

HARMONY IN DIVERSITY IN BORDER AREAS: DAYAK IBAN TRIBE AND MIGRANTS IN BADAU

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Abstract

This study aimed to highlight the harmonious coexistence among different ethnic and religious groups. The study was conducted in Badau, a sub-district in West Kalimantan, inhabited by the indigenous Dayak Iban ethnic group and migrants from various ethnic and religious backgrounds. The primary motivation for examining the socio-cultural and religious life in Badau stems from the region's challenges, including limited religious guidance and services, the establishment of places of worship, the roles of traditional and religious leaders, and interfaith relationships. Using a qualitative approach with observation, interviews, and document analysis, the research revealed several key findings. Firstly, customary rules play a significant role in the lives of the Dayak Iban, serving as a guiding principle. They adhere to these rules strictly but with flexibility. Secondly, community leaders and social institutions are

instrumental in resolving social issues. The *rumah panjang* and *balai adat* are two key mechanisms for conflict resolution. The study recommends conducting anthropological and historical research to trace the origins of the Dayak Iban tribe and explore religious encounters in the region. It also suggests that local governments in border areas emulate Badau's community resilience, where the Cross-Border Post (PLBN) serves as a living symbol of unity, promoting nationalism and harmony among diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious groups.

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menyoroti kehidupan harmonis di antara kelompok etnis dan agama yang berbeda. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Badau, sebuah kecamatan di Kalimantan Barat, yang dihuni oleh suku Dayak Iban sebagai kelompok etnis asli dan para migran dari berbagai latar belakang etnis dan agama. Motivasi utama untuk meneliti kehidupan sosial budaya dan agama di Badau berasal dari tantangan yang dihadapi wilayah ini, seperti keterbatasan bimbingan dan layanan keagamaan, pendirian tempat ibadah, peran pemimpin adat dan agama, serta hubungan antar umat beragama. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumen, penelitian ini mengungkapkan beberapa temuan penting. Pertama, aturan adat memainkan peran penting dalam kehidupan suku Dayak Iban, menjadi pedoman utama mereka. Mereka mematuhi aturan tersebut dengan tegas namun fleksibel. Kedua, para pemimpin komunitas dan lembaga sosial berperan penting dalam menyelesaikan masalah sosial. Rumah panjang dan balai adat merupakan dua mekanisme penyelesaian konflik di antara masyarakat. Studi ini merekomendasikan dilakukannya penelitian antropologi dan sejarah untuk menelusuri asal-usul suku Dayak Iban serta mengeksplorasi pertemuan agama di wilayah tersebut. Studi ini juga menyarankan agar pemerintah daerah di wilayah perbatasan meniru ketahanan komunitas di Badau, di mana Pos Lintas Batas Negara (PLBN) berfungsi sebagai simbol hidup persatuan, mempromosikan nasionalisme dan kerukunan di antara kelompok etnis, budaya, dan agama yang beragam.

Keywords: Cross-border Post; customary rules; Dayak Iban tribe; religious diversity

Introduction

Badau is one of the sub-districts in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, which directly borders Malaysia. Citing the official website of the National Border Management Agency (BNPP) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Badau and 187 other sub-districts in the country's border areas are priority locations for development (Budianta, 2010). Meanwhile, Maisondra (2023) noted that Indonesia now has 18 Cross-Border Posts (PLBN) in its border regions. Indonesia shares borders with three countries: Malaysia, the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste (RDTL), and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The presence of the Cross-Border Post (PLBN) in Badau has significantly increased the number of immigrants, drawn not only by the monument but also by the economic opportunities at nearby shopping centers. However, this influx of people has introduced complexities, as border regions often experience heightened interactions between diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, which can lead to social tension and friction. Badau, now home to Dayak Iban, Malay, and Javanese communities, exemplifies how migration can foster both positive exchanges and potential conflict among these groups, especially in areas where socio-cultural and political dynamics are intertwined with cross-border interactions (Kutor et al., 2021).

Border areas, especially in Indonesia, are not only strategic from an economic and political standpoint but also hold significant socio-religious complexities that warrant deeper examination. Sabara (2020) revealed a similar conjecture in his research on other border areas. Borders are particularly vulnerable to the infiltration of foreign ideologies or religious beliefs with transnational patterns, which may be incompatible with Indonesia's national ideologies. Thus, border areas should not be analyzed solely in terms of economy, politics, resilience, and state security but also in terms of socio-religious dynamics. The complexity of border areas invites further study on issues related to migration, demographics, politics, economy, and national defense (Tim Peneliti, 2017).

Based on these assumptions, border areas generally contain three important aspects worth studying: defense-security, economy-trade, and socio-culture. This research focuses on the socio-cultural perspective, enriched with the study of religious life. The main reason for examining the socio-cultural and religious life in the Badau community is the region's limitations, such as religious guidance and services, the establishment of places of worship, the role of traditional and religious leaders, and interfaith relations. Rosyidah & Kustini (2022) found that marriage services, especially for Muslims, were inadequate, with the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) in Badau having only one employee, who also serves as the head of the office. Gumelar (2018) noted that similar limitations are prevalent in almost all of Indonesia's border areas.

Despite the high cross-cultural diversity in Badau, primarily due to the interaction between the local community and those from Sarawak, and encounters with new ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, the outcomes of this study are not as dramatic as those found in other researches. Adeney-Risakotta (2018) emphasized that cultural encounters and mutual influences between societies in different countries allow the flow of globalization into the religious sphere. As cosmopolitan elements from globalization enter various religious traditions, there is hope for these encounters to challenge parochialism and religious violence.

The study on border communities also did not reveal the symptoms described by Appleby and Abdullah (Tim Peneliti, 2017), who argued that forms of religiosity in border communities can give rise to ethno-nationalist religious extremism. Rusmiyati (2022) highlighted the strategic importance of border areas for such developments, where mutual influence in religious understanding crosses state administrative boundaries in a "borderless" fashion (Azra, 2013, 2014, 2015). Nevertheless, this study still draws from previous research on similar socio-cultural dynamics in other border regions (Motomitsu, 2020; Nathan, 2020).

The Dayak Iban tribe, historically predominantly Catholic, directly faced a high volume of ethnic, cultural, and religious interactions at the

Badau border. This raises the primary issue of how the Dayak Iban have managed to maintain religious and cultural diversity, especially between Catholics, Christians, and Muslims, as well as between the Dayak Iban and Malay ethnic groups. The history of the region's formation and the dynamics between ethnic, tribal, and religious groups is intriguing, as Pamungkas (2018) discovered in Bengkayang. The focus of this research on the religious dynamics and diversity management by the Dayak Iban in Badau is a novel aspect that differentiates it from previous studies (Cahya, 2012; Septarina, 2014; Dedees, 2016; Christyanto & Mayulu, 2021).

This research utilized several frameworks for analysis. Even though the Dayak Iban tribe is the majority, it does not exempt them from conflict, often expressed through subtle or hidden actions. In Scott's (1990) terms, this is referred to as a 'hidden transcript,' where groups unable to voice their opinions publicly resort to concealed forms of resistance. Bourdieu (2006) added that 'social taste' is often dictated by the majority, leaving minorities to conform to common standards. Apart from this silent stage of conflict, the Badau community has unique problem-solving mechanisms, where traditional structures like the *balai adat* (traditional hall) and the *rumah panjang* (longhouse) are used to resolve various issues.

The existence of culture is important to recognize because a place often carries multiple interpretations, leading to struggles over access and resources, as well as claims and contestations over 'space.' However, it also serves as a space for dialogue, intimate cultural exchanges, and solutions to various life challenges. The atmosphere of mutual trust and interdependence among people aligns with Putnam's view that the stronger the civic network within a society, the less likely it is for violence or communal conflict to occur (Putnam, 2021). These civic engagement networks, which foster trust between residents, serve as the foundation of social capital. Through this social capital, people can extend mutual trust and adhere to shared norms.

Adaptation is the key to uniting differences. Dayak community adapt to their environment through the use of their natural resources for survival, which resonates with the concept of Haviland's adaptation that is essential

for all life forms (in Luardini & Garner, 2019). In specific areas, people living in the same environment tend to adopt each other's positive habits. Keesing (2014) supports this view, stating that one of the oldest forms of human adaptation to new environments involves hunting, gathering, and farming. The Dayak Iban tribe's adaptive encounter with migrants—largely through agriculture and plantations—serves as a foundation for social harmonization. The ability of the Dayak Iban tribe (comprising primarily the Dayak and Malay peoples) to maintain religious diversity (among Catholics, Christians, and Muslims) is noteworthy. As Pamungkas (2018) demonstrated in Bengkayang, the history of territorial creation, management, and the dynamics among tribes and religions are fascinating to explore. This study's focus on religious life dynamics and how the Dayak Iban manage diversity in Badau sets it apart from previous studies, especially those conducted in Kalimantan and other border areas (Cahya, 2012; Christyanto & Mayulu, 2021; Dedees, 2015; Septarina, 2014; Zainuri, 2018).

The current research is to explore the complex socio-religious dynamics between the Dayak Iban tribe, Malays, and other migrants in the Badau region. The research focuses on key aspects such as the existence of the Dayak Iban tribe and their grounded Catholicism, examining how they navigate religious identity while maintaining cultural traditions. It also investigates the role of Christianity in balancing theological beliefs with Dayak customs and the rapid development of Islam, leading to the emergence of a "mixed generation" that embodies multiple ethnic and religious influences. Additionally, the study delves into the unique problem-solving mechanisms within the community, such as the use of traditional structures like the *balai adat* and *rumah panjang* for conflict resolution. By analyzing these facets, the research highlights how the Dayak Iban tribe fosters harmonious relations and diversity management in a culturally rich and religiously pluralistic border area, contributing to the broader understanding of social harmony in Indonesia's border regions.

Method

This research employed a qualitative method, utilizing observation, in-depth interviews with key informants in Badau District, and documentation. Observations were made by examining social phenomena in Badau, such as traditional markets, the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), sub-district offices, *rumah panjang* (long houses), traditional halls, places of worship, and particularly around the cross-border area. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants, as shown in Table 1, including traditional stakeholders (*tumenggung*, *punggawa*), community leaders, and government officials from both Badau and Putussibau Districts. These individuals were selected because their extensive experience in dealing with various people gave them deeper knowledge than the general population. The use of this technique is supported by the nature of qualitative research, which is not intended for generalization (Lune, Howard & Berg, 2017; Silverman & Patterson, 2022).

Table 1. The list of selected interviewed informants

Name	Status
YU	A tumenggung from Dayak Iban tribe
AS	A punggawa from Malay tribe
AS	A priest of a Catholic Church in Badau
IBRR	A priest of a Catholic Church in Badau
LB	A Christian priest
BM	Local person
Bl	Local person
AL1	Local person
WS	The head of BPD
PUT	A resident coming from Palembang
AL2	A resident coming from Banyuwangi
AU	A local person

The third data collection technique used in this study is document analysis. While observation and in-depth interviews are considered the primary techniques, document analysis serves as a secondary method. Secondary data in this study was sourced from the Central Statistics Agency

(BPS) and other documents, both from the Badau District office and Kapuas Hulu Regency. Unfortunately, locating documents that specifically discussed Badau was challenging, although some valuable information on the Dayak Iban Tribe was available. This lack of specific information was supplemented by literature reviews, incorporating both primary and secondary data.

The research findings and analysis were based on primary data (interviews and observations) and secondary data from relevant prior studies, helping to address this informational gap. This approach aligns with the goals of qualitative research, which seeks to understand phenomena within their natural social context, prioritizing deep communication and interaction between researchers and the studied phenomenon (Lune, Howard & Berg, 2017). To analyze the data, the researchers followed five key steps: bracketing, data reduction and elimination, data clustering, data validation, and Individual Textural Description (ITD) (Moustakas, 1994). In the first step, the researchers made notes of informants' expressions and relevant field notes. Next, they selected and sorted the data, retaining only what was relevant to the research themes. The selected data were then categorized according to these themes. To ensure validity, the data were triangulated using multiple sources, including other informants and written documents. Finally, the researchers produced ITD to provide a clear interpretation of the findings.

Finding and Discussion

The Existence of the Dayak Iban Tribe in Badau

Tracing the history and existence of the Dayak Iban tribe in Badau is quite difficult due to limited information, both written and oral, as noted by the informants. Even *Tumenggung* YU and *Punggawa* AS, two of the oldest people in Badau, could not provide clear details about the origins of the Dayak Iban and the Malay in Badau. Similarly, the introduction of Islam, regarded as the most recent religion, is not widely documented. This contrasts with the extensive studies on Islam and Malay culture in Sumatra, particularly in Riau (Haba, 2012).

The Dayak Iban tribe is one of the 186 Dayak sub-tribes in West Kalimantan. Known as "Iban people" or "Neban people," "Hivan," or "Dayak Laut," they are the most populous Dayak group in Borneo, residing across

Kalimantan, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam. In Kapuas Hulu Regency, the Iban people predominantly inhabit Embaloh Hilir, Embaloh Hulu, Batang Lupar, Badau, Empanang, Nanga Kantuk, Lanjak, and Putussibau. The Iban are divided into several sub-ethnic groups, such as Balau, Skrang, Saribas, Undup, Kumpang, Sebuyau, Seru, Empran, Katibas, and Gaat, with most residing in Sarawak, Malaysia. Their primary settlements are located around the Batang Lupar River in Sarawak and the northern upper reaches of the Kapuas River.

The Dayak Iban primarily earn their livelihood through farming and gardening (Leli et al., 2023). It is not surprising that the areas along the roads from Putussibau to the PLBN are lined with plantations, particularly of pepper, palm oil, and rubber. Palm oil is the most widely cultivated crop in the region. In addition to farming and working as oil palm laborers, the Iban also gather forest products, such as rattan and resin.

The Iban people have developed various art forms, particularly in the oral tradition. One notable form is satirical rhyming, often performed during courtship events. Besides rhyming, they have hymns to the gods for blessings (*ensemak*) and mantras sung by shamans to heal the sick (*balian mantra*). Rhymes are also used for entertainment (*didi*) among young people, while they pass down oral traditions through folklore, often recited at ceremonies like births, marriages, or funerals.

The Dayak Iban, especially in West Kalimantan, do not have fixed residential areas (Keai, 2021; Tugang & Keai, 2022). Historically, they originated from the Batang Lupar River, geographically located in the Sarawak region of Malaysia. Known for their exceptional courage, the Dayak Iban succeeded in crossing the border and defeating other Dayak tribes through a wandering war (*mengayau*), eventually pushing the Dayak Kantuk tribe out of the area.

According to oral history, the Dayak Iban control the area up to the Badau border, though the majority of their population is in Sarawak. When the Dayak Kantuk tribe attempted to settle there, the Iban people successfully repelled them. In addition to *mengayau*, the Iban have many

ancient ceremonies still practiced today, which honor and glorify the universe. Along with these ceremonies, they have maintained customs such as brewing their own drink from glutinous rice (*bram*) and preparing sap water, sometimes mixed with bark to alter its flavor (interview with AS, 14/7/2017).

Relations between the Dayak Iban Tribe, Malays, and Other Migrants in Badau

The approximately 175 km long road from Putussibau, the capital of Kapuas Hulu Regency, is one of the main routes to Badau, and perhaps the smoothest. The Putussibau-Badau road has been open since 1992 and has been comfortably passable since 2011. This road project is one of the 10 National Strategic Activities in Kalimantan, with Badau District being the top priority location for the Management of State Boundaries and Border Areas (Badau District Profile, 2013).

After 2012, the road conditions improved significantly. The construction of the Cross-Border Post (PLBN) in Badau had a major impact, attracting many migrants from outside the region. Most of these newcomers are traders and garden farmers, with some even purchasing land to build rental properties. Many traders in the traditional markets come from Sumatra and Java, while Chinese traders have opened electronic stores, grocery stores, and workshops.

A married couple, PUT from Palembang and AL1 from Banyuwangi, noted that since the construction of the PLBN, the number of immigrants has increased over the last three years. They believe there is now an exchange between the Dayak Iban, who farm, and the immigrants, who engage in trade. BM, an honorary teacher, confirmed this, adding that after receiving their salaries, the oil palm farm workers, most of whom are Dayak Iban, flock to the markets and shops owned by the immigrants.

The presence of immigrants, particularly the Malay community, has been growing since the 1960s. According to YU, a *tumenggung* (tribal leader) of the Dayak people, Malays initially arrived as garden cultivators. Over time, as the gardens expanded, more workers were needed, especially after PT.

Sinar Mas took control. Jobs that the Dayak Iban could not manage, such as teaching and government positions, were taken by Malays and other immigrants. YU also noted that the Malay population has grown, not only due to job opportunities in the public sector but also because of intermarriage with the Dayak Iban. His view was supported by AS, a Malay *punggawa* (community leader), who stated that intermarriages between the two tribes are becoming more common. Additionally, the number of *muallaf* (converts to Islam) from the Dayak Tribe is also increasing (interview with YU, 14/7/2017).

Other informants, such as AS and AU, mentioned that as immigrants, they had to adhere to the customary laws of Badau. Only by doing so could they integrate and participate in customary and religious activities. This is evidenced by the inclusion of Malay representatives in the village administration, a decision ratified by the sub-district government. This democratic approach demonstrates that Badau has successfully integrated its two largest tribes, the Dayak and Malay (interview with AS, 14/7/2017; interview with AU, 15/7/2017).

In terms of religious life in Badau, YU and AS noted that the Dayak Iban tribe predominantly practices Catholicism and Christianity, while the Malay tribe represents Islam. People can easily identify a person's religion based on their tribal origin, although intermarriage has blurred these lines, with many Dayak Iban individuals converting to Islam and vice versa. Generally, women tend to change their religion to follow their husband's faith, though some convert of their own accord.

Based on our observations, document studies, and the testimonies of informants, Islam has grown rapidly since the Malays first settled in Badau, as many of the newcomers were Muslims. Statistical data from Badau District shows that the population is dominated by the three major religions: Catholicism, Christianity, and Islam. There is only one Buddhist family in Badau (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu, 2017, p. 36). However, there are relatively few places of worship for these three major religions (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu, 2017, p. 35). This

scarcity is not due to the population ratio of each religion, as specified by regulations on the establishment of worship places, but rather due to the strong influence of customs. The construction of worship houses is strictly regulated and must be based on customary agreements.

Dayak Iban and Grounded Catholicism

YU and AS stated that the history and development of religion in Badau has never been documented. This lack of written history makes it difficult for society to embrace diversity, as promoting openness can begin with cultural literacy, including religious matters (Kutor, 2021). The researchers struggled to obtain documents on the religious history of the Badau community, making it challenging to describe this history. Furthermore, no prior research specifically examines the religious history and development in Badau.

The only reliable perspective on the Ibans' adoption of religion seems to stem from the colonial period. As in many colonized areas, particularly by Dutch missionaries, Badau likely followed this pattern. YU explained:

"According to the stories I've heard, in the early 1890s, the Dayak Iban people in Badau officially embraced Catholicism brought by the Dutch. Before then, we only believed in the forces of nature. Although we have adopted a religion, our original beliefs remain and are still practiced today. At that time, all of us in Badau were Catholic because the Dutch controlled the area and employed many Iban people as farmers" (interview, July 15, 2017).

YU further noted that until the 1960s, before the arrival of more people to Badau, Malays and Catholics were the majority. However, today, many have embraced Christianity and Islam. Some Catholics, particularly married women, follow their husbands' religion due to intermarriage with the Dayak Iban tribe. This view is supported by AS, the Punggawa of the Malay tribe, who mentioned that intermarriages between the two tribes have become increasingly common. It is also noted that more members of the Dayak tribe have converted to Islam.

This brings its own blessing, as the bond of brotherhood in Badau grows stronger, although it remains rooted in the values and customary norms of the Dayak Iban Tribe. Based on YU's experience as a traditional administrator before becoming Tumenggung, religious life and its relationship with other faiths have remained harmonious. This is partly due to several traditional events throughout the year that succeed in uniting the people of Badau.

In terms of places of worship, Catholics in Badau have only one church, St. Montfort of the Sintang Diocese. This church is unique, adorned with Dayak Iban carvings. Father AS, who previously served in Jakarta, has been leading the church for six months.

"Even though I've only been here for six months, I can feel the peaceful atmosphere. The community is very close-knit, with strong cooperation. Almost all tasks in Badau are accomplished. Additionally, the traditional leaders are integrated into the sub-district structure, which helps keep things organized. Given this peaceful atmosphere, my goal is to reinforce the bonds of life with sermons that encourage brotherhood..." (interview, July 16, 2017).

The teachings of brotherhood and love, central to Catholicism, are practiced in Badau with a degree of detachment from issues outside the community, as if mocking external conflicts. For example, in cases like the rejection of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) in Pontianak or the controversy surrounding the Governor of Jakarta during the 2017 Regional Head Election (Pilkada), the people of Badau remain unconcerned. They often say, "Why get involved in other people's problems? What matters is that Badau is safe. Let them deal with their own issues—so long as they don't disturb us, we have no reason to interfere," as one resident expressed during the abstinence ceremony.

Christianity: Balancing Theology and Tradition

Over time, the Iban people did not solely embrace Catholicism. Although Christians make up only about 10% of the population, Christianity continues to grow and develop, with various distinctions emerging among Christian denominations. This growth is partly due to the

presence of different Christian synods. Christianity is now increasingly embraced by the Dayak Iban Tribe. According to IBRR, a pastor interviewed after a service at the Evangelical Sentence Church, the spread of Christianity began with Limbertus Aki Apu, a pastor from Landak Regency, in the 1960s. IBRR shared that the pastor took a sabbatical, entered the world of politics, and during his journey, arrived in Badau. After a few months, he began offering religious services. Initially, only one family converted to Christianity. It was difficult to spread Christianity in Badau at first, as Catholicism was seen as more aligned with the customs of the Dayak Iban Tribe. However, over time, the number of Christians grew, and a church was eventually established.

To support the Christian community, IBRR stated that he encourages his congregation to follow the customs of the Iban people. He also maintains regular communication with other religious leaders and actively participates in meetings. This is particularly important during times of concern, such as when there were fears about the potential arrival of Gafatar, which was considered a deviant organization.

The challenges posed by the spread of Christianity were also acknowledged by Pastor LB. According to him, the Iban people feel comfortable with Catholicism because several customs and traditions have been incorporated into Catholic teachings. This has made the spread of Christianity a particularly tough challenge. He even had to conduct special research and spend extended time with his congregation in the *rumah panjang*.

“Christians in Badau must be encouraged not to rely too heavily on customs, as the role of government and religion must also be emphasized. This is a difficult task because Christians are still struggling to distinguish between custom and theology. Gradually, however, customs and religion have begun to be practiced in a more balanced way. For example, before participating in traditional ceremonies, they first pray according to Christian practices, then proceed with activities dictated by custom. We also emphasize resolving every problem through family and deliberation methods” (interview, July 17, 2017).

Pastor LB's remarks suggest that the increasing traffic in Badau, resulting from the construction of the PLBN (Indonesian Border Post), must be taken into account. He believes that if the people of Badau continue to prioritize only one institution—customs—without adapting, they risk being left behind by newcomers. He also stressed that customs must be flexible in response to the challenges of changing times.

Pastor LB further noted that the relationships between people of different religions in Badau have been very positive. This social capital should serve as a foundation for helping Badau navigate change. If Badau remains too traditional, its people risk falling behind, similar to other regions where populations that were once the majority have been pushed to the periphery. He used the Betawi and Lampung people as examples of such communities that now largely live on the outskirts.

It seems Pastor LB is reflecting on his inner journey, suggesting that cultural change will occur when people manage their energy effectively. Progress in culture will naturally bring change. While maintaining a strong sense of identity, the people of Badau must also be open to expanding social networks as a consequence of the ongoing changes. In a broader context, Kutor et al. (2021) noted that 21st-century global society will face a dualistic division: touching on themes of identity, networks, and change in the context of globalization.

The Rapid Development of Islam and the Presence of the "Mixed Generation"

The arrival of Islam in Badau is relatively recent compared to its introduction and development in Java or Sumatra. One reason for this is that Badau was difficult to access in the past, with improved access only beginning in the 1990s. However, the rapid development of Islam in Badau is a fascinating subject. According to Ibrahim's (2015) report, seven kingdoms in Kapuas Hulu introduced external influences, including Islam. Based on this history, it is clear that almost all of West Kalimantan has been influenced by Islam.

According to AS, a Malay Punggawa, Islam was introduced and developed in Badau through peaceful means.

"Long before the Malay tribe arrived in Badau, the Iban people controlled the entire border area. They came from the state of Sarawak, Malaysia, which is why the Dayak Iban in Badau and in Malaysia share a strong bond, both in language and religion. Meanwhile, the Malay group originates from the Peninsula (Kuala Lumpur) and nearby areas, including Sumatra. The Malays arrived in Badau around the 1960s. They were accepted, particularly because they participated in farming and trading and respected the customs of the Iban people" (interview, July 15, 2017).

AS believes that since the arrival of the Malay tribe, life in Badau has become more diverse. The Malays introduced activities that the Iban people did not engage in, such as opening shops and dominating traditional markets. This dynamic created a mutually beneficial "job distribution" between the Iban and Malays. Some local residents mentioned that during busy times, like August 1st, both Iban and Malays mingle, buying and selling from each other, which illustrates the mutual trust between the two groups.

Trust between the Iban and Malays has been established for a long time, facilitating communication in social, economic, religious, and political matters (Hasbullah, 2006). The Malay tribe, although considered "immigrants," has adapted well to life in Badau. For instance, the village of Majang Island is 100% Muslim, yet this majority does not diminish their respect for Dayak Iban customs.

WS, the head of BPD from Majang Island, ensures peaceful coexistence by reminding residents not to mock each other, as it could be seen as a challenge. He mentioned that Muslims in Majang have never been affected by external issues. To maintain harmony, religious leaders often organize lighthearted gatherings at guard posts and mosques to prevent the community, especially the youth, from being swayed by unverified issues.

Majang Island, with its entirely Muslim population, reflects the harmonious inter-religious relations in Badau (Hasbullah, 2006). This shows how well Muslims have adapted to their environment. Shared needs and the role of traditional leaders have helped Muslims and the Iban go hand in

hand. For example, during Iban traditional ceremonies, Muslims also participate without feeling that it contradicts their faith. Interestingly, Muslims in Badau have adapted some Iban traditions, like the *ngampu tolak bala* ceremony, which is similar to the Muslim *pedarak tepung tawar* ceremony. Both are expressions of gratitude to God for protection from disasters (Supriyanto, 2020). This demonstrates the unique adaptation of Iban customs, as Yusriadi et al. (2012) noted, where religion and customs provide social cohesion.

The stable situation in Badau aligns with Putnam's (2021) analysis, which suggests that the presence of many networks within a community can serve as social capital, helping to create and maintain peace. Similarly, inter-community networks, particularly citizen participation in joint activities, can prevent potential conflicts. While informal, everyday communication between citizens may be sufficient to maintain social cohesion in rural areas, it may not be enough in larger cities. In urban settings, formal associational ties are essential to promote inter-ethnic peace (Panggabean, 2018).

In line with these expert opinions, the rapid development of Islam in Badau can be attributed not only to its ability to adapt to Dayak Iban customs but also to the presence of a "mixed generation." These descendants, born from marriages between Dayak Iban and Malay tribes, including converts to Islam (muallafs), play a crucial role in fostering mutual respect and care. They view themselves as part of a larger family, which has strengthened communal bonds. One of the reasons Badau remains unaffected by external influences is the presence of this "mixed generation," which further solidifies shared values. The muallafs have infused Iban culture with an Islamic touch, a transformation they see as a new cultural wealth that the people of Badau now take pride in (interview with AS, June 14, 2017).

Problem-solving Mechanisms

Earlier, it was mentioned that Badau is inhabited by various ethnic groups, making it vulnerable to social disharmony and even ethnic conflict (Haba, 2012). Several studies have reported conflicts between indigenous people and migrants. Notable examples include conflicts between the Dayak

and Madurese (Hamdani, 2022), Dayak and Chinese (Maulana, 2015), Dayak and Malay (Hamdani, 2022), among others. Among these, the conflict between the Dayak and Madurese was the most severe and traumatic, causing significant destruction and loss of life (Arkanudin, 2006). On the other hand, the conflict between the Dayak and Malay was less intense, though this does not mean there were no tensions between these two ethnic groups in Badau, where the Dayak are the dominant ethnicity.

According to an analysis of interview and observation results, most issues in Badau can be resolved easily due to the people's natural inclination toward peaceful living. Additionally, the presence of strong, hierarchical traditional institutions, from the RT to sub-district levels, plays a crucial role. AN and other informants explained that each social structure in Badau has clearly defined responsibilities, preventing overlap. Their tasks involve categorizing and addressing problems, whether they are customary, criminal, or religious. For instance, a seemingly minor issue like hitting a pet dog or pig can be a serious matter in Badau.

Most problems (except for criminal cases such as drug-related issues or murder) are resolved through customary law. Even cases of infidelity or rape, which fall under criminal law, can sometimes be settled within families. The resolution process is also hierarchical. If a problem is solved at the level of the *patih* or customary head, there is no need to escalate it to the Customary Council. Each customary stakeholder must first attempt to resolve the issue. If a problem affects both tribes (Dayak Iban and Malay), it is addressed jointly by the *Tumenggung* and *Punggawa*, highlighting the important role leaders play in maintaining harmony (Samuel & Tumonglo, 2023; Zuhairi & Muzakki, 2023). These leaders not only promote peaceful coexistence (Zuhairi & Muzakki, 2023) but also mediate conflicts. If the *Tumenggung* and *Punggawa* cannot resolve an issue, it can be brought to the Customary Council with the involvement of the sub-district as a facilitator.

The problem-solving mechanisms mentioned above are highly feasible for the Badau people, as they are accustomed to engaging in dialogue within the *rumah panjang*. This traditional house is built along large rivers and is both spacious and long. The house is very sturdy, supported by large trees that are resistant to all weather conditions, and is often constructed as a stilt house to avoid flooding, tides, or wild animals. Nowadays, many *rumah panjang* have been built with permanent walls, resembling residential complexes. One thing that remains unchanged is the elongated roof, which

can accommodate an average of 15 to 50 families, making the house as long as 200 meters. At first glance, it resembles a mini village under one roof. Along the main roads of Badau, traditional stilt *rumah panjang* are still standing.

Through the *rumah panjang*, the Badau people form a unique community based on an ambilineal kinship system, though the husband traditionally lives with his wife's family. Ambilineal kinship means that some people trace their lineage through their father's side, while others do so through their mother's side. The post-marriage custom is *utrolocal*, where some couples choose to live in the husband's *bilek* (room), and others in the wife's *bilek*. This choice also determines membership in the *bilek*, along with its associated rights and obligations. A person can never be a member of two *bilek*. Children belong to the *bilek* they are born into.

Historically, *rumah panjang* were inhabited by families related by blood. However, due to practical needs, they are now also used as rented housing. Different families from various ethnicities and religions can live together. In the mornings and evenings, they gather, joke, and play in the outdoor and inner courtyards. Through the *rumah panjang*, children from an early age are exposed to diverse personalities, values, and cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. Despite their varying economic circumstances and social statuses, they learn to maintain togetherness. They are also taught tolerance, respect for others, self-control, and the importance of maintaining shared values (Segara, 2020).

Deliberation based on ethical behavior has become a tradition passed down through generations. This practice is essential to instill continuously, creating a *habitus* that extends beyond the *rumah panjang* and into broader life contexts. In line with Bourdieu's (2006) concept of *habitus*, the *rumah panjang* serves as an arena for producing and reproducing values that will be passed on to future generations. It is a place where people express their experiences and identities as members of the same community.

The practice of deliberating and solving problems is not only carried out in the *rumah panjang* but also in the *balai adat* (traditional halls). In Badau District, there are two large traditional halls for each tribe. When a problem involves two tribes, deliberation is first held to decide which tribal hall will be used for mediation. Additionally, most villages have their own separate

traditional halls. Generally, these halls are used for a variety of meetings, including customary gatherings and other formal activities.

The problem-solving process also benefits from the close kinship and brotherhood that exists between different religions and tribes in Badau. This relationship is reflected in many community activities, most of which are deeply rooted in Iban customs, and are followed by all residents, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. The people of Badau continue to regard customs and culture as sources of values. Religion, practiced through customs and culture, serves as a tool for self-reflection and finding common ground with others. This aligns with Geertz's (2014) assertion that religion is not only part of culture but its core. As the 'core culture,' religion serves as a guide for life, determining what is seen as good and bad. Without realizing it, the Badau people incorporate various rites as a medium for practicing their religion.

Throughout the year, several traditional activities are conducted collectively. Interestingly, some traditional Dayak Iban ceremonies have been adapted to accommodate the needs of the Malay community. For instance, every new year, usually between December and January, a ceremony is held to ask for safety and well-being for all Badau residents. This lively ceremony, since 2017, has been conducted in a neutral area between the Indonesian and Malaysian PLBN. Besides its significance in ensuring safety and prosperity, the ceremony also serves as an expression of gratitude for the establishment of the impressive PLBN in Badau.

In the *ngampu tolak bala* ceremony (a traditional ritual to ward off misfortune, negative energy, or disasters), all residents actively participate. In addition to contributions and voluntary donations, some provide ceremonial materials and food. Uniquely, no pork is served during this ceremony out of respect for Muslim residents, demonstrating a blending of Dayak Iban customs with Islamic teachings.

Another traditional ceremony is the *padarak*, an Iban ritual performed to inaugurate a new building or house. All residents are invited to attend and offer prayers. Over time, as this ceremony became more frequent and attended mainly by close relatives, the Malay community began to refer to it as *teprung tawar* (Luardini et al., 2019; Masrur, 2022). These two ceremonies, which share similar meanings and purposes, have become opportunities for the two tribes to mingle and celebrate together more often.

There is also *gawae*, a festival held at the end of May, although some areas in Badau celebrate it in June or July. This annual event is a sign of gratitude for the harvest and the bounty from the land. During *gawae*, all residents visit each other and host guests in their homes. Additionally, there is *ngabang*, an event where cakes, dishes, and other sweets are exchanged among relatives, friends, neighbors, and family. This event takes place during religious celebrations, with the Dayak Iban practicing *ngabang* during Easter, Christmas, and New Year, while the Malay community observes it during Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha.

In addition to the various traditional rites and activities mentioned above, the Badau people also take part in national ceremonies to strengthen fraternal relations between tribes and religions. One significant event is the celebration of Independence Day on August 17, where they mingle and participate in various activities such as parties, exhibitions, sports, and art performances. Although this celebration is common across Indonesia, what makes it unique in Badau is that border residents from Malaysia are allowed to join without needing passports. Recently, in an expression of pride and unity, a grand night festival has been held in the PLBN area, further enhancing the festive spirit. They have even successfully invited artists from Jakarta and Pontianak several times to enliven the event. Pamungkas (2018), in a different study, also observed a similar pattern in the Malay-Karimun community.

The sense of togetherness and unity among the tribes and religions in Badau may seem superficial at first glance. However, when you delve into how they engage their thoughts and actions in these activities, it becomes clear that they share a common 'space' called Badau. Theoretically, Herzog (2018) states that organic solidarity in a society can be formed and maintained through a system of community values that has been historically built through tradition. Unconsciously, the value system embedded in these various socio-cultural activities, including the traditional ceremonies of the Badau people, has guided their behavior and fostered unity in their diversity. Herzog refers to these unifying forces as collective representations. Therefore, these rituals and cultural traditions play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and national resilience for the people of Badau.

Overall, one limitation of this study is that it focuses solely on the socio-cultural and religious life in Badau, which may limit the generalizability of its findings to other regions with different ethnic and religious dynamics.

The study's qualitative approach, while valuable for in-depth insights, relies on a limited sample size of interviews and observations, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the community. Additionally, the study does not extensively explore the potential challenges or conflicts that might arise from the integration of different ethnic and religious groups in Badau, which could provide a more balanced view of the region's social harmony. Lastly, the study recommends further research on the anthropological and historical aspects of the Dayak Iban tribe, suggesting that there are still significant gaps in understanding the deeper roots of interethnic and interfaith relations in the area.

Conclusion

This research provides significant theoretical findings, showing that migration and the revitalization of the PLBN have enabled the Dayak Iban tribe to interact with people of different ethnicities and religions. These inter-tribal relationships have also influenced the religious identity of the Dayak Iban tribe, which was originally predominantly Catholic. Over time, some members have embraced Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This demonstrates the Dayak Iban tribe's capacity to accept the arrival of migrants from outside. Despite Badau Sub-district now being home to a variety of ethnicities and religions, its religious life has remained harmonious and stable.

Although this research offers a portrait of the current religious landscape of the Dayak Iban tribe amidst other ethnic groups and faiths, it has limitations due to the lack of data or references on the early history of the tribe and the religions now practiced by the Badau community. Therefore, future research should focus on anthropological and historical studies to trace when and how the Dayak Iban tribe existed before the migration of other ethnic groups. Such research could also map the evolution of religious encounters, highlighting how Catholicism, once dominant, has given way to a more diverse religious landscape.

The recommendations from this study are specifically directed toward local governments in border areas, encouraging them to adopt the positive examples from Badau. The self-resilience of the Badau community is a model worth replicating, as they have successfully utilized the PLBN as a space to express love, pride, and nationalism. The PLBN is not just a static

cultures, and religions. Other border communities in Indonesia could similarly leverage the PLBN as both a monument and a unifying symbol to promote harmonious living in diversity.

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