



Modern vs Traditional: Examining Cultural Commodification of Javanese Wedding Ritual in Pacitan, Central Java

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Abstract. This study examines the cultural commodification of the Temu Panggih, a part of procession in Javanese traditional wedding in Pacitan Regency. Temu Panggih is one of the traditional ritual that has the meaning which is to meet (between the bride and the groom). We assume that Cultural commodification occurs in changing the value and function of goods and services into commodities (which has economic value) in this case the change in philosophical values into a current trend that can be traded according to consumer demand. This can be studied by three indicators, namely inauthentic, manipulative and standardized. This research method uses descriptive qualitative and data collection techniques are interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis technique used is the critical paradigm. The result of this research is that there is a commodification of culture that can be seen from the changes that occur in the procession for the sake of market demand. Thus, the values decrease due to reduce of this step by step procession.

Keywords: Cultural Commodification · Temu Panggih · Pacitan

1 Introduction

Indonesia has a diversity of customs and cultures, one of which is the custom of marriage. Each region throughout the archipelago has its own characteristics, ranging from the wedding procession, clothing and ornaments that add to the characteristics of the custom. This is because there is customary marriage law, namely the rules of customary law that regulate the form of marriage, methods of application, marriage ceremonies and the termination of marriages in Indonesia (Wulansari, 2016). These customary law rules in various regions of Indonesia have differences from each other due to the different nature of the community, customs, religions and beliefs. In addition, customary law also undergoes several changes or shifts in values due to the changing times, the occurrence of marriages. Between different ethnic groups, customs, and religions and beliefs.

One of the highlights in the variety of wedding customs, is the Javanese traditional wedding procession. Especially in this case is a series that is sequential and becomes a typical value. This Javanese traditional wedding has different and complex customs

and processions. Located in the series of events and attributes during the procession. Among other things, the *handover procession*, *paes or creaking*, *siraman*, *midodereni*, *meeting panggih* and so on. From these various processions, the traditional Panggih is a procession that becomes an icon. This procession is the culmination of a series of Javanese traditional wedding processions. This is because in this procession the bride and groom meet each other (JAYA, 2018: 1). They were met before being seated on the aisle to receive prayers from the guests.

Meanwhile, technological developments have an impact on the *Panggih*, which is widely known as a Javanese cultural heritage and tradition. One of them is millennials who know this procession from social media. According to data in Indonesia, the most social media users are *millennials* as much as 95.96% (Dwi Anggraini, 2019: Accessed January 6, 2022, 16:28). With the broadcast of the *Panggih* on digital media and social media, it increases *awareness* of the wider community, especially *millennials* as the biggest users of social media.

Through wedding broadcasts, public figures then spread awareness among young people to also use the *Temu Panggih procession*. The exposure to various social media and television caused wedding processions using Javanese customs to increase. This is evidenced by wedding vendors who use Javanese traditional weddings at the request of their clients (interview with wedding vendors in Pacitan, November 2021). This phenomenon describes the Javanese customs used by married couples without leaving the customs they have in Indonesia.

However, the widespread use of Javanese customs in this marriage raises problems, especially in the values contained in each stage of the procession. On the one hand, Javanese customs including *Temu Panggih* are used, on the other hand there are several stages in the procession which are omitted with various considerations. This fact raises the problem that to attract the interest of the younger generation to use Javanese traditional weddings there are several stages of the procession that are omitted, even though each has its own philosophical value.

Philosophical of the procession or series of traditional *Temu Manten* procedures that must be carried out by the bride and groom are: *Ijab qabul ceremony*, *Panggih ceremony* or *meeting manten*, *balangan suruh*, *wiji dadi* (stepping on eggs), *sikepan sindur*, *sungkeman*, *dulangan*, *weighing*, *Kacar-kucur*. All these processions must be carried out in a marriage. If it is not done then they have the belief that breaking the procession will cause disharmony in the household (Munirah, 2020).

Based on this phenomenon, the researcher attempts to examine it from the point of view of Cultural Commodification. This is considering that cultural commodification can be briefly understood as changing the culture to be an economical commodity like the market demand. The definition is exemplified in the preeminent earliest work undertaken by Greenwood in 1989 who has investigated *Alerde festival of Fuenterrabia* in Spain and *Basque festival* using an anthropological perspective (Nurhadi et al, 2022).

The theory used to analyze the problems that have been described, this study uses the theory of commodification by Vincent Mosco (2009), defines commodification as the process of changing goods and services, including communications, which are valued for their usefulness, into commodities that are valued for what they will they provide in the market. Commodification *theorizing* the political economy of communication

(Fernandez, 2013: 17). Commodification is closely related to the economics and politics of communication, where the transformation of goods and services that were originally valued for their use value becomes a valuable commodity because it can bring profits in the market for commercial broadcasting.

Marx's view (in Ritzer, 2004) on commodities stems from his materialist orientation which focuses on the productive activities of actors. Popular culture has changed the attitude, commitment, and orientation of artists' interest in respecting art. This can be seen, for example, in the midst of concerts, performances, musical spectacles held openly or privately, and broadcasts on television screens; the performance of these artists has been manipulated for the benefit of commerce and competition rather than art appreciation. Here, the artist has become the trademark of the sponsored merchandise rather than an aesthetic appraisal or art appreciation. Their appreciation space has been limited by the image or propaganda of commodity imaging from sponsors.

Commodification theory is derived from Marx's idea of finding a capitalist system in a medium that describes the form and direction of the media. In other words, the media will benefit greatly if they are able to make goods or services commodities into large-scale commodities with large exchange rates (Adila, 2011: 93-108). This theory becomes the starting point for entry into the study of the political economy of critical media. There are several main concepts offered by Mosco, namely *commodification*, *commercialization*, *spatialization*, and *structure*. The presence of commodification can remove products from a more meaningful social context to become useful in terms of business and "free market" ideology. There is an explanation if capitalism dominates all dimensions of life in society so that interactions in people's lives are always marked by impoverishment in the face of objective currency exchange activities that cause alienation in society (Sumartono, 2016: 43-51).

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Adam Smith and proponents of classical political economy have distinguished between products whose value is arises from the satisfaction of special human wants and needs, namely "*use value*", and products whose value is based on what they can provide in exchange, namely "*exchange value*".

Commodities may arise from vulnerable social needs, including the satisfaction of physical hunger and meet or conflict with the status codes of certain social groups. Moreover, contrary to some interpretations, use value is not limited to meeting survival

needs but extends to socially shaped ranges of use. In short, use value is also the result of social construction.

In the view of Mosco (2009), the commodification process has two important meanings for communication research. First, communication processes and technologies have contributed to the general process of commodification in the economy as a whole. Communication practices and technologies also contribute to the general process of commodification in society. Second, the commodification process that works in society as a whole penetrates the communication process, so that improvements and contradictions in the social commodification process affect communication as a social practice.

Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) in their *The Culture Industry Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, criticizes that commodification occurs as a result of the development of a culture industry. The production of cultural objects (music and films) in pre-industrial times was produced purely, without industrial interference with any market system in the production process. The era of globalization with the capitalist system has led to a cultural explosion in all aspects of life, thus giving rise to the needs of the masses.

2 Method

The type of research that the researcher uses is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is research that aims to explain the phenomenon in depth through data collection (Kriyantono, 2009: 12). The qualitative approach was chosen because it is case and context oriented. While descriptive studies are used to provide an overview of the symptoms or reality in order to provide an understanding of the symptoms or reality (Pawito, 2007). This method aims to explain the phenomenon in depth. This research does not prioritize the size of the population or sampling, even the population or sampling is very limited (Kriyantono, 2009). The data collected is in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers. The data comes from interview scripts, field notes, photos, videotapes, personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents (Moeloeng, 2007). As for the data collection method in the research used, the authors use interviews, observation and documentation with 3 to 10 respondents as a bridal couple who use the procession of Temu Panggih, MUA, WO service providers and parents of the bride and groom.

3 Result and Discussion

The recent cultural commodification has strengthened the identity of the *temu panggih* which simultaneously encourages the process of reconstructing the identity of the procession. Based on several points explained by the speakers, several types of commodification can be drawn. The researchers will review these indicators in the analysis of indicators that are not authentic/pure, manipulative and standardized as follows:

3.1 Inauthentic or Pure

In the book "*The Culture Industry Enlightenment as Mass Deception*" commodification is due to the development of a cultural industry that produces products in the form of

culture. (music, film, fashion, art and tradition). In the Javanese bridal tradition, one of which uses the *Temu Panggih*, the cultural industry creates a procession that can be traded and traded according *trend*. *Temu Panggih*, which was originally a cultural tradition with various philosophical values and is sacred, with traditional actors who understand and are appropriate in their field, has become economical. These traditions and cultures are constructed and undergo changes along with the times. This happens intentionally or unintentionally by the perpetrators of this traditional marriage procession *meeting* be neither authentic nor pure.

According to Adorno, culture that is produced autonomously/purely is no longer produced by the people or communities who own it, but there is industrial interference with all market systems in the production process (Adorno, Th, and Horkheimer, 1979). Cultural objects, which are filled with high values, authenticity and truth, have undergone a shift in meaning, mass-produced based on market tastes.

The series of Javanese traditional wedding processions according to Dea as a source of triangulation is a sacred procession. This sacredness can be seen from the sequence, philosophical values, traditions and taboos carried out by the actors who carry out this procession. This is very striking in the traditional makeup of friends who have to do tirakat, namely fasting before applying makeup for the bride. The change in the name for the bride's make-up call who used to be a *dukun manten* to become *MUA (Make Up Artist)* is not only a change in the name but also the burdens carried and the habits carried out are different.

3.2 Manipulative

Temu Panggih is a wedding procession that dominates weddings in Pacitan Regency (based on an interview with Vany Ardika) . Through various complex sequences of events starting from *srah-srahan sanggan*, *throwing betel nut*, washing feet and breaking eggs, then the two brides walked hand in hand to the aisle. After arriving at the aisle, it is continued with the stages of *curd* or *tampa rich*, *dhahar walimah* or eating together, *showing rucuh with* and then ending with *sungkeman* to the parents of the bride and groom. At the time, for *betel* the ceremony, *ubarampe* is also prepared, including *sanggan-throwing* event and , for the Kacar kucur ceremony for the ceremony of *walimah* (eating together).

These various sequences of processions have symbolic meanings from various points of view which are good for future marriage preparations. However, with the sacred meaning of each procession, it becomes biased by various media exposures that make the *Temu Panggih* an *icon* in Javanese traditional weddings. Even some processions have been omitted in order to meet market demand (*clients*).

All of the informants in this study knew in general the *panggih* but not all of the informants knew the implied and explicit meaning of the contents in each procession. The four resource persons knew about the *Temu Panggih* procession from various sources, from family, due to work demands to through social media. The differences in these sources have made the understanding of the four sources different, some of them know in detail and only know about the procession *Temu Panggih* .

Procession meeting is not carried out sequentially, according to Ms. Indri, "we adjust the request from the candidate for externship and consider the time duration so that the

meeting is incomplete" (Results of the direct interview, July 8, 2021). In fact, according to Nelly Dea S.Pd, a beautician who is engaged in Javanese traditional weddings, "meetings are carried out in a coherent manner according to existing customs" (Based on an interview via WhatsApp August 10, 2021).

3.3 Standardized

The commodification process often occurs in all aspects of life, the influence of media exposure affects the process of change and even shifts in values, content, labor and so on. vendors *wedding* are no strangers to the *Temu Panggih* procession because this procession is often used and thanks to the mass and social media that also preach or report on artists in the country. This can be seen by the Indonesian actors and actresses using the *Temu Panggih* at weddings.

Meanwhile, Indri knows this procession since she entered the world of women in Yogyakarta. Moreover, he had studied in depth with KPH Widhi Sumirat who is a relative of the Surakarta Sunanate regarding this procession. When they got a *client* in Central Java with a request for a complete, intact and sacred procession, Indri and his team needed to learn more about this in 2014. "*Alhamdulillah, I learned directly from Pak Widhi about Temu Panggih in the style of Surakarta, his father was very kind, so he was informed. in detail each procession and its meaning. If possible, the client's request that must be sacred, maybe I won't study in detail*" (Results of a live interview July 1, 2021).

4 Conclusion

Based on the findings of researchers in the procession of *Temu Panggih* in Pacitan Regency, there is a commodification of culture that can be seen from three indicators, namely inauthentic/pure, manipulative and standardized. The findings of this research show that there is a commodification process in the form of a sequence of procession of *Temu Panggih* that is not coherent according to existing standards. This happens because of market demand (*clients*) and media exposure that puts forward a simple procession but has an aesthetic to be documented.

In addition, cultural commodification also causes an increase in the number of personnel in a traditional wedding starting from the existence of *jemuk interpreters*, *dalang manten* (MC) and so on. There are many shifts in cultural values that previously *the dalang manten* should have used the Javanese language of *krama inggil* and *Javanese kawi* used Indonesian. And *the jemuk interpreter* who should wear a kebaya when guiding the event but wears ordinary clothes.

Furthermore, the commodification of the *Temu Panggih* is also sourced from media exposure which makes the bride and groom use this procession. In addition, the media also functions as a medium for learning, *upgrading* service vendors *wedding* Star artists and *influencers* in the country who use this procession also contribute in introducing the heritage of this ancestral traditional procession. The role of the media is very conspicuous in the commodification of this procession which results in a manipulative tradition and gradually creates a simple and interesting standard *meeting* to be documented according to the existing market demand.

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