Harmony in Diversity: Social Capital and Social Cohesion in the Gintingan Tradition of the Subang Community

Rully Khairul Anwar¹, Ute Lies Siti Khadijah², Edwin Rizal³

¹ FIKOM, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia. E-mail: rully.khairul@unpad.ac.id
² FIKOM, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia. E-mail: ute.lies@unpad.ac.id
³ FIKOM, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia. E-mail: edwin.rizal@unpad.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes a phenomenon found in rural communities in Subang district: the tradition of Gintingan. The Gintingan is a tradition of donating from one family to a family that will or is holding a celebration. Despite modern times, the tradition lives on due to the ownership of society's social capital. By employing a qualitative strategy coupled with a phenomenological technique, this study examines the effects of putting a traditional practice into action. Mutual trust between individuals is crucial in this case, as they exchange goods with each other repeatedly and contribute to helping Sohibul Hajat. Village communities boast a robust social network that serves various common and personal goals. Despite the tradition remaining constant, everything surrounding it transformed, such as invitations, track records of attendees, and the design of dinnerware and barbecues, acquiring contemporary sensibilities. Evidently, society adapts to modernity while holding onto tradition.

A. INTRODUCTION

In rural communities, the essence of social capital and traditions is paramount, shaping identities and fostering collective resilience. Social capital, comprising the networks and norms that encourage community collaboration, is vital for these close-knit societies. Traditions, transcending mere customs, embody the community's history and values, linking the past to the present. Every individual's needs, personal and within the group, are met through social interactions integral to rural life. These interactions, whether verbal, non-verbal, or symbolic (Bungin, 2008), are often deeply rooted in tradition and community values. They not only strengthen social bonds but also reinforce communal identity and belonging. Understanding this interplay of social capital, traditions, and individual needs is crucial for comprehending the harmony and dynamics of rural communities.

With social networks acting as conduits, individuals exchange and expand their beliefs. The network itself becomes social capital once it is a viable resource. As per James Coleman, social capital signifies the arrangement of relations between people that permits the generation of fresh wealth. Disruptions to the social network of relationships, such as divorce, conflict, or migration, impact his ability to gain benefits from social capital. Families leaving their current social network can result in a loss of social capital value (Kurnosenko, 2022). Hunter (2016) also stated that social capital includes the social forces in communities that are built by individuals or groups to achieve goals effectively and efficiently, with reference to the social structure they value. By building and embedding social relationships, individuals can work toward common goals and facilitate their achievement. A product of long-term social connections, social capital is marked by the value placed on relationships. From interactions come the making of networks, comprised of cooperation, shared values, mutual reliance, and interpersonal bonds (Markowska-Przybyla & Grzeskowiak, 2022).

Tradition is an essential component of a society's culture. Without it, a culture loses its foundation and becomes fragile. Tradition plays an important role in shaping the cultural system and harmony in the
relationships between individuals and society. Tradition helps to ensure that the actions of the individual are consistent with the values and norms prevalent in society. Individuals can be assured that their actions that are in accordance with tradition are considered right and good, while actions that go against tradition may be considered wrong or disregarded by society. Through these habits, individuals gain insight into what works and what does not, both within their society and beyond. Through Hajatan, people show appreciation and celebrate the gifts they have received. To achieve this goal, social events are planned, and invitations are sent to close contacts. During the devotion, guests are expected to donate either money or rice to the host as a symbol of their willingness to help and display their support.

The "Tri Tangtu cosmology," a fundamental component of the Sundanese community's belief system, has a significant impact on daily life in West Java's Subang Regency, Indonesia. This cosmology, pivotal to Sundanese culture, emphasizes a harmonious relationship among the spiritual, natural, and human worlds, shaping the community's interactions and overall perspective. From this cultural foundation emerges the "Gintingan tradition," a reflection of the Sundanese lifestyle that merges economic and socio-cultural practices. At the heart of this culture is a mutual responsibility to assist one another. Thus, individuals in every community feel like they belong to each other. The Gintingan tradition is akin to the "Gotong Royong" concept practiced among the Javanese ethnicity, which focuses on mutual help, support, and cooperation in pursuit of the "hajatan." Hajatan is the significant family happenings and aspirations. At these moments, neighbors give "gantangan," traditional rice containers ten liters each, which denote not so much aid as the feeling of obligation and unity. Thus, the Sundanese communities in Subang Regency display a unique blending of their cosmological notions, social rituals, and economic cooperation, resulting in a cohesive, interrelated society (Saefullah, 2019).

Gintingan is an indigenous organization that follows the Tri Tangtu worldview and differs from today's microfinance systems. It plays an essential role in maintaining balance and unity in rural societies, especially during important events such as weddings, circumcisions, and other ceremonies. The farming communities in the northern region of Java, especially in the Subang region, particularly practice this tradition.

The Gintingan tradition is observed by the communities living in Bunihayu village, located in the Jalancagak sub-district of Subang Regency. This tradition is an integral component of their celebratory practices. The practice under discussion is commonly called "Gintingan," denoting the quantity of rice contributed by invited attendees to the host. Though there are some parallels between the general worship ceremony and the Gintingan tradition, there are also some significant distinctions. In the Gintingan custom, invited visitors to volunteer their services and carry out their duties by paying back debts or lending the host cash or rice. It is customary for the host to compensate guests who arrive late with either cash or rice as a sign of goodwill (Prasetyo, 2012). Baging and Hanif (2019) claim that this particular situation has the potential to create a lasting relationship between the party giving the loan and the person or organization receiving the money.

In Bunihayu village in Jalancagak sub-district, the gintingan tradition is an example of the growth of social capital within the community. This tradition is based on repeated social interactions and the creation of social networks based on mutual exchange, mutual trust, and the underlying values and norms that strengthen social bonds.

B. METHOD

In the qualitative study conducted in Bunihayu village, which focused on Gintingan customs, social capital and reciprocity, a thorough methodology was used to gain an in-depth understanding of these issues. The research aimed to capture personal experiences related to these phenomena, which is in line with phenomenological principles (Kuswarno, 2009).

The primary method, in-depth interviews, was the focus of data collection. The interviews were conducted for one month, from October 4 to November 4, 2022, and included conversations with key community members such as Mr. Atang, Ms. Uun, Ms. Ai, and Ms. Uli. In selecting participants, care was taken to include individuals directly involved in Gintingan custom, as well as neighbors knowledgeable about the rituals and community leaders to ensure a diversity of viewpoints. The semi-structured nature of these interviews allowed for a broad exploration of themes and thorough coverage of critical aspects, allowing participants to freely share their experiences and perspectives, which enriched the qualitative data.

Participant observation was another important method used in this study. The researchers immersed themselves in the community by actively participating in or observing events and rituals related to the Gintingan tradition. This method provided insights into the daily life, relationships and practices of the community in a natural setting.

In addition, document analysis complemented the interview and observation data. Various documents related to the Gintingan tradition were examined, including historical records, community guidelines, and other relevant texts, which provided additional contextual and background information for understanding the development of the tradition and current practices.

The data collected through these three methods...
were then subjected to content analysis or thematic analysis according to the guidelines described by Moleong (2010). The aim of the analysis was to identify key themes and patterns that provide insights into the relationship between social capital, reciprocity and the Gintingan traditions in the Bunihayu community. This phenomenological approach to qualitative research successfully provided a comprehensive overview of the social structure and cultural practices of the community through the integration of different methods.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Gintingan Tradition

The Gintingan tradition, an important cultural practice in the village in Jalancagak district, is based on the principle of community cooperation and support. This tradition involves community members coming together to help those hosting important events or in need of community support, often by sharing resources or labor. It reflects the community’s commitment to mutual aid and collective responsibility.

In Bunihayu village, the Gintingan tradition is an excellent example of how social bonds within a community can grow and become stronger. It shows how regular interactions between community members foster a solid support network. These interactions go beyond simple acts of assistance; they foster a deep trust and understanding between the villagers. Community members form a close-knit group because they share similar interests and values. This deep-rooted unity and mutual support make the Gintingan tradition a key element of the village’s social structure and emphasize the importance of cooperative practices in strengthening community bonds.

As for the historical roots of the Gintingan tradition, Mr. Atang and other local experts note that its exact origins in Bunihayu village are not entirely clear. Gintingan is a long-standing tradition in the village. It is believed to have its beginnings in the Subang Pantura region, which includes areas such as Pagaden, Panamukan, Kalijati, and Purwadadi. It is believed that someone from this region brought the custom to the village of Bunihayu, where the residents showed great interest and eventually made it their own.

Although the Gintingan tradition does not originate from Bunihayu village, it is known to the locals from their travels to other parts of Subang district, especially the Subang-Pantura region. This custom originated in Bunihayu village when people from the neighboring Subang region settled there and brought the Gintingan custom with them. The practice of lending money to each other as a sign of devotion or gratitude is an example of how this custom strengthens the community (Makmur & Dastina, 2018). Janmaimool & Denpaiboon (2016) discovered that villagers who practice the Gantangan philosophy of sufficiency economy report a higher quality of life and community trust. Some of the customs of the people in Bunihayu village have evolved over the years. In recent years, the “Merean” has fallen out of favor, especially among the women who used to participate in the ritual three days before the dedication. The use of rice as iron material is similar to the use of money. Moreover, ngahiras is an old custom that is no longer followed. In this ritual, community members work together to bake “cakes,” prepare food, build a stage, and perform other rituals in anticipation of the inauguration. However, busy schedules and preferential payments have led to a decline in public participation in the ngahiras tradition.

Figure 1. Registration Committee of Gintingan

Source: Primary Data, 2022

The performance of devotions often includes a meal or Parasmanian feast. Guests are welcome to eat at the host’s home or bring “pamulang” to share with family. As plastic packaging for modern foods such as instant peppers and packaged drinks have replaced the use of coconut leaves as containers, the shape of the tree has changed over time. It shows how the tradition has evolved over the years. The Gintingan tradition has advantages and disadvantages that should be thought about, even though it materially supports worship. Among the positive aspects of this custom are the strengthening of social ties, the development of sympathy, financial support, and the donation of initiation materials. On the other hand, the hosts of the inauguration have to deal with the obligation to return the money if many participants want to keep it. Mr. Atang added that the decline in gotong royong and social solidarity is because people are increasingly concerned with material gain and loss, and sensitivity to the needs of others is diminishing.

Local culture reflects community identity, and its survival is critical to maintaining community standards (Zhelondievskaia & Barysheva, 2021). Bunihayu village residents place a high value on their culture, as evidenced by their desire to preserve it despite changes in some traditions (such as the adoption of the Gintingan tradition). Although this custom originated in another part of the world, Bunihayu villagers have adopted it and made it an integral part of their way of life. This custom is followed in a variety of devotions, from banquets and weddings to initiations and other ceremonies, and
requires meticulous planning that begins a full month in advance. People still perform these customs with zeal and dedication to preserve their cultural identity, although they have undergone some changes over the years (e.g., written reminders have been replaced by oral ones). Ruan (2017) argues that the Gantangan tradition builds "ritual capital" and trust through the shared practice of rituals and norms. Observing others following the proper ways and etiquette makes faith in shared values and willingness to contribute to community events. We learned this from our conversation with Ibu Uli on November 4, 2022:

Sohibul Hajat wants to list or record all the people he visited, when they came, and how much money he saved. Sohibul Hajat told the RT that he would hold an inauguration with a Gintangan as soon as he completes the record. The President asked several people, especially mothers, to send invitations in the form of tea, colek soap, bath soap, or coffee to each person on Sohibul Hajat's register. The citizen's name registered in the Book of Worship is printed on the invitation, along with the names of his wife and husband and his full address. The invitations are sent out one week before the ceremony. The official paper invitations and the tea and soap invitations are sent out. After the invitations are sent out, the party usually asks a few people to serve on their committees. These include the cook, the artisan, the decorator or decorator, the security officer, the guest receiver, the clerk (the person who receives the invitation envelope), and the person who takes care of the hygiene of the parties, such as the spoon plates. Usually, the first feast of RT takes place three days before the feast. At this time, a ceremonial visit or prayer of Gintangan is performed. The invited guest came and gave the envelope to the scribe. The scribe noted the money for the invitation, the money to pay the debt for the jewel, and how much money the guest had saved on the Sohibul Hajat to return later.

The gintingan tradition is used at the dedication and involves two people acting as scribes with the task of noting the invitation from the guest who paid or kept the gintingan to the host of a dedication. In the context of larger devotions, such as weddings, men are usually chosen as scribes (Kurnia et al., 2022). However, in simpler devotions, such as domestic thanksgiving or the 40-day devotion, this is usually done by mothers. It is important to note that the system of recording ginger varies depending on the type of ginger, i.e. ginger in the form of rice or money. Recording and collecting ginger in the form of rice and other goods, such as sugar, vegetables, oil and other cooking materials, is usually done three days before the ceremony. This is done because the items are to be used as business food during the ceremony (Hasil Wawancara dengan Ibu Uli, 04 November 2022).

2. Social Capital of Rural Communities

Speaking specifically about rural locations, "Social Capital in Rural Communities" pertains to the accumulation of social resources. Intertwined individual connections define social capital, which includes relationships, networks, and shared societal standards. The success of rural communities hinges on the understanding and application of social capital's principles (Chernyak et al., 2021; Sofoluwe et al., 2021).

Social capital, defined by its diverse, interconnected elements, thrives in rural communities. The interpersonal connections in the community form the basis for social networks and thus create social capital (Pitas et al., 2021). Our closest connections, including family, friends, and colleagues in the community, contribute significantly to the formation of these networks (Miyamoto et al., 2015). Trust is a critical element of social capital that fosters cooperation and collaboration within communities (Bashar & Bramley, 2019).

Social capital in rural areas develops through local social norms. Informal rules determine individual behavior within the community and influence activities such as farming and mutual aid. Social capital manifests in rural communities through collaborative efforts (Ohta et al., 2022; Reynolds & Walther, 2020; Suhaeb & Kaseng, 2023), with community members working together in areas such as agriculture, education, and infrastructure development.

The importance of social capital in rural areas cannot be overstated. A strong social foundation can improve rural well-being, promote sustainable progress, and successfully overcome obstacles. Simply put, the presence of rich social capital fosters a thriving atmosphere in rural communities and improves their collective social and economic well-being. Social capital is of great importance, as it forms the basis for the solidarity and growth of rural communities.

There are three main components of social capital: social norms that reinforce social order, the free flow of information, and the fulfillment of obligations and expectations based on trust in the social environment (Salehi et al., 2023).

Society's value, witnessed via the custom of The value of society witnessed through the custom of Gintingan shows the importance of social capital in the contemporary era. Moral standards of cooperation such as honesty, solidarity, and justice are valued differently by each member of society when it comes to the level of social capital. Does trust go beyond the closest friends and family?
Gintingan is an important community service tradition that can provide start-up funding for businesses. This custom encourages healthy competition among communities to provide credit for dedicated hosts. It is customary to present a monetary gift during the dedication ceremony, in addition to any gifts guests may wish to give. The feast committee usually sends out invitations for tea or soap three to four days before the feast and notes the supplies of rice, oil, meat, sugar, etc.

a. Mutual Trust

The Gintingan tradition in Bunihayu village promotes trust-building among citizens in terms of saving money, rice, and other devotional items. In this process, each individual keeps a record and notes the amount he or she saves as a valid receipt. This practise enables aspirants to track down the individuals they have visited to request a gintingan. These records are clear evidence of a person's presence at the time of execution and of the amount they are later required to pay. This payment system has its own peculiarity, namely that the public can only pay the mortgage debt during the pledge and at no other time. In other words, this system is seasonal.

For example, Ibu Ai revealed that her first entry of Gintingan was from the preference of her youngest son, which has been going on for almost eight years now. However, there is still an unpaid debt of about Rp. 200,000, and the deadline for fulfilling a vow, which is only in certain months, means that this payment process takes quite a long time. If there are guests who are not present at the ceremony, in addition to recording the evidence, the Sohibul Hajat often uses the "totog" system to demand money or jewellery directly from the absent guests. At the end of a ceremony, the sohibul hajat usually notes again who did not come and makes an invitation in the form of a tea or soap to give to the guest whose invitation did not arrive.

If it is said to believe yes there must be a system of 'totog', so later if someone doesn't come also tomorrow it will be directly at the 'tog' to his house. It's like tea is charged again, but it's charged by invitation again, usually with soap, tea, coffee, which has a record of the amount of money to be charged." (Hasil Wawacara dengan Ibu Ai, tanggal 09 November 2022).

In the Gintingan tradition in Bunihayu village, the difference between the amount of money recorded in the Sohibul Hajat's records and the amount mentioned in the invitation often requires quick action. Usually, the first step is to contact the clerk to clarify and correct the amount of money to be paid. The main purpose of this action is to avoid errors or discrepancies in calculations and to ensure the availability of accurate records.

Mutual trust underpins the significance of reciprocal actions in prompting the public to engage in various social and economic endeavors, particularly in light of shared progress objectives. The significance of trust in national productivity cannot be overstated, as it is a key ingredient of social capital. When faith vanishes, community management's internal disharmony sapping resources. The connection between culture and social capital is strong, and when cultural aspects are robust, trust and social capital tend to thrive. By prioritizing cultural development, a nation can bolster its quality of life and strengthen its social capital.

Trust has a positive impact on the economy because it can reduce costs, especially when individuals are willing to put the interests of the group above personal interests (Kasmaoui et al., 2018). Trust influences cooperative behavior and contributes to the formation of social capital in a community. Trust also creates hopes for order, honesty, and cooperative behavior in a society based on norms that community members generally accept.

In the Gintingan tradition, debt must align with existing records due to a strong emphasis on reciprocity and trust. When records diverge, act swiftly to avoid issues by correcting any discrepancies straightaway. Ensuring accuracy, personal savings records must be kept by every Bunihayu villager at each inauguration. Guests returned tea and soap that did not meet expectations during an Ibu Uli hosted event.

b. Reciprocal Activity

Public participation in the Gintingan tradition in Bunihayu village reflects the practice of reciprocity that exists in this society. Helping each other is a community norm, but it comes with costs and benefits, so people do not always do it willingly. Contributing to religious events, exchanging gifts, and playing gotong-royong are just a few examples of how karma is pervasive in public life. Societies with low social stratification and evenly distributed political power tend to have more egalitarian social structures, which in turn fosters a culture of reciprocity.

By participating as a community in gotong royong and devotional practices, Bunihayu village residents practice a form of reciprocity that is central to the Gintingan tradition. In the Gintingan tradition, there is
no distinction between social classes. The economic exchange system in traditional societies is characterized by reciprocity, but this also exists in modern urban societies. In the Gintingan tradition of Bunihayu village, the borrower returns the gift in the form of a return gift. Such customs have the potential to take root in a society over many generations.

People practice reciprocity when they give and receive services as part of their social obligations and do so with the expectation that they will receive something in return in the future. The reciprocation may be in the form of money, appreciation, or additional help. Caring and friendship between people strengthens social cooperation in a community. For example, if a neighbor lends you money, you owe them a favor and should return the favor if you ever need help. The main focus of the Gintingan tradition is to repay loans in the form of devoted service. The Arisan system, in which communities deposit money for members who perform devotional deeds in return, is conceptually similar to the Ginting tradition.

There were so many people who wanted to do it that it seemed as if a lot of people were interested. Soap or soap that there is a written amount of money that will come was my turn to have

At its core, social capital means the alliances created to achieve something. Cooperation arises from social interactions that create networks, exchange, trust, and shared values norms. From societies to organizations, social networks are embraced as methods for achieving social interactions. These networks are built on the principles of ties and specific connections between individuals or groups sharing common traits. Component of social capital, the social network comes with beliefs and norms. By leveraging social connections, daily life can be bettered through improved welfare and enhanced interests. While social norms exist, these networks function according to a shared set of standards and ideals. Depending on society’s needs and interests, the personal values and norms found in these networks may change. All communities, including Gintingan may not observe the cultural practices of Bunihayu village. Immigrants, accustomed to unconventional lifestyles, are typically oblivious to the Gintingan tradition. As they are not yet reliant on this custom, they get to decide whether to participate or not. Saving up for crucial lodging precedes actively practicing Ginting’s custom, which consists of reserving funds before participating in a devotional Observance such as a procession or domicile ritual according to their traditions.

https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v25.n2.p244-251.2023
Those who don’t want to take on extraneous responsibilities via the Gintingan tradition can point to various justifications. Typically, these are the types of societies that reject traditional practices - those lacking in socialization capacity or immigrant societies (Hasil Wawancara degan Ibu Uun, November 2022). The social network of the Gintingan tradition in Bunihayu village is based on family relationships. Individuals need to interact with others motivates them to learn interaction patterns, plans, and strategies. This results in role assumptions that correspond to their social status in their neighborhood. Although some citizens do not currently participate in this tradition, they may do so in the future. Close social interaction in a society, especially when based on equality of wealth, fosters a strong bond among its members that influences other social relationships and plays an important role.

Individuals connected by values form a network in the concept of social capital. Because of mutually beneficial relationships, this network has grown. Trust and cooperation between members of society are necessary to maintain and preserve these values or norms. In modern society, the dynamics of social relations are becoming more complex and include several dimensions such as cultural, social, economic, religious, political, etc. In the context of modernization, societies today have a variety of ways to engage in social interactions, such as forming social networks, interacting, adapting, and establishing social relationships in different ways. In today’s social context, social networks have become one of the most important forms of interaction between individuals or groups.

Considering the Gintingan practice of Bunihayu village, social capital elements such as trust, mutual responsibility, and interpersonal connections become evident, warranting the classification of this custom as an embodiment of social capital. Although the Gintingan tradition does not prescribe strict norms or customary laws, the communities that practice it do not act in an indirect manner. The existing rules do not oppress those who follow the tradition, but those who do not participate may do so because they are afraid to take risks or because they have less interaction and social networks with other communities.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The study investigates the notion of social capital in the village of Bunihayu, situated in the district of Jalancagak in Subang. It particularly examines the Gintingan tradition, where families support each other in organizing or hosting celebrations. This tradition is characterized by mutual assistance and cooperation during major life events. Although its precise origins are somewhat mysterious, this practice, which began in Subang Pantura, has been actively maintained and developed by the local community. The basic elements of social capital include mutual trust, reciprocity, and the development of social networks. These components are crucial in enhancing community solidarity and preserving local traditions amidst modern influences and changes in traditional customs. This venerable tradition, through its assemblage of time-honored customs and established practices, serves not only to ritualize a sequence of ceremonies but also to embody the social capital of the community, exerting an impact on social exchanges and connections.

Social capital according to the Gintingan tradition: in the Gintingan traditions of the people in Bunihayu village, the following elements constitute social capital: a) mutual trust: The Gintingan tradition promotes mutual trust among citizens. They keep money, rice and other religious goods in the knowledge that they will be used properly. The registration of each participant serves as a valid record of who donated and was present at the ceremony, facilitating verification and management of the return of relief goods. b) Reciprocity (activities with reciprocal elements): The Gintingan tradition promotes the activity of reciprocity between societies in which they exchange goodwill and aid. Within the framework of the Gintingan tradition, reciprocity applies to all parties, regardless of their social or economic status, and c) the Gintingan tradition as a social network: implementing the tradition requires building a large social network within the community. It aims to increase social capital by increasing the stock that can be used during devotions. In addition, the Gintingan tradition serves as a means for the community to maintain mercy among its citizens. The development of the Gintingan tradition in the village of Bunihayu under changing leadership illustrates its adaptable and dynamic character. As leaders change, they bring in new ideas and methods that reflect contemporary influences while maintaining the core values of mutual trust, reciprocity, and community connectedness. These changes ensure that the tradition remains relevant and resonates within the community, strengthening social bonds and solidarity. The Gintingan tradition is thus not just a set of rituals but an evolving cultural practice that continuously enriches social capital and strengthens the community’s commitment to its cultural heritage and mutual support.

E. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank all of the sources who agreed to be interviewed for this research and who took the time to share their experiences and observations with us.

REFERENCES


Rully Khairul Anwar


Kurmosenko, A. (2022). The influence of social capital on network effects. Herald of Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics, 146(6), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.30167/1/2022(146)05


https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v25.n2.p244-251.2023