

# *Tombor maghi* as an interfaith ritual: lived religion among Muslims and Christians in West Papua, Indonesia

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## **Abstract**

This article explores the *Tombor Maghi* ritual among the Fakfak community in West Papua Province, Indonesia, which strengthens interfaith relations, particularly between Muslims and Christians. Originally part of a traditional marriage custom, the ritual has developed into a broader form of community solidarity involving cross-religious cooperation. While scholars in anthropology and sociology have extensively studied rituals, research that focuses explicitly on rituals within the context of inter-religious relations remains relatively underdeveloped. This study addresses three main research questions: how the *Tombor Maghi* ritual is practiced and interpreted by the Fakfak community across religious affiliations; what role the ritual plays in fostering interfaith cooperation and reinforcing communal solidarity; and what symbolic and social significance

the ritual holds within the broader framework of lived religion and indigenous approaches to peacebuilding. This study employs a qualitative methodology, utilising a realist ethnographic approach. Data were collected through interviews and field observations conducted in Fakfak Regency. The findings indicate that *Tombor Maghi* continues to be preserved as a form of cultural dialogue that weaves together interfaith relations. The ritual reflects cultural knowledge that is created, transmitted, and practised in daily life. It provides a space for Muslims and Christians to collaborate through community-based initiatives, such as at mosques and churches. In light of these findings, further research related to this topic is suggested because there are still many interesting issues to discuss in connection with rituals that have become a philosophy in social life.

Artikel ini mengkaji komunitas Fakfak di Provinsi Papua Barat, Indonesia, dan praktik ritual *Tombor Maghi* yang memperkuat hubungan antarumat beragama, khususnya antara Muslim dan Kristen. Awalnya merupakan bagian dari tradisi perkawinan adat, ritual ini telah berkembang menjadi bentuk solidaritas sosial yang melibatkan kerja sama lintas agama. Meskipun kajian tentang ritual telah banyak dilakukan oleh para ahli antropologi dan sosiologi, penelitian yang secara khusus menyoroti ritual dalam konteks hubungan antaragama masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini mengangkat tiga pertanyaan utama: bagaimana ritual *Tombor Maghi* dipraktikkan dan dimaknai oleh masyarakat Fakfak lintas afiliasi agama; bagaimana peran ritual ini dalam membina kerja sama antarumat beragama dan memperkuat solidaritas komunal; serta apa makna simbolik dan signifikansi sosial ritual ini dalam kerangka agama yang dihayati (lived religion) dan pendekatan perdamaian berbasis kearifan lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan etnografi realis. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan observasi lapangan di Kabupaten Fakfak. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa *Tombor Maghi* tetap dilestarikan sebagai bentuk dialog budaya yang merajut hubungan lintas agama. Ritual ini merefleksikan pengetahuan budaya yang diciptakan, diwariskan, dan dipraktikkan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari, serta menjadi ruang kolaboratif bagi umat Muslim dan Kristen melalui inisiatif komunitas seperti *wewowo maghi* di masjid dan gereja. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, disarankan agar penelitian lebih lanjut dilakukan, mengingat masih banyak isu menarik terkait ritual yang telah menjadi falsafah dalam kehidupan sosial masyarakat.

**Keywords:** *Ritual, Interfaith dialogue, Tombor Maghi, Lived religion*

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## Introduction

The Fakfak Regency in West Papua Province represents a unique model of interfaith coexistence, where Muslims and Christians share cultural spaces through rituals like *Tombor Maghi*. Originally a traditional marriage ceremony among the Iha-speaking people, *Tombor Maghi* (meaning: women's treasure) involves collective contributions from the groom's family to the bride's family in the form of dowries such as jewellery, cloth, and money (Hindom, 2025; Jejaring Desa Wisata, 2022). The ritual must be completed before 5 PM on the designated day, reflecting strong cultural codes. More than a ceremonial act, *Tombor Maghi* has evolved into a broader symbol of community solidarity, where people of various religions participate in helping to build places of worship and support social institutions through variants like *Wewowo Maghi* Church or *Wewowo Maghi* Mosque (Frances, 2021).

Despite this cultural harmony, West Papua has experienced episodes of religious and ethnic tensions. Incidents such as the 2019 riots in Fakfak -triggered by racial propaganda and resulting in the burning of a traditional council office and local market- reflect lingering vulnerabilities (Rusyaid & Hermanto, 2022; Ika, 2019). Conflicts over places of worship, like the mosque construction controversy in Manokwari, further highlight interreligious sensitivities (Putri, 2023). Broader cases like those in Singkil (Aceh) and Tolikara (Papua) show that intolerance continues to disrupt religious harmony in Indonesia (Sudjatna, 2015).

While rituals have been studied extensively in anthropology and sociology by scholars such as Victor Turner, Max Gluckman, Emile Durkheim, and Lisa Schirch, most research tends to overlook the role of rituals in contemporary interfaith relations (Turner, 1991; Gluckman, 1955; Durkheim, 1965). Sociologist James V. Spickard noted that ritual studies remain marginal in mainstream sociology of religion (Spickard, 2017). Yet rituals function as symbolic acts that

shape identities, transform conflicts, and foster communal ties (Bell, 1997; Alexander, 2006; Ammerman, 2021).

This study addresses the gap by examining *Tombor Maghi* as a lived religious practice that facilitates Muslim-Christian relations in Fakfak. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and qualitative interviews, the research analyses how the ritual supports interfaith cooperation and cultural resilience. It aims to contribute to the discourse on interreligious peacebuilding by showing how locally rooted traditions function as tools for communal harmony (Lattu et al., 2016; Lattu, 2023). This research focuses on three main aspects. First, it explores how the *Tombor Maghi* ritual is practised and interpreted by the Fakfak community across religious affiliations. Second, it investigates the role of *Tombor Maghi* in fostering interfaith cooperation and reinforcing communal solidarity. Third, it examines the symbolic and social significance of the ritual within the broader framework of lived religion and indigenous approaches to peacebuilding.

Several studies on interfaith tolerance and local wisdom in Fakfak have been conducted. Rusyaid & Hermanto (2022) examined the philosophy of “*Satu Tungku Tiga Batu*” (One Stove Three Stones) as a model of religious moderation in Fakfak Regency. Rahman (2023) emphasised the concept's relevance in fostering tolerance among indigenous Papuan communities. Syamsul (2023) investigated how these values are internalised through Islamic education at Fakfak State Polytechnic, while Kasim (2024) explored their role in character education in madrasah settings. Marshanda (2024) focused on the historical-political backdrop of West Irian's integration. Despite these contributions, no prior research has specifically focused on the *Tombor Maghi* ritual as a medium of lived interfaith engagement, leaving a significant gap in studying ritual as a peacebuilding tool in the Fakfak context.

To explore this phenomenon, the study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach, which is suitable for interpreting symbolic actions and

lived experiences in natural settings (Norman et al., 2009; Sarosa, 2021). The fieldwork was conducted in Fakfak Regency, specifically in North and South Fakfak Districts, between October 2023 and January–March 2024. Six key informants (R1–R6), including religious leaders, indigenous authorities, and local community members, participated in in-depth interviews conducted via WhatsApp and intermediary facilitators. Additional data were gathered through a literature review focused on interfaith rituals and social cohesion. Analysis followed Miles and Huberman’s interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994), alongside four interpretive steps: attending to lived experiences, transcribing narratives, identifying patterns, and rereading data for clarity and consistency. This methodological approach aligns with the study’s aim of understanding Tombor Maghi as a ritual that enables interfaith cooperation and cultural resilience in the Fakfak context (Creswell, 2009; Dubey, 2022)

**Table. 1 Data of research respondents**

Respondent’s	Position	Gender	Age
R1	Chairman of Indigenous Peoples Organization	Male	45 years old
R2	Indigenous Peoples Council Management	Male	55 years old
R3	Pastor	Male	56 years old
R4	Citizens of the community	Female	40 years old
R5	Imam/ Muslim scholar	Male	50 years old
R6	Priest of Catholic Church	Male	47 years old

### **The notion of ritual**

Sociologist Spickard (2017) observes that the study of ritual has often been marginalised in the broader discipline of sociology of religion, despite rituals playing a fundamental role in shaping religious practice and social cohesion. Victor Turner, a leading figure in ritual theory, defines rituals as transformative

performances that structure human experience through symbols. He emphasises the concept of 'liminality'—a transitional state where social norms are temporarily suspended—and *communitas*, a sense of egalitarian community created among participants. These aspects, he argues, enable rituals to foster strong social bonds and provide symbolic resolution to conflict (Turner, 1991). Max Gluckman, another foundational thinker, views rituals through the lens of social conflict and reconciliation. He asserts that while rituals may seem to reproduce social hierarchies or tensions, they also serve to regulate and contain conflict, especially in stateless or segmented societies. In his studies of African communities, Gluckman (1955) introduces the idea of 'rituals of rebellion'—where conflict is symbolically enacted in ways that ultimately reaffirm social cohesion. According to Gluckman, rituals create a kind of customary legal code that helps manage kinship ties, obligations, and community balance.

A number of scholars has expanded the study of ritual in various disciplines. Durkheim (1965) identifies rituals as collective rites reinforcing religious beliefs and society's moral unity. For Durkheim, the sacred and the profane are distinguished and upheld through ritual practices, which bind individuals into a moral community. Collins (2005) focuses on the micro-level interactions in rituals, emphasising their role in producing emotional energy and symbolic capital among participants. From a cultural sociological perspective, Alexander (2011) conceives of rituals as 'social performances'—structured cultural scripts that generate meaning and identity. Ammerman (2021) adds that rituals must be viewed as part of 'lived religion', where religious practices are integrated into daily life and shaped by personal and communal experiences.

Bell (1992) introduces the concept of 'ritualisation', arguing that rituals are not fixed sequences but dynamic strategies of social action used to negotiate

power, identity, and meaning. Meanwhile, Schirch (2005) highlights the peacebuilding function of rituals, particularly in indigenous and post-conflict settings. She defines rituals as symbolic acts enacted in distinct social spaces, which communicate messages through metaphor, myth, and repetition rather than explicit dialogue. Schirch emphasises three core traits: rituals are symbolic, transformative, and occur in designated social contexts that differ from everyday life (Schirch, 2005). These frameworks suggest that rituals are powerful cultural tools not only for reinforcing norms but also for reshaping relationships and healing divisions. Despite their richness, these theoretical approaches have not been sufficiently applied to the context of interfaith relations, particularly in pluralistic societies like Indonesia. As Lattu (2023) notes, such studies are increasingly relevant in light of rising religious tensions and demographic shifts fueled by globalisation and migration.

### **The notion of lived religion**

The concept of “lived religion” refers to the idea that religion is not only limited to ritual practices or structured religious activities but also includes how religion is practised in everyday life and how religion influences individual behaviour and decisions in various situations (Ammerman, 2007b). In addition, religion is not just about dogma or rituals but also how religion affects how one interacts with others, understands oneself and the world, and faces challenges and decisions in life (Dillon, 2003).

The importance of understanding religion in the context of "lived religion" is highlighted, where spiritual and religious dimensions are present in everyday interactions (Ammerman, 2014b). It is also emphasised that religion exists in everyday life, including in the workplace, symbolic interactions, and everyday practices such as social services and economic activities. He also

underscored the role of "spiritual tribes" or informal communities where people support each other and share spiritual values (Kanieski & Ammerman, 1997). The follower must go beyond a secularised view that views religion only as an individual identity and emphasises the importance of community and social interactions in shaping everyday life's religious and spiritual dimensions. In addition, she highlighted the importance of organised religious communities in shaping spiritual conversations and morality in everyday life (Ammerman, 2014a).

According to Ammerman (2021) the study of religion is lived out in two kinds of big pictures. *First*, religion is placed in a big picture that includes all kinds of social practices. By starting from theories of how people act in the social world, we can see how religious practices are similar and different from what people do when they engage in everyday activities. How are religious practices socially defined activities that are both habitual and improvisational?

*Second*, we increase perspective. To think about practices in different places, we need a way to think about how the cultures and laws of those places create opportunities and obstacles for religious practices. Societies around the world organize religious practice differently. People expect to find spiritual practices in different places and have different ideas about what is possible and desirable. With a framework for understanding such diversity, the study of lived religion can take context into account. Starting with religion as practice, means we start with patterned regularities in what people do, and we seek to understand those patterns in the context of cognitive models and overlapping fields of social interaction that make them meaningful and enable us to act. To say that religious actions are meaningful does not mean that they conform to a coherent life structure, doctrinal belief system, or set of personal values. Rather than seeing religion as the creation of meaning, we say that all



actions require the kind of practical meaning that allows us to function in the world (Ammerman, 2014b).

Furthermore, socially constructed patterns of action practices can be habitual or surprising, constrained by circumstances or creative and subversive. When we look for religion in everyday patterns of action, we can see the habitual structure assumed by those patterns and the agency of the actors. Religious practice is not uniquely structured by habit or domination, as if humans just mindlessly practice religion or enact oppressive patterns because God commands it. However, religion is also not uniquely creative, as if everyone creates actions from scratch, transcending social conventions. Like all practices, lived religion is structured and evolving. To see the religious things people do is to live with a combination of ordered predictability and disordered improvisation that varies over time and place as well as within the scope of culture (Ammerman, 2021).

Ammerman, has required us to see religion in a new perspective and place. Religion is not only limited to a certain space but we can find it in the practice of everyday life because everyday actions have religious and spiritual elements (Ammerman, 2014a). She says in identity theory that identity always has many strands and intersections. We often adopt the mistaken idea that religious identity is characterised by all or none of the other identities. There is a dichotomy, whether it contains religious elements or not, is spiritual. The place is sacred or profane and so on. However, with the concept of live religion, we can see that religion coexists with the reality of everyday life, meaning that everyday stories can be both sacred and secular. The sacred and the secular sometimes sit right next to each other. For example, in the world of work an employee keeps religious objects at their desk, pray together with coworkers about personal issues or even find divine inspiration in science

journals, as well as religious goods bought and sold in the capitalist market (Ammerman, 2014a). Therefore, the religion that people live in the everyday world enters and leaves the language, symbols, and interactions of public spaces and bureaucratic institutions (Ammerman, 2014a).

Religious practices in everyday life are often produced and reshaped outside of existing institutions. Whenever people talk about and direct their lives in ways that transcend the self, the "non-rational" they are engaging in religious action. Religious action is related to something sacred, transcendent, or out of the ordinary. The sacred here is not something universal, and the transcendent nature of religious acts does not necessarily directly involve a relationship with a personalised Divine Being, nor does it require individual religious "experience". Rituals, stories, moral teachings, and institutionalized traditions are usually recognized as religious (Ammerman, 2007a).

The shared practical knowledge embodied in lived religion is situated knowledge in the tangible, material environment. As we have seen, the human body mediates the material and natural worlds. The body senses, encounters, and manipulates properties and settings; but materiality itself is also important. Studying lived religion means paying attention to where religious practices take place, so in this chapter we will turn to the material environment and concrete objects. From the mundane to the spectacular, lived religious practices involve things we can see. How can we think about how the world of material culture works? And how can we observe the practices that define and occur in spaces of religious significance? (Ammerman, 2007a).

Therefore, identifying emotional realities in religious practice is also important because we learn about the world through our feelings, which drive action. Emotions convey information to us, and we convey information with them. They can direct our attention towards some things and away from others

(Ammerman, 2010). People may engage in some forms of religious practice because it makes them happy, avoiding other practices. After all, they are accompanied by unpleasant emotions. Studying a living religion means paying attention to those various attractions and repulsions. It can also work the other way around. Actions can motivate feelings. It may even be difficult to distinguish which action or feeling comes first in a particular way. Religious rituals are often aimed at evoking emotional states, and the way they are performed tells us something about the participants and the group (Ammerman, 2021).

### **The relations between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia**

Indonesia is often characterised by a history of peaceful interfaith relations among the world's religions (Lattu, 2023). In 1945, the founding fathers established religion as the first of the five pillars of Pancasila, the foundational philosophy of the Indonesian state (Titaley, 2024). The first principle, "Belief in One God," underscores the centrality of religion in the nation's identity. According to Titaley, Pancasila and Indonesia are akin to two sides of the same coin, indicating that they are inseparable. The impact of Indonesian religiosity on interreligious relations is that all individuals living in Indonesia are considered equal before God Almighty. This sense of equality fosters a spirit of togetherness among citizens, promoting respect for all religions, caring for humanity, and encouraging inclusiveness in the political sphere. It also emphasizes the importance of opposing acts of injustice and discrimination, ensuring everyone is treated equally under the law (Titaley, 2013).

Hefner also emphasizes that the relationship between religion and democracy in Indonesia does not delineate a separation between religion and the state; rather, it is effectively integrated through Pancasila and the principle

of diversity. Indonesia serves as a prime example of a pluralistic system where religion not only contributes to but also enhances and strengthens democracy, populism, and diversity. The functioning of democracy in Indonesia is particularly effective when grounded in the nation's unique historical and cultural heritage, which values good manners, cooperation, and solidarity (Hefner & Bagir, 2021).

Interreligious life in Indonesia is marked by the coexistence and development of various major world religions (Qurtuby, 2021). Islam has spread widely throughout the archipelago and is the predominant faith among the Indonesian population. Christianity, encompassing both Catholicism and Protestantism, was introduced in a more organized manner, bringing with it modern organizational systems that have influenced Indonesian society (Ngelow, 2017). Hinduism was the first to establish governance through a royal system that transcended local boundaries, while Buddhism left behind monumental legacies, such as the Borobudur Temple, which is recognized as one of the wonders of the world. Additionally, the arrival of Chinese immigrants introduced Confucianism, which is now practiced by some Indonesians. Local religions continue to persist as well, contributing to Indonesia's rich tapestry of religious diversity (Hutahaeen, 2020).

The plurality of Indonesian society presents both challenges and opportunities that are relatively unique in the history of humanity, particularly from a religious perspective. The diversity of religions, especially among world religions, can lead to serious conflicts within society and the state. The inherent moral, ethical, and spiritual values of these religions can sometimes act as triggers for such conflicts. However, if managed effectively, religious diversity can also foster positive moral, ethical, and spiritual support for the life of society, the nation, and the state. Indonesia's experiences in navigating these

complexities could provide valuable insights for addressing similar issues faced by humanity today (Titaley, 2013).

However, Indonesia has experienced numerous conflicts fueled by religious tensions, including the Christian-Muslim conflicts in Maluku (Qurtuby, 2016) and Central Sulawesi, as well as terrorist attacks in various regions (Al Qurtuby, 2015). The country witnessed its first suicide bombing in Bali, a major global tourist destination and the only province with a Hindu majority.

In response to the aforementioned challenges, Indonesia recognizes the importance of its social, political, and cultural fabric, which holds great promise for fostering harmony within a heterogeneous society. Consequently, both central and local governments have established interfaith forums to facilitate dialogue at various levels. The role of religious leaders and interfaith communities remains crucial in initiating reconciliation and promoting peace (Lattu, 2023). Moreover, Indonesia's political ideology, Pancasila, provides a framework for addressing social unrest and building connections among interfaith communities. This political context complements the social environment created by interfaith groups, which have actively worked to establish dialogue spaces ranging from theological discussions to cultural performances (Lattu, 2023).

Interfaith relations in Indonesia have become an important model for the international community. Eid al-Fitr in 2016, for example, illustrates that Indonesia is indeed a model of interfaith relations in the world. Especially when experts read about interfaith relations in Indonesia's non-political common space. Eid al-Fitr is not just a religious ritual, but a festival of interfaith communities in Indonesia. In physical space, homes, families, and interfaith friendships become meeting spaces and arenas for the 'dialog' of religious life.

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) also became a new space for interfaith meetings in the event of Eid al-Fitr. Social media is filled with greetings and invitations to celebrate community festivals. However, interfaith relations in Indonesia are a challenge in the political sphere (Lattu, 2024).

### **Interfaith engagement between Muslims and Christians in Fakfak**

Fakfak is a regency situated on the island of Papua, specifically in the region often referred to as the "bird's head," which resembles a giant sitting cassowary. Covering an area of 14,320 square kilometres, Fakfak Regency is part of West Papua Province, a division established through Law No. 40 of 1999. To the north, Fakfak is directly adjacent to Teluk Bintuni Regency. To the south, it borders the Arafura Sea and Kaimana Regency. To the west, it is bounded by the Seram Sea and Berau Bay, while to the east, it shares a border with Kaimana Regency (Ahmad, 2023).

Although Fakfak is less well known to the public, it is one of the oldest regencies in Papua, having been established alongside eight other regencies during Papua's integration with Indonesia. During the Dutch colonial period, Fakfak was recognised as a significant region, along with Manokwari, and was designated by the Dutch East Indies Government as one of two Afdelling regions on the island of Papua. Historically, Fakfak has served as a crucial gateway for interactions between Papua and the outside world. Notably, it has been referenced in various historical sources since the 13th century. The *Kitab Negara Kertagama*, written by the poet Mpu Prapanca in 1365, particularly in Kidung 13 and 14, lists regions under Majapahit sovereignty, including Wwanin and Sran (Onim, 2006).

Fakfak is recognised as one of the safest regencies in Papua, where various ethnic and religious groups coexist in relative harmony and peace, in contrast

to other parts of Papua often affected by conflict and violence (Wiranto, 2020). However, several challenges have emerged regarding inter-religious relations in West Papua Province and Fakfak City. Notably, a lack of tolerance among religious communities in Manokwari City has been identified as a significant issue (Mustafa, 2019). Furthermore, a racially charged incident at the Papuan Student Dormitory in Surabaya, East Java, sparked widespread protests and riots across Papua and West Papua from August 19 to September 23, 2019. Research indicates that the propaganda surrounding this incident contributed to mass riots and social conflicts, resulting in damaged relationships between Papuans and other Indonesian communities, as well as potential social unrest that threatens national security (Wiranto, 2020). The impact of these racial tensions in Fakfak Regency included the burning of the customary council office and Tumburuni market in 2019 (Ika, 2019).

The construction of places of worship is a sensitive issue that often triggers debate and conflict in various parts of the world. A notable example of this occurred in Manokwari, a city in West Papua Province (Putri, 2023), Indonesia, where certain community groups have expressed opposition to the construction of a mosque for several reasons. One prevalent concern is that the mosque could disrupt social harmony and incite inter-religious conflicts within the city. Opponents argue that the presence of the mosque would create demographic imbalances and negatively impact the existing religious character of Manokwari. Cases of intolerance, such as those in Singkil, Aceh, and Tolikara, Papua, illustrate the ongoing violence perpetrated in the name of religion (Sudjatna, 2015). Additionally, a significant incident occurred on August 15, 2023, when the head of Kramomonga District in Fakfak Regency was murdered, further highlighting the tensions surrounding religious issues in the region (Costa, 2023).

One study indicates that the religious harmony index in West Papua is 82.1 out of a maximum value of 100, suggesting that Papua has the highest level of religious harmony in Indonesia. This data implies that the riots that have occurred in Papua do not accurately reflect the prevailing harmony within the region. In particular, the dynamics of life in Sorong and Fakfak, West Papua, demonstrate the interplay of education, family, and community life in promoting harmony. In this context, harmony is associated with the coexistence of different religions within a single household, framed by the local wisdom philosophy known as “Satu Tungku Tiga Batu” (Nawas & Sulaiman, 2022).

The practice of *Tombor Maghi* is well known and actively observed in the daily lives of the people in Fakfak Regency. This rite is embedded in the community and symbolizes the intersection of various religions. Participants are called to assist one another willingly, regardless of the religious, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds of those being helped. In terms of inter-religious relations, *Tombor Maghi* embodies a living philosophy that interprets the concept of “one stove, three stones,” wherein all religions coexist and collaborate harmoniously (Ngabalin, 2015). This suggests that dialogue is not confined to formal discussions; rather, various local community practices, such as the *Tombor Maghi* ritual, serve as mediums for interfaith encounters.

Interreligious dialogue is a crucial and significant approach to interreligious relations in today's world; however, it often involves elite participation in closed dialogue circles, such as academic discussions and political processes. Interreligious dialogue consists of a series of conversations, which are human cognitive events that can foster a fusion of perspectives on specific issues. This approach is thus regarded as a sophisticated form of interreligious diplomacy (Lattu, 2023). To what extent does interfaith dialogue



engage with the realities of Fakfak society, which is characterized by its diverse cultures? How does interfaith interaction manifest as a textual dialogue, viewing culture as an interfaith text? Through the *Tombor Maghi* rite, individuals from various faiths and cultural backgrounds interact and engage in daily life, fostering cooperation and mutual assistance. Interfaith engagement during the *Tombor Maghi* ritual is understood as a form of non-textual communication, highlighting the importance of lived experiences in promoting interfaith understanding.

### **Perceptions of the Fakfak regency community regarding the *Tombor Maghi* ritual**

The *Tombor Maghi* ritual is an ancestral heritage of the Fakfak community in a procession of helping each other collect treasures or dowry for the groom's family to be given to the bride's family. *Tombor Maghi*, commonly referred to by the local community as putting this treasure, is one of the traditions that has been carried out for generations before the preparation of marriage or pre-marriage in Fakfak (Ginuni, 2025).

Related to the origin of *Tombor Maghi*, then according to the opinion of R1 & R5, in an interview via *WhatsApp* application, on October 30, 2023 stated that in the Iha language, the word *Tombor*: woman, and *Maghi*: talk, talk about (in the concept of two directions from both parties) so *Tombor Maghi* is talking about women in a general sense, about education, construction of church buildings etc. But specifically, if the word *Tombor Maghi* is about marriage property. But specifically, if the word *Tombor Maghi* is about marital property. So *Tombor Maghi* is talking about marriage customs, especially the Fakfak people. *Tombor Maghi* has been done for a long time, from generation to generation. In

the Iha language, they say *Awiar* (it's been a long time ago, like an heirloom), so if you want to go and get a daughter, or have been married for a long time, you can also do *Tombor Maghi*. But this is "mandatory" because, according to the parents, if *Tombor Maghi* is not conducted, there will be problems in marriage.

Meanwhile, according to R3, *Tombor Maghi* is an idiom in the local language - *iha Maghi* (iha language - often also called *nemeih Maghi* mountain language); which is composed of two words, namely *Tombor*, meaning woman/women/mother/mother, and the word *Maghi* (plural of *Maghi*), meaning 'language' or 'voice', or can be interpreted as 'message' or will'. With the addition of 'i' which means *about* or *regarding*, so that the term *Tombor Maghi* can be interpreted as "a discussion about women, or a discussion about a woman's voice - the will of a mother".

According to the answer of R3, argued that *Tombor Magh / Tompor Magk* or known as putting treasure, is an ancestral heritage of Fakfak people's living customs as a traditional marriage of the Mbaham tribe. *Tombor Magh/Tompor Maghi* is a customary procession (tradition) of mutual assistance among Indigenous peoples who are now developing in the Fakfak community who come from different religious backgrounds, collecting treasures or dowry for the groom's family to be given to the bride's family as is the tradition of the Mbaham community in the form of gold bracelets (*Yana*), gold ore (*Wenti*), cloth (*Marpan*), as well as tied cloth, one packet of cloth containing 20 gold ore (*Nteingnteing*), some money, gong (*Mongmongka*), minok (shaped like a small cannon), and other treasures that can be gold put in woven forest pandanus leaves, known as *lopa-lopa*. The collection of these treasures is adjusted to the customary request of the woman or has been fulfilled by custom to be given to the woman, then the bridegroom can take the bride home.

Before taking the bride home from her house, the groom is required to pay *wela-wela* (paying the doorstep from the woman's side), which is paid with money/gold bracelets accompanied by the *Tan yoh* procession, which is greeting while inserting money. The traditional marriage blessing or marriage is performed by the elders/ elders/ clan heads/ the oldest family, either from the male side or the female side. The blessing is usually accompanied by advice, marriage messages, and wishes for family life. After the marriage ceremony, the woman is obliged to return to her husband's house and is accompanied by a procession and accompanied by the beating of a gong to signify that the husband has brought his wife home with his belongings from his old home.

Meanwhile, according to R4, *Tombor Maghi* which means "wedding treasure" or commonly known as "taru harta" is a custom carried out by the Fakfak people in preparation for the proposal of a boy to his prospective wife. This procession is the process of paying dowry which is the responsibility of both parties (the male party and the female party) in accordance with customary rules or types of customary laws of marriage in the Mbaham Matta tribe. *Tombor Maghi* is a family gathering, where the male family gathers at the residence of the female family to negotiate about the dowry that is carried out before the preparation of marriage or pre-marriage. The *Tombor Maghi* event is attended by the families of the two prospective brides and the traditional leaders who lead the *Tombor Maghi*. According to R5, in an interview via *Whatsapp* application, October 21, 2023 the *Tombor Maghi* tradition has been known and practiced for generations, since thousands of years ago. It is predicted since the bronze age in the historical periodization of 3300- 1200 BC. At that time, humans began to recognize metal civilization with various skills and crafts for

furniture, agricultural technology, trade, the formation of kingdoms/countries, architecture/art, the development of religion, and writing/writing culture.

Based on the description of the respondents' answers above, the *Tombor Maghi* ritual has a very deep and important meaning, for the people of the Mbaham Matta tribe - Fakfak, which has several basic perspectives (Audi, 2010, pp. 1-11), sees the basic perspective of an episteme arising from what is known and experienced in the past and believed to be part of the source of knowledge, namely: *First*. The *Tombor Maghi* ritual is not limited only to the affairs of the engagement and marriage of a daughter/sister. However, it is broader and has noble value, namely as a sacred bonding process, with the intertwining of noble values of brotherhood and kinship, based on the radiance of the family tree, historical journey, work and greatness of the Clans in the Mbaham Matta Tribe, which is expressed through a cultural event of collecting dowry. The traditional wedding of the bride and groom, and the celebration party, which involves *their* relatives, friends and acquaintances and the wider community of the Mbaham Matta Tribe- Fakfak. In the customs of the Mbaham Matta Tribe, the *Tombor Maghi* is the family of the groom who will propose to a woman. Mr. Hajat, will first send customary messages and invitations to all relatives, friends and acquaintances throughout the country. The notification time can be around three months or as early as one month, until the day of the *Tombor Maghi* feast.

*Second*. This ritual has an etymological concept related to two things, namely *Tombor* and *Maghi*. These two terms as stated by the respondents are not only related to women and property, but also boil down to mutual care, compassion, and willingness to help others and the basic perspective of knowledge is that two families who have personal desires have an impact on

communal (social) relations born from the local wisdom of the Fakfak people. *Tombor Maghi*, has a basic perspective that boils down to the source of truth (metaphysical project, justification project and speech act) (Kirkham, 1995, pp. 8-16). Against what is believed, helping others is part of humanity's basic calling and nature. In the implementation of *Tombor Maghi*, it is evident that this ritual has two distinct aspects, namely, those for men and women. If a man wants to marry a woman he likes, then he will tell his family. They will sit together to talk about the assets that will be given to the woman.

*Third*, in Fakfak Regency, West Papua Province, a high degree of religious tolerance between the two predominant religious groups—Islam and Christianity—is clearly evident. A tangible manifestation of this harmony is observed in the implementation of the *Tombor Maghi* customary ritual, a tradition that centers on honoring ancestors and resolving customary matters. In carrying out this ritual, both religious communities cooperate harmoniously, transcending differences in belief (Kabab, 2025). Muslims and Christians actively participate in various stages of the ceremony, including the preparation of ritual materials, arrangement of the venue, and the involvement of religious and traditional leaders who serve as spiritual and cultural advisors (Tuturop, 2025).

The interfaith collaboration embodied in the *Tombor Maghi* ritual reflects the application of the local philosophy of "*One Furnace, Three Stones*," which underscores the importance of unity amid diversity (Ngabalin, 2015). Despite differing religious affiliations, the Fakfak community continues to uphold values of brotherhood and social cohesion. This ritual functions not only as a medium for cultural preservation but also as a powerful symbol of the deeply rooted unity within community life (Hegemur, 2025). Through this

collaboration, the Fakfak community demonstrates that religious differences are not barriers to peaceful coexistence or to the maintenance of a shared cultural heritage (Hegemur, 2025).

*Fourth.* The *Tombor Maghi* ritual has basic knowledge about the value of brotherhood and kinship. Although it has differences in terms of formal objects, *Tombor Maghi* tries to manage, organize and develop the value of brotherhood from the spirit of personal solidarity to mechanical and social solidarity, as proposed by Durkheim (1984). In a synergy (cooperation) that mutually enriches and contributes to the process of self-autonomy and true independence of life. Thus, *Tombor Maghi* is not lined up as selfish forces that threaten, prey on and eliminate each other (negation) but greet each other or revive each other in self-autonomy and maturity in the spirit of brotherhood and kinship.

#### ***Tombor Maghi* ritual and the strengthening of interfaith relations**

The implementation of the *Tombor Maghi* ritual, on the one hand, provides space for cross-religious, ethnic and cultural community encounters to continue to help carry out the ritual within the family. However, this ritual has experienced a development of meaning, where people who come from different religious backgrounds also help and cooperate in the culture in question. On this side, interfaith relations are very important to increase tolerance, solidarity and harmony between religious communities. The driving factor of interfaith relations is that people have an attitude of humanism and humility, as well as increasing tolerance and solidarity.

The practice of interfaith relations can be seen when people of different religions participate in an activity called "*Wewowo masjid maghi*".

*Wewowo masjid maghi* is a deliberation and agreement of the interfaith community to help build and inaugurate the mosque. According to R4, this activity was carried out by people of different religions in Fakfak to increase solidarity, and brotherhood, and contribute to helping and helping others in this case the construction of mosques. This activity involves various elements of society, including Christians and Muslims as well as various personnel from institutions and elements of society. It aims to raise funds and solicit assistance for the construction of mosques and houses of worship.

Besides *Wewowo masjid maghi*, there is also an activity called "*Wewowo church maghi*". This activity is an interfaith community activity carried out by the Catholic Church of St. Yosep Parish in Fakfak Regency. This activity is in the form of people of various religions making donations to celebrate 129 years of the Catholic Mission in the Land of Papua. One example of a *wewowo maghi church* is STT (Theological College) *wewowo Maghi*. *Wewowo* in the Fakfak language means deliberation.

Furthermore, R3, in an interview via WhatsApp application, on May 10, 2024, argued that the "*STT wewowo maghi*" activity is an activity carried out based on the philosophy of "*Tombor Maghi*" and aims to support the operational implementation of the STT of the Indonesian Protestant Church in Papua. In these activities, symbols with certain meanings can be found. The groom is a symbol of community members who come from different tribes, cultures and religions. The groom collects treasure for the bride, which is to support the educational institution of the College of Theology (STT GPI) Papua, (interview with R5 on January 21, 2024).

Based on the answers of the respondents above, it can be concluded that through three *Wewowo* activities: *Maghi Mosque*, *Maghi Church* and *Maghi*

Theological College (STT), interfaith relations in Fakfak Regency can be realised through the practice of cooperation and feelings of wanting to share. This gives rise to an attitude of solidarity, willing to share and engage with others. Association involvement (Lattu, 2023) association involvement perspective, interfaith communities form associations where people of different religions join together to address common problems. Sharing common concerns means building interfaith bridges and creating stronger relationships between people from different religious backgrounds. In the Indonesian context, for example, religious elites in many cities have formed Interfaith Harmony Forums. These forums consist of religious elites who discuss interfaith issues within their circles. The forums are, among other things, groups and these conversations center on discussions of theological issues or government policies regarding religions in Indonesia. The second "non-textual engagement" is based on people's social networks in everyday encounters (Lattu, 2025).

## **Conclusion**

This research focuses on three main areas. *First*, it examines the historical background and recent developments in Muslim-Christian relations in Indonesia, with a particular emphasis on the Fakfak Regency in West Papua Province. Fakfak has a rich historical legacy shaping the region's unique social and cultural identity. As one of the oldest inhabited areas in Papua, Fakfak has played a significant role in the Nusantara trade routes since the 7th century. The influence of major kingdoms such as Majapahit and Tidore contributed to the region's early development. The arrival of traders from Maluku and the Arabian Peninsula not only facilitated the exchange of goods but also introduced the teachings of Islam and Christianity. These two religions eventually coexisted and



engaged with local traditions, giving rise to a pluralistic society that continues to uphold traditional values, local wisdom, and interfaith tolerance.

*Second*, this study explores the Fakfak community's understanding of the *Tombor Maghi* ritual. The research reveals that the ritual embodies foundational cultural knowledge that reflects the social reality of the Fakfak people. Various cultural symbols are employed through the ritual, each carrying deep significance within the community. These symbols serve as representations of tradition and tools for expressing communal values and identity. *Third*, the study examines how the *Tombor Maghi* ritual contributes to the strengthening of interfaith relations. The findings suggest that the ritual has evolved to include interreligious engagement, as demonstrated through shared participation in activities such as *wewowo maghi* (offering) at mosques and churches. This practice promotes cooperation and mutual support across religious boundaries, reinforcing social cohesion and facilitating collective efforts in community development. In this context, *Tombor Maghi* functions as a living expression of interfaith harmony in everyday life.

However, this study has several limitations in the data collection process. *First*, this data was collected *online*, so the author could not be free in the data collection process. This constraint contributed to the number of participants who answered the research instrument. *Second*, there was a lack of interest from some participants who participated in the study.

In addition, it would be better if this research is continued in the future. The researcher suggests that other researchers seek additional data on interfaith relations in Fakfak and other regions of Indonesia. Thus, the author hopes other researchers can conduct further research related to this topic because there are

still many interesting issues to discuss in connection with rituals that have become a philosophy in social life.

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