

SYNCRETIC DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS AND TRADITIONAL VALUES IN THE MARSODIP TRADITION OF THE PAK PAK TRIBE OF SITELLU TALI URANG JEHE KAB. PAK PAK BHARAT

Hidayatul Fahmi Capah ^{a*)}, Irwansyah ^{a)}

^{a)} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

^{*)}Corresponding Author: hidayatulfahmi667@gmail.com

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Abstract. This research aims to analyze the syncretic dynamics between religious teachings and customary values in the Marsodip tradition, a cultural heritage of the Pak Pak ethnic community in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe Subdistrict, Pak Pak Bharat Regency. The Marsodip tradition reflects the community's effort to preserve cultural identity amid the challenges of modernization and shifting religious values. Using a qualitative approach and ethnographic method, data were collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with 3 key informants, including traditional leaders, religious figures, and community members involved in the tradition. The findings reveal a strong form of syncretism, where customary and religious values do not negate one another but engage in a dynamic interaction through processes of adaptation and negotiation. The syncretic strategies developed by the community include symbolic modifications in rituals, reinterpretation of customary values through religious perspectives, and the involvement of religious leaders in the implementation of traditions. This study shows that Marsodip serves not only as cultural preservation but also as a space for active dialogue between tradition and religion in the context of social change. The research contributes to the discourse on cultural and religious syncretism in traditional Indonesian societies.

Keywords: Conflict, Religious Leaders, Traditional Leaders, Marsodip Tradition, Pakpak Tribe.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as a country with ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity, has very rich and diverse local traditions. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has a wealth of customs and beliefs that are passed down from generation to generation. One of the tribes that has a unique tradition and is very thick with its traditional values is the Pak Pak Tribe who inhabits the Pak Pak Bharat Regency area, especially in the Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District. In this area, there is a tradition called Marsodip, which is one of the traditional ceremonies that is highly respected by the local community. In the life of the Pak Pak Tribe, religion and traditional values play an important role as a symbolic system that forms patterns of social interaction and community structure. The Christian religion practiced by the local community not only functions as a spiritual belief system, but also as a social regulation that influences cultural norms and practices in everyday life. Traditional values that are inherited collectively become the basis for social identity and rules that govern relationships between community members. The phenomenon that occurs

shows the existence of social dynamics in the interaction between religion and custom in the Marsodip tradition. These two systems sometimes adapt to each other, conflict, or negotiate to maintain cultural sustainability while meeting religious demands. Social changes due to modernization and external influences also influence how the Marsodip tradition is carried out and understood by society. In this context, it is necessary to conduct a study on the dynamics of the relationship between religious teachings and customary values in the Marsodip tradition. Understanding how the two interact, adapt, and even conflict will provide deeper insight into how the Pak Pak people live their lives amidst the meeting between customary traditions and religious teachings. This study is important to map how local communities respond to social change, maintain the sustainability of their traditions, and how they manage these differences in the context of everyday life.

Thus, this study aims to examine the dynamics of the relationship between religious teachings and customary values in the Marsodip tradition carried out by the Pak Pak Tribe community in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District, Pak Pak

Bharat Regency, as well as the impact of the interaction between the two on the social and cultural life of the local community.

The Marsodip tradition is a traditional ceremony that contains various cultural values, such as respect for ancestors, togetherness, and a sense of responsibility for the social and natural environment. This ceremony is usually carried out in a series of certain celebrations involving various elements of the Pak Pak Tribe community. In the Marsodip procession, there is a strong influence of customary teachings that are more spiritual and collective in nature, where the entire community is involved in the activity. This tradition has existed for a long time and has become an inseparable part of people's lives, providing identity and a sense of pride for them.

However, since the entry of Christianity into the Pak Pak Tribe area, especially through the mission of spreading religion, there have been significant changes in the way of thinking and practicing daily life. Christian teachings, which emphasize individualism, simplicity, and a more rational understanding of spiritual life, sometimes conflict with some aspects of traditional traditions that are more collective and based on myths or magical rituals. For example, in Marsodip, there are elements of belief that are considered inconsistent with Christian teachings, such as symbolic sacrifices or the use of certain media that are considered inconsistent with the principle of monotheism in Christianity.

The dynamics that occur in the Pak Pak community today show an effort to balance the implementation of religious teachings and the preservation of traditional traditions. Some community groups feel the need to change or even abandon some traditional elements in Marsodip to be more in accordance with religious teachings. On the other hand, other groups argue that customs must be maintained and preserved as part of their cultural identity, even though there are differences with religious teachings. There are also groups that try to find common ground, by adapting the implementation of Marsodip, for example by reducing elements that are considered inconsistent with religion, but still maintaining the essence and meaning of the tradition.

This dynamic is increasingly complex with the influence of modernization, urbanization, and changes in social values that occur in the Pak Pak community. The younger generation, who are more exposed to global culture and technological developments, often have different views on traditional customs and religious teachings. They tend to strictly follow Christian teachings, while others believe that customs must be adapted to the times. This causes tension in society, especially in terms of the implementation of Marsodip which is faced with the question: is this tradition still relevant and should be maintained in its original form or does it need to be adjusted to be in line with religious teachings and social developments?

In this context, the emergence of these different views has the potential to cause social conflict between the older generation who are more concerned with tradition and the younger generation who are more inclined to prioritize

religious teachings. In addition, these differences in understanding can also affect the unity and harmony of the Pak Pak community, which was previously known for its strong togetherness and sense of solidarity in carrying out traditions.

Based on the explanation above, the main problem that arises is how the dynamics of the relationship between religious teachings and customary values in the Marsodip tradition can affect the preservation of the Pak Pak culture, while maintaining balance in their social life. Can the Marsodip tradition survive amidst the increasingly strong currents of modernization and religious influence, or will it undergo major changes to follow existing religious teachings? This study aims to examine more deeply the adaptation process that occurs and its impact on the sustainability of the traditions and social life of the Pak Pak Tribe. With this, it is hoped that the background of this thesis can provide a more complete picture of the Marsodip tradition, the dynamics that are happening now, and how it relates to the problems that are to be raised in the study.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because it can provide a deep understanding of the phenomenon of conflict between religious and traditional leaders regarding the Marsodip tradition in a specific socio-cultural context. The study was conducted in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, North Sumatra Province. This district was chosen because it is one of the areas with a concentration of Pakpak people who still preserve the Marsodip tradition and at the same time experience significant penetration of monotheistic religions. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, consisting of traditional leaders, religious leaders, and the community in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District, Pakpak Bharat Regency. Field observations were conducted to observe the practice of the Marsodip tradition and the dynamics of interaction between religious and traditional leaders. Documentation studies were conducted on related documents, such as historical records, traditional manuscripts, and religious scholars' fatwas. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Islamic Views on the Marsodip Tradition

1. Analysis of the Marsodip Tradition in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Hadith

Based on the research results, the Marsodip tradition contains several elements that contradict the fundamental principles of Islamic teachings, especially related to the

concept of monotheism. The Marsodip tradition, which involves rituals of worshiping ancestral spirits and supernatural powers through offerings and special mantras, clearly contradicts the teachings of monotheism in Islam. The Qur'an strictly forbids practices that lead to polytheism, as stated in Surah An-Nisa verse 48:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٨﴾

Meaning: Indeed, Allah will not forgive the sin of shirk, and He forgives all sins other than (shirk), for whom He wills. Whoever associates partners with Allah has indeed committed a great sin."

Apart from that, in Surah Al-Maidah verse 3, Allah SWT says:

حَرَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَالْحَمَّ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةَ وَالْمُوقُودَةَ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةَ وَالنَّطِيطَةَ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُجِحَ عَلَى النَّصَبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكُمْ فَسُقُ الْيَوْمَ بِئْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمِهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

Meaning: This day I have perfected your religion for you, and completed My favor upon you, and have approved for you Islam as your religion.

This verse emphasizes that Islam has been perfected as a religion, so that there is no need for rituals and religious practices outside of those taught in Islam.

In a hadith narrated by Bukhari, the Messenger of Allah SAW said:

"Whoever creates a new practice in this matter of our religion that is not in it, then that practice will be rejected."

Field observations show that the Marsodip tradition involves practices such as

- Recitation of special mantras to summon ancestral spirits
- Providing offerings in the form of food, drinks and certain objects
- Ritual of asking for help and protection from other than Allah SWT
- Belief that ancestral spirits can provide benefits and avert harm

All of these practices clearly contradict the principle of monotheism in Islam which teaches that only Allah SWT is worthy of worship and help.

2. Opinions of Ulama on the Marsodip Tradition

Scholars, both classical and contemporary, have firm views on practices similar to the Marsodip tradition. Imam Ibn Taimiyah in his book "Majmu' al-Fatawa" emphasized that the practice of asking for help from the spirits of the deceased and offering offerings to them is included in the category of major shirk (shirk akbar) which can remove someone from the Islamic religion.

In the local context, based on interviews with several scholars in the Pakpak Bharat region, they agreed that the Marsodip tradition contains elements that contradict Islamic teachings. Ustadz Ahmad Ridwan, a religious figure in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District, stated:

"The Marsodip tradition clearly contains elements of shirk, because it involves worship and asking for help from other than Allah SWT. This contradicts the basic principles of Islamic aqidah which teach that only Allah SWT deserves to be worshipped and asked for help."

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Pakpak Bharat Regency has also issued a fatwa stating that the practice of the Marsodip tradition which involves rituals of worshiping ancestral spirits and supernatural powers is forbidden in Islam.

3. Legal Status of the Marsodip Tradition in Islam

Based on the analysis of the Qur'an, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars, it can be concluded that the Marsodip tradition from the perspective of Islamic law is a forbidden practice (haram). This is based on the consideration that the tradition contains elements of shirk, bid'ah, and superstition that are fundamentally contrary to Islamic teachings.

The prohibition of the Marsodip tradition lies mainly in the following aspects:

- The belief that ancestral spirits can provide benefits and avert harm, which is contrary to the concept of monotheism in Islam.
- Rituals of giving offerings and reciting special mantras that have no basis in Islamic teachings.
- The practice of asking for help and protection from other than Allah SWT, which is a form of shirk.

However, it should be noted that not all aspects of Pakpak tradition are forbidden. Cultural aspects that do not contain elements of shirk, such as traditional clothing, traditional dances, and traditional cuisine, can still be preserved as long as they do not conflict with Islamic teachings.

B. Conflict between Religious Figures and Traditional Figures regarding the Marsodip Tradition

1. Background and Chronology of the Conflict

Conflicts between religious and traditional figures regarding the Marsodip tradition began to emerge along with the increasing understanding of Islam among the Pakpak community in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District. Based on the results of interviews and documentation studies, this conflict began to be seen openly in the 2010s, when religious figures began to actively voice their objections to the practice of the Marsodip tradition.

The chronology of this conflict can be described as follows:

- 2010-2012: Religious figures began to give sermons and studies on the dangers of polytheism and heresy, implicitly criticizing the practice of the Marsodip tradition.
- 2013: Several religious figures openly issued statements that the Marsodip tradition was contrary to Islamic teachings and urged the community to abandon it.

- 2014: Customary leaders responded by holding customary meetings to discuss the importance of preserving ancestral traditions, including Marsodip.
- 2015-2016: Polarization in society began to appear, with some people supporting the views of religious figures and others still holding fast to tradition.
- 2017-present: The conflict continues with varying intensity, with several attempts at dialogue and reconciliation that have not been fully successful.

Several important events that marked the escalation of the conflict between the two parties included the refusal of religious figures to attend traditional ceremonies involving the Marsodip ritual, the issuance of a fatwa by the Pakpak Bharat Regency MUI on the prohibition of the tradition, and the emergence of public debates in community forums and social media.

2. Religious Figures' Arguments on the Marsodip Tradition

Religious figures, in their views on the Marsodip tradition, base their arguments on the Qur'an, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars. They argue that the tradition must be abandoned because it is contrary to the principle of monotheism in Islam and can lead society into the practice of shirk.

Based on interviews with religious figures in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District, the following are the main arguments they put forward:

- The Marsodip tradition contains elements of shirk because it involves worship and asking for help from other than Allah SWT.
- The practice of giving offerings and reciting special mantras has no basis in Islamic teachings and is included in the category of bid'ah.
- The belief that ancestral spirits can provide benefits and ward off harm is contrary to the concept of monotheism in Islam.
- Islam teaches that only Allah SWT deserves to be worshipped and asked for help, as stated in the Qur'an Surah Al-Fatihah verse 5.
- Preserving traditions that contradict religious teachings can hinder the purification of faith among Muslim communities.
- Religious figures have also proposed several alternatives to replace the Marsodip tradition, such as:
 - Holding religious studies or majlis taklim as a replacement for the Marsodip ritual
 - Praying together in accordance with Islamic guidance as a form of gratitude to Allah SWT
 - Developing new traditions that are in accordance with Islamic teachings but still reflect the Pakpak cultural identity

3. Arguments of Traditional Figures in Maintaining the Marsodip Tradition

On the other hand, traditional figures argue that the Marsodip tradition needs to be maintained because it is an ancestral heritage that has been practiced for centuries and is the cultural identity of the Pakpak tribe. They claim that this

tradition has deep philosophical values for the Pakpak people and functions as a social glue in the community.

Based on interviews with traditional figures in Sitellu Tali Urang Jehe District, here are the main arguments they put forward:

- The Marsodip tradition is a cultural heritage that existed long before Islam entered the Pakpak region, so it is part of the cultural identity that cannot be separated from the Pakpak community.
- The Marsodip ritual is not intended as a form of worship to other than Allah, but rather as a form of respect for ancestors and the universe.
- This tradition has a social function as a unifying force for society and a means to maintain kinship ties between community members.
- Abandoning ancestral traditions completely can result in the loss of the Pakpak tribe's cultural identity, which in turn can lead to social disintegration.
- Many similar traditions in various regions in Indonesia are still preserved without having to conflict with religious teachings through the process of acculturation and adaptation.

Traditional figures also proposed several modifications or adaptations to the Marsodip tradition so that it is in line with religious values, such as:

- Eliminate elements that clearly contradict Islamic teachings, such as the recitation of special mantras and the giving of offerings.
- Replace worship rituals with prayers that are in accordance with Islamic teachings.
- Emphasize the symbolic and cultural aspects of the tradition, not the spiritual aspects.
- Integrate Islamic values into traditional practices to create new forms that do not contradict religious teachings.

4. Dynamics of Conflict and Its Impact on Society

The conflict between religious and traditional leaders regarding the Marsodip tradition has had a significant impact on society. Based on observations and interviews with various parties, some of the impacts identified include:

- Polarization of society into two groups: those who support the views of religious leaders and those who support the views of traditional leaders.
- The emergence of social tension in daily interactions, especially during traditional ceremonies or religious activities.
- Confusion among the younger generation in responding to ancestral traditions of religious teachings.
- Changes in the practice of the Marsodip tradition among the community, where some are starting to abandon it, some are modifying it, and some are maintaining it intact.
- Weakening social cohesion in the community due to sharp differences in views.

Based on the interview results, it was revealed that the younger and more educated generation tended to be more

accepting of the views of religious figures, while the older generation tended to maintain the views of traditional figures.

This indicates a shift in values among the Pakpak community influenced by education and modernization factors.

C. Conflict Resolution Efforts and Recommendations

1. Dialogue and Reconciliation Efforts

To resolve the conflict between religious and traditional figures regarding the Marsodip tradition, several dialogue and reconciliation efforts have been made. Based on interviews and observations, several efforts that have been made include:

- Formal meetings between religious and traditional figures facilitated by the local government to discuss this problem.
- Public discussion forums involving various parties, including academics and youth, to find solutions that are acceptable to all parties.
- Mediation efforts by third parties, such as community leaders who are respected by both parties.
- Personal approaches by several individuals who have influence among religious and traditional figures.

However, these efforts have not been completely successful in resolving the conflict completely. This is due to fundamental differences in the way people view the Marsodip tradition and its underlying values.

2. Cultural Transformation in the Context of Islam

One approach that can be considered in resolving this conflict is through cultural transformation in the context of Islam. This approach refers to the process of adaptation and reinterpretation of local traditions to be in line with Islamic teachings, as has been done in various cultural contexts in Indonesia.

Some forms of cultural transformation that can be considered include:

- Eliminating elements that clearly contradict Islamic teachings, such as the practice of worship and giving offerings.
- Replacing rituals that contain elements of polytheism with rituals that are in line with Islamic teachings, such as praying together and reading the Qur'an.
- Emphasizing the cultural and symbolic aspects of tradition, not its spiritual aspects.
- Developing a new narrative about the Marsodip tradition that is more compatible with Islamic teachings, for example by emphasizing universal values such as gratitude to Allah SWT and respect for ancestral history.

This cultural transformation needs to be carried out by involving various parties, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, scholars, and the general public, to ensure that the resulting solution is acceptable to all parties.

3. The Role of Government and Educational Institutions

The government and educational institutions have an important role in resolving conflicts between religious leaders and traditional leaders regarding the Marsodip tradition. Some of the roles that can be played include:

- Local governments can facilitate dialogue and mediation between religious leaders and traditional leaders, and

provide support for the implementation of the agreements reached.

- Educational institutions, both formal and non-formal, can play a role in providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between religion and culture, as well as the importance of preserving the positive values of local culture without conflicting with religious teachings.
- The government can support the development and promotion of new forms of cultural traditions that are in line with Islamic teachings, as an alternative to the Marsodip tradition which contains elements of shirk.
- Cultural research and development institutions can conduct in-depth studies on the philosophical values in the Pakpak tradition and find ways to integrate them with Islamic values.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows The relationship between religious teachings and customary values in the Marsodip tradition is dynamic and complex. The Marsodip tradition reflects the interaction between Christian religious teachings and customary values that are passed down from generation to generation, which sometimes experience adaptation, syncretism, or conflict in their implementation. The Pak Pak community tries to balance between maintaining customary traditions as a cultural identity and adhering to the religious teachings they adhere to. The Marsodip tradition has a significant social impact on the lives of the Pak Pak community. This tradition acts as a means of strengthening social solidarity, maintaining community togetherness, and preserving cultural heritage. However, differences of opinion between customary groups and religious figures, as well as social change and the influence of modernization, cause tension and potential conflict that need to be managed wisely so that social harmony is maintained. Thus, the preservation of the Marsodip tradition needs to be carried out by considering the harmony between customary values and religious teachings, as well as paying attention to social change so that this tradition can remain relevant and function positively in the lives of the Pak Pak community.

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