



The Construction of Island Islamic Traditions: A Phenomenological Study of the Prophet's Birthday Tradition Sacredness on Bawean Island

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Abstract

The tradition of the Prophet's Birthday on Bawean Island embodies the intersection of Islamic values and local culture, shaping the distinctive religious practices of the island's people. This tradition is a religious celebration and a means of preserving cultural identity. This study formulates two main questions: (1) How is the sacred construction of the Prophet's Birthday tradition in Bawean formed through the interaction of Islam and local culture? Moreover, (2) How do people across generations interpret this tradition? The study used a qualitative approach with Husserl's phenomenology to explore the community's religious experiences. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation in the form of archives, prayers, and photographs of the procession. Informants were selected purposively, including religious leaders, cultural figures, the Maulid committee, the general public, and the younger generation. Data analysis used phenomenological stages: bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing. The findings indicate that the sacredness of the Maulid in Bawean is understood as a space for strengthening faith, social solidarity, and cultural inheritance. This tradition represents a harmonious construction of archipelagic Islam: Islamic in its values, local in its expression, and sacred in the spiritual experience of its people.

Keywords: *Construction, Maulid tradition, phenomenology, Sacrality, Bawean Island.*

Introduction

The maulid ceremony of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, in the religious tradition of the Bawean people, has a very important role. This shows the process of internalizing Islamic values into local traditions with diverse responses. The process of internalizing Islamic values takes place dynamically so that it gains space in the continuity of the religious culture of the Bawean people, through a dialectic process that runs simultaneously (Hafidz, 2021). The sustainability of the maulid tradition in Bawean is certainly apart from the results of culture, but also inseparable from the legitimacy of the local elite, so that the tradition still survives (Suriadi, A., n.d.).

The Bawean people are a complex area, with cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds from various regions. The complexity of the Bawean community can be traced to the local community's religious traditions. Therefore, the religious pattern of the Bawean people in constructing Islamic traditions cannot be separated from the contact of the community with various cultures and ethnicities living in Bawean, thus giving birth to a distinctive tradition of the Prophet's maulid (Vredenburg, 1990). In addition, the institutionalization of Islam from various regions, such as Java, Madura, and Sulawesi, also contributed to the birth of a distinctive pattern in constructing the Maulid tradition (Hafidz, 2021).

The results of temporary observations, the phenomenon of the maulid tradition in Bawean, have found its own form in the dynamics of people's lives. It became a medium for transforming and internalizing Islamic cultural values into local culture. In the tradition of the Prophet's Birthday, Islamic values are incorporated into the tradition with local nuances to form a unique pattern of religious traditions (Vredenburg, 1990). So, the maulid tradition that developed in Bawean can be understood as the result of the social construction of various cultural elements in the community. This is because the island of Bawean, which is incidentally an archipelago, located between Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, allows wide access to other areas and becomes a sea travel hub. Plus, the diverse origins of the inhabitants, and the distribution of the population in various regions inside and outside the country (Osni, Hadi., 2021) has contributed to the birth of distinctive cultural conceptions and expressions, namely *Molod* (Hafidz, 2021).

The presence of diverse ethnicities and Muslims from various regions on Bawean Island has given rise to a unique tradition of celebrating the Prophet's Birthday (Mawlid al-Nabi) (Jamalie, 2014). This tradition is a blend of local culture and Islamic values. Despite the strong influence of Islam, local cultural values have not been wholly lost but have instead been fused into a unique form of celebration. The intersection of local and Islamic cultures in the Mawlid tradition on Bawean opens up the possibility of tension between values or a process of transformation that results in harmony. This contrasts with the case in Minangkabau, where the intersection of culture and religion often leads to conflict. In the Bawean context, the Mawlid tradition instead displays a mutually beneficial combination of local culture and Islamic teachings.

Studies on the Maulid tradition in Bawean have focused more on historical aspects and ritual forms (Jamalie, 2014), but have been limited to analyzing how the interaction of Islamic values and local culture shapes social harmony. Few studies have examined in depth the dynamics of value negotiation between Islam and Bawean culture in the Maulid tradition and the factors that differentiate it from cultural encounters in other regions, such as Minangkabau. This study aims to analyze the tradition of the Prophet's Birthday in Bawean as a meeting place between local culture and Islamic values, identify patterns of interaction that create harmony, and explain the factors that distinguish this tradition from other contexts that tend to give rise to conflict, such as in Minangkabau.

Literature review

Celebrating the Prophet's Birthday in Bawean is a form of social construction passed down through generations and legitimized by the community as a meaningful religious practice. Within the framework of Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, this tradition first undergoes a process of externalization, namely the community's expression of faith in the Prophet Muhammad, manifested in celebrations, poetry recitations, and the presentation of traditional foods. This process demonstrates how religious experience is concretized into social actions that the wider community can see, hear, and feel (Hjelm, 2019).

The theory states that reality is socially constructed. Social constructionists hold that values, ideologies, and institutions are human beings. In addition, social construction is also a statement of belief and viewpoint that the content of consciousness is taught by culture and society. Because for Schutz, the social world is something intersubjective and a meaningful experience (Hjelm, 2019). Subsequently, the tradition underwent a process of objectification, in which religious symbols such as the barzanji, communal prayer, and the sharing of blessings were interpreted as something sacred and socially binding. At this stage, the tradition of the

Prophet's Birthday in Bawean was no longer considered merely an individual expression but a collectively accepted objective social reality (Hadiwijaya, 2023). Through its annual repetition, this tradition formed a collective awareness in society that the commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday was not merely a ritual, but also a medium for strengthening solidarity, teaching the values of togetherness, and affirming Bawean's unique Islamic identity (Asmanidar, 2021).

Ultimately, through internalization, the new generation of Baweanese people internalizes the Maulid tradition as part of their religious identity. Children who witness and participate in this celebration from an early age grow up understanding that the tradition has cultural and religious legitimacy. (Mochammad Fiki Eko et al., 2024) Thus, the Maulid tradition's social construction in Bawean preserves ancestral heritage and shapes the community's ongoing religious and cultural awareness.

Although social institutions and society look objectively real, in reality, they are all built on subjective definitions through interaction. New objectivity can occur through repeated affirmations given by others with the exact subjective definition. At the highest level of generality, man creates the world in a universal symbolic meaning- a comprehensive view of life, legitimizing and regulating social forms and giving meaning to various areas of life. In short, Berger and Luckmann say there is a dialectic between individuals creating society and society creating individuals. This dialectical process occurs through externalization, objectification, and internalization (Gergen, 1992).

Research method

This research was designed using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological paradigm to deeply understand the construction of the island Islamic tradition through the experience of the sacredness of the Prophet's Birthday tradition on Bawean Island. The research was conducted for six months with the following stages: (1) research preparation, including literature study, instrument creation, and field exploration (1 month); (2) field data collection, including in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of the Maulid tradition (3 months); (3) qualitative data analysis using Husserl's phenomenological approach, through the steps of bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing (1.5 months); and (4) systematic preparation of the research report (0.5 months). Thus, this research is oriented toward collecting factual information and exploring the meanings experienced by the Bawean people in interpreting the sacredness of the Prophet's Birthday.

The research informants were selected purposively to obtain a diverse and representative perspective. They included religious figures (kiai, ustadz, and mosque imams) who serve as religious authorities in the implementation of Maulid, local cultural figures who understand the roots of the tradition, the Maulid organizing committee who are directly involved in the procession, the general public who are both participants and audiences, and the younger generation who will inherit and preserve the tradition. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with open-ended questions, direct observation during the Maulid procession, and document collection in archives, prayer manuscripts, photographs, and activity recording. Furthermore, the data were analyzed by identifying key themes regarding how Islamic values are integrated with local cultural elements, how various levels of society interpret sacredness, and how this tradition is reproduced across generations. With this detailed research design, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the construction of Islamic tradition in island communities, particularly in the Maulid tradition on Bawean Island, can be obtained.

Results and Discussion

Construction of the Molod Ceremony: Externalization, Objectification, and Internalization

The Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, or *molod*, is one of the most awaited moments by the people of Bawean Island. This is proof of the love of the people of Bawean Island for the Prophet Muhammad Saw. As is customary for commemorating the Prophet's birthday in various regions, the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday on the island of Bawean has many distinctive features that have not been found in other areas. One of its unique features is the recitation of the Berzaji book and the "*angka'an*" *molod*. Angka'an *molod* is a distinctive souvenir that contains traditional Bawean food served at the *molod* celebration, usually called "*berkat*" in Madurese. Each dish served has a meaning related to Islamic values in Bawean, as Sugriyanto explained,

"This uniqueness is what makes the maulid commemoration on Bawean Island lively. In celebrating molod, the angka'an of molod becomes an inseparable unit in the ceremonial series. The concept of the community celebrating the molod ceremony is the implementation of Islamic teachings, whose references are the Qur'an and hadith."(Sugriyanto, personal communication, June 15, 2024).

Molod is conceived as an arena of gratitude for the gifts given by Allah SWT to his servants in the form of Islamic blessings, faith, and prosperity in living life. As stated by Muhammad, a resident of Telukjati, Tambak:

"The Prophet's Birthday cannot be separated from the gratitude of Bawean Muslims, which is packaged with the uniqueness of the culture of snack angka'an (products and traditional food concoctions) that have a philosophical meaning" (Faizil, personal communication, Mei 2024).

Sugriyanto also strengthened the above statement,

"Molod angka'an are not only typical foods and natural products presented to residents who attend the molod ceremony, but also have a philosophical meaning in each dish as a cultural tool manifested in angka'an." (Sugriyanto, personal communication, June 15, 2024).

According to Sugriyanto, each amount and food served in the angka'an of *molod* has its own meaning related to Islamic values, as Sugriyanto said,

"The colors of the leaves and flowers of the tongghul in the angka'an symbolize joy in welcoming the maulid ceremony. First, Tongghul: the main accessory is a miniature polhon with very shady leaves and flowers embedded in the center of the angka'an presentation, thanks to molod, as a signal that the commemoration of the maulid is a historical event in human life. Trees symbolize the history and genealogy of humankind, especially the people of the Prophet Saw. Second, Suitable for the Speaker: To be an enlivening and decorative, a molod angka'an. It is made from a 40cm long bamboo sharpener with a diameter of 0.5 cm. The stem generally fits the size of a pencil, with colorful, wrinkled paper. At the top, some petals are blooming as egg flowers. Eggs look beautiful. When dye is used, it is usually red, using lung color. Third, the angka'an is 12; this angka'an is reminiscent of the history of the birth of the Prophet on the 12th of the early Rabiul. The tellor is painted in the shape of a smiling and cheerful person. Tellor chicken and duck. Fourth, tellor: cohesiveness is the main thing in maintaining the existence of a leader." (Sugriyanto, personal communication, June 15, 2024).

Meanwhile, the types of food served also vary in color. The food served can be divided into two, namely seafood and produce. Produce is divided into two: those embedded in the

earth's stomach, such as tubers, and fruits, such as bananas. Each *angka'an* is usually given money as alms, which is called *shalabet money*. (Sugriyanto, personal communication, June 15, 2024). Some Muslims welcome the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a matter of culture and a necessity to maintain the continuity of *the molod* tradition (Muhammad, personal communication, May 2024).

Meanwhile, in the *molod* ceremony, there is a series of events that are carried out in the procession of the *molod* ceremony, namely, the book of *al-Barzanji*, *asrakal*, *marhabanan*, *kercengan/hadrah*, the *Qur'an*, religious lectures, and closed with prayer. Then, at the end of the event, the distribution of *angka'an* continued by exchanging them for the heads of each family. After that, it was followed by the distribution of *angka'an* to the children who participated in the ceremony and ate together at the mosque.

Externalization: The Process of Self-Adaptation

Molod, as a product of the Islamic culture of the Bawean people, is continuously encouraged and celebrated through religious and educational institutions. The Bawean people understand the *molod* ceremony as a form of expression of pride and gratitude for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, who brought Islam. With the introduction of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad, Bawean Muslims had the hope of being able to survive from error, and be able to distinguish between right (*haq*) and wrong (*bathil*). The community's belief in the truth of the Prophet Muhammad as the bearer of the true religion is then expressed in annual activities in *molod* as a return of favor and a form of gratitude. This can be seen, for example, in Sugriyanto's expression.

"As Muslims, it is certainly a must for us to be grateful for the blessings given by Allah. The blessing was in the form of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, Saw, who brought Islam. Through his intermediary, we now know Islam. As the bearer of Islam, the people must know the person who carries it, namely the Prophet Muhammad Saw. Therefore, the most likely form of gratitude to be done together is celebrating his birthday (maulid). By celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, God willing, we as his people will get his blessings and intercession in the hereafter." (Muhammad, personal communication, Mei 2024).

So it can be understood that *molod* is a form of outpouring of gratitude and joy of the Bawean Islamic community for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, the bearer of Islam, which is packaged in *the molod* ceremony. This *molod* activity continues to be maintained and socialized to other community members from an early age. So that the behavior and values contained in *the molod* ceremony can be absorbed and maintained by the community. The outpouring of *molod* activities differs from the Prophet's maulid ceremony in other regions such as Java, Madura, Sulawesi, Jogjakarta, and Sumatra. *Molod* Bawean is a distinctive culture that is absorbed from various regions and packaged in the Bawean-style *molod* culture to become a distinctive identity distinguishing kislaman and regions. Furthermore, *molod* is also a marker as well as a differentiator of the Islam of the Bawean people from other forms of Islam.

The outpouring of Islam of the Bawean people in *molod* can be seen in the variety of *molod* figures. Various cakes, regional foods, produce, and sea are presented in *molod* *angka'an* to be distributed to other residents, loaded with philosophical meanings and Islamic values. These various *angka'an* are preserved as a sign to remember and emulate the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, the appreciation of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad Saw is also displayed in various cultural symbols that are accommodated in the *angka'an* of *molod*. To look further, it seems that, as Sugriyanto revealed in the presentation of *molod*

angka'an, several types of food and attributes must be in the *molod angka'an* (Sugriyanto).

Furthermore, *molod* also means togetherness and cohesiveness in the *moment of molod*, so various elements of society, ranging from religious leaders and the government, can make *molod* an activity to give alms and increase *ukhuwah*. In this case, religious leaders and the community feel that *the molod* ceremony is used to foster social spirit and concern for others. Cultural symbols are introduced to the community, especially children. In addition, ethics and manners are also introduced in social life without having to go through religious doctrine, but through cultural absorption.

In addition to *the molod angka'an*, the series of *molod* events is no less important. In *the molod ceremony*, residents gathered at the mosque to participate in the *molod* commemoration. The event began with reading the book of Al-Barzanji, then continued with the reading of *marhaban*, the reading of the holy verses of the Qur'an, and *mauidzah hasanah* by the *kiai*. The event ended with prayers and the distribution of *angka'an* to the residents present and each head of the family.

In the *molod* event that should not be left out is the reader of Barzanji, whose content tells the history of the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, *marhaban*, *mauidzah*, *hasanah*, and prayer. The reading of the book al-Barzanji is intended to study and emulate the struggle of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as the bearer of Islam. At the same time, the Qur'an is a guideline for Islamic scholars in carrying out religious sharia, while *mauidzah hasanah* is to learn the meaning of the Prophet's *maulid*.

Furthermore, *molod* is also introduced by giving religious messages (*mau'izah hasanah*) by the *kiai* who are invited to *the molod event*. Religious teachings and love for the Prophet Muhammad were slowly absorbed into the souls of children, adolescents, and society. *Kiai* always watched the stories of the Prophet's struggle. So, this *maulid* ceremony can be a lesson for the government, the community, especially for the younger generation, to learn to imitate the teachings of the Prophet, namely, sharing.

"Ceremonial pattern Molod. From time to time, these changes are more about the ability of the community to adapt to the times. So that the change does not lead to structural changes, but rather specific changes, some people want a change in patterns. However, others maintain the model Molod, who have lived in the community, as Atiyatus Sa'adah said, they do not want the maulid model in Bawean to be replaced with another model. For example, it can be replaced with monetary contributions to build mosques, roads, and so on." (S. Atiyatus, personal communication, June 12, 2024)

So, the existence of *Molod* as a culture has become a space for religious activities and mental expressions by the Bawean people. They consider *Molod* to be a culture that must be preserved. *Molod* has become a religious institution of the Bawean community, expressed in various cultural fields. This resilience cannot be separated from the values contained in the *Molod*, such as *helping in making cakes Molod*, *training yourself to be a philanthropist*, *tasting gratitude for the gift of sustenance from Allah*, and sharing the results of the work obtained. In addition, accepting and rejecting a tradition depends on the individual's ability to adapt to that socioculture. Conceptually, the moment of self-adjustment to the sociocultural tradition of *the molod* of the Bawean people can be described as follows:

First, adjustments to sacred texts, the Qur'an and hadith. One of the references for implementing *the molod* ceremony is the word of Allah in the Qur'an, Surah al-Ahdzab, verse 56, which commands to always recite prayers to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Therefore, Allah commands his people to deliver prayers and the Prophet. The command to

recite the prayer is reflected in a traditional moment of the Prophet's Birthday (*molod*) commemoration. In this commemoration, Muslims chant prayers for the Prophet Muhammad SAW as a form of obeying Allah's commands. The sacred text of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet are used to legitimize the celebration of *molod*.

Adjustments to the sacred text are carried out by religious leaders, ulama, kiai, and ustadz in the momentum of recitations, sermons, learning in madrasas, langgar, and Islamic boarding schools. Scholars' interpretation is based on verses of the Qur'an that encourage a lot of prayer reading, one of which is done by commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad Saw, which is filled with the recitation of prayer. *This modern* interpretation has a basis for legitimacy, which is also obtained in the classic books by umala' salaf and through the tradition of speech conveyed by religious experts.

Second, adjustment to old traditional values. Adjusting individual actions to values in the old tradition involves two actions, namely acceptance and rejection. The acceptance of the Bawean people is a tradition manifested in their participation and involvement in carrying out ceremonies in cultural spaces (culture-space) such as mosques, madrasas, langgars, and Islamic boarding schools. Many people are involved in *molod ceremonies* at mosques, with mahrabanan event packaging and angka'an being carried.

However, a small portion of the community also refuses to preserve the values and traditions of this *molod*, especially those affiliated with the Muhammadiyah organization. This rejection is also based on sacred texts and their way of viewing. The form of rejection is using *the language of bid'ah*, which is a traditional act that the Prophet has never exemplified.

Objectivity: The Process of Self-Interaction with the Socio-Cultural World

According to Berger, society is a human product rooted in externalization. Products that exist outside of him, then confront these products as a factuality outside of him. Culture is beyond the subjectivity of man, which then becomes his own world (Dreher, 2016). Therefore, the man-made world acquires the nature of objective reality. From this theory, it can be understood that *Molod* as a culture is a product of the Bawean Islamic community. As a cultural product, it has its own character and structure that can be distinguished from the culture of other regional maulids.

The Bawean community, which is based on Islam, theologically and normatively accepts the demands to practice their religious beliefs. Islamic theological beliefs and normative guidance require that religion be practiced according to the prevailing norms (*shari'ah*), per the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith. These beliefs are then objectified through parayaan *molod*. So *Molod* is the objectification of the externalization of the theological and historical belief of the Bawean people in the truth of the Prophet Muhammad as the messenger of Allah. The theological beliefs of the Bawean people, which are poured into the maulid ceremony, are preserved and maintained because of the functional relationship between beliefs and social needs. (Mochammad Fiki Eko et al., 2024).

Belief in Islam and the Prophet Muhammad's truth requires obedience to carry out the shari'ah. One of the teachings of shari'ah is to be grateful, share, help, and give alms for the blessings given by Allah. The values and teachings of the ruling religion are externalized into *molod*. *Molod* then became a product of the religious culture of the Bawean people, which represented obedience to carry out religious (Islamic) commands. From this analysis, religious commandments such as gratitude, doing good, and sharing with others give birth to one culture, namely *molod*, which is held in the cultural field, namely religious institutions, as expressed by Sugriyanto.

Apart from the social values mentioned above, Molod also contains the value of a sign of love for the Prophet Muhammad Saw, as a medium of da'wah (syiar). This syiar was done by the early Islamic da'is in Bawean. In the history of the spread of Islam in Bawean, the maulid ceremony is used by da'i for da'wah facilities with various activities that attract the public.”(Sugriyanto, personal communication, June 15, 2024).

Molod becomes an objective reality that lives and develops in the midst of society. The Prophet's maulid ceremony in Java is called the Syahadatain Ceremony, which is pronounced Sekaten by the Javanese tongue. (Said, 2017) This maulid ceremony is one of the most effective da'wah media. In it, people gather in groups that do not distinguish between rich and poor, young and old, or black and white. All gathered as one, they also heard what was conveyed by the kyai preacher who filled the ceremony.

Furthermore, *molod* is also said to be an identity and an Islamic identity in Bawean. This means that the *Molod*. This is the identity or *basic central* power of Muslims. Because in this maulid ceremony, Muslims gather and are united by one togetherness, namely the people of the Prophet Muhammad Saw. From here, it is hoped that it can strengthen the relationship of brotherhood between Muslims so that they always live in harmony and help each other. So, as a social product, *molod* tradition developed in Bawean is one of the local cultural phenomena, in which the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet live (*Living Qur'an*)—*living Qur'an*. *In the tradition, Molod made a tradition in a series of ceremonies*. To institutionalize culture, the Bawean community is accustomed to (Hadiwijaya, 2023).

“The habit starts early. It is mainly held at Al-Quran Education Park (TPQ), Children's Education Garden (TPA), Langgar, Islamic boarding schools, and socio-religious organizations such as Mosque Youth. Even to get used to this typical Bawean molod ceremony, the Bawean nomadic community (migrants) also carry out Bawean-style molod, as conveyed by Mujiburrahman, a nomad from Bawean who lives in Batam, who celebrates the Prophet's Birthday abroad as carried out in Bawean, so that the love and pride for this maulid tradition is maintained and preserved. So that later it will be continued by our children who live in the region.” (Mujiburrahman, personal communication, April 21, 2024)

He has been able to adapt and identify himself as an Islamic Bawean and must maintain traditions considered reasonable by his ancestors. Adaptation results from habituation that is carried out continuously in the community. These habitual actions maintain their meaningfulness for individuals personally, socially, and culturally, so they can be accepted. In addition to adaptation and identification, habituation in society also brings personal psychological benefits because each individual does not need to redefine what already exists and runs among the Bawean people. This can free the accumulation of tension in society due to undirected impulses in each individual. Because, according to Berger, human empirical knowledge cannot be separated from the pouring of himself into the world he inhabits (Hadiwijaya, 2023).

Internalization: The Process of Self-Identification in the Socio-Cultural World

Berger and Luckman state that society is a subjective reality, which occurs through internalization. Internalization is an individual's direct understanding of objective events as an expression of meaning. (Radley, 1995). Thus, it can be understood that the tradition of *the molod ceremony* in Bawean embodies theological beliefs that have been internalized in the community's soul. Apart from that, when facing the month of Rabiul Awal, both the community

and the government have assumed that there is an obligation that encourages it to be carried out. Finally, the momentum of the Prophet's birthday is used as a means to seek blessings for the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) so that later he will get help (*shafa'at*) in the hereafter (Faizil, personal communication, May 2024).

The religious awareness of the Bawean people has been built from an early age; they have been introduced to Islam since childhood. Therefore, it is not surprising that *molod* ceremonies are also carried out in early childhood education institutions (PAUD), village langgars, and Islamic boarding schools. The goal is for people to get to know Islam, especially to express their love for the Prophet Muhammad as the bearer of Islam. That is what Berger called primary socialization.

Even in Langgar, where there are only seven students, *molod* events are held by Atiyatus Sa'adah, a teacher in Saricindan village of Sidogedungbatu, to instill love for Islam and culture. Socialization of religious activities is also carried out in various langgars in Bawean. So that when they grow up, they will also continue the tradition as a form of love for the Prophet Muhammad Saw. This socialization is essential in Bawean, hoping the tradition will be maintained and internalized in the community's soul. The Kiai also recommends that *this molod tradition* continue to be socialized to young children, both those who live in the village and in Islamic boarding schools. Because of the *molod* event, the community can absorb the importance of sharing, please help each other, and build cooperation between residents in carrying out *molod* ceremonies and other activities. (S. Atiyatus, personal communication, June 12, 2024).

Furthermore, the socialization process that occurs in the Bawean community to cultivate Islam and religion is carried out in Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, langgar, and other religious institutions such as mosque organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and Muhammadiyah (Azhari, 2006). In these sectors, the Bawean people are exposed to religion, the Qur'an, fiqh books, Islamic holidays such as *isra' mi'raj*, the Prophet's birthday, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha. The actors who introduced the activity were community leaders such as *kiayi*, *ngaji* teachers, and organizational leaders. With the introduction of the Islamic tradition, the community can understand and believe in the truth of Islam and can foster love for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The success of instilling Islamic values and love for the Prophet Muhammad was proven by the data presented by Nur Iftah Mufidah, one of the residents of Bawean. 'I am thrilled to celebrate the Prophet's birthday in Bawean. We are proud to have this considerable Maulid tradition.

So, the values introduced in *the molod ceremony* are not only the preservation of Islamic traditions but also the cultivation of the Prophet, through the reading of history and biography, and those contained in the book of al-Barzanji, which are usually commented on by the speakers in *the molod* event. In addition, it also strengthens Islam through the recitation of the Qur'an in every *molod* ceremony. (Asnawi, 2022).

In addition to fostering love for the Prophet Muhammad Saw, *molod* is also a vehicle for the community's gratitude for the gifts given by Allah to his servants for one year, as conveyed by Muhammad, a resident of Telukjati village. Table 1 explains the social construction process of the *molod ceremony* in the Bawean community.

Table 1. The Process of Social Construction of the Bawean Community on the *Molod Tradition*

Moment	Process	Phenomenon
Externalization	Adapting to the socio-cultural world	Conforming to religious doctrine per the interpretation of the previous religious elite, the act of <i>molod</i> ceremonies has a historical basis, teachings, and religious values. Adapting to the language and actions of <i>the molod</i> ceremony, as exemplified by Ulama' <i>Salaf</i>
Objectivity	Self-interaction with socio-cultural	Awareness that religious elites (ulama', kiai, da'i) are exemplary people in religious actions. The realization that <i>the molod ceremony</i> is a religious teaching that must be carried out as a form of gratitude for the birth of the Prophet, who brought Islam. Habituation of actions through the repetition and institutionalization of local Islamic traditions (<i>molod</i>) through various variants of actions and cultural terrains. (Mosque, Langgar, Pondok Islamic Boarding Schools and Educational Institutions)
Internalization	Self-identification with the socio-cultural world	There are differences in social backgrounds based on historical, anthropological, sociological, and ideological backgrounds, so it is required to carry out negotiations that give birth to cooperation and accommodation within the framework of Social Harmonization.

Internalization of Islamic values and local traditions (*Molod*), as a Bawean tradition, contains various loci of Islamic cultural symbols as described above. There is an adjustment, a self-identification that gives birth to the conception that *Molod* is an inseparable behavior in the teachings of Islam itself. Tradition *Molod* This has been evenly distributed in all levels of Bawean society, starting from educational institutions and places of worship. The absorption of these traditional values cannot be separated from the role of local elites in socializing these traditions through the cultivation of values and habituation of religious behavior from an early age in various social institutions. Because the success of socialization, according to Berger, depends on the symmetry between the objective world of society and the subjective world of individuals (Hadiwijaya, 2023) The Bawean people have experienced socialization from the community before about the meaning of *molod*, so what is in their mind is an analogous meaning of the ceremony. That alone has become the personal awareness of the community.

Typology of the Bawean People in the Construction of the *Molod* Tradition

The *molod* tradition in Bawean is not simply interpreted as a ceremonial ritual, but rather a religious experience that shapes collective identity. For example, the practice of *rokat tasek* (sea thanksgiving), *angka'an molod* (food distribution), and *diba'an* (recitation of praise poems) are multi-layered expressions of faith, encompassing spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions. (Pujiyanto & Muslihudin, 2023). Phenomenologically, each celebration is viewed as a construction of meaning within the community's consciousness, placing the Prophet Muhammad as a central figure in their religious life. (Nindito, 2013).

Furthermore, *molod* in Bawean can be divided into two broad categories: celebrations emphasizing the sacred-spiritual dimension and celebrations oriented toward the socio-cultural dimension. The first is reflected in ritual activities focused on reciting the *maulid* (sea blessing) and prayer, where religious awareness is fostered through collective spiritual experiences. The second manifests through social symbols, such as processions, banquets, and the distribution of blessings, strengthening social solidarity and community cohesion. From a phenomenological perspective, these two characteristics are not a contradiction, but rather a dialectic of the religious consciousness of the Bawean people, which unites sacred and profane experiences within a single framework of tradition.

***Molod* Ceremony: The Harmonization of Islam and Local Traditions**

The phenomenon of religious and cultural relations in the Bawean people that occurs naturally and intensely has given birth to a very accommodating religious attitude of the Bawean Islamic community. Starting from religion as a thing that is believed (value system), understood (cognition system), and practiced (affection system). These stages not only appear at the level of belief, but at each of the three stages above, giving birth to a distinctive religious expression in Bawean. (Pujiyanto & Muslihudin, 2023).

The *molod* ceremony, as a religious practice that is believed to be a religious teaching, has given rise to religious attitudes from some Bawean Muslim communities who are eager to purify Islam from the possible practice of acculturation of local culture, while others are trying to build a pattern of accommodation between the two harmoniously and intensively. Each of the above communities already has the belief that the essence of Islam comes from the *samawi*. In contrast, others believe that Islam is a manifestation of an encounter between the two. It is undeniable that this fact occurs systematically from time to time, such as the tradition of grave pilgrimage, *selamatan di sumber*, and *molod* ceremonies. (Hadiwijaya, 2023).

From the data above, it can be understood that there has been a syncretic-mutualistic combination, which is also a pattern of behavior of the Bawean people. Religious practices can be understood as those adapted to local culture and traditions—the merger of local culture and Islam into Islamic religiosity with Bawean colors. Mystical culture is actually closer to Hindu-Buddhism, which has been Islamized, where there is a combination of Islamic values and syncretic local culture, so that Bawean Islam is a form of religious phenomenon that is loaded with the content of religious traditions with a syncretic pattern. This arises from the historical dialectic between Islamic teachings and local culture adapted to Islam. In addition, gathering various ethnicities, such as Madura, Bugis, Mandar, Javanese, and the Kemas clan in the Bawean cultural locus has also given the residents their own Bawean Islamic cultural terrain.

Conflict and Resistance: The symbolic meaning of the Prophet's Birthday Celebration

In addition to functioning as a means of social harmonization, the Prophet's Birthday tradition in Bawean also holds the potential for conflict and resistance. This arises from the different perspectives of religious groups, especially modernist circles such as Muhammadiyah. From the perspective of Muhammadiyah, the celebration of Maulid is considered to have no strong normative basis in the Sunnah of the Prophet, so it tends to be seen as a practice of *bid'ah* that can obscure the essence of monotheism.(Hodaifah et al., 2025). This resistance often does not arise through confrontation, but through religious discourse and education that emphasizes the purification of the faith.

However, for the Bawean people, the Maulid tradition is not just a celebration, but a religious expression that is socially and culturally legitimized. The tradition of *angka'an* (food *angka'an* distributed to worshippers) is an important symbol of social solidarity and a form of *angka'an* that is believed to descend from the commemoration of Maulid. In terms of Berger-Luckmann's social construction, this symbol goes through a process of objectification: *angka'an* are not only considered food, but representations of *angka'an*, prayers, and the binding of social relations (Hodaifah et al., 2025).

Thus, the resistance that comes from the modernist perspective (Muhammadiyah) meets the objective social reality that is already established in Bawean. At this point, the dialectic occurs between purifying religious teachings and the social need to nurture sacred traditions that strengthen community cohesion. This situation shows that the Maulid tradition contains harmonization and the dynamics of differences of opinion that enrich religious discourse in Indonesia.

Table 2. Symbolic *angka'an* of the Molod in Bawean

The Element of Angka'an	Social Symbols	Makna Religius	Modernist Resistance (Muhammadiyah)
Rice and side dishes	Solidarity & togetherness	There is gratitude and prayer for salvation	Considered just a feast, less substantial
Traditional pastries (apem, etc.)	Local cultural identity	A reminder of the Islamic tradition of the archipelago	Tradition is considered unnecessary in religion
Fruit	Symbol of blessing and fertility	Prayers for abundant sustenance	Considered more as culture than sharia
Plastic/souvenir wrapping	Social relations media (giving)	The symbol of "a blessing that takes home"	Seen as having no religious basis



Figure 1. An Example Of A Souvenir For Molod (Souce: Doc. Privat, Bawean 2025)

Conclusion

The tradition of celebrating the Prophet's Birthday in Bawean has proven to be more than just a religious ritual. It is a social construct born from externalization, objectification, and internalization processes, thus becoming a collective identity passed down across generations. This tradition serves a dual purpose: maintaining the sacredness of reverence for the Prophet Muhammad while simultaneously strengthening social solidarity and togetherness within the Bawean community, enabling it to endure as a social reality recognized and maintained today.

This study of the tradition of celebrating the Prophet's Birthday in Bawean offers a novel approach by applying Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory to understand the dynamics of local rituals. While studies of the Prophet's Birthday typically emphasize theological, historical, or cultural aspects, this study highlights how the tradition is produced, legitimized, and internalized as a social reality. Thus, this research demonstrates that the sacredness of religious traditions is not static, but rather the result of a social construction process continually renewed by society.

Theoretically, this research broadens understanding in the sociology of religion, explaining that religious practices such as the Prophet's Birthday cannot be viewed solely as normative legacies but also as the result of social interactions that produce religious meaning. This emphasizes that religion exists not only at the level of doctrine but also as an "objective social reality" that shapes the community's identity, solidarity, and collective consciousness. In other words, this research confirms the relevance of social construction theory for understanding local religious practices while enriching the sociological study of religion on the relationship between tradition, society, and religious consciousness.

Declaration of conflicting interest

In the study entitled *The Construction of Island Islamic Traditions: A Phenomenological Study of the Sacredness of the Prophet's Birthday Tradition on Bawean Island*, there is no potential or actual conflict of interest with any party, either individuals, institutions, or organizations that can influence the process or results of this research. All research content is independently compiled for academic purposes, and no party provides any particular pressure, intervention, or personal advantage. Thus, I declare that this research is carried out to develop science and academic contributions without conflict of interest.

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