



# Padalan Porsa

## Mapping Symbolic Communication In The Death Messages of The Simalungun Ethnic Group

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**Abstract.** The aim of this research is to map and deeply analyze the symbolic communication contained in the death messages of the Padalan Porsa tradition among the Simalungun ethnic group, a practice rich in meaning and crucial for understanding the social and spiritual dynamics of the Simalungun society. This study employs a qualitative approach, relying on ethnographic methods that involve direct observation of the rituals, in-depth interviews with cultural stakeholders, families performing the rites, and the study of relevant literature to gather comprehensive data. The data analysis process adopts symbolic interpretation techniques, allowing for a deep understanding of the meanings hidden behind the symbols and rituals carried out during the Padalan Porsa process. The results of this research reveal that the symbolic communication in Padalan Porsa not only contains messages about the concept of death and the afterlife but also communicates the rich social values embraced by the Simalungun community. Furthermore, these messages serve as a means of learning and reminder for the living, emphasizing the importance of leading a harmonious life in accordance with the values and norms cherished in the Simalungun society, and maintaining a balance between the physical and spiritual worlds.

**Keywords:** Padalan Porsa, Symbolic Communication, Simalungun Tradition

## 1 Introduction

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Padalan Porsa is one of tradition death that has depth meaning in culture Simalungun, which is located in North Sumatra, Indonesia[1]. This tradition has held during centuries and became part not inseparable from life public Simalungun[2]. In context rich and diverse culture like this, Padalan Porsa No only own significance as a death ritual, but also as means For disclose beliefs, values, and norms that form the core of public Simalungun. Padalan Porsa No only about death, but also about method public Simalungun celebrate and honor life[3]. In this ceremony, various element symbolic used For convey deep messages about life after death, relationships with ancestry, and its importance guard harmony in community[4], [5]. Every component in this ritual has meaning its own reflection society's worldview Simalungun. By traditional, Padalan Porsa involve families and communities come together For honor deceased[6]. In this ceremony, a number of activity symbolic done, like giving offerings, reading prayers, and other rituals that connect the physical world with the spiritual world. These symbols

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are used For bridge gap between on and off , all at once as reminder for those who still do life For undergo life with full meaning and integrity. Simalungun is one of the tribes in Indonesia that still exist maintain Lots traditions and values strong culture[7] . Padalan Porsa , as part from inheritance this culture , plays role important in guard continuity tradition and identity culture[8] . Apart from that , this ceremony also helps strengthen bond social and community , because Lots element in Padalan Porsa which emphasizes unity and solidarity[9] .The purpose of this research is For map and analyze communication symbolic contained in message death from tradition Padalan Porsa[10] . Use approach qualitative , this research attempts For understand the meaning behind symbols in ceremony the . With approach ethnographer , researcher can observe directly the ritual process, carrying out interview deep with the family does it ceremonies, and study literature related For get comprehensive understanding . Importance This research lies in its capabilities For give outlook deep about method public Simalungun looking life and death . With map symbolism in Padalan Porsa , us can understand more Good How values social and spiritual delivered in this tradition . This also helps We appreciate complexity culture Simalungun and its importance maintain tradition in face changing times.

This research is expected can give contribution significant for understanding We about culture Simalungun and traditions Padalan Porsa . More far , results this research can become source valuable knowledge for public spacious , good in context academic nor in guard continuity culture traditional . With understand symbolism and communication in Padalan Porsa , us can explore ways new For value inheritance culture and strengthen a sense of togetherness in public Simalungun .

### 3 Methods

Approach used in this research is qualitative , with focus on method ethnographic[11] . This method is selected Because can disclose more context and meaning deep from tradition Padalan Porsa in culture Simalungun . Through approach qualitative , researcher Can get more understanding holistic about this tradition , dig elements possible symbolic No seen with method quantitative . With this approach , researchers can understand and interpret the meaning behind symbols and actions that occur during the ritual.



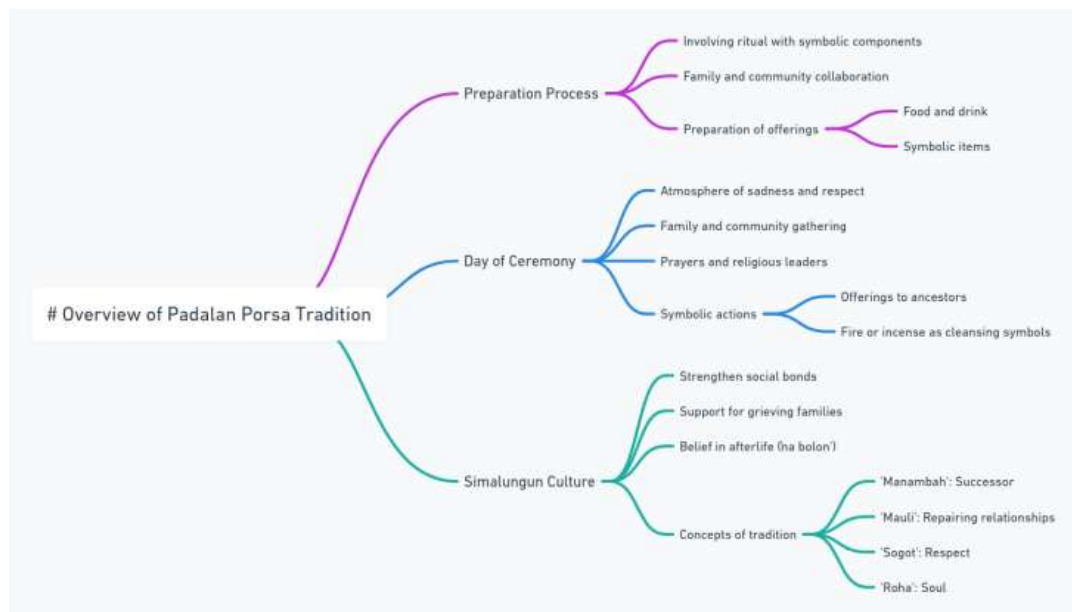
Figure 1. Flow and Research Method

In collecting data, researchers use technique observation direct , interview in-depth , and study literature[12] . Observation direct possible researcher For engage and see in a way Padalan process directly Porsa , note important details , and capture possible nuances No seen with method other[3] . Interview deep done with the parties involved , such as member family and figures culture , for get outlook about meaning and function symbols in rituals. Literature studies were also carried out For get context more historical and cultural wide about this tradition. Data analysis was carried out with use technique interpretation symbolic , which makes it possible researcher For understand the meaning behind symbols and actions in Padalan Porsa . This technique helps elaborate messages hidden and conveyed values through rituals. With this approach , researchers can identify themes main and patterns symbols emerge in the Padalan process Porsa , as well understand How these messages are related with beliefs and values in culture Simalungun .

## 4 Results and Discussion

### A. Overview of Padalan Porsa Tradition

Padalan Porsa is an involving ritual various components and elements prepared symbolic with careful . Preparation process started Far before day ceremony , where family and community Work The same For ensure everything needed available . Preparation offerings is part important of this process, with items such as food , drink and offerings others arranged in procedures certain . Every item has meaning related symbols with the deceased's spiritual journey and relationships between the physical and spiritual worlds . On the day ceremony , the atmosphere created reflect combination between sadness and respect . Family and community gather at the designated location determined , usually at home family or place burial . Prayers start chanted , often led by religious leaders or Elder society , as part of the process of connecting the living with the spiritual world. Presence friends and relatives also give support emotional to the grieving family , confirmed importance solidarity in face death . Ceremony Padalan Porsa also involves various action symbolically designed For bridge connection between the living and the dead . For example , some rituals include giving offerings to ancestor , which symbolizes respect and care connection with those who have gone . In some case , fire or incense used as symbol cleansing and unification with the spiritual world. This symbolism reflects confidence public Simalungun will life after death and its importance guard harmony between the physical and spiritual worlds .



**Figure 2.** overview of the Padalan Porsa tradition

Padalan's role Porsa in culture Simalungun is very important, especially in strengthen bond social and community[13]. This ceremony is not only become moment For in memory of deceased, but also for strengthen connection between member family and friends. During ceremonies, people of various layer public come For give reverence, show support, and share memory. This creates a deep sense of community, helpfulness grieving family feel supported and respected by the community they. In tradition Language Simalungun, concept about life after death reflected in the term "na bolon", which in fact literally means "to the land of the ancestors". This illustrates confidence that after dead, spirit somebody will return to natural spirit or the ancestral world, which is the place where the spirits are ancestors is at. In Padalan Porsa, ceremony the aim For facilitate journey spirit late to "na bolon" with peace and respect [14].

The concept of "manambah" or "successor" is also important in tradition Simalungun. This refers to belief that late Still own influence or strong presence in life family they after death. In Padalan Porsa, family believe that with guard traditions and doing ceremony with well, they are can ensure that spirit late will to be a good "add". for they, provide protection and blessing[15]. Additionally, the concept of "mauli" or "repair relationship" also comes up frequently in context Padalan Porsa. This emphasizes importance guard harmonious relationship between the living and the dead. Through rituals and prayers, family try for "mauli" or repair connection with deceased, confirmed that although they has death, relationship they with family Still intertwined strong[16]. In context Padalan Porsa, the concept of "sogot" or "respect" also holds role important. This reflects values culture Simalungun emphasized importance honor ancestors and people who have gone. Through this ceremony, family and community express gratitude love and respect to deceased, as well strengthen bond emotional and spiritual with they[17].

Finally, the concept of "roha" or "soul" is also a concept aspect important in tradition Simalungun is reflected in Padalan Porsa. It refers to the individual's spiritual existence attached to the body man. In ceremony death, family believe that although body physique has dead, spirit or "roha" of the deceased still live and play role important in life family they're nice spiritually and in influence they to incident in life daily.

## **B. Symbolic Communication in Padalan Porsa**

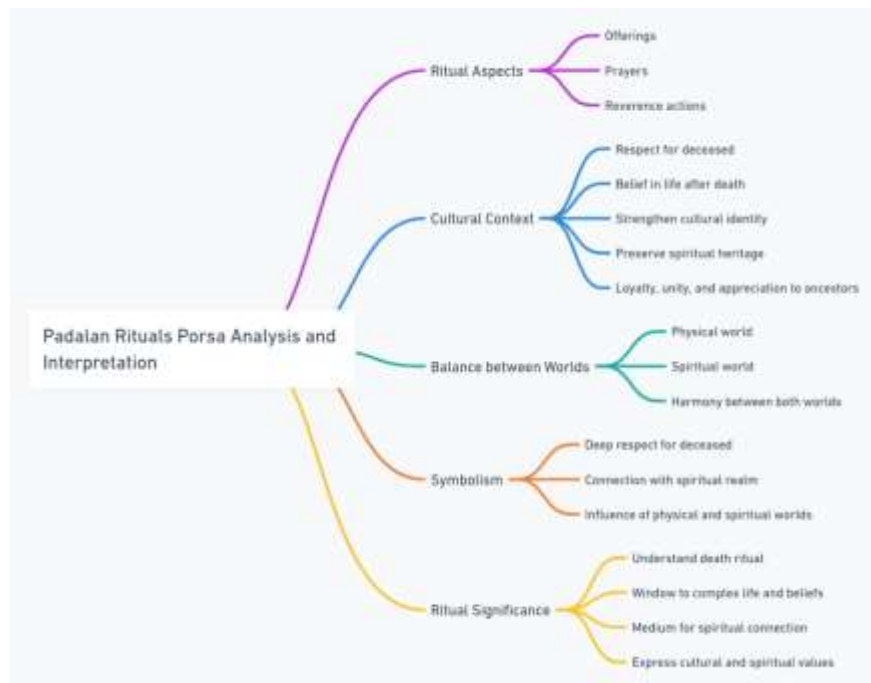
In culture Simalungun, concept about death and life afterwards is an integral part of held beliefs and values firm. Interpretation related symbols with death and life afterwards reflect rich worldview spirituality and belief will existence spirit. Symbolism in Padalan Porsa, like offerings and actions respect, interpreted as method For facilitate journey spirit late to natural spirit or "na bolon". This illustrates confidence that death it's not end, but beginning from journey spirit going to life afterwards. Related symbols with death and life afterwards it is also interpreted in context harmonious relationship between the living and the dead. The concept of "mauli" or repair connection with late reflected in effort family For guard good communication and relationships with spirit late through ritual and prayer. This shows that in culture Simalungun, death No seen as termination relationship, but as transition to stage new in life. Interpretation symbols death and life the aftermath also reflects values social and spiritual beliefs held by society Simalungun. Respect given to late in Padalan Porsa, which is reflected in preparation careful presentation and action respect carried out by family and community, is expression from values like loyalty, appreciation, and respect to ancestors. With understand and interpret symbolism in tradition death like Padalan Porsa, us can get more insight in about worldview and values culture held by society Simalungun related with death and life afterwards.

Padalan Porsa No only just a death ritual, but also a medium for convey containing messages values important social. These messages reflect held norms and values steadfast by society Simalungun, like respect to ancestry, unity, and solidarity between members public. Through symbols in ceremony Padalan Porsa, these messages are conveyed in a way symbolic to family and community, reminded they will importance maintain values the in life daily. Padalan Ritual Porsa also works as means communication between the living and the living die. Through these ceremonies, messages and prayers sent to deceased, confirmed that they Still remembered and respected by the families and communities left behind. For those who still life, this ceremony also becomes chance For learn and remember return values inherited from ancestors they. With pay attention and follow tradition Padalan Porsa, generation young can Study about respect, togetherness and harmony in public Simalungun. Apart from that, Padalan Porsa is also a moment important For reminds the living will interest guard good relationship between One each other and with ancestors they. This ritual confirms importance loyalty, mutual respect

, and each other help between members public . Through participation in this ceremony , people are reminded will importance look after connection social harmony and mutuality supports , so created life more society Good .

### C. Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis and interpretation towards Padalan rituals Porsa disclose meanings deep behind the symbolism used , is pervasive in life and belief public Simalungun . This ritual reflects A complexity symbolic that presents A rich worldview spirituality and meaningfulness . In this context , the symbolism contained in every ritual aspects , incl offerings , prayers , and actions reverence , hinting deep respect to deceased and beliefs will continuity life after death . Analysis more carry on to symbols in Padalan Porsa show that this ritual is expression from values held cultural and spiritual beliefs steadfast by society Simalungun . Ceremony the No simply become respect to deceased , but also become means For strengthen identity culture and care spiritual heritage . Here , Padalan Porsa become representation from commitment public Simalungun to loyalty , unity , and appreciation to ancestors they .



**Figure 3** .Analysis Padalan Porsa

Additionally , analysis towards this ritual also highlights importance guard balance between the physical and spiritual worlds within life public Simalungun . Padalan Porsa teach that connection with spiritual realm has the same meaning importance with connection in the physical world . In this context , this ritual becomes embodiment from effort For look after harmony between both worlds , acknowledged that both of them each other related and influential One each other. With Thus , analysis symbolism in Padalan Porsa No only bring We to more understanding in about this death ritual , but also revealing depth thoughts and wealth values culture and spirituality inherited by society Simalungun . In this interpretation process , we can appreciate how this ritual came to be window for understanding about complexity life and belief in public the .

In conclusion , analysis and interpretation towards Padalan rituals Porsa disclose that behind actions symbolic there is A inheritance rich and valuable culture and spirituality . This ritual is not simply series formal ceremony , but also a possible medium public Simalungun For convey messages important about connection with spiritual nature , values culture , and meaning death in life man .

## 5 Conclusion

From this research, it can be concluded that Padalan ritual Porsa own deep meaning in culture Simalungun, reflecting held spiritual, social and cultural values steadfast by society the. Analysis of symbolism in this ritual reveals complexity and depth the thinking behind practices traditional the. Found that Padalan Porsa No only simply ceremony death, but also a means For look after connection with spiritual realm, teaches values culture, and unite community in loyalty. Implications This research includes suggestions for study advanced about tradition and communication symbolic in culture Simalungun. Still many aspect from life public Simalungun which hasn't yet explored in a way deep, esp in context their traditions and ritual practices. Therefore that, research more carry on can give more insight comprehensive about inheritance culture and spirituality of society Simalungun, as well open door For more understanding Good about complexity life man in context different culture.

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