

THE MEANING OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTION IN THE PROCESS OF PIKAMBOLAKUA CEREMONY

La Yusran^{1*}, Ansar Suherman², M.Rizal Ardiansah Putra³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Muhammadiyah Buton

***Corresponding author, E-mail : layusran2@gmail.com**

Abstract

Purpose of this research is to examine “The Meaning of Symbolic Interaction in the Process of Pikambolakua Ceremony of Buton Tribe, Lapandewa Kaindea Village, Lapandewa Subdistrict”. Researching the meaning of symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony because it can be used as a step to find out the meaning and purpose in the implementation of the traditional ceremony. This type of research is qualitative research based on inductive thinking patterns, which are based on participatory objective observation of a symptom (phenomenon). Understanding phenomena from the context of participants, social, and institutions is the main goal of qualitative research, which also aims to simplify the findings to explain the problem. the main results of the research on the Pikambolakua ceremony in Lapandewa Village, which involved direct observation and interviews with the local community, will be presented. The findings show that the ceremony consists of several important stages, from preparation, ritual execution, to closing. Each stage has specific meanings and functions that contribute to the community's understanding of their relationship with the spiritual and social worlds. This research has examined the meaning of symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony process in the Lapandewa Kaindea Village community. Through various symbols, such as traditional clothing, ritual objects, and symbolic actions, the ceremony has not only become a tradition, but also serves as a mechanism for transmitting the values of the community.

Keywords: *Symbolic Interaction, Pikambolakua Ceremony, Cultural Meaning, Lapandewa Kaindea Village*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with diverse tribes and makes Indonesia a country rich in traditions, customs, and culture. Of the many traditions and cultures in Indonesia, one of them is the Pikambolakua ceremony (circumcision) tradition originating from the Buton tribe located in Lapandewa Kaindea Village, South Buton Regency. In the customs of the Buton tribe, the Pikambolakua ceremony is the next issue in the knowledge of self-purification, a kind of holiness in Buton society.

The Pikambolakua ceremony carried out by the Buton tribe in the Lapandewa Kaindea Village area which is still preserved to this day is a legacy of ancestors that is passed down to their descendants from generation to generation so that it is preserved and

maintained as a form of appreciation for the ancestral heritage. Ancestral heritage is usually in the form of traditions, customs and habits. Traditions are more oriented towards beliefs and ritual activities that develop and take root in society and have become a tradition.

Culture is our social heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation, of course it is very necessary for us to continue to maintain and preserve culture. Culture plays an important role in human life, culture does not grow and form by itself but rather is present because of a process. Humans always build good relationships with other individuals. Of course, humans need reciprocal relationships with other individuals through interaction to achieve a goal, so that a tradition is formed that is built from a mutual agreement.

The traditions and cultures that exist in a region vary, as well as the culture and traditions of Pikambolakua both in terms of culture and the symbols used in interacting and communicating. Circumcision is part of Islamic law for Muslims which is obligatory to be carried out. Circumcision is cutting off part of the body in order to maintain and remove dirt. Thus, circumcision makes the body healthier and free from dirt (Faris 2014).

The culture in a region is different. Both in terms of its own culture and the symbols used in interacting and communicating are also different. As in the Pikambolakua culture, the customs and culture used are not exactly the same as other cultures. Communication also has a very close influence related to culture, especially in the Pikambolakua culture, especially traditional/customary Pikambolakua. Communication is a means of interacting as an effort or activity to convey ideas or thoughts to others. Based on its nature, the scope of communication is divided into two parts, namely verbal communication in the form of language that uses words, either spoken or written, and nonverbal communication as a substitute for verbal messages, complements verbal messages, and as an accentuation of verbal messages (L. Rudy Rustandi 2022).

One form of nonverbal communication is a symbol. Symbols in the form of objects are the result of human craftsmanship, both those that are inherent in humans and those intended for the public interest. A symbol is a thing or condition that leads to the understanding of a subject or object. This means that symbols lead to uniqueness to better understand the contents of the message contained therein. This is due to the multifunctional nature of symbols, namely that in addition to being a medium of communication, they can also express the emotions of the contents of the message that cannot be conveyed only verbally. From this description, symbolic communication is a

communication process that uses symbols or symbols that contain certain intentions and that lead to understanding of the symbols or symbols and in accordance with mutual agreement.

In communication, there are also several functions, including ritual communication related to rituals carried out by humans every day, such as traditional circumcision ceremonies and so on. So that the focus of the culture that will be studied is the components of culture, namely the belief system, especially the traditional circumcision culture because people often do not know why traditional circumcision is carried out and the symbolic interactions used in the circumcision ceremony. And the function of communication in a Buton tribe circumcision ritual event, especially the Lapandewa Kaindea Buton.

The Tribe Groups include the Lapandewa Kaindea Tribe, Lapandewa Sempa-Sempa, Lapandewa Rongi, Lapandewa Kaungke Ungkea and in the current development, Lapandewa and Lapandewa Jaya. In the Pikambolakua process, the Buton Lapandewa Kaindea Tribe uses many symbols or emblems in interacting. Many people do not understand the meaning and intent of other communities.

Research on Pikambolakua or circumcision has existed before. The research was conducted by Halisan on the Kangkilo Tradition (circumcision) in instilling moral and ethical values in children. This research is to see how the Kangkilo tradition in instills moral and ethical values in early childhood which include: Religious Values, Cultural Values, Mutual Cooperation Values and Ethical/Moral Values. Departing from this research, the researcher is interested in examining the meaning of symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua (circumcision) ceremony in Lapandewa Kaindea Village.

Based on the results of initial observations in the field, the researcher found

that in the Pikambolakua ceremony, the people of Lapandewa Kaindea Village interacted using many symbols or emblems. Many people do not understand the meaning and intent of each form of movement element in the implementation of the Pikambolakua ceremony, such as carrying circumcision equipment or in the local language, *kamparanga*, which has a deep spiritual meaning in human life between men and women who live side by side. The Pikambolakua ceremony itself has the aim of converting participants who take part in circumcision (Pikambolakua) in the Lapandewa Kaindea community to Islam.

Based on the results of observations in the field, the researcher is interested in researching "The Meaning of Symbolic Interaction in the Pikambolakua Ceremony Process of the Buton Tribe, Lapandewa Kaindea Village, Lapandewa District." Researching the meaning of symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony because it can be used as a step to find out the meaning and purpose in implementing the traditional ceremony.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research conducted by Halisan, 2021 with the title *Kangkilo tradition (circumcision) in instilling moral and ethical values in children*. The method used in this study is qualitative with a descriptive research type. The results of this study *Kangkilo tradition in instilling moral and ethical values in early childhood include: Religious values, cultural values, mutual cooperation values and ethical/moral values*. Meanwhile, community efforts in maintaining the *Kangkilo tradition traditional ceremony in the Wasilomata 2 Village Community are: Involving family institutions, traditional institutions and government institutions in collaboration*.

Research conducted by Nasam Rumau, 2021 with the title of the research *Traditional*

circumcision ceremony in the community of the Sera Administrative Village, Pulau Gorom District, East Seram Regency, reviewed from the principles of religious sociology. The results of this study *The form of implementation of the traditional circumcision ceremony for the Sera Administrative Village community which is called dasale (circumcision) in its implementation, circumcision is carried out preparations starting from prayer, reading barzanji, a knife is used to cut the genitals of children who are circumcised. Coconut shells are provided with sand for blood, cloth for children, after the circumcision process for two to three days the circumcised children take a saltwater bath so that the wounds on the genitals will heal quickly, the end of all that is the reading of a prayer of congratulations for the completion of the Pikambolakua event. The basis for the process of implementing circumcision for children is in accordance with the demands of Islamic law accompanied by the customs of the Sera Village community in Pulau Gorom District which is used as local wisdom*.

Research conducted by Ananda Anugrah Budi Salmani, 2019 with the research title *Tradition of circumcision of Makassarese girls in Balikpapan*. The results of this study show the main conclusions. The form of stages and values contained in the tradition of circumcision of Makassarese girls in Balikpapan, provide research suggestions.

METHODOLOGY

This type of research is a qualitative research that is based on an inductive thought pattern, which is based on the observation of a participatory objective towards a symptom (phenomenon). Understanding the phenomenon from the context of participants, social, and institutions is the main goal of qualitative research, which also aims to simplify the findings to explain the problem.

This type of understanding is not predetermined, but rather, it is achieved by first analyzing the facts surrounding the research topic (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULTS

This chapter will present the main results of the research on the Pikambolakua ceremony in Lapandewa Village, which involved direct observation and interviews with local people. The research findings show that this ceremony consists of several important stages, starting from preparation, ritual implementation, to closing. Each stage has a specific meaning and function that contributes to the community's understanding of their relationship with the spiritual and social world. Furthermore, the research reveals how participants interact with these symbols, and how this interaction strengthens the meaning of the ritual personally and collectively. Community perceptions of the Pikambolakua ceremony indicate that this ritual is an important element in maintaining cultural identity and strengthening social ties within the community. This finding is also in line with the symbolic interaction theory, which explains that meaning is created through social interaction and symbols. Thus, the research results provide insight into how symbols and rituals function in the cultural and social context of the Lapandewa community.

Symbolic Interaction in the Pikambolakua Circumcision Ceremony Process

The Pikambolakua circumcision ceremony is an important ritual in the lives of the people of Kaindea Village, Lapandewa District. This ritual is not just a physical procession, but also contains a wealth of meaning and symbolic interaction that reflects the values, beliefs, and cultural identity of the local community.

Symbolic interaction in the context of the Pikambolakua ceremony refers to the process of exchanging meaning through

symbols used during the ritual. These symbols can be physical objects, movements, speech, or even silence that have special meanings for the participants in the ceremony. Through interaction with these symbols, the people of Kaindea Village not only carry out the ritual, but also reaffirm their collective identity, strengthen social ties, and pass on cultural values to the next generation.

In the Pikambolakua ceremony, symbolic interaction occurs at various levels. Starting from the interaction between the leader of the ceremony and the participants, the interaction between participants, to the interaction of the community with ritual objects and the ceremonial environment. Every element in the ceremony, from the traditional clothes worn, the objects used, to the series of actions carried out, has its own meaning that is understood and interpreted by the community.

This process of meaning is not static, but rather dynamic and continues to develop along with changing times. The Kaindea Village community actively interprets and negotiates the meaning of symbols in the ceremony, adapting them to the contemporary social and cultural context, while maintaining the essence of tradition.

The study of symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony is important for understanding how the Kaindea Village community builds, maintains, and passes on their cultural identity. Furthermore, this understanding can provide insight into the role of traditional rituals in strengthening social cohesion and maintaining the continuity of cultural heritage amidst the flow of modernization.

In the following sections, various aspects of symbolic interaction that occur in the Pikambolakua ceremony will be described in more detail, starting from the description of the ceremony, forms of symbolic interaction, the meaning of symbols, to the process of interpretation and transmission of meaning in

the Kaindea Village community.

Description of the Pikambolakua circumcision ceremony

The Pikambolakua circumcision ceremony is a traditional ritual that has an important meaning in the lives of the people of Kaindea Village, Lapandewa District. This ritual marks the transition phase of a boy towards adulthood and is considered a form of initiation into the social structure of the community.

The term "Pikambolakua" comes from the local language, where "Pika" means to cut or circumcise, and "Mbolakua" refers to the concept of change or transformation. Literally, Pikambolakua can be interpreted as a cutting ritual that brings change. The background of this ceremony is rooted in local beliefs that combine elements of Islam with local customary traditions.

This ceremony is believed to be not only a physical procession, but also a spiritual ritual that cleanses and prepares boys to enter a new stage of life. The people of Kaindea Village view Pikambolakua as a means to instill cultural values, ethics, and responsibility in the younger generation

Today, Tutura Kalawati is not only seen as a traditional ritual, but also as an important symbol in preserving Buton culture. The community sees it as a form of pride in local identity and a medium to teach local wisdom values to the younger generation. This tradition continues to be passed down from generation to generation, although there are some adaptations to keep it relevant to modern society. Overall, the history of Tutura Kalawati reflects the strength of local culture in maintaining identity amidst the dynamics of social change. This tradition is not only an important element in the spiritual life of the community, but also functions as a means to maintain social unity and cultural pride in Wasamba Village.

This ceremony is believed to be not

only a physical procession, but also a spiritual ritual that cleanses and prepares the boys to enter a new stage of life. The Kaindea Village community views Pikambolakua as a means to instill cultural values, ethics, and responsibility to the younger generation.

The stages in the Pikambolakua ceremony begin with preparations called Poposadia. At this stage, the family of the child to be circumcised holds a meeting to determine a good time for the ceremony. Logistical preparations are also carried out, including a ritual of cleansing oneself and the house by the family as part of spiritual preparation.

After the preparations are complete, the pick-up stage or Pekaalano is carried out, where the traditional group picks up the child from his home. The child is then taken to the ceremony site accompanied by traditional music as a symbol of respect and togetherness.

The next stage is a cleansing ritual known as Kaombo. At this stage, the child to be circumcised is bathed with water that has been given special prayers by the traditional leader. The water is believed to have the power to cleanse the child physically and spiritually before the circumcision procession is carried out.

The core procession of the ceremony is called Pikambolakua, where the circumcision is carried out by a traditional circumcision expert or "sando". Throughout this procession, prayers and traditional mantras are recited to provide blessings and protection for the child. After the core procession is complete, a celebration or Haroa is held. This celebration is a form of gratitude for the success of the circumcision procession and involves the entire village community in an atmosphere of togetherness and joy.

The last stage in the ceremony is post-circumcision or Kapiara, which is the recovery period for children who have just been circumcised. During this period, the child receives special care and is taught traditional

values by his family, as part of character building and respect for tradition.

In the Pikambolakua ceremony, various equipment and symbols are used, each containing a deep philosophical meaning, reflecting the cultural and spiritual values of the Kaindea Village community.

First, special traditional clothing is worn by the child who is to be circumcised. This clothing symbolizes his new status as someone who is entering adulthood, marking the transition from childhood to greater responsibility. Next, the heirloom keris is used in the ritual as a symbol of masculinity and responsibility. This knife is not only a traditional weapon, but also a symbol of strength, courage, and wisdom that the child is expected to have after undergoing the circumcision procession.

Betel nut also plays an important role in the ceremony, symbolizing fertility and wisdom. Its presence in the ritual reflects the hope that the child will grow into a wise person and be able to contribute to the continuity of life and the customs of the community.

Holy water is used in the cleansing ritual, symbolizing purity and rebirth. The water is believed to have the power to cleanse spiritually, preparing the child to undergo a new phase of life with a pure heart. White cloth is used to cover the area to be circumcised, symbolizing purity. The color white is often associated with purity and integrity, reflecting the hope that the circumcised child will live a life full of honesty and virtue. Torches are also an important part of the procession. The torches used symbolize illumination and guidance in life. The fire from these torches is considered a symbol of light that will guide the child in facing the future and life's challenges.

Overall, each stage and equipment in the Pikambolakua ceremony is not only a physical ritual, but also a means of transmitting cultural and spiritual values. This ceremony serves as a sign of physical maturity, as well as

a medium to strengthen social ties and preserve cultural knowledge in society.

In order to find out more about the Pikambolakua ceremony, researchers conducted an interview with a traditional figure, namely Mr. La Base, as follows:

"Pikambolakua is not just an ordinary circumcision. This is a sacred ritual, a boy's entrance into adulthood. Every step has meaning, from bathing in flowers to wearing traditional clothes. We do this so that our children are ready to become real men, have responsibilities to their families and villages."

Based on the interview above, it can be seen that the Pikambolakua Ceremony is a traditional circumcision ritual that has been rooted in the traditions of the Kaindea Village community since the time of their ancestors. More than just a physical procession, this ceremony functions as a symbolic gateway for boys to enter adulthood. This ritual consists of a series of stages that are full of meaning, from self-cleansing rituals to prayer and communal feasts. Each element in this ceremony is designed to instill life values and responsibilities in the participants. For the Kaindea community, Pikambolakua is not just a tradition, but a cultural mechanism to preserve ancestral heritage and strengthen social ties in the Kaindea village.

Forms of symbolic interaction in ceremonies

Symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony occurs through various forms involving the leader of the ceremony and the participants, reflecting a relationship that is full of spiritual and cultural meaning. The leader of the ceremony, usually a traditional figure or priest called "sando", plays a key role in guiding the procession.

One of the dominant forms of symbolic interaction is through the recitation of prayers and mantras. The leader of the ceremony recites prayers and mantras in the local language, which are believed to have spiritual power.

These words are uttered with great respect, and the participants of the ceremony respond with a solemn attitude, acknowledging every prayer uttered as a sign of receiving blessings and protection for the circumcised child.

Ritual movements are also an important part of symbolic interaction in Pikambolakua. The leader of the ceremony performs a series of symbolic movements, such as sprinkling holy water or swinging a sacred knife. These movements not only have a ritual function, but are also full of symbolic meaning, reflecting spiritual cleansing and protection. Participants in the ceremony observe carefully, and in some cases, they also imitate these movements as a form of active participation in the process, showing that they are emotionally and spiritually involved.

In addition, symbolic interaction occurs through the delivery of advice by the leader of the ceremony. Before and after the main procession, the leader gives advice to the circumcised child and his family. This advice is delivered in the form of allusions or traditional expressions that are rich in philosophical meaning. These expressions reflect the moral values and wisdom that are expected to be applied by the child after the procession, marking their transition to a more responsible stage of life.

Through these various forms of symbolic interaction, the Pikambolakua ceremony becomes an important means of transmitting customary values, strengthening social ties, and maintaining harmony in society.

Symbolic interactions in the Pikambolakua ceremony not only occur between the leader of the ceremony and the participants, but also between the participants and the community with the cultural symbols used. Each form of interaction strengthens the social and cultural ties of the Kaindea Village community, and becomes an important means of transmitting traditional values.

Interactions between participants in the

ceremony involve symbolic actions that strengthen social relations between them. One form of this interaction is the exchange of betel nuts. Offering and receiving betel nuts in the ceremony symbolizes brotherhood and togetherness. This tradition reflects the collective commitment of the community to maintain harmonious relations and strengthen social solidarity.

In addition, mutual cooperation in the preparation and implementation of the ceremony shows communal values that are highly respected in society. Every member of the family, relatives, and community participates in this process, both in the form of labor and materials, which reflects cooperation and mutual support between each other. This is an important symbol of collective strength in society. Non-verbal interactions are also an important part of the relationship between participants in the ceremony. The gestures, facial expressions, and body postures used by participants have special meanings in the context of the ceremony. For example, a smile, a nod, or a respectful silence are non-verbal cues that indicate acceptance, respect, and involvement in the procession.

In addition to interactions between participants, there are also symbolic interactions between the community and the symbols used in the Pikambolakua ceremony. The traditional clothing worn by participants, especially circumcised children, symbolizes respect for the traditions and cultural identity of the community. The use of traditional clothing in this context is a symbol of continuity and affirmation of community identity.

Ritual objects, such as heirloom keris and holy water, also act as a medium for symbolic interaction. The community treats these objects with great respect, because they represent high spiritual values. Interaction with these sacred objects reflects the community's belief in the power and symbolic meaning of these objects.

The presentation and consumption of traditional food is also part of the symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony. The traditional food served is not only a dish, but also a symbol of prosperity, togetherness, and gratitude. Through eating together, social ties between community members are strengthened, and their cultural identity is reaffirmed. Thus, each form of symbolic interaction plays an important role in deepening the meaning of the Pikambolakua ceremony. This ceremony is not only a ceremonial procession, but also a space where the values, norms, and beliefs of the Kaindea Village community are exchanged, reaffirmed, and passed on to the next generation. Through these interactions, the collective identity of the community is strengthened and preserved.

To learn more about the symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony, here is an interview with Mr. La Holi, a traditional figure in Kaindea village:

"Every element in this ceremony has a deep meaning. The prayers and mantras that are recited are not only rituals, but also a means of communication with ancestors and guardian spirits. Every word in the mantra has power; when we say it, we invite blessings and protection, not only for the circumcised child, but also for the entire community." La Holi also emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation in carrying out the ceremony. He said, "Cooperation between community members in preparing all the needs for the ceremony not only makes the procession run smoothly, but also strengthens social relations between us. Mutual cooperation is our way of showing our sense of brotherhood and commitment to keeping our traditions alive. Without mutual cooperation, the values of togetherness and solidarity will be lost."

Based on the interview above, it can be seen that symbolic interactions in the Pikambolakua ceremony are not only ceremonial, but also function as a medium to

strengthen social and spiritual relationships in society. La Holi highlights the important role of prayers and mantras as a form of communication with spiritual entities, indicating that this ritual has a deep religious dimension. In addition, the mutual cooperation explained by the informant underlines the importance of cooperation in strengthening community solidarity. These interactions are a means to ensure that cultural values and social norms are passed on to the next generation, making the Pikambolakua ceremony a pillar of the collective identity of the Kaindea Village community.

The meaning of symbols in the Pikambolakua ceremony

In the Pikambolakua ceremony, each element involved has a deep symbolic meaning, reflecting the beliefs, values, and outlook on life of the Kaindea Village community. This meaning emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage and spiritual values passed down from generation to generation. The following is an explanation of the meaning of the main symbols in the ceremony.

First, the traditional clothing used in the ceremony has an important meaning. Traditional clothing, which is often white or bright in color, symbolizes purity and hope for a bright future for the circumcised child. The color white reflects inner cleanliness and readiness to enter a new phase of life. In addition, the sarong or traditional woven cloth worn by the circumcised child often has motifs that have special meanings. For example, the tree of life motif symbolizes growth and sustainability of life, which is also a symbol of hope for the child. Head coverings, such as songkok or traditional headbands, symbolize honor and maturity, indicating that the child is considered ready to take on a greater role in society.

Ritual objects also have deep meanings. The heirloom keris, as one of the

important objects in the ceremony, symbolizes masculinity, responsibility, and protection. The use of the keris in this ritual is also seen as a bridge between the human world and the spiritual world, reflecting the community's belief that circumcision is an important moment in the relationship between humans and the universe. The holy water used in the cleansing ritual symbolizes spiritual purification and symbolic rebirth, reinforcing the importance of purity in entering a new phase of life. Betel nuts, which are often exchanged between participants in the ceremony, symbolize fertility, wisdom, and unity. The exchange of betel nuts is a symbol of acceptance and respect between members of the community. The torch or lamp used in the procession symbolizes illumination and guidance in life, as well as a symbol of hope for a better future for the child.

The symbolic movements and actions in the ceremony are also full of meaning. The procession around the village that is carried out before the circumcision symbolizes the farewell to childhood, as well as the introduction of the child to the community in his new status as a more mature individual. The cleansing ritual using holy water reflects physical and spiritual purification, which is necessary in preparation for entering a new phase of life. The reading of prayers and mantras by traditional leaders is considered a way of communicating with ancestors and spiritual powers. These prayers ask for protection, blessings, and a smooth procession. Meanwhile, hair cutting as part of the ritual symbolizes the release of childish traits and the acceptance of new responsibilities as an adult.

The symbols in the Pikambolakua ceremony are not static, but can change in meaning over time. However, the essence of these symbols remains intact as part of the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community. Through the interpretation of these symbols, the Pikambolakua ceremony is not only a ceremonial procession, but also an

important medium for transmitting cultural values, ethics, and outlooks on life from one generation to the next. In addition, this process also strengthens social ties in society, because a shared understanding of the meaning of these symbols creates a strong sense of togetherness and collective identity. In the Pikambolakua ceremony, each element involved has a deep symbolic meaning, which reflects the beliefs, values, and outlooks on life of the Kaindea Village community. This interpretation emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage and spiritual values that are passed down from generation to generation. The following is an explanation of the meaning of the main symbols in the ceremony.

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To further explore the explanation above, here is an interview with a cultural expert in Kaindea village, La Hendra. His statement is as follows:

"The traditional clothes we wear in the ceremony are not just decorations, but have deep meanings. The white or bright colored traditional clothes symbolize purity, hopes, and our prayers for the future of the circumcised child. Likewise with sarongs or woven cloth, the motifs often contain special meanings such as the tree of life which symbolizes growth and

sustainability of life. As for the objects in the Pikambolakua ceremony, the heirloom Keris for example, is not just a weapon, but a symbol of masculinity, responsibility, and protection. This is an ancestral heritage that connects us to the spiritual world. The holy water we use in the cleansing ritual symbolizes spiritual purification and rebirth. This is an important part of preparing the child to enter a new phase of life."

Based on the interview above, it can be seen that the symbols in the Pikambolakua ceremony not only have aesthetic meanings, but also reflect the value system and beliefs of the Kaindea Village community. La Hendra emphasized the importance of traditional clothing and ritual objects in transmitting cultural and spiritual values. Traditional clothing is a symbol of purity and hope, while ritual objects such as heirloom keris and holy water strengthen the bond between the human world and the spiritual world, and emphasize the social and spiritual responsibilities that must be carried out by individuals who undergo the ceremony. This symbolic interaction plays an important role in maintaining the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community.

These symbols are not only understood in the context of tradition, but are also internalized as part of a way of life that is passed down from generation to generation. Although the interpretation of these symbols can change over time, the essence and basic values contained in them are maintained as the foundation of the community's collective identity. This process of meaning-making helps maintain social unity and strengthens a sense of togetherness within the community.

The process of interpretation and transmission of meaning

The process of interpretation and transmission of meaning in the Pikambolakua ceremony is an important part of maintaining and continuing the cultural values of the Kaindea Village

community. The community not only carries out this ritual as part of its tradition, but also uses it as a means to strengthen their cultural identity through symbols that are rich in meaning. Every member of the community, from the young to the old, is involved in understanding, interpreting, and passing on the symbolic meanings contained in this ceremony.

The interpretation of the symbols in the Pikambolakua ceremony is often done informally. This process begins with direct observation and participation by community members, especially children and adolescents who participate in the preparation and implementation of the ceremony. Through active involvement in this activity, they can learn and understand the symbolic meaning of each action taken. In addition, this interpretation process also occurs through communal discussions that take place before and after the ceremony. In these informal forums, the meaning of the symbols is discussed openly by community members, providing space for the older generation to share their knowledge and understanding with the younger generation.

The role of traditional leaders or village elders is very important in this interpretation process. They are the source of authority in interpreting the symbols of the ceremony, providing in-depth explanations of each action taken. These traditional leaders are not only considered as guardians of tradition, but also as spiritual liaisons who have a deep understanding of the symbolic meaning of each element of the ritual. The community often relies on them to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of each symbol used.

In addition, the interpretation of symbols in Pikambolakua is often linked to the daily lives of the community. The people of Kaindea Village interpret the meaning of this ritual in a practical context and relevant to their life experiences. For example, the heirloom keris is not only seen as a ritual object, but also

as a symbol of responsibility and courage that are upheld in everyday life. In this way, the symbols in the ceremony become more than just sacred objects, but also represent the values lived by the community.

The process of passing on this understanding is carried out in various ways. One of the main ways is through oral narratives, where folktales, myths, and legends related to Pikambolakua are passed down from generation to generation. This narrative not only serves as entertainment, but also as a means to convey cultural values and symbolic meanings of rituals. In addition, the active participation of children and adolescents in the ceremony also plays an important role in transmitting cultural values. By being directly involved in the preparation and implementation of the ceremony, they gain a deep understanding of the meaning of each symbol and action performed.

Informal education in the family is also part of the process of passing on this meaning. Parents and older family members teach the meaning of symbols and rituals to their children through everyday conversations, both when preparing for the ceremony and in everyday life. This process strengthens the bonds between generations and ensures that cultural values remain alive.

Over time, the interpretation of the Pikambolakua symbols can change according to social and technological developments. However, despite changes in interpretation, the basic essence of the symbols is maintained. This adaptation shows that the Kaindea Village community has the ability to adapt their traditions to changing times without losing the core meaning of the ritual. Some communities have even begun documenting symbolic meanings in written form or audio-visual recordings, with the aim of ensuring that understanding of the Pikambolakua ritual can continue to be passed on to future generations.

Thus, the process of interpretation and

transmission of meaning in the Pikambolakua ceremony not only serves to preserve tradition, but also to strengthen the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community. Through this ceremony, the values, norms, and philosophies contained in the ritual continue to live and are relevant in everyday life. The flexibility and ability of the community to adapt the interpretation of symbols to social change demonstrates the resilience of their culture in facing the challenges of modernization, while maintaining the authenticity of their traditions.

To support the statement above, here is an interview with the head of Kaindea village, Mr. La Jaali:

"Understanding the meaning of the symbols in this ceremony does not just come. Usually, parents teach their children through stories and everyday conversations. We also often hold discussions after the ceremony, where traditional leaders and village elders explain the meaning of each ritual and symbol used. We always make sure that children and teenagers are directly involved in the preparation and implementation of the ceremony. That way, they not only learn theoretically, but also feel the meaning of every step taken. This is our way of ensuring that our cultural values and traditions remain alive and relevant, even in the midst of changing times."

The interview with the Village Head highlighted the importance of the process of interpretation and transmission of meaning in the Pikambolakua ceremony as a mechanism to maintain the continuity of the traditions and cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community. As La Jaali explains, informal learning through stories and everyday conversations and communal discussions play key role in understanding and passing on the meaning of ritual symbols.

The importance of active participation from the younger generation is also emphasized by La Jaali, who emphasizes that direct involvement in the ceremony not only provides

practical understanding but also strengthens a sense of togetherness and collective identity. This process illustrates how the people of Kaindea Village are able to maintain the essence of their culture while remaining flexible and adaptive to social change. This shows the resilience of their culture in the face of modernization, while maintaining the relevance and sustainability of traditional values in the context of contemporary life.

Through a continuous process of interpretation and transmission, the Pikambolakua ceremony becomes not only a ritual, but also a means of strengthening social ties and solidifying the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community, ensuring that this tradition remains an integral part of their lives in the future.

DISCUSSION

Symbolic Interaction in the Pikambolakua Circumcision Ceremony Process

In this chapter, we will discuss further the meaning of symbolic interactions that are established during the Pikambolakua ceremony in Kaindea Village, Lapandewa District. This ceremony is not only a physical ritual, but also an important medium in strengthening the cultural values and collective identity of the local community. Through this ceremony, various symbols that have deep meanings are used to convey social, religious, and cultural messages to participants and spectators.

This discussion will describe how the Kaindea Village community interprets each element in the Pikambolakua ceremony, from the use of ritual objects to the actions carried out during the ceremony. The meaning contained in each symbol is understood and interpreted by the community as part of a cultural heritage that continues to be maintained and adapted to the times.

In the context of symbolic interaction, each symbol used during the Pikambolakua

ceremony contains a message that strengthens social relations, emphasizes cultural identity, and maintains the continuity of tradition amidst the influence of modernization. The Kaindea Village community plays an active role in interpreting these symbols, ensuring that the values and beliefs inherited remain relevant and acceptable to the next generation.

This discussion will also highlight the dynamics and changes that occur in the process of symbolic meaning, as well as how society adapts to social change without losing the essence of tradition. Through this analysis of symbolic interaction, a deeper understanding will be gained regarding the role of traditional rituals in maintaining and strengthening the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community. In the following sections, various aspects of symbolic interaction that occur in the Pikambolakua ceremony will be discussed in more depth, including the forms of interaction, the symbols used, and the interpretation and transmission of meaning in society.

Description of the Pikambolakua circumcision ceremony

Referring to the theory of symbolic interaction proposed by Herbert Blumer (1969), the Pikambolakua ceremony can be seen as a series of actions laden with symbols that have deep meaning. This theory emphasizes that the meanings associated with objects or actions emerge from the process of social interaction and are interpreted in the context of the prevailing culture. The Pikambolakua ceremony is not only a physical procession, but also reflects the cultural and spiritual values of the Kaindea Village community. Each stage of the ceremony, from preparation to post-circumcision, contains symbols that have special meanings. For example, the use of the heirloom keris in the core procession is not only as a tool for circumcision, but also as a symbol of masculinity and responsibility, which represents the social role of boys who are

entering adulthood. Other symbols such as traditional clothing, betel nuts, and torches also have important functions in transmitting cultural and ethical values to the younger generation. The traditional clothing worn by a circumcised child, for example, symbolizes his new status as an individual who is ready to shoulder greater social responsibilities. The use of betel nut and torches in the procession, on the other hand, symbolizes fertility, wisdom, and illumination and guidance in life.

This study found that the Pikambolakua ceremony is an effective cultural mechanism in strengthening collective identity and maintaining the sustainability of cultural heritage amidst the current of modernization. This is in line with research conducted by Supriyanto (2022), which states that traditional ceremonies are often used as a means to strengthen social ties and reaffirm cultural identity amidst rapid social change. Supriyanto highlighted how symbols in traditional rituals not only function in a spiritual context but also play an important role in social integration and the preservation of tradition.

Furthermore, an interview with a traditional figure, Mr. La Base, revealed that Pikambolakua is seen as a sacred ritual that prepares boys to become real men with responsibilities to their families and villages. This statement confirms that the Pikambolakua ritual has a deeper meaning than just a physical procession, but rather as a symbol of the social and spiritual transitions that boys go through in Kaindea society.

Thus, based on the theory of symbolic interaction, it can be concluded that the Pikambolakua ceremony is not only a cultural event, but also an arena where social and cultural values are formed, conveyed, and inherited. Every symbol used in this ceremony plays an important role in maintaining social integrity and strengthening the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community. This study makes an important contribution to

understanding the role of traditional rituals in building and maintaining social and cultural structures amidst the challenges of modernization.

Forms of Symbolic Interaction in the Pikambolakua Ceremony

Symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony in Kaindea Village occurs in various forms and involves various parties. Based on the theory of symbolic interaction, every action taken during the ceremony not only has a literal meaning, but also contains a deeper social and cultural meaning, which is constructed through interactions between the individuals involved.

First, the symbolic interaction between the leader of the ceremony and the participants is very prominent in this ritual. The leader of the ceremony, usually a traditional figure or priest (sando), plays a central role in directing the course of the ceremony through the recitation of prayers and mantras that are believed to have spiritual power. These prayers and mantras not only function as a form of verbal communication, but also as a spiritual medium that connects the participants of the ceremony with the ancestors and guardian spirits. The ritual movements performed by the leader of the ceremony, such as sprinkling holy water or swinging a heirloom keris, become important symbols that are observed and often imitated by participants as a form of active participation in the ritual.

Second, the interaction between participants in the ceremony also plays an important role in strengthening social solidarity. The exchange of betel nuts between participants is a symbol of deep brotherhood and togetherness. The practice of mutual cooperation involving the entire community in the preparation and implementation of the ceremony reflects the communal values that are still strongly held by the Kaindea Village community. In addition, the use of non-verbal language such as gestures, facial expressions,

and body postures during the ceremony shows that communication in this context does not always require words, but can be done through symbolic actions that are rich in cultural meaning.

Third, community interaction with ceremonial symbols is also an integral part of the Pikambolakua ritual. The use of special traditional clothing by participants in the ceremony symbolizes respect for the traditions and cultural identities that have been passed down from generation to generation. Ritual objects such as heirloom keris and holy water are not only used as tools in the procession, but also function as symbols of beliefs and spiritual values that are upheld by the community. Traditional food served and consumed during the ceremony is also a form of symbolic interaction that strengthens social and cultural ties within the community.

An interview with Mr. La Holi, a traditional figure in Kaindea Village, provides deeper insight into the meaning of this symbolic interaction. He emphasized that every element in the Pikambolakua ceremony has a deep meaning and functions as a means of communication with spiritual entities, not only for the blessing of the circumcised child, but also for the entire community. In addition, La Holi also highlighted the importance of mutual cooperation in carrying out the ceremony, which not only ensures the smooth running of the procession, but also strengthens social relations between community members.

Based on the interviews and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony is not only ceremonial, but also has deep social and spiritual functions. This study is in line with the findings of Prasetyo (2023), who emphasized that traditional ceremonies in various regions in Indonesia are often an important medium in strengthening social and spiritual ties within the community, as well as maintaining the continuity of traditions amidst

the flow of social change. Prasetyo also stated that symbolic interaction in traditional ceremonies plays an important role in transmitting cultural values to the next generation, which ultimately strengthens the collective identity of a community.

Thus, the symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony not only functions as a ritual medium, but also as a social mechanism that ensures that cultural values and social norms remain alive and relevant in the lives of the Kaindea Village community.

Meaning of Symbols in the Pikambolakua Ceremony

In the Pikambolakua ceremony, each element has a deep symbolic meaning that reflects the belief system, values, and outlook on life of the Kaindea Village community. The traditional clothing used in the ceremony, such as white or brightly colored traditional clothes, symbolizes purity and hope for a bright future for the circumcised child. The color white, which is often chosen, reflects the purity and prayers of the community for the blessings of the child's life. The sarong or traditional woven cloth worn usually has a special motif, such as the tree of life motif which symbolizes growth and sustainability. This shows the hope that the circumcised child can grow well and be able to continue the family tradition. Head coverings, such as songkok or traditional headbands, are used as symbols of honor and maturity, indicating that the child has reached an important stage in his life and is recognized by the community.

In addition to clothing, the ritual objects used also have strong symbolic meanings. The heirloom keris, for example, symbolizes masculinity, responsibility, and protection. The use of the keris in the ceremony is not only as a weapon but also as a link between the human world and the spiritual world, emphasizing the importance of social and spiritual responsibilities that must be

carried out by the circumcised child. The holy water used in the cleansing ritual symbolizes spiritual purification and symbolic rebirth, indicating that the child has been purified and is ready to enter a new phase of life with a clean soul. The betel nuts exchanged during the ceremony symbolize fertility, wisdom, and unity, which are considered symbols of acceptance and respect, as well as strengthening social ties in society. The torch or lamp lit in the ceremony symbolizes illumination and guidance in life, as well as hope for a bright future for the child. The symbolic movements and actions in the Pikambolakua ceremony also have deep meaning. The procession around the village that is carried out before the circumcision symbolizes the farewell to childhood and the introduction of the child to the community in his new status.

This is a symbol that the child has entered a new phase in his life with recognition from the community. The cleansing ritual that is carried out symbolizes physical and spiritual purification, as preparation for the child to enter a new phase of life with a clean soul and ready to accept new responsibilities. The recitation of prayers and mantras during the ceremony is considered a means of communication with ancestors and spiritual powers, where people ask for protection and blessings for the child. The cutting of hair, which is often done as part of the ritual, symbolizes the shedding of childish traits and the acceptance of new responsibilities as an adult.

The symbols in the Pikambolakua ceremony are not static, but rather dynamic and can be reinterpreted as time changes. However, the basic essence of these symbols is maintained as part of the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community. Through the interpretation of these symbols, the Pikambolakua ceremony becomes a medium for transmitting cultural values, ethics, and outlooks on life from one generation to the next. This process also strengthens social ties in

society, because a shared understanding of the meaning of these symbols creates a sense of togetherness and collective identity.

To further explore the explanation above, an interview with La Hendra, a cultural expert in Kaindea Village, provides further insight into the symbolic meaning of this ceremony. According to La Hendra, the traditional clothing used in the ceremony is not just decoration, but has a deep meaning. White or bright colored traditional clothing symbolizes purity, hope, and the prayers of the community for the future of the circumcised child. The motifs on sarongs or traditional woven fabrics often contain special meanings, such as the tree of life which symbolizes growth and sustainability of life. La Hendra also emphasized the importance of ritual objects in the Pikambolakua ceremony. The heirloom keris, for example, is not just a weapon, but a symbol of masculinity, responsibility, and protection. The holy water used in the cleansing ritual symbolizes spiritual purification and rebirth, which are important parts of preparing a child to enter a new phase of life.

Based on the interview, it is clear that the symbols in the Pikambolakua ceremony not only have aesthetic meaning, but also reflect the value system and beliefs of the Kaindea Village community. Traditional clothing and ritual objects in this ceremony play an important role in transmitting cultural and spiritual values from one generation to the next. These symbols are not only understood in the context of tradition, but are also internalized as part of an inherited outlook on life. Although the interpretation of these symbols may change over time, the essence and basic values contained in them are maintained as the foundation of the community's collective identity. This process of meaning-making helps maintain social unity and strengthens a sense of togetherness in the community.

This study is in line with the findings of Lestari (2022), which shows that symbolism in

traditional ceremonies plays an important role in maintaining and strengthening the cultural identity of a community. Lestari also emphasized that although interpretations of traditional symbols can develop, the core values contained therein remain relevant and serve as guardians of the sustainability of tradition and social solidarity in society.

Process of interpretation and transmission of meaning

The process of interpretation and transmission of meaning in the Pikambolakua ceremony is an important aspect that shows how the Kaindea Village community understands, interprets, and passes on their cultural values. Interpretation of symbols in this ceremony often occurs through direct observation and participation, where community members, especially the younger ones, learn from previous generations. Communal discussions that often occur before and after the ceremony become a forum for sharing knowledge and strengthening shared understanding. Traditional leaders or village elders have an important role in providing in-depth explanations of the meaning of these symbols to the younger generation.

The passing on of understanding of meaning between generations is carried out through various means, including oral narratives that convey folk stories, myths, and legends related to the Pikambolakua ceremony. The active participation of children and adolescents in the preparation and implementation of the ceremony is also an effective method for providing direct and in-depth understanding of the ritual. In addition, informal education through daily conversations and preparation for the ceremony is an important means of transmitting the meaning of these symbols from one generation to the next. Although the interpretation of these symbols may change over time to accommodate social changes, the basic essence of the values and traditions remains.

This study is in line with research conducted by Geertz (2016) which emphasizes the importance of symbols and rituals in the formation and preservation of a society's cultural identity. In addition, this study also supports the findings of Bell (2019) which shows that the transmission of symbolic meaning in traditional ceremonies is an important mechanism for maintaining the sustainability of traditions and cultural values amidst social change. Thus, the Pikambolakua ceremony is not only a ritual, but also a means to strengthen the cultural identity of the Kaindea Village community, ensuring that this tradition remains relevant and an integral part of their lives in the future.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the meaning of symbolic interaction in the Pikambolakua ceremony process in the Lapandewa Kaindea Village community. Through various symbols, such as traditional clothing, ritual objects, and symbolic actions, this ceremony not only becomes a tradition, but also functions as a mechanism for transmitting values, norms, and collective identity from one generation to the next.

The traditional clothing used in the ceremony, such as white traditional clothes and woven cloth with distinctive motifs, contains the meaning of purity, hope, and the continuation of life. Ritual objects such as heirloom keris and holy water, as well as symbolic actions such as the procession around the village and the cleansing ritual, provide a deeper layer of meaning. They are not only seen as aesthetic elements or formalities, but also as a means of spiritual and social communication that connects the community with ancestors and provides a strong identity.

The process of interpretation and transmission of meaning in this ceremony shows that the Lapandewa Kaindea Village

community has a rich and dynamic knowledge system. This knowledge is passed down through various means, including oral narratives, direct participation, and communal discussions, all of which help maintain the continuity of tradition in a modern, ever-changing context.

In addition, the involvement of the younger generation in this ceremony plays an important role in maintaining the relevance and sustainability of the tradition. By actively participating, the younger generation not only learns about the symbols and meanings of the ritual, but also internalizes the underlying values, which in turn strengthens their cultural identity and social ties. In conclusion, the Pikambolakua ceremony is not only a manifestation of the traditional beliefs and practices of the community, but also an important tool for maintaining and strengthening cultural identity in the face of changing times. This ceremony, with all its symbolism and meaning, remains an integral part of the life of the Lapandewa Kaindea Village community, ensuring that valuable cultural values continue to live and be passed on to future generations.

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