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THE SYNERGY OF RELIGIOUS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS IN BUILDING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN FAKFAK REGENCY

Abdullah Nur[1], Widayat Mintarsih[2], Ema Hidayanti[3], Abdul Karim[4]
[1, 2, 3, 4] Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia
[1] abdullahnur381@gmail.com, [2] widayatmintarsih@walisongo.ac.id,
[3] emahidayanti@walisongo.ac.id, [4] abdulkarim@walisongo.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyze the synergy between religious and community leaders in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua. Fakfak is a region with high religious diversity, where people live side by side on the basis of the local philosophy of Satu Tungku Tiga Batu *("One Stove, Three Stones"). Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic religious leaders, as well as community leaders. The results show that religious and community leaders play synergistic roles as motivators, educators, facilitators, and mediators. Religious leaders provide role models through dialogue and sermons, while community leaders encourage social collaboration and strengthen customary norms. This synergy is manifested in concrete actions such as mutual cooperation in building places of worship across religions and participation in the celebration of religious holidays. The main challenges do not come from within the community but from external influences in the form of intolerant ideologies brought by newcomers or outsiders. Nevertheless, through intensive communication and commitment to local wisdom, harmony has been maintained, with West Papua's tolerance index reaching 82.1 points in 2019. The study concludes that cross-actor collaboration grounded in local wisdom is highly effective in maintaining social stability in plural regions.*

Keywords: *Synergy, Religious Leaders, Community Leaders, Religious Tolerance, One Stove Three Stones.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis sinergi antara tokoh agama dan tokoh masyarakat dalam membangun toleransi beragama di Kabupaten Fakfak, Papua Barat. Fakfak merupakan wilayah dengan keragaman agama yang tinggi, di mana masyarakatnya hidup berdampingan berdasarkan filosofi lokal Satu Tungku Tiga Batu. *Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi kasus, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh agama Islam, Kristen Protestan, Katolik, serta tokoh masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh agama dan tokoh masyarakat menjalankan peran sinergis sebagai motivator, edukator, fasilitator, dan mediator. Tokoh agama memberikan keteladanan melalui dialog dan khotbah, sementara tokoh masyarakat menggerakkan kolaborasi sosial dan penguatan norma adat. Sinergi ini terwujud dalam aksi nyata seperti gotong royong membangun tempat ibadah lintas agama dan partisipasi dalam perayaan hari besar. Tantangan utama yang dihadapi bukan berasal dari internal masyarakat, melainkan pengaruh eksternal berupa ideologi intoleran dari pendatang atau pihak luar. Namun, melalui komunikasi intensif dan komitmen pada kearifan lokal, kerukunan tetap terjaga dengan indeks toleransi mencapai 82,1 poin pada tahun 2019. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kolaborasi lintas aktor yang berlandaskan kearifan lokal sangat efektif dalam menjaga stabilitas sosial di wilayah plural.*

Kata Kunci: *Sinergi, Tokoh Agama, Tokoh Masyarakat, Toleransi Beragama, Satu Tungku Tiga Batu.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with extraordinary ethnic and cultural diversity. It is also home to a variety of religions whose adherents respect one another. The spirit of living together peacefully and respecting differences in belief remains a noble value that is upheld, even though challenges and obstacles sometimes arise.[1] With regard to the relationship between religion and the state, Pancasila has consistently provided reassurance for the nation and the state, as can be seen in its first principle, "Belief in the One and Only God." Several articles of the 1945 Constitution therefore set out the relationship between religion and the state in Indonesia, such as Article 28E, which states that "Every person is free to embrace a religion and to worship according to his or her religion," and Article 29(1) and (2), which state that "The State guarantees the freedom of every resident to embrace his or her own religion and to worship according to that religion and belief." The government takes part in religious affairs by recognizing several religions in Indonesia, as shown in Circular Letter of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 477/74054/1978, which states that the government recognizes Islam, Christianity/Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[2] However, although freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution, acts of intolerance by certain individuals still occur in Indonesia.

One example of religious intolerance in Papua is the conflict in Tolikara on July 17, 2015, when members of the Evangelical Church of Indonesia (GIDI) protested against the use of a mosque loudspeaker during the Eid al-Fitr prayer, leading to a riot that damaged 13 houses and a church and left one person dead as a result of police retaliation. This situation shows a religious conflict arising from minority issues and the dominance of the Protestant majority in the highlands of Central Papua.[3] Intolerance has also occurred in Fakfak Regency, West Papua. First, identity politics in the regional elections of 2015–2020, in which religious sentiment was used to mobilize political support and concerns arose about the dominance of one religious group in the regional bureaucracy. This period saw polarization at the grassroots; although it did not lead to physical conflict, it created temporary social distance between groups of supporters divided along

[1] Moh. Abdul Kholiq Hasan, "Merajut Kerukunan dalam Keragaman Agama di Indonesia," *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 1 (2013): 66–77.

[2] Ibnu Rusydi and Siti Zolehah, "Makna Kerukunan Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Konteks Keislaman Dan Keindonesian," *Journal for Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2018): 170–81, https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1161580.

[3] Prabawati Dwi Utami, "Dinamika Moderasi Beragama: Studi Kasus Transformatif Konflik Dan Perdamaian Di Papua," *Jurnal Limit Multidisiplin* 1, no. 1 (2024): 7–13.

religious lines. Second, the challenge of "new teachings" and exclusivism in 2018–2021, when Muslim and Christian religious groups from outside Fakfak began to question or reject syncretic customary rituals that blend culture and religion. This created internal tension within each religious community, and the tradition of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which places blood kinship above religion, began to be challenged by more rigid religious interpretations.[4] Third, disputes over customary (*ulayat*) land for places of worship in 2019, in which residents objected to the construction of certain houses of worship on customary land claimed by clans of different faiths.[5]

According to Endahwati,[6] religious tolerance concerns human belief about God or creed. People must be given the freedom to choose their own religion, and the teachings they hold must be respected. Tolerance is the act of restraining oneself, being patient, and being open-hearted toward things that do not accord with one's faith or principles. Meanwhile, according to Mukzizatin,[7] being religious is the activity or state of a person in embracing and practicing the teachings of a religion or belief. It includes belief in God, performing worship or religious rituals, and practicing the values and rules taught by that religion; it also includes a person's spiritual relationship with God and good relations with other people and with society as a whole. Religious tolerance is thus an attitude of mutual respect, appreciation, and acceptance of differences in belief or religion between individuals and groups. It includes the ability to live together peacefully with people of different religions or beliefs without coercion, discrimination, or hostility. It also means respecting each person's freedom to choose and practice his or her religion according to his or her beliefs and refraining from denigrating or insulting other religions. Its consequence is the recognition of every person's right to believe and worship according to his or her conscience and the building of harmonious relations in a society composed of various religions.[8]

A role refers to a pattern of behavior associated with a status. A role is the dynamic component of a position (status): when people perform tasks that correspond to their position, they are performing their role. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, a religious leader is also called a *kyai*, meaning a person who has religious (Islamic) knowledge as well as deeds and character consistent with that knowledge. Religious leaders play a very important role in building religious tolerance because they have the moral and spiritual power to instill the

[4] Penerbit Litera, *Dialektika Pendidikan dan Agama di Era Kontemporer* (Penerbit Litera, 2021).

[5] Iwan Mulyawan, "Kedudukan Tanah Adat Dalam Pengadaan Tanah Untuk Kepentingan Umum Di Kabupaten Manokwari Papua Barat," *Jurnal HUKUM BISNIS* 9, no. 1 (2025): 1–17.

[6] Wiwik Endahwati, "Kajian Ayat-Ayat Al-Quran Tentang Toleransi Beragama," *An-Nafah Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 2, no. 1 (2022): 41–52, https://ejurnal.staitaswirulafkar.ac.id/index.php/an-nafah/article/view/22.

[7] Siti Mukzizatin, "Relasi Harmonis Antar Umat Beragama Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Andragogi: Jurnal Diklat Teknis Pendidikan Dan Keagamaan* 7, no. 1 (2019): 161–80, https://doi.org/10.36052/andragogi.v7i1.75.

[8] Laila Hami Harahap, "Penguatan Kecerdasan Sikap Multikultural (Sosiologis)," *Journal of Islamic Education El Madani* 2, no. 1 (2023): 53–59, https://doi.org/10.55438/jiee.v2i1.62.

principles of brotherhood and tolerance in religious teaching and practice.[9] Community leaders also play an important role in overcoming differences and promoting harmony; they are regarded as role models or as people to whom the community turns for guidance on the problems it faces.[10] Good collaboration between these two parties can create an environment conducive to mutual understanding, respect for differences, and interreligious harmony.

The religious diversity that characterizes Indonesia can be seen in many cities and regencies across the country. One regency that foregrounds religious tolerance is Fakfak Regency, West Papua, where adherents of the three main religions, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism, live together very well. Although Muslims form a majority of about 53.8 percent of the population, Protestants and Catholics are also present in significant numbers, and all religious adherents have an equal place in society.[11] Fakfak is a fine example of the level of religious tolerance in Indonesia: according to surveys by the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the harmony index of West Papua Province has always been among the top ten, and the province once ranked first nationally with the highest tolerance index, about 82.1 points, in 2019.[12] This is closely related to how the people of Fakfak practice religious tolerance. The local philosophy known as *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* ("One Stove, Three Stones") supports the high level of interreligious tolerance in Fakfak. It depicts the unity and balance of the three religions that form the main pillars of the social and cultural life of the people of Fakfak and contributes to a strong and peaceful harmony.

Fakfak Regency is known as an example of religious tolerance because religious diversity there is not a source of conflict but a unifying force. The people of Fakfak even regard the three religions as "family religions," in which members of the same family may adhere to different religions yet live in harmony and respect one another. This can be seen in many social and religious activities, such as working together to build houses of worship and taking part in the religious celebrations of other faiths.[13] However, although religious harmony in Fakfak is generally very good, some problems have arisen, especially in connection with population change

[9] Marissa Dwi Anjarahmi and Taufik Alamin, "Peran Tokoh Agama Dalam Meningkatkan Spiritualitas Masyarakat Di Kabupaten Bojonegoro," *Journal of Islamic and Social Studies (JISS)* 1, no. 1 (2023): 15–24, https://doi.org/10.30762/jiss.v1i1.1337.

[10] Subang Waikero and Didik Iswahyudi, "Peran Tokoh Masyarakat Dalam Pembangunan Desa," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Bagi Guru Dan Dosen* 3 (2019): 256–63, https://conference.unikama.ac.id/artikel/index.php/fip/index.

[11] Saidin Ernas, Ismail DP, and Ismail Kilderak, "Islam, Papuanness and Indonesianess within Papuan Muslims in Fakfak," *Al-Albab* 10, no. 2 (2021): 275–94, https://doi.org/10.24260/alalbab.v10i2.1990.

[12] Kemenag Papua Barat, "Kemenag: Indeks Toleransi Beragama di Papua Barat Capai 81 Poin" (November 2024).

[13] Hendrik Ryan Renna, "Satu Tungku Tiga Batu, Toleransi Hidup Beragama Masyarakat Fak-Fak: Tinjauan Ensiklik Fratelli Tutti," *CENDERAWASIH: Jurnal Antropologi Papua* 2, no. 2 (2021): 75–86, https://doi.org/10.31957/jap.v2i2.1842.

and political issues that sometimes exploit religion for particular interests. For example, there are concerns about possible conflict triggered by issues of Islamization and religious radicalization, which some Christians regard as a threat.[14]

According to Fitriani,[15] religious tolerance can be practiced and applied to manage religious diversity in society and to build harmonious relations. Previous studies show that one of the most effective ways of building religious tolerance in communities with diverse beliefs is inseparable from the role of religious leaders.[16] Building religious tolerance will certainly be easier if community leaders also contribute. Religious and community leaders can synergize their roles in building religious tolerance in diverse communities. The word "synergy" comes from the Greek *synergos*, meaning "working together." Synergy shows how people cooperate, integrate, and complement one another to achieve common goals with the best results. Synergy is not merely cooperation but an attitude of mutual respect, sharing ideas, and finding innovative solutions that benefit all parties without sacrificing any of them.[17]

This study differs from previous research in that it focuses on the synergy of two elements, religious leaders and community leaders, in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua. Other studies usually emphasize only the role of religious leaders. For example, Samuel and Tumonglo[18] discuss how religious leaders help connect religious communities in Toraja, Indonesia, especially in the south bordering the Muslim-majority Enrekang region, which still shows interreligious harmony, particularly between Muslims and Christians. Religious leaders there promote interreligious tolerance and a harmony that has never been affected by ethnic, religious, and racial (SARA) issues as in some other places. That study is relevant to the present one in that both examine the role of religious leaders in building religious tolerance. However, the present study emphasizes the importance of cooperation or synergy between religious and community leaders as the basis for a harmonious and tolerant religious life in a plural region such as Fakfak, West Papua, and thus offers a broader and more contextual perspective than previous studies.

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[14] Saidin Ernas and Zuly Qodir, "Agama Dan Budaya Dalam Integrasi Sosial (Belajar Dari Pengalaman Masyarakat Fakfak Di Propinsi Papua Barat)," *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi* 2, no. 2 (2017): 43, https://doi.org/10.22146/jps.v2i2.30015.

[15] Shofiah Fitriani, "Keberagaman Dan Toleransi Antar Umat Beragama," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 20, no. 2 (2020): 179–92, https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v20i2.5489.

[16] Yusuf Faisal Ali, "Upaya Tokoh Agama Dalam Mengembangkan Sikap Toleransi Anatar Umat Beragama Studi Kasus Desa Sindangjaya Kecamatan Ciranjang Kabupaten Cianjur," *Untirta Civic Education Journal* 2, no. 1 (2017): 91–112.

[17] Husnul Hakim, "Sinergi Antara Good Government Dan Azas-Azas Umum Pemerintahan Yang Baik (Aaupb) Dalam Upaya Pencegahan Korupsi," *DIALEKTIKA: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Ilmu Sosial* 7, no. 2 (2022): 191–200, https://doi.org/10.36636/dialektika.v7i2.1461.

[18] Samuel Samuel and Esther Epin Tumonglo, "Toleransi: Peran Tokoh Agama Sebagai Perekat Kerukunan Umat Beragama," *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 3, no. 1 (2023): 81, https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v3i1.14734.

In view of these phenomena, the researchers chose Fakfak Regency, West Papua, as the research site because of its high religious diversity. In such a setting, religious and community leaders play an important role in creating and maintaining social harmony and religious tolerance. The researchers sought to learn more about how religious and community leaders work together in building religious tolerance and what obstacles they face in doing so in the region.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative case study approach. According to Creswell, as cited by Fitrah,[19] a qualitative case study aims to understand a phenomenon comprehensively through observation, interviews, and document analysis in a real-life context. This method was chosen because it allows the researchers to explore comprehensively the roles of religious and community leaders in building religious tolerance. The study aims to describe, explain, and analyze the synergy between religious and community leaders in creating religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency. Its results are thus expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the strategies, challenges, and impacts of collaboration among social actors in building religious harmony.

The primary data came from in-depth interviews with Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic religious leaders and with community leaders. The secondary data came from official documents and a literature review. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation and analyzed qualitatively to provide an in-depth picture of the synergy and dynamics of religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, as described by Wijaya,[20] through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religious Tolerance in Fakfak Regency

Religious tolerance is an important value in a multicultural society, shown through mutual respect for and appreciation of differences in belief, worship, and religious tradition among religious communities. It not only prevents conflict but also enhances social stability and encourages cooperation in virtue amid diversity. Q. al-Baqarah 2:256 explains that God does not compel anyone to embrace Islam:

لَآ اِكْرَاهَ فِى الدِّيْنِۗ قَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّۚ فَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوْتِ وَيُؤْمِنْۢ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقٰى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَاۗ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ

[19] Muh Fitrah, *Metodologi Penelitian: Penelitian Kualitatif, Tindakan Kelas & Studi Kasus* (CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher), 2018).

[20] H Wijaya, *Analisis Data Kualitatif Teori Konsep Dalam Penelitian Pendidikan* (Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Jaffray, 2020), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=GkP2DwAAQBAJ.

> "There is no compulsion in religion. The right way has become clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in false deities and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy handhold, which will never break. And God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

In light of this verse, continuous efforts are needed to increase tolerance through programs that support harmony and respect for differences.[21] According to Friedrich Heiler, as cited by Ma'shum et al.,[22] religious tolerance is the way a person views and honors various religions, respects each religion, and strives to live harmoniously with others. Religious tolerance is therefore an active and profound attitude in which a person not only recognizes the religious diversity around him or her but also sincerely respects and appreciates the teachings and practices of each religion. According to Heiler, the basis of religious tolerance lies in concrete efforts to build and maintain a harmonious life in a plural society in which people of different religions can interact, cooperate, and live together peacefully.

This view is supported by Jamin Patiran, a community leader in Fakfak Regency and former head and secretary of Offie Village, Teluk Patipi District, West Papua, interviewed by the researchers on November 17, 2025. According to him, the forms of religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency include the following.

Respect for freedom of worship. Every member of the community in Fakfak Regency has the right to worship according to his or her beliefs without being influenced by others and without belittling or mocking the religions and beliefs of others; this is rooted in the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which has been passed down from generation to generation since the ancestors.

Interreligious dialogue. Interreligious dialogue in Fakfak takes place continuously, both in daily interaction and at customary events or religious celebrations, where people talk in order to understand their differences, cooperate in social activities, and support religious harmony. Concrete examples in daily life include greeting one another, sharing food with neighbors, and other forms of social interaction.

Cooperation in social activities. To build harmonious relations, people take part in social activities involving various religious groups and help those in difficulty. In this context, the people of Fakfak never look at religious differences; instead, they help one another and work together when their relatives are in need. Such social cooperation includes visiting sick residents

[21] Citra Ayu Rahmawati et al., "Toleransi Beragama Di Perguruan Tinggi," *Media Ilmiah Komunikasi Umat Beragama* 15, no. 1 (2023): 29–38.

[22] Muhammad Ma'shum et al., "Toleransi Beragama Di Era Digital Dalam Telaah Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an," *Musala : Jurnal Pesantren Dan Kebudayaan Islam Nusantara* 2, no. 2 (2023): 167–77, https://doi.org/10.37252/jpkin.v2i2.545.

regardless of their religion or background and taking part in building places of worship, whether mosques, Protestant churches, or Catholic churches, as well as other social activities.[23]

According to H. Rubbahy Muri, the second imam of the Offie Village Mosque in Teluk Patipi District and a Muslim religious leader in Fakfak Regency, interviewed by the researchers on November 14, 2025, there are several forms of tolerance among people of different religions in Fakfak Regency.

Recognizing the rights of every person. Religious tolerance in Fakfak, West Papua, rests on the basic belief that everyone has the right to practice his or her faith without discrimination, as expressed in the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which emphasizes brotherhood and unity despite the differences between Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. In practice, the people of Fakfak not only respect religious differences but also help one another, for example by working together to build the places of worship of other religions, sharing food, and visiting one another when sick.

Respecting the religious beliefs of others. Daily practice in Fakfak Regency is grounded in the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which teaches that the three major religions (Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism) must live together, respect one another, and cooperate like the three stones that support a cooking fire. There is no discrimination in social assistance: people help one another build the places of worship of other religions, visit the sick regardless of their religion, and interact daily through greetings and sharing food, showing that harmony has become a core value passed down through generations.

Mutual understanding. Religious tolerance in Fakfak, West Papua, is reflected in the harmony among Christians, Muslims, and Catholics, who live side by side and even within the same household, harmoniously and with mutual understanding.[24]

Simons Pelipus Tuturop, a Catholic religious leader in Fakfak Regency interviewed by the researchers on October 12, 2025, described religious tolerance in Fakfak as follows:

> "We continue to strengthen the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which is the foundation of harmony in Fakfak Regency. Social harmony in Fakfak is also reflected in close family ties; people live in harmony. Even within one family and one clan, members adhere to different religions, such as Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism. In the spirit of harmony, we help one another in various activities, including construction and celebrations. Tolerance is seen in practice in collaboration to build places of worship for all religions, participation in weddings, and visiting the sick. Most importantly, we uphold the principle that there is never any coercion in matters of religion, ensuring that every individual is free to practice his or her faith."

[23] Marpuah Marpuah, "Toleransi Dan Interaksi Sosial Antar Pemeluk Agama Di Cigugur, Kuningan," *Harmoni* 18, no. 2 (2019): 51–72, https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v18i2.309.

[24] Wani Syafiqah Adnan, Indrianty Ismail, and Mazlan Ibrahim, "Toleransi Beragama Dalam Filem Bajrangi Bhaijan (2015)," *Hawley's Condensed Chemical Dictionary* 3, no. 3 (2020): 1–9.

Religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency is thus grounded in the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which dates back to the ancestors and is closely tied to the concept of religious tolerance in Fakfak, West Papua. The philosophy depicts how the three main religions in the region, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism, are united harmoniously like three stones supporting the same cooking fire. It has developed into a cultural and social foundation that teaches appreciation of and respect for religious differences as part of the unity of the people of Fakfak.[25] Religious tolerance in Fakfak is also shown in strong social interaction and cultural practices that unite the community in strong social integration. Mutual respect and openness to differences in belief are part of the community's collective identity, as shown by the way the people of Fakfak avoid religious conflict and instill values of peace and cooperation among religious groups. The *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* philosophy helps build harmonious social relations and overcome conflicts that may arise from religious differences.[26]

The Synergy of Religious and Community Leaders' Roles in Building Religious Tolerance in Fakfak Regency

According to Deardorff and Williams (2006), as cited by Manggalou,[27] synergy is a multiplying effect that allows joint efforts to increase individual energy and work results exponentially. In this sense, synergy is not merely cooperation but an integration that produces significant added value in achieving common goals. According to Soerjono Soekanto (2002), as cited by Lantaeda, Lengkong, and Ruru,[28] a role is the dynamic aspect of a person's position (status), carried out through the rights and obligations associated with that position. Performing a role thus shows how a person carries out his or her function in social interaction. According to Elly M. Setiadi, the indicators of a role include acting as motivator, educator, facilitator, and mediator. As a motivator, a leader is expected to encourage, mobilize, and inspire the community to act in accordance with agreed values (for example, tolerance and harmony). As an educator, a leader provides enlightenment, guidance, and values education so that the community understands the meaning of living together amid differences. As a facilitator, a leader provides space, means, and opportunities for good interaction, dialogue, and cooperation among residents. As a mediator,

[25] Daud Alfons Pandie, "Konsep 'Satu Tungku Tiga Batu' Sosio-Kultural Fakfak sebagai Model Interaksi dalam Kehidupan Antarumat Beragama," *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 1 (2018): 49.

[26] Saidin Ernas, "Politik Simbol Dan Harmoni Sosial: Makna Satu Tungku Tiga Batu Dalam Dinamika Politik Lokal Di Fakfak, Papua Barat," *Dialektika* 9, no. 2 (2015): 1–18, http://jurnal.iainambon.ac.id/index.php/DT/article/view/226/169.

[27] Singgih Manggalou, "Sinergitas Collaborative Governance Dalam Pencegahan Dan Penanganan Pandemi Covid-19 Kota Surabaya," *Journal Publicuho* 5, no. 3 (2022): 575–90, https://doi.org/10.35817/publicuho.v5i3.11.

[28] Syaron Brigette Lantaeda, Florence Daicy J. Lengkong, and Joorie M. Ruru, "Peran Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah dalam Penyusunan RPJMD Kota Tomohon," *Jurnal Administrasi Publik (JAP)* 4, no. 48 (2002): 243.

a leader bridges different parties, mediates misunderstandings, and helps resolve conflicts peacefully and amicably.[29]

Simply put, a "religious leader" is a person respected and recognized in a religious community or group for his or her deep knowledge, understanding, and practice of religious teachings, and who has a moral and spiritual influence on the members of that community.[30] Harun Nasution, as cited by Taofiq, defines a religious leader as a person with broad and deep religious knowledge who can convey and explain religious teachings to the community rationally and acceptably, and who thus becomes a reference and role model in religious matters. According to Salim and Andani,[31] religious leaders have great potential to be agents of social change in society, as motivators, educators, facilitators, and mediators.

Based on an interview on October 12, 2025, with Jony Iha, a pastor at the Tetar Church and a Christian religious leader in West Papua, Christian religious leaders play the following roles in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency.

Motivator. Christian religious leaders act as motivators by instilling a spirit of unity and mutual respect amid differences in belief, especially in families whose members adhere to different religions. They encourage believers to hold firmly to the ancestral heritage of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, so that religious differences can strengthen family ties and mutual cooperation and encourage the community to maintain harmony sustainably.

Educator. Through sermons and daily interaction, Christian religious leaders teach the principle of living together harmoniously without discrimination. In teaching tolerance, they emphasize the importance of mutual help among religious communities, such as helping to build houses of worship or attending the religious holidays of other faiths. From the outset, this approach strengthens understanding of the concept of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*.

Facilitator. Christian religious leaders act as facilitators of interfaith social activities, such as working together to build places of worship and jointly securing religious holiday celebrations. They facilitate practical cooperation that shows that differences in belief do not hinder communal solidarity, ensuring that tolerance is realized in concrete action in daily life.

Mediator. Christian religious leaders act as mediators in facing external challenges by actively talking with people of other religions to maintain unity. They preserve the culture of

[29] Elly M Setiadi, *Ilmu Sosial & Budaya Dasar* (Kencana, 2017).

[30] Rudi Setiawan, "Mempertahankan Kehidupan Toleransi Beragama Suku Tengger Bromo Melalui Peran Tokoh Agama," *Civis : Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan* 12, no. 2 (2023): 1–14, https://doi.org/10.26877/civis.v12i2.16389.

[31] Ahmad Salim and Andani Andani, "Kerukunan Umat Beragama; Relasi Kuasa Tokoh Agama Dengan Masyarakat Dalam Internalisasi Sikap Toleransi Di Bantul, Yogyakarta," *Arfannur* 1, no. 1 (2020): 1–14, https://doi.org/10.24260/arfannur.v1i1.139.

tolerance by relying on local wisdom to overcome potential friction from outside, an approach that proactively stops intolerant influences.

Aman Patiran, a Muslim religious leader and the first imam of the Musthafa Mosque in Offie Village, Teluk Patipi District, West Papua, interviewed by the researchers on November 14, 2025, described the roles of Muslim religious leaders in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency as follows.

Motivator. Muslim religious leaders act as motivators by being concrete role models in daily life, encouraging believers to maintain unity and interreligious harmony. They actively deliver sermons and lectures that emphasize mutual respect, motivating the community to take part in interreligious mutual cooperation, such as religious holiday celebrations or the construction of places of worship.

Educator. Muslim religious leaders educate believers through teaching that is not limited to religious rituals but also covers the values of tolerance derived from local wisdom (the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*) and Islamic teachings. Through interreligious dialogue forums and consistent daily practice, they promote the understanding that differences in belief are a wealth to be preserved.

Facilitator. Muslim religious leaders act as facilitators by supporting community social activities, such as customary affairs, and by cooperating with other religious communities to build shared facilities. In this way, they ensure that people take an active part in interreligious events and strengthen social harmony without imposing their beliefs.

Mediator. As mediators, Muslim religious leaders are respected for their ability to resolve misunderstandings among residents peacefully, using their moral authority and the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*. They facilitate regular discussions among religious leaders to clarify issues that could divide interreligious harmony.

Marcus Iha, a Catholic religious leader in Fakfak Regency interviewed by the researchers on October 14, 2025, likewise described the roles of Catholic religious leaders as motivators, educators, facilitators, and mediators in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, as follows.

Motivator. Catholic religious leaders motivate the community by strengthening the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* as the foundation of harmony and by encouraging mutual help in social activities such as building houses of worship and celebrating religious holidays, as well as harmony in society.

Educator. They educate believers through concrete examples, such as emphasizing universal Christian love in daily interaction with people of other religions, including warm greetings and the maintenance of everyday harmony.

Facilitator. Catholic religious leaders facilitate collaboration among religious communities, such as taking part in weddings, visiting the sick, and building places of worship together, without coercion of belief.

Mediator. As mediators, they build synergy with other religious leaders through intensive discussion to deal with external challenges, strengthening unity and preventing divisions in religious harmony.

Interviews with Christian, Muslim, and Catholic religious leaders in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, show that religious leaders play synergistic roles as motivators, educators, facilitators, and mediators in building religious tolerance, rooted in the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* as a symbol of the unity of three religions within one family. As motivators, they inspire believers through concrete examples such as helping one another build places of worship across religions, cooperating in holiday celebrations, and maintaining family harmony across differences in belief. As educators, they deliver sermons, lectures, and interreligious dialogue that emphasize harmony and respect without coercion. As facilitators, they lead social collaboration with community leaders, such as participation in weddings, visits to the sick, and customary activities. As mediators, they bridge potential conflicts arising from external influences through intensive discussion and inclusive deliberation, thereby strengthening a foundation of peace passed down through generations to this day.

Community leaders also play an important role in building religious tolerance. According to Suhendi,[32] community leaders are individuals who stand out in various aspects of community life. People regarded as leaders usually have exceptional qualities whose virtues can serve as examples to be followed. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara's teaching on leadership, a good leader must have three main characteristics: *ing ngarsa sung tuladha* (setting an example in front), *ing madya mangun karsa* (building spirit in the middle), and *tut wuri handayani* (giving encouragement from behind). A good leader usually has good qualities worthy of emulation. According to Andanasari, Yuliatin, and Dahlan,[33] community leaders play an important role in creating harmony and tolerance within groups and in helping to make decisions that affect harmonious community life.

Community leaders thus play a very important role in maintaining harmony in society. They can ease tensions and help people talk to one another to solve problems collectively. Community leaders are also instrumental in building and maintaining harmony and tolerance

[32] Ahmad Suhendi, "Peranan Tokoh Masyarakat Lokal Dalam Pembangunan Kesejahteraan Sosial," *Sosio Informa* 18, no. 2 (2013): 105–16, https://doi.org/10.33007/inf.v18i2.73.

[33] Fransiska Dian Andanasari, Yuliatin, and Dahlan, "Peran Tokoh Masyarakat Dalam Membina Toleransi Antarumat Beragama (Studi Di Kelurahan Karang Baru Kota Mataram)," *Journal Civics & Social Studies* 5, no. 2 (2022): 233–42, https://doi.org/10.31980/civicos.v5i2.1344.

within groups and are the main advocates in decision-making processes aimed at a harmonious society.

An interview on November 21, 2025, with Umar Patiran, chair of the Village Consultative Body (BAPERKAM) of Teluk Patipi District and a community leader in West Papua, yielded several key points about the significant role of community leaders in building religious tolerance in the region: community leaders can act as motivators, educators, facilitators, and mediators for the community, as follows.

Motivator. Community leaders act as motivators of religious tolerance through concrete examples, such as encouraging cooperation among believers in building places of worship and celebrating religious holidays, and by strengthening collective commitment to the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* in Fakfak Regency.

Educator. Community leaders in Fakfak Regency act as educators by sharing the principles of harmony through deliberation and by strengthening the ancestral philosophy. This helps the younger generation understand the importance of living together without religious discrimination amid diversity.

Facilitator. Community leaders mobilize interfaith community activities, such as customary events and the construction of public facilities, thereby creating shared harmony and maintaining social stability in Fakfak.

Mediator. Community leaders act as mediators for the community in resolving family problems and in addressing threats to religious harmony from external friction through proactive dialogue with religious leaders, ensuring that every issue is handled in a familial manner in order to maintain interreligious harmony.

Community leaders in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, thus play an important and integral role in building and maintaining religious tolerance through close collaboration with religious leaders, grounded in the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, an ancestral heritage of living in harmony amid difference. They act as drivers and facilitators of interfaith community activities, such as working together to build places of worship, taking part in the religious holidays of other faiths, and resolving communal issues amicably. Their presence strengthens the community's resilience to potentially divisive external influences, making Fakfak a concrete example of strong and sustainable interreligious harmony.

The roles of religious and community leaders therefore form a strong synergy in building religious tolerance. Their roles in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, are highly strategic in building and maintaining religious tolerance. They actively implement the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which teaches people to live harmoniously across religions as one large family, so that religious differences do not hinder togetherness. Religious leaders of various faiths provide role

models through interreligious dialogue, support for the construction of public facilities such as houses of worship, and joint participation in religious celebrations. Community leaders act as drivers in strengthening interfaith cooperation and maintaining the stability of harmony, with readiness to deal with external influences that might damage it. This overall synergy between religious and community leaders makes Fakfak Regency a concrete example of strong and peaceful religious tolerance.

Religious and community leaders have a very significant influence on building and maintaining religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, realized through the active implementation of the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*. They act as motivators who inspire through concrete examples, such as working together to build places of worship across religions; as educators who convey the values of harmony through sermons and interreligious dialogue; as facilitators who lead social collaboration in customary activities and religious celebrations; and as mediators who proactively resolve potential conflicts through inclusive deliberation. In this way, they have created a community-based early warning system, strengthened positive social norms passed down through generations, and faced external challenges in the form of intolerant ideologies with a strategy of intensive communication, making Fakfak Regency a concrete example of strong, peaceful, and sustainable interreligious harmony, with West Papua recording the highest tolerance index in Indonesia at 82.1 points in 2019.[34]

Table 1 summarizes the synergy of the roles of religious and community leaders in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua.

Table 1**.** The Synergy of Religious and Community Leaders' Roles in Building Religious Tolerance in Fakfak

Role	Religious Leaders	Community Leaders	Synergy of Religious and Community Leaders
Motivator	Provide concrete role models through sermons and interreligious mutual cooperation.	Encourage collective commitment through grassroots deliberation.	Together inspire believers through concrete action, such as helping to build places of worship, strengthening family ties across faiths.
Educator	Teach tolerance through sermons and interreligious dialogue.	Share ancestral values by strengthening social norms among the younger generation.	Collaborate in regular dialogue and deliberation to internalize the local philosophy and prevent external exclusivism.
Facilitator	Facilitate interfaith social activities such as religious holiday celebrations and visits to the sick.	Mobilize customary events and shared public facilities.	Synergize in mutual cooperation to build places of worship and in social celebrations, creating a sustainable space for harmonious interaction.

[34] Kemenag Papua Barat, "Indeks Toleransi Beragama."

Role	Religious Leaders	Community Leaders	Synergy of Religious and Community Leaders
Mediator	Mediate minor frictions by emphasizing the local philosophy.	Handle family-based conflicts through inclusive deliberation.	Engage in proactive dialogue and joint early warning to prevent external threats such as hardline ideologies, and maintain harmony.

Source: Authors' analysis of interview data.

Challenges Faced by Religious and Community Leaders in Building Religious Tolerance in Fakfak

According to Baidi Bukhori,[35] the main challenge to religious tolerance arises from rigid and exclusive religious fundamentalism, in which individuals or groups claim absolute truth and therefore reject differences in belief. This theory analyzes two main factors: (1) internal fundamentalism, that is, doctrinal understanding from within the religious group itself; and (2) external influence, such as the entry of hardline ideologies from outsiders or newcomers who promote intolerant attitudes, which threaten social harmony by triggering conflict among religious communities. Bukhori emphasizes that without strengthening *self-control* grounded in humanitarian values and dialogue, these external factors can damage established harmony.

Bukhori's theory that problems of religious tolerance are caused by the influence of religious fundamentalism from external sources corresponds to the situation faced by religious and community leaders in Fakfak Regency. There, the entry of outsiders or newcomers who bring hardline and rigid teachings claiming absolute truth can disrupt local harmony based on the philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*. Comprehensive interviews with religious and community leaders in Fakfak, West Papua, show that religious and community leaders face several challenges in building religious tolerance in the region.

According to Pastor Carlos Mury, a Christian religious leader from the Tetar Church in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, there are some challenges, although not significant ones, in efforts to build religious tolerance. These challenges were described in an interview with the researchers on October 12, 2025, as follows:

> "As a Christian religious leader, I see that the most serious challenges in building religious tolerance actually do not exist within our community. Nevertheless, challenges may arise, but they often come from outsiders or individuals who are not native residents of Fakfak and who bring an understanding of religious tolerance that tends to be rigid or harsh. However, we have a very strong foundation. All residents here share the same goal and commitment in facing such individuals, ensuring that our spirit of unity will not be contaminated or influenced. This is because our ancestors taught us the beauty of togetherness and harmony long ago, which is deeply embedded in our local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*."

[35] Baidi Bukhori, *Toleransi Beragama : Peran Fundamentalisme Agama Dan Kontrol Diri* (2022).

Based on an interview on October 26, 2025, with Kurnalis Kabes, a Catholic religious leader in Fakfak Regency, the challenges faced by Catholic religious leaders in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency are as follows:

> "Regarding religious tolerance in Fakfak, there are basically no significant challenges from within. Interreligious harmony is already very strong and firmly established as a heritage passed down through generations. The greatest challenge actually comes from outsiders who seek to divide the existing harmony. However, such efforts will never succeed, because the people of Fakfak always hold firmly to the philosophy taught by their ancestors, the concept of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*. This philosophy symbolizes an inseparable unity in which each religious element (Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism) acts as a mutually reinforcing support, making harmony in Fakfak a concrete example of true brotherhood in the land of West Papua."

In line with this, Robbana Rumakat, deputy imam of the Musthafa Mosque in Offie Village, Teluk Patipi District, and a Muslim religious leader in Fakfak Regency, explained the challenges faced by Muslim religious leaders in creating religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency in an interview with the researchers on November 21, 2025, as follows:

> "The implementation of religious tolerance in Fakfak tends to be stable and strong, because the local community has long lived side by side, holding firmly to the wisdom of the *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* philosophy. Internal challenges that threaten harmony are therefore minimal. More significant threats often come from outsiders or newcomers who may bring rigid and exclusive intolerant thinking or interpretations about interreligious relations. The entry of such hardline ideologies could damage an already harmonious social order, so the main focus is to defend the bulwark of local culture against divisive external influences."

Meanwhile, Abdul Rahman Kabes, a former government official and community leader in Fakfak Regency, shared his views on the challenges faced by community leaders in building religious tolerance in an interview with the researchers on November 14, 2025:

> "So far, the situation of harmony in our region is relatively stable, and no serious challenges or upheavals that could threaten harmony have been detected. However, we are not complacent. We have established a proactive preparedness framework; if potential conflicts or sensitive issues arise at any time, we are ready to deal with them with a well-considered approach. Our main strategy is to immediately initiate inclusive discussion and deliberation that directly involves all religious leaders and community representatives. This step is prioritized to ensure that every problem is resolved at the grassroots level with a cool head, based on the principle of kinship."

The main challenges for religious and community leaders in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, thus come from external influences rather than from internal conflicts within the local community. These challenges include efforts by outsiders or newcomers who bring a rigid, harsh, or intolerant understanding of tolerance, as well as the potential intervention of provocative issues that threaten harmony. Religious and community leaders can

overcome these challenges, especially external influences such as outsiders who bring rigid understandings or divisive ideologies, through synergy in intensive communication and regular interreligious dialogue to clarify misunderstandings and align strategic steps. This approach is reinforced by a firm commitment to the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which symbolizes the unity of three religions (Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism) as one family, so that the community remains harmonious and is not easily influenced by national issues. In addition, initiating deliberation and setting concrete examples, such as working together to build places of worship across religions, constitute a proactive form of preparedness for maintaining sustainable harmony.

CONCLUSION

The synergy between religious and community leaders in Fakfak Regency, West Papua, is very important and has succeeded in building and maintaining strong religious tolerance. This collaboration is actively implemented through the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*, which teaches people of different religions (Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism) to live in harmony as one family. Religious leaders provide role models through dialogue, support for the construction of houses of worship, and joint participation in religious celebrations, while community leaders act as facilitators, drivers, and social architects in strengthening interfaith cooperation, handling potential conflicts through deliberation, and maintaining the stability of harmony against external influences. Despite challenges, mainly from external influences that bring intolerant ideologies, joint efforts through intensive communication, regular dialogue, and commitment to local wisdom have kept Fakfak a concrete example of peaceful harmony. This study used a qualitative case study approach focusing on the synergy of religious and community leaders' roles in building religious tolerance in Fakfak Regency, West Papua. Its main limitation is that it is a single case study, so its findings on strategies, challenges, and collaborative efforts based on the local philosophy of *Satu Tungku Tiga Batu* may not be widely generalizable to other regions of Indonesia with different social, cultural, and local wisdom contexts. Moreover, the primary data came only from in-depth interviews with religious leaders (Muslim, Protestant, and Catholic) and community leaders. Future research could be extended to include the perspectives of local government, non-governmental organizations, or representatives of interfaith youth groups to obtain a more holistic picture of the dynamics of religious tolerance in Fakfak.

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