Building a Harmonious Family: Combining Cultural Heritage and Religious Values in Ambon City

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ABSTRACT

The issue of high divorce rates in Indonesia has become a serious concern. To address this, efforts are needed to strengthen family relationships. This research aims to describe that the enduring cultural and religious values play a significant role in fostering family harmony. The study focuses on families in Negeri Hukurila, Ambon City, an area renowned for its deep respect for cultural traditions and social ties. For this purpose, the research employs a qualitative research method using in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collection techniques. The findings indicate that families in Negeri Hukurila play a pivotal role in preserving cultural values and fostering community solidarity. These traditional cultural values serve as a strong foundation for family harmony, such as the concepts of sarikat and badraheng. Sarikat is a cultural concept emphasizing cooperation and mutual assistance among clans within a community to address tasks or issues. Meanwhile, badraheng underscores the importance of solidarity, mutual support, and collaboration among extended family members of a clan to face potential challenges and conflicts. Additionally, religious values and activities also contribute to strengthening family bonds. Programs like pre-marital counseling and religious education have aided in shaping positive attitudes and behaviors within families. For the people of Negeri Hukurila, the noble culture and religion are inseparable. They liken religion and culture to three foundational pillars (tiga batutungku). Therefore, integrating cultural and religious values becomes essential in enhancing family relationships.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The data indicates that Indonesia is facing a crisis in family harmony or household disintegration. This phenomenon is reflected in the rising numbers of divorces and incidents of domestic violence. According to information from BPS (2023), there were

516,334 divorce cases recorded in 2022. This figure represents an increase of approximately 15.31% compared to the previous year, which recorded 447,743 divorces. Factors such as economic conditions [2], ineffective communication [3], infidelity, and socio-cultural aspects [4] are identified as the main causes. Additionally, the

widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the preceding year also contributed to the rise in divorce rates [5]. Changes in communication dynamics and conflicts within households are cited as the primary reasons behind the disharmony leading to divorce [6], [7].

Previous studies have affirmed that family discord can be addressed by implementing the principles of a sakinah family [8]–[10]. The term sakinah family refers to a family living in harmony, peace, and shared joy. The literal meaning of sakinah is tranquility or peace. The principle of sakinah is prominently found in Islamic texts, which state that family happiness can be achieved if husbands and wives maintain a harmonious relationship, mutually respect each other, and nurture genuine affection between them.

In its application, the concept of sakinah is utilized to reduce the risk of divorce. Married couples are expected to maintain a balanced relationship supporting, collaborating, respecting, and preserving trust in each other. Additionally, effective interaction is crucial to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts that could disturb household peace. [11] findings revealed several steps to strengthen a sakinah family, including careful partner selection, the presence of affection and empathy within the family, mutual understanding between spouses, promoting constructive dialogue, and avoiding disputes. [12] suggested a clear the understanding of rights responsibilities of each partner. Meanwhile, [13] emphasized the importance of faith and tolerance within the family to build a harmonious household. [12] argued that the principles of a sakinah family should be instilled from the outset, for instance, through pre-marital education using the Begalan method, which introduces nine functions of a family to prospective spouses. [14] referred to the Niolilieta tradition on Wetang Island as an example of a life prioritizing love and familial bonds.

In Madura, there is a tradition called *ngabulâ*, aimed at ensuring peace within the family environment. *Ngabulâ* is an educational process provided to prospective

brides at the residence of a kiai (religious scholar) for a full week before marriage. During these sessions, the kiai imparts teachings on the principles of leading a harmonious family life. From this perspective, women are given a pivotal role as household managers responsible for the family's needs, including those of their future husbands and children. If she can meet her family's needs effectively, the family is considered harmonious and in line with the sakinah concept, as highlighted by Mu'in & Hefni's research (2016).

Unlike the culture in the Osing indigenous community of Central Java, there exists the adu tumper tradition. This tradition aims to ward off misfortune through a series of specific rituals performed during the temon ceremony. The ritual involves the union of burning logs, which are extinguished with holy water from flower offerings. This tradition is deemed necessary if the groom is the eldest child and the bride is the youngest in their respective families. Their belief is that if a marriage proceeds without adhering to this order, the family will face misfortune. Hence, the adu tumper tradition is seen as a solution to avert such outcomes [16], [17]. Conversely, in Ampelan, Bondowoso, East Java, the community practices the Pamugih tradition. In this tradition, the prospective groom presents a series of gifts, such as household furniture like tables, chairs, and wardrobes, to the prospective bride. The aim is to safeguard the new family from potential disasters and ensure marital happiness. This belief stems from the perspective that the tradition promotes harmony between the couple [18].

Unlike previous research, this article will explore the methods of combining traditional cultural principles and religious teachings in an effort to create a harmonious family. While earlier studies tended to emphasize either religious or cultural aspects alone, this paper posits that their combined influence can be the key to fostering harmony within families. The integration of social norms from tradition and religious teachings can bring peace to the family environment. In Negeri Hukurila (The village of Hukurila),

Maluku Province, both play significant roles in addressing various issues that arise in diverse family types. Therefore, the objective of this article is to elucidate how family harmony in Negeri Hukurila, Maluku, is constructed through the synergy between cultural principles and religious values.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method [19], [20] to delve into the roles of traditional culture and religious teachings in fostering family harmony in Negeri Hukurila, Ambon City. The qualitative approach was adopted as it facilitates a deep understanding of participants' experiences, interpretations, and social backgrounds. The primary focus of this study is Negeri Hukurila, Maluku Province, viewed as a unique example that accentuates the relationship between culture, religious beliefs, and pre-marital education in supporting family peace. The main data were collected through in-depth interviews with individuals from various generations and roles within the community. The dialogue was designed with an inclusive approach, allowing the respondents to express their perspectives on traditional principles, religious beliefs, and their experiences with education. pre-marital Furthermore, observations involving active participation were conducted to delve deeper into the daily routines of families and how these norms are rooted in everyday practices [19], [20]. In this context, there were ten participants, including a priest as a religious figure, the "Raja" and "Saniri" as customary leaders and village governance in Negeri Hukurila, community leaders, youth representatives, and five families exemplifying harmony in Negeri Hukurila.

In addition to primary information, this research also involved document analysis [19], [20] to gain a deeper understanding of how cultural traditions and religious principles relate to family dynamics. Various documents, such as traditional manuscripts, religious literature, and pre-marital education materials, were used as supplementary references to validate the research findings.

Once the data were collected, an analysis was conducted using content analysis methodology. This phase encompassed the organization, categorization, and interpretation of information to identify patterns, topics, and relationships emerging from the materials examined. In this manner, the analysis aided researchers in uncovering the deeper essence of how traditions and religious teachings interact to foster family peace in Negeri Hukurila.

Using qualitative the method employed, the aim of this research is to delve deeper into the roles of traditional culture and religious teachings in shaping marital harmony. Additionally, this study underscores the significance of pre-marital education in efforts to maintain family stability, especially amidst the prevalent issue of divorce that colors the broader Indonesian society and, specifically, the Maluku community.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Kaci' and Umataun*: The Concept of Family in Negeri Hukurila

Family is regarded as a social entity formed by individuals bound by emotional ties, which can arise through genetic relations, marriage, or adoption processes [21], [22]. Within the household structure, family members bear responsibility for ensuring essential needs such as security, attention, education, and psychological support are met [23]. In the perspective of the Hukurila community, family is seen as a small unit within the community characterized by strong kinship and emotional ties. They believe that family is a divine gift that demands significant responsibility to nurture, protect, love, and give life. The presence of family plays a significant role amidst the Hukurila community. Hukurila culture emphasizes the value of family ties, reflected in the collaboration on every family occasion and the support provided to those in need within the family environment.

In Hukurila, two family models emerge as dominant forces in the social structure: the *kaci'* family and the *umataun*

family. The *kaci'* family, often regarded as the core family, consists of essential members such as parents and children. They typically reside together in one household and are esteemed as fundamental components that constitute the family's existence. Despite their compact and relatively small nature, their role is pivotal in providing mutual support among family members and upholding values of respect and appreciation for each other.

On the other hand, the umataun family in Hukurila arises from a tradition and naming system that follows a patrilineal structure. The umataun family structure typically involves a combination of 2 to 3 families, although the number of members remains smaller compared to the *kaci'* family. the relationships Nevertheless, among members of the umataun family are deeply intertwined and close-knit. They not only share living spaces but also support each other in various family activities and are ready to assist anyone in need. Overall, families in Hukurila are positioned as the foundation that solidifies the cultural existence and solidarity of the community. Values of collaboration, care, and mutual assistance are emphasized, ensuring that families remain central forces driving harmony and unity within the community.

Whether it's the *kaci'* family or the *umataun* family, both types of families play a vital role in the Hukurila community. SY, who serves as the *Raja* of Hukurila, emphasizes several primary functions of families there. These include shaping identity, providing protection, building social relationships, serving as educational centers for children, passing down culture, fulfilling basic needs, and ensuring smooth communication.

SY further explains that firstly, families play a role in shaping an individual's identity and values. Within the family, individuals are taught about cultural, religious, and moral values that shape their character. Secondly, families serve as guardians of security and comfort for their members. There is a strong emotional bond among family members that depicts their closeness and support. Furthermore, the family is also the first place where one learns

social interaction. Here, individuals are taught how to communicate, collaborate, as well as skills such as fishing and seafaring, which are livelihoods in Negeri Hukurila. Early education is also a responsibility of the family, where children are given the foundations to face life's challenges. Then, families play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and traditions. Through family rituals and celebrations, these values and traditions are passed down from one generation to the next. Families also fulfill basic needs such as food, clothing, and health, and support the educational and occupational needs of their members.

Lastly, effective communication among family members is highly prioritized. With good communication, family members can support each other, understand each other's needs, and build trust. By maintaining these functions well, families in Negeri Hukurila are committed to creating a harmonious and loving environment, both within the family and in the community."

One renowned sociologist who extensively discussed the functions of the family is Émile Durkheim. Durkheim, a French sociologist who lived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is considered one of the founding figures of modern sociology. He is renowned for concepts such as social solidarity, anomie, and functionalism [24]. In his works titled "The Division of Labor in Society" and "The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life," Durkheim delved into the crucial role of the family in nurturing and perpetuating societal norms and values [25], [26]. According to Durkheim, the family serves as the primary socializing agent where individuals are first taught about societal norms and values [27].

Durkheim believed that the family plays a pivotal role in maintaining social solidarity. This social solidarity is grounded in shared values, norms, and common objectives that are accepted and learned by individuals within the family [25]. Thus, the family aids in creating social cohesion and integrating community members. Apart from Durkheim, numerous other sociologists have also discussed the functions of the family,

such as Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton. Parsons, in his theory regarding the family's function within the social system, emphasized the family's role in socializing children and preserving cultural values [28]. Meanwhile, Merton, with his structural-functional approach, discussed how the family fulfills the needs of both individuals and society at large [29]."

3.2 Marriage and Pre-Marital Education: Religiosity within Families in Negeri Hukurila

The Negeri Hukurila community understands marriage as an official bond between two individuals committed to living together in a legitimate union recognized by religion, law, and tradition. Marriage involves the union of two people who love, respect, and support each other in their life journey. Marriage encompasses legal, social, and emotional aspects. Thus, legally, marriage is a valid contract between two individuals that entails specific rights and responsibilities, including shared property rights, financial obligations, and legal protection.

Marriage is also socially culturally recognized as an institution that involves a commitment between two families, laying the foundation for the formation of a new family. For families in the Negeri Hukurila, the essence of marriage lies in the profound emotional bond between a loving couple who share their lives. Married couples commit to supporting each other, building trust, and facing challenges together. Marriage serves as a vessel for couples to grow and evolve as individuals while forging strong and enduring bonds. Moreover, families in Hukurila believe that marriage encompasses spiritual and religious dimensions. Marriage is viewed as a sacred union blessed by God and governed by religious values. The Protestant Christian faith practiced by the Hukurila community has rules, rituals, and traditions associated with marriage, imparting spiritual depth and significance to the couples. In a broader sense, the Hukurila community sees marriage as the foundation of both family and society. Through marriage, couples establish a stable

and secure environment for the growth of children and play a vital role in shaping and fostering societal values. Marriage also lays the groundwork for the distribution of responsibilities and roles within the family, facilitating the exchange of love, support, and engagement between spouses.

Pre-marital education is a program or activity aimed at providing preparation and tools to prospective couples before entering married life. This education imparts understanding, knowledge, skills, and values necessary to build a healthy, harmonious, and enduring marital relationship. Pre-marital education employs various approaches and methods, whether through religious institutions, educational institutions, organizations counselors, marriage or focusing on family education. It emphasizes the importance of effective communication, conflict resolution, family financial management, roles, responsibilities marriage, and joint future planning. Additionally, this education may also cover understanding the shifts in roles and dynamics of a family after marriage, as well as common challenges couples often face in marital life.

Pre-marital education also provides space for prospective couples to discuss, share experiences, and deepen their understanding of cherished values in marriage, such as commitment, loyalty, mutual understanding, and love that grows and evolves over time. Through pre-marital education, prospective couples are given the opportunity to reflect, evaluate their readiness both individually and as a pair, and receive guidance to navigate challenges and foster a healthy and happy relationship.

In the Hukurila community, premarital education is obtained from two institutions: religious institutions (churches) and families. Pre-marital education through religious institutions (churches) is referred to as church education or "Pre-marital Preparation." The main foundation of this education is the teachings of the Bible and reverence for God. Within the family vision advocated, the importance of fearing God, loving one another, respecting, honoring, and

assisting each other is emphasized. The goal of this education is to equip prospective couples with strong religious and moral values and to assist them in building a quality family based on faith.

Furthermore, pre-marital education is also within the family conducted environment. In this form, family education takes place in a more intimate and familiar setting, namely within one's own family. Commonly used terms for this are "Advice" or "Guidance." In this education, the teachings provided aim to foster a harmonious and happy family. The family vision promoted is to create a loving family environment, maintain good family relations, understand and fulfill the responsibilities of each family member.

Pre-marital education through the church and family plays a significant role in equipping prospective couples with the values, knowledge, and skills necessary to build a healthy and harmonious marital relationship. Whether through the teachings of the Bible and reverence for God imparted in the church or through advice and guidance within the family environment, prospective couples are provided with adequate preparation for the journey of married life. With proper pre-marital education, it is hoped that prospective couples can establish a strong, loving family and navigate the various challenges that may arise in their marriage.

3.3 Sarikat and Badraheng: Cultural Values in Building Family Harmony in Negeri Hukurila

In the Negeri Hukurila, two crucial terms are utilized to strengthen relationships within and outside the family: sarikat and badraheng. badraheng refers to the bonds and relationships forged among family members, particularly those connected by blood or marriage. The focus of this concept lies in unity, mutual support, and collaboration among family members when facing various challenges or disputes. On the other hand, sarikat pertains to the significance of communicative interaction, collective decision-making, and valuing diverse perspectives to ensure harmony and unity

within the family environment. In the cultural context of Hukurila, during family ceremonies such as weddings or other special events, families come together to organize the event, offering mutual financial support or resources. This reflects the strong spirit of mutual cooperation and collaboration among Hukurila families.

Indeed, sarikat and badraheng highlight fundamental differences in their relational dimensions. Sarikat, in essence, underscores how families interact and integrate with external parties, including nearby neighbors, colleagues from various occupational backgrounds, and individuals who may not share blood ties with them. In this context, sarikat encourages families to participate in social activities held within the community, such as charity events, social service activities, or community meetings, aiming to strengthen connections and active involvement. Beyond that, sarikat also promotes collaboration with various external institutions or organizations, including governmental bodies for policies and regulations, educational institutions for education and training, and religious institutions for moral and ethical guidance. This collaboration aims to maintain social cohesion within the community while ensuring that the integrity and harmony within the family structure remain intact, leveraging all available resources and support.

Sarikat embodies a community united to support one another in accomplishing specific tasks. This collaboration is frequently observed in various activities, ranging from community service, development initiatives, to religious events and harvest celebrations. In these moments, cooperation becomes the primary key; all community members work together to achieve optimal results. Each member is assigned specific responsibilities and contributes according to their capacity, aiming to ensure the smoothness and efficiency of task execution. In the Negeri Hukurila, the tradition of sarikat is not merely a routine but also serves as a foundation that strengthens relationships among families, regardless of blood ties.

In many activities such as rice harvesting or constructing a new house, families in the Negeri Hukurila typically arrange food as part of the preparations. All involved family members then collaborate until the completion of the task. After their hard work, their tradition is to gather and enjoy the meal together as a form of appreciation for the teamwork that has been done. Interestingly, even though no monetary compensation is given, the spirit of mutual cooperation and support serves as the driving force behind each of their actions.

However, there are also situations where the tasks at hand are more extensive and involve a larger number of people, such as cleaning the church area or carrying out renovations. In these situations, the role of mothers often becomes pivotal; they are responsible for preparing meals for everyone working. Meanwhile, other community members or congregants focus on the physical labor. After everything is completed, they all come together to share a meal, solidifying the relationships that have been established. Through such means, the residents of the Negeri Hukurila not only complete tasks swiftly but also deepen their social bonds.

The presence of the *badraheng* and *sarikat* traditions in the Negeri Hukurila is crucial in strengthening relationships among families. These concepts underscore the importance of mutual support, solidarity, and a sense of togetherness in daily life. The existence of *badraheng* and *sarikat*, which have become integral parts of the culture and traditions in the Negeri Hukurila, makes this community a robust and supportive environment.

3.4 *Tiga Batutungku*: Social Institutions as Drivers of Harmony within Families

The concept of the *tiga batutungku* in Hukurila describes the collaboration among three societal pillars that uphold harmony within families. These three pillars consist of religion, the State of *Negeri* as reflecting traditions and customs, and the educational institution. Together, they collaborate to

create a peaceful and harmonious atmosphere within families and the community.

Religion, especially the church, plays a pivotal role in ensuring harmony within families. In the predominantly Protestant Christian community of Hukurila, the church provides moral and spiritual guidance. Teachings such as forgiveness, tolerance, and love serve as the foundation for shaping character and relationships among family members. Moreover, these teachings also serve as sources of inspiration for resolving conflicts and maintaining peace within the family.

Furthermore, the State of Negeri, led by the Raja and Saniri, is responsible for upholding justice and order. Through customary law and national legislation, they ensure security and protection for all citizens, including harmony within families in Hukurila. The State government also has the responsibility to implement programs that support families in addressing social challenges and potential conflicts that may arise within them, even within the 'kaci' families. Meanwhile, educational institutions, such as schools, play a role in equipping family members with knowledge and skills. With a structured curriculum, schools teach effective communication, conflict resolution, and the values of collaboration. All of these efforts aim to prepare the younger generation to build harmonious families in the future."

Through intensive collaboration among these three pillars, the State of Hukurila has successfully fostered an environment that supports the growth of harmonious families. The *tiga batutungku* not only emphasizes the importance of collaboration but also values the role of each institution in shaping values that promote peace and harmony within the community.

The concept of *tiga batutungku* is implemented in the Hukurila community with the principle of collaboration among various parties in addressing the village's existing issues. The church, government, and educational institutions work together to find solutions and ways out for every problem faced. Several cases exemplify the collaboration built by the *tiga batutungku* in

the state of Hukurila. Firstly, in the context of the church, if there is a need for funds for church construction, the entire village community collaborates to find a solution, including allocating funds from the village budget or coordinating with relevant parties. Secondly, this collaboration and coordination also occur in education, where all parties strive to meet the needs of students, such as providing examination facilities using computers from state meetings.

At the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) level, facilities and support are also provided by the village community. The state government assists in paying teachers, providing play equipment, and meeting administrative needs. Similarly, in the health sector, the community collaborates in funding monthly weigh-ins for toddlers and the elderly. Thirdly, in governance matters, if there is a conflict with neighboring villages, the church and council also help resolve the issue. Coordination is carried out between the church and the church representatives in the neighboring village, ensuring that problem is resolved effectively. With the principle of collaboration and coordination among the church, government, educational institutions, and village community, it is hoped that existing issues can be addressed and collective prosperity can be built. The tiga batutungku concept serves as the foundation for the Hukurila village in achieving harmony and sustainable progress.

The collaboration among the tiga batutungku is also evident in family conflicts in the Hukurila region. When family disputes arise, these three institutions play a pivotal role. The role of the tiga batutungku (church, state government, educational, and health institutions) in resolving family conflicts in the Hukurila region is of utmost importance. Whenever there are issues within families, the Hukurila region engages the tiga batutungku to convene meetings alongside the FKPM (Community Empowerment Communication Forum) and also involves the State Inclusion Working Group of Hukurila, especially when the conflicts are related to household matters, such as disputes between spouses. The Hukurila region strives to promptly address these conflicts. They directly facilitate meetings, summon pastors as representatives of the church, and involve healthcare professionals if the conflict escalates and someone gets injured. In such scenarios, healthcare personnel are engaged to provide the necessary assistance and care.

The Hukurila region adopts a familial approach to reconcile family conflicts, ensuring they do not escalate into broader disputes. They recognize the importance of maintaining harmony and peace among community members. An example of such a case occurred a few months ago, where the tiga batutungku, in collaboration with the FKPM and the State Inclusion Working Group, actively intervened to resolve the family conflict. Through the involvement of the tiga batutungku and the synergy between government, church, educational institutions, and other community organizations, the village of Hukurila strives to create a harmonious environment, supporting families in addressing conflicts. They perceive the need for proactive and responsive conflict resolution to realize a happy and harmonious family life in the Hukurila region.

The aim of the tiga batutungku is to foster harmony within the community. The needs and issues prevalent in the community at large, and specifically within families, are complex matters that require collaboration and cooperation from various stakeholders to arrive at effective solutions. With distinct yet complementary roles, the church, government, and educational institutions collaborate to provide protection, guidance, and effective conflict resolution within the realm of the Hukurila region. Here are some functions of the tiga batutungku: Firstly, the Church plays a crucial role in Hukurila. Through counseling and spiritual advice, the church aids community members in finding peace and addressing domestic issues. Moreover, the church provides places of worship and religious ceremonies as means to strengthen the bonds among its members. Family and marriage counseling programs organized by the church help maintain harmony within households and foster solidarity among families in the Hukurila region. Additionally, the church is proactive in imparting good moral and ethical values in daily life, serving as a firm foundation in building harmonious families.

Secondly, the state government plays a crucial role in resolving family conflicts in the Hukurila region. The government provides policies, regulations, and laws related to the protection and resolution of family disputes. Through public services such as health centers, social services, and child protection, the state government aids the community in addressing familial issues. The state government is also responsible for coordinating conflict resolution efforts by involving relevant departments and other governmental institutions. Furthermore, the government promotes the implementation of family development and educational programs to enhance the well-being of families in the Hukurila region.

Thirdly, educational institutions hold a significant role in handling family conflicts in Hukurila. Through formal education, these institutions instill positive values and good behavior in children. Educational institutions also foster effective communication between parents and children, ensuring that strong relationships and communication remain intact. With the collaboration between educational institutions, families in the Hukurila region can create an environment conducive to the growth of healthy and happy families.

With cooperation and coordination between the church, government, and educational institutions, the *tiga batutungku* in the Hukurila region serves as a catalyst for harmony within families. They collaborate to provide protection, guidance, and support to the community in resolving family conflicts, maintaining harmony, and creating a conducive environment for the growth of healthy and happy families.

4. CONCLUSION

This research indicates that in the Hukurila region, families play a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting traditions, as well as strengthening unity within the community. The values rooted in family customs serve as a robust foundation that supports stability and harmony within families. Additionally, religion contributes to maintaining harmonious relationships among family members. Premarital education programs and religious teachings have proven to be influential in guiding the mindset, actions, and interactions within families, whether they are from the Kaci' community or the general populace. Premarital education offers essential information and skills to prospective spouses to navigate the various dynamics of marriage. On the other hand, religious teachings introduce profound values that reinforce the bonds and connections among family members. From these findings, it can be concluded that the combination of traditional and spiritual values forms a strong foundation for sustaining harmony within families. This article highlights how the integration of traditional values with religious teachings can serve as a solution to address the rising divorce rates in society. The message conveyed in this article is clear: the presence and preservation of cultural and religious values play a crucial role in building and maintaining harmony within families.

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