

Integration of Islamic Values and Modernization in Sasak Wedding Traditions in Lombok

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the dynamics of change and continuity in the wedding traditions of the Sasak community in Lombok from an Islamic perspective and its impact on their social structure. The Sasak community possesses a rich cultural heritage passed down through generations, with wedding traditions being one of the essential foundations of their social life. This study employs Lévi-Strauss's structuralism approach to delineate the key elements in Sasak wedding ceremonies and analyze the role and symbolic meaning of each element in the context of Islamic teachings. Sasak wedding traditions reflect traditional values highly esteemed by the community, such as togetherness, mutual cooperation, and respect for ancestors. The influence of Islam, which has permeated Sasak life, creates a unique cultural synthesis where traditional elements are integrated with Islamic practices. However, modernization and globalization bring significant changes to the wedding traditions and social structure of the Sasak community. This research finds that despite strong external influences, the Sasak community has managed to preserve key traditional elements and uphold their traditional values. Through this study, a deep understanding is gained of how the Sasak community faces social changes without losing their cultural and Islamic identity. This research also elucidates how social structure and wedding traditions function as reflections and mechanisms to face contemporary challenges, contributing to structural anthropology studies and providing a broader understanding of socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia.

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1. Introduction

The Sasak community inhabiting Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara, possesses a rich cultural heritage and diverse customs, passed down from generation to generation. This cultural diversity encompasses various aspects of daily life, including language, art, rituals (Varanida, 2018), and wedding traditions, which form one of the essential foundations of their social life (Mansyur, 2019). Sasak wedding traditions are not merely a series of ceremonies and customs but also reflect the traditional values highly esteemed by the community (Sulistiawati, 2023). These values include a sense of togetherness, mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and social norms that govern community life (Sulistiawati, 2023). Sasak wedding customs play a central role in their social structure, determining relationships between individuals and groups, and regulating patterns of interaction and power distribution within the community.

Islamic influence has permeated the lives of the Sasak people for centuries, leading to a unique cultural synthesis where traditional elements have been harmoniously integrated with Islamic teachings and values (Zaenuddin, 2020). This is evident in various wedding rituals and processes, where elements like the akad nikah—a marriage contract conducted according to Sharia—are central to the ceremony. The recitation of the ijab kabul in front of an officiant and witnesses, as well as the incorporation of prayers and dhikr throughout the various stages of the ceremony, underscores the Islamic identity of the Sasak community while simultaneously strengthening their social and spiritual bonds (Jahidin, 2023; Rahman et al., 2022; Rahman & Faisal, 2023). This tradition not only emphasizes their religious devotion but also reflects the community's adaptability in preserving their cultural identity amidst changing times.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, a structuralist anthropologist, posited that the systems built are the result of human conceptual ideas and organizational thinking as a complexity of their culture (Aswar, 2020). In the context of the Sasak community, social changes resulting from modernization, globalization, and interaction with external cultures affect various aspects of their life, including wedding traditions (Anastasya, 2024). These changes reflect the adaptability and flexibility of Sasak culture in facing the challenges of globalization (Asisah et al., 2023). Despite strong external influences, the Sasak community has managed to retain essential traditional elements and preserve their traditional values (Asyari, 2021; Tahir et al., 2020). This shows that, even in the modern era, they continue to reinforce their cultural identity through marriage, as the core of their social and spiritual life (Guntoro, 2020; Amelia J et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2020). Nonetheless, amid these changes, some traditional elements persist and continue to be passed down through generations.

This research aims to explore the dynamics of change and continuity in Sasak wedding traditions from an Islamic perspective and their impact on their social structure. Using a Lévi-Straussian approach, this study will delineate the key elements in Sasak wedding ceremonies and analyze the role and symbolic meaning of each element in the context of Islamic teachings. Additionally, it will discuss how the social structure of the Sasak community influences and is influenced by their wedding practices, and how changes in wedding customs reflect broader social dynamics.

Through this study, it is hoped to gain a deeper understanding of how the Sasak community faces social changes without losing their cultural and Islamic identity. This research also seeks to explain how social structure and wedding traditions function as reflections and mechanisms to face contemporary challenges, contributing to structural anthropology studies and providing a broader understanding of socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia.

1.2 Marriage Customs of the Sasak in the Perspective of Islam

Previous research has extensively examined the traditional marriage customs of the Sasak people in Lombok from various perspectives. For example, a study by Ita Suraya and Musakir (2023) explored the Islamic legal perspective on the practice of *merarik* (elopement) following the traditional marriage procedures of the Sasak people of Lombok (Sulistiawati, 2023). Another study by Lenny (2023) examined the views of Muslim students at FKIP Universitas Mataram regarding Islamic teachings in the "Nyongkolan" tradition, which is part of the Sasak traditional marriage ceremony (Herlina, 2023). M. Gunawan Ismail Soleh (2023) revealed that the implementation of *aji krame* in the *orong serah* tradition, which uses the highest strata of the Sasak language, does not contradict Islamic law (Sholeh, 2023). Syaripudin (2022) found that the community of Penujak village believes that customs cannot be separated from religion, and that the Islamic legal perspective on marriage in Penujak village is justified based on the opinions of some scholars (Syaripudin et al., 2022). Syarifudin (2021) revealed that there is a potential for resistance and conflict between customs (*adat game*, *adat krame*, and *adat tapsile*) and religion (*aqidah*, *ibadah*, and *mu'amalah*) (Syarifudin, 2021). Suwarno (2019) found that *kawin culik* (kidnapping marriage) among the Sasak people is a process of eloping with another person's daughter, which has been previously agreed upon. This tradition can be considered "*al-'urf al sahih*" (a valid custom) (Suwarno, 2019). Finally, Triana Apriyanita and colleagues (2023) concluded that there is no prohibition in Islam regarding the practice of *merarik*, as it meets the criteria for being considered a good custom (Apriyanita, Triana, Ija Suntana, 2023).

2.2 Levi-Strauss's Thought

Levi-Strauss's thought has been widely used in cultural research, particularly in the context of marriage. Eka Suriyansyah's (2019) study applied Levi-Strauss's approach and found that in the cultural reality present in society (marriage), when viewed superficially, some rituals appear to contradict the normative values of religion (Suriyansyah, 2019). The perspective of Levi-Strauss was also used by Ulum and Khasanah (2022) in their study of myths in the Kediri community, this research examined the myth of the prohibition of marriage between Etan and Kulon Kali Brantas Kediri. Levi-Strauss's theory on the incest taboo discusses and explains that marriage institutions cannot be separated from other phenomena (Ulum & Khasanah, 2023). An article written by Umam (2021) revealed that the tradition of *mantenan* (marriage) in the Madurese community highlights two important aspects: balance and harmony. These two aspects are like two sides of a coin that complement each other, resulting in a peaceful, harmonious, and prosperous community life (Umam, 2021). Furthermore, research conducted by Maulani et al. (2023) explored the influence of *Weton* in Pakunden village marriages according to Levi-Strauss's Structuralism theory. The study found that the Pakunden village community still adheres to *Weton* calculations in marriage, with family, culture, fanaticism, and personal experience being the basis for the influence of these calculations. Finally, *Weton* calculations are seen as an effort to avoid misfortune and disaster in marriage (Aatika et al., 2023). Levi-Strauss's thought was also used in the study of *kawin lili* in Sukakiong village, East

Nusa Tenggara by Salju et al. (2023), and found that the Manggarai people in Sukakiong village believe that kawin lili aims to strengthen previously existing blood relations that have been agreed upon by both parties continuing the marriage (Salju et al., 2023).

2. Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach, where data is not merely raw information obtained from the field but is instead shaped through interactions between the researcher and the data sources, whether human or derived from previous studies. The emphasis on descriptive interpretative analysis makes this method particularly well-suited for explaining the dynamics of the social structure and Sasak wedding traditions in a clear and comprehensive manner.

To gather the necessary data, the research utilized multiple methods, beginning with an extensive literature review and document analysis. This initial phase was crucial for establishing a foundational understanding of Sasak wedding traditions and their associated social structure. By thoroughly studying existing documents and previous research, the researcher was able to gather essential background information and theoretical insights that would guide subsequent analysis. This method not only provided the necessary context but also helped frame the understanding of how Sasak wedding traditions have evolved and how they are deeply intertwined with the community's social structure.

To complement the insights gained from the literature, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants who possess extensive knowledge of the Sasak community's wedding traditions. This method was specifically chosen to capture diverse perspectives and experiences directly from individuals who are part of or familiar with these traditions. The interviews allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences, values, and meanings attributed to wedding customs within the community. By engaging with respondents in various contexts, the researcher was able to uncover the nuances and complexities that might not have been evident through literature alone. To ensure the data collected was rich and comprehensive, interview guidelines and supporting tools were carefully prepared in advance.

The final step of the research involved data analysis, carried out using the Lévi-Straussian approach. This approach involves organizing and interpreting the collected data to identify patterns, themes, and categories that reflect the dynamic social structure inherent in Sasak wedding traditions. The analysis process was not limited to merely organizing the data but extended to interpreting it in relation to existing theories and the specific cultural context of the Sasak community. This analytical process began during the data collection phase and continued through to the completion of data gathering, ensuring that the analysis remained continuous and reflective of the evolving understanding of the subject matter. By comparing the findings with established theories, the researcher was able to relate the observed patterns to broader theoretical frameworks, providing deeper insight into the social dynamics at play.

Through the integration of these methods—literature review, document analysis, and in-depth interviews—this research aims to present a holistic view of the Sasak community's wedding traditions and their impact on social structure. Each method played a crucial role in building a comprehensive understanding, with the literature review offering context, the interviews adding depth, and the analysis providing a synthesized interpretation that aligns with the theoretical framework.

3. Result and Discussions

3.1 The Dynamics of the Social Structure of the Sasak Community

Lombok, an island located in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, is renowned for its stunning natural beauty and diverse cultural richness. The majority of Lombok's population belongs to the Sasak ethnic group, which has a unique and dynamic social structure influenced by tradition, religion, and modernization (Maulidi, 2019). The breathtaking beaches and the majestic Mount Rinjani are just part of the island's allure, where a rich and deep-rooted culture is an integral part of daily life. The Sasak people, as the largest ethnic group in Lombok, preserve traditions and customs that have been passed down through generations. One such tradition is the caste system known as Bangse (Prahana, 2023). Although it is not as rigid as in the past, this system still influences social interactions and traditional ceremonies, illustrating how ancient traditions continue to hold relevance in a modern context.

3.2 Social Stratification

Social stratification refers to the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or groups within a society, where positions are unequal and determined by various factors (Kolip, 2011). The formation of these social layers can occur naturally as a society evolves, or they can be deliberately structured to achieve collective goals (Soekanto, 2005). Social

stratification can manifest in various forms, including age, gender, religion, ethnicity, education, social status, and more. In modern societies, social differences are increasingly shaped by factors beyond inherent characteristics such as gender or age, with economic, social status, and political dimensions playing more significant roles (Alaini, 2015). This complexity reflects a shift away from traditional, innate determinants of social hierarchy (Soekanto, 2005).

In the Sasak community, social stratification is primarily divided into two distinct status groups: nobles and commoners. The nobility holds significant power and influence, dominating key aspects of Sasak societal activities (Hasbullah & Al-Pansori, 2022). This division has roots dating back to the Majapahit Kingdom in 1357, where nobility was inherited and passed down through generations (Wahyudin, 2017). Commoners, who make up the majority of the Sasak population, have traditionally been governed by the noble class. Although the royal system has since disappeared, the distinction between nobles and commoners remains prevalent in both traditional and bureaucratic settings today.

The status of individuals within these groups is often signified by the titles they bear, which are prominently used in everyday communication. Male nobles are addressed as Rahadian or Raden, typically shortened to Den, while noble women hold the honorary title of Denda (Kholidi et al., 2021). A nobleman who has children is referred to as Mamiq, meaning father, while ordinary men are called Amaq. Women, regardless of their noble or commoner status, are called Inaq by their children, meaning mother. Additionally, Sasak nobles use the titles Lalu for men and Baiq for women, particularly for those who are offspring of nobles who have married commoners (Hayyan, 2024). Socially, the titles Lalu and Baiq hold a lower status compared to Raden and Denda, reflecting the nuanced hierarchy within the noble class itself.

3.3 Social Stratification

In the face of intense globalization and modernization, the Sasak people of Lombok have managed to preserve their traditional values and customs. Traditional Sasak houses, built from natural materials like bamboo and woven lontar leaves, remain a distinctive feature that reflects the social and cultural values of the Sasak community. These homes are not just architectural structures but embody the essence of Sasak identity and heritage. The Sasak are also renowned for their intricate art of songket weaving, a tradition that has been passed down through generations. This traditional fabric, adorned with beautiful motifs, holds significant cultural value and symbolizes the continuity of Sasak artistic expression (Anastasya, 2024).

However, globalization and modernization have undeniably influenced the cultural values of Lombok, particularly in the social aspects of society. As Ritzer (2010) noted, globalization has a profound impact on existing cultures, leading to both the adaptation and erosion of traditional practices, among them:

a. Aesthetic values

Aesthetic values, or beauty, which encompass many aspects such as the beauty of cultural heritage surrounding the Sasak people of Lombok. However, with the advancement of time driven by globalization, people have started using modern interior designs for their homes.

"Nowadays, we prefer styles brought from outside the island, which has led to a lack of interest among us, the native people of Lombok, in traditional clothing, regional music, and futuristic housing. Globalization has significantly impacted our culture in Lombok, especially in aspects such as marriage customs, housing, and behaviors that are starting to lean towards Western ways." Moh. Imami Syacitta Riadjie, 29 Juni 2024.

In reality, the cultural values of the Lombok community have been influenced by globalization and modernization. These changes are evident in various aspects of daily life, including building concepts, social life patterns, and clothing styles. Modern infrastructure development with architecture adopting international styles has replaced traditional Sasak houses known for their granaries (Tjandra, 2024). Additionally, the clothing of the Lombok community has also undergone significant changes. In the past, traditional attire such as 'sapuk,' 'kain songket,' and 'baju lambung' were often worn in daily events, but now many people prefer modern clothing that is more practical and aligns with global trends (Andayani et al., 2021).

The social life patterns of the community have also started to change. In the past, togetherness and mutual cooperation were the core of social interaction, but now individualism is growing stronger with the influx of global culture that emphasizes individual independence (Murdi, 2018). The strong communal life, where important decisions were made collectively, is shifting towards more individualistic decisions.

Moreover, the use of polite language or "base dalem," which is the native language of the Sasak people, is becoming marginalized. Polite words such as "tiyang" (I am), "niki" (this), "sampun" (already), and "nggih" (yes) are increasingly rare among the younger generation (Mulianah, 2021). They more often use Indonesian or even a mix of foreign languages in daily communication. This indicates a shift in the values of politeness and respect that were once highly esteemed in Sasak culture.

These changes not only reflect the impact of globalization and modernization but also signify the challenges in maintaining cultural identity amidst rapid change. The people of Lombok are now at a crossroads between preserving tradition and keeping up with the times, striving to find a balance so that the noble cultural values can still be passed down to future generations.

b. Social Change in the Sasak Community of Lombok

Social change within the Lombok community, particularly among the Sasak people, is largely influenced by geographical conditions, material culture, cultural assimilation, and the acceptance of new ideologies (Panjang & Suana, 2022). A significant turning point in this process was the introduction of Islam, which profoundly altered the traditional belief systems of the Sasak. However, rather than a complete overhaul, the change was characterized by cultural assimilation where Islam and the local Sasak culture interacted dynamically. This interaction resulted in the integration of traditional Sasak elements into Islamic practices, a phenomenon discussed by (Muzakir & Suastra, 2024). For example, the incorporation of traditional musical instruments into religious celebrations and the adaptation of traditional ceremonies to align with Islamic values illustrate this blend. Such adaptations reflect the Sasak community's resilience and ability to maintain their cultural identity while embracing new religious elements. This synthesis of old and new underscores the community's unique approach to cultural preservation in the face of change.

"There is no significant difference from other regions. In the past, local languages were still commonly used, but now they are mixed with other languages. The problem is that this leads to a decline in cultural identity that should be preserved. Even villages that are cultural destinations are not immune to the impacts of globalization and modernization. Similarly, in terms of marriage, where invitations used to be distributed from house to house, this is now rare due to the advent of technology." Ilham Muhammad falari., 6 Juli 2024.

"This has resulted in a shift in social interactions between young people and the elderly, including the use of polite terms and respectful language. There has been a loss of politeness towards elders, a disregard for formal address, and an increased openness with the general public. Additionally, clothing styles have changed, with people no longer wearing traditional, modest, religious attire, despite Lombok being known as a religious island." Nauval Rachman 18 Juli 2024.

In the past, the use of local languages was very strong in Lombok. The Sasak language, with its refined forms such as "base dalem," was an integral part of the cultural identity of the community. However, with the passage of time and the influx of external influences, the use of the local language has started to blend with Indonesian and even foreign languages. This blending occurs not only in everyday communication but also in both formal and informal contexts. This linguistic mixing indicates a decline in the preservation of original cultural identity. The use of refined Sasak terms like "tiyang" (I am), "niki" (this), "sampun" (already), and "nggih" (yes) is increasingly rare, especially among the younger generation (Mulianah, 2021). This shift can be seen as a form of cultural erosion where the values of politeness and respect that were once highly esteemed are beginning to fade. This indicates that globalization and modernization have a significant impact on the continuity of traditions and local languages that should be preserved.

Villages that are cultural destinations in Lombok are also not immune to the effects of globalization and modernization. These villages, which should serve as bastions of culture and tradition, are beginning to be influenced by the currents of change. This is evident in how the community practices customs and traditions, including in marriage practices. Previously, wedding invitations were distributed from house to house as a form of respect and togetherness. However, with the advent of technology, this practice is starting to be abandoned. Invitations are now more often sent via social media or electronic messages, which, although more practical, diminish the personal aspect and direct interaction that are crucial parts of local traditions.

Globalization and modernization have significantly influenced the social interactions between the younger and older generations in Lombok. A key example is the diminishing use of polite terms such as 'pelinggih' (father/mother) and

'side' (you), which traditionally conveyed respect for elders and interlocutors. This reduction in the use of honorific language reflects a broader decline in the values of politeness and respect that are integral to Sasak culture, as noted by (Amrina et al., 2021). Similarly, modernization has also brought about changes in clothing styles. Previously, the attire in Lombok was modest and aligned with the island's religious identity. However, under the influence of global fashion trends, more revealing clothing has become prevalent, signaling a shift in values and norms related to modesty and religion.

The perspectives offered by these sources underscore the profound impact of globalization and modernization on Lombok's cultural and traditional landscape. The observed shifts in language usage, modifications in marriage practices, and transformations in the expression of politeness suggest that the local cultural identity is under considerable pressure. Although some changes may be inevitable, it is crucial to undertake efforts to preserve and uphold traditions and local values to maintain the cultural heritage and identity of the Lombok community amidst global transformations (Amrina et al., 2021).

3.4 The Concept of Sasak Traditional Marriage

When examining marriage customs among the Sasak people of Lombok Island, the concept of 'Merariq' is essential for understanding their distinctive cultural practices. Unlike the general Indonesian concept of marriage, 'Merariq' in the Sasak language conveys a specific meaning. The term originates from 'melaiq'ang,' which means 'to elope' or 'to carry away,' a tradition that remains significant in Lombok today. (Salam, 1992) explains that 'Merariq' refers to the ritual of elopement, where a girl is symbolically 'carried away' before the formal marriage ceremony. This tradition serves not merely as a prelude to marriage but as a crucial cultural marker, highlighting the Sasak people's strong attachment to their heritage and identity. The persistence of 'Merariq' amidst ongoing societal changes illustrates the community's determination to preserve its cultural traditions.

The broader social life on Lombok Island is shaped by a complex interplay of cultural influences, reflecting the island's rich cultural diversity. (Zakaria, 1998) identifies two major cultural currents that have shaped Lombok's cultural identity: the indigenous Hindu-Buddhist traditions and the later Islamic cultural practices. Through a process of acculturation, these two streams have merged to create a unique Sasak culture. (Zakaria, 1998) further notes that within Lombok society, distinct communities embody these influences. For example, the Balinese community, primarily located in Mataram, practices a syncretic form of Hinduism and Buddhism, while the majority of Lombok's population adheres to Islam, with their social practices and cultural structures heavily influenced by Islamic teachings. This cultural division underscores the island's complex cultural landscape, where historical and religious influences continue to shape social life.

a. From the Perspective of Merariq's Originality

Elopement (Merariq) is considered an indigenous local culture and an authentic ritual inherited from the ancestors of the Sasak people, practiced long before the arrival of the Balinese or Dutch colonizers. This view is supported by a portion of the Sasak community, led by traditional leaders such as H. Lalu Azhar, the former Deputy Governor of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) and currently the Chairman of the Sasak Indigenous Community (MAS). Additionally, the Dutch researcher Nieuwenhuyzen also supports this perspective. According to Nieuwenhuyzen, as quoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture team, many Sasak customs resemble those of the Balinese, but the customs or traditions, particularly in Sasak marriages, are genuinely Sasak in origin (Pencatatan Kebudayaan Daerah, 1979).

b. From the Perspective of Merariq's Acculturation

Elopement (Merariq) is considered an imported culture and not an original tradition of the Sasak ancestors. This practice was not carried out by the community before the arrival of the Balinese colonizers. This opinion is supported by a portion of the Sasak community and is led by religious leaders. In 1955, in Bengkel, West Lombok, Tuan Guru Haji Saleh Hambali abolished the practice of elopement (Merariq) because it was seen as a manifestation of Balinese Hinduism and incompatible with Islamic teachings. Similar views are also found in villages that are centers of Islamic activities in Lombok, such as Pancor, Kelayu, and others (Rahmin, 2016).

In practice, Merariq, as a tradition common among the Sasak people of Lombok, has its own unique logic. For the Sasak community, Merariq means maintaining dignity and demonstrating the bravery of a Sasak man, as he successfully takes (elopes with) the girl of his dreams. On the other hand, for the parents of the girl being taken, they would not willingly give away their daughter if asked conventionally. They consider their daughter to be of great value, so if asked in a usual manner, it would be as if asking for something of little worth. There is a saying in the Sasak language: "Sarian

ngendeng anak manuk bae" (as if asking for a chick) (Cahyadi, 2014). In this context, Merariq is understood as a way to conduct the marriage process, as well as a means to avoid conflict.

c. The Tradition of Merariq: An Acculturation of Legal Pluralism (Islamic Law, State Law, and Sasak Local Culture)

Islam, from a theological standpoint, is understood as a system of divine and transcendent values, but it also functions sociologically as a phenomenon of civilization, culture, and social reality. The interplay between Islamic teachings and the realities of life has been a consistent feature throughout its history, driving its evolution within various cultural contexts. This interaction has significantly contributed to the tangible development of Islam, ultimately shaping a civilization that commands respect across the globe. As Islam spread, it didn't merely exist as a monolithic tradition but actively contributed to cultural pluralism through the processes of Islamization and indigenization. This led to the emergence of diverse expressions of Islam, such as those found in Aceh, Malay, Java, Sunda, Sasak, Bugis, and others. Each of these regional forms lends a unique character to the broader Islamic tradition, though this diversity can sometimes create ambiguity, a phenomenon that is sociologically recognized as a common aspect of religion (Zuhdi, 2011).

In the context of Sasak society, marriage holds profound significance, marking a person's full integration into the community. Much like in Islam, where marriage is considered a path to achieving tranquility and continuity of lineage, for the Sasak people, it not only unites a man and a woman but also forges bonds between two extended families. This communal aspect of marriage reflects the deep intertwining of social and religious values. The traditional Sasak wedding process includes several culturally rich stages, each carrying significant meaning. While some of these stages align with Islamic teachings, others may require adjustments to ensure they adhere to Shariah principles (Zuhdi, 2011). The following are several stages of the traditional Lombok wedding process:

1. Midang

In the Sasak community, "Midang" refers to a visit by the man to the house of the woman he is interested in, with the purpose of getting to know each other better and discussing the possibility of a more serious relationship leading to marriage. During this event, the man is usually met by the woman, who is accompanied by her mother or sister. The purpose of Midang is similar to the concept of Ta'aruf in Islam, which is to allow the man to see the woman who might become his wife, while the woman and her family can learn more about the man who may become their daughter's imam (leader), as well as understand the prospective son-in-law on a deeper level.

This is in line with what is expressed in the Qur'an:

"There is no sin for you if you hint at a proposal to women or conceal it in your hearts. Allah knows that you will mention them, but do not make a secret promise to marry them, except by saying a recognized statement. And do not resolve on the tie of marriage until the waiting term has expired. And know that Allah knows what is within your souls, so beware of Him, and know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing." (Al-Baqarah: 235).

It can be observed that in Islam, the principle of Ta'aruf, or introducing prospective spouses for the purpose of marriage, is highly recommended. The Midang practice in Lombok tradition, which shares similar objectives with Ta'aruf in Islam, can be viewed from several important perspectives. First, Islam encourages that the process of proposing should be done openly and clearly. This aligns with the principle that there is no sin in making a direct or clear proposal, as long as there is no intention to hide the good intentions behind it. Second, Islam teaches the importance of protecting women's rights in the marriage process. This includes the right of women to know who their prospective husband is and to be able to consent to the marriage. This principle ensures that women have control over their marital destiny and can make informed decisions. Third, Islam recognizes the importance of local customs and culture in the marriage process, as long as they do not conflict with fundamental religious principles. In the context of the Midang tradition in Lombok, as long as the process upholds values of honesty, respects the consent of the woman, and does not violate Islamic principles, this activity can be seen as a positive means for prospective spouses to get to know each other before marriage.

2. Merariq

"Merariq" or "maling" have different meanings, but both share a common concept. Merariq, in the local language, refers to bringing the woman who is to be married to the man's family with the mutual agreement of both parties, the man and the woman. Meanwhile, maling means to avert one's gaze from the parents as a sign of preparation for marriage.

The origin of Merariq is not actually an illegal elopement but rather a mutual agreement based on love. This is explained in Surah Ar-Rum: 30:

"And among His signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought." (Ar-Rum: 21).

In Islam, marriage is regarded as a sacred union that embodies principles of equality, justice, and harmony between spouses. This is emphasized in Surah Ar-Rum (30:21), where Allah highlights the creation of spouses so that they may find love, tranquility, and mercy in one another. These principles underscore the importance of mutual agreement and consent in the marriage process, ensuring that both parties enter the union willingly and respectfully.

In the context of Lombok's traditional practice of Merariq, or elopement, these Islamic principles can be upheld when the practice is conducted based on mutual love and consensual agreement between the man and the woman. When both individuals willingly participate in Merariq, it aligns with the Islamic emphasis on protecting women's rights and ensuring uncoerced consent in marriage. Properly practiced, Merariq can facilitate the building of a harmonious and balanced marital relationship, fulfilling the spiritual and social objectives outlined in Islamic teachings.

Therefore, integrating the traditional practice of Merariq with the foundational principles of Islam demonstrates how cultural customs can coexist with religious doctrines, preserving local identity while adhering to religious obligations. This harmonious integration ensures that marriage practices remain culturally relevant and spiritually meaningful, contributing to the stability and continuity of the Sasak community's social fabric.

3. Selabaran

Selabaran is the process in which the man's side formally informs the woman's family about the Merariq event that has taken place, doing so with respect and in accordance with local customs. The purpose of this process is to alleviate the parents' concerns about their daughter and to allow the woman's parents to quickly decide when the marriage contract (akad nikah) will be conducted. The bride-to-be, who has been brought over, must promptly inform her family that she willingly agrees to marry her prospective husband. This process is carried out by two men dressed in traditional attire, as a sign of respect toward the woman's family.

This tradition embodies moral values toward parents, emphasizing the responsibility to provide clarity and to inform them. It is a form of respect for one's parents, as taught in the words of Allah in Surah Luqman, verse 14:

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination." (Luqman: 14).

4. Bait Wali

Bait Wali refers to the consultative visit made by representatives from the groom's side to the bride's guardian to promptly arrange her marriage. A marriage is not considered valid without the presence of a guardian (wali). This is based on the hadith narrated by Abi Musa Al-Ash'ari from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

لا يَكُاحُ إِلَّا بِوَالِي

"There is no marriage except with a guardian (wali)."

This teaches the value of consultation when making decisions, as Allah commands in the Quran:

وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

"And their affair is [determined by] consultation among them; and from what We have provided them, they spend." (Q.S. Ash-Shura: 38)

In Islam, the principles of consultation (shura) and mutual consent are crucial when resolving matters involving multiple parties. The verse from Surah Ash-Shura (42:38) emphasizes that decisions are made through consultation among the parties involved. In the context of Bait Wali in Lombok's tradition, consultation between the groom's side and the bride's guardian (typically the parents or guardian of the bride) is essential to achieve a fair and mutually agreeable marriage arrangement, in line with the principles of justice in Islam. Islam also emphasizes the importance of protecting

women's rights, including the right to give free and uncoerced consent to marriage. In the Bait Wali process, the bride's guardian plays a key role in ensuring that the bride willingly consents to marry the chosen groom.

5. Sorong Serah Aji Krame

Soroh Serah Aji Krame is the core of the traditional wedding procession of the Sasak tribe in Lombok. This event represents the wedding celebration or "walimatul'ursy." During this event, the bride's family hosts a celebration, which is usually funded by the groom's side based on agreements made during the Bait Wali process. This practice is in line with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who said:

...أَوْلِمُّوْا لَوْ بِشَاةٍ (رواه مسلم)

"...Hold a wedding feast, even if it is with just one sheep." (Narrated by Muslim)

In the context of Islamic teachings, marriage is considered not only a social contract between two individuals but also an act of worship that is to be blessed and celebrated. This is underscored by the prophetic tradition, where Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasizes the importance of holding a 'walimah,' or wedding feast, as an expression of gratitude for Allah's blessings, stating, 'Hold a wedding feast, even if it is with just one sheep.' The Soroh Serah Aji Krame tradition in Lombok aligns with this Islamic principle, integrating the concepts of gratitude and joy within the marriage celebration. However, it also reflects the local customs that govern social and financial responsibilities, making it a pivotal part of the Sasak wedding procession. By combining religious teachings with local cultural practices, the tradition of Soroh Serah Aji Krame exemplifies how the Sasak community harmonizes their Islamic faith with their cultural heritage, thus reinforcing the central thesis of this study: the dynamic interplay between religion and culture in shaping the Sasak identity.

6. Nyongkolan

Nyongkolan is a procession that takes place after the Soroh Serah Aji Krame ceremony. This event involves the groom and bride being paraded around the village, accompanied by traditional Sasak music such as gamelan or gendang belek. The entire family of the groom, along with the community members who have visited the bride's home, participate in this procession. The purpose is to officially present the couple to the bride's parents, family, and the entire community. During this event, they ask for forgiveness and show respect to the bride's parents.

Nyongkolan carries the educational values of forgiveness and reconciliation by strengthening the bonds of friendship and kinship, as emphasized in the Quran, Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 10:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

"Indeed, the believers are brothers. So make peace between your brothers and fear Allah that you may receive mercy."

This procession serves as a meaningful tradition to mend and reinforce relationships within the community, aligning with the Islamic principles of brotherhood and reconciliation.

7. Bales Ones Nae

The final event in the Sasak traditional wedding ceremony is Bales Ones Nae. This activity serves as a social visit between the groom's family and the bride's family, and vice versa. It involves discussions about the couple who will be starting their new life together, as well as the exchange of essential items needed for their household, such as clothing, kitchenware, and other necessities. This is the concluding event of a marriage that is recognized by both religion and tradition. After this ceremony, the couple is responsible for establishing their own family.

This event holds significance in Islamic teachings, as reflected in the Quran, Surah Ali-Imran, verse 103:

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ فُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses [of revelation] that you may be guided."

Bales Ones Nae underscores the importance of unity and mutual support in relationships, aligning with Islamic principles of brotherhood and communal harmony.

4. Conclusion

This research analyzes the dynamics of the social structure and marriage customs of the Sasak community through an Islamic perspective and uses the Lévi-Strauss structuralism approach. The results of this research provide several important conclusions. First, Sasak society has a social structure consisting of two main groups, namely nobles and ordinary people. This social stratification has its roots since the Majapahit Kingdom and is still influential today in traditional and bureaucratic contexts. The title used before a name indicates a person's social status in society. Second, Sasak wedding customs, such as the "Bales Ones Nae" ritual, reflect the close connection between customs and Islamic teachings. This procession not only functions as a gathering between families, but also prepares the bride and groom to form a new family by providing basic household needs. Third, globalization and modernization have brought significant changes in Sasak traditional and cultural practices. Shifts in language use, changes in the way wedding invitations are distributed, and transformations in politeness values are some of the visible impacts. The use of modern technology in wedding traditions reduces the personal aspects and direct interactions that are an important part of local traditions. Fourth, using the Lévi-Strauss approach, this research finds that the social structure and customs of Sasak marriages have patterns that are consistent with structuralism theory. The customs and rituals that are carried out reflect the relationships between individuals and groups in society which are influenced by religious and cultural values. Overall, this research shows that despite the influence of modernization and globalization, the Sasak people still maintain many of their traditions and customs. However, the changes that have occurred show the need for efforts to preserve local culture and values to maintain the identity of the Sasak people in the midst of global change.

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