

# Strengthening of Unity Through The Harmonization Among Religious Communities in Ohorderwatun Village, Kei Kecil Sub-District, Southeast Maluku Regency

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**Abstract.** This research aims to look at technological developments that have experienced rapid growth and brought major changes to the current order of human life. The high flow of information has blurred the boundaries between countries, so that foreign values can easily enter and develop in Indonesia. The problems above cause divisions in religious communities to become a permanent issue in hoax news. This research uses qualitative methods by describing all events and phenomena in Ohorderwatun Village. The results of the research show that exemplary practices carried out by traditional leaders and village leaders are the key to building a harmonious and harmonious community life. Activities carried out by traditional leaders and village leaders aim to familiarize the community with implementing the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation. Activities carried out include commemorating religious holidays celebrated by the village community, such as halal bi halal, building houses and preparing for weddings together, village meetings, holding yelm, and helping each other in their work as fishermen.

**Keywords:** Community Self-Help, Spreading Hoax News, Tolerance

## 1. Introduction

The development of information technology has proliferated, bringing significant changes to the order of human life today. Increasingly sophisticated information technology has changed the pattern and system of people's lives towards modernity. These changes can be seen from the existence of a new lifestyle that cannot be separated from electronic devices, such as gadgets and laptops so that without realizing it, technological sophistication has formed a new world or a new community of people, namely the natural world and cyberspace (cyber community). Furthermore, in 2020, around 98.31% of Indonesia's population used gadgets as a medium for communicating and searching for information, while laptops in 2020 increased by 15.78% (Badan Pusat Statistik: 2020) [1]. This figure shows that modern society depends on technological sophistication, most even consider technology a basic need for every individual.

Technical sophistication spoils society with all instant and easy facilities, especially in getting information from various worlds easily and quickly. The fast flow of communication blurs the natural boundaries between countries, so different information quickly enters and develops in Indonesia.

The ease of obtaining information can be used to develop knowledge and skills. However, on the other hand, technological sophistication can facilitate the spread of hoax news in Indonesia. In 2022 the spread of hoax news will increase by 12.6%, especially regarding the issue of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (<https://pusiknas.polri.go.id/>) [2]. The circulation of hoax news or negative opinions can cause fear, worry, intolerance, conflict, material losses, and damage to one's good name. As stated by the Head of Public Relations of the Bangka Belitung Regional Police "One bullet can only kill one person, but one hoax news can kill thousands of people" (in [https://babelprov.go.id/artikel\\_detil/pentingnya-daya-kritis-Masyarakat-tangkas-hoax](https://babelprov.go.id/artikel_detil/pentingnya-daya-kritis-Masyarakat-tangkas-hoax)). This means that one hoax of news spread through various platforms can cause tension between religious communities, ending in the outbreak of conflict. In addition, some impacts that will arise from the spread of hoax news include war, genocide, and intolerance movements that cause divisions in the Indonesian nation.

This nation has never felt the bitterness caused by the intolerance movement; in 1999 there was a significant conflict between religious adherents in Ambon. This incident brought material losses and caused many human lives to be lost. Maluku Province is one of the cities prone to conflict. In 2022 the Maluku Regional Police Chief Inspector General Pol Lotharia Latif stated that in this province, there are 52 conflict-prone points, one of the causes of which is the movement of intolerance between religious communities [3]. The spread of hoax news that looks trivial, turns out to have a significant impact on the safety, peace, and unity of the Indonesian people. Provocative issues spread through unfounded news can have fatal consequences for the country, considering that Indonesia is multicultural, where the level of sensitivity is relatively high, especially regarding religion. Hoax news can pit the two influential groups against each other, so that it can cause significant conflicts and be detrimental to the Indonesian nation. Material things and human life can be threatened if a conflict occurs. Therefore, the spread of hoax news must be prevented by increasing the Indonesian people's sense of unity and oneness.

Indonesia was built based on the unity of the whole society through social harmony and a mosaic of ethnic, religious, racial and cultural diversity. The high level of diversity makes Indonesia known as one of the multicultural countries in the world. The plurality and heterogeneity reflected in society are bound in the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which has different meanings but is still one. Tolerance is a fundamental pillar in maintaining unity and unity, where mutual respect and respect for all differences is the primary key that the Indonesian people must implement. Applying tolerance in everyday life can create a sense of comfort, security, peace and harmony. Therefore, strengthening the values of tolerance and harmony is urgently needed in today's digital era to prevent some of the problems mentioned above. All

educational environments elements, such as families, communities and schools, can cultivate tolerance. Cooperation is the primary key to achieving success in implementing tolerance among Indonesians. As happened in Ohoirderwatun Village, even though Maluku is one of the areas prone to conflict, the village has not been affected. Instead, it has become an example of implementing the values of tolerance which are very good.

Ohoirderwatun Village is located in Kei Kecil District, Southeast Maluku, known as an area that has excellent natural potential. One is Ngiarwarat, a white sand beach with beautiful natural scenery. In addition, Ngiarwarat Beach is known for its fantastic beach sand like flour. Although geographically this village is relatively tiny, Ohoirderwatun has a population of 2,000 people with a classification of 50% being Muslim and 50% Christian. The life of this village community is filled with peace, tranquility, harmony, tolerance and modesty. For the village community, tolerance is the central pillar in carrying out social life. The village government leads this village with one traditional leader highly respected by the community. The strong sense of tolerance can be seen from everyday life, where sharing, helping, and loving each other regardless of background or religion is usually carried out in the village. As the saying goes " Maren-Masohi ", working together in doing something will be easier and more beautiful than alone. Local wisdom values such as cooperation, cooperation and respect are a philosophy of life that the village community continues to uphold, or in the Ohoirderwatun language, it is referred to as " Loor Lebay ". Seeing commitment and consistency in implementing the value of tolerance makes the village one of the happiest areas. Seeing all these uniqueness, researchers are very interested in studying more deeply the application of tolerance in Ohoirderwatun Village as a lesson for other villages in Indonesia to strengthen the unity and integrity of the Indonesian nation.

## **2. Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach, defined as a research procedure to produce valid data in the form of written, spoken or the behavior of the research object which is thoroughly and in-depth observed [4]. Descriptive data collection is the primary key in qualitative research which is outlined in reports and descriptions. This type of descriptive research is a deep understanding of the object of research, which can be explained descriptively about events and occurrences [5]. Qualitative descriptive research methods focus on finding facts through observation, interviews, and studying previously existing documents. The location used in this study is Ohoirderwatun Village, which is located in Kei Kecil District, Southeast Maluku. Ohoirderwatun Village is unique in implementing tolerance and harmony in its community. This can be a model for other villages in Indonesia. This study uses two data source techniques, namely primary and secondary. Primary data sources are obtained from various information both orally and in writing, attitudes and behavior of informants (humans) in this case the village government, traditional leaders, and the village community. At the same time, secondary data sources or supporting data were obtained from various literature studies from several previous

studies. This study's data collection methods were observation, interviews, documentation and data triangulation. In other words, using the triangulation method in the three methods aims to obtain valid data and credibility.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

Durkheim defines harmony as a process of interaction between religious communities, forming social bonds and not being individualistic to create a whole society which is under the role of community leaders [6]. Constitutionally, six religions are recognized in Indonesia: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Every religion has a different pattern from us, places of worship, holidays, and culture. These differences make the level of sensitivity between religions relatively high, so there is a chance for inter-religious conflicts to occur due to differences of opinion, hoax news, and ethnocentrism. Therefore, it is essential to instill the value of tolerance in a society with a high level of heterogeneity. The value of tolerance is the central pillar in creating harmony, peace and tranquility among religious communities. Building religious harmony requires much cooperation from various parties, especially the community and local government, so the level of success is relatively high. Like the village of Ohoiderwatun, the value of tolerance has become an essential part of people's lives.

Ohoiderwatun Village is a small village in Kei Kecil District, Southeast Maluku. This village is known as a modest, peaceful, peaceful and tolerant village amid a heterogeneous society. This village has a population of 2 thousand people, with the classification of 50% adhering to Islam who live in the western region of the village. In contrast, the other 50% are Catholics and Protestants living in the village's eastern region. The people in Ohoiderwatun have a close kinship relationship, or in the local language it is called "Vu'ut Ain Mehe Ngifun, Manut Ain Mehe Tilur", meaning, the people of the Kei tribe believe that they come from one ancestry. Another proverb, "ain ni ain", means "we are one unit". These two philosophies of life are the main pillars for the kei community in maintaining togetherness and balance with nature and the surrounding community. Tolerance and harmony have become an essential part of the life of the Ohoiderwatun Kei Kecil Islands community. The implemented tolerant attitude is proof of the success of instilling and strengthening the value of tolerance. In addition to the saying above, implementing tolerance and harmony in the Ohoiderwatun village community is based on local wisdom and values.

One is regarding the philosophy of life that the people of Ohoiderwatun village firmly hold called "Loor Lebay", which means a mediator, or generally interpreted as positioning something in its proportions, not exaggerating in one attitude and view. Every member of the Ohoiderwatun community is an intermediary in resolving various upheavals or societal debates. However, on the other hand, as individual creatures, they have no right to impose their desires on society. In the customary tradition of Southeast Maluku, they recognize the existence of a customary law called "Larvul Ngabal", which contains seven articles. The law is classified into

two types. Firstly, Larvul Law discusses the principles of criminal law in 4 articles. Second, Ngabal law is contained in 3 articles regarding decency and civil law principles. These values have existed and been practiced for centuries until now. For the Kei people, the position of tradition or custom is first and religion is second, so the term "our customs comes first and religion later" appears. This is not without reason, for the people of this village the presence of religion does not have to delegitimize the local wisdom values of our lives in togetherness. In other words, religious differences will not break up the togetherness of the kei tribe, it can strengthen their sense of brotherhood. Based on a sense of respect and appreciation, this society is very tolerant of all differences. The meaning of tolerance according to the kei tribe, is a process of understanding each other's differences, learning from each other, and sharing. This process must be carried out jointly by the entire Ohoiderwatun village community to create harmony between communities.

The joint regulation of the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 9 and 8 of 2006 explains that the harmony of diverse peoples is a relationship among religious people based on tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual respect, and respect for equality, in practicing their religious teachings [7]. Success in realizing harmony in the Ohoiderwatun Village community must be connected to the solid collaboration between the village government, traditional leaders, and the community. This starts with the example shown by the village government or traditional leaders to the community, in behaving, speaking and embracing all village members. Not only that, every activity that is designed is based on the philosophy of life and existing local wisdom. So community activities become a means to continue socializing tolerance values, especially to the younger generation. There are several ways that people can create harmony in people's lives, which was put forward by [8] among others: mutual respect, religious freedom, accepting other people as they are, and positive thinking. The following are activities that are often carried out by the people of Ohoiderwatun Village in order to maintain unity and unity, including:

### **3.1 Bergotong royong build a house**

Argued that cooperation is a positive attitude that supports village development [9]. Gotong royong is one of the distinctive values of the Indonesian people as a manifestation of tradition, culture and habits. Every living creature needs a place to shelter from the hot sun and rain which is called home. In significant city communities, building houses is usually left entirely up to the architect and his team, this only applies to the Ohoiderwatun people. Building a house is one of the activities carried out jointly by the entire village community. The materials and tools needed to build a house are a shared responsibility. Everyone can bring sand, bricks, cement, paint, and tiles. To help build houses. The prospective homeowner is in charge of preparing food and drinks for everyone who helps. Working together in building houses has become a tradition and culture that has roots since ancient times until today. The people of Ohoiderwatun Village believe that sharing and helping will create fraternal solid relations. One of the advantages of this tradition is that building a house is relatively short because an activity

carried out in cooperation or together will be completed more quickly than alone. The value of gotong royong can be seen from the collection of materials, tools, and manufacturing processes.

### **3.2 Bergotong royong dalam acara keagamaan**

The manifestation of the implementation of the value of tolerance in this village community can be seen from the several activities carried out, one of which is commemorating religious holidays together. Activities that can be categorized reflect the value of tolerance if they fulfill the following elements: 1. Providing freedom and independence, 2. Recognizing everyone's rights, 3. Respecting other people's beliefs, 4. Understanding one another. Most Ohoiderwatun villagers adhere to Islam and Protestant Christianity, where every religion has several big days. For example, in the Islamic religion, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha. While in Protestant Christianity, such as Easter, the increase of Isa al-Masih, and Christmas. For the general public, the commemoration of holidays is only carried out by adherents of that religion, but it differs from the people of Ohoiderwatun village. The entire village community celebrates the commemoration of religious holidays with joy. For example, halal bi halal is an activity to celebrate the victory day of Eid al-Fitr. This activity involved all religious people who were there, starting from preparations such as forming a committee, collecting food ingredients, and providing a place. Usually, the committee is divided into two, male and female. Men are responsible for preparing the place for activities, while women cook food and drinks for all community members. All religious people, such as chicken and fish, can consume food and beverage ingredients used for cooking. The activities included: apologizing to each other, chatting, discussing, and eating together. This activity was very effective in strengthening the unity and oneness between generations, the absence of partitions gave a profound message about the true meaning of tolerance and harmony.

### **3.3. Bergotong royong in preparing for the wedding**

Koentjaraningrat (1987) divides two types of cooperation in Indonesian society: first, mutual help and cooperation [10]. Each region has customs and traditions for holding weddings. Likewise, with the people of Ohoiderwatun village, weddings are held based on local wisdom values. Preparations for the wedding party are carried out jointly and led by the customary leader. Community members work together to prepare everything; everyone has been given different responsibilities, for example, someone is in charge of collecting donations of food ingredients, make-up, clothes, cooking, and providing a wedding venue. The basic needs of the wedding party are obtained from members of the community donations. Does every member of society want to donate? The answer is yes, even community members welcome this activity with joy and happiness. Tradition intends to reduce the burden on the bride and groom in preparing for the wedding, both materially and physically. The concept of sharing and helping others is an essential value in maintaining harmony and togetherness.

### **3.4. Bergotong royong in the process of buid churches and mosque**

In 2023 is one of the crucial moments illustrating the strong sense of tolerance, unity and harmony in Ohoiderwatun Village. Places of worship for Christians have suffered some damage, so a thorough repair is needed. At this moment it becomes a beautiful sight, where all community members work together to repair it compactly and jointly. All the men in the village gathered and divided the work to repair the church, while the women gathered food and cooked food together. Many community members voluntarily donated tools and materials to help repair the church. Activities that look simple contain a million important meanings for this country. The activity above is one of the interactions that reflects harmony between religions, this was expressed that harmony is an effort or effort to unite social beings by providing a sense of comfort and peace for both individuals and groups by using concepts or ways agreed upon by the community in order to create unity and cohesion in society [11]. Please follow other areas. This activity is a moment for people to chat with each other, joke, laugh and discuss making it seem as if there is no difference between them, there is only mutual love, respect and appreciation.

### **3.5 Suri Taudalan from village government and traditional leaders**

The village government and traditional leaders are vital in maintaining local wisdom values and harmony. Traditional leaders play the role of elders, and intermediaries in resolving conflicts, and maintaining existing traditions. This role is essential in building a harmonious community life. Traditional leaders must be able to become good behavior for the community starting from their words, attitudes, and behavior. In every activity, traditional leaders always remind and advise on the importance of unity, tolerance, and harmony. This aims to remind the community always to maintain tolerance, unity, and oneness. Like traditional leaders, the village government plays an essential role in facilitating all community activities to strengthen tolerance values. In addition, the village government acts as a bridge between the community and the Indonesian government.

The value of tolerance does not just appear in the people of Ohoiderwatun Village but through a long development process. This success was achieved because of the effort and cooperation between the village government, traditional leaders, and the community. Challenges and obstacles will always arise to hinder the implementation of tolerance, especially in today's digital era. However, the commitment, consistency, and belief of the people of Ohoiderwatun Village in the fundamental values of life make these challenges and obstacles not affect the implementation of tolerance to maintain national unity and integrity.

## **4. Conclusion**

Tolerance for the Ohoiderwatun village community is a process of mutual understanding of differences, mutual learning, and sharing. These three values form the basis for maintaining good

relations between religious communities. The Ohoiderwatun Village community implements several strategies to maintain harmony amid diversity and digitalization, starting from village officials and traditional leaders. For example, all village communities show commitment and cooperation, and all village elements participate in organizing and following every activity. Maintaining tolerance and harmony is not only the duty of the village government or traditional leaders, but the entire community must participate. For the effort, cohesiveness, and humility of the Ohoiderwatun village community, they have created a comfortable, peaceful, and tolerant life. For the village community, differences are not a source of problems but rather a source of happiness because all Indonesian people are brothers.

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