



SNAP TO READ

## THE DISCOURSE OF RITUAL “BARITAN” AND ITS RELATION TO NATURE IN THE ONLINE WEBSITE

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### **Abstract:**

*Most ritual meanings are often constructed only as a medium to maintain social harmony and religious tolerance or, in the most straightforward language, as a rasa syukur to God. Thus, the depictions of rituals in the mass media do not convey the moral code of nature as highlighted. Based on these considerations, this research wants to discover ritual discourse and its relationship with nature. This study specifically examines online news articles from various websites that include the keyword baritan. The data was collected on May 23-25, 2023, with data coverage from 2018 - 2023, while obtaining 136 news articles. The researcher analyzed the data using Van Dijk's method of discourse analysis, which sought to reveal social cognition through a linguistic approach. Although this research not talk much about power, it wants to determine the dominance of discourse in depicting ritual and ecology in the media. The other theory to portray the result is Bruno Latour's concept about the Parliament of Things and how to represent the 'non-humans' in this political democracy. This concept of political democracy is constructed based on two things: (1) science and technology and (2) nature that can be connected to become an arena for political practices. This research reveals that the media's construction of rituals has a major effect dominating the discourse on ritual actors, actions, and networks. The dominance of this discourse makes the knowledge that should be local/personal not get enough*

*space to develop, especially regarding the moral messages stored in rituals. Cultural interpretations of ecological issues may be personal experiences not covered by global meanings. By revealing the diversity of local meanings about the relationship between nature and humans through the baritan ritual, it is hoped that this ritual can become a ‘Parliament of Things’ where actors, human and non-human, feel each other’s presence and rebuild commitments for the sustainability of the actors’ lives.*

**Keywords:** *ritual, baritan, ecology, democracy*

## INTRODUCTION

Cultural interpretation of ecological issues is one way to maintain the perspective of people aware of nature and the environment. The issue of environmental damage is not only seen as a physical problem that must be solved with a physical approach (Maimun et al., 2020; Saptaningtyas, 2020; Wijzen, 2021). Although the perspective of environmental problems as technical problems is the most discussed, many studies have shown how cultural interpretations and religious motivations also contribute to human lifestyles that positively impact nature (Ahmad, 2015; Ali Ikhsan et al., 2017; Davy, 2021; Kearns, 1996). Criticism of modernism that ignores the metaphysical perspective on life beyond humans (Nasr & Nasr, 1968) is currently demonstrated by the increase in studies on the relationship between religion and the environment (Egri, 1997; Hornborg, 2008; Islam, 2012), includes the study of ritual and ecology.

The study of rituals and religion has developed into an ecological issue. Ritual has a significant role in society, as their authority is based on sustainable environmental traditions and has religious claims (Hornborg, 2008). For environmental activists, environmental threats can be considered an ecological component. However, for Indigenous people who depend on nature for their livelihoods, such as the Maring people (Rappaport, 1967), it is not only physical resources that are threatened but also their entire lives. Nonetheless, responding to environmental crises ritually is also not

commonplace, as most research on rituals, particularly in the context of Javanese tradition, refers to the social function of rituals as a medium of social cohesion (Dewey, 1970; Peters, 2016; Schweizer et al., 1993). Instead of locating rituals as part of ecosystem reservation, rituals are interpreted as variables that depend on moral values and religious beliefs (Grimes, 2003). Thus, rituals as symbol systems that transmit moral messages have also encountered new challenges that compromise their function.

The Baritan ritual in Java is a spiritually charged cultural practice that most media and academic studies describe as an expression of gratitude for abundant agricultural produce and for strengthening social ties within the community. Researchers explain baritan as a tradition that combines local customs with Islamic values, reflecting the close relationship between religion and culture. For example, Baritan emphasizes social cohesion and community well-being (Utami & Sabardila, 2023), and symbols such as Takir and Ingkung represent spiritual contemplation and hopes for prosperity (Wardana & Fauzi, 2022). Moreover, these rituals enhance social connections through collective participation and increase shared cultural identity. Furthermore, these rituals are passed down from generation to generation and are often not understood by younger generations. The Baritan ritual in Java is similar to many traditions in Indonesia and abroad that also show gratitude for agricultural products and community safety.

In Indonesia, rituals of a similar character are also found in Sedekah Laut. Fishermen express gratitude for their catch by throwing offerings into the coastal Java and Bali seas in the Sedekah Laut Ritual (Wahyudi, 2011). At the same time, the Sundanese perform Seren Taun in West Java as a harvest celebration with traditional prayers and performances (Rachman, 2018). Outside of Indonesia, the Pahiyas Festival in the Philippines, Niinamesai in Japan, and Pongal in India also share the central concept of Baritan, which expresses gratitude for the harvest through food offerings, prayers, and community celebrations. Despite the variety of cultural expressions, the main commonality of these rituals is to strengthen the connection between people,

nature, and the spiritual forces believed to provide blessings.

Media has a significant function in molding public opinion, particularly in formulating and maintaining local traditions, such as Baritan, and in harmony between nature and culture. Local traditional media are simple platforms that facilitate social harmony by strengthening cultural values. The mass media, especially television, can catalyze cultural change and raise public awareness, sometimes leading to conflict between modernity and tradition (Marzuki et al., 2024; Zhao, 2024). Further, the media are proponents of culture preservation; they influence government policy and channel resources toward sustaining traditions for posterity (Marzuki et al., 2024).

Most ritual meanings are often constructed only as a medium to maintain social harmony and religious tolerance (van den Boogert, 2017) or, in the most straightforward language, as a *rasa syukur* to God (Nasir, 2019). Thus, the depictions of rituals in the mass media do not convey the moral code of nature as highlighted in (Grimes, 2023). Based on these considerations, this research aims to discover ritual discourse and its relationship with nature. In particular, I want to focus on online news published by various websites using the keyword *baritan*. This ritual has no clear definition due to its many forms and the meanings ascribed to ‘*baritan*.’ Some call it *sedekah bumi* (Griyanti et al., 2018; Syariffudin, 2013); others call it *slametan* as an expression of gratitude held at a crossroads of the village (Wardana & Fauzi, 2022). The media tends to portray rituals as a means of expression of thanks or cultural activities that focus on people. Meanwhile, local interpretations often involve personal experiences rooted in direct relationships with nature. This study shows how non-human elements (nature) act as subjects in the *Baritan* ritual using Bruno Latour’s framework of the “Parliament of Things.” Furthermore, this research determines how the mass media constructs the *Baritan* ritual, especially regarding the moral representation of the ritual code towards nature.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### The Media's Construction of the Ritual

According to Rappaport, the primary function of ritual is a specific means of communication. He defines ritual as “the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers” (Rappaport, 1999). In this sense, Rappaport argued that the function of ritual is storing cultural and moral codes rather than transmitting messages through verbal communication (Hornborg, 2008). From the perspective of ecological anthropology, Rappaport emphasized in his last book, *Ritual and Religion* (1999), that ritual not only performs its ecological function but is supposed to do so. Hence, Rappaport articulates the logical, rather than empirical, as the consequences of ritual forms. He asserts that ritual is the only way certain meanings can be expressed. The performative form of ritual contains a meta-message- a statement of untouchable things that no other form of communication can do (Rappaport, 1999).

From the communication theory perspective, rituals are a large symbol system. Each symbol has its own “Signifier” and “Signified,” and by combining typical symbols and building a multi-level symbol system, it can build a sense of ritual from the communication content (Chen, 2023). James Carey explains ritual as a symbolic representation given in the communication process, and all communication is a concrete manifestation of the existence of various types of symbols of messengers. Thus, language has an important role as the most fundamental component of the ritual view of communication. This role shows that communication is a process of linguistic interaction, conversation, and a way to express ideas (Carey, 1992). In this case, mass media have an important role in constructing the ritual-making process and distributing the rituals’ meaning and moral messages in the public sphere.

The ritual construction subject in this study differs from the conventional communication model, which stipulates that the recipient of information and the initiator of communication are considered equal subjects. Ritual construction assumes that the subjectivity of the recipient

of information gets more attention than what it means. The object of ritual construction is the existence of cultural symbols and metaphors most widely understood by people in the community, which are usually set as important ritual references.

This research utilizes these assumptions to explain the performative nature of rituals so that they do not become dead artifacts. Thus, rituals can convey moral messages through performative forms in society (Brown, 2003). However, the existence of mass media as an intermediary in distributing these messages to the public has become an equally important factor in forming cultural interpretations of ecological issues. The performative ritual production process influences ritual construction, the internalization process of the subject of ritual construction, and the process of meaning distribution carried out by the news media. Thus, a discourse study on ritual construction in online media finds its significance in studying ritual and ecology.

#### Bruno Latour's Theory of the Philosophy of Modernity

The challenge of rituals in modern society starts from questioning the rationalism of rituals, considering that current knowledge has explained things that were previously only understood as myths. Modernism's pressure on rituals comes not only from the modernization process through the introduction of technologies in the production process but also from the religious purification movement that began to criticize practices considered syncretic teachings (Sutiyono, 2015). Some rituals in agricultural societies began to disappear, replaced by modern agricultural processes. Although not entirely so, these rituals were also adapted by forming new performatives, adjusting to the demands of the community's religious style and political, economic, and social needs. Bruno Latour's theory of the Parliament of Things will help this research to explain how nature as 'actant' is involved in the dynamics of ritual making in the modern context.

Bruno Latour criticizes modernism for not defining non-modernism. Instead, he explicitly says that humans have never been modern. The character of modernism distinguishes everything as rational and irrational,

placing objects as something separate from ‘the representation of things’, making them subject and object, nature and culture, science and politics. Latour explains the concept of ‘hybrid’ to bridge the dualism in the mode of modernism. The paradox of modernity, which separates the world into two parts, nature and culture, science and politics, basically occurs simultaneously in everyday life, and humans are used to dealing with this dualism. However, the separation between the two makes what happens simultaneously (which Latour calls hybrid) invisible, unthinkable, and even unrepresentable (Blok & Jensen, 2011).

With this ‘hybrid’ argument, Latour practices the most distinctive part of the modern constitution: a representative democracy. In Latour’s theory, ‘Constitution’ refers to ‘humans and non-humans, their properties and their relations, their abilities and their groupings’ to distinguish it from the political constitution in general (Latour, 1993). Latour mentions his theory of the Parliament of Things and how to represent the ‘non-humans’ in this political democracy.

Latour argues that the Parliament of Things must not be started from scratch but can use what society already has. According to him, political democracy is constructed based on two things, namely (1) science and technology, and (2) nature. These two things can be connected to become an arena for political practices. However, how can non-humans be involved in this Parliament?

It is difficult to imagine non-humans acting like humans, let alone being part of a political parliament, to determine policy. Thus, Latour explains Actor-Network Theory with the following provisions: (1) what humans call objects (non-humans) have the nature of agency and everything that can make a change can ‘act.’ However, actors here are not understood as physical actions (such as humans speaking and moving) but as ‘actants.’ If the actor acts, then the actant leaves a trace as evidence of the existence of the action (Latour, 2005). (2) Action depends on the number of actors involved. Every human being does not act alone. Human action is influenced

by the surrounding environment that allows them to act. (3) A group is not the group itself but the process of group formation. Social actors are always involved in mapping their social context; thus, the context in which each actor places them is very important. (4) ‘From ‘Matters of Fact’ to ‘Matters of Concern,’ If the modernist mode tries to state that facts are facts, without being influenced by any conditions around them, as an empirical and objective reality, then Latour argues the opposite, because everything is not self-formed and is susceptible to change, has risks, cannot be separated from the consequences of actions around it. Therefore, everything should not be seen as a fact but as a subjective ‘concern’ for what is contained in a thing (Donovan, 2014). (5) The last part shifts from description to explanation. It means that various studies should begin to focus on finding and explaining the networks between these actors, no longer using a unidirectional perspective of subjects and objects.

## **METHOD**

This research collects data through websites consisting of online media, local government websites, and mass media. The breadth of coverage of the type of news considers the number of samples that can be taken. However, the search results became much more significant, using local government websites and community writings about this ritual. Data for this study was collected on May 23-25, 2023, with data coverage from 2018 - 2023, while obtaining 136 news articles. Some online news channels that reported on baritan include: Ngopibareng.id, tribunjakarta.com, jurnalnusantara.com, tribunbali.com, inipurworejo.com, antaranews.com, pikiran-rakyat.com, cendananews.com, merdeka.com, inibaru.id, liputan6.com, netralnews.com, koranmemo.com. This research does not have specific criteria for the online media used, only ensuring that there is the word baritan in the title and body of the news in the specified period.

This study uses Van Dijk’s discourse analysis method, which seeks to reveal social cognition with a linguistic analysis approach. Although this



research will not talk much about power, it aims to determine the dominance of discourse in depicting ritual and ecology in the media. Van Dijk explains that discourse is ‘communicative events, including interactions, written text, and related semiotic dimensions.’ ‘Cognition’ is the beliefs, goals, emotions, mental, memory structures, representations, or processes involved in discourse and interaction. Social cognition includes knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, and values. (Van Dijk, 1993). The steps of this research were (1) collecting data on the internet, (2) classifying based on word frequencies, (3) using a concordance to understand the semantic meaning of specific terms, (4) discourse analysis, and (5) theory analysis. The research used the MAXQDA application for wording analysis.



Picture 1: Interactive Word Tree results using MAXQDA on news data collected using the keyword “baritan”

Van Dijk’s discourse analysis theory is highly pertinent to internet news that represents varied public perspectives and shapes the public agenda. Van Dijk posits that discourse constitutes a communicative experience

encompassing interaction, written text, and associated semiotic elements, all of which contribute to the formation of social cognition. Online news featuring diverse perspectives and emotional content can mirror societal attitudes, ideologies, and values, constituting an aspect of social cognition (Asker & Dinas, 2019; McCluskey & Hmielowski, 2012; McGregor, 2019). Processes like user content selection and social media engagement that perpetuate extreme or polarizing perspectives can be examined as a reflection of the beliefs and attitudes shaped by discourse. This research utilizes Van Dijk’s discourse analysis to examine the media’s representation of rituals and ecosystems in online news discourse and to investigate how the knowledge, norms, and ideologies embedded in this discourse influence public comprehension of these matters.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Macrostructure Analysis**

Semantic macrostructure is the global meaning that language users use in producing and comprehending discourse. Language users cannot gobble up all the details of the meaning of discourse and, hence, mentally organize these meanings with global meanings or topics. They self-define what speakers, organizations, and groups are communicating most, impacting the discourse and subsequent actions (Van Dijk, 1993).

At this level, the researcher analyses the data by emphasizing wording analysis, which measures the intensity of word usage that is most related to this research topic. In addition, the analysis will continue by looking at the ‘interactive word tree’ to show the relationship between words and the most talked-about words in the corpus.

The news corpus consists of 136 documents with 3,036 different words. This report is a term that can potentially be the most frequently discussed topic in baritan-related news.

Table 1. Word Frequencies

Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
Baritan	876	Syukur	134	keselamatan	65
Tradisi	687	Suro	118	sapi	61
Desa	648	Indonesia	111	Pemerintah	60
masyarakat	538	Bumi	108	kehidupan	59
Warga	501	ritual	106	Covid	54
Budaya	265	sedekah	93	daun	54
Jawa	245	Tuhan	88	panen	53
Takir	243	Laut	73	corona	48
upacara	214	selamatan	71	festival	46
Adat	197	Blitar	69	alam	45
Plontang	172	Sesaji	68	allah	42
doa	143	trenggalek	68	Agama	37

Based on the data, it can show several things: firstly, Baritan is mostly understood as tradisi 687, then the news chose rewording with the word budaya 265, upacara 214, adat 197 and ritual 106. Even in all the news coverage, the concept of agama was only mentioned 37 times, or only 0.06% of the total data. For the Javanese community, baritan is a tradition, referring to one of the written texts “yang sudah dilakukan turun temurun sejak 50 tahun silam”, “yang sudah dilakukan sejak dulu”, “yang sudah ada sejak zaman”, “yang sudah ada dan terkenal”, “yang sudah ada turun temurun”, “yang sudah menjadi kearifan lokal”, “yang sudah menjadi turun temurun”, “yang sudah digelar sejak zaman nenek moyang”, “yang sudah membudaya di kalangan desa”, “yang sudah terakulturasi dengan agama islam”.. The word tradisi is placed in front of the word ‘baritan’ to explain the type of ritual activity, distinguishing it from other rituals that are classified as religious.

Secondly, another popular topic in the discourse on baritan is the mention of doa (143) and syukur (134). These word choices indicate that most news reports about baritan refer to human activities connected to God, with prayers and gratitude. However, the word tuhan is mentioned 88 times, while rewording with the word allah has only 42 repetitions. It can be understood

that most studies refer to baritan as an expression/form of syukur rather than the meaning that the ritual seeks to convey, particularly concerning nature. Although some keywords related to nature are mentioned, such as bumi, laut, and alam, they are not given attention by speakers, news writers, or readers because they are considered insignificant in explaining baritan. The three words related to nature are reduced to descriptions of place, such as the phrases sedekah bumi and hasil bumi, which are rituals held on the mountain, or sedekah laut, hasil laut, and rituals held at sea. Neither term provides any other explanation.

Third, the assumption of the last conclusion, with the lack of discourse linking rituals with ecology, is represented by the lack of terms that refer to the presence of nature in human ritual activities. The use of the word 'alam' also refers to the phrases peristiwa alam, wisata alam, bencana alam, keanekaragaman alam, kekayaan alam, dan kondisi alam. All of them place the word nature as a noun that acts as an object. However, there are some phrases that place nature as the subject, such as "Baritan Ritus Tahun Baru Jawa", "menyatukan manusia, alam semesta dan tuhan" dan "alam memiliki mekanisme ajaib dalam memunculkan kebenaran", "alam yang sudah membantu memenuhi kebutuhan", and "dalang yang bertugas memasrahkan segala sesuatu kepada alam'. All of these quotes at least show that there is another discourse, albeit small compared to the other dominant discourses. In these sentences, nature is placed as the subject instead of the object as in the dominant discourse.

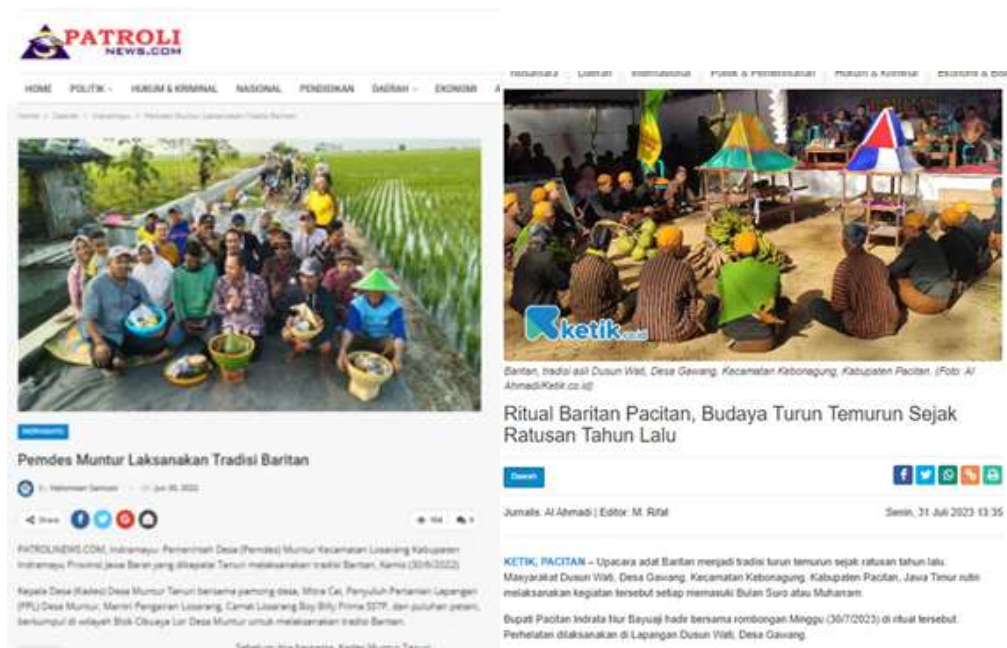


Figure 2. The example screen capture of the news

## Local Meanings

Local meanings result from the selection that speakers or writers make in their mental models of events or their more common, socially shared beliefs. At the same time, local meaning is the kind of information that (under the control of the global whole) directly affects mental models (Van Dijk, 1993).

At this level, This study analyzed the actors featured in the news reports. The subjects mentioned in the news are warga (501), pemerintah (60), mahasiswa (10), lurah (10), presiden 10, parpol (9), pemkab (9), pemdes (8), pemimpin (8). The term warga is often used in the news. This term, in KBBI, means member. The word citizen is also often fused into the phrases community member and village member. Warga has a very high-intensity value compared to other terms as a subject in the baritan discourse. The intensity value shows that the tradition is organized by community members in general, without showing other identities, considering other identity adverbs such as 'jawa' 245, which is only half as many as the word 'warga.'

This inclination to limit the subject is enough to explain why baritan belongs to a Javanese tradition—the word *warga* against meaning in contexts that indicate the name of the village/place.

As a subject, the word ‘*warga*’ acts as in the following sentences ‘*warga datang membawa makanan beserta lauk*’ (people come with food and side dishes), ‘*warga berkumpul di perempatan pintu pasar*’ (people gather at the market entrance intersection), ‘*warga yang mencari keberkahan dari baritan*’ (people who seek blessings from baritan), ‘*tidak ada warga yang berani menebang pohon ingas*’ (no one dares to cut down ingas trees), ‘*warga berebut sesaji buah-buahan*’ (locals scramble for fruit offerings), ‘*warga mengadakan iuran sukarela*’ (villagers organize voluntary contributions) and hundreds of other phrases. All of these sentences signify the role of the term *warga* as the central subject of how the baritan tradition is carried out. Thus, most of the meanings constructed in the news coverage of baritan come from the statements of ‘*warga*’ as speakers and are transmitted by reporters in the news script.

Interestingly, however, the reporter uses the word *warga* mostly in the passive voice, especially in the context of sentences indicating the organization of baritan. As in the following sentences: “*ada 46 gunung yang dibawa oleh warga*” (there are 46 gunung brought by people), “*ritual masih tetap dilestarikan oleh warga*” (rituals are still preserved by the people), “*uberampe yang harus dibawa dari rumah oleh warga*” (uberampe must be brought from home by people), “*adat baritan ini dilaksanakan oleh warga*” (baritan is carried out by people), “*pemanjatan doa yang diselenggarakan oleh warga*” (prayer meetings organized by the people), ‘*baritan dilaksanakan oleh warga*’ (baritan is carried out by people). This sentence means that the use of passive clauses will present the target as the main focus while the actor is sidelined.

Passive sentences that remove the actor from the sentence can also make the reader uncritical. The questions are: What kind of *warga* are there, whether there are ‘*warga*’ who do not accept the tradition, and how do

citizens personally interpret the ritual? News coverage only emphasizes the visible ritual process without paying attention to the diversity of actors in giving meaning to the baritan ritual. As a result, all news about baritan has the same information character. The similarity of information in the news, for example, the sequence of information about when and where the ritual was held, how the ritual was carried out, and then a statement from one of the residents to state the purpose. In addition, with a very low level of news diversity, the baritan ritual becomes a repetitive and monotonous tradition without providing new meanings or reactions to changes around it. Such changes could include how the ritual is performed from year to year and how changes in the rural environment might affect the practice of the baritan ritual.

Another actor is the pemerintah (60). Pemerintah is mentioned, but only a few place it as the subject. As in the following phrases “mendapat dukungan penuh dari pemerintah”, “sesuai dengan instruksi pemerintah”, “dapat memberikan kontribusi kepada pemerintah”, “acara ini dihadiri pemerintah”. As for the subject, for example, in the sentence “pemerintah mengupayakan pelestarian dan pengembangan,” “agar pemerintah senantiasa selalu mendukung.” The number of pemerintah as subjects in the discourse of ‘baritan’ does not make a significant contribution other than the effort to make a ritual recognized by the government. The word dukungan in various news narratives pinned to the government has an implied meaning of providing financial support in organizing the ritual, especially if the ritual is held larger as the center of attention of tourists.

## **Discussion**

Language users not only form mental models of their interaction situations but also of the events or situations in which they talk or write. Thus, local and global coherence is not only determined in terms of the functional relationships between their propositions (such as generalization, specification, example, and explanation) but also mainly by the relationships of the ‘facts’ referred to by these prepositions, such as causal relationships. However, it is not the facts that define coherence; rather, it is how language users define or

interpret the facts in their mental models. These interpretations are personal, subjective, biased, incomplete, or completely imaginary (Van Dijk, 1993).

In writing the baritan discourse news, local and global meanings show only a few gaps. The findings show stagnation in exploring ritual messages that have become a tradition. Even in academic studies, most will show uniformity in constructing the meaning of the Baritan ritual. The dominance of the discourse of baritan as “tradisi turun-temurun” dan “bentuk/ungkapan rasa syukur” influences the local meaning. However, this tendency does not rule out the possibility of other discourses that prioritize alam as a subject and become part of the ‘Baritan’ ritual.

Using Bruno Latour’s perspective, the Baritan ritual should become a Parliament of Things, where the presence of humans and non-humans can be felt together. This presence is carried out continuously, and the function of rituals to transfer moral codes can become a reflective space to think about and rebuild the attachment between humans and non-humans as fellow agencies.

Furthermore, this attachment is also reflected in how nature is represented in the news narratives. In several excerpts from the news, several sentences refer to nature as a subject, such as “alam yang sudah membantu kebutuhan,” “alam memiliki mekanisme ajaib” showing nature as an actant, an actor that leaves traces. Humans find these traces and draw them as part of the things that affect their existence, so the baritan ritual is a potential means as a Parliament of Things, in addition to (1) having found a discourse that shows nature as an actant but also shows (2) an effort to always renew the process of group formation (rather than the group itself) as in the quote “manusia, alam semesta, dan tuhan” which symbolizes the three in the forms of manifestation of human activities, which are no longer dichotomized in subjects and objects.

(3) in the From ‘Matters of Fact’ to ‘Matters of Concern’ principle, the discourse of baritan should be placed as a matter of concern rather than as matters of facts. In this study, the discourse that emerges places baritan as an object of news, a fact that seems to be separated from changes or things



that affect that fact. This can be seen in the quotes “melestarikan budaya”, “melestarikan tradisi”, “melestarikan kegiatan adat istiadat”, considering the words culture, tradition, and customs as alternative wording of the baritan tradition. Everything that affects the change or existence of baritan has no place in the constructed ritual discourse. (5) The principle of study to find actor networks is not found much because the news writer makes most of the sentences in the form of passive sentences. In addition to the imbalance of actors mentioned, the news writer also categorizes everyone involved in the word ‘warga,’ which distinguishes it from ‘pemerintah.’ In addition, as explained earlier, ‘bumi’ and ‘laut’ do not have a significant role as subjects; instead, they are adverbs.

When this news data was published during covid, baritan also had a semantic relationship with the event. Warga uses baritan to gather and pray together to avoid the coronavirus outbreak. Communities in various regions such as Cirebon, Blitar, and Banyuwangi revived this tradition in the hope that it would bring protection and safety from calamities. In this Liputan6 report, it mentions, “Tradisi Baritan merupakan cara orang Tegalbug Cirebon menangkal wabah virus Corona melalui doa bersama dan syukuran.” Similar acts were observed in Blitar, wherein people came together in a feast to drive out pagebluk (epidemic). As Detik Jatim reported, “Baritan merupakan tradisi kenduri warga Blitar sebagai tolak bala virus Corona.” Open-field prayers during the Baritan event that happens before Suroan in Blitar make the same hopes waved, that the community could be free of the pandemic. Baritan, therefore, is indeed a popular local cultural resistance against the scientific approach, as its complete narratives address the spiritual and subjective motivations for facing the pandemic, preserving how people remain connected to local wisdom in modernity. Further, Baritan is an expression of social solids that enhance relationships among citizens through collective prayers and establish a strong collective identity in facing an illness threat with the same hopes for protection and safety.



Figure 3. One of the media pages that reported Baritan during the COVID period

Ritual symbolism bridges ecological knowledge and cultural values, thus reinforcing environmental consciousness and green practice. Ritual aspects like prayers and offerings symbolize local ecological insight, such as the utilization of terrestrial and aquatic resources that acknowledge the significance of nature to human beings. This ritual aspect can be associated with policies like customary conservation or green development. In other studies, Ruwatan Leuweung Babakti and the legend of Otak Aiq Tojang illustrate human beings' intimate connection with nature (Hilmi et al., 2024; Prasetyo, 2023). At the same time, the use of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in ceremonies like Warung Hupu Liku for reciprocity and sustainable resource use speaks to the same (Wohangara et al., 2023). These ceremonies result in environmental education and policy influence under attention to cultural heritage, emotional bonding towards nature, and ecological ethics.

## CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the media's construction of rituals has a major effect on dominating the discourse on ritual actors, actions, and networks. The dominance of this discourse makes knowledge that should be local/personal not get enough space to develop, especially regarding the moral messages stored in rituals. Cultural interpretations of ecological issues may be personal experiences not covered by global meanings. By revealing the diversity of local meanings about the relationship between nature and humans through the baritan ritual, it is hoped that this ritual can become a Parliament of Things where human and non-human actors feel each other's presence and rebuild commitments for the sustainability of the actors' lives.

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