

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ACCULTURATION IN THE RAMBU SOLO' CEREMONY MUSLIM IN TANA TORAJA

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.31330/penamas.v38i2.954>

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Dates:

Received: August, 31th 2025

Revised: December, 12th 2025

Published: December, 30th 2025

Abstract

*This study examines cultural acculturation in the Rambu Solo' funeral tradition in Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi, as adapted by Muslim families. This study discusses the challenges of cultural and religious acculturation, considering the potential for polemics when there is no space for dialogue, negotiation, and mutual understanding. To study this research, a qualitative descriptive method was used, and data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results of this study are that Rambu Solo' is a sacred and meaningful traditional funeral ceremony usually performed by adherents of the Aluk Todolo religion and Christians. However, over time, this tradition has also begun to be practiced by Muslims, with several adjustments to align with Islamic law, including the elimination of elements that conflict with Islamic teachings, such as the absence of pork, replacing singing with recitation of the Qur'an, the elimination of alcoholic beverages ('ballo'), and the elimination of the buffalo fighting ritual (*mappasilaga tedong*). Islamic rituals carry out the process of slaughtering animals. Initially, the implementation of Rambu Solo' for Muslims sparked controversy because it was considered inconsistent with Islamic law.*

Keywords: Rambu Solo'; Tradition; Cultural Acculturation; Society; Tana Toraja

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji akulturasi budaya dalam tradisi pemakaman Rambu Solo' di Tana Toraja, Sulawesi Selatan, sebagaimana diadaptasi oleh keluarga Muslim. Penelitian ini membahas tantangan akulturasi budaya dan agama, dengan mempertimbangkan potensi polemik yang muncul jika tidak ada ruang untuk dialog, negosiasi dan pemahaman bersama. Untuk mengkaji penelitian ini, metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dan data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini adalah Rambu Solo' merupakan upacara pemakaman tradisional yang sakral dan bermakna yang biasanya dilakukan oleh pengikut agama Aluk Todolo dan Kristen. Namun, seiring berjalannya waktu, tradisi ini juga mulai diperaktikkan oleh umat Islam, dengan beberapa penyesuaian agar selaras dengan hukum Islam, meliputi penghapusan unsur-unsur yang bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam, seperti tidak adanya daging babi, mengganti nyanyian dengan bacaan Al-Qur'an, penghapusan minuman beralkohol ('ballo'), dan penghapusan ritual adu kerbau (*mappasilaga tedong*). Proses penyembelihan hewan dilakukan sesuai dengan ritual Islam. Awalnya, pelaksanaan Rambu Solo' bagi umat Islam memicu kontroversi karena dianggap tidak konsisten dengan hukum Islam.

Kata Kunci: Rambu Solo'; Tradisi; Akulturasi Budaya; Masyarakat; Tana Toraja



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INTRODUCTION

Tana Toraja (Toraja), located in South Sulawesi, has many traditions and cultural traditions. One traditional ceremony still practiced today is the funeral ceremony known as *Rambu Solo*'. This ceremony holds profound social, religious, and cultural significance for the Toraja people. *Rambu Solo*' is a defining characteristic of the Tana Toraja people (Anggraeni & Putri, 2020). Some sources say that Christians often perform this ritual, but others say that those who perform it adhere to animist beliefs (*Aluk Todolo* religion) (Idbackpacker, 2025).

Regarding the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony, the people of Tana Toraja believe it is not merely a ritual but also a connection between human nature, ancestors, and God. Traditionally, during this ceremony, a buffalo is slaughtered as a symbol of respect for the departed spirit. This respect is imbued with profound meaning, so that during this ceremony, every family member experiences both a sense of loss and a profound sense of acceptance (Petrus et al., 2024).

The *Rambu Solo*' ceremony places great emphasis on the implementation of family values and cooperation to ensure its smooth operation. However, carrying out this ceremony requires significant funding. In some cases, the body must be preserved for years before the ceremony. This is because the ceremony must be conducted as grandly as possible, in the hope that the bereaved family will not feel lonely and will be able to let go of their deceased family members sincerely. This significant cost is broken down into several factors, namely the number of buffalo and other livestock for slaughter, the cost of the location and construction (usually held in the traditional Torajan house, the *Tongkonan*), the use of traditional attire for all family members and guests, traditional dances and entertainment (Gelstry et al., 2024; Tumirin & Abdurahim, n.d.)

Based on the explanation above, the entire series of *Rambu Solo*' ceremonies are attached to the term *Aluk Todolo*, so it is called *Rambu Solo' Aluk Todolo*. However, after we conducted observations from various sources, this *Rambu Solo*' is carried out differently by adherents of Islam. This was first discovered in 2022 when a Muslim family in Tarongko Village, Makale District, Tana Toraja Regency, also held the *Rambu Solo*" ceremony. In general, the Muslim family explained that the *Rambu Solo*' they carried out had been adapted to Islamic teachings, such as not including pigs in the list of livestock to be slaughtered, slaughtering livestock by reciting the *basmalah*, replacing the *badong* song (in the *Ma'badong* dance) with the recitation of the Quran, not providing *ballo* (palm wine for guests), not storing the body and replacing it with a tombstone that is inserted into the coffin, and eliminating the *Mappasilaga Tedong* procession - buffalo fighting.

Although this practice initially garnered public attention because it was deemed contrary to Islamic law, several aspects have been recognised as consistent with Islamic teachings. Not only did it garner public attention, but the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) initially opposed the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony performed by Muslim families. However, after careful consideration, the MUI and NU agreed to grant permission for Muslim families to perform the *Rambu Solo*" ceremony, with the primary requirement that the entire process be conducted in accordance with Islamic teachings and that no non-Islamic rituals be adopted. Furthermore, to support the implementation of *Rambu Solo*' by Muslim families, the MUI agreed to collaborate with the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), the Indonesian National Police (POLRI), traditional leaders, and Islamic organizations to discuss the situation and establish clear regulations (DetikSulsel, 2022).

Based on the explanation above, we argue that the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony would be highly contradictory if performed by a Muslim family. Data shows that the Muslim population in Tana Toraja is approximately 31,187, or 12.08% of the total population, while Christians (70.54%) make up the majority (Darmawan, 2024). Based on this data, although the Muslim population is a minority, they are equally empowered to practice their traditions in Tana Toraja. Therefore, we assume that Muslims, in this practice, also have an opportunity to practice *Rambu Solo*' as a socio-cultural society, despite the numerous controversies surrounding its conflict with Islamic values. Furthermore, researchers see this situation as

intersecting with the study of cultural acculturation, which is a cross-section of intercultural communication studies. Acculturation is defined as the meeting of two or more cultures and their interaction without abandoning their original culture (Ambarita et al., 2024; Purnomo & Demartoto, 2022).

Cultural acculturation is a social process that occurs when two cultures interact intensively, resulting in the exchange, adjustment, and unification of certain cultural elements (Koentjaraningrat, 2009). This process is not always balanced, as it often involves the domination of one culture over another. Berry (1997) developed a highly influential theoretical framework for acculturation, identifying four primary strategies in the acculturation process: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. These four strategies describe how individuals or ethnic groups adapt to new cultural environments, balancing their desire to maintain their original cultural identity with participation in the dominant culture.

Reflecting on the controversy faced by Muslim families in Tana Toraja who performed the "Rambu Solo" ceremony, we observed that cultural controversy can affect anyone and is closely related to cultural acculturation. This has been studied in depth by several academics, such as Novel Adryan Purnomo and Argyo Demartoto. Purnomo and Demartoto explained that acculturation occurring between two cultures is feared to diminish the values and identity of the old culture (Purnomo & Demartoto, 2022). Thus, new identities will emerge, giving rise to new dynamics. Furthermore, M. Alie Humaedi explained that acculturation has the potential to fail if there is no space for discussion between the two cultures in one location (Humaedi, 2014). This potential for failure arises when culture is intertwined with religious issues. Therefore, he believes that collaboration and discussion are crucial for understanding cultural and religious acculturation.

Several other studies also show that cultural acculturation extends across various contexts and communities in Indonesia. For example, the K-pop wave has become an agent of cultural acculturation through music, with netnographic and Google Trends analysis reflecting public interest in Korean culture in Indonesia (Masruroh et al., 2023). Other research explores the acculturation of Minang, Chinese, and Islamic cultures in Padang City through the *Cap Go Meh* tradition. This study highlights cultural strategies and adaptive acculturation methods within the local context (Susilawati et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the dynamics of cultural acculturation in a multi-ethnic society in Palangka Raya City (Sriyana & Arianti, 2025). This study highlights the interactions of various ethnic groups and strategies for intercultural adaptation and integration in everyday life. Furthermore, Tusriyanto's research shows that cultural acculturation is strongly linked to societal perceptions and cultural identity, thereby significantly influencing the adaptation process. One example is the Rohingya migrants in Aceh (Tusriyanto et al., 2023). This study explores cultural adaptation among migrants and ethnic minorities.

Referring to the aforementioned studies, several important points and gaps emerge in this research. Previous studies have not explicitly addressed death rituals, meaning they have not addressed the death rituals of Muslim communities living among non-Muslim local communities. In this article, we focus on an in-depth study of how Muslims in Tana Toraja perform the death ceremony (*Rambu Solo*), a local death ritual originating from non-Muslim local culture. Furthermore, previous studies have focused solely on cultural harmonization, while this article examines identity, tolerance, and negotiation between local culture and religion. Thus, it opens the door to further research on cultural acculturation in the normative and spiritual realms. Therefore, this article uses a portrait of the implementation of *Rambu Solo* in Tana Toraja, which Muslim families carry out, as a window into the academic discourse on cultural acculturation, one of the studies in the intercultural communication cluster.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses qualitative research focused on understanding the meanings, values, and symbols that exist in the cultural practices of the community, particularly in the implementation of the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony by the Muslim community in Tana Toraja (Patton, 2002). This approach is used to explore in depth the subjective experiences and interpretations of cultural actors, such as Muslim families, traditional leaders, and religious figures, regarding the process of acculturation between Islamic teachings and traditional traditions. The data obtained are descriptive, collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation of the ceremony, and documentation of the cultural artifacts and accompanying religious practices (Sugiyono, 2016).

The approach used in this research is phenomenology. This approach emphasises the personal experiences and symbolic meanings of traditional practitioners and Muslim families participating in the *Rambu Solo*' procession. Through this approach, researchers seek to understand how these individuals perceive and interpret this traditional practice within the framework of Islamic teachings. The primary focus is not solely on the outward form of the ritual, but also on the participants' subjective awareness and perception of the acculturation process occurring between local culture and their religious values.

This study uses a broad framework of intercultural communication. According to Gudykunst and Kim, intercultural communication involves the exchange of information between individuals from different cultural backgrounds, each of whom brings unique values, norms, and meaning systems (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003). In this process, acculturation serves as a bridge, facilitating adjustments in perception and behaviour and enabling effective communication. When individuals experience long-term cultural contact (such as migration, intercultural marriage, or cross-border work), the acculturation process will influence their communicative abilities, including language, communication style, and interpretation of meaning.

In-depth interviews were applied in this study to explore the experiences, meanings, and direct knowledge of informants involved in the Muslim version of the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony. Key informants included Muslim family members who organized the ceremony, Torajan traditional figures who still play a role in preserving the tradition, Islamic religious figures such as *ustaz* (Islamic teachers) or *imams* (Islamic priests) who contribute to the instilling of Islamic values in the ritual, and residents who witnessed or were socially involved in the procession. Interviews were conducted openly and flexibly, so that researchers could capture subjective meanings, in-depth understanding, and local narratives that are alive in the practice of cultural and religious acculturation.

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, identifying, organizing, and interpreting key themes emerging from the interview transcripts (Leavy & Brinkmann, 2014). This process began with transcribing all interviews verbatim, followed by repeated readings to understand the implicit and explicit meanings within the informants' narratives. The researcher then conducted a coding process, marking or labeling key sections related to the research focus, such as symbolic meanings, forms of acculturation, and cultural adaptation within the framework of Islamic teachings. Related codes were then classified into broader themes. This analysis enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of cultural actors and how they interpret customary and religious values in the implementation of the Muslim version of *Rambu Solo*'.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Philosophical Views on Death in Torajan Culture

Death in Torajan culture is not the end of life, but rather a transitional phase to the spirit realm, known as *Puya*. In Torajan belief, the soul of a deceased person does not immediately

move to *Puya* but must undergo a series of traditional ceremonies known as *Rambu Solo*'. This ceremony is considered a final tribute to the deceased's spirit and a means of ensuring a smooth transition to the spirit realm in accordance with ancestral traditions. *Puya* is not simply a final resting place, but also a manifestation of the cycle of life as believed by the Torajan people. In this belief, the connection between the human world and the ancestral realm remains closely intertwined. Surviving families are responsible for escorting the spirit to *Puya* through a proper funeral procession. The more elaborate and complete the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony, the higher the social status and honor accorded to the deceased (Lumbaa et al., 2023).

The *Rambu Solo*' ceremony is not only ritualistic but also reflects the Torajan people's deeply held values, such as togetherness, cooperation, and respect for ancestors (Sihombing, 2022). The procession involves many parties, from family and relatives to the wider community, who collectively contribute to preparing and implementing the ceremony. Furthermore, elements of the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony, such as the buffalo slaughter, traditional dances, and traditional music, express the rich cultural heritage passed down through generations (Serdianus, 2022). Thus, *Rambu Solo*' is not merely a funeral procession, but also a symbol of spirituality, cultural identity, and social expression for the Torajan people (Pantan et al., 2024). Through this tradition, they not only ensure the transfer of the soul to *Puya* but also maintain the balance between the human and ancestral worlds, strengthen cultural values, and strengthen social bonds within their community. From practices like this, it becomes a reflection that encourages harmony among residents, mutual respect, and the maintenance of harmonious relationships (Syihabuddin & Alfani, 2024; Ukat et al., 2025).

Rambu Solo' is one of the most sacred funeral traditions in Indonesia, not just a farewell ritual for the deceased but also a symbol of the cultural, social, and spiritual values of the Torajan people (Noviani et al., 2024). As part of a centuries-old ancestral heritage, this ceremony holds profound significance in Torajan social life. The *Rambu Solo*' ritual consists of various customary stages that must be carried out in sequence to ensure the spirit's journey to *Puya* (the spirit realm) goes smoothly. The general process of the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony is *Ma'pasulluk* (family gathering), *Mangriu' Batu* (pulling the simbuang stone to the ceremony yard), *Ma'pasa Tedong* (buffalo inventory), *Ma'papengkalao* (removal of the body), *Manggissi Loud* (filling into the hut), *Ma' Palao* and *Ma' Pasonglo* (removal of the body from the grave to Lakkian), *Allo Katongkonan* (reception day), *Hari Katorroan* (rest day), *Mantaa Padang* (animal slaughter), *Me Aa* (burial of the body) (Lebba & Kaharuddin, 2023). Each stage in *Rambu Solo*' has its own philosophy that reflects the relationship between humans and their ancestors, nature, and fellow community members (Salurante, 2020).

Besides its profound spiritual dimension, *Rambu Solo*' also reflects the Torajan social hierarchy. The higher a person's social status, the larger and more magnificent their funeral procession. This is reflected in the number of buffalo and pigs slaughtered—a practice that not only demonstrates a family's economic capacity but also strengthens their standing within the community (Bigalke, 2005; Mangopang et al., 2017). Torajan society divides social status into several classes based on birth and family wealth. Those from the nobility (*Tana' Bulaan*) typically have much more elaborate funeral ceremonies than those from the common caste (*Tana' Karurung*). This ritual serves as a symbol of family honor and a means of demonstrating social solidarity through cooperation and shared contributions from relatives and neighbors (Salam, 2017).

One important dimension that makes *Rambu Solo*' more than just a funeral procession is the presence of meaningful traditional music and dance elements (Embon, 2019). One form of expression is *Ma'badong*, a ritual dance performed by mourners who form a circle, hold hands, and recite mournful verses that represent the deceased's spiritual journey. This dance not only reflects collective grief but also embodies the values of togetherness and social solidarity within the Torajan community structure (Patandean et al., 2018). In addition to *Ma'badong*, traditional Torajan music, such as *Pa'pompang* (wind instruments) and *Pa'barrung* (large drums), accompanies the procession as a final tribute to the deceased.

These elements add an aesthetic dimension to *Rambu Solo'*, making it not only a mourning ceremony but also a cultural celebration that connects the present generation with the traditions of their ancestors.

On the other hand, carrying out *Rambu Solo'* requires significant funding to turn this tradition into a grand celebration. Several studies show that the use of buffalo and pigs as livestock in *Rambu Solo'* is often replaced by cash. This has also sparked controversy and public participation, particularly among the indigenous Tana Toraja people. For traditional leaders, this practice is often viewed as "cheap," as it typically prioritises livestock, such as buffalo, over money. However, acquiring buffalo and the celebration also require substantial amounts of money (Sampe, 2020). When the *Rambu Solo'* tradition is performed quickly and grandly, the community assumes that the family performing it is part of the nobility. Buffalo and pigs are believed to possess high value and prestige, so only wealthy families can afford them. This is evident in the large number of buffalo and pigs included in the *Rambu Solo'* tradition (Anggraeni & Putri, 2020).

Based on the above data, it can be concluded that the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony not only functions as a spiritual ritual and a symbol of social hierarchy but also embodies important social values for the Torajan people, namely: *First*, solidarity and cooperation, where all family and community members are involved in organizing the ceremony, both financially and physically. *Second*, respect for ancestors, where this ritual ensures that the deceased's spirit is welcomed into the ancestral realm and maintains connections with the living family. *Third*, the passion for cultural values, which is passed down from generation to generation as part of the Torajan identity. As a cultural heritage that remains preserved to this day, *Rambu Solo'* demonstrates how the Torajan people maintain their traditional values while adapting to changing times. This ritual is not only part of their belief system but also a cultural identity that distinguishes the Torajan people from other communities in Indonesia.

The Rambu Solo' Tradition and the Muslims of Tana Toraja

In general, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja is a minority group (Paisal, 2019). Despite being a minority group, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja has a long history of acceptance and rapid growth. In the context of social life, Muslims in Tana Toraja demonstrate a rapid ability to adapt (Mustamin et al., 2022). One example is the ability to live alongside other religions. This tolerance in Tana Toraja manifests itself in the maintenance of customs and cultural rituals without abandoning Islamic law.

One form of adaptation is the *Rambu Solo'* funeral ritual (Surono et al., 2024). In a pluralistic context, Toraja Muslims face challenges in preserving the *Rambu Solo'* tradition, a traditional funeral ritual deeply embedded in local beliefs and the Torajan social value system. As a minority group, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja must navigate the complexities of preserving ancestral traditions and adhering to Islamic teachings. This creates a unique process of acculturation, where traditional elements are aligned with Islamic principles to remain acceptable to the Muslim community. *Rambu Solo'* is a funeral ceremony that Torajans have practiced with *aluk todolo*, Christian, and Catholic beliefs for generations. As the number of Torajan converts to Islam has increased, several Torajan cultural practices have been adapted to Islamic teachings, including the funeral ceremony.

Based on interviews, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja, who held the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, later adopted the name *Mattambung*. This name was adopted from Bugis traditions. This is inseparable from the history of Islam's arrival in Tana Toraja, brought by the Bugis community. The term *Mattambung* comes from the root word *tambu*, which means "closing" or "completion" (Suardi, Toraja Muslim community leader, personal interview in Makale, April 18, 2024).

The *Mattambung* tradition is performed as a final act of respect for the deceased, usually on the 100th day after death. In practice, the family and relatives of the deceased gather for a communal prayer and place pebbles at the grave as a symbol of attention and respect for the final resting place. This activity not only has spiritual significance but also strengthens social

bonds and solidarity within the community.

Unlike the *Mattambung*, the *Rambu Solo*' tradition is a traditional funeral ceremony performed by the non-Muslim people of Tana Toraja. *Rambu Solo*' is not only a religious ritual, but also a complex traditional ceremony involving various processions, such as the slaughter of sacrificial animals, artistic performances, and the gathering of the extended family. The primary purpose of *Rambu Solo*' is to honor the spirit of the deceased and send them to the realm of Puya (the spirit realm), in accordance with traditional Toraja beliefs. Besides being an expression of grief, this ceremony also demonstrates the social status of the deceased's family and strengthens the community's social structure.

As the number of Muslims in Toraja increases, the *rambu Solo*' tradition remains. The Islamic community of Tana Toraja maintains the essence of respect for the deceased. However, it adapts the event to Islamic teachings, such as prayer recitations and *tahlilan* (religious recitation), without elements of traditional beliefs. Unlike the Bugis community, which sets the 100th day as the exact date for *Mattambung*, the Islamic community of Tana Toraja is more flexible in choosing the ceremony's timing, depending on the family's financial and social readiness. This shows that in religious practices, people still consider the deeply rooted local cultural context.

Rambu Solo' is known as a magnificent, expensive funeral ritual, full of symbols of the *Aluk Todolo* faith. The Muslim community of Tana Toraja no longer fully practices this tradition, as it conflicts with Islamic teachings. However, the spirit of honoring the deceased is preserved through simpler and more religious versions, such as the *Mattambung* tradition. The acculturation in Tana Toraja reflects the harmony between religion and culture, where the community does not immediately erase old traditions but reworks them to align with its religious principles. This process demonstrates that culture and religion can coexist in a social space that respects and enriches each other.

Based on an interview with Mr Andi (pseudonym), the *Mattambung* tradition is motivated by changes in the physical condition of graves over time. One common change is the subsidence of the grave's surface due to natural weathering or erosion. In the context of the *Mattambung* tradition, this condition is the primary reason for tomb restoration. When the grave's surface begins to sink, the deceased's family will add gravel and rearrange the stones around the grave as a marker and a sign of respect. The gravel is not only placed for functional reasons but also carries symbolic meaning, demonstrating the family's presence and care for their ancestors. Mr Andi further added that the addition of gravel is usually done in conjunction with the *Mattambung* commemoration, thus becoming part of a ritual that unites spiritual and social values. The process of repairing the grave is seen as a moral responsibility to the deceased's family members, as well as a moment of reflection for the surviving family. Besides serving as a physical marker, the added gravel also symbolises the family's togetherness in the process. This tradition demonstrates that in the Islamic society of Tana Toraja, repairing a grave is not only about caring for the final resting place, but also a way to nurture relationships among family members, uphold the honour of ancestors, and preserve local cultural values that have been acculturated with Islamic teachings.

Echoing Mr Andi, Mr Suardi added that the *Mattambung* tradition is not merely a religious or cultural ritual but also has a powerful social function. According to him, *Mattambung* is an important moment for re-establishing family ties, especially for family members who are away from home. When a family member dies, and a *Mattambung* ceremony is held, the entire family living outside the area will try to make time to return home and gather. This activity is seen as a means of strengthening ties, as it provides a rare opportunity to meet and maintain close family ties. Mr Suardi also added that in the Muslim community of Tana Toraja, the *Rambu Solo*' tradition—which typically involves a large feast in the context of a death—is no longer fully observed. Instead, simple dishes are prepared for the family and guests as a form of respect.

Family ties in Toraja society are very strong, especially during funeral ceremonies. In their culture, every family member is considered part of a larger family, making participation in funeral ceremonies a symbol of social and moral responsibility. If someone is absent or not involved in these ceremonies, they often feel ashamed, as they are seen as neglecting family ties. This differs from non-Muslim Torajans, particularly those of the *Aluk Todolo* faith, Christians, and Catholics, who believe that their responsibility for the deceased is not complete until they have performed the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony.

According to Mr. Suardi, the primary substance of the *Mattambung* tradition is repairing or strengthening the deceased's grave, both physically and symbolically. This is not only a form of respect for the deceased but also an expression of the family's concern for their ancestral heritage. Thus, the *Mattambung* tradition is not only a form of cultural acculturation but also a means of preserving family values within the Islamic society of Tana Toraja.

The *Rambu Solo*' ceremony, performed by non-Muslim communities, can last for days or weeks, depending on the deceased's social status and the family's economic capacity. The higher a person's social standing during life, the larger and more elaborate the traditional procession. The entire series of activities is organized and coordinated by the *Tongkonan* (extended traditional family) along with traditional leaders who play a crucial role in maintaining the continuity of the tradition and ensuring that each stage of the ceremony is carried out in accordance with Torajan cultural rules and values.

Unlike non-Muslim communities, the *Rambu Solo*' ceremony performed by Toraja Muslims generally lasts for a shorter period, around three to seven days. Its implementation also incorporates Islamic values, both in terms of time and ritual content. The main activity usually takes place at night, which is interpreted as a time of silence and reverence for praying for the deceased. On these nights, the extended family gathers to read the Quran until it is finished as a form of ongoing charity for the deceased. Furthermore, there is a tradition of counting pebbles while reciting Surah Al-Ikhlas a thousand times, a form of dhikr and prayer believed to ease the soul's journey to the afterlife. This tradition serves as a clear example of the acculturation of Torajan culture with Islamic teachings, where traditional elements are maintained but reinterpreted within the framework of the Muslim faith (Hadriyat et al., 2023; Salu et al., 2018; Wulandari et al., 2023).

On the main day of the ceremony (the day itself), the extended family slaughters a sacrificial animal, usually a goat or cow, as a form of gratitude and final respect for the deceased. The meat is then cooked and served to guests, family, and neighbors at a communal meal as part of the *Mattambung* traditional series of prayers and spiritual activities performed collectively before and after the funeral. This slaughter also marks the end of the religious activities that have taken place over the previous several nights. Finally, pebbles previously used in dhikr (recitation of Surah Al-Ikhlas a thousand times) are sprinkled over the deceased's grave, and a headstone is installed. This symbolic act is interpreted as a form of release and final respect, as well as a symbol of the prayers that accompany the soul's departure to the afterlife.

Despite facing various challenges, the Muslim *Rambu Solo*' was ultimately accepted as part of the social reality of Torajan society. This *Rambu Solo Muslim shows as a Model of Acculturation in a Multicultural Society*. This process demonstrates that culture and religion can adapt through value negotiation without losing cultural identity or violating religious beliefs. This phenomenon can also serve as a model for other communities facing similar dilemmas in maintaining local traditions amidst social change and religious demands. Several important lessons from *Rambu Solo*' Muslim that can be applied in other multicultural contexts include: first, dialogue and collaboration. The success of acculturation is inseparable from dialogue between various parties, including indigenous communities, religious leaders, and community leaders. Open discussion spaces can help build common ground between cultures and religions. Second, flexibility in understanding tradition. Acculturation does not mean eliminating culture, but rather harmonizing existing values so that they are acceptable to all parties. Third, the application of the principle of religious moderation. Islam, as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all nature), provides room for adaptation to

local culture if it does not conflict with the main principles of Islamic teachings.

The acculturation of the Muslim *Rambu Solo*’ not only affects the religious aspect but also has broader social and cultural impacts, such as strengthening the identity of the Toraja Muslim community. With the existence of the Muslim version of *Rambu Solo*’, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja can still preserve their identity within the broader social system. Second, maintaining interfaith harmony. With this adjustment to the ritual, Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Toraja can continue to respect each other’s traditions without causing conflict. Third, becoming a model for cultural preservation in a diverse context. The successful adaptation of the Muslim *Rambu Solo*’ shows that culture and religion can develop together in a pluralistic society without having to eliminate each other.

Demographically, the population of Tana Toraja is predominantly Christian and comprises local Torajan cultural communities. Despite being a minority religion, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja also observes the *Rambu Solo*’ tradition as a traditional funeral ceremony. The people of Tana Toraja believe that performing this tradition releases the human spirit, allowing it to return to the ancestral realm and enter the afterlife in peace (Sihombing, 2022). However, Muslims remain steadfast in their adherence to Islamic teachings, often leading to theological and cultural dilemmas in the practice of “*Rambu Solo*.” This is reflected in practices such as the slaughter of certain animals that violate Islamic law, the use of symbolic statues, and ancestor worship.

This tension often arises among the Muslim community in Tana Toraja, who choose to adapt, such as refraining from slaughtering animals, using statues as gravestones, and holding worship rituals. This adaptation process involves harmonizing local customs with Islamic teachings. Thus, the Wednesday Solo’ ceremony carried out by the Muslim community of Tana Toraja is more about social respect and family solidarity (Salurante, 2020).

Furthermore, the Muslim community in Tana Toraja has its own perspective on death and the afterlife (Pantan et al., 2024). Generally, they adhere to Islamic law, understanding death as a process of transition from one’s life to the afterlife. This view has nothing to do with ancestral cosmology. Therefore, sociologically, they respect and practice the *Rambu Solo*’ tradition; it is part of their social life to maintain harmony among religious communities, but spiritually, they practice it in accordance with Islamic teachings.

CONCLUSION

Muslim families in Tana Toraja perform the *Rambu’ Solo*’ ceremony with various adjustments to align with Islamic teachings, while still upholding Torajan cultural values as a form of respect for ancestors. The ritual typically lasts three to seven days, beginning with a Qur'an recitation and collective dhikr (remembrance of God), including reciting Surah Al-Ikhlas a thousand times while counting pebbles. Unlike the traditional version, which involves slaughtering pigs and dozens of buffalo, Muslim families only slaughter halal sacrificial animals, such as goats, cows, or buffalo, whose meat is distributed as alms. The body is buried according to Islamic rites. Finally, pebbles previously used for *dhikr* are sprinkled on the grave as a symbol of prayer accompanying the deceased’s passing. The entire process is guided by Islamic religious leaders, with the continued involvement of traditional figures, reflecting the harmonious acculturation between Islamic beliefs and Torajan culture.

The Muslim version of *Rambu’ Solo*’ is carried out with the principle of careful cultural acculturation, adapting social and symbolic elements of Torajan customs while avoiding elements that conflict with Islamic teachings. Muslim families still perform ceremonies to honor the deceased through Quranic recitation, dhikr (remembrance of God), and communal prayer, replacing non-Islamic rituals such as summoning ancestral spirits or offerings. Sacrificial animals are still slaughtered, but only from halal animals and are interpreted as acts of worship and charity, not spiritual offerings.

This research still has limitations in terms of coverage and diversity of Muslim *Rambu’ Solo*’

practices, given differences in implementation across families and villages. Therefore, future researchers are advised to conduct comparative studies in several areas of the Torajan Muslim community to illustrate the broader diversity of acculturation. Furthermore, future research could deepen the study through visual anthropology or digital ethnography, for example, by recording the processions and symbols used in the ceremony, to strengthen the analysis of the meaning and cultural context within the community. Equally important, the involvement of religious and traditional leaders as key informants could also be increased to delve deeper into the dynamics of value negotiation between Islamic law and Torajan customs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article was completed thanks to good cooperation with team members who went directly to Tana Toraja to collect data related to Rambu Solo'. We would also like to express our gratitude to all informants and other parties involved.

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