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Negotiating the image of local Islam: *Wetu telu* oral tradition from an imagological perspective

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Abstract: The *wetu telu* oral tradition, as an expression of local Islam, occupies a contested position in religious discourse, often being portrayed as "customary Islam" through external representations sustained by internal practices. This study examines how *wetu telu* constructs, affirms, and negotiates its image through oral traditions using an imagological perspective. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, data were collected in Bayan through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed through transcription and identification of recurring and meaningful images. The findings indicate that oral traditions not only reproduce the identity of "ancestral Islam" but also construct the image of a "guardian of cosmic and social harmony" by reconciling Islamic law (*sharia*) and customary practices. These *imagemes* challenge negative representations and affirm the legitimacy of *wetu telu* as an Islamic tradition. The study highlights the importance of understanding local Islamic identities through internal narratives rather than relying exclusively on external representations. Furthermore, the dominant image of *wetu telu* reveals an implicit binary opposition between "traditional-harmonious" and "modern-rigid," positioning its identity in contrast to *waktu lima*.

Keywords: *wetu telu Islam, oral tradition, imagology, image.*

INTRODUCTION

Islam in Indonesia has developed through encounters between universal religious teachings and the history, language, customs, social structures, and knowledge systems of local communities. Therefore, local Islam should not be understood as a religion separate from Islam itself, but rather as an expression of religiosity shaped through the translation of values, cultural accommodation, normative selection, and the negotiation of religious authority within particular contexts.

One manifestation of local Islam can be found among the Sasak community in Bayan, North Lombok, commonly referred to as the Wetu telu community. The term *Wetu telu*, or *Waktu Telu*, has primarily been attributed to this community by outsiders, including researchers and members of the Waktu Lima group. In classical studies, *wetu telu* is often contrasted with Waktu Lima: Waktu Lima is regarded as more textual, formal, and oriented toward Islamic orthodoxy, whereas *wetu telu* is associated with customary practices, agrarian rituals, ancestor veneration, and traditional leadership.

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Although this opposition is useful for understanding the socio-religious dynamics of the Sasak people, it also risks oversimplifying the lived experiences of the Bayan community.

Zuhdi (2018) employs the concept of parochiality to explain the importance of local knowledge, customary traditions, genealogy, sacred space, and everyday experience in understanding religion within the *wetu telu* community. Religion is understood not merely as an externally derived doctrine, but also through the cultural horizon of the community. Accordingly, Wetu telu needs to be interpreted as the outcome of a dialectical relationship among Islam, Sasak customs, local power structures, and the collective memory of the Bayan people.

Wetu telu continues to be stigmatized as a group that observes only "three" pillars of Islam or recognizes only three prayer times. Such narratives construct an image of *wetu telu* as incomplete, syncretic, or even deviant Islam. From an academic perspective, these claims cannot be regarded as neutral descriptions, as they emerge from formalistic and orthodox standards of religiosity imposed by external observers.

Rahman (2024) demonstrates that the Bayan community has faced prolonged stigmatization of its *wetu telu* identity. Rather than passively accepting such representations, members of the community reinterpret *wetu telu* through the philosophy of *sesepen*, a philosophy of life derived from an intensive search for deeper meaning. This reinterpretation demonstrates that *wetu telu* identity is dynamic and is continuously reformulated in order to maintain the community's dignity, the continuity of customary traditions, and its social position.

Oral tradition constitutes an **essential** element in sustaining this identity. Religious values, customary rules, origin histories, ancestral narratives, social norms, ritual procedures, and understandings of nature are transmitted through the advice of traditional leaders, collective narratives, ritual instruction, intergenerational communication, and the symbolic language of ceremonies. The involvement of younger generations in rituals forms part of the transmission of *wetu telu's* customary and religious traditions. Oral tradition, therefore, functions not merely as a channel of communication but also as a space for the production, negotiation, and preservation of local Islamic identity.

Taufiq and Said (2025) found that *wetu telu* religious identity has developed through oral interpretations of the Qur'an. During the early Islamization of Lombok, preachers employed simple local languages to make Islamic teachings understandable and relatable to Sasak values. Such interpretation was flexible and contextual, as it adapted to pre-existing traditions. While *waktu lima* developed through textual interpretations and formal educational institutions, *wetu telu* displays a form of religious authority rooted in oral discourse, communal practice, and cultural memory.

An imagological perspective is relevant to understanding this phenomenon. Imagology examines how images of the self and of others are constructed, circulated, contested, and transmitted through texts and cultural representations. Its central concepts include the *auto-image*, or self-image, and the *hetero-image*, or the image constructed by others. Imagological studies do not merely assess whether an image is true or false; rather, they examine who constructs the image, the media through which it circulates, the interests underlying its construction, and the responses of the group being represented.

Wetu telu exists within a contestation of representations. On the one hand, the community constructs its self-image through customary narratives, rituals, the philosophy of *sesepen*, and oral traditions. On the other hand, external representations classify the community as a less orthodox form of Islam. The present study is therefore important in ensuring that *wetu telu* is not understood solely through categories constructed by outsiders.

Sumiadi (2025) shows that negotiations between Islam and customary traditions within the *wetu telu* community occur through structural approaches involving customary elites, emotional approaches based on trust, and cultural approaches that integrate Islamic teachings into local traditions without eliminating the community's identity. This study aims to describe the role of oral tradition in constructing the image of *wetu telu* Islam, analyze the negotiation of that image from an imagological perspective, and identify strategies for identity representation and cultural transmission in Bayan.

Studies on the *wetu telu* community indicate that the relationship between Islam and local culture involves customary legitimation, identity transformation, education, and social negotiation. Umam, Al Humaidy, and Amrulloh (2024) employ the perspective of (customary law) to frame the *merariq* (marriage) tradition as an Islamic practice, thereby offering an alternative interpretation that counters the negative labeling often associated with *wetu telu*. Nasri, Muliadi, and Rasyidi (2024) examine Islamic education as a space for both identity adjustment and the preservation of ancestral values. Meanwhile, Nurmalayani and Wijoyo (2025) interpret symbols and rituals as sources of moderate and inclusive Islamic educational values. Sumiadi (2025) highlights the roles of traditional leaders, interpersonal trust, and cultural approaches in the negotiation between religion and custom. Masriyani et al. (2026) integrate local values into contextual learning, while Zuhdi and Putri (2026) explain religious change through community-based social learning. While these studies provide context for how meaning is constructed around *wetu telu*, they do not directly address the strategies used to negotiate the community's image within its oral traditions. The novelty of the present study lies in its application of imagology to the analysis of *wetu telu* oral texts: how images are constructed by outsiders, understood by the community itself, negotiated through oral traditions, and managed through the reinterpretation of identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Imagology—a theory developed by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (2007)—serves as an approach within comparative literature and cultural studies to analyze the formation, representation, and dissemination of a social group's image through discourse, texts, and cultural representational practices. In the context of this research, which explores the construction and negotiation of the Wetu telu Islamic identity through the oral traditions of the people of Lombok, imagology is used to explain how the community defines and portrays itself as a Muslim group. Conversely, the concept of "hetero-image" is employed to analyze how outsiders represent the community, often associating its religious practices with syncretism, deviation, or a lack of alignment with specific, conventional understandings of Islam.

Thus, the imagology theory of Beller and Leerssen serves as the primary framework for addressing the research focus concerning self-image, external image, and the image-negotiation strategies of the Islam *wetu telu* community within their oral tradition. Applying imagology to this local religious community represents an analytical extension of the studies

on national and ethnic imagery—the initial focus of Beller and Leerssen—and, consequently, any conclusions drawn must remain grounded in the verbal evidence uncovered during the research.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach to understand the meanings, symbols, utterances, practices, and social experiences of the *wetu telu* community within the context of their everyday life. The research was conducted in Bayan, North Lombok, because this area is particularly significant in terms of the history, rituals, ancient mosque sites, traditional houses, and transmission of *wetu telu* traditions.

Primary data were obtained through field observations, in-depth interviews, ritual documentation, and the recording of oral traditions. Secondary data were drawn from scholarly books, journal articles, theses, historical documents, local archives, government documents, news reports, and media representations of *wetu telu.*

The data were analyzed using descriptive-qualitative and interpretive approaches through thematic analysis and discourse analysis informed by imagology. This approach was employed to examine oral narratives, identify prejudices and stereotypes directed toward particular communities, and investigate how such images are maintained or challenged through community stories and oral discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History and Existence of Wetu telu Islam in Bayan

Wetu telu Islam in Bayan represents an expression of local Islam among the Sasak people, formed through encounters among Islam, customary traditions, cosmology, and ancestor veneration. *Wetu telu* should not be understood as "another religion," but rather as a religious-customary tradition that continues to change in its formal practices while preserving the core elements of Bayan's cultural heritage.

The Islamization of Lombok is estimated to have taken place between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through trade, political relations, and Islamic missionary activities originating from Java. One figure frequently associated with this process is Sunan Prapen, the son of Sunan Giri of Gresik. According to Cederroth (1981), Islam entered Lombok not through direct cultural replacement but through a process of acculturation that allowed elements of earlier belief systems to remain embedded in Sasak social life.

The encounter among Islam, Sasak traditions, and earlier belief systems gave rise to the local Islamic tradition known as *wetu telu*. The term *wetu* means "to emerge" or "to originate from," whereas *telu* means "three." However, the notion of "three" does not refer exclusively to prayer times. According to the explanation of a customary leader cited by Zuhdi, *wetu telu* may refer to three modes of reproduction among living beings: giving birth (*menganak*), laying eggs (*menteluk*), and growing from seeds (*mentiuk*). This interpretation reflects a cosmology concerned with life, fertility, the relationship between human beings and nature, and divine power.

Erni Budiwanti describes *wetu telu* as referring to Sasak people who identify themselves as Muslims while continuing to maintain local beliefs and customary rituals associated with ancestors and nature. Its primary characteristic lies in the close relationship among Islam, customary traditions, and ancestor veneration. Ritual practices do not concern formal worship alone but also accompany different stages of life, including birth, hair cutting, circumcision, marriage, death, and pilgrimage to ancestral graves. Zuhdi refers to life-cycle rituals as *gawe urip*, while death rituals are called *gawe pati*. The latter may extend from burial to commemorations held on the third, seventh, ninth, fortieth, hundredth, and thousandth days following a person's death.

From the colonial period to the post-independence era, the position of *wetu telu* changed as a result of *waktu lima* missionary activities, Islamic boarding-school education, social mobility, and state administration. Rasmianto notes that the polarization between *wetu telu* and *waktu lima* became stronger as *Tuan Guru*—respected Islamic religious scholars—promoted an understanding of Islam emphasizing the formal observance of Islamic law. However, Raden Gedarip, as cited by Zuhdi, states that "*wetu telu* is not a religion, but a custom." This perspective demonstrates that academic, colonial, and formal religious categories do not always correspond with the local understanding of the Bayan people.

Rahman observes that negative stigma toward *wetu telu* has had a significant impact on younger generations. They have responded by reinterpreting the concept of *wetu telu* and applying the philosophy of *sesepen*: "prolonged negative stigma has a significant impact on the younger generation of *wetu telu*. Their efforts to overcome this stigma involve the reinterpretation of the *wetu telu* concept and the application of the sesepen philosophy as a cultural tool to raise broader public awareness." The study also found that *wetu telu* rituals remain relatively consistent despite economic changes, including transformations in agriculture and textile production.

Yusrifa et al. (2016) note that, following the Reformasi era, differences in formal religious practices between *wetu telu* and *waktu lima* became increasingly less distinct. Nevertheless, rituals concerning birth, marriage, death, respect for ancestral graves, and the traditions surrounding the Ancient Bayan Mosque continue to be maintained. This continuity is supported by the philosophy of "Never Forgetting the Ancestors". Today, *wetu telu* is more appropriately understood as a Sasak Islamic-customary tradition that adapts to modernity without abandoning historical memory, customary authority, and ancestral values. The government has also developed Bayan as a cultural tourism attraction, which has contributed to the preservation of customary sites and rituals.

The Image of Wetu telu Islam in Social Discourse

The image of *wetu telu* can be analyzed through the concepts of *auto-imageme* and *hetero-imageme*. Auto-imageme refers to the self-image constructed by the Bayan community, whereas hetero-imageme refers to images produced by external actors, including mainstream Muslim communities, researchers, government institutions, the media, and tourists.

In imagology, an *imageme* refers to an image, stereotype, or collective representation of a particular group. Such images do not necessarily correspond to social reality because they are constructed through repeated narratives, power relations,

social judgments, and differences in identity. Therefore, the important question is not merely "What is *wetu telu*?" but also "Who has the authority to define *wetu telu*?"

For the Bayan community, *wetu telu* constitutes part of their identity, customary knowledge, and way of life, connecting human beings with God, ancestors, fellow human beings, and nature. Raden Gendarip explains that *wetu telu* does not necessarily mean "three times" or praying three times a day. The community distinguishes *wetu* from *waktu* ("time"), and therefore considers the identification of *wetu telu* with *Waktu Tiga* ("three times") to be inaccurate.

The auto-imageme of the Bayan community can be formulated as follows:

1. The Bayan people perceive themselves as a customary community rather than merely as a group practicing "incomplete Islam."
2. *Wetu telu* is understood as *sesepen*, namely inner knowledge concerning human origins, spiritual maturity, and the relationship between human beings and God.
3. Customary law serves as a social guideline regulating rituals, family life, respect for elders, community cooperation, and environmental protection.
4. Islamic identity is not strictly separated from Bayan Sasak customs, history, cosmology, and systems of values.
5. The community presents itself as one that preserves social and ecological harmony through tolerance, mutual cooperation, respect for differences, and concern for forests and animals.

By contrast, the hetero-imageme frequently simplifies *wetu telu*. *First*, *wetu telu* is portrayed as "three-time Islam," referring to a community supposedly performing prayers only three times per day. This image neglects the social structure, customary leadership, history, rituals, and religious understandings of the Bayan people. Consequently, *wetu telu* is often regarded as failing to practice Islam properly because it is judged directly according to the standard of five daily prayers.

Second, wetu telu is portrayed as a syncretic form of Islam or a mixture of Islam, Hinduism, animism, and ancestral beliefs. Customary rituals, ancestor veneration, relationships with nature, and the role of traditional leaders are used as grounds for judging *wetu telu* as an incomplete form of Islam. Although the term "syncretic" may appear descriptive, it frequently contains implicit judgments concerning religious purity.

Third, wetu telu is positioned as an incomplete or imperfect form of Islam, as though its adherents have not fully accepted or implemented Islamic law. Such an image creates a hierarchy between groups considered to practice Islam "fully" and those perceived to occupy a lower stage of religiosity.

Fourth, *wetu telu* is exoticized through its rituals, clothing, traditional houses, and ceremonies, which are promoted as tourist attractions or objects of cultural consumption. Such a perspective tends to emphasize their uniqueness, antiquity, and visual appeal while overlooking the religious, social, and political meanings embedded in Bayan customary practices. Rituals are not merely spectacles; they contain rules governing relationships among human beings, God, ancestors, land, water sources, and the wider living environment.

Fifth, the Bayan people are portrayed as a traditional, backward, static, or pre-modern community. Such perceptions measure progress according to external standards and disregard the community's capacity to select forms of change in accordance with its own values and historical experiences. Preserving customary

traditions does not automatically imply rejecting education, technology, economic development, or modernity.

The opposition between *wetu telu* and *waktu lima* has often generated an unequal relationship. *Waktu lima* is frequently associated with Islam that is correct, pure, modern, and obedient to Islamic law, whereas *wetu telu* is associated with Islam considered incomplete, mixed with customary traditions, or deviant. Field research and statements by several informants indicate that identifying *wetu telu* with the practice of praying only three times a day does not necessarily correspond with the Bayan community's own understanding. Some informants emphasize that they perform the five daily prayers, although these may be understood or categorized within three particular temporal periods.

The tension between auto-imageme and hetero-imageme indicates a struggle over the authority to define identity. The Bayan people wish to be understood through their own experiences and local knowledge, whereas outsiders often employ standards of formal religious orthodoxy. The image of *wetu telu* is therefore not neutral but closely related to power relations. The very label "*wetu telu*" can even be criticized as a colonial category that positions the Bayan people as "the Other" within Indonesian Islamic discourse and potentially intensifies opposition between *wetu telu* and *waktu lima*.

Negotiating the Image of Wetu telu Islam in Bayan

The Islamization of the Indonesian archipelago took place among societies that already possessed their own customs, languages, beliefs, and local wisdom. Islamization, therefore, did not necessarily entail cultural replacement, but often occurred through dialogue, acculturation, adaptation, reinterpretation, and negotiation. Paisun (2010) explains that the dialectical relationship between Islam and local culture has produced various forms of cultural Islam, including Javanese Islam, Madurese Islam, Sasak Islam, and Sundanese Islam.

Within Sasak society, Islam interacts with customary traditions, social structures, cosmology, and local rituals. Budiwanti (2000) describes *wetu telu* as a form of Sasak Islam closely associated with customary practices and frequently contrasted with *waktu lima*. Sirnopati, Rasyad, and Tohri (2022) explain that *wetu telu* emerged through a historical process in which local belief systems interacted with major religions, particularly Islam.

Wetu telu cannot be understood solely in terms of differences in formal ritual practices. Umam, Al Humaidy, and Amrulloh (2024) demonstrate that the *merariq* tradition reflects a dialectical relationship between Islam and local culture through processes of acceptance and value adjustment. Local communities are not passive recipients of religious teachings; rather, they actively interpret and negotiate Islamic norms in relation to traditions inherited from their ancestors.

In popular discourse and some earlier scholarship, *wetu telu* has been described as syncretic, heterodox, incomplete, or deviant Islam. Umam, Al Humaidy, and Amrulloh (2024) note that the *wetu telu* community has often been accused of incorporating deviant, heterodox, or heretical traditions. Sirnopati, Rasyad, and Tohri (2022) likewise show that outsiders often perceive it as a variant or offshoot of the Sasak religious system within a predominantly Muslim society.

Wetu telu identity is not fixed; rather, it continues to be shaped through interactions between the Bayan community and *waktu lima* groups, Islamic missionaries, *tuan guru*, researchers, government institutions, and other social actors. Budiwanti (2011) identifies efforts by *tuan guru* and Islamic preachers to transform customary practices considered incompatible with Islam. This process introduced education and social change, but at the same time could be interpreted as a threat to the continuity of Bayan cultural identity. Budiwanti (2014) also identifies Islamic purification movements in Bayan that brought more orthodox interpretations of Islam into contact with local customary religious practices.

Consequently, some scholars and members of customary communities increasingly emphasize the term "Bayan Indigenous Community" (*Masyarakat Adat Bayan*) rather than referring exclusively to "*wetu telu*." This shift in terminology is important because it reflects a demand for the community's right to define itself instead of being positioned solely within the binary opposition between *wetu telu* and *waktu lima.*

Oral tradition constitutes a primary arena for the negotiation of this identity. Origin narratives, customary expressions, ritual utterances, elders' advice, readings of traditional narratives, and verbal performances function to transmit collective memory, religious values, community history, and perspectives concerning relationships among human beings, God, nature, and ancestors. Agil et al. (2025) demonstrate that the customary language of Bayan within the *wetu telu* tradition is not merely a means of communication, but also a symbol of identity containing spiritual, cosmological, and philosophical meanings.

Suyasa (2022) explains that the *bakayat* oral tradition has developed in Lombok since approximately the sixteenth century as a medium for Islamic preaching and the dissemination of Islamic values. Islamic values within this tradition are not received statically but are articulated through Sasak customary practices and continuously rearticulated according to changing social conditions. Written texts acquire social meaning through oral narration, translation, and interpretation.

Within imagology, Beller and Leerssen (2007) explain that cultural, ethnic, and group images are constructed through discourse. Leerssen (2007) emphasizes that representation constitutes a discursive construction associated with particular historical and ideological contexts. Therefore, representations of Wetu telu as "three-time Islam," "syncretic Islam," "incomplete Islam," or "deviant Islam" can be understood as hetero-images. Conversely, narratives portraying *wetu telu* as a philosophy of life, cosmological balance, ancestral heritage, and harmony between custom and Islam constitute auto-images.

Previous studies by Budiwanti (2000; 2011; 2014), Sirnopati et al. (2022), Umam, Al Humaidy, and Amrulloh (2024), Maulana and Assilmi (2023), Suyasa (2022), and Agil et al. (2025) provide a foundation for understanding the relationships among *wetu telu*, *waktu lima*, Islamic purification, material culture, oral tradition, and the customary language of Bayan. The present study, however, specifically positions oral tradition as an arena in which images are constructed and negotiated between the perspectives of the Bayan community and external representations.

Oral Tradition as a Medium of Cultural Transmission

Oral tradition refers to the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, values, beliefs, history, norms, and identity through spoken communication. According to Vansina (1985), oral tradition is a historical source that contains the collective memory of a society and serves as a means to preserve group identity. Among the Bayan community, oral traditions include folktales, prayers, incantations, customary advice, symbolic expressions, ritual utterances, genealogies, and explanations concerning the origins and meanings of *wetu telu* ceremonies. The customary language of Bayan contains spiritual, cosmological, and philosophical meanings related to God, nature, and ancestors; consequently, it functions as a symbol of cultural identity rather than merely as a means of communication. This aligns with the view of Sibarani (2012) that oral traditions can serve as a cultural force and a primary source for shaping identity and building civilization. The preservation of cultural traditions within the *wetu telu* community relies significantly on oral tradition.

1. **Transmitting values and beliefs.** Through the oral teachings of customary leaders, younger generations learn about the meaning of life, relationships between human beings and God, respect for ancestors, and the obligation to maintain harmony with nature. This process occurs largely through direct participation in ceremonies rather than solely through books or formal education.
2. **Explaining the meaning of rituals.** Rituals associated with birth, marriage, death, and religious holidays are not performed merely as ceremonial activities. Customary oral traditions explain their stages, symbols, purposes, transformations in social status, social obligations, and relationships with the spiritual world.
3. **Preserving customary language.** Ritual language preserves terms, concepts, and expressions that cannot always be fully translated into Indonesian. Such utterances have declarative and expressive functions because they convey hopes, prayers, respect, sincerity, and the legitimacy of ceremonial practices.
4. **Constructing collective identity.** The shared use of prayers, terminology, and customary utterances reinforces community membership. Identity is not merely individual; it is constructed through shared understandings and practices involving values, language, rituals, and customary regulations.
5. **Maintaining historical continuity.** Stories about ancestors, the origins of customary traditions, traditional leaders, sacred places, and social changes are transmitted orally. This is particularly important because the histories of indigenous and customary communities are not always available in written documents.
6. **Providing informal education.** Children learn by listening, observing, imitating, and participating in rituals. The values transmitted include respect for parents and customary leaders, politeness, obedience to customary regulations, mutual

cooperation, protection of sacred places, and conservation of the environment and water sources.

7. **Strengthening social solidarity.** Rituals and customary advice bring families and community members together through cooperation, food sharing, communication, and collective responsibility. Oral tradition therefore strengthens the community's sense of belonging.
8. **Reinforcing ecological relationships.** Customary advice, prohibitions, and narratives emphasize the importance of protecting forests, springs, sacred places, and natural resources. Oral traditions preserve ecological rules, including prohibitions against damaging forests, polluting water, or exploiting natural resources excessively.

However, oral traditions face challenges arising from modernization, the declining use of customary languages, the dominance of formal education, migration, digital media, and changing orientations among younger generations. The decreasing use of customary languages may erode cultural heritage and lead to the disappearance of the philosophical meanings embedded within them. If younger generations merely participate in rituals without understanding their oral expressions and symbols, the traditions risk becoming purely ceremonial practices devoid of deeper understanding.

CONCLUSION

Wetu telu Islam in Bayan constitutes an Islamic-customary tradition of the Sasak people that emerged through encounters among Islam, local customs, cosmology, and ancestor veneration. Wetu telu should not be reduced to “three-time Islam,” syncretic Islam, or an incomplete form of Islam, because such interpretations primarily originate from external perspectives that employ formal standards of Islamic religiosity as their sole measure.

The Bayan community understands Wetu telu as a customary and spiritual identity governing relationships among human beings, God, ancestors, fellow human beings, and nature. Customary traditions function as guidelines for maintaining social order, respect for ancestors, community solidarity, and environmental sustainability. Wetu telu is a living tradition that adapts to social change without abandoning cultural values inherited from previous generations.

The differences between the Bayan community's self-image and the images constructed by outsiders demonstrate an ongoing negotiation of identity. The Bayan people are not merely objects of labeling as a traditional, exotic, or deviant community; rather, they are active subjects who maintain, interpret, and articulate their own identity. Within this process, oral tradition plays an important role in transmitting values, history, customary language, ritual meanings, and ecological knowledge to younger generations.

The sustainability of Wetu telu Islam in Bayan depends on the community's ability to preserve oral traditions, customary practices, and ancestral values amid

modernization. Such preservation should be accompanied by respect for the Bayan community's right to define its own identity without reducing it to religious stereotypes or treating it merely as an object of cultural tourism.

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