

ANALYSIS OF MERARIQ KODEQ TRADITION PRACTICED BY SASAK INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN LOMBOK BASED ON MAX WEBER AND GEORG SIMMEL'S THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Sasak ethnic group still maintains the ancient tradition of abducted marriage or called Merariq, in which women are hidden in the homes of male relatives with the approval of traditional institutions. The tradition called 'merariq' initially required the consent of both parties and was only conducted under the strict supervision of traditional elders. The study aims to analyze Merariq Kodeq tradition practiced by Sasak indigenous people in Lombok from the point of view of max weber and georg simmel's theory. The study used a qualitative method with a literature review approach. The concept of social action initiated by Weber represents traditional Merariq tradition of Sasak indigenous people in Lombok. Compared to other sociologists, Weber's ideas are comprehensive.

KEYWORDS *Sasak ethnic; Merariq tradition; Max Weber; Georg Simmel*



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INTRODUCTION

A case study of Merariq; Lombok tradition of forced marriage in NTB.

"I did not know what to do when he proposed. So, I said yes," said Yani.

"We took our motorbikes from the beach to his brother's house."

Yani's parents did not know where she was for days when the village elders arrived with news of the marriage.

"I was angry and disappointed. I cried non-stop while looking for her," said the mother, Nur Halima, while cradling the two-month-old baby girl she calls her granddaughter.

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"She has not finished school yet. But what can I do except allow her to marry? If she gets a divorce, it will be a disgrace to our family," Yani's parents told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Fifteen minutes into their date, Helma Yani received a marriage proposal at the first meeting. From their beach date, she was rushed by the boy to the future in-law's house. Moreover, only a month later, they pronounced the consent granted. They are only 17 years old.

Yani is one of 1.5 million underage brides living in Indonesia. In Yani's hometown, Lombok, the Sasak ethnic group still maintains the ancient tradition of abducted marriage or called *Merariq*, in which women are hidden in the homes of male relatives with the approval of traditional institutions. However, it is claimed that the "merariq" culture is often abused to justify forced marriages and early-age marriages (Amalia, 2017). Traditionally, girls who have been taken away are forced to marry, and it is difficult to refuse. If rejected, the local community will regard it as a disgrace for failing to marry. The men's side will also try to keep the marriage going, even though they are still children (Welle, 2019).

Philosophically, the tradition called 'merariq' initially required the approval of both parties and was only conducted under the strict supervision of traditional elders (Ihsan, 2020). However, many people justify the practice of early marriage. To do merariq, there is a minimum age for a wife candidate.

The social phenomenon identified from the merariq practice is a man taking away the woman as a first step towards marriage (Hilman, 2016). Taking a woman away for a specific time, 24 hours or more, is a sign or initial stage for a man to marry his partner.

Merariq practice is meant to tell the parents of the male and female an intention to get married. If the process of merariq (running away) has occurred, the parents of both parties must marry them off (Rosdiana et al., 2018). This is a tradition of Sasak customary community where marriage must begin with the process of merariq, or running away from the female partner. This practice is a tradition passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years (Princess, 2017).

Even so, unfortunately, the merariq practice is often misused to justify early-age marriage. Getting married seems to be the only solution to the "merariq" process (Triantini et al., 2017). Other considerations regarding male and female physical, mental, and social readiness to experience a very complex household life are no longer essential to consider. The primary consideration is the basic understanding of parents and the local community who believe in the merariq tradition that if their child has been rushed or returns home late, the practice of merariq (marriage) must occur to avoid disgrace or embarrasses the family in the community. Thus, the motives of someone who carries out the merariq process are one of the representations of traditional rational social action. The study aims to analyze Merariq Kodeq tradition practiced by Sasak indigenous people in Lombok from the point of view of Max Weber and Georg Simmel's theory.

RESEARCH METHOD

The design of this research is a qualitative method with a literature review approach. A literature review is research that examines or critically reviews the knowledge, ideas, or findings contained in the body of academic-oriented literature and formulates theoretical and methodological contributions to specific topics (Cooper, 2015). The nature of this research is descriptive analysis, which is an orderly description of the data that has been obtained, then given understanding and explanation so that it can be understood well by readers

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Max Weber's Concept of Social Action

Introduction about social context, ideal type concept, social action, and objectivity

To analyze the Merariq case study, Max Weber's notion of Social Action was used to see the rational motives of individual members of the Sasak indigenous people behind the Merariq's actions. It is essential to know about the social context that played a role in influencing Weber to develop his ideas and thoughts about social sciences (Mukhyar, 2023). Weber's approach to sociology is directly related to the intellectual context of German philosophy and social science. Especially its position concerning *methodenstreit* - the German debate about the proper method for social sciences. He insisted that social science must look for causal arguments that generalize beyond specific cases, even if it is impossible to establish universal laws of human society (Kurniawan, 2020).

He emphasizes proper object of analysis is social action. Because the meaning of specific actions resides in the actor's head, sociology must pay attention to the context in which an action occurs and involve a "verstehen" interpretive understanding of subjective motivation.

Ideal type and Objectivity

Objectivity is the effort to capture the natural (empirical) nature of an object being researched/s or studied in a way that does not depend on any facilities from the subject who investigates it (Hutasoit, 2020). In Objectivity in Social Science, Weber coined a concept called the "ideal type" (he is also called the "pure type") (Psathas, 2005). Weber differed from Durkheim's social realism and Marx's materialism. Weber claimed the only way to escape the researcher's sub-objectivity was through ideal types, i.e., concepts devised for essential characteristics of a particular phenomenon.

Weber argued ideal type that social scientists use in objective explanations of social action should be concerned with ideas that motivate action. The ideal type is thus Weber's way of linking institutions and grand ideas to individual action (Ritzer, 2018).

The ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of many diffuse, separate, more or less present, and sometimes no individual concrete phenomena, i.e., arranged according to

unilaterally emphasized points of view into one unitary analytical construct (Gedankenbild).

Definitions of Sociology and Social Action

Weber explained Sociology as a science to carry out an interpretive understanding of social action to arrive at a causal explanation of how the action works and the consequent effects on society (Ghofur, 2017). The "action" is insofar as the individual who acts gives subjective meaning to his behavior, whether open or covert, occurs due to negligence or approval.

An act is "socially" meaningful in so far as its subjective meaning takes into account the behavior of others and thus is oriented towards how the action goes. In short, sociology seeks to understand in-depth (verstehen) social action to seek explanations of how these actions work and their effects on society.

Methodological basis

In order to understand Weber's thoughts on Social Action, it is necessary to understand the methodological basis contained in the following basic terms:

- 1) Meaning
- 2) The line between meaningful action and merely reactive behavior devoid of subjective meaning cannot be drawn sharply empirically.
- 3) As in scientific observations, all interpretations of meaning seek clarity and verifiable accuracy of existing insights and understandings.
- 4) In all the sciences of human action, processes and phenomena with no subjective meaning must be considered.
- 5) Understanding can consist of 2 types: direct observational and explanatory.
- 6) Comprehension involves an interpretive understanding of the meaning present in one's context.
- 7) Motives are complex subjective meanings that appear to the actor himself or observers as an adequate basis for the behavior in question.
- 8) Processes and uniformity, not referred to as sociological phenomena or uniformity because they are not "understandable," still need attention.
- 9) Action in the sense of subjectively understandable behavioral orientation exists only as the behavior of one or more individual human beings.
- 10) It is customary to designate various sociological generalizations.
- 11) Sociology seeks to formulate the concept of general types and uniformity of empirical processes.

According to Weber, not all actions are categorized as Social Actions or have a social character. Actions carried out without involving a relationship or connection with other people are not social. The characteristics of social action include:

- 1) Social action is not identical, either with the similar actions of many people or with every action influenced by others.
- 2) Action is subjective
- 3) Real action that has mental and subjective properties
- 4) Actions are directed at others
- 5) Actions were taken to get a response or are a response to the actions of others.

Types of social action

In his book, Weber divides social action into four types:

- 1) Instrumental rational (zweck-rational)
- 2) Rational-value (wert-rational)
- 3) Affective (especially emotional)
- 4) Traditional

Action is human behavior that has subjective meaning for the perpetrator. Social action is an action taken by considering the behavior of others and oriented toward the behavior of others. Actions are said to be social actions if carried out as a form of interaction and communication with other individuals.

The stages of social action are the existence of the individual's will; the individual aims at targets, and some activities consider the circumstances of social actions. The purpose of understanding social action is to understand the social reality produced by social action so that it can explain why humans make choices.

Rationality

Some literature states definition of action and rationality is the same. However, some say rationality is the reason behind human actions or reasons for making choices. Rationality includes tools (means), the main target, goals (ends), and cultural aspects. People with a rational mindset will choose the correct tool to achieve their goals.

Rationality is divided into four types: 1.) traditional rational, 2.) affective rational, 3.) value-oriented rational 4.) instrumental rational. Traditional rational and affective rational, including the irrational rational types. Meanwhile, value-oriented rational and instrumental rational is included in the rational type.

Traditional rationality is a type of rationality that fights for values originating from the traditions of people's lives. In addition to the merariq tradition, examples of traditional rational actions are the ceremony of throwing a buffalo head into the sea as a symbol of gratitude from the fishing (coastal) community to the ruler of the sea or the funeral ceremony for Rambu Solo by the Tana Toraja, indigenous people who are believed to prevent the family left behind from misfortune. This traditional rational action is based on the traditional values of coastal communities, passed down from generation to generation, and are still valid today.

Weber Positions and Uses These Four Things for Sociological Studies

Two consistent themes connect Weber's sociological work. One is interested in the relationship between forms of social action (especially power relations) and patterns of social order. For Weber, the bureaucracy, the state, and the world's religions are examples of social institutions supporting certain power relations among people (Kurniawan & Tamam, 2023).

At the same time, Weber argued that social action motivated by one type of social order leads to fundamental transformations in other domains. For example, religion can drive changes in economic interactions and, ultimately, throughout the economic system. The second consistent theme in Weber's theory relates to the gradual expansion of rationality in social life (Calhoun et al., 2022).

Weber argued that individual social action was increasingly directed by a conscious cost/benefit calculation in all areas of life. The growth of rationality is marked by reorganizing and formalizing social institutions, such as the state and corporations, to improve efficiency, accountability, and justice. Traditional social guidelines no longer bind people, but this can also lead to a loss of deeper meaning in people's lives.

Differences in Weber's thinking with other Sociological thinkers (Durkheim and Marx)

Compared to Marx and Durkheim, Weber's approach was more individualistic in method and more culturally oriented. Weber's individualism is striking in his methodological essays. Weber insisted that the object of sociological analysis should be individual action as it is other-oriented. Weber certainly did not ignore collective actors or institutions, but his analysis of social formats is related to the behavior of the individuals under their influence. This distinguished him, especially from Durkheim, who argued for the social collective as the unit of analysis.

Weber was also very interested in the cultural orientation of social actors. For Weber, religious, political, economic, and aesthetic ideas and value orientations are essential because they motivate action. Although material conditions may shape ideas, Weber argues that the reverse may also be true. This distinguishes Weber most clearly from Karl Marx, especially in Marx's more programmatic assertions of historical materialism.

Different from the point of view of Durkheim and Marx, Weber saw that social reality cannot be understood through empirical scientific methods alone. For Weber, nothing is empirical because human interpretations of social reality can differ, unlike Marx, who was economically deterministic.

Understanding social action, if Durkheim considers social action driven by social facts and Marx considers social action as a manifestation of social class, Weber sees individual action as having a subjective and dynamic meaning.

Durkheim saw society as a harmonious whole, while Marx saw society as an arena of conflict between classes. At the same time, on the other hand, Weber focused on the meaning of social action between individuals. The thoughts of these three figures are then used as the basis for the three main approaches to sociology. Durkheim's thinking gave birth to a structural functionalism approach, Marx's thought gave birth to a critical approach, and Weber's thought gave birth to a symbolic interactionism approach.

Analysis of The Merariq Case from The View of Weber's Concept of Traditional Social Action

Merariq tradition or known as "eloping," where a man will rush girls to be his wife. Running away in this context is taking a woman away for a certain time, 24 hours or more, as a sign or initial stage for a man to marry his partner. The practice of merariq is meant to inform parents that the couple wants to get married. If the process of merariq (running away) has occurred, the parents of both parties must marry them off. This is a tradition of Sasak customary community where marriage

must begin with the process of merariq, or taking away the female partner. This practice is a tradition passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years.

The culture of elopement is in the tradition of the Sasak tribe. Its implementation has four principles: women's pride, men's empowerment, and women's powerlessness, togetherness, and economic benefits. Merarik means the courage to be responsible, the determination to realize marriage and settlement of cases through deliberation.

However, Merariq currently deviates far from its noble philosophical values. Sasak indigenous people themselves often abuse this tradition. Some people use the merariq to legalize early-age marriage. This is also referred to as 'merariq codeq' or child marriage. Such cases are also common in Lombok. The practice of "taking away" a woman as the entrance to marriage has been a tradition going on for a long time. It has become an unwritten rule for the traditional marriage process followed by the Sasak indigenous people in Lombok. This resulted in the prevalence of child marriage increasing every year. Unsurprisingly, Lombok is in the top 10 provinces with Indonesia's highest child marriage rates.

From the point of view of sociology, Weber stated that sociology aims to understand in depth (*verstehen*) the subjective meaning of the social actions carried out by the individual. Why, then, is this merariq practice considered a social act? There are several characteristics fulfilled by the practice of merariq as a social activity, including:

- 1) Merariq, or taking away women, has a subjective meaning for men or men and women to marry
- 2) Merariq is directed at other people, especially family
- 3) Merariq is done to get responses from other people, especially families, to continue at the marriage stage
- 4) In other words, this merariq is a social action because the motive behind the man's action to run away from a woman is to inform or give a signal/sign to other people, especially the woman's family, that he has run away and going to marry the woman who was a runaway. This practice is a tradition and belief passed down from generation to generation among the Sasak indigenous people; if the women and men who have run away are not married, this will be a family disgrace.

Weber also said that social action is based on 4 rational types: instrumental, value, affective, and traditional. Merariq customary tradition is a form of traditional social action. Actions with the traditional rational type are carried out based on a sense of trust and belief in a particular tradition or belief that has been going on for a long time and is usually carried out from generation to generation.

The Merariq case is one of the traditional rational social actions under Weber's idea, which states that every individual action directed at another individual or group has a subjective meaning. In the context of the Merariq customary Sasak community, the primary rationale underlying the Merariq action is the existence of traditions and habits in the community regarding the Merariq process; women have been rushed by men, regardless of age, they absolutely must be married or married off.

Using the *verstehen* method, the emergence of the action of *merariqkodeq* (to marry at a young age) is carried out by the family, especially from women's families in a society that adheres to the *merariq* tradition, due to fears that the woman who has been rushed away will be ostracized or become the subject of gossip by the neighbors so that she becomes the family's disgrace because her daughter is no longer whole as a woman. After all, she has been rushed away.

To see this *merariq*, Weber's traditional notion of rational action is very appropriate to analyze the rational motives behind this event. This idea clearly describes an action taken by some of the Sasak indigenous people who carry out *merariq* based solely on the understanding and belief in the traditional *merariq* tradition that prevails in society and has been passed down from generation to generation.

Thus, if *merariq* has occurred and the couple is not married off, there is concern over social sanctions in the form of community judgment that considers their daughters to be a disgrace if they do not marry since they have been taken away by men and no longer considered "intact" as single women. Conversely, if both parties agree to marry, one of the following processes, *Nyongkolan*, will be carried out. *Nyongkolan* is a bridal ceremony or long march party accompanied by local villagers as a form of notification or announcement to surrounding villages that the woman who has been taken away has been married so that it will not become gossip in the local village community.

CONCLUSION

The concept of social action initiated by Weber represents traditional *Merariq* tradition of Sasak indigenous people in Lombok. Compared to other sociologists, Weber's ideas are comprehensive. For example, Durkheim saw the top-down phenomenon that social facts determine people's behavior. At the same time, Marx views society in a deterministic way that the facts of the economic structure determine people's behavior. Weber, in the concept of social action, really explains that everyone has a background that regulates the direction of social behavior patterns, whether the choice is 1) Instrumental Rational Actions, 2) Value-Oriented Actions, 3) Affective Actions, or 4) Traditional Actions, respectively have consequences for each individual and society. However, it is necessary to realize that every ethical action is not something that arises due to an individual's dependence on authority or background but action according to the meaning of moral consciousness.

Thus, the practice of *merariq* has fulfilled the main characteristics of Weber's ideas as a traditional rational social action by fulfilling the following characteristics; (1) it is conducted based on traditions and beliefs of Sasak indigenous people, which require *merariq* as the first step in the stages of marriage, (2) in the *merariq* process, the community or individual members of Sasak indigenous people no longer consider or question critically or consciously reflect on reasons behind these actions (taken for granted), (3) not prioritizing rational considerations, even when the practice of *merariq* is conducted by individuals who are still in early age, the beliefs of indigenous Sasak people must still be married without considering of children

readiness, the risks and impacts that will be experienced by children, especially women in the future, and (4) this action follows the practice of Sasak custom ancestors which has been passed down from generation to generation.

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