
Public Beliefs In The Brendung Ritual To Call Rain In Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District

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Abstract

This research discusses a belief among the people of Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District, namely the brendung ritual to summon rain. This research is a socio-cultural study that occurred in the Gutomo Village community, Karanganyar Kajen District. A rain charmer is someone who has the advantage of summoning rain in the dry season among the people of Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District to this day. Apart from being a belief, the brendung ritual is used as entertainment and a form of cultural heritage. The theory used is the sacred and profane theory according to Emile Durkheim. This research uses an ethnographic method which produces descriptive qualitative data. The result of this research is that there is a change in people's beliefs towards the brendung ritual. Originally this belief was considered a ritual to summon rain and was full of mystical content. However, even though it is still embedded as cultural heritage, this ritual is also used as entertainment during the dry season.

Keywords: *Belief, Ritual, Brendung*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang suatu kepercayaan pada masyarakat Desa Gutomo Kecamatan Karanganyar Kajen yakni ritual brendung untuk memanggil hujan. Penelitian ini merupakan sebuah kajian sosial budaya yang terjadi di masyarakat Desa Gutomo Kecamatan Karanganyar Kajen. Pawang hujan adalah seseorang yang memiliki kelebihan dalam memanggil hujan pada musim kemarau oleh masyarakat Desa Gutomo Kecamatan Karanganyar Kajen hingga saat ini. Selain menjadi sebuah kepercayaan, ritual brendung ini dijadikan sebagai hiburan dan bentuk warisan budaya yang ada. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori sakral dan profan menurut Emile Durkheim. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode etnografi yang menghasilkan data kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah ada perubahan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap ritual brendung. Semula kepercayaan ini diyakini sebagai ritual untuk memanggil hujan dan penuh dengan muatan mistis. Namun meski masih tertanam sebagai warisan budaya ritual ini juga dijadikan sebagai hiburan ketika musim kemarau.

Kata Kunci: *Kepercayaan, Ritual, Brendung*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country whose motto is *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, namely unity in diversity. The rich culture that Indonesia has, with its variety and variety, with various

cultural customs and arts that grow and develop from Sabang to Marauke, this cannot be separated from its supporting communities which have diversity or differences in thoughts and life experiences. culture in the area. The existence of differences in factors, geography, customs, social culture, etc. will produce a different art form.

Meanwhile, society is a group of people who live and live in a certain area, they live in relation to each other, carry out existing norms and rules, have goals, as well as desires and hopes to build a life according to what they aspire to. In a society there are various people with different personalities and thoughts, and different perceptions will also emerge.

Central Java Province is a region that has many kinds of traditions or very strong community culture. One of the areas in Central Java that still maintains this tradition is in the Pekalongan Regency area, to be precise in Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District. Pekalongan Regency is located on the northern border with Pekalongan City, the eastern part with Batang Regency, the southern part with Banjarnegara Regency, and the western part with Pemalang Regency. Gutomo Village is an area that still has a lot of traditional culture. One of these cultures is in the form of music and dance, namely in the breeding ritual to summon rain.

The meaning of rituals can be described with religious or semi-religious symbols. Mudjahirin Thohir believes that ritual is a form of implementation that has a relationship between humans and the supernatural, the relationship between humans and other humans, and the relationship between humans and nature. In the context of classical anthropology on the theory of magic by J.G. Frazier (1890) stated that humans are able to solve life's problems with reason and the knowledge system they possess. According to him, if humans are faced with problems that cannot be solved rationally, then these problems can be solved through magic. Magi has a meaning, namely as an individual action in solving life problems and to make achievements through supernatural powers. This can be used as an assumption that when a ritual is carried out correctly, it will produce an effect that is in accordance with what was determined (Mughtar 2011).

Before the arrival of Islam, the ancestors of Gutomo Village did not know religion but believed in spirits and mystical things. This then became a belief called kejawen. Kejawen is an ancestral belief of the Javanese tribe who adheres to Javanese teachings

and culture. The Brendung ritual is one of the traditions inherited from the ancestors of the Javanese tribe who adhere to Javanese beliefs (Setiyaningsih et.al. 2022). As Islam entered the archipelago, the people of Gutomo village also embraced Islam and it has become the religion of the majority of the people there, so that the existence of adherents of the Javanese belief is increasingly fading.

In the teachings of the Islamic religion, having belief in spirits or human spirits is an idolatrous trait. This creates a conflict between whether or not the brendung ritual is permissible to summon rain because during the ritual implementation the spirits of ancestors are summoned who are believed to be able to summon rain. Thus, the people of Gutomo village, who now predominantly adhere to Islam, choose to continue preserving the brendung ritual, but the purpose and essence of carrying out the ritual is not based on the belief that the spirit that possesses the brendung doll can summon rain. However, now the brendung ritual has become an art as a means of entertainment and a form of inheriting ancestral culture.

Inclusive policies meet the basic rights and welfare needs of citizens more fairly, reduce the effects of marginalization for groups of citizens, and reduce the trap of elitist and exclusive social services. A democratic social policy process can have an impact on bringing closer the sense of mutual knowledge and belonging between communities. This close sense of mutual knowledge and belonging will strengthen public trust in a particular culture. Public trust is a very important variable to manage, in general, and also in particular processes. Public trust is citizens' trust in something, including certain institutions, policies and culture.

In research written by Sintia Kurnia in 2017 with the title "Public Belief in the Ritual of Moving Rain in Tualang District, Siak Regency" analyzed the public's belief in the ritual of moving rain. In his research, it was stated that people in Tualang sub-district completely trust the rain charmer when carrying out rituals. The community also considers that the role of a rain charmer is very important when there is a celebration, so the services of a rain charmer as a weather controller are needed to ease people's concerns (Kurnia, 2017). In contrast to research in Gutomo village, the village community considers this ritual as a means of entertainment and inheriting culture, whereas in research in Tualang sub-district, the community fully believes that the presence of a rain

charmer in the ritual can control the weather so that it can prevent rain from falling or speed it up.

Public trust is a form of social capital (Putnam, 1993) which has two aspects, namely involvement in public activities and interpersonal trust. In a cultural context, public trust becomes a determinant variable, not just an outcome variable. A high level of public trust certainly makes it easier for participants to express their voices to assess the impact of the program, and stronger participation makes it easier to adjust if there is a multi-agency conflict (dual roles in functions) in implementing this culture. So public trust in the context of social policy plays a role both upstream and downstream. Public trust can act as capital (input) in creating a social environment. The higher public trust, the lower the transactional costs of culture. Public trust will also influence the public's assessment of the legitimacy and effectiveness of social policies.

The function of this ritual has been passed down from generation to generation, namely to summon rain or move rain to another place. Meanwhile, the *brendung* ritual is carried out by someone called a rain charmer. Rain charmer is a profession in a section of society that is classified as having supernatural powers. Apart from that, a rain charmer is someone who has the same position in society in general, namely a head of the family, breadwinner, and so on.

The next problem is how to manage public trust in a democratic society? Efforts to find the causes of low public trust will be more representative if carried out through a democratic evaluation mechanism. When linked to variables measuring public trust, efforts to increase public trust mean efforts to increase credibility, sincerity, honesty, competence and justice (Dwiyanto, 2011: 368). Credibility, sincerity, honesty, competence and justice can be improved if there is transparency and close relations between citizens. The closeness of this relationship means that there is space to understand the various aspirations, experiences and needs of citizens which need to be held together cooperatively between government and non-government actors. In other words, it requires democratic policy evaluation, namely the democratic involvement of citizens using social policies to evaluate, in order to produce appropriate policy strategies according to public needs, so as to produce support for greater legitimacy and trust.

The method used by rain charmers to carry out the brendung ritual is metaphysical. This method is difficult for the human mind to understand (Bryan 2013). Even though the ritual is difficult to understand through human reason, the people in Gutomo village actually consider that the brendung ritual is considered a success in summoning rain. On the other hand, in line with the times and the arrival of Islam in Gutomo village, this ritual has become an activity that is contrary to religion, which equalizes human power with the power of Allah SWT. Therefore, from around 1980 until now, the implementation of the brendung ritual has begun to fade, especially from the social cultural aspect. In order to prevent further erosion of the culture of the belief system regarding the brendung ritual, now the people of Gutomo village continue to preserve the brendung ritual by making it an entertainment, especially during the dry season. To this day, the people of Gutomo village still believe in a ritual carried out by rain charmers. The existence of this ritual has become a belief called the brendung ritual. The brendung ritual is an activity that contains religious symbols using dolls and has mystical value in it.

Thus, to maintain the preservation of the brendung ritual in Gutomo village, it needs to be developed in a research manner. Because belief in the brendung ritual does not only occur among the people of Gutomo village, but there are several areas that carry out the same ritual but have different characteristics. Therefore, as academics we must be able to preserve it through research, which this time discusses how the brendung ritual is carried out by rain charmers in Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District, who contributes to the implementation of this activity, and what is the role of a rain charmer in social activities community in Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District because the majority of people still have beliefs and use the brendung ritual to summon rain to this day. In this research, the method used is ethnography with data collection techniques of observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative descriptive analysis technique. The analysis steps

include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Mulyana 2008).

Data collection through observations produced informants and key informants. An informant is someone who provides information related to the phenomenon or object of study being researched. The first informant in this research, Mr. Tarmidi, is a rain charmer and works as a searcher for red ant eggs. He is currently 57 years old. Second, Mr. Hardi is a rain handler and works in project development, currently he is 45 years old. Third, Mr. Wahyudi is a civil servant and is currently 42 years old. Fourth, Mr. Agus is the project builder and is currently 32 years old. Meanwhile, a key informant or what is usually called a key informant is someone who knows the history of the phenomenon being studied. The key informant in this research is Pak Darmo as the head of the RT. 01 Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District. Based on the informants and key informants that were obtained, to obtain data the researchers conducted in-depth interviews using free guided interview guidelines.

Researchers also use documentation methods. In this research, researchers found previous research. Nuzul Aprilianie's research, which was made into a thesis with the title "The Mystical Value of Brendung Art in Sarwodadi Village, Comal District, Pematang Regency" in 2016, stated that the brendung tradition has existed during the time of our ancestors and has been passed down until now. In the Comal area, brendung has become an art that exists to enliven an event or to welcome big guests. In the research in Sarwodadi village it was not much different from that in Gutomo village. The brendung ritual is a ritual to summon the spirit of Mbok Brendung and the brendung doll will be the container. However, the difference is that the brendung tradition in Gutomo village originally aimed to summon rain, while research conducted by Aprilianie in Sarwodadi Comal village stated that brendung is an art with mystical value (Aprillianie 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Procession of Brendung Ritual Activities

Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District, is predominantly Muslim, but the people of the area still believe in the existence of sacred places and objects which are

considered to have magical or mythical powers. It is not uncommon for them to carry out ceremonial practices related to their old beliefs. Their belief in spirits and ancestors. These two aspects of life (agriculture and faith) influence their artistic life. The beliefs and environmental conditions, livelihoods and socio-cultural activities of the people of the area are inseparable from the art forms they perform (Mulyana & Yogyakarta, 2020). The people of Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District, take advantage of their environment by farming. As a result, various ways of carrying out traditional arts and ceremonies are also related to agriculture, for example the fertility of their land.

In cultural studies, culture and literature have an interesting relationship (Ratna, 2007). In the Pekalongan area, there are many cultural forms that have not received attention from researchers. The richness of Indonesian culture is reflected in the various rituals carried out in various regions in Indonesia. One of the unique rituals carried out by the community is the ritual of summoning rain. The ritual of summoning rain is still widely practiced in several regions in Indonesia, although this ritual later appeared with various different names such as the tip which originates from the Purbalingga and Banjarnegara areas, the *manten cat* which is carried out in Palem Village, Tulungagung Regency, the *ojung* which originates from Bondowoso, *gebuk ende* comes from Bali, and *cowongan* is carried out in Banyumas. Of these various rituals, there are some that have similarities but there are also those that have differences in implementation. What all these rituals have in common is that there are mantras that are chanted to summon rain even though the media used in the implementation are different. These mantras are believed to have magical powers that can ward off all danger and protect the people around the performance venue. The use of mantras, one of which can be found in the ritual of summoning rain or *cowongan*, is carried out by the people of Banyumas. Basically, mantras are not verbal expressions without meaning. Mantras are believed to have magical powers that can make the wishes of both the reader and the surrounding community come true.

Culture and customs generally develop from generation to generation and are followed by children and grandchildren continuously, because customs and culture move from primitive past life, we see that many cultures move from the basis of animistic beliefs (believing that behind all reality has spirits at work) as well as pantheism

(believing that nature is God). The combination of these two ideologies produces primitive beliefs that are mystical and magical and color cultures everywhere. Javanese mystical adherents assure that such activity is not a strange and irrational cultural act.

One of the importance of tradition in the development of a nation's life no longer needs to be explained, tradition is the root of cultural development which gives a characteristic identity or personality to a nation (Murgiyanto, 2004: 15). This tradition is a fertility ritual ceremony to ask the Almighty to rain in the area. This activity is held once a year during the dry season. Local people's beliefs like this are based on the way of thinking of their ancestral cultural heritage. As Ben Suharto said about the remnants of past cultural heritage which were called animism, dimanism and totemism (Suharto, 1999: 4-5). The Brendung ceremony is still carried out today and people believe that this ceremony can fertilize their agriculture.

Before the brendung ritual for the people of Gutomo village, Karanganyar Kajen subdistrict takes place, a rain charmer must fulfill the requirements first. This requirement is carried out because of the hereditary factor of the ancestors in the process of summoning rain. The implementation of the brendung ritual in this research is a desire of the people of Gutomo village to summon rain during the dry season in 2023. On the other hand, the rain charmer has the position of leader in this brendung ritual to summon rain. Apart from that, the rain charmer's job is to be responsible for the process of carrying out the brendung ritual. There are conditions that must be fulfilled, such as taking a coconut shell ladle from the house of the fiercest rondo or widow in the village. Taking here means stealing it from the widow. Then, people started making doll bodies from bubuk (bamboo fish catchers) and put cloth like clothes and scarves around the doll's body.

Based on this, before the rain charmer carries out the brendung ritual to summon rain and produce what the community hopes for, the rain charmer is required to fulfill the requirements. First, decide on the time to carry out the brendung ritual through approval from someone who is considered the most senior in Gutomo village. The result of this decision is that the brendung ritual can be carried out at any time as long as it is based on Kliwon neptu. Second, after the time has been determined, the next requirement is to prepare the ritual equipment. One of the main equipment in this ritual is the

brendung doll or what is usually called 'Nyai Brendung'. This brendung doll is made from wuwu or fish catcher and a coconut shell for the head. On the other hand, to get coconut shells you have to steal from someone's house and the owner of the house is a widow. Meanwhile, the people who stole the coconut shells had to be two girls who were still virgins and pure. The two virgin and still pure girls became a symbol of purity and it was believed that the ritual would come true.

After getting the stolen coconut shells, the third step is wuwu and the coconut shells are assembled and made up like a beautiful female figure and mori cloth is used to cover the doll's body. Then, the results of the series of brendung dolls must be placed in a sacred grave. Regarding support, it must be carried out by a man who is still a virgin and chaste. During the propping process, the brendung doll must be covered using a cloth. The cloth used in the ritual in Gutomo village is mori cloth in general. The time for buffering is one day and then the brendung doll is handed over to the rain handler in the evening, namely at 20.00 WIB for the ritual activity to take place. The ritual leader prepares 4 different flowers, such as rose, jasmine, kantil and ylang-ylang. After that, make hair for the doll from coconut leaves along with jasmine and kantil flowers. The jasmine and kantil flowers are strung together with thread until they are long. The doll's face must also be painted to resemble a human, such as the nose, eyes and mouth using apu. Brendung will be placed in what is believed to be the most haunted place until after sunset so that the angel can enter the doll.

If the above requirements have been met, then carrying out the brendung ritual to summon rain may be carried out. Apart from that, the brendung doll is also equipped with incense, frangipani flowers, jasmine and kantil. During the procession, the brendung ritual is also accompanied by the poem 'Mbok Brendung' and the sound of kitchen utensils being played, such as used pots and gallons to form a certain rhythm. In carrying out the brendung ritual, apart from being played by a rain charmer, four men are also assisted by four men whose job is to hold the brendung doll so that it doesn't fall off. Because according to the beliefs of the Brendung ritual, when the doll is played in the form of a dance and accompanied by the poetry, the spirit of Nyai Brendung will come into the doll. If the Brendung doll is not held firmly then what happens is that Nyai Brendung rebels and flies into the sky. In accordance with what happened in Gutomo

village, Karanganyar Kajen District, that the spirit of Nyai Brendung rebelled violently and the four people were not strong enough to hold it, so what happened was that Nyai Brendung flew to a coconut tree.

The mystical value of Brendung art can be seen through the visual and auditive aspects. The first visual aspect is the movement of the Brendung doll which is reciting the mantra. Performers of the Brendung art, namely Brendung dolls, panjak, performers, and the audience must be in a pure state of hadast and pure of mind, because if they are not in a pure state then the performance will not run smoothly.

The meaning of singing the poem 'Mbok Brendung' is as a symbol of worship of Nyai Brendung. The singing procession can be described as if 'Nyai Brendung' has possessed the Brendung doll and is dancing, then the Brendung doll will feel heavier. This can be said to be a success in the brendung ritual to summon rain. On the other hand, if Nyai Brendung actually possessed the rain charmer, then the ritual could be said to have failed in summoning rain. Then, after the brendung ritual procession is carried out whether it achieves success or failure in summoning rain, water is sprinkled at the place where the ritual activity has been prepared with the flowers to summon rain.

1. Analysis of the Sacred and Profane in the Brendung Ritual

Durkheim's conception of religion includes a distinction between two opposing categories, namely between the sacred and the profane, which differentiates between the collective and the individual. The concept of sacred refers to something that is sacred, divine, and beyond the reach of the human mind. Meanwhile, the profane is the real world, namely the world of everyday life which is under human control. Durkheim stated that the sacred is something that is separate from all worldly things. The sacred is created through symbols in a ritual (Radam 2011). There are several physical symbols in the brendung tradition in Gutomo village, including coconut shells, wuwu, mori cloth, incense, frangipani flowers, jasmine and kantil.

First, coconut shells. In accordance with history, coconut shells to make the heads of brendung dolls must be used from coconut shells stolen by a virgin girl from a widow's house. This is sacred in the brendung tradition. However, as times change, people no longer follow what was handed down by their ancestors because it is increasingly

difficult to find it nowadays. The coconut shells used are coconut shells which can be obtained in any way. This is included in the profane concept according to Durkheim. Second, wuwu. Wuwu is a fish catcher or fish trap which is generally made of rattan. The use of wuwu is as a body for brendung dolls because its shape resembles the shape of a human body. Third, mori cloth. Mori cloth as a wuwu covering and used when arranging dolls in graves has been carried out for generations. The mori cloth used is white cloth, because white means purity. Fourth, incense. Incense is a type of fragrance that is burned until it smokes, giving off a distinctive aroma. Incense is used in rituals as a link between the supernatural and real worlds where it is believed that its aroma can summon spirits to come closer. Fifth, frangipani flowers, jasmine and magnolia. The three flowers are strung together to be used as a headdress for the brendung doll to resemble a bride. At the end of the ritual procession, the ritual place is watered with flower water. The flowers used are frangipani, jasmine and kantil flowers because they are believed to immediately call for rain to fall.

Cultural values in this traditional behavior are a community effort to preserve local traditions. The aesthetic value in these traditional poems sounds very beautiful and has the meaning of human love for nature, fellow humans, and humans and God. The values contained in behavior in this tradition are cultural values because this tradition seeks to discuss and resolve (1) problems of the nature of life, (2) the nature of work or human work, (3) the nature of human position in space and time, (4) the nature of relationships humans and the natural environment, and (5) the nature of human relationships with fellow humans.

Based on the history of the brendung ritual, the beliefs held by the ancestors were belief in spirits and supernatural objects. This is an important part of the sacredness of the brendung ritual, namely the belief that spirits can summon rain through the intermediary of the brendung doll and the rain charmer. It can also be proven from symbols in rituals that are sacred and holy. Meanwhile, the people of Gutomo village currently no longer fully adhere to the beliefs handed down by their ancestors because the majority of the people have adopted the Islamic religion in which there is a prohibition on worshipping anything other than Allah SWT.

Thus, the sacredness of the brendung tradition lies in the presence of magical elements that are still passed down from time to time. The profanity contained in the brendung tradition is how society can balance religion and culture so that the two do not conflict with each other. Therefore, the beliefs of today's people are different from the beliefs of their ancestors. This makes the ritual tradition of brendung now an art whose function is as a means of entertainment and a form of inheriting ancestral traditions.

CONCLUSION

Brendung art is not only shown to wish for success but can also be used for ordinary entertainment, but does not leave a mystical impression, namely it still has a series of events before the performance such as chanting, offerings, and prayers or mantras. Based on research that has been carried out using descriptive qualitative ethnographic methods with the title Community Belief in the Brendung Ritual for Calling Rain in Gutomo Village, Karanganyar Kajen District, it can be concluded that, in Gutomo village there is a brendung ritual to call rain using special requirements and led by a rain charmer. more sacred in carrying out its activities. The sacred in this tradition lies in the symbols that exist in the implementation of rituals, while the profane lies in how these sacred elements change their essence to suit the current conditions of society.

Javanese people often use certain symbols, all actions use feelings, and their actions are always kept vague. These symbols are abstract, complex and detailed images of attitudes, words and actions. Likewise, Javanese mystical practices are carried out in specific places, procedures and times, clearly containing various forms of cultural allusions in them. In fact, almost all cultural practices contained in rituals are a series of spiritual cultural symbols. These cultural symbols are used to express transcendental ideas, emotions and thoughts.

Apart from that, the brendung ritual to summon rain has no conflict with groups of people who have different beliefs, because this ritual is an ancestral heritage that must be preserved and even used as entertainment. Thus, the Gutomo community trusts the position of the rain charmer and hopes to carry out these activities. With regard to beliefs in rituals carried out by humans in worshiping spirits, it is best to remove any suggestion of these beliefs and use them as mere entertainment to preserve traditional arts and

culture. Brendung can be better preserved by being maintained, developed and disseminated because Brendung art is a traditional art inherited from ancestors who still believe in it and contains mystical values in it.

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