Religious Integrity and Local Culture (Descriptive Study on Cicarucub Indigenous Peoples of Lebak Banten)

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Abstract: The relationship between religion (Islam) and culture is often manifested in accommodative, complementary, and conflicting forms, but for the people of South Banten, the relationship between religion and culture (tradition) looks more complementary. Islam and ancestral culture have similar values, so a dynamic, dialectical relationship is created so that an integral relationship is realized. This study employs an ethnographic approach, which explains in depth about humans, in this case the Cicarucub community. The method used is a qualitative method; this method develops and solves problems that have been described and analysed in terms of religious and cultural integrity. The results of this study state that there are cultural meanings that have similarities with Islamic teachings. The relationship between religion (Islam) and culture (Sunda) is proof that Islam is a dynamic religion; it is permissible to modify new teachings as long as they do not conflict with the al-Qur’an, hadith, the consensus of the scholars (ijma’), and qiyaṣ (analogy). Sundanese culture is also a very dynamic culture, able to coexist with religious teachings, especially Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Discussions on religious and cultural issues will continue to be topics of interest, receive special attention, and grow. Both are primary factors that can change the style and system of human life, for both individuals and groups. Even though religion is seen as something superstitious by some groups, it still survives and develops today. Religion and culture share many similarities, including the fact that both are individual and group identities that can be expressed to others. People who are religious and cultural will display both identities in public.

Understanding religion certainly cannot be seen from just one perspective because the definitions related to religion are written by experts with a very large number of variations. Among the popular definitions of religion, religion is seen as a system of human culture. According to Geertz, religion is a symbol that aims to create feelings and motivations that are strong, easily spread, and not easily lost in a person by forming a conception of the general order of existence and placing this conception into factual radiations and ultimately feelings, and this motivation will be seen as a unique reality (Daniel L. Pals, 1996: 414).

Of course, religion and culture cannot be separated because every human group has them, but the meaning of religion in culture creates something different, such as dialogue, conflict, or even complementarity. One example is the integrity of religion and local culture, which form cultural acculturation in religion (Islam) and regional culture.

Islam is the Samawi religion, also known as the Abrahamic religion, which was last accepted by humans. Allah revealed Islam to the prophet Muhammad SAW as a guide for all humanity (Umar: 5). Islam was born in the region of Saudi Arabia (Makkah), which at that time was called the jahiliyah (ignorance) because they still adhered to the traditions of their ancestors. One of the factors that causes jahiliyah behaviour to occur is the fatrah period from the prophet Isya to the prophet Muhammad SAW, which is quite long. Fatrah is the transition from the prophet Isya to the prophet Muhammad SAW for 600 years, and at this time the "syara" law does not apply (Syekh Taqiyudin as-Subki: 62).

After Muhammad was sent as a prophet, regional expansion continued to be carried out by him and subsequent generations so that Islam entered and was accepted in a number of areas and even became the religion with the second most adherents in the world. Most Muslims are divided into several ethnic and racial groups; Huntington, as written by Asep Achmad Hidayat, divides them into three groups: Arabia, Persia, and Malay (Asep, 2017: 3).

Indonesia is one of the Malay countries and the largest Muslim country in Asia. The theory of the entry of Islam into Indonesia is still the subject of much debate among historians, and this debate was certainly born from various perspectives on how to see the entry of Islam. According to popular belief, Islam entered Indonesia through Persia due to the discovery of the Persian influence on Muslim civilization in the archipelago, particularly from a linguistic standpoint. Nurkholis Majid gave an example of Arabic words such as Tha Marbuthah (ْبُذَّة), which became ha (َّ) if read as waqf (dead), like zakatun became zakah.

This shows that the Indonesian language did not borrow directly from Arabic but from Persian and mainland Islamic languages such as Urdu, Pustha, Turkish, and others (Sumanto, 1993:18).

According to some, Islam arrived in Indonesia through Chinese Muslim traders in the 8th and 9th centuries AD. In the seventh century, the Wha Zhin Zi mosque was found in Guangzhou, while in Indonesia, a tomb was just discovered. The perspective
used by this opinion is to look at historical inscriptions or artefacts. Another opinion states that Islam entered Indonesia through Arabic, Turkish, and Gujarati. The opinion that mentions Islam in the Archipelago through Gujarat is a popular opinion among Nusantara Muslims. Ratu Suntiah cited Pijnappel (a Dutch scholar) who linked the origins of Islam in the archipelago to the Guzarat and Malabar regions, citing Arabs of the Shafi’i madhhab who migrated and settled in Indian territory before bringing Islam to the archipelago (Ratu, 2016: 193).

Before Islam entered Indonesia, the people were already familiar with cultural civilization (local wisdom) and religion (local religion), such as the belief systems Kejawen and Sunda Wiwitan. As a result, even if people accept Islam, they will be unable to abandon the Hindu-Buddhist pantheism that had previously entered. For example, among the nobility, they abandoned Indian ritualism but not pantheism, becoming more introspective and adopting an intrinsically illuminationist approach to supernatural power, a kind of far eastern nостicism, a contemplation of metaphysical capabilities and actions (Hawe, dkk, 2007: 79).

Portraits of Muslim communities that have not been able to leave pantheism or their ancestral traditions can be found in several places in Indonesia, as can be seen in the South Banten region, which is also the object of discussion in this paper. Most of the people of South Banten, especially those who are members of the Banten Kidul Customary Unit organization, in their religious practices still combine two elements, namely religion and ancestral traditions.

Furthermore, this paper will try to examine and discuss the position of religion in the lives of Muslim communities in South Banten as a representation of religious and cultural acculturation in Indonesian Muslim society, the object of which is the Kasepuhan Cicarucub indigenous people.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employs an ethnographic approach, which explains in depth about humans, in this case the Cicarucub community. Thus, a calm essay on the culture of an ethnic group, arranged according to an ethnographic framework, will consist of several discussions or chapters. Koentjaraningrat offers sub-chapters, including location, natural environment and demography, ethnic origin and history, language, technology systems, livelihood systems, social organizations, knowledge systems, the arts, and religious systems (Koentjaraningrat, 2009: 257).

This research method uses qualitative research methods; qualitative research methods can be defined as research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behaviour (Lexy, 2003: 3). Furthermore, to obtain the data needed for this study, the authors explored data from various sources. Data sources according to the method of acquisition are as follows: 1. Primary data sources, namely data obtained from interviews with related parties, namely: traditional leaders, community members, and important figures

2. Secondary data sources, namely, data obtained from literature, books, libraries, archives, journals, online media, and others that support its use as secondary data.

The theory used in this study is the cycle theory; in this theory, it is argued that life will always revolve. Every life will experience setbacks, including those related to a spiritual or supernatural belief. Selo Soemardjian said that social institutions in society fulfil the social systems, values, religion, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour among groups (http://repository.ut.ac.id/4267/1/IPEM4439-M1.pdf).
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religion shows the value of obedience to God, while culture contains values and symbols so that humans are able to be dynamic in their lives. The existence of a religious system that encompasses society implies a collective meaning that influences the totality of the religious social order, but it cannot be viewed as a system that applies in society forever.

However, sometimes the dialectic between religion and culture turns into tension because culture is often seen as inconsequential. Therefore, humans in accepting culture and religion are divided into at least three parts: there are those who reject culture as a whole like reformers; there are those who maintain culture but do not accept religion (Islam) like the Baduy people; and there are those who accept both in the process of acculturation like the people of South Banten or the *Kasepuhan* people.

*Kasepuhan* residents who live around Bungur Village are a social, historical, economic, and cultural unit with *Kasepuhan* residents who live in other areas around the Mount Halimun complex area, which includes the South Bogor and South Banten areas. The word "kasepuhan" itself is taken from the word "elder" in Sundanese, which means "old man" (R. Satjabdirata, 2011: 319). In simple terms, "kasepuhan" means ancestors or parents who are respected by the community as their advisors. Until now, there have been no systematic notes or writings about their socio-cultural lives (Kusnakan, 1992: 14–15).

For the *Kasepuhan* Cicarucub community, customs or traditions are something that considered urgent in their lives. Religion and custom are their two guidelines in carrying out life with their respective duties or functions. Religion regulates how they carry out a transcendental relationship with Allah SWT, while adat serves as a guide in carrying out activities such as the location of the house, farming rules, and other traditions.

The *Kasepuhan* tradition in Cicarub has undergone many shifts; this is well recognized by the traditional leaders and the community. According to Entoy, in their current culture, there is a dispensation or relaxation in practice as long as it does not clash with kasepuhan, but these changes and concessions are made according to their traditional mechanisms from generation to generation as they are called the inauguration ceremony (personal communication, November 1, 2022).

An example of a change in their traditions is that, for example, in the past they were prohibited from using electricity or lighting, but with the development of the times and the introduction of technology to them, they are now allowed to use lights. In the past, they were forbidden to use the stove, but now they are allowed, although they are limited to cooking other than rice because, to cook rice, they have to use firewood.

As explained in the discussion above, the two elements that guide their lives are religion and culture or tradition. They had walked in unison since their ancestors and had an inseparable relationship. In the Cicarucub community, examples of an integral relationship between religion and culture include:

1. **Lilikuran** Culture

The *Lilikuran* culture is carried out by the community on the last odd night of the month of Ramadan. The tradition of the *Lilikuran* night is carried out by number of women on the last odd night of the month of Ramadan; they bring food to the mosque to eat after finishing the Tarawih prayers. In other terms, it is also referred to as the "mother’s alms tradition" because it is they who cook and serve the food.
Meanwhile in Islam, the last odd number in the month of Ramadan is the recommendation to stay in the mosque to perform i’tikaf in the mosque. As Imam Abu Syuja’s opinion in the book Fathul Qorib says, "I’tikaf is very sunnah in the last ten of the month of Ramadan to get the night of lailatul qodar" (Ahmad Bin Husen, 27).

The relationship between religion and culture in the case above is an effort to position culture as an infrastructure for da’wah so that people are accustomed to staying in mosques to perform i’tikaf worship. The principle of legality in giving alms is also supported by several arguments from religion. This is a good deed, and one of the rewards given by religion is that the perpetrator is protected from all harm or calamity by Allah, according to Rasul:

العمر تطول و البلاة ترد الصدقة سلم و عليه الله صلي النبي قال

Alms can repel harm and prolong life (Jalaludin, 28).

2. Sedekah Bumi Culture (Nguner Lembur)

Understanding Sundanese culture certainly cannot use just one view; therefore, Rizki Ridyasmara divides Sunda into three parts, namely, philosophical, ethnic, and geographical. According to him, the area traversed by the sun’s orbit is now called the Sunda Shelf, the Sundanese level, or the Sundanese region, and has even become Sundaland (Rizki, 2016: 9).

Philosophical is called siloka or silo lamun can kabuki in the Sundanese language (Cicarucub). Silo means to glare at something whose meaning is unclear and, if not interpreted, will lead to wrong conclusions. So when interpreting the meaning of culture, there is no difference between religion and culture if it is understood philosophically. According to Ntoy, the rules of religion, state, and culture both command good and prohibit bad. All three are one unit that cannot be separated; if there is an attempt to separate, the consequence is division (personal communication, November 1, 2022).

The Sedekah Bumi culture, or nuner overtime, is a culture of the people whose time is temporary. Usually, when the village is feeling lonely because they don’t find blessings in it, they believe their village must be repaired, they call it ngabeberes overtime (repairing the village).

This cultural practice is carried out by the community by slaughtering buffalo that are bought together. Slaughtered buffalo may only be eaten on the spot by the public and guests who are also present at the event. The buffalo head is not cooked but will be buried in the village; the process of burying the buffalo head is called alms of the earth. The goal of Sedekah Bumi is to express gratitude to the creator of the earth (Allah) through cultural expressions.

In Dzohir’s eyes, burying a buffalo’s head will be considered redundant or useless by the public. But for actors, of course, this culture has a variety of meanings and goals. According to Dadang, burying a buffalo’s head is not at all a waste. According to him, what is a waste is that when people finish eating the buffalo meat, they are sleeping or not doing any activities (personal communication, July 16, 2020). Slaughtering a buffalo is intended as a charity for the community, and it is hoped that the alms made will receive the blessing of Allah so that they will be saved from disaster.

Burying the buffalo’s head is a symbol of burying human desires or animalistic thoughts (Fikru al-Hayawaniah), which sometimes exist in humans. This is equivalent to the sacrifice on the Adha holiday, one of which is to bury the animal desires that exist in humans, and these animal desires do not differentiate between humans and animals.

Scholars view this case as detailed law. The above cultural laws can be both good and bad; at least the scholars divide the law into two parts (permissible and not).
One of the scholars who commented on this law is Sheikh Zainudin Almaliabari in the book Fathul Muin:

"Whoever slaughters because he is closer to Allah to avoid interference from Jin, then it is not haram; if the aim is to give it to Jin, then the law is haram" (Zainudin, 64).

Sheikh Zainudin's opinion explained that in slaughtering any animal, it must be in accordance with the intentions and rules of fiqh. This opinion was also commented on by Abi Bakar Uthman bin Muhamad Syato in I`anah at-Tholibin, as in the text below:

Syekh Abi Bakar Uthman explained that if someone slaughters something from a camel, cow, or goat because he is closer to Allah or intends to get closer and worship Allah alone, then the slaughter is sufficient to reject the disturbance of the jinn. The status of animals that are slaughtered is that of halal animals because they are meant for Allah alone and not for anything else. But when it is intended for someone other than Allah, it becomes haram, and the slaughter becomes carrion that is forbidden to consume (Abi Bakar, 349).

According to Solih, the relationship between religion and culture as described above has an important meaning, both of which provide even positive values.

Acculturation will create a new culture (assimilation) to change society's perspective on carrying out culture, so that culture is not considered a religion and vice versa. In the Kasepuhan language, it is known as buhun kudu disuhun, syara kudu kudu dibawa, which means culture must be maintained and religion must be used (personal communication, November 4, 2022).

Still, in Solih's opinion, if there are differences in opinion regarding religion and culture, then it is considered normal. He also offers a solution, namely, as long as culture does not conflict with monotheism and does not disgrace and destroy the spirit of religion, then culture does not need to be an issue.

3. The Culture of Wearing Headbands (Memakai Iket Kepala)

The definition of Sundanese iket can be seen in various sources, both oral (folklore) and written. Iket is a cloth used as a head covering that means bond (Beungkeutan) and has a basic rectangle shape. In their use, the iket and the imamate (sorban) have the same function, which is to cover the head.

In the basic form of iket, which is a square (juru opat) with four sides and a square in the middle with a diagonal position, it means:

1. Opat Kalima Pancer (fire, water, wind, land, and self) means harmony between nature and humans as its inhabitants.
2. The four companions (opat juru) and five are the Messenger of Allah (the middle part), which means the four companions of the apostle who always accompany him as examples of life's teachings.
3. The four maddhabs
4. Five is the basic shape of the Ka`bah (Suciati, 2008: 207).

Iket with a skullcap or cap has similarities in binding; a skullcap is taken from the Arabic Khofa-Yakhfi-Khofiyatan, which means vague. Science and knowledge must be disguised and may not be used arbitrarily. Iket also serves the same purpose, as a term appears in Sundanese Sing Saringset Pageuh Iket, Carincing Pageuh Kancing, you must be strong with a cap, and you must be careful with buttons.

The cultural teachings of iket and religious teachings of skullcap or priesthood
have the same meaning. Sundanese iket made of cloth is taken from four squares that have four corners. The four corners are west, east, south, and north. In Sundanese cosmology, it is also known as *papat kalima pancer*, which means four powers and one single power (God). The four forces are water, earth, land, and fire. In addition to humans needing the four elements, humans are also given the task of guarding them so that they can protect the ecosystem of life.

In a Facebook post called Kasepuhan Cicarucub, which was uploaded on June 23, 2020, the admin explains in detail the meaning of "iket," apart from the meaning above. The rectangular iket is folded into a three-square, as explained in the post. This triple square has a meaning: *Tilu Sapamulu Dua Sakarupa. Anu Hijj Ulah Pahili* The three (religion, country, and culture) cannot be separated; the two have the same meaning (the orders from Allah and sayings from parents), and the one is Allah, with whom he has no partner. This principle or interpretation of culture really contributes to moderation in thinking; this concept invites people to obey the rules of religion, state, and culture.

**CONCLUSION**

Religion (Islam) and culture (Sunda) in the Kasepuhan adat community of South Banten (Cicarucub) are like two sides of the same coin that cannot be separated from one another. Religion and culture are integrated into the way of life, social system, culture, and Islamic values. Both are used as boats to sail the ocean according to religious or cultural rules.

In the cultural shift that occurred in Cicarucub, it can be concluded that culture and religion can be intertwined as an integral relationship. Cultures that are not in accordance with Islamic teachings can be detected and then replaced with a new culture, namely one that has Islamic values. The basic concept of culture is functional, meaning that when there is a culture that is considered not functional, either in terms of values or rituals, then that culture will be replaced with a new one.

The harmonization of religion and culture in Cicarucub makes it very possible to use culture as a method of da’wah, so it is hoped that religion can be accepted by the community without having to discriminate against local culture that does not conflict with religion. The phenomenon of religious and cultural integrity also opens horizons for dialogue between religion and culture so that it can be used as a conflict resolution tool when there is conflict between religions and cultures.

**SUGGESTION**

Research on the integration of religion and culture has been carried out by academics on various themes and topics. This study has numerous flaws and weaknesses. As a result, the researchers recommend to readers:

First, this research was conducted using an integral relationship approach between religion and culture. It is necessary to examine Islam and Sundanese culture from various perspectives to see how they complement each other.

Second, it is necessary to carry out further research on the integration of religion and culture with a quantitative approach. so as to produce data and conclusions that can be measured more precisely.

Third, in this study there are still many shortcomings and weaknesses, both in terms of writing and substance. Therefore, the researcher really hopes for constructive criticism and suggestions to make the scientific work in the form of this thesis better.
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