Ritual Communication and Disasters Preparedness in the Slope of Merapi Volcano

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how ritual communication as cultural behavior in the slopes of Mount Merapi, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Symbolic interactionism theory is used to understand the forms and meanings of ritual communication that are associated with disaster preparation through qualitative research. The unique culture in each region is the reason for using the case study approach in this research. This type of research is qualitative research with a case study approach. Informants were selected using a snowball sampling technique of three people. Data were collected using in-depth interview and observation techniques. The results of the analysis of aspects of symbolic interactionism namely action, gesture, significant symbols, mind, self and society show the performances of *ketoprak* and dances *Kukiloyakso*, *Kenduri* Suro, *Kenduri Kupatan* and *Dandan Kali Deles* were ritual communication related to preparation for disaster in Sidorejo Village. The ritual communication carried out by the residents of Sidorejo Village was an ancestral heritage, but residents continue to reproduce meaning so that there were changes in each ritual communication procession. There were three meanings relating to disaster preparedness, namely the presence of danger signs, respect for animals and conservation of springs. These three meanings were the trust as well as guidelines for residents in living side by side with Mount Merapi.

Keywords: Cultural, Disaster Preparedness, Ritual Communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country which is also a meeting area of two volcanic paths and several folded mountain paths of the world. This condition causes various natural disasters. More than 1800 disasters occurred in the period 2005 to 2015 alone [1].

Natural disasters have been a part of people's lives since ancient times. This is evidenced by the existence of local culture related to natural disasters in their respective regions. Cultural diversity in a community is not an obstacle in disaster management, but an asset to prevent, mitigate, prepare and adapt [2].

Gary R. Webb [3] states culture is not only used to understand how disaster is defined but also to understand how people survive in the extreme nature. Culture that is understood by the surrounding community is important in terms of resilience and vulnerability in dealing with hazards and disasters. The community uses culture to be more alert, understand the dangers and map out how to avoid and manage these threats.

One study in Pakistan states that the knowledge of indigenous people in Nahar Kot, Barkhan District trust the early warning system in disaster management from ancestors. This belief comes from ancestors who are familiar with local environmental problems and even they get help from the ancestors to predict the weather [4].

Indonesia itself has various cultures related to disasters. One of them happened in Simeulue Island, Aceh. In Simeulue, Aceh, there is Smong culture which means earthquake. This culture is known since 1907 and passed down through Poetry Nandong. This poem invites residents to look for a high place in the event of a strong earthquake followed by receding water. The results show that oral culture on Simeulue through Smong provides exceptional mitigation that saves humans with a quick warning system [5].

The same thing happened to people on the slopes of Mount Merapi. Mount Merapi is the most active mountain in the world. Merapi is named as one of 16 volcanoes in the Decade Volcanoes project, the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of Earth's interior. Merapi eruption was recorded since 1006 related to the history of Borobudur Temple [6]. In May 2018, Merapi showed increased activity and an eruption occurred on May 24, 2018 and June 1, 2018. The eruption caused ash to fall in the area around Merapi. Earlier in September 2010, Merapi's explosive eruption resulted in damage and loss of life.

One of the natural disasters that caused great damage and fatalities is volcanic eruption. This is not surprising because Indonesia has 127 active volcanoes or 13 percent of active volcanoes in the world [1] while 60 percent of them have a great potential danger.

Despite frequent eruptions, the slopes of Mount Merapi have never been abandoned by residents. Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency are four kilometers from the peak of Merapi. The land in Sidorejo Village is dominated by gardens or fields cultivated by residents as their main livelihood. The village is inhabited by 3,059 residents [7].

The activity shows how Merapi has become a part of community life in Sidorejo Village. Merapi eruption in 2006 destroyed the village and required three years of recovery. While in the 2010 eruption, Sidorejo Village was able to restore the ecosystems and economic life of residents in just one year.

One tool in dealing with disasters is local cultural wisdom. Wisdom of local culture is a culture that comes from the community itself, is transformed formally and informally, is owned collectively and is easily adapted [8].

A cultural approach to disaster mitigation is important because how the process of interpreting something, including in the context of an emergency or crisis, is strongly influenced by cultural background [9]. This research looks at culture in the perspective of communication, that is ritual communication. Ritual communication is not meant as a process of transforming messages, but is used as a fulfillment of the needs of community members as a human being.

Culture in disaster prone areas has a close relationship with disaster management that has been passed down for generations. In facing disasters, the role of the community and its culture is an important element. Danger is something natural, but disasters are not the cause of disasters influenced by nature and human interaction [2]. Meanwhile, handling crisis communication in volcanic disasters is more difficult than handling other disasters. This is caused by the influence of local beliefs and local culture [10].

Other research states that the oral tradition in Mount Merapi is an influential factor in the meaning of residents of their geological activities. The existence of oral tradition represents the number of volcanic earthquake activities that have occurred at Merapi since ancient times [11]. Although still a mystery, the folklore can be used as an effective disaster mitigation tool.

The Durkheimian assume that ritual is the key to social phenomena. Rituals can be used to strengthen interpersonal or group relationships within the community. Furthermore, rituals are usually used to help people solve problems in times of crisis.

Research related to the existing rituals in Merapi is conducted in 2017. In this study, there are three types of rituals in Merapi, namely the harbor ritual, *topo bisu* (no speaking) and mountain alms. The research focuses on how education and local wisdom of the community coexist with nature [12]. But there is no communication approach used to analyze the communication ritual.

From this background, this study has a problem statement that is how the communication of the Mount Merapi Slope Communities ritual in Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency.

1.1. Ritual Communication

We recognize that the means for such cultural mediation are diverse, many of which are expressed through the arts, through those that are performative, such as painting, music, dance, and storytelling. , Myths and sacred teachings and those that are more materials like architecture, textiles, clothing and food [13]. Daniel de Coppet also specifies that "rituals are at the heart of the social identity of all communities [14].

Ritual communication is one of the perspectives of communication that emphasizes sharing, participation, association and shared beliefs. Ritual communication pays more attention to how the community attempts to maintain togetherness [15]. Ritual communication characteristics are divided into eleven [16]. First, ritual communication is a communication activity that emphasizes sharing, participation, togetherness and outreach activities among people who have similar beliefs. Second, ritual communication is not used to send messages but to maintain community togetherness. In previous research showed that the marriage rituals is to maintain harmony, good order and solidarity.

Third, ritual communication is used to create the same trust in society. Fourth, ritual communication is like a sacred ceremony as a gathering place for community members. Fifth, symbols made by the people are used as languages such as dances, games and fairy tales. Sixth, the recipient of the message tries to be involved in the sacred drama so he does not act only as a spectator.

Seventh, the symbol used is a symbol that comes from the community itself. Eight, in ritual communication members' inner satisfaction becomes important in the procession of activities. Ninth, the message conveyed is latent and ambiguous. Tenth, media and messages blend into the media itself, which can become messages at once. Finally, symbols are used to achieve the goals of ideas and values related to hospitality and celebration or worship.

1.2. The Use of Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Ritual communication is inseparable from the meaning that exists in actions composed of symbols. In understanding ritual communication on the slopes of Merapi, this study uses the theory of symbolic interactionism. The communication science perspective translates the theory of symbolic interactionism as a theory which views that society is formed based on conversations between its members [17]

The essence of the theory of symbolic interactionism emphasizes the process of symbol exchange which is labeled meaning. Symbolic interaction theory according to La Rossa and Reitzes has three focus of study, namely the importance of meaning in human behavior, self-concept and the relationship between individuals and society [18]. This research is included in the study of human meaning and behavior.

The theory of symbolic interactionism itself has three main premises proposed by Mead [18]. First, the individual responds to something according to its meaning. Second, meaning is a social product and third, meaning is interpreted continuously so that it can change from time to time.

In this research, aspects of symbolic interactionism theory refer to the thought of George H. Mead. Ritual communication will be examined through actions, gestures, significant symbols, mind, self and society. This aspect is used to understand ritual communication, especially in relation to disaster preparedness.

2. METHODS

This research is a qualitative type with a case study approach. This research was conducted limited to the area of Sidorejo Village, Kemalang District, Klaten Regency so that the type of case study chosen was an instrumental case study. Instrumental case studies are a type of case studies that focus on discussing one issue by choosing limited cases to illustrate research problems [19].

The subject of the research is the community of Sidorejo Village with the snowball sampling technique. The research informants consisted of village leaders, representatives of village youth and villager. Interviews and observations were used in this study to obtain primary data sources. Secondary data in the form of books, journals and other documentation obtained through documentation techniques.

The analysis technique used interactive analysis techniques. This technique provides the stages of analysis. First, data reduction is defined as the process of selection, simplification, abstraction and transformation of data [20]. Second, the presentation of data is the stage of organizing data and finally, the stage of drawing conclusions.

Data in this study were validated using source of triangulation. In this case the researcher made a comparison of the results of the interview with the results of observations, various views in the community and other relevant research results.

3. RESULTS

Sidorejo village is the closest area to the peak of Merapi in Klaten Regency. This is the main reason for the selection of subjects in this study. Various traditions are preserved by the community related to the activities of Mount Merapi, which have never been absent in their lives.

The results showed that the culture in Sidorejo Village was different from the cultures on other slopes of Merapi. In the Yogyakarta region, Merapi has close links with the Yogyakarta Palace and the south coast which is replanted by local fable used to transform Merapi's eruption activity in the past as well as disaster mitigation [11]. While the area of Sidorejo Village, which is located in a different area, is not directly related to the Yogyakarta palace.

In relation to disaster preparedness, several ritual communications related to disaster management carried out in Sidorejo Village such as the art of *ketoprak* and *Kukiloyakso Dance, Kenduri* and *Dandan Kali Deles*. The explanation is as followed:

3.1. Ketoprak Performing Arts and Kukiloyakso Dance

Ketoprak performances and dances become a communication ritual that has become part of the life of the people of Sidorejo Village and its surroundings. The combination of these two traditions is usually held on the commemoration of Indonesian Independence Day and at the people's party which is routinely held by villages.

"*Ketoprak and Kukiloyakso usually use musical instruments, the players are their own citizens. Only one or two players are from outside the village. In the past, it was said that it was only played during harvest time, now it is more on holidays or village events. In fact, we have also filled events elsewhere"* (Interview with Paiman Doto Parsana).

The performance involving 80 people was divided into three main rounds. The first round is played through *ketoprak* art which contains Javanese drama performances about community life on the slopes of Merapi with various blessings and dangers.

The second round is the emergence of nine dancers by using a crown of bird feathers to dance this dance accompanied by musical instrument called *gamelan*

and *Geguritan Wong Merapi* (the song of Merapi's society)*)*. *Kukiloyakso dance* is a typical dance of Sidarejo Village, danced by ten dancers dressed in birds. The name of this dance called *jathilan* dance is derived from the Javanese language that is *kukilo* which means bird and *yakso* which means giant. On several occasions, this dance is performed by children.

Birds as markers of danger from Mount Merapi come from hereditary knowledge that is strengthened by the experience of residents. In 2006 before the eruption, for example, when evening arrived thousands of starlings filled the streets of the village for days and then returned to the slope when the sun began to rise. A few days ago, an eruption occurred. Residents believe that the starling's behavior is a sign that an eruption will occur so that residents prepare themselves to evacuate.

The third was when *Kukiloyakso* danced and the *ketoprak* show was continued which illustrated how people could save themselves in the event of an eruption. *Ketoprak* performances and *Kukiloyakso* dances are understood by residents as ancestral heritage that are still relevant to current conditions. "Cultural heritage, yes, entertainment too. That is also to remind us that we live in Merapi, which is prone to disasters, so we must be prepared, "explained Sukiman.

In daily life, *ketoprak* and *kukiloyakso dances* are not played by permanent players. Anyone who wants to contribute to being a player usually gathers at the village hall or residents' house to practice before performing.

Equipment such as costumes, *gamelan* and others are jointly owned properties that are purchased independently. Sukiman added, the property has been replaced several times because it was damaged.

3.2. Kenduri

Kenduri is a Javanese tradition as well as Islam, which means a banquet. *Kenduri* in Sidorejo Village has many types based on the time of implementation. From the results of observations and interviews, there are two festivals related to disaster preparedness namely Kenduri Kupatan and Kenduri Suro.

The whole *kenduri* is conducted by residents ranging from parents, children and youth. The division of roles in the procession of *kenduri* implies the active participation of all groups of citizens.

"*All are involved, especially children, they must know our culture. Yes, we as parents do not explain anything, but later we will find out for ourselves, just eat it,* "(Interview with Sukiman)

Kupatan Kenduri which is also called *Kenduri Gumbretan* is a festivity carried out in the eighth season leading to the ninth season. The implementation of the *Kenduri Kupatan* begins with reading thanksgiving to God because the rainy season has come and eating together. In the feast which is carried out in the house of the elders of the residents there is a main dish that is served, namely the *ketet madet* and *ketupat lepet* cooked by each family.

Jadah tetet madet is a typical village food made from compacted sticky rice. This food is a symbol of prayer to God asking for a solid fortune (a lot) in the future. "That means so that if you become a fortune remain stuck (solid)," said Sukiman. While the *ketupat lepet* is rice wrapped in bamboo leaves which means that it is fast or wrong.

After the residents gathered, ritual communication was opened through prayers conducted by village leaders. The prayer was a thanksgiving to God who has given health, fertility and enjoyment to residents and their livestock. After praying, the residents did a meal together.

The main procession was done after a meal together when the residents flocked to their livestock pens and hung meal cups near the cattle pens while saying their apologies to their livestock. This ritual was a manifestation of the people's apology to their livestock.

"We as humans apologize if we often torture them, often not treating you well," (Interview with Marno Sumarmo).

This feast has a deep meaning for residents because almost all houses have livestock. Based on the residents' experience, livestock is not just food. Livestock are their savior when an eruption occurs. Sukiman added, after the eruption, residents would lose their property and fields. That's when livestock is the key to the survival of villagers, so livestock deserve to be treated as well as possible.

Kenduri kupatan is a tradition that has long been done by the residents of Sidorejo Village. This tradition also relates to the *Dadung Awuk* puppet story *in Rabine Permadi's* play where *Dadung Awuk* is believed to be a respected person who has a pet cow and other livestock.

The second *kenduri* is Kenduri Suro. The feast was held every eight and tenth of the Islamic Calendar Suro Month. This feast was held at the house of a resident, Madyo, who was chosen because his house was right in the middle of the village. *Kenduri Suro* was related to the tradition of welcoming the Islamic new year as

well as the community's beliefs related to folklore stories about the guardians of Mount Merapi.

"Every family makes pancakes, *apem* and tempeh stew," said Paiman Doto Parsana. Almost the same as *Kenduri Kupatan*, the *Kenduri Suro* procession opens with a reading of prayers. The difference is, the prayer in *Kenduri Suro* is more focused on thanking God for the sustenance of the crops provided on the slopes of Merapi.

After the prayer, a dish of pancake, a cake called *apem* and tempeh stew was served together with fruits to eat together. After that the residents prepared the fruits of the crops on a large plate made of bamboo and then put them in the corners of the village. The food was intended for Javanese Tiger called *Gogor.*

Residents appreciated the animals that were maintained by ancestor because they protected the residents from eruption. One of the pets was the Javanese tiger or commonly called *Gogor* by residents. *Gogor*'s existence was basically still confusing.

"Me and the villagers, both the elderly, youth or even children, actually know that Gogor is not in the corners of the village. But it is a symbol in which there are wild animals that inhabit Merapi which we must maintain as well. We only provide food, yes we will hurt wild animals, "(Interview with Sukiman).

In line with Sukiman, Marno Sumarmo also said that wild animals are neighbors for him. "They both live in Merapi, they have our lives, we also have lives. They help us instead, "explained Marno Sumarmo.

Based on experience, Sukiman said that under certain conditions wild animals on Mount Merapi had several times brought messages about the condition of Merapi, one of which was *menjangan* or deer field.

"In 2006, the deer suddenly comes down here looking for drinks and some even come into the houses. I remember my grandmother's story, if a deer suddenly enters the village, there will be a sign of disaster. There is knowledge from generation to generation of ancestors, deer will look for a drink if the water in Merapi is not good because the sulfur mixture will erupt, "(Interview with Sukiman).

3.3. Dandan Kali Deles

Dandan Kali Deles is a ritual communication routinely held every third season, during the dry season. The procession handed down by the ancestors of Sidorejo Village initially used offerings, but along with the development of Islam the offerings were removed.

Dandan Kali Deles procession was opened with a group prayer in front of the residents' houses. Led by the village leaders, the community offered their thanks and asked for a fortune in the form of water using Javanese. After that the residents were divided into groups based on their residence and then walked to the spring and river closest to their homes.

"When I was a child, residents still used offerings. Not now. Around me there are two times (the river), Lumbang and Reno rivers. Reno River cannot be taken anymore because the water is at the bottom of the cliff but we still clean and repair it. "(Interview with Marno Sumarmo).

In small groups the residents then brought the tools of the plantation and food in the form of rice and side dishes. Arriving at the water source, residents then began to discuss the stages of cleaning. "Usually we clean the branches or mud that pollutes the water source, depending on the conditions," said Paiman Doto Parsana.

One water source and river are usually cleaned by 10 to 15 residents. In the process, residents not only clean rivers and water sources but plant especially bamboo around the river. The bamboo is a relic of the village's ancestors used by residents as a disaster warning at Merapi.

"Bamboo has been around since I was a kid, he said, it's been there since time immemorial. We just need to guard it. When we sleep at night, there is a hot cloud that will erupt in the bamboo so it sounds like a noise ... a kind of alarm. Bamboo must grow in rivers because hot clouds always flow from rivers tipped in volcanic craters, "(Interview with Sukiman).

Every time Merapi erupts, bamboo which is exposed to hot clouds always makes a loud noise. Automatically if the sound of bamboo starts to be heard in the village, residents immediately prepare disaster prepared bags and get ready to go to evacuation. Paiman Doto Parsana said, in the 2010 eruption, bamboo exploded for some time.

"As I recall at that time the sound of bamboo exploded early in the morning, his voice was very loud for a long time. Not just once or twice, because there are a lot of bamboos. I thought it would be an eruption or what, so just ask the others, apparently they heard it too, immediately preparing to evacuate, "(Interview with Paiman Doto Parsana).

After cleaning up the water source and taking care of the bamboo around the river, residents then made holes to pile up garbage such as twigs, leaves and mud that covered the water source. In this activity, residents did work distribution. Women and children

were usually tasked for preparing side dishes to be brought to the water source while men and youth went down to the water source.

"Not all of them. Usually men and young men, sometimes we have to open the road because the plants have covered the roads. Sometimes there are snakes, animals. The women who are preparing lunch, "(Interview with Marno Sumarmo)

When a group of men was cleaning up a water source, usually a group of women kept their children from participating because the terrain led to heavy and dangerous water sources. Water sources and rivers were a source of livelihood for residents. The geographical condition of the village caused the residents to often experience drought, so that the cleanliness of water sources and rivers were seen as a duty of citizens.

According to Paiman Doto Suparna, Dandan Kali Deles was actually not the main solution in dealing with drought, but this activity continued to be carried out to find out the condition of water sources and rivers around the village. "Some water sources are already dry, but we still clean them. We know how it is, "said Paiman Doto Suparna.

The implementation of *the Dandan Kali Deles* procession itself was related to the amount of environmental damage in the village area, one of which was the rise of sand mining from erupted rivers. Mining has become a daily view of the residents. "Mining is actually not a problem, but if the residents here are trustworthy, we should not be greedy to take the sand later, Merapi is" angry ". If most of them take sand later, there will certainly be disasters such as illness and others, there are a lot of evidence that if you want to be called the only one, "said Sukiman.

The communication of the *Dandan Kali Deles* ritual is in line with the implementation of the clean river tradition in Bejiharjo VillageYogyakarta. It is stated that the clean river tradition is an ancestral heritage. This study concludes, the tradition is loaded with ecological education both for children, youth and adults to study nature conservation [21].

4. DISCUSSION

The study of symbolic interactionism has an emphasis on human action. Human action is the behavior of the production and reproduction of meaning through the use of symbols, interpretation and efforts to translate these symbols. Referring to the aspect of symbolic interactionism proposed by Mead, this study will look at ritual communication through

actions, gestures, significant symbols, mind, self and society [22]. These aspects are discussed in relation to disaster preparedness as follows:

4.1. Collective Participation

Human action is something that arises based on human psychological processes that start from impulse, perception, manipulation and consummation. In this study, residents conducted ritual communication such as the *ketoprak* and *Kukiloyakso dance, Kenduri* and *Dandan Kali Deles* as their own wishes. This is categorized as the encouragement of community members.

Durkheim termed the ritual with the collective effervescence [23]. This relates to the participation of community members in a ritual communication caused by a feeling of comfort. In this case the people of Sidorejo Village have solidarity as fellow citizens who are prone to being affected by the Merapi eruption so that they have a role to continue to do something in their lives side by side with Merapi.

The second stage is perception which is a human process in translating something. In this research, perception as inhabitants of disaster-prone areas is influenced by the implementation of ritual communication. In addition, perception is also influenced by myths or stories handed down by predecessors, for example the story of the existence of *Gogor* in the *Kenduri Suro* ritual communication.

The next stage is how humans manipulate their environment. In this case residents manipulate through various forms of beliefs about Javanese tigers in Merapi. Through this stage, humans use objects to be directed towards certain goals. The final stage of action is consummation or completion. In this stage, citizens as actors in ritual communication provide an assessment of community members who are active in ritual communication. This can be seen from the position of village leaders as the center of communication in the ritual of *Kenduri Suro, Kenduri Kupatan and Dandan Kali Deles.*

4.2. Gesture as Evacuation System

Mead explained the gesture as a stimulus that will cause the response of people around him. Village people interpret every procession in ritual communication through movements done by people who are considered older.

Gesture in ritual communication in Sidorejo Village is closely related to disaster mitigation systems, especially hazard warnings. In the *Kukiloyakso Dance* and *Ketoprak Performance*, the most prominent movement is the second round, when the *Kukiloyaso dance* begins. Dancers' movements depicting giant birds that come to villages are

considered as disasters. In this case citizens are internalized that birds are animals that can be a sign of danger. While in the third round, the movement of *Ketoprak* players who instructed residents to go down the mountain became a sign of evacuation to safer areas.

Mead [22] explains, the movement functions as an adjustment among community members involved in social actions that refer to certain objects. In other words, the movement becomes a guide on how to awaken community members as citizens who live side by side with disasters. In this case, the movements in the dance give a clue in interpreting the bird as a sign of danger.

Not only adults, *Kukiloyakso Dances* are often danced by children. Before performing, the children learn this dance. Carey [15] explains that movements in traditional dance, learning for children represent how children can imitate adult behavior.

In the ritual communication of *kenduri suro*, the prominent movement in the second scene is the movement of the people's hands while in their respective animal cages, the residents clasping their palms followed by a bent body that shows an apology. This is interpreted as a sign of respect for their livestock animals.

In contrast to the *kenduri kupatan*, the feast procession was opened with a movement of village leaders who stood with their hands up, indicating that the prayer session was about to begin. The movement related to the process of preparing for a disaster was at the last scene, when residents brought bamboo as a food container aimed at *Gogor*. At some point in the village, residents knelt and laid down their food and then clenched their hands. This is interpreted as a tribute to wild animals and efforts to preserve wild animals on the slopes of Merapi.

In the ritual communication of *Dandan Kali Deles*, the main movement of the people was when they were around the water source. After cleaning up the water source, residents paid attention to the bamboo ecosystem. If there was trash or mud covering the soil in the bamboo growing area, residents immediately cleaned it. In this case the residents interpret bamboo as a must-have crop around their water sources and rivers. This is related to the importance of bamboo as an alarm or danger sign that will explode when the river flows with cold lava.

The gesture in the *Kukiloyakso Dance and Ketoprak Performance* related to the evacuation system in disaster mitigation. While in *Kenduri Suro* and *Kenduri Kupatan,* gesture is related to how residents pay respect to both livestock and wild animals.

4.3. Symbols; Blessing Merapi

Ritual communication in Sidorejo Village has different symbol elements in each process. The use of this symbol has become an important process of shared meaning.

The ritual communication of the *Kukiloyaksi dance, ketoprak performance* and dance has a significant symbol namely bird. This bird symbol is shown through a bird costume that is believed to be a depiction of a catastrophic eruption. This symbol is reinforced through the bird-like aspect of movement previously described.

In general, at the level of interpretation, residents have confidence that the implementation of the *Kenduri Kupatan* and *Kenduri Suro* will bring blessing in the future. This is due to residents being able to build good relations with livestock and wild animals in the Merapi environment.

The meaning of respect for animals in both festivals is taken from artifacts, which are symbols used in ritual communication processions. In this case the meaning is taken at the operational level. *Kenduri Kupatan* with the symbol of diamond and sticky rice is interpreted as an expression of the apology of the owner of his livestock.

Ketupat or *kupat lepet* in Javanese is a symbol of 'fast' or apologize. Society interpreted the diamond as a symbol of apology for their physical and spiritual mistakes. This is in line with the earlier research that interpreted the diamond shape as a symbol of apologize process at a *tingkeban* or seven monthly ceremony [24].

Kenduri Suro uses the symbol of offerings in the form of food products to feed Gogor and other wild animals. There is a story about the Javanese tiger that is actually not so trusted by its citizens. However, residents routinely carry out Kenduri Suro. This is not surprising for the ritual communication perspective, because in ritual communication human behavior is often difficult to understand by people outside the community.

Those metaphor made conservation efforts and how residents treated both the best animals and wild animals on the slopes of Merapi became ambiguous and hidden. Ritual communication has the essence not of its activities but the feelings of members of the community [25].

Blumer explains in understanding meaning according to the perspective of symbolic interactionism emphasizes the process of internalization in humans which is manifested in intrapersonal communication or interaction with oneself [26]. *Kenduri Kupatan's* ritual communication is marked by people's apologies to animals which is

actually a conversation with oneself. While *Kenduri Suro* is marked by giving food to Javanese Tiger.

Even more clearly Carey [15] explains, the actual stimulus is not presented directly but through symbols. This is in line with this study which presents a bird symbol as a substitute for an eruption to signal danger and other symbols.

Regarding disaster preparedness, in the pre-disaster stage there are two main activities, mitigation and preparation [27]. While disaster preparedness includes preparedness signs, early warning systems, evacuation systems and disseminating disaster-related information through various communication channels. Bird symbols in the *Kukiloyakso dance*, bamboo in the *Dandan Kali Deles* is used as a preparation for citizens in facing disasters through an early warning system.

In daily life, residents not only rely on starlings but also deer. This knowledge arises from the experience of residents who always see deer come down to the village in search of drinking water. Similar research in India states the same thing. Wild animals can be a symbol of danger because they will come out of the forest if there is a commotion and an increase in water temperature. This knowledge becomes disaster mitigation so that citizens can prevent losses [28].

4.4. Mind; Interpretation of The Ritual Communication

In this study mind is related to the ability of villagers to interpret ritual communication functions. The process of interpretation that occurs is the ritual communication of *Dandan Kali Deles.* Although the packaging of this activity is cleaning up the river, one of the processes is maintaining the bamboo plant ecosystem along the river and water sources.

The traditional resilience of this population is also carried out by residents of Merapi in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The difference is that the residents not only plant bamboo because of its geographical condition which is further from the crater of Merapi, but residents' plant hard trees such as durian, pineapple and other trees. This activity is carried out from generation to generation to protect their homes from cold lava [29].

Mead [22] explains, experience becomes important because it is at the center of the human nervous system and will be strengthened by future experiences. The bamboo-related knowledge gained by the residents of Sidorejo Village from their ancestors was confirmed through real experiences during the eruption of 2006 and 2010, so that the preservation of bamboo becomes an obligation during the *Dandan Kali Deles* procession.

This ability to interpret allows changes in human action. In the beginning, most residents believed that ritual communication is a cause and effect ceremony. So each procession must be carried out to prevent residents from the Merapi disaster. Along with the development, ritual communication is not only a sacred traditional ceremony but also an entertainment function.

In the interview process, the researcher found a polarization of meaning in the ritual communication of *Kupatan* and *Kenduri Suro. Kenduri Kupatan* and *Kenduri Suro* is a ritual communication originating from the merging of Islam and Javanese culture. While in the ritual communication of *Dandan Kali Deles*, offerings are removed when many residents begin to embrace Islam. This polarization is done to legalize ritual communication in an Islamic perspective so that ritual communication is still safe to be carried out by residents without any allegations of shirk.

Polarization of meaning is certainly not new in the study of symbolic interactionism. Blumer stated, every human being will carry out the process of selecting, examining, postponing, rearranging and changing the meaning that will determine his actions [26].

In Blumer's explanation, the change in meaning is caused by the process of interpretation over and over through human action. This change of meaning is a process that involves a psychological element that is interpretation that is not interpreted as something that is taken for granted or automatically [26]. In this study, changes in the meaning of citizens towards ritual communication occur in the process of preserving ritual communication that is continuously adapted to the religious, social and economic aspects of citizens.

4.5. The Self Roles

Humans as individuals will develop self-concepts through interactions with others. In addition, self-concept will also form behavioral motives [18]. Mead divides self into two important dimensions, I and Me.

This study analyzes residents in I position. Residents who are active actors in ritual communication know how the myths that exist in the ritual communication procession can be contrary to the teachings of certain religions. For example, the use of food as offerings in ritual communication *Kenduri Kupatan.* Another example is in *Kenduri Suro*, residents realize that on the slopes of Merapi there is no *Gogor* or Javanese tiger but still provide food to *Gogor*. But as artists they accept these consequences.

Me's position itself refers to how residents mingle with other citizens as members of the community who must uphold the agreed norms. In observation, the researchers assessed the involvement of citizens as me in ritual communication plays an important role in maintaining the values of solidarity, togetherness,

mutual respect for humans and care for the environmental ecosystem.

In ritual communication, residents actualize Me as a citizen who feels the same fate and responsibility. Actualization as humans who live side by side with disaster is explored through active participation in ritual communication as performers, dancers and other roles.

4.6. Voluntary and Active Society

The concept of society is a concept related to social relations between humans. This social relationship is a relationship that is voluntary and active. Mead explained there are two important parts that build society, the first is particular other and the second is generalized other.

In the results of the study, particular other refers to significant individuals in the community, namely the village elder, the chairman of *the Jalin Merapi Community Radio* and the youth leader who was the informant in this study.

All ritual communication in Sidorejo Village gives a role to the particular other as the person who initiates in leading the practice, leading the prayer during the ritual communication procession, making new creations and holding routine exercises. This indicates that the other particular is a central figure who transforms ritual communication from generation to generation.

One of the strong meanings in the *Dandan Kali Deles* procession is the function of social control through informal rules that forbid citizens from disposing trash or damaging the environment around water sources and streams. Residents believe, people who damage the environment will get punishment in the future. Some miners affected by the disaster become a formative process where the meaning associated with the aquatic ecosystem is used and revised as instruments to form an action. Meaning always plays their role in action through a process of interaction with oneself [26].

Mead [22] describes generalized others as social groups that give individuals a unity of themselves. In this case Sidorejo Village residents are generalized other in the implementation of ritual communication related to disaster preparedness.

The implementation of ritual communication has the support of various parties both internal and external to the village. Aside from being an art container, the implementation of ritual communication is also seen as a disaster mitigation education needed by residents. In a broader scope, some parts of ritual communication such as the *Kukiloyakso dance* received a special invitation to be held outside of

Sidorejo Village. This shows a positive response from outside parties.

This generalized other attitude is important in preserving ritual communication. Mead believes that generalized other attitudes will determine one's self development through experiences so that the individual will take the same attitude [22].

5. CONCLUSION

The ritual communication carried out by the residents of Sidorejo Village aims to prepare residents for disaster. Forms of ritual communication include *ketoprak shows* and *Kukiloyakso dances, Kenduri Suro, Kenduri Kupatan* and *Dandan Kali Deles*. This ritual communication has been carried out by the ancestors of the residents and reproduced its meaning. Based on the analysis of aspects of action, gesture, significant symbols, mind, self and society as aspects of symbolic interactionism theory, there are three important meanings that can be concluded from this study. First is the meaning of danger signs, the second is the meaning of respect for animals, and the third is the meaning of conservation of ecosystems in springs. These three meanings are used by residents as guidelines in dealing with the natural disaster of the Merapi volcano eruption.

The limitation of this research is the exploration of ritual communication from a theoretical perspective which is still not deeply explained. Subsequent research can thus portray ritual communication that has been presented in this study, using various other theories, such as cognitive dissonance theory to determine the relationship of cultural beliefs to disaster mitigation information that comes from outside the citizens' culture.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Vinisa Nurul Aisyah as author have full contributed in process conceived and designed the analysis, collected the data, analysis and wrote the paper.

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