

Purification and Peace: The Role of *Manyanggar* Ritual in Dayak Folklore and Social Cohesion

M. Irfan Wahid ^{a,*}, Zulkifli ^b, M. Ikhsan Tanggok ^b, Ismatu Ropi ^b, Maida Norahmi ^c

^a IAIN Palangka Raya

Palangka Raya, Indonesia

^b Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah

South Tangerang, Indonesia

The Ohio State University,

Ohio, United State

*Corresponding author: mirfanw1@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the *Manyanggar* ritual practiced by the Dayak Bakumpai community in Central Kalimantan as a mechanism for social resilience and conflict resolution. Two research questions guide the inquiry: (1) How does *Manyanggar* function as a symbolic medium for reinforcing social cohesion? (2) In what ways do community members interpret it as a conflict resolution tool? Drawing on an ethnographic approach, the study integrates in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis conducted during fieldwork in 2018. Findings demonstrate that *Manyanggar* operates as a ritual of purification and symbolic communication, facilitating social bonding and the negotiation of cultural and religious identities. Drawing on symbolic interactionism and Alatas's concept of articulatory labor, the study examines how *Manyanggar* has evolved within an Islamic moral framework while preserving its indigenous social functions. These findings contribute to broader scholarly discussions on indigenous knowledge systems, vernacular Islamization, and the role of ritual performance in contemporary peacebuilding.

Keywords: *Plague Folklore, Social Resilience, Articulatory Labor, Conflict Resolution.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji ritual *Manyanggar* yang dipraktikkan oleh masyarakat Dayak Bakumpai di Kalimantan Tengah sebagai mekanisme ketahanan sosial dan penyelesaian konflik. Penelitian ini berupaya menjawab dua pertanyaan kunci: (1) Bagaimana *Manyanggar* berfungsi sebagai media simbolik untuk memperkuat kohesi sosial? (2) Dengan cara apa anggota masyarakat menafsirkannya sebagai alat penyelesaian konflik? Dengan memanfaatkan pendekatan etnografi, penelitian ini menggabungkan wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa *Manyanggar* beroperasi sebagai ritual pemurnian dan komunikasi simbolik, yang memfasilitasi ikatan sosial serta negosiasi identitas budaya dan agama. Melalui lensa interaksionisme simbolik dan teori kerja artikulatoris, penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana *Manyanggar* telah berkembang dalam kerangka Islam sambil tetap mempertahankan esensi adatnya. Wawasan ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas tentang sistem pengetahuan adat dan peran ritual dalam upaya pembangunan perdamaian kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: *Folklore Bencana, Ketahanan Sosial, Kerja Artikulatoris, Resolusi Konflik.*

Introduction

Indigenous ritual practices have been extensively documented across Southeast Asia as mechanisms of cultural transmission, spiritual regulation, and communal identity, yet their function as practical conflict-management tools in Muslim indigenous communities remains empirically understudied. Scholars have increasingly recognized that ritual performance constitutes more than symbolic heritage: it operates as a practical intervention in social life, particularly in communities where customary authority and moral order continue to shape everyday governance (Riduan, 2024; Asmawati, 2018).

Studies in anthropology and peace studies demonstrate that rituals translate abstract communitarian values such as solidarity, reciprocity, and social responsibility into embodied, emotionally compelling encounters that enable collective repair. Despite this growing recognition, most existing research treats ritual primarily as symbol or spectacle rather than as a locally legitimate mechanism of social regulation with identifiable conflict-management functions. This gap is especially pronounced in Muslim indigenous communities, where the intersection of Islamic moral frameworks and indigenous ontologies introduces additional complexity that few empirical studies have addressed directly (Safitri, 2022).

A parallel strand of scholarship has sought to explain how indigenous ritual practices persist within Islamicized communities not through abandonment or unchanged preservation, but through active processes of reinterpretation and cultural negotiation. Contemporary debates on religious change have introduced concepts such as articulatory labor, cultural translation, and vernacular Islamization to account for how indigenous practices are reworked and selectively legitimized within Islamic moral vocabularies (Alatas, 2021).

Within this theoretical landscape, rituals become sites of negotiation in which indigenous ontologies, communal obligations, and Islamic ethical discourses are combined without erasing one another. This approach challenges the binary assumptions between tradition and religion that have long structured anthropological inquiry (Sulistiyati, 2022), emphasizing instead the active and creative work of communities in sustaining continuity through selective reinterpretation. Understanding how this process unfolds in concrete ritual settings, however, requires sustained ethnographic attention that existing research has not yet fully provided.

The Dayak Bakumpai community of Central Kalimantan presents a particularly instructive case for examining these dynamics. As a predominantly Muslim Dayak community, the Bakumpai inhabit a cultural position shaped by centuries of interaction between indigenous *Kaharingan* cosmology and Islamic ethics, producing a distinctive moral universe in which customary and religious obligations

are simultaneously operative (Nasrullah, 2014; Tanggok and Hawari, 2021). Tradition in this context is not a relic of the past but a living and evolving entity that adapts to changing social and cultural circumstances while preserving its core symbolic functions (Hobsbawm, 2013).

Central to this cultural life is the *Manyanggar* ritual, a purification ceremony traditionally performed to ward off plague and metaphysical disturbances, which also serves as a form of symbolic communication, a mechanism for reinforcing social ties, and an instrument for conflict resolution within the community. Previous studies, including those by Samiah (1998) and Ratini (2015), have largely focused on the ritual's religious dimensions and its association with the *Kaharingan* belief system, providing valuable ethnographic description but leaving its socio-political and conflict-management functions substantially underexamined. More recent work by Riduan et al. (2024) and Sukti (2023) has begun to document its social dimensions, yet neither study systematically analyzes how *Manyanggar* operates as a practical mechanism of de-escalation, reconciliation, and moral authority in a Muslim Dayak setting.

This paper addresses that gap through ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Barito Utara, Central Kalimantan, in 2018. It is guided by two research questions. First, how does *Manyanggar* serve as a symbolic medium to reinforce social cohesion? Second, in what ways do community members interpret and deploy it as a tool for conflict resolution? Drawing on in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, the study demonstrates that *Manyanggar* materializes community values into publicly enacted obligations, generates a shared emotional environment conducive to reconciliation, and sustains its cultural legitimacy through ongoing reinterpretation within an Islamic moral idiom. These findings contribute to broader scholarly discussions on indigenous knowledge systems, vernacular Islamization, and the role of ritual performance in community-based peacebuilding.

Literature Review

Recent studies in Southeast Asian ritual scholarship demonstrate that traditional ceremonies frequently serve not only spiritual functions but also operate as mechanisms of social cohesion that reinforce community unity and shared responsibility. In indigenous societies, ritual participation produces a collective emotional atmosphere that reinforces kinship, reciprocity, and ethical obligations across internal social divisions such as age, gender, or economic status. Research on village purification rituals in Barito Utara District, for example, indicates that cooperative involvement in preparing offerings, collective performances, and shared meals strengthens social bonds and reduces interpersonal tension by shifting individual concerns onto a collective responsibility. The ritual therefore sustains cohesion not through formal sanctions but by mobilizing

shared symbolic values that are embodied in collective action, illuminating how ritual performance constitutes an active social intervention rather than merely a symbolic survival of the past.

Complementary research highlights that rituals contribute to cohesion even in contexts of religious and cultural plurality. Agung et al. (2024) show that multi-faith communities in Indonesia maintain harmony not only through interreligious dialogue but also through the revival of traditional ceremonies that embody values of mutual cooperation and non-hierarchical participation. These ceremonies reinforce inclusive identities that transcend sectarian boundaries by foregrounding shared moral values rather than doctrinal affiliation. The embodied nature of ritual also produces social intimacy that rational dialogue alone cannot achieve, enabling emotional reconciliation and transforming relationships among participants. Taken together, this body of scholarship provides the conceptual foundation for the first research question addressed in this study, namely how *Manyanggar* functions as a symbolic medium for reinforcing social cohesion in a community characterized by overlapping Dayak cultural heritage and Islamic religiosity.

A related strand of scholarship conceptualizes ritual as an informal mechanism of conflict resolution in societies where legal or administrative institutions do not fully regulate interpersonal disputes. Pamungkas and Indriasari (2021) argue that symbolic ceremonies can resolve conflict by reducing the emotional intensity that fuels antagonism, restoring social relations without requiring a loss of face or formal adjudication. In such settings, the goal is not to determine guilt or innocence but to re-establish mutual respect and create a shared social reality in which grievances lose their emotional weight. Diab et al. (2022) further demonstrate that ritualized reconciliation works precisely because it avoids direct confrontation: shared performance and symbolic action enable opposing parties to reintegrate into the community without verbal negotiation that might reopen wounds. These studies establish that ritual can be an effective peacebuilding instrument when communal harmony is valued over procedural justice.

Ritual-based conflict resolution is particularly effective when it involves public witnessing and shared emotional catharsis. Ethnographic research from several indigenous societies indicates that purification rituals, trance performances, and collective offerings play a significant role in releasing anger, shame, and humiliation, which are the core emotional drivers of prolonged conflict. By displacing personal grievances into symbolic performance, ritual provides a socially legitimate pathway for reconciliation without requiring the articulation of blame. Moreover, the presence of ritual specialists, who are perceived to hold both moral authority and spiritual legitimacy, ensures that reconciliation is validated by the entire community rather than imposed from without. This body of literature is directly relevant to the *Manyanggar* context and informs the study's second research

question, which concerns how community members interpret and deploy the ritual as a conflict-resolution tool.

Understanding why *Manyanggar* retains its conflict-resolution authority in a predominantly Muslim community, however, requires a third analytical lens: one that addresses how indigenous ritual practices achieve continued legitimacy within Islamicized social environments. A growing body of research examines precisely this question, demonstrating that indigenous rituals persist not through syncretism or passive continuity but through active processes of cultural negotiation and selective reinterpretation. Scholars emphasize that ritual continuity depends on what Alatas (2021) calls "articulatory labor," defined as the active integration of Islamic moral vocabularies and cosmology into indigenous practices while retaining their social functions and symbolic structure. In this view, rituals are not frozen relics but dynamic sites where identities are mediated and renegotiated across generations. Understood through "articulatory labor," ritual transformation is neither cultural loss nor mere accommodation but a creative act of community self-definition.

This perspective challenges the binary distinction between tradition and religion that has long structured both colonial-era anthropological inquiry and early Islamic reformist discourse, both of which tended to position indigenous custom and Islamic orthodoxy as fundamentally incompatible (Sulistiyati, 2022). In contrast, recent ethnographic studies on Dayak Muslim communities reveal that Islamic authority is not positioned in opposition to cultural heritage but becomes a legitimizing structure for indigenous ceremonies. Research among Bakumpai-majority regions demonstrates that the participation of religious leaders, the recitation of Islamic prayers, and the framing of rituals as acts of gratitude to God rather than ancestral worship have enabled traditional ceremonies to remain culturally meaningful while aligning with Islamic ethics (Darmono, 2013). These studies suggest that ritual resilience derives from a community's capacity to integrate multiple value systems without erasing symbolic meaning or social function. This body of literature provides the analytical basis for examining how "articulatory labor" shapes the contemporary authority and practice of *Manyanggar*, and for situating the ritual as an evolving socio-religious institution that mediates identity, authority, and communal harmony in a Muslim Dayak setting.

Method

This research employed an ethnographic approach because understanding *Manyanggar* requires close attention to embodied practices, symbolic communication, and locally constructed meanings that cannot be adequately captured through abstract or survey-based description. Ethnography allowed the researcher to follow ritual interaction as it unfolded in social life, documenting gestures, collective labor, emotions, and narrative framings as they were performed and interpreted by community members. The design of the study prioritized immersion, prolonged engagement, and

thick description to capture the complexity of the ritual's role in social cohesion, conflict resolution, and the negotiation of Islamic-Dayak identity. Data were collected not only from participants' statements about *Manyanggar* but also from their actions during ritual preparation, procession, and closure. The analytical orientation was interpretive, aiming to reconstruct how actors themselves understood and justified their ritual behaviors within the wider moral universe of village life.

The study was carried out in Barito Utara, Central Kalimantan, between January and December 2018, because the region is one of the principal areas where the Bakumpai Dayak continue to practice *Manyanggar* regularly and integrate it with Islamic ethical norms. The selection of this site was based on preliminary observations and reports indicating that the ritual remained actively embedded in community life, particularly during periods of social tension and conflict. The region also offered multigenerational participation, providing an opportunity to observe both ritual continuity and the negotiation of meaning across age groups. Observing the ritual in its natural social setting allowed the researcher to document moments in which *Manyanggar* emerged as a spontaneous community response to conflict or instability rather than as a planned cultural performance, and this situational relevance made Barito Utara the most appropriate site for studying how tradition operates within real social dynamics.

Participants consisted of ritual leaders (*Balian*), Islamic religious leaders, household representatives involved in active disputes, younger procession participants, and community elders who articulated interpretations of ritual values and moral obligations. The study also drew on informal conversations with local cultural figures and villagers who supported activities such as preparing offerings, decorating the *mayang* structure, and handling sacred objects. This variation in participant roles was intended to capture the diversity of perspectives on what *Manyanggar* means and how it should be practiced across different social positions. The number of participants was not fixed in advance but was determined by the principle of data saturation, whereby the generation of new data ceased when successive interviews and observations no longer produced substantially new categories or insights (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This approach ensured that the findings reflected the range of local voices rather than imposing predetermined theoretical expectations.

Data collection consisted of multiple stages, beginning with preliminary visits to establish rapport with community leaders and to familiarize the researcher with the social geography of ritual life. These preparatory visits were followed by a three-month observation period focused on ritual activities and everyday social interactions surrounding ritual preparation. Field notes were recorded during community gatherings, planning meetings, communal labor sessions, the ritual procession, trance episodes, *batopeng* performances, and post-ritual shared meals. With respect to ethical conduct, prior to fieldwork, the researcher obtained permission from ritual leaders, village

authorities, and relevant community gatekeepers, and all participants provided informed consent before interviews and observations were recorded. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and identifying details were anonymized in all written materials to protect individual privacy, particularly in cases involving disputants whose conflicts were described during interviews. The researcher adjusted the level of participation to ethically acceptable boundaries during sacred segments that required symbolic purity or restricted access, and these protocols ensured that documentation was both analytically rigorous and culturally respectful.

Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding anchored in grounded ethnographic logic. Descriptive field notes were first transcribed, then systematically segmented into categories including communal cooperation, emotional release, symbolic equalization, invocation of Islamic ethics, narrative moral teaching, and participant perceptions of conflict resolution. Interview transcripts were coded according to participants' interpretations of ritual symbols, their accounts of appropriate conduct toward others, and their understandings of the relationship between Islamic identity and Dayak cultural practice. Ritual sequences were reconstructed into analytical stages and compared across observed events to identify recurring mechanisms and points of variation. This stage of analysis was designed to ensure that interpretive themes emerged from participants' own perspectives rather than being imposed from external theoretical frameworks.

In the final stage of analysis, emergent themes were connected to wider theoretical debates on social cohesion, restorative justice, and identity mediation. Description and interpretation were integrated to produce a narrative account of how *Manyanggar* operates at both the practical and symbolic levels. Triangulation was achieved by systematically comparing observations, interview accounts, and locally held historical narratives to strengthen the credibility of the interpretations offered (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Findings were then rendered in a form that preserves participants' ethnographic voices while situating the ritual within broader social-scientific discussions, allowing community perspectives and moral reasoning to remain central to the study's conclusions.

Results and Discussion

The findings are organized around three interrelated dimensions that emerged from ethnographic observation and interview data collected in Barito Utara in 2018. The first concerns how *Manyanggar* produces social cohesion through cooperative labor, spatial arrangement, and narrative transmission. The second addresses how the ritual functions as a practical mechanism for conflict resolution through affective regulation and symbolic closure. The third examines how the integration of Islamic ethical framing shapes the ritual's contemporary authority and enables its continued legitimacy among Muslim Dayak communities. Together, these dimensions demonstrate that *Manyanggar* is neither a static cultural artifact nor a purely spiritual ceremony, but a dynamic socio-religious

institution that mediates identity, moral authority, and communal harmony in ways that remain practically effective in contemporary village life.

***Manyanggar* and the Production of Social Cohesion**

“sebelum tradisi Manyanggar ini dilaksanakan, kami biasanya mengundang para pihak yang berkonflik untuk rekonsiliasi dengan ikhlas. Tanpa adanya rekonsiliasi terlebih dulu, maka praktik budaya Manyanggar belum bisa dilaksanakan. Jadi tradisi budaya ini bisa dimaknai sebagai medium komunikasi sosial sekaligus juga resolusi konflik”. (Haji Zarkasih)

[Translation: "Before the *Manyanggar* tradition is carried out, we usually invite the conflicting parties to reconcile sincerely. Without prior reconciliation, the cultural practice of *Manyanggar* cannot yet be performed. So, this cultural tradition can be understood as a medium of social communication as well as conflict resolution."]

This statement from Haji Zarkasih, the principal ritual leader observed in this study, establishes a foundational point: *Manyanggar* does not simply accompany reconciliation but presupposes and actively structures it. Reconciliation is not an outcome of the ritual alone, but a precondition embedded within the ritual's moral logic, making the ceremony itself an assertion of communal standards for how conflict must be addressed.

The *Manyanggar* events observed in Barito Utara (as shown in Figure 1 below) reveal that social cohesion is produced through a sequence of embodied communal tasks that precede and structure the ritual performance itself. Preparation began two days before the public procession and included joint hunting for ritual materials, communal cooking, and shared decoration of the *mayang* canopy (*gantung mayang*). These practices distributed labor across households and tied formerly distant kin into cooperative networks. Field observations confirmed that these preparatory tasks created repeated face-to-face encounters and shared practical dependency, which participants consistently described as "moving the heart together," a phrase that recurred across multiple interviews and points to the affective work that precommunal labor performs before the ceremony even begins. This finding resonates with Sukti's (2023) comparative study of Bakumpai *Manyanggar*, which similarly documents that communal labor and shared meal cycles are central to social integration in Barito communities, and with broader anthropological arguments that cohesion is built not through declaration but through repeated cooperative praxis (Durkheim, 1912).

Figure 1.
The Community Gathers Beneath the *Mayang* as Part of the *Manyanggar* Procession. June 28, 2018



Source: Author's documentation (June 28, 2018).

As seen in Figure 1, the spatial arrangement of participants beneath the *mayang canopy* during the procession serves as a visible articulation of communal membership and mutual accountability. Disputant households were physically close to one another under the *mayang* while elders recited invocations, thereby transforming private grievances into a publicly witnessed communal matter. Informants reported that this public witnessing creates moral pressure to conform to community expectations of forgiveness, since to withdraw from the shared space would constitute a visible breach of communal obligation. The social effect is therefore twofold: the relational labor of preparation creates affective affinity, while the procession's spatial architecture converts personal conflict into collective responsibility. This dual mechanism extends the findings of Salendra (2021) on *Manyanggar Lewu*, which documents that purification ceremonies embed spatial and performative devices that symbolically reorder social relations and mark collective responsibility for local wellbeing.

Finally, the *Manyanggar* ceremonies documented here produce durable normative expectations through ritualized repetition and narrative framing. In interviews, several elders explicitly framed *Manyanggar* as a practice that "reminds us of who we are" and "what we owe to each other," indicating that ritual memory supplies moral templates for conduct that extend well beyond the event itself. Observations confirmed that stories narrated during *batopeng* performances and masked enactments re-narrate local moral exemplars, and younger participants later cited these stories when navigating everyday disputes. This narrative transmission extends ritual cohesion into everyday life

and functions as a gradual cultural sanctioning mechanism rather than an immediate legal penalty. These dynamics are consistent with anthropological accounts that treat ritual repetition and narrative as engines of social memory and moral habitus (Durkheim, 1912; Hobsbawm, 2013), and the Barito Utara evidence concretely shows how Manyanggar's performative stories are mobilized during conflict-prone moments to stabilize communal expectations.

Manyanggar as a Ritual Mechanism for Conflict Resolution

A thick description of a conflict case observed in Muara Teweh illustrates that *Manyanggar's* conflict-resolution function operates primarily through affective regulation and performative co-presence rather than through deliberation or adjudication. In this case, an interfamily dispute arising from a violent altercation produced escalating social withdrawal and mutual avoidance. Rather than proceed to formal adjudication, community leaders called for a *Manyanggar Mamapas Lewu* ceremony. During the ceremony, the two families participated in separate but adjacent ritual tasks before later sharing the same cooking hearth, a staged rapprochement that diffused immediate tension by embedding the disputants in common tasks before face-to-face interaction was required. A ritual elder described this process in an interview as *panyadingen atei*, meaning "cooling the heart," signifying that the ritual provided a sanctioned space to discharge anger and restore the internal equilibrium necessary for social relations to resume. This sequence demonstrates that *Manyanggar* works through structured co-presence and affect regulation rather than through argument or verdict, a finding consistent with Pamungkas and Indriasari's (2021) argument that symbolic ceremonies restore social relations by reducing the emotional intensity that fuels antagonism without requiring formal adjudication or a loss of face.

The trance and *batopeng* segments, which feature culturally embedded humor, provide a structured channel for emotional discharge that is both socially acceptable and visibly transformative. During the *badewa* and *batopeng* sequences, the Balian's invocation and the mask performances diverted collective attention into symbolic narrative, enabling participants to externalize hostility through dramatic speech and movement. Several participants reported feeling "lighter" following these segments and expressed a greater willingness to exchange greetings with those they had previously avoided (Riduan, 2024). These observations align with comparative ethnographic studies showing that trance and masked performance function as regulated catharsis, serving as ritual technologies for managing humiliation, shame, and anger without direct confrontation (Diab et al., 2022). The Barito Utara data contribute analytical nuance by showing that these cathartic episodes are embedded within an ordered ritual sequence so that emotional discharge coincides with communal reintegration practices such as oil sprinkling and shared meals, ensuring that catharsis does not dissolve into further antagonism but is channelled toward closure.

Public symbolic equalization is most visibly enacted through the sprinkling of *mayang oil* and the sharing of sacrificial food, which together constitute a culturally legible closure of disputes in Barito communities. In the observed cases, elders sprinkled oil in the presence of the whole village before a joint meal was shared among households that had previously been divided. Informants described the oil as both a cleansing medium and a social marker, explaining that "we are again the same" after the sprinkling is complete. This ritual seal functions as a non-coercive but socially binding declaration that the conflict has been absorbed into the communal frame and resolved in social terms, even where formal grievances may remain partially unaddressed. Such symbolic sealing mirrors the mechanisms documented by Pamungkas and Indriasari (2021) and Diab et al. (2022), where public observance and ritual closure are identified as crucial to restorative outcomes that preserve the dignity of all parties. The Barito Utara evidence therefore reveals *Manyanggar*'s conflict procedure as an integrated three-stage sequence: communal labor that rebuilds social proximity, performative catharsis that discharges accumulated emotional tension, and symbolic equalization that publicly resets relational status.

It must be noted, however, that *Manyanggar*'s efficacy as a conflict-resolution mechanism depends on the community's recognition of ritual authority and the disputants' willingness to abide by the communal framework it establishes. Field interviews revealed that when either party refuses to participate or when ritual authority is contested, the ritual's de-escalatory power is substantially diminished, and formal institutional mechanisms may need to be sought instead. This conditional effectiveness underscores that ritual conflict resolution is not an automatic substitute for institutional justice but a culturally embedded complement that succeeds when community trust in ritual authority and the moral legitimacy of its practitioners remain intact. These contextual limits align with prior literature on community-based peacebuilding, which consistently emphasizes that restorative mechanisms operate within rather than outside broader governance structures (Kriesberg, 1998).

Islamic Ethical Framing and the Negotiation of Cultural Authority

A distinguishing feature of *Manyanggar* in Barito Utara is the explicit incorporation of Islamic ethical elements alongside older Dayak ritual forms, and field data indicate that this integration is central to the ritual's contemporary legitimacy rather than incidental. During multiple ceremonies, the invocation of Arabic phrases and the presence of Islamic religious leaders were systematically observed and recorded. Informants consistently explained that the inclusion of Qur'anic recitation reassures Muslim participants that the ritual is compatible with Islamic piety and does not constitute forbidden innovation. One elder specifically framed *Manyanggar* as "articulation, not contradiction" between Dayak custom and Islamic faith, an interpretive strategy that preserves the ritual's social functions while realigning their moral justification within Islamic ethical discourse. This finding

corresponds precisely to Alatas's (2021) conceptualization of "articulatory labor" and to recent studies showing comparable adaptive strategies in other Muslim Dayak communities (Darmono, 2013; Nasrullah, 2014).

“Bacaan doa seperti surah Al-Fatihah, ayat kursi dan tahlil serta penyebutan nama malaikat dalam Islam adalah tuturan yang kami dapatkan dari kakek nenek kami yang melaksanakan ritual ini. Ini adalah hal yang biasa dan sudah dilakukan turun temurun” (Haji Zarkasih).

[Translation: "Recitations such as Surah Al-Fatihah, Ayat Kursi, tahlil, and the invocation of the names of Islamic angels are utterances we received from our grandparents who performed this ritual. This is something ordinary and has been practiced across generations."]

This testimony reveals that Islamic elements were not introduced into *Manyanggar* as a recent accommodation to external religious pressure but have been transmitted intergenerationally as a constitutive part of the ritual's own heritage. The incorporation of Islamic prayer is thus experienced by participants not as modification or compromise but as continuity, which is precisely what enables "articulatory labor" to function as a socially credible and emotionally compelling process rather than a merely strategic adjustment.

The figure of Haji Zarkasih himself is analytically central to understanding how this integration operates in practice. As shown in Figure 2, he leads the procession not simply as a traditional ritual specialist but as a figure whose authority is grounded in both Dayak customary knowledge and publicly recognized Islamic piety. As a devout Muslim who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, Haji Zarkasih commands recognition as an exemplar of Islamic devotion within the community. At the same time, the community regards him as the divinely chosen bearer of the cultural responsibility for conducting the ritual, a dual status that confers a legitimacy neither a purely religious leader nor a conventional ritual specialist could hold alone.

Figure 2.
Haji Zarkasih is Conducting the Procession.



Source: Author's documentation (June 28, 2018).

Interview data consistently indicated that participants felt reassured when the ceremony was led by someone who embodied both identities, because in his person, ritual obligations and religious obligations were seen as aligned rather than competing. The Barito Utara case therefore illustrates that Islamic framing does not legitimize *Manyanggar* from the outside as an external endorsement but is embodied in the figure of the ritual leader himself, creating an integrated source of authority that reinforces both the ritual's outcomes and the community's compliance with its prescriptions for reconciliation. This observation advances the theoretical argument of Alatas (2021) by demonstrating that "articulatory labor" is not only a discursive strategy but an embodied and personified one, carried in the social identity of specific ritual actors whose biographies make the convergence of tradition and religion publicly credible.

The regional variations in *Manyanggar* practice observed across Barito regencies, including differences in the incorporation of Burdah *shalawat*, *Tolak Bala* sequences, and *mamapas lewu* enactments, reflect the plasticity that underpins the ritual's resilience. As Sukti (2021) notes in a cross-regional analysis, *Manyanggar*'s repertoire shifts to emphasize purification, social drama, or Islamic supplication depending on local histories and the interpretive authority of community leaders. These variations do not undermine the ritual's core social functions but demonstrate that its legitimacy rests on its capacity to be re-signified in ways responsive to local moral sensibilities, a quality itself a product of sustained "articulatory labor" across generations. The implications of this finding for heritage and governance policy are discussed in the conclusion.

Conclusion

This study has argued that the *Manyanggar* ritual in Barito Utara functions simultaneously as a mechanism of social cohesion, a community-based instrument of conflict resolution, and a site of ongoing cultural negotiation between Dayak indigenous tradition and Islamic ethical authority. The evidence demonstrates that these three functions are not parallel but mutually reinforcing: the cooperative labor that builds social cohesion creates the relational conditions under which conflict resolution becomes possible, and the Islamic framing that legitimizes the ritual ensures that its prescriptions for reconciliation carry moral authority across the community's overlapping religious and customary obligations.

The findings make two contributions to existing theoretical debates. First, they extend symbolic interactionist accounts of ritual by showing that *Manyanggar*'s cohesive and reconciliatory effects are produced not primarily through shared belief or symbolic meaning alone, but through the sequenced enactment of cooperative tasks, spatial co-presence, and performative catharsis that generate affective solidarity prior to and independently of verbal agreement. The ritual works not because participants interpret its symbols identically but because shared enactment produces a common emotional and moral orientation that makes reconciliation socially recognizable and publicly binding. Second, the study advances Alatas's (2021) concept of "articulatory labor" by demonstrating that this process is not only discursive but embodied and personified. In Barito Utara, "articulatory labor" is carried in the social identity of the ritual leader himself, whose simultaneous standing as a Hajj pilgrim and a Balian makes the convergence of Islamic piety and Dayak custom publicly credible in ways that no institutional arrangement or textual argument alone could achieve. This finding suggests that the sustainability of "articulatory labor" in Muslim indigenous communities depends critically on the presence of individuals whose biographical authority bridges the moral vocabularies of both traditions, a dimension that has not been sufficiently theorized in the existing literature.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The fieldwork was conducted at specific sites in Barito Utara during 2018, and the findings may not fully represent the range of *Manyanggar* practices across other regions of Central Kalimantan, where local histories, leadership structures, and degrees of Islamization vary considerably. The study focused primarily on reconciliation ceremonies and the perspectives of male ritual leaders, elders, and household representatives, leaving the roles of women, youth, and economically marginal participants underexamined. Additionally, a single fieldwork year cannot capture the diachronic dimensions of ritual change, including how *Manyanggar* has shifted across political transitions or generational turnover. Rather than undermining the findings, these

boundaries define the scope of the study's claims and point toward productive directions for future inquiry.

The implications of this research extend across both scholarly and practical domains. For scholars of ritual, indigenous religion, and peacebuilding, the Barito Utara case demonstrates that community-based conflict resolution mechanisms deserve analysis as pragmatic social institutions rather than as cultural curiosities, particularly in pluralistic societies where state legal mechanisms remain structurally limited in their reach (Kriesberg, 1998; Pamungkas and Indriasari, 2021). For heritage policymakers and local government bodies in Kalimantan, the findings carry a pointed implication: state sponsorship of *Manyanggar* as cultural heritage must be approached with caution, since bureaucratic incorporation risks displacing the elder-centered and community-driven authority structures upon which the ritual's conflict-resolution efficacy depends. Preservation efforts are most likely to succeed when they protect ritual autonomy and support community-led interpretation rather than standardizing performance for tourism or administrative visibility.

Future research should pursue at least three directions. Comparative studies examining *Manyanggar* across Dayak Muslim communities in Barito Selatan, Barito Timur, and Kapuas Hulu would clarify how local religious environments and leadership histories shape both ritual form and conflict-management function. Longitudinal research tracking younger cohorts of ritual participants over multiple years would illuminate how intergenerational transmission, modernization, and digital media influence the reinterpretation and continued vitality of the practice. Finally, studies that center the perspectives of women and younger community members would substantially deepen understanding of how ritual authority and moral legitimacy are negotiated across gender and generational lines within Muslim Dayak communities. Together, these research directions have the potential to establish *Manyanggar* not only as a subject of regional ethnographic interest but as a theoretically generative case for broader debates on indigenous peacebuilding, vernacular Islamization, and the embodied dimensions of cultural resilience.

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