

Between Efficiency and Traditional Values: Examining Social Sensitivity of Rural and Urban Communities to the Punjungan Tradition

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
punjungan tradition, Purworejo, rural urban, social sensitivity.	The richness of tradition and culture in Javanese society, which is known for its deep values, has undeniably been transformed along with the entry of modernization that changes their social dynamics. This problem occurs in the punjungan tradition in Purworejo Regency, Central Java. The punjungan tradition that is carried out from generation to generation and provides a symbol of nobility for the social life of the community cannot be denied that it must coexist with the modernization of the times. This research aims to identify and analyze the understanding, practice, and social sensitivity of Purworejo people towards the punjungan tradition by comparing responses from rural and urban communities. The research method used is narrative qualitative. Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observations, and literature studies, and data analysis was carried out thematically deductively by creating main themes as a reference in the process of data processing, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings highlight the differences in social sensitivity between rural and urban communities toward the punjungan tradition. At the end of this paper, it provides a conclusion in the form of social sensitivity of rural and urban communities towards the punjungan tradition in an effort to preserve the punjungan tradition in Purworejo Regency.

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Introduction

The Javanese people, with a wealth of traditions and culture that hold deep values, now undeniably coexist with a modern way of life shaped by the advancement of science and technology (Suyanto & Hadi, 2020). Over time, their rich culture and traditions must adapt and transform as modernization changes their social dynamics (Rosidi, 2017). One dialectic seen in this context is the tradition of the arbor. The arbor tradition holds essential meaning as a way to show affection and respect by giving food to others as a symbol of invitation, a practice carried out for generations (Hasyim et al., 2022; Rahmiyani, 2022). However, in responding to a more modern societal order, people increasingly shift the tradition of the arakan, which has long been inherited and maintained across generations (Fitriana, 2021). These cultural transformations reflect broader changes in

identity, ritual function, and community interaction (Aisyah & Nugroho, 2018). In fact, local traditions become a core identity for the community, bearing noble values (Mulyani & Putra, 2019). Additionally, these traditions relate to achieving the eleventh point of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) regarding sustainable cities and settlements, specifically targeting the strengthening of efforts to protect and preserve the world's cultural and natural heritage (UNESCO, 2020).

The emergence of this shift reflects the community's sensitivity or social awareness in responding to modernization (Inglehart, 2020). This social sensitivity is exhibited through the rational actions of individuals in making decisions (Arifin & Lestari, 2020). Examining the community's social sensitivity in the face of cultural shifts can be approached by comparing rural (suburban or rural) and urban (urban) communities. A dichotomy exists between rural and urban communities regarding how they respond to their traditions, largely due to differences in their characteristics (Widyastuti & Mulyadi, 2019). Boeke's 1953 theory of economic dualism explains that dual character—capitalist, as seen in the urban context, and pre-capitalist, as seen in the rural context—can coexist within one region, with both experiencing clashes of economic and social systems (Prasetyo, 2016). In the modern era, rural communities tend to uphold communal values and local customs more strongly than urban residents, who are more likely to adopt individualistic and practical values (Rizal & Fauziah, 2021). Data from BPS shows that out of 76.59 percent of households attending and/or holding traditional ceremonies (such as birth, circumcision, marriage, death, religious ceremonies, harvests, and others) in 2021, 84.59 percent of rural households and 70.55 percent of urban households participated in these ceremonies (Girsang et al., 2022). This percentage demonstrates that rural communities uphold traditional practices more than urban communities, indicating different characteristics in responding to tradition and culture (Handayani, 2020; Susanti & Yanuarti, 2018).

Several studies on the *arbor* tradition exist in various regions. However, past research tends to focus on exploring changes in the form of the *arbor* (Lupitasari and Jalil, 2017), its values (Rosalia, 2020), and traditional practices (Sari et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the question of social sensitivity among rural and urban communities towards shifts in the *arbor* tradition has not been addressed. This discussion is important to raise public awareness about the significance of cultural traditions as local wisdom that must be preserved. Therefore, this study aims to fill the knowledge gap regarding cultural shifts by identifying and analyzing the community's understanding, practices, and social sensitivity to the *arbor* traditions in both rural and urban contexts. Based on the problem statement, this study has three research questions: 1) how do rural and urban communities understand the *arbor* tradition in Purworejo Regency; 2) how is the practice of the *arbor* tradition applied by rural and urban communities in Purworejo Regency; and 3) how is the social sensitivity of rural and urban communities demonstrated in efforts to preserve the *arbor* tradition in Purworejo Regency?

Materials and Methods

This study uses a qualitative method with a narrative approach. This approach is used to examine social and cultural phenomena based on the experiences of individuals or social groups or *community culture*. Utilizing this approach, the research process included selecting individuals or figures, determining questions, identifying data sources, outlining data collection techniques, and defining data analysis procedures (Susetian et al., 2023). The research was conducted in two areas of Purworejo Regency, Central Java Province: *Dudukulon* Village, Grabag District, as a representation of rural areas, and *Pangenjurutengah* Village, Purworejo District, as a

representation of urban areas. The data used in this study consisted of primary data obtained through interviews and observations, as well as secondary data obtained through literature studies.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews and participant observation. In-depth interviews were conducted with 40 informants, divided equally between 20 rural and 20 urban informants. Field data collection via interviews was performed offline, separated into two stages. The first stage occurred over four days—May 16-19, 2024—consisting of interviews and observations in *Pangenjurutengah* Village. The second stage was carried out over four days—May 30-June 2, 2024—by conducting interviews and observations in *Dudukulon* Village. The research subjects were determined based on the criteria of having experience in receiving *arture* or having directly participated in the practice of *arbor*. Informants were selected using the purposive sampling method, which involves choosing individuals with relevant but differing perspectives who can provide critical insights, and the snowball sampling method, where further informants are identified through connections stemming from the initial participant (Campbell et al., 2020; Naderifar et al., 2017). In this study, the purposive sampling method was used to select informants or research subjects such as village officials and key community figures, while the snowball sampling method was utilized to select local residents, with the process ending once data saturation was reached.

Additionally, data collection through participant observation was carried out during one day, on May 24, 2024, at the residence of a *Pangenjurutengah* Village resident. Active participant observation was conducted offline by joining in the traditional activity accompanying the *arbor*—namely, the *tumpeng slametan* at a wedding in *Pangenjurutengah* Village. This observation took place at the home of one of the chairpersons of the RW in *Pangenjurutengah*. Conversely, passive participant observation was carried out offline by observing the giving of a *conquest* at the house of an informant in *Dudukulon* Village. The activity of giving the *conquest* was documented during an interview at the residence of a research informant.

The data analysis used thematic analysis, where the researcher identifies, analyzes, and reports data based on themes and interprets the findings (Susetawan et al., 2023). This type of analysis is flexible and can address various research questions regarding understanding, practice, and social sensitivity to the *arbor* tradition in rural and urban communities. In this study, deductive thematic analysis was employed by first mapping out main themes, which then served as a framework for formulating interview questions. The main themes included: experience, knowledge of tradition, knowledge of components, implementation burden, practice of traditions, components in traditions, accompanying traditions, recipient groups, role of the community, and capital for tradition implementation. The interview transcripts were processed and categorized according to these main themes. Once the thematic mapping was completed, the data was interpreted and conclusions were drawn regarding the social sensitivity of rural and urban communities in preserving the tradition of the *arbor*.

Results and Discussions

Rural and Urban People's Understanding of Punjungan Traditions in Purworejo Regency

The understanding of the people of Purworejo Regency on the tradition of the *arbor* was obtained through in-depth interviews with indicators on the main themes including the understanding of the *arbor* tradition, the burden of implementation, and the urgency of carrying out the *arbor* tradition. The results of these indicators are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Understanding the Punjungan Tradition

Indicator	Rural	Urban
Traditional Knowledge	As an invitation, notice, respect, friendship	As an invitation and thanks
Implementation Load	Feeling unburdened, it has become a habit	Feeling unburdened, but limited in number

From table 1, it shows that there is a difference in the understanding of the arbor tradition from rural and urban communities. First, in the aspect of knowledge of the tradition of the arbor, the people of rural areas interpret the tradition of the arbor as an invitation, notice, and respect to others to come and help the celebration carried out by the master of the hajatan. Rural people interpret the giving of an arrogance to others as a means of gathering, uniting, and establishing friendship, in addition to being an invitation and notification of wishes. Of the 20 rural community informants who were the subject of this study, including village officials such as the Village Head and his staff, community leaders such as Pak Dalang, and community members, knowledge about the tradition of the arakan was obtained from parents, simbah or grandmothers, and previous people who often carried out the tradition of the arbor. Meanwhile, in urban communities they interpret the tradition of the arbor as an invitation, a form of alms, and gratitude for wishes that will or have been carried out. Of the 20 urban informants, which include village officials such as Pak Carik, community leaders such as Pak Kaum, and community members, have the same source of knowledge about the tradition of the Buddha, namely from their parents and previous people.

Then, from the aspect of the implementation burden, rural people tend to feel happy and intend the process of implementing the arbor tradition with careful preparation full of joy. The majority of them consider that the tradition of the arbor has become a habit in the community and also as a means to get closer to relatives and neighbors in the surrounding environment so that they are more harmonious and "tepa selira" or tolerant by respecting and respecting others. Meanwhile, in urban communities, the majority of them also do not feel burdened when carrying out the tradition of punjungan. They consider that by giving happiness and giving alms to others, it will bring blessings. Others will also give reciprocity in the form of prayers, closer brotherly relationships, and other good things.

Traditional Practices of Punjungan Applied by Rural and Urban Communities in Purworejo Regency

The practice of the arbor tradition carried out by rural and urban communities in Purworejo Regency was obtained through in-depth interviews and participant observations. In-depth interviews were conducted using indicators on the main theme, including the practice of the arbor tradition, the components of the arbor, the recipient group, the accompanying traditions, the role of the community, and the implementation capital shown by the results of the comparison between rural and urban communities in Table 2.

Table 2. Traditional Practices of Punjungan

Indicator	Rural	Urban
Traditional Practices	Cook yourself with rewang	Catering or booking
Components of the Arbor	Rice, vegetables, meat, noodles, tempeh, eggs, crackers, and other complements that are always the same	Rice, vegetables, side dishes to suit the catering
Recipient Group	Relatives, neighbors, friends, and village officials (differentiated)	Relatives, neighbors, friends (undifferentiated)
Accompanying Traditions	Ngayu, nempur north south, and some cooking rules	Slametan
The Role of the Community	Village officials and residents helped from the preparation process to implementation	Nearest neighbors who help distribute the consecration
Implementation Capital	From private family and neighbors	From a private family

From Table 2 above, it shows the difference in the practice of implementing the arbor tradition in rural and urban communities. First, from the aspect of the practice of the arbor tradition, there is a striking difference between rural and urban communities. In rural communities, the tradition of arakan is prepared by rewang or cooking activities together from family and neighbors around the house of the owner, because the arakan is distributed in large quantities. So, it takes a lot of energy to cook the components or contents in the arbor. The existence of rewang is still attached and continues to be carried out every time there is a tradition of arbor, supported by the conditions of the supportive region. The distance between the houses is quite far away and each house has a large backyard or yard. So, it can be used as a place for rewang activities. In addition, the majority of residents in rural areas are farmers who have their own rice fields. So, they have enough time to gather with other residents, including helping their neighbors who have celebrations. Meanwhile, in urban areas, they prefer catering to carry out the tradition of punjungan. This is because the condition of the urban area does not have enough land to do rewang, because the distance between one house and the other is close. In addition, several informants mentioned that the average resident in Pangenjuritengah Village works in the office. So, their time is limited to do other social activities and want more practical.

Second, from the aspect of arbor components, in rural areas there tend to be many types of components and every time you do an arbor, the components are made the same. Components of arbor in rural areas include rice, chicken or buffalo meat, noodle vegetables, cabbage or potato vegetables, tempeh, eggs, crackers or peanut peyek, serundeng, gadon, and perkedel. However, there are exceptions only for serundeng, gadon, and perkedel, given during the distribution of arbors on the first day, because the first day is for village officials and surrounding neighbors. The large number of components cooked, supported by commodities produced in rural areas from the agricultural and livestock sectors, supports to meet the needs of those who require the presentation of large quantities of food. Meanwhile, for urban people, the arbor component is varied and flexible, at least containing rice, vegetables, and side dishes that vary the food between the master of the wish and the caterer.

Third, in the aspect of the recipient group, the difference between rural and urban communities lies in the village apparatus. Rural people know their village head very well, because they come from and are chosen by the residents of Dudukulon Village itself. Therefore, in every activity in the village, the village head has an important role.

"That is the way it should be for our parents. So whatever you have to say, listen to Mr. Kades".

Meaning, "The term is, Mr. Kades is our parents, Mba. So, if there is something in the village, you must say, respect Mr. Kades". (Obtained through an interview with one of the informants, 2024).

According to one of the informants from the excerpt of the interview story above, the village head has an important meaning in every activity of residents in the village. Usually the neighbors get one portion of each component, so for village apparatus the side dish is two to three times. Meanwhile, in urban areas, not all residents know officials in the village, because some officials in the village, including Pak Lurah and Pak Carik, are not native residents of Pangenjurutengah Village, but from other villages in Purworejo Regency. Therefore, every community activity such as the tradition of the array, village officials do not participate in helping residents who have wishes and are not given an arrogance by the residents.

Fourth, from the aspect of accompanying traditions, in rural areas there are more other traditions that accompany the tradition of the arkansas, especially the tradition of arkansas for wedding celebrations. The accompanying tradition is carried out like ngayu, which is cutting seven trees where the wood is used as a source of fireplace for rewang activities. In addition, the tradition of nempur lor kidul is also carried out, namely giving gifts in the form of food to the south coast (south) and to the river bordering the northern village (lor) in the hope that nothing bad will happen during the wedding celebration. Then, at the time of rewang, there are several provisions for people who cook rice to have a complete family, for example, it is not allowed to be a widow, assuming that those who have a wish are avoided from unwanted things. Meanwhile, in urban areas, the tradition of companionship is usually in the form of slametan or joint prayer with the closest neighbors to pray so that the fulfilled wishes can run smoothly.

Fifth, from the aspect of community roles, in rural areas there is quite a lot of involvement of residents in the implementation of the arbor tradition. Village officials such as Mr. Kades have an important role in every activity of residents in the village and often help their residents who have wishes. The wives of the village officials were also directly involved in rewang activities to prepare for the arbor. Then, the neighbors involved in the rewang activities some of them came voluntarily to help with the cooking and preparation of the arbor traditions, but some were also invited. Usually those invited are the closest neighbors and experts in a job such as cooking rice, washing dishes, and others. Community leaders such as Pak Dalang in Dudukulon Village also play a role in determining a good date or day for a series of celebration processes including the arkansas. Meanwhile, in urban areas, the role of residents is usually to help distribute the money to recipient groups carried out by neighbors or close families. This is because the preparation of the

arakan has been handed over to the catering. Thus, the process of preparing and implementing the tradition of arbor in urban areas does not involve enough residents.

Sixth, in the aspect of capital for the implementation of the tradition of arbor, for rural communities, capital comes from private property and close relatives. Interestingly, usually neighbors also help provide basic ingredients such as rice, noodles, tea, sugar, and others to the owner of the wish when they are going to do *rewang*. If the cooked food is gone, usually the person who is worried will take the initiative to buy the deficiency and later it will be replaced by the owner of the wish. Meanwhile, the capital in urban areas needed for the implementation of the arbor comes from private families. Because the preparation of the arbor tradition is carried out catering, financial needs are highly considered to carry out the celebration.

Social Sensitivity of Rural and Urban Communities in an Effort to Preserve Punjungan Traditions in Purworejo Regency

Social changes in Javanese society are marked by shifting traditions and cultures that they carry out. One of the causes is the entry of the economic and social system in the Javanese society which then has implications for the social actions they take against their traditions or culture. Social actions as a form of social sensitivity of the Javanese people in rural and urban areas have differences. As explained in Boeke's 1953 theory of economic dualism, the entry of traditional economic systems narrated in rural areas tends to be simple and difficult to adopt a more modern (capitalist) system. They are called by Boeke the pre-capitalist economic system. Meanwhile, in societies with a more modern import economic system (called by Boeke the capitalist economic system), they tend to be more open to modernization and urban formation (Boeke, 1953). The clash of economic systems forms a rural and urban dichotomy with different characteristics. However, despite this dichotomy, the economic and social system in rural communities still exists and coexists with the economic and social system in urban or urban communities. This can be seen from the tradition of arbor in Purworejo Regency in the research.

The social sensitivity of rural and urban communities is obtained by identifying and analyzing the understanding and practice of the arbor tradition that has been carried out. Then, the indicator used to see how the social sensitivity of rural and urban communities is the urgency of implementing the tradition. Both rural and urban communities are not much different in interpreting and understanding the tradition of arbor that has been carried out for generations in each region. However, from the implementation practice, it looks quite different between the two regions. From these differences, The social sensitivity of the community to the tradition of the Buddhist tradition is studied by looking at how the community interprets the urgency of the current Buddhist tradition.

In the area of Dudukulon Village, which is a rural representation, and Pangenjurutengah Village, which is an urban representation, there are differences in the economic and social characteristics of the community. It is the difference in the system that affects their social actions in responding to the tradition of the arbor which is their typical tradition when carrying out celebrations. Social action as a form of social sensitivity can be seen from how they interpret the tradition that has been passed down through generations in the midst of the entry and development

of increasingly rapid and modern knowledge and technology. Moving on from this, to examine the social sensitivity of rural and urban communities, this study uses the urgency arising from the perception of rural and urban communities in responding to the current tradition of arbor.

For rural communities, the tradition of the arbor must always be carried out in every celebration activity that requires this tradition, such as weddings, circumcision, and the birth of babies. The tradition of arbor must be carried out with the same process and implementation as done by the previous people, in order to get blessings and avoid unwanted bad events. Actions taken by rural communities are defined as rational actions that are oriented towards values, namely actions based on individual beliefs (Hoorn et al., 2028). They have their own faith values to continue to carry out the tradition of arbor. This is because there is an assumption that if you do not carry out the tradition of arborism, you will get something bad. In addition, the characteristics of rural communities are collective or communal, namely prioritizing common interests rather than individual interests (Utomo et al., 2022). Thus, the practice of the tradition of the arbor is very important, because it strengthens kinship relationships. In addition, if it is not implemented, it will create conversations from neighbors which in the future will actually make the relationship tense.

Then, for urban people, the tradition of the arbor needs to be done by adjusting religious sharia and also looking at or considering financial ability. Urban society has more rational and mechanical characteristics, and individual interests dominate over common interests (Utomo et al., 2022). Urban people tend to simplify the tradition of arbor. The proximity of the houses, the inadequate large yard to cook the components of the arbor in large numbers and large numbers of people, as well as the majority working in the formal sector encourage them to opt for more efficient preparations to carry out the tradition of the arbor. Even so, the tradition of *punjungan* still exists and is carried out in several celebration activities such as weddings, circumcision, and the birth of babies. The tradition of *puraring* that is carried out is more practical and does not leave the essentials of the arbor is to invite others in a better way and share joy in the form of giving food to others. Therefore, they still consider that the tradition of the arbor needs to be carried out, even though the tradition of the arbor is carried out in a way that is more adaptive to the current situation.

Conclusion

The understanding of the *arbor* tradition in Purworejo Regency is largely similar between rural and urban communities, both viewing it as a symbol of invitation and notification through food sharing. The key difference lies in intent: rural communities regard it as a means of fostering friendship, while urban communities use it primarily for thanksgiving. Traditional practices also differ, with rural communities actively involving local residents in preparation through *rewang* activities, maintaining consistent components, and offering *arbor* to village officials. In contrast, urban communities tend to rely on catering services, provide more varied components, and involve fewer local residents in preparation. Social sensitivity also varies, with rural communities adhering more closely to tradition, while urban communities prefer simplification and efficiency. Despite these differences, both communities regard the *arbor* tradition as an important cultural element to preserve. They adapt their practices to

maintain this tradition, with rural communities continuing traditional rituals and urban communities favoring more efficient approaches. Both communities involve younger generations in the preparation and practice of the tradition, ensuring its transmission through stories and direct participation. To sustain the *arbor* tradition, it is vital that parents instill knowledge through oral storytelling and active participation. Cultural observers and academics should further explore the continuity of this tradition, while the local government of Purworejo Regency should develop strategies to promote and preserve it through cultural activities and other initiatives, ensuring its ongoing relevance and sustainability.

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