



## Exploring the Interpretation of Cultural Values in Babad Banyumas Manuscript as a Means to Understanding Banyumas Society

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### **Abstract**

Culture as an abstraction of a dynamic human experience, tends to develop in line with development of the supporting communities. Babad Banyumas as a literary work of traditional history reflects the culture which tends to convey a transformative message, and many of which loaded with social life values of the community at the time which became the underlying guidance and characters of the Banyumas society. This study aims to explore the culture and local values of Banyumas community's social life reflected from the text of Babad Banyumas. This is a qualitative study which employs content analysis to Babad Banyumas text as the data analysis. The data was collected through observation and interviews with experts in history. Data analysis uses qualitative data analysis using display data, data reduction and data verification to find common themes. The results of the study found that there are manifested cultural values and concepts in Babad Banyumas among others the culture of showing gratitude '*terima kasih*', *cablaka*, egalitarian, asceticism (*tapa brata*), freedom (free soul), and politeness, which are also effective in strengthening and instilling the local culture and social norms values appreciated and observed by Banyumas society.

**Keywords:** Cultural Values; Babad Banyumas; Social Studies;

### **Introduction**

The initial concept of cultural studies comes from E.B. Tylor (1871), who says that culture is the whole complex thing that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws and other abilities and habits that people gain as members of society (Garna., 2001). Culture is also defined as a shared social meaning, such as the customs of certain communities, values, norms, languages, and symbolic objects of daily life (Barker., 2008). Someone who tries to find out how the process of social life of the society should first try to understand the meaning that lived in a culture called the "thick description", which is interpreting in depth and thorough of the system symbols of the cultural meaning (Geertz., 1992). Culture as art, museums, libraries and heritage which receive 'public-funding' undertaken by the community generates a lot of meaning (Holden., 2006; Scott, Rowe, & Pollock., 2015).

The study of the local people's life values is expected to raise the people's awareness into having a sense of historical empathy, for that reason it is quite significant in developing the society (Perrotta &

Bohan., 2017). We should at least provide people with insight into their local values so that they are aware of their social identity and as their collective understanding, so that they can contribute to the environment (Dichter., 2015). This is quite effective, since social contributions are often found locally rather than at the national level (de Kraker., 2017). Living in this plural society, along with the rapid influx of western culture, modern / postmodern cultural influences, and globalization, it seems to be a great challenge for indigenous people to preserve local indigenous culture and customs. Through elements such as traditional knowledge, systems and local practices, it is important to look at the risks and changes experienced by community groups in relation to their customs (Anacin., 2015). In a large scale and multidimensional societies, social identity is needed to facilitate individuals to cooperate in different contexts. Since the social identity structures linked to community structures are interconnected and grow into more heterogeneous societies (Smaldino., 2017). The existence of culturally diverse individuals, enables the influence on social behavior and norms (Gupta et al., 2018).

Babad as one of the results of the local history literature which resides many noble cultural values and social values of the past events process which is worthy of reflection in the present, since the chronicle is the result of intellectual property of the age. Culture affects many aspects of society, thus it is pivotal to consider cultural development. Having understood the national culture can lead to a better understanding of the transformation of national policy and strategy formation. To fully understood cultural influence on policy may help one to overcome challenges in the local policy making, planning or management, in comparison to further advance understanding of global challenges (Shortall & Kharrazi., 2017). Cultural factors affect one's moral values and behavior. To know the judgment and moral behavior of a person, it is visible from cultural system of the society. Cultural factors additionally contribute to religion, social ecology, and social systems such as kinship structures, and so on (Graham, Meindl, Beall, Johnson, & Zhang., 2016).

### ***Cultural Studies on the Local Point of View***

According to Pierre Bourdieu, culture is the result of human creativity and adaptation to social change through continuous reproduction, while dominating interest groups claiming their power through political control over local culture (Bourdieu & Passeron., 1990). Given the influence of such political control, it shows that there is a relationship between political power, the entry of foreign cultures, and changes in local culture (Jingyi & Chung-shing., 2018). Culture also includes traditions, which is interpretable by inheritance or continuing norms and customs which experience changing with the combined variety of human acts so as to give a new form to existing cultural patterns (van Peursen., 1988).

Cultural characteristics can be defined as socially constructed phenomena that generate collective meaning in a shared social environment (Shortall & Kharrazi., 2017). Common cultural characteristics within a nation, including the perceptions of identity, value, and history can be defined as a form of national culture (Daniell., 2014). Cultural factors rooted in society, gradually changing, and defining individual and group behavior on risk, conflict resolution, and social and institutional capacities for sustainable transformation (Park, Russel, & Lee., 2007). Cultural formation can be undertaken through exploring and examining how the cultural system brings together many people into cohesive-relative communities, and establishes the customs and traditions that define the lifelong ways of life (Scott., 2012).

Culture has a very broad meaning and must be understood in a wider context(Barker., 2008). Understanding the fundamental patterns and processes of human cultures diversity may lead into a challenge in anthropological evolution. Cultural transmission between groups is influenced by social and cultural factors. Cultural proximity can also be measured by the similarity of dialects use (Tamura & Ihara., 2017). The increase on interaction between members of different ethnic groups can lead into the

increased mutual understanding, less hostility, prejudice and the formation of friendship between groups in different social contexts (Kim, 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp., 2006). The negative impact, however, when two different cultures are forced to unite may lead into cultural intolerance. Otherwise when cultural intolerance is strong enough, hemophilic attitudes arise, ie attitudes that can only correlate and establish good cooperation with individuals who share the same culture, while with individuals who do not tend to show intolerant attitudes (Bilancini, Boncinelli, & Wu., 2018). The weak government's role may result in the society easily divided into certain sects due to the influence of sociocultural factors, especially the role of religious-political organization, while the sociocultural characteristics are shaped by religions (Baytiyeh., 2017).

Culture as a manifestation of community's identity undergoes a process of change, the so called 'cultural dynamics'. Perhaps the long-term of the world population are no longer dependent on cultural distance and the initial cultural makeup of the population, it is which will one create a lot of problem in terms of cultural preservation (Bezin & Moizeau., 2017). In this context, 'culture' can be understood as the power to realize its identity. Local cultural heritage also has an important role in increasing senses of attachment and belonging to the region itself so that it can foster a sense of social trust (Stefaniak, Bilewicz, & Lewicka., 2017).

### ***Social Value Concept in the Context of Social studies***

The term social value has also been used in various definitions, which can be interpreted as to refer to particular community values or cultural values and norms of society in general, but can also be used to refer to an altruistic society (Kenter et al., 2015). The emergence of altruistic nature in one's individual fosters an egalitarian character toward another individual. This happens because of the individual's domination which goes along with self-centered selfish characteristics, thereby affecting the decline of altruistic qualities in one's individual. On the basis of these factors the origin of the human moral trust system will then be built (Calmettes & Weiss., 2017; Chirumbolo, Leone, & Desimoni., 2016). Consequently, if a person is virtuous then he or she tends to be unselfish or have more sensitivity towards others (Jonason, Strosser, Kroll, Duineveld, & Baruffi., 2015). However, the low level of one's concern is also related to the cultural background. If a person shares the same thought and norm in certain culture and community orientation then his/her level of concern is higher, compared to different cultures which triggers strongest sense of individuality (Tam & Chan., 2017). This could be the impact on the emergence of groups and communities in society. As a result of the communities within a society, the number of conflicts between communities occurs high because of the emergence of rivalry and competition in regard of superiority over ethnic or sectarian, religious groups, and even the culture (Naseemullah., 2017).

The social life of one's society in the process is easily influenced by economic conditions, politics, culture, and other factors as the main pillar of global transformation (Ma, 2015; Afshari-Mofrad, Ghazinoory, Montazer, & Rashidirad., 2016). Another factor of community change is on the environmental change, thus, a local case study is needed to create a better understanding to the social dynamics and mechanisms of environmental conditions with the surrounding community. The relationship between humans and their environment is the two interrelated significant things to building interaction with each other so as to benefit the community (Lacoeuilhe, Prévot, & Shwartz., 2017). Social relations fostered in an environment reflect the potential that can improve welfare and contribute to the positive development of a society (Bennett et al., 2017).

Having a view or understanding towards the social value concept is quite significant in overcoming the problem of evaluative impact of community development (Watson, Evans, Karvonen, & Whitley., 2016). Human beings have a role to change the living conditions by understanding and leading to act the human improvement through cultural and environmental historical roots. Despite the past did

not offer any future change, a better human beings would at least contribute into having a better understanding of how to defend and eliminate, and how prevent and overcome future possibilities (Hartman et al., 2017). Among the constituents of human change and improvement are identified by the implementation of norms and values. The existence of norms is very important effect on one's behavior including the attitude of hospitality to the surrounding environment (Belgiawan, Schmöcker, Abou-Zeid, Walker, & Fujii., 2017). The influence of norm has also been widely expressed in various studies with different terms such as environmental influences, friendship behavior, and family (Abou-Zeid et al., 2013).

### ***Babad as Cultural Local Heritage***

According to *Kamus Sejarah Indonesia* 'the Indonesian History Dictionary' *babad* is a Javanese chronicle usually written in poetic form to explain and glorify the rise or rule of a certain kingdomhood, although some may be found in mystical narrative of stories (Cribb & Kahin., 2012). *Babad* refers to a specific term used to refer to the type of literary work that contains historical events (Darusuprpta., 1981). In terms of the contents, *babad* is a manifestation of two constituent elements, namely facts and literary arts. These two elements share an intersection, which is a formed history, usually realized in a state story, story of the establishment of a country, war, genealogy, etc.. The facts are expressed through language, which then established a narrative story. Between facts and art the language is mixed in such a way as to give rise to a whole and round art of literature. The facts revealed in the building of the story can be understood because of the relationships that synergize among the elements constituting a story (Wiryamartana., 1986).

*Babad* is an intellectual property of the past that can even be a today's life reference, since after all the character of society is established due to the presence of its history. If we want to comment on the Javanese community, it will not be separated from local beliefs or cosmology that immerses the lives of Javanese people, both Javanese and Malay cosmologies based on values of belief, world of thought and culture indirectly determined by art, narrative essays and symbolic forms. This element also consists of indirect values and symbolism which can be justified through perception of meaning both in aspects of belief, culture and function (Zakaria, Salleh, & Rashid., 2013). *Babad* is an ancient Javanese manuscript containing ancient riches of astonishing knowledge, related to several fields of intellectual activity, such as philosophy, religion, art, the system of science and literature (Natarajan & Sreedevi., 2017). Manuscripts represent the historical value of this unique and invaluable artwork, raising public awareness of the conservation of their cultural heritage (Pessanha, Manso, & Carvalho., 2012).

### ***Cultural Values and Social Citizenship in Babad Banyumas Texts***

*Babad Banyumas*, which is the local knowledge created by adapting a community that shares life experiences communicated from generation to generation and can be used as a life guidance by local people to survive in an environment that integrates with belief systems, norms, cultures and is expressed in tradition and myths are adhered to within a long period of time. The process of regenerating local wisdom is undertaken through tradition and literary works, as reflected from *babad*, *suluk*, *tembang*, *saga*, and so forth. One of the regeneration process for the delivery of local wisdom as an amplifier of Banyumas identity is through the tradition of literary works, as portrayed in *babad Banyumas*. *Babad Banyumas* as a result of intellectual property of the local Banyumas community which resides magnificent noble values and cultural traditions that deserve to be maintained and as a life guidance for the people of Banyumas. Among the values characterizing the people's life of Banyumas include the culture of showing gratitude, egalitarianism, *cablaka*, asceticism, life freedom, and courtesy/politeness. Those the six noble cultures might be primarily reflected the life values for the people of Banyumas.

### ***Culture of Cablaka or Blakasuta***

Cablaka is a character socially expressed by the indigenous people of Banyumas. Cablaka is often interpreted as a special character that puts forward the nature of directness, speaks for what it is, one who does not want to hide things, and without any cover-up (without *thedeng aling-aling*). This Cablaka character may also show the nature of courage and confidence. Usually people have such traits because of situational impulses of both self and environment (Dunlop & Walker., 2013). Cablaka or Blakasuta is the most essential human character of Banyumas which has been hereditary adopted and uneasily change even though indigenous people of Banyumas have socially shared many things with society of diverse cultural backgrounds (Priyadi., 2013). This character could be found in the sentences in the following babad Banyumas manuscript.

*“Ki Hajar ing Wanatara ingkang nyetha rahaden,  
yèn ora kesah-kesah saking ing Majalengka,  
ngalamat jumeneng ratu anggentosi ingkang raka ing nagara Majapahit,  
Sampun katur mring kang raka sanget kumejot galihe andhawuhaken timbalan.”*

“Ki Hajar Wanantara once conveyed a prophecy that,  
if at any time Raden Baribin remains in Majalengka neighborhood,  
he will be honored as the king who would replace the throne of King Brawijaya in Majapahit,  
he presented the prophecy without any intention instead of just a feeling.”

The above sentence shows the attitude of Cablaka recounted through the narrative especially at the time Raden Baribin had to frankly conveyed and talked as it was without any intent to his brother about the predictions of Ki Hajar Wanantara who predicted herself (Raden Baribin) who would later take over the throne of King Brawijaya. Because of his cablaka, Raden Baribin was then expelled from the kingdom, and had to move to another country.

### ***Egalitarian Culture***

The egalitarian culture in a broader sense may refer to (1) the belief that humans share the same value and are, therefore, equally positioned, and (2) an approach to just social conditions such as income, wealth, resources and abilities (Arenson., 2013). Egalitarianism could also be a self-controlling reaction to prejudice against their differing views on culture, prejudice, and authoritarianism (Hachfeld et al., 2011). This egalitarian attitude would keep every individual from a feudalistic attitude that places position, rank, and wealth as a center of social relations. This egalitarian culture is apparently also shown in babad Banyumas, as follows:

*“Arsa mundhut mantu ingkang abdi,  
lir katepan kinen ngrangsang arga,  
timun amesah lah duren,  
pinten pikantukipun mundhut mantu abdi wong desi.”*

“How can I want to make him my son-in-law,  
only their story can be likened to Katepan who wants to embrace the mountain,  
the cucumber fruit which sets a hostile to durian,  
why (you) want to make me as a father-in-law while I'm a village man.”

The above sentence indicates an intention that the Duke or Adipati Warga Utama who was the ruler of Wirasaba wanted to make Kaiman the son-in-law who was actually his Panakawan (his maid) who came from a village, who was nothing but a child of Ki Meranggi, and was a dagger sheath maker.

This shows that Adipati did not distinguish where he came from, but treated the same to others, he did not distinguish and justify any personal position, wealth, class. This clearly teaches us about social equality in which all persons within a given society or group deserve equal status. This has at least revealed a unique character of the socially opaque Banyumas community, so Cablaka as described previously shows the openness of the community in interacting with people outside their tribe or premordial environment, thereby encouraging them to be more egalitarian towards one another.

### **Cultural Ascétism**

In understanding the historical theory of traditional life of the ascetic society, it is an evasion to the self-welfare and self-esteem that departs from self-desire enforces one to control himself from worldly life to focus more on eternal phase of life, culturally called *kebatinan* or the teaching of spirituality (Baumard, Hyafil, Morris, & Boyer., 2014). Asceticism does not imply a spiritual basis for the practices it demonstrates, but it is clear that this ascetic tradition has influenced one's moral values (Hospital., 1985). This asceticism teaches one to stay concerned, avoid lustful pleasures, achieve spiritual purposes. This asceticism culture has also been shown by the figures of Banyumas especially by the ancestors as was observed by Adipati Warga Utama II in running his reign.

*“Wau kang wonten ing gendhing sajenenge Toya Mas langkung ageng  
rialate anyander ing tapa nira anedha marang sukma,  
Ing saturune ing besuk andhandhang mengku sasama.”*

“It is narrated that Toya Mas has more advanced and famous name, while he often performed *tapa brata* praying to Hyang Sukma, so that his offspring sustainably continue to stay rahayu ‘nobled’.”

In such a sentence, in an effort to promote and raise his country Adipati Warga Utama II felt the need to perform an ascetic through *tapa brata* or to get closer to Hyang Sukma so that his offspring could be sustainable in carrying out his duties and authority in Banyumas. What had been practiced by this Adipati was he would like to teach his people to a meaningful life that if something is pursued with either small or big desire should be closer to the Almighty through certain believing rituals or through life concerned.

### **Culture of Showing Gratitude ‘terimakasih’**

The culture of showing gratitude is one of the noble cultures characterizing the Indonesian people’s attitudes, although this culture may begin to fade in amidst the current global cultural demands. In that sense, this culture has even been morally and collectively regarded as an obligation, besides showing gratitude is another form when we highly value one's effort in helping us to solve all the existing problems for we could not be able to afford ourselves. Being grateful is a manifestation of gratitude which includes a source of social support, the characteristics of a close personal relationship, inspiring one another, and other individual’s positive attributes, such as showing kindness or good manners (Timmons, Ekas, & Johnson., 2017). An act of showing gratitude is a gift of charity for one's good deeds. This form of gratitude expresses another opinion which is giving a gift, regardless of whether the contribution is a word or a reality (Newman & Jeremy Shen., 2012). As an altruistic nature of showing gratitude is also believed to be a charity that may be linked to one's religious beliefs and teachings. This culture came into existence as a strong character of the society and manifest significant teaching on etiquette, because history has long taught about this. Babad Banyumas as many ancient texts teach the culture of showing gratitude, such as:

*“Pirsakna bocah ing sapungkur ingsun,  
aja ana anglampahi ing saturun turun ningsun,  
marang anak putu mami mangan ayam alas mangko.”*

“Raden also testified to his followers,  
none of his descendants,  
could eat the forest chicken meat.

Ideas underlying of the ban on eating chicken meat to the descendants as manifestation of Raden Baribin’s gratitude to the animal which managed to save him from danger and escape from the pursuit of his enemies. Menurut (Priyadi., 2013), the forest chicken could be a self-symbol of Baribin himself who is still belonging to family relatives of the king Hayam Wuruk of Mataram Kingdom. Even though that forest chicken literally symbolizes Baribin, Baribin was also the one who worthy of thanks to himself, for a person who thanks himself will undoubtedly be grateful to his Lord. Thus, showing gratitude should not only be expressed by one to another fellow human beings but to anyone or anything, even to animals or even to one himself.

### ***Cultural Freedom (Free Soul)***

The cultural freedom or free soul culture means a soul which stay unfettered by both by physical and environmental circumstances. As was indicated by Kyai Tolih and Banyak Catra in the manuscript of Babad Banyumas.

*“Lawan kaping kalih ipun,  
hamba yen dipun lilani paduka tuwin narendra,  
kawula anuwun pamit arsa molana kewala,  
tan remen wonten negari.”*

“the second request,  
he begged that Ki Patih and the Prabu volunteered me to go forth,  
because (he) did not like to live in the palace.”

The free soul as shown here, was at a time when Ki Tolih begged for permission to the court people, who was Ki Patih and the King to volunteer himself to go wandering to every country. Because he himself used to live in the wild so that if (he) lived in the palace, then his soul shall weaken and helpless.

### ***Politeness Culture***

Politeness is a respectful and caring attitude towards others based on certain acceptable ways in society, culturally appreciated by the social environment in which the person live in. This attitude can be indicated through a series of ways in which a person communicates, behaves and shows facial expressions at the time dealing with his interlocutor (Holtgraves & Perdeu., 2016). The culture of politeness is also conceptually related to practical understanding in a particular society by looking at the personal, cultural, situational and normative aspects of the society's ideology so that mutual relations between communities can be well established (Locher., 2015). In the text of Babad Banyumas many teachings of politeness are shown by the characters supporting the story, as described in the following sentence,

*“ingsun arsa temu kang kinen tur sembah mentar  
lampar hira data kawarnaha ing margi prapta ing dusun ngejavar.”  
“tur sembah ngaras pada atur pamit mring sang wiku,  
wus linalan nulya pangkat.”*

“I immediately called to perform sembah bhakti,  
then said good-bye to go home to his village Ngejavar.  
“Called to sembah bhakti and said goodbye to the Pandhita,  
to continue his journey.”

Polite attitude shown by the above figures is (1) at the time Kaiman called to sembah bhakti and asked for permission to leave the prospective father-in-law to return to his village; (2) at the time Raden Gagak Ngampar and Kyai Gedhe Kolot called to sembah bhakti and said goodbye to the Pandhita who had given a clue to the existence of his brother to continue the journey. The above attitudes show politeness especially at the time the above figures asked for permission and said good-bye when they want to leave the place.

### **Conclusion**

The six concepts of culture and social values shown by local people of Babad Banyumas are among others; the culture of showing gratitude which has set a strong character of the Banyumas community in regard of appreciation to one's good deeds, this sort of things nuanced the Banyumas people's image seems to be extremely polite people; an egalitarian culture places an equal status, has been a life evidence and reasons for why the Banyumas people often show the character of cablaka; the culture of asceticism teaches us how to have sense of compassion and how to get closer to the Almighty; as well as a free soul that does not want to become self-bound for his/ herself. Therefore, sustaining the noble culture and values as manifested in the aforementioned individual characters in the Babad Banyumas narrative is indispensable, because it is through culture and values we gain our personal identity amidst the plural society. That is why, cultural teachings and local values in Babad Banyumas are a non-dried source, reference and life concept for the virtuous, cultured, and dignified Banyumas succeeding generations.

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