

# Acculturation of Islam and Muna's Kampua Traditions in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia

La Aso<sup>1</sup>, La Taena<sup>2</sup>, Murni Nia<sup>2</sup>, I Ketut Suardika<sup>3</sup>, La Iru<sup>4</sup>, Bahtiar<sup>5</sup>,  
Muhammad Ali Pawiro<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Language and Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Economic Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Department of Primary School Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Department of Civic Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup>Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Halu Oleo, Kendari, Indonesia

<sup>6</sup>Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: La Aso ([la\\_aso@yahoo.co.id](mailto:la_aso@yahoo.co.id))

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20260431>

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the acculturation of Islam within the Kampua tradition among the Muna ethnic community in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The findings reveal that Kampua represents a form of cultural-religious synthesis in which Islamic values are integrated into local traditions without eliminating indigenous symbolic structures. The ritual reflects a dynamic negotiation between Islamic norms and local cosmology, particularly in symbolic elements such as food offerings and ritual timing. The study argues that Kampua functions not only as a birth ritual but also as a medium for cultural continuity, social cohesion, and identity formation. This research contributes to broader discussions on Islam Nusantara and localized religious practices in Southeast Asia.

**Keywords:** acculturation, Islam, Kampua, symbolic anthropology, Muna

## INTRODUCTION

Religion constitutes a fundamental dimension of cultural identity and social organization among indigenous ethnic communities.<sup>[1]</sup> Religious beliefs, rituals, and moral teachings are often inseparable from language, as spiritual knowledge is transmitted through prayers, chants, oral narratives, and ceremonial instructions expressed in indigenous languages.<sup>[1]</sup> The interaction between religion and local culture has long been a central issue in anthropological and sociological discourse, particularly in culturally diverse societies like Indonesia.<sup>[2]</sup> Religion is not merely a system of belief but also a social institution that interacts with existing cultural frameworks, producing dynamic forms of adaptation and transformation.<sup>[3]</sup> In this context, Islam in Indonesia has historically developed through a process of cultural accommodation, enabling it to coexist with and even reinforce local traditions.<sup>[4]</sup> One important domain where the interaction between religion and culture becomes particularly visible is in life-cycle or household rituals. Unlike public or

institutional rituals, household rituals are embedded in everyday life and are transmitted primarily through family interaction, imitation, and language use.<sup>[5]</sup> These rituals include daily practices such as greetings, meals, expressions of respect, and hospitality, as well as periodic or life-cycle events such as weddings, births, and mourning practices.<sup>[5]</sup> Birth rituals, in particular, often serve as a medium for expressing both religious beliefs and cultural values. In many Indonesian communities, these rituals incorporate elements of Islamic teachings alongside local symbolic practices.<sup>[6,7]</sup> The Kampua tradition of the Muna ethnic community in Southeast Sulawesi represents a significant example of such cultural-religious integration. Kampua is a ritual performed when a baby reaches the age of forty-four days, involving hair-cutting, communal prayers, and the use of symbolic objects such as ketupat and bananas. While Islamic elements<sup>[8,9]</sup> are clearly present in the form of prayers and recitations, the ritual also retains strong local characteristics that reflect the cultural identity of the Muna community. "Kampua is an important tradition for the Muna people. This tradition is defined as the slaughter of livestock, usually goats, as an expression of gratitude...."<sup>[10]</sup>

Despite the importance of Kampua as a cultural practice, existing studies tend to focus primarily on descriptive accounts, with limited analytical exploration of its symbolic and theoretical dimensions. In particular, there is a lack of research that examines Kampua within the framework of symbolic anthropology and acculturation theory. As a result, the deeper meanings and social functions of the ritual remain underexplored. This study offers a novel contribution by positioning Kampua as a dynamic site of negotiation between Islamic orthodoxy and local cultural symbolism.<sup>[11]</sup> Unlike previous studies that treat local rituals as static traditions, this research adopts a symbolic anthropological approach to analyze how Islamic values are

interpreted, adapted, and embedded within indigenous cultural practices. Furthermore, this study situates Kampua within the broader discourse of localized Islam (Islam Nusantara), highlighting the agency of the Muna community in shaping a contextualized form of religious expression."<sup>[12]</sup>

By doing so, this research not only contributes to the understanding of Kampua as a cultural phenomenon but also provides broader insights into how religion and culture interact in plural societies. It demonstrates that the relationship between Islam and local traditions is not inherently conflictual but can instead produce harmonious and meaningful forms of social practice.

### **The Concept of Acculturation**

Acculturation provides a useful analytical lens to understand this phenomenon and refers to the process by which cultural elements from different societies interact and influence one another without necessarily eliminating their original identities. In the Indonesian context, this process is evident in the integration of Islamic teachings with indigenous cultural practices, resulting in diverse expressions of Islam that vary across regions and communities. Scholars such as Geertz have argued that religion must be understood as a cultural system, where symbols play a crucial role in shaping meaning and guiding social behavior.<sup>[13]</sup> Similarly, Turner emphasizes that rituals function as social processes that reinforce collective identity and cultural values.<sup>[14]</sup> These perspectives suggest that religious practices cannot be separated from the cultural contexts in which they are embedded.

### **Ritual as Social Process in Turnerian Perspective**

From the perspective of Turner, rituals are not merely symbolic acts but are also social processes that play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion.<sup>[14]</sup> In the case of Kampua, the ritual serves as a communal

event that brings together various members of the community, including family members, neighbors, and religious leaders. This collective participation highlights the social dimension of the ritual, which extends beyond its religious significance. One of Turner's key concepts is *communitas*, which refers to a sense of social unity that emerges during ritual participation.<sup>[14]</sup> Kampua creates a temporary space in which social hierarchies are minimized, allowing individuals to interact on a more equal footing. During the ritual, participants share a common purpose—praying for the well-being of the child—which fosters a sense of solidarity and collective identity.

### **Symbolic Meaning in Geertzian Analysis**

From a Geertzian perspective, culture can be understood as a system of symbols through which individuals interpret and give meaning to their experiences.<sup>[13]</sup> In this framework, the Kampua ritual is rich in symbolic elements that convey important cultural messages. These symbols are not merely decorative but serve as “vehicles of meaning” that reflect the worldview of the Muna community. One of the most prominent symbolic elements in Kampua is the use of ketupat and bananas. These objects carry gender-specific meanings that are deeply embedded in the cultural system. Ketupat, which is associated with female children, symbolizes fertility, domestic roles, and nurturing qualities. In contrast, bananas, which are associated with male children, represent strength, continuity, and lineage.

### **Kampua as Social Integration in Durkheimian Perspective**

From a Durkheimian perspective, rituals play a fundamental role in maintaining social cohesion by reinforcing collective consciousness.<sup>[15]</sup> Kampua serves as a mechanism for bringing individuals together and reaffirming shared beliefs and values. Through participation in the ritual, community members strengthen their sense

of belonging and collective identity. Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness refers to the set of shared beliefs and moral attitudes that unite a society.<sup>[15]</sup>

## **METHODS**

This research employs a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design.<sup>[16]</sup> The ethnographic method is particularly suitable for this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of cultural practices and meanings from the perspective of community members.<sup>[17]</sup> The study was conducted in Muna Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, where the Kampua tradition is still actively practiced. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, including traditional leaders, religious figures, and community members who have direct experience with the Kampua ritual. Data collection<sup>[18]</sup> was carried out through three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather detailed information about the meaning, process, and significance of Kampua. Second, participant observation was used to document the actual implementation of the ritual. Third, documentation techniques were employed to collect supporting materials such as photographs, field notes, and written records. The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.<sup>[15,18]</sup> To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation of data sources and methods was applied.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Kampua as a Cultural–Religious Hybrid**

The Kampua ritual represents a distinctive example of cultural–religious hybridity in which Islamic teachings and indigenous cultural practices are interwoven into a coherent social practice. Rather than existing as separate domains, religion and culture interact dynamically within the ritual, producing a form of practice that reflects both continuity and adaptation. This

hybridity is not accidental but is the result of a long historical process in which Islamic values have been gradually integrated into the cultural framework of the Muna community.

From the perspective of acculturation theory, Kampua can be understood as a process of selective adaptation. The Muna community does not simply adopt Islamic practices in their original form; instead, they reinterpret and modify them in ways that align with existing cultural values. This process allows the community to maintain its cultural identity while simultaneously embracing Islamic teachings. In this sense, Kampua serves as an example of how acculturation can produce a balanced coexistence between external religious influences and local traditions.

Furthermore, Kampua reflects what anthropologists describe as a “negotiated tradition.” This concept emphasizes that traditions are not static but are continuously reshaped through social interaction and cultural interpretation. The inclusion of Islamic prayers within the Kampua ritual demonstrates how religious elements are incorporated into local traditions without displacing their original meaning. Instead, these elements enhance the ritual’s significance by adding a spiritual dimension that resonates with contemporary religious beliefs.

Empirical data from interviews support this interpretation. Informants consistently emphasize that Kampua is both a cultural obligation and a religious expression. One traditional leader noted that the ritual has evolved over time, incorporating Islamic elements while preserving its original cultural structure. This indicates that the community actively participates in shaping the ritual, rather than passively inheriting it from previous generations. In this context, Kampua can be seen as a form of cultural resilience. It demonstrates the ability of the Muna community to adapt to changing religious influences while maintaining the core values of their cultural heritage. This resilience is particularly important in the

face of modernization, which often threatens the continuity of local traditions. By integrating Islamic values into Kampua, the community ensures that the ritual remains relevant in contemporary society.

### **Ritual as Social Process**

The communal nature of Kampua is further reflected in the involvement of different social actors. Each participant plays a specific role, from preparing ritual materials to leading prayers. This division of roles not only facilitates the smooth execution of the ritual but also reinforces social relationships within the community. Through repeated participation in such rituals, individuals internalize social norms and values, contributing to the stability of the social structure. In addition, Kampua can be understood as a form of social communication. The ritual provides a platform for expressing shared beliefs and reaffirming cultural values. Through symbolic actions and collective participation, the community communicates its commitment to both cultural traditions and religious principles. This communication is essential for maintaining social cohesion, particularly in communities where oral traditions play a significant role. Finally, the Turnerian perspective highlights the transformative potential of rituals. Kampua marks a transitional moment in the life of a child, symbolizing the passage from one stage of life to another. At the same time, it reinforces the social integration of the child into the community. Thus, the ritual functions not only as a cultural practice but also as a mechanism for social reproduction.

### **Symbolic Meaning**

The symbolic associations reflect broader cultural expectations regarding gender roles within the Muna community. Through the use of these symbols, the ritual communicates social values that are considered important for the development of the child. In this sense, Kampua functions as a medium for transmitting cultural

knowledge across generations. Furthermore, the symbolic elements of Kampua are closely linked to the community's cosmological beliefs. The ritual not only addresses the physical well-being of the child but also its spiritual protection. The combination of symbolic objects and religious prayers creates a holistic framework that integrates material and spiritual dimensions.

Geertz's concept of "thick description" is particularly relevant in analysing these symbols. A superficial observation of the ritual might overlook the deeper meanings embedded in its elements. However, a detailed interpretation reveals that each component of the ritual contributes to a broader system of meaning. This highlights the importance of understanding cultural practices within their specific contexts. In conclusion, the symbolic dimension of Kampua underscores its role as a cultural text that encodes social values and beliefs. By interpreting these symbols, researchers can gain deeper insights into the cultural logic that underlies the ritual.

### **Kampua and Aqiqah: Localization of Islamic Practice**

The comparison between Kampua and aqiqah provides valuable insights into the process of localization in Islamic practice. Aqiqah is a well-established Islamic ritual that involves the sacrifice of animals as a form of gratitude for the birth of a child. In contrast, Kampua incorporates local cultural elements that are not found in classical Islamic teachings. Despite these differences, both rituals share a common purpose: expressing gratitude and seeking blessings for the child. This similarity suggests that Kampua can be seen as a localized adaptation of Islamic practices. Rather than replicating aqiqah in its original form, the Muna community has developed a version that aligns with their cultural context.

From the perspective of acculturation, this adaptation can be understood as a process of cultural negotiation. The community selectively adopts elements of Islamic

practice while retaining aspects of their indigenous tradition. This process allows for the coexistence of religious and cultural values without creating conflict. Contemporary scholars of Islam in Southeast Asia have emphasized the importance of such localized practices. They argue that Islam in the region is characterized by its flexibility and adaptability, which enable it to integrate with diverse cultural traditions. Kampua exemplifies this characteristic, demonstrating how Islamic teachings can be interpreted in culturally meaningful ways. Moreover, the localization of Islamic practice in Kampua reflects the agency of the Muna community. Rather than being passive recipients of religious teachings, community members actively reinterpret these teachings to suit their social and cultural needs. This highlights the dynamic nature of religious practice and its capacity to evolve over time.

### **Kampua as Social Integration**

Kampua contributes to the formation and maintenance of this collective consciousness by providing a space for communal interaction. During the ritual, participants engage in shared activities that reinforce their connection to one another. The ritual also functions as a form of social regulation. By adhering to established norms and practices, individuals demonstrate their commitment to the community. This reinforces social order and ensures the continuity of cultural traditions. In this sense, Kampua acts as a stabilizing force within the social structure.

In addition, Kampua provides an opportunity for intergenerational interaction. Older members of the community pass on cultural knowledge and values to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of the tradition. This process of transmission is essential for maintaining cultural identity over time. Finally, Kampua can be seen as a symbolic representation of social unity. The collective participation in the ritual reflects the interconnectedness of individuals within

the community. This unity is not only expressed through actions but also reinforced through shared beliefs and values.

### **Kampua as Cultural Resilience**

In the context of globalization and modernization, many traditional practices face the risk of decline or transformation. However, Kampua demonstrates a remarkable capacity for cultural resilience. The ritual continues to be practiced by the Muna community, even as social and cultural conditions change. This resilience can be attributed to the adaptability of the ritual. By incorporating Islamic elements, Kampua remains relevant in a society where religion plays an increasingly important role. At the same time, the retention of local symbols ensures that the ritual continues to reflect the community's cultural identity.

From a theoretical perspective, cultural resilience refers to the ability of a community to maintain and adapt its cultural practices in the face of external pressures. Kampua exemplifies this concept by balancing continuity and change. The ritual evolves over time while preserving its core values. Furthermore, Kampua serves as a form of cultural resistance against homogenizing influences. In a globalized world, local traditions often face pressure to conform to dominant cultural norms. By maintaining Kampua, the Muna community asserts its cultural distinctiveness and autonomy.

In conclusion, Kampua is not only a ritual but also a symbol of cultural resilience. It reflects the capacity of the Muna community to navigate the challenges of modernization while preserving their cultural heritage.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the Kampua tradition represents a form of cultural-religious acculturation in which Islamic values are integrated into local cultural practices. The ritual reflects a dynamic process of negotiation between religious

teachings and cultural traditions. Kampua is not merely a birth ritual but a complex social institution that embodies symbolic meanings, reinforces social cohesion, and preserves cultural identity. The findings suggest that local communities play an active role in shaping religious practices, resulting in diverse expressions of Islam. This study contributes to broader discussions on localized Islam and cultural adaptation, highlighting the importance of understanding religion within its cultural context.

### **Declaration by Authors**

**Acknowledgement:** None

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflicts of interest declared.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Karmaker, R. (2026). Indigenous Religion, Language Loss, and Cultural Identity among Ethnic Communities in Bangladesh. *ASEAN Journal of Religion, Education, and Society*, 5(1), 37-42. <https://ejournal.bumipublikasinusantara.id/index.php/ajores/article/view/877/690>.
2. Madjid, N. (1997). Islam, doktrin dan peradaban. Paramadina.
3. Al-Qaradawi, Y. (1994). The lawful and the prohibited in Islam. Al-Falah Foundation.
4. Damayanti, R. (2025). Islam Nusantara and Local Traditions: Role and Challenges in Indonesia's Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations. *Mimbar Agama Budaya*, 42(1), 1-13. [https://repository.paramadina.ac.id/1806/1/Rizki%20Damayanti\\_Published.pdf](https://repository.paramadina.ac.id/1806/1/Rizki%20Damayanti_Published.pdf).
5. Hakimovna, U. K. (2026). Household Rituals Across Spanish, English, Uzbek, And Turkish Linguocultures. *American Journal of Education and Learning*, 4(1), 341-346. <https://advancedscienti.com/index.php/AJEL/article/view/3749/7380>.
6. Adinugraha, H. H., & Al-Kasyaf, M. Z. (2025). Islamic rituals and spirituality in Southeast Asia: An ethnographic study of coastal Muslim communities. *Journal of Asian Wisdom and Islamic Behavior*, 3(2), 74-90.

- <https://mail.jawab.web.id/index.php/JAWA-B/article/view/98>.
7. Pedersen, L. (2016). Religious pluralism in Indonesia. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 17(5), 387-398. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14442213.2016.1218534>.
  8. Ali, M. (2025). Indonesian Post-Orientalist Study of Islam. *Studia Islamika*, 32(1), 43-73. <https://studiaislamika.ppimcensis.or.id/index.php/studia-islamika/article/view/45297>.
  9. Isnaeni, H., Muafiroh, S., Ummah, Z. R., Turner, S., Lekakis, S., Adianto, J., ... & Atqa, M. (2025). Sacred Places, Ritual and Identity: Shaping the Liminal Landscape of Banda Neira, Maluku Islands. *Land*, 14(5), 1109. <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/14/5/1109>.
  10. Devianti, D., & Suraya, R. S. (2025). Ritual Kampua Bagi Orang Muna di Desa Waara Kecamatan Lohia Kabupaten Muna. *KABANTI: Jurnal Kerabat Antropologi*, 9(1), 1-13. <https://journal.fib.uho.ac.id/index.php/kabantropologi/article/view/3057/1965>.
  11. Azman, Z., & Supriadi, S. (2025). The History of Islamization in Indonesia: Its Dynamics and Development. *El-Ghiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 23(1), 67-82. <http://jurnal.staibslg.ac.id/index.php/el-ghiroh/article/view/1092>.
  12. Pusvisasari, L., & Faqih, F. A. (2025). Islam and Traditions in Indonesia. *Al-Amru: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Dakwah Islam*, 1(1), 18-27. <https://al-amru.hadana.id/index.php/i/article/view/3>.
  13. Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.
  14. Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. Aldine Publishing.
  15. Durkheim, E. (1995). *The elementary forms of religious life*. Free Press.
  16. Koentjaraningrat. (2009). *Pengantar ilmu antropologi*. Rineka Cipta.
  17. Spradley, J. P. (2007). *The ethnographic interview*. Waveland Press.
  18. Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- How to cite this article: La Aso, La Taena, Murni Nia, I Ketut Suardika, La Iru, Bahtiar, et al. Acculturation of Islam and Muna's Kampua traditions in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2026; 13(4): 316-322. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20260431>

\*\*\*\*\*