The Symbolic Meaning of Sumomba: A Study of Marriage Practices in the Mappurondo Indigenous Tradition

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of the Sumomba tradition, identify the symbolic meanings embedded in each stage and traditional equipment, and analyse its continuity within Mappurondo traditional marriage amid social changes in the community. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Informants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data were analysed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the Sumomba tradition consists of four main stages: messisik, mekutana, meusik, and Sumomba, which are conducted according to Mappurondo customary rules. Each stage and traditional object carries symbolic meanings associated with respect, responsibility, social harmony, and aspirations for married life. Despite ongoing social changes, the Mappurondo community continues to preserve the Sumomba tradition as an essential component of its cultural identity while maintaining its core values and customary principles. The findings contribute to the sociological understanding of indigenous marriage traditions by demonstrating how symbolic meanings are reproduced through ritual practices and customary objects.

Kata Kunci: Makna Simbolik; Sumomba; Mappurondo; Perkawinan Adat..

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan tradisi Sumomba, mengidentifikasi makna simbolik yang terkandung dalam setiap tahapan dan perlengkapan adat, serta menganalisis keberlangsungannya dalam perkawinan adat Mappurondo di tengah perubahan sosial dalam masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Informan dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi Sumomba terdiri atas empat tahapan utama, yaitu messisik, mekutana, meusik, dan Sumomba, yang dilaksanakan berdasarkan aturan adat Mappurondo. Setiap tahapan dan perlengkapan adat mengandung makna simbolik yang berkaitan dengan penghormatan, tanggung jawab, keharmonisan sosial, serta harapan terhadap kehidupan rumah tangga. Meskipun masyarakat terus mengalami perubahan sosial, komunitas Mappurondo tetap mempertahankan tradisi Sumomba sebagai bagian penting dari identitas budaya mereka dengan tetap menjaga nilai-nilai inti dan prinsip-prinsip adat. Temuan penelitian ini berkontribusi terhadap pemahaman sosiologis mengenai tradisi perkawinan masyarakat adat dengan menunjukkan bagaimana makna simbolik direproduksi melalui praktik ritual dan penggunaan perlengkapan adat.

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Introduction

Indonesia is characterized by considerable cultural and religious diversity, which has given rise to various indigenous traditions, including customary marriage practices.[1] Customary marriage serves not only as a union between a man and a woman but also as a means of preserving cultural values, social norms, cultural identity, and social relationships within the community.[2,3] One manifestation of this cultural diversity can be found among the Mamasa community in West Sulawesi, which has historically maintained close ties with the ancestral belief system of Mappurondo.

Mappurondo functions not only as a system of belief but also as a normative framework that regulates relationships among human beings, ancestors, nature, and the supernatural.[4,5] Its values are embedded in everyday social relations, customary norms, communal solidarity, and cultural identity.[6] Although Christianity and Islam have become established among many Mamasa communities, the thesis documents that ancestral customary principles continue to influence social life in several Mappurondo communities.[7]

One of the customary practices associated with Mappurondo is Sumomba, a ritual embedded in the traditional marriage process of the Mappurondo community.[8] The practice remains observable in Dusun Tanete, Desa Salumokanan Utara, Kecamatan Rantebulahan Timur, Kabupaten Mamasa. The research site is particularly significant because the thesis identifies Tanete as the only hamlet within Salumokanan Utara where the Mappurondo belief

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[1] RR Dewi Anggraeni, "Islamic Law and Customary Law in Contemporary Legal Pluralism in Indonesia: Tension and Constraints," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 1 (June 16, 2023), https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v23i1.32549.

[2] Setiyawan, D., Wahyuningsih, S. E., Hafidz, J., Mashdurohatun, A., & Benseghir, M. (2024). Exploring Abhakalan Culture (Early Marriage) in Madura: A Dialogue of Customary Law, Religion, and The State. AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah, 24(2), 345–364. https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v24i2.36070.

[3] Hairuddin K., Iskandar, A. M., & Harifuddin, H. (2024). The Honor of Women and Belis in Manggarai Traditional Marriage Customs. Society, 12(2), 214–224. https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v12i2.339.

[4] Hidayat, F. (2025). Ada' Mappurondo, Indigenous Religion Resurgence and State Accommodation in Indonesia. Indigenous Southeast Asian and Ethnic Studies, 1(1), 74–94. https://doi.org/10.32678/iseaes.v1i1.17.

[5] Rozi, S., Jamaldi, Pismawenzi, & Ishaq, M. (2026). A Deconstruction of Religion Meaning for the Religious Right in the Indigenous Community of Mentawai Indonesia. International Journal on Minority and Group Rights, 1–32. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-bja10265.

[6] Ferdy Hidayat, "Eksistensi Paondo Sebagai Model Pengajaran Bagi Penghayat Ada' Mappurondo Di Desa Ranteberang, Kabupaten Mamasa," *PUSAKA* 11, no. 2 (November 5, 2023): 245–60, https://doi.org/10.31969/pusaka.v11i2.1224.

[7] Mahyuddin Mahyuddin et al., "Reviving the Authority of Customary and Religious Institutions: Sustaining Post Conflict Peace in Mamasa, Indonesia," *Jurnal Sosiologi Reflektif* 20, no. 2 (April 30, 2026): 251–80, https://doi.org/10.14421/jsr.v20i2.3826.

[8] Ferdy Hidayat, "Ada' Mappurondo, Indigenous Religion Resurgence and State Accommodation in Indonesia," *Indigenous Southeast Asian and Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (March 2025): 74–94, https://doi.org/10.32678/iseaes.v1i1.17.

system and Sumomba ritual are still practiced, with 19 families recorded in the hamlet. At the same time, the practice is becoming less frequent as the number of community members adhering to Mappurondo decreases. This situation places Sumomba at an important intersection between cultural continuity and social transformation.

The continuity of Sumomba cannot be separated from broader changes in the social environment. Modernization, formal education, urbanization, media exposure, and the increasing influence of formal religious institutions have contributed to transformations in the ways younger generations encounter and understand inherited cultural practices.[9] The study indicates that these changes have created concerns regarding the decreasing frequency of Sumomba and the possibility that younger community members may participate in customary rituals without fully understanding their symbolic and spiritual meanings. Nevertheless, the empirical findings also demonstrate that social change has not resulted in the complete abandonment of the tradition. Instead, certain elements of marriage practice have changed, particularly clothing and the way prospective spouses are selected, while the principal stages and customary rules of Sumomba remain largely preserved.

Existing scholarship has established the importance of Mappurondo in understanding the social and cultural life of indigenous communities in Mamasa. Saputra & Mordekai for example, examined the cultural and ecological relationship between Aluk Mappurondo and Christianity, emphasizing the negotiation of religious differences and the preservation of ethical and ecological values.[10] Similarly, Nurkidam & Mahyudin, investigated Ada' Mappurondo taboos and demonstrated how local customary knowledge contributes to ecological preservation through the interaction of cultural and religious values.[11] These studies establish Mappurondo as an important subject for examining belief, social relations, and local knowledge. However, their primary focus is on cosmology, interreligious relations, and ecological wisdom rather than the symbolic dimensions of marriage rituals.

This limitation reveals an important research gap. Scholarly attention to Mappurondo has not sufficiently examined Sumomba as a marriage ritual through which symbolic meanings are produced, communicated, and reproduced among individuals and families. The

[9] Jon Schubert and Jason Sumich, "Unseeing Urban Divides in Luanda and Maputo," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 44, no. 2 (April 28, 2026): 227–42, https://doi.org/10.1177/02637758251344823.

[10] Jefri Andri Saputra and Mordekai Mordekai, "Studi Cross-Textual Reading Terhadap Kisah Padi Pulut Dan Kisah Elia Dan Janda Di Sarfat," *Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja* 7, no. 1 (April 30, 2023): 54–74, https://doi.org/10.37368/ja.v7i1.516.

[11] Andi Nurkidam and Mahyudin, "Ada' Mappurondo Taboo: Ecological Wisdom of the Mamasa Community in Maintaining Natural Preservation," *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 16, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 153–67, https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v16i2.7087.

existing literature provides limited explanation of how specific ritual stages and customary objects acquire meaning within the social interaction of the Mappurondo community. This gap is significant because Sumomba is not simply a sequence of ceremonial activities; it constitutes a symbolic system through which respect for families, marital commitment, responsibility, social harmony, kinship relations, and aspirations for family life are expressed.

The study is theoretically positioned within Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism, particularly the proposition that people act toward objects on the basis of the meanings those objects have for them, that such meanings emerge through social interaction, and that meanings are interpreted and modified through ongoing social processes.[12] This perspective is particularly relevant to Sumomba because the meanings attached to ritual stages, objects, gestures, and customary practices are not inherent in the material objects themselves. Rather, they are collectively understood and transmitted through interactions among customary authorities, couples, families, and community members. The study therefore approaches Sumomba as a socially constructed symbolic practice whose meanings are continuously reproduced through cultural interaction.

Against this background, this study aims to examine three interconnected dimensions of Sumomba in the Mappurondo traditional marriage of the Tanete community: (1) the process and stages through which Sumomba is performed; (2) the symbolic meanings embedded in each ritual stage and the customary objects used in its performance; and (3) the continuity of Sumomba amid social change within the Mappurondo community. The originality of this study lies in bringing these three dimensions together within a single sociological analysis of an understudied indigenous marriage practice. Rather than treating Sumomba merely as a cultural heritage or ceremonial tradition, this study conceptualizes it as a symbolic social practice through which cultural meanings, family relationships, customary norms, and collective identity are maintained and negotiated.

Research Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to examine the implementation, symbolic meanings, and continuity of Sumomba within the Mappurondo traditional marriage system. The study was conducted in Dusun Tanete, Desa Salumokanan Utara, Kecamatan Rantebulahan Timur, Kabupaten Mamasa, West Sulawesi, Indonesia. The location was purposively selected because the community continues to practice Mappurondo beliefs and

[12] Thomas J. Morrione, *Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, and 21st-Century Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2021).

the Sumomba marriage ritual. The study involved six informants selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in Sumomba. The informants consisted of two sando or Mappurondo customary leaders, one village community leader, and three Tanete community members.

Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, while secondary data were derived from relevant books, scientific articles, research reports, and other written materials. Observations focused on the stages of Sumomba, customary objects, the role of the sando, and community participation. In-depth interviews were guided by questions concerning the implementation of Sumomba, the meanings attributed to ritual symbols and customary objects, and the continuity of the tradition amid social change. The interview guide was developed from the research questions, while follow-up questions were introduced when necessary to clarify participants' responses and deepen the interpretation of observed practices.[13] Documentation included photographs, videos, audio recordings, and relevant field materials.

The researcher served as the primary instrument, supported by an interview guide, observation sheet, and documentation equipment. Data analysis was conducted continuously through data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing.[14] Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials were organized into thematic categories concerning ritual processes, symbolic meanings, cultural values, social functions, and the continuity of Sumomba. The resulting themes were interpreted using Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism to examine how meanings were produced and maintained through interaction among customary leaders, couples, families, and community members.

Result and Discusion

The findings show that Sumomba is not merely a ceremonial component of Mappurondo customary marriage but a socially organized process through which marriage is negotiated, symbolized, and legitimized between two extended families. The practice consists of four interconnected stages messisik, mekutana, meusik, and Sumomba with each stage involving particular actors, objects, interactions, and meanings. The findings further indicate that the symbolic meanings attached to customary objects are collectively understood and

[13] Daniel M. Abraham and P. Padmakumari, "Developing Qualitative Interview Guides: A Methodological Framework for Novice Researchers," *Nurse Education Today* 163 (August 2026): 107116, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2026.107116.

[14] J. D. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage Publications., 2017).

transmitted across generations. At the same time, although aspects of marriage practice have changed, particularly clothing and the way prospective partners are selected, the principal stages and customary rules of Sumomba remain maintained.

The Process of Sumomba in Mappurondo Customary Marriage

The first major finding concerns the sequential character of Sumomba. The research identified four interconnected stages: messisik, mekutana, meusik, and Sumomba as the culmination of the customary marriage process. Rather than functioning as separate ceremonies, these stages form a continuous social process in which the two families gradually establish communication, negotiate acceptance, confirm the marriage relationship, and finally conduct the customary marriage ceremony.

At the messisik stage, the family of the prospective groom communicates its intention to the prospective bride's family through an intermediary, particularly parents or family representatives. The process involves bringing a lipak (sarong) as part of the customary arrangement. The finding indicates that this initial stage is important because it establishes the first formal communication between the two families. The action is therefore not simply an expression of individual interest in marriage; it initiates a relationship between two kinship groups within the normative framework of Mappurondo customary practice.

Following acceptance from the woman's family, the process continues to mekutana, the formal proposal stage. The man's family sends several representatives to the woman's house, accompanied by customary items such as sirih and pinang. At this stage, the families discuss the continuation of the marriage process and establish agreement concerning subsequent stages. The findings consequently reveal that marriage is constructed through communication and mutual agreement rather than through a unilateral decision by either family.

The next stage, meusik, involves the presentation of a sissim (ring) by the man's side to the woman's side. The ring functions as an indication that the proposal has been accepted and that the relationship has reached a more formally recognized stage within customary practice. Other objects, including sirih, pinang, a traditional plate (pindam), and lime, may also accompany this stage. Importantly, the timing of the final Sumomba ceremony is also discussed and agreed upon during meusik.

An additional transitional practice occurs after meusik, when the man's side brings firewood to the woman's house. The wood is wrapped in a sarong and placed in the kitchen.

Within the local understanding documented in the study, this action indicates that the Sumomba ceremony is approaching and signals an increasingly close relationship between the two families. Thus, the object and action simultaneously communicate information, mark a transition, and confirm that the marriage process has progressed to its final stage.

The final stage is Sumomba, which represents the culmination of the customary marriage process. At this stage, the man's family and extended relatives come together and bring various customary objects, including lipak, traditional plates, doke (spear), piso (machete), buah maja/buah bila, lime, and other materials according to customary provisions. The findings demonstrate that Sumomba therefore involves considerably more than the union of a bride and groom. It constitutes a collective event in which the two extended families become socially connected through a recognized customary process.

Table 1. Stages and social functions of Sumomba

Stage	Main activity	Social function
Messisik	Communication of marriage intention and presentation of lipak	Initiates communication and establishes relations between the two families
Mekutana	Formal proposal and discussion between family representatives	Produces agreement concerning the continuation of the marriage process
Meusik	Presentation of sissim and other customary objects	Confirms acceptance and strengthens the marriage relationship
Transitional practice	Delivery of wrapped firewood to the woman's house	Signals that Sumomba is approaching and marks the progression of the relationship
Sumomba	Culminating customary marriage ceremony	Integrates the two extended families through customary rules and collective participation

Source : Research Results 2026.

The sequence presented in Table 1 demonstrates an important sociological finding: the marriage process is organized as progressive social interaction. Each stage depends upon the outcome of the preceding stage. This characteristic corresponds closely with Blumer's symbolic interactionist perspective, particularly the idea that social action emerges through interaction and interpretation rather than occurring independently of social relationships.[15] In the context of Tanete, the progression from messisik to Sumomba demonstrates how customary rules provide a shared framework through which individuals and families interpret one another's actions.

[15] Morrione, *Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, and 21st-Century Sociology*.

From the perspective of Blumer's symbolic interactionism, these findings demonstrate that Mappurondo is not merely a system of inherited beliefs but a social reality whose meanings are continuously produced through interaction. In the context of marriage, customary values become meaningful through communication, negotiation, and shared interpretation among families and community members. Complementing this, Berger and Luckmann's social construction perspective explains how repeated marriage practices become institutionalized and transmitted across generations.[16] Thus, the present study extends previous Mappurondo scholarship by showing how cultural meanings are socially constructed and reproduced through marriage, kinship, and symbolic communication.

The finding also extends the focus of previous Mappurondo scholarship. Saputra & Mordekai, for example, examined the cultural and ecological dimensions of the encounter between Aluk Mappurondo and Christianity in Mamasa, particularly the relationship between cosmology, religious interaction, and ecological ethics.[17] Their study therefore provides an important understanding of Mappurondo at the level of belief and interreligious relations, whereas the present study demonstrates how Mappurondo values operate within the concrete social institution of marriage. Similarly, Nurkidam & Mahyudin, examined Ada' Mappurondo through ecological wisdom and traditional prohibitions in relation to environmental preservation.[18] The present findings shift the analytical focus from ecological practice to marriage, kinship, symbolic communication, and inter-family relations.

This distinction is important because it demonstrates that Mappurondo should not be understood only as a system of religious or ecological beliefs. The findings indicate that its values are also embedded in everyday social institutions, particularly marriage. Sumomba becomes a mechanism through which customary norms are enacted collectively. Consequently, its continuity depends not only on the existence of customary rules but also on repeated interaction among families, customary leaders, and community members. From a theoretical perspective, the process can be interpreted through Blumer's three premises. First, the actors act toward the marriage stages and customary objects on the basis of meanings that they collectively recognize. Second, these meanings emerge from interaction

[16] Thomas Luckmann Peter Berger, *The Social Construction of Reality*, 3rd Editio (New York: Routledge, 2023), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003320609.

[17] Saputra, J. A., & Mordekai, M. (2023). Studi Cross-Textual Reading Terhadap Kisah Padi Pulut dan Kisah Elia dan Janda di Sarfat. Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja, 7(1), 54–74. https://doi.org/10.37368/ja.v7i1.516.

[18] Andi Nurkidam and Mahyudin, "Ada' Mappurondo Taboo: Ecological Wisdom of the Mamasa Community in Maintaining Natural Preservation," *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan* 16, no. 2 (December 2023): 153–67, https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v16i2.7087.

among families and community members. Third, meanings are maintained through continuing interpretation and practice.[19] The sequence of messisik, mekutana, meusik, and Sumomba consequently illustrates how customary marriage becomes a form of joint action, in which individual actions acquire social significance because they are coordinated with the actions of others.[20]

The principal implication is that Sumomba's social significance lies not only in its final ceremony but in the process of interaction that precedes it. The ceremony becomes meaningful because the participants have progressively constructed agreement and shared understanding through the preceding stages. In this sense, Sumomba functions simultaneously as a marriage ritual and a mechanism for reproducing social relationships.

Symbolic Meanings of Objects and Actions in Sumomba

The second major finding is that the objects used in Sumomba possess meanings that extend beyond their material functions. The research identified meanings associated with lipak (sarong), sissim (ring), pindam (traditional stone plate), sirih, pinang, piso (machete), doke (spear), selimut, kelambu, and buah maja/buah bila. These meanings relate principally to respect, commitment, family solidarity, household responsibility, harmony, and expectations concerning future descendants. At the messisik stage, lipak is interpreted as a symbol of respect and appreciation toward the woman's family. The significance of the sarong does not derive from its physical characteristics but from the social meaning assigned to it by members of the community. Its continued use demonstrates that an ordinary material object can become a culturally recognized symbol through repeated social interaction and intergenerational transmission.

At the mekutana stage, the use of sarong, sirih, pinang, and lime represents respect and the strengthening of kinship relations between the two families. These objects communicate a social message concerning acceptance, respect, and the establishment of a relationship. Their meaning is therefore relational: the significance of the objects becomes visible through the interaction between the two families rather than through the objects themselves. At the meusik stage, the sissim (ring) represents the strengthening of the relationship and seriousness toward marriage, while pindam represents a hope for a peaceful and harmonious

[19] Panji Perdana Putra Priyanto, Ahmad Fatkhur Rohman, and Dini Rahmawati, "Tradisi Slametan Masyarakat Jawa Dalam Perspektif Interaksionisme Simbolik Herbert Blumer," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial* 12, no. 1 (July 2026): 78–91, https://doi.org/10.23887/jiis.v12i1.112080.

[20] Gusmira Wita and Irhas Fansuri Mursal, "Fenomenologi Dalam Kajian Sosial Sebuah Studi Tentang Konstruksi Makna," *Titian: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora* 6, no. 2 (December 2022): 325–38, https://doi.org/10.22437/titian.v6i2.21211.

household. The objects consequently operate as condensed representations of expectations concerning married life. Their presentation does not merely document that a ceremony has occurred; it communicates a culturally shared understanding about what the marriage is expected to establish.

The objects used during the final Sumomba ceremony convey additional meanings. The piso is interpreted as representing the man's responsibility in household life, while the doke represents strength and the role of the man as head of the household. Selimut and kelambu symbolize respect toward the woman's parents for their care and sacrifice in raising their daughter. Buah maja/buah bila represents the hope for descendants, while sirih and pinang symbolize togetherness, unity, and the strengthening of kinship between the two families.

Table 2. Stages and social functions of Sumomba

Stages	**Traditional Equipment (Symbols)**	**Symbolic Meanings**
Messisik	Lipak / Sambuk	Respect and appreciation toward the woman's family
Mekutana	Sarong, Sirih, Pinang, Lime	Respect and strengthening of kinship
Meusik	Sissim	Commitment and seriousness toward marriage
	Pindam	Hope for a peaceful and harmonious household
Sumomba	Piso	Responsibility of the man in the household
	Doke	Strength and role of the man as head of the family
	Selimut and Kelambu	Respect for the woman's parents for raising her
	Buah Maja / Buah Bila	Hope for descendants
	Sirih and Pinang	Togetherness, unity, and family bonds

Source : Research Results 2026.

The findings in Table 2 are particularly significant when interpreted through symbolic interactionism. Blumer, argues that social actors do not respond simply to the physical characteristics of objects; they act according to the meanings that objects have for them.[21] In this study, the sarong, ring, plate, machete, spear, and other objects become socially meaningful because the community has developed and maintained shared interpretations of

[21] A. Razak, "Interaksi Simbolik Untuk Akuntansi Sektor Publik," *Eksos* 19, no. 1 (June 29, 2023): 114–29, https://doi.org/10.31573/eksos.v11i1.576.

them. The research therefore supports the proposition that symbolic meaning is socially produced rather than inherently embedded in material objects. The second premise of symbolic interactionism is also visible, the meaning of each object emerges from social interaction.[22] For example, the ring becomes a symbol of commitment because members of the community understand and recognize its role within meusik. Similarly, the sarong becomes an expression of respect because its use has been repeatedly associated with the relationship between the two families. The symbolic meaning therefore exists within a network of social relationships. The third premise provides an additional explanation for the continuity of these meanings. Meanings are not merely transmitted mechanically; they are encountered and interpreted whenever the ritual is performed. The repeated enactment of Sumomba allows the community to reproduce the meanings attached to the objects while simultaneously placing them within contemporary social circumstances. The findings therefore suggest that cultural continuity does not necessarily require cultural practices to remain completely isolated from social change.

This finding also differentiates the present study from previous research on Mappurondo. Saputra & Mordekai, emphasize cosmological and ecological dimensions in the relationship between Aluk Mappurondo and Christianity,[23] while Nurkidam & Mahyudin, demonstrate how Mappurondo customary prohibitions embody ecological wisdom.[24] The present research adds a micro-sociological dimension, showing how cultural meanings are produced and reproduced through concrete interactions during marriage. The novelty therefore lies not simply in documenting customary objects but in explaining how these objects function as symbols within an interactional system of family relations.

The findings further suggest that Sumomba serves as a medium through which abstract social values become visible in concrete practice. Respect, responsibility, family solidarity, marital commitment, and expectations concerning descendants are difficult to observe directly as abstract values.[25] Through symbolic objects, however, these values

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[22] Panji Perdana Putra Priyanto, Ahmad Fatkhur Rohman, and Dini Rahmawati, "Tradisi Slametan Masyarakat Jawa Dalam Perspektif Interaksionisme Simbolik Herbert Blumer," *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Sosial* 12, no. 1 (July 1, 2026): 78–91, https://doi.org/10.23887/jiis.v12i1.112080.

[23] Saputra, J. A., & Mordekai, M. (2023). Studi Cross-Textual Reading Terhadap Kisah Padi Pulut dan Kisah Elia dan Janda di Sarfat. Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja, 7(1), 54–74. https://doi.org/10.37368/ja.v7i1.516.

[24] Nurkidam and Mahyudin, "Ada' Mappurondo Taboo: Ecological Wisdom of the Mamasa Community in Maintaining Natural Preservation," December 2023.

[25] Abdul Malik Iskandar, Arfenti Amir, and Hasanudin Kasim, "Social Adaptation of Immigrant Communities in Urban Communities," *JURNAL MULTIDISIPLIN MADANI (MUDIMA)* 3, no. 12 (2023): 2483–90, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55927/mudima.v3i12.7132.

become materialized and publicly communicated. The ritual consequently connects individual marriage with collective expectations about family life.

There is also an important sociological implication concerning gendered expectations. The meanings assigned to the piso and doke explicitly associate male identity with responsibility, strength, and household leadership. Rather than treating these meanings as universal characteristics of men, they should be understood as culturally constructed expectations within the Mappurondo customary context documented in this study. This distinction is important because symbolic interactionism directs attention to how social actors learn, reproduce, and attach meaning to culturally defined roles.[26]

Thus, the symbolic dimension of Sumomba demonstrates that the ritual operates simultaneously at three levels: material, relational, and normative. At the material level, specific objects are used in the ceremony. At the relational level, the objects mediate communication between families. At the normative level, they communicate expectations concerning respect, responsibility, kinship, and married life. This three-dimensional character strengthens the interpretation of Sumomba as a social institution rather than merely a ceremonial practice.

Continuity of Sumomba amid Social Change

The third major finding concerns the continuity of Sumomba in the context of social change. The research indicates that the core structure of Sumomba remains maintained, even though several supporting aspects of customary marriage have changed. Informants consistently described the main stages, procedures, and customary rules as continuing without substantial alteration. At the same time, changes were observed particularly in clothing and in the process through which marriage partners are selected.

One visible change concerns clothing. In the past, participants generally wore simple clothing that reflected the economic conditions of the community. More recently, some participants have used traditional clothing, kebaya, suits, and other clothing considered more appropriate to contemporary social expectations. Importantly, the change in clothing has not resulted in a corresponding alteration of the principal Sumomba stages.

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[26] Aprilina Salma and Shira Putri Amalia, "Mead's Symbolic Interactionism Analysis of Nadhifa Allya Tsana's Online Identity on Social Media Instagram @ntsana Analisis Symbolic Interactionism Mead Terhadap Identitas Daring Nadhifa Allya Tsana Di Media Sosial Instagram @ntsana," in *Procedia of Social Sciences and HumanitiesOnline Influence & Identity Forum (OIIF 2025)*, vol. 0672, 2025, 154–62, https://pssh.umsida.ac.id.

A second change concerns partner selection. According to the findings, marriage in the past was more strongly associated with arrangements involving parents and families. In contemporary practice, some couples have already established a relationship before proceeding to marriage through the customary mechanism. Despite this change in how couples meet or choose one another, the marriage process continues to involve Sumomba.

This finding is analytically important because it demonstrates that cultural continuity should not automatically be equated with complete cultural immobility. The community has modified some elements of marriage practice while maintaining what it considers the principal customary structure. In other words, change and continuity coexist within the same cultural practice.

This pattern can be interpreted through Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction. The study conceptualizes the continuity of Sumomba through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization.[27] Once the customary procedure becomes recognized collectively and incorporated into social expectations, it acquires an institutional character. Members of the community subsequently encounter Sumomba not simply as an individual choice but as an established component of customary marriage. The process of objectivation is particularly evident in the continued recognition of the principal Sumomba stages as customary requirements. The practice has acquired a degree of objective social reality because it is collectively recognized and repeatedly enacted. The community's continued performance of the ritual means that the practice exists beyond any single individual and provides a framework within which marriage is socially organized. The process of internalization can be observed in the transmission of knowledge concerning Sumomba through families, customary leaders, and the broader social environment. Members of the community learn that Sumomba constitutes part of their cultural identity and therefore reproduce it in subsequent marriage practices. The study consequently suggests that continuity is supported by the transmission of both procedural knowledge and symbolic meanings. At the same time, the changes in clothing and partner selection demonstrate externalization and adaptation. Community members respond to changing social circumstances without abandoning the principal structure of the customary marriage. The finding challenges a binary understanding of tradition in which cultural practices are either preserved unchanged or replaced by modern practices. Instead, Sumomba

[27] Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 2024), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003335016.

demonstrates a process of selective adaptation: some peripheral elements are modified while core elements remain institutionally significant.

The continuity finding contributes to existing Mappurondo scholarship by demonstrating that cultural resilience operates not only through belief systems or environmental practices but also through institutionalized family practices. Saputra & Mordekai, show that Mappurondo cultural values continue to interact with broader religious and social transformations,[28] while Nurkidam & Mahyudin, demonstrate the continuing role of Mappurondo customary institutions in ecological practice.[29] The present study complements these findings by showing that customary marriage can also function as a mechanism through which cultural identity is reproduced.

Theoretically, the findings suggest a productive connection between symbolic interactionism and social construction theory. Blumer helps explain how the meanings of objects and actions are produced through interaction, whereas Berger and Luckmann help explain how repeated meanings and practices become stabilized as socially recognized realities.[30] Applied together, the two perspectives provide a more comprehensive explanation of Sumomba: its symbols remain meaningful because they are interpreted through interaction, while its institutional continuity is supported because those meanings and practices are repeatedly reproduced within the social structure of the community.

The findings also have implications for cultural transmission. The continued recognition of Sumomba among younger community members, as reported by informants, indicates that cultural knowledge remains connected to actual practice rather than existing solely as historical memory. However, because the study also identifies social change surrounding the practice, continued transmission depends on the community's ability to communicate not only what is done, but also why particular actions and objects matter. This distinction is particularly important because procedural preservation without symbolic understanding could gradually reduce the ritual to formal ceremony.

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[28] Saputra, J. A., & Mordekai, M. (2023). Studi Cross-Textual Reading Terhadap Kisah Padi Pulut dan Kisah Elia dan Janda di Sarfat. Jurnal Abdiel: Khazanah Pemikiran Teologi, Pendidikan Agama Kristen Dan Musik Gereja, 7(1), 54–74. https://doi.org/10.37368/ja.v7i1.516.

[29] Nurkidam, A., & Mahyudin. (2023). Ada' Mappurondo Taboo: Ecological Wisdom of the Mamasa Community in Maintaining Natural Preservation. KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial Dan Keagamaan, 16(2), 153–167. https://doi.org/10.35905/kur.v16i2.7087.

[30] Ahmad Baedowi and Rangga Galura Gumelar, "Konstruksi Makna Jilbab Sebagai Simbol Komunikasi Sosial Masyarakat Urban," *Journalism, Public Relation and Media Communication Studies Journal (JPRMEDCOM)* 5, no. 2 (September 2, 2024), https://doi.org/10.35706/jprmedcom.v5i2.10863.

From a practical perspective, the findings support the importance of community-based cultural documentation and intergenerational learning. It also identifies a role for customary leaders and local government in supporting cultural preservation and documentation. The involvement of the village government is also relevant. The research reports that village authorities may be given an opportunity to provide advice to newly married couples and support customary activities. Such involvement indicates that Sumomba exists at the intersection of customary, family, and community institutions. Its continuity is therefore not dependent solely on customary leaders but is supported by a wider social environment in which the practice continues to receive recognition.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the persistence of Sumomba is best understood as cultural continuity through adaptive social reproduction. The community does not preserve every element of marriage practice in an identical form. Instead, it retains the stages, rules, and core meanings considered essential while adapting selected aspects to contemporary social conditions. This finding extends the understanding of cultural resilience by showing that resilience may involve transformation at the margins while maintaining continuity at the institutional and symbolic core.

The central contribution of this study, therefore, is the identification of Sumomba as an interactional and socially constructed institution of customary marriage. The ritual connects individual marriage with extended family relations, transforms material objects into culturally meaningful symbols, and reproduces Mappurondo identity across generations. The findings further demonstrate that its continuity is not simply the result of passive inheritance. It is sustained through repeated interaction, collective interpretation, socialization, and selective adaptation to changing circumstances. In this respect, Sumomba represents not only a surviving customary ceremony but also an active mechanism through which the Mappurondo community negotiates the relationship between cultural heritage and social change.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Sumomba represents more than a customary marriage ceremony; it functions as a socially organized cultural practice through which Mappurondo values, kinship relations, and collective identity are continuously reproduced. The findings demonstrate that the practice consists of interconnected stages *messisik, mekutana, meusik,* and *Sumomba* through which the two families establish communication, negotiate agreement, confirm the marriage relationship, and ultimately formalize the customary union. The

symbolic meanings attached *to lipak, sissim, pindam, sirih, pinang, piso, doke, selimut, kelambu,* and *buah maja/buah* bila further show that material objects become meaningful through collective interpretation and intergenerational interaction. These findings support Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism by demonstrating that actors respond to customary objects and actions according to meanings constructed through social interaction and continuously reproduced through cultural practice. At the same time, the persistence of Sumomba despite changes in clothing and partner-selection patterns indicates that cultural continuity does not require complete cultural uniformity. Rather, the community selectively adapts peripheral aspects of marriage while maintaining the principal stages, rules, and meanings of the customary practice.

Theoretically, the study contributes by connecting symbolic interactionism with social construction theory to explain both the production of meaning and the persistence of Sumomba as a customary institution. Blumer explains how meanings are generated and sustained through interaction, while the social construction perspective helps clarify how repeated practices become collectively recognized and transmitted across generations. Empirically, the study extends previous research on Mappurondo by shifting attention from primarily cosmological and ecological dimensions toward the sociological processes of marriage, kinship, symbolic communication, and cultural reproduction. The findings also imply that preserving Sumomba requires more than maintaining its ceremonial procedures; the meanings embedded in its symbols and practices must remain intelligible to younger generations.

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