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The Culture of *Angkut Pari* in Javanese Society Form of Agricultural Culture

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Abstract

Cultural practices constantly adapt to societal dynamics and human life. Within the agricultural communities of Java, one such practice is the *ngangkut pari* (transporting rice) culture. A deeply ingrained habit during the harvest season involves moving the crop from the fields to the granary for storage as a food reserve. Among the Javanese, this custom of carrying rice stalks has evolved into an ongoing tradition. This study gathered data through document analysis, interviews, and various digital platforms, including online media and social networks. The generational transmission of community behaviors during harvest has cemented this practice as a routine ritual. Farmers perform *ngangkut pari* as a ceremony to honor Dewi Sri, the goddess of rice. For human survival, the earth's bounty must be protected and nurtured. The agricultural sector provides the livelihood for these communities; as farmers prosper, so does the society around them. Safeguarding human culture is vital to ensure its continuity and relevance for the future of Javanese society. This agricultural tradition represents a form of culture that must be sustained.

Keywords

Culture, Transport, Forms of agricultural culture, Society

1. Introduction

Humans naturally form communities and collaborate, developing cultures to satisfy both their physical and spiritual requirements. As fundamentally social beings, humans rely on interaction and socialization to maintain a cultured existence (Boyd et al., 2011; Engel, 2020; Levinson & Enfield, 2020). Communal living entails collective action toward shared objectives. Given their interdependence, a cultured lifestyle is essential for humans to achieve physical and spiritual fulfillment. Culture is indispensable, as spiritual well-being brings comfort to life. For

Javanese farmers, cultural practices are deeply intertwined with the agricultural cycle, encompassing activities like spreading winih (seeds), ndaut (pulling seedlings), matun (weeding), nyorok, wiwit (ritual before harvest), metik (picking), and the harvest itself. This local wisdom is prevalent across Java, spanning Central, East, and West Java. These cultural expressions are all tied to the agricultural routines of Javanese farmers. Beyond the primary farming activities, other forms of local wisdom persist within the Javanese cultural sphere. The Javanese community continues to observe a series of rituals embedded in the agricultural cycle. This ongoing cycle is a cultural legacy inherited from their ancestors. Such heritage extends beyond physical artifacts like ancient structures, golden chariots, gamelan instruments, palace heirlooms, and temples. It also includes literary works (serat, babad) and performing arts like Javanese karawitan (gendhing), wayang orang, wayang kulit, and traditional dances. The ngangkut pari (transporting rice) culture is another vital component of this harvest cycle.

Java is home to numerous cultural customs, and the tradition of transporting pari (rice) occurs post-harvest. During this event, the harvested rice is moved to the granary. Across the Java region, this transportation method has evolved; while traditionally carried, it later involved carts and bicycles, and today, pickup trucks are commonly used. Every Javanese ritual retains essential cultural elements that benefit human life, inherently providing moral education. Ultimately, living a good, religious life involves activities that express gratitude to the Creator.

Etymologically, the term "culture" (Indonesian: budaya) originates from the Sanskrit word buddhayah, the plural of buddhi, meaning human mind or reason. In English, it is "culture," derived from the Latin colere, meaning to cultivate or tend. In the Indonesian context, it implies cultivating or farming, reflecting behaviors aimed at ensuring societal needs are met. Humans fulfill these needs by manifesting ideas into creations that satisfy physical and spiritual desires, leading to inner peace (Koentjaraningrat, 2015).

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI: 2020), culture is defined as the intellect and reason that transform ideas into beliefs, arts, and customs. Culture is essentially the behavioral expression of ideas. These cultural behaviors are designed to fulfill human necessities, encompassing both the physical and spiritual realms. Because human behavior is driven by these needs, culture dictates the requirements of those who practice it. This article focuses specifically on one aspect of agricultural culture rather than the entire cycle of farming customs. It will thoroughly analyze, describe, and explain the ngangkut pari culture as a distinct agricultural procession.

This research investigates the procession and activities of transporting rice, documenting the process and the specific offerings prepared for this cultural event. Preserving this culture is crucial for its continued existence within the cultural cycle. Sustainable traditions must be actively nurtured, developed, and promoted by the community to ensure their longevity. This responsibility falls upon all residents of Java, particularly those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture. Local culture embodies the local wisdom of a specific area (Sartini, 2009) and can be categorized as follows:

a. Superculture: A culture applicable to the entire society, such as a national culture.

b. Culture: More specific groupings based on ethnicity, profession, or region, like Javanese

or Sundanese culture.

c. Subculture: A specialized culture within a broader culture that aligns with its core values, such as the culture of mutual cooperation (gotong royong).

d. Counter-culture: A subculture that opposes the dominant culture, exemplified by extreme individualism.

These cultural categories each possess unique characteristics, ranging from ethnic/regional cultures to general local and national cultures (Ida, 2014; Suwendra, 2018). Local culture is generally tied to spatial aspects, often visible in urban areas where migrants bring their respective regional cultures. The dominant local culture of the city evolves, while the national culture represents an amalgamation of these regional influences. Local culture encompasses all ideas, activities, and human creations within a specific community and location (Destrianti, 2019; Funay, 2020; Lemke, 2000; Weisgrau et al., 2023). As this local culture continues to grow and evolve, society must actively ensure its sustainability. Traditional ceremonies are communal activities conducted to fulfill physical and spiritual needs across the human life cycle, including birth, daily life, and work, while expressing gratitude for divine blessings (Brown & Cousins, 2001; Macdonald, 2020; Sukmawan et al., 2023). This article analyzes the pari culture within the context of agricultural practices, offering deep insights into this specific Javanese agricultural procession.

2. Methods

This study on ngangkut pari utilizes a qualitative, descriptive research methodology to accurately document field phenomena. Data collection methods included reviewing library references, analyzing photo documents, YouTube and TikTok videos, conducting interviews, and performing in-depth preliminary and ongoing observations. The research design integrated observational data and in-depth interviews with document analysis. Informants were categorized into primary and secondary sources; secondary sources demonstrating profound knowledge were elevated in importance. This methodology provides a representative sample of Java's agricultural environment. Data analysis involved grouping information gathered from observations and interviews to ensure the findings validly reflect the reality on the ground. Researchers employed observation techniques to gather detailed information about the ngangkut pari culture. This involved observing the harvest process, the transportation of the rice, and its storage in the granary. Furthermore, the researchers documented the specific offerings used in this tradition. The purpose of studying this ritual is to present a scientific article based on cultural theories regarding its function in Javanese society. In-depth interview techniques were crucial, requiring careful planning, preparation, and the drafting of specific questions for the informants. Combining these interviews with document analysis ensures a highly accountable presentation of data.

3. Results and Discussion

Human existence is inextricably linked to cultural practices designed to fulfill physical and spiritual needs. A peaceful and comfortable soul is achieved when the heart is fulfilled and connected to the Creator of the universe. Expressing gratitude is a fundamental aspect of a meaningful human life. Culture represents the manifestation of ideas and thoughts through actions, whether in daily routines or specific, recurring events. These agreed-upon cultural practices form groups united by a shared commitment to carrying out these activities. A practice becomes a culture when a community shares the same goals, vision, and mission, ensuring its continuous implementation.

Culture resembles a food chain, characterized by cycles of birth, life, and death, accompanied by numerous related cultural stages. For example, traditional Javanese marriage involves a sequence of rituals including siraman, the meeting of the bride and groom, ijab qobul, bbak kawah, tmplak punjen, and selapan mnten. Similarly, life milestones are marked by customs like birth ceremonies, separaman, selapanan, tedhak siten, and circumcision. Beyond these, various other cultural forms exist to express gratitude or seek salvation, such as village cleansing ceremonies (bersih desa), mountain almsgiving, sea almsgiving, and rituals involving sacred sites (punden). Another vital form of culture relates to fulfilling basic needs; notably, nearly 90% of the Javanese population relies on the agricultural sector for their livelihood.

Agriculture encompasses a range of activities and community behaviors, including land preparation, seeding, fertilizing, and harvesting, all of which can be performed in accordance with cultural traditions. The specific culture analyzed here occurs during the harvest: the process of transporting the harvested rice to the granary. A rice barn (granary) is a storage facility for agricultural products like corn, secondary crops (palawija), rice, wheat, and coconuts. Javanese people across Central, East, and West Java store their harvests to sustain themselves until the next harvest cycle. Storing staples like rice, corn, and other grains for months or even years provides a crucial food reserve during off-seasons or in the event of crop failures. The ngangkut pari activity follows the ceremonial rice picking.

Communities that maintain the ngangkut pari tradition do so for cultural preservation, and importantly, as a philosophical guide for life. The agricultural process involves cultivating the land, preparing seeds, planting, weeding, picking, harvesting, and finally, transporting the rice. Specific traditional customs are prepared for the ngangkut pari process. The equipment used for ngusung pari demonstrates cultural evolution alongside civilization. Historically carried solely on the shoulders, the method evolved to use wooden poles with baskets on either side, or by tying bundles of cut rice directly onto the shoulder. This traditional rice-carrying ceremony is an expression of profound gratitude to God Almighty.

In Java, the ngangkut pari tradition is a procession dedicated to paying respects and expressing thanks for an abundant harvest. The underlying belief is that Dewi Sri bestows the grains of rice, leading to a bountiful yield. The Javanese express their gratitude by treating the rice with immense respect. A plentiful rice harvest ensures a prosperous life. The Javanese people remain mindful of their blessings, consistently acknowledging the greatness of the Almighty. Remembering these blessings and achieving prosperity ultimately fosters comfort, peace, and continuous blessings in life. A cohesive cultural life, connecting the people and the

Creator (Gusti), involves activities that consistently honor God.

The traditional pari carrying ceremony involves a selamatan (thanksgiving meal) featuring specific ubarampe (offerings). These include tied rice, a takir (banana leaf container) holding eggs, chilies, salt, shallots, and garlic. The bancaan (communal feast) typically consists of urap/gudangan (vegetable salad with coconut), tumpeng (cone-shaped rice), bongko, pelas, eggs, ingkung (whole chicken), and bothoan. Additionally, a slametan/kenduren ceremony is held, featuring golong asahan rice, a bunch of plantains, flowers adorned with coins, yellow rice, and traditional market snacks (jajan pasar). The community members assisting with the rice transport participate in this bancaan. Village elders or the village head typically lead the ceremony.

The transported rice is subsequently stored in the granary. In Java, this event often features a tayub dance. Following the harvest, the Ngarengkong Festival takes place, a ritual where rice is moved from the fields to the traditional granary. This annual celebration involves the community, alongside traditional and community leaders who possess extensive experience and knowledge (elders). In the Sukoharjo area of Java, the Tayub dance is specifically used to express gratitude. The Tayub dance is a symbol of fertility, performed with the hope of bringing glory, success, and prosperity to the farmers, enabling them to provide a decent life.

The procession from the fields to the granary often includes a carnival led by village elders, a parade of dancers, and sometimes a reyogan performance, depending on the organizers. This acts as a form of cultural preservation, fostering love for Javanese culture and ensuring its continued existence and sustainability. The Javanese integrate culture into their daily lives as a demonstration of their commitment to their heritage. The seemingly simple act of carrying pari holds profound meanings, including: 1. Drawing closer to God to ensure prayers for abundant harvests are answered; 2. Expressing gratitude, which brings health and peace; 3. Fostering harmonious togetherness; 4. Sharing food and wealth (alms) with others; and 5. Preserving Javanese culture. This highly meaningful, positive activity continues to be nurtured for the sake of cultural preservation.

4. Conclusion

The sustainability of cultural products depends on the active participation of all stakeholders, including the government, the community, and the youth. The ngusung ceremony will endure if it continues to be practiced and safeguarded as a vital part of cultural preservation. A deep sense of belonging and affection for Javanese culture shapes the character of a cultured nation. Cultural harmony fosters comfort and tranquility. The ngusung pari culture represents a cyclical behavior essential to meeting daily needs through farming. The entire spectrum of agricultural activities—from land preparation, seeding, and crop care, to weeding, fertilizing, picking, and harvesting constitutes a series of Javanese cultural processes and behaviors. Passed down through generations, these practices sustain a living community culture heavily reliant on the agricultural sector.

Everyone shares the responsibility of ensuring the sustainability of Javanese culture. This requires tangible evidence of cultural concern. It demands a sense of love and ownership, demonstrated by caring for the culture inherited from our ancestors. The modern generation

must continue to cherish their own culture so that it doesn't fade into mere stories over time. Introducing these practices to individuals of all ages, from children to adults, will cultivate a beautiful and sacred culture that endures perpetually. It requires a spirit that is proud of its own heritage, rather than favoring foreign cultures that may not align with Eastern values. The Creator made this life, and His creations should be treated with care. A directed and orderly life, guided by these cultural principles, leads to tranquility.

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