Living Law In The Antaran Wedding Tradition: A Study Of Customary Marriage Practices In Tanah Kampung, Sungai Penuh City, Jambi Province

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Abstract

This article examines the dynamics of customary marriage practices within the framework of legal pluralism, highlighting the antaran tradition as practiced by a local community in Jambi. This tradition demonstrates a marked divergence from prevailing practices in Jambi society, as antaran is conducted after the wedding reception and applies only to couples originating from the same village, while grooms from outside the community are not subject to this obligation. Using a qualitative socio-legal approach based on interviews, observation, and documentary analysis, the study employs perspectives of customary law and the concept of living law to understand how these local norms are formed, maintained, and institutionalized as social standards within the community. The analysis also situates the antaran custom within the framework of Islamic law through the concept of 'urf, to assess whether this practice meets the criteria of a tradition that can be recognized by Islamic jurisprudence. The findings indicate that the antaran tradition functions not merely as part of the wedding ritual but also as an instrument of social cohesion, a means of preserving local identity, and a mechanism of social control that strengthens communal bonds. The study contributes to the scholarship on living law and legal pluralism by demonstrating how a local customary institution maintains normative authority while adapting to contemporary social change. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationships among customary law, Islamic law, and national law in contemporary Indonesian society.

I. Introduction

Marriage practices constitute one of the most universal social institutions, yet at the same time one of the most diverse in terms of form, norms, and meaning. In many parts of the world, marriage does not function merely as a personal contract but also as an arena in which local traditions, religious authority, and state regulation interact. Global phenomena indicate that rules governing marriage often stand at the point of tension between modernity, cultural pluralism, and community identity. Within this context, the concept of *living law*—namely, law that lives and is factually practiced by society—serves as an important analytical lens for understanding how communities maintain and modify marital practices in accordance with their social needs.

At the international level, the dynamics of marriage across identities have long been the subject of scholarly inquiry. Studies on Jewish intermarriage in Helsinki, for example, demonstrate that communities construct social boundaries through customary practices that, in many cases, prove more influential than religious doctrine or state law (Czimbalmos, 2019). Similar phenomena can be observed in the canonical traditions of the Orthodox Church, which position mixed marriage as both a doctrinal and a social issue.(Perșa, 2018) In American history, interracial marriage even generated prolonged legal and political debates, as it was perceived to challenge the state's structures of power and racial hierarchy (Sollors, 2004). These studies reveal that marriage practices frequently function as community mechanisms for preserving identity, authority, and cultural values.

In the study of Islamic law, scholarly attention to customary practices has increasingly intensified. Discussions concerning *'urf* as a living source of law affirm that Islamic law does not operate in isolation from social structures, but rather engages in a dynamic interaction with local traditions (Luthfi et al., 2024). The *living law* perspective articulated by Eugen Ehrlich is particularly relevant for understanding this phenomenon, as it emphasizes that effective law is the law actually practiced by society in everyday life, rather than norms merely codified in statutory texts (Steward, 2011). This line of thought has influenced a range of contemporary studies that conceptualize religious marriage practices as arenas of negotiation among local norms, religious authority, and the state's positive law.

Beyond Ehrlich's conception, contemporary socio-legal scholarship has further developed the understanding of living law through legal anthropology and legal pluralism perspectives. Legal anthropologists argue that law should not be understood solely as state-made rules but also as normative orders embedded in social practices, cultural values, and local institutions. In plural societies, multiple normative systems often coexist and interact, creating legal spaces in which customary law, religious norms, and state regulations simultaneously shape social behavior. Consequently, marriage customs provide an important empirical site for examining

how legal norms are negotiated, legitimized, and reproduced within everyday community life. This perspective is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where the interaction between adat, Islamic law, and state law has historically produced diverse forms of legal accommodation and local normative arrangements.

In Southeast Asia, issues surrounding customary marriage develop within the broader context of legal pluralism. The practice of intermarriage between Malay Malaysians and Dayak communities along the Kalimantan border, for example, illustrates that societies frequently select customary norms as the primary reference for resolving tensions between differing traditions (Wahyuni, 2017). In other contexts, research on interfaith marriage in Indonesia shows that communities integrate religious norms, state law, and local culture when formal regulation fails to provide adequate accommodation (Nasir, 2022). From these studies, it is evident that custom functions as a mediating bridge between state law and local social needs.

Studies on customary marriage in Indonesia have likewise demonstrated the continuing significance of adat institutions in regulating family relations and social obligations. However, most existing studies focus on legal disputes, interfaith marriage, marriage registration, or the interaction between customary law and state law. Comparatively less attention has been given to the internal normative structure of customary marriage rituals themselves, particularly traditions that operate selectively according to communal membership and kinship affiliation. As a result, the socio-legal functions of local marriage customs as living law remain underexplored in contemporary Indonesian legal scholarship.

At least twenty different researchers have produced international scholarship on cross-community marriage. Hayes demonstrates that marriage in ancient Jewish tradition was not solely doctrinal in nature, but was also deeply embedded with social and political interests, particularly in efforts to preserve communal purity (Hayes, 1999). Meanwhile, Charmé highlights conflicts of authenticity in the processes of conversion and mixed marriage (Charmé, 2015). In the Mediterranean region, Federica Sona observes that interreligious marriage is shaped by tensions between state law and sharia, particularly regarding the recognition of family status (Sona, 2018). Historical studies, such as those by Sivan and Ikeya, further reveal that colonialism significantly influenced the structure of mixed marriages through legal policies and systems of racial categorization (Sivan, 2001).

Meanwhile, Davis, Sollors, and Schneider discuss how interracial marriage in the United States has become a focal point of debate concerning national and racial identity (Davis, 2004). In the context of contemporary American Jewry, Gordon, Phillips, and Thompson emphasize that intermarriage has become a source of transformation in both family and communal identity (Gordon, 2014). Other studies link mixed marriage to gender dynamics, as articulated by Yogi through a framework

that examines the relationship between religion and gender (Yogi, 2023).

Within the study of Islamic law, Ali reassesses pre-modern *fiqh* regulations concerning non-Muslim marriage, emphasizing the importance of understanding the socio-historical context that shaped legal constructions (Ali, 2022). Bosanquet and Levmore examine how religious regulation influences marriage in Israel, including issues of *agunah* and rabbinical authority (Bosanquet, 2022). In Indonesia, studies by Nasir, Fitri, and Muchimah reveal the complexity of interfaith marriage and how communities adapt to formal regulatory frameworks (Fitri et al., 2024).

From these bodies of scholarship, it is evident that international research has extensively addressed issues such as community social boundaries, religious authority in marriage, identity dynamics in mixed marriages, the relationship between state law and religious law, and cultural change through marital practices. Nevertheless, there is a notable absence of studies examining selective customary marriage practices within small communities in Indonesia, particularly those that differentiate customary obligations based on community membership status, such as the *antaran* tradition in Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on legal pluralism, living law, and marriage practices, several important gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly examined interfaith, interracial, or intercultural marriages, whereas limited attention has been devoted to customary marriage traditions operating within relatively homogeneous local communities. Second, although living law has been widely discussed in relation to legal conflicts and dispute resolution, few studies have explored how living law functions through marriage rituals as a mechanism for maintaining social boundaries, communal identity, and normative authority. Third, existing research on marriage customs in Jambi generally focuses on ceremonial procedures and cultural preservation, while little attention has been paid to the selective application of customary obligations and their socio-legal implications within the framework of legal pluralism and Islamic legal thought. Consequently, the antaran tradition in Tanah Kampung remains insufficiently theorized in both socio-legal and legal anthropological scholarship.

This study has strong scholarly urgency because, at the theoretical level, it contributes to the development of the concept of *living law* through an exploration of local customs that have rarely been examined, while simultaneously integrating the frameworks of legal pluralism, *'urf*, and legal anthropology to enrich a multidisciplinary approach to the study of family law, including the provision of a new analytical model of selective customary practices that is relevant to the development of marriage law policies in plural societies. From a social perspective, this research offers a broader impact by providing deeper insight for local governments and customary institutions into the role of local traditions in

maintaining social cohesion, supporting efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage, and expanding academic discourse on how small communities sustain their identities amid modernity. Accordingly, it becomes essential to examine how the *antaran* practice as a form of *living law* is implemented, why this tradition is applied selectively, and how the community interprets its social functions and legal implications within the context of Indonesian legal pluralism, which ultimately leads to the formulation of research problems concerning the normative structure, social mechanisms, and legal consequences of the *antaran* tradition in Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh.

This study offers three principal contributions. Empirically, it provides the first in-depth socio-legal analysis of the antaran tradition in Tanah Kampung, a customary marriage practice that differs significantly from other marriage traditions in Jambi because of its selective application based on community membership. Theoretically, it advances living law scholarship by demonstrating how customary norms function not only as cultural practices but also as mechanisms of social regulation, identity preservation, and boundary maintenance. Methodologically, the study integrates legal pluralism, legal anthropology, and the Islamic legal concept of 'urf into a single analytical framework, thereby offering a more comprehensive approach for understanding the interaction between adat, Islamic law, and state law in contemporary Indonesia.

II. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a socio-legal and legal anthropology orientation to understand the *antaran* tradition as a form of *living law* that exists, is practiced, and is transmitted within the customary community of Tanah Kampung. The qualitative approach is chosen because it enables the researcher to capture meanings, symbolism, and configurations of values internalized within customary practices, as advocated by John W. Creswell in studies of social phenomena oriented toward meaning through the lived experiences of research subjects (Creswell, 2018). The socio-legal approach is utilized to explain how customary norms function as a non-formal regulatory system operating alongside state law, while legal anthropology allows for an exploration of the relationships among social structures, customary authority, and cultural constructions that govern community behavior (Cotterrell, 2006). This approach is consistent with the characteristics of *living law* research, which examines law within its social context rather than merely as written norms (Ehrlich, 2002).

Primary data sources in this study include directly observed customary practices and in-depth interviews with customary leaders, *ninik mamak*, customary intermediaries, bridal couples, nuclear family members, and community members involved in implementing the *antaran* tradition. Informants were selected using

purposive sampling—targeting actors considered to possess in-depth knowledge and understanding of the tradition—along with snowball sampling to reach additional informants recommended by key actors (Babbie, 2016). Secondary data were obtained from customary documents, family archives, records of wedding processions, literature on customary law, and academic publications related to legal pluralism, *'urf*, and studies of customary marriage in Indonesia.

Data collection techniques consisted of participatory and non-participatory observation to document stages of the wedding procession, customary interactions, the use of cultural symbols, and the role of customary authorities in determining the timing and procedures of *antaran*. Observation was employed because it provides direct access to symbolic actions and social practices that cannot always be fully revealed through interviews, as suggested by Uwe Flick in culture-based qualitative studies(Flick, 2014). In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to capture subjective perspectives and personal interpretations of the *antaran* tradition, following the in-depth interview method proposed by William Lawrence Neuman, which emphasizes open yet guided conversation (Neuman, 2014). Documentation was carried out to obtain visual and textual evidence supporting the narrative reconstruction of the customary tradition.

Data validation was conducted through source and method triangulation to ensure the reliability and consistency of information obtained from various informants and data-collection methods. Triangulation strengthens findings by comparing information across actors and data types (Miles et al., 2020). Member checking was carried out by reconfirming preliminary findings with key informants to ensure the accuracy of representation of their perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the researcher implemented an audit trail by systematically documenting all stages of data collection and analysis, as recommended by **John W. Creswell** (2018), to ensure the traceability of the research process(Creswell, 2018).

Data analysis employed thematic analysis as developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, which allows for the identification of patterns of meaning within customary narratives and community social practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The stages of analysis included transcription of raw data, initial coding, identification of conceptual themes, and the interpretation of deeper meanings related to normative structures, social justifications, and the cultural functions of the *antaran* tradition. During the coding process, the researcher applied the procedures proposed by **Matthew B. Miles**, **A. Michael Huberman**, and **Johnny Saldaña**, namely data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, which facilitate layered analysis of meanings, actor relationships, and the dynamics of normative reproduction within society (Miles et al., 2020). Thematic analysis was selected because it aligns with the research objective of uncovering the meanings of custom

and the social structures that sustain the *antaran* tradition as a form of living law, rather than merely providing a descriptive account of customary practices.

This method is considered the most appropriate for examining the *antaran* marriage tradition as a *living law* phenomenon, given its unwritten, contextual nature and its operation based on collective social consciousness. In line with the *living law* theory of **Eugen Ehrlich**, living law can only be understood through direct observation of social behavior and interaction patterns that produce compliance (Ehrlich, 2002). An interpretive qualitative approach provides space to evaluate the sources of customary legitimacy, how customary authority operates in practice, and the reasons communities continue to uphold the *antaran* tradition despite modernization and social change. Accordingly, this method enables the research to capture the depth of cultural meaning, power dynamics, and normative structures that cannot be adequately explained through normative-dogmatic approaches or quantitative surveys.

III. Results and Discussion

Marriage Proposal (Meminang/Melamar) Customs in the Tanah Kampung Community, Sungai Penuh City

The custom of meminang, or proposing marriage, within the Tanah Kampung community constitutes a form of living law that reflects the dynamics of social relations, the structure of matrilineal kinship, and the moral values transmitted across generations. This tradition serves not only as an initial mechanism leading to marriage, but also as a social instrument to ensure harmony among kin groups and maintain the stability of customary structures. Historical developments indicate that earlier models of marriage placed greater emphasis on endogamy—marriage within the circle of kinship—as a strategy to preserve lineage continuity and safeguard inherited property within the matrilineal system. Over time, increased access to education, social mobility, and technological development have shifted these preferences toward eleutherogamy, in which individuals enjoy greater freedom to form relationships with partners outside their kin group and even across different regions. This shift demonstrates the flexibility of Tanah Kampung customary law in responding to social change without eliminating the foundational values that regulate marital relations in the community.

The initial stage of the marriage process begins with the practice of betandeak, namely a visit by the young man to the young woman's home, accompanied by his mother or female relatives. This practice serves as a social space for mutual acquaintance, moral assessment, and compatibility evaluation before entering more formal stages. Earlier traditions, such as besekire or bemudeou, illustrate that the Tanah Kampung community historically had its own mechanisms for regulating

relationships between young men and women while maintaining moral supervision through the presence of family members. The operation of living law at this stage is evident in how the community interprets ethical conduct, propriety, and prudence as integral components of the partner-selection process.

Field observations confirmed this normative social space in practice. During betandeak visits observed by the researcher, the presence of the young man's female relatives was consistently treated not as a formality but as a moral safeguard. A customary elder (ninik mamak) interviewed in Tanah Kampung explained: "Betandeak bukan sekadar berkunjung. Ini cara kami menilai apakah pemuda itu pantas — adabnya, sopan santunnya, dan niat keluarganya. Tanpa tahap ini, keluarga perempuan tidak akan menerima lamaran dengan tulus" (Betandeak is not merely a visit. It is our way of assessing whether the young man is worthy — his manners, his conduct, and his family's intentions. Without this stage, the woman's family will not receive the proposal sincerely). This testimony illustrates how betandeak functions as a socially sanctioned evaluation mechanism embedded in the normative structure of the community, consistent with Ehrlich's conception of living law as norms sustained through social interaction rather than formal codification.

When a relationship is deemed serious, the process advances to the stage of batuik or undeit bajaleo, which involves appointing a respected elder to inquire about the young woman's status. The envoy is typically a trusted relative, known in customary terms as "one who walks in water and speaks in the earth," signifying a figure capable of keeping confidences and acting with wisdom. This stage represents the customary equivalent of khitbah in Islamic law, yet the structure of customary authority enriches it within a matrilineal society. The envoy not only seeks the woman's family's consent but also ensures that she is not already engaged to another party—a mechanism that reflects the principle of prudence (tabayyun) and reinforces ethical values in marital relations. This entire process unfolds within the social and cultural setting of Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh, where customary norms continue to function as a living and authoritative framework guiding marital practices.

If the female party agrees, the process proceeds to the nganto tando tradition, namely the delivery of symbolic items: clothing, a plain rattan-split ring, betel leaves and areca nuts, and cash. Each item carries strong symbolism: betel leaves signify capability, areca nuts represent earnest intention, the plain ring denotes sincerity, and cash reflects a commitment to providing lawful sustenance. This tradition demonstrates the depth of Jambi Malay customary philosophy, which understands tando as a form of social and moral agreement between two families. At this stage, the semayo pledge also comes into effect, constituting a commitment to maintain the relationship until the marriage is formally concluded. Customary sanctions, such as emas telucir for a man who withdraws and balik duo for a woman who reneges,

underscore that customary law possesses its own mechanisms of dispute resolution that are binding in moral and social terms (Somad, 2002).

The subsequent stage is ngimbu tuwae, namely a gathering of family members and customary elders to formally convey the intention to marry. This serves as an official forum to socially legitimize the marriage plan and to ensure that all kinship elements are informed and in agreement. The role of the tengganai as a central figure within the matrilineal system is particularly prominent, as he is regarded as the guardian of lineage and the key decision-maker in important family matters. In the context of living law, this stage illustrates that customary authority continues to play a dominant role despite the community's experience of modernization. The akad nikah is typically conducted at the bride's residence or a nearby mosque and is accompanied by penoa adat, namely the exchange of customary utterances between the tengganai of both parties. This exchange constitutes a form of symbolic communication that affirms the legitimacy of the marriage according to custom. Following the akad, the tradition of mulang muntein is observed, involving the customary return of the groom as the closing of the sacred marital stages, thereby reflecting a balanced relationship between the two families.

The centrality of the tengganai in the ngimbu tuwae gathering was vividly illustrated during field observations. In one documented case, a young man from Tanah Kampung sought to proceed to the formal proposal stage without adequately informing his tengganai. The customary elder promptly intervened, halting the process until the proper deliberation (musyawarah) could be convened. As the tengganai stated during the subsequent gathering: "Adat kita bukan sekadar aturan lama yang kita pegang karena tradisi. Ini adalah cara kita memastikan bahwa setiap pernikahan membawa kebaikan bagi seluruh kaum, bukan hanya dua orang" (Our custom is not merely an old rule we hold because of tradition. It is our way of ensuring that every marriage brings benefit to the entire clan, not just to two individuals). This perspective reinforces the argument that the tengganai functions not as a ceremonial figurehead but as an active institutional actor whose authority remains socially binding within the living law framework of the community.

The most distinctive feature of the Tanah Kampung custom is the delivery of household and bedroom items after the wedding reception, unlike in other regions, where this is done before the marriage contract. This tradition signifies that post-marital social responsibility rests not only with the bride's family but also with the groom's family, as an expression of respect and solidarity. The collective delivery of bedding, clothing, and gifts is accompanied by traditional performances such as butale and rentak kudo, which strengthen social cohesion and reinforce the notion that marriage is a familial and communal event rather than merely a personal relationship (Depati H. Alimin, 2025).

The communal character of the antaran procession was directly observed by the researcher across multiple wedding events in Tanah Kampung. In each instance, the delivery of household items was organized not by the nuclear family alone but by the extended kin group, with coordination managed by customary intermediaries (urang sumando). One bride's mother, reflecting on the significance of the event, remarked: "Kalau antaran tidak dilaksanakan, masyarakat akan bertanya-tanya. Bukan soal hukumnya, tapi soal harga diri keluarga dan rasa hormat kepada kaum" (If the antaran is not carried out, the community will question it. It is not about the legal aspect, but about the family's dignity and respect toward the clan). This testimony reveals a critical dimension of the antaran tradition: its normative force derives not from state legal sanction but from the social consequences of non-compliance, particularly the risk of communal exclusion and reputational loss. Such social sanctioning mechanisms are hallmarks of living law systems in which community opinion functions as the primary enforcement mechanism.

The entire sequence of proposal customs and marriage processions demonstrates that the Tanah Kampung community possesses a complex socio-legal system in which customary norms, cultural symbolism, kinship structures, and moral values operate simultaneously. Although influenced by changing times, core values such as kinship wisdom, prudence, deliberation, and the sanctity of promises remain central pillars of living law governing marital practices. Accordingly, the custom of meminang is not merely a social ritual, but a manifestation of living law that functions to preserve order, identity, and social cohesion within the community of Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh.

Socio-Legal Interpretation of the Antaran Tradition within the Structure of Indonesian Legal Pluralism

The socio-legal interpretation of the antaran tradition within the Tanah Kampung community unfolds within a field of legal pluralism characterized by the coexistence of state norms, religious law, and local customary law. In this context, antaran is not merely a supplementary wedding rite, but functions as an arena in which the community continuously negotiates the boundaries of living legal authority (living law) in relation to the formal framework of the state. This argument is consistent with Indonesian legal scholarship, which emphasizes that repetitive social practices collectively accepted by a community may acquire normative force that, in practice, exceeds that of positive law, particularly in societies that continue to rely on custom as a primary source of socio-legal legitimacy (Hamida, 2022). The antaran tradition, which in Tanah Kampung is performed after the wedding reception rather than prior to marriage as is common in many areas of Jambi (Ghina Nabilah Effendi, M. Kamal Fathoni, 2025), demonstrates a form of localized normative reconstruction as well as a subtle resistance to the regional generalization of customary law.

Within the Tanah Kampung community, antaran is understood as a social mechanism for affirming interfamily relationships, strengthening kinship structures, and ensuring the continuity of social networks that underpin community cohesion. This interpretation underscores that the social function of antaran is far more dominant than its legal-formal function, even though it continues to operate within a sphere that influences marital status. The literature on legal pluralism indicates that communities frequently prioritize relational values, communal morality, and social stability over formal legal provisions when assessing the legitimacy of marital practices (Benda-Beckmann & Benda-Beckmann, 2023). This finding is consistent with studies on cross-traditional marriage dynamics, which highlight how communities develop their own internal "logics" in defining social obligations and the acceptability of family units (Suhasti et al., 2019).

This identity-preserving dimension of antaran was particularly evident in interviews with elderly community members who have witnessed generational changes in the Tanah Kampung community. One senior community elder, who has observed dozens of antaran processions over several decades, articulated the tradition's identity function in the following terms: "Dulu orang Tanah Kampung menikah di antara sesama. Sekarang banyak yang merantau, banyak yang menikah dengan orang luar. Tapi antaran tetap ada untuk yang berasal dari sini. Itu cara kami bilang: kamu tetap orang Tanah Kampung, di mana pun kamu pergi" (In the past, Tanah Kampung people married among themselves. Now many go to other regions and marry outsiders. But antaran remains for those who originate from here. That is our way of saying: you are still a Tanah Kampung person, wherever you go). This narrative reveals that antaran has adapted in function over time: rather than simply regulating endogamous marriage, it now serves as a normative anchor that maintains communal identity even as community members become geographically and socially mobile. This adaptive capacity is precisely what distinguishes living law from static customary rule — it evolves in response to social change while preserving its core normative purpose.

The antaran tradition functions as a concrete mechanism through which social solidarity between two families is publicly displayed and institutionally affirmed. Unlike a private arrangement between spouses, antaran is a communal performance observed and evaluated by the broader community. Multiple informants emphasized this collective dimension. A young groom from Tanah Kampung who recently completed the antaran process reflected: "Antaran bukan hanya soal barang yang dibawa. Ini adalah cara keluarga saya menunjukkan kepada seluruh kampung bahwa kami menghormati keluarga istri saya dan siap bertanggung jawab. Kalau tidak dilaksanakan dengan baik, seluruh kaum akan tahu" (Antaran is not only about the items that are brought. It is the way my family shows the entire village that we respect

my wife's family and are ready to take responsibility. If it is not carried out properly, the entire clan will know). This testimony illustrates how antaran operates as a public declaration of commitment that reinforces social bonds not only between the two families directly involved but also within the broader community network. The tradition thereby serves a cohesive function that extends beyond the immediate marriage relationship.

Within the framework of Indonesian legal pluralism, antaran serves as a point of convergence between customary norms and religious norms. Although it is not rigidly regulated under state law, its existence is understood as part of local customary ethics and adaptive Islamic morality. Studies on customary pluralism demonstrate that Indonesian society has historically developed patterns of "interpenetration" between custom and religion, in which both adjust to one another in everyday practice without necessarily undergoing formalization (Darwis, 2017). This perspective explains why the Tanah Kampung community does not perceive antaran as a legal obligation in the formal sense, but rather as a moral obligation regarded as equally significant as social pillars in shaping the social validity of a marriage.

This interpretation is also evident in the way the community negotiates antaran values within the broader framework of state law. In the literature, Indonesian legal pluralism is described as a layered system in which state law does not always function as the sole source of authority, and community decisions are often guided by "social authority" grounded in customary structures and community leadership (Djawas et al., 2024). The Tanah Kampung community positions antaran as an instrument for resolving social tensions, such as ensuring the couple's initial economic commitment, safeguarding family reputation, and regulating the symbolic balance between the two parties entering into marriage. In this context, antaran is a ritualized negotiation that aligns social expectations with religious imperatives and the values of modernity within the community of Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh.

Furthermore, the legal interpretation of antaran cannot be separated from the community's conceptualization of the relationship between customary law and state law. The literature on the dynamics of intertraditional marriage emphasizes that communities often regard customary norms as a more stable source of legitimacy than state norms, which are perceived as changeable or not fully reflective of local needs (Rajafi et al., 2024). Although the context of this study does not concern interfaith marriage, the general pattern highlighted by such studies is highly relevant: communities operate within a space of negotiation between local and national social norms. In the case of Antaran, the custom preference illustrates how the residents of Tanah Kampung continue to maintain communal authority despite operating within an increasingly formalized and administrative national legal order.

Beyond its cohesive function, antaran also operates as a selective mechanism of

social control, particularly through its differential application based on community membership. The tradition is obligatory only for grooms who originate from Tanah Kampung; grooms from outside the village are exempt from this requirement. This selectivity was confirmed by multiple customary leaders during interviews. As one senior ninik mamak stated: "Antaran ini tanda bahwa pemuda kita masih terikat dengan kampung. Dia boleh merantau, boleh sekolah jauh, tapi kalau menikah di sini, dia tetap harus menunjukkan bahwa dia anak kampung ini" (This antaran is a sign that our young man is still bound to the village. He may travel, study far away, but if he marries here, he must still show that he is a son of this village). This statement reveals that the selective application of antaran functions as a boundary-maintenance mechanism, reinforcing communal membership and distinguishing insiders from outsiders. In anthropological terms, this reflects what Barth (1969) described as boundary-marking practices through which ethnic and communal identities are maintained and reproduced. Within the living law framework, this selectivity demonstrates that the community does not merely preserve custom as a static heritage but actively employs it as a tool for managing social boundaries and regulating communal belonging.

The antaran tradition also serves a legal function as a preventive mechanism for disputes. Because antaran is held after the wedding reception, it becomes a space for social evaluation of whether both families have met the relational and economic standards considered appropriate. From a living law perspective, this mechanism serves to resolve potential conflicts through material symbols and reinforced social relations (Wijaya, 2025). Other studies on the plurality of marriage practices demonstrate that communities frequently employ customary rites as mechanisms that substitute for formal law in resolving family and communal issues (Daud et al., 2022). Accordingly, antaran serves as an unwritten yet effective normative representation, regulating social behavior and establishing moral obligations with binding force.

The social control dimension of antaran was further evidenced in community responses to cases where the tradition was not observed. In one documented case described by a customary intermediary (urang sumando), a family that failed to perform antaran following a wedding found itself subjected to indirect social pressure — neighbors refrained from visiting the couple's home for an extended period, and the groom's family was excluded from subsequent communal deliberations (musyawarah kaum) until the obligation was fulfilled. The customary intermediary recounted: "Dalam adat kita, tidak melaksanakan antaran itu seperti tidak mengakui kampung. Masyarakat tidak akan marah secara terbuka, tapi mereka akan menjauh. Itu hukuman adat yang paling berat — dikucilkan secara sosial" (In our custom, not performing antaran is like not acknowledging the village. The community will not express anger openly, but they will distance themselves. That is the heaviest

customary punishment — social exclusion). This account corroborates the theoretical proposition that living law enforces compliance through informal social sanctions rather than formal legal penalties, and that the effectiveness of such sanctions can be more powerful than state-imposed ones in close-knit community settings.

Within the sphere of the state, legal pluralism allows customary practices such as antaran to persist, as national law generally provides space for the continued existence of customary law so long as it does not conflict with positive law (Fenwick, 2016). Contemporary legal pluralism literature emphasizes that the continued practice of custom without conflict may be regarded as evidence that society accepts and normalizes such law, thereby rendering it part of a living legal system that operates in parallel with formal law (Wibawa, 2018). In the context of Tanah Kampung, antaran is understood as a local norm with strong legitimacy, not because the state explicitly recognizes it, but because the community collectively preserves the practice as an integral part of its social and moral identity.

Ultimately, the socio-legal interpretation of antaran within the structure of Indonesian legal pluralism reflects the dynamics through which local communities maintain their cultural autonomy while simultaneously negotiating their position within a formal national legal system. Through this practice, the community constructs a bridge between customary values, Islamic morality, and the demands of the modern state, demonstrating that living law functions not only as a norm governing behavior but also as a medium for the formation of communal identity and social stability. The antaran tradition in the community of Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh thus represents not merely a ceremonial custom, but a concrete manifestation of how legal pluralism is operationalized in everyday social life.

IV. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the antaran tradition within the Tanah Kampung community functions as a form of living law that continues to operate and to gain social legitimacy despite not being institutionalized within the framework of state law. This practice not only reflects customary values regarding kinship relations, interfamily respect, and the moral stability of marriage, but also illustrates the flexibility of customary law in responding to social change. Empirically, the implementation of antaran after the wedding reception reflects a selective mechanism through which the community negotiates customary norms with the demands of modernity, while simultaneously indicating that customary authority remains an important source of legitimacy in family life. These findings affirm that custom is not merely a cultural residue but a normative system alive, negotiated, and actively practiced within the context of Indonesian legal pluralism.

The contribution of this research lies in its detailed exposition of how the community interprets antaran as a socio-legal practice that regulates interpersonal

relations and the interaction among custom, religion, and state law. This study strengthens the argument that Indonesian legal pluralism is not solely a structural phenomenon, but also an everyday praxis managed through adaptive customary mechanisms. The findings open space for regulatory approaches that are more sensitive to local diversity, while also encouraging the development of a living law theoretical framework capable of explaining the dynamics of interaction between customary norms and formal legal systems. Accordingly, the antaran tradition serves as a concrete example of how local communities maintain their normative identity while continuing to engage with a plural national legal framework, as evidenced in the community of Tanah Kampung Kota Sungai Penuh.

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