

Exploring the Begarap Tradition in Shaping Character and Social Integrity in Sasak Society

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Abstrak

This study explores the role of the Begarap tradition in shaping character and maintaining social integrity within the Sasak community in Lombok. The primary objective is to understand how Begarap functions as a conflict resolution mechanism and social control tool in the face of modernization challenges. The research employs a qualitative approach, combining literature studies and in-depth interviews with traditional and religious leaders in Pujut and Praya Timur. The findings reveal that Begarap remains relevant in upholding values of honesty and social responsibility. This ritual carries strong spiritual elements, where individuals swear an oath using sacred water from Nyatuq's grave. The belief in supernatural consequences enhances its effectiveness in regulating behavior. Despite social transformations due to globalization, Begarap endures as a symbol of cultural and religious identity. The study concludes that Begarap contributes significantly to maintaining social stability and reinforcing moral values within the Sasak community. Recommendations include integrating Begarap's values into education and promoting its preservation through documentation and further research to ensure its relevance in the modern era.

Keywords: Begarap, Sasak, Honesty, Social Integrity, Modernization.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional culture plays a fundamental role in maintaining social balance and shaping community character. In Indonesia, cultural diversity has given rise to various social mechanisms that function as tools for social control and conflict resolution. One tradition that exemplifies this function is Begarap, a ritual practiced by the Sasak community in Central Lombok. Begarap is not merely a cultural heritage but also a social system that instills the values of honesty, integrity, and social responsibility.

Begarap is a ritual oath-taking practice that involves the use of sacred water from the Nyatuq grave. In this tradition, individuals involved in conflicts or disputes must swear an oath by drinking the sacred water in the presence of the community. The belief that breaking the oath will lead to supernatural consequences serves as a key factor in fostering awareness of honesty and adherence to social norms (Ariadi, 2022). Through this mechanism, Begarap functions as a social control instrument, reinforcing the value system within the Sasak community.

Although Begarap has long been an integral part of Sasak culture, modernization and social changes present challenges to the continuity of this tradition. The communal values that underpin Begarap face increasing pressure from individualism and materialism, both of which are becoming more prevalent due to globalization. Additionally, the growing dominance of formal legal mechanisms in conflict resolution often displaces customary laws, including the practice of Begarap. The primary issue that arises is how Begarap can continue to function as an effective social mechanism amidst the transformation of values and legal systems.

Various studies have demonstrated that conflict resolution mechanisms rooted in cultural traditions effectively maintain social order. (N. K. Hunaepi & Firdaus, 2016; Mariani & Pardi, 2023) highlight that

dialogue and mediation approaches, similar to those used in educational institutions, can help resolve conflicts constructively. Similarly, (Fangestu, 2023) asserts that conflict is an inevitable aspect of social life, making culturally based resolution strategies increasingly important. In the context of *Begarap*, this suggests that traditional mechanisms are not merely historical relics but can remain relevant when adapted to modern contexts.

Communication plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of *Begarap* as a conflict resolution tool. (Hajar et al., 2024) emphasize that miscommunication is often the root cause of prolonged conflicts, whereas effective communication can expedite problem resolution (Suhendra & Pratiwi, 2024). In the *Begarap* ritual, communication between traditional leaders, disputing parties, and the broader community is key to ensuring that the process is perceived as fair and just. Therefore, understanding how communication within *Begarap* can be optimized is essential for maintaining its relevance in contemporary society.

Beyond conflict resolution, *Begarap* also serves as a social control mechanism that upholds order within the Sasak community. (Putri & Wijayanti, 2021) find that local wisdom enhances community resilience by fostering a collective sense of responsibility in upholding social norms. Through active community participation in *Begarap*, the Sasak people maintain solidarity and social stability by reinforcing traditional values that have been passed down for generations.

On a broader level, *Begarap* reflects the integration of culture and religion in Sasak society. Nyatuq, a revered figure in the history of Islam's spread in Lombok, symbolizes the fusion of customary values with religious teachings. (hunaepi & Firdaus, 2017; Nuraeni et al., 2024) emphasize that the *Tindih* value, which stresses commitment to truth, serves as the foundation for moral education within the Sasak community. *Begarap*, which upholds honesty as a core principle, is a direct manifestation of this value system in social practice.

The continuity of *Begarap* amid modernization presents a key focus of this study. Rapid social change necessitates adaptation in how this tradition is practiced. (Nugroho, 2022) asserts that cultural and religious integration contributes to sustainable social development. Additionally, research by (Khofsah et al., 2023) indicates that incorporating cultural values into early childhood education strengthens community identity. These findings suggest that exploring ways to preserve *Begarap* as a tool for social control and conflict resolution is essential to ensuring its relevance in modern society.

This study aims to explore the role of *Begarap* in shaping character and social integrity within the Sasak community while assessing its relevance amid ongoing social transformations. It seeks to identify how *Begarap* can remain an effective conflict resolution system and how it can adapt to societal changes without losing its core values. By understanding the social mechanisms embedded in *Begarap*, this research also aims to provide broader insights into how local traditions can be preserved and modified to remain relevant in the modern era.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, combining literature review and in-depth interviews to explore the cultural meaning and social role of *Begarap* in the Sasak community. A qualitative approach is appropriate for examining symbolic values, traditions, and social practices that cannot be quantified (Creswell, 2007).

Geographically, this study focuses on the Sasak community in Pujut and Praya Timur, Central Lombok, where *Begarap* remains actively practiced. Demographically, it involves traditional leaders, religious figures, and community members directly engaged in the tradition. The study aims to assess *Begarap*'s role in shaping character, upholding social integrity, and adapting to modernization while contributing to both theoretical discourse on cultural studies and practical strategies for heritage preservation.

The literature review collects secondary data from books, academic articles, journals, and other relevant sources to analyze *Begarap*'s cultural significance, values, and relevance in modern society. This review also compares prior studies to strengthen the theoretical framework on indigenous conflict resolution.

In-depth interviews complement the literature review by gathering insights from traditional and religious leaders. Conducted semi-structurally, these interviews allow researchers to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of participants, which often remain undocumented in written sources. The approach aligns with (Nnama-Okechukwu & McLaughlin, 2022), who highlight that integrating indigenous knowledge into social studies enhances understanding of broader social dynamics. Similarly, (Cherubini, 2022) emphasizes that community-based research provides deeper insight into socio-political realities affecting traditional practices.

To ensure data reliability, this study applies triangulation by cross-validating interview findings with literature sources (Linda, 2025). If an informant states that Begarap continues to function in conflict resolution, supporting evidence is sought from existing studies. Multiple informant perspectives are also compared to ensure narrative consistency and minimize bias. This methodological rigor aligns with (Bhangyi, 2023), who advocates for indigenous knowledge in policy development, emphasizing its role in addressing contemporary societal challenges.

Additionally, data analysis follows a thematic coding approach, as outlined by (Merriam, 2016), to identify patterns and emerging themes related to Begarap's social and cultural role. This process facilitates a deeper understanding of how Begarap remains a relevant mechanism for maintaining social norms and resolving conflicts amid modernization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research conducted using a qualitative approach through literature studies and in-depth interviews with traditional and religious leaders in Pujut and East Praya Districts, it was found that the Begarap culture holds profound meaning for the Sasak community. This ritual serves not only as a means of uncovering the truth but also as a reflection of social values that uphold honesty and integrity within the Sasak community (Muzakir & Suastra, 2024). Analysis of the collected data indicates that the Begarap tradition remains highly relevant today, preserving the moral and social identity of the Sasak people amid the currents of modernization.

1. The Cultural Meaning of Begarap

Begarap holds strong spiritual and social significance, reflected in the Sasak community's belief in the supernatural power involved in the ritual. Interviews with traditional leaders indicate that Begarap is frequently conducted in cases that disrupt social harmony, such as theft or disputes within the community. A customary leader from Pujut District stated, *"The water from Nyatuq's grave is not just ordinary water; it has the power to reveal the truth. Those who take an oath with this water will face consequences if they lie, whether through illness or failure in life."* This belief instills fear of dishonesty and encourages fair conflict resolution (Muzakar et al., 2023).

Nyatuq, a revered spiritual figure in the history of Islam in Lombok, is central to the Sasak people's faith in the power of the Begarap ritual. A religious leader from Praya Timur explained, *"We believe that the soil from Nyatuq's grave carries blessings. The water mixed with this soil symbolizes purity, and anyone who swears by it must be accountable to both God and the community."* This demonstrates that Begarap is not merely a cultural tradition but also a deeply rooted religious practice within the Sasak way of life.

Honesty, as demanded in Begarap, is not only a social obligation but also a religious commitment believed to bring positive consequences for both individuals and their descendants for up to seven generations. A community member who had participated in the Begarap ritual shared, *"I would rather admit my mistake than swear falsely because there are many stories of those who lied experiencing misfortune after undergoing this ritual."* This testimony reinforces that Begarap functions not only as a conflict resolution system but also as a social control mechanism, embedding the value of honesty through the integration of local customs and religious teachings (Sahabudin, 2022).

2. Honesty in the Begarap Tradition

Honesty is a fundamental element upheld in the Begarap tradition. Based on literature review and interviews, the Sasak community regards honesty as a pillar of social interaction. In the Begarap ritual, individuals involved are required to confess the truth before the community, believing that dishonesty will bring severe moral and spiritual consequences. (Anjani et al., 2022)

A specific case illustrating the role of Begarap in enforcing honesty occurred in Pujut District, where a dispute arose between two farmers over missing livestock. One farmer accused the other of theft, but there was no concrete evidence. To resolve the matter, the community elders arranged a Begarap ritual, requiring both individuals to swear upon the sacred water from Nyatuq's grave. A village elder present during the ritual stated, *"The accused initially denied any wrongdoing, but when faced with the prospect of taking the oath, he hesitated. Eventually, he confessed and returned the livestock, fearing the spiritual consequences of breaking the sacred vow."* This case demonstrates how Begarap functions as a social control mechanism, reinforcing honesty through both psychological pressure and collective belief in supernatural consequences.

For the Sasak people, honesty in Begarap is not merely a social norm but a religious obligation. A religious leader interviewed in Praya Timur explained, *"The principle of truthfulness in Begarap aligns with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of speaking the truth. The belief in supernatural repercussions serves as a moral reminder, ensuring that honesty is upheld not only in social interactions but also in one's relationship with God."* This belief fosters collective awareness within the community, reinforcing the necessity of honesty and creating a socially stable environment where truthfulness is the norm that guarantees security in social interactions (Fakihuddin, 2023).

3. Social Integrity in the Begarap Tradition

In addition to instilling honesty, Begarap plays a crucial role in maintaining social integrity within the Sasak community. Interviews with traditional leaders reveal that people believe dishonest or deceitful actions can disrupt social harmony. Begarap serves as a social control mechanism, preventing deviant behaviors such as fraud or theft through the threat of spiritual sanctions, which are believed to bring misfortune upon those who break their oath (Saiful et al., 2020).

The impact of Begarap on social stability is evident in communities that continue to uphold this tradition. Based on interview data, villages that actively practice Begarap report lower incidents of theft and interpersonal conflicts compared to those that have abandoned the tradition. A traditional leader from Pujut stated, *"In our village, theft is extremely rare because people know that if they are caught and required to undergo the Begarap ritual, there is no escape but to tell the truth. Those who lie often face misfortune, which serves as a warning to others."* This claim is supported by local police reports, which indicate that over the past five years, crime rates in villages that still practice Begarap are 30% lower compared to those that no longer use the ritual for conflict resolution (Mansyur, 2018).

The process of internalizing honesty through Begarap also strengthens social solidarity, fostering closer relationships and ensuring that individual rights are respected. The fear of spiritual consequences associated with breaking an oath in Begarap enhances individual responsibility toward the community, creating a strong moral obligation to maintain social balance. A resident of Praya Timur explained, *"We do not fear only customary law, but also the consequences that could affect our families if we lie during Begarap. This makes us more cautious in our actions."*

The social integrity established through Begarap not only prevents deviant behavior but also fosters collective awareness of social responsibility, creating a harmonious and trustworthy community ((Kurniawansyah & Rodiatun, 2022).

4. Relevance of Begarap Culture in the Modern Context

Amid the challenges of globalization, the Begarap tradition remains relevant in preserving the moral values of the Sasak community. Findings from literature reviews and interviews indicate that despite increasing exposure to external cultures, the Sasak people continue to uphold this tradition as part of their identity. Begarap is not merely seen as cultural heritage but also as a mechanism for addressing contemporary social challenges. The community views it as an essential means of maintaining social cohesion and moral integrity in a rapidly changing world (Winarsih, 2023).

Although individualism and materialism are becoming dominant in many regions, the Sasak people have adapted while preserving the core values of Begarap. By emphasizing honesty and integrity, Begarap serves as a moral compass that reinforces harmonious relationships between humans, nature, and God. Interviews with community members highlight that Begarap is regarded as a symbol of moral strength, reinforcing spiritual connection and social balance. This underscores that traditional culture still plays a crucial role in shaping moral foundations, even in the modern era (Zulfikri et al., 2023)

Beyond the Sasak community, the findings of this study offer a unique contribution by presenting Begarap as a model for preserving indigenous traditions in other cultural contexts. The ritual demonstrates that local wisdom can coexist with modernization without losing its essence. Similar traditions in other communities could benefit from adopting Begarap's approach, where spiritual beliefs and social norms function as mechanisms for conflict resolution and moral reinforcement.

Furthermore, Begarap's emphasis on honesty, integrity, and social responsibility can serve as an inspiration for cultural and educational policies. Incorporating traditional wisdom into school curricula and community programs can strengthen cultural identity and ethical awareness among younger generations. Policymakers could also integrate Begarap-based moral education into broader initiatives aimed at preserving local traditions while addressing contemporary social issues. By doing so, Begarap not only preserves Sasak cultural identity but also provides a sustainable model for cultural resilience in the face of globalization.

The relevance of Begarap in the modern context is increasingly significant as it integrates traditional values with contemporary societal needs. (Xie, 2023) emphasizes that connecting traditional culture with modernity can enhance cultural inheritance, allowing communities to adapt to social changes while preserving their heritage. This aligns with the findings of (Abbas et al., 2023), who illustrate how traditional teachings, such as Sufism, can be harmonized with local wisdom to foster cooperation and humility, values that are crucial in today's interconnected world. In this sense, Begarap is not only a cultural heritage but also a social mechanism that helps the Sasak community navigate modern complexities while maintaining its identity.

The adaptation of traditional practices to modern contexts is evident in the Bajau community's response to modernization, demonstrating how cultural identity can remain dynamic without losing its essence (Zainuddin, 2023). Begarap reflects a similar flexibility, where ritual oaths continue to be used for conflict resolution and reinforcing honesty, even amid rapid social changes. The integration of cultural elements into modern practices, such as in product design, further illustrates how traditional cultures can thrive in contemporary settings while contributing to economic and social development (Chen & Sharudin, 2023). Thus, Begarap is not only a preserved tradition but also a sustainable cultural model that can be applied across various aspects of modern life.

Social integrity within the Begarap tradition plays a crucial role in fostering community cohesion and maintaining social order. This tradition emphasizes local wisdom and cultural practices that promote mutual respect and cooperation among community members. (Asikin, 2021; H. Hunaepi et al., 2019) highlights that local culture and traditions serve as key mechanisms for social cohesion, enabling harmonious interactions between individuals and their environment. This is particularly relevant in diverse communities, where cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings and conflict, making Begarap a vital structure for peaceful dispute resolution.

The practice of Begarap, which often involves communal activities and rituals, reinforces social bonds and collective identity within the community. In a broader context, cultural festivals enhance social capital and resilience in multicultural societies by strengthening social cohesion (Oliveira, 2024). Additionally, the integration of traditional practices into modern contexts, as discussed by Abubakar et al. (2021), illustrates how cultural traditions can reinforce social cohesion and community resilience in the face of contemporary challenges. Thus, Begarap not only preserves cultural heritage but also plays a critical role in sustaining social integrity and promoting community solidarity in modern society.

Honesty in the Begarap tradition is a fundamental value that underpins social interactions and community cohesion. This tradition emphasizes integrity and transparency in relationships, reflecting a deep-rooted cultural ethos that prioritizes trust and accountability. (Xu et al., 2024), highlights that integrating traditional values into modern contexts can strengthen ethical behavior and social responsibility among community members. This is particularly relevant in today's society, where the pressures of modernization can sometimes lead to ethical dilemmas and a departure from core values.

Furthermore, the work of (Siringo-ringo et al., 2022) illustrates how traditional practices, such as storytelling and communal rituals, serve as vehicles for imparting moral lessons, including the significance of honesty. These cultural expressions not only preserve the community's heritage but also instill a sense of moral obligation among individuals, fostering a culture of honesty that is essential for social harmony.

The adaptability of the Begarap tradition in the face of modernization, as discussed by (Yang & Chonpairot, 2024), showcases how traditional values can be reinterpreted to remain relevant in contemporary society. This adaptability ensures that the principle of honesty continues to resonate with younger generations, thereby sustaining its importance within the community.

The cultural meaning of Begarap is deeply rooted in community values, tradition, and social cohesion. This tradition emphasizes collective identity and shared practices that bind community members together. As noted by (Pan & Huang, 2023), traditional values continue to influence contemporary societies, proving that cultural heritage remains significant even amid modernization. The Begarap tradition encapsulates these principles by fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect among its practitioners.

Moreover, the integration of Begarap into modern contexts reflects a broader trend of cultural adaptation, where traditional practices are reinterpreted to remain relevant. (Sitnikov et al., 2019) discuss how sociocultural transformations can lead to the revival of traditional practices, serving as a means of social integration and identity reinforcement in contemporary settings. This adaptability is crucial for maintaining the cultural significance of Begarap while addressing the challenges posed by globalization and modernization.

Furthermore, the Begarap tradition plays a vital role in promoting ethical behavior and social responsibility within the community. (Cheema, 2020) highlights the importance of traditional values in guiding social interactions and fostering a sense of accountability among individuals. This ethical framework is essential for nurturing harmonious relationships and ensuring the sustainability of cultural practices in the face of modern challenges. Begarap, with its emphasis on moral and social values, demonstrates that local traditions can adapt to contemporary life without losing their cultural essence.

CONCLUSION

The Begarap tradition plays a crucial role in maintaining honesty and social integrity within the Sasak community. As a conflict resolution mechanism, this ritual not only upholds customary law but also carries strong spiritual values. By swearing an oath using sacred water from Nyatuq's grave, individuals involved in disputes feel bound to honesty, fearing the supernatural consequences of breaking their vow. This makes Begarap an effective social control tool that fosters collective awareness of moral values. Amid modernization, Begarap continues to serve as a symbol of cultural identity for the Sasak people. Despite the growing influence of individualism and materialism, this tradition demonstrates that local wisdom remains relevant in fostering social solidarity. However, challenges such as the dominance of formal legal systems and the younger generation's declining understanding of this tradition necessitate more systematic preservation efforts. Therefore, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and indigenous communities is essential to document, teach, and adapt the values of Begarap in contemporary life. By doing so, this tradition will not only be preserved as cultural heritage but will also continue to function as a moral foundation that strengthens social harmony within the Sasak community in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the continuity of the Begarap tradition in the modern era, several strategic steps are needed. First, local governments and cultural institutions should support documentation and further research to preserve and promote its core values. Second, educational institutions should integrate Begarap's principles into curricula, especially in character education and social ethics, ensuring younger generations internalize its values. Third, indigenous communities and religious leaders must actively promote and maintain Begarap through community events, workshops, and cultural festivals. Finally, adapting Begarap to modern legal frameworks can enhance its relevance, ensuring it continues to contribute to social harmony and integrity within the Sasak community.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dwi Pangga, Sukinil Ahzan, and Suryati were responsible for research conceptualization, methodology development, data collection, data analysis, and data validation to ensure the accuracy of the research findings. They also contributed to manuscript preparation. Wayan Suja, Ida Bagus Made Astawa, and Made Sutajaya conducted the review and advanced editing before submitting the manuscript to the journal for publication.

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