

The Islamic Culture and Customs of Gorontalo from the Perspective of the Hermeneutics of Clifford Geertz

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ABSTRACT

The presence of Clifford Geertz in Indonesia, at that time conducting research in Java to fulfill his dissertation research assignment, can be a gift for us in Indonesia, through his work Indonesia is widely known by the international community. The methods he provides are very relevant to the study of any culture. Anthropologist hermeneutics can enter to study, especially the Gorontalo region on how the Gorontalo traditional cultural model takes place and is combined with Islam. Gorontalo people have their own philosophy, namely "adat bersendikan Syarah, Syarah bersendikan Kitabullah", this Gorontalo local wisdom value, which has deep values and meanings. This philosophy has been formulated since the Amai Kingdom until it was refined three times, the third time was during the reign of King Eyato, with a name that still echoes today, this wisdom becomes the color of implementation or a form of implementation of religious values in Gorontalo

INTRODUCTION

In the frame of studies that use the scientific method of Hermeneutics, at this time it may be very relevant, even this study is no longer talking in the realm of text, but has advanced to see the cultural reality of society. Hermeneutic studies, as studied in Philosophy research, are a fundamental study in understanding every issue of the meaning of life, which is included in it, including religious experiences, when entering understanding, approaching religious experiences, one of the experts in this method is Clifford Geertz, from this approach that can be said, religious experience is a transcendent experience that has a personal dimension and a social dimension (Mulyono, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this discussion there is a Hermeneutic model that has been attributed to Clifford Geertz, that Humans are creatures that depend on the network of meanings they weave themselves, and culture is a network. Then in the next discussion, how Geertz's thought, in the form of Hermeneutics, is able to see and get a new meaning in the study of regional context, especially Gorontalo, Gorontalo is an area that is included in one of the regions that has a tradition that is quite maintained until now.

They have their own philosophy and have given birth to 185 agreed customs, then from the results of this agreement each custom becomes an action that is inherent in the structure of the community. The author has discussed further in the discussion below.

METHODOLOGY

Hermeneutic interpretation from time to time has always been a knot that has controversies that seem very difficult to unravel. There is a paradoxical point where at first glance the spirit of the text seems very important (Mulyono, 2013). According to Hamim Ilyas, Hermeneutics has been mapped into three sub-groups, namely: first, hermeneutics as a text study, whose object of study is the Qur'an, Hadith and religious books, especially Islamic books such as Aqidah, fiqh, Ushul Fiqh, tarekh and others. Second, Hermeneutic methodology, this model is hermeneutic concepts theorized by Islamic thinkers, such as Fazlur Rahman, Hasan Hanafi, M. Arqoun, Nasr el Fadhil etc. Third, the hermeneutics that are deemed suitable for Islamic studies. This model is a theory that can be used as a framework for studying an Islamic study (Sodiman, 2018).

The author uses the third method to study, scientific studies that tend to be Islamic, by discussing choosing Clifford Geertz's Anthropological Hermeneutics. Related to the data used, that the author chooses a literature study, a literature study is a method that uses research literature, which begins by collecting data related to the research topic (Sugeng, 2021).

DISCUSSION

Biography of Clifford Geertz.

Clifford Geertz was born in San Francisco, California, on August 23, 1926. Geertz studied English then changed and switched to the study of Philosophy until graduation. In the following year he became an anthropology student at Harvard University along with his wife, then the following year he conducted his research together with his wife in Mojokuto, then within six years he had earned his doctoral degree from Harvard University. It was due to the success of his two-year research on multi-religious society with his wife in Indonesia (Sugeng, 2021).

In addition, Geertz was listed as a visiting professor at several respected universities. Oxford and was listed as a visiting professor at Princeton University. Until 2000 it was time for his academic career to stop, but he was still actively channeling his thoughts. Then in 2006 it became sad, that he passed away after performing heart surgery at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, United States (Sugeng, 2021).

Hermeneutics etymologically comes from the Greek "*hamencuin*" meaning understanding. This word is closely related to "*Hermes*" a God in Greek mythology (Fitria, 2016). Hermes served as a messenger in the world, he was also called a translator, at first glance this shows that there are human activities to understand the text brought by (*Hermes*) as an intermediary (Mulyono, 2013). This conception is the most developed and has become a scientific method in general, and the condition with religious texts if simplified to the study of sacred texts, often also associated with holy books.

Hermeneutics initiated by Clifford Geertz as an anthropologist, can be called Anthropological Hermeneutics, namely an anthropologist goes on an expedition and then sees everything that he makes a picture in memory, so that he matches one by one and tells all the experiences of his vision to many people. Geertz's hermeneutic theory is based on the understanding of culture that:

"Man is an animal dependent on the webs of meaning he weaves for himself, I consider culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it is then not an experimental science in search of laws but an interpretive science in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1992).

Every human behavior is a document so that every action forms a culture that is seen as a text (Sodirman, 2018). Thus, culture and documents are public.¹² As interrelated systems of signs that can be interpreted, with a deep search for a context.¹³ Thus, it is clear that culture is not an entity that is hidden, meaning that it is outside, even if the individual's action is only a small action such as a blink of an eye and a voice in conversation (Geertz, 1992). Therefore, every action, even if it is only limited to that, has formed a culture that is public, this is the same as meaning (Tohari, 2024).

The definition that has been written above emphasizes that humans are symbolic creatures of God, in the sense that every communication carried out by every individual is always close to the use of symbols. In these symbols, humans always produce certain meanings, which in the end, the meanings that have been produced will form a cultural network (Soehada, 2014).

Therefore, borrowing a view from the philosopher Derrida that the culture contained in society is not only to be explained, but how to find the understood meanings contained in the symbols. For Geertz, culture is seen as an ongoing text. So to capture a meaning that has been contained in a text, interpretation is needed like someone who is understanding the meaning of the message in a text (Nasruddin, 2011). Then in thought, Geertz approaches religion according to which religion is not a mere metaphysics, nor is it limited to ethics, but the source of its vitality is understood to lie in the depth of belief. Apart from the sacredness attached to it, as a reference for the study of religion is returned to the situation of appreciation, belief, and getting influence from it, namely humans, as individuals and society, religion is seen as actual or factual which really lives in the appreciation and practices of its adherents (Sodirman, 2018).

The problem does not lie in the fact that religious teachings are the ultimate truth, seen from a philosophical, theological and empirical point of view, both from the point of thought and in terms of objective observation, true or false it is a theological and metaphysical problem, which is beyond the ability of social science that can be researched objectively, because that aspect of the right and wrong of religious teachings is adjusted to the adherents (Sodirman, 2018), (Andriansyah, 2023). As for what becomes the basic benchmark is the simple fact, that religion becomes actual, felt, and felt.

It exists when it has been believed in by its adherents when it reflects teachings in the nature of social relations between people, meaning when it is culturally lived and structurally functional (Geertz, 1992).

The text documents the actions of every human being as a result of religious beliefs, reflected in the social relations of fellow humans that have been culturally structured in the culture of an organization or community, this is the target of anthropological hermeneutic studies (Sodirman, 2018).

Humans are creatures that always build their own world based on a system of symbols where their view functions as a theory that understands the world, how a person lives in that world (Geertz, 1992) in that form, the worldview is a metaphysical proposition that has the role of a "model of", while in the next function the world has become an ethical proposition that has the role of a "model for" (Geertz, 1992).

The Reality of the Relationship Between Islam and Local Culture of Gorontalo People

Gorontalo Province, located on the island of Sulawesi, borders North Sulawesi to the east and Central Sulawesi to the west, and the majority of its population is Muslim. Since the beginning of the existence of Islam and has become an official religion among the Gorontalo community, since then Islam has become the backbone and reference for the people of Gorontalo. all activities of Gorontalo society, whether it is related to rituals, sharia, customs, or for daily habit (Mashadi, 2012).

With regard to the custom that the province is known as a customary area, Van Vollenhoven, a renowned customary law expert from the Netherlands, has placed Gorontalo in the ninth position out of 19 customary areas in Indonesia in his book "*Het Adatrecht van Nederlands-Indie*" (Suprianto, 2021). It can be said that almost all aspects of people's lives have customary values that are respected. For

them, adat is a norm that has been upheld in the line of life, they also believe that adat is a way of strengthening and reinforcing faith in Allah Swt (Suprianto, 2021). Gorontalo people, the majority of whom are Muslims, live in harmony with each other. This community has and maintains their philosophy which is very close to Islam as a source of guidance rather than custom. The author will elaborate a little below and until now this philosophy has become the guide of the Gorontalo community until now.

This philosophy was present when King Amai accepted to marry Princess Owutango, but with a condition. In that condition King Amai was asked to embrace the religion of monotheism, namely Islam, as well as the people he led. Then the condition was accepted but with a request, to Islamize his community he asked to be helped.

After the marriage was completed, King Amai returned with his wife and the small kings of Palasa to help Islamize the area. Then King Amai reformed the kingdom, along with developing the principles of customs and habits of the community in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Not long after that Islam officially became the religion of the kingdom.

After becoming an Islamic kingdom, it began to be determined that the importance of customs was adjusted to Islamic Sharia, the results of this formulation were known as "*Saraa Topa-topango to Adati*" which means "*Syarah rests on custom*" with this formulation has produced a customary formulation of 185 applicable customs. The principle of these customs became the main guide for the community in running the royal government and its relationship with the community which was patterned on Islamic life (Amin, 2012).

In the formulation of this adat that took place, during the time when Raja Amai was still at the helm, that principle of linking adat and shara, although it appears that the formulation of this philosophy "*syarah*" is dominated by adat, "*because syarah still relies on adat*".

Next, in the time of King Motodulakiki, who was the son of the previous king, King Amai, he did something renewable, which can be called a reform that is more than before, he formulated a new philosophy that was born with the title "*Adati Hulo-huloo to sara'a, sara'a hulo-huloo to adati*" meaning "*adat bersendikan sarah, sarah bersendikan adat*" in this formulation is a refinement to make a balance between adat and sarah. This philosophy shifts to an effort to equalize, meaning that adat does not dominate as before and vice versa, sarah dominates adat. In other words, both have become the source of the scientific philosophy of Gorontalo society (Amin, 2012).

Furthermore, during the royal period led by King Eyato, the formulation was much admired and became a perfect thing, the formulation combined and was based on the holy book, the sound of philosophy "*adat hula-hulao to sara'a, sara'a hula-hulao to Qur'ani*" means that it becomes more advanced that the Gorontalo philosophy which means "*adat bersendikan sarah, sarah bersendikan Al-Qur'an*" the formulation initiated by king Eyato is the one until now, how the customary footing uses the measure is Islamic Sharia and its source comes from the Al-Qur'an. If it is noticed that the Gorontalo community fully underlines that

the best source is the Qur'an and carries out the orders of Allah Swt, that the Qur'an is a guide in the world (Amin, 2012).

Gorontalo Traditional Marriage Model

In a marriage that will be held in the Gorontalo Region, of course, it cannot be separated from the thick customary system, and through various processes that are quite long. Gorontalo custom has strict procedures and requirements, in Gorontalo customary marriage, religion is a condition for marriage, which means that Gorontalo customary marriage does not approve of marriages of different religions, in fact it is very strict and does not tolerate it at all. If it is based on a strong desire, one of them must convert to Islam, and only then can the marriage take place.²⁹

The next criterion in Gorontalo education law is reading the Qur'an, women are required to be able to read the Qur'an proficiently, especially for women who are going to get married, because on the night of the marriage contract the bride-to-be will be asked to read the Qur'an, in this process it is called (*Mohatamu*) memamatkan Al-Qur'an (Kustiawan, 2021).

In the stages of the wedding ceremony that will take place in Gorontalo there are 5, as follows, *Tolobalango*, which is a ceremony that will be carried out with the proposal, *Modepito Dutu*, Namely the procession of delivering the dowry, which will bring together all of the two big families, which the ceremony takes place at the residence of the female candidate, *Momohuto*, This ceremony lasts quite a long time from the bathing process to the process of stepping on the plate which takes place with a fairly sacralized traditional ceremony, *Mohatamu*, I have explained this traditional ceremony as above, namely reciting the Qur'an for caressing women, the last is *Akaji*, which is a marriage contract that lasts a long time besides the many traditional processions that will be carried out (Nizar, 2018).

The stages mentioned above must be carried out in their entirety, Gorontalo people believe that the perfection of marriage can be measured by the implementation of marriage customs, whether it is carried out or not. That is the procession of one of the traditional practices in Gorontalo, which counts 185 customs that have been formulated and are still being implemented. One of the unique ones that has begun to be researched is the *Mokubingo* ceremony in the form of circumcision for baby girls and the process is attached to the backing of Islam, which the author has not been able to describe.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide some conclusions and implementation of the research results.

That Clifford Geertz's thoughts on hermeneutics, Geertz who is an Indonesianist anthropologist research figure, his work is very relevant to be used as a reference method in the study of cultural customs in Gorontalo, Gorontalo which is one of the provinces with fairly strict customs, which have been based on the Qur'an (*Adat Bersendikan Sarah, Sarah Bersendikan Kitabullah*) to be in accordance with what Geertz promoted when he defined religion as: "A system of symbols that serves to instill strong, deep, and enduring passions and motivations in human beings by creating those conceptions in such an atmosphere of factuality, that the atmosphere and motivations appear realistic".³²

"Furthermore, apart from a few briefing sheets that focus attention, rather, on the fundamental issues by means of which theories operate in the essays collected here, a very general list of headings, made in academic concepts and systems of concepts, "integration," "rationalization," "symbol," "rite," "ideology," "metaphor," "structure," "worldview," "actor," "function," "sacred rite," "ideology," "ethos," "revolution," "identity," "metaphor," "structure," "worldview," "actor," "function," "sacred," and of course, "culture" itself-are woven into the fabric of profound ethnographic paintings in the hope of providing scientific eloquence on events as they are (Geertz, 1992).

From the explanation of the quote that the author takes that Geertz is very instrumental in making every event that occurs into a science, and emphasizes that every whatever it is even though culture is a thread that he weaves himself, in this sense that he suggests that the meaning implied in public space must be obtained and found.

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