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Religion, Tradition, and Modernization: Portrait of the Shift in Dawuhan Tradition in the Ngerso Community, Tawangmangu Karanganyar

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This study explains the transformation of the Dawuhan Tradition in Ngerso, Tawangmangu, which is influenced by changes in religious practices that develop in the local community. This study uses a Cultural Studies approach to analyze changes in symbols and rituals that occur in the ceremony. The theory chosen in this study is Derrida's deconstruction theory, which is determined to reveal and understand the layers of meaning behind cultural and religious transformations. The main objective of this study is to show how negotiations between local traditions and religious influences reshape the implementation of the Dawuhan Tradition. Descriptive and qualitative methods collect data through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of this study indicate that there are changes in the implementation of the Dawuhan Ceremony, such as changes in the time of implementation, replacement of sacred elements, and changes in offerings presented to ancestors. These changes are a reflection of the cultural negotiations that occur between local traditions and religious influences. This negotiation is carried out to maintain the relevance of the ritual in the context of modern life. In conclusion, this study provides an overview of the complex socio-cultural dynamics in society (religion and culture); tradition must adapt to social change without losing its essence. This research implies that it is a form of preserving tradition in changing times, which is done by reinterpreting it to be more relevant. On the other hand, this research also shows the existence of social and political hegemony over changes in tradition, and it can be underlined that the flexibility and ambiguity of Javanese tradition allow society to negotiate and adapt to change without losing its cultural identity.

Keywords: Tradition; Modernization; Religion; Deconstruction

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has a diversity of unique customs, tribes, and cultures spread across various regions. The community believes customs or traditions inherited from their ancestors must be preserved. Society and culture are two things that form one social reality in community life and cannot be separated (Mulya and Sudiarna 2019). The relationship between humans and culture is like the relationship between roots and plants; humans are the main actors that form culture. Indonesian society is pluralistic, which forms the consequences of diversity and ultimately creates cultural diversity. The diversity of society creates a diversity of different mindsets in each region (Rakhmawati, Anisa, and Wardana 2024). One group with another group forms a mindset according to the conditions of their respective communities and environments. Javanese society is known to have an "Eastern Personality", namely the belief that spiritual or religious life reflects faith in the Almighty. This is reflected through the diversity of behavior in respecting religion and obeying the developed customs; belief becomes a form of respect and honor (Fardani, Much Arsyad 2024). Javanese society is thick in maintaining its cultural traditions, and some forms of artistic traditions are ceremonies and rituals.

A ceremony is a series of symbolic actions carried out in a particular context to express society's religious, social, and cultural values (Valeri 2018). Ceremonies in society have procedures that have been established and agreed upon together (Ramadhan, Yurisman, and Satria 2023). Ceremonies in various regions have different uniqueness and methods. One of the ceremonies still preserved and carried out in Javanese society is the *Dawuhan* tradition. This tradition is a cultural tradition that is rich in artistic and spiritual values for the people of Dusun Ngerso,

Tawangmangu. This ceremony is carried out as a form of respect and gratitude to God and the ancestors who have given the hamlet blessings and prosperity. The *Dawuhan* tradition functions as a means of spirituality, strengthening the cultural identity and social ties of the Dusun Ngerso community.

The *Dawuhan* Tradition of Ngerso Hamlet is a form of water environment management ceremony that is still preserved and routinely carried out every year. This ceremony is an annual routine for the surrounding community, with goals and procedures instilled for a long time. The water source that is preserved in this hamlet is the Watu Surupan Channel. The Watu Surupan Channel is channel from the river flowing along Ngerso Hamlet. The community carries out this environmental preservation effort, and it has been a tradition for a long time. Preserving the natural environment is a tradition routinely carried out and passed down from generation to generation by the people of Ngerso Hamlet, Tawangmangu, Karanganyar. The people of Ngerso Hamlet have a life that depends on the natural environment, especially water. This is because the surrounding community works in the agricultural sector. The river water source is one of the most important things and must continue to be preserved for the community's survival.

This cultural tradition is an example of local wisdom developed in a community group. Local wisdom is a form of perspective, knowledge, belief, and behavior unique to a particular community (Zainal et al. 2024). Local wisdom is a strategy a group uses to manage and face challenges and obstacles from nature and society (Maridi 2022). Battiste in Zainal et al (2024) stated that the local wisdom of a group is obtained from the heritage of ancestors or previous generations. Local wisdom related to natural resource management has been

discovered for a long time and has undergone long adaptation. This has been found in several groups in Indonesia. Human life cannot be separated from the natural environment or natural resources. Humans and living things depend on nature; they behave and interact to gain mutual benefits (Firmansyah et al. 2023). The unity between humans and nature is characterized by systematic interdependence in a form called an ecosystem. The *Dawuhan* ceremony procession consists of several series of events and event schedules, one of the ceremony agendas is the ritual procession. This procession is carried out by asking for prayers to God Almighty, which the local hamlet elders carry out. The prayers offered to God are intended to express gratitude for the gifts, goodness, and greatness of God who has blessed the people of Ngerso Hamlet, especially in the gifts related to water sources that are very beneficial for the people's lives.

On the other hand, a ritual procession is also carried out to honor the ancestors. This ritual is closed by placing offerings in the form of food in a place that is considered sacred, namely at the easternmost end of the Watu Surupan Channel, this place is called Ndog Garing by the Ngerso people. Along with the development of the times, religious practices have also begun to emerge among the Ngerso people. This condition brings about significant changes, especially in the order or procedures for traditional ceremonies. Spiritual practices are also present, and new religious teachings, values, symbols, and belief systems are becoming more assertive, some of which conflict with the local community's customs. This change encourages transformation in various aspects of the lives of the local community, one of which is related to implementing the *Dawuhan* Tradition. Cultural studies is a discipline that provides a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of transformation that occurs in this

ceremony. In cultural studies, traditions and rituals are viewed as dynamic social entities or practices that continuously experience transformation and negotiation of meaning. This approach will look at how the Ngerso Hamlet community adapts the *Dawuhan* Tradition that they have believed in for a long time in the context of changes in religious practices that occur in society.

The transformation of the *Dawuhan* Tradition can be seen in several ways, such as changes in the time of the ceremony, the replacement/removal of certain sacred elements in the ritual, and changes in the mindset towards ancestral offerings. These changes have an impact on various perceptions or views of society. Some communities accept the changes that occur and follow the flow of development. Communities that accept and believe that the essence of the *Dawuhan* tradition will remain, although several things have transformed. On the other hand, some people feel that the changes reduce the sacredness and authenticity of the ceremony. People who disagree also argue that modernization and the influence of religious practices will threaten the existence and identity of local culture. Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Religion, Tradition, and Modernization: A Portrait of the Shifting *Dawuhan* Tradition in the Ngerso Community, Tawangmangu Karanganyar". There have been changes in various aspects of the ritual, such as the time of implementation, sacred elements, and forms of offerings that are adjusted to religious values and the dynamics of modern life. This study aims at analyzing the transformation of symbols and rituals in tradition and understand how negotiations between local traditions and religion reshape the implementation of tradition with contemporary times.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious practices that influence the continuity of customs or culture of the community also occur in the lives of other community groups. Each region needs help adapting customs and culture to current community conditions. The following are previous research on the influence of religious practices on changes in cultural practices in several community groups. The first is Salam research (2023), which discusses changes in the Ujung Mantra Traditional Ritual in the Gucialit area, Lumajang. The results of the study show that there has been a change in the Ujung Mantra tradition; this change can be seen from the shift in the meaning of the ritual, which was initially a ritual to summon rain to a ritual to create harmony among residents. This is due to the influence of immigrants from Madura, who caused a clash of ethnicities and religions.

On the other hand, this interpretation is also carried out so that the meaning of the ritual becomes more rational because there are three entities: religion, culture, and modernity. This change in meaning is carried out to avoid negative stigma against the ritual: The new discourse in this interpretation is expected to maintain the existence of the ritual amidst changing times. The second is a study conducted by Jamrud (2022), which discusses the differences in views among communities regarding implementing the Death Traditional Ceremony in Tutumaloleo Village, North Galela District, North Halmaher. The results of the study show that there are several community views regarding traditional ceremonies in Tutumaloleo Village. This ceremony has been adjusted to religious values related to the burial of the body, but the surrounding community has agreed on seven stages of death customs. These seven stages are traditions passed down from generation to generation in the local community.

However, recently, a new view has emerged in the community, namely, some people who think that the stages of death customs are only four stages according to the Islamic faith, namely bathing, shrouding, praying, and burying. Some people who hold this view no longer carry out traditional ceremonies according to the procedures of the community in the past. This does not cause conflict because in this community group, it will return to the right of each person to have an opinion on whether to follow the tradition.

The third is Solihah research (2019), this study discusses the influence of the religion of the Gebang Madura community on the Rakat Tase Culture. Rakat Tase Culture is a ritual procession of sea alms carried out by the people of Gebang Village. This tradition aims at asking for the safety of fishermen from all disasters at sea. Strengthening Islamic values in the local community also influences the implementation of this tradition. This impacts the Rakat Tase tradition; prayers accompany the current implementation process to Allah, reading of the Prophet's prayers, and reading of Kahlil. Initially, this tradition did not include the above procession while maintaining previous traditions. However, the sacred process of throwing offerings into the sea is still carried out or maintained; the community has discussed this together.

The fourth is a study conducted in Tawangmangu, Karanganyar, Central Java, related to the Dhukutan Tradition. The study was conducted by Wati and Saddhono (2019); the dhukutan tradition is a traditional ceremony carried out by the people of Ngelurah Village, Tawangmangu, Karanganyar. This tradition is carried out to honor the village's ancestors and as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty, who has bestowed sustenance, health, and safety for the town's people. Based on Javanese calculations, the ceremony is

carried out on 7 Lapan or every 35 days. The Dhukutan tradition is also used as a character education based on Islamic values. These values include sincerity, honesty, obedience, gratitude, *tawakal*, and tolerance. Education of these religious values has excellent potential as a medium for character education, especially for elementary school students. This study explains the integration of tradition with learning; students are required to understand local cultural values and implement moral and religious values in everyday life. Learning with the integration of the Dhukutan Tradition at Nglebak Tawangmangu Elementary School allows students to be more connected to their surroundings, especially in understanding local wisdom and practicing religious values. This is important as a form of cultural preservation in the modern era and helps introduce traditions and strengthen community identity.

Based on the previous research above, it can be concluded that developing religious knowledge in society will influence people's views on their ancestral culture. This causes negotiations, often called cultural negotiations; cultural talks are carried out to find a middle ground between cultural practices that conflict with religious values. The existing negotiations will cause transformation or change in the procession of ceremonies, rituals, and other cultural forms. On the other hand, the Dhukutan Tradition originating from Tawangmangu also explains the interaction of religion and culture in a tradition. This is shown by religious teachings that adapt to local traditions as a form of building social harmony while maintaining spiritual values. This tradition also reflects the existence of cultural negotiation, in which Javanese elements are aligned with Islamic values and form a broader practice with the integration carried out in schools that combine the preservation of tradition and

the instillation of religious values contained in the Dhukutan Tradition.

This study offers novelty through an in-depth exploration of the transformation of the *Dawuhan* Tradition with an interdisciplinary approach that connects Derrida's deconstruction theory with cultural studies. Critically, this study reveals how symbols and rituals originally full of local meanings experience reinterpretation due to the influence of religion and modernization, which is rarely discussed comprehensively in similar studies. Another novelty lies in the focus on the process of cultural negotiation, where local traditions are seen as passively adapting entities and actively negotiating their position in the changing social landscape. In addition, this study pays attention to the impact of this transformation on the perception of the sacredness, authenticity, and relevance of tradition in modern life while documenting the diversity of community perspectives on this change. By combining symbolic analysis, critical perspectives, and sociocultural dimensions, this study enriches the discourse on the relationship between religion, tradition, and modernization in local Indonesian culture.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses Derrida's deconstruction theory, a concept of thought understood as a revival of postmodernism. The postmodernist paradigm interacts critically with the previous paradigm, namely Western thought related to structuralism. Lubis explains that Derrida criticized three traditions of structuralist thought: logocentrism, phallogentrism, and binary opposition. Derrida provides a method related to the reading and interpretation of texts. Deconstruction is characterized by rejecting logocentrism and phonocentrism, which gives birth to binary oppositions and dichotomous hierarchical perspectives.

Derrida's deconstruction method is a reversal of the hierarchical opposition that is firmly embedded in structuralism. After carrying out the reversal, the opposition reversal is implemented. The purpose of deconstruction is to open the dissolution of the text but builds an unconventional reconstruction. From this process, the meaning hidden in the text will be revealed.

Derrida's deconstruction is related to language and issues of peace and justice (Baga 2022). Deconstruction is a form of hospitality that accepts other perspectives and interpretations. Derrida rejects the concept of universal justice; ideas and concepts of justice can vary from one society to another. Derrida's deconstruction theory is a philosophical method that aims to dismantle and challenge the hidden assumptions, structures, and hierarchies that underlie specific thoughts, languages, and cultures. The critical assumptions of Derrida's deconstruction theory are, first, difference, the concept of the relationship between signs and signs that is not only arbitrary but also unstable. Meaning is not fixed and closed but continues to change and depends on the existing context (instability of meaning). The difference is a combination of 2 concepts created by Derrida, namely the different "différer" and the delayed "different," terms to explain the meaning continuously produced through the difference between the signifier and the delayed due to changing contexts.

Derrida explains that the meaning of action is not fully and immediately present. However, other signs in a system determine the meaning and always-moving relationships (Gustafson 2023). This cannot be understood with certainty, meaning that meaning constantly shifts to other signs (never certain or fixed). Second, opposing structuralism's dependence on binary oppositions. Derrida criticized logocentrism because it relates to the belief in a stable central meaning and is found in binary

opposition. Binary opposition is a term for a pair of opposing ideas, and structuralism assumes that meaning is generated from the differences of these elements. Derrida explains that the existence of binary opposition creates not only hierarchy but also something more dominant than the other.

On the other hand, binary opposition ignores the complexity and instability of true meaning. Deconstruction can be realized in a healthy philosophical culture using "negotiation". Deconstruction is not a static or systematic approach but rather an ongoing process that requires mutual dialogue, debate, and a dynamic exchange of ideas. According to Derrida, the term "negotiation" emphasizes the context of deconstruction that does not only claim single truth but involves compromise between various perspectives and interpretations. The concept of deconstruction requires freedom of thought, a living and healthy philosophical culture, open-mindedness, freedom of thought, freedom to question assumptions, and freedom to challenge existing norms. Deconstruction requires space to explore new and unconventional ideas.

Religion, Tradition, and Modernization

Local traditions are a tangible manifestation of local cultural wisdom that continues to be passed down to the next generation. The *Dawuhan* tradition is one of the local traditions rich in social and spiritual values carried out by the Ngerso, Tawangmangu, Karanganyar community. This tradition is a form of reflection on the relationship between humans and nature. On the other hand, this tradition also represents the bond between society and religion and cultural norms inherent in society. However, amid modernization, this tradition faces challenges. This is due to the transformation of values, lifestyles, and technological advances that are starting to be known by the community.

Based on this context, religion plays a significant role. Religion is a value system that is a guideline for society. Therefore, religion can potentially maintain or modify elements of the *Dawuhan* tradition. The interaction between religion and tradition often forms this new synergy. However, it cannot be denied that it can also cause cases such as giving rise to conflicts or the elimination of certain socio-cultural practices. On the other hand, the modernization movement also puts pressure on the sustainability of tradition through several forms of social change, such as lifestyle, use of technology, and globalization in culture.

The focus of this research is to examine three main concepts, namely religion, tradition, and modernization. The first concept examines how the interaction of religion and tradition is analyzed to understand how religious values can influence the *Dawuhan* tradition. The second is the modernization of local traditions; this modernization can be identified by exploring changes in the mindset of society and the level of community participation in the activities of the *Dawuhan* Tradition. The third concept is related to the response of religion to modernization; in this case, it can be seen from how religion protects tradition and becomes an agent of change in the tradition.

The deepening of this tradition's movement has several dimensions. The first is the social dimension, which examines how changes in social interaction patterns affect the sustainability of the *Dawuhan* Tradition. The second is the religious dimension, which seeks to explore the religious perspective on tradition. This includes the role of religious organizations in maintaining or changing the *Dawuhan* tradition.

Based on the explanation above, the conceptual framework is expected to

identify the shifts in the *Dawuhan* Tradition in the Ngerso Hamlet community, Tawangmangu, Karanganyar. The shift can be seen in how the interaction pattern between religion, tradition, and modernization can provide strategic recommendations for preserving tradition without ignoring the increasingly strong dynamics of modernization. Therefore, this researcher emphasizes the contribution of local cultural studies and tries to protect cultural heritage in facing this dynamic social change. The research approach uses a deconstruction approach in analyzing how the symbols and rituals of the *Dawuhan* Tradition are reinterpreted or changed in meaning due to the influence of religious practices. Cultural studies offer a critical perspective in dissecting the layers of meaning behind the transformation. In addition, cultural studies also explain how society can maintain the cultural identity that it has held for a long time and adapt to new contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research on the *Dawuhan* Tradition in the Ngerso Tawangmangu Hamlet Community, Karanganyar, is a descriptive qualitative research (Anselm and Corbin 2007). Descriptive qualitative research is expected to reveal the meaning of the thoughts and actions of the research object. It is proposed with an analytical descriptive model so that the presentation of Islam and nationality becomes more open and natural. This research uses a sociology of religion approach (Strauss, Anselm, and Corbin 2009); religion is a social fact that is accurate, factual, and observable and influences people's behavior (Sodik 2006). Religion is part of the real life of its adherents, which can be seen in daily life such as the ideas, activities, and works of its adherents (Zada 2002); this approach explores the social aspects of religion (Imam

and Suprayogo 2003). In-depth interviews involving observation and documentation techniques were conducted for data collection (HB Sutopo 1988). In-depth interviews were conducted using a snowball sampling pattern so that the information received remains focused, namely on the hamlet head (Mr. S), people who are members of a religious sect (Mr. M and Mrs. M), the general public represented by the RT head (Mr. H), and the elders of Ngerso Hamlet (Mr. KW). The interview began with the Hamlet Head as the Hamlet leader, the driving force behind the surrounding community in implementing the *Dawuhan* Tradition (conducted in June 2024).

Furthermore, the hamlet head recommended a village elder who knows the origin of the *Dawuhan* tradition, namely Mr. KW (72 years old, interview was conducted in June 2024). The informants selected by the researcher were members of a particular religious group, where this informant was used to find out more about the opinions of the religious group's community regarding the *Dawuhan* Tradition (interview was conducted in July 2024). Finally, the interview was conducted with the RT head as the community leader to participate together in the *Dawuhan* Tradition, this informant strengthened information related to the implementation of the *Dawuhan* Tradition and the dynamics that occurred in the community related to the activity (the interview was conducted in July 2024). Further data collection was carried out through observation; observation involved direct observation and involvement in implementing the *Dawuhan* custom. In 2024, the *Dawuhan* Tradition was held on August 11, 2024. Researchers conducted direct field observations related to the *Dawuhan* Tradition activities in Ngerso Hamlet, Tawangmangu.

Meanwhile, documentation techniques were used to support data

sources in this study. The data analysis technique used in this study is an interactive analysis model that includes three stages: data reduction, data delivery, and conclusion (Sugiyono 2020). The data is presented in a systematic arrangement according to the flow created. This is intended to present a complete and well-structured condition. To better appreciate the feelings of the informant, the researcher explained the emic and etic models. Conclusions are drawn by paying attention to various things with a strong research data foundation. The findings obtained were tested for validity through data triangulation and informant review.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History, Dynamics, and Shifting Symbols of the Dawuhan Tradition

The *Dawuhan* tradition is a ceremony held annually in Ngerso Tawangmangu. *Dawuhan* etymologically comes from the Javanese language, "*dawuh*" which means "command". The meaning of the word "command" is intended for the local community to participate and routinely work together in maintaining the water environment by cleaning it. This command is a "*dawuh*" from the elders of the Ngerso community, which has been passed down from generation to generation from ancient times and has developed in society until now, even amidst the challenges of modernity and cultural globalization. The *Dawuhan* tradition aims at commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the month of Mulud on the Javanese calendar, precisely on the 12th of Rabi'ul Awal in the Hijri calendar. Related to eco-Sufism, the *Dawuhan* tradition is carried out to maintain the cleanliness of the water source from the Samin River, which flows in the Watu Surupan Channel. The Watu Surupan channel flows through Ngerso Hamlet and is the only water source. One way to

maintain the sustainability of the water source is to clean the 1,600 M long water channel with the cooperation of the entire Ngerso community. This water channel is vital for the Ngerso community because they work in the agricultural sector and need water sources to survive. The peak of the *Dawuhan* traditional event is a ritual prayer procession at Ndog Garing.

Tawangmangu is a sub-district located in Karanganyar Regency, Central Java. This sub-district is situated right on the slopes of Mount Lawu. Ngerso Hamlet is one of the hamlets in Nglebak Village, Tawangmangu. Nglebak Village has an area of 234,4305 km² and a population of 5,355 people. Nglebak Village has several hamlets, such as Ngrangen, Ngerso, Lebak, Mudal, and Somokatan. The location provides a cool climate and fertile soil suitable for developing agricultural systems, especially rice, vegetables, and fruits. These conditions are the primary roots of the *Dawuhan* tradition, an agrarian ritual rich in cultural and spiritual values.

The *Dawuhan* Tradition has strong roots in the agrarian culture of the people of Java. This tradition aim at expressing gratitude and ask for smooth irrigation of agriculture so that harvest yields are maximized.

"The Dawuhan Tradition was originally a local belief coming from ancestors; according to ancient oral tradition, this tradition existed before Islam entered Tawangmangu; since Islam entered, prayers in Islamic teachings began to appear, which were used in rituals. There were old mantras in the past because they were not taught to us at that time, and we only knew Islamic prayers until now." (KW 2024)

The prayer procession in the *Dawuhan* Tradition involves village elders known as *Modin*. This model is proof that this tradition is attached to Islam. The Islamic term *Modin* comes from the word

muezzin, a person crackled to life to issue the adhān, the prayer-call to the faithful. However, according to KH Bisri Mustofa (Muhsin 2022), *Modin* means imam al-din or a religious leader who has duties in spiritual and social activities. *Modin* has a role in maintaining and preserving local traditions that are in touch with Islamic teachings. This tradition is like the *Dawuhan* tradition; this figure is often involved, especially when reading prayers and providing spiritual direction.

"The peak of the Dawuhan Tradition is a joint prayer in Ndog Garing. This prayer is led by Mr. K as the Hamlet model. After that, they eat together." (S 2024)

Based on the oral tradition of the Ngerso Hamlet community, *Dawuhan* was originally a local ritual tradition based on the animist-dynamism beliefs of the rural community in Java. However, Islamic Mataram began to enter and dominate Central Java around the 16th to 17th centuries. Therefore, this tradition began to be integrated with Islamic teachings. The elders of Ngerso Hamlet explained,

"This tradition has existed since I was born 70 years ago, maybe even before I was born. The elders said that in ancient times, Islam came through the clerics of the Kingdom. Therefore, the prayers changed, and Kejawen Islam emerged. The prayers have been used very long are now replaced with Islamic prayers." (KW 2024)

Evidence that strengthens the influence of Islamic Mataram is the use of Islamic prayers and gratitude to God in the *Dawuhan* tradition. The village head uses Islamic prayers in the prayer procession, replacing the old practice that focused on mantras or worship of ancestral spirits.

"We believe that in this way, Allah will give blessings. Therefore, when the prayer ritual is performed, the Modin usually expresses gratitude to Allah, followed by a prayer to obtain blessings"

for the abundance of water flowing in our hamlet.” (M 2024)

Through the oral tradition of the local community, *Dawuhan* in Ngerso Hamlet, Tawangmangu is the result of the acculturation of local culture and the influence of Islam brought by Mataram. This tradition is not only a form of agricultural ritual but also a form of spiritual obedience of the local community. The *Dawuhan* tradition is still developing in several areas in Java, one of which is in the Tawangmangu area, Central Java. *Dawuhan* has a philosophical meaning that is very attached as a symbol of a community group's togetherness and cultural identity. This ceremony celebrates several values of Indonesian society, such as cooperation, obedience to ancestors, and others. The *Dawuhan* tradition developed in this community will maintain the harmony of the relationship between humans, nature, and spirituality.

The *Dawuhan* tradition also shapes the social life of the Ngerso Hamlet community. The *Dawuhan* tradition, which is the result of the life of the local community, also shapes the community's life. Through the *Dawuhan* tradition, the Ngerso Hamlet community also participates in a series of events in the ceremony. Community participation can be seen in cooperation, cleaning water channels, and maintaining the cleanliness of water sources, which are an essential source of life for the local community. This condition illustrates that with this ceremony, the community will be more structured and obedient to the social rules agreed upon together through interaction and practice. This ceremony involves the division of tasks and responsibilities carried out collectively regarding the division of locations for cleaning water channels based on region.

On the other hand, women also feel the division of tasks; they actively prepare food for ritual purposes and communal

eating events. The majority of the Ngerso Hamlet community works in the agricultural sector. The source of river springs is one of the main things that must be maintained for the survival of the Ngerso Hamlet community. Given the importance of water as a source of life, the Ngerso Hamlet community maintains the quality and quantity of water in their hamlet through the *Dawuhan* Ceremony.

The *Dawuhan* Ceremony is a ritual in which God Almighty asks to provide sufficient water for the community, especially for agriculture. The culture of the local hamlet community plays a vital role in achieving a successful harvest. The community carries out a joint prayer procession in this series of ceremonies. As a form of gratitude and thanks, the community gives offerings to nature and always provides water to irrigate the local community's rice fields.

The culture, values, and norms in the *Dawuhan* Ceremony also serve as a means of education for the next generation, teaching them about the importance of preserving and managing water. The *Dawuhan* Ceremony is attended by all elements of society, both young and old. The participation of the younger generation in the *Dawuhan* Ceremony teaches them about traditional techniques and ways of the community in managing water, the importance of preserving water, and how to maintain the cleanliness of water sources, which are the community's shared responsibility. This valuable knowledge will be passed on to the next generation.

The statement above shows that the practices carried out in this ceremony are part of the identity and culture of the Ngerso Hamlet community, which are formed through interactions and experiences in everyday life. For example, cleaning water channels as part of the *Dawuhan* Ceremony is not only done as a routine task but also as a symbol of togetherness and concern for

the environment and the surrounding community. Through collective life that has taken place over a long period of history, the Ngerso Hamlet community has developed and maintained these practices as an inseparable part of their lives. The *Dawuhan* Ceremony in Ngerso Hamlet is a product of the community's social life and plays a role in shaping their social life. Through this ceremony, the Ngerso Hamlet community participates in cleaning water channels and maintaining the cleanliness of water sources that are the source of life for the local community. This reflects how the ceremony becomes a structure that organizes the community's social life, regulating interactions and practices carried out by individuals in society.

In line with the dynamics of existing socio-religious changes, the *Dawuhan* Tradition has also experienced many shifts in meaning, symbols, and other aspects. This is felt by the Ngerso and Tawamanggu communities, as well as cultural changes due to the openness of information, social media, and the encouragement of external factors that bring pop culture. In addition, this socio-cultural change occurs due to the encouragement of religious practices that develop in the Ngerso community. The *Dawuhan* tradition ritually has a sacred symbolic meaning to honor ancestors and guardians of water sources. Currently, the *Dawuhan* tradition has transformed along with the religious understanding of the community and the emergence of several religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute, the Al-Quran Interpretation Council, and Salafi which have changed the socio-cultural map of the local community. These changes reflect the cultural adaptation process caused by local traditions interacting with external influences. The transformation of the *Dawuhan* tradition can be seen from the changes in the procedures for implementation and several fundamental

aspects, such as symbolism, meaning, and social structure related to the ceremony.

In socio-cultural terms, the Ngerso community adheres to the cultural customs developed in their environment. Located at the foot of Mount Lawu, Lawu has a unique culture of preserving the natural environment as a form of "dawuh" that continues to be held by the Ngerso community because it has moral teachings from religious teachings and local wisdom. The Ngerso community has experienced shifts and transformations that illustrate the tension between customary values and the outside world's influence, especially Islamic teachings.

"The shift and gap in society in carrying out the Dawuhan tradition began with the entry of religious organizations into the Ngerso community by bringing scriptural Islamic doctrines and understanding so that they considered the tradition not part of spiritual values. They believed that the Dawuhan tradition contained things considered mystical and superstitious, but as a form of social togetherness, they still cleaned the environment. After dialogue, the community with various perspectives finally found common ground so that this tradition and togetherness would not disappear." (S 2024)

Changes and shifts in the *Dawuhan* Tradition, especially in ceremonies, were carried out by negotiating between community members to find a solution acceptable to all parties. The changes that occurred ranged from the time of implementation to the symbolism used in the ritual. In the Javanese calendar, the old tradition of carrying out ceremonies on the first day of Suro is considered a sacred day, and rituals and worship of ancestral spirits occur. The choice of this time is related to the Javanese tradition, namely kejawen, which emphasizes the importance of

relationships with *pepunden* and ancestors as a form of respect for ancestors.

According to Islamic-Javanese beliefs, the first ten days of the month of Suro is considered sacred (Aryanti and Zafi 2020). This idea stems from the cultural factor of the palace, the "sangaran" of the month of Suro itself. This triggers the community to develop a traditional culture of remembering and honoring ancestors using "mundhi dawuh" through activities such as *selamatan*, *kenduri*, *Muharram* procession, cleaning of the *Kraton keris*, and others. For the Ngerso community, the Dawuh tradition is usually carried out on the 1st of Suro as a form of gratitude to God for still being allowed to enjoy the new year and a form of respect for the ancestors. In line with the changes and dynamics of the Ngerso community, the time of the *Dawuhan* tradition was changed from the 1st of Suro to the 12th of *Rabi'ul Awwal* in the month of *Mulud*. On that date, Muslims celebrate *Maulid Nabi*, or the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which the Ngerso community calls *Muludan*. The shift in the implementation time from 1 Suro, which is identical to a holy day in the Javanese calendar, to 12 *Rabi'ul Awwal* reflects the influence from outside, especially Islam, which colors the way of thinking so that it becomes an activity in the religious and cultural practices of the community. From the results of the study, what caused the shift in the time of the ceremony was the development of certain religious and spiritual groups among the Ngerso community.

The Ngerso community participates in several religious organizations such as Nadhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute, Salafi, and others, thus making the social, cultural, and religious dynamics. Traditional religious organizations, such as Nadhatul Ulama, are relaxed by accepting local cultural forms as part of the media to

develop religious teachings in the Ngerso community. They assume that religion will continue to exist and grow as long as it is accompanied by culture, namely a culture that does not conflict with Islam. On the other hand, several religious defenders reject local traditions and cultures because they are considered "*laisa minal Islam*" with a rigid, dogmatic religious understanding and only having one perspective. This causes people to be careful in responding to social life, including following cultural traditions.

This causes a split in the social structure of society into two and in a position that is facing each other; there are groups of people who still hold fast to ancestral customs; on the other hand, there are groups of people who have begun to abandon local customs due to outside influences. This condition has resulted in minor conflicts; some people want to avoid following *Dawuhan* customs, such as helping to clean water channels to irrigate rice fields.

"Certain groups of religious organizations that did not want to participate in the Dawuhan traditional activities did not want to clean the river. Their harvest was not optimal; from that incident, they began to speak up in meetings and wanted to find a solution."
(S 2024)

The negotiations between the elements of society resulted in an agreement, and the elders of the Ngerso community wanted togetherness between residents and customs to be preserved. The community tried to find a way out of the *Dawuhan* tradition without eliminating its original meaning by changing the time of its implementation. The previous implementation time, namely the first day of Suro / Muharram, was considered a mystical and superstitious time for the Javanese people and was considered polytheistic because the time was chosen based on the Javanese calendar. This opinion was clarified to avoid causing conflict in the midst of a

society lacking in everything. However, it was agreed that the implementation time would be changed to commemorate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

The peak of the *Dawuhan* tradition is the ritual procession of praying and eating together as a form of gratitude to God and the social togetherness of the Ngerso community. The food that must be brought in the *Dawuhan* tradition is *tumpeng*, complete with side dishes. In the *Dawuhan* tradition, *tumpeng* means "*tumuju mring Pangeran*" as a symbol of gratitude to God for all the blessings, one of which is the gift of a spring given to the Ngerso community as a significant source of life. Cone-shaped *tumpeng* in the *Dawuhan* tradition is a symbol of prosperity. (Fardani, Much Arsyad 2024), cone-shaped *tumpeng* is a symbol in Javanese Islamic ceremonies or rituals such as symbols of fertility, luck, and community welfare. In the *Dawuhan* tradition, *Tumpeng* is a product of the surrounding community and has symbolic prosperity, namely everything obtained from nature. The old tradition requires the Ngerso community to cook grilled chicken or *ingkung*, which means junking, marring to God Almighty, prostrating, and surrendering to God Almighty. *Ingkung* symbolizes gratitude and respect for ancestors. *Ingkung* means being serious in praying. *Ingkung* teaches people about harmony between communities and how life goes on calmly and peacefully.

"In the Dawuhan tradition, Tumpeng is a product of the Ngerso community. Roast chicken can be eaten at Watu Surupan every time you eat it. An old sak Niki moves the mo banda; the edge squeezes the eight estates. Others are not good at drinking, but the community also shows them to pay for their ancestral worship and help them preserve the beautiful spring." (KW 2024)

Some food in traditional offerings has begun to shift. The new *Dawuhan* tradition

eliminates incense and alcohol. This condition is influenced by the social conditions of the Ngerso community, especially the influence of the development of Islamic teachings. In some communities that belong to certain schools of thought, this gives rise to cultural negotiations. One of the cultural negotiations is considering food in offerings. They believe that the principle of Islam is awareness and equality with Allah in all aspects of life. Offerings with magical meaning are considered excessive because the central sense of gratitude is to God Almighty. *Ingkung* is considered excessive.

Not all people can perform offerings/*tadarus* because the economic limitations felt by the community vary. The community wants the ceremony to remain sustainable but more accessible so that all elements of society can carry it out. This food is no longer mandatory because it is adjusted to the situation felt by the community. Alcoholic drink used as a symbol of ancestral offering rituals has also been removed. This is due to negotiations that occur in the community; the view of some people emphasizes that alcohol is drink that is prohibited in Islamic teachings (haram) in any form and must be avoided.

Apart from the food aspect, the thing that has shifted in the *Dawuhan* tradition is related to the media. The prayer procession in the *Dawuhan* ritual is sacred and involves social elements, namely the elders of Ngerso Hamlet who become prayer leaders addressed to God Almighty and the ancestors. This old tradition uses tools such as incense as offerings in prayer. Incense as a medium is symbolic in conveying prayers, messages, and requests always to be given safety. Meanwhile, incense has meaning and purpose of indicating to the spirits of the ancestors that the Ngerso people obey the teachings of their "dawuh" and ask for

blessings so that the prayers offered to God are answered.

"Incense is sacred medium in the Dawuhan tradition for prayer rituals. In general, incense is only symbol of prayer, so what is requested will be immediately granted by God. Incense is also symbol of the Ngerso people's obedience to "dawuh" and what has been left behind by the ancestors." (S 2024)

The new tradition eliminates incense, a tool for the prayer procession in the *Dawuhan* tradition. The elimination of incense reflects the symbolic ritual of the Javanese people's belief in Islamic teachings. Incense contains magical, symbolic meanings when communicating with ancestors. The smoke used in incense is likened to a tool that carries prayers to the ancestors. This has received opposition from specific religious organizations who consider it contrary to Islamic teachings. From here, some Ngerso people reject practices that involve intermediaries other than Allah SWT. Islam prohibits various forms of worship aimed at ancestral spirits because they are polytheistic. This condition provides openness to the views of the Ngerso community.

The *Dawuhan* tradition has shifted in three phases due to religious factors. Changes in the practice of the Ngerso community's *Dawuhan* tradition open up deep insights into cultural transformation's hidden meaning and ambiguity. The old *Dawuhan* tradition involves several symbolic elements that have been abandoned, such as shifts in ceremony times, the removal of curved food and drinks, and the removal of ritual tools (incense). These elements appear unstable and are accepted by society. When these elements are lost, their meaning is not fixed. According to Derrida (Gustafson 2023), signs will always experience shifts and delays (differences), such as the loss of meaning from the request for food and drink, which indicates an unstable old

meaning. Society moves dynamically to find and create new meanings through social conditions, such as changes in the practice of religious understanding.

The dismantling of meanings that change symbolically in the *Dawuhan* tradition is seen because of two binary oppositions: *Kejawen* and Islamic teachings. These two things influence and define each other. The negotiations were carried out by the two oppositions from their respective meanings. No meaning dominates completely; instead, both interact dynamically. The *Dawuhan* tradition has two sides: hardcore, fixed and static, usually as a value, and softcore, which moves dynamically according to the times. The *Dawuhan* tradition is flexible with its views and adjusts the construction of new meanings through negotiation. People who are members of specific mass organizations have opinions that are initially open to the existing situation. The community begins to soften in carrying out traditions according to the agreement; they bring food that has been directed, such as *tumpeng* and side dishes. On the other hand, people who are close to Javanese customs condition themselves to what happens, as shown by the existence of the *Dawuhan* tradition led by community leaders without using ritual equipment that was previously eliminated and still maintaining the solemnity of the ritual whose primary purpose is as an expression of gratitude to God Almighty for the gift of the spring that has been given.

Power, Instability of Meaning, and Ambiguity in the Dawuhan Tradition

The symbolism and procedures in the *Dawuhan* tradition that change the meaning related to the sign are always flexible and definite. The meaning of the sign continues to develop, changing the ritual by eliminating incense and replacing it with practices according to Islamic views, thus creating new conditions in the ritual. Incense is a symbol

connecting humans with ancestral spirits. The loss of incense, a ritual procession to communicate with ancestors, is considered "lost" and only associated with prayer. The existing changes raise the question of whether respect for ancestors is less critical, or is the symbol changed as a form of respect for ancestors in a new way? Questions like this show that the meaning of the ritual is no longer clear and ambiguous; it requires continuous interpretation, studied according to the awareness of the Ngerso people. This aligns with Derrida's deconstruction theory, which states that eating does not always exist entirely and directly. Still, its meaning will continue to be associated with signs in a system that continues to move.

The awareness of the Ngerso community to re-examine and re-interpret the *Dawuhan* tradition with a newer approach is known as the term continuous meaning. The meaning that never remains in the ritual will continue to be studied and developed. The unclear understanding of the changes in the *Dawuhan* tradition rituals that occurred has an impact on the identity of the Ngerso community and the sustainability of the tradition. The community must negotiate to form a new meaning that arises from the existing shifts, thus creating complex cultural dynamics in the identity of the Ngerso community. The meaning of the *Dawuhan* tradition in the past is different from the present; there will also be social, cultural, and religious changes in the future. The changes that occur are a form of negotiation, reinterpretation, and reproduction of the artistic and spiritual meanings of the Ngerso community. Derrida's deconstruction approach reveals the dynamics of power and hegemony in the changes in *Dawuhan* customary practices due to social, religious, and cultural shifts in the Ngerso community.

The deconstruction approach provides a deconstructive view, narrative of domination, and discourse of power formed

in socio-political power (Gustafson 2023). The Ngerso community plays a vital role in responding to changing conditions; they negotiate to deal with shifts. Understanding deconstruction explores hidden layers of meaning and understands how meaning always experiences movement, shifts, and delays in the *Dawuhan* tradition.

Several figures associated with social and political power control the changes and shifts in the *Dawuhan* tradition. Socio-religious institutions have an essential role in influencing changes in the *Dawuhan* tradition. People affiliated with religious organizations such as Nadhatul Ulama, the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute, Majelasi Tafsir Al-Qur'an, Muhammadiyah, and Salafi have religious views and doctrines that must be actualized in everyday life. This encourages people to think critically about the spiritual knowledge they believe in, especially in interpreting the *Dawuhan* tradition because it links religion and local culture. The *Dawuhan* tradition is considered to deviate from the understanding of *Kaffah* Islam because it is syncretic and must be corrected. This is also in line with research conducted by Jamrud (2022); the influence of religion changes people's perceptions of local traditions, even to the point of causing the tradition not to be carried out by some people who think that the tradition is not in line with Islamic teachings. On the other hand, for traditional religious organizations such as Nadhatul Ulama, the *Dawuhan* tradition is part of the media for propagation to develop Islamic teachings as long as its activities do not conflict with the core values of religious teachings.

The permanent government or local community leaders, namely the hamlet head, also have the authority to influence and direct the narrative of change that occurs. These community leaders create a discourse of togetherness and modernization in society.

The *Dawuhan* tradition must continue to be preserved by the entire community. Seeing the dynamics of modernization and conditions in the field, the message that is to be conveyed is that community leaders, such as village heads, need to be actors and provide input regarding the implementation of negotiations. These negotiations are carried out so that the *Dawuhan* cultural tradition remains sustainable. Traditions are preserved and community togetherness is maintained amidst the strong currents of modernization and various external influences. The hamlet head is a figure who agrees with the changes that occur. The Hamlet head supports changes that aim for social harmony. Behind this cultural transformation, customary elements are starting to be replaced by new elements and practices that adapt to the times. Customary elements are replaced by practices that are more based on the demands of Islamic teachings. That is how some parties dominate in providing direction for social change.

The *Dawuhan* tradition has a religious meaning and respect for God for blessing the local community with a water source. The tradition of respecting ancestors with symbolic tools and certain rituals began to be eliminated. This condition shows that the narrative of dominance is trying to strengthen their position in society. Existing agreements can manage the community's response to these changes. The Ngerso community wants local culture and Javanese Islamic customs such as *Dawuhan* not to be lost in the current of modernization and silenced under the "pretext" of religion because it is a "dawuh" or ancestral command that influences the lives of the Ngerso community. Changes through negotiation did not cause resistance from religious mass organizations that rejected the *Dawuhan* custom because it was considered un-Islamic and tinged with polytheism. Resistance occurred before the talks; after the negotiation, there has been no

resistance until now. This condition does not rule out the possibility of continuing negotiations. The cultural identity of the Ngerso community is continuously negotiated by new and external influences that create ambiguity or continuously reinterpreted meanings. This is also felt by the Gebang Madura community towards the Rakat Tase Culture, the local community's knowledge of Islam dramatically influences the local traditions of the community (Solihah 2019). The negotiation occurs to form new cultural practices in traditions such as the current implementation process coupled with prayers to Allah, reading of the Prophet's prayers, and reading of *Tahlil*.

CONCLUSION

The *Dawuhan* tradition that developed in the Ngerso community, Tawangmangu Karanganyar, experienced a cultural shift due to changes in social dynamics, especially the influence of religious practices by existing mass organizations. The shift that occurred can be seen from several changes in symbolism in the *Dawuhan* tradition, namely changes in the time of the ritual, the elimination of some food offerings in ceremonies such as *ingkung* and alcoholic drinks, and the elimination of ritual prayer media in the form of incense and frankincense. The changes that occurred illustrate the negotiation and reinterpretation of the meaning of the *Dawuhan* tradition in the Ngerso community. The cultural studies paradigm with a deconstruction theory approach dismantles the meaning of the ritual. The meaning of ritual ceremonies is never fixed but always dynamic. This meaning will continue to change and is not permanent. This shift in tradition has a discourse on power relations and socio-political hegemony that significantly influences changes in the *Dawuhan* tradition, this discourse forms public

perception and encourages people to negotiate.

The cultural identity of the Ngerso community continues to move and experience negotiation and reinterpretation based on social dynamics. This condition makes the meaning of the *Dawuhan* tradition ambiguous and never reaches the final word. The shift in *Dawuhan* tradition illustrates the dynamics of local culture that comes into contact with external influences. Ultimately, this creates new cultural practices continuously negotiated by the local community. This study contributes significantly to the discussion of Javanese tradition negotiation; tradition is not static and undergoes a continuous negotiation process based on social, religious, and political changes. Cultural negotiation aims to preserve tradition and become a sustainable strategy. Tradition changes to maintain the relevance of tradition for the next generation while still keeping critical social values and norms.

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