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THE PHENOMENON OF GOTONG ROYONG IN JAVA COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY *NYUMBANG*

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Abstract

Culture is the result of human creation in order to make life easier. Along with the times, the culture is possible to experience shifts and changes. This study discusses one of the cultures of gotong royong in Javanese society, especially the nyumbag, by taking research samples from several villages in Yogyakarta. This study discusses the changes and phenomena of people's attitudes toward the tradition of donating. The results of the study found that on the one hand the community was uncomfortable and objected to the tradition of donating, but on the other hand the community was unable to change the tradition. This is due to the existing system in the community, namely in the form of social control and social sanctions. These two things greatly affect the mindset and behavior of the community. Social control and social sanctions are factors that keep the continuity of a hereditary tradition in society.

Keywords: *culture, Javanese, mutual cooperation, tradition, social control, social sanctions.*

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INTRODUCTION

A big topic that is always the subject of discussion/discussion as well as reviews is about culture, because after all, humans and culture are two things that cannot be separated from one another. Culture is the result of human creation, human development will automatically be followed by the development of culture. Therefore, talking about culture is something that is always interesting. How important culture is, it can be concluded from the opinions of two leading anthropologists, namely Melville J. Herkovits and Bronislaw Malinowski in (Soemardjan, 1990) who put forward the notion of *Cultural Determinism*, which means that everything in society is determined based on the culture that belongs to the community. .

An anthropologist, (Tylor, 1994) in his book entitled *Primitive Culture* (in (Soekanto, 2014) and (Haviland, 1993). defines 'culture' as follows: *Culture is a complex which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society*.

According to (Kistanto, 2015), the word *culture* comes from the Sanskrit *budhayah*. This word is the plural form of the word *budhi* which means 'mind or reason'. Thus, culture means things related to reason or mind which are the fruit of human effort. In another book, (Koentjaraningrat Koentjaraningrat, 2019) mentions another opinion which says that the word *culture* is a development of the compound word *cultivation* which means 'power of the mind'.

Furthermore, it is said that *culture* is the power of the mind in the form of creativity, taste, and intention, while *culture* is the result of the creativity, taste, and intention. One of the cultures of the Indonesian nation that will be discussed in this paper is the culture of gotong royong. This research focuses on one form of gotong royong culture in Javanese society, namely the *nyumbang*.

Culture as a result of the creation of human taste and initiative, along with the times, of course, will also experience changes. These changes can be in the form of changes in form, value, or function. This is in accordance with the structural functionalism approach as developed by Talcott Parsons in Be (Kim & Lee, 2022), which states that society is seen as a system of interrelated parts. Society is seen as a series of biological organisms, where one part will greatly affect the other. According to this approach, it can be understood that the attitude of individuals and society towards something is of course strongly influenced by other factors. In relation to the tradition of *donating*, some questions that arise are: 1). Does the development of the era affect the attitude of the Javanese people towards this tradition? 2). Has there been a change in the form, value, and function of the tradition of *giving* in Javanese society? 3). What is the attitude of the community towards the tradition of *donating*? and 4). Is the tradition of *donating* still relevant to be implemented?.

These questions are interesting to study because based on a quick observation, I see that there has been a change in the culture of gotong-royong in the tradition of *donation*. People feel uncomfortable with the tradition of *donating*. The interesting thing to discuss is how the attitude of humans or society, as creators of culture, in dealing with the fact that it turns out that the culture they have created is felt to be irrelevant. This has become a very interesting phenomenon, namely the reality in society where humans are trapped in their own culture. On the one hand, humans are not comfortable with their own culture, but on the other hand they are unable to get out of the shackles of that culture. Culture is the result of human creation, taste, and initiative, so humans should have 'power' over their culture, but what happens is that culture controls humans, culture controls its creators.

As a data source, to answer these questions I conducted research, either in the form of observations or interviews, by taking samples in several villages in Yogyakarta. This study aims to determine the culture of mutual cooperation in general in Javanese society, in particular knowing the problems regarding the tradition of *giving donations*. This research is expected to find out the attitude of the Javanese people towards the culture of *donation*, especially in Yogyakarta, so that it can be used as a consideration to look for new forms or formats related to cultural issues that are deemed irrelevant and need to be changed. By studying humans and their culture, we hope to know the development of human culture or civilization, so that we can use it as a basis for a better life in the future. This research has two significances. First, the academic significance, which is to contribute knowledge about the culture of gotong royong in Indonesian society, especially Javanese society, as well as providing empirical data on the attitudes of people in several villages in Yogyakarta to the culture of *donation*. Second, the practical significance, which is to provide/find alternative forms/formats of *culture* a better/relevant culture of donation to be implemented so that the community does not feel burdened by the existence of the *donating*.

METHOD

This study uses ethnographic methods for qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data, in written or oral form, of people and behaviors that can be observed as a whole and adapted to the individual context. Qualitative research was chosen because it helps reveal the course of events in detail and thus understands the dynamics of social reality and the interaction of social reality (Afrizal, 2015). The ethnographic approach is a qualitative research procedure that seeks to describe, analyze, and interpret elements of cultural groups, such as patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time (Fitrah, 2018). The purpose of this study was to examine the phenomenon of Gotong Royong in Javanese Society: A Case Study of the Nyumbang Tradition, to obtain descriptive data in the form of written texts obtained from primary data sources about traditional gifts through interviews and community involvement. Secondary data is obtained through literature study which includes references, communication, village communities, culture, community traditions, and donation traditions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Mutual Cooperation and the Tradition of Contribution in Javanese Society

In Javanese culture, there is a motto or motto that reads “sepy ing pamrih rame ing gawe” which implies that people will prioritize the work assigned to them without taking into account the remuneration or rewards for the results of their work. We often hear this slogan, especially in rural areas in Java, where people work together for a specific purpose and purpose, the implementation of which is done by mobilizing a lot of energy. Such a system of cooperative activities is often referred to as 'gotong-royong', which means working together. The word 'gotong-royong' comes from the Javanese gotong which means 'to bear', and royong which means 'together' (Kartohadikoesoemo, 1953:243). In Javanese society there are many forms of mutual cooperation. The forms of gotong royong include mutual assistance in building or repairing houses, roads or bridges, places of worship, commemorating holidays, cleaning villages, and helping each other when one resident holds a traditional ceremony. As stated in the background, this paper will focus on discussing mutual cooperation activities related to traditional ceremonies, in which there is a tradition of giving or making donations.

In the Javanese Baoesastra Java dictionary, donating is defined as providing assistance to others who are having a need. The tradition of donating is an activity in which a person or a family provides assistance in money or goods to other people or other families who are holding an event, ceremony, or celebration. In Javanese cultural society, there are many activities in the form of ceremonies/celebrations that accompany the life cycle, in which there are donation activities. The ceremony or celebration can be grouped as follows: 1). Ceremonies related to birth, such as: brokohan (ceremony when the baby is born), selapanan (ceremony when the baby is 35 days old), puputan (ceremony when the remaining dry umbilical cord is released), tedhak siten (ceremony when the baby begins to learn to crawl or walk, approximately 8 months of age); 2). Ceremonies related to maturity, such as: tetakan (circumcision ceremony for boys), droplets (circumcision ceremony for girls); 3). Marriage ceremonies, such as mantu (wedding reception ceremony),

tingkeban/mitoni (ceremony at the age of seven months of pregnancy); 4). Death ceremonies, such as: geblag (death day ceremony), nelung dina (three-day death anniversary ceremony), mitung dina (7-day commemoration ceremony), ripepuluh dina (40-day death anniversary ceremony), nyatus (100-day commemoration ceremony) death), nyewu and ngijing (ceremony of the 1000th anniversary of death, accompanied by the installation of tombstones/tombstones), and 5). Other thanksgiving ceremonies, such as recovering from illness, graduating from educational institutions, promotions, and others.

In the book System Gotong-Royong in Rural Communities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (1982:64) which is the result of a documentation and inventory project of regional culture carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the culture of contribution is classified in the classification of mutual assistance in the social field. Mutual assistance activities in the social field in general can occur in every activity that concerns the interests of community members, for example marriages, deaths, or other forms of salvation such as circumcision or circumcision. In this event, mutual assistance activities were realized in the form of the 'donating-donating' tradition. The tradition of donating can be realized in the form of food ingredients or in the form of money, the aim of which is to lighten the burden of others who are having an intention. Mutual assistance activities in the social field that arise in the community arise with the reason that there are common interests in social life, especially villagers, who are actually aware that their lives depend on other people. For this reason, with their patience, they created and maintained good relations among their fellow villagers. This relationship between each other occurs because of the principle of reciprocity (Kebudayaan Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

2. The Process of Implementing the Donation Tradition

Based on the data I collected through observations and interviews with villagers in several areas in Yogyakarta, the process of donating activities is as follows:

a. Families who are going to hold a celebration visit relatives and close neighbors with the aim of asking them to help in the implementation of the celebration. The head of the household/father visits the male neighbors to help prepare the supporting facilities for the celebration activities, such as setting up a tent, taking and arranging chairs, and other forms of activity, this is usually called a splice. The mother will visit a female neighbor to help cook and process food ingredients, this is commonly known as réwang.
b. The relatives and neighbors who were asked for réwang came to the family home holding the celebration and gave or donated a sum of money or goods. The amount of money is not determined, but adjusts to applicable standards. The standards that apply when the research is conducted are between Rp. 50,000.00 to Rp. 100,000.00. For certain cases, namely people who are rich or have high positions/positions, they usually give donations that exceed the applicable standards. The money is put in a sealed envelope. Some are named, some are not. According to the data found, most of the envelopes were given the name of the donor. The items given are usually in the form of basic necessities, such as rice, oil, eggs, sugar, or tea. The value of these goods usually ranges from Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 100,000.00. If they have donated in the form of money, they do not give the goods, and

vice versa. There are also those who sometimes give money as well as goods, but if they add up the value of both (money and goods) it will approach the standard value of the applicable donation. As an illustration, for example, a neighbor will donate Rp. 100,000,000.00, then the person concerned will give Rp. 50,000 in money and goods worth Rp. 50,000.00. Based on this information, réwang people, apart from donating money or goods, they also provide energy assistance.

c. The relatives and close neighbors who are finicky then cook/process food ingredients that have been prepared by the host and brought by relatives and close neighbors. The food is for eating the réwang people and men who spit it out, as well as food that will be used in tr-têr or arbor activities, as part of a series of celebrations. What is meant by têr-têr or arbor is the provision of food that has been processed in the form of rice and its side dishes which are placed in a container called bèsèk made of woven bamboo, or sometimes placed in a paper/cardboard box. This food is given to relatives and close neighbors who are réwang, to other neighbors who are not réwang, friends, or other acquaintances. This tr-têr or flattery is intended or given to those who previously also gave tr-têr or admiration to families who are now holding a celebration. This tr-têr or arbor is delivered by young women or réwang mothers.
d. Those who received the tr-tr or flattery then came to donate to the house that gave the tr-tr or flattery by giving an amount of money or goods as described in point b.
e. For families who are economically capable, when holding a celebration, they will prepare food and invite guests who come to contribute to enjoy a large meal that is served, usually served as a buffet or sideboard. For families who are less able, those who come to donate will be treated to snacks and drinks. Guests who donate after leaving will be given a bèsèk or medium-sized cardboard containing lêmpêr (a type of food made of glutinous rice, inside filled with ground beef or chicken, or stuffed with srundèng `fried grated coconut`, wrapped in banana leaves then steamed) about 8-10 pieces and two cooked chicken eggs. For now, the lemper and cooked chicken eggs are often replaced with bread or cakes.
f. After all the celebrations have been completed, the male neighbors will come again to dismantle the tent, return the chairs, and clean the yard. Families who have a celebration will give food similar to the food given during tr-têr to relatives and close neighbors who are réwang, as a kind of thank you. This gift is called uluh-ulih.
g. The family having the celebration, assisted by several relatives, opened the donation envelopes, then recorded the names and the amount of money in them. Also take note of the items given. This note will later be used as a guide if someone else is holding a celebration. For example: When A holds a celebration, B contributes Rp. 50,000.00 to A. So, when B holds a celebration, A will make a contribution equal to or equal to the money or goods given by B to A.
h. This celebration activity can last from three to ten days, depending on the type of celebration as well as the abilities and desires of the person having the celebration.

3. Changes in the Donation Tradition

Regarding societal change, (Syani, 1995) states that the scope of societal change consists of cultural elements, both immaterial and material. In simple terms, immaterial refers to anything that is not form or not, while material refers to everything that is form or thing. Abdul Syani's opinion brings us to Koentjaraningrat's opinion about the three forms and seven universal elements of culture. The first two forms of culture, namely those in the form of ideas, ideas, values, norms, rules and so on, as well as patterned behavior activities of humans in society, can be classified in cultural elements that are immaterial, while the form of culture as objects Objects made by humans can be classified as material elements of culture. Abdul Syani also added that changes in society in general involve changes in the structure, function of culture, and community behavior.

In the following, we will discuss changes in society in relation to the culture of donation, as I observed this in the Tamantirto Village area of Yogyakarta. To make the discussion easier, I divide the discussion on community changes in relation to the culture of donation in the following sub-sections:

a. Material changes.
b. Immaterial Change: People's Views and Attitudes towards the Nyumbang Tradition.
c. Social control and social sanctions as guardians of tradition.

Discussion

a. Material Change

As mentioned above, what is meant by material elements of culture is related to the third form of culture, namely in the form of objects made by humans. Based on the results of research, both observations and interviews with community members in several villages in Yogyakarta, changes or shifts in elements of material culture created by humans related to the tradition of donation are:

1). The value of money or goods given as donations will change along with changes in the rupiah exchange rate. In 1995-1998, the standard value for donations was between Rp. 5,000.00 to Rp. 10,000.00. At the time this research was conducted (in 2021) the standard value of the donations ranged from Rp. 50,000 to Rp. 100,000.00.

2). The food given during tr-têr or arbor which is usually rice, fried chicken, eggs, crackers, noodles, and tempeh vegetables, and placed in bèsèk (in the form of a box made of woven bamboo), now sometimes someone changes it to rice and Chicken pecel complete with sambal and lalapannya, or sometimes even replaced with bread, and placed in a cardboard box. Substitution of the food menu with consideration of practicality and to feel a different taste. Substitution of the basket into a cardboard box as a place for food, apart from practical considerations, it is also an economical consideration because cardboard is cheaper than bulk. In addition, for a long time the fungus will grow.

3). For those who donate, after saying goodbye, they will be given a kind of souvenir in the form of lêmpr in the amount of eight to ten pieces and two cooked chicken eggs and placed in the bsk, but now sometimes the lmpr and eggs are replaced with bread and placed in a cardboard box.

b. Immaterial Change: People's Views and Attitudes towards the Donating Tradition

Based on the opinion of (Syani, 1995), immaterial change refers to everything that is intangible or not an object. Ideas, ideas, values, norms, rules and patterned behavior activities of humans in society can be classified as immaterial elements of culture. The following will discuss changes in people's views and attitudes towards the tradition of donating.

As stated in the book Gotong-Royong System in Rural Communities in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (1982:1), the gotong-royong system has been institutionalized in Indonesian society since the heyday of Hindu kingdoms in Java such as the ancient Mataram kingdom and also the Majapahit kingdom. The gotong-royong system is more institutionalized in rural communities in Java and in Indonesia in general. However, with the influx of outside influences that brought elements of foreign culture through the process of acculturation, the long-established mutual cooperation system has more or less left its original element, even in some places in Indonesia such as in urban areas, the meaning contained in gotong People are starting to leave royong, many people no longer live up to the true meaning and meaning of gotong royong.

In line with this, based on the results of the researcher's observations, both observations of attitudes and behavior, as well as interviews with community members in several villages in Yogyakarta in relation to mutual cooperation activities, especially the donation tradition, the researchers, caught the shift in values or meaning of these gotong royong activities. The tradition of giving, which is a form of mutual assistance, has shifted from the nature of mutual assistance itself. In simple terms, the help that is manifested by the tradition of giving can be interpreted or understood as a voluntary activity without coercion. If we are unable or unable to contribute, our obligations fall.

As the results of observations and interviews that I did, what happened in the community was not as it should be. In fact, people are uncomfortable, don't really like it, and don't fit into the tradition of donating. The consideration and the reason is that there are many forms of celebration in which there is a donation activity so that it causes a very large expenditure. The community performs or undergoes the tradition of donating as an obligation that inevitably must be carried out or fulfilled. Even if they are unable to donate, due to economic problems, they will still try their best to donate. They still try to carry out the tradition of donating even though it is forced to do it by way of debt to neighbors. You can imagine how, for example, in one month there are 2 to 3 celebrations in the village. How much do they spend in that month? With the economic level of the middle to lower society, this is of course very difficult. In essence, they have objected to the existence of the donating culture.

c. Social Control and Social Sanctions as Guardians of Tradition

The interesting thing to discuss based on these findings is that although many people in the community object and are uncomfortable with the implementation of the donation tradition, they do not dare to oppose or change the tradition. Even if they are forced to, the community members continue to carry out the tradition of donating. I think this is very ironic. The tradition of donating is the result of human creation, which of course aims to facilitate human life, it turns out to be burdensome for the human creator of the culture itself. The question that arises is why humans/society as creators of culture do not dare to oppose or try to change the form of culture which turns out to be burdensome for their lives.

Regarding this question, I tried to find out by asking what steps or actions the community had taken as an expression of their dislike/objection to the tradition of donating. The majority of the answers I got were they haven't or haven't done anything. The community continues to carry out the tradition of donating, even though they have objected to the tradition. Indeed, there were residents who tried to become agents of change. This is in accordance with the opinion of AG (Kotler & Keller, 2016) which states that the change and development of a culture goes according to the needs of the community concerned with a trial and error process. Because the changes that occur by adjusting to these needs, culture is adaptive. The resident expressed his objection to the tradition of donating by doing two things. First, when the resident held a celebration, he did not make a pitch or flattery to other residents. With consideration, if he does ter-ter or flattery, it can be interpreted as a form of invitation for other residents to come and make donations. Second, when a neighbor holds a celebration and gives a tar or a flattery, the resident does not come to donate. These residents are trying to break the chain of the traditional donation system.

The effort to become an agent of change in the form of trial and error activities carried out by one of the residents in order to change the form of culture that was considered irrelevant, turned out to have a bad impact. These residents received negative responses and views from the community. These residents become the subject of gossip or public talk, are considered arrogant and are considered to have no social spirit. The community gave an assessment that these residents were called 'non-Javanese' and were labeled or considered as citizens who were not 'general'. The community considers that these residents have violated the customs inherited from their ancestors that have been passed down from generation to generation by the community. The community even ostracized these residents.

Based on the reality of the negative impacts received by residents who try to become agents of change, the effort to change the tradition of donating is not followed by other members of the community. With various pressures and negative views received, residents who made changes related to the donation tradition were finally forced to return to participating or carrying out traditional donation activities.

The social phenomena that occur in society can be understood and understood after reading the opinions of Niels Mulder, Geertz, and Franz Magnis Suseno. (Mulder, 1984) says that Javanese values that stand out are efforts to maintain harmony and avoid conflict, both in the hierarchical dimension and in the communal dimension. The main way to achieve this state is through passive tolerance of other people (neighbors, fellow villagers or other close relatives). When a person or

group of people strays too far, strong and effective measures are taken to force them to conform and restore order. The Javanese community has a powerful social control mechanism in the form of slander, embarrassing others, jealousy and even physical sanctions to keep individuals from obeying public order. Niels Mulder's view is reinforced by the view of (Hildred, 1961) which says that the social pattern in Javanese society is determined by two basic rules, namely: first, in every situation humans should behave in such a way that it does not cause conflict; second, so that humans in speaking and carrying themselves always show respect for others, according to their degree and position. According to (Magnis-Suseno, 1984), the first rule is referred to as the principle of harmony while the second rule is the principle of respect.

CONCLUSION

Along with changing times, human culture must experience a shift or change. Humans and society as creators of culture will definitely change the results of their cultural creations when humans and society are not comfortable with their created culture. Based on research conducted in several villages in Yogyakarta, particularly the donation tradition, some interesting things were found. On the one hand, people are uncomfortable and object to the tradition of donating, but on the other hand, people are unable to change their own cultural creations. This is apparently due to the existence of social control and social sanctions that apply in society.

The social control and social sanctions that are so severe as well as the basic rules that surround/animate the pattern of association and community life have turned out to be very effective in order to maintain the sustainability of a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation by the community. With the existence of social control and social sanctions, the tradition of giving continues to apply and is carried out today. Even though in reality people are not comfortable with the tradition of donating, people are forced to continue to carry out the tradition of donating.

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