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Interreligious Dialogue in Indonesia: Reading Fakfak's Interfaith Experiences Through Paul F. Knitter

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Abstract

Interreligious dialogue has become an urgent necessity in plural societies because social peace cannot be sustained through formal tolerance alone, but must also be grounded in shared everyday practices rooted in local culture. This study aims to analyse the relevance and implementation of Paul F. Knitter's thought in the socio-religious life of the people of Fakfak. This research employs a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to understand the meanings, social practices, and value systems that support interreligious dialogue in Fakfak Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving religious leaders and customary leaders selected purposively. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of attending to experience, transcribing experience, analysing experience, and reading experience, and was further strengthened by the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and verification. The findings show that interreligious dialogue in Fakfak is concretely manifested through the practices of Gereja Maghi and Mesjid Maghi, interfaith mutual cooperation in the construction of houses of worship, reciprocal participation in religious celebrations, and kinship relations across different faiths. The study also reveals that the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, together with the values of *Idu-idu*, *Mani-Nina*, and *Jojo*, serves as a socio-cultural foundation that reinforces interreligious harmony. The implication of this study is that the strengthening of interreligious harmony in Indonesia needs to be built through the integration of interfaith dialogue and local wisdom as a contextual and sustainable social praxis.

Keywords: Interreligious Dialogue; Paul F. Knitter; *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*; Fakfak; Local Wisdom

Dialog antaragama menjadi kebutuhan penting dalam masyarakat majemuk karena perdamaian sosial tidak cukup dibangun melalui toleransi formal, tetapi juga melalui praktik hidup bersama yang berakar pada budaya lokal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis relevansi dan implementasi pemikiran Paul F. Knitter dalam kehidupan sosial-keagamaan masyarakat Fakfak, Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi untuk memahami makna, praktik sosial, dan sistem nilai yang menopang dialog antaragama di Kabupaten Fakfak. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi terhadap tokoh agama serta tokoh adat yang dipilih secara purposif. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan attending to experience, transcribing experience, analyzing experience, dan reading experience, lalu diperdalam dengan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dialog antaragama di Fakfak terwujud secara nyata melalui praktik Gereja Maghi dan Mesjid Maghi, gotong royong lintas agama dalam pembangunan rumah ibadah, partisipasi timbal balik dalam perayaan keagamaan, serta relasi kekeluargaan lintas iman. Temuan ini juga menegaskan bahwa falsafah Satu Tungku Tiga Batu, bersama nilai Idu-idu, Mani-Nina, dan Jojo, menjadi fondasi sosial-kultural yang memperkuat harmoni antarumat beragama. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa penguatan kerukunan antarumat beragama di Indonesia perlu dibangun melalui integrasi dialog lintas iman dan kearifan lokal sebagai praksis sosial yang kontekstual dan berkelanjutan.

A. INTRODUCTION

Interreligious dialogue is increasingly seen as an urgent necessity in multicultural societies that are vulnerable to prejudice, social segregation, and identity-based conflict. In such situations, social peace cannot be built through formal tolerance alone, but requires spaces of encounter that allow different religious groups to understand one another, build trust, and cooperate in shared life. This view aligns with Ishmael Beah's emphasis that openness toward people of different faiths is an essential condition for a more humane religious life, while exclusivism may in fact generate antipathy toward difference (Beah 2025). Within a broader theoretical horizon, Paul F. Knitter argues that interreligious dialogue should not be understood passively as simply letting others be, but rather as an active practice grounded in respect for difference, the search for common ground, and a commitment to social transformation (Knitter 2002). Therefore, as also affirmed by Knitter, Swidler, and Mojzes (1997), interfaith dialogue is significant not only for theological relations, but also for the formation of social solidarity in plural societies.

In this context, Fakfak Regency in West Papua presents a case that is both important and distinctive. The social and religious life of the people of Fakfak is rooted in the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which symbolises balance and mutual support among the three main religious communities: Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholicism (Pandie 2018). However, the strength of this philosophy lies beyond with its symbolic meaning. In everyday practice, *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* functions as an ethical principle that regulates relations among groups, strengthens communal solidarity, and preserves harmony amid diversity (Ngabalin 2015). The uniqueness of Fakfak is also visible in genealogical relations that cross religious boundaries, where differences of faith often exist within the same extended family without automatically breaking social ties. Interreligious

involvement also frequently appears in socio religious activities, including joint participation in the construction of houses of worship. Fakfak is therefore important not only as an example of harmony, but also as a social space that demonstrates how local cultural values can concretely sustain the practice of interreligious dialogue.

Previous studies have essentially shown that interreligious dialogue, religious moderation, and local wisdom are closely connected in the formation of social cohesion. In the broader Indonesian context, a number of studies have stressed that plural societies require models of interreligious relations that are grounded in dialogue, spaces of encounter, moderate attitudes, and contextual interfaith communication (Ismail 2012; Akhmadi 2019; Jena 2019; Agung et al. 2024; Jati et al. 2024). In Papua, similar findings can be seen in research on Manokwari, which shows that harmony among religious communities is better maintained when religion, customary values, and local authority mutually reinforce one another in everyday social life (Mustafa 2019). More specifically, in Fakfak, earlier studies have discussed *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* as a model of interreligious interaction, a foundation for local tolerance, a means of internalising values through religious education, and a symbol of social harmony embedded in the local cultural sphere (Pandie 2018; Pandaiya, Ngabalin, and Camerling 2021; Rusyaid, Hermanto, and Nasir 2022; Indria Nur 2022; Syamsul and Kuliahsari 2023; Rahman 2023). The study that comes closest to the focus of this article has even begun to connect Paul F. Knitter's thought with the context of Fakfak, showing that religious dialogue contributes to inclusive and harmonious relations among religious communities (Ngabalin, Lattu, and Listyani 2024). Overall, this body of literature demonstrates that Fakfak is an important locus for understanding the relationship among religion, local culture, and social cohesion.

Nevertheless, the existing literature still leaves a significant analytical gap. Earlier studies have indeed shown the importance of *Satu*

Tungku Tiga Batu for tolerance, religious moderation, value education, and representations of social harmony. However, most of them still tend to discuss it separately as a cultural symbol, an educational model, or a normative value, rather than as a practice of interreligious dialogue that is continuously negotiated in the everyday life of the community (Pandie 2018; Rusyaid, Hermanto, and Nasir 2022; Indria Nur 2022; Syamsul and Kuliahsari 2023). The broader literature has also emphasised the importance of dialogue, spaces of encounter, and grassroots foundations in plural societies. However, it has not adequately connected these with local sources of legitimacy such as kinship, genealogy, and shared philosophies of life that operate concretely in the context of Fakfak (Akhmadi 2019; Jena 2019; Agung et al. 2024; Jati et al. 2024). As a result, the social mechanisms that enable interreligious dialogue to endure sustainably have not yet been sufficiently formulated. It is at this point that this article positions itself, namely by examining how Paul F. Knitter's thought interacts with the local wisdom of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* as the practical basis of interreligious dialogue in the social and religious life of the Fakfak community.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyse the relevance and implementation of Paul F. Knitter's thought in the social and religious life of the people of Fakfak. This study is important because it shows that interreligious dialogue does not take place in an abstract space, but grows out of cultural values, genealogical relations, and everyday practices that are alive within local communities. Sociologically, this study contributes to strengthening the study of religion and society, especially by explaining how theories of interreligious dialogue can be grounded in local wisdom as a foundation for social cohesion in plural societies.

B. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Fakfak Regency from October 2024 to April 2025 by employing a qualitative ethnographic approach. A qualitative

approach was chosen because the study seeks to explore and understand the meanings individuals and groups construct in relation to social and human realities, particularly the practice of interreligious dialogue in everyday life (Creswell 2009). Within this framework, ethnography was used because it enables the researcher to understand community's culture from the perspective of its social actors, including the values, practices, relationships, and systems of meaning that sustain collective life. This approach is relevant for examining interreligious dialogue in Fakfak because the phenomenon exists not only as a normative idea, but also as a living social practice embedded in everyday interaction. Through ethnography, the researcher can develop a deeper understanding of how the philosophy of living together, kinship relations, and interfaith experiences are interpreted and practised by the local community. Ethnography was therefore selected not merely as an observational technique, but as an approach that allows the researcher to learn directly and contextually from the social experience of the community (Creswell 2023).

Data were collected through participant observation, indepth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was carried out by attending locations relevant to the socio-religious life of the people of Fakfak in order to observe interactions, activities, and forms of interreligious dialogue in everyday life. Indepth interviews were conducted purposively with ten informants who were regarded as key actors in the practice of interfaith dialogue, namely religious leaders and customary leaders in Fakfak Regency, including pastors, priests, imams or ustaz, the Chair of the Customary Council, and administrators of the Customary Community Institution. The informants were selected purposively because they possessed knowledge, experience, and social positions relevant to study's focus. Documentation was used to complement the field data through notes, archives, and documents related to the socio religious life of

the people of Fakfak. Through this combination of techniques, the study sought to obtain rich, contextual, and indepth data on the practice of interreligious dialogue.

Data analysis was carried out in stages by combining ethnographic reading with an interactive analytical model. The initial stage of analysis referred to Riessman (1993:8–16), which includes attending to experience, namely being present in the field and directly observing the social experiences of the informants; transcribing experience, namely preparing interview transcripts and field notes; analyzing experience, namely identifying the patterns, practices, and themes emerging from the data; and reading experience, namely rereading the entire data set in order to deepen meaning and check the consistency of interpretation. The data were then analysed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and verification or conclusion drawing (Miles and Huberman 2014). Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing, and grouping the data according to the research themes; data display was conducted by organising the findings systematically so that the relationships among categories could be seen clearly; while verification was undertaken to strengthen the interpretation and draw conclusions regarding the relevance of Paul F. Knitter's thought in the practice of interreligious dialogue in Fakfak. Through this procedure, the analysis focused not only on describing the data, but also on interpreting the social meanings embedded in interfaith dialogue practices.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs Paul F. Knitter's theory of interreligious dialogue as its theoretical framework to analyse how local wisdom shapes interfaith relations in Fakfak. Paul F. Knitter develops four major models in the theology of religions, namely the replacement model, the fulfilment model, the mutuality model, and the acceptance model. These four models

describe the spectrum of Christian responses to other religions, ranging from exclusive to pluralist positions. This typology is important because it shows that interreligious relations within the Christian tradition are not singular in character, but have developed historically and conceptually in accordance with the ways believers understand religious plurality (Knitter 2002). Thus, this classification is not merely a theoretical division, but also a framework for reading theological shifts toward a more open form of dialogue.

The replacement model begins from an exclusivist view that places Christianity as the only path to salvation. In this model, other religions are acknowledged to exist, but they are regarded as incomplete or mistaken and therefore must ultimately be replaced by the truth of Christ. Knitter distinguishes this model into two forms, namely total replacement and partial replacement, yet both continue to place conversion as the primary orientation of relations with other religions (Knitter 2002). For that reason, this model tends to limit the possibility of equal dialogue.

In contrast, the fulfilment model adopts an inclusivist position. This model recognises that other religions contain elements of truth and positive values, but maintains that their fullness lies in the Gospel and in the person of Jesus Christ. Dialogue in this model is no longer directed solely toward replacement, but also toward acknowledging that the love of God may work beyond the boundaries of the Christian community (Knitter 2014). Even so, other religions remain positioned within a framework of fulfilment through Christianity.

The mutuality model, meanwhile, emphasises reciprocity in interreligious dialogue. This model rejects claims of superiority by one religion over another and holds that each tradition possesses intrinsic value and equal access to transcendent reality. Within this approach, dialogue is understood as a space for mutual learning, mutual correction, and even mutual transformation, rather than merely an exchange of theological ideas

(Knitter 2002). This model also encourages cooperation across religious boundaries in responding to broader humanitarian issues.

The acceptance model, on the other hand, treats difference as something that does not need to be erased or standardised. This model rejects exclusivism, but it also avoids reducing all religions to complete sameness. For Knitter, each religion possesses a uniqueness that cannot be reduced to a single standard, and therefore interreligious relations must begin with the acceptance of difference itself (Knitter 2014:45–48). In this way, interreligious dialogue is directed not toward eliminating identity, but toward building respect in the midst of difference.

1. The Relationship between Dialogue and Interreligious Engagement

Izak Y. M. Lattu classifies interreligious engagement into four major forms, namely structural engagement, everyday engagement, associational engagement, and symbolic-imaginative engagement. These four forms show that relations across religious boundaries do not occur only in official forums, but also in social practices, community networks, and the symbolic world. This framework is important because it helps us understand religious pluralism as a living social process that operates across many layers of social life (Lattu 2023). In this way, interreligious dialogue can be read more comprehensively, both in formal and informal spheres.

Structural engagement refers to the role of the state, political elites, and formal institutions in shaping spaces of interreligious interaction. In this form, public policy, legal regulations, and institutional mechanisms are used to maintain peaceful coexistence and prevent identity-based conflict. The state becomes an important actor in providing a normative framework that allows religious life to proceed in an orderly and equal manner (Lattu 2023). Therefore, structural engagement serves as an administrative foundation for managing religious pluralism.

Everyday engagement emphasises the importance of spontaneous interaction in ordinary social life. Through relations between neighbours, social cooperation, and routine encounters, shared spaces or *loci communes* are formed, enabling solidarity across religious lines to grow naturally. This form is often called the dialogue of life, namely a dialogue rooted in everyday activities and in the social issues people face together (Lattu 2023; Lattu 2024). Precisely because of its intimate and recurring nature, this form often becomes the strongest basis for social cohesion.

Associational engagement emerges when individuals from different religions come together in organisations, forums, or collective platforms to respond to common concerns. This form creates social bridges that enable cooperation across faiths in a more organised way, for example through forums such as FKUB. However, Lattu also points out that associational forms that are too formal and elitist often have limitations in capturing the experiences of grass-roots communities (Lattu 2023). Therefore, associational engagement is important, but it is not sufficient if it stands alone.

Meanwhile, symbolic imaginative engagement shows that interreligious dialogue is also built through symbols, rituals, narratives, and media. Cultural rituals, social performances, and digital media can become shared spaces that bring people together without requiring their physical presence in one place. From this perspective, social cohesion emerges from collective imagination shaped by shared symbols, as seen in cultural practices such as *slametan*, *pela gandong*, *halal bi halal*, *dugderan*, and also the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* (Lattu 2019; Lattu 2023; Lattu 2025). Therefore, local wisdom becomes an important medium for a more vibrant and contextual form of interreligious dialogue.

2. Supporting Factors for the Success of Interreligious Dialogue

Leonard Swidler understands human dialogue as a holistic process involving the whole person. Since human beings not only think, but also act, feel, and seek meaning, dialogue cannot be limited to intellectual conversation alone. Within this framework, dialogue is divided into several major dimensions, namely cognitive dialogue, practical dialogue, affective or spiritual dialogue, and the holistic unity of the human person (Swidler 2014). This division shows that the success of interreligious dialogue depends greatly on the full involvement of the mind, the hands, the heart, and spiritual life.

Cognitive dialogue, or the dialogue of the head, focuses on the search for truth through intellectual openness. In this dimension, religious communities are invited not to approach others teach or conquer them, but to learn from diverse experiences, perspectives, and beliefs. Its foundation lies in the awareness that no one possesses perfect knowledge about everything, and dialogue therefore becomes a means of expanding understanding while also cultivating epistemological humility (Swidler 2014). For this reason, cognitive dialogue is essential in preventing closed and rigid truth claims.

Practical dialogue, or the dialogue of the hands, is embodied in joint action for the common good. This form emphasises that religious communities can work together in addressing humanitarian issues such as poverty, injustice, conflict, and environmental destruction. In this sense, dialogue does not stop at conversation, but continues into real collaboration in caring for the shared world (Swidler 2014). In this way, interreligious relations appear as a productive ethical and social force.

Affective, aesthetic, or spiritual dialogue, which is also called the dialogue of the heart, emphasises openness to the beauty, emotional depth, and inner experience of others. Human beings encounter one another through art, music, poetry, ritual, love, and spiritual expressions that often

go beyond rational language. Swidler argues that the heart has its own way of understanding reality that cannot always be explained conceptually, and therefore heart's dialogue often becomes the easiest and deepest path toward building closeness with those who are different (Swidler 2014). Here, the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions become important elements in deepening interreligious relations.

Finally, holiness refers to the need to unite all dimensions of the human person in harmony. Successful dialogue does not occur only between individuals and others, but also within the human person itself, when the head, the hands, and the heart move in balance. Human beings become whole when they engage in cognitive, practical, and affective dialogue simultaneously, so that interreligious dialogue does not remain merely a method of communication, but becomes a path toward a fuller, more peaceful, and more humane life (Swidler 2014).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses them in relation to Paul F. Knitter's framework of interreligious dialogue. It focuses on how interfaith relations in Fakfak are practised and sustained through local wisdom, kinship, and everyday social interaction. Through this discussion, the study shows how *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* functions not only as a cultural philosophy, but also as a living foundation for interreligious dialogue in a plural society.

1. The Local Practice of Interreligious Dialogue in Fakfak in Paul F. Knitter Framework

Paul F. Knitter, a prominent figure in the discourse on the theology of religions and interfaith dialogue, formulates a set of fundamental principles that can serve as a foundation for inclusive, constructive interreligious dialogue. According to Knitter, the primary prerequisite for

dialogue is the recognition of religious plurality as an authentic and legitimate reality. He critically rejects both the exclusivist paradigm, which views only one religion as the path to salvation, and reductionist inclusivism, which diminishes other traditions as mere partial reflections of a single truth. As an alternative, Knitter proposes a pluralist approach that affirms that diverse religious traditions may constitute valid paths toward divine reality.

In the social reality of Fakfak society, the implementation of this interreligious dialogue takes concrete form in the practice of living together, particularly through the activities of Gereja Maghi and Mesjid Maghi. These two practices represent participatory, and culturally grounded spaces of interfaith interaction, that not only strengthen social relations but also actualise the values of dialogue in communal life. A concrete example of this practice can be seen in the construction of Gereja Maghi, where major contributions often come from members of the extended family. What is particularly striking is that such participation does not come only from Catholic or Protestant relatives, but also from Muslim family members and others from different social backgrounds. This reflects the highly plural character of Fakfak society, where one clan may include followers of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. When they are invited to take part in religious activities, they willingly attend and offer support regardless of religious difference. This pattern shows the strength of kinship ties and the spirit of togetherness that transcend religious boundaries. The construction of Gereja Maghi has been carried out several times, and the funds collected have consistently reached hundreds of millions of rupiah. A similar pattern can also be seen in the building of Mesjid Maghi. For the people of Fakfak, this process is not merely a physical effort to build a house of worship, but a reflection of collective spirit and deeply rooted cultural values. The construction of both churches and mosques is not supported by only one religious group or community, but by contributions from people of diverse

backgrounds, including Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant families. In this context, a strong sense of shared belonging and nationalism is clearly visible.

Based on this, in the process of constructing Gereja Maghi, for example, financial and moral support often involves extended families from different religious backgrounds. Protestant, Catholic, and Hindu families contribute to the construction of mosques, and conversely, Muslim families also contribute to the construction of churches. They come in large numbers, bringing assistance in the form of money and labour as an expression of togetherness and social care. Roles in activities such as Gereja Maghi also carry their own symbolic value. Not everyone can be appointed to lead or speak at such events. Serving as the Master of Ceremony in these activities is not merely a technical function, but also a form of recognition of trust and social standing within the community. Such involvement reflects a person's position in the community and their ability to act as a bridge across interreligious social and spiritual spaces (Ngabalin et al. 2025).

From this perspective, Knitter emphasises that interreligious dialogue must be grounded in the principles of equality and mutual respect. Each participant is encouraged to express their religious convictions honestly while remaining open to listening, understanding, and learning from the religious experiences of others. Dialogue should not be understood as a site of domination or the imposition of truth, but rather as a sincere and reciprocal process of exchange aimed at broadening the spiritual horizons of all involved. Regarding harmonious relations among religious communities in Fakfak Regency, all informants stated that such harmony does indeed exist among the diverse religious groups living there. Informants R1, R5, and R7 expressed this view in the following statement:

Interreligious dialogue functions as a strategic instrument for strengthening social cohesion in plural societies. More than simply an exchange of religious views, dialogue is understood as a social process that encourages mutual recognition, the achievement of mutual understanding, and the formation of equal, inclusive, and just relations among religious communities. The implementation of interfaith dialogue is realised through the development of social harmony supported by active participation in respecting and protecting diversity. Dialogue also plays a role in strengthening interreligious family ties, which in some communities have become an integral part of social and cultural practice. Harmony among religious communities is reflected in everyday practices of tolerance, expressed through mutual respect, collective participation, and cross religious collaboration in addressing social issues. Interreligious dialogue, tolerance, and kinship across faiths become the three main pillars in creating a peaceful, inclusive, and just society. [Personal Interview, R1, R5, and R7, 2023.]

The findings from informants R1, R5, and R7 are consistent with Knitter's ideas. This strengthens the conclusion that Knitter firmly rejects any understanding of interreligious dialogue confined to intellectual discourse or theological debate. On the contrary, he emphasises that interfaith dialogue must be rooted in the concrete realities of human social life (Knitter 2003a). From Knitter's perspective, authentic dialogue includes not only the exchange of ideas, but also an ethical dimension and a collective commitment to active involvement in responding to humanitarian issues such as poverty, social inequality, religion-based violence, and ecological crisis (John Hick and Paul F. Knitter 2001:35–38). Thus, according to Knitter, the fundamental purpose of interreligious dialogue is to strengthen solidarity, build cooperation across faiths, and promote social transformation in pursuit of peace, justice, and global well being (Knitter 2003b: 67–70).

Furthermore, Knitter stresses the importance of drawing a clear distinction between dialogue and missionary activity oriented toward conversion. For Knitter, genuine dialogue must not become a covert instrument for changing others' beliefs, but rather a space of mutual understanding that does not require participants to abandon their commitment to their own faith. Ultimately, Knitter calls for theology not to

remain at the level of abstract theorisation, but to become contextual, relational, and actively engaged with the sociocultural realities and concrete needs of the communities in which religions are rooted and develop (Knitter 2002).

Knitter's emphasis is reflected in the lives of the people of Fakfak Regency. Regarding to dialogue as a prerequisite for the construction of harmonious interreligious relations in Fakfak, all research informants agreed two main factors contribute to social harmony. These are dialogues in the form of a culture of living together and the kinship values of Fakfak society, which form the foundation of interreligious cooperation in the construction and celebration of church activities such as Gereja Maghi, as well as in the culture of mutual assistance practised by the people of Fakfak. Among all participants, two informants, R2 and R3, specifically emphasised that dialogue plays a central role in fostering harmonious relations. Meanwhile, three other informants, including R7 and R10, stated that dialogue and cooperation among religious groups operate simultaneously in strengthening social harmony amid the plural character of Fakfak society.

Interreligious cooperation in the construction of Gereja Maghi in Fakfak is deeply rooted in a local culture that emphasises togetherness, openness, and participation. The long-standing tradition of living together has made solidarity among community members, including support for church funding, appear as an inherited social value rather than an unusual act. The involvement of figures from different religious backgrounds in the Catholic *Maghi* mission and in religious celebrations in Fakfak reflects kinship ties and a shared ethos of communal life that are firmly embedded in local culture. The active participation of a Muslim figure such as Heru Uswanas, the Raja of Fatagar, in leading such activities demonstrates that interreligious involvement is regarded as natural within Fakfak society. This is closely connected to the local principle of *idu idu mani nina*, which affirms that social attachment and kinship transcend differences of belief.

These findings indicate that dialogue plays a crucial role in building and sustaining interreligious relations in Fakfak Regency. Dialogue does not merely create a constructive space for communication, but also opens opportunities for cross religious cooperation, as reflected in the trust placed in Muslim figures to lead committees for the construction of Catholic church buildings. This suggests that dialogue and cooperation function as two complementary pillars in the making of interreligious harmony. Together, they form the foundation for mutual care, support, protection, and assistance among religious communities, thereby helping to preserve social stability in a plural society. The informants' perspectives also reveal two related tendencies in understanding dialogue and the culture of mutual help in Fakfak. First, dialogue is understood within the framework of a helping culture that has long been an integral part of local social life. Second, dialogue is also understood in its everyday form, where interreligious interaction and mutual assistance are practised as concrete expressions of a shared philosophy of life.

The social values of Fakfak society are embedded in local expressions rich in symbolic and ethical meaning. The concept of *idu idu* reflects the principle of reciprocal compassion as the basis of social relations. *Mani nina* symbolises calmness and harmony as necessary conditions for social order and spiritual balance. *Jojor*, meanwhile, highlights the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness as mechanisms for resolving conflict in communal life. These values are closely associated with the broader philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which represents a social order in which different elements perform distinct functions while remaining interdependent and mutually supportive. In the context of Fakfak, *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* is not merely a domestic symbol, but a form of social cosmology that binds Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholicism within one shared space of harmonious, equal, and supportive coexistence. Together with *idu idu*, *mani nina*, and *jojor*, this philosophy embodies the

values of compassion, peace, and reconciliation, and serves as the foundation of religious moderation that has long been practised contextually in Fakfak, even before it was formally institutionalised at the national level. Within this social structure, religion, custom, and government are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, shaping a collective life that is peaceful, inclusive, and just.

2. Satu Tungku Tiga Batu as the Cultural Foundation of Interreligious Harmony in Fakfak

The concept of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* is a cultural value system deeply rooted in the life of the people of Fakfak, West Papua, and functions as a normative framework for building social harmony within a plural society, particularly in relation to religious difference (Ngabalin 2015). Symbolically, the stove, which in local terminology is called *hirriet*, represents the land, the village, or a shared space of existence, while the three stones that support the stove symbolise the three fundamental pillars of life in Fakfak society, namely custom, government, and religion. In the context of religious plurality, these three stones are specifically associated with the existence of the three major religions that have developed and coexisted in Fakfak, namely Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam (Pandie 2018).

In everyday practice, *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* is understood not merely as a rhetorical symbol of tolerance, but as a principle embodied in concrete actions such as interreligious participation in the construction of houses of worship, involvement in religious celebrations, and solidarity in responding to social events (Rahman 2023:90–92). The strength of this concept lies in its capacity to preserve social harmony within Fakfak's heterogeneous society without requiring the substantive blending of religious teachings. As a result, it does not produce syncretism, but instead nurtures a culture of mutual respect and appreciation for religious

difference.

This can be better understood through the broader pattern reflected in the informants' accounts. The local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* finds concrete expression in the practices of Gereja Maghi and Mesjid Maghi, both of which contribute significantly to strengthening interfaith relations in Fakfak society. These activities function not only as a means of reinforcing internal fellowship among Christian communities, both Protestant and Catholic, but also as a strong social bridge between Christian and Muslim communities, while at the same time creating space for the involvement of people from other religious backgrounds. The philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which symbolises the unity and balance of custom, religion, and government, is therefore not confined to symbolic discourse, but is realised in practice through active interreligious participation.

This is evident in the involvement of individuals from different faiths in important roles during the events, including a Muslim serving as master of ceremonies at the Gereja Maghi procession, which shows that interfaith coexistence has become embedded in everyday social practice rather than remaining mere rhetoric of tolerance. The presence of people from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, including those who are not indigenous Papuans, further indicates that Gereja Maghi has moved beyond sectarian boundaries and has become a shared social space that unites diversity through mutual cooperation. In this sense, Gereja Maghi should be understood not only as a religious rite or a cultural expression, but also as an effective social medium for building cohesion and harmony among religious communities (Hegemur 2023).

Within the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, this reality can be understood as a concrete manifestation of a local cultural gift that should not only be appreciated, but also preserved as the foundation of collective life. The tradition of Gereja Maghi represents one of the supporting stones

of the stove, embodying universal values such as solidarity, cooperation, and mutual respect. These values do not function solely within the internal life of the church community, but also contribute significantly to maintaining balance in interreligious relations within West Papua's plural society. From this perspective, Gereja Maghi finds its relevance as a cultural and spiritual practice integrated into a shared system of life, in which each stone of the stove symbolises the strength of mutually sustaining relationships. Therefore, Gereja Maghi functions not only as an expression of faith, but also as an inclusive and transformative medium of interreligious dialogue that strengthens social cohesion and preserves harmony in diversity.

This point is also reflected in the broader accounts of the informants. The involvement of the church in Fakfak can be seen in its appreciation for and reinforcement of local cultural values, especially *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which has been adopted as a foundation of church life. The church does not view this culture merely as a tradition, but as a bridge between faith and social practice, as well as a form of communal spirituality that remains relevant for strengthening social cohesion amid religious diversity. In this context, the preservation of local cultural values is positioned as part of the church's contextual theological mission, one that is oriented toward peace, justice, and diversity (Salima 2023).

The concept of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* in Fakfak also has a limitation, namely the tendency to suppress expressions of dissatisfaction in order to preserve social stability, which may cause potential conflicts to remain hidden and social dynamics to develop slowly. Even so, this concept remains relevant as a cultural model for strengthening interreligious life in Indonesia by placing harmony, tolerance, and respect for difference as the main foundations of social interaction (Lattu 2019). The social condition of Fakfak society is marked by cohesion within extended families whose members often follow different religions, in line with the philosophy of *Satu*

Tungku Tiga Batu, which emphasises balance and unity. This concept is rooted in a long historical process in which Fakfak society developed within a multiethnic social structure that was open to migration from Seram, Maluku, Bugis, Arab, and Chinese communities, while also receiving the presence of the three major religions at almost the same time in the early twentieth century (Lelapary 2016).

As a living social symbol within Fakfak society, the concept of the three stone stove carries profound theological and cultural dimensions. It is not merely a metaphor for harmony among custom, religion, and government, but also contains values of shared life that were formed organically and transmitted through everyday practice. In interreligious relations, these values appear not only in the form of normative discourse, but through concrete actions that reflect trust, solidarity, and compassion across faiths.

One example that illustrates this interreligious intimacy can be seen in a village thanksgiving gathering, where a loudspeaker belonging to the Christian community, which had been used for an evening activity, was accidentally left on until the following day, coinciding with the time of Friday prayer for Muslims. Although what could be heard was Christian devotional music, the Muslim community did not regard the incident as a problem. Instead, it was understood as a reflection of the strength of living together, rather than as a disturbance or an offence. This demonstrates the high level of social and religious maturity within Fakfak society, where difference is viewed through the lens of brotherhood rather than division. The social dynamics of Fakfak underline the importance of continuous efforts to maintain tolerance among religious communities. Without such efforts, the social harmony that has been formed organically may become vulnerable to sociocultural change, the politicisation of religion, and the lack of reflective spaces for dialogue. Fakfak society is known for the concept of *agama keluarga*, or family religion, namely the integration of

religious identity and kinship that gives rise to inclusive and adaptive forms of religious practice, something rarely found in other parts of Papua. In this context, the Forum for Religious Harmony, or FKUB, plays a strategic role in facilitating interreligious dialogue, especially between Muslims and Christians, through a participatory and constructive approach (Marthinus Ngabalin, Izak Y. M. Lattu, and Listiyani 2024).

3. Forms of the Implementation of the Values of Satu Tungku Tiga Batu

a. The Context of Kinship Relations: Structural Engagement

The phenomenon of religious diversity within a single extended family is commonly found in Fakfak society. For example, one family may include members who adhere to Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Catholicism. In the life of the people of Fakfak, the concept of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* operates not only in the broader social sphere, but is also deeply rooted in kinship structures through the clan and family system.

In Fakfak, one large clan may consist of family members from different religious backgrounds, such as Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam. This reality has become an integral part of local social dynamics and is not seen as a source of disintegration, but rather as a reflection of diversity that must be preserved in the spirit of brotherhood. One example frequently referred to is the Hindom clan, where religious differences among family members do not prevent the creation of a harmonious life marked by mutual respect and a strong commitment to family values (Hindom 2025).

This principle is in line with the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, in which each stone has a functional role in supporting the stove. The absence of one element would disturb the balance of collective life. Therefore, in the context of the clan system, religious diversity is positioned not as a threat, but as a strength that reinforces social cohesion. Concrete practices of tolerance are often found within interreligious extended

families, such as the provision of special eating utensils for Muslim family members or participation across religious boundaries in customary and religious events (Lattu 2019). In this way, the clan system in Fakfak does not merely serve as a marker of kinship identity based on descent, but also functions as a space for the actualisation of the values of tolerance, solidarity, and togetherness, as embodied in the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* (Pandaiya, Ngabalin, and Camerling 2021). Despite differences in belief, family relations remain intact through mutual respect and the principle of living in harmony.

A concrete example can be seen in the Hindom family, where religious differences do not give rise to conflict, but instead strengthen solidarity among family members who hold different beliefs. In the implementation of *Maghi* activities, community participation takes place spontaneously and sincerely. The contributions offered are highly varied, ranging from cash donations to building materials such as cement, sand, iron, wood, and even labour. This shows that solidarity in Fakfak society is not merely symbolic, but is expressed in real and practical ways. The willingness of people from different religious backgrounds to assist in the construction of both churches and mosques indicates that religious values in Fakfak do not stand alone, but grow out of kinship, custom, and shared humanity. The collective emotion generated in this process is also very strong, and many local figures, including the Regent, members of the Regional House of Representatives, and subdistrict heads, have expressed deep appreciation for the enthusiasm and spirit of togetherness shown by the people of Fakfak in making these shared religious activities successful. One local philosophy frequently used to describe this spirit is *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*. This expression is not merely a slogan, but a way of life that forms the basis of social relations in Fakfak, where difference is understood not as a reason for separation, but as a reason to support and strengthen one another.

Thus, formal structural engagement in interreligious life in Fakfak reflects the fact that relations across religious boundaries are not merely the result of political power and institutional intervention. In this context, local political actors, including the Fakfak Regency government, village heads, subdistrict heads, and state civil service institutions, actively use their structural authority to create public spaces that support interreligious cohesion (Ngabalin 2025:285). This form of intervention is not only administrative, but also symbolic, as it emphasises the importance of participation across religious boundaries (Izak Y. M. Lattu 2024).

b. Social Practice: A Form of Everyday Engagement

In the interreligious context of Fakfak, engagement in everyday interaction forms an important foundation for the creation of *loci communes*, or shared spaces where individuals from different social and religious backgrounds can meet and interact on equal terms (Lattu 2023). This reality becomes concrete in the practice of living together expressed through local philosophies such as *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which affirms the importance of balance, togetherness, and mutual support among communities of different faiths.

Through communal relations built in everyday life, whether in social cooperation, customary celebrations, or mutual visits during religious festivals such as Eid al Fitr and Christmas, interreligious communities in Fakfak undergo a process of integration in the form of a living and contextual social solidarity. Thus, the dialogue of life does not appear as an abstract discourse, but as the concrete practice of living as good neighbours, a model of interreligious engagement rooted in everyday activities and shared concern for social issues. This is clearly reflected in the social life of Fakfak, where the involvement of a Muslim relative in moments of sitting together affirms that kinship relations extend beyond religious boundaries. Conceptually, the practice of preparing and reserving special dining plates

for Muslim relatives represents a form of respect and readiness to welcome them into the domestic space. When they visit, these plates function not only as practical utensils, but also as symbolic media of hospitality. In this context, dining plates do not merely reflect the act of sharing food, but become symbols of meaningful social exchange.

This tradition is evident in the everyday life of Fakfak society, where Muslim families bring food to their Christian neighbours during Eid al Fitr, while Christian families share meals with their Muslim neighbours at Christmas. Such reciprocal practices build social relations based on mutual exchange and at the same time strengthen cohesion among religious communities. Moreover, these relations are grounded not only in social closeness, but also in genealogical ties through local kinship systems such as Puarada and Hindom. Although they follow different religions, these individuals remain connected within the same family and clan networks. This shows that, in the worldview of Fakfak society, kinship remains a primary value that transcends differences of faith. In this sense, the expression “an elder sibling remains an elder sibling” reflects an ethical and cultural principle that affirms the continuity of interreligious solidarity within one shared social body. This principle forms an essential foundation for the maintenance of harmony and social integration in the plural society of Fakfak (Hegemur n.d.).

These practices create a *loci communes*, a shared social space in which religious difference does not become a boundary, but rather a bridge for building relationships. In this sense, the cultural practice of special dining utensils during Eid al Fitr and Christmas in Fakfak can be understood as an everyday cultural practice that functions as a medium of interreligious dialogue, a symbol of social solidarity, and a mechanism of community integration in a plural society. The face to face interactions that take place intensively and continuously in everyday life eventually generate collective awareness among the individuals and groups involved, thereby

strengthening social cohesion and deepening the sense of belonging within shared life amid diversity.

At the level of social relations, tolerance is expressed through respect for the religious needs of each group. Non-Muslim families, for example, deliberately prepare eating and cooking utensils that are used only when hosting Muslim guests, as a form of respect for Islamic dietary regulations. In addition, during shared meals, if Muslim guests are present, the host provides chicken or goat meat that has been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law.

One concrete manifestation of the implementation of the values of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* in the social life of Fakfak can be seen in the practice of providing special eating and cooking utensils within non-Muslim households. Items such as plates, glasses, spoons, and certain cooking utensils are kept separately and are not used in the family's daily activities, but are reserved specifically for receiving Muslim guests. This effort is intended to provide Muslim guests with a sense of comfort and security, especially in relation to the halal requirements of Islamic teaching. More than that, in the local tradition of Fakfak, if a non-Muslim family wishes to serve chicken or goat meat to Muslim guests, they often allow the guests themselves to perform the slaughter in accordance with Islamic law. This process is then followed by a shared meal as an expression of respect and as a way of strengthening interreligious social ties.

Practices of this kind show that the principle of tolerance in Fakfak society does not stop at the symbolic level, but is internalised in everyday behaviour that respects differences of belief. In this way, the meaning of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* is not understood as an attempt to mix religious teachings, but as a collective commitment to creating a shared living space grounded in mutual respect, even in such simple matters as the provision of dining facilities. In some situations, the host even allows Muslim guests

to carry out the slaughter themselves, thereby ensuring that respect for the guests' beliefs is fully maintained (Pandie 2018).

c. Participation in the Construction of Houses of Worship: Associational Engagement

The spirit of interreligious mutual cooperation is also reflected in community participation in the construction of places of worship. When a church undergoes construction or renovation, Muslim community members also contribute, whether by serving on committees or by providing material support and labour. A similar situation can be seen in the construction of mosques, where Protestant and Catholic Christians also take an active part, both through institutional roles and through social cooperation at the community level.

For the people of Fakfak, including indigenous Papuan Muslims, religious identity does not become an obstacle to upholding the values embodied in Gereja Maghi, namely solidarity, mutual assistance, and respect across community boundaries. These principles are expressed in everyday religious practices, such as interfaith participation in mourning processions or Gereja Maghi rituals as forms of respect within Christian places of worship. In a similar way, Christians also take part in Islamic religious activities. This pattern suggests that places of worship are understood not merely as symbols of religious institutions, but as shared spiritual spaces that transcend sectarian boundaries, where all people may surrender themselves to God without being confined by formal religious identity.

This idea fundamentally deconstructs the theological and institutional dichotomy between the entities of "church" and "mosque," which have often been placed in opposition within modern constructions of religious identity. Rather than reproducing socio religious segregation, the people of Fakfak have instead developed an inclusive socio religious

cosmology in which the meaning of God's presence goes beyond the formal boundaries of religious institutions and is reflected in the diversity of worship practices and patterns of communal interaction. In this context, the principle of solidarity contained in *Tombor Maghi* is also reflected in interreligious life in Fakfak. In the construction of places of worship, the spirit of mutual cooperation among religious communities is especially visible. It is not uncommon for the head of a mosque construction committee to come from a Christian family, while church construction committees may be led by Muslims. This phenomenon reflects a Fakfak culture that highly values mutual assistance regardless of religious difference. Such habits represent not only passive tolerance but also active participation in one another's religious life, rooted in the local identity of Fakfak as a society that lives by the principle of *idu idu mani nina*, or brotherhood in difference. Religious difference does not obstruct human relations. The vertical relationship with God is regarded as a personal matter, while horizontal relations are built on kinship, solidarity, and care across faiths. Therefore, practices such as Gereja Maghi and Mesjid Maghi function not only as means of worship, but also as spaces of social encounter and cultural dialogue that strengthen networks of harmony.

From this perspective, the principle of *Tombor Maghi* does not merely function as a binding instrument within local kinship structures, but also represents an ethical proposition that is relevant for strengthening the practice of coexistence in multicultural societies. Through this principle, respect for difference is not understood merely as a normative discourse, but is internalised as a crucial foundation for the creation of social and spiritual cohesion at the community level.

d. Participation in Religious Celebrations: The Mutuality Model

Interreligious participation in Fakfak is also clearly visible in the celebration of major religious festivals, which serve as strategic spaces for

strengthening social solidarity. On the eve of *Takbiran* before Eid al Fitr, Christians do not simply appear as passive observers, but actively help with preparations and take part in creating an inclusive atmosphere of togetherness. A similar pattern can be observed during Christmas celebrations, where Muslims demonstrate solidarity by contributing to both the preparation and implementation of the festivities. These practices represent a concrete form of tolerance that does not stop at the level of discourse, but is realised in equal and mutually supportive social interaction amid religious diversity.

The implementation of the principle of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* in Fakfak is reflected in cross religious participation in religious celebrations, where differences of belief do not become barriers to involvement in socio religious activities. Protestant and Catholic Christians, for example, participate in *takbir* parades or assist in preparations for *Malam Takbiran* as expressions of respect and solidarity across communities. Likewise, Muslim participation in Christmas celebrations reflects the internalisation of the cultural values of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which emphasise peaceful coexistence without blending religious teachings. In addition to formal forums such as FKUB, interreligious cooperation is also manifested in activities organised by PHBK and PHBI. Christian and Islamic religious celebrations are conducted openly, with active participation and mutual respect among religious communities, as seen in the presence of Christians at *halal bihalal* events and the involvement of Muslims in Christmas celebrations.

Accordingly, the tradition of mutual respect that is actualised in various religious moments in Fakfak functions as a strategic instrument for preserving social harmony and strengthening cohesion among religious communities. These practices of tolerance do not remain at the level of rhetoric, but are embodied in everyday interactions that reflect the ability of Fakfak society to manage diversity constructively. This pattern

of social relations indicates that religious difference does not function as a disintegrative factor, but rather becomes a space for strengthening solidarity and sharing joy within a plural social framework. This phenomenon also reflects the positive influence of the concept of *agama keluarga*, which has become a foundation of social cohesion in Fakfak. At the same time, the Forum for Religious Harmony does not display tendencies toward exclusivism or identity-based extremism, but instead promotes inclusiveness and openness toward the existence and activities of other religious communities. Such an approach is not only commendable, but may also serve as a model for managing interreligious harmony in other social contexts.

Furthermore, the pattern of collaboration among institutions such as the Fellowship of Papuan Churches, the Forum for Religious Harmony, the Christian Religious Festival Committee, and the Islamic Religious Festival Committee in Fakfak does not operate separately or sporadically. On the contrary, this cross institutional cooperation is firmly rooted in a local culture that prioritises kinship, tolerance, and openness across faiths. The effectiveness of these institutions is in fact strengthened by the legitimacy of cultural values that have long been rooted in and widely accepted by the people of Fakfak.

In the context of participation in religious festivals in Fakfak, the Mutuality Model formulated by Paul F. Knitter can be understood as a theological framework that is alive in social practice. This approach emphasises genuine reciprocity in interreligious engagement, especially when religious communities participate in one another's Eid al Fitr and Christmas celebrations. In these practices, there is no claim to the superiority of one religion over another, but rather an acknowledgment that each religious tradition possesses intrinsic value and makes a meaningful contribution to collective life. In the reality of Fakfak, this paradigm of mutuality is visible through the reciprocal presence and

participation of Christians and Muslims in religious celebrations. They do not remain mere spectators, but take part through visits, food sharing, and social support. This reflects the spirit of mutual transformation, in which interfaith interaction not only strengthens social relations but also opens spaces for learning, attitudinal change, and a deepening of religious meaning within shared life (Hedges 2011).

Dialogue in the form of participation in religious festivals is therefore not formalistic or merely discursive, but is realised as an everyday ethical practice rooted in love, respect, and solidarity. In this way, dialogue becomes a concrete action rather than simply an exchange of ideas, and it serves as a living expression of the commitment to nurture human relationships amid difference. The principle of *rough parity* in the Mutuality Model is also relevant here, since each religious community is given equal space to celebrate its beliefs without pressure or domination from others (Knitter 2011). Interreligious participation in major religious celebrations does not erase theological differences, but instead manages them within a framework of mutual respect. As a result, the people of Fakfak are able to maintain a balance between recognising difference and sustaining social unity. More broadly, participation in religious festivals may be understood as a historical and cultural bridge that connects different faith traditions through shared experience. This bridge enables interreligious encounters that are reflective and contextual without blurring the distinct identity of each tradition (Knitter 2003). In this sense, the model of mutuality is not merely a theological concept, but also a concrete social praxis that demonstrates how interreligious dialogue can operate in an inclusive, equal, and transformative way in the life of Fakfak society.

D. CONCLUSION

The findings show that Paul F. Knitter's thought is both relevant and practically implemented in the socio religious life of Fakfak. Interreligious dialogue in Fakfak is not confined to theological discourse, but is embodied in everyday social practices such as Gereja Maghi and Mesjid Maghi, cross religious participation in the construction of houses of worship, reciprocal involvement in religious celebrations, and kinship relations that cut across religious boundaries. These practices are sustained by the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* as well as by values such as *idu idu*, *mani nina*, and *jojor*, which function as the cultural foundation of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual respect. Therefore, the study answers the research question in the introduction by showing that the relevance of Knitter's thought in Fakfak lies in its convergence with local wisdom, while its implementation is visible in concrete forms of interreligious cooperation that strengthen harmony among religious communities.

These findings reflect the fact that interreligious dialogue becomes meaningful and sustainable when it grows from lived social realities rather than remaining at the level of abstract doctrine. The case of Fakfak demonstrates that harmony is not produced solely by formal institutions or normative calls for tolerance, but by a social ethic rooted in kinship, everyday mutual help, and culturally embedded practices of coexistence. In this sense, *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* does not function merely as a symbolic philosophy, but as a living social mechanism through which dialogue, solidarity, and mutuality are continuously reproduced in communal life.

The implication of this study is that efforts to strengthen interreligious harmony in Indonesia should integrate interfaith dialogue with local wisdom as a contextual and sustainable social practice. The limitation of this study lies in its focus on Fakfak and on the perspectives of religious and customary leaders, which means that the experiences of broader grassroots groups are not yet fully represented. Further research

should therefore examine other plural regions comparatively and include youth, women, and non elite actors in order to understand how interreligious dialogue is reproduced across different social settings.

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