

Research Article

Traditional Wisdom of Peasant Community and Its Integration on Islamic Order in Molamahu Village of Gorontalo Regency - Indonesia

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Abstract: This study examined the traditional wisdom of the peasant community, and its integration in the Islamic order. The researchers used a qualitative approach and ethnographic methods. The results stated that the traditional wisdom of the peasant community is in the form of the *mopo'a huta* ritual, which contains *dayango* dance and gives offerings to spirits. Some local communities opposed this practice along with the entry of Islam because it was not in line with Islamic values. To continue existing in the peasant community, this traditional wisdom in its implementation is integrated with the Islamic order. In practice, the integration is not yet complete, since the Islamic values can only be found in a few small parts. Those are to believe in the existence of the supernatural, encourage fear and hope to the supreme ruler of the God Almighty, charity to share food even in the tight conditions of the dry season, and humans must live in harmony with the universe.

Keywords: Traditional wisdom, Peasant community, Integration, Cultural acculturation, Islamic order.

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INTRODUCTION

Agricultural society has distinctive cultural wisdom that continues to be practiced from generation to generation. They are a community that understands well what their ancestors believed and carried on from generation to generation and respects a culture that they believe in purity and nobility (Supriatna and Nugraha, 2020). The results of previous studies indicate, there are several farming communities in rural areas that still choose to maintain the heritage of ancestral traditions. They believe that culture is a habit that must be maintained even though it has experienced challenges in both socio-economic and cultural problems. These traditions include carrying out rituals with dancing and providing offerings. Rituals and offerings are very thick with the Hindu Buddhist order. From this point of view, the rituals and offerings adopted by the Muslim peasant community are fascinating to study how they encounter Islam.

When Islam was accepted in Java society, which was brought by Walisongo, the cultural ritual system of earth offerings was not eliminated. It was even used as a means to broadcast the sharia of God about faith and piety, that is, not associating partners with God and always submitting and obediently carrying out orders and avoiding prohibitions God. Ritual offerings that were once offered to nature were

later renamed to *sedekah bumi* (earth alms) given to humans, especially orphans and poor people without distinction of ethnicity, religion, race, and class (Slamet, 1984). In Javanese and Sundanese tribes, the *sedekah bumi* tradition is carried out as a form of gratitude for the abundant harvest. It is as stated by Nugroho (2018) *sedekah bumi* ritual is generally performed as a form of gratitude to the Unseen Substance which is considered to control agriculture and determine the success and failure of the harvest.

Sedekah bumi in other Javanese communities have different names, which Geertz (1985) called it a *slametan* ceremony. While Subarman (2014) found another name, *Nadran* ceremony in North Cirebon, Maryamah and Ratnawati (2018) found the naming of the ritual of *bongkar bumi* in Cirebon society and Supriatna (2020) found a ritual with the name *tahlilan* or thanksgiving for the harvest in the Bogor area.

From the various naming of *sedekah bumi* rituals mentioned above, all of them are undergoing acculturation with Islam. Acculturation is very thick seen in earth loading rituals, and this is a ritual as well as cultural expression to welcome the growing season in the middle of the Javanese and Sundanese tribes. *Bongkar bumi* ritual is carried out by holding prayers in mosques and shadow puppet performances, which are a form of homage to the ancestors who will bless the

village. In the context of cultural acculturation, this ritual can be said as a fusion of Islam with local culture; in a more straightforward context, *bongkar bumi* is a ritual of the salvation of the earth asking for protection and welfare from the Almighty (Maryamah and Ratnawati, 2018).

After Islam came, many elements of Islam entered and became part of the traditional *bongkar bumi* ritual. Such as doing al-Quran recitation in the mosque and praise to Allah and His Messenger. It is done before the performance of the puppet in the *hulu dayeuh* (the center of mystical power). However, the community in carrying out the tradition of *bongkar bumi* still performs rituals, which are the Hindu Buddhist order, which is even putting offerings in places that are considered sacred by the community even though rituals and offerings like that do not exist in the Islamic law.

The peasant community in the village of Molamahu, Gorontalo Regency, also has a similar ritual, *mopo'a huta* (Hunowu et al., 2020), which is a ritual to feed the land. *Mopo'a huta* ritual and *sedekah bumi* have similarities, both providing offerings to be offered to all sentient beings. The difference is that the *sedekah bumi* ritual is performed after harvest as an expression of gratitude. In contrast, the *mopo'a huta* ritual is carried out during the lean season, so that in practice, *mopo'a huta* is closer to the ceremony of rejecting evil luck.

Many previous studies examined the practice of rejecting evil luck rituals. Some of them are *katutuhano tei* traditions in Watorumbe Village of Central Buton, Southeast Sulawesi. *Katutuhano tei* is one of the traditional rituals that are believed by the community to prevent all disasters and dangers, such as drowning and losing direction for those who go to sea. It is held once a year at each change of seasons, as a form of respect for supernatural beings. The ritual process begins with praying, led by a traditional leader. The ritual is closed by eating together and greeting (Sumianti et al., 2018).

Seen from the aspect of Hoenigman's perspective of the cultural form (in Koentjaraningrat, 2009), all the rituals above have the same ideas, activities, and ritual artifacts. The idea is as a form of gratitude or a request to the Almighty, its activities take the form of rituals either by dancing, puppet shows, or praying, and the artifacts are offerings and other elements that animate it. Along with the times, the implementation process is challenged, especially after the entry of Islam. In the implementation of the *mopo'a huta* ritual in the village of Molamahu, some groups began to be resistant and called this ritual prohibited in the Islamic order. As Hartono and Firdaningsih (2019) found, resistance occurs, but does not stand alone, accommodation and assimilation will also happen in the

dynamics of social, religious, and cultural life. It affects the patterns and characteristics of the cultural life that are typical of society and also its rituals of worship.

Unlike the Javanese and Sundanese tribes, who carry out the *sedekah bumi* ritual at harvest or when planting, the *mopo'a huta* ritual in the peasant community is carried out in the famine season. By some people, this ritual is called a ceremony asking for rain. This ritual is held for several nights while collecting donations from the community. After the gift is sufficient for the provision of offerings, the ceremony ends with providing offerings for supernatural beings (Hunowu et al., 2020). This ritual is the same as *slametan* which is the core ritual of Javanese society. *Slametan*, according to Geertz, comes from the belief that there are spirits that can disturb human life (Geertz, 1985).

By holding the *mopo'a huta* ritual, the peasants hope that they will not be disturbed by spirits. This belief is slowly being challenged, with the entry of the Islamic order on the one hand, and the active participation of young people in Islamic boarding schools in the city. For the *mopo'a huta* ritual to still exist, the influential figures in this ritual integrate it with the Islamic order. The researchers examined the emic perspective on this ritual, relating to the ritual adherents' response to community resistance, as well as the form of Islamic values integrated into the ceremony.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maran (2007) states that ritual or rite is a concrete manifestation of religious life, as a medium of connecting with the divine. In the ceremony, humans actualize themselves with the divine, as if humans urge the divine to pay attention to their lives. Maran divides the rite into two types, namely purification rites and sacrificial rites. The sacrificial rite is very relevant to the *mopo'a huta* ritual. Rites of sacrifice, such as offerings, are offered to supernatural beings who rule the universe. By holding sacrificial ceremonies, humans not only give something to the divine for the good and peace of life but at the same time, humans are open to the source of divine grace. In it no longer matters who is giving and who is receiving because both parties naturally give and take from one another. In this relationship, the divine will continue to flow grace and strength for the preservation of human life, so that humans are kept away from all that is evil (Maran, 2007). This is a strong motivation, why the peasant community always strives to carry out the *mopo'a huta* ritual.

Some previous research shows that the sacrificial rite was carried out by the peasants and fisher communities, who have adopted Islamic values, both in the form of *sedekah bumi* and rejecting evil luck. *Sedekah bumi* rituals in the Bogor society, the practice

today can not be released with religious practices such as the blessings of the prophet and *manakib*. Supriatna and Nugraha (2020) state that this shift is a form of assimilation from the four ideological pillars, namely Nadhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, local wisdom, and modern knowledge. The incision among these four ideologies in society produces new values that make people able to live together even if their doctrines are different. It indicates the existence of cultural intelligence so that it can filter out aggression and reconcile the ideological warfare in social life.

In general, the *sedekah bumi* tradition that provides abundant food offerings is not only a necessity but at the same time also becomes an attraction for residents to attend the ceremony. In the people of *Made* in East Java (Nugroho, 2018), the main thing in the *sedekah bumi* is a giant rice cone prepared together. Some prepare rice, vegetables, side dishes, and various other things. In the ritual carried out by some of the communities, in addition to offerings, there are other elements added. It depends on the creativity of the adherents of the ritual.

The liveliness of ceremony can be created by adding the puppet performance art which was presented to the Javanese society; while a *dayango* dance accompanied by drum beats to the peasant community in Molamahu village of Gorontalo regency. In the *Made* community, the ritual which was held one day and night also featured entertainment such as shadow puppets. The story raised in the puppets play is a story with the power of God Almighty. The ceremony is closed with a joint prayer led by religious leaders, both from Hinduism and Islam. It is for the safety and security of the people of *Made*. Hundreds of rice cone that were collected after reciting the prayer then distributed again in a group to the community. The offerings used in *sedekah bumi* are symbols of the people's safety request to God Almighty, including the spirits of the village founders (Nugroho, 2018).

Identical to the *sedekah bumi*, *bongkar bumi* is a ritual of the salvation of the earth in invoking the protection and welfare of the Almighty (Maryamah and Ratnawati, 2018). For peasants, the tradition of *bongkar bumi* is not just an annual routine or ritual; however, this tradition has a deep meaning. In addition to encouraging gratitude, it also urges adherents that humans must live in harmony with the universe. The *bongkar bumi tradition* is one of the symbols that shows a sense of love and affection, besides, as a human appreciation for the earth that has given life to humans. So, then the land that is stepped on will not be angry, such as landslides and floods, but instead, it can be friendly side by side with the people who inhabit it.

The *mopo'a huta* ritual is the traditional wisdom that continues to live in the agricultural

community and come into contact with Islam. Geertz (1992) views religion and culture as reciprocating, meaning that on the one hand, religion influences culture, and at the same time, culture also influences religion. It is where diversity occurs in Islamic culture, where each region has its characteristics. It of course is a consequence of how Islam entered the area. Geertz's comparative study of Islam in Indonesia and Morocco, for example, proves that there is a cultural influence in understanding Islam. In Indonesia, Islam was transformed into a syncretic religion; Islamic acculturation occurred with the local culture. While in Maroko, Islam has an aggressive and passionate nature (Geertz, 1971). Syncretism in the *mopo'a huta* ritual is a historical necessity as the philosophy of life of the people of Gorontalo, namely the custom based on *syara* (law) and *syara* based on the *Kitabullah* (Book of God). For this ritual to continue, in its implementation, its adherents integrate it with the Islamic order.

The peasant community in Molamahu village of Gorontalo Regency is 100% Muslim. Muslim means a person who surrenders or submits himself to God (Maryam, 2012). The meaning of Islam adopted by the peasant community in Molamahu village can be interpreted as surrender. Islam implies a set of rules based on the revelations revealed by God to the prophets and apostles to be obeyed in the framework of salvation, prosperity, and peace for humankind as contained in the scriptures (Hartono and Firdaningsih, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach and case studies. The data was collected using three methods of data collection, namely interviews with community leaders, traditional leaders, and the peasant community, both those who support or reject traditional wisdom ritual practices. The observation was carried out by observing community life in general and looking closely at the procession of the implementation of the *mopo'a huta* ritual until the peak event held early in 2020. Document review was carried out to explore information relating to the *dayango* dance that had been previously studied. Data analysis was carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Molamahu village of Pulubala district is one of the corn farming centers located about twenty-three kilometers from the capital of Gorontalo regency. Molamahu village is bordered by a forest connected to the mount of Boliyohuto. The peasant community in this village still practices the *mopo'a huta* ritual even though lately, many people oppose it. The peasant community interprets it as a form of harmony between humans and the ruler of the universe. So that all

agricultural products that they are trying to experience fertility, livestock business will develop without disease pests, and the health of residents is guaranteed and free from strange deadly diseases. The practice of *mopo'a huta* ritual faces more and more challenges, as the existence of traditional agricultural traditions shifts to the conditions of modern agriculture on the one hand, and people's understanding of Islamic values is increasingly widespread on the other.

The *mopo'a huta* ritual in the peasant community of Molamahu village has been carried down from the first generation of the villagers in the 18th century to the present. During the leadership of the village head (before the issuance of the Village Law in 1979), the *mopo'a huta* ritual became a significant celebration of the peasant community in the village of Molamahu, which was held every year or every dry season. In this ritual, there is an element of *dayango* dance accompanied by drum beats. Rituals in other communities also make dance an essential element. Like the *dakdeng* dance in Malay society (Irawati, 2015), this dance is a part of the ritual of rejecting evil luck, which is a unity and accompaniment in the ritual of rejecting bad luck on the Malay community. This dance contains magical and mystical elements because it is associated with spirits. Like the *dayango* dance, *dakdeng* dance does not have a standard motion like other dances. This dance is improvised because the condition of the dancers experience possession in which the dancers' body movements start from the entry of spirits, so the dancer's body is moved to follow the actions performed by following the sound of accompaniment music blows by circling the dish.

In practice, traditional wisdom is always accompanied by specific prohibitions that must not be violated because the culprit may experience bad luck or a bad future. Obie et al. (2020) state that bans in traditional communities is related to environmental sustainability. It is because traditional communities live in harmony with the natural environment.

Traditional Wisdom as a Form of Human Reconciliation with Supernatural Beings

Traditional wisdom, such as the ritual of feeding the land (*mopo'a huta*) is carried out once a year, which is every dry season (famine). In the ceremony, there are several essential parts, namely the *dayango* dance accompanied by drum beats, which are held several nights, and the peak event organizers provide offerings consisting of some local material and divided into twenty-five packages. The package is placed in *tonggolo'opo* (a kind of *panjor* in Hindu rituals). At around seven o'clock in the morning, after the offering is complete, the ritual leader calls the supernatural beings to taste the offerings available. At the end of the ritual, the offerings are distributed to the organizers, especially the dancers and drummers.

Researches on *dayango* dance have been conducted by Niaga (2013), Noma (2014), and Sofyan (2015). In the study, the *dayango* dance was held to invoke healing and well-being. Previous researchers concluded that the *dayango* ritual is a tradition that is thick with shirk, even contrary to Gorontalo customs. Ritual adherents deny this accusation that *dayango* in particular and *mopo'a huta*, in general, are not considered shirk. They believe that *dayango* and offerings are a form of human interaction with nature, not the worship of nature. As Muslims, they believe in one God who must be worshiped. Besides, they also believe that God created the devil and his friends who disobeyed his commands and proclaimed themselves to disturb human kind. Rituals also explain that *mopo'a huta* is not a ritual of worshiping the devil. It is not serving or worshiping the devil, as it is known that satan has asked permission before God to disturb people. In this case, what is disturbed is not only human faith but also the devil can hide lives, create plant pests, move clouds to other regions, strangle human necks, etcetera. Thus, humans must arrange it, so that it will not interfere, by carrying out *mopo'a huta* and providing all their likes. After everything is available, the devil is called by saying this is your part, and don't bother us anymore.

Similar rituals are also found in the Bajo tribal community (Obie, 2015; Obie et al., 2016; Obie, 2018). The ceremony is intended to prevent various outbreaks of disease in the Bajo tribal community carried out by the *duata* (shaman group). The Bajo people believe that all kinds of illnesses arise because the spirits guarding coastal and marine resources show their wrath, so to prevent it is necessary to provide offerings, which is to pay respect to evil spirits.

Similar to the ritual in the Bajo tribal community in Tomini Bay, the *mopo'a huta* ritual in Molamahu village is a form of human reconciliation with the devil and its friends so as not to interfere with human life. According to this belief, humans do not want to worship spirits but only want to establish harmony as fellow creatures of God, so that souls do not interfere with humans in farming. With the holding of this ritual, it becomes a momentum for spirits to pick up what the peasant present in the offerings.

The statement "this is your part, and do not disturb us" is essentially a form of protection from the disturbance of spirits. In the Islamic order, this practice can be found in the command to recite three *Qul* in the al-Quran (*Surah al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq, and an-Naas*), as protection against disturbed spirits. The goal is the same, but the practice is different. Practices asking for protection like this are found in many rituals practiced by the traditional community.

To change the outsiders' views on shirk, ritual organizers integrate Islamic values into their practice. It can be seen from the presence of new rituals nuanced in Islam. The ceremony is to recite the prophet's blessings and prayer (*mongadi salawati*) as a closing ritual. In the peasant community in Molamahu peasant, the *mongadi salawati* tradition is a tradition that always accompanies every life cycle activity. *Mongadi Salawati* is done by inviting *shar'i* employees to recite *barzanji*, *zikir*, and prayers while sprinkling incense on embers. The integration of Islamic values in the ritual is carried out after all stages of the ritual end. The organizer provides a typical food, namely yellow rice combined with fried chicken or chicken porridge and boiled eggs.

Thus, it can be said that traditional wisdom such as the *mopo'a huta* ritual carried out by people who had not yet embraced Islam, were undergoing acculturation from the practice of shirk to a nuanced practice of Islam. The peasant community believes in supernatural beings and believes in the existence of satan's defiance of God. The peasant community also believes that the devil and his army are trying to tempt and disturb human life. The devil can do anything, make people sick, drive clouds to other places, create plant pests; everything can be done apart from uprooting human spirits. The belief is reflected in rituals that aim to reconcile humans with supernatural beings.

Integration of Islamic Order in Traditional Wisdom

The peasant community in Molamahu village has spiritual principles and beliefs that are closely related to ecological values. It is similar to the *slametan* ritual in Javanese society when planting and harvesting are an expression of communalism and good wishes for nature, which has provided a source of life (Nurish, 2019). Spiritual beliefs are manifested in ritual activities. However, the ritual, which is mostly inspired by Hindu and Buddhist values, is slowly integrated with Islamic values. Based on the reflection of the results of ongoing discussions with traditional leaders and Islamic religious leaders relating to the implementation of the *mopo'a huta* ritual, several activities can be found as spaces for the entry of Islamic values.

In the process of slaughtering twenty-five chickens as offerings in *mopo'a huta* ritual, it was done in the name of *Allah*. The practice of slaughtering chickens before entering Islam, using local language spells. In the spell, it instructs the chicken to give off a bad and unpleasant taste through the breath that comes out, and enter a good taste and pleasant taste through the incoming breath. Although the spells are still present, those are integrated with the speech of *basmalah* (in the name of *Allah*). Besides, the blessings of the prophet as the opening of the spells.

The offerings provided for fine creatures are foods that have not been seasoned and flavored so that it cannot be eaten immediately, for example, chicken that is only burned, cork is burned only, etcetera. Food offerings are then offered to ritual practitioners such as dancers, drummers, and ritual leaders. Islamic values are the inspiration that food as a form of giving can be intended as alms, as a command to give alms to fellow human beings. Offerings can be symbolically offered to sentient beings, then distributed to performers and ritual implementers. In another part, the food served at the time of the prophet's prayer, remembrance, and prayer is no longer derived from offerings. Still, the typical food of local festivity is yellow rice or chicken porridge.

Based on the above review, it is found that there is cultural acculturation between traditional wisdom and Islamic values in the peasant community. The finding was, as stated by Hartono and Firdaningsih (2019) that there was acculturation of Javanese culture with Islam at the *sedekah laut* (sea alms) ceremony. It received a system of thanksgiving belief to Allah Almighty for all of his gifts as the final value system (the goal) of all sea alms rituals. Sea alms ceremony is also perceived and believed by the fishing community to affirm their faith in the unseen. It is also in line with the findings of Lahaji and Obie (2020) relating to the local wisdom of the Bajo tribe and its acculturation on Islamic sharia. The inclusion of Islamic sharia in the Bajo tribal community that had previously held fast to ancestral traditions led to cultural acculturation in which traditional rituals accepted Islamic sharia without leaving existing rituals.

CONCLUSION

The ritual leaders in the peasant community integrate Islamic values into traditional wisdom. The integration of Islam in the ritual of *mopo'a huta* is still at the beginning, not yet penetrating into the main aspects because it is still understood personally by its adherents. In the *sedekah bumi* or *bongkar bumi* in Javanese and Sundanese communities, the integration of Islam is dominant. In some communities, the ritual aspect even turns into entertainment. *Sedekah bumi* ritual is an expression of happiness overabundance of sustenance after harvest, while in the *mopo'a huta* ritual is an expression of sadness over the prolonged drought and attacks of plant pests that hit. Thus, the *mopo'a huta* ritual can be positioned as a ritual of rejecting bad luck as practiced by other rural communities. Islamic values found in the *mopo'a huta* ritual are to believe in the existence of the supernatural and encourage fear and hope to the universal ruler of God. Besides, promote the sharing of food even in the cramped conditions of the dry season, and encourage adherents that humans should live harmonious with the universe.

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