Mbecek Culture in Religious and Social Perspectives in Ponorogo Regency, East Java

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ABSTRACT: *This study aims to determine the early history of the mbecek culture and people's views of the mbecek culture in terms of religious, social and cultural perspectives. An exciting aspect of this research is that the culture of mbecek has become a tradition for generations. The culture which initially originated from values originating from the religion and culture of the nation began to shift costs that lead to the benefits of materialism, business and economy. Data collection is done by way of interviews with government leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, educational leaders and cultural actors. From the results of the study, it can conclude that the culture of birth based on religious, social and cultural values of the Indonesian people. In a spiritual perspective, religious leaders are of the view that the mbecek tradition needs to preserved on condition that it does not deviate from ethical values or teachings. In the socio-cultural perspective, community leaders are of the view that mbecek culture is an implementation of the realization that humans cannot live alone and need help from others. Mbecek culture is part of the values of cooperation or assistance in social life.*

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejarah awal budaya *mbecek* dan pandangan masyarakat terhadap budaya *mbecek* ditinjau dari perspektif agama, sosial dan budaya. Hal yang menarik dari penelitian ini adalah budaya *mbecek* telah menjadi tradisi turun-temurun. Kebudayaan yang semula bersumber dari nilai-nilai yang bersumber dari agama dan budaya bangsa mulai menggeser biaya yang bermuara pada keuntungan materialisme, bisnis dan ekonomi. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara wawancara dengan tokoh pemerintah, tokoh agama, tokoh masyarakat, tokoh pendidikan dan pelaku budaya. Dari hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa budaya lahir berlandaskan nilai-nilai agama, sosial dan budaya masyarakat Indonesia. Dalam perspektif spiritual, pemuka agama berpandangan bahwa tradisi *mbecek* perlu dilestarikan dengan syarat tidak menyimpang dari nilai-nilai atau ajaran etika. Dalam perspektif sosial budaya, tokoh masyarakat berpandangan bahwa budaya pengecekan merupakan implementasi dari kesadaran bahwa manusia tidak dapat hidup sendiri dan membutuhkan bantuan orang lain. Budaya check out merupakan bagian dari nilai-nilai kerjasama atau asistensi dalam kehidupan sosial.

Keywords: *Mbecek culture, community traditions, cultural values.*

Received: May 10, 2020; **Revised:** May 18, 2020; **Accepted:** June 29, 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Koentjaraningrat (1992) in the Indonesian Cultural Value System, this value contains four concepts, namely (1) Humans do not live alone in the world but are surrounded by their community, society, and the universe around them. In this macro-cosmic system, he feels himself to be only a small element, which is carried away by the circulation of the immense universe, (2) Thus, in all aspects of his life. Humans are essentially dependent on others, (3) Because he must always try to maintain a good relationship with each other as much as possible, driven by a spirit of equal feeling and, (4) Always try to be as conformant as possible, do the same and be together with others in the community, driven by a spirit of equal high and equal.

From the concept of value above, various terms of mutual assistance emerge, namely activities of helping or exchanging energy between neighbours. Between relatives in small village communities, forms of assistance include, among other things, splice or group activities, njurung or rewang, layat tetulung, community service, and many more (Ikhwan, 2014). One of them is the culture or tradition of *mbecek*. According to Isnaini Rahmat (2009), the rule or culture of *mbecek* is often interpreted as assisting in the form of goods or money to parties who are holding a celebration or party. The donations in the form of goods include rice, sugar, potatoes, noodles, bread, bananas, coconuts, boncis, chillies, coconut oil and so on. Donations in the form of goods are usually in the way of necessities brought by the women plus money, meanwhile, for men only in the form of cash.

The *mbecek* tradition has initially been an implementation of the values held by the Indonesian religious society and the awareness that humans cannot live alone, and need help from others. This *mbecek* culture is part of the values of cooperation or mutual assistance in social life. In its development, along with advances in science and technology as well as the influence of the culture of globalization, this *mbecek* culture begins to change in terms of the model or model itself. Likewise, the positive values of *mbecek* which are part of helping out also experience a shift to become mixed with business values, social status values and feel burdensome for some of the community (Sidiq, 2019).

This *mbecek* model is interesting to study because the traditions that exist in rural areas and some suburbs in Ponorogo are starting to feel burdensome and allow resistance to occur in the family economy. This is due to the *mbecek* culture, which used to be the value of helping out for families who are still kinship, and as an effort to gather large families and help neighbours expand to a broader reach so that colleagues, distant neighbours and even anyone he knows is all invited. Even in certain months for the Javanese, it is called the month of *manten*. A good month to have a witch. This is what makes some people think that *mbecek* is a burdensome culture, although they do not dare to refuse, because it is a traditional culture in society (Tamara et al., 2018).

Research conducted by Isnaini Rahmat (2009) entitled "The Reality of the Cecek Tradition and the Cries of Poverty in Ngrayun Ponorogo", which is located in Temon Village, Ngrayun District, Ponorogo Regency, explains that the *mbecek* tradition is a helping activity using the principle of "paseduluran" (brotherhood). In the economic field, it can be seen from the mutual assistance in meeting the needs for holding a celebration or a party in the form of materials needed to keep the festival.

In this study, it is explained that the change in the value of the old check with the modern check is due to the occurrence of globalization in life. The shift in weight can be seen in the intention and preparation before the holding of a celebration or party. When people used to have a celebration or gawe, they had the choice of inviting or arranging the whole family or family and neighbours to establish a friendship. Long before the D-day, we prepared ourselves with the term "Klump-Klump", for example, firewood, coconut, and kitchen spices (Muhammad, 2010).

Meanwhile, people now think more about economics/business when they have a celebration. He feels that he has spent a lot of money to check, so the cash or goods spent must return. Most of the time, someone who will have a gawe or celebration has little or no capital, so he has the principle of spending as light as possible to get the maximum possible result. Because they do not have start-up capital, people who have a gawe now have a lot to lose and have to borrow from banks or sell fields (Zamroni & Imam, 2010).

The research above has not explained the forms or models of the check, so it can be seen which models are burdensome or not. Likewise, we have not examined people's views on the *mbecek* culture itself, so that the problem can be identified, so that the preservation of *mbecek* culture can be combined according to the original intentions of our ancestors and not burdens the community. This problem is what encourages the writer to examine the *mbecek* cultural model from the perspective of the Ponorogo community.

All are aware that we are in an environment that is always experiencing changes and developments that are very fast and revolutionary (Pasaribu, 1986; Ikhwan et al., 2019). As a result, there is a change in the values of helping in the form of the *mbecek* cultural tradition. The shift in society from *Gemeinschaft* which is characterized by friendship, friendship, friendship, power, irrational, personal and static relationships to *Gesellschaft* which is characterized by relationships of meeting, cooperation, cooperation with employers, rational, impersonal and dynamic, causes behavioural changes in society (Pasaribu, 1986).

According to Homans in Poloma (1994), the occurrence of changes in values in society can be analyzed based on social exchange theories which are based on the principles of economic transactions in which people provide goods or services and in return expect to get the desired goods or services. Change theorists have the simple assumption that social interactions are similar to economic transactions. However, they acknowledge that social exchange cannot always be measured in terms of money value, because, in various social transactions, it is also exchanged for things that are real and not real.

Homans in Poloma (1994) believes that the exchange process can be explained using five interrelated proportional statements originating from Skinnerian psychology. The proposition is the first: the offer of success. In every action, the more often a specific effort is rewarded, the more often he will perform that action. Second: stimulus proposition. If in the past the occurrence of a particular stimulus, or set of incentives, was an event in which a person's actions were rewarded, the more similar the current triggers are to the past, the more likely a person is to perform similar or somewhat identical actions.

Third: Value proposition. The higher the value of an action, the more happy someone is doing that action. Fourth: the Deprivation-Satiation proposition the more often in

recent times a person receives a particular reward, the less valuable it is for the person to increase each unit of that reward and the fifth: When a person's actions do not get the bonus he expected or receive an unwanted punishment, then he will be angry; he becomes very likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour, and the resulting behaviour becomes more valuable to him.

One of the approaches used in analyzing society and human culture is functionalism and structural functionalism. This approach appears to be based on the idea that humans throughout their lives are influenced by the thoughts and actions of those around them so that humans are never able to fully make choices of activities, attitudes or behaviours without considering other people (Sulasman, 2013).

The *mbecek* culture, which is the custom and culture of the people of Ponorogo and its surroundings, has changed meaning because it is influenced by the thoughts and actions of the surrounding people. The culture of *mbecek*, which was initially part of the implementation of the culture of cooperation and help helps to develop as the thoughts and actions of some people in the community develop. There is an opinion that the *mbecek* culture, aside from being an effort of cooperation and helping people among the community, also functions as a means of investment or savings which we can take back at any time.

The culture of shame and balanced or fair thinking, which is a characteristic of Indonesian society causes a pattern of recording in the *mbecek* culture. Every person who has a desire must record who donated or checked and how much was the amount of the donation and the type of one's contribution. In time, the person who donated will have an intention, and then there is an obligation to return the gift according to what he gave. Feelings of shame not to produce according to the size and type of donation make a family or togetherness atmosphere maintained in society. Therefore, every habitual pattern is part of an essential function in culture.

Socio-cultural change is a symptom of changing social structures and cultural patterns in a society. Socio-cultural change in a community is a necessity and cannot be avoided due to changes in society. This change can be said to be one of the operational modes of a company to survive or defend itself. Therefore, culture is never static; it always changes dynamically from one state to another due to various factors. This change is intended as a form of human response to environmental challenges (Arifin et al., 2018).

According to Herbert Spencer in (Sulasman, 2013) argues that the development of society and culture of every nation in the world has or will go through the same stages of evolution (universal evolution). Social change can also occur due to developments in science and technology. The *mbecek* culture that arises in the Ponorogo community and its surroundings based on some of the evolutionary theories above has also changed. We can see this, especially in urban areas. Initially the culture of *mbecek*, besides bringing money, also brought sang an in the form of raw materials for basic needs, such as rice, sugar, potatoes, noodles, cabbage, oil, soy sauce, onions, garlic and others. Nowadays, in urban areas, it is enough to bring money, and that is enough for one family, either father or mother.

This is felt to be more convenient and practical when compared to the *mbecek* model in the village, which has to carry customers. People who receive blessings from carrying sanggan bags are usually not consumed, especially in one day more than one person has a desire.

Materialism is a concept that assumes that life in this world is the result of material engineering. Finally, while a human lives in the world, he is living in the material world. He wants to live, must use tools (material). Cultural viewpoint materialism is the result of a collection of thoughts studied by the social community, which are passed on from one generation to the next (Sulasman, 2013).

Cultural change checking in the view of materialism cannot be separated from the material or economic way of thinking. The *mbecek* culture is a business opportunity, and economic opportunity so that the *mbecek* culture is part of a relatively good way of investing. People who follow the concept of materialism will invest with people who have a desire, especially if this person in the not too long time will have a desire too (Muqoyyidin, 2013).

By making an enormous contribution, he hopes to get back what he has contributed. When you have a craving, therefore, there are many cases in the community that after having a gawe he can repair houses, buy luxury items, buy rice fields and vehicles, even though the surrounding neighbourhood does not know for sure about this behaviour.

From the explanation above, the research objectives are: (1) To describe the early history of *mbecek* culture that occurred in Ponorogo Regency; (2) Describe the views of the Ponorogo community on the *mbecek* culture in Ponorogo Regency in a religious and socio-cultural perspective.

II. METHOD

This type of research is descriptive qualitative, namely research that intends to describe the state or status of a phenomenon related to something that is described in vocabulary or sentences according to categories to obtain conclusions (Suharsimi, Arikunto, 1993). Data obtained from two sources, namely primary sources that will be extracted from the Regent, several village heads, religious leaders, community leaders, cultural observers and practitioners. Meanwhile, secondary data sources (supporting) will be explored through the community of *mbecek* cultural actors, both those located in rural areas, suburbs and urban villages in Ponorogo. Determination of informants will be carried out through the Snowball technique, where data mining will be carried out on informants without determining the number, but is sufficient with the quality of the information provided (Noviar et al., 2019).

Data collection techniques used in this study were in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. The data that has been collected is then analyzed through four stages which are described as follows:

Checking the validity of the data in this study was carried out by (1) Extension of participation. At the time of data collection, researchers provide as much time as possible to interact with leaders and the community, in this way it is hoped that they will be able to draw representative conclusions, (2) Triangulation. The study will check the validity of the data through various sources and informants through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Origins of *Mbecek* in Ponorogo

From theoretical studies and field research, the field writer shows that the word *mbecek* is equivalent to the name *buwuh* and *donate*. *Mbecek* comes from the word *muddy*, which means willing to sacrifice wholeheartedly or *wet* (*ngembloh*), the total work done by community members who help prepare everything from planning, designing and implementing a celebration carried out by neighbours, relatives and close friend. This celebration can prepare for building a house, burning bricks, the ceremony for childbirth, circumcision, marriage and others (Nugraha, 2019).

The culture of *mbecek* is an implementation of the noble values upheld by our ancestors to this day in the form of helping and cooperation carried out by community members, especially neighbours, relatives and close friends who support their relatives who happen to have a desire. Please enable it is done in the form of energy, thoughts and possessions.

In terms of religious teachings, a *mbecek* culture is a form of *ta'awun* or the attitude of helping each other between humans in carrying out good, for example, *walimah* events, circumcision, building houses and others. This is carried out with full sincerity and is part of good deeds, which are carried out as evidence of faith in Allah (*Tauhid* in Allah). *Ta'awun* behaviour is carried out solely to get the pleasure of Allah SWT.

From the books that the author has read, it is not clear when this checking activity began. Indeed, the words *gotong royong* (*gotong royong*) were already popular during Sukarno's era. According to a Dutch agricultural expert who had worked in the Blitar area named GH Van der Kolff, wrote that in 1920, that in rural areas in Blitar many farmers began to abandon the custom of cooperation in agricultural production and found it more practical to hire agrarian labourers. The latter was given a wage in the form of money.

According to Koentjaraningrat, in his research on cooperation in Karanganyar in 1958 and 1959, he called *gotong royong* with the term *sambatan* which comes from the word *sambat* or ask for help which in German is termed *bitarbeit* which means "the requested assistance work" (Ikhwan, 2017). From the phrase *sambatan* or asking for help or asking for help, then it develops in all aspects of life, including when you have a desire to ask for help or donations which then grow with the culture of *mbecek*, *buwuh* or donating.

In the times, this sincere *mbecek* culture has begun to undergo a process of change. Changes in community activities are very natural. Many factors influence the occurrence of these changes. Among the changes in people's mindset due to the development of science and technology, the influence of the cultures that entered Indonesia and the result of materialism, hedonism, economic factors and the

increasingly complex challenges of life necessities, the values of cooperation, please help. Experience a shift in value. The costs of assisting help which is social values, religious values are shifted to economic matters. So that the muddy culture, besides having social values, religious values must also have monetary values.

These changes are very reasonable, because the demands of life are increasingly materialistic and hedonistic, where every activity is measured from the material interests and benefits on the side. Also, the values of equality, balance and equivalence make people, especially Javanese, to help each other and try to help others, at least equal or better than what they have received (Zakiah et al., 2019).

The problem is that we have to take a middle path, where what we do for others in the form of checking or donations must be based on the values of religious teachings, namely sincerity and part of worship and good deeds. Meanwhile, in relationships with others, it is better if we do the principle of balance or commensurability, even if it is better (Lestari, 2014).

For those who donate, of course, there is no need to look back at what they contributed to others. Because each of us does not know the problems experienced by each of us, with this principle, harmony is maintained and what we give to others is part of shodaqoh and good deeds, which is blessed by Allah SWT.

Public Views of the Culture of Checking in a Religious, Social and Economic Perspective

From the results of interviews with various figures who became informants in this study, we can analyze the following: First, they agree that the *mbecek* culture was initially a culture based on religious values and noble values of the Indonesian nation. The culture of *mbecek* / buwuh / numbing from the perspective of spiritual teachings is an implementation of the costs of ta'awun or the attitude of helping each other, helping each other based on kindness and taqwa.

From the values extracted from the journey of this nation, *mbecek* culture is an implementation of the importance of cooperation or helping fellow human beings. These values are values that are upheld by the entire society of our nation until now that culture has always existed and developed because it is also based on the importance of heredity, togetherness, and equality.

Second, the views of the informants about the current *mbecek* culture are of several kinds, including the change in value. The culture of *mbecek*, which was initially a form of ta'awun or the implementation of the costs of cooperation and mutual assistance, has begun to shift towards hedonistic and materialistic values. *Mbecek* is an investment or social savings, *mbecek* is a future investment, and *mbecek* is a social gathering. Therefore, it is the duty of community leaders, organizational leaders and leaders to return the original values of the *mbecek* culture of the meaning of ta'awun, please help and the importance of cooperation.

Third, related to the *mbecek* culture which is carried out by carrying sanggan in the form of wet or dry goods, which is carried out excessively or above generality, the majority of informants think that it is very burdensome and burdensome for the community to disturb the people's economy because there is no unique budget for it. Likewise, the return from *mbecek* which is given is in the form of rice and vegetables, if it is not delicious and too much, it is very wasteful and is often given to animals or chickens or dried in the sun for aking rice.

However, if the checking culture is not excessive as it is in urban areas, it is customary to give money in envelopes at the reception time, and it is okay. Because there is no minimum limit and according to their respective abilities. It should be that most of the donors will contribute more than what they get.

Almost all informants agreed that the *mbecek* culture should be preserved as a medium for silaturrohim, ta'awun press, and the media to continue the brotherhood between people as long as it did not burden all parties, both those who donated and those who contributed. If we can afford it, then not accepting donations in any form is better to maintain sincerity and good deeds.

We invite other people to watch the wedding ceremony of our sons and daughters is a form of gratitude and ask for blessings and notification of increasing families to the community, especially neighbours, friends, extended family and society in general.

IV. CONCLUSION

The origins of *mbecek* culture do not have an exact date and year. However, based on previous studies, the *mbecek* culture is an implementation of the values of cooperation, mutual assistance and splitting that occurred in the early twentieth century. The word *mbecek* comes from the phrase muddy-muddy, which means being willing to sacrifice to help family, neighbours and friends who have a severe need starting from planning, implementation and evaluation. From the teachings of religion, culture, *mbecek* is the implementation of the commands of the Al-Qur'an to help in doing goodness and righteousness.

The view of the majority of informants agreed to preserve the *mbecek* culture as a medium for silaturrohim. Gotong royong and ta'awun or please help provided that they do not deviate from religious teachings, starting from the process and implementation. This culture needs to be preserved on the following conditions: (1) It is based on religious and social values, namely sincerity and helping each other. (2) Not burdening others. (3) Do not push yourself and according to ability. (4) Do not want to get praise or wow from others. (5) Implemented with Islamic principles such as being simple, on time and others.

To all members of society who have objections to the culture of *mbecek*, they should measure whether they have any intention or when doing *mbecek*, so that it is not burdensome. For harmony to occur in society, the contributions we make should be by the donations we receive. At least we check according to generality or in general people do. For example, leaders have a moral responsibility to restore the *mbecek* culture, according to the values that the culture was born with.

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