

The Semiotic Study of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*: Understanding The Significance of Symbolic Communication in the Modernization Era of East Kasiyan Village

Lasino, Mohamad Sudi, Achmad Naufal Irsyadi, Nadia Amalia, Muwafiqus Shobri

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi IKAT Jakarta, Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik (IISIP) Yapis Biak-Papua, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Universitas Djuanda Bogor, STAI Hasan Jufri Bawean
lasinoska.kdtk@sttikat.ac.id, sudi.iisip1976@gmail.com, naufalirsyadiachamad@gmail.com,
nadia.amalia@unida.ac.id, dosensukses@gmail.com

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Abstract - In the contemporary world, the dynamics of culture and communication are constantly evolving due to the forces of modernization. Traditional rituals and practices often undergo transformations as societies adapt to new realities. The research aims to analyze symbolic communication in the ritual of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* in the village of East Kasiyan, using a semiotic approach. In the context of modernization, the ritual faces challenges in preserving its meaning and relevance amid social and cultural changes. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the symbolic values embedded in the ritual and the role of symbolic communication in strengthening cultural identity and social cohesion in the community. The research adopts a qualitative approach with semiotic analysis method. This research employs a qualitative research design, aiming to deeply explore the semiotic aspects of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual and its significance in the context of modernization. Data is collected through participatory observation during the implementation of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*, as well as in-depth interviews with 20 participants, they were 5 community figures, 5 local leaders, and 10 cultural practitioners related to the communication. Besides, relevant documents and literature are used to support the analysis. The research findings reveal that *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* is a ritual rich in signs and symbols, including language, bodily movements, and ritual objects. These signs form a complex system of symbolic communication, containing profound meanings about tradition, religious beliefs, as well as identity and social relationships in the community.

Keywords: *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*, Ritual Symbolism, East Kasiyan Village Cultural Identity

I. INTRODUCTION

Tradition is the material and conceptual elements from the past that still exist and remain intact until now. Traditions can be interpreted as true heritage or legacies from the past. Traditions that repeat themselves do not occur by coincidence or intentionally (Sztompka, 2007). Poerwadarminto (1976) revealed that tradition encompasses everything such as

customs, beliefs, habits, teachings, and other elements passed down from ancestors. Culture and tradition are inseparable aspects of a society's identity. However, in the turbulent era of modernization, the continuity and understanding of cultural heritage become increasingly challenging.

Modernization is a process of change or renewal that spans various fields, depending on

which areas the rulers emphasize. If individuals or communities are open to new things, the process of modernization will proceed rapidly (Rosana, 2011). Modernization impacts various aspects of values, attitudes, and personalities, creating the concept of the “modern individual” who enjoys seeking things independently, has achievement needs, and tends to seek uniqueness (Lerner, 2009). One crucial aspect of cultural heritage is the richly meaningful and symbolic ritual practices. Amidst the development of time and social changes, the effort to understand and preserve the significance of symbolic communication in cultural rituals becomes essential. This research aims to describe the process and meaning of the tradition of a 40-day Slametan and how there has been a transition from traditional wet cakes to dry cakes or snacks.

This study aims to understand the meaning and significance of this ritual in the context of modernization, particularly in East Kasiyan Village. The *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual plays a vital role as a strong form of symbolic communication within its community. Like many other areas, East Kasiyan Village experiences rapid social and cultural changes due to the influences of globalization and urbanization. Traditions that were once cherished and respected for centuries are now facing challenges, including the loss of meaning and declining interest from younger generations. Therefore, it is crucial to explore and understand the values embedded in *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* and how this ritual functions as a form of symbolic communication that can strengthen social bonds and preserve cultural identity amidst the challenges of modernization.

In this context, semiotic studies emerge as an appropriate theoretical framework to unravel the interconnections of signs, symbols, and meanings present in the ritual of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*. A semiotic approach allows us to examine the symbolic language used in the ritual, identify the hidden meanings behind actions and symbols, and construct an understanding of the role of symbolic communication in reinforcing social bonds and maintaining cultural identity amidst the challenges of modernization. Through a deeper understanding of symbolic communication in *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*, this research

aims to contribute meaningfully to the preservation of cultural heritage and the appreciation of cultural values in the face of the challenges of modernization. Thus, this effort is expected to help the community of East Kasiyan Village and others to preserve and respect their cultural wealth and pass it on to future generations.

As of now, the researcher has not found any specific study on the semiotic study of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*: understanding the significance of symbolic communication in the modernization era of East Kasiyan Village. However, there are several studies with similarities to this research. Nilan (2007) conducted research on applying semiotic analysis to social data in media studies; Karima & Christin (2015) studied semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce on the representation of violence in the animated cartoon series Little Krishna episode September 5, 2014; Fitria (2017) examined semiotic analysis of Charles Sanders Peirce in campaign advertisements for gubernatorial and vice-gubernatorial candidates in the Bengkulu Province in 2015; Wulandari & Siregar (2020) explored the semiotic study of Charles Sanders Peirce: the triadic relation (icon, index, and symbol) in the children's short story Mercusuar by Mashdar Zainal; Ibrahim & Sulaiman (2020) conducted research on semiotic communication: an approach of understanding meaning in communication.

Besides, Muhammadiyah, Muliadi, Hamsiah (2020) conducted the research on a semiotic analysis of political news featured In Indonesian Newspapers; Ramdhan, (2021) conducted the research on mixed cultural representation of stuart's character in minions as a symbol of strength and protection; Putra & Riana (2022) conducted the research on white crocodile as social criticism of polygamy phenomenon in Curug Dahu Village; Tiandoko (2022) conducted the research on the analysis of semiotics modernity representation in Comic Strip Mice Cartoon “Indonesia banget! volume 3; Widyastuti (2022) conducted the research on semiotic analysis in Islamic Javanese healing texts; Arafah, Fitriasia, Fitriani & Shaheema (2023) conducted the research on the analysis of semiotic signs appearing on the names of acehnese online Newspapers.

Furthermore, Muta'allim, Alfani, Mahidin, Agustin, & Wicaksi (2021) conducted

research on the function of comparative adjectives in the Kangean dialect of the Madurese language and its impact on the Kangean community with a pragmatic study; Salikin, Muta'allim, Alfani, Hosaini, & Sayfullah (2021) investigated traditional Madurese engagement amid social changes in the Kangean society; Muta'allim, Sofyan, & Haryono (2020) examined superlative adjectives in the Kangean dialect of the Madurese language with a pragmatic study; Haryono, Wibisono, Sofyan, & Muta'allim (2023) explored the use of speech levels by Madurese students as an implementation of politeness principles in Islamic Boarding Schools in Bondowoso, East Java; and Irsyadi, Fitriyah, Hanifiyah, & Muta'allim (2022) discuss assessing the potential of local wisdom values in regional literature.

The research conducted by Nilan (2007); Ibrahim et al. (2020); Muhammadiyah et al. (2020); Tiandoko (2022); and Widyastuti (2022) shares similarities in the aspect of semiotics with this research, but the differences lie in the subjects, objects, locations, theories, and research methods used. On the other hand, the research conducted by Karima et al. (2015); Fitria (2017); Wulandari et al. (2020) is similar in the use of the theory of semiotics proposed by Pierce, but the differences are in the subjects, objects, locations, theories, and research methods used. Additionally, the research conducted by Ramdhan (2021); Putra et al. (2022); Yudistira et al. (2022); Arafah et al. (2023); Yudistira et al. (2023); and Irsyadi et al. (2022); has similarities in terms of the research objectives, focusing on symbols and culture; while the research by Muta'alim et al. (2021); Sofyan et al. (2022) is similar in terms of the language aspect, but the differences lie in the subjects, objects, locations, theories, and methods used.

Based on the previous researches, the researcher has not found any similar studies. Thus, this research is categorized as relatively new, which makes the researcher very interested in exploring it. Building upon the above background, the researcher formulates the research problem: How does the semiotic approach shed light on the symbolic communication of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* in East Kasiyan Village? To answer this research problem, the use of semiotic theory

is necessary. Semiotics involves the study of human symbolism in ideation, conceptualization, or argumentation through symbols, including language, actions, and objects.

Peirce proposed the concept of signs as a form of representation that consists of three essential elements, namely the representamen (the sign), the object being represented, and the interpretant (the understanding). In the context of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*, the signs that appear in the form of actions, words, symbols, and ritual objects will be explained through Peirce's concept of signs. The Semiotic study of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* is based on the concepts and theories of semiotics that unravel the interconnections of signs and symbols shaping the ritual. This theory allows for a profound understanding of the meanings and significance of symbolic communication that occurs amidst the era of modernization in East Kasiyan Village. In this research context, this theory assists in comprehending the role of symbolic communication in conveying cultural values, social identity, and interpersonal relationships within *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative study with a case study design. The qualitative approach is used to understand the symbolic communication in the *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual. This research employs a qualitative semiotic study design to delve into the symbolic communication within the context of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* in the modernization era of East Kasiyan Village. The qualitative method allows for the description of complex phenomena and the understanding of meanings from the participants' perspectives in the ritual. The semiotic approach will provide insights into the deeper meanings and implications of the symbols used in this cultural practice. Data is collected through participatory observation during the ritual, in-depth interviews with participants, local community figures, and cultural practitioners, as well as document analysis related to the ritual.

The research involve key informants from East Kasiyan Village, including cultural practitioners, community leaders, and participants of the *Slametan Ngawandasa*

Ndinteni. Approximately 10-15 participants will be selected purposively for their knowledge and involvement in the practice. The researcher will actively participate in and observe *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* events to capture the use of symbols, signs, gestures, and interactions by using semiotic principles to uncover their cultural meanings and communicative significance. The data in this research consist of symbolic communication in the *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual, and the sources are the participants of the ritual, local figures, and the community in East Kasiyan Village. Data is analyzed through transcription of interviews, observation notes, and other sources. Semiotic analysis and relevant theories will be used to interpret and understand the symbolic communication in the ritual. Data validity is enhanced through data triangulation from various sources, and member check is conducted with the participants to ensure that the interpretation aligns with their perspectives.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

In a rapidly changing world marked by modernization and shifting cultural dynamics, traditional practices often undergo transformations that affect their symbolic meanings and communication. The study at hand delves into the semiotic aspects of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* tradition, a cornerstone of cultural identity in East Kasiyan Village. This research aims to unravel the intricate web of symbolic communication within the context of modernization, shedding light on how symbols evolve and resonate in a community's evolving narrative. By exploring the semiotics of this tradition, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of how cultural practices navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by contemporary times. The current development of modernization has shown a significant increase in its influence on society. The impacts of modernization are related to cultural values, particularly in terms of customs, traditions, and beliefs within the collective sphere.

The Process and Significant of Slametan Tradition

In this context, the researcher uncovered several steps within the implementation process

of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual, along with the profound meanings that encompass each of these steps. During observations, the researcher witnessed the dedicated participation of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual performers, displaying sincere engagement in organizing the event. This dedication is evident in the various materials used to convey communication symbols. The ritual of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* in East Kasiyan Village holds significant meanings. It symbolizes a cultural bridge between tradition and modernity, reflecting the village's adaptation to changing times while preserving its heritage.

The ritual signifies communal unity, as participants gather to share in blessings and prayers, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity. Additionally, it carries spiritual importance, seeking blessings, protection, and harmony from ancestral spirits for the village and its people. The ritual's symbolism resonates beyond its traditional roots, becoming a manifestation of cultural identity and a symbol of resilience in the face of modern influences. Furthermore, *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual serves as one of the ways for the East Kasiyan Village community to maintain a connection with their ancestors and carry forward traditions that have existed for a long time.

The Changes of Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni Tradition

Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni tradition in East Kasiyan Village has undergone notable transformations, reflecting shifts in cultural dynamics and the influence of modernization. These changes have reshaped various aspects of the tradition while retaining certain core elements.

1. Adaptation in Practices

The modernization era has prompted adaptations in the execution of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni*. While the essential components remain, the way rituals are conducted, materials used, and even the pace of the event might reflect contemporary demands.

2. Symbolism and Meaning

Shifts in societal values have led to reevaluations of certain symbolic meanings. Some elements of the tradition might acquire new interpretations, resonating with

contemporary aspirations while still retaining ties to ancestral beliefs.

3. Participation and Engagement

With changing lifestyles, the level of participation and engagement might have evolved. Busy schedules and modern commitments could impact the depth of involvement in the tradition.

4. Modern Influences

Modern influences, such as technology and urbanization, have brought new ideas and practices into the community. This interplay between tradition and modernity can lead to hybridized practices.

5. Preservation Efforts

Amidst changes, efforts to preserve the core essence of the tradition persist. Community members might consciously strive to safeguard meaningful elements, even as they adapt to the evolving context.

6. Continuity of Identity

Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni tradition continues to serve as an anchor for cultural identity. Even as it transforms, it remains a defining characteristic that distinguishes East Kasiyan Village from other places. *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* tradition in East Kasiyan Village has experienced changes as a result of modernization. These changes reflect the community's resilience in adapting to new circumstances while endeavoring to maintain the essence of their cultural heritage.

DISCUSSION

In this study, it will further discuss about the process and meaning and the shift of Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni tradition in East Kasiyan Village.

The Process and Meaning of Slametan Tradition

The process and meaning of the 40-day commemoration tradition (*slametan*) are as follows. In Javanese and Madurese society, particularly in Dusun Krajan I, East Kasiyan Village, there is a belief that the spirits of ancestors who have passed away will leave their dwelling place. Therefore, families hold a *slametan* commemoration to mark the journey of

the spirits towards the eternal spiritual realm in the future. The Islamic community in Java and Madura has the tradition of *slametan* for those who have passed away. One crucial part of this tradition is the *Ngawandasa Ndinteni*, which takes place on the fortieth day after the death. This 40-day tradition holds significant meaning for the residents of East Kasiyan Village. The celebration involves activities such as religious readings, *tahlilan* (Quranic recitation), and joint recitation of the Yasin prayer. Thus, this tradition embodies beliefs that continue to evolve and are firmly held by the local community.

Furthermore, in the celebration of the 40-day tradition after someone's passing, there is a special meaning associated with the production of traditional wet cakes. These cakes are typically served as gifts or offerings to the community. The gifts consist of rice and various types of cakes. The cakes play a vital role in the 40-day *slametan* tradition, especially two types of cakes, namely *Kue Nogasi* and *Kue Apem*. Both cakes carry deep meanings and symbolism in the tradition of the 40-day commemoration of the deceased. *Kue Nogasi* is a long rectangular-shaped cake filled with banana and wrapped in banana leaves. While, *Kue Apem* is a cake made from rice flour. Both types of cakes have been an integral part of the *slametan* tradition for the deceased, as their narration dates back to the time of ancestors and has been passed down and developed by the younger generations, including in Dusun Krajan I, East Kasiyan Village, where the tradition continues to be upheld. Therefore, both types of cakes are considered essential in the celebration of *Ngawandasa Ndinteni*.

The Shift of Slametan Tradition in East Kasiyan Village

The shift of the commemoration *Slametan* tradition from wet cakes to dry cakes represents a change that has occurred in the community. *Slametan* tradition holds significant meaning as a sign of respect to ancestors and spirits. One essential element of this tradition is the wet cakes. However, in Dusun Krajan I, East Kasiyan Village, some residents have altered the 40-day commemoration tradition by replacing wet cakes with dry cakes such as *bakpia*, snacks, or *ciki-ciki*.

A resident conducted observation and stated that the use of dry cakes is more practical

and easily done, even providing an example of using bowls and sugar in his home. This change can be associated with Leibo, Jefta's theory (1995) about social change influenced by external factors, including immanent change, selective contact change, and directed contact change. This shift is caused by social change that originates from within the community itself, without significant external influence. The community feels that using dry cakes is a more convenient and lightweight option compared to traditional wet cakes. Moreover, the community spontaneously develops new ideas within their social system, which can influence the thinking of other community members in the same hamlet. This change aligns with the emergence and development of new ideas introduced by outsiders, which impact the transformation of traditions practiced by ancestors before.

Despite the shift in the slametan tradition, cultural values and beliefs continue to play a role in determining the meaning and significance of the ngawandasandinteni (fortieth day) commemoration. Even with the adoption of new traditions involving dry cakes and flavored drinks, the values and norms that have been embraced for a long time are still respected. The Slametan tradition with *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* and the use of typical cakes is still preserved and deeply embedded in Javanese and Madurese culture in Dusun Krajan I, East Kasiyan Village. Although there are concerns that these cake traditions might disappear if not continued by some individuals, the meaning and significance of the slametan celebration still depend on the cultural values and beliefs that have been part of the community for so long.

The research on symbolic communication in the slametan *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* tradition in Kasiyan Village also highlights the impact of modernization on the Slametan *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual. Social changes, urbanization, and the influence of globalization have affected the implementation of the ritual and the interpretation of its symbolic meanings. Some traditional elements have undergone adjustments or even vanished, while new elements have emerged, presenting challenges to the overall understanding of the ritual. Thus, this research underscores the importance of understanding symbolic communication in Slametan *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* as a means to strengthen cultural identity and social cohesion in East

Kasiyan Village. The findings of this research provide insights into how symbols in the ritual function in the context of modernization and their relevance in preserving and valuing the rich cultural heritage of the local community.

This research provides a significant contribution to understanding symbolic communication and how cultural practices can remain relevant in the era of modernization. These findings illustrate how the Slametan *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual not only preserves cultural identity but also serves as a means to communicate values and traditions within the community. This can inspire further studies on the role of culture and rituals in social transformation. The importance of these findings can be felt in the context of cultural preservation efforts. This is stated as such because the research results offer insights into how communities can wisely adapt traditions to uphold their cultural values while navigating changing times. This can offer practical guidance for cultural preservation efforts in communities facing the pressures of modernization. Therefore, this research not only provides a deeper understanding of cultural symbolism and rituals but also holds practical implications in preserving cultural heritage amid the dynamics of modernization.

Influence of Modernization on the Slametan *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* Ritual Modernization has brought significant changes to the implementation of the Slametan *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* ritual in East Kasiyan Village. Traditions that were once conducted within closed family and community settings have shifted to a more open context influenced by modern factors. One notable change is in the frequency of conducting the ritual. In earlier eras, the Slametan was regularly held as a form of honoring ancestors. However, with the dynamics of modern life, this frequency might decrease due to time constraints and busyness. This indicates that modernization has impacted the organization and participation in cultural rituals.

Other challenges arise in the form of global cultural influences. Social media and globalization have opened access to new information and cultural trends, which can influence society's perspectives and values towards their own traditions. Some community members may be more inclined to follow new

trends rather than continue old traditions. Furthermore, shifts in social structure also affect the ritual's execution. Youth who migrate in search of work sometimes cannot directly participate in the ritual, leading to changes in the dynamics of younger generations' involvement in preserving the tradition. Thus, these changes depict how modernization has influenced the Slametan ritual and how cultural traditions must adapt to the dynamics of the times to remain relevant. This can represent a broader understanding of how social and technological developments shape cultural transformations.

IV. CONCLUSION

The semiotic study of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* discusses the importance of symbolic communication in the modernization era of East Kasiyan Village. In this research, it is found that the 40-day *Slametan* tradition holds strong cultural values and beliefs for the Javanese and Madurese communities in Dusun Krajan I, East Kasiyan Village. Some residents have made changes to certain aspects of the tradition, such as replacing traditional wet cakes with dry cakes like *Bakpia*, snacks, or *Ciki-ciki*, influenced by internal factors like convenience and practicality. Despite changes in the tradition, the semiotic study confirms that cultural values and beliefs continue to play a crucial role in determining the meaning and significance of the *Ngawandasa Ndinteni* commemoration. This tradition remains an essential way to honor ancestors and spirits while preserving customs and beliefs within the community.

In the face of modernization's changes, our cultural traditions hold essential values. Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni, for instance, preserves identity, connects generations, and imparts historical insight. Maintaining ties to our traditions is vital in an interconnected world. Understanding and appreciating our cultural heritage ensures its legacy for future generations, strengthening community identity amidst change. This research's findings contribute significantly to symbolic communication and cultural preservation. They guide us in understanding the enduring relevance of cultural values. Practical implications for preserving culture include education, active participation, documentation, inclusion in development plans, and community

collaboration. The research calls for further study, not only on the semiotic communication of *Slametan Ngawandasa Ndinteni* in East Kasiyan Village but also on the impact of modernization on the tradition, understanding the community's perspective on changes, exploring the role of the younger generation in preserving the tradition, and conducting comparative studies with similar traditions in other regions, as well as the impact of globalization on local traditions. An interdisciplinary approach can also be applied to gain a richer and more holistic understanding of this tradition. Through comprehensive further research, it is hoped that a deeper appreciation and preservation of the rich and meaningful cultural traditions in the modernization era of East Kasiyan Village can be achieved.

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