

A Study on Nglanggeran *Kampung Pitu*: Sociologically and Anthropologically Perspectives

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Abstract

Some studies have found village in Yogyakarta that is only inhabited by 7 families, namely kampung Pitu. Since it was established approximately 600 years ago, it must only be inhabited by 7 families, no more and no less. This unique fact has raised researchers' concern to conduct a study on the village by utilizing sociological and anthropological perspectives. This study aims to cultivate further the history of the village, its customs, and the religious understanding of the community of kampung Pitu. This study is descriptive qualitative. The informants of this study are the caretaker, head of community, and the head of families living in kampung Pitu. The data are collected by semi-structured interviews and documentation. The study results show that 1) Tingalan, Tayub/Ledek, and Rasulan are the traditions that are still preserved in the village. In the villagers' belief, there will be a disaster if they abandon those traditions. 2) The community believes in myths, offerings, and rituals. 3) The social life of the village is much the same as the village in general. The community in kampung Pitu practice a strong religious tradition of their ancestor. Thus, making offerings and rituals is commonly practiced as they believe it can shield them from disaster, famine, and the like.

Keywords

Kampung Pitu, anthropology, sociology

Abstrak

Beberapa penelitian menemukan bahwa desa di Yogyakarta yang hanya dihuni oleh 7 keluarga, yaitu kampung Pitu. Sejak didirikan sekitar 600 tahun yang lalu, hanya boleh dihuni oleh 7 keluarga, tidak lebih dan tidak kurang. Fakta unik ini menimbulkan perhatian peneliti untuk melakukan kajian di desa dengan memanfaatkan perspektif sosiologis dan antropologis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk lebih mendalami sejarah desa, adat istiadatnya, dan pemahaman keagamaan masyarakat Kampung Pitu. Penelitian ini bersifat deskriptif kualitatif. Informan penelitian ini adalah pengurus, kepala masyarakat, dan kepala keluarga yang tinggal di kampung Pitu. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan wawancara semi terstruktur dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: 1) Tingalan, Tayub/Ledek dan Rasulan merupakan tradisi yang masih dilestarikan di desa. Dalam kepercayaan penduduk desa akan ada bencana jika mereka meninggalkan tradisi tersebut. 2) Masyarakat mempercayai mitos, sesajen, dan ritual. 3) Kehidupan sosial desa hampir sama dengan desa pada umumnya. Masyarakat di kampung Pitu mempraktikkan tradisi religi yang kuat dari nenek moyang mereka. Jadi, membuat persembahan dan ritual biasanya dilakukan karena mereka percaya itu bisa melindungi mereka dari bencana, kelaparan, dan sejenisnya.

Kata Kunci

Kampung Pitu, antropologi, sosiologi

Introduction

According to the Indonesian Dictionary (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia/KBBI*), anthropology is the science of human beings, especially the origin, colors, physical shapes, customs, and beliefs of the past era. Nurti, (2017) in her journal, mentions that anthropology is derived from Greek words, *anthropos* which means human or person and *logos*, which means knowledge (Nurti, 2017). Anthropology studies humans as biological creatures as well as

social creatures. Anthropology has two holistic sides in which it examines humans and their humanistic dimensions. This mainstream traditionally separates anthropology from other humanitarian disciplines that emphasize cultural comparisons (Saputra, 2017).

Meanwhile, sociology according to the Indonesian Dictionary is a science on the characteristics, behavior, and development of society, science on social structure, social processes, and changes. The word sociology is derived from the word *socius* which means friend and *logos* which means science (Maunah, 2020). A sociologist named Pitirim Sorokin defines sociology as the study of the relationship and the influence of reciprocity between various kinds of social phenomena and non-social phenomena. Furthermore, it studies the general characteristics of all other social phenomena (Lumintang, 2015).

Based on the data findings, the researchers focus the study of *kampung Pitu* on the perspective of Sociology and Anthropology. *Kampung Pitu*, which is thick with mystical ambiance, is situated in the eastern peak of the ancient volcano of Nglanggeran, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, at the altitude of 740 meters above sea level (Sholihah, 2018). Until recently, the people of *kampung Pitu* faithfully hold their ancestor's cultural heritage practiced for hundreds of years. It is the one that requires the village to be inhabited by seven families. If more than seven families live in the area, bad luck will come to the 8th and the following families. Thus, *kampung Pitu* is derived from that circumstance, as in Javanese *pitu* means seven. The legend has it that the village is sacred, it will choose its own inhabitants. Not everyone can survive to live there, not even people who have supernatural power. Those who survive are those who are chosen by nature (Mitop, 2019). However, it does not mean that many people cannot inhabit the village. According to Redjo, the caretaker, the village can bear up to a thousand people, only if they are willing to be the member of a certain family who already lives there.

The unique and significant findings of this study draw the researchers' interest to cultivate further on the phenomena by applying the perspective of Sociology and Anthropology. Thus, this paper aims to unfold the phenomena of *kampung Pitu* in Nglanggeran, Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta in the eyes of Sociology and Anthropology.

Methods

There are two main data sources of this study, namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data are gained from the interview with the caretaker of the village, the head of community, and the head of families as sample informants. The secondary data are taken from books, journals, researches and other resources related to *kampung Pitu*.

The population of this study is the residents of *kampung Pitu*, who are chosen by purposive sampling. The data collection is taken from the semi-structured interview and documentation. Those data are, then, analyzed with the descriptive-qualitative method.

The following is the detailed numbers of sample and population of *kampung Pitu* as the data resource of this study.

Tabel 1

No	Population	Sample		
1.	The caretaker of <i>kampung Pitu</i>	1	1 male	-
2.	The head of the community of <i>Kampung Pitu</i>	1	1 male	-
3.	The residents of <i>Kampung Pitu</i>	23	3 males	-
TOTAL		25	5	

Results & Discussion

Overview and Brief History of *Kampung Pitu*

Kampung Pitu is situated on the top of an ancient volcano, covering the area of 7 hectares, at the altitude of 740 meters above sea level. Its formal address is Nglanggeran Wetan Village, RT 19 RW 04, Nglanggeran sub-District, Patuk District, Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia (Interview, 2020).

In Javanese, *pitu* means seven. The village is named so because the village can only be inhabited by 7 families. The family is counted based on the formal family identification card released by the government.

Nowadays, of the 7 families, *kampung Pitu* is home to around 25 people. There is no written rule mentioning that *kampung Pitu* must only be inhabited by 7 families. However, every time it is violated; fight, disaster, squabble, or other unpleasant thing happens (Interview; 2020), which leaves the village with 7 families again. The residents of *kampung Pitu* look like and behaves just like other Indonesian in general. Nothing looks different from them (Interview, 2020).

The history of *kampung Pitu* begins from a village called *kampung Tlaga*. However, as it is only inhabited by 7 families, later it is called as *kampung Pitu* (Purwanto, 2020). The people of *kampung Pitu* itself are uncertain when the first time do people start to stay in that place, however they say that people live there from generation to generation. The village already exists in the days of the saints, but they do not mention which saint (among the nine saints known in the history of Islam in Java) it is (Pratiwi and Pinasti, I.S, 2017).

Nevertheless, the history of *kampung Pitu* can be traced from the story told by the caretaker of the village. The story is well-remembered in the memory of the people in the area and its surroundings. According to the local story, what is now *kampung Pitu*, was then a wild forest. In that forest, there is a rare tree called *kinah gadung wulung* (Interview, 2020). A sacred heirloom that has supernatural power is hidden on that tree. It is beyond challenging to draw the heirloom from that tree. Finally, the King of Yogyakarta Kingdom held a contest to draw the heirloom. Whoever succeeded in doing the challenge would be given a plot of land for him and his descendants (Interview, 2020).

Many people participated in the contest, no one succeeded but a gentleman named Iro Kromo. He was given a plot of land by the Yogyakarta Kingdom. Later, Iro Kromo and his seven friends who helped him win the challenge settled nearby the *kinah gadung wulung* tree and made an unwritten pact. The pact mentions that: first, only seven families are allowed to stay in that plot of land; second, if any descendants of the seven families wish to stay in the area, they should wait until one head of family passed away; third, if they strongly wish to stay while there are already seven families live there, they should be included as the member of the existing family under one head of family.

The unwritten pact above is still obeyed by the people today. Anytime the agreement is violated, unpleasant things occur; such as illness, a sudden feeling of uneasiness living in that place, a disruption of supernatural events, or even death. These peculiar things still exist today, thus, they make *kampung Pitu* unique and sacred (Hamid, 2019).

After the death of Iro Kromo, his place is replaced sequentially by Mento Dikromo, Kartoyoso, and now Rejo Dimulyo. Rejo Dimulyo claims that he is more than 100 years old, although in his ID card it is written that his birthdate is 31 December 1928 (Interview, 2020).

According to Redjo, as the caretaker of the village, *kampung Pitu* can accommodate up to 1000 people under one circumstance, i.e they include themselves into the seven existing. Otherwise, otherwise, some unpleasant things will happen to them. The legend says that *kampung Pitu* is a sacred village. It will choose its residents in an unexplained way. Even people with supernatural power might not manage to survive to live in the village if the land does not desire them. Those who live there are the chosen ones (Interview, 2020).

Rituals and Myths of Kampung Pitu

Nowadays, *kampung Pitu* is led by caretaker Redjo Dimulyo, the oldest resident whose age is 102 years old. According to him, during its existence for several hundred years, *kampung Pitu* has only 4 caretakers. Though it is a bit preposterous, it is plausible because the ancients lived longer than today's' population. For instance, Redjo's grandfather passed away in 1925 at 210 years old (Interview, 2020).

One of the safest ways for the outsider to be able to live in *kampung Pitu* is to marry one of the family members. Those who marry and settle there will not be harmed like most people who have tried different way before (Interview, 2020). No matter how many family members are, the number of the family (head of the family) must only be seven, no more and no less. No matter how strong the attempt of the people to break the tradition is, it remains to exist because any violation of the rule will end up in a wretch. Currently, there are 25 people from 7 families living in *kampung Pitu* (Interview, 2020).

Meanwhile, the people of *kampung Pitu* still preserve several rituals as a form of gratitude for their lives today. Those traditions are as the following (Interview, 2020).

First, *Tingalan*. *Tingalan* is an annual birthday celebration. The birthday is based on the Javanese calendar (*neton*). However, the celebration is only dedicated to the elders. *Tingalan* carries out a special meaning for the villagers (Interview, 2020). When one of the elders celebrates their birthday, he will hold *tingalan* in his house.

Second, *Tayub/Ledhek*. *Tayub* is a cultural heritage dance that is still preserved. In *kampung Pitu*, *tayub* is performed in *Rasulan* which is held annually. The performance of *tayub* is held near *Sumber Tlogo*. Four Javanese songs must be sung on that occasion, they are *blendrong*, *ijo-ijo*, *eleng-eleng* and *sri slamet*. Those songs express the gratitude for the abundant harvest (Sawitri, et.all, 2021).

Third, *Rasulan*. Some of the residents of *kampung Pitu* believe that if they do not conduct the tradition of *Rasulan*, disaster such as drought, epidemics, and crop failure may occur. *Rasulan* conducted by the *kampung Pitu* community is also associated with the gratitude of the people for a successful harvest, an abundant rice harvest. The villagers understand that the good harvest is gained because of the role of Dewi Sri, the Goddess of Rice. Therefore, Dewi Sri becomes the center of the worship and gratitude of the *rasulan* (Bauto, 2014). The values drawn from this tradition is that people should always be grateful to the Creator for the life they live today.

Furthermore one deep meaning that can be learned from this tradition is –togetherness with other communities. The activities are done in the form of prayers and offerings. The offerings are intended as a form of alms to family, relatives, neighbors, and all God’s creatures. The alms-giving process is done after the prayers are taking part. The offerings (*uborampe*) will be enjoyed together with other community members or distributed to the needy. The offerings of the *Rasulan* are varied, each of them carries out a special meaning (Interview, 2020).

The next tradition is Tomb Cleaning. This tradition is held annually, several days before the month of Ramadhan. The tomb of Iro Kromo becomes the center of this tradition. Every year people will clean the tomb of the first person who opens the land and starts the life of *kampung Pitu* (Patria, 2018).

Several cultural prohibitions are applied in *kampung Pitu*. At least, three prohibitions exist, namely turning their back to Nglanggeran ancient volcano when performing a shadow puppet, performing a story of Ongko Wijaya getting hurt in a puppet show, and performing shadow puppet in the northern zone of Nglanggeran ancient volcano (Ardiansa, 2021).

In *kampung Pitu*, there is a natural spring called *Tlogo Mardhido/guyangan*. It is believed that the spring is never dry, even in the scorching dry season. People consider the spring as a source of life. They utilize it for daily use like cleaning and cooking. The myth has it that this spring is the bathing place of the *jaran sembrani*, the horses of the angels. Every time the horses go down and step its feet on the big rock beside the spring, it leaves footprints. Only with a certain spell that the horse’s footprints are detached itself from the rock. On certain days, the spring is visited by many people. They usually come to that place to do rituals or meditation. People believe that the place is sacred and it is a place where prayers are answered (Interview, 2020).

Those rituals are believed to bring blessings and security to the people of *kampung Pitu*. At the same time, it is a way for the descendants of Iro Kromo to send prayers and gratitude to nature which gives them life and shelter (Supriadi, 2020)

The Social and Religious Life of Kampung Pitu

Seven buildings steadily stand in *kampung Pitu*, however, only seven buildings are occupied. The people faithfully preserve to keep it seven families live in the village. If one of the descendants is married, he needs to wait until one head of family in the village dies.

The people of *kampung Pitu* truly uphold the inherited tradition of their ancestors. They unify together to practice every obligation and to avoid every prohibition. The obligations they practiced are named as Aksara 4, Aksara 5, dan Aksara 7 (Muhammad Roy Purwanto; Supriadi; RahmaniTimoritaYulianti, 2019). In a general description, those *aksaras* are the guideline on how to behave and treat everything in nature (Interview, 2020).

Redjo explains that Aksara 4 means pure, honest, long-lasting and sustainable. On the other side, Aksara 7 emphasizes the tradition of the ancient calendar, which tells people the right time to do something. For instance, when someone wants to build a house or to hold a wedding celebration, he needs to consult the calendar to find the best time to realize his intention. Redjo does not explain further the details of Aksara 5 but certainly, all the three *Aksaras* must be obeyed by anyone in the community and walk side by side with nature (Interview, 2020).

The appreciation of *kampung Pitu* community to their ancestor is their philosophy of life in seeing and interpreting their surrounding nature (Supriadi and Purwanto, 2019). It is because of the mindset to always befriend with nature which is drawn from their appreciation to their ancestors' way of life in the past. Until today, the people of *kampung Pitu* always give their best effort to protect nature. All of these forms of appreciation of the people in *kampung Pitu* to their ancestors become their guidelines to always live harmoniously with nature for nature is the main source of life. These appreciations; generate local wisdom or distinctive culture i.e. value system of customs and beliefs (Interview, 2020).

All the traditions, rituals, and everything done by people of *kampung Pitu* are inseparable from their strong faith of the inherited beliefs that still survive until today (Fadhilah, 2020). As they fear that the faith may fade as time goes by and lead to a disaster, they strictly apply the rule that not anyone can stay or construct a building in the area of *kampung Pitu* without their permission (Purwanto, 2020). In addition, other attempts are also conducted by the villagers to keep living harmoniously with nature by making offerings to the community. The offerings are placed near the spring of *kampung Pitu* (Supriadi; et al., 2020). The ritual is followed by mass prayers and ends with eating the offerings together. With these rituals, the people of *kampung Pitu* wish always to remember their ancestors who taught them kindness in life.

Kampung Pitu, as a traditional organization system has a special attachment to the life cycle of the residents. Everything in *kampung Pitu* is the heart of the life cycle of Nglanggeran community. The noble values taught by this village Without's the social determination to preserve the ancestor's way of life. The aspect of sustainability values With s part of the teaching of *kampung Pitu* as well.

Conclusions

Kampung Pitu is called so because since it was stablished hundred years ago, it can only be inhabited by seven (*pitu*) families. The traditions preserved in this village are *Tingalan*, *Tayub/Ledek*, and *Rasulan*. If these traditions are abandoned, the villagers believe that disaster will occur. Furthermore, they also believe in myths that drive them to conduct rituals and make offerings. The social life of *kampung Pitu* community is not different from other communities in general. They work as farmers from the morning to the afternoon. As the religious life of *kampung Pitu* is thick with their ancestor's tradition, rituals and offerings are commonly practiced. They believe that practicing these rituals may prevent disaster, give security, grant them with an abundant harvest.

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