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Evolution of Sunnah in the Aqiqah Tradition of Kamang Mudiak Community in Agam Regency, West Sumatera

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the Kamang Mudiak community's cultural acceptance of the aqiqah traditions. Their acceptance had consequently resulted in a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. In this tradition, there is a process of sunnah transmission involving cultural agents. The discourse of contemporary hadith studies includes this study in the group of living hadith. This research was conducted using a phenomenological approach. The purpose of this research is to reveal the acceptance and transmission of the hadith recommendation of aqiqah commanded by the Prophet Muhammad in the tradition of aqiqah practiced by the Kamang Mudiak community in the form of certain rituals. The findings of this research include: (1) The tradition of aqiqah in Kamang Mudiak was established in an evolutive manner. It has historical roots originating in the tradition of welcoming the birth of babies during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. (2) The constructions of this tradition are inseparable from the role of cultural agents, namely ulama and ninik mamak (tribal chief). In its development, this tradition is not only an Islamic identity but also a cultural identity for the people of Kamang Mudiak. (3) This tradition holds a symbolic meaning for the local community, as an expression of gratitude, the sacredness of attributes, prayers and hopes for the baby.

Keywords: *Tradition, Aqiqah, Transmission and Evolution*

Introduction

Welcoming the birth of a baby is one of the key religious traditions performed by the people of Kamang Mudiak in Agam Regency, West Sumatra Province. This tradition is not only considered part of the religious orders, but it has strong and deep social values. A family will be stereotyped if they do not carry out this tradition. This tradition is, basically, an effort to actualize the *aqiqah* commandment in Islam. However, for the Kamang Mudiak community, this sunnah of *aqiqah* is institutionalized in the form of customary norms. This shows the significance of this tradition in the traditional system of the Kamang Mudiak community.

Transmission of the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad has resulted in various religious traditions and practices in the community. In contemporary hadith studies, this is called living hadith (Qudsy & Dewi, 2018). Historically, the concept of living hadith in the Islamic intellectual

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treasury actually refers to the concept of the practice of *ahlu madinah* formulated by Imam Malik as a source of Islamic law (Ad-Dumainiy, 1403). Among Imam Malik's arguments was that Medina was the area where the Prophet lived until his death. The people living in this area witnessed Islam being developed and were involved in the process. Therefore, their practice is a representation of the Prophet's practice (Fauziy, 198). According to Imam Malik, the practices performed by the people of Medina in the first and second centuries were minute reflections of the Prophet's practices. This paradigm is actually similar to Fazlur Rahman's theory of sunnah evolution, which argues that the early generation's sunnah was the activities of the *sahabah* following the Prophet's example (Rahman, 1988).

The two paradigms above show that Islamic traditions, such as the tradition of welcoming births practiced by the Kamang Mudiak community, emerged in an evolutive manner from Islam in the era of the Prophet until Islam was introduced in the area. Referring to Rahman's (1988) view, although a long period of time had passed between the time of the Prophet and the advent of said tradition, the two are strongly correlated. In the evolution of sunnah, welcoming the birth of a child or popularly referred to by the local people of Kamang Mudiak as the *"mambadakan paja*" tradition was influenced by the adaptive and collaborative Islamization unfolding in Minangkabau. The pattern of the spread of Islam in this region forms a typology of Muslim society that differs to that in Java (Gusmian, 2016). This factor has, actually, led every Islamic tradition developing among Indonesian Muslim communities to have a visage of locality in each region.

The struggle between Islam and Minangkabau, which has had numerous impacts on aspects of community life such as tradition, has been well studied by Taufiq Abdullah (Abdullah, 1966). In fact, Azyumardi Arza made a review about *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisi dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Azra, 2017). Even in the contemporary era, studies on this theme, by both Western scholars and local scholars (Dobbin, 1974; Fadhil, 2007; Simon, 2014), are becoming increasingly prominent.

As for research that specifically examines the issue of living hadith in Minangkabau, it was carried out by, among others, Nico Kapttein (Kaptein, 1993), Ibasrol (Ibasrol et al., 2021), Nursaid (Nursaid et al., 2023), Erlina (Erlina & Nasrulloh, 2023), Dewi Sartika (Sartika, 2021), and Gusnanda on *Katam Kaji* in Jorong Pauh Kamang Mudiak (Gusnanda, 2019). This study was conducted in 2016 in the form of thesis research. In the following year, more and more studies on living hadith were conducted in Minangkabau. For example, in 2017 there was a study on *Merantau dalam Menuntut Ilmu (Studi Living Hadis oleh Masyarakat Minangkabau)* by Angelia. This study correlates Minangkabau people's *merantau* (migration) culture with the motivation outlined in a hadith about Muslims' obligation to pursue knowledge (Angelia, 2017). A study of the issue of living hadith in Minangkabau by Novizal Wendry is an increasingly complex study which looks into the Acculturation of Islam and Local Culture in the Mangaji Kamatian Tradition in the Lareh Nan Panjang Padang Pariaman Community (Wendry, 2021). From here on, the study of living hadith has gained greater prominence and become more massive. This research specifically discusses the transmission of hadith in the tradition of welcoming the birth of a baby (hereinafter referred to as *mambadakan paja*) carried out by the Kamang Mudiak community in Kamang Magek District, Agam Regency, West Sumatra Province. A study on this theme has been conducted under the title "The Struggle of Islam and Local Culture in the *Mambadakan paja* Tradition of the Kamang Mudiak Community" (Gusnanda, 2020). Two important aspects are examined in the study, i.e., the history of the emergence of the *mambadakan paja* tradition and its implementation procedure. In the current research, we conduct in-depth exploration by raising the following questions: how had the transmission process of the hadith on aqiqah brought about the *mambadakan paja* tradition? Who were the cultural agents that played a role in the formation of the tradition? What is the community's understanding about the implementation of these religious traditions? This paper seeks to deepen the aspects that previous researchers have not reviewed by focusing on two important issues, namely an explanation about the evolution of the sunnah *aqiqah* into

the tradition of *mambadakan paja* by implementing Fazlur Rahman's (1988) theory of sunnah evolution; and what symbolic meaning is contained in the *mambadakan paja* tradition for the Kamang Mudiak community. Accordingly, this research is significant for complementing previous studies and adding to the treasure of living hadith studies in Minangkabau community.

Methods

This is a qualitative research, in which the object of study is the community's tradition in welcoming the birth of a baby. The research location is Nagari Kamang Mudiak, Kamang Magek District, Agam Regency, West Sumatra. The tradition in question is related to the study of the transmission of hadith about *aqiqah* in the form of local community religious practices. The data for this research consisted of primary and secondary sources. The primary data sources included: (1) the phenomenon of welcoming a baby's birth by the Kamang Mudiak community; and (2) information regarding the tradition of welcoming a baby's birth obtained from the local community. The secondary data were sourced from documents, journals, and books that are relevant to the research problem. The data collection methods used were observation and interviews. Observations were carried out to observe the traditional process of welcoming births implemented by the Kamang Mudiak community.

The observation technique was conducted in a participatory manner, in which the researcher directly experienced the life of the Kamang Mudiak community and followed the implementation of the traditional process of welcoming the birth of a baby. Observations were performed from April to November 2023. Meanwhile, the interview method was used to obtain data in the form of information from several figures. Among the figures interviewed as informants were *ninik mamak* (tribal chief), religious scholars, and educational figures. We used the snowball sampling technique to collect data from informants. The approach used in analyzing the problems or phenomena studied in this research was the theory of sunnah evolution by Fazlur Rahman (died 1988) and the cultural theory by Clifford Geertz (died 2006).

The Constructions of Mambadakan Paja: From Sunnah Aqiqah to Tradition

All Muslims certainly wish to carry out all Islamic teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. However, all that is taught by Islam and listed in the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet are not all ideally realized in society. "Ideal Islam" as taught by the Prophet SAW is termed normative Islam, while Islam as it actually unfolds in society is called historical Islam (Khadziq, 2009).

Islam in this latter category is empirical and contextual. Therefore, historical Islam does not suddenly appear, but there is a context behind it. Whether one's practice of Islam is right or wrong is very much influenced by the time and space they experience. Thus, it is not wise to see someone's religious practice and quickly judge whether the practice is wrong or right, let alone accuse them of blasphemy because it is considered wrong(Khadziq, 2009).

In this context, the *mambadakan paja* tradition that developed in Nagari Kamang Mudiak is a form of the historical Islamic phenomenon above. Ideally, the practice is carried out in the form of *aqiqah*. However, there are circumstances requiring the local community to interpret and practice it in another form. The aqiqah commandment stipulated in the Prophet Muhammad's hadith was perceived by the Kamang Mudiak community and subsequently resulted in a religious tradition called *mambadakan paja*.

In general, it can be understood that in the transmission process the *aqiqah* tradition underwent a change in interpretation, which Fazlur Rahman (1988) termed living traditions (Rahman, 1988). This change at every level and time was influenced by many factors. *Aqiqah*, which was originally conceptualized by the Prophet, was eventually modified and became the

tradition of *mambadakan paja* as a new model for the Kamang Mudiak community in practicing the hadith on *aqiqah*.

The birth of the *mambadakan paja* tradition in Nagari Kamang Mudiak has similar context with the recommendation for *aqiqah* during the time of the Prophet. As outlined in chapter two of this paper, it turns out that practices such as *aqiqah* had developed among the people of Mecca long before the arrival of Islam. However, the practice was discriminatory and contrary to the mission of Islamic teachings.

Pre-Islamic Arab society had a tribalistic social structure and system where loyalties were built on tribalism. They were often involved in wars to defend their limited economic resources. In addition, the geographical conditions were dominated by barren deserts. These circumstances made them maintain a stern character, which often got them involved in wars. It was under such conditions that the presence of a boy was seen as a great gift. This was because when the baby is grown, he can be trained to become a tribe member as well as a brave and skillful warrior in using weapons of war (Imron, 2016).

By contrast, the presence of a baby girl was regarded as something completely unfavorable, both economically and in terms of social prestige. This is because baby girls would only become weak members of the tribe. A large number of women in a tribe would only be a burden and weaken the tribe's army. That's why they were often killed shortly after birth (Imron, 2016).

The presence of a baby boy was seen as something auspicious. To welcome the arrival of a boy, a special feast ceremony would be organized. During the ceremony, a goat would be slaughtered and the blood applied to the hair of the newborn boy (Imron, 2016).

The Prophet Muhammad SAW subsequently arrived with the teachings of Islam, which became a mercy for Arabs and non-Arabs alike. The arrival of Islam undermined the building of traditions that had developed among the Quraysh community. However, there was a kind of watering-down process so that Islam did not eliminate the tradition as a whole. Islam legalized it in the form of a new tradition that internalized Islamic values into it turning it into a religious doctrine. In a hadith narrated by Imam Abu Daud, we are told that the tradition of commemorating the birth of a child had developed among the pre-Islamic Arabs. Later, Islam came to reconstruct it in the form of the commandment of *aqiqah*. The wording of the hadith is as follows:

حدثنا أحمد بن محمد بن ثابت قال ثنا علي بن الحسين قال ثنا أبي قال حدثني عبد الله بن بريدة قال سمعت أبي بريدة يقول : كنا في الجاهلية إذا ولد لأحدنا غلام ذبح شاة ولطخ رأسه بدمها فلما جاء الله بالإسلام كنا نذبح شاة ونحلق رأسه ونلطخه بزعفران

Meaning: *"Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Tsabit from 'Ali ibn Husayn from his father from 'Abd Allah ibn Burayd, who said: I heard 'Abd Allah ibn Burayd say: "In the days of Jahiliyyah, when one of us had a child, he would slaughter a goat and smear its head with its blood. So, after Allah brought Islam, we used to clean the goat, shave the baby's head and put perfume on it "* (Al-Sijistaniy, n.d).

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the practice of *aqiqah*, which was legalized by Islam, was verbalized and then researched by the *mukharrij* and documented in the hadith books. It is through this book that information about *aqiqah* can again be found, and, from the book, the practice of *aqiqah* was subsequently rewritten by Muslims.

The time span and geographical distance between the practice of *aqiqah* at the time of the Prophet and the generations after him, starting from the companions, *tabi'in*, *tabi' al-tabi'in* and until today have resulted in changes in the practice of *aqiqah* due to historical processes. Moreover, given the expansion of Islam's territory to areas that already had a source of values from customs prior to Islam's arrival, such condition allowed numerous acculturation processes between the sunnah of *aqiqah* and local culture.

The limitations of people outside Arabia in understanding the source of the teachings also made the practice of *aqiqah* even more inauthentic. They ended up fumbling in the dark and assuming what they inherited from their predecessors about the tradition of *mambadakan paja* is the truth in practicing the *aqiqah* traditions. Perhaps the above explanation can lead to a methodological framework for understanding the transmission process from the sunnah of *aqiqah* to the traditional ceremony of *mambadakan paja* in Kamang Mudiak.

For a closer understanding, we would like to quote again the hadith regarding *aqiqah*, which is the theological basis for the introduction of the *mambadakan paja* tradition. The hadith text is as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ الْمُثَنَّى حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ أَبِي عَدِيٍّ عَنْ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ قَتَادَةَ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ عَنْ سَمُرَةَ بْنِ جُنْدُبٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ « كُلُّ غُلاَمٍ رَهِينَةٌ بِعَقِيقَتِهِ تُذْبَحُ عَنْهُ يَوْمَ سَابِعِهِ وَيُحْلَقُ وَيُسَمَّى ». قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ وَيُسَمَّى أَصَحُّ كَذَا قَالَ سَلاَّمُ بْنُ أَبِي مُطِيعٍ عَنْ قَتَادَةَ وَإِيَاسُ بْنُ دَغْفَلٍ وَأَشْعَثُ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ. قَالَ « وَيُسَمَّى ». وَرَوَاهُ أَشْعَثُ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- قَالَ « وَيُسَمَّى ».

Meaning: *"Ibn Al-Mutsanni told us, Ibn Abi "Adiy from Sa "id told us from Qatadah from Hasan from Samurah ibn Jundib that the Apostle (SAW) said, "every child is pledged with its aqiqah, which is slaughtered on the seventh day from the day of its birth and shorn of its hair and given a name"* (Al-Sijistaniy, n.d.).

The Hadith suggests that a child is entitled to be given at least three rights by the parents when he/she is born into the world. These rights, as described in the hadith narrated by Imam Abu Daud above, are *aqiqah*, its hair shorn, and being named. These three rights must inevitably be fulfilled by the parents, or at least the right to be shorn and named.

In addition, it can also be understood that the main message of the traditions presented above is actually about *aqiqah*. Thus, indirectly, *aqiqah* is an obligation for parents to sacrifice goats or sheep. In the Islamic sharia the number is set: for male babies two animals must be slaughtered; while for female babies only one. There are at least three rights described in the hadith narrated by Imam Abu Daud above, namely *aqiqah*, shearing the baby's hair, and naming the baby. These three rights must inevitably be fulfilled by the parents, or at least the right to be shorn and named.

In addition, the hadith also explains that the implementation of *aqiqah* is recommended on the seventh day of the child's birth. In this case, the reality practiced by some Muslims differs to what the Prophet specified in the hadith. Some perform *aqiqah* when the baby is a month old, two months old and even more than a year old. Sometimes the practice of *aqiqah* is adjusted to certain moments such as *haflah* or celebration of *khatam al-Qur'an* (Gusnanda, 2019). For example, in Jorong Uba, Nagari Koto Tangah, Tilatang Kamang Subdistrict, the slaughter of aqiqah animals was performed to coincide with the celebration of *khatam al-Qur'an*. This is done at the initiation of the local *ulama* so that the slaughtered *aqiqah* animals can be eaten together with the local community in the *surau* (Gusnanda, 2023).

Regarding *aqiqah*, the Prophet Muhammad also confirmed to give the child a name and shear the baby's hair. In another hadith the Prophet was mentioned using the phrase "removing disease or disturbance" (Al-Bukhariy, 2007). Given that the *aqiqah* tradition the author described in the previous chapter is viewed from the perspective of the theory of the evolution of the sunnah initiated by Fazlur Rahman (1988), it will certainly be concluded that the traditions describing *aqiqah* are the verbalization of the ideal sunnah that was originally exemplified and or commanded by the Prophet Muhammad. Interpretation, actualization, and reception of the sunnah *aqiqah* as an ideal sunnah, since the time of the *sahabah* has established *aqiqah* a living

sunnah. The generational development overtime had caused the practice of *aqiqah* to experience a process called creative-evolution. *Aqiqah* as an ideal sunnah was then accepted, understood, and actualized creatively to the point that for the Kamang Mudiak community, this *aqiqah* practice was subsequently transformed into a tradition called *mambadakan paja*.

The sunnah of *aqiqah* and the tradition of *mambadakan paja* carried out by the Kamang Mudiak community actually have the same normative basis. The only difference lies in the slaughtering of the *aqiqah* animals. When referring to the traditions describing the recommendation of *aqiqah*, three main messages conveyed by the Prophet SAW can be captured. Among them are the slaughter of *aqiqah* animals, shaving of the hair, and naming of the baby. Only two of the three main messages about *aqiqah* are found in the *mambadakan paja* tradition, namely giving a name and shaving the hair.

Some findings were identified when we analyzed the evolutionary process of the sunnah of *aqiqah* into the tradition of *mambadakan paja* in Nagari Kamang Mudiak. Presumably, even prior to the introduction of Islam, the people of Kamang Mudiak already had a tradition in welcoming the birth of a child. There is no valid data on this, but it is implicitly reflected in the procession and attributes used.

This assumption is strengthened by the theory that before Islam came, the Minangkabau people already had a source of values and social institutions in their lives called *adat*, which simply translates to customs (Kamaluddin, 2005). Consequently, Nagari Kamang Mudiak, which is part of the Minangkabau region, could certainly have a tradition such as *aqiqah* that developed in the region. The similarity of the traditions that at that time developed in Nagari Kamang Mudiak with the sunnah of *aqiqah* brought by Islam can, indeed, be easily accepted by the community. The conception of this practice was actually not much different from what happened in pre-Islamic Arab society, which already had a tradition of slaughtering animals to welcome the birth of a boy.

Given the narrative above, we can clarify and prove the conceptional process of the *mambadakan paja* tradition in Nagari Kamang Mudiak. We present a scheme in the chart below demonstrating how the change in the sunnah of *aqiqah* became a religious tradition.

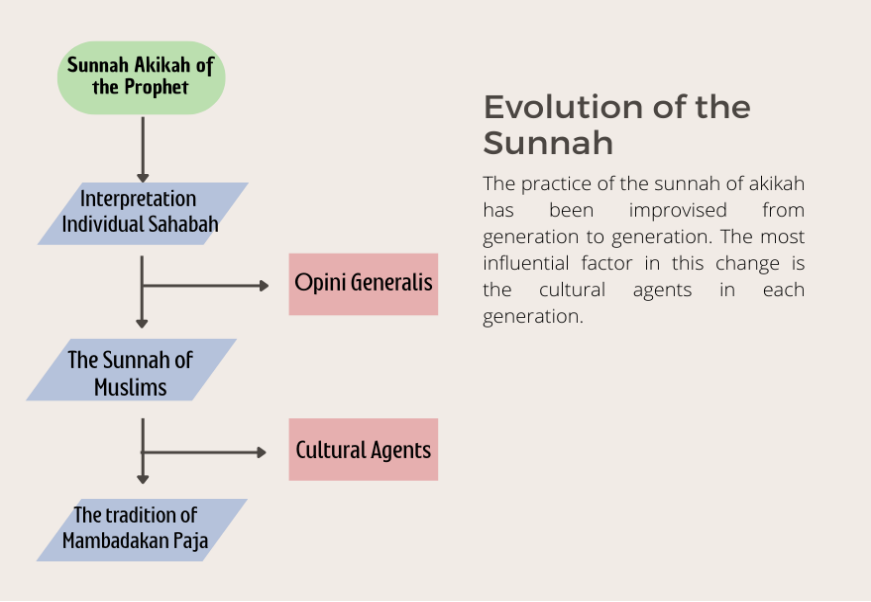

Figure 1.

Schematic of the evolutionary process of the sunnah of *aqiqah*

Source*: Processed from literary sources and field interviews*

According to the above figure, it can be concluded that there is a tradition of animal sacrifice given in honor of the birth of a male child (Al-Suyutiy, 1993). During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam granted legality and reconstructed the tradition of sacrificing animals in welcoming the birth of a child with the sunnah of *aqiqah* (Al-Sijistaniy, n.d). Subsequently, since the 6th century until today, Islam had spread to various regions throughout the world, and assimilated with local cultures. According to HAMKA, Islam was introduced to Minangkabau in the 7th century CE. So, it is estimated that during that era the Islamization process continued and eventually the tradition of *mambadakan paja* came into being in Nagari Kamang Mudiak and experienced periodical changes over time.

Cultural Agents in The Mambadakan Paja Tradition

The *mambadakan paja* tradition was originally the community's interpretation of the hadith about *aqiqah* as well as a product of acculturation between Islam and local culture. Therefore, the spread of this tradition was inseparable from the role of religious leaders and traditional leaders as authorities in the community. Both were the main sources of the development of the tradition.

We consider the two main figures above cultural agents, namely people responsible for the conception and development of tradition in society. In addition, other factors that influenced the emergence and development of this tradition were educational and economic relations. To understand the extent of the authority of religious and traditional leaders and the influence of economic and educational relations in shaping the structure and pattern of the *mambadakan paja* tradition, the elaborations in the following passages are provided.

The Authority of Religious Leaders

The Kamang Mudiak community is known as a religious community. Religious leaders in Kamang Mudiak play an important role in the socio-cultural life of the community owing to the robustness of their religious culture. At the same time, they are the controllers of the community's religious authority.

The people of Kamang Mudiak are obedient to their religious leaders. The religious leaders in this area are called by their special titles, such as: *malin, tuangku, kari, buya*, and *ustadz* (L. M. Satriman, personal communication, 2 June 2023). Religious figures in Kamang Mudiak would usually have a background engaging in Islamic boarding education, and there are three boarding schools serving as a source for the local community to learn religious knowledge. Meanwhile, not many religious figures pursued higher education in the village. Broadly speaking, they fall into two categories: traditionalist scholars and modernist scholars. In viewing the phenomenon of *mambadakan paja*, these two groups of scholars have very different fatwas and understandings. Modernist scholars are among those who are slightly against this traditional practice.

They argue that the tradition of *mambadakan paja* has no theological basis in the Prophet's hadith. They consider *mambadakan paja* as an act of *bidh'ah* and contains many elements of *khurafat* and futile actions. This group of modernist scholars does not really have a role in spreading this tradition, instead they are considered to be the masterminds undermining the tradition of *mambadakan paja* (U. Tuangku Panjang, interview, 3 June 2023).

Consequently, throughout the course of the research, these scholars, both modernists and traditionalists, were mostly unable to cite the hadith-reports on *aqiqah* in a clear and precise manner. They could only discuss the traditions in terms of their meaning. This is understandable given their educational background. Traditionalist scholars play an important role in shaping the pattern and spreading the tradition of *mambadakan paja* in Nagari Kamang Mudiak. They are the ones who were most instrumental in the process of sunnah evolution; from the ideal sunnah on *aqiqah* to a practice of *mambadakan paja* tradition.

Authority of traditional leaders

The presence of traditional leaders in the life of the Kamang Mudiak community is the main key in maintaining customary norms. The title given to them is *penghulu* (read: *pangulu*), also known as *niniak mamak*. Structurally, these *penghulu* are organized in a village-level organization called KAN (*Kerapatan Adat Nagari* – Nagari Customary Assembly). Meanwhile, in practice they have duties and responsibilities in guiding and fostering their children.

The existence of *niniak mamak* (tribal chief) is what makes the people of Nagari Kamang Mudiak not only religious but also compliant to their traditional values. This is apparent from the mode of interactions and several traditional events carried out in the area, such as weddings, funerals, including welcoming the birth of a child. Therefore, the sunnah of *aqiqah* is well institutionalized as a result of strong customary factors.

Based on the Minangkabau philosophy of *syara' mangato adat mamakai*, *niniak mamak* are involved in the spread of the *mambadakan paja* tradition. *Niniak mamak* are not religious experts, because religious matters fall under the authority of the parents and other religious leaders. Therefore, whatever fatwa the clerics issue, the *niniak mamak* certainly cannot reject it (S. Dt. Kayo, interview, 12 May 2023).

The task of the scholars in the tradition of *mambadakan paja* can be seen as "legislators" who draw and learn the tradition of *mambadakan paja* from the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad so that it can be accepted as being in line with sharia. When that task is completed, it is the *ninik mamak* who functions as the guardian of the tradition into a tradition that applies to their children and kemen. For the *ninik mamak*, the tradition of *mambadakan paja* is a mandated custom. This term is defined as a result of the agreement among *ninik mamak* on local customs that can be truncated, added, and eliminated. Based on this agreement, the rules of implementation will need to be determined (Kari Bagindo, 2005). This elaboration clarifies why the pattern and implementation of the *mambadakan paja* tradition, which is given a different name, i.e., *turun mandi* in one village, differs from the tradition of *turun mandi* in another village. In addition, since *mambadakan paja* is a mandated custom, it is natural for the pattern and implementation to change from time to time.

Economic and Educational Agents

Education, economy, and culture are inseparable elements. Education is the most effective tool in maintaining and preserving culture itself. It is through education that a tradition can be passed down from generation to generation. The relationship between economy and tradition is similar, wherein the economic situation of a society will affect the structure and traditions that develop in it. For example, urban communities that have a modern economic system will have a different culture from rural communities with agrarian economic sources.

Upon observation and social analysis, it was found that the Kamang Mudiak community's *mambadakan paja* tradition is also motivated by economic factors. For those who are well-off, *aqiqah* is performed to perfection as specified in the hadith. Meanwhile, for people who cannot afford to buy *aqiqah* animals, it is sufficient to perform the *mambadakan paja* tradition. On the one hand, their economic situation does not allow them to buy a goat as an *aqiqah* animal, but on the other hand there is still a desire to fulfil their obligations as parents, such as cutting the child's hair and naming the child, so the solution is to practice the hadith about *aqiqah* partly. They only perform parts of the hadith about *aqiqah* that include naming the baby and cutting the baby's hair. Furthermore, to replace the slaughtering of the *aqiqah* animal, a chicken is slaughtered to be served at the *mambadakan paja* procession.

What is interesting about this phenomenon is that even though there are people with sufficient economic resources and capable of carrying out both *aqiqah* and *mambadakan paja*, it does not necessarily lead to a gap or social stratification among the Kamang Mudiak community. This is

unlike the study conducted by Geertz (2006) who categorized Javanese society into three groups, namely: *santri, priyayi*, and *abangan*. In other words, the tradition of *mambadakan paja* does not create social classes in society. Instead, this tradition has become a medium for social integration. When this event is held there is good relationship between those who are economically well-off and those who are not, there are also values of cooperation and even value of *gotong royong* (mutual assistance).

In addition to economic factors, education also has a close relationship with this tradition. Economics can be said to be a supporting factor for the implementation of the *mambadakan paja* tradition, while education is just the opposite. Results of interviews and observations made indicate that people with higher education level tend to dislike being bound by and having to perform traditional ceremonies such as *mambadakan paja*. Moreover, those who pursued higher education outside the Minangkabau region are usually indifferent to the traditions in their hometown. This seems to be the case as those who are educated think more rationally-pragmatically and are also influenced by the culture of urban modernity (Gusnanda, 2023).

They argue that the tradition of *mambadakan paja* has no theological basis in the Prophet's hadith. They consider *mambadakan paja* as an act of *bidh'ah* that contains many elements of *khurafat* and futile actions. This group of modernist scholars does not really have a role in spreading this tradition, instead they are considered to be the masterminds undermining the tradition of *mambadakan paja* (Gusnanda, 2023).

Indeed, there is still anxiety about the waning of the *mambadakan paja* tradition among the younger generation of Kamang Mudiak. A fact found in the field revealed that only elders are concerned about the waning of traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. Most of these elders have only studied up to the sixth grade of Islamic boarding school. In fact, some of them did not go to school and only obtained lessons reciting the Quran in *surau-surau*. These non-formal educational institutions are also affiliated with one of the tarekat groups, such as the Naqshabandiyah sect in Surau Cubadak in Jorong Halalang and Surau Buya Mansur in Jorong Pakan Sinayan and the Samaniyah tarekat in Surau Sungai Sirah, Jorong Pauh (Gusnanda, 2023).

Symbolic Meanings in The Tradition of Mambadakan Paja

Upon review of Geertz's view on religion, he mentioned that religion can be considered a cultural system. Religion is defined as a symbol or symbolic act that is able to create strong feelings and motivations, easily spread and not easily lost in a person by forming a conception of a general order of existence and attaching this conception to factual emanations and in the end the feelings and motivations will be seen as a unique reality (Gertz, 1992). Geertz's view will be used as a tool to examine the symbols and meanings reflected in the procession of the Kamang Mudiak community's *mambadakan paja* tradition. The symbolic meanings contained in the *mambadakan paja* tradition include:

A Form of Gratitude

As Allah says in the Qur'an that the birth of a child is a form of good news for both parents. This is expressed in the story of the Prophet Zacharias about the birth of his son Yahya, as stated in the Qur'an Surah Maryam verse 7:

يَا زَكَرِيَّا إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ اسْمُهُ يَحْيَى لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا

Meaning: *"O Zacharias, We give you glad tidings of a son whose name shall be Yahya, before whom We have not created any like him.* (QS. Maryam: 7)

The parents' joy upon the birth of a child gives rise to rights that must be afforded to the child, which subsequently become obligations that the parents shall fulfill. The rights of the child have been explained in the hadith of the Prophet regarding *aqiqah* in the previous discussion. *Aqiqah* is explicitly identified with the slaughter of a goat or sheep, but upon deeper consideration the meaning is certainly more than that. The following is a portrait of the welcoming ceremony for the birth of a baby by the Kamang Mudiak community:

Figure 2.

Shaving a baby's hair by a religious leader

Source: *Gusnanda carried out observations and documentation in June 2023 in Kamang Mudiak*

For the Kamang Mudiak community, the expression of gratitude for the birth of a child is conceptualized and actualized in the form of a tradition called *mambadakan paja*. Throughout the process, various interactions between each subject take place. These interactions hold a deep and sacred meaning for them (Gusnanda, 2023). The interactions between one individual and another, between individuals and groups, and the use of attributes during the procession of the *mambadakan paja* tradition reflect their expression of gratitude. Not only for the parents, gratitude is also felt by all close relatives; both paternal and maternal relatives. This is characterized by the participation of close relatives in preparing for the event. They work together cooking food to be served to the guests. The food prepared for the invitees is a form of gratitude (Gusnanda, 2023).

Inviting relatives to come "*baralek*" to the house is a way of announcing that a child has been born, as well as introducing the child's name. In this context, inviting people to eat at home and the cooperative process undertaken by all family members in the *mambadakan paja* tradition is a symbol of actions demonstrating that the tradition is a series of forms of gratitude for the birth of a child.

The most concrete form of gratitude can be seen in the collective prayer procession. This procession is led by "faith" at the end of the event with various prayers. In essence, the prayer includes gratitude to Allah SWT because the child's birth process went smoothly and aspirations that the child will become a devout and successful person in life in the future (Gusnanda, 2023). This is illustrated in the photo below.

Figure 3.
The process of praying and eating together in the *Mambadakan Paja* tradition
Source: *Gusnanda carried out observations and documentation in June 2023 in Kamang Mudiak*

Sacredness in the Tradition of Mambadakan Paja

Given that Geertz viewed religion as a series of symbol systems that are useful for setting strong moods and goals (motivation), pervasive in humans and lasting, in the context of the *mambadakan paja* tradition, it does not only contain a symbol system, but sacred type of activity and symbols are also found. The term sacred here is defined by referring to Mircea Eliade's opinion stating that the sacred can be found through "indirect experience" of language, symbols, and myths. Eliade explored religious symbols and one thing that is emphasized is that anything in this life that is ordinary is part of the "profane" (Pals, 2011). It exists only for itself. However, at certain times, the profane can be transformed into the sacred. Such sacred symbols can be found in all religions, for example the cross for Christians, the image of the star and crescent or the Ka'bah for a Muslim (Eliade, 1963).

Looking at the tradition of *mambadakan paja* using Geertz's perspective and Eliade's explanation of "sacred", it can be understood that the process of cutting the baby's hair by an ulama (*ustadz, buya* and *kiyai*) is actually a sacred activity for the Kamang Mudiak community. To this day, no one can answer why there should be a hair-cutting procession during the *mambadakan paja* event. Their responses always stop at the Prophet's hadith about *aqiqah*. In the tradition of *mambadakan paja*, hair cutting is one of the core events next to naming. This one procession should not be missed or omitted.

Empirically, there is nothing special about this procession, because the child could have been taken to a barbershop to have his/her hair cut. However, a deeper understanding, which in Geertz's language is known as thick description (deep painting), therein lies something sacred in the hair cutting procession, in which the community believes that the character of the person cutting the child's hair will transform the child later once the child has grown and matured (Gertz, 1992).

The hair is also not shaved or cut entirely, but only a few strands are cut. It is a symbolic gesture and a sign of the implementation of the law of the Prophet Muhammad as stated in the traditions of *aqiqah*. The shorn hair is then buried. If the parents wanted their child's hair to be straight then the hair would be thrown into the river. Meanwhile, if the parents wanted their child's hair to be curly or wavy, the hair would be buried under a banana tree (Gusnanda, 2023).

Perhaps this is what Geertz considered the moods and motivations that permeate people so that their moods and motivations appear distinctive. These motivations and moods form a belief that there is a force outside of themselves that can change or determine the shape of hair, such as being buried under a banana stem and floating it down a river.

Furthermore, the dimension of sacredness can also be observed during communal prayers led by a *buya*. Observing the prayers delivered by an ulama, there is nothing special, it is just the same as the prayers that are chanted when one finished praying. Even scholars who are used to lead prayers in this tradition did not know any special prayers about *mambadakan paja* when they were asked.

However, seeing the solemnity of the people who attended the event seemed like an unusual situation. It seems that this is what Geertz meant by saying that symbols can give people peace. In other words, the prayer that is done together is a form of communication that is manifested by a symbolic system. Although they do not know the exact meaning of the prayers they recited, the prayers have created a calm mood, or what Geertz called moods and life goals (motivation) in the person who prays. For them, prayer is one of the media to get closer to the transcendent, namely Allah SWT.

Hope and Prayer

Hope is the foundation of life. Without hope, humans cannot live a humane life. Everyone has hopes according to their own goals and aspirations. A young man who dreams of becoming a famous actor hopes that one day his dreams will come true. Likewise, parents also certainly expect their children to become good and useful people for society. Some even hope to become wealthy, have a house like a palace, and so on (Maran, 2000).

Through Geertz's view of "thick description", we try to reveal what is the exact meaning kept in the attributes that are used when performing the *mambadakan paja* tradition. As far as observations go, it turns out that prayers and hopes for the Kamang Mudiak community are not only expressed verbally, but also often expressed in the form of symbols. In the context of the *mambadakan paja* tradition, these symbols are embodied in several attributes as described in the previous chapter. Each of these attributes has its own meaning.

Figure 4.

The process of praying and eating together in the *Mambadakan Paja*

Source: *Gusnanda carried out observations and documentation in June 2023 in Kamang Mudiak*

In the *Mambadakan Paja* tradition, the Qur'an is placed on a bundle of rice, when cutting the child's hair. This is a prayer for the child, so that when he/she grows up he/she will have the righteous faith and good character in accordance with the morals taught by the holy book. Meanwhile, *sukatan* constitutes prayer and hope that the child has a perfect mind. Furthermore, *siriah langkok* in Minangkabau custom is always featured in various activities such as marriage ceremonies, *batagak pangulu* (tribal leader appointment ceremony), including in the tradition of *mambadakan paja*. Thus, *siriah langkok* (betel leaf, areca nut, gambier) is a symbol and character of the Minangkabau people. For the Kamang Mudiak community, the existence of this attribute is a form of prayer given by the parents so that the child they gave birth to becomes a true Minang person (S. Dt. Kayo, interview, 12 May 2023).

In cases where the child is a boy, male tools such as chisels (paek) are provided. This tool, which is usually used for carpentry, is a symbol of the hope that the child will become a real man (not effeminate). As for baby girls, ingredients for cooking such as coconut, chili pepper, and salt are provided in the *talam* (large plate). These ingredients are symbols of the hope that the girl will become a real woman and have a maternal character who is good at cooking (Gusnanda, 2023).

Furthermore, the symbol of hope is crystallized in the legs and wings of the chicken that has been drummed. As explained in the previous chapter, these chicken legs and wings are placed together with other attributes in the "*talam*". The hope stored in these chicken legs and wings is that the child will have the trait of "tired feet, light hands" when they grow up. The meaning of this trait is to be diligent, tenacious, and persevering (M. N. Dt. M. Batuah, interview, 16 May 2023).

In addition, other attributes such as the "*saka*" (palm sugar) and the process of feeding the child using banana leaves, also have the meaning of teaching the child about flavors. Since the child is still young, the first flavor introduced is sweetness. The banana leaf used to feed the child is a symbol of simplicity (S. Dt. Kayo, interview, 12 May 2023).

Such is the implementation of the *mambadakan paja* tradition by the Kamang Mudiak community, which not only has religious value, but is also rich in customary and cultural values. In all these processes, there is a series of symbol systems that contain various meanings. The series of symbol systems are always related to the social structure and psychological processes of the people involved.

Conclusion

This research examined the tradition of *mambadakan paja* from two aspects, namely analyses of the process of the formation of the tradition and the meaning of the tradition as understood by the community. Historically speaking, this tradition developed prior to Islam's introduction to Nagari Kamang Mudiak. The local community categorized it as "*adat nan diadatkan*" (customary traditions). When Islam arrived in this area, the tradition of *mambadakan paja* underwent acculturation with Islamic teachings on the sunnah of *aqiqah*. It is in this process that the reception and transmission of the sunnah of *aqiqah* transpired in the *mambadakan paja* tradition.

The tradition of *mambadakan paja* is strongly rooted and founded upon the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. The sunnah commandments when practiced becomes culture because it comes into contact with humans who are the subject of the culture itself. Cultural agents interpreted the concept of *aqiqah* in Islam in an evolutive manner by considering the social context. This process is what Fazlur Rahman referred to as the evolution of sunnah. In this case, cultural agents hold a pivotal role in the formation of the *mambadakan paja* tradition. The essence and substance of this tradition is a form of expression of gratitude for the birth of a child in the process of name-giving and hair-cutting of a newborn child. These two parts are among the practices that are in line and essentially inseparable from the implementation of *aqiqah*. Some

aspects that have not been revealed are the influence that modernity has on the development of the *mambadakan paja* tradition. Other researchers can perhaps conduct relevant studies to complete the current study on the *mambadakan paja* tradition.

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