

## THE “NGOPI” TRADITION IN THE FRAMING OF ISLAMIC SOCIETY IN KARANG BARU SUB-DISTRICT, ACEH TAMIANG DISTRICT

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### Abstract

The tradition of coffee gatherings has become a deeply rooted social phenomenon in the lives of the people of Karang Baru District, Aceh Tamiang Regency. This study aims to analyze how the coffee tradition shapes the identity of a moderate and inclusive Islamic society. The approach used combines sociology to understand the social dynamics formed through community interactions, and Sufism to explore the spiritual values reflected in this practice. The results show that the coffee tradition is not merely a space for social interaction, but also a means of internalizing Islamic values such as tolerance, compassion, and brotherhood. Through this practice, the community implicitly applies Sufi teachings such as humility (*tawadhu'*), sincerity (*ikhlas*), and Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*) in daily life. Thus, the coffee tradition serves as a medium for fostering a harmonious Islamic character within the local socio-cultural context.

**Keywords:** Coffee Tradition, Sociology, Sufism, Islamic Society, Social Identity

### INTRODUCTION

Humans are essentially social creatures who cannot live individually, but always need the existence and role of others in their lives. Living together and interacting with each other has become human nature, thus forming a complex pattern of social relations. In this context, social communication plays an important role as a fundamental element in establishing and maintaining social relations between individuals. Social communication is understood as a process of information exchange aimed at creating integration and harmony in society. For this communication to be effective, there needs to be an understanding and alignment of perspectives between the communicator and the communicant regarding the topic or issue being discussed (Djami, 2020).

One form of social communication that has been known for a long time is the activity of drinking coffee collectively. In the past, farmers often gathered in coffee shops before starting farming activities in the fields. In this atmosphere, they discuss agricultural strategies, share experiences, and build togetherness. Thus, coffee shops do not only function as a place for beverage consumption, but also become a social space that facilitates dialogue, interaction, and

strengthening of relationships between community groups, even within the diversity of existing social structures (Neni Dwi Lestari, 2023). When it comes to Islamic culture, coffee has a long and interesting history, involving various dimensions such as religion, health, and meaningful social traditions. The introduction of coffee in the Islamic world began around the 15th century by tribes in Ethiopia. From there, it spread to the Yemen region, where it acquired a significant role in the spiritual lives of Sufis. Sufis consumed coffee to help them stay awake during their nightly devotions, making it a symbol of dedication and spiritual concentration in their religious practices (Syam & Nugroho, 2023).

Historically, coffee is known as a drink that can improve concentration and maintain alertness, especially among Sufis who use it to stay awake while performing dhikr and night worship. In those days, some scholars even considered coffee as a drink that could strengthen one's spiritual abilities. However, there was a debate among scholars regarding the legal status of coffee consumption in Islam. Some scholars forbade coffee due to its stimulant effects, while others viewed it as permissible, provided it is not overused or misused. Over time, the tradition of coffee has evolved and now has a broader meaning in popular culture. It is not only seen as a consumptive habit, but is also considered part of a productive or spiritual activity (Amalia, 2024).

Coffee-related social traditions have deep roots in the culture of the Islamic world. In the Middle East and North Africa, coffee gatherings have long been an important means of gathering and interaction. In the past, these gatherings were often used as a space to discuss various religious and social issues, and to strengthen the bonds between community members. This tradition continues today, albeit in a more modern form. For example, in countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, coffee is not only part of the daily routine, but also plays an important role in major ceremonies such as weddings or family gatherings. In the majlis tradition, coffee is often accompanied by deep discussions about life, religion and politics, making it more than just a drink, but a symbol of togetherness and cultural identity (Alamsyah et al., 2024).

Over time, coffee has transcended its role as a support for religious activities and now encompasses health dimensions as well as social traditions in various Muslim communities. The habit of drinking coffee has become a way to strengthen social ties and share stories. From homes to coffee shops, the drink has become an integral part of daily life. As such, coffee not only serves as a stimulant drink, but is also an integral part of the cultural and spiritual heritage of Muslims. Although coffee is not native to Indonesia, it is now considered part of the local identity in many communities (Chofiyana et al., 2024).

The coffee tradition is believed to have first emerged in Indonesia, where a unique and meaningful coffee drinking culture was born. One of the regions with a strong coffee tradition is Aceh, which is also known as a major coffee producer. Therefore, it's no surprise that coffee culture is deeply embedded in the lives of Acehnese people. One of Aceh's most famous coffee traditions is Sanger, a mixture of filter coffee, condensed milk and sugar that is whipped into a frothy mass. This tradition is more than just a way of enjoying coffee; it also reflects the social warmth that exists among the people of Aceh (Syam & Nugroho, 2023).

Tradition is an important part of people's social life, because through tradition, the identity, values and culture of a community can be maintained and passed on from generation to generation (Safitri, 2023). One tradition that is deeply rooted in the lives of the people of

Aceh, including in Karang Baru Sub-district, Aceh Tamiang District, is the tradition of drinking coffee together. Although coffee drinking is generally known as a leisurely activity to unwind, there are deeper social and cultural meanings behind this habit. The coffee tradition in Karang Baru is not just a meeting place, but also an important medium of social interaction, as well as a means to strengthen Islamic values in daily life.

In addition to being a place to exchange information, the coffee tradition in Karang Baru also contains a strong *da'wah* dimension. Through this coffee habit, Islamic values that teach *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, tolerance, mutual respect, and maintaining *adab* in speaking, can be transmitted in a way that is light and easily accepted. Religious leaders who often participate in coffee activities not only enjoy coffee, but also slip religious messages and advice in the ongoing chat. The process of *da'wah*, which is carried out in a relaxed and non-patronizing manner, turns out to be more effective and can be well received by the local community. This shows how the coffee tradition can be a means to strengthen the Islamic character of the community without ignoring local culture.

## **IMPLEMENTATION METHOD**

This research is a field research with a qualitative descriptive method to explore in depth how the coffee tradition is carried out by the community in Karang Baru Subdistrict and how Islamic values are internalized in these activities as part of the framing of Islamic community identity that lives and develops in their social environment.

The approaches used in this research are the Sociological Approach and the Sufistic Approach. The Sociological approach is used to understand how the coffee tradition develops in the community of Karang Baru Subdistrict and how social interactions that occur in coffee activities contribute to shaping the pattern of Islamic social life. Meanwhile, the Sufism approach is used to look at the spiritual dimensions contained in the coffee tradition, such as the values of togetherness, inner calm, and the delivery of religious advice in a wisdom manner that reflects Sufism morals in everyday life. This approach also aims to highlight how simple practices such as coffee can be part of the process of purifying the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*) and building Islamic character in the social space of society.

The data sources in this research are divided into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from observations and interviews with the community and figures involved in the practice of the coffee tradition in Karang Baru Subdistrict. Informants in this study are individuals who have direct experience and understanding of coffee activities and the Islamic values reflected in them (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Meanwhile, secondary data is data collected from various relevant literature and documents, such as books, scientific journals, articles, and previous research reports related to community social traditions, Islamic values, as well as sociological and Sufism approaches in local cultural studies (Daruhadi & Pia Sopiati, 2024).

The data collection techniques used in this research include observation, interviews, and documentation. In this research, observation is used to directly observe coffee activities that take place in various coffee shops in Karang Baru District to find out how social interactions and Islamic values are reflected in these activities. In this research, the interviews used were in-

depth interviews to obtain information directly from informants such as coffee shop owners, religious leaders, community leaders, and residents who are active in the coffee tradition. In this study, documentation was conducted to collect supporting data of a written nature such as books, scientific articles, research reports, photos of activities, and other relevant documents, which can enrich the analysis and support the findings from the results of observations and interviews.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Coffee Tradition in the Daily Life of Karang Baru Community**

The habit of drinking coffee or ngopi has become one of the characteristics of Indonesian society, because this drink is believed to increase enthusiasm in starting work activities. Currently, the coffee industry in Indonesia continues to grow rapidly. This development also brings changes in the culture and patterns of coffee consumption among the community, making coffee drinking an increasingly widespread tradition. This also opens up significant business opportunities for business people in Indonesia to open coffee shops. Coffee drinking culture is closely related to communication culture, because when enjoying a cup of coffee, the communication process becomes more fluid. In addition, coffee is also a time to do various other activities, such as smoking, negotiating, keeping in touch, and so on (Mukhsinuddin et al., 2024).

It is said that the world's first coffee tradition emerged in Indonesia, which is the birthplace of a unique and rich coffee drinking culture. One of the regions that has a strong coffee tradition is Aceh. Aceh is known as a coffee producer, so it is not surprising that the culture of drinking coffee is very embedded in its society. One of the most famous coffee traditions in Aceh is Sanger, which is a mixture of filter coffee, condensed milk and sugar that is whipped until frothy. This tradition is not just a way to enjoy coffee, but also reflects the social warmth that exists between residents (Kamil, 2019).

Since long ago, the existence of coffee shops or kedai kupa has been an important part of the social life of the people of Aceh. Kedai kupa is not only known as a place to enjoy drinks, but also as a space for social interaction and an effective communication medium between residents. In this place, people greet each other, exchange stories, and strengthen the relationship that has become part of the collective culture of the Acehnese people.

In Karang Baru Subdistrict, the tradition of coffee has been deeply rooted and has become a daily routine that involves almost all elements of society. From young people, to parents, to community and religious leaders, all make coffee a moment to relax and bond together. This activity is generally carried out in the morning before the main activity, as well as in the afternoon and evening as a form of relaxation and refreshment after work.

In the author's observations in the field, almost every corner of the village and kelurahan in Karang Baru has a coffee shop, both small-scale and modernly managed. These coffee shops are gathering places that are open to anyone regardless of background. Certain times, such as the morning after Fajr prayer, the afternoon during work breaks, and the evening after Isha prayer, are the peak moments of community presence at coffee shops. In an intimate and relaxed atmosphere, they talk about a variety of topics, ranging from household matters, agriculture,

local politics, to religious issues.

Based on an interview with the village Imam, Mr. Kurniawansyah (41 years old), *"Ngopi is not just about coffee, but it has become part of our lives. This is where we exchange news, stay in touch, discuss village issues, and even talk about religion. Sometimes from these casual chats come ideas for mutual progress."*

This statement confirms that the practice of coffee has a functional value in people's lives, especially as an informal space that strengthens social solidarity and tightens communication networks between residents. This tradition has also evolved, adjusting to the dynamics of the times. Today, some coffee shops provide Wi-Fi access, television, and even semi-formal discussion facilities for village youth. However, the essence of the coffee tradition remains the same, namely as a medium for building togetherness and expressing aspirations openly. From coffee shops, the younger generation learns about customs, listens to stories of the past, and absorbs local wisdom values that are passed down orally from generation to generation.

### **Internalization of Islamic Values in the Ngopi Tradition**

The coffee tradition that develops in Karang Baru Subdistrict does not only function as an ordinary social activity, but also a means to instill and internalize Islamic values in people's daily lives. Internalization is the process of making certain values part of one's beliefs and behavior (Wardani & Hestingtyas, 2021). In this context, Islamic values such as ukhuwah (brotherhood), deliberation (discussion), honesty, courtesy, and concern for others seem to live and develop in the coffee tradition carried out by the community.

Islam teaches various aspects of teachings, which include worship, morals or behavior, rules in social life, as well as the fundamental aspect of aqidah. Aqidah is related to human belief and monotheism to Allah SWT which must be obeyed by every individual or group in everyday life with full appreciation and sincerity. Thus, Islam is the basis for a comprehensive view of life for every Muslim, which is reflected in traditions and social interactions such as coffee together (Arifinsyah et al., 2020).

Based on the results of an interview conducted with one of the religious leaders in the Aceh Tamiang Regency area, Mr. Zainul Abidin (47 years old), he stated that *"I see that the habit of gathering and discussing in coffee shops is not something that is against Islam, as long as the conversation is positive and useful. Coffee shops can be a space for friendship, a place to exchange ideas, and even a simple means of da'wah. What is important is that the content of the conversation does not contain gossip, slander, or useless things. If directed properly, this can strengthen ukhuwah and Islamic values in the community."* This statement shows that the tradition of coffee can be an effective means of building Islamic awareness and values in the community, as long as it is supported by the content and direction of positive discussions.

In the coffee tradition, the value of ukhuwah Islamiyah is very evident. People from all walks of life, young and old, farmers and employees, as well as community and religious leaders, gather in an egalitarian atmosphere. There are no social barriers that limit them, and this strengthens the sense of brotherhood as taught in Islam (QS. Al-Hujurat: 10).

﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

*“Indeed, believers are brothers, so reconcile your brothers and fear Allah that you may be blessed.”*

Coffee together becomes a medium to establish a more intimate and consistent relationship, even more effective because it takes place in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. In addition, the value of deliberation and constructive discussion also grows in this practice. People often talk about important matters surrounding their lives together, such as social conditions, religious activities, and local policy issues. Although discussions are conducted without formal procedures, the spirit to reach consensus and listen to each other is maintained. This reflects the principle of deliberation as mentioned in the Quran (QS. Ash-Syura: 38), which is the basis for building a just and participatory social order.

﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

*"also better and more lasting for) those who accept (obey) the call of God and perform the prayer, while their affairs (are decided) by deliberation among them. They spend part of the sustenance We bestow upon them."*

On the other hand, the practice of akhlakul karimah is also manifested in interactions at coffee shops. People in general maintain speech ethics, avoid harsh words, and show a tolerant attitude despite having different views. On several occasions, religious leaders or elders insert religious messages subtly through stories or experiences, without appearing patronizing. This indicates that cultural da'wah is taking place naturally in the social spaces of society, including coffee shops.

Sociologist Clifford Geertz in his cultural studies explains that community religious practices are not always present in institutional and formal forms, but can also be found in cultural activities that are deeply rooted in society (Riady, 2021). The tradition of coffee in Karang Baru is one form in which Islamic values live in local traditions and cultures that are widely accepted by the community.

### **The Relevance of Coffee Tradition in the Formation of Moderate and Inclusive Islamic Community Identity**

Coffee tradition has a very important role in the formation of Islamic community identity, especially in various Muslim communities in the world, including Indonesia. Coffee is not just a drink, but has become a social and spiritual symbol that strengthens Islamic values and togetherness in society. The history of coffee in the Islamic world is also closely related to religious practices, especially among Sufis. Coffee is used as a beverage that helps maintain alertness and concentration when performing night worship and dhikr. Thus, the coffee tradition is not only consumptive, but also has a spiritual dimension that strengthens religious practices and closeness to Allah. In many majlis zikir and religious gatherings, coffee is part of a deep spiritual and social experience (Pebriani et al., 2024) (Pebriani et al., 2024).

In Karang Baru Sub-district, the coffee tradition has developed not only as a social routine, but also as a means that has important relevance in shaping the character of a moderate and inclusive Islamic society. This activity is an open medium to strengthen the Islamic bond

of brotherhood, strengthen the values of tolerance, and foster mutual understanding in the midst of diversity. In the egalitarian atmosphere of coffee shops, social boundaries such as economic status, educational background, and affiliation with religious organizations are no longer dominant. All groups are free to join in conversations, share views, and discuss various social and religious issues without barriers.

Meetings in coffee shops often give birth to cross-generational discussions, cross-thought, even cross-methods, so that it becomes a strategic space in building a culture of dialogue, openness, and avoiding exclusive attitudes in understanding religious teachings. Thus, the coffee shop tradition contributes to realizing Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin which encourages the creation of social harmony and solidarity between people.

Furthermore, the coffee tradition can also be seen as a form of actualization of ukhuwah maintenance and social compensation. In coffee shops, various life issues can be discussed casually and openly. Everyone can join the conversation without formal procedures, simply by ordering a cup of coffee, they immediately become part of the community. This phenomenon reflects the maintenance of social values that are more inclusive and fluid, thus strengthening social solidarity in the community.

Aside from being a social vehicle, the coffee tradition also serves as a positive alternative in reducing deviant behavior, such as alcohol consumption. Many individuals who were previously accustomed to visiting places where alcohol is consumed, turn to coffee shops that offer a similar recreational atmosphere, such as music or entertainment facilities, but within a halal corridor. Thus, coffee shops become a safe space to socialize, relax, while keeping themselves away from activities that are forbidden in Islam.

The coffee tradition plays an important role in maintaining the morality and faith of the people. By replacing bad habits such as drinking alcohol or drug abuse with more positive activities, the coffee tradition becomes part of a cultural strategy in guarding and strengthening the moral integrity of society. Through coffee shops, people not only find a means of healthy entertainment, but also a space to maintain Islamic values in their daily lives.

The concept of moderate Islam (wasathiyah) echoed in various contemporary Islamic literature emphasizes the importance of balance between text and context, between tradition and progress, and between personal religiosity and social piety (Luthfi & Nursikin, 2023). The tradition of coffee, although not a formal act of worship, becomes a space for the expression of the values of Islamic moderatism itself. In coffee shops, people learn to criticize politely, respond to actual issues wisely, and build collective awareness without coercion. This reflects the teachings of Islam, which calls for wisdom and good approach (mau'izah hasanah), as mentioned in QS. An-Nahl: 125.

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ  
بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

*"Call (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching and debate them in a better way. Verily your Lord is the One who knows best who strays from His path and He knows best who is guided."*

In an interview with one of the youth leaders who is active in community activities as

well as the imam of the mosque, he mentioned that: *"Coffee shops are not just a place to hang out, but a place to learn about social life. We often discuss important matters, from local issues to religious matters. This is where we learn to respect other people's opinions, and that is important in living a peaceful religious life."*

This statement illustrates that the coffee tradition also contributes to forming a community identity that is Islamic but not exclusive, Islamic but not hostile to differences. The value of inclusiveness reflected in the openness of the discussion space, the involvement of many elements of society, and respect for differences of opinion are a clear reflection of the principles of ta'aruf (knowing each other) and tasamuh (tolerance) in Islam.

Thus, the ngopi tradition has a very strong relevance in strengthening the identity of a moderate Islamic society because it emphasizes balance and openness, and is inclusive because it does not limit Islamic expression to one particular style or group. This tradition, if maintained, can become a model of cultural diversity that is harmonious and adaptive in facing the challenges of the times, as well as an example of how local culture can be in line with the noble values of Islam.

## CONCLUSION

The coffee tradition in Karang Baru Sub-district is not just a habit of enjoying coffee, but has become an integral part of the community's social and cultural life. This activity functions as an interaction space that strengthens ukhuwah, strengthens social communication, and becomes a medium for internalizing Islamic values such as brotherhood, deliberation, honesty, and akhlakul karimah. In the practice of coffee, it is clear that people build social solidarity, share views in an egalitarian manner, and maintain religious values in a relaxed yet meaningful atmosphere. In addition, the coffee tradition also has an important relevance in shaping the identity of a moderate and inclusive Islamic society. Through informal spaces such as coffee shops, people learn to appreciate differences, dialogue wisely, and strengthen the values of tolerance and openness in line with the principles of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin. This tradition is also a positive alternative in diverting people from deviant behavior towards more constructive and moral social activities. Thus, the ngopi tradition in Karang Baru not only reflects local wisdom, but also becomes a real manifestation of Islamic values that live in daily cultural practices. If managed and directed properly, this tradition can become a model of strengthening Islamic culture that is harmonious, adaptive, and contributes to the formation of a religious, moderate, and inclusive society.



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