

Negotiating Solidarity and Piety: The Role of Arisan Macul in Reinforcing Communal Cohesion amid Agrarian Change in Java

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Abstract

This study examines the tradition of *Arisan Macul* as a form of local wisdom that continues to thrive in the farming community of Torongrejo Village, Batu City, amid rapid social and economic change. The primary focus of this study is to describe how this tradition is carried out, what social, cultural, and religious values are actualized in it, and how these values function as cultural resilience and strengthen the collective identity of the farming community. The research approach is qualitative ethnography, with data collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of 18 purposively selected informants. The results show that *Arisan Macul* functions not just as a collective mechanism for cultivating land but also as a medium for strengthening social solidarity, togetherness, and knowledge exchange among community members. The socio-cultural values actualized in this practice include mutual cooperation, *harmony*, *tepa selira* (mutual respect), and respect for ancestral heritage. On the religious side, *Arisan Macul* strengthens the practices of praying together, sincerity, gratitude, and the interpretation of hoeing as a form of worship based on Islamic teachings. The integration of these social, cultural, and religious dimensions makes *Arisan Macul* a form of religious agrarian heritage that functions as a mechanism for cultural resilience for the Torongrejo farming community in the face of modernization and economic change. This study shows that local traditions such as *Arisan*

Macul can be an essential instrument of in cultural preservation, social capital strengthening, and the internalization of Islamic values in contemporary agrarian life.

Keywords: *Arisan Macul, Cultural Resilience, Social Capital, Collective Work, Religious Piety, Agrarian Heritage*

Abstract

Penelitian ini mengkaji tradisi Arisan Macul sebagai salah satu bentuk kearifan lokal yang terus hidup dalam komunitas petani di Desa Torongrejo, Kota Batu, di tengah perubahan sosial dan ekonomi yang cepat. Fokus utama penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan bagaimana tradisi ini dijalankan, nilai-nilai sosial, budaya, dan keagamaan apa saja yang teraktualisasi di dalamnya, serta bagaimana nilai-nilai tersebut berfungsi sebagai ketahanan budaya dan penguat identitas kolektif masyarakat tani. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif etnografi dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi partisipan, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi terhadap delapan belas informan yang dipilih secara purposif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Arisan Macul berfungsi lebih dari sekadar mekanisme kerja kolektif untuk mengolah lahan, tetapi juga sebagai medium penguatan solidaritas sosial, kebersamaan, dan pertukaran pengetahuan antaranggota komunitas. Nilai-nilai sosial budaya yang teraktualisasi dalam praktik ini meliputi gotong royong, guyub rukun, tepa selira, serta penghormatan terhadap warisan leluhur. Di sisi religius, Arisan Macul memperkuat praktik doa bersama, ikhlas, syukur, dan pemaknaan kerja mencangkul sebagai ibadah yang berlandaskan ajaran Islam. Integrasi dimensi sosial, budaya, dan keagamaan ini menjadikan Arisan Macul sebagai bentuk heritage agraris religius yang berfungsi sebagai mekanisme ketahanan budaya komunitas petani Torongrejo dalam menghadapi modernisasi dan perubahan ekonomi. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa tradisi lokal seperti Arisan Macul dapat menjadi instrumen penting dalam pelestarian budaya, penguatan modal sosial, dan internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam kehidupan agraris kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: *Arisan Macul, Ketahanan Budaya, Modal Sosial, Kerja Kolektif, Kesalehan Religius, Heritage Agraris.*

Introduction

Agrarian villages in Java have faced rapid and structural socio-economic changes in recent decades. Data from the Central Statistics Agency indicate that between 2003 and 2018, agricultural land on

the island of Java shrank by more than 1.3 million hectares due to conversion for housing, industry, and tourism (Statistik, 2019). This decline in agricultural land has been accompanied by a shift in work relations, where traditional systems of mutual cooperation have gradually been replaced by cash-based, individualistic labour arrangements (Geertz, 1983). In many rural areas, solidarity-based institutions such as food barns have transformed into debt barns as small farmers increasingly rely on informal credit and microfinance institutions to cover rising production costs (Scott, 1980). These changes have weakened the ethical foundations of agrarian life, where work was once understood as a collective responsibility, a source of social cohesion, and a form of worship rooted in ancestral teachings (Koentjaraningrat & Pembangunan, 2009). If this trend continues, what may be lost is not only local knowledge of cultivation techniques but also social capital, trust, and the cultural meaning of agricultural labour.

Within this broader context, Torongrejo Village in Batu City presents a contrasting case. Despite pressures from land conversion, tourism development, and the monetisation of labour, the community continues to maintain the Arisan Macul tradition as a collective work system that integrates agricultural labour with social solidarity and religious values. Unlike many agrarian villages in Java where mutual cooperation has weakened, Torongrejo demonstrates the persistence of collective work practices that function not only as a strategy for reducing production costs but also as a mechanism for sustaining communal identity, social cohesion, and everyday piety. The continuity of Arisan Macul amid rapid

socio-economic change positions Torongrejo as an important site for understanding cultural resilience in contemporary rural Java.

Studies on local wisdom and agrarian culture in Indonesia generally highlight the role of traditional practices in regulating relationships between humans, nature, and the spiritual realm, while also functioning as mechanisms for filtering external influences that may erode local identity (Koentjaraningrat & Pembangunan, 2009; Stefano et al., 2012). Research on mutual cooperation, community service, and arisan systems emphasises their contribution to building social capital and strengthening rural solidarity (Fukuyama, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Meanwhile, studies on local Islam in Java show how religious teachings are embedded in everyday social practices, including collective labour and agrarian rituals, which integrate worship, ethics, and communal harmony (Geertz, 1960; Woodward, 2010). However, existing studies on collective work among farmers tend to focus on economic efficiency, labour-sharing mechanisms, or risk distribution (Hart & Peluso, 2005; Li, 2020), without examining the symbolic, cultural, and religious values that accompany these practices. Research specifically addressing Arisan Macul remains limited and rarely conceptualises it as both religious agrarian heritage and a mechanism of cultural resilience that links work, solidarity, and piety in a unified practice of rural life.

This study aims to address this gap by analysing the implementation of Arisan Macul in Torongrejo Village, identifying the social, cultural, and religious values embedded in the tradition, and examining how these values function as mechanisms of cultural resilience amid socio-economic transformation. The study seeks to describe the operational mechanisms of Arisan Macul, analyse the

values actualised within the practice, and explain how these values sustain communal identity and social cohesion.

Literature Review

Local Wisdom and Agrarian Heritage in Nusantara

Scholars such as Koentjaraningrat, Stefano et al., and Sedyawati conceptualize local wisdom as a historically embedded system that regulates relationships between humans, nature and the spiritual realm. Koentjaraningrat and Pembangunan (2009) emphasize that local wisdom is not merely a technical guide for resource management but a cultural framework that shapes collective identity and moral obligations. This perspective aligns with Stefano et al. (2012), who position agrarian traditions as intangible cultural heritage that must be understood through their intergenerational transmission and their role in sustaining rural communities. Sedyawati (2006) similarly underscores the symbolic dimension of agrarian heritage, arguing that traditional practices encode cosmological values that structure social behavior and ritual life.

Although these scholars converge in viewing agrarian heritage as a holistic system, they differ in emphasis. Koentjaraningrat foregrounds the socio-cultural and ethical dimensions, while Stefano et al. highlight heritage preservation and global recognition frameworks. Sedyawati, in contrast, focuses on the expressive and ritualistic aspects of agrarian culture. When compared, these perspectives reveal a tension between understanding agrarian heritage as a lived, adaptive system and as a cultural artefact requiring preservation. This tension is particularly relevant in

contemporary rural Java, where rapid socio-economic change challenges the continuity of traditional practices.

Critically, these studies tend to treat agrarian traditions as stable cultural forms rather than dynamic practices that respond to structural pressures such as land conversion, monetisation, and labour fragmentation. While they acknowledge the resilience of local wisdom, they do not fully address how communities negotiate cultural continuity amid economic transformation. This gap becomes evident when examining practices like *Arisan Macul*, which operate not only as heritage but also as adaptive mechanisms that sustain social cohesion and religious meaning in changing agrarian contexts.

Collective Labour, Social Capital and Local Islamic Values

Geertz (1983) describes Javanese collective labour as rooted in reciprocity and communal ethics, contrasting it with the rise of wage-based, individualistic labour relations. Putnam (2000) and Fukuyama (2001) extend this discussion by theorising social capital as the trust, norms, and networks that facilitate cooperation. Their frameworks help explain why practices such as *sambatan*, *gugur gunung*, and *arisan* systems have historically strengthened rural solidarity. However, while Putnam and Fukuyama emphasise the structural benefits of social capital, Geertz situates these practices within the symbolic and cultural logic of Javanese society.

In parallel, studies on local Islam by Geertz (1960), Woodward (2010), and Azra and Hasan (2002) highlight how Islamic teachings are embedded in everyday social practices rather than confined to formal religious institutions. Geertz's analysis of Javanese Islam

emphasises syncretism and the integration of religious values into communal rituals. Woodward (2010) expands this by showing how local Islamic expressions are shaped through cultural negotiation, while Azra and Hasan (2002) argue that Islam in the archipelago is characterised by contextual adaptation and social ethics. When compared, these scholars collectively demonstrate that religious values such as sincerity, mutual assistance, and gratitude are often enacted through social practices like collective labour.

Despite their contributions, these studies rarely examine how collective labour simultaneously embodies social, cultural, and religious dimensions in contemporary agrarian settings. Research on labour-sharing systems by Hart and Peluso (2005) and Li (2020) tends to focus on economic rationality, risk-sharing, and production efficiency. While these analyses illuminate the economic logic of collective work, they overlook the symbolic, relational, and spiritual meanings that accompany such practices. This creates a conceptual gap in understanding how collective labour functions as a site for reproducing social capital and religious piety in rural communities.

Previous studies reveal a rich body of scholarship on agrarian heritage, collective labour and local Islamic practices. However, they also expose a significant gap. Existing studies have not sufficiently examined how a single tradition can integrate social solidarity, cultural identity and religious piety within the context of contemporary agrarian change. Specifically, there is limited research that conceptualises Arisan Macul as religious agrarian heritage and analyses its role as a mechanism of cultural resilience that responds to the pressures of land conversion, monetisation and shifting labour relations. This study addresses this gap by offering

an integrated analysis of the social, cultural, and religious values embedded in Arisan Macul and by demonstrating how these values sustain communal identity in rural Java.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic design to examine the practice of Arisan Macul as a socio-cultural and religious phenomenon embedded in the everyday life of the Torongrejo farming community. Ethnography was selected because the research questions required an in-depth understanding of meanings, values, and lived experiences that cannot be captured through quantitative measurement. The approach enabled the researchers to observe how collective labor, social solidarity, and religious practices are enacted in their natural setting and interpreted by community members themselves. This design was therefore the most appropriate for analyzing Arisan Macul not only as a technical labor-sharing mechanism but also as a cultural system that integrates work, identity, and piety. The extended field engagement from January to September 2023 further strengthened the suitability of ethnography by allowing the researchers to witness multiple cycles of Arisan Macul and build trust with participants.

The study population consisted of farming households in Torongrejo Village who actively participate in Arisan Macul. Eighteen informants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling, comprising fifteen core participants directly involved in the collective hoeing activities and three supporting informants, including traditional leaders, a *kamituwo*, and the head of the *arisan* group. Inclusion criteria required participants to have direct

experience in Arisan Macul, either as labor contributors or as individuals responsible for organizing and maintaining the tradition. Individuals who were not involved in agricultural work or who had no knowledge of the practice were excluded to ensure that the data reflected authentic and informed perspectives. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation of field activities, photographs, and community records. Participatory observation allowed the researchers to observe work patterns, gendered role distribution, and expressions of religious values, while interviews provided insight into participants' interpretations, motivations, and experiences.

Data analysis followed a multi-stage qualitative procedure. First, all observational notes and interview transcripts were organized and subjected to initial coding to identify recurring concepts related to collective work, social solidarity, cultural values, and religious practices. Second, the coded data were grouped into thematic categories that reflected the core dimensions of Arisan Macul, including labor rotation, communal decision-making, gender roles, and expressions of piety. Third, the researchers applied interpretive analysis to examine how these themes interacted to form a coherent cultural system, drawing on thick description to contextualize practices within the broader socio-economic environment of Torongrejo. Throughout the analysis, triangulation of methods and sources was used to enhance validity, and member checking was conducted by confirming interpretations with key informants to ensure alignment with community perspectives. Reflexive engagement was maintained to minimize researcher bias and ensure

that interpretations remained grounded in participants' lived realities.

Results and Discussion

The Practice of Arisan Macul Among the Farmer Community in Torongrejo

The practice of Arisan Macul in Torongrejo Village emerges as a highly organized collective labor system rooted in mutual assistance, shared responsibility, and intergenerational cultural continuity. Interviews reveal that participation is not merely voluntary but is perceived as a moral obligation. As ER/23 explained, "We always come to every turn because this is what keeps us united." Similarly, AS/25 emphasized that taking turns to help one another is "the way we maintain harmony as farmers." These statements illustrate that participation is embedded in a shared normative framework where absence generates discomfort, as PT/54 admitted feeling "sungkan" if unable to attend. This strong sense of obligation aligns with Putnam's (2000) concept of bonding social capital, where trust and shared norms sustain collective action. However, the Torongrejo case extends Putnam's argument by showing that social capital is not only a by-product of cooperation but is actively cultivated through ritualized labor cycles. In this sense, the findings complement Geertz's (1983) observation of Javanese communal work while challenging his portrayal of such practices as eroding under modernization. In Torongrejo, collective labor persists precisely because it is tied to moral identity and social belonging.

The land rotation and host system further reinforces equality and reciprocity. DM/70 described the rotation as “a fair way so no one feels left behind,” while PN/75 noted that the order is determined collectively to avoid conflict. This structured rotation ensures that labor benefits are distributed evenly, preventing the emergence of hierarchical relations. Compared with Hart and Peluso’s (2005) analysis of labor-sharing systems as economic strategies for risk distribution, the Torongrejo findings reveal a deeper symbolic dimension. The rotation is not only a mechanism for efficiency but also a cultural expression of fairness and social balance. This supports Koentjaraningrat’s (2009) argument that agrarian practices encode ethical values, yet the Torongrejo case adds nuance by showing how these values are operationalized through explicit procedural agreements such as drawing lots and deliberation meetings.

The scheduling and task distribution meetings illustrate the deliberative nature of the tradition. ER/23 described how members gather to draw lots, while PM/46 explained that the names included in the lots reflect consensus. These meetings function as micro-arenas of participatory governance, where decisions about work location, timing, and equipment are negotiated collectively. This resonates with Stefano et al. (2012), who emphasize the role of intangible cultural heritage in structuring social organization. However, the Torongrejo case challenges the assumption that heritage practices are static. Instead, the community adapts the scheduling process to contemporary needs, demonstrating that cultural resilience involves flexibility rather than mere preservation.

Collective digging work is the core of Arisan Macul. AS/25 highlighted that everyone begins work at the same time, while PT/54 noted that punctuality is tied to mutual respect. The simultaneous labor reduces individual workload and accelerates land preparation. This collective rhythm reflects Durkheim's notion of mechanical solidarity, where shared experiences and interdependence bind individuals into a cohesive whole. Yet, the Torongrejo findings extend Durkheim's theory by showing that solidarity is not only a structural condition but is actively reproduced through embodied practices such as working side by side, sharing tools, and synchronizing physical effort. The findings also complement Ritzer and Yagatich's (2012) interpretation of solidarity by demonstrating that emotional comfort and social accountability are central to maintaining collective labor.

Women's contributions to food preparation reveal a gendered dimension of solidarity. MT/76 explained that women prepare meals from their own rice fields and gardens, while PT/54 described cooking as "our way of supporting the men who work." These narratives show that women's labor, though often overlooked, is essential to sustaining the collective work cycle. This supports Munawaroh and Lazuardi's (2025) argument that women play a dual role in agricultural social structures. However, the Torongrejo case challenges the tendency in agrarian literature to marginalize women's contributions by demonstrating that their involvement is recognized and valued by the community. Women's food provisioning also aligns with Woodward's (2010) view of local Islam as embedded in everyday practices, as the act of feeding workers is framed as an expression of sincerity and care.

The shared meals and rest periods further strengthen social cohesion. IR/45 described the break as “a time to laugh together,” while MR/45 noted that humor and informal conversations deepen relationships. These interactions transform labor into a social ritual that reinforces emotional bonds. Subqi’s (2020) findings on harmonious living support this interpretation, yet the Torongrejo case adds empirical depth by showing how harmony is enacted through mundane practices such as eating together by the rice fields. This demonstrates that social capital is not only conceptual but is materially produced through shared food, shared space, and shared time.

Finally, the preservation of tradition emerges as a central theme. DM/70 referred to Arisan Macul as “warisan leluhur,” while JM/77 emphasised that elders teach younger generations to help one another. These narratives show that Arisan Macul is understood as a cultural inheritance that must be maintained. This aligns with Mustanir and Razak’s (2017) argument that traditional practices function as mechanisms of cultural continuity. However, the Torongrejo findings challenge the assumption that heritage is preserved passively. Instead, the community actively reproduces the tradition through deliberate teaching, participation, and adaptation, demonstrating that cultural resilience is a dynamic process.

The researcher's documentation during the *Macul Arisan* activity is presented below.



Figure 1. Arisan Macul activity.



Figure 2. Arisan Macul members taking a break and eating together.

The visual documentation in Figures 1 and 2 illustrates more than the physical act of hoeing the land; it captures the relational dynamics that animate Arisan Macul as a lived social institution. The images show members working side by side, exchanging jokes during breaks, and sharing meals in a relaxed, family-like atmosphere. These interactions reflect the emotional texture of the practice, where cooperation is not merely functional but infused with warmth, humour, and mutual care. Such scenes resonate with participants' narratives describing how collective labour “feels lighter when done together” and how shared meals “strengthen our

sense of being one family.” These embodied expressions of togetherness align with Subqi’s (2020) argument that harmonious living, mutual respect, and appreciation among community members are key indicators of social capital in rural societies. The conviviality depicted in the images therefore reinforces the idea that Arisan Macul operates as a generator of bonding social capital, consistent with Putnam’s (2000) emphasis on trust and shared norms as the foundation of cohesive communities. At the same time, the informal conversations and laughter observed during rest periods illustrate how solidarity is continually reproduced through everyday interactions, complementing Geertz’s (1983) view of Javanese communal practices as deeply embedded in social life. Thus, the images do not merely document agricultural labour; they reveal the social infrastructure of cohesion, reciprocity, and emotional connectedness that sustains the Arisan Macul tradition across generations.

Religious Socio-Cultural Values as Social Capital for the Community

The Arisan Macul tradition in Torongrejo Village operates not only as a collective agricultural mechanism but also as a living arena where social and religious values are continuously enacted and reinforced. Interviews reveal that members willingly help one another without monetary compensation, driven by the conviction that assistance will be reciprocated in future cycles. As ER/23 explained, “We help today because tomorrow it will be our turn to be helped.” This reciprocal ethic transforms labor into a moral exchange system that cultivates trust and emotional security within the group. Such practices align with Putnam’s (2000)

conceptualization of bonding social capital, where shared norms and mutual obligations strengthen community cohesion. Yet, the Torongrejo case extends Putnam's framework by showing that reciprocity is not merely a social expectation but is embedded in religious understandings of sincerity, gratitude, and collective responsibility.

Togetherness emerges as a central value, visible in the way farmers work, rest, and eat side by side in the fields. Field observations show that shared meals and informal conversations create a warm, family-like atmosphere that reinforces emotional closeness. This resonates with Basit's (2017) argument that reciprocal social relationships generate harmony and trust, but the Torongrejo findings add nuance by demonstrating how such relationships are ritualized through repeated cycles of collective labor. The practice also reflects the Javanese cultural emphasis on *guyub* and *rukun*, which Geertz (1960) identifies as foundational to local social ethics. However, unlike Geertz's portrayal of Javanese communalism as potentially eroding under modern pressures, the Torongrejo community demonstrates that these values remain resilient when anchored in everyday agricultural routines.

Solidarity is further strengthened through the absence of social stratification during Arisan Macul. AS/25 and SR/45 noted that members of different ages, economic backgrounds, and kinship groups participate equally, without hierarchical distinctions. This horizontal integration supports Yunistiati et al.'s (2014) view that social cohesion emerges when individuals engage in shared activities that transcend status boundaries. The Torongrejo case, however, offers a more dynamic interpretation: social integration is

not only a by-product of collective work but is actively produced through regular meetings, shared decision-making, and open discussions about commodity prices, family matters, and village issues. These interactions transform Arisan Macul into a social forum where information flows freely and community bonds are continually renewed.

The role of women adds another important dimension to the socio-cultural fabric of Arisan Macul. Interviews with PM/46 and MT/76 show that women prepare meals using produce from their own fields, ensuring that all participants are nourished without imposing financial burdens. Their contributions, though not involving physical labor in the fields, are essential for maintaining the rhythm and harmony of the collective work cycle. This supports Munawaroh and Lazuardi's (2025) argument that women hold a dual role in agrarian social structures, contributing materially and emotionally to community cohesion. The Torongrejo findings challenge the common assumption that women's roles in agrarian traditions are peripheral; instead, they reveal that women's labour is central to sustaining the social and moral foundations of the practice.

Knowledge exchange also plays a significant role in strengthening social capital. During breaks, farmers share planting techniques, pest control strategies, and informal weather predictions based on local wisdom. These exchanges demonstrate that Arisan Macul functions as a site of collective learning, where traditional expertise is transmitted across generations. This aligns with Widyaningsih et al. (2014), who argue that daily social interactions serve as channels for value internalisation and knowledge transfer. The Torongrejo case enriches this perspective by showing how agricultural knowledge is

embedded within a broader moral economy of cooperation, trust, and shared responsibility. The following documentation depicts the atmosphere of *Arisan Macul* in Torongrejo Village: it shows farmers working together in the fields and taking breaks filled with casual conversation and shared meals.



Figure 3. Women farmers cooking together



Figure 4. Farmer women delivering food to the fields

The visual documentation in Figures 3 and 4 further illustrates these dynamics. Women cooking together and delivering food to the fields highlight the gendered yet collaborative nature of the tradition. These scenes depict not only logistical support but also the emotional labour that sustains harmony among members. As Subqi

(2020) notes, harmonious living, mutual respect, and appreciation are key indicators of social capital. The images therefore reinforce the argument that Arisan Macul is a holistic system where social, cultural, and religious values converge to create a resilient and supportive community environment.

It could be said that Arisan Macul is far more than a labour-sharing mechanism. It is a socio-religious institution that cultivates trust, reinforces cultural identity, facilitates knowledge exchange, and sustains communal resilience amid socio-economic change. Through these intertwined values, Arisan Macul continues to function as a vital source of social capital for the Torongrejo farming community.

Religious Cultural Heritage Resilience in Arisan Macul

The practice of Arisan Macul in Torongrejo Village demonstrates a deeply rooted religious dimension in which agricultural labour is framed as an act of worship. Interviews reveal that members consistently interpret their participation as a form of devotion, motivated by the intention to help others and seek divine pleasure. AH/50 described the activity as “*working for God while helping neighbours,*” while JM/77 emphasised that “*every hoe strike counts as charity.*” These narratives show that religious meaning is not an abstract ideal but is embedded in the embodied routines of collective labour. This aligns with Adinugraha et al. (2025), who argue that Islamic values such as mutual cooperation, gratitude, and environmental respect are naturally integrated into indigenous traditions. The Torongrejo case, however, extends this argument by demonstrating how religious values are operationalised through a

structured labour-sharing system that reinforces both spiritual and social commitments.

The value of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) is particularly evident in the willingness of members to attend each turn without calculating material gains or losses. SR/25 explained that “*we come because it is our duty as believers to support one another,*” reflecting the Qur’anic principle in Q.S. At-Taubah:71 that believers are allies who support each other. This finding supports Abdillah’s (2025) argument that *ta'awun* forms the ethical foundation of Islamic social relations, yet the Torongrejo case adds nuance by showing how *ta'awun* is enacted through unpaid physical labour rather than symbolic gestures. In contrast to economic interpretations of collective work that emphasise efficiency or risk-sharing, the Torongrejo farmers frame their participation as a moral obligation rooted in faith. This challenges Hart and Peluso’s (2005) labour-sharing model by demonstrating that religious motivations can be as influential as economic ones in sustaining collective work traditions.

The values of sincerity and gratitude further illustrate the spiritual depth of Arisan Macul. PM/46 noted that assistance is given “without expecting anything except God’s reward,” while SR/45 described shared meals and prayers as expressions of gratitude for health and harvest. These practices resonate with Mahfud’s (2014) view that sincerity and gratitude are central to Islamic ethics, yet the Torongrejo findings show how these values are embodied in everyday agricultural routines rather than confined to ritual spaces. This supports Geertz’s (1960) observation that Javanese religiosity is expressed through lived practices that blend seamlessly with cultural norms. However, the Torongrejo case challenges Geertz’s

tendency to categorize Javanese Islam as syncretic by demonstrating that Islamic values are not diluted but actively reinforced through local cultural forms.

The acculturation of Islam and Javanese culture is evident in the integration of *ta'awun*, sincerity, and gratitude with Javanese values such as *rukun* (harmony) and *tepa selira* (empathy). SM/65 explained that “*helping each other is both Islamic and Javanese; they cannot be separated.*” This reflects Adinugraha et al.’s (2025) argument that the relationship between Islam and local wisdom is dialogical and adaptive, producing a harmonious synthesis that preserves indigenous identity. The Torongrejo findings complement this view by showing how acculturation is enacted through collective labour rather than through ritual ceremonies alone. The blending of religious and cultural values creates a holistic moral framework that guides behaviour, strengthens social bonds, and reinforces community resilience.

From all these findings, it could be concluded that Arisan Macul functions as a form of religious cultural heritage resilience, where Islamic values and Javanese cultural ethics converge to sustain social solidarity amid economic pressures. While modernization often encourages individualism and monetization of labor, the Torongrejo community maintains a collective ethic grounded in worship, reciprocity, and cultural continuity. This suggests that religious–cultural acculturation plays a critical role in preserving communal cohesion and resisting the fragmentation commonly associated with socio-economic change. Future research could further explore how these intertwined values shape decision-

making, conflict resolution, and intergenerational transmission within agrarian communities.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Arisan Macul in Torongrejo Village functions as a multidimensional institution that integrates collective labour, socio-cultural values, and Islamic ethical principles. The findings show that the tradition strengthens community solidarity through structured labour rotation, shared responsibilities, and reciprocal assistance grounded in trust. At the same time, it reinforces Javanese cultural values such as harmony, empathy, and intergenerational continuity, while embedding religious values of *ta'awun*, sincerity, and gratitude into everyday agricultural practices. Together, these elements position Arisan Macul as a form of religious agrarian heritage that sustains cultural resilience and communal identity amid rapid socio-economic change.

Methodologically, this study is limited by its reliance on a single-site ethnography and a relatively small number of purposively selected participants, which may constrain the generalisability of the findings to other agrarian contexts. The extended immersion strengthened interpretive depth, yet future research would benefit from comparative studies across multiple villages, longitudinal tracking of generational shifts, or mixed-method approaches that integrate social network analysis or participatory rural appraisal. Further exploration of gender dynamics, economic pressures, and the transformation of religious meaning in collective work traditions would also enrich the understanding of cultural resilience in rural communities.

Overall, this research contributes to the broader scholarship on local wisdom, social capital, and religious practices by conceptualising Arisan Macul as an integrated socio-religious system rather than a purely economic labour-sharing mechanism. The study highlights how cultural and religious values can operate as powerful resources for sustaining communal cohesion in the face of structural change. By foregrounding the resilience embedded in everyday agrarian practices, this work underscores the importance of recognising and preserving local traditions as vital components of sustainable rural development and cultural continuity.

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