



Local Wisdom Panjek Pinang Georg Simmel's Theory Perspective

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Abstract. This research aims to explore the panjek pinang tradition observed during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, delving into its history, philosophy, and the underlying local wisdom values. Through qualitative methods, the study seeks to identify and understand the Panjek Pinang tradition. The act of climbing the pinang tree is often accompanied by the promise of various prizes, fostering a sense of camaraderie and unity among participants, while also serving as a reflection of cultural values. Georg Simmel's theory is employed as an analytical framework in this study. Analytical techniques utilized include data collection, reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Keywords: Climbing slippery pole, Local Wisdom.

1. Introduction

The community that upholds strong moral principles possesses a local wisdom that has been inherited over many years and merits further study and preservation. It encompasses universal values while also embodying unique local customs. Local wisdom pertains to the principles individuals apply in their daily lives to sustain and preserve their environment. Another perspective on local wisdom views it as a traditional cultural ethos shared by a specific ethnic group. Local wisdom represents enduring truths that have become entrenched traditions in areas of high value, requiring continuous exploration and excavation. It can also be interpreted as the traditional cultural wisdom of a particular ethnic group or nation (Njatrijani, 2018: 18-19).

Local wisdom is the embodiment of shared values within a community. These values are deemed true and serve as a reference for the everyday conduct of the local populace. Consequently, local wisdom significantly influences how individuals interact with dignity in public settings. It encompasses a blend of elite knowledge, creative power, and societal intelligence, which collectively shape the trajectory of public cultural development. Local wisdom is typically manifested through enduring societal customs and practices, serving as a reflection of the community's collective consciousness. These shared values serve as guiding principles for specific social groups, greatly influencing their attitudes and behaviors on a daily basis (Diem, 2012: 301).

Conceptually, local wisdom is an integral aspect of culture. Haryanti Subadio (1986) posits that local wisdom, often referred to as local genius, encompasses all aspects of culture and is synonymous with cultural identity, representing the essence of a nation's character (Brata, 2016: 11). The distinction between various social groups

lies in their unique identities, which are characterized by symbols, cultural practices, behaviors, and religious beliefs (Hanani, 2011: 80).

Indonesia boasts a rich diversity of traditional games, each unique to its respective region. Husna highlighted several traditional games such as areca nut climbing, sack races, and cake-eating competitions, often held during celebrations of the Republic of Indonesia's Independence Day. However, over time, particularly among Indonesian children, there has been a decline in interest in these ancient pastimes. The values inherent in areca nut climbing, for instance, serve as inspiration for achieving independence and reflect current state policies. Typically played by mature men, climbing areca palms is not recommended for children due to its perceived danger (Windarto, 2019: 143-144).

In the Agam Regency of West Sumatra, there exists a local tradition known as the Panjek areca nut, which involves participants competing to retrieve objects or gifts hanging from trees. To participate, individuals must collect skinned areca palm trees and apply lubricant, usually oil. This tradition is typically observed during the annual celebration of Indonesian Independence Day, as well as during Eid al-Fitr. Eid al-Fitr, celebrated on the 1st of Shawwal, marks the end of Ramadan, a month of fasting for Muslims (Ningsih & Halimah, 2021:38). During this holiday, many people return to their hometowns, fostering a sense of shared happiness and excitement, while also strengthening bonds within the village community (Hanani & Nelmaya, 2022).

Georg Simmel, a classic sociological theorist, was a contemporary of Max Weber and played a significant role in establishing the German Sociological Association. Born on March 1, 1858, in Berlin, he was the youngest of seven siblings and hailed from a Jewish family of intermediate social status (Arisandi, 2015:72). Simmel was renowned for his extensive knowledge, ranging from logic to the history of philosophy, social psychology, ethics, and sociology (Wahyuni, 2017:146). Central to Simmel's sociological perspective is the notion of society as a dynamic and evolving entity. He argued that individuals are interconnected within society, with specific motivations and interests driving their interactions (Dewi, 2017:2). Given the diversity of human experiences, sociological activities must be differentiated to address various situations effectively. This involves identifying and selecting specific methods of analysis based on the unique forms of interaction observed in society (Arisandi, 2015:75).

The tradition of climbing areca palms is intricately linked to the lengthy history of the Republic of Indonesia's struggle for independence. The application of lubricant to the areca nut tree symbolizes the method by which obstacles are overcome in the pursuit of reaching the summit. Reaching the top signifies the attainment of independence, making teamwork essential for success in this race (Anggriawan, 2019:294). According to Widarto, this competition, known as "pinang climbing," depicts the Indonesian people's struggle for independence during the colonial period, with their ideals serving as motivation to achieve independence (Hamidah, et al, 2022: 59).

During the Dutch colonial era, predating Indonesia's independence, the game of areca nut climbing was already known among the Indonesian people, as Hutari pointed out. Setya further elaborates that during this period, the game was referred to as "de Klimmast," translating to climbing areca nut. The objective of areca climbing was to reach gifts hanging from the shoots of the areca nut tree, which had shed its fronds. The stem of the areca nut tree would be coated with oil to make it slippery, presenting

a challenge similar to climbing a slippery pole. Hutari also mentioned that the prizes provided by the Dutch colonial rulers included food ingredients, clothing, and other luxurious items coveted by the local population. The height of the areca nut tree climbed varied, ranging from 10 meters to 30 meters, depending on the agreement reached by the participating community members (Adisaputra, et al, 2021:10).

During Dutch celebrations, areca nut climbing was a customary activity. However, in the Dutch colonial era, this game was exclusively for the indigenous population. Indigenous individuals would participate by forming a "staircase" with each other's help to reach the top of the areca palm trees where gifts were hung. Meanwhile, the Dutch colonizers would merely observe and laugh as the indigenous people struggled to climb the trees to claim their prizes. Hutari also explains that in addition to being organized by the Dutch, this game was also hosted by wealthy indigenous individuals and colonial lackeys (Wijaya, et al, 2023: 97).

2. Method

This discussion utilizes the qualitative method, as defined by Denzin & Lincoln, which involves employing naturalistic approaches to elucidate phenomena observed and studied through various available sources. Erickson posits that qualitative methods delve into and elucidate activities, as well as the impact of these actions on people's lives. Krik and Miller further assert that qualitative methods are a conventional practice in the social sciences, emphasizing the importance of observing people and their interactions, both in terms of subject matter and terminology. This approach seeks to discern what is meaningful within different global contexts of human diversity, encompassing a wide array of actions, beliefs, and preferences, and focusing on the myriad factors that contribute to diverse interpretations and understandings (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018: 7-9).

Post-positivism serves as the foundation for qualitative research due to its effectiveness in studying natural phenomena. In this approach, researchers play a crucial role as the primary instruments, deliberately conducting sampling and collecting data from various sources. The data collection method involves triangulation, which combines different sources of information, along with inductive or qualitative data analysis. The outcomes of qualitative methods prioritize meaningful insights, as the primary objective is to comprehend events or phenomena and develop models that can generate new hypotheses. Researchers elucidate how meaning is derived from the environment and how it influences behavior (Fadli, 2021: 36).

The research was conducted in Jorong Batu Balantai, Canduang District, Agam Regency, utilizing the local wisdom of Panjek Pinang. This qualitative study aims to explore and describe the historical background and underlying principles of Panjek Pinang's local wisdom from the perspective of social interaction theory and modern society, as articulated by Georg Simmel. Additionally, the research seeks to understand how and when the local wisdom of Panjek Pinang was implemented in Canduang District.

3. Results and Discussion

Areca nut climbing is a social phenomenon that exists within society, reflecting modern social theory's emphasis on public behavior. Areca nut climbing fosters social

connections among the public, as described by Georg Simmel's perspective on modern society. Simmel highlights the significance of culture in shaping individual experiences and social interactions. In the context of areca nut climbing races, the cultural importance of this practice is evident. It brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds and social classes. Cultural practices such as these festivals or races serve as mechanisms for social bonding and the reinforcement of social norms and values (Silfia, 2023).

Simmel argued that real social interaction between individuals is what forms society (Nafiana, 2020: 5). According to Simmel, society is shaped through interaction rather than just by groups themselves. The quantity of interacting individuals is crucial for engagement. Simmel further explained that genuine social interaction among individuals creates the public sphere. Simmel's primary focus is on social interaction rather than its content. His perspective is straightforward: there are events, actions, and interactions in the real world (Dewi, 2017: 2-3). For Simmel, the social world or civilization is shaped by events, deeds, interactions, actions, exchanges, and so forth. Various types of social interactions include interactions between individuals, interactions between individuals and groups, and interactions between groups (Arisandi, 2015:17).

In Simmel's theory, he categorizes social interaction into four concepts: exchange, conflict, cooperation, and hospitality. Effective communication plays a crucial role in these interactions. Without good communication, disharmony or incompatibility may arise. Communication involves the exchange of information between individuals, and all parties involved gain valuable insights from this exchange. Simmel considers exchange to be the most advanced and purest form of interaction (Nur'aini, 2023:16). Georg Simmel illustrates how social interactions within public or groups are not independent of the thoughts and intentions of the individuals who comprise them. The essence of social life encompasses the binding relationships that exist in various spheres, including business, religion, marriage, family life, education, entertainment, and defense (Rizaldy, 2021:40).

In Emile Durkheim's perspective on modern society, there exists a complex and concrete solidarity mechanism. Within this framework, new forms of social solidarity emerge, with individuals in society depending on each other and assuming different roles to achieve common objectives together (Hanani, 2023:188).

In the game of Areca climbing, social interaction is essential to foster a sense of unity and solidarity among participants. It requires teamwork, mutual support, and alternation to reach the peak and obtain prizes. Solidarity within the group is crucial during the competition, especially in climbing the areca nut (Hanani, 2018).

Areca climbing is a common competition among adults, often involving prizes for those who reach the top of the areca nut tree. Organizers frequently award cash prizes to the first group to reach the peak. However, climbing an areca palm tree, which can be 8 to 10 meters high, is not as easy as it may seem because the tree's trunk is coated with oil, making it very slippery (Somantri & Juhrodin, 2022: 6).

Areca climbing is one of the activities carried out to commemorate Independence Day. It's not just about having fun and providing entertainment; areca climbing also holds deep philosophical significance. It teaches us to strive for independence. While areca climbing may not always be viewed positively and has faced controversies in the

past, the public's enthusiasm for and interest in watching areca climbing events remain high.

Climbing competitions in Indonesia have been ingrained in Dutch colonial culture since colonial times, often serving as entertainment for events such as weddings and childbirth. The act of climbing the areca nut palm has become a cultural tradition in Canduang. Culture, as a learning process, is shaped by assumptions and inherited practices passed down through generations. It encompasses traditions that instill trust and set general norms, which have been inherited over centuries with the objective of fostering appropriate ways of living in harmony with the environment. Communities are organized around shared goals, beliefs, and values, which can be measured by their influence on motivation (Sumarto, 2019:147).

Areca climbing takes place in Jorong Batu Balantai, typically occurring on the third day of Eid and organized by a committee of teenagers. Prior to the youth event, there is a collaborative effort among the community. In rural societies, such collaborative endeavors are integral to daily life. This shared labor has been a cultural tradition passed down through generations, akin to the practices of our ancestors. Indonesian society, particularly in rural regions, is marked by this spirit of communal support, known as "mutual assistance," which involves aiding one another in various social activities (Widaty, 2020:175). During these collaborative efforts, teenagers divide tasks such as fundraising, collecting and peeling areca nuts, and procuring necessary equipment. The committee members exhibit enthusiasm from the inception to the conclusion of the event.

In terms of mental education, games provide ample opportunity to practice what is known as adversity quotient (AQ), which is the ability to persevere through challenges in pursuit of success with the motto: turning challenges into opportunities. In any competition, there can only be one winning group, leaving other groups fatigued and defeated. This mentality differs from that of mountain climbers who aim to conquer lofty peaks rather than short areca palm trees (Hidayat, 2006:4). In areca palm climbing competitions, conflicts often arise among supporters, as each backs their respective teams with different objectives regarding the ultimate victor. The Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) defines conflict as a dispute or confrontation, whether in the form of ideological clashes or physical altercations between opposing groups. According to Simmel, conflict is a common occurrence, persisting and recurring without ever being completely resolved or coming to a definitive end. Whether in the realm of politics or social interactions, human life is fraught with conflict, stemming from inherent differences, competition, and sometimes, intentional discord (Maghfiroh & Zawwi, 2012: 174). George Simmel suggests that while conflict has the potential to weaken both social and individual unity, it is not always detrimental. In fact, conflict can serve as a catalyst for unity if it is short-lived and leads to resolution (Faruk, 2015: 36).

Conventional or traditional games have the capacity to nurture positive character traits and attitudes such as tolerance and empathy among players, while also enhancing their emotional intelligence in interactions with teammates. These games are instrumental in developing social interaction skills and fostering friendly, cooperative, competitive, and disciplined behavior. The significance of perseverance in games becomes evident through the dedication, skill, and thoroughness players demonstrate (Rianto & Yuliananingsih, 2021: 127). Areca nut climbing competitions

serve as a prime example, illustrating that success cannot be achieved alone but requires teamwork and a commitment to group unity. In these competitions, the value of hard work is underscored through the diligent application of effort and skill. Participants' lively and engaging actions captivate the attention of residents and passing motorists, prompting them to stop and watch.

Georg Simmel identifies several forms of conflict, including conflicts based on fundamental principles, competition between adversaries, personal and intimate relationships, as well as group conflicts. Social conflict and methods of managing it also constitute a form of conflict. Examples of social conflict include competition between adversaries, disputes over laws, interpersonal conflicts, and conflicts related to kinship ties. Resolving the root causes of social conflicts through efforts to achieve peace and recognizing the victory of one party over the defeat of the other is considered the best approach to resolution (Sukmadipta & Wahyuningsih, 2012: 3).

In areca nut climbing competitions, social conflicts between teams often arise due to differences in interests and roles among the individuals involved in the activity. Conflict in areca nut climbing can also occur due to disparities in how individuals interact and communicate with each other. From Simmel's perspective, conflict is not inherently negative or detrimental to unity. In fact, conflict is viewed as a fundamental aspect of social connections that maintains the integrity of social bonds and enables enduring involvement over time.

4. Conclusion

The principles governing a society are often referred to as local wisdom, which typically manifests in the ingrained lifestyle of a community. These principles, specific to particular community groups, are often intertwined with the sustainability of local traditions and expertise. Areca climbing is a manifestation of such local wisdom and is commonly organized as a competition to commemorate Independence Day. However, in some areas, areca climbing competitions are also held to celebrate Eid al-Fitr. The tradition of areca climbing dates back to the Dutch colonial era in Indonesia, where it was often organized as part of special events such as weddings, births, and other celebrations. Areca climbing competitions are usually lively events, attracting participants of various ages who compete for interesting prizes.

Climbing areca nut can enhance social connections among people, as described in Georg Simmel's theory of modern society. According to Simmel, genuine social interaction occurs among individuals forming a public. Social interactions can be categorized into three types: interactions between individuals, interactions between individuals and groups, and interactions between groups. In addition to fostering social connections among the public, areca nut climbing competitions can also lead to conflicts. These conflicts may arise between supporters or between competing teams vying for victory in the race.

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