

Acculturation of sharia and custom in the ban on single organs in koto petai, kerinci

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Islamic (sharia) values and local customary law (adat) have come together in the customary prohibition of single-organ (orgen tunggal) entertainment in Koto Petai Village, Kerinci Regency, Jambi. Orgen tunggal refers to solo electronic-keyboard performances that are inexpensive to stage and, in this community, are associated with late-night crowds, alcohol, and brawls. Customary leaders (ninik mamak) have enforced the ban since 2003. Rather than asking whether the prohibition is justified, the study asks how villagers understand, justify, comply with, and at times question it, and what the case reveals about the workings of communal customary law. The research used a qualitative case study with a phenomenological orientation. Data were generated through in-depth semi-structured interviews with purposively selected participants customary leaders, a religious leader, a village official, and ordinary villagers alongside non-participant observation and review of relevant local materials during 2024. Interview transcripts were analysed thematically with the support of NVivo 12, and trustworthiness was strengthened through source and method triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Five themes were constructed: a religious moral order as the ground of the ban; the fusion of sharia and adat into a single unwritten norm; customary social control through deliberation (musyawarah) and graduated sanctions; broad compliance accompanied by quieter negotiation and differing views; and communal customary law as a living, binding order. The case suggests that acculturation here is less a finished state of harmony than an ongoing negotiation in which religious and customary authority reinforce one another while still leaving room for differing community voices.



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Introduction

In Koto Petai Village, Kerinci Regency, an evening of orgen tunggal can no longer be held. Since 2003, the village's customary leaders, the ninik mamak, have prohibited this form of entertainment, and the prohibition still holds today (Interview with Hj. Zubir, 2024). The rule is not written in any regional regulation or formal statute. It lives instead as an unwritten customary norm that the community has agreed to and continues to enforce. This study takes that local prohibition as its starting point and asks a deceptively simple question: how did a ban on a popular form of music entertainment come to be treated, in one Muslim village, as both a religious obligation and a matter of custom?

Orgen tunggal (literally "single organ," here rendered as single-organ entertainment) is a solo performance built around an electronic keyboard that reproduces a full ensemble of sounds. It is cheap to organise and needs only one performer, which is part of its appeal at weddings and village celebrations (Pratiwi, 2020; Ulum, 2020).

In Koto Petai, however, residents and leaders describe the performances they have witnessed as something else: shows that run until dawn, that feature singers in revealing dress, and that draw crowds where alcohol, fights, and unsupervised mixing between young men and women become common (Interview with Pak Muhammad, 2024). These are the community's own characterisations of the events, and they are central to how the ban is justified, so the study reports them as claims that participants make rather than as settled facts about the music itself.

Conceptually, the case sits within long-standing discussions of acculturation, understood since Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) as the changes that occur when groups with different cultural backgrounds come into sustained contact. Later work reframed acculturation as a two-dimensional process in which a community can retain its heritage while selectively engaging with outside influences (Berry, 1997). In Indonesia, the meeting of Islam and local culture has produced distinctive religious and customary forms rather than a simple replacement of one by the other (Geertz, 1960; Lundeto et al., 2023). The prohibition of *orgen tunggal* in Koto Petai is one such form: a local response in which Islamic moral vocabulary and customary authority are woven together.

A number of studies have already examined *orgen tunggal* in Indonesian communities, but they tend to approach it from particular angles. Several read it through the lens of Islamic jurisprudence, weighing the entertainment against the principle of *maslahah* or public benefit (Umiyati, 2021). Others analyse the implementation of regional regulations (*peraturan daerah*) that restrict night-time performances (Murni & Elimartati, 2021), or focus on community perceptions of the entertainment at weddings (Pratiwi, 2020; Ulum, 2020). Afdal (2023) looks specifically at how *ninik mamak* communicate a prohibition to younger kin. These studies are useful, yet two gaps remain. First, most treat the prohibition either as a question of *fiqh* or as the application of state regulation, and rarely as a lived outcome of sharia–adat acculturation that is enforced through unwritten communal customary law. Second, they seldom attend to disagreement within the community, presenting the prohibition as broadly accepted without examining where it is negotiated, resisted, or quietly worked around.

To address these gaps, this study draws on the theory of communal customary law associated with the Dutch adat-law scholarship of van Vollenhoven (1981) and ter Haar (1948), and with Soepomo's account of customary law as a system grounded in shared agreement and joint decision (Soepomo, 2003). Van Vollenhoven famously mapped the archipelago into a set of customary-law areas (*adatrechtskringen*), of which the Kerinci region is part. From this perspective, customary law need not be written to be binding; it is the living law of a community, made and maintained by that community. The prohibition is also read here as a form of social control in Pound's (1942) sense, where law works to regulate conduct in line with shared moral expectations. Together these frameworks let the case be analysed not as a moral verdict on *orgen tunggal* but as an instance of how an unwritten, religiously infused customary norm is produced, enforced, and received.

Three questions guide the study:

1. How do community members and leaders understand and justify the customary prohibition of *orgen tunggal*?
2. Through what mechanisms is the prohibition enforced and complied with as communal customary law?
3. What does the case reveal about the acculturation of sharia and adat, including its points of negotiation and differing perspectives?

The study contributes in two ways. Theoretically, it extends the discussion of acculturation beyond an image of static harmony toward an account of negotiation, showing how sharia and adat reinforce each other while leaving space for disagreement. For socio-legal scholarship, it offers a close reading of how unwritten communal customary law operates in everyday enforcement, an area where description still outweighs analysis. Nasution and Hasibuan (2023) and Salim (2016) point in this direction in their work on adat sanctions and local wisdom, and the present case builds on that line of inquiry within a specifically religious village setting.

Method

Research Design and Rationale

This study used a qualitative case study design with a phenomenological orientation (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and it is reported in line with the qualitative reporting standards set out by Levitt et al. (2018). The earlier draft of this work described its approach as “normative-empirical.” On reflection, that label fits a doctrinal legal study better than the present inquiry, which is fundamentally about meaning: how a particular community understands and lives with a customary prohibition. A qualitative design was chosen because the research

questions ask about interpretation, justification, and lived experience rather than about the frequency or measurable effect of the ban. A single-site case study allowed the prohibition to be studied in depth and in context, while the phenomenological orientation kept attention on how participants themselves made sense of the rule.

Research Setting

Koto Petai is a village in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, on the island of Sumatra. Residents describe it as a devout Muslim community with active congregational prayer, Qur'anic study groups, and a strong showing in religious recitation competitions (MTQ). Village life is organised partly through adat institutions, with the ninik mamak senior figures of the matrilineal kin groups holding recognised authority over customary matters. The prohibition of organ tunggal began in 2003 and has been maintained by these leaders since. Fieldwork for this study was carried out during 2024.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected purposively (Patton, 2015) to include those with direct knowledge of, or a direct stake in, the prohibition. Inclusion criteria were: adult residents of Koto Petai; familiarity with the customary prohibition; and willingness to take part. The sample brought together people who make and enforce the rule, people who speak to its religious basis, and people whose social lives the rule most affects, so that the findings would not rest on a single vantage point. Two individuals are named with their consent because of their public customary and religious roles; other participants are identified only by role to protect their privacy. Table 1 summarises the participants.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Code	Role	Relevance to the study
CL1 (Pak Muhammad)	Senior ninik mamak (customary leader)	Makes and enforces customary decisions and sanctions
CL2	Ninik mamak (customary leader)	Participates in deliberation over sanctions
RL1 (Hj. Zubir)	Religious leader (tokoh agama)	Articulates the religious grounds of the prohibition
VO1	Village government representative	Links customary and administrative order
CM1–CM3	Community elders / parents	Reception of the rule across generations
YA1–YA3	Young adults	The group most directly affected by the ban

Note. Ten participants in total. Named individuals are identified with permission; all others are referred to by role only.

Data Collection

Data were generated through three sources. The primary source was in-depth, semi-structured interviews lasting roughly forty-five to ninety minutes each, conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and the local dialect. The interview guide covered participants' accounts of organ tunggal, the history and reasons for the prohibition, how it is decided and enforced, how the community has responded, and how participants relate the rule to religion and to adat. Questions were open-ended, and follow-up prompts were used to draw out concrete examples. The second source was non-participant observation of everyday village settings and community events, recorded in field notes. The third source was a review of relevant local materials, including any documentation of customary decisions, to corroborate participants' accounts. Because the prohibition is unwritten, this documentary trail is necessarily limited, a point taken up again under trustworthiness.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the six-phase approach to thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006), supported by NVivo 12 for organising codes and tracing themes back to the data. Analysis began inductively, with line-by-line coding close to participants' own words (Saldaña, 2021), before codes were grouped into candidate categories and then into themes. The frameworks of acculturation and communal customary law informed, but did not dictate, this process: where the data pushed against the theory for instance, in expressions of disagreement those instances were kept rather than smoothed over. Five themes were constructed through this iterative movement between codes, categories, and the full dataset.

Researcher Role and Reflexivity

The researchers are Muslim academics affiliated with an Indonesian Islamic university, which placed them in a partly insider position: familiar with the religious idiom participants used, yet outsiders to Koto Petai's specific adat. This position eased rapport but also carried a risk of taking the religious framing of the prohibition for granted. To guard against this, the researchers kept reflexive memos, deliberately probed for views that did not fit the dominant narrative, and treated participants' moral language as data to be analysed rather than as conclusions to be adopted. The earlier draft's recommendation that violators be imprisoned has been removed, since it expressed the author's own preference rather than a finding from the data.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed through the criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was supported by triangulating across data sources (customary leaders, a religious leader, a village official, and community members) and methods (interviews, observation, and document review), by member checking key interpretations with participants, and by peer debriefing among the research team. Transferability is supported through thick description of the setting and the prohibition, so that readers can judge how far the findings travel to other communities. Dependability and confirmability were addressed by keeping an audit trail of coding decisions and analytic memos in NVivo 12. Table 2 maps each theme onto the sources that support it.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was sought from customary leaders before fieldwork began. Participants gave informed consent, took part voluntarily, and were free to withdraw. With the exception of the two public figures who agreed to be named, participants are identified only by role.

Results and Discussions

Five themes were constructed from the data. Each is presented below with illustrative quotations in the Indonesian original followed by an English translation. Table 2 then summarises how the themes are supported across the different data sources.

Theme 1: A Village That "Holds Tight to Religion"

Participants consistently framed Koto Petai as a place where religious practice is woven into daily life, and they treated this as the deepest reason for the prohibition. The village's self-image as devout regular congregational prayer, study circles, the Ramadan tradition of completing the Qur'an together was offered not as background but as the very thing the ban protects. The religious leader put it plainly:

"Kampung kami ini kuat agamanya. Orgen tunggal itu kami nilai tidak sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam, makanya tidak kami benarkan." (RL1, Hj. Zubir)

"Our village holds tight to religion. We judge orgen tunggal to be out of step with Islamic values, and that is why we do not permit it." (RL1, Hj. Zubir)

In participants' accounts, the objection was less to music as such than to what they had seen accompany these particular performances: drunkenness, fighting, and unrestrained mixing between young men and women. They linked these concerns to Qur'anic injunctions against intoxicants (Q.S. al-Ma'idah: 90), against approaching *zina* (Q.S. al-Isra': 32), and against causing corruption in the land (Q.S. al-A'raf: 56). The religious objection, in other words, was tied to observed social harm rather than asserted in the abstract.

Theme 2: When Adat Speaks With Sharia's Voice

The prohibition is hard to classify as purely religious or purely customary, because in practice it is both. Participants described religious and customary leaders acting together: the tokoh agama supplies the moral reasoning, and the ninik mamak give it the form of an adat rule that the community is bound to obey. This is acculturation in a concrete, local key Islamic norms and adat authority fused into a single expectation rather than sitting side by side.

"Aturan ini lahir dari kesepakatan ninik mamak bersama tokoh agama. Jadi adat dan agama di sini sejalan, tidak bertentangan." (CL1, Pak Muhammad)

"This rule was born from the agreement of the ninik mamak together with the religious leaders. So here adat and religion run along the same line; they do not contradict each other." (CL1, Pak Muhammad)

Participants also located the prohibition within a longer history. When Islam reached the Kerinci communities, some of its teachings, they said, already matched existing custom, so the religion was received as

confirming adat rather than overturning it. The ban on orgen tunggal is read in the same spirit: a new application of an old alignment between faith and custom.

Theme 3: Musyawarah and Sanctions Enforcing an Unwritten Rule

Although the rule is unwritten, it is enforced through a clear and recognised procedure. When a violation occurs, the ninik mamak convene a deliberation (*musyawarah*) to decide the appropriate response. Sanctions are graduated: a first response is typically a warning, while continued or serious violation can bring a fine, reported by participants as in the range of IDR 10,000,000 to IDR 15,000,000, or an equivalent in livestock such as goats (Interview with Hj. Zubir, 2024).

“Kalau ada yang melanggar, kami musyawarahkan dulu. Sanksinya bisa teguran, bisa denda, sesuai keputusan bersama ninik mamak.” (CL1, Pak Muhammad)

“If someone violates the rule, we deliberate first. The sanction can be a warning or a fine, according to the joint decision of the ninik mamak.” (CL1, Pak Muhammad)

What participants emphasised was not the severity of the penalty but its source: the sanction carries weight because it issues from collective deliberation rather than from any single figure. Enforcement, in their telling, is an act of the community on itself.

Theme 4: Compliance, Quiet, and Disagreement

Participants reported broad compliance with the prohibition, which most described as long settled and unremarkable. Yet the picture was not uniform. Some residents said that they did not object to orgen tunggal in principle, and would tolerate it provided that order and security were maintained; their concern was with the disorder, not the music. A few noted the economic and social pull of the entertainment, especially at weddings, where it is cheaper than a traditional ensemble. Others raised a practical worry about consistency: that a warning alone does not always deter repeat disturbances, and that enforcement can feel uneven.

“Sebenarnya orgennya tidak masalah bagi saya, asal tertib. Yang bikin resah itu kalau sudah ribut dan mabuk-mabukan.” (YA2)

“Honestly the organ itself is not a problem for me, as long as things stay orderly. What unsettles people is when it turns into fights and drinking.” (YA2)

These voices do not amount to open opposition, and no participant called for the ban to be lifted. But they show that acceptance is layered rather than total. The prohibition is upheld, and at the same time it is discussed, weighed, and occasionally questioned at the edges which is to say it is negotiated, not merely obeyed.

Theme 5: A Law Without a Text

Running through the other themes is participants’ understanding of the prohibition as customary law that binds even though it is unwritten. They were clear that no official manuscript records the rule, and equally clear that this does not weaken it. The rule lives in shared memory and practice, passed down and re-affirmed through deliberation.

“Aturan adat di sini tidak tertulis, tapi tetap dipatuhi turun-temurun. Tidak ada naskahnya, namun mengikat semua warga.” (RL1, Hj. Zubir)

“The adat rules here are not written down, yet they are obeyed from one generation to the next. There is no manuscript, but they bind every resident.” (RL1, Hj. Zubir)

Table 2. Triangulation of Themes Across Data Sources

Theme	Customary leaders	Religious leader	Community members	Observation / documents
1. Religious moral order	✓ Cite religion as the basis	✓ Qur’anic grounding	✓ Describe village as devout	✓ Active mosque / study life
2. Fusion of sharia and adat	✓ Joint rule-making	✓ Adat and religion aligned	✓ Seen as one expectation	✓ Leaders act together
3. Musyawarah and sanctions	✓ Describe deliberation, fines	✓ Confirm sanction range	✓ Aware of penalties	✓ Reported decisions
4. Compliance and negotiation	✓ Note general compliance	✓ Note acceptance	✓ Voice tolerance / concerns	✓ Few open violations

Theme	Customary leaders	Religious leader	Community members	Observation / documents
5. Unwritten binding law	✓ “No manuscript”	✓ Binds all residents	✓ Passed down	✓ No written code found

Note. ✓ indicates that the source supports the theme. Convergence across sources strengthens the credibility of each theme.

Read together, the five themes describe acculturation as something the community keeps doing rather than something it once achieved. The prohibition of *orgen tunggal* is not a case of Islam simply displacing local custom, nor of custom absorbing religion. It is closer to what Berry (1997) calls integration: the village retains its *adat* structures while drawing on Islamic moral resources, and the two reinforce each other in a single rule. This matches the classic definition of acculturation as change arising from sustained cultural contact (Redfield et al., 1936), with the important qualification, visible in Theme 4, that the outcome is neither uniform nor static.

The case also illustrates how communal customary law operates in practice. Following van Vollenhoven (1981) and ter Haar (1948), *adat* law is binding not because a state enforces it but because a community recognises it as its own, and Kerinci sits within the customary-law areas they mapped. Soepomo's (2003) account of customary law as a system resting on shared agreement and joint decision fits the deliberative procedure described in Theme 3 almost exactly: the rule's authority comes from *musyawarah*, not from any written code. Theme 5 sharpens the point. An unwritten rule can be more durable than a written one precisely because it is held in collective memory and renewed each time the *ninik mamak* deliberate. Here the prohibition functions as social control in Pound's (1942) sense law as a means of regulating conduct toward shared moral ends but a social control that is generated from within the community rather than imposed from outside.

What gives the rule its particular texture is the fusion described in Theme 2. The religious leader supplies the moral grammar, and the customary leaders supply the binding form, so that to break the rule is at once a religious lapse and a customary offence. This dual coding helps explain the broad compliance reported in Theme 4: the prohibition draws on two sources of authority at the same time. It also resonates with accounts of Islam Nusantara, in which Islamic teaching is expressed through, rather than against, local culture (Lundeto et al., 2023; Geertz, 1960), and with studies of *adat* sanctions as carriers of local wisdom (Nasution & Hasibuan, 2023; Salim, 2016).

The findings depart from much of the existing *orgen tunggal* literature in a useful way. Studies framed around *masalah* (Umiyati, 2021) or around the implementation of regional regulations (Murni & Elimartati, 2021) tend to ask whether the entertainment should be permitted and how a formal rule is applied. The present case shows a prohibition that needs no regional regulation at all, because it is carried by *adat* and faith together, and it foregrounds the community's own reasoning and disagreements rather than an external legal standard. Where Afdal (2023) examines how leaders communicate such a ban, this study examines how the ban is lived: justified, enforced, complied with, and quietly negotiated. The negotiation matters analytically. Treating the prohibition as fully and unanimously accepted, as the earlier draft did, would have hidden the very dynamics that make it a case of ongoing acculturation rather than settled consensus.

Conclusions

This study set out to understand how a customary prohibition of *orgen tunggal* in Koto Petai came to be treated as both a religious duty and a matter of *adat*. Participants justified the ban through a religious moral order tied to observed social harm (RQ1); they enforced it through deliberation and graduated sanctions that bind even without a written text (RQ2); and they sustained it through a fusion of sharia and *adat* that, while broadly accepted, remains open to quiet negotiation and differing views (RQ3). The case's contribution is to portray acculturation as an active, continuing process. Sharia and *adat* here do not merely coexist; they are worked together, again and again, through the everyday practice of communal customary law.

Several limitations should temper these claims. The study is based on a single village and a small purposive sample, so its findings are offered for analytic rather than statistical generalisation; readers must judge transferability against their own settings. The researchers' partly insider position, and the work of translating participants' words from Bahasa Indonesia and the local dialect into English, inevitably shaped the analysis. Because the prohibition is unwritten, documentary corroboration was limited. Future research could compare Koto Petai with communities where *orgen tunggal* is permitted or regulated by formal law, follow how younger residents negotiate the rule over time, or attend more closely to the economic dimension of the entertainment at weddings. Such work would test how far the pattern seen here acculturation as negotiation rather than as finished harmony holds across other Indonesian communities.

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