



JESS 11 (1) (2022): 36-43

http://journal.unnes.ac.id/sju/index.php/jess



Symbolic meaning of *Barikan* tradition in realizing maritime culture preservation of the Mojo Village, Pemalang

Rizky Septiana Dewi¹[∞], Hamdan Tri Atmaja², Rodiyah Rodiyah²

¹SMP Negeri 3 Comal, Indonesia ²Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info

Abstract

History Articles Received: 25 February 2022 Accepted: 22 March 2022 Published: 30 June 2022

Keywords: Barikan Tradition; Coastal Community; Fishers.

Coastal community is people who live and carry out socio-economic activities related to the coastal and its resources. One of the cultural wealth owned by the coastal community is sea alms. The purpose of this paper is to describe the symbolic meaning of the Barikan tradition in Mojo Village, describe how the community interprets the Barikan tradition, and find out the factors that influence the Barikan tradition in Mojo Village that still exists amid modernization. This research is expected to find and develop knowledge related to symbolic meaning in the Barikan tradition as well as contribute to the development of science, especially Social Studies Education, which includes social change. Data sources are informants, documents, and phenomena or events. The results showed that the symbolic meaning of the Barikan Tradition was in the buffalo head, tumpeng, and the offerings tradition. The village head interprets the barikan tradition as identity, the fishers as a ritual, and teenagers as entertainment. The factors that influence the Barikan tradition to continue to exist are the historical and mythical factors that have developed in the community. Thus far, there has been no change in the Barikan tradition even though the times have led to modernization.

[™] Correspondence address:

Jl. Nusa Indah 3, Wonokromo, Comal, Pemalang, Jawa Tengah E-mail: rizkyseptiana85@gmail.com

p-ISSN 2252-6390 e-ISSN 2502-4442

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a maritime country with the largest archipelagic in the world, consisting of 17,000 large and small islands. Geographically, two-thirds of Indonesia's area consists of the sea, which has considerable potential in the marine sector. The great amount of natural resources produced from the sea makes many Indonesians dependent upon it for their livelihoods, and it drives them to reside in the coastal areas.

Coastal communities are a group of residents (fishers, fish cultivators, fish traders, et cetera) who live together in coastal areas that develop and have different cultures from other communities by sharing their dependence on resources (Nafelo 2020). coastal These communities have different characteristics from others. These characteristics include their tendency to have a hard and open character and diversity that tends to be acculturative (Septianto et al., 2015). In living their lives, coastal communities have different knowledge, beliefs, social roles, and social structures. Most of them make a living as fishers, and some are laborers in the fisheries sector. Law number 45 of 2009 concerning fisheries states that fishers are people whose livelihood is fishing. The fishing community consists of social categories that form a social unit as a system. They also have a value system and cultural symbols to reference their behavior in everyday life. This cultural factor is the difference between the fishing community and other social groups. The fishing community has its own cultural system, unlike people living in the mountains, valleys, mainland, or urban areas (Kusnadi 2002).

One of the cultural wealth owned by coastal communities is sea alms. The sea alms tradition is one of the traditional rituals of the fishing community often performed, especially on the Java island. Javanese society has many traditions, one of which is a salvation ceremony. According to Suseno (Shely 2020), as per the Javanese concept, salvation is a traditional Javanese ceremony that has religious and social meanings and values that can evoke a sense of solidarity, such as togetherness and harmony, while at the same time creating a shared feeling that all people are at the same degree.

Each sequence of events and offerings must have symbols that have meaning in the traditional ceremony. The Barikan tradition is a ritual tradition of the fishing community by throwing the heads of cow or buffalo, food ingredients, flowers, and fruits into the middle of the sea, starting with the reading of special prayers. Fishers carry out the Barikan tradition in Mojo Village to express their gratitude to the God Almighty for the fortune given to fishers with abundant marine resources. People believe that giving out offerings is a ritual that can avoid all forms of disasters from the ocean. The fishing community that performs the ritual believes this as well. They still adhere to the local traditions of the local community. This is proved by the way they maintain and preserve the traditions of their ancestors from generation to generation, such as giving alms to the sea to this day. Apart from being a local tradition of the local community that needs to be maintained and preserved, the Barikan tradition is also a maritime cultural identity that they still believe as a sacred tradition.

The Barikan tradition, as the local culture of the Mojo village community, is proof that culture is formed from the human mindset. Culture, according to Geertz, is a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life. From a social point of view, according to Durkheim, the tradition of giving alms to the sea has a high meaning and value of social solidarity, a belief and feeling shared by the community in forming a system that is appropriate in the pattern of living together (Ritzer 2012).

Nowadays, the Barikan tradition is faced with a problem with the birth of communication technology that threatens the sustainability of the local culture that has existed for a long time. The development of communication technology has led to the modernization of people's lives. Modernization can be defined as changing from traditional methods to a more advanced and new or modern way to improve the quality of a more advanced society. According to Rohadi and Sudarsono (Ilahi 2018), modernization is a change in mindset, attitude, and personality that were previously traditional to advance. The invention of modern communication technology has brought people to a rational, progressive, and positive attitude, especially in improving the quality of life and achieving human goals. The more people get to know these new technologies, the more they get fascinated by them. Hence, fishers who used simple traditional tools to catch fish are now switching to the more modern ones.

The influence of modernization that entered the Mojo Village community certainly caused some changes in people's lives. One of which is the shift in habits of local communities (Larasati 2018). The influence is apparent from the lifestyle of the people. In the past, they had a simpler lifestyle compared to now. The existence of communication and information technology in the form of electronic media such as cellphones makes people now able to communicate without direct communication. Accordingly, the sociocultural elements of the community changed, and the process of social transformation from a traditional society to a more modern society took place (Martono 2018).

Society is a system that is constantly changing. Changes in people's lives mentioned above are natural happening that occurs. For instance, in the Mojo Village community's case, they change very quickly following the times. These changes can happen in every part of their lives, one of which is the values or norms they adhere to. This change might cost them their traditional values, especially those in the Barikan tradition. According to Sedyawati (in Bahrudin, Masrukhi, and Atmaja 2017), changes in a traditional culture are caused by several factors, such as the development of communication technology, the desire to change, the lack of socialization about local culture to the younger generation, and even the existence of new values that are not according to

that culture. The best solution for this is to strengthen the knowledge of the local culture.

In the current society, the Barikan tradition is meant for a ritual tradition, but it is also a mandatory activity performed annually by the villagers in Mojo as mere entertainment without properly understanding the meaning of the tradition itself. If this continues to be allowed, the understanding of the meaning and value of the Barikan tradition will change. The absence of socialization or training provided by the local government to learn local culture is also one of the causes of the lack of maintaining local traditions amid the times. Tradition has different meanings depending on the community and region. А study conducted by (Abdurrohman 2015) stated that sea alms is a tradition formed by the local community by applying the values of goodness in every sequence of the process. The symbols in each sequence of the process are shared thoughts and collective agreements by the community to create values packaged in a symbol.

The sea alms tradition has a ritual that is a condition of doing the tradition itself. According to (Deb 2018), the rituals carried out by the fishing community were a form of ritual observance that was carried out from generation to generation, which turned into a unique religious, cultural creation. The ritual that is carried out is a ritual that is regulated and arranged in a sociocultural system. In addition to rituals, in a sea alms tradition, offerings must be fulfilled as a form of the sacredness of the tradition. According to (Puspita 2018), the offerings used in a sea alms tradition reflect the coastal community's belief in Allah SWT and supernatural beings such as Nyi Roro Kidul (The Queen of Southern Sea in Javanese mythology). This shows that the beliefs of coastal communities are included in syncretism because of the acculturation of Javanese culture with Islamic culture.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the symbolic meaning of the Barikan tradition in Mojo Village, Ulujami District, Pemalang Regency, describe how the community interpret the Barikan tradition in Mojo Village, Ulujami District, Pemalang Regency, and find out the factors that influence the Barikan tradition in Mojo Village that still exists amid modernization.

METHOD

The approach used by researchers in this study is qualitative. This approach is used because it can connect researchers and informants more closely. The qualitative approach discusses the background and the individual thoroughly (Moelong 2010). The research location is in Mojo Village, Ulujami District, Pemalang Regency by considering that Mojo Village is one of the villages that still carries out and maintains the tradition of giving alms to the Barikan sea. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and Interviews documentation. took nine informants, namely the village head, two fishers, 2 Barikan tradition committees, one community leader, one religious leader, and two teenagers.

Triangulation technique is used to validate the data. Triangulation is a data validity checking technique that utilizes something other than the data created for checking purposes or as a comparison against the data itself (Moelong 2011). In this study, the researcher used source triangulation to check the validity of the data. According to Patton (Moelong 2010), source triangulation is the validity of the data carried out by researchers by checking according to the questions posed to the informants. It compares data and then re-checking the reliability of information obtained through different times and tools in qualitative methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Symbolic Meaning of the Barikan Tradition

The Barikan tradition is one of the sea alms or sea salvation traditions still maintained and preserved by the people of Mojo Village. As a symbolic meaning, the Mojo community considers the Barikan Tradition a sacred ancestral ceremony that must always be performed every year for the peaceful life of fishers. There is an assumption that if this ceremony is not carried out, it will cause unwanted effects or impacts on the community. All informants stated and agreed that the Barikan Tradition symbolically is a form of community gratitude for the work or catch they have received from the sea. This is in line with Ruslan's research (2014) which stated that the sea alms tradition is a religious expression carried out by the fishing community to manifest the fishers' gratitude to God for the fortune they get from the sea. In addition, fishers also ask for protection from various kinds of danger, poverty, and anxiety.

The Barikan tradition has a procession of events with meaning and a symbol of sacredness. It makes this Barikan tradition not only a tradition believed by the community, but its implementation can bring blessings in the lives of fishers and the people who live in it. The sequence of the Barikan tradition procession starts from the recitation at night and provides compensation to orphans, then the next day continues with the main event, namely the wayang golek (puppet arts) performance, larungan (give out offerings), closed with a prayer together and the last event is an entertainment program. The entertainment program here is usually a dangdut (folk music from Java) orchestra to entertain the people of Mojo Village themselves or domestic tourists who come and want to see the Barikan tradition.

One of the Barikan processions symbolically in this tradition is the larungan procession. Larungan, or the process of handing over the prepared offerings to the ancestors at sea, means cleansing sins and getting rid of bad luck. The larungan process begins with preparing all the required offerings into the Cungguban (a place to put offerings), which later will be prayed for, then brought by a special ship to be floated into the sea. The larungan process is carried out simultaneously with the procession of fishing boats, which in the process of implementation, there are approximately 200 fishing boats participating in the procession. In this larungan procession, fishers who have boats are required

to participate in the event. This is done so that the fishers and the ships will get blessings and be free from all harm when they are at sea.

For the Javanese people, a ritual is a form of devotion and sincerity to God, partly manifested in symbols that have deep meanings. The symbol is manifested in the form of offerings presented in rituals of salvation, ruwatan (purification ritual), and so on (Sholikin, 2010). The Barikan tradition, besides the sacred procession, also has a condition for offerings that have special values and meanings. The offerings used in the Barikan tradition ceremony are offerings from the land and the results of plants that bear fruit and grow above the ground. The offerings include Buffalo head (Cow), whole fruits, market snacks, all kinds of porridge consisting of red and white porridge, green bean porridge, and most importantly, kendhil porridge. It consists of all kinds of wedangan (drinks), nasi tumpeng (cone-shaped rice) consisting of Tolak Bala Tumpeng, Megeg Tumpeng, Kendil Rice, Kupat Lepet, Roasted Chicken, and Toys consisting of pure gold of at least 1 gram.

The many types of offerings make the nominal value in the Barikan tradition high, reaching up to tens to hundreds of millions. These offerings are purchased with self-help money deliberately collected by fishers for the Barikan tradition. This offering is a symbol of the gratitude of the fishing community to their ancestors that are delivered through the sea. The types of offerings made are all adjusted to what the ancestors ordered and wanted. These offerings are not allowed to be taken and consumed by humans. If that happens, humans who eat it will get bad luck or reinforcements from the ancestors of Mojo Village. This is in line with (Aristanto 2011) research that in a tradition, the completeness of the offerings used in Javanese rituals is an absolute requirement. Therefore, the people who carry out the tradition try to prepare the offerings as completely as possible to avoid bad omens.

The offering symbol of the Barikan tradition is the cow or buffalo's head. The history of giving this buffalo head comes from

Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono, who often gave out buffalo head on the Southern Sea. Buffaloes are bought for the meat to be eaten by the whole community, and their heads are to be offered to Dewi Lanjar (the Queen of the Northern Seas in Javanese Mythology) as a form of gratitude for the fish caught. This tradition is still believed to this day as a form of gratitude to the ancestors at sea. The head of a cow or buffalo gave out is also interpreted as an offering to Unseen Creatures or what the people of Mojo Village refer to as ancestors. The goal is to ask the ancestors to continue protecting the sea as the place of their livelihoods and as a hope that the sea can continue to produce abundant fish. This is in line with research (Falah, 2020) that buffalo heads in the sea alms tradition are the main symbol in the offerings. The head without other limbs shows the main essence and good offerings in the sea alms tradition.

Besides the buffalo head, another identical thing to the Barikan tradition offerings is Nasi Tumpeng (cone-shaped rice). Tumpeng for Javanese people is an expression of the word "metu dalan kang plate," or living through a straight path (Sholikin, 2010). Tumpeng serves rice with side dishes made in a cone shape. Usually, tumpeng is served in yellow rice or uduk rice (steamed rice cooked in coconut milk). Tumpeng is identical to the culture of the Javanese and Betawi people who have Javanese ancestry when celebrating an important event or feast. However, almost all Indonesian people are familiar with nasi tumpeng. The shape of the cone is closely related to the geographical conditions of Indonesia, especially Java island, which has many volcanic ranks. The origin of the tumpeng is that the Indonesian people glorify the mountain as a place for the ancestral spirits or often called hyang. When the Javanese people were influenced by Hindu culture, the rice was then formed into a cone-like shape of the holy mountain Mahameru as the abode of the gods. From then on, tumpeng is often used for thanksgiving events.

The cone often used in the Barikan tradition is the cone of rejecting bad lucks. This cone is often used in joyful ceremonies, such as

circumcision and celebrations. The characteristic of this tumpeng is the presence of whole chicken eggs, whole shallots, grilled shrimp paste, and red chilies at the top end of the tumpeng. All these foods are attached using bamboo or sticks. The cone means prosperity, fertility, and safety. Tumpeng has a shape like a mountain where the water flows from it to support the plants; therefore, the shape of this mountain is a symbol of true prosperity. Meanwhile, the plants are formed into a spring which describes life and growth.

The Meaning of the Barikan Tradition by the Mojo Village Community

The barikan tradition has different meanings for the people of Mojo Village. The findings show that the barikan tradition is interpreted by several informants, namely the Village Head, Fishers, and Youth. For the village head, it is interpreted as an identity. The barikan tradition is a tradition or custom that is carried out because it has become part of the identity of the people in Mojo. Thus, if they do not do it, the community will feel like something is missing and will impact their lives as a whole. The barikan tradition, which is routinely carried out once a year, can also indirectly introduce local traditions as the identity of the people of Mojo Village to outsiders.

For fishers, the barikan tradition is interpreted as a ritual that they must carry out because it is believed to bring blessings and safety. Hence, the fishing communities feel the need to carry it out. In addition, this tradition is a form of gratitude from the fishing community for the achievements or income they get from working in the sea as fishers. The main goal of this is to ask for safety and blessings for fishers when they are at sea to sail and return home safely. The Barikan tradition is also interpreted as a form of communication between the fishing community in Mojo Village and their ancestors who inhabit the sea area.

As a tradition that has been believed and its implementation is also believed to have a good impact on the fishing community, the Barikan tradition must continue to be maintained and preserved so that the fishers community in Mojo Village can continue to live in blessings and use the sea as a livelihood in fulfilling a living for their families. The impact of not implementing the Barikan Tradition is misfortune or distress that will befall Mojo Village and its entire community.

The Barikan tradition in Mojo Village is believed to have grown within its people as the implementation has never changed, from the sequence of processions, offerings prepared, prayers offered, to the community's enthusiasm in participating in a series of events in the tradition. This is because the Barikan tradition continues to be preserved from generation to generation by inviting the younger one to participate in the Barikan Tradition activities. Elders in Mojo Village always invite and urge all people from all generation groups to continue carrying out this tradition to maintain the welfare of fishers' lives. Therefore, no matter the circumstances, this tradition must continue to be carried out, particularly the important part of the tradition, the procession of offerings and prayer together. This is in line with research (Setiawan, 2020), which states that sea alms are an obligatory ritual for fishers to express their gratitude for the fortune they get from the sea. They need to carry out this tradition to pray for safety and get blessings from Allah SWT in carrying out their activities at sea.

The meaning of the barikan tradition as a sacred tradition changes when teenagers interpret it. For teenagers, the barikan tradition is entertainment. They consider the barikan tradition as an annual tradition to gather with other communities. In addition, the purpose of the youth following the barikan tradition is to unwind and entertain themselves since it is the biggest sea party and is only held once a year which makes them feel enthusiastic about participating in the tradition. They focus more on the entertainment aspect of the barikan tradition, such as the dangdut orchestra, compared to following the rituals in the barikan tradition. The barikan tradition will only be interpreted as entertainment and not a sacred ritual tradition if this continues. Therefore, there

needs to be awareness for teenagers to learn, participate, and get involved in preserving the barikan tradition. This is in line with Mustaqim's (2017) research, which stated that many young people do not understand the symbols and meanings in a tradition. Not only that, but the generations also do not understand the meaning of the offerings used. Thus, the current tradition is nothing more than a mere ritual with no meaning and symbols.

Factors Affecting the Existence of Barikan Tradition

The existence of the Barikan tradition in the Mojo Village community is influenced by two factors, namely historical factors and mythical factors. Based on historical factors, the Barikan tradition was handed down by ancestors. The history of the Barikan tradition, according to the informant, is a traditional ceremony that is carried out once a year. Historically, this tradition was carried out for the safety of fishers in Mojo Village who earned their livelihood from the coastal resources. Meanwhile, the sea is a vast nature that does not rule out the possibility that it can pose a risk to fishers who are sailing. To prevent the unwanted circumstances, the ancestors did sea alms by giving out offerings. The ancestors also manifested this as an expression of gratitude for the goodness of nature in providing resources to fishers for them to provide for their families and livelihoods.

The next factor is the myth that develops in society regarding the Barikan tradition. The Barikan tradition is a traditional event considered sacred by the people of Mojo Village; therefore, if it is not carried out, it can cause unwanted adverse effects, especially for those who work as fishers. The myth creates fear in the community if the tradition is not carried out. Based on the results of interviews conducted with informants, throughout the Barikan traditional ceremony, there has never been a change in terms of the month of implementation, the procession, or modifications to the type of offerings given. This happens due to the myth that develops in Mojo

Village that everything in The Barikan tradition cannot be changed except in terms of entertainment. The myth that developed in this community has succeeded in making the Barakan tradition still exist amid the times. This supports research by Sulistyowati (2018), which claimed that people believe that the ritual tradition of giving out offerings is mandatory to be carried out. They believe that if the tradition is not carried out properly, disaster will arise as a consequence or punishment.

The myth about the Barikan tradition can indirectly influence people's way of thinking to never eliminate the tradition as part of the Mojo Village community and will continue to carry it out by recruiting committees from the younger generations. Myths can also create a sense of worry and fear in the community about the impact of this tradition is not carried out, which makes the villagers perform the Barikan tradition on the Month of Suro every year.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the people of Mojo Village interpret the head of the buffalo, tumpeng, and offerings as a sacred symbol of Barikan Tradition, which must exist. The people of Mojo Village interpret the Barikan tradition as something sacred and must be carried out as a form of gratitude for the resources obtained and gratitude to the ancestral spirits. Factors that influence the existence of the Barikan Tradition are historical factors and mythical factors that develop in the community. In addition, the changing of times does not influence the Barikan tradition. The community still carries out the tradition every Suro Month, with processions and types of offerings according to the rules that previous ancestors have set.

REFERENCES

Abdurrohman, Muhammad. 2015. "Memahami Makna-Makna Simbolik Pada Upacara Adat Sedekah Laut Di Desa Tanjungan Kecamatan Kragan Kabupaten Rembang." *Jurnal The Messenger* 7(1):27–34.

- Aristanto, Zaenal. 2011. "Perang Obor Upacara Tradisi Di Tegal Smbi, Tahunan, Jepara." Sabda: Jurnal Kajian Kebudayaan 6(1):88–94.
- Bahrudin, Babul, Masrukhi, dan Atmaja H.T. 2017. "Pergeseran Budaya Lokal Remaja Suku Tengger Di Desa Argosari Kecamatan Senduro Kabupaten Lumajang." Journal of Educational Social Studies 6(1):20–28.
- Deb, Apurba Krishna. 2018. "'Surrender to Nature': Worldviews and Rituals of the Small-Scale Coastal Fishers of Bangladesh." *Marine Policy* 92(October 2017):1–12.
- Falah, Fajrul. 2020. "Makna Simbolik Sesaji Tradisi Baritan Di Asemdoyong Pemalang Jawa Tengah." *Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Antropologi* 4(1):39–40.
- Ilahi, Muhammad Takdir. 2018. Modernisasi Kurikulum Pesantren. Yogyakarta: IRCisoD.
- Kusnadi. 2002. Konflik Sosial Nelayan. Yogyakarta: LKis.
- Larasati, Dinda. 2018. "Globalisasi Budaya Dan Identitas: Pengaruh Dan Eksistensi Hallyu (Korean-Wave) Versus Westernisasi Di Indonesia." Jurnal Hubungan Internasional 11(1):109.
- Martono, Nanang. 2018. Sosiologi Perubahan Sosial. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo.
- Moelong, Lexy J. 2010. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Jakarta: Remaja Persada.
- Moelong, Lexy J. 2011. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif.* revisi. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Mustaqim, Muhamad. 2017. "Pergeseran Tradisi Mitoni: Persinggungan Antara Budaya Dan Agama." *Jurnal Penelitian* 11(1):119–40.
- Nafelo, La. 2020. Dinamika Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Pesisir Berbasis Masyarakat. Yogyakarta: CV Budi Utama.

- Puspita, Ayunda Riska. 2018. "Refleksi Kepercayaan Masyarakat Pesisir Pantai Prigi Dalam Sajen Slametan Njangkar (Kajian Etnolinguistik)." Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya 20(2):261–71.
- Ritzer, George. 2012. *Teori Sosiologi*. Kedelapan. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Ruslan, Idrus. 2014. "Religiositas Masyarakat Pesisir: (Studi Atas Tradisi 'Sedekah Laut' Masyarakat Kelurahan Kangkung Kecamatan Bumi Waras Kota Bandar Lampung)." Al-AdYaN 9(2):63–88.
- Septianto, Marzuqo, Lutfhi Asma, dan Alimi Moh.Yasir. 2015. "NYAI LEBE; OTORITAS MODIN PEREMPUAN PADA MASYARAKAT PESISIR JAWA (Studi Kasus Di Kelurahan Sugihwaras Kecamatan Pemalang Kabupaten Pemalang)." Solidarity: Journal of Education, Society and Culture 4(2):157–67.
- Setiawan, Irvan. 2020. "Dari Ruwat Laut Menjadi Syukuran Laut: Strategi Mempertahankan Kelangsungan Tradisi Masyarakat Nelayan Pulau Jawa Di Kabupaten Lampung Selatan." *Patanjala: Journal of Historical and Cultural Research* 12(2):293–308.
- Shely, Cathrin. 2020. "Empan Papan: Etika Komunikasi Di Media Sosial Dalam Perspektif Budaya Jawa." *Jurnal Lensa Mutiara Komunikasi* 4(2):165–85.
- Sholikin, M. 2010. *Ritual Dan Tradisi Islam Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Narasi.
- Sulistyowati, Mulia. 2018. "Mitos Dan Nilai Local Wisdom (Kearifan Lokal) Tradisi Larung Sesaji Sebagai Tolak Bala Di Kawah Gunung Kelud Desa Sugihwaras Kabupaten Kediri." I 41–48.