

Social and cultural relations are inherent in the life of the Semparu Community, Lombok

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Abstract

This study examines the social and cultural relations inherent in the lives of the Semparu community in Central Lombok. The Semparu community is known for its strong kinship ties, traditions of mutual cooperation, and cultural practices that form the basis of social cohesion. This study aims to understand how local values function in maintaining solidarity, collective identity, and cultural sustainability amidst the currents of modernization. The method used is a qualitative approach with ethnographic types through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, and its validity was tested through triangulation of sources and methods. The research findings show that social relations within the Semparu community are built on trust, reciprocity, and solidarity, manifested in collective practices such as *game* (celebrations), community service, and mutual assistance among the community members. This inherent culture is evident in the traditional rituals and life cycle traditions maintained by traditional leaders, religious figures, and village elders as agents of value transmission. However, modernization and globalization present challenges, including shifts in cultural meaning, ambivalence among the younger generation, and the risk of weakening traditional regeneration. Nevertheless, the Semparu community demonstrates *cultural resilience* by adapting without losing its essence. This research concludes that the inherent social and cultural relations in Semparu are still maintained as social capital and collective identity, despite facing the pressures of modernization. Its sustainability depends on community-based preservation strategies involving community leaders, the younger generation, and cultural education.

Keywords: Social relations, inherent culture, mutual cooperation, modernization, Semparu society

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

The Semparu community in Lombok is one of the local communities with a rich culture and traditions that are still preserved today. In their daily lives, people live not only as individuals but also as part of a close and interconnected social network (Wardyaningrum, 2013). The social relations formed in their lives are based on the values of family, mutual cooperation, and solidarity, which are reflected in various cultural practices (Muchlis et al., 2023). This shows that culture is not only present as a symbol but is also strongly embedded in regulating the order of community life.

The Semparu community's culture is evident in its kinship system, traditional rituals, daily interaction patterns, and the way the community resolves conflict resolution. These values serve as guidelines for community life and function as a social mechanism to maintain harmony, collective identity, and community sustainability (Putri et al., 2025). Thus, social and cultural relations complement and strengthen each other in shaping the Semparu community's collective personality.

Amidst the tides of modernization and globalization, local cultures often shift due to the influx of new values that do not always align with local traditions. However, the Semparu community demonstrates cultural resilience by maintaining traditional practices while adapting to the changing times. This phenomenon is interesting to study because it demonstrates how a community can maintain its inherent cultural identity while continuing to interact with broader social dynamics.

The study of social and cultural relations inherent in the life of the Semparu community is important to understand how local values function in maintaining social integration, as well as how culture can play a role in supporting collective life amidst change (Asis, 2018). This study also contributes to the anthropological understanding of how local communities maintain traditions, build solidarity, and negotiate their identities amidst the flow of modernity.

Ahmad (2015) examined the kinship system of the Sasak people in Lombok, emphasizing the role of the extended family in marriage and inheritance. This study focused more on genealogical aspects and did not address the dimensions of everyday social relations within the community itself. Sutrisno (2017) examined the Bau Nyale traditional ritual in South Lombok as a form of local wisdom. This study highlighted cultural symbolism but did not explain how the ritual shapes the community's social networks. Rahayu (2019) examined sociocultural changes in Lombok's society in response to tourism. The results indicate a shift in traditional values but do not detail how the inherent culture persists at the rural community level. Hidayat (2021) highlights mutual cooperation as a form of social solidarity in rural Central Lombok. This study emphasized economic aspects and village development but did not examine their relationship with cultural identity. However, few studies have examined the relationship between social relations and inherent culture in the daily lives of certain communities, particularly the Semparu community in Central Lombok. This community has unique characteristics in maintaining family values, solidarity, and local cultural practices that continue to live amidst the currents of modernization.

This research aims to fill this gap by emphasizing the anthropological analysis of how social and cultural relations are mutually shaped, maintained, and interpreted by the Semparu community in Lombok.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with an ethnographic type (Sari et al., 2023), because the focus of the study is to understand the social and cultural relations inherent in the Semparu community in depth through the direct involvement of researchers in the field. This approach was chosen so that researchers could capture the meaning, values, and cultural practices as understood by community members. According to Spradley (2007), ethnography allows researchers to study the socio-cultural life of a community by directly observing the daily practices, symbols, and interaction patterns that occur in the community.

The research was conducted in Semparu Village, Kopang District, Central Lombok Regency, and West Nusa Tenggara. This location was chosen because of the strong local cultural practices and social ties of the community that became the focus of this research study. Informants were determined using a

purposive sampling technique, namely, selection based on certain criteria that are considered capable of providing relevant information (Sugiyono, 2019). Key informants included traditional and religious leaders, village officials, residents who are active in cultural and social activities, and the younger generation as cultural successors. The number of informants was not determined with certainty but rather followed the principle until data saturation was achieved (Creswell, 2018).

Participatory observation data collection techniques involve researchers directly engaging in community activities, such as mutual cooperation, traditional rituals, and daily social interactions. Spradley (1980) emphasized the importance of participant observation in ethnography for understanding the cultural meanings inherent in a community. It was conducted face-to-face with key informants to explore the views, experiences, and cultural meanings inherent in their lives. According to Moleong (2020), in-depth interviews allow researchers to understand the world of informants from their perspective. Notes, photographs, village archives, and recordings of cultural activities complemented the field data.

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes data reduction (filtering important information), data presentation (creating narratives, tables, or charts), drawing conclusions, and verification (connecting findings to theory). Data validity was checked using the triangulation technique of sources and methods (Denzin, 1978), by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation from various informants. In addition, the researchers conducted member checks, confirming the results of interpretations with informants to ensure they were in accordance with the reality they understood.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This shows that the Semparu community still strongly adheres to the principles of kinship and mutual cooperation (Zul Azhari, 2025). Social relations are built through collective activities such as *gawe* (celebrations), community service, and helping each other in times of urgent need. The values of mutual trust and solidarity are the foundation of social relations in this village. Several informants emphasized that in community life, “*lek nu ada gawe, side sedaye jao bantu*” (if there is an event, everyone comes to help) (Daulay et al., 2024). This shows that social ties are not just symbols but are realized in real practices that strengthen social cohesion.

Social relations based on mutual cooperation are strong and constitute a collective identity. Culture, education, and social aspects are embedded. Community leaders act as guardians of tradition but face the challenge of regeneration. Modernization and globalization influence the mindset of the younger generation; therefore, strategies are needed to maintain the relevance of tradition (Darmawan & Radiansyah, 2023).

These findings reinforce Durkheim's (1912) view that religion and rituals serve as a means of maintaining social solidarity. Tradition is not only a cultural heritage but also an instrument that integrates society through moral values, spirituality and togetherness. This aligns with the concept of culture as a social mechanism (Geertz, 1973), in which symbols and rituals guide daily actions.

The mutual cooperation practices of the Semparu community also demonstrate Putnam's (2000) theory of social capital, which states that trust, norms, and social networks can strengthen community cohesion and collective action. These values serve as the social capital inherent in the Semparu community. However, the influx of modernization has shown signs of a cultural shift, as described by Inglehart and Welzel (2005), in which society moves from traditional values to modern ones. The younger generation exhibits ambivalent attitudes: some are proud of the tradition, while others are starting to distance themselves from it. This indicates a negotiation of cultural identity amid the currents of globalization.

Thus, the Semparu community's social and cultural ties remain strong, yet they face challenges of regeneration and social change. Going forward, a community-based cultural preservation strategy involving the younger generation is needed to ensure that traditions remain relevant without losing their original meaning.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Social Relations Based on Mutual Cooperation

The results of this study show that the Semparu community still upholds the values of kinship and mutual cooperation. Activities such as *gawe* (celebrations), community service, and helping each other in emergencies are real forms of social relations that strengthen community cohesion (Widiyanti, 2024). The value of mutual trust is the basis of interaction, where the community believes that each individual will receive support when needed.

These findings align with Hidayat's (2021) research on mutual cooperation in Central Lombok, but differ because in Semparu, this practice functions not only in the context of economic development but also as a social mechanism that strengthens the collective identity. Thus, social relations in Semparu demonstrate that mutual cooperation is not merely a practical activity but also a symbol of inherent, cultural solidarity. The research findings indicate that the Semparu community still strongly upholds the values of kinship and mutual cooperation in their daily life. Mutual cooperation is evident in various activities, such as *gawe* (celebrations), community service cleaning the environment, building houses, and helping families affected by disasters. The community's expression, "*lek nu ada gawe, side sedaye jao bantu*" (if there is an event, everyone comes to help), is evidence that social solidarity is not merely symbolic but is manifested in practice. The values of mutual trust, reciprocity, and togetherness form the basis of social relations that strengthen community cohesion.

Hidayat (2021) examined the practice of mutual cooperation in Central Lombok and found that it serves as a socioeconomic mechanism in village development. This research aligns with the findings of Semparu, but differs in that Semparu's mutual cooperation focuses not only on development but also on maintaining emotional bonds and cultural identity.

In his classic study of Javanese society, Geertz (1961) explained that mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is a form of moral economy that strengthens village solidarity. This is relevant to the situation in Semparu, where mutual cooperation plays a role not merely as a cooperative practice but also as a value system inherent in community life. Sutrisno (2017), who studied Bau Nyale in South Lombok, emphasized that cultural rituals build community social solidarity. Although his focus was on rituals, this finding supports the research in Semparu that found that togetherness in collective activities strengthens social networks.

In his theory of *social capital*, Putnam (2000) explains that participation in collective activities strengthens social trust and community cohesion. This is evident in Semparu, where mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) is a tangible manifestation of social capital that strengthens the bonds between residents. While previous research has emphasized mutual cooperation in an economic context (Hidayat, 2021) or cultural rituals (Sutrisno, 2017), research in Semparu shows that mutual cooperation functions more broadly as an inherent cultural identity, connecting the community's social, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

3.2.2 Embedded Culture and the Role of Community Leaders

The local culture of the Semparu community is evident in traditions and other rituals related to the life cycle (Rismelati et al., 2018). This tradition functions as a spiritual medium, moral education, and a means of strengthening social solidarity. Traditional leaders, religious leaders, and village elders play important roles in maintaining the continuity of traditions. They are not only ritual leaders but also cultural transmission agents who channel ancestral values to the younger generation (Setiawan & Handayani, 2020). However, there are challenges to cultural regeneration. Some of the younger generation do not understand the meaning of *Kidung Parasnabi* due to the dominance of formal education, technology, and social media. This demonstrates the tension between traditional values and modernity. Compared to Sutrisno's (2017) study on Bau Nyale, which emphasizes ritual symbolism, shows the functional dimension of culture as a tool for everyday social cohesion.

In Semparu Village, a deeply embedded culture is manifested through traditions and traditional rituals that accompany the community's life cycle, from birth and marriage to death. These traditions serve not only as spiritual media but also as a means of moral education, the transfer of historical values, and the strengthening of social solidarity. Community leaders, including traditional, religious, and village elders, play a crucial role in safeguarding traditions. They serve as ritual leaders who direct the course of traditional ceremonies, social mediators who mediate conflicts within the community, and agents of cultural transmission, conveying local values and wisdom to younger generations. However, this role faces several significant challenges. Some young people are more influenced by formal education, digital technology, and modern lifestyles, resulting in a diminished understanding of tradition. This poses a risk of disrupting cultural transmission if not addressed promptly.

In his research on the Bau Nyale ritual in South Lombok, [Sutrisno \(2017\)](#) found that traditional leaders play a central role in maintaining the ritual's legitimacy. This is in line with the findings of Semparu, where community leaders are the main actors ensuring the continuity of tradition. [Rahayu \(2019\)](#) examined socio-cultural changes in Lombok society due to tourism. He found that the role of local leaders is crucial in negotiating traditional values with modern needs. This finding is relevant to Semparu, where traditional leaders must play a dual role: preserving tradition while adapting it to modern social dynamics of the village. [Geertz \(1960\)](#), in his classic study of Javanese religion, emphasized the role of religious leaders and elders in maintaining cultural practices. This parallels the conditions in Semparu, where community leaders function not only in spiritual aspects but also in maintaining social harmony among the residents. [Durkheim \(1912\)](#) in his theory of collective conscience, stated that community leaders strengthen collective consciousness through rituals and symbols. This is evident in Semparu, where traditional leaders ensure that tradition remains a social glue, despite the pressures of modernization.

(Sutrisno, Rahayu, Geertz) emphasized the role of figures in rituals or responses to change. Research in Semparu shows that community figures have a more comprehensive role as ritual leaders, social mediators, and agents of cultural transmission. This is what keeps the inherent culture alive amidst the new generation facing the currents of modernization.

3.2.3 Dynamics of Modernization and the Challenges of Cultural Sustainability

Modernization has brought significant changes to the Semparu community. Some rituals have been shortened or modified to suit the demands of modern life ([Aslan & Pugu, 2025](#)). However, the community still strives to maintain its cultural core so that it is not lost. The younger generation shows an ambivalent attitude: some are proud of the tradition, while others consider it less relevant to today's lifestyle.

This phenomenon illustrates the concept of cultural resilience, namely, the ability of a community to maintain its cultural identity amidst the pressures of global change. This aligns with [Rahayu's \(2019\)](#) findings on Lombok communities facing tourism, but differs in that in Semparu, the focus is not on tourism, but rather on negotiating local values with modernization. Thus, cultural sustainability in Semparu depends heavily on adaptation strategies involving community leaders, the younger generation, and support for cultural education.

Modernization has significantly impacted the lives of the people of Semparu Village. Some traditions have begun to undergo adjustments in terms of time and form of implementation. For example, traditional rituals that usually last long have now been shortened to avoid disrupting the community's economic activities. However, the core of the ritual is still maintained as a symbol of cultural identity in the modern era. The younger generation shows an ambivalent attitude towards tradition. Some feel proud and consider tradition a valuable heritage, but others consider the practice less relevant to a modern lifestyle ([Sari, D. \(2023\)](#)). This condition reflects the tension between traditional cultural values and the demands of modernity. Without a specific strategy, the risk of cultural discontinuity or interruption of cultural transmission between generations increases.

[Rahayu \(2019\)](#) examined the cultural changes in Lombok society due to tourism. She found that the influx of modernization and global interaction has given rise to a shift in traditional values. This is similar to the situation in Semparu, where globalization through technology and modern education has

changed the younger generation's perspective on tradition. Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), in their concept of invented tradition, explain that communities often modify or "reinvent" traditions to remain relevant in the modern era. This phenomenon is evident in Semparu, where rituals are shortened in duration without losing their symbolic essence. Sutrisno's (2017) study of Bau Nyale shows that cultural rituals can be an arena for negotiating between tradition and modernity. Similarly, in Semparu, the communities adapt to maintain their traditions without burdening their daily lives. Duranti (1997) emphasized the importance of *cultural resilience* in facing change. In Semparu, although modernization has influenced the mindset of the younger generation, communities still strive to maintain cultural continuity through traditional figures and informal family education.

Value shifts (Rahayu, 2019) or ritual modifications (Sutrisno, 2017), therefore, research in Semparu shows that modernization not only changes the form of tradition but also tests the sustainability of inherent culture as a collective identity. The greatest challenge lies not only in changing ritual practices but also in regenerating cultural values among younger generations.

The culture in Semparu exhibits a unique dynamic: it survives through modifications in form but faces serious challenges in transmitting values between generations. Modernization, rather than erasing tradition, forces communities to renegotiate their cultural identities to remain relevant in the global era.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the social and cultural relations inherent in the lives of the Semparu people remain strong despite the challenges of modernization. Kinship, mutual cooperation, and solidarity remain the primary foundations for maintaining social cohesion. Collective practices such as *gawe* (celebrations), community service, and mutual assistance demonstrate that trust and reciprocity are crucial for community sustainability.

Local culture, manifested through traditions and rituals, serves as a spiritual symbol and a means of moral education, value transfer, and strengthening of collective identity. Traditional leaders, religious figures, and village elders play crucial roles as ritual leaders, social mediators, and agents of cultural transmission. However, this role faces the challenge of regeneration, particularly as younger generations are increasingly influenced by globalization, formal education, and digital technology. Modernization has ambivalent impacts: on the one hand, it encourages adaptations of traditions to make them more relevant, such as shortening the duration of rituals; on the other, it risks weakening the understanding of cultural meaning. This phenomenon demonstrates the negotiation of identity and cultural resilience, namely, the ability of communities to maintain the core of traditions while adapting to changing times.

Thus, the sustainability of Semparu culture depends heavily on collective efforts involving community leaders, the younger generation, and cultural education support. Adaptive, community-based preservation strategies need to be continuously developed so that traditions survive not only as symbolic heritage but also as vibrant social practices that strengthen community identity and solidarity in the era of globalization.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was not required for this study

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

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Notes on Contributors

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