



JESS 11 (2) (2022): 78-85





The symbolic meaning of *ruwatan bumi* for youth as successors of tradition in Guci, Tegal

Aditya Fajar Setiawan¹⊠, Thriwati Arsal², Hamdan Tri Atmaja²

Abstract

¹MTs NU Sunan Kalijaga ²Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info

History Articles Received: 16 August 2022 Accepted: 19 September 2022 Published: 30 December 2022

Keywords: Guci Village; Locall Wisdom; *Ruwatan Bumi*; symbolic meaning.

Youth as a measure of cultural integrity is an essential element. Without youth, culture will gradually disappear into the earth. Youths begin to reason by viewing a culture that looks ancient and contains mystical elements (irrational) without seeing or understanding the symbolic meaning of the elements of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition. The development of today's era makes people's understanding of the meaning and symbolic elements of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition begin to blur, especially the youth. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Ruwatan Bumi procession in Guci Village, the meaning of the youth toward the Ruwatan Bumi tradition in Guci Village, and the social attitudes of youth towards the Ruwatan Bumi tradition. The youth of Guci Village rarely follows the Ruwatan Bumi tradition ceremony. This study uses a qualitative approach, obtaining data through in-depth interviews, documentation, and observation. Validation of data using triangulation from Mils and Huberman. The results show that the implementation of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition is still carried out every year. Ruwatan begins with bathing and slaughtering Mendit goats and continues with Kidungan. Youth interpret Ruwatan Bumi as a ritual, ceremony, entertainment, and thanksgiving.

[⊠] Correspondence address:

Jl. Raya Singkil Kaliwadas KM.2 Adiwerna, Kaliwadas, Kec. Adiwerna, Kab. Tegal Prov. Jawa Tengah E-mail: fajars401@gmail.com p-ISSN 2252-6390 e-ISSN 2502-4442

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with thousands of islands that have various ethnicities and races, which makes it a multicultural country. In the current era of globalization, multicultural communities interact with each other, either directly or indirectly (Saputra, 2018). Culture is communication and a society's attitude to respect the ancestors (Saputra, 2018). Culture can maintain and improve human life as social beings and can also destroy that life. Cultures that support human life are called cultures with ethical values, while those that destroy people's lives are called unethical cultures (Herimanto, 2015). Life in society does not stand alone but exists because of elements of values, morals, and institutions that affect individuals, as is the case (Rozi et al., 2021).

A multi-racial and ethnic society produces a very diverse culture and can also be referred to as local wisdom. Culture appears in people's lives as a form of the emergence of psychological awareness of their culture (Hermawan, 2019). Culture has a strong character and is physically strong and creative to be the right capital to keep civilization from changing times (Alfaqi et al., 2019). Local culture can also provide educational value to the local community itself (Andari, 2020).

Culture or tradition survives because of the preservation and inheritance of civilization to the next generation. Culture can be lost because of the erosion of an era. Priyatna said that the value of local wisdom or culture owned by the community is generally considered not by the times, so it is sometimes ignored (Affandy & Wulandari, 2012). Local wisdom should be transmitted or passed on to youth. The Ruwatan Bumi tradition is a local culture that exists in society and was formed because of a historical event in this area. As stated by Sari, Setyowati, and Arsal that local wisdom or local culture is a product of civilization, and culture is born from humans. That is, culture exists because humans created it instinctively. Culture must be inherited and its meaning understood by each generation

so that it is not lost because it is replaced by a new culture (Sari et al., 2020).

Implementing the Ruwat Bumi Tradition is a local culture that must be carried out in the Guci Village every year, which is carried out in the month of Assyuro. The opening of this tradition was initiated by traditional stakeholders and continued by community leaders with events such as Bathing and Slaughtering of Kendit Goats, Ngidungan, and Distribution of offerings distributed through a procession of salvation. The tradition, which is routinely held yearly, gets enthusiasm from the Guci village community and outside the village. Apart from only being held once a year, this tradition also brings many positive things to the lives of local people in particular (Safa'atilllah & Chanifah, 2021).

The Ruwatan Bumi traditional ceremony in Guci Village is fascinating to watch by natives and outsiders of Guci Village. Unfortunately, the Ruwatan Bumi Tradition Ceremony is rarely followed by the youth of Guci Village. Youth is a measure of cultural integrity in society itself. Without youth, culture will gradually disappear into the earth. The presence of technology followed by social change is a problem in preserving the culture of Ruwatan Bumi. Youths begin to reason by viewing a culture that looks ancient and contains mystical elements (irrational) without seeing or understanding the symbolic meaning of the elements of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition. The development of today's era makes people's understanding of the meaning and symbolic elements of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition begin to blur, especially the youth. They consider the Ruwatan Bumi tradition just a ruin every year as a mere entertainment event without adequately understanding the symbolic meaning of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition. The values of local wisdom that can survive against cultures that come from outside will have the ability to integrate external cultural elements into local culture and have the ability to adapt without leaving outside cultures. Local culture can also provide educational value to the local community itself (Andari, 2020).

Based on the explanation above, there is a need for in-depth research to find out how young people interpret the symbolic meaning of a series of *Ruwatan Bumi* rituals that have long existed in their homes. It is proof of whether it is by the thinking of George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer who argue that individuals are conscious and self-reflective beings. Individuals actively shape their behaviour or whether the individual will gradually abandon existing habits, arguing that they are outdated (Lestari, 2019). This study aims to analyze the implementation of the *Ruwatan Bumi* procession in Guci Village, the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition in Guci Village.

METHOD

The research method uses qualitative because it relates to social and cultural interactions (Creswell, 2015). The selection of qualitative methods is based on the focus of research in the form of community interaction with culture. The community in this study were youths in Guci Village, Bumijawa District, Tegal Regency, who interacted with the *Ruwatan Bumi* culture.

This research approach is descriptive, namely, research that seeks to find solutions to existing problems based on data in the field. This study focuses on the symbolic meaning of the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition, which includes the importance of giving, giving offerings and the process of slaughtering the kendit goat. The procession is fascinating to study because the author wants to know the views of the youth of Guci Village about the symbolic elements of the *Ruwatan Bumi*tradition and see how youth participate in a series of ruwatan traditions events.

The data needed in this study were collected in several ways, first with in-depth interviews conducted with research sources. The sources in this study included youth, caretakers of the ruwatan tradition, traditional leaders and community leaders, totalling 14 people. Youth who become resource persons have a work background of a teacher or community service, youth with a farming experience, youth by profession as entrepreneurs, and youth still in school/college. Resource persons were selected based on their involvement in the *Ruwatan Bumi* event. The second data collection method is documentation on data sources in writing, photos, films and other documents. Researchers determine which records are used according to the research focus. And the last data collection technique is the observation of events or the implementation of the ruwatan tradition. Researchers observed and followed the event from beginning to end and approached the resource persons to make the intention and meaning of the *Ruwatan Bumi* ceremony procession more transparent.

After the data is obtained, it is checked for its validity level using source triangulation. Researchers use this source triangulation to review data and explore information through data sources obtained from youth as key informants. After data from critical informants has been received, then take the same data to support informants and other data sources such as documents. In the next stage, after the data is checked for validity, the information is processed and analyzed using Miles and Huberman analysis techniques.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History of ruwatan tradition in Guci

Ruwatan Bumi was born from a long history in Guci Village. The history of the ruwatan tradition is the same as the beginning of the formation of a village called Guci. It is said that there was a raden from the kingdom of Demak named Aryo Wiryo who wandered up to the northern slopes of Mount Selamet. He was the first to open the village land, so many people came and asked to be made a disciple. At that time, the village was given the name Keputihan village, which means holy town without sin. Because in the past, this village was embraced by the Hindu-Buddhist community. However, since the arrival of Raden Aryo, all people have flocked to Islam.

At the beginning formation story by *Ruwatan Bumi* Tradition in 1966, at that time in

Guci village, there was a pageblug outbreak or itching all over the body. Long story short, there came a student or santri from Syech Syarif Hidayatullah alias Sunan Gunungdjati whose real name was Kyai Grandmother Sutajaya, who intended to spread Islam in the village. Raden Aryo, who at that time was still studying the science of Islam, intended to become his student and invite his followers to deepen the religion of Islam amid the plague that was befalling the white village. At that time, Kyai Grandmother Sutajaya was in this village inviting Raden Aryo and his followers to pray to God using salvation. As a symbol of the collective prayer, the process was to offer agricultural products such as nutmeg pandemic (cassava, sweet potatoes, nuts), Hang nutmeg in the form of fruit - fruits and vegetables, these crops are shown as an expression of gratitude for the product. They are also offered to the ancestors who first existed in this white village.

Guci village is said to have its history. Namely, a person who is believed to be Syech Syarif Hidayatullah came to this village with a large urn filled with holy water to cure skin diseases. He entrusted his student, Kyai Elang Sutajaya, who then placed the pot in the corner of the slope at the foot of Mount Selamet. That's when this village was given the name Guci Village.

The primary purpose of this ruwat Bumi activity is as a form of gratitude for what has been given by Allah SWT in the form of natural wealth owned by Tegal Regency, especially in Guci Village and Dukuh Pekandangan. The details of the Ruwat Bumi are as follows:

1) As an expression of gratitude for what has been given by Allah SWT. 2) Asking for protection to avoid danger or disaster. 3) As a form of preserving the ancestors' traditions.

The process of ruwatan bumi.

The Ruwat Bumi tradition is an annual activity carried out by the people of Dukuh Pekandangan, Rembul Village and Guci Village, Bumijawa District. This traditional ceremonial activity is carried out in the village of Guci on the month of Muharram or Assyuro. Regarding the calendar of this ceremony, depending on the village elders' agreement, it must still be in the month of Muharram. The tradition of the Ruwat Bumi Ceremony in Guci Village itself starts with a prayer together and istighozah, held the night before the ceremony and Ruwat Bumi. Still, the *Ruwatan Bumi* in Guci Village is slightly different from the *Ruwatan Bumi* in other areas, one of which is prohibiting the playing of shadow puppets and being replaced. with gedingan or gamelan music.

The next day the event started at 08.00 am with the preparation of the music players and was followed by remarks from village elders. Mr Dakot began the speech as a caretaker and a descendant with the mandate to continue the *Ruwatan Bumi*tradition in Guci village. After that, an explanation by community leaders, one of which is Mr Nurkhlolis, is a traditional holder or customary leader and is tasked with explaining the understanding of the procurement of this *Ruwatan Bumi* ceremony carried out and explain the meaning of ruwat itself.

The original meaning of the ritual procession of the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition is an offering to honour the ancestors and as an expression of our gratitude to Allah SWT, who has given this village an abundance of produce. The procession must be carried out in town to avoid the calamity and chaos experienced at that time.

Kendit goat bathing and slaughtering

The opening procession of the *Ruwatan Bumi* ceremony is the village elders and caretakers parading the kendit goat to the thirteenth shower. The ritual of slaughtering the goats will be taken to a place where the kendit goat is bathed first, the 13teen shower, which is now used as a tourist spot for warm water baths. This thirteen shower also has meaning if it is interpreted that one (1) plus three (3) equals four. The Javanese count of four means Sri, Lungguh, Dunya, Lara. It falls on the number four, which means pain or illness, where people come to heal their illnesses in the shower 13.

The selection of the kendit goat is not without reason or cause. The kendit goat has the

meaning of an unbroken brotherhood and kinship seen in the white circle in the middle of its stomach. Therefore, in the *Ruwatan Bumi* traditional ceremony, you can't just choose a goat. The goat was chosen as a symbol of the ceremony. It was adapted to the villagers of Guci, which were not too many and not too few. The history of the selection of kendit goats stems from a depiction of a river known as Kaligung, where this river has no end and surrounds the entire area of Tegal Regency. For that reason, every ceremony in our *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition requires a kendit goat type.

Kidungan

Kidung or ngidung in Javanese is defined chanting or singing Javanese as songs accompanied by gamelan music or other musical instruments. In ancient times, kidungan was introduced by Jaka Said alias Sunan Kalijaga in the lingsir wengi song. Sunan Kalijaga always sings or prays every night in the Tahajud prayer as a prayer to Allah SWT as the creator of the sky, earth, and everything in it. The song in the village of Guci has the same meaning as the chant performed by Sunan Kalijaga. in the procession of carrying out the Ruwatan Bumi tradition ceremony, Ngidungan has the meaning of prayer. That is offered directly to God as entertainment means for the people as happiness symbol and gratitude expression.

The song in the implementation has the meaning of greeting the ancestors from various directions as a means of entertaining ancestors' spirits. The songs that must be dedicated to the ancestors based on their preferences are seen in the elders' manuals, such as warungdoyo, ijo - ijo, and ronggengmanis played alternately with musical instruments and dances from Sinden. Kidung is also intended as a means of entertainment for the people of Guci and its surroundings.

Sesajian

Offerings are a medium to communicate with ancestral spirits by offering food and drink. The offerings in Guci village have different meanings in general. The offerings in Guci village do not have an element of polytheism outside the teachings of the Islamic religion that we adhere to. It is called shirk if something is done without reading bismillah, but in the implementation of this tradition, it begins with istighozah and ends with praying together.

The culture has existed since ancient times according to their respective preferences. The offerings in Guci village are in the form of Pala Pendem, hanging nutmeg, and several kinds of drinks such as bitter tea, sweet tea, weak tea, brewed tea, bitter coffee, sweet coffee, and other drinks. These drinks are served or offered to ancestral spirits as an expression of respect and preservation.

Foods that are offered and each have a symbolic meaning in the form of:

1) Tumpeng Kuwat is rice in the form of a pointed cone, and on the side, there are side dishes and urab - uraban. The cone shape symbolizes the meaning of life that will always prosper and the hand that always worships God as a hope of exemplary achievement.

2) Red and white porridge, namely red porridge seven takirs (Wadah) and white porridge five takirs (Wadah). The seven takir red porridge means that man must be brave and guard his five senses by doing it every day of the week. Meanwhile, the five takirs white porridge means that we have five senses, namely the pillars of Islam.

3) Plants that do not have thorns, such as hanging nutmeg and pendem nutmeg, which have meaning in this Islamic new year, we remember that above is Allah and look at below are less fortunate people.

4) There are four kinds of healthy water, which means that we, as Javanese adhere to shari'ah, traiqoh, essence, and angels.

5) Black coffee water has a human meaning from the beginning of life until death does not know anything.

6) Tea water means having a brave nature because it is true.

7) White water symbolizes human understanding and understanding and can distinguish what is wrong and what is right. 8) Flower water has the meaning of describing mature nature to parents, namely having to do succi and fragrant nature in their lives.

Symbolic meaning of the *ruwatan bumi* tradition

Symbolic interaction is a theory that discusses how symbolic meaning appears when one human interacts with another human being. Symbolic interactionism discusses natural relationships in community interactions reflected in various symbols (Arisandi, 2014). The symbolic meaning of Ruwatan Bumi for youth can be seen in how youths observe the procession of the Ruwatan Bumi ceremony. The symbolic elements contained in the Ruwatan Bumi can affect the youth's meaning of the symbols that appear in the ceremonial procession of the Ruwatan Bumi tradition. The eating meaning appears as a result of social interactions and affects individuals (Rohman, 2013).

The findings in the field show that the youth interpret the ruwat Bumi procession as a ritual, tradition, gratitude, and entertainment. Ritual, in general, is a culture of a group of people that is a form of a series of human activities with a specific purpose. Ruwatan Bumi tradition is a ritual because it contains a procedure process with mystical nuances. In addition, Ruwatan Bumi is also a local culture inherited and is a tradition that has been implemented for a long time. This is in line with what was stated by Purau and Pasaribu in a book entitled "Popular Music," explaining that ritual can be interpreted as the role played by a community. That supports a religion, custom, belief, or principle, in the context of fulfilling the needs of teachings or cultural values and spiritual values that are passed down from generation to generation by their ancestors or ancestors (Dahliani et al., 2015).

The symbolic meaning in a series of other *Ruwatan Bumi*ceremony processions is a custom or tradition. Tradition can be interpreted as something that is done repeatedly. According to the KBBI, tradition is a habit repeated and

carried out continuously because it is considered beneficial for a group of people so that the group preserves it. The study results can be concluded that the symbolic meaning of Ruwatan Bumi for young people who work as farmers is much influenced by their parents and the surrounding community. When their parents and the surrounding community considered the Ruwatan Bumi tradition a tradition that had a symbolic meaning, so did this young man. This is Dadi's opinion in the end. The symbol right is according to the direction and development of humans and the environment. On the other hand, misinterpreting symbols can be a disaster for humans and their environment (Radaei et al., 2020).

The following finding is that the prohibition in this tradition is using puppets, let alone using shadow puppets. Traditional actors have proved the prohibitions and visible consequences, but for the current generation. The use of wayang was never carried out for fear of something unwanted happening. The youth never again saw the customary perpetrators violating it. The rules are born from the experiences of individuals and groups over the years in the social space through a dialectical relationship between agents and structures (Zurmaili & Faruk, 2017). The prohibition in the Ruwatan Bumi tradition in Guci Village itself is a prohibition on playing puppets. The caretaker of the ruwatan tradition conveyed the prohibition. That was conveyed to village elders and carried out by all components of the village community.

Based on the explanation above, it shows that the symbolic interaction theory applies in the Guci village community but not entirely. There is a group that deviates from this theory. They are a group that does not understand the symbols of the implementation of traditions by the mutual agreement in symbolic interaction. Ritzer says individuals will more easily adapt actions through significant symbols such as direct delivery through language rather than body language or gestures. That is, people can interact with each other through cues and significant symbols (Ritzer, 2006). This ability allows the realization of patterns of interaction and forms of social organization that are much more complicated than through cues. This is also reflected in the ruwat tradition, which uses various symbols that are complex.

Social attitudes are actions that spontaneously occur to a person or individual in response to phenomena that appear in their environment or social objects. Social attitudes can be seen in how a person treats a person or group of people when interacting. Social attitudes that arise in the community, especially the youth of Guci village, are related to the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition in terms of social attitudes, including responsibility, tolerance, cooperation, and courtesy.

The youth's responsible attitude towards the Ruwatan Bumi tradition can be seen when the youth does not abandon the tasks. Their tasks have been given, such as the task of raising funds, preparing the equipment needed for the Ruwatan Bumi tradition ceremony, and being responsible for maintaining order during the event. The second attitude is the attitude of tolerance, vouth who incidentally are individuals with egos and more advanced thoughts because they have been influenced by the culture from outside they have observed. Guci village youths seem to have still a high tolerance attitude, where youth still value and respect ancestral heritage as local wisdom, which they should adequately guard. This is evidenced by their forming youth groups, one of which is to help implement the Ruwatan Bumi tradition.

The third emerging social attitude is the attitude of cooperation. The youth of the village of Guci need not doubt the problem of cooperation or cooperation. In the field, youth can contribute ideas and works of art exhibited in a series of *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition events. For example, youths make mountain works and props used to produce parades. The social attitude that emerged last was polite, the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition, which is a tradition that implies mutual respect and respect for others, both visible and invisible. In the life of the Guci village community, the value of politeness and courtesy among humans is high. The youth of

Guci village were seen in the observations of researchers in the field as having exquisite politeness and polite speech towards older people and even people they had just met.

Based on the description above, the procession of the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition ceremony has given birth to the values of life that others may not understand as culture itself. However, if we look deeper, a tradition in society must have a good purpose for social life, one of which is the *Ruwatan Bumi* tradition in Guci Village, Bumijawa District, Tegal Regency. The reality, whether intentionally or not, this tradition provides life knowledge that emerges through the social attitudes of the community, especially the youth of Guci village, such as an attitude of responsibility to a polite attitude, which nowadays we rarely encounter this kind of attitude in the scope of urban society.

CONCLUSION

The Ruwatan Bumi tradition in Guci village is still being carried out to this day, main events such as chants and ceremonies are still maintained, and unique offerings are still a feature. The meaning of youth towards the ruawatan tradition varies due to the influence of the surrounding environment. On the other hand, the community still lacks in socializing the understanding of ruwatan to youth. This resulted in the cultural transmission did not materialize. The fact that there are traditional actors does not force youth to understand because they think that something forced will not be good. Moreover, the Ruwatan Bumi tradition is a religious culture carried out in the village of Guci.

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