

HYBRID CULTURE IN KATOBA RITUAL OF MUNA

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Abstract: Initiation rituals for children in society, which combine ancient rituals and Islam, are an underexposed method for cultural selection. The research aims to address how the *katoba* tradition in the Muna community of Southeast Sulawesi results in cultural hybridization between customary practices and Islam. Interviews with traditional figures and ceremonial leaders, and observations of village and local *katoba* processions provided primary data. The research shows that the *katoba* processions effectively depict cultural hybridization as a result of how the community interprets the relationship between traditional customs and religion and how *katoba* undergoes cultural filtering, creating new forms and meanings. The cultural hybridization that occurs in *katoba* Muna is not only limited to material cultural components, but also in almost every sequence of rituals, from pre-ritual, procession, and even post-ritual stages; not only in dominant-subordinate power relations between *adat* (traditional customs) and Islam, but in equal relations. This research emphasises the dynamic relationship between customary practices and Islam, which involves constant exchange, reinterpretation, and substitution, assuring culture's continuous acceptance and meaning in society. This study also emphasises the necessity of studying rituals since cultural selection occurs in rituals.

Keywords: Cultural hybridization, initiation ritual, Islam, *katoba*, Muna.

Introduction

Globalization has resulted in the blurring of boundaries between different cultures, making it increasingly challenging to delineate cultural boundaries and ascertain cultural authenticity¹. In such a

¹ Mitsuko Maeda, "Education and Cultural Hybridity: What Cultural Values Should Be Imparted to Students in Kenya?" *Compare* 39, 3 (2009): pp. 335–348; Cf. Robin Patric

context, cultural crossings occur, leading to the fusion (mutual contamination) of one culture with another², thereby rendering the distinction between original and mixed elements more fluid. These trans-cultural exchanges are propelled by the fluidity and permeability of cultural boundaries and the willingness of societies to embrace external cultural influences.

Cultural crossings inevitably engender transformations in the forms and meanings of cultural expressions, including rituals. Rituals represent a significant aspect of culture, serving as reflections of a society and, therefore, subject to potential evolution from their original states. Existing studies on rites of passage into adulthood have predominantly focused on three key aspects. The first tendency centers on examining the impacts of rituals, encompassing health³, psychological⁴, and even economic dimensions⁵. The second tendency views rituals as mechanisms for cultural social control⁶. The third

Clair et al., *Engaging Cultural Narratives of the Ethnic Restaurant: Discursive Practices of Hybridity, Authenticity, and Commoditization*, *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 37 (London: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd, 2011).

² Maeda, "Education and Cultural Hybridity.

³ Joanna Skinner et al., "Transitions to Adulthood: Examining the Influence of Initiation Rites on the HIV Risk of Adolescent Girls in Mangochi and Thyolo Districts of Malawi," *AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV* 25, 3 (2013): pp. 296–301; Cf. Gerry Mshana et al., "Traditional Male Circumcision Practices among the Kurya of North-Eastern Tanzania and Implications for National Programmes," *AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV* 23, 9 (2011): pp. 1111–16.

⁴ Elizabeth Anorkor Abbey et al., "Dipo Rites of Passage and Psychological Well-Being Among Krobo Adolescent Females in Ghana: A Preliminary Study," *Journal of Black Psychology* 47, 6 (2021): pp. 387–400; Anita Padmanabhanunni, Labeeqah Jaffer, and Jeanette Steenkamp, "Menstruation Experiences of South African Women Belonging to the Ama-Xhosa Ethnic Group," *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 20, 6 (2018): 704–14.

⁵ Hizky Shoham, "He Had a Ceremony - I Had a Party": Bar Mitzvah Ceremonies vs. Bat Mitzvah Parties in Israeli Culture," *Modern Judaism* 36, 3 (2016): pp. 335–56; George M. Crothers, "Early Woodland Ritual Use Of Caves In Eastern North America," *Society for American Archaeology* 77, 1 (2015): pp. 115–24.

⁶ Tryphosa Siweya, Tholene Sodi, and Mbuyiselo Douglas, "The Notion of Manhood Embodiment in the Practice of Traditional Male Circumcision in Ngove Village, Limpopo, South Africa," *American Journal of Men's Health* 12, 5 (2018): pp. 1567–74; Alice Schlegel and Herbert Barry, "Pain, Fear, and Circumcision in Boys' Adolescent Initiation Ceremonies," *Cross-Cultural Research* 51, 5 (2017): pp. 435–63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397116685780>.

tendency gravitates towards contestation between the traditional and the modern⁷. Several studies have examined rituals within the interrelation of customary practices and religious beliefs⁸. However, studies specifically focusing on cultural hybridization within the context of implementing initiation rituals for children remain limited. In reality, rituals can express profound reflections, collective memories, and strong societal aspirations⁹. In the case of Muna, it serves as a reflection of the intricate intersections and even debates within the Muslim community, encompassing both its elements and processes.

The ritual of initiation into adulthood is not static, particularly in its encounter with Islam. Rituals undergo changes, adjustments, additions, and omissions, and are even responded to and carried out in diverse ways. As one of the dominant rituals in the Muna community of Southeast Sulawesi, this ritual is obligatory for every child in Muna, and the people of Muna refer to it as the Islamic initiation ritual. Some members of the community perceive *katoba* as leading to practices of polytheism (*shirk*) and innovation (*bid'ah*). Such perceptions arise from certain components within *katoba* that are deemed incongruent with Islam, including both its elements and the advice given to children during the ritual.

Studies on the relationship between Islam and customary practices have predominantly focused on dominant communities, such as those in Java,¹⁰ Lombok,¹¹ Bima,¹² Sumatra, South Sulawesi,¹³ or Goron-

⁷ Marni Sommer, Samuel Likindikoki, and S. Kaaya, "Tanzanian Adolescent Boys' Transitions through Puberty: The Importance of Context," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, 12 (2014): pp. 2290–2297; Brandon D. Lundy, "Challenging Adulthood: Changing Initiation Rites among the Balanta of Guinea-Bissau," *African Studies* 77, 4 (2018): pp. 584–606, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2018.1496598>.

⁸ H. Cory, "Jando: Part II: The Ceremonies and Teachings of the Jando," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 78, 1 (2016): pp. 81–94; A. P. Caplan, "Boys' Circumcision and Girls' Puberty Rites among the Swahili of Mafia Island, Tanzania," *Africa* 46, 1 (1976): pp. 21–33.

⁹ David J. Butterworth, "Ritual Preparation for Living: Education in the Social Memory of an Eastern Indonesian People," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 39, 113 (2011): pp. 49–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2011.547729>.

¹⁰ Nor Hasan, et al., "Tradition, Social Values, and Fiqh of Civilization: Examining the Nyadran Ritual in Nganjuk, East Java, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7, 3 (2023); Muh. Fathoni Hasyim, et al., "The Walagara Marriage Ritual: The Negotiation between Islamic Law and Custom in Tengger," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 14, 1 (2020).

talo.¹⁴ In the case of Southeast Sulawesi, specifically, research emphasis has primarily been directed towards the context of Islam and customary practices within the Buton community.¹⁵ As one of the Islamic sultanates in the Indonesian archipelago, studies examining the intersection of Islam and customary practices in this region have been scarce. Particularly, there is a lack of research discussing the encounter between Islam and local customs in areas that have received minimal historical mention regarding the spread of Islam in Indonesia. This paucity extends to studies specifically focused on rituals within these regions.

This article aims to address how the *katoba* tradition in the Muna community of Southeast Sulawesi results in cultural hybridization between customary practices and Islam. It is based on field research conducted in two study locations, namely in Muna district, which serves as the cultural center of the Muna community, and the city of Kendari as an urban locus. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews and observations. In-depth interviews were conducted with ritual leaders and participants, particularly with government officials, *ustadz* (Islamic scholars) who led the *katoba* ritual and parents who organized the *katoba*. Observational data consisted of the *katoba* procession, both in rural and urban areas. Primary data was also obtained through in-depth observation during the *katoba* implementation, including participatory observation, as several rituals involved participation from both immediate and extended family members. Secondary data was obtained from personal records of government officials regarding Muna culture, particularly *katoba*, whether in the form of published books or handwritten documents.

¹¹ Usman, "Social and Cultural Interpretation of the Maleman Tradition in the Sasak Community of Lombok," *Ulumuna: Journal of Islamic Studies* 27, 1 (2023).

¹² Muhammad Mutawali, "The Dialectics of Customary Law and Islamic Law: An Experience from Dou Donggo Customs of Bima, Indonesia," *Abkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 21, 1 (2021).

¹³ Misbahuddin, et al., "Normativism of Islamic Law in the Akkattere Hajj Ritual of South Sulawesi's Ammatoa Community," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7, 1 (2023).

¹⁴ Sofyan A.P. Kau, et al., "Gorontalo Tradition of Molobunga Yilyala: Cultural and Islamic Law Perspectives," *QIJIS, Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 11, 2 (2023)

¹⁵ Blair Palmer, "Migrasi dan Identitas: Perantau Buton yang Kembali ke Buton Setelah Konflik Maluku 1999–2002," *Antropologi Indonesia* 74 (2014): pp. 94–109, <https://doi.org/10.7454/ai.v0i74.3512>.

Cultural Hybridisation within Ritual

The concept of hybridization has been developed by scholars such as Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Michele Cliff, referring to the idea of occupying an intermediate position between various elements, characterized by composition, syncretism, or the creation of new formulas¹⁶. Hybridization is a process rather than a static and fixed outcome.¹⁷ In the context of culture, hybridization refers to the mixing or blending of two or more cultures into a new form or expression,¹⁸ even cultures that are in conflict with each other can undergo hybridization,¹⁹ and created a new form²⁰ or new identity.²¹ Cultural hybridization, as a consequence of cross-cultural interactions, does not merely entail the mixing of two or more cultures, but emphasizes the productive, dynamic, and positive process that

¹⁶ Robert J.C.Young, *Colonial Desire Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Riskeedas 2018 vol. 3 (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁷ Burke and Peter, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Cf. Katharyne Mitchell, "Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15, 5 (1997): pp. 533–53; Cf. Peter Albrecht, "Hybridisation in a Case of Diamond Theft in Rural Sierra Leone," *Ethnos* 83, 3 (2018): pp. 567–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2016.1263229>.

¹⁸ Babatunde Raphael Ojebuyi and Bimbo Lolade Fafowora, "Contesting Cultural Imperialism: Hybridisation and Re-Enactment of Indigenous Cultural Values in Nigerian Hip-Hop Music," *Muziki* 18, 1 (2021): pp. 59–81.

¹⁹ Rebecca Marsland, "The Modern Traditional Healer: Locating 'hybridity' in Modern Traditional Medicine, Southern Tanzania," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, 4 (2007): pp. 751–65; Cf. Bingyu Wang and Francis L. Collins, "Becoming Cosmopolitan? Hybridity and Intercultural Encounters amongst 1.5 Generation Chinese Migrants in New Zealand," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, 15 (2016): pp. 2777–95.

²⁰ Volker Boege, Anne M. Brown, and Kevin P. Clements, "Hybrid Political Orders, Not Fragile States," *Peace Review* 21, 1 (2009): pp. 13–21; Cf. Gloria Nziba Pindi, "Hybridity and Identity Performance in Diasporic Context: An Autoethnographic Journey of the Self Across Cultures," *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies* 18, 1 (2018): pp. 23–31; Cf. Gerhard Fink, Anne-Katrin Neyer, and Marcus Kölling, "Understanding Cross-Cultural Management Interaction: Research into Cultural Standards to Complement Cultural Value Dimensions and Personality Traits," *International Studies of Management & Organization* 36, 4 (2006): pp. 38–60.

²¹ Ojebuyi and Fafowora, "Contesting Cultural Imperialism; Cf. Anna Prashizky, "Ethnic Fusion in Migration: The New Russian–Mizrahi Pop-Culture Hybrids in Israel," *Ethnicities* 19, 6 (2019): pp. 1062–81.

occurs in the encounter of diverse global cultures without boundaries.²²

As a process, cultural hybridization engenders complex challenges and simultaneously presents ambivalent conditions²³. Hybridization can result in cultural ambivalence when individuals do not possess a strong command of one or two cultures within their sphere of influence.²⁴ This condition emphasizes that hybrid cultures experience fluctuations in terms of merging, interplay, clear points of convergence, acceptance or rejection, both in whole or in part. Hybridization also signifies a process of exploring identity, where it is not implausible for an individual to have more than one identity due to complex interactions, journeys, and life experiences²⁵.

In hybridization, there is no definitive distinction between Western culture and traditional culture²⁶, included the question of what is considered authentic and inauthentic²⁷. Therefore, the process involves not only integrating elements of local culture with the global, responding to global or dominant cultures, but also making efforts to revitalize and even restore cultures from the past that are gradually endangered²⁸; It is not surprising that a process of positive and productive cultural selection occurs for the existence of cultures, including local culture. Cultural selection enables communities to choose, filter, and rearrange cultural elements that are deemed irrelevant in order to make them constructive and meaningful.

²² Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, Routledge Taylor & Francis (Routledge, 1950); Cf. Daniel P.S. Goh, "Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore: Syncretism, Hybridisation and Transfiguration," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 37, 1 (2009): pp. 107–37, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853109X385411>.

²³ Viggo Vestel, "Limits of Hybridity versus Limits of Tradition?: A Semiotics of Cultural Reproduction, Creativity, and Ambivalence among Multicultural Youth in Rudenga, East Side Oslo," *Ethos* 37, 4 (2009): pp. 466–88.

²⁴ Yuli Rahmawati and Peter Charles Taylor, "The Fish Becomes Aware of the Water in Which It Swims': Revealing the Power of Culture in Shaping Teaching Identity," *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 13, 2 (2018): pp. 525–37.

²⁵ La Toya Strong, "The Intersection of Identity, Culture and Science Engagement," *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 11, 2 (2016): pp. 379–85.

²⁶ Maeda, "Education and Cultural Hybridity.

²⁷ Clair et al., *Engaging Cultural Narratives of the Ethnic Restaurant*.

²⁸ Joanne Thobeka Wreford, "'Long-Nosed' Hybrids? Sharing the Experiences of White Izangoma in Contemporary South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, 4 (2007): pp. 829–43; Ojebuyi and Fafowora, "Contesting Cultural Imperialism.

Hybridization goes beyond mere blending of two or more distinct cultures; it consciously and simultaneously exerts influence and assumes different forms within the adopting society;²⁹ it is a position that enables communities to be responsive to the influences of globalization without losing their original cultural roots, which are reshaped in new forms. As a result of this hybridization, on one hand, the foundation of culture becomes unstable and may even crumble, transitioning to new footholds. However, on the other hand, culture can transcend boundaries and discover new forms that are no longer dependent on measures of authenticity (cultural originality). Cultural exchange can actively occur, enabling diverse cultures to engage in reciprocal interactions. Within a diverse cultural landscape, hybridization can serve as a tool for filtering various information as external variants compete with one another. It bridges the exchange of knowledge, communication media, and cultural integration, fostering social innovation and enhancing cross-cultural competencies³⁰.

The encounter of two or more cultures gives rise to novel forms and even new identities, which, according to Bhabha's conceptual framework, are referred to as the "third space." This "third space" represents a state of being between or in-between, characterized by liminalities.³¹ It is a state of openness that allows for the incorporation of other elements. Liminality within hybrid culture facilitates the emergence of creativity, transformation, and even new forms that may no longer resemble their original state. It is possible that this process involves the erosion or solidification of elements from mixed cultures. However, not all cultural elements are exchanged in this process; only certain elements are readily accepted by other cultures. According to Essadek's perspective, cultural exchange primarily occurs in the realm of material culture rather than in beliefs, values, or cultural practices³². Liminality also serves as a medium for cultural selection within a society, where there is a correction of elements that are no longer

²⁹ Shilpa Daithota Bhat, "Hackneying Hybridity? Fending off 'Foreignness', Khoja Community and Hybridisation in The Magic of Saida," *Culture and Religion* 20, 1 (2019): pp. 21–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2019.1571521>.

³⁰ Go and Trunfio, "A Cultural Hybridisation Approach to Reinterpreting the Integration-Diversity Dichotomy.

³¹ Mitchell, "Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity."; Cf. Wang and Collins, "Becoming Cosmopolitan?.

³² Fatima Essadek, "A Hybrid New World or Not? Transformation versus Hybridisation in Early Modern World," *Critical Survey* 31, 3 (2019): pp. 1–14.

relevant, adjustments, and even reinterpretation into alternative forms that are more suitable and acceptable.

One manifestation of cultural hybridization can be found in rituals. The study of initiation rituals into adulthood, referred to as “rites of passage” by Van Gennep and further developed by Turner, exemplifies this phenomenon.³³ The study of rituals has been a longstanding and enduring focus of inquiry, remaining relevant to this day. Contemporary research extensively examines rituals in various countries, exploring diverse aspects such as rituals as means of conflict resolution³⁴, social changes resulting from modernity in Ghanaian society³⁵, including the aspect of human rights violations in Malawian society³⁶.

In Indonesia, the ritual of coming-of-age initiation within the Muslim community is interpreted as “*sumat*” or circumcision³⁷. In Muna society, the coming-of-age initiation ritual is known as “*katoba*”. The *katoba* ritual is an initiation ceremony aimed at boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14. It is a prominent and public ritual that is mandatory for the Muna people. In Muna culture, *katoba* is referred to as the Islamic ceremony, considering the strong influence of Islam in this ritual. The root word of *katoba* is “*toba*”, which means repentance. Thus, *katoba* can be understood as a ritual of repentance or a way of repenting. During this ritual, teachings are imparted on how to be a good Muslim, as the ritual instructs on proper behavior within the

³³ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (London: Cornell University Press, 1967).

³⁴ Simon J. Bronner, “Fathers And Sons: Rethinking The Bar Mitzvah As An American Rite Of Passage,” *Children’s Folklore Review* 31 (2009): pp. 7–33.

³⁵ Franklin N. Glozah, “Social Change and Adolescent Rites of Passage: A Cross Cultural Perspective,” *International Journal of Human Sciences* 11, 1 (2014): pp. 1188–97, <https://doi.org/10.14687/ijhs.v11i1.2909>.

³⁶ Ajwang Warri, “Girls’ Innocence and Futures Stolen: The Cultural Practice of Sexual Cleansing in Malawi,” *Children and Youth Services Review* 91 (2018): pp. 298–303, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.06.011>.

³⁷ Lynda Newland, “Under the Banner of Islam: Mobilising Religious Identities in West Java,” *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11, 3 (2000): pp. 199–222; Irwan M. Hidayana and Reni Kartikawati and Fatima Az Zahro Djamilah, Johanna Debora Imelda, “Female Circumcision in Indonesia: Between Policy and Practice,” in *FGM/C: From Medicine to Critical Anthropology Related Papers From Medicine To Critical*, ed. Michela Fusaschi and Giovanna Cavatorta (Torino: Meti Edizioni, 2018), pp. 95–102.

community³⁸. The mention of the Islamic initiation ritual in the Muna society does not pertain to circumcision (*sunat/sirkumsisi*) as practiced in other Muslim communities³⁹. The traditional circumcision practice among the Muna people is called *kangkilo*, but the term “islamization” still refers to *katoba*. This ritual is conducted with the aim of achieving purity, both for the parents and the child, encompassing both physical and spiritual purity. *Katoba* serves as the foundation or prerequisite for the child to attain sacred knowledge, symbolizing cleanliness and purity.

Hybrid Culture of Muna and Islam

Islamic practices in Indonesia are closely intertwined with local traditions, and the two are almost inseparable. The convergence of Muna customs and Islam within Muna society leads to cultural hybridization, a process marked by the blending of different cultural elements that form a new cultural form.⁴⁰ The convergence of indigenous customs and Islam in Muna gives rise to a hybrid culture that is clearly evident in the *katoba* ritual, as elucidated in the following table:

Table 1. Components of Cultural Hybridization in *Katoba*

Category	Hybrid Culture in <i>Katoba</i> Muna (<i>Local Culture and Islamic Culture</i>) ⁴¹
Basis of Implementation	Cleansing of impurities or dirt (<i>sin/IC</i>)/ <i>ali kita</i> (LC) and fulfilling obligations/debts (<i>adbosa</i>)
Leader	<i>Pegawai Sara</i> (<i>imam, khatibi, modji</i>) (LC) or imam (IC)
Participants of the ritual	Parents; Child; Religious teacher (IC); Companion (<i>kafoghawi</i>); Immediate family (<i>lambu</i>); Extended family (<i>tombu</i>)/LC
Time of Ritual	Traditional Muna calculation (<i>gholeo metaa</i>) by the parents (<i>pande kutika</i>)/LC using the Islamic calendar (IC) interpreted in a traditional manner with the intention of obtaining safety and blessings

³⁸ Paul Kyalo, “Initiation Rites and Rituals in African Cosmology,” *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 1, (2013): pp. 34–46.

³⁹ Merli, “Male and Female Genital Cutting among Southern Thailand’s Muslims.

⁴⁰ Ojebuyi and Fafowora, “Contesting Cultural Imperialism.

⁴¹ LC stands for local culture, referring to elements derived from Muna culture, and IC stands for Islamic culture, referring to elements derived from the Islamic religion.

Category	Hybrid Culture in <i>Katoba Muna</i> (<i>Local Culture and Islamic Culture</i>) ⁴¹
Targets and Objects of Repentance:	
Target of Repentance:	Human (<i>bak'kunnaasi</i> (LC)/ <i>hablum minannaas</i> (IC), Allah (<i>botuki</i> (LC)/ <i>hablum minallah</i> (IC)), and the Universe (<i>falia</i> (LC)/ <i>hablum minal'alam</i> (IC))
Object of Repentance	Heartfelt mistake (<i>kabalano dukuno lalo</i> (LC)/rukun <i>qalbiyah</i> (IC), Verbal mistake (<i>kabalano dukuno pogau</i> (LC)/rukun <i>qauliyah</i> (IC), misdeed (<i>kabalano dukuno podiu</i> (LC))/rukun <i>fi'liyah</i> (IC).
Ritual Element	
<i>Dupa</i> (The smoke emitted from the combustion of specific materials.)	The presence is cherished by the spirits of ancestors. (<i>sumanga</i> (LC)) and angel (IC)
<i>Haroa</i> (Traditional food as an offering.)	Interpreted as representing the four elements of human existence (earth, water, fire, and air)/the teachings of the seven levels of spiritual enlightenment. (IC)
<i>Pitara</i> (White rice and raw eggs.)	The analogy of zakat fitrah and the symbol of the source of human life (IC) and the symbol of willingness to share with others. (<i>kawagho</i>)/LC
Verbal Declaration:	
Al Fatihah (the first surah in the Al Qur'an)	The main/obligatory component of the verbal declaration serves as a marker for a child's acceptance of Islam (IC) and becomes obligatory as an integral part of the series of ritual declarations (LC).
Istighfar (Seeking forgiveness from Allah.)	The main/obligatory component of the verbal declaration serves as a marker for a child's acceptance of Islam (IC) and becomes obligatory as an integral part of the series of ritual declarations (LC).
Syahadat (The proclamation of the belief that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger.)	The teachings of the religion (IC) and traditions (LC) serve as markers for a child's acceptance of Islam (IC).
Ritual advice/words of wisdom:	
<i>Isaratino Toba</i> (The procedure of repentance.)	The teachings of the tradition derived from the concept of Al-Ghazali (IC) are conveyed using local terms such as: <i>dososo</i> /LC (regretting sins), <i>dofekakodobo</i> /LC (avoiding sins), <i>dofomiina</i> /LC (eliminating the possibility of

Category	Hybrid Culture in <i>Katoba</i> Muna (<i>Local Culture and Islamic Culture</i>) ⁴¹
	committing the same or different sins), <i>botuki/LC</i> (surrendering to Allah).
<i>Kaalano Oe</i> (The procedure of purification.)	The teachings of ablution (IC) and personal cleansing (<i>ali kita/LC</i>) in the Muna belief.
<i>Lansaringino</i> (Obedience to Allah and the Messenger (referring to Prophet Muhammad).)	The doctrine of faith in Allah, along with obedience to parents, as a comprehensive teaching of family morality (IC).
<i>Hakkunnaasi</i> (Upholding human rights)	The main and obligatory components of the ritual serve as the formation of traditional social morality (LC) and religious teachings (upholding the rights of other humans/IC).
<i>Nemotehi bbe nemokado</i> (Carrying out commands and avoiding prohibitions, as well as practicing " <i>lateno wuni-wuni</i> " (being honest and not deceiving/cheating))	The formation of social-cultural mentality and character (LC), as well as religious teachings (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong/IC).
Symbols & Meanings of Rituals:	
Ritual attire/clothing.	Traditional attire (LC) and hijab (for women) and songkok (for men) (IC).
Symbol of verbal declaration.	The white cloth tied around the finger of a child and the imam (<i>kai kapute/LC</i>) symbolizes purity in Islam (IC).
The meaning of words.	Culture (LC) and repentance (embracing Islam)/IC.
Meaning of the teachings of <i>Wambano toba</i> .	Creating the perfected human (<i>insan kamil/IC</i>) or the futile human (<i>asfala safilin/IC</i>).
Final value	Purity (<i>nongkilo/LC</i>) and the purity of Islam (IC), not only physical but also non-physical.
Ritual conclusion:	
Recitation of prayer.	Elements of tradition, traditional artifacts (LC), and prayers in Arabic language (IC).
Recitation of <i>Baca-baca</i>	Munanese Language (LC) and Arabic Language (IC)
Consequences of rituals:	
Obligations of children.	Practicing religious teachings (IC) and Muna traditions (LC).
Social Control	Social control exercised by all participants of the ritual (parents, religious leaders, <i>kafoghami</i> (LC), immediate family, and extended family) as a religious moral

Category	Hybrid Culture in <i>Katoba</i> Muna (<i>Local Culture and Islamic Culture</i>) ⁴¹
Social sanctions of rituals.	responsibility that is considered fardhu kifayah (IC). Non-Muna individuals (LC) who are Muslims (IC).

Table 1 shows that cultural hybridity in Muna *katoba* extends from pre-ritual to post-ritual, beginning with the foundation of implementation, leaders, participants, time, targets, and objects of repentance. In the ritual elements, cultural hybridity is found in the elements of incense (*dupa*), ceremonial offerings (*baroa*), and ancestral relics (*pitara*). Meanwhile, in the *katoba* procession, cultural hybridity is evident in the verbal declaration (*ikrar lisan*), ritual advice/words of wisdom, consisting of *isaratino toba* (procedure of repentance), *kaalano oe* (procedure of purification), *lansaringino* (obedience to Allah and the Messenger), *hakkunmaasi* (upholding human rights), *nemotebi bhe nemokado* (enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong), and *lateno wuni-wuni* (honesty and the prohibition of cheating (*lancung*)).

Cultural hybridity is also found in the symbols and meanings of rituals, including attire, the symbol of verbal declaration, the meaning of words, the meaning of *Wambano toba* teachings, and the ultimate values to be achieved in the ritual. The *katoba* ritual, which concludes with recitation of prayers, also exhibits cultural hybridity in the process of reciting prayers and the usage of specific Arabic words. In the post-ritual phase, cultural hybridity is found in the consequences of rituals regarding the obligations of children, social control, and social sanctions of the ritual.

Cultural hybridity in Muna *katoba* clearly demonstrates the strong interplay, mutual influence, and convergence between these two entities. The underlying philosophy of *katoba* implementation revolves around the concept of purity as the fundamental basis for performing religious rituals, drawing from the concept of *fiqh thabarab*. In Muna culture, this concept is referred to as *ali kita*, representing the teachings of *kangkilo* (self-purification). Given the importance of personal cleanliness, the ritual duty that parents must fulfill for their children is considered a debt or even a sin (*odbosa*). *Thabarab* in Islam and *kangkilo* in Muna culture converge in the same concept, encompassing not only physical cleanliness (external), but also purity of the heart (internal). *Kangkilo* in Muna culture, similar to *thabarab* in Islam, serves as a prerequisite for purification and returning to the path of

fitrah/religion.⁴² The concept of purification as an important element in Muna society is confirmed in other aspects of *katoba* as well, particularly in the targets and objects of repentance. Repentance is not limited to external actions but also extends to other sensory organs (speech/*kabalano dukumo pogau*, eyes, and ears) and even the heart (*kabalano dukumo lalo*). Personal purity is also attained through the willingness of various entities that have the potential to engage in wrongdoing, including humans (*bakkunnaasi*), the universe (*falia*), and Allah SWT (*botuki*). The verbal declaration of *istighfar*, recited by the child in Arabic, is a mandatory component alongside other verbal declarations. This declaration signifies the acceptance of a child as a Muna Muslim. Purification, as a crucial part of many cultures, showcases the profound philosophy of self-purification represented in the ritual.⁴³

Cultural hybridization is evident in the preconditions, process, and post-conditions of *katoba*. The preconditions are shown in the requirements of repentance (*isaratino toba*), which include three aspects: *dososo* (remorse for sins), *dofekakodobo* (abstaining from sins), and *dofomiina* (eliminating the possibility of committing the same or different sins), and finally, *botuki* (submission to Allah). These three stages of repentance are found in the teachings of repentance taught by Imam Al Ghazali. The process, which demonstrates cultural hybridization in the concept of purity, is seen in the verbal declaration (*ikrar lisan*), the advice/narration of *katoba* that adopts Islamic teachings on purification (*kaalano oe*), the teachings of respecting the rights of others (*bakkunnaasi*), the teachings of *nemotebi bhe nemokado* (commanding good and forbidding evil), and the principle of *lateno wuni-wuni* (honesty and prohibition of cheating/deceit). The purification of the self-using water as a cleansing medium in Muna society is referred to as *kaalao oe*, which intersects with traditional practices and Islamic teachings.⁴⁴ The meaning of *katoba* itself demonstrates the importance of purification in Muna society and the

⁴² Sami A. Aldeeb Abu-Sahlich, “Muslims’ Genitalia in the Hands of the Clergy: Religious Arguments about Male and Female Circumcision,” *Male and Female Circumcision: Medical, Legal, and Ethical Considerations in Pediatric Practice* (1999), pp. 131–71, http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-0-585-39937-9_9.

⁴³ Arabestani, “Ritual Purity and the Mandaeans’ Identity.”

⁴⁴ Mohammad Zakir Hossain, “Water: The Most Precious Resource of Our Life,” *Global Journal of Advanced Research* 2, 9 (2015): pp. 1436–45.

strong convergence of customs and Islam. This is evident in the meaning of *mambano toba* (*katoba* advice), which guides children to attain the status of “*insan kamil*” (perfect human) or “*ghuluba*” and ultimately achieve the ultimate goal of *katoba*, which is the purity of both the physical and spiritual aspects (*nongkilo*).

Hybridization of culture in *katoba* Muna reflects the blending of global (Islam) and local (customary) elements, but not in a relationship of dominance and subordination.⁴⁵ This can be seen in the ritual leaders, consisting of *imam*, *khatibi*, and *modji*. The terms *imam* and *khatibi* originate from Islamic terminology, referring to the *imam* and *khatib*, two important positions in leading Muslim worship. The blending of Islam and culture gives rise to three sets of customary apparatus in Muna called “*pegawai sara*”. As part of their social responsibility, the involvement of ritual participants also reinforces the cultural hybridization, which not only obligates parents to actively take on the role of primary caregivers and educators for their children, but also involves the ritual leaders (*pegawai sara*), child companions during the ritual (*kafohmani*), and even extended family members (*tombu*). The responsibility for education in Muna society extends beyond the individual child's personal obligations to follow religious teachings and traditions. It is not limited to the family's responsibility (parents and siblings), but becomes a social responsibility for all parties involved in the ritual. The timing of the ritual, which combines Islamic timekeeping and the customary practices of Muna, demonstrates the hybridization of culture in the concept of “*gholeo metaa*” (auspicious days). The notion of auspicious days in Muna tradition is believed to bring blessings and ward off misfortune. Determining these auspicious days involves referencing the Islamic calendar while incorporating Muna traditional methods.

The strong presence of Islamic elements and teachings in *katoba* does not imply Islamic authority over the ritual, as can be seen in the verbal affirmations, such as reciting *Surah Al-Fatihah*, uttering *istighfar*, and affirming the two testimonies of faith (*shahadah*). The strong influence and Islamic teachings are apparent, but in the interpretation of the Muna people, these three verbal affirmations represent a mandatory series of statements that children must recite during *katoba*, serving as a marker of their Muslim identity. Anyone can become a

⁴⁵ Matthew; Uzma Z. Rizvi Liebmann, *Archaeology And The Post'colonial Critique* (Lanham· New York· Toronto· Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press, 2008).

Muslim without undergoing *katoba*, and conversely, someone can become Muna without being a Muslim. However, by participating in *katoba*, a child's status in Muna becomes Muna-Muslim simultaneously.⁴⁶ The strength of the *katoba* tradition in Muna leads to the perception that individuals who do not undergo *katoba* are not considered Muna people. In the case of *katoba*, it is no longer important to emphasize the dominance of one culture (whether it is Islam or *adat*).⁴⁷ However, it is more about the context of coexistence, borrowing from each other, substituting elements, negotiation, and reinterpretation to make the ritual acceptable and meaningful.

In the hybridization of culture, it is possible for there to be simultaneous changes in form and meaning that are compatible and even overlapping. The word "*katoba*" is linguistically adopted from the Islamic term "*taubat*," which means repentance. In the Muna language dictionary, it is mentioned that "*katoba*" means to be cultured and to repent (to be Islamic). These two meanings demonstrate an overlapping between transfiguration (changes in form) and hybridization (changes in form and meaning) in *katoba*, which in the *Gob* terminology is referred to as transfiguring hybridization.⁴⁸ The teachings that the *imam* imparts to the child during the *katoba* process are Islamic teachings, which include the methods of repentance, purification, obedience to Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and parents, the teachings to refrain from infringing upon the rights of others, and to do good and stay away from evil. Changes in form within *katoba* are found in the way the Muna community explains the concept of preparing a vessel to keep the water clear.

LSI, a traditional figure from Muna, explains that "no matter how clear or transparent the water is, if it is poured into a dirty vessel, it will become dirty as well". The overlapping meanings in cultural hybridization can be seen in the way the *imam* teaches the importance of obedience to Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and parents (*lansaringino*). In the teachings of *katoba*, the position of the father is likened to the manifest Allah, the mother is likened to the manifest Prophet Muhammad, the older siblings are likened to manifest angels,

⁴⁶ Asliah Zainal, *Menjaga Adat, Menguatkan Agama Katoba Dan Identitas Muslim Muna* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2017).

⁴⁷ Helene Maria Kyed, "Hybridity and Boundary-Making: Exploring the Politics of Hybridisation," *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal* 2, 4 (2017): pp. 464–80.

⁴⁸ Goh, "Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore.

and the younger siblings are likened to fellow Muslims. The people of Muna interpret *lansaringino* not in the sense of polytheism or associating partners with Allah, but as a moral teaching to help children better understand and relate to the lessons. Thus, the father is considered the manifest Allah Swt., the mother is considered the manifest Prophet Muhammad, and so on. Children need teachings and examples that they can witness in their daily lives. However, the consequences of these teachings require the maintenance of family morality, meaning that a father must truly embody the qualities of a father whose commands are worth following, a mother should reflect the words of the father and embody true care and affection, and siblings should display brotherly/sisterly love and compassion as Muslims as a whole.

The overlapping of form and meaning as a consequence of hybridization is also evident in the teachings of *bakemmaasi* (upholding the rights of others). This teaching emphasizes the importance of respectful behavior and valuing the rights of others, whether conveyed metaphorically or directly. Similarly, the teachings of *nemotehi bbe nemokado* (encouraging good and forbidding evil) and *lateno wuni-wuni* (being honest and avoiding deceit) carry significant meanings and values in *katoba*. These teachings represent the ultimate meaning and values to be achieved in *katoba*, which is to become an "insan kamil" (a complete human being) who embodies both traditional social and religious moral teachings.

In cultural hybridization, there is a productive, existing, and positive process occurring⁴⁹ as in the ritual procession from beginning to end, a productive, existing, and positive process occurs, producing new elements, interpretations, and meanings through the fusion of customs and Islam. Traditional and Islamic elements are present in the form of the attire worn by the child, the accompanying *kafoghawi* (assistant), and the *imam* who leads the *katoba*. The clothing worn reflects the combination of Islam and culture. The closing of the ritual, celebrated with prayer recitation (*baca-baca*), also incorporates Islamic and Muna cultural elements. *Haroa* (traditional Muna food) is no longer considered an offering to ancestral spirits but is seen to represent the four elements of human existence: fire, wind, water, and earth. These four elements of human existence are adopted from the teachings of the "martabat tujuh" (the seven ranks), which were part of

⁴⁹ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*; Cf. Goh, "Chinese Religion and the Challenge of Modernity in Malaysia and Singapore.

the laws of the Buton Sultanate and the Muna kingdom in the past. Another element is the burning of incense (*asap dari api*) which is not interpreted as pleasing the spirits (*sumanga*), but rather the aroma of incense is believed to be liked by the angels and facilitates the granting of prayers. Another component of the prayer recitation is the *pitara* (white rice and raw eggs), symbolizing *zakat fitrah* (alms) and the source of human sustenance. *Pitara* is the right of the *Kafoghami*, representing the teaching to children about the willingness to share blessings (*kawagho*).

In cultural hybridization, there is a process of debate, conflict, and ultimately mutual acceptance,⁵⁰ just as the elements in *Katoba* are interpreted by the people of Muna. The hope for the fulfillment of prayers is expressed rhythmically and simultaneously by those present in the utterance of “Amin”. During the recitation process, the *imam* uses both the Muna language and Arabic. The prayers in the recitation have a more *mantra*-like nature, and the simultaneous utterance of “Amin” by those present highlights the importance of the magical-mystical function in the ritual, rather than its literal meaning.

The *katoba* of Muna constructs new forms and interpretations by combining elements of local tradition and Islamic teachings in various ritual components. The production of hybrid culture brings positive values for the continuation of *Katoba* in the future, allowing it to persist and be accepted by the Muna community, with the potential to endure for an indefinite period of time (sustain).⁵¹

The involvement of ritual participants, both in the procession and throughout the child's life, emphasizes the strong social control within Muna's *katoba*. If *katoba* is no longer carried out, then the roles within *katoba* also disappear. If it undergoes a change in form, the roles may no longer be the same, resulting in a loss of societal control over children's behavior. The responsibility for the child no longer lies with the community but becomes solely the responsibility of the family, and even more specifically, the personal responsibility of the parents. In this context of social responsibility, *katoba* is still considered highly important in Muna society in terms of its meaning and benefits.⁵² The convergence of Islam and culture in the *katoba* procession is

⁵⁰ Rahmawati and Taylor, “The Fish Becomes Aware of the Water in Which It Swims”.

⁵¹ Fink, Neyer, and Kölling, “Understanding Cross-Cultural Management Interaction.”

⁵² Maeda, “Education and Cultural Hybridity.”

strengthened through the process of *ikrar* (pledge) guided by the imam for the child. During the procession, each finger of the *imam* and the child is bound by a white cloth, symbolizing the strong and pure commitment that must be upheld in the shared responsibility represented by the white cloth (*kai kapute*). The ritual signifies the importance of collective responsibility among the participants in the ritual⁵³.

In the implementation of *katoba*, it becomes irrelevant to distinguish what is still original from the Muna *katoba* and what is mixed, as the Muna people consider the various forms of implementation as part of the teachings of *katoba*. Similarly, the Javanese community considers it unimportant to question what is traditional and what is global/modern, as found by Nasir.⁵⁴ In hybridization, it becomes difficult to determine the originality of culture between two or more cultures that intersect.⁵⁵ Islam and local customs are not something that needs to be opposed or seen as contradictory, as *katoba* Muna serves as the identity of Muna's Islamic faith.⁵⁶ These two cultures mutually preserve and strengthen each other within a unique identity, making Muna's Islamic culture continue to exist and be accepted, thereby enriching its meaning.⁵⁷ In the case of Muna, the hybridization between Muna customs and Islam, which is considered authentic (central), reaffirms the existence of Muna culture. The form of cultural hybridization displayed in *katoba* actually reasserts the presence of Muna culture through the cultural intelligence and wisdom that intelligently and fluidly reconcile and negotiate the relationship between customs and Islam.

Conclusion

The implementation of *katoba* in Muna presents a unique form of encounter between local traditions and Islam. This portrayal reaffirms that the community's response to Islam is not singular, despite sharing

⁵³ Kheswa et al., "The Experiences and Perceptions of 'Amakrwala'.

⁵⁴ Mohamad Abdun Nasir, "Revisiting the Javanese Muslim Slametan: Islam, Local Tradition, Honor and Symbolic Communication," *Al-Jami'ab* 57, 2 (2019): pp. 329–58.

⁵⁵ Clair et al., *Engaging Cultural Narratives of the Ethnic Restaurant*; Cf. Maeda, "Education and Cultural Hybridity.

⁵⁶ Zainal, *Menjaga Adat, Menguatkan Agama Katoba Dan Identitas Muslim Muna*.

⁵⁷ Generalis, "Hybrid Vigour As A Creative Strategy In The Works of Steven Cohen And Grace Jones."

the same teachings. Islam has distinct influences on Muna's culture, particularly in rituals. Islam is utilized to strengthen the *katoba* ritual, and it can also be employed to replace other elements that may be considered non-Islamic. However, the ritual itself also contributes to the reinforcement of Islam through the reinterpretation of ritual elements that hold greater Islamic value.

The cultural hybridization depicted in *katoba* Muna confirms previous studies, indicating that this process will continue continuously as an inevitable phenomenon and a logical consequence of hybridity,⁵⁸ and consciously carried out.⁵⁹ However, the cultural hybridization that occurs in *katoba* Muna is not only limited to material cultural components, as found by Essadek,⁶⁰ but also in almost every sequence of rituals, from pre-ritual, procession, and even post-ritual stages; not only in dominant-subordinate power relations between *adat* (traditional customs) and Islam, but in equal relations.

The encounter between tradition and Islam in *katoba* demonstrates a gradient of elements and materials between culture and Islam as two mutually influencing sides in cultural hybridization. In this context, *katoba* serves as a medium for cultural selection in its relationship with Islam, where cultural components may strengthen, weaken, disappear, diminish, intensify, or even undergo transformation. This article contributes by highlighting that responses to Islam through ritual representation are not singular; they are interpreted differently based on the socio-cultural backgrounds of different communities. Additionally, the article provides a depiction of the gradient of cultural density and fluidity, raising questions about the influence of culture and Islam in the lives of the Muna people. Therefore, the study of rituals deserves more attention as it is where the process of cultural selection takes place. []

⁵⁸ Rana Sobh, Russell Belk, and Justin Gressel, "Mimicry and Modernity in the Middle East: Fashion Invisibility and Young Women of the Arab Gulf," *Consumption Markets and Culture* 17, 4 (2014): pp. 392–412; Cf. Dannie Kjeldgaard and Soren Askegaard, "The Glocalization of Youth Culture: The Global Youth Segment as Structures of Common Difference," *Journal of Consumer Research* 33, 2 (2006): pp. 231–247; Cf. Marwan M. Kraidy, "The Global, the Local, and the Hybrid: A Native Ethnography of Glocalization," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 16, 4 (1999): pp. 456–76.

⁵⁹ Russell, Emanuel, and Russell, "Deconstructing Ashdoda; Cf. Bhat, "Hackneying Hybridity? Fending off 'Foreignness', Khoja Community and Hybridisation in 'The Magic of Saida'."

⁶⁰ Essadek, "A Hybrid New World or Not?."

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