Beyond the rituals: *Using* on the social economics context

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Abstract. Ritual *Seblang* is one of the religious expression forms done by the *Using* (one of the tribes in Banyuwangi, Indonesia) community. With two kinds of rituals which are *Seblang Olehsari* and *Seblang Bakungan*, these rituals that are still practiced by the people have their potential in conserving the culture as well as showcasing the culture through every part of the ritual. These rituals remain to be important in the community for it is used to be to maintain the cultural ecosystem as written on Law Number 5 2017 about cultural development. By *Using* the ethnography method, this paper suggests that these rituals should be developed the way it can better not only as of the cultural identity but also as a tool to boost the economy of the community.

1. Introduction

Ritual is a sequence of actions that aim to express the religiosity. Religiosity is defined as the admiration towards the higher power that is pictured as a supra-natural creature that has no limitation on what can be done, independent and not bound with anything else. Pursuing the religiosity would also allow us to learn more about the existence of *Hyang Maha Esa* (The One Almighty God) believed in the monotheism taught. The human also personified the external forces like the wind, fire, the ocean, mountain, river, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the animals.

In Banyuwangi, especially the *Using* community, call themselves the natives of Banyuwangi that have the blood connection to the Majapahit emperor. Various myths live in the community related to relics in the form of rituals which are still being done by the *Using* community until today. In the society, there are *Seblang Olehsari, Seblang Bakungan, Barong Ider Bumi Kemiren, Keboan Aliyan* and *Kebo-Keboan Alasmalang* rituals as the part of the rural agrarian-based culture. In societies with the maritime-based culture, there is *Petik Laut* ritual like the one that takes place every year at Muncar Beach and Pancer, Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia.

In the context of rituals in Banyuwangi, it shows that ritual is defined as a series of activities, the verbal and the nonverbal ones. Both are done to complement each other and reinforce the characteristics of ritual as a permanent and repetitive religious performance. Rituals as part of the ongoing culture of the community grab the attention of the government in a form of direct and indirect supports. The direct support is given when the government is in the location of the ritual, actually watching the ritual and participating through the awards and facilities given to support the rituals. On the other hand, indirect support is given by building infrastructures like roads, hotels, and modern transportation to help the mobilization of people, socializing and promoting each ritual activity in festivals, such as the 2019 Majestic Banyuwangi Festival.

In contemporary Banyuwangi, it seems that to understand rituals as a sacred and pure activity does not do justice. Understanding the rituals solely as the spiritual things that are related to God might be revisited, for, as what will be explained further in this paper, there are some aspects of rituals...
that turned to be commodity(-ies). Some of the aspects, to say not all of it, of rituals, have gone through such transformation both within its ideas and the show that have economic value. This paper examines how far the commodification process is available within the rituals of Using. This paper aims to provide an alternative perspective in understanding the growth of rituals in Using. This paper then suggests that the increasing number of rituals in this area is understood not only the rituals themselves, but also it has been beyond. The rituals have been commodified.

Human limitations and the Infinite Hyang Maha Kuasa (The Almighty God) are universal phenomena. Society responds to each phenomenon according to their knowledge, attitudes, expectations, and perspectives. In communities with either a rural agrarian culture or maritime-based culture, they always have the bersih desa ritual as part of the rituals though each of the rituals has its different ways of doing the bersih desa. Studies that have been done before aim to enrich the views on rituals that take place in various societies.

In Greece, the history of rituals can be found in classical plays such as the works of Homer and Sophocles in expressing sadness, victory and worship expressed by Using praise, speech, and clothing [1]. Bostock’s view is similar to Baker who explores tragedy as a ritual performance [2]. The ritual performance is a symbolic imperative that is conveyed narratively. The symbolic imperative is reminiscent of the Durkheimian view of the religious dimension, secular life and social change. Rappaport said that rituals are performative and celebrated as events [3]. Meanwhile, de Jong who focuses on liturgical studies, puts it as a collective expression [4]. Thus, the people who are members of the ritual are actively participating in it and enjoying the rituals as performance.

The results of Liu’s study states that the promotion of Confucian rituals changed the social structure and the popular culture within the rural community [5]. Local people choose and use Confucian rituals as a symbol of justice and noble culture. The cultural mix is mediated by groups who have a keen interest in promoting castles, noble culture, and retaining local ritual traditions. They infused the Confucian ritual and local ritual traditions, which then continued to the process of hybridization of culture [5].

Another finding by Hannah, was about the mystery of the Antikythera motion. The name Antikythera is the name of an island in Greece where extensive sets of gears were found[6]. Therefore, various speculations emerged by stating that the object was the world’s clock, an ancient calendar or even an ancient computer. All the mysteries occurred because the objects found in the state have been petrified and broken that the scientists cannot really explain how the people back then used it.

Good timing can be interesting for most people. Various ways are used to construct and deconstruct time [7]. More specifically, Doering focuses on the study of the time to celebrate Sabbath for Jewish community [8]. During Sabbath, there will be things that cannot be done to maintain the special day of Sabbath itself. It does not matter when each Jew community starts the Sabbath day, but what matters there will be a time frame that has a certain length to celebrate it. Universally, time is a unit of motion of natural objects. The lunar calendar and solar calendar terms occur as the effect of the motion of the moon and earth. Time placement is critical in rituals in the Islamic world, such as prayer times, fasting, and breaking the fast.

2. Method

By analyzing cultural phenomena in cultural studies, this paper emphasizes in-depth descriptions of the efforts to develop Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan rituals. Ethnographic analysis is used to seek the cultural symbols to build a systematic understanding of culture from the perspective of people who have experienced or studied, organized, and then lived the culture [9]. In a more critical aspect, the ethnographic method analyses cultural problems in society or society related to the issues of power, tactics and negotiations carried out by its members.

Ritual as a community identity raises a collective memory that is related to various events that occur in the community. Identity connects the representation of the people to politics, but politics that created phenomena like Seblang and Gandrung rituals represent Banyuwangi in the first place [10].

The preliminary data is collected from written sources, such as news, papers, research reports, and books. The library data is also supported by the data collected on the field through observation, participation, and in-depth interviews with selected informants, namely perpetrators of the rituals as well as local government, cultural experts, and administrators of local social organizations. Data
interpretation related to the development of Seblang rituals is interpreted in a semiotical manner by taking into account inter-data relations comprehensively.

3. Result and discussion

The results of the study indicate that Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan rituals have elements that cannot be changed. The development of Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan rituals are based on these elements that can be changed; most of them are the external elements of the rituals. This phenomenon becomes an opportunity and consideration for the community in determining which parts to be developed and left untouched. The key elements that cannot be changed are listed on the table down below,

Table 1.1 Seblang Olehsari and Seblang Bakungan requirements

| No | Requirements | Seblang Olehsari | Seblang Bakungan |
|----|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1  | Pawang (handler) | There must be available | Must be provided |
| 2  | Pengudang | There must be available | Must be provided |
| 3  | Narasi (narration) | Should not be existed | Might be provided |
| 4  | Selamatan (salvation) | There must be available | Must be provided |
| 5  | Ziarah makam dan sumber air penawar (paying a visit to the ancestors tomb and the antidote water source) | None | Must be provided |
| 6  | Sesaji dan dupa (offerings and incense) | There must be available | Must be provided |
| 7  | Waktu penyelenggaraan dan penari Seblang (performance time and Seblang dancers) | Syawal: waiting for kejiman for 7 days | Dzulhijjah: community forum in one day |
| 8  | Gending dan Tembang (the music) | There must be available | There must be available |
| 9  | Rias dan omprok (makeup and the bamboo crown) | There must be available | There must be available |
| 10 | Tempat ritual (ritual spot) | Absolute: Arena Seblang | Absolute: Arena di sanggar Seblang |

The table above shows that there are 10 (ten) elements for Seblang to be held. Seblang Bakungan tends to be more flexible, compared to Seblang Olehsari which is shown on the 3rd and 7th points of the list. The traditional management of Seblang Olehsari did not even reject the narrative on the 3rd element but it was not responded by them either. On the contrary, the Seblang Bakungan management is open to it (chief of Village, Adat Chairperson, Youth Organization, and cultural observers). On the 7th element, the timing and dancer on Seblang Olehsari are determined through a process of judgment. Customary management, local government, and the Culture and Tourism Agency do not have decisive authority. In Seblang Bakungan, time and actors are determined through a community forum that is attended by the organizing committee.
As shown in the pictures above (Figure 1), rituals as performative identities are also a space for expression that entertains and fulfills the aesthetic needs of society. Aesthetic-performative power can attract guests to enjoy the ritual. Aesthetic expressions in the form of motion, tone, rhythm, and poetry are the strength and unique parts of Seblang Olehsari and Seblang Bakungan to attract more audience for the rituals.

The following are the results of research and discussion on the efforts to develop Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan rituals. The discussion is done by presenting the activities that have been carried out and other opportunities that have the potential to be developed.

3.1 Promotion and Publication
Banyuwangi puts tourism as one of the leading development programs. Promotions and publication are parts of tourism development. The tourism spots that are offered to the public are divided into three categories like natural, cultural and artificial tourism. In Banyuwangi, cultural tourism is the most crucial one. Therefore, since 2012, the government has integrated cultural activities in one forum, Banyuwangi Festival Calendar (CBF) which is published through the official page of the Banyuwangi Regency Government. The online publication can be accessed by the global community and proved to be able to significantly increase the number of audience of the Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan rituals.

The promotions and publication are forms of the contributions done by the government (state) that present and protect the culture of local communities so that they are known and loved by locals and international tourists. Online publication by utilizing digital media also has the potential to provide initial information to the global community and the Banyuwangi diaspora who live in various parts of the country and abroad. CBF provides information and guidance in determining the choice of cultural activities to be enjoyed.

3.2 Space Setup
Olehsari is held in a particular spot where Seblang has usually been held. Seblang Olehsari lasts for seven days with a well-organized venue. The gate looks magnificent, the arena is high enough and permanent to give comfort to the guests and pendapa on the left and right of the arena are reserved for guests among the bureaucrats and other special guests. The 7 (seven) days are also celebrated by traders to market their products like toys, accessories, food, Gandrung costumes, Gandrung musical instruments, textiles and motorized vehicles.

The increasing number of guests is anticipated by placing traders outside the courtyard of the Seblang stage arena. The tents provided by the organizing committee were installed outside the Seblang arena. The placement is to provide comfort for the guests who witnessed the Seblang stage. Arrangements were also made for the Seblang Bakungan. The addition of activities took place since two days before the event in 2016 and 2017 and took place since 3 days before the event in 2018 was carried out by utilizing the main road of Bakungan. Based on the observation, Bakungan already has several creative industry centers included in the bazaar. The creative industrial products on display are produced by UMKM (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) that are developed in Bakungan, such as
batik, accessories, food and souvenirs. Thus the community gets the economic benefits from holding the annual Seblang ritual.

3.3 Activity Development

The activity development of Seblang Bakungan is done by prolonging the celebration period of the ritual. Seblang Bakungan was supposedly held in only one day but in the past three years, there have been some additional days added to the calendar. In 2016 and 2017, the committee added 2 days of activities. The two days before the ritual were for the opening and the bazaar for the local UMKM (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) products and from all around Banyuwangi. Some of the products that are not yet available in Bakungan are produced by UMKM (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) from outside Bakungan within Banyuwangi Regency. In addition to product development, within the two days before the ritual, there was an art appreciation agenda by performing school-based arts in the Bakungan Village. The last day prior to the ritual was scheduled for the art appreciation event by performing community-based art from the art studios, social organizations, and community organizations in Bakungan.

The Seblang Bakungan Committee in 2018 planned activities for six days prior to the ritual, but it was canceled because of the Eid al-Adha. Finally, the activity began on three days prior to the ritual which was filled with activities: (1) exposures of Bakungan UMKM (Micro small and Medium Enterprises) products and all around Banyuwangi, (2) drawing and coloring competitions for children, (3) appreciation of art from schools, studios and communities and (4) virgin lacing in Watu Ulo's antidote water source.

Additional time and activities have a strategic role in the development of the ritual. First, it can help to increase the productivity and welfare of the Bakungan community through the expansion of UMKM (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) products. Second, it helps with introducing local culture to the younger generation through drawing competitions, appreciation of art from the development of the local Bakungan community, and virgins lancing. Third, it triggers the collective memory of the Seblang Bakungan ritual. Collective memory is done by involving all components of the community in the Seblang Bakungan sub-activities, especially the younger generation in order to have a deep impression on Seblang Bakungan.

Meanwhile, Seblang Olehsari, which lasts for seven days, requires development in the form of additional activities. The development in activities that has the potential to increase the productivity and welfare of the community. The effort to develop the rituals has been carried out since 2015 is organizing a program to increase the capacity of the studio through training to make the accessories and costumes of Gandrung.

3.4 Business Diversification and Strengthening Human Resources

One of the ritual characters as community identity is the repetition of the regular and consistent activities. Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan show these phenomena. Regular and consistent repetition in terms of ways, actors, requirements, and time has become known within the community of Olehsari and Bakungan. The ritual as an aesthetic performance has the potential to invite more audience to enjoy the rituals. The presence of large numbers of tourists is also an opportunity to socialize, promote and market a variety of creative industry products.

Figure 2: Skill training for making accessories and costumes of Gandrung (Author's documentation)
In order for the audience to get new products offered during the bazaar, it seems necessary to diversify the business. Business diversification supports the strengthening of creative and innovative human resources. To create creative and innovative human resources requires a helping hand from academics, government, investors, and entrepreneurial people [11].

Academics through research activities have the opportunity to find potential, models, and community needs that need to be translated into legal products as regulations that support community activities. These legal products are the responsibility and authority of the government and the local legislature. Furthermore, the development of rituals that have the potential to increase productivity and prosperity through creative efforts also requires creative executors. The executors translate the potential and opportunities (community, materials, markets) into activities that produce creative industry products.

The way to strengthen the human resources of Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan dancers require different handling methods. Seblang Olehsari which dancers are teenagers should be focusing on the development of education for their future. The dancers would go to school until they graduate from high school. The last two dancers, Fidyah Yuliati (2015-2017) and Susi Susanti (2018-2020), are still in junior high and vocational high school. Both of them still have the opportunity to go to college. Seblang Bakungan dancers are older adults. They need better welfare improvement by utilizing facilities of health, transportation, and subsidies to support their daily needs. Improvement of these facilities can be done by assisting to obtain the available social services, such as BPJS (Health Insurance), Rantang Kasih, and community subsidies to Seblang dancers.

3.5 The Seblang Ritual Based Development

Seblang Olehsari and Bakungan are rural agrarian-based rituals. The rural agrarian-based culture can be seen in the accessories and offerings used at the Seblang stage, such as daffodils, cassava, yams, fruits and various kinds of flowers. The rural agrarian culture also appears in the song lyrics that are used to go along with each Seblang ritual scene, such as in the songs like "Kondhok Ngorek," "Kembang Gadung," "Kembang Menur," "Erang-Erang," and "Liya-Liyu." Thus, the existence of Seblang rituals is strengthening and representing the identity of the people who live as farmers.

The trend that is happening today like farming technology, tends to be abandoned by the younger generation. They tend to make a living by working on other sectors, except agriculture. Another trend is the phenomenon of land conversion, from agricultural land to property development. The lessen interest of the younger generation in agriculture and land conversion is a threat to the rural agrarian-based culture and the rituals. Therefore, there needs to be a strategic step to prevent and overcome these two trends. The interest in the profession in the field of agriculture has the potential to be developed along with other sectors to invite the younger generation to the modern agriculture sector. For example, the government or related institutions can carry out mechanization of agriculture, development of processing agricultural products, protection of local agricultural products, subsidies to consumers so that farmers can get better profits.

The issue of land conversion also requires comprehensive steps to make sure that property needs do not reduce productive agricultural land. This requires a strategic policy related to the requirements for the conversion of agricultural land into a property.

4. Conclusion

The description of the results of the research and discussion shows that Seblang rituals development has the potential to be directed to increase the productivity and welfare of its supporting community. Various development efforts that can be done are by adding activities, business diversification, strengthening human resources and preventing or limiting the conversion of agricultural land into a property. Especially in Bakungan, development is also carried out with additional time to carry out other activities because Seblang Bakungan lasts one day.

Seblang rituals development that leads to the development of creative industries requires cooperation between the community, academics, business people, and the government. Some of the development efforts that have been made are the application of the Seblang Bakungan narrative Using two languages, namely Indonesian and English. Other efforts that can be done are training to make
accessories and Gandrung costumes, souvenirs made from metal, batik Gandrung, documentaries, folktales and managing creative industries.

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