



The Tradition of Arab Ethnic Marriage in the Lens of Interpretive Symbolic Theory

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Abstract. Based on the researcher's pre-research that there are some different views about the implementation of marriage conducted by the Arab ethnic community. Arab ethnic community has a different view of marriage implementation. This research aims to know the uniqueness of the marriage tradition of the Arab ethnic community in Malang. It is also to explain the factors that underlie why this tradition must be done. The researcher used Interpretive Symbolic theory for analysis. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research. This research shows that there are three categories of uniqueness in the marriage tradition of the Arab ethnic community in Malang. First, Purification Classical Culture. It is the pure classical culture of Arabia. Second, Acculturation Classical Culture is a classical culture that acculturates with Javanese culture. Third, Progressive Modern Culture is culture itself. The three groups when mixed with Geertz's Interpretive Symbolic Theory are assessed as *pattern of behavior*. Then the three influenced the concept of *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* as a *pattern for behavior* which in the end resulted in a *system of meaning* (system of the meaning) piety to Allah SWT.

Keywords: Culture · Purification · Social Relation

1 Introduction

The Arab ethnic community consists of two groups (1) the Ba'alawi group and (2) the Masyayikh group. These two groups are a contraction of the Arab ethnic groupings in Indonesia. The Ba'lawi or Ba'alwi groups represent the sayid group, while the Masyayikh group is the non-sayid group [1]. The two groups in marriage have different traditions as illustrated in the following pre-research results. First, in choosing a partner, the Ba'alawi ethnic Arab community has a habit, namely the Ba'alawi Arab community is more likely to choose a partner from among their own fellow Ba'alawis and it is very rare for Ba'alawi circles to marry non-Ba'alawi people. In both Arab ethnic communities are very rare to get married in the month of Shafar and will usually choose the month of Robiul Awal or Robiul Akhir or Shawwal. On the day of implementation of the marriage contract, usually, Arab people will like to carry out the contract procession on Friday. Third, in determining the amount of dowry, ethnic Arab communities tend to ask for a small amount of dowry. However, there is usually a difference in giving gifts that are beyond

the dowry the man will give a lot of gifts. Fourth, in carrying out the procession of the Arab ethnic community, it is very important to carry it out at home. In this case, the host is the bride's family. In this contract procession, the men involved and the guests and invitees are dominated by men. Very few women follow this procession. Usually, women follow, only the family of the bride and groom only. Fifth, all the series of their wedding ceremony will read Maulid Habsyi first. Sixth, those involved in the Walimatul Urs event are only women. This teaching about marriage among them has been given since childhood, the concepts of marriage are always included in the advice of parents when there is a wedding ceremony carried out by relatives [2].

The above phenomenon is certainly a more dominant social construct so sometimes there may be additions after the implementation of the terms and conditions in the form of local wisdom. On this basis, it becomes interesting to be explored and studied further as specifically proposed in the formulation of the problem as follows.

This study aims to describe the uniqueness of marriage traditions among ethnic Arabs mixed with the Interpretative Symbolic Theory from Clifford Geertz.

2 Research Methods

This type of research is field research. This is because the data obtained are data taken from the field through interviews. Besides that, this research also takes place in the community, not in the library, so this research is a field research type. While the type of approach used in this study is a qualitative approach because the data extracted does not use data in the form of numbers, namely a research approach that produces descriptive data, which comes from writing, or expressions and behaviors obtained from other people.

Then the method of determining the subject that the researcher will make as a resource in this study is to use the method of purposive samples. Purposive sample [3] referred to as an objective sample, which means selecting a sample based on a certain assessment because the selected elements, or units, are considered representative of the population. Then to obtain data from the sources that the researchers have determined above, the researchers use interview and documentation data collection methods.

3 Results

3.1 The Uniqueness of Marriage Traditions Among Ethnic Arabs

After the researchers carried out the process of collecting data on the resource persons, three categories were obtained as follows.

- (1) Purificative Classical Culture. The meaning of Purificative Classical Culture is that the traditions in this category are pure traditions brought by the Arab Ethnic community from their ancestors. Purification means purity without the interference of anything else [4], in this context Arab culture is not mixed from the influence of local culture.

- (2) Acculturative Classical Culture. The meaning of Acculturative Classical Culture is that the traditions that exist in this group are traditions that are carried out classically like group one but begin to open up or begin to accept other traditions to create an acculturative cultural typology. While acculturation is an adjective of the work form of acculturation, so that acculturative has the meaning as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups. Consequently, if acculturation occurs in groups, it will affect the social structure, while in the individual sphere it will affect their behavior [5]. Haviland [6] who explained that acculturation is one of the mechanisms of cultural change. Acculturation occurs when groups of individuals who have different cultures interact directly and intensively, then major changes occur in the cultural pattern of one or both cultures concerned. However, the changes that occur will not eliminate the sense of their own culture [7]. In the end, the process of change in cultural patterns becomes an active process in affirming its existence. In addition, this change also requires adaptation, either as a strengthening of cultural existence in a new place or as a cultural adjustment in a new place [8].
- (3) Progressive Modernist Culture. The purpose of this progressive modern culture is that the traditions carried out are progressive modern, in another sense the existing traditions will always experience changes according to the needs and desires.

4 Discussion

In answering the problem formulation, one researcher will try to clash the three categorizations above with the Interpretative Symbolic theory proposed by Clifford Geertz. Geertz describes culture as a pattern of meanings or ideas contained in symbols by which people live their knowledge of life and express their consciousness through those symbols [9].

Interpretive Symbolic Theory works if the *pattern for behavior* inspires *pattern of behavior* and then *pattern for behavior* inspires back to the *pattern for behavior*. The interaction between the two *patterns* of course has a consequence, namely to produce a *system of meaning*. In this case, the *pattern of behavior* is the three categories above. Why is that, this is because all three are the result of the mindset (cognition) of the Arab ethnic community to create a marriage full of blessings. Arab ethnic communities in marrying their offspring really expect the marriage of their offspring to be a marriage that is *sakinah mawaddah wa rahmah*. This is of course in accordance with the principles of marriage presented by Dr. Musdah Mulia [10], one of which is the principle of *sakinah mawaddah wa rahmah*.

Seeing the above, *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* becomes a *pattern for behavior*. Why is that, this is because *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* is a value system adopted by Arab ethnic communities when talking about marriage. They consider that the purpose of marriage is *sakinah mawaddah warahmah*. *This is based on* the Firman of Allah SWT QS. ar-Rum verse 21 which means:

“.....and He made between you love and affection.”

pattern for behavior in this case is the concept of *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* which inspires the Arab ethnic community to create a marriage tradition that is in accordance with the concept. So the existence of traditions such as the reading of the Maulid,

the separation of male and female invitees, as well as the counting of real names are inspired by the value system they adhere to, namely the concept of marriage that is *sakinah mawaddah warahmah*.

After the pattern of behavior is inspired by the pattern for behavior, then the pattern for behavior should inspire the concept of *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* which in the end the concept is understood in such a way at this time. So from the results of the cognition (mindset) of the Arab ethnic community, a standard was created in the concept of *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* that they adhered to. As in the tradition of reading *Maulid Habsy*, as a result of the cognition of the Arab ethnic community in understanding the concept of *sakinah maawaddah warahmah*, to achieve this standard they carry out a tradition that is considered to make the marriage a *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* marriage. The tradition of *Maulid Habsy*, for example, is an event that has a symbol of gratitude, respect and praise to the Prophet Muhammad.

Seeing the interaction between the two *patterns* above, the researcher now explores the meaning of the uniqueness in the marriage tradition of the Arab ethnic community. After seeing how the Arab ethnic community adheres to a value system that ultimately inspires a marriage tradition which in this case is the result of the cognition (mindset) of the Arab ethnic community, what becomes the *system of meaning* is piety to Allah SWT.

Why is that, this is because the Arab ethnic community in embracing a value system and in their cognition system is very much shown as an act based on piety to Allah SWT. Starting from the value system that takes from the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet which then inspires their cognition system which is seen in traditions that smell very Islamic, although there are several traditions that are the result of acculturation between Arab culture and local culture which in this context is Javanese culture.

5 Conclusion

In answering the problems that have been presented previously, it was found that three categories describe the uniqueness of the marriage traditions of the Arab ethnic community; Purificative Classical Culture, Acculturative Classical Culture, and Progressive Modern Culture. The three groups when mixed with Geertz's Interpretative Symbolic Theory are assessed as pattern of behavior. Then the three influenced the concept of *sakinah mawaddah warahmah* as a pattern for behavior which in the end resulted in a system of meaning (system of the meaning) piety to Allah SWT.

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