

INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE DYNAMICS IN LOCAL COMMUNITY WEDDING TRADITION IN EAST JAVA AND WEST NUSA TENGGARA

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Abstract: Local tradition is a pride that creates identity. Each region has their own identity in strengthening the uniqueness of its traditions. Inclusive versus exclusive has a different sense, but both of them have the same sense of preserving, caring, and sustaining local traditions. There are two important things that must be explored in this study; 1), how the wedding traditions in Kediri, East Java, and Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, are comparable? 2), how the uniqueness of each region's wedding traditions is in realizing inclusive and exclusive local traditions? Based on the wedding traditions comparison, it was found that 1), each region possesses a variety of historical values. 2), the Siman and Wetu Telu community have their own dynamic in responding and sustaining wedding traditions. Blummer's symbolic theory helps to analyze and deepen the harmonization of the dialectics of local marriage traditions. Community dignity is maintained by preserving the values of local wisdom as a symbol of regional pride in East Java and West Nusa Tenggara. The dialectic through the symbol of marriage is a social fact to maintain the integrity of communal morals, which are framed in communal norms.

Keywords: Inclusive; Exclusive; Local Tradition; Wedding.

Introduction

Indonesia has always offered the quality of value-laden traditions with its diverse background. Among the trichotomy of marriage, birth, and death, the tradition of marriage marks the perfection of our lives. Marriage is the meaning of life itself, the culmination of life's achievements.¹ It is the measure of having succeeded in navigating the ark of life. Weddings are mostly colored by sacred attributes and symbols, a form of social collective consciousness.² The tradition of marriage brings together two groups (families) where each of them has historical values. And the challenge is how the essence of the wedding tradition is left intact. The communities of Siman Kediri and Wetu Telu Lombok have unique ways of maintaining their marriage traditions.

This study aims to elaborate and analyze the marriage traditions of the Siman and Wetu Telu communities. Both of them have different traditions due to historical, environmental, and community differences. To surface the culture of inclusive and exclusive local communities and build a commitment to maintain its sustainability, is important to identify the uniqueness of the societies. There are two points that will be formularized in this research: 1), how is the comparison of local traditions on marriage in Kediri, East Java, and Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara? 2), how does the uniqueness of the wedding traditions of each region into the implementation of inclusive and exclusive local traditions?

Each region in the archipelago has its own wedding traditions such as the *Pingitan*, *Panaik*, *Manjapuik*, *Marapulai*, *Mambali*, and more. Marriage is an ancestral tradition passed down from generation to generation. According to Shomad, marriage is performed under Islamic norms³ and Sharia. However, Indonesians have modified local traditions with Islamic law, and this happens in the marriage traditions of the Siman and Wetu Telu communities. In addition, Yulianto et al. show that interracial and ethnic marriages have become commonplace in Indonesia today. For example, Javanese and Chinese couples are able to coexist by

¹ Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage* (London: Penguin, 2006), 4.

² Jill Forshee, *Culture and customs of Indonesia*, Vol. 88 (London: Greenwood Press, 2006), 10.

³ Ahmad Tholabi Kharlie, *Hukum keluarga indonesia* (Jakarta: Sinar Grafika, 2022).

communicating in daily life. It is indisputable that tribal, ethnic, cultural, and religious tensions in Indonesia are still frequent in various places and ready to explode at any time.⁴

When tradition and customary law take precedence over equality between partners, marriage becomes problematic in some cultures. Titisari et al. criticize the marriage traditions of the predominantly Hindu Balinese for being subordinate. Practically *patrilocal (pura)* marriage is patriarchal. Consequently, Balinese women experience multiple constraints in terms of economic, reproduction, and customary (ritual) roles.⁵ On the other hand, Andriyani, Dian, Sundayra, et al. have the opposite side of inter-regional marriage. In order to maintain the harmony, basic social values and norms are needed. Mutual respect and courtesy in the family sphere are quite important nowadays.⁶

Qualitative-descriptive is the data collection tool that includes planning to data analysis. The instruments include; interviews, observation, documentation, and data analysis.⁷ Other supporting stages complete the data collection. Habermas qualitative analysis helps the process of presenting data, reducing data, and how to drawing conclusions. Meanwhile, Blummer's symbolic theory⁸ becomes an analytical knife to harmonize the local dialectics of marriage. Community dignity is maintained by upholding the values of local wisdom as a symbol of regional pride. The dialectic

⁴ Jony Eko Yulianto, Darrin Hodgetts, Pita King, and James H. Liu, "Navigating Tensions in Inter-ethnic Marriages in Indonesia: Cultural, Relational, Spatial and Material Considerations," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 86 (2022), 227-239.

⁵ Anastasia Septya Titisari, Luh Kadek Ratih Swandewi, Carol Warren, and Anja Reid, "Stories of Women's Marriage and Fertility Experiences: Qualitative Research on Urban and Rural Cases in Bali, Indonesia," *Gates Open Research*, Vol. 7 (2023), 124.

⁶ Anak Agung Ayu Dian Andriyani, Ladycia Sundayra, Ni Wayan Meidariani, and I. Dewa Ayu Devi Maharani Santika, "Kesantunan Ranah Keluarga Perkawinan Antar Bangsa Jepang dan Bali," *Diglossia: Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah Kebahasaan dan Kesusasteraan*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2022), 81-91.

⁷ Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods* (London: Sage, 2020).

⁸ Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (California: University of California Press, 1986), 6.

of marriage symbols is a social fact to sustain morality framed in community norms.⁹

Local Wedding Traditions in Kediri, East Java, and Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara

In the course of human relationships, marriage is a socio-cultural practice. Meanwhile, in tradition, the most basic aspect is faith which is hereditarily and continuously passed down from ancestors through generations, both verbally and in writing.¹⁰ In Kediri, East Java, the Siman community has a unique belief in marriage practices. At glance, the wedding traditions carried out by the Siman community are the same as the practices carried out by common Javanese society (Central and East Java).¹¹

The Siman community manages information regarding marriage practices so that, it is still practiced by the young generation nowadays. As the passage of time and without public awareness, this tradition will vanish. For academics and historians, such as Thomas Reuter, tradition is not an object or inanimate object that can be damaged, abandoned, and exploited, but a subject that lives and colors the process of human life.¹²

Marriage is the personification of the unwritten law. This law becomes the basis for the applicable values and norms in society. Norms are substantially believed to be unwritten laws because they are considered true and absolute.¹³ Hence, when people behave not in accordance with the existing norms, they are considered to have violated and deviated from social ethics.¹⁴

The Siman community practice the framework of norms as a benchmark in their daily life, and one of which is in wedding

⁹ Herbert Blumer, “George Herbert Mead,” in *The Future of the Sociological Classics (RLE Social Theory)*, ed. Buford Rhea (London: Routledge, 2020), 137.

¹⁰ Dennis Kelley, *Tradition, Performance, and Religion in Native America: Ancestral Ways, Modern Sehers* (London: Routledge, 2015), 26.

¹¹ Interview with Iqdam, Kediri, 2023.

¹² Thomas A. Reuter, *Custodians of the Sacred Mountains: Culture and Society in the Highlands of Bali* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2002): 7.

¹³ Ni Ketut Ardani and R. Ibrahim, “Legal Consequences of Change or Revocation of Marriage Agreement: Analysis of Marriage Law in Indonesia,” *The International Journal of Social Sciences World (TIIJSSW)*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2022), 175-180.

¹⁴ Blumer, “George Herbert Mead,” 110.

tradition. The community believes that when someone intends to establish a family, marriage is a sacred path to start a family. Typically, the wedding traditions of the Siman community are different from the wedding processions of the Javanese community. The difference relies on the unique wedding traditions of the Siman community. The unique is that they are prohibited from marrying fellow Siman community. It is confirmed by the statement of an informant, stating that “he belief regarding marriage traditions is true. We (Siman community) believe that a marriage will bring blessings and prosperity throughout our lives if our future husband or wife is not a native of the Siman community.”¹⁵ It means that the Siman community must marry with men or women from other villages or regions in Indonesia. Local community still preserve this tradition up today.¹⁶

The Siman community also performs other social duties, such as pilgrimages to the graves of their ancestors (known as ponco limo and mbah Sarinjing). The pilgrimage takes place at every Suro celebration, followed by a Larungan ritual in the reservoir area.¹⁷ It is also forbidden to destroy nature and pollute the water of the reservoir and the Sarinjing River, and to wear certain clothes such as batik barong and yellow paint, which are considered forms of violation of local Siman traditions.¹⁸ The Simans also have some interdictions in their marriage tradition. But of course, the choice is in everyone's hands. One may choose to follow the ancestral traditions or else, abandon the old ways. Following their hearts or the demands of their parents and ancient traditions.

Marrying someone outside of the village means not only respecting the local culture. It also means preserving the local traditions inherited by their forefathers. On the one hand, we think about the future of the younger generation and our grandchildren, so that they stay connected to their roots. Preserving local traditions is much more difficult than fighting for them. Because the challenges of modern culture increasingly threaten the existence of the archipelago's cultural place. Thus, ignoring is not the way to preserve our culture.

¹⁵ Interview with Mubarak, Kediri 2023.

¹⁶ Interview with Indira, Kediri 2023.

¹⁷ Interview with Imam, Kediri, 2023

¹⁸ Interview with Ponidi, Kediri, 2023

The presence of globalisation is a threat to the preservation of Siman's marriage traditions. Because globalisation is one of cultural transformation itself.¹⁹ An informant who married a woman from Samarinda, east Kalimantan said that "...perhaps one of the reasons why we still maintain the tradition of cross-marriage is because it has become our habit. Following and continuing our ancestral traditions is the same as we following the orders of our parents and God, both are important and valuable for the safety of our life and marriage continuity."²⁰

Intermarriage between tribes, ethnicities and religions in Siman has been going on for a long time. Interestingly, the younger generation of Siman, whose average age is 20 and above, still practice the tradition.²¹ In the midst of the challenges of modern marriage culture, they see the old tradition in a metaphorical way. Different traditions are the wealth of the Indonesians that must be preserved. For this reason, the community needs to have a filter in place in order to avoid the influence of foreign cultures.²² The role of the community is extremely important to maintain the originality of the culture itself. Internalization, as done by the Simans, is one of the best solutions that can be taken to preserve the local culture. In addition, cultivation is the preservation of the noble values of the marriage tradition.²³ So that, it remains alive even though it has gone through the era. It is an attempt to protect against the destruction of the marriage tradition itself. But the question is, can the Siman and Wetu Telu communities maintain the marriage tradition through the internalization process?

The impacts of modernization and scientific developments have not changed their local values. For traditional people, custom is everything to them. This is also marked by the wedding tradition practiced by the *Islam Wetu Telu* in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara.

¹⁹ Divinah Andrew, "The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Religious Practices and Cultural Values: A Case Study of Kenya," *International Journal of Culture and Religious Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2023), 5.

²⁰ Interview with Kusmi, Kediri, 2023

²¹ Interview with Kasun, Kediri, 2023

²² E. R. Mathipa and Q. M. Motsepe, "Resilience in Marriages: Traditional and Religious Versus Modern Marriages," *Pharos Journal of Theology*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (2023), 43.

²³ See William Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (N.p.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2023).

The marriage of the *Islam Wetu Telu* is a mixed marriage of Islam and Sasak customs.²⁴ In addition, it is referring to the “three times” prayers (Friday, Eid Mubarak, and funeral prayers).²⁵ The assimilation of Islam and local traditions results in the concept of a unique and different Islam from the Islam of the five times preached by the Prophet Muhammad. This religious and cultural assimilation influences the wedding traditions of the Wetu Telu community.

Local customs still dominate the beliefs of the Wetu Telu people. They do not substantially shift animistic and anthropomorphic forms of worship but, instead, they are maintained and carried out according to the prevailing customary rules²⁶ and survive to this day. In general, both of the communities have shown that internalization can create new identities distinct from other regions. Inclusive and exclusive marriage in Siman and Wetu Telu communities is a regional culture describing regional nature and circumstances. Therefore, the Wetu Telu community practices wedding traditions that must be in accordance with local customary law, such as the blessing of traditional leaders and instructions or directions from a *Kiai* (Islamic scholars).²⁷ In short, a wedding ceremony cannot be solemnized without the approval of *Kiai* and traditional leaders.²⁸ The Wetu Telu community puts custom beyond everything so that the marriage procession can be exclusively solemnized.²⁹

²⁴ Wiwik Setiyani and Nurhairunnisa Tasrif, “Cultural Interpretation: The Meaning of Metu Telu Wedding in the Local Tradition of Tanjung Community in North Lombok Regency,” *INFERENSI: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2023), 89.

²⁵ Interview with Denindra, Mataram, 2023.

²⁶ Interview with Sapruddin, Lombok, 2023.

²⁷ Interview with Datuk Hartadi, Lombok, 2023.

²⁸ Interview with Hernanda, Lombok, 2023.

²⁹ Muhammad Harfi Zuhdi, “Wetu Telu in Bayan Lombok: Dialectic of Islam and Local Culture,” *Kawalu: Journal of Local Culture*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2018), 90.

The Diversity of Inclusive and Exclusive Traditions of the Siman and Wetu Telu Communities

Differences in culture and customs of the bridal couple are inevitable.³⁰ However, the Siman community can solve this by accepting and openness to prospective bride or groom coming from other areas. Their inclusivity is visible in the proposed wedding procession. For example, the wedding ceremony and reception going to be solemnized are not an issue; the couple from other areas is not incurred with the wedding costs; or they problematize different social statuses.³¹

Anyone who has advantages in the financial aspect and been willing to finance the wedding is optional as long as it is according to the agreement of both couple families and the elders. One of the informants argue that: “The responsibility of wedding costs or dowry is based on the awareness of the prospective bride and groom and the results of agreement of their respective family.”³²

Some of the basic issues is flexible. This means that dialogue and deliberation determine the results of the consensual agreement. When a wedding is solemnized in Siman village, it is followed a traditional Javanese procession, and, vice versa, weddings held outside Siman follow local customs. There is no significant difficulty talking about tradition. Similar to belief, newcomers (prospective brides and grooms) who marry and live in Siman are not required to believe in and follow the traditions of the local community.³³

Prospective brides and grooms, coming from other areas, have also personal awareness regarding the wedding traditions and customs in Siman. The significant aspect of the wedding traditions of the community is that the chosen man or woman must come from outside Siman. It is taboo for local community to marry fellow Siman residents. They believe that if violated, the marriage will not last, and their partner will die or divorce as well as there will be no harmony and blessings in their marriage, such as illness,

³⁰ Tiarnita Maria Sarjani Siregar, Ankey Dohar, Nazwa Inaya, Natasya Euodia and Susi Eria Agustina, “The Beauty Of Wedding Culture In Indonesia,” *International Journal Of Society Reviews*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2023), 60.

³¹ Interview with Imam, Kediri, 2023.

³² Interview with Harun, Kediri 2023.

³³ Interview with Kasun, Kediri, 2023.

poverty, and death. Misfortunate life will accompany the couple if these taboos are still violated.³⁴ This belief continues to be lived through generations.

Technically, marriage facilitates the communication process and establish two-way relationships between individuals, groups, tribes, and ethnicities.³⁵ Social relations that occur one with another result in legal relations based on religion and the constitution (civil law). There are mixed marriages between ethnic groups, where ethnic groups have various dynamics processes, such as differences in language, culture,³⁶ and beliefs. According to Blumer, Language, culture and all instruments in the Wedding tradition are Symbols.

Although there are many ways of social interaction, symbolic interaction is a useful tool. It allows for the assessment and judgment of objects based on the perspectives of others.³⁷ Sociologists should not oversimplify the complexity of social order and normalcy. If we state that those people in social interaction are the people who are participants, then it is wrong. Blumer's theory of symbolic interaction, whatever else it may be, is commonplace in frame theorizing (the basis of contention and interaction between individuals ends with the same theory).

Blumer's Symbolic Interaction Theory is an autonomous interaction between individuals, which is also based on subjective relations between actors and social objects or symbols.³⁸ Blumer theoretically states that all objects within it are part of a dialogical process. Therefore, it can be concluded that inclusive and exclusive marriages in Siman and Lombok encourage and improve

³⁴ Interview with Fatimah Zahra, Kediri, 2023.

³⁵ Fisca Cahyani, Ravik Karsidi and Drajat Kartono, "Kenduri: Traditional Culture in the Modern Society," in *Proceedings of the 1st Seminar and Workshop on Research Design, for Education, Social Science, Arts, and Humanities (SEWORD FRESSH) 2019*, 27 April 2019, Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia, 2019, retrieved from <https://osf.io/95uv2/download#page=15>.

³⁶ Ariane Utomo and Peter McDonald, "Who Marries Whom? Ethnicity and Marriage Pairing Patterns in Indonesia," *Asian Population Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2016), 35.

³⁷ Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 25.

³⁸ Jeffery T. Ulmer, "David R. Maines: Embedding Symbolic Interactionism at the Heart of Sociology," *Symbolic Interaction*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2023), 16.

social coordination. This complex interaction is a unique process because the responses given rely on symbolic giving.

The social life of the Siman and Wetu Telu communities is considered stable, yet also threatened. Symbolic relationships and interactions will continue to play a significant role in the future. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the symbols used in wedding traditions, as they interact with various societal elements such as tribes, ethnic groups, and religions.³⁹ The Siman and Wetu Telu communities demonstrate that there are many ways to promote the common good through both exclusive and inclusive wedding rituals. The Siman community's embrace of inclusivity exemplifies how cultural harmony can be achieved through intercultural, interracial, and interreligious marriages.⁴⁰

The measures of a couple manage friction between cultures can create harmony. However, family relationships can cause tension due to different cultural expectations and insights.⁴¹ The Siman community views differences as a diversity that colors the identity of an inclusive traditional society. Thus, the method of the Siman community responding to differences through wedding traditions is different from the Wetu Telu community. "For our [Wetu Telu] people, marriage within the same tribe is mandatory, because it has been a generational tradition. In addition, the procession is easier, and the differences of wedding cultures are not an issue. If it is implemented by one tribe, it is easier according to custom, religion, and state."⁴²

The Wetu Telu community, originating from the Tanjung and Bayan tribes, requires marriage within the same tribe (fellow *Islam Wetu Telu* followers).⁴³ However, those who live in urban areas, such as Mataram City, do not require this rule. The assimilation and construction of wedding culture in urban society is more

³⁹ Judit Balatonyi, "From 20th Century Weddings to Quarantine Weddings: Old and New Approaches to Analyzing Rituals," *Journal of Contemporary Rituals and Traditions*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2023), 76.

⁴⁰ Min Han, "The Logic between Nature and Culture: Food in the Wedding Traditions Across East Asia," *International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2023), 9.

⁴¹ Interview with Ali Hermawan, Kediri, 2023.

⁴² Interview with Hendra, Lombok, 2023.

⁴³ Erni Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak Islam Waktu Lima Versus Islam Wetu Telu* (Yogjakarta: LKiS, 2000), 25.

practical and simpler. Meanwhile, the marginalized communities still maintain old traditions. In urban areas, intermarriage is also found between the Wetu Telu communities and common people or from other tribes. This event is certainly not found in the more exclusive of the Wetu Telu wedding traditions in Tanjung and Bayan. Approval from traditional leaders, social status, and family background are the most significant aspect. People from the noble class must marry fellow nobles, such as the *Datu'* and *Raden* families.

The Dialectics of Marriage as a Symbol of Local Tradition

Since 2350 BC human beings have been practicing wedding traditions for centuries.⁴⁴ Current wedding traditions have their roots in culture, religion, and history. Every building, object, and symbol in wedding traditions has high value and can be studied to respect ancestors.⁴⁵ It does not question who has started it or where this tradition comes from. The practice of marriage with various interpretations also does not reduce the meaning and value of the sacredness practiced by the Kediri and Lombok communities.

Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has regulated the basic freedoms stipulating that every individual has the (same) privilege to marry and have a family regardless of ethnicity, religion, and nationality, the most important thing is mutual consent.⁴⁶ Not all communities understand this universal statement. For the exclusive Wetu Telu community, marriage within a tribe has become a customary law that cannot be broken. Simultaneously, it is an effort to preserve their locality. Meanwhile, the Siman community is a perfect example of the Universal Declaration itself. They see that difference is not only a blessing but something definite and absolute.

The wedding dialectics of the inclusivity of the Siman and exclusivity of the Wetu Telu community in their series of wedding

⁴⁴ Judge Thomas J. Walsh, "Religion and Marriage," *Family Advocate*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2019), 7.

⁴⁵ Katie Barclay, Jeffrey Meek and Andrea Thomson (eds), *Courtship Marriage and Marriage breakdown: Approaches from the History of Emotion*, Vol. 39 (London: Routledge, 2019), 11.

⁴⁶ Djaja S. Meliala, "Perkembangan Hukum Perdata Tentang Orang dan Hukum Keluarga (Bandung: Nuansa Aulia, 2007), 71.

processions have philosophical value. For the Siman community, marriage is born from the inner bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, who have the purpose to build a harmonious family. Marital bonds occur on the basis of compatibility between two individuals. Thus, ethnic and cultural differences are not a barrier to build a family.⁴⁷

The newcomers have succeeded in adapting to local traditions, such as the Larungan ritual with the aim of honoring ancestral spirits in the reservoir area and ancestral tombs, Suro rituals, cultural carnivals, and obeying the applicable taboos in Siman.⁴⁸ The older generation does not insist that younger generation must marry people from outside Siman. They do not force people to believe in old beliefs, not to marry fellow Siman residents. As consequence, those from outside Siman such as Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan to Papua and Sulawesi, have internalized and adapted to local culture.⁴⁹ Religious and cultural conversion is commonplace for the Siman community, and natural marriage between tribes and regions increases the ratio of religious conversions to occur, such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and Javanese faith. The decision to follow couple's beliefs (shared faith) is a personal decision and responsibility.⁵⁰

An informant, Kusmi, who is married to a Balinese, argued:

I have been married for almost 50 years... My husband is Balinese and he is Christian. At first, we were married to different religions, but after 10 years of marriage, I decided to follow my husband and convert to Christianity. My first son became Muslim, meanwhile the second and the last one became Christians. They also married people from outside Siman... because that's what we believe in, and that is how it is handed down from generation to generation.⁵¹

According to Kusmi, she is not sure whether the tradition of marriage in Siman will still be practiced by the younger generation in the next 20 to 30 years. She is also unsure whether her children

⁴⁷ Utomo and McDonald, "Who Marries Whom?" 39.

⁴⁸ Interview with Fatimah Zahra, Kediri 2023.

⁴⁹ Interview with Harun, Kediri, 2023.

⁵⁰ Interview with Kasun, Kediri, 2023.

⁵¹ Interview with Kusmi, Kediri, 2023

and grandchildren will continue the tradition. The fact that modern marriage culture is much more popular among our children, nowadays.⁵² The reason why modern marriage is loved is because it is not bound by certain rules, such as norms and customary laws,⁵³ which are rigid, archaic, and lacking in expression.

The inclusivity of the wedding tradition in Siman is not always positive. However, village elders reiterate that inter-ethnic, cultural, tribal, and religious marriages are not an obligation imposed on the Siman community. At the end, this is about traditions, ancient beliefs that must be revived in honor of ancestors and customs.

In contrast to the Wetu Telu community, they do not take a massively persuasive approach when it comes to tradition. In the Wetu Telu custom, traditional marriage laws are absolute and cannot be reconstructed or restructured under the pretext of following the age.⁵⁴ Marriage models such as; *Merariq* (escaped marriage), *Nyerah Hukum*, *Mepadiq lamar* (*Melakoq* or *Ngenden*), Kidnapping marriage, *Ngiwel*, and *Tadong* (hanging marriage)⁵⁵ are still practiced up today. There is a popular term among local community that ‘*seseorang belum dikatakan asli wetu telu apabila tidak melakukan merariq*⁵⁶ (a person is not a pure Wetu Telu follower if he or she does not experience *Merariq* or the stages of all the marriage procession).

Interaction and adaptation require time for the Siman and Wetu Telu communities, because achieving harmony, equality, and unity depends on human activity with symbols and human life runs in a symbolic circle.⁵⁷ Blumer emphasized that social interaction determines whether a society can adapt and accept a new culture

⁵² Interview with Fatimah Azahra, Kediri, 2023

⁵³ Rusdi Abadi Siregar and Orien Effendi, “Religion and Culture: The Perspective of Customary Law in the Wedding Tradition of Sasak Societies in Lombok,” *SANGKEP: Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2023), 51.

⁵⁴ Interview with Salwa (Pseudo-name), Lombok, 2023.

⁵⁵ Budiwanti, *Islam Sasak*, 37-38. See also Erni Budiwanti, “5 The Purification Movement in Bayan, North Lombok: Orthodox Islam vis-à-vis Religious Syncretism,” in *Between Harmony and Discrimination: Negotiating Religious Identities within Majority-Minority Relationships in Bali and Lombok*, eds. Brigitta Hauser-Schäublin and David D. Harnish (N.p.: Brill, 2014), 153.

⁵⁶ Interview with *Datu’ Hartadi*, Lombok, 2023.

⁵⁷ Blumer, “George Herbert Mead,” 140.

or not. Also, Charmaz, Harris, and Irvine stated that communication is a symbolic process in carrying out traditions.⁵⁸

In the wedding tradition, the Siman community prioritizes interaction (deliberation) by being open to all forms of cultural differences, customs, religion, and language. This inclusivity cannot be separated from their local knowledge regarding taboos in wedding traditions. Meanwhile, the Wetu Telu community protects itself from cultural influences so that wedding traditions do not mix with modern culture. The exclusivity of the Wetu Telu community is quite reasonable if seen from Blumer's premise. The Wetu Telu community properly interprets the meaning of marriage, both conceptually and practically.

Blumer revealed that symbolic theory does not focus on social structure but on face-to-face interaction or co-presence. According to him, co-presence interaction is limited to individuals who influence each other's actions when each is physically present.⁵⁹ Social beings in society influence each other through their behavior, which colors the pattern of their interactions. According to Weber, this interdependence is bridged through exchange. In Siman and Lombok, the process of inclusive and exclusive marriage occurs not on the basis of independent interactions between strangers,⁶⁰ but rather because the people involved know each other and have a high level of solidarity.

It can be concluded that inclusivity and exclusivity of communities towards something are according to the meaning/interpretation of the symbol. The Siman and Wetu Telu communities practice wedding traditions according to their respective principles and perform consciously. Wedding traditions are the

⁵⁸ Kathy Charmaz, Scott R. Harris and Leslie Irvine, *The Social Self and Everyday Life: Understanding the World through Symbolic Interactionism* (N.p.: John Wiley & Sons, 2019), 7.

⁵⁹ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 63.

⁶⁰ Arif Sugitanata, Siti Aminah, Heru Sunardi and Siti Khamidatus Sholikhah, "Violation of Women's Rights: The Kawin Magrib Tradition of the Sasak Muslim Community in Lombok, Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Law*, Vol. 4 (2023), 197.

result of symbolic interactionism⁶¹ formed through communicative social structures and interactions.⁶²

Identification of the wedding traditions in Siman and Wetu Telu communities results in a commitment to maintain cultural sustainability. Adaptation with adjustments that are more open to provide input is necessary, and, importantly, the essence of wedding traditions is not abandoned. On the other hand, marriage traditions in inclusive and exclusive societies require mitigation and protection processes as optimally as possible. The wedding tradition is a symbol of the affirmation of local traditions,⁶³ having high cultural values.

Conclusion

Feeling connected to local wisdom means preserving and nurturing traditions. There are many ways in which people preserve their traditions, especially through protecting them from global trends. The Siman and Wetu Telu communities have unique ways of practicing traditional marriage. Both communities experience different dynamics when implementing the marriage tradition. For the local Siman, it is a must for them to choose a husband and wife outside of the village. Because it is taboo for them to marry fellow Siman.

They believe that if they violate the custom, a misfortunate life will accompany them (the couple). And if these taboos are still violated the marriage will not last, and their partner will die or divorce as well as there will be no harmony and blessings in their marriage, such as illness, poverty, and death. This inter-regional marriage makes the Siman community more inclusive than the Wetu Telu community in Lombok even for Javanese people. The exclusivity of the latter is when they try their best to protect their custom from cultural influences, so that, wedding traditions do not mix with modern culture. In the end, wedding traditions are the

⁶¹ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism*, 21.

⁶² Bernard Meltzer, John Petras and Larry Reynolds, *Symbolic Interactionism (RLE Social Theory): Genesis, Varieties and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 2020), 3.

⁶³ Cahyono Agus, Sri Ratna Saktimulya, Priyo Dwiarso, Bambang Widodo, Siti Rochmiyati and Mulyanto Darmowiyono, “Revitalization of Local Traditional Culture for Sustainable Development of National Character Building in Indonesia,” in *Innovations and Traditions for Sustainable Development*, eds. Walter Leal Filho, Eugene V. Krasnov and Dara V. Gaeva (Champ: Switzerland, 2021), 351.

result of symbolic interactionism formed through communicative social structures and interactions.

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