

## Conservation Efforts of Betawi Community Traditions in the Modern Era (Descriptive Study of the Betawi Cultural Institution in Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta Region)

Rizal David<sup>1</sup> Dinar Sugiana Fitrayadi<sup>2</sup> Febri Alwan Bahrudi<sup>3</sup>

Pancasila and Citizenship Education Program Study, Teaching Faculty and Educational Sciences, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Serang City, Province of Banten, Indonesia<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Email: [r6949606@gmail.com](mailto:r6949606@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup> [dinar.sugiana@untirta.ac.id](mailto:dinar.sugiana@untirta.ac.id)<sup>2</sup> [febrian.alwan@untirta.ac.id](mailto:febrian.alwan@untirta.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

Traditional Betawi culture, including ondel-ondel, lenong, and tanjidor, is declining due to modernization, with the younger generation forgetting their cultural heritage. The research suggests three main points: (1) Betawi traditions are diminishing in the modern era; for instance, ondel-ondel is now often used for begging. Government intervention is necessary to address this issue. Lenong and Tanjidor also face challenges and need improvement to remain relevant in drama and music. (2) The Betawi community abandons its traditions in the modern era due to the loss of space for Betawi residents in Jakarta. The local government should provide effective solutions to prevent neglect of these distinctive traditions. (3) Efforts by the Betawi community and cultural figures to preserve traditions involve operating cultural institutions in accordance with Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Advancement of Culture.

**Keywords:** Local Government, Music



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### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, there have been many significant changes. These changes impact various aspects, ranging from the economy, society, culture, education, to technology. According to Mubah (2011:251-260), "Globalization has become an unavoidable phenomenon; it adversely affects the fading existence of local cultures". In the current era of modernity and globalization, the negative impacts on a nation are becoming increasingly evident, one of which is manifested in the weakening of noble values inherent in a culture. This phenomenon is also observable in Indonesia, where the influence of globalization, particularly from foreign cultures, may not align with the values of Pancasila, which serves as the foundation and identity of the nation. Culture and tradition are synonymous in their meaning. Tradition is the continuation of culture in social attitudes, customs, and institutions, encompassing habits and practices that have been in existence for a long time.

The Betawi tradition has experienced a significant decline, primarily influenced by several factors. The contributing factors to the decline of Betawi traditions include a lack of preservation efforts, inadequate oversight and support from local governments. In reality, many Betawi traditions are still misused, such as the Betawi ondel-ondel. In the past, ondel-ondel Betawi served as a means to ward off evil or mystical disasters, but nowadays, it is often seen merely as a performance prop without its original narrative or significance, as stated by Sumardjo, Jakob, and Saini (1997). However, nowadays, Betawi ondel-ondel can still be seen being used as objects for begging by certain individuals. Some Betawi traditions include the performing arts, such as Lenong Betawi. Currently, Lenong Betawi is rarely featured on television or in newspapers, indicating a decline in its popularity. The decline may be attributed to a lack of innovation in Lenong, making it challenging to capture the attention of the Jakarta or Indonesian audience.

Another Betawi art form is Tanjidor, a music ensemble that gained popularity in the 1980s. However, with the ongoing progress of time, there are several groups striving to preserve Betawi traditions. These groups can be referred to as communities, defined by Liliweri (2014:17) as a form of a group within society. Thus, a community can be understood as a group of people gathering for a specific purpose or activity. This realization the importance of preserving traditions and culture so that future generations, including our children and grandchildren, can look back and appreciate them. Traditions such as those of the Betawi people need to be preserved. Therefore, it crucial for the government and the community to collaborate in maintaining Betawi traditions in this modern era.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research method employed is descriptive research using a qualitative approach. The focus of the study is the Betawi Cultural Institution in DKI Jakarta's Efforts to Preserve Betawi Traditions in the Modern Era. This qualitative approach, data is collected naturally using natural methods by individuals with natural attention (Lexy J. Maleong, 2007:5). In this study, the depiction of the changes in preservation efforts of the Betawi community's traditions in the modern era is highlighted. To comprehend the phenomenon in detail, a research method is required, as it involves a way of collecting data using various data collection techniques and tools (Reinzharz, S., 2005:225). With this qualitative research method, researchers can directly observe the preservation efforts of Betawi community traditions in the modern era, analyze events occurring in Betawi culture such as ondel-ondel, lenong, and tanjidor, and conduct interviews with several informants.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this research is to understand the condition of Betawi community traditions in the modern era, identify the reasons behind the Betawi community abandoning Betawi traditions in the modern era, and explore ways for the community and cultural figures of Betawi to preserve Betawi traditions in the modern era. Based on the research findings, the condition of Betawi community traditions still adheres to the religious system, as it is known that Betawi culture is derived from Islamic teachings. They continue to apply Islamic teachings, particularly in events such as weddings, circumcision ceremonies, Eid al-Fitr, and others. In this context, Betawi traditions are experiencing a decline, emphasizing the need for efforts to preserve these traditions to ensure they endure and do not undergo changes from their distinctive characteristics. Based on the research findings, the condition of Betawi community traditions still adheres to the religious system, as it is known that Betawi culture is derived from Islamic teachings.

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With the rapid development of the modern era, it has had an impact on various aspects such as the economy, traditions, technology, law, and society. In this case, the development of the modern era has both positive and negative effects on traditions, contributing to the progress

of tradition-building but also influencing the position of the Betawi community. The displacement of the Betawi community's location is increasingly evident, especially with the construction of tall buildings that have an impact on the declining Betawi traditions. Factors affecting the decline of culture in its existence, according to Suharta (2020), include: (1) Changes in the natural environment, (2) Changes resulting from contact with other groups, (3) Changes due to discoveries, and (4) Changes because communities adopt some material cultural elements developed by groups in other places.

The current condition of Betawi traditions faces numerous challenges, both internal and external. Examining the efforts to preserve Betawi traditions reveals that routine preservation activities include supporting tools, locations, and management. According to Jacobus Ranjabar (2016:114), the preservation of local culture involves maintaining the values of artistic culture and traditional norms by developing dynamic embodiments that adapt to changing and evolving situations. This preservation effort is also undertaken by Betawi communities in caring for and safeguarding Betawi traditions in various ways. Some use social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok to brand and promote Betawi traditions in the digital sphere. The researcher concludes that preserving cultural heritage is essential for maintaining the culture itself, and there are various methods employed in activities geared towards preserving local culture, as exemplified by the Betawi traditions. Tradition is a regular and continuous practice within a community. Just like in the Betawi community, *ondel-ondel*, *lenong*, and *tanjidor* are forms of performing arts that are consistently enjoyed by the Betawi people. These performances hold significant meanings, which is why *ondel-ondel*, *lenong*, and *tanjidor* are continually played by the Betawi community. However, preserving these traditions faces challenges, especially in the rapidly changing modern era, which affects the popularity of Betawi arts, leading to a decline in their appeal.

In conclusion, tradition is a habitual practice performed regularly by a community, as exemplified by the Betawi people. However, the Betawi arts have undergone changes, particularly with *ondel-ondel* being used as a means of livelihood by beggars, commonly seen on the streets or in residential areas of Jakarta. Field research findings indicate that such phenomena violate existing regulations, specifically Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 8 of 2007 concerning Public Order, Article 40, which states that "Ondel-ondel art has been misused to earn income, beg in villages, and disrupt road order. Sanctions for those using *ondel-ondel* for such purposes are considered a minor offense". The sanctions imposed on beggars aim to create a deterrent effect, preventing them from repeating their offenses. However, in the context of sanctions, it serves as a coercive tool, compelling the enforcement of the law or adherence to legal norms. Sanctions, as a law enforcement tool, can also involve the nullification of actions that violate the law, whether void *ab initio* or void after being declared by a judge (R. Subekti and Tjitrosoedibyo, 2005:98). The role of the Cultural Institution of DKI Jakarta, in collaboration with the Department of Culture and the Local Government, is to regulate and discipline individuals engaged in the misuse of *ondel-ondel* for begging. The Betawi Cultural Institution plays a significant role in preserving culture, aligning with Law No. 5 of 2017, allowing Betawi traditions to compete and advance alongside other cultures.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion and research, there are three main points, namely the condition of the traditional Betawi community, the reasons why the Betawi community abandoned Betawi traditions in the modern era, and the efforts of the Betawi community and Betawi cultural figures to preserve Betawi culture in the modern era. The fading condition of Betawi traditions in the modern era is currently experiencing a decline, particularly in *ondel-ondel*, *lenong*, and *tanjidor*. In this regard, Betawi traditions must be preserved collectively. Currently,

there are over 300 Betawi cultural centers in DKI Jakarta, established with the aim of preserving Betawi traditions. These centers collaborate with the Betawi Cultural Institution to advance Betawi traditions and introduce artistic performances as well as Betawi culture to the wider community. The Betawi community's abandonment of its traditions is attributed to several factors. Firstly, the loss of residential areas plays a significant role, as the Betawi people have been displaced due to the construction of tall buildings, leading them to move to areas like Tangerang, Depok, and Condet. Economic factors also contribute to this shift, as the Betawi community faces economic difficulties, particularly affecting cultural centers that experience a decline in their finances. The lack of government attention to Betawi cultural centers exacerbates this issue, potentially leading to their closure. Additionally, the factor of employment is interconnected with economic challenges. As practitioners or enthusiasts of the arts, the Betawi community experiences fluctuations in their professions, influenced by the demands of life within their families or communities. Altogether, these factors contribute to the Betawi community distancing itself from its traditional practices. Efforts by the Betawi community and cultural figures to preserve Betawi traditions in the modern era include the initiatives of the Betawi Cultural Institution in implementing Law Number 5 of 2017, which can advance Betawi culture. Utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter, Betawi studios or the Betawi Cultural Institution can be employed in the modern era. In the process of socialization, these platforms can be used to raise awareness among the general public about the importance of preserving cultural traditions, especially considering the decline in Betawi traditions. Socialization efforts can take the form of seminars or workshops aimed at preserving Betawi traditions. The Betawi Cultural Institution also provides wages and social security benefits to Betawi studios, offering support to ensure their enthusiasm in preserving Betawi culture.

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