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Lengkoano Kamparanga Ritual as a Traditional Disease Prevention Practice in the Ciacia Ethnic Community, Buton Island, Indonesia

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Abstract

Many communities across the world perform rituals to seek protection from threats that can disrupt their lives. On Buton Island, Sulawesi, the Ciacia ethnic group practices the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual as a traditional means of preventing disease outbreaks. This study explores the ritual's significance as a culturally embedded strategy for protecting community health, maintaining social cohesion, and providing psychological reassurance. A qualitative approach was employed, collecting data through in-depth interviews with 20 knowledgeable informants, participant observations of the ritual, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with community members. Data were analyzed thematically using cultural value frameworks and ethnographic methods to understand local perceptions and practices. Findings indicate that the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual is performed by offering symbolic items in four cardinal directions, reflecting the community's ancestral knowledge and spiritual beliefs. While rooted in traditional animist practices, the ritual has been adapted over time to coexist with Islamic teachings and modern health concerns, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The ritual not only reinforces communal identity and continuity but also serves as a culturally sanctioned form of risk management, offering emotional and psychological security to villagers. This study contributes to the understanding of indigenous knowledge systems in disease prevention, illustrating how ritual practices function as complementary strategies alongside modern health interventions. It underscores the importance of preserving such cultural practices as part of local wisdom and public health resilience.

Keywords: Ritual, Lengkoano kamparanga, Ciacia ethnic group, Disease prevention, Local wisdom

1 Introduction

Various forms of rituals exist in society, each serving different purposes such as warding off ill omens, preventing diseases, or praying for blessings during agricultural seasons. As Coleman (2013) notes, rituals are not merely symbolic but also forms of action or behavior, making them accessible to all human beings and often closely connected with religious practices. Religion provides a way of multiplying an all-encompassing narrative and differences in situations where people share the same place and time (Beyer, 2007).

Since ancient times, humans have practiced rituals as an integral part of their lives (Alosman & Raihanah, 2022). This notion is grounded in the understanding that human existence is deeply interwoven with ritualistic acts, extending from prenatal ceremonies to funeral rites. These practices illustrate how rituals accompany people across different stages of life, reinforcing unity and cultural identity within families and communities (Alosman & Raihanah, 2022). However, in many parts of the world, rituals face the threat of fading due to the "disenchantment of the world" — a process driven by modern education, urbanization, and a rational-critical mindset that tends to devalue traditional beliefs and practices. While this trend may not yet have significantly affected the Ciacia community, the influence of modernization poses a potential risk to the preservation of their ritual heritage in the future.

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The Ciacia community in Burangasi Village, South Buton Regency, performs an ancestral ritual known as *lengkoano kamparanga*, aimed at warding off misfortunes or illnesses believed to be signaled by troubling signs. While the ritual may not directly repel omens themselves, it represents a culturally grounded response to perceived threats, reinforcing communal resilience and spiritual balance.

The Ciacia ethnic group, the focus of this research, is an indigenous community located in Southeast Sulawesi, specifically in the southern part of Buton Island. Their culture is noteworthy due to its distinct traditions, many of which have been preserved and passed down through generations. The traditional lifestyle of the Ciacia people reflects a strong adherence to ancestral customs, one of which is the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual — a cultural practice that serves as a form of disaster mitigation. This ritual provides a sense of spiritual and psychological calm because it is believed to prevent various forms of disaster that might affect the community.

According to Jackson (2021), disasters are understood as extreme events that disrupt the normal functioning of society. Brundiers (2018) suggests that disasters can act as wake-up calls, drawing attention to vulnerabilities and prompting communities to adopt more sustainable and preventive practices. For instance, the experience of a typhoon might motivate residents to use stronger materials or improved construction methods for future protection. In this context, the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual reflects a traditional form of disaster awareness and response readiness rooted in local wisdom. Integrating such indigenous practices with modern disaster risk management training could enhance community resilience and provide additional long-term benefits.

The novelty in the present study on the ritual of the lengkoano kamparanga is that it shows how the ritual is carried out to signal to the air princes or spirits that people want peace, not conflict. Furthermore, the ritual is intended to seek help from the spirits of ancestors to protect the village from various disease outbreaks, especially the coronavirus. This illustrates how rituals serve purposes beyond symbolic or ceremonial functions, embedding them within broader systems of belief and community survival strategies. As Owoc (2008) explains, rituals were historically rooted in religious practices. While early rituals may have originated in religious contexts, particularly within indigenous animist traditions or broader spiritual worldviews, their functions have since evolved to encompass multiple dimensions of social, psychological, and cultural significance. Central to many of these practices is the belief in a spirit world, grounded in a dualistic understanding of mind and body, where unseen forces influence the physical world in reciprocal ways. When humans fail to respect these forces, negative consequences are believed to follow.

For example, indigenous peoples of the Andes maintain relationships with sacred non-human entities — ranging from spiritual beings to animals and natural landmarks — through offerings, symbolic gestures, and shared practices. These rituals reflect a worldview in which the human and non-human are fluid and interdependent, with anthropomorphic or spiritual entities believed to respond emotionally to human actions (Ferrari et al., 2021). A similar principle of reciprocity underlies rituals elsewhere. In West Bengal, indigenous communities protect the natural environment through ritual practices conducted in forest sanctuaries known as sacred clumps (Sarkar & Modak, 2022). Healing rituals also express cultural perceptions of illness, health, and treatment that are shaped through intergenerational socialization processes (Satrianegara et al., 2021). In Pakistani Sufi traditions, healing rituals at shrines — believed to connect devotees with saints who intercede for them before Allah — draw their strength not merely from ritual acts such as exorcisms but from the collective participation and enduring faith of thousands of followers over generations (Charan et al., 2020). This highlights a critical dynamic: The strength of such rituals lies in widespread communal belief and participation. Consequently, when external factors such as modern education, state secularization, or urbanization weaken this collective support, the ritual system may collapse if the number of adherents drops below a certain threshold.

Swidler's concept (Manley, 1998) about cultural tools is how to use symbols in ritual strategies to integrate methods, practices, concepts, and beliefs into local culture. Ritual becomes a sacred link between humans and metaphysical powers. Signs are complex realities. We are in a position to know and be able to analyze the origin and meaning of signs and symbols (Doina et al., 2012).

A community performs warding-off rituals to prevent the misfortunes believed to follow certain signs such as natural disasters, epidemics, or other threats. While ill omens themselves cannot be warded off, as

they are merely perceived as warnings of impending danger, the ritual serves as a response to such omens, aiming to avert the danger they are believed to foreshadow. People report that not performing the ritual leads to anxiety and psychological discomfort, which can disrupt daily activities. In this way, the ritual offers a sense of protection and emotional reassurance.

Similar practices are also found in Indonesia. For example, communities in Aceh Province perform the tulak bala ritual to ward off calamities and protect against misfortune, reflecting a belief that collective ritual action can safeguard the community from disaster (Maulina et al., 2025). At the international level, a comparable worldview is seen on Tanna Island (Vanuatu), where the local community regards Mount Yasur as an ancestral entity with which they maintain a spiritual connection. An eruption is interpreted not merely as a geological event, but as a sign of the ancestors' anger triggered by human actions. To prevent such an eruption, ritual ceremonies are performed to appease the mountain and restore harmony (Niroa & Nakamura, 2022).

Beyond disaster prevention, rituals in some contexts also function as tools for environmental stewardship and collective memory. According to Antadze and Gujaraidze (2021), rituals are used by the local people of Sveneti, Georgia, to protect the environment and prohibit the exploitation of the environment that can bring disaster. Rituals are not only cultural symbols but also a means of resistance and a political tool. In the suburbs of the foothills of Santiago, Chile, natural disasters are considered events that must be remembered. Therefore, a post-disaster memorialization was held through practices and discourses to prevent future disaster risks (Fuentealba, 2021).

The development of religious beliefs and rituals in Dalmatia, Croatia, shows that the imaginary religious community consists of a set of values and symbols that rely on faith with elements of 'folk magic' to strengthen these beliefs. The apotropaic power (protective magic) of ritual is needed to ward off evil or prevent evil influences, such as misfortune or the evil eye's power (Reed, 2019). Rituals are a fortress and a source of strength, success, health, and well-being that the people who live it believe in. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual as a way for the Ciacia ethnic community to prevent disasters from entering their village. The worldview — predominantly animist with syncretic influences — shapes their understanding of disasters as spiritual disturbances that must be countered with collective ritual action. This perspective is closely tied to efforts to fortify the village against incidents that can disrupt the life of its people. Disaster mitigation through rituals is an effort to protect the community from various dangers or disasters that can occur at any time. Rituals are a harm reduction technique that can produce beneficial effects for individuals and communities by strengthening bonds between community members (Kohek et al., 2021).

2 Literature review

Disaster mitigation plays a vital role in community preparedness and resilience. A clear understanding of this concept is essential for raising public awareness and fostering proactive attitudes toward disaster risk reduction (Nugraheni et al., 2022). Disaster management itself is a dynamic, integrated, and sustainable process that includes preparedness, prevention, mitigation, emergency response, evacuation, rehabilitation, and rebuilding. Within this framework, mitigation refers specifically to actions aimed at reducing or minimizing potential losses and damage caused by disasters. As Srividhya et al. (2020) emphasize, urgent and coordinated efforts across all aspects of disaster management are necessary to effectively respond to and recover from natural hazards. Similarly, Okubo (2016) defines disaster mitigation as a strategic effort to manage disasters by minimizing their destructive impact before they occur.

Modern disaster management emphasizes scientific and technocratic approaches. For instance, in Bangladesh, mapping of flood-prone areas has guided the construction of shelters to protect vulnerable populations (Uddin & Matin, 2021) while in Zimbabwe, a "build-back-better" strategy has focused on rebuilding safer and more resilient infrastructure after disasters (Dube, 2020). These examples highlight rational, action-oriented models of disaster preparedness, centered on planning, infrastructure, and risk

assessment. However, this "disenchantment of the world" often sidelines spiritual or cultural dimensions that remain vital in traditional communities.

By contrast, traditional disaster mitigation emphasizes ancestral knowledge and ritual practices. Suarmika et al. (2022) describe such practices as accumulations of customary wisdom developed through generations of coping with threats. Bwambale et al. (2022) add that rituals can function as coping strategies, linking social resilience with ecological well-being. Historical experiences also show how disasters reshape community preparedness. In Aceh, the 2004 tsunami initially strengthened community readiness, but subsequent studies revealed a decline due to limited training and weak institutional support (Syamsidik et al., 2021). A similar gap appeared in Uttarakhand, India, where COVID-19 responses were hampered by insufficient community participation, particularly in medical care and psychosocial support (Rautela et al., 2022). These examples reveal a key limitation of purely rational-scientific frameworks: Without cultural meaning or ritual grounding, long-term public engagement is difficult to sustain.

Ritual-based approaches demonstrate how local wisdom contributes to disaster prevention across diverse contexts. Among the Oromo in Ethiopia, forests are believed to be guarded by cosmic agents (ayyanaa) who can bring calamities if the sacred environment is desecrated, leading communities to perform rituals that maintain ecological balance (Mitiku & Hailu, 2017). In Japan, the Danjiri Matsuri of Kishiwada functions as a ritualized form of disaster preparedness, strengthening social capital and fostering collective responsibility (Bhandari et al., 2010). These cases illustrate how rituals not only preserve cultural traditions but also embed disaster awareness into everyday social practices.

The present study builds on this scholarship by focusing on the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual of the Ciacia people in Southeast Sulawesi. Unlike previous studies that largely explore ecological guardianship (e.g., Oromo), social capital formation (e.g., Japan), or technocratic responses (e.g., Bangladesh, Zimbabwe), the Ciacia case highlights rituals as both spiritual negotiations with ancestral spirits and unseen forces, and practical mechanisms for disaster mitigation, including protection against disease outbreaks such as COVID-19. By situating the Ciacia experience within broader discussions of disaster management, this study contributes a novel perspective on how indigenous ritual practices function as culturally rooted strategies for resilience, complementing and challenging dominant scientific models.

3 Method

3.1 Research design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method to explore the practice and meaning of the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Secondary data were collected from relevant literature, including previous studies, reports, and cultural documents to strengthen the analysis.

3.2 Research site and timeline

The research was conducted purposively in Burangasi Village, Lapandewa District, South Buton Regency, selected for its rich practice of the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual. Fieldwork was carried out over a six-month period, from September 2020 to February 2021, encompassing observations during the ritual period, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). This timeline ensured that both routine annual ceremonies and emergency adaptations (e.g., COVID-19) were captured.

3.3 Informants

Informants were selected based on their knowledge of and involvement in the ritual. Key participants included traditional leaders — Parabela, Kolaki, Moji, and Waci — and villagers actively participating in the ritual. A purposive snowball sampling strategy was used, starting with recommendations from community leaders and extending through referrals from initial informants until data saturation was achieved. A total of 20 informants participated in interviews and FGDs, representing different roles in the ritual and ensuring a comprehensive perspective.

Table 1: Table 1. Informants, their roles, and responsibilities in the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual

Informant Role	Number	Responsibilities
Parabela	1	Leading ritual; managing customary land
Kolaki	1	Ensuring community safety
Moji	1	Spiritual affairs; chanting incantations
Waci	1	Public relations; community coordination
Other villagers	16	Assisting in procession; observing ritual rules

Note. Add any explanatory note here if needed.

3.4 Data collection techniques

Data collection involved:

1. In-depth interviews: Semi-structured interviews were guided by Spradley's ethnographic domains — including space, activities, objects, acts, events, time, goals, and social relationships — to capture the ritual's multifaceted cultural and functional meanings.
2. Focus group discussions (FGDs): FGDs were conducted with groups of villagers to explore collective understanding, community roles, and social values embedded in the ritual.
3. Participant observation: Direct observation of the ritual processions, including *porano kamparanga* and *lengkoano kamparanga*, allowed documentation of sequence, timing, leadership dynamics, and communal participation.
4. Secondary data: Literature review of related traditional rituals, disaster-mitigation strategies, and local histories supported triangulation and contextual interpretation.

3.5 Research instruments

- Interview guide: Structured around Spradley's cultural domains and specific questions regarding ritual purpose, timing, procedures, symbolism, and adaptation during emergencies.
- Questionnaire for FGD participants: Designed to gather perceptions of ritual efficacy, community involvement, and social-emotional impacts.
- Observation checklist: Included indicators for ritual timing, order of proceedings, roles of participants, and adherence to prohibitions.

3.6 Data analysis

Data were analyzed using a thematic descriptive approach:

1. Transcription of interviews and FGDs in the Ciacia language and translation into Indonesian.
2. Coding guided by cultural value frameworks, focusing on themes such as disaster mitigation, social cohesion, spiritual beliefs, leadership roles, and adaptive strategies.
3. Triangulation of interview, FGD, observation, and secondary sources to ensure validity and comprehensiveness.
4. Presentation of results descriptively, with tables, figures, and narrative explanations illustrating the ritual's process, meaning, and socio-cultural implications.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The research followed ethical principles, ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, and respect for local customs. Confidentiality of participants was maintained, and the community was fully briefed on research objectives.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Ciacia Ethnic

Buton Island, located off the southeast coast of Sulawesi, is home to various ethnic groups, one of the most prominent being the Ciacia, historically significant as one of the founding communities of the Buton Sultanate. The Ciacia are concentrated along the southern coast of Buton, particularly in Burangasi Village, which serves as the locus of the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual. Their historical importance — such as the settlement of the first Buton King Wakaka in Wabula and the arrival of the first Islamic missionary, Sheikh Abdul Wahid, in Burangasi — highlights their central role in shaping the island's cultural and religious landscape.

Economically, Ciacia livelihoods are closely tied to their natural environment. Many cultivate corn and cassava or work as fishermen, occupations shaped by the region's coral-reef-dominated coastal geography. These economic activities are highly vulnerable to natural hazards such as storms, failed harvests, and outbreaks of disease. These conditions gave rise to and sustain rituals like *lengkoano kamparanga*, which seek spiritual protection and balance in the face of environmental uncertainty.

The belief system of the Ciacia reflects a syncretism between Islam and ancestral spiritual traditions. While Islam provides religious guidance, ancestral beliefs sustain practices such as invoking spirits during rituals to ensure communal safety. This syncretism directly influences the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual: Prayers draw on Islamic elements, while offerings and symbolic acts reflect older animist traditions. Together, these dual influences shape both the performance and the meaning of the ritual as a culturally embedded form of disaster mitigation.

Underlying the ritual are broader cultural values that continue to guide Ciacia life: mutual respect, social harmony, reverence for nature, and spiritual balance. These values are not merely abstract ideals but practical principles that foster solidarity and collective action during crises. In the context of disaster risk, they ensure that communities unite to perform rituals, reinforcing both spiritual protection and social cohesion. Such values also act as ethical guidelines for environmental stewardship, reflecting the belief that respecting ancestral spirits and natural forces prevents misfortune.

By situating the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual within this cultural framework, it becomes clear that the Ciacia's historical identity, livelihood patterns, and syncretic belief system are not background details

but active foundations that shape the ritual's function as disaster mitigation. These interconnections demonstrate how traditional practices remain relevant for community resilience in the face of modern challenges such as environmental change and disease outbreaks.

4.2 The ritual of Lengkoano Kamparanga past

The *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual is a disease-prevention practice inherited from the Ciacia ancestors in Burangasi Village, South Buton Regency. The name comes from the Ciacia language: *lengkoano* means "to deliver", and *kamparanga* means "container", referring to the act of presenting offerings in ritual vessels. Historically, the Ciacia believed that the world was governed by unseen forces whose displeasure could manifest in illness, crop failure, or natural misfortunes. The ritual was therefore established as a means of prevention, an effort to maintain harmony with these forces and avert disaster before it struck.

The origins of the ritual are tied to collective memory of disease outbreaks such as cholera and severe vomiting, which devastated the community in the past. These outbreaks were interpreted not merely as medical crises but as signs of cosmic imbalance or punishment by nature. Similarly, agricultural failures caused by pests like caterpillars or wild pigs reinforced the idea that neglecting spiritual obligations could invite calamity. Thus, the *lengkoano kamparanga* functioned as an early form of preventive disaster strategy, embedding lessons from lived experiences into a ritualized system of collective protection.

Timing plays a crucial role in the ritual's meaning. It is performed once a year during the transitional period between the west and east monsoon seasons, when weather instability with heavy rains, strong winds, and thunderstorms often coincided with outbreaks of disease. By situating the ritual at this liminal environmental moment, the Ciacia demonstrated both ecological awareness and ancestral knowledge, transforming seasonal uncertainty into a socially coordinated act of resilience.

The ritual procedure involves preparing four *kamparanga* containers, each filled with ritual offerings and placed at the four cardinal directions: north, south, east, and west. This reflects the belief that illness or disaster could emanate from any direction; placing offerings in all four ensured comprehensive protection. The act symbolizes both spiritual coverage and geographic vigilance, aligning the community's physical landscape with their cosmological worldview.

Leadership plays a decisive role in the ritual's effectiveness. The Ciacia traditional structure, led by the Parabela (territorial and customary leader) and supported by the Kolaki (guardian of safety), Moji (spiritual advisor), and Waci (liaison to the community), ensures order, obedience, and proper ritual execution. Rather than viewing these roles as bureaucratic functions, the community sees them as guarantees of ritual validity. Without the authority of the Parabela or the guidance of the Moji, the offerings would lose their protective force. In this sense, leadership structures directly reinforce the ritual's role as disaster mitigation, ensuring that knowledge, authority, and communal effort converge in a unified response to threat.

Collective participation is equally central. Decisions regarding the ritual are made through gotong-royong (mutual cooperation), which obliges all members to contribute labor, resources, and presence. This cooperative ethic strengthens social solidarity, meaning that disaster prevention is not an individual act but a communal responsibility, embedding resilience into the very fabric of daily life.

The ritual also illustrates a process of Islamic syncretism. While its origins predate the 16^{th}-century arrival of Islam on Buton Island, the Ciacia community, now entirely Muslim, continues to practice it. Islamic prayers and invocations are incorporated alongside ancestral offerings, reflecting an adaptation rather than a replacement of tradition. This syncretism has arguably helped preserve the ritual, allowing it to remain meaningful within a Muslim community while retaining its original function as a safeguard against calamity. In this way, Islam has not erased the ritual but reframed it, embedding spiritual legitimacy within both ancestral and Islamic cosmologies.

Taken together, the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual represents more than a cultural relic. It rather is a holistic disaster-mitigation strategy rooted in memory, ecology, leadership, and spirituality. By blending ancestral wisdom with Islamic practice, the Ciacia sustain a tradition that protects against disease and affirms communal identity, demonstrating how indigenous rituals can endure and adapt while continuing to serve vital functions in contemporary life.

4.3 Ritual proceedings

4.3.1 Time

The chief or tribal leader determines the time of the ritual based on astrological forecasting. Auspicious days are another consideration. When the Parabela, the tribal leader, decides to perform *lengkoano kamparanga*, all people should prepare for the ritual.

Generally, *lengkoano kamparanga* is performed twice a year unless emergency situations, such as the spread of diseases, urge people to perform the ritual. As La Hamiru (37 years) states in the interview, such is considered a preventive measure:

> *"When the president in 2020 announced in March that two Indonesians had been exposed to the coronavirus, our parents here immediately discussed performing the lengkoano kamparanga ritual." (Interview, February 15, 2021).*

The interview data above illustrates that *lengkoano kamparanga* has no rigid time schedule, but can be adapted to pressing circumstances. Although there is no direct evidence linking the ritual to modern health crises such as COVID-19, the community's decision to perform the ritual in response to the pandemic demonstrates its adaptability. This shows that traditional practices are not static but remain responsive to contemporary challenges, reflecting how local beliefs continue to provide meaning and collective action even in the face of unprecedented situations.

Lengkoano kamparanga is performed for four days. Incantations (*batata*) in the Ciacia language are chanted when *kamparanga* or the offerings are placed in the Parabela's house. The days of the ritual are called *porano kamparanga*; *porano* means "to place". All offerings are placed in the Parabela's house for four days before being moved to specific areas as determined on the fourth day. The number of days also signifies the number of offerings that will be placed.

4.3.2 Preparation Stage

All materials and instruments of the ritual are prepared in this stage. The day of the ritual has been announced, thus enabling people to prepare everything they need for *lengkoano kamparanga*. People from Bungarasi Village, Bungarasi Rumbia, and Gaya Baru Village will join the ritual.

The tribal leaders will prepare the materials of the ritual as instructed by the Parabela, with the help of the villagers. Usually, people prepare white clothes to complement the instruments of the ritual. All materials can be found in some areas in Bungarasi. This is the list of the materials:

a. *Kecupa kuata* (a long ketupat or diamond-shaped rice cake)

b. *Pangana* (areca nut)

c. *Hapu* (lime betel)

d. *Karoo* (betel leaves)

e. *Kundee Mudea* (reddish, young coconut)

f. *Cikolu manu* (chicken eggs)

g. *Loga-loga* (coins)

h. *Kae hupute* (white clothes)

i. *Kae hudea* (red clothes)

j. *Kappa* (cotton)

k. *Tabako sili katela* (tobacco roll)

l. *Baee* (rice)

m. *Parawata* (bamboo stick)

n. *Kamparanga* (cardboard box)

All the materials mentioned above are placed in a vessel called kamparanga. There are four kamparanga, which will be transported into the four cardinal directions. After preparing all materials, the proceedings of *lengkoano kamparanga* will start under the direction of the Parabela as the tribal chief with the assistance of other leaders of the traditional council. The materials are first checked in the Parabela's house as the center point of the ritual. Such allows the traditional leaders to ensure that all materials are complete.

4.3.3 Ritual Processions

The processions are divided into two: porano kamparanga and *lengkoano kamparanga*. Both processions are inseparable and must be performed in four days. Provided in the following subsections are the details of each procession.

Porano kamparanga

Porano (means to sit) kamparanga is a procession where the offering is placed in the Parabela's house for four days. All materials are stored in four media, which will be inserted to a cardboard box called kamparanga. Incantations (*batata*) are chanted before all offerings are stored in the kamparanga in the Parabela's house for four days. After this procession, the kamparanga is transported to four areas based on the four compass points.

Figure 1. Materials for the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual. The figure illustrates the ritual materials prepared for the lengkoano kamparanga. These typically consist of agricultural produce, symbolic plants, and other offerings considered essential in the ritual sequence. Each item plays a role in ensuring balance and harmony when distributed into the kamparanga.

Source: La Rudi, 2020

An equal number of each material is placed into each kamparanga. There are no differences in each material's total between one kamparanga and another.

The Parabela is responsible for placing the materials in each kamparanga, ensuring that the four cardboard boxes are ready to be transported. People in the villages are not allowed to make noises that can distract the procession of porano kamparanga. People are also not allowed to:

- make hammer noise

- play musical instruments loudly
- sound any vehicle horns
- scream due to conflicts
- hold celebrations that can be too noisy

The prohibitions above are because kamparanga is, by nature, sacred. Consequently, safeguarding the ritual is a necessity. Noises and other distracting activities disrespect kamparanga because the ritual should be held calmly due to its sacred nature. People participating in the ritual are aware of the prohibitions and adhere to all procession regulations. They remind others when there are any noises and remind people from other villages not to make any distractions as a ritual is taking place. Villagers from outside Burangasi are allowed to participate in the ritual if they wish. Burangasi people do not restrict those who want to get involved in the ritual. However, those people need to follow the rules.

Figure 2. Inserting materials of *Kamparanga* into cardboard box

Source: La Rudi, 2020

People are prohibited to make any noise when the materials are placed into the cardboard box as Jamadi (52), the informant of the present research, explained:

> *"When the materials are placed into kamparanga, people cannot make any noise as we must respect the procession of kamparanga." (interview data, February 18 2021).*

Based on the above data, offerings of kamparanga have meanings that represent the prayers of all villagers. Kamparanga is then stored in the Parabela's house for four days under continuous supervision by married couples. This condition symbolizes responsibility, stability, and the balance of masculine and feminine energies that married couples embody, which are believed to provide harmony and strength to the ritual. Those who are not yet married are not permitted to perform this task, as they are considered not to have reached the stage of life associated with maturity and responsibility. Furthermore, the husband and wife chant incantations, or *batata*, during the procession, while other married couples take turns substituting one another to prevent fatigue and ensure the sacredness of the ritual is maintained throughout the four days.

lengkoano kamparanga procession

On the fourth day, the kamparanga offerings are transported to four designated areas corresponding to the cardinal directions — North, East, South, and West. This phase is called the *lengkoano kamparanga* procession, meaning "to move the offering to other places". The procession typically begins in the morning,

after sunrise, around 9 a.m., which is considered an auspicious time. Morning dew at this time has dried, preventing clothes from getting wet while walking on grass. Importantly, the ritual is carried out regardless of weather conditions, reflecting the community's adherence to ancestral rules over environmental inconvenience.

The Parabela's house functions as the ritual's central point. Whenever a new Parabela assumes leadership, the center of the ritual shifts accordingly for the communities of Burangasi, Burangasi Rumbia, and Gaya Baru, highlighting the ritual's close connection to customary authority. Villagers gather at the Parabela's house to participate in transporting the offerings. Four people, assigned from three sub-villages — Rumbia, Patambara, and Lahilalangi — carry the kamparanga, accompanied by one villager walking in front as a guide. Interestingly, even villagers who are not traditional leaders are sometimes assigned to carry the offerings, emphasizing communal participation and responsibility.

The procession is led by a person carrying a *parang* (traditional machete) to clear paths obstructed by plants or grasses. Kamparanga is carried in a posture akin to holding a flag during a ceremonial event, symbolizing respect and focus. The Parabela and other traditional leaders remain at the Parabela's house, chanting *batata* incantations to ensure the ritual's success in preventing disease outbreaks.

The procession is conducted in complete silence, both by participants and by villagers in nearby houses. This restriction is identical to that observed during the porano kamparanga and serves to maintain the sacred atmosphere and spiritual efficacy of the ritual. Villagers inside houses must refrain from making disruptive noises and, if they wish to join, must follow behind the carriers of kamparanga, demonstrating respect for ritual hierarchy and order.

Upon reaching each designated area, the guide cuts small pieces of wood to construct a base for the offering. Placing the kamparanga on the ground is strictly forbidden, symbolizing the protection and elevation of sacred objects. The white and red flags placed on the front and back sides of the kamparanga, respectively, carry symbolic meaning: White signifies purity and harmony, while red represents protection and vitality, marking the offerings as sacred and powerful in warding off misfortune.

Figure 3. Kamparanga base is being made in the determined area

Source: Documentation by author

After placing the offerings, carriers return to the Parabela's house, followed by accompanying villagers. The Parabela and traditional leaders continue chanting *batata*, praying that the ritual's protective powers are effective. Once all groups return, the community joins in a collective prayer and celebrates with a feast, marking the conclusion of the procession. Traditional leaders, however, remain until they are certain all villagers have returned safely, reflecting the emphasis on order, responsibility, and community cohesion.

The entire four-day series of proceedings — from *porano kamparanga* to the distribution of offerings — is inseparable and continuously performed as one sequence in Burangasi Village. Success relies on strict adherence to rules, cooperation between leaders and villagers, and collective awareness of the ritual's significance. This aligns with Eisenbruch's (2021) view that rituals are believed to ward off ill omens and

provide psychological relief to communities affected by natural disasters. Additionally, the ritual fosters a sense of belonging (Gamba & Cattacin, 2021) and elicits positive emotions, reinforcing social cohesion and resilience (Zermeño & Pirtle, 2021). The silent, orderly, and participatory nature of the procession underscores the interweaving of spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions in disaster-mitigation rituals.

5 Conclusion

The *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual is a disease-prevention practice performed by the Ciacia community in Burangasi Village, South Buton Regency. Historically, it emerged as a response to outbreaks of incurable diseases, reflecting the community's proactive approach to managing unseen threats. Traditional leaders developed preventive strategies, with the ritual serving as a symbolic safeguard against harm. The offerings, or kamparanga, are placed in the four cardinal directions to protect the village, reflecting a deep-rooted cosmological worldview and ancestral knowledge. Historical evidence indicates that this ritual predates the 16^{th} century, prior to the introduction of Islam to the region under Syeck Abdul Wahid.

As a culturally embedded mitigation model, *lengkoano kamparanga* provides the community with psychological reassurance, reinforcing the perception that villagers have taken all possible measures to maintain harmony with spiritual forces and prevent disease outbreaks. Its value lies less in empirical biomedical outcomes and more in emotional, spiritual, and social security. The ritual also illustrates the adaptability of the Ciacia people: During modern health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, ritual practices continued alongside contemporary medical interventions, demonstrating a pragmatic integration of traditional and scientific health approaches.

Beyond its local significance, this study highlights the broader role of indigenous rituals in disaster and disease mitigation. Such practices exemplify how traditional knowledge can complement formal disaster risk management frameworks, offering culturally sensitive strategies that enhance community resilience and social cohesion. Policymakers, public health officials, and disaster management agencies may benefit from acknowledging and integrating such culturally grounded practices into local preparedness programs.

However, the study has limitations. The findings are based on qualitative data from a single village, relying primarily on self-report interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. This limits generalizability to other Ciacia communities or regions. Additionally, the study does not include quantitative measures of ritual effectiveness in preventing disease, making empirical validation difficult.

Future research could expand to multiple Ciacia communities or other Indonesian ethnic groups, combining ethnographic and quantitative approaches to better understand the efficacy and social impact of traditional disaster mitigation rituals. Comparative studies with global indigenous practices may also yield insights into integrating ancestral knowledge with formal public health and disaster risk management strategies. Overall, the *lengkoano kamparanga* ritual represents a living example of how cultural heritage, spirituality, and community cohesion can intersect with practical strategies for managing uncertainty and promoting resilience.

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