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Reception of Islamic Legal Rituals Among Indigenous Indonesian Communities with Comparative Findings from *Wetu Telu* and *Masade*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the Reception of Islamic legal rituals among indigenous Indonesian communities through a law-centered comparative design. This study understands reception as the selection, reinterpretation, and substantive integration of Islamic ritual norms into local practice. The framework juxtaposes doctrinal analysis of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) categories, namely *ibādāt ta'abbudi/tawqifi* (worship rituals strictly bound to canonical pillars and conditions) and *mu'āmalāt/aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah* (social transactions and personal status), with ethnographic and historical materials. The analysis assesses four equivalent domains: core obligations of worship, calendrical ordering, sacred space and authority, and life-cycle rites. Findings indicate that the *Wetu Telu* (Sasak "three times" tradition) community in Lombok exhibits primarily substantive *Reception*, in which ritual form and legal intent converge and are institutionally embedded. By contrast, the *Masade* (Sangihe "Old Islam" community) exhibits a more selective and symbolic reception, maintaining Islamic identifiers while limiting ritual obligations and temporal coordination within a localized sacred order. These patterns clarify how *'urf* (customary practice) can sustain or reframe *Fiqh* in indigenous settings without reducing analysis to a simple binary of "orthodox" versus "syncretic." The article contributes a scalable matrix for assessing ritual reception across communities and highlights implications for legal pluralism and the living law of Islam in Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Across the Muslim world, indigenous communities encounter Islamic law not as a fixed code but as a repertoire of prescriptions that interact with preexisting ritual orders, local authorities, and historical trajectories (Bowen, 2020; Ibrahim, 2022; Kooria & Ravensbergen, 2021). Empirical studies reveal a spectrum of reception, ranging from the selective borrowing of symbols to the deeper integration of core ritual obligations into local lifeworlds (Adams, 2015; Bukido et al., 2022; Forrest, 1879). Over time, missionizing waves, as well as state and clerical reforms, shape these patterns, alongside mobility and trade networks, and contemporary debates over orthodoxy and authenticity (Bowen, 2020; Gez, 2018). The recent trend in socio-legal scholarship emphasizes Islamic law as living law that is negotiated through everyday practices rather than imposed solely by textual authority (Diala, 2017), highlighting how ritual life operates as the primary site where legal norms are accepted, reinterpreted, or resisted (Kozak-Isik, 2025; Yilmaz, 2024; Yilmaz & Sokolova-Shipoli, 2024).

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country with diverse customary communities, the reception of Islamic legal rituals unfolds within dense fields of *adat* (tradition) institutions, local cosmologies, and plural legal histories (Bukido et al., 2022; Samsul Hady et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2025). Longitudinal accounts document how communities adopt elements of prayer, fasting, marriage, burial, calendrical calculation, and sacred space while retaining customary cycles and authority structures (Bruinessen, 2013; Ibrahim, 2022; Manan, 2015). These processes have accelerated or shifted under colonial encounters, Islamic reformism, Christian missions in certain regions, and postcolonial state standardization of religion (Ma'arif, 2017). Within this broad landscape, two settings display analytically instructive contrasts. In Lombok, *Wetu Telu* integrates Islamic legal rituals more substantively, allowing daily worship and Ramadan fasting to coexist with life-cycle ceremonies and village ritual offices (Huda, 2019). In Sangihe, *Masade*, often referred to as Islam Tua, adopts primarily symbolic aspects, such as terminology, attire, architectural features, and calendrical markers, while selectively reframing core obligations (Macpal & Tungkagi, 2022). These divergent trajectories demonstrate why a focused comparison of *Wetu Telu* and *Masade* is important: Layered histories of Islamization have shaped both communities, yet they arrive at different degrees of reception that bear directly on religious identity and self-identification.

A growing body of scholarship has approached these dynamics from several analytical angles. *First*, a legal-pluralist strand treats Islamic law, state positive law, and customary law as overlapping normative orders, emphasizing institutional competition, jurisdictional bargaining, and the routinization of local compromises (Kozak-Isik, 2025; Lukito, 2012; Makka et al., 2025). *Second*, a lived religion and ritual strand centers on the performative and material dimensions of piety, demonstrating how prayer cycles, fasting, calendars, sacred objects, and architectural forms mediate the integration of legal prescriptions into everyday life (Adams, 2015; Bowen, 2020; Yusuf et al., 2025). *Third*, a historical-ethnographic strand examines the longue durée processes of Islamization, reform, and missionization to explain regional variations, including the roles of courts, trading polities, and clerical lineages (Aljunied, 2019; Liutikas, 2025). While these strands have clarified important mechanisms, they often either catalog "syncretic" practices without a comparative metric or, conversely, evaluate conformity to textual orthodoxy without capturing gradations of reception at the ritual level.

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This study advances the discussion by proposing and applying a comparative, ritual-centered framework of degrees of reception. Rather than classifying communities as simply syncretic or orthodox, the analysis maps how Islamic legal rituals are selected, reinterpreted, and integrated along a continuum from symbolic adoption to substantive incorporation. Empirically, the study contributes new field-based evidence from two indigenous settings that are rarely examined in tandem, providing comparable data on ritual performance, local offices, and calendars. Theoretically, it refines debates on living law by locating reception at the intersection of ritual ordering, identity formation, and historical pathways of Islamization. Methodologically, it combines ethnohistorical reconstruction with contemporary observation and interviewing to link past trajectories with present ritual life.

This study asks how *Wetu Telu* and *Masade* receive Islamic legal rituals and where their practices sit along a continuum from symbolic to substantive reception, what social and historical factors account for their divergent trajectories, and how degrees of reception shape religious identity and self-identification in each setting; we proceed by outlining the ethnohistorical and methodological approach, presenting comparative findings on ritual domains and local institutions, and discussing the implications for legal pluralism and living law in Indonesia.

2. METHODS

This study uses a comparative qualitative design with an ethnohistorical approach to examine the reception of Islamic legal rituals in two indigenous communities (Novotny & Dedrick, 2018). The research locations are in the *Wetu Telu* community in North Lombok and the *Masade* community in the Sangihe Islands. The fieldwork was conducted in four rounds, from May to June 2023 and from July to August 2023, accompanied by archival research and ethnographic-historical literature review.

Participants were selected purposively and snowballed to reach the ritual stakeholders. A total of 6 informants consisted of traditional leaders and ritual officials, religious leaders and community elders, adult women involved in life cycle rites, and young residents/participants in ritual routines. Inclusion criteria include a long-standing domicile, tangible involvement in ritual practices, and a willingness to provide consent.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with an average duration of 45 minutes, as many as two sessions per location, participant observations on key rituals (e.g., daily prayers, Ramadan and Eid, birth–marriage–death rites, local calendars), as well as studies of local documents, historical archives, and ethnographic literature. All interviews were transcribed verbatim in Indonesian, and the researcher compiled field records daily. With the participants' permission, the researcher also collected visual materials to map spatial layouts and record ritual objects. The analysis was carried out in stages. In-case coding to map ritual domains and local authorities, cross-case comparisons with indicator matrices, and then integrative interpretations linking ritual patterns with historical trajectories of Islamization and customary dynamics (Miles et al., 2018) His theoretical framework places reception as the primary lens assisted by the concept of living law (law as a practice of life) (Diala, 2017) legal pluralism (overlap of sharia-customs-state law) (Lukito, 2012)), and ritual theory (performative order, materiality, temporality, authority) (Liutikas, 2025). The degree of reception is operationalized through core indicators: the primary obligation (the frequency and form of Ramadan prayers and fasting), symbolic markers (terminology, fashion, architecture, and dating), the structure of ritual authority, and the temporal

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integration between the Islamic cycle and the customary cycle. This framework ensures a systematic interpretation of the findings and allows for comparison across locations.

Reception is defined as the selection–interpretation–integration of fiqh prescriptions into the local ritual order, with the distinction *of ibādāt taʿabbudī/tawqīfī* (strict on *arkān–syurūṭ*) and *muʿāmalāt/ahwāl al-syakhsiyyah* (space for *ʿurf* as long as it does not violate nash *qathʿī*) (Syathiby, 2005; Zuhaili, 2006) The basis of the rules: *al-ʿādah muḥakkamah* (and its derivatives *al-maʿrūf ʿurfan ka-l-masyrūṭ syarthan*), *al-masyaqqah tajlib al-taysīr, al-ḍarar yuzāl, al-umūr bi maqāṣidihā*, as well as the principle of changing the law according to time and place without overhauling *arkān–syurūṭ* (al-Suyuti, 2013; Al-Zuḥaylī, 2006; Ibn Nujaym, 1999) From here, we derive Fiqh in four equivalent domains: (1) the central worship, namely the verification of the harmony/conditions of prayer, Ramadan fasting, zakāt fitrah and legal cadence based on the Hijri calendar; (2) the sacred calendar and time, which is the function of the Hijri as a scheduler of obligations (not just an identity marker); (3) the sacred space and authority, namely *the fiqh-legible* space (*qiblah*, *mihrab*, *saf*), *the rules of ṭahārah*/adab, and the authority structure that operationalizes obligations; (4) The rite of the life cycle is the integrity of the legal nucleus of marriage (*ijab-qabul*, *walī*, witness, dowry) and the body (*ghusl*, shroud, *ṣalāt al-janāzah*, legal burial) which are then framed as *ʿurf* without invalidating their validity (al-Suyuti, 2013; Syathiby, 2005) Each finding is marked with the type of evidence (Interview/Observation/Document) to ensure strong traceability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Islamization and the Ritual Order of *Wetu Telu* and *Masade*

The anthropology of religion offers a lens for understanding religion as a universal phenomenon that operates in social reality. This study emphasizes that belief in supernatural elements, although abstract, shapes ways of thinking, organizing behavior, and regulating human social relations. Key thinking in this area asserts that religion plays a significant role in contributing to social change and transformation. As an established subdiscipline, the anthropology of religion flourished in the 20th century, as evident in works such as Bowie (2021), which explores the Anthropology of religion in his research. This study employs this lens to conceptualize reception as a social process in which social actors select specific prescriptions of Islamic law, reinterpreted and integrated into the local ritual order.

Historically, the Islamization of the archipelago occurred through maritime networks, trade, Sufism, and multi-layered local political patronage over a long period. Islamic encounters with indigenous communities several centuries ago gave birth to intense cultural and religious negotiations. From that process, Islam took its place in the customary structure and gave rise to legal pluralism. At the same time, communities adopted Islamic elements to different degrees (Al Qutuby et al., 2020). Historical and ethnographic literature reveals the spectrum of reception, ranging from symbolic adoption to substantive integration, influenced by the currents of Islamic renewal, religious missions, population mobility, and religious administrative standardization in the modern period (Daniels, 2016; Fahmi, 2025).

In the context of Lombok, Islamization aligns with the cosmology and traditional institutions of the Sasak, as well as the regional political and cultural heritage, as depicted in local

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historiography, including records (Velentijn, 2014). In the *Wetu Telu* community, core elements of obligations, such as daily prayers and Ramadan fasting, coexist with the rituals of the life cycle and village ritual offices. This configuration shows a more substantive level of reception as the prescription of Islamic law is not only adopted as a symbol, but is integrated into the ritual sequences that organize the calendars of communities and local authorities (Mansouri, 2018)

In the Sangihe Islands, located in northern Sulawesi, the trade and political networks of the archipelago closely shape the processes of Islamization, as well as cross-religious encounters. From this trajectory emerged a configuration that residents refer to as Old Islam or *Masade* (Tungkagi, 2019). Islamic elements are evident in the realm of symbolic markers, including terminology, clothing, architectural features of worship, and dating practices. At the same time, some core obligations are reframed within the customary horizon. This pattern marks a more selective reception and explains the differences in religious identity and the way the community interprets itself compared to *Wetu Telu* (Willis, 2021)

Reception of Islamic Legal Rituals in Wetu Telu, Lombok

Islam in Lombok is closely intertwined with Sasak customs, creating a complex and layered religious landscape. The majority of the community practices mainstream Islam. In contrast, in certain areas, such as the North Lombok region, particularly Bayan, the Wetu Telu community maintains a ritual order that combines the obligation of Islamic worship with the rites of the life cycle and the customary calendar. Religious practices are regulated through the roles of village ritual officials, as well as traditional and religious leaders, so that the cycle of prayer, Ramadan fasting, and holiday celebrations is directly related to the community's customary obligations. This framework provides an important context for assessing how the reception of Islamic legal rituals occurs substantively in Wetu Telu, while remaining tied to local institutions and collective memory.

The term *Wetu Telu* first appeared in the terminology of the Sasak tribe's religion, but its origin remains unclear. Identifying the historical traces of belief in Lombok, especially Islam, can explain the emergence of the *Wetu Telu* group or ideology. Islam reached Lombok in two ways. The first came from the West, where Sufism, mysticism, and syncretic Islamic elements (Hinduism and Islam) are present. The second came from the East, where there are indications of religious practices that go beyond the scope and nature of the teachings. As a result, the orthodox Islamic movement (followers of the Five Ages of Islam) began to emerge (Budiwanti, 2014; Mutawali, 2016).

The second group moved more slowly because the locals did not react and because their teachings differed significantly from those they brought. In this situation, the locals continued to have deep beliefs. They recognized the reality of supernatural forces that operate throughout the cosmos, which continued to guide and assist them in their daily routines. As a result, the approach of the second group was slower than that of the first group, which used a more subtle and pluralistic approach. The first category is Islam, which has been influenced by various Hindu and other traditions have influenced. There are some similarities between Indian culture and the early beliefs of the Lombok people. In this regard, it is worth noting that the rituals of Lombok communities often incorporate mystical nuances that closely intertwine with Islamic beliefs. (Mutawali, 2016; Sirnopati et al., 2022).

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The success of this second group goes beyond further purification. The syncretic purity of Islam, which resists purification, is the driving force behind this. It may also be because the younger generation does not continue these advances, which means that the religious pattern has changed among the *Wetu Telu* adherents, whose religion is not only syncretic (combining elements of Islam and Hinduism) but also influenced by the customs and practices of the Sasak ancestors. It is what causes people to refer to this religious pattern as the *Wetu Telu* adherents.

Islam *Wetu Telu* is one of the traditional communities that has absorbed several Islamic religious rituals. Islam entered the Lombok archipelago in the 16th century, brought by Sunan Prapen. Sunan Prapen was the king of Giri and the son of Sunan Giri, who led an expedition to Islamize areas outside Java, including the island of Lombok. Following the Islamization process of Sunan Prapen, Islam experienced rapid growth in the Lombok region and was widely adopted by the local population (Graaf, 1985). This Islamization process is certainly accepted differently by one traditional community than another. It occurred in the Islam *Wetu Telu* community, which differed from the Islam Waktu Lima community in Lombok.

Adherents of the *Wetu Telu* belief are identified with Islam, but, in everyday life, are very idealistic about embracing the beliefs of their ancestors. In religious life, this Indigenous community understands Telu, or the three cycles in human life. According to them, living things, including humans, have three cycles: giving birth, developing, and dying. Therefore, the religious rituals of the *Wetu Telu* community are very focused on this series of cycles. Community members always accompany each stage with a religious ceremony that represents a transition in human life, and they repeat this pattern at every stage.

Therefore, *Wetu Telu* is a custom, not a religion, according to Raden Gedarip, an actor and traditional figure of Wetu Telu. *Wetu Telu* existed before Islam and retained animistic beliefs (the belief that spirits inhabit everything). During the Dutch colonial period, *Wetu Telu* was separated from Islam and became a separate part. The entry of Islam *Wetu Telu* came through the eastern route, passing through Goa, Lombok Harbor, and New Carik Harbor to the current Bayan area. In the 16th century, *Wetu Telu* first emerged, coinciding with the construction of an old mosque that served as a place of worship for followers of the religion (Raden Gedarip, 2023).

Figure 1. Old House of Worship/Mosque in Bayan, built in the 16th century

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Source: observation, 2023

Another claim states that the *Wetu Telu* tradition emerged when Sunan Prapen and his entourage preached on Lombok Island, especially in the Bayan region. In his preaching, Sunan Prapen used a variety of approaches to encourage local communities, including *Wetu Telu* followers, to accept Islamic teachings in their entirety and purity (Graaf, 1985). However, after some time, Sunan Prapen and his followers left Bayan to continue preaching in other areas, bringing simple teachings that the Bayan community did not fully absorb. It is also mentioned that the Qur'an used by Sunan Prapen for preaching was abandoned and became an essential symbol for the local community. When *Wetu Telu* supporters approached Sunan Prapen's group to return the Qur'an, he asked them to keep it, an act that symbolically strengthens the relationship between Islam and local traditions, which is still preserved in the form of *Wetu Telu* (Budiwanti, 2014; Sirnopati et al., 2022).

Reception of Islamic Legal Rituals in Masade Sangihe

Islam in the Sangihe Islands is present in the maritime network that connects northern Sulawesi with the commercial and religious centers of the surrounding archipelago, and then interacts with strong local customary structures. In this landscape, indigenous communities coexist with mainstream Muslims and deep-rooted Christian traditions, forming a pluralistic religious configuration. In some pockets of communities, including groups that identify themselves as Masade or Old Islam, elements of Islam are expressed through symbolic markers, such as religious terminology, clothing, architectural features of worship spaces, and ritual practices. At the same time, some core obligations are reframed in accordance with customary horizons and local authorities. This description provides the initial context for the reception's analysis of Islamic legal rituals in *Masade*, helping the reader understand why the reception process in Sangihe shows a different pattern than in Lombok.

The historical process of Islamization in the Sangihe region cannot be separated from the history of Islam in the Philippines (Forrest, 1879). With evidence of the remains of the Kendahar kingdom in the Sangihe Islands, one of the real histories is that Islam was the first religion to enter the lives of the Sangihe people, as King Kendal Shah Alam of the Kendal kingdom had embraced Islam. The entry of Islam through commercial and kinship relations established a presence among Filipino Muslims in the Sangihe Islands. In addition, Imam *Masade*, also known as Mawu *Masade*, is an important person in the history of the *Masade* Association (Old Islam), which cannot be separated from it (Widiyanto, 2014).

According to J. Scheneke, the development of Islam in Sangihe has been ongoing since 1550. Islamic culture and Islam have been found in the Sangihe archipelago (Widiyanto, 2014). Islam and Islamic culture spread through two channels. The first Islamization channel originated from the northern region, specifically the Mindanao region, and was a continuation of the Islamization process in Maluku, Sumatra, Brunei, and the Sulu archipelago. It took place around 1550. The second Islamization channel originated from the southeastern region, specifically the Ternate, Tidore, Bacan, and Ambon regions, around 1540 (Guleng et al., 2024).

The Sultan of Ternate's political and industrial hegemony contributed to the expansion of Islamic teachings in the Sangihe Islands. Considering their geographical function, Islamic influence likely came from Mindanao and Ternate to the Sangihe Islands. The first is from the route taken by the Sultanates of Sulu and Mindanao in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, respectively.

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Since the 13th century AD, the Sangihe Islands have become a crossroads for travelers using alternative routes between Sulu and Maluku, so this dynamic did not occur without reason. The life of the Sangihe people at that time had undergone a process of Islamization. It began with the period when the Sultanates of Sulu and Ternate exerted significant influence over the Sangihe region and sent an envoy named Syam Syah Alam to influence the Sangihe people to embrace Islam.

Additionally, trade routes influenced the spread of Islam in Ternate. The process of Islamization in the Sangihe island group is also related to the Moro war that broke out in the Philippines. The statement indicates that the people of the Sangihe-Talaud islands have a strong relationship with the Moro community and various pirate organizations from Southern Mindanao, Sulu, and Jolo (Guleng et al., 2024; Saleeby, 1908).

The term Islam Tua (Old Islam) emerged in the Sangihe community to distinguish between Qur'anic Islam and Old Islam. However, this religion or belief is an integral part of the religious history of the Sangihe community. Historically, this religion existed in the Sangihe region, spread by Mawu *Masade*, who came from the current Mindanao region. According to Suwondo, the figure of *Masade* was a cleric named Syarif Mansur. This figure was a cleric sent by the Philippine sultanate to Islamize the Sangihe islands.

In contrast to this explanation, the community is aware of *Masade* as a native of Sangihe who studied Islam in the Philippines. People who adhere to the *Masade* faith believe that *Masade* is a priest with a gentle and generous heart. The teachings of *Masade* adherents require their followers to help fellow humans and love God's creation (Azis, 2019; Guleng et al., 2024).

The oral history of this Ancient Islamic community claims that this teaching originated when a husband and wife discovered a baby boy in the middle of the forest on their way to the garden; the baby's name was Mawu *Masade*. *Masade* left his parents when he was 16 to travel to Tugis with a companion named Valentijn. At the age of 66, Masade returned to Sangihe Island after studying the Old Islamic doctrine. There, he met his friend Reverend Valentjin (Brenteley), whom the Ternate people had detained. The Ternate people saw this as an act of revenge for the Portuguese killing of their sovereign, Sultan Hairun. Knowing this, *Masade* cursed the Ternate region, warning that after nine days, God would be angry with it. *Masade* then left and returned to his birthplace on Sangihe Island. Reverend Breenteley (Valentijn), a priest, was a close friend of Imam *Masade* when he was 16. Their interactions on several occasions, especially when both visited Ternate, were evidence of their closeness (Velentijn, 2014).

Oral tradition claims that Imam *Masade* developed into an intelligent young man who sensed Mawu (God in Sangihe; trans.) during his formative years. Some even believed that Imam *Masade* was the son of God. Since this doctrinal assumption had already influenced theological debates, it impeded the dispute with the Muslim majority in Sangihe. After visiting Sangihe, he spread his teachings to several places. Mawu *Masade* finally imparted his knowledge to Pananging, considering him one of his best students. He imparted knowledge to Pananging to promote Old Islam before his death (Interview, Agung Masihor, Traditional Figure of Islam Tua/*Masade*, 2023). Penanging then spread the teachings of Mawu *Masade* and continued to respect the figure of Mawu *Masade*. In the religious life of Old Islam, the figure of the Imam represents the teachings of the *Masade*

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Islamic community; in fact, the figure of the Imam itself functions as a metaphor, namely "a walking holy book". However, the teachings of *Masade* Islam were influenced by the Philippines, where the Tugis region, where he concentrated his studies, functioned as a center for the growth of Shia Islam (Saleeby, 1908).

Islamic Legal Rituals in the *Wetu Telu* Indigenous Community

This subsection analyzes how Islamic legal teachings shape ritual life in *wetu telu* (Sasak "three times" tradition) through a law-centered lens that prioritizes *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) domains enacted as ritual. The empirical setting is North Lombok, particularly the Bayan area, where Wetu Telu communities maintain a dense interface between village customary offices and religious practices. Fieldwork consisted of semi-structured interviews with ritual and customary leaders, observations of congregational worship and life-cycle ceremonies, and documentation of calendars and spatial layouts of sacred sites (Interview, Raden Apriyadi, Traditional Figure of Sasak, 2023; Interview, Raden Gedarip, Traditional Figure of Sasak, 2023). The analysis focuses on ritual fields where Islamic legal prescriptions are most salient and verifiable, namely core obligations of worship, calendrical ordering, sacred space and authority, and life-cycle rites with legal content. Treating these fields as observable indicators allows specification of the extent to which prescriptions are selected, reinterpreted, or substantively integrated into the local ritual order.

In the domain of core obligations, the data indicate that wetu telu practices daily worship and Ramadan fasting in a manner that is recognizably Islamic in form and is coordinated by local institutions. Daily *ṣalāt* (ritual prayer) follows the canonical sequence, bodily postures, and orientation, while being synchronized with the rhythms of the village and agricultural schedules. The call to prayer, formation of rows, and leadership structures are handled by local functionaries whose authority is acknowledged by both customary and religious constituencies (Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023). Ramadan fasting is observed as a binding annual obligation, accompanied by communal evening prayers and shared pre-dawn and breaking-fast arrangements that intensify solidarity across hamlets (Interview, Raden Gedarip, 2023). *Zakāt al-fiṭr* (alms at the end of Ramadan) is collected through recognized local channels and redistributed to eligible recipients, anchoring an explicitly legal obligation in a social practice that is legible to the community and enforceable through moral suasion and office-based coordination (Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023). These patterns indicate that *fiqh al-ʿibādāt* (jurisprudence of worship) is not merely referenced symbolically but enacted in a sustained, rule-governed manner within village life (Al-Zuḥaylī, 2006; Mutawali, 2016).

Calendrical ordering further confirms substantive reception. The determination of Ramadan and Shawwal, as well as the scheduling of major feasts, is decided through consultation between ritual officers and religious figures, using lunar reckoning, while taking into account the village cycle of customary duties. The Islamic calendar provides the binding frame for worship-related obligations, articulated with local cycles such as *gawe urip* (rites of life) and *gawe pati* (rites of death), including memorial observances that sequence three-, seven-, and subsequent-day remembrances after death, locally glossed with community-recognized terms (Interview, Raden Sumiadi, Traditional Figure of Sasak, 2023). Rather than producing conflict between systems, this articulation yields a composite temporal order in which Islamic months anchor legal obligations and the customary cycle distributes communal labor, attendance, and provisioning. The calendar

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thus functions simultaneously as a legal schedule and a social organizer, a hallmark of living law in ritual time (Jalili et al., 2023; Suparmin & Lubis, 2025).

Sacred space and authority provide the institutional skeleton for that temporal articulation. Communities typically arrange mosques and prayer houses with a clear qibla orientation (direction of prayer), a niche, and a leadership locus that structures congregational practice. Access, maintenance, and usage protocols are negotiated between customary office holders and religious functionaries, who together curate the sequence of rites, the wording of intentions, and the choreography of participation (Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023). The resulting division of labor is not a simple juxtaposition of *adat* (customary law) and Islam but a collaborative governance of ritual life, in which legal prescriptions regarding purity, entry, and performance are operationalized through locally legitimate offices. The authority to convene, begin, and close rituals is legible to participants and provides predictability that supports the performance of legal obligations as collective acts rather than merely private devotions.

Life-cycle rites show most clearly how Islamic legal form and customary expression cohere. Marriage ceremonies include *ījāb* and *qabūl* (offer and acceptance) with the presence of a *walī* (guardian) and witnesses, agreement on *mahr* (dower), and public acknowledgment that satisfies the legal conditions for validity. Around this legal nucleus, *wetu telu* integrates processions, exchanges, and kinship obligations that extend the social meaning of the bond without displacing the legal structure (Interview, Ridho, 2023). Death rites likewise preserve the legal sequence of *ghusl* (ritual washing), shrouding, funeral prayer, and burial with an intentional orientation of the grave, followed by memorial gatherings that distribute obligations across kin and neighbors according to locally codified expectations (Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023). The legal content is neither diluted nor hidden; it is foregrounded and then expanded through customary acts that define who participates, who provides, and how responsibility is shared. In both marriage and death, what counts as compliance with Islamic law is publicly knowable and verifiable, which is the core of substantive reception (Al-Zuḥaylī, 2006; Mutawali, 2016).

Taken together, these four fields show a coherent pattern. Islamic legal prescriptions provide binding forms for worship, calendrical cycles provide the temporal framework for obligations, sacred spaces and officeholders supply institutional capacity for rule-governed performance, and life-cycle rites embed legal acts in collective obligations that give them endurance and social reach. The community's language for these acts is explicitly Islamic, procedures are recognizable within *fiqh* categories, and enforcement relies on reputational and office-based mechanisms that make noncompliance morally costly even when the state is not directly involved. Within the theoretical frame of reception, this configuration sits toward the substantive end of the continuum. It exceeds symbolic adoption because it preserves the legal grammar of obligations and renders those obligations actionable through calendar, space, and authority. It remains locally distinctive because *adat* determines sequencing, hospitality, and the distribution of roles, yet these customary features amplify rather than negate the legal core (Jalili et al., 2023; Suparmin & Lubis, 2025). It is precisely what one would expect when Islamic law operates as living law in a plural setting: prescriptions are received not as isolated texts but as practicable norms that order time, space, and social relations in ways that community members can perform, monitor, and remember across generations (Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023; Interview, Raden Gedarip, 2023).

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Islamic Legal Rituals in the *Masade* Indigenous Community

This subsection examines how Islamic legal teachings inform ritual life in *masade* (Sangihe "Old Islam" community) by applying a law-centered lens to fields that are ritually enacted and empirically observable. The setting is the Sangihe archipelago, where *masade*, often glossed locally as Islam Tua, share a plural landscape with mainstream Muslim and Christian populations. Fieldwork involved semi-structured interviews with customary and ritual leaders, direct observation of communal devotions and life-cycle ceremonies, and documentation of calendars and sacred spaces (Interview with Agung Masihor, Traditional Figure of Islam Tua/Masade, 2023). To ensure comparability with *wetu telu* (Sasak "three times" tradition), the analysis focuses on four equivalent domains in which Islamic legal prescriptions could reasonably surface as practice rather than mere discourse. These domains are core obligations of worship, calendrical ordering, sacred space and authority, and life-cycle rites that carry legal content.

In the domain of core obligations, field accounts indicate a selective reframing of the five daily prayers and fasting obligations. Communal prayer tends to concentrate on particular weekly or festival moments that the community recognizes as ritually significant, rather than being distributed uniformly across the canonical daily schedule (Interview, Hebimisa, Young Figure of Islam Tua/Masade, 2023). Arabic-derived terms for intention, blessing, and praise are recited, and bodily postures echo Islamic *ṣalāt* (ritual prayer); yet, frequency and timing are governed by local committees and customary expectations rather than a strictly legal timetable. This study articulates fasting as a discipline of the inner self that the community values as an ethical and devotional practice during specific periods, with public emphasis on restraint, reconciliation, and communal solidarity (Interview, Ridho, People of Islam Tua/Masade, 2023). Almsgiving and mutual aid are practiced and sometimes described using the lexicon of *zakāt* (alms obligation) or *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity). However, calculations, categories of recipients, and distribution pathways follow local moral economies and leadership directives rather than formal *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) rubrics (Interview, Agung Masihor, 2023). These observations suggest that Islamic legal language and gestures are present and meaningful, while *adat* reauthorizes the binding force of their canonical cadence (customary law).

Calendrical ordering reinforces this symbolic and selective reception. *Masade* uses Hijri months and well-known Islamic feast names as communal markers that organize assemblies, shared meals, and processions. Decision-making about the start of significant periods relies on deliberation among customary leaders and ritual specialists who may take into account lunar sightings and regional cues but ultimately prioritize local consensus (Interview, Hebimisa, 2023). The Islamic calendar thus functions as a vocabulary for sacred time and group memory rather than as a prescriptive schedule that regulates daily obligations. Its primary effect is to anchor communal identity and coordinate participation, not to mandate a comprehensive regimen of legally timed acts.

The structure of sacred space and authority further clarifies how Islamic legal elements are received. Prayer houses and communal halls incorporate recognizably Islamic features, such as directional orientation, Arabic calligraphy, and terminology for spaces and roles, providing

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participants with a shared semiotic environment for devotion (Interview, Agung Masihor, 2023). The governance of these spaces rests chiefly with customary authorities and ritual masters, who curate the wording of prayers, sequence the acts, and determine when and how the community gathers (Interview, Hebimisa, 2023)—the leadership model privileges genealogies of local office and the stewardship of tradition over formal clerical credentialing. Rules about purity, entry, and performance are framed as obligations to the community's order and ancestors rather than as the enforcement of *fiqh* categories, which helps explain both the persistence of Islamic symbols and the elasticity of their legal grammar.

Life-cycle rites display the clearest interplay between Islamic legal form and customary priority (Noortyani et al., 2023). Marriage ceremonies often adopt the language of *nikāḥ* (marriage contract) and *mahr* (dower), and may stage an exchange resembling *ījāb* and *qabūl* (offer and acceptance). The guardianship, witnessing, and the distribution of obligations are adjudicated within customary councils that define who may authorize a union and how responsibilities are shared among kin (Interview with Agung Masihor, 2023). Validity is thus grounded in *adat* recognition while Islamic terms lend sacral weight and moral seriousness to the occasion. Funerary practices include washing or cleansing the body, collective prayers that employ Arabic invocations, and reverent handling of the burial space. However, the sequencing of intervals of mourning and obligations of hospitality follows customary norms regarding who convenes, who speaks, and how long the community remains ritually engaged (Interview with Hebimisa, 2023; Interview with Ridho, 2023). In both marriage and death, Islamic legal motifs are visible and affective; this normative architecture embeds them, which locates authority and ultimate validation in *adat* institutions.

Synthesizing across these fields, *masade* exhibits a pattern of reception that is predominantly symbolic and selective. Islamic prescriptions provide a shared lexicon, gestures, and temporal markers that confer dignity and translocal resonance on communal rites. The legal core of those prescriptions is not absent. However, its binding cadence and categorical structure are subordinated to customary governance, reinterpreted as virtues, and operationalized through the moral economy of the community. Compliance is monitored more as fidelity to local order than as adherence to a comprehensive *fiqh* regimen. This configuration stands in clear contrast to the *wetu telu* case, situating *masade* toward the symbolic end of the reception continuum, while still demonstrating how Islamic law can function as living law when its concepts and forms are appropriated as resources for identity, solidarity, and ritual cohesion (Farhah, 2022).

Analysis of the Reception of Islamic Law in the Religious Rituals of Indigenous Communities

This section examines how *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) norms are adopted, interpreted, and operationalized in the ritual practices of two indigenous communities. Here, reception is defined as the process of selecting, interpreting, and integrating *fiqh* prescriptions into the local ritual order over time. Juridically, *Fiqh* distinguishes *ibādāt* (acts of worship) that are *taʿabbudī* (purely devotional) and more *tawqīfī* (fixed by revelation) from *muʿāmalāt/ahwāl al-shakhṣiyyah* (social and transactional dealings and personal status law), which allows room for *ʿurf* (customary practice) and public benefit as long as it does not conflict with *naṣṣ qaṭʿī* (unequivocal scriptural text) (Syathiby, 2005; Zuhaili, 2006) These two domains guide the present inquiry into core worship

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obligations, namely *ṣalāt* (ritual prayer), Ramadan fasting, and *zakāt al-fiṭr* (alms at the end of Ramadan), as well as life-cycle rites such as marriage and funerary practices. Analysis also attends to calendrical scheduling, sacred space, and ritual authority.

The framework for authentic reception in *Fiqh* rests on *uṣūliyyah* (principles of legal theory) and *qawāʿid fiqhiyyah* (legal maxims). *First*, *al-ʿādah muḥakkamah* (custom is authoritative) affirms the role of *ʿurf* in *muʿāmalāt* and social order so long as it does not contradict scriptural evidence (Syathiby, 2005). Its derivative rule, *al-maʿrūf ʿurfan ka al-mashrūṭ sharṭan* (what is customary is tantamount to a stipulated condition), clarifies why local patterns of practice and ceremonial ordering may bind as implied terms (Suparmin & Lubis, 2025; Washil & Azzam, 2023). *Second*, *al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysīr* (hardship invites facilitation) and *al-ḍarar yuzāl* (harm must be removed) justify procedural ease and harm-elimination provided the *arkān* (pillars) and *shurūṭ* (conditions) of worship remain intact (Fauzi, 2024). *Third*, *al-umūr bi maqāṣidihā* (acts are judged by their aims) emphasizes the importance of intention in worship and contracts. Fourth, *lā yunkar taghayyur al-aḥkām bi taghayyur al-azminah wa al-amkinah* (legal rulings may vary with time and place) supplies a historical rationale for practice-variation that does not alter the prescribed *arkān* and *shurūṭ* of worship grounded in scriptural sources (Washil & Azzam, 2023; Zuhaili, 2006). In short, *ʿurf* frames how obligations are carried out without replacing the pillars of worship.

From this framework, operational criteria for the degree of reception are derived. Reception is substantive when, within *ibādāt*, the required elements and conditions are observed and collectively enabled, for example, in prayer through time observance, intention, *ṭahārah* (ritual purification), *qibla* (direction of prayer), *arkān*, and *salām* (closing salutation). For fasting, the criteria include intention, *imsāk* (refraining) from dawn until sunset, and recognized nullifiers. For *zakāt al-fiṭr*, they include timing, object, and *mustaḥiq* (eligible recipients). These obligations are legally scheduled through the Hijri calendar and institutionalized through sacred spaces and ritual authority that make collective observance possible (al-Suyuti, 2013; Willis, 2021). In the realm of *ahwāl al-shakhṣiyyah*, substantive reception appears where the legal nucleus of the contract is maintained, for instance, in marriage through *ījāb* and *qabūl* (offer and acceptance), *walī* (guardian), witnesses, and *mahr* (dower), and in funerary rites through *ghusl* (ritual washing), shrouding, prayer, and lawful burial, all framed by *ʿurf* without impairing validity (Suparmin & Lubis, 2025; Willis, 2021). By contrast, reception is selective symbolism when chiefly Islamic lexicons, gestures, and markers are retained. At the same time, the rhythm of obligations, pillars, and conditions, or legal scheduling no longer functions as a binding structure, and final validity is determined by a customary council rather than by a complete *fiqh* category (Akhtar et al., 2023; Andalib et al., 2021).

With these criteria, the practice of *Wetu Telu* tends to be substantive: the harmony and conditions of worship and the contract are maintained and carried out in the Hijri schedule with the support of the holy space and recognized authority. The practice of *Masade* tends to be symbolically selective: Islamic lexicons and markers stand out, but customs determine the legal rhythm and final validity. The matrix below maps the differences across four equivalent fields to facilitate a relevant comparison.

Table 1. Comparative matrix of Islamic legal rituals

Ritual field	Fiqh criteria (rukun/syarat	*Wetu Telu* (Lombok)	*Masade* (Sangihe)	Reading of reception

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	& legal cadence)			
Core obligations (ṣalāt, ṣawm Ramadan, zakāt al-fiṭr)	Prayers: time, intention, thahārah, qiblah, arkān, salām. Fasting: intention, imsāk from dawn to maghrib, cancelling. Zakāt fitrah: time, object, mustaḥiq.	Implemented as a binding obligation; qibla-oriented congregational prayers with awakened arkān; Ramadan is thoroughly followed; Zakāt Fitrah is collected and distributed through recognized local channels.	Devotion is centered on a weekly or festival moment, with Islamic-style prayers, but the daily rhythm is not rigidly adhered to. Fasting is emphasized as an inner discipline, and alms follow a lexicon of zakāt, adhering to the traditional moral economy.	Selective substantive and symbolic (al-Suyuti, 2013; Mutawali, 2016; Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023; Azis, 2019).
Calendar and sacred time	Hijri-based obligation scheduling; local rukyat/itsbat; taqyīd masa ibādāt.	Hijri guides Ramadan, Shawwal, and Eid; it is based on life and death, with decisions made through ritual officials and religious leaders.	The names of the months and holidays are used as markers of identity and coordination. The beginning of an important period is determined through customary consensus, rather than the daily regime of Fiqh.	Legal schedulers and identity markers (Jalili et al., 2023; Interview, Raden Sumiadi, 2023; Widiyanto, 2014).
Sacred space and authority	Fiqh-legible spatial planning (qiblah, mihrab, saf); the authority of the imam/'āmil; the rules of ṭahārah and the manners of the mosque.	Qiblah-oriented mosques/mosques; The collaboration of traditional leaders and religious leaders operationalizes the rules of purity, access, and congregational formation.	Islamic semiotic halls or houses of worship; curation of prayers and messages by traditional officials; Rules are understood as obligations to the order of the community.	Institutionalization of Fiqh and *customary stewardship* (Huda, 2019; Interview, Raden Apriyadi, 2023; Interview, Hebimisa, 2023).
Life-cycle rites (marriage, corpse)	Marriage: ījāb qabūl, walī, witness, dowry. Corpses: ghusl, shroud, funeral prayers, legal burial.	The legal nucleus of marriage and the body are maintained, then framed by a traditional procession without	Islamic terms and gestures lend sacred weight, but the customary forum and customary order ultimately determine the	Legal nucleus plus 'urf dan Islamic lexicon plus adat validity (Al-Zuḥaylī, 2006; al-Noortyani et al., 2023; Interview, Ridho, 2023).

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	damaging the legitimacy.	validity of the marriage and the body.	

Source: Analysis of interviews and field observations, 2023.

The matrix indicates that the main differences extend beyond "what is done" to include the normative status of actions, modes of scheduling, institutional capacity, and mechanisms of social sanction. *Wetu telu* (Sasak "three times" tradition) presents the prescriptions of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) as binding norms that are scheduled by the Hijri calendar and enacted within sacred spaces and recognized authorities that enable collective obedience. *Masade* (Sangihe "Old Islam" community) retains elements of *Fiqh* as lexicons, temporal markers, and meaningful gestures, yet the rhythm is determined by customary rule, so final validity is anchored in the customary forum rather than in a complete *fiqh* category. On an reception continuum, *Wetu telu* lies nearer the substantive pole, while *Masade* approaches the selective–symbolic pole.

Differences in the degree of reception reflect distinct paths of Islamization. In North Lombok, Islamization became closely intertwined with Sasak institutions from an early stage, crystallizing through village offices and religious figures accustomed to administering *fiqh*-based worship. From the outset, *taʿabbudī* (purely devotional) and more *tawqīfī* (fixed by revelation) rituals, such as prayer and fasting, were practiced in structured communal formats, allowing worshippers to maintain the pillars and conditions. At the same time, custom filled the realm of *muʿāmalāt* (social and transactional dealings) without negating legal essence (Andalib et al., 2021). In Sangihe, by contrast, Islamization unfolded within a plural, maritime arena that encountered other traditions. In such a landscape, what first took root was less the legal rhythm of worship than Islamic vocabularies, symbols, and atmospheres compatible with local customary horizons (Akhtar et al., 2023; Al-Zuḥaylī, 2006; Bruinessen, 2013). This historical trajectory established different baselines for authority, ritual custom, and expectations of obedience, which in turn fostered substantive reception in *Wetu telu* and selective symbolism in *Masade*.

Configurations of authority shape whether *fiqh* prescriptions remain merely spoken or become operational. In *Wetu Telu, traditional officials and religious functionaries share roles in stable ways, translating rules of worship into executable procedures. It includes forming the ṣaff (prayer rows) and leading prayer, as well as* governing *ṭahārah* (ritual purification) and managing *zakāt al-fiṭr* (alms at the end of Ramadan). Apparent authority makes compliance observable and socially sanctionable. In *Masade*, authority is centered in the customary council and traditional stakeholders. They curate prayer texts, action sequences, and gathering moments through community deliberation. The maxim *al-ʿādah muḥakkamah* (custom is authoritative) operates strongly at the level of format; however, without religious authority nodes that bind pillars and conditions, *fiqh* prescriptions tend to be framed as collective virtues rather than scheduled legal obligations.

How communities treat sacred time clarifies the normative status of action. In *Wetu Telu,* the Hijri calendar serves as a scheduler of obligations. Its articulation with *gawe urip* (rites of life) and *gawe pati* (rites of death) produces a rhythm that can be planned and supervised, consistent with *taqyīd al-awqāt* (time-bounding of acts) in the *Fiqh* of worship (Washil & Azzam, 2023; Zuhaili, 2006). This temporal certainty forms a worship habitus, so daily prayers, Ramadan fasting, and the moment of *zakāt al-fiṭr* appear as expected and verifiable sequences. In *Masade*, the names of Islamic months and holidays primarily serve as mnemonic and identity markers, coordinating

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gatherings, rather than as a daily legal regime. When the calendar acts as a symbolic marker, obligation shifts toward virtuous encouragement, the rhythm becomes elastic, and standardization follows customary consensus rather than *fiqh* time-binders (Jalili et al., 2023).

The legal status of an action is also shaped by how it is collected, shared, and monitored. In *Wetu telu*, *zakāt al-fiṭr* is collected through publicly recognized channels, recipients are socially sorted, and distribution is conducted openly. Such visibility reinforces the perception of legal obligation in line with *al-umūr bi maqāṣidihā* (acts are judged by their aims). It activates moral sanction in cases of neglect (Ibn Nujaym, 1999). In *Masade*, alms and social assistance follow a customary moral economy. The *zakāt* lexicon confers sacred weight, yet *iḥsāb* (calculation), *aṣnāf* (eligible recipient categories), and distribution channels track established reciprocity practices (Al-Zuḥaylī, 2006). As a result, the language of *Fiqh* is received as a flexible communal virtue, not as a *fiqh*-standard obligation that demands loyalty at specific times and categories (Andalib et al., 2021; Fauzi, 2024).

Identity orientation supplies the normative references that steer ritual choices. *Wetu telu* self-identifies as Muslim, creating an internal drive to preserve the legal nucleus of prayer, Ramadan fasting, marriage, and funerary rites, so that the pillars and conditions remain relevant and are actively fulfilled, while *ʿurf* (customary practice) expands social meaning. *Masade* self-identifies as Old Islam, so continuity with ancestral order and customary authority becomes the primary benchmark. In this context, Islamic symbols, terms, and atmospheres serve as sources of dignity and solidarity, while the ultimate ritual validity is determined by customary recognition. Hence, reception appears selective and symbolic, consistent with the principle that legal rulings may vary with time and place so long as they do not demand strict adherence to the *arkān* (pillars) and *shurūṭ* (conditions) of worship in every instance (Makka et al., 2025).

These five factors operate synergistically rather than in isolation. The trajectory of Islamization shapes the architecture of authority, which in turn determines whether the calendar is used as an obligation scheduler or as an identity marker. The calendar system forms worship habits and participation patterns, while ritual economics regulates social incentives and sanctions. All of these factors are filtered through identity boundaries. This causal chain explains why *Wetu telu* consistently appears near the substantive pole of reception, while *Masade* is consistently positioned near the selective–symbolic pole, as shown across the four fields in the table. The resulting assessment of reception thus rests on the juridical foundations of *Fiqh* and on empirical evidence, rather than on descriptive categorization alone.

4. CONCLUSION

This article reassesses the reception of Islamic legal rituals in *Wetu Telu* and *Masade* through an explicitly fiqh-based lens, operationalizing reception by terms and conditions, a legal cadence anchored in the Hijri calendar, and the institutional capacity of sacred space and authority. Applying this metric to four equivalent fields, core obligations of worship, calendrical ordering, holy space and authority, and life-cycle rites with legal content—shows that *Wetu Telu* preserves a legal nucleus for ṣalāt, ṣawm Ramadan, zakāt al-fiṭr, nikah, and funerary rites, then frames it with 'urf in ways consistent with the maxims al-ʻādah muhakkamah, al-umūr bi maqāṣidihā, al-masyaqqah tajlib al-taysīr, al-ḍarar yuzāl, and the principle that some rulings follow time and place

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without collapsing arkān and syurūṭ. *Masade*, by contrast, receives Islamic law symbolically and selectively: Islamic lexicon, gestures, and feast names are salient, but customary councils ultimately adjudicate cadence, validation, and distribution of obligations. The divergence is patterned and cross-domain, traceable to five interlocking factors identified in the analysis: historical pathways of Islamization, authority architecture, calendar governance, ritual economy, and boundary work of identity. The study contributes a replicable, ritual-centered metric of degrees of reception that clarifies how 'urf may frame but not replace the legal core in ibādāt and how, in plural settings, Islamic law can function either as a practicable norm or an emblematic repertoire. This framework invites comparative tests in other Indonesian and non-Indonesian indigenous contexts, as well as closer attention to gendered participation, youth religiosity, and state administrative standardization, as they reshape the balance between the legal nucleus and the symbolic repertoire.

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