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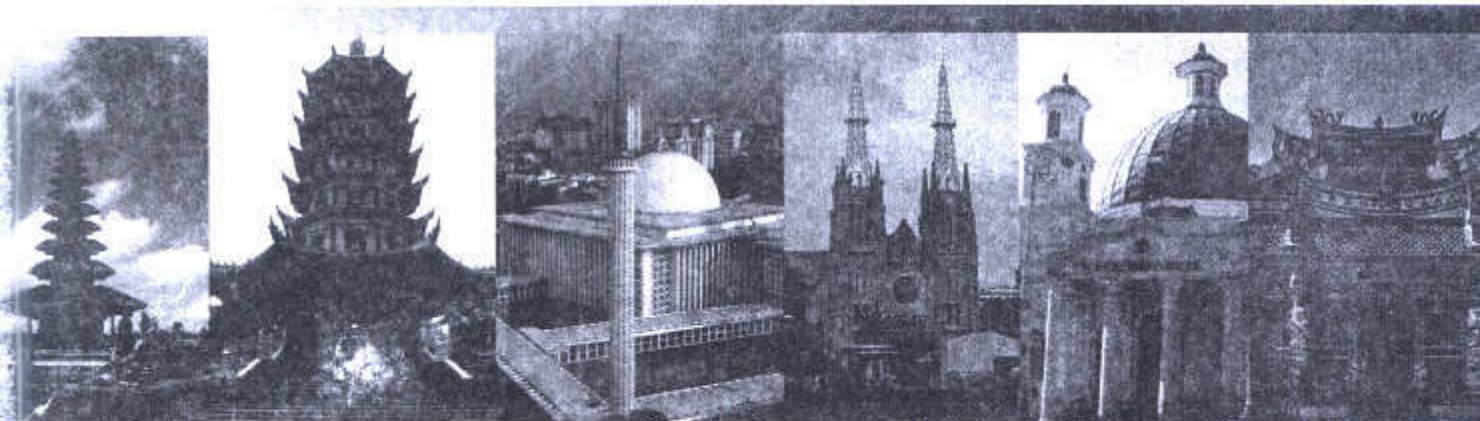


Center for Research and Development of Religious Literature and Heritage
Office for Research and Development and Training
Ministry of Religious Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia

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CONTENTS

Editorial Notes	ii
1. The Growth of “Islamic” Radical Books in Indonesia <i>Choirul Fuad Yusuf</i>	1 – 22
2. Women, Leadership, and Mosque’s Cultures: Indonesian Heritage in New York City <i>Etin Anwar</i>	23 – 52
3. Lyrics in the <i>Dolalak</i> Dance Purworejo Central Java as a Form of Islamic Folk Songs <i>Djarot Heru Santosa, Timbul Haryono, and RM Soedarsono</i>	53 – 94
4. Cultural Strategies of Abdi Dalem in the Global Era in Achieving Welfare <i>Sulistiyowati</i>	95 – 116
5. Traditional Ritual Water Conservation, and Islamic Thought <i>Mohammad Fathi Royyani and Abdul Syukur</i>	117 – 144
6. Islamic and Customary Law in Aceh Darussalam Constitution <i>Gunawan Adnan</i>	145 – 176
7. أثر التشيع في تصحيح الحديث: دراسة عن تصحيح أبي عبد الله الحاكم النيسابوي حديثي الطبر ومن كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه في كتاب المستدرک على الصحيحين <i>Abdul Malik Gazali</i>	177 – 204
About Authors	205
Notes to Contributors	209

EDITORIAL NOTES

The growth of religiously radical books has already occurred in parallel to the growth of universal ideologies, philosophical thoughts, and universal ideas of religion in the world-wide, spread globally by information and technological progress. This first article, "The Growth of "Islamic" Radical Books in Indonesia", written by Choirul Fuad Yusuf, sociologically, attempts to describe how the development and spread of Islamic literary works, particularly on the conflictually-nuanced books in Indonesia. The article of which data is referred to the research-findings on *Survey of Religious Books in Indonesia*, highlighted some notes. *First*, the growth and development of Islamic books, since last decade, tends to be strongly dominated by the practical-Islam books. This phenomenon, is culturally predominantly caused by any pragmatic view of the Muslims at large. *Second*, if it is compared to its former development, the liberal books of Islam seems to face any decline of quantity and interest due to its messages perceived as too freely secular. *Third*, both fundamental books containing the ideas of teaching-purification, and radical "Islamic" books proposing the *syariah* Islam implementation totally and establishing Islamic state in Indonesia, tend to very be stagnant and not too popular amongst Indonesian Muslims because of their political aspiration for defending Indonesia as their country.

The second article is about "Lyrics in the Dolalak Dance in Purworejo Central Java" is written by Djarot, Timbul and Sudarsono. They highlighted that Islamic education teachings which is transmitted performatively in the form of folk-songs is relatively very effective. The article, which is very descriptive and informative in nature, shows that the performance art is methodologically significant and functional in the approaching people's soul and spirituality to be closer to the God believed. So, for the future, the writers confidently recommend to Government to maintain and conserve this traditional method of Islamic teachings or *dakwah Islamiyah*.

The third article, Etin Anwar which talks on the use of social, religious and cultural heritage for community building and mosque participation by Indonesian Muslim communities in New York City and its impact on women's leadership in al-Hikmah mosque and their production of moral agency and pious self in the mosque setting. She argues that Indonesian Muslim women in Al-Hikmah mosque have more leadership capacity due to the cultural heritage of Indonesian Islam and the complementary status of women in their communities.

Further, Sulistiyowati's article on "Cultural Strategies of Abdi Dalem in the Global Era in Achieving Welfare" talks about the life of Abdi Dalem in facing the globalization era, particularly focusing on the why-ness of the Abdi Dalem have a strong dedication to the King. The Abdi Dalem (royal officials) of Jogjakarta Palace, historically, devoted of the Kings on the reach of blessing (*ngalap berkah*). They believed in the non-material as the highest values. To be an Abdi Dalem who devotes to the King will be functionally effective to gain both inner and outer welfare. Through her research carried out in 2009, she concludes that to be Abdi Dalem, actually, is not only motivated for the need of seeking for blessings (of the King or Sultan), but it is also inherited by their ancestors. Although, the monthly salary (*paring dalem*) received by Abdi Dalem, ranging from IDR 7,000.00 up to IDR 15,000.00 but they feel happier and more fortunate in getting welfare. This social fact, of course, becomes a very unique phenomenon in the modern era or *jaman saiki*.

The fifth article is "Traditional Ritual, Water Conservation and Islamic Thought, written by Muhammad Fathi Royyani. This article discusses the traditional ritual of water conservation and its relation to the Islamic thoughts on utilizing the natural resource. This article, substantially, explicates of how the relation of the concept of *Kawin Cai* and Islamic thought, known as the Seven Grade (*Martabat Tujuh*). This article important to read though it seems to be only as a reportive work.

The sixth article of "Islamic and Customary Law in the Aceh Darussalam Constitution" written by Gunawan Adnan tries to show readers that there is a tied and hard relationship between Islamic law

and customary law in the Aceh Darussalam constitution. This relationship phenomenon is clearly seen through the examination study of the manuscripts of the so-called the three law of Aceh, especially pertaining to *siyasaḥ*. The article jumps to a brief conclusion that the most Islamic law, especially the political domain (*siyasaḥ*) has been permeated into Monarchic Aceh Darussalam structure. The institution of *Ahlul Halli wal Aqdi* (parliament), *syura* system, King and functionary conditions are systemically needed for carrying out the state. Further, based on *qanun*, the form of Aceh Darussalam kingdom is not purely a monarchy, endowed by generations, but has been constructed by modern Islamic Republic State. Moreover, the relationship between Islamic law and customary law (*adat*) in Aceh Darussalam kingdom has already been found in the form of both total and selective absorptions.

The last article, written in Arabic “أثر التشيع في تصحيح الحديث”, by Abdul malik Ghazali, studied on the book of *Al-Mustadrak ‘ala Ṣaḥīḥain* written by Abu Abdillah al-Hakim al-Nisaburi (w. 405). The author argues that Al-Hakim easily approved on *hadis* either *hadis saḥih* or *hadis hasan*. This action, at least, indicated that Al-Hakim was already influenced by *syiah* domination in the reign of Muslim states at that time.

Cultural Strategies of *Abdi Dalem* in The Global Era in Achieving Welfare

Sulistiyowati¹

Abstract

The article aims at examining cultural strategies of Javanese community, particularly those of the *abdi dalem* (royal official), in achieving welfare. It is inevitable for the *abdi dalem*, who has existed for more than one century in Javanese community, to face the changes of era (global era). Javanese cultural values which are believed and accepted as the guidance in daily behaviour are opposed to the values in globalization that worship material as the highest value. The behaviour of *abdi dalem* as cultural actors holding tight to Javanese cultural values or Javanese logic (*logika kejawen*) in their everyday lives will be understood in context to see their flexibilities in responding to any changes occurred around them. Through this understanding, the research is aimed to uncover the functions of cultural values as cultural identity and strategic function in promoting the sustainability of public support (*abdi dalem*) within the globalization challenges. Hopefully, the result of this research will be useful for the policy makers as well as the community to reveal the positive values of Javanese culture to adapt to the changing era. To obtain the objectives of the research, qualitative method is adopted. Methods of data collection used are participant observation and in-depth interviews. The informants selected in this study are the *abdi dalem* of Yogyakarta Palace. Through the interpretative approach of the symbols of *abdi dalem* behavior inexpressible that devotion to the king for *ngalap berkah*, simple lifestyles and the

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harmony principle is offered by *abdi dalem* to achieve welfare within the globalization challenges.

Keywords: *abdi dalem*, welfare, strategy.

Introduction

“*Amenangi zaman edan, ...beja begjane kang lali, luwih beja kang eling lawan waspada*”², this expression proposed by Ranggawarsita seems to be quite appropriate to question the logic of capital in defining the concept of well-being today. Undeniably, the changing eras have led to the needs which are increasingly complex and leading to a state of chaos. Everyone is competing to achieve a better life without thinking about ethics in the effort to get it. A better life or welfare seemed to be a dream for many people. Thus, the meaning of welfare becomes more worldly.

‘*Zaman saiki*’ or the present era reflects a world in which imaging, consumption, and representation become important themes. Money is an indicator frequently used as a measure to create the icons of welfare. Those who are categorized as having a good life are those who own one or more icons namely: luxurious house, apartment, car, jewellery, acres of land or companies scattered everywhere. This is where the actual servitude on the ‘material’ is no longer a mere orientation, but has become a kind of social pathology.

The world of ‘*zaman saiki*’ or present era with its globalization leads us to a new round of a mass commodification that life is defined as nothing more than a transaction process. The calculation of cost and benefit is the credo that becomes the determinant in defining each relationship and social practices. It is this social pathology which in turn gives birth to new generations, known as generation x in Ortner’s term (2006:94), who are

² In the globalization era, those who always remember and alert are much luckier than those who forget.

actually stable financially but constantly haunted by anxiety due to the changing living standards.³

Anxiety, worry, and fear emerged as part of the hedonic effect proves that money brings destructive effect. Anxiety, fear, or worry are the concrete manifestation of the socio-cultural dislocation caused by the cult to skin or things that are surface (Chaney, 1996:15-16). The efforts made to achieve a better life must eventually collide with endless material achievement standards (Abdullah, 2006: 111-112). It brings the individuals to a less expected situation. The logic of capital which is built on wealth accumulation motives and profit maximization has obtained consequences that are incomparable with the expectations given (Lewellen, 2002; Abdullah, 2006; Kirby, 2006; Badri, 2008). Advanced logic of capital raising the highest material living standards, in fact, brings impacts that Berger termed as pyramids of sacrifice. The application of the logic of capital has been demanding human cost both in terms of physical and non-physical, in the form of misery calculation and calculation of meaning (Berger, 1982:xiv-xvii).⁴ The wealth that has been owned and lifestyle privileges that have been obtained even cause what is called the existential isolation.

The standards of welfare in modern life which are inherent with rationality and positive values to achieve maximum results are sought in various ways. One example of the Javanese community in defining or promoting welfare is reflected in the everyday life of the *abdi dalems* who are tomb caretakers in Imogiri royal cemetery (Sulistyowati, et.al., 2009). Becoming an *abdi dalem* is based on the need to seek blessings from the king. Obtaining peace is the primary goal. From these statements, it can

³Khudori called this kind of generation as a taste-centrist generation, who devote themselves to the consumption of prestigious capital products. For further explanation see Khudori, 2005:88-89.

⁴ Misery calculation is related to the shortage and physical sufferings caused by famine or terror, while the calculation of meaning is related to cultural loss, the dwindling culture and the emergence of people who lost their handle on life (materialistic attitudes and consumptive which are promoting the socioeconomic inequality)

be defined that someone becomes *abdi dalem* not to meet subsistent needs but spiritual needs. It is hard to be accepted rationally for an *abdi dalem* to survive in the present era that puts the needs of material above all. Devotion and submission to the king as the lord apparently teaches this *abdi dalem* (*abdi dalems*) in adapting the advantages of manners, habits, and behaviour of their lord/ *bendara*. The figure of *abdi dalem* does leave exotic impression. With *blangkon* (male batik headdress), *jarit* (batik cloth), *keris* (dagger) and *surjan* (Javanese long-sleeved man's jacket) that they always wear, they are often regarded as unique figures in today's era. The uniqueness is further evident when it is faced with the fact that being *abdi dalem* does not promise any financial gain. Such a small monthly salary often makes people shake their heads and assume that the *abdi dalems* are really a group of people who are not rational. Although they are closely associated with a variety of uniqueness, the *abdi dalems* in fact still have their own ways to enjoy the comforts of life and the various facilities offered by modern life.

Motivation of *caos bekti* or giving devotion as an *abdi dalem* is believed to bring inner and outer well-being. This kind of ideology that could be called as *kejawen* is an ethic and lifestyle inspired by Javanese way of thinking. It is the Javanese outlook on life that emphasizes inner peace, harmony and balance, and *nrimo* attitude or gratefully accepting any events that happened while placing the individual at the bottom of society and the public at the universe. In Javanese philosophy, life is not merely the pursuit of earthly matter, but a harmony between the earthly and spiritual things. It is difficult to understand when seeing the present condition with the increasingly varied needs which required large capital to obtain (Mulder, 2001:10) By looking at it, it simply may be hard to find a reason how can *abdi dalem* "live" in today's world despite their high level.

When put in cultural function chart, the life of Yogyakarta Palace *abdi dalem* can be viewed as a tension between open

attitude (transcendence) and closed stance (immanence) in the linkage between human beings and the surrounding powers. Humans in this case are the *abdi dalem*, while the surrounding power is something that affects the *abdi dalem*. In general, the power can be found in the universe, in social patterns, in engineering, in sexuality, in happiness, and in divine environment. The bottom line is anything that comes from the outside will affect us (Peursen, 1976).

The problems raised in this study are discussed with the strategy of seeing the tension between open attitude and closed stance; how far *abdi dalems* open themselves up and accept the influence of external powers. In the global era, the external power to the lives of *abdi dalem* could be defined as the king's power of which the charisma they really believe so that it brings up the myths about the majesty and magic of the king not only when they were still alive but also when they already passed away. On the other hand, the *abdi dalem* may not be able to isolate themselves from the global influence and impact in this era. This process is inevitable in Javanese culture, in general, and in the lives of *abdi dalem*, as it corresponds to the continuum nature of culture as a result of the meeting process of the other cultural elements that are very diverse.

The contradiction emerge between the meaning of material prosperity brought by the logic of capital and the simplicity emphasized in the life philosophy of Javanese culture raises fundamental questions about how the *abdi dalems* define prosperity? How do they negotiate the Javanese cultural values that they believe with the demands of life in the logic of capital in order to achieve well-being? Are there any conflicts that arise in the effort to achieve harmonization? In turn, this research is expected to be able to achieve specific objective, which is revealing the strategy of local culture (the Javanese) in responding to the changes of era in the context of achieving welfare. An understanding of this will then be used to see the suppleness or

flexibility of Javanese culture in response to the changes that arise, as well as in providing answers to the needs of cultural supports. Through this understanding, the research is aimed at uncovering the function of cultural values as the cultural identity and strategic function in supporting the sustainability of public supporting the culture within the framework of Javanese cultural heritage preservation. In short, the potential of Javanese culture as the local culture will be explored to anticipate and deal with the changing times in a more discerning way and promoting harmony for its supporters.

The concept of cultural strategy can be understood as a behavior to achieve a goal/ specific achievement by using a set of values as a rule in support of those efforts (Nurdin, 1990:10). In terms of welfare, these behaviors include: capacity building, protection from the incapacity of individuals and community groups, the protection from the disorder and problems that reduce the ability owned and optimizing various abilities and participation in the system of human welfare.

The problems on welfare always exist in the development of community civilization. Welfare is derived from an ancient word "farewell" meaning achieving good condition (well being). Each community has its own way to achieve welfare. In Oxford dictionary, the word welfare is interpreted in two ways. First, the state of healthy, happy, and the presence of opportunity to influence others owned by individuals or groups. Second, activities or procedures that are designed to meet the basic needs both the physical and material to achieve well-being.

Fitzpatrick (2001) in Bahruddin (2008) defines welfare by sorting it into welfare as an end and welfare as a process or design to achieve well being. In this case, Fitzpatrick also describes six important aspect to be considered in defining well-being, namely: happiness, security, choice, necessity, possibility to earn award and punishment (desert) and relative comparisons. Welfare can

basically be defined as a condition of life in which the balance of individuals' inner and outer may be created in relation to their effort to meet their physical and spiritual needs (Twikromo, 1995:19).

In some literatures, the concept of well-being is juxtaposed contradictively with the concept of poverty or lack. One of the literatures is an article written by Coleman and Cressey (1987:172). Welfare is a category of success coupled with wealth, ownership (property), privilege (prestige) and power. Those who are not included in this category are referred to as "poor people". They are attached with limited access to subsistence, shortages of food, shelter, clothing and entertainment.

In addition to the meaning from material definition, well-being can be understood as a virtue attitude that leads to self-control or harmony between the demands and the requirements established under the umbrella of spirituality reflected in the concept of Javanese. One of the articles that confirm the same thing can be found in the article of Ali (1986). In his writings, he explains that people should take the distance to the world around him, both in material and spiritual aspects. Everything that happens in the world confused consciousness of joy and sorrow; happiness and misery ruin true consciousness. If people want to have meaning in the world, he must first reflect on the world. The virtue is achieved through the attitudes of *riila* (willing to do something sincerely), *narima* (gratefully accepting what God gives us), and patient.

Endraswara (2006) also shows the principle of life "*ana sethithik dipangan sethithik*" (it is not a problem if there is a little or a lot of food) which is used as a guidance in the effort to achieve satisfaction in Javanese world. In this case, life is basically always driven by the spiritual power '*ana dina ana upa*' (when there is a day, there must be good fortune) and '*obah mamah*' (the fortune will come to the people who work hard). These concepts underlie

the real meaning of life which actually lead to the concept that people do not need to exert (make strenuous effort) in living the life. Tasks of life are performed within the principle corridor of '*alon-alon waton kelakon*', which is defined as not to act rashly in performing a task, and emphasize on the accomplishment of the task enjoyably.

Geertz (1983) in *Keluarga Jawa* also raises the concept of harmonization in achieving social welfare known by Javanese society. He called this concept 'harmony'. It is this term of harmony which is used by Geertz as a method used by the Javanese to handle the demands on properties. In this method, consensus is considered as more valid than a correct answer. Harmony becomes a practical *modus vivendi* achieved through mutual giving and receiving among people who are selfish.

The method used in this study is qualitative methods. This method is based on the interpretative approach by Geertz that culture is basically communal meaning relation built in so that entraps the owner of culture itself. Understanding will be obtained through an interpretation of the meaning of symbols, language, acts, and objects. The system of ideology can be expressed through the interpretation. The interpretation of meaning is important to understand culture phenomenon (Geertz, 1973).

***Abdi dalem* in the Social Community Structure**

Abdi dalems are divided into two, namely *punakawan* and *kaprajan*. *Abdi dalem punakawan* is *abdi dalem* who served in the palace, the tombs, mosques, and at the foot of Mount Merapi for the palace. Meanwhile, *abdi dalem kaprajan* is local government employees who get *kekancingan* or decree from the king as governor by pleading for rank or *kalenggahan* in the palace. Rank and title given by the palace to the *abdi dalem* is an indicator of one's status and position, and this is the aspect that

distinguishes it from the governmental system of the Republic of Indonesia (Sudaryanto, 2005).

Abdi dalem as an element of royal government has the right and obligation. The rights of *abdi dalem* are rank, title and name, salary, welfare, and retirement. The *abdi dalem* both *punakawan* and *kaprajan* may acquire the rank or *kalenggahan*. There are several ranks in Yogyakarta palace government. Based on *Pranatan Kalenggahan* No.01/Pran/KHPP/XII/2004, it is stated that the ranks in Yogyakarta palace consists of 11 levels, starting from 1) *Kanjeng Pangeran firnas15Harya* (KPH), 2) *Bupati Nayaka*; 3) *Bupati Kliwon*; 4) *Bupati Sepuh*; 5) *Bupati Anom*; 6) *Riya Bupati Anom*; 7) *Wedana*; 8) *Penewu*; 9) *Lurah*; 10) *Bekel*; dan 11) *Jajar*.

Remuneration (salary) is only for the *abdi dalem punakawan*, while the for the *abdi dalem kaprajan*, the palace have no obligation to give salary because they are paid by the government/state. The provisions on remuneration is stated clearly in the letter of determination (*kekancingan*), both for *abdi dalem punakawan* and *abdi dalem kaprajan*. The salary gained by *abdi dalem punakawan*, which is called by the palace as *pituwas* or a reward, is very small, and when compared to the provincial minimum wage (UMP), it is far from standard. Therefore, the *abdi dalem punakawan* does not consider the money as a salary. As argued by Jamroni, "the money I received is not salary but the gift from the king, which is 20 thousand rupiahs". They call it a token of mercy from the sultan or Sultan's gift. This statement is reinforced by Nyi KRT Hamong Tedjonegoro, a female *abdi dalem*:

"Wonten mriki menika mboten upah-upahan, Mbak. Dados wonten mriki menika paran *abdi dalem* menika keikhlasan, ketulusan. Dados wonten mriki pengabdian. Yen mboten pengabdian wonten mriki mboten saged menika. Yen badhe pados arta mboten saged. Aluwung nyambut damel teng njawi. Dados wonten mriki nika njih wau, keikhlasan. Dados sing sami nyambut damel teng mriki sami ndherek

menika raosipun sami ayem tentrem. Dados mboten mengharapkan gaji. Ning nggih saking kraton punparingi.”

"In the palace there is no salary. All the *abdi dalems* work sincerely as a form of their devotion. The palace is not a place to earn money, but peace, although the palace gives token of mercy.”

This condition gives the sense that motivation of becoming *abdi dalem* is not based on economic motives or demands of the material, but more prominent and dominant motivation is devotion and sincerity (nonmaterial). Despite the relatively small salary given, the Sultan of Yogyakarta Palace as the king pays attention to the welfare of his *abdi dalem*. There are some efforts made by the Sultan in promoting the welfare of the *abdi dalem*. One is in the form of concern for the health of the *abdi dalem*. The steps taken are evidence that the palace is well aware that most of the palace *abdi dalems* are generally old.

The welfare of the *abdi dalem* is getting noticed by the Sultan of Yogyakarta. Since 2011, the *abdi dalem* received THR (Holiday Allowance). The amount of THR given depends on the amount of monthly salary or *paring dalem* received by the *abdi dalem*, ranging from IDR 7,000.00 to IDR 15,000.00⁵. Although this policy is widely criticized by the public who judge that the amount of THR given is inhuman just as the amount of the salary received by the *abdi dalem*, the *abdi dalems* accept the policy well as a form of attention from the Sultan.

Another policy adopted by the palace as the seat of government is the implementation of incentive system in order to motivate employees to achieve work performance. In general, the *abdi dalem* has a high work ethic and obedient, despite inadequate financial reward. This motivation is manifested in the form of pension salary for *abdi dalem punakawan*. The pension is granted

⁵ sosbud.kompasiana.com/2011/10/25/bangganya-menjadi-abdi-dalem-kraton-yogyakarta

to *abdi dalem* who had served within a certain period of time, but can not continue their duty (*caos bekti*) because of illness or old age.

According to KRT Murtiwandawa, flexible work schedules of the *abdi dalem* is a form of wisdom and understanding of the king (HB IX) so that the *abdi dalems* who have the task to come to the palace or *sowan* every day, still have the time to do something else to earn income from another job to support their life. The palace realizes that the salary given is far below the standard of provincial minimum wage.

Abdi dalem who worked in the palace or in the mosque or in the cemetery of the king, are at the same time community members in which they live. Thus, an *abdi dalem* as a member of the community would have the same obligations as other citizens, for example in the context of community service or neighborhood watch. Local communities around the *abdi dalem* generally understand and are tolerant of what the *abdi dalem* means, if at any time they could not participate in social activities due to their turn in *caos* (serving the King) task; they will not get any social sanction. Society will not gossip their absence, even the *abdi dalem* will be asked to do the *caos* tasks that have become their liabilities.

Respect to the *abdi dalem* from the surrounding neighbours, among others, is shown by appointing the *abdi dalem* to be the head of RT (*Rukun Tetangga* = neighbourhood-group). It is experienced by K.R.T. Puja Dipura and Nyi K.R.T. Hamong Tedjonegoro although she is a woman and has a K.R.T title. When she was asked to occupy the position of the head of RT, she proposed a requirement or request, "I want to be head of the neighborhood, but if there is a meeting in the evening I would not be able to attend it so I ask for permission", and the *lurah* (the head of urban village) even allows that. Holding the community

service, social gathering and the meeting will certainly be done if they are not done in the evening.

K.R.T. Puja Dipura has different experiences. He acts as the head of RT as a leader who helps to resolve conflicts or disputes in the community. On the other hand, as a citizen he never misses to attend community service, neighborhood watch, or other social activities. According to him, he felt the difference in treatment of people after he became an *abdi dalem*. He is more appreciated or respected (*diajeni*). He expressed public opinion about him, "Generally the community has positive response, because after all the *abdi dalems* are also served as cultural heroes. It is because they help to preserve the legacy of Mataram Kingdom. "

The attitude of respect or *ngajeni* is also indicated by the way people call him. The *abdi dalems* are generally addressed in accordance with the position, such as *mas lurah*, *mas ngabehi*, *mas wedana*, while those who hold the rank of *bupati nayaka* and have the title K.R.T will be greeted with their title. *rama* or *kanjeng* for their nicknames. As an example, K.R.T. Murtiwandawa is greeted with *kanjeng Murti* or *rama Murti*. In every event they are treated more than commoners as *abdi dalems* are considered as a group of nobles, so their seats are in the "respectable" or VIP row.

Tracing The *Abdi dalem*' Trail

According to Rostiati (1987), when a person decides to be an *abdi dalem*, it is based on the needs of seeking for blessings (*ngalap berkah*) from the King. This was confirmed by an *abdi dalem* to a *Kompas* reporter, "All the *abdi dalems* do not have commercial motive whatsoever, but *caos bekti*. Being part of the palace makes people feel content. Obtaining peace of mind is their main goal in life" (2008). This is similar to that expressed by Mas Bekel Yudhosari (60 years old) who has become an *abdi dalem*

for 12 years “*ndherek ngabdi, ndherek sowan, ndherek ngayom, nyuwun berkah dalem, saged paringana panjang umur, katentreman, kawilujengan olehe momong anak putu.*” The intention to become an *abdi dalem* came from his own will. Although his grandfather was also *abdi dalem*, it is not the excuse for him. He is firm solely to serve to get the blessing from the King, with the hope that he could be given a long life, peace of mind, and safety in caring for his children and grandchildren.

The decision to become an *abdi dalem* is not just because ones want to seek for blessing but it is also influenced by heredity and environment. Being *abdi dalem* in Yogyakarta Palace is generally inherited from their ancestors while there are some who serve as *abdi dalem* because they are invited by neighbors or acquaintances who have already become *abdi dalem*. Heredity is not a guarantee that a person is interested in becoming *abdi dalem*. One wants to be an *abdi dalem* because of his own desire. In some cases, the invitation to be *abdi dalem* come from the palace itself. It is as expressed by Budi Raharjo (55 years old) who has served for 28 years, “*awit bekti, panggilan hati, jiwa dan hati, saking alit sampun wonten ngriki, dasare keturunan tiyang sepuh, simbah-simbah abdi dalem wonten ngriki, ngantos kula lan anak kula.*” (because of devotion, the calling from heart, since I was little I have already been here, it was descended from my parents; my grandfather and great grandfather were also *abdi dalem* in this palace, and so am I and my kids). The families of this father-of-one have been *abdi dalem* for generations. They occupy a house with the *magersari* status from generation to generation (*magersari* is the concept of living in an area owned by more respected or prosperous people especially the king; without paying and without owning the land.)

Watching the *abdi dalems* with their distinctive costumes everyday passing in front of his house, Mas Bekel Yuda Margiana (62) gradually became interested to serve in Yogyakarta palace. Mardi Sagiya who makes a living by making *lincak* (low

bamboo bench) said “*kaya dene panggilan hati, menawi critanipun, kula waune kerja ning pasar, sumerep abdi dalem kondur, lha kula kok kepingin rasane, lha ning awak kula batin kula “lha kok aku ra duwe kenalan ra duwe sedulur”*”. Lha ndilalah menika tahun 2003 wonten mergi kenalan abdi dalem, lha kula ketemu jagongan lajeng ditari “*kepingin dadi abdi dalem?*” (“It was just like the calling of the heart, the story began when I was working in the market. I saw an *abdi dalem* coming home, I got a feeling that I want to be like him; but I was telling myself that I didn’t have any acquaintances or relatives who are *abdi dalems*. Coincidentally, in 2003, being acquainted to an *abdi dalem*, he invited me to be an *abdi dalem*’. Tit for tat, this man who loves *macapat* accepted the invitation with great fondness.

K.R.T Puja Dipura (55), who has been an *abdi dalem* for 14 years, became interested in having the profession as *abdi dalem* not only because watching the everyday life of *abdi dalem* but also because his father was also an *abdi dalem*. “I am also keen to help to preserve the cultural heritage by being an *abdi dalem*. If it was not me or my siblings who else”, said the man who already has the rank as *bupati anom*. The similar background of interest was also experienced by Mas Wedana Yudha Mudiana. When he was young, he often joined his grandfather who meditated in cemeteries and did rituals in Parangkusumo and Mount Merapi. Since then, an interest to become *abdi dalem* aroused. With a network of people who were already working as *abdi dalem* and his grandfather, he applied to be an *abdi dalem* at the age of 18. Until now he has served for 35 years.

Mas Ngabehi Jamroni said that he became an *abdi dalem* because of coercion from his *abdi dalem* friends because he is smart in reading Koran. At first he did not have any aspiration to become an *abdi dalem* even though his father and grandfather were also *abdi dalem* in the same place where they worked as the caretaker. His work as a farmworker pays for his son education in high school. In addition to working as a laborer, he has a skill of

reciting Koran (*qiroah*) and he is often invited to preach at the mosque. He was then asked by his friends to be an *abdi dalem* at the Wotgaleh mosque to substitute his father. When he was asked about his family's involvement as *abdi dalem*, he said “*nggih nek riyin nggih kados bapak barang niku, simbah barang niku, istilahe turun-maturun*” (it was passed down from generations, just like my father and grandfather). Therefore, Mr. Jamroni continued to work as servants in the palace to continue his family tradition. So then he joined to be an *abdi dalem* at the Wotgaleh mosque in Berbah.

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Being *abdi dalem* is an honor, so in this case the social status is the main reason one wishes to be an *abdi dalem*. By becoming an *abdi dalem*, one can obtain a fairly privileged position either because there are additional aristocratic titles or specific roles entrusted directly from the Sultan (Guinness, 1986; Soelist, 1991; Soelist and Kustara, 1995, and Rustopo, 2007). The *abdi dalems* show their pride in various ways. One of them is by installing the attributes associated with the symbol of the kingdom

in the living room of their homes, such as framed *partisara* (certificate) from Yogyakarta Palace, spears, Sultan HB VII photo, photo of *kekancingan* acceptance letters, and personal photos using specific *peranakan* costume. There is also a show of pride as *abdi dalem* by putting up the nameboard above the entrance door to the house. Mas Wedana Yuda Mudiana implicitly shows his pride as *abdi dalem* from his saying, “*Dadi abdi dalem niku abot, mboten entuk napa-napa, kedah lair batin. Butuh kula kiyambak dados abdi dalem, dados kula kasarane cah cilik wis diparingi pangkat seka ngarsa dalem kula pun alhamdulillah, atase cah ndesa bodho kalih sultan dianggep diparingi asma, ya bersyukur tenan matur nuwun sing maringi kula kok dikeki jeneng dikeki pangkat niki bagi kula sampun dhuwur*”. (Being *abdi dalem* is burdensome, I do not get anything; but it should be done fully. It is my own will to become an *abdi dalem*, so it is as if I was a little boy who was given the rank from the king that I should be grateful to God. Although I was a dumb country boy, the Sultan appreciated me and later gave me a title, I am grateful to those who gave me the title, to me gratitude is important).

***Abdi dalem*' Perceptions toward the Changes of Time**

The changes of time, as predicted by Ranggawarsita basically refers to the time in which order, security, justice, and norms are violated (Mulder, 1983). It is believed that God will send the Messiah to realign the existing irregularities. It seems that awareness of the changes of time are perceived and responded to by some people by applying to be *abdi dalem*. Mas Bekel Yudasahari views the situation worrisomely, he said that he did not like to see the news because the news only contain *udur* (conflict). Palace life is believed to be regular, safe, fair, and uphold the values of Javanese culture so he believes that it can provide tranquility of life. Saryono (2011) said that in Javanese culture the state of serenity and peace is externalised in the concept

of *urip tansah tentrem, urip adhem ayem kerta raharja kadya siniram banyu ayu sewindu lawase, tentrem iku saranane urip aneng donya, kamulyaning urip iku dumunung ana ing tentreming ati*. (Life should always be peaceful, cool and calm, and prosperous just like being showered by water for eight years; peacefulness is the purpose of life in the world, and the preciousness of life lies in the peace of mind).

In their daily life, *abdi dalems* realize that changes happen from the traditional to the modern life. Nevertheless, the *abdi dalems* continue to believe that the traditional symbols remain relevant to face the changing time. The *ayem* or calmness symbol signifies the life force, so they are able to survive, even if they live with a high demand as a result of globalization. They do not have any desire to leave their job despite a very small salary. According to them the tranquility of living is one of the strengths in dealing with the changes of time.

In response to the speed of time, the *abdi dalems* rest their conviction on the philosophy of *madya* life means to live sufficiently, not too wealthy nor too poor, not excessive and not less, and also not too mediocre. This is reflected in the lives of *abdi dalem* (Endraswara, 2006). The *abdi dalem* generally has principles of living moderately and not extravagantly. This principle may be shielding the changes of modern times in which life demands are increasing. In the present era, it is not only the needs of stomach, but also household assets to meet the need for entertainment, communication, and transportation, as well as the need to improve education.

In terms of ownership of electronic devices, all *abdi dalems* have TV, with a variety of sizes ranging from 12 to 20 inches. Some of them are even completed with VCD player. Other electronic goods that are owned by the *abdi dalems* are a fan and an electric iron. One of *abdi dalem* who uses an electronic device that is Mas Ngabehi Jamroni. He was 23 years old when he

became an *abdi dalem* with the duty of *bekel sepuh* at the Wotgaleh mosque. The use of electric iron can be a symbol of conformity with the progress in line with the changes of time. The use of an electric iron in one side indicates that the traditional way of ironing with charcoal is becoming obsolete. Similarly, the means of communication such as mobile phones (cell phones) change the attitude of the *abdi dalem*. For example, Nyi Kliwon Hamong Sastrawiyo families who belong to lower middle class used a cheap mobile phone needing the credit of Rp 10.000,00 per month. While the day-to-day expenditure itself is uncertain, for her, such conditions deems sufficient.

The changes of lifestyle as an effort to address the changes of time can be seen from the condition of the house where *abdi dalems* live. The *abdi dalems* mostly live in houses that show the simplicity of the content/furniture and the buildings. Simple lifestyle, as revealed by Mas Wedana Yudha Mudiana (52 years), "*Wong kuncine wong urip niku napa ta, nggih namung tentrem, sethithika kae sing penting tentrem. Nek kula ngrasakke ngeten niki nggih pun tentrem. Sanajan omah ora apik kae ning kula pun tentrem. Nyatane isa nyekolahke anak-anak wis alhamdulillah*". (The key of human's life is just peacefulness, although we only have a few money or wealth, peacefulness is the most important thing. That is what I feel, although the house is not so good, I have peace of mind; in fact, I could send my children to go to school anyway, Praise to God, *alhamdulillah*).

Abdi Dalems' Strategies in Facing the Changes of Time

The figures of *abdi dalem* are as "employees" to the royal with all the duties and obligations to serve their master, which is the king. The devotion and relinquishment causes the *abdi dalem* to adopt the advantages of the procedures, habits and behaviors of their masters. Therefore, the general idea is of an *abdi dalem* figure is a person who have mannered behavior, quiet, and simple.

The identity of the *abdi dalem* figures besides their behaviors can also be easily recognized from their unique and exotic costumes. Wearing *blangkon*, *jarit*, dagger and *surjan* during *caos* (serve the King) give a meaning in present time. They proudly wear clothing that characterizes their personas, and at the same time culture, so that they do not feel awkward while crossing a street full of modern symbols. Even with the typical fashion that they wear, they are free from the rules of driving, e.g. without wearing a helmet while riding a motorcycle. It was a unique cultural phenomenon. This uniqueness seems to be real if it is faced with the fact that being *abdi dalems* do not promise them any financial profit. It is because their "salary" per month is too small, so it would not be rational if they can exist in an era filled with the demands of luxurious life and high-paced.

This reality of the life of the *abdi dalem* is a mirror of Javanese culture on one side, but on the other hand they have to deal with the changes. They are aware that their needs are not just a matter of the stomach (food), but also other needs whether related to education, housing or social cost. The image of modern life has been present and cannot be avoided by the *abdi dalems* in their daily lives. Simplicity and *sakmadya* lifestyles seem to be the key to the success of the *abdi dalem* in addressing the cahges of time. The philosophy that frames this simple lifestyle is the attitude of *nrima* screened by the value of certainty, order and regularity. Small but steady salary, *lumintu*, *milli*, and *sempulur* provide them with certainty that led to the establishment. *Sakmadya* lifestyle means living moderately, it is *not overdone but also no shortage*. The philosophies of life of Javanese *abdi dalem* have goals to find the harmony of life, therefore the *abdi dalems* have a strategy to address the changes in life. *Abdi dalems* who are from ethnic with Javanese culture have ethics to address the cosmos, one of the ethics is understated and simple (Endraswara, 2006). Simplicity, relinquishment, and devotion, make the life of

the *abdi dalem* in peace. Under those conditions, the *abdi dalem* can create a strategy in dealing with changes.

As it is understood, money is not the main orientation of the *abdi dalem* to work in the palace. The *abdi dalems* generally also have other jobs as a source of income for the daily survival by opening stalls, raising chickens, a farmer / farm worker, renting boarding house, and even getting the payment from retirement. However, in reality some of the *abdi dalems* expect income from their job as *abdi dalem*.

The place where the *abdi dalems* are assigned give more or less influence to their extra income. It is just like what have been experienced by Mas Ngabehi Jamroni. He feels bad because the visitors of Wotgaleh mosque are not as many as before. In fact, it is from the visitors that the *abdi dalems* there earn additional income. *nek suka duka niku kadang-kadang ten riku mboten tentu wonten tamu, kadang-kadang sedina sewengi mboten wonten tamu, nate sewengi namung entuk sewu. Nek sakniki angel, mboten kaya rumiyin, nek rumiyin satu kali piket saged ngge makan, nek sekarang sulit. sing ziarah ya ra kaya mbiyen*" (The ups and downs of becoming *abdi dalem* here is that sometimes there is not many visitors, sometimes there is no visitor at all. One day I had been here and I only got a thousand rupiah. It is different now, things are getting harder. During my round in the past, I used to get income from visitors that I can use to buy meals. Now it is hard, the visitors are not what they used to be).

Unlike K.R.T. Puja Dipura who worked as a guard in Imogiri royal cemetery. The man who became a contract employee of BP3 Yogyakarta admitted that the wage given from the palace plus the money from the visitors could reach approximately Rp 500,000.00 per month. But that is not all his wages because he still gets Rp 600,000.00 per month honorarium as the guardian of the cemetery. It causes him trouble if the visitors do not follow the rule of pilgrimage in Imogiri royal cemetery. He

said that many visitors want a free rule, they want to go inside the cemetery with free clothes, without wearing special *peranakan* outfit. "The visitors only want to follow their own rules. There were some visitors who pretended to be conceded by a spirit in order to enter the cemetery forcefully. What he likes about his job is that there are many visitors who come." This can be understood considering that any visitor who wants to enter the cemetery will be required to wear *peranakan* outfit and they will be asked to give money voluntarily. The money from the visitors is used for the welfare of *abdi dalem* who served in the tomb complex.

The devotion to the king causes the *abdi dalem* to put their roles in a prime position, in order to achieve inner well-being. To keep pace with the demands of globalization, they have other jobs. They believe that the success they got in other jobs is because they got the royal blessing as *abdi dalem*. Mas Bekel Yudaharnawa said "*Sehari-hari menika dereng nate kula ten nggriya, dados wonten komplek menika malah ngantos sing dha ngantri ngentosi kathah. Dados mboten wonten istilah hari taknggo nganggur, menika berkah dalem ngoten. Pripun nggih, nggolek gawean nggolek rejeki menika wonten mawon ngaten.*" (Every day I would not be at home, I would be at the palace complex that even a queue waiting. So, there is not any single day that I would not do my job, it is because of the blessing. I am always fortunate to have this job).

There is a different thing from the life of Mas Bekel Yudasahari. To meet his daily needs, he relies on the results of animal husbandry. Even so, he thinks that it is only a side job. "*Sumber penghasilan lain nggih saking ternak. Ning nomer siji nggih ndherek sowan bekti, sowan bekti niku ngabdi, ngabdi negara.*" (Another source of income is from raising the cattle, but my major job is my devotion to the king, which means devotion to the state).

The *abdi dalems* have their supporters, the spouse (wife or husband) that fills an important role in the day-to-day needs. The wives of the *abdi dalems* usually have other income, such as selling snacks, raising cattle or poultry, farming, and also by becoming a seamstress. The importance of the role of the *abdi dalem*'s wives is expressed by K.R.T. Murtiwandawa that to be a "servant" one should have a big breech (buttocks), meaning a wife who can help to shore up the economy of the families considering that the 'wages' as an *abdi dalem* cannot be the main source of livelihood. The wives of the *abdi dalem* understand this condition, even they have the pride as the wives of the *abdi dalem*. They believe that their husbands' devotions as *abdi dalem* brings blessings to their lives. One of the *abdi dalem* wives who open the home-based business is the wife of Mas Ngabehi Jamroni. She has a small business of making fried garlic flavoured peanuts and fried glutinous rice crispies. The peanuts and crispies are marketed in the stalls around the village. By working as a farmworker and manufacturer of fried garlic flavoured peanuts and fried glutinous rice crispies, the family of Mas Ngabehi Jamroni can meet their daily needs.

One strategy offered by MB Yuda Margiana in addressing the changes of time, as it is happening now is harmony, because harmony is what makes the family happy. Happiness is not because he thinks about his property and wealth. The principle of harmony according to Magnis-Suseno (1982) is a rule of Javanese life. The peace and harmony lifestyle is not only peace and harmony in the family, but also in the surrounding communities. An interesting example is told by MB Yuda Margiana about his problem. It is about how he has go to the palace to do *caos*. He can not drive a motorcycle, and he is not very strong for cycling the *onthel* bike for about 2 km distance. These problems can be solved because of the interwoven harmony with his fellow *abdi dalem* neighbours. This strategy enables him to come to the palace for the *caos* excitedly. Another strategy that is run by MB Yuda

Margiana is diet. In this globalisation era, fast food with high fat content is an unstoppable existence. Unwittingly Sagiwana families have a strategy, especially to limit the type of food they consume (limited crops) and also the number of consumption by only eating twice in a day.

Maintaining the diet as a strategy in response to changes of time is also run by Mas Ngabehi Jamroni. The diet pattern of this family is quite simple. They are not used to eat fast food, even though they do not realize that step. One meal eating habits can reduce carbohydrate intake, although in the beginning it was an attempt to overcome the mediocre economic conditions. Simple diet is also done by the family of Mas Wedana Yudha Mudiana. This strategy is implemented in order to save costs as it is said by his wife, "*Kula mboten nate tumbas daging-daging, mboten mewah-mewah, sing penting kangge ragat sekolah*". (I never buy meat, we do not eat extravagantly; school fees is more important than meals). They maintain this diet without realizing that the chosen diet is actually good for health. It is because the menu that they eat are vegetables that contain vitamins. This is proven by the fitness of the wedana's body and he claimed that he has never gotten ill, even though he is already in his fifties.

The simple and regular lifestyles that the *abdi dalem* adopts as a strategy in addressing the global lifestyle can establish stability. The value of establishment does not mean negating the changes and shifts. However, changes and shifts are tolerable and accommodated in an effort to improve the reliability and not to destroy or replace the order of establishment.

Conclusion

The decision of becoming *abdi dalem* for some people is considered as unpopular in today's modern era. Especially when it is viewed from the salary (*pituwas*) given by the palace. The total salaries of the *abdi dalem* are far below the minimum wage. It

makes many people to wonder why anyone would want to be the *abdi dalem* in the situation where life necessities is increasing every day. Nevertheless, in fact, every year more and more people apply to become *abdi dalem* at the Yogyakarta Palace. To get the blessings of the palace is the main motivation of the *abdi dalems* who are ready to serve the Sultan. It is believed by the *abdi dalems* that sincere devotion and sincerity will bring blessings and will affect their lives for the better. Positive life changes are experienced by the *abdi dalems*, especially in their inner peace and it is not only felt by the *abdi dalems* themselves but also by their families and the environment around them.

To meet their daily needs, the *abdi dalems* do the works that have been practiced prior to their service to the Sultan. In addition, they have the support from their family, especially their wives who can manage their families' finance. The palace pays attention to the *abdi dalem* welfare noting that there are some policies which include medical assistance, education, and also in the form of joint venture (KUB). In addition, there is a policy of relatively short working hours, allowing the *abdi dalem* to do other works.

In addressing the changes of globalization era, the *abdi dalems* are neither drifted nor moving away from worldliness. A simple moderate living principle as Javanese is practiced in their lives. The lives of *abdi dalem* generally show simplicity. Starting from the daily food, shelter, electronic equipment, personal-communications equipment, and transportation; those are hold for their functions. This means that the *abdi dalems* are relatively old. They are aware of the new technology but at the same time they are not dragged with the rapid development of technological advances. Thus, the *abdi dalem* basically responds positively to changes of time by prioritizing understated life and expect to live a peaceful life.

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Intensive Forest Management and Advanced Utilization of Forest Resources (Jakarta, collaboration LIPI, ICIAR, Kyoto University, UGM, Strategic Funds for the Promotion of Science and Technology, Humanosphere 2012), presentation in The IXth International Flora Malesiana Symposium (Bogor 2013). contact: moha036@lipi.go.id or fathi.royyani@gmail.com

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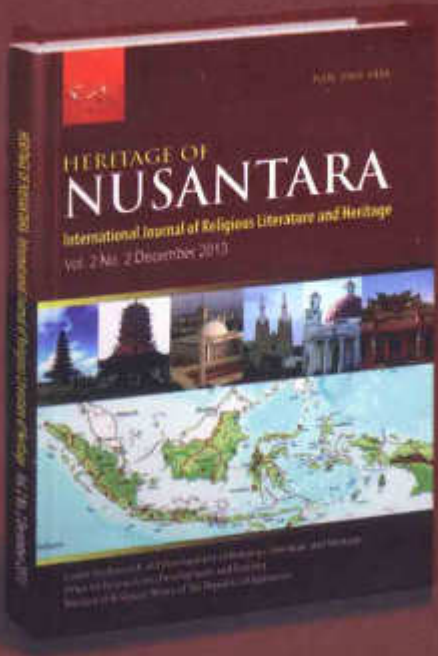
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