang Ade deng Kaka, Sagu Salempeng Makan Bage Dua (Betel Nut Tree Coconut Tree, Weighing Cloes in Saparua, People say that Brother and Sister, Eat Sago Salempeng Together).”* (Interview with Saimima at Saparua Island, 14<sup>th</sup>, July, 2020)

The phrase “*Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*” is philosophically interpreted as a symbolic representation of the sago tree, which is considered the “tree of life” by the cross-religious communities of Saparua. The community of Moluccas relied on that part of the sago tree the most out of all the parts of the sago tree. *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua* is interpreted as a life with mutual caring and sharing based on the consciousness of the spiritual relations built in the way of life of the communities of the Moluccas, as stated by Watloly (2017). In the local tradition of the Moluccas, the expression “*Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*” refers to two distinct realities that are complementary to one another.

One interpretation of the phrase “*Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*” is that it is a metaphor for living a life characterized by empathy and generosity toward one another. In his study of humans and culture, Cassirer (1987) stated that every language expression is indeed metaphorical because it is based on both nature and reality. Regarding how the *Sago Salempeng Broken* text should be interpreted, the second expression, “Two,” means that all children living in the villages of Saparua, regardless of their families’ religious affiliations, should be aware of sharing and caring for one another. To put it another way, the suffering of one person is the suffering of all people. Because of this, it is necessary for the people of Saparua to bear it together based on the fellowship life (*hidop orang basudara*, which translates to “brotherhood life”). According to this point of view, the ability of individuals and groups to coexist peacefully within the context of an interreligious community finds its pivot point in *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*’s philosophy of life.

### 3. Sei Leli Hatulo, Hatulo E-Leli Esepei

Along with *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa* and *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*, *Sei Leli Hatulo, Hatulo Eleli Esepei* is essential to building peace and social integration in the community of Saparua and the Moluccas as a whole. In another way, the oath will kill the person who broke it. However, unlike *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa* and *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*, *Sei Leli Hatulo, Hatulo Eleli Esepei* emphasizes keeping promises and oaths to keep people together. It is done to keep the brotherhood sacred.

In cultural sociology, the philosophy of life *Sei Leli Hatulo, Hatulo Eleli Esepei* means something fundamental to the people of Saparua and the Moluccas. It is not just empty words. It has become a local tradition, and it is about how the Saparua community’s way of life is a model of how to be

loyal to each other in relationships between people, communities, villages, and even different religions and cultures.

*“In the context of social relation, philosophy of Sei Leli Hatulo, Hatulo Eleli Esepei magical and sacred elements that are believed to bring law consequence toward those who broke the vow.”* (Interview with Sahupala at Saparua Island, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020)

In symbolism a promise or vow bond is like a stone that is hard and sturdy (Sulaeman et al., 2021), so one who dares to flip the stone (breaking a vow) will receive a consequence, the stone will hurt him (the vow will kill him).

### Peace Through Forms of Local Traditions

Within a community, the values of the local traditions are significant components in constructing a life that is believed to be the path that leads to civilization (Ridwan et al., 2020). Regarding the Saparua community, even though its members come from different religious backgrounds, Salam and Sarani (Muslim and Christian), they have merged into one local traditions horizon hierarchically. It is passed down from generation to generation to preserve the relationship between its members in a pattern of social order. Relationships between communities, whether on a micro or macro scales, such as those that exist within families or between nations, and especially between humans and the natural environment, all have a place at the origin of the tradition. It ultimately shapes a person’s perspective of the world. Social mechanisms include these relationships. In the scope of this research, some local traditions on the island of Saparua will be analyzed and discussed. These traditions are thought to play a role in resolving conflicts and constructing peace in this part of the world.

#### 1. Pela Gandong

In his dissertation, Bartel (1997) wrote: “pela is a system of relationship tying together two or more villages, often far apart and frequently on a different island”. Cooley (1987) also stated a similar interpretation, saying that *Pela* is friendship or brotherhood bonds instituted in two or more villages.

*“Several figures in the Siri Sori Islam, Iha Mahu, Itawaka, Iha and Kulur villages agreed that pela is a brotherly bond between two villages that occurred as a result of an event (either war or calamity/accident). Based on those events, the two villages agree to help each other.”* (Interview with Habibulla Luhulima at Saparua Island, 17<sup>th</sup>, April, 2020)

Considering these various interpretations, we can define *pela* as an arrangement whereby two or more villages form a brotherly bond to meet

a common need. *Pela* can be interpreted in multiple ways lexically (Assagaf, 2017), with some drawing connections to the related word ‘brother’ (‘pelauw’). The word ‘*pela*’ means to bind, strengthen, guard, secure, or attempt to make something that is not easily damaged or broken.

*Gandong* means a relationship or affinity between two or more villages based on genealogical relationships or blood ties. The Chinese character for “womb” (*gandong*) refers to the female reproductive organ. In this sense, *gandong* is a metaphor, analogue, or parable about a bond between villages that developed because their residents shared a common ancestor. This double connection is possible for a variety of reasons. As was previously mentioned, nomadic ways of life are one of the earliest distinguishing features of the people of the Moluccas. Because of this disorder, bloodlines that once connected them have dispersed to different parts of the world. Marriage also plays a role because it facilitates the sharing and transmitting of religious and philosophical convictions.

*“The Islamic Siri Sori village and the Christian Siri Sori village were previously one village and had Islamic beliefs or faith. Likewise, the relationship between the Islamic Siri-Sori village and the Hutumuri (Christian) village, the Waai (Christian) village, and the Tamilouw (Islamic) village. These villages are mutually exclusive because they have the same genealogical roots.”* (Interview with Nadar Saimima at Saparua Island, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2020)

*“Kulur village also has a relationship with the land of Oma (Christian) and the land of Samasuru (Christian). According to the traditional leader of the Kulur villages, Luhulima, this Gandong relationship usually occurs when their ancestors (brothers and sisters) struggle to survive. There is a separation and their brothers start pioneering new settlements with their descendants in the new place they have visited.”* (Interview with Habibulla Luhulima at Saparua Island, 11<sup>th</sup>, July, 2020)

*Gandong* relations in the Siri Sori Islam village, the Iha country and the Kulur village, or in the villages in Central Molucca in general, can be traced through clans that spread widely across regional and religious boundaries. There are *mataruma* who have different religious backgrounds. For example, there is a Patty clan who is Muslim and Christian. Likewise, clans include Saimima, *Sahuṗala*, *Sopamena*, *Luhulima*, *Leitemia*, *Litololy*, etcetera. The table is constructed based on a study by Bartel (1997), developed using field data.

Table 1. *Pela-Gandong* relationship of inter-religious community

No.	Name of Village		Status
	Islam	Christian	
1.	Siri Sori Islam	Siri-Sori	Gandong
		Haria	Pela-Gandong
		Waa	Gandong
		Hurumuri	Gandong
2.	Kulur	Oma	Pela-Gandong
		Samasuru	Gandong
		Hatu	Gandong
3.	Iha	Ihamahu	Gandong
		Tuhaha	Gandong
		Ulath	Gandong

Below is a list of the relationship between the Islamic villages: Islamic *Siri-Sori*, *Iha*, and *Kulur*. This list was created based on interviews and mapping of the relationship between *pela-gandong*, which Bartels made in a study to benefit his doctoral dissertation at Cornell University, USA.

*“This loyalty to the Pela and Gandong traditions makes the Muslims of Siri Sori Islam village not feel guilty if they are involved in cooperation (masohi) to help (physically, morally, and materially) for the construction of houses of worship (churches) in villages. It tied up in pela relations or neighboring villages, their gandong siblings in Siri-Sori Serani village.”* (Interview with Edi Pattisahusiwa at Saparua Island, 07<sup>th</sup>, November, 2020)

*“The construction of a mosque in the Kulur village, the people of the Kulur village, received full assistance from their relative, the Christian Samasuru village.”* (Interview with Habibulla Luhulima at Saparua Island, 2nd July 2020)

Another interesting point of view is that when the formal ceremony of the house of worship (church) of a neighboring village, Ulath village, or the formal ceremony of the King of *Siri-Sori Serani*, it seemed the citizens of *Siri-Sori Islam* village participated in helping logistics for the celebration of the formal ceremony of the house of worship and the inauguration of the king of the village with joy.

## 2. Masohi

The term “*Masohi*” is considered to have a high familiarity in the Central Moluccas. *Masohi* is well known in all of the typical villages and possibly also in the administrative villages located in the Central Moluccas. *Masohi*

is a form of community collaboration that occurs across religious lines to accomplish something (Amirrachman, 2007). For example, cooperation in building, rehabilitating, or renovating a house is masohi. For instance, if one community is going to build, rehabilitate, or renovate its house, the community invites other local communities to help. The other local communities then build, rehabilitate, or renovate the house. This type of cooperation is called masohi. To this day, the local Masohi tradition has yet to die out completely. This Masohi culture is still maintained, for the most part, within interfaith communities that are located on traditional lands in Saparua. Although it is acknowledged that relative social developments and changes make it appear as though awareness and attitude towards Masohi have vanished, the contrary is also true.

*“The fact does confirm the truth that in many cases, the construction of community houses has used paid builders. If the community is invited to build a house, they are still willing to help.”* (Interview with Habibulla Luhulima at Saparua Island, 2nd July 2020)

Masohi is still commonly used in official celebrations of state events like weddings, funerals, new babies, etcetera. Participants in Masohi events do not receive compensation. Those in need receive only drinks and food that can be used to speed up the construction, repair, or renovation of a home. Therefore, Masohi activities do not involve any trade.

Masohi, as described by Bartel (1997), is the highest ideal of collectivism, which manifests itself in the pooling of resources (human, material, and otherwise) to accomplish goals that no single person or family could ever hope to achieve alone. Masohi cooperation is based on the idea of mutual benefit, which is modified to fit the needs of the community hosting the activity. All citizens of a village, or even of neighboring villages, work together on various aspects of their daily lives, and this level of social cooperation is observed frequently (Amirrachman, 2009).

*“It is in faith and loyalty to traditions like this that all Latupati in the forum sincerely hope that the people of the Iha village (Muslims) who were exodus due to the conflict (1999) will immediately return to their home villages. It is done to re-establish brotherly relations and maintain mutual peace.”* (Interview with Willhelm Alexander Wattimena at Saparua Island, 18<sup>th</sup>, February, 2020)

For cross-religious communities, the practice of helping each other to overcome needs as a community of the village and neighboring villages or villages in cross-community kinship bonds is a historical call that is believed to have sacred values.

### Local Traditions of Sustainable Peace

Even though members of the Saparua interfaith community come from various religious traditions, they are committed to a single core value. When people are aware of the values they hold in common, the next step in the process of building relationships among “*Basudara People*” (*katong samua basudara*) can begin (we are all brothers). The actualization of awareness of shared values in traditions like this one has an essential function as a social safety networking for traditions that are significant for efforts to build peace. This function is a social safety networking for traditions. In light of this widespread recognition of shared ideals, the principles of coexistence informed by the philosophies of *Ale Rasa Beta Rasa*, *Sago Salempeng Patah Dua*, and *Sei Leli Hatulo, Hatulo Eleli Esepei* become practical components in the process of bolstering social integration between individuals, between nations, and even between religious communities. If one were to go into further detail on the guiding principles of life derived from the three different philosophies of life, one would get the results in table 2.

**Table 2. Principles of value that become the principle of the life of Saparua community in its relationship to peace**

No.	Philosophy of life	The value conceived	Description
1.	<i>Ale rasa beta rasa</i> (You feel I feel)	Mutual compassion Mutual empathy Mutual understanding Mutual acceptance Mutual respect	Human is not considered as an individual but rather citizens of the social unity that is strong crossing primordial barriers
2.	<i>Sagu salempeng patah dua</i> (A plate of sago eaten together)	Mutual empathy Mutual caring Mutual sharing Mutual helping Mutual support	Mutual life should be maintained in spirit of sharing and caring each other.
3.	<i>Sei leli hatulo hatulo eleli esepei</i> (Who flips the stone, the stone hurts him back)	Belief Honesty Constancy Loyalty Unity	Togetherness has to be built with an attitude of honesty, consistent, and true to the values of togetherness.

This table illustrates how the three worldviews above and the values serve as nexuses where the individual or communal ego meets the collective spirit. These intersections are fertile ground for the meeting places that ultimately shape the conditions under which peace can be built (Wenno, 2010). As a

result, local traditions are celebrated by incorporating cultural forms like *Pela-Gandong*, *Masohi*, *Sasi*, *Makan Patita*, to strengthen the spirit of togetherness and peace.

After conducting a needs assessment in 50 different communities across Central Moluccas Regency, researchers found that, on average, all of these areas still desire the growth of the *Pela Gandong* culture (Wenni & Wilma, 2010). The local wisdom values outlined above significantly contribute to peacebuilding in Saparua from conflict resolution and peacebuilding perspectives. Bartels, as cited by Abella (2020), suggests four critical values to test the functioning or not of the local wisdom values of *Pela Gandong*. These include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) villages in *Pela* relationships help each other in times of (natural) crisis, disaster, or war; 2) when necessary, one partner village should assist another in carrying out large community projects such as the construction of churches, mosques, schools, and mutual assistance for celebrations; 3) the reunification of families separated.

Below are the results of identifying and mapping values recorded from the interviews with these figures. To help facilitate identification and mapping, a tabulation approach is used. This approach is taken to see the differences and similarities in the values contained by *Pela*, *Gandong*, and *Masohi* and their potential as a cultural synergy. The value mapping here is based on living values education (Rahman, 2017).

**Table 3. Local values mapping and its correlation to peacebuilding**

No.	Form of Local Traditions	The value conceived	Description
1	. <i>Pela</i>	Humility Honesty Mutual help Tolerance Cooperation Affection Love Peace Freedom Happiness Unity	The openness of the <i>pela</i> relationship demands openness and mutual acceptance. Therefore, the eleven values are highly required to build a peaceful togetherness over a prolonged time and sustainability.

2	<i>Gandong</i>	Humility Honesty Affection Love Tolerance Mutual help Cooperation Happiness Peace Unity	The quality of the <i>gandong</i> is established, maintained, and its sustainability is guaranteed because it is based at least on ten of these values.
3	<i>Masohi</i>	Affection Awards Cooperation happiness Responsibility Mutual help Unity Peace	Awareness of <i>masohi</i> culture still survives and its quality is maintained because of these eight values.

Based on the identification and mapping of the values presented thus far, it is clear that *Pela*, *Gandong*, and *Masohi* each contained some dominant values. Love, respect, mutual assistance, cooperation, responsibility, unity, happiness, and peace are the values that make up these principles. On the island of Saparua, the eight core beliefs and ideals listed are the most critical aspects of the culture and the indigenous knowledge that still survives in the customary villages.

In a way that can be thought of as an analogy, these eight values are a series of interrelated values that build each other up, strengthen each other, and form a construction that constitutes a local tradition. First, that compassion is the fundamental component of humanity that is required to respect others. To assist others and responsibly collaborate with them, the essential principle will be to value sincerity and willingness and sincerity. Brotherhood will be put to the test regularly in *Pela*, *Gandong*, and *Masohi*, and these tests will come from the perspectives of the economy, society, and the environment (Bartel, 2017). It is the center of the relationship between Islam and the local culture on Saparua Island, located in the central part of Maluku. Its purpose is to create a sense of unity, happiness, and peace passed down in a regenerative and sustainable way.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research suggest that the Saparua interfaith community continues to value local wisdom in the form of customs and traditions to foster coexistence and prevent strife. The central role that local wisdom is thought to play in establishing and maintaining social bonds is a significant contributor to this view. The people of Saparua Island strongly believe in the importance of traditional institutions like the Latupati forum in preserving local customs and traditions as a shared and cherished value by all community members. Based on the findings of this research, conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts can benefit significantly from the continued revival of local wisdom such as *Pela*, *Gandong*, and *Masohi*. The three aspects of indigenous culture convey important messages of harmony, unity, and mutual respect. These local values and customs must be continually refined to keep up with interfaith communities' ever-changing dynamics and ensure lasting peace.

The process of improving these values can be accomplished through either an accommodation mechanism (accepting aspects of local traditions that are believed not to conflict with the existing fundamental values) or an invention mechanism (maintaining and developing existing traditional values). Both of these mechanisms involve maintaining and developing existing local traditional values. From this vantage point, regional customs can be enhanced in different ways, including through dialogues on religious and cultural practices, education, or even the arts and sports. In addition, we can also participate in the process by which the government creates regulations to protect these values.

This research also found local traditions such as the expression *Ale rasa beta rasa*, *Sago salempeng dipatah dua* and *Sei leli hatulo hatulo eleli esepei*, and *Pela*, *gandong* and *masohi* needed to continue to be revitalized as cultural instruments in the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Hence, the values conceived by that tradition of local tradition have a universal humanitarian message, such as peace, brotherhood, compassion, and cooperation.

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