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Religious Traditions and Egalitarian Spirit Case Study of Enculturation of Egalitarianism Values in Tahlilan Ritual in Javanese Rural Muslim Communities

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Abstract

This research was conducted by a qualitative approach. The research focus attention was everyday cultural life. The research area emphasized on the *tahlilan* as the religious ritual tradition within society. Religious ritual traditions were the basis to collect data as representatives of research units by emphasizing the procedures to implement the traditions, the underlying values, including the understanding or thoughts of individual members of society regarding the traditions. The research results showed that religious traditions within rural communities related to typology of their lifestyle sociality. This religious tradition was based on a loose grid but emphasizes strong group ties or a manifestation of egalitarianism principle.

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A. INTRODUCTION

This research follows up Ridjal et al. (2019) that santrinization has a spirit of egalitarianism. This study focuses on traditions changes or daily life rhythms of community members in rural areas and the characteristics of their social life which were previously seen as bound by a single tradition to show a gap with frame of reality. This frame should explain members of society in a new social life. This problem was based on emergence of songs from residents of research location village, namely Sumberarum village, Jombang Regency, East Java.

The song seems to imply the condition of society as described by Bauman (1995) in an effort to "searching for a centre that holds". The song also contains a message about the goals society aspiration. This view confirms Ki Hajar Dewantara's statement (1967) that Javanese song art was closely related to spiritual character or the soul image. Researchers suspect that Sumberarum has a change in value orientation manifested by changes in behavior and actions of individual residents. Society has cultural changes that more fluid, no longer anonymizing between subcultures as before. Bauman (2010) described the societal culture changes lead to a situation that was " growing more 'liquid' and 'lighter' than before ". One of these changes was shown Ridjal et al. (2020) that the existence of amalgamation leads to integration of identities between local subcultures. This study was guided by view that village communities were considered to have their own sociality.

Individual community members in Sumberarum have different socio-cultural backgrounds. These everyday life differences were manifested through titles that indicate which class an individual comes from. There were three types of designations as manifestations of local socio cultural identity background, namely *wong Njaba* or wong kedhusan, *wong njero* and *wong mambu-mambu*. *Wong njero* was a identity symbol of village members for *kyai (Islamic scientist)* family, *wong Njaba* was an identity symbol to describe society members who politically and socially in lower strata, and majority of village government officials generally come from circles symbolized as *wong mambu-mambu*. Based on kinship relations, members of *mambu-mambu* community consider themselves have a kinship relationship with *njero* people. The *Njaba* community consider themselves did not have direct kinship with other two groups, especially with *Njero* people.

These terms contains subcultural identity from recognition that Sumberarum was a *desa santri* (*village communities characterized by Islamic subculture*), or "*kedhung agama*"; namely prioritizing symbols of Islamic religious identity in the tradition. This can be linked to other terms which according to a number of village residents appeared long before these terms, namely: *wong loran* (residents who live in northern area of village) and *wong kidulan* (residents who live in southern area of village). The Sumberarum santrinization was also a determinant of dominant value orientation of new social order, based on local subcultural identity, or community members were based on their santri level.

These changes become more blurry. The field reality showed a blur differences in group identity classifications related to traditional characteristics or the rhythm of their daily cultural symbolism. Based on these events, research questions of this study was: Why do individuals as members of society develop new social identity

constructions or subcultures that were able to accommodate the diversity of traditional particularistic value orientations in their daily lives?

B. RESEARCH Framework

Habitat or social environmental conditions of society the members daily live can influence the habits, namely the rhythm of life or behavior patterns and actions of individuals as members of society in their daily lives. The relationship between habitat and habit emergence was not direct, but through the mediation of cognition within individuals. The emergence of habits really depends on their thinking about habitat, namely the type of habitus or certain orientations value that dominant in their daily lives. Habitus was borrowed from Bourdieu (1994) to explain a social tendency to think or act in certain ways (Scott, 2020). The relationship between habitat, habit and habitus shows a clear mutual relationship influence, inter-locking determinants (Bandura, 1977; Schunk, 2012), or each relationship confirms each other, compatibility conditions (Thompson, et al, 1990). The changes of one component were likely to affect the other components.

Clements and Shelford (1939) described habitat as the physical environment around a species, or population of species, or group of species, or <u>community</u>. They were consistent with of Krausman and Morrison (2016). Habitat was an information provider about the series of events observed or events experienced by individuals. Habitat was an event that occurs before the emergence of individual behavior and emotions, in this study were called habit. Rosenthal (2011) explained that habit formation was a process where behavior becomes automatic. Habitat was not the cause of habit, but the emergence precedes habit.

The relationship between habitat and habit emergence was very dependent on cognitive mediation system. Habit was a product of human thinking about their habitat, or individuals' interpretation of information available in habitat, in this study was referred to as habitus. How individuals think about the situation and conditions of their habitat based on their value orientation determines the form of their reactionary actions to the habitat, or their habits within habitat. Therefore, level of change originates from dominance of certain value orientations developed in individuals thinking. Changes in dominant value orientations within individuals will influence the way they interpret the information available in their habitat. These changes in turn can result in changes in habits or the rhythm of individual's daily life as members of society, vice versa.

The tradition and identity in this research were related dialectically. Susanti and Rumondor (2022) explained that birth of religious expressions (in form of traditions) was an indication of dialectical phenomenon of religion and culture. Effendi (2009) stated that a tradition was useful to show the philosophical meaning of moral values to connect one person to another and contain deep psychological elements. Kleden (1986) stated that by relying on tradition and integration, a culture will maintain its identity, ensuring the sustainable existence. Muliadi, et al, (2020) emphasized that behavior or character of each individual was motivated by characteristics of an identity. Furthermore, Rahmaniah (2012) added that concept of social identity contains the same meaning as the concept of ethnic identity, referring to all aspects of ethnic issues, such as beliefs, knowledge, culture, religion, language and inherited customs.

Williams (1977) stated that tradition was the surviving past. Langlois (2001) added that traditional society refers to a society characterized by a past orientation, not the future, with a dominant role in customs. Thus, identity construction process was related to historical background of society and developed traditions. The survival of a tradition as the surviving past was very dependent on socialization. This was proven by Ridjal et al. (2022) that community at their research location still maintains the *nyadran* tradition. Furthermore, Williams added that tradition in practice was actually a hegemonic and domination expression. Witton (1986) stated that hegemonic ideology was a system of ideas that dominates society's thinking patterns, but originates from and benefits the upper layers of society.

The construction of santri village identity symbol or "*kedhung* religion " cannot be separated from thought patterns socialized by "*wong njero*" circles. As mentioned in previous section, members of "*Wong njero*" circle, especially since the restoration of mosque and establishment of Islamic boarding school, have declared themselves as santri. They control most of values that were highly valued in society, namely property, prestige and power. Weber stated that these three components were dimensions that build a system of social stratification in society (Sanderson, 1995 and Ritzer, 2011). In turn, changing Sumberarum into a santri village will change the previous pattern of social relations.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Sumberarum, a village in Jombang Regency, East Java. Sumberarum has a history of village founding. The village history referred as local level history which originates from stories or verbal expressions of community members that more folklore in nature (Georges and Owens (1995). This village in its early days was known as a santri village or "*kedhung agama*". This comes from oral history that lived and developed in Sumberarum. Raymond Williams stated that this type of history generally shows what called as the myth of concern, Baldick (2015) called it a legend as functions to stabilize values and order. Abdullah (1985) said

that local history only means the history of a place, a locality, whose geographical boundaries was a village. Furthermore, Abdullah added that local history can be formulated as a story in past of a group or community groups located in a limited geographical area.

Finberg and Skipp (1967) defined a limitation as more specific boundary of a community. Therefore, local history depends on its geographic boundaries that will deal more directly and intimately with humans as actors. It originates from oral expressions, local history that contains an important meaning, as a reflection of social system of community, or projective system. Vansina (1973) stated that oral traditions were a reflection of reality. Furthermore, Abdullah (1985) emphasized this reality as a cultural formation.

This research refers local history as more local story, or stories that have been told orally from generation to generation. Lynn Abrams (2010) provided a broad definition of oral history, namely "... almost all interview conducted with an individual can be labeled as 'oral history'." James (2000) adds that "... life stories were cultural constructions refer to public discourse structured by class and gender conventions". Therefore, oral history actually uses a wide spectrum of possible roles, self-representations, and available narratives. The stories, symbols and logic embedded in them can be understood for their deeper meaning given the complexity found in lives and historical experiences of people who tell them.

This study uses a qualitative approach based on Yin (2011), Tracy (2013), and Miles et al. (2014). Ridjal (2003) explained this study has aim to explore or building a proposition or explaining the meaning behind reality. The meaning of social phenomena, through the self-intersubjective method, was emphasized, but the objective conditions of socio-cultural life were not put aside (Ridjal, 2003). This study also pays attention to statements of Anderson and Jack (1991) that nature and level of community was depending on individual definition. Thus, the study units in data collection was comprehension or meaning of individuals as members of society toward village history, and this history places more emphasis on oral history (Ritchie, 2004).

The data collection concerns to field data consistency and congruence techniques. Merriam (1996) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the congruence term for internal validity, and consistency or dependability for reliability of qualitative study data. The field data collection process involved a number of informants. The collected data was interpreted by taking into account the informants comprehension.

Researchers followed Adler and Adler's directions(1994) to achieve a high level of consistency and congruence, namely: using a "dual observer" strategy, testing the relevance of data through discussions with colleagues, using various data collection techniques from various sources and being involved in situation of study location. Data analysis uses stages of flow model from Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and verification which ran simultaneously, or took place simultaneously with data collection process.

D. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results showed that symbol of Sumberarum's identity as a santri village or religious *kedhung* has changed the previous social formation which based on historical considerations, namely *wong kidulan* (members of village founders) and *wong loran* (immigrants). The santrinization makes the members of society were differentiated by cultural value orientation. The historical dichotomy was replaced by a cultural dichotomy, namely: the *gendero ijo* (santri) and *gendero abang* (*abangan*). This dichotomy was consistent with name of their region, Jombang. However, this grouping was still characterized by inheritance of past conceptions of thought, namely the conception of concentric circles of power (Rahman, 1995), as well as the movement in one's conception of Javaneseness (Lombart, 1996). Such a pattern was based on concept of mandala to establishes an order of thought related to social formations determined by their proximity to center. The movement to change the concept of Javanese Psychology" is from not yet Javanese movement towards rather Javanese until it becomes Javanese.

Sumberarum community developed into three groups, namely wong njero, wong Njaba and wong mambumambu. Wong njero was an identity symbol members of Hasani family who have never had a marriage relationship with wong Njaba. This group was believed to have advantages in terms of mastery of religious knowledge and a higher level of formal education than other groups. Wong njero was also symbolized as a model to control social, religious and moral life. Wong mambu-mambu was a identity symbol for group members who consider themselves still have a kinship relationship with wong njero but they also think to have a kinship relationship with Njaba people. Most members of circle symbolized as wong Njaba do not have direct kinship relations with two groups mentioned above, especially with wong njero.

These changes make the identity symbols before and after Sumberarum became a religious *kedhung* were not longer at forefront. The groupings were based on local cultural identity background which very prominent in past. Society seems to be building a new identity construction that binds together the diversity of traditional particularistic identities. They named this new identity construction as *padha tampare*. This new identity emerged along with Sumberarum's santrinization journey.

Changes in patterns of social relations encouraged the *njero* people to re-emphasize the symbol of dominant value orientation in early days of santrinization, namely *ngramekna masjid* (enliven the mosque), to maintain spirit of togetherness. The rationale for these efforts was they did not longer fully control the sources of previous value: economic, political, and social. The mosque as institutional for the center of mandala was characterized by a hierarchical structure of society, but was substantially an open place, regardless the social position of individuals. Mosques were not only places for prayer, but also carry out social functions, places for social interaction between individuals across social statuses. Social distance (Triandis & Triandis, 1960; Bogardus, 1959 and Magee and Smith, 2013) between structures becomes close, proximity (Coon, 1985). Human as a social species have a need for social relationships (Zhang, et al, 2014). Such a situation can support the creation of an interpersonal relationship based on positive interpersonal attraction (Newcomb, 1960). The social relations between individuals as members of society develop a conception of togetherness spirit value. This process supports the creation of a spirit of togetherness was constructed in new identity development, *padha tampare* (Ridjal, 2004); namely same or equivalent subcultural identity.

An identity that accommodates a diversity of value orientations relies on continuity of tradition as a basis to preserve it, namely socio-religious ritual traditions. The preferred socio-religious tradition was *tahlilan*. Following the Kleden's (1984) view and relying on traditions, integration of diverse individual cultures can be built and a new identity embedded in that tradition can be maintained. Maintaining this tradition was an effort to build and maintain *Padha Tampare's* identity. Various ritual traditions, especially *tahlilan*, were implemented to support the strength of this identity, namely socio-religious ritual traditions that support the community *padha tampare ---*tamparization (Ridjal, 2004), namely the process to build a new identity to accommodates various subcultural identities. This process was through traditional religious ritual practices, especially *tahlilan*.

Priority was given to the ritual traditions in tamparization related to death ceremonies. They were a reflection of basic altruistic nature of human sociality. One of religious ritual traditions to support the collective identity of *padha tampare* was *tahlilan*, the ritual to pray for safety in grave of someone who has died. The procedures to makes this ritual were carried out equally regardless of social status and subcultural identity background. The tahlilan ritual was also called the Koran prayer at night, at Maghrib or Isha, for seven days starting from day of death. There was no different treatment based on social status or subcultural identity background. This was a form of egalitarianism in social life, in sense that every family receives the same treatment and respect from society, regardless of their group's subcultural identity background. The implementation of such ritual traditions was based on a sense of emotional and supra-emotional ties between individuals as members of society. Emotional bonds were formed when they were both still alive, and supra-emotional bonds occur because they still have a sense of attachment and concern about the fate of souls of community members who have died. The group ties between its members were very strong.

The involvement of individual community members in this tahlilan tradition illustrates how strong the people bound in togetherness. On one hand, there were different and separate individuals, perhaps having the same reasons for staying together, despite lacking a sense of unity and connection. On other hand, they have a connected sense of identity, connecting more deeply and personally with each other. They spend more time together and have a stable relationship. In fact, relationship of attachment and care in this tahlilan tradition was not limited to life, but continues until death. Situations like this illustrate a strong group dimension (Douglas, 1978; Thompson et al, 1990)

The *tahlilan* activities were always accompanied by puluran (food/drink) distributed to participants within the rhythm of *sak takir-takir dhing*, namely each participant gets a gift in same quantity and size. There was no special treatment or privileges for certain people. They were seen as equals. This means that each individual participant in tahlilan ritual tradition will be given the same reward.

The new local subcultural identity symbols were developed by relying on socio-religious ritual traditions, especially tahlilan. The center moves from mosque to tradition then to individuals. Anyone, regardless of position in social formation who carries out the tradition, was seen as bound by an identity in *padha tampare*. Cultural identity was not divided by *santri* and *abangan*, nor was it traced from mosque *mandala: wong njero, wong mambu-mambu*, and *wong Njaba*, nor was it based on level of religious knowledge or the quality of religious practice. Therefore, next development that occurred was that someone who professed Islam and practiced one of traditions (especially tahlilan, congratulations for dead), was deemed sufficient to be in ranks of *padha tampare*.

This ritual tradition was prioritized because it emphasizes a sense of togetherness. The emphasis on one component of social system encourages society to ignore other components of social system. So, leader of traditional *tahlilan* ritual not only come from *njero* community as before. However, at certain times and places it can be led by those from any identity background, it was no longer limited as in past. Rewards for achievements were considered, instead of prioritizing ascriptive patterns. The opportunity to become a traditional controller was starting to open up, regardless of origin of one's social position. It was so easy to change roles as tahlil leader and

relatively fixed procedures for its implementation illustrate the weak dimensions of grid. Douglas (1978) and Thompson et al. (1990) stated that strong grid dimension describes how different people were in groups and how they take different roles. At one end of this spectrum, weak grid, people were relatively homogeneous in their abilities, jobs, and activities and can easily switch roles. This makes them less dependent each other.

E. CONCLUSION

Individual community members in Sumberarum village were broadly grouped into two cultural groups: *santri* and *abangan*. This can be traced from thoughts of those who associate it with *kirata* as the name of Jombang area. Jombang means that society consists of two groups: the *ijo* flag (santri) and *abang* flag (*abangan*). However, the oral history of village's founding suggests that structure of Sumberarum society was not much different from old Javanese structure, inherited from concept of concentric circles.

Along with santrinization of Sumberarum, culture of mosque *ngramekna* was developed. The "*mandala*" spectrum centers on mosque as a determinant of level of Islamic boarding school of its individual members. The further away from mosque, the weaker level of Islamic boarding school. The terms associated with residential location of individual members of community came to fore: *wong njero*, *wong mambu-mambu* and *wong Njaba*. In fact, *wong jaba* were seen as people of honor. The construction of an individual's identity was tied to background of their residential location, regarding their value orientation and traditions.

Santrinization relies on its ritual traditions. The traditions emphasized the emotional attachment between individual members, it was prioritized, especially the tahlilan ritual tradition. Ritual traditions bind individual members of society in *padha tampare*. The distribution of resources in this mainstay ritual tradition of tamparization follows the rhythm of *sak takir-takir dhing*, namely everyone was treated equally regardless of their background and social position.

This new identity put *tahlilan* (ritual traditions related to death ceremonies) as the spearhead. It was not the level of knowledge or religious quality, but claiming to be a Muslim and *tahlilan* acceptance was considered enough to bound by identity of *padha tampare*. Communities that maintain ritual tradition of *tahlilan* describes the attachment between individuals in the groups as very strong, or tied into strong groups. As for procedures and processes to implement the tahlilan ritual tradition, this society was controlled by a weak grid. This society has little internal role differentiation, relationships between groups members become blur. This type of society prioritizes institutionalized equality, eliminating social differences and equalizing outcomes. This type of society put religious identity based on definitions built in each group. A society that has strong group and weak grid dimensions characterizes an egalitarian society (Thompson et al, 1990).

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