



The Role of Christian and Islamic Leaders to Strengthen Local Wisdom in Atambua

Local wisdom is an ancestral heritage that is closely related to the life value that is not only formed into religion but also culture and traditions. The purpose of this study is to describe the local wisdom among representative leaders of religions in Atambua which contribute to maintaining a harmonious life. Traditional leaders, government officials, and religious leaders continue to renew local wisdom to maintain and preserve local wisdom, even though it is eroding and fading due to the negative influence of globalization and modernity. This paper is qualitative research featuring data from both fieldwork investigation, hybrid interview, and literature review. The findings of this study show that; *First*, Atambua local wisdom contributes significantly to true harmony and brotherhood; *Second*, local wisdom complements and strengthens the noble values of the Bible and the Qur'an; *Third*, the government and the traditional religious leaders play a role in inviting all parties to preserve religious harmony and creating dialogue forums to revitalize the local wisdom in Atambua. This article is the first grounded research to introduce indigenous proverbs such as *knuk ida fatik ida* and *nekaf mese ansaof mese* in the context of interfaith dialogue to encourage true intimacy and fraternity of "thy brother, who proceeded from the same womb" in Atambua.

Keywords: Local Wisdom; Muslim-Christian Brotherhood; Interfaith Dialogue; Atambua

Kearifan lokal merupakan warisan leluhur yang berkaitan erat dengan tata nilai kehidupan, yang menyatu dalam bentuk religi, budaya dan adat istiadat. Penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan nilai-nilai kearifan lokal di kalangan pemimpin agama Atambua yang berkontribusi dalam menciptakan harmoni. Seiring arus globalisasi, pemimpin adat, pemerintah, dan pemuka agama Atambua terus bekerja sama dalam mempertahankan nilai-nilai kearifan lokal. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan teknik pengumpulan data berupa penelusuran lapangan, wawancara hibrida, dan studi pustaka. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa; *pertama*, kearifan lokal Atambua berkontribusi signifikan terhadap kerukunan dan persaudaraan sejati; *kedua*, kearifan lokal tidak bertentangan dengan nilai luhur Injil dan Al-Qur'an, tetapi saling melengkapi dan menguatkan; *ketiga*, tokoh adat, pemerintah, terutama pemimpin agama berperan mengajak semua pihak duduk bersama dan berdialog untuk merevitalisasi kearifan lokal Atambua. Tulisan ini adalah penelitian lapangan pertama yang memperkenalkan peribahasa lokal *knuk ida fatik ida* dan *nekaf mese ansaof mese* dalam konteks dialog lintas iman untuk mempererat keakraban dan persaudaraan sejati antar "sesame saudara yang berasal dari rahim yang sama" di Atambua.

Kata Kunci: Kearifan Lokal; Persaudaraan Muslim-Kristen; Dialog Lintas Iman; Atambua

Author:Yanuaris Seran **Affiliation:**UIN Sunan Kaliaga Yogyakarta,
Indonesia**Corresponding author:**jansenseran037@gmail.com**Dates:**

Received 8 Sept. 2021

Revised 22 Oct. 2021

Accepted 15 Nov. 2021

Published 26 Dec. 2021

How to cite this article:

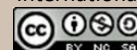
Seran, Yanuaris, 2021, 'The Role of Christian and Islamic Leaders to Strengthen Local Wisdom in Atambua' *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22(2), 279-298
<https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v22i2.3246>

Copyright:

©2021. Yanuaris Seran.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution

Non Commercial ShareAlike 4.0 International.



Scan this QR code with your mobile device or smartphone to access online

Read Online



Introduction

The social interactions that occur are significantly responsible for a community group's harmonious relationship. Social interaction is an essential component of both individual and community life. Humans cannot meet their everyday needs without this relationship.¹ "Social contact is between two or more individuals, where one's relationship impacts, changes, or enhances the behavior of another individual or vice versa," Mahadi says.² Interaction theory views society as a dynamic process in which humans operate as both players and leaders. Humans want interaction with other people for a variety of reasons, including bodily or psychological requirements, in order to demonstrate a dynamic process of action in society.³

Social integration is also required to develop harmony in variety. Social contact, according to Afif, is "a process of adjustment to comprehend each other, accept circumstances, ideas, and acts in a harmonious social order."⁴ New social integration can develop if each member of a group does not suspect the others in order to avoid a conflict.⁵ As a result, every aspect of society must nurture, protect, and preserve social integration so that it does not

arise in the social environment or in group interpersonal problems.⁶

Diversity is frequently a trigger for emotions and problems when living together, thus it must be dealt with care. Diversity has a two-edged sword. On the one hand, social tangles tear apart relationships. However, it is also employed to promote self- and group egoism, which is unhelpful, in order to foster social togetherness and weave variety. Diversity is a societal fact that must be handled mindfully since it is akin to a rainbow that may encapsulate the beauty of life.⁷

Indonesia as a multi-ethnico-legal country is continually confronted with many issues due to societal change and discord.⁸ Discord arises from a lack of understanding of various nationalities and beliefs, which is accompanied by mutual distrust, which leads to conflict.⁹ Meanwhile, the societal changes in Indonesia after modernization generated reinterpretations of references in the form of values, symbols, and concepts. Some institutions endure, yet others evolve and change.¹⁰ Sudiadi recognizes the necessity of multicultural education to promote the concepts of tolerance, and mutual respect, and really recognizes the value of diversity as a result of the fragility of national cohesion.¹¹

¹ Nur Ahmad, "Pengembangan Masyarakat Menuju Harmonisasi Masyarakat Islam", *Community Development* Volume 1, Nomor 1, Juni 2016, 17.

² Ujang Mahadi, *Komunikasi Antar Budaya Strategi Membangun Komunikasi Harmoni Pada Masyarakat Multikultural* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2017), 9.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Afif Umikalsum, "Integrasi Sosial Dalam Membangun Keharmonisan Masyarakat", *Jawi*, Volume 2, No. 1 (2019), 66-67.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Nur Ahmad, "Pengembangan Masyarakat", 17.

⁷ Sabarudin dan Mahmud Arif, "Kerukunan Hidup Antarumat Beragama Berbasis Kearifan Lokal: Studi Kasus di Kampung Loloan Kabupaten Jembrana Provinsi

Bali", *Sosiologi Reflektif*, Volume 14, No. 1, Oktober 2019, 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Deni Irawan, "Menciptakan Harmoni Dengan Dialog Antarumat Beragama", *Religi*, Vol XV, No. 2, Juli – Desember 2019, 125.

¹⁰ Lemhanas RI, "Revitalisasi Kearifan Lokal guna Memperkuat Karakter Bangsa dalam Rangka Ketahanan Nasional", *Jurnal Kajian Lemhanas RI*, Edisi 17, Maret 2014, 36.

¹¹ Dadang Sudiadi, "Menuju Kehidupan Harmonis Dalam Masyarakat Yang Majemuk, Suatu Pandangan Tentang Pentingnya Pendekatan Multikultural dalam Pendidikan di Indonesia", *Jurnal Kriminologi Indonesia* Vol. 5 No. 1 Februari 2009, 34-36.





According to Uhi, values in general refer to characteristics or things that are essential and valuable to humanity. The word value is typically used to describe abstract concepts that can be translated as worth or goodness. In English, the term "value" denotes "useful," "capable of," "powerful," "applicable," and "strong," whereas in Latin, *valere* means "useful," "capable of," "powerful," "applicable," and "strong."¹² Things can have value. First and foremost, value is dignity, the character of something that makes it attractive, useful, or potentially interesting. Second, value is a privilege: anything that is appreciated, or something that is valued as an award. As a result, "negative or 'inappropriate'" is the polar opposite of a positive number.¹³

To face modernization and information and communication technology, which has incorporated various values, ideas, insights, and even science and technology from Indonesia into the private sphere of Indonesian society, multicultural education is preferred. Of course, it must be based on the value of local wisdom. As a result, the noble principles of traditional wisdom are eroding, fading, and even disappearing. That is why, while dealing with wisdom originating outside of Indonesia, it is vitally needed and revived, so that local wisdom values can continue and develop in the face of civilization, while also reinforcing the nation's character and resilience.¹⁴

Local wisdom is an ancestral heritage that is closely related to life values, not only united in a form of religion, but also in traditions.¹⁵ It

is a collection of good thoughts, about the goodness of a community group in a certain location, it can even contain advice, and wise words that are embedded and followed by the supporting community.¹⁶ It contains noble values as the foundation of wisdom, as well as inspiration and strategies for self-defense, and building prosperity for people's life.¹⁷

The Diocese of Atambua is one of the suffragans of the Archdiocese of ecclesiastical province of Kupang. Atambua-Belu is the seat of the bishop or leader. The districts of North Central Timor (hence denoted as TTU), Belu, and Malacca make up this diocese, which is located in the province of NTT. On the one hand, the society is homogeneous, with family, ethnicity, and ancestral origins, as well as strong social bonds, passed down from generation to generation. The Catholic faith is practiced by 89.75 percent of the population. Other ethnicities and religions, such as Protestantism (7.55 percent), Islam (2.54 percent), Hinduism (0.08 percent), and Buddhism (0.02 percent), have shifted to the center of the Regency City, giving it the character of an increasingly heterogeneous and diverse society; it is also characterized by various social identities due to its heterogeneity and plurality are not managed intelligently and wisely, this can lead to a variety of conflicts.

Even though the Atambua people are becoming increasingly diverse, they continue to live in peace and love. This happened, for example, because the community has a set of local wisdom, such as "ita belu malu hadomi

¹² Jannes Alexander Uhi, *Filsafat Kebudayaan Konstruksi Pemikiran Cornelis Anthonie van Peursen dan Catatan Reflektifnya*, cet. Ke-2 (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2017), 67.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Lemhanas RI, "Revitalisasi Kearifan Lokal", 37.

¹⁵ Agus Wibowo, Gunawan, *Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Kearifan Lokal di Sekolah, Konsep, Strategi dan Implementasi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), 17-18.

¹⁶ Suswandari, Sri Astuti, *Kearifan Lokal Dalam Keragaman Etnik di Kabupaten Sikka* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2020), 135-136.

¹⁷ Suswandari, *Kearifan Lokal Etnik Betawi (Mapping Sosio-Klutural Masyarakat Asli Jakarta)* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2017), 40.





malu," which means "we are friends and love each other," and "hit nekaf mese ansaof mese," which means "we are one heart and one chest," which he has always lived and practiced. In Atambua, pearls of local wisdom have become the foundation of peace and true brotherhood among "all brothers of the same womb." Local wisdom with a high value of hospitality; wisdom that complements and strengthens the noble principles of religion, as expressed in the Qur'an and the Bible.

The currents of globalization and modernity are gradually eroding and fading local wisdom, which is perceived as each region's ancestral history. Atambua has a similar amount of local wisdom. As a result, two fundamental questions arise. First, why are local wisdom's noble principles being eroded? Second, how should Atambua respond to the destruction of local wisdom? Following studies have attempted to address these issues.

This study aims to explain that: First, the Atambua people maintain concord and harmony in the face of diversity or heterogeneity because they employ local wisdom as a guide for living together, as explained in this study. Second, the negative effects of globalization and modernization are eroding and diminishing Atambua's native wisdom. Third, while there are problems and obstacles to local wisdom's survival, traditional leaders, government officials, and religious leaders are still working to strengthen and revive its principles.

The findings of this research are: *first*, Atambua's local wisdom significantly contributes to peace, harmony and true brotherhood; *second*, Atambua's local wisdom is not in contrary with religion or noble values of the Bible and the Qur'an, instead it is

complementing and strengthens each other; *third*, religious leaders of Christian and Islam of Atambua have a role in motivating and encouraging the strengthen of Atambua's local wisdom. This is a descriptive qualitative study, with field research and literature review as its design. The data was obtained from both direct interviews and virtual ones using "WhatsApp" media. The informants consisted of religious representatives, tribal leaders, youths, teachers, and housewives. The research locations are in the area of TTU, Belu, and Malaka. Tribal leaders and community leaders who know well about local culture/wisdom are taken as key informants.

Local Wisdom in Atambua

Local wisdom is always linked to local beliefs and cultural traditions, as the people of Atambua and other communities in East Nusa Tenggara and even Indonesia recognize. One example is the endeavor to preserve and conserve sacred things like betel nut, silver coins, statues, crosses, gongs, machetes, spears, *kelewang* (traditional weapon of Atambuans), and other heirlooms that are kept in traditional homes. Tribal communities regard these precious things as having high sacred, cultural, and historical values hence they must be passed down from generation to generation.

"Traditionally, the nations of the East have a cultural orientation that is mystical, magical, cosmic, and holy," says researcher Naomi Diah Budi Setyaningrum.¹⁸ Nations who cherish cultural values such as this seek to live in harmony with nature because they recognize that they are a part of it." Nature is viewed in this context as a source of life with specific powers that influence human life.

¹⁸ Naomi Diah Budi Setyaningrum, "Budaya Lokal di Era Global," *Ekspresi Seni: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Karya Seni* 20, no. 2 (November 1, 2018): 102-112.





Although Atambua has many cultural traditions and local wisdom, the concept of local wisdom studied in this paper only focuses on the expressions "*ita belu shame hadomi malu*," "*hit nekaf mese ansaof mese*," and a few other expressions; as well as folk dances and songs such as *likurai*, *bidu*, *tebe*, *gong*, and *aka beluk*; and culture of *gotong royong* or In the context of the abovementioned cultural legacy, the concept of Atambua local wisdom can be created.

Ethnicity of Dawan, Belu and Malaka (will be written Atambuan people next), have sets of local wisdom, which becomes the subject of this study, which are: *ita belu malu hadomi malu*, which means "We are friend and we love each other"; *hitin luan kbonan luan*, which means "broad lap and open chest"; *hun ida abut ida*, which means "Centralized in one root"; *knuk ida fatik ida*, artinya "Originated from the same womb/place" (ethnic Belu-Malaka), and *hit nekaf mese ansaof mese*, means "one heart and one body".¹⁹ Local wisdom in the area of TTU, Belu and Malaka (will be written Atambua's local wisdom).

Local Wisdom of the Atambuan People

Local wisdom is a special culture expression of an ethnic community, which contains values, ethics, norms, rules, and skills, even challenges to the sustainability of human life.²⁰ According to *The Dictionary of Indonesian-English*, "local wisdom" can be understood as ideas, values, and local perspectives which are wise, full of wisdom,

embed good values, and are followed by the supportive community.²¹

Among Atambuan people, ethnic Belu and Malaka, which speak Tetun and Dawan "R", and even though the society is even more multicultural, major and minor communities are not directed to assimilate, or if there is an assimilation of the minority culture into the majority culture despite the more dominant cultural tradition and local wisdom is the ethnic Dawan "L". Otherwise, the cultural traditions of each different community (Ethnic Batak, Java, Dayak, Manado, Makasar, Ambon, Bima, Sumba, Alor and Timor Leste) are always get the attention, therefore its plurality is remained maintained, under the awareness and mutual respect for the differences in ethnic cultural traditions of each community. Other ethnics are not forced to follow ethnicity of majority community.²²

This notion is noticeable in Independent Day of Indonesian Republic on 17th day of August and Kefa City's birthday, the acronym of *Biinmafo* (*bi = Biboki*, *in = Insana*, *mafo = Miomafo*) is echoed, but it only concerns the territorial unity. Otherwise, other ethnic groups are still given the space to be involved in various activities, such as parading around Kefa city, wearing the distinctive culture of each ethnic group, in a form of *bete'-tais* (traditional cloth), *kelewang* (traditional weapon), hats, including traditional dances and songs. Meaning to say that the acronym of *Biinmafo* is not contrary to the local wisdom of "*hit nekaf mese ansaof mese*", "*huna naka' mese*",

¹⁹ Interview with Yosef Diaz Fernandez, November 12, 2016; Yosed Akoit, Head of Ministry of Religion of TTU, November 9, 2018; Achmad A. Setyawan, Muslim Traditional Figure of Belu, October 13, 2018; Pr. Paulus Nubatonis, Head of Presbyteries of TTU, November 2, 2018; Martinus Toleu, Education Figure, August 6, 2020; Yohanes Bauk, Education Figure, November 14, 2021; and Oktovianus Un, Tribal leader of Naisau as Manule. December 4, 2021.

²⁰ Suswandari, Sri Astuti, *Kearifan Lokal Dalam Keragaman*, 135.

²¹ Samsul Hidayat, "Implikasi dan Konsekwensi Nilai-Nilai Local Wisdom (Kearifan Lokal) Dalam Kepemimpinan Di Era Globalisasi", *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian*, Vol. 1, N0. 10 Maret 2021, 2115.

²² Interview with Paulus Sako Tanouf, Diocesan Catechist, November 11, 2021.





"oela mata' mese" and "tah tabua tiun tabua", which unites all ethnicity in TTU.²³

Variety of Local Wisdom in Atambua

Atambua's local wisdom emerges in a form of hospitality of accepting guests through betel nut dish and give hitchhiker; and applied to the true brotherhood; which is friendship "belu too mate", which means "friend until die", and brotherhood "knuk ida fatik ida", which means "Originated from the same place/womb"; or brotherhood "nekaf mese ansaof mese", which means "one heart and one body".

Hospitality is originated in Latin 'hospes', which means guest.²⁴ Hospes is a combination of two Latin words which are 'hostis' and 'pets'. Hostis means stranger, but it also has a connotation of the enemy. Meanwhile, the meaning of pets is having power. From the meaning study of "hospes" and "pets", it can be seen that the host and the guest have the same power. As a result that both of them deserve to treat or be treated the same.²⁵

Hospitality is termed in Greek with *philo-xenia*, which means "love to the stranger". Hospitality is a love expression directed to the stranger. It is not only just a manner or politeness in hosting the guest, but it is concerning about the level of feeling and intention, specifically the act of love which is pushed by strong affection.²⁶ In Indonesian, the word hospitality has an equal meaning with "keramahatamahan", a person who is kind, sweet

in speech and demeanor, pleases many people in association, and is friendly and sincere in greeting others.²⁷

The activity of greeting other people is an act of sharing meaning with the one who greets. A person greets other people because that person wants to show his/her presence to others. Emmanuel Levinas stated that every person who greets other people is the one who first opens himself to become other people's objects. The ones who greet, open their self-defense, let others in and position themselves under the pressure of others. If the greetings are not responded to, it will put the one who greets at the bottom position. Otherwise, if the greetings are well-responded, the one who greets and the one who is greeted will be in the same position and it will bring happiness for both of them.²⁸

1. Betel Nut as a Symbol of Hospitality

Hospitality is a common thing in hosting a guest in a human's life. Almost all cultures have a unique tradition of hosting and entertaining guests, whether it is just ordinary people, great people like kings/leaders, or even strangers. The quality of hospitality is depended on the attitude when hosting the guests. From the way, the host greets the guest, contact, expression, body language, and entertainment. The service can be read as the sincere act or not

²³ Interview with Martino Toleu, Retired Civil Servant and Public Figure of TTU, November 15, 2021; and Paulus Sako Tanouf, Diocesan Catechist, November 11, 2021.

²⁴ *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Provo, Utah: Machmillan Pulishing, 1955), 471.

²⁵ Jessica Wroblewski, *The Limits of Hospitality* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 15.

²⁶ Xavier Leon Dufour, *Ensiklopedi Perjanjian Baru*, cet. ke-3 (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2016). Bdk. pula dengan A.

Budi Nugroho, "Hospitalitas Di Universitas", dalam *Rohani Menjadi Semakin Insani*, NOMOR 06, TAHUN KE-66, JUNI 2019, 28.

²⁷ Ones Morokuhi, "Tradisi Hospitalitas Untuk Pendidikan Perdamaian Di Poso", *Shanan Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen* Vol. 1, No. 1, 2017, 26.

²⁸ Sundoyo, "Bolehkah Kami Ikut Mengucapkan", dalam *IMPULSE Mencungkil Sumbatan Toleransi*, ed. D. Lintang Suminar & Tim IMPULSE (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2010), 30-31.





from a sympathetic heart or whether it is just pretending.²⁹

One of hospitality types in Atambua is betel nut dish. Regarding to the invitation to attend a celebration, for example, the media used is the box of betel nut (*kabi*: a box to store betel nut for woman and/or *tiba*: a box to store betel nut for man). Before submitting the invitation, the host presents the betel nut, then they eat the betel nut together, and then the host conveys the purpose of the invitation. The tradition of inviting using betel nut is strongly appealing. The one who gets the invitation will feel respected because of its presence so it is obligatory to accept the invitation. Anyone who submits an invitation without betel nut is considered to lack respect, then the invited party may be offended.³⁰

In connection with the arrival of guests, after being picked up, guests are led to the meeting place. After sitting down, before the activity takes place, guests are served betel nut, usually entertained by *bidu*, *Sakurai*, or *gong* traditional dance to honor the guests. The service of betel nut for the Atambuan people is etiquette and an opener of communication. The first thing both hosts and guests do is have betel nut before starting the conversation.³¹

The tradition of serving betel nut in Atambuan people, especially for ethnic Dawan, has meaning as follows. (a) Betel nut is a symbol of intimacy, kinship, a

sense of friendship, and harmonious relations. (b) Betel nut is a symbol of openness and sincerity to host guests. (c) Betel nut is a medium to overcome and reconcile two warring parties. (d) Betel nut is a link between humans and their ancestors. Therefore, offerings in the form of betel nut as well as food and drink are offered to the ancestors. Because it is believed that the ancestors are never far from them, even it becomes a prayer for those who are still alive. Their prayers will be passed on by the spirits of the ancestors to *Uis Neno* (*Tuhan Langit/God of Heaven*)³² as the source of all blessings.³³

2. *Hitin Luan Kbonan Luan* as Invitation for Interfaith Dialogues

Atambuan is open to others or guests they meet. This attitude grows from the philosophy of ancestors "*hitin luan kbonan luan*". "*Hitin*" means lap. "*Kbonan*" means chest. "*Luan*" means broad or wide. Moreover "*hitin luan kbonan luan*" means Atambuan people have broad laps and to accept and embrace others.³⁴

Maria Fatima N. Nahak said that she and her husband had known Mansur and his wife, Juminah, from Aceh through a business relationship. In 2018 they came to Malaka, unexpectedly Juminah had a contraction. She was taken to the Betun Health Center, then succeeded in giving birth to a baby boy, named Muhammad. The family had difficulty finding lodging

²⁹ Ones Morokuhi, "Tradisi Hospitalitas Untuk Pendidikan", 26-27.

³⁰ Yohanes Sanak, *Kerajaan Bikomi dan Budaya Puah Manus Dalam Relasi Kuasa Usif Amaf* (Jakarta: Seven Books, 2020), 241-242.

³¹ Interview with Oktovianus Un, Tribal Leader of Naisau As Manulea, December 5, 2021.

³² In the Atambua community, the term *Allah* (*Tuhan Langit/God of Heaven*) in the *Tetun*-speaking *Belu*

and *Malaka* ethnics is called *Nai Maromak*; for ethnic Dawan "L" is called *Uis Neno*; while the people of *As Manulea*, ethnic Dawan "R" call it *Us Neno*.

³³ Erna Suminar, "Simbol dan Makna Sirih Pinang Pada Suku Atoni Pah Meto Di Timor Tengah Utara", *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Bisnis* Volume VIII No.1 Mei 2020, 59-60.

³⁴ Interview with Petrus Tahu, Tribal Leader of Umakatahan, October 9, 2018.





after leaving the health facility. Mansur decided to call Fatima and her husband and told the situations. Fatima and her husband agreed and accepted Mansur's family to stay at their house for more than a month.

It is said that they are living in harmony. Mansur's family was given a room to stay and to pray by Fatima's family. During their stay, the food served was only halal food, such as fish, chicken, tofu, tempeh and vegetables. They all did not eat pork. After returning to Aceh, they are still in touch with each other until this day. A small experience that of course can be found elsewhere, but very beautiful for Fatima and her family, because this story directly applies the local wisdom of "*hitin luan kbonan luan*". During their life together they learn from each other, understand each other, be tolerant and practice interfaith dialogue within the family. That was the experience of Fatima and her husband in hosting and entertaining the Mansur family from Aceh.³⁵

From the story above, hospitality has become a practical way for openness to one another and can be used as a way to get rid of mutual suspicion; or deep fear and hatred with fellow Islam. Hospitality of Belu-Malaka has made it possible to meet each other as hosts and guests. Cultural instruments and local wisdom of Atambua are contain of family values, togetherness, equality, harmony, and true brotherhood. As a practical way, hospitality is required

to build cooperation in various dimensions of life, including interreligious dialogue.³⁶

Through hospitality as a practical way, the values of local wisdom can be revitalized, and actualized in interreligious dialogue that not only teaches religious people to be hosts, which invites other religious people to come to their "home" and entertain them well as a form of good host. On the other hand, dare to become a guest to the "home" of other religions, as a form of hospitality in the relation of religions. Since hospitality does not only stop at the act of being a "host" but continues with a willingness to visit a religious house or other people.³⁷

Everyone in this world is a brother, including those who are enemies but also those who are most dear to them. Brotherhood bond can be emerged because of the similarity of faith, perspective, aspirations, ideals, and hopes. True brotherhood in human nature is maintaining equal relationships. Everyone can accept the presence of other believers as part of themselves and acknowledge them as fellow creatures of God.

3. *Belū Too Mate', Friend until Die*

The term friend has an equal meaning to pal, buddy, or *handai taulan*. Friendship can be interpreted as brotherhood or relation between friends. Therefore, friendship is an agreement on all things human and divine, accompanied by goodwill and mutual love. In friendship there is an agreement that is usually informal at least between two people.³⁸

³⁵ Interview Maria Fatima N. Nahak, Catholic Youth Companion of Parish of Betun, November 13, 2021.

³⁶ Eklepinus Jefry Sopacuaperu, "Hospitalitas Menurut Amos Yong dan Falsafah Hidup Orang Basudara Untuk Dialog Interreligius", *Melintas* Vol. 35, No. 3, 2019, 309.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 311-312.

³⁸ Joseph Nahak, "Menuju Etika Persahabatan Sejati", dalam *Etika Vos Amici Mei Estis Mgr. Dr. Dominikus Saku Dalam Tata Pencerahan Ilmu, Iman dan Ekonomi*, ed. Theodorus Asa Siri (Yogyakarta: Bajawa Press, 2018), 43-44.





Friendships will be meaningful in the context of relationships with others. Friendship is made by those who share in the joys and hopes, as well as the sorrows and anxieties of others, despite different religions, cultural backgrounds or beliefs. Friendship is made with other people; it can also be with relatives of the same religion or the same ethnicity³⁹. Every form of friendship should lead to a true friendship that is not based on the efforts of "mutual benefit", because such friendships will break easily, fragile and do not last long.⁴⁰

Ahmad Setyawan believes that the local wisdom "*ita belu malu hadomi malu*", must be internalized as *ita belu malu belu too mate*, which means "be friend until die". In Islam, friendship is highly recommended by Allah, as stated in Qur'an; "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers. And fear Allah that you may receive mercy" (Surah Al-Hujurat; 10).⁴¹ The nature of friendship revealed by Qur'an, which is also stated in the Bible, that humans need the presence of other people as friends to support each other positively. The writer of the book of Psalm stated, "How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!" (Psalm 133:1). Jesus also declared to His disciples, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command." (John 15: 13-15)⁴² That is the meaning of friendship which is implied and expressed both in the holy book of the Qur'an and the Bible.

Wilhelmus Serran also gave a critical note by inviting people of Belu, Malaka, and Dawan to practice the local wisdom of "*ita belu malu hadomi malu*" correctly. As a true friendship that is rich in meaning, not as pseudo-friendship. Therefore:

"*Ita belu malu hadomi malu*" is required to be practiced as a form of friendship which is called "*belu hae hun bukan belu hae dikin*". The sentence has a meaning of "friend from the bottom (strong roots/bonds), not friend from the top". The reason is "*belu hae hun*" is the right *belu*, meanwhile, "*belu hae dikin*" is not the right *belu*, or pseudo-*belu*; Friendship that is lived must be "*belu naktasak (belu/true friendship)* not *belu soe lerek (trampled friendship)*".⁴³

Wilhelmus encouraged the Atambuans to practice the local wisdom of *ita belu malu hadomi malu* correctly and not reduce the meaning into trivial things which are less valuable. He argued that true friendships must be rooted and sourced in the values of the local culture.

4. *Knuk Ida Fatik Ida, All Beings Origin from the Same Womb*

The unity spirit in the brotherhood among people is injured by the interests of certain individuals and groups. Some people take an advantage of diversity for self-interest. Certain communities are turned against each other, religion becomes a field of violence, and ethnic, racial, and cultural differentiation is used to preserve personal authorization. Politics has been abused for group interests to the point of betraying the lofty ideals of politics for the

³⁹ Armada Riyanto, *Menjadi-Mencintai Berfilsafat Teologis Sehari-hari* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2013), 112.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁴¹ *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: PT Bumi Restu, 1974), 846.

⁴² *Alkitab Deuterokanonika, Kitab Suci Umat Kristiani, Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia*, Percetakan Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, Edisi NLO, 2017.

⁴³ Interview with Wilhelmus Seran, Principal of St. Wilibrodus Betus VHS, August 13, 2020.





benefit of many. These unethical practices are carried out only for power.⁴⁴

Therefore, the long-standing harmonic brotherhood was shattered by the divide and rule policy. The events on Surabaya, Situbondo, Tasik (1996), Rengasdengklok (1997), Jakarta, Solo, Kupang (1998), Ambon, Sambas, Poso (1999) can be used as a reflection. It is still not known who was the one who triggered those events, suddenly religious facilities such as mosques, churches or educational institutions belonging to certain religions were burned down to the ground. That are facts that many people ask. Where is the true brotherhood that has been built for such a long time? Who is guilty for the damage? Why are people being pitted against each other?⁴⁵

Salahuddin said that all events that occurred were a continuation of social conflict, the result of an exclusionary relationship model that did not guarantee harmony. It is the pattern of inclusive interfaith relations that is able to reduce various forms of social conflict with religious nuances. The heterogeneity of religions does not need to be questioned if it is not interpreted narrowly by certain provocative individuals who trigger riots in various regions.⁴⁶ All of those happened because fellow human is seen as strangers, not brothers. Contrarywise this, one thing that is required to build is a true brotherhood, which is born from the need

of justice, kindness, and respect toward the dignity of other people's life.

Now Atambuan people are trying to live the nature of true brotherhood which is called "*hun ida abut ida*", "*knuk ida tafik ida*", and "*nekaf mese ansaof mese*" in local tongue. This means that since creation, all human beings have been essentially one father and one mother. Humanity is a descendant, passed down from generation to generation. So, anyone who is met deserves to be accepted because all human beings are one, the same, brothers and sisters.⁴⁷

In Christian teachings, as well as in Islamic teachings, people feel that they are brothers and sisters to one another because they believe that every human being is a part of the human race, originating from the same father and a mother, which was Adam and Eve. As stated in Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous¹ of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Aware. (Q. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13).⁴⁸

Islam believes that all people are equal, regardless of differences in religion, race, or class. Therefore, Islam forbids any act of insisting, hurting, criticizing, confronting or hurting others. In principle, indigenous does not differentiate between humans,

⁴⁴ Konstantinus Frederikus Jawa, "Pendidikan Demokrasi, Persaudaraan Dan Persatuan Indonesia Dalam Terang Dokumen Persaudaraan Manusia (2019), *Jurnal Melintas* Vol. 35, No. 3, 2019, 280.

⁴⁵ Aloys Budi Purnomo, *Membangun Teologi Inklusif Pluralistik* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2003) 49-50.

⁴⁶ Marwan Salahuddin, "Mengenal Kearifan Lokal di Klepu-Ponorogo (Praktik Hubungan Sosial Lintas

Agama dan Mekanisme Pencegahan Konflik)", dalam *Agama dan Kearifan Lokal dalam Tantangan Global*, ed. Irwan Abdullah, Ibnu Mujib, M. Iqbal Ahnaf (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008), 49.

⁴⁷ Interview with Petrus Tahu, Tribal Leader of Umakatahan, November 11, 2021; and Oktovianus Un, Tribal Leader of Naisau As Manulea, November 12, 2021.

⁴⁸ *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, 847.





nor exclude humans. People who are good or bad are accepted and embraced. In the Tetun language, it is called “*diak mai be ita simu hola, at mai be ita hiti hola, hodi hanorin nee be nia atu dadi ema diak*”, which means “good people are accepted as well as bad ones. Hugged and embraced while being educated to be a better human being”. A bad-tempered person is likened to a dull knife, which if kept sharpened will become sharper over time. Just like humans, even if they have bad attitudes, if they are accepted, appreciated, nurtured, and educated, their character and behavior will get better over time.⁴⁹

As in other religions, Petrus Tahu and Yosef Akoit stated in local language “*ita nee hun ida abut hun ida*”, “*knuk ida fatik ida*” (Belu-Malaka), “*hit nekaf mese ansaof mese*” (Dawan L). In the indigenous perspective, Muslims, Protestants, Hindus and Buddhists or anyone who inhabits the TTU, Belu and Malaka areas are accepted and embraced, because religion and belief are indeed different, but they both live as humans, friends and brothers.⁵⁰

Humanitarian ideology can be found in Islam, which is used by Muslim activists in carrying out humanitarian missions. The Qur’an even states that the obligations of human to God must be followed by obligations to fellow humans.⁵¹ Hence,

even though people have different religious backgrounds and beliefs, they are brought together in the same realm of life, field of struggle and devotion, because they breathe the same air, drink from the same water, which if the air and water is polluted, they suffer the same. Humanity is a common area, public space and altar of life that gives space for all religious adherents to meet and fight together for the good of all. Humanity is a meeting point for people of different religions and beliefs celebrating their differences. Since human beings are the common altar of life.⁵²

Atambua’s local wisdom is upholding the diversity and humanity, one that cannot be denied, every person, despite their ethnicity, class, or religion, is still one, the same brothers and sisters as human beings.⁵³ Local wisdom of “*belu malu*” and “*nekaf mese*”, has been uniting the indigenous people, all people and religions.⁵⁴ Local wisdom was there before the religions came up and it becomes heritage from the ancestors, so that there is no reason to conflict with religion or even with fellow human.⁵⁵

Atambua’s local wisdom can be seen as the fundamental of harmonic relations and true brotherhood between religious people in Atambua. Moreover, Atambuan local wisdom is strengthened by religion or high

⁴⁹ Interview with Petrus Tahu, Tribal Leader of Umakatahan, November 11, 2021; and Oktovianus Un, Tribal Leader of Naisau As Manuslea, November 12, 2021.

⁵⁰ Interview with Petrus Tahu, Tribal Leader of Umakatahan, November 11, 2021; and Oktovianus Un, Tribal Leader of Naisau As Manuslea, November 14, 2021.

⁵¹ Hilaman Latif & Zezen Zaenal Mutaqin, “Islam dan Urusan Kemanusiaan: Peta Wacana dan Perumusan Agenda Kerja”, dalam *Islam dan Urusan Kemanusiaan, Konflik, Perdamaian, dan Filantropi* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2015), 31-33.

⁵² Darius Dubut, “Menjadi Orang Kristen Indonesia: Refleksi Pengalaman Dialog Antar Iman”, dalam *Merajut Perbedaan Membangun Kebersamaan*, ed. H. Agus Moh Najib (Yogyakarta: Dialogue Centre Press PPS UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2011), 206.

⁵³ Interview with Pr. Nadya Ciptadi, Religious Leader of Shepherd Wemalae Congregation, Betun-Malaka, October 4, 2018.

⁵⁴ Interview with Muhammad Ismail Jazuli, Head of Banser NU of TTU, November 2, 2018.

⁵⁵ Interview with Pr. Amos Tangpen, Leader of Classical Council of Belu-Malaka, October 5, 2018.





value of Al-Qur'an and Bible as stated by Agus Akhmadi,⁵⁶ that the cultures, local wisdoms, and religions of this ethnically diverse country do not conflict with each other, but rather reinforce each other and can be used to resolve conflicts inclusively. Therefore, these two pillars, local wisdom and religion, which are the Al-Qur'an and the Bible, must be lived and obeyed in order to not easily eroded by the flow of globalization and the development of the times in the 21st century.

Challenges in the Local Wisdom of Atambua

Atambua's local wisdom is full of high cultural values as explained above. However, it is undeniable that eventually, the values of Atambua's local wisdom have weakened or faded due to the impact of the times, as shown in the following challenges;

First, there is no doubt that in normal conditions, local wisdom among the Atambuan people is practiced daily. However, challenges emerge when cultural values are pitted with personal interests. People tend to choose their personal interests than the true meaning of a value. For example, before the election on December 9, 2020, local wisdom of "*ita belu malu*" and "*hit nekaf mese*" as the binding chain of true brotherhood completely changed to its lowest point. Society is divided by political intrigues, so they were no longer respect each other as friends and brothers, but accused of insulting and humiliating each other only to win their superior package.⁵⁷

Long before municipal elections, people must be educated and politically socialized in

order to face the reality of such disputes. Political education is aimed at "maintaining a generally stable state at a given moment and is supposed to constitute the foundation for the democratic process." This instruction is intended to teach the community not to view politics as something unclean but holy, and to encourage them to participate in politics. Meanwhile, political socialization aims to help individuals become more mature in democracy, making it difficult to incite disagreement and violence during elections.

It is intended that political enlightenment will make the public more knowledgeable, so that they will accept if the candidate they support loses, but also be grateful if the candidate they support wins the election. Furthermore, the people must be reminded that the local wisdom of "*ita belu shame hadomi malu*" and "*hit nekaf mese ansaof mese*" must be strictly followed as guidelines and glue for Atambua's interfaith communities;

Second, although Atambuans tried to live together in harmony and true brotherhood, the challenges emerged because there are "certain individuals" who have not lived and practiced the local wisdom of "*hun ida abut ida*", "*knuk uda fatik ida*". They see others who come from Sumatera, Java, and Makasar as strangers and not brothers.⁵⁸

Certain individuals have not accepted brothers from outside Atambua as friends or relatives, various parties, particularly religious leaders, have attempted to educate people about the importance of practicing multiculturalism values in Atambua's inter-ethnic and religious life. Multiculturalism is a

⁵⁶ Agus Akhmadi, "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Keragaman Indonesia, Religious Moderation in Indonesia's Diversity", *Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* Vol. 13, No. 2, Februari – Maret 2014, 49.

⁵⁷ Interview Maria Fatima N. Nahak, Catholic Youth Companion of Parish of Betun, November 13, 2021;

Achmad A. Setyawan, Muslim Traditional Leader of Belu, November 15, 2021; and Paulus Sako Tanouf, Diocesan Catechist, November 15, 2021.

⁵⁸ Interview with Wilhelmus Seran, Principal of Santo Wilibrodus Betun VHS, November 13, 2021; and Markus Kobesi, Retired Catechist, November 13, 2021.





way of thinking about diversity that accepts differences; it is a sincere endeavor to manage a pluralistic society such that it is multicultural, peaceful, and dynamic while upholding human freedom and equality.

Multicultural communication is required to foster mutual understanding between men by reducing misunderstandings and dissolving racial, ethnic, and primordial prejudices from one nation to the next, as well as contributing a common vision of living together in a globalized world. A multicultural communication that is desired to achieve a level of understanding between ethnic, religious, intergroup, and class groups in society in order to achieve peace and harmony in everyday life.

The Atambua people are expected to understand and recognize that local wisdom is "friends of one womb," "hun ida abut ida," "knuk ida fatik ida," which means we are "one root, one root," "one womb, one origin," which applies not only to native Atambua, but also to other brothers and sisters who come from outside Atambua. In short, individuals of different ethnic faiths might truly accept one another as brothers and sisters;

Third, customs in the Atambuan occurred in ethnic Dawan "L", Belu, and Malaka are relatively the same. However, the system of its marriage is a thing that significantly differentiates. In the area of Dawan "L" and Belu, the marriage system is patrilinear, generally. Nevertheless, the marriage system in Malaka is matrilinear.⁵⁹ On the traditional marriage of Malaka, woman's status is higher than the man. All property is passed down to women. After married, a man leaves his family and lives in a woman's house.⁶⁰ Traditional marriage of Malaka called "*Sabete Sladi*". Man

joins his partner's tribe after the marriage. The man is not necessarily required to prepare dowry. He just needs to prepare betel nut as dowry. The challenge emerges from this situation is, sometimes, the son in law is put after everyone in the house. He can only eat after his parents.⁶¹

Faced with the reality of males (husbands) being humiliated in this way, the Atambua people, particularly those in Malacca, must be educated on the meaning of human rights. Everyone has the same rights as a human being. Human rights refer to these rights. People have rights that are inherent in their essence as humans. This human right is a gift from God, and no one can deny it.

Married men will be regarded as human beings in the execution of the Malacca matrilinear marriage system, through this much moral enlightenment, even though they do not enter and do not pay for *belis*. None including traditional leaders should underestimate the importance of human rights. The most important element in a family is mutual love, respect, loyal, and support. Each husband is responsible for protecting his wife and children and preparing all the essentials of domestic life to the best of his ability, while the wife is responsible for managing the household appropriately and responsibly;

Fourth, the culture of mutual cooperation is no longer respected. Local wisdom becomes increasingly important in the setting of a diverse society in order to maintain and preserve fading ancestral traditions. The gotong-royong culture, known as "*hakawak*" for the Belu-Malacca people, "*meup tabua*" for the Dawan "L" people, and *tmanaek* for the Dawan "R" people, is now fading away. Because the

⁵⁹ Theny I.B. Kurniati Pah, "Relasi Gender Dalam Menghadapi Bencana Di Kabupaten Malaka, Nusa Tenggara Timur", *NATAPRAJA* Vol. 4 No. 2, Desember 2016, 168.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Interview with Yohanes Bauk, Educational Figure, November 14, 2021.





"mentality" of money has supplanted the culture of gotong royong. If you get paid, work; if you don't, don't be stupid. As a result, young people and youngsters must be inspired and educated to work hard for no monetary gain.

Because the quality of each man is not just assessed by money, education and instilling noble principles of labor in young people and children is critical. Human effort, on the other hand, causes humans to become self-aware. Work has personal, social, human, and spiritual values in Catholic doctrine. Humans strive to express and perfect themselves in the personal dimension. Humans labor to provide for their families and social welfare through the social dimension. Working to promote human dignity through the human dimension. Humans labor to praise and glorify God in the spiritual realm.

The Significance of Atambuan Local Wisdom

Some reflective notes will be given here regarding the concept of harmonious life, local wisdom, and the true brotherhood of "friends of the womb," as well as efforts to maintain local culture and criticize global culture, and then specifically point out the role of religious leaders in Atambua as revitalizers of local knowledge.

1. Harmonious Life

"Society harmony cannot be divorced from life in society, where community harmonization is an important aspect in shaping the character of each individual who is directly involved in the social institution itself," according to the theory of Characteristic Social Institutions. Harmony is required to develop individual character

in a social institution, which is defined as a product of community consensus, in order to apply a set of values and standards in a society. According to Koentjaraningrat, social institutions are "a system of behavior and connections centered on activities to address the complicated requirements of specific persons in people's life," as quoted by Halida Zia et al.⁶²

Nur Ahmad suggests three ways to live a harmonious life, among them: a) people should be educated about social inequality and its consequences, so that they are reminded that maintaining harmony is very beneficial for maintaining a conducive environment; b) parents should encourage and control their children, especially when they are searching for their identity as teenagers; and c) interactions should be conducted politely so that the other party does not hate. On the other hand, in order for ideas or concepts to be significant to others, they must be communicated intelligently and empathically.⁶³

Local knowledge refers to social institutions that are linked to specific traditional community institutions. Rudito demonstrates his wisdom in three ways: 1) the process of human knowledge as it exists in a specific environment and is embodied in a pattern of life and way of thinking; 2) the entirety of life, including the supernatural and natural, as the heart of the effort to ensure the unique and specific sustainability of the environment; 3) it is commonly assumed that local wisdom is only owned by certain communities in remote areas.⁶⁴

⁶² Halida Zia, "Eksistensi Hukum Adat Dalam Penyelesaian Sengketa Tanahulayat Di Indonesia," *DATIN LAW JURNAL* 2, no. 1 (July 30, 2021): 22–34.

⁶³ Nur Ahmad, "Open Journal Systems" (n.d.), accessed July 2, 2021,

<https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/komunikasi/article/view/1639>.

⁶⁴ Bambang Rudito, "The Improvement of Community Economy as Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Program: A Case Study in Pengalengan, Bandung, West





Apart from social structures, social interaction is also important in achieving life harmony. Purwasito considers social interaction to be a dynamic and progressive social process that is necessary for social activity. Social interaction occurs as a result of social communication, or the exchange of messages between individuals, individuals and groups, and groups and groups in order to achieve specific goals. Individual and group social interactions must grow more peaceful and harmonious as society develops a pattern of relationships.⁶⁵

According to Sabarudin and Arif, Faisal Ismail stated that strategic plans are now required to build unity and harmony, as well as to resolve diverse communal problems. The strategic policy must be implemented through the following steps: a) functionalization of social institutions; b) extraction of local wisdom values; c) increased participation at all levels of society; and d) development of new institutions that contribute to strengthening harmony and harmonious living together.⁶⁶

In a pluralistic society, social integration serves to harmonize society in addition to social contact. The existence of religion, cultural traditions, and local wisdom as sources of values that strengthen the realization of social integration is especially important for a heterogeneous country like Indonesia. Local wisdom, according to Umikalsum and Fauzan, is the

most significant medium for achieving social integration.⁶⁷

Social integration is defined in sociology as a process of modifying many factors in people's lives to achieve a harmonious function. Assimilation and adjustment are the first two key aspects found here, followed by functional elements. When social plurality fails to achieve assimilation or adjustment to one another, social breakdown results. As a result, the community's harmonic, calm, and harmonious social life pattern does not materialize.

To ensure harmony and harmony in Atambua, local wisdom "ita belu shame hadomi malu" and "hit nekaf mese ansaof mese" are always used as benchmarks in living together. Therefore, if there is a conflict or interpersonal dispute between families or between tribes, the problem is always handled in a traditional and familial manner, based on the local wisdom of Atambua. Even if the problem has been reported to the local police, the solution is always returned to the family, to be resolved in a customary manner by the two people or clans who are having problems.

According to Maridi in Budiwiyanto, the word "local wisdom" was originally identified by HG Quaritch Wales, who defined it as "local genius," which refers to a set of cultural qualities that a community has as a result of its common past

Java, Indonesia," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 164 (2014): 471–476.

⁶⁵ Deny Wahyu Tricana, Andrik Purwasito, and Mahendra Wijaya, "Local Wisdom on Persuasive Communication Between The Departement of Market Management of Surakarta with the Traders in the Process of Relocation of Ornamental Fish Sellers from Pasar Gede to Pasar Depok,"

Prosiding Strengthening Local Communities Facing The Global Era 1, no. 1 (2017).

⁶⁶ Sabaruddin Sabaruddin et al., "Sinergi Budaya Lokal Dan Nilai-Nilai Agama Dalam Membina Kerukunan Masyarakat Pedesaan," *SOSIORELIGIUS* 5, no. 2 (2020).

⁶⁷ Afif Umi Kalsum and Fauzan Fauzan, "Integrasi Sosial Dalam Membangun Keharmonisan Masyarakat," *JAWI* 2, no. 1 (2019).





experiences.⁶⁸ Local wisdom, according to R. Yunus, is "a culture that is owned by certain communities and in certain places, and is considered to be able to survive in the face of the negative influences of globalization and modernity, because it contains values that can be used as a means of forming national character."⁶⁹

Local knowledge, according to John Haba, "refers to numerous cultural assets that emerge and develop in a society that is known, trusted, and recognized as key aspects capable of improving community members' social cohesion." To back up his claim, Haba lists six roles of local wisdom as a method for resolving conflicts, namely:

"First and foremost, as a marker of a community's identity. The adhesive element (cohesive component) between citizens, religions, and beliefs is the second. Third, local wisdom is a cultural aspect that exists and lives in society, rather than being coerced or coming from above (top-down). As a result, the binding power is more powerful and long-lasting. Fourth, local wisdom gives a community a sense of belonging. Fifth, by putting individuals and groups on similar ground/culture, local knowledge will improve their mindsets and reciprocal interactions. Sixth, local wisdom can be used to promote the development of togetherness, appreciation, and a common mechanism to ward off diverse threats to communal solidarity, which is thought to emerge and expand from shared awareness in an integrated society."

That is Haba's perspective on the role and function of local knowledge in resolving inter-ethnic and inter-religious

conflicts and promoting social harmony. Local wisdom, according to one of the points, has a stronger binding power and lasts longer, but this is also a challenge for the Haba concept because, due to the negative influence of globalization and modernity, "of course not all of them," but some of the values of local wisdom, "of course not all of them," but some of them, have been lost. It is eroding and fading, and it is on the verge of disappearing. As a result, various parties, including religious leaders, are working hard to rejuvenate local wisdom in order for it to survive.

Various parties are required to play their parts in this revival because every culture has values of local wisdom, which are a generic consequence of the preceding generation and serve as a guide in life, as well as a fortress for filtering outside cultures. Local knowledge can act as a buffer and a social control tool. However, as the values of local knowledge begin to diminish as a result of globalization and modernization, reinforcement is provided to ensure that the noble ideals are not easily lost and that the moral dimension of the supporting community is maintained and conserved.

Efforts to revitalize the nation's generation's moral principles are carried out in three ways: first, through education, particularly through providing an example for the future generation. They are accustomed to living and maintaining genuine and just values; second, by re-establishing the implementation of religious education, to create excellent morals; third, by pursuing religious

⁶⁸ Joko Budiwiyanto, "Tinjauan Tentang Perkembangan Pengaruh Local Genius Dalam Seni Bangunan Sakral (Keagamaan) Di Indonesia," *Ornamen 2*, no. 1 (2005).

⁶⁹ Rabin Yunus and Sukri Tamma, "Importance of Cultural Legitimacy to the Local Government in Indonesian Democracy," *BISNIS & BIROKRASI: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi dan Organisasi* 21, no. 1 (2014): 27-34.





education that can produce moral improvement, from religious instruction to religious education. As a result, internal and external synergistic collaboration from multiple components and the environment is required.⁷⁰

In a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious community, solidarity can be shown through a brotherly relationship that is fought for, built, and extended through many means. Brotherhood can be created by all neighbors in one RT/RW, through social media channels, or other techniques that are appropriate for local situations, in this digital era. The community is supposed to learn to know each other more intimately, get along smoothly, and trust each other as a result of this relationship, so that they can work together in intimacy and brotherhood across faiths.

True brotherhood is difficult to achieve, but it is achievable. "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible," Jesus declared in Matthew 19:26b, referring to Christian doctrines. This passage from the Gospel of John will underline that whomever lives in and with God lives in love. Brotherhood is required for living in love. To emphasize this, YB. Sahid stated that true brotherhood includes not only peace, togetherness, and solidarity, but also mutual understanding, acceptance, and even advancement.

Creating brotherly ties is one of the principles that must be implemented by a preacher in Islamic teachings. "The foundation of an Islamic social structure, a place where humanity may face challenges together, both in tough and pleasant

situations," says Nur Ahmad. Brotherhood is a bridge to a noble location, just as it is a bridge for preachers of brotherhood to bring Islamic teachings to the target group for their da'wah."

"Every human being cannot dispute that the value of everything that is visible or unseen depends not only on the amount to which that individual provides value to it, but because the factor of the object or item has given meaning to people," Alexander Uhi said of the significance of brotherhood.

According to Jannes Alexander, the social and cultural life of a society determines its value. Humans have always benefited from this wealth. The community's value, as well as their traditional, cultural, religious, and social customs, survive to this day. Because the value is directed to the community in terms of its social and cultural values.

Jannes have constituted themselves as a unit of indigenous peoples to protect true family and brotherhood, regardless of their origins from the same or similar regions. This mindset is the result of a collaborative effort to find solutions to the current situation and to construct a more evolved, harmonious, and affluent society and country. True brotherhood is defined by the ability to resist primordialist impulses that celebrate their homeland as the best, true, and high. As a result, humans can act irrationally toward others without feeling guilty, perhaps causing internal tensions.

The Atambua people reject the notion of promordialism that Jannes Alexander questions through their local knowledge "hun ida abut ida," "knuk ida fatik ida." The Atambua people no longer consider other

⁷⁰ John Haba, "Realitas Masyarakat Adat Di Indonesia: Sebuah Refleksi," *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2010): 255–276.





people (others) as foes or strangers, but as "friends of the same womb," thanks to their commitment to local wisdom. Because everyone from outside Atambua who lives in the area currently is embraced as a brother and friend, as the embodiment and application of Atambua local wisdom.

2. Local Culture Preservation Adapting to the Global Culture

Globalization is inevitable. The pervasiveness of western values through the flow of globalization to the Indonesian people is a threat to the indigenous culture, the image of the locality of the region in this country. Regional arts such as *ludruk*, *ketoprak*, *wayang*, Javanese *gamelan*, are under serious threat from the development of western pop culture which is increasingly in demand by the public because it is considered modern.⁷¹ Nowadays, the Atambuan people have also been infiltrated by the culture of soap operas and dance, so that local traditions such as the *likurai dance*, *bidu*, *tebel/bonet*, *aka beluk* and so on, are increasingly being avoided because they are considered ancient.⁷²

This is a challenge and a threat to the sustainability and identity of the Atambua community. Therefore, religious leaders, tribal leaders, the government, and cultural observers need to sit down together and look for new models of local wisdom as a solution to counteract the stickiness of hedonism. The "new local wisdom" is meant to "pick up" the local Atambua

culture, which is getting lost in the midst of soap operas and dance culture.⁷³

Refusing the globalization is not a right step, because it will suspend the development of science and technology. Otherwise, strategic plans to improve the durability of local culture are, *first*, utilizing access to advances in information and communication technology as a preserver and developer of local cultural values. Meaning to say that the media is required to use as the tool to market the local culture throughout the world in order to make the attraction of local culture get high values. That is why national and international media, which are able to increase the role of local tradition to the world stage, are needed. *Second*, it takes a counter culture, in the form of local media to counteract the effects of outside media. For example, producing digital media such as websites, locally produced blogs and apps, or producing electronic media for television and radio that further characterizes local communities to counteract and balance global cultural advancements.⁷⁴

3. The Role of Public Representations of Religions in Atambua

The strengthening and renewing of local wisdom in Atambua involve synergies or the participation of several parties. This long-term project involves informal leaders (such as elders/traditional leaders), official leaders (such as the government), and religious leaders (Islam and Christianity). While this study does not dismiss the other two types of leadership, it focuses on the

⁷¹ Ayouvi Poerna Wardhanie, "Peranan Media Digital Dalam Mempertahankan Budaya Lokal Indonesia Di Era Globalisasi", *Proceeding ICSGPSCI*, 348-349. <http://jurnsl.unmuhsember.ac.id/index.php/pslcf/article/download/915/729>.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 349.

⁷³ Interview with Maria Fatima N. Nahak, Catholic youth companion of parish of Betun, November 13, 2021.

⁷⁴ Ayouvi Poerna Wadhanie, "Peran Media Digital", 353.





function of religious leaders and/or leaders in FKUB.

What gives? When examined through the lens of history, the function of community leaders, particularly religious leaders, is still held in high regard. "Religious individuals are still truly role models for their people," Basuki/Isbandi says. Whatever they suggest is still followed by his people. When a bombing occurred, signaling an Islamic-Christian clash, religious leaders assembled, collaborated, and sought answers to the problem. Conflicts like those between Ambon and Poso, for example, can only be resolved when religious leaders are involved. All of this suggests that religious leaders' contributions to communal cohesion are still critical.

The masses vent their emotions by destroying new markets, opening prison doors so that many prisoners leave, and sealing Atambua District Attorney's Office, and so on," the experience in Atambua during the execution of Tibo Cs on September 23, 2006 in the morning in Poso, was a reaction to disagreeing with the decision of law enforcement in this country: The episode lasted three to four hours, effectively turning Atambua into a "dead city." The police and the army, among others, were unable to quell the mob's rage. When Bishop Anton Pain Ratu, Haji Muhammad Hasan, and Pdt. Isak Hendrik arrived at the gathering site, the Bishop stated only one sentence:

"Listen to me, my children!" The Poso event has occurred; Atambua must remain safe, and our country must remain quiet; therefore, listen to me." The masses initially refused to accept it and continued to shout to express their feelings, but they eventually calmed down because the Bishops and interfaith leaders had requested it. This

comment demonstrates that the people of Atambua still value the prophetic voice of the religious leaders.

The religious leaders of the Atambua also played an important part in the development of the true brotherhood of "friends of one womb," as previously mentioned. A type of brotherhood that is weaved not only because individuals follow the applicable norms or regulations, or because they are faithful to their different religious teachings, but also because they accept the local wisdom of "ita belu shame hadomi malu" and "hit nekaf mese ansaof mese" as a social glue. Local wisdom does not contradict religion, notably the Bible's and Qur'an's noble principles, but rather complements and reinforces each other. Traditional elders and the government, particularly religious leaders, play a critical role in Atambua's development and revitalization of indigenous wisdom.

Conclusion

As for the Indonesian people, whose local wisdom values are eroding and fading, the Atambua people are experiencing the same thing, with the local wisdom of *ita belu shame* and *nekaf mese* as ancestral heritages eroding, fading, and even disappearing. Atambua is important for developing concord and harmony in its supporting communities, as well as enhancing the nation's character and national resilience, in terms of local wisdom.

This study argues that traditional wisdom of Atambua contributes considerably to peace and harmony, as well as the establishment of true friendship "friends of the womb" ("hun ida abu Iada", "knuk ida fatik ida"). In the heart of the multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious Atambua community, a local wisdom that is extremely useful since it does not conflict





with religion or the wonderful principles of the Qur'an and the Bible.

Despite the wonderful principles of local wisdom such as "ita belu shame hadomi malu," "hit nekaf mese ansaof mese," and numerous regional dances such as *likurai*, *bidu*, *tebe*, *gong aka beluk*, and the like, the culture of *gotong-royong* is diminishing, and it is even on the verge of extinction.

On the one hand, because of the negative effects of globalization and modernity, and on the other hand, individuals are less filtered in their decision-making about the degree of value that they face. Various stakeholders are currently working hard to renew the ideals of local wisdom for survival, sustainability, and sustainability, including cultural observers, traditional leaders, government officials, and Christian and Islamic religious leaders.

Acknowledgments

The author is forever grateful to the promoters, Prof. Dr. J. B. Banawiratma and Dr. Fatimah Husein, M. A.

Competing Interests

The author of this study has no financial or personal relationship with other people that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the study.

Author's Contributions

Yanuaris Seran is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical Considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research, without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding Information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and assumptions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

Bibliography

- Ahmad, Nur. "Open Journal Systems" (n.d.). Accessed July 2, 2021.
<https://journal.iainkudus.ac.id/index.php/komunikasi/article/view/1639>.
- Akhmadi, Agus. "Moderasi Beragama Dalam Keragaman Indonesia, Religious Moderation In Indonesia's Diversity", *Jurnal Diklat Keagamaan* Vol. 13, No. 2, Februari – Maret 2014: 45-55.
- Alkitab Deuterokanonika*. Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2017.
- Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Restu, 1974.
- Boty, Middy. "Agama dan Perubahan Sosial (Tinjauan Pesspektif Sosiologi Agama)", *Jurnal Istinbath/No. 15/Th.VIX/Juni/2015*: 35-50.
- Budiwiyanto, Joko. "Tinjauan Tentang Perkembangan Pengaruh Local Genius Dalam Seni Bangunan Sakral (Keagamaan) Di Indonesia." *Ornamen* 2, no. 1 (2005).
- Dubut, Darius. "Menjadi Orang Kristen Indonesia: Refleksi Pengalaman Dialog antar-Iman", dalam *Merajut Perbedaan Membangun Kebersamaan*, ed. H. Agus Moh. Najib, Ahmad Baidowi. Yogyakarta: Dialogue Centre Press PPS UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2011.
- Dufour, Xavier Leon. *Ensiklopedi Perjanjian Baru*, cet. ke-3. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006.
- Encyclopedia of Religion*. Provo Utah: Macmillan Publishing, 1955.
- Haba, John. "Realitas Masyarakat Adat Di Indonesia: Sebuah Refleksi." *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 12, no. 2 (2010): 255–276.
- Hidayat, Samsul. "Implikasi dan Konsekwensi Nilai-Nilai Local Wisdom (Kearifan Lokal) Dalam Kepemimpinan Di Era Globalisasi", *Jurnal Inovasi Penelitian* Vol 1. No. 10, Maret 2021: 2113-2122.
- Jawa, Konstantinus Frederikus. "Pendidikan Demokrasi, Persaudaraan dan Persatuan Indonesia Dalam Terang





- Dokumen Persaudaraan Manusia (2019)", *Melintas* Vol. 35, No. 3, 2019: 279-300.
- Kalsum, Afif Umi, and Fauzan Fauzan. "Integrasi Sosial Dalam Membangun Keharmonisan Masyarakat." *JAWI* 2, no. 1 (2019).
- Latif, Hilman & Zezen Zaenal Muttaqin. Islam dan Urusan Kemanusiaan Peta Wacana Perumusan Agenda Kerja", dalam *Islam dan Urusan Kemanusiaan: Konflik, Perdamaian dan Filantropi*. Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2015.
- Morokuhi, Ones. "Tradisi Hospitalitas Untuk Pendidikan Perdamaian di Poso", *Shanan Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen* Vol 1 No. 1 2017: 22-82.
- Mudjiharto, "Kepemimpinan Dalam Kearifan Lokal", *Jurnal Mitra Manajemen*.(22-24). <https://journal.universitassuryadarma.ac.id/index.php/jmm/article/view/586/557>.
- Nahak, Joseph. "Menuju Etika Persahabatan Sejati", dalam *Etika Vos Amici Mei Estis Mgr. Dr. Dominikus Saku, Dalam Tata Pencerahan Ilmu, Iman dan Ekonomi*, ed. Theodoras Asa Siri. Yogyakarta: Bajawa Press, 2018.
- Nugroho, A. Budi, "Hospitalitas di Universitas", dalam *Rohani Menjadi Semakin Insani*, no. 06, vol-66, 2019. (28-30).
- Nursyirwan Effendi, "Kearifan Lokal Menuju Karakter Sosial: Suatu Tantangan Kemajemukan Budaya di Sumatera Barat". (107-115). <http://jurnalantropologi.fisip.unand.ac.id/index.php/jantro/article/view/27>.
- Purnomo, Aloys Budi. *Membangun Teologi Inklusif Pluralistik*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2003.
- Riyanto, Armada. *Menjadi-Mencintai Berfilsafat Teologis Sehari-hari*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2013.
- Rudito, Bambang. "The Improvement of Community Economy as Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Program: A Case Study in Pengalengan, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia." *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 164 (2014): 471-476.
- Sabaruddin, Sabaruddin, Andi Batara Indra, Fajrul Ily Darussalam, and Agustan Agustan. "Sinergi Budaya Lokal Dan Nilai-Nilai Agama Dalam Membina Kerukunan Masyarakat Pedesaan." *SOSIORELIGIUS* 5, no. 2 (2020).
- Salahuddin, Marwan. "Mengenal Kearifan Lokal di Klepu-Ponorogo (Praktik Hubungan Sosial Lintas Agama dan Mekanisme Pencegahan Konflik)", dalam *Agama dan Kearifan Lokal dalam Tantangan Global*, ed. Irwan Abdullah-Ibnu Mujib-M. Iqbal Ahnaf. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2008.
- Setyaningrum, Naomi Diah Budi. "BUDAYA LOKAL DI ERA GLOBAL." *Ekspresi Seni: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan dan Karya Seni* 20, no. 2 (November 1, 2018): 102-112.
- Sihotang, Kasdin. *Etika Kerja Unggul*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2020.
- Sopacuaferu, Eklepinus Jefry. "Hospitalitas Menurut Amos Yong Dan Falsafah Hidup Orang Basudara Untuk Dialog Interreligius", *Melintas* Vol 35, No.3, 2019: 301-315.
- Suminar, Erna. "Simbol dan Makna Sirih Pinang Pada Suku Atoni Pah Meto Di Timor Tengah Utara", *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Bisnis Volume VIII* No. 1 Mei 2020: 55-62.
- Sundoyo, "Bolehkah Kami Ikut Mengucapkan", dalam *IMPULSE, Mencungkil Sumbatan Toleransi*, ed. D. Lintang Suminar & Tim IMPULSE. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2010.
- Suseno, Franz Magnis. "Di Senja Zaman Ideologi Tantangan Kemanusiaan Universal", dalam *Tantangan Kemanusiaan Universal, Antropologi Filsafat, Budaya, Sejarah Politik & Sastra, Kenangan 70 Tahun Dick Hartoko*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992.
- Suseno, Franz Magnis. *Etika Kebangsaan, Etika Kemanusiaan 79 Tahun Sesudah Sumpah Pemuda*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008.
- Suswandari, Sri Astuti. *Kearifan Lokal Dalam Keragaman Etnik Di Kabupaten Sikka*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2020.
- Suswandari. *Kearifan Lokal Etnik Betawi (Mapping Sosio-kultural Masyarakat Asli Jakarta)*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2017.
- Tricana, Deny Wahyu, Andrik Purwasito, and Mahendra Wijaya. "Local Wisdom in Persuasive Communication Between the Departement of Market Management of Surakarta with the Traders in the Process of Relocation of Ornamental Fish Sellers from Pasar Gede to Pasar Depok." *Prosiding Strengthening Local Communities Facing The Global Era* 1, no. 1 (2017).
- Tulasi, Eman & Agustinus Leu. *Kematian Manusia, Pengaruhnya Bagi Suku Dawan Timor Tengah Utara*. Malang: Dioma, 2016.
- Umro, Jakaria. "Konsep Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Menumbuhkan Nilai-Nilai Ukhuwah Di Sekolah", *Jurnal Al-Makrifat*, Vol. 4, No. 1, April 2019: 177-199.
- Wardhanie, Ayouvi Poerna. "Peranan Media Digital Dalam Mempertahankan Budaya Lokal Indonesia Di Era Globalisasi", *Proceeding ICSGPSCI*, (348-354). <http://jurnal.unmuhjember.ac.id/index.php/pslcf/article/download/915/727>.
- Wibowo, Agus, Gunawan. *Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Sekolah*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015.
- Widharsana, Petrus Danan. *Mengamalkan Pancasila Dalam terang Iman Katolik*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2018.
- Wrobleski, Jesica. *The Limits of Hospitality*. Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012.
- Yunus, Rabin, and Sukri Tamma. "Importance of Cultural Legitimacy to the Local Government in Indonesian Democracy." *BISNIS & BIROKRASI: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi dan Organisasi* 21, no. 1 (2014): 27-34.
- Zia, Halida. "Eksistensi Hukum Adat Dalam Penyelesaian Sengketa Tanahulayat Di Indonesia." *DATIN LAW JURNAL* 2, no. 1 (July 30, 2021): 22-34.

