

Barong Ider Bumi: Symbolic Interaction of Contemporary *Osing* Society of Kemiren-Banyuwangi

Rochsun*

IKIP Budi Utomo Malang
rochsun@budiutomomalang.ac.id
sptrochsun@gmail.com

Jasuli

IKIP Budi Utomo Malang
jasuli@budiutomomalang.ac.id

Abstract. *Barong Ider Bumi* is one of the intangible cultures and a sacred traditional ceremony which belongs to the *Osing* society of Kemiren-Banyuwangi. The uniqueness of *Barong Ider Bumi* lies in its survival and existence among the onslaught of global culture as well as the issue of sacred ritual phenomena gradually turning profane. Acknowledging different viewpoints of previous researchers saying the revitalization of functions not as the main factor is a form of scientific democracy especially that the characteristics and behavior of the *Osing* society become the basis of this study. The question of what spirit underlying the *Barong Ider Bumi* traditional ceremony making it survive to exist is a way to reveal the meaning of the spirit values. The symbolic interactionist theory of Mead became an entry point in analyzing the social phenomena of the *Osing* culture and society. Through the concept of Mind, Self and Society, especially the concept of Self is then assumed to be able to answer the question. The paradigm of social definition through a phenomenological approach was used to reveal meaning from the actor's point of view. Observation, interview, and document techniques were also used to carry out this research. Furthermore, analyzing the data with a phenomenological perspective of Moustakas and Creswell as adapted by Hasbiansyah is what this research identified through stages, namely description, reduction, essence and intentionality. The result of the analysis found a Model of *Ladak* spirit which is strongly believed to be one of the main reasons for the existence and survival of the *Using* culture in the context of the *Barong Ider Bumi* traditional ceremony.

Keywords: *Osing society, Osing culture, Barong Ider Bumi*

INTRODUCTION

It could not agree anymore that the Banyuwangi *Osing* society (formerly called Blambangan) was formed by heroic events as clearly described by Margana [1] in his book *"Java's Frontier: The Struggle for the Hegemony of Blambangan; 1763-*

1813". The bad situations come and go on people of Blambangan from conflict and war to ethnic and religious sentiments. A severe test was passed when they suffered defeat in the Puputan Bayu war against colonial Dutch in the 18th century, and when poverty and a prolonged epidemic were stricken. This complicated experience shaped the remaining Blambangan population to become a persistent and unyielding society, until finally a new society, civilization, and culture were formed, namely *Osing* civilization and *Osing* culture which was formidable, unyielding, accommodating and egalitarian. The nature, attitudes, and behavior of the *Osing* community thus helped facilitate the negotiation space of the two major cultures that together gave influence, Hindu and Islamic cultures. The acculturation of these two major cultures actively and creatively constructs *Osing* culture with syncretism features.

Utomo [2] argues otherwise, that Hinduism is not a religion that has a strong influence on the Blambangan community at that time. Hinduism is only found in the Keraton environment. In fact, according to him, the ancient Javanese religion that colors people's lives. Ancient Javanese religion is mysticism, which is the lifestyle of people who foster mysticism, such as the interpretation of symbols, the sacredness of sacred goods, and tombs [3].

Hinduism is synonymous with Balinese culture and Islam is synonymous with Javanese culture. In actualizing *Using* culture, both of them look very dominant in coloring *Osing* culture. The length of control over the struggle for the Blambangan hegemony through Dutch colonialism is an indication of its main cause. Finally, what happened was called the acculturation of two streams of values, namely the assimilation between the teachings of Islam and Hinduism, the culture of the ancestors of the *Osing* people who had taken root. Acculturation is said to be a cultural change, which is marked by the relationship between two cultures, both giving and receiving, and associated with the characteristics of *Osing* people who are accommodating and egalitarian, and able to adapt to global change.

The clash of the two cultures resulted in cultural contact. This means that the meeting between the

two cultures is the result of a process that arises over a particular social environment as it is confronted with several foreign cultural elements. However, the foreign cultural element was gradually accepted and processed according to the desires of its own culture. The process of acculturation has gradually made Islam as a religious teaching and Hinduism as a unified cultural entity. That is what led to the actualization of culture in the view of Geertz [4], [5], and Beatty A [6], as a syncretic culture. The great influence of Islam in Blambangan, and also the strong community to maintain the culture of ancestors, requires both merges into one. However, the fusion and mixing of the two cultures can take place in harmony. All the process of social interaction of the Osing community produces Osing culture in the form of tangibles or intangibles which are characterized by syncretism. One of them is Barong Ider Bumi.

The narrative about Barong Ider Bumi has always been linked to the existence of the great-grandchild of Chili and the events of the Pagebug disease outbreak (a picture of contemporary community phenomena such as the Corona outbreak) that struck the people of the village of Kemiren around the mid-19th century. This sacred old culture has existed for years and survived, even able to go through a millennial era in contemporary Osing society. While other cultures (non-Osing cultures) tend to be stagnant and even experience extinction, due to the terrible wave of global cultural influences. Barong Ider Bumi looks more stunning in propane packaging to invite the attention of the global world. Its existence echoes not only the local level, but it also becomes a national and even international spotlight [7]. Therefore, it is a necessity when academics desire to conduct Barong Ider Bumi research. Information was obtained as result of previous studies, stating that the existence and survival of Osing culture are due to the factor of function revitalization [8]. The Acculturation of Barong Ider Bumi in Figure 1

However, if viewed from the egalitarian and accommodating characteristics of Osing society and culture, revitalization of functions is not the main reason for the existence and survival of Barong Ider Bumi, instead, it is believed that there is a spirit value contained in the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony. The spirit is believed to be the fundamental reason why Osing culture can exist and survive. The implementation of the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony triggers social actions that are full of meaning. As Ritzer [9], [10] views on social action states that social action is meaningful for individuals or actors aimed at others with certain goals. Based on that view, the holding of the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony is believed to have

certain goals. The spirit to achieve certain goals is the "thing" which is the spirit value of the ancestral *uri-uri* culture, as a form of respect and obedience to *Weluri*.

In embodying that goal, the Osing cultural actors in reviving the culture experienced obstacles, the effort caused controversy between the political elite in the local legislative body and the leaders of the Banyuwangi Islamic mass organization. They assume that the *uri-uri* (reviving) culture of Osing are only certain ethnic interests, violate the needs of the diverse Banyuwangi society, and deviate from the teachings of Islam as followers of the majority [11]- [13]

The main tool for social interaction is a symbol since symbols are signs to interpret something. Meaning can be indicated by symbols. Symbols can be verbal language, can be symbols, such as colors. White is interpreted as a symbol of purity, red is interpreted as a symbol of courage. Likewise, the material cultural context of the Osing community, for example, "Barong", is interpreted as a symbol of togetherness. All words used are symbols because they have many meanings. Symbols are complex communication tools and often have several levels of meaning. Human culture uses symbols to express certain ideologies. That is, the symbol presents meaning from one's cultural background.

The Mead Symbolic Interaction Theory is used as an entry point for finding social responsibility for the phenomenon of the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony, also functioned to reveal the spirit contained in Barong Ider Bumi through the individual understanding of the Osing community as actors. This theory emphasizes the importance of self-concept and perception owned by individuals based on interactions with other individuals. The process of interaction and communication between them by using certain techniques and ways, their meaning can be understood through the symbols they use, because the essence of the Symbolic Interaction theory is the communication or exchange of symbols that are given meaning. Mead's [14] concept of Mind, Self and Society identifies self-phases, in two phases, namely "I" and "me". Both are processes that occur in a broader self process. Self has a dual role, one time as a subject (I), independent, free, uncontrollable, another time acting as an object (Me), dependent, not free, controlled. In essence, Mead's theory says that humans are active and creative individuals. Later this leads the researcher to question what spirit is contained in the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony so that the culture exists and survives?

METHOD

The paradigm of the social definition is intended to reveal the understanding of individuals as Osing community actors related to the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony from the perspective of the actors themselves, by delving into the actors' thoughts and then reflecting on them. The qualitative approach was elected to uncover the meaning of Osing cultural spirit values through descriptive data in the form of spoken, written, and behavioral observations from the subject. Data is obtained by using "inducement" questions and letting the subject tell about his experience based on the prepared questions guidelines. Data are collected through

steps of observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation uses two techniques, namely; non-participatory and participatory techniques. The non-participatory technique was carried out at three different times, namely two days before the ceremony (D-2), on the day of implementation (D-day), and two days after (D+2). The participatory technique is executed when the researcher directly involved in the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony as a participant of the parade. The data is then analyzed using the steps: description, reduction, essence, and intentionality of the results of inducement questions. Data validity is done by triangulation [15], [16].

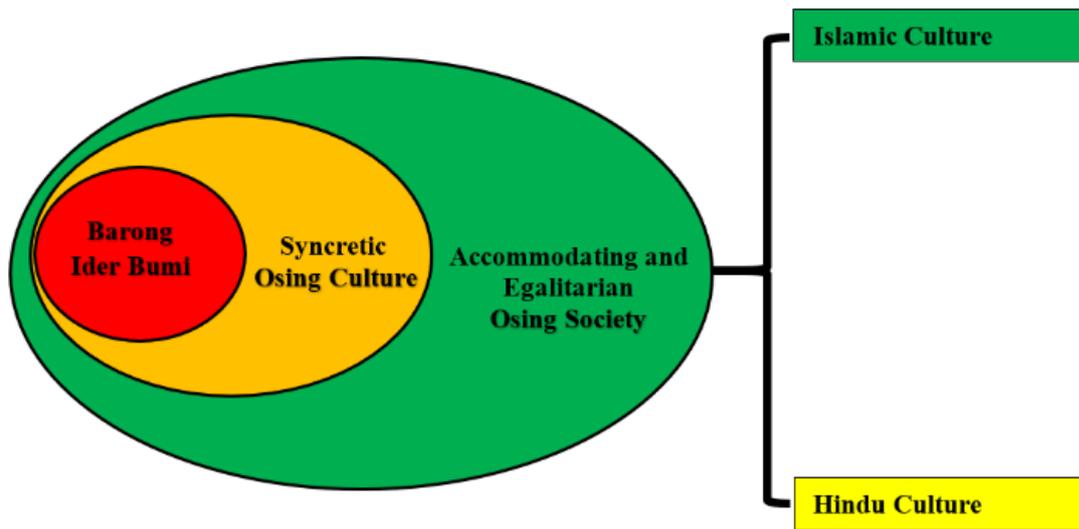


Figure 1: The Acculturation of Barong Ider Bumi

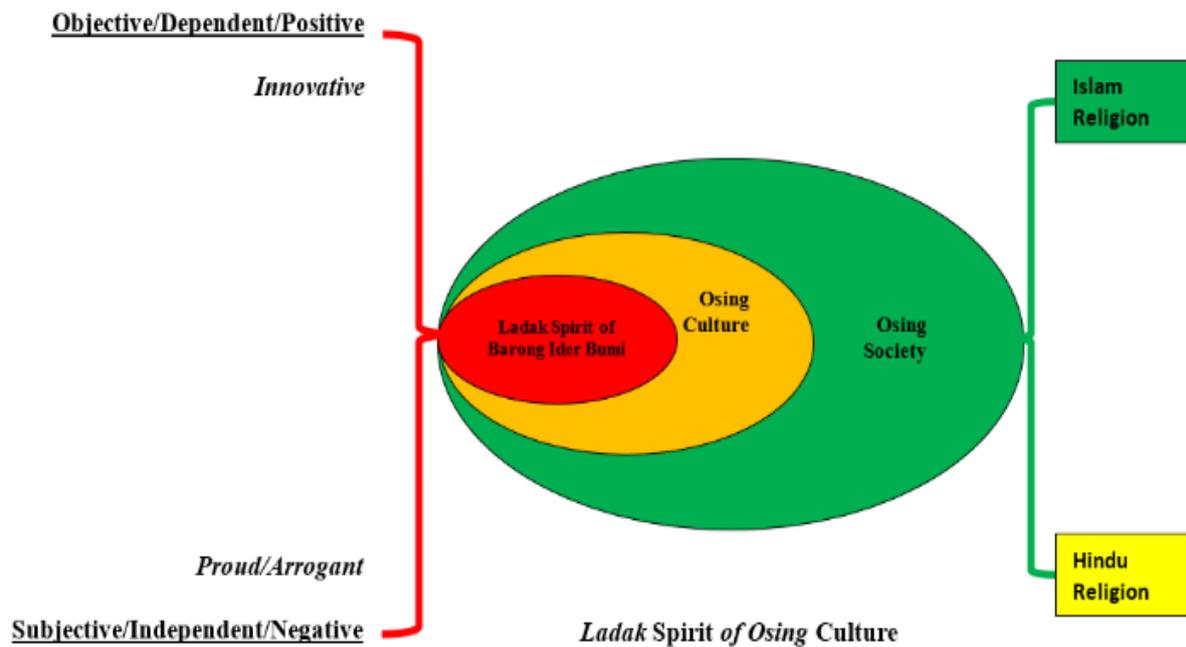


Figure 2: Ladak Spirit of Osing Culture

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The Mead's Symbolic Interactionist Theory, particularly the concepts of Self (I and Me) contain two roles or multiple roles. One time it can have both positive and negative connotations. Self is dynamic, it will experience changes whenever individuals or something interacts. Once as a subject, then it becomes an active self, spontaneous and independent or free, unrestrained, uncontrolled, and at will. Once as an object, it is dependent, restricted, not free, follow the environment, and is controlled. Similar to Ladak's spirit, in Osing culture, Ladak as an individual "I" subject, also "Me" as an object. When Ladak's spirit is dominant as a subject, then it gives rise to motivations that have negative connotations, traits, attitudes and 'arrogant' behavior, indifferent, and boastful. When Ladak's spirit is dominant as an object, it gives rise to motivations that have positive connotations, such as innovation, firmness, and egalitarianism. Ladak Spirit of Osing Culture in Figure 2.

The actualization of the Ladak spirit was shown when the Barong Ider Bumi traditional ceremony of Kemiren village indicated by referring to features of across two major cultures, Hindu and Islamic culture. Barong Ider Bumi and all its beliefs in supernaturalism are representations of Hindu beliefs, namely carrying out ceremonies as the Hindu community believes. The thanksgiving with various procedures and prayers to the Only One God is a representation of Islamic culture. Both blend together in a series that is held solemnly in the framework of a sacred traditional ceremony which then turns into propane. This is the attitude and behavior that holds Ladak's spirit.

CONCLUSION

Ladak's expression, both verbal and non-verbal, in maintaining culture is a necessity and must be maintained. It gives rise to positive energy for the existence and survival of a culture. In the era of the novelty of current society, the nature, attitude, and behavior of Ladak is a spirit that motivates innovation and is becoming a trend of nowadays contemporary society.

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