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Bergerian Analysis of "Rukun Kematian" (A Community Self-Funded Donations for Muslim Funerals): Reflecting Social Virtues

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in Pajeng Village, Gondang District, Bojonegoro Regency. It sought to highlight the relevance of Rukun Kematian (RK) as a societal virtue, define the process and impacts of institutionalizing RK, and assess its influence on local village development projects. The study also tried to examine the communicative acts of RK initiators and their respective institutions. A qualitative approach was applied, with phenomenological approaches. Documentation, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to collect data. The study used theoretical, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques to gain a thorough understanding. Data processing included bracketing, reduction and deletion, thematic clustering, validation, and a personalized texture analysis. The findings demonstrated that societal virtues are formed by the interaction of personal-transcendental and social-reciprocal meanings, the quality of representation, collective purpose for social and economic advantages, and the presence of generative conversation. The validity claims discussed in public spaces shape the institutional model for societal virtues. This model influences local initiatives and citizen innovations in village development. The communicative actions of RK initiators focus on building mutual understanding through generative dialogue, fostering a discursive process of societal virtues, and creating a collective intention for social and economic benefits. The study also established a "Constructionist-Communicative Analysis Model for Rural Communities" and a mathematical formulation to identify the generative self-governance model in rural communities.

Keywords: Analysis, Bergerian, Rukun Kematian (RK), Social Virtues.

Introduction

Historically, Pajeng Village was marked by impoverishment and division, with the remnants of political conflicts from 1955 to 1968 still evident. Bojonegoro is an 'Endemic Poverty Story', a structural construct established since the colonial era (1). Geographically, Pajeng Village, located at an altitude of 194 - 260 meters above sea level, is surrounded by hills and bordered by various districts and the Nganjuk Regency. The village's agricultural sector is dominated by rainfed rice fields, spanning 375 hectares, with the remaining land used for sharecropping and intercropping in forest areas. The village, similar to other border villages, is isolated from economic activities and government social initiatives. A significant portion of the population is farmers or farm laborers. The socio-cultural aspect of Pajeng Village is characterized by a persistent belief system, manifested in leadership norms, the Nyadran tradition, and RKs. These beliefs and

traditions, deeply rooted in the villagers' respect for their ancestors and nature, play a significant role in their daily lives (1). Pajeng Village, despite its socio-cultural richness, is ensnared in the harsh reality of poverty, a consequence of adaptation and survival strategies against marginalization. This reality, manifested in values, attitudes, and traditions, is deeply ingrained in the social fabric of the village, leading to a culture of poverty. Over time, this culture has eroded the villagers' motivation and aspirations, fostering resignation to fate and passive attitudes towards economic hardship. The villagers, already struggling to meet daily needs, are further burdened by the cost of RKs, a practice they adhere to avoid social ostracization. It is easier to eradicate poverty than the culture of poverty (2). The RK of Pajeng exemplifies this culture, with impoverished families striving to fulfill all ritual requirements, thereby exacerbating their financial

plight. The community's response to death varies based on the deceased's economic status, with wealthier families receiving more mourners due to larger alms and better food. Unbeknownst to them, this long-standing tradition has perpetuated a cycle of poverty in the village. In Pajeng Village, the RK was reinterpreted following the death of a poor widow, Rusmini. Village leaders Tarwoco, Syamsudin, and Zulfatoni, recognizing the ritual's discriminatory nature, proposed a 'Death Rukun' forum to promote welfare and unity. They socialized this idea with NU figure Abdul Wahid, emphasizing the importance of communal values. Despite resistance from the Kejawen circle, who viewed the idea as arrogant, the socialization proved effective. From 1989 to 2016, six Death Rukun groups were formed, involving 1,173 families. The phenomena of Pajeng Village provide insight into the interpretation of death tradition practices and critique mainstream views on poverty. Some theories offer perspectives on the culture of poverty, marginalization, and the peasant moral economy (2–4). These theories highlight the adaptation of the poor, the need for external initiative for renewal, and the dominance of moral principles over economic rationality. The Pajeng Village study reveals that change is initiated from within the community, enriching and expanding existing values from private to public spheres. This process involves various authorities and integrates local elements. Contrary to the Peasant Moral Economy Theory, the villagers are not weak or static; they are capable of interpreting and renewing values, sparking innovation, and alleviating poverty. Resistance to these new values and ideas actually accelerates the formation of value transplantation and collaboration. Metaphor of Javanese farmers 'walking on water' is challenged by the continuous evolution and innovation in Pajeng Village since the early 90s (3). Effective rural development requires the participation of people in a mutual learning experience involving local and external resources (5). However, progress will not occur if residents are merely herded to new pastures. Mainstream rural poverty theories have influenced various development policies, often likened to a shepherd's staff guiding livestock to new pastures. However, these policies often overlook the actual experiences, expectations, and

needs of the communities they aim to assist. Policymakers tend to focus on the staff and the image of the new pasture, neglecting the voices of rural communities. The paradigm shift from 'Building Villages' to 'Villages Building' requires communicative competence to understand the symbolic and subjective realities of these communities. The Pajeng Village phenomenon, marked by historical conflict and trauma, demonstrates the potential for self-discovery and reinterpretation of traditions to escape helplessness. This process led to the formation of six RKs, reflecting the potential for rural development. Social construction perspective suggests that societal norms form a social structure and institution that confront individuals as an objective reality (6). However, the formation of the RK in Pajeng Village indicates that these processes can occur collectively, challenging the Bergerian concept of autonomous and individual externalization and internalization. Consensus among actors can be achieved through communicative action. Society must establish norms to regulate behavior and become rational, not merely by providing rational reasons, but also through intersubjective legitimization (7, 8). Consensus can only be achieved in a reflective society that has succeeded in carrying out satisfying communication. In this communication, participants strive to achieve 'validity claims' that are seen as rational and will be accepted without coercion as a result of consensus. The rational method serves as a means towards consensus, which will occur if there is an argument, with the party presenting the better argument prevailing. The capability of discussion and action within the 'orbit of rational argumentation' is essential to realize consensus (7, 9, 10). To this point, no research has been found that specifically explores the construction of RKs' meaning as social virtue values from a Bergerian viewpoint and its implications for local initiatives. The existing body of research does not sufficiently probe into the process of constructing social virtue values that catalyze the emergence of local initiatives (11–13). A notable study titled "The Causality Relationship between Social Capital and Poverty in Rural Indonesia," (14), delves into the relationship between social capital and poverty in rural Indonesia. The study concludes that social capital is a multifaceted concept that cannot be

easily encapsulated by a single measure. It also reveals a bidirectional causality relationship between social capital, defined as participation in social activities, and poverty. As a result, it suggests that the Indonesian government's poverty alleviation program should take into account existing social activities. However, while the study concludes that participation in social activities influences poverty levels, it does not adequately illuminate the social virtue values that underpin community participation in social activities. Therefore, a more in-depth examination of the social virtue values that underlie community members' participation in social activities that impact poverty is essential. Habermas's communicative action perspective is to study village development planning in South Lampung and Pesawaran Regency (5). The study emphasizes the need for governance based on indigenous wisdom to foster deliberation in rural areas. The reinterpretation of RKs, such as the "Rukun Kematian Desa Pajeng", has led to a more rational understanding and planning of these rituals, benefiting society at large. This process reflects the externalization, objectification, and internalization of the RK in Pajeng, as seen from the perspective of Berger and Luckmann. However, the social construction approach is insufficient due to the dialectical process between initiators and community members, leading to a "battle of claims". This necessitates the use of an integrative paradigm, which can fill gaps, overcome limitations, and enrich the discussion results of this research. The application of the integrative paradigm is carried out by Peter Ludwig Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their work "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge"(15, 16). They argue that humans and society are dialectical products, and reality has both subjective and objective dimensions.

Social Construction Theory Perspective

This research applies Berger and Luckmann's perspective on the social construction of reality, asserting that shared reality is formed through individual actions and interactions (6). Berger, influenced by Alfred Schutz, argues that while social reality exists objectively, its meaning is subjectively derived from the individual's relationship with the objective world. He

identifies three dialectical processes: externalization, objectification, and internalization, through which humans create and influence objective social reality, reflecting subjective reality. Society, as an objective reality, is studied through its relationship with social institutions (17). Vico's philosophy posits that humans can only understand what they have constructed themselves, viewing social reality as a construct of individuals. Berger emphasizes that societal life is a continuous construction, with social reality found in inter subjective experiences (18). He also stresses the importance of selecting an appropriate logic to understand the plural, relative, and dynamic nature of social reality (19). Thus, reality is dual - both subjective and objective - and is both within and outside of individuals. Berger emphasizes the need for an appropriate logic to comprehend the plural, relative, and dynamic nature of social reality, suggesting that the sociology of knowledge should explore all societal knowledge (20). Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction, rooted in the dialectic between the self and the sociocultural world, posits that reality is socially constructed and must be analyzed by the sociology of knowledge. They argue that this field should distinguish between "knowledge" and "consciousness", and requires the use of both logical and non-logical principles (21). This theory encompasses three simultaneous processes: externalization, objectification, and internalization, which reflect how individuals adjust to the sociocultural world, interact within institutionalized settings, and identify themselves within social institutions (16). Despite societal rules preserving social order, individuals may violate these due to externalization fluctuations (15). Society, as an objective reality, includes legitimization, making institutionalized objectification objectively reasonable. Society also exists as a subjective reality, requiring socialization for its maintenance and transformation (22). The relationship between an individual and their institution is dialectic, expressing society as a human product, an objective reality, and humans as social products.

Communicative Action Theory Perspective

Habermas, since the 1970s, has been developing a theory of communication, integrating linguistic

analysis into critical theory. His work, "The Theory of Communicative Action," dialogues his critical theory, emphasizing that praxis, grounded in rational consciousness, involves both work and communication (23). Habermas identifies four types of claims: truth, rightness, sincerity, and comprehensibility, which are essential for effective communication and communicative competence (24). He distinguishes two types of argumentation: discourse and criticism, with the latter divided into aesthetic and therapeutic criticism. Communicative action refers to interpersonal communication oriented towards mutual understanding, avoiding the subject-object situation. Habermas asserts that healthy communication requires each participant to be free to oppose claims without fear and have equal opportunities to speak, make decisions, and oppose others' opinions. He states that every argumentation process must allow every competent subject to participate, question assertions, and propose decisions. Habermas's theory of communicative action posits the actor as an autonomous subject in a setting where communication is free from intimidation and coercion (25). He emphasizes that human interaction is symbolically mediated through language and expressive gestures, with the essence of language being communication conducted in a state of mutual freedom. Habermas identifies four norms for successful communication: clarity, truth, honesty, and correctness (26). These norms facilitate mutual understanding, which is the ultimate goal of communication. In his book "The Theory of Communicative Action," Habermas proposes a theory to reveal the intent behind a speaker's expressions. He classifies four types of communicative action elements: Imperatives-Power, Constatives-Truth, Regulatives-Rightness/Justice, and Expressive-Sincerity. These elements measure a speaker's expression meaning and are crucial in building interpersonal relationships and achieving effective communication.

Conceptual Framework

This research explores concepts such as Javanese Death, Social Virtue, Javanese Social Virtue, Consensus, Public Space, Governance, and Innovation. The Javanese concept of death is not an end, but liberation to discover life's essence.

Social Virtue, rooted in ancient Greek civilization, emphasizes virtues like wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice (27, 28). In Javanese society, two norms, the principle of harmony and the principle of respect, govern interaction. Harmony, a state of peace and cooperation, is achieved by subordinating personal interests for collective agreement. Respect, shown according to status and position, maintains societal hierarchy. These norms are instilled through socialization, beginning with family education. Javanese children learn to control emotions, express indirectly, and behave decently. They also learn to feel fear, shame, and reluctance in situations demanding respect. Thus, Javanese society fosters a respectful and harmonious environment through these principles. This research explores the concept of consensus, originating from Latin, meaning agreement and shared feeling (29). In sociology, consensus is a decision-making process seeking widespread agreement among group members. Emile Durkheim posits that societal existence depends on moral consensus, a necessary condition for social order. This consensus is contained in his concept of collective consciousness, a source of solidarity encouraging cooperation. Durkheim emphasizes morality in society, allowing for social integration. Society will always move towards unifying interaction, despite tensions and conflicts (30, 31). Myron Weiner distinguishes five types of integration: national, regional, value, elite-mass, and behavioral (32, 33). Jurgen Habermas introduces the concept of the public sphere, a discursive space separate from the economy and state, where citizens participate in dialogue and debate (7). This sphere presupposes ideal communication, where participants discuss in a free and equal condition. The public sphere essentially includes everyone, enabling humans to reflect on themselves critically. Governance refers to collective decision-making rules in settings involving multiple actors or organizations, serving as a state policy instrument to promote social integrity and cohesion (8, 27). It signifies a shift from structured domination to a new method of societal governance. Innovation, perceived as new by an individual, is closely linked with dynamic and evolving environments (5). It encompasses the entire process of creating and offering goods or services that are new, better, or cheaper than

those previously available. The speed of innovation acceptance is influenced by its characteristics, including relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. The adoption of innovation involves stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption (34). The diffusion of innovation process is significantly influenced by the roles of opinion leaders and change agents. Change agents, striving to influence someone's adoption decision, often involve opinion leaders or recruit assistant personnel from within the social system. This ensures better communication with system members. Thus, governance and innovation are interconnected, influencing societal dynamics and progress. This research confirms Habermas's view, using the Lebenswelt of Pajeng Village and the formation of the RK as an entry point to uncover the fact that rational argumentation is only one of many modes of discussion. The RK, a trace of social innovation that has an impact on public benefit, is one of the unique features of Pajeng Village compared to other villages in the Bojonegoro region. This research aims to answer three main questions: How is the construction of meaning in RKs manifested as social virtues? How is the process of institutionalizing the values of social virtues in the RK and its implications for local development initiatives? How is the communicative action of the initiators of the RK towards the community members?

Methodology

This study investigates the significance of individual acts using a qualitative methodology. It acknowledges that each person interacts with their social environment differently, necessitating careful analysis. Qualitative research makes it possible to fully comprehend societal attitudes, awareness, and behavior. It provides a comprehensive perspective, taking into account that actions are the consequence of numerous interrelated causes. Finally, by comprehending phenomena from the players' points of view, it sheds light on local perspectives, particularly with relation to Islamic rituals.

Research Method

There are four research methods in social and human sciences, including the phenomenological method used in this study (35). This method, grounded in the philosophy to understand the

essence of specific life experiences, such as a principal's unique experiences in a natural setting (36). The phenomenological method is characterized by four key qualities: description, reduction, essence, and intentionality (37). Phenomenology influences data analysis through interpretive phenomenology, which emphasizes an open, accurate description of the subject's experience and the suspension of prior knowledge (38). The researcher's interpretations of the participant's life experiences are expressed, and data analysis occurs in the intersubjective perspective between the researcher and the participant (39). There are five stages in phenomenological data analysis, including expression listing, reduction, theme creation, validation, and the creation of a Personalized texture analysis.

Data Sources and Collection Methods

In this qualitative research, the researcher, despite being a public official, adopts a learning position to understand RKs in Bojonegoro villages from the native's perspective. The research employs participative observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to understand the meaning behind actions. The researcher actively participates in the subjects' activities, such as RKs, and conducts in-depth interviews to explore perceptions and experiences related to death rituals and *Rukun Kematian*. Documentation of various records and recordings supports and validates the social change process in Pajeng Village. Three FGDs involving 20 informants were conducted to confirm findings related to the dynamics in each Rukun Kematian group. The scholarly investigation, undertaken in the locale of Pajeng Village within the Gondang Subdistrict of Bojonegoro Regency, has been persistently progressing for a duration exceeding five years. The systematic accumulation of data was initiated one year into the research period. Key informants in this research are those involved in the formation and management of Rukun Kematian I-VI in Pajeng Village. The selection of these informants combines theoretical, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques to identify individuals with in-depth knowledge. Theoretical sampling is used for data collection and analysis, while purposive sampling selects knowledgeable informants who can provide in-depth insights.

The choice of informants evolves according to the researcher's needs and the stability of data obtained. Snowball sampling is used to select key informants with in-depth understanding of plural realities. The selection considers the informants' involvement in Rukun Kematian and their knowledge about its formation process and implications.

Data Analysis

A number of careful measures were taken to guarantee the data analysis was accurate. To separate important information from unimportant components, the raw data was first sorted using bracketing techniques. The dataset was then further refined through reduction and removal procedures. To find patterns and recurrent ideas, the next stage was to create thematic clusters, which required grouping related subjects together. After that, validation was done to confirm the findings' dependability and consistency. In order to give a thorough, nuanced understanding of the people's experiences, a personalized texture analysis was finally conducted. These extensive procedures guaranteed that the analysis was accurate, comprehensive, and representative of the opinions of the participants.

Trustworthiness

Researchers ensure the validity of research findings and data interpretation through four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Credibility verifies the alignment of the researcher's observations with reality. To achieve data validity, researchers employ methods such as persistent observation, triangulation, peer checking, referential adequacy checking, and member checking. In this research, the researcher uses triangulation to compare the subject's and informant's statements, and conducts peer and member checking to interpret data and reconfirm information. Referential adequacy checking is done by enriching literature to analyze the obtained data through a predetermined theoretical perspective.

Results

What sets Pajeng Village apart?
The Death Pillar in Pajeng Village represents a richly inspirational social innovation. Pajeng Village presents an "anomalous face" compared to other villages in the Bojonegoro region. In the Islamic teachings embraced by the majority of Pajeng Village residents, death is a "disaster" for the bereaved family. The term disaster, or "musibah" in Arabic, literally means something that befalls us or something that strikes us. In general, a disaster is a test or anything undesirable. Consoling the bereaved, or "takziah," is derived from Islamic teachings and carries a social obligation to comfort those who experience disaster or grief. In the villages of the Bojonegoro region and Java in general, death commemoration, or "slametan kematian," is a space to actualize values of care and solidarity. However, these values have shifted to become a "duty" for the bereaved family, transforming the event of death into an "economic disaster" for the bereaved family.

"…the death slametan is to honor the deceased…the way to give alms to the deceased is through barokahan (holding a feast) as a tribute to the departed…giving alms to the deceased means providing sangu (provisions) for their journey in the afterlife…"

What happens in Pajeng Village is quite different. The researcher, who has been a regent for two terms in Bojonegoro since his teenage years, felt the need to highlight this turning point as inspiration in developing a new approach related to rural development. The researcher intends to delve into and elaborate on what the reformers of the RK have done, leading to the formation of Death Pillar. The researcher also intends to identify how the process of meaning construction and communicative action plays a role in encouraging the renewal of the death commemoration ritual towards Death Pillar in Pajeng Village. To date, six Death Harmonies have been formed, each with its own "uniqueness" in terms of institutionalization and governance.

".... This tradition of RKs has fostered mutual assistance among residents. Those in distress will have their burdens lightened. For the heirs and relatives, this tradition can be an opportunity to pay respects to the deceased…"

How is the construction of meaning in RKs manifested as social virtues?
RKs represent a reality that does not emerge independently. According to the Social Construction theory proposed by Berger and Luckmann, it is understood that reality is socially constructed, where reality and knowledge are two key terms for understanding it. Reality is a quality

inherent in phenomena recognized as having existence, thus not dependent on human will. Knowledge, on the other hand, is the certainty that these phenomena are real and possess specific characteristics. A reality is depicted in the social process through actions and interactions, where individuals continuously create a reality that they subjectively own and experience. In this research, the universe of meaning from the RKs of Pajeng Village was identified, which is dimensionally personal-transcendental and social-reciprocal, along with a reinterpretation of the meaning of death pillar from three groups of sources in this study. The categorization into these three groups is based on biography, knowledge reserves, and the sources' views on the practice of RKs.

"…when someone passes away, the villagers cease their work in the fields, everyone comes to assist with the RKs. Activities such as digging graves, making penduso, are carried out without the need for orders, everything proceeds organically, thus all those who work are united and harmonious in their efforts."

The three groups are: First, the Village Officials group (GP), who are former village officials, village heads, and teachers. They hold authority due to their formal positions or historical social legitimacy. Second, the Puritan Islam group (GIP), consisting of religious teachers, mosque caretakers, clerics, and those considered to have religious authority. Third, the Kejawen group (GK), which includes elders and those who are recognized for their steadfast adherence to long-standing local traditions in Pajeng Village. The theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, which views social reality as a social construction created by individuals who are free beings. Individuals become determinants in the socially constructed world based on their will. Humans, in many respects, have the freedom to act beyond the control of social structures and norms, where individuals respond to stimuli in their cognitive world. Each human constructs a social reality where the subjective process becomes objectified in social life. In the context of RKs in Pajeng Village, the personal-transcendental and social-reciprocal dimensions, as "expressed" in objective meaning, are not exactly aligned with the subjective interpretation of the sources in this study. This is reflected in the emergence of three subjective interpretations related to the practice of RKs in Pajeng Village. The Village Officials group (GP) views the RK as an activity that "impoverishes" the community of Pajeng Village. This is because the expenditure to finance the RK procession increasingly burdens the family and heirs of the deceased. The Puritan Islam group (GIP) views the RK in certain respects as no longer in line with Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, the Kejawen group (GK) believes that the RK is an ancestral teaching about how to show devotion and love for someone who has passed away. All forms of expenses that arise are a consequence of love, respect, and loyalty to the person who has entered the afterlife.

"…Five days after the death of Mbah Rusmini, I gathered five RTs here, and thus the Rukun Kematian was formed. Initially, there were five RTs for one Rukun Kematian group here. Once it was well-established here, I then formed another in the northern area, in Dukuh Dodol, and gradually in Dukuh Tegalan…"

From a social construction perspective, this double interpretation is inevitable. This is because all humans have meaning and strive to live in a meaningful world. The variety of interpretations can occur due to the background of biography, knowledge reserves, and reflection on reality in their social world.

How is the process of institutionalizing the values of social virtues in the RK and its implications for local development initiatives?

The aim of this study is to elaborate on the social virtues embedded in the RKs of Pajeng Village. Social virtues are reflections of hopes, aspirations, and obligations, thus these values possess an ideal nature. Social virtues encompass elements of integrity, justice, temperance, purity, decency, merit, distinction, and excellence. With these elements, an ideal life that leads humans to become wise, brave, self-aware, and just can be achieved. This aligns with Plato's thought that the highest good in life is to harmonize the ideal with reality, "…when someone dies, no one works in the fields, everyone comes to help with the RK. Like digging graves, making penduso, no need for anyone to command, everything runs by itself, so those who work are all united and harmonious." This is to realize justice, courage, goodness, and wisdom through the guidance of reason. The

highest happiness lies in a life that leads to the highest good and contemplates the highest ideas such as values of solidarity, togetherness, and justice. In addition to achieving an ideal life, social virtues can also indicate the emergence of a "moral movement" to respond to the decline of collective values (33). With these social virtues, degradation and "deficit of meaning" can be healed. This condition also occurred in Pajeng Village in the early 1990s. At that time, several people were shocked with grief when the event of the late Mrs. Rusmini being called to face His presence occurred. The grief occurred when they saw the few villagers who came to console. Moreover, Mrs. Rusmini, who during her life was already burdened with poverty, now had to pass her burden on to the family she left behind. The burden is a "social obligation" to fulfill a series of RKs, which of course requires considerable funds and resources. Those who were shocked, in the end, questioned and reinterpreted the established and rooted RKs in Pajeng Village. Through various discussions, they came to the conclusion that "this ritual is an impoverishing and unproductive activity; the poor will become even poorer."

"Since ancient times, here, when someone passes away, all the villagers are aware, and without being ordered, everyone helps collectively to take care of the deceased…"

Based on this fact, they initiated the establishment of Death Pillar (RK). The two objectives of the establishment of RK are, first, to renew the practice of RKs to ensure that the poor do not become poorer; second, to ensure that RK has utility for the common interest. From the formulation of RK's objectives, the spirit of utility explicitly radiates. A spirit based on the principle of striving for the greatest possible benefit or good effect for as many people as possible in their actions. Also, the principle of justice, so that people do not sacrifice the rights of others in pursuing the greatest possible benefit. The benefit referred to is not only limited to the actor himself, but for all who can be influenced by the act, both directly and indirectly.

"…The practice of Islam by the santri is somewhat different from that of the Javanese tradition. Here, when a Javanese family experiences a death, there is a prayer: 'lantaran sekar gondo sarine roso mbah saget padhang dalane jembar kubure dingapuro dosane mengo suwargane tetepo imane didaku marang gustine agen kulo kintu syah kagem gusti Allah.' This tradition still exists, partly Islamic and partly Javanese custom. But whatever it is, in essence, all good ways are respected, for the benefit of all…"

The principles of utility and justice continue to be socialized by the initiators of RK from the beginning of the establishment of RK to the present. The utility model offered by the initiators of RK is not the same as the utilitarianism model in the moral philosophy stream that emphasizes the fulfillment of choices (preference satisfaction) which assumes the involvement of rationality in fulfilling utilities. However, utilitarianism is based on the spirit of "Ngregani, bantu lan peduli liyan" (appreciating, helping, and caring for others). This *liyan* spirit is a characteristic of the principles of harmony, harmony, and harmony in Javanese ethics. Based on this liyan spirit, the process of institutionalizing the social virtues of RK is not instant and uniform. In the spirit of "social utility" manifested in the effort of *Ngregani, bantu lan peduli liyan*, in the end, a discursive process occurs in public spaces in Pajeng Village. This is where the point of contact of the Berger and Habermas approach becomes the focus of this research.

How is the Communicative Actions of the initiators of the RK towards community members?

From the perspective of communicative action, this study has identified a correlation between the internalization of experiences, views, and references, and their influence on the characteristics of actions, behavioral orientations, and the choice of socialization media (see Table 1). This correlation is academically significant and warrants further investigation.

Table1: Results of Communicative Actions

	The Pamong Group	The Puritan Islamic Group	The Kejawen Group
The Background of Actions	Experience and Responsibility as a Protector	Enforcement of Religious Values	Recognition of Local Wisdom

Action Characteristics	Instrumental-Strategic Actions	Instrumental-Strategic Actions	Communicative Actions
Actor Orientation	Influencing Others to Achieve Goals	Influencing Others to Achieve Goals	Seeking Mutual Understanding
Media Used	Through Institutional and Formal Meetings	Through Religious Forums	Through Informal Dialogue Spaces
Communicative Competence	First and Second Stage Competence	First and Second Stage Competence	First and Second Stage Competence

Table 1 shows the communication actions of three groups in Pajeng Village. The Pamong Group focuses on using their knowledge and responsibilities as protectors to influence others through institutional and formal gatherings, employing instrumental-strategic tactics. Similarly, the Puritan Islamic Group focuses on upholding religious principles and influencing others through religious forums using instrumental-strategic actions. Meanwhile, the Kejawen Group cherishes local knowledge and strives for mutual understanding through communicative acts in informal dialogue settings, with all groups displaying first and second-stage communicative competence. Communicative action is a form of communication aimed at achieving consensus. Parties can reach consensus in communication when they are able to understand the intentions and interests of their interlocutors, convey their own intentions and interests, and then determine arguments that are potentially acceptable to both parties. In this communication, society must make their interlocutors understand their intentions by striving to achieve validity claims. These claims are seen as rational and will be accepted without coercion as a result of consensus.

"In conducting religious outreach in the village, we must first learn before taking steps… if not, hantem kromo (haphazard actions) will not succeed… What is the reason? The important thing is a peaceful and mutually beneficial relationship, our direction remains there, it is in accordance with our teachings, almuhafadhotu 'ala qodimis sholih, wal akhdzu bil jadidil ashlah, wal iijadu bil jadiidil ashlah…"

To achieve consensus, Habermas requires the fulfillment of four validity claims, which include: first, truth claims: when they can agree on the natural and subjective world; second, rightness claims: when they agree on the implementation of norms in the social world; third, sincerity or honesty claims: when they agree on the congruence between the inner world and a person's expression. And fourth, comprehensibility claims. Every effective communication must meet these four claims. People who are able to fulfill these claims are referred to by Habermas as people who have communicative competence.

"…when parents pass away, children and relatives will hold a tahlil as a sign of affection, praying for their departed parents…"

The consensus process between groups in the formation of the RK took nearly 20 years. In this time span, three consensus formation models were found: first, the hegemonic approach model depicted in the RK of groups I, II, and III. Second, the voluntaristic approach model depicted in the RK of group IV, and third, the pro-existence approach model as depicted in the RK of groups V and VI. The dynamics of the formation of these six RK show that the social construction process of the RK is not an autonomous process as stated by Berger, or also Habermas's view that consensus can only be achieved when there is two-way rationality and communicative competence.

Discussion

Three main areas are examined in this study: the communicative activities of RK initiators, the institutionalization of RK values for local development, and the construction of RKs as societal virtues. In opposition to top-down rural development strategies that undermine social energy and dignity, it looks for a creative strategy that preserves community dignity. The Pajeng Village phenomenon gives promise for a respectable and sustainable future in spite of these obstacles. The study highlights community-driven efforts as a means of achieving this revitalization. Social virtue values are constructed through a process termed "hybridity," which blends personal-transcendental and social-reciprocal dimensions to produce new meanings (27, 28). This process is marked by the quality of

representation and is more effective when followed by a shared vision to achieve social and economic benefits. The interaction between these factors is enriched by generative dialogue, found in both informal and formal meeting spaces. The institutionalization of social virtue values is influenced by the type of validity claim discussed in public spaces (6, 15), affecting the institutional model and subsequent local initiatives. The rightness, truth, and sincerity claims result in different institutional models, as observed in the RK groups. These models trigger the emergence of various local initiatives and innovations (24). For instance, the institutional model of the RK I-III led to initiatives for public interests, while the model of the RK IV led to initiatives to meet contextual needs. The model of the RK V-VI led to initiatives that utilize local knowledge and wisdom. The initiators of the RK build mutual understanding with the community through more than just two-way rationality and communicative competence. Key factors include generative dialogue (40), the discursive process of social virtue values, and a shared intention to achieve socio-economic benefits. The initiators predominantly utilize informal discussion spaces for initiating and socializing the formation of the RK, without negating perceived irrationalities of those adhering to religious teachings or customary rules. This interaction between rational and irrational elements stimulates discursive processes related to the RK. The initiators' communicative competence is demonstrated through second-stage communication, differentiating speech into statements, clarifying social roles, and directing individuals as actors and observers.

Theoretical Implications

This research aims to understand the construction of RKs as social virtue, the institutionalization of social virtue values, and the communicative actions of the RK' initiators in Pajeng Village. Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory and Habermas's communicative action theory are employed to understand the process of ritual meaning construction and the emergence of a "new social virtue" (15, 16). The researcher points out a number of flaws in both hypotheses while acknowledging that no one hypothesis can adequately explain reality. For example, Berger's

social construction approach can ignore the group level's non-linear knowledge creation and spiritual aspects. Furthermore, it is inadequate in explaining Javanese culture's "universe of meaning" and collaborative building process. Regarding Habermas's communicative action perspective (7, 10), the researcher found that considerations of values such as togetherness and harmony form the basis for the parties, Habermas's discourse ethics is not a universal formula, informal-cultural forms of discussion are foundational for the construction of a discursive process, communication competence in the Javanese context involves building strong emotional bonds, and the discursive process is not about winning arguments but about placing others in a non-rational context. This research demonstrates that existing theories, such as Oscar Lewis's poverty culture theory (2), Clifford Geertz's Marginalization Theory, and James Scott's theory of agricultural involution (3, 4), are insufficient to redefine rural community realities. Evidence from Pajeng Village shows that poverty culture is not merely an adaptation to marginalization, but a reinterpretation of socio-cultural reality that births a "new social energy" and awakens residents from despair. Collective awareness of marginal socio-cultural conditions sparks community awakening. Geertz's proposals for overcoming rural poverty (3), which involve external reformers and a focus on changing values, are refuted. Instead, it is proven that change agents come from within the community and that values cannot be simply transferred from outside. Pajeng Village residents construct "social virtue values" by consciously blending personal-transcendental and social-reciprocal dimensions. This process occurs when each party is in the "orbit of consciousness," transforming power dynamics, affiliations, and socio-economic benefits to present a better future. The research also challenges James Scott's thesis, showing that rural communities are not weak, irrational, or static, but capable of renewal, institutional modeling, and innovation. The integration of social construction and communicative action perspectives (7, 32, 33) is instrumental in understanding the process of meaning construction, institutionalization of new interpretations, and discursive processes in rural Javanese society. However, these perspectives are

insufficient for comprehending the universe of meaning and socio-cultural world in this context. To address these limitations, two alternatives are proposed: designing an analytical framework that explains the social construction process at the group level, focusing not only on knowledge but also on the richness of societal wisdom; and conceptualizing elements in communicative action to be more relevant, contextual, and sensitive to socio-cultural diversity. In order to comprehend how meaning-making, discursive processes, and novel interpretations are institutionalized in rural Java, the researcher created the "Constructionist-Communicative Analysis Model for Rural Communities." According to this paradigm, social virtue values are promoted when personal transcendental and social reciprocal components are combined. By bridging these gaps, generative discourse promotes socioeconomic advancement on a collective level. Discussions on validity claims in public settings are essential for local projects and innovative self-governance. Rural communities may suffer if crucial components like communicative competence and two-way rationality are undermined in the absence of creative discussion. Public Space, Social Virtue Values, Representation Quality, Social-Economic Benefits, and Generative Dialogue are the five main components of the model, and they are all essential for self-governance.

GSG = (RP+NKS + KR + KSE) DG

GSG: Generative Self Governance

RP: Public Sphere (H)

NKS: Social Virtue Values (B)

KR: Representation Quality (H)

KSE: Collective Intention for Social Economic Benefits (HB)

DG: Generative Dialogue

Five components of the constructionist-communicative analysis model for rural communities are interpolated to create the Generative Self Governance (GSG) model. In order to create public places, social virtue ideals, high-quality representation, and shared socioeconomic aspirations, it highlights the importance of generative discussion. This conversation fosters nonviolent transformation by strengthening meaning-making and institutionalizing fresh interpretations. The self-governance index of Javan rural communities is captured by the GSG

model, which overcomes the shortcomings of both the social construction and communicative action viewpoints.

Conclusion

The building of RKs as social virtue values, the institutionalization process and its effects on local village development, and the dynamics of RK initiators' communication behaviors are all examined in this study. The objective is to identify a novel and contextual strategy that preserves community dignity in the face of top-down rural development strategies, which frequently undermine the social vitality and dignity of rural communities. By combining social-reciprocal and personal-transcendental aspects, the Pajeng Village phenomenon creates social virtue qualities that give promise for a respectable and sustainable village life in the future. When paired with a common goal and vision to attain social and economic advantages, this "hybridity" boosts efficiency and production. The interaction between these elements is enhanced by generative discussion, which produces fresh goals and concepts. Public debates effect the institutional model, local efforts, and resident creativity, all of which have an impact on the institutionalization of social virtue principles. Mutual understanding is fostered within the community through the communicative actions of RK initiators, which are affected by generative conversation and the discursive process of social virtue ideals.

Recommendations

This study uses a constructionist-communicative analysis methodology to suggest a plan for rural empowerment and development. It proposes generative self-governance as a more dignified and contextual development paradigm and highlights leverage areas for it. The government is advised to prioritize problem-solving in budgetary arrangements, promote creative discourse, and enhance the caliber of representation. While rural communities are advised to continue practicing generative self-governance, activists and non-governmental organizations are invited to participate in contextual dialogues and co-create with them. To expedite these methods, experts and scholars should work together and approach rural development with humility.

Abbreviations

GSG: Generative Self Governance, RP: Public Sphere (H), NKS: Social Virtue Values (B), KR: Representation Quality (H), KSE: Collective Intention for Social Economic Benefits (HB), DG: Generative Dialogue.

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