International Journal of Social Science and Human Research

ISSN (print): 2644-0679, ISSN (online): 2644-0695

Volume 09 Issue 02 February 2026

DOI: 10.47191/ijsshr/v9-i2-49, Impact factor- 8.007

Page No: 1331-1337

Sectoral Policies Towards Collaborative Policies: Analysis of Local Traditions as Reinforcement Policies in Reducing the Prevalence of Violence Against Women in North Maluku

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ABSTRACT: The prevalence of violence against women in North Maluku shows an alarming trend, with 292 cases reported in 2021 and continuing to increase every year. These forms of violence include sexual violence (33%), psychological violence (36%), physical violence (18%), and economic violence (13%), which occur both in public spaces and within families. A comprehensive analysis shows that this problem is influenced by the complexity of the socio-cultural structure, the weak implementation of formal policies, family factors and parenting patterns dominated by patriarchal relations, as well as the lack of early sexuality education in the family environment. Based on these conditions, this study assumes that the local traditions of Oke Sou and Sidi, which are practices of female sexuality education based on cultural and religious values, have a learning model that can be adapted and integrated into policy. This study uses a qualitative approach with a framework of policy integration and collaborative governance perspectives. Data was collected through literature studies, in-depth interviews with traditional leaders, Oke Sou/Sidi practitioners, and other stakeholders.

The study aims to identify the Oke Sou and Sidi traditions in providing understanding and protection for women, as well as opportunities for integrating traditional values into public policy and collaborative models that enable synergy between formal institutions and traditional customs. The results of the study show that the Oke Sou and Sidi traditions can be a new strategy in increasing the legitimacy of public policy at the community level and strengthening the internalisation of protective cultural values for women. Thus, this study contributes to the development of public policies that are more holistic, responsive to the local context, and sustainable in efforts to prevent violence against women in North Maluku.

KEYWORDS: Policy, Inclusive, Sexuality, Collaborative, Integration

INTRODUCTION

The level of violence against women in North Maluku shows an alarming trend, with 292 cases in 2021 and an increasing trend in subsequent years, including sexual, psychological, physical, and economic violence in both domestic and public spheres (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2022). This phenomenon is intertwined with patriarchal socio-cultural structures, weak implementation of formal policies, hierarchical family parenting patterns, and a lack of early sexuality education in the family environment (Siiskonen, Tikkanen, & Pykalainen, 2025).

At the national level, the state has responded through various legal instruments such as the 2022 Law on Sexual Violence Crimes (TPKS) and various derivative policies; however, empirically, the prevalence of violence against women remains high, calling into question the effectiveness of formal policies at the community level (Cejudo & Trein, 2023). This situation highlights the gap between top-down sectoral policies and the configuration of local values, authorities, and social mechanisms, particularly in regions with strong traditional and religious customs such as North Maluku (Siiskonen et al., 2025).

In North Maluku, the Oke Sou and Sidi traditions as practices of education and initiation for women based on customary and religious values actually contain a set of norms, knowledge, and social control mechanisms that have the potential to serve as a 'reinforcement policy' for formal policies on the prevention of violence against women (Pettrachin, 2024). Using the framework of policy integration and collaborative governance, this paper asks: how do the Oke Sou and Sidi traditions produce social protection for women, and how can the values, actors, and mechanisms within them be integrated into public policy to reduce the prevalence of violence against women in North Maluku? (Sarti, 2023; Kaplaner, Knill, & Steinebach, 2025).

Furthermore, the high prevalence of violence against women in North Maluku also indicates a fundamental challenge in building synergy between formal policies and local norms. This is reinforced by findings that communities tend to trust customary-based resolution mechanisms more than formal legal processes, so that efforts to prevent and handle cases of violence are often half-

hearted (Siiskonen et al., 2025). On the other hand, approaches that integrate traditional values such as Oke Sou and Sidi are believed to be able to strengthen the legitimacy and effectiveness of public policy, as they are able to bridge local needs with national regulations in a more harmonious manner (Kaplaner et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Policy Integration

Recent literature positions policy integration not merely as a technocratic design, but as a cross-subsystem political process from agenda setting to implementation and evaluation (Cejudo & Trein, 2023). Policy integration is understood as an effort to connect new issues with existing policy regimes and build links between sectors that previously worked in sectoral 'silos' (Kaplaner et al., 2025).

Substantively, policy integration means consolidating objectives, instruments, and standards across policies so that interactions between policies are coherent rather than mutually exclusive. Organisationally, policy integration requires cross-institutional coordination mechanisms, administrative capacity, and instruments that maintain this integration on an ongoing basis, including opening up space for non-state actors at the local level (Siiskonen et al., 2025).

The main assumption in this article is based on the understanding that the integration of formal policies with local traditional values can strengthen the effectiveness of preventing violence against women in North Maluku. Within the framework of policy integration theory, the success of a policy is not only determined by comprehensive regulatory design, but also by the policy's ability to adapt and negotiate with existing social structures. As described by Cejudo & Trein (2023), the process of cross-subsystem integration requires the synchronisation of objectives and instruments between the formal and informal sectors, thereby creating synergies that can respond to the complexity of issues in a contextual manner.

Furthermore, collaborative governance reinforces the assumption that the participation of non-state actors, particularly customary and religious institutions, is not merely complementary but an essential component in the production of inclusive public policy. This theory emphasises the importance of deliberative processes and the division of authority, in which local actors are given the space to define problems, formulate solutions, and oversee implementation. In other words, recognition of local normative authorities such as Oke Sou and Sidi is the foundation for creating trust and social legitimacy, which ultimately encourages compliance with and sustainability of integrative policies (Pettrachin, 2024).

Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach to policies on preventing violence against women affirms that formal efforts will always clash with the diversity of meanings, interests, and practices at the community level. Therefore, the integration of local values is not only pragmatic but also strategic in developing policies that are responsive and adaptive to the local socio-cultural context. By adopting the framework of policy integration and collaborative governance, this article lays the theoretical foundation that the protection of women will be more effective if formal policies are able to accommodate and empower local mechanisms that have been proven to be operational in North Maluku society.

Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance emphasises a deliberative, trust-based, resource-sharing process of joint decision-making between state and non-state actors to address complex public issues (Pettrachin, 2024). In the context of integrative policy, collaborative governance provides an 'institutional space' for policy production between bureaucracies, religious institutions, customary institutions, NGOs, and communities (Sarti, 2023).

In the case of North Maluku, Oke Sou and Sidi place customary and religious institutions as the main normative authorities in regulating the body, sexuality, and gender relations. The integration of these traditions into formal policy is only possible through a collaborative governance design that recognises these local authorities as co-governors, not merely implementing partners (Pettrachin, 2024).

The theoretical assumptions in this article become even more relevant when we examine the dynamics of interaction between formal policy and local values in North Maluku. The integration between state regulations and Oke Sou/Sidi traditions is not merely a process of policy adaptation, but also a process of negotiating meaning that takes place in the social space of the community. Here, local actors act as a bridge between the interests of the state and the needs of the community, so that the resulting policies are not only administratively legal, but also culturally and socially legitimate. Thus, the effectiveness of women's protection is largely determined by the ability of policies to recognise and empower local authorities, rather than simply imposing formal norms from outside.

Furthermore, the concept of collaborative governance adopted in the analytical framework of this article emphasises the importance of deliberative and participatory processes across actors. The involvement of customary, religious and women's community institutions in every stage of policy-making from problem identification to outcome evaluation strengthens social legitimacy and broadens the basis for compliance. This process also enables the transfer of knowledge and good practices between

the formal and informal sectors, so that the resulting policies can adapt to the complexities of local realities that are often beyond the reach of national legal instruments.

Ultimately, the theoretical assumption of this article is based on the belief that the protection of women is not sufficient by merely strengthening regulatory and law enforcement aspects, but must be accompanied by the strengthening of norms, values, and local mechanisms that are deeply rooted in society. By integrating the policy integration and collaborative governance approaches, policies to prevent violence against women in North Maluku have the potential to become a responsive and sustainable model that is able to respond to the challenges of socio-cultural diversity in a concrete and inclusive manner.

Policies on Violence against Women and Implementation Gaps

Studies on integrative policies show that politicisation, conflicts of interest between sub-sectors, and misalignment of frameworks between central and local governments and local actors often lead to 'incongruent implementation': what is stated in integrated programmes at the national level differs from practices at the local level (Sarti, 2023). On the issue of violence against women, policies are often designed from a legal-positivist and criminal-legal perspective, while at the community level the issue is understood through the language of morality, family honour, and traditional-religious norms. This framing gap often results in national policies lacking social legitimacy, leading to low case reporting rates, the dominance of informal mediation, and customary sanctions operating in parallel with, or even in conflict with, the formal justice system (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Cejudo & Trein, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, conducted in the city of Ternate and the district of West Halmahera (Jailolo), two regions that still maintain the traditions of Oke Sou and Sidi as integral parts of community life. The selection of locations was based on the assumption that these two regions have strong cultural and religious continuity and are areas with a high prevalence of violence against women (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2022). In addition, Ternate City, which is predominantly Muslim, and Jailolo, which is religiously pluralistic, share similar linguistic and traditional aspects, as well as good interfaith tolerance, enabling this study to explore the dynamics of integrating local traditions into public policy in a comparative manner.

Data collection methods included Literature study: reviewing national and regional regulations related to violence against women, violence prevention programme documents, and writings about Oke Sou and Sidi. In-depth interviews: conducted with traditional leaders, religious leaders (Islam and Christianity), Oke Sou and Sidi practitioners, local government officials (P3A Office, Bappeda, education and health offices), law enforcement officials, and women's activists in Ternate City and Jailolo.

Data analysis was conducted thematically using open, axial, and selective coding to identify: (1) the construction of values and norms regarding the body, sexuality, and protection of women in Oke Sou and Sidi, (2) the structure of actors and mechanisms of sanctions/rewards, and (3) opportunities and obstacles to integration into formal policy through the lens of policy integration and collaborative governance. In addition, this study also considers the linguistic and traditional aspects that are still similar between Ternate City and Jailolo, as well as good interfaith tolerance as supporting factors for the integration of local values into public policy.

The qualitative data analysis approach and techniques in this study refer to Denzin & Lincoln (2015), which emphasise the importance of thematic and interpretative analysis in understanding the social meaning of the collected data. In addition, the data analysis techniques also follow Sugiyono (2019), which explains the qualitative research procedure systematically, from data collection to interpretation of results. The analysis model used in this study is also supported by relevant qualitative methodology journals, such as Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2014), which provide practical guidance on qualitative data analysis, including coding techniques, themes, and data interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Oke Sou and Sidi as Local Protection for Women

Initial findings show that Oke Sou and Sidi are not merely rites of passage, but contain a curriculum of values about bodily purity, family honour, ethics in relationships with the opposite sex, and prohibitions that function as mechanisms to prevent sexual violence and violations of women's bodily boundaries. The structure of the activities usually involves traditional leaders, senior women (tete/ina adat), and religious leaders who convey teachings narratively, symbolically, and ritually (Pettrachin, 2024).

In addition, Oke Sou and Sidi work with the logic of 'social sanction': violations of norms related to sexuality and violence are processed through traditional institutions and extended families, which can impose social, economic, or status sanctions, thus functioning as a deterrent for potential perpetrators. However, this mechanism also has the potential to reproduce stigma against victims if violence is understood as a 'family disgrace' rather than a violation of rights. This is where the ambivalence lies: tradition

provides protection, but it can also normalise private mediation and hinder access to formal justice (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Sarti, 2023).

Oke Sou as a Source of Local and Religious Values

The Oke Sou tradition is a long-standing tradition in North Maluku, particularly in the cities of Ternate, Jailolo and Tidore Kepulauan (with different names). Moreover, as there are still similar traditions in North Maluku, the Oke Sou tradition not only functions as a ritual of female adulthood, but also as a space for the transmission of local and religious values, particularly Islam, which are relevant for strengthening the protection of women in the community. Dyah Kusuma, through Jailolo Kultur, plays an active role in reviving and renewing the Oke Sou tradition as part of preserving Jailolo's culture and identity (Tandaseru, 2022). This effort shows that Oke Sou is not only a symbol of biological adulthood, but also a space for the transformation of knowledge and the inheritance of values that have a positive impact on the younger generation, especially women (Cermat, 2025; HalmaheraPost, 2025).

In the Oke Sou procession, young women are given traditional herbs that are considered to have physical and spiritual properties, as well as advice on ethics, modesty, and social responsibility in accordance with Islamic values (Cermat, 2025; HalmaheraPost, 2025). This ritual usually ends with tahlilan, demonstrating the integration of local cultural and spiritual values, as well as strengthening the legitimacy of religion in traditional practices (Cermat, 2025). This process not only builds women's awareness of their roles and social responsibilities, but also provides a space for socialisation about the boundaries that must be maintained, including in gender relations and sexual violence.

The preservation and revitalisation of Oke Sou through communities such as Limau Jiko Spice Creative Centre and Jailolo Kultur shows that local traditions can be empowered as tools for education and women's empowerment, as well as being part of a strategy to prevent violence against women that is appropriate to the local context (BaKTI, 2024; Tandaseru, 2022). The integration of Oke Sou values into public policy—through education, campaigns, and women's empowerment programmes—can increase the legitimacy and acceptance of formal policies at the community level, while strengthening the internalisation of protective values for women (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024).

Sidi as a Localised Form of Protection for Women in the Christian Perspective

Within the Christian community in North Maluku, the tradition of Sidi plays a very significant role as a process of education and confirmation of spiritual maturity, particularly for women. The Sidi affirmation is a church ritual that marks the culmination of the catechism or faith development process, in which Sidi participants are considered to have reached spiritual maturity and are responsible for their faith (Rev. Elifas Tomix Maspaitella, as quoted in SuaraMaluku, 2016; MalukuPost, 2020). In the context of women, the Sidi procession often becomes a space for the transmission of ethical, moral, and social responsibility values that are relevant to strengthening the protection of women in the community.

In the Sidi catechism process, participants—including women—are given material on faith, ethics, and social responsibility in accordance with Christian teachings (Antara News, 2018). This material includes teaching about gender relations, boundaries in social interactions, and the importance of maintaining self-respect and integrity, which are the foundations for preventing violence against women (Philoxenia, 2019). After being confirmed, women who become members of Sidi are expected to be role models and examples in the community, as well as to be active in upholding moral and spiritual values (Antara News, 2018).

The preservation and revitalisation of Sidi through church communities, as carried out by the GPM Synod's Daily Workers Council, shows that this tradition can be empowered as a tool for education and women's empowerment, as well as being part of a strategy to prevent violence against women that is appropriate to the local context (Antara News, 2018; Philoxenia, 2019). The integration of Sidi values into public policy—through education, campaigns, and women's empowerment programmes—can increase the legitimacy and acceptance of formal policies at the community level, while strengthening the internalisation of protective values for women (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024).

The Gap between Sectoral Policies and Localities

Regulations such as the TPKS Law, which classifies violence as a state criminal offence, operate through an institutional chain (police–prosecutor–court–support services) that is structurally and culturally separate from the customary-religious arena of Oke Sou/Sidi. Studies on policy integration show that when new policies are 'imposed' on local systems without design coordination, fragmentation occurs: one issue is responded to by several policy regimes and social regimes in parallel without synergy (Cejudo & Trein, 2023; Kaplaner et al., 2025).

In the context of North Maluku, fragmentation is evident in: (a) the absence of customary/religious actors in the formulation of regional programmes for the prevention of violence against women; (b) the dominance of project-based logic from sectoral agencies (P3A, education, health) that does not touch on traditional socialisation spaces such as Oke Sou/Sidi; and (c) the absence of a two-way referral mechanism between the handling of cases in the customary sphere and the formal legal system (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024).

Sectoral Policies Towards Collaborative Policies: Analysis of Local Traditions as Reinforcement Policies in Reducing the Prevalence of Violence Against Women in North Maluku

The gap between sectoral policies and localities in the prevention of violence against women in North Maluku is a complex issue rooted in the lack of synergy between the formal legal system and customary and religious-based protection mechanisms. Many formal policies, such as the TPKS Law, only focus on law enforcement and administrative procedures, thus often failing to reach traditional socialisation spaces such as Oke Sou and Sidi, which have high social legitimacy at the community level (Cejudo & Trein, 2023; Kaplaner et al., 2025). The absence of customary and religious actors in the formulation of regional policies has led to a fragmented response to cases of violence, with victims and their families often confused about which course of action best aligns with their values.

Furthermore, the dominance of project-based approaches from sectoral agencies such as P3A, education, and health tends to position violence prevention programmes as external interventions that are separate from local traditions. As a result, spaces for socialisation that have traditionally built protective awareness towards women, such as the Oke Sou and Sidi rituals, receive little attention in the design and implementation of formal policies (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024). In fact, these customary-religious mechanisms are capable of transmitting moral, spiritual, and ethical values that are highly relevant to building women's resilience to the risk of violence.

The absence of a two-way referral mechanism between the handling of cases in the customary sphere and the formal legal system also widens the gap of fragmentation. Cases handled by customary law are often not officially documented, thereby potentially reducing victims' access to justice and comprehensive protection. On the other hand, state officials often lack understanding of the prevailing social dynamics and local norms, so that case handling can cause resistance or distrust at the community level (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024). Integration between these two regimes is absolutely necessary so that the protection of women is not only formal, but also substantive and contextual to the needs of the local community.

Studies on policy integration emphasise the importance of inclusive and adaptive policy design, in which customary and religious actors are actively involved in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of violence prevention programmes. Thus, formal policies can be strengthened by the social and spiritual legitimacy that already exists in the Oke Sou and Sidi traditions, thereby promoting compliance, acceptance, and effectiveness of interventions at the grassroots level (Cejudo & Trein, 2023; Kaplaner et al., 2025; Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024).

Oke Sou and Sidi as Reinforcement Policy

Based on the policy integration framework, Oke Sou and Sidi can be positioned as a ‘reinforcement policy’ that strengthens the effectiveness of formal policies at three levels: (1) normative level: values that protect women's bodies and dignity are rearticulated in the language of human rights, gender equality, and anti-violence, then woven into the Oke Sou/Sidi module that is recognised by custom and religion; (2) institutional level: customary institutions and religious councils function as official partners in the prevention of violence, for example through MoUs with local governments for the implementation of tradition-based sexuality education and tiered reporting in cases of violence; and (3) the instrument level: campaign instruments, educational curricula, and counselling services incorporate Oke Sou/Sidi material and, conversely, TPKS Law material is adapted into the ‘local language’ conveyed in these rituals (Sarti, 2023; Kaplaner et al., 2025).

Experience in various contexts shows that successful policy integration requires adaptation of instruments and processes, not just the addition of programmes. The integration of formal sexuality education modules with traditional socialisation schemes such as Oke Sou/Sidi has the potential to increase legitimacy and compliance at the community level (Siiskonen et al., 2025; Pettrachin, 2024).

Collaborative Governance Model: State–Customary Law–Religion–Community

Referring to the literature on collaborative governance and studies on policy integration networks, a collaborative governance model for the prevention of violence against women in North Maluku can be formulated with the following components: (1) a cross-actor collaborative forum: involving local government, indigenous institutions, religious councils, women's organisations, educational institutions, and law enforcement agencies to formulate common goals, success indicators, and case referral protocols; (2) the role of local ‘integration entrepreneurs’: figures who are able to bridge the language of formal policy with the language of custom/religion, such as local academics or women's activists who have cultural legitimacy, acting as drivers of integration at the implementation stage; and (3) a two-way referral mechanism: cases handled by customary institutions can—with the victim's consent—be referred to the formal justice system, while state officials respect the social recovery process carried out by the community, as long as it does not violate the victim's rights (Pettrachin, 2024; Sarti, 2023).

This design shifts the orientation from sectoral policies (law, social, education moving independently) to collaborative policies that recognise the plurality of normative regimes and utilise them as resources, rather than obstacles, for the protection of women (Kaplaner et al., 2025; Siiskonen et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

(1) This article argues that the high prevalence of violence against women in North Maluku is not only a failure of formal policy implementation, but also a reflection of the absence of integration between state policies and local social values such as Oke Sou and Sidi. Using the framework of policy integration and collaborative governance, local traditions are positioned not as 'opponents' of modernity, but as policy reinforcements that can increase the legitimacy, credibility, and effectiveness of policies to prevent violence against women. In practical terms, this study recommends:

(2) The formulation of regional policies for the prevention of violence against women that explicitly recognise and integrate the role of Oke Sou/Sidi;

(3) The development of sexuality education modules based on local traditions that are in line with human rights principles and the TPKS Law; and

(4) The establishment of a collaborative forum as an arena for ongoing negotiation on values, mechanisms, and instruments for the protection of women in North Maluku.

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