



Cultural politics in the Undhuh-Undhuh tradition within Javanese Christian Authority

Rojabi Azharghany^{1*}, Caecilia Arini Palupi², Dodik Harnadi³

^{1,2,3}Department of Sociology, University of Jember, Indonesia

Email: azharghany@unej.ac.id

Abstract. *Undhuh-undhuh is a traditional celebration of the East Javanese Christian Church (GKJW) that combines the values of Christian teachings found in the Bible with distinctive local Javanese culture and the agrarian traditions of Javanese society. This study aims to analyze and understand how the process of reproduction of cultural power occurs in the undhuh-undhuh celebration within the authority of GKJW Sambirejo, primarily using Chris Jenks's perspective on cultural reproduction as its analytical framework. The study employs a qualitative approach using interpretative methods. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The findings indicate that undhuh-undhuh serves as a space for the transmission of cultural values and symbols across generations within the religious community. The older generation acts as the guardian of tradition, whilst the younger generation introduces innovations to ensure the tradition remains relevant in an increasingly modernised global world. This tradition preserves elements of local culture such as traditional dress, the use of the Javanese language in sermons and hymns, musical accompaniment featuring Javanese gending, and traditional food. This tradition strengthens social solidarity through collective activities such as mutual cooperation in event preparations and auctions. The acculturation of Christian values and Javanese culture is evident in the symbols of worship, which are adaptive yet retain their spiritual significance. This research emphasises the importance of intergenerational involvement in safeguarding the continuity of local traditions so that they remain relevant amidst social change.*

Keywords: *Cultural politics; Reproduction of cultural power; Undhuh-Undhuh; Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan*

Abstrak. Undhuh-undhuh adalah perayaan tradisional Gereja Kristen Jawa Timur (GKJW) yang memadukan nilai-nilai ajaran Kristen yang terdapat dalam Alkitab dengan budaya Jawa lokal yang khas serta tradisi agraris masyarakat Jawa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dan memahami bagaimana proses reproduksi kekuasaan budaya terjadi dalam perayaan undhuh-undhuh di bawah naungan GKJW Sambirejo, dengan terutama menggunakan perspektif Chris Jenks tentang reproduksi budaya sebagai kerangka analisisnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode interpretatif. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa undhuh-undhuh berfungsi sebagai ruang untuk transmisi nilai-nilai dan simbol-simbol budaya lintas generasi di dalam komunitas keagamaan. Generasi tua berperan sebagai penjaga tradisi, sementara generasi muda memperkenalkan inovasi untuk memastikan tradisi tersebut tetap relevan di tengah dunia global yang semakin modern. Tradisi ini melestarikan unsur-unsur budaya lokal seperti pakaian tradisional, penggunaan bahasa Jawa dalam khotbah dan nyanyian pujian, iringan musik berupa gending Jawa, serta makanan tradisional. Tradisi ini memperkuat solidaritas sosial melalui kegiatan kolektif seperti kerja sama dalam persiapan acara dan lelang. Akulturasi nilai-nilai Kristen dan budaya Jawa terlihat jelas dalam simbol-simbol ibadah, yang bersifat adaptif namun tetap mempertahankan makna spiritualnya. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya keterlibatan lintas generasi dalam menjaga kelangsungan tradisi lokal agar tetap relevan di tengah perubahan sosial.

Kata kunci: *Politik Budaya; Reproduksi Kekuasaan Budaya; Undhuh-Undhuh; Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan*

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious traditions are a form of cultural expression in community life that are not only sacred in nature, but also reflect the value system, symbols and identity of a particular community.

In the context of the Javanese Christian community, one form of religious celebration that reflects a fusion of Christian spirituality and local Javanese wisdom is the tradition of undhuh-undhuh. This celebration is a hallmark of the Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW) when the harvest season arrives (Puspita & Istyanto, 2020).

Just as the *undhuh-undhuh* tradition is practised by GKJW congregations in general, it is also observed at the GKJW Sambirejo Congregation, Pare Sub-district, Kediri Regency, East Java. Kediri is one of the regions that, culturally speaking, falls within the **Mataraman** cultural sphere—that is, the south-western part of East Java which, historically and culturally, shares close ties with the culture of Central Java. This region is known for preserving classical Javanese traditions and values such as unggah-ungguh (etiquette), the attitude of ewuh pakewuh (modesty), folk traditions such as slametan, and a social structure that tends to be egalitarian yet remains hierarchical in social relations. Agrarian culture remains deeply ingrained in the social life of the community, including amongst the congregation of the GKJW. Although the majority of the population no longer practises farming directly, values such as *gratitude for the earth's bounty* and spirituality remain firmly rooted. It is within this context that the tradition of *undhuh-undhuh* has found space to continue to flourish.

The GKJW Sambirejo Congregation exemplifies the interplay between religion and Javanese culture, which is actively upheld by its congregation. The church is not only a place of worship, but also a space for cultural expression, where local traditions coexist with Christian teachings (Jatmoko & Jura, 2022). This is clearly evident in the practice of undhuh-undhuh, which is the result of a dialogue between Christian values (gratitude to God) and Javanese cultural values (community spirit, the spirit of farming, and the symbolism of the earth's bounty).

Undhuh-undhuh itself derives from a Javanese word meaning 'to pick' or 'to harvest'. In practice, this celebration is held as an expression of the congregation's gratitude to God for the harvest or other blessings in life. The procession incorporates cultural values, such as the wearing of traditional dress, the use of the Javanese language, the Solah Bowo dance, Javanese-agrarian decorations and the use of *takir* (containers made from banana leaves). As well as being a form of worship, *undhuh-undhuh* serves as a forum for the transmission of culture and intergenerational social solidarity. (Bitiyono, 2024).

The *undhuh-undhuh* tradition in Javanese Christianity is generally understood as an expression of gratitude for the harvest, but in a broader analysis, this ritual extends beyond a purely devotional function. *Undhuh-undhuh* also serves as a social space where the church processes, presents and passes on Javanese culture within Christian practice. A number of studies indicate that this ritual blends elements of church liturgy with local symbols, language, a sense of community and value systems, so that the church is not present as an entity separate from Javanese society, but rather as an integral part of local cultural life. (Jatmoko, 2022; Santoso, 2013; Utomo et al., 2020).

In case studies at GKJW and GKJ, *undhuh-undhuh* appears to function as a medium for the transmission of culture and social solidarity. Research in Mojowarno shows that this ritual is not only a celebration of thanksgiving, but also a means of social integration, the preservation of shared customs, and the strengthening of the congregation's relationship with the surrounding community (Khotimah, 2019). Similar findings emerged in a study of the GKJW in Surabaya, which confirmed that the inculturation of Javanese culture has shaped the congregation's communal identity and underpinned the church's survival even in an urban context (Santoso, 2013).

Based on this analysis, it can be seen that research into *undhuh-undhuh* centres on three main areas. Firstly, *undhuh-undhuh* is understood as a ritual of thanksgiving and a means of social integration within the congregation (Khotimah, 2019; Santoso, 2013). Secondly, *undhuh-undhuh* is seen as a medium for the inculturation and reproduction of Javanese culture within the

church (Jatmoko, 2022). Thirdly, *undhuh-undhuh* is understood as a space for change, tension and the negotiation of meaning amidst globalisation, consumer society and the postcolonial history of the Javanese church (Bawono, 2019; Labeti, 2021; Pramudita, 2023; Salindri & Handayani, 2022). Consequently, a study of the space for cultural reproduction within the *undhuh-undhuh* tradition is important for explaining how the Javanese church not only preserves cultural heritage, but also continually reproduces that cultural identity and meaning within an ever-changing context.

In this context, this study draws on Chris Jenks's theory of cultural reproduction (1993) which emphasises how culture is dynamically reproduced through social interaction, symbolic values and collective activities within a community. Culture, according to Jenks, is not static, but is constantly modified through everyday practices. Therefore, *undhuh-undhuh* is not merely understood as an annual celebration, but also as a social mechanism for collectively maintaining, reshaping and transmitting Javanese Christian cultural identity.

This study aims to understand the process of cultural reproduction that takes place during the *undhuh-undhuh* celebration at the GKJW Sambirejo Congregation, as well as how older and younger generations play a role in preserving and adapting traditions to the changing times. This research not only makes a theoretical contribution to the fields of cultural and religious sociology, but also provides a contextual understanding of the continuity of local culture amidst the tide of modernisation.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The literature also indicates that the reproduction of culture in *undhuh-undhuh* is not a static process. A number of studies highlight changes in the form and meaning of rituals resulting from globalisation, economic changes, technology, the media, and the weakening of intergenerational transmission (Nurhayati & Yani, 2013; Salindri, 2020; Salindri & Handayani, 2022). In Mojowarno, for example, the meaning of *undhuh-undhuh* has shifted from the practice of gathering the harvest for social purposes to an expression of gratitude, solidarity, tolerance and even economic support amongst the community (Nurhayati & Yani, 2013). In Jember, changes in rituals are linked to external factors such as education and the media, as well as internal factors such as a decline in congregational solidarity and a reduction in cultural transmission (Salindri, 2020; Salindri & Handayani, 2022). This indicates that *undhuh-undhuh* is not merely about preserving tradition, but also serves as a space for negotiating the changes of the times.

This dimension of negotiation becomes clearer when this tradition is placed within the historical context of the relationship between the church and Javanese culture. Studies of the GKJ show that Javanese churches were initially strongly influenced by the legacy of Western missions, which tended to view local cultural practices with suspicion or to restrict them (Labeti, 2021). Subsequently, there was a paradigm shift towards the acceptance of culture as an integral part of the church's ministry (Labeti, 2021). This process is not always smooth, as it involves adjustments on two fronts simultaneously: the church is reinterpreting its teachings, whilst elements of Javanese culture are also undergoing a shift in meaning so that they can find a place within the Christian context (Bawono, 2019). Consequently, *undhuh-undhuh* can be understood as the result of an ongoing negotiation between the Christian faith, Javanese identity and the demands of a changing social context.

From a liturgical perspective, several studies emphasise that Javanese Christianity developed through hybrid forms, rather than through a strict separation between 'Christian' and 'cultural' elements. The liturgy of churches in Indonesia, including Javanese churches, has largely been shaped by a blend of missionary heritage and local expressions, whether in language, music, symbols or the structure of worship services (Widiasih & Rachman, 2022). Therefore, *undhuh-undhuh* should be understood not merely as a local tradition that has been 'added' to worship, but

as a practice of inculturation that shapes the very character of Javanese Christianity itself (Jatmoko, 2022; Widiasih & Rachman, 2022).

3. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach based on an interpretative paradigm (Moleong & Edisi, 2004). This approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to explore the meanings constructed by the subjects within the undhuh-undhuh tradition, as well as to understand the dynamics of cultural reproduction through narratives, symbols and social practices. This approach is not merely descriptive but also analytical, seeking to uncover the relationship between inherited cultural structures and the social agents who play a role in perpetuating or transforming those structures (Sukidin, 2002).

The research was conducted at the GKJW Sambirejo Congregation, Kediri Regency, East Java, which has an agrarian congregation and is known for actively preserving elements of Javanese culture within congregational life. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on the criterion of active involvement in the organisation of undhuh-undhuh, whether as committee members, church leaders or participants. The informants comprised the pastor, members of the congregation council, representatives from the youth and elderly groups, and multimedia officers.

Data collection methods included participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews and visual documentation (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020). Observations were carried out from the preparation stage through to the actual celebration of the *undhuh-undhuh* festival, with the researcher directly participating in the congregation's activities. Interviews were conducted to obtain subjective accounts of the meaning and evolution of this tradition. Documentation took the form of photographs, videos, church archives and social media posts. Data analysis was carried out in three stages (Neuman, 2000): data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data was tested through triangulation of sources and time (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kediri is one of the regions that, culturally speaking, forms part of the Mataraman cultural region—that is, the south-western part of East Java which, historically and culturally, has close ties to the culture of Central Java. This region is known for preserving classical Javanese traditions and values such as *unggah-ungguh* (etiquette), the attitude of *ewuh pakewuh* (modesty), community-centred customs such as *slametan*, and a social structure that tends to be egalitarian whilst still maintaining a hierarchy in social relations. Agrarian culture remains deeply ingrained in the social life of the community, including amongst the congregation of the GKJW (Christofandi & Pudjibudojo, 2023). Although the majority of the population no longer practises farming directly, values such as gratitude for the earth's bounty and spirituality remain alive. It is within this context that the undhuh-undhuh tradition has found a space to continue to flourish.

The GKJW Sambirejo Congregation exemplifies the fusion of religion and Javanese culture, which is actively upheld by its congregation. The church is not merely a place of worship, but also a space for cultural expression, where local traditions coexist with Christian teachings. This is clearly evident in the practice of *undhuh-undhuh*, which is the result of a dialogue between Christian values (gratitude to God) and Javanese cultural values (community spirit, the farming ethos, and the symbolism of the earth's bounty).

The GKJW Sambirejo Congregation exemplifies the convergence of religion and Javanese culture, which is actively preserved by its congregation. The church is not merely a place of worship, but also a space for cultural expression, where local traditions coexist with Christian teachings. This is clearly evident in the practice of *undhuh-undhuh*, which is the result of a

dialogue between Christian values (gratitude to God) and Javanese cultural values (community spirit, the farming ethos, and the symbolism of the earth's bounty).

One of the key findings of this study is that cultural reproduction in *undhuh-undhuh* is not static. It is not merely a matter of preserving rituals, but involves re-creativity and symbolic transformation. In line with the thinking of Chris Jenks (1993), culture is understood as the result of social practices that are continually negotiated through processes of interaction, rather than simply the inheritance of past values. In this context, the reproduction of culture does not merely preserve form, but also creates new meanings relevant to contemporary social conditions.

History and Procession of the Undhuh-undhuh Tradition of the Sambirejo GKJW Congregation

Undhuh-undhuh arose from the convergence of the agrarian way of life of Javanese society and the efforts of Javanese churches to shape expressions of faith that were closely tied to the congregants' lived experiences. At its core, undhuh-undhuh is associated with the harvest and a sense of gratitude. Within Javanese Christianity, this meaning has not been lost, but has been transformed into a church celebration that incorporates the fruits of the earth, collective labour and congregational fellowship as integral parts of worship. Consequently, undhuh-undhuh is best understood not merely as a tradition to be preserved, but as a form of contextualisation of faith that has grown out of the Javanese social fabric itself. (Jatmoko, 2022; Khotimah, 2019).

Research history shows that the development of undhuh-undhuh cannot be separated from the history of the relationship between the Javanese church and local culture. In the early stages of the formation of Javanese churches, many traditional elements were viewed with suspicion because church life was strongly shaped by the legacy of Western missions. In that context, Javanese cultural practices were often excluded from the church or accepted only to a very limited extent. A study of the GKJ reveals that Javanese churches were initially prone to being severed from their cultural roots, as church life was governed by dogma and patterns of worship inherited from the Dutch. (Labeti, 2021). A consistent interpretation confirms that the tension between Christianity and Javanese culture has existed since the nineteenth century and has shaped a long process of adaptation within the GKJ (Bawono, 2019).

A major shift occurred when Javanese churches began to view culture not as a threat, but as a medium for expressing their faith. In this context, contextualisation and local theology became crucial. The churches no longer merely replicated the liturgical forms handed down by missionaries, but began to reinterpret the Javanese experience as a source of Christian expression (Anam, 2021; Chairul, 2021). A study of the development of the GKJ reveals a paradigm shift from the rejection of traditional customs towards the acceptance of culture as an integral part of the church's ministry (Labeti, 2021). It was at this point that the 'undhuh-undhuh' came to be firmly established as a legitimate church celebration, rather than merely a remnant of old customs.

In more recent research, undhuh-undhuh has been understood as one of the most evident forms of inculturation in Javanese Christianity. A study of the GKJ Dagen Palur congregation describes the undhuh-undhuh festival as a religious celebration that unites the teachings of the church and Javanese culture within a context of social togetherness and a vertical relationship with God (Jatmoko, 2022). A study of the GKJW community in Surabaya also shows that elements of Javanese culture, including the symbols and communal practices associated with undhuh-undhuh, have become part of the congregation's identity and underpin the church's resilience even in an urban setting (Santoso, 2013). In other words, undhuh-undhuh evolved from an expression of gratitude for the harvest into a means of shaping Javanese Christian identity.

Nevertheless, the evolution of undhuh-undhuh has not followed a linear path towards a fixed form. Research in Mojowarno indicates a transformation in its meaning. In the past, undhuh-undhuh was understood as the collection of rice to be lent to residents in need. As the tradition developed, it came to be more widely understood as an expression of gratitude, a means of strengthening community spirit, a source of economic support for residents, and a vehicle for tolerance (Nurhayati & Yani, 2013). Another study in Jember confirms that changes in undhuh-undhuh are influenced by education, the economy, technology, the media, changing traditions, a decline in solidarity, and a weakening of cultural transmission (Salindri & Handayani, 2022). These findings suggest that undhuh-undhuh is constantly subject to a process of negotiation between cultural heritage, the needs of the church and social change.

A recent study has placed these ‘undhuh-undhuh’ within a broader context, namely that of hybrid and postcolonial liturgy in Indonesia. Indonesian churches, including Javanese churches, have shaped their worship through a blend of missionary and local ethnic elements, whether in language, music, symbols or the structure of the service (Widiasih & Rachman, 2022). From this perspective, undhuh-undhuh is not merely a folkloric addition on the fringes of worship, but rather one of the ways in which Javanese Christianity constructs itself. It serves as a space where the congregation nurtures cultural memory, affirms its identity, and continually adapts to the modern world (Puspita & Istyanto, 2020; Widiasih & Rachman, 2022). In brief, the development of the undhuh-undhuh cultural tradition within the GKJW’s cultural events can be summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. The phases of the formation and understanding of the *undhuh-undhuh* tradition

Fase	Main features	A shift in understanding
Local agrarian roots	Gratitude for the harvest and the fruits of the earth in Javanese society	From village social practices to a symbol of collective gratitude
Early mission phase	Javanese culture is viewed with suspicion or restricted	Traditional customs have not yet fully found their way into the church
The contextualisation phase	The Church has begun to embrace culture as a medium of faith	Undhuh-undhuh has gained recognition as a church festival
The phase of liturgical inculturation	Javanese elements are present in the worship, symbols, language and atmosphere of the celebrations	‘Undhuh-undhuh’ is seen as a shaper of Javanese Christian identity
The phase of modern transformation	Traditions adapt to urbanisation, the media, the economy and consumer society	The significance of rituals is expanding and their forms are becoming increasingly diverse

In Javanese Christianity generally, the practice of undhuh-undhuh is not entirely uniform across congregations. However, existing research indicates a relatively consistent underlying pattern. This celebration is usually held periodically, generally once a year after the harvest, although some congregations hold it at different times depending on the local context (Khotimah, 2019; Salindri & Handayani, 2022). From an ecclesiastical perspective, ‘undhuh-undhuh’ is a service of thanksgiving. From a social perspective, it is a collective endeavour that connects the

households of the congregation, the place of worship and the surrounding community (Alfiyani et al., 2025; Santoso, 2013).

The preparations for the undhuh-undhuh at the GKJW Sambirejo Congregation began well in advance of the day of the celebration. The preparations were carried out by a committee comprising members from various sectors of the congregation, who were responsible for organising the logistics, decorations, procession, auction and special liturgy. A few hours before the event begins, each congregation member brings an offering in the form of produce, household items, and even handicrafts, which have been decorated in such a way as to be displayed in the hall (Figure 1). At the same time, the women prepare takir for consumption after the service. The takir is cooked by each family and then collected at the church.



Figure 1. The arrangements for the offerings at the community hall were carried out by the KPPW (Commission for the Advancement of Women's Roles) and the PHBK (Committee for Religious Holidays)

The service will begin with a warm welcome from the council, followed by the 'solah bowo'; there will then be a procession comprising the council and children carrying symbolic offerings to the church building to be placed on the altar, after which the entire congregation will sing together to mark the start of the service (Figure 2). The procession continues with a special thanksgiving service using a contextual liturgy. Javanese is used for the Bible readings and the sermon, interspersed with hymns accompanied by Javanese Christian music. After the service, there will be a communal meal and an auction, with the proceeds going towards social ministry and church development.



Figure 2. The offering of gifts at the altar (left) and children's hymns (right) to mark the festival of *undhuh-undhuh*

The Reproduction of Meaning and Cultural Identity in the Undhuh-Undhuh Tradition

Within Jenks's framework of thought (1993), culture is understood as a system of meaning that is continually produced and reproduced through social practices carried out repeatedly within the collective life of a community. The undhuh-undhuh tradition, in its historical context and in its practice, demonstrates how religious meanings, cultural symbols and the social practices of the congregation are not only preserved but also continually reproduced through annual rituals involving all members of the community. This celebration serves as a space in which the system of meanings concerning gratitude to God, the relationship between humans and nature, and social relations amongst the congregation are put into practice. From Jenks's perspective (Jenks, 2002), collective practices such as these are an important mechanism for the reproduction of culture, as it is through repeated social actions that the values, symbols and beliefs held by the community are continually renewed and instilled in the next generation.

The spiritual significance emphasised in the undhuh-undhuh tradition can be understood as part of the reproduction of the religious system of meaning within the community (Sosis, 2019). The offering of the fruits of the earth, understood as an expression of gratitude, is not merely a ritual symbol, but a social practice that links theological beliefs with the daily lives of the congregation. In Jenks' view (Jenks), culture is always present in the form of practices that affirm the relationship between structures of meaning and the social actions of individuals and groups. When the congregation collectively performs a thanksgiving service and offers up the harvest, they are in fact reproducing a theological understanding of the relationship between humankind and God. This practice also demonstrates how religious culture is passed down not only through doctrine, but through collective experiences that are continually repeated, thereby shaping a shared consciousness of faith and social life (Jæger & Breen, 2016).

The dimensions of cultural identity evident in the use of Javanese symbols such as the *takir*, the Javanese liturgical language and etiquette can also be interpreted as a form of local cultural reproduction within the religious sphere. Within Jenks' framework (Jenks, 1993), cultural reproduction is always linked to the process of reinterpreting the cultural symbols that are alive within society. The undhuh-undhuh tradition demonstrates how elements of Javanese culture are not merely preserved as a traditional heritage, but are reinterpreted within the context of the Christian faith, thereby giving rise to a contextual form of religious expression. This process shows that cultural reproduction is not a static process, but rather a dynamic one involving the reinterpretation of symbols and values (Chykur & Iarotska, 2025). In this tradition, Javanese

culture serves not merely as a cultural backdrop, but as a medium that enables the Christian faith to be understood and practised in a way that is more closely aligned with the congregation's social experience.

This analysis can also be enriched by Pierre Bourdieu's perspective on cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 2018) which emphasises the role of habitus and social practices in maintaining cultural structures within society. In the context of undhuh-undhuh, the involvement of all congregation members in the process—from preparation and implementation through to the auction—demonstrates how the values of mutual cooperation, solidarity and simplicity have become the community's social habitus. This habitus is formed through practices repeated from generation to generation, resulting in patterns of behaviour that are regarded as normal and natural within community life (Burawoy, 2018). Thus, this tradition not only reproduces cultural symbols, but also reproduces the social dispositions of the congregation, which reflect the collective values of Javanese society and the church community.

Furthermore, Anthony Giddens' perspective (Ross, 2020) The theory of structuration also helps to explain how cultural reproduction takes place through the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. The undhuh-undhuh tradition can be seen as a social structure that provides certain rules, norms and symbols within the congregation's religious practices. However, this structure is not rigid, as the congregation, as social agents, continually reproduces the meaning of this tradition through their active participation. The involvement of children, young people and the elderly demonstrates that cultural reproduction occurs not only through the formal transmission of values, but also through social participation, which enables every member of the community to experience and understand the tradition first-hand.

On the other hand, the dimension of cultural representation within this tradition can also be analysed using Stuart Hall's approach (Hall et al., 2024) which emphasises that culture is produced through systems of representation and symbols. Symbols such as agricultural produce, traditional decorations, and the use of the Javanese language in liturgy are forms of representation that produce meaning regarding Javanese Christian identity. Through these symbols, the congregation constructs a narrative about who they are, how they interpret their faith, and how they situate themselves within the local cultural context. Thus, the undhuh-undhuh tradition not only reproduces social practices but also reproduces a discourse of identity that brings together religion, culture and community (Hall, 1997).

Overall, the undhuh-undhuh tradition described in the text can be understood as a complex mechanism of cultural reproduction, in which religious values, Javanese cultural identity and the social structure of the congregation are produced and maintained through collective ritual practices. From Chris Jenks's perspective (1993), cultural practices such as this demonstrate how communities maintain the continuity of their meaning and identity through repeated social actions. At the same time, through the dynamics of interpretation and participation by community members, these traditions are also constantly being renewed so that they remain relevant in the face of modern social change. Thus, undhuh-undhuh functions as a social space where culture, faith and community identity are both reproduced and continuously negotiated within the life of the congregation.

Social Practices and Cultural Reinterpretation in the Undhuh-Undhuh Tradition

The acculturation between Christian elements and Javanese agrarian culture in the undhuh-undhuh celebrations demonstrates how cultural reproduction takes place through symbolic integration. The use of cultural elements such as the takir, solah bowo, agrarian decorations, and traditional kebaya and beskap attire shows that local cultural symbols are not eliminated from religious practice, but are reinterpreted within a Christian theological framework. From the perspective of Chris Jenks (1993), symbols of this kind serve as a medium of representation that enables communities to preserve their collective system of meaning. When

cultural symbols are used repeatedly in religious rituals, they not only preserve local cultural identity, but also serve as a means for communities to negotiate the relationship between local traditions and the religious values they uphold. This process demonstrates that cultural reproduction not only preserves old forms but also enables symbolic reinterpretation, resulting in new forms of cultural expression that remain rooted in tradition (Jenks, 2002).

As well as through material symbols and rituals, cultural reproduction also takes place through oral narratives that develop within communities (Pred, 2017). The stories shared in sermons, event introductions and informal conversations amongst congregation members—concerning the history of the undhuh-undhuh, the meaning of gratitude, and the life experiences of farmers and congregation members—form part of the community's collective memory. From Chris Jenks's perspective (1995), narratives of this kind are a key mechanism in the reproduction of cultural meaning, as stories and experiences that are continually retold form a shared interpretative framework for members of the community. This can also be understood through Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (Jenkins, 1992), where certain values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour are unconsciously instilled through a process of repeated socialisation within social life. Through stories that are continually passed down, the congregation gradually internalises the values of gratitude, simplicity and perseverance as part of their social identity. Thus, oral narratives serve not only as a means of communication, but also as a medium for the reproduction of cultural values that strengthen the congregation's collective identity.

In this context, the church functions not only as a religious institution that governs worship practices, but also as a social arena that facilitates dialogue between religious values and local culture. From Chris Jenks's perspective (1995), social institutions play a vital role in organising cultural practices so that they can be sustained over time. The church serves as a space where Christian spiritual values intersect with Javanese cultural symbols, giving rise to a form of ritual that is neither entirely sacred nor entirely profane, but rather a blend of the two. This is in line with Anthony Giddens's idea (Ross, 2020) regarding structuration, which explains that social structures and individual actions mutually shape one another. The undhuh-undhuh tradition is determined not only by church rules as an institutional structure, but also by the practices of the congregation, who actively bring the tradition to life through their participation in every stage of the activities. Thus, this tradition endures because it is practised collectively by members of the community, who simultaneously reproduce the social structures and cultural values that surround it.

The use of Javanese in the liturgy and in communication during the celebrations also demonstrates how language functions as a medium for the reproduction of culture. Within Chris Jenks's framework of thought (2002), language is a symbolic system that plays a vital role in preserving cultural meaning. Language serves not only as a means of communication, but also as a marker of social and cultural identity. When spiritual values are conveyed through the Javanese language, these religious messages resonate more closely with the congregation's cultural experience. The local language enables the values of faith to be translated within a cultural framework already familiar to the community, thereby making the process of internalising these values more effective. This demonstrates that cultural reproduction occurs not only through formal rituals, but also through symbolic systems such as language, which shape the way individuals understand their social world (Burawoy, 2018).

Amid social changes characterised by modernisation and the development of digital technology, the undhuh-undhuh tradition has also undergone a process of adaptation that reflects the dynamics of cultural reproduction. The use of social media to promote events, the digital documentation of activities, and the involvement of the younger generation in creating content on the preservation of traditions demonstrate that culture is not static. From Chris Jenks' perspective (1993), the reproduction of culture always involves a process of change, as each generation reinterprets cultural symbols and practices in accordance with the context of its own time.

Adaptation to digital technology demonstrates that traditional cultures can utilise new media to broaden their symbolic reach and strengthen their social legitimacy. This phenomenon also shows that the younger generation are not merely consumers of modern culture, but also active agents who play a role in transforming traditions so that they remain relevant in contemporary society (Rosani et al., 2025).

Thus, the undhuh-undhuh celebration at the GKJW Sambirejo Congregation can be understood as a space for cultural reproduction that brings together Javanese agrarian symbols, Christian religious values, and the social dynamics of the community within a single, ongoing ritual practice. Through cultural symbols, collective narratives, the use of the local language, and adaptation to modern technology, the congregation actively reproduces its cultural and religious identity. From the perspective of Chris Jenks's theory of cultural reproduction (1995), this tradition demonstrates that culture endures not because it is passively preserved, but because it is continually practised, reinterpreted and revitalised through the social interactions that take place within community life. This process makes the undhuh-undhuh not only an annual religious ritual, but also a social mechanism that safeguards the continuity of Javanese Christian cultural identity amidst the changing times.

Intergenerational Participation in Cultural Reproduction Download-Download

In Jenks' view (1995), culture is not automatically transmitted from one generation to the next, but is reproduced through social practices carried out continuously by members of the community in their daily lives. Culture endures because it is learnt, interpreted and re-enacted by social actors within the context of concrete social interactions. The phenomena observed during the undhuh-undhuh celebrations demonstrate that this tradition serves as a social space in which the process of cultural reproduction takes place through the active involvement of various generations of the congregation, who collectively practise, understand and interpret the values embodied within it.

The role of the older generation as guardians of cultural values within the undhuh-undhuh tradition illustrates how the process of cultural reproduction takes place through the transmission of collective knowledge and experience. The older generation acts as narrators, recounting the history of the tradition, the theological significance of the practice of giving thanks, and the Christian ethical values practised within the Javanese cultural context. From the perspective of Chris Jenks (1995), such processes demonstrate that culture is reproduced through symbolic interaction and social communication, which enable the members of a community to continue to understand cultural meanings. The stories passed down by the older generation are not merely historical narratives, but social mechanisms that construct the community's collective memory and reinforce a shared sense of identity. Through this process, the younger generation not only receives information about traditions, but also learns to understand the symbolic meanings embedded within them.

However, cultural reproduction within the undhuh-undhuh tradition is not a one-way process. The younger generation within the congregation not only acts as passive recipients of cultural values, but also as active participants in modifying and renewing the forms of these traditional practices. Their involvement in devising event concepts, managing the visual aspects of the celebrations, and utilising social media demonstrates that cultural reproduction always involves a process of reinterpretation in line with changing social contexts. This is in line with the views of Chris Jenks (1993) that culture is constantly being reinterpreted by its practitioners. In this context, the innovations introduced by the younger generation do not mean abandoning tradition, but rather adapting its forms of expression so that they remain relevant to the changing times.

This process can also be understood from Pierre Bourdieu's perspective (2018) which explains that cultural reproduction is linked to the process of internalising values through repeated

social practices. In Bourdieu's concept of habitus, individuals unconsciously absorb cultural values through the social experiences they undergo from childhood. Children's participation in various undhuh-undhuh activities—such as dancing, playing music, acting as offering attendants, or being involved in the organising committee—provides direct experiences that allow the values of togetherness, service and gratitude to become ingrained in their consciousness. Through these participatory experiences, cultural values are not only taught verbally but also practised through concrete actions, thereby becoming part of an individual's social disposition within the community.

On the other hand, the process of cultural reproduction that takes place within the undhuh-undhuh tradition also reflects the relationship between social structure and individual action, as described in Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration (Ross, 2020). From Giddens' perspective, social structures not only constrain individual actions but are also reproduced through repeatedly performed social practices. The undhuh-undhuh tradition, as a communal ritual practice, provides a social framework that enables congregation members to fulfil specific roles within the celebration. At the same time, however, through their active participation, congregation members also help to reproduce and reinforce the tradition's presence within community life. In other words, the cultural structure governing the practice of undhuh-undhuh is not static, but is continually renewed through the collective actions of the congregation members.

Intergenerational involvement in this tradition also demonstrates that cultural reproduction takes place through a dialogical social process. Parents and the congregation do not position themselves as authorities who entirely determine the form of the tradition, but rather as facilitators who create space for the participation of the younger generation. This situation creates a social space that enables the exchange of ideas and experiences between generations. Within the theoretical framework of Chris Jenks (1993), such social practices demonstrate that cultural reproduction not only preserves old forms, but also creates the conditions for cultural transformation that remains rooted in the community's core values.

As well as serving as a space for the transmission of values, the undhuh-undhuh tradition also functions as a social mechanism that strengthens the cohesion of the congregation. Collective activities such as event preparation, the formation of cross-generational organising committees, the auction of agricultural produce, and communal meals using takir foster intense social interaction amongst community members. These interactions foster egalitarian and participatory social relationships, in which every member of the congregation has the opportunity to be involved in communal life. From the perspective of cultural reproduction, these collective social practices serve as a vital means of maintaining social solidarity whilst strengthening identity (Hunt & Benford, 2004) the Javanese Christian community.

In the context of modern society, which tends to be characterised by rising individualism and weakening social bonds (Bauman, 2000), traditions such as undhuh-undhuh play a vital role in maintaining the continuity of social relationships within the community. This tradition serves not only as a religious celebration, but also as a social space in which the values of togetherness, solidarity and collective responsibility are continually practised and passed on. From the perspective of Chris Jenks' theory of cultural reproduction (1993), such practices demonstrate that culture remains alive because it is practised collectively by members of the community in their day-to-day interactions. Through intergenerational participation, adaptation to changing times, and the strengthening of community solidarity, the congregation of GKJW Sambirejo has succeeded in making the undhuh-undhuh tradition a dynamic space for cultural reproduction, where religious values and local culture are continually preserved and developed within the community's social life.

5. CONCLUSION

The *undhuh-undhuh* tradition at the GKJW Sambirejo Congregation is a concrete example of the active and dynamic process of cultural reproduction taking place within local religious communities in Kediri Regency. This celebration is not only seen as an expression of gratitude to God, but also as a social space where cultural values, spirituality and social solidarity are preserved.

Through intergenerational engagement, the values and practices embodied in *undhuh-undhuh* are passed on both symbolically and in practice. The older generation acts as role models and guardians of tradition, whilst the younger generation serves as agents of adaptation, bringing innovation in line with the demands of the times. This process demonstrates that cultural reproduction is not passive, but rather the result of social interaction that is constantly changing and evolving, as explained by Chris Jenks' theory.

The acculturation between Javanese culture and Christian teachings in this celebration is a tangible manifestation of cultural syncretism which does not diminish religious values, but rather enriches the congregation's spiritual expression. The use of local symbols such as *takir*, Javanese music, the Javanese language in sermons, and cultural processions makes *undhuh-undhuh* both a medium of worship and a means of preserving cultural identity.

The implications of these findings highlight the importance of preserving the church's role as a space for cultural reproduction, as well as engaging the younger generation in cultural preservation through adaptive and participatory strategies. Moving forward, efforts in documentation, intergenerational education and the use of technology will be key to ensuring that these traditions remain relevant in the face of modernisation, without losing their spiritual and cultural roots.

REFERENCES

- Alfiyani, N., Syawaludin, M., & Jumaidi, S. (2025). Pendekatan Pembelajaran Kontekstual Berbasis Tradisi Riyaya Unduh-Unduh sebagai Penguat Karakter Berkebinekaan Global. *Jurnal Humanitas: Katalisator Perubahan Dan Inovator Pendidikan*, 11(3).
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. London. Polity, 74.
- Bawono, H. (2019). *Adaptation Both Side: When the Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) Multiculturalize itself*. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:198685360>
- Bitiyono, A. T. (2024). Makna Perayaan Undhuh-Undhuh Bagi Jemaat Gkjjw Di Mojowarno. *Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Satyabhakti*.
- Bourdieu, P. (2018). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In *Knowledge, education, and cultural change* (pp. 71–112). Routledge.
- Burawoy, M. (2018). Making sense of Bourdieu. *Catalyst: A Journal of Theory & Strategy*, 2(1).
- Chairul, A. (2021). Nilai Kerukunan Sosial Dalam Tradisi Undhuh-unduh Di Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW) Mojowarno Jombang Jawa Timur. *Skripsi Fakultas Ushuluddin Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta*.
- Christofandi, D. L., & Pudjibudojo, J. K. K. (2023). Gratitude dalam Budaya Undhuh-Undhuh di Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (GKJW) di Jawa. *SUNDERMANN: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi, Pendidikan, Sains, Humaniora Dan Kebudayaan*, 16(2). <https://doi.org/10.36588/sundermann.v16i2.121>
- Chykur, L., & Iarotska, G. (2025). HYBRID IDENTITY OF UKRAINIAN MIGRANTS. *Мова*, (44). <https://doi.org/10.18524/2307-4558.2025.44.343838>
- Hall, S. (1997). Culture and power. *Radical Philosophy*, 86(27), 24–41.
- Hall, S., Evans, J., & Nixon, S. (2024). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*.

- Hunt, S. A., & Benford, R. D. (2004). Collective identity, solidarity, and commitment. *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, 433(57).
- Jæger, M. M., & Breen, R. (2016). A dynamic model of cultural reproduction. *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(4), 1079–1115.
- Jatmoko, I. (2022). Cultural Inculturation: Riyaya Undhuh-Undhuh Celebration in Worship in Java Christian Church, Dagen-Palur, Surakarta. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.21275/sr22318141326>
- Jatmoko, I., & Jura, D. (2022). *Cultural Inculturation: Riyaya Undhuh-Undhuh Celebration in Service at Gereja Kristen Jawa, Dagen-Palur, Surakarta*. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.11-10-2021.2319575>
- Jenkins, R. (1992). *Key Sociologists Pierre Bourdieu*. Routledge.
- Jenks, C. (1993). *Cultural reproduction*. Routledge London.
- Jenks, C. (1995). *Visual culture*. Psychology Press.
- Jenks, C. (2002). Introduction: The analytic bases of cultural reproduction theory. In *Cultural reproduction* (pp. 11–26). Routledge.
- Khotimah, K. (2019). Studi Ritual Undhuh-Undhuh Di Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan (Gkjjw) Mojowarno Jombang Dalam Perspektif Talcot Parsons. In *Skripsi UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya*.
- Labeti, U. C. S. (2021). Pandangan Gereja Kristen Jawa (GKJ) Terhadap Budaya Dalam Konteks Masyarakat Jawa. *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.38189/jtbh.v4i1.190>
- Moleong, L. J., & Edisi, P. (2004). Metodologi penelitian. *Bandung: Penerbit Remaja Rosdakarya*, 3(01).
- Neuman, W. L. (2000). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (4th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- Nurhayati, & Yani, M. T. (2013). Transformasi Makna Tradisi Undhuh-Undhuh Pada Era Globalisasi Di Mojowarno, Jombang. *Kajian Moral Dan Kewarganegaraan*, 3(1).
- Pramudita, R. (2023). Unduh-Unduh; Relasi Gereja dan Budaya di Tengah Masyarakat Konsumer. *MURAI: Jurnal Papua Teologi Konstektual*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.58983/jmurai.v4i2.117>
- Pred, A. (2017). Social reproduction and the time-geography of everyday life. In *Theory and Methods* (pp. 243–260). Routledge.
- Puspita, M., & Istyanto, S. B. (2020). Perayaan Undhuh-Undhuh di GKJ Purwokerto sebagai Media Komunikasi Multikultural di Era Globalisasi dalam Membangun Kerukunan. *KOMUNIKATIF: Jurnal Ilmiah Komunikasi*, 9(1).
- Rosani, C. E., Suryandoko, W., Rd, T., Mai, W., Wan, P., & Christmasela, E. R. (2025). Undhuh-Undhuh Tradition from the Perspective of Historical Traces of Inculturation of Javanese Culture and Art to Christianity-BY-NC-SA) 4.0 license. *Solah Journal of Performing Arts*.
- Ross, D. (2020). Anthony Giddens. In *Social Theory* (pp. 121–126). Routledge.
- Salindri, D. (2020). The Undhuh-undhuh Ritual Change of Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan Congregation in Jember, East Java, Indonesia. *Tawarikh*, 12(1).
- Salindri, D., & Handayani, S. A. (2022). Hidupnya Ritual Undhuh-Undhuh Jemaat Greja Kristen Jawi Wetan Jember. In *CV. Feniks Muda Sejahtera*.
- Santoso, P. (2013). Inkulturasi Budaya Jawa dan Ajaran Kristen Pada Komunitas Jemaat GKJW di Kota Surabaya. *Bio Kultur*, 2(1), 85–104.
- Sosis, R. (2019). The building blocks of religious systems: Approaching religion as a complex adaptive system. *Springer Proceedings in Complexity*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-00075-2_19
- Sukidin, B. (2002). Metode penelitian kualitatif perspektif mikro. *Surabaya: Insan Cendekia*.

- Utomo, Y., Florentinus, T., Rohidi, T., & Ganap, V. (2020). *Liturgical Inculturation at Javanese Christian Church, Gondokusuman, Yogyakarta*.
<https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.29-6-2019.2290235>
- Vaughn, L. M., & Jacquez, F. (2020). Participatory research methods–Choice points in the research process. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*, 1(1).
- Widiasih, E. P., & Rachman, R. (2022). Reshaping Liturgy in Postcolonial Indonesia. *Liturgy*, 37(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2022.2026696>