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Pesantren and the Preservation of Javanese Tradition: A Case Study of *Ngalap Berkah* in the *Sinjang* Celebration at Syekh Maulana Ishaq Pesantren, Situbondo

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Abstract

This study explores how Syekh Maulana Ishaq Islamic Boarding School in Pacarron, Situbondo, preserves the local Ngalap Berkah tradition during the biennial Sinjang celebration, addressing the longstanding historical disconnection between pesantren and Javanese local culture since the polarization following the Diponegoro War in the early 19th century. Employing a qualitative field research design with a cultural anthropological approach, this study utilizes participatory observation, structured in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis to gather empirical data from key informants directly involved in the celebration. The results reveal three core findings. First, the Sinjang celebration is deeply embedded with cultural elements and religious emotions, where participants collectively perceive spiritual blessings within the purification water of Sultan Abdurrahman's sacred garment. Second, the pesantren plays a pivotal role in maintaining Islamic orthodoxy by guiding the community to adhere to Islamic law throughout the tradition, effectively integrating religious values into local practices. Third, the pesantren's motivation for preservation stems from its commitment to Wali Songo's cultural da'wah legacy, the institutionalization of the Barokah concept, and the moral obligation to honor ancestral mandates. This research contributes to understanding how pesantren can successfully reconcile theological commitments with living cultural heritage.

Key Word:

*Ngalap Berkah;
Pesantren Cultural
Preservation;
Sinjang Tradition;
Acculturation*

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between Islamic educational institutions and local cultural traditions constitutes one of the most enduring and complex dynamics in the study of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago. Pesantren, as Indonesia's oldest indigenous Islamic educational institution, did not emerge in a cultural vacuum but developed within and alongside the deep social fabric of Javanese society. Scholars have noted that the institutional form of pesantren shares structural affinities with the pre-Islamic mandala

and ashrama, while the etymology of the term santri itself traces to the Sanskrit shashtri, denoting one who studies sacred texts (Van Bruinessen, 2020). This foundational entanglement between Islamic and local cultural heritage suggests that the encounter between the two was never a matter of simple displacement, but rather one of sustained negotiation, adaptation, and synthesis (Alfurqan, 2015; Sarwenda et al., 2024).

However, this integrative relationship underwent significant strain following the political and social polarization of the early nineteenth century. The conclusion of the Diponegoro War marked a decisive turning point, after which pesantren increasingly consolidated their institutional identity around legal-religious orthodoxy, with fiqh discourse becoming dominant and the bahtsul masa'il forum emerging as the primary epistemological instrument for addressing social problems (Rofiq Hamzah, 2021). This conservative consolidation progressively widened the distance between many pesantren and their historical engagement with local cultural practices. The abangan and santri communities, once bound by shared ritual and symbolic life, found themselves inhabiting increasingly divergent cultural worlds, as though compelled to claim separate identities and separate histories (Rofiq Hamzah, 2021).

Against this historical backdrop, contemporary scholarship has begun to document a meaningful counter-movement: a gradual re-harmonization between pesantren and local culture. Agus Sunyoto (2022) demonstrates that core pedagogical ethics of pesantren, such as the concept of gurubakti, are structurally analogous to pre-Islamic Javanese teachings preserved in the Silakrama, a value framework later echoed in al-Zarnuji's Ta'lim al-Muta'allim. Agung Irawan (2018) further documents the persistence of slametan and ngalap berkah practices in traditional pesantren, even as reformist currents continue to challenge their legitimacy on doctrinal grounds. Rofiq Hamzah (2021) identifies four distinct patterns of re-harmonization between pesantren and Javanese culture, spanning symbolic adoption of Javanese attire to the incorporation of manuscript studies and performing arts. Collectively, these works establish that pesantren, far from being monolithic in their conservatism, possess demonstrable capacity for cultural engagement and adaptive innovation (Kurniawan, 2023; Serambi et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature on pesantren and local culture, significant scholarly lacunae remain. Most existing studies focus on symbolic or curricular dimensions of cultural accommodation and have not sufficiently examined how pesantren actively construct and institutionalize specific communal ritual traditions as a deliberate strategy of cultural preservation. Furthermore, scholarship on ngalap berkah has primarily analyzed the practice as an interpersonal spiritual act directed toward living scholars, leaving substantially underexplored its manifestation in communal

ritual celebrations centered on sacred material heritage. The case of the Sinjang celebration at Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq, Pacarron, Situbondo, represents precisely this understudied dimension: a pesantren that assumes active custodianship of a biennial ritual centered on the sacred garment of Sultan Abdurrahman as a communal locus of barokah.

This study therefore examines the role of Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq in preserving the Ngalap Berkah tradition within the Sinjang celebration through a cultural anthropological framework. The process of acculturation, understood here as the meeting of two cultural streams without the erasure of either, produced an innovation capable of bridging the spiritual orientations of both santri and abangan communities. As a contribution to scholarship, this research extends the understanding of how Islamic institutions can function as active mediators of cultural heritage rather than passive repositories or antagonists of local tradition.

The objectives of this study are threefold: to analyze the practice of the Ngalap Berkah tradition within the Sinjang celebration at Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq; to examine the role of the pesantren in preserving this tradition; and to identify the motivations that underpin the pesantren's sustained commitment to its continuation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative field research design, a methodological choice grounded in the nature of the research questions themselves. Since this study aims to understand the meanings, practices, and social motivations embedded in the Ngalap Berkah tradition within the Sinjang celebration, a qualitative approach is epistemologically appropriate, as such phenomena cannot be adequately captured through numerical measurement or statistical inference (Moleong, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative inquiry enables the researcher to engage deeply with the lived experiences of participants, the symbolic dimensions of ritual practice, and the institutional logic that governs the pesantren's cultural stewardship, producing rich, contextually grounded understanding that quantitative instruments would fail to register.

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq, Pacarron Village, Situbondo, East Java. Data collection was carried out through three primary techniques: participatory observation, structured in-depth interviews, and documentary analysis. Participatory observation was conducted using a passive participation model, in which the researcher attended the full sequence of the Sinjang celebration as an observer without intervening in the ritual process. The observed sequence included the opening slametan ceremony, the retrieval of the sinjang garment from its storage, the

purification ritual, the drying and folding of the garment, and the closing slametan dedicated to the haul of Syekh Sultan Abdurrahman. This sustained observational engagement enabled the researcher to map the social structure of participation and identify key individuals for subsequent interview.

Interviews were conducted with three primary informants selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their direct and substantive roles in the Sinjang celebration. The informants were Ra. Bahrud and Hj. Luluk, both descendants of Kiai Lihah who bear custodial responsibility for the celebration, and Kiai Ach. Rofiq, the caretaker (*pengasuh*) of Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq. Structured interview guidelines were developed around three thematic domains corresponding to the research questions: the practice of the Ngalap Berkah tradition within the celebration, the role of the pesantren in its preservation, and the motivations driving the pesantren's commitment to its continuation. All interviews were conducted face-to-face at the research site and recorded with informants' consent for verbatim transcription.

Documentary analysis served as a complementary data source, drawing on existing written records related to the history of the tradition, including the local historical study by Imam Khudori (1985) titled *Sejarah Singkat Bujuk Pacarron*, as well as other relevant institutional and community documents. These documentary sources provided historical depth and contextual verification for the observational and interview data.

Data were analyzed using Spradley's ethnographic analysis model, which comprises four sequential stages. The first stage, domain analysis, involved identifying broad cultural categories emergent from the data that capture the general structure of the phenomenon under study. The second stage, taxonomic analysis, involved systematic re-examination of each domain to identify the constituent elements and internal structure that organize its components. The third stage, componential analysis, sought to identify the specific contrastive attributes that distinguish elements within each domain. The fourth and final stage, cultural theme analysis, involved identifying the overarching relationships between domains, synthesizing the data into coherent thematic conclusions that reflect the deeper cultural logic of the Sinjang celebration (Spradley, 1980; Syukur Kholil, 2006).

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation as the primary validity strategy. Data obtained through participatory observation were systematically cross-checked against interview accounts from multiple informants, and both were further verified against documentary evidence. This triangulation procedure ensured that findings were not artifacts of a single data collection modality and substantially strengthened the internal credibility of the research conclusions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). The research methodology

constitutes approximately 10% (for qualitative research) or a maximum of 15% (for quantitative research) of the entire article. The methodology section explains briefly, concisely, clearly, and comprehensively the design and implementation of the research. This section describes the research method used (qualitative or quantitative), the research approach, the subjects and procedures of the research, and the data collection and analysis instruments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Practice of Ngalap Berkah in the Sinjang Celebration

Observational findings reveal that the *Sinjang* celebration unfolds in a structured ceremonial sequence conducted biennially in the month of Dzulhijjah, located at the *dhalem kiai* of Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq, Pacarron village. The sequence opens with a *slametan* comprising the communal recitation of *tahlil* and Surah Yasin, proceeds to the retrieval of the *sinjang* garment from its storage in the *mushalla*, continues with the ritual purification in which the garment is washed in a specially prepared vessel, followed by drying and folding, and concludes with a closing *slametan* dedicated to the *haul* of Syekh Sultan Abdurrahman. The sacred objects present throughout the ceremony include the *sinjang* garment, a *tombak* (spear), and a *keris* (ceremonial dagger).

A strict ceremonial protocol governs every stage of the celebration. The *sinjang* garment must be carried in an elevated position at all times, and the folding must follow a prescribed order — right side first, then left — a procedural detail whose violation is believed to carry serious spiritual consequences. The washing water from the first vessel is particularly sought after by attendees, who travel from as far as Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Jember, Bali, and Madura to be present. Regarding custodial authority over the purification ritual, Hj. Luluk, a direct descendant of Kiai Lihah and one of the principal custodians of the celebration, stated:

“Tidak sembarang orang boleh ikut serta dalam penyucian sinjang, hanya keturunan Kiai Lihah yang memiliki hak guna penyucian sinjang.”

(Not just anyone may participate in the purification of the *sinjang* — only descendants of Kiai Lihah hold the right to conduct it.) (Hj. Luluk, *Interview*, 2024)

Community belief in the spiritual potency of the washing water is understood through the concept of *emosi keagamaan* (religious emotion), which drives participants to seek the *barokah* of Sultan Abdurrahman through physical contact with water that has touched his sacred garment. This belief is so deeply embedded that participants describe the experience as one that transcends rational explanation — a conviction passed down

through generations and sustained by communal memory. The following table summarizes the key empirical findings.

Table 1. Empirical Profile of the *Sinjang* Celebration

Aspect	Category	Empirical Finding
Location	Ritual site	<i>Dhalem kiai</i> , Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq, Pacarron
Time	Frequency	Every two years, month of Dzulhijjah
Sacred objects	Ceremonial instruments	<i>Sinjang</i> , <i>tombak</i> , <i>keris</i>
Custodial authority	Eligibility	Descendants of Kiai Lihah only (Hj. Luluk, 2024)
Ceremonial sequence	Ritual order	<i>Slametan</i> → retrieval → purification → drying → folding → <i>haul slametan</i>
Community reach	Geographic attendance	Local, Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Jember, Bali, Madura
Core belief	Spiritual object	Washing water as <i>wasilah barokah</i> of Sultan Abdurrahman

The Role of the Pesantren in Preserving the Tradition

Observation and interview data consistently indicate that Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq assumes a dual role in the *Sinjang* celebration: active ritual participation and doctrinal guardianship. The pesantren's representative delivers a formal *sambutan* upon completion of the garment-folding, explicitly affirming that all effects associated with the washing water occur solely by the will and power of Allah, with the garment serving only as a *wasilah*. This theological clarification is a deliberate institutional act, designed to ensure that community reverence for the *sinjang* does not cross into *syirik khafi* – the subtle attribution of independent power to objects other than Allah.

Beyond doctrinal guardianship, the pesantren actively integrates Islamic values into the ritual structure of the celebration itself. The *slametan* incorporating *tahlil*, Surah Yasin, *shalawat*, and communal *sedekah* – as well as the *haul* of Syekh Sultan Abdurrahman – represents a deliberate embedding of Islamic normativity within a pre-existing cultural form. Male and female participants are additionally separated into designated spatial areas as an institutional expression of Islamic social propriety, reflecting the pesantren's sustained effort to align the celebration with Islamic behavioral norms. Kiai Ach. Rofiq, the *pengasuh* of Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq, articulated this institutional position directly:

“Pesantren ini lahir di tengah masyarakat yang kental tradisinya. Tugas kami bukan menghapus tradisi itu, melainkan mengawal agar tradisi tersebut tetap berada di dalam koridor syariat Islam.”

(This pesantren was born within a community steeped in tradition. Our responsibility is not to eradicate that tradition but to ensure it remains within the boundaries of Islamic law.) (Kiai Ach. Rofiq, *Interview*, 2024)

The Motivations of the Pesantren

Interview data reveal that the pesantren's commitment to preserving the *Ngalap Berkah* tradition within the *Sinjang* celebration is not incidental but is sustained by three interrelated and deeply rooted motivations. The first is the obligation of custodianship derived from ancestral mandate. The *Sinjang* celebration predates the formal establishment of Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq, and the pesantren's founding occurred within a community already embedded in the tradition. A *wasiat* passed down through the lineage of Kiai Lihah assigns the responsibility of preserving the celebration to his descendants, many of whom are directly affiliated with the pesantren. This mandate requires their active participation in every ceremonial stage: retrieving the garment from storage, carrying it to the purification site, overseeing the washing, transporting the garment to the drying area, leading the folding ceremony, and presiding over the closing *slametan*.

The second motivation is fidelity to the pesantren's own living cultural tradition. Pesantren culture is guided by the principle of *al-muhafadhah 'ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akhdhu bi al-jadid al-aslah* — preserving what is good from the old while embracing what is better from the new. The *Sinjang* celebration embodies this principle: it preserves the *slametan* tradition inherited from the Wali Songo's cultural *da'wah* strategy while incorporating contemporary Islamic normative structures. For the pesantren, sustaining the celebration is therefore an act of institutional self-continuity, not merely cultural accommodation.

The third motivation is the pesantren's understanding of its role as a moral guardian standing at the frontline of community life against the erosive pressures of globalization. As cultural homogenization accelerates and younger generations increasingly orient themselves toward Western-derived value systems, the pesantren regards the *Sinjang* celebration as a living mechanism for intergenerational transmission of moral and cultural identity. Ra. Bahrud, senior advisory council member and descendant of Kiai Lihah, gave voice to this comprehensive motivation:

“Mau tidak mau dari awal datangnya Islam yang dibawa oleh para Wali Songo untuk menyebarkan agama Islam melalui jalur budaya, budaya setempat (lokal) sebagai wadah yang mana isi dari budaya lokal tersebut telah diberi nilai-nilai keislaman agar tidak bertentangan dengan Syariat Islam.”

(Whether we like it or not, from the very beginning Islam was spread by the Wali Songo through cultural channels — local culture served as the vessel into which Islamic values were poured so that it would not contradict Islamic law.) (Ra. Bahrud, *Interview*, 2024)

Discussion

Religious Emotion and the Sacred Logic of Barokah

The findings of this study demonstrate that the spiritual efficacy attributed to the Sinjang celebration is fundamentally grounded in what Koentjaraningrat (2015) identifies as *emosi keagamaan* — religious emotion — the affective bedrock upon which the entire system of religious practice rests. Within the Sinjang celebration, this religious emotion is concentrated on the washing water of Sultan Abdurrahman's sacred garment, perceived by participants as a divinely sanctioned conduit of barokah. This finding aligns with broader scholarship on the sociology of sacred objects, which consistently demonstrates that the sacredness of material culture is not inherent to objects themselves but is socially constructed through collective affective investment (Koentjaraningrat, 2015; Nashiruddin, 2021). The community's conviction that the washing water constitutes a *wasilah* — a legitimate Islamic intermediary of divine blessing rather than an independent source of power — reflects a theologically coherent position that distinguishes *tabarruk* from *shirk*.

This distinction is not merely doctrinal but operationally enacted through the *pesantren*'s formal *sambutan* at the conclusion of each ceremony. By publicly and explicitly attributing all spiritual effects to the will and power of Allah alone, the *pesantren* performs a continuous act of theological boundary maintenance that keeps community reverence within the parameters of Islamic orthodoxy. Comparable dynamics have been documented in studies of *ngalap berkah* in other *pesantren* contexts, where the concept of barokah functions as a form of social practice linking *santri*, *kiai*, and the divine through chains of spiritual transmission (Syihabuddin et al., 2023; Azizah, 2021). What distinguishes the Sinjang case is that the object of *tabarruk* is not a living scholar but a material relic — the sacred garment of a *wali* — extending the conceptual scope of *ngalap berkah* from an interpersonal spiritual practice to a communal ritual engagement with sacred material heritage, a dimension that existing scholarship has not yet adequately theorized.

The religious system embedded in the Sinjang celebration further comprises the three structural elements identified by Koentjaraningrat (2015): a system of belief, a system of religious ceremony, and a community of adherents. These elements operate not in isolation but in dynamic interrelation, each reinforcing the others in a self-

sustaining cycle of ritual meaning-making. The community's belief in Sultan Abdurrahman's barokah generates participation; the ceremony reproduces and intensifies that belief through collective experience; and the community of adherents — bound by genealogical obligation and shared spiritual conviction — ensures intergenerational continuity. This structural coherence explains why the Sinjang celebration has endured across generations despite the broader conservative turn in Indonesian pesantren culture documented by Hamzah (2021) and the persistent reformist challenges to the legitimacy of tabarruk practices (Irawan, 2018).

Acculturation, Innovation, and the Pesantren as Cultural Mediator

The Sinjang celebration represents a compelling empirical case of acculturation as theorized in cultural anthropology: the meeting of two cultural streams — Javanese pre-Islamic ritual tradition and Islamic normative practice — that produces a new cultural form without erasing either of its constituent elements. Koentjaraningrat's (2015) framework of cultural diffusion, acculturation, and assimilation provides an analytically productive lens through which to understand this dynamic. Rather than assimilating Javanese tradition wholesale into Islam, or reducing Islamic ritual to mere cultural performance, the celebration produces a genuinely hybrid form in which the slametan, the haul, the shalawat, and the ritual purification coexist as mutually reinforcing elements of a single ceremonial whole. This is consistent with the findings of Aziz (2021) and Hamzah (2021), who document analogous acculturative processes across multiple pesantren contexts in Java, and with the broader scholarship on Javanese Islamization as a process of gradual cultural negotiation rather than abrupt displacement (Van Bruinessen, 2020).

The analytical significance of innovation in this process merits particular emphasis. The Sinjang celebration is not a direct survival of pre-Islamic practice but a culturally innovated form that emerged from the encounter between the pesantren's Islamic educational tradition and the pre-existing ritual life of the Pacarron community. This innovation mirrors the cultural da'wah methodology of the Wali Songo, who strategically employed existing cultural forms — wayang, macapat, slametan — as vessels for Islamic teaching, infusing them with Islamic content without dismantling their structural integrity (Sunyoto, 2022; Fathurrahman et al., 2024). The Sinjang celebration can thus be understood as a local instantiation of a historically established Javanese Islamic cultural logic, one in which the pesantren functions not as an external civilizing force but as an organic participant in community cultural life.

The findings of this study further challenge the assumption, prevalent in certain strands of modernist Islamic discourse, that pesantren conservatism necessarily entails

cultural exclusivism. The role of Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq in the Sinjang celebration illustrates a more nuanced institutional posture: the pesantren as an active cultural mediator, simultaneously preserving local tradition and subjecting it to ongoing Islamic normative evaluation. This dual function — custodianship and guardianship — reflects what Hamzah (2021) describes as the reharmonization of pesantren with Javanese culture, driven not by passive accommodation but by deliberate institutional agency. The pesantren does not merely tolerate the Sinjang celebration; it actively shapes its theological meaning through the formal sambutan, the structural embedding of Islamic ritual elements, and the spatial regulation of participants.

What emerges from this analysis is a conception of the pesantren as an institution capable of holding cultural complexity without dissolving it. Unlike reformist institutions that resolve the tension between Islam and local culture through exclusion, and unlike purely syncretic movements that dissolve the tension through uncritical assimilation, Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq navigates this tension through active mediation — preserving the cultural form while continuously renegotiating its theological content. This mediating posture has important implications not only for understanding this particular institution but for theorizing the broader role of traditional Islamic educational institutions in the management of religious and cultural plurality in contemporary Indonesia (Hamzah, 2021; Kurniawan, 2023).

Ancestral Mandate, Moral Guardianship, and Community Resilience

The wasiat dimension of the pesantren's motivation reveals a crucial mechanism through which institutional memory sustains cultural practice across generations. The assignment of custodial responsibility to the lineage of Kiai Lihah creates a durable social structure that ensures the continuity of the tradition regardless of broader institutional or political changes. This genealogical anchoring of ritual authority is consistent with wider patterns of Islamic sacred geography in Java, where the spiritual authority of a wali is perpetuated through his descendants and the material objects associated with his life (Sunyoto, 2022; Van Bruinessen, 2020). The pesantren's participation in this genealogical structure simultaneously legitimates the tradition within an Islamic framework and embeds the institution within the community's deepest structures of historical memory, creating a bond between institutional and communal identity that reinforces both.

The principle of *al-muhafadhah 'ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akhdhu bi al-jadid al-aslah*, as articulated by Ra. Bahrud, functions not merely as a cultural slogan but as an operative institutional logic that enables the pesantren's sustained engagement with the Sinjang tradition in the face of ongoing reformist pressure. The flexibility embedded in

this principle — preserving what is good from the old while adopting what is better from the new — gives the pesantren the jurisprudential authority to engage with pre-Islamic cultural forms without compromising its Islamic identity. This balance is achieved through the consistent application of the concept of 'urf: customary practices deemed socially beneficial and not contradictory to Islamic law are accorded religious legitimacy, transforming the Sinjang celebration from a potentially suspect cultural relic into an Islamically sanctioned communal institution (Zainuddin, 2015; Nashiruddin, 2021).

In a context where globalization exerts increasing pressure on local cultural forms, the pesantren's custodial role transcends heritage preservation and becomes an act of active community resilience. The Sinjang celebration functions as a living mechanism for the intergenerational transmission of moral, spiritual, and cultural identity, ensuring that younger generations remain anchored in the historical and spiritual roots of the Pacarron community. Irawan (2018) and Al Aluf (2018) have both documented the pesantren's broader function as a frontline moral institution in Indonesian society, and the Sinjang case substantiates this claim with specific empirical depth. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the pesantren's engagement with the Sinjang tradition is not a concession to cultural pressure but a deliberate and principled expression of its deepest institutional identity — as guardian, educator, and custodian of the community it has always served.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the *Sinjang* celebration at Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq Pacarron constitutes a coherent and theologically grounded cultural institution in which the *ngalap berkah* tradition operates as an expression of Islamic religious emotion rather than a deviation from orthodoxy. Literature demonstrates that the community's conviction regarding the spiritual efficacy of Sultan Abdurrahman's washing water is anchored in the concept of *emosi keagamaan* as identified by Koentjaraningrat, whereby sacred objects derive their power not from intrinsic material properties but from the collective affective and theological investment of a community of adherents. The presence of all three structural elements of the religious system — system of belief, system of ceremony, and community of adherents — confirms that the *Sinjang* celebration functions as a fully integrated cultural-religious institution whose internal coherence explains its remarkable intergenerational durability.

The role of the pesantren in this tradition is neither passive nor merely custodial. Literature identifies Pondok Pesantren Syekh Maulana Ishaq as an active cultural mediator that simultaneously preserves the structural form of the *Sinjang* celebration and subjects its theological content to continuous Islamic normative evaluation. Through

the formal *sambutan*, the embedding of Islamic ritual elements — *slametan*, *shalawat*, *haul* — and the spatial regulation of participants, the pesantren ensures that community reverence remains oriented toward Allah as the sole source of divine power, safeguarding the boundary between legitimate *tabarruk* and *shirk*. This mediating posture instantiates the historical *da'wah* methodology of the Wali Songo and operationalizes the institutional principle of *al-muhafadhah 'ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akhdhu bi al-jadid al-aslah* in living cultural practice.

The motivational architecture sustaining this engagement rests on three interrelated foundations: community control rooted in genealogical responsibility, the preservation of the pesantren's *barokah* tradition, and the fulfillment of a *wasiat* inherited from the lineage of Kiai Lihah. Together, these motivations constitute an institutionalized system of cultural guardianship that transcends individual agency and ensures the tradition's survival across generational transitions. This study ultimately argues that the pesantren's engagement with the *Sinjang* tradition represents a principled and historically coherent model of Islamic cultural stewardship — one that holds enduring relevance for understanding how traditional Islamic educational institutions can preserve local heritage, maintain Islamic integrity, and sustain community resilience in the face of contemporary pressures toward cultural homogenization. Future research would benefit from comparative examination of analogous *ngalap berkah* traditions across pesantren in other Javanese and Madurese contexts to assess the generalizability of this model.

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