



## TRADITIONAL VALUE TRANSFORMATION TOWARD THE ERA'S CHALLENGE IN USING SOCIETY: CASE STUDIES OF GANDRUNG DANCE AND TUMPENG SEWU TRADITION

Ahmad Wahyudi<sup>1</sup>, Laras Setyaningsih<sup>2</sup>, Dina Stevany Ermayasari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>History Department, Airlangga University., Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>History Department, Airlangga University., Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>History Department, Airlangga University., Surabaya, Indonesia

[ahmadwhyd21@gmail.com](mailto:ahmadwhyd21@gmail.com), [larassetyaningsih1997@gmail.com](mailto:larassetyaningsih1997@gmail.com), [dinastevanye02@gmail.com](mailto:dinastevanye02@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Gandrung dance and Tumpeng Sewu tradition are traditions of the Using society that are preserved until this present day. In the beginning, every tradition emerged had a religio-magical and aesthetic functions which were a form of gratitude to the gods for what had been given to humans. The existence of the tumpeng sewu tradition is a form of harmony between nature and humans. The value contained in the tumpeng sewu ritual is believed to protect nature. Gradually, the value of religio-magical functions shifts to economical pragmatic with the rise of tradition put into cultural tourism. There are consequences that need to be considered when religio-magical function is preserved but encounter shifting as well. If the religio-magical value is still maintained, it faces many irrelevances. However, if shifting occurs, the pattern of society experiences a shift because culture or tradition is a product of society. These dynamics are the subject of this study. Changes that take place in the tradition of Using society can be seen from several aspects, one of them is the local government who held events on a national to international scale in an excessive and festive way. The content of the events is Using culture. Whether it is realized or not, the pattern of change has helped to ignite the spirit of the society to preserve their traditions. The sacred and profane theory put forward by Emile Durkheim is the basis of thought to unravel the pattern of change made by Using society. This study used ethnographic method with interviews and literature studies as the data collection techniques. The concept of Geertz's desacralization which describes the process of changing the nature of ritual from sacred to profane also becomes one of the foundations of this study.

**Keywords:** Using, Tradition, Tumpeng Sewu, Gandrung

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Geographic and Demographic Conditions

Geographically, the Village of *Kemiren* is located in Glagah Subdistrict, Banyuwangi. *Kemiren* is one of the villages that is used as a tourist village. Its location is strategic because it goes along the way to the Ijen Crater. This village has area of 117,052 m<sup>2</sup> extending up to 3 km, both sides are bounded by two rivers named *Gulung* and *Sobo* which flow from west to east. In the middle, there is a 5 m wide asphalt road that connects the village with the city of Banyuwangi on the east side and the *Taman Suruh* bath and *Kali Bendo* plantation on the west (SM Anasrullah et al, 2015). The village boundaries of the area are *Jamesari Village* in the north, *Olehsari Village* in the south, *Tamansuruh Village* in the west, and the village of *Banjarsari* in the east. *Kemiren* village is located at an altitude of 144 m above sea level and is included in a low rainfall topography with 2000 mm / year of rainfall, so it has an average air temperature ranging from 22-26°C. This is



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indeed quite comfortable and interesting in perspective of temperature assessment and village tourism sights.

From demographic aspect, dated on December 2018, the Indonesian Center Bureau of Statistics shows that the population of the *Kemiren village* is 2491 people consisting of 1239 men and 1261 women. With the number of family cards as many as 894 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017). *Kemiren village* has been designated as the Using tribe village and cultural heritage to protect the Using Tribe. The uniqueness of this village is not only in terms of language but also the unique tradition of *buyut cilicite* sanctification. Considered from the topographic location aspect, in general, the Using tribe located on the slopes of the volcano, so the people do farming and planting for a living. There are various types of agricultural products such as rice, corn, cassava, sweet potatoes, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, long beans, eggplants, cucumbers and others. Moreover, there are also farm products which consist of coconut, coffee, cloves, silk cotton, mango, durian, banana, rambutan, papaya, avocado, orange and starfruit. A small part of the community works as traders. The work as a farmer or technological based breeder tends to be very simple and traditional. The Using tribe has a diverse culture both in the form of art and cultural practices. Cultural activities in *Kemiren Village* are not only related to community groups and livelihood activities, but there are also several activities related to the life cycle such as pregnancy, birth, circumcision, marriage and death. The majority of the population of Using Kemiren believe in Islam. There were quite a lot of religious activities, but there were several activities that were always carried out and celebrated festively such as *suroan*, *Isra 'Mi'raj*, *Nuzulul Quran*, *Muludan*, *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*. These religious activities involve all Muslims of the Using society. In the village of Kemiren, there is a mosque, so that the pattern of religious activities of the Muslim community is directed to the mosque. The Using Society uses customary law that applies to several cases such as divorce, marriage and land disputes.

### **1.2 Methods and Concepts**

The method used was qualitative method and the approach used was ethnographic approach. Ethnographic approach was chosen to understand the pattern of thought of the society in facing the changes within them. Ethnography is defined as an approach to learn about the social and cultural life of a society, social institutions or way to survive. The ethnographic approach was chosen by the researcher to collect data from the people who tried to describe the real conditions. Not only refers to Using society as the object of study but also becomes a subject of study to reveal the process of change. The researcher conducts interviews for further study. The literature study was also used as a comparison. The historical approach was used to understand the attitudes of the society and preventive actions that can be taken from it. The concept used in this study was the concept proposed by E. Carr. He argues that history is an unstoppable dialogue between the past and the present (Maurice Halbwachs, 1992:40). This has a relationship with the concept by Benedicto Croce that every history is the history of the present time. This study is hoped to be the direction of decision making.

The concept used to discuss this phenomenon is the concept of desacralization proposed by Geertz. In this concept, he discusses the differences between sacred and profane. The concept of desacralization itself refers to how a ritual that was originally considered sacred has changed gradually to become profane. This can be considered as a cultural degradation, but the change itself is a certainty for the culture. In the Using society, the heavy flow of change occurs to encounter globalization. These changes were made as a result of the demands of the era. Through the concept of desacralization, the researcher was able to comprehend the types of impacts caused by cultural



change. In addition, to unravel the sacred and profane concepts, the researcher refers to the concept proposed by Emile Durkheim in the life circle theory. Society has two symptoms, according to Durkheim. There is a twofold nature of people's lives that is when working to find fortune and when gathering to worship in the holy month. Both human nature, according to Durkheim, can be the foci to discuss the concept of social life or the philosophy of life of Using society.

The concept of Using tribe, or better known as the Using society is a term for the people who live in the *Kemiren* village. This society is one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia. The Using society uses everyday language named Using language. The Using society lives in the *Kemiren* region or stands for *kemiri duren*. This study is interesting because the Using people made a major change to their village, from the traditional village to a cultural tourism village. This change is the topic of the study.

### 1. USING SOCIETY : PAST AND PRESENT TIME

The term 'Using' refers to an ethnic group and local language in Banyuwangi, was first discovered in the writings of Lekkerkerker on the historical setting of the eastern part of Java, which was published in 1923. In his description of those he mentions 'Using people' (Oesingers), Lekkerkerker notes that the character, language and customs of the Using society are very different from other Javanese (Wiwin Indarti, 2016). Using is a local word which means "no". In a variety of traditions, arts and rituals of the Using society up until now, it is clear that the elements of Javanese and Balinese culture color many aspects of their performance, mixture and accommodation with elements of local culture.

Using society has strong character. This was reflected during the colonial government. Using society or the remaining population of the people of *Blambangan* refused to cooperate with the Dutch colonial government and chose to stay far from the city center at that time. Therefore, there were not many sugar factories found as a form of colonial power. It can only be found in the Glanmore and Kalibiru areas. The settlement pattern of the Using community is also clustered, which indicates that people felt safer and more comfortable living with people who are considered equal. The form of the culture of Using society is oriented towards the agrarian sector because most of the population is farmers who uphold the value of mutual cooperation. Various types of culture whose philosophical values are a form of gratitude for harvest did exist, such as the Tumpeng Sewu tradition. The tradition carried out by Using society is a form of balance between the microcosm and the macrocosm. However, the form of tradition began to change with the change of rulers.

Since the new order period, cultural values have changed to become economically practical. Beginning with the entry of traditional rituals into the tourism calendar and agenda which give cultural recognition of local religious practices are part of the majority religion. This have gained legitimacy by the state. This directly raises the communal belief that their culture is not something that deviates in the view of the state as a political ruler in this Republic. Eventually, the growing enthusiasm and desire to continue and enliven the communal rituals with additional activities popularized their identity. Thus, the spread of ideas and practices related to communal identity becomes increasingly lively and does not appear to be a form of coercion to be involved because it brings collective pride among people of the Using Society. Using society tries to be able to maintain its tradition so it would not lose its identity (Novi Anoegrajeki et al, 2016). The further implication of ritual publication is an attempt to invite the presence of sponsors from certain companies to contribute to the financing of rituals, especially for additional events that absorb large costs, such as music entertainment and Using local arts.



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The name 'Using' has been more familiar since Abdullah Azwar Anas became Banyuwangi Regent in the 2016-2020 period. Various national and international awards were achieved by Abdullah Azwar Anas. The latest one was Banyuwangi government received an award from the UNWTO Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism for the category "Public Policy Innovation and Governance", defeating other nominee from Colombia, Kenya and Puerto Rico (Zabur Karuru, 2016). The name 'Banyuwangi' with all its natural and cultural potential is increasingly lifted into the international arena; an achievement that has never been achieved by the regents and the ranks of the previous bureaucracy. One of the key strategies used by Abdullah Azwar Anas's government is to transform local culture according to their economic political interests. To be able to create the local culture as part of life, synergy between the indigenous people themselves and the government is essential. This has been reflected by Using society in Banyuwangi.

## **2.1 Using Tradition in Kemiren Village**

*Tumpeng Sewu* and *Gandrung* dance are a tiny part of the *Using* culture which still exists in the present. *Gandrung* and *Tumpeng Sewu* were originally a culture practiced by the society which then later transformed into *Using* society's cultural identity. Changing patterns that occur in a culture can be influenced by various things. One of them is foresight in utilizing traditions to be promoted and developed into tourism. The time changes also affect how a culture should adapt to remain sustainable and enjoyable. Furthermore, the notion of culture that is usually considered old-fashioned and left behind can change into a new tourism alternative in Banyuwangi.

*Using's* identity is constructed in various aspects, from art to tradition, is then utilized, polished, and promoted in such a way as to become a cultural commodity through various festivals. In the perspective of commodification of culture, *Using's* cultural identity is constructed as something that is attractive, unique, exotic, traditional and modern, and full of grandeur to be worthy and later is accepted in the global tourism market. In general, the use of tradition as tourism, contributes to the process of conserving and revitalizing the arts and traditions of the *Using* culture in order to remain sustainable amid the advancement of era. The role of the government as the front guard in conserving culture gets positive responses from the society. International events which was held by presenting local arts and traditions successfully brought in both local and foreign tourists.

### **2.1.1 Gandrung Dance**

*Gandrung* is a performance art consists of dances and songs. It involves dancers who dancetogether with the guests, and accompanied by Javanese-Balinese music. *Gandrung* dance is the oldest art in Banyuwangi. Several literatures mention that *Gandrung* Art first appeared when the *Blambangan* people cleared the forest to build a new city which later became Banyuwangi, not long after Mas Alit was sworn in by the Dutch to become the first regent in 1773. Moreover, *Gandrung* has functions to entertain the people who cleared the forest and to accompany the ceremony of celebration to show the gratitude to God which also known as *Wingit* (Indiarti, Wiwin et al, 2015:146).

*Gandrung* Dance are usually performed at night to enliven an event (party). The performance of *Gandrung* is done all night long, from 9:00 in the evening until 4:00 in the morning. At first, *Gandrung* Dance was only performed by men who wear women's clothes (Paul Arthur Wolbers, 1986:79). As the time goes by, women could also become the dancers. There were many controversies in *Gandrung* dance as well. One of the controversies is the alcoholic beverages such as beer that were provided by the dancers. Typically, the male guests drink the beer if they want to give tip to the dancer and dance together with them which also known as *sawer* (Al Khanif,



2009). However, the image attached to the performance of *Gandrung* dance eventually disappeared as the time goes by. Now, *Gandrung* is better known among the wider society as a cultural identity of the *Using* society in Banyuwangi.

*Gandrung* dance is an identity possessed by Banyuwangi. In the mid 2000-2005, Regent Samsul Hadi created policy called *Banyuwangi Jenggirat Tangi* policy which means "the rise of Banyuwangi". The term was very *Using*-centric. This politic of identity is realized in the form of establishing *Gandrung* dance as a tourism mascot. The construction of a *Gandrung* statue is found in the corners of the city and various main locations in Banyuwangi. The construction of the *Gandrung* statue seems to be a marker to show that Banyuwangi is the city of *lare Using* or *Using* people (Wiwin Indarti, 2016). In the leadership era of Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas, he not only fixed and did major promotion in the tourism sector, but also attempted to restore *Kemiren's* prestige as a leading tourism village for wisdom-based local tourism. Many local and foreign visitors and tourists visited *Kemiren* Village to find out about the village which is famous for its culture and customs. In 2013, Banyuwangi government also set up and held certain yearly events in *Kemiren* Village such as *Ngopi Sewu*, *Tumpeng Sewu*, and *Mepeh Kasur*.

### 2.1.2 *Tumpeng Sewu* Tradition in *Kemiren* Village

*Tumpeng Sewu* ritual is one of the traditions that has been developing in the society. This ritual is held once a year in the first day of *Dzulhijjah* which is month according to Islamic calendar. This ritual serves as bad-luck repellent. Some processions that must be done before holding this ritual are *Mepe Kasur* (putting the mattress of the bed under the sunlight), *Nyekar* (visiting the grave of) *Buyut Ciliand barong ider*, and finally eating *tumpeng* at night. These have become an obligatory parts done by *Using* society. In *Mepe Kasur* tradition, the people put all of their mattresses in front of their homes. *Mepe Kasur* ritual is done from the morning until the afternoon. Mattresses that are dried in the sun are not just any mattresses, but the typical *Kemiren* mattresses, which has black and red color. *Using* society believes that removing mattresses from inside the house can help to get rid of all illnesses because according to some people, the source of the biggest disease comes from the bed. After completing *Mepe Kasur* tradition, then the people do the *Barong (Barong Ider Bumi)* procession. The village elders make a pilgrimage to the graves of the ancestors of *Kemiren* Village, *Buyut Cili*. *Buyut Cili* is famous among the *Using* society as a village guardian spirit or other terms "Danyangan". The *Using* people believe that *Tumpeng Sewu*, *Barong Ider Bumi*, and *Nyekar* traditions is essential to keep the *Kemiren* Village from bad-luck and disaster. The majority of the people are Muslims, but the animism and dynamism belief system which is believing in supernatural powers are still held by the society. The syncretic belief between Islam and the belief in spirits is known as *Agami Jawi* which is a term proposed by Koentjaraningrat.

The existence of *Tumpeng Sewu* contains propaganda. Name adjustment was done to make it more interesting for the sake of tourism promotion. Thus, the term "*Tumpeng Sewu*" exists. Moreover, 'sewu' is a number word that is often used in reference to something that is numerous in Javanese and *Using* culture. At the beginning of the implementation, the *tumpeng* tradition was carried out by this society for local people only. Then, this culture has succeeded in bringing tourists to the land of Banyuwangi for not too long. At the same time, Banyuwangi regional government also began to intensify in exploring the potential of existing local tradition which were then packaged and developed into new tourism alternatives as a form of affirming *Using* identity.

The ritual that is held every year is always attended by thousands of Banyuwangi residents. Every visitor who comes is welcome to enjoy the meal because it has become a tradition of *Using* society in *Keiren* to entertain every guest. Banyuwangi continues to consistently elevate local traditions in Banyuwangi Festival. This tradition is one tourist attractions that is attracting a lot



of tourists. It has been recorded that the number of tourist who visits Banyuwangi continues to increase. In 2016, the number was increased to seventy thousand foreign tourists and 4 million domestic tourists (SM Anasrullah, 2015:111). Not only Banyuwangi natural tourism that is promoted by the government, but also a creative economy image.

## 2. CONCLUSIONS

A culture persists in keeping with the demands of the times, but society has the choice to maintain the value of a tradition with the consequence of getting a backward label or changing the value of the tradition as a whole. In this authorship case study, the Using people with the tumpeng sewu tradition and the gandrung dance provide other options. As a society that is seen as isolated and backward, osing society creates new choices, namely changing the sacred tradition towards profane. The use of the theory of decentralization can unravel the pattern of changes made by the Osing community. In changing the function of the gandrung dance and the tumpeng sewu tradition, the osing community makes use of the changing times into an innovation opportunity. Everyone is part of a change, including people who live as isolated tribal entities. So, this writing can be a policy consideration for decision makers to develop ethnic groups. Through analysis in this study, the authors provide recommendations for the government to involve all elements of society in the face of changing times. Infrastructure development is the main thing that needs to be done by the government. In addition, the promotion of cultural tourism also needs to be done in order to develop the village of cultural tourism. The hope is that this can support the potential of indigenous peoples to promote their traditions. tourist village Kemiren in Using worthy of being role models of cultural tourism.

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