**Bersih desa traditions in javanese life: cultural studies (case study in Petungrejo village, Nguntoronadi, Magetan regency, East Java)**

I Malawi1, F Chasanatun1, and A K H Sudjoko
1Universitas PGRI Madiun, Setia Budi 85, Madiun, East Java
*chasanatun71fida@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This study aims was to describe and analyze the implementation of Bersih Desa traditions including the reason for its implementations that was conducted in Petungrejo Village, Nguntoronadi District, Magetan, East Java. This research used a qualitative case study approach by grounded methods that is a study based on empirical field data through observation, interviews with informants who are appropriate to this research study. The subjects were a community that was determined by purposive sampling technique. The data have been taken from primary and secondary sources, and data collection techniques by observation, interviews, and documents. The main instrument in this research was the researcher himself. Based on the results above included analysis and discussion of the research findings, it was found: a) Bersih Desa traditions was an ancestral tradition that is carried out every Suro month on Friday Legi; b) In Bersih Desa ceremony, the symbols are used as an interaction between humans and their environment; c) Some people still have animism and dynamism as a legacy from their ancestors; d) These spiritual values became mental triggers among the community to hold Bersih Desa activities; e) The Bersih Desa traditions were being a syncretism between Islamic teachings and animism dynamism; f) The Bersih Desa traditions contained the social correlation and mutual assistance as a manifestation of noble character; g) The community realizes that the use of mutual cooperation spirit as a form of harmony and cooperation that could be carried out all common interests as well as.

**1. Introduction**

Some Javanese people, particularly those who lived in Magetan and surrounding it, still practiced the custom called Bersih Desa traditions. The Bersih Desa traditions are carried out once a year, in the month of Suro (the first day of the Javanese calendar year in the month of Suro, corresponding with the first Islamic month of Muharram). The Bersih Desa traditions that carried out by the villagers to express gratitude to God Almighty. The Bersih Desa activities usually started from cleaning graves, streets, or alleys that are rarely passed by people. Its activities were carried out together (mutual help) among communities. In this event, the tradition of "munjung" (giving gifts from young to old) and "weweh" (giving a gift from older to younger) is also carried out to celebrate it. Besides, in part of Bersih Desa traditions, there were also Kenduri traditions (Javanese ritual) by all villagers that are usually held together in the yard/field. The residents bring their Kenduri menu’s such as rice and its dishes that are placed in a basin or tray, then praying together that was held by a person who called a "modin" (A Javanese Islamic cleric or expert on Islam) and holds some entertainment as the highlight of the Bersih Desa traditions.

The culture was closely related to communities. Melville J. Herskovits and Bronislaw Malinowski argued that everything that is in society is determined by the culture and owned by the community itself. The term for this opinion is Cultural-Determinism. Herskovits looked culture as something that is passed down from one generation to another which is called super organic. According to Andreas
Eppink, culture contained the whole understanding of social values, social norms, science, religious and other structures, including all the intellectual and artistic statements that characterized a society.

From these definitions, it can be concluded that culture is something that will affect knowledge’s level and included a system of ideas or concepts that is in the human mind so that in daily life, culture is abstract. While the embodiment of culture objects that created by humans as cultured creatures toward their real behavior and objects, for example, patterns of behavior, language, rules life, social organization, religion, art, etc. that are aimed to help humans in carrying out their social life.

2. Methods
This research was a case study that implemented of Bersih Desa traditions in Petungrejo Village, Nguntoronadi, Magetan Regency. The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze the implementation of Bersih Desa traditions and the background of its traditions. To achieve the research objectives, the researcher used the grounded method that is appropriated method because it based on empirical data through observation, interviews with informants who was expert with the research study.

The research location is in Petungrejo Village, Nguntoronadi District, Magetan Regency. The focus of this research was the implementation of Bersih Desa ceremony, its background, and the tradition of Bersih Desa ceremony that is held in this place.

The instruments that are used in the data collection process to reveal the research problems namely: (1) the main instrument was the researcher himself by conducting observations, in-depth interviews, analyzing, and drawing conclusions based on the phenomena that were studied of the Bersih Desa implementations, the background of its traditions which is held in Petungrejo Village, Nguntoronadi District, Magetan Regency; (2) Supporting instruments consisting of means or tools that could assist researchers in recording data, collecting data, photographing data, and for drawing conclusions or verifying the phenomenon under study.

Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation.[1] In this study, researchers used participatory observation, in which the researcher was involved with the activities of the person being observed or used as a source of research data (Emzir, 2011).

The interview was one way of collecting data through oral communication activities in an unstructured form. Meanwhile, the documentation method used collecting data processes from all written objects, both moving and immovable. In this study, the researchers used photographs and equipment of the Bersih Desa traditions as supporting documents.

3. Result and Discussion
Based on the findings that have been obtained by researchers, the Javanese community was still practicing the Bersih Desa traditions in Petungrejo Village, Nguntoronadi, Magetan Regency. In Petungrejo Village, there were three places that used to implementation the Bersih Desa traditions, namely Dodol Hamlet, Waruk Hamlet, and Petung Hamlet. According to Suprayuda (the Headman of Petungrejo Village) who said that the implementation of the Bersih Desa traditions through those hamlets above was independent events, meaning that its was carried out and financed by the community itself in the month of Suro (Interview, 28 August, 2020).

Its implementation begins from cleaning the environment, slaughtering goats, praying and rayuban (Javanese dance in which male members of audience are invited to join female professional dancers that used traditional classical music) were presented in Figure below.
The people of Petungrejo Village highly uphold the customs or traditions of their ancestors. Customs are social acts which are networks of ideals, norms, rules, views, systems and so on. Traditional habits are made normative, then they change into customs, and customs that are ingrained form character.

The village clean ceremony is an annual tradition that is routinely held every year. This tradition is carried out in the month of Muharram or what the Javanese people usually call the month of Suro by taking the Friday Legi. Adat content or tradition or habit is something that has been done for a long time and has become part of the life of a community group that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Each actions and behaviors in carrying out the ritual of the Bersih Desa ceremony was aim to get safety, luck, and peace (Interview with Kamitua; title / position for a head of a hamlet or village in the village level government system, especially in areas where the level of position system in the Javanese tradition still applies, named Suwito Utomo, August 28, 2020).

Figure 1. Slaughtering Goats in Waruk Hamlet, Petungrejo (28 August, 2020)

Figure 2. Tayuban Traditions by dancing together in Waruk Hamlet, Petungrejo (28 August, 2020)

Figure 3. The Bersih Desa Ceremony that was held in Dodol Hamlet, Petungrejo (28 August, 2020)
The *Bersih Desa* ceremony that is carried out by the Petungrejo community believed as a mandate from their ancestors who became the forerunner of their village and used it as a hereditary tradition. This tradition is manifested as a cultural behavior of the people who lived around Petungrejo village (Interview with Kamitua, Suwito Utomo, and August 28, 2020).

The *Bersih Desa* ceremony was being the tradition that carried out from generation to generation like a custom of the Petungrejo community. It became a cultural institution containing norms that must be carried out among them. It was in line with Taylor's opinion (M. Munandar Soelaeman, 2007) who stated that culture is a comprehensive complex that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and every ability and habit obtained by humans as citizens[4].

All about the community did in the *Bersih Desa* ceremony is following Blumer opinions. He stated that symbolic interaction refers to the unique characteristics of humans as seen from the interactions between humans. Humans were actors and being actors themselves who will choose, examine, think, classify, and transform values concerning the situation and the action is going. Interpretation should not be regarded only as of the application of predetermined values, but as a process of formation. It used a value that was defined as an instrument for direction in shaping action. In this case, Blummer said that the individual is not surrounded by environments of potential objects that play with him and shape his behavior, but rather people who shape the objects, for example, dress. Humans are designing different objects, giving them meaning, judging their suitability by actions, and making decisions based on these judgments. It has been meant that all of their interpretation or acting are always based on symbols.

This symbol of the preservation of Javanese culture shows that the Petungrejo people still carry out the *Bersih Desa* ceremony, even though the current of modernization provides opportunities for foreign cultures to enter this area. In their interactions, the community also showed enthusiasm and together took part in preparing all the ceremonial ceremonies of the *Bersih Desa* ceremony. It was in line with the symbolic intersections theory of Herbert Blummer's (1969), who said that society consists of interacting human beings, and these activities are compatible with each other through collective action, forming something known as social organization or structure and the interaction consists of activities related to human activities.

Based on the research, in the *Bersih Desa* ceremony, there were many symbols used, namely the offerings that consisting of: 1) perfume, 2) *menyan*, 3) opium, 4) *cok bakal* (3 kinds of flowers), onion, coconut, coins, chicken eggs, 5) powder and nylon glass, 6) comb, 7) hair clips, 8) bottle sprites, 9) *klobot* cigarettes, 10) *Tumpeng* consisting of rice, side dishes, and chicken (Interview with Kamitua, Suwito Utomo, August 28, 2020), it could be seen in Figure4 below.

![Sesajen of the *Bersih Desa* Ceremony that was held in Waruk Hamlet, Petungrejo](image)

The existence of a religious magical view was being characteristic of the cultural pattern of the Indonesian, including various religious views, and eliminate any conflicts of its belief with one another. Its activities could be seen in *Selamatan* (Javanese traditional of thanksgiving event by
inviting several relatives or neighbors) in the form of ceremonies related to the circle of life, such as birth ceremony, marriage, death, and other ceremonies such as village cleaning and so on.

Religion was an important part of a social system, as well as in the Bersih Desa Ceremony that could meet their religious needs of the community in Petungrejo Village, Nguntoronadi District, Magetan Regency. In addition, people have faith in their religion, namely Islam, but people also still have traditional beliefs that called religious magic, so that there is a harmonious combination among them. This combination is evident from the recitation of prayers that was originating from Al-Qur’an in Selamatan ceremonies, both those involving individual events and social events, such as the Bersih Desa Ceremony, Selamatan for the start of a building, bridge, and others.

The Bersih Desa Ceremony had great spiritual weight. According to (Suwardi, 2006)The Bersih Desa Ceremony becomes a place for (1) expressing gratitude to God Almighty for the peace of the community, (2) paying respect to the ancestors and forerunners of the village who have pioneered of opening its villages, (3) expect protection (nyuwun wilujeng) from God Almighty and the Prophet Muhammad SAW, so that the life of the community will be more prosperous ever after. There was also mystical Javanese practice that included with mythical values.

People who believed in Kejawen tend not to call these traditions as a religion. In practice, Kejawen understanding was also not developed through religious lectures or Dakwah. People who entered the world of Kejawen are generally not influenced or controlled by the community who have embraced this ideology, but it came from their individuals, even though they may have adopted a formal religion that is declared by the state (the Indonesian Government).

[2] In every Javanese mysticism (kejawen), there were always four dominant elements that become its orientation, namely guiding the human (spiritual) mind to become good personality: 1) virtuous character, able to did good deeds and had good moral, ethical and behavior as a human being to realize the safety and harmony of life, 2) gained the deepest understanding of the metaphysical philosophy regarding human life and human existence in the world and the hereafter, 3) understanding, and if necessary to be able to understand about supernatural powers that exist in humans and nature around him, 4) trying to approach and realize his devout to God Almighty in accordance with the Javanese message of Manunggaling Kawula Gusti. (Iman Budhi Santosa, 2012)

The Javanese understanding (Kejawen) emerged from the development of Islam in Java that was brought by the guardians and cleric since the past period of Islam. In their preaching, the guardians and ulama adopted two accommodative and flexible strategies, namely not leaving the elements of old beliefs and culture (Hinduism and Buddhism), as well as incorporating Islamic values into them.[2] Both strategies are: 1) Islamizing the Javanese people and Javanese culture that has been colored and combined by Hindu, Buddhist, animist, and dynamism values; 2) Doing Javanese traditions and Islam concurrently so that it would be easily accepted by the Javanese. (Iman Budhi Santosa, 2012)

The purpose of first strategies was trying to make Javanese people embrace Islam and expressed the daily activities based on Islamic values as well as a formal or substantial way. The realization of this strategy can be seen in the establishment of langgar and mosques in the villages, wearing Muslim clothing, saying greetings “assalamu’alaikum” every time when they meet fellow Muslims, implementing inheritance distribution according to Islamic law, and so on.

Then, the second strategies was combining Islamic values into Javanese norms. It was being more an effort to internalize or harmonize Islamic values into Javanese culture so that these values can be accepted easily without causing significant upheaval. For example, incorporating Islamic values into stories, characters, and wayang performances. The creation of Javanese songs using Islamic instrument (mijil, kinanithi, Pucung, sinom, asmaradana, dhandanggula, pungkur, masumambang, durma, megatruth, and gambuh) and another Islamic poem like Dewaruci by Yasadipura, Wirid Hidayat Jati by Ranggawarsita, and Wedhatama by Mangkunegara IV.

Through these strategies, Islamizing the Javanese people and Javanese culture have tolerated the existence of old religious values and beliefs (Hinduism, Buddhism, animism, dynamism) in Javanese life. It was being proofed that as a new religion, Islam did not erase the old belief necessarily. Islam built an alignment between Islamic values and the old cultural beliefs and customs.
This condition reaffirms Tylor's opinion (Suwardi, 2006), who said that the essence of religion is their belief in spiritual things[5]. It implies that spiritual values was far more important than material values in the Bersih Desa traditions. These spiritual values became the inner stimulants of the community to always carry out the Bersih Desa traditions.

The practice of mutual help created cooperation. According to (Koentjaraningrat, 1997), three values are realized by villagers in conducting cooperation, namely: First, the person must be aware that he was social being and always dependent on others, so that he should try to maintain good relations with each other; Second, the person must be conformist, means that he should not try to stand out above (arrogant) from others in his society; Third, people should keep the harmony environment based on the practice of deliberation, namely the process of taking decisions in consultation with one another[3].

Meanwhile, according to Suseno (1991), ideally deliberation is a procedure that all voices and opinions are heard. All voices and opinions were considered equally correct and help to solve problems. Deliberation sought to achieve unanimity of will or unanimity. It could be translated as the whole or unanimity of the wishes and opinions of the participants. Unanimity was being a guarantee of the truth and accuracy of the decisions to be taken because the truth was contained in the unity and harmony of the deliberative groups. Deliberation was a process of consideration, giving and receiving, and compromise. It explained that all opinions must be respected with others.

The Javanese people were fully aware of their individual interests. It could be seen in mutual cooperation as a form of harmony and cooperation. In the implementation of the Bersih Desa ceremony, it can be carried out successfully because the value of mutual cooperation among the community was very strong so that all activities can be carried out together among them. Based on the discussion above, the following findings can be obtained:

(a) Finding 1: The Bersih Desa traditions were being an ancestral tradition that held every Suro month on Friday Legi.
(b) Finding 2: In the Bersih Desa ceremony, symbols are used as an interaction between humans and their environment.
(c) Finding 3: Some people still had animism and dynamism as a legacy from their ancestors.
(d) Finding 4: These spiritual values became the inner stimulants of the community to always hold the Bersih Desa ceremony.
(e) Finding 5: The Bersih Desa ceremony was a syncretism between Islamic customs and animism dynamism.
(f) Finding 6: The Bersih Desa ceremony contained the value of cooperation and mutual help as a manifestation of noble character.
(g) Finding 7: The community realized the importance of cooperation spirit as a form of harmony and cooperation so that all interests can be carried out well.

Based on the findings above, the following proposition can be formulated: "The Bersih Desa tradition had religious values / beliefs from its ancestors that is carried out with a form of syncretism between Islamic and local cultural beliefs by using symbols and carried out in mutual cooperation among communities

4. Conclusions
Based on the discussion of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that the Bersih Desa tradition which was carried out in Petungrejo Hamlet, Nguntoronadi, Magetan District namely: a) The Bersih Desa traditions were being an ancestral tradition that held every Suro month on Friday Legi.; b) In the Bersih Desa ceremony, symbols are used as an interaction between humans and their environment; c) Some people still had animism and dynamism as a legacy from their ancestors; d) These spiritual values became the inner stimulants of the community to always hold the Bersih Desa ceremony; e) The Bersih Desa ceremony was a syncretism between Islamic customs and animism dynamism; f) The Bersih Desa ceremony contained the value of cooperation and mutual help as a
manifestation of noble character; g) The community realized the importance of cooperation spirit as a form of harmony and cooperation so that all interests can be carried out well.

References
[1]. Emzir. (2011). Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Analisis Data. PT Rajagrafindo Persada.
[2]. Iman Budhi Santosa. (2012). Nasihat hidup orang Jawa. Diva Press.
[3]. Koentjaraningrat. (1997). Kebudayaan, mentalitas dan pembangunan. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
[4]. M. Munandar Soelaeman. (2007). Ilmu Budaya Dasar: Suatu Pengantar. PT Refika Aditama.
[5]. Suwardi. (2006). Mistisisme dalam Seni Spiritual Bersih Desa di Kalangan Penghayatan Kepercayaan. Jurnal Kebudayaan Jawa, 1(2).
http://staffnew.uny.ac.id/upload/131872518/penelitian/jurnalkejw2pdf.pdf