



The Role and Symbolic Meaning of the Wacan Syekh Oral Tradition in Fostering Community Social Culture

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Abstract: This study investigates the preservation of Wacan Syekh, an oral tradition (also called Reading or Wawacan Layang of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani) in Renged Village, Tangerang Regency, Banten, as intangible cultural heritage blending religion, local culture, and social values. Employing a qualitative descriptive-interpretive approach grounded in phenomenology and symbolic interactionism/social constructivism, it analyzes data from participatory observation, interviews, and documentation via Miles and Huberman's model. Findings reveal Wacan Syekh's role as a medium for moral-spiritual learning, community solidarity, and noble value internalization through symbols like water and seven-colored flowers, functioning as spiritual protection and cultural identity preserver relevant to national character development.

Keywords: community social culture; noble values and meanings; Sheikh's discourse tradition.

1. Introduction

The Wacan Syekh tradition is an oral tradition that is still cultivated by the community, especially in Renged Village, Kresek District, Tangerang Regency, Banten. There are various names, some call it Wacan Syekh, Wawacan Layang Syekh Abdul Qodir Jaelani and Maca Syekh. All of these names are true, depending on the community's habit of calling it. Wacan Syekh is one of the cultural riches in the field of oral tradition that has existed for a long time and is still carried out by the people of Renged Village, Kresek District, Tangerang Regency, Banten Province. In the study of the Wacan Syekh tradition, the author uses a Qualitative research method with a descriptive approach, as it requires analysis of events or phenomena in the research location, namely Renged Village, Kresek District, Tangerang Regency, Banten. The Wacan Syekh tradition is usually recited when commemorating several important events, one of which is during the thanksgiving night of walimatul 'urs (wedding), at the residence of the bride and groom, the Wacan Syekh will be recited by the village elders, usually the ones who read are men, accompanied by the reading of holy verses of the Qur'an and also prayers. Then, the thanksgiving event for birth, a girl's first menstruation, circumcision, even when receiving fortune to buy a vehicle. The most striking characteristic of the Wacan Syekh tradition in Renged Village is, the presence of 7 kinds of snacks, 7 kinds of flowers (even 7 colors) stored in a bowl, tray or other container along with water. The Wacan Syekh tradition itself tells the story of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaelani, advice, habits and so on. The Wacan Syekh tradition is a form of cultural acculturation involving cultural, religious, and political elements to produce an acculturation product that can survive until now (Setiawan, 2019).

The Wacan Syekh tradition itself is an oral tradition still practiced by the majority of Bantenese people. Cultural acculturation here includes both traditional and linguistic acculturation. Cultural acculturation is the fusion of two different cultures, without losing the distinctive characteristics of the

culture itself. Koentjaraningrat defines cultural acculturation as a process, namely when a group of people with a certain culture encounters foreign cultural elements. These elements will be accepted and processed into their culture without losing the culture itself (Putri, 2022). Why is it called acculturation? Because clearly, one of the traditions of traditional society is an oral tradition, long before the discovery of civilization, also called the tradition of the pre-literate period (before the discovery of writing) some also call it Folklore. Folk culture or folklore includes various forms of tradition, such as folktales, legends, music, oral history, proverbs, jokes, superstitions, fairy tales, and customs that develop within a group or subculture. Folklore plays a role as a medium for disseminating cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next. According to Jan Harold Brunvand, an American folklore expert, folklore is divided into three categories based on its form: oral, partially oral, and non-oral. Based on this classification, the Wacan Syekh Tradition that developed in Renged Village falls into the oral folklore category because it is passed down and conveyed through verbal communication between community members (Setiawan, 2019).

Oral tradition, as part of intangible cultural heritage, is a complex form of knowledge that combines various elements to convey information in the context of its time. This tradition is not just a story, but also contains noble cultural values implied in the stories told, often accompanied by variations in rhythm and tone that reflect the character and customs of the supporting community. The function of oral tradition is very important, because in addition to being a means of entertainment, it also plays a role in instilling moral values, social norms, and cultural identity in future generations. However, despite its high cultural value, oral tradition currently still does not receive serious attention for preservation. The lack of protection and development efforts has left many cultural works in the field of oral traditions and expressions at risk of extinction. Some have even disappeared completely from community practice. This condition demonstrates the need for systematic steps to document, preserve, and revitalize oral traditions, so that they do not just become memories of the past, but remain relevant as a medium for cultural education, a means of social interaction, and a reinforcement of community identity in the face of changing times.

Maca Syekh is an intangible cultural heritage that is part of the oral traditions and expressions of Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. Currently, this tradition is facing the risk of extinction due to the decreasing number of generations to preserve it. According to Hudaeri and his colleagues, the stories contained in the Maca Syekh manaqib have the primary purpose of providing moral guidance to humans, teaching how to act and behave in everyday life. In addition to moral values, Maca Syekh also displays cultural richness through the diversity of local elements processed into forms of acculturation, resulting in distinctive cultural works. This oral tradition is not merely entertainment, but also a medium for education, dissemination of spiritual values, and strengthening the identity of the local community. Thus, Maca Syekh reflects the fusion of morality, oral tradition, and cultural diversity that continues to be an important part of Banten's cultural heritage, despite currently facing preservation challenges (Setiawan, 2019).

Tangerang Regency itself is predominantly Indonesian, Sundanese Aing Tangerang, and in several sub-districts such as Kresiek sub-district, Javanese is used. In translating the Book of Maca Sheikh, it is by using the Arabic Pegon script. The term Sheikh itself describes the figure of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaelani who is known as a spreader of Islam, and has noble character in implementing his knowledge in a society that is still very traditional. One of its manifestations is in advice that leads to goodness, delivered with gentle words so that the listeners can absorb and understand what is conveyed. The Wacan Sheikh tradition in Tangerang Regency itself uses several pupuhs, including: pupuh Asmarandana, pupuh Dangdanggula, pupuh Kinanti, pupuh Gurisa, pupuh Pangkur, pupuh Sinom, pupuh Pucung, pupuh Lambang, pupuh Mijil, and pupuh Durma.

In understanding the concepts of religion and spirituality, Canda and Furman emphasize a specific relationship between the two. Religion or religiosity is understood as a structured and institutionalized collection of values, beliefs, symbols, behaviors, and experiences aimed at bringing individuals closer to the spiritual dimension. These values are collective, recognized within society, and passed down through tradition from generation to generation. Meanwhile, spirituality is understood as a process of

searching for meaning, purpose in life, morality, and well-being that involves a relationship with oneself, others, and the highest reality or ultimate reality. With this understanding, a person can express their spirituality through formal religious practices, which connect them to the highest reality, or through non-religious means, for example through personal reflection, social interaction, and connection with nature. Thus, spirituality can be present in both religious and non-religious contexts, depending on how individuals construct meaning and relationships with the world around them (Amir & Lesmawati, 2016).

Elkins et al. argue that spirituality should be free from the constraints of formal rules and religious rituals inherent in religiosity. They agree with Maslow's view that spirituality is inherently human, even if people claim to be non-religious or do not follow a specific religion. Elkins et al. state that spirituality comes from the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning "breath of life." By definition, spirituality is a way of being and experiencing that arises from an awareness of the transcendent dimension and is characterized by certain values that are evident in oneself, others, nature, life, and anything considered to be the Ultimate. Spirituality makes one feel a strong longing and drive to understand various things in life, whether related to religion or otherwise (Amir & Lesmawati, 2016). Spirituality, according to this view, is personal and dynamic, not bound by dogma or specific ritual practices, but rather arises from an individual's subjective experience in searching for the meaning of life. This allows each person to develop a deeper self-awareness, empathy, and connectedness with their surroundings. Furthermore, spirituality encourages individuals to explore moral, ethical, and humanitarian values that can be applied in everyday life. Thus, although not tied to a formal religious structure, spirituality remains an important means for humans to understand existence, find life's purpose, and cultivate harmony with oneself, others, and the universe in a holistic manner. It exists as a force that guides individuals towards personal growth and inner well-being.

In practice, people express their religion and spirituality through various forms of actions and behaviors, which in turn enrich the values of the Wacan Syekh tradition. The way people respond to this tradition, both from a religious and social perspective, gives rise to a variety of different norms and values. Therefore, a study of the Wacan Syekh (Wawacan Layang Syekh Abdul Qodir Jaelani) is important to uncover the moral, spiritual, and social values contained within it. This research also aims to assess the extent of the tradition's relevance in the context of cultural development with a national perspective. With a deep understanding, the noble values implied in the Wacan Syekh can be used as a reference in the development of regional culture, while enriching the treasury of Sundanese literature, particularly in the field of religious literature. Furthermore, the results of the analysis are expected to provide practical input for efforts to foster local culture, facilitate the preservation of oral traditions, and foster public appreciation for the spiritual and cultural heritage that is the community's identity. Thus, the Wacan Syekh tradition is not only a historical legacy, but also a source of inspiration for character and cultural development in the modern era.

2. Research methods

Research is essentially a systematic process undertaken to discover, test, and confirm established truths or to gain new understanding of a particular phenomenon. This search for truth is not only undertaken by scientists, but also by philosophers, researchers, and practitioners through specific models commonly known as paradigms. This paradigm serves as the philosophical foundation underlying every research, as research cannot be conducted haphazardly without a clear philosophical foundation. In this regard, a paradigm serves as a foundation that regulates the meaning, nature, objectives, and methods of research. In other words, a paradigm is not merely an abstract concept, but rather a framework of thought containing certain assumptions, theories, models, and solutions related to the main problem, research objectives, and the basic nature of the object or study material being studied (Moleong, 2007).

In research methodology, a paradigm refers to a set of beliefs shared by the scientific community, accompanied by specific methods consistent with those beliefs. Research begins with the researcher's adopted paradigm, which serves as a reference and a boundary that regulates the researcher's scope

during the research process. Paradigms provide a specific perspective that differentiates one study from another, and these differences in paradigm directly influence the procedures, methods, and analytical techniques used. According to Bogdan and Biklen, a paradigm is a collection of assumptions, concepts, or propositions that guide a researcher's thinking and behavior. Paradigms help researchers understand how a phenomenon is structured, how its parts relate to each other, and how these parts function within a specific context or time dimension (Moleong, 2014).

Meanwhile, Khun defines a scientific paradigm as an example of accepted scientific practice, encompassing laws, theories, applications, and instruments simultaneously, thus forming a coherent research tradition (Kahmad, 2000). Harmon then explains a paradigm as a fundamental way of perceiving, evaluating, thinking, and acting related to a particular vision of reality. Capra adds that a paradigm is a constellation of concepts, values, perceptions, and practices shared by a scientific community, which forms a particular understanding of reality and forms the basis for how that community organizes itself (Moleong, 2014). The interpretive paradigm emphasizes that social reality is dynamic, ever-changing, and influenced by personal interpretations. In this view, humans are seen as beings with conscious will and give meaning to their environment. Therefore, research using an interpretive paradigm seeks to uncover the veil of meaning hidden behind visible phenomena, so that deeper truths can be understood. This paradigm differs from paradigms that attempt to explain phenomena objectively; its focus is on understanding the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of the individuals or groups being studied (Rizal, 2010). Interpretive research methods emphasize direct observation to provide detailed interpretations of social behavior and interactions. Facts are viewed as extraordinary, contextually specific, and crucial to understanding social meaning. These facts are not fixed and can be interpreted in various ways depending on the context and individual experience. In other words, what appears on the surface is often merely a reflection of a hidden reality that needs to be uncovered through in-depth analysis.

In qualitative research, the focus is on understanding and exploring the perspectives and experiences of the individuals or groups being studied. This research produces descriptive data, which can be in the form of words, images, or documents, rather than numbers as in quantitative research. Qualitative methods, such as observation, in-depth interviews, and document review, are used because of their flexibility, sensitivity to social context, and ability to adapt to the complexities of diverse realities. Characteristics of qualitative research include naturalistic, descriptive data collection, an emphasis on process, inductive analysis, and a deep understanding of the meaning behind the observed phenomena (Sugiyono, 2012). Qualitative research requires intensive involvement of researchers in the field, where researchers participate, take careful notes, reflect on documents, and compile detailed reports. The theoretical foundation of qualitative research is often rooted in phenomenology, which emphasizes individual subjective experiences and first-person perspectives. The primary goal of phenomenology is to deeply understand individuals' lived experiences, including the meanings they attach to each event or phenomenon.

Data in qualitative research can come from primary or secondary sources. Primary data is obtained directly from the source, for example through interviews with community leaders or unpublished documents. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from literature studies or existing documents, such as books, journals, papers, or official archives. Data collection techniques include participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, while data analysis is conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction aims to group important information according to the research topic, thereby simplifying the analysis process. Data presentation is done narratively to facilitate understanding. Meanwhile, verification and drawing conclusions are carried out by considering data credibility and triangulation, namely comparing information from various sources or methods to ensure the validity of the findings (Sugiyono, 2013).

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding the Wacan Syekh tradition that takes place in Renged Village, Kresek District, Tangerang Regency, Banten. The research focuses on the community's efforts to preserve this tradition, the meanings they attach to it, and the social

functions that emerge from the practice of reciting Wacan Syekh. Data analysis was conducted using the perspectives of Symbolic Interactionism and Social Constructivism, to evaluate the relationship between actual practices in the field and existing theoretical frameworks. The results reveal that Wacan Syekh is not merely a ritual or tradition, but also plays a role as a medium for learning religious and social values, which influence the formation of community behavior and attitudes. The qualitative approach used is based on phenomenology and an interpretative paradigm, allowing researchers to explore socio-cultural phenomena more comprehensively. Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and data verification through triangulation to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings. This method allows researchers not only to record surface facts but also to uncover the implicit meanings behind each social practice and behavior. Thus, this research provides a more holistic understanding of the Wacan Syekh tradition, including its role in shaping the identity, morals, and social interactions of the Renged Village community. Furthermore, this research contributes to efforts to preserve oral culture and local traditions, and demonstrates how cultural practices can serve as a means of integrating religious, social, and cultural values into community life. These findings reveal the complex relationship between tradition, meaning, and social function, which continues to evolve with the dynamics of society.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Socio-Cultural Processes in the Habitation of the Sheikh's Wacan Tradition in Society

Human life cannot exist without culture. Whether intentional or not, structured behavior indicates that a person has entered a cultural environment. An integral aspect of human existence is culture. Consciously or unconsciously, structured behavior indicates that a person has interacted with a culture. Cultural heritage, which is divided into two categories: tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage, consists of artistic creations that have undergone revitalization and have high intrinsic value. A cultural endeavor in the field of oral tradition known as Maca Syekh is another example of how cultural diversity is combined to produce acculturation. Oral tradition, which is part of intangible cultural heritage, is a complex body of knowledge about various elements of knowledge combined with the aim of disseminating information relevant to the context of its time. As an intangible cultural heritage, oral tradition contains noble cultural values through stories told with various melodies. For example, according to Hudaeri et al., Maca Syekh in Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province, an intangible cultural heritage included in the category of oral tradition and expression, is threatened with extinction. The stories in the Manaqib (Maca Sheikh) are intended to provide moral guidance to humans on how to behave in this world (Setiawan, 2019).

The Bantenese, particularly in Tangerang Regency, have a rich cultural heritage in the form of an oral tradition known as Wacan Syekh or Maca Syekh. This tradition presents the life story and advice of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani, delivered in Pegon Arabic, a combination of Arabic and Javanese, and accompanied by the rhythm of Sundanese pupuh. Wacan Syekh plays a significant role in shaping the social, cultural, and religious life of the local community. Substantially, the Maca Syekh tradition aligns with the practice of manaqib because both highlight the life journey of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani while instilling the moral and spiritual values contained in his teachings. In local belief, reciting Wacan Syekh is believed to bring karomah or spiritual blessings from Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani, which are considered to provide protection and blessings to those who practice it. More than just stories, Wacan Syekh serves as a medium for religious education as well as a means of preserving local culture. This tradition also reflects cultural acculturation between Islamic teachings, local languages and Sundanese oral arts, thus strengthening the cultural identity of the Banten people as well as becoming an intergenerational bridge in passing on the noble values and local wisdom contained therein.

The first figure to introduce and recite the Wacan Syekh in Kresik District was Syekh Ki Astari, a cleric known as Waliyullah from Cakung Village. The tradition of reciting the Wacan Syekh has long been embedded in the lives of the local community, passed down orally from one generation to the next. This practice persists to this day, driven by respect and concern for the spiritual dimension, as well as the strong influence of religious teachings in community life. Recitation of the Wacan Syekh is

not performed regularly, but is limited to special moments, such as Rebo Wekasan on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar, as well as on major Islamic religious holidays. This activity is not only a form of religious ritual, but also serves as a medium for strengthening cultural values, social solidarity, and community identity. Thus, the Wacan Syekh symbolizes the fusion of spirituality and local cultural traditions that the Kresek community continues to uphold.

From a psychological perspective, the Sheikh's Wacan serves as a means to overcome life's obstacles and relieve stress or negative emotions. The stories in Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jailani's sermons provide motivation and inspiration, teaching that seemingly impossible challenges can be overcome through faith and wisdom. This tradition also plays a role in building social relationships, strengthening solidarity, and instilling moral values in society. The Sheikh's Wacan is not merely a spiritual story, but also a life guide that reminds people that physical strength is not the only factor that determines life's journey. The Sheikh's Wacan is usually conducted by one to seven men fluent in Arabic and Pegon yellow books, including ustadz (Islamic teachers), community leaders, and students (santri). The recitation is carried out solemnly because it is considered sacred. This event is often associated with major celebrations, such as haul (hajatan), circumcisions, weddings, or other important events. In a social context, the Sheikh's Wacan has strong religious value, believed to bring blessings and strengthen faith. The stories convey moral messages, patience, fortitude, and perseverance in the face of difficulties. In addition to its religious value, the Wacan Syekh tradition also has social value because it strengthens relationships, builds togetherness, and fosters solidarity among residents. Psychologically, this recitation is believed to calm the mind, reduce anxiety, and increase motivation. Culturally, Maca Syekh reflects the acculturation of Islamic culture with local Javanese and Sundanese values, evident in the use of Pegon Arabic and the art of pupuh recitation. This tradition also serves as a medium for passing on noble values and knowledge about religious figures from one generation to the next, while preserving local culture, including ancient manuscripts.

In practice, the Sheikh's Recitation is performed at various moments in community life. At wedding ceremonies, recitations are usually held the day before the marriage contract as part of the prayer and blessing. Ustadz, kiai, and community leaders read the holy book, attended by extended family, neighbors, and local residents. This ceremony serves not only a religious purpose but also strengthens social ties through friendship. The media used include water in a tray as a symbol of purity, seven-colored flowers for positive energy and diverse sustenance, a pillow for placing the holy book, an envelope containing alms, and food as a symbol of sharing and gratitude. In addition to weddings, the Sheikh's Recitation is also recited at Islamic holidays. Rebo Wekasan, the last Wednesday of the month of Safar, is believed to be a time of trials, so the recitation of the Sheikh's Recitation serves to ward off disaster and strengthen faith. Residents, especially women, prepare food and envelopes containing money and prayers, which are then collected at the mosque. This event continues in turns until all the pupuh have been recited, followed by a closing prayer. On the Prophet's birthday, the "Maka Sheikh" (Islamic prayer) is recited to praise the Prophet Muhammad and instill moral values. This activity is usually accompanied by donations to orphans and the underprivileged, the recitation of the Yasin (the recitation of the Quran), and religious sermons to strengthen spirituality. On the eve of Nisfu Sya'ban, this tradition is performed to seek forgiveness and blessings, as well as to strengthen the spiritual awareness of the community.

This tradition is also practiced in the construction of new homes. Before the groundbreaking, the Wacan Syekh is recited to invoke blessings and protection during the construction process. After the house is completed, this tradition is repeated before occupancy, symbolizing the instilling of good values within the home. When purchasing a new vehicle, this ritual is performed to invoke safety, protection from accidents, and blessings. Although only a few religious teachers are present, the recitation is still carried out solemnly to uphold the intentions and prayers of the vehicle owner. The Wacan Syekh tradition is an integral part of the social culture of the Banten community, especially in Renged Village. This tradition is not only an art form of reading scriptures, but also a means of moral education, a medium for cultural acculturation, the transmission of religious values, and a strengthening of social solidarity. The recitation of the Maca Syekh strengthens faith, fosters

motivation, and calms the psychological well-being of residents. Its continued existence demonstrates the importance of oral traditions as part of local cultural identity, harmoniously combining spiritual, social, and cultural values. Thus, Maca Syekh is a clear example of how oral tradition can influence people's lives in various aspects, including religious, social, psychological, and cultural aspects. This tradition has become a means of instilling noble values, maintaining social solidarity, and providing moral guidance for the younger generation, while ensuring the preservation of local culture over time. Each recitation of Maca Syekh is not only a religious ritual, but also a means of learning and reinforcing cultural values deeply rooted in Banten society.

3.2. The Meaning of the Sheikh's Discourse According to the Renged Village Community

For those who accept and believe in it, religion is a social fact that can be learned, assimilated, and practiced. Because religion is embedded in human life, all its practices and actions lead to human discoveries, which in turn create culture. Humans and religion have a close relationship. Religious teachings are contextualized within the social life they encompass. Conversely, culture consists of knowledge, morals, values, art, customs, rituals, and therefore, religion is a component of culture, as Geertz stated. In social life, religion serves to strengthen social cohesion. According to Emile Durkheim, religious organizations function as symbols and symbols of society. They uphold and strengthen a sense of social obligation and solidarity, and their sacredness stems from the authority that applies to every member of society. Other components are used to carry out religious teachings (Malihatunnajiah, 2024).

Wacan Syekh, in the context of Sundanese culture, is an oral literary work in the form of a pupuh, a form of traditional Sundanese poetry, which tells the life of a Sheikh, generally Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani, a highly respected Sufi figure. In Sundanese society, especially in the village of Renged, Banten, Wacan Syekh is understood not only as a long story, but also as a medium rich in Islamic values, especially Sufism, as well as moral and spiritual teachings that guide community behavior. Although the majority of the community speaks Bantenese Javanese, the Wacan Syekh book is written in Sundanese using the Arabic Pegon script. This shows the existence of cultural acculturation, where local traditions are combined with Islamic religious values to create a unique and distinctive cultural identity. Wacan Syekh has many meanings that are understood by the community.

First, Wacan Syekh serves as a story about a saint of Allah, which contains the story of the life and struggle of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani in getting closer to God. This story serves as a spiritual example for society, showing how a person can direct his life according to religious values. Second, Wacan Syekh contains the teachings of Sufism, a mystical teaching in Islam that emphasizes spiritual experience and direct closeness to God. Third, Wacan Syekh serves as a medium for religious education, teaching the concepts of sharia, tariqat, hakikat, and makrifat, which are the levels of approaching God. Fourth, Wacan Syekh conveys a moral message about goodness, patience, piety, and the importance of avoiding reprehensible actions. Fifth, Wacan Syekh is part of the rich Sundanese cultural heritage, becoming a form of literary treasure that must be preserved. Sixth, in addition to religious and moral values, Wacan Syekh also has an entertainment function when recited or sung in traditional art performances.

In Renged village, Wacan Syekh participates in various religious and social events. According to research sources, Wacan Syekh activities are carried out at *marhaban, salam* (greetings), wedding celebrations, housewarmings, vehicle purchases, and other events. This tradition is seen as a form of gratitude to God, and there is an element of "fear" if it is not carried out. Based on an interview with H. Ade, a Renged community leader, Wacan Syekh also functions as a means of community socialization, although its influence is more suggestive. This tradition is understood by the community as an effort to obtain blessings or *karamah* from the advice of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani and as a means of sharing happiness during celebrations. The ethnographic approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural elements that exist within a social system. Research on the Wacan Syekh tradition in Renged village not only explores the culture but also draws social lessons from the practice. In the socialization process, Wacan Syekh is introduced through formal and informal teachings by

religious leaders, community groups, or religious institutions. Gradually, this tradition was accepted by the community through social interactions, becoming part of the Renged village lifestyle. Sociologist Émile Durkheim emphasised that religious rituals are an important medium for transmitting religious values, strengthening social cohesion, and building a community's collective identity.

In practice, the people of Renged Village give the Wacan Syekh tradition different meanings depending on the event's context. For example, during wedding ceremonies, the community recites the Maca Syekh as a tradition passed down through generations. Mr. Jajuli stated that if it is not performed, it will bring danger, so the wedding ceremony must be accompanied by this recitation. This indicates that the community observes this tradition more for ritual and protection than for a deeper understanding of the text. During Islamic holidays such as Rebo Wekasan, the community only knows the most distinctive part of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani's story, without understanding the entire contents of the pupuh. Herri Setyawan added that the recitation of the Wacan Syekh is intended to ward off disaster and express gratitude, although their understanding of the text is limited. The meaning of the Wacan Syekh tradition is also reflected in the ceremony of building a new house. Residents, such as Wawan and Mrs. Rumsah, stated that the recitation is performed to seek protection, blessings, and good fortune for the home's residents. Although understanding of the text is not deep, spiritual beliefs remain strong. This demonstrates that the transmission of religious values isn't always based on complete understanding, but also on collective transmission across generations. Similar traditions are also practiced when purchasing a new vehicle, where the primary goal is protection from disasters such as accidents or loss. Miss Rita emphasized that the practice is more ritualistic and symbolic, rather than based on historical or theological understanding.

The Maca Syekh book used by the Renged village community includes praises, prayers, and the life story of Sheikh Abdul Qodir Jaelani. The book emphasizes religious, spiritual, and moral values, including patience, sincerity, and obedience to God. This book also teaches ethical behavior, exemplary behavior, and social responsibility. Recitation of Maca Syekh is used to obtain blessings, safety, and protection from danger through the teachings of tawasul. This book is conveyed in seven pupuh, namely pupuh dangdanggula, asmarandana, kinanti, sinom, pangkur, durma, and simbol. Each pupuh has its own meaning, ranging from peace, love, longing, hidden anger, enthusiasm, to humor. In the Renged community, the most popular pupuh are those containing elements of jokes or romance, because young people only attend without understanding the full meaning of the pupuh. Haji Mai stated that not all pupuh are recited; only some are relevant to religious or social activities, while others are recited in full at specific events. In addition to the text, the equipment in the Maca Syekh tradition also has symbolic meaning. The water used is believed to contain blessings and can be sprinkled on people, homes, or vehicles to ward off disaster. Juniawan mentioned that water is used for new vehicles to ensure their safety, while Ibu Juhanah added that water has flexible uses, for example, mixed with bath water, doused in yards, or sprinkled on the face, all to hope for blessings and ward off disaster. From a symbolic-anthropology perspective, water functions as a transformative medium that connects the spiritual dimension with everyday life.

The flowers in this tradition are usually seven types or seven colors, symbolizing the perfection of prayer. The fragrance of flowers is thought to bring positive energy, prosperity, and harmony in life. Pillows are used as a cushion for the book to prevent it from touching the floor, signifying respect for the text. The pillow's function is practical, although it still carries a symbolism of respect. The food served at the end of the reading is a form of sharing sustenance and gratitude, with no specific quantity or type specified. H. Fathullah emphasized that simple food is sufficient to convey social and religious meaning. The Wacan Syekh tradition in Renged village demonstrates a complex combination of religious, moral, social, and symbolic practices. This tradition strengthens the community's cultural and religious identity, strengthens ties, conveys moral and spiritual values, and serves as a means of transmitting values from generation to generation. Wacan Syekh functions not only as a religious ritual but also as a medium for education, entertainment, and strengthening social cohesion, demonstrating the flexibility and adaptability of tradition in modern society. This practice demonstrates that local culture remains relevant as a means of moral, spiritual, and social learning for the people of Renged

village, while also serving as a form of preserving a rich and valuable cultural heritage. The Wacan Syekh tradition combines religious, symbolic, and practical aspects that reflect the noble values upheld by the community and shows how religious practices can function as a medium for social, moral, and spiritual strengthening, integral to the community's daily life.

The social functions of the Wacan Syekh tradition in Renged Village include strengthening relationships, fostering compassion through charity, and internalizing religious and moral values. This tradition serves as a forum for social interaction, strengthening relationships between residents, fostering empathy, and instilling habits of mutual cooperation, solidarity, and responsibility in the community's daily lives, as follows:

First, *silaturahmi* is an effort to strengthen relationships in goodness and maintain the bonds of brotherhood between people. This bond of brotherhood does not have to be blood-related; even those without any ties can forge one. *Silaturahmi* is a form of kindness shown to family, relatives, friends, or fellow Muslims to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood. *Silaturahmi* strengthens weak relationships and clears up clouded ones. In social life, humans are interdependent, so good relationships are necessary. Despite differences in ethnicity, religion, or background, *silaturahmi* and tolerance are important for maintaining harmony and togetherness. Mr. Arya, a community leader in Renged Village, emphasized the importance of *silaturahmi* because humans cannot live alone and always need the help of others. *Silaturahmi* does not have to involve long conversations; simply greeting neighbors is also included. Besides being a form of social interdependence, *silaturahmi* reconnects broken bonds of brotherhood. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of maintaining these relationships, as QS. An-Nisa (4):1 teaches humans to be pious and maintain kinship, because Allah always watches over and maintains relationships between people.

Second, sharing through charity reflects noble social concern, fostering empathy and a caring character, and generating rewards. This social interaction fosters a sense of responsibility and concern for others in everyday life. Social concern is a commendable moral that should be ingrained in everyone's soul. A person's concern has a positive impact on oneself, leading to rewards from Allah SWT. Interactions with others and the surrounding environment shape us into individuals with empathy and concern for others. One way to instill the value of social concern is through habitual charity. Charity, as a concrete form of social concern, can help shape an individual's character to be more caring and empathetic toward others. From a social and psychological perspective, charity not only provides material assistance but also brings emotional and spiritual satisfaction. The act of giving increases happiness, strengthens empathy, solidarity, and social relationships, while also encouraging the creation of harmonious communities and deeper and more sustainable happiness (Santosa, 2024). Charity and sharing in society have important meaning as manifestations of care, solidarity, and efforts to build shared prosperity. In Renged Village, the culture of sharing persists in various activities, such as celebrations, regardless of economic status. This practice strengthens social bonds, creates a sense of equality, maintains harmony, and serves as a natural mechanism for resolving differences among residents.

Third, Internalization of values is the process of integrating values, attitudes, beliefs, and rules into a person's personality so that they become part of everyday behavior and thinking. Internalisation is defined as the integration of behaviour, opinions and so on into the personality. Internalization as the unification of values within a person, or in psychology language is the adjustment of beliefs, values, attitudes, practices and standard rules within a person. According to Kama Abdul Hakam and Encep Syarief Nurdin, Internalisation is the process of presenting something originating in the external world as the internal property of an individual or a group. Values are essentially the ideas of a person or group about something Virtue, good, true, beautiful, wise, so that the idea is valuable and qualified to be used as a guideline in attitudes and actions. So, the internalisation of values aims to incorporate new values or to ensure the values already embedded in each individual or group. Internalized values can be national values, morals, culture, religion and objective values that are believed to be good for a group. According to Kama Abdul Hakam and Encep Syarief Nurdin, internalization of values is the process of changing values from the external world into the internal property of an individual or group,

including national values, morals, culture, religion, and principles that are used as guidelines for behavior (Hakam & Nurdin, 2016).

Based on research in Renged Village, the internalization of values is clearly evident through the cultural practices of sharing and mutual cooperation that are embedded in the behavior and mindset of residents. Children are accustomed to helping their parents or neighbors from an early age without being asked, imitating the real-life examples of their parents, community leaders, and the surrounding environment. These values are also reflected in religious activities, such as religious studies, *tahlilan* (religious recitation), or communal prayers, which are not merely rituals but also a means of instilling care, togetherness, and respect for tradition. Village programs, such as entrepreneurship training, also encourage residents who have internalized the value of sharing knowledge with their neighbors. Millennials explained that the community spontaneously helps those experiencing difficulties or holding celebrations, regardless of economic status. The Wacan Syekh tradition serves as a forum for socialization, where residents interact, prepare food, and distribute gifts. Values in the manuscript, such as the religious beliefs of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jaelani, integrity, perseverance, and accountability, serve as guidelines for social practices in the village, strengthening social relations while maintaining community harmony.

3.3. The Relevance of Spradley's Ethnography to the Theory of Symbolic Interactionism and the Theory of Social Constructivism in the Tradition of Sheikh's Discourse

Spradley's ethnography, with its emphasis on cultural understanding through participant observation and in-depth interviews, is highly relevant to the theories of symbolic interactionism and social constructivism. Spradley's ethnography provides a method for understanding how individuals actively construct meaning and reality through social interaction, which aligns with the fundamental principles of both theories. According to symbolic interactionism, people's interactions with the outside world are determined by the meanings they assign to symbols. With its emphasis on in-depth cultural knowledge and insider perspectives, Spradley's ethnography helps researchers identify the meanings and symbols people use in everyday interactions. Researchers can observe how these meanings develop and are shared in specific social situations through participant observation. According to social constructivism, social interaction is how people collectively create knowledge and social reality. Through componential analysis, taxonomy, and domain analysis, Spradley's ethnography allows researchers to identify how diverse individual perspectives and experiences contribute to the creation of collective reality. Understanding how shared values, standards, and beliefs are created and maintained through social contact is another benefit of analyzing cultural themes in Spradley's ethnography.

Spradley's ethnography is relevant because it provides rich empirical data on societal behavior, beliefs, and values; supports an interpretive approach by emphasizing the perspectives of social actors; enables analysis of social processes to understand meaning-making; and helps understand social diversity across cultural groups. Within the context of symbolic interactionism, Spradley's ethnography emphasizes interaction-based meaning, the role of language and symbols, and the process of individual interpretation of symbols. In social constructivism, this method emphasizes the construction of social reality, personal experience as a source of meaning, and local perspectives as builders of knowledge. Thus, Spradley's ethnography aligns with the idea that meaning and social reality are created through interaction, making it an effective tool for understanding how communities shape and interpret their cultural environment. Furthermore, Spradley's ethnography is related to symbolic interactionism theory and social constructivism theory in the Wacan Syekh tradition, namely (Sari, Wijaya, Hidayatullah, Sirodj, & Afgani, 2023):

Spradley's ethnography is highly relevant to symbolic interactionism and social constructivism. Within the context of symbolic interactionism, this method emphasizes participant observation and interviews to understand the interaction and interpretation of symbols in the Shaykh Discourse tradition. The Shaykh's use of symbols and the community's understanding of them are analyzed through componential analysis, highlighting subjective and individual meanings. Meanwhile, from a

social constructivist perspective, Spradley's ethnography highlights how meaning is socially constructed through interactions within discourse, with cultural and social contexts influencing understanding. Domain analysis and taxonomy help identify co-constructed categories of meaning, showing how meaning and knowledge are collectively formed and classified. Thus, Spradley's ethnography is an effective method for understanding Shaykh discourse, social meanings, symbolic interactions, and the influence of culture on individual understanding (Sari et al., 2023).

Spradley's ethnography, which focuses on understanding culture from the perspective of participants, is highly relevant to understanding the Wacan Sheikh tradition. Spradley's approach, which emphasizes exploring cultural meanings and interpretations from the perspective of cultural actors themselves, helps reveal the complexities and nuances of the Wacan Sheikh tradition that are often invisible from an outside perspective. The Relevance of Spradley's Ethnography in the Wacan Sheikh Tradition (Lestari & Zurinani, 2024). Spradley's ethnography emphasizes the importance of understanding culture from the perspective of those directly involved in it. In the context of Wacan Sheikh, this approach allows researchers to understand how community members interpret and live the tradition in a concrete way. Spradley developed a cultural domain analysis to identify important components within a culture, such as discourse texts, rituals, symbols, and associated social roles. In addition, taxonomic studies help classify aspects of culture, including discourse styles, ceremonies, or social hierarchies, while complementary analysis allows for comparisons of interpretations, roles, and variations.

Spradley's ethnography emphasizes the significance of social interaction in the creation of cultural meaning. Interactions between the Sheikh and his followers or between community members influence the understanding and practice of discourse. Through this approach, researchers can develop in-depth cultural theory, based on facts and participant perspectives, thus understanding the Sheikh's Discourse not merely as a text or ritual, but as a living system of meaning and social practice. The Sheikh's Discourse tradition also demonstrates symbolic and social construction. Religious, social, and cultural symbols are interpreted uniquely by each individual, while reading discourse becomes a social activity that builds consensus on meaning, strengthening cohesion, group identity, and social norms. The values embodied in the Sheikh's Discourse form the basis of the community's identity, norms, and practices, while also demonstrating local cultural adaptations to Islam. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the Sheikh's Discourse tradition can be interpreted as a social interaction involving symbols that have special meaning for the community that supports it. This group shapes its identity, values, and social conventions by creating and interpreting these symbols through reading the Sheikh's Discourse.

Symbolic Interactionism in the Sheikh's Wawacan Tradition, first, is as a symbol and meaning. Religious, social, and cultural symbols abound in the Sheikh's discourse, which is an oral tradition and text. Each person and group in society interprets and gives meaning to these symbols, such as prophetic stories, moral lessons, and noble ideals, in unique ways. Second, besides being a personal activity, reading the Sheikh's discourse is also a social activity. Broader understanding and consensus on meaning are generated through shared reading, debate, and interpretation. Group identity is formed and social cohesion is strengthened by this interaction. Third, is social construction. In the Sheikh's Wacan tradition, communities create meaning about the world, themselves, and their relationship with God through symbolic interaction. Wawacan values become the foundation for the development of social norms, identities, and relevant values within the community. The Sheikh's Wacan tradition, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, can be understood as a social interaction that uses symbols to construct meaning and identity. The discourse of the Sheikh refers to discourse or conversation surrounding the figure of the Sheikh, who may be a religious figure, a cleric, or other charismatic figure. In symbolic interactionism, this social interaction is viewed as a process of constructing meaning through the use of symbols, both verbal and non-verbal.

First, Symbols and Meaning. In the Shaykh Wacan tradition, symbols such as names, titles, life stories, teachings, or even objects associated with the Shaykh become the center of attention. These symbols are then interpreted and given meaning by individuals and groups in social interactions.

Second, Social interactions in the Shaykh Wacan can occur in various forms, such as religious studies, discussions, lectures, or even just informal conversations. Through these interactions, individuals share their understanding and interpretation of the Shaykh, as well as construct shared meanings about the identity, values, and norms associated with the figure. Third, Identity Construction. The Shaykh Wacan can also play a role in the construction of individual and group identities. By engaging in this discourse, individuals can identify themselves as followers, sympathizers, or even opponents of the Shaykh, depending on the interpretations and meanings they assign to the symbols involved. Fourth, Symbolic Dynamics. It is important to note that the meaning of the symbols in the Shaykh Wacan is not static. These meanings can change along with changes in social, cultural, and historical contexts. Continuous social interaction will shape and change the meaning of these symbols, so that the Wacan Syekh tradition remains alive and relevant. Thus, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, the Wacan Syekh tradition is a dynamic process in which social interactions involving symbols are linked and serve to construct meaning and identity (Haris & Amalia, 2018).

From a social constructivist perspective, Sheikh's discourse can be understood as a social construct shaped by individuals' interactions and experiences within society. Sheikh's discourse, which contains the stories of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, is not simply a written text but the result of his community's collective construction of meaning. First, the formation of collective meaning. Society actively constructs a shared understanding of the identity, norms, and values contained in the sheikh's discourse through the reading and dissemination of these stories. These meanings are continually reinterpreted and modified to suit changing social environments. Second, the role of social interaction. Social interactions, such as reading the sheikh's discourse at religious events, community discussions, or even casual conversations, are how meaning is constructed. People share diverse perspectives, experiences, and understandings through these exchanges, ultimately creating a deeper and more comprehensive meaning of the sheikh's discourse. Third, the social and psychological function. The tradition of the sheikh's discourse serves both social and psychological purposes. Socially, the sheikh's discourse can help spread cultural values, foster group identification, and increase community cohesion. Psychologically, the sheikh's discourse can provide solace, inspiration, and inner peace for those experiencing difficult times. Fourth, the construction of identity. Both individually and collectively, the sheikh's discourse can be seen as a construction of identity. Through the sheikh's discourse, people can understand the noble values contained in these stories, such as wisdom, courage, and piety. When combined, the sheikh's discourse can become a marker of cultural identification that distinguishes one community group from another. Fifth, the dynamics of change. Although deeply rooted in the culture of society, the sheikh's discourse tradition can be interpreted and changed over time. How the sheikh's discourse is interpreted and used in everyday life can be influenced by social, political, and economic shifts. Understanding the sheikh's discourse tradition by considering constantly changing social factors is crucial. Thus, a social constructivist perspective provides a rich lens for understanding how the sheikh's discourse tradition is not only a written text, but also the result of the dynamic and ongoing construction of meaning in the social interactions of its supporting community.

4. Conclusion

The Wacan Syekh tradition, or ritual, is a traditional belief system for overcoming obstacles in life, serving both social and psychological purposes. Psychologically, this ritual alleviates depressive emotions and the difficulty of facing difficult life obstacles. People are inspired by the knowledge that challenges, even those that initially seem impossible, can be overcome when they recite the stories contained in Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaelani's lectures. Those facing life's challenges inevitably feel more optimistic because of it. The Wacan Syekh tradition is a social practice that helps people build relationships with one another. Therefore, the Wacan Syekh tradition in Renged village truly serves as a means of socialization within the community. The Wacan Syekh practice does not have a significant impact; it is more of a strong suggestion, but if the intended effect is to obtain blessings or charisma from Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaelani's advice. As part of the process of religious socialization, the Wacan Syekh tradition is introduced into the community's social life. Gradually, the Wacan Syekh is accepted

and becomes a habit through interactions between individuals and groups within the community. Through repetition and reinforcement in social activities, Wacan Syekh has become part of the lifestyle of the people of Renged Village. The Wacan Syekh tradition, practiced in Renged Village, contributes to the community's socio-cultural development by preserving customs previously practiced by their ancestors. Currently, the community simply carries out or continues this tradition. They would feel less "afdol," less appropriate, and out of step with previous customs if they did not practice it, because they believe they no longer receive the blessings they once did. According to the hypothesis of social constructivism theory, knowledge and understanding of the Wacan Syekh tradition are formed through social interaction and shared experiences, acquired purely from external sources. Social constructivism rejects the idea that reality is beyond human perception. Instead, collective agreement and cooperation are considered to produce social reality. Knowledge and adherence to the rituals of the Wacan Syekh tradition help one stay safe, receive blessings, and avoid danger. This knowledge and adherence to rituals are not something that is already present and taken for granted; rather, they are actively formed through experience and social interaction.

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