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email: jurnal.pwk@undip.ac.id
website: ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/pwk
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Continuity Of Local Identity In The Multicultural Neighborhood

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Diterima : 18 November 2016
Disetujui: 01 Maret 2017

ABSTRACT

A century ago, Sosrowijayan Wetan was a homogenous place and all of its inhabitants were Javanese. However, tourist accommodation development in the area gave rise to globalization. As a result, Sosrowijayan Wetan transformed into an international tourist neighborhood, especially for backpackers. The differences of value between expatriates and local people stimulated transformation in Sosrowijayan Wetan, for instance, in spatial and socio-cultural aspects. The destabilizing effect of this transformation involved a highly complex process with an important consequence in the continuity of the local identity. The purpose of this study was to investigate the continuity of local identity in Sosrowijayan Wetan. A constructivist grounded theory as qualitative methods was utilized. The transcribed data were constantly built into a collective story. It was found that most insiders continued to hold onto and identify with the traditional ways of life and felt strong ties to their neighborhood. However, the structures and the values in this community seemed to be more resistant to change. Therefore, local initiative for cultural resilience became more important because the decline of local culture might lead to more multicultural problems. For instance, if the insiders were not interested in supporting the initiative through their participation in the organization, multicultural interaction problems would proliferate. This relationship influenced the continuity of local identity through its adaptation strategy for the cultural resilience.

Key word: Multicultural Interaction, Continuity, Local Identity

ABSTRAK


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BACKGROUND

Globalization in Indonesia is signified by international acceptance required for promoting local tourism to the world. Indonesia attempts to package its local culture uniqueness as the main attraction of its tourism (Hampton 2003). As the result of such promotion, Bali and Yogyakarta are two provinces that are successfully considered as the most visited cultural tourism destinations in Indonesia (Dahles 2002). Because of the prestigious history of Yogyakarta Sultanate during the process of Indonesian independence, Yogyakarta was given a special status when the President made Sultan Hamengku Buwono, the King of Yogyakarta Sultanate, the Governor in his land, the Special Province of Yogyakarta. In Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX regime, Yogyakarta was known as the city of tolerance (Zudianto 2010; Wardani 2012). The unique characteristic of Yogyakarta as a city is known worldwide and attracts international tourists to visit the city. Hill and Mubyarto (Timothy & Wall 1995) reported that 9,700 international tourists visited Yogyakarta in 1967, and the number increased to 58,000 in 1976. Yogyakarta tourism is dominated by low-budget tourists called backpackers (Sörensson 2008). She stated that the declining foreign tourist number in 2006 until 2007 did not include backpackers. The phenomenon of backpackers influenced the accommodation development in Sosrowijayan Wetan. In addition, it stimulated local people to consider the multicultural requirements in the development. Local people recently turned densely populated area into a concentration of low-budget tourist accommodation by developing homestays, inns, hostels, restaurants, coffee shops, travel agent offices, second-hand bookshops, and other associated services in their properties.

Tourist accommodation development in Sosrowijayan Wetan triggered the rise of globalization. Globalization prompted various reactions, reflecting contradictory implications; indeed it established the universal unity and the democracy for global culture. As a result of globalization rapidity, Sosrowijayan Wetan transformed into an international tourist neighborhood, especially for backpackers. The value distinction between expatriates and local people stimulated transformation in Sosrowijayan Wetan, for instance, in spatial and sociocultural aspects. The destabilizing effect of this transformation involved a highly complex process with an important consequence in the continuity of local identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to investigate the effect of multicultural interaction towards continuity of Sosrowijayan Wetan cultural identity, and it was approached by qualitative constructivist grounded theory. Grounded theory was originally developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967. Grounded theory has been enduringly popular choice of methodology since its development in the 1960s, with more than 3,650 journal articles published, both on the methodology itself and reporting research outcomes (Mills et al. 2006). Glaser & Strauss (1967) deemed that researchers needed a method that would allow them to construct theories based on their research data. They would be ‘grounded’ in the data from which they had developed rather than rely on analytical constructs, categories, or variables from pre-existing theories (Strauss & Corbin 2005). So, grounded theory methods talk about steps or phases occurring in certain phenomena without accounting for or explaining variation in variables or being interpreted with any consequences (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

Charmaz (2006) divided grounded theory into constructivist approach and objectivist approach. This research implemented constructivist approach to direct the research process. It
was focused on the phenomena of study and saw both data and analysis as created from the
shared experiences of researchers and participants (Charmaz 2006). In addition, grounded
theory interviews were used to tell a collective story, not an individual tale in a single interview
(Charmaz 2003; Rivas 2013). Constructivist grounded theory is a dynamic research process
(Charmaz 2006). It writes and stops whenever ideas occur to them. Instead, some of the best
ideas may occur in a late time within the process and may lure researchers to go back to the
field to gain a deeper view (Charmaz 2006).

**COHERENCE OF MULTICULTURAL INTERACTION AND CONTINUITY OF LOCAL IDENTITY:
A LITERATURE REVIEW**

Cultural identity is usually inferred on the basis of one’s sense of action and stance meanings.
Of course, although some actions and stances are closely associated with particular cultural
identities, others are resources for constructing a wide range of cultural identities. The action
is represented by touching, reaching, manipulating, and transforming not only ways of
knowing objects, but also fundamental conceptual dimensions of cultural objects (Ochs 1993).
It is translated as cultural knowledge, as what Seo & Gao (2015) suggested that people
understand their unique personalities as a person and a member of community; however, in
case of human objects, culture can be interaction between each other if they have a
willingness to do so (Ochs 1993). It is translated as cultural awareness, as what Seo & Gao
(2015) asserted, that works as the sensor of identities. On the other hand, the stance comes to
associate particular kinds of influence with particular objects in the world (Ochs 1993). In this
way, cultures jointly construct the relationship between them. These joint constructions
produced in the course of moment-to-moment interaction socialize cultures into how they
should consider another culture around them and provide them with models of how they
themselves might use affective displays to create, transform, or destroy relationships and
other cultural identities (Ochs 1993). It is translated as cultural sensitivity (Taylor 2015) that is
defined as the ability to recognize multiple perspectives of an event or behavior, to recognize
one’s own cultural values and those of others, and to pick up on verbal and nonverbal signals.

Culture describes the nature of relationships between people and their environment and
amongst people themselves because they also make choices about whom to interact with.
Individuals value socio-cultural interaction because it can provide information, economic
opportunities, economic support, risk sharing, or can simply be enjoyable (Reich 2013).
However, there are some suggestions about central themes in the conceptualization of place.
Inglis (n.d.) mentioned that categorization with places is a form of socio-cultural labeling as
much as identification. The place is seen in terms of people gathered together in a particular
location, territory and space that creates particular forms of social dependence and
interaction. Indeed, Corcoran and her college (as cited in Inglis n.d.) concluded that socio-
cultural interaction has a strong sense of identification with where they lived. Hence,
multicultural interaction is identified by two indicators, namely socio-cultural and spatial, to
find multicultural connectedness.

Multicultural interaction obviously stimulates residential segregation and urban conflicts
proliferation. Specific risk factors may include racism, group powerlessness, and the conflicting
demands of different cultures. However, the exploration of these factors, as well as of
features unique to indigenous culture that may promote resilience in the face of overwhelming
adversity, requires investigators to go beyond traditional longitudinal or intervention studies
and draw on ethnographic and other qualitative research that explores the major differences
in history, local conditions, social structures, and culture between local communities (Langton
as cited in Homel et al. 1999). For many local communities, recognition of and support for the realization of the potential of their own culture and traditional values will be critical in attaining livelihood security and sustainability because people instinctively make the most of their beliefs, norms, customs, traditional knowledge, religion and spiritual elements and other creative sources to meet diverse livelihood objectives (Daskon 2010). It enhances people’s ability to be the agents of change and their ability to question, challenge, propose and ultimately bring in new ways of doing things. Eventually, the significance of cultural values in resisting change or adapting to it gives rise to cultural resilience in the context of achieving continuity of local identity.

In this view, every individual is an author who reflects on the diverse episodes and events of his or her life and connects them to form a more or less unified story. Moreover, Chandler and Lalonde (as cited in Kirmayer et al. 2009) found that indicators of greater cultural continuity in the community are associated with its cultural competence. They define cultural continuity as a workable personal or collective mechanism that reinforces responsible ownership of a past and hopeful commitment to the future. For instance, in some communities success follows from renewing culture, while for others, priorities of traditional image and education are more prominent. Collective means of preserving identity are linked to an individual process of coherence and continuity; both levels serve to mitigate its risk. Cultural identity is at risk everywhere with the depredations of globalization, but the developing world is particularly at risk. This, then, is the story that implicates globalization in the destruction of cultural identity and in the threat to that particular subset of cultural identity that we call local identity (Tomlinson 2003). But another, quite contradictory, story can be told: that globalization, far from destroying it, has been perhaps the most significant force in creating and proliferating cultural identity. This story involves a rather different understanding of the idea of identity than somewhat reified understanding of an individual or collective possession and it also involves a rather more complex understanding of the globalization process: one, at least, which allows a degree of unpredictability in its consequences (Tomlinson 2003).

ANALYSIS

In Sosrowijayan Wetan, multiculturalism arose in 1970’s as a result of insiders’ tourist neighborhood development to cater international backpackers. Samad (personal communication, 18 May 2016) confirmed that Romo Kanjeng, one of Sultanate family members who lived in Dalem Sorowijayan, approved the idea of local community to develop a tourist accommodation inside the enclave. The development was concentrated in Sosrowijayan Wetan alley I and II since the early stages. Thus, the enormous flow of expatriates made that area an international neighborhood. In the early stages, the locals were overwhelmed in operating the business because they didn’t have enough experience to deal with the cultural difference. It made them so frustrated that they distinguished global and local tourists into separate buildings because they felt that they had the moral responsibility to preserve the image of the neighborhood (Warsito, personal communication, 20 May 2016).

Instead of getting more benefits, some of them were losing the opportunities because of the communication difficulties among people as well as xenophobia. It was common in Indonesia because they had some preconditions for interaction regarding the image of the neighborhood. It became the best evidence for action and stance relationship that Carmona et al. (2010) stated because the theory prevailed although the image of Sosrowijayan Wetan as tourist neighborhood was biased by prostitution activities at Sosrowijayan Kulon. Local people
associated Sosrowijayan with Pasar Kembang Street, which was the center of prostitution in Yogyakarta (Pamungkas, personal communication, 10 May 2016). It affected business in that area especially for domestic affairs. The situation made the insiders establish physical distinction between two neighborhoods. Officially, Sosrowijayan had three major alleys between Sosrowijayan Street and Pasar Kembang Street, namely alley 1 and 2 in Sosrowijayan Wetan as tourist area and alley 3 in Sosrowijayan Kulon as a prostitution area. This problem created a unique relationship and interaction between the insiders and outsiders.

The aforementioned growth of tourism activity became the insiders’ responsibility. The reason was that it had become their main way of earning for a living since many years ago. They actually took the opportunities and the challenges; therefore they made a regulation for multicultural interaction so that they could preserve the image of the neighborhood (Purwandari, personal communication, 13 May 2016). It required the insiders to stand in the middle of interaction in the hope that they could make peaceful interaction to get a lot of benefits. As the regulation was taken into effect, most outsiders felt comfortable in interacting with the insiders. Danang (personal communication, 23 May 2016), further stated,

“I really feel comfortable with the insiders’ culture, because they express the uniqueness of the local culture. They are really open and appreciate differences. They asked me to actively engage in every local event. They are not only open for business affairs, but also give me a feeling of togetherness in a society. They are really open to share their life experiences “.

The regulation was successfully implemented not only for outsiders but also for expatriates. The regulation made them feel comfortable with the insiders’ presence. Samir (personal communication, 28 May 2016) stated,

“Foreign people and local people are really tolerant to each other. I got the comfort of living here since a long time ago. Until now, I don’t have any problem to communicate with them because I can speak Bahasa Indonesia and they can speak English too. Indeed, I am usually invited to come to some traditional rituals such as wedding and ‘layat’.”

Eventually, the strategy successfully gave a good impact to the insiders, outsiders, and also expatriates.

![Diagram of socio-cultural interaction](source: Authors, 2016)

**FIGURE 1**

FRAMEWORK OF SOCIO-CULTURAL INTERACTION IN SOSROWIJAYAN WETAN

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Despite success in multicultural interaction, there were some socio-cultural problems in Sosrowijayan Wetan, especially for expatriates-outsiders interaction. Such interaction was beyond the insiders’ control, although the insiders created a regulation for their interaction. Most expatriates and outsiders were not willing to interact with one another when they lived in Sosrowijayan Wetan, although they still interacted in a simple conversation.

During the multicultural interaction, people in Sosrowijayan Wetan placed themselves in a vulnerable situation that may acculturate their cultures. The acculturation affected the way they behaved, materialistic nature, and cultural values in performing arts. Insiders were the most affected ones by such acculturation because they intensely engaged in such interaction compared to others.
Accommodation location was developed based on activity, space, and behavior into two basic categories: (1) Accommodation location choice is based on rent price, because each alley in Sosrowijayan Wetan had different range of rent price; and (2) Accessibility was not the primary determinant of accommodation location, but the amenity, environment, socio-cultural and psychological factors operated together to influence the decision making.

Considering the political profane, urbanization process and minority and migrant group behavior, Sosrowijayan Wetan were clustered into five zones: commercial zone, low class residential zone, local backpacker accommodation zone, center of magersari zone, and global backpacker accommodation zone.

Segregated neighborhood would trigger the fear of victimization (Peach et al. 2007), and so would Sosrowijayan Wetan neighborhood. Sosrowijayan Wetan was suffering from crime and disorder.. Burglary, which was the most common crime, was only experienced by the insiders. It was a normal situation because almost none of outsiders and expatriates were intensely involved in tourism business. They only stayed in the neighborhood for several days to enjoy their vacation. The growth of tourism activity in Sosrowijayan Wetan attracted many migrants to get the opportunities to earn money. Sudden movement of migrants seeking for opportunities in the area had elevated the competition between them. Due to the fact that none of them had buildings for lodging, they worked as escorts, guides, and travel agents. Sometimes, hard competition and life pressures blinded them in obeying the insiders’ regulation. They rudely offered service to every tourist, especially to young adults and women who traveled without the accompaniment of men. It explained the condition of expatriates and outsiders who were vulnerable as victims. Based on research data, expatriates became the most common victims of crime and harassment. Crime activities were spotted in specific area, while harassment cases were scattered, commonly at the streets in commercial zone. What happened in public places, as mentioned by Carmona et al. (2010), was oftentimes harassment rather than criminal behaviors.

Multiculturalism increased crime and harassment cases in Sosrowijayan Wetan. It threatened the image of the neighborhood as an international tourist area, while the insiders did not do anything. In addition, it affected the number of tourists who decided to stay there. Decreasing number of tourists was harmful for the continuity of tourism activity in Sosrowijayan Wetan, which has become the main livelihood for the insiders. Accordingly, it stimulated them to negotiate and manage the urban conflicts. Negotiation and management of the urban conflicts in Sosrowijayan Wetan were seen as a process of returning to previous condition rather than transforming into something new. It was a dynamic process that might vary from one social context to the next and from one worldview or value system to another (Kirmayer et al. 2009).

In addition, it reflected the process that drew from multiple sources of strength and resources to allow people to face, live with, manage, and overcome the challenge.

First organization established in Sosrowijayan Wetan was PPSW (Persatuan Pemuda Sosrowijayan Wetan) or Sosrowijayan Wetan Youth Association. It was established in 1950 and now they have reached the 66th generation. In the early stages, PPSW was aimed to unify the nature lovers in the neighborhood. Unanimous growth of tourism activity in 1970’s altered PPSW’s purposes. Actually, PPSW was a non-profit organization and it did not have any legibility. Nowadays, PPSW aims to preserve the traditional art and cultural event to enrich Sosrowijayan Wetan attraction. PPSW does not provide tour guide for tourists because of illegibility of association. In fact, PPSW has terminated relationship with Pemerintah Kelurahan
Sosromenduran (Government Official for Sosromenduran Village). As a former head of PPSW, Ginanjär (personal communication, 20 May 2016) further stated,

"In so far as we had a relationship with Pemerintah Kelurahan Sosromenduran, they always cheated us. They stole our idea to propose a material for a tender of auxiliary fund from the City Government. Based on those experiences, we made a decision for an event first before we took an action for planning and preparation. Indeed, several days ago, Pemerintah Kelurahan asked us to participate in the donation night for apeman traditional event but we officially rejected. Nowadays, the association focuses on preserving the continuity of Sosrowijayan Wetan as the most comfortable area for international tourist accommodation. We are not working alone, we always ask the elders as our advisors”.

Recently, PPSW was in a vulnerable condition because of lack of regeneration to continue the organization activities. The recruitment system for new members was the big problem because it was opened really close to the date of an event. After the event, they were not active anymore.

In the end of 1980’s, Yogyakarta’s city government approved the establishment of PARWISAN (Pengantar Wisatawan) or Tourist Escort Association to support tourism activity in Sosrowijayan Wetan (Sigit, personal communication, 10 May 2016). It was different from PPSW because it had the liability to help tourists when staying in the neighborhood, such as looking for a room, restaurant, or laundry service (Ginanjär, personal communication, 20 May 2016). In the mid 1990’s, PARWISAN faced some problems that threatened the neighborhood good image; consequently the elders of Sosrowijayan Wetan took over its management. Sigit (personal communication, 10 May 2016) noted that crime cases arose in 1980’s until 1990’s. Indeed, PARWISAN was privatized as a travel agent called Sosrowijayan Tourism Agency (Ginanjär, personal communication, 20 May 2016).

“In addition to PPSW and PARWISAN, the insiders established PARTSSY (Paguyuban Akomodasi, Restoran, Transportasi, dan Souvenir Sosrowijayan Yogyakarta) or Association of Accommodation, Restaurant, Transportation, and Souvenir of Sosrowijayan Yogyakarta. It unified the insiders who had business in Sosrowijayan Wetan in order to enhance tourism services and to promote collaboration among them. However, it did not work (Sigit, personal communication, 10 May 2016). Theresia (personal communication, 19 May 2016) had even forgotten that PARTSSY ever existed”.

The first generation of insiders had strong solidarity. Indeed, they believed in each other to develop Sosrowijayan Wetan as a tourist accommodation complex. Although they only had a neighborhood association to support the socio-cultural network, they successfully discovered the benefit of trusting one another to collaborate in tourism development in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the prestigious achievement in that generation could not successfully be followed by the second generation. While the women in the first generation empowered each other to engage in the tourism development, the women in the second generation avoided participating actively in any organizations. It made the community vulnerable to the impacts of urban conflicts. Most women in the second generation had similar reasons to avoid participating actively in any organizations. Roes (personal communication, 23 May 2016) stated,

“‘I do not want to actively participate in any organizations here. I choose to be passive because I am old and I do not have any benefits by being active in any organizations’.”
The third generation of insiders had the similar situation with the former generation. Indeed, it was going to be worse because all women avoided participating actively in organizations. They decided to live individualistically. Bougenville (personal communication, 19 May 2016) stated her opinion why she preferred being individualistic,

“I feel uncomfortable to meet another young people here, because image of the neighborhood is not really good for me as a woman to play outside. Indeed, I don’t have a willingness to interact with them. It affects me to avoid any engagement in any organizations here.”

On the other hand, Mrs. Fetty had different opinion why she preferred being not involved in any organizations. She was disappointed by her former community. Fetty (personal communication, 27 May 2016) further stated,

“I was really stressed when living here, especially for several moments when a male guest treated me impolite and humiliated me. Unfortunately, when I was in trouble, I didn’t get any support from my organization. Then, the elders and Mrs. Purwandari as the head of RW 1 calm me down to find the solution for my problem. Because of those experiences, I won’t ever have a willingness to engage in any organizations.”

Resilience initiative in Sosrowijayan Wetan was a spontaneous action and every group worked only for a short time. The insiders avoided making commitments and did not really participate actively in any organizations, not only in neighborhood organizations but also in cultural or work-based organizations. Until now, the insiders only established the groups without managing its continuity. In fact, it might be caused by lack of trust. They considered everyone threatening their business. They even deemed their neighbors as competitors.

Globalization transformed Sosrowijayan Wetan into an international tourist neighborhood, particularly for small-scale tourist accommodation. It gave rise to multiculturalism and affected the insiders to be more modern in their lifestyle; consequently, they did not like having any commitment to participate in any organizations in Sosrowijayan Wetan. Modernization threatened the continuity of Sosrowijayan Wetan culture, although the insiders successfully transmitted the cultural knowledge through generations. Family had great role for cultural knowledge transmission, despite the fact that they did not have any willingness to engage in any organizations. At least, it guaranteed the continuity of the local identity until now. The transformation was more to enhance the insiders’ cultural capacity to support their engagement in multicultural interaction than to change the cultural identity. The continuity of local identity in Sosrowijayan Wetan neighborhood should be visualized. It built a relation to historical elements of the cultural identity.

CONCLUSION

Most insiders continued to hold onto and address any situations with the traditional ways of life, roles, and values. The insiders felt strong ties to their neighborhood, but the structures and the values in this community seemed to be more resistant to change. For instance, the young generation cannot speak Javanese language well, although they were supposed to have the knowledge of Javanese identity through the Sultanate inheritance. The young generation also enhanced the cultural competence as a way of appreciating globalization, but it could not increase their awareness to associate as a community in the development. Even now, the young generation did not support the organization’s resilience initiative. They avoided making
any commitment and were not willing to participate actively. Eventually, they made a comfortable atmosphere in Sosrowijayan Wetan, although they denied the responsibility to engage in the society. Even now, the modern women did not have any interest in participating in the development. In addition, even the women’s role decreased over time. Although several specific organizations as an adaptive strategy were established to enhance the insiders’ participation, those organizations could not ensure their participation to reach the cultural resilience. Those organizations could not even persist for a long time because the insiders could not manage the organization well. Moreover, those organizations neglected problems of their members without giving any support. Indeed, such marginalization decreased the insiders’ participation in creating a harmonious atmosphere in Sosrowijayan Wetan.

The development of the neighborhood and tourism generated opportunities and infrastructure and thus improved the living standard in Sosrowijayan Wetan. The transformation eroded the continuity of local identity because cultural assimilation resulted to the decline the local identity. The appreciation of communication and cultural development in globalization process made the insiders diminish their identity. This condition proved the globalization effect and the ability of technology to weaken local ties and beliefs in which communication revolution gave rise to cultural-ethnic awareness. Therefore, the unfit intervention will weaken the embedded local identity.

In this case, local initiative for resilience became more important because there might be more multicultural problems. For instance, if the insiders are not interested in supporting the initiative by through their participation in the organizations, there will be more multicultural interaction problems. This will affect the continuity of local identity through its adaptation strategy for the cultural resilience achievement.

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