



Sedulur Sikep's Sociocultural Adaptation to Social Changes in Ploso Kedhiren Village, Randublatung District

Hamida Zama Rahmatillah¹, Argyo Demartoto², Drajat Tri Kartono³

¹²³Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

Correspondent: hamidazamar@gmail.com¹

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ABSTRACT: Sedulur Sikep refers to the followers of Samin Surosentiko's teachings that continue to exist to this day by consistently upholding the values and teachings of Samin. This research aims to explore the sociocultural adaptation strategies employed by Sedulur Sikep. The research was conducted from January to March 2025. This study utilizes a qualitative method and phenomenological approach. The data collection techniques include three methods, which are observation, interviews, and documentation. The sampling technique applied in this study is purposive sampling. The obtained data were analyzed by reducing, displaying data, drawing conclusions, and verifying them. The results indicate that Sedulur Sikep adhere to the Samin's teachings, which fundamentally focus on principles of human life values that serve as a guide for attitudes and behavior, especially for the Sedulur Sikep to remain virtuous and honest. The challenges faced by the Sedulur Sikep are inseparable from the context of social pressures and domination they experienced, particularly during politically sensitive periods, such as the post-G30S/PKI 1965 era. Government policies related to KTP (Resident Identity Card), marriage registration at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs), and compulsory formal education have influenced the lives of Sedulur Sikep. Findings show that the Sedulur Sikep have maintained the core values of Samin's teachings while remaining open and willing to adapt to social changes. Future research should focus on the younger generation of Sedulur Sikep to explore their sociocultural adaptation.

Keywords: Sedulur Sikep, Adaptation, Sociocultural



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country rich in cultural, ethnic, racial, and natural resource diversity, which can be viewed from various aspects of life due to the diversity of spirit, customs, and culture ([Hidayati & Shofwani, 2019](#)). Moreover, this diversity arises from the historical development of a society, especially when it encounters other communities. Many sociocultural phenomena have emerged as forms of adaptation by communities to maintain their existence and endure from one generation to another ([Hadi, 2018](#)). One of the cultural communities in Indonesia that possesses distinctive

characteristics is Sedulur Sikep. Their uniqueness is reflected in their way of life, language and behavior, as well as customs and traditions that have been preserved across generations ([Sadhana et al., 2021](#)). This often raises the question of how Sedulur Sikep have managed to adapt to social change while continuing to uphold the teachings of Samin to this day.

The Sedulur Sikep is part of the Javanese sub-ethnic group and represent a form of community grouping based on distinctive teachings and worldview ([Hanifah, 2019](#)). Sedulur Sikep refers to the followers of Samin Surosentiko's teachings, who propagated a doctrine that emerged as a non-violent resistance to the Dutch Colonial Government's policies, which were perceived as oppressive to the people at the time. Several terms for followers of Samin Surosentiko's teachings include *Wong Sikep* or *Wong Dam* (self-referential terms used by the community), *sedulur* (used among fellow *Wong Sikep*), *Wong Samin* (a label for *Wong Sikep* used by outsiders), and *Sedulur Sikep* (a term used both internally and externally for *Wong Sikep*) (Suartina, 2014).

The Samin teachings originated from a farmer named Samin Surosentiko, who came from Ploso Kedhiren Village, Randublatung District, Blora Regency, Central Java Province ([Hidayat et al., 2022](#)). In 1890, at the age of 31, Samin Surosentiko began spreading his teachings to the people in Ploso Kedhiren Village, Blora. Each year, the number of his followers continued to grow. His followers came not only from Ploso Kedhiren and its surroundings, but also from outside the Blora region, such as Bojonegoro, Ngawi, and Grobogan. By 1906, the Samin movement had also expanded to the southern part of Rembang, with the number of followers reaching 3,000 people ([Benda & Castles, 1969](#)).

The followers of Samin Surosentiko, or Sedulur Sikep, uphold the principles of independent Sikep farmers who do not rely on others. They tend to focus only on what they possess, such as their homes, families, inheritance, and land, while being generally indifferent to the interests of others. These teachings initiated by Samin Surosentiko aim to shape the ideal or perfect human being. The term Sikep can also be interpreted as an attitude or action that must align with one's spoken words ([Pinasti & Lestari, 2017](#)). Benda and Castle (1969) explain that Sedulur Sikep are described as honest and cautious, desiring freedom from all forms of bonds, and refusing to accept orders from anyone. They work as farmers, cooperate well with one another, but exchange little with outsiders. Additionally, they also weave their own clothing.

The Sedulur Sikep reside in communities that are intermixed with the general population ([Suartina, 2014](#)). Society is constantly moving, developing, and changing. This social dynamic can be driven by two main factors, the first is internal factors within the community itself, and the second is external environmental factors ([Goa, 2017](#)). Both internal and external factors have made Sedulur Sikep inevitable to society's changes. Various agents of change, such as government officials, religious leaders, and community figures, have played a role in this transformation. Despite that, the continuity of Samin teachings has been generally preserved through efforts such as internalization, restrictions on formal education, self-sufficiency policies, and marriage regulations that require partners to be sought from within the Sedulur Sikep community ([Yahya, 2009](#)).

The social change phenomenon among the Sedulur Sikep began to occur after the Indonesian independence era. The lifestyle of Sedulur Sikep has become increasingly adaptive to the broader society. Moreover, their level of participation in government programs has gradually increased

([Sastroatmodjo, 1952](#)). The current existence of the Sedulur Sikep, who no longer live in isolated separation from other societal groups, or in other words, live integrated with others without strict geographical boundaries, has made mutual influence between the Sedulur Sikep and other members of society inevitable. The Sedulur Sikep, as adherents of Samin teachings, coexist with ordinary people who do not follow Samin teachings ([Mardikantoro, 2021](#)). Furthermore, from the year 2000 to present days, the openness of the Sedulur Sikep toward the general public has significantly increased. This is due to the increasing intensity of their interactions with the broader society ([Hanifah, 2019](#)). The Sedulur Sikep do not outright reject them, but instead navigate them while still adhering to their ancestral teachings ([Setiadi & Rosyid, 2021](#)).

Previous research has highlighted the adaptation process done by Sedulur Sikep as a local community strategy in social transformation. In a study titled "Study of the Adaptation Process as a Local Community Strategy in Social Transformation of the Samin Group of Indonesia," it was found that the presence of modern culture within traditional environments has led to the emergence of a new order in Sedulur Sikep culture. The Sedulur Sikep, who initially avoided socialization with outside communities, have now become more open to accepting new elements within their community. The findings of the research indicate that Sedulur Sikep strive to adjust to their surroundings. Their social behavior reflects an objective condition shaped by a collective commitment to values, which are influenced by their environment. The social transformation of the Sedulur Sikep is shaped by both internal and external factors, and their social life fundamentally represents an organic evolution. Despite that, Sedulur Sikep still uphold Samin teachings, particularly in terms of attitudes and behavior in the relationships with human beings ([Sadhana et al., 2021](#)).

Another relevant study is the research titled "Transformation of Sikep Samin's Socio-Cultural Change: A Case Study of Sedulur Sikep Samin Sambong Village, Blora Regency." This research was motivated by the progression of time, which has led Sedulur Sikep to accept and follow changes. Both internal and external factors have influenced the transformations within the Sedulur Sikep community. Nevertheless, the continuity of Samin's teachings has generally remained well-preserved ([Nur Hidayah et al., 2022](#)).

Despite extensive studies, little attention has been conducted to how Sedulur Sikep negotiate sociocultural adaptation in the context of local dynamics within the original birthplace of Samin teachings in Ploso Kedhiren Village, Randublatung District. This raises a fundamental inquiry: how does Sedulur Sikep in Ploso Kedhiren, Randublatung District adapt socioculturally to social change while maintaining the values of Samin Surosentiko's teachings? This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the sociocultural adaptation strategies employed by Sedulur Sikep, particularly focusing on their interactions with government structures, education systems, and non-Sikep community in Ploso Kedhiren Village, Randublatung District. By applying a phenomenological approach, this study not only highlights the community's agency and resilience but also interrogates the broader structural constraints they continue to encounter.

METHOD

Based on the research problem proposed in this study, a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach is used to examine how Sedulur Sikep in Ploso Kedhiren, Randublatung District adapt socioculturally to social change while maintaining the values of Samin Surosentiko's teachings. This location was chosen because it is the birthplace of Samin Surosentiko, which also serves as the initial site for the spread of the Samin teachings. Currently, the Pendopo Pengayoman Mbah Samin Surosentiko stands in this location and actively functions as a gathering place for Sedulur Sikep from various regions every Monday Kliwon night. The qualitative method allows for an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the research subjects. Meanwhile, the phenomenological approach provides a comprehensive picture of local dynamics and the existing social and cultural adaptation strategies. The research was conducted from January to March 2025.

The data collection techniques required and relevant to the topic under study include three methods, observation, interviews, and documentation. The primary data sources in this research were obtained through interviews with informants. According to Moleong (2013), informants are individuals who provide information related to the data sought by the researcher regarding the research being conducted. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, based on certain indicators to select informants who were considered capable of answering the research problem formulation. The informants in this study consist of key informants, main informants, and supporting informants. Key informants are individuals who possess comprehensive and in-depth knowledge regarding the issues addressed by the researcher. Main informants are individuals who possessed technical and detailed knowledge relevant to the research focus. Supporting informants are those who could provide supplementary insights to support the qualitative analysis and discussion. The key informants are figures from the Sedulur Sikep community, the main informants are members of Sedulur Sikep, and the supporting informants are representatives from the government and local community. To complement the research data, secondary data sources were used, including books, archives, and scientific journals relevant to the study.

Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed using the approach proposed by Miles & Huberman (2014), including data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. During the data reduction phase, the researcher selected, focused, simplified, and organized raw data obtained from field observations, interviews, and field notes related to the sociocultural adaptation of the Sedulur Sikep community to social changes in Ploso Kedhiren Village, Randublatung District. In the data display stage, the organized data were presented in the form of narratives, descriptive matrices, and thematic groupings, allowing patterns and relationships to be observed and interpreted more clearly. Subsequently, conclusion drawing and verification were carried out by interpreting the meaning of the displayed data in relation to the research questions. The researcher engaged in an iterative process, revisiting field notes, re-examining emerging patterns, and reflecting critically on the findings. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, verification was also supported through peer debriefing. Discussions with fellow researchers provided alternative perspectives, helped minimize potential biases, and enhanced the overall trustworthiness and credibility of the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Samin Surosentiko's Teachings

The teachings of Samin Surosentiko are rooted in the values of human life, which involve both the notion of a perfect life and the imperfect aspects of human life. These teachings serve as guidelines for speech and behavior, particularly for Sedulur Sikep, so that they may always live virtuously and honestly. The teachings of Samin are deeply embraced by Sedulur Sikep. The Sedulur Sikep deeply internalize Samin teachings, believing that adherence to them liberates individuals from "law of karma" (Mumfangati. et al., 2004). In principle, the Samin teachings are based on human life values, which are used as a guide for attitudes and behavior, especially for Sedulur Sikep, to always act with kindness and honesty. Samin Surosentiko disseminated his teachings to his followers through *sesorah* or lectures, held in homes and open fields (Mardikantoro, 2021).

The Samin teachings consist of moral advice and guidance for daily behavior (Mubarak & Falasifah, 2024). Sedulur Sikep must possess *toto coro* (proper manners) and avoid negative attitudes. The teachings that are still firmly upheld by Sedulur Sikep today include *ojo nglakoni drengki, srei, panesten, dahwen, kemeren, ojo bedhog colong, pethil jumput, nemu wae ora gelem*. These teachings mean that one must not show envy or jealousy, be easily offended, criticize others, steal, rob, and even refrain from taking found items. These teachings collectively become values that are consistently practiced in daily life, particularly in interactions with fellow humans. As stated by Tedjo, a Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

"Mboten iri, drengki, srei, panesten dahpen, kemeren, bedog colong, kutil jumput, nemu mawon mboten purun."

"No envy, no hatred, no resentment, no suspicion, no jealousy, no violence, no stealing. Even picking up something that doesn't belong to you is not allowed." (Tedjo, January 26, 2025).

This view is further supported by Gunretno, a prominent figure in the Sedulur Sikep, who noted that:

"Memang tentang ajaran Mbah Samin sing ojo nglakoni drengki, srei, panesten, dahwen, kemeren, ojo bedhog, colong, pethil, jumput, nemu juga dilarang."

"Indeed, according to the teachings of Mbah Samin, one must not engage in envy (drengki), hatred (srei), suspicion (panesten), anger (dahwen), jealousy (kemeren), nor commit acts of violence (bedhog), theft (colong), taking what is not theirs (pethil, jumput), or even claiming something found that does not belong to them (nemu). All of these are strictly prohibited." Gunretno, January 18, 2025).

Sedulur Sikep are believers of the Adam religion (Adzkiya & Fadhilah, 2020). The term "Adam religion" refers to the belief that the first human was Adam and that all humans are his descendants. Therefore, it is prohibited to make distinctions between fellow human beings. A person's good or bad aspect is judged based on their speech and behavior. Sedulur Sikep also do not differentiate between other religions, for them, what matters most is the character of the believer (Munawaroh et al., 2015). As stated by Gunretno, a prominent figure in the Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

"Ketika ditakoki agamamu opo, agamaku Adam."

"When asked about my religion, I answer: my religion is Adam." (Gunretno, January 18, 2025).

Sedulur Sikep live as farmers in line with their teachings and beliefs ([Kurniasari et al., 2018](#)). For Sedulur Sikep, farming is a way to preserve the traditions and culture passed down from generation to generation. Through farming, Sedulur Sikep realize that their lives are heavily dependent on nature, thus, they strive to maintain a balanced relationship with the nature ([Arumdati, 2023](#)). Therefore, in their farming practices, Sedulur Sikep are committed to maintain the principle of environmental balance. For Sedulur Sikep, farming has provided their social and economic well-being ([Kurniawan et al., 2023](#)). Sedulur Sikep do not use chemical fertilizers, but instead use organic fertilizers that they produce themselves. Pest control for rice field rats is also done in a traditional manner, by walking together in the fields while carrying torches and singing. For the *wereng* (brown planthopper) pest specifically, Sedulur Sikep create a natural pesticide with ingredients such as tobacco, soursop leaves, and garlic, which are fermented for one week and then sprayed onto the pests. As stated by Bathiono, a non-Sikep Community, in an interview:

"Asli organik, blas ora nganggo pupuk kimia, sak genggem, sak sendok ae ora nganggo. Abuk yo nggawe dewe, ko kotoran yo daun-daunan. Wong obat wereng ae trimo nggawe dewe, ning nyatane yo mati. Wong trimo mbako, godong sirsak, bawang putih diferementasi seminggu, disempreti, mati. Karo jalan-jalan nang sawah nggowo obor. Nyanyi, mbak. Nyanyi sambil menyebut hama wereng, hama tikus, tidak boleh ke sini. Berdoa dengan lagu. Tikus yo rodok aman. Mboten angsal dibunuh tikus niku."

"It is purely organic. Absolutely no chemical fertilizers are used, not even a handful or a spoonful. We make our own compost, using only natural materials like leaves and plant waste. Even for pest control, we create our own remedies. And they work, pests die. For example, we ferment tobacco leaves, soursop leaves, and garlic for a week, then spray the mixture, and it kills pests effectively. We also walk around the rice fields carrying torches while singing. Yes, singing. We sing songs addressing the pests, brown planthoppers, rats, telling them they are not welcome here. We pray through song. Interestingly, the rats tend to stay away. But we must not kill them. It is forbidden to kill the rats." (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

A prominent characteristic of Sedulur Sikep is *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). For Sedulur Sikep, *gotong royong* serves as the foundation of their social interactions ([Mumfangati et al., 2004](#)). To this day, Sedulur Sikep continue to rely on the principle of *gotong royong* in various aspects of life. In Ploso Kedhiren Village, where the Pendopo Pengayoman Mbah Samin Surosentiko stands, it is believed that the site is the birthplace of Samin teachings. The location of this *pendopo* (traditional hall) is considered the *petilasan* (sacred site) of Samin Surosentiko. The Pendopo Pengayoman Mbah Samin Surosentiko was constructed through *gotong royong* between the Sedulur Sikep and the surrounding community. The entire pendopo was constructed without any assistance from the government, as Sedulur Sikep refuse to accept funding from the regional budget (APBD). The land on which the Pendopo Pengayoman stands is also a *waqf* (religious endowment) by Mbah Ngadimah, which handed over to Sedulur Sikep on March 15. As stated by Komari, a Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

"Yo gotong royong leh, saling nek ono kegiatan pemerintah umpamane krocokoan ae, edak ngono ae krocokan ning gone deso yo melu krocokan. Biasa sih."

"It is all about mutual cooperation. For example, if there is a government-led activity like krocokan (communal irrigation cleaning), even if it is not happening directly in our village, we still take part in it. It is just something we normally do." (Komari, January 30, 2025).

Patno, *Kamituwo* of Ploso Kedhiren Village, further elaborated:

"Itu gotong royong, ora enek upabe, keikhlasan, tandang gawe, misalkan nopo mawon bentuke. Kebersihan, pembangunan, prasarana pemerintah, yang membutuhkan dari Sedulur Sikep selalu dibantu (oleh Sedulur Sikep), dan aneunya Sedulur Sikep itu ndak mau dibantu. Membantu mau, dibantu ndak mau."

"It is all based on mutual cooperation, there is no payment involved. It is done with sincerity and a willingness to contribute, regardless of the form it takes. Whether it is for cleanliness, development, or government infrastructure, whenever help is needed, the Sedulur Sikep are always willing to assist. Interestingly, though, the Sedulur Sikep are reluctant to receive help themselves. They are eager to help others, but they do not want to be helped." (Patno, January 13, 2025).

Sedulur Sikep have their own unique marriage customs ([Alfasina, 2024](#)), which differ from those of non-Sikep communities that are referred to as *pasuwitan*. The marriages practiced by Sedulur Sikep are endogamous, which hold the principle that individuals must seek a spouse from their own community ([Galba, 2009](#)). The *pasuwitan* process begins with the prospective groom expressing his intention to marry to his parents, followed by a request made to the family of the prospective bride. The couple then lives together in the same house. Afterwards, they announce that they have undergone the traditional *tatane wong sikep rabi* (the traditional Samin marriage ritual), which is followed by the *nyuwita* ceremony attended by the entire extended family. Sedulur Sikep do not register their marriages with the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), as the marriage is considered valid once it has followed the procedures aligned with the Samin teachings. As explained by Komari, a Sedulur Sikep:

"Dadi (proses perkawinan) Sedulur Sikep prosese suwe. Dadi nek turune nduwe senengan, terus kondo karo bapak biyunge, 'pak aku seneng karo kae'. Lha terus bapakke mrono. Nakokno karo wong tuwane wong wedok. 'Bener gak turune jenengan niku sik prawan opo wis ono sing ngarepno'. 'Nek jik prawan yo iki ape dikarepno turunku'. Prosese suwe, dadi nek wis proses kui, nek wis podo setuju, lagi nyuwita. Nyuwita diterke dulur-dulur bareng-bareng. Jawab. Lha, jawab iku nek wis ono rukune, nek bapakke kono nglegakno, ibuke ngrukuno, nek wis ono rukune bocah loro kui kondo karo wong tuwane lanang karo wedok.' Pak, tatane Wong Sikep rabi wis tak lakoni."

*"Thus marriage process of the Sedulur Sikep community is a long process. For example, if a young man is attracted to someone, he tells his parents, saying, 'Father, I like that girl.' Then the father goes to meet the girl's parents to ask, 'Is your daughter still single, or is someone else already interested in her?' If she is still single, he will say, 'Then my son would like to propose to her.' The process takes time. If both sides agree, then comes the *nyuwita* (formal request for marriage), which is done together with extended family members. After that comes the *jawab* (formal response), which takes place once both families reach an understanding. The father of the girl gives his consent, and the mother confirms the harmony of the arrangement. When that mutual understanding is reached, the couple reports back to their parents and says, 'Father, we have fulfilled the traditional steps of a Sikep marriage.'" (Komari, January 30, 2025).*

The Samin teachings include not only marriage customs but also funeral rites, known as *salin sandhangan*, which means "changing clothes." In this process, the deceased is dressed in everyday clothing, such as a black shirt and trousers, along with an *udheng* (traditional headwrap), and positioned face-up, as if sleeping. The body is also not always buried in a cemetery. As stated by Tedjo, a Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

Terus tatane tiyang asale kula mastani salin sandhangan, meninggal. Niku nggih kedah dipertahankan tata carane, budayane.”

“According to our ancestral customs, we refer to death as salin sandhangan, which means ‘changing clothes.’ That tradition and all the cultural practices that come with it must be preserved.” (Tedjo, January 26, 2025).

These teachings continue to be practiced as part of Sedulur Sikep's efforts to preserve the purity of the Samin teachings. Therefore, Sedulur Sikep strive to uphold the customs passed down from their ancestors, as these are tied closely to the continuity of the Samin teachings. If these customs are not practiced in accordance with the Samin teachings, it is feared that this could lead to the erosion of Sedulur Sikep's social order.

Social Change

The social change faced by the Sedulur Sikep community in Ploso Kedhiren Village cannot be separated from the context of social pressure and dominance they experienced, particularly during politically sensitive times such as the post-G30S/PKI 1965 era. During that period, Sedulur Sikep were pressured to follow the social and religious standards imposed by the state and dominant society. At the time, all citizens were suspected of being affiliated with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), including Sedulur Sikep. As stated by Bathiono, a non-Sikep Community, in an interview:

“Semenjak 65 waktu ada G30SPKI kan warga Sikep dikucilkan. Termasuk orang yang paling jelek di sini. Katanya gitu. Setiap ada orang tanya, ‘wong kok koyok Wong Samin’. padahal orang Samin itu bener-bener jujur, orang baik. Tapi warga –warga yang sudah termasuk warga modern itu bilang ndak baik katanya. (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

“Since 1965, during the G30S/PKI incident, the Sikep people were socially marginalized. They were labeled as among the worst in society, at least, that was the perception at the time. Whenever someone behaved differently, people would say, ‘Why are you acting like a Samin?’ Yet in reality, the Samin people are genuinely honest and kind. However, those who considered themselves part of the modern community used to believe otherwise.” (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

From these suspicions, the pressure to adopt ways of life deemed in line with “national” values and official religions emerged. Every household was forced to install a *padasan* (ablution area) as a symbol of compliance with Islamic norms, even though Sedulur Sikep are not followers of Islam. They also faced verbal intimidation, which indicated efforts to suppress their identity and beliefs, especially when they were told to install the *padasan*. When they refused to install it, they were pressured to either comply or face exile, as happened to Samin Surosentiko. Samin Surosentiko himself was exiled to Digul, then to Sawahlunto, where he eventually died ([Rosyid, 2021](#)). As stated by Bathiono, a non-Sikep Community, in an interview:

“Waktu itu kan zaman zaman 65 kan warga semua kan disangka PKI. Itu. Jadi dipaksa. Kalau ndak mau pasang padasan , opo pengen koyo mbahmu? Ngono. Maksude mbahmu iku Mbah Samin Surosentiko. Opo ora pengen muleh koyok mbahmu? Iku paksaane ngoten. Dadi warga sing mriki tiap rumah harus ada padasan waktu itu. Semenjak 65 itu. Dipaksa semua harus beragama. Padahal orang Sikep itu bukan Islam, tapi dia mengakui bahwa tuhan itu ada. Wong agamanya agama adam.”

"Back in 1965, during that period, everyone in the village was suspected of being affiliated with the PKI. People were forced to comply with state expectations. For example, if someone refused to install a padasan (a traditional water vessel used for ritual ablution), they would be threatened, 'Do you want to end up like your ancestor?' What they meant was Mbah Samin Surosentiko. They would say, 'Don't you want to return like your ancestor?' That was the kind of coercion we faced. Since 1965, every household here was forced to have a padasan. Everyone was compelled to have a religion. But the Sikep people are not Muslim, even though they acknowledge the existence of God. Their belief is often referred to as the religion of Adam (agama Adam)." (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

Around that era, the Sedulur Sikep experienced discrimination and negative stigma. They were once marginalized and labeled as a deviant group. This negative stigma was reinforced by the perception of "*Wong Samin*" as a strange, even derogatory term. This is why the followers of Samin teachings prefer to be called "Sedulur Sikep," which means good and honest people, as a replacement for the term *Wong Samin*, which had a negative connotation in society as referring to dishonest people (Mardikantoro, 2021). A turning point for Sedulur Sikep in gaining acceptance from the non-Sikep community occurred when they began to participate in social and political processes. Previously, they had been excluded from those processes due to being perceived as different and not granted the same rights as other Indonesian citizens. However, in 1997, Sedulur Sikep were able to take part in the General Election (*Pemilu*) and used their voting rights for the first time. As stated by Bathiono, a non-Sikep Community, in an interview:

"Wah, 90-an sekitar 97, waktu pemilu itu sudah diikuti warga pemilu, boleh. Kan dulu-dulu ndak boleh."

"Around the 1990s, about 1997, during the general elections, Sikep community members were finally allowed to participate. Before that, they weren't allowed to vote at all." (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

The Sedulur Sikep community also faced subtle forms of symbolic domination that directly affected their identity. One such form of symbolic domination occurred when they processed administrative documents at the *kelurahan* (district office), where they encountered responses questioning the "legitimacy" of their identity. This situation represents a form of administrative and symbolic pressure that indirectly forces Sedulur Sikep to conform to general norms deemed "normal" by the state bureaucracy. As stated by Bathiono, a non-Sikep Community, in an interview:

"Kalau dari pemerintah itu kadang-kadang paksaannya gini mbak, seandainya minta surat dari kelurahan itu, 'Iha wong kowe ora koyok wong umum', gitu. 'Iha aku yo wong Jowo lho pak, yo wong Indonesia, asli wong Indonesia, najan aku wong Sikep, kabeh iku sedulurku pak, ora enek sing tak beda kasehke. kabeh sedulurku.' Ngoten."

"Sometimes, the pressure from the government comes in subtle forms. For example, when we request a letter from the district office, they might say, 'Well, you're not like ordinary people.' And I respond, 'But I am Javanese, sir. I'm Indonesian, born and raised here. Even though I'm Sikep, everyone is my brother and sister. I don't treat anyone differently. We are all family.'" (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

Another pressure emerged from government policy requiring every Indonesian citizen to possess a Resident Identity Card (KTP) that includes one of the six officially recognized religions in the country, which are Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Sukirno, 2018). As adherents of the Adam Religion, the Sedulur Sikep community wished for Adam Religion to be recognized as an official religion in Indonesia, alongside the six others.

However, since the government has not accommodated this, Sedulur Sikep chose to leave the religion column on their KTP blank (Mujahidin, 2023), despite initially having it filled with one of the state-recognized religions. While Sedulur Sikep, as Indonesian citizens, are willing to follow government regulations, they also hope the government will provide space for their beliefs, so that both parties can find mutual compatibility. Yet, in reality, the government remains unwilling to recognize the Adam religion as an official category. Thus, the compromise path taken is to persist in leaving the religion column empty on their KTPs. As stated by Tedjo, a Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

"Yen kados Sederek Sikep kan yen ditangleti agomo kan mboten agomo Islam, mboten agomo Kristen, agomo niku yen Sederek Sikep, agomo Adam corone, pemerintah mboten purun nyatet niku, nah timbang mboten purun, kula ken ngosongke"

"Among the Sedulur Sikep, when asked about their religion, the answer is neither Islam nor Christianity. Their belief is referred to as agama Adam. However, since the government does not accept this classification for official documentation, I decided to leave the religion section blank rather than have it rejected." (Tedjo, January 26, 2025).

The policy regarding marriage registration at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) has also played a role in the journey of Sedulur Sikep community. In practicing their marriage customs, Sedulur Sikep once faced difficulties due to differences with the general procedures of marriage. Sedulur Sikep experienced coercion to follow marriage procedures through the KUA. The form of coercion they experienced involved married members of Sedulur Sikep being gathered at the village hall without adequate explanation about the purpose of their gathering. KUA officials also attended at the village hall to marry them using procedures considered valid by the officially recognized religions in Indonesia. This practice was conducted without full understanding by those involved. As stated by Komari, a Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

"Mbiyen iku sing katut ning gone paksaan pernikahan iku dikumpulno. Kumpul ning balai deso ora eruh acarane, ning kono dicawisi, kabare lbo aku dewe yo ra ngerti sakutube ning koyo ngono iku. Dadi dipanggili sedulur sikep sing wis duwe bojo bojo ditimbali ning balai desa, ning kono ono KUA. Lha akhire dinikabno ning kono."

"In the past, those who were subjected to forced marriage were gathered together. They were brought to the village hall without knowing what the event was about. There, they were prepared for something, I only heard about it; I didn't witness it myself, but that's how the story goes. Members of the Sedulur Sikep community who were already in a relationship or considered married were summoned to the village hall, and the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) was already there. In the end, they were officially married on the spot." (Komari, January 30, 2025).

The Sedulur Sikep are known to avoid formal education ([Rizqi & Rini, 2015](#)), which has led them to face challenges related to policies that mandate formal schooling. They believe that schools, as formal educational institutions, can have a significant influence on the religious beliefs of Sedulur Sikep children, especially amid the modernization. There are concerns that Sedulur Sikep children may be influenced, thus it requires close supervision and special instruction about the values upheld by the Sedulur Sikep. The previous generation also applied the same practice. Schools have various activities that require student participation. This is feared to reduce their children's time to learn and practice Samin teachings. Initially, Sedulur Sikep experienced coercion to enroll in formal education by the local government. School-aged children of Sedulur Sikep were approached by

teachers and the *kamituwo* (village hamlet head). However, the Sedulur Sikep have remained firm in their decision not to send their children to school. As a result, such coercion no longer occurs anymore. As stated by Komari, a Sedulur Sikep, in an interview:

"Nek Sedulur Sikep kan ora sekolah"

"Sedulur Sikep don't attend school" (Komari, January 30, 2025).

Komari further emphasized that:

"Sedulur Sikep pengaruhe sing paling akeh iku ning gone keagamaan sih, dadi bocah sedulur sikep nek ora disetir tenan pengaruhe yo gede. Mulane biyen iku mbah-mbah ngandakno nek bocah, anak sedulur sikep disekolahno iku pengaruhe gede. Dadi ngko nek wis mlebu ning sekolahan. Kan ono kegiatan-kegiatan sing akeh. Sing kaitane keagamaan. Ngko dipaksa kon iki kon iki kon iki. Paling pengaruhe disitu. Dikhuwaterno, ning mungkin yo ora nganti koyo ngono. Yo mugo-mugo yo ojo nganti koyok ngono. Sing dikuwaterno iku. Pengaruhe gede."

"The greatest influence on Sedulur Sikep children comes from religious matters. If the children are not guided closely, the external influence can be quite significant. That is why, in the past, our elders used to say that when Sedulur Sikep children go to school, they are exposed to strong influences. Once they enter formal education, there are numerous activities, many of which are related to religion. They might be compelled to participate in this or that religious activity. That is the main concern. It may not always turn out that way, but hopefully it doesn't. Still, that is what we are worried about the influence is strong." (Komari, January 30, 2025).

The local dynamics and challenges faced by the Sedulur Sikep show that they not only endure, but are also able to manage social and political pressures in their own unique way. Throughout this process, the Sedulur Sikep continue to face local dynamics and challenges while consistently practicing Samin teachings. In responding to these matters, they remain open, as long as it does not erode the values of Samin.

Sociocultural Adaptation

The Sedulur Sikep is a community that does not live in isolation, separated from other societal groups. They live side by side with non-Sikep communities and form daily social and cultural interactions with the individuals. Under such conditions, the Sedulur Sikep are constantly exposed to external influences. Therefore, their openness to change has implications for the transformation of Sedulur Sikep's way of life (Mardikantoro, 2021). Based on this, the Sedulur Sikep are required to preserve their cultural identity while also confronting social changes, so that they can navigate local dynamics through social and cultural adaptation.

Sociocultural adaptation involves the ability of individuals or groups to adjust to the norms, values, and cultural practices within their environment. The crucial factors influencing this adaptation include cultural context, openness, and compatibility in accepting and adapting to cultural differences, all of which play a key role in the process of sociocultural adaptation. Additionally, communication skills between communities of different ethnic backgrounds are essential. By understanding these aspects in daily life, individuals or groups can develop the skills needed to live harmoniously in a socially and culturally diverse society (Novialdi & Fitriani, 2024).

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted, various forms of sociocultural adaptation strategies applied by the Sedulur Sikep in Ploso Kedhiren Village to face social changes have been identified. It is known that the Sedulur Sikep once isolated themselves from social life as a form of rejection by the Sedulur Sikep toward Dutch colonialism. The prolonged period of Dutch colonialism had implications for the erosion of Samin values and teachings. Therefore, the Sedulur Sikep made efforts to preserve and uphold the values and teachings of Samin, even if it meant isolating themselves from the outside world ([Pinasti & Irenewaty, 2016](#)).

In Ploso Kedhiren Village, which is the initial site of the spread of Samin Surosentiko's teachings, the sociocultural adaptation has shown significant social dynamics, especially in terms of interaction and openness with the surrounding non-Sikep community. Initially, the Sedulur Sikep had little to no intense interaction or relationship with the local non-Sikep community. However, the change began when the Pendopo Pengayoman Mbah Samin Surosentiko was established in the village. Since then, social relations between Sedulur Sikep from various regions and the non-Sikep community have begun to develop positively. As stated by Bathiono, a non-Sikep Community, in an interview:

"Tapi, sekarang sudah tau kalau orang Samin itu benar-benar jujur, benar-benar adaptasi sama warga yang ndak Samin, sama saja. Kan tanggapannya sekarang positif, baik."

"Now, people have come to realize that the Samin are truly honest and capable of adapting to non-Samin neighbors just like anyone else. Today, the public perception has shifted toward a more positive and respectful view." (Bathiono, January 31, 2025).

The process of sociocultural adaptation carried out by the Sedulur Sikep in Blora can be seen in the way they interact with the surrounding community, which is predominantly Muslim believer. There is no distinction in daily social interactions between the Sedulur Sikep and the non-Sikep community. The Sedulur Sikep uphold a principle of interaction based on mutual respect. Although there are spiritual or religious differences, where the Sedulur Sikep hold beliefs and practices that differ from those of the majority around them, this has not become an obstacle in building social relationships. The Sedulur Sikep participate in various social activities based on spiritual tradition, such as *mapag poso* (welcoming Ramadan), joint *iftar* gatherings, and *halal bi halal* (post-Ramadan reconciliation event). Additionally, the Sedulur Sikep are also involved in various national commemoration events, which are carried out in the spirit of *gotong royong* alongside the government and the non-Sikep community. As explained by Patno, Kamituwo of Ploso Kedhiren Village:

"Rembug gunem, nek bahasanya niku musyawarah. Lha itu dilaksanakan ada even-tevent tertentu misalkan mau peringatan satu abad, ulang tahun misalkan pendirian pendopo kan pasti setahun sekali diadakan, terus mapag poso, terus mapag suro, terus tutupan suro, itu selalu ada kegiatan. Sedekah bumi, 17 agustus, terus Hari-hari pahlawan, selalu mengikuti. pahlawan perjuangan kan mbah (Samin) juga pahlawan walaupun tidak diakui, tidak terpampang seperti pahlawan-pahlawan yang lain, tapi keluarga sikep juga merasa mbah e niku pahlawan 10 november, pokoknya hari-hari besar selalu mengikuti terus ada kegiatan. seperti kemarin itu nggih nandur pobon Pancasila, terus diadakan renungan terus diadakan rembug gunem, terus mungkin ada masukan, mungkin ada kurang paham di situ untuk menjelaskan, meluruskan dengan ajaran Sikep."

"Rembug gunem, in our terms, means deliberation or communal discussion. It is usually held during specific events. For example, the centennial commemoration, or the anniversary of the establishment of the pendopo. Then there's mapag, mapag Suro, and tutupan Suro; all of these always involve collective activities. There is also sedekah bumi, Independence Day on August 17th, and Heroes' Day. All regularly observed and participated in by the community. For us, even though Mbah Samin is not officially recognized or publicly honored like other national heroes, the Sikep family still regards him as a freedom fighter. On November 10th (Heroes' Day), for instance, we commemorate it through various activities. Just recently, we planted a 'Pancasila tree', held a moment of reflection, and conducted a rembug gunem. In that session, we shared thoughts, provided clarifications for those who were uncertain, and offered explanations aligned with Sikep teachings." (Patno, January 13, 2025).

In their daily lives, the sociocultural adaptation of the Sedulur Sikep takes place not only in the context of interpersonal relations, but also in their interactions with formal institutions such as the village governments. Despite past experiences of symbolic domination that pressured them to conform to societal norms, the Sedulur Sikep did not outright reject such pressures. Instead, they responded in a manner that reflects social maturity and the nobility of their values. As explained by Patno, Kamituwo of Ploso Kedhiren Village:

"Saat ini dari pemerintah daerah mengakui (Sedulur Sikep). Kegiatan-kegiatan Sedulur Sikep jelas mendukung program pemerintah, itu apa yang dicanangkan dan dianjurkan (oleh pemerintah) selalu didukung dari keluarga Sikep."

"At present, the local government has acknowledged the existence of Sedulur Sikep. The activities carried out by the Sedulur Sikep community clearly support government programs, whatever is initiated and recommended by the government is consistently supported by the Sikep families." (Patno, January 13, 2025).

Nowadays, the Sedulur Sikep have generally adapted in terms of clothing and lifestyle. They wear modern attire such as trousers, shirts, and sandals in their daily lives, similar to the non-Sikep community, while still upholding their principle of simplicity. Furthermore, the Sedulur Sikep have embraced technological advancements in their daily lives, such as using mobile phones, motorcycles, and modern agricultural tools to ease land cultivation and harvesting process through the use of tractors and rice threshers ([Dyani et al., 2022](#)). However, the principle of respecting and preserving nature is never abandoned. The Sedulur Sikep continue to use natural fertilizers such as manure and homemade liquid organic fertilizers. Although they have adopted modern agricultural technology, the spirit of *gotong royong* remains upheld to this day ([Lestari & Wijayanti, 2020](#)). As explained by Tedjo, a Sedulur Sikep:

"Yen tradisi enten sing berubah kedik, contone mbah-mbah mboten ngagem sandal, sakniki mpun ngagem sandal. Mbah-mbah moten numpak sepeda kula pun numpak sepeda, mbah-mbah boten gadah hp. Niku kan mpun berubah. Nggih mengikuti teknologi ning boten ngicali nilai-nilai sing dianggep paling baku."

"Some traditions have slightly changed. For example, our elders used to walk barefoot, but now we wear sandals. They didn't ride bicycles, but I do. They didn't own mobile phones, but now we do. These are examples of change. We do follow technological developments, but without abandoning the core values that we hold as fundamental." (Tedjo, January 26, 2025).

In their marriage customs (*pasuwitan*), the Sedulur Sikep adapt by inviting religious leaders, community figures, and government representatives to witness the ceremony. This is intended to

make non-Sikep communities more familiar with their wedding traditions and to avoid potential misunderstandings between the state and the Sedulur Sikep. As a result, the Sedulur Sikep have developed an adaptive approach through openness and participation. This approach demonstrates that the Sedulur Sikep are not closed off, but remain steadfast in preserving their traditions. A similar practice is applied to death rituals. The Sedulur Sikep also invite religious leaders, community figures, and government representatives to witness the *salin sandhangan* ceremony. Before performing *salin sandhangan* in accordance with Samin teachings, they first request permission from the village authorities and local *modin* (religious functionary) to fully carry out their traditional customs. This is also aimed at preventing any misunderstandings that may arise from the differences between Sedulur Sikep customs and those of the non-Sikep community. As explained by Komari, a Sedulur Sikep:

"Winginane kan kula nikahke kaleh turunne kula sing teng Rembang niku, yo sarekat kula undang. Pak Lurah, pak Wo, tak kon nyekseni tata carane wong sikep, ben ngerti. Ben ora simpang siur. Sikep i piye to nek nikah. Ben ngerti."

"Recently, I held a wedding for my child who lives in Rembang, and I invited members of the Sarekat (community group). I also invited the Lurah and the Kamituwo to witness the marriage ceremony according to Sikep customs, so that they would understand. So there would be no misconceptions or misunderstandings about how the Sikep community conducts marriage. It was important for them to see and understand it firsthand." (Komari, January 30, 2025).

Tedjo further stated that:

"Kula anggep nggih mpun saling menghargai niku, kula nindake niku kula dugi teng gene pak Kamituwo, pak Modin, pak Lurah, matur yen tata carane kula ajeng kula tindake sak wutube. Pihak-pihak Modin, pihak Lurah, Kamituwo sing mangku dusun niku mpun monggo. Niku yen tata carane jenengan kula nggih kanton monggo, sing penting sami rukun."

"I consider this as a form of mutual respect. I carried it out by coming to the Kamituwo, the Modin, and the Lurah to inform them that I intended to carry out our customary practices in full. The Modin, the village head, and the Kamituwo who oversees the hamlet responded by saying, 'Please, go ahead.' They said, 'If those are your customs, then please carry them out as you see fit, as long as we all live in harmony.'" (Tedjo, January 26, 2025).

In its development, the Sedulur Sikep not only teach Samin teachings to their children, but also commit to teaching reading, writing, and calculation through family-based education ([Hazim et al., 2023](#)). The Sedulur Sikep believe that education is not merely about following the formal education system, but rather about *mbecikno laku* (improving behavior) and *mbenerno ucapan* (correcting speech). The Sedulur Sikep understand that school is about learning. For the Sedulur Sikep, learning is a process of building character and ethics in accordance with the values taught by Samin Surosentiko. Concerns regarding potential illiteracy or innumeracy have been addressed as the Sedulur Sikep have demonstrated their ability to read, write, and calculate. As explained by Gunretno, a prominent figure of Sedulur Sikep:

"Ngene, tarublah tentang sinau, pendidikan. Mungkin yo pemerintah ora salah ketika penting saiki iku kudu ngerti aksoro lan ongko. Iku penting karena iki menjadi kebutuhan. Adaptasiku dalam mempertahankan tidak sekolah formal, tapi aku memahami sekolah iku kan sinau, nah sinaune sedulur sikep adalah mbecikno laku dan benerno ucapan. Kekhawatiran ora iso moco nulis terjawab dengan aku iso moco nulis."

*"Let's take the issue of education, for example. Perhaps the government is not wrong in emphasizing the importance of literacy and numeracy today. These are indeed important, as they have become essential needs. My way of adapting, while still holding on to our principles, is by not attending formal school, but I understand that schooling is essentially about learning. For the Sedulur Sikep, learning means *mbecikno laku* and *mbenerno ucapan*. The concern that we might not be able to read or write has been answered because I can read and write."* (Gunretno, January 18, 2025).

The Sedulur Sikep's sociocultural adaptation is a long and complex process, as it involves not only local dynamics and challenges but also the continuity of the Samin teachings. Based on the explanation above, it is evident that the sociocultural adaptation of the Sedulur Sikep is their active effort to preserve the Samin teachings while remaining selective in their adjustments. This aligns with Robert K. Merton's theory of social adaptation, which states that there are five modes of social adaptation, they are conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion (Fadli & Quartyza, 2022). The Sedulur Sikep apply four of these five modes of adaptation. They choose the paths of conformity, innovation, ritualism, and retreatism as forms of adjustment.

Their conformity is visible in their willingness to engage in collective activities with the broader society, such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), participation in national celebrations, or involvement in communal discussion (*rembug gunem*), as long as such involvement does not contradict their moral principles. At the same time, they exhibit innovation by selectively modifying the means to achieve cultural ends. For example, leaving the religion column on resident identity cards blank as a form of respectful disagreement with state religious classifications, or redefining formal education as *sinau*, a process of learning moral conduct rather than religious instruction. Ritualism is demonstrated in their continued observance of customary practices such as marriage arrangements, burial rites, and interpersonal ethics, even when these are no longer formally required or widely practiced outside their community. Meanwhile, retreatism appears in instances where members choose symbolic or practical withdrawal from aspects of state engagement, such as opting out of government aid programs or refusing public schooling for their children to preserve autonomy and ideological purity.

Importantly, the Sedulur Sikep do not engage in rebellion, the fifth of Merton's modes. Rather than seeking to overthrow or replace dominant social structures, they choose peaceful coexistence while maintaining clear cultural boundaries. This choice reflects their philosophical commitment to non-violence (*mbecikno laku lan mbenerno ucapan*), a central tenet of Samin teachings. In essence, the Sedulur Sikep's adaptation strategy represents a reflective and selective approach, one that is both resistant and responsive, rooted in tradition yet open to negotiation, allowing them to sustain their identity within a sociocultural landscape.

While the findings of this study provide meaningful insights into the sociocultural adaptation of Sedulur Sikep in Ploso Kedhiren, Randublatung District, several limitations must be acknowledged. This research employed a phenomenological approach, which prioritizes lived experiences and subjective understanding. As a result, the data may reflect the dominant narratives of community leaders while overlooking alternative perspectives, particularly those of younger generations or dissenting voices. The selection of informants, largely elder or established members

of the community, could introduce bias in interpreting the adaptive strategies as more cohesive or unified than they might be in practice.

CONCLUSION

Sedulur Sikep refers to the followers of the teachings of Samin Surosentiko. They consistently practice the Samin values, which emphasize honesty, simplicity, and brotherhood. These values not only serve as moral guidance, but also become the foundation for navigating sociocultural changes. Rather than adapting passively, the community exhibits a reflective and selective approach to adaptation, actively negotiating their identity in the face of societal expectations.

The complexity of their adaptation process is deeply rooted in historical and structural challenges, especially during politically sensitive periods such as the post-G30S/PKI era in 1965. During that time, Sedulur Sikep experienced negative stigma and discrimination. Government policies also added the challenges, as several regulations, such as the Resident Identity Card (KTP) requirement, marriage registration at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), and compulsory formal education, were incompatible with the Samin teachings. Despite these institutional constraints, Sedulur Sikep demonstrates a remarkable capacity to negotiate spaces of compliance and resistance. For example, their willingness to leave the religion column blank on their KTP, or to participate in community programs without compromising their values, reflects their strategic cultural resilience.

This study shows that Sedulur Sikep's sociocultural adaptation is not a process of assimilation, but a dynamic balancing act, preserving tradition while constructively engaging with external demands. Their efforts are increasingly acknowledged by both local authorities and non-Sikep community, signaling growing mutual understanding and integration without the loss of identity.

These findings carry several implications for policymakers, educators, and community facilitators. Efforts to engage Sedulur Sikep and other culturally distinct groups should be grounded in participatory dialogue and recognition of indigenous knowledge system. Cultural sensitivity and institutional flexibility are crucial to avoid marginalization and instead promote inclusive governance.

Future research could delve deeper into how the younger generation of Sedulur Sikep interprets and transmits Samin teaching in the context of modern influences such as digital technology, urban migration, and interfaith interactions. Longitudinal studies, ethnographic immersion, and youth-centered participatory approaches may uncover evolving expressions of identity and adaptation in the decades to come.

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