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SUNAN KUDUS' STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN THE SELF-OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Adita Nurdia Damayanti¹ and Sartini²

Abstract

Sunan Kudus is one of the Walisongo (the nine revered saints of Islam in Indonesia) figures with a particular way of delivering his teachings. To adapt to the community when conveying the teachings of Islam, he employed art and culture as a medium, established architectural foundations, and established social harmony, so much so that the people of Kudus became relatively untouched by horizontal conflicts. This article aims to explore the cultural adaptation models carried out by Sunan Kudus, find the underlying life principles he utilized, and analyze the thoughts and value principles he maintained within the conceptual framework of self-relationship and self-other relationship. The current research is a field study supported by literary data. The research results of this study indicate that he carried out approaches to the community by emphasizing attitudes of mutual respect, humility, and capacity to benefit the surrounding environment. He demonstrated ways of gaining public sympathy through caution and gradual progress. He entered the community's life, approached the community members, and understood the things they needed. He applied a cultural approach and technology to help the community fulfil its needs. Prioritizing fostering tolerance among them, he highly encouraged the promotion of community approach that avoided the use of violent means. This study complements the literature on Sunan Kudus about the concept of self-other. This is a new finding concerning the life

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concepts of Sunan Kudus in his relationship with others, with these concepts functioning as a means for him to win the hearts and minds of the people of Kudus to follow the teachings of Islam and to consider him as a role model. The study results have yet to reveal the concept of self-other in terms of the relationship between human beings (Sunan Kudus) and other creatures.

Keywords: adaptation, culture, self-other, Sunan, Kudus, Java.

Introduction

Indonesia as one of the largest multicultural countries in the world can be observed from the viewpoint of its complex sociocultural aspects and extensive geographical conditions. The Southeast Asian country consists of several ethnic groups, cultures, and religions that are pluralistic and heterogenic.³ Based on 2010 Indonesian Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik*) data, there are 1,331 ethnic groups in Indonesia with a myriad of religions and cultures.⁴ The nation has six officially recognized religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism), and 187 faith/belief-based organizations, including Islam Wetu Telu, Sunda Wiwitan, and Islam Kejawen.⁵ The plurality and heterogeneity of Indonesians are bounded in the principle of national unity and oneness expressed in the adage “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” (unity in diversity). This implies that the Indonesian nation is united within a single force and harmony of religion, nation, and state that must be knowingly recognized.⁶ In addition, Indonesia maintains as its

³ Budiono Kusumohamidjojo, *Kebhinnekaan Masyarakat di Indonesia: Suatu Problematik Filsafat Kebudayaan* (Jakarta: Gramedia Widiasarana Indonesia, 2000), 45, <https://www.amazon.com/Kebhinnekaan-masyarakat-Indonesia-problematik-kebudayaan/dp/9796698986>.

⁴ “Mengulik data suku di Indonesia,” *Mengulik Data Suku di Indonesia*, accessed June 6, 2020, <https://www.bps.go.id/news/2015/11/18/127/mengulik-data-suku-di-indonesia.html>.

⁵ Muhammad Harfin Zuhdi, “Slam Wetu Telu di Bayan Lombok,” *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 17, no. 2 (October 2012), 163.

⁶ Gina Lestari, “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika: Khasanah multikultural Indonesia di tengah kehidupan sara,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan*

national ideology and basis the *Pancasila* (the five philosophy of state), which is a set of values functioning as a way of life. Pancasila is the unifying concept stipulating that citizens of differing backgrounds live together in harmony and mutual aid without disregarding their ethnic, traditional, racial, or religious identities.⁷ Although with Pancasila, a common principle for living in Indonesia has already been established, the substantial force of diversity can still lead to potential conflicts. Ideological challenges relating to religious pluralism and multiculturalism include the emergence of terrorist acts and local social conflicts that have been conducted in the name of religion.

One terrorist act executed in the name of religion in Indonesia was the 2002 Bali Bombing, resulting in the death of several Muslims. The terrorists were seeking revenge for the events in Poso and Ambon and were also trying to defend the Afghans against the war perpetuated by the United States. The terrorists considered the war in Afghanistan highly oppressive to the people. Another reason is that they consider Bali as a centre of immorality and not in line with the teachings of Islam.⁸ Another terrorist act was the bombing of the three churches (Santa Maria Tak Bercela church, GKI Diponegoro, and Surabaya Pentecostal Center (GPPS) Sawahan Congregation church) in Surabaya in 2018.⁹ A terrorism observer from Universitas Indonesia, Stanislaus Riyanta believed that there is a strong indication that the actors behind the bombings were members of a militant group calling themselves the Islamic State, or ISIS. Such a conclusion can be drawn from the pattern and characteristics of the attacks carried out on those three churches.¹⁰

28, no. 1 (June 27, 2016), 31, <https://doi.org/10.17977/jppkn.v28i1.5437>.

⁷ Mardiyanto, "Pancasila dan tantangan milenial," *detikNews*, June 1, 2019, <https://news.detik.com/kolom/d-4573104/pancasila-dan-tantangan-milenial>.

⁸ Devita Retno, "5 latar belakang peristiwa bom Bali tahun 2002," *Sejarah Lengkap*, January 29, 2019, <https://sejarahlengkap.com/indonesia/latar-belakang-peristiwa-bom-bali>.

⁹ Sandy Pramuji, "3 lokasi ledakan di Surabaya, 9 tewas dan 40 terluka," *Beritatagar.Id*, May 2018, <https://beritatagar.id/artikel/berita/3-bom-meledak-di-surabaya-9-tewas-dan-40-terluka>.

¹⁰ Juni Kriswanto and Ronny Fauzan, "Serangan bom di tiga gereja Surabaya: Pelaku bom bunuh diri 'perempuan yang membawa dua anak,'" *BBC News*

Aside from terrorism, issues involving religious diversity also marred the peace in Indonesia within a narrower social scope, of which among them was the inter-religious conflict in West Java. Exchange of aggressions took place between ordinary folks and the Jamaah Ahmadiyah group members, a result of the majority of denizens being opposed to the Ahmadiyah sect.¹¹ A conflict in Bantul, Yogyakarta also occurred after the majority of Muslim residents forged an agreement to reject non-Muslims living in the area.¹²

Problems emerge when members of a group or community adopt an exclusive mindset, which refers to the sense that they and their group are the most genuine and righteous entity. Driven by this mindset, they subsequently set themselves apart as an exclusive group without intending to mingle with other groups. Religious exclusivism is the doctrine or belief that only one particular religion or belief system is valid.¹³ The group's exclusive mindset is hence interpreted unrestrictedly into actions and deeds, which eventually leads to clashes with other groups and potentially harming social rights and responsibility.¹⁴ Observations of the aforementioned several violent incidents involving intolerance lead one to question where the root of cultural conflict involving Muslims in Indonesia come from religious figures that have actually been teaching us to live in peaceful co-existence.

There are numerous examples of harmonious relations between Muslim adherents and followers of different religions. This may be attributable to how the Islam that arrived in the archipelago combines two differing values. Throughout the process, Muslim figures put

Indonesia, May 13, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-44097913>.

¹¹ Suarni Saputri, "Contoh kasus antar budaya," *Kompasiana.Com*, accessed June 6, 2020, <https://www.kompasiana.com/putriunifa/57124d62d77a610b09ea4dad/contoh-kasus-antar-budaya>.

¹² Irwan Syambudi, "Warga pedukuhan Karet Bantul DIY tolak pendatang beragama Kristen," *Tirto.Id*, April 2, 2019, <https://tirto.id/warga-pedukuhan-karet-bantul-diy-tolak-pendatang-beragama-kristen-dkUb>.

¹³ William Wainwright, *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2005), 345.

¹⁴ Calvin Layuk Allo, "Eksklusifitas sebagai penyebab radikalisme," *Kompasiana.com*, June 5, 2018, <https://www.kompasiana.com/calvinallolayuk/5b162310caf7db4aa2081ed3/eksklusifitas-sebagai-penyebab-radikalisme>.

much effort into carefully orienting how they deliver Islamic teachings to ensure respect for the religious and cultural backgrounds of the communities they visit. These Muslim figures, commonly known as Walisongo (the nine revered saints of Islam in Indonesia), had devised a systematic and long-term dawah strategy, particularly in facing the archipelagic and Javanese cultures.¹⁵ The most fascinating figure among the nine was Sunan Kudus, a Muslim who wanted to spread the word of Islam amidst the Hindu and Buddhist population majority. He had used methods unlike the ones employed by the other *wali* (saints). His strategies were more practical and right on target, leading the community to accept and consider him as a public role model. This Muslim figure did not use violence in facing communities that he regarded as objects for his *da'wah* even though he was the military leader of Demak Kingdom who was not lacking in power, intelligence, and wealth. At the time, there was no state ideology like Pancasila to address the existing differences, yet the people could live in harmony amid cultural and religious diversities. Given this important accomplishment of Sunan Kudus, his life principles and mindset need to be revealed and explained to the public to provide a reflection for resolving conflicts brought about by religious pluralism and multiculturalism in Indonesia.

The present study shall present the life principles and mindset Sunan Kudus used in adapting to a pluralistic society as an implementation of the concept of self-relations between the revered saint and others. It is in this very aspect that the analysis of cultural actions and minimizing of conflicts in social life can be correlated to one another.

Literature Review

Several studies investigate Kauman Village, Kudus Tower, and *da'wah* of Sunan Kudus. One study about Kauman Village elaborated how the Kudus Tower Kauman area contains the history of the Kudus Tower and its founder, namely Sunan Kudus. Kauman

¹⁵ Mashlihatuz Zuhroh, *Masjid Menara Kudus: Ekspresi Multikulturalisme Sunan Kudus: Studi Kasus Kehidupan Toleransi Masyarakat Kudus*, Thesis, Jakarta, UIN Syaraif Hidayatullah, (2018), 73, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/41756>.

in history is commonly associated with the educated middle-upper class who made their living through trade and were accordingly positioned at the top social stratum. Kudus' trade network had reached as far as China and Vietnam.¹⁶

Another study on the Kudus Tower discusses its significance as a symbol of tolerance between Islam and Hinduism. The Kudus Tower can be described as a temple structure left from the Age of Hinduism.¹⁷ Additionally, another study discusses the unique ornaments of Kudus Tower and explains that the ornamental presence in the Kudus Tower Mosque compound is not as dominant when compared to that of other mosques of the same period, such as the Mantingan-Jepara mosque or the Sendhang Dhuwur-Paciran, Lamongan mosque.¹⁸ Another research focuses on the design and shape of the Kudus Tower, which is considered as resembling the form of temples that have an East Javanese design, such as those found in its *regol* (gate), front yard *gapura* (entrance), foyer, and the interior of Kudus Mosque. Such temples all recall classical art designs in East Java to mind.¹⁹ While some of the aforementioned studies explored the ornaments, structure, area, and shape of Kudus Tower, another study looked into its tradition, focusing on the perceptions of the people of Kudus toward a tradition called Buka Luwur Sunan Kudus, which is a traditional activity routinely held by the Sunan Kudus Cemetery, Tower, and Mosque Foundation to commemorate the death of the saint. A series of events filled with prayer activities and concluded by distributing religious meals, a rice dish called *nasi jangkrik* (lit. cricket rice), is observed during the

¹⁶ Moh Rosyid, "Kawasan kauman Menara Kudus sebagai cagar budaya Islam: Catatan terhadap kebijakan pemerintah Kabupaten Kudus," *PURBAWIDYA: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengembangan Arkeologi* 7, no. 1 (August 1, 2018), 91, <https://doi.org/10.24164/pw.v7i1.253>.

¹⁷ Parwito, "Masjid Menara Kudus simbol toleransi Islam & Hindu," *Merdeka.Com*, September 8, 2017, <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/masjid-menara-kudus-simbol-toleransi-islam-amp-hindu.html>.

¹⁸ Supatmo Supatmo, "Keunikan ornamen bermotif figuratif pada Kompleks Bangunan Masjid Menara Kudus," *Imajinasi: Jurnal Seni* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 63–80, <https://doi.org/10.15294/imajinasi.v7i1.8887>.

¹⁹ Totok Roesmanto, "Rupa bentuk Menara Masjid Kudus, Bali Kulkul dan Candi," *Jurnal Arsitektur Universitas Bandar Lampung* 4, no. 1 (December 2013), 28–35.

commemoration that symbolizes social prosperity. Because the public consider all things associated with him as having the power to bestow blessings upon them, they hustle and jostle to get a piece of it.²⁰ Another study describes the meaning and value inherent within the Buka Luwur Sunan Kudus event, stating that it contains a high level of educational values and noble understandings, namely sense of mutual tolerance, sense of mutual help and respect, practicing and becoming accustomed to giving alms, constantly bringing oneself closer to God, and ability to develop noble characters and restrain oneself from conducting negative deeds while reminding others to conduct proper worship as a provision for life after death.²¹

Another research discusses the concept of multiculturalism that Sunan Kudus followed in spreading Islam in the city of Kudus, and how a life of tolerance among the people of Kudus can be maintained until today. He is a focal point in the superbly tolerant life found in the city of Kudus.²²

Various studies on Sunan Kudus have, thus far, been related to elaborations on the methods he used to spread the word of Islam, as well as discussions on the Kudus Tower and its distinctive architecture, which displays a mixture of Islamic and Hinduism ornaments. To the best of this author's knowledge, no research has yet explored the basic thinking and concepts developed by Sunan Kudus in achieving conditions of tolerance and adaptations. The concept of self-other relations is utilized to shed light on the context.

Method

This is a field research supported by literature review utilizing a factual historical model in exploring the figure²³ of Sunan Kudus.

²⁰ Masita Argarini, *Persepsi Masyarakat Kudus Terhadap Simbol Visual pada Tradisi Buka Luwur Sunan Kudus*, Thesis, Surakarta, Universitas Sebelas Maret, 2015.

²¹ Erik Aditia Ismaya, Irfai Fathurohman, and Deka Setiawan, "Makna dan nilai buka Luwur Sunan Kudus (Sumbangan pemikiran mewujudkan visi Kampus Kebudayaan)," *KREDO: Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa dan Sastra* 1, no. 1 (November 27, 2017), 44–57, <https://doi.org/10.24176/kredo.v1i1.1752>.

²² Zuhroh, *Masjid Menara Kudus*.

²³ Anton Bakker and Achmad Charis Zubair, *Metodologi Penelitian Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2014), 61, <https://opac.perpusnas.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id>

Field data were gathered by conducting observations, which were subsequently followed by in-depth interviews with relevant informants, namely the caretaker of Kudus Tower, community figures, religious leaders, and elders representing the community. The results of the interviews and literary data were then collected and presented in accordance with the purpose of study. Analyses were carried out by interpreting data found in cultural adaptation evidences based on the understanding of the concept of adaptation and then reflecting on the life of the people. Thoughts on his cultural adaptation were analysed in aspects that relate to historical environs, influences sustained, and in his life journey.²⁴ The concept of self-other was used to analyse the behaviours shown by Sunan Kudus in adapting to communities that had dissimilar religious and cultural backgrounds in the bid to identify a synthesis in the form of concepts he upheld in engaging with the community, which ultimately led to the subduing of the people of Kudus.

Definition of Worldview

Worldview is a key and defining aspect in a community. The term refers to a set of beliefs regarding fundamental aspects of reality that establish the foundations and influences concerning the forms of perception, thought, knowledge, and action.²⁵ The development of worldview is gradual in the mind of an individual, starting with the accumulation of concepts and mental attitudes that one develops throughout his or her life, which are ultimately shaped into a mental framework or worldview. Epistemologically speaking, the thinking process is similar to seeking and acquiring knowledge, which is the accumulation of a priori and a posteriori knowledge. The process can be explained as follows: the knowledge that an individual acquires surely consists of various concepts in the form of ideas, beliefs, aspirations, and other elements that in their entirety form a total

=271944.

²⁴ Bakker and Zubair, 64.

²⁵ Sartini Sartini and Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, "Preliminary study on worldviews," *Jurnal Humaniora* 29, no. 3 (October 2017), 265, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.v29i3.29690>.

concept that is interrelated and organized within a single network.²⁶

The concept of worldview refers to Kearney's opinions, among others, about time, space, self-other, causality, and classification.²⁷ Cultural adaptation is inseparable from the worldview that a community holds, particularly in the relationship of self-other. This is because it is associated with the concept of the self and the others—which is not only limited to be between human beings but may extend to matters that are supranatural in nature and even to the values and culture that a community upholds—that will accordingly influence the adaptation process that an individual undergoes, and whether said individual is accepted in the community or otherwise.²⁸

Concept of Self-Other

The discussion on the concept of self-other begins with the understanding of the relationship between culture and human philosophy. This is because humans are the only creature that possesses a conceptual understanding of the self. Such understanding of the self is alive and nurtured within a culture. Human being as a concrete "I," must be understood in its relationship to "others," in terms of socializing, adapting, and creating culture. Humans possess self-awareness with others as well as the infrahuman.²⁹ Human being's awareness of the self demands an "other." An understanding of the self's role and position is reliant on its relationship with "others." The self and others maintain a reciprocal relationship, with each giving the other meaning, value, and existence. The self and others exist and are united within a complex form of culture, wherein culture is considered as a socializing forum that has its origin in human beings.³⁰ Humans can only define themselves in terms of their relationship with others. Individuals can only be recognized

²⁶ Alparslan Acikgence, "The framework for a history of Islamic Philosophy," *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)*, vol. 1, no. 1 & 2 (1996), 6.

²⁷ Sartini and Ahimsa-Putra, "Preliminary study on worldviews," 272.

²⁸ Acikgence, "The framework for a history of Islamic philosophy."

²⁹ Anton Bakker, *Antropologi Metafisik* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 12–13, https://books.google.com/books/about/Antropologi_Metafisik.html?id=O6quKCJsHLMC.

³⁰ Bakker, 43–50.

based on their relationships and interactions with others, be it in terms of their relationship in an organization, community, or society. Individuals are an essential factor in the social structure.³¹ The self, ethically, has a responsibility to others.³² This correlates with the understanding of the concept of the self, which is an image that a person has of his/herself, which is shaped by the experiences acquired from the interactions conducted in the surrounding environment.³³ The concept of the self is not a congenital thing but is developed based on numerous experiences. Fellow human beings play a substantial role in the life of every individual.³⁴ The self is incapable of identifying and explaining itself if others were, synchronously, omitted from participating in his/her life. The more the self gains a deeper appreciation of all its development as a personal self, then the more connected it will feel toward others.³⁵ The reciprocal relationship between the self and others creates the expectation that one individual's action shall be rewarded accordingly by the action of other individuals.³⁶

In addition to human life being influenced by the existence of other fellow human beings, it is actually influenced by nonhuman others as well. The construction of human life is very much influenced by the self's belief in God as a significant life-controlling force and by awareness of nonhuman beings that exist in this world,

³¹ R. S. Perinbanayagam, "The significance of others in the thought of Alfred Schutz, G. H. Mead and C. H. Cooley," *The Sociological Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1975), 501–3.

³² Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern and Post-Modern (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy)* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), <https://www.amazon.com/Poetics-Imagining-Post-modern-Perspectives-Continental/dp/0823218716>.

³³ Hendriati Agustian, *Psikologi Perkembangan: Pendekatan Ekologi Kaitannya Dengan Konsep Diri Dan Penyesuaian Diri Pada Remaja* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2006), 138, http://library.fip.uny.ac.id/opac/index.php?p=show_detail&id=2715.

³⁴ Piet Leenhouders and K. J. Veeger, *Manusia Dalam Lingkungannya: Refleksi Filsafat Tentang Manusia* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988), 191, <https://onsearch.id/Record/IOS2847.INLIS00000000043600>.

³⁵ Leenhouders and Veeger, *Manusia Dalam Lingkungannya*, 194.

³⁶ E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C* (London: Published for the College by H.K. Lewis, 1952).

albeit in different dimensions.

Humans did not come into this world on its own, for there exists a Creator. As beings created by God, humans are mandated to serve God. Human awareness as an individual being and a social being is not to disregard its existence as God's creation. The responsibilities that humans have to their own self, family, community, and country are a part of their servitude and devotion to God. Human activities conducted as individual and social beings are representations of one's self-awareness concerning human accountability to God. Accordingly, humans should conduct themselves well and adopt good deeds and virtues while avoiding unfavourable behaviour. Humans have the power of reasoning and life perspectives. Nonetheless, human beings are cognizant that they are frail creatures with complex lives, and such awareness of their weakness has driven them to seek external power, both physical and nonphysical. This has, in turn, fuelled their belief in God. For humans, God is a constant and eternal need, with worship being the manifestation of human love toward God. Worshiping God is the true core, value, and definition of life. Worship, aside from an expression of love, is also a manifestation of the human fear of God's authority. Consequently, humans worship God as a means of extinguishing fear and anxieties.³⁷

Followers of *Kejawen* (Javanese traditional belief) usually mention God with the term *Gusti Allah*, two words combining the Javanese word *gusti* and the Islamic vocabulary Allah. The word *gusti* in ancient Javanese dictionary is defined as master or the authority and a special group in the royal palace (*keraton*) community.³⁸ *Kejawen* believes in the existence of a life origin—where one came from and where one shall go after his or her life, or what is known with the term *sangkan paraning dumadi*. Followers of *Kejawen* often utilize their surrounding life phenomena

³⁷ Sujarwa, *Ilmu Sosial & Budaya Dasar: Manusia Dan Fenomena Sosial Budaya* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2010), 101–57, https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Ilmu_sosial_budaya_dasar.html?id=TKtXnwEACAAJ&redir_esc=y.

³⁸ P. J. Zoetmulder and S. O. Robson, *Kamus Jawa Kuno Indonesia (Ancient Javanese-Indonesian Dictionary)* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1995), <https://opac.perpustakaan.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id=355705>.

to express their belief in God, such as naming God with the term *Pangeran*. The word *Pangeran*, which is usually used to address the son of a king or royalties, is also used to address God. The use of the phrase *Pangeran* to address God is found in the *Kitab Primbon* (ancient manuscript) Atassadhur Adammakna, which states “*Ing sabener-benere manungsa iku kanyatahaning Pangeran, lan Pangeran iku mung sawiji*” (in essence, human beings are the actual form of God, and there is only one God). Aside from the use of *Pangeran*, there are also several pre-Islam period terminologies used to address God, including *Sang Hyang*, which means God the Almighty (*Sang Hyang Wenang*), God the provider of knowledge (*Sang Hyang Guru*), God the All Gentle (*Sang Hyang Suksma*), God the Ruler of the Universe (*Hyang Jagad Wasesa*).³⁹ The terminologies used to mention and address God are a form of concept that humans maintain concerning God. For human beings, God has an exceedingly strong relationship to humans and He rules the universe.

The relationship between the self and the “unseen” can be drawn from one single basis, namely a component of the religious system. There we can find emotions of religiosity, which lead human beings to become religious and believe in religious ceremonial systems and their purposes (supernatural power), religious ceremonial systems and their purpose of human relationship with God (supernatural power), and form or be part of religious social groups that adhere to a religious system. The special elements found within the frame of the religious system are occultism and the religious system. Emotions of religiosity drive human beings to engage in religious acts. Emotions of religiosity cause an object, action, or idea to retain a sacred value and are subsequently considered as sacred. Even profane objects, actions, or ideas, when confronted by humans seized by emotions of religiosity consequently become considered as sacred.⁴⁰

³⁹ Siti Woerjan Soemadiyah Noeradyo, *Kitab Primbon Lukmanakim Adammakna: Sambetanipun Betaliemur* (Yogyakarta: Soemodidjojo Mahadewa, 1979), 14, <https://www.amazon.com/Kitab-primbon-Lukmanakim-adammakna-Sambetanipun/dp/B0000D7IY2>.

⁴⁰ Sujarwa, *Ilmu Sosial & Budaya Dasar: Manusia Dan Fenomena Sosial Budaya*,

Profile of Sunan Kudus

Sunan Kudus or Ja'far Shodiq was a figure who held a vital role in the development of Islam in the city of what is now Kudus.⁴¹ He was the son of Sunan Ngudung or Raden Utsman Haji and Nyai Anom Manyuran binti Nyi Gede/Ageng Maloka (the daughter of Sunan Ampel and Nyi Ageng Manila). During the reign of Raden Prawata in Demak Sultanate, he was appointed as the military commander to Adipati Jipang, also known as Arya Penangsang. He was a student of Sunan Kalijaga.⁴² The title of Sunan originated from the word *susuhunan* or *sinuhun* which means someone who is revered. For some time, the title of Sunan was also complemented with the word Kanjeng. These revered individuals or Sunan maintained their role as mentor/educator and held positions as advisor to the king or elder of the Sultanate. He was one of the nine ulama who were pioneers and champions of Islamic development in the Island of Java. These nine ulama are popularly known as Walisongo⁴³

Walisongo resided along the north coast of Java, particularly in some regions throughout East Java (Surabaya, Gresik, Lamongan), Central Java (Demak and Kudus), and West Java (Cirebon), from early 15th century until the middle of the 16th century. Walisongo were intellectual reformers who introduced various forms of new civilizations in the field of health, cultivation, trade, culture, art, society, and governance.⁴⁴ They established mosques as a place of worship and a place to teach religion. They taught religion at the mosque's foyer, which had been made into the oldest educational institution in Java, it having a more democratic nature. During the initial development of Islam, the teaching method conducted by Walisongo was called *gurukula*, wherein a teacher conveyed his teachings to a group of students sitting before him. The knowledge

106–9.

⁴¹ Solichin Salam, *Ja'far Shadiq, Sunan Kudus* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1986), 12.

⁴² Rosyid, "Kawasan kauman Menara Kudus sebagai cagar budaya."

⁴³ Badri Yatim, *Sejarah Peradaban Islam* (Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada, 1996), 170, <https://opac.perpusnas.go.id/DetailOpac.aspx?id=1137665>.

⁴⁴ Abdul Ghoffir Muhaimin, *Islam Dalam Bingkai Budaya Lokal: Potret Dari Cirebon* (Jakarta: PT Logos Wacana Ilmu, 2001), 8–11, <https://www.amazon.com/Islam-dalam-bingkai-budaya-lokal/dp/9796261030>.

taught this way covered principles of faith in Islam, principles of worship, martial arts, concept of invulnerability, and self-defense.⁴⁵

The Sunans were masters of various skills and knowledge. Sunan Kudus, known as *waliul ilmi*, mastered various fields of knowledge such as the science of *tawhid* (systematic theology), *hadith*, *usul al-fiqh*, exegesis, literature, classical logic (*manṭiq*), and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). He can be likened to today's professor having numerous students throughout various regions.⁴⁶ He was a prolific writer who authored several philosophical and religious writings and created Javanese songs in the form of Gending Maskumambang and Mijil.⁴⁷ He is known as a strict ulama in terms of Islamic jurisprudence or *fiqh*. This was evident in his attitude in upholding Shariah laws and his firm actions and thoughts in addressing religious deviations. It had been told that he held a significant role in the Kingdom of Demak's court of law.⁴⁸ He was a courageous figure as demonstrated by his involvement in the expedition to East Java and the battle against Kebo Kenanga who revolted against the Kingdom of Demak. His actions were done for the sake of protecting Islam's purity.⁴⁹ He is also known as a successful trader, and his skills in trading were picked up by the people of Kudus. The term used to describe his entrepreneurial spirit is *gusjigang*. Sources do not specify the type of commodity or commodities Sunan Kudus traded in but there is a possibility that he sold fabrics.⁵⁰

The entrepreneurial spirit of Sunan Kudus was used as one of the means for spreading Islam (*da'wah*) amidst the fact that during at

⁴⁵ M. B. Rahimsyah, *Legenda Dan Sejarah Lengkap Walisongo* (Surabaya: Amanah, 2000), 5, https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Legenda_dan_sejarah_lengkap_Wali_Songo.html?id=8m5YHAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y.

⁴⁶ Salam, *Ja'far Shadiq, Sunan Kudus*, 14.

⁴⁷ Salam, 14.

⁴⁸ Widji Saksono, *Mengislamkan Tanah Jawa: Telaah Atas Metode Dakwah Walisongo* (Mizan, 1995), 44–45, https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Mengislamkan_tanah_Jawa.html?id=F8jXAAAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y.

⁴⁹ Saksono, *Mengislamkan Tanah Jawa*, 46.

⁵⁰ Nur Said, "Gusjigang dan kesinambungan budaya Sunan Kudus (Relevansinya bagi pendidikan Islam berbasis local genius)," *Jurnal Penelitian ISLAM EMPIRIK* 6, no. 2 (2013), 117.

that time, the people relied only on agriculture and fisheries for their source of income. Hence, his entrepreneurial spirit became a smart choice in winning the hearts of, and gaining sympathy from, the people of Kudus. Additionally, as a way of further adapting to the community, he constructed a tower with an architectural design based on the Hindu culture and complemented by Islamic culture. Some literary sources even state that the structure is a product of the acculturation between Hinduism and Islam. The Kudus Tower is, however, not a result of acculturation because it simply followed the structural design and style of that period. This can be explained by his origin from the Kingdom of Demak. As the military commander of Demak Kingdom, he surely had sufficient knowledge about the style and structure of royal buildings/residences of that time.⁵¹ Although it has not been shown that he was an expert in the field of construction, he is nonetheless well known as a gifted individual in various fields, including in creating appropriate technology for the people of Kudus.

Ultimately, it can be stated that Sunan Kudus and the other saints utilized their religious and technical abilities such as trading and creating technological tools as means to penetrate and adapt to the local culture. The historical legacy left by Sunan Kudus indicates such patterns of adaptation.

Forms of Cultural Adaptation

The people of Kudus had initially followed Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In the Kudus Tower compound, we can find the Hok Ling Bio Temple that was built in the 15th century, which was prior to the construction of Kudus Tower. Most of the people living in Kudus at time were of Chinese ethnic background. Aside from the Chinese temple, there also stands Langgar Bubar, currently functioning as one of the places of worship for the people of Kudus, which construction dates back before the arrival of Sunan Kudus. Stone carvings of deities can be found at Langgar Bubar. Stone carvings of deities can also be found not far from that location, specifically in the Bacin region. The people of Kudus believe that

⁵¹ Dhani (Yayasan Menara Kudus), December 2019.

these sites are places of worship that have been around before the advent of Islam, which was introduced by Sunan Kudus. The people believe the story written in *Babad Tanah Jawi* (History of Java) that tells of how he migrated to the Muria islands and brought along his students that included Arya Penangsang the Duke of Jipang, Sunan Prawoto the Demak King after Trenggono, and Queen Kalinyamat.⁵²

Although the arrival of Sunan Kudus and his teachings to embrace Islam was carried out in a peaceful manner, it still resulted in various dissenting opinions. Some people became followers of Islam and remained in Kudus, specifically the area that is known today as Kauman. Those who firmly rejected him and Islam fled to the Rahtawu area, which is a highland region of Kudus. There, they developed residential areas and built places of worship according to their belief. This is evidenced by the stone carving of deities found in the area that still remain as a cultural heritage to this day.⁵³

The arrival of Sunan Kudus altered several aspects of life of the people of Kudus, but it did not involve any element of force or coercion. Various beliefs continue to exist in Kudus. Followers of Hinduism, Buddhism still adhere to their respective religions while the Chinese community remains in the Kauman area. The Chinese Buddhists still perform their worshipping rituals at the Hok Ling Bio Temple and reside across the Kudus Tower. In addition, a testament to his success in adapting to the local community is the fact that non-Muslim traditions and structures remain, such as how Langgar Bubar remains standing, the Dhandhangan tradition is still observed, and the tradition of not slaughtering cows persists until today.

Langgar Bubar, which was initially named *Bancikan*, is a place of worship for followers of Hinduism. *Bancikan* was established by Pangeran Pontjowati, who was an envoy from Majapahit and given authority over land in the Kudus area. At the time of Pangeran Pontjowati's arrival, Hinduism was at its peak in Kudus (as indicated by a large part of the community adhering to Hinduism). This is one of the reasons why Pangeran Pontjowati built *Bancikan*. When Sunan Kudus arrived, Pangeran Pontjowati was still a devout follower of Hinduism and was even the leader of the Hindu community around

⁵² Dhani (Yayasan Menara Kudus).

⁵³ Dhani (Yayasan Menara Kudus).

the *Bancikan* area. Sunan Kudus and Pangeran Pontjowati had a good relationship without any dispute despite the fact that they followed different religious beliefs. They are the two individuals who had substantial influence in Kudus at the time. Sunan Kudus and Pangeran Pontjowati fostered good relationships in various fields, which included cooperation in improving the economy and the utilization of social resources.⁵⁴

As time went by, the Hindu place of worship changed its function into a *Langgar* (a small house used by Muslims for praying or Quran recitals) after Pangeran Pontjowati embraced Islam. Pangeran Pontjowati became a loyal student of Sunan Kudus, and he married Sunan Kudus' daughter. Pangeran Pontjowati's conversion to Islam had a significant effect on the community, leading to great developments in Sunan Kudus' *da'wah* process. All followers and residents around the *Bancikan* area (who were loyal followers of Pangeran Pontjowati) converted to Islam and soon, the function of *Bancikan* was changed and so was its name, which became *Langgar* a place of worship that is smaller than a mosque. *Langgar Bubar* (*Bancikan* that changed function or *bubar*—lit. disbanded) became a centre for learning about Islam for Pangeran Pontjowati's followers. In addition to heritage buildings, Sunan Kudus also left behind several traditions.⁵⁵

Dhandhangan began with a habit carried out by students of Sunan Kudus, who flocked the Kudus Tower area in the period leading up to the month of Ramadhan. Hundreds of students and locals gather in wait for the announcement by Sunan Kudus of the beginning of the fasting month. Subsequently, the activity was joined in by followers of Hinduism and Buddhism. It became an event that drew wide interest from young males since beautiful girls who were usually secluded from social activities were also allowed to go out and witness the announcement. Eventually, more people participated in the tradition and converted to Islam. The crowd was also utilized by small traders to sell their products. It then turned into a night market during the period leading up to the month of Ramadhan, becoming a local tradition that is still observed as of current. The

⁵⁴ Munif and Kusdi, January 15, 2020.

⁵⁵ Rochmad, February 2, 2020.

traders come from various regions and diverse religious backgrounds. It is believed that *Dhandhangan* is a legacy passed down by Sunan Kudus and it is a tradition of excellence, providing more auspicious fortune than any ordinary day. Aside from *Dhandangan*, the tradition of not consuming beef is still preserved to this day. This is done to respect followers of Hinduism in Kudus. The Hindu community has great affection and care toward cows. Hinduism teaches its followers to honour cows, a teaching called *Tumpak Kandang*. It has become an annual tradition to give cows religious offerings so that the animals may bring about benefits or good luck to humans.⁵⁶

Sunan Kudus' prohibition against the slaughter of cows was a strategy to gain the public's attention and favour, as they were still followers of Hinduism then. He gathered his students and the entire Kudus population around the courtyard of the Kudus Tower Mosque and when the Hindu followers arrived, he expressed his greetings and welcomed them. Subsequently, he began his lecture, conducted his *da'wah*, and held a dialog. In his lecture, he often cited verses from the Holy Quran, particularly from *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*, which means the cow. He called upon the Muslim community to refrain from slaughtering and eating beef. This request had surprised the residents, particularly the Hindu community, and left them in awe of Sunan Kudus. He was able to gain public sympathy by respecting their beliefs.⁵⁷

Life Value Principles as a Basis of Adaptation Strategy

The title of *Sunan* attached to Sunan Kudus as well as the other saints bear a special meaning. *Sunan* means a person who spreads Islam in a region. *Sunan* also means a holy person who is wise and has close relations with the community. The title of *Sunan* used by the public to address him did not make him better or higher than other members

⁵⁶ Yuliana Nurhayu Rachmawati, *Sunan Kudus: Dinamika Ajaran, Tradisi Dan Budaya Di Kudus Jawa Tengah Tahun 1990-2015*, Thesis, Jakarta, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2018, 70, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/43136>.

⁵⁷ Zaimul Haq Elfan Habib, "Sunan Kudus, Umat Hindu dan Sapi Betina," merahputih.com, Sunan Kudus, Umat Hindu, dan Sapi Betina, May 29, 2018, <https://merahputih.com/post/read/sunan-kudus-umat-hindu-dan-sapi-betina>.

of the society. The image of his character can be represented by several life value principles reflected in the various expressions made by Sunan Kudus and the roles that he assumed, as discussed below.⁵⁸

1. Adigang, adigung, adiguna and andhap asor lembah manah

The attitude demonstrated by Sunan Kudus reminds us of the Javanese adage “*oyo adigang, adigung, adiguna*” that talks of an attitude that must be avoided. This expression means that human beings must prioritize the character of *andhap asor* or *lembah manah*, which means humility or modesty. Human beings should not be arrogant and pretentious. As a human being who acknowledges his or her need for other people, s/he must avoid dispositions that lead one to boast of his or her power, position, and authority. People should understand that all three are mandated (by God) and that they should be exercised as righteously and as justly as possible. Higher positions, broader mastery of knowledge, and greater authority that one maintains should not turn one into an arrogant person.⁵⁹

The people of Kudus believe that Sunan Kudus was a figure who possessed an excess of both wealth and knowledge. He used his overabundance to assist others, and he was believed to have often helped the sick. He also willingly relinquished the throne and position that he had for the sake of *da'wah*. This indicates that he was not someone who is blinded by wealth and position, and, in fact, he highly regarded good manners and the avoidance of vanity. These characteristics were inherent in Sunan Kudus before and after the title of Sunan was given to him. The saint was a person who sacrificed his time and energy and consistently upheld the truth.⁶⁰

Sunan Kudus's character as discussed above can be associated with the theory of self-other. The self has control over every action that the individual enacts, and the good and the bad of an action is the accumulative product of self-autonomy. A human being is a complete unity, which includes its strengths and weaknesses, being is the supreme controller of all the actions s/he commits. In this study, the relationship with the theory of self-other refers to all the dispositions

⁵⁸ Dhani (Yayasan Menara Kudus), interview.

⁵⁹ Rochmad, interview.

⁶⁰ Rochmad.

that he had by the virtue of self-autonomy. The virtues and vices that emerged from his character were created and thought out personally by him. He left us with an essential moral value that serves as a lesson and guidance in social relationship. As human beings, we must prioritize good attitude/manners to fellow human beings because we are, essentially, mutually dependent upon one another. All overabundance of wealth and lofty positions should not make us feel better or greater than others. All excess resources that human beings possess should be used to provide benefit to fellow human beings. With their abundance of resources, people should be able to help others without having to feel superior, an inner state that promotes arrogance.

2. *Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar*

The way of life and basic thinking that Sunan Kudus maintained was *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. The essence of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* is the effort in upholding religion and the interests of the community. Specifically, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* was significantly emphasized by him to anticipate or eliminate evil. The purpose of this behaviour is to try to keep negative matters away without causing more substantial negative impacts on society.⁶¹

The way of life upheld by Sunan Kudus manifested in his attitude and the way he built his life based on the good for the sake of avoiding evil. He assumed various positions as a military commander, a judge, a teacher, and even a proselytizer of Islam with the aim of upholding truth and virtues in the relationship between fellow human beings and with God. As a newcomer, he understood his self-capacity in terms of what he could and could not do. The principle that he upheld was to constantly spread good things unto other fellow human beings. He lived his life entirely for the sake of enforcing the truth and upholding virtues.⁶²

3. *Astra bhuwana* as the foundation of the *urip iku urup* philosophy

Sunan Kudus is like *astra bhuwana*, which means weapon of the world. This symbolization of a weapon correlates with the way that

⁶¹ Mbah Marto, January 29, 2020.

⁶² Mbah Marto.

humans think and act as a creature with self-autonomy. Humans are able to use their mind to conduct either good or evil. Ideally speaking, humans use their knowledge and mind to conduct good deeds. Humans are expected to practice the life philosophy of *urip iku urup*, which means that life is a flame that enlightens. This is reflected in his personality that constantly utilized his intelligence and abilities for the good of his surrounding environs. His life was lived for the purpose of spreading virtues as a leader, teacher, and proselytizer in accordance with Islam. This is well seen in how Sunan Kudus, being a military commander, did not turn prisoners of war into slaves but, instead, gave them lessons and made them his students. This proves that the Muslim saint did not consider human beings based on their position and wealth. All human beings were treated as equals.⁶³

Sunan Kudus was a teacher to several key figures, one of them being Arya Penangsang, Adipati Jipang Panolan. Although he was a teacher, he willingly assisted his student who had devised a plan of revenge against Sunan Prawata who had seized the throne of, and killed, the latter's father. Arya Penangsang sought help from Sunan Kudus who, aside from being his teacher, was well known as an intelligent strategist. In this case, he used a strategy for good in a case involving the grave matter of avenging death. After several discussions, he eventually agreed to help Arya Penangsang for the sake of upholding the truth, which was to take back what rightfully belonged to Arya Penangsang, and of stopping evil. This is one of the indicators that the life of Sunan Kudus refers to the philosophy of *urip iku urup*. The story of Sunan Kudus and Adipati Jipang demonstrates that an unfavourable action of helping someone to get revenge must be understood astutely for a good end. Mind and reason must be employed to analyse a problem and formulate the actions necessary to uphold the truth.⁶⁴ His decision to help Arya Penangsang should be understood as an effort to manifest the philosophy of *urip iku urup*, that is, turning on the lights to enlighten. Based on his perceptiveness in sorting out various problems and determining the measures to be taken, he was entrusted by the

⁶³ Bowo, *Kepala Desa Temulus*, December 2009.

⁶⁴ Fathoni, January 20, 2020.

Kingdom of Demak to serve as a judge. He had always been accurate in his judgments based on the knowledge and assertiveness that he demonstrated in the past, including in the case of Adipati Jipang. He had succeeded in utilizing the life he had for good, and for that he is considered as a role model for the Muslim community.

4. *Ksatria Berbudi Bawa Leksana*

The self of Sunan Kudus is one of the manifestations of *ksatria berbudi bawa leksana*, which means a wise leader who has good demeanours; is responsible for the lives of many; shows love, care, and affection; and bears responsibility for his speech and action. *Ksatria* manifested in his position as a military commander who was wise, astute, and courageous. He was a great figure in battles, but he showed love, care, and affection to both friends, foes, and people around him. He was known as an individual who was shrewd and wise in devising strategies of war. He was able to unite all his soldiers and create a sense of solidarity among the soldiers of Demak Kingdom. Meanwhile, his love, care, and affection were reflected in his attitude to slaves of war by making them his students. His attitude toward fellow human beings garnered the support and love of numerous parties. This was a key factor that resulted to victory in every battle he led.⁶⁵

Sunan Kudus held the principle that he, himself, has an ethical obligation toward others and fellow beings. Wisdom is something that he prioritized and favoured. This principle manifested when he led a group of his students and followers from the Kingdom of Demak heading toward Kudus. He carried himself as a leader capable of fulfilling his obligations to others, one of which was to maintain the safety of his students and followers.⁶⁶

He observed wisdom and love as a leader when engaging with the people in Kudus and in conducting his *da'wah*. When he first arrived in Kudus, he was a part of the minority so the way that he acted determined how the people of Kudus accepted him at the time. They initially did not entirely accept him, with some even preferring to move to the Rahtawu region rather than converting to Islam and

⁶⁵ Mbah Marto, interview.

⁶⁶ Fathoni, interview.

living side by side with him. He accepted this wholeheartedly. Although he had numerous students and followers, he did not resort to violence in dealing with such public reaction. His wisdom and love eventually won the hearts and minds of the people in Kudus. Gradually, people who were followers of Hinduism or Buddhism converted to Islam and became his followers. This is an implication of the attitude that he had, which was to always humanize and venerate his fellow human beings despite the difference in their religious belief. Additionally, the policy he set in prohibiting his followers to slaughter cows and considering cows as a holy animal to respect the Hindu community also drew the interest of Hindu followers in Kudus to become his followers. Nevertheless, he welcomed the people to embrace the religion they desire while continuing to live in peace and harmony. Widely known as a figure of tolerance in Kudus, he knew when he had to go into battle and when he had to keep calm and peaceful.⁶⁷

5. *Tepo selira lan tansah migunani*

To a newcomer, an attitude of tolerance and politeness should be prioritized: this is known in the Javanese philosophy as *tepo seliro lan tansah migunani*. Sunan Kudus was a figure who embodied and upheld the said philosophy, hence, in the process of his arriving and settling in Kudus, he was well accepted by the people although their beliefs differed. Public acceptance is determined by the attitude of the newcomer toward the surrounding community. Javanese communities, Kudus in particular, prioritized a sense of mutual tolerance and politeness. He had taught his followers and the wider public that it is much better if an individual can provide some benefit to the community. However, if one is unable to contribute, then s/he must give precedence to observing an attitude of politeness and tolerance.⁶⁸

6. *Caraka utusaning donya*

Sunan Kudus, in his relationship with God, perceived himself as a *Caraka*, which means a messenger to the world or *utusaning donya*.

⁶⁷ Dhani (Yayasan Menara Kudus), interview.

⁶⁸ Kang Harin (Masjid Menara Kudus), January 10, 2020.

Human relationship with God can be categorized as human devotion to the Creator. Devotion is a human action in the form of thoughts, opinions, love, energy, or veneration that is carried out sincerely. Humans did not spontaneously come into this world because we were created. As God's creation, humans are obligated to worship God. Humans here on earth are leaders or messengers. The self-expression as a *Caraka* provides a comprehensive image of his existence in this world and his relationship with God. The sense of devotion that humans in this world have to God can be manifested in their worship and the sacrifice they perform. The sacrifice that he performed, in this case, was his wholeheartedness and total devotion to Islam as a manifestation of his love and servitude to his God, i.e., Allah ﷻ. He was, wholeheartedly, willing to leave behind the position, nobility, and authority he had in the Kingdom of Demak for the sake of spreading Islam. He realized and believed that all he possessed were a manifestation of God's love to His people. All mortal worships and behaviours are to be directed toward God, since humans were created by God, and it was by God's will that they developed and flourished.⁶⁹

The Values Inherited from Sunan Kudus Today

Based on the concept of self-other, Sunan Kudus was a manifestation of God's voice—which he believed constantly whispered to him—that taught him to conduct good deeds and avoid bad ones. This was the underlying basis of his behaviour toward others. The existence of Sunan Kudus correlates with his existence as God's creature, based on his self-awareness as an individual and a member of the society. The responsibilities that he had toward himself, his family, the society, and the nation were a part of his devotion and servitude to God. Human activities that he carried out as an individual being and a social being were representations of his self-awareness as a human being who is ultimately accountable to God. All personal and social responsibilities that he assumed were entrusted by God unto human beings as vicegerents on earth. Accordingly, efforts oriented toward achieving *memayu hayuning*

⁶⁹ Mbah Marto, interview.

bawana or the constant endeavour to maintain the beauty of the world was carried out by him with wisdom and prudence. He upheld the belief that human beings as God's creation have the obligation to constantly conduct *da'wah* and spread *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*. Humans have the responsibility to call upon others to conduct virtues and avoid vices.

The successful process of Sunan Kudus' cultural adaptation in conveying Islamic teachings can be observed in terms of several aspects. One of them is the fact that, as of current, Kudus' population is mostly Muslim. This condition significantly differs from that when he first arrived, which was around the 15th century. At the time, Hinduism and Buddhism were the religions of the majority throughout Kudus. A substantial part of the Muslim population in Kudus today still has a close attachment with traditions that have been maintained since the 15th century. The values inherent within Islam as taught in Indonesia are still practiced and have become a way of life.

Kudus is known as a city of *santri* (devout student of Islam), which is centred in the Kauman Village, and the people of Kudus are called *wong ngisor menoro* (people living under the Kudus Tower). The Kudus area that is most populated by *santri* is Kudus Kulon. Nevertheless, the social composition of Kudus Kulon is quite heterogeneous, marked by various religious backgrounds, including Confucianism, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.⁷⁰ Muslims living in Kudus Kulon exude a greater impression of religiosity than those living in Kudus Wetan. Most of the people living in Kudus Kulon are fanatical *santri*, so the figure of a *kyai* (Javanese cleric or expert in Islam) has always been considered as a role model for Kudus Kulon community. The stance that Kudus Kulon Muslims maintain indicates the success of his process in spreading Islam.⁷¹ His influence can still be felt to this very day. Kudus Kulon is known as a kampong of *santri* since the social activities conducted there mostly consist of religious activities such

⁷⁰ Marbangun Hardjowirogo, *Manusia Jawa* (Jakarta: Inti Idayu Press, 1984), https://books.google.co.id/books/about/Manusia_Jawa.html?id=QEwbAAAAIAAJ&redir_esc=y.

⁷¹ Rachmawati, "Sunan Kudus: Dinamika ajaran, tradisi dan budaya di Kudus Jawa Tengah tahun 1990-2015," 36–38.

as Islamic study gatherings (*pengajian*) and congregational worships at mosques. The people of Kudus Kulon continue to strictly preserve the cultural legacy passed on by Sunan Kudus, of which among them is the prohibition to slaughter cows.⁷²

The people of Kudus currently live in harmony and firmly uphold the teachings and heritage of Sunan Kudus. Although Kudus is well known as a city of *santri* due to the abundance of Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) and religious figures, the population of Kudus remains very diverse, with its residents living together in peace and harmony. He passed on many virtuous teachings and cultural legacies that became witness to the cultural and social adaptation in the struggle to spread the word of Islam.

The struggle experienced by Sunan Kudus in spreading Islam was based on his use of several methods that incorporated values of tolerance. Instead of resorting to violence, he approached the people of Kudus by understanding their needs and utilizing art and culture as well as appropriate technology. He prioritized an attitude of *andhap asor lembah manah* (humbleness/humility). Even as his position rose, his mastery of relevant knowledge broadened, and his power/authority increased, he did not become an arrogant individual. Highly upholding the concept of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* was something he did by fighting for or promoting the truth (spreading the word of Islam) and maintaining good deeds. One of his purposes in life was *urip iku urup*, which meant leading a life capable of enlightening fellow human beings. He also emphasized an attitude of *tepo seliro lan tansah migunani*, which refers to the ability to provide benefits to the people he met and to highlight the awareness of always being polite and tolerant. These virtues have been passed down to the city of Kudus and resulted in the city being one of the notably tolerant cities in Indonesia.

Sunan Kudus' teachings and attitude towards life is a demonstration of the relationship between the self and others. Sunan Kudus' 'self' shows its existence in its relationship with the community, which serves others. The existence of others is given

⁷² Lance Castles, *Religion, Politics, and Economic Behavior in Java: The Kudus Cigarette Industry*, First Edition (Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1967), 87, <https://www.amazon.com/Religion-politics-economic-behavior-Java/dp/B0006BQR5K>.

significant attention through God. The measures he carried out in the process of adaptation and socialization were manifestations based on the belief in the existence of God and one's position before God.

Conclusion

The data and analyses discussed above reveal the basic reasoning and stance of Sunan Kudus, which are representations of the concept of self and others. These principles of fundamental values were developed by the *wali* as bases for adapting to, and living together in, society. He emphasized the need to understand attitudes that should be avoided, namely *adigang*, *adigung*, *adiguna*. As human beings, we should not be dependent on our power, authority, and intellect because life with fellow men and women can be led in peace and harmony so long as each individual maintains an attitude of mutual respect, politeness, and humility toward one another. As human beings, we should also implement *tepo selira lan tansah migunani*, which is an attitude underlying tolerance and politeness toward our fellow human beings, as well as constant endeavour to be of benefit to others. The mindset and attitude that he showed in spreading Islam throughout Kudus have proven that violence is unnecessary to influence an individual or a community. People will be more interested and sympathetic if the approaches employed emphasize respect and are able to provide benefits to one's self and others.

There are numerous values and attitude to life that we can learn from the history of Sunan Kudus. This Muslim saint is greatly revered by the people so much so that a cult following has emerged in various traditions. Further studies are needed to better understand such a phenomenon.

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	
ء	ب	پ	پ	ز	ز	ز	ز	گ	—	g	g	g
ب	ب	ب	ب	ژ	—	—	ř	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	پ	پ	پ	ژ	—	zh	j	م	m	m	m	m
ت	ت	ت	ت	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ث	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ş	ه	h	h	h ¹	h ¹
ث	th	th	th	ص	ş	ş	ş	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḍ	ḍ	ḍ	ی	y	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah	—	—	-a ²
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al ³	—	—	—
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘	—	—	—	—	—
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğh	—	—	—	—	—
ڈ	—	—	d	ف	f	f	f	—	—	—	—	—
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	q	—	—	—	—	—
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k/g	k/ñ	—	—	—	—	—

¹ – when not final

² – at in construct state

³ – (article) al - or l-

VOWELS

	Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	iy (final form i)	iy (final form i)
	و	uww (final form ū) uvv (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	ا	u	u or ū
	ا	i	o or ö
	ا	i	i

URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. چ jh گ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

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