

THE MEANING OF THE POPENE'E TRADITION IN LAUJE TRIBAL WEDDINGS IN PALASA VILLAGE, PALASA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in Palasa Village, Palasa District, with four research questions: (1) How is the culture of the community in Palasa Village, Palasa District? (2) How is the marriage tradition performed in Palasa Village, Palasa District? (3) What is the meaning of the Popene'e tradition in the marriage of the Lauje tribe in Palasa Village, Palasa District? (4) How is the traditional Popene'e marriage tradition preserved among the Lauje community in Palasa Village, Palasa District? This study aims to describe the community culture in Palasa Village, Palasa District, describe the performance of the Lauje marriage tradition, analyze the meaning of the Popene'e tradition in Lauje marriages, and analyze efforts to preserve the Popene'e tradition as part of the community's cultural heritage. This study employed a qualitative research method. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation. The results indicate that the community of Palasa Village continues to maintain traditions passed down through generations, as evidenced by their language, knowledge systems, social organizations, livelihoods, religious systems, and preserved arts. The performance of Lauje marriages still adheres to traditional customary stages, including the Popene'e tradition, which symbolizes respect for parents, acceptance of the bride into the groom's family, and the strengthening of familial bonds. The Popene'e tradition continues to be preserved through the transmission of cultural values and its practice in every traditional wedding.

ABSTRACT

Artikel hasil Penelitian ini memilih obyek di Desa Palasa Kecamatan Palasa dengan 4 rumusan masalah, yaitu: (1) Bagaimana Kebudayaan masyarakat di Desa Palasa Kecamatan Palasa?. (2) Bagaimana pelaksanaan tradisi pernikahan di Desa Palasa Kecamatan Palasa?. (3) Bagaimana makna tradisi Popene'e dalam pernikahan suku Lauje di Desa Palasa kecamatan Palasa? (4) Bagaimana pelestarian tradisi pernikahan adat Popene'e pada masyarakat suku Lauje di Desa Palasa Kecamatan Palasa?. Artikel hasil Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan kebudayaan masyarakat di Desa Palasa Kecamatan Palasa, mendeskripsikan pelaksanaan tradisi pernikahan suku Lauje, menganalisis makna tradisi Popene'e dalam pernikahan suku Lauje, serta menganalisis upaya pelestarian tradisi Popene'e sebagai warisan budaya masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yaitu observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Berdasarkan Hasil penelitian artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa masyarakat Desa Palasa masih mempertahankan kebudayaan yang diwariskan secara turun-temurun, yang terlihat dari bahasa, sistem pengetahuan, organisasi sosial, mata pencaharian, sistem religi, serta kesenian yang masih dijaga. Pelaksanaan pernikahan suku Lauje masih mengikuti tahapan adat yang berlaku, termasuk tradisi Popene'e yang memiliki makna sebagai penghormatan kepada orang tua, penerimaan pengantin perempuan dalam keluarga laki-laki, serta penguat hubungan kekeluargaan. Tradisi Popene'e juga masih terus dilestarikan melalui pewarisan nilai-nilai budaya dan pelaksanaannya dalam setiap pernikahan adat.

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1. Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic nation with diverse ethnicities, languages, religions, and cultures. This diversity is both a national treasure and a symbol of identity, reflected in the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika." Cultural diversity is not only a legacy from our ancestors but also a source of strength in strengthening our national identity (Saputra et al., 2025:30778).

Culture is everything related to the creativity, feelings, desires, and works of a society. Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Advancement of Culture states that customs are one of the objects of cultural advancement that must be protected, developed, and preserved. Humans and culture are inextricably linked because humans create culture and are also shaped by it through social interactions and daily life (Mahdeyani et al., 2019:154).

Traditional societal culture passed down from generation to generation is called tradition. Tradition is the result of human creation and work, which can take the form of customs, arts, beliefs, or habits passed down from the past to the present (Muharam et al., 2023:15; Salamah et al., 2023:151). Traditions that remain alive in society become part of the identity and social life of the community that supports them.

Tradition is also present in Indonesian traditional weddings. Traditional marriage is not only a relationship between a man and a woman, but also a process of uniting two families, encompassing symbolic values, customs, local wisdom, and social and cultural values. The forms of traditional marriage in Indonesia are diverse and related to the kinship system and social structure of the local community (Nurlita et al., 2023:100).

One community that still maintains traditional wedding traditions is the Lauje tribe in Palasa Village, Palasa District, Parigi Moutong Regency, Central Sulawesi. The Lauje people still uphold the customs inherited from their ancestors, including in the implementation of traditional weddings (Sunuh, 2020:227). One tradition that is still practiced is Popene'e, which is the first visit by the bride and groom to the home of the groom's family or parents after the wedding. This tradition symbolizes respect for the parents and marks the acceptance of the bride as part of the groom's family (Baso Malla, HA et al., 2021:332).

The Popene'e tradition holds significant social and cultural significance in the lives of the Lauje people. It reflects togetherness, cooperation, mutual respect, strengthening family ties, and community solidarity. Therefore, Popene'e is seen not only as a series of

wedding ceremonies but also as a tradition meaningful to the community's social life (Sulis et al., 2025:63-70).

Theoretically, culture can be understood through several perspectives. Edward Burnett Taylor viewed culture as a complex whole encompassing knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and habits acquired by humans as members of society. Clifford Geertz viewed culture as a historically interwoven pattern of meanings manifested through symbols. Meanwhile, Bronislaw Malinowski viewed culture as a form of human adaptation to the environment and an effort to maintain survival based on the traditions of a society.

Based on these three perspectives, Clifford Geertz's theory is most relevant for this research because the Popene'e tradition contains various cultural symbols and meanings. Each stage, action, and rule in Popene'e can be understood as a symbol reflecting the values, beliefs, and outlook on life of the Lauje people. This tradition also serves as a means of conveying and passing on cultural values to the next generation.

Traditions are customs passed down from generation to generation and maintained by a society. Van Reusen (1992:115) explains that traditions are a legacy encompassing the rules, customs, and norms that exist within a society. However, traditions are not rigid and can evolve according to the behavior and lifestyle of the community.

According to WJS Poerwadarminta (1976), tradition is everything related to community life and continues continuously, such as culture, habits, customs, and beliefs. Meanwhile, Johanes Mardimin (1994:12) views tradition as hereditary habits that become collective habits and the collective consciousness of a society.

Based on these theories, Van Reusen's (1992:115) view is most relevant to this research because the Popene'e Tradition is a traditional heritage encompassing the rules, norms, and customs of the Lauje people. This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and is still practiced in community life today.

According to Hilman Hadikusuma (2003:70), traditional marriage is a marriage ceremony whose procedures are carried out according to the prevailing customary rules and are passed down through generations by the community. Therefore, traditional marriage is not only related to the relationship between a man and a woman, but also forms part of the social and cultural life of the community.

According to Nurlita et al. (2025), marriage is a socio-cultural institution carried out through a series of

customs and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation, are full of symbols, and reflect the values, norms, and identity of the local community.

Based on these two perspectives, Hilman Hadikusuma's theory (2003:70) is most relevant to this research because the Popene'e Tradition is part of the Lauje tribe's traditional wedding rites. This tradition is carried out based on customary rules and customs that have been passed down from generation to generation and hold value and meaning for the community.

Preservation is the effort to protect and preserve something so that it continues to exist and can be passed on to future generations. In a cultural context, preservation aims to maintain values, norms, traditions, and cultural identity so that they are not lost to the passage of time.

According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), cultural preservation is an effort to maintain cultural heritage and local identity by passing on values, norms, traditions, and cultural symbols from one generation to the next. Meanwhile, AW Widjaja (1986) explains that preservation is an activity carried out continuously, directed, and integrated to achieve certain goals, while still considering the dynamic and evolving nature of culture.

This study uses Koentjaraningrat's (2009) theory, which is considered the most relevant because the Popene'e Tradition is a cultural heritage of the Lauje Tribe that is maintained through the process of passing on values, norms, symbols, and customs to the next generation. This theory can be used to analyze how the Popene'e Tradition is maintained as part of the cultural identity of the Lauje Tribe in Palasa Village, Palasa District.

Based on the theoretical description, the research on the Popene'e Tradition in the Lauje Tribe's Traditional Wedding in Palasa Village, Palasa District focuses on three main aspects, namely cultural meaning, traditional wedding traditions, and cultural preservation. Clifford Geertz's theory is used to understand the meaning and symbols in the Popene'e Tradition, Van Reusen's theory is used to understand Popene'e as a tradition that is inherited and developed in society, Hilman Hadikusuma's theory is used to understand its position as part of traditional marriage, while Koentjaraningrat's theory is used to analyze efforts to preserve the tradition.

The Popene'e tradition is not only a series of activities in a wedding, but also a symbol of respect for parents, acceptance of new family members, strengthening family relationships, togetherness, responsibility, and a means of maintaining the cultural

identity of the Lauje people (Baso Malla, HA et al., 2021:332; Sulis et al., 2025:63–70).

2. Method

Types of research

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. According to Sugiyono (2014:1), qualitative research is conducted in natural settings and produces qualitative data. This method is widely used to understand social and cultural phenomena in depth.

A qualitative descriptive approach was used because this study aims to directly describe the implementation and meaning of the Popene'e Tradition in Lauje weddings in Palasa Village, Palasa District. Research data were obtained through written words, observations, interviews, and documentation. Qualitative methods produce descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words, as well as observed behavior (Bogdan and Taylor in Baso Malla, HA et al., 2021).

Location and Time of Research

The research was conducted in Palasa Village, Palasa District, Parigi Moutong Regency, Central Sulawesi. This location was chosen because the Lauje people in Palasa Village still maintain and practice the Popene'e tradition in wedding ceremonies.

Initial observations were conducted on October 9, 2025, while the research was carried out for approximately one month after the issuance of the research permit.

Research Subjects

The research subjects were traditional figures, traditional elders, and community figures who knew, understood, and were involved in the implementation of the Popene'e Tradition at Lauje Tribe weddings in Palasa Village.

Data Types and Sources

This study uses qualitative data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation to understand the implementation and meaning of the Popene'e Tradition.

Data sources consist of:

Primary data, namely data obtained directly from the research location through observation, interviews, and documentation of the Popene'e Tradition procession. Research informants included traditional leaders, traditional elders, and community leaders of Palasa Village.

1. Secondary data, namely supporting data obtained from various library sources, such as books, articles, journals,

scientific works, and previous research that is relevant to the research.

Data collection technique

Data collection was carried out using three techniques, namely:

1. Observation

Observation is a data collection technique by observing ongoing activities (Syadiah in Satori & Komariah, 2014:64). In this study, observations were conducted by observing the cultural life of the Palasa Village community, the implementation of traditional Lauje tribal weddings, the stages of the Popene'e Tradition, the meanings contained therein, and the community's efforts to preserve the tradition.

2. Interview

An interview is a question-and-answer process between a researcher and a source to obtain information, opinions, and experiences related to the research object. Esterberg in Sugiyono (2014:72) explains that an interview is a meeting between two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers.

In this study, interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, traditional elders involved in the Popene'e Tradition, and community leaders who understand the tradition.

3. Documentation

Documentation is used to supplement and strengthen data from observations and interviews. According to Sugiyono (2014:82), documents are records of past events and can be in the form of writing, drawings, or other works.

The documentation in this research is in the form of notes, interview recordings, photos, and videos of the implementation of the Popene'e Tradition in Lauje Tribe weddings in Palasa Village.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted systematically on interview results, field notes, and documentation. According to Sugiyono (2024:131), data analysis involves organizing, describing, compiling, selecting important data, and drawing conclusions to ensure the research results are easily understood.

Data analysis in this study consists of three stages:

1. Data Reduction

Data reduction was carried out by summarizing, selecting, and focusing on data deemed important according to the research focus. Data from observations and interviews were objectively selected to obtain

information related to the implementation, meaning, and preservation of the Popene'e Tradition.

2. Data Presentation

The reduced data is then organized and presented in descriptive narrative form. The data is presented systematically to ensure the relationships between the information are easily understood and can be used to address the research problem.

3. Drawing Conclusions

The final stage is drawing conclusions based on the reduced and presented data. The conclusions contain the core research findings regarding the implementation, meaning, and preservation of the Popene'e Tradition in Lauje weddings in Palasa Village, Palasa District.

3. Results and Discussion

Results

Culture of the Palasa Village Community

The research results show that the Lauje people in Palasa Village, Palasa District, still maintain their culture and customs, which have been passed down through generations. This can be seen in seven elements: language, knowledge systems, social relations, equipment and technology systems, livelihoods, religious systems, and the arts.

The Lauje language is still known and used, especially by older residents. The younger generation uses Indonesian more frequently in their daily lives, but most still understand Lauje. This demonstrates that regional languages still hold a place in the community's cultural identity.

In terms of knowledge systems, society has experienced development primarily through education. Younger generations are increasingly pursuing higher education, but knowledge of customs, traditions, and lifestyles is still taught by their parents. Social ties also remain strong. Mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, respect for elders, and maintaining family ties are still evident in weddings, religious ceremonies, and other social activities.

Living equipment and technology have changed as people have adopted more practical, modern tools. However, traditional equipment is still used in certain traditional activities. People's livelihoods are still largely tied to natural conditions, primarily as farmers, gardeners, and fishermen, although some people also work as traders, civil servants, and in other occupations.

In terms of religious life, the Palasa Village community is predominantly Muslim, with Christian, Catholic, and Hindu communities also present. Religious differences do not diminish social ties, as the community continues to live in harmony and respect each other. In the arts, the community still maintains traditional arts used in certain activities, although interest in some forms of art by some younger generations is beginning to wane.

This condition is in line with the views of Clifford Geertz (1973) which views culture as a pattern of meaning formed historically and expressed through symbols. In the lives of the Palasa Village community, customs, language, traditions, and various forms of social activities are part of the symbols that demonstrate the community's identity and are passed down from generation to generation.

Implementation of Wedding Traditions

The results of the study show that The Lauje wedding ceremony in Palasa Village still follows traditional customs passed down from previous generations. The wedding ceremony begins with a discussion or proposal of marriage between families, followed by a deliberation to determine the date and various wedding preparations, followed by the marriage contract, and finally, the Popene'e ceremony. Family, neighbors, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and the surrounding community all assist in the preparations.

The proposal is the initial step in conveying the groom's intentions to the bride's family. After an agreement is reached, both families hold a meeting to discuss the timing and requirements for the wedding. Preparations for the venue are also carried out together, including setting up the tent, preparing the venue, cooking, and other necessary supplies.

After the marriage contract, the wedding ceremony continues with Popene'e. The ceremony comprises rules regarding the sequence of stages, equipment, and the parties involved. The community still respects these rules, ensuring that traditions are not carried out haphazardly. Changes have occurred more in the use of equipment and more practical preparation methods due to modern developments.

This situation aligns with Van Reusen's theory of tradition, which views tradition as a legacy encompassing rules, customs, and norms that exist within a society. Traditions may undergo changes in certain aspects, but their core values remain intact. In Lauje weddings, community involvement is one factor that keeps traditions alive and passed down to the next generation.

The meaning of the Popene'e tradition in Lauje ethnic weddings

The Popene'e tradition has a broader meaning than simply a post-wedding visit. Research shows that this tradition symbolizes respect for the groom's parents and family, a sign of the bride's acceptance as part of her husband's family, and a means of strengthening ties between the two families. This tradition is carried out after the wedding ceremony and marks the first visit by the bride and groom to the groom's family home.

The Popene'e ceremony still follows traditional customs passed down through generations and involves the bride and groom, their families, and traditional leaders. The Popene'e tradition consists of six stages. Each stage carries a specific meaning. Some of the stages in the procession include: *Bride's Welcome* or welcoming the bride and groom, the process of *mongkoni alatu wahu jopa mogahu* or using traditional equipment, or bringing kitchen and cooking equipment, reading prayers of congratulations, *Mopanange* or eating together, and *sungkeman* to the groom's family.

The procession begins with the *Monyambute Pengantin* (wedding rite) as a form of welcoming and accepting the bride by the groom's family. Next, the activities of peeling coconuts, splitting wood, and slicing banana leaves symbolize the husband's responsibility and the hope that the relationship between the two families will remain harmonious and united. *Mongunjae Baki* carries hopes for health, longevity, and a good household life. *Mongkoni Alatu Wahu Jopa Mogahu* symbolizes the acceptance of the bride and responsibilities in the household. The recitation of prayers is a request for blessings and safety for the bride and groom, while *Mopanange*, or eating together, symbolizes togetherness, mutual respect, and cooperation between husband and wife. The entire Popene'e series also serves as a form of respect for parents and family and strengthens the relationship between the two families.

The core values of the Popene'e tradition include respect for parents, acceptance of new family members, husband and wife responsibilities, togetherness, family, and cultural preservation. These values are the reason the Lauje people maintain the Popene'e tradition in their married life.

These findings indicate that Popene'e is inseparable from the traditional marriage of the Lauje people. This aligns with Hilman Hadikusuma's theory (2003:70), which explains that traditional marriages are conducted based on customary provisions and procedures passed down through generations. Therefore, Popene'e is part of the traditional marriage system, serving social and cultural functions for the Lauje people.

Preserving the Popene'e Tradition

The Popene'e tradition is still practiced by the Lauje people at every traditional wedding. Preservation is primarily achieved by maintaining the tradition and involving the younger generation in the traditional procession. Parents and families provide opportunities for the younger generation to witness and participate directly so they can understand the procedures and values inherent in Popene'e.

While there have been changes due to the times, these changes are most evident in the increasingly practical equipment and preparation methods. Meanwhile, the core stages and values of Popene'e remain intact, particularly respect for elders, togetherness, and family ties.

These findings align with Koentjaraningrat's (2009) theory, which views cultural preservation as an effort to maintain cultural heritage and local identity by passing on cultural values to future generations. In the context of the Lauje community, Popene'e is not only maintained as a form of wedding procession, but also as a cultural heritage and local identity that distinguishes the Lauje community from other communities.

Discussion

The research results show that Popene'e is a tradition that serves social, cultural, and symbolic functions in the lives of the Lauje people. This tradition serves as a means of introducing the bride to the groom's extended family, building relationships between the two families, and affirming the bride's acceptance as part of the husband's family. The existence of Popene'e also demonstrates that customs still hold a significant place in the lives of the Lauje people.

From Geertz's perspective, the various stages of Popene'e can be understood as symbols with specific meanings. This tradition serves as a medium for conveying the community's values and outlook on life regarding respect for parents, domestic life, responsibility, togetherness, and family relationships. Meanwhile, based on Koentjaraningrat's theory, the continuity of Popene'e demonstrates a process of cultural inheritance that continues through direct practice and the involvement of the younger generation.

Therefore, the Popene'e Tradition is not only part of a traditional wedding ceremony, but also a way of passing on the values, identity, and culture of the Lauje people. Its continued existence demonstrates the community's awareness of preserving their ancestral heritage, even as its implementation has begun to adapt to changing times.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the meaning of the Popene'e tradition in Lauje tribal weddings in Palasa Village, Palasa District, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. Community culture in Palasa Village, Palasa District is still well-preserved and a part of people's daily lives. This culture is evident in the continued use of regional languages, the continued development of community knowledge without abandoning traditional values, strong social ties, livelihoods largely derived from natural resources, harmonious religious life, and the preservation of traditional arts. People view culture as a legacy from their ancestors that must be preserved to prevent it from being lost to the times.
2. Implementation of wedding traditions in Palasa Village, Palasa District still follows traditional customs passed down through generations. The wedding ceremony is carried out through several stages, from family discussions, wedding preparations, the marriage contract, and the implementation of the Popene'e tradition. Although there have been slight changes in the equipment and facilities used due to technological advances, the traditional customs and values embodied in the wedding ceremony are still maintained by the community.
3. The meaning of the Popene'e tradition in Lauje tribal weddings is not only a series of post-wedding customs, but it also holds profound meaning for the community. This tradition symbolizes respect for parents and extended family, signifies the bride's acceptance as part of her husband's family, strengthens family ties between both parties, and serves as a symbol of togetherness, mutual respect, and maintaining harmony in community life. The Popene'e tradition is also part of the cultural identity of the Lauje people and is still maintained to this day.
4. Preservation of the Popene'e traditional wedding tradition is done through various efforts, namely by continuing to carry out the Popene'e tradition in every traditional wedding, passing on traditional values to the younger generation through family and traditional leaders, maintaining the cultural identity of the Lauje community, and involving the community in every tradition implementation. These efforts show that the people of Palasa Village have a high awareness to maintain cultural heritage so that it remains known and passed on to the next generation as part of the local cultural identity.

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