



The Role of Women and Cultural Negotiation in Topeng Betawi Mak Kinang

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Abstract

Studies on the preservation of Topeng Betawi Dance have largely treated cultural transmission and social change as separate issues, failing to fully explain how the tradition is passed down while simultaneously adapting through female agency. This research aims to analyze the role of women in the processes of cultural transmission and negotiation within Topeng Betawi Dance, focusing on the lineage of Mak Kinang specifically Kartini Kisam as an heir and preserver of the tradition. The study uses a qualitative approach grounded in historical ethnography, enriched by digital ethnography. Data were gathered through literature reviews, semi-structured interviews with Kartini Kisam as the primary informant, and an examination of six Youtube audiovisual recordings featuring interviews and narratives about Mak Kinang and her descendants. The analysis utilizes Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman's concept of vertical cultural transmission alongside Gelfand and Brett's concept of relationship-based negotiation within a cultural context. The findings reveal that Mak Kinang served as a source of cultural authority, transmitting dance skills, performance styles, and values such as honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and artistic ethics through instruction, role modeling, observation, and direct participation in performances. Kartini Kisam evolved beyond being a mere recipient of this transmission; she became a cultural agent who preserved the heritage while adapting transmission strategies to the changing functions and performance spaces of Topeng Betawi Dance in modern society. These findings demonstrate that women occupy three interconnected roles: agents of cultural transmission, holders of cultural authority, and cultural negotiators. Theoretically, this research expands understanding of cultural transmission by showing that the continuity of tradition is not static but shaped by a dialectical relationship between the inheritance of values and skills and the negotiation of social change.

Keywords: Woman, Topeng Betawi, Transmission, Dance, Cultural Negotiation, cultural preservation

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INTRODUCTION

Women play a vital role in culture as preservers of tradition. This is documented in various historical records of the archipelago; for instance, during the heyday of the Javanese royal courts, women were actively involved in literary writing, the transmission of traditional values, and the performing arts as dancers and singers (Carey, 2016:65). Women's efforts to preserve tradition were not limited to the royal courts but extended to folk arts as well. In various parts of Java, the figure known as the *ronggeng* is a familiar presence. One example of a contemporary dance inspired by the *ronggeng* tradition is the Warak Dugder dance. In the traditional *Dugderan* art form of the Semarang region, the *ronggeng* a female performer highlights female strength through specific movements (Widyati et al., 2024). This figure plays a crucial role in Dugderan performances.

The *ronggeng* is a vital element in certain traditions, such as thanksgiving rituals. Within the realm of Javanese folk arts, the *ronggeng* tradition relies on the role of women as the central figures or *kembang* of the performance; their presence brings a sense of vitality to the tradition. However, over time, gender dynamics have shifted; women's participation in traditional performing arts has increased, reflecting broader movements toward emancipation and changing social roles for women in society (Suryawan, 2025).

The *ronggeng* tradition also spread to Jakarta formerly known as Batavia. In this region, where the Betawi people are the primary bearers of local culture, a distinctive performance art known as Topeng Betawi emerged. Topeng Betawi is a complex fusion of theater, music, and dance that reflects the sociocultural identity of the Betawi community (Sabillah et al., 2025). This art form is deeply rooted in the *ronggeng* tradition, encompassing its dance, music, and social function as popular entertainment. Notably, from its early stages of development, women played a pivotal role in introducing these cultural forms to the diverse ethnic groups of Jakarta. Europeans residing in Batavia around 1894, for instance, would often invite *ronggeng* performers to their gatherings to entertain guests from various ethnic backgrounds (Haddar, 1982:80).

The role of women in Topeng Betawi encompasses both sacred and economic dimensions. The Ronggeng Topeng figure is believed to bring prosperity to her troupe and serve as a spiritual intermediary between humans and their ancestors (Hasim, 2020). Given this sacred significance, the role of Ronggeng Topeng could not traditionally be assumed by just anyone; the transmission of the role was typically restricted to direct descendants

or the immediate family to preserve the art form's authenticity and distinctive characteristics (Sabillah et al., 2025).

Prominent female figures who have played pivotal roles in Topeng Betawi include Mak Kinang and Nyi Meh. They were preservers of tradition and transmitters of cultural values through the art of dance. Contemporary research indicates that women in this art form are not merely symbolic figures in performances or supporting players; they act as active agents in preserving tradition. Nyi Meh is recognized as a Topeng Betawi maestro who established a training studio (*sanggar*), mentored the next generation, and navigated the practice of tradition within the context of modernity (Kiftiawati & Mursalim, 2020). Similarly, Mak Kinang, a maestro from Gandaria, successfully passed on her expertise to her descendants, paving the way for successors such as Kartini Kisam. Kartini is now renowned as a Betawi dancer and instructor who consistently preserves Topeng Betawi through education, generational succession, and the creation of new choreography that has garnered international recognition.

A significant milestone in the evolution of the Topeng Betawi art form was the creation of the Topeng Tunggal dance in 1930 by the maestro duo Mak Kinang and Kong Djiun (Sabillah et al., 2025). During the dance's development, Mak Kinang served not only as its creator but also as the lead dancer, drawing upon her spiritual experiences and creative intuition to inspire its movements (Sabillah et al., 2025). This tradition paved the way for successors such as Kartini Kisam, who has carried on the mission of preserving Topeng Betawi through education and dance studios. This lineage underscores the enduring role of women in safeguarding Betawi cultural identity to the present day.

Betawi performing arts specifically Topeng dance and theater represent a cultural heritage that reflects the identity of Jakarta's urban community. Previous studies have sought to explain the continuity of this art form from various perspectives. Probonegoro, (1987) emphasized the textual and semantic aspects of Topeng Betawi theater, noting how female figures appear in plays as symbols of morality and fidelity meanwhile, Hoesodoningsih (2006) highlighted the themes of continuity and change within Topeng Betawi performances, including the involvement of artist families which included women. However, their specific roles were not the primary focus of the study.

By 1918, Mak Kinang was already performing as a ronggeng topeng alongside her husband, Dji'oen. Her dancing prowess took her on tours across Jakarta and its surrounding areas while she was still just fourteen years old. In 1930, she even won first place at the mask dance festival in Gambir (Hoesodoningsih, 2006:70). Mak Kinang's skills were passed down to her three sons Bokir, Kisam, and Dalih each of whom went on to establish their own distinct Betawi topeng troupes; the Topeng Kinang troupe, for instance, was continued by Dalih Dji'oen. The studios founded by Mak Kinang's descendants produced new creative forms of Betawi dance within the topeng genre, and these dances spread across various parts of Jakarta.

Topeng Betawi dance is rooted in a strong tradition, and its continuity relies heavily on mechanisms of cultural transmission. This pattern mirrors that of its predecessor art form, the Betawi Topeng performance art. Challenges arise, however, when this process of transmission confronts the currents of modernization and globalization, which erode local cultural enclaves in Jakarta (Kiftiawati & Mursalim, 2020). In this context, art practitioners, particularly women, are compelled to engage in cultural negotiation. Cultural transmission here entails more than passing down dance skills; it also involves conveying the values, meanings, and messages embedded in a maestro's personal style. As a legendary ronggeng topeng figure, Mak Kinang serves as the focal point of this transmission process, as it was through her that the distinctive style, expression, and identity of Betawi Topeng were shaped. The process of external transmission to the wider community through dance studios also constitutes a form of negotiation. This is evident when dance material is transformed into a more structured form through fixed choreography to make it easier for the younger generation to learn, even though the title of "Ronggeng" is retained as a family identity (Hasim, 2020).

Given these facts, it is evident that women hold a pivotal position in sustaining Betawi dance, whether acting as maestros, teachers, or leaders of dance troupes. This process of negotiation is reflected in how artists have adapted the dance's function, shifting from a ritual perceived as mystical to a medium for entertainment, education, and cultural diplomacy (Sabillah et al., 2025). Perspectives rooted in gender equality and feminism provide a crucial framework for understanding these roles; women have proven to be not merely peripheral figures in the art form but key actors driving generational renewal and negotiating cultural identity amidst the currents of globalization. Consequently, research into the role of women in preserving Betawi dance is highly

relevant for addressing gaps in previous scholarship while affirming the values of gender equity within the realm of traditional culture.

Previous studies have already mapped the relationship between women and cultural transmission in the performing arts. Globally, the transmission of cultural practices, specifically dance, often occurs as adult women pass knowledge to the younger generation through oral traditions (Diaz, 2024). Within the Indonesian archipelago, too, women play a significant role in the continuity of traditional arts, particularly dance. In the Warak Dugder dance, for instance, women derive their strength from gentleness and self-protection, demonstrating that they need not emulate the masculinity of male dancers to be perceived as strong (Mawasti et al., 2020). This aligns with findings by (Sarastiti et al., 2022) who observed that through the Barongan Samin Edan art form, women were able to dismantle structural barriers by engaging in gender resistance across roles previously dominated by men.

Existing research has yet to link the transmission process, dialectically manifested as the internalization of values and skills within the family, with the negotiation process, manifested as externalization and adaptation in the public sphere, as interconnected elements of cultural preservation practices. To date, transmission has tended to be understood in isolation from the dynamics of social change; however, in the preservation practices carried out by women, these two processes occur simultaneously and mutually influence one another. Transmission serves as the foundation for passing down values and skills, while negotiation allows that heritage to be adapted to ever-changing social contexts without severing the continuity of tradition.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research design on the Mak Kinang family, using historical ethnography strategies enriched with digital ethnography. In the early stages, the researcher reviewed books, journal articles, theses, and dissertations that discussed the Topeng Betawi Dance and the role of women in traditional arts. These sources were used to build a theoretical framework and strengthen the research position in the study of Betawi performing arts and culture.

Furthermore, an ethnographic survey based on digital media was conducted. The data were collected by searching for audiovisual recordings on the internet. Based on the search results, six data sources were found from the YouTube platform. The six sources were chosen because the content contains direct interviews with the descendants of Betawi Dance Maestro (Mak

Kinang) and Kartini Kisam, as the heirs to their culture. These sources were analyzed as online ethnographic data. The observation period is from January 2025 to May 2026, but in the caption column, the video was uploaded from 2021 to 2023. Observations about Mak Kinang's work as a Topeng Betawi performer are taken from the Baba Mandra YouTube account, whose owner is Mandra Nail, Mak Kinang's grandson. Digital media is treated as a space of cultural representation that allows researchers to observe the practices, narratives, and values of preserving the Topeng Betawi dance, especially those carried out by women in the modern era.

To complete the data that is lacking, a direct interview was conducted with a party who has a direct relationship with the Topeng Betawi Dance artist, namely Kartini Kisam. Understanding values and forms as part of cultural transmission can be seen from the oral traditions carried out by the owners of the culture. Digital-based ethnographic research and interviews were conducted to obtain data on the language of key figures. Literacy does not have to be presented as a reality of teachings in the form of fairy tales, mythology, or stories. Still, it can also be seen in various educational processes that arise in daily life (Widaryanto, 2024:227). The interview was conducted in a semi-structured manner and lasted two hours. In this case, Kartini Kisam played the role of the main participant and speaker.

Mak Kinang was chosen as a case study because traces of the inheritance of the Topeng Betawi tradition in its lineage are relatively easy to trace to date. The descendants of Mak Kinang maintain their knowledge and practice of Topeng Betawi, and develop their heritage so that the data sought is adequate to trace the process of cultural transmission between generations and the role of women in it. This condition makes the Mak Kinang lineage a single relevant case to examine the sustainability and cultural negotiation of the Topeng Betawi Dance. A single case study on the Mak Kinang family was conducted to build a constitutive argument regarding the role of women in cultural preservation. A constitutive argument is a scientific claim that answers questions about a phenomenon such as its existence, categorization, or composition to provide a conceptual understanding that applies across cases. (Pacewicz, 2020).

To analyze the data, a cultural transmission approach is used. Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman say that one of the modes of cultural transmission is vertical transmission, which is the process of transferring cultural character from parents to their biological descendants (Sforza & Feldman, 1981: 54). The vertical transmission mechanism was

chosen because it is very relevant to explain the stability and preservation of the distinctive values of the Topeng Betawi Dance in the lineage of the Mak Kinang family. This transmission process is dissected through a two-stage approach, which includes the stage of awareness in which cultural signals are received through direct observation or teaching, as well as the stage of acceptance or adoption (Sforza & Feldman, 1981:34). There is a second stage in which cultural selection works, where individuals consciously decide to learn, maintain, and practice Betawi dance skills, especially the Topeng Betawi dance family.

Then, to deepen the analysis of social interaction in cultural inheritance formed due to cultural transmission, this study applies the concept of relationship-based negotiation. This approach was chosen because Topeng Betawi, as part of the collective culture, focuses on building long-term relationships and maintaining social harmony. In the context of the Topeng Betawi Dance, the role of women as cultural agents involves the use of high-context communication. This relates to traditional information and values that are negotiated implicitly through symbols or "tastes" to maintain the "face" and social integrity of the community (Gelfand & Brett, 2004).

Thus, cultural negotiation is understood as a dynamic process in which female dancers manage their behavior to adapt traditions to new social contexts without losing the essence of their relational identity. As depicted in the chart below.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Transmission in the Mak Kinang Lineage

Mak Kinang, one of the female figures in the development of Betawi dance, has a family background outside the field of art. After becoming the wife of a Topeng Betawi performance artist (Pak Djiun), Mak Kinang began to learn to become a Kembang Topeng. Her skills in dancing and singing made her known to many people and

became a favorite, even when Mak Kinang died (Mandra, 2021). Therefore, the Topeng Betawi performance performed by Mak Kinang and Pak Djiun used the name Kinang as the group's name.

In this case, Mak Kinang is a female figure who upholds the legitimacy of tradition, not just a supporting actor. This refers to the process of social and cultural recognition of a cultural practice, so that the practice is considered valuable and worthy of being inherited across generations. The event that marks the legitimacy of the tradition carried out by Mak Kinang can be seen from its influence on the art of Topeng Betawi both when Mak Kinang was still active and when he died.

"saat dia masih aktif laris, begitu artisnya udah gak muncul, biasanya grup selesai, ini mah enggak, dari dia masih ada masih aktif sampe dia di rumah terus masih laris. Namanya topeng kinang. Lah kinangnya mah udah gak ada, udah kagak main lagi. Ini si laris gak luntur, orang udah gak main di grup itu tapi larisnya gak luntur. Ini mak kinang orangnya kagak main, larisnya kagak luntur, sampe dia meninggal itu kagak luntur juga".

(Mandra, 2021)

Not only from the performance. Another proof that Mak Kinang is the legitimate tradition's perpetrator can be seen in the learning process carried out by Kembang Topeng in the Topeng Betawi performance. Many Topeng Betawi artists use the name Mak Kinang when teaching Topeng Betawi (Mandra, 2021).

After Mak Kinang died, the Topeng Betawi Kinang performance group was continued by Mr. Dalih. At that time, several Ronggeng Topeng appeared, such as Rimah, Ifon, Dahlia, Enik, and several other Ronggeng Topeng (Mandra, 2021). However, of these ronggengs that still survive until now is Kartini Kisam, the direct granddaughter of Mak Kinang, Kisam's daughter. Other ronggengs began to stop because of their busy family. This proves that vertical transmission occurs. Offspring, in this case a grandmother, contribute to the traits that her grandchildren can learn. This is in line with (Sforza & Feldman, 1981), which states that this kind of transmission pattern causes cultural inheritance from parents or ancestors to their descendants, tending to result in the continuation of more conservative traditions. This is because cultural values and practices are maintained consistently between generations. This pattern is reflected in the inheritance of the Topeng Betawi Dance from Mak Kinang to Kartini Kisam, where knowledge, skills, and cultural values are inherited through family relationships and direct experience.

The acquisition of a trait by one individual from another individual in cultural transmission involves a long and complex learning process. There are two stages in this transmission process, namely awareness and acceptance (Sforza & Feldman, 1981). Awareness requires the presence of signals either through teaching or observation, while acceptance usually occurs in the learning process.

In this case, it aligns with the stage of the transmission process regarding consciousness. This concept can be observed in the inheritance process of the Betawi Topeng Betawi experienced by Kartini Kisam. The delivery stage is shown through Mak Kinang's role as a grandmother who invites Kartini to attend the performance. After that, Mak Kinang showed dance movements, guided the exercises, and gave direct examples in various staging opportunities. Meanwhile, the acceptance stage was seen when Kartini Kisam observed each of these processes, participated in exercises with Mak Kinang, and learned the compatibility between dance movements and musical accompaniment through the direction of her father, who acted as the drummer of the Topeng Betawi. The learning process is illustrated in the following Kartini Kisam story.

"Saya kan belajarnya dari Mak Kinang, bukan dari Ibu, karena ibu saya tuh saya umur 10 tahun udah meninggal. Jadi saya lebih banyak ke nenek. Kalo babeh kan bagian musiknya, jadi nanti dia lebih banyak bilangin. jangan gitu itu salah. ini gitu. dia karena gak bisa nari, dia kan tau. Untuk ngendangin ini gerakannya seperti ini gitu".

In addition to direct teaching, cultural transmission also occurs through continuous exposure in the family environment. (Sforza & Feldman, 1981) explain that individuals acquire cultural elements through repeated interaction with the practices that live around them by observing and participating in daily life. This experience can be seen in Kartini Kisam's narration in an interview (Rizki, 2017)) on YouTube. In the interview, Kartini Kisam stated that since childhood, she has often watched the Topeng Betawi performance led by Mak Kinang more often than other forms of dance. The intensity of the encounter with the Topeng Betawi makes the art the closest cultural experience to him, as expressed in it.

"Sebetulnya waktu itu emang gak ada pilihan lain ya. karena yang sering saya lihat ya topeng nenek saya, topeng betawi ini. Belum ada pilihan tari Jawa atau tari sunda, memang sih ada liat, tapi sewaktu waktu. yang sering dilihat ya Topeng Betawi"

However, in this concept, the two stages of consciousness and acceptance cannot be

completely separated. When a person grows up in the same cultural environment from childhood, socialization is so intensive that awareness of a tradition is followed by its acceptance. In such conditions, cultural transmission takes place as a one-stage process. This can be seen because individuals accept an inherited culture without going through a conscious selection process.

Cultural Negotiation and the Role of Women

As a successful ronggeng in his time, Mak Kinang was an educator and ethical role model, especially for Kartini Kisam. Mak Kinang trusted Kartini Kisam not only because of their direct descent, but also because the dancing ability inherited by Mak Kinang could be performed well by Kartini Kisam. Mak Kinang advised that his ability to perform the Topeng Betawi dance must be continued and preserved. In this case, it is also seen that women have authority in the process of transmitting traditions.

"Waktu itu kata nenek 'harus meneruskan nih warisan nenek karena kalo bukan elo siapa lagi, akhirnya saya ikutin terus, kegiatan nenek, dari panggung ke panggung. Suatu saat pernah mengikuti kegiatan dari pemerintah mewakili nenek saya itu, nari gegot namanya. Itu sangat berkesan bagi saya karena oh ternyata saya sudah dipercaya oleh nenek bahwa saya itu harus meneruskan apa yang nenek tarikan. Waktu itu tahun 1973, yang awal itu ikut lomba itu di Bandung, alhamdulillah dapet juara, itu jadi kebanggaan saya, nah dari situ saya terus ikut belajar dan belajar kemudian nenek saya bilang jangan cuma tari itu aja yang dipelajari, tapi juga harus belajar tari Topeng Tunggal, yaitu kedok tiga yang tiga karakter itu. Akhirnya saya belajar, alhamdulillah akhirnya dipercaya sampai sekarang untuk mempelajari tari Topeng Tunggal." (Kartini Kisam, dalam Parade Tari Nusantara, 2021)

The preservation of the Topeng Betawi Dance occurs through intergenerational inheritance, closely woven within the family and community. In this context, women serve as the primary link between traditions and their continuation in the present. This is achieved through bodily experience, emotional closeness, and direct involvement in performance practices. The relationship between Mak Kinang and Kartini Kisam demonstrates that dance learning is not merely technical but also shapes cultural identity and awareness.

"Meneruskan warisan dari nenek saya mak kinang, awalnya saya diajak oleh nenek saya kalo nenek saya pentas, manggung ke panggung ke panggung saya diajak nonton. Akhirnya saya suka, yang

tadinya cuma menonton akhirnya jadi ikut nenek nari. Saya mulainya tahun 70, mulai ikut nenek. Soalnya nenek itu kan banyak ornam yang eh hajatan, kawinan, sunatan, khitan. Itu nenek ditanggap topengnya kemudian anak cucunya ikut. Sebetulnya waktu itu emang gak ada pilihan lain ya. karena yang sering saya lihat ya topeng nenek saya, topeng betawi ini. Belum ada pilihan tari Jawa atau tari sunda, memang sih ada liat, tapi sewaktu waktu. yang sering dilihat ya Topeng Betawi. Yang sering ajarin saya nari itu nenek, ibu saya juga penari, tapi setelah saya baru menginjak 7 tahun ibu meninggal. Ibu saya Ibu Nasah, bapak saya Bapak Kisam jiun itu juga pemusik sebagai penggendang topeng."

(Kartini Kisam, in Handika Rizky 2017).

This preservation also demonstrates strong intergenerational continuity, beginning with Mak Kinang as the female maestro and continued by Kartini Kisam as the primary inheritor of the tradition. Kartini Kisam not only reproduced dance knowledge but also transformed it through educational practices within the family, ensuring the continued transmission of cultural values. Kartini Kisam plays a role as both a female guardian and a negotiator of the boundaries of tradition today. This is evident in her legitimate position as a dance maestro, particularly in the Topeng Betawi Dance. This title has led Kartini Kisam to various educational roles, such as serving as a judge and resource person for various government agencies, schools, and universities. Through these venues, she must continually negotiate the legitimacy of Betawi movement styles and new creative Betawi dance idioms.

Kartini Kisam also maintains her authority as the official heir to Mak Kinang's lineage. This recognition is based on the testimony of two of her contemporaries, Mandra and Entong. The quote below explains that forms of legitimacy based on bodily and movement similarities function as non-verbal negotiation capital for cultural authority.

" Nah kalo mungkin sekarang, Kartini, kartini itu cucu mak tua kinang juga, anaknya kisam, tari topeng betawi, badannya hampir mirip mak kinang. Nah kalau dia ngibing atau nari, ya kayak dia tuh".

Recognition of Kartini Kisam's role as a preserver of the Topeng Betawi Dance was also supported by family testimonies, which confirmed that she successfully educated her younger siblings to always preserve the Topeng Betawi Dance as part of a shared cultural responsibility.

"Saya sebagai adiknya sangat bangga sekali karena beliau sangat komitmen

dalam berkesenian, dan saya pribadi sangat bangga punya mpok yang benerbener mendidik adik-adiknya supaya berkeseniannya jangan setengah setengah dan alhamdulillah berkat bimbingan beliau juga saya baik dalam keseharian maupun berkesenian tetap membanggakan mpok kartini".

(Entong Sukirman, in Parade Tari Nusantara, 2021)

In line with Sedyawati's (Sedyawati, 2007) opinion, women can play a key role in the successful development of national culture by acquiring knowledge supported by wisdom and prudence. These values of wisdom and prudence were passed down from Mak Kinang through Kartini Kisam. Kartini Kisam explained that Mak Kinang not only inherited her dancing skills but also instilled a set of values that serve as the foundation for living as a traditional artist. The values of honesty, sincerity, responsibility, and commitment to giving one's best are understood as part of artistic ethics that are inseparable from the practice of Topeng Betawi Dance. In this context, the process of cultural transmission not only transfers technical skills but also passes on a value system that serves as the basis for facing various social and cultural changes.

There are fundamental differences between the Topeng Betawi Dance tradition of the past and the present. According to Kartini Kisam, based on her experience following and observing Mak Kinang's activities, in the past the Topeng Betawi Dance functioned as a traditional ceremony. Topeng Betawi performance was one of the spectacles often performed at these ceremonies. The performance includes a part, namely a dance that uses masks (kedok), which is now often called the Topeng Tunggal Dance.

"Beda banget, kalau dulu kan topeng tunggal itu fungsinya buat upacara, buat haul, kalau peringatan hari, di keramat-keramat dulu kan kita masih banyak keramat ye? Keramat tuh semacam kayak gini, kaya di Cirebon gitu kan orang pada ziarah nih, nah tapi kalau dulu musimnya kan maulid ya".

The shift in the function of the Topeng Betawi Dance from a part of community ritual life to a performing art, entertainment, and educational medium demonstrates that the preservation of tradition does not occur through a complete reproduction of the past. In this process, the values inherited from Mak Kinang are maintained, while the presentation forms, performance spaces, and inheritance strategies are adjusted to the new social context. This situation indicates that cultural transmission occurs simultaneously with a process of cultural negotiation, namely the effort to maintain traditional identity through various

forms of adaptation undertaken by cultural actors. As both heir and teacher, Kartini Kisam occupies a crucial position in this process because she not only passes on the legacy she received but also determines how the values and practices of the Topeng Betawi Dance remain relevant for the current generation. The framework for understanding negotiation is not simply an individual transaction, but rather a process shaped by social motivations and the structure of cultural relations at the group and community network levels (Thompson et al., 2004).

Social motivation as a basis for negotiation stems from the distribution of outcomes between one's own gains and the other party's. Furthermore, Gelfand & Cai (2004) categorize this negotiation process into three layered contexts. The first is the inner circle, typically comprising the immediate family. The second is the middle circle, involving relationships that have the potential to become part of the "in-group" but are not yet fully established. The third is the outer circle, where the negotiation of cultural identity becomes clearly apparent. The inner circle is evident in the views of Mak Kinang's descendants; the middle circle is seen in the formation of groups originating from schools, universities, and the dance studios mentored by Mak Kinang's descendants; and the outer circle emerges through the acceptance of Kartini Kisam's identity as a Topeng Betawi Dance maestro, particularly in dances such as Topeng Tunggal Dance.

One of the greatest dilemmas facing traditional performing artists in the contemporary era is the constant pressure to innovate and create something new. This pressure stems from various directions: entertainment-market demands for fresh spectacles, government policies that often favor newly created works, and academic prestige that treats creativity as a benchmark of progress. Kartini Kisam inherited the tradition from Mak Kinang at a time when the social structure of the Betawi community had undergone a fundamental transformation shifting from an agrarian-ritual society to a fast-paced, pragmatic urban-industrial one. At this juncture, Kartini Kisam chose to be a preserver rather than a choreographer. This choice represents a firm socio-political and cultural statement by a woman.

In contrast, some of Kartini's relatives chose the path of choreography, developing Betawi dance through various innovations. However, this often results in dance forms losing their genealogical grounding, making it difficult to identify which dance lineage they belong to. Desmond (1993) emphasizes that cultural transmission always involves a dialectical process of re-creation (remodeling) rather than mere passive borrowing. Nevertheless, the nature of the changes made

during re-creation must still be guided by the choreographer's genealogical compass. Meanwhile, Kartini has consistently maintained the form of the Topeng Betawi Dance exactly as Mak Kinang handed it down; indeed, it is precisely this role as a preserver that ensures her continued recognition as a guardian of authenticity amidst the blurring boundaries of modern Betawi dance genres. It is within this context that cultural negotiation emerges as an adaptive strategy designed to uphold the essence of the heritage while responding to the demands of new contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the continuity of Topeng Betawi Dance within Mak Kinang's lineage occurs through vertical cultural transmission, passing down not only dance skills but also knowledge, values, ethics, and cultural identity. Mak Kinang serves as a cultural authority who legitimizes and transmits the tradition through family ties, instruction, role modeling, observation, and direct involvement in performances. This process shapes Kartini Kisam as both a recipient and an heir to the culture, who then carries forward this knowledge and these values through educational practices and generational renewal. Thus, cultural transmission in Topeng Betawi Dance unfolds through embodied experience and social relationships, enabling the intergenerational internalization of cultural knowledge.

This transmission is not static; it is intertwined with cultural negotiation as the tradition confronts changing social contexts. The shift in the function of Topeng Betawi Dance from a practice linked to customary rituals to a form of performing art, entertainment, education, and a space for cultural representation reflects adjustments in how the tradition is practiced and passed down. In this context, Kartini Kisam has chosen the role of a preserver, maintaining the form of Topeng Betawi Dance inherited from Mak Kinang, while expanding the transmission process through formal education, dance studios, and various social spheres. Cultural negotiation, therefore, does not necessarily entail altering the form of the tradition; it can also occur through the decision to uphold specific elements of authenticity when faced with demands for innovation and social change.

The research findings underscore the strategic position women hold in the continuity of Topeng Betawi Dance as agents of transmission, cultural authorities, and cultural negotiators. Mak Kinang represents the authority that establishes the tradition's legitimacy and passes on knowledge and values to the next generation. At the same

time, Kartini Kisam actualizes this heritage through preservation, education, and generational renewal. Consequently, the role of women in this study cannot be understood merely as recipients or practitioners of tradition, but as actors capable of shaping how the tradition is maintained and positioned within contemporary society. This study shows that cultural continuity forms through the interplay between transmission that preserves values and knowledge, and negotiation that allows traditions to remain functional in changing social contexts.

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