



**THE DIALECTICS OF ISLAMIC LAW AND CUSTOMARY LAW  
ON MARRIAGE CONCEPT OF JAVANESE MUSLIM IN MALAYSIA**

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**Abstract:** In Malaysia, customary law, especially marriage, should follow Islamic laws. Customary law should not conflict with Islamic law. On the contrary, the Muslim community of Javanese descent in Malaysia can combine customary and Islamic laws balanced. They maintain Javanese marriage traditions by harmonizing Malay customs and Islamic marriage laws, such as *rewang* (helping each other), *slametan* (praying together), *tunangan* (engagement), *ijaban* (wedding), and *nyumbang* (donating). To contribute to previous studies, this article aims to critically examine the dialectic between customary and Islamic laws regarding the marriage tradition of the Javanese Muslim community in Selangor and Johor, Malaysia. The analysis results show that the dialectic of customary and Islamic laws concerning the concept of marriage for the Javanese Muslim community in Malaysia encourages negotiations so that customs in harmony with the Islamic law can be maintained, and conflicting traditions can be abandoned. The dialectic between customary and Islamic laws in the marriages of Javanese Muslim communities in Malaysia is closely related to social, economic, and traditional symbols of carrying out religious teachings, strengthening solidarity, and preserving tradition.

Di Malaysia, keberadaan hukum adat harus mengikuti hukum Islam khususnya dalam tradisi perkawinan sehingga hukum adat tidak boleh bertentangan dengan hukum Islam. Berbeda dengan masyarakat Muslim Keturunan Jawa di Malaysia yang mampu memadukan hukum adat dan hukum Islam secara seimbang. Mereka mempertahankan tradisi perkawinan Jawa dengan memadukan adat Melayu dan hukum perkawinan Islam seperti *rewang*, *slametan*, *tunangan*, *ijaban*, dan *nyumbang*. Untuk berkontribusi pada kajian terdahulu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara kritis dialektika antara hukum adat dan hukum Islam dalam tradisi perkawinan masyarakat Muslim Keturunan Jawa di Selangor dan Johor, Malaysia. Kajian dalam artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa dialektika hukum adat dan hukum Islam dalam konsep perkawinan masyarakat Muslim Keturunan Jawa di Malaysia mendorong

terjadinya negosiasi sehingga adat yang selaras dengan hukum Islam tetap dipertahankan dan tradisi yang bertentangan ditinggalkan. Dialektika antara hukum adat dan hukum Islam dalam perkawinan masyarakat Muslim Keturunan Jawa di Malaysia sangat terkait erat dengan simbol sosial, ekonomi dan tradisi sebagai bagian dari menjalankan ajaran agama, memperkuat solidaritas dan melestarikan adat.

**Keywords:** *Customary Law; Islamic Law; Marriage Concept; Javanese-Malay; Malaysia.*

## INTRODUCTION

The migration of Javanese Muslims to Malaysia is a significant factor in the cultural encounter between Java and Malay. There are mutual influences between Javanese and Malay cultures in Malaysia, although Malay culture is quite dominant. Javanese Muslims as immigrants in Malaysia require to adapt to the local culture. Moreover, Javanese Muslims as immigrant communities are tolerant of other cultures integrated with their own culture. The other cultures do not eliminate the Javanese Muslim cultural personality, including their original characteristic and identity. The contact of Javanese and Malay Muslim cultures produces cultural diversity without losing the personality and native culture. Some practices of Javanese tradition in several areas of Johor and Selangor Malaysia have some uniqueness compared to other people. The tradition of Javanese Muslim society in Malaysia still existing includes marriage, pregnancy, birth, and death.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of local tradition (low tradition) shows the influence on the characteristic of the formal religion (high tradition) and vice versa. In this case, religion and culture (tradition) is incomparable. We cannot ask which one is more dominant. Both are interrelated and influential portraits of relations.<sup>2</sup> These traditions eventually become part of the customary law living in society to reinforce the religious identity of Javanese Muslim in Malaysia, especially in Johor and Selangor.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between the traditions later becoming the living law of the Javanese Muslim community in Malaysia and the interpretation of the religious law (sharia) were written by Jan Michiel Otto in a compilation book entitled *Sharia Incorporated*. This book offers four categories of sharia, namely divine sharia (Islamic law stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah), classical sharia (classical Islamic law, as stated in the jurisprudence books), historically transferred sharia (historical interpretation of Islamic law), and contemporary sharia (current Islamic law).<sup>4</sup> The Javanese Muslim traditions in Johor and Selangor Malaysia,

<sup>1</sup> Arik Dwijayanto, "Migrasi, Adaptasi dan Tradisi Komunitas Muslim Jawa di Semenanjung Melayu," *Dialogia* 15, no. 2 (2017): 265, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v15i2.1194>.

<sup>2</sup> Miftahul Huda, "Proses Bernegosiasi Masyarakat Ponorogo dalam Tradisi Larangan-Larangan Perkawinan Jawa" (Al-Risalah, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Abid Rohmanu, "Acculturation of Javanese And Malay Islam in Wedding Tradition of Javanese Ethnic Community at Selangor, Malaysia," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 24, no. 1 (2016): 52-66.

<sup>4</sup> Otto Jan Michiel, "Sharia Incorporated. A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present," 2010.

especially in marriage, are inseparable from the relation between traditions and sharia interpretively-historically. The symbols embedded in traditions, such as *rewang* and *nyumbang* in the wedding ceremony procession, also show the meaning related to the perpetrators of the tradition as a form of collective identity as a community of Javanese-Malay.

This research aimed to examine the negotiation between the dialectic of customary law (Javanese and Malay) and Islamic Law regarding the marriage concept. Even though these marriage rituals are dynamically changing to be simplified, the essence of their cultural and religious tradition is not affected. Internally, in Johor and Selangor, sometimes there are various rituals, but they do not take their Javanese identity off. Moreover, this Javanese marriage tradition in Johor and Selangor is highly related to social, economic, and traditional symbols in their daily life.

This article is divided into several sub-discussions. The first sub-discussion concerns the cultural identity of Javanese Muslims in Malaysia. This discussion of identity is essential to be explored based on the author's observation that the Javanese Muslims in Malaysia maintain their cultural identity as Javanese descent. However, on the other hand, they become part of Malay as a religious identity, so that this dual identity is interesting to be discussed in this sub-discussion. This will affect how they combine Javanese and Malay traditions, especially in marriage based on Islamic law.

Second, the discussion of the traditions carried out by Muslims of Javanese descent in Malaysia becomes a significant point to obtain an overview between customary law and the influence of Islamic law concerning the concept of marriage. This sub-discussion also describes the initial tradition of pre-wedding customs to implement a reception or wedding party by Muslims of Javanese descent in Malaysia.

Third, the discussion of negotiations is a compromising way for Javanese Muslims in Malaysia to present the concept of Javanese-Malay marriage based on Islamic law. This negotiation is carried out by various adjustment patterns, simplification, and eliminating some traditions considered contrary to Islamic law. Fourth, in the final sub-discussion, this article describes the meanings and symbols in the marriage tradition of Javanese Muslims in Malaysia.

This study combined theoretical and empirical observations. The data for these observations were collected through bibliographical study and fieldwork. The bibliographical study was conducted by surveying relevant references from books, articles, and research reports containing early findings. The bibliographical study was completed by exploring relevant documentation and media. The use of

documents and field observations conducted in this study also included exploring existing community data related to the research object.

This research studies tradition as living law in the Muslim society of Javanese descent in Johor and Selangor. The dominant Javanese descent living in Malaysia stay in Johor and Selangor. Based on the symbolic interactionism theory, the meaning of the symbols in the marriage tradition is primarily in *rewang* and *nyumbang*.

The researcher chose the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* as part of customary law in the concept of Javanese marriage still maintained by Muslims of Javanese descent in Malaysia. The tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* in Malaysia is only carried out in the marriage tradition. Unlike in their native Java, the *rewang* and *nyumbang* can be held in all traditions outside of marriage. This phenomenon encouraged researchers to be more specific in choosing the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* with a symbolic interactionism theory approach.

The theory of symbolic interactionism assumes that human action has meaning. Mead views this interaction as a pattern of human action over his environment. Mead explained that "self" is under internalization or subjective interpretation of a broader (objective) reality. The "self" is an internalization of a person for what people have generalized or the social habits of the wider community. The "self" is a dialectical product of "I" or impulsive of the self, and "I" or the social side of a man.<sup>5</sup>

Based on that explanation, the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* is a reality that self internalizes. *Rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions arise from a widespread and deeply rooted habit within the individual. Individuals have a role as a self and position themselves in their role in society. In this case, the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions become a norm governing the individual. On the other hand, the individual has the creativity in shaping and accepting the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions as a reaction to his life in society. Mead further used a self-phase-based analysis called "I" and "Me." Mead stated, "The self is essentially a social process taking place in two distinct phases."<sup>6</sup>

If "I" is applied in a *rewang* and donate tradition, then "I" reacts to "Me," organizing a set of other people's attitudes that he takes to his own. In other words, "me" is the acceptance of others generalized. Unlike the "I," people are aware of "me," which includes awareness of responsibility. As Mead said, "me" is an ordinary, conventional individual. Society controls the individual through the "me." Mead defined the notion of social control as an expression of excellence of "me" above the expression of "I" as the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: The Definitive Edition* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Daniel R Huebner, "The Construction of Mind, Self, and Society: The Social Process behind GH Mead's Social Psychology," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 48, no. 2 (2012): 134-53.

<sup>7</sup> George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky, *Sociological Theory* (Sage publications, 2017).

In the context of *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions, the concept of social control as the exercise of self-criticism is applied strictly to individual actions or behavior. The concept of social control helps to integrate individuals and their actions on organized social processes from individual experiences and behaviors. The social control of individual actions or behaviors is based on self-criticism's origin and social base. Self-criticism is essentially social criticism and socially controlled behavior. Hence, social control is far from the tendency to destroy an individual or eliminate his consciousness. Conversely, social control is inseparable from its relationship with individuality.<sup>8</sup>

In the Javanese traditions, including *rewang* and *nyumbang*, there is an interaction, which is developed and shown by thinking ability in the Mead perspective. All kinds of interaction are not only in socialization, enlarging our ability to think. Moreover, thought forms the interaction process wherein the actor should pay attention to others and determine when and how to adjust his activities. In this case, the meaningful action develops into a social action when it results in a response from another individual. Mead analyzed there are two different forms of interaction, namely signaling motion and significant symbols. Mead stated that motions or gestures are the basic mechanisms of social action and more general social processes. Mead viewed that the conversation is the meaning of the gestures. A gesture is part of an ongoing action signifying as part of a more extensive social process.<sup>9</sup>

The symbols are social objects used to represent (or substitute) whatever the person agreed. Not all social objects can represent something else, but a social object that can replace something else is a symbol. Words, physical objects (artifacts), and physical actions can all be symbols.<sup>10</sup> The symbols are essential aspects enabling people to act in ways that are typical of human beings. Because of symbols, humans do not respond to self-enforcing reality passively but actively create and re-create the world in which they play a role. A symbol is also a tool that allows one to summarize the various actions and symbols to be visible so that symbols can serve as communication, knowledge, and control.<sup>11</sup>

## **IDENTITY, TRADITION, AND NEGOTIATION**

They were referring to the definition of Parekh and Rajchman, which states that identity in society is not something that is fixed, static, and free from ambiguity.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Peter Marina et al., "Ethnographies of Religion," 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: The Definitive Edition*.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Newman, "Challenging Convention: Symbolic Interactionism and Grounded Theory," *Collegian* 15, no. 3 (2008): 103-7.

<sup>11</sup> Mark V Redmond, "Symbolic Interactionism," 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, *A New Politics of Identity: Political Principles for an Interdependent World* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 2008); John Rajchman, *The Identity in Question* (Routledge, 2014).

In certain respects, sooner or later, the identity of individuals or groups of people changes and allows time for a process of absorption and adjustment of new values that develop. It is just that identity will undergo a significant and widespread change if there are several factors that the community cannot control, so members cannot rely on their cultural and cultural resources to control the course of life and experience moral panic.<sup>13</sup>

But according to some Muslim scholars and researchers of Javanese descent in Malaysia as well as Tamrin.<sup>14</sup>, Noriah<sup>15</sup> and Sukiman<sup>16</sup> The establishment and strengthening of their identity lie in the survival and success of the Javanese Muslim community in the face of diverse challenges in new places while remaining sourced from the philosophy and values of the old tradition. Their ability to maintain the continuity of Javanese traditions and values remains primarily preserved. Although, at some stage, new cultural elements are being absorbed, as part of the inevitable interaction and contestation with other cultures, but not eliminating the values held.<sup>17</sup>

As immigrants, the Javanese Muslim community is encouraged to perpetuate tradition and culture in a new place, as long as it is conducive and not contrary to local values. The principle of Javanese life that upheld the values of harmony became the primary foundation, which gave vast space for a tolerant attitude.<sup>18</sup> Options on the path to consensus and avoiding open conflict are the main features that make people and Javanese culture flexible and accessible anywhere. In fact, at some stage is eclectic and able to absorb elements of culture outside themselves well. Therefore, it cannot be denied that establishing Javanese Muslim identity in Johor and Selangor has not been monotonous and stagnant for several decades, but dynamic, creative, and continuous.<sup>19</sup>

In Javanese Muslim society in Malaysia, especially in Johor and Selangor, tradition becomes part of the vein that occupies an essential position as a glue of social relations, a function of tradition that provides guidelines for action and gives the individual identity. The tradition of Javanese Muslim communities in Johor and Selangor is not much different from other ethnic traditions, both in terms of

<sup>13</sup> Mohammad Maiwan, "Orang Jawa di Selangor," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mimbar Demokrasi* 10, no. 2 (2011): 24–41.

<sup>14</sup> Khazin Mohd Tamrin, "Orang Jawa di Selangor Kedatangan dan Penempatan," *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies* 7 (2020).

<sup>15</sup> Kamdi Kamil and Noriah Mohamed, *Masyarakat Keurunan Jawa Johor* (Yayasan Warisan Johor, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Khazin Mohd Tamrin and Sukiman Bohari, "Orang Jawa Pontian: Kedatangan dan Kegiatannya dalam Aspek Sosio-Ekonomi dan Politik Tempatan," *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies* 10 (2020).

<sup>17</sup> Arik Dwijayanto and Yusmicha Ulya Afif, "Religious and Political Role of Javanese Ulama in Johor, Malaysia," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2019): 157–70.

<sup>18</sup> Arik Dwijayanto, "Ethnicity, Mobility, and Identity: The Emergence of Javanese Muslim Middle Class in Malaysia," ed. Nabil Chang-kuan Lin (Tainan: NCKU Taiwan, 2020), 85.

<sup>19</sup> Maiwan, "Orang Jawa di Selangor."

harmony, religious practice, including at the marriage ceremony. The tradition of marriage in Muslim societies of Javanese descent is still strongly influenced by the traditions of origin. Nevertheless, in some aspects, it has also been strongly influenced by Malay culture. In a nutshell, the marriage tradition of the Javanese-Malay ethnic community usually begins with the introductory stage between men and women followed by stages, *merisik* (Javanese: *nontoni*), then the next stage with *bertunang* (Javanese: *tunangan*), and so on, *berkahwin* or marriage.<sup>20</sup>

*Merasi* tradition is a pre-marital stage performed to choose a mate made by a parent to find a husband or wife candidate for their daughter or son. *Merisi* activities are usually done by men who want to marry a girl but have not recognized the girl's identity, or if already familiar but just a little familiar with it. The purpose of the *merisik* activity is to determine whether the girl has a partner or not. If the girl has a fiance, then the man can no longer intend to marry her because, in Islamic law, it is forbidden to propose to another person's fiance. In addition to the *merisik* tradition performed as a preliminary step to determine that the girl does not have a partner, there is also a tradition of *meninjau*. This activity is sometimes performed simultaneously with *merisik* activities. *Meninjau* activity is intended to find out where the candidate will be married. The review activity is conducted by a representative who is believed to be able to do so. *Meninjau* activity will be easy if the representative knows the girl. On the contrary, if they do not know it, it will take a longer time to do the *meninjau* phase.<sup>21</sup>

*Merisi* and *meninjau* traditions are also used to determine the ethnic background of both grooms. In rural society or village of Java still, prioritize that marriage ideally applies to fellow Javanese. This is somewhat different from the Javanese, who are in a region that is relatively heterogeneously ethnic. In a heterogeneous society, ethnic intersections in marriage have become justified. In *merisik* and *meninjau* traditions, the Javanese still emphasize the *wis jowo* (already Javanese). It points to the importance of maintaining the values and traditions of Java in their lives. People who do not understand and live the Javanese way of life are called "*urung jowo*" (not yet Javanese). Marriage of ethnic Javanese with other ethnic groups is considered as disruptive to this principle. However, mixed ethnic Javanese marriage with other ethnicities has become more liquid in its development due to the increasingly inter-ethnic interaction between Selangor and Johor, Malaysia.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Rohmanu, "Acculturation of Javanese And Malay Islam in Wedding Tradition of Javanese Ethnic Community at Selangor, Malaysia."

<sup>21</sup> Abdul Ghani On, "Adat Perkahwinan Masyarakat Melayu Perlis: Merisik," 1996; Nur Nasuha Binti Muhamad, Baharuddin Ahmad, and Rahmadi Rahmadi, "Tinjauan Hukum Islam Terhadap Tuntutan Perbelanjaan Adat Perkawinan Masyarakat Melayu Moderen di Pekan Parit Yani Johor, Malaysia" (UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Rohmanu, "Acculturation of Javanese And Malay Islam in Wedding Tradition of Javanese Ethnic Community at Selangor, Malaysia."

Another tradition is *merasi* activity that is very rare in both the societies of Selangor and Johor, Malaysia. The purpose of *merasi* is to ascertain whether the pair to be matched is suitable or not. That is, *merasi* is an activity to look at the compatibility between the pairs to be matched. This activity is usually done through the intermediary of an expert who has been accustomed to getting married to the person who wants to get married. The matchmaker will give her opinion that the pair is considered fit (appropriate) or not. In the past, people believed that this activity was necessary because the compatibility between the spouses determined the harmony of the household. If the result of the *merasi* is that the couple does not match, then the parents of each partner will then cancel the marriage plan of their children. If they are fixed, then the consequences will affect the household's disharmony, incompetence, and integrity. Society believed that an incompatible pair would be abused by poverty, divorce, and other disasters. The *merasi* tradition has not been widely used by Javanese ethnic communities in Selangor and Johor because it is considered inappropriate according to the beliefs and developments that are rarely transmitted through parents.<sup>23</sup>

Once it is felt that the couple to be married is suitable, the step then is *meminang* stage. Before *meminang*, the family of the men proposes first the girl to be married. The purpose of *meminang* is to ask for the approval of the prospective bride before the marriage ceremony. If still in the stage of *meminang*, then the marriage plan cannot be ascertained. That is, although the prospective groom has scaled (*merisik*) and reviewed (*meninjau*) the background of the woman to be married, in the stage of applying (*meminang*) for an answer to be received from him is still uncertain. Otherwise, if the woman has been proposed, then the answer can be said to be sure. The prospective groom does mining by delivering some representatives consisting of some people who believe they can assume the responsibility. In the meeting, there will be a talk to get a definite answer from the side of a prospective bride. Usually, the women will provide answers within a few days. The grace period is also enabled to negotiate with family and siblings and investigate the background of men carefully and carefully.<sup>24</sup>

After the women's family approves the male candidate, they meet the male representative to inform the decision. In Malay custom, usually, the men themselves will come to the women's house to ask the decision. After both parties talk and agree, the envoys from the male representatives will come again to determine when the engagement day will be held. This meeting also discussed

<sup>23</sup> Rahmat Pulungan, "Tradisi Merasi Dalam Adat Perkawinan Melayu Riau (Studi Analisis Terhadap Penentuan Kafaah Calon Pengantin di Kelurahan Bagan Batu)," *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 2, no. 2 (2016): 184-99.

<sup>24</sup> Haji Juned Khamis, "Adat Lama Perkahwinan Orang Melayu Muar/Khamis Haji Juned," *Malaya in History/Malaysia in History Dan Malaysia Dari Segi Sejarah*, no. 25 (1997): 65-89.



the number of goods delivered and the number of men who will come together. It is intended that the women quickly make preparations in receiving their arrival.

Towards the implementation of the wedding reception, conducted *gotong-royong* or *rewang* event. The host party needs to provide food and various cakes for those involved in *rewang*. Brothers, neighbors conduct *Rewang* activity, both men and women, to prepare the wedding location. Those who engage in *rewang* traditions will be given responsibilities according to the division of tasks such as cooking, washing dishes, receiving guests, and arranging chairs. In the *rewang* tradition, the concept of 'old elder' is applied. The elderly are only assigned as recipients, while the younger, especially men, bring food dishes from the kitchen to be served to the guests. The girls will be assigned to help provide food to the guests. Adult women or the majority of mothers are involved in helping prepare food ingredients. Usually, mothers who will go *rewang* have brought their kitchen tools. Typically, they are merely contributing their energy and usually carrying the necessities of the kitchen and cooking. However, many also prefer to donate in the form of ringgit money.<sup>25</sup>

Another activity is a tradition ahead of the wedding ceremonies, namely *berzanzi* readings conducted after the Isha prayer. This assembly is usually followed by those who have engaged in *gotong-royong* activities for a day and night, followed by the host's family and relatives, including a special invitation to this assembly. To hold this activity still needed *gotong-royong* effort as done before. In the *berzanzi* reading, activities are also served banquet, usually consisting of rice and side dishes. Each dish is reserved for four or five people.

Nevertheless, this *berzanzi* reading is now not so popular to accompany the tradition of marriage. In addition to the *berzanzi*, usually, three days before the wedding day, there is a tradition of hanging things as an activity to decorate the house or place where the wedding ceremonial will be held by installing fittings such as making tents and decorations, hanging equipment for the *majlis*, adorn the bedroom of the bride, and decorate the chair where the two brides-to-be are paired. This tradition indicates that the culture of *gotong-royong* (mutual helping) is solid in ethnic Javanese-Malay society.<sup>26</sup>

Another tradition of ethnic Javanese marriage in Johor and Selangor is *berinai*, symbolized by the activities of nail polish performed by a makeup artist or commonly known as Mak Andam assisted by relatives and close relatives. The traditions of the bride-to-be couples take place at the same time. Technically, this

<sup>25</sup> Zainorinyana Jamoran Yana and Vivien W C Yew, "Amalan Rewang Dalam Masyarakat Jawa Di Malaysia (The Practice of Rewang among Javanese Community in Malaysia)," *Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space* 13, no. 3 (2017).

<sup>26</sup> Abdul Basit Samat et al., "Seni Barzanji Dan Marhaban: Sejarah dan Amalannya dalam Masyarakat Melayu," 2014.

activity is done separately, for the bride performed in her own home and for the bridegroom performed in his own house or place he stopped. However, in the tradition of Malay marriage, the groom usually takes precedence.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the tradition of *berinai*, there is a tradition of *berandam* conducted in the afternoon led by Mak Andam accompanied by the parent or nearest family of the bride. This ritual is done firstly at the residence of the bride candidate, accompanied with *rebana* music, and then performed at the groom's residence. The main activity of *berandam* is to shave hair because this body part is the beauty point of a women's crown. In addition, it also includes shaving and cleansing the thin hairs around the face, neck, and nape, beautifying the forehead, and raising the series face by using betel nut. The meaning of the ritual ceremony is to clean the physical (outer side) of the bride and groom with the hope that the inner is also clean. Its symbolic meaning is as a symbol of personal hygiene to face and to live a new life.

Among the above pre-marriage ceremonies, social rites such as *rewang* can be judged as a form of customary Javanese influence. In the Javanese way of life, *rewang* is a manifestation of an essential aspect of harmony. At the same time, the tradition *nyumbang* associated with marriage is also allegedly part of the influence of the Javanese tradition. *Nyumbang* is a gift in the form of money to the host who holds a marriage council. As in the current Javanese tradition, donations are made in the form of money. The tradition of *nyumbang* in the marriage traditions in Johor and Selangor communities looks more explicit than those in Java. In the tradition of ethnic Javanese marriage in Johor and Selangor, donations are given directly to the bride's parents. In this case, the bride's parents stand in front of the house to greet the guests. It was on this occasion that the guests gave donations while shaking hands with the hosts. This is different from the tradition of donations to Javanese people who are not given directly but provided a separate box where the guests may put the money. At the same time, the host sat accompanying the bride on the main stage.<sup>28</sup>

The wedding ceremony usually begins with the recitation of holy verses of the Qur'an, then proceeds with a welcome speech from both parties, and continues with light entertainment. The occasion is also interspersed with the use of rhymes that reciprocate between the bride and groom. Meanwhile, at the wedding, there is also a tradition of stepping on eggs or *pondongan* in which the bride is carried (*dipondong*) by the groom into their room.

<sup>27</sup> Rohmanu, "Acculturation of Javanese And Malay Islam in Wedding Tradition of Javanese Ethnic Community at Selangor, Malaysia."

<sup>28</sup> Syh Noorul Madihah Syed Husin, Raihanah Azahari, and Asmak Ab Rahman, "The Practice of Al-Ta'awun in the Wedding Expenditure of Malay-Muslims in Malaysia.," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 28, no. 2 (2020); Muhammad Ariff bin Ahmad, "Family Ties and Traditions: Rites and Rituals-Weddings, Nikah, Bersanding, Birth, and Death Rites, Circumcision," 2019.

The *slametan*<sup>29</sup> or *kenduri* that accompanies the wedding tradition is also a meeting point between Javanese and Malay cultures in Johor and Selangor. The tradition of *kenduri* with *nasi ambeng* is a tradition that is still maintained by the Javanese community in Malaysia, not only in the tradition of the wedding, but other vital events in the human life cycle, namely birth, marriage, and death.<sup>30</sup> The above traditions and rituals can be judged as Javanese cultural interaction with Malay in Johor and Selangor. There is the possibility of other rituals also occurring at a tangent point even though it is packed with Malay culture. This is due to the characteristics of Javanese society that have many similarities of values with the traditions and the local community. The tradition of community equality in Johor and Selangor has many similarities that follow the *shafi'iyah* school. This school is also known to be very tolerant of local culture. It is therefore not surprising that traditions such as Berzanzi and Khatmil Qur'an are also used to accompany the tradition of marriage. These two religious traditions are also commonly found in Javanese society.

Islamic law recognizes *adat* (custom and tradition) as a source of law because it is aware that customs and traditions have played an essential role in governing the people's lives. Customs and traditions become unwritten laws but are maintained and obeyed by society. As long as customs and traditions go according to Islamic law, these traditions and customs receive recognition from *syara'* as a form of *adat* effectiveness in the interpretation of the law. In harmony with Woodward's perspective, Islamic dialectics, and Javanese traditions have emerged on a regenerative basis. Their relationship creates a unique existence. In traditional connection with theology, some Javanese customary rituals are considered 'deviant' or labeled *syirik*. Hence, the tendency requires an attempt to adjust or compromise between traditions with the local community's rules (Islamic law). Such dialectics can be categorized in the model of compromising theology. This can be seen from the shift in the pattern of theology from naturalistic to formalistic. One example in the Javanese tradition of *slametan* with *nasi ambeng* is given to the unseen spirit (*sesajen*). Similarly, the ritual of coconut breaking in the tradition of pregnancy in the Javanese society resembles the Hindu tradition.<sup>31</sup> Some Javanese traditions in Johor and Selangor experienced adjustments, simplifications, and changes following the local Malay culture.

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<sup>29</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (University of Chicago Press, 1976); Mark Woodward, "Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta," in *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (University of Arizona Press, Tucson; Association for Asian Studies Monograph, 45, 1989).

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Syahir Bin Mohamed Noor, "Keunikan Makanan Tradisional Masyarakat Keturunan Jawa Johor Ke Arah Kelestarian Budaya Pelancongan," 2018.

<sup>31</sup> Woodward, "Islam Java Norm. Piety Mysticism Sultanate Yogyakarta."

## THE DIALECTICS OF SOCIAL SYMBOL, ECONOMICS, AND TRADITIONS

In understanding the tradition of Javanese weddings, especially in *rewang* and *nyumbang* activities, Mead's symbolic interaction approach shows a relationship between the individual with the symbols that make up the tradition. In this case, the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions are considered to be a structure that binds them. However, there is a kind of action from others that results in an individual acting, the obligation arising out of a marriage tradition consent or rejection of the action given the individual. From the individual action taken, it has a different response. This is described by the explanation below.

### 1) Individuals that Produce Symbols

*Rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions can be categorized as meaningful actions. As Blumer said, "for a person, the meaning of something comes from the ways others act on it about that thing. The actions they do will give birth to something for others. In this case, it can be said that individuals play a role in society by internalizing the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions as a mandatory act to be accepted in their environment with restrictions received by other individuals. It is intended that the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* is an action that aims to lighten the burden of others. On the other hand, such action has indirectly obtained the consent of another individual. However, on the other hand, the meaning will change along with the behavior obtained from other actors and vice versa."<sup>32</sup>

According to Blumer, it is done through the process of interpretation. Blumer mentions that there are two steps in the process of interpretation. First, the actor shows himself the various actions being performed; he must point himself to the various meanings he is doing, such as indicating an internalized social process in that actors interacts with themselves. This interaction is communication that affects each other in its own right. Secondly, based on this process of the notification itself, interpretation becomes a separate meaning. The actor chooses, checks, rearranges, and transforms meaning in terms of the situation in which he is placed and from the direction of his actions.<sup>33</sup>

From that explanation, it can be stated that interaction affects each other from within the individual. In this process, the internalization of the individual gives birth to an interpretation of an action. If incorporated into the phenomenon studied, it can be said that *rewang* and *nyumbang* is an action that previously received a response from individuals with different perspectives. Individuals internalize the tradition for the individual to carry out the action *rewang* and

<sup>32</sup> Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Univ of California Press, 1986).

<sup>33</sup> Huebner, "The Construction of Mind, Self, and Society: The Social Process behind GH Mead's Social Psychology."

*nyumbang*. As an action, the actor sees the action as a positive action that leads to valuable action. These actions result from interaction with others.

## 2) Symbols in *Rewang* and *Nyumbang* Traditions

Mead describes three paths in identifying a meaningful symbol or gesture. In this case, the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions can be identified as follows; First, for what and who *rewang* and *nyumbang* is done. Secondly, with the *rewang* and *nyumbang*, the actor plans the following activities that will be done. Thirdly, with *rewang* and *nyumbang*, the actor will intentionally bring up the actions of others as part of what has been planned. Significant symbols are a kind of gesture that only humans can create. Cues become significant symbols when they arise from the individual making the symbols the same as the response. In this case, *rewang* and *nyumbang* is significant symbol because it is nothing but a symbol that can move the other party's response. Symbols, in this case, become social objects that are used to present (or substitute) whatever the person agrees to be represented. Not every object can present something but a social object that can replace something else known through symbols.<sup>34</sup>

Blumer says that the game of meaning over objects is part of self-interaction. The self will adjust his actions with the action of outside. The actor is free to decide what action he or she will take. Therefore, *rewang* and *nyumbang* emphasize that the situation was meaningful as an aid given to others. However, in this case, the meaning of *rewang* and *nyumbang* will change when the actor gets approval from other actors when the meaning of *rewang* and *nyumbang* is also changed. In symbolic interactionism, the symbol becomes a mean for the actor in response to the cues given by other actors. In the Mead perspective, as quoted by Ritzer that significant symbols are identified as languages. Now it becomes a significant symbol and tells a particular meaning. In a conversation with a gesture, only the cues themselves are communicated. However, with language, what is communicated is its cue and meaning. Symbols are an essential aspect that allows people to act in ways that are typical of humans. Because of symbols, humans do not respond passively to self-enforcing reality but actively create and re-create the world in which they play a role. With the standards outlined in the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang*, individuals can form meaning in the tradition, with the existence of creative individuals that these various signals arise from the symbols created by individuals.

The description above can be drawn to highlight that a symbol is a communication tool for both words, physical objects, and physical actions that can be a symbol that can be used to represent an action. In the activity of *rewang*

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<sup>34</sup> Ritzer and Stepnisky, *Sociological Theory*; Redmond, "Symbolic Interactionism."

and *nyumbang*, there is a meaning that becomes a symbol of the communications of Javanese Muslims in Johor and Selangor, such as:

a. Social Symbols

*Rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions are used as a form of community cohesiveness that has a meaning of harmony. The egalitarian nature that surrounds society, especially in traditional society, becomes the basis of forming typical family patterns as long as the tradition has reciprocity. At the same time, reciprocity serves as a foundation for fraternal structures in traditional societies. In the perspective of Geertz, the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* is the disclosure of all forms of pattern that is imprinted on the philosophy of event cooperative holding, which leads to the value of harmony. From the statement of Geertz, then formed the conclusion that the tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* is a social symbol based on the aspects of harmony and kinship, which later can bring up various other acts that accompany this social symbol.<sup>35</sup>

b. Economic Symbols

The tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* in the perspective of Geertz's theory is a disclosure of the premise of the values underlying the whole pattern of event cooperative holding. In this case, the premises are helpful when holding the wedding ceremony up to the forms of donations given. However, another tendency is a source of profit, and many people are said to hold this assembly primarily because it expects material gains from guests' donations. From Geertz, it can be concluded that this economic symbol is driven by the form of *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions that emphasize the gained benefits.<sup>36</sup> This is most likely to occur in societies whose lives are within the boundaries of subsistence, giving birth to subsistence ethics, that is, ethics in society that must accept the consequences of living so close to the subsistence line. These ethics can be said to be social security earned when someone contributes. These social guarantees are the realization of a person's right when contributing.

The tradition of *rewang* and *nyumbang* contained an understanding of saving to address the needs that arise in the future or investment. The party that held a wedding ceremony would reap the benefits of money and donations from guests who attend the wedding ceremony.

c. Tradition Symbol

Symbols cannot always be said to be typical in a tradition. There must be various things that make people have confidence and become the legitimacy of

<sup>35</sup> Geertz, *The Religion of Java*.

<sup>36</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*, vol. 37 (University of Chicago Press, 1971).

all forms of activity. In addition, it must be a collective identity. Therefore, the form of the symbols of this tradition is the thing that can indirectly regulate the patterns of human relationships. The tradition is the whole thing and idea that comes from the past but is still today, not destroyed, discarded, or forgotten. Here traditions such as *rewang* and *nyumbang* means can be said as a legacy of the past. The tradition means everything that is transmitted or passed from the past to the present.

### **3) Interaction Patterns in *Rewang* and *Nyumbang* Traditions**

*Rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions, in this case, are limited in the procession of the wedding ceremony. In the wedding ceremony, the process of *rewang* and *nyumbang* can be seen from the inclusion of the tradition in one of its events. Based on the theory of symbolic interactionism used to express the problems studied, three symbols are successfully expressed: social, economic, and traditional symbols. The *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions prevailing in the Johor and Selangor communities is a tradition that has long existed and becomes a habit that exists in every wedding ceremony series. Nevertheless, this tradition is not formed by itself because there is a process of interaction that eventually forms a tradition. In this case, the *rewang* and *nyumbang* traditions formation are due to both economic and social needs. Economic necessity is a requirement of social security gained when conducting a wedding ceremony.

On the one hand, social needs look like harmony and togetherness in a wedding ceremony. From the above, the above interaction undergoes a process. This process continues and develops. A tradition is not just a social and economic necessity. There is an interaction that produces a symbol that became the basis of the creation of this tradition. Through a process of individual interpretation forms a symbol.<sup>37</sup>

The basic foundation in symbolic interactionism is to interpret every action or symbol conveyed by another individual. The symbolic interaction perspective seeks to understand culture through human behavior reflected in communication. Symbolic interaction is more emphasis on the meaning of cultural interaction of a community. Therefore, understanding the behavior of *rewang* and *nyumbang* must be understood in advance the definition of the tradition. Individuals interpret the *rewang* and *nyumbang*, not stand alone. Individuals can interpret it through interaction. Through one's interactions form a definition. Individuals in certain situations often develop standard definitions (or common perspectives) because they regularly relate and experience together, but the agreement is not required.

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<sup>37</sup> Mifedwil Jandra et al., "Identity and Culture Change of Javanese in Johor," *UMRAN-International Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies* 3, no. 3-1 (2016).

On the other hand, some hold a standard definition to point to the truth, an understanding that can always be agreed upon. This can be influenced by people who see things from the other side. When acting on a specific definition, something will not be suitable for someone. Usually, when a problem exists and can form a new definition, it can negate the old one. In other words, it can change. So interpretation is essential. The traditions of *rewang* and *nyumbang* become symbols tried to be interpreted by various circles as part of the internalization process by their environment. They can also reject that *rewang* and *nyumbang* are not merely the production of culture.

Moreover, each individual is free to interpret the *rewang* and *nyumbang* with various concepts in his mind. Based on the accompanying impulse driven by rules and regularity, values, and value systems in society. However, it is not just orderliness, values, and value systems in society that only underlie individual actions in *rewang* and *nyumbang*, but how they are defined and used in specific situations. Humans act not based on what is required in the *rewang* and *nyumbang* process but on how they view the tradition.

## CONCLUSION

The individual's perspective in interpreting the *rewang* and *nyumbang* is reflected in their freedom in interpreting their traditions. This interaction creates different symbols from the various responses obtained. Responses from the various symbols displayed will be visible in the interaction of individuals with other individuals. These actions will be described when the process of *rewang* and *nyumbang* take place. These different symbols will form a symbol that simultaneously occurs in society, a social symbol. Social symbols arise when a tradition is considered glue and a form of obligation in a friendship or kinship. This symbol shows the importance of individual relationships with other individuals in their social life. This is inseparable from a relationship that they create themselves.

In comparison, this economic symbol emerges when a person wishes that *rewang* and *nyumbang* will become an economical source or become social insurance for a person as a substitution of the cost of the wedding ceremony. In this case, one will have this motif for various reasons so that the economic symbol emerges. At the same time, the symbol of tradition *rewang* and *nyumbang* becomes a collective identity for the Javanese Muslim community in Johor and Selangor. The symbol of tradition is a form of a symbol that can bind one's identity.



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