



Anthropological Analysis and ‘Urf Review from the Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah Perspective of the Tengger Tribe: Preserving Honor in the Walagara Tradition

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Abstract

This study examines the interlegal negotiation experienced by the Muslim community of the Tengger Tribe in relation to the Walagara customary marriage ritual. In the Tengger social order, Walagara functions as an indispensable marker of customary legitimacy, even for marriages that have already been validated through an Islamic marriage contract and state registration. The central dilemma arises because the authentic Walagara procession contains ritual elements such as mantras, offerings, and symbolic communication with ancestral or cosmological entities, which may be problematized from the perspective of formal Islamic jurisprudence. Using a qualitative case study with an ethnographic orientation, this research was conducted in Ngadas and Sukapura Villages through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings show that Tengger Muslims do not simply combine Islamic and customary rituals. Rather, they navigate overlapping legal spaces through a model of sequential demarcation: *ijab qabul* and KUA registration are performed to secure Islamic and state legality. At the same time, Walagara is conducted separately to obtain customary recognition and protect family honor. This arrangement produces a distinctive interlegal identity in which Muslim actors remain faithful to Islamic marital validity while maintaining their belonging within the Tengger customary community. The study also shows that honor in this context is socially operationalized through recognition, family reputation, avoidance of the stigma of *kumpul kebo*, and continued participation in customary life. While cognitive reframing enables Muslim Tengger actors to interpret Walagara as a social custom rather than worship, this study argues that such reframing must be understood as conditional and context-dependent, not as an automatic neutralization of all theological objections. The article contributes to debates on legal pluralism, ‘urf, and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah by showing how *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-‘ird* are negotiated within a plural customary society.

Keywords: Legal Pluralism, Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, Tengger Tribe, ‘Urf, Walagara.

Introduction

The legal landscape in Indonesia is characterized by a dynamic phenomenon of legal pluralism, in which state law, religious law, and customary law coexist, interact, and frequently overlap (Hariri & Babussalam, 2024). This phenomenon, commonly discussed through the concept of interlegality, generates complex legal realities in which hybrid practices emerge from negotiation, interpenetration, and the intersection of different normative systems (Walker, 2022; Kalra, 2024). Within Islamic family law, this interaction becomes particularly significant because marriage is not only a religious contract and a state administrative act, but also a socially embedded institution shaped by custom, kinship, and communal recognition.

A relevant case for examining this phenomenon is the Tengger Tribe, which inhabits the Bromo-Tengger-Semeru region of East Java. The Tengger community is widely recognized for its multicultural and multi-religious character; adherents of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and

Christianity coexist under a shared customary order (Putri et al., 2022; Anggarini & Husni, 2023). Despite their diverse religious affiliations, Tengger residents are bound by adat as a civic and communal framework. One of the most important customary institutions is the marriage ritual known as Walagara or Wologoro. This ritual is regarded as a mandatory requirement for obtaining social legitimacy and full recognition within the Tengger customary community (Hasyim et al., 2020).

The core research problem emerges from the encounter between customary obligation and Islamic legal consciousness. From the social and customary perspective, Walagara functions as an important marker of marital completeness within the Tengger community. A marriage that has been conducted through *ijab qabul* and registered at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) may still be regarded as incomplete (*dereng purna*) from the perspective of customary recognition if the couple has not undergone the Walagara ritual (Hasyim et al., 2020). The ritual may involve *japa mantra* and offerings (*sesajen*), which are understood within the Tengger ritual framework as forms of spiritual communication involving deities, *dayang banyu* (water spirits), and ancestral spirits (Efendy et al., 2026). From the perspective of Islamic theology and jurisprudence, these elements may raise significant theological concerns when they are understood as acts of worship or as attributing spiritual agency to beings other than Allah (Efendy et al., 2026). This tension between customary obligation and Islamic legal consciousness constitutes an important site for examining how Muslim Tengger communities negotiate religious norms and customary practices.

Existing studies on Walagara have examined the ritual and its symbolic dimensions (Meilinda, 2024), the negotiation between customary practices and Islamic norms (Hasyim et al., 2020; Setyabudi, 2025), and the broader dynamics of legal pluralism and interlegality in Tengger society (Parjono et al., 2025). (Susanti Hoiril, 2022) further indicate that the encounter between Tengger customary practices and Islamic norms remains an important area for further investigation. However, existing analyses tend to focus either on the description and meaning of the ritual or on the normative relationship between customary and Islamic law. Less attention has been given to how Muslim Tengger actors themselves negotiate overlapping legal, religious, and moral frameworks in their everyday marital practices. This gap opens an opportunity to connect legal anthropology, the concept of *'urf*, and contemporary *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, particularly through the principle of *ḥifẓ al-'ird*, understood here as the protection of human honor, reputation, and family dignity.

This article addresses that gap by analyzing the Walagara phenomenon through three lenses: legal anthropology, *'urf* review, and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. It argues that Muslim Tengger communities do not practice theological syncretism. Rather, they develop a sequentially demarcated hybrid ritual in which religious-state validity and customary-social legitimacy are fulfilled through separate but connected processes. The article further argues that this model produces a distinctive interlegal identity: Tengger Muslims remain Muslim legal subjects before Islamic law and the state, while simultaneously becoming fully recognized Tengger subjects before the customary community.

Literature Review

1. Legal Anthropology

Legal anthropology offers a critical framework for understanding law not merely as a formal set of rules but as a living social process embedded in everyday practices. Ehrlich’s concept of *living law* emphasizes that the normative order governing social life cannot be reduced to formally enacted state law, as social associations also generate and maintain norms that regulate everyday conduct (Nelken, 2008; Tamanaha, 2011). This perspective is particularly relevant to plural societies in which state, religious, and customary norms coexist and interact.

Griffiths’ theory of legal pluralism further challenges legal centralism by emphasizing the coexistence of multiple normative orders within the same social field (Griffiths, 1986). Rather than treating state law as the exclusive source of legality, the legal-pluralist perspective directs attention to the ways in which different normative orders operate simultaneously and influence social behavior.

Santos’ concept of interlegality provides a more dynamic lens for examining these interactions. Interlegality moves beyond the simple coexistence of separate legal orders and focuses on how different legal spaces become interpenetrated, mixed, and negotiated through social practice (Walker, 2022). In the context of the Tengger Muslim community, interlegality is not simply reflected in the fact that Muslim couples perform both *ijab qabul* and Walagara. More importantly, it can be examined through how individuals differentiate, sequence, and assign meaning to these practices. *Ijab qabul* and KUA registration are associated with Islamic and state legal frameworks, whereas Walagara functions within the sphere of customary recognition (Hasyim et al., 2020).

This movement across normative spaces may produce a distinctive form of interlegal subjectivity. Tengger Muslims do not necessarily abandon Islamic legal norms or detach themselves from Tengger customary belonging. Rather, they may construct a negotiated legal subjectivity in which they recognize themselves as Muslim subjects within Islamic and state legal frameworks while simultaneously maintaining their status as Tengger subjects within the customary community. Such subjectivity is therefore not necessarily produced through the fusion of religious doctrines but through the practical management and negotiation of overlapping normative boundaries (Walker, 2022).

Within this framework, Walagara should not be understood merely as an archaic remnant or cultural performance. It can instead be examined as a site of legal and normative negotiation in which religious identity, customary obligation, family reputation, and communal belonging intersect. Moore’s concept of the semi-autonomous social field is particularly useful here because it explains how social groups generate internal norms and mechanisms of social control while remaining embedded within and interacting with wider legal and political structures (Moore, 1973). Therefore, the sequential performance of *ijab qabul* and Walagara can be analyzed not simply as passive compliance with different rules, but as a form of interlegal navigation through which Tengger Muslims manage multiple normative expectations.

2. 'Urf Review

Within the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), 'urf refers to established patterns of practice and social convention that may be taken into consideration in Islamic legal reasoning, particularly in matters closely connected to social relations and everyday transactions (Hallaq, 1997; Kamali, 2008). The juristic maxim *al-ʿādah muḥakkamah* affirms the legal relevance of established custom, provided that such custom does not contradict established principles of Islamic law (Kamali, 2008). In this sense, 'urf provides an important conceptual bridge between Islamic normativity and local social practices (Hallaq, 1997; Kamali, 2008).

Classical Islamic legal theory distinguishes between 'urf *ṣaḥīḥ* and 'urf *fāsid*. 'Urf *ṣaḥīḥ* refers to customary practices that are socially established and do not conflict with Islamic legal principles, whereas 'urf *fāsid* refers to practices that conflict with established Shari'ah principles (Kamali, 2008). In the context of the present study, this distinction becomes particularly relevant when customary practices contain ritual elements that may raise theological or jurisprudential concerns. The Walagara tradition occupies a complex position within this framework because it performs an important social and customary function while incorporating ritual elements such as *japa mantra* and *sesajen* that have been examined from the perspective of Islamic law (Hasyim et al., 2020; Efendy et al., 2026).

For this reason, the present study does not treat 'urf classification as a purely abstract legal exercise. Instead, it examines how Muslim Tengger actors themselves interpret Walagara, distinguish between religious worship and customary practice, and negotiate participation in the ritual while maintaining the Islamic validity of marriage (Hasyim et al., 2020). This approach moves beyond a rigid binary of valid and invalid custom toward a more contextual understanding of how 'urf is lived, contested, and morally negotiated within a plural normative environment (Opwis, 2010; Hallaq, 1997).

3. Reconceptualizing *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a*

The *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* framework provides a philosophical and normative foundation for analyzing the public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) underlying Islamic legal and social practices (Auda, 2021). The classical formulation emphasizes the protection of five essential interests: religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (al-Ghazālī, 1993; al-Shāṭibī, 1997). Contemporary approaches to *Maqāṣid*, including Auda's systems approach, encourage a more holistic, multidimensional, and contextual reading of these objectives (Auda, 2021).

In the context of marriage, the protection of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) can be examined alongside the protection of honor and dignity (*ḥifẓ al-ʿird*) as complementary objectives of Islamic legal reasoning (Bawono et al., 2025). This perspective is particularly relevant to Walagara because the ritual involves not only the formal dimension of Islamic marital validity but also social recognition and customary belonging within the Tengger community (Hasyim et al., 2020). In this study, *ḥifẓ al-ʿird* is operationalized through four analytical dimensions: protection from social stigma, preservation of family dignity, avoidance of customary exclusion, and maintenance of communal belonging. These dimensions constitute an analytical operationalization developed by the present study rather than a fixed classical formulation of *ḥifẓ al-ʿird*.

However, the use of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* in this study must be balanced with theological caution. The protection of honor cannot independently justify practices that clearly conflict with fundamental Islamic principles, particularly *tawhīd*. Therefore, the analysis focuses on how Muslim Tengger actors negotiate *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-‘ird* through the differentiation, sequencing, and reinterpretation of religious and customary practices (Auda, 2021; Hasyim et al., 2020). This makes the Walagara case a valuable site for examining the limits and possibilities of *Maqāṣid* reasoning within a plural customary and normative setting.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design with an ethnographic orientation (Harrison et al., 2017). The case was bounded by place, actors, and ritual practice: Muslim Tengger communities in Ngadas and Sukapura Villages who negotiate the obligation of Walagara within the framework of Islamic marriage law, state registration, and Tengger customary legitimacy. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to understand how Muslim Tengger actors interpret, experience, and negotiate overlapping normative orders in their everyday marital practices.

Fieldwork was conducted from 10 November 2025 to 11 November 2025 through intermittent site visits. During this period, the researcher conducted 12 field visits, each lasting approximately 2 days, and observed 3 Walagara-related processions or marriage events. The fieldwork included observation of ritual preparation, interaction between families and customary actors, the separation between Islamic marriage procedures and customary ritual stages, and informal conversations with residents before and after the procession.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used because they allowed the researcher to follow a prepared interview guide while remaining open to informants’ own narratives, categories, and interpretations (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview guide focused on four themes: the meaning of Walagara, the relationship between *ijab qabul* and customary legitimacy, forms of social sanction for non-compliance, and Muslim actors’ interpretation of mantras, offerings, and ritual authority. The reporting of the qualitative interview process was strengthened by referring to qualitative reporting standards such as COREQ and SRQR (Tong et al., 2007; O’Brien et al., 2014).

Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in Walagara, Islamic marriage procedures, customary leadership, or village governance. Snowball sampling was then used to identify additional informants recommended by initial participants (Palinkas et al., 2015; Noy, 2008). To avoid treating religious authority as a single category, this study distinguished between structural religious authorities and cultural religious leaders. Structural religious authorities refer to actors connected to formal Islamic marriage administration, such as KUA or Ministry of Religious Affairs officials. Cultural religious leaders refer to local Muslim figures, such as *kiai*, *modin*, or respected community-based religious figures who provide religious interpretation within the local setting. Customary authorities refer to *Dukun Pandita*, customary elders, or *adat* administrators who hold ritual authority in Walagara.

The informant profile is summarized in Table 1. The codes in the table are used consistently in the findings to protect informants’ anonymity while still allowing readers to identify the

social position from which each statement was made.

Table 1. Profile of Informants

Code	Category	Role/Position	Location/Institution	Data Source	Date
CA-1	Customary authority	Dukun Pandita	Ngadas	Interview, observation	10 November 2025
CA-2	Customary authority	Customary elder/administrator	Ngadas	Interview	10 November 2025
SRA-1	Structural religious authority	KUA officer / Ministry of Religious Affairs official	Poncokusumo	Interview	10 November 2025
CRL-1	Cultural religious leader	Kiai / Modin	Ngadas	Interview	10 November 2025
CRL-2	Cultural religious leader	Local Muslim figure	Ngadas	Interview	11 November 2025
MC-1	Muslim community member	Married couple/bride/groom	Ngadas	Interview	11 November 2025
MC-2	Muslim community member	Parent/family elder	Ngadas	Interview	11 November 2025
VA-1	Village authority	Village head/village official	Ngadas	Interview, document	10 November 2025

Data analysis was conducted iteratively throughout and after fieldwork. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials were first organized and coded according to recurring themes, including customary legitimacy, Islamic validity, social sanction, ritual authority, honor, and identity negotiation. The second stage involved thematic-interpretive analysis to identify how informants assigned meaning to Walagara and how they differentiated religious obligation from customary participation. The third stage mapped the findings onto the theoretical framework of legal pluralism, ‘urf, and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah. Finally, the analysis synthesized these layers to explain how sequential demarcation functions as an interlegal strategy for protecting both ḥifẓ al-dīn and ḥifẓ al-‘ird.

To maintain ethical standards, all informants are identified using codes rather than real names. Interview citations include the informant code, role, location, and date of interview. The bracketed dates and fieldwork details in this revised manuscript must be finalized according to the author’s original field log before resubmission.

Results

1. The Communal and Multicultural Order of the Tengger Tribe

The findings confirm that the Tengger community, also known as Wong Tengger, maintains a highly communal social order. The main pillar supporting this order is a kinship

system that tends to be bilateral and uxori-local. In practice, newly married couples may reside near the husband’s family, the wife’s family, or in another location as long as they remain within the Tengger social territory. This residential flexibility creates physical proximity among relatives and reinforces everyday mutual assistance. As a result, reputation and social recognition become primary forms of social capital.

“Here, after marriage, we usually deliberate first between the families of the man and the woman. There is no compulsion to live in any particular house. What matters is that we remain within the Tengger area. If we live too far away, it becomes difficult to participate in customary events. Therefore, we stay close so that we can help one another when there are ceremonies or communal work.”

(Interview with MC-2, Tengger resident, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

“Here in Tengger, we do not overly consider who is older or from which family; everyone is regarded as relatives. If there is a problem, it is usually resolved together at the village hall. Thus, relationships among residents are very strong because we feel like one big family.”

(Interview with VA-1, village authority, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

Demographically, the Tengger community exhibits multicultural and multi-religious characteristics. Adherents of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity live side by side under a shared customary order. Collective identity as Wong Tengger often becomes more socially salient than formal religious identity. Customary traditions function as mechanisms of integration by establishing common obligations for all community members regardless of religious affiliation.

“I am Muslim, but many of my family members are Hindu. We all still participate in the Kasada and village cleansing ceremonies. For us, it is not about religion, but about togetherness as the Tengger people. Adat is what keeps us united.”

(Interview with MC-1, Muslim resident, Ngadas, 11 November 2025)

“What matters most here is adat. Religions may differ, but when there is a customary ceremony, everyone participates. No one feels superior. Since childhood, we have been taught that Wong Tengger must maintain harmony and must not create conflict.”

(Interview with CA-2, customary administrator, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

2. The Walagara Procession: Ritual Structure, Symbols, and Actors

Ethnographically, Walagara represents the culmination of the Tengger customary wedding procession. It normally follows earlier stages such as Pancangan and, for Muslims, ijab qabul. The core procession is known as Temu Manten, which symbolically unites the bride and groom within customary bonds, and is followed by Asrah Pengantin, which marks the formal ratification of the couple before the Tengger community.

Walagara is separate from formal religious processes. Ijab qabul affirms marriage within Islamic law, while Walagara affirms customary and socio-cosmological legitimacy before the Tengger community. The dual structure shows that marriage is not considered fully complete in the local social order unless it has passed through both religious-state and customary domains.

“Walagara is a form of customary validation. If Walagara has not been performed, even though the marriage is religiously valid, it is still considered invalid in the eyes of custom. People here believe that Walagara not only unites two individuals, but also two extended families.”

(Interview with CA-1, customary leader, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

“After the ijab qabul is completed, we proceed to Walagara. This is the most sacred part because all families and villagers come to witness it. The Dukun Pandita leads the ritual and ensures that the

couple is accepted by custom. Thus, Walagara is a sign of ancestral blessing."

(Interview with CA-2, customary elder, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

The performance of Walagara demonstrates a clear division of ritual authority. The Dukun Pandita holds ritual authority in the customary domain, whereas the kiai or modin holds authority in the Islamic marriage domain. In practice, the Dukun Pandita employs specific ritual media such as incanted water in a prasen bowl, flowers, food offerings, and other ceremonial objects. From the emic perspective, these media function as symbolic instruments for introducing the couple to the ancestral and cosmological order of Tengger.

"A Dukun Pandita is different from a Kiai. The Kiai officiates religious marriage, while the Dukun Pandita legitimizes it customarily and spiritually. He uses prasen water and special prayers to inform the ancestors that there is a new couple in Tengger."

(Interview with CA-1, Dukun Pandita, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

"In Walagara, we prepare offerings such as small tumpeng rice cones, flowers, and holy water. All of this is to honor the deities and ancestral spirits. If it is not done, it is believed that the household will face many trials because it has not been recognized by the guardians of the Tengger realm."

(Interview with CA-2, customary practitioner, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

3. The Legal-Social Status of Walagara, Customary Sanctions, and Honor

Field findings consistently affirm that Walagara has mandatory status for Tengger residents entering marriage, including Muslims. This obligation does not originate primarily from Islamic theology, but from the juridical-social function of custom within the Tengger social structure. Walagara functions as the gateway through which a couple obtains full social recognition. Consequently, marriages that are valid through *ijab qabul* and state registration may still be considered incomplete (*dereng purna*) if Walagara has not been performed.

"Walagara is mandatory for Tengger people. Even if married at the KUA or church, without Walagara, the marriage is not socially recognized. Parents usually urge immediate performance so that it is not considered invalid customarily."

(Interview with CA-1, customary leader, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

"In Tengger, marriage is only complete after Walagara. It is a sign of acceptance by the ancestors and community. Without it, people regard the marriage as incomplete."

(Interview with MC-2, Tengger resident, Ngadas, 11 November 2025)

This mandatory status is reinforced by social and spiritual sanctions. Couples who do not perform Walagara are believed to be vulnerable to misfortune, household conflict, and livelihood difficulties. However, the findings indicate that social sanctions are more immediate and coercive than spiritual fear. Couples may experience gossip, reduced recognition, and stigma as *kumpul kebo*, a label associated with cohabitation without proper marital legitimacy.

"If someone does not perform Walagara, people regard the marriage as invalid. Sometimes they are excluded from customary activities. It is believed that misfortune may occur because ancestral blessings have not been granted."

(Interview with CA-2, customary elder, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

*"There was once a couple who delayed Walagara due to financial reasons. They were labeled *kumpul kebo*. It was very embarrassing. Eventually, they rushed to perform Walagara to be accepted again."*

(Interview with MC-2, Muslim resident, Ngadas, 11 November 2025)

In the Tengger context, honor does not refer merely to an abstract moral value. It is socially operationalized through recognition, reputation, and participation. Losing honor means being regarded as a couple whose marriage is not yet complete, being exposed to the stigma of *kumpul kebo*, causing shame to the extended family, and potentially experiencing reduced

participation in customary life. Therefore, ḥifẓ al-‘ird in this study refers to the protection of social recognizability, family dignity, and communal belonging. This operational definition explains why Walagara remains socially urgent even after Islamic and state legal validity have been fulfilled.

4. Power Relations and Sequentially Demarcated Hybrid Ritual among Tengger Muslims

The persistence of Walagara is not sustained merely by shared belief, but also by subtle power relations embedded in the Tengger communal order. Customary authorities, family elders, and village-based social networks maintain Walagara as a compulsory marker of marital legitimacy. The Dukun Pandita benefits symbolically because his ritual authority remains indispensable in validating marriage before the customary community. Family elders also benefit because the ritual protects the collective family reputation and prevents public shame. At the communal level, Walagara functions as a mechanism for reproducing Tengger identity across religious boundaries.

However, the same structure may create pressure for Muslim couples, especially those who are economically vulnerable or theologically hesitant. Several informants indicated that not performing Walagara could expose a couple to gossip, reduced recognition, exclusion from certain customary activities, and the stigma of kumpul kebo. This indicates that compliance with Walagara is not always purely voluntary; it is shaped by the fear of reputational loss and social marginalization. Walagara, therefore, operates both as a cultural integrator and as a disciplinary mechanism.

Within this power structure, Muslim Tengger couples develop what this study calls a sequentially demarcated hybrid ritual. The term hybrid ritual does not refer to syncretism or to the blending of Islamic and non-Islamic theological substances. Rather, it refers to a parallel ritual structure in which two distinct normative orders are fulfilled through separate and sequential acts. The Islamic marriage contract remains located within the jurisdiction of Islamic and state law, while Walagara remains located within the jurisdiction of Tengger customary legitimacy. Thus, hybridity in this study is structural and procedural, not theological.

The first stage is *ijab qabul*, led by a *kiai* or *modin* and registered at the KUA. This stage secures Islamic and state legal validity and fulfills ḥifẓ al-dīn. The second stage is Walagara, led by the Dukun Pandita. This stage secures customary recognition and protects ḥifẓ al-‘ird. The two stages are not merged into a single theological ritual; they are separated chronologically, symbolically, and jurisdictionally.

“We Muslims still perform ijab qabul first before the kiai and register it at the KUA. That is our religious duty. After that, we perform Walagara, because here custom must also be respected.”

(Interview with CRL-1, Muslim leader, Ngadas, 10 November 2025)

“Ijab qabul is for legitimacy before God and the state, while Walagara is for customary legitimacy. We separate them, because one concerns religion and the other tradition.”

(Interview with MC-1, Muslim resident, Ngadas, 11 November 2025)

In-depth interviews also reveal a strategy of cognitive reframing. Muslim Tengger actors reinterpret Walagara not as worship, but as social respect, family responsibility, and communal harmony. This reframing does not eliminate all possible theological controversy, but it

explains how Muslim actors make participation in Walagara livable within their religious consciousness.

“For us, Walagara is not worship, but tradition. We perform it to honor parents and ancestors.”

(Interview with CRL-2, local Muslim figure, Ngadas, 11 November 2025)

“Now we understand Walagara only as tradition. We intend it as social harmony and protection of family dignity.”

(Interview with MC-2, Muslim resident, Ngadas, 11 November 2025)

Table 2. Summary of Findings and Analytical Meanings.

Theme	Main Finding	Analytical Meaning
Communal and multicultural order	Tengger society is bound by a shared customary order across religious differences.	Adat functions as a civic platform that integrates multi-religious residents into a single communal identity.
Walagara as customary validation	Walagara is separate from ijab qabul but remains necessary for full social recognition.	Marriage legitimacy is distributed across Islamic, state, and customary jurisdictions.
Sanctions and honor	Non-performance of Walagara may generate stigma, gossip, shame, and reduced participation.	ḥifẓ al-‘ird is operationalized as protection of family reputation and communal belonging.
Power relations and sequential demarcation	Walagara is maintained through customary authority and social pressure, while Muslim Tengger couples respond by separating ijab qabul/KUA registration from Walagara.	The practice creates structural-procedural hybridity rather than theological syncretism and shows interlegal negotiation under customary power.

Discussion

1. Customary Supremacy in the Communal and Multicultural Order of the Tengger Tribe

The findings indicate that the communal and multicultural order of the Tengger community is sustained through a shared customary framework that transcends formal religious boundaries. Although Tengger society consists of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, *adat* functions as a civic platform that binds residents into a collective identity as *Wong Tengger* (Astina et al., 2021; Parjono et al., 2025). This confirms that customary law in Tengger society is not merely a cultural ornament, but a living normative order that regulates social belonging, recognition, and communal participation (Lestarini, 2023). This finding is consistent with legal anthropological perspectives that view law as a living social process rather than only a formal state institution (Lestarini, 2023). It also supports the broader argument in legal pluralism that multiple normative orders may operate simultaneously within a single social field (Griffiths, 1986; Tamanaha, 2011).

The bilateral and uxori-local tendencies identified in the findings further show that kinship and residence patterns play an important role in maintaining social cohesion. Residential flexibility allows married couples to remain physically close to family and community networks, thereby strengthening mutual assistance, ritual participation, and collective responsibility. In this sense, kinship proximity becomes a form of social capital that sustains harmony within Tengger society (Ambayoen et al., 2025). Previous studies on Tengger communities have similarly emphasized the role of social capital, local wisdom, and

customary solidarity in maintaining social resilience and communal integration

The multicultural character of the Tengger community also reveals that religious identity does not always function as the primary basis of social membership. In many everyday contexts, being recognized as *Wong Tengger* is more socially significant than belonging to a particular formal religion. This does not mean that religious identities disappear, but that they are mediated by a stronger customary framework. Astina et al., (2021) show that Tengger traditional ceremonies play an important role in sustaining collective identity, while Parjono et al., (2025) demonstrate that Tengger identity is shaped through socio-cultural hybridity and shared ritual participation. Therefore, the Tengger case demonstrates a model of customary governance in which *adat* operates as a social framework that organizes plural religious communities under a common moral and cultural order.

This finding is important because it shifts the analysis from a simple narrative of religious tolerance to a more complex understanding of customary governance. Harmony in Tengger society is not produced only by mutual acceptance among religions, but also by a strong customary system that establishes common obligations for all residents. Thus, *adat* functions simultaneously as an integrative mechanism and as a normative structure that defines who is socially recognized as a full member of the Tengger community (Moore, 1973; Griffiths, 1986).

2. Sequential Demarcation in the Walagara Procession: Ritual Authority and Theological Boundaries

The findings show that Walagara occupies a distinct position in the Tengger marriage system. It is not identical to *ijab qabul*, nor does it replace Islamic marriage requirements. Rather, Walagara functions as a separate customary procession that provides social and customary legitimacy after religious validity has been fulfilled. This finding is consistent with Hasyim et al., (2020), who demonstrate that Walagara remains an important customary component of Tengger marriage even though Muslim marriages are solemnized according to Islamic requirements and subsequently registered through the formal state system. Their study further shows that Walagara has undergone a transformation in meaning among Tengger Muslims, from a religiously authoritative ritual toward a customary tradition that continues to be socially observed.

The concept of sequential demarcation is useful for explaining this structure. Sequential demarcation refers in this study to the chronological and jurisdictional separation between the Islamic-state marriage process and the Tengger customary ritual process. *Ijab qabul* is conducted first under Islamic religious authority, followed by state marriage registration through the KUA, while Walagara is subsequently performed within the customary domain. This sequence indicates that Tengger Muslims distinguish between the legal validity of marriage and the customary recognition of marriage. Hasyim et al., (2020) similarly show that, for Tengger Muslims, Walagara does not replace the religious requirements of marriage but remains an important customary practice associated with the social recognition of marriage.

This separation is reinforced by the differentiation of ritual authority. The *kiai* or *modin* represents Islamic religious authority in the marriage process, whereas the Dukun Pandita occupies a central position in Tengger customary ritual and traditional leadership. Hidayat,

(2019) demonstrates that the Dukun Pandita has responsibilities relating to both religious ritual and *adat* and occupies a central position in Tengger ceremonial life. In this sense, the distinction between Islamic and customary authority does not necessarily indicate direct institutional competition; rather, the two forms of authority operate within different normative domains. This arrangement can be further understood through Moore, (1973) concept of the semi-autonomous social field, in which a social group is capable of generating and maintaining internal norms while remaining connected to external legal and institutional structures.

However, this separation should not be interpreted as eliminating all theological tensions. The findings indicate that mantras, offerings, and symbolic forms of ritual communication remain important elements requiring theological interpretation. From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, such practices may become problematic when they are understood as acts of worship directed toward beings other than God. Consequently, the significance of sequential demarcation does not lie in establishing that all elements of Walagara are theologically neutral. Rather, it lies in demonstrating how Muslim Tengger actors distinguish Islamic worship from customary participation in practice.

This distinction also requires caution in describing Walagara as either purely Islamic or purely non-Islamic. Hasyim et al., (2020) characterize the interaction between Islamic law and Tengger custom as a process of negotiation and compromise that produces a hybrid ritual configuration. The present study develops this argument further by emphasizing not only hybridity but also the temporal and jurisdictional separation through which Muslim actors manage the relationship between the two normative orders. Walagara can therefore be understood as a customary ritual that remains socially significant while being institutionally distinguished from the Islamic act that establishes the validity of marriage.

3. Legal Pluralism, Customary Sanctions, and the Protection of Honor

The findings concerning the mandatory status of Walagara demonstrate a clear case of legal pluralism. In Tengger society, a marriage may be valid according to Islamic law through *ijab qabul* and recognized under state law through KUA registration, yet still be considered socially incomplete within the customary community if Walagara has not been performed. This finding illustrates the central insight of legal pluralism: social life may be regulated by multiple normative orders operating simultaneously rather than by a single legal system (Griffiths, 1986; Tamanaha, 2011). In the Tengger context, Islamic, state, and customary norms therefore operate in overlapping but distinguishable domains.

The Tengger case is particularly significant because it reveals a form of social incompleteness that differs from formal legal incompleteness. In many contexts, the state may regard a religious or customary marriage as legally incomplete without formal registration. In Tengger society, however, the customary community may regard a religiously valid and state-registered marriage as socially incomplete without Walagara. This demonstrates that the effectiveness of normative orders cannot be assessed solely through formal legal institutions. Social recognition, stigma, ritual participation, and family reputation may operate as mechanisms through which customary norms are maintained and enforced. Tamanaha, (2011) emphasizes the importance of examining how legal pluralism operates in practice rather than limiting analysis to formally recognized legal institutions. The Tengger case illustrates this practical dimension through the continuing social force of customary marriage obligations.

The comparison with Minangkabau custom further clarifies the distinctive mechanism through which Tengger customary norms operate. In Minangkabau society, customary norms may regulate marriage through restrictions and prohibitions concerning particular marriage patterns, including norms that operate alongside Islamic and state law. In Tengger, by contrast, customary authority operates primarily through an additional obligation: Walagara provides customary recognition after Islamic and state requirements have been fulfilled. Both cases demonstrate the continuing significance of *adat* within Indonesian legal pluralism, but the mechanism of customary authority differs. In the Minangkabau case, customary authority may operate through restriction, whereas in the Tengger case examined here, it operates through compulsory customary recognition.

The operational meaning of honor is central to this analysis. In the Tengger context, *hifz al-'ird* should not be understood merely as an abstract notion of dignity; rather, it can be operationalized through concrete social conditions, including recognition of the couple as socially legitimate, avoidance of the stigma associated with *kumpul kebo*, preservation of family reputation, and continued participation in customary life. These dimensions illustrate how honor is embedded in social relations and communal recognition. From a *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* perspective, the protection of dignity and social welfare can be incorporated into a broader understanding of human well-being, particularly through contemporary approaches that expand maqāṣid analysis beyond a rigid enumeration of the classical five necessities (Auda, 2021).

Accordingly, the social importance of Walagara should not be interpreted simply as evidence that customary law overrides Islamic or state law. Rather, it demonstrates how Muslim Tengger couples navigate multiple normative expectations simultaneously. Islamic marriage validity, state registration, and customary recognition address different dimensions of marital legitimacy. The performance of Walagara can therefore be interpreted as a strategy for maintaining social recognition and family dignity while preserving the formal validity of the Islamic marriage. In this sense, the Tengger case demonstrates how legal pluralism operates not only through competing norms but also through the practical sequencing and accommodation of different normative obligations.

4. Power Relations, Cognitive Reframing, and Maqāṣid-Based Accommodation

The fourth finding shows that Walagara is sustained not only by shared belief, but also by power relations embedded in the customary order. Customary authorities, family elders, and village-based social networks possess symbolic power to define whether a marriage is socially complete. The Dukun Pandita benefits symbolically from the persistence of Walagara because his ritual authority remains indispensable in producing customary legitimacy. Family elders and the wider community also benefit because the ritual protects collective reputation and reproduces Tengger identity across religious boundaries. This confirms the legal anthropological view that local normative systems are maintained not only through formal rules, but also through authority, recognition, and social pressure (Moore, 1973; Tamanaha, 2011).

At the same time, this power relation places Muslim couples in a complex position. On the one hand, Walagara integrates them into the Tengger communal order and protects them

from social stigma. On the other hand, the fear of gossip, reduced recognition, ritual exclusion, and the label of *kumpul kebo* may pressure them to comply even when they are economically vulnerable or theologically hesitant. Therefore, participation in Walagara should not be understood only as a voluntary cultural celebration. It also reflects the disciplinary power of adat. Walagara functions simultaneously as a mechanism of cultural integration and as a form of social control.

Within this structure, Tengger Muslims develop what this study calls a sequentially demarcated hybrid ritual. The term “hybrid” must be understood carefully. It does not refer to syncretism or to the blending of Islamic and non-Islamic theological substances. Rather, it refers to a structural and procedural arrangement in which two normative orders are fulfilled through separate and sequential acts. *Ijab qabul* and KUA registration secure Islamic and state legality, while Walagara secures customary recognition. This pattern is consistent with studies showing that Tengger communities often negotiate identity by distinguishing between religious commitment and customary belonging (Hasyim et al., 2020; Setyabudi, 2025).

The strategy of cognitive reframing enables Muslim Tengger actors to interpret Walagara as a social custom rather than an act of worship. However, this argument must be treated with theological caution. This study does not claim that intention alone automatically neutralizes all juristic problems associated with mantras, offerings, or symbolic communication with ancestral and cosmological entities. From the standpoint of formal Islamic law, such elements may still be criticized if they are understood as acts of worship or as attributing independent spiritual power to beings other than God. Therefore, Walagara should not be described as having been unconditionally transformed from ‘urf *fāsid* into ‘urf *ṣaḥīḥ*. A more precise formulation is that Muslim Tengger actors attempt to make the practice religiously livable through separation, sequencing, and reinterpretation.

From the perspective of ‘urf, this means that Walagara occupies a contested and conditional position. Islamic legal theory recognizes custom as legally relevant when it does not contradict primary Islamic principles, as reflected in the maxim *al-‘ādah muḥakkamah*. Yet the presence of theologically sensitive elements means that Walagara cannot be accepted uncritically. Its acceptability depends on how Muslim actors understand, limit, and reinterpret their participation. If the ritual is treated as worship or as an alternative source of spiritual power, it remains problematic. If it is treated as a social mechanism of recognition while Islamic marital validity remains primary, it may be understood as a negotiated accommodation within a plural customary context.

From the perspective of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, sequential demarcation represents an effort to protect two objectives at once. *Ḥifẓ al-dīn* is protected by ensuring that *ijab qabul* is performed first and remains the primary basis of Islamic marital validity. *Ḥifẓ al-‘ird* is protected through participation in Walagara as a mechanism for preserving family reputation, social recognition, and communal belonging. This reflects the broader maqāṣid concern with public welfare, social context, and the protection of human dignity (Auda, 2021). The Tengger case, therefore, shows that Maqāṣid reasoning must be applied carefully: it can explain the social necessity of accommodation, but it cannot be used to erase theological boundaries.

The findings also have implications for Islamic marriage administration in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and local KUA offices should recognize that Muslim couples in customary communities may require social legitimacy beyond formal registration. However,

the state should not transform Walagara into an administrative requirement, because doing so would risk creating additional bureaucratic and financial burdens for citizens. A more appropriate response is facilitative rather than regulatory. KUA officials should protect the independence of Islamic marriage registration while engaging culturally with customary authorities to ensure that local traditions do not become coercive, especially for economically vulnerable Muslim couples. In this way, the state can respect local custom without allowing customary obligation to override citizens’ religious and legal rights.



Figure 1. Sequential Demarcation Model of Muslim Tengger Marriage Legitimacy.

Figure 1 illustrates that Muslim Tengger marriage legitimacy is achieved through two sequentially separated but socially connected processes. Ijab qabul and KUA registration produce religious and state validity, while Walagara produces customary recognition. The two processes are not merged into a single theological ritual; rather, they are arranged sequentially to preserve Islamic boundaries while fulfilling Tengger social obligations.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Walagara tradition among Muslim Tengger communities cannot be adequately understood through a simple opposition between Islamic law and customary law. The findings show that Muslim Tengger couples live within an interlegal space where Islamic law, state law, and Tengger customary law operate simultaneously. Ijab qabul and KUA registration provide Islamic and state legal validity, while Walagara provides customary recognition and social legitimacy. This layered structure reveals that marriage validity in Tengger society is not determined by a single legal order, but by the interaction of religious, administrative, and customary jurisdictions.

The main contribution of this study lies in the concept of sequential demarcation. Muslim

Tengger communities do not blend Islamic and customary rituals into a single theological act. Rather, they separate them chronologically, symbolically, and jurisdictionally. Ijab qabul is performed first under Islamic authority, while Walagara is performed afterward under customary authority. This model shows that the so-called hybrid ritual is not theological syncretism, but a structural and procedural strategy for navigating plural legal obligations. Through this arrangement, Muslim Tengger actors maintain Islamic marital validity while also preserving their belonging within the Tengger customary community.

This study also clarifies the operational meaning of *ḥifẓ al-‘ird* in the Tengger context. Honor is not merely an abstract moral value, but is socially experienced through recognition, family reputation, avoidance of the stigma of *kumpul kebo*, and continued participation in customary life. The urgency of Walagara, therefore, lies not only in ritual belief but also in the protection of family dignity and communal belonging. At the same time, the findings show that Walagara is sustained by power relations within the customary order. Customary authorities, family elders, and village-based social networks possess symbolic power to define whether a marriage is socially complete, creating pressure for Muslim couples who may be economically vulnerable or theologically hesitant.

Nevertheless, this study recognizes the limits of cognitive reframing. Muslim Tengger actors may interpret Walagara as a social custom rather than worship, but intention alone does not automatically remove all juristic concerns related to mantras, offerings, and symbolic communication with ancestral or cosmological entities. Therefore, Walagara should not be described as having been unconditionally transformed from *‘urf fāsid* into *‘urf ṣaḥīḥ*. A more precise conclusion is that Muslim Tengger actors attempt to make Walagara religiously livable through separation, sequencing, and reinterpretation, while its theological status remains conditional, context-dependent, and open to juristic debate.

The findings have implications for Islamic marriage administration in Indonesia, particularly for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and local KUA offices in culturally plural areas. The state should protect the independence of Islamic marriage registration and ensure that customary rituals do not become additional administrative or financial requirements for Muslim citizens. At the same time, KUA officials may play a facilitative role by engaging in cultural mediation with customary authorities so that local traditions can be respected without becoming coercive. In this way, Islamic legal validity, citizens' rights, and local customary dignity can be balanced more carefully.

This study is limited to the Tengger Muslim communities in Ngadas and Sukapura, so its findings cannot be generalized to all Muslim minority communities in Indonesia. Future research may compare the Tengger case with Muslim communities in Bali, Lombok, or other regions where Islamic marriage practices intersect with strong customary systems. Such comparative research would help determine whether sequential demarcation is a uniquely Tengger model or part of a broader pattern of Muslim legal adaptation in plural customary societies.

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