

***Antar Pakatan* and the Reproduction of Social Solidarity: A Cultural Strategy for Addressing the Economic Burden of Customary Marriage in the Sambas Malay Community**

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Abstract

In communal societies, the celebration of traditional weddings often places a significant financial burden on host families, particularly in communities that uphold strong cultural values and social honor. This challenge is also faced by many lower- to middle-income families in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. This article analyzes the *antar pakatan* tradition practiced by the Sambas Malay community as a culturally embedded social strategy to mitigate the high costs associated with customary wedding ceremonies. Utilizing a qualitative field research methodology with a socio-legal approach, the study draws on in-depth interviews and non-participant observations conducted in Sepadu Village, Sambas Regency. The findings reveal that *antar pakatan* functions as an informal mechanism of economic redistribution, grounded in the values of mutual assistance and collective participation, which are realized through voluntary contributions from guests. This tradition effectively alleviates financial pressure without diminishing the symbolic significance of customary rituals, while reinforcing social solidarity through culturally institutionalized reciprocal relationships. This article argues that *antar pakatan* represents a customary institution capable of bridging the sustainability of tradition with the need to adapt to contemporary economic challenges. Furthermore, it contributes theoretically to the study of social exchange dynamics within value-based communal societies.

[Dalam konteks masyarakat komunal, pelaksanaan pesta pernikahan adat sering kali menjadi beban ekonomi yang signifikan bagi keluarga penyelenggara, terutama dalam komunitas yang menjunjung tinggi nilai-nilai kultural dan kehormatan sosial. Hal serupa juga dialami oleh sebagian keluarga yang berpenghasilan menengah ke bawah di Kabupaten Sambas. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tradisi antar pakatan yang dipraktikkan oleh

komunitas Melayu sebagai solusi sosial berbasis kearifan lokal dalam menghadapi tingginya biaya penyelenggaraan pernikahan adat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif lapangan dengan pendekatan sosio-legal, melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi non-partisipan yang dilaksanakan di Desa Sepadu, Kabupaten Sambas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi antar pakatan berfungsi sebagai mekanisme informal redistribusi ekonomi yang dilandasi nilai gotong-royong dan partisipasi kolektif, yang diwujudkan melalui kontribusi sukarela dari tamu undangan. Tradisi ini secara efektif mereduksi tekanan finansial tanpa menghilangkan makna simbolik dalam penyelenggaraan adat, sekaligus memperkuat solidaritas sosial melalui relasi timbal balik yang dilembagakan secara kultural. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa tradisi antar pakatan merepresentasikan pranata adat yang mampu menjembatani antara keberlanjutan tradisi dan adaptasi terhadap tantangan ekonomi kontemporer, serta memberikan kontribusi teoretis terhadap kajian mengenai dinamika pertukaran sosial dalam masyarakat berbasis nilai.]

Keywords: Antar Pakatan, Customary Marriage, Economic Redistribution, Malay Community, Social Solidarity.

Introduction

In recent decades, socio-cultural transformations in marriage practices have increasingly positioned wedding ceremonies as arenas for reproducing symbolic capital. The performative display of wealth now serves as a representation of familial prestige and social legitimacy.¹ This emerging paradigm transcends geographical boundaries between urban and rural areas, permeating various socio-economic strata through deeply embedded cultural expectations that normalize excessive spending, often disproportionate to a household's financial capacity.² Such normative pressures, reinforced by collective traditions and the internalization of status-based social logics,³ have engendered economic behaviors characterized by overconsumption, debt accumulation, and long-term financial vulnerability, particularly among lower-middle-income families.⁴ This phenomenon reflects a complex interplay between cultural hegemony, economic stratification, and social conformity, transforming marriage from a personal or religious rite into a structural

¹ Oludayo Tade and Magdaline Aimeanota Nnamani, "Symbolic Status of Space: Event Centre Culture and Patronage in Nigeria," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52, no. 5 (August 2017): 646–56; Rabi Narayan Kar and Kusha Tiwari, "Is the New Normal Driving Sustainability: Evidence from Indian Wedding Industry," *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development* 18, no. 1/2 (2024): 91–105.

² Julia Pauli, "Celebrating Distinctions: Common and Conspicuous Weddings in Rural Namibia," *Ethnology* 50, no. 2 (2011): 153–67; Gloria Jiménez-Marín, Pedro Correia, and Irene García Medina, "Análisis Del Impacto Turístico De La Organización De Bodas En La Zona Del Caribe," *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, October 21, 2021, 89–109.

³ Kismullah Abdul Muthalib, Dohra Fitrisia, and Nia Zahara, "Ceremonial Language and Social Cohesion: An Analysis of Seumapa in Acehese Wedding Traditions," *Studies in English Language and Education* 11, no. 2 (June 13, 2024): 1231–47.

⁴ Mohd Khairuddin Mohad Sallehuddin, "New Mediators in Consumerism Activity on Malay Wedding," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 31, no. 1 (February 17, 2023): 125–38; Ahmad Albattat, Trisha Anne Joseph, and Abdul Azim Mazlan, "The Impact of Modernization on Malay Weddings," in *Event Tourism in Asian Countries* (Apple Academic Press, 2022), 10.

locus for reproducing social inequality.⁵ Accordingly, the economic dimensions of wedding celebrations warrant critical examination to uncover the socio-normative mechanisms that drive excessive spending and explore broader implications for distributive justice, intergenerational burdens, and the sustainability of cultural values within an evolving economic landscape.

A similar phenomenon is observable in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan, where the local Malay community faces significant economic pressures due to the high costs associated with wedding celebrations deeply rooted in customary traditions. In this context, marriage practices serve not only as expressions of cultural identity but also involve a series of ceremonial processes that require substantial expenditures—including communal feasts, customary rituals, and symbolic gestures of social respect. Collectively, these elements impose a considerable financial burden on the bride and groom's families.⁶ A local initiative known as *antar pakatan* has emerged in response to this challenge. This tradition, grounded in kinship-based cooperation and communal solidarity, aims to alleviate the financial strain of wedding celebrations.⁷ It holds promise as a locally rooted solution that can be normatively analyzed within the framework of customary law, which has received constitutional recognition in Indonesia. This study, therefore, focuses on the *antar pakatan* tradition as a customary legal mechanism that reflects the value of *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation), offering an alternative resolution to the economic challenges surrounding wedding ceremonies in the Sambas Malay community.

Cross-cultural studies have demonstrated that traditional wedding practices, while rooted in symbolic values and collective identity, often impose significant financial strain on households.⁸ In several Central Asian countries, social norms promoting opulence in wedding ceremonies have led families to spend beyond their means, frequently resorting to formal and informal debt.⁹ In other contexts, such as Uganda, the substantial financial burden has triggered shifts in gender relations, as women increasingly contribute to wedding expenses, thereby challenging entrenched patriarchal structures.¹⁰ Research from Nigeria indicates that weddings serve as mechanisms for class representation, yet simultaneously create structural barriers that compel some individuals to migrate in order to escape economically

⁵ René Provis, "Shifting Social Dynamics and Economic Inequality in the Post-Soviet Space: Networking and Participation in *Toi* among the *Novyi* Kyrgyz," *Economic Anthropology* 2, no. 2 (June 2015): 371–84.

⁶ Svetlana Yu. Barsukova, "Financial Rationality vs Traditions: On Wedding Costs of Medium Income Urban Families in Kazakhstan," *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*, no. 5 (May 15, 2024): 128–40.

⁷ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village, November 2024.

⁸ Albattat, Joseph, and Mazlan, "The Impact of Modernization on Malay Weddings," 10.

⁹ Svetlana Barsukova, "Bank Loans vs Debt within Social Networks: The Case of Central Asia," *Terra Economicus* 20, no. 3 (September 25, 2022): 87–97.

¹⁰ Erin V. Moore and Nanna Schneidermann, "Women Who Pay Their Own Brideprice: Reimagining Provider Masculinity Through Uganda's Thriving Wedding Industry," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 31, no. 2 (June 2025): 493–512.

burdensome customary expectations.¹¹ In countries like Uzbekistan, state interventions often generate tensions between modernization goals and preserving tradition, with the effectiveness of policies remaining inconsistent.¹² Similarly, in Mexico and among modern Malay communities, large expenditures for wedding receptions have prompted households to adapt economically by drawing on long-term savings, social transfers, and the redistribution of domestic labor, consequently diverting resources away from productive activities.¹³ In contrast to these findings, the institutionalized the *antar pakatan* tradition within the Sambas Malay community explicitly seeks to minimize the financial burden of wedding receptions. This article argues that this tradition not only provides a solution to economic hardship but also serves as a mechanism for strengthening social solidarity and preserving intergenerational customary values.

This study employs field research with a socio-legal approach, aiming to empirically investigate the workings of customary law through an interdisciplinary lens that integrates legal studies and social sciences. The fieldwork was conducted over three months, from October to December 2024, in Sepadu Village, Semparuk Subdistrict, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with three respected Malay customary leaders who comprehensively understand the *antar pakatan* tradition in the context of wedding receptions. Additionally, non-participant observation was conducted to obtain a contextual understanding of the tradition in practice. All data were analyzed qualitatively using the theoretical framework of social exchange theory, as developed by George Caspar Homans,¹⁴ which is considered suitable for examining social behavior as the product of reciprocal interactions, wherein the perceived benefits or costs within those exchanges influence actions.

Sambas Malay Community: Social, Religious, and Cultural Identities

Sambas Regency, located in the northernmost part of West Kalimantan Province, is a strategically important region of Indonesia that directly borders the State of Sarawak in East Malaysia.¹⁵ Geographically positioned between 0°57'29.8" and 2°04'53.1" North Latitude and 108°51'17.0" and 109°45'7.56" East Longitude, Sambas occupies a unique geopolitical and cultural position as a borderland area.¹⁶ To the north, it is bordered by the Natuna Sea and Malaysia; to the south and east, by

¹¹ Olayinka Akanle, Adefolake Olusola Ademuson, and Olufunke Olufunsho & Oguntinyinbo Adegoke, "This Is Who We Are and Why!: Ethnography of Weddings in Ibadan, Nigeria," *African Population Studies* 33, no. 1 (2019): 4686–99.

¹² Tommaso Trevisani, "Modern Weddings in Uzbekistan: Ritual Change from 'Above' and from 'Below,'" *Central Asian Survey* 35, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 61–75.

¹³ Mizuhiro Suzuki, "Affording Expensive Ceremonies: Evidence from Quinceañeras in Mexico," *Journal of Development Economics* 174 (May 2025): 103448.

¹⁴ George Caspar Homans, *Social Behavior; Its Elementary Forms* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974), 53–55.

¹⁵ Khalidah Khalid Ali, "A Discourse on the Malay Cultural Identity Within the Malaysian Society," *Kajian Malaysia* 40, no. 1 (April 27, 2022): 83–107.

¹⁶ Pemerintah Daerah Sambas, "Laporan Kinerja Instansi Pemerintah Kabupaten Sambas" (Sambas: Pemerintah Daerah Sambas, 2022), 1–2.

Bengkayang Regency and the City of Singkawang; while its western frontier opens to the Natuna Sea. Covering an area of 6,394.70 km²—with a coastline extending nearly 200 km and maritime waters spanning over 1,467.84 km²—Sambas possesses significant potential in maritime economics, border politics, and transnational cultural networks.¹⁷

The demographic structure of Sambas Regency reveals a large and dispersed population across 19 subdistricts and 195 villages, totaling approximately 654,912 residents. Sajingan Besar is the largest subdistrict in terms of land area, while Salatiga is the smallest. Tebas ranks as the most densely populated area, unlike East Selakau, which has the fewest residents. This spatial and demographic variation not only illustrates the geographic distribution of the population but also highlights the social and cultural dynamics that contribute to a heterogeneous yet integrated societal structure. Within this landscape, the Malay community, particularly the Sambas Malay subgroup, emerges as the dominant ethnocultural group, playing a central role in shaping local social systems, political structures, and collective cultural expressions in this border region.¹⁸

The collective identity of the Sambas Malay community is intricately linked to the historical spread of Islam and the establishment of traditional Islamic political institutions, most notably the Sultanate of Sambas. Historically, this community is part of the broader Dayak-Melayic ethnolinguistic group, sharing genealogical and linguistic connections with other Dayak groups such as the Banjar, Iban, and Kanayatn. The transition from Dayak-Melayic to Malay identity occurred gradually, in tandem with the spread of Islamic proselytization originating from the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. Islamization transformed the belief system and catalyzed the emergence of a new social order rooted in Islamic values as cultural foundations.¹⁹ In this context, local cultural expression is inseparable from religious elements, encapsulated in the slogan “The Malay World is the Islamic World,” which serves as both a historical and ideological framework for Malay identity in Sambas.²⁰

Cultural identity within the Sambas Malay community has undergone significant transformation through linguistic evolution and shifts in various cultural expressions.²¹ The Melayic language, which serves as the primary means of communication, has experienced intricate phonological, morphological, and syntactic developments, ultimately resulting in the distinct Sambas Malay dialect. These changes reinforce the notion that cultural identity is dynamic—a product of ongoing historical, social, and political interactions. As highlighted in linguistic and anthropological scholarship, language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a symbol of cultural power and a manifestation of

¹⁷ Pemerintah Daerah Sambas, 3.

¹⁸ Pemerintah Daerah Sambas, 42.

¹⁹ Ibrahim Ibrahim, “Al-Ṭuqūs wa ‘Alāqatuhā bi Huwīyat Muslimī Ulu Kapuas, Kalimantan al-Gharbīyah,” *Studia Islamika* 25, no. 3 (December 4, 2018): 543–88.

²⁰ Rizal Mustansyir, *Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Melayu Sambas dalam Tinjauan Filosofis* (Yogyakarta: Fakultas Filsafat UGM, 2015), ix.

²¹ Purniadi Putra et al., “The Use Malays-Sambas Expressions in Developing Character Education in Sambas Primary Madrasah in Millennial Era,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 9, no. 2 (May 30, 2021): 331.

collective identity. Therefore, preserving local language and culture is a crucial strategy for safeguarding the cultural autonomy of community, particularly in the face of modernization pressures and the encroachment of global values.²²

The intersection of social, religious, and cultural identities within the Sambas Malay community is reflected in the management of social institutions, customary structures, and daily religious practices.²³ Islam serves not only as the predominant religion but also as a normative framework that influences social governance, collective decision-making, and customary economic and legal practices. The historical role of the Sultanate of Sambas in integrating Islamic values into the local social system remains relevant today, as evidenced by the continuation of traditional ceremonies, the structure of community institutions, and the authority of religious leaders who play pivotal roles in community life. In this context, religion, custom, and culture are not perceived as separate domains but rather as an interconnected normative configuration that collectively shapes social order and sustains the ethno-cultural identity of the Sambas Malay society.²⁴

***Antar Pakatan* Tradition in the Customary Marriage Structure of the Sambas Malay Community**

Marriage within the Sambas Malay community is not merely a personal union between two individuals; rather, it is a social event that embodies communal cohesion and is deeply rooted in customary norms and kinship networks.²⁵ As a representation of traditional social structures, marriage signifies not only a change in social status but also serves as a platform for articulating customary institutions that govern the distribution of roles, responsibilities, and collective contributions.²⁶ A key feature exemplifying this is the tradition of *antar pakatan*, a form of communal contribution in which community members support the host family of a wedding by providing essential items—primarily chickens and rice. This tradition plays a vital role in the early phase of the wedding festivities, particularly on the *hari kecil* or *hari motong*, which marks the beginning of a two-day customary wedding celebration, culminating in the *hari besar*.²⁷

The practice of the *antar pakatan* tradition operates through an informally institutionalized social mechanism that requires no written rules or formal legal

²² Kristianus, "Nasionalisme Etnik di Kalimantan Barat," *Masyarakat Indonesia* 37, no. 2 (December 19, 2011): 147–76.

²³ Nurmawati Nurmawati et al., "The Projection of Cultural Shift Rejuvenation about Fostering Islamic Education and its Counterpart within Malay Community," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 8, no. 1 (January 30, 2020): 1–16.

²⁴ Lisa Ranti Mardiyanti, Iwan Ramadhan, and Heri Kurnia, "Profil Melayu Sambas dalam Konteks Asal-Usul, Tradisi dan Budaya di Kalimantan Barat," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Budaya Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (May 1, 2023): 1–9.

²⁵ Siew-Ean Khoo, "Educational Attainments, Inter-Ethnic Marriage and Social Cohesion," in *Social Cohesion in Australia*, ed. Emma Dawson, James Jupp, and John Nieuwenhuysen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 114–28.

²⁶ Dwi Suryahartati et al., "The Local Customary Law: The Contribution of Adat Law in Preserving the Lubuk Larangan in Jambi," *Jambe Law Journal* 4, no. 1 (November 14, 2021): 43–68.

²⁷ SA, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village, November 2024.

sanctions. Invitations to attend a wedding are extended through a system known as *disaro*, a kinship-based method of invitation that implies more than a mere request for presence.²⁸ It carries a moral obligation, whereby each family receiving the invitation implicitly understands their duty to contribute a *pakatan*. Over time, the nature of this contribution has been simplified—from including chickens, rice, sugar, and condensed milk to now typically comprising a single chicken and a sack of rice. Nevertheless, the significance of the contribution lies not in its quantity or material value, but in the act of participating in a mutual assistance system rooted in local values. As noted by MS: “*The weight of the chicken and rice is not specified; it depends on the giver’s ability.*”²⁹ This statement reflects the voluntary nature of the tradition while affirming its moral obligation within the community.

Antar pakatan’s implementation reveals a socially coordinated system that, while informal, is highly effective. Although not governed by formal institutions, its execution is often facilitated by local community figures or neighborhood leaders (RT or *Rukun Tetangga*) who possess social authority. As DI stated: “*When someone hosts a wedding, members of the community come together to assist—it has all coordinated through the RT and other local organizations.*”³⁰ This statement illustrates how the continuity of tradition depends on local social institutions that act as intermediaries between customary values and contemporary community dynamics. Consequently, the *antar pakatan* tradition is not merely a practice of cultural preservation; it also embodies a form of community-based governance that ensures the sustainability of tradition within a framework of social order.³¹

Interestingly, the endurance of the *antar pakatan* tradition is further strengthened by a non-coercive system of social control that exerts significant regulatory influence. The lack of formal legal sanctions does not diminish social pressure; societal norms foster a robust collective awareness.³² Many residents hesitate to attend a wedding if they cannot bring a *pakatan*—not out of fear of social punishment, but due to social shame. As DI observed: “*Most people will not attend unless they bring a pakatan. Out of ten individuals, perhaps only one will participate [on hari motong].*”³³ It indicates that the unwritten customary laws within the community have a regulatory capacity that rivals or even surpasses the effectiveness of formal legal systems in promoting social compliance.³⁴

Furthermore, the resilience of the *antar pakatan* tradition amid social change lies not only in its functional role but also in its ability to preserve substantive

²⁸ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

²⁹ MS, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village, December 2024.

³⁰ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

³¹ S. Miri Ghaffarzadeh, H. Nazari, and N. Saadat, “Wedding Celebration Customs of West Azerbaijan and Urmia in Tradition,” *Life Science Journal* 9, no. 4 (2012): 4811–14.

³² Handika Purnama, “Hukum Islam, Adat dan Hukum Negara dalam Perkawinan Masyarakat Suku Melayu di Pekanbaru Riau: Keabsahan, Etika, dan Administrasi Perkawinan,” *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 14, no. 1 (May 4, 2021): 1–10.

³³ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

³⁴ Asrizal Saiin et al., “The Domination of Islamic Law in Customary Matrimonial Ceremonies: Islamic Values within the Malay Marriage Tradition in Kepulauan Riau,” *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 16, no. 2 (December 29, 2023): 320–41.

meaning despite changes in form. DI emphasized: “*There is no difference between the antar pakatan of the past and the present—the goal remains mutual assistance.*”³⁵ This statement suggests that, although the physical aspects of the practice may have been simplified, the core values of solidarity, mutual aid, and social responsibility continue to endure. The tradition has been institutionalized as a living social practice, rather than being reduced to a ceremonial cultural artifact. Essentially, the *antar pakatan* tradition exemplifies how the Sambas Malay community constructs and sustains social order through customary norms, serving as a symbol of cultural heritage and an effective system for regulating collective behavior. This tradition further illustrates that in communal societies, the law does not always originate from the state; instead, it may arise from social mechanisms rooted in collective consciousness and legitimized by tradition.³⁶ In this context, *antar pakatan* tradition is not a peripheral aspect of the wedding ritual. However, it is core—sustaining the rhythm of social harmony, collectively distributing economic burdens, and reinforcing community cohesion amid the increasing complexities of modern life.

Social, Economic, and Moral Functions of the *Antar Pakatan* Tradition in Fostering Communal Solidarity

The *antar pakatan* tradition within the Sambas Malay community is not merely a cultural aspect of wedding rites; it is a multifaceted social institution that underpins the sustainability of communal solidarity.³⁷ Beyond its ceremonial function, it serves as an active social mechanism for fostering inter-family interactions and affirming binding norms of social obligation within the framework of traditional society. This tradition is a collective medium that strengthens interpersonal and inter-familial relationships in a social system oriented toward shared responsibility and cooperation. As DI remarked: “*Antar pakatan is a moment to foster strong relationships among families and within the community, while honoring the traditions passed down from our ancestors.*”³⁸ This statement illustrates how the tradition serves as an expressive space for kinship values, which are manifested through active participation in shared social events.³⁹

From a functionalist perspective, the *antar pakatan* tradition is vital in redistributing social and economic burdens. It functions as an informal mechanism through which individuals from diverse economic backgrounds collectively support the financial demands of customary wedding celebrations—costs that often present a significant challenge to host families. In cases where the families involved face economic constraints, community contributions through this tradition serve as a

³⁵ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

³⁶ Purnama, “Hukum Islam, Adat dan Hukum Negara dalam Perkawinan Masyarakat Suku Melayu di Pekanbaru Riau,” 1–10.

³⁷ Miri Ghaffarzadeh, Nazari, and Saadat, “Wedding Celebration Customs of West Azerbaijan and Urmia in Tradition,” 4811–14.

³⁸ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

³⁹ Karin Polit, “Gifts of Love and Friendship: On Changing Marriage Traditions, the Meaning of Gifts, and the Value of Women in the Garhwal Himalayas,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 22, no. 2 (August 2018): 285–307.

foundational support system, ensuring that the ceremony proceeds following established customary norms. SA explained: “*Antar pakatan is a form of community contribution that addresses the needs of a wedding ceremony through mutual deliberation.*”⁴⁰ This statement affirms that the tradition represents a pragmatic social consensus, where collective participation aims to achieve a balanced distribution of both burdens and social benefits within the community.⁴¹

In rural societies characterized by kinship networks and horizontal social relations, the *antar pakatan* tradition functions as a system of moral economy grounded in voluntarism, sincerity, and communal consensus.⁴² No legally binding standards govern contributions; the tradition operates through shared values upheld by collective awareness. It is viewed as a form of social protection that ensures all families can fulfill customary obligations with dignity regardless of their economic status. Within this framework, the tradition becomes embedded in the community’s microeconomic structure as an alternative to exclusive market mechanisms. It serves as a form of social capital that facilitates resource allocation based on reciprocity and trust.⁴³

Beyond its economic utility, the *antar pakatan* tradition also assumes a crucial moral role in preserving social cohesion. It embodies norms of courtesy, respect, and social responsibility toward the community.⁴⁴ Within the context of Sambas, non-participation in this tradition—although not subject to formal legal sanctions—is often regarded as a violation of communal ethics. MS affirmed: “*This tradition deserves to be preserved because, when weddings are conducted in accordance with it, the sense of brotherhood and mutual assistance grows stronger.*”⁴⁵ This statement indicates that the tradition fosters communal values, reinforcing social bonds and shaping a collective identity rooted in mutual respect and empathy. Furthermore, the symbolic significance of the *antar pakatan* tradition lies in its function as a vehicle for preserving local values that emphasize openness, harmony, and social trust. The tradition continually generates and sustains social networks through shared participation in wedding events, facilitating the dissemination of values that unite the community. DI elaborated, “*This tradition is not only a means of economic support but also a way to strengthen emotional ties and promote social reconciliation among the families involved.*”⁴⁶ It reinforces the notion that the *antar pakatan* tradition constitutes a productive social space that enables the ongoing

⁴⁰ SA, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁴¹ Saiin et al., “The Domination of Islamic Law in Customary Matrimonial Ceremonies,” 320–41.

⁴² Khairuddin et al., “Belo Bellen as Compulsory Delivery in Aceh Singkil Wedding: ‘Urf and Islamic Law Anthropology Review,” *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 19, no. 1 (June 15, 2024): 151–73; Fathurrahman Azhari, Hariyanto, and Muhammad Rifqi Hidayat, “Giving Jujuran in Socio-Cultural Marriage of Banjar Community,” *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences -- Formerly Kasetsart Journal (Social Sciences)* 045, no. 1 (2024): 215–24.

⁴³ Polit, “Gifts of Love and Friendship,” 285–307.

⁴⁴ Muthalib, Fitrisia, and Zahara, “Ceremonial Language and Social Cohesion,” 1231–47.

⁴⁵ MS, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁴⁶ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

reproduction of social structures while bolstering solidarity through collective action embedded in cultural practices.⁴⁷

The enduring strength of the *antar pakatan* tradition also lies in its nature as a living law—a normative system sustained by collective social consciousness rather than imposed by external authority.⁴⁸ Its legitimacy is derived from participation and consensus, rather than codified enforcement. All three informants interviewed for this study affirmed that no disputes or resistance toward the practice have occurred.⁴⁹ As SA observed: “*There has never been a conflict because the purpose of this custom is good.*”⁵⁰ This statement highlights the widespread societal acceptance of the tradition as a legitimate social norm, despite its lack of formal institutionalization. Therefore, the *antar pakatan* tradition is not merely a cultural remnant of the past; it is a living social institution that actively maintains social equilibrium, equitably redistributes economic burdens, and reinforces everyday ethics.⁵¹ Amid the pressures of modernization, which often promote individualism and the fragmentation of values, the continuity of this tradition reflects the adaptive capacity of local communities to uphold principles of social justice and collective participation rooted in indigenous wisdom. Its preservation is not only critical in cultural terms but also foundational for building inclusive and resilient social systems grounded in dynamic local values.

Antar Pakatan as a Social Mechanism for Addressing the Financial Challenges of Wedding Ceremonies

In communal societies, the organization of wedding celebrations is not merely an individual rite of passage; rather, it is a socially significant event imbued with collective expectations, the reinforcement of family status, and the preservation of cultural traditions.⁵² Beneath these symbolic meanings, however, customary marriage practices often carry substantial economic implications.⁵³ The Sambas Malay community celebrates traditional weddings over two consecutive days, *hari kecil* and *hari besar*, requiring extensive arrangements that include communal feasting, ceremonial decorations, venue preparation, and traditional entertainment.⁵⁴ The high costs associated with such events frequently impose a significant financial burden on the families of the bride and groom,⁵⁵ particularly

⁴⁷ Polit, “Gifts of Love and Friendship,” 285–307.

⁴⁸ Darsul S. Puyu et al., “Mansai in the Marriage Tradition of the Banggai Ethnic in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia: A Living Sunnah Perspective,” *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 3 (July 12, 2023): 1352–72.

⁴⁹ MS, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village; DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁵⁰ SA, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁵¹ Polit, “Gifts of Love and Friendship,” 285–307; Muthalib, Fitrisia, and Zahara, “Ceremonial Language and Social Cohesion,” 1231–47.

⁵² Tade and Nnamani, “Symbolic Status of Space,” 646–656.

⁵³ Albattat, Joseph, and Mazlan, “The Impact of Modernization on Malay Weddings,” 10.

⁵⁴ Field Notes from Observation of the *Antar Pekatan* Tradition, October 2024.

⁵⁵ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

those from lower and middle-income groups, and may even lead to household debt or long-term financial instability following the wedding.

In response to this reality, the Sambas Malay community has developed the *antar pakatan* tradition as a grassroots strategy rooted in solidarity and the principle of *gotong-royong*. This practice allows invited guests to contribute material support, typically a chicken and a sack of rice, voluntarily offered on the *hari kecil* as a form of assistance to the host family.⁵⁶ Such participation is not merely an act of goodwill or customary philanthropy; rather, it constitutes an informally organized economic redistribution mechanism that effectively alleviates the financial burden of wedding ceremonies through collective action. The value of the contribution is not assessed in monetary terms but rather in its participatory dimension, which strengthens social relationships and enables the continuation of wedding practices under local norms, all while avoiding undue strain on household finances. The *antar pakatan* tradition operates on the principle of reciprocity: individuals who contribute not only gain social recognition but also build trust and accumulate symbolic capital within their social networks.⁵⁷ Participation in this tradition signifies active involvement in maintaining the structural balance of the community, where support extended to others is anticipated to be reciprocated in future events. This experience of mutual aid yields non-material social rewards, such as respect, reputation, and enhanced status within the community. As SA explained: “*Antar pakatan is a form of community contribution aimed at fulfilling the needs of a wedding event through collective deliberation.*”⁵⁸ This statement indicates that the tradition is not motivated by legal obligation but by a shared understanding of the importance of redistributing responsibilities and fostering social harmony.⁵⁹

In addition, the *antar pakatan* tradition functions as a moral system that regulates economic behavior without state intervention or formal legal sanctions. In a society that relies heavily on horizontal social relations, this tradition provides an economic framework governed by normative values—such as voluntarism, deliberation, and social concern—that guide resource management. The absence of fixed standards regarding the quantity or value of contributions illustrates the tradition’s social flexibility; however, it remains underpinned by powerful unwritten norms. Guests who do not participate often feel reluctant to attend weddings, not out of fear of punishment, but due to moral pressure and social shame. These dynamics position the *antar pakatan* tradition as a form of living law—a body of norms embedded in collective consciousness and enforced through symbolic yet effective social oversight.⁶⁰

The relevance of the *antar pakatan* tradition extends beyond its social and economic functions to encompass its symbolic significance. It fosters repeated

⁵⁶ MS, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁵⁷ Polit, “Gifts of Love and Friendship,” 285–307.

⁵⁸ SA, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁵⁹ Saiin et al., “The Domination of Islamic Law in Customary Matrimonial Ceremonies,” 320–41.

⁶⁰ Puyu et al., “Mansai in the Marriage Tradition of the Banggai Ethnic in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia,” 1352–72.

social interactions during wedding ceremonies, acting as a vehicle for preserving local values, strengthening intra-community integration, and facilitating social reconciliation through collective practices. As DI noted: “*This tradition serves not only as a means of economic assistance but also as a way to strengthen emotional bonds and promote reconciliation among the families involved.*”⁶¹ Such practices demonstrate that redistributing economic burdens is not merely transactional but also affective and identity-affirming. In other words, the *antar pakatan* tradition operates within a broader framework of social exchange, where economic actions are motivated not by personal profit but by the desire to build, sustain, and reinforce shared systems of value.⁶²

An evaluation of the functionality of the *antar pakatan* tradition reveals that it effectively bridges the gap between cultural preservation and the community’s economic challenges. It serves as a social institution that not only safeguards the continuity of customary rites but also promotes a more equitable distribution of wedding-related costs. The absence of social resistance to this practice⁶³ indicates its widespread acceptance and legitimacy as a community-sanctioned norm. Consequently, the *antar pakatan* tradition should not be viewed merely as a vestige of cultural heritage; rather, it should be recognized as a dynamic, effective, and sustainable system of collective resource management. It contributes to the development of an inclusive social order, reinforces communal participation, and upholds principles of social justice amid economic pressures and the complexities of modern life.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The *antar pakatan* tradition within the Sambas Malay community is not merely a ceremonial aspect of customary weddings; rather, it is a complex and multidimensional social institution that effectively regulates economic burdens and fosters communal solidarity. Operating within a social exchange framework rooted in *gotong-royong* (mutual cooperation) and collective consciousness, this tradition facilitates an informal yet structured redistribution of resources through voluntary contributions from community members to the host family. Although not formally institutionalized within the national legal system, this mechanism demonstrates a high regulatory capacity through internalizing social norms, symbolic recognition, and non-coercive moral pressure. Consequently, the *antar pakatan* tradition serves not only as an adaptive response to the financial challenges associated with customary wedding practices but also as an integrative instrument that maintains social stability, reinforces interpersonal relationships, and sustains collective values within a continually evolving social landscape.

⁶¹ DI, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁶² Polit, “Gifts of Love and Friendship,” 285–307.

⁶³ SA, Interview with a Malay Traditional Leader in Seladu Village.

⁶⁴ Saiin et al., “The Domination of Islamic Law in Customary Matrimonial Ceremonies,” 320–41; Purnama, “Hukum Islam, Adat dan Hukum Negara dalam Perkawinan Masyarakat Suku Melayu di Pekanbaru Riau,” 1–10.

This study conceptually expands the analytical framework for understanding social exchange practices within local cultural contexts. It affirms customary institutions' transformative potential in addressing communities' structural challenges. The theoretical implications emphasize that social solidarity can be constructed and maintained through non-material patterns of reciprocal interaction. The *antar pakatan* tradition is a relevant model for managing collective economic burdens that could be replicated in other communal societies. Nevertheless, the study is limited in its geographic scope and the relatively small number of participants involved, suggesting that any generalization of its findings should be approached with caution and contextual sensitivity. Further research employing comparative cross-cultural methodologies and larger sample sizes is essential to assess the applicability of this model in other regions and to investigate the interactions between customary institutions, resistance to economic pressures, and the sustainability of local values in contemporary societies. In this context, the contribution of this study is not solely descriptive or empirical. It also establishes a conceptual framework for broader discussions regarding the role of traditional institutions in promoting inclusive, resilient, and locally rooted models of social development.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical considerations.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflicts of interest were reported by the authors.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with established research ethics principles. Informed consent was obtained from all informants before participation.

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