

## Transformation of the Earth Charity Tradition in the Era of Globalization: An Ethnographic Study of the Sambikerep Village Community, Surabaya

Riska Agustin<sup>1\*</sup>, Romi Mesra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Email\*: [riskaagustin669@gmail.com](mailto:riskaagustin669@gmail.com)



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**Abstract.** The Earth Charity Tradition is a form of local cultural tradition that continues to be preserved in the lives of agricultural communities in Indonesia, particularly in Sambikerep Village, Surabaya. However, in the context of globalization, many local traditions are facing significant challenges. This ethnographic study is crucial in delving deeper into the transformations that have occurred in the significance and value of Sedekah Bumi within Sambikerep Village, Surabaya. The primary objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how local communities navigate the balance between tradition and modernity, while simultaneously preserving their cultural identity in the face of globalization. This research employs qualitative research methods, including participant observation, interviews, and documentation, to gather data. The qualitative data analysis involves data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The theoretical frameworks employed in this research are social construction theory and hybridity theory. The findings of this research demonstrate that the advent of globalization and its associated modernization values have transformed Sedekah Bumi from a purely spiritual event into an entertainment experience that incorporates social activities requiring participation and cooperation from all village residents. This transformation involves the integration of traditional elements with modern aspects, resulting in a vibrant cultural performance that does not compromise the original cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Era of Globalization, Earth Charity, Tradition, Transformation of Meaning, Transformation of Values.

### INTRODUCTION

Tradition originates from the Latin word “traditio,” which translates to “passed on” or “habit.” Additionally, it is rooted in the Latin noun “tradere,” meaning “to hand over.” According to KBBI, traditions are habits that are transmitted from generation to generation and are carried out within society. In general, tradition refers to a habit that is passed down from one generation to the next (Ayu Sendari, 2021).

In Javanese society, there exists a tradition known as Sedekah Bumi. Sedekah Bumi is a tradition that has evolved from Javanese culture and is influenced by local beliefs. Individuals engage in this ritual as a form of gratitude to the divine for the sustenance provided in the form of harvests and natural blessings. This tradition serves not only as a means of expressing gratitude but also embodies the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The implementation of Sedekah Bumi conveys a profound message regarding the significance of maintaining ecosystem balance and the human responsibility to preserve and care for nature as an integral component of the sustainability of life. (Karangrejo, 2023)

The Earth Charity Tradition: A Historical Legacy Worth Preserving

The Earth Charity Tradition holds a profound historical legacy that should not be disregarded or eliminated. By upholding this tradition, we demonstrate gratitude and simultaneously seek divine intervention to provide a sense of security and tranquility within village communities. (Nugroho, 2018)

In the contemporary era of globalization, numerous local traditions encounter significant challenges. This phenomenon arises from the introduction of novel values originating from modern culture, which stands in stark contrast to the traditional values that have been meticulously passed down through generations. The advent of information technology, the proliferation of social media platforms, and evolving lifestyles have all contributed to this transformation. Moreover, societal shifts in perspectives regarding local traditions, such as Sedekah Bumi, have further complicated the preservation of these customs. (Nurhayati et al., 2022)

Research conducted by Fuadul (2020) entitled “Analisis Makna Simbolis Tradisi Sedekah Bumi (Nyadran) dan Pendidikan Islam di Kaplongan Lor, Indramayu” sheds light on the Earth Charity Tradition. This tradition, deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of the Javanese people, has been passed down through generations as a form of gratitude for the bountiful produce of the earth. Fuadul employs a qualitative descriptive methodology, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources to illuminate the significance of this tradition. The research concludes that the Earth Alms Tradition imbues meaning and is intrinsically linked to society. It cannot be severed from its societal context, as it serves as a symbol of safeguarding the preservation of local wisdom, a hallmark of agricultural communities on the island of Java. (Fuadul, 2020)

Research conducted by Suwandari, et al. (2022), entitled “Transformasi Nilai Tradisi Sayan Sebagai Upaya Mempertahankan Solidaritas Masyarakat,” elucidates the transformation of Sayan traditional values in Ngeplak Hamlet, Malang Regency. This transformation is an effort to preserve community solidarity in the face of contemporary developments. The tradition is a form of mutual cooperation among residents, manifesting in activities such as house construction, celebrations, and communal mourning. The primary value of this tradition lies in the emphasis on togetherness and mutual assistance among residents, provided without any expectation of reciprocity. While initially perceived as a means of mutual favor exchange, the tradition has evolved into a broader expression of solidarity, thereby strengthening social bonds among residents. The transformation process is influenced by informal education that permeates the family and community environments (Suwandari et al., 2022).

In the article entitled “Dampak Globalisasi Terhadap Nilai-Nilai Budaya Lokal Masyarakat Pedesaan Ambulu Jember” (Ega et al., 2024), the impact of globalization on the local cultural values of the rural community of Ambulu, Jember, is elucidated. The research delves into the alterations in values and customs brought about by global influences, particularly through the pervasive influence of information technology, media, and trade. As globalization exerts its impact, the Ambulu people are actively engaged in preserving their traditional customs while simultaneously witnessing transformations in certain cultural aspects, such as language, social rituals, and kinship systems. This research draws upon Michel Foucault’s theory to analyze the existing changes, with a specific focus on the dynamics of power and knowledge that shape local cultural values. The anticipated outcomes of these changes are that the Ambulu community can adopt a more inclusive approach to creating a distinctive hybrid cultural form by integrating global elements with local traditions. This approach aims to mitigate the potential loss of local culture while simultaneously enriching the community’s identity, provided that globalization is managed effectively (Ega et al., 2024).

In the article entitled “Dampak Globalisasi Terhadap Eksistensi Budaya” (Andika, 2021), the impact of globalization on culture is comprehensively explored. The article underscores the inescapable nature of globalization and the imperative for cultural adaptation to accommodate new developments while preserving traditional values. A distinct chapter within the article delves into the mutual influence and interaction between diverse societies, underscoring the necessity for cultural adaptability in the face of rapid societal transformations. The article elucidates the impact of globalization on local cultures, highlighting the transition from closed to open societies and the evolution from homogeneous values to pluralistic norms. Furthermore, the article emphasizes the profound implications of globalization beyond economic considerations, particularly in the realm of cultural meanings and values. (Andika, 2021)

This research differs from previous studies in its focus on preserving traditions during the era of globalization. While previous research primarily examined the impacts of globalization on traditions, this research explores the integration of traditional and global elements.

The novelty of this research lies in its examination of the transformation of the Earth Alms tradition in Sambikerep Village, Surabaya. In implementing the Earth Alms tradition, individuals harmonize traditional and contemporary practices. This research demonstrates how village communities can develop hybrid cultures by incorporating elements of globalization, such as carnivals, fruit mountain processions, and the

utilization of social media to promote these traditions. In contrast to previous research that primarily focuses on the effects of globalization on local traditions, this article emphasizes the coexistence of traditional values with modernity, ensuring its relevance in an ever-evolving environment.

Sambikerep Village, situated in the western region of Surabaya, offers a unique perspective on how a local community grapples with contemporary transformations (BKKBN, 2023). Despite retaining some traditional elements, the influence of modernization is evident in various aspects of the community's lives. Consequently, this ethnographic study holds significant importance in delving deeper into the changes that have altered the significance and value of Sedekah Bumi within Sambikerep Village, Surabaya.

The phenomenon that corresponds to this title is the transformation of the meaning and values of the Earth Alms tradition in Sambikerep Village, Surabaya, due to the pervasive influence of globalization. The Earth Alms tradition, initially a simple agricultural ritual expressing gratitude for the earth's bounty, is undergoing a metamorphosis into a cultural performance that seamlessly integrates traditional elements with contemporary aspects such as carnivals and processions. This phenomenon encapsulates the challenges faced by society in preserving its local cultural identity amidst the relentless onslaught of globalization. In Sambikerep Village, this tradition transcends its role as a form of divine gratitude and reverence for nature, serving as a catalyst for fostering social cohesion while introducing local culture to the younger generation and a broader audience.

The theoretical frameworks employed in this study are social construction theory and hybridity theory. The Construction Theory proposed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, as elucidated by Mawarni and Agustang (2021), posits that individuals' persistent habits shape and reinterpret their cultural values to remain pertinent in the face of social transformation. In this context, society not only inherits these traditions from generation to generation but also adapts them to the evolving circumstances of the times, thereby generating novel interpretations that resonate with the younger demographic. Concurrently, cultural hybrid theory, as expounded upon by Nuranisa et al. (2023) and Ega et al. (2024), elucidates the manner in which local cultures adapt to global influences to generate novel and adaptive cultural forms. Hybridity encourages individuals to amalgamate traditional elements with contemporary aspects, resulting in a culture that retains its local roots while embracing modern influences. In this regard, traditions undergoing a hybridization process will be adapted to technological advancements in their implementation, while simultaneously preserving shared values.

The primary objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how local communities navigate the intricate balance between tradition and modernity. Furthermore, it aims to elucidate the mechanisms by which these communities maintain their cultural identity amidst the pervasive influence of globalization.

## **METHOD**

The research methodology employed in this study adheres to the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research methodologies are employed to seek information that cannot be quantified or expressed numerically. This research methodology places a strong emphasis on observational research techniques within the field, followed by non-statistical data analysis. In this methodology, the researcher's self serves as a primary data collection instrument (Soeprapto, 2022).

The research methodology utilizes data collection techniques through participant observation, interviews, and documentation. According to Soeprapto (2022), participant observation is a research strategy that necessitates direct involvement and participation by the researcher in the object of research. Interviews are a data collection method conducted by posing questions to individuals who play a pivotal role in the implementation of an event. Documentation is another data collection method that involves capturing information through visual representations.

The qualitative data analysis employed in this study comprises data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. According to Soeprapto (2022), data reduction entails refining the data obtained from interviews. Data presentation involves organizing information based on predetermined categories. Finally, conclusion drawing entails formulating meaningful interpretations from the research results expressed in concise and easily comprehensible sentences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### 1. Transformation of the Meaning of Earth Charity

##### a. The Meaning of Hope for Village Safety and Welfare

According to Mrs. PN (68 years old), one of the village elders of Sambikerep, Tegal Deso (Earth Almsgiving) is a traditional thanksgiving event that serves as a means of ensuring the safety and well-being of the village, encompassing the safety of the family, the village, the children, and the grandchildren. (Interview, November 22, 2024)

The elders of Sambikerep village, collectively known as Sedekah Bumi, are responsible for carrying out this tradition. Based on the interview with Mrs. PN, Sedekah Bumi is a cherished legacy passed down through generations of Sambikerep ancestors. It is a practice that involves offering prayers and expressing gratitude for the blessings received, with the ultimate goal of seeking protection and prosperity for all village residents, ensuring their well-being for future generations.

My observations have revealed that the Tegal Deso tradition in Sambikerep Village extends beyond its role as an occasion for offering prayers. It also serves as a platform for preserving the cultural heritage and traditions of our ancestors.

Furthermore, the Tegal Deso tradition plays a crucial role in fostering the preservation of local wisdom values amidst the challenges posed by modernization. It provides an opportunity for the younger generation to gain insights into the underlying philosophy of this tradition, emphasizing the significance of gratitude, unity, and harmony with nature.

The primary objective of the Results and Discussion section is to present the findings of the research and provide interpretations, opinions, explanations, and implications of the results. It serves as a means of answering the questions posed in the Introduction, demonstrating how the research findings support the answers, and aligning the findings with existing knowledge in the relevant field. The Discussion section is considered the heart of the paper and typically requires multiple drafts to refine and enhance its clarity and coherence.



**Figure 1.** Earth Charity Tradition which is carried out in the form of thanksgiving  
(Source: Moch Asim, 2018)

##### b. The meaning of gratitude to God

According to Mrs. DH (47 years old), as Mrs. PKK, one of the committee members responsible for the implementation of Sedekah Bumi, the traditional practice of almsgiving has undergone a transformation. In the past, Sedekah Bumi was primarily understood as a form of gratitude expressed for the agricultural products obtained from the land. However, the current interpretation encompasses a broader sense of appreciation for the blessings received and the protection provided by the community. (Interview conducted on November 22, 2024) As elucidated by Mrs. DH, the Sedekah Bumi tradition has evolved beyond its initial agricultural roots. It now serves as a symbol of overall gratitude for the diverse forms of sustenance and protection that the Sambikerep community receives. These changes can be attributed to the influence of modernization and globalization. Sedekah Bumi has transcended its agrarian origins and now reflects the spiritual and social needs of contemporary society. While the essence of this spiritual tradition remains steadfast, its implementation has adapted to align with the values and principles that resonate in modern times.



**Figure 2.** Transformation of Earth Alms Implementation  
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

## 2. Transformation of the Values of the Earth Charity Tradition

### a. Shifting Sacred Values to Entertainment Values

According to Mr. SW, Chairman of RW 04 Sambikerep, he disclosed that “In the past, almsgiving for the earth was conducted through salvation by serving tumpeng rice with grilled chicken and accompanied by agricultural products such as polo pendem, vegetables, and fruit. However, currently, every RT is mandated to create a substantial quantity of fruit to be paraded around the village.” (Interview, November 22, 2024).

As elucidated by Mr. SW, the significance of the Sedekah Bumi tradition has undergone a transformation. Initially, it centered around simple spiritual rituals performed in village halls or punden. However, it has evolved into an event that incorporates elements of entertainment and creativity. The creation of mountains of fruit by each RT and the subsequent procession around the village have generated a festive atmosphere that is both entertaining and has garnered the attention of the community, including the younger generation.

Based on my observations, the transformation of Almsgiving to the Earth, which initially manifested as a celebration, has metamorphosed into an event involving a procession of mountains of fruit. This adaptation reflects the proactive efforts of the Sambikerep Village community in aligning existing traditions with the contemporary dynamics. Notably, the procession not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the event but also serves as a means of fostering a stronger sense of unity among the residents.



**Figure 3.** Creativity of One of the RTs in Making Mountains of Fruit  
(Source: Vivin, 2024)

### b. Adaptation of Traditional Values to Globalization

According to Mrs. WT, as the wife of Mr. SW, she stated that “Tradisi saiki berubah soale melok i jaman” (interview on 22 November 2024).

“Traditions that are carried out now have changed because they follow the times.”

As expressed by Mrs. WT, the Earth Alms Tradition exemplifies society’s capacity to adapt to changing circumstances without compromising its cultural essence. Changes such as the incorporation of carnival elements and the traditional procession of mountains of fruit via social media demonstrate how the inhabitants of Sambikerep Village are embracing modernization while preserving their local cultural heritage.

Based on my observations, the adaptation of the Sedekah Bumi tradition in Sambikerep Village with the incorporation of modern elements such as carnivals and processions of the Gunung Buah community reflects the ability to harmonize traditional values with relevant innovations. These new elements not only



enhance the appeal of traditions, particularly for the younger generation, but also contribute to the strengthening of local identity amidst globalization.

With the inclusion of carnival and the procession of mountains of fruit, the Earth Alms event has become an attraction that invites broad community participation, encompassing both the village community and individuals from outside. This fosters a sense of unity and provides an opportunity to introduce traditions and entertainment. Consequently, the excitement generated not only enhances the solidarity of the people but also infuses a new vibrancy to the tradition.



**Figure 4.** Carnival as a Form of Adaptation to Globalization.  
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

## Discussion

### 1. Transformation of the Meaning of Earth Charity

#### a. The Meaning of Hope for Village Safety and Welfare

Earth almsgiving is an annual tradition that serves as a form of gratitude to God Almighty for the successful harvest of agricultural products. It also fosters community togetherness in celebrating the gifts of nature and praying for the safety and well-being of the surrounding community. Additionally, Earth almsgiving embodies respect for nature as a source of life. In this tradition, individuals express gratitude for the natural resources that sustain their lives, emphasizing the significance of maintaining a harmonious relationship between humans and the environment.

From a sociological perspective, the Sedekah Bumi tradition can be understood as a product of social construction. It is the result of a social process through which the meaning and values of this tradition are constructed, preserved, and inherited by society through social interactions. The Earth Alms tradition emerged as a response to the agricultural communities' need to express gratitude for the abundance of the harvest and the gifts of nature. This is manifested in the form of rituals, joint prayers, and collective celebrations. The values of gratitude, togetherness, and respect for nature are the outcomes of the experiences of individuals who rely on the earth's produce for their sustenance.

#### b. The meaning of gratitude to God

The transformation of Alms Earth into a form of gratitude for all forms of sustenance, including non-material, reflects the evolving spiritual needs of society. In this context, the Sedekah Bumi tradition serves not only as a means of expressing gratitude but also as a vehicle for internalizing positive values such as togetherness and hope amidst the challenges of contemporary life.

Guided by social construction theory, this tradition can be understood as a product of collective interpretation and transmission from generation to generation. Tegal Desa, as a form of collective thanksgiving, not only honors ancestors but also serves as a means of reflecting the collective identity of the community. Society actively shapes and reconstructs this tradition to ensure its relevance in the modern era, incorporating elements such as entertainment to enhance its appeal. Consequently, the Earth Alms tradition in various regions, including Sambikerep Village, is undergoing a transformation. Previously, this tradition centered on collective prayer and simple expressions of gratitude, but it has now evolved into a vibrant cultural performance that incorporates additional entertainment elements, such as carnivals and processions of abundant fruit. Despite the changes in its implementation, the fundamental values of gratitude, solidarity,

and respect for nature have remained steadfast, ensuring the tradition's continued relevance and acceptance in the contemporary world.

## **2. Transformation of the Values of the Earth Charity Tradition**

### **a. Shifting Sacred Values to Entertainment Values**

As time advances, existing traditions undergo transformations in their perceived value. This is evident in the case of the Sambikerep Village tradition in Surabaya, where the significance and values of this tradition have evolved in the context of globalization. Notably, this tradition was carried out by a group prayer or celebration held in the punden and village hall, involving the presentation of tumpeng rice and agricultural products such as sweet potatoes, vegetables, and a small quantity of fruit.

The participants in this celebration were attended by village officials, elders, and individuals who wished to contribute food. However, with the advent of globalization and its associated modernization values, this event has undergone a transformation. It has shifted from a purely spiritual occasion to an entertainment event that incorporates social activities requiring the participation and cooperation of all village residents. This fusion of traditional elements with modern aspects has resulted in lively cultural performances that preserve native culture without its elimination.

This transformation aligns with the principles of Cultural Hybridity. The implementation of the earth alms tradition after the adoption of globalization has led to each RT in Sambikerep Village being responsible for creating Ancak from fruit shaped into various characters and adding them to the carnival on the street. This tradition has gained significant popularity, spreading rapidly through the internet and becoming a cultural preservation and tourism attraction in Surabaya annually.

### **b. Adaptation of Traditional Values to Globalization**

The transformation of the Earth Alms tradition demonstrates adaptation to social and cultural changes in the era of globalization. The influence of modernization has resulted in a cultural fusion between traditional customs and contemporary elements, such as entertainment and social media. This amalgamation of values has not only transformed the Earth Alms tradition into a spiritual event but also provided an opportunity for residents of Sambikerep Village to strengthen their friendships and foster a sense of solidarity. Moreover, it has attracted the interest of the younger generation through this tradition.

This fusion of values underscores the enduring presence of gratitude and togetherness despite the alterations in the implementation of traditions. This transformation serves as a form of social construction, demonstrating that society adapts modernization values to preserve and transmit traditions from generation to generation in accordance with contemporary developments. The advent of digital technology has provided a supportive mechanism for the continuity of these traditions through documentation and dissemination on social media platforms. This serves as a broad cultural promotion tool and can help preserve cultural identity amidst the challenges of modernization.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The Andun dance, a traditional dance originating from Bengkulu Province, particularly in South Bengkulu Regency, is a social dance performed by both male and female dancers. Its origins are unknown, and its exact creation date is uncertain. However, it is believed to have existed for centuries. The Andun dance is an integral part of the traditional wedding ceremony of the South Bengkulu community. Originally, it served as an entertainment form, enhancing the festivities of the event. Over time, it evolved into a performance dance. The dance is performed during the Bimbang Adat (wedding feast), a seven-day and seven-night celebration. The Andun dance is interpreted as an expression of gratitude and happiness for the blessings received. It also reflects the social spirit of the community, emphasizing the importance of togetherness and unity.

To preserve and promote the Andun dance, the government has implemented various conservation efforts. These efforts include organizing competitions and incorporating the dance into the curriculum of junior and senior high schools. Additionally, artists dedicated to preserving the dance have established studios to teach it. Furthermore, the community government has taken steps to preserve the dance, such as adjusting the duration of the Bimbang Adat ceremony from seven days and seven nights to three days and two nights for the middle and lower classes, while ensuring that the essence of the event remains intact.

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