

## The Barikan Tradition: A Symbol of Solidarity and Communal Harmony

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**Abstract.** *This research focuses on the role of the Barikan Tradition in strengthening social solidarity among the community, highlighting how this cultural and religious practice serves as a bond between community members. Additionally, the study aims to explore the religious meanings embedded in the Barikan Tradition from the local community's perspective, as well as its influence on the formation of collective identity. A qualitative approach using ethnographic methods was employed to deeply examine the religious meanings and functions of the Barikan Tradition and its social impact on the community. The findings indicate that the Barikan Tradition is understood as an effort to maintain balance between the spiritual and material worlds, between traditional values and the demands of modernization. This tradition plays a significant role in reinforcing social solidarity, preserving collective identity, and helping the community adapt to social changes. Furthermore, the Barikan Tradition reflects religious syncretism, where a fusion of local beliefs with religion occurs. As a religious rite passed down through generations, Barikan not only functions as a symbolic ritual but also as a reflection of spirituality and community values. In the context of the sociology of religion, this tradition plays an important role in strengthening collective consciousness and preserving religious values amid the challenges of globalization and modernization.*

**Keywords:** *Barikan Tradition, social solidarity, collective identity, religious syncretism, modernization..*

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini berfokus pada peran Tradisi Barikan dalam memperkuat solidaritas sosial di antara masyarakat, menyoroti bagaimana praktik budaya dan agama ini berfungsi sebagai pengikat antara anggota masyarakat. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi makna religius yang tertanam dalam Tradisi Barikan dari sudut pandang masyarakat setempat, serta pengaruhnya terhadap pembentukan identitas kolektif. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode etnografi digunakan untuk mengkaji secara mendalam makna dan fungsi religius dari Tradisi Barikan serta dampak sosialnya terhadap masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Tradisi Barikan dipahami sebagai upaya untuk menjaga keseimbangan antara dunia spiritual dan material, antara nilai-nilai tradisional dan tuntutan modernisasi. Tradisi ini berperan penting dalam memperkuat solidaritas sosial, melestarikan identitas kolektif, dan membantu masyarakat beradaptasi dengan perubahan sosial. Selain itu, Tradisi Barikan mencerminkan sinkretisme agama, di mana terjadi perpaduan antara kepercayaan lokal dengan agama. Sebagai sebuah ritus keagamaan yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun, Barikan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ritual simbolik, tetapi juga sebagai refleksi spiritualitas dan nilai-nilai masyarakat. Dalam konteks sosiologi agama, tradisi ini berperan penting dalam memperkuat kesadaran kolektif dan melestarikan nilai-nilai agama di tengah tantangan globalisasi dan modernisasi.

**Kata kunci:** Tradisi Barikan, solidaritas sosial, identitas kolektif, sinkretisme agama, modernisasi.

### 1. BACKGROUND

One of the cultural practices that has been preserved and deeply rooted in Javanese society, particularly in rural areas, is the Barikan Tradition. This tradition has been passed down through generations and is carried out annually as a form of gratitude by the village community to God Almighty for the abundant agricultural yields (Karim, 2014).

The Barikan Tradition includes a series of activities such as communal prayers, shared meals, and "selamatan" (a communal feast) aimed at seeking safety, prosperity, and protection from unwanted threats. Barikan not only serves as a symbol of the community's

spirituality and cultural identity but also acts as a form of social activity, reflecting how traditional religious practices can strengthen social bonds and collective identity within the community (Mirtanty, 2021).

In the context of the sociology of religion, the Barikan Tradition is also a significant example of how local religious elements can endure and adapt amidst social changes. This is an important area of study because the Barikan Tradition is not merely a religious ritual, but also a symbol of the social dynamics occurring within the community. According to Durkheim (1912), religion is a belief system that functions to bind individuals within a society through shared sacred practices. In this context, the Barikan Tradition can be seen as one way the community maintains social cohesion and collective values through religious activities.

Moreover, studying the Barikan Tradition from the perspective of the sociology of religion is essential to understanding the process of religious differentiation within society. As Weber (1922) suggested, religion has the ability to integrate various aspects of social life, including morality, law, and culture. The Barikan Tradition, which combines elements of belief, ritual, and social interaction, provides an illustration of how local communities construct and reproduce religious values through cultural practices.

Thus, this study will contribute valuable insights into how local traditions can influence and be influenced by social and religious structures at the community level. By focusing on the role of the Barikan Tradition in strengthening social solidarity, this research highlights how cultural and religious practices act as a cohesive force among community members. The study also aims to explore the religious meanings embedded in the Barikan Tradition from the perspective of the local community, as well as to examine the tradition's influence on the formation of collective identity.

Consequently, this research will analyze how the Barikan Tradition contributes to shaping and maintaining the social and religious identity of the community, especially in the face of ongoing social changes. The study aims to uncover the religious meanings and functions of the Barikan Tradition, as well as to analyze its impact on the community's social structure and identity. Through in-depth analysis, this research will provide insights into how the tradition strengthens social solidarity, shapes collective identity, and preserves religious values amid social change and modernization. Additionally, it will seek to understand how the Barikan Tradition continues to be practiced and adapts within the religious life of the community in the era of globalization.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Sociology of Religion**

Several key concepts in the sociology of religion underlie an understanding of how religion and its practices affect social structures as well as individual and group identities. One of the key concepts is the social function of religion, introduced by Emile Durkheim (1912). This concept considers religion as a tool to strengthen social solidarity through various collective activities. Durkheim highlighted that religious rituals, such as the Barikan tradition, play an important role in forming a collective consciousness that unites members of society in a single social entity. Max Weber (1922) outlined another relevant notion of religion as a source of meaning and identity, where religion is considered to play an important role in the formation of individual and collective identities. Weber argued that religion is not just a belief, but also a moral guideline that shapes people's perspectives and actions in society.

Research on the role of local religious traditions in social life has been the focus of scholarly attention. Geertz (1960), for example, in his study of Java, underlined the significance of slametan as a mechanism for maintaining social cohesion. A comparison with the Barikan tradition shows a similar pattern, where these collective rituals serve as social glue and a means of preserving cultural values. These studies collectively highlight the importance of religious traditions in bridging the dynamics of social change and maintaining a community's collective identity.

### **Barikan Tradition**

The Barikan tradition is the result of an acculturation of various beliefs that have long existed in Java. The roots of this tradition can be traced back to the past, where a blend of animism, Hindu-Buddhism and Islam formed a unique religious practice (Sarwi, 2020). Originally, Barikan aimed to invoke protection from ancestral spirits and supernatural powers. However, with the introduction of Islam, the ritual shifted, with the addition of Islamic elements such as Arabic prayers (Woodward, 1989).

Previous research on the Barikan Tradition has generally adopted historical and anthropological approaches. For example, Koentjaraningrat (1985) sees the Barikan Tradition as part of Javanese beliefs, where the ritual is considered as a method to maintain balance between the physical and spiritual worlds. In anthropological studies, the Barikan Tradition is analyzed as a form of cultural adaptation that allows people to maintain their identity and values amidst social change. More recent research has also highlighted how the

Barikan Tradition continues to evolve and adapt to modernization, demonstrating its relevance despite structural and cultural changes in society (Beatty, 2009).

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative approach with ethnographic methods to deeply explore the religious meanings and functions of the Barikan Tradition, as well as its social impacts on the community. A qualitative approach is chosen as it allows the researcher to understand social phenomena in their context, delve into deeper meanings, and provide rich descriptions of how the Barikan Tradition is practiced and understood by the local community. Ethnography is particularly suitable for exploring complex cultural and religious practices like Barikan, as it involves participant observation and in-depth interviews, covering the ritual, social, and symbolic dimensions.

The researcher will conduct participant observation by directly taking part in the Barikan Tradition in the village where the research is carried out. During the research period, the researcher will live with the residents, follow each stage of the ritual, and document the social interactions and dynamics that occur. Through this method, the researcher hopes to gain a deeper understanding of the tradition's execution, including details that may not be captured through interviews alone. Additionally, by participating in the ritual, the researcher can observe the roles of each community member and how they interact, providing insights into the social structure and solidarity fostered by the Barikan Tradition.

In-depth interviews will also be used as a primary tool for data collection. Interviews will be conducted with religious leaders, community leaders, and villagers who participate in the Barikan Tradition. These interviews will be semi-structured, with flexible question guides to allow for the exploration of issues that may arise during the conversations. The interviews will focus on participants' understanding of the religious meanings of Barikan, the role of the ritual in daily life, and their views on the social and cultural impacts of the tradition. Through these in-depth interviews, various perspectives are expected to emerge, providing a broader picture of how the Barikan Tradition is understood and valued by the community.

Additionally, document analysis will be conducted to complement the data gathered through observation and interviews. The documents analyzed will include religious texts, historical records, local archives, and literature related to the Barikan Tradition and religious practices in Java. This study aims to place the Barikan Tradition within a broader historical and sociocultural context and to understand the evolution and continuity of this tradition up

to the present day. By integrating historical and ethnographic data, this research seeks to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the role of the Barikan Tradition in community life.

Data triangulation will be employed to enhance the validity of the research by comparing the results from observations, interviews, and document analysis. This process is crucial to ensuring that the data interpretations are accurate and reflect the complex social reality. Additionally, self-reflection by the researcher throughout the research process will help mitigate bias and subjectivity, which are common challenges in qualitative research.

Through this comprehensive approach, the research is expected to produce an in-depth understanding of the Barikan Tradition, both in terms of its religious meanings and its social impacts. This study has the potential to make significant contributions to the literature on the sociology of religion and the study of religious traditions in Indonesia.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Meaning And Function**

As a manifestation of the spiritual beliefs and practices of Javanese society, the religious significance of the Barikan Tradition will be deeply examined in this study. The Barikan Tradition carries complex religious objectives, often regarded as a ritual for seeking blessings or warding off misfortune. Essentially, this ritual reflects the relationship between humans, the spiritual realm, and ancestors, as well as the community's belief in transcendental forces that influence daily life (Agustina, 2021). In this context, Barikan can be seen as a means of spiritually communicating with sacred entities, such as ancestral spirits, deities, and God within the monotheistic framework adopted through the process of Islamization.

Durkheim's (1912) concept of the "sacred and profane," which differentiates between the sacred and the worldly, highlights the religious meaning of the Barikan Tradition. Barikan creates specific sacred times and spaces where people gather to celebrate their connection with the divine. This ritual reinforces religious beliefs and the social norms grounded in them. For instance, participating in Barikan is often seen as a moral and social obligation, showing how community ethics align with religious values.

Barikan also functions as a "mechanism for preserving cultural and religious identity" in an evolving society. Weber's (1922) theory of "religion as a bearer of moral values" states that traditions play a vital role in maintaining values and standards passed down through generations. Through Barikan, communities strengthen their relationship with God or

spiritual entities and renew their commitment to their community and cultural identity. This tradition allows communities to uphold their traditional values in the face of modernity's challenges.

According to previous research by Geertz (1960), traditions like Barikan help people navigate life's uncertainties and provide a sense of security through collective practices. With its rich symbolism, this ritual helps individuals and communities find meaning in events that cannot be logically explained. Therefore, the Barikan Tradition encompasses religious, psychological, and social dimensions, making it an integral part of the lives of those who practice it.

In summary, the religious meaning and purpose of the Barikan Tradition can be understood as an effort to maintain balance between the spiritual and material worlds, as well as between the demands of modernity and traditional values. This study is expected to enhance our understanding of how local religious practices like Barikan function in a broader context, serving as mechanisms for preserving identity, social solidarity, and emotional stability amidst the dynamics of social change.

### **Social Impact**

The Barikan Tradition not only holds religious significance but also has a profound social impact on the communities that practice it (Afdhila, 2022). One of the primary social effects of the Barikan Tradition is the strengthening of social solidarity among community members. Social solidarity is crucial for maintaining cohesion and social stability, especially in communities facing challenges such as modernization and rapid social change. By fostering strong emotional bonds, the Barikan Tradition reinforces relationships between individuals and groups through its collective rituals. According to Durkheim (1912), religious rituals like Barikan enhance collective consciousness, a shared awareness that binds individuals within a community and distinguishes them from other groups.

The Barikan Tradition plays a vital role in preserving the collective identity of the community within a social context. Collective identity refers to how a group of people sees themselves as part of a larger community, sharing common norms, values, and beliefs. Through its rich symbolism, the Barikan Tradition shapes and maintains this identity, especially during social changes that might threaten cultural homogeneity. By participating in the Barikan Tradition, community members reaffirm their identity as part of a group with a shared history, tradition, and beliefs (Horii, 2021). This aligns with Weber's (1922) idea of religion as a tool for integrating society, where religious practices help unite individuals within a community based on shared cultural and religious identities.

Additionally, the Barikan Tradition functions as a "mechanism of social adaptation" as communities undergo change. The values and customs of society often shift as a result of modernization and globalization, which can endanger cultural identities. In this context, the Barikan Tradition helps preserve traditional values while adapting to these changes. Research conducted by Beatty (2009) shows that Javanese religious traditions, such as Barikan, can survive and even thrive in the era of modernization because they are able to adapt to new social and cultural environments. This demonstrates how the Barikan Tradition remains relevant as part of the community's social and spiritual life.

Another significant social impact of the Barikan Tradition is community empowerment. The implementation of this ritual allows community members to participate in a collective process that enhances their sense of belonging and social responsibility. Through active participation in the ritual and both material and moral support, the Barikan Tradition provides individuals with opportunities to contribute to the community. This strengthens social bonds and increases community engagement and participation in preserving shared values and traditions. As a result, the Barikan Tradition helps enhance social capital—the network of social relationships that support cooperation and solidarity within the community.

Overall, the social impacts of the Barikan Tradition include strengthening social ties, preserving collective identity, helping communities adapt to change, and fostering community empowerment. It is hoped that this research will provide deeper insights into how local religious traditions like Barikan contribute to shaping social structures and community dynamics. Moreover, it will significantly advance theories in the sociology of religion and culture.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This research is expected to contribute to the development of theory in the sociology of religion, particularly in understanding the role of religious traditions like the Barikan Tradition in preserving religious and social values within a community. One of the main theoretical implications of this study is the concept of local traditions as a mechanism for maintaining religious and social identity amidst the accelerating forces of globalization and modernization. The Barikan Tradition exemplifies the theory of cultural resistance, where communities continue to preserve ancestral cultures and reinforce their identities through the strengthening of traditions (Clarke, 2011).

Moreover, this research can enrich theoretical understanding regarding the integrative function of religion within social structures, as described by classical sociologists such as

Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Durkheim (1912) emphasized that religion, especially in its ritualistic aspects, plays a crucial role in reinforcing social solidarity and collective consciousness. The Barikan Tradition, with all its complexities, provides a concrete example of how religious rites are effective tools for enhancing social cohesion, particularly in rural Javanese communities.

This study also contributes to the development of Weber's (1922) theory regarding religion as a driving force in society. Weber argued that religion could be a force that shapes the ethics and values underlying social structures. In the context of the Barikan Tradition, this research is expected to demonstrate how local religious practices function not only as reflections of religious values but also as agents of social change, influencing how communities understand their own identities and their relationships with the social and spiritual environment. The Barikan Tradition, with its rituals and symbolic meanings, represents a collective effort to strengthen work ethics, morality, and social commitment, all of which are critical elements within broader social structures.

Another theoretical implication is a deeper understanding of religious syncretism, where the Barikan Tradition provides an example of the blending of local beliefs with Islamic teachings. This tradition shows that syncretism is not merely a compromise but a creative process in which elements from various religious traditions are combined to create practices that are relevant and meaningful in a local context. This provides empirical evidence that can enrich the theory of how local and global religions influence and interact with one another in shaping dynamic and adaptive religious practices.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the Barikan Tradition is a tradition passed down through generations from ancestors. The Barikan Tradition plays a significant role in strengthening social solidarity and preserving the collective identity of the community that practices it. Barikan is not merely a symbolic ritual but also a reflection of the spirituality and values of the community. The religious meaning and function of the Barikan Tradition can be understood as an effort to maintain balance between the spiritual and material worlds, as well as between traditional values and the demands of modernization. The social impacts of the Barikan Tradition include strengthening social solidarity, preserving collective identity, facilitating social adaptation to change, and empowering the community. The main theoretical implication of this research is that local traditions serve as mechanisms for maintaining religious and social



identity amidst the accelerating forces of globalization and modernization. Another theoretical implication is a deeper understanding of religious syncretism, where the Barikan Tradition provides an example of the blending of local beliefs with Islamic teachings.

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