Contestation of Customary and Islamic Law: *Mangupa* and *Tuor* in *Horja* Ritual at Tapanuli Muslim Community Wedding

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Abstract: This article discusses the change from custom to sharia with contestation of discourse between culture and religion in the *horja* ritual at the wedding of the Tapanuli Muslim community. *Horja* rituals that were initially based on local customs and traditions have undergone significant changes due to the influence of Islam. This article analyzes how the contestation between tradition and religion occurs and affects cultural identity. This type of research uses qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. This ethnographic approach is used to see how strong cultural and religious practices are attached to the wedding *horja* ritual of the Tapanuli Muslim community. This study found that cultural and religious contestation in the marriage *horja* ritual of the Tapanuli Muslim community targeted two cultural contents, namely, *mangupa* and the determination of *tuor* (offering). The authority of religious figures who managed to seize the influence of society to create a change in culture, namely from custom to sharia. These changes include replacing cultural practices, mantras, and symbols with Islamic practices and prayers and emphasizing Islamic religious teachings and practices in marriage ceremonies, *mangupa*, and *tuor* (offering). Contestation between indigenous and religious leaders arose to maintain control over culture and spiritual values. In addition, the role of Islamic religious figures has also penetrated the cultural domain.

Keywords: *Culture*; *religion*; *contestation*; *muslim wedding*

Abstrak: Artikel ini membahas perubahan adat ke syari'at menggunakan pendekatan kontestasi wacana antara budaya dan agama dalam ritual *horja* pada pernikahan masyarakat Muslim Tapanuli. Ritual *horja* yang awalnya didasarkan pada adat dan tradisi lokal telah mengalami perubahan signifikan akibat pengaruh agama Islam. Artikel ini menganalisis bagaimana kontestasi antara tradisi dan agama berlangsung dan memengaruhi identitas budaya. Jenis penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi. Pendekatan ini digunakan untuk melihat seberapa kuat praktik kebudayaan dan agama melekat pada ritual *horja* pernikahan

masyarakat muslim Tapanuli. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa kontestasi budaya dan agama dalam ritual *horja* perkawinan masyarakat muslim Tapanuli menyasar dua konten kebudayaan, yaitu *mangupa* dan penetapan *tuor* (seserahan). Otoritas tokoh agama yang begitu kuat berhasil merebut pengaruh masyarakat sehingga menciptakan perubahan dalam budaya, yaitu dari adat ke syari'at. Perubahan ini mencakup penggantian praktik, mantra dan simbol budaya dengan praktik dan doa-doa Islam serta penekanan pada ajaran dan praktik agama Islam khususnya pada konten *mangupa* dan *tuor* dalam *horja* pernikahan. Kontestasi antara tokoh adat dan tokoh agama muncul dalam upaya mempertahankan kendali atas budaya dan ajaran agama. Selain itu, peran tokoh agama Islam juga sudah merambah domain kebudayaan.

Kata kunci: *Budaya*; *agama*; *kontestasi*; *pernikahan muslim*

Introduction

Historically, the genealogy of the *horja* ritual manifests the teachings of the Tapanuli culture, which originated from a mixture of animism, dynamism, and paganism (triadic cosmology).[1] The arrival of Islam as a religion that teaches monotheism (*tawḥīd*) is contrary to cultural beliefs.[2] It is called the opposite because traditional rituals were originally a form of worship to ancestral spirits, *Nadebata* (supernatural powers), and objects considered sacred.[3]

The prolonged interaction between culture and Islam in Tapanuli has never resulted in a mutually agreed relationship.[4] The relationship between the two is marked by tensions and differences in

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[1] Faizah Binte Zakaria, *Sacral Ecologies of the North Sumatran Highlands: An Environmental History of Conversions, c. 1800 to 1928* (Yale University, 2017).

[2] Eleni Polymenopoulou, "Caliphs, Jinns, and Sufi Shrines: The Protection of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Rights under Islamic Law," *Emory Int'l L. Rev.* 36 (2022): 743.

[3] Exson Pane and Freddy Manurung, "Religious Movement of Movement of Ugamo Malim in Batak Land-Indonesia," *Jurnal Koinonia* 14, no. 2 (2022): 119–33.

[4] Suheri Sahputra Rangkuti, "PARADAT, HAGURUAN DAN USTAZ SALAFI: Perubahan Nilai Adat Dalihan Na Tolu Dalam Narasi Pendidikan Nilai", *PhD Thesis*, UIN SUNAN KALIJAGA YOGYAKARTA (2021).

views that often come to the surface.[5] Although Islam has long been present in the region and is the religion of most of the population, some people still hold cultural traditions in high esteem. Even cultural values and Islamic teachings often appear as topics of discussion at various moments in people's lives, especially in some traditional ceremonies such as wedding ceremonies and funerals.[6] This has led to differences in views between those who adhere to customary traditions and those who follow Islamic provisions.[7] In addition, some traditional traditions contradict Islamic religious teachings, such as worshiping ancestors or *mangupa* in wedding ceremonies and sacred symbols in the *mangupa* ceremony.

Although the relationship between culture and Islam in Tapanuli is full of dynamics and challenges, the existence of both simultaneously is also one of the characteristics of the culture and identity of the people in this area.[8] Such differences are only sometimes a source of conflict. But it is possible that one day it could become a fertile field to generate prolonged conflict and more profound intolerance among its inhabitants.

Horja, as part of the culture in Tapanuli, is one aspect that has attracted the attention of researchers concerning Islam.[9] *Horja* refers to traditional ceremonies that are the center of social and cultural life of the Tapanuli people. As a place for large families to gather and carry out various cultural activities, horja has an essential role in maintaining

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[5] Dirk De Clercq and Renato Pereira, "Relationship Conflict, Low Goodwill Trust, Innovation Propensity—and Help? How to Encourage Helping Behaviours Even in Conflict-Laden Work Settings," *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences/Revue Canadienne Des Sciences de l'Administration*, 2022.

[6] Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," in *Ritual* (Routledge, 2017): 549–76.

[7] Rr Dewi Anggraeni, "Islamic Law and Customary Law in Contemporary Legal Pluralism in Indonesia: Tension and Constraints," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 1 (2023): 25–48.

[8] Indra Muda and Agung Suharyanto, "Analysis of Life's Inter-Religious Harmony Based on the Philosophy of Dalihan Na Tolu in Sipirok Sub-District, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatera Province," *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 30, no. 5 (2020): 533–40.

[9] Syahrini Harahap, Syafruddin Syam, and Ramadhan Syahmedi Siregar, "Inheritance Anomaly of Daughter 'Batang Angkola' Based on Islamic Law And Common Law," *JURNAL ILMIAH MIZANI: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi, Dan Keagamaan* 10, no. 1 (2023): 91–105.

cultural identity and strengthening the social bonds of the community. However, in the complex interaction between culture and Islam, *horja* is also one of the growing points of discourse. Some aspects of tradition associated with *horja* can contradict Islamic teachings.[10] For example, some cultural practices related to ancestral spirits and certain rituals within the *horja*, such as *mangupa* could be considered a form of worship to something other than Allah, which contradicts the Islamic belief in monotheism.

An Islamic religious leader in southern Tapanuli said that in marriage, some practices are contrary to Islamic teachings. One of them is *mangupa* and *tuor* (offering) provisions. In his confession, he said that he often refused to do the practice in every marriage ceremony as it was initially acted. He only accepted when the *mangupa* and *tuor* were adapted to the teachings of Islam according to what he believed.[11] An Islamic religious leader in Mandailing also said that it is not only the practice of *mangupa* that must be eradicated. The types of *tuhor* (offering) must also be adapted to Islam because, in Islam, there is only dowry.[12]

One of the exciting findings of the most recent research in Tapanuli is that some cultural traditions previously considered contrary to Islamic teachings have evolved to align with religious values.[13] Other research in line with this suggests that societies have successfully adopted an inclusive approach and sought to filter out cultural elements that do not align with Islam.[14] However, there is a significant difference with previous research that attracts attention, namely the findings that say that a group of indigenous peoples from South Tapanuli try to

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[10] Malkan Hasibuan, Ramdhan Syahmedi Siregar, and Muhammad Syukri Albani Nasution, "THE VIEW OF UTARA PADANG LAWAS SCHOLARS ABOUT THE CULTURE OF ANIMAL SLAUGHTER AT THE TIME OF ACCIDENTS (MAQOSHID SYARIAH)," *Ta Dib Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2023): 83–92.

[11] Interview with An Islamic religious leader in southern Tapanuli, 2022

[12] Interview with An Islamic religious leader in Mandailing, 2022

[13] Rangkuti, "PARADAT, HAGURUAN DAN USTAZ SALAFI."

[14] Suheri Sahputra Rangkuti et al., "Hatobangon: Character Building and Revitalization of Cultural Values in Panyabungan," *HIKMATUNA: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2022): 119–33.

maintain traditional rituals, not just to perpetuate their essence and meaning.[15]

Some of the most recent research above examines positive developments related to respect and Islamic teachings.[16] Some of the research above departs from efforts to harmonize the two entities. However, some highlight that some groups maintain traditional rituals with full awareness and belief as a form of resistance and affirmation of their cultural identity.[17] However, this study only describes minor movements made by these cultural groups.

So far, the authors have not found any research that radically highlights the relationship between culture and Islam. This research uses Pierre Bourdieu's theory that in every social structure, there are actors, capital, and habitus that influence. In this perspective, this research will focus on identifying the root of problems, conflicts, and clashes of values between Islamic cultures and teachings. This research will also examine how local communities respond to and deal with these complex relationship dynamics and their impact on social and cultural life in Southern Tapanuli.

This type of research is qualitative research using an ethnographic approach. The ethnographic approach is the right choice to understand the relationship between culture and Islam in Tapanuli, especially in marriage ceremonies with the point of view of contestation. Through this method, researchers will engage directly with communities, observe in depth, and document their daily experiences and practices. To gain a deep insight into the views, beliefs, and values maintained by indigenous peoples who seek to retain their customary rituals. These steps involve active interaction with the community, conducting in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and engaging in traditional events and ceremonies. In

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[15] Muba Simanihuruk and Tunggul Sihombing, "Increasing Tension: Toba Batak Value System and Direct Democracy Praxis in the Village Head Elections in Tapanuli Utara," *Advanced Science Letters* 24, no. 1 (2018): 471–74.

[16] Sumper Mulia Harahap, Fatahuddin Aziz Siregar, and Darwis Harahap, "Tracing the Dynamic Spectrum of Religious Moderation in the Local Custom of North Sumatera," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 11, no. 1 (2023): 65–102.

[17] Sakinah Azzuhra and Nursapiah Harahap, "Tapanuli Central Regency Parent Communication Model in Coastal Traditional Marriage in Sorkam District," *Daengku: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Innovation* 2, no. 3 (2022): 379–84.

addition, the ethnographic approach also allows researchers to understand the social, historical, and cultural contexts that shape people's perspectives and practices horja related to marriage and Islam. By looking at adat and Islam as part of a broader cultural context, this research can provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the relationship between the two.

Contestation Mechanism: Actors, Capital, and Habitus in the *Horja* Ritual Arena

The contestation in this study is not a clash that relies on physical strength but rather a contestation between groups in the form of discourse contestation. In the discourse contestation, different views and values between indigenous groups that seek to maintain indigenous rituals and groups that try to filter out indigenous elements considered contrary to Islam are expressed through other languages and narratives.[18]

The contestation of discourse reflects the battle of ideas, interpretations, and understandings of culture and Islam. Each group uses different arguments and evidence to defend or change their life practices.[19] In this process, intense discussions and debates arise to find points of understanding or at least mutual respect for differences of views.

Contestation is a form of activity that plays an essential role in defining the identity of one group, giving authority to the group itself, and presenting power for a group to speak on its behalf.[20] In the process of contestation, indigenous groups that seek to maintain customary rituals and groups that seek to filter cultural elements that are considered contrary to Islam communicate with each other and

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[18] Roberto González, Héctor Carvacho, and Gloria Jiménez-Moya, "Psychology and Indigenous People," *Annual Review of Psychology* 73 (2022): 431–59.

[19] Alison Dundes Renteln, "The Use and Abuse of the Cultural Defense," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society/La Revue Canadienne Droit et Société* 20, no. 1 (2005): 47–67.

[20] Sabine Saurugger and Mark Thatcher, "Constructing the EU's Political Identity in Policy Making," in *Constructing the EU's Political Identity* (Springer, 2022): 1–16.

influence each other's views. Each group tries to convince the other of the existence and relevance of their values, traditions, and beliefs.[21]

Contestation becomes a stage where indigenous and Islamic groups can actively define who they are, what they profess, and what they value as their identity. In this process, they try to establish each other's authority and existence. Not only that, contestation allows the two entities to express their perspectives, desires, and aspirations. In seeking support and recognition of their cultural identity, indigenous groups use discourse to embrace others and broaden the scope of understanding of the importance of indigenous traditions for cultural and religious diversity in Southern Tapanuli.

1. Actors: Orthodoxa and Heteredoxa

In this study, actors are determined by analyzing the origins of structures and how much influence those structures have in an actor's life. Actors in this context refer to individuals or groups who can act and make decisions. The origin of the structure relates to the social, cultural, and environmental background in which the actor grew and interacted.[22] Simply put, it is called an actor when it can influence all factors, including mindset, behavior, and choices made by followers in their daily lives.

Furthermore, in the context of contestation, there are two terms actor, namely, first, the term "orthodoxy" refers to actors who seek to maintain certain autonomy or authority by cleaning up symbols or doctrines that have been covered with dust from the outside. In this effort, the agent of orthodoxy tends to put forward established beliefs and norms and seeks to preserve traditions and values that it considers authentic. Second, "heteredoxa" refers to groups of followers who question or challenge existing authorities or norms. They tend to look for new alternatives, reflect on existing doctrines, or even propose contemporary interpretations of existing symbols and beliefs.[23] This

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[21] Clifford Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," in *Man in Adaptation* (Routledge, 2022): 19–32.

[22] Sarah Amira de la Garza, "Mindful Heresy as Conscious Social Praxis: Modeling Change through Violations of Cultural Orthodoxy," *Western Journal of Communication* 86, no. 2 (2022): 232–40.

[23] Kitty Millet, "Heretics of Innovation," in *Abstract Book of the XXIII Congress of the ICLA*, vol. 23, 2022.

can happen because of changes in the social environment, intellectual development, or the drive to seek truth.

In the context of this study, *horja* as a traditional ritual has components of conventional and religious figures. Both groups were involved in the ceremony. Groups of indigenous figures are positioned as orthodox actors who consciously acknowledge and accept the power and customary rules that have become part of their traditions. This recognition is reflected in the actions and respect for existing customs and efforts to preserve the cultural heritage passed on from previous generations. Meanwhile, religious figures are positioned as heteredoxa actors, because they have presented perspectives that compete with the views and practices of indigenous figures (orthodoxa). Competition between the two actors of each group can trigger debates, tensions, and social dynamics within society. It is possible that it can lead to changes in existing values and norms.

2. Each Actor's Capital

The notion of capital in Bourdieu's view can be pretty broad, involving concepts related to wealth, power, and symbols that affect social dynamics. In Bourdieu's sociological theory, capital is not only limited to the financial aspect but also includes other forms of capital, such as cultural and social capital.[24] Cultural capital refers to the knowledge, education, and artistic expression an individual or group possesses, which can be used for social gain.[25] Meanwhile, social capital relates to a person's social network, including relationships with individuals and groups in various strata of society.

Capital also provides room for strengthening dominance because actors are seen as an essential bridge that connects an individual's cognition with the world of ideas formed. In the context of Bourdieu's theory, actors refer to individuals or groups with access and control over various forms of capital. Actors are not only passive in accepting social structures but also active in shaping them through interaction, reproduction, and transformation of capital. In this case,

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[24] Jason D. Edgerton and Lance W. Roberts, "Cultural Capital or Habitus? Bourdieu and beyond in the Explanation of Enduring Educational Inequality," *Theory and Research in Education* 12, no. 2 (2014): 193–220.

[25] Adam Baczko and Gilles Dorronsoro, "Thinking about Civil Wars with and beyond Bourdieu: State, Capital and Habitus in Critical Contexts," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 22, no. 2 (2022): 199–221.

actors with greater access to religious and cultural capital can direct societal views, values, and norms.[26]

Religious actors or figures in Tapanuli have capital authority in interpreting religious teachings that can influence how these teachings are applied in daily life. This capital can influence social norms that govern various aspects of life, including, more broadly, relationships between individuals, families, society, and culture. This capital also influences the collective perception and standards of truth espoused by society. Thus, groups or individuals with limited access to specific capital may feel marginalized or perceived as less meaningful in the existing social hierarchy.[27]

Meanwhile, indigenous actors or figures also have significant capital in the cultural and social context of Tapanuli, which can affect community dynamics. Cultural and social capital owned by indigenous actors or figures in Tapanuli is often based on in-depth knowledge of traditions, customs, and social relationships formed over a long period.

Actors or traditional figures in Tapanuli are considered custodians of cultural heritage and traditional values. They have access to knowledge and practices related to rituals, ceremonies, and social norms governing daily life. The network of relationships that have been formed between indigenous actors and communities over the years has given them a vast influence in the community. The ability to embrace a wide range of social actors, including family, neighbors, and other community members, gives them legitimacy in making decisions or providing direction in a given situation.

3. Rules of Culture and Religion as Habitus

Cultural and religious rules are fundamental in shaping Tapanuli habitus. In the concept of habitus developed by Bourdieu, habitus refers to those patterns of thought, behavior, and worldview internalized unconsciously by individuals due to their experiences and societal interactions.[28] Cultural and religious rules are the main constituents of this habitus. Cultural rules, which include the norms,

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[26] Ashleigh Cartwright, "A Theory of Racialized Cultural Capital," *Sociological Inquiry* 92, no. 2 (2022): 317–40.

[27] Rangkuti et al., "Hatobangon."

[28] Emma Mc Cluskey, "Bourdieu the Ethnographer: Grounding the Habitus of the 'Far-Right'Voter," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 2023, 00108367231154165.

values, and practices followed in society, form the basis of understanding how to interact and behavior that is considered reasonable.[29] For example, norms related to dress codes, language used, ways of speaking to elders, and ways of celebrating certain events will shape an individual's daily behavior. In Tapanuli customs, such as wedding ceremonies and other traditional ceremonies, the cultural rules governing the procedures and processions of events become very important. By implementing this tradition, individuals adhere to long-standing rules, including ceremonial ordinances, traditional dress, and social norms related to family and community relationships.

Meanwhile, religion also has a central role in shaping habitus in Tapanuli. Religious teachings cover spiritual aspects and offer guidance on ethics, morality, and norms of behavior. Religious beliefs and worship practices can shape how individuals interact with fellow humans, nature, and God. The habitualization of religious practices, such as regular worship, fasting, or respect for older people, shapes habitus reflected in daily actions.

The interaction between cultural and religious rules forms a complex habitus framework in Tapanuli. Different interpretations of existing rules or values can lead to differences of opinion. In some cases, social change or interaction can also challenge existing habitus, triggering critical reflection and negotiation over held norms.[30]

Practices Challenged by Islamic Leaders and Defended by Indigenous Leaders in Marriage Respect

1. *Mangupa* (blessing)

Mangupa is one of a series of horja rituals. Practically, mangupa uses special symbols to represent the meaning and purpose of the ceremony. This includes using objects considered sacred, specific

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[29] Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, "Shedding Some (More) Light in Bourdieu's Habitus and Doxa: A Socio-Phenomenological Approach," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 53, no. 2 (2023): 255–70.

[30] Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in *Rethinking the Subject* (Routledge, 2018): 31–45.

colors, or other relevant symbols. It can indeed be deemed to have elements similar to superstitious practices.[31]

In practice, *mangupa* involves using natural materials as symbols or mediums to pray to the Almighty. The simplest *mangupa* ingredients consist of chicken eggs, shrimp, fish, sweet potato leaf vegetables, rice salt and water (as a drink). All these ingredients are cooked separately. Native chicken eggs are boiled and peeled to look like whole round eggs. The prawns are wholly cooked with sweet potato leaves without removing the shrimp head. The fish referred to in *mangupa* are seven estuary fish, small fish species such as *incor* and aporas (the name of the type of small fish in Tapanuli). This fish is cooked separately in two tails. Next, the salt is placed on a small bowl and arranged on a godang plate, by placing the egg on top of the rice and then in the middle of the traditional plate (a type of crock). It reflects the relationship between man and nature and the belief that nature has spiritual messages or powers.[32]

A traditional leader in southern Tapanuli considers *mangupa* as one of the stages or significant rituals in the *horja* ceremony. This is attributed to the belief that *mangupa* has significant spiritual or symbolic power in achieving the ceremony's purpose. For traditional figures, *mangupa* can also be considered a step of purification or spiritual cleansing in preparation for the following stages in the *horja* ceremony. This reflects the understanding that to achieve purity and harmony. One must cleanse oneself of all unwanted or harmful things through such rituals. *Mangupa* is also considered a symbol of unity and togetherness in the people of Southern Tapanuli. In practice, *mangupa* is a celebration of cultural identity.[33]

Unlike the case with religious figures, especially Islam. Different interpretations and perspectives of traditional rituals make different responses and understandings to the *mangupa* ritual because

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[31] Asrul Siregar et al., "Local Wisdom in Cultural Ceremony of Angkola Indigenous Community," *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal* 8, no. 24 (2023): 255–60.

[32] Silvi Tabah Hati, "Makkobar Tradition at Marriage in Batang Baruhar Jae Perspective of Social Reconstruction," *Edumaspul: Jurnal Pendidikan* 7, no. 1 (2023): 465–71.

[33] Interview with A traditional leader in southern Tapanuli, 2022

Islam has specific teachings and principles that its followers must follow.[34]

Some Islamic religious figures have views critical of practices that are considered contrary to Islamic teachings. *Mangupa*, in their view, contains elements that are considered dubious in terms of Tawhid beliefs, such as being seen worshipping specific ancestors or spirits. Departing from the observance of Islamic religious figures opposed such practices. Even some of these Islamic religious figures who practice religious teachings strictly consider that the practice is unfounded in Islamic teachings. They advise followers of Islam to stay away from such practices. Moreover, according to them, *mangupa* is a teaching of animism, dynamism and paganism.[35]

The difference in how cultural rituals are viewed between indigenous and religious figures is influenced by their respective understandings and approaches as well as the social and cultural contexts they experience and feel. Explicitly, it can be supposed in contrast to the response of these two figures in understanding cultural rituals. Islamic religious leaders see cultural rituals from an Islamic perspective that they know. They judge whether the ritual is based on the teachings of Islam they profess or vice versa.[36] For example, in Islam, some provisions must be followed in worship, and religious figures will check whether these cultural rituals contradict those standards.

Meanwhile, indigenous leaders see cultural rituals in the context of local traditions and customs that have existed for a long time in the community. Indigenous leaders even emphasized preserving cultural heritage and maintaining community identity. Indigenous figures tend to focus on the spiritual aspects of cultural rituals. They seek religious meaning in the ritual, associating it with their religious beliefs and teachings without abandoning aspects of history and tradition. Indigenous leaders see cultural rituals in the context of local traditions and customs that have existed for a long time in their communities. On the other hand, religious leaders pay more attention to whether the

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[34] Fatimah Alshehaby, "Cultural Heritage Protection in Islamic Tradition," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 27, no. 3 (2020): 291–322.

[35] Interview with Some Islamic religious figures, 2022

[36] Muhammad Zuhdi, "Challenging Moderate Muslims: Indonesia's Muslim Schools in the Midst of Religious Conservatism," *Religions* 9, no. 10 (2018): 310.

rituals meet the social and moral values advocated by their Islamic teachings.

2. The problem of *Tuor* (offering)

Tapanuli custom has several kinds of offerings that must be given to the bride, including *sinamot*, *mangalangkai,* and *namosok. Sinamot* is a dowry in Islam or a gift to the bride-to-be. *Mangalangkai* is money given to the sister of the bride-to-be when the bride precedes her older sister in marriage. Meanwhile, *namosok* is money given to the bride's family for party expenses at home.[37]

These varied types of offerings are offerings in the cultural press. In the view of traditional figures, these three offerings are obligations that the groom must fulfill. *Sinamot* proves the groom's serious commitment to the bride's family. The number of *sinamot* given can also reflect the groom's social and economic status, symbolizing his ability to provide for the bride. The handover of *mangalangkai* closely relates to family values and unity in Tapanuli culture. Giving money to the bride's unmarried sister is considered a form of support to the bride's extended family.

It can also strengthen the relationship between the groom's and bride's families. At the same time, offerings in the form of *namosok* are gifts to the bride's parents. It is an expression of gratitude for raising and educating the bride. In addition, *namosok* can also be considered a symbol of apology and recognition for the "theft" of the bride's family members from her family of origin.

For some Islamic religious figures in Tapanuli, the three variations of the offerings by Islam are only dynamos. In addition, two types of offerings, *mangalangkai* and *namosok*, are not relied on in the teachings of Islam they profess. *Islam considers Sinamot* a form of dowry that the groom must give the bride. The concept of dowry or offerings in Islam is a practice that is recommended as evidence of the commitment and willingness of the groom to enter into marriage with the bride. This practice is based on Islamic teachings on marriage.[38]

Meanwhile, *mangalangkai* is considered an addition to Tapanuli culture that does not follow Islamic teachings. Islam emphasizes a

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[37] Yulia Risa and Emizal Amri, "Fungsi Tuor Bagi Orang Mandailing," *Culture & Society: Journal Of Anthropological Research* 3, no. 2 (2021): 85–96.

[38] Interview with Some Islamic religious figures in Tapanuli, 2022.

marriage agreement between the bride and groom, and the involvement of family members in the form of money unrelated to dowry may be considered irrelevant to Islamic teachings. Likewise, *namosok* can also be regarded as a cultural practice that is not by Islam. Although Islam encourages doing good to parents and families, giving *namosok* as part of the marriage process is considered a form of compensation that is not by the values of religious teachings that only burden the groom.

The difference in views between traditional and Islamic religious figures in the tuhor (offering) issue looks tougher. This is because Islamic religious leaders in Tapanuli are more experts in shari'a or *fiqh* studies, which allows them to provide a firmer and more detailed view of shari'a in the context of Islam.[39] So that the debate and discourse about *tuhor* money is often the subject of study in various kinds of ta'lim assemblies and religious lectures in the community, they can use their religious knowledge to clarify whether a practice of heresy is by the teachings of Islam or not.

On this issue, contestation directly confronts shari'a and customs. Each side mobilized support from local communities or even outside the region. Those who want to strengthen their arguments involve the most authoritative figures in their respective communities, both religious and indigenous leaders. The involvement of these figures can give additional weight to their arguments.[40] In addition, each side in the contestation uses moral and ethical arguments to strengthen their views. Each claims that their views correspond to the moral values held by society. Various factors can affect the outcome of this kind of contestation. These include legal approaches, communities, and government policies. In Tapanuli, these factors are more likely to support religious teachings. This is understandable because religion contains eschatology as the responsibility of its adherents for spirit and loyalty to religion.

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[39] Mirsa Astuti and Ida Nadirah, "Giving Stepping Gifts in Marriage According to Customary Law and Islamic Law," *DE LEGA LATA: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 8, no. 2 (2023): 192–201.

[40] Henry Mbaya, "Contested Religious and Cultural Issues: An Encounter between Western Missions and African Cultures and Religions in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 1, no. aop (2023): 1–31.

The Purpose of Contestation Strengthens Authority

Contestation often arises due to differences in views, values, or traditions between the parties involved. The purpose of contestation may vary depending on the situation and the parties involved. Contestation can usually be related to identity issues. All so-called communities generally have specific traditions or customs they want to maintain to strengthen their community identity.[41] In this context of reinforcing identity, contestation occurs as a form of testing or proving one's authority or position in one's community, especially in certain social hierarchies.

In societies based on a particular hierarchy or social system, marriage ceremonies are often used to maintain or show social status and existing hierarchies. This includes the selection of a spouse based on social status, the exchange of property or dowry that reflects status, or the fulfillment of specific tasks to prove worthiness in that social structure.[42] Parties with authority in a particular social structure use various ways to strengthen authority, including using marriage ceremonies to control various aspects of marriage, such as customs to be followed or property to be given. It can be a form of testing to see to what extent a person is willing to obey existing authority.

The marriage ritual is often a forum for Islamic religious leaders in Tapanuli to take influence and show religious teachings to couples who are about to get married and all participants of the ceremony. Before or during the *horja* ritual, religious figures may give religious lectures or sermons to the couple about to get married and the guests present. In this lecture, religious leaders can convey religious teachings relevant to marriage, such as the importance of fidelity, affection, and responsibility in marriage.

In the traditional Tapanuli wedding procession, standard symbols and actions have often been replaced or mixed with religious symbols by integrating new elements into the wedding tradition. Although the tradition of marriage remains essential, religious leaders

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[41] Nurul Khurriyah et al., "Multireligious Understanding and Contestation of Works in World Literature," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 10, no. 5 (2023): 167–73.

[42] Ramaswami Mahalingam, "Essentialism, Culture, and Power: Representations of Social Class," *Journal of Social Issues* 59, no. 4 (2003): 733–49.

choose to combine religious elements to create a marriage that is more Islamic and by the teachings of Islam itself.

This then made traditional leaders hold resistance by fending off various kinds of discourses raised by religious figures.[43] This is indeed natural, considering that the people of Tapanuli consider culture and religion to have an important role. Indigenous leaders think that efforts to change made by religious leaders are unethical. Because, according to traditional leaders, culture is their domain. Religious figures are seen as unnecessarily intervening in cultural affairs.

Indigenous leaders in Tapanuli maintain control over culture from religious leaders' hands by ensuring that the local traditions and customs of Tapanuli remain alive and upheld in the community. Indigenous leaders can promote cultural education in the community in schools and through community programs. This education may include teaching about the history, customs, and cultural values of Tapanuli. Indigenous leaders also work with cultural organizations and institutions to raise public awareness of the importance of preserving Tapanuli culture. Cultural campaigns and events are used as a forum to campaign for cultural values.

Indigenous leaders' resistance to the influence of religious figures in maintaining control over their culture is often rooted in a desire to preserve their identity and cultural heritage. In many cases, Tapanuli's efforts to retain control over culture were founded with solid religious doctrines. One of them is the eschatological doctrine of religion. Islamic society believes that religious experts or religious figures are the mouthpiece of the prophet in society. Not believing or opposing the opinions of religious experts or religious figures is iniquity. Automatically, the disobedient will be put into hell.[44]

The eschatological doctrine of Islamic teachings makes the Muslim community in Tapanuli more subject to the instructions of religious leaders than traditional leaders. However, these problems occur in the realm of custom or culture. In addition, religious figures often have a vast network and scope of influence covering various

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[43] Cartwright, "A Theory of Racialized Cultural Capital."

[44] Muhamad Afif Ulin Nuhaa, "Khaled Abou El-Fadl. S Perspective Authoritive Hermeneutics (An Solution Face Phenomenon Islamic Law)," *Pro Justicia: Jurnal Hukum Dan Sosial* 1, no. 2 (2021): 167–82.

aspects of life, including educational, political, and social. This can make people more likely to follow their lead in multiple contexts.[45]

In the end, Islamic religious leaders in Tapanuli managed to gain control over the custom, although not ultimately. Islamic religious figures in Tapanuli became a new structure in Tapanuli customs. The position of religious figures in the traditional structure of Tapanuli provides space for these religious figures to interfere with various cultural practices and customs that they consider to violate religious teachings. Control over culture in the structure of customs adds to the authority of religious figures who can cover two essential aspects of people's lives, namely religion and culture. Automatically, the dual role of religious figures in society strengthens their authority as religious leaders and engages in cultural control.

Changes in *Horja* Rituals: From Adat to Islam

These changes reflect how the influence of the teachings of Islamic religious figures, such as the Shari'a, can change significant aspects of a society's culture and customs. This change reflects how Islamic religious teachings replaced or changed most elements of traditional customs in wedding ceremonies in Tapanuli, particularly in the *mangupa* (blessing) and *tuhor* (offering) rituals.

1. *Mangupa* (blessing)

At some stage in the *mangupa* ceremony, the bride and groom will receive blessings from religious figures in a manner consistent with Islamic teachings, using special prayers and advice from Islamic marriage. The use of these special prayers leaves the mantras of blessing mantara-*mangupa*, which use traditional customary language. However, cultural mantras that use traditional language do not contradict Islam. However, Islamic religious leaders consider the mantra to be unrewarded. The change in the use of prayers in the *mangupa* and wedding rituals reflects the influence of Islamic religious figures and their eschatological understanding in responding to the ceremony.

The practice of *mangupa* used to be swirled over the heads of the bride and groom during the blessing. However, after the entry of religious figures as a new structure in the custom, the practice was

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[45] Qais Salem Alma'itah and Zia Ul Haq, "The Concept of Messiah in Abrahamic Religions: A Focused Study of the Eschatology of Sunni Islam," *Heliyon* 8, no. 3 (2022).

stopped and only placed in the presence of the bride and groom. For Islamic religious figures, this act is part of shirk because it puts natural materials in a higher position than humans. Mentally, the act of culture is also regarded as asking for protection from beings other than God.

Traditional leaders in Tapanuli argue that these cultural mantras and actions do not contradict their religious beliefs, as they consider them religiously neutral expressions of art and culture. This view reflects an appreciation for art and creativity in the local culture. Mantras, dances, music, and other artistic elements in the mangupa ritual are considered art forms that enrich people's lives.[46]

In addition, the *mangupa* ritual is very closely related to nature and the environment because *mangupa* ingredients are the result of local nature, which is interpreted as a symbol of blessing for the local community eaten by traditional leaders as a way to maintain balance with nature and the importance of protecting the environment. In addition to the change in location and mantara to prayers in Islam, the *mangupa* ritual in marriage horja also changed from its original purpose. The primary purpose of *mangupa* in marriage horja was originally a symbol of inauguration where marriage was recognized by the indigenous people of Tapanuli or as an essential step in making marriage legal according to traditional Tapanuli tradition. It has now become more related to adhering to the teachings of Islam, seeking blessings from Allah, and ensuring that the marriage is religiously valid.

Another change is the actor who becomes the guide of the *mangupa*. The practice of *mangupa* is usually guided by traditional figures. Today, religious figures play all the roles in the content of the mangupa ritual. The change in *mangupa* practices that involves shifting roles from indigenous figures to religious figures is interesting. This reflects the social and cultural changes that can occur as contestation interactions continue.

In addition, the sense of reverence towards *mangupa* also changed. When standard customary rules begin to erode or disappear, resulting in various impacts on the rituals and culture of the community, such as *mangupa* becomes unstable and loses meaning. Without clear guidance, people experience confusion about the true

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[46] Interview with Traditional leaders in Tapanuli, 2022.

purpose of the ritual and how to carry it out properly to remove the sense of reverence from the ritual.[47]

2. *Tuhor* (offering)

In addition to the *mangupa* ritual, *tuhor* (seserahan) also changed from following customary to sharia rules. This change shows that religion has played a more dominant role in determining the laws of marriage, including in matters of marriage. This could reflect a more profound shift in societal values toward religious teachings.

The head of the traditional institution in Tapanuli mentioned that before Islam came, *tuhor* (offering) was three benuk that must be fulfilled, namely, *sinamot* (must be given to the bride-to-be), *namosok* (must be given to both parents of the bride) and *mangalangkai* (must be given to the bride's unmarried elder sister). These three forms of offerings have now turned into dowry only. The replacement of *sinamot*, *namosok*, and *mangalangkai* with dowry by Islamic principles shows the strong influence of Islam in the practice of marriage in Tapanuli society.[48]

This change is acceptable in society because people are more likely to understand that dowry must be based on religious teachings. This change illustrates conformity with Islamic religious principles, stipulating that dowry is essential to marriage. People who better understand and establish their marriage practices based on religious teachings feel it is the right doctrinal step.

In the view of many religions, including Islam, marriage is a very sacred event and is considered part of God's plan. Therefore, understanding and following religious teachings in marriage is a way to honor God's will.[49] They may see marriage not just as a social bond but also as a more significant spiritual commitment. Societies that strongly value religion may also be interested in ensuring continuity and adherence to religious teachings in subsequent generations. Therefore,

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[47] Moh Iqbal Lahama, Zainal Abidin, and Syamsuri Syamsuri, "The Scope Of Sharia, Marriage And Tradition," in *Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic and Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2 (2023): 53–58.

[48] Interview with The head of the traditional institution in Tapanuli, 2022

[49] Samuli Schielke, "Second Thoughts about the Anthropology of Islam, or How to Make Sense of Grand Schemes in Everyday Life," in *Research in the Islamic Context* (Routledge, 2022): 42–68.

they can support changes that follow religious teachings to maintain these values.

The level of education and religious awareness in society can play an essential role in support of this change. People who understand religious teachings better may be more inclined to follow practices that conform to those teachings. Changes based on understanding and respect for religious teachings can be a positive step in maintaining religious values in society and ensuring that marriage practices remain consistent with religious beliefs held by society. However, as in all cultural changes, inter-generational and inter-group communication and understanding can be crucial in bridging these changes.

Conclusions

The main conclusion of this article is that there is a contestation of discourse between culture and religion in the wedding rituals of the Tapanuli Muslim community. The religion of Islam plays an essential role in their identity. The increasingly vital religion of Islam has had a significant influence on changing the customs of Tapnuli. This creates a complex dynamic in implementing traditional rituals, especially wedding rituals, where people try to adhere to Islamic religious teachings while maintaining cultural traditions. These findings also show that contestation often arises when combining the two in societies with strong religions and rich cultural heritage. However, this article also shows that contestation does not cause physical conflict; only discourse debates seize societal influence and authority. As a suggestion, traditional and religious leaders should dialogue with each other to find creative and inclusive ways to celebrate marriage rituals that respect both aspects, namely culture and religion.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest with any party in writing this article.

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