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JURNAL BUDAYA ISLAM

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THE CULTURAL PREACHING VALUES OF THE GAYO TRADITION MELENGKAN IN ACEH

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Abstract

The delivery of Islamic preaching can be effectively conducted through cultural approaches, such as the Gayo tradition of melengkan in Aceh. This tradition involves delivering speeches at wedding ceremonies using metaphorical sentences that embed Islamic messages. It serves as a valuable means of preaching and merits preservation. However, the tradition faces challenges due to the declining number of people skilled in the art of melengkan. It is hoped that local government policies will support training the next generation in the art of melengkan to prevent this tradition from becoming extinct. This research aims to analyze the forms and preaching values within the tradition, employing a descriptive qualitative research method. Data collection is conducted through

interviews with key informants, including performers of *melengkan*, traditional leaders, and community figures from the Gayo community. Observations of traditional wedding ceremonies and analysis of *melengkan* speech texts are supplemented with other literature. The research findings indicate that the cultural preaching messages in *melengkan* include informative, persuasive, and coercive types. The values embodied within these messages encompass beliefs, worship or Sharia, and morality. Further studies could explore broader applications of cultural preaching values in multicultural settings worldwide, offering a model for other regions with similar cultural and religious dynamics.

Penyampaian dakwah Islam dapat dilakukan secara efektif melalui pendekatan budaya, seperti tradisi *melengkan* di Aceh. Tradisi ini melibatkan penyampaian pidato dalam upacara pernikahan menggunakan kalimat metaforis yang menyertakan pesan-pesan Islam. Ini merupakan sarana berharga untuk berdakwah dan layak untuk dilestarikan. Namun, tradisi ini menghadapi tantangan karena menurunnya jumlah orang yang terampil dalam seni *melengkan*. Diharapkan kebijakan pemerintah daerah akan mendukung pelatihan generasi berikutnya dalam seni *melengkan* untuk mencegah kepunahan tradisi ini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk dan nilai-nilai dakwah dalam tradisi tersebut, menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dengan informan kunci, termasuk pelaku *melengkan*, pemimpin tradisional, dan tokoh masyarakat dari komunitas Gayo. Observasi upacara pernikahan tradisional dan analisis teks pidato *melengkan* dilengkapi dengan literatur lainnya. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pesan dakwah budaya dalam *melengkan* mencakup tipe informatif, persuasif, dan koersif. Nilai-nilai yang terkandung dalam pesan-pesan ini mencakup kepercayaan, ibadah atau Syariah, dan moral. Studi lanjutan bisa mengeksplorasi aplikasi luas nilai-nilai dakwah budaya di lingkungan multikultural di seluruh dunia, menawarkan model untuk wilayah lain dengan dinamika budaya dan agama yang serupa.

Keywords: Cultural preaching values, Gayo ethnicity, *Melengkan* traditions

Introduction

Indonesia is a pluralistic country with diverse ethnicities, languages, religions, and skin colors. This diversity is a national asset that fosters social harmony and unity. The multiculturalism within religions and cultures is essential, and Indonesian society must approach it with wisdom. Islam, as a religion, is inseparable from culture and mutually influences it because both contain values and symbols. Religion influences culture in its formation, while culture can influence the value system and symbols of religion (Marhamah & Fauzi, 2020). Religion is a symbol that represents the value of obedience to God, just as culture contains values and symbols for humans to live by. The principle of assimilating Islam with local culture occurs not only in the social aspect but also in the dimension of worship, articulating the message of Islam according to the needs and issues of society. For instance, Javanese culture gradually absorbs various elements of religion, including Islam. The presence of Islam in Java has maintained the relevant and unique nuances of Indonesian Islam, enriching the actualization of Islamic culture as a universal religion (Susilo & Syato, 2016). The presence of Islam does not immediately erode the cultural values and traditions already formed within society; rather, a dialectic occurs between these two elements.

Religion and culture are vital elements within society that interact with each other, each possessing its own fundamental values. They are capable of acculturating directly and harmoniously (Saefudin et al., 2020). As found by Aziz et al. (2020), the acculturation of Islam with Minang culture takes the form of synthesis, with customs adapting to Islamic teachings. The acculturation of Islam with Minang culture occurs peacefully, thus not causing rejection from traditional leaders and avoiding upheaval within the local community (Aziz et al., 2020). The compatibility of Islam with Minang culture is reflected in its philosophy, which signifies that Minang customs are based on Islam, and Islam itself is based on the Quran. Islam's ability to interact with culture affirms its universality. Similarly, in conveying Islamic messages through preaching, it should be based on the objective conditions

of the target audience and the surrounding situation. One approach to delivering Islamic messages is through a cultural approach. The messages are conveyed in the form of informative messages, which provide factual information; persuasive messages, which aim to raise awareness to change the attitudes of the message recipients; and coercive messages, which are forceful and may involve sanctions (Jafar & Amrullah, 2018). The preaching messages are conveyed through the symbolism of tradition and customs, referred to as cultural preaching (Mualimin, 2020).

Cultural preaching is an effort to instill Islamic values in all aspects of life, considering the potential and inclinations of humans as cultural beings (Thaib, 2018). It can be said that cultural preaching is Islam's doctrinal acknowledgment of the validity of local existence and wisdom that are not in conflict with the principle of monotheism (Damsuki, 2019). The cultural preaching approach demonstrates that preaching should introduce to society the universal goodness recognized by all humans, regardless of spatial and temporal boundaries (Ipaenin, 2018). The potential of humans in realizing culture is used as a means to understand the preaching message at the empirical level. The preaching message emerges in the form of formal practice that manifests in society, thus cultivating Islamic teachings within culture. This means that cultural preaching appears to reinforce local wisdom within a culture by separating it from elements that contradict the values of Islamic teachings. Islamic values in preaching include the value of faith, which relates to monotheism or the oneness of Allah, the value of worship, which relates to the rules to attain Allah's pleasure, and the value of morality, which relates to good behavior towards God, fellow humans, and the universe (Achmadin, 2023).

Cultural preaching accommodates cultural values in a creative and innovative manner without diminishing the religious substance. Therefore, cultural preaching adopts a more bottom-up approach, strengthening communal religious life based on distinctive values (Ramdhani, 2016). If cultural preaching refers to preaching with a culturally-informed Islamic approach, then it involves peacefully engaging with the culture that develops

within society. This is known as compromise preaching, which accommodates and appreciates local wisdom (Al Hana, 2011). The compromise preaching approach has significantly influenced the history of Islam's spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula, including in Africa, Europe, Asia, and especially in Indonesia, as practiced by the Wali Sanga who integrated Islam with local culture. In this context, a reciprocal, synergistic, and cohesive relationship between preaching and culture is evident. Therefore, cultural preaching serves as a predictive reference for realizing preaching by considering cultural aspects according to the development of society. It can be said that this doctrinal truth reference confirms the cultural diversity of society. Islam and culture hold parallel positions when there is an adaptive and creative dialectic, ensuring that neither is in a subordinate position that ultimately weakens the other.

Substantially, the purpose of cultural preaching is aimed at dynamism and purification. Dynamism reflects efforts to appreciate the potential and inclinations of humans as cultural beings, while striving for culture to enlighten human life. Meanwhile, purification is intended as an effort to purify the values within culture to reflect monotheistic values. Therefore, cultural preaching can be conveyed through various traditions that continue to be preserved within society. Traditions that develop within society are not merely empty rituals but contain meaningful messages. For example, in wedding traditions, which include procedures and stages that must be followed. Marriage is a basic human need, so its process often becomes a sacred tradition in the cultural construction of certain societies (Mualimin et al., 2018).

The sacredness of traditions is evident in the customs that accompany the process within the cultural values embraced by the community. For instance, the Gayo ethnic group, residing in the highlands of Aceh province, is part of the Proto-Malay or Old Malay family, migrating from the Dutch East Indies to the archipelago in the first wave before the Common Era (Ibrahim, 2007, p. 9). The Gayo highlands consist of several regencies, namely Aceh Tengah, Bener Meriah, Gayo Lues, Gayo Serbejadi in Aceh

Timur, Gayo Alas in Aceh Tenggara, and Gayo Kalul in Aceh Tamiang (Melalatoa, 2006, p. 14). The cultural philosophy of the Gayo people explains the compatibility of Gayo culture with Islam through the expression "*Edet Mungenal, Hukom Mubeda*," which means that tradition recognizes something as an action because it is customary, while Sharia distinguishes between what is right and what is wrong (Ibrahim, 2013, p. 40). The compatibility between Islam and Gayo culture is due to the fact that the customary value system is not in conflict with Islamic teachings; instead, it is integrated and supportive of Islamic Sharia.

The wedding tradition in the Gayo is carried out according to the rules and culture called *melengkan*. *Melengkan* is a customary speech aimed at providing information or advice about religion, married life, and community life. *Melengkan* can be considered as a form of oral literary art conveyed through carefully chosen metaphorical or rhymed sentences (Pinan, 2003, p. 252). Therefore, the tradition of *melengkan* is usually conveyed by the "Reje" (village head) or "Pemelengkan" (performer of the *melengkan* art).

Many previous studies have examined the *melengkan* tradition. The ideology within the text of the *melengkan* ceremony emphasizes the meaning of interpersonality ideologies in the contexts of religion, democracy (power), and socio-cultural aspects (Ansari, 2014). Similar studies also analyze the structure of the *melengkan* tradition, including its diction and linguistic style, which consist of traditional expressions such as proverbs, metaphors, and maxims, and stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile, and symbolism (Afriani, 2018). In another study, cultural values in the *melengkan* tradition are explained, including values of politeness, respect, speaking gently, hospitality, and steadfastness (Jaya & Daud, 2017). Similarly, in another study, it is mentioned about the messages contained in the *melengkan* tradition, such as maintaining good relations, being dutiful to parents, honoring others, preserving marital harmony, and encouraging the creation of a harmonious and loving family (*sakinah mawaddah warahmah*) (Zain, et.al, 2021). However, research focusing on the cultural preaching values of the *melengkan* tradition still needs more exploration.

This study follows up on previous research on the *melengkan* tradition. The difference lies in the research focus, which is on the cultural preaching values within the *melengkan* tradition. The *melengkan* tradition needs to be preserved, especially considering the declining number of individuals with the skill to perform this traditional art, particularly among the younger generation. Preserving culture can be achieved through scientific studies. Based on this problem background, this research aims to analyze the forms of preaching messages in the Gayo *melengkan* tradition in Aceh and the preaching values within the Gayo *melengkan* tradition in Aceh. Understanding the preaching values contained within the *melengkan* tradition results in the implementation of the tradition going beyond mere ceremonial purposes.

Method

This research employs qualitative methods with an ethnographic approach, emphasizing the search for meanings, phenomena, symbols, and descriptions of natural and holistic phenomena, conveyed narratively (Yusuf, 2019, p. 329). It aims to uncover the meanings within local culture and the *melengkan* tradition of cultural preaching, examining the forms and values of preaching messages. The research is conducted in Aceh Tengah Regency, a Gayo area where the *melengkan* tradition is still practiced during wedding ceremonies.

Data collection involves interviews with performers of the *melengkan* tradition (*pemelengkan*), traditional figures, and members of the Gayo community, as well as observations of how the *melengkan* tradition is carried out during weddings. Additional documentation includes *melengkan* speech texts from several *pemelengkan*, journal articles, books, research reports, and other relevant literature. Triangulation techniques are utilized to cross-verify data sources, enhancing the reliability of the results. Data analysis follows the qualitative model of Miles and Huberman, involving interactive and continuous analysis until saturation is reached (Sugiyono, 2020, p. 244). The analysis process begins with data reduction, which includes summarizing,

selecting, and focusing on the main topics, identifying themes and patterns to provide a clear overview and facilitate further data collection. The second step, data presentation, organizes the data in narrative form for easier comprehension. The final step involves drawing conclusions and verification, clarifying unclear aspects of the study to provide a definitive examination.

Finding and Discussion

Forms of Da'wah Messages in the Tradition of *Melengkan* of the Gayo Ethnicity

Messages are the essence of the preaching delivery process. These are statements presented as symbols that convey the intended meaning from the communicator to the recipient (Effendy, 2017, p. 18). In the communication process, a message is an element conveyed by the sender to the receiver, either face-to-face or through media. It can include information, advice, propaganda, entertainment, and more (Sobur, 2018, p. 645). Preaching messages in the Gayo *Melengkan* tradition are delivered in the form of informative, persuasive, and coercive messages. These message forms are adapted to the stages of the customary wedding procession. The stages of the customary wedding procession in the Gayo ethnic group include "*munginte*" (engagement), "*turun caram*" (presenting gold or dowry), "*i serahen ku guru*" or "*berguru*" (handing over to the teacher or receiving advice), and "*mujule bai*" (sending off the bride and groom). The analysis of the forms of preaching messages in the Gayo *melengkan* tradition is based on excerpts from several narrations or *melengkan* speech texts according to the procession and purpose of the activity. The forms of preaching messages in the Gayo *melengkan* tradition are informative, persuasive, and coercive messages as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Forms of Preaching Messages in the *Melengkan* Tradition

Message Form	Customary Procession	<i>Melengkan</i> Sentences	Meaning
--------------	----------------------	----------------------------	---------

Informative Messages	Munginte (engagement)	<i>kami penge ari kuyu beremus, bede remalan, i kiteni ara inih simumatae (1)</i>	We heard through the wind blowing that our family has a good seed
		<i>kin geh ni sedere, kite petama, pintu beruke, alas bedenang. buge jeroh hamal ni kami urum niipi jege (2)</i>	The arrival of our relatives is welcomed, the door is open, and the mat is spread out. Hopefully, our efforts are fruitful
	Turun Caram (presenting gold or dowry)	<i>reje, ujut ayu murubah, mukim mera mupinah, mat ani mera musapur terang, mera we mutaluk iden, mera we mulupen lale ku kite ni heme (3)</i>	Village head, with the existing exchange, there might be movement, eyes might wander, for us as humans, we can forget.
		<i>reje, kuyu keras bepenampong, edet berujud, fi'il berupe, semi betubuh, ke si katan kuning bge betimang, si putih nge bebilang, gere lebih gere kurang si agehegehe we (4)</i>	Village head, intentions and agreements have been proven, gold has been weighed and money counted, neither more nor less, exactly as agreed.
Persuasive Messages	Beguru (receiving advice)	<i>ko rowanmu turah sepegi seperange, temas urum-urum temas, nyanya urum-urumnyanya, besitunungen, besipengen, besi ejeren (5)</i>	You two must be harmonious, as one, difficulties are shared, joys are felt together, burdens are carried together, and happiness are shared equally.
		<i>ike itunungko kase ling ni kami, insyaAllah langitmu gere mugegur, bumimu gere muguncang anakku (6)</i>	If you follow our advice, my child, God willing, the sky will not tremble and the earth will not shake.
Coercive Messages		<i>murip ikanung edet anakku, mate ikanung bumi, murip turah benar. mate boh suci (7)</i>	Life is carried in the body, death is carried by the earth, life must

be righteous, death
must be pure.

Informative Messages

Informative messages are statements or information aimed at broadening the audience's knowledge and awareness. These messages provide information or facts that enable the audience to understand the content, draw their own conclusions, and make decisions based on that understanding (Cangara, 2019). The informative message forms in the *Melengkan* tradition are predominantly used during the "munginte" or engagement procession and the "turun caram" or dowry presentation procession. The Gayo wedding customary procession begins with the "munginte" or engagement procession, usually conducted by a "telangke" (mediator) from the groom's side to the bride's side through several stages. This is why the Gayo wedding customary procession is called "ngerje beraturen" because it involves specific stages that must be followed in the wedding customary procession (Ningsih et al., 2016). The initial stage of the "munginte" procession involves discussions or consultations between the parents or families of both parties, referred to as "risik kono." The "munginte" procession also serves to ascertain whether the woman being proposed to is not already lawfully engaged to someone else. This aligns with Islamic teachings, which prohibit proposing to a woman who is lawfully engaged to another man. This principle is emphasized in the hadith that states: "It is not permissible for a believer to bid against his brother's bid, nor to propose over his brother's proposal until he leaves it" (Al-Bukhari, 2011, p. 920).

In this "munginte" procession, the "pemelangkan" (performer of the *melengkan*) from the groom's side directly delivers a message face-to-face to the "pemelengkan" from the bride's side. The *melengkan* speech is conveyed in the form of metaphorical sentences (see table 1). The first sentence indicates the firm decision of the groom's side towards the woman being proposed to as a potential wife. However, this determination should not be expressed directly but rather metaphorically. In Gayo culture, expressing intentions

and purposes directly through sentences is considered inappropriate according to custom (based on an interview with Gayo traditional figure, Yusin Saleh). Additionally, nonverbally, the *melengkan* message is symbolized by giving an object, such as betel nut equipment, termed "*adat penampang kuyu*" (wind blocker), when the groom's family visits the bride's house as a sign of engagement to prevent the acceptance of proposals from others.

The *melengkan* speech from the groom's side is then responded to by the bride's side (see sentence 2 in table 1). This message informs that the bride's side has welcomed the arrival of the groom's side and will consider the proposal after consulting with the entire family. Other information is also conveyed in the form of a message from the bride's side to the groom's side through the *melengkan* speech which means "we hope to receive guidance from Allah while consulting with the family so that we can think carefully about whether to accept or reject the proposal" (based on an interview with Gayo *pemelengkan*, Ridwan). The *melengkan* speech in the proposal process (*munginte*) serves as an informative message, informing the potential bride about the purpose and intention of the groom's visit. Similarly, the message from the bride's side indicates their openness to the groom's intentions. The religious message conveyed through the *melengkan* narration highlights that Islam encourages gathering information about the potential bride beforehand. This practice ensures that the groom's decision is more resolute and helps eliminate any doubts (Zuhri et al., 2021). In line with this, Islam advises a man who wishes to marry a woman to see or observe her first. In terms of proposing, Islam permits a man to see the woman he intends to marry to better understand the qualities of his potential wife, as affirmed by the hadith: "From Al-Mughirah bin Shu'bah, who proposed to a woman, the Prophet Muhammad said, look at her! Because it will strengthen your marriage" (HR. Tirmidzi and Nasa'i) (Tirmidzi, 2017, p. 1001).

The preaching message conveyed in the *melengkan* speech about proposing or *khittbah*, emphasizes this as an important stage in marriage and aims to communicate a man's feelings and desires towards a woman. As affirmed in the Qur'an: 'And there is no sin upon you if you propose

marriage to women, or conceal what is in your hearts. Allah knows that you will think of them. But do not make a secret contract with them, except in an honorable manner, nor resolve on a marriage tie until the prescribed period is over. And know that Allah knows what is in your hearts, so be cautious of Him. And know that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Forbearing' (QS. Al-Baqarah verse 235). According to Sya'rawi's interpretation, this verse highlights the importance of proposing because it determines a person's future—whether to commit to a new family and its responsibilities or to decide against establishing a relationship. That is why the proposing process is conveyed with gentle and respectful language, in accordance with the dignity of the woman (Sya'rawi, 2015, p. 1013).

Informative messages in the *melengkan* tradition are also used in the process of *turun caram* (delivering the dowry). *Turun caram* is performed after the acceptance of the proposal and agreement by both parties on the amount of the dowry (Coubat, 1984, p. 58). The procession of delivering the dowry is no longer carried out by the family themselves but has been entrusted to the customary authorities such as the *Reje* (village head), *Imam* (religious leader), *Petue* (elders), and the community. The message conveyed by the *pemelengkan* during the dowry delivery includes the third *melengkan* sentence, which is responded to by the bride's side with the fourth sentence. The *melengkan* speech states that the groom has sent the dowry according to the agreed-upon terms and expresses hope that it will be accepted by the bride's side. The bride's side then confirms that they have checked and verified that the dowry is in accordance with the prior agreement. If there are any discrepancies, the groom will make the necessary adjustments (interview with Gayo *pemelengkan*, Abdullah AR). Before concluding the *melengkan* speech, the groom apologizes for any shortcomings in the dowry provided. The *melengkan* speech communicates that the dowry is one of the husband's first obligations to his wife, aimed at honoring the woman so she can prepare herself for marriage. This is supported by the Qur'an, which states: "And give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously. But if they give up

willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease" (QS. An-Nisa' verse 4).

Persuasive Message

Persuasive messages are those conveyed by the communicator to the audience with the aim of changing their mindset or attitude by persuading them without any elements of coercion (Mulyana, 2017, p. 92). Persuasive messages in the tradition of *Melengkan* are used to provide advice to the prospective groom and bride. These *Melengkan* messages are usually delivered at the stage of "*beguru*," a ceremony where the prospective groom and bride are handed over to their respective religious leaders (*Imams*) to be given advice related to religious matters (Melalatoa, 1982, p. 104). The *melengkan* delivers a message in the fifth sentence to persuade the two prospective spouses to strive for a harmonious family, despite the challenges involved. In marriage, an adjustment must be made between two personalities who come from different backgrounds and have distinct life experiences. A harmonious family is one that is peaceful, loving, complementary, and cooperative. Achieving this harmony requires understanding each other's differences, addressing them positively, and communicating assertively (Sainul, 2018). This principle is supported by the Quran in Surah Al-Furqan, verse 74, which states: 'And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous." Harmony within the family will be achieved when the family members can function and fulfill their roles properly while adhering firmly to religious values.

Persuasive messages are also conveyed by the *melengkan* with the phrase "*ike itunungko kase ling ni kami, insyaAllah langitmu gere mugegur, bumimu gere muguncang anakku*," which means if you follow our advice, my child, God willing, the sky will not tremble and the earth will not shake. This message persuades to sincerely heed parental advice, as one key to happiness is being dutiful to parents. Thus, a child should obey their parents' commands as long as they do not contradict religious commands. This aligns with the

Quranic affirmation that means "Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be kind to parents." (QS. An-Nisa' verse 36). Persuasive messages in the *melengkan* tradition are more prominently used during the *beguru* procession, as *beguru* involves providing advice to the prospective groom and bride. The purpose of the *beguru* activity is to provide guidance on married life in accordance with Islamic teachings, usually conveyed by elders before the wedding ceremony (Hamda et al., 2023). Therefore, delivering advice or guidance in a persuasive manner can leave a deeper impression and significantly influence the understanding, attitudes, and actions of the recipients. Persuasion is a communication process aimed at changing someone's attitudes and behaviors through verbal or nonverbal messages (Devito, 2019, p. 447). The effectiveness of persuasive messages largely depends on the interpersonal relationship between the communicator and the audience, as well as on motivational factors.

Coercive Message

A coercive message aims to forcibly change attitudes, opinions, and behaviors, typically through commands that instill fear (Habibi, 2018). In the tradition of *melengkan*, coercive messages take the form of directives, explaining the sanctions imposed if these directives are violated. The seventh *melengkan* speech emphasizes adherence to the customary norms prevalent in the Gayo community. In Gayo culture, these norms act as guidelines, mandates, and controllers of appropriate behavior. By adhering to these customary norms, a harmonious way of life is realized, as expressed in the customary phrase "*muriṗ turah benar, mate boh suci*" (life must be righteous, death must be pure) (interview with community leader, Anwar). Gayo cultural values reflect the ideal concept of character expected to shape and color the patterns of Gayo society's actions. Gayo culture has a principal value called "*mukemel*" (self-esteem), derived from the word "*kemel*" meaning shame. This cultural value emphasizes the importance of maintaining one's dignity by avoiding thoughts and actions that could lead to a loss of self-

esteem, such as reprehensible actions or those contrary to religion and culture.

Da'wah Values in the Tradition of *Melengkan* Gayo Ethnicity in Aceh.

The value of preaching encompasses a set of rules or teachings that serve as the basis for actions and behavior. These are conveyed to others to encourage them to act virtuously in accordance with Islamic law (Zumaroh, 2021). According to the components of Islamic teachings, preaching values are broadly divided into three categories: faith, worship, and morals (Achmadin, 2023). These values are dynamic, adapting to the spirit of the times and the development of knowledge in society (Basit, 2013, p. 195). The Gayo *melengkan* tradition acts as a medium for conveying these preaching values. Through the *melengkan* tradition, Gayo communities learn about Islamic values embedded in the messages. The tradition plays a significant role in the wedding process (*ngerje*) of the Gayo ethnic group and aligns with the elements of preaching, thus qualifying as cultural preaching. Cultural preaching is a model for conveying Islamic teachings that is more tolerant and open, as it accommodates the culture and customs of the local community. The integration of Islam into traditional wedding processes exemplifies spiritual cultural preaching (Astuti & Amirullah, 2019). The analysis of preaching values in the Gayo *melengkan* tradition is derived from excerpts of several narratives or *melengkan* speech texts, selected according to their relevance to the process and purpose of the activity. This selection aims to provide a focused and clear understanding of the preaching values in the speech texts, emphasizing the values of faith, worship, and morality.

Values of Faith

Faith is the cornerstone of Islamic teachings because it underpins all actions and behaviors that define a Muslim. It represents the ideological or belief dimension in Islam and should remain free from doubt (Atin, 2018). During marriage ceremonies, the words of the *pemelengkan* embody the value of faith, as demonstrated in the seventh sentence (see table 1). This

emphasizes faith and the oneness of Allah, illustrated by the narrative of adhering to the pillars of faith and using Islam as our life guide (*rukun imen urum rukun Islam, oya kin amat-amatenmu kena oya isi ni kiteb sucinte Al-Qur'an*). These preaching messages are typically conveyed during the *beguru* process before the wedding ceremony. Because in the *beguru* process, the content predominantly focuses on faith, sharia, or worship and manners, aiming to foster stability and harmony within the family (interview with *pemelengkan*, Abdullah AR). Additionally, it is noted that traditions and Islamic teachings encourage society to achieve a balanced fulfillment of physical and spiritual needs, as suggested by the saying "*beras padi tungket imen*," which means that adequate basic needs will strengthen faith (interview with community figure, Alam Syuhada).

Another aspect of faith value evident in this wedding tradition is the tradition of '*bersibeteheh*.' Marriage, as a sacred bond after faith, underscores the importance of matching faith, crucial for achieving the purpose of marriage. In the Gayo tradition, investigating prospective grooms and brides, known as '*bersibeteheh*,' indicates that the marriage process must adhere to customary stages (interview with customary figure, Abdullah Kader). This tradition of '*bersibeteheh*' aligns with Islamic "*ta'aruf*." "*Bersibeteheh*" involves not only knowing the name and family but also understanding their religion or faith. This aligns with the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad, which states: "A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. Choose the religious woman, and you will prosper" (HR. Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurairah) (Al-Bukhari, 2011, p. 910).

Value of Worship

Worship is a crucial religious ritual behavior for adherents of a religion, helping to preserve and maintain the sanctity of their faith. As such, worship is an essential activity that facilitates human communication with the Creator. It is also an act of devotion to Allah, drawing believers closer to Him and fulfilling their life's duties as creatures of Allah (Husna & Arif, 2021). The *melengkan* message conveying the value of worship

states: "Anakku, bayaku, si lime waktu sikatan wajib porape enti taringko kena oya tiang ni agama" which mean My child, remember, the most important thing is not to miss the obligatory five daily prayers. Understand and practice the pillars of faith and the pillars of Islam, for they are our fundamental principles.' This statement underscores the importance of maintaining worship to Allah, particularly the obligation to perform the five daily prayers, which are considered the pillar of the religion. Thus, prayer is one of the most vital means of communication and connection between humans and Allah. This aligns with the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, which states: 'The essence of all matters is Islam, and its pillar is prayer' (HR. Tirmidhi no 2616).

The embodiment of the value of worship in the *melengkan* tradition is also evident in the advice to speak truthfully and convey the truth, in accordance with the Qur'an and Hadith. The prerequisite for the greatness of deeds is to convey the truth, as affirmed in the Qur'an: 'O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice' (QS. Al-Ahzab verse 70). Society will be corrupted if the truth is concealed or hidden. As expressed in the *melengkan* message "tingkis ulak ku bide, sesat ulak ku dene" which means correct the wrongs through justice, rectify the mistakes through religion' (interview with cultural figure, Anwar). The principle of truth in Islamic teachings is also manifested through fulfilling promises or trusts, as in the tradition of delivering the dowry, which must be in accordance with the agreed-upon amount. This is expressed through the *melengkan* message "si katan kuning nge bertimang, ke si perin putih keta nge bebilang. The meaning conveyed by this *melengkan* message is that the dowry, whether in the form of gold or money, has been weighed and counted according to the agreement or contract. This conformity is seen as upholding trustworthiness or truthfulness. The value of worship in this *melengkan* text is a worship in the form of *ghairu mahdhah* or *muamalah*, encompassing all behavior that brings goodness and is performed with sincere intentions for the sake of Allah. This form of worship is typically carried out among fellow humans or in horizontal relationships (Bajuri, 2022). It also pertains to fulfilling the

promise made by the groom regarding the agreed amount of dowry. The obligation to fulfill promises is emphasized in the Quran: 'And never say of anything, "Indeed, I will do that tomorrow," except [when adding], "If Allah wills." And remember your Lord when you forget [it] and say, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to what is nearer than this to right conduct" (QS. Al-Kahfi verse 23-24).

Values of Morality

Morality encompasses behavior that manifests good words and deeds, as delineated by the Quran and Hadith. Thus, it is intrinsically linked with faith and worship, encompassing patterns of behavior that reflect belief and obedience. Morality pertains to how one behaves towards Allah, fellow human beings, and nature (Habibah, 2015). The messages during the engagement ceremony that convey moral values include the following: "*becerak enti bubuk, beperi enti sergak, becerak gelah lagu santan mulimak i bibirmu*" It means to honor others with a soft and gentle voice, accompanied by a polite and friendly attitude. Religion commands to honor parents by prohibiting harsh and loud voices that may hurt their feelings. Therefore, in Gayo culture, those who do not use respectful language towards others are considered to be engaging in *sumang perceraan* or inappropriate speech (according to an interview with a cultural figure, Jhoni) In Gayo culture, speaking in a rude manner, such as *becerak sergak* shouting or *jis* raising one's voice is considered uncivilized behavior (according to an interview with a cultural figure, Alam Syuhada).

The *melengkan* message aligns with the Quranic injunction which means: "And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], 'uff,' and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word" (QS. Al-Isra' verse 23). In addition to verbal expressions, the *melengken* message also conveys the value of worship through actions, as expressed "*remalan ko kase enti begerdak, mujurah enti musintak, salak nti osah kerut, budi turah belangi, si tetuwe i mulit-yenko*". The message

emphasizes acting with gentleness and politeness, such as walking without stomping and maintaining a friendly or cheerful demeanor when interacting with others. This is considered a form of honoring others (interview with cultural figure, Yusin Saleh). This principle is also emphasized in the Quran: 'And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful' (QS. Lukman verse 18).

Conclusion

Gayo tradition of *melengkan* serves as a means of conveying Islamic teachings through cultural approaches, known as cultural preaching. This method is highly effective in Indonesia's multicultural society. Islam peacefully entered Indonesia through cultural integration, as it naturally accommodates local culture. Islam didn't aim to erase existing cultural practices but rather to internalize Islamic teachings into them. Gayo *melengkan* tradition as a form of cultural preaching is conveyed during the various stages of customary wedding ceremonies, employing informative, persuasive, and sometimes coercive approaches. These messages embody preaching values such as faith (*aqidah*), worship (*ibadah*) or transaction (*muamalah*), and morals (*akhlak*). Preserving and transmitting the art of *melengkan* is crucial, as this skill is declining. Therefore, it's vital for local governments to support the next generation in learning and practicing *melengkan* through training programs and competitions to ensure this tradition endures.

The findings from this research not only underscore the significance of the *melengkan* tradition in integrating Islamic teachings with local customs but also highlight a practical framework for cultural preservation and religious education. For policymakers and educational institutions, there is a valuable opportunity to incorporate *melengkan* as a case study of cultural resilience and religious adaptation. This inclusion could enhance students' understanding of cultural diversity and religious harmony, promoting a more inclusive approach to religious education. Additionally, scholars and

researchers can further explore the impact of such cultural practices on social cohesion and individual identity formation. By conducting comparative studies across different regions or even similar practices in other cultures, researchers can gain deeper insights into the mechanisms through which cultural practices can be leveraged to foster societal harmony and religious understanding. This can lead to broader applications of cultural preaching in multicultural settings worldwide, offering a model for other regions with similar cultural and religious dynamics.

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TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION: ISLAMIC INFLUENCE ON ANIMAL SLAUGHTER IN PADANG BOLAK FUNERAL CUSTOMS

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the acculturation of Islam and local culture in the tradition of animal slaughter at funeral ceremonies preserved by the Padang Bolak community, as part of the religious system reflecting the community's understanding of the Hadith. This study is a field study employing a qualitative method within the framework of living Hadith theory. The research findings indicate that this tradition of animal slaughter at funeral ceremonies in the community is motivated by several factors, including efforts to preserve customs and culture, as an act of devotion to parents, the deceased's will to conduct an animal slaughter before passing away, to honor guests, maintain the good name of the deceased parents within the community, as an expression of love for parents, and the belief that the merits of charity performed on that day will benefit the deceased. In

Islamic legal studies, this tradition is fundamentally contradictory to Islamic teachings in all its processes and requirements. The acculturation of Islam with this tradition has led to modifications that eliminate elements conflicting with Islamic teachings. Further studies are needed on how such modifications can aid in understanding and potentially guiding the process of cultural adaptation in other Islamic communities.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan akulturasi Islam dan budaya lokal dalam tradisi penyembelihan hewan pada upacara pemakaman yang dipertahankan oleh komunitas Padang Bolak, sebagai bagian dari sistem religius yang mencerminkan pemahaman masyarakat tentang Hadits. Studi ini adalah studi lapangan yang menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam kerangka teori Hadits hidup. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi penyembelihan hewan pada upacara pemakaman di komunitas tersebut didorong oleh beberapa faktor, termasuk upaya untuk melestarikan adat dan budaya, sebagai tindakan pengabdian kepada orang tua, keinginan almarhum untuk melakukan penyembelihan hewan sebelum meninggal, untuk menghormati tamu, mempertahankan nama baik orang tua yang telah meninggal di dalam komunitas, sebagai ungkapan cinta kepada orang tua, dan keyakinan bahwa pahala amal yang dilakukan pada hari itu akan menguntungkan almarhum. Dalam studi hukum Islam, tradisi ini secara mendasar bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam dalam semua proses dan persyaratannya. Akulturasi Islam dengan tradisi ini telah mengarah pada modifikasi yang menghilangkan elemen-elemen yang bertentangan dengan ajaran Islam. Studi lebih lanjut diperlukan tentang bagaimana modifikasi tersebut dapat membantu dalam memahami dan berpotensi mengarahkan proses adaptasi budaya di komunitas Islam lainnya.

Keywords: *animal slaughter tradition, funeral customs, Islam acculturation, living hadith*

Introduction

Tradition is a habit or custom passed down from generation to generation by ancestors, still practiced and adhered to by a community (Rofiq, 2019). Customary rules also serve as a benchmark for a person's position in society. Success in one's social status is considered incomplete

without observance of traditional ceremonies. North Padang Lawas Regency, a region in North Sumatra, is rich in cultural and traditional heritage that has been preserved through generations. This distinctiveness characterizes the regency, with its people who consistently adhere to and practice these traditions in every aspect of life. The residents of this area are known as the Padang Bolak community, part of the Angkola Batak ethnic group, which shares similar traditions with the Angkola Batak tribe in the South Tapanuli region. In the implementation of traditions and cultural customs, the customary norms upheld by the Padang Bolak community are related to the '*siriaon*' and '*siluluton*' events. '*Siriaon*' involves joyous activities such as weddings, childbirth, entering a new house, and celebrations for the achievement of desires. Conversely, '*siluluton*' involves activities related to misfortunes, such as death, building graves, and moving graves. Specifically regarding death, especially of parents, there is an obligatory tradition of animal slaughter.

The arrival of Islam in this northern region did not lead its inhabitants to abandon their existing customs and traditions. Instead, the rules of custom and Islam are considered equal in status and are the primary benchmarks in community life. The slogan "*Hombardo Adat Dohot Ibadat*," meaning there is no conflict between custom and Islamic law, reflects the belief in the equality between custom and religion in their community life (Harahap, 2020).

Fundamentally, the funeral ceremony of the Padang Bolak community involves not only the completion of *fard alkifayah*, according to Islamic law, but also the preservation of kinship relations, generational transition, and settlement of inheritance. Therefore, especially the death of parents, such an event is significant in the tradition of the Padang Bolak community. While the Angkola Batak tribe has interactions with Islam, the implementation of these traditions is divided. Some community segments, like the Padang Bolak, tend to preserve these traditional ceremonies, whereas others, like the Mandailing community, may abandon them due to inconsistencies with Islamic teachings (Pulungan, 2018).

The tradition of slaughtering animals during parents' funeral ceremonies has seen various changes and is increasingly abandoned by other communities, especially among the Mandailing, where heirs no longer feel obligated to slaughter an animal (Busyairy, 2018; Pulungan, 2018). In contrast, in the Angkola community, the tradition persists, albeit with specific provisions for those who will carry it out. The Padang Bolak community holds a life philosophy, "*ulang salin ho sian nadua tolu*" (Harahap, 2020), meaning that no one should neglect performing traditional ceremonies (Siregar, 2023).

There are three common traditions performed by the Angkola Batak community during funeral ceremonies: first, animal slaughter; second, *tahlilan*; and third, *khataman* or recitation of the Quran at the grave (Siregar et al., 2022). The tradition of animal slaughter is conducted according to customary rules, where the slaughtered animal is typically a buffalo. This practice is an integral part of the ceremony aimed at settling all customary debts and is performed when a parent passes away. The deceased's family facilitates all aspects of the slaughter process, adhering strictly to the tradition's core values. The implementation of this tradition can occur beyond the day of death, with the stipulation that no other customary ceremonies can be conducted until this event is completed (Rasyid et al., 2022).

To fulfill the funeral ceremonies, families often resort to borrowing money due to the fear and shame associated with not adhering to this tradition, which could lead to ostracization within the community. Families performing the slaughter often feel pride, viewing it as a final act of devotion to their parents. They also provide alms in the deceased's name to the pilgrims, hoping that the merits of this charity will benefit the deceased. Preliminary studies have revealed a profound fear and shame if the family is unable to perform the animal slaughter on the day of death. Often, an elderly parent will make a testament requesting their children or family to slaughter a cow as alms on their behalf after they pass away.

A recent finding that distinguishes this study from previous research is that the influence of Islam has been assimilated into the customary agreements. If the children and family of the deceased are economically unable to perform this tradition, then relatives or other close family members provide the necessary financial support for the implementation of the slaughter tradition. The existence of this slaughter tradition is one of the events that continue to be preserved in the Padang Bolak community. Due to the unity of family and relatives in addressing economic challenges, the *siluluton* tradition has begun to loosen within the community.

The high costs associated with this tradition have prompted several processions to shift from buffalo to cow slaughter as a more accessible alternative for those unable to afford a buffalo. Although cow slaughter lacks the grandeur of buffalo slaughter as a customary practice, the process and distribution to the community indicate that the customary ceremony has been completed, absolving any debts for the deceased's relatives. Additionally, to mitigate the negative effects of this tradition, all costs and the implementation are covered by a joint fund from the community (Hasibuan et al., 2023). This includes providing the sacrificial animal, rice, and all other necessities required by the deceased's family. This modification of the tradition is influenced by religious scholars who preach adaptation to cultural practices that contradict Islamic teachings without abandoning the traditions that are part of the culture. This is a notable finding, as previous research indicated that the burden of this tradition was placed solely on the family of the deceased.

Several studies have analyzed the tradition of animal slaughter during funeral ceremonies, such as those by Harahap and Yusuf (2023) in the Batak Mandailing community and Rasyid et al. (2022) in the Angkola community. However, more exploration is needed concerning the role of community mutual aid in this tradition, their motivation to participate, and the social and economic impacts of their involvement. Additionally, a more analytical description is required concerning the relationship between

this tradition and the transformation of Islamic influence from the perspectives of the ulama and community leaders. Therefore, the current study aims to delve deeper into the tradition and its transformation to enrich the discussion and provide new, relevant perspectives in the context of this study. It discusses the urgency of the animal slaughter tradition, as well as how the acculturation of Hadith and local culture plays a role in this tradition.

Method

This research employs a qualitative method to explore the social phenomenon of the animal slaughter tradition, examining not only through the lens of the researchers but also through the realities occurring within the community. This approach includes field studies supported by literature such as previous research, books, and journals. It is crucial for researchers to comprehend the background and social phenomena by engaging directly with individuals involved in the animal slaughter tradition through interviews. This method helps to uncover, describe, and delve into the community's social life.

North Padang Lawas Regency in North Sumatra was selected as the research location because its community strongly upholds traditions and cultures in daily life, aligning closely with Islamic teachings. The focus of this research is on the acculturation of Islam and local culture within the animal slaughter tradition, viewed as a component of the death ceremony in the Padang Bolak community.

The research is underpinned by both primary and secondary data. Field data, obtained through interviews with the community in Padang Bolak, North Padang Lawas Regency, forms a substantial part of the data used. Data collection techniques include: First, interviews. The interviews are unstructured, conducted freely and openly without adhering to strict or systematic guidelines (Creswell, 2009). Second, observation, which involves directly observing the implementation of the animal slaughter tradition in death ceremonies and the conditions within the Padang Bolak community.

Third, document study, which gathers information about the philosophical meaning of the animal slaughter tradition and contributes novel insights to the research.

Interviews are conducted with traditional leaders and community members who are key informants, such as customary leaders or *harajaon*, and religious figures, selected for their knowledge and active involvement in the tradition. This strategy allows the research to obtain more in-depth and valid data. Interviews are performed with the permission and approval of relevant parties, ensuring objectivity in gathering information related to the animal slaughter tradition. After collecting responses, the researcher verifies the information to draw main conclusions. Comments and theories are then provided in response to the informants' answers, aiding in addressing the research questions posed.

In data processing, the research begins with field analysis focused on the study's objectives. After collecting all data, the researcher proceeds with data analysis by grouping, organizing, interpreting, and verifying the data. This is followed by data processing, which involves data reduction, data presentation, and data verification to draw conclusions.

Finding and Discussion

The Tradition of Slaughtering Animal in Funeral Ceremonies

The tradition of animal slaughter in the Padang Bolak community is carried out precisely on the day of a parent's death. This slaughtering ceremony persists and remains prevalent within the community. According to informant accounts, the implementation of this tradition is considered a mandatory ceremony for every death, especially that of elderly parents. For the Padang Bolak community, carrying out this ceremony reflects and proves that adherence to customs and traditions is essential for all individuals, despite the wave of modernization eroding the identity of various ethnic groups. This sentiment is tied to the principle and enduring presence of a culture that has been rooted in history since the time of their ancestors (Rusli Harahap, personal communication, June 28, 2022).

Interviews with several informants revealed that the origins and history of this slaughtering ceremony predate the introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism to the Padang Bolak community. It can be concluded that this tradition is a cultural heritage that has interacted with various other cultures and has remained preserved through time. Before the arrival of Islam in this region, its teachings had already assimilated with various other cultures, making it more adaptable in regulating and interacting with local customs. Consequently, Islam establishes attitudes and guidelines that regulate these cultures, ensuring that the community's culture is preserved and does not conflict with Islamic teachings (Lukman Siregar, personal communication, August 28, 2022).

Observations and interviews identified several reasons for the continued existence of this tradition, which is almost universally observed at every parent's death in the Padang Bolak community. The motivations for maintaining the tradition of slaughtering cattle at funeral ceremonies include preserving culture, maintaining honor, giving charity, and fulfilling the deceased's last wishes.

Preserving and perpetuating tradition and culture

The first motivation to maintain the tradition of slaughtering cattle is for preserving and perpetuating tradition as well as culture. The Padang Bolak community is known for its strict customary rules, and this tradition has been ongoing for a long time and is still practiced by the community (Siregar, 2020). This adherence is inseparable from the principle ingrained in their society that customs are an integral part of an individual's life. From birth to death, a person's life in the Padang Bolak society goes through customary processes. For instance, the birth of a child is celebrated with "*mangaligi nasorang*" (visiting a newborn), during marriage there is the tradition of "*pabagas boru*" (marrying off a daughter) and "*haroan boru*" (marrying off a son), and both of these customary processes involve many stages. Finally, when someone passes away, there is a customary process of

slaughtering animal, both for males and females (Rajainal Siregar, personal communication, August 28, 2022)

The most prominent social event in *siluluton* (mourning) over the course of human life is death. From an evolutionary standpoint, death is a *sunnatullah* (inevitable destiny) that occurs in every human being (Anggariani & Malik, 2021). According to Islamic teachings, death is the fulfillment of Allah's will and decree, which must be accepted by humans (Karim, 2015). While other events included in *siluluton* involve receiving calamity or punishment, society still has the opportunity to make amends for the underlying causes. According to the perception of the Padang Bolak community, *siluluton* has a religious significance that must be accompanied by various ceremonies involving close relatives and the community.

The most significant traditional ceremony in the death of a Padang Bolak person occurs during the funeral of a parent. Conversely, if a child dies, the traditional ceremony conducted is not as elaborate. The form of the funeral ceremony can indicate the social status of the deceased. The level of the ceremony is determined through deliberation among relatives, traditional leaders (*harajaon*), and elders (*hatobangon*). In the traditional ceremony, the influence of Islamic teachings is not very visible because religious leaders are not involved in determining it. However, Islamic Sharia provisions are still implemented, especially concerning *fard al-kifayah* (community obligations) such as bathing, shrouding, praying for, and burying the deceased. Nevertheless, for those still bound by tradition, the funeral ceremony is carried out according to tradition. Conversely, for those not bound by tradition, the ceremony is simpler and more practical, following Islamic rules.

Maintaining the Honor and Title of Parents

If the tradition of slaughtering during the funeral of parents is carried out with the aim of inheriting titles and preserving the good name of the parents, then the slaughtered animal must be more valuable than cattle. In this case, the animal is usually a buffalo, which is considered

valuable in tradition, unlike cattle. The implementation of this tradition, based on this purpose, differs from regular slaughtering because there are specific conditions and several differences (Mustan Ritonga, personal communication, August 29, 2022).

The differences in the procession lie in the stricter traditional ceremonies that involve traditional kings from outside the village but within the same region. According to the traditional king (*raja adat*), this tradition ensures that in the event of a death, slaughtering a buffalo helps maintain respect for the family's good name in the community. It is essential to preserve this so that the title remains attached to the family and is passed to the eldest grandson from the eldest son (Rasyid et al., 2022).

There are customary regulations regarding the titles held by individuals to ensure they are not lost and are inherited by descendants. Therefore, several conditions must be met in this tradition. Like all humans, when someone dies and has gone through all the obligatory funeral processes, all titles and positions are lost with the burial of the deceased. However, through the implementation of this slaughtering tradition, the prestigious name can be passed on to the eldest grandson from the eldest son, serving as a way to preserve the traditions of the Padang Bolak Society, a subethnic group of the Batak Angkola tribe in South Tapanuli (Rasyid et al., 2022).

Giving Charity in the Name of the Deceased to Attendees

One important reason for the implementation of this tradition is to provide charity to those present on the day of the death. This slaughtering tradition is closely linked to the economic status of the deceased's family. If those who carry out the tradition of slaughtering an animal are economically capable, then providing the slaughtered animal as charity will not pose a problem. However, issues arise when those performing this tradition come from less fortunate backgrounds and still force themselves to do so, leading to various complex problems.

The responsibility for providing the animals, whether cattle or buffalo, and all the necessities for this traditional ceremony falls on the children and family of the deceased. Often, the procurement of these animals is financed through loans, with the costs to be paid after the funeral ceremony is completed. In some cases, it has been found that communities in several regions have had to sell assets such as houses and land to cover all the expenses of this tradition. Economic difficulties are one of the reasons why this tradition is opposed by religious scholars in North Padang Lawas Regency. They argue that when carried out without economic consideration, the tradition results in more harm than benefit (Hasibuan et al., 2023). Therefore, the implementation of slaughter for charity purposes is considered one of the urgent issues facing the Padang Bolak community.

The Presence of Testament from Parents

One of the main factors for the tradition of slaughtering an animal at the funeral of parents in the Padang Bolak community is to fulfill and carry out the last wishes of the deceased before their passing. The existence of such a testament in the Padang Bolak community is one of the reasons why this culture continues to endure today. It is commonly understood that the tradition of slaughtering animals is largely due to the deceased's last wishes. As a child, it is only fitting to fulfill the final testament of one's parents, and usually, the funds for implementing this tradition have been provided beforehand by the deceased, long before their passing. This practice has become a custom among the elderly in Padang Bolak who are of advanced age.

Islamic Influence on Animal Slaughter Tradition in The Funeral Ceremonies

The tradition of slaughtering animals at the funeral of parents involves various elements of the community. Therefore, on the day of the death, mourning experts invite all community figures to a meeting or

consultation to oversee the customary work. The animal slaughter at the funeral is a collective responsibility of the mourning experts or family members (Rasyid et al., 2022). However, fundamentally, the primary responsibility for financing this slaughter rests with each surviving eldest son. The total cost is divided among the sons of the family. Nevertheless, other family members, such as daughters and nieces, may contribute financially, though it is not obligatory. Despite this, the strong sense of solidarity in the Padang Bolak community is a significant strength in carrying out this activity.

The slaughter ceremony at the funeral reflects the strength of the *dalihan natolu* (three pillars of Batak society) (Harahap & Yusuf, 2023). This shows that while death is unpredictable in terms of time and place, conducting an animal slaughter ceremony on the day of death demonstrates cooperation and solidarity that can be mobilized quickly. Those who come to offer condolences immediately provide support in accordance with the customary provisions of the area, bringing items such as rice, firewood, coconuts, and money for the funeral process (Rusli Harahap, personal communication, June 28, 2022).

Before the arrival of Islam, the Padang Bolak community adhered to animist beliefs, worshipping the spirits of their ancestors. To honor and ensure the presence of the spirits of deceased relatives, the Batak Angkola community would consume the meat of the slaughtered animals (Murni & Nurwahida, 2023). However, after the arrival of Islam, this tradition was expected to be completely abandoned due to conflicts with Islamic teachings. Yet, the tradition was not eradicated immediately. Instead, modifications were made to its form and implementation to align with the religion (Siregar et al., 2022).

From the above explanation, it is clear that several factors underlie the implementation of the animal slaughter tradition in the Padang Bolak community. Initially, this tradition was carried out without considering religious factors and faced implementation challenges. However, over the past decade, there has been a reconsideration and the involvement of

religious scholars in addressing this issue. One solution has been to involve the neighborhood to alleviate the economic difficulties arising from this tradition. The presence of communal aid has greatly assisted in managing the costs of this tradition. It is no longer solely the responsibility of the deceased's family, but rather a shared responsibility of the community. Meanwhile, the family focuses on managing the implementation process of the fard al-kifayah for the deceased (Hasibuan et al., 2023).

There are differences in the implementation of this tradition between the early days of Islam and the present. Initially, all costs of the ceremony were borne by the eldest sons of the deceased, and the animals slaughtered were either buffalo or cattle. This was feasible because almost everyone in Padang Bolak owned livestock, either as wealthy owners or as poorer individuals who cared for buffalo or cattle. In contrast, today, the tradition has undergone many modifications to facilitate community participation in the ceremony. These changes include financing through mutual aid and voluntary contributions from relatives and community members who attend the funeral. Because Islam could not eliminate this tradition, a compromise was reached by modifying the tradition and its implementation procedures (Nasution et al., 2022).

Islamic teachings in this region are still relatively relaxed, with tradition dominating community activities. Traditions are deeply ingrained in the Padang Bolak community and continue to be practiced, albeit infused with Islamic teachings. For instance, the funeral tradition still involves animal slaughter, but modifications have been made so that costs are no longer solely borne by the bereaved. The slaughtered animal need not be a buffalo; it can be cattle or goats, depending on the financial status of the deceased (Siregar, 2018).

If the deceased parent held a customary title or was a traditional leader (*harajaon*), it is not permissible to slaughter a cow, as cows are not considered traditional animals. To honor the esteemed name of the deceased parent, a buffalo must be slaughtered instead. This prestigious name can then be passed down to the eldest grandson from the eldest son.

There is a saying in the Padang Bolak community: "Habang halihi tinggal hasonggopanna," meaning "an eagle flies away leaving its perch." Specifically for those who slaughter buffalo, the death of the deceased is announced publicly and to village and laot chiefs to conduct the traditional adat ceremony (Rasyid, 2022).

The tradition of slaughtering buffalo at funerals is contingent upon the birth of a child. Thus, the tradition can be carried out after the birth of a grandson from the eldest son, followed by the traditional funeral ceremony. The tradition of slaughtering buffalo, motivated by the birth of a child, is carried out to honor the esteemed name of the parent and preserve their good reputation within the community. Unlike simply giving alms, slaughtering an animal is seen as an act of honoring the parent and a form of filial piety. Therefore, it is considered more respectful than merely giving money to relatives.

The Social Impact of Animal Slaughter Tradition

When examined from a socio-religious perspective, the Padang Bolak community is influenced by Islamic teachings on one hand and local customs on the other. This coexistence of religion and tradition significantly affects the implementation of the tradition, impacting both public perception and religious views. For the Padang Bolak community, this tradition is rooted in Islam, yet customs also play a critical role in its urgency and implementation. Thus, they consider this tradition not merely a practice passed down through generations, but also a practice with religious guidance (Zamzami, 2020).

The implementation of the tradition of animal slaughter during death ceremonies has significant social impacts, particularly in the context of socio-religious aspects. The majority of the Padang Bolak community is shaped by both Islamic teachings and local customs, which coexist and mutually influence each other. This dual influence affects how the tradition is viewed and implemented from both community and religious perspectives. Although originating from Islam, customs play an essential

role in the urgency and execution of this tradition. Therefore, this tradition is regarded as an integral part of the identity and cultural continuity of the Padang Bolak community (Harahap, 2020). The tradition of animal slaughter during funeral ceremonies, deeply embedded in the local culture, has undergone modifications influenced by Islamic teachings in recent years. Despite its local origins, its essence has become closely tied to Islamic principles, making it an inseparable part of the community's cultural continuity (Harahap, 2015).

The modifications are primarily influenced by the scholars' understanding of the hadiths that describe providing food to the family of Ja'far bin Abi Talib. These hadiths serve as the basis or justification for modifying the tradition of animal slaughter at funerals. For instance, the hadiths narrate that the Prophet provided food to Ja'far's family after returning from a battle, which the Padang Bolak community interprets as a commendable practice of feeding others, especially during significant moments like funerals. Therefore, the tradition of animal slaughter at funerals in the Padang Bolak community can be seen as a fusion of local culture and Islamic teachings. Although its core still stems from local culture, this tradition has been modified by Islamic teachings, becoming a vital part of the social and religious life of the Padang Bolak community.

Based on an interview with Ustadz Salman Amidi, a religious figure in Padang Bolak, the hadith about providing food to the family of Ja'far bin Abi Thalib has become a key reference for modifying the tradition of animal slaughter at funerals in the Padang Bolak community. According to Ustadz Salman Amidi, this hadith provides a strong foundation for continuing this tradition while incorporating the values of Islamic teachings. Thus, the modification of this tradition can be seen as an effort to harmonize local customs with Islamic teachings, reflecting the religious and cultural life of the Padang Bolak community (Salman Amidi Siregar, personal communication, August 29, 2022).

According to Ustadz Kadir Ahmad Siregar, some Islamic scholars in Padang Bolak oppose the tradition of slaughtering animals at funerals,

believing it can be harmful to the community. However, given the strong influence of local customs, it is not feasible to completely abolish this tradition. Therefore, the scholars agree to allow its continuation by making various modifications to eliminate elements of polytheism and harm. These modifications, made in accordance with Islamic teachings, ensure the tradition can be practiced without conflicting with religious principles. This allows the people of Padang Bolak to continue this tradition with the approval of scholars who have provided guidance for its Islamic implementation (Kadir Ahmad Siregar, personal communication, August 29, 2022).

The acceptance of authority over religious rituals begins when the ritual is practiced (Geertz, 1973). In this case, modifications to the tradition of slaughtering animals at funerals can be seen as acculturation between hadith and local culture. Inspired and reinforced by hadith, these modifications serve as the basis for creating a better culture within the tradition of slaughtering animals. Through the contextualization of hadith, the tradition undergoes transformation to align with the needs and values of the Padang Bolak community.

Acculturation of Islam is a process in which Islamic teachings or values undergo changes or adjustments when absorbed by a local culture or specific social contexts. This can occur when Islamic teachings or practices are adapted to existing traditions or beliefs in a particular society (Harahap, 2016). This acculturation can result in new practices or traditions that combine elements from both sources. In the context of the tradition of slaughtering animals at funerals in Padang Bolak, the acculturation of Islam occurs when teachings in the hadith about feeding the family of Ja'far bin Abi Thalib are used to modify the local tradition. This hadith serves as the basis for serving or preparing food for the family left behind by the deceased on the day of the calamity, as an expression of compassion and care for their condition. This is an Islamic teaching that strengthens the bond of brotherhood and encourages mutual cooperation among Muslims in facing calamities. The duration for preparing food is not specified in this

hadith; some scholars suggest it should be for one day and one night, considering the grief that can distract from food preparation, while others suggest three days, aligning with the mourning period in some schools of jurisprudence. It is important to avoid excess in preparing food, as excess is considered disliked by Sharia. The food prepared should meet their needs, and visitors who come to the house of the bereaved family are also allowed to partake, as the food is prepared for the family of the deceased, not for themselves.

The acculturation of Islam with this tradition allows for variations in the practices of animal slaughter from one place to another, but the underlying purpose of this tradition remains constant. Nowadays, the practice of modifying this tradition is increasingly common, not only in the Padang Bolak district but also in other districts dominated by the Padang Bolak community, each maintaining their respective uniqueness (Hakiemah, 2019).

The adjustment in the practice of animal slaughter is an effort by religious scholars to eliminate the harmful aspects of this tradition while preserving its continuity. Despite many modifications, the values and meanings of this tradition are still upheld and respected by the people of Padang Bolak as a form of Islamic accommodation to local culture, ensuring its continuity against the tide of modernization. A second adjustment concerns the costs involved. To mitigate the negative impact of this tradition, religious scholars and traditional leaders have established solutions to cover the expenses by creating a communal fund collected by the community. This fund is used to cover all costs associated with the tradition of animal slaughter at funeral ceremonies. Another modification is the expanded involvement of communal aid in this tradition, starting from providing sacrificial animals and rice to meeting other needs of the deceased's family during the 3-day mourning period. This adjustment by religious scholars and the community aims to maintain a tradition that has become an integral part of the culture while ensuring it does not contradict Islamic teachings.

Conclusion

The implementation of the tradition of animal slaughter at funeral ceremonies in the Padang Bolak community of North Padang Lawas Regency is motivated by several factors. These include efforts to preserve customs and culture, respect for parents, the deceased's will to slaughter a cow before passing away, honoring guests, maintaining the deceased's good name within the community, and expressing love for the parents. It is also believed that the merit of charity given on that day will benefit the deceased. In Islamic legal studies, this tradition fundamentally contradicts Islamic teachings in both its processes and conditions. Islam, when confronted with the culture and traditions of a society, follows three principles: first, to accept if it does not contradict Islam; second, to reject if it contradicts Islamic creed and teachings; and third, to modify or change elements that are contrary to the culture. The findings indicate that religious scholars have made many efforts to modify this tradition, recognizing that it is deeply rooted in the society. Through various efforts and modifications, it can be concluded that the modified tradition no longer contradicts Islamic teachings. However, if one adheres to the tradition in its original form, it is considered contradictory and should be abandoned. The modification of this tradition involves communal aid in its implementation, including providing sacrificial animals, rice, and all other necessities required by the deceased's family. This modification is a contribution from the ulama, who continue to lecture and adapt to cultural practices that contradict Islamic teachings without abandoning traditions that have become part of the culture.

The practical implications of these findings are significant for the Padang Bolak community, as they help reconcile local customs with religious requirements, thus maintaining cultural continuity while aligning with Islamic teachings. The community's adaptation through communal contributions not only alleviates the financial burden on grieving families but also strengthens communal bonds and ensures that the practices remain inclusive and sustainable. This model of cultural adaptation and

communal support could be a reference for other communities facing similar conflicts between traditional practices and religious norms.

For further research, it is recommended to study the long-term impacts of these modifications on community cohesion and individual identity within the Padang Bolak community. Additionally, comparative studies with other regions where similar traditions are practiced could provide deeper insights into the dynamics between religion and local customs globally. Exploring the psychological and social impacts of these modified traditions on the families involved could also provide valuable information on the efficacy and reception of such changes within the community. Lastly, further theological analysis on how such modifications viewed within the broader spectrum of Islamic jurisprudence could help in understanding and potentially guiding the process of cultural adaptation in other Islamic communities.

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ISLAMIC MUSIC AND LOCAL IDENTITY OF SUNDANESE ETHNICITY

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Abstract

Derived from the dimension of locality, terebang merges Sundanese ethnic and Islamic elements into a distinctive music genre. This article explores the forms of the Sundanese Islamic musical genre and how this genre is utilized at Islamic ritual events and on the urban stage. With the involvement of cultural activists supporting the Candralijaya band, this research also examines the challenges and criticisms from various groups concerning the integration of ethnicity and Islam. Based on an ethnographic expedition in Tasikmalaya, West Java, the findings reveal a unique significance in this genre that is not evident in other parts of Indonesia or the Muslim world, such as in the Middle East and Pakistan. This study highlights the importance of expressing 'Sundanese-Islamic feelings' through musical performance art. It argues that this music genre embodies a vernacular meaning born from two distinct origins, yet it has created a distinctive genre. This confirms that both sources maintain specific

boundaries, each with its own unique 'flavors.' Future studies could explore how these musical performances can foster intercultural dialogue and understanding in diverse societies, potentially serving as a bridge between different religious and ethnic communities.

Berawal dari dimensi lokalitas, terebang menggabungkan elemen-etnik Sunda dan Islam menjadi genre musik yang khas. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi bentuk-bentuk genre musik Islam Sunda dan bagaimana genre ini digunakan dalam acara ritual Islam dan di panggung urban. Dengan keterlibatan aktivis budaya yang mendukung band Candralijaya, penelitian ini juga mengkaji tantangan dan kritik dari berbagai kelompok mengenai integrasi etnisitas dan Islam. Berdasarkan ekspedisi etnografi di Tasikmalaya, Jawa Barat, temuan ini mengungkapkan sebuah keunikan dalam genre ini yang tidak terlihat di bagian lain Indonesia atau dunia Muslim, seperti di Timur Tengah dan Pakistan. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya mengekspresikan 'perasaan Islam-Sunda' melalui seni pertunjukan musikal. Argumennya adalah bahwa genre musik ini mengandung makna vernakular yang berasal dari dua sumber berbeda, namun telah menciptakan genre yang berbeda. Ini membenarkan bahwa kedua sumber tersebut mempertahankan batas-batas tertentu, masing-masing dengan 'rasa' uniknya sendiri. Studi mendatang dapat mengeksplorasi bagaimana pertunjukan musik ini dapat mendorong dialog dan pemahaman lintas budaya dalam masyarakat yang beragam, berpotensi menjadi jembatan antara komunitas agama dan etnik yang berbeda.

Keywords: cultural criticism, local identity, music genre, urban stage

Introduction

Indonesia, a prominent Southeast Asian country with thousands of islands, is home to diverse tribes and cultures. It has 17,508 islands inhabited by more than 1,340 tribes (Wijaya, 2019, pp. 3–4), with 1,728 cultures recorded as intangible cultural heritage in 2022 (Kementerian Pendidikan

dan Kebudayaan RI, 2022). Such diversity sometimes triggers friction (Vangen & Winchester, 2014, p. 693). This study focuses on West Java, a location where cultural conflicts often occur, viewing religion as a factor that exacerbates this friction. One such conflict took place in 2016 when the Islamic Defenders Front or *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI), a hardline Islamic group, conducted a midnight sweep and destroyed a statue of the puppet character "Arjuna" in a tourist park in Purwakarta Regency. The FPI, deeming the statue an "idol," destroyed it to restore Purwakarta's religious identity. This unauthorized action led to confrontation, with local leaders condemning it. Subsequently, Dedi Mulyadi, the Mayor at the time, challenged the FPI to destroy the tiger statue, an icon for the Siliwangi Regional Military Command III and the West Java Regional Police, questioning their selective targeting of non-Islamic symbols.

Similar incidents have occurred elsewhere; for instance, in Yogyakarta, the statue of the Virgin Mary was covered with a blue tarpaulin due to developmental disagreements, leading to external Islamic organizations intervening, which prompted police involvement. Ultimately, this case concluded as a 'misunderstanding.' Further tensions in East Java involved the tearing down of statues at a temple in Tuban, highlighting ongoing cultural and religious conflicts.

In West Java, the interplay between religion and culture is particularly intense, with the majority (97%) of the population being Muslim, intertwining Sundanese identity with Islam. This is encapsulated in the slogan: 'Sundanese are Islam, Islam is Sundanese' (Woodward, 2019). Despite these tensions, areas such as Kampong Toleransi exemplify peaceful coexistence between Chinese and Sundanese communities (Yuliatwati et al., 2023), challenging the notion that Islam is detached from local ethnic cultures. Puppetry, criticized by both conservative Islamist and modernist groups, exemplifies the cultural artifacts most often targeted.

This paper specialises in Islamic performances in West Java that contradict the abovementioned phenomena. The historian Pacholczyk (1986), for example, observed that musical performances played during the

Wali Songo (Islamic) era were a transition to the Javanese Hindu (pre-Islamic) tradition (Pacholczyk, 1986). Outside Java, in Lombok, for example, Sasak (Islamic) music and Balinese (Hindu) music are often positioned in a binary position as harmonisation of two different religious values (Harnish & Rasmussen, 2011).

This research was conducted in Tasikmalaya City, West Java, in mid-2023 by a research team from the Center for the Study of Muslim Society (CSMS) and used a separate corpus. This study approached the topic from a cultural perspective, while the CSMS examined it from a musical anthropology angle. Preliminary observations and interviews positioned Sundanese music as a bridge between Islamic culture and Sundanese ethnicity, suggesting a syncretic blending rather than a dichotomy. Islam, as perceived here, is distinct from 'Arab' culture, aligning more closely with peripheral Javanese traditions. During the study, the high esteem for Islam among the Sundanese of West Java was evident, reinforcing the slogan 'Sundanese is Islam; Islam is Sundanese,' particularly in the context of Islamic performing arts influenced by strong tribal values.

This article examines the Islamic Sundanese frame-drum music genre, exploring how the people of Tasikmalaya articulate this musical performance as part of local music that is distinctly Islamic yet strongly nuanced by ethnicity. Using Bennett and Peterson's ethnography approach, this research reveals how music genres embody local and trans-local agendas, articulating recurring lifestyle meanings and showing how individuals or groups negotiate these into various activities (Bennett & Peterson, 2004). This study addresses a gap not covered by Simon Black, who discusses how urban movements born from critical efforts of street culture in poor, migrant working-class urban communities shape local musical identities (Black, 2014). In contrast, the Sundanese Islamic music genre emerges not from social movements but from a tradition where frame drums are taught from one generation to the next.

Furthermore, this research fills a void left by Appert by examining how music genres are influenced by the geographical presence of a society

and the significance of specific moments (Appert, 2017). However, it uniquely focuses on how local music shapes the identity of certain ethnic groups with specific ethnic, cultural, and religious traditions. It also challenges Aharon's findings, where the local identity of a community is said to be shaped by appropriating other ethnic music genres (in this case, Israeli appropriation of the Andalusian music genre) (Aharon, 2013).

This research aims to delve into the Sundanese ethnic Islamic music genre by examining its background, type of music, and its activists. Understanding the local context is crucial for comprehending how the Sundanese ethnic community intertwines religion (Islam) with ethnic culture through musical performances, while addressing the challenges and criticisms associated with merging these two aspects. It argues that the Sundanese Islamic music genre possesses a local agenda that integrates Sundanese and Islamic values, making this performing art a distinct identity of the Sundanese society. The study uncovers that the local authenticity of society is shaped by performing arts that amalgamate local ethnic culture with religious traditions.

Method

This study was based on an ethnographic expedition in Tasikmalaya, West Java precisely in a remote village called Cikeusal, Tanjungjaya subdistrict. It focuses the analysis on the Islamic musical genre using the frame-drum type with a musical instrument called *terebang*. The data concerning the Sundanese ethnic Islamic music genre includes its background, type of music, and its activists. Therefore, the data collection includes interviews with key informants such as local musicians, religious leaders, and community elders who are directly involved in the performance and preservation of the *terebang* music genre. Field observations were also integral to the study, allowing for in-depth analysis of live performances and rituals in which the *terebang* is utilized. Additionally, video and audio recordings of the performances were collected to facilitate a detailed examination of musical patterns and interaction among performers.

Documentation review was another crucial aspect, involving analysis of local archives, musical manuscripts, and previous research studies related to the musical traditions of the Sundanese people. This combination of qualitative methods aimed to capture the nuanced interplay between music, culture, and religious expression in this specific ethnographic context.

Findings and Discussion

***Terebang* in Tasikmalaya**

Terebang is played at religious events such as the reading of the Prophet's history, known as al-Barzanji-an, accompanied by a typical Sundanese instrument, the salendro (Suhaya et al., 2020). In Tasikmalaya, this musical instrument is played by a local group named Candralijaya, which was established in 1966 with a unique Cikeusal genre style called '*beluk*,' meaning music without instrumental accompaniment. Although frame drums are played in various villages of Tasikmalaya, this music is particularly popular and renowned in the village of Cikeusal. The primary audience for this music tends to be the elderly, who are also the main performers, thus preserving this musical tradition in Sunda. Not many young people attend these performances; typically, they only participate briefly at the beginning and then soon leave. This situation indicates a lack of opportunity for generational regeneration, placing the tradition at risk of extinction. However, contrary to what might be expected, we found that the knowledge is not being passed down to the young but rather to the older generation.

Brakel observed that local performing arts in Java are usually part of syncretistic ritual ceremonies and involve the veneration of specific sites or figures (Brakel, 2004). While Brakel's argument is valid, it does not entirely apply in Cikeusal where *terebang* is played to commemorate Islamic events such as the *Maulid* (birthday) of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and circumcision, with quite a few people using it for celebrations. This practice challenges Brakel's assumptions and leans more toward efforts at desacralization. Although some scholars, such as Acciaioli and Newland, argue that ritual desacralization aims to promote tourism with material and

worldly motives, and attempts to showcase the syncretism within Islam in West Java (Acciaoli, 1985, p. 152; Newland, 2000, p. 199).

Sundanese Muslims in Tasikmalaya

As the second-largest ethnic group in Indonesia after the Javanese, the Sundanese people are 97.29% Muslim (Suryadinata et al., 2003, p. 103), giving rise to the label 'Sundanese are Islam, Islam is Sundanese'. Tasikmalaya is part of Sunda, and history has recorded that Tasikmalaya became a small cultural center in Sumedang (which had its capital in Central Dayeuh) under the Islamic Mataram Sultanate. The influx of Muslims into Sunda became even more significant after the forced migration in 1965, during the transition to the tumultuous New Order government. This period was marked by a coup and physical conflict between the Soekarno government and the TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or Indonesian Army) (Hoadley, 2005, pp. 8, 10–12, 16). This situation forced Muslims to migrate to Tasikmalaya, Garut, and Bandung, areas that were protected by the army (Hugo, 2006, p. 73). Currently, there are around 1.8 million Muslims in Tasikmalaya, and there were 266 Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in 2019 (Pemerintah Kota Tasikmalaya, 2019). This popularity later earned Tasikmalaya the reputation of being one of the 'santri cities'.

Another indicator of the Islamic influence is that after the New Order, Tasikmalaya began to incorporate Islamic values and principles into regional law. The issuance of the Tasikmalaya Sharia-based Regional Regulation (*Perda Syariah*) provided a protective umbrella for Sundanese Muslims amid the political and social chaos following Soeharto's resignation. However, this *Perda Syariah* did not have a significant impact on Tasikmalaya because of the widespread chaos and the emergence of corruption practices that plagued both central and regional governments after the overthrow of the New Order (McLeod, 2000). The existence of this Sharia Regional Regulation at that time demonstrated that Islam had deeply penetrated aspects of the Sundanese people's lives and had been adopted into the regional government system.

Types of Sundanese Islamic Music Genres

Terebang Sejak

This Sundanese Islamic music genre features two types of drums. The first, *terebang sejak*, includes four to five drums of different sizes, typically played by one person per drum in unison. The rhythm varies depending on the event. In Cikeusal, the *terebang sejak* is traditionally played during the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, with rhythms derived from the *Kitab Mulud al-Barzanji*, more popularly known in West Java as the *Kitab Mulud*. However, the tradition fell into disrepair when this music was played at weddings. The *Kitab Mulud al-Barzanji*, authored by the village founder Haji Aki Hambali in 1961, combines Sundanese and Arabic and is inspired by Zainal Abidin Ja'far bin Hasan al-Barzanji's 17th-century work. The *Kitab Mulud* serves as an instruction manual for all *terebang sejak* performers, consisting of five main personnel—two vocalists and three backups to cover for any fatigue. Performances typically last all night until dawn.

Terebang sejak performances, enriched with Islamic motifs, accompany Islamic ceremonies, with songs and music following the intonations noted in the *Kitab Mulud*. Historically, *terebang sejak* has been part of the region since pre-Islamic times, passed down through generations. The spread of Islam in Java during the mid-14th century, particularly through trade routes like those in Banten, Cirebon, and Sunda, integrated Islamic culture into Javanese traditions (Gultom, 2018; Sulistiyono, 2021). The Sultanate of Banten and Cirebon represented the zenith of Islamic glory in Sunda, linking to the Demak Islamic empire. In other words, Islamic culture and art aspects were introduced and infiltrated Javanese culture and traditions. It is not impossible that the art of Islamic music, as musicologist Kunst found in Sunda, showed that the *Rangkasbetung* musical instrument was popular among West Javanese Muslims (Kunst, 2013, pp. 449–450).

The rhythmic text of *terebang sejak* originates from the *Kitab Mulud al-Barzanji*, and some lyrics are drawn from *Syi'rul Hisan* (Qur'anic verses about goodness). In places like Sumedang in West Java, this genre has been preserved as 'ritual music' since the 1930s, often intertwined with stories of

Muslim figures such as Shaykh 'Abdul Qadir Jailani, popularly involved in *manakiban* rituals. Given the Javanese affinity for ritual, integrating Islamic elements into this music has been a way to propagate Islam (Tickell, 2009). In contrast to the Candralijaya music group, they play more *beluk* than *sejak*. During the *Maulidan* event, the people of Cikeusal think that the 'spirit' of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH will be present when the drum *bedug* is beaten. There is a constant awareness that the Prophet will be present at assemblies (Muslim gatherings) to remember with prayer (*dhikr*, prayer) and song.

During *Maulidan* events, the residents of Cikeusal believe that the 'spirit' of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH is invoked when the *bedug* drum is played, fostering a communal atmosphere of remembrance through *dhikr* (prayer) and song. The use of *terebang sejak* in these rituals reflects a Sufi approach, reminiscent of the *Samā'* ceremonies that involve singing, dancing, and poetry to evoke divine remembrance. Integrating music into religious practices is central to contemplative traditions in Islamic Sufism (Lewisohn, 1997), creating an immersive experience where participants feel 'intoxicated by divine love'. According to the Sundanese people, especially Cikeusal, there is no means of getting closer to God in a plural manner other than congregational prayer and playing *terebang*.

Terebang Beluk

To distinguish it from *sejak*, *beluk* is older and is played without a musical rhythm; the instrument used is called *gebes*. In other words, *gebes* is the musical instrument, and *beluk* is the vocal art. Previously, both were played in a single performance, but nowadays, they are more often played separately. Occasionally, the *gebes* drum is played at *terebang sejak* performances. Another distinction from *sejak* is the larger size of the drum. Players of this Sundanese frame-drum genre must be physically and mentally robust, as the instrument is quite large, with a diameter of around 75 cm and made from jackfruit tree wood, each drum weighing 20-35 kilograms. Although it is played while sitting down, players must remain mentally

composed as performances last all night; thus, players lying down—whether inside or outside the performance—must not be distracted by other activities. For the Sundanese, wood from the jackfruit tree is considered robust, suitable for foundations or antiques. As such, the Candralijaya band possesses *terebang* musical instruments over 100 years old. Another difference from *sejak* is that the vocal text in *beluk* is unstructured and lacks a controlled sound system.

When interviewed, several *gebes* players mentioned that this music exudes a 'Sundanese-Islamic' aura, although it was initially confusing how music played without songs could convey a sense of sacredness. However, during observation, I noticed that the audience for *gebes* enjoyed the unsung rhythm of the pieces. Mr. Ujang Syahrul expressed his enjoyment of the authentic Sundanese rhythm, which invigorates those present. Another informant, Mr. Aceng, shared that his ancestors have played *terebang gebes-beluk* across generations, a practice in Sundanese called *sered*. He recalled that there were many bands like Candralijaya in the past, ranging from 10 to 17 groups. They would gather and play in open fields for competitions, an activity known as *grubug*, meaning 'gathering simultaneously'. According to him, the more bands that attended, the more enthusiastic the players became, as they showcased their skills in these competitions. In the context of the Islamic Mataram palace, another term for *grubug* is *garebeg*, used during ceremonies such as *sekaten* (commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH), *syawalan* (Eid al-Fitr holiday), and *besaran* (Eid al-Adha holiday) (Karim & Raya, 2022; Woodward, 2011).

Terebang Beluk is a Sundanese Islamic musical genre characterized by an agricultural theme. Because it does not require precise arrangement or ensemble rules, this genre sometimes sounds rough and loud, contrasting sharply with its role's typically gentle and smooth character. According to Mr. Aceng, in the past, *terebang beluk* and *outs* were used by farmers to express their grievances through music. Typically, members of the group take turns performing as a means of regeneration. The message of this musical instrument is conveyed when it is sung, and the members of the Candralijaya

group project their voices loudly, akin to people screaming. This method mimics how farmers communicate across their distant and hilly fields. Most fields in Cikeusal are dry rice fields (*huma* fields).

In his monumental work 'Music in Java,' Kunst classified *terebang beluk* as ancient Sundanese music called *tembang nuhun*. It is referred to as 'tembang' because it is sung with a specific arrangement to narrate stories so that lessons or values can be imparted (Kunst, 2013, p. 392). The people of Cikeusal call *terebang* '*tembang lumbung*' to honor the romance of the farmers' struggles, from planting to harvest. They endure various challenges, from acquiring seeds, planting, nurturing, combating pests, weathering hostile climates, and achieving bumper harvests, to selling their crops at fluctuating prices. This *tembang lumbung* also commemorates the farmers' success in the food self-sufficiency program initiated by President Soeharto during the New Order regime (Ariefiansyah & Herman, 2023; Hamilton-Hart, 2019). In the New Order era, the practice of plowing fields transitioned from using animal power (buffaloes) to machines (Dijkman & Leeuwen, 2019, pp. 143-144). In essence, *terebang beluk* represents the traditional method by which the Muslim community in Cikeusal cultivates crops, celebrated through this ancient Sundanese song.

Several farmers in Cikeusal have admitted that the romanticized version of the farmers' journeys during the Suharto era's food self-sufficiency program is no longer felt today. The switch to engine power has made their work more accessible, and they no longer express their grievances through song. Mahmudi, the son of Mr. Aceng, recalled how his father once owned buffalo. According to him, *terebang beluk* has transitioned to the urban stage. The Candralijaya band has taken the initiative to bring *terebang beluk* to urban audiences, performing at venues like the Tasikmalaya Arts and Culture Exhibition at Plaza Asia, Tasikmalaya City. This event was held on the Ground Floor of the mall and even featured a collaboration with vocalist Iwan Fals in 2010.

Candralijaya is one of the main actors in *Terebang* performances. The older generation in Cikeusal remains enthusiastic about preserving these frame drums. Meanwhile, the youth are interested in preserving the performing arts of Sundanese music but find playing traditional musical instruments somewhat 'boring.' However, several youth communities are keen to help the Candralijaya band preserve this music genre. After Suharto announced his resignation as President in 1988, these youth groups became concerned about the development of *terebang* and founded several 'Sundanese Music Lovers' communities.

Mr. Asep Zam Noer and Mr. Acong are two young individuals who frequently transition between traditional and modern stages. They formed the *Azan* Community and the *Cermin* Community, which have revitalized the authenticity of centuries-old *terebang* in the urban performing arts scene. To date, Mr. Asep Noer has engaged educational institutions such as the Cipasung Islamic Boarding School to study and help regenerate interest. This initiative is driven by the rhythm and arrangement developments that originated from the *Mulud* Book, a key reference in Sundanese Islamic boarding schools. Similarly, Mr. Acong has undertaken comparable efforts with the *Cermin* Community, mirroring those of the *Azan* Community. According to him, the urban stage is an ideal venue for the millennial generation to acquaint themselves with the legendary Sundanese performing arts.

Mr Asep Zam Noer and the *Azan* Community

The founder of the *Azan* Community is Mr. Asep Zam Noer, whose full name is Acep Zam-zam Noer. In 2001, through a Sharia Regional Regulation (*Perda Syariah*), Tasikmalaya was designated a 'Muslim City' by the regional government. This inspired Mr. Asep Zam Noer to establish the *Azan* Community as a means to preserve Sundanese Islamic culture, at a time when there was opposition trying to erase traces of Islamic art and culture in Sundanese society. In essence, the creation of the *Azan*

Community was Mr. Asep Zam Noer's method of safeguarding *terebang* through political channels.

From the *Azan* Community, Mr. Asep Zam Noer then founded the PNS Party (Nurul Sembako Party), which stands for 'Nurul' (light in Arabic) and 'Sembako' (Nine Basic Needs). Through the PNS Party, Mr. Asep Zam Noer criticized the Reform-era government for its lack of support for rural communities in agriculture, arts, and culture. Another layer of parody in 'PNS' refers to civil servants—who receive substantial salaries from the government yet are perceived as not siding with the people. With this party and the *Azan* Community, Mr. Asep Zam Noer encouraged all Sundanese to abstain from '*golput*' (*golongan putih* or white group), a term for those who refuse to vote in general elections, particularly the Presidential elections, as a strong protest against the government.

Furthermore, Mr. Asep Zam Noer invited the Cipasung Islamic Boarding School to teach *terebang* to the students (*santri*) so that they could become familiar with the art of Sundanese Islamic music, based on the *Kitab Mulud*. He also took the initiative to broadcast *terebang* performances on local radio and television channels. Even when airing on television, Mr. Asep Zam Noer labeled *terebang* as 'Sundanese Islamic Music' to introduce this Islamic performing art to the general public. Since Mr. Asep Zam Noer showcased *terebang sejak* and *beluk* on television and radio, many people outside the Sundanese community have begun to recognize *terebang*. He views this exposure as his contribution to preserving Sundanese Islamic culture. He also has a strong desire to counter the criticism from opponents of the *Perda Syariah*, who, according to him, are corrupt groups with worldly interests.

Mr Acong and the *Cermin* Community

Because the Candralijaya band was predominantly managed by the 'old people,' Mr. Acong, representing the 'young people,' took alternative steps to help preserve this Sundanese Islamic music genre. In 1998, similar to the *Azan* Community, Mr. Acong founded the *Cermin* Community to

encourage school children to learn about the musical traditions. If the schools did not accept this performing art, Mr. Acong invited children after school, including those who had dropped out, to Cikeusal for regular meetings—weekly and once a month—to practice playing *terebang*. Although *terebang* is typically played by 'old people' during traditional performances, Mr. Acong believes that young people should also be given the knowledge and practice of playing this musical instrument, along with the teachings of the *Kitab Mulud*.

Unlike the politically oriented Azan Community, the Cermin Community focuses more on preserving culture through educational and cultural initiatives that involve the private sector. In 2010, Mr. Acong contacted Candralijaya to facilitate a collaboration with national artists. During the New Year celebrations in Bandung and Tasikmalaya, Candralijaya successfully collaborated with the renowned vocalist and guitarist, Iwan Fals. This strategy proved quite successful as the Sundanese Islamic frame-drum genre, with Candralijaya as the performers, received special attention from the millennial generation and attracted thousands of viewers. Among the attendees were many students. Iwan Fals sang with guitar accompaniment, while Candralijaya complemented the performance with *terebang*. This epic combination of modern guitar and traditional drums created a unique blend, where Iwan Fals brought a pop-flamboyant style, and Candralijaya contributed a traditional sound that evoked an Old Sundanese feel.

***Terebang* and Rural-Urban Vibes**

Every beat is silent when this frame drum is played in the village. However, when these frame drums are played in the city, they convey an authentic impression of 'Sundanese Islam.' Here, the researcher demonstrates how *terebang* can explore both contexts and position itself as a local identity, potentially beneficial for other ethnic performing arts with similar cultural character and spirit.

While part of the CSMS research team, the researcher attended an Islamic frame-drum genre performance in Cikeusal village, and felt different vibes compared to those in *Sasak* (Lombok) or at the *Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* (Central Java). The *Sasak* style is more prominent in ensemble, flow and melody rather than Islamic story elements. In the song *Lalo Ngaro*, performed on Musik Wonderland Indonesia 2 on August 17 2022, the female vocalist is seen wearing traditional *Sasak* clothing, complete with a *hijab* (a head covering like Muslim women). However, *Lalo Ngaro* only tells the story of a young man who went to the rice fields and met a woman on the way. This is similar to the Islamic musical at the *Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat*, where the Islamic Mataram element subtly influences every aspect of the palace's cultural heritage and values. Even though it remains one of the Islamic sultanates in Java, Islamic elements add only a subtle touch to the palace's musical genre. Meanwhile, according to the researcher's analysis, the performance in Cikeusal village transcends the ethnic Islamic values inherent in the genre. Through Qureshi's analysis, it becomes evident that the nexus between sound and societal response is crucial, where the sonic sensation not only ignites enthusiasm but also awakens people (Qureshi, 2000, p. 801). In other words, the frame drum can instantly connect the audience, allowing them to immerse in the same emotive experience.

The term 'vibes' is used here because it focuses attention on the local rural atmosphere. Borrowing Canosa and Bennett's term, 'urban vibes in a rural setting,' *terebang* emerges as an art performance that represents ecological awareness with a rural aura. Canosa highlighted that 'urban vibes' develop because today's young generation has a more rural than urban local form. Rural spaces allow the younger generation to play rural music amidst urban vibes (Canosa & Bennett, 2021). The music's impact on the audience leads to varied responses depending on the situation. Mencke assesses that the combination of different modes of musical experience—from classical (traditional) music aesthetics to contemporary (modern) trends—among listeners and players in different contexts, places, and situations creates

unique vibes. By utilizing evidence from psychology and neuroscience research, the emotional response of inner calm provides a feeling of joy and new enthusiasm (Mencke et al., 2023). This is why Candralijaya portrays *terebang* as a venue to voice his grievances about being a village farmer. Furthermore, *terebang* aims to introduce the personal life of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his gentle and caring character to 'little people.' At these moments, the audience is also lost in this imaginative journey.

In the village vibes, as the music begins, the drummers' solemnity is evident as they close their eyes and sway from side to side. This mirrors the intensity of those lost in the ritual of dhikr (remembering God in Islam) during *istighosah* or *sholawatan*, where praise to the Prophet accompanies the rhythm of the songs. This tranquil atmosphere is also influenced by rural elements, such as the absence of vehicle noise or the hustle and bustle of urban areas. Conversely, in urban settings, the audience's response to this music performance differs significantly. For example, in the village, everyone recognizes *terebang* as a Cikeusal music genre that embodies Sundanese Islamic authenticity. However, in cities and urban communities, even those residing in West Java may still need to learn what *terebang* is. The researcher confirmed with a colleague from Bandung that they were not familiar with this Sundanese music genre. The activity organized by the *Cermin* Community, which showcases *terebang* and its players, the band Candralijaya at Mall Plaza Asia, serves to affirm the identity of *terebang* as a Sundanese ethnic Islamic musical genre on a modern stage.

Unlike in the village where *terebang* performances are live and involve only local performers and audiences, in urban areas, the involvement of cultural activists and stakeholders is necessary to create cultural events in public places such as malls. Moreover, these events must be planned for specific occasions, unlike in Cikeusal, where they can happen spontaneously. What Candralijaya achieved in collaboration with the capital's musician, Iwan Fals, exemplifies the engagement of cultural activists in this endeavor. Stakeholders such as malls, entrepreneurs, or local governments facilitate these performance events. The music performances by Candralijaya allow

urban audiences, particularly young people and millennials, to experience their Sundanese identity in ways they have never seen before. Meanwhile, for the people of Cikeusal, this performance is a routine tradition that connects them to the struggles of farming, intertwined with the story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH's life journey, providing solace to their hearts that the Prophet too endured pain.

Village vibes, as Allen termed, the revival of local music is about "maintaining authenticity." The discourse of a strong local identity in Cikeusal through the steadfast efforts of the Candralijaya band and the two youth communities (Azan Community and Cermin Community) represents a renaissance of awareness that vernacular music genres are part of a series of historical processes shaping the authenticity of rural music. Allen also emphasized that the involvement of a single band underpins this identity formation, driven by a robust cultural impulse (Allen, 2010).

Challenges and Criticism of the Fusion of Sundanese Ethnicity with Islamic Culture

Here, the term 'Islamic culture' is used because this Islamic musical genre shares patterns with other regions in Indonesia, such as parts of Java and several Southeast Asian regions. In Thailand, the extinction and revitalization of Cambodian performing arts have occurred significantly. Khmer music, a traditional Thai music genre, has had to face this reality. However, a group of accomplished musicians, mentors, and players have made efforts to revive these Thai music traditions. A strong motivation for this revitalization is the role of tradition in educating (regenerating) and preserving religious rituals, Cambodian national identity, and the livelihood background of the musicians (Kartomi, 1995). Kartomi also confirmed that in Cikeusal, the challenge of preserving music is similarly rooted in three aspects found in Thai Khmer music: regeneration and preservation of traditions, Sundanese identity, and farmers as the main livelihood of the Cikeusal community. Here, the real challenge is the issue of regeneration, which still adheres to traditional principles. *Terebang* players are always

chosen from older age groups, preventing young people from being directly involved. Although Mr. Asep Zam Noer and Mr. Aceng have initiated efforts through the *Azan* Community and the *Cermin* Community, the method of regenerating this music genre has remained unchanged.

This sparked criticism from opponents of the Tasikmalaya Sharia Regional Regulation (*Perda Syariah*), who, according to Mr. Asep Zam Noer, are corrupt government officials opposed to establishing Islam as the foundation of regional law. Using his political methods, Mr. Asep Zam Noer responded to this criticism by establishing the Azan Community and the PNS Party. The Cipasung Islamic Boarding School supports this effort, teaching its students to play *terebang* as part of preserving Sundanese musical arts. Titon views efforts like this from an ecological perspective. While preserving local music as cultural heritage with the aid of applied ethnomusicologists and folklorists, the public still adopts a defensive stance in protecting cultural assets. This occurs due to sustainability interventions from interested parties who wish to segregate one culture (Titon, 2009). For instance, critics of *terebang* seek to separate Islam from Sundanese culture due to other, misaligned interests. Observing this phenomenon, these officials are hesitant to designate Tasikmalaya as an 'Islamic City.' Pourmohammadi argues that the definition of an 'Islamic City' transcends its physical form and structure. The 'Islamic City' theory, as introduced by the Qur'an, consists of three supporting elements: society, law, and city government. According to him, if these three elements are absent, then the definition of an 'Islamic City' cannot be established (Pourmohammadi et al., 2022). Although the Cikeusal community, which is predominantly Muslim, meets these criteria, the Sharia Regional Regulation, opposed by some Tasikmalaya government officials who advocate for its repeal, still does not suffice to make Tasikmalaya an 'Islamic City.'

The officials acknowledge Sundanese as the 'native' ethnic culture of Tasikmalaya but do not accept Islam as the law and governance. Although there are other motivational factors for this rejection, the necessary mechanisms to establish Tasikmalaya as an 'Islamic City' are not yet in place.

Moreover, the argument for an 'Islamic City' that emerged from an Islamic musical genre does not yet possess sufficient resources to meet these criteria

In fact, from a cultural perspective, this music genre meets the criteria for being considered an Islamic musical, as previously explained. In the village vibe, *terebang* is an iconic 'Sundanese Islamic' identity not found in Islamic culture in other parts of Java. Essentially, it bridges Sundanese culture with the spread of Islam. For example, the frame drum is iconic, symbolizing a prophetic tradition. This is supported by the biographical storyline of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the legal consensus on musical instruments permitted in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) (Omar, 1964). *Terebang* instruments are also regulated in the *Kitab Mulud al-Barzanji*. These factors earn the genre widespread respect. Besides embodying Sundanese ethnic values, *terebang* also exalts Islamic values by musically narrating the history of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The responses of players and spectators are central to this discussion. If this genre did not carry the 'Sundanese spirit' or 'Islamic spirit', it would be impossible for members of the Candralijaya group and the audience to enjoy the music accompanied by physical movements as if they were lost in the pleasure of *dhikr*. This resembles a Sufi movement, where dancers move their bodies repeatedly to celebrate the 'liberation of the soul' from all dependence, relying solely on 'God's Love'. For Sufis, dancing is a moment when they are 'drunk in love' with God, as if walking amidst the grass and green village vistas with flowers to present themselves to God's beloved servant (Maier, 1990).

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the repetitive sound of drums from the Islamic musical genre can hypnotize the audience with a ritual dance called *dhamāl*. The imaginative expectation of creating *dhamāls* that are then displayed at various holy sites in Pakistan characterizes the actual devotional practices of rural communities and the urban poor in Sindh and Punjab, expressing their spiritual feelings (Frembgen, 2012). Like *dhamāl*, *terebang* is an experience of complete and active mystical devotion to fulfill the 'social habitus' of village farmers, a typical village ritual act deeply embedded in Sundanese culture. Similarly, this experience of mystical devotion is fully

integrated into the local dimensions of Sindhi and Punjab, shared by Muslims with audiences from other religions, such as Hindus. Here, the contextual meaning of Cikeusal, predominantly farming, becomes the repertoire for *terebang* farmers to engage with nature (rice fields or fields) through the lens of Islamic spiritual romance.

Conclusion

The study of local music has garnered attention from world musicologists, some of whom focus on the structure of the instruments, while others adopt an anthropological approach to draw out the cultural aspects that shape musical genres. However, as explained in this paper, it has been challenging to find studies that illustrate a solid vernacular culture generated from religious elements. The Candralijaya band is a local Muslim element that upholds Islam as a principle of life. Furthermore, local rural music genres rarely make appearances on the urban stage. Through the efforts of the youth movements of the *Azan* Community and the *Cermin* Community, these genres have successfully reached an urban audience previously unaware of this music. By presenting a robust blend of Sundanese ethnic culture and Islamic performance rituals, this study explores the Sundanese Islamic music genre, which originated from two distinct sources: the Sundanese ethnic and the Islamic traditions. History records that *Rangkasbetung* has been popular among Muslims in West Java and is another name for *terebang*. Additionally, the arrangement and ensemble of *terebang*, as prescribed in the *Kitab Mulud al-Barzanji*, which contains the life story of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, is noteworthy. These two sources have merged to form a new genre that differs from others, such as the Muslim Sasak music in Lombok or the music at the *Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* in Central Java.

This type of sensation—silence, authenticity, and unity with nature—is not found in those genres. This study showcases these expressions on two different platforms: 'village vibes' and 'city vibes,' highlighting the strong identity of the vernacular ethnic music genre. With its ability to display these

aspects, this Sundanese Islamic music genre offers a broad comparative analysis with Islamic musical genres from other parts of the world, such as the Middle East with the concept of 'Sufi dance' that can 'free the soul' from dependence on anything other than God, and in Pakistan, where its Islamic music genre can create *dhamāl*, used in various Muslim and Hindu holy places as a form of genuine devotional practice for rural communities and the urban poor. Although *terebang* has successfully combined two different elements, it has faced negative criticism. Some Tasikmalaya government officials oppose the implementation of the Sharia Regional Regulation (*Perda Syariah*), which legalizes Islamic performing arts in public spaces as part of defining an 'Islamic City.' On the other hand, activists from the Sundanese Islamic music genre, such as the Azan Community and the Cermin Community, have struggled to meet the criteria for defining Tasikmalaya as an 'Islamic City' as proposed by Pourmohammadi, which includes requirements introduced by the Qur'an. Although the Cikeusal community represents an 'Islamic society,' the law (*Perda Syariah*) and the city government apparatus reject Pourmohammadi's criteria, leading to the failure of this definition in the area.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of integrating local music genres with broader cultural narratives, particularly in how they engage with urban audiences and address issues of identity and tradition. Given the unique confluence of Sundanese ethnic and Islamic cultural elements in the *terebang* music genre, further research could benefit from a more in-depth comparative analysis with other regional musical genres that incorporate religious elements. Future studies could explore the socio-cultural impacts of such music genres in urban settings, particularly how they influence youth culture and urban public life. Another productive area of study could be the exploration of how these musical performances can foster intercultural dialogue and understanding in diverse societies, potentially serving as a bridge between different religious and ethnic communities.

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUFISM AKHLAQI TO STRENGTHEN THE NOBLE MORALS OF INDONESIAN STUDENTS

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Abstract

The world of education today faces a variety of complex and diverse challenges. One significant challenge is the shift towards the industrial era 4.0, which potentially negatively impacts student morals. This study explores the concept of Sufism akhlaqi as proposed by experts and its implications for teaching Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at a university in Indonesia, aiming to strengthen students' noble morals. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing a descriptive-analytical method through literature review. The findings of this study indicate that: (1) Sufism akhlaqi emphasizes the purification of the soul to strengthen students' noble character; (2) The implications of the Sufism akhlaqi concept for IRE teaching support the instructional objectives of fostering faith and piety in students, while also focusing on promoting noble

morals. IRE learning materials should integrate the values of Sufism akhlaqi in each relevant subject, and lecturers must serve as role models of noble morals.

Dunia pendidikan saat ini menghadapi berbagai tantangan yang kompleks dan beragam. Salah satu tantangan yang cukup besar adalah peralihan menuju era industri 4.0 yang berpotensi memberikan dampak negatif terhadap moral mahasiswa. Penelitian ini mendalami konsep tasawuf akhlaqi yang dikemukakan oleh para ahli dan implikasinya dalam pengajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (IRE) di salah satu universitas di Indonesia, yang bertujuan untuk memantapkan akhlak mulia mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif-analitis melalui tinjauan pustaka. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa: (1) tasawuf akhlaqi menekankan pada penyucian jiwa untuk memperkuat akhlak mulia peserta didik; (2) Implikasi konsep tasawuf akhlaqi terhadap pengajaran IRE mendukung tujuan pembelajaran untuk menumbuhkan keimanan dan ketakwaan pada peserta didik, sekaligus fokus pada peningkatan akhlak mulia. Materi pembelajaran IRE hendaknya mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai tasawuf akhlaqi pada setiap mata pelajaran yang relevan, dan dosen harus menjadi teladan akhlak mulia.

Keywords: *Implications, Sufism akhlaqi, noble morals.*

Introduction

Sufism has a significant influence on the moral and spiritual life of Muslims (Fahrudin et al., 2021), and it can be an alternative solution to the spiritual needs and moral education of modern humans (Bagherpur et al., 2022; Bolandhematan, 2019; Carrington, 2010; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2022; Piraino, 2023). Therefore, the presence of Sufism is very necessary in today's modern world, especially to guide humans to remain conscious of their God (Fahrudin et al., 2021). Sufism studies are relevant to human problems because they provide a balance between birth and mind, offering a sense of coolness (Ghani, 2019; Piraino, 2023).

In this context, Zaruq explained that Sufism is a science that aims to purify the heart and focus it solely on Allah (Isa, 2010, p. 5). Similarly, Ujaibah described Sufism as the study of procedures to reach Allah, cleanse

the mind of all despicable morals, and adorn it with praiseworthy morals (Isa, 2010). One of the branches of Sufism is akhlaqi Sufism, which is highly beneficial for cultivating humans with noble morals (Hamsyah & Subandi, 2017; Purwanto et al., 2023). The essence of akhlaqi Sufism aligns with the primary purpose for which the Prophet was sent to the world, namely to elevate human morals to nobility (Fathurahman, 2019). Akhlaqi Sufism can be a source of one's spiritual values, instilling the belief that everything must be done solely for the sake of Allah Almighty (Ueno, 2018). Moreover, through Sufism, one's heart can become tender and full of love, thus preventing blame, disbelief, and violence against others (Qian, 2021).

Etymologically, the word "Sufism" derives from several sources: (1) "Ahlussuffah," which refers to those who moved with the Prophet from Mecca to Medina; (2) "Shafi" and "shafiiyun," meaning holy, implying that a Sufi is a purified person; and (3) "Shuf," which refers to coarse woolen cloth made from fur, highlighting that Sufis often wear this material as a symbol of simplicity. Terminologically, Sufism is a discipline that explores how an individual can be as close to God as possible (Nasution, 1995).

Sufism involves the purification of the heart from material impurities, founded on man's relationship with the Great Creator (Isa, 2010). According to Al-Kurdi, Sufism studies the virtues and vices of the soul (Hatina, 2022; Mitha, 2019; Sorgenfrei, 2018), detailing how to cleanse it of negative qualities and imbue it with commendable ones, and how to undertake '*suluk*'—a spiritual journey towards the pleasure of Allah and adherence to His commands (Majhuddin, 2010). Al-Nuri defines Sufism as the denial of self-indulgence, which he categorizes as either formal or essential. Formal denial occurs when one renounces a pleasure yet finds pleasure in the denial, whereas essential denial occurs when pleasure itself fades away, leading to true contemplation where Sufis witness God with their "bashirah" (the core strength of humans to empower their physical and spiritual aspects). Hence, while the denial of pleasure is a human act, the elimination of pleasure is an act of God. Human actions are seen as superficial and metaphorical, whereas God's actions are considered essential (Isma'il et al., 2008).

Al-Nuri further elaborates that Sufism embodies noble character, achievable only when one adheres to moral principles, aligns actions with those principles, and meets their demands (Gasdaglis, 2021; McGrath, 1994; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2022). He distinguishes between practices and morals, explaining that practices are mere actions lacking substance, thus their form diverges from their spirit. Morals, on the other hand, are commendable actions performed sincerely, their form in harmony with their spirit. Additionally, Sufism is described as a state of freedom from the shackles of lust and greed. This purification from pride and vanity allows one to seek merit and generosity, committing oneself to the divine rather than worldly pursuits. There are three key moral obligations for those on the Sufi path: first, morality towards God by obeying His commandments sincerely; second, morality towards others by respecting elders, showing compassion to the young, and practicing justice without seeking retribution; and third, morality towards oneself by resisting lust and temptation. These principles elevate a Sufi to the highest esteem before God (Isma'il et al., 2008).

According to Al-Syadzili, Sufism trains the soul in the context of worship ('ubudiyah'), aligning and restoring the soul according to divine laws ('rububiyah'). A Sufi must cultivate four qualities: morality aligned with divine morals, obedience to God's commandments, overcoming internal desires out of reverence for Allah, and striving to maintain a perpetual closeness with Him (Isma'il et al., 2008). This alignment emphasizes continuous spiritual effort and discipline as essential components of the Sufi path.

Practitioners of Sufism are commonly called Sufis. According to Abul Wahid, Sufis use their intellect in times of sorrow, always guided by conscience and devotion to their Lord, steering clear of base passions. Al-Mishri describes a Sufi as someone undeterred by external demands and untroubled by loss. Sufis prioritize God above all else, and thus, God elevates them above all others. Al-Junaid portrays Sufis as God's chosen ones, hidden or revealed at His will. Al-Jalla' defines a Sufi as a 'faqir' (ascetic), free from worldly means and constantly in communion with Allah, unfettered by physical locations (As-Sarraj, 2009).

The path to the pinnacle of Sufism, known as '*suluk*', demands perfection in the purity of the heart and a strong will ('*iradah*'). This journey involves shedding veils of materialism, honor, class prejudice, and immorality. Once these veils are lifted, a '*salik*' (traveler on the path of *suluk*) requires a mentor for guidance. A place for solitude and heart concentration, or '*zawiyah*', is also essential. Throughout this journey, a *salik* encounters various spiritual statuses ('*manazil*') leading to closer proximity to Allah (As-Sarraj, 2009).

Sufism plays a very important role in life (Ghani, 2019). It offers a crucial solution for overcoming crises caused by modernization, helping to quench the spiritual thirst and refresh the pursuit of God (Milani & Possamai, 2015). The essence of Sufism lies in establishing a direct relationship with God, enabling a person to feel, through their consciousness, that they are in God's presence (Ni'am, 2020). Sufism should be developed and promoted within communities because it offers several benefits, including saving humanity from the confusion and anxiety resulting from a lack of values (Isa, 2010).

Furthermore, Sufism provides a way to overcome frustration through a positive attitude towards God's decrees, characterized by complete surrender and acceptance of God's decisions (Athallah, 2006). Materialistic and hedonistic tendencies can be addressed by adopting the concept of *zuhud* or asceticism (Usman et al., 2020). Additionally, the practice of *uzlah* or seclusion which is also found in Sufism, encourages withdrawing from worldly deceptions. Therefore, the principles of Sufism should be integrated into the overall concept of life.

The term "noble moral," the focus of this study, linguistically relates to the Arabic word "*akhlak*," derived from "*akhlaqun*." The plural form is "*khulqun*," encompassing meanings such as character, behavior, temperament, conduct, ethics, and customs. According to Saebani and Hamid (2010), morality is an innate trait that enables a person to act happily and effortlessly without conscious thought. An action is considered moral if it is performed automatically and consistently, without deliberate thought, research, or forced by authority, as it becomes part of the individual's

character, disposition, and habits—essentially, an attitude and action ingrained in daily life (Rahmat, 2010).

A person with a perfect noble character exhibits the correct moral attitudes and behaviors. In Islam, all attitudes and behaviors must be based on the commands of Allah and His Messenger (Saebani & Hamid, 2010). Thus, correctness in moral attitudes and behaviors implies adherence to divine commands, rather than succumbing to whims and desires. Additionally, noble morals involve enhancing one's devotion through increased worship, charity, prayer, fasting, filial piety towards parents, harmonious living, alleviating human suffering, simplicity, truthfulness, keeping promises, trustworthiness, humility, controlling anger, forgiving others, frequent remembrance of God, repentance, patience, and even seemingly minor acts like removing thorns from paths, as these are also considered virtuous actions commanded by Allah and His Messenger (Kulkarni & Karim, 2022; Rahmat, 2010).

This current paper broadly discusses matters related to the concept of akhlaqi Sufism which includes: the meaning of akhlaqi Sufism, the steps in akhlaqi Sufism towards noble moral people, the efforts that must be taken in Sufism to feel close to God, and the implications of the concept of Sufism akhlaqi on IRE (Islamic Religious Education) learning to strengthen the noble morals of students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI).

Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach through a literature review. In this review, researchers aim to describe and analyze perceptions and thoughts about the concept of Sufism akhlaqi from various sources, subsequently formulating these into a scientific value framework. This aligns with the view of Bogdan and Biklen (1982), who posit that qualitative research via literature review primarily seeks to understand and interpret concepts within specific texts. The method utilized in this study is descriptive analysis. From the results of this formulation, the implications for teaching Islamic Education at the Indonesian University of Education (UPI) were analyzed to enhance the noble morals of students.

The researchers themselves act as instruments in this study, responsible for establishing the research focus, selecting data sources, collecting data, assessing data quality, analyzing and interpreting the data, and drawing conclusions from their findings. The study comprises two phases: (1) the literature review process, involving data collection and analysis on the concept of Sufism akhlaqi from various sources; and (2) analyzing the implications of the Sufism akhlaqi concept in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) to bolster the noble morals of students.

Data analysis was performed using content analysis, which involves analyzing concepts and supporting literature related to the thought of Sufism akhlaqi. This analysis aims to describe and resolve the research problem, making the findings clear and meaningful. The analytical steps undertaken in this study include data reduction and data presentation. Data reduction involved summarizing, selecting key points, and focusing on relevant data, ensuring the data's clarity. Data presentation then involved detailed examination and exploration of the concept of Sufism akhlaqi through methodical steps, facilitating easier comprehension of the study's content for readers. The final stage involved analyzing the implications. From this study, the researchers attempted to analyze the influence of the Sufism akhlaqi concept on IRE teaching to enhance the noble morals of UPI students.

Findings & Discussion

Understanding Sufism Akhlaqi

Sufism akhlaqi emphasizes the purification of the soul to achieve noble morals. This teaching focuses on the perfection and purity of the soul, regulating mental attitudes and enforcing strict behavioral discipline to attain optimal happiness (Daulay et al., 2021). Employing specific methods, this form of Sufism concentrates on efforts to avoid despicable morals, thereby fostering praiseworthy morals among Sufis (Farhan & Arafat, 2021). According to Azyumardi Azra, Sufism akhlaqi prioritizes noble morals. The essence of Sufism akhlaqi is the effort and process of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, which involves cleansing oneself from both major and minor sins, as well as from various heart diseases and despicable qualities, in order to develop one's

inherent noble moral potential. It also emphasizes the need to reduce, control, and eliminate bad morals within an individual (Isma'il et al., 2008).

Sufism focuses on bureaucracy or formal rules to shape students' attitudes and behavior with the goal of immediate moral and ethical improvement. This branch of Sufism emphasizes both the outer and inner aspects of civilization in learning, hence the famous rule: "put civilization before science" (Abur et al., 2020). Thus, Sufism is of practical value. A person's mind is shaped by various rules and policies, fostering qualities such as honesty, fairness, sincerity, generosity, diligence, obedience, and perpetual purity. This strict pattern of moral education is prevalent in the Sufi community. They form *ahlus shuffah*, social groups characterized by various rules and disciplinary forms (Athallah, 2006). Akhlaqi Sufism does not lead students to directly experience or perceive the existence of Allah, but rather to confidently know Allah and feel closeness to Him. Students are simply taught to be good and to live as if God is always watching. However, the development of moral foundations (loss of ego) through *adab* (proper behavior) and *'ubudiyah* (devotion to Allah) is a prerequisite for attaining a true understanding of the Divine Essence (Isa, 2010).

Sufism, as previously explained, is a discipline aimed at exploring the pathways individuals can take to draw as close as possible to Allah. Akhlaqi Sufism, in particular, delves into the science of purifying the soul, cultivating noble virtues, and integrating them into everyday life. Although the practice of Akhlaqi Sufism traces its roots back to the time of Prophet Muhammad, it was formally articulated as a science in the second century Hijri. This branch of Sufism emphasizes simplicity in life, a principle exemplified by the Prophet through his concept of *zuhud*. Through Sufism, individuals strive to lead a life of *zuhud*, eschewing the allure of worldly possessions, embracing simplicity, and dedicating themselves to various forms of worship. This may include fasting, engaging in nightly prayers, and reciting various *wirid* (spiritual invocations), to the extent that the physical body weakens while the spiritual dimension strengthens. Sufism thus entails a concerted effort to transcend the physical realm and surrender to the spiritual dimension (*nafs*), employing diverse methods to achieve moral refinement, as asserted

by Sufis. It is also seen as a journey to attain knowledge and *ma'rifat* (understanding) of the Divine Essence and His perfection (Isma'il et al., 2002).

Steps to Purify the Heart to Noble Morals

To achieve cleanliness of the heart and thus closeness to God in Sufism, a person must undertake certain steps, specifically *tazkiyatunnafs*, *mujahadah*, and *riyadhah*. Generally, entering the life of Sufism requires several efforts to cleanse the heart of various ailments through *tazkiyatunnafs*. This process not only leads a person to exhibit good morals in everyday life (Acim, 2022; Hamsyah & Subandi, 2017) but also brings them closer to Allah. Therefore, *tazkiyatunnafs* is crucial for those aspiring to embrace Sufism, involving the purification of the heart in both substance and belief (Taimiyah, 2010).

Azyumardi Azra explained that the main activities in practicing Sufism focus on three key efforts: (a) *tazkiyatunnafs*, which involves cleansing oneself of both major and minor sins, as well as various diseases of the heart and despicable qualities; (b) *taqarrub ila Allah*, which means earnestly striving to draw closer to Allah; (c) *hudur al-qalb* ma'a Allah, focusing on feeling the presence of Allah and seeing Him with the eyes of the heart, even experiencing unity with Him (Isma'il et al., 2008).

According to Solihin, *tazkiyatunnafs* holds an essential position in Sufi practices, a focus consistent among Sufis, both classical and contemporary. Al-Ghazali, a charismatic thinker, discussed *tazkiyatunnafs* in several of his books on Sufism, proposing that purification of the soul is achieved through the process of *takhalli*—removing reprehensible qualities and simultaneously instilling praiseworthy ones (Isma'il et al., 2008). *Tazkiyatunnafs* also involves purifying the soul from bestial and satanic qualities and imbuing it with divine morals. It aims to treat mental illness (*asqam al-nufus*) after identifying its causes, intimately connected to morals, psychology, and efforts to draw closer to Allah. Since Allah is Most Holy, He must be approached by a person with a holy soul. Consequently, the degree

of closeness (*qurb*), knowledge (*ma'rifah*), and love (*mahabbah*) a person has towards Him depends on the purity of their soul (Athallah, 2006).

An essential effort for a Sufi to get closer to Allah is *mujahadah* and *riyadhah*. *Mujahadah* (fighting against lust) involves weaning oneself from despicable desires and adhering to the sharia of Allah, both commandments and prohibitions (Isa, 2010). Al-Sadiqi describes *mujahadah* as the ability to suppress the impulse of lust that always seeks to do wrong, enabling oneself to perform good deeds (Hamsyah & Subandi, 2017; Usman et al., 2020). The term *mujahadah* comes from *jihad*, which means "to strive earnestly by exerting all strength on a path believed to be good and true." In the Sufi context, *mujahadah* is a spiritual effort against passions and various low mental tendencies (Gould, 2005; Sheridan, 2012; Zappalà, 2021). It is a continuous war against lust, considered a great war (*al-jihad al-akbar*), using the divine weapon of *dhikr* to Allah. Al-Qushayri views *mujahadah* as an effort to free oneself from the restraints of one's passions, trying to control oneself and not obey one's whims most of the time. Al-Ghazali defines *mujahadah* as the exertion of earnestness in getting rid of lust or abolishing it altogether (Isma'il et al., 2008).

In addition to *mujahadah*, getting closer to Allah involves *riyadhah*. Ash-Shidiqi defines *riyadhah* as spiritual training in performing praiseworthy actions through words, deeds, and the disclosure of the right things, which vary according to the level of closeness of the servant to his God (Majhuddin, 2010). *Riyadhah* is training oneself to purify the soul by combating the desires of the body. This process includes cleansing or emptying the heart from everything other than Allah, then adorning the heart with *dhikr*, worship, charity, and noble morals. According to Ibn Arabi, *riyadhah* is moral formation (Reilly & Stapleford, 2018; Stoner, 2022), which entails purifying and cleansing the soul from everything inappropriate for the soul itself (Sugianto, 2018).

Stages to Self-Perfection in Sufism Akhlaqi

In Sufism, there are stages that must be taken to achieve self-perfection and purification of one's soul in order to attain closeness to God

and an openness of heart, allowing the Divine Nur to be revealed. These stages are *takhalli*, *tahalli*, and *tajalli*. *Takhalli*, the initial step, involves emptying oneself of reprehensible behavior and morals, such as excessive love for worldly affairs (Daulay et al., 2021). It represents an effort to free oneself from a detrimental state of mind and ethics, purging various liver diseases, and discarding negative qualities, particularly those of arrogance (*takabbur*), self-admiration (*ujub*), showiness (*riya*), and seeking approval through hearsay (*sum'ah*) (Rahmat, 2010). *Takhalli* also means liberating oneself from dependent natures driven by mutual pleasure, involving a commitment to abstain from disobedience in all forms and striving to extinguish the drive of evil desires (Farhan & Arafat, 2021). Mustafa Zahri describes *takhalli* as a departure from all reprehensible qualities (Mutholingah et al., 2020).

Al-Baghdadi discusses the behaviors that should be abandoned in Sufism to feel closeness to God: (a) A Sufi should renounce poor behavior and qualities, embracing the good ethics taught by Sufism. (b) Adherents must forsake traits that tarnish the soul's purity, resist physical temptations, adopt spiritual qualities, engage with natural sciences, and frequently recall Allah and His Messenger. (c) Since Sufism involves shifting focus from worldly to moral affairs, combating lust is crucial for drawing closer to Allah. Al-Junaid once defined union with God as "eliminating lust," stating that subduing one's passions is more challenging than demolishing a mountain. (d) Practitioners must adhere to tawhid, which Al-Junaid explains as recognizing the perfect oneness of Allah—unbegotten, incomparable, omnipotent, omniscient. (e) A Sufi must maintain three practices diligently: reciting dhikr with full awareness, sustaining a high level of zeal in worship, and regulating diet strictly and appropriately (Isma'il et al., 2008).

Tahalli is an effort to adorn oneself with commendable attitudes, behaviors, and morals by adhering to religious practices properly, such as prayer, fasting, zakat, and hajj. This stage follows after cleansing the soul of reprehensible morals. *Tahalli* involves filling the heart through soul purification (*tazkiyatun nafsi*) and heart purification (*tashfiyatul qolbi*). It includes increasing worship, avoiding major and minor sins committed

repeatedly, and ensuring that food, clothing, and shelter are kept pure and free from doubt. Additionally, it involves continuous dhikr and maintaining a heart devoted solely to God (Rahmat, 2010)

In the *tahalli* stage, one must fill oneself with praiseworthy qualities and illuminate the heart with outward and mental obedience. Consequently, all of a person's actions are always based on sincere intentions, free from *riya* (showing off), and their acts of worship seek solely the pleasure of Allah Almighty. As such, individuals who embody these qualities can draw closer to the Almighty. Therefore, Allah Almighty consistently bestows mercy and protection upon them (Farhan & Arafat, 2021).

It is suggested that *tahalli* involves adorning oneself with a path of refined character, good behavior, and deeds. Zahri defines *tahalli* as the adornment of oneself with praiseworthy qualities. To undertake *tahalli*, one must build individuals to possess the morals of *al-karimah* and maintain consistency with previously established steps. This involves rigorous psychological training to reinforce good behavior, which ultimately guides a person to become exemplary (Al-Kadiri, 2010). After cleansing oneself of all negative mental dispositions and behaviors (*takhalli*), the next step is *tahalli*. This involves filling oneself with all positive dispositions, behaviors, and deeds, and striving to ensure that every action conforms to religious requirements (Farhan & Arafat, 2021).

In akhlaki Sufism, the human soul is likened to a piece of land that a farmer prepares for planting. Before planting, the farmer must clear the land of all unwanted grass, a process known as *takhalli*. Once the soil is free from grass, it is ready to be sown with beneficial plants, a stage called *tahalli*. The mental attitudes and noble activities that must be instilled in the heart to foster a relationship with God include repentance, anxiety and hope, and *zuhud* (Ali, 1997). Repentance involves a profound sense of regret in the heart, accompanied by pleas for forgiveness and the abandonment of all actions that lead to sin, allowing only Allah Almighty to occupy one's memory and soul. In other words, repentance is a return to the righteous path recognized by Allah after deviations. Anxiety and hope refer to feelings of concern that arise from frequent mistakes and neglect of Allah Almighty,

or from realizing one's imperfections in serving Allah. This worry and fear that Allah may be displeased coexist with a hope for His forgiveness and favor. *Zuhud* means detaching oneself from worldly dependencies by focusing on the afterlife. It involves controlling desires that drive humans towards worldly indulgences.

Tahalli is a stage in a seeker's (*salik's*) spiritual journey, characterized by the cultivation of praiseworthy deeds, noble morals, and resilience in facing everyday challenges. This process also aims to perfect the individual, who strives to infuse their daily life with positive actions. Adorning oneself with praiseworthy qualities is not straightforward without the methods and guidance of a teacher or murshid who leads one towards the path favored by Allah (Ali, 1997).

Tajalli is the manifestation of Divine Nur in the form of glory or mercy bestowed by Allah upon those who have rid themselves of contemptible deeds and embraced praiseworthy qualities. This is the final phase in the education of noble morals (Ali, 1997). *Tajalli* improves one's quality to achieve closeness to God, aiming to attain the essence of mortal *bidzatillah* (Rahmat, 2010). For those accustomed to performing noble deeds, it is essential to further cultivate a sense of divinity. Habits practiced with optimum awareness and deep love naturally foster a longing for Him (Daulay et al., 2021). The term *tajalli* signifies the expression of Allah within the heart. If the soul is imbued with ethical pearls and the body consistently performs noble deeds, one must then experience a sense of divine nature. The process, undertaken with ideal understanding and profound love, intensifies the longing for Him. Sufis agree that devotion to Allah is the sole means to achieve this purity of the soul, providing a path to reach God (Ghani, 2019).

According to Ibn Arabi, *tajalli* refers to the emanation, descent, and unveiling of the veil (barrier) between humanity and God. The concept of *tajalli* stems from the belief that God, in His transcendence beyond space and time, desires to behold His own reflection outside of Himself. Thus, nature was created as a mirror to reflect God. When God wished to perceive Himself, He gazed upon nature. Alternatively, it is posited that God desires

to be known, hence He manifests Himself in the form of *tajalli*. Ibn Arabi elucidates that the essential and transcendent essence of God manifests in three modes through His nature and attributes, ultimately manifesting in diverse empirical forms (Isma'il et al., 2010).

Implications of Sufism Akhlaqi Concept for IRE Objectives

Goals play a pivotal role in the educational journey. At UPI, in the study of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), the aim is for students to attain a comprehensive understanding of religion encompassing creed (*aqidah*), worship, ethics, and the fundamentals of transactions (*mu'amalah*), and to apply this knowledge in their daily lives (Fahrudin & Anwar, 2022). In striving to instill noble morals among students through IRE, it is essential that the goals are twofold: material and spiritual. Emphasizing spiritual goals, particularly the cultivation of virtuous character, should take precedence, as it paves the way for students to embody noble conduct. Furthermore, the objectives of IRE should align with the ultimate purpose of human existence, which is attaining eternal happiness in the hereafter. Prioritizing happiness in the hereafter is paramount, as it represents genuine and everlasting fulfillment.

Implications of Sufism Akhlaqi Concept for IRE Materials

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is a mandatory course at UPI, with its overarching goal being to cultivate students' faith, piety, and noble character. Achieving this entails a focus not only on cognitive aspects but also on affective dimensions that resonate with students' hearts, particularly through the study of Sufism. Incorporating Sufism into the curriculum is essential, with an emphasis on Akhlaqi Sufism across all subjects. However, the depth of Sufi material is tailored to students' backgrounds, providing a foundational introduction rather than an exhaustive exploration akin to that in Islamic boarding schools. IRE coursework at UPI covers various aspects of Sufism, including its meaning, purpose, Quranic foundations, historical development, and spiritual states. By offering this foundational knowledge, students are encouraged to explore Sufism further beyond the classroom,

ultimately fostering noble character and spiritual purification, leading them closer to God (Saebani & Hamid, 2010). Furthermore, the curriculum design for IRE should integrate Sufi values into relevant subjects, ensuring alignment with the core concepts of Sufism throughout the educational experience.

Implications of Sufism Akhlaqi Concept for IRE Lecturers

The effectiveness of a learning process hinges on the educators involved. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at UPI, particularly in shaping students with noble morals, it is imperative to have lecturers well-versed in Islamic knowledge. To instill noble morals in students through IRE, lecturers must possess a deep understanding of Sufism, particularly Akhlaqi Sufism, and serve as exemplars to their students. They should embody the ideals of moral excellence, acting as role models who epitomize noble conduct. This is crucial for the success of IRE education at UPI. Looking back at history, the most effective moral education was administered by the Messenger of Allah, particularly Prophet Muhammad, who was specifically tasked with perfecting noble morals. Therefore, IRE lecturers at UPI should emulate the prophetic role, drawing insights from how the Prophet taught noble morals to his community (Fathurahman, 2019). In essence, an IRE lecturer must aspire to emulate the exemplary teachings and conduct of the Messenger of Allah, recognizing this role as pivotal in shaping the moral character of students. This perspective is not overstated; rather, it underscores the profound responsibility of IRE lecturers in guiding students towards moral excellence.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research as described above, several conclusions can be drawn as follows: Sufism akhlaqi is a science that studies ways to cleanse the heart, so that a person has noble morals and can appear as a virtuous person in everyday life. To be able to cleanse the liver, it must take steps that must be done, namely: *tazkiyatunnafs* accompanied by *mujahadah* and *riyadhah*. In addition, in Sufism akhlaqi to be able to get closer to Allah so that Nur Ilahi is revealed, you must take steps called

takhalli, *tahalli*, and *tajalli*. The implications of the concept of Sufism akhlaqi on IRE learning in order to strengthen the morals of students at UPI are: (a) the goals of IRE must be directed to material and spiritual goals, and spiritual goals that emphasize the study of the heart must be a priority. By prioritizing spiritual growth, IRE can effectively nurture students' moral development; (b) IRE learning materials at UPI must be based on Sufism values, especially Sufism, so as to deliver students to have noble morals. In other words, integrating Sufi teachings into the curriculum can guide students towards noble morals and ethical conduct, facilitating their spiritual and moral growth; (c) IRE lecturers must master Sufism, especially Sufism and must be an example in noble morals, and must try to appear like the figure of the Prophet Muhammad. By embodying the qualities of the Prophet, IRE lecturers can inspire and guide students towards moral excellence.

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ACCULTURATION OF ISLAM IN KABUMI CULTURAL TRADITION OF LEBUAWU VILLAGE JEPARA

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Abstract

This study examines the acculturation of Islam in the implementation of the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency, Central Java. It employed a qualitative descriptive method to describe the cultural facts surrounding the traditional Kabumi celebration. The findings show that the Kabumi tradition has become a traditional celebration as a form of gratitude by the people of Lebuawu Village to the Creator for allowing them to live on Earth by His grace. They heavily rely on the earth to grow crops, obtain food and drink, and carry out other activities. As a result, they perform earth alms as a way to express their gratitude to the earth. Additionally, the alms to the earth also represent a form of gratitude for the salvation and sustenance received by the community, and are believed to bring protection to their fields, ensuring abundant harvests. The acculturation

of Islam in the implementation of Kabumi also teaches the community to always maintain an attitude of tolerance among people of different religions, as this acculturation preserves local traditions that characterize this custom.

Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang akulturasi Islam dalam pelaksanaan tradisi Kabumi di Desa Lebuawu, Kecamatan Pecangaan, Kabupaten Jepara, Jawa Tengah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk mendeskripsikan fakta budaya seputar perayaan adat Kabumi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi Kabumi telah menjadi perayaan adat sebagai wujud rasa syukur masyarakat Desa Lebuawu kepada Sang Pencipta yang telah mengizinkan mereka hidup di bumi atas karunia-Nya. Mereka sangat bergantung pada bumi untuk bercocok tanam, memperoleh makanan dan minuman, serta melakukan aktivitas lainnya. Oleh karena itu, mereka melakukan sedekah bumi sebagai wujud rasa syukurnya terhadap bumi. Selain itu, sedekah bumi juga merupakan wujud rasa syukur atas keselamatan dan rezeki yang diterima masyarakat, serta dipercaya dapat memberikan perlindungan pada ladangnya dan menjamin hasil panen yang melimpah. Akulturasi Islam dalam pelaksanaan Kabumi juga mengajarkan masyarakat untuk selalu menjaga sikap toleransi antar umat yang berbeda agama, karena akulturasi ini melestarikan tradisi lokal yang menjadi ciri adat tersebut.

Keywords: *earth almsgiving, Islamic culture, Kabumi tradition*

Introduction

Islam entered the Indonesian archipelago through various means such as trade routes, education, marriage, Sufism, politics, and cultural traditions (Permatasari & Hudaidah, 2021). It is noted that Islam first reached Indonesia via Arab, Gujarati, Persian, and Chinese traders. The spread of Islam in Indonesia occurred gradually and involved significant contributions from both local and foreign entities. In its expansion, Islam was embraced not only by coastal communities but also by rural populations.

One of the primary factors that facilitated the spread of Islam in Indonesia was commerce. Muslim traders who visited the archipelago did not solely engage in trade but also propagated the Islamic faith. They introduced Islamic teachings to the local inhabitants, both directly and indirectly. Marriage also played a crucial role; Muslim traders who intermarried with the local community helped spread Islam to their new families. Additionally, political factors significantly influenced the spread of Islam in Indonesia. For instance, in the 13th century AD, the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai in Aceh became the first Islamic kingdom in Indonesia (Permatasari & Hudaidah, 2021), playing a vital role in the propagation of Islam across the archipelago.

By the 14th century AD, the Kingdom of Demak in Java emerged as the most influential Islamic kingdom, successfully uniting Islamic regions in Java and extending the reach of Islam throughout the archipelago (Asroni, 2022). The spread of Islam in Indonesia has led to profound changes in the societal structure. Islam has had a significant impact on social, cultural, and political aspects. Socially, Islam introduced new belief systems, values, and norms to the Indonesian people, who previously practiced Hinduism and Buddhism. Culturally, Islam influenced various fields, including art, music, and literature. Developments in calligraphy, architecture, and Islamic music also began to flourish across the archipelago.

The triumph of Islam, introduced by the Arabs, lay in its ability to dialogue and integrate smoothly into the long-existing cultural structure of the archipelago. In this case it appears that Islam shows the ability to understand and assimilate into the pre-existing local cultural environment, so that it can be accepted by society. This achievement cannot be separated from the cultural approach applied by Islamic preachers in the 13th century, where they skillfully combined Islamic teachings with local customs, thereby creating a harmonious and inseparable unity between the two (Al-Amri & Haramain, 2017). One form of acculturation to local

culture and Islamic teachings is attached to the Kabumi tradition in Jepara. This is a strong reason why further exploration is still needed regarding how the essence of Islam and the implementation of the Kabumi tradition show harmonious acculturation in the community in Lebuawu Village, Jepara.

In the sociopolitical realm, Islam has significantly influenced both government systems and societal structures. The spread of Islam in Indonesia has been a pivotal factor in the formation of the Indonesian nation. Islam has united a society that previously consisted of diverse ethnic groups and religions. As the religion embraced by a majority of the global population, Islam has had a profound impact on human culture and civilization across various regions of the world. The relationship between Islam and culture is complex and has been the subject of scholarly study for centuries (Jamali & Wibowo, 2023; Sunda & Fitri, 2022; Tajdin, 2022). Therefore, the cultural diversity that develops within the societal context of Indonesia merits further study in relation to Islamic values to understand its current dynamics.

Furthermore, the influence of Islam extends beyond cultural and societal realms particularly to the people living in villages. Understanding the interplay between Islam and the tradition held by the villagers is crucial for comprehending Indonesian Islamic culture and its implications for broader social developments in the region. Further research exploring the intersection of Islam with cultural practices can provide valuable insights into the complexities of religious influence on societal dynamics.

Culture encompasses everything created by humans as a result of learning and experience in everyday life. According to Wissler et al., culture involves any action that must be learned. Meanwhile, Bakker defines culture as the process of creating, publishing, and processing human values (Firoosya, 2023). In Islam, culture plays a significant role in everyday life, teaching values that benefit society and help form a positive culture. The interaction between Islam and culture is mutually influential; in Islam,

culture can strengthen religious values and the faith of Muslims, while Islam can shape the values adopted by Muslims (Meilindasari, 2021).

Indonesia is home to many different races, ethnicities, languages, cultures, religions, and beliefs. The motto “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” aptly describes the reality and aspirations of the country. According to Pascal, pluralism that does not converge into unity is chaos, and unity that does not preserve plurality is tyranny (Al-Amri & Haramain, 2017). Indonesia, with its variety of tribes and customs, maintains its diverse cultures well. In Java, for example, there is a longstanding tradition known as *Nyadran*, or earth alms, held annually. This ceremony expresses gratitude to God for the previous year’s crops and includes community prayers for a successful future harvest. *Nyadran*, conducted every *Sha’ban* (Hijri calendar) or *Ruwah* (Javanese calendar) before the Ramadan fast, involves collective visits to tombs to give thanks (Wajdi, 2017).

The Earth Alms belong to one of the annual traditions of farming communities on the north coast of Central Java, carried out after the harvest, specifically in the month of *Dzulqo’idah* on the weton day of *Kliwon*. This ceremony is a form of community gratitude for the harvest obtained. In addition, Earth Alms are conducted by the community to anticipate and adapt in the face of trauma, difficulties, tragedies, threats, and all factors that cause stress. Earth Alms are also performed as an expression of community gratitude to God (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Thus, it can be understood that the implementation of the Earth Alms tradition varies in timing and procedures across different regions. During the Hindu-Buddhist period, the implementation of the Earth Alms tradition involved praises and offerings as ritual tools, whereas during the time of Walisongo, the tradition was acculturated with prayers from the Qur’an and Hadith, as practiced by the Lebuawu Pecangaan Jepara community.

People believe that deceased ancestors still exist and influence the lives of their descendants. Therefore, during the *Nyadran* tradition, they

visit their ancestors' graves as a form of cultural heritage preservation. However, with the influence of Islam, the meaning of *Nyadran* has evolved from a simple prayer to God into a ritual of reporting and thanksgiving during the month of *Sha'ban* (Yusof & Kastolani, 2016). According to Islamic teachings, *Sha'ban*, the month before Ramadan, is a time when people should practice charity. Thus, the trench pilgrimage is also intended as a means of introspection, reflecting on the efforts and achievements of the past year.

Islam, with its noble teachings, has intertwined with the local culture of Indonesia for centuries. An interesting outcome of this interaction is its correlation with the tradition of earth alms, known in Jepara as *Kabumi*, a ritual where people offer produce. This ritual is practiced in various regions of the archipelago. As described earlier, there is a close correlation between Islam and the culture of earth alms, with each region having its unique way of conducting this tradition. Accordingly, this study examines the implementation of the *Kabumi* tradition by conducting a structural analysis through direct observations and interviews with traditional and religious figures in Lebuawu Village. This current research is intended to determine the relation of Islam and the culture of the earth alms tradition particularly in the context of *Kabumi* as practiced by the people of Lebuawu Village in Pecangaan Jepara.

Furthermore, this study holds significance in shedding light on the intricate relationship between Islam and local cultural traditions, particularly the practice of earth alms, or *Kabumi*, in Indonesia. By delving into the implementation of the *Kabumi* tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan Jepara, this research aims to uncover the nuanced interplay between Islamic principles and cultural practices at the grassroots level. Understanding how Islam shapes and is shaped by local customs and rituals is essential for appreciating the cultural diversity and religious dynamics within Indonesian society. Moreover, this study contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on the role of religion in shaping cultural

traditions and societal norms, offering insights that may inform future research and policymaking endeavors aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage while fostering religious harmony and understanding.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive method with a qualitative research approach. Field qualitative research was conducted by directly observing the phenomena of the Kabumi tradition naturally. As a qualitative research study, it involved the researcher as the main instrument (Sugiono, 2016). The descriptive method was chosen to examine the current state of a person, object, set of conditions, system of thought, or a series of events related to the Kabumi tradition. Descriptive research aims to create a systematic and factually accurate description or picture of the facts, characteristics, and phenomena of Kabumi as practiced by the people in Jepara.

The data source was derived from primary sources, including observations on the implementation of the Kabumi tradition and interviews with local traditional and religious leaders. The secondary source consisted of literature reviews from various scientific journals and books that discuss the same research theme.

The key informants for this study were selected based on specific criteria to ensure comprehensive and representative insights into the Kabumi tradition and its relationship with Islam in Lebuawu Village. Criteria for selecting key informants included their expertise and knowledge of the Kabumi tradition, their active participation in the implementation of cultural and religious practices within the village, and their willingness to share their experiences and perspectives openly during interviews. Additionally, efforts were made to include a diverse range of informants representing different age groups, genders, and social backgrounds to capture a comprehensive understanding of the tradition from various viewpoints within the community.

The data collection technique used was participant observation, carried out when the researcher was involved in the observed activities (Fadli, 2021). The focus of the participant observation was on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Kabumi tradition and its relationship with Islam in Lebuawu Village. During the observation process, the researcher actively engaged in the observed activities related to the Kabumi tradition, immersing himself in the cultural and religious practices unfolding within the community. The primary objective was to observe firsthand the rituals, customs, and behaviors associated with the Kabumi tradition, as well as the interactions and dynamics among participants involved in these activities. Specifically, the researcher paid close attention to the ceremonial proceedings, the roles of key individuals or groups involved, the symbolic meanings embedded in the rituals, and any variations or adaptations of the tradition in response to Islamic influences. Through keen observation and documentation, the researcher aimed to capture the nuances of the Kabumi tradition's implementation and its interconnectedness with Islamic beliefs and practices within the context of Lebuawu Village.

In addition to data collection using observation techniques, this study also employed interview methods by conducting direct questions and answers between the researcher and respondents (Rachmawati, 2007). This study employed semi-structured interviews, conducted with questions that were partially predetermined and partly adjusted according to the conditions during the interview (Fadli, 2021). The questions for the semi-structured interviews were carefully crafted to elicit comprehensive and representative insights into the Kabumi tradition and its relationship with Islam in Lebuawu Village. They were designed to be partially predetermined, providing a framework to guide the discussion, while also allowing flexibility to adjust according to the conditions and responses during the interview. The questions covered various aspects of the Kabumi tradition, including its historical background, cultural significance,

religious practices associated with it, and its role in fostering community cohesion and identity. Additionally, inquiries were made into the participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and perceptions regarding the Kabumi tradition and its alignment with Islamic teachings. Efforts were made to pose open-ended questions that encouraged detailed responses and reflections, facilitating a deeper exploration of the subject matter. Overall, the questions aimed to facilitate a rich and nuanced discussion that captured the diverse perspectives and insights of the participants regarding the Kabumi tradition and its intersection with Islam in Lebuawu Village.

The data analysis techniques used in Islamic acculturation research in the Kabumi cultural tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency consist of several steps. First, the researcher screened all interview transcripts that had been conducted with local communities and traditional and religious leaders comprehensively. The next step involved making a note of the first impression from what occurred in the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu village, then the researcher re-read the transcripts carefully. The researcher then labeled or marked relevant words, phrases, sentences, or passages in the transcripts. These codes could relate to actions, activities, or anything else that the researcher deemed relevant. After grouping the codes, the researcher identified patterns or themes that arose from the data. The analysis then proceeded with ensuring that it was consistent and reliable, considering the validity of the data and whether the findings were in accordance with the context of the study. Lastly, the researcher wrote a report that explained the findings comprehensively, including direct quotes from interview transcripts to support the findings. The final stage was drawing conclusions to answer the research question concerning the acculturation of Islam in the implementation of the Kabumi tradition.

Findings & Discussion

The influence of Islam in the implementation of Kabumi tradition

"Kabumi" is a term used for the tradition of earth alms or *Nyadran* in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan, Jepara. According to Mr. Sarmadan, a cultural and religious stakeholder in Lebuawu Village, the term derives from "sede-kah bumi," originating from "kah bumi" and has evolved into "kabumi" over time. This event is a tradition held annually in Lebuawu Village during the Javanese month of "Apit" which is chosen because it falls between two Islamic holidays, namely Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (Kumparan.com, 2022).

A research interview conducted with Mr. Zamroni, a religious leader in the village, revealed that the Kabumi tradition is a sacred annual event that blends Javanese and Islamic traditions. According to Maarif (2018), this integration represents a harmonization of Islam with local customs, a concept present in the local community's culture and known as conservative theory. This method of cultural acculturation combines elements of Javanese culture with Islamic teachings introduced by the Walisongo. One example is the adaptation of traditional arts such as wayang and Javanese songs, which have been modified by the Walisongo to include Islamic messages (Waluyo, 2021).

Several interviews have highlighted the significant influence of Islam on the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, Pecangaan, Jepara. The tradition includes various activities aligned with Islamic teachings, such as the slaughter of large cattle. Mr. Sarmadan mentioned that traditionally, cows were used, but over time, buffalo slaughter has been adopted to accommodate the religious sentiments of other communities in the area. Additionally, the village conducts *slametan* activities as part of the Kabumi tradition.

Slametan is a cultural tradition in Indonesia that has been practiced for a very long time. It involves a communal prayer session to ask for

salvation from God, usually concluding with a shared meal (Amin & Salim, 2018). The *slametan* at the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village marks the opening of the event. Mr. Sarmadan explained that this *slametan* is conducted as a prayer so that the entire event, from start to finish, is blessed.

Following the opening *slametan* is the activity of Tahtimul Quran Binnadhhor. This involves collectively reading the Quran with the aim of receiving blessings from this holy book, which is a primary source of Islamic teachings (Syaripudin, 2016). This activity is led by local religious leaders and santri from the village, where santri are students studying Islam in pesantren (Amin & Salim, 2018).

All residents of Lebuawu Village, including children, youth, and the elderly, bring food to the grave of Mbah Citro Rangin Kusumo for a pilgrimage. Mbah Citro Rangin Kusumo was the pioneer of "*babat alas*" activities in Lebuawu Village, a term referring to the clearing of forest areas for settlement and the development of civilizational life. This activity traditionally involves opening new land or clearing existing land (Cahyono, 2022). During this visit, the community performs *Tahlilan*, reciting the Arabic phrase "*La illaha illa Allah*" and reading verses from the Quran such as Surat Al Iklas, Al Alaq, An Nas, along with a series of prayers (Amin & Salim, 2018). Mr. Zamroni mentioned that the *Tahlilan* at Mbah Citro Rangin Kusumo's grave is performed to honor his contributions to the community and to pray that his deeds are recognized and rewarded by God.

After completing the *Tahlilan*, the community, along with traditional leaders and other dignitaries, gather to pray together at the tomb of Mbah Citro. This collective prayer seeks to transfer blessings from God. Through this prayer, the community expresses hope that the crops harvested this year will bring blessings and that the crops in the following year will yield abundant results, benefiting the villagers even more. This additional

information was provided by Mr. Hariyanto, a religious figure in Lebuawu Village.

After the series of events at the tomb concluded, the *slametan* event resumed at the Lebuawu Village Hall following Maghreb prayers, as reported by Mr. Sarmadan. This *slametan* was intended to seek blessings for the smooth running of the next event, namely the shadow puppet show held at the village hall. The wayang kulit performance was chosen because shadow puppets are a medium for spreading Islam introduced by Sunan Kalijaga, who created stories and incorporated Islamic content into his performances (Vindalia et al., 2022). Additionally, the Lebuawu community greatly enjoys shadow puppet shows.

Sunan Kalijaga utilized wayang as an effective da'wah medium to draw people closer and garner sympathy for Islam. He possessed a captivating ability to puppeteer, earning him fame under various pseudonyms in different regions. For instance, in the Pajajaran area, he was known as Ki Dalang Sidabrangti, and in Tegal, as Ki Dalang Bengkok (Vindalia et al., 2022). His flexibility and wisdom in preaching allowed the Javanese, who still upheld ancient beliefs, to feel unthreatened. Sunan Kalijaga approached the community subtly and non-coercively; he even dressed in a manner not typically associated with Islamic attire, which helped people feel less intimidated and more receptive to his teachings.

Sunan Kalijaga is one of the most celebrated walis in Java. He was not only respected by the Javanese people but also regarded as a great and holy teacher. In his preaching, Sunan Kalijaga did not discard the religious values and ancient beliefs of the Javanese. Instead, he gradually integrated Islamic values into these traditional beliefs, making it easier for people to accept Islam. This flexible and wise method of da'wah was crucial in spreading Islam throughout the archipelago, particularly in Java. The traditional media used by Sunan Kalijaga, namely wayang kulit, is a popular Javanese art form. By incorporating Islamic teachings into the wayang stories, he made the principles of Islam more accessible to the Javanese

people. Examples of Islamic values he included in puppet stories are moral values such as honesty, loyalty, and compassion; spiritual values like faith in God, prayer, and fasting; and social values such as helping and supporting each other.

Islamic tradition is deeply embedded in the Kabumi tradition, as observed by researchers. It is essential to preserve the Kabumi tradition because it not only incorporates Islamic teachings but also includes elements of Hindu customs, integrating them with Islamic religious teachings. The influence of Islamic tradition in the traditional Kabumi ceremonies is profound. It attracts various groups to preserve various activities of local traditions and customs. In addition, it teaches a sense of tolerance between religious communities.

The practical implications of the Kabumi tradition, with its blending of Javanese and Islamic elements, extend beyond cultural significance to encompass broader societal benefits. Firstly, the tradition serves as a model for fostering gratitude and resilience within communities. By participating in the series of events associated with Kabumi, such as the *slametan*, *Tahtimul Quran*, and *Tahlilan* activities, individuals are encouraged to cultivate a deep sense of gratitude towards God and their fellow community members. This heightened sense of appreciation can contribute to improved mental and emotional well-being, enhancing individuals' ability to cope with challenges and adversity. Furthermore, the emphasis on friendship and tolerance within the Kabumi tradition promotes social cohesion and harmony within the community. Through the integration of Islamic values and local customs, the tradition fosters an inclusive environment where diversity is embraced and celebrated. As such, the Kabumi tradition serves as a practical example of how cultural practices can be harnessed to strengthen community bonds and promote positive social values.

People's views on Kabumi

Based on the interview with Mrs. Parsi, the tradition of earth alms instills gratitude within the community of Lebuawu Village for the blessings bestowed by Allah Almighty. These blessings manifest in the form of earthly products, reminding people that everything on this earth belongs to God, and their duty is to utilize these gifts wisely and be grateful for them. Another interview, this time with Mr. Nizar, a youth from Lebuawu Village, revealed that Kabumi serves as a gathering place for fostering friendships among the residents. During the Kabumi event, people gather at the grave of Mbah Citro to pray and share meals, fostering bonds of friendship among them.

Additionally, in an interview with Mr. Kasnan, it was mentioned that Kabumi serves as a reminder of gratitude and promotes friendship, which in turn benefits the local economy. When puppet performances are held, villagers are allowed to set up bazaars or engage in trade around the Lebuawu Village Hall. Another informant, Mr. Hamzah, emphasized the importance of preserving the Kabumi tradition in the village as it serves to uphold the cultural heritage passed down by previous generations. Additionally, this event plays a vital role in enhancing the community's understanding, particularly among the youth, of the local traditions in Lebuawu Pecangaan Jepara Village.

According to a local figure, Mrs. Wati, Islam is a religion that accommodates cultural practices with flexibility. Initially, there was a significant contradiction between Islam and culture, as cultural practices were perceived as shirk, or associating partners with Allah. In the past, offerings were made to appease spirits believed to inhabit the area, aiming to prevent their interference during cultural events such as the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu village. However, with the introduction of Islam, this practice underwent a transformation. The tradition of offerings, initially intended to appease spirits, has evolved into communal prayers. While offerings are still made, they are no longer dedicated to spirits but are

instead offered as alms to animals such as ants, grasshoppers, and others. The tradition of earth alms is highly beneficial, especially for the millennial generation, as it provides valuable lessons from the Kabumi tradition, fostering a sense of community familiarity and harmony among the people of Lebuawu Village.

From the interviews conducted, it is evident that the people of Lebuawu Village hold a very positive view towards the Kabumi tradition, which has evolved alongside Islam. The Kabumi tradition instills in the community a sense of gratitude for the agricultural and fisheries products bestowed upon them by God. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of community cohesion and harmony within Lebuawu Village, encouraging mutual care and the preservation of cultural heritage. Moreover, the Kabumi tradition serves to broaden the insights of both young and older members of the village, as it has become a renowned symbol of Lebuawu Village and an integral part of its cultural identity.

The results of the interviews show the diversity of perceptions on the benefits of the Kabumi tradition as also stated by Rachmawati et al. (2021) that the earth alms celebration can be used as an example in increasing feelings of gratitude and community resilience. Through the earth alms ceremony, there is an increase in spiritual belief and devotion to God, as well as in the community's sense of gratitude and resilience. Almsgiving to the earth is a strategy used by society to anticipate and adapt to various traumas, difficulties, tragedies, threats and situations that cause stress. Apart from that, earth alms event is also a form of expression of people's gratitude to God.

While the interviews shed light on the positive aspects of the Kabumi tradition in Lebuawu Village, it's essential to acknowledge some limitations in the findings. Firstly, the interviews represent a small sample size and may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives within the community. Additionally, the interviews primarily focus on the perceived benefits of the Kabumi tradition, potentially overlooking any challenges or criticisms

associated with it. Furthermore, the interviews provide subjective accounts that may be influenced by the respondents' personal experiences and biases. Future research could aim to address these limitations by conducting a more extensive and representative study, considering a broader range of viewpoints, and exploring potential drawbacks or controversies surrounding the Kabumi tradition.

Conclusion

Kabumi refers to the tradition of earth alms or *Nyadran* in Lebuawu Pecangaan Jepara Village, carried out annually during the month of "Apit" in Javanese terms. This sacred custom blends Javanese and Islamic traditions, exemplifying the process of harmonizing local culture with Islam through cultural acculturation, where elements of Javanese culture are combined with Islamic teachings brought by the *walisongo*. For instance, arts such as *wayang* and Javanese songs were adapted by the *Wali* to fit the context of Islamic *da'wah*.

Islamic acculturation within the Kabumi tradition instills a profound sense of gratitude among the people of Lebuawu Village, evident in the series of events like the *slametan*. It is a communal prayer activity seeking salvation from God, includes *Tahtimul Quran* to seek blessings from the holy book, the primary source of Islamic teachings. This activity involves local religious leaders and village students. Following *Tahtimul Quran* is the *Tahlilan* activity, where the community, along with traditional leaders and figures, pray together at the tomb of Mbah Citro, seeking blessings for the crops to benefit the people of Lebuawu village. Subsequently, another *slametan* seeks blessings for the smooth conduct of the next event—the shadow puppet show at the Lebuawu village hall. *Wayang kulit* is chosen as a medium for spreading Islam, a practice introduced by Sunan Kalijaga.

Islamic acculturation within the Kabumi tradition emphasizes gratitude and fosters friendship among the people of Lebuawu Village. This tradition not only embodies local culture but also encompasses Islamic values. It promotes an attitude of tolerance within the community since this acculturation does not eliminate local traditions that became the feature of Kabumi tradition.

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RELIGION, LOCAL WISDOM, AND POWER OF THE MADURESE SOCIETY: ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE AND SOCIAL THEORY

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Abstract

This research aims to elucidate the relationship between religion, local wisdom, and power relations in the dynamics of Madurese community life from an Islamic perspective, religious scripture texts, and social theory. The research employs qualitative methods focusing on the Madura community as a distinct ethnic group in conducting social interactions and identifying language expressions that symbolize everyday peace. This study employs various data collection methods, including observation, interviews, and documentation. A thorough examination of the dynamics of religion, traditional knowledge, and power dynamics within the Madurese community serves as the data analysis technique employed in this study. By focusing on ontological and epistemological issues, this research utilizes social theory and an Islamic viewpoint to conceptually explain the study of religion, local wisdom, and power relations. The findings show that the Madurese people are known for their unwavering commitment to togetherness, balance, peace, and harmony. This is reflected in 'rampak naong bringen korong,' a concept of local wisdom that

represents their deeply ingrained cultural values and moderate religious teachings. These insights hold implications for further studies in exploring the practical applications of local wisdom in promoting social cohesion, governance effectiveness, and community well-being.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan hubungan antara agama, kearifan lokal, dan hubungan kekuasaan dalam dinamika kehidupan masyarakat Madura dari perspektif Islam, teks-teks agama, dan teori sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang berfokus pada komunitas Madura sebagai kelompok etnis yang berbeda dalam melakukan interaksi sosial dan mengidentifikasi ekspresi bahasa yang melambangkan perdamaian sehari-hari. Studi ini menggunakan berbagai metode pengumpulan data, termasuk observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Pemeriksaan menyeluruh terhadap dinamika agama, pengetahuan tradisional, dan dinamika kekuasaan dalam komunitas Madura berfungsi sebagai teknik analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Dengan memfokuskan pada isu ontologis dan epistemologis, penelitian ini menggunakan teori sosial dan sudut pandang Islam untuk menjelaskan secara konseptual studi tentang agama, kearifan lokal, dan hubungan kekuasaan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Madura dikenal karena komitmennya yang teguh terhadap kebersamaan, keseimbangan, perdamaian, dan harmoni. Hal ini tercermin dalam 'rampak naong bringen korong,' sebuah konsep kearifan lokal yang mewakili nilai-nilai budaya mereka yang sangat tertanam dan ajaran agama yang moderat. Temuan ini memiliki implikasi untuk penelitian lebih lanjut dalam mengeksplorasi aplikasi praktis kearifan lokal dalam mempromosikan kohesi sosial, efektivitas tata kelola, dan kesejahteraan masyarakat.

Keywords: *culture of peace, local wisdom, Madurese society, power relation, religious harmony*

Introduction

The Madurese are known for their distinct ethnic identity, setting them apart from other Indonesian ethnic groups. Previous researchers have shown considerable interest in exploring the social, cultural, and religious aspects of Madurese society. Notable studies conducted by de Jonge and

Touwen-Bouwsma (1995) and Smith (1997) have extensively investigated these dimensions within the lives of the Madurese people. Given the rich diversity in religious, cultural, and traditional practices, the study of Madurese society offers a compelling field for exploring the interactions and contests among religion, local wisdom, and power dynamics within community life. Scholars like Dzulkarnain (2015) have also focused on religious peace within the framework of multiculturalism, examining the religious and social dynamics that support the development of interfaith harmony in Madura.

The majority of Madurese people adhere to Islam, which profoundly influences their daily actions. Islam serves not only as a spiritual guide but also as a crucial principle in shaping social norms, morals, and interactions within Madurese society. Religious values are manifested in practices, belief systems, and social relationships, forming a philosophy of life that is intrinsic to the social dynamics of the community. For the Madurese, Islam provides a moral and ethical foundation that guides individual and communal behavior in social interactions, as noted by Nasrullah (2019). Key Islamic teachings such as honesty, responsibility, justice, tolerance, mutual assistance, and more form the cornerstone of life among the Madurese people.

Apart from religion, the Madurese people also place great emphasis on the importance of maintaining local wisdom, which is manifested in traditions, customs, and a philosophy of life that are highly meaningful to the community. These values uniquely identify the community through the wisdom of music, dance, language, and expressive forms such as poetry, which represent philosophical values as cultural heritage. The kinship system, including the marriage system and relations between ethnic communities, plays a significant role in the dynamics of social life in Madurese society (Khotijah et al., 2023). Local wisdom provides a unique dimension to community identity, including customs, oral traditions, and daily practices that always serve as life guidelines through actions and behavior (Majid & Sugiarto, 2022).

In the dynamics of Madurese society, a powerful influence of power intersects with the relationship between religion and local wisdom. The influence of power can manifest in various forms, ranging from institutional structures to social relations. Power dynamics in Madura are also related to local customary and political structures that influence religious and cultural relationships. Power is exercised at many levels, from the family to the broader level of government. Authority figures are seen as leaders in influencing social and political decisions. Researchers identify these dynamics as crucial to understanding the relationship between religion and local wisdom within a more robust power structure (Siti et al., 2022). This study focuses on the dynamic relationship between religion and social interactions among different social groups through the use of religious symbols (Fitri, 2012).

The interplay between religion, local wisdom, and power in the lives of the Madurese people has significant implications for strengthening their identity and character. Religion emphasizes moral and ethical aspects, local wisdom aims to preserve cultural identity, and power plays a role in regulating social structures, political life, and broader global environmental issues in Indonesia (Rozi & Taufik, 2020). However, the interaction between these elements can foster harmony and peace but also give rise to conflict. Thus, maintaining a balance between religion, local wisdom, and power has become crucial in the social contestation among the Madurese community. Harmony between religion and culture is fundamental to the future survival of the Madurese people (Nafisah et al., 2022).

In exploring the intricate relationship between religion, local wisdom, and power in the dynamics of Madurese community life, scholars aim to gain a deeper understanding of the community's socio-cultural complexity, which is quite unique compared to other communities. This research contributes significantly to academic discourse and provides a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that underpin the development of local wisdom. The study of the interplay between religion, local wisdom, and power in Madurese society is relevant not only for

understanding the uniqueness of this ethnicity at a local level but also for its significant impact on the broader religious landscape of Indonesian society.

This research plays an important role in supporting the preservation of culture and local wisdom among the Madurese people, who are increasingly being influenced by global culture. Understanding how local wisdom values are integrated with religious teachings and how power influences the social structure of the society could lead to important strategies for preserving local traditions and culture. This research is not only vital for the development of knowledge but can also serve as a practical reference for policymakers, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and community leaders in developing local wisdom that aligns with religious teachings. A better understanding of the relationship between religion, local wisdom, and power in the dynamics of Madurese community life can serve as a fundamental basis for developing programs that promote social harmony, justice, and sustainable development (Hannan et al., 2023).

This research emphasizes ontological and epistemological aspects as a fundamental basis for conceptual explanations of religious studies, local wisdom, and power relations in the lives of the Madurese people. This is crucial for exploring the dynamics of the noble traditions and culture of the Madurese people, which are compelling to anyone who examines them. Thus, this study seeks to understand the ontological and epistemological meanings of religion, local wisdom, and power relations in the dynamics of Madurese community life.

Methods

This research employs qualitative methods to elaborate on the relationship between religious practices, local wisdom, and power relations in the dynamics of Madurese community life. It utilizes an Islamic perspective and religious scripture texts, alongside social theory, to understand the relationship and contestation between religion, local wisdom, and power. The study focuses on the Madurese community, a

unique ethnic group known for its social relations and the everyday use of language expressions that symbolize peace.

Several data collection techniques were used in this research. First, the observation technique allowed researchers to examine the practice of the relationship between religion and local wisdom within the Madurese community. Second, the interview technique involved cultural figures, religious figures, and community leaders, with the selection of informants based on their knowledge, leadership, and character in the life of Madurese society. Third, the documentation technique drew from primary sources such as scientific journals, books, articles, and documents related to religion, local wisdom, and power relations in Madurese society.

The data analysis technique used in this research involves an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of religion, local wisdom, and power relations among the Madurese community. This research conceptually explains the study of religion, local wisdom, and power relations from an Islamic perspective. It also explores the issue through social theory, emphasizing ontological and epistemological aspects as a basis for examining the religious values, local wisdom, and power dynamics in the life of the Madurese people. As an initial study in understanding the ontological and epistemological meaning of religion, local wisdom, and power relations, this section is crucial for exploring the dynamics of the traditions and culture of Madurese society, which are noble and compelling to anyone who engages with them.

Findings and Discussion

Ontological and Epistemological Study of Religion, Local Wisdom, and Power Relations

The essence of religion in ontological studies refers to its pure teachings, which emerge from the process of revelation through the intermediary of the Prophet, who was tasked with spreading God's teachings (Nata, 2001). For example, Islam, as practiced by the Madurese, emphasizes obedience to religious laws and social norms in society based on the commands and prohibitions of Allah. The ontological meaning of religion

in the Qur'an is understood as a belief and trust in Allah, who must be worshiped by Muslims through the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad regarding monotheism. Islam contains sacred and authentic teachings, referring to those brought by the Prophet Muhammad as a messenger for all mankind (Amri & Santalia, 2023). Ontologically, Islam is viewed as a revealed (normative) religion intended for all mankind, with the hope of achieving salvation and happiness not only in this world but also in the afterlife (Saputra et al., 2021).

The epistemological foundation of Islam is centered on the belief in Allah, who is the highest source of knowledge in monotheism. Thus, the concepts of faith and revelation are fundamental principles in understanding the epistemological basis of religion, which originates from God. Religion stems from one central point: Allah, the Almighty, who can control all aspects of human life (Shihab, 2005). In Islamic teachings, the epistemological foundation is none other than faith, which bases all knowledge on the belief and trust bestowed by Allah through the process of revelation. However, faith concerns not only the relationship between the individual and God but also the relationship with the social environment.

From a social theory perspective, religion is a belief in supernatural powers that arises from human inability to face very complex life problems. Religion as a social fact can be understood to mean that religion was born and developed from the history of human civilization, which colored the dynamics of changes that occurred in human history in the search for divine ideas or beliefs that they believed could provide help for their inability to face various life problems. For this reason, religion always expresses feelings of intimacy, understanding, reason, knowledge, and imagination about humanity as the core of its teachings. However, it must be admitted that sociologically, religion has shifted from its original form to become more about invisible teachings (Luckman, 2022).

In an ontological context, religion is essentially a very private dimension and concerns humans' relationship with God in carrying out His commands. It is not surprising that Wilfred Cantwell Smith stated that

religion can be divided into two components: faith and tradition. Many traditions have been practiced for generations by the Madurese people, such as '*Karapan Sapi*', the tradition of '*carok*', and sea-picking rituals. Faith is a dimension that is internal, transcendental, and inward. Meanwhile, tradition is an external dimension and is outside religion, representing observable, social, and historical aspects of religiousness for every very fanatical religious community (Smith, 1991). Religion, in its development, is a tradition gathered in human history as a result of the relationship and interaction of various religious and cultural elements that live in society, such as beliefs, rites, sacred texts, their interpretations, myths (Rachman, 2022), and religious symbols which then form a belief system of an institutional nature (Roibin, 2010), which are known as Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions (Jubba et al., 2022).

Concerning the ontological meaning of religion from a social theory perspective, religion is one of the most effective forms of legitimacy in regulating human life amidst various social divisions and conflicts. Berger understands that religion is a symbolic universe that represents important meaning for human life, which is full of mystery and uncertainty. Therefore, religion functions as a social glue to protect society from chaotic situations and conditions (Berger, 1991). In its development, religion has legitimized social institutions by positioning them within sacred and cosmic dimensions. Religion functions as a social bond, showing that it will continue to develop and be present in societies that are starting to be antipathetic towards formal religious teachings (Durkheim, 2003). There are many examples of religious practices and rituals that have social implications for society in Madura, such as the ritual of giving offerings to avoid disaster such as in '*rokat tase*', '*village rokat*', and recitation groups

The ontological meaning of local wisdom, from both Islamic and social theoretical perspectives, encompasses arguments about its existence, nature, and values as constructs of knowledge, truth, and wisdom within the dynamics of community life. From an Islamic standpoint, the ontological meaning of local wisdom underscores its alignment with human nature as

beings who honor traditions and cultures adaptable to evolving circumstances. This perspective emphasizes that local wisdom derives from God's will, encompassing various traditions and cultures deeply embedded in community dynamics.

Epistemologically, from an Islamic viewpoint, local wisdom entails the knowledge and values evident in each local community and specific cultures within Muslim society. The Muslim community in Madura exemplifies numerous local wisdom values such as traditional ceremonies, attire, cooperation, wedding customs, matchmaking, and religious rituals. By melding Islamic principles with local wisdom, Madura's Muslim community preserves its cultural identity while practicing Islam according to its teachings. Islam acknowledges local wisdom's significance as part of societal wisdom in accordance with Islamic principles (Halim & Pahrudin, 2020). The religious value in local wisdom is the relationship between man and God the Creator of the world that God commands man to do His good orders and away from His prohibitions (Effendy, 2021).

Socially, the ontological meaning of local wisdom can be construed as life wisdom inherent in societal locales, rooted in traditions and cultural norms. Local wisdom intertwines with cultural construction and self-identity affirmation, shaping community dynamics. The local wisdom of the Madurese people epitomizes traditional values, artistic diversity, environmental stewardship, and religious devotion, fostering strong communal bonds, courage, honor, and a robust work ethic. It signifies the cultural richness and indelible identity of the Madurese. From a sociological perspective, local wisdom is seen as a product of social interactions, daily experiences, and historical traditions in society that display the wisdom of human life (Wahab et al., 2020).

Sociologically, local wisdom is perceived as knowledge arising from lived experiences, continuously transmitted as a valuable guide for fostering harmony and equilibrium in life. From this perspective, local wisdom embodies unique legitimacy and value in pluralistic societies, capable of addressing local challenges and preserving deeply rooted traditions and

cultures (Sadewo et al., 2018). Its evolution provides rich material for sociological and anthropological inquiry into societal influences on individuals and their relationship with traditions or cultures imbued with living wisdom. This knowledge is not accentuated within the framework of local knowledge but can overcome local problems and maintain traditions or cultures that are deeply rooted in the community. In its development, local wisdom can become a source of learning and research material in sociological and anthropological studies on how society influences individuals and its relationship to traditions or culture containing living wisdom (Syam, 2007).

By using social construction theory, local wisdom emerges as a product of community culture, involving interaction and adaptation to any changes that arise. The findings of the Madurese cultural adaptation reveal the '*carok*' culture, adopted from the narrative of the struggle against colonialism (Smith, 1997). This cultural adaptation by the Madurese people showcases their ability to remain relevant and evolve amidst changing times and environments while preserving local values and wisdom, integral to their cultural identity. Local wisdom is constructed through norms, values, and socially accepted practices within the community. The true measure of an individual's value and dignity in their society is determined by their local wisdom. Thus, local knowledge is applied by combining elements of intelligence, inventiveness, and local insights from the community's elite, all vital to the advancement of the community's culture (Geertz, 1983). Therefore, the ontological study of local wisdom emphasizes the importance of preserving it as a form of resistance against cultural homogenization due to the influence of globalization and modernization.

From a social theory perspective, the epistemological basis of local wisdom stems from the ancestral legacy of maintaining local traditions, customs, and culture, considered sacred and providing meaningful life experiences for those who practice them. One research finding regarding the sacredness of tradition in Madurese society as local wisdom is the *nyabis* tradition, reflecting values of faith, worship, and ethics to *Kiai* in Madura.

In other words, local wisdom is transmitted across generations and socially legitimized in community life, perpetuating local traditions and culture as part of the human life experience. This is accompanied by the trust of local people who have remained unaffected by the existence of a global culture (Farida & Andalas, 2019).

Furthermore, this section also delves into the ontological meaning of power from the Islamic perspective and social theory, which offer different approaches to understanding the nature and role of power throughout human history. In the Islamic perspective, power is situated within God's domain as the ultimate source of existence in the world (Arafah, 2023). God's omnipotence is believed to reign supreme over everything in the universe, including human life and all its facets. The verses of the Qur'an depict Allah's power as limitless and absolute, granting Him the prerogative to determine all that is rightfully His. However, Allah has entrusted humans with stewardship over the Earth. Humans are thus tasked with fostering a society where their relationship with God is strong, social harmony prevails, and religious, rational, and cultural values are upheld (Shihab, 2007).

In the perspective of the Qur'an, power can be interpreted as signifying that Allah is the holder of supreme authority over everything, as He is referred to as *al-Malik* (Ruler of the Universe) and *al-Qadir* (Almighty). This implies that all forms of human power, natural forces, and social influence originate from Allah as the Almighty Being who holds power over all in the world. Furthermore, governmental power is viewed as temporary and transient, contrasting with God's power, which is not bound by time and space (Mubasirun, 2016). In the Qur'anic perspective, power represents a human responsibility to Allah to fulfill all that lies before them (Musayadah et al., 2021).

In social theory, power is perceived as a social construct shaped by human relationships and interactions within the dynamics of social life. Sociologically, power emanates not only from the social structure of society but also from roles, identities, stratification, and societal hierarchies including the way to communicate. Within Madurese culture, using formal

language towards elders or esteemed figures is considered polite behavior, as the use of impolite language is culturally inappropriate and can lead to conflict. Conversely, informal language reflects polite behavior and attitudes.

According to Foucault's theory, power need not manifest in the form of institutions, structures, or systems; rather, it is a concept applied by humans to complex strategic situations within a society, including conflict. Power represents a productive role relationship in socio-cultural life, evolving through various channels, particularly knowledge dissemination, as it consistently intertwines with the power to construct discourse (Foucault, 1972). Within the social realm, power is perpetually contested, reproduced, and constructed through interpersonal or group dynamics in society. Ultimately, power's existence is upheld, perpetuated, and legitimized as a social force deeply ingrained in people's lives (Foucault, 1980).

The concept of power in the lives of the Madurese people is manifested through various aspects, including social structures, institutions, cultural values, and daily practices. Firstly, the patriarchal family structure prevails, where power and authority traditionally reside with the head of the family, typically an elder male, responsible for making pivotal decisions affecting other family members. Secondly, customs and customary laws reflect power within Madurese society, with traditional figures or leaders holding authority to resolve disputes, regulate marriages, and maintain social equilibrium. Thirdly, religion exerts significant influence, particularly Islam, shaping power dynamics through religious leaders who provide guidance, offer perspectives on social issues, and influence crucial community decisions. Lastly, in the local political arena, power often centers on political figures or regional leaders with a strong support base in Madurese society, whose involvement influences local policies and decision-making processes.

Thus, the ontological significance of power from the perspective of the Qur'an and social theory represents differences in understanding the nature of power relations in human life. From the Islamic viewpoint, power is an attribute exclusive to Allah, subsequently delegated to humans for their exercise according to their respective capacities. Meanwhile, from a social

theory standpoint, power is a social phenomenon inherent in humans, enabling them to lead communities or groups according to a set of rules established by humans themselves. Understanding the integration of power in Islam and social theory can assist religious communities in utilizing power while prioritizing principles of ethics, justice, transparency, and responsibility in fulfilling their mandates.

Next, what constitutes the epistemological foundation of power in the Islamic perspective and social theory? The epistemological examination of power from both Islamic and social theory perspectives is a crucial aspect closely intertwined with the dynamics of social life. Power relations entail the dynamics of power within society, encompassing its distribution and exercise. Islam offers a distinctive perspective on justice and just governance. Social theory, on the other hand, enables a broader understanding of how power relations operate within diverse social contexts, including Islamic societies.

Islam in Cultural Dynamics and Power Relations in Madura

The significance of epistemological studies concerning religion, local wisdom, and power relations within Islamic perspectives and social theory lies in understanding how Islam interacts with social realities. It enables Muslim communities to embody the principles of their religion while considering the local social and cultural context. Furthermore, analyzing power relations aids in comprehending social and political issues concerning justice within Muslim societies.

This section concentrates on studying Islam as a religion intricately intertwined with the cultural dynamics of society, perpetuating the traditional heritage of ancestors as a way of life amidst global developments. Islam has become an integral part of life for the Madurese people, who consistently prioritize upholding Islamic teachings as guiding principles in their daily lives. From the outset, the Madurese have been recognized as a diligent community in adhering to religious teachings comprehensively, earning them a reputation as a devout and spiritual society. Hence, it is unsurprising that Islam, within the cultural dynamics of Madurese society,

remains intertwined with the religious fervor of adherents who uphold traditions or cultural practices deeply rooted in Madurese society (Indriani et al., 2019). In the social reality of the community, Islamic diversity in Madura pervades nearly all aspects of life, entangled within highly multicultural social relations and interactions.

The daily behavior of the Madurese people is consistently influenced by the values embedded in Islam, the predominant religion among them. Consequently, the Madurese worldview is inseparable from religious teachings. The overwhelming majority of Madurese are followers of Islam, although there are minorities of other faiths within the community. There is substantial evidence that Madurese people devoutly adhere to their religious teachings, which form a core part of their identity and profoundly shape their life experiences. This is evident in the symbolic clothing worn by the Madurese, such as the '*samper*' (long cloth), '*kebaya*', and '*burgo*' (veil) for women, and '*sarong*' and '*songko*' for men, which in rural areas particularly, have become symbols of Islam (Rifai, 2007).

The integration of Islam within the Madurese ethnic community, which constantly grapples with the complexities of social, cultural, and religious life, is seen as a successful endeavor. It must be acknowledged that the religious dimension still consistently influences how the Madurese respond to global challenges and the developments of the Industrial Revolution 5.0 era. The normative understanding of Islamic teachings among Madurese continues to evolve dynamically and synergistically with the cultural context, nuanced by local and temporal influences (Rahman, 1999). This understanding is intertwined with the cultural realities of the community, which steadfastly uphold local wisdom as the foundational basis for expressing their distinctive religiosity. In other words, Islamic identity is crucial for the Madurese in navigating their lives (Munir, 1985).

The Madurese Muslim community embraces numerous local wisdom values, including traditional ceremonies, attire, cooperative endeavors, wedding rituals, matchmaking, and religious practices. Various religious practices and rituals significantly impact Madurese society, including '*rokat*

tase', 'village *rokat'*, and recitation groups. In practice, this communal ethnic religiosity naturally manifests within the local traditions, encapsulating the Madurese interpretation of Islam as a grand tradition (normative teachings) and shaping a conception of the sociological-anthropological reality that influences the lives of local communities (Azra, 1999). The presence of Islam within these sociological-anthropological frameworks has evolved into an "actual-cultural movement," which openly engages in dialogue and communication with various groups, ensuring that the practice of Islam by the Madurese genuinely offers comfort and shelter, aligning with the local wisdom values manifested in "*rampak naong bringen korong*" or the principle of harmony values in peaceful life.

The Concept of *Rampak Naong Bringing Korong* of the Madurese Community

This section focuses on one of the local wisdom values of the Madurese people, which underscores a culture of peaceful social interaction within their community and with communities outside Madura. Many symbolic expressions have become part of Madurese local wisdom, representing potential and primordial strength in fostering brotherhood and kinship with a peaceful nuance between communities (Supratman & Linarsih, 2021). One such symbolic expression that embodies these local wisdom values is "*rampak naong bringen korong*" (a shady atmosphere full of peace, akin to being under a shady banyan tree), symbolizing harmony and peace in Madurese life.

Another symbolic expression integral to Madurese local wisdom is "*oreng dhaddhi taretan, taretan dhaddhi oreng*" (other people can become your brothers, while your brothers can become other people). This term reflects the lexical meaning that the Madurese ethnic group is a "separate community," distinct from other ethnic groups in its ethnographic form and type (Alwi, 2001). This expression signifies that strong brotherhood is a social capital for the Madurese, helping maintain their spirit of primordialism—

sameness in ethnicity, language, religion, and culture—in a more positive direction.

Moreover, the Madurese hold an ideal insight about living ‘*rokon*’ (harmoniously) as a symbol of brotherhood integral to the fabric of their societal life. The values of local wisdom are captured in the phrase “*namen sokon salanjangnga, nemmo sorat pas ebatja, odi’ rokon noro’ bunga, bukte bettje’ mangka kaca*” (planting breadfruit forever, finding a letter and then reading it, living harmoniously is enjoyable, proof of goodness that serves as an example) (Rifai, 2007). These symbolic expressions, within the framework of Madurese literature, symbolize unity and brotherhood as “*settong dara*” or one blood, uniquely representing the local wisdom that forms part of the Madurese philosophy of life.

The expressive term “*rampak naong bringen korong*” can be explained as follows. First, the ‘*rampak*’ concept. Etymologically, *rampak* means living in a row or side by side. In a terminological sense, it implies living side by side as equals, without turning their backs on each other in social life. The inherent characteristic of *rampak* is being together in a horizontal structure that fosters inner and familial ties between communities in a complementary atmosphere. If society interprets and applies the symbol *rampak* as a cycle of life that always coexists and collaborates, then the societal atmosphere will remain peaceful and serene, free from the traps of violence (Takdir, 2018).

Second, another symbol of local wisdom is the word ‘*naong*’ interpreted as a place that is shady and cool, protected from heat and rain. Sociologically and anthropologically, the word *naong* in Madurese life symbolizes a cycle where people experience shade and coolness in beautiful places, such as homes, prayer rooms, or under large, densely leaved trees. In essence, it represents a peaceful and harmonious life, radiating through symbols of local wisdom in Madurese society (Alwi, 2001).

Third, another Madurese philosophy of life is ‘*bringen*,’ which is interpreted as the banyan tree. It substantially is a symbol of a tree with strong roots, a sturdy trunk, and shade. As a Madurese philosophy of life, the

bringen tree provides a sense of shade and coolness for people who apply this philosophy and symbol.

Fourth, another Madurese philosophy of life is the word '*korong*' which comes from the root word '*sangkar*' (confinement). In the context of Madurese society, it represents a symbol for people who want to take refuge from various threats that confront them. Madurese people believe that the *korong* is a shelter for chickens who feel hot and rainy, so a place called a *korong* is needed.

The values of local wisdom manifested in the expression '*rampak naong bringen korong*' above are the way of life of Madurese people in building socio-cultural relations with their community or other communities outside Madura. In the Madurese philosophy of life, the anthropological journey of human life is not only related to human responsibility towards God but also towards fellow humans. Even though it is only in the form of symbolic expressions, the values of local wisdom manifested in the Madurese philosophy of life always have positive implications for building a harmonious, peaceful, and balanced life in all aspects of life.

The value of local wisdom in expressions '*rampak naong bringen korong*' is togetherness between people regardless of differences in background, whether differences in language, customs, ethnicity, social status, political choices, or even religious differences. This value of togetherness to live side by side is part of the Madurese philosophy of life which is not eroded by changing times and developments in the digital world. The value of togetherness that is most visible in the traditions and social relations of Madurese life is in the form of social activities and the construction of community facilities and places of worship. Besides, the value of balance in the '*rampak naong bringen korong*' philosophy is an important part of Madurese people living an orderly, harmonious, and balanced life. It is in line with religious teachings to take the middle path or *wasatiyyah* (moderation) (Pajarianto et al., 2017). Life balance for Madurese is a guideline for carrying out every activity, including when interacting with others who are limited by social and religious norms (Zubairi, 2013)

The most important value of the expression '*rampak naong bringen korong*' is the value of peace and harmony as symbols and philosophies of life for Madurese people who prefer living in harmony with others. The value of peace for Madurese people is part of local wisdom that demonstrates a nurturing character and avoids various forms of violence in community life such as '*carok*'. Local wisdom serves as social capital in countering all forms of violence in the lives of Madurese people and promoting the values of peace and harmony (*rokon*) as life principles deeply ingrained in daily behavior. Moreover, in Madurese culture, there exist social relations that foster bonds of closeness and togetherness, serving as potential social capital among the community. These social relations in Madurese culture are often described as reinforcements influenced by the environment, presenting a nuanced atmosphere of peace and harmony as a manifestation of the expression '*settong dara*' (Wiyata, 2002).

The Relevance of Religion, Local Wisdom, and Power in the Concept of *Rampak Naong Bringen Korong*

This section presents an analysis of the relevance of religion, local wisdom, and power from an Islamic perspective and the social theory of the Madurese people. They strongly adhere to religious teachings and respect power relations within the framework of Buppa/Babu (father/mother), guru (teacher, kiai, ustadz), and rato (government/leader) as symbols of inviolable respect (Hefni, 2007; Wiyata, 2003). The expression '*rampak naong bringen korong*' also represents a cultural philosophy of peace and power relations in the dimension of those power relations (Daulay et al., 2022).

For Madurese people, ulama or kiai are elite figures who hold strategic positions in every activity of community life. It is not surprising that kiai or ulama have become symbols of unity and community centers among people who seek spiritual or other guidance (Mansurnoor, 1990). Kiai figures in Madurese society are not only known as experts in religious knowledge but

also as experts in healing through prayers and often provide advice on the community's economic problems.

If fathers and mothers are the figures most respected among the Madurese people as part of life's wisdom, then the Kiai is an important element that influences the religious life of the community (Hefni, 2007). Likewise, the figure of *rato* (government) has relations with power and plays an important role in every aspect of community life, including economic, political, and cultural issues of Madurese society (Effendi, 1990). However, Kiai's position as a religious representative is more influential and has higher charisma compared to the government's position as a power relation. In other words, the relationship between religion, local wisdom, and power is reflected in the Madurese people's obedience to their parents, teachers (*ulama/kiai*), and the government as formal leaders. In the socio-cultural life of Madurese people, there is a reference standard of obedience to role models in a hierarchical frame.

Regarding the connection between religion, local wisdom, and power, the expression '*rampak naong bringen korong*' indicates that every individual or group must be able to maintain good relations with others regardless of differences in background. One example of life balance internalized in the expression is taking care of each other's feelings among friends or relatives so that they do not easily get offended in any social relations. This illustrates that a good and balanced relationship pattern will foster harmonious and peaceful relations among the Madurese people and outside Madura itself. Moreover, the value of balancing life by maintaining good relations with everyone will be the best way to cultivate a peaceful and serene atmosphere in religious, social, and power environments.

Conclusion

Referring to the concept of local wisdom expressed in "*rampak naong bringen korong*," Madurese people will always maintain togetherness, balance, peace, and harmony as symbols of moderate religious teachings and deeply rooted cultural values. This is reflected in the teachings of parents as

respected figures who always encourage their children to maintain togetherness and work together in every activity without demeaning each other. When interacting with the outside world, Madurese children are taught to take care of other people's feelings so as not to give the impression of belittling or demeaning them, let alone turning their backs on each other in every relationship and social interaction. Humility, brotherhood, balance in life, and harmony between people are important parts of religious teachings, represent the teachings of local wisdom, and are supported by the government as the policyholder in all aspects of community life.

In other words, the relationship between religion, local wisdom, and power is reflected in the Madurese people's obedience to their parents, teachers (ulama atau kiai), and the government as formal leaders. There is a reference standard of obedience to role models in a hierarchical frame of social and cultural life. Among Madurese people, fathers and mothers are the figures most respected as part of their wisdom, and the Kiai is an important element that affects the religious life of the community. Similarly, the figure of rato (government) has relations with power and plays an important role in every aspect of community life, including economic, political, and cultural issues of Madurese society.

Understanding the interplay between religion, local wisdom, and power sheds light on the Madurese people's adherence to hierarchical structures and their respect for parental, educational, and governmental authorities. These insights hold implications for further studies in exploring the practical applications of local wisdom in promoting social cohesion, governance effectiveness, and community well-being. Relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and community leaders, can leverage these findings to design interventions that align with Madurese values, thereby fostering sustainable development and inclusive growth in Madura and beyond

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PATRIARCHY AND PATERNALISTIC CULTURE OF RELIGIOUS LEADER DEIFICATION CAUSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The rise of sexual harassment perpetrated by religious figures in Islamic educational institutions has raised doubts about the role and objectives of these institutions in Aceh. This research aims to determine how sexual harassment is influenced by religious culture and the impact of such cases on the image of Islamic educational institutions. It is qualitative-descriptive in nature. Data were collected using observation, interviews, and documentation instruments. Meanwhile, data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis. The results show that cult-like practices contribute to sexual harassment in Islamic

educational institutions as part of the religious culture within these institutions. The strength of these cult practices, as part of the religious culture, is intertwined with the role of patriarchal culture and paternalistic leadership deeply rooted in society. This harassment occurs through the abuse of religious dogma, such as the method of transferring metaphysical knowledge. With the continued increase in cases of sexual harassment within Islamic educational institutions, parents have grown doubtful about the educational process in institutions run by religious figures, leading them to prefer general educational institutions instead. This finding is helpful for understanding the causes and methods of preventing the recurrence of sexual harassment in Islamic educational institutions.

Maraknya pelecehan seksual yang dilakukan oleh tokoh agama di lembaga pendidikan Islam telah menimbulkan keraguan tentang peran dan tujuan lembaga-lembaga tersebut di Aceh. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan bagaimana pelecehan seksual dipengaruhi oleh budaya agama dan dampak kasus-kasus tersebut terhadap citra lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif-deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan instrumen observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Sementara itu, analisis data dilakukan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik-praktik seperti sekte berkontribusi terhadap pelecehan seksual di lembaga pendidikan Islam sebagai bagian dari budaya agama dalam lembaga-lembaga tersebut. Kekuatan praktik-praktik sekte ini, sebagai bagian dari budaya agama, terkait erat dengan peran budaya patriarki dan kepemimpinan paternalistik yang sangat tertanam dalam masyarakat. Pelecehan ini terjadi melalui penyalahgunaan dogma agama, seperti metode transfer pengetahuan metafisik. Dengan terus meningkatnya kasus pelecehan seksual di lembaga pendidikan Islam, orang tua semakin meragukan proses pendidikan di lembaga-lembaga yang dijalankan oleh tokoh agama, sehingga mereka cenderung memilih lembaga pendidikan umum. Temuan ini berguna untuk memahami penyebab dan metode pencegahan berulangnya pelecehan seksual di lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Keywords: *deification; Islamic educational institutions; paternalistic leadership; patriarchal culture; sexual harassment*

Introduction

Pesantren is one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and has become an icon in giving birth to cadres of ulama up to the present day (Bafadhol, 2017). The term "Pesantren" can consist of two elements: a *Kyai* (a Javanese Islamic cleric) or *Teungku* (an Acehnese Islamic cleric) and Santri (Islamic boarding school students), supported by the existence of a place for the students to live within the educational environment (Almuhajir, 2020; Djamas, 2008; Nirzalin & Febriandi, 2020). The special characteristics of Islamic boarding schools include a curriculum focused on religious sciences, such as Arabic syntax, Arabic morphology, Islamic law, Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic theology, Sufism, history, and rhetoric. The literature for these sciences uses classic books called the "*kitab kuning*" (Mujib & Mudzakkir, 2006).

Ideally, a religious educational institution, especially an Islamic boarding school, has the significant task of creating Indonesian Muslim individuals and communities who have faith and devotion to Allah SWT (Azra, 2001). This enormous task is carried out by religious leaders to ensure that educational institutions operate in accordance with their religious understanding. Due to the significant role of these religious figures, a tradition of reverence towards them has emerged within the environment. This tradition of reverence is deeply embedded in the journey of Islamic boarding schools, both in religious activities, particularly "*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*" (enjoining good and forbidding evil), and in structured education and religious teachings conducted both inside and outside the boarding school (Huda, 2011). However, recently, this tradition of reverence, which should foster genuine trust in teachers and leaders of Islamic boarding schools, has had harmful and destructive impacts. One visible impact is that the leadership of these religious figures in Islamic educational institutions is often labeled as authoritarian and arbitrary, leading to characteristics of patriarchal and paternalistic leadership (Erlangga et al., 2013; Mastuhu, 1994).

Various phenomena and data showed deviations, especially in the religious education environment, using cult traditions for actions that are contrary to Islamic values, such as sexual harassment and corrupt acts (Nedegaard et al., 2014). The data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women on the fact sheet of sexual violence in education in 2020 states that sexual violence occurs at all levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education. Universities rank first at 27% and Islamic boarding schools or education based on Islam ranks second or 19%, 15% occurs at the high school/vocational school level, 7% occurs at the junior high school level, and 3% respectively in TK, SD, SLB, and Christian-Based Education (Komisi Nasional Perempuan, 2020).

Sexual harassment in the religious education environment is not a new thing but an old behavior but has only recently become national news. One case of sexual harassment is done by perpetrator Moch Subchi Azal Tsani who is the son of the leader and a teacher at the Siddiqiyah Islamic Boarding School, Jombang Regency, East Java. In the statements of the victims, several excuses were made by the suspect to be able to carry out his evil plan, namely teaching spiritual knowledge with strange rituals and even being stripped naked in a hut (Sadiah et al., 2023; Tempo, 2022).

Another case is Herry Wirawan, who is the leader of a *Pesantren* in Bandung and a teacher at three other Islamic boarding schools who take advantage of his position as a leader of a *Pesantren*. He is known to be a pious person who raped 14 female students and even gave birth to children and exploited the children resulting from rape with various lures (Suara Ternate, 2021). The good lure is in the form of a better life, to religious motives (Hardyanthi et al., 2021; Oktariani et al., 2023). These two cases are not the only cases of sexual harassment in Islamic boarding schools. Similar incidents have also occurred in various areas, both those that have been revealed and that have not been revealed, not least in Aceh where the perpetrator was a *Teungku* in northern Aceh in carrying out sodomy acts against his students (AJNN, 2023).

There has been several research on the occurrence of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in campus environments (Pandor et al., 2023), in public spaces (Pratiwi & H, 2021; Rabathy & Komala, 2021), and in public transportation (Karliana & Prabowo, 2015; Pradini, 2023; Ramdhani, 2017). However, there has not been much research on sexual harassment that focuses on Islamic educational institutions that uphold religious values. It is undoubtedly a haram act and a major sin. Religious leaders carry out the majority of sexual violence that occurs in Islamic educational institutions and is often accompanied by cult practices (Pebriaisyah et al., 2022).

Cult is not one of the causes of sexual harassment that occurs in various Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. Still, this tradition indirectly makes it easier for perpetrators to carry out their actions with various motives. So, moving on from the various problems above, this study concerns the patriarchy and paternalistic as the cult of religious leaders and sexual harassment. It belongs to a study of social phenomena in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh. It comprehensively examines the causes of sexual harassment in the environment of religious education and cult traditions that pave the way for acts that are contrary to various norms. By looking at some of the descriptions above, for this reason, this study focuses on how sexual harassment is influenced by religious culture and the impact of sexual harassment cases on the image of Islamic educational institutions.

Method

This study employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, wherein the researcher explored the nature of human experiences related to a specific phenomenon. The phenomenological approach involved research methods that required the researcher to engage directly and for an extended period with several subjects to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Rukminingsih et al., 2020). In this study, the phenomenon examined was the cult tradition within religious educational institutions, which has led to cases of sexual harassment. The locations studied included

salafiyah and modern Islamic boarding schools (Pesantren/Dayah) in the Bireuen and Aceh Besar Regencies.

The research was supported by both primary and secondary data. The qualitative data sources comprised informants, events, locations, and documents. Data collection efforts involved several techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. To obtain primary data, the researchers conducted interviews with several relevant individuals, including the Regional Head of the Aceh Ministry of Religion, officers of the Dayah education service, legislative members, the Aceh Police Criminal Investigation Department, the Head of the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (DPPPA), and people with a religious educational background. These informants were selected based on the following criteria: first, their understanding of specific issues within the Islamic boarding school environment; and secondly, their experience with cases of sexual harassment. Additionally, the researchers collected literature as secondary data. The documentation technique involved retrieving documents from the Ministry of Religion's website, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, and articles related to the growth of religious educational institutions and cases of sexual harassment in Aceh. The data analysis techniques in this study included: 1) Data Reduction, 2) Data Display, and 3) Conclusion Drawing/Verification.

Finding and Discussion

The causes of sexual harassment in Islamic Educational Institutions

In Aceh, there are currently many cases of sexual harassment, whether students or teachers perpetrate it, and there are even some religious educators who have abused their students, such as the case that was allegedly perpetrated by the leadership of one Islamic boarding school in Pidie Jaya regency, who abused a 14-year-old student traumatized and depressed. Previously, there was also news about the alleged harassment of 15 students who were still children by the Pesantren leaders in Lhokseumawe City. Three years later, in Aceh Besar regency, there were also allegations of sodomy by

the Pesantren leader against two underage male students. In the western province of Aceh, in Nagan Raya regency, to be precise, a few months ago, there were also reports of sexual crimes committed by Islam teachers who abused their students so that they had to be rushed to the hospital. Another case of sexuality in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh that has surfaced is the case of sexual harassment of 20 female students by a teacher in the North Aceh regency (AJNN, 2023).

Based on the Aceh Sharia Court Data, there are only 28 cases of sexual violence against women and children registered in the Court Case Tracing Information System (SIPPP) at the Aceh Sharia Court (Mahkamah Syar'iyah Aceh, n.d.). These events could be an iceberg phenomenon, which could be a reality much bigger than what the public hears and reports in the media about the shabby behavior of unscrupulous religious teachers who can defame a spiritual, educational institution considered moral. Moreover, the case of alleged sexual harassment in Islamic boarding schools was not highlighted because most Islamic educational institutions in Aceh even covered up this case to maintain the good name of the institution if even a little was revealed because of the openness of the victim and the assistance from the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) in finding and tracing who the perpetrators were. Thus, perpetrators of abuse can receive punishment according to existing laws and feel deterred from repeating these actions (Meutia, 2023). Cases of harassment also occur at the student level; in this case, it is crucial for families, especially, to provide education to children so they can avoid things that lead to harassment. In this case, harassment itself is any unwanted sexual act, whether verbal, written, or sexually suggestive, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated, sometimes even causing a tremendous traumatic effect (Sigurdardottir & Halldorsdottir, 2021).

In addition, what is in the spotlight is the occurrence of these sexual activities in the environmental space of Islamic educational institutions, which should aim to learn, explore, absorb, and practice Islamic teachings with religious morals instead of doing things that are not in line with their

goals. Even though sexuality has a theological basis in every religion, illegal sexual relations (outside of marriage) are rejected by religious authorities. In the traditions of Semitic religions, for example, this activity is considered a form of adultery where the perpetrators are punished and ostracized from social interactions. Likewise, the practice of deviation, harassment, and sexual violence is also contrary to the principles of all religions. Responding to the phenomenon of sexual violence in Aceh, especially in cases of sexual harassment, there are many factors behind this despicable act.

Patriarchal culture and paternalistic leadership

Based on the observations, Islamic educational institutions such as *Pesantren* have a culture and tradition that tends to place religious leaders such as the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as exalted figures, central figures, references, and even role models. Still many heads of foundations or officials in Islamic educational institutions often abuse their sacred status or position and take advantage of this leadership style, which gives them an advantageous position. Under the pretext of a religious cult that they use to gain the trust of victims and those around them, they can carry out acts of violence and sexual harassment seamlessly. Obedience to the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* becomes part of what is instilled, so being critical and opposing it will be considered deviant because it is believed to be a source of sin.

Then, the value of patriarchal culture is still strengthening; a man is still considered to have greater power (power relations) than a woman in social and political life, which can lead to discrimination against women, including sexual harassment. McMaster (2020) explained exceptional characteristics or signs in Islamic educational institutions such as *Pesantren*, namely power, patriarchy, obedience, and respect for authority figures (high-ranking foundations or leaders of Islamic educational institutions). These signs can actually facilitate the possibility of violence or sexual harassment. In a sociological context, the strong position and charisma of a religious figure are due to the cult tradition, which is also one of the characteristics that distinguish *Pesantren* from modern educational institutions such as schools and *madrrasah*. In a psychological context, this cult is formed from

the fascination of Santri with the figure of a Kyai, Ustadz or Teungku who is based on emotion (feelings), not rational (thoughts).

Psychologically, this condition has given perpetrators of sexual violence a sense of comfort to carry out their actions in Islamic boarding schools without fear. As a result of cult traditions and the uncontrollable sexual libido of religious leaders, cases of sexual harassment and violence in Islamic boarding schools appear to be mushrooming. Pesantren, as a place of education, is narrated as a "holy" place where parents entrust their children to be educated with religious morals so that their children become good and valuable people in society. Pebriaisyah et al. (2022) said that religious education institutions such as Pesantren are often associated with patriarchal culture, where men are constructed as subjects while women are objects. Islamic boarding schools also show an imbalance of power relations in which the position of a religious figure such as a *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* is higher than the Santri so that the Santri who are harassed do not have the power to fight because they are in a low hierarchy. Bruineessen (1995) describes the position of a *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as the sole authority in a Pesantren whose words and actions are considered the truth, allowing him to dominate the Santri. Indeed, this condition does not only occur in Islamic boarding schools in Java but also in religious education institutions such as Dayah and Pesantren in Aceh, where a *Teungku* is often positioned as an infallible (holy) figure who has never done anything wrong and sin.

Darma, the head of the Aceh Besar Regency Day education office, explained that in the leadership of this religious figure, the paternalistic culture shows the existence of power relations between the positions of Kyai-Santri such as superiors and subordinates. It can also be interpreted as superior and inferior in terms of these factors because the Santri's obedience to the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* is sacred and cannot be questioned or denied (Darma, 2023). In line with Huda (2011), the one-way learning system in Pesantren has also positioned the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as primary sources, which automatically place students at the bottom of the hierarchy and are passive. This condition is the primary basis for the emergence of an

emotional-based cult attitude towards the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*. This cultic tradition or deification later gives rise to unequal power relations in boarding schools. In addition to cases of rape in Islamic boarding schools being considered un-Islamic, the hierarchy of power found in Islamic boarding schools is also not recognized in Islam. The existence of sexual violence in Islamic boarding schools is the worst result of the fusion of religious and modern patriarchy. The unlimited power possessed by male leaders in *Pesantren*, which is justified by various religious verses, comes from modern structures such as colonialism and capitalism and not from Islamic sources.

Based on the analysis, it is evident that the sexual harrasment stems from power relations and social class in Islamic educational institutions. The *Santri* and the congregation of Islamic boarding schools will usually place the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* as the elite, namely "holy" people, who are considered incapable of doing wrong. In various religions, the community will often find religious terms metaphysical designations in the mention of spiritual leaders as "holy people," such as the mention of saints, clerics, or similar titles.

Lack of understanding of diversity

Most individuals today are shaped by the culture in which they were born and live, acquiring cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors. Culture determines the definition and description of normality and psychopathology. Islamic educational institutions such as *Dayah* and *Pesantren* tend to be heterogeneous. Each *Santri* who studies at these institutions typically has a diverse socio-economic background, origin, personality, character, and various cultural backgrounds. Additionally, large economic disparities can exacerbate the situation, especially for *Santri* from poorer areas and for Islamic educational institutions in remote areas where sexual crimes can occur more frequently (Annan, 2006; Jones et al., 2023; Lizarraga & Terry, 2021; Macêdo, 2021).

Cultural diversity plays an important role in how certain populations and societies perceive, understand, and process sexual acts and sexual

violence. Activities under the guise of religion or considered religious cults carried out by religious experts are something that cannot be disputed. The high trust given by students or families often does not raise suspicions about these deviant activities, especially among students whose parents have minimal educational background. Undergoing education in institutions such as *Pesantren*, where students have diverse backgrounds, certainly creates loopholes for acts of sexual harassment to occur, presenting a challenge to prevent it (Juflawan, 2023).

Based on information from Ade, Director of General Criminal Investigation of the Aceh Regional Police, who handles harassment cases, the perpetrators used certain methods to channel their libido in Islamic boarding schools, usually narrated using religious language. The mode can take various forms, such as prayers, useful knowledge, strengthening memorization of the Qur'an, meta facts, and so on (Ade, 2023). This mode of operation seems to be quite effective in deceiving the victims, who are, on average, still underage and immature psychologically. Those who are underage are certainly more vulnerable to being provoked by the actions carried out by unscrupulous *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*. Moreover, life in Islamic boarding schools is full day and night. Given that students live in these boarding schools 24 hours a day, seven days a week, there is often no one to watch over them constantly. This means that without strict internal and external supervision, abuse of power by religious leaders with a paternalistic culture can occur in religious educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools

Misuse of Religious Dogma

Regarding acts of sexual violence often occur in “religious spaces” such as seminaries and Islamic boarding schools, in this context, one must distinguish between religion as a theological doctrine which refers to sacred texts with a spiritual dimension, and religion as a sociological phenomenon which refers to the behavior of its adherents. Based on this dichotomy, sexual violence is in the sociological domain (reality), not in the theological (normative) domain. Even though it is in the sociological domain, the

perpetrators of sexual violence often use theological arguments such as 'obedience' and 'blessing' to influence their victims. Using dogma with religious attachments as a tool to suppress and dominate is commonplace for those with a paternalistic culture. Punishments and extra lessons given by sexual predators are often attached to a religious cult that cannot be avoided (Ade, 2023).

Regarding this punishment is another finding against the notion that violence is part of the learning media and a form of teaching that is by their cult. Some Islamic educational institutions use violence as a form of punishment for students who break the rules. Punishment aims for students to feel a deterrent, not repeat mistakes and become obedient (Darma, 2023). The practice of sexual violence that occurred in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh can be classified into two categories: the opposite gender and the same gender. Sexual harassment of the opposite gender, namely the perpetrators who commit acts of sexual harassment, are male friends of the same age, *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*. At the same time, the victims are female teachers/staff and female students. Then, the second category is the same gender, namely: the perpetrators are *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*, and the victims are boys with a form of sexual harassment. The pattern of occurrence of the practice of sexual violence is divided into several stages, namely:

First, the perpetrator shows more attention to the students who are potential victims, creating closeness between them. Often, the perpetrator shows a good attitude towards the child's parents with the hope that the child's parents feel that their presence with the perpetrator positively impacts the child's development. Second, involving potential victims where unscrupulous *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* are invited to give lectures and serve as their companions at each lecture location. Some parents consider this relationship something to be proud of because of the close relationship between their children and unscrupulous *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*, making them think their child has potential and is special (Ade, 2023). Third, after gaining the trust of parents and children, the execution of *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* continues to occur, which leads to sexual violence, as in the case of

Kyai, Ustadz, or Teungku who commit sexual harassment under the pretext of helping the students' exam process at Islamic boarding schools. To pass the exam smoothly, students must take part in and receive the transfer of knowledge through sexual intercourse. These students must listen, obey and obey whatever the *Kyai, Ustadz, or Teungku* orders.

In addition, some offer meta-fact knowledge that can fulfill every desire of the *Santri* accompanied by the doctrine of "purification" with rituals carried out by unscrupulous religious experts who are the institution's leaders (Jamil, 2023). This dogma then provides an opportunity for perpetrators to channel their sexual libido through harassment and violence in 'religious spaces'. In a psychological context, as stated by Freud, the definition of libido is not only focused on the issue of sexuality but has an impact on all behaviors (Reber, 2001). In some cases, libido is related to sexuality, so abnormal libido is often associated with sexual violence. This strong and unstoppable libido is frequently touted as the impact of pornography. Nevertheless, factually, pornography is not always inherent in increasing libido. As Rothbart mentioned, access to pornography that is too intense makes it difficult to reach a climax when having sex (Rothbart, 2011).

Intimacy and loyalty

The ongoing intimacy and loyalty instilled based on obedience and trust in the leadership raise a dilemma between a sense of community solidarity in Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools with human literacy. Solidarity is often interpreted as defending or silencing perpetrators who are fellow *Ustadz* or teaching staff even though they have wrong attitudes and behaviors, including perpetrators of violence and harassment. The existence of familial relationships among fellow teachers (oligarchic relations) makes it generally difficult to identify perpetrators of sexual harassment against students (Juflawan, 2023). This familiarity is also the reason allegations of sexual harassment at Islamic educational institutions in Aceh are rarely exposed. In most *Pesantren*, when harassment occurs, they cover up the case to maintain the good name of the institution where they belong. This familiarity is also the cause of delays in resolving

cases of sexual harassment against students due to the reluctance to become witnesses in these immoral cases (Jamil, 2023).

To overcome this problem, it is necessary to have good cooperation between administrators and teachers. Those involved in managing institutions, such as staff, must also receive education and outreach about sexual harassment, understand laws and regulations on violence and harassment. In addition, they also need to be trained to make educational institution policies that can serve as guidelines in reporting and acting on cases of violence and harassment (Htun & Jensenius, 2020; Yanto et al., 2023). The lack of concrete guidelines and seriousness often makes it difficult to prove sexual assault. Unfortunately, if the alleged crime cannot be proven in most cases, it is considered slander. The protection of students and staff against attacks as well as false accusations requires policies such as implementing a code of conduct so that more minor offenses can be proven. This allows for more minor offenses which have a lower standard of proof, such as being alone with students or obtaining student contact information without permission from the administration of the institution. By matching appropriate professional expectations, grounds for dismissal of a teacher or anyone else violate ethics and standards when a crime against this has not been proven.

In some cases, the accusers often feel insufficient evidence. Yet, after examining the facts, numerous violations sufficient to prove that teachers or central figures were acting outside of professional ethics come to light. However, when standards are ambiguous, it is easy to exploit “gray” areas. Clear codes of conduct make accountability practical and enforceable.

Incompetence in religion and state

One of the other causes of frequent cases of sexual harassment is that the perpetrators do not have a religious understanding and the meaning of the foundation of the Indonesian state, namely *Pancasila* (Muslimah et al., 2019). The noble values contained in *Pancasila* are needed to guide everyday life in society. Those who use *Pancasila* as a guideline in everyday life should be aware that any intention they are doing violate what has been enshrined

in *Pancasila* as the state philosophy. The harassment is very inconsistent with the first precept of *Pancasila*, "Belief in one and only God." Then, someone with a high faith in the religion he adheres to certainly will not commit despicable acts such as harassment. Because every religion explains that treating women inappropriately, especially to the point of harassing them physically and in other ways that traumatize the victim mentally, is prohibited. The act of sexual harassment also violates the second precept, namely "fair and civilized humanity." The human values contained in *Pancasila* teach us to uphold human dignity, do justice to others, and not treat others arbitrarily. Therefore, the importance of the values of *Pancasila*, especially the second precept, is as a guide in handling sexual harassment cases. In addition, the involvement of social institutions helps victims recover from trauma resulting from instances of sexual harassment. This capacity is also one of the applications of the second precept of *Pancasila* (Oktariani et al., 2023).

Moreover, these abuse cases are also very much against the fifth *Pancasila* precept; all members of society, whether young, old, toddlers, students, or all, without discrimination, have the right to be treated fairly. The application of *Pancasila* can provide legal protection and support for victims to have the courage to report cases of sexual harassment. However, the most essential thing is to prevent this from happening again by implementing *Pancasila* values from an early age (Aminuddin & Kumalasari, 2023). The importance of *Pancasila* education is applied starting from elementary school to instill *Pancasila* values. In addition, the importance of early education about reproductive health for children so that later they can understand they can resist behaviors that lead to sexual harassment.

Furthermore, it is essential to ask oneself what effect normalization of abuse has in Islamic circles. At the same time, many efforts have been made to stop harassment in the environment, which aims to teach children about Islam. Children studying at Islamic boarding schools often experience violence, such as being beaten and so on, under the pretext of education. This is no exception for adult students who are frequently beaten and cursed

at, sometimes even by teachers who are emotional and angry. What is happening at this time is undoubtedly far from the way of the Prophet, as it is known from the hadith of Aisyah that Rasulullah SAW. Never hit anyone outside of battle (HR. Muslim No. 2328) (Al-Hajjaj, 2006). *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, *Teungku*, or other similar names are still ordinary human beings; as ordinary humans, they can do right and wrong. This religious elite group is not a group that is infallible or free from sin. They are not God's messengers guaranteed by religious texts as people who can do no wrong. Therefore, this religious elite class, including the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku*, must be seen as ordinary people, treated as ordinary people, and pinned on suspicions like ordinary humans. Islam has conveyed that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, not to give absolute obedience to anyone, including to the *Kyai*, *Ustadz*, or *Teungku* in a famous hadith "*la tha'ata li makhluqin fi ma'siyatil Khaliq*" which means no obedience to creatures in an invitation to disobedience to the creator.

Inconsistent law enforcement

The lack of effective and strict law enforcement against perpetrators of sexual harassment may signal that such acts can be carried out without serious consequences. In the aspect of law enforcement, it is not uncommon for victims to be charged with proving their reports amid a narrow evidentiary system and a robust patriarchal system, which results in a high culture of victim blaming by society (Aborisade, 2023; Davies et al., 2022; Murphy-Oikonen et al., 2022). In addition, government regulations have not been able to reach them strongly regarding cases of sexual harassment in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh. Regarding existing rules, Minister of National Education Regulation No. 84 of 2008 concerned Guidelines for Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in the Education Sector. It states that formal education institutions must carry out gender mainstreaming. Also, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Regulation No. 30 of 2021 concerns the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence (PPKS) in the Higher Education Environment. However, considering that there are several educational institutions whose arrangements are outside the

authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture but under the Ministry of Religion, such as Religious Colleges and boarding schools, including *Dayah* and *Pesantren*, the enforcement of these rules is difficult to execute (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Although the existence of these rules is considered an effort to protect women and children to avoid violence and sexual harassment, in some places, such as in the province of Aceh, these regulations cannot be used as they should. Because Aceh, with the privileges granted by the state, prioritizes its legal product, namely *Qanun Aceh No. 6 of 2014*, concerning *Jinayat Law* or *Qanun Jinayat*. It regulates ten Islamic crimes: *Khamar* (alcohol consumption), *Maisir* (gambling), *Khalwat* (close proximity between unmarried individuals of the opposite sex), *Ikhtilath* (physical intimacy between unmarried individuals of the opposite sex), Adultery, Sexual Harassment, Rape, *Qadzaf* (false accusation of adultery), *Liwath* (sodomy), and *Musahaqah* (lesbianism). Unfortunately, the *Qanun Jinayat* does not comprehensively address the crime of sexual violence. According to Darma, (2023), the regulatory element only punishes the perpetrators and does not pay attention to the victims' rights of these heinous acts. Even in the handling process, it is not in favor of the victim; instead, the victim is charged with proving the truth (victim blaming). In addition, it can be said that the lack of legal socialization of the Law on Child Protection and the *Qanun Jinayat* is the reason for the increase in cases of sexual harassment in Aceh. In the process, which often ends peacefully, there is mediation where the perpetrator complies with the demands of the victim's family so that it does not proceed to the law (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Besides that, Islamic educational institutions need to establish clear rules and guidelines on how teachers can discipline students that focus on students' dignity. In addition, teachers must not justify expressing frustration or channeling the teacher's outbursts of anger toward students. If teachers violate relevant guidelines or regulations, they must be reported immediately and dealt with without tolerance for such crimes. All parties need to show children that their welfare is of the utmost concern. Most importantly,

Islamic teachings do not allow and justify anything harmful, such as violence or harassment.

Inadequate facilities and infrastructure

Another cause of sexual harassment cases in Islamic educational institutions is inadequate facilities and infrastructure. Often, Islamic educational institutions such as *Dayah* and *Pesantren* have minimal facilities, such as beds and bathrooms, which forces the students to share, sleeping in the same room and crowded together. Additionally, the limited number of bathrooms makes the students bathe together, which becomes a common practice and does not seem astonishing or taboo to them. This situation provides an opportunity for perpetrators to commit sexual harassment.

Moreover, the students must live in the educational institution by staying in the hostel during their studies. This learning model increases the opportunity for deviant behavior. Another cause is the limited social life of the students outside the institution. They are prohibited from interacting with the opposite sex, are not allowed to leave the grounds of Islamic boarding schools except for urgent reasons, and may only communicate and interact with the same sex (LGBT) within the boarding schools, which can lead to sexual harassment (homosexual and lesbian activities) (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Lack of sex education

The phenomenon of sexual deviance that occurs in Islamic educational institutions (boarding school-oriented religious education institutions), such as homosexual and lesbian activities, is due to a lack of control and understanding of sex. Sex education is often considered taboo in public circles, making it difficult to introduce and provide knowledge about gender functions. This lack of education can exacerbate cases of harassment, making them more concerning if left unchecked (Rakhmawati et al., 2023). Sexuality is a natural part of human existence, as birth and development originate from sexual events. Religious teachings, including those in Islam, address sexuality. Islam, which rejects celibacy, incorporates sexuality into its teachings. In Islam, legal sexual intercourse (*jimak*) is

considered part of worship and is valued higher than sunnah fasting. Therefore, discussions of sexual relations are detailed in Islamic Fiqh.

In Aceh, there is still a lack of education about sex, including sexual harassment prevention and treatment. This can exacerbate the situation and allow sexual harassment to continue without proper action. Sex education is often considered taboo, making it challenging to introduce and provide knowledge about gender functions, even though cases of harassment are more concerning if left unaddressed (Putra & Erniyati, 2022). Children have a great curiosity during their development, so sex education needs to be provided early by parents and teachers. If parents and teachers do not provide sex education, children will seek information from potentially unreliable sources, such as peers who may understand sexual concepts negatively or adults with harmful intentions (Ningsih, 2023).

Sex education is a form of intervention to address cases of sexual violence against children by introducing words such as vulva, vagina, penis, anus, and breasts—names of body parts that children must understand to avoid harmful behavior. The main objective of efforts to prevent sexual abuse of children in education (by providing sex education) is to help children identify dangerous situations, and prevent sexual harassment. It also aims to understand inappropriate touching, refuse or end interactions with suspicious individuals, and seek help when needed. A lack of education and excessive parental trust in children results in inadequate supervision, leading to sexual abuse in Islamic educational institutions (Al-Farlaki, 2023).

Lack of parental supervision and sensitivity

In such educational institutions, there are no checks and balances on how children are treated. The impact of this treatment often leaves a negative impression on their view of Islam or religious leaders in general. The excessive trust of parents in these institutions can result in neglect of parental monitoring, leading to sexual harassment of their children. Parents often show minimal interest in their children's experiences at the Islamic boarding school, which is critical in revealing cases of sexual harassment (Jamil, 2023).

To eradicate this phenomenon, prevention rules must be established, such as not allowing children to be alone with adults, and ensuring that more than one adult is present in the children's environment. Additionally, individuals must be held accountable for violations of these rules. Children must be taught about boundaries, understanding which touches or conversations are allowed and which are not. Parents need to understand that being a Muslim, an Islamic teacher, or being in an Islamic educational institution does not guarantee immunity from committing horrific acts.

The role of family and parents is crucial in fostering children's openness by paying close attention to their daily lives in Islamic boarding schools. Parents must learn to watch for signs of abuse, encourage their children to communicate any inappropriate behavior, and not teach them to blindly obey authority figures. Children must understand the difference between respect and obedience, and cultivating an assertive attitude can make them less likely targets for harassment by authority figures.

Children play an important role in exposing perpetrators who commit immoral acts against them, ensuring that such behavior is dealt with according to applicable laws and regulations. Without reports from children, the practice of sexual harassment in Islamic boarding schools will remain hidden (Meutia, 2023). By fostering understanding and courage in children, they can contribute significantly to preventing inappropriate actions, especially while studying at Islamic boarding schools. Given the strict rules allowing parents to meet their children only on certain days and conditions, it is vital for *Santri* to communicate their experiences effectively. Thus, the role of children in conveying their experiences is extremely important.

Lack of supervision over internet use

The use of social media containing pornographic content, which is now very easy to access, can trigger acts of sexual harassment because pornography on the internet is addictive. Men who consume pornography are more vulnerable to violence and sexual coercion from peers or adults. Boys exposed to pornography from their early teens will shape their sexual behavior and tend to seek power over women (Ningsih, 2023). Conversely,

adolescent girls are more likely to tolerate emotional, physical, and sexual abuse as a result (Kohut et al., 2021). Internet use should be positive, with monitoring and dissemination of internet ethics.

In addition, the use of social media in advocating social issues is very influential. Social media can play a role in digital activism around the dangers of pornography and sexual harassment by helping motivate others to appear anonymously and share stories to cope with the trauma they have experienced. The public can start campaigns on social media to provide space for people to share the truth and generate conversation around sexual violence. Other methods, such as online forums and blogs, have become channels for victims to unite and drive institutional change. It also works on a macroscopic scale. Communities, as agents of social change, can create petitions that attract the attention of the government and legal aid agencies, holding educational institutions accountable for not protecting students from sexual violence and filtering unstoppable internet use.

The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Islamic Educational Institutions

According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, Aceh is one of the provinces with the most Islamic educational institutions, with Islamic boarding schools in Aceh ranking fifth most, totaling 1,286 *Dayah* and *Pesantren*. The Head of the Regional Office of the Aceh Ministry of Religion, Iqbal, added that the growth of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is rapid. In traditional Islamic educational institutions such as *Dayah*, there have been 400 new *Dayah* established in the past two years (Iqbal, 2023). This continued growth is due to the public's expectation of religious education institutions that provide adequate religious knowledge along with other skills. In the last two years, the number of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh has increased by more than 400, reflecting the enthusiasm of the predominantly Muslim population. The establishment of these institutions is a form of participation, contribution, and concern in preparing the Islamic generation in Aceh for the future.

Amid the rapid development of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh, various reports have emerged tarnishing the reputation of these institutions, which are considered to have higher moral and ethical values due to vigorous religious learning. All criminal acts related to sexuality, where both men and women can be the objects, often place women as victims. These actions, which tend to position the subject and object in a static gender manner, are called gender-based violence. This may also be associated with gender inequality, which manifests in burdens, stereotypes, violence, marginalization, and subordination of women in society. Gender-based violence can take the form of rape cases involving various modus operandi such as anger rape, sadistic rape, domination rape, seduction turning into rape, and exploitation rape. Other forms include domestic violence, forced prostitution (commodification), and humiliation. Gender-based violence occurs at all levels of education, from early childhood education to higher education, as shown in figure 1.

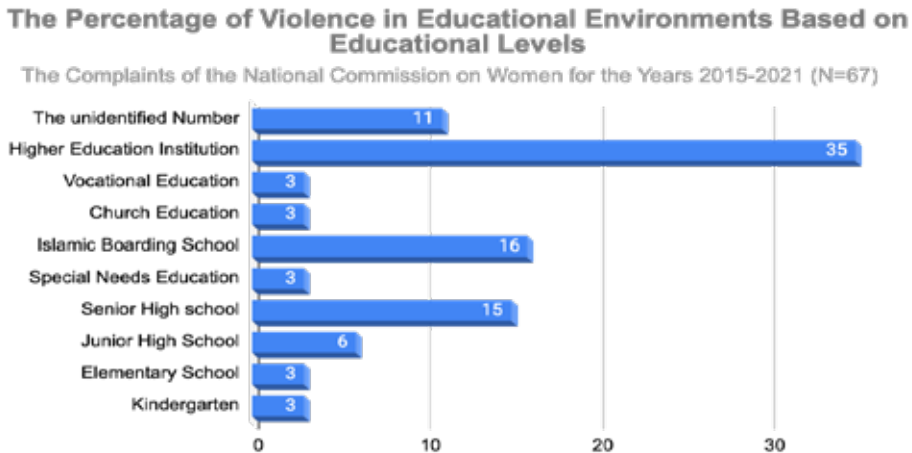


Figure 1. Gender-based violence (Source: data processing)

Based on the records of the National Commission for Women (2020), out of 67 cases reported to Komnas Perempuan during 2015-2021, Higher Education Institutions ranked first (35%), followed by Islamic boarding

schools (16%), and then Senior high schools (15%). An unidentified 11% of cases mentioned the chronology at school without specifying whether it was elementary, junior high, or senior high school. Even so, the number of incidents in Pesantren may be less than 1% of the total number, which reaches 36,600, and does not necessarily represent the population (Ramadhani, 2022). However, the increase in coverage in the mass media cannot be underestimated because it has harmed public perception of Islamic boarding schools, which have so far been seen as places for religious and "holy" people. Moreover, the public is unfamiliar with the practices of Islamic boarding schools because social life in that environment is limited or closed (Darma, 2023).

Sexual harassment is a disgraceful act and is considered a grave sin in Islam. The existence of harassment committed by those who understand religious teachings and serve as teachers of religious knowledge, yet commit immoral acts, is considered very barbaric. Such actions are damaging because, in addition to the commonly seen effects of abuse, perpetrators use religion to cause harm, which is detrimental to the victims' religious life. A safe and comfortable life in the environment of Islamic educational institutions, where religion is taught to reflect positive values for every human being, is now lost and tarnished.

Islamic educational institutions in Aceh should be places for Islamic learning and education for Acehnese children; they should not take repressive actions or commit acts of violence against their students under the pretext of educating them. Even though the attractiveness of Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is higher than in other regions, the rise of harassment cases has made the environment of these institutions appear treacherous (Jufliwani, 2023). Parents with religious concerns often send their children to Islamic schools to learn to read the Qur'an, acquire basic Islamic education, and deepen it. They often believe that children will not be harmed. Unfortunately, abuse often occurs in these institutional settings and can harm children's spiritual development and education, which is what parents seek to protect.

There are also parents who believe that institutions with religious principles cannot guarantee the safety of their students. Consequently, the hopes of parents who want to provide education for both the world and the hereafter through Islamic educational institutions are shattered. According to Maulana (2023), the emergence of sexual predators in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is considered a vital threat to the existence of Islamic development through these institutions. In fact, Islamic educational institutions are meant to uphold socio-religious life.

Islamic boarding schools should be safe, comfortable, and trusted places to study both worldly and spiritual knowledge, free from such bad behavior. Many parents believe that Islamic boarding schools teach about *akhlakul karimah*, where caretakers and religious teachers should serve as role models for their students (Hasyimi, 2023). The emergence of sexual harassment by caretakers of Islamic boarding schools, who often exploit the innocence of *Santri* under the guise of cult traditions, has caused parents to worry and question the religious understanding practiced by teachers and caretakers at Islamic educational institutions in Aceh (Jamaluddin, 2023). Furthermore, the slow response of these institutions in handling cases of sexual violence, often to maintain the institution's reputation, has further angered the community (Ariful, 2023). Although efforts are being made to eradicate sexual harassment in educational institutions, it is difficult because victims find it hard to report these incidents.

In response to this phenomenon, Islamic boarding schools must take strategic steps to retain community trust. One such step is transforming the education system from emotional-based doctrinal and cult (domination) patterns, which cause students to become passive, to a rational-based critical learning system with dynamic relationship patterns. This change will encourage students to think independently. Independent thinking and a critical attitude from students will help prevent such incidents from recurring in the future. It is not easy, but it is essential.

Islamic teachings are a trust that must be carried out properly without any betrayal of the role of teachers, and Islamic educational institutions are

responsible for the students in their care. They must demonstrate that they prioritize their students' well-being by developing policies, procedures, and accountability mechanisms to ensure zero tolerance for abuse of authority. Managers of Islamic educational institutions need to win the hearts of Muslims by showing that they care about safety, dignity, and justice. They must be proactive in delivering on these ideals, not just concerned about responding to scandals or maintaining a good image, but investing in the welfare of present and future generations of Muslims. Islamic educational institutions should be places where students can learn and grow without the fear of negative experiences.

In this way, it is hoped that in the future, unwanted incidents will no longer occur within Islamic educational institutions, especially in Aceh, which has a unique position in carrying out Islamic sharia. This typical Aceh institution must be free from perpetrators of sexual harassment, regardless of who they are or what form it takes. Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools can then focus on building the nation's future and become centers of great Islamic civilization. The hope is that future news about Islamic educational institutions in Aceh will be positive and inspirational, representing moderate Islamic values and progressive insights into the future.

Conclusion

The occurrence of sexual violence in Islamic educational institutions in Aceh is caused by various factors. First, there is the "utilization" of a paternalistic leadership culture, making students obedient to teachers in these institutions. Second, the diversity of student backgrounds causes those who understand religion to dare to commit these despicable acts. Perpetrators often target students from poor or uneducated family backgrounds, knowing they can easily influence them. Third, the misuse of religious dogma serves as a tool for persuasion by the perpetrators. Fourth, the closeness and loyalty among teachers allow them to harass students and remain silent about it. This familiarity makes them support each other under

the pretext of maintaining the institution's good name. Fifth, the lack of effective and strict law enforcement against perpetrators of sexual harassment signals that such actions can be carried out freely without serious consequences and without fear of punishment. Sixth, the lack of adequate facilities in Islamic educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools, also contributes to the problem. Limited facilities, such as bathrooms and beds, force students to share, leading to sexual deviations, including homosexuality and lesbianism. Seventh, the lack of sex education provided by parents and the government leaves students unaware of the abuse they are experiencing. *Santri* often become victims due to their innocence and youth. Eighth, unmonitored scientific and technological advances, such as unfiltered internet access to pornographic content, negatively impact behavior and lead to sex addiction.

Furthermore, cases of sexual harassment in Islamic educational institutions have serious and tangible impacts on future developments. Sexual harassment by those who understand religious teachings and are teachers of religious knowledge but commit immoral acts is considered barbaric. Islamic boarding schools should be safe, comfortable, and trusted places to study both worldly and spiritual knowledge. Many parents believe that Islamic boarding schools teach about *akhlakul karimah*, where caretakers and religious teachers should serve as role models for their *Santri*. With the continued increase in cases of sexual harassment within Islamic educational institutions in Aceh, parents are losing trust in these institutions and are more inclined to choose public educational institutions for their children.

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HOW HUMANITARIAN ISLAM FOSTERS PEACE: THE PERSPECTIVE OF NAHDLATUL ULAMA

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Abstract

This paper explores the perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, on the relationship between Islam and citizenship, and how its Humanitarian Islam initiative fosters peace and harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims. Using a literature review method, it examines the historical and conceptual background of Islam and citizenship and their relevance and implications in the context of Indonesia. It argues that NU and Humanitarian Islam view Islam and citizenship as compatible and mutually beneficial, based on the Islamic values and principles that are in line with the ideals and norms of citizenship. It also analyzes the main features and achievements of NU and Humanitarian Islam in promoting and practicing

Islam and citizenship in Indonesia and beyond, such as their role in countering extremism, advancing democracy, and enhancing social justice. It discusses the challenges and opportunities that NU and Humanitarian Islam encounter in the contemporary world, such as the rise of Islamophobia, the impact of globalization, and the need for interfaith dialogue. It concludes that NU and Humanitarian Islam can serve as a model and a catalyst for the Muslim world and humanity at large, to foster a more peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive society.

Makalah ini mengeksplorasi perspektif Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), organisasi Islam terbesar di Indonesia, mengenai hubungan antara Islam dan kewarganegaraan, serta bagaimana inisiatif Islam Humanitarian mereka mempromosikan perdamaian dan harmoni di antara umat Muslim dan non-Muslim. Dengan menggunakan metode tinjauan literatur, makalah ini mengkaji latar belakang historis dan konseptual Islam dan kewarganegaraan serta relevansi dan implikasinya dalam konteks Indonesia. Makalah ini berargumen bahwa NU dan Islam Humanitarian memandang Islam dan kewarganegaraan sebagai hal yang kompatibel dan saling menguntungkan, berdasarkan nilai dan prinsip Islam yang selaras dengan ide dan norma kewarganegaraan. Makalah ini juga menganalisis fitur utama dan pencapaian NU dan Islam Humanitarian dalam mempromosikan dan mempraktikkan Islam dan kewarganegaraan di Indonesia dan lebih luas, seperti peran mereka dalam menangkal ekstremisme, memajukan demokrasi, dan meningkatkan keadilan sosial. Selanjutnya, makalah ini membahas tantangan dan peluang yang dihadapi NU dan Islam Humanitarian di dunia kontemporer, seperti munculnya Islamofobia, dampak globalisasi, dan kebutuhan akan dialog antariman. Makalah ini menyimpulkan bahwa NU dan Islam Humanitarian dapat berfungsi sebagai model dan katalisator bagi dunia Muslim dan umat manusia secara luas, untuk membina masyarakat yang lebih damai, toleran, dan inklusif.

Keywords: *Islam and citizenship, Nahdlatul Ulama, Humanitarian Islam, peace and harmony*

Introduction

Islam is a religion that has a long and rich history of interaction with diverse cultures and civilizations (Manj et al., 2021). Throughout its history,

Islam has faced various challenges and opportunities in adapting to different contexts and realities. One of the most pressing issues that Islam faces today is how to reconcile its universal values and principles with the demands and expectations of modern citizenship (Cohen & Ghosh, 2019). Citizenship, as a concept and practice, entails the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups in relation to the state and society (Kallio, Wood, & Häkli, 2020). It also involves the recognition and respect of diversity and pluralism within and across communities (Kirmayer, 2019). In the contemporary world, citizenship is often associated with democracy, human rights, rule of law, and social justice (Jelin, 2019). However, these ideals are not always compatible with the traditional interpretations and applications of Islamic law and ethics, which may emphasize the primacy of religious identity and authority over secular and civic ones (Saada & Magadlah, 2021). Therefore, the question of how Muslims can be faithful to their religion and at the same time be good citizens in a pluralistic and democratic society is a crucial and complex one (Rahman & Setia, 2021).

This question is especially relevant and urgent in the context of Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country and the third-largest democracy (Hefner, 2019). Indonesia is a country that has experienced a remarkable transition from authoritarianism to democracy since the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998 (Hicken, 2020). It is also a country that has a remarkable diversity of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious groups, which coexist under the national motto of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity) (Hefner, 2023). However, Indonesia is also a country that faces various challenges and threats to its stability and harmony, such as corruption, poverty, inequality, terrorism, radicalism, sectarianism, and intolerance (Kingston, 2019). These challenges and threats pose serious risks to the consolidation and quality of democracy and citizenship in Indonesia, as well as to the peace and security of the region and the world (Setiawan & Tomsa, 2022).

In this context, the role and contribution of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the world's biggest Islamic organization, is significant and influential

(Saenong, 2021). NU is a socio-religious movement that was founded in 1926 by a group of traditionalist Muslim scholars (ulama) who sought to preserve and promote the teachings and practices of classical Sunni Islam (Jufri, 2022), especially the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence and the Ash'ari school of theology, in the face of modernist and reformist challenges (Hanafi, 2023). NU has a large and loyal following of about 50 million members and 14,000 Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) across Indonesia. It also has a strong and active presence in various fields of social, educational, cultural, political, and humanitarian activities (Purwanto, 2019). NU is also known for its support and participation in the democratic process and institutions in Indonesia, as it endorses the principles of constitutionalism, pluralism, and civil society (Barton et al., 2021).

One of the most notable and innovative initiatives of NU in recent years is the Humanitarian Islam movement, which was launched in 2016 by the current chairman of NU, Kyai Haji Said Aqil Siradj, and the general secretary of NU, Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf (Mostowlansky, 2020). Humanitarian Islam is a vision and mission of Islam that aims to address the root causes of the crisis of civilization that afflicts the Muslim world and humanity at large (Nasution, 2019). It is also based on the recognition that some of the existing interpretations and applications of Islamic teachings are no longer relevant or compatible with the current realities and challenges of the 21st century (Akrim, 2022). Therefore, Humanitarian Islam emerges as a response to the complex socio-political landscape of the modern world.

Humanitarian Islam advocates for a holistic reform encompassing theology, jurisprudence, and social norms. Islam underscores the importance of dialogue and cooperation across religious boundaries. Successful interfaith initiatives demonstrate the feasibility of peaceful coexistence (Ahmed et al., 2020). Humanitarian Islam promotes inclusivity regardless of ethnicity, sect, or gender. Thus, Humanitarian Islam offers a vision of Islam that transcends parochial boundaries, emphasizing compassion, justice, and coexistence.

The main objectives and strategies of Humanitarian Islam are articulated and elaborated in several documents and declarations that have been issued and endorsed by NU and its affiliates, such as the Nusantara Manifesto (2016), Gerakan Pemuda Ansor Declaration on Humanitarian Islam (2017), Nusantara Statement (2018), and The Humanitarian Islam Charter (2019) (Ivanyi & Lohlker 2023). They also provide a constructive and positive contribution to the global discourse and action on peace, security, and development, as they offer a viable and alternative model of Islam that is compatible and conducive to democracy, human rights, rule of law, and social justice (Ranjbar & Chikrizova, 2023).

The main argument of this study is that Islam and citizenship are not incompatible or contradictory, but rather complementary and mutually reinforcing, in the perspective of NU and its Humanitarian Islam initiative (Satibi & Supriadi, 2023). It demonstrates how NU and Humanitarian Islam foster peace and harmony among Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia and beyond, by promoting and practicing the values and principles of Islam that are in line with the ideals and norms of citizenship (Jamilah, 2021). It also discusses the challenges and opportunities that NU and Humanitarian Islam face in advancing their vision and mission of Islam and citizenship in the contemporary world (Nubowo, 2023). This article consists of three main parts: the first part provides a historical and conceptual overview of Islam and citizenship, and their relationship and relevance in the context of Indonesia; the second part analyzes and evaluates the main features and achievements of NU and Humanitarian Islam in promoting and practicing Islam and citizenship in Indonesia and beyond; and the third part concludes with some reflections and recommendations on the future prospects and implications of NU and Humanitarian Islam for the peace and harmony of the Muslim world and humanity at large.

Method

To dig deeper into how Humanitarian Islam facilitates peace, this research adopts a literature review approach. The steps taken in this research

were literature collection. It started with searching for literature relevant to the topic "Humanitarian Islam" and "Nahdlatul Ulama" (NU). The next step was accessing databases of journals, books, articles, and other trusted sources. This stage aims at selecting the most relevant literature from the past five years, focusing on Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and their role in promoting peace. It ensures that the selected literature is of good academic quality by using Publish or Perish and exclusively relying on sources indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (WoS). This study analyzes the issue by identifying patterns, findings and concepts that emerge from the literature we research. The synthesis also involved comparing and contrasting various existing views and approaches.

To ensure objectivity in our analysis and present a balanced view of the research, this study employed a systematic approach in comparing and contrasting various existing views and approaches. The methodology involved the following steps: *First*, systematic literature review done by selecting sources that are peer-reviewed and indexed in recognized academic databases. *Second*, critical analysis that involved assessing the credibility of the research by examining the authors' affiliations, potential conflicts of interest, and the robustness of the research design. *Third*, synthesis of literature that was constructed to reflect the complexity of the subject matter, acknowledging areas of consensus as well as ongoing debates. *Fourth*, objective presentation, focusing on the evidence provided by the studies rather than personal opinions or biases. *Fifth*, acknowledgment of controversies and disagreements, which are discussed in the context of their implications for the field and the potential for future research. *Sixth*, transparent methodology, done by making sure that the research process, selection criteria, and analytical methods are clearly outlined to allow for reproducibility and scrutiny by other scholars. By adhering to these methodological principles, this study aims to contribute a rigorous, balanced, and objective analysis to the academic discourse on the subject. In sum, the methodological rigor enables a holistic understanding of NU's

impact on peace, underscoring its significance within the Islamic Humanitarian framework.

Findings and Discussion

Overview of Islam and Citizenship in Indonesia

The exploration of Islam's role in the Indonesian context of citizenship begins with a historical overview, tracing the nation's journey from an authoritarian regime to a vibrant democracy. The pivotal year of 1998 marked Indonesia's re-emergence as a democratic state, a transition that was both celebrated and fraught with challenges. This period underscored the nation's unique standing as the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and its commitment to democratic principles (Hefner, 2023).

The analysis then shifts focus to the influential role of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the Humanitarian Islam movement in shaping Indonesia's democratic landscape. NU, with its deep roots and extensive following, has been instrumental in advocating for a form of citizenship that transcends religious and ethnic divisions, promoting a vision of democracy that is inclusive and representative of all Indonesians. This vision stands in stark contrast to the challenges posed by the rise of Islamist militias and the surge in violence against minority groups. Such tensions highlight the ongoing struggle between inclusive citizenship and exclusionary ideologies (Cayli, 2019).

Nahdlatul Ulama's contributions to democracy and citizenship in Indonesia are further highlighted by its commitment to religious tolerance and good governance. NU has been recognized as a leading Muslim institution dedicated to protecting traditional Islamic values while simultaneously advocating for democratic civility, inter-group conciliation, and the public good. Its efforts have been crucial in mainstreaming marginalized communities, including ethnic minorities, women, non-Sunni Muslim minorities, and non-Muslim religious minorities, thereby enhancing

the process of democratization in Indonesia (The Conversation, 2021; The Diplomat, 2023).

The concept of Humanitarian Islam has emerged as a significant force in promoting an inclusive public ethics that aligns with democratic ideals. It emphasizes the importance of equal citizenship and deeper cooperation among Muslims, Christians, and followers of other religions to promote world peace. This interpretation of Islam, which focuses on love and compassion, represents a reformist agenda that challenges controversial issues such as political leadership and relations with non-Muslims, advocating for the legitimacy of modern states' constitutional and legal systems over a state based on Islamic law (The Conversation, 2021).

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Humanitarian Islam's Democratic Endeavours

Indonesia's journey from an authoritarian regime to a robust democracy is a testament to the nation's resilience and commitment to democratic ideals. The year 1998 stands as a watershed moment in Indonesian history, marking the end of a repressive era and the beginning of a new chapter characterized by electoral democracy and the pursuit of inclusive citizenship. This transition has been particularly significant given Indonesia's status as the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation and the third-largest democracy, presenting a unique blend of Islamic traditions and democratic governance (Hefner, 2023).

The democratization process in Indonesia has been underpinned by the active participation of major Islamic groups, which have played a crucial role in shaping the country's political landscape. These groups have supported the development of a pluralistic and participatory democracy based on the national ideology of Pancasila, which emphasizes unity in diversity and religious tolerance. The consensus on Pancasila among these groups has been instrumental in fostering a moderate interpretation of Islam that aligns with democratic values (Anwar, 2019).

Furthermore, Indonesia's experience with local elections has shown how Islamic leadership can contribute to democratic processes. In this concern, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), one of the largest Islamic organizations globally, has played a pivotal role in shaping the democratic ethos of Indonesia. NU's advocacy for a democratic model of citizenship that is inclusive of all Indonesians, irrespective of religious or ethnic identity, has been a bulwark against the rise of Islamist militias and the increasing violence directed at religious minorities. This commitment to inclusivity is a cornerstone of NU's vision for a harmonious society, where the values of equality, justice, and non-discrimination are paramount (Cayli, 2019).

NU's innovative approach to citizenship is encapsulated in the term "al-muwatinun," which signifies a socio-political identity that transcends traditional religious classifications. This concept, developed in response to the emergence of exclusionary ideologies in Indonesia, represents a departure from classical Islamic thought and reflects NU's efforts to foster a society where all individuals are valued equally and afforded the same rights and opportunities, regardless of their faith (Zuhdi, 2022).

The application of the al-muwatinun concept is a manifestation of NU's contextualized approach to Islamic jurisprudence, which is attuned to the unique cultural and societal landscape of the Indonesian archipelago. By embracing a form of fiqh that is responsive to local realities, NU underscores its dedication to safeguarding the unity and integrity of the Republic of Indonesia. This approach serves as a counterbalance to radical ideologies that seek to divide society along religious lines (Schmid, 2022). NU's embrace of al-muwatinun has profound implications for the fabric of Indonesian society. It demonstrates the potential for Islamic principles to evolve in harmony with contemporary political and social dynamics, thereby contributing to the creation of a more cohesive and inclusive nation.

Interplay between Islam and Societal Changes

The interplay between Islam and societal changes is a multifaceted concept that reflects the dynamic relationship between Islamic teachings and

the evolving needs of society. The concept of Humanitarian Islam, as articulated by Khafagy (2020), is a prime example of this interplay, where the core principles of Islam intertwine with the universal values of humanitarianism. By promoting a version of Islam that aligns with global humanitarian standards, NU aims to demonstrate that Islam can actively contribute to solving modern societal challenges while fostering a peaceful coexistence worldwide.

In the Islamic tradition, charity and assistance to others are not merely acts of kindness but are considered fundamental components of one's faith. Mittermaier (2019) highlights that these acts are deeply embedded within the religious practices of Islam. The Qur'an and Hadith—the primary sources of Islamic jurisprudence—emphasize the significance of benevolence and altruism. Syahfriani, Hasibuan, and Fanreza (2020) note that the Qur'an particularly stresses the importance of doing good deeds and aiding those in distress. This ethos of helping the needy is further reinforced by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who advocated for Muslims to engage in humanitarian actions, encompassing donations, material support, and direct services to the less fortunate (Rahmanto et al., 2023).

Beyond the spiritual acts of prayer and fasting, Islam mandates its followers to partake in charitable giving and support for others as a religious obligation (Nisar & Rashid, 2019). This obligation is operationalized through mechanisms such as zakat (mandatory alms-giving), infaq (voluntary charity), and sadaqa (voluntary alms), which Hamed (2020) describes as the humanitarian pillars of Islam. Al-Bawwab (2023) and Owoyemi (2020) elucidate that zakat, in particular, is a compulsory act for financially capable Muslims, aimed at alleviating poverty and reducing social disparities. Additionally, kafarat, a compensatory practice for certain transgressions, involves monetary penalties or assistance to the needy, further embedding the concept of restitution within the framework of social welfare (Firmansyah & Fadoli, 2024).

The role of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), particularly Islamic NGOs, is pivotal in actualizing these principles. Ahmad and Ali (2022)

observe that numerous Islamic NGOs adhere to these humanitarian tenets, initiating diverse programs across education, health, and disaster relief sectors (Beigbeder, 2023). Historically, Islam's humanitarian outreach has transcended boundaries of religion, ethnicity, and nationality, offering aid to all those in need, a testament to the profound humanitarian spirit ingrained in Islamic doctrine (Di Stasio et al., 2021; Alak, 2023). Islamic-based NGOs in Indonesia have experienced remarkable growth and are increasingly influential across various societal sectors.

The growing prominence of Islamic-based NGOs on the international stage highlights their dedication to the welfare of humanity, driven by the compassionate principles of Islamic teachings. They are crucial in realizing the ideals of Humanitarian Islam, launching diverse initiatives across multiple sectors to enhance societal well-being (The Conversation, 2021). The dynamic relationship between these NGOs and societal transformations continues to evolve, adapting to contemporary challenges while remaining anchored in the timeless values of the faith.

The influence of Indonesian Islam, as exemplified by the legacy of Wali Songo in the 15th and 16th centuries, showcases the adaptability of Islamic humanitarianism. Qomar (2019) details how Wali Songo propagated Islam in Indonesia by underscoring the principle of *rahmah* (compassion) and tailoring Islamic teachings to the contextual realities of the time and place. This approach underscores that Humanitarian Islam transcends mere assistance; it represents a harmonious blend of religious tenets with humanitarian efforts aimed at the collective well-being of society. In summary, the interplay between Islam and societal changes encapsulates the essence of Humanitarian Islam, which is characterized by a commitment to the welfare of humanity, guided by the compassionate and inclusive spirit of Islamic teachings. This interplay is a continuous process, evolving with the changing times while remaining rooted in the timeless principles of the faith.

Challenges and Prospects for Democracy and Inclusive Citizenship

Islam's teachings on fundamental human values offer a robust framework for understanding the challenges and prospects for democracy and inclusive citizenship. The challenges and prospects relate to the implementation of Tawhid, justice, Tasamuh, deliberation and Ishlah, Qudwah, and Hubbul Wathan. Each of the concepts is elaborated in the following.

Tawhid: resonating human values essential for democracy

The concept of Tawhid (Oneness of Allah), which is the cornerstone of Islamic belief, underscores the notion that only Allah is supreme and perfect (Almirzanah, 2020). This principle fosters a sense of equality among humans, as the highest degree of reverence is reserved solely for Allah (Ali, 2021). Such a perspective is pivotal in democratic societies where the equality of all citizens is paramount.

Tawhid has several dimensions that resonate with human values essential for democracy and inclusive citizenship (Al Mahmud, 2023). The first dimension is *Tawhid Rububiyah* that focuses on the belief that Allah is the sole creator and governor of humanity (Fatimah et al., 2024). This belief instils a sense of accountability and governance that is reflective of democratic principles. The second dimension is *Uluhiyah* or monotheism emphasizing that Allah is the only deity to be worshipped (Chasan & Zamhari, 2021). This form of monotheism is at the heart of the Messengers' teachings and promotes the idea that all humans are equal in the eyes of God, a notion that is fundamental to democratic societies. The third dimension is *Tauhid Asma wa Sifat* that pertains to the names and attributes of Allah, encouraging humans to recognize and honour the noble qualities of the divine. This aspect of Tawhid are key tenets of a democratic society where rights are safeguarded by the community and the state (Ramcharan, 2021).

Justice in Islamic Teachings: A Pillar for Social Harmony and Inclusive Citizenship

Justice, as articulated in Islamic principles, calls for fairness and equity for all individuals, irrespective of their social standing (Ciftci, 2019). Justice is a fundamental norm that is deeply desired in the social fabric of life (Young, 2020). Within Islamic teachings, justice is not merely a human construct but is seen as a divine mandate, reflecting the will of Allah (Sirait, 2022). This divine justice is instrumental in establishing equality, eradicating social disparities, and safeguarding individual human rights (Cole, 2022).

In Islamic teachings, justice has a central role and includes several principles that are relevant to human values (Haron et al., 2020). The first principle is be fair by following Al-Maidah verse 8: “O you who believe, be steadfast in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So, follow not personal inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted” (Murdiono et al., 2023). The second principle is justice in all things since Islam advocates for justice as a means to attain peace, prosperity, and happiness in both this life and the hereafter (Ibrahim & Riyadi, 2023). Believers are instructed to practice justice in every aspect of life, encompassing both religious and secular domains (Fengren, 2022). The third principle is true testimony as Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of truthful testimony, which underscores the need for fairness and honesty in all testimonies (Liddini et al., 2022). The fourth principle is active engagement where Muslims are called upon to actively engage in the pursuit of justice, which includes conflict resolution, humanitarian efforts, and the advocacy of human rights. This moral responsibility extends beyond personal conduct to encompass societal actions (Karimullah, 2024).

Tasamuh: Fostering Respect and Peaceful Coexistence

The principle of tolerance or Tasamuh in Islam advocates for a harmonious coexistence amidst diversity (Astuti, 2023), which is essential for

nurturing inclusive citizenship where diverse perspectives are respected and valued (Pascual, 2021). These principles form the foundation of a societal framework where the application of justice and tolerance not only strengthens community bonds but also enhances the collective capacity to address and resolve social challenges effectively. Tasamuh is a vital concept in Islam that promotes mutual respect, acceptance of differences, and peaceful coexistence (Nawawi, 2023).

It is through the application of Tasamuh to respect religious diversity, appreciate cultural variances, engage in constructive dialogue, and avoid extremism (Hanif, 2020). Its application is related to the following principles. First, freedom of belief where Islam asserts that there should be no compulsion in matters of faith, allowing every individual the liberty to choose their religious beliefs (Islam, 2020). Second principle is social interaction with non-muslims, in which Muslims are instructed to interact kindly and respectfully with people of all beliefs, fostering harmonious relationships (Haron et al., 2020; Kawangung, 2019). Third is respect for other religions; Islam teaches its adherents to refrain from mocking or insulting the deities of other religions, thus maintaining respect for diverse beliefs (Hapsari & Wahyuningtiyas, 2023). The last is recognition of differences. Understanding and respecting the distinctions between Islamic teachings and those of other religions is crucial, and Islam prohibits the amalgamation of its doctrines with those of other faiths (Bahri, 2019). By adhering to the Quranic guidance on justice and Tasamuh, we can cultivate a more inclusive and harmonious society, which is essential for the flourishing of democracy and inclusive citizenship.

Deliberation and Ishlah: Foundations for peaceful governance and social equity in Islam

Deliberation in Islam is not merely a process of discussion; it is a profound principle that underscores the importance of collective decision-making through negotiation and consensus (Mirahmadi, 2021). It is about articulating beneficial ideas and seeking common ground among diverse

perspectives, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued equally (Holmes, et al., 2019). The ultimate aim is to achieve mutual agreement or *mufakat*, with a willingness to compromise for the greater good (Zamharir et al., 2023).

Historically, after the Prophet Muhammad's passing, the principle of deliberation was effectively applied in choosing the head of state, exemplified by the selection of Abu Bakr as caliph through a consensual process (Ahmad, 2019; Oweidat, 2019). In contemporary governance, this principle can be realized through democratic mechanisms such as general elections or deliberative assemblies. It emphasizes the significance of leaders considering the populace's views (Macq & Jacquet, 2023).

The Islamic principle of deliberation emphasizes the importance of dialogue and consensus in decision-making processes (Reykowski, 2019), mirroring the democratic practice of participatory governance. Similarly, the concept of *Ishlah*, which promotes peace and harmony (Nursita & Sahide, 2019), is crucial for resolving conflicts through peaceful means, a fundamental aspect of a stable democracy (Väyrynen, 2023). These principles not only align closely with democratic values but also underscore the potential for Islamic teachings to contribute positively to the political and social stability of a society.

Ishlah, or the pursuit of peace, is another cornerstone of Islamic principles that promotes equitable and humane relationships among individuals (Sulaiman, 2021). It encompasses several key concepts. The first concept is *karamah insaniyah*; this principle affirms the inherent dignity of every human being, deserving of respect and honor (Noh, et al., 2023). Second is *musawah*; Islam advocates for absolute equality among all humans, transcending distinctions of gender, race, ethnicity, or culture (Ahmad, 2022). Third concept is religion based on justice; justice is a fundamental tenet of Islam, demanding impartiality in divine ordinances (Jorjorzadeh, et al., 2021). The fourth concept is peace in oneself that is essential for fostering peace in society and the environment (Afsaruddin, 2020). Muslims are encouraged to transcend personal desires and cultivate righteousness within themselves. By integrating the principles of deliberation and *Ishlah*, Islam

lays a foundation for peaceful governance and social equity, which are essential for the development of a just and harmonious society.

Qudwah: Exemplary leadership in Islam

Qudwah refers to the concept of exemplary leadership that is derived from the Arabic language and conveys the idea of a role model whose actions are emulated by others. Leaders who embody Qudwah possess commendable moral and ethical qualities, setting a positive example through their daily actions and behaviours (Ihsan & Umar, 2020). It entails setting a positive example in upholding human rights and advocating for humanity (Qorib, 2022). This aligns with the democratic expectation of leaders to be role models in protecting the rights and dignity of all citizens.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is regarded as the ultimate Qudwah for humanity, exemplifying the virtues of an ideal leader (Erihadiana & Ridwan, 2021). The Quranic verses highlight that the Messenger of Allah serves as an excellent model for those who seek Allah and the Last Day (Reynolds, 2020). In Islamic pedagogy, the method of teaching through example—both in knowledge and actions—is pivotal in shaping the character of learners (Khaidir & Suud, 2020). Leaders who are Qudwah effectively inspire others, combining justice, wisdom, and exemplary conduct (Zaim, 2024). By adhering to the principles of Qudwah, leaders can foster a humane, equitable, and peaceful environment.

Love of the Motherland: A Reflection of Faith

The love for one's homeland, also called Muwathanah or Hubbul Wathan, teaches Muslim to cherish their country and uphold the rights of fellow citizens (Bahraen, 2023). It is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings as an expression of faith (Anshori & Muhith, 2023). This principle, articulated by the Indonesian cleric KH Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari, posits that love for one's country is an intrinsic part of one's belief (Subekti, 2022). Islam emphasizes the importance of maintaining the unity, integrity, and security

of the homeland as a manifestation of profound faith (Sari & Sutomo, 2022).

Loving one's country is a natural human inclination and is encouraged in Islam, provided it does not conflict with Islamic values. The absence of a homeland can lead to a sense of loss and imperfection in one's religious practice. Love for the Motherland plays a crucial role in sustaining peace and contributing to global justice (Aydin et al., 2022). Islam advocates that this love should not lead to exclusivity or conflicts with other nations (Thahir, 2021). Patriotic love can be actualized through education, environmental stewardship, respect for authority and peers, and a commitment to the welfare of society, nation, and state.

The principles of Islam provide a comprehensive blueprint for addressing the challenges faced by democracies today. By advocating for equality, justice, tolerance, deliberation, peace, exemplary leadership, and love for one's country, Islam lays the groundwork for a society that values inclusive citizenship and democratic governance. This integration of Islamic values with democratic principles can greatly enrich political and social systems, offering solutions that promote sustainability and cohesion within diverse communities.

NU's Role in Promoting Peace and Tolerance

Established on January 31, 1926, in Surabaya by Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari, NU emerged as a response to the rigid interpretations of Islam following the Saudi conquest of Mecca and Medina (Fuad, 2020). It has since played a pivotal role in fostering harmony among Indonesia's diverse religious communities. Adhering to mainstream Sunni Islam, NU integrates Islamic spirituality with Indonesian cultural traditions, reflecting a commitment to traditional Islamic teachings while engaging with modernity.

The founders of NU, including K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari, K.H. Abdul Wahab Chasbullah, and K.H. Bisri Syansuri, envisioned an organization that would reinforce adherence to one of the four recognized Islamic schools of thought (Madzhab) and engage in activities aligned with Islamic

principles. NU's key initiatives include: (a) fostering unity: strengthening the bond among scholars dedicated to the teachings of their respective sects; (b) educational guidance: offering direction on the curriculum of Islamic educational institutions; (c) dissemination of teachings: spreading Islamic doctrines in harmony with the four Madzhab; (d) institutional growth: expanding the number of Madrasas and organizational bodies; (e) infrastructure support: aiding in the construction of mosques, prayer halls, and Islamic boarding schools; (f) social welfare: assisting orphans and the underprivileged.

NU's influence extends to the global stage, where it advocates for peace and stability through religious diplomacy, aiming to shape norms and identities within the international community. In Indonesia, NU has been instrumental in maintaining interfaith harmony, actively participating in interfaith dialogues and championing the principles of tolerance and mutual understanding (Ridwan, 2020; Saumantri, 2022). The organization underscores the significance of preserving the rich cultural heritage of the archipelago and promotes cooperation among religions to establish a peaceful coexistence (Selamat, 2023).

In the realm of religious governance, NU contributes to the consultative processes for religious regulations in Indonesia, addressing topics that are seldom discussed (Pelletier, 2021). The Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB), established in 2006, is a testament to NU's commitment to dialogue and harmony, created in the wake of rising conflicts over sacred sites and places of worship (Ali-Fauzi, 2019). Furthermore, NU's educational institutions play a crucial role in nurturing inter-religious harmony, instilling values that foster peaceful relations based on core Islamic tenets of human dignity and social justice (Abduloh, et al., 2022).

Nahdlatul Ulama's principles and stance on inter-religious harmony are rooted in mutual tolerance and respect (Rahman & Shapie, 2023). By encouraging such values, NU not only preserves the peaceful fabric of Indonesian society but also sets an example for the global community on fostering tolerance and respect among diverse religious groups. NU's

approach to moderation serves as a bridge between religious communities, promoting social harmony and national unity (Prasetiawati, 2020). NU's guiding principles—*tawazun* (balance), *Tasamuh* (tolerance), *tawasut* (moderation), and *i'tidal* (fairness)—are applied across various sectors of national life, reinforcing its role as a stabilizing force (Maarif et al., 2022).

Founded in 1926, NU has a storied history of advocating for peace, tolerance, and social justice, championing a moderate interpretation of Islam (Gumuruh & Amrullah, 2021). Despite facing challenges such as maintaining relevance in a rapidly evolving world and countering the rise of extremism, NU remains a steadfast proponent of a peaceful and inclusive Islam (Purwono, 2020; Nazar & Hamid, 2022). Its efforts in interfaith dialogue have been pivotal in building bridges between different religious communities, contributing to a stronger, more harmonious society (Lattu, 2019; Selamat, 2023).

As NU continues its journey, it must navigate the complexities of Indonesia's political landscape, balancing traditional values with modernity (Jamal, 2023). The organization's resilience in promoting a moderate and inclusive vision of Islam is more crucial than ever, as it stands against the tides of extremism and terrorism, striving to uphold the values of peace and cooperation (Pohl, 2009; Pektas, 2021). This strategic balance not only enhances its credibility and influence within Indonesia but also serves as a beacon of progressive Islamic thought in the global community.

Conclusion

In the contemporary landscape, where the world is increasingly interconnected yet paradoxically divided, Nahdlatul Ulama's (NU) Humanitarian Islam emerges as a guiding light, advocating for a harmonious coexistence that transcends religious and cultural divides. This initiative is not merely a response to the growing tide of extremism and Islamophobia; it is a proactive movement towards a global society that values peace, democracy, and social justice. At the heart of NU's Humanitarian Islam is the conviction that Islamic values are inherently aligned with the principles

of good citizenship. This alignment is the foundation upon which a society can build a future where democratic values and social justice are not ephemeral ideals but lived experiences. NU's commitment to this cause is a powerful testament to the transformative potential of interfaith dialogue in enhancing societal cohesion and fostering a sense of shared responsibility among all citizens.

Educational institutions play a pivotal role in this vision. They are the nurseries where the seeds of Humanitarian Islam can be sown and nurtured. By integrating the principles of this initiative into their curricula, educational institutions can enlighten young minds on the critical importance of interfaith understanding and civic responsibility. They can create programs that not only educate but also encourage students to actively engage in community service and dialogue with diverse groups, thereby cultivating a generation of leaders who are empathetic, informed, and committed to societal harmony.

Religious leaders are the custodians of faith and have a profound influence on their communities. They are called upon to embrace and propagate the message of Humanitarian Islam, highlighting the synergy between religious devotion and active citizenship. By organizing interfaith events that foster shared experiences and understanding among different religious communities, they can break down barriers of ignorance and mistrust, paving the way for a society that is united in its diversity.

Looking to the future, there are several aspects to develop in further studies. The role of youth in championing the cause of Humanitarian Islam and inclusive citizenship is paramount, given their vital role in shaping the future. The impact of globalization on the perception and practice of Humanitarian Islam is another area ripe for exploration, as is a comparative analysis of Humanitarian Islam with other interfaith initiatives across the globe.

In conclusion, NU's Humanitarian Islam is a clarion call to all stakeholders to strive towards a future characterized by peace, tolerance, and inclusivity. It is an invitation to celebrate diversity and uphold our shared

humanity, advancing collectively towards a society that not only tolerates but wholeheartedly embraces differences. The path laid out by NU's initiative provides practical steps for related parties to follow, ensuring that the principles of Humanitarian Islam continue to inspire and guide efforts for societal betterment. The journey ahead is long and complex, but with the roadmap provided by NU, it is one that can lead to a more harmonious and just world.

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LASEMAN HAND-DRAWN BATIK MOTIFS AND SOCIO-RELIGIOUS LIFE PATTERNS OF THE LASEM COMMUNITY

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Abstract

Various Lasem batik motifs have been widely researched in Indonesia, but no one has researched the Lasem batik motifs using social semiotic analysis. The research aims to determine the meaning of Lasem batik motifs using a social semiotic analysis approach, understand the function of Lasem batik patterns and motifs, and determine their influence on the social life of the Lasem community. The approach used in this research is qualitative. The data collection methods used are observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews. The data analysis used in this research uses two types of analysis, namely content analysis and descriptive analysis. The results of the research explain that there are several meanings contained in Lasem's batik motifs, such as the meaning of togetherness, prosperity, caring, sincerity (not giving up), spreading goodness, rejecting evil, patience (holding back anger), and

seriousness in living life. The use of batik is the style of the people who own it. Laseman Batik has experienced a shift in meaning and function. The transmission of values and meanings of batik motifs continues to be instilled in the community so that they become shared knowledge and can have implications for people's attitudes and behaviors among partners.

Ragam motif batik Lasem telah banyak diteliti di Indonesia, namun belum ada yang meneliti motif batik Lasem ini dengan analisis semiotic social. Penelitian bertujuan untuk mengetahui pemaknaan motif batik Lasem dengan pendekatan analisis semiotic social, memahami fungsi corak dan motif batik Lasem serta mengetahui pengaruhnya terhadap kehidupan social masyarakat Lasem. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah pengamatan atau observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara mendalam. Analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan dua jenis analisis yaitu analisis isi dan analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menjelaskan bahwa Terdapat beberapa makna yang terkandung dalam motif-motif batik tulis Lasem, seperti: makna kebersamaan, kesejahteraan, kepedulian, kesungguhan (tidak putus asa), menyebar kebaikan, tolak bala, sabar (Menahan amarah), kesungguhan menjalani kehidupan. Penggunaan batik merupakan style masyarakat sebagai pemiliknya. Batik Laseman telah mengalami pergeseran makna dan fungsi. Transmisi nilai-nilai dan makna motif batik terus ditanamkan kepada masyarakat agar menjadi pengetahuan bersama dan pada gilirannya dapat berimplikasi kepada sikap dan perilaku masyarakat.

Keywords: *Batik motifs; semiotic social analysis, socio-religious*

Introduction

Since the time of the Majapahit kingdom, Indonesian people have created a noble art called batik, which is still developing today. However, at that time, legal protection for batik as one of the intellectual properties of Indonesian society was still weak, leading to instances where batik was recognized as the property of other countries. In response to this situation, the Indonesian nation undertook a series of studies, seminars, workshops,

and exhibitions related to batik, followed by legal action to ensure its protection (Siregar et al., 2020). This effort was facilitated by Indonesia's participation as a member of UNESCO. The government submitted the batik nomination on September 3, 2008, and after several months, UNESCO approved it for processing. Finally, on October 2, 2009, UNESCO declared batik part of the intangible cultural heritage (Masterpieces of the Oral and the Intangible Heritage of Humanity) (Arni & Ciptandi, 2021).

Judging from its morphology, the word “batik” consists of two words combined into one: “ba” and “tik.” In relation to batik as art, “batik” is one of the elements of fine art essential for creating a written work. Each of these words has an equivalent: the word “ba” with the prefix “am” and the word “tik,” so that when combined, it becomes “ambatik,” which means making a point. The word “amba” means wide cloth, and “tik” means point (Prastomo & Widiatoro, 2018). This means that batik consists of dots drawn on a wide cloth to create beautiful patterns. From a fine arts perspective, batik starts with dots, which are then connected into lines and developed into shapes (Widagdo et al., 2022). Batik has become a heritage of the Indonesian nation, with many regions having their unique batik motifs that often depict the identity of the region. One area in Indonesia known for its variety of batik motifs is Lasem.

Lasem is known as the city of Bandar, an important port city from the Majapahit era until the Japanese colonial period. Lasem is also known as “le petit chinoise” (the little China) due to its Chinese architecture and the significant Chinese population that has lived in the city. Lasem is renowned for its batik, often referred to as Laseman batik (Hastuti et al., 2023). From the past to the present, the people of Lasem continue to produce batik with distinctive patterns, motifs, and colors. These unique motifs and patterns have made Lasem batik well-known not only in Indonesia but also internationally. However, Lasem hand-written batik is not only characterized by its ancestral motifs and patterns but is also rich in life values. Batik patterns and motifs provide insights into the spiritual and

social values upheld by the people of Lasem. The Lasem batik motif symbolizes meaningful concepts such as togetherness, friendship, and tolerance (Inayah et al., 2023).

After UNESCO officially recognized batik, it had a positive impact. The government responded by making regulations that required civil servants to wear batik on certain days, especially on National Batik Day. Additionally, the general public has become increasingly proud to wear batik, leading to its rapid growth in Indonesia (Wibisono et al., 2022). This development is marked by the emergence of various motifs that differ across regions. Natural inspirations from batik-producing areas and their surroundings influence the evolution of batik motifs. Painting on cloth with a canting is not the only aspect of batik, as there is always a deeper meaning behind the motifs on a piece of batik cloth. Batik communicates meaning not only through its motifs but also through the shapes and colors used (Kristie et al., 2019). Understanding the meanings embedded in batik motifs is essential for preserving its cultural significance and fostering pride in wearing batik. This understanding can be achieved through semiotic analysis.

The theoretical framework of this research is based on social semiotics, a field used to explore the depth of meaning in a work of art. Meaning is something experienced and internal to human perception, playing a role and formed from signs. Therefore, any meaning considered unified in signs can be false, differ in interpretation, and exist in various possible meanings (Bezemer & Cowan, 2021). Social semiotics provides tools to analyze works of art, such as films, in terms of their representation and depth of meaning. Unlike traditional semiotics, which focuses solely on linguistic analysis, social semiotics examines complex and coherent signs in their social context. It considers the multilevel, ambiguous, and multi-referential nature of signs, recognizing the influence of the social context on the textual level (Chow, 2023).

In the study of social semiotics, Leeuwen (in Meindrasari & Nurhayati, 2019) emphasizes at least four main dimensions: discourse,

genre, style, and modality. Discourse is used to study how semantic resources are employed to build representation or presence. Genre relates to the use of semiotic resources to determine communicative interactions regarding representation, whether in conversation or other communication elements that span time and distance, such as books and films. Style is directly connected to an individual's lifestyle, as demonstrated in communication activities, which implicitly or explicitly express the identity and values they adhere to. Modality concerns the way things are done—studying the use of semiotic resources to create and communicate truth or reality values from their representations, whether as fact or fiction, proven truth or conjecture, and so on (Meindrasari & Nurhayati, 2019).

Many studies related to batik motifs have been conducted by previous researchers. Rorong et al. (2020) identified the aesthetic constructivism of lar motif batik calligraphy. The wings of the Garuda bird symbolize strength, as Javanese people greatly admire birds that can soar through the sky and have the courage to navigate it. The interpretation of the motif in the lar motif batik conveys strength and valor (Rorong et al., 2020). Rosandini and Kireina (2020) examined the visual language studies on Gendongan Lasem batik with nature and animal motifs. The results indicate that the motifs on the sling batik from Lasem have a primitive stylized character and tell a story about natural harmony, signifying good prayers for the wearer (mother and child) (Rosandini & Kireina, 2020).

Regarding studies on the Lasem community, Lestari and Wiratama (2018) noted that Chinese power, from opium to batik, sparked resistance from the native people in Lasem. Resistance to opium came from the ulama and santri groups, as well as intellectuals. One of the scholars who opposed the opium trade in the Lasem-Rembang-Juwana area was R. A. Kartini, one of Indonesia's heroines. Opium was considered an epidemic that was difficult to suppress, leading to many calls for the Dutch to revise their policy regarding its legality. Chinese power in the batik industry also faced resistance from indigenous groups. The indigenous community

wanted Chinese batik entrepreneurs to be wiser in employing batik workers and to pay them higher wages (Lestari & Wiratama, 2018).

The position and differences of this research compared to previous studies lie in several aspects. First, the focus of this study is not only on the motifs and meanings of Lasem batik but also on the function of batik and the Lasem community's interpretation of the meaning of batik motifs and their implications in socio-religious life. Second, while previous studies used semiotics, which focused solely on symbols and signs, this study goes further by focusing on the study of discourse, genre, style, and modality. Therefore, this study employs social semiotics. Third, this study focuses on the assumptions of the Lasem community regarding the meanings contained in batik motifs and how they serve as a reference in their socio-religious life. This research examines the meanings contained in Lasem hand-drawn batik motifs, the function of Lasem batik patterns, and the implications of these motifs in the socio-religious life of the Lasem community.

Method

Judging by its type, this research is field research with a qualitative approach. The data collection methods used are observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews. Observation is used to see and study Lasem batik motifs and the socio-religious activities of the Lasem community. The researchers used interviews to gather in-depth information and supplement data not obtained during observation. The data concerned Lasem batik motifs and the socio-religious activities of the Lasem community. Documentation techniques were also used to record Lasem batik motifs and the socio-religious activities of the Lasem community, including photos, videos, and other documents.

After the data was collected, the researchers carried out data analysis using three analytical techniques: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is used to select, sort, and filter data that is relevant to the research, excluding data that falls outside the

research scope. Then, from the results of data reduction, the researchers present the data by describing it. Finally, the presented data is used to draw conclusions. These conclusions form the researcher's argument, which must be included in the study (Nicmanis, 2024). These three techniques were used to analyze the function and use of Lasem batik, as well as the Lasem community's interpretation of batik motifs and their implications in socio-religious life.

Finding and Discussion

The Meanings of Lasem's Hand-drawn Batik Motifs

There are several meanings contained in Lasem's hand-drawn batik motifs. These meanings emerge from the discourse process as the batik motif is created. In general, Lasem batik motifs are divided into three types: palace motifs, coastal motifs, and a combination of both with the flora and fauna motifs of the Lasem area. These three types of motifs are combined to form a Laseman batik motif, which is quite unique (Basiroen & Manuaba, 2022). Among the meanings contained in Laseman motifs are:

First, the meaning of togetherness. Semiotically, the values of togetherness can be seen in the three-kingdom batik motif. This batik motif is quite complex because it combines inland batik motifs (Solo and Yogyakarta) with coastal batik motifs (Pekalongan and Cirebon). Therefore, this combination of motifs symbolizes togetherness. Additionally, the value of togetherness in the three-kingdom batik is also symbolized culturally, as this batik results from the acculturation of three cultures: Chinese, Dutch, and Javanese. This acculturation is evident in the color composition of the three-kingdom batik, dominated by red (Chinese culture), indigo blue (Dutch), and *soga* brown (Javanese). This three-kingdom motif is one of the motifs that describes Lasem batik, along with the *latoh* motif and the broken stone or *kricak* motif (Enrico et al., 2020).



Figure 1. Three-kingdom Motif

Second, the meaning of welfare. This meaning can be seen in one of the Lasem batik motifs, namely the “Gunung Ringgit” motif. The Mount Ringgit motif is inspired by the location of the Lasem area, which is geographically surrounded by mountains. As is known, mountains are a symbol of fertility, and areas surrounded by mountains provide many benefits for human life. The fertile nature of the mountains can be a source of life for the community. Semiotically, Mount Ringgit itself consists of two words: “Gunung,” which means mountain, and “Ringgit,” which means money. Combined, Mount Ringgit can be interpreted as a mountain of money. Therefore, the Gunung Ringgit motif represents wealth or prosperity (Lukman et al., 2022).



Figure 2. Mount Ringgit Motif

Third, the meaning of caring. One of Lasem’s hand-drawn batik motifs is the “watu pecah” motif, often also called the “Kricak” motif. The naming of "broken rocks" was inspired by a historical description of the condition of the Indonesian nation in the past. “Watu pecah” depicts indigenous people who were forced by the colonialists to build a road stretching from Anyer, West Java, to Panarukan, East Java. This road along the north coast of Java was built in 1808 AD under the government of

Herman Willem Daendels. Residents of the communities through which this road construction project passed were forced to break stones. At that time, the condition of the indigenous people was quite worrying. Many of them died as a result of forced labor or outbreaks of influenza and malaria. This concerning situation is depicted with the symbol of a broken rock, or kricak. The broken rock symbol represents the meaning of concern for the condition of the indigenous people at that time (Maghfiroh & Umami, 2022).

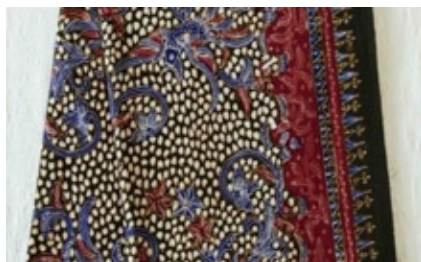


Figure 3. Kricak Motif

Fourth, the Latohan motif was inspired by depictions of the Latoh plant, a type of seaweed that is a typical food of coastal communities, especially Lasem. The Latoh motif was created to exploit the beauty of the marine flora that grows abundantly on the north coast of Java. Each community has its own foundation system, and Lasem, with its maritime potential, has several aspects supporting its history. One of the results of the maritime culture of the Lasem community is batik Latoh. This motif symbolizes resilience, as latoh, when picked, will grow back easily (Maghfiroh, 2023).



Figure 4. Latohan Motif

Fifth, the meaning of spreading kindness. This meaning can be found in the “Sekar Jagad” batik motif. This batik motif is a typical

Indonesian motif, specifically originating from the Solo and Jogja areas. Semantically, the term sekar jagad comes from the words “kar” (Dutch), which means “map,” and “jagad” (Javanese), which means “world.” So, sekar jagad means world map. However, some interpret the word “sekar” to mean flower and “jagad” to mean world. Therefore, it is not surprising that most of the Sekar Jagad batik motifs are dominated by floral patterns. Philosophically, the Sekar Jagad motif signifies not only goodness but also beauty and diversity. Diversity is depicted by various types of flowers. This type of motif is widely used by experts, scientists, intellectuals, and court officials. It represents knowledge and power, as it is considered to promise the world's flowers (Pebri et al., 2024).

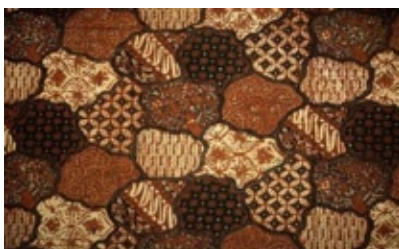


Figure 5. Sekar Jagad Motif

Sixth, the meaning of repelling harm. This meaning can be found in the “fish scales” motif, often also called the Gringsing motif. Gringsing is a combination of two words: “gring,” which means sick, and “sing,” which means no. When combined, it means no pain. Initially, the Gringsing batik motif emphasized two colors, black and white. Black symbolizes eternity, and white symbolizes life. Therefore, the Lasem batik motif is functionally believed to repel evil. The Gringsing batik motif is also one of the superior motifs for Lasem hand-drawn batik (Maymona et al., 2023).

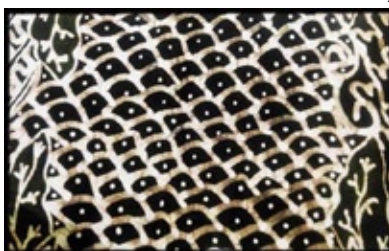


Figure 6. Gringsing Motif

Seventh, the meaning of holding back anger. The name “Geblok Kasur” is derived from an object made of leaf-shaped rattan that has three fan-like stalks. This object is used to hit the kapok mattress when it is dried in the sun and cleaned. Observing everyday life, the Geblok Kasur motif emerged. According to batik makers, the Geblok Kasur motif symbolizes the belief in cleansing oneself of all kinds of anger and negative energy when wearing this batik. The Geblok Kasur motif is inspired by everyday objects, making it easily accepted in the market (Prasetyo & Disarifianti, 2021).



Figure 7. Geblok Kasur Motif

Eighth: The meaning of sincerity. This meaning can be seen in the “Lerek Baganan” batik motif. The word “lerek” means a slope that describes a person’s degree or caste level to lead to something better in navigating the waves of life. Therefore, this batik motif, philosophically, has the meaning of seriousness in living life (Lukman & Dkk, 2019).



Figure 8. Lerek Baganan Motif

There are many more Lasem batik patterns and motifs that hold significant meaning and are produced by the Lasem people. These Laseman batik motifs continue to innovate while adhering to the standards of coastal batik motifs. Overall, Laseman batik motifs contain values rich in

Understanding these implied meanings fosters a deeper appreciation within the community, encouraging them to cherish and preserve their cultural heritage. Furthermore, this understanding can profoundly influence people's thinking and behavior. Laseman batik embodies extraordinary philosophical and moral values for the Lasem community, deserving of recognition and preservation (Maghfiroh et al., 2023).

The meanings of Laseman batik motifs can be interpreted through the symbols within the motifs and patterns. These symbols, in the form of batik motifs, reflect the culture of the people who create them. For example, the symbol of "various kinds of flowers" in the Sekar Jagad batik motif signifies joy and happiness; the colors and motifs of the three countries symbolize togetherness; and the "watu pecah" motif represents concern. These meanings are social realities, symbolized in batik patterns and motifs, allowing society to understand the symbols as cultural and social resonances.

The batik symbols represent an internal space shaped by signs that serve as a medium for people to navigate their lives. These symbols contain meanings that form a discourse for batik entrepreneurs, artists, and the Lasem community, derived from semantic sources illustrating events or moral messages. The semantic sources in Laseman batik include historical pages, objects, nature, and biological life found in and around the Lasem area. Symbols such as broken stones, marine plants, and mountains with various characteristics illustrate these semantic sources, embedding profound meanings.

The meanings embedded in Laseman batik symbols constitute a value system continually maintained and transmitted to batik makers and the Lasem community. This aims to instill an understanding of the philosophical meanings of batik motifs. However, not all Lasem people know and comprehend these philosophical meanings; only a select few, including batik entrepreneurs, craftsmen, artists, and a small segment of the general public, have this understanding. The lack of public understanding is due to several factors: first, insufficient socialization of

batik meanings within the community; second, a tendency to view batik motifs primarily for their aesthetic value without understanding their deeper meanings; and third, a generally low level of public appreciation for arts and culture, particularly Laseman batik motifs

Function of Batik Patterns and Motifs among The Lasem Community

The variety and richness of motifs are deliberately created not only for their beauty but also for harmony in their use. Therefore, each motif is considered by the Lasem community to have its own function, especially in carrying out life activities. There are several motifs that are suitable for various uses:

The Sekar Jagad motif, a typical coastal motif, is usually used by people with high social status, such as employees, scientists, and royal families. Batik Sekar Jagad is also commonly used at joyful events such as weddings, circumcisions, and official events held by government institutions. These happy events are enhanced by the beauty of batik with various flower motifs (Afifah et al., 2020). As stated by Mrs. Sulastri: “The batik motif used by ASN employees is usually kawisan, public officials usually use estehan and three countries motifs, while religious figures often use the sekar jagad motif in brown” (Sulastri, 2023).

One of Laseman’s batik motifs is the Kendoro-Kendiri batik motif. Fatkhur Rohim, a Lasem batik entrepreneur from Selopuro village, Lasem subdistrict, with the Kidang Kencana batik brand, said that the Kendoro Kendiri batik motif is an old motif among other Laseman batik motifs. Functionally, the Kendoro Kendiri batik motif is usually used by brides and grooms to ensure that their household is happy and lasts forever, even until they become grandparents.

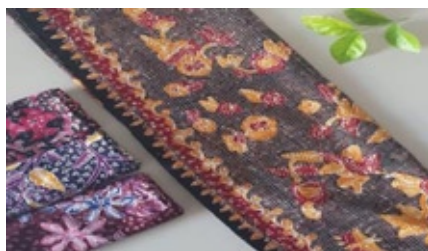


Figure 9. Kendoro Kendiri Motif

Mrs. Ngatikah, a batik maker from Tulis village, Lasem sub-district, who has worked for more than 60 years, said that all Laseman batik motifs have their uses, even though not all Lasem people know about them. This aligns with what Ahmad Rifa'i said: that every batik motif worn has its own purpose. For example, when a mother is 4 months pregnant, the batik motif used is the *angkrem baboon* motif, which means that a *baboon* represents a woman and *angkrem* means a pregnant person protecting the baby in her stomach.

Another motif often used by Javanese people is the *sido luhur/sido mukti* batik motif. This motif is usually used for adults, intending that, in the future, when they become parents, they can raise or give birth to children who can serve society. Similarly, the Lokcan batik motif is used to signify that the person wearing the batik will have good fortune or can be called a *bejonan* (lucky) person (Hermawati et al., 2020).



Figure 10. Lokcan Motif

One of the phenomenal Lasem batik motifs is the three-kingdom batik. This batik motif is also considered the world's batik master. The three-kingdom batik motifs are quite complex because they combine inland batik motifs (Solo and Yogyakarta) with coastal batik motifs (Pekalongan and Cirebon). Therefore, the three-kingdom batik serves as an identity

marker for the owner or user, often indicating that the wearer comes from aristocratic circles. Additionally, three-kingdom batik is often used by the Lasem community at social and religious events, such as state anniversaries and religious celebrations (Rizali, 2018).

One of Lasem's unique superior motifs is the Gringsing batik motif. This batik motif, dominated by black and white, is frequently used by coastal communities, especially the Lasem community. Among the people of Lasem, this motif symbolizes life, ensuring health and well-being. As a result, Lasem people often wear this batik for daily activities, such as going to work and other routine tasks. This batik motif is also commonly used in sacred events, such as weddings and circumcisions, to ensure the ceremonies proceed smoothly without obstacles (Permita et al., 2022).

Laseman batik motifs, rich with life values, are not only intended for clothing but also for other household items such as bed sheets, curtains, and tablecloths. Other motifs used include the "Geblok Kasur" batik motif. Many "kricak" motifs, often used in clothing, are also employed for making tablecloths and curtains.

In the past, slings were an important part of the lives of the Lasem people; babies were cradled and carried in batik. A sling, usually called "sayut," means "to bind," while in Old Javanese, 'sayut' means to reject evil. The uniqueness of the sayut from Lasem, used to carry children, lies in its ornaments, where each motif offers prayers and good hopes for the child. The characteristic motifs of Lasem slings are well known in Chinese culture, featuring animal motifs such as elephants, hong birds, and kilin, as well as floral motifs such as lotus flowers, peonies, and vines. These motifs carry good meanings for the wearer.

The Latohan motif was inspired by the Latoh plant, a type of seaweed that is a typical food of coastal communities, especially Lasem. The Latoh motif was created to highlight the beauty of the marine flora that grows abundantly on the north coast of Java. Each community has its own foundation system, and Lasem, with its maritime potential, has several aspects supporting its history. One result of the maritime culture of the

Lasem community is Batik Latoh. This motif symbolizes resilience, as latoh, when picked, will grow back easily.

Lasem batik, with its various patterns and motifs, remains a distinctive fabric used not only in Lasem but throughout Indonesia and internationally. Functionally, most Lasem people wear typical Lasem batik motifs for various occasions such as work, national and religious celebrations, weddings, circumcisions, and daily clothing. For batik entrepreneurs and craftsmen, each batik motif has a specific function, and their use must be tailored to these functions. This reflects the lifestyle of the people who create and use them. Style is directly related to an individual's lifestyle, displayed in communication activities and social interactions, implicitly or explicitly expressing their identity and values. Therefore, some Lasem people who understand the meanings and functions of batik motifs will wear them accordingly. For example, the Sekar Jagad batik motif is typically worn at weddings, while the three countries motif is used for formal events. However, most of the Lasem community does not fully understand the style of the Laseman batik motif, which has long been a regional characteristic (Basiroen, 2020).

Additionally, field observations have shown that the meaning and function of Laseman batik have recently shifted. Batik cloth with typical Lasem motifs, traditionally worn as shirts or hems, is now used for other purposes such as souvenirs (bags, wallets) and household goods (bed sheets, sarongs, carriers). Lasem sling cloth motifs often incorporate elements familiar to Chinese culture, such as animal motifs (elephants, hong birds, kilin) and floral motifs (lotus flowers, peonies, vines), which carry positive meanings for the wearer. This shift in function is driven by social, fashion, and cultural developments, leading to a metamorphosis in Laseman batik's use.

The symbols, meanings, and functions of Laseman batik are cultural treasures for coastal communities, particularly in Lasem. This cultural heritage is significant not only as an artistic product but also as a representation of the views, traditions, and value systems of the Lasem

people. Consequently, various stakeholders—arts and culture observers, batik entrepreneurs and craftsmen, community leaders, and regional governments—have actively promoted Laseman batik motifs, emphasizing their symbolism, meaning, and social function. The continuous transmission of batik values and meanings aims to embed them within the community, potentially influencing attitudes and behavior (Wibowo et al., 2024).

Many methods have been employed to internalize the meaning and function of Laseman batik. For example, local government policies require all state civil servants to wear Lasem batik on certain days. Religious activities and celebrations in government institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and religious organizations also mandate the use of Lasem batik. Batik entrepreneurs, craftsmen, and Lasem community leaders play a significant role in promoting Lasem's unique batik, rich in cultural values. These efforts utilize semiotic resources to create and communicate societal truths and cultural representations. Consequently, this initiative not only enhances the community's understanding of the value system in batik motifs but also influences their attitudes and behavior in their religious, national, and civic lives (Mastur & Khotimah, 2019).

The Influence of Lasem Hand-drawn batik Motifs in the Socio-religious Life of the Lasem Community

The meanings contained in Lasem batik motifs influence people's knowledge about the values of life. The Lasem people have acquired knowledge of these values from batik motifs passed down from generation to generation. The philosophical values of batik motifs are also often promoted by cultural institutions and the Lasem regional government. The promotion of the Lasem batik motif occurs not only on the national stage but also internationally. It is not surprising that the development of Lasem batik is now known worldwide.

Lasem batik motifs contain high philosophical meanings, especially concerning life systems. These philosophical meanings indirectly impact

the function of Laseman batik motifs in the life activities of the Lasem community. Every batik motif and its meaning can be used by the community as a form of preservation of the traditional life system of the Lasem community. Functionally, Lasem's typical batik motifs are used according to existing traditions, such as weddings, formal activities, religious celebrations, and so on (Utomo et al., 2018).

Regarding the implications of the meanings of motifs on social religious life, the data showed that the majority of people have not felt the influence of the meanings of batik motifs in their social religious activities. Even in social religious practice, the Lasem community is very tolerant, maintains togetherness, and respects each other's differences. In addition, they are also religious in carrying out religious values and teachings.

There are several values of religious life that are always prioritized by the majority of the Lasem community: (a) maintaining togetherness and mutual cooperation; (b) being tolerant; (c) respecting differences; (d) seriously seeking sustenance; (e) taking care; (f) protecting health and the environment; and (g) being grateful and patient. In fact, there are many more religious values that have been genuinely used as guidelines for the lives of the Lasem people.

Conclusion

There are several meanings contained in Lasem's batik motifs, including the meaning of togetherness, prosperity, caring, sincerity (not giving up), spreading goodness, rejecting evil, patience (holding back anger), and seriousness in living life. These meanings are depicted in each symbol of the Laseman batik motif. The philosophical meanings contained in batik motifs are also the result of dialectics or discourse from several sources, whether historical sources or traditions and value systems adhered to by the Lasem community.

Lasem batik, with its various patterns and motifs, is still a typical batik used by the Lasem people as clothing material. Laseman batik is used for various needs, such as office uniforms, school uniforms, and clothes for

national and religious celebrations, weddings, and circumcision events. Each batik motif and pattern had its own function, and the use of batik motifs must be adapted accordingly. The use of batik reflects the style of the people who own it. Recently, the use of Laseman batik has experienced a shift in meaning and function. Lasem batik motifs are not only worn for shirts or hems but are also used for other purposes, such as souvenirs in the form of bags, wallets, and more. The transmission of the values and meanings of batik motifs continues to be instilled in the community so that they become shared and common knowledge, which in turn can influence people's attitudes and behaviors.

Various methods have been employed to internalize the meaning and function of Laseman batik, such as government policies and outreach from entrepreneurs, craftsmen, art observers, and community leaders. This effort is a modality where all parties try to use semiotic resources to create and communicate truth or reality values from society's cultural representations. This effort aims to enhance the community's understanding of the value system contained in batik motifs and influence their attitudes and behavior in living their religious, national, and civic lives.

Future research can explore more on the meanings contained in batik in various regions, not just Lasem. Because the diversity of batik in Indonesia is vast, with different motifs and each motif having a unique meaning, a study must be conducted by analyzing social semiotics so that the meanings contained in batik across Indonesia can be understood by the wider community. This comprehensive understanding will help preserve the cultural heritage and promote its significance on a broader scale.

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- Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition*. Princeton University Press.
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- Sholehuddin, M. S., Munjin, M., & Adinugraha, H. H. (2021). Islamic Tradition and Religious Culture in Halal Tourism: Empirical Evidence from Indonesia. *IBDA: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Budaya*, 19(1), 79-100.
- Tracy, K. (2020). *Islamic Culture in Perspective*. Mitchell Lane.

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TRANSLITERATION GUIDELINES

Arab	Latin	Arab	Latin
ا	a	ض	dh
ب	b	ط	th
ت	t	ظ	zh

ث	ts	ع	‘
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	h	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dz	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	و	w
ش	sy	ه	h
ص	sh	ى	y

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