

# REVISITING THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF NYADRAN IN THE GLOBALIZATION ERA: QUALITATIVE ANTHROPOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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Article received February 12<sup>nd</sup>, 2024; Article revised April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024; Article approved May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

## **Abstract**

*In an increasingly integrated and connected era of globalization, cultural identity becomes important in maintaining the diversity and uniqueness of each human group. This research identified the changes in the traditional cultural identity of Nyadran in the context of the globalization era, using a contemporary anthropological perspective. Nyadran is a Javanese cultural tradition that is historically closely linked to local values and local community beliefs. However, along with the development of the globalization era, this tradition has undergone a significant transformation to adapt to ever-changing global flows. Using contemporary anthropological research methods, this research involved active participation in the Nyadran event as well as interviews with practitioners and participants of this tradition. Data analysis revealed how local elements in Nyadran interact with global influences, such as technology, mass media, and changes in social values. In addition, this research explored how globalization can influence the concept of local cultural identity and how local communities react to these changes. The results of this research provide in-depth insight into the dynamics of changing cultural identity in the globalization era, highlighting the complexity of the relationship between traditional and modern elements in the context of Nyadran.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural Identity, Nyadran, Globalization, Anthropology Perspective*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cultural identity has become increasingly complex and complicated in the era of fast-paced and connected globalization. Globalization has presented new challenges for people in maintaining their cultural identity. This is due to rapid changes in communication and transportation

technology that have facilitated intercultural interactions throughout the world. Therefore, we need to review cultural identity in the era of globalization. Contemporary anthropology, as a branch of science that studies humans and their diversity in social and cultural contexts, can provide a valuable perspective in this regard.

Globalization has had a strong external influence on cultural identity, with the emergence of a flow of information and influence from outside into society. However, through a contemporary anthropological perspective, we can see that cultural identity is not static or tied to one particular place or time. Cultural identity is dynamic and continues to change along with changes in society. Cultural identity can adapt and evolve with the times. In reviewing cultural identity in the globalization era, contemporary anthropology also highlights the importance of maintaining cultural diversity (Sinha, 2011).

*Nyadran* is a Javanese tradition that is carried out to honor ancestors. It consists of various ceremonies, songs, dances, and celebrations. Local people usually commemorate *Nyadran* together. *Nyadran* comes from Sanskrit, *śraddha*, which means the belief in honoring ancestors, which is usually done by cleaning ancestral graves, scattering flowers, and holding parties or celebrations at ancestral graves (Bagio & Priyadarshana, 2023). As a characteristic of Javanese culture, the *Nyadran* tradition has long been an inseparable part of local community life, manifesting values, beliefs, and social interactions that are rooted in history and local wisdom. Even though it has a rich cultural heritage, *Nyadran* now faces serious challenges in the dynamics of the globalization era (Fatanti & Tuti, 2020).

Rapid transformations in global aspects, including technology, mass media, and changes in social values, raise deep questions regarding how this tradition adapts and maintains its cultural identity amidst the continuous flow of change (Lefringhausen et al., 2022). In this context, this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of changes in the cultural identity of *Nyadran* in the era of globalization, using a contemporary anthropological approach. Contemporary anthropology provides a relevant framework for understanding how local traditions interact with global influences and the extent to which these changes influence local communities' concepts of cultural identity (Tasoulis et al., 2023).

By tracing the transformation of *Nyadran* from a contemporary anthropological perspective, we can detail how local and global elements interact with each other, forming a new cultural reality. Through this research, it

is hoped that new insights will emerge about how local communities maintain the authenticity of their cultural identity while responding to and adapting new elements emerging from globalization. Apart from that, this research is also expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of globalization in shaping the dynamics of local cultural identity in an ever-changing society.

## Literature Review

Research on the *Nyadran* tradition has highlighted various aspects of this cultural practice, which is the result of acculturation to Javanese culture, which was influenced by Hinduism and then Islamized. *Nyadran* is considered an annual event to commemorate ancestors and a means to strengthen brotherhood among surviving family members. This tradition is observed in various areas around the mountain, with small variations based on developments and local community deliberations (Nurrahma et al., 2022).

In the context of Sobowono Hamlet, Afandi (2023) shows that the *Nyadran* tradition has two stages of implementation: cleaning the grave and carrying out the *Nyadran* tradition. This tradition functions as a gathering event, a social bonding factor, a means of building community identity, nationalism, and a sense of national pride. It has a positive impact on social interaction in the Sobowono Hamlet community.

Meanwhile, research in Lamuk Hamlet, Temanggung Regency, identified the form, function, and meaning of the *Nyadran Punden* tradition, its symbolic role in relationships, and efforts to preserve it through education and active participation (Andriyani, 2021). Anam (2017) in the *Sambatas* and *Nyadran* traditions in Suruhan Hamlet explored the cultural significance and relationship between the *Sambatas* and *Nyadran* traditions in the Suruhan community, showing the depth of these traditions in society. Meanwhile, Riyadi's research (2017) revealed that the *Nyadran* tradition in Kayen Village is an annual ritual that unites all members of the community, transcending individual religious identities, becoming an annual event that is considered a moment of returning home for community members.

Likewise, the results of Andriyani's (2021) research highlight how the *Nyadran*

*Punden* tradition in Lamuk Hamlet is a concrete example of efforts to preserve local culture in facing the challenges of globalization. This shows the importance of understanding and appreciating local wisdom as part of a cultural identity that must be maintained and developed, as well as providing insight into how local communities can utilize these traditions to strengthen social, religious, educational, and entertainment ties in their lives.

The same point is also shown by Saputri's study (2021), which highlights concrete efforts to preserve the *Nyadran* tradition, which not only functions as respect for ancestors but also as a means of strengthening cultural and national identity. The involvement of the younger generation and synergy between families, traditional institutions, and government are the keys to maintaining traditional values amidst the challenges of globalization and social change.

Although previous studies have explored various aspects of the *Nyadran* tradition, this research takes it a step further by focusing on the interaction between local traditions and global influences, and their impact on the concept of cultural identity in contemporary Javanese society. In the globalization era, the *Nyadran* tradition shows the dynamics of cultural identity that adapts while maintaining its essence. *Nyadran's* transformation and adaptation in the face of globalization reflects the resilience and flexibility of Javanese cultural identity in responding to changing times.

Through this literature review, the research aims to explore how *Nyadran* cultural identity is maintained and developed, looking at the implications of this adaptation process for religious practices and cultural identity in contemporary Javanese society. This research opens new insights into the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural identity in the context of globalization, especially in relation to *Nyadran* practices, which are an inseparable part of Indonesia's cultural richness.

### Conceptual Framework

This article explores two main themes: the evolution of *Nyadran* cultural identity and the dynamics of funeral ceremonies in the context of globalization from a qualitative

anthropological perspective. Several experts, including Clifford Geertz, Mark Woodward, and M.C. Ricklefs, have provided in-depth insight into the interaction between Islam and local culture in Java, highlighting how long-standing traditions received influence from Hindu and Buddhist nuances before the arrival of Islam (Amrozi, 2021; Ramli, 2005; Ahyani, 2015).

The phenomenon of syncretism—a combination of elements of Islam and Javanese culture—dominates the daily life of Javanese people, especially in practices such as *Nyadran*, a ritual to honor ancestors by combining Islamic prayers and Javanese cultural symbols (Laily, 2021).

*Nyadran*, as a cultural practice rich in values and symbolism, has become an important means of honoring ancestors in Java. During social change and the pressures of globalization, *Nyadran* experiences adaptation and transformation, which not only shows the resilience and flexibility of Javanese cultural identity but also its dynamic interaction with global influences. This raises the question of how *Nyadran* practice can maintain its essence as part of cultural heritage while adapting to an ever-changing global context.

Through a qualitative anthropological approach, this study will examine how the *Nyadran* tradition survives and develops, faces, and responds to global influences, and the implications of this process for the cultural identity and religious practices of Javanese society today. The focus of this research includes an analysis of how *Nyadran*, as an expression of Javanese cultural identity, navigates the challenges of globalization, maintains its traditional values, and integrates new elements to ensure the relevance and continuity of the tradition in the future.

### RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative anthropological research used an ethnographic method with three main components: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and library research (Lee, 2021). Participatory observation was carried out by observing and participating in the *Nyadran* ritual process. The location of this research

was the grave of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, the parents of Sri Sultan HB VI and the grandfather of Sri Sultan HB VII, which was in the Pengklik Mountain Cemetery, Madurejo Village, Sleman Regency. Participatory observation was carried out to track each stage of the *Nyadran* ritual. Literature research collected information from various literature sources related to the *Nyadran* topic.

Through this observation, we could thoroughly understand and explain the entire *Nyadran* ritual process, including the requirements and equipment, as well as the prayer readings. In-depth interviews were conducted with community and religious figures, especially ritual leaders or traditional leaders. More specific information about the history and evolution of the *Nyadran* ritual was explored so that we could find out which parts have changed and which parts have not. Other important information about the process of change and evolution of the *Nyadran* ritual, as well as the possibility that the meaning of the *Nyadran* ritual may change, was studied further.

## DISCUSSION

### *Nyadran* Tradition as an Expression of Local Javanese Wisdom in Respecting Ancestors

The *Nyadran* tradition is common throughout Java, including Yogyakarta. One of the traditions carried out before the month of Ramadan is cleaning the graves of parents of dirt and grass. After that, scatter flowers and say prayers, and a funeral celebration at the end. The Hindu-Buddhist tradition is the source of *Nyadran*. Since the 15th century, the *Walisanga* combined this tradition with their preaching to make Islam more easily accepted by society. This tradition still exists throughout Java, even in Yogyakarta. One of them is Madurejo Village in Kapanewon Prambanan, Sleman Regency, precisely at the Pengklik Mountain Cemetery.

This is one of the areas in Sleman that is unique in terms of culture and religion. In the Pengklik Mountain Cemetery, there is the grave of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, the parents of Sri Sultan HB VI and the grandfather of Sri Sultan HB VII. At the grave

complex of local figure Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, a traditional ceremony was carried out. People wearing traditional Javanese clothing, followed by hundreds of local residents, walked towards the grave complex carrying *Ubo Rampe* accompanied by *Bregodo* soldiers, welcoming this tradition with great enthusiasm. This tomb is in the Pengklik Mountain Cemetery complex.

The tomb looks similar to the tombs of the Mataram Imogiri kings. According to local community leader, Lulut Triyono, Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso was a nobleman from the Kasunanan Surakarta kingdom who had close ties to the Yogyakarta Sultanate. After moving from Surakarta, he then settled in Padukuhan Payak Wetan, Srimulyo, Piyungan Bantul, Yogyakarta. After he died at the end of 1785, he was buried on Pengklik mountain. Pengklik's grave is the grave of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, a nobleman from the Kasunanan Surakarta kingdom who had close ties to the Yogyakarta Sultanate.

Although this grave is limited to the family and descendants of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, this tomb has become a religious and historical tourist location that attracts many pilgrims. "Every year, during the Javanese month of *Ruwah*, the local community routinely holds the *Sadranan* tradition at this tomb," he said. Haji Sumadi, Madurejo subdistrict head, stated that there was no other purpose than to pray for the ancestors, especially Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso and his descendants. This *Sadranan* aimed to maintain the Madurejo tradition. The enthusiasm of the community caused the changes and progress of the *Nyadran* ritual. This ritual is not as lively as it is now because previously, it was only carried out by a handful of village residents. Almost all village residents wanted to be involved and contribute.

The Kingdom of Yogyakarta holds the *Nyadran* ritual in Imogiri every year on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Sha'ban, the month before Ramadan in the Islamic calendar. This ritual is carried out by *abdi dalem (punggawa)* because there is a belief that kings who serve themselves should not come to the tomb. The *Nyadran* ritual procession begins with *besik*, cleaning the ancestral graves of dirt and grass. In this

activity, the community and families work together to clean ancestral graves. Various kinds of flowers, incense, and other official necessities are included in the *Ubo Rampe*. With a parade consisting of several courtiers and royal troops, *Ubo Rampe* was taken to the cemetery.

This *Nyadran* ritual involves courtiers who carry out the sacred task of reading prayers to God, asking for salvation for the royal family who have passed away and are buried in this holy place. Participation in the *Nyadran* procession is exclusively reserved for royal servants and troops, emphasizing the depth of traditional and spiritual values that are strictly maintained in every step of the ritual. However, the uniqueness of the *Nyadran* parade lies in its openness to the public, offering the opportunity for anyone to attend and witness this meaningful procession without having to pay a penny.

This openness invites visitors from all walks of life to take part in honoring long-standing traditions, allowing them to wear personal clothing, creating an atmosphere that is inclusive and deeply rooted in diversity. The concept of voluntary donations was introduced as a way for visitors to contribute, strengthening the values of mutual cooperation and togetherness that are at the core of the *Nyadran* tradition. The donation box provided is a symbol of togetherness and the community's willingness to maintain and preserve the cultural values contained in the *Nyadran* tradition, ensuring that this ritual can continue from generation to generation.

### **Dynamics of Change in the *Nyadran* Tradition in the Globalization Era**

The historical and cultural context of the grave of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, the parents of Sri Sultan HB VI and the grandfather of Sri Sultan HB VII, which is in the Pengklik mountain tomb, clearly influences the *Nyadran* ritual procession. As a courtier and traditional figure who is close to local residents, he was able to convince local residents to respect his services at the Pengklik Mountain Cemetery. Pengklik Mountain Cemetery is located in the middle of the village settlement, so village residents can

easily respect it during the *Nyadran* funeral ceremony.

This situation also allows villagers to carry out *Nyadran* directly on their own initiative. This was demonstrated in Madurejo Village, Sleman Regency, where an organizing committee was formed to carry out the annual *Nyadran*. Therefore, the *Nyadran* ritual, which is based on the awareness of the village community itself, allows the implementation of innovations or inventions in this field. This situation is also inseparable from the more religious context of village life, as shown by the reading of the Al-Quran and recitations (religious lectures) during the *Nyadran* ceremony procession.

Villagers were directly involved in the *Nyadran* procession, attracting media attention due to their desire to make the ritual more festive. Some media have called the *Nyadran* procession "cultural tourism". They said that the *Nyadran* ritual had developed from a pilgrimage ritual into cultural tourism because many visitors came from outside the village and even from abroad. The *Nyadran* ritual has become more lively and is better known as an annual cultural event that attracts more people because they come in many buses. Apart from that, the local government also supports the process by assisting village aid funds.

The local government's support for the *Nyadran* ritual not only shows recognition of the cultural and spiritual value of the tradition but also marks an effort to preserve and promote cultural heritage as a tourism asset. This indirectly strengthens the capacity of local communities to manage and utilize the *Nyadran* tradition to improve their economic welfare. Through the allocation of village aid funds, the infrastructure supporting *Nyadran* activities, such as road access and public facilities, is repaired and upgraded, making access easier for visitors and enhancing their experience in participating in the ritual.

The increasing number of visitors interested in joining *Nyadran* as a cultural tourism site also opens up new economic opportunities for village residents. Small and medium businesses, such as food traders, craftsmen, and lodging service providers, benefit from the increase in economic activity

generated by this cultural event. In addition, villagers who have skills in making *Ubo Rampe*, offerings, and other ritual attributes get the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise through workshops or training, which not only contributes to the preservation of traditional skills but also provides them with an additional source of income.

The development of *Nyadran* as a cultural tourist attraction also strengthens community identity and increases residents' sense of pride in their cultural heritage. Direct community involvement in ritual processions and other supporting activities fosters collective awareness about the importance of preserving traditions as a source of cultural identity and uniqueness. This, in turn, encourages the continuation of traditional practices through the transmission of knowledge and values from generation to generation.

However, this development also raises challenges in maintaining a balance between preserving tradition and adapting to modern needs. Local communities and relevant stakeholders need to work together to ensure that *Nyadran's* spiritual essence and traditional values are maintained while remaining open to innovation that brings social and economic benefits. This collaboration needs to be directed at creating an inclusive and sustainable strategy that allows the *Nyadran* tradition to develop along with the times without losing the cultural roots that form its foundation.

Thus, the *Nyadran* tradition of the grave of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, the parents of Sri Sultan HB VI and the grandfather of Sri Sultan HB VII, located in the tomb of Pengklik mountain and its surroundings is not only a symbol of rich cultural heritage but also a reflection of ongoing social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Through wise adaptation and effective management, *Nyadran* can continue to thrive as a practice that binds communities, enriches social life, and contributes to local economic development.

The changes and developments that occur in the *Nyadran* Pengklik Mountain ritual are in line with the theory of ritual change (Bell, 1977), which includes at least three things: social transformation, discovery or renewal,

and media construction. Social transformation can be seen in how the *Nyadran* ritual, which was originally a more intimate and limited spiritual activity, developed into a lively and inclusive cultural event. Wider participation from various levels of society, including children, shows how these rituals have adapted to changing social needs and expectations. The presence of religious activities is a form of transformation of their spiritual awareness (Patimah et al., 2022).

Innovation or renewal in the *Nyadran* ritual is also key in maintaining its relevance and appeal. Changes in how it is implemented, such as the incorporation of other cultural elements and increased community involvement, are a response to changing social dynamics. This innovation not only maintains local interest but also attracts the attention of visitors from abroad who are looking for an authentic cultural experience. Meanwhile, the role of the media in building and communicating changes in the *Nyadran* ritual cannot be ignored. The use of print media, television, and especially online and social media has expanded the reach of information about *Nyadran* to a wider audience. The media functions as an effective tool in constructing the image of *Nyadran* as an interesting cultural event, thereby increasing the number of visitors and public participation. Thus, the media not only plays a role in promoting *Nyadran* but also in shaping public perceptions of this ritual as part of a dynamic and living cultural heritage.

Highlighting the Public Sphere theory by Jürgen Habermas (1986) on changes in the *Nyadran* ritual on Mount Pengklik offers an in-depth perspective on how social and cultural dynamics interact in public space. In *Nyadran's* case, social transformation, innovation and media influence have contributed to the formation of public discussion around the practice, broadening participation and increasing cultural awareness. Organizing a more open and inclusive *Nyadran*, as well as its existence as a topic that attracts media attention, creates a platform for people to interact and participate in forming a collective identity. This reflects how public spaces function to integrate diverse

views and perspectives, ultimately strengthening cultural awareness and promoting cultural diversity as an important value in society.

Furthermore, increased access to information and participation through social media and other digital platforms shows how modern technology can facilitate the formation of a broader and more dynamic public space. This allows individuals from various backgrounds to engage in discussions about *Nyadran*, enriching dialogue and broadening understanding of this tradition. The existence of this digital public space also strengthens society's ability to maintain and adapt traditions in the face of global change while ensuring that cultural values continue to be passed on to the next generation.

Cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), in this case, includes knowledge, skills, and symbols that are valued in society, all of which can be seen in the updated *Nyadran* practice. These activities not only strengthen the identity of local communities through preserving and innovating traditions but also increase their prestige and social recognition. This shows how traditional cultural practices, when managed and promoted well, can adapt to the era of globalization without losing their essence and meaning while also becoming a source of community pride and identity. The cultural capital enriched through *Nyadran* has become an important asset for Madurejo Village, showing the strength and flexibility of culture in responding and growing amidst changing times.

This analysis shows that the dynamics of change in the *Nyadran* ritual are not only a response to internal community factors but are also influenced by complex interactions between social factors, cultural innovation, and media dynamics. It reflects how traditional practices can transform and survive in an era of globalization while highlighting the importance of understanding and appreciating the underlying cultural values.

## ***Nyadran* Tradition Preservation and Development Strategy for the Future in a Contemporary Anthropological Perspective**

Maintaining and developing the *Nyadran* tradition requires an integrated and dynamic strategy to respond to the challenges of fast-paced globalization. Given the importance of these traditions in constructing Javanese cultural identity, contemporary anthropological approaches offer a rich framework for understanding and implementing effective conservation strategies. Here are several strategies that we can use (Wahono, 2022).

First, the importance of education and outreach in strengthening people's understanding of *Nyadran*'s spiritual values and local wisdom cannot be underestimated. Through formal and informal education, the younger generation can be taught to recognize and appreciate this tradition as part of their heritage. Social media and other digital platforms have become powerful tools in disseminating information and increasing public awareness about *Nyadran*, making it relevant to modern life.

Second, involving the younger generation is not only about participation in the *Nyadran* ritual but also about formulating and implementing innovations that keep this tradition interesting. Thus, *Nyadran* is maintained not only as a cultural heritage but also as a living practice that continues to develop and adapt to changing times.

Third, maintaining *Nyadran*'s noble values and symbolic meaning requires commitment from the entire community. This is not only the task of traditional institutions or the government, but all elements of society must be actively involved in this conservation effort. The *Nyadran* tradition, with all its values and symbolism, must continue to be strengthened through daily practices and collective celebrations.

Fourth, collaboration between traditional institutions, government, and the wider community is key to preserving *Nyadran*. Government support through the allocation of funds and other resources is essential. However, active community involvement in planning and carrying out rituals is also

significant. Through this synergy, *Nyadran* can continue to develop as a lively and inclusive cultural event, which is attractive to local residents and visitors from abroad.

Lastly, facing the challenges of modernity and globalization, *Nyadran* must be able to adapt without losing its traditional essence and values. Conservation strategies must be flexible and innovative, utilizing technology and new media to broaden reach and increase participation while maintaining the cultural roots and spirituality that are the foundation of these traditions.

With a contemporary anthropological approach, we can see that the preservation and development of *Nyadran* are not just about maintaining old traditions but about how these traditions can continue to live and be relevant in a changing society. Through the strategies that have been explained, *Nyadran* will not only survive as an important part of Javanese cultural identity but also as a symbol of the dynamics and adaptation of society in facing the era of globalization.

## CLOSING

The conclusion of this research confirms that the *Nyadran* ritual at the tomb of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, the parents of Sri Sultan HB VI and the grandfather of Sri Sultan HB VII who are at the tomb of Mount Pengklik have shown extraordinary adaptability in facing social dynamics and global change. The changes and developments that occur not only enrich *Nyadran* practice but also strengthen its role in maintaining and promoting community cultural identity. External factors such as wider public participation and coverage by various media have played a significant role in increasing visibility and attracting greater interest in this ritual, while internal factors such as the dedication of the *abdi dalem* ensure that the spiritual and traditional essence of *Nyadran* is preserved.

In the context of globalization, which is often feared will erode local cultural identity, *Nyadran* proves that traditions can survive and even develop by integrating new elements without losing their roots. This is evidence of the importance of revision and adaptation in cultural practices to maintain their relevance in

modern society. This research also highlights that *Nyadran* is not only a cultural expression but also has significant social and economic implications for the community. It shows how cultural practices can contribute to the socio-economic development of local communities through increasing tourism and economic empowerment of residents.

Thus, *Nyadran* at the tomb of Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso, the parents of Sri Sultan HB VI and the grandfather of Sri Sultan HB VII who are at the tomb of Mount Pengklik offer valuable insight into the importance of maintaining a balance between preserving traditions and adapting to changing times. It emphasizes the importance of joint efforts between communities, governments, and various stakeholders to preserve cultural heritage while ensuring that traditions remain dynamic and relevant for future generations. Through a qualitative anthropological approach, this research underlines the intrinsic value of *Nyadran* as an inseparable part of Indonesia's cultural richness, which continues to inspire and unite society amidst global changes and challenges.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the management of the Kiai Ageng Prawiro Rejoso Tomb on Pengklik Mountain, Madurejo Village, Sleman Regency, as well as the local community, who welcomed and supported us during the research.

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