

# TENGGERESE SHAMAN AS THE CENTER OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY IN BROMO NGADAS – EAST JAVA

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**Abstract** *Indigenous peoples have their own tendencies in structuring ethics and strengthening their identities. This has happened in various Indigenous communities, one of which is the Tengger people in Bromo Ngadas - East Java. This research was conducted through ethnological description on interviews for five months with the community and traditional officials to find out the role of shamans in indigenous peoples. Through this research it was found that the traditional shaman was the center of the Tengger community order. The role of the dukun or shaman can determine the identity of customs, ethics, and rules, as well as the distribution of power in society. Through this research it was also found that the preservation of the culture and economic life of the Tengger people was significantly influenced by the role of traditional shaman. In short, the Shaman manages the ethics and spiritual continuity of the Tenggerese.*

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## 1. Introduction

Ngadas Village is one of the last villages under the foot of Mount Bromo, located in East Java. Mount Bromo itself is known worldwide because its beauty is recognized on an international scale and has received recognition as one of the 7 wonders of the world in Indonesia. Bromo is surrounded by four regencies namely Malang, Probolinggo, Pasuruan, and Lumajang regencies. This research is centered on Ngadas, a village located in the district of Malang Regency and Poncokusumo District, which has the highest elevation, which is around 2200 meters above sea level on the southwest side of Mount Bromo. The majority of the people who live in Ngadas are Tengger people. Their ethnic identity is still being debated by academics so the mention of ethnicity is sometimes replaced by the term 'community'. This consideration was put forward considering several historical discoveries which argued that the Tenggerese did not have one ethnic ancestor, but at least four ethnic groups, namely Javanese Mataram, Javanese Pandalungan (assimilation of Javanese and Madurese), Mongolian and Chinese.

The Tengger people themselves are scattered from all over the foot of Mount Bromo, at least scattered in several villages such as Ngadas, Ngadisari, Wonokitri, Cemoro Lawang, Ranupani, Argosari, Tosari, Podokoyo, Sapikerep, and Gubuk Klakah. Several villages in the districts of Lumajang, Probolinggo, and Pasuruan have experienced acculturation with the culture of other villages below them. Among several other villages, Bromo Ngadas is recognized

as a village that consistently preserves culture and traditional order. Modernization in Bromo Ngadas village only affects the development sector and communication technology and agriculture. The rise of the tourism industry has not changed the ethical order of the Bromo Ngadas people. The existence of shamans supports the strength of *adat* (or culture) which is a special attraction for tourists both from Indonesia and abroad. Modernization does not then erode the existence of traditional shamans in certain communities (Kowalewski, 2019). This raises the argument that the Bromo Ngadas community has a structured system that creates conditions in which culture must be upheld, regardless of the various modernization offers that enter the village.

Through observations in this study, it was found that the shaman is a central figure in almost all community activities, starting from the agricultural and tourism economy, marriage and kinship, development and education, health, and safety of citizens, as well as rites and culture that take place in the community. In this study, a shaman who was trusted by the people of Ngadas village named Sutomo was identified. Sutomo was born and raised in the village. According to his narrative, he and his family have lived in Ngadas for four generations and currently Sutomo has children and grandchildren who also live in the village. In most areas of Southeast Asia, shamans are not allowed to directly benefit from their activities as shamans. Most have other professions such as farmers (Coflquergood et al., 1989), fishermen, teachers, or state apparatus. As shamans who live in an agricultural area, traditional shamans in Tengger do not take advantage of their duties as shamans. For his livelihood, he works as a fruit farmer. Sutomo's role in maintaining the identity, ethics, and power structure of the Bromo Ngadas community is a phenomenon that deserves to be explored again to study the order of indigenous peoples in Indonesia.

## 2. Methods

This research focuses on the role of the traditional shaman of the Tenggerese community in Bromo Ngadas village. By considering the unique sociological and spiritual aspects of Ngadas village, this study seeks to explain the role of traditional shamans as the center of culture in Tenggerese ethnic group. An ethnographic descriptive discussion of the role of traditional shamans will be based on three sub-themes, namely identity, ethics, and division of powers. The research was conducted from 20 December 2022 to 20 April 2023 in Bromo Ngadas Village - Malang Regency using the snowball sampling method of interviews with cultural actors, traditional officials, village officials, and the Tengger people. The results of the analysis in this study resulted from a sociocultural analysis that utilizes the three aspects of the sub-discussion that have been described previously.

## 3. Result and Discussions

### 3.1. Shaman as Elders of Karo Spiritualism

A *dukun* in Javanese beliefs is generally someone who has invisible powers or has his own special skills, which not everyone has. However, *dukun* is often reluctant to be called 'dukun' because the term *dukun* is closely related to black magic in Indonesia (Jannah, 2017). Generally, shamans also deal with other world matters that are 'meta-physical' or do not depend on the physical world. An example is *dukun santet* (to send bad things to other people) or *dukun pelet* (to send seduction to other people). Apart from that, a *dukun* is also mentioned for someone who has intelligence or special skills, such as a *dukun* (who acts as a helper in the pregnancy process) and a *dukun* massage (who plays a role in fixing problematic joints of the body). However, in the Tenggerese community, the call for a *dukun* has a higher position than the

professional title. A *dukun* is usually an adult male, and he has several assistants, both family and closest relatives, to help him carry out his duties. In the Tengger community, especially in the village of Ngadas, the shaman is responsible for understanding the local community, as well as managing the course of the cultural and spiritual order of the community. This means that the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas is trusted by the local community because of their spiritual gifts and not because of their rhetorical abilities or mastery of speaking skills (Bužeková, 2019). This becomes the basic argument that shamans for this community have a central role in managing their civilized way of life.

The Tengger people have a set of beliefs which until now have not been recognized as a religion in Indonesia. This order of belief is referred to as the Karo belief. Karo has entered the nomenclature as one of the teachings of belief in Indonesia but is not considered a religion. The assumption underlying this decision is that Karo is largely a Hindu belief tradition, which has been modified by the Tengger people with various historical and ecological aspects. In the Karo tradition of worship, aspects of Hinduism are felt to be very strong. However, the existence and theological development of this Karo belief has temporarily been delegated to the teachings of Hindu Darma in Indonesia. In addition to producing an order of belief, the Tengger people believe that the Karo belief is a custom that can be carried out by everyone. Therefore, instead of practicing the Karo religion, the Tengger people prefer to see the Karo tradition as a form of culture that must be adhered to and applies to all people who live around Mount Bromo.

The demographics of the Tengger people in Ngadas itself consist of 50% of the Buddhist community, 40% of the Muslim community, and 10% of the Hindu community. Other religions such as Christianity, Catholicism, and Confucianism are not included in it because the population of these religions is very small. In fact, within a certain period, no residents who adhere to the three religions are found. But the people of Ngadas see religion as the personal responsibility of each person. This means that religion is a personal responsibility that must be adhered to by a person in considering the relationship of the present life and life after death. The stronger belief of the Tengger people in Ngadas is the Karo belief as their tradition. This means that they position this tradition as a condition for living together both with fellow human beings and with nature and the Ancestors. The ancestors referred to by the Tengger indigenous people in Ngadas are all humans who have lived before them, as well as the creator figure who in Indonesian is referred to as God. This consideration has been going on for centuries since the people at the foot of Mount Bromo identified themselves as the Tengger people. This is also found in the behavior of indigenous peoples in various parts of the world, where they have a representative (the shaman) who has the strength and peace of mind as a representative to interact with nature or with other forces that are trusted by the community (Winkleman, 2010). With this consideration also, the people of Tengger need a spiritual leader who is called a shaman.

The Tengger shaman has the main task of leading his village community to offer prayers to the Ancestors. Prayers chanted by Tengger shamans are generally prayers of gratitude. If the community has special requests such as health, sustenance, mate, and so on, the shaman will add the community's request at the end of the prayer. As applies to almost all indigenous peoples in Indonesia, shamans are also known to be able to cure illnesses through prayer or *suwuk* and spells (Setiawan et al., 2021). The prayers or spells of the Tengger shamans are not written down or have a formal form. The *dukun* in Ngadas, like various shamans in parts of Asia, will pass on their abilities through various oral teaching methods (Peters, 1982). The same thing happened to the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas where he would recite the *mantram* that had been taught by his predecessor based on his memory. At certain moments, a

dukun can be hindered from reciting prayers. They suddenly felt the symptom of 'forgetting' the mantra they usually recited. This is usually believed, influenced by the will of the Ancestors (with capital A). If the Ancestor is not pleased with someone's request or prayer, then the dukun will experience memory loss symptoms.

Apart from that, in spiritual terms, the *dukun* serves to remind the Tengger people of the will of the Ancestors, for example through advice in daily life or in community meetings at the village hall or at the village official's house. Because their beliefs are not written down in a special book but are preserved in teachings passed down from generation to generation, the shaman's job is to explain the customs and manners of the Tengger people at certain forums, for example during holidays and village community parties. The advice spoken by the shaman is not always conveyed in general. Sometimes the advice is only conveyed to village officials or other stakeholders who are interested in the livelihoods of village communities.

As a *dukun*, he also has the obligation to fast completely on special occasions and white fast (usually called *mutih* or fasting only by eating white rice without any flavors) with the aim of purifying oneself. Shamans are not considered sacred and exalted like priests in major religions. He is respected as a village elder like other village officials. However, because the level of trust of the Tengger people in Ngadas is still strong, the shaman is respected and often takes an important position in public decisions in the village. Fasting for a shaman is considered an attempt to replace the community in feeling sad and lost to nature. The shaman's way to mediate called *luyut*. It can be interpreted as human acceptance of all natural conditions, whether good or bad, because the Tengger people believe that the manifestation of their ancestors in the world is nature and their living environment.

In celebrations of the Tenggerese people, the position of the shaman can be equivalent to that of a priest, monk, or priest. It's just that in the tradition of the Tengger people in Ngadas, there are more celebrations led by shamans than the leaders of each religion. This is purely based on the consideration that priests, monks, and caretakers are more responsible for the inner formation of each person. While the Tengger people in Ngadas believe that joint activities cannot be categorized based on religious diversity, so the *dukun* becomes a joint spiritual leader who can be accepted as a community leader in understanding nature and the will of the Ancestors.

### **3.2. Shaman as Community Data Center**

Like the spiritual duties of the priest in major religions, important events in human life such as birth, marriage and death must be accompanied by prayer and the guidance of a spiritual leader. Meanwhile, the Tengger people themselves are a plural society since five seven to eight generations. Each family can consist of different religions for example. in one family the father is Buddhist, the mother is Hindu, and the children are Muslim. This consideration causes a *dukun* to pray for the people of Tengger during their important times.

Since the colonial era, shamans have also served to pray for newborn babies and pray for the bodies of those who have just died. This causes the *dukun* to know data from residents who have just been born or have recently died. Because of this experience, shamans can memorize the Tenggerese in Ngadas, both living and dead. At times when civil registration had not been carried out properly in Ngadas village, the *dukun* oversaw replacing the village secretary to record the births and deaths of residents in Ngadas village. The existence of a shaman who is accepted by a community indicates that the community is a plural society. This considers the testimony of the shaman as a figure who is present to pray for and accompany a family in these events.

The same thing also happens in the event of a wedding. Even though the Ngadas people are now experiencing a period of modernization, people over the age of 50 are still experiencing marriages without civil registration. This is influenced by two things, namely the lack of access to civil registration and civil marriage, as well as the tendency of village people to marry their neighbors. Shamans once again play a role in this important event. In dealing with a wedding event, a traditional shaman in Ngadas has three tasks, namely, first to meet the bride and groom to bless them both, second to give directions regarding the procedures and day of the wedding, and third to be a witness for the bride and groom to promise that they will continue to follow the traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation in the village of Ngadas. This third task is usually an additional task for a shaman, especially if one of the bride and groom is from outside the village of Ngadas. A community stakeholder named Sametono explained that prior to 1995, there was no valid civil registration to legalize the marriages of residents in Ngadas. This was influenced by several things which led to the government's lack of attention to the people in the village. Because of these considerations, in the end, the shaman's duty is to record the data of the bride and groom who will marry in Ngadas, or who will marry a resident of Ngadas.

Until now, with advances in information and government bureaucratic services, the people of Ngadas can easily register their marriages. However, the tradition of looking for dates, arranging special offerings for humans, nature and ancestors, and offering prayers are still carried out by a shaman. This makes the old duties of a *dukun* unchanged. If there is an error or fraud in marriage, birth or death documents, the village or regional government can ask for the data held by the *dukun*. Until now, Sutomo the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas still often receives birth and death records of Ngadas residents, even when they are outside the village of Ngadas. Information technology for sending electronic messages using the WhatsApp application has been recognized by Sutomo so he can keep track of important events in rural communities who are overseas and pray for them from afar in the village of Ngadas.

### **3.3. Shaman as Preservers of History and Culture**

In connection with the recording tradition carried out by the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas, other important events that occurred in the village of Ngadas also become part of the shaman's memory. As with the *dukun's* duties in various regions in Indonesia, the *dukun's* duties include preserving cultural systems, such as leading every ritual activity and being a source of knowledge about teachings and other mystical information about ancestral spirits (Kholiq et al., 2022). The position of a shaman is generally passed down the lineage, although on certain occasions this is not always the case. However, a shaman also has an obligation to tell various important events that he has experienced or has been told by his ancestors. For example, in Sutomo's experience, he would tell village officials and his family about anyone who had an affair in the village of Ngadas, or anyone who was born in a special way and died in an unusual way. This can develop into folklore and even be staged. However, shamans have limitations, namely if the stories and experiences of residents are considered bad things for the living family.

In short, shamans serve as agents of history in a society (Langdon, 2007). This also applies to the traditional Tengger shaman in Ngadas. For one case was when Sutomo experienced a night where he had to pray for and record the death of a resident with the initials A. A died by suicide because he felt guilty towards his family's ancestors. On the night before A died, there was a *ludruk* performance (a type of theater that often contains humor about folklore). Over a night, a *ludruk* group of artist tells a story about the murder of a husband against his wife. The

husband is a strong person and is considered as a sacred person, but not a shaman. He often meditated and cultivated himself in the middle of a forest or on a mountaintop. When he got home, his pregnant wife didn't want to eat so her husband persuaded her many times to eat. But the wife always rejects and finally, her husband turned out to be possessed and harm his wife. The *ludruk* groups tells that the man going to be insane because he had meditated wrongly. When the husband's patience ran out while persuading his wife, he killed his wife instantly. The husband himself ended miserably. He died at the hands of the Ngadas people because he could not be controlled. The people had to shoot him several times until he finally died while still trying to attack the people of his own village.

*Ludruk* that was shown that night was aimed at educating the public to be patient and not thirsty for power. But it also provides entertainment for the people through humor and *parikan* (a type of poetry typical of the people of East Java). Unlucky for A, after seeing *ludruk* he felt comforted, entertained, and happy. But when he was at home, his wife told him that the story told in the *ludruk* was the story of his grandmother and grandfather. Feeling guilty, A decided to end his life. The traditional shaman certainly performs a prayer ceremony for A. However, he did not advise the victims' families to pass on their stories to their children and grandchildren. As a shaman, Sutomo also knew the story from his grandfather. However, because the story was considered unfit to be passed down by A's family, he never once told this to the public. Because of this incident, the prayer ceremony for A was combined with the ceremony for his ancestors as told in the *ludruk* story.

A's case become unfortunate events for Bromo Ngadas residences. After this case, the village head advised the residents to clarify the history with the shaman first before sharing the history with others. Case A is a note for the village shaman, that a sad story should not be presented in the form of entertainment, such as *ludruk*. Without trying to limit creativity, the shaman appealed to village officials and residents of Bromo Ngadas to be careful in recreating history in literary form.

### **3.4. Shaman as Common Law Administrator**

The role of other Tengger traditional shamans in Ngadas village is as a determinant of ethics in living with villagers. This is based on the argument that the shaman could have direct contact with nature, so that he can know the will of nature and the Ancestors. Shamans in indigenous peoples, especially in Java, usually have the characteristics of substantive, non-formalist, and altruistic mysticism (Sartini, 2021). In other words, traditional shamans will use their power to improve the condition of society based on the morality of their beliefs. Another argument is that shamans have stories and experiences that are passed down from generation to generation so they can know what good and bad things can happen in society. Therefore, the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas village, assisted by village officials, is tasked with making ethical rules for the village community. At present, these rules have been neatly drafted and written down as customary law. However, until March 2023, these customary laws had only obtained permits to be enforced from the village and sub-district governments. The regional government, namely Malang Regency, is still processing and reviewing the customary law.

In the formulation of customary law, the shaman plays the role of a person who tells about the worst that can happen in society, such as theft, abuse, fights, and extramarital affairs. Every immoral act that has occurred in the village from year to year is written down by a shaman, and with the assistance of the village government, they formulate what sanctions should be carried out by lawbreakers. This is also adjusted to the law in force in Indonesia. For example, in the mid-twentieth century, there was an extramarital affair that ended in the disposal of the corpse

of the child of the affair. Each party already has a family, so it is impossible to get married. Because of these considerations, both received sanctions, namely donating 100 sacks of fertilizer to the villagers by each actor. Based on the current community considerations and context, fertilizer is no longer an option because the village community already has local government assistance to procure fertilizer. Because of this, the fertilizer was replaced with cement which had to be carried from a neighboring village (allocation distance of about 2 km from the center of Ngadas village).

Rules of manners and socializing can also be regulated by shamans and village officials. For example, the time when a man who is not married to a girl's house visits a maximum of 9 pm. If it exceeds this hour, the community is obliged to force the boy's family to marry the woman he visits. This is based on the experience of harassment of a girl who met her lover at night, after 9 pm to the detriment of the girl and her family. There are several other rules that have been regulated by the shaman and village apparatus of Ngadas. As a shaman, the consequence of his profession as a community intermediary and the will of the Ancestors is to pass on the bad experiences of the previous Ngadas community in the form of regulations. Most of the other rules revolve around the observance of village traditions and celebrations, sharing of agricultural produce, theft, and domestic conflicts.

### **3.5. Shaman as Village Community Political Mediator**

As someone whose job is to pray for the people of his village, the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas is also often asked to pray for local sons who wish to run for leadership at various levels and sectors. A shaman is not only a profession that is attached to someone who is considered to have magical abilities, moreover, but he can also be considered a figure that influences society (Ilyas, 2018). Therefore, the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas has the duty to pray for these prospective leaders, and to remind them to always be honest both before taking office and when they have taken office. In some conditions, for example, the election of a village head or the election of a tourism and agricultural stakeholder head, candidates who live in the village must go to a *dukun* to get a prayer representative from him. In addition, to avoid conflict between candidates, the shaman has two additional tasks.

The first task is to gather all the candidates and ask them not to compete and accept all the decisions made by the village community. Apart from that, the second task is to mediate with the prospective leaders if, in the process, there is a conflict or dispute related to their respective interests in obtaining a position as a leader. Generally, a shaman will know each candidate who comes to him. With the introduction of these candidates, each candidate will receive advice to control their respective bad traits. If the conflict cannot be avoided, usually the interested parties will ask the shaman to mediate them at the village hall or at the shaman's residence. Fortunately, this rarely happens because the villagers are plural citizens, so they are used to solving problems in a family way independently. This independent resolution is generally also mediated by a shaman, where the shaman's job is to solve problems without reward (Sartini, 2018).

According to Ilyas' research, a *dukun* in Indonesia can occupy almost every structure in society, starting from social, economic, political, and cultural structures (Ilyas, 2018). Because of this, because a *dukun* figure is considered to have the power to control the condition of society, what often happens is the arrival of candidates for regional leaders at levels above the village, for example, candidates for the regional people's representative council (DPRD), candidates for the people's representative council (DPR), candidates for regents, and governor candidates. Because often the candidates have domiciles that are far from the village of Ngadas,

the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas is only tasked with reminding several things, such as maintaining peace in the village of Ngadas, not using money politics in the village, or not forgetting promises to the people of Ngadas if the candidate has previously offered certain promises to their village. The shaman does not have the right to ask the community to vote for a particular candidate, but he is obliged to inform the community through village officials that there are several people who wish to carry out a campaign in the village. All candidates who come to the *dukun* in Ngadas will receive a prayer but not a promise regarding the number of votes obtained.

Even though the shaman does not have a strategic political position in determining village policies, he is also responsible for praying for anyone who wants to carry out activities in the village, and for the smooth running of the activities of these newcomers in his village. The Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas has no political power, but his role in receiving guests who wish to campaign in his village is able to significantly determine public opinion. Of course, this tendency has a bad potential for shamans and people of Ngadas. And to avoid the worst potential, often the shaman is only allowed to be seen in public spaces such as the village hall or the courtyard of the village head's house. Although the role of the *dukun* is quite important in determining power in an area, the Tengger people have never officially placed a *dukun* as a public official or regional leader. This is equivalent to previous studies regarding the role of shamans in Indonesia (Sutiono, 2014). The Tengger people have clear limitations on the role of the shaman in their area, namely to direct inner propositions that impact the ethical order and actions of society, not on practical political leadership.

### **3.6. The Sustainability of Shamanic Culture in Bromo Ngadas and Surrounding Areas**

Given the role of the Tengger traditional shaman in Ngadas who has a significant influence on the continuity of life together in the village, the requirements for becoming a *dukun* are also not easy. There are several procedures and conditions that must be carried out to carry out the procession of changing the shaman. This does not only involve individual shamans, but also village officials, the Tengger shaman association (a shaman association from several other villages), as well as blessings from nature and the Ancestors. In general, a *dukun* who is on duty has the right to resign when he feels that his body is no longer able to carry out his duties. Furthermore, several children, grandchildren and closest male relatives can register themselves by meditating in one of the predetermined areas. In the Tengger tradition, a shaman is usually a man. There is no prohibition for women to register as a *dukun*. But until now there has never been a female shaman who has served in the Tengger community. This requires a separate study considering that various shaman traditions in various parts of the world place male traditional shamans more than women (Krippner, 2007). There is no difference between male or female shaman candidates in Tengger, especially in Ngadas village. This tendency is likely to be part of sociological studies that can be carried out in the future.

When meditating, the prospective shaman will recite certain prayers that come out by itself from the depths of his heart. This prayer is believed to determine the blessings of nature and the Ancestors. This meditative activity is aimed at obtaining a fresh and clean body condition so that prospective shamans can understand themselves and be trusted, can obtain unusual knowledge from the Ancestors (Walsh, 2001). Therefore, the time of meditation is not specified but generally lasts two days and one night. On these days, the community and village officials usually watch them meditate while waiting for the arrival of other shamans from neighboring villages. Then there are several tests for the prospective *dukun*, some of which cannot be said to the village community and the public. One of the common considerations with



various studies of shamans in various countries is that traditional shamans in Tengger need to have the ability to interact with special knowledge with certain spirit entities and nature and have special powers that enable them to know the course of nature or human affairs in a way that usually not possible (Krippner, 2007). However, one thing that is known by the village community is that the prospective shaman will be asked to recite his prayer among the other village shamans who have been present.

According to tradition, only one shaman who succeeds in chanting prayers smoothly before the assembly of shamans so practically, is the one who then serves as the shaman in the village where he lives. The Tengger traditional shaman association itself has a coordinating body called the Tengger Shaman Association. The chairperson is chosen based on the nomination of willing parties and elected by deliberation. The task of this association is to protect the customs, the spiritual condition of the Tengger people, and to coordinate if there are special matters together, for example a big ceremony at Bromo or natural disasters related to Mount Bromo. In both Ngadas village and its surroundings, shamans are now able to communicate quickly via cell phones. These shamans live to support each other because they understand the burden of a shaman is the responsibility to preserve the life of the people around Bromo with nature, Ancestors, and fellow human beings regardless of religion or background.

#### 4. Conclusion

Through this research, a general conclusion can be drawn that the role of shaman in the life of the Bromo Ngadas community plays a very vital role. The cultural preservation and political-economic life of the Tenggerese are significantly influenced by the role of traditional shamans in managing the ethnicity and behaviors of their culture. A shaman or *dukun* can regulate various aspects of society such as regulating customary law, determining the results of calculating holidays, marrying residents, recording citizen birth-marriage-death data, passing on folklore and history, reminding ethical norms of cultural arrangements, and many other things. Modernization brought about by the tourism industry and technological developments have not had a major effect on the views of the Tengger Ngadas people because the people still adhere to the rules set by their traditional shaman. In addition, the shaman in Bromo Ngadas also has a portion to determine or decide policies for villagers, together with village officials and local government or investors in Ngadas village.

The next conclusion from this research is that Ngadas village is an indigenous people who are able to preserve their culture because of their belief that *adat* is the culmination of their life order in addition to the applicable government laws. Since shamans also play the role of political mediators, village and regional officials position them as advisors for local policies. This makes the customary law stipulated by the shaman always try to be adjusted to the legal law and regional regulations in Ngadas and Malang Regency. Religion is positioned as a personal responsibility in the Ngadas community, while *adat* is a shared responsibility that must be carried out and preserved together as well. Even though the Tengger people have great faith in their traditional shaman, the determination of someone to become a shaman also has special provisions which are jointly regulated by the people of Ngadas and its surroundings. This shows that the indigenous peoples exemplified by the Tengger people in Ngadas can not only be appreciated for their social exotica but also for their ethical commitment to their civilization and culture.

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