

Compromise of Islam and customary practices in the religious practices of the muslim community in Papua: a study of *maqāṣid syarī'ah*

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Compromising Islam and customary practices (*adat*) in religious life practices is a manifestation of Islamic law in maintaining harmonious relationships among religious communities, particularly Muslims and Christians. This article not only aims to uncover various religious practices that compromise Islam and *adat*, but also presents an in-depth analysis of the impact of such compromises on inter-religious relations among the Kokoda community. The data analysis for this article was obtained through observation, interviews, and literature and document studies. The article demonstrates that religious practices among Kokoda Muslims are deeply infused with *adat* nuances, making compromise with Islam a middle ground. There are three practices that are openly carried out. First, in social relations practices, both Muslims and Christians perceive that their current religion is the one inherited from their family. This concept is an implementation of Islamic legal principles regarding the urgency of preserving genealogy and family traditions in the context of faith. Second, the celebration of major religious days is considered a shared possession even though they adhere to different religions. This aligns with Islamic law which emphasizes the importance of harmonious and respectful life among religious communities. Third, the marriage practice that compromises Islam and *adat* is an effort to fulfill the guidelines of Islamic law, while also preserving Kokoda *adat*. This reflects harmonization between religious obligations and respect for *adat* law. This study focuses on discussing the forms and impacts of religious practices that compromise Islamic law and customary practices (*adat*) within one community group, namely Kokoda. This research contributes to global studies on religious diversity, pluralism, and cultural conflict resolution, as well as adds to the literature on religious adaptation in culturally complex societies.

Mengompromikan Islam dan *adat* pada praktik kehidupan keagamaan merupakan manifestasi hukum Islam dalam menjaga hubungan harmonis di antara umat beragama, khususnya Muslim dan Kristen. Artikel ini tidak saja bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan berbagai praktik keagamaan yang mengkompromikan Islam dan *adat*, tetapi juga menyajikan analisis mendalam mengenai dampak kompromi tersebut terhadap hubungan antara-agama di kalangan Masyarakat Kokoda. Basis data analisis artikel ini diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi literatur serta dokumen. Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa praktik-praktik keagamaan di kalangan Muslim Kokoda kental dengan nuansa *adat* sehingga mengkompromikannya dengan Islam menjadi jalan tengah. Terdapat tiga praktik yang secara terbuka dilakukan. Pertama, dalam praktik relasi sosial, baik Muslim maupun Kristen mempersepsikan bahwa agama yang dianut saat ini merupakan agama yang diwariskan oleh keluarga. Konsep ini merupakan implementasi dari prinsip hukum Islam mengenai urgensi menjaga genealogi dan tradisi keluarga dalam konteks keimanan. Kedua, perayaan hari-hari besar keagamaan dianggap sebagai milik bersama meskipun mereka menganut agama yang berbeda. Hal ini sejalan dengan syariat Islam yang menekankan pentingnya kehidupan harmonis dan saling menghormati di antara umat-beragama. Ketiga, praktik perkawinan yang mengkompromikan Islam dan *adat* merupakan upaya memenuhi tuntunan syariat Islam, sekaligus menjaga kelestarian *adat* Kokoda. Hal ini mencerminkan harmonisasi antara kewajiban agama dan penghormatan terhadap hukum *adat*. Studi ini focus mendiskusikan bentuk dan dampak praktik beragama yang mengkompromikan hukum Islam dan *adat* pada satu kelompok masyarakat, yakni Kokoda. Penelitian ini berkontribusi

pada kajian global tentang keberagaman agama, pluralisme, dan resolusi konflik budaya, serta menambah literatur mengenai adaptasi keagamaan dalam masyarakat yang kompleks secara budaya.

Keywords: *compromise of Islam and customary practices; religious life; Kokoda Muslims; maqāsid syarī'ah; West Papua.*

Introduction

Religious practices that compromise Islam and customary practices have become key to achieving harmony in the lives of the Kokoda community, which consists of Muslims and Christians. These two religious groups not only live together but also collaborate in various religious practices. In many religious practices among Muslim communities in Indonesia, the nuances of Islam and customary practices remain strong alongside the community's steadfastness in preserving customary practices (Jubba et al., 2018; Mursalin, 2023; Sudirman et al., 2022). For instance, during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr and Christmas, the implementation involves both religious groups in proportion to their respective involvements; Muslim families assist Christian families and vice versa (Rais, 2011; Wekke, 2013). Holiday celebrations are not only conducted as routine activities but also serve as shared spaces that do not contradict religious differences to achieve joy. This attitude aligns with the mission of religion, which places appreciation for humanitarian values in a functional position (Rasyid, 2016; Fernando, Larasati and Cahyani, 2023; Montasir et al., 2023).

As a comprehensive and universal religion, Islam has a broad mission as a religion of mercy for all creation (Thohari and Makmun, 2019), while customary practices live and grow intertwined with the very fabric of community life, having been passed down from generation to generation (Mursalin, 2023). Among Muslims, religious practices that are compromistic have become part of broader life practices (Jubba, Rustan and Juhansar, 2018). In fact, customary law [ʿurf] and Islamic law coexist within the community (Bukido et al., 2022; Thalib, 2023). In Islamic teachings, for example, *ukhuwah Islāmiyyah* [Muslim brotherhood] is one of the keys to strengthening relationships among Muslims, based on shared faith (Syekh, 2019). Meanwhile, the role of customary practices is also significant in ensuring closer social relationships despite differences in members' beliefs. Many terms

are often used by the community to signify brotherhood, such as the Javanese term “*nge wong ke wong*” (humanizing people), the Bugis term “*sipakatauk*” (mutually humanizing), and various terminologies known among religious communities, especially in Indonesia (Gusnawaty et al., 2022). In Indonesian households, it is not uncommon for more than one religious adherent to reside under one roof. Muslims and Christians often live in the same house and respect each other without conflict (Yamin et al., 2019).

The contribution of customary practices to religious practices for Muslims brings welfare even though it is considered to lack justification from the *nas* [Qur’an/hadith] or religious evidence but relies solely on customary practices (*urf*) or habits. *Urf* is a legal system that develops and is implemented with a focus on communal or group interests (Osman, 2024). J.B Klakla explains the concept of customary law with a layered approach that varies in normative character (Klakla, 2022). *First*, there are aspects of customary law behavior systems that have expected behavioral patterns. *Second*, it is still related to human behavior shaped by tendencies and social action guidelines. *Third*, there are layers that have more symbolic meanings, connected to human behavior in a more indirect way, and form the cognitive-cultural components of customary law, such as layers of social values and social identity layers. These layers reflect the progressive changes occurring within the social order of a community.

The construction of knowledge and the implementation of customary law within a society can vary from one another (Luthfi, Fajrin and Bachtiar, 2024; Mabrusyah et al., 2024). This is closely related to relations, spirituality, environment, rituals, ceremonies, and practices (Tualima and Bowrey, 2024). For example, in Nigerian society, there exists a customary law where the eldest son exclusively inherits his late father’s ancestral home. Litigation over this customary law has been described as a matter of life and death, and it serves as a mandatory norm in legal conflicts. This customary law can be replaced by statutory law or refer to religious law (Okoli, Yekini and Oamen, 2023). Furthermore, the conceptualization of customary law possesses ambiguities caused by the failure to clearly explain its flexibility and presence (Diala, 2017). However, legislation and bureaucracy often replace the authority of customary law. Therefore, the validity requirements of customary law need to be understood by considering its flexibility and not regarded as a static concept

(Nkuna-Mavutane and Jamneck, 2023).

In the context of this study, maintaining the values of Islam and customary practices can support the main objectives of *maqāṣid syar'ah* [the higher objectives of Islamic law], such as preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. The religious practices of Kokoda Muslims that integrate Islam and customary practices can be viewed from different dimensions regarding whether these practices bring *maṣlahah* [public welfare] or rather lead to *mafsadah* [corruption or harm]. These religious practices are efforts to maintain harmony within the family and community by not contradicting Islam and customary practices in their diverse practices. Such practices not only represent efforts to present Islam as a source of mercy but also become distinctive features of Islam that are “colorful” since the introduction of this religion in Indonesia. In this regard, the beliefs established by the community illustrate an integration aimed at creating harmonious conditions (Zubir & Aḥmad, 2022).

The compromise between religion and customary practices represents a life landscape that emphasizes the ability to adapt religious practices to the sociocultural dynamics of the community (Alfurqan et al., 2024; Suryani et al., 2023). The compromise between religion and customary practices can be both symbolic and substantive, giving rise to hybrid rituals that combine both entities (Hasyim, Channa and Mufid, 2020; Elfia, Surwati and Bakhtiar, 2023). Moreover, the compromise between religion and customary practices is carried out through imitation to practice and uphold faith (Budayová et al., 2023). Religion and customary practices serve as mediums to establish a relationship with God. This is because, for certain groups, religion is perceived to provide a framework for beliefs, customs, and social behaviors (Gupta and Agrawal, 2024).

The Kokoda community, which has long lived with strong traditions of religion and customary practices, possesses a wealth of practices that compromise both in their religious activities. Although Islam, in particular, has been recognized for a long time, the steadfastness in preserving customary practices remains strong. In certain conditions, customary law [urf] is even more dominant than religious law. Several studies that examine the relationship between Islam and customary practices have provided a strong foundation regarding their positions within Muslim communities. Studies conducted by several scholars (Jubba et al., 2018; Mursalim, 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2014; Zubir & Aḥmad, 2022) indicate

that the relationship between Islam and customary practices in society is harmonious. However, these studies have not comprehensively highlighted how this harmony is realized. This study complements those studies by focusing on a single group, namely the Kokoda community, which integrates Islam and customary practices in their religious activities with various functions, including how both entities operate and are present in each of their religious activities.

This article discusses how the compromise between Islam and customary practices occurs in the religious practices of Kokoda Muslims. Three religious practices are portrayed in the discussion of this article. *First*, the practice of *muamalat* [social transactions]. This relates to the social life practices between Muslims and Christians in the Kokoda community, which have been carried out together thus far. *Second*, the practice of social religiosity. This practice is related to the cultural mechanisms that operate when celebrating religious events. In this context, how they celebrate holidays together without eliminating the essence of each religion's teachings and the strong internal sense of togetherness rooted in adherence to Kokoda customary practices. *Third*, the practice of *munakahat* [marriage]. The marriage practices in the Kokoda community, besides being based on Islamic teachings, still strongly incorporate customary practices, especially in the marriage process; one example is the giving and type of bridal gift (*mabar*) in the form of hanging plates.

Method

This research was conducted in Victori village, Sorong City, West Papua, from November 2023 to February 2024, focusing on the lives of the Kokoda community. This village is located near Domine Eduard Osok Airport and the city center, with good road access and public facilities such as schools and shopping centers. Observations were carried out at Masjid Babul Jannah, the only mosque in the village, which functions as a center for worship and social activities. The purpose of this observation was to obtain information about important actions and events from the research subjects (Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger, 2020). Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with customary leaders and the chairman of the Kokoda Muslim youth. These interviews were conducted with them because they have the authority to convey important information related to the group to external parties. The

selection of informants was based on the depth of their knowledge regarding the issues being studied, positioning them as key informants (Lucas, 2014).

The interview and observation methods were used to explore the group's knowledge and attitudes toward outsiders and the dynamics of social religious life occurring around the Kokoda community recently. The obtained data were analyzed alongside related literature to provide a more comprehensive perspective. The use of these methods is supported by recent research that emphasizes the importance of combining interviews and observations to gain an in-depth understanding of customary communities in the context of social change. The processed data were then presented in the form of narratives and visualizations, with term adjustments to make them easier to understand without diminishing their original meanings (Salleh et al., 2024).

The data obtained from various sources were then analyzed using the perspective of *maqāṣid syari'ah*. The study of *maqāṣid syari'ah* or *al maṣlaḥah* (Misran, 2016) serves as the foundational framework in Islamic law to this day. Imam Al-Syatibi, in his book *al-Muwafakat*, divides *maqāṣid syari'ah* into three hierarchical categories (Nazaruddin and Kamilullah, 2020), namely *ad ḍarūriyyah* [essential necessities], *al ḥājjiyyah* [necessary but not essential], and *at taḥṣīniyyah* [desirable but not necessary]. *Al maṣlaḥah ad ḍarūriyyah* encompasses five main principles that must be preserved: preserving religion, preserving life, preserving intellect, preserving lineage, and preserving property (Salma, 2012). In terms of their existence, they are divided into three categories: *al maṣlaḥah al mu'tabarah* [recognized public welfare], *al maṣlaḥah al mulgāb* [contrary to text], and *al maṣlaḥah al mursalah* [unrestricted public welfare]. *Al maṣlaḥah al mu'tabarah* refers to public welfare that is already present in the *nash* [scriptural texts] or evidence that permits it, oriented towards the preservation of *al maṣlaḥah ad ḍarūriyyah*. *Al maṣlaḥah al mulgāb* is something that contradicts the *nash* or goes against the law. Meanwhile, *al maṣlaḥah al mursalah* refers to public welfare that is not found in the *nash* or evidence but its existence impacts a public welfare (Misran, 2016).

Conceptually, *al maṣlaḥah* is divided into three forms: *al-mu'tabarah*, *al mulgāb* [welfare that is futile/not considered], and *al mursalah*. *Al maṣlaḥah al mu'tabarah* refers to welfare that receives explicit support from *nash*. In this context, it is the considered welfare. *Al maṣlaḥah al mulgāb* is welfare that contradicts the provisions of Islamic law and opposes

syara' [Islamic law] (Hidayatullah, 2018). *Al maṣlaḥah al mursalah* is welfare that aligns with religious provisions and has certain evidence that justifies or rejects it.

The objectives of *syari'ah* [Islamic law] itself can be seen in three forms: *ad ḍarūriyyah* [primary], *al ḥājjiyyah* [secondary], and *at taḥṣiniyyah* [tertiary]. *Ad ḍarūriyyah* represents the fundamental or urgent objectives of *syari'ah*, such as preserving religion, life, lineage, intellect, and property. *At taḥṣiniyyah* refers to the necessary objectives of *syari'ah*, such as preserving lineage and property. Meanwhile, *al ḥājjiyyah* represents complementary objectives aimed at improving the standard of living in society, such as social justice, prosperity, and harmony within the community. Thus, the general objective of *syari'ah* is to realize human welfare (Nofardi & Samiran, 2023).

Family religion: Kokoda's perception of Semitic religion

Differences in beliefs or religions, which have often caused disputes (Rismawati et al., 2021), do not apply to the Kokoda community. In the Kokoda community, religious differences instead serve as a medium for establishing more open communication and cooperation. The ties of communication and cooperation occur in various aspects, including religious matters. Religious differences even facilitate communication among religious groups (Haryanto, 2012). Similar customary practices remain the main key that allows communication to function well to this day. Various everyday issues, such as fights among residents, can be resolved through communication based on customary provisions involving elders or customary leaders (Yousaf, 2021). Within the Kokoda community itself, religious affiliation is divided into two major groups, namely Muslims and Christians (Idris, 2023). These two groups live in the same area not only geographically but also under the same customary practices with the same social structures. Despite different religions, they are bound by Kokoda customary practices that are upheld and used as life guides to this day (Arsyad, Wahid and Saeni, 2021).

For the Kokoda community, religion is considered a shared possession. This perception aligns with the role of religion, which besides being a source of teachings, also serves as a family binder (Dollahite, Marks and Dalton, 2018; Radjab et al., 2020; Yang, Xue and Liu, 2020). It is not uncommon for a single extended family to have members who adhere to

two different religions. This condition does not damage their familial relationships. This is acknowledged by Idris Ugaje [59], Chief of Kokoda Customary Practices, who stated that within the Kokoda community there are members of different religions, even living in the same house without conflicts.

Different religions are not barriers to establishing harmonious relationships. These differences are limited to identity and do not involve differences in principles that could harm internal group relationships. For the Kokoda community, religion serves not only as a means to practice adherence to religious teachings but also to strengthen the existence and role of customary practices. This simultaneously explains the uniqueness of the Kokoda, which integrates religion and customary practices into various aspects of their lives (Rais, 2011). There are many avenues to strengthen internal bonds within the Kokoda. Besides religion, food also serves as a bonding tool. Food is not enjoyed alone but involves others. Prohibitions for Muslims, such as consuming haram (forbidden) meat, are respected. As stated by Jalil Ugaje [43], a Kokoda youth leader:

“We love each other so there are no problems. We live in one religion and culture through family closeness. We have never had misunderstandings because of religious differences; we still follow one customary practice” (Jalil, 2023).

The above description explains the shared perspective among the Kokoda regarding the presence of other religious groups. Religious differences do not trigger conflicts; on the contrary, they strengthen relationships among them. This perception fundamentally stems from the construction of humans as creations of God endowed with certain rights and obligations. Although humans differ in various dimensions such as religious beliefs, they possess the same rights and obligations (Naharudin, 2019). This awareness emerges, in part, driven by the reality of unavoidable differences.

What happens in the Kokoda community, where life is integrated amid religious differences, illustrates that Indonesia’s diversity has the strength to further enhance cohesion among religious adherents. In this context, religious differences become a means to strengthen social relationships based on the awareness of the importance of mutual respect with a spirit of emphasizing similarities rather than differences. The equality of rights and obligations as creations of God, for example, reinforces the view of humans’

interdependent positions. Differences are part of human nature. In the Qur'an (QS. Al Hujurat, verse 13), the creation of humans with distinct differences is clearly outlined. In this regard, differences among humans, such as gender, needs, and so forth, are tangible social facts.

As social beings, humans have connections with others, which drives them to be open to others despite having certain differences in principle (Berger and Lukmann, 1966). In this context, the social relationships built between Muslims and Christians, as seen in the Kokoda community, are based on shared principles that have been continuously inherited through generations (Rais, 2011). The belief that humans originate from the same ancestry strongly complements the social bonds within the community, even among those who adhere to different religions. This also demonstrates and explains that, fundamentally, moderate religious practices based on a balanced understanding have long been practiced in Indonesia (Fahri and Zainuri, 2019). In the Indonesian context, such religious practices are distinctive because, in addition to relying on religious teachings, they are also based on the prevailing customary practices within the community. Reflecting on the life practices of Prophet Muhammad SAW, openness and acceptance of differences have been exemplified and enshrined in the Constitution of Medina, Article 25, regarding the freedom of Jews to firmly adhere to their religious teachings (Azhar, 2018), just as Muslims steadfastly practice Islamic teachings.

In the context of these practices, it is evident that the recognition of Semitic religions (Islam and Christianity) as family religions is an effort to maintain social relationships harmoniously. In this regard, religious differences do not distance Muslims from Christians; instead, they strengthen existing social relationships. Borrowing from Syatibi's argument, this practice embodies *al maṣlaḥah ad darūriyyah* [essential public welfare] by maintaining social relationships without harming other relationships despite differing religions (Nazaruddin and Kamilullah, 2020). The embodiment of the spirit of respect and freedom, as explained in QS. Al-Kafirun, verses 1-6, has directly become part of the religious practices of the Kokoda community. This is certainly in line with the main spirit of *maqāṣid syari'ah*, which emphasizes how human welfare is preserved and realized, especially in a pluralistic society.

Major religious celebrations: a medium for fulfilling Islamic teachings and customary practice guidelines

Annual major religious celebrations become joyful and anticipated events for religious adherents. Each religion has its major days celebrated with various decorations. These celebrations, besides being annual rituals, also serve diverse functions. Substantively, major religious celebrations are a medium for internalizing religious teachings for their adherents, conducted routinely (Saputra and Muhajir, 2019). Formally, major religious celebrations serve as tools to recall various important events of religions and to unite the faithful (Nuriyanto, 2015). For Muslims, celebrations like Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, for example, hold historical values closely linked to Islam's mission of tolerance towards others. The worship before Eid al-Adha, namely fasting, teaches Muslims to care for and tolerate other people and communities. Similarly, the celebration of Eid al-Adha reminds Muslims of the history of the sacrificial slaughter of animals from the events of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail (Khairullah, 2012). During Christmas celebrations, Christians not only recall an important event but also bring about a renewal of knowledge regarding their adhered religious teachings. It can be understood that religious celebrations have historical, theological, and sociological dimensions that, besides being able to commemorate an event, also strongly bind the faithful, thereby maintaining the steadfastness in practicing their religious teachings effectively.

Within the Kokoda community, both Muslims and Christians involve all elements in their religious celebrations. These celebrations, besides being based on religious guidelines, also accommodate the interests of sustaining customary practices. Each religious group celebrates by blending Islam and customary practices. For instance, the celebration of Eid al-Fitr is adorned with local traditions such as providing food for customary leaders and residents. For them, this does not diminish the substance of religious teachings and the celebration itself. Similarly, during Christmas celebrations, a solemn atmosphere envelops the event with the presence of both Muslims and Christians. Both religious groups take part in successfully carrying out major religious celebrations. Idris Ugaje (59 years old), a customary leader of Kokoda, expressed that during major Islamic celebrations such as Mawlid Nabi, Eid al-Fitr, and also Christmas, both Muslims and Christians participate

by engaging in activities with their respective roles (Idris, 2023). Moreover, they are open to groups outside of Kokoda. Jalil Ugaje mentioned regarding the mosque, which has never been claimed solely as the property of Kokoda Muslims. Concerning the presence of outsiders in Kokoda, Jalil Ugaje stated that:

“Others are welcome to come, welcome to Kokoda. We are very happy when guests visit. We consider ourselves all the same. Whether Muslim or Christian, it’s the same. We accept everyone as long as their intentions are good. We cannot be disconnected from others” (Jalil, 2023).

In various religious activities, the Kokoda community—divided into Muslims and Christians—mingles and supports each other. The annual celebrations of Eid al-Fitr and Christmas become occasions where both religious groups not only meet face-to-face but also collaborate to ensure the success of these holiday celebrations. In fact, during the process or implementation of the activities, both groups share tasks so that the events run smoothly and safely. This sense of togetherness not only indicates interfaith cooperation but also reinforces respect for each other’s beliefs, which they have upheld to this day. What is practiced by the Kokoda community further strengthens the argument for the importance of compromising Islam and customary practices in the religious lives of Indonesians, who are generally devout, by no longer emphasizing differences but rather highlighting similarities, including cultural elements or habits (Jubba et al., 2019).

In Kokoda Muslim society, *‘urf* or *al ‘ādab* [tradition] plays an important role in the application of family law, especially concerning marriage, child-rearing, and family relations. Islam recognizes local customary practices as long as they do not conflict with *syari’ah*, as emphasized by the principle “*al ‘ādab muḥakkamah*,” which means customary practices can serve as a legal basis if they conform to religious rules (Saifulloh, 2020). Traditions such as proposals, the giving of a bridal gift, and customary ceremonies are accepted as long as they meet *syari’ah* requirements, such as the approval of a guardian and the bride and groom. The theory of *al maṣlahah al mursalah* [unrestricted public welfare], supported by Imam Malik (Syaripuddin, 2020; Ikhsan and Iskandar, 2021), affirms that *‘urf* and *al ‘ādab* can be applied if they bring benefit and prevent harm. In the Kokoda community, tradition strengthens family bonds and ensures justice and balance in family relationships, in line with Islamic values that can be achieved through such celebrations. This approach

demonstrates the flexibility of Islamic law in responding to social and cultural changes without sacrificing the main principles of *syari'ah*. Family law in the Kokoda community reflects the harmony between Islamic law and local customary practices, in accordance with the principles of *maqāṣid syari'ah*, which emphasize the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.

During major religious celebrations held by the Kokoda community, there is a visible effort to strengthen relations both internally and externally. Internally, the relationships formed are based on shared religious and ethnic backgrounds. Meanwhile, the relationships formed with external groups grow stronger through their involvement in the celebrations organized by the Kokoda community. The fundamental function of these celebrations is to ensure that cohesiveness and harmony remain present within the community, without questioning religious differences. In fact, celebrations that involve all religious groups reinforce communal identity, which has started to face challenges, particularly from outside. A similar phenomenon is found in the Raju ritual of the Mbawa people in Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, which promotes cohesiveness and harmony for religiously diverse communities by creating a shared ethnic identity and practicing it as a cultural adaptation (Wahid, 2022). This ritual shows that the strong influence of customary practices provides a broad space for compromise between religion—especially Islam—and customary practices, allowing them to engage in dialogue within the religious practices of the community.

The above description illustrates three fundamental factors that determine the well-functioning relations between Muslims and Christians in the Kokoda community. *First*, the readiness to accept differences. Being Muslim or Christian is merely a label serving as an administrative distinction and does not disrupt their relations. *Second*, the willingness to involve others in various activities. In this case, there is no “monopoly” or “claim” of ownership over Kokoda, since all groups are present within it and even become the main actors in carrying out celebrations. *Third*, the openness to acknowledge the existence of others. An inclusive attitude is demonstrated in various activities, so that the presence of religious groups different from one’s own is not only recognized but also given a broad role. These three points are the result of an attitude that compromises religion and customary practices in religious practice.

In this discussion context, the Kokoda community has shown tolerant religious practices that do not undermine the theological substance of their religious teachings. Joint religious celebrations essentially also have a strong basis in *naṣ*. Such celebrations are also infused with the spirit of mutual assistance (*ta'awun*). Through these celebrations, a sense of togetherness and mutual help emerges, whether in ensuring the success of activities or achieving common goals—namely, establishing communication among religious communities through celebrations. This can certainly serve as a way to maintain togetherness so that harmony continues to be felt by both religious groups. In the Qur'an, cooperation is especially emphasized in doing good. In QS. Al-Maidah verse 2, it is firmly stated: “*And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.*” During major religious celebrations, not only is the religious spirit present, but also cooperation through recognition and participation of religious groups outside Islam.

Marriage bridal gift (*mahar*)

Mahar, also known as *maskawin* [bridal gift], in marriage holds not only a symbolic sacred dimension but also a functional one. The sacredness of bridal gift lies in its position as a symbol of the legitimacy of a marriage, although in some cases, bridal gift can be requested and returned, such as when a marriage is annulled (Aliansyah and Iqbal, 2018). The functional dimension of bridal gift is its role as a mandatory gift from the groom to the bride during the marriage contract process. This gift also affirms the high status of the woman and the marriage itself, emphasizing its voluntary nature rather than being based on coercion or compulsion. This is as emphasized in QS. An-Nisa' verse 4, which states, “*Give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously*”.

In marriage traditions, the bridal gift given to the bride typically consists of goods, money, and services (Ahadi and Djazimah, 2020) with varying amounts. The goods or items provided usually hold high economic value, such as gold and other valuable items. Nowadays, bridal gift has been converted not only into tangible items but also into services, such as memorizing the Qur'an as a substitute for *mahar*. This form of bridal gift is seen as an effort to protect religion and intellect in accordance with the principles of *maqāṣid*

syari'ah (Ahadi and Djazimah, 2020). Whether in the form of goods or services, bridal gift serves the same function: it is a gift that proves a marriage has been conducted, involving both parties. Bridal gift also signifies the sincerity and commitment, particularly of the groom, to marry (Ridwan, 2020).

The types and amounts of bridal gift in marriages often become obstacles to the completion of a marriage (Djawas et al., 2023). In certain communities, bridal gift is associated with the provision of other material items such as shopping money. For example, in Manado society, there is a provision besides bridal gift known as the “*antar harta*” [wealth exchange] tradition (Giu, 2020), among the Bugis-Makassar people known as “*uang panaik/duik menrek*” [specific monetary traditions] (Rinaldi, 2023) or *sompa* [traditional gift] (Djawas et al., 2023), which often becomes a point of debate. The issue arising from this tradition is the amount or nominal value of money given to the bride. It is not uncommon for debates between both parties to become intense, sometimes without finding a common ground, leading to the annulment of the marriage. This annulment is driven by non-substantial issues in the marriage because, besides involving tradition, it is also related to family prestige (Mustafa and Syahriani, 2020). One member of the Kokoda community shared his experience that the larger the amount of money given, the more “prestigious” the groom’s family name becomes. Conversely, if the amount of money given is relatively small, the family becomes a subject of gossip (Hamzah, 2023).

The provision of bridal gift in the form of valuable items among Muslims is practiced diversely. This practice is often intertwined with customary practices or *urf* (Osman, 2024). In addition to providing items, there is also bridal gift in the form of animals, even animals that are considered “*haram*” [forbidden], such as pigs (Keray, 2024). The practice of giving bridal gift in the Kokoda Muslim community is similar. The items given by the groom to the bride are in the form of plates. These plates are made from clay and have undergone a lengthy process to become plates with various ornaments or motifs that hold high aesthetic value. Some plates feature animal motifs such as birds, chickens, fish, and dragons. There are also plates depicting the activities of residents and various other motifs. Below are some of the plate motifs used as bridal gift in marriages within the Kokoda community.

Picture 1.
Several Bridal Gift Plate Motifs



Source: Researcher's Document, 2023

As seen in several images (Picture 1), the motifs of hanging plates used as bridal gift in Papuan marriages, particularly within the Kokoda community, are evident. These plates are widely used as decorations hanging on the walls of residents' homes, hence the name "hanging plates." Besides serving as decorations, the hanging plates given by the groom are also used as dining plates for family members and in rituals involving many people.

Mahar in the form of hanging plates in Kokoda Muslim marriages is considered central. Hanging plates are objects with diverse functions. Besides being used as dining utensils, these plates also function as a means of payment, such as paying mahar. In fact, these plates

are used as a means of paying for customary violations committed by community members. For example, abducting a girl before marriage, killing someone, and other criminal violations that are considered against customary practices require the perpetrator to pay a customary fine using hanging plates (Yusuf, 2021). These plates also hold numerous meanings closely related to human life in a broad sense. Regarding marital mahar, the Chief of the Kokoda Tribe stated that plate bridal gift is a primary requirement in Kokoda marriages. According to him:

“The plates given by the man to the woman are indeed only in the form of dining utensils, but they hold very deep meanings in the Kokoda community. Plates symbolize a man’s establishment and readiness to marry. Plates as bridal gift are handed over by both Muslim and Christian men to their wives” (Idris, 2023).

The more plates given to the bride, the higher the man’s social status. In this regard, men demonstrate their high responsibility and have declared themselves ready to marry and form a new family. The plate handover process takes place when the marriage is conducted at the woman’s house. The numerous plates mentioned earlier are handed over before entering the woman’s house. The groom uses the plates given as a base when entering the woman’s house. Here, one can witness the number of plates the groom hands over to the bride. As for the hanging plates (main mahar), as explained by Idris Ugaje, they are handed over through the tribal chief to the woman after the *ijab kabul* [marriage contract] ceremony is conducted.

The use of hanging plates in Kokoda customary practices is not limited to mahar. Hanging plates are also used when welcoming important guests to Kokoda, whether greeting the arrival of significant individuals such as officials and customary leaders or welcoming new community members. In the baby haircut ceremony (*akikah*) for newborns (Hamzah, 2023), these plates are also a customary requirement. The use of these plates not only demonstrates the Kokoda community’s strong commitment to preserving tradition, even though plates can be replaced with other valuable items that hold more prestigious value. Therefore, the provision of hanging plates as bridal gift required by customary practices is relevant to the concept of bridal gift in Islam, which emphasizes voluntary giving (Rais, 2011). Kokoda Muslims steadfastly adhere to the provision of hanging plates

as mahar, which can be understood not only as a form of adherence to customary rules but also as an effort to compromise them with Islamic teachings. In this context, the provision of bridal gift is not merely viewed as a customary activity but also as a submission to Islamic teachings, even though it still retains strong customary nuances. From a broader perspective, practices such as the provision of hanging plate bridal gift affirm that customary law operating within the community is capable of building cohesion and continuity within society, including the sustainability of traditions from one generation to the next within a community group (Rahmawati et al., 2014).

The main spirit in the provision of mahar, particularly as demonstrated by the Kokoda community, is mutual assistance and mutual respect. The spirit of mutual assistance is reflected in the groom's desire not only to provide a number of plates but also to show appreciation to the bride and ensure the legal certainty of the marital bond that is formed (Maloko et al., 2024). Mahar, which is one of the requirements for legitimizing a relationship, has a noble purpose. In the context of *syari'ah* objectives, the legality of the husband-wife relationship not only preserves life and religion to prevent falling into *zina* [fornication or adultery] to protect lineage (Munir et al., 2022). Although the provision of bridal gift in the form of plates is denominated by customary practice requirements, the implementation of Islamic law is also deeply embedded within it. In this context, the provision of bridal gift is no longer merely viewed in its tangible form as items of value but symbolically represents a man's readiness and responsibility to marry by providing something beneficial for his wife (Hilmy & Utami, 2021). This provision simultaneously demonstrates high respect for women (Bukido et al., 2022), who will later become partners in fulfilling religious commands to be bound in a legitimate bond.

Conclusion

The compromise between Islam and customary practices in religious practices, within the context of this article's discussion, is oriented towards achieving welfare amidst differences. Religious differences do not become barriers to the formation of open and harmonious inter-religious relationships; rather, these differences further strengthen social bonds that begin to be challenged due to the presence of new values. The compromise between Islam

and customary practices, as seen in the religious practices of Kokoda Muslims, demonstrates efforts to simultaneously implement Islamic law and customary law. *Maqāṣid syari'ah* is an Islamic legal theory that can be used to justify the acceptance of local customary practices, provided that these practices do not contradict *syari'ah*.

Kokoda Muslim practices emphasize the protection of religion, soul, intellect, lineage, and wealth by blending religious law and customary practices in diverse practices. These two entities are not opposed to each other but are compromised, thereby creating a new, more flexible understanding of the application of *syari'ah* in daily life. This article focuses on how the compromise between religion and customary practices occurs within a local community with its distinctive characteristics, thereby necessitating further studies involving other local communities, especially Muslims, to discover various models of religious practices that are still maintained in Indonesia today. This approach contributes to the global understanding of harmonizing religious teachings and customary practice demands in a multicultural society. Such studies are crucial in expanding the understanding of accommodating religious teachings and customary practices amidst the challenges of globalization, where efforts to integrate the two often result in friction or even conflict.

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