

## TRANSFORMATION OF THE PRACTICE OF GIVING 'LIN WELIN LETO WOTER' IN KROWE ETHNIC MARRIAGES: ANALYSIS OF CAUSAL FACTORS AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Renhat Marlianus Siki<sup>1</sup>, I Made Suastika<sup>2</sup>, Maria Matildis Banda<sup>3</sup>,  
Luh Putu Puspawati<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Program of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University;

<sup>2,3,4</sup>Cultural Studies Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Udayana University;

Email: <sup>1</sup>[renhat3478@gmail.com](mailto:renhat3478@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[madesuastika@yahoo.com](mailto:madesuastika@yahoo.com),  
<sup>3</sup>[mbanda575@gmail.com](mailto:mbanda575@gmail.com), <sup>4</sup>[puspawati1960@yahoo.co.id](mailto:puspawati1960@yahoo.co.id)

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### ABSTRACT

This research explores the transformation of the practice of giving "Lin Welin Leto Woter" in Krowe ethnic marriages in Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, examining the influence of ideological, social, and material factors. Using qualitative methodology, data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. The results reveal ideological shifts driven by modernity and globalization, social tensions triggered by manipulation within the community, and economic impacts driving adaptation. Despite facing challenges, the Krowe community demonstrates resilience by incorporating personal symbols and adjusting practices. Traditional terms persist alongside new practices, reflecting cultural continuity. From a theoretical perspective, these practices reflect the flexibility of cultural symbols, inviting further investigation. In conclusion, the Krowe community's response reaffirms their ability to navigate change while preserving cultural identity, suggesting avenues for further research and recommendations to support cultural preservation.

**Keywords:** cultural transformation, ideological shifts, Krowe ethnic marriages, resilience, social tensions

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage in the Krowe ethnic culture is characterized by the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*," which holds deep significance as a symbol of unity, love, and harmony between two families joining through marriage. However, in recent years, this practice has undergone significant shifts, giving rise to a number of issues that affect the stability and sustainability of this tradition.

Changes in ideological structure, such as religious, educational, and economic values, have influenced the understanding and interpretation of the practice of giving "*Lin*

*Welin Leto Woter.*" Traditional values that once underpinned this practice, such as purity and reverence for women, may be eroded by the adoption of more pragmatic and materialistic modern values. This has created tension between tradition and social development, sparking debates about the true meaning of this giving practice in a changing context.

On the other hand, shifts in social structure have also created disagreements and tensions among members of the Krowe community. Differences in perspectives on the values and meanings of this practice can lead to internal conflicts within the community, especially between older generations who uphold tradition and younger generations who are more open to change.

Furthermore, changes in material infrastructure, including economic shifts and technological advancements, have also impacted the values and meanings of the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter.*" Increases in the prices of traditional symbolic items, such as gold and ivory, can create economic burdens for marrying families and lead to extortionate practices by the bride's family. The influence of social media and globalization can also stimulate adaptations of this giving practice to align with modern trends and expectations.

Thus, the issues arising from the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" include conflicts between traditional and modern values, social tensions in the interpretation and implementation of the practice, and the economic and technological impacts on cultural stability and significance. In facing these challenges, the Krowe community is confronted with the need to maintain a balance between preserving their cultural heritage and adapting to changing times.

In this research, a concept plays a crucial role. As explained by Putra (2001:6), these concepts form the foundation for the development of a strong theory. Therefore, one of the concepts that needs to be highlighted is the concept of ideology. Emphasizing this concept is essential to understand its contribution to the transformation of the "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" giving practice within the Krowe ethnic culture. With a deep understanding of ideology, this research can uncover how ideology plays a key role in the occurring changes.

## **METHODS**

The current research employed a qualitative methodology (Budasi & Suryasa, 2021), which is aimed at comprehending the significance of various subjects, societies,

situations, and events (Suastika, 2020). This method seeks to grasp empirical cultural phenomena within the field and operates within the framework of interdisciplinary multimethod studies, focusing on interpretation and employing diverse paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009: 2-6).

Qualitative research emphasizes a naturalistic approach to understanding and interpreting phenomena, and it is particularly relevant in cultural studies due to its unique perspective and emphasis on participatory observation (Endraswara, 2006:87-89; Denzin & Lincoln, 2009:5). Data collection in this study involved observation, interviews, and documentary analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Marriage in the Krowe ethnic group**

Marriage in the Krowe ethnic group is not just a union between two individuals but a sacred covenant that involves the unity and brotherhood of two extended families represented by the marrying couple (Grossman, 2016). The customary expression known as "*Dadi Wai Nora Lai Tena Wue Nora Wari Dadi Lihan Nora Lalan Tena Nara Nora Wine*" reflects the significance of unity and love that strengthens the bonds of kinship. Marriage in the Krowe ethnic group is not only seen as a single event but also as a lengthy process embedded with strong generational values, following the expression "*Daa Ribang Nopok Koli Tokar.*" This refers to a long-term commitment to preserving unity, brotherhood, and the evolving and adapting values of love over time.

The maintenance of commitment and seriousness in Krowe ethnic marriages is reflected in the practice of giving. The giving of "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" symbolizes the emotional and spiritual bond between husband and wife, encompassing feelings of complementing and enriching each other. "*Lin Welin Leto Woter,*" which can be interpreted as "a harmonious family structure," illustrates the importance of building harmonious and balanced relationships within the family based on love and unity.

However, socio-economic changes have altered the system, values, and practices related to the giving of symbolic objects. This is reflected in the use of symbolic objects such as ivory, gold, horses, and money. This shift has created challenges and issues, such as the phenomenon involving economic burden due to the high value of symbolic objects, reports of intimidation by the wife's family towards the husband to fulfill the obligation of giving symbolic objects, incidents of violence against wives, and the potential for conflict and tension within households also arising due to economic pressure.

## **b. Factors causing the shift in practices**

Changes in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages occur due to the influence of Ideological Superstructure, Social Structure, and Material Infrastructure. These factors can be viewed from the perspective of Sanderson's concept of Ideological Superstructure, Social Structure, and Material Infrastructure.

1. Ideological Superstructure: The concept of ideological superstructure refers to the values, beliefs, and ideologies that shape a community's worldview (Eatwell, 2019). This superstructure is the symbolic or ideological part of culture that encompasses the code of social regulations based on how social and political organizations occur. Basically, an ideology is derived from a myth and after it is established it becomes an ideology as what is stated by Barthes (2003:122) that if a connotation is already established, it will become a myth and that if the myth is already established it becomes an ideology. Kumbara (2010:17) stated that a cultural ideology and tradition can be analyzed by finding out what the ideology in the tradition contains. According to Destuut de Tracy (in Noeliono-Budianto, 2004:128-130), an ideology is a collection of systemized concepts used as the basis leading to the life sustainability of someone or a group of people. An ideology is the ideal which is intended to be achieved by many parties in society (Horkheimer, 2014). The supporting society usually spreads the ideology to its members who support it in different ways in accordance with their respective tradition and culture (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2019). Ideology determines the responsibilities and rights of all community members (Woolard, 2020). In the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages, this superstructure includes symbolism and representations related to the practice. Some examples of superstructure understandings include:

- a. Religious ideology. Religion is obedience to something perceived as sacred, holy, and divine (Daulay, 2011:35). In its early emergence, the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" had a sacral function as a form of honor and respect for women imbued with religious ideology. The implementation of the community's ethnic Krowe belief values towards ancestors is explicitly and implicitly evident through the construction of "*Mahe Moan*," meaning the grand altar, as a form of honoring Krowe ethnic women which serves as an altar for sacrificial offerings.
- b. Educational ideology. Education is a crucial element in shaping the ideology of the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*." Gazalba (1989:375) states that education plays a role in shaping habits through the repetition of responses or actions, which

form the basis of this process. Moreover, efforts to increase the intensity of responses or actions to achieve a certain level of appreciation are also necessary to effect significant changes. Education that builds the ideology of the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" is education focused on character education. As expressed in the customary saying "*Ami Gea Lin-Dena Lepo Naha Nora Lin*," "*Ami Meti Welin Dena Woga Naha Nora Welin*," "*Ami Leto Wain-Dena Bua Beli Doi*," "*Ami Boter Men-Dena Poti Beli Ngen*" (Diogo, 2020). Education is directed towards these expressions, which convey the meaning of unity and mutual respect in the bond of love.

c. Economic ideology. The practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" as an inherent cultural form tends to have economic aspects. In this practice, the expected welfare is internal, in the form of love and mutual respect. It involves honoring and providing for all aspects of life, including clothing, food, and shelter. The economic value evident in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" is clear in the form of symbolic self-representations such as agricultural produce, livestock, jewelry, and others. The economic ideology related to the inner being of the Krowe ethnic community is a value that cannot be measured financially in terms of money. The depiction found in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" represents the noble values of the Krowe ethnic community, resulting in the emergence of a need for this practice.

2. Social Structure: The concept of social structure refers to the social relationships that form within a community (Fathy, 2019). In the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*," factors such as differences in understanding and commodification influence social relationships within the Krowe ethnic community. Within the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages, differences in understanding and commodification can be explained as follows: Differences in understanding encompass variations in the interpretation and meaning of the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" among Krowe community members. For instance, some community members may have a more traditional and spiritual understanding of this practice, while others may view it from a more modern and practical perspective. Commodification refers to the process where a practice or object is transformed into a commodity or tradable item. In the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*," commodification of this practice can occur when it starts to be perceived as something that can be traded or commercialized,

possibly through external influences such as the tourism market or the wedding industry. In the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*," differences in understanding and commodification can impact social relationships within the Krowe ethnic community. Differences in understanding can create tensions among community members with different perspectives on this practice, while commodification can change how the practice is carried out and understood by the community, affecting social and economic dynamics within the community. Manipulation by actors with knowledge also plays a significant role in shaping social relationships, knowledge, and the identity of the Krowe ethnic community, especially in the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages. This manipulation is reflected in the instruments of domination within the social structure. For example, in the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages, some figures involved in manipulation and instruments of domination within the social structure are *Lai Meken Moan Puan Tanah Puan Tawa Tana*, Cultural Figures, and the Youth of the Krowe Ethnic Community. *Lai Meken Moan Puan Tanah Puan Tawa Tana* holds a respected position within the Krowe ethnic community and influences cultural practices and knowledge production related to marriage events. *Lai Meken* plays a role in creating the stages of the "*Naruk Wai Lai Lihan Lalan*" events that reflect social norms governing interpersonal and familial relationships within the Krowe community. Cultural figures in the Krowe ethnic community hold positions of influence and impact cultural practices and knowledge related to the transformation of "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" into "*Ling Weling*." Cultural figures have played a role in giving meaning to this practice. The youth of the Krowe ethnic community play a crucial role in the adaptation and change in the interpretation and implementation of traditional practices from "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" to "*Belis*," as seen in the practice of giving "*Belis*." The youth are responsible for developing the necessary skills and knowledge to sustain their households and manage social relationships and traditional values within the context of marriage. In the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages, manipulation by these figures is reflected in instruments of domination within the social structure, such as manipulation of games, the use of intentionally designed language to deceive or change others' perspectives, and the use of the giving system to influence others' perceptions and thoughts.

3. **Material Infrastructure:** The concept of material infrastructure refers to material factors that influence a community, such as technology, economics, and physical environment (Josa & Aguado, 2019). In the context of the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*," economic factors influence the Krowe community's perspective on the giving practice and trigger shifts in its form and meaning. Additionally, technological advancements and social media developments also influence the Krowe community's perspective on the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" and trigger shifts in its meaning and form.

In conclusion, examining the factors influencing the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages begins with an assessment of ideological superstructure factors, followed by social structure factors, and finally material infrastructure factors. In the examination of ideological superstructure factors, it refers to the influence of modernity and globalization, bringing challenges and changes to the interpretation and implementation of the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*." In the examination of social structure factors, it refers to the manipulation by actors with knowledge and instruments of domination within the social structure. While in the examination of material infrastructure factors, it refers to the influence of economic values and technological advancements and their impact on the Krowe community's perspective on the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*."

### **c. Response of the Krowe Ethnic Community**

In response to the shifting practices of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in marriage, the Krowe ethnic community has developed new variations in this giving practice, including the incorporation of personal symbols. Female self-symbols include *Tua Wair* (wine and water), *Utan Patan* (batik cloth), and *Wawi Ara* (pig and rice). Meanwhile, male self-symbols include *Wua Taa Bako Apur* (betel leaf, tobacco, and lime), *Tudi Manu* (chicken knife), and *Toa Balik Bala Bahar* (silver, bronze, ivory, and gold). This demonstrates that the Krowe ethnic community is capable of adapting to change while preserving their cultural values within a changing context.

The personal symbols in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" reflect the complexity of women's roles and positions in the society. In semiotic analysis, Krowe women are represented as givers of life, protectors, and central figures in ritual activities, reaffirming their status and importance within the social structure. Male self-symbols also reflect their roles and positions in society, such as family leaders and protectors.

Furthermore, the Krowe ethnic community has also developed new practices in giving, such as the use of money as a substitute for ivory and gold. This indicates that they can adapt to changes in the economy and technology occurring around them. However, despite the shift in the form and meaning of the "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" giving practice, the nomenclature in discourse continues to maintain references to ivory and gold. This can be interpreted as an affirmation of the symbolic persistence and resilience of these two elements in the cultural narrative of the Krowe ethnic group.

From a Baudrillardian perspective, the symbols in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" create a complex network of meanings and invite questions about how social and cultural meanings are always open to reinterpretation. This demonstrates that the Krowe ethnic community is capable of adapting to change while preserving their cultural values within a changing context, all while maintaining the significance and values that are important to them.

In summary, the response and adaptation of the Krowe ethnic community to the shifting practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in marriage show that they can adapt to changes while preserving their cultural values within a changing context. The Krowe ethnic community has developed new variations in the giving practice, including the incorporation of personal symbols, and has introduced new giving practices, such as using money as a substitute for ivory and gold. This indicates their ability to adapt to economic and temporal changes while maintaining the meanings and values that are important to them.

## **CONCLUSION**

The examination of the factors influencing the shift in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" in Krowe ethnic marriages sheds light on the complex interplay of ideological, social, and material factors driving these changes. Ideologically, the influence of modernity and globalization challenges traditional interpretations of this practice, leading to shifts in its meaning and implementation. Socially, manipulation by influential figures within the community, such as cultural leaders and the youth, contributes to altering perceptions and practices related to the giving of symbolic objects. Additionally, material factors, including economic values and technological advancements, further influence the community's perspective on this practice, prompting adaptations to changing economic and social landscapes.

In response to these shifts, the Krowe ethnic community has demonstrated resilience and adaptability by developing new variations in the giving practice. The



incorporation of personal symbols, such as wine and water for females and betel leaf for males, reflects a nuanced understanding of gender roles and societal dynamics within the community. Moreover, the adoption of new practices, such as using money as a substitute for traditional symbolic items, showcases the community's ability to navigate economic changes while preserving cultural values.

Despite these adaptations, the Krowe ethnic community maintains a connection to their cultural heritage through the continued use of traditional terminology and references to symbolic elements like ivory and gold. This persistence underscores the significance of these elements in the cultural narrative of the Krowe ethnic group, despite evolving practices.

From a theoretical perspective, the complex network of meanings embedded in the practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" invites further inquiry into the fluidity of social and cultural meanings. Drawing from Baudrillardian concepts, the practice serves as a lens through which to explore the dynamic nature of cultural symbols and their reinterpretation over time.

In conclusion, the response and adaptation of the Krowe ethnic community to the shifting practice of giving "*Lin Welin Leto Woter*" demonstrate their ability to navigate change while preserving their cultural identity. Moving forward, continued research into the evolving dynamics of cultural practices within the Krowe ethnic group can provide valuable insights into the intersection of tradition, modernity, and cultural resilience. Additionally, recommendations for stakeholders interested in preserving and supporting the cultural heritage of the Krowe ethnic community can be developed based on these findings.

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