



Between Inclusion and Erasure: *Jumat Pahingan* as Oral Tradition, Local Identity, and Contested Belonging in Bulak Pepe Buffalo Village

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Abstract. *Jumat Pahingan*, a communal prayer ritual held every time Friday coincides with the Pahing day in the five-day Javanese market week cycle (*pasaran*), is the heartbeat of local identity in Bulak Pepe Hamlet, Ngawi Regency, East Java, a community widely known as the “*Kampung Kerbau*” (‘Buffalo Village’), home to 514 buffalo as of 2025. This article analyzes how *Jumat Pahingan* constructs local identity and communal belonging, while simultaneously exposing the fractures in its inclusivity under the pressures of modernity. Drawing on an ethnographic approach and theoretical frameworks of oral tradition (Vansina; Thompson), cultural identity (Hall; Castells), belonging and inclusivity (Yuval-Davis), and Foucauldian power technology, the study finds that *Jumat Pahingan* operates as a technology of inclusivity that transcends boundaries of class, age, and belief. However, under the compounding pressures of modernization, formal education, and tourism commodification, the ritual is undergoing erosion: younger generations no longer recognize it. This article argues that the disappearance of *Jumat Pahingan* represents not merely a cultural loss, but the collapse of a social infrastructure that has for centuries sustained inclusivity, ecological justice, and organic social transformation as the foundational layer of Bulak Pepe community life.

Keywords: Oral Tradition, Local Identity, Inclusivity, Belonging, Jumat Pahingan, Bulak Pepe

1 Introduction

Buffalo in Indonesia are not regarded merely as ruminant livestock; they are deeply embedded carriers of local identity and a cross-ethnic cultural phenomenon [1]. This is particularly evident in Bulak Pepe Hamlet, Banyubiru Village, Widodaren District, Ngawi Regency, East Java. Every Friday that coincides with the *Pahing* day in the Javanese five-day market cycle (*pasaran*), a day locally referred to as *Jumat Pahing*, the atmosphere of this hamlet transforms. Buffalo owners and herders converge at the communal pen known as *Ngguyangan* (a wallowing ground and communal grazing enclosure for buffalo). Before them are laid out the ceremonial offerings called *ubo rampe*: *nasi bucent* (cone-shaped rice cooked in coconut milk, symbolizing prayers for safety), *ketupat* (diamond-shaped rice cakes woven from palm leaves, symbolizing gratitude), *lepet* (glutinous rice wrapped in young coconut leaves), *cengkaruk* (toasted

dry rice snack), *ubi gembili* (purple wild yam), *gedang* (banana), *ingkung* (a whole chicken, marinated in turmeric and coconut milk and slow-cooked in its entirety, symbolizing sincerity and submission to God and ancestors), and *jenang sumsum* (white rice porridge made from rice flour and coconut milk, symbolizing purity of heart).

Prayers are offered in the Islamic manner, yet within them are explicit invocations of ancestral spirits and *Dadung Awuk*, the guardian spirit (*danyang*, a Javanese term for a protective ancestral spirit believed to inhabit and watch over a place) believed to reside in Bulak Pepe and to care for its buffalo. This ritual, known as *Jumat Pahingan*, is the moment when the Bulak Pepe community affirms its identity through oral tradition [2] as a “*Kampung Kerbau*” (‘Buffalo Village’): a community whose livelihood, economy, and cosmology revolve around the buffalo.



Fig. 1. Buffalo in Bulak Pepe hamlet (researcher documentation, September 10, 2025)

Bulak Pepe Hamlet recorded a buffalo population of 514 head in 2025 [3], a remarkably high figure amid the sweeping wave of agricultural mechanization that has drastically displaced the role of buffalo across nearly all Javanese villages. What sustains this buffalo population is not economics alone, but three myths passed down through generations: the myth of *Ngandong* (a sacred forest believed to be the supernatural realm of the spirit *Dadung Awuk*), the myth of *Dadung Awuk* (the guardian spirit of the buffalo), and the myth of *Kesaktian Cah Angon Kebo* (the supernatural powers believed to be possessed by buffalo herders). These three myths constitute an active system of local knowledge: oral traditions continuously produced and reproduced through ritual, daily conversation, and above all through *Jumat Pahingan*.

Yet beneath the apparent vitality of *Jumat Pahingan*, cracks are widening. Some younger community members now refer to buffalo as “*a filthy and disgusting animal*” and have no knowledge of *Dadung Awuk* or the *Ngandong* myth. The *Nretek* tradition, a protective musical procession held during the sacred Javanese month of *Suro* (the first month of the Javanese lunar calendar, considered the holiest month of the year), in which herders dressed as clowns paraded through the village accompanied by percussion made from buffalo accessories, has ceased entirely. *Gumbrekan Mahesa* (literally meaning the buffalo parade: *gumbrekan* = ceremonial procession, *mahesa* = buffalo in Javanese), celebrated since 2018 as a modern

reinterpretation of *Jumat Pahingan*, has gradually been transformed into a tourism attraction [4],[5]. The question is “when *Jumat Pahingan* changes its face and younger generations abandon it, who still guards the identity of Kampung Kerbau? And who is being quietly erased from within it?”. This article argues that *Jumat Pahingan* performs a dual and mutually tensioning function: on one side, as a mechanism of inclusivity that unites the community across social boundaries; on the other, as an arena in which belonging is now contested and in which the threat of *erasure* looms over certain groups. This article aims to demonstrate that oral tradition should not be treated merely as a passive heritage of the past, but examined as an active and simultaneously fragile agent of social transformation. One capable of both fostering inclusivity and generating new forms of exclusion within the community it purports to unite.

2 Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 2. Four theoretical frameworks work in an integrated manner to read the phenomenon of *Jumat Pahingan* as an arena between inclusion and erasure.

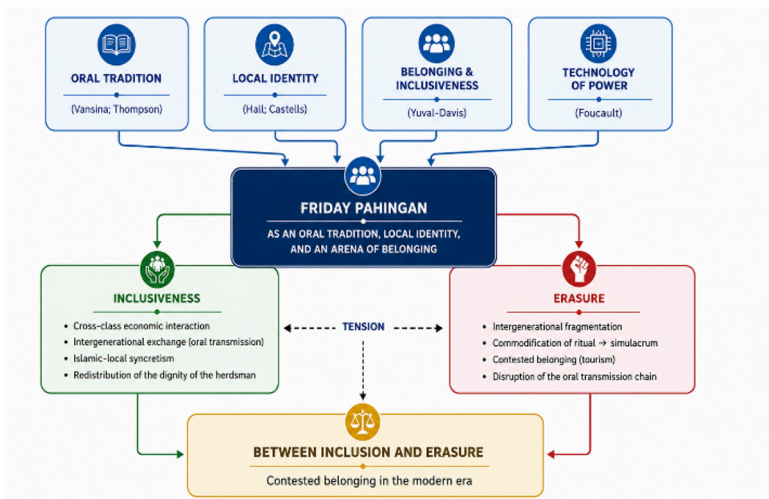


Fig. 2. Conceptual Framework: Between Inclusion and Erasure (Source: Researcher’s Analysis, 2026)

2.1 Oral Tradition as Living History

Jan Vansina [6] defines oral tradition as “verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation”: verbal messages that carry statements from a past that extends beyond the current generation. Within this framework, oral tradition is not merely folklore; it is an alternative form of

historiography that preserves the collective memory and adaptive knowledge of a community [7]. Thompson extends this perspective by affirming that oral history is the most democratic means of recording the past, as it gives voice to those who have been excluded from the official written narrative [8]: farmers, herders, and buffalo breeders. Jumat Pahingan in Bulak Pepe is an oral tradition in the fullest sense, never written down, yet continuously renewed and transmitted through the spoken word within the ritual. Assmann describes this process as cultural memory: a form of collective memory that requires ritual and repeated practice to remain alive [9]. When ritual ceases, memory does not merely fade; it is erased alongside the entire system of knowledge that sustains it.

2.2 Construction of Local Identity

Cultural identity is “a production which is never complete, always in process”, a production that is never finished [10]. The identity of “Kampung Kerbau” (‘Buffalo Village’) is produced through the repeated enactment of Jumat Pahingan, which at each performance reaffirms: “we are the people who preserve the buffalo”. Castells (2010) adds a dimension of power by distinguishing three types of identity: legitimizing identity (produced by dominant institutions), resistance identity (formed by marginalized groups as a form of resistance), and project identity [11]. The identity of Kampung Kerbau Bulak Pepe is a resistance identity: it grows from a community that refuses to be categorized as “backward” simply because it still keeps buffalo and maintains its rituals

2.3 Belonging and Contested Inclusivity

Belonging is “emotional attachment, about feeling ‘at home’”: an emotional attachment to a community, place, or narrative [12]. It is inherently contested: never available equally to all, but always defined by boundaries drawn by those who hold power. Jumat Pahingan determines who belongs: those who attend, who bring the ritual offerings, who know the invocation addressed to Dadung Awuk. Those who are absent, younger generations, outsiders, or community members who have distanced themselves from the buffalo identity are gradually being erased from this symbolic community.

2.4 Ritual as Technology of Power (Foucault)

Foucault affirms that power operates through production: the production of knowledge, subjects, and truth [13]. Ritual is a technology of power that disciplines the body and forms subjects without explicit coercion. Jumat Pahingan produces the subject of the responsible buffalo keeper and the dignified herder through the internalization of values that occurs each time the ritual is enacted. Foucault’s concept of the regime of truth is equally relevant: Jumat Pahingan is the moment in which truths about the buffalo, that it is *rajakaya* (literally ‘living wealth’: the Javanese term for livestock, especially cattle and buffalo, regarded as a mobile and self-reproducing financial asset) that must be preserved, that Dadung Awuk is real, and that Ngandong

is a forbidden and sacred space, are proclaimed and legitimized by the community as a whole.

3 Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with an ethnographic strategy. The research site is Bulak Pepe Hamlet, Banyubiru Village, Widodaren District, Ngawi Regency, East Java. Data were collected through three primary methods: (1) participatory observation, which included direct immersion in the daily life of Bulak Pepe during December 2025 and January 2026; (2) in-depth interviews with 14 informants comprising senior herders (Pak Sugiyono, Pak Setu, Pak Suroyo, Pak Trimo, Pak Hadi Suroto), a female buffalo keeper (Ibu Surati), the hamlet head (Pak Warsito), younger community members (Keisya, Syarah, Naufal), and an official from the Ngawi Regency Animal Husbandry Office; and (3) *photovoice*, in which informants photographed ritual practices and reflected on them verbally. Secondary data were obtained from village archives, media reports, and academic literature. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking (Miles, et al. 2023). Analysis followed the interactive model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Oral Tradition as a Living Communal Archive

Across many communities in Indonesia, *Jumat Pahing* is widely regarded as an auspicious day for communal prayers and offerings to livestock. Triyono et al. document a parallel tradition called *Gumbrekan* preserved in Gesing Hamlet, Gunungkidul, which takes the form of a *selamatan* (a communal ritual feast of Islamic origin, widely practiced across Java as a mechanism for collective prayer and social bonding) for cattle and other livestock, held once every eight months according to the Javanese *wuku Gumbreg* calendar week (a specific week in the Pawukon cycle, a 210-day Javanese ceremonial calendar), on particular days such as Monday-Pahing or Friday-Pahing. The community believes that God maintains the balance of nature and protects both humans and livestock from harm, bestows prosperity through agricultural and husbandry yields, and sustains social bonds among community members through the shared practice of ritual [15].

In Bulak Pepe, the ritual is celebrated as *weton kerbau* (literally ‘the buffalo’s birthday’: *weton* refers to a person’s or, in this case, an animal’s natal day calculated by the intersection of the 7-day week and the 5-day Javanese market week, recurring in a 35-day cycle; it is of considerable spiritual significance in Javanese belief). Originally practiced individually from house to house, the ritual has since 2017 been held collectively at the communal enclosure of *Ngguyangan* (Interview: Pak Warsito, 31 December 2025).



Fig. 3. Communal Friday Pahingan in Ngguyangan (source: Mr. Sugiyono 2023)

The elements of *Jumat Pahingan* constitute a complex oral text. On the material side, the ritual requires *ubo rampe* (ceremonial offerings; literally the ‘complete set of accessories’ needed for a ritual): *nasi buceng* (cone-shaped ceremonial rice symbolizing a prayer for safety, the cone form echoing a mountain as a sacred axis between heaven and earth), *ketupat* (diamond-shaped rice cakes woven from palm leaves, symbolizing gratitude and purity of heart; its woven structure symbolizes the complexity of human relations), *lepet* (glutinous rice wrapped in young coconut leaves and steamed), *cengkaruk* (dried, toasted rice granules eaten as a crunchy snack), *ubi gembili* (a type of purple-fleshed wild yam native to Java, *Dioscorea esculenta*, commonly used in ceremonial offerings as a symbol of the earth’s bounty), *gedang* (banana), *ingkung* (a whole chicken prepared by marinating it in a turmeric-coconut milk blend and slow-cooking it in its entirety, the use of the whole, uncut bird symbolizing sincerity, humility, and submission to God and ancestral spirits), and *jenang sumsum* (a smooth white porridge made from rice flour and coconut milk, symbolizing purity of soul and intent). On the verbal side, the ritual opens with Islamic prayers (*bismillah*, ‘in the name of God’; *allahumma barik lana*, ‘O God, bless us’) that explicitly incorporate the naming of ancestors and *Dadung Awuk*. Ibu Surati, a senior female buffalo keeper, explains:

“Kedah ngoten niku. Niku nguri mbah mbiyen. Jadah, kupat lepet, karuk, uwi gembili, gedang, ingkung. Dados e kula niki nurut kalih mbah mbiyen. Kula terusne muga-muga sing kula ingu niku mboten enten alangan napa-napa. Didongakne sak sagede. Cuma njih sami kalih tiyang maem sing allahuma niku mawon. Nek maem allahuma bariklana, nek niku njih disebutne leluhure.”

(Interview, Ibu Surati, 30 December 2025)

[Translation from Javanese: “It must be like that. That is what the ancestors left us. Sticky rice, *ketupat*, *lepet*, *cengkaruk*, yam, *gembili*, banana, *ingkung*. So I follow the ancestors. I continue it, hoping that what I raise will encounter no obstacles whatsoever. We pray as best we can. It is the same as when

people eat and say allahumma — just that. When eating, allahumma barik lana; in this ritual, the ancestors are also named.”]

Ms Surati’s account reveals the workings of oral tradition as a communal archive: it does not merely transmit ritual procedures, but also conveys values, deference to ancestors, responsibility for the buffalo as *rajakaya* (living wealth), and the unbroken relationship between humans, animals, and ancestral spirits. Pak Hadi Suroto adds the historical dimension:

“Lha niku lak enten sejarah bu. Sejarah riyan mahesa niku mulakne pendak tiap jemah pahing niku namine digumbreki. Niku lak dingge Dadung Awuk niku. Critane tiyang sepuh niku bu. Mirsani niku. Ndamel kupat lepet.”

(Interview, Pak Hadi Suroto, 13 December 2025)

[Translation from Javanese: “Well, there is a history to it. The history is that in the past, every Jumat Pahing the buffalo was ceremonially honored — that’s what it’s called: *digumbreki* (to be celebrated in the *gumbrekan* tradition). It was for Dadung Awuk. That’s the story of the elders. I witnessed it. Making *ketupat-lepet*.”]

In Vansina’s terms [6], Pak Hadi Suroto’s account is a classic example of oral tradition: a “*reported statement from the past*” that has passed through many generations of speakers before reaching his ears. Beyond being a historical account, *Jumat Pahingan* is what Assmann calls *communicative memory* in active function: it does not merely store the past, but shapes how the community understands the present and envisions the future [9]. Each time *Jumat Pahingan* is held, the myth of *Dadung Awuk* is renewed in its relevance, and the identity of Kampung Kerbau is reinforced at its foundations.

4.2 Jumat Pahingan and the Construction of Local Identity as “Kampung Kerbau”

Each time *Jumat Pahingan* is held, it affirms that Bulak Pepe is a community distinct from the villages surrounding it. This identity is multi-layered: (1) *ecological* (the sacred forest of *Ngandong* and its perennially flowing springs); (2) *economic* (buffalo as financial assets valued at IDR 18–25 million per head in 2025); and (3) *cosmological* (Bulak Pepe as a place ‘watched over’ by *Dadung Awuk*). *Jumat Pahingan* is the moment at which all three layers of identity converge and mutually reinforce one another. In Hall’s (1996) terms, the ritual represents the community as part of the narrative of Kampung Kerbau and it is this representation, not the other way around, that produces the identity itself. The identity of Kampung Kerbau is precisely what Castells (2010) calls a *resistance identity*: a wordless declaration that modernity has no right to define what is valuable and what is not.

4.3 A Ritual that Transcends Social Boundaries: Dimensions of Inclusivity

The research finds that *Jumat Pahingan* operates as a mechanism of inclusivity that organically transcends social divisions. Figure 4 visualizes the four dimensions of this inclusivity and compares their strength before and after modern pressures.

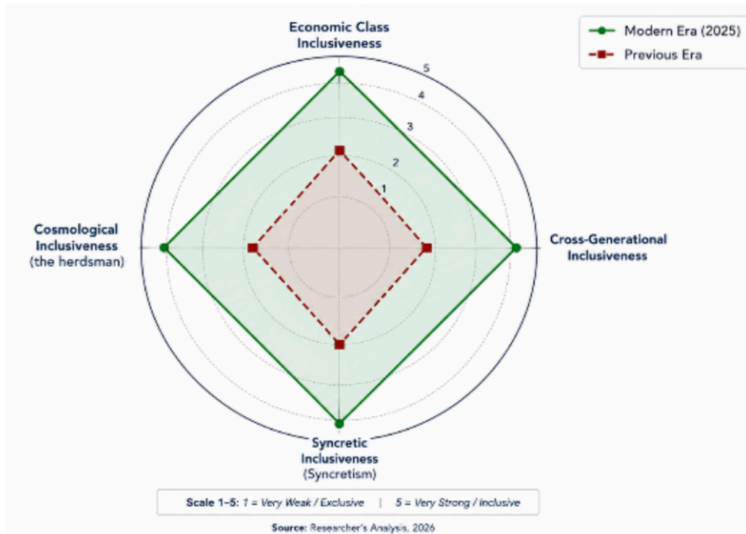


Fig. 4. Comparison of Inclusivity Dimensions in Jumat Pahingan: Before and After Modern Pressures (Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2026; Scale 1–5)

Figure 2 shows that prior to modern pressures, all four dimensions of inclusivity stood at high levels (4.2–4.8). In the modern era, cross-generational inclusivity has suffered the sharpest decline (4.2 → 2.1), followed by the cosmological inclusivity of the *cah angon* (4.6 → 3.2). Cross-class inclusivity has remained relatively stable (4.5 → 4.3) as communal rituals are still conducted collectively. Syncretic inclusivity (across religious beliefs) has experienced a moderate decline (4.8 → 3.8) due to religious rationalization and the expanding reach of formal education.

At least four dimensions of inclusivity are at work within the ritual. *First*, cross-class economic inclusivity: buffalo owners with dozens of animals, who occupy the upper economic stratum of the hamlet, sit alongside daily-wage herders, praying over the same buffalo, eating the same offerings. The ritual creates a moment of cosmological egalitarianism found in none of the formal village institutions, not in village council meetings, not in economic associations. *Second*, intergenerational inclusivity: *Jumat Pahingan* is the sole occasion on which knowledge about buffalo, ordinarily held only in the minds of elderly herders, is actively transmitted to younger members through speech, demonstration, and direct participation. Those young people who attend do not merely listen to myths; they learn how to prepare the *ubo rampe* (ceremonial offerings), how to recite the prayers, how to read the signs of nature through the behavior of the buffalo. This is a space of informal education irreplaceable by any formal school.

Third, cross-belief inclusivity through syncretism: the Islamic phrase *bismillah* (the opening invocation ‘in the name of God’, recited at the beginning of all Islamic acts of worship and daily activities) coexists alongside the naming of *Dadung Awuk*; Friday prayers precede the buffalo *selamatan*; Islamic rice mounds are served alongside offerings rooted in pre-Islamic tradition. This syncretism, the interweaving

of Islamic and indigenous Javanese spiritual practices, constitutes a form of theological inclusivity: an implicit offer that one may be fully Muslim and simultaneously fully bound to one's ancestors and local tradition, with no need to choose between them. *Fourth*, cosmological inclusivity for the most marginal: the greatest paradox of *Jumat Pahingan* is that it places the *cah angon*, the buffalo herders, who occupy the lowest economic stratum of the hamlet, in the highest position of cosmological honor. The *cah angon* are the mediators between humans and *Dadung Awuk*; they possess the power to repel destructive winds, heal sick buffalo, and read supernatural signs. The ritual functions as a social adhesive that plays an important role in building solidarity and maintaining community stability [16].

4.4 The Fracturing of Inclusivity: Erasure and Contested Belonging

Jumat Pahingan, which was once intimate and deeply sacred, has progressively become a more social and public event. The frequency of the ritual's practice has declined: once performed consistently every year by the community as a whole, it is now observed by only a small number of community members who continue to hold the old beliefs. These changes indicate that the practice of the tradition has become increasingly subjective and dependent on individual conviction, thereby diminishing its cultural uniformity and continuity (Regan, et al 2025).

Three erosive forces now work simultaneously against *Jumat Pahingan*'s inclusivity, as visualized in Figures 5 and 6 below.

TRADITION	FREQUENCY	MAIN FUNCTION	STATUS (2025)	MAIN THREATS
 Jumat Pahingan	 Every Friday (~7x/month)	 Prayers together; strengthen the bond between humans, buffalo, and nature	 ACTIVE	 Generational fragmentation; declining attendance of young people
 Sepasaran Gudel	 5th day after calf is born	 Thanksgiving for the birth of a buffalo calf; strengthens family bonds	 ACTIVE	 Less recognized by the younger generation
 Gumbrekan Mahesa	 Once a year (after the 3rd harvest)	 Communal gratitude; prayers for the buffalo, ancestral reverence	 TRANSFORMING (Tourism since 2018)	 Ritual → simulacrum; sacred function becomes more flexible
 Nretek	 Suro Month (Javanese New Year)	 Balu-style musical performance; a purification process for the village	 DISCONTINUED	 No regeneration; completely abandoned

 **ACTIVE**
Traditions are still practiced regularly and function well.
 **TRANSFORMING**
Traditions are still carried out, but have shifted in meaning or function.
 **DISCONTINUED**
Traditions are no longer practiced and have been abandoned.

Source: Field Interviews and Participatory Observation, November 2023–January 2026.

Fig. 5. Status of the Four Buffalo Ritual Traditions in Bulak Pepe Hamlet (Source: Field interviews and participatory observation, November 2023–January 2026)

Figure 5 shows that of the four ritual traditions present in Bulak Pepe, only two remain consistently active: *Jumat Pahingan* and *Sepasaran Gudel* (literally the 'fifth-day celebration for a calf': *separasari* = the fifth day after birth, a key marker in Javanese time-reckoning; *gudel* = a newborn buffalo calf). This ritual is held on the fifth day after the birth of a calf as an act of gratitude and a prayer for the calf's safety and growth; the offerings differ depending on the calf's sex: *pondoh*, white rice with

coconut, and *dawet* (a traditional sweet coconut milk drink with rice flour droplets) are offered for a female calf, while *jadah kutil*, glutinous rice with black-eyed peas, is offered for a male calf). One tradition, *Gumbrekan Mahesa*, has been transformed into a tourism attraction since 2018. And one, *Nretek* (a protective ritual held during the Javanese month of *Suro*, in which herders dressed in comic attire played percussion instruments made from buffalo accessories), primarily the *klothak* (a large wooden cowbell hung around the buffalo's neck, and processed through the village to ward off *bala*, communal misfortune), has ceased entirely. This pattern indicates that the erosion of ritual is not a singular event but a gradual process that has unfolded over more than a decade.

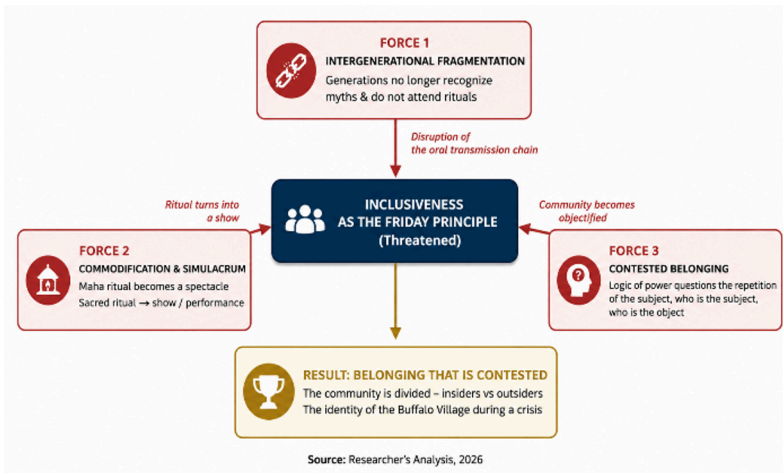


Fig. 6. Model of the Three Erosive Forces Undermining the Inclusivity of *Jumat Pahingan* (Source: Researcher's Analysis, 2026)

As illustrated in Figure 6, three erosive forces operate in simultaneous convergence. The first force is intergenerational fragmentation. Younger community members in Bulak Pepe have alarmingly lost familiarity with *Jumat Pahingan*. Informant “S” (17 years old, a child of a buffalo herder) stated that she would not follow in her father’s footsteps as a keeper, as she considers herding a repulsive form of work (Interview, 31 December 2025). In contrast, informant “K” continues to herd buffalo consistently and with genuine affection, acknowledging that he is often mocked by peers for pursuing a hobby so unlike those of other young people. In Foucault’s terms, this constitutes an *epistemic rupture*: knowledge that is no longer transmitted systematically, surviving only as a residual intuition without the grounding of direct experience. The second force is the commodification of ritual into simulacrum.

Gumbrekan Mahesa, packaged as a tourism attraction since 2018, has shifted *Jumat Pahingan* from a communal ritual into a performance. This is a process of *simulacrum*: the representation of the ritual replaces the ritual itself. Tourists arrive to photograph the buffalo parade; the *ubo rampe* (ceremonial offerings) are arranged to maximize visual appeal; yet the soul of the ritual, the silence of prayer, the intimate

closeness with *Dadung Awuk*, the reverent fear that generates deep respect, quietly evaporates. The third force is market-based contested belonging. As Gumbrekan Mahesa becomes a tourism agenda, a quietly troubling question surfaces: for whom is this ritual performed? If its purpose is to serve tourists who bring money and redefine expectations, then the Bulak Pepe community paradoxically becomes a stranger within its own ritual. Their *belonging* to the identity of Kampung Kerbau is contested by the logic of the tourism market [18] [19], as Yuval-Davis (2006) warns: the boundaries of community can be redrawn by external forces, so that those who were once full members now become extras in a narrative that is no longer their own. Oral tradition is thus not merely storytelling, it is a claim to power [20], and when that claim is appropriated by market forces, the community loses its authority over its own story.

4.5 Jumat Pahingan as a Threatened Agent of Social Transformation

Jumat Pahingan performs three transformative functions that are quiet but effective. *First, ecological transformation:* the myth of *Ngandong*, which is consecrated and reaffirmed in the ritual, has for centuries protected the forest and water sources of Bulak Pepe. When the extended drought of 1975 struck and caused crop failure throughout the surrounding region, Bulak Pepe succeeded in harvesting 15 hectares of paddy, not because of modern irrigation infrastructure, but because the springs within the *Ngandong* area never dried up, protected by the taboo of the sacred forest myth. *Second, justice-based economic transformation:* the *gaduhan* system (a traditional Javanese profit-sharing arrangement for livestock: a buffalo owner entrusts animals to a herder who cares for them; in return, the herder receives an agreed share of the calves born, typically 50% of the offspring, while the owner retains the original herd. The arrangement is based on mutual trust and social obligation rather than written contract, making it a form of informal yet highly functional agrarian cooperative) born of belief creates a more equitable distribution of economic benefit than many formal financial mechanisms. *Third, resistant identity transformation:* *Jumat Pahingan* is a subversive declaration that agrarian communities need not be ashamed of their identity. The buffalo is identity a culture that endures and adapts without losing its core; that continuously adapts without losing its essential character.

5 Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that *Jumat Pahingan* in Bulak Pepe Hamlet is not merely a local religious ritual, it is a living system of oral tradition that simultaneously operates as a communal archive, a construction of local identity, a mechanism of inclusivity, and an organic agent of social transformation. Three erosive forces have been identified as threatening its existence: intergenerational fragmentation, the commodification of ritual into simulacrum, and market-based *contested belonging*. These forces do not operate from a single direction; they converge and mutually reinforce one another. The most significant decline has occurred in the dimension of cross-generational inclusivity, indicating that the chain of oral transmission is in the gravest danger as it is no longer being sustained by the younger generation.

The implications of these findings advance a broader academic proposition: oral history is not only about recording the past, it is about protecting the social infrastructure that sustains equity, inclusivity, and sustainability in the present. The social transformation agenda that this conference champions cannot afford to overlook oral tradition as one of its most authentic and irreplaceable forces. What must be saved from *Jumat Pahingan* is not merely its documentation, but the social conditions that make its continued, living production possible: a younger generation willing to listen, a space free from market-driven intervention, and the institutional recognition that local knowledge is legitimate knowledge not an archaic relic to be visited once and then forgotten.

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