

## Dialectics of Cultural Dawah and Symbolic Ontology: Transformation of *The Mappaleppe Tinja Tradition Towards Tauhid Awareness*

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the dialectic between cultural da'wah and symbolic ontology in the transformation of the Bugis community's mappaleppe kaku tradition in Kajuara District, Bone Regency towards monotheistic awareness. This tradition of releasing vows contains theological problems in the form of ontological split-causality when Puang Nene', offerings, and sacred spaces are interpreted as independent sources of power other than Allah SWT. This existential condition gives rise to tension between the preservation of local culture and the purity of faith. Using qualitative methods with a theological-anthropological approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then interpreted through theological hermeneutic analysis. The results show that the mappaleppe kaku tradition is a socio-religious construction that binds a sense of collective security through ancestral genealogical memory. Resistance to eliminative da'wah arises due to the strong emotional attachment of the community to this system of meaning, so that confrontational da'wah tends to fail to read the local symbolic structure. As a dialectical solution, this study formulates a mappaleppe deceng da'wah model that works through five main stages: mapping religious awareness, stabilizing social relations,*

*contextual theological clarification, reconstructing symbolic meaning, and institutionalizing tawhid awareness. This adaptive-transformative model transmutes the ontological status of material symbols such as shifting the meaning of offerings from offerings of supernatural powers to horizontal alms ethics so that the strengthening of tawhid goes hand in hand with the preservation of social cohesion. The novelty of this study lies in the formulation of the mappalettu deceng model as a theological-anthropological meaning management strategy. This model proves that the transformation of tawhid awareness in lived religion is more effective through re-anchoring local symbolic values to His absolute source rather than through frontal cultural elimination.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural Da'wah, Symbol Ontology, Mappalettu Deceng, Tauhid Awareness, Mappaleppe Stool.*

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## 1. Introduction

The relationship between religion and local culture is a locus of ongoing existential encounter within the socio-religious dynamics of Muslim communities in Indonesia and is also a pillar supporting Islam Nusantara. 'Islam does not exist in a cultural vacuum, but rather develops through a process of dialogue, adaptation, and negotiation with the value systems, symbols, and social practices of local communities.<sup>2</sup> Within this dialectical landscape, religious practice often manifests itself in the form of *lived religion* a spiritual landscape in which formal-normative theological doctrines organically fuse with the social experiences and everyday traditions of the community. This phenomenon confirms that the religious consciousness of Muslims is not solely shaped by dogmatic legal texts, but rather by an active interpretive process that bridges the universality of the teachings of monotheism with the particularities of local culture.

However, when a tradition has genealogical roots and emotional functions that are massively internalized, the normative, confrontational-formalistic approach to preaching often reaches a dead end.<sup>3</sup> Preaching strategies that solely prioritize legalistic legal reasoning without being equipped with the ability to read the ontology of meaning behind cultural symbols tend to fail to trigger a substantive transformation of

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<sup>1</sup> A. Ansari, "Islam Nusantara: Cultural Diversity and Tradition," *LISAN AL-HAL: Journal of Thought and Cultural Development*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 226–247, 2024, doi: 10.35316/lisanalhal.v18i2.226-247.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lestari and Y. Yunita, "Syncretism of Islamic Culture and Local Culture of the Archipelago in Strengthening Community Relations," *Ri'ayah: Journal of Social and Religious Affairs*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 93–103, 2025, doi: 10.32332/riayah.v10i1.10440.

<sup>3</sup> AS Makatita and A. Islamy, "The Paradigm of Islamic Preaching on the Local Culture of Papuan Society": Integration of Islamic Law and Culture in the Stone Burning Tradition of the Dani Muslim Community," *AT-TAGHYIR JOURNAL Journal of Da'wah and Village Community Empowerment*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 2685–7251, 2022, doi: 10.24952/ttaghyir.vi2.5264.

theological awareness.<sup>4</sup> For tradition-based communities, local rituals are not merely profane customs, but rather institutions of meaning that legitimize communal identity, family honor ( *siri'* ), and provide a sense of security from the threat of cosmic uncertainty. As a result, the penetration of da'wah carried out in an eliminative-frontal manner not only triggers psychological distance and social resistance between da'i and mad'u but also widens the gap between the purity of Islamic teachings and the preservation of local cultural identity. This is where cultural da'wah urgently needs to be positioned not merely as a practical communication tactic, but as a transformative hermeneutic paradigm capable of shifting the theological orientation of society without uprooting its local culture.

This epistemological and theological crisis is clearly visible in the *mappaleppe kotoran tradition* of the Bugis community in Kajuarra District, Bone Regency. Existentially, this tradition of releasing vows and articulating gratitude for healing, salvation, or economic success reveals an ontological *split-causality* in the community's religious consciousness. At the verbal level, they believe in Allah SWT as the One Almighty God; but at the level of ritual practice, they attribute the effectiveness of supernatural powers and the determination of fate to intermediary entities such as *Puang Nene'*, the use of offerings, and the tying of knots in sacred spaces. An acute epistemology of fear emerges: the belief that the absence of offerings or neglect of rituals will automatically bring material curses in the form of prolonged illness or business bankruptcy. This is where the fundamental theological problem crystallizes, where the boundaries between respect for ancestral customs and the shifting foundations of monotheism become blurred, giving rise to a latent tension between the need to maintain the purity of faith and the desire to maintain communal social cohesion.<sup>5</sup>

Theoretically, the cultural da'wah approach is based on the understanding that local culture does not always have to be eliminated in the da'wah process but can be reconstructed through symbolic reinterpretation toward a monotheistic orientation.<sup>6</sup> Da'wah, in this context, is understood not only as the delivery of religious doctrine, but

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<sup>4</sup> T. Saumantri, "Integration of Sociological Theory in the Analysis of Islamic Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 127–156, 2024, doi: 10.14421/jjkii.vi2.1388.

<sup>5</sup> EN Hopipah, S. Kamil, and MA Mudzhar, "The Psychological Approach to Islamic Studies: Between Theory and Practice," *Tasfiah: Journal of Islamic Thought*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 149–182, 2025, doi: 10.21111/tasfiah.vi1.13121.

<sup>6</sup> M. Syamsuddin, "Transformation of the Relationship between Muhammadiyah and Javanese Islam": From Puritanism to Cultural Preaching in Kotagede," *Pusaka Journal of Religious Treasures*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 312–334, 2025, doi: 10.31969/pusaka.v13i2.1628.

as a process of transforming society's religious awareness through a dialogical, persuasive, and contextual approach. Thus, the transformation of tradition is understood as a process of shifting the orientation of ritual meaning from symbolic dependence to devotion to Allah SWT, without eliminating the socio-cultural function of society.

Several previous academic works have attempted to examine the *Mappaleppe Lemak* tradition and the discourse of cultural da'wah in Bugis society, but they tend to operate with fragmented methodologies. Research by Andi Agussalim, Asri, and Erina, for example, dissects the symbolic meaning of the *Mappaleppe Lemak* ritual using cultural semiotic analysis. While they successfully mapped the ritual's spiritual and social functions descriptively and anthropologically, their research fails to address the social engineering and value transformation strategies through da'wah movements.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, a study by Yusrijal, Mahmuddin, and Audah Mannan highlighted the persuasive strategies of religious instructors in clarifying the understanding of traditional practitioners. Unfortunately, this study remains trapped within the normative-educational da'wah paradigm, thus failing to reveal the ontological structure of religious symbols in a philosophical and in-depth manner. The research shows that the da'wah approach is carried out through persuasive and educational guidance but remains normatively oriented and has not yet formulated a da'wah model capable of deeply understanding the symbolic structure of community culture.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, Umar's research on Muhammadiyah's cultural da'wah in the Karampuang traditional ritual confirms the effectiveness of cultural instruments as a medium for Islamic da'wah but has not yet specified his analysis in the case of *mappaleppe kaku* which has a unique level of genealogical-metaphysical ties. This theoretical lag indicates the existence of a void in academic space (research gap) that can marry a deep reading of symbolic anthropology with the formulation of a theological-transformative da'wah model.<sup>9</sup> The increasing flow of religious purification and the strengthening tension between the purification of Islamic teachings and the preservation of local culture make the need for a dialogical, contextual, and

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<sup>7</sup> MI Aminim, G. Maria, and S. Ja'far, "Theology and Culture: Walisongo's Strategy of Islamic Enculturation in Java," *Aqlania: Journal of Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 2656–6605, 2025, doi:10.32678/aaqlania. v6i1.26.

<sup>8</sup> N. Hamid, "The Relationship Between Islamic Dawah and the Concept of Islam Nusantara in a Multicultural Perspective," *Ath-Thariq: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 17–29, 2024, doi:10.32332/ath-thariq. v8i1.8614.

<sup>9</sup> A. Agussalim, A. Asri, and D. Erina, "Symbolic Meaning in the Mappaleppe Stool Tradition of the Bugis Hulo Community in Bone," *SOCIETIES: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2023.

transformative da'wah model increasingly important in a tradition-based Muslim society.<sup>10</sup>

Driven by the urgency to bridge the dissolution of the clash between the purification of faith and cultural preservation, this research is directed to analyze the dialectic of cultural da'wah and the ontology of symbols in the transformation of *the mappaleppe kakus tradition* of the Bugis Kajauara community. The focus of this research is placed on how the mechanism of the da'wah movement works in transmuting the ontological status of the symbolic meaning of community rituals towards strengthening the values of monotheism without sacrificing local socio-cultural institutions. The substantive novelty of this research rests on the formulation of the *mappalettu deceng da'wah model* as an offer of a theological-anthropological da'wah model. This model places the management of meaning and the re-anchoring of religious symbols as the driving engine of the spiritual transformation of society in a dialogical, gradual, and contextual manner.

Thus, this article is expected to provide a cutting-edge theoretical contribution to the discourse on contemporary da'wah philosophy, cultural theology, and the strengthening of religious moderation based on local wisdom. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a blueprint for a moderate, humanistic da'wah approach, capable of upholding the word of tawhid (monotheism) upon the pillars of harmonious and civilized Nusantara culture.

## 2. Methods

Religious practices in society do not arise in a vacuum, but are formed through the interaction of religious teachings, collective experiences, cultural symbols, and social structures. "Berger and Luckmann explain that social reality is shaped through processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization."<sup>12,13</sup> In the context of local

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<sup>10</sup> Y. Yusrijal, M. Mahmuddin, and A. Mannan, "The Da'wah Strategy of Religious Instructors in Bola District in Correcting the Understanding of the Community of Adherents of the Mappaleppe Tinja Tradition in Coppo Petta Bulu, Lempong Village, Wajo Regency," *RITMA: ISLAMIC INTEGRATED JOURNAL*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 30–35, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> U. Umar, "Muhammadiyah's Cultural Da'wah Strategy in the Mappogau Hanua Traditional Ritual of the Karampuang Sinjai Community," *AFKARUNA Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2017, doi: 10.18196/aafkaruna.v3i2.4210.

<sup>12</sup> FA Basith, AD Purwandi, M. Erihadiana, M. Mahmud, DH Hamdani, and MR Aziz, "SPIRITUALISM TYPES AND IMPLICATIONS OF SAUDI ARABIAN CULTURAL TRANSMISSION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN INDONESIA," *Scaffolding: Journal of Islamic Education and Multiculturalism*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 515–539, 2026, doi: 10.37680/scaffolding.v8i1.8642.

<sup>13</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 47–51.

religiosity, these processes explain how a cultural religious practice emerges from a society's subjective experiences, is then institutionalized as a collective tradition, and is ultimately passed down as part of the community's social consciousness.

Clifford Geertz views religion as a system of symbols that shape a society's inner atmosphere, life orientation, and understanding of reality.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, symbols in local traditions cannot be read merely as ritual objects, but as media of meaning that connect social experiences, beliefs, and community expectations.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the *lived religion approach* developed by Meredith McGuire, Robert Orsi, and Nancy Ammerman emphasizes that religion is not only present in the form of formal doctrines and religious institutions, but also lives in daily practices, social experiences, cultural symbols, and traditions carried out by the community. The <sup>16</sup>*lived religion* perspective places the religious experience of the community as a crucial part in understanding local religious practices that often cannot be fully explained through formal normative approaches alone. Thus, *the mappaleppe kakus tradition* can be understood as a form of religiosity that lives in the cultural experience of the Bugis people.

However, understanding tradition as a social religious construction does not mean justifying all its ritual elements theologically.<sup>17</sup> It is precisely through ontological and epistemological reading of the symbol system that cultural da'wah can explain the fundamental reasons why this tradition persists as an established structure of cosmic reality, how the consciousness of its adherents interprets metaphysical causality, and at what existential point the transformation of religious values towards pure monotheism needs to be injected. Thus, the theory of social construction and anthropology of religion in this study is repurposed not merely as a profane sociological recording tool, but as an instrument of deconstruction to reveal the architecture of traditional meaning before formulating a *mappalettu deceng da'wah model* that is methodologically adaptive, transformative, and contextual.

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<sup>14</sup> AB Bukhari, "ISTIGHASAH AS A SPIRITUAL TRADITION AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY OF THE MUSLIMS: FIELD STUDY IN THE BAKEONG COMMUNITY," *At-Tasyrih Journal of Islamic Education and Law*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 62–74, 2026, doi: 10.55849/attasyrih.v12i1.482.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 90.

<sup>16</sup> A. Jalil and SN Hasanah, "From Ritual to Social Reality: Deconstructing the Meaning of Pak Punjen Tradition in the Marriage of the Karangwotan Pati Community through the Lens of Berger & Luckmann's Social Theory," *AL-MAQASHIDI Journal of Islamic Law of the Archipelago*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1–16, 2025, doi: 10.32665/aalmaqashidi.v11.4537.

<sup>17</sup> S. Rohwati, B. Badrudin, and A. Mamnuah, "Negotiation of Islam and Local Traditions in the Practice of Sea Alms: An Anthropological Study," *JDK: Journal of Da'wah and Communication*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 2548–3366, 2025, doi: 10.29240/jdk.v10i2.15014.

Acculturation is a crucial concept in understanding the encounter between Islam and local cultures. Melville J. Herskovits defines acculturation as a process of cultural change that occurs when groups with different cultures come into continuous contact, resulting in changes in the cultural patterns of one or both groups without necessarily losing their original cultural identities.<sup>18</sup> In the context of Islam Nusantara, acculturation explains how Islamic teachings interact with local traditions through a process of dialogue, adaptation, selection, and reinterpretation of meaning.<sup>19</sup>

The development of Islam in the archipelago demonstrates that acceptance of Islam did not always involve a complete rejection of local culture. In many societies, Islam was accepted through a process of transforming symbols and adapting cultural meanings, allowing Islamic values to integrate into the social fabric without creating significant social conflict.<sup>20</sup>

In Bugis society, the relationship between Islam and local culture is reflected in the principle of *ade' na syara', syara' na ade'*, which demonstrates the dialogical relationship between custom and sharia. This principle demonstrates that custom and Islam are not always positioned as opposites, but rather mutually reinforcing as long as cultural values are guided by Islamic principles.<sup>21</sup> However, this relationship still requires critical reading, as not all elements of local tradition are automatically aligned with monotheism.

*Mappaleppe Kesan* tradition represents a space for acculturation between Bugis culture and Islamic practices. On the one hand, this tradition embodies positive social values such as gratitude, fulfilling vows, family solidarity, and strengthening social relationships. On the other hand, some symbolic elements within the ritual practice have the potential to raise theological issues if interpreted as sources of metaphysical power other than Allah SWT.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, acculturation in this study is not understood as a justification for all traditional practices, but rather as an analytical space to

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<sup>18</sup> G. Ghiland, IYM Lattu, and TRC Tampake, "Exploration of the Dimensions of Lived Religion in the Osong Rambu solo' Song in Luwu Regency," *Jurnal Ilmiah Religiosity Entity Humanity (JIREH)*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 29–44, 2025, doi: 10.37364/jireh.v7i1.244.

<sup>19</sup> J. Arroisi, S. Badi', M. Putra Perdana, and AT Mafaza, "PROBLEMATICS OF BELIEF AND SPIRITUALITY AS INDONESIAN INDIGENOUS RELIGIONS," *Fikri: Journal of Religions, Social and Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 139–155, 2021, doi: 10.25217/jf.v6i2.1739.

<sup>20</sup> L. Al-Amri and M. Haramain, "ACCULTURATION OF ISLAM IN LOCAL CULTURE," *Kuriositas: Social and Religious Communication Media*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 191–204, 2017, doi: 10.35905/kur.v10i2.594.

<sup>21</sup> W. Widadi and F. Razi, "ISLAM AND CHANGE IN THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO CULTURE," *JSI: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 331–353, 2025, doi: 10.33477/jsi.v14i2.11797.

<sup>22</sup> Moh. T. Prasetyo, "Islam and the Transformation of Local Culture in Indonesia," *Batuthah: Journal of Islamic History*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 150–162, 2023, doi: 10.38073/batuthah.v2i2.1107.

understand which parts of the tradition can be maintained, directed, selected, and transformed.

Cultural da'wah is a da'wah approach that positions local culture as a space for dialogue and a medium for transforming Islamic values. In contemporary da'wah studies in Indonesia, cultural da'wah is understood as a da'wah strategy that takes into account the social, cultural, and structural contexts of society's religious experience so that the Islamic message can be accepted without creating social resistance.<sup>23</sup> In this approach, culture is not seen solely as an obstacle to da'wah, but as a social field where the Islamic message can be conveyed persuasively, gradually, and contextually.<sup>24</sup> Historically, the cultural da'wah approach can be seen in the da'wah practices of the Prophet Muhammad, the Walisongo, and the Tri Dato. The Prophet's da'wah demonstrated the principle of gradualism, namely, that socio-religious change is carried out in stages while considering the psychological, social, and cultural readiness of the community. The Prophet did not immediately erase all Arab traditions, but rather reconstructed value orientations that conflicted with monotheism, justice, and humanity.<sup>25</sup>

The Walisongo's model of Islamic propagation in Java demonstrates the importance of reinterpreting cultural symbols. Local traditions, arts, and cultural media were not erased, but rather reoriented to serve as a means of embracing Islamic values.<sup>26</sup> In this context, cultural symbols function as a bridge for Islamic propagation, enabling society to embrace value transformation without losing its cultural roots.

In South Sulawesi, the preaching of *the Tri Dato* (*Dato ri Bandang, Dato ri Tiro, and Dato Patimang*) demonstrates a pattern of integration between custom and sharia within the Bugis-Makassar community. Islam was introduced through an adaptive approach to the social structure and customs of the community, ensuring that the Islamization process did not result in a drastic cultural break.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> L. Jamilu and A. Humaidi, "DIALECTICS BETWEEN MALUKU CUSTOMARY TRADITIONS AND ISLAMIC SHARIA AFTER THE 1999 HUMANITARIAN TRAGEDY," *Jurnal PUBLIQUE*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 16–35, 2026, doi: 10.15642/publique.2026.7.1.16-35.

<sup>24</sup> A. Adiyono, S. Ni'am, and A. Akhyak, "Methodology of Islamic Studies: Islam as Religion (A Perspective Epistemology, Paradigm, and Methodology)," *Analysis : Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 169–200, 2024, doi: 10.24042/ajsk.v24i1.22636.

<sup>25</sup> MS A Rosyid and M. Mulyani, "INTEGRATION OF ISLAMIC VALUES AND LOCAL CULTURE IN CULTURAL PROPHECY IN THE ARCHIPELAGO," *Pendas: Scientific Journal of Elementary Education*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 271–287, 2025, doi: 10.23969/jp.v10i04.39759.

<sup>26</sup> J. Japeri, M. Yunus, S. Sabiruddin, WMY Wan Chik, and AI Mohd Fadzli, "Grounding Maqasid Sharia in the Dakwah and Cultural Practices of Islamic Society," *al-Qanatir: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 33, no. 6, pp. 31–46, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> M. Amahzun, *Manhaj of the Prophet's Da'wah*, Indonesia. Jakarta: Qisthi Press, 2004.

The da'wah model in this discourse is no longer viewed merely as a practical instrument but rather is positioned as a paradigm of theological praxis and epistemological architecture that systematically moves to transmute the structure of ontological consciousness, ethical dispositions, and the phenomenological articulation of communal religiosity. The da'wah model here radically transcends the mechanistic boundaries of linear dogmatic message transmission. It necessitates a hermeneutical capacity in which the da'wah practitioner acts as an active interpreter capable of decoding social stratification, exposing the ontology of cultural symbols, constructing an emancipatory communicative dialectic, conducting axiological filtering of local value systems, and ultimately reorienting the horizon of society's theological awareness toward the absolute purity of monotheism.<sup>28</sup> In the context of transforming local traditions, the da'wah model must be able to bridge two interests simultaneously: maintaining the purity of the principle of monotheism and maintaining socio-cultural functions that do not conflict with Islamic teachings.<sup>29</sup>

This research uses a qualitative paradigm with a theological-anthropological approach that functions to reveal the dialectic between cultural da'wah practices and symbolic ontology. The qualitative design was chosen because the main focus of this research is based on exploring the system of meaning, religious experience ( *lived religion* ), and the process of transformation of theological consciousness of the Bugis Kajuara community who adhere to *the mappaleppe kakus tradition*.<sup>30</sup> The theological anthropological approach is used to read *the mappaleppe kakus tradition* not only as a cultural practice, but also as a socio-religious phenomenon that contains theological, symbolic, and da'wah dimensions. Through this research approach, it is possible to understand the relationship between cultural symbols, the orientation of community beliefs, and the da'wah process in directing the transformation of tradition towards strengthening monotheism.<sup>31</sup>

The research was conducted in Kajuara sub-district, Bone regency, South Sulawesi. This location was chosen because *the mappaleppe kaku tradition* is still

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<sup>28</sup> A. Sunyoto, *Atlas of the Wali Songo: The First Book to Reveal the Wali Songo as Historical Facts*, Revised. South Tangerang: Pustaka IIMaN, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> Ridhwan, *Islamic Education during the Bone Kingdom: History, Roots and Scientific Characteristics and the Role of the Kadi*, First. Lhokseumawe: Unimal Press, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> N. Rahmat and R. Tasruddin, "SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION BASED ON DAKWAH: BRIDGING SPIRITUALITY, CULTURE, AND TECHNOLOGY," *Tashdiq: Journal of Religious Studies and Dakwah*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 1-10, 2025, doi: 10.3783/tashdiqv2i9.2461.

<sup>31</sup> OP Siregar and AT Sikumbang, "MUI's Preaching Strategy in Handling Deviant Sects in Medan City," *ASAS WA TANDHIM Journal of Law, Education & Social Religion*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 165-184, 2025, doi: 10.47200/awtjhpas.v4i2.2865.

practiced by some Bugis people and has become an important space for negotiations between preserving local culture and strengthening Islamic values. The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with religious leaders, traditional leaders, religious instructors, traditional practitioners, and members of the community who understand or are involved in the *mappaleppe kaku practice*. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement, knowledge, experience, and social position in the tradition and the da'wah process in the community. Secondary data were obtained through documents, cultural archives, scientific literature, previous research results, and other written sources relevant to the *mappaleppe kaku tradition*, cultural da'wah, and Bugis culture.

The unit of analysis in this study radically transcends the boundaries of behaviorism by orienting its focus on the ontology of ritual symbols, moral-metaphysical regulations in the practice of releasing vows, the epistemic construction of community meanings towards tradition, the architecture of da'wah communication patterns, the dynamics of community responses to da'wah, and the semantic-theological transmutation of the trajectory of changes in the orientation of ritual meaning. By establishing such an interdisciplinary unit of analysis, this study methodologically does not stagnate in a profane ethnographic description of the implementation of tradition. Furthermore, this study reveals philosophically and applicatively how cultural da'wah practices work as instruments for the reconstruction of meanings especially in decoding, selecting, reinterpreting, and transforming the structure of cultural values that live in society to align with the transcendental principle of tauhid. Furthermore, documentation is used to strengthen field data through activity photos, field notes, cultural documents, local archives, and literature related to the research object.<sup>32</sup>

Data analysis was conducted interactively through data reduction, presentation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting data related to ritual symbols, traditional meanings, issues of monotheism, da'wah practices, community responses, and the transformation of religious values. The reduced data were then categorized into analytical themes, such as the social construction of tradition, the symbolic meaning of rituals, negotiations between Islam and local culture, community da'wah patterns, and changes in the orientation of ritual meaning.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> A. Alaslan et al. , *Qualitative Research Methods* , Pe Print. Tasikmalaya: Indonesian Cemerlang House Association (PRCI), 2023. doi: 10.31219/osf.io/smrhb.

<sup>33</sup> Y. Yusanto, "Various Qualitative Research Approaches," *Journal of Scientific Communication* , vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1-13, 2019, doi: 10.31506/jsc.viii.7764.

The data interpretation stage combines empirical findings in the field with a theological-anthropological approach through theological hermeneutic analysis and ontological mapping. Peter Berger's social construction theory is used to uncover the production, institutionalization, and internalization of the *mappaleppe kotoran tradition* as a genealogical memory across generations. Meanwhile, Clifford Geertz's perspective of religion as a symbol system is critically repurposed alongside acculturation theory and the paradigm of cultural da'wah to unravel the ontology of ritual meaning, while simultaneously analyzing the semantic-theological transmutation of local material symbols toward strengthening absolute monotheistic consciousness.

*mappalettu deceng* da'wah model was designed through an inductive synthesis of the typology and recurrence of religious practice patterns consistently found in the field. This pattern was identified from the communication dynamics of preachers, instructors, and community leaders in conducting axiological filtering, integrating the essence of *sharia* with the institution of *ade*, and reinterpreting the ontological status of ritual symbols in a personal-generational manner. Through this *grounded approach*, the formulated model is not speculative-a priori, but rather arises organically from the empirical reality of observations, in-depth interviews, and the exploration of Bugis Kajuara cultural documentation.

The researcher acts as the primary instrument applying the principle of hermeneutical reflexivity to maintain an objective analytical distance, in order to avoid the trap of cultural relativism and one-sided dogmatic apologetics. The validity of interpretation is strictly maintained through technical triangulation (observation, interviews, documentation) and source triangulation that brings together the horizons of thought of religious leaders, traditional leaders, KUA instructors, and ritual practitioners. Through informant confirmation (*member checking*), this entire series of procedures ensures the academic credibility of *the mappalettu deceng model* in guiding the transmutation of public awareness from the trap of cosmic fear to the purity of monotheism in a dialogical, gradual, and contextual manner.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Social Construction of *the Mappaleppe Tinja Tradition*

The tradition of *mappaleppe kotoran (feces)* in the Bugis community of Kajuara sub-district, Bone Regency, is a socio-religious practice that cannot be reduced to a mere ritual for releasing vows. This tradition is formed through a dialectic between individual experiences of crisis, ancestral cultural legitimacy, and social inheritance that continues

across generations. <sup>34</sup>From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann's social construction, *mappaleppe kotoran* can be interpreted through three main processes: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. <sup>35</sup>These three processes explain how the community's subjective experiences in dealing with illness, disaster, safety, and life expectancy are then transformed into ritual structures that are institutionalized and accepted as part of the Bugis community's socio-religious identity.

### *Externalization of Nazar as an Expression of Crisis and Hope*

Externalization in *the Mappaleppe Lemak tradition* is evident in the practice of making vows. These vows arise from life experiences considered beyond human control, such as death in the family, prolonged illness, economic hardship, the safety of family members, and hopes for certain successes. At this stage, the community's subjective experiences are projected into symbolic acts in the form of cultural religious promises that demand fulfillment once the desire is achieved. Puang Fd explains:

“When my child died, my parents were worried that it would happen again to the next child. So, before my child was born, to ensure his safety, health, and longevity, I *would* bring offerings to *Bulutanah* and *Uhae fellae*. Thank God, my child was born safely, so I had to fulfill my vow. Because we believe that if you make a vow and don't fulfill it, there will be consequences. There could be another illness or disaster. So, it's better to fulfill it so that no more disasters happen to my family” (Puang Fd, Interview, January 28, 2026).

Puang Od also emphasized:

“If it's *mattinja*, it must be fulfilled, because it will impact the safety and health of my family. This has been a tradition passed down through generations. So, if someone is sick or has a major problem, we usually make a vow first. If they recover or the problem is resolved, then we come to bring offerings. It's been a tradition for a long time, and I don't dare leave it out” (Puang Od, Interview, January 29, 2026).

Puang St said something similar:

“I made a vow that if my business was successful and my fortune was good, then I would come to bring offerings to *Puang Nene'*. At that time, my business was having difficulties, so I *stopped*. After my business started to improve, I immediately carried out that vow. Because I believe that if you have made a promise you have to keep it. If not, I'm afraid

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<sup>34</sup> G. Daruhadi and P. Sopiati, “Research Data Collection,” *J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah*, vol. 3, no. 5, pp. 5423–5443, 2024, doi: 10.56799/jceki.v3i5.5181.

<sup>35</sup> CA Ramdhani AR, T. Bahfiarti, and MI Sultan, “SOCIAL REALITY CONSTRUCTION TOWARDS LOCAL CULTURAL ISSUES IN ONLINE MEDIA REPORTING IN INDONESIA,” *Nusantara: Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 378–391, 2026, doi: 10.31604/jips.v13i1.2026.378-391.

that there will be problems with my fortune again or problems will arise because of *Puang Nene's reprimand*“ (Puang St, Interview, 30 January 2026).

These three interviews demonstrate that vows in *the mappaleppe kotoran tradition* serve not merely as individual religious expressions but as a cultural mechanism for managing the existential uncertainty of the community. They function as symbolic devices that connect the experience of crisis with a sense of collective security. In this context, rituals not only represent beliefs but also serve as social instruments for managing anxiety, maintaining orderly meaning, and preserving the continuity of Bugis cultural identity.

Theoretically, these findings demonstrate that *mappaleppe kotoran* cannot be assessed solely from its outward appearance as an offering or a vow fulfillment practice. Its social roots lie in the existential needs of society to manage the uncertainties of life. Therefore, preaching that merely rejects the ritual form without understanding the underlying crisis and fear that give rise to it will struggle to transform consciousness. At this point, a theological-anthropological approach is needed to assess the monotheistic orientation, and an anthropological approach to understand why society maintains this tradition.

### *Objectivation of Tradition as a Collective Ritual Structure*

The subjective experience that gives rise to a vow is then objectified in the form of a relatively fixed ritual structure. This objectification is evident in the use of sacred space, ritual actors, types of offerings, and procedures deemed legitimate by the community. What was initially a personal act transforms into a collective pattern that is recognized, repeated, and legitimized as the correct way to fulfill a vow. Puang Nb explains:

“When my son recovers, I come to Arung Palakka’s grave to bring raw eggs, young coconuts, and chickens, then arrange them with *flowers* , led by *the pabbaca* prepared by *the Arung Palakka grave caretaker* . I also visit the *Bejo River* to feed the fish and offer them eggs as offerings. It’s all in keeping with what my parents did in the past, and I just follow suit.” (Puang Nb, Interview, January 31, 2026).

Puang Ec stated:

“When my family was struck by disaster, I climbed Mount Bulutanah to tie tree branches in a knot, believed to be sacred to life, as a sign of a vow. After the situation improved, I returned to untie the knot and bring offerings. That’s the custom in the mountains. You can’t just show up; there must be a physical sign of the knot, and it must be untied once your wish has been granted.” (Puang Ec, Interview, February 1, 2026).

Puang Th also explained:

“When my child gets married, I come and bathe at *Waetuwo*, as I vowed. *Waetuwo* is a sacred place because it contains a spring that is the source of life. This is a tradition passed down through generations and is still maintained today.” (Puang Th, Interview, February 2, 2026).

This quote demonstrates that *the mappaleppe kotoran ritual* has an institutionalized structure. The ritual location is not freely chosen, but follows spaces that have acquired sacred legitimacy, such as graves, rivers, mountains, and springs. Likewise, offerings, ritual actors, and symbolic actions follow inherited patterns. From Berger and Luckmann’s perspective, objectivation occurs when repeated social actions are accepted as seemingly objective realities, as if they exist beyond the individual’s will.

Analytically, objectivation explains why *the mappaleppe kakus tradition* is difficult to change. Traditions already have social structures that govern how vows are pronounced, where the ritual is performed, who leads, and what must be carried. Thus, *mappaleppe kakus* has become a cultural institution with norms, patterns, and symbolic sanctions. Da’wah that ignores this objectivation will face resistance because society is not defending individual actions but rather a social structure that has been legitimized as collective truth.

### *Internalization of Tradition as Collective Identity*

Internalization occurs when an institutionalized tradition is re-accepted by individuals as part of their subjective consciousness and social identity. The tradition of *mappaleppe kotoran* is practiced not only due to external pressure, but also because it has been learned, believed, and passed down through family and community social experiences. Puang Ll explains:

“For a long time, when our parents had a big event like a child’s wedding, they would make vows and bathe at a familiar place. So when my son got married, I did the same. It’s become our family tradition. I never considered abandoning it, because it’s been that way since our ancestors’ time. (Puang Ll, Interview, February 3, 2026).

A said:

“When I was sick, I vowed that if I recovered I would come to the house where there was *a fallohe* to bring offerings. After I recovered, I immediately fulfilled it. That vow must be kept. My parents always said that too. So I just went along with it, because that’s what was taught in the family” (An, Interview, 4 February 2026).

Puang Ac also emphasized:

“I once made a vow when I migrated to Java, that if I returned safely to my village, I would come to the *Cella Matae cemetery*. And this has become our belief in the family. After I arrived at the village, I immediately *mappaleppe feces* by bringing offerings according to my family’s tradition” (Puang Ac, Interview, 5 February 2026).

These three interviews demonstrate that *mappaleppe kotoran (feces)* has become ingrained in family memory and the collective consciousness of the community. Tradition is no longer understood as an individual choice, but as a moral obligation passed down through generations. Internalization explains why the tradition persists despite the formal conversion of the Bugis community of Kajuara District to Islam.

The synthesis of these three processes shows that *mappaleppe kotoran* is a cultural-religious construct with strong social resilience. Externalization explains the origins of tradition from experiences of crisis, objectivation explains the institutionalization of ritual, while internalization explains the inheritance of tradition as identity. Thus, the transformation of da’wah cannot only target ritual forms but must also address the structures of consciousness that shape and sustain these traditions.

The findings of this study expand Berger and Luckmann’s perspective on social construction. In the context of the Bugis community in Kajuara sub-district, social construction not only legitimizes cultural practices but also generates a genealogically inherited religious symbolic dependence.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the social reality in *the mappaleppe kotoran tradition* does not cease to be a product of social interaction but develops into a belief system that influences the community’s theological orientation.

### **The Symbolic Meaning of *the Mappaleppe Tinja Tradition***

*Mappaleppe Lemak* tradition is supported by a system of symbols that give meaning to the community’s ritual actions. The symbols of *Puang Nene’*, offerings, sacred spaces, and vows not only function as complementary elements of the ritual, but also shape how the community understands safety, blessings, disasters, and human relationships with the transcendent.<sup>37</sup> In Geertz’s perspective, religious symbols function as models

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<sup>36</sup>Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 61–65.

<sup>37</sup> MS Pramono, T. Tampake, IYM Lattu, and AC Molewe, “Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s social construction of the institutionalization of tolerance values in the Nyadran Perdamaian

of reality and models for reality , that is, they represent reality while simultaneously directing community actions. The meaning of symbols in <sup>38</sup>the *Mappaleppe Lemak* tradition can be understood through the following dimensions:

### ***P Nene's money as a Symbol of Spiritual Intermediation***

In the *Mappaleppe Lemak* tradition, *Puang Nene'* is understood as a spiritual figure who occupies a mediating position between humans and God. Some communities emphasize that prayers are still directed to God Almighty, but are made through the intermediary of *Puang Nene'* , who is believed to possess spiritual powers. Puang Bc explains:

“During *mattinja*, prayers are still addressed to God through the intermediary of *Puang Nene'*. *Puang Nene'* is given supernatural powers or advantages from Allah SWT. So when she prays, it is immediately answered, because *Puang Nene'* is considered to have supernatural powers in praying for her worshippers. For example, when I was sick, on the instructions of *Sanro* or the shaman who treated me, I had to climb the mountain to ask for *Puang Nene's blessings* , and thank God I was cured. *Puang Nene'* is an ancestral belief that is passed down to their descendants” (Puang BC, Interview, February 6, 2026).

Puang Am as *s anro* stated:

“The position of *puang nene'* is merely an intermediary in praying to Allah SWT. The existence of *puang nene'* is interpreted in several places, namely land, water, the floor of the house, on top of the house, so that when there are perpetrators who will perform *the mappaleppe kotoran ritual* , they are focused on the place they believe in” (Puang Am, Interview, February 7, 2026).

Puang Pt as a traditional figure emphasized:

“In essence , *Puang Nene'* is a creature of God, only he is in another dimension so that when we make a vow, we still ask for prayers from God, but through the intermediary of *Puang Nene'* because *Puang Nene'* is given supernatural powers” (Puang Pt, Interview, February 8, 2026).

These three interview results demonstrate a theological dialectic within community consciousness. Verbally, Allah SWT remains affirmed as the source of prayer

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tradition,” *AL MA'ARIEF: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Budaya* , vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 50–61, 2024, doi: 10.35905/almaarief.v6i1.9759.

<sup>38</sup> G. Wita and IF Mursal, “PHENOMENOLOGY IN SOCIAL STUDIES: A STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING,” *Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora* , vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 325–338, 2022, doi: 10.22437/titian.v6i2.21211.

and help. However, practically, *Puang Nene'* is still believed to have a mediating function and spiritual effectiveness. This is where symbols operate not merely as cultural representations but as structures of meaning that guide community religious actions.

Critically, these findings suggest that the primary issue is not simply the existence of *the Puang Nene' symbol*, but the attribution of metaphysical effectiveness attached to it. When *Puang Nene'* is understood solely as part of culture, the theological problem is relatively negotiable. However, when *Puang Nene'* is understood as an intermediary who determines the fulfillment of prayers, the orientation of monotheism risks shifting from dependence on God to symbolic dependence. Therefore, da'wah needs to shift the meaning of *Puang Nene'* from the center of spiritual effectiveness to part of cultural memory that lacks metaphysical power.

### *Offerings as a Materialization of Vows and Hopes*

In the *Mappaleppe Kedung tradition*, *offerings* are a material medium that concretizes the community's vows, hopes, and spiritual commitments. Each element of the offering has a specific meaning and is understood as a symbolic language that connects human intentions with the spiritual order believed in. Ss explains:

"The meaning of the symbol on banana is longevity, *doang* is *faddoangeng*, *b ukkang* is *tabbukka maneng faddoangenge*, *bale lamerre* is *materrekki atepperetta Lao di puangnge*, *sokko pute* is *mafute maneng fakkalinonge*, *sokko lotong* is *natulabala anu majakke*, *tello* is *masseddi atuo tuonge*, *baki* is *fappakaraja*" (Puang Ss, Interview, February 11, 2026).

Puang Bc stated:

"I was once sick and vowed that if I recovered, I would bring offerings in the form of food to offer to *Puang Nene'* who was in *Puang Callu's house*. Then at almost the same time I also made a vow that Puang Gahu could rebuild his house due to the fire disaster that befell him, so I came and brought one live chicken with 2 liters of rice to offer to *Puang Nene'*. Thank God, everything I vowed came true thanks to *Puang's help. nene'* so that in a short time I went *mappaleppe feces* according to what I intended" (Puang Bc, Interview, 6 February 2026).

Puang Rt admitted:

"I also don't know the meaning of the offerings I'm offering. Basically, I'm just following my parents' orders. And I'm afraid that if I don't do what my parents do, *my uncle* might rebuke me by bringing illness, misfortune, and not being safe." (Head of Household, Interview, February 12, 2026).

The three interview results indicate that offerings operate on two levels. At the reflective level, offerings are understood as a symbolic system encompassing prayer, purity of intention, repelling evil, unity of life, and respect. However, at the practical level, some people perform them as a hereditary custom without a deep understanding of their symbolic meaning. In fact, some practitioners associate offerings with fear of reprimands in the form of illness and disaster.

This analysis shows that offerings are not merely ritual objects but rather instruments for the objectification of prayer and mechanisms for the reproduction of obedience. In the context of da'wah, simply prohibiting offerings as objects is not sufficient, because the problem lies not in the objects themselves, but in the metaphysical meanings attached to them. Transforming da'wah requires shifting the meaning of offerings from offerings to supernatural entities to charity, prayer, gratitude, and social solidarity.

Geertz's symbolic perspective in this study shows that cultural symbols not only shape a society's orientation toward meaning but also serve as a platform for negotiating da'wah (Islamic preaching) in the process of transforming monotheism. Symbols such as *Puang Nene'*, offerings, and sacred spaces are not merely representations of local culture but also interpretive tools that determine how a society understands salvation, disaster, and its relationship with the transcendent.

### *Sacred Space as Religious Cosmology*

Sacred spaces in *the Mappaleppe Kesan tradition* include houses, water, land or mountains, graves, and even modern spaces believed to be connected to supernatural entities. These spaces are understood not only as physical locations but also as spiritual addresses where vows are fulfilled and the balance of life is restored. Puang Bc explains:

*the puang nene'* are believed to be God's creations: *the puang nene'* who lives in the house, *the puang nene'* who lives in the water, the *puang nene'* who lives in the land, and *the puang nene'* who lives in the grave. If offerings are not given to these four sacred places, *the puang nene'* can rebuke their descendants in the form of illness and disaster" (Puang Bc, Interview, February 6, 2026).

Puang Hf stated:

"When I vowed that my son would graduate from civil service, I came to Mount Bulutanah while praying and tying a knot on a tree that is considered sacred. When this vow was fulfilled, I was obliged to come to Mount Bulutanah to untie the knot on the sacred tree by bringing offerings to be offered to the *puang nene'*" (Puang Hf, Interview, 10 February 2026).

Puang Am explained:

“The place where *I* usually go to visit the grave of Sheikh Yusuf, like when I made a vow that if my child got married and the event went smoothly until it was finished, I would come to visit the grave of Sheikh Yusuf Tuan ta salamaka in Gowa” (Puang Am, Interview, February 7, 2026).

This quote demonstrates how sacred space shapes the map of a society’s religious cosmology. Home, water, land, mountains, and graves become symbolic spaces that connect people to hope, salvation, healing, and ancestral memory. In Eliade’s reading, sacred space becomes a central orientation that distinguishes ordinary territory from areas perceived as possessing transcendent meaning.<sup>39</sup>

However, theologically, problems arise when space is no longer understood as a cultural symbol or a place of pilgrimage, but as a source of consequences believed to bring illness, disaster, or salvation. Therefore, preaching needs to shift the meaning of sacred space from a center of spiritual dependence to a space of cultural memory, prayer, guidance, and social solidarity.

### *Vows as Moral Regulation*

The vow is the normative core that drives *the mappaleppe kotoran tradition*. Once pronounced, a vow is no longer understood as a simple promise, but as a moral obligation that must be fulfilled. Failure to comply with a vow is believed to bring disaster, illness, or imbalance in life. Puang Hi asserts:

“I believe that *the Mappaleppe Lemak ritual* is a vow and must be fulfilled. Failure to do so will inevitably bring disaster and danger to the person performing *the Mappaleppe Lemak ritual*.” (Puang Hi, Interview, January 13, 2026).

Puang Od stated:

“If you make a vow, it must be fulfilled, or *difaleppe*, because it relates to a person’s illness and fortune. The place where *the mappaleppe kotoran is held* is the house that maintains *the fallohe*, according to family ties. For example, a vow is made: if I recover, I will bring offerings to *my uncle and grandmother* at their home. This must be carried out because it has consequences for health, safety, and happiness.” (Puang Od, Interview, January 29, 2026).

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<sup>39</sup>Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), p. 20–24.

Puang An explains:

“When I was sick, I immediately vowed that if I was healed, I would go to the house that had *the fallohe* to offer offerings to *Puang Nene*. So after I recovered, I fulfilled my vow because I felt I had a moral obligation to fulfill the promise that had been made” (Puang An, Interview, 4 February 2026).

These three interviews demonstrate that vows function as moral regulations, binding individuals to promises, linking life crises to ritual actions, and strengthening the continuity of traditions. A vow is not merely a personal mechanism, but a social one that maintains obedience through fear and moral responsibility.

The synthesis of this section shows that *Puang Nene*, offerings, sacred space, and vows form an interconnected system of symbols. *Puang Nene* serves as a mediator, offerings as a material language, sacred space as a cosmological address, and vows as a moral contract. This system of symbols is what keeps *the mappaleppe kakus tradition* alive and serves as a sensitive field for da’wah. Religious transformation cannot stop at criticizing ritual forms but must address the symbolic orientations that underpin the collective consciousness of society.

### **Field of Preaching and Symbolic Resistance of Society**

Based on these social constructs and symbolic meanings, da’wah in Kajuara sub-district faces a complex social landscape. The tradition of *mappaleppe kotoran* (*the “stool”*) is not a sporadic practice, but rather a structure of meaning that binds fear, ancestral legitimacy, family identity, and hopes for salvation. Therefore, a frontal da’wah approach tends to generate resistance [36]. Puang Fd stated:

“I’m afraid that if I make a vow and don’t fulfill it because there will definitely be consequences. It could be that someone will get sick again or we will have a disaster. So it’s better to fulfill it so that nothing else happens in the family” (Puang Fd, Interview, 28 January 2026).

Puang Od emphasized:

“If you have made a vow, you have to fulfill it, because I am afraid that if you don’t fulfill it, it will bring disease and disaster to our family. And this must be done as a legacy from our ancestors and forefathers” (Puang Od, Interview, 29 January 2026).

Ustadz Sm as a religious figure explains:

“It’s difficult to change people’s understanding of the *Mappaleppe Lemak tradition*, which is not in accordance with Islamic law. Therefore, we must be careful to use language that doesn’t offend them. Therefore, we must not be overt in our preaching. If those who

practice *the Mappaleppe Lemak tradition are offended*, it will make it difficult to correct their understanding and may even give rise to hatred and conflict,” (Ustadz Sm, Interview, February 14, 2026).

These three quotes demonstrate that community resistance stems from three main layers: existential fear of illness and disaster, genealogical legitimacy as ancestral heritage, and the attribution of symbolic causality to rituals. These three constitute symbolic resistance, namely the rejection of change because tradition is understood as part of safety, family honor, and ancestral continuity.

This research confirms that the failure of the eliminative-frontal da'wah approach is not caused by the weak religious authority of the da'i, but rather due to epistemological blindness in reading the ontology of local symbols. The purification movement that only targets the physical-outward eradication of rituals will directly clash with the genealogical memory of ancestors, the sense of collective security, and the principle of *siri'* (existential dignity) of the Bugis people. Therefore, in the condition *of lived religion*, the resistance that arises is not a theological rejection of Islamic teachings, but rather an existential defense mechanism to protect the stability of the cosmology and family honor that underpin their social reality.

These findings reinforce the argument that the dialectic of cultural da'wah must undergo a methodological transition. Da'wah must not stagnate in the mechanistic destruction of material symbols, which is likely to be perceived as a radical delegitimization of ancestral heritage. Instead, the movement's strategy must move toward theological meaning management and the transmutation of symbols' ontological status. Through this reorientation of the semantic chain, the purification of faith toward absolute monotheism can be peacefully injected without disrupting communal social cohesion.

From the perspective of Mircea Eliade's phenomenology of religion, the tradition *of mappaleppe kotoran* in the Bugis Kajuaran community cannot be understood simply as a profane customary spectacle, but rather as a communal existential effort to construct a "sacred space" to break the homogeneity of chaotic world reality. For its adherents, the uncertainties of life such as health crises, the threat of death, and economic failure are manifestations of a profane space that is vulnerable to collapse. To restore the balance of life, the community performs a vow recitation that functions as a threshold medium (liminal) to re-access the Sacred. This vow release ritual is a form of hierophanyan event in which the Sacred is manifested in material and spatial objects in the universe, transforming the ordinary into transcendent meaning.

The symbol system in this tradition forms a rigid cosmological map, where physical loci such as Mount Bulutanah, the Waetuwo spring, the Bejo River, and the

historical tombs of Arung Palakka and Syekh Yusuf act as *the axis mundi* (center of the world). These sacred points are seen as cosmic pillars connecting the human earthly order with the metaphysical dimension of ancestors. Within this center of orientation, the figure of *Puang Nene'* occupies an ontological position as a spiritual intermediary entity. *Puang Nene'* is legitimized as possessing supernatural powers to channel blessings or cast curses. As a result, the existence of offerings (*sokko pute*, *sokko lotong*, bananas, chickens, and eggs) shifts from mere food to the materialization of sacred promises. These physical symbols are believed to be metaphysically binding; they become instruments of prayer objectification that determine the course of the law of causality in the real world.

Theologically, the construction of this independent sacred reality gives rise to the problem of *ontological split-causality* (the division of metaphysical causality). An epistemological crisis occurs in which the consciousness of the tradition practitioners separates the absolute authority of God from the determination of fate on the ground. Although adherents verbally affirm that the final request remains directed to Allah SWT, in practice their rituals are trapped in *the epistemology of cosmic fear*. They believe that ignoring sacred points or the absence of offerings will automatically bring immediate disaster in the form of mysterious illnesses or financial hardships from the power of *Puang Nene'*. The symbol that should function as a transcendental window to the Divine instead collapses in on itself, locking its adherents' spiritual dependence on local material and imaginary entities, and obscuring the purity of absolute monotheism.

Based on an ontological reading of the symbol system, the failure of eliminative-frontal da'wah occurs because the approach only targets the external-material aspects without being able to touch the architecture of theological meaning in the heads of its followers. When a purification movement forcibly dismantles sacred space, this action is perceived by society as a radical threat that legitimizes the destruction of communal security and the desecration of ancestral genealogical memory protected by the ethics of *siri'*. Therefore, *the mappalettu deceng da'wah model* is present not as an instrument of legalistic-formal legal repression, but as a paradigm of Transformative Hermeneutics that manages the course of metaphysical shifts in meaning gradually, dialogically, and contextually.

*the mappalettu deceng* model in five stages is essentially a process of epistemic reconstruction and alignment of the theological horizon of society:

1. The Awareness Mapping & Social Relations Stabilization Phase: These two initial stages serve as adaptive steps to read the cosmological map of traditional adherents without creating cultural trauma. Dai enter the communication space of adherents in a humanistic manner to maintain social stability, so that access to deconstructing meaning is not blocked by walls of social resistance.

2. Contextual Theological Clarification Phase: In this third stage, the preacher begins to localize the epistemological crisis by unraveling the false causality believed by the community. Philosophically, this stage separates innate psychological impulses (such as gratitude and the intention to make vows) from metaphysical attribution errors (belief in an independent power other than Allah SWT).
3. Symbolic Meaning Reconstruction Phase: This is the heart of the philosophical-applicative fusion of this model. Here the process of Transmutation of the Ontological Status of Material Symbols occurs. The physical form of the ritual is not destroyed, but rather its semantic content is radically reoriented. The offerings are deconstructed from their original status as “magical offerings to tame spirits” and metaphysically transformed into social ethics in the form of “horizontal alms” or communal eating rituals that have beneficial values. The symbol of tying the rope on the sacred mountain is deciphered into a symbol of releasing psychological burdens, while the position of *Puang Nene*’ is removed from the center of spiritual effectiveness and returned to its original place as part of ancestral historical memory that has no metaphysical power.
4. Institutionalization Phase of Monotheism Awareness: In the final stage, this refined monotheism awareness is institutionalized through existing generational and cultural structures (family, religious study groups, religious study groups). This step ensures that the breaking of the chain of animistic symbolic dependency is established and sustained across generations.

Comprehensively, this entire study converges on a single theoretical thesis: the *lived religion phenomenon* within the *Mappaleppe Kesan tradition* cannot be simply purified through destructive purification or outright cultural elimination. This tradition’s resilience is not due to the community’s rejection of Islamic orthodoxy, but rather because the ritual has secured their existential map, ancestral memory, and defense mechanisms for their sense of security in the face of the threat of cosmic uncertainty.

At this meeting point, the *mappalettu deceng da’wah model* emerges as a conceptual bridge, theoretically and practically proving that the way out of this tension in faith is through a Theological Meaning Management strategy. Using a theological-anthropological approach, this model does not dismantle the shell of Bugis Kajuar culture but rather executes an ontological transmutation of the material symbol system within it.

Through five systematic operational stages, this model works by re-*anchoring* the local semantic chain. As a result, the orientation of intention and the realm of community awareness are subtly shifted; from being trapped in the *epistemology of*

*cosmic fear* of the power of creation, it is now transformed into absolute transcendental obedience (*Tawakkal*) to Allah SWT alone. Ultimately, the purification of faith towards the true awareness of monotheism is successfully achieved simultaneously on the pillars of preserving social cohesion and communal cultural identity.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the tradition of *mappaleppe kotoran* in the Bugis Kajuara community is not merely a profane customary expression, but rather a form of *lived religion* born from communal existential efforts to manage cosmic anxiety. Theologically and philosophically, this practice of releasing vows contains an epistemological crisis in the form of an ontological split-causality. In the realm of consciousness of the ritual participants, the power of determining fate, health, and safety is wrongly attached to the intermediary entity *Puang Nene'* and the materiality of the offerings, thus locking their spiritual orientation into the epistemological trap of cosmic fear that obscures the purity of monotheism.

The cultural resistance that emerged against the purificatory-eliminative approach to da'wah proves that the purification of faith cannot be executed through the physical destruction of symbols or the forced erasure of cultural shells. The failure of this confrontational da'wah is rooted in epistemological blindness in reading the ontology of symbols, where the radical negation of ancestral rites is immediately perceived as a delegitimization of the value of *siri'* (existential dignity) and the stability of the sense of security of communal groups. Therefore, the theological tension between religious orthodoxy and local wisdom necessitates a methodological leap in da'wah, namely a shift from the model of material elimination to a paradigm of dialogical and contextual theological meaning management.

As a dialectical solution, the *mappalettu deceng da'wah model* offers a five-stage hermeneutic-transformative architecture that works to re-anchor *the* semantic chain of local culture. This theological-anthropological model conclusively proves that transformation towards absolute monotheistic awareness does not have to sacrifice customary institutions but is achieved by executing a transmutation of the ontological status of symbols such as shifting the essence of offerings from supernatural offerings to horizontal alms ethics. Through this gradual reorientation of meaning, pure surrender (*Tawakkal*) to Allah SWT can simultaneously stand with authority on the pillars of preserving the social cohesion of Nusantara culture.

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