



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE STUDY OF THE SOCIAL REALITIES OF THE NYADRAN TRADITION AMONG FISHING COMMUNITIES

\*Hartoyo

Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

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#### ABSTRACT

The study dealt with *Nyadran*, a tradition that developed among the people of Indonesia, especially Javanese. *Nyadran* is also enacted by the fishing communities of Desa Bluru Kidul (Bluru Kidul village), Kecamatan Sidoarjo (Sidoarjo district) of Sidoarjo Regency. The main activity of *Nyadran* is a visit to a shrine located in Dusun Kepetingan of Desa Sawohan, Kecamatan Buduran of Sidoarjo Regency. The purpose of the present study was to describe and analyze *Nyadran*, the meanings of the cultural activities of *Nyadran* as perceived by the fishing communities and the reasons why the fishing communities of Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo regency engaged in *Nyadran*. The present study made use of the qualitative approach and the Grounded Theory developed by Strauss and Corbin as the analytical tool. It employed the Theory of Culture as the main theory and the relevant social theories such as symbolic interactionism, social action and phenomenology to delve into the subject matter. Results showed that *Nyadran* acted upon by the fishing communities was basically *nyekar* (a visit) to the shrine of Dewi Sekardadu. The *Nyadran* tradition as perceived by those who carried it out constituted a form of gratitude to God the Almighty for sustenance they earn. The *selamatan* (a thanksgiving meal) in the shrine of Dewi Sekardadu was based on the belief that the visit to the shrine would bring blessings. The fishing communities continued to engage in the *Nyadran* tradition since it was considered a good cultural heritage of the ancestors.

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## INTRODUCTION

A study of the *Nyadran* tradition for the fishing communities is one that focuses on cultural activities that have become traditions and thrive among communities in an effort to delve into one's perception of the *Nyadran* tradition and their actions to realize it. Culture means the thoughts, reasons, customs, something that has become a habit and difficult to change (PusatBahasa, 2008: 214). The word '*budaya*' derives from the Sanskrit '*buddhayah*' which is the plural form of '*buddhi*', meaning the minds or reasons. Thus, *budaya* can be defined as things that are concerned with the minds or reasons (Soekanto, 1982: 172). In the discipline of cultural anthropology, the terms '*budaya*' (culture) and '*kebudayaan*' (Culture) have the same meaning and there is no difference (Muhammad, 2011: 76). In a terminological term, '*budaya*' or '*kebudayaan*' has been largely defined by scholars. Koentjaraningrat (in Sulasman and Gumilar, 2013: 19) defined culture as "*a whole system of ideas, actions, and works of humans in the context of a society to be possessed by humans, acquired by*

*way of learning*". E. B. Tylor (in Soekanto, 1982: 172) provides a definition of culture as knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and a variety of capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of a community. Culture contains seven elements considered as the principal or basic elements, commonly called the cultural universals (Soekanto, 1982: 176). Those *cultural universals* are: life equipment and technology system, livelihood and economic systems, social systems, languages, arts, knowledge systems, and religion. A community is a group of people who interact with each other. In order to interact with each other, humans need infrastructure. With the presence of infrastructure members of a human collective will be able to interact. However, an interacting human collective does not necessarily constitute a community since a community must have a special bond. McIver, J. L. Gillin and J. P. Gillin (in Soelaeman, 1987: 122) concurred that the presence of mutual mingle and interactions within a community are due to the presence of values, norms, methods, and procedures that constitute common needs; thus, a community is a unity of human life that interact according to certain customs system, which is continuous and bound by a sense of shared identity. A fisherman refers to someone whose livelihood is mainly

\*Corresponding author: Hartoyo,  
Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia.

marine fishing. Thus, a fishing community is a group of people whose main livelihood is marine fishing. *Nyadran* derives from the word 'sadrán', which means visiting a tomb or shrine to deliver prayers to the ancestors (father, mother, and so on) with flowers or offerings. The ancestral spirits prayed for are those of the ancestors and those who have contributed to the villagers. They include those who have contributed to establishing the village, known as *cikalbakal* (the forerunners), or those who have *babat alas* (forest clearing) of the village. The *Nyadran* tradition constitutes a form of culture developing among the people of Indonesia, especially Javanese communities. It is carried out by the fishing community of Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency. The main activity of *Nyadran* is a visit to the shrine of Gusti Ayu Dewi Sekardadu. The fishing community of Bluru Kidul was chosen as the object of the present study due to several considerations that, among others, *Nyadran* in Bluru Kidul is located very near to the center of Sidoarjo Regency administration and it is performed so festively with various activities that attract wide public attention.

The *Nyadran* tradition constitutes a process of assimilation into the Islamic tradition of the Hindu-Buddhist religious tradition called *shradhha*, which is a ceremony of 'meruwat' (to purify) the spirits after twelve years of their death (Sunyoto, 2014: 126). Among the Javanese communities *Nyadran* partially serves as an expression of gratitude to God the Almighty for the bestowed fertility of agricultural land, or the ease and safety in making a living, as well as the abundance of sustenance. Therefore, they call it *tasyakuran* (a thanksgiving). The present study focused on the meaning of *Nyadran* from the perspective of its actors, namely the fishing community of Desa Bluru Kidul and how they realize the meaning within the community, which is capable of affecting the development of a variety of culture within the surrounding communities. The fishing community of Desa Kidul Bluru, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency, continues to perform the *Nyadran* tradition once a year on the *maulud* (the birth of Prophet Mohammad) month.

The purposes of this study were to describe and analyze the *Nyadran* tradition performed by the fishing community of Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency; to describe and analyze the meanings of the cultural activities of *Nyadran* as perceived by the fishing community of Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency; and to describe and analyze the reasons of the fishing community of Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency for practicing the *Nyadran* tradition.

The present study not only contributes academically to the researcher, but also enriches the body of knowledge. Theoretically, it can be used for an analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of the *Nyadran* tradition among communities and, practically, it can inform all parties, particularly the Government of Sidoarjo Regency, with regard to the effort to patenting the *Nyadran* tradition among the fishing communities. In particular, results of the present study can be considered in formulating policies for enhancing the tourism potential of Sidoarjo Regency.

## METHODS

The approach taken in the present study was the concept of criticism, in the sense of the researcher did not take for granted the sources obtained, but critically sorted it out in order to obtain acceptable facts. According to Ary *et al.* (2002: 450), criticism can be external and internal, in which the former is the lower-level criticism and the latter is the higher-level one. The strategy chosen for the present study was the qualitative approach and the analytical strategy was the Grounded Theory developed by Strauss and Corbin. The present study examined more deeply the social phenomenon of "The *Nyadran* Tradition of Fishing Communities (a Study of the Social Realities of the Meanings of *Nyadran* Tradition from the Perspective of the Actors in Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency)". The main site of the study was Desa Bluru Kidul, Kecamatan Sidoarjo of Sidoarjo Regency.

The instruments used in the study were the observation and interview guides. In addition, the researchers made use of a number of devices, such as a voice recorder, a camera and stationeries to obtain certain data relevant to the subject matter of the study. Informants were selected using the purposive sampling technique in accordance with the purpose of the study. In a qualitative study informants are of importance since the study relies on data from interviews with them. Thus, data should be obtained from certain individuals with sufficient knowledge, expertise and insight in terms of the issues to be investigated.

Data were collected by means of interviews and documentation. An interview is an attempt to gather information by asking questions verbally to be answered verbally. The main characteristic of an interview is face-to-face relationships of the information hunter with the informant. According to Patton (in Moleong, 2002), data analysis is the process of arranging the order of data, organizing them into a pattern, category, and a basic description. Data analysis is firstly intended to organize data. All data collected consisting of field notes, the researcher's comments, images, photographs, documents such as reports, biographies, articles, and so on, are organized, sorted, grouped, coded and categorized. The organizing and managing of the data would at least be capable of finding the themes and propositions serving as a substantive theory. Given the qualitative approach of the present study, data collection and data analysis could not be separated from each other, taking place simultaneously and continuously before, during and after data collection (Noeng Muhajir, 1990).

Data analysis in the present study used the method developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) in their book entitled *Basic of Qualitative Research, Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. It includes the procedure of coding, consisting of three phases: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The development of the theory using this approach is entirely based on the field data from the emic perspective of the actors who are the subjects of the study itself so as to find a theory that departs from the interpretation or the first-order understanding. The present study used the qualitative approach and the analytic strategy of grounded research.

The bottom-up development of theory was entirely based on the existing field data. The first step was to arrange the order of the data and to organize them into a pattern, category, and a basic description. Subsequently, by using a variety of relevant information, a further analysis of the fishing community's understanding of the *Nyadran* tradition was carried out in order to obtain an overview of the meanings of the tradition. Data analysis performed in this study was not limited to that in the field, but also after the data were collected. Data were analyzed using the procedures of coding to develop a grounded theory through the data.

The coding procedures involved three processes, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The steps of open coding are as follows: (1) to generate concepts from the data obtained from the study; (2) to classify data and concepts having in common in terms of phenomenon for the purpose of categorization and to designate the categories; (3) to link those categories by assigning it with properties (e.g., duration, intensity, frequency, etc.) or range dimensions (rarely, often, never); these steps linked categories, sub-categories and main categories; (4) results of open coding would be phenomena and categories. The axial coding step was a series of relationships as follows: causal conditions → phenomenon → context → intervening conditions → action–interaction strategy → consequence. The selective coding involved the selection of the core categories, namely the central phenomena systematically linking to other categories, with an emphasis on the validity of these relationships, and the filling of the categories requiring sorting and development, and constant comparison. The concept of constant comparison was applied to the entire process of data collection and analysis.

## RESULTS

The total population of DesaBluruKidul, there was only 473 (4.68%) of 10,143 people who worked as fishermen). In other words, only a small fraction of the total population of DesaBluruKidul remained preserving the *Nyadran* tradition. Due to the abandonment by DesaBluruKidul villagers of the fishing profession, the *juragan* (mussel collectors) and boat owners had a difficulty to find mussel seekers from their own village. Thus, they had to find mussel seekers out of the village, even outside the region. In order to express the existence of their group, the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul established a fishing community called “NelayanSumberRejeki” of DesaBluruKidul, Sidoarjo.

The marine product gathered or collected by the fishermen of DesaBluruKidul was mussels. The fishermen sought mussels using motorized boats departing from DesaBluruKidul to the waters off Madura strait. Usually, the fishermen departed after the Fajr time and returned at about 5 p.m. on a daily basis. They sought mussels only on a single site, but they always moved to other sites, depending on their feeling or intuition of where the mussel beds resided. There were three methods to catch mussels and those three methods continued to be commonly employed up to now by the fishing community. With the first method the fishermen used a simple, manual equipment to catch mussels, especially for those elderly fishermen. The mussels were caught manually with the aids of a basket, a used car

tire, and *pancalan* (a wooden board for seating the mussel-seeking fisherman). With the second method, the fishermen used better equipment than the manual one, called *garuk* (an iron triangle dropped into the places of gathering mussels). The third method required less labor, in which a single boat only loaded by three people. The caught mussels were mostly sold to *tengkulak* (middlemen) in DesaBluruKidul. The fishing community of DesaBluruKidul belonged to the category of what is called a social group. According to Hendropuspito (Raho, 2004: 75), the characteristics of a social group are, among others, a real collective identifiable and distinguishable from other social groups, having a social structure, roles, code of conduct governing how those roles should be enacted, the feeling of common interests and defending the common values of life. According to NuraniSoyomukti (2010), members of a particular social group more or less will have a tendency to assume everything that has become the group's customary habits as “the best” relative to that of other groups. This tendency is called ethnocentrism. Thus, the current preservation of *Nyadran* by the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul could be by accounted for by the aforementioned reasons.

The fishing community of DesaBluruKidul was a Javanese community and they were all Muslims. With regard to the practice of their religious activities, they belonged to the traditionalist Islamic group, following the usual tradition of their parents, or the so-called *sesepuh* (elders). Religious activities commonly practiced by the traditionalist Islamic group included, among others, undertaking a variety of *Selamatan*, organizing Jam'iyah (congregation) for recitals of *Yasin* and *Tahlil*, recital of the book of *Diba* (the life history of the Prophet Muhammad), recital of the *Manakib* (a history of the life of Sheikh Abdul QadirJailani), visits to the grave of ancestors, and various other activities. As described by Geertz (2013: 23), within the belief of the Javanese, in every village there are demons considered as *arwah* (plural of the word *roh* [spirits]) of the long-dead elders and community leaders, those demons being called “*Danyang*”. *Danyang* resides at a place called *punden* (a storied holy place). The spirits are, among others, the people who first lived in the village (the people who cleared the forest to establish the village), those contributed to the villagers, and so forth. In DesaBluruKidul there were several long-dead figures who could be called as *Danyang*, such as MbahDondong, MbahKajiLanggar, including also MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu.

The tradition to engage in *Nyadran* to the shrine of MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu could also be interpreted as a tradition to visit the tombs of *Wali* (saints) or holy people who had *Karomah* (a miraculous gifts) since MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu was the mother of SunanGiri and there was a belief developing among the fishing community that she was the ruler of Kepetingan waters. There was another ritual associated with *Selamatan* and normally practiced mostly by Javanese, namely preparing *sesajen* (offerings). In a special sense, *sesajen* is the delivery of offerings at certain moments in connection with the belief in spirits (Kodiran in Koentjaraningrat, 1995: 348). The offerings are a must in any event for the people who still strongly adhere to Javanese customs. Offerings are

placed in certain places. The BluruKidul villagers, in general, and many fishing communities, in particular, largely did so, especially when their families had a celebration. In the practice of *Nyadran*, an offering called *suguh* was prepared. A total of 7 (seven) *suguh* were prepared, all of which were offered to the *mbaurekso* (ruler) of certain places along the BluruKidul River, from *babagan* (wharf) where *Nyadran* was started to *babagan* where *Nyadran* was held, namely near the shrine of MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu. The main activity of *Nyadran* was *nyekar* or a visit to the shrine of MbahBuyutGustiAyuDewiSekardadu in Dusun (hamlet) Kepetingan, DesaSawohan, KecamatanBuduran of Sidoarjo Regency. The ritual visit to shrines for many Javanese is called *nyekar* since after praying at the shrines they laying flowers (flowers in the Javanese language is *sekar*). The fishing community of DesaBluruKidul also called *Nyadran* as "*TasyakuranLaut*" or sea thanksgiving. The term *Tasyakuran* (thanksgiving) was used in the practice of *Nyadran* by the fishing community since they were grateful for all the gifts of God the Almighty they had enjoyed over the years. Even though they referred it to as *TasyakuranLaut* (sea thanksgiving), it does not mean that they performed it at sea, rather they did it "on the ground", precisely in the shrine of DewiSekardadu located in DusunKepetingan, DesaSawohan of KecamatanBuduran.

In the perception of the fishing community the main site of *Nyadran* was the shrine of DewiSekardadu in DusunKepetingan, a hamlet in the estuary of Sidoarjo River. In the belief developing among the fishing community DewiSekardadu was the mother of SunanGiri, one of *Walisono* (the Nine Saints) located in Gresik. It was also believed among the fishing community that DewiSekardadu could also be regarded as *Danyang* and the ruler of Kepetingan waters. However, the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul did not call her *Danyang*, but only called her by name, MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu. That was why DewiSekardadu later had become a revered figure among the fishing communities, especially those in DesaBluruKidul of Sidoarjo Regency. With *Nyadran*, the fishermen felt calm when they were sought mussels in the sea since they perceived DewiSekardadu as helping them. The main ritual for those following *Nyadran* was the same as a visit to a grave in general, namely reciting sura *Yasin*, followed by *tahlil* and closed with prayer. The fishing community believed that *Nyadran* would bring benefits and increase blessings in their lives.

No one knows when the *Nyadran* tradition began since it has been practiced for so long and become a tradition passed down from generation to generation among the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul. In the past, *Nyadran* was practiced individually, meaning that anyone who wanted to perform *Nyadran* did it himself. Individuals who performed *Nyadran* usually carried *tumpang* (a rice cone) with such side dishes as roasted rooster, flowers and additional foods such as *lepet* (a type of sticky rice dumpling mixed with peanuts cooked with coconut milk packed inside janur [young coconut leaf or palm leaf]) and a bunch of *gedangrojo* (plantains). In the past, *Nyadran* was performed at night, around 10 p.m. until dawn. Upon completion of morning prayer, the ritual was followed by

*slametanNyadran* and *kenduren* (a festivity). There was a norm that people who performed *Nyadran* should back home before sunrise. At present, *Nyadran* was well-packed by the organizing committee into a tourist attraction since it was a unique, distinct tradition. Therefore, the *Nyadran* tradition can be used as a leading tourist product, in line with the vision and mission of Sidoarjo Regency as a festival city. There were several rituals and activities carried out by the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul in the sequence of *Nyadran* activities. Those activities included ones performed prior to the end procession of *Nyadran* in the shrine of MbahBuyutDewiAyuSekardadu by all the participants, as well as some support activities. The rituals and activities will be described as follows: (a) the preliminary activity and procession, covering a limited *Nyadran* performed on the night prior to the peak procession, *nyekar* to the shrines of MbahDondong and MbahKajiLanggar; (b) the peak activity and procession of *nyekar* to the shrine of DewiSekardadu by reciting sura *Yasin*, *Tahlil*, prayers, laying wreaths and taking the *bancaan* rice provided by the participants of *Nyadran*; (c) a wide range of support activities, such as contests, bazaars or fairs, *Dangdut* and *Campursari* music performances, *Khataman* (complete recital of) Qur'an, as well as public Islamic lecture.

Those various supporting activities were outside the rituals of *Nyadran*. They were carried out to attract tourists, both from DesaBluruKidul and the surrounding areas. The currently coordinated *Nyadran* gained a lot of positive responses from various circles. It was shown by the participants of *Nyadran* itself, from initially being followed by about 30 boats to a dramatic rise of more than 75 boats next year. Subsequently, *Nyadran* became merrier, with approximately 120 boats being prepared in 2016. The government of Sidoarjo regency, in this case the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, suggested that *Nyadran* not being carried out at night, but during the day only. Thus, since then the *Nyadran* tradition was held during the day and scheduled regularly every year. The 2016 *Nyadran* or *TasyakuranLaut* was the sixteenth anniversary.

## DISCUSSION

The fishing community of DesaBluruKidul, *nota bene* continuing to preserve the *Nyadran* tradition, was a small fraction of the total population of DesaBluruKidul, or only 473 (4.68%) of 10,143 people. In the perspective of social theory, the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul constitutes a social group with a tendency to assume everything that has become the group's customary habits as "the best" relative to that of other groups. This tendency is called ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is an attitude that compares the cultural elements of other groups to its own cultural standards (Nurani Soyomukti, 2010). The fishing community of DesaBluruKidul was a Javanese community and they were all Muslims. With regard to the practice of their religious activities, they belonged to the traditionalist Islamic group, following the usual tradition of their parents, or the so-called *sesepuh* (elders). Religious activities commonly practiced by the traditionalist Islamic group included, among others, undertaking *selamatan* and a visit to the tombs of their ancestors.

*Slametanmauludan* was also carried out by the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul in the *pesarean* (tomb) of MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu. It is the *Selamatan* which the fishing community had known as *Nyadran*. *Nyadran* was performed in that place since the fishermen believed that she was a saint, the mother of SunanGiri, and was regarded as meritorious to the fishermen. Thus, in addition to honoring her, *Nyadran* in the shrine of DewiSekardadu was also to pray for her. *Nyadran* was believed to bring blessings for the fishing community in their daily search for mussels in the sea.

The *Nyadran* tradition carried out by the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul was to visit the shrine of DewiSekardadu in DusunKepetingan since DewiSekardadu was a figure honored by the fishing communities, especially that of DesaBluruKidul of Sidoarjo Regency. In addition, she was the mother of SunanGiri, one of the *Walisono* in Gresik. Additionally, she was a *Danyang* who was ruling Kepetingan waters. With *Nyadran* in her shrine, the fishermen felt calm when seeking mussels at the sea. The word-of-mouth tale indicated that since ancient times the fishermen felt the need for *Nyadran*, called *nyekar* at that time. In the past, *Nyadran* had been carried out individually, especially by the *juragan* or boat owners. At present, *Nyekar* was known as *TasyakuranLaut*, or *Nyadran*. In general, *Nyadran* included: (1) the preliminary activities or processions, prior to the peak event of *Nyadran* in the shrine of DewiSekardadu; (2) the peak procession of *nyekar* in the shrine of DewiSekardadu by all the participants of *Nyadran*; (3) several supporting activities meant to enliven the cultural activities of *Nyadran*. In a study of symbolic interactionism, the cultural meanings of *Nyadran* with regard to some of its rituals needed to be interpreted in order to reveal the meanings behind the actions taken by the fishing community. According to Blummer (in Raho, 2007: 108), humans act based on meanings. Therefore, in an interaction, people mutually interpret and defining actions. The actions of others are given meanings first prior to being responded.

This means that a stimulus is not instantly responded, but it is firstly interpreted or given a meaning first by the actor. In social sciences, such an interaction is called symbolic interaction, one requiring a meaning or interpretation process first. In the *Nyadran* tradition performed by fishing communities, there were some equipment and materials that had to be prepared. Those materials were goods to be made into a particular object, or anything to be used or needed for a particular purpose. They were required to prepare various offerings in the ritual *selamatan* of *Nyadran*. In addition, during the festivity of *Nyadran* in the fishing community of DesaBluruKidulSidoarjo, a variety of supporting activities was also held. Those supporting activities were not really part of the substance of *Nyadran*; rather, they continued to be held since they were expected to be capable of attracting visitors, both from inside and outside DesaBluruKidul and even locally and abroad, and enlivening the *Nyadran* tradition. The present study found the following: (1) the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul was a small fraction of the total population of the village (only 4.6%), but up to now they continued to preserve the *Nyadran* tradition; (2) not all members of the fishing community are native to the

village since a large number of them switched profession; (3) there were groups that were not receptive to and rejected *Nyadran* but they never showed confrontation; (4) the fishing community believe in the existence of *Danyang* capable of helping them in seeking mussels on the sea, namely DewiSekardadu, MbahDondong and MbahKajiLanggar; (5) the main activity of the *Nyadran* tradition was a visit to the shrine of DewiSekardadu, along with the ritual of reciting *Tahlil*, prayer, laying flowers and ended with taking the *bancaan* dish provided by the participants of *Nyadran*; (6) in general, *Nyadran* included several activities, namely the preliminary activities, the peak procession of *nyekar* to the shrine of DewiSekardadu, and a variety of supporting activities; (7) the *Nyadran* tradition has undergone several changes, including the fact that it was individually carried out at night in the past, but it was performed in groups during the day; (8) there were several negative stigmas attached to the *Nyadran* tradition, such as gambling, drinking liquor, fornicating, and so on, which were not part of the *Nyadran* tradition; (9) the various supporting activities, including bazaar (night market), contests, Dangdut and Campursari stage performances, *Khataman* al-Qur'an, *pengajian* (public Islamic lecture), were intended to attract more visitors; (10) the subject of *pengajian* did not relate to the *Nyadran* tradition at all; (11) during *pengajian*, a parliament member of Sidoarjo gave speech with regard to the planned installation of gas pipeline for households.

Those findings lead to the proposition 1: the *Nyadran* tradition of the fishing community had the main activity of *nyekar* to the shrine of DewiSekardadu, as the *Danyang* of the local waters, along with the recital of *Tahlil*, prayer, laying wreaths and taking the *bancaan* rice brought by the participants of *Nyadran*. Analysis and description of the meaning of *Nyadran* as perceived by the fishing community resulted in the following findings: (12) all the equipment and materials used in the ritual of *Nyadran* were determined by the elders and taught to a particular person appointed; (13) *Nyadran* to the shrine of DewiSekardadu was to pray for her and *ngalapbarokah* (seeking blessings) and to invoke a spiritual, mystical salvation from her; (14) the meal after *nyekar* was intended to be alms as a form of gratitude to God the Almighty for all His gifts; (15) in the course of *Nyadran* there was a blend of the Islamic rituals with those of local culture believed to be the legacy of the elders of the fishing community; (16) *nyekar* to the shrine of MbahDondong and *kiridungo* (pray for) to MbahKajiLanggar as the *Danyang* of the village were intended to *nyuwunpangestu* (request approval) from both of the figures with regard to the *Nyadran* to the shrine of DewiSekardadu; (17) the various rituals of *Nyadran* were laden with symbols, such as a symbol of submission to God the Almighty, a symbol of sacrifice, a symbol of life in harmony and peace with fellow humans and fellow creatures of God the Almighty.

Those findings lead to proposition 2: The *Nyadran* tradition embodied the gratitude of the fishing community to God the Almighty for all the blessings and mercy. Analysis and description of the reasons of the fishing community for performing *Nyadran* showed the following findings: (18)

The fishing community believed that the *Nyadran* tradition had been inherited from ancestors they continued to preserve; (19) there was no financial support for performing *Nyadran* from sub-district or district level government. Those findings lead to proposition 3: the *Nyadran* tradition was inherited from the ancestors of the fishing community they continued to preserve. On the basis of the propositions stated, a major proposition could be made, “the *Nyadran* tradition of the fishing community with *nyekar* to the shrine of DewiSekardadu was continually preserved by them as an embodiment of the gratitude of the fishing community to God the Almighty for all His gifts”.

Several internal reasons why the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul currently remained performing the *Nyadran* tradition were, among others: (a) in an effort to preserve the ancestors’ cultural values passed down from generation to generation; (b) to honor DewiSekardadu for her services to protect the fishermen of DesaBluruKidul from all the adversities when they were seeking mussels on the sea; (c) the presence of a sense of togetherness, cooperativeness, communality among fellow citizens, especially fishermen and the villagers of DesaBluruKidul; (d) As a means to meet the needs for recreation for citizens who were daily busy earning a living to fulfill the needs of everyday life; (e) to create business opportunities by organizing bazaars (night market) during the course of *Nyadran*; (f) to render *Nyadran* a form of cultural, religious and social socialization and transformation from the older to the younger generations; (g) the willingness of the boat owners, *juragan*, and the fishermen of DesaBluruKidul who jointly provided the funding; and (h) to make *Nyadran* a leading tourism product of Sidoarjo Regency. The external reasons were: (a) presence of support from the village administration of DesaBluruKidul; (b) presence of sponsorship; (c) presence of non-binding donors; and (d) presence of contribution from traders joining the bazaar.

## Conclusion

The *Nyadran* tradition of the fishing community at its core was *nyekar* to the shrine of MbahBuyutDewiSekardadu. In the course of the event, *selamatan* or *kenduren* was held. Various rituals performed during the *selamatan* included the recital of sura *Yasin*, *Tahlil* and *prayers*, as well as laying flowers (*sekar*) in the shrine of DewiSekardadu, followed by taking the *bancaan* brought by the participants of *Nyadran*. *Nyadran* was carried out on Sunday morning in groups using approximately 50 boats. Prior to the peak procession of *Nyadran*, two important rituals preceded: firstly, a limited *Nyadran* performed on Thursday night and Friday using one boat, in which approximately 15 people participated; secondly, *nyekar* to the shrines of MbahDondong and MbahKajiLanggar. The *Nyadran* tradition of the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul as perceived by its actors had the meaning as a means of gratitude of the fishing community to God the Almighty for sustenance derived from mussels they caught over the years. The *selamatan* (*nyekar*) to the shrine of DewiSekardadu was based on the belief that the visit to the shrine of DewiSekardadu would bring blessings due to the *barokah* she had. Doing so, all the requests to God the Almighty would immediately fulfilled by Him, so that the fishing

community of DesaBluruKidul would catch more mussels and be protected from harm while seeking mussels on the sea. The fishing community of DesaBluruKidul continued to practice *Nyadran* on the ground that it was a good and positive cultural heritage of the ancestors. Therefore, the tradition would continue to be preserved. In addition, from the perspective of the theory of action, *Nyadran* itself is a traditional action, one taken by someone as an habit acquired from ancestral heritage. Thus, the fishing community practiced *Nyadran* as a habit. In conclusion, the fishing community practiced *Nyadran* largely due to internal reasons.

## IMPLICATIONS

Results of the present study support and complement the theory of culture. According to the theory of culture, a culture universal consists of seven elements considered as fundamental or basic, commonly called the cultural universals. Among of these elements are livelihood and economic systems (agriculture, animal husbandry, production systems, distribution systems, and so forth). The *selamatan* (*nyekar*) to the shrine of DewiSekardadu was based on the belief that the visit to the shrine of DewiSekardadu would bring blessings and that the requests to God the Almighty would be immediately fulfilled by Him, so that the fishing community of DesaBluruKidul would catch more mussels and be protected from harm while seeking mussels on the sea. In other words, the *Nyadran* tradition they practiced was closely related to the fishing community’s activities in connection with income or living.

The present study corroborates and complements and has theoretical implications to the development of the theory of action, that the fishermen carried out the *Nyadran* tradition based on the assumption it was a positive cultural heritage of their ancestors, which they continued to preserve. From the social science perspective it is called social action. Max Weber termed it “traditional action”, which is an action done by someone due to a habit acquired from the legacy of ancestors; thus, they perform it without any conscious reflection or planning. They would continue to perform *Nyadran* without knowing exactly what the benefits were; they only perceived it as a suggestion and habit of their parents.

Additionally, the present study had theoretical to the development of the theory of symbolic interactionism, with regard to the fact that the various rituals of *Nyadran* had symbols, such as the symbol of submission to God the Almighty, the symbol of embodiment of life in harmony and peace with fellow human beings, even to fellow creatures of God the Almighty. This was carried out by, among others, preparing *bancaan* and various offerings, including those not prepared to humans.

## Recommendations

Theoretically, the core of the *Nyadran* tradition of the fishing community was *selamatan* in the shrine of DewiSekardadu. The *selamatan* was a manifestation of gratitude for the sustenance given by God the Almighty to them. *Slamatan* served a religious function of *Nyadran*. In

fact, the religious function showed a blend (syncretism) between the teachings of Islam and pre-Islamic beliefs.

In addition to the religious function, there were many other functions, such as socio-cultural functions, economic functions, educational functions, political functions, and so forth. The present study did not deal with such a variety of functions since the focus of this study was the meaning of *Nyadran* as perceived by the fishermen. Despite the limitations of the present study, future researchers can undertake further study related to the functions of *Nyadran*. The various rituals of *Nyadran* had such symbols as the symbol of submission to God Almighty, the symbol of embodiment of life in harmony and peace with fellow humans and fellow creatures of God Almighty. Not all the meanings and symbols in *selamatan* were described in the present study since it only focused on the meanings of *selamatan* in *Nyadran*.

Actually, there were many meanings in the various rituals of *selamatan* since a wide range of *selamatan* had symbols on their own. Future researchers can undertake a study of the various meanings of rituals in *selamatan*, such as *selamatan* with regard to the circle of life, *selamatan* related to purify the village, *selamatan* for the National and Islamic holidays, *selamatan* related to certain events or periods, such as traveling a long distance, occupying a new house, *selamatan* for *tolakbalak* (averting danger), *selamatan* to fulfill a *nadzar* (vow) for recovering from an illness, and so on. Difficulties in the process of data collection associated with the more specific rituals of *Nyadran* could be addressed by, among others, positioning the researcher as part of the fishing community. Thus, they were ultimately more open and revealed almost all their social data. Future other researchers can follow the same procedures of approach, especially when the grounded theory is used to serve as a research approach.

In practical terms, results of the present study are expected to provide inputs, especially for Islamic leaders in the fishing community of Desa Bluru Kidul, with regard to providing guidance on the knowledge of Islam to the community so that the *Nyadran* tradition can continue to be held without departing from the principles of Islam, let alone contradicting with the norms of Islam. Results of the present study are also expected to serve as input to all parties, particularly the Government of Sidoarjo Regency, as considerations in formulating policies for enhancing the tourism potential in Sidoarjo Regency; at least, the activities of *Nyadran* are to be included in *Sidoarjo Calendar of Events*. Additionally, results of the present study are also expected to provide inputs to the competent parties, particularly the Government of Sidoarjo Regency with regard to the effort to patent the *Nyadran* tradition of the fishing community. This is important since *Nyadran* is a tradition native to Indonesia, which is passed down from generation to generation.

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