



Original Research

***Ritual Labuhan* in Yogyakarta: Cultural Resilience, Spiritual Authority, and Community Dynamics in Contemporary Javanese Society**

Zakaria Efendi, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

Meysella Al Firdha Hanim, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pontianak, Indonesia

Muh. Hambali, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Indonesia

Mudjijono, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Indonesia

Mohd Syahiran Abdul Latif, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

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Abstract: Modernization is often understood as a process that undermines traditional authority and ritual practices. However, the *Labuhan* Ritual performed by the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat reveals a different dynamic. This study aims to analyze how the *Labuhan* Ritual functions as a form of institutionalized cultural resilience, as well as a mechanism for reproducing spiritual authority and community dynamics within contemporary Javanese society. This study employs a qualitative approach using interpretive ethnography, which emphasizes analysis of institutional structures, hierarchical roles, and symbolic configurations in ritual performance. Data were collected through digital ethnography, including observation of official visual documentation, archival sources, and relevant scholarly literature. The study's findings indicate that the *Labuhan* Ritual functions as a ritual practice centered on the Keraton, characterized by strictly limited participation, standardized ritual protocols, and an ethos of devotion as the primary foundation for the tradition's continuity. Spiritual authority is maintained through a stable hierarchical structure and tradition-based legitimacy, thereby preserving symbolic coherence and cosmological order. At the community level, this ritual generates a process of symbolic reception and collective meaning-making without undermining its core sacredness. This study contributes to the anthropological study of ritual by demonstrating that cultural resilience is not always manifested through open opposition to modernity but can operate effectively through the institutionalization and symbolic regulation of tradition.

Keywords: *Cultural Resilience, Spiritual Authority, Community Dynamics, Labuhan Ritual, Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat*

Introduction

Institutional modernization and rationalization are often assumed to weaken traditional authority, but the ritual practices of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat show the opposite trend. Every year, the Keraton commemorates the anniversary of the ascension to the throne of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, which is held at the end of the month of Rajab in the Hijri calendar, an event that also serves as a cultural framework for the implementation of Keraton

rituals, including the *Labuhan* tradition in Parangkusuma, Mount Merapi, Mount Lawu, and Dlepih. This commemoration does not merely function as a symbolic ceremony but rather as an institutional mechanism that reproduces the Keraton's cultural values, hierarchy, and authority (Kushins and Quispe-Agnoli 2025). Although it takes place in a physically open space and in a society that continues to undergo social change, ritual practices are still carried out through the internal structure of the palace with standardized behavior and strict division of roles (Munson et al. 2024). This condition confirms that palace rituals do not exist as cultural residues of the past but as active social practices that maintain the continuity of traditional authority in the context of contemporary Yogyakarta.

Literature on rituals generally places traditional practices within two broad frameworks: as cultural heritage under threat or as a form of adaptation to modernity through commodification and public participation (Alam 2025). Previous studies have tended to emphasize the performative, identity, or symbolic functions of rituals in the context of tourism and the cultural economy (Cheng et al. 2025; Rise 2025; Yan et al. 2024). However, relatively few studies have explicitly examined rituals as mechanisms of cultural resilience that operate through institutionalization, spiritual authority, and social role constraints. The novelty of this study lies in interpreting the *Labuhan* Ritual performed by the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat as an institutionalized practice of cultural resilience, not as an open rejection of modernity but as a symbolic strategy that preserves the boundaries of Javanese meaning, hierarchy, and cosmology. By integrating an analysis of the palace's institutional framework, the structure of spiritual authority, and the dynamics of community reception, this study expands our understanding of how traditional rituals can endure without losing their semantic integrity.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze how the *Labuhan* Ritual, organized by the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, functions as a mechanism of cultural resilience institutionalized through ritual practices centered on the Keraton. Specifically, this study explores three main dimensions: first, how the Keraton reproduces symbolic authority and cultural legitimacy through structured ritual practices; second, how spiritual authority and hierarchical order shape compliance, discipline, and the stability of meaning within *Labuhan* practices; and third, how the community perceives, interprets, and reproduces the meaning of the ritual within a broader social space without interfering with its core sacredness. Thus, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between traditional institutions, spiritual power, and community dynamics in the context of contemporary social change.

This study departs from the basic assumption that rituals are not merely symbolic expressions or relics of the past but rather active social practices that shape and regulate relations of power, meaning, and collective identity (Jabbarli 2024). The *Labuhan* Ritual is assumed to operate as a cultural system with internal logic, in which spiritual authority, social hierarchy, and cosmology are functionally interrelated. Furthermore, this study assumes that

modernity is not always destructive to tradition but rather creates a new field of negotiation that can be utilized by traditional institutions to maintain the integrity of meaning (Xinzhong 2015). Within this framework, the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat is understood as a non-state cultural actor with strategic capacity to manage social change through institutionalized symbolic practices. This assumption forms the analytical foundation for interpreting the *Labuhan* Ritual as a stable, adaptive, and meaningful cultural practice in contemporary Javanese society.

Literature Review

Cultural Resilience

Cultural resilience refers to a community's ability to maintain, adapt, and transform its cultural practices, values, and identity in the face of various external pressures such as globalization, environmental change, and sociopolitical dynamics (Rockowitz et al. 2024). Recent literature on cultural resilience emphasizes that cultural resilience is not merely a passive effort to preserve traditions but rather a dynamic process involving continuous negotiation and innovation (Garrido-Moreno et al. 2024; Wu et al. 2026; Yanou et al. 2024). Local knowledge, language, rituals, and social institutions are viewed as vital assets that enable communities to respond to crises without losing the continuity of their identity (Ginzarly and Teller 2025). Within this framework, cultural resilience is closely linked to the concepts of social capital, collective memory, and identity formation, which collectively strengthen a community's capacity to cope with uncertainty (Carmen et al. 2022). Communities with strong cultural cohesion tend to be better able to mobilize internal resources, strengthen solidarity, and maintain psychological well-being amid stress.

Furthermore, contemporary research highlights the link between cultural resilience and sustainable development and public policy frameworks. Several studies emphasize the importance of integrating cultural dimensions into resilience planning, particularly in regions vulnerable to climate change and rapid urbanization (Abdillah et al. 2025; Bleicher and Kumar 2025). This approach stems from the recognition that top-down interventions are often ineffective when they disregard deeply rooted cultural practices and the role of local actors (Baudoin et al. 2016). Therefore, participatory governance, inclusive policy formulation, and recognition of local knowledge and indigenous communities are key components in strengthening resilience outcomes (Zurba and Papadopoulos 2023). Furthermore, advancements in digital technology and transnational networks are reshaping how cultural resilience is manifested, enabling diaspora communities to maintain cultural ties across geographical borders (Ponzanesi 2020). Overall, the literature on cultural resilience underscores the importance of a multidimensional approach that combines cultural preservation and adaptive capacity to ensure sustainability and transformation in an increasingly complex global context.

Spiritual Authority

Spiritual authority is a form of legitimacy that derives from religious beliefs, cosmology, and spiritual convictions collectively recognized by a community (Subramanian 2025). Unlike formal authority based on law or bureaucracy, spiritual authority is built through sacred symbols, rituals, and cosmological narratives that place certain individuals or institutions as intermediaries between the human world and transcendental forces (Lipková 2025). Max Weber classified spiritual authority within the framework of traditional and charismatic authority, where legitimacy is obtained through customary inheritance or extraordinary spiritual qualities (Bora 2020; Turner 2015). In traditional societies, spiritual authority plays an important role in regulating social order, morality, and human relations with nature (Birher 2025). Religious anthropology studies confirm that spiritual authority is not static but is continuously negotiated through ritual practices and social recognition (Andok 2024; Gottowik 2008). Thus, spiritual authority functions as a source of symbolic power that is capable of shaping obedience, trust, and social cohesion without relying on coercive mechanisms.

Spiritual authority is found in the roles of traditional leaders, ritual leaders, or sacred institutions that are believed to have the capacity to maintain cosmic and social balance (Mene and Miso 2024). In the Indonesian context, the Yogyakarta palace is an example of an institution that combines symbolic, political, and spiritual power (Nofrima et al. 2021). The *Labuhan* Ritual serves as the primary medium for reproducing the spiritual authority of the palace as the guardian of harmony between humans, nature, and the supernatural world (Saktimulya 2023). Through ritual processions and symbolic offerings, the Sultan is positioned not only as an administrative leader but also as a spiritual figure with cosmological legitimacy (Kurniadi 2025; Nugroho 2019). Nofrima et al. (2021) show that community participation in such rituals reflects collective recognition of this spiritual authority. A similar phenomenon is also found in other indigenous communities in Indonesia, where spiritual leaders play a central role in decision-making and conflict resolution (Kasmawati et al. 2025; Yani et al. 2025). Thus, spiritual authority not only functions as symbolic legitimacy but also as a social mechanism that maintains the continuity of tradition and community cohesion amid the changes of modernity.

Community Dynamics

Community dynamics are the processes of social interaction, power relations, and patterns of participation that shape how a community functions, adapts, and maintains its sustainability over time (Zhang et al. 2024). This concept emphasizes that communities are not static entities but rather social arenas that are constantly undergoing negotiations between actors, values, and social structures (Khan and Eversole 2025; Matous et al. 2025). From a sociological and anthropological perspective, community dynamics are influenced by cultural, economic, political, and collective historical factors that shape solidarity and shared

identity (Orihuela Gallardo 2021; Sun et al. 2023). Putnam highlights the importance of social capital, norms, and social networks as key elements in maintaining community cohesion (Kavanaugh et al. 2005; Tahlyan et al. 2022). Meanwhile, Bourdieu emphasizes that community dynamics are also determined by the distribution of symbolic and cultural capital that influences individuals' social positions within the group (Gang and Terrazas 2024; Shevchenko and Beletskaya Tatiana 2024). Thus, community dynamics reflect how communities manage conflict, preserve local values, and respond to external changes, including modernization and globalization, without losing their collective identity.

Community dynamics can be observed through collective practices, social participation, and decision-making mechanisms carried out jointly by community members (Guthrie and Otton 2021). In the context of the *Labuhan* Ritual in Yogyakarta, community dynamics are evident in the involvement of various social actors, ranging from *Abdi Dalem*, local communities, to the palace institution, each of which has different symbolic roles and positions (Widyatwati et al. 2021). These interactions reflect patterns of cooperation and social hierarchy that have been internalized in Javanese culture (Saktimulya 2023; Sudarsih 2020). Studies (Duche-Pérez et al. 2024) show that community participation in rituals is not only ceremonial but also serves as a space for building solidarity and transmitting cultural values between generations. Furthermore, community dynamics are evident in how communities negotiate the meaning of rituals amid cultural commercialization and tourism (Larsson and Ouattara 2024). Some groups seek to preserve the sacredness of rituals, while others see them as economic opportunities (Siswayanti et al. 2025). This negotiation process shows that community dynamics play an important role in maintaining a balance between preserving traditions and adapting to the demands of modernity.

Method

The unit of analysis in this study is the practice of the *Labuhan* Ritual as an institutionalized sociocultural system centered on the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat. The analysis is not directed at individuals as personal subjects but rather at the configuration of ritual practices, institutional structures, and symbolic relations formed within them. The unit of analysis covers three main dimensions: first, the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat as a cultural institution that produces, regulates, and maintains the meaning of rituals; second, ritual actors such as *Abdi Dalem* and *Juru Kunci* as executors of symbolic and spiritual authority within a hierarchical structure; and third, the community as recipients and interpreters of ritual meaning in a broader social space. With this unit of analysis, the *Labuhan* Ritual is understood as a collective cultural practice that operates through institutional rules, symbols, and role restrictions.

This study uses a qualitative approach with an interpretive ethnographic design (Lowis 2025). This approach was chosen because it allows for a deep understanding of the meaning,

behavior, and symbolic structure of rituals without relying on the verbal narratives of the research subjects. Interpretive ethnography focuses on reading practices, gestures, symbols, and the configuration of ritual space as meaningful social texts (Wondimu et al. 2025). This method is relevant for analyzing the *Labuhan* Ritual, which is carried out in a closed, hierarchical, and compliance-based manner, where meaning is not always expressed discursively but is realized through repeated and institutionalized practices. Thus, this study positions ritual as an active social practice that can be analyzed through observation and symbolic interpretation.

The data in this study consists of primary and secondary data collected through a qualitative approach based on ritual monitoring. Primary data was obtained through indirect observation of the implementation of the *Labuhan* Ritual at main locations, such as *Labuhan Merapi*, *Labuhan Parangkusuma*, *Labuhan Dlepih*, and *Labuhan Lawu*, which was carried out through systematic monitoring of visual documentation and ritual narratives published on the official social media of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat and related online channels. The observations focused on the structure of the procession, the division of roles among ritual actors, the use of symbolic attributes, sacred spatial arrangements, and the symbolic relationship between ritual performers and the community. Visual documentation in the form of officially uploaded photos and recordings was used as the main source for analyzing the stages of the procession, the positions of the actors, traditional clothing, and the spatial configuration of the ritual. Secondary data included the digital archives of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, credible online sources, cultural documents, and relevant academic literature, which were used to provide historical, cosmological, and conceptual context to the practice of *Labuhan* in the dynamics of contemporary Javanese society.

The data collection technique in this study was conducted through a combination of digital ethnography-based qualitative observation and document analysis (Jensen et al. 2022). The observation was carried out by systematically monitoring visual uploads, text narratives, and audiovisual recordings published through the official social media of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat and relevant online sources during the *Labuhan* Ritual period. This process included repeated recording of procession patterns, ritual sequences, actor roles, cultural symbols, and representations of the relationship between the palace, nature, and society. In addition, data collection was supplemented by searching digital archives, cultural publications, and official palace documents available online to ensure historical continuity and consistency in the symbolic meaning of the ritual. All collected data were then classified thematically and analyzed comparatively to identify institutional patterns, spiritual authority, and community dynamics that shape the practice of the *Labuhan* Ritual.

The data analysis technique in this study used an interpretive qualitative approach with thematic analysis and symbolic analysis strategies (Efendi et al. 2025). All previously classified data were analyzed in stages through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to identify key themes related to cultural resilience, spiritual authority, and community

dynamics. Symbolic analysis was applied to interpret the meanings of ritual attributes, processional structures, and spatial relationships as representations of the Keraton's cosmology and cultural legitimacy. Additionally, the analysis was conducted contextually by linking empirical findings to theoretical frameworks in ritual anthropology, symbolic power, and cultural institutionalization. Source and data triangulation was performed by comparing results from digital observations, visual documentation, and academic literature to enhance the validity of interpretations. This analytical approach enables a deep understanding of how the *Labuhan* Ritual operates as a living, institutionalized, and continuously negotiated cultural practice within the context of contemporary Javanese society.

Results

Institutionalized Cultural Resilience Through Keraton-Centered Ritual Practice

The *Labuhan* Ritual held by the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat operates within an institutional framework that positions the palace as the center of cultural meaning production and preservation. This ritual practice cannot be understood solely as a spiritual expression or local tradition but rather as an institutional mechanism that maintains the continuity of the kingdom's symbolic authority amid ongoing social change. Through structured ritual practices, the Keraton reproduces cultural values, norms, and legitimacy rooted in Javanese cosmology. The involvement of key actors in the ritual reflects a hierarchical division of roles bound by an ethos of devotion, rather than individual participation. Rituals function as a medium of subtle but continuous cultural resistance, maintaining boundaries of meaning so that they do not dissolve into the logic of commodification or entertainment. This makes the *Labuhan* Ritual a symbolic space where royal culture is reproduced as a living practice, not merely a representation of the past. This context can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Institutionalized Cultural Resilience and
Ritual Continuity in the *Labuhan* Tradition

<i>Evidence/Picture</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Anthropological Meaning</i>
 Figure 1: The <i>Labuhan Merapi</i> Procession	The core rituals are performed exclusively by the <i>Abdi Dalem</i> of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat.	Emphasizing rituals as institutional practices of the Keraton, not mass participation.
 Figure 2: <i>Abdi Dalem</i> Carrying and Releasing Offerings in the <i>Labuhan Parangkusuma</i> Ritual	All symbolic stages are carried out by the <i>Abdi Dalem</i> of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat.	Cultural resilience is institutionalized through traditional institutions.
 Figure 3: The <i>Abdi Dalem</i> Wearing Traditional Keraton Attire During the <i>Labuhan</i> Procession	<i>Abdi Dalem</i> wearing formal and symbolic attire.	Reproduction of cultural legitimacy through royal symbols.

 Figure 4: <i>Labuhan</i> as a Community Service Assignment	Rituals are understood as traditional obligations of the Keraton.	Culture is preserved through a spirit of devotion, not individual expression.
 Figure 5: The <i>Labuhan</i> Procession Is Held in an Open Space, but It Remains a Closed Event	The procession was carried out in a closed sacred ceremony attended only by the <i>Abdi Dalem</i> of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat.	Emphasizing the meaning of rituals as cultural practices, not attractions.

Source: Documentation from the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat

Table 1 confirms that cultural resistance in the *Labuhan* tradition is institutionalized and sustained through the symbolic authority of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat. First, the *Labuhan Merapi* procession (Figure 1), which is carried out exclusively by *Abdi Dalem*, shows that this ritual is positioned as an institutional practice of the Keraton, rather than a form of mass participation by the community. Second, the implementation of all symbolic stages by representatives of the Keraton in the *Labuhan Parangkusuma* ritual (Figure 2) reflects how cultural resilience is institutionalized through traditional authorities that have historical and spiritual legitimacy. Third, the use of traditional palace attire by the *Abdi Dalem* during the procession (Figure 3) serves as a mechanism for reproducing cultural legitimacy through royal symbols that continue to be revived in ritual practices. Fourth, the interpretation of *Labuhan* as a duty of service (Figure 4) shows that the continuity of tradition is maintained through a collective ethos of obligation within the palace structure, rather than through

individual expression alone. Fifth, although the *Labuhan* procession is held in an open space, the application of a closed and limited sacred order to the *Abdi Dalem* of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat (Figure 5) affirms the ritual as a meaningful and sacred cultural practice, not as a public attraction or cultural commodity.

The *Labuhan* tradition in the context of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat shows how cultural practices are preserved through strong and structured institutional mechanisms. This ritual is not carried out as an open public celebration but rather as a cultural practice bound to the authority, values, and ethos of service to the Keraton. The continuity of tradition is built through the management of symbols, the limited roles of ritual actors, and the interpretation of service as a collective obligation that transcends individual expression. Although it takes place in a physically open space, the ritual is still maintained within a strict framework of sacredness, so that its meaning is not reduced to spectacle or cultural commodity. This shows that the *Labuhan* tradition functions as a medium for the reproduction of cultural legitimacy and symbolic resistance to the logic of modernization, which tends to encourage openness, mass participation, and the commercialization of tradition.

Spiritual Authority and Hierarchical Order in the Keraton

Spiritual authority is a fundamental element in the structure of *Labuhan* Rituals, where leadership and legitimacy are inseparable from an established hierarchical order. In the cosmology of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, spiritual power is not only symbolic but also operational in regulating the course of ritual practices. The relationship between spiritual leaders and ritual performers reflects a system of obedience built through tradition, discipline, and genealogical continuity. This hierarchy forms a framework that regulates who has the right to lead, give instructions, and interpret the meaning of rituals. Spiritual authority thus functions as a mechanism for cultural stabilization, ensuring that rituals are carried out in accordance with inherited values. In the context of contemporary Javanese society, this hierarchical structure demonstrates how non-state power continues to play a significant role in maintaining symbolic and spiritual order within traditional institutions. This context can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Spiritual Authority and Hierarchy Within the Keraton-Centered Ritual

<i>Evidence/Picture</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Anthropological Meaning</i>
 Figure 6: The <i>Labuhan Merapi</i> Procession Is Led by the <i>Juru Kunci</i> of Mount Merapi, Mas Lurah Suraksoharjo	Ritual instructions come from spiritual authorities.	Spiritual authorities operate within a hierarchical structure.
 Figure 7: The <i>Labuhan</i> Ritual Is Led by the <i>Juru Kunci</i>, Who Sits in the Center	The ritual procession led by the <i>Juru Kunci</i> reflects a symbolic hierarchy.	Spiritual power is institutionalized visually.
 Figure 8: During the <i>Labuhan Delpih</i> Procession, the Royal Servants Follow Instructions Without Negotiation	There is no debate in the implementation of rituals.	Cultural discipline as the basis for Keraton cohesion.

 Figure 9: The <i>Juru Kunci</i> of Mount Merapi Uses the Same Genealogical Attributes as the Previous <i>Juru Kunci</i>, Mbah Marijan	The hereditary symbol is displayed explicitly.	Spiritual legitimacy based on tradition, not modern rationality.
 Figure 10: The <i>Juru Kunci</i> of Mount Merapi Leads the <i>Abdi Dalem</i> Keraton Group in the <i>Labuhan Merapi</i> Ceremony	Other figures were present without taking on key roles.	Role restrictions reinforce the primary authority of the <i>Juru Kunci</i>.

Source: Documentation from the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat

Table 2 shows that spiritual authority in the *Labuhan* Ritual operates hierarchically and is strongly institutionalized within the Keraton structure. First, the leadership of the *Labuhan Merapi* procession by the *Juru Kunci* of Mount Merapi (Figure 6) shows that ritual instructions originate from spiritual authorities who have special legitimacy within the palace order. Second, the position of the *Juru Kunci* sitting at the center of the ritual procession (Figure 7) represents a visualization of symbolic hierarchy, where spiritual power is institutionalized and clearly displayed in the ritual space. Third, the *Abdi Dalem*'s obedience to the *Juru Kunci*'s instructions without negotiation during the procession (Figure 8) confirms that cultural discipline is the main foundation of cohesion and order in the Keraton institution. Fourth, the use of the same genealogical attributes as the previous *Juru Kunci*, as inherited from Mbah

Marijan (Figure 9), shows that spiritual legitimacy is built on the basis of continuity of tradition and lineage, not on modern rationality. Fifth, the presence of other figures in the *Labuhan Merapi* procession without taking on core roles (Figure 10) confirms the existence of clear role restrictions, while also reinforcing the central position of the *Juru Kunci* as the main spiritual authority in the ritual.

The *Labuhan* Ritual centered on the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat shows how spiritual authority is exercised through an established hierarchical order that is collectively accepted. Ritual leadership is legitimized by specific spiritual positions that have the authority to regulate the procession, give instructions, and interpret the symbolic meaning of the ritual. This hierarchical structure builds a pattern of obedience that is not coercive but rather rooted in tradition, discipline, and the continuity of symbolic inheritance between generations. Ritual performers place themselves in clear and limited roles, so that there is no negotiation or contestation of authority during the procession. Thus, spiritual authority functions as a mechanism for cultural stabilization that ensures the continuity of values, symbolic order, and the legitimacy of the *Labuhan* Ritual amid social change in contemporary Javanese society.

Community Dynamics and Symbolic Reception of Keraton-Centered Rituals

The *Labuhan* Ritual also operates in a broader social space, where cultural meaning is not only produced by the Keraton institution but also received and interpreted by the community. The relationship between ritual and community forms a distinctive symbolic dynamic, marked by a distinction between the roles of ritual performers and the public. The community interacts with the ritual through observation, collective interpretation, and indirect social involvement. In this context, rituals become a medium of cultural communication that bridges traditional authority and contemporary social realities. The presence of cross-generational communities shows that the meaning of rituals is not static but is continuously reproduced through social processes. In addition, the connection between rituals and natural elements strengthens the cosmological dimension that forms the basis of collective identity. Thus, *Labuhan* functions as a symbolic space that allows for the negotiation of meaning between tradition, community, and changing times. This context can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Community Dynamics and Symbolic Reception of the *Labuhan* Ritual

<i>Evidence/Picture</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Anthropological Meaning</i>
 Figure 11: Although the <i>Labuhan Parangkusuma</i> Ceremony Is Closed to the Public and Only Attended by the <i>Abdi Dalem</i> of the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, the Community Still Comes to Watch the Event	The public is only allowed to watch from a designated distance and is not permitted to participate in the <i>Labuhan</i> Ritual procession.	The symbolic relationship between the Keraton and the community.
 Figure 12: The Presence of Multiple Generations of Scouts at the <i>Labuhan Merapi</i> Event	The Sleman Scout Council participates in activities as a form of community service and preservation of tradition.	Transmission of cultural meaning through external community activities.
 Figure 13: Many People Attended and Documented the <i>Labuhan Parangkusuma Ritual</i>	The ritual was recorded without interfering with the proceedings.	Symbolic consumption of culture in the modern era.

 Figure 14: Although the <i>Labuhan</i> Ritual Is Not a Tourist Attraction, Many People Still Attend to Watch the Event	Residents interpret the meaning of rituals collectively.	Rituals as a source of social meaning production.
  Figure 15: Nature as the Main Symbolic Backdrop	Mountains and seas are the focal points of rituals.	Keraton's cosmology as the foundation of collective identity.

Source: Documentation from the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat

Table 3 shows that the dynamics of the community in the *Labuhan* Ritual form a unique symbolic relationship between the Keraton and the wider community. First, the presence of the community, who are only allowed to watch the procession from a certain distance without being directly involved, confirms the existence of clear role restrictions, while also building a symbolic relationship between the Keraton authorities and the public as recipients of the ritual's meaning (Figure 11). Second, cross-generational involvement through community activities such as scouting in the context of *Labuhan Merapi* reflects the process of cultural meaning transmission that takes place outside the core ritual structure but still contributes to the preservation of tradition (Figure 12). Third, the community's practice of documenting the ritual without intervening in the procession demonstrates a form of symbolic cultural consumption that is in line with modern logic without diminishing the sacredness of the ritual (Figure 13). Fourth, although *Labuhan* is not positioned as a tourist attraction, the significant presence of the community shows that rituals are a source of social meaning that is interpreted collectively

(Figure 14). Fifth, the placement of the mountain and sea as the main symbolic backdrop confirms the Keraton's cosmology as the foundation of collective identity that simultaneously connects rituals, communities, and the natural order (Figure 15).

The *Labuhan* Ritual serves as a symbolic space that brings together the traditional authority of the Keraton with the broader social dynamics of society. Although the ritual is limited to certain actors, the community remains involved through observation, collective interpretation, and indirect social practices. The involvement of cross-generational communities shows that the meaning of the ritual continues to be reproduced and transmitted through social interactions outside the core ritual structure. In the modern context, the ritual also undergoes a process of symbolic consumption that allows the community to interpret tradition without having to intervene in its sacredness. In addition, the ritual's connection with natural elements reinforces the cosmological dimension that forms the basis of collective identity, so that *Labuhan* not only represents the continuity of tradition but also becomes a medium for negotiating meaning between the palace, the community, and contemporary social change.

Discussion

The findings in this study confirm that the *Labuhan* Ritual held by the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat cannot be understood merely as a residual cultural practice but rather as an active social system that simultaneously reproduces cultural resilience, spiritual authority, and community dynamics. Through ritual practices centered on the Keraton, *Labuhan* functions as an institutional mechanism that maintains the continuity of Javanese cosmology amid the pressures of modernization and cultural rationalization. The results of the study show that the continuity of the ritual does not depend on mass participation but rather on the management of symbols, role hierarchies, and a strongly internalized ethos of devotion (Sumi et al. 2025). Spiritual authority operates effectively through a collectively accepted hierarchical structure, while the community acts as recipients and interpreters of meaning without intervening in the core of the ritual (Sheehan et al. 2023). Thus, *Labuhan* becomes an arena where tradition is not only preserved but also subtly negotiated in a contemporary social context. These findings confirm that interactions between traditional institutions, ritual actors, and communities create a cultural configuration that remains robust and adaptable, while challenging the assumption that modernization automatically leads to the erosion of traditional ritual practices.

In the context of contemporary Javanese society, the practice of the *Labuhan* Ritual must be positioned within a social landscape characterized by the expansion of market logic, cultural tourism, and state regulation of local traditional expressions (Chen et al. 2024). The findings of this study indicate that the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat has been able to maintain cultural autonomy through the selective and closed institutionalization of rituals.

This context is important because many traditional rituals in Indonesia have been transformed into cultural commodities or tourist attractions, which often blur the boundaries between sacredness and entertainment (Wisnu Parta and Maharani 2023). In contrast to this trend, *Labuhan* demonstrates a cultural strategy that resists the penetration of external logic by asserting the symbolic and spiritual authority of the Keraton. The Keraton's position as a center of cultural legitimacy allows rituals to continue to function as cosmological practices, rather than mere folkloric representations. Within this framework, *Labuhan* reflects how non-state traditional institutions continue to have significant capacity to regulate meaning, practice, and social relations, even when faced with increasingly complex and differentiated social structures (Akuoko et al. 2025).

Cultural resilience in the *Labuhan* Ritual is not confrontational in nature but rather operates through structured symbolic mechanisms and well-established institutional disciplines. This resilience is reflected in the palace's ability to preserve the boundaries of ritual meaning from the penetration of the logic of openness, individualization, and commodification that dominate modern culture. In this context, spiritual authority functions not only as a symbol of legitimacy but also as an operational actor that consistently regulates the rhythm, conduct, and interpretation of the ritual (Mahyuddin et al. 2025). Patterns of compliance that occur without negotiation, as reflected in the hierarchical structure of rituals, indicate that spiritual power remains viewed as the primary source of order and stability of meaning (Noy and O'Brien 2026). Nevertheless, the community's involvement as active observers indicates that the meaning of the ritual is not entirely monopolized by the Keraton but is continuously received and reproduced through dynamic social interactions (Wu 2018). Thus, *Labuhan* can be understood as a hybrid symbolic space, where traditional authority and social participation work complementarily to maintain cultural continuity.

The power of the *Labuhan* Ritual lies in its ability to integrate institutional, spiritual, and cosmological dimensions into a cohesive framework of practice. The ethos of devotion that underlies the role of ritual actors creates continuity that does not depend on individual motivation but rather on a collective commitment to inherited values (Mcnamara 2024). The spiritual hierarchy functions as a mechanism for intergenerational transmission of values, ensuring that authority is not determined by instrumental rationality but by traditional and genealogical legitimacy (Moiwo et al. 2025). The ritual's connection to natural elements also enriches the cosmological meaning of *Labuhan* as a practice that connects humans, symbolic power, and the order of the universe. This dimension affirms *Labuhan*'s position as a ritual that cannot be reduced to mere visual performativity (Westmoreland 2022). The sustainability of traditional rituals depends not only on adaptation to change but also on the ability to maintain internal coherence between structure, symbols, and meaning.

Compared to various rituals at the global level that have undergone commodification, folklorization, or transformation into cultural spectacles, the *Labuhan* Ritual displays a relatively different pattern in the way ritual practices are maintained, interpreted, and

negotiated by its main participants. Many local rituals have been reconfigured to meet the needs of tourism or cultural development agendas, so that the role of the community has become more participatory but has lost its symbolic depth (Torres-Toukoumidis et al. 2022). In contrast, *Labuhan* maintains strict role restrictions between ritual performers and the public, which actually strengthens its sacredness and symbolic legitimacy. Compared to state rituals or official ceremonies, *Labuhan* also displays a form of non-state power that works effectively without bureaucratic instruments. This comparison shows that the strength of traditional institutions does not always lie in their open adaptive capacity but in their ability to maintain symbolic exclusivity (Jagannath et al. 2025). Thus, *Labuhan* provides an alternative example of how traditions can survive without having to fully negotiate with the demands of a homogeneous and utilitarian modernity.

The theoretical implications of this study suggest that research on traditional rituals must go beyond the simple dichotomy between tradition and modernity. The *Labuhan* Ritual demonstrates that traditional cultural institutions can function as active agents in managing social change through institutionalized symbolic strategies. Empirically, these findings contribute to the study of cultural resilience by demonstrating that symbolic and spiritual power remains relevant and adaptive in the face of modern societal dynamics. Practically, this study has significant implications for cultural preservation policies, particularly in avoiding the reduction of rituals to mere commodities or tourist attractions. Preservation approaches must consider authority structures, an ethos of service, and local cosmology as the primary foundations for the sustainability of traditions. Thus, the *Labuhan* Ritual is not only significant as a cultural heritage but also as a model of how traditional communities and institutions build and maintain the integrity of meaning through symbolic resilience practices amid the accelerating currents of social change.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the *Labuhan* Ritual, organized by the Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat, functions as both an institutionalized and a strategic cultural practice in building cultural resilience, maintaining spiritual authority, and preserving the stability of meaning amid contemporary social change. Through centralized ritual management, *Labuhan* is not carried out as an open tradition or merely a folkloric expression but rather as a symbolic system that is hierarchically organized and grounded in an ethos of devotion. This finding confirms that cultural resilience does not always manifest as a confrontation with modernity but operates subtly through the institutionalization of ritual practices, the regulation of social roles, and the consistent reproduction of Javanese cosmology. Thus, *Labuhan* represents a form of cultural resilience that is stable, sustainable, and deeply rooted in traditional authority structures.

Furthermore, this study highlights the central role of spiritual authorities in maintaining symbolic cohesion and ritual legitimacy. The hierarchical structure governing the leadership and execution of *Labuhan* demonstrates that spiritual authority retains significant regulatory power without relying on coercive mechanisms or modern bureaucratic rationality. The adherence of ritual actors to inherited codes of conduct indicates that the legitimacy of tradition is still collectively accepted as a source of social and cosmological order. At the same time, the community's involvement as observers and interpreters of meaning indicates that the ritual is not isolated from the broader social sphere but operates within symbolic relationships that enable the transmission of values across generations without interfering with its core sacredness.

Theoretically, the findings of this study enrich the anthropological study of rituals and cultural resilience by demonstrating that the continuity of traditions is not solely determined by the ability to adapt to modernity but rather by the capacity of cultural institutions to maintain internal coherence among structure, symbols, and cosmology. The *Labuhan* Ritual demonstrates that non-state traditional institutions retain significant capacity to manage social change through institutionalized symbolic practices. In practical terms, cultural preservation efforts must go beyond approaches based on commodification and tourism, by paying attention to spiritual authority, the ethos of devotion, and the boundaries of meaning upheld by the supporting community. Thus, the *Labuhan* Ritual is not only relevant as a cultural heritage but also as an alternative model for the sustainability of tradition in a society undergoing continuous social transformation.

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The authors acknowledge the use of ChatGPT to create summaries of datasets or literature, and those summaries were included in the article; Integrating sources and/or findings from other researchers into any part of the authors' article; Formulating practical applications or developing recommendations based on the results presented in the article. AI technology was used to improve the clarity of language and the readability of the article. In addition to using AI for grammar/spelling checks and translation, AI technology was used to revise the article's content. The commands used include rearranging sentences within a paragraph, refining the translation from the original text into English, and searching for references relevant to the discussion that requires references. The results of these commands are used to organize paragraphs more neatly and academically, find references, and refine the translation of the original text into English.

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Informed Consent

The authors declare that informed consent was not required as there were no human participants involved.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Zakaria Efendi: Master Student, Department of Anthropology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Sleman, Indonesia

Corresponding Author's Email: zakariaefendi@mail.ugm.ac.id

Meysella Al Firdha Hanim: Master Student, Department of Anthropology, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Sleman, Indonesia

Email: meysellahanim@gmail.com

Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo: Lecturer, Graduate School, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pontianak, Pontianak] Indonesia

Email: zaestain@yahoo.com

Muh. Hambali: Lecturer, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang, Indonesia

Email: hambali@pai.uin-malang.ac.id

Mudjijono: Researcher, Cultural Anthropology, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Email: mudj004@brin.go.id

Mohd Syahiran Abdul Latif: Lecturer, Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: syahiran@uitm.edu.my