Tradition-Narrative Reconstruction in Tourism Development of *Kampung Budaya Polowijen*, Malang City

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Abstract. The City of Malang has made effort to improve its tourism image by generating 11 thematic tourism concepts based on societal empowerment. One of them is Kampung Budaya Polowijen (KBP). KBP offers a wealth of traditions and unique history such as masks, batik, and the myth of Ken Dedes. This research attempts to visualize the effort of narrative reconstruction, also historical and cultural framing in KBP development. Discovery and reinforcement of cultural traditions as the basis of tourism in KBP was conducted by utilizing the mythological framing of Ken Dedes and the claim to Topeng Malangan of the City of Malang based on the discovery of Mbah Reni's grave, an art figure who is believed to be important. This reconstructive effort was conducted by uncovering historical narrative of "Panawijen" and cultural commodification by bringing out the cultural icon, Ragil Kuning as part of the distinct story of Kampung Budaya Polowijen.

Keywords: culture, history, narration, thematic, tradition, village

1 Introduction

The tourism sector is now the most important sector in Indonesia. This matter cannot be removed from the role of Indonesia as one of the destination countries for international tourists. Indonesia cannot avoid being exposed to the impact of the tourism boom that has swept through the world. A report by the UNWTO in 2015 mentioned that tourism is ranked third in the category of exports worldwide, after fuel and chemicals. As such, tourism in Indonesia is massively developed in the framework of development. Tourism is as a passport to development, a new kind of sugar, a tool for regional development, an invisible export, and a non-polluting industry [1][2]. This is also as intended by the government of Indonesia, as expressed in the 2015-2019 National Middle Term Development Plan (RPJMN): "As such, the strategic issue for tourism development is the increasing of contributions from tourism in improving the welfare of society, particularly the society in tourist destination areas" [3].

Meanwhile, development of tourism based on the potential of Objects of Tourist Appeal is starting to be conducted to great amounts by governments and the society. A part of this is the phenomenon of the emergence of thematic villages based on the potential of local wisdom in the City of Malang. Since 2016, 11 thematic villages have been made official by the former Mayor of Malang, H. Moch. Anton (malangtimes.com). One of these is Kampung Budaya Polowijen (KBP, Polowijen Cultural Village), which was made official on 2 April 2017. KBP offers the themes of history and culture of Topeng Malang by way of reviving historical romanticism as well as discovering and reinforcing traditions of the past, in line with the

existing culture. In this case, tourism can be brought about as an agent of development and cultural sustainability, and can be further reinforced with support from the City Government.

In this context, it can be seen that Kampung Budaya Polowijen is developing a cultural narrative construction based on the potential of their local wisdom. The cultural framing that is developed is through the art of Topeng Malangan with its distinct character of Ragil Kuning. This framing also cannot be removed from the existence of physical cultural evidence in the form of the grave of Mbah Reni, which is found in the Polowijen area. Mbah Reni is believed to be the elder or empu of Topeng Malangan. The existence of the cultural claim for Topeng Malangan of the City of Malang is further reinforced by the creation of the distinct character of KBP, as the mask of Ragil Kuning that becomes the only remaining mask of Buyut Reni. This framing or claim becomes an interesting matter, considering that the art of Topeng Malangan with the characters of Panji Asmorobangun and Dewi Sekartaji has already existed and is well established in other areas, which are the areas of Pakisaji and Tumpang. As such, it becomes fascinating to find out further how the people of KBP build up and discover the cultural narrative of Topeng Malangan with Ragil Kuning as the unique character, compared to that with other characters that are more popular. This is in addition to how the people of KBP identify the character of the mask of Ragil Kuning visually through reinforcing the tradition of the art.

This research is an attempt to visualize the cultural narrative that is being formed by the KBP through the viewpoint of "inventing tradition" [4]. "Inventing tradition" may be regarded as a process of formalization and ritualization that contains references to the past and possibly forces repetition to occur. This research becomes important to be conducted, considering that the City of Malang is currently conducting efforts to discover the distinct culture of the city. Meanwhile, KBP becomes a potential destination for cultural tourism to be developed further and to become a reference for other cities. In addition, the development of KBP becomes the intersection of tourism and culture, and thus it can be seen that the activity not only has consequences of commercial gains but also preservation of tradition.

2 Research Method

The primary focus in this research is to describe the narrative development of Kampung Budaya Polowijen. This article is composed from data that were collected since the end of 2019 with the data collection methods of participant observation and in-depth interview. Further data collection was conducted from June-August 2020 in combination with the method of "netography" or digital ethnography. The method of "netnography" utilizes digital media and the Internet in the process of data collection [5]. The data that were obtained with the method of "netography" refer to the data mediated through the Internet regarding Kampung Budaya Polowijen, specifically data regarding development. The matter covers all social media outlets of Kampung Budaya Polowijen, which consist of a web site as well as Instagram and YouTube accounts. In addition, various data were obtained through online media reports regarding Kampung Budaya Polowijen. Meanwhile, interviews with informants, as the initiators of Kampung Budaya Polowijen, were conducted through social media due to the limited access during the COVID-19 pandemic and several restrictions of COVID-19 health protocols.

3 Results and Discussion

From Hystory "Panawijen" to Polowijen: Research Area-Transformation of Village to City

Kampung Polowijen is located in Polowijen Hamlet in Blimbing Sub-District, City of Malang, at a distance of 2 km from the sub-district center and 5 km from the city center. Polowijen is bordered to the north by the administrative region of Balearjosari Hamlet; it is also bordered to the south by Purwodadi Hamlet, to the west by Lowokwaru Sub-District, and to the east by Arjosari Hamlet and the terminal of Arjosari. Geo-culturally, the location of Polowijen is not too distant from the center of the ancient civilization in Malang, as Singosari Sub-District in Malang Regency. Considering the matter, it is highly likely that the historical and cultural influence in Singosari had an effect on Polowijen, which is to be discussed further. The map of the region of "Kampung Budaya Polowijen' can be seen in Figure 1 below:



Fig 1. Map of the "Kampung Budaya Polowijen" Blimbing Source: Google Maps (2019)

Historically, Polowijen is closely related to Panawijen, the village where Ken Dedes was born. The community believes that the current area was Panawijen during the Singosari Kingdom. It is explicitly mentioned in the Wurandungan inscription in the Mpu Sindok era, recorded by Brandes with the number 865 Saka (943 AD). In the Pararaton script, Panawijen was a holy place from 948 AD until Majapahit ended [6].

Cahyono asserted that Panawijen is an agricultural village based on historical records that most of its people work as farmers [6]. This information is recorded in the Tamraprasasti Wurandungan Kanjuruhan inscription by Sri Maharaja Mpu Sendok. The Wurandungan inscription also reveals information about the *sima* (Sanskrit: boundary, restriction) of rice fields in Panawijen; *Sima* of a rice field area functioned as a sacred construction financing. It was divided into three parts, measured based on a unit called the *jong*. The first rice field area of 13 jongs was known as Kingkaburing. The second area was a 2-jongs rice field for gaga

rice, located to the west of the shrine (Parhyangan). The third area was for gaga rice, located west of Gurubhaki.

Suwardono stated that based on data collected, the Windu Sumur site or Sendang Ken Dedes, located in the Panawijen area, was a religious and holy place in the past [7]. He also pointed out that in the Wurandungan inscription in 948 A.D, Panawijen was a *gurubhakti* (the practice of devotion and submission towards a spiritual teacher or *guru*). Simultaneously, according to the Pararaton text, Panawijen was a Mahayana Tantric Buddhist's *mandala setra*. The caves in Panawijen resulted from the development of belief in the late Majapahit period with the proliferation of the *Mandala Kadewaguruan* (religious education). The "parhyangan" can be seen in the east of Polowijen village, which is now part of the Arjosari area.

Panawijen community is said to be an agricultural society; several archaeological remains support this. The heritage is the *arung* (underground channel), flowing from Sendang Dedes or Sumur Windu to the rice fields in Kali Mewek. *Arung* is thought to function as a means for irrigating the rice fields in Panawijen. It was made as Kali Mewek was on a lower land than the rice fields, so it was impossible to drain water into the rice fields. The *arung* as a means of irrigation for rice fields is strengthened by the information on the Kanyuruhan B inscription (943 M), stating that *suwak/subak* (one of the traditional irrigation management systems in Indonesia) was used to irrigate the rice fields of Gaga (pagagan) rice [6]. Apart from the *arung*, Watu Dakon artifacts were also found at the Panawijen site; they resembled a *lumpang* (mortar). This discovery supports the view that the Polowijen community lived as agrarians because it allegedly served as a grain pounder. Accordingly, the discovery confirms that since prehistoric times, especially during the cultivation period, Polowijen has become a potential agricultural area.

The arung supports the myth of the absence of water in the Panawijen area. According to a story developed in the community, the absence of water was related to the oath of Mpu Purwa, who was angry with the Panawijen residents for not telling him that his daughter Ken Dedes disappeared. However, based on historical data (Warundungan inscription in 948 AD), the rice fields in the Panawijen area were mixed with dry rice fields. Suwardono stated that the dry mixed rice fields in the Panawijen area were arid and infertile soils. The agricultural product in Panawijen was predominantly gaga rice, which depended on rainwater, and had very little wet rice. He also reported that only *one Jung* or about 700 m2 of Panawijen rice fields were irrigated by river water. The rest was dry rice fields as reinforced by the term *suwak* and the aroma discovery of *arung*, which functions as irrigating rice fields on dry land.

Once, in the 1990s, Sendang Dedes or Sumur Windu dried up led by several causes apart from the previously mentioned historical events, one of which was the death of old and large *preh* trees (*Ficus retusa*) that have been supplying water. The construction of a pilgrimage dome directly above the site exacerbated the situation of the *sendang* (spring), which had to end completely.

The agricultural Panawijen area is still visible through many rice fields in the Polowijen area, although the rice field management no longer involves Polowijen residents. Currently, the Polowijen community does not depend on agricultural products anymore. Based on the *Kampung Budaya Polowijen* monograph data, no Polowijen residents are working as

farmers. The rice fields in Polowijen belong to residents outside the *Kampung Budaya Polowijen*; however, the village occasionally rents the fields for events.

Changes in regional administrative arrangements affect the context of the village transformation. Initially, Panawijen stretched from the Arjosari area to the present-day Polowijen area. However, since the 1930s, there have been changes to the Dutch's administrative system to facilitate the monitoring and management of the area. According to Gemeenteblad no.108 of 1937, it eventually divided Polowijen and Arjosari Villages into separate administrative areas.

The next stage of village development was not widely known until the arrival of a *babad alas* figure (a man who open the forest to build a village) or *bedah krawang*, namely Eyang Jibris from Demak, who also spread Islam in Polowijen. The role of Eyang Jibris is not widely documented, but people believe that he was the one who started to lead the Polowijen people to embrace Islam. To date, the chronology is still difficult to find out. At first, the term was known as *Petinggi*, then *Kepala Desa*, and then *Lurah* since the change in village administration to a sub-district in 1985.

The rice fields, increasingly squeezed by the buildings in Polowijen, have influenced changes in the community's socio-cultural context. Now, Polowijen is a sub-district on the outskirts of Malang city, most of which are immigrants from various regions. The livelihood patterns of the Polowijen people shifted to the trade and industrial sectors. In this context, the Polowijen community has now turned into an urban community that has left the rice fields; only some still manage the fields.

Exploring Polowijen Cultural Village: A Process of Finding Tradition

The context of uncovering the form of Kampung Budaya Polowijen contains several stages, from identifying the historical narrative of the claim of the origins of Topeng Malangan, discovering cultural icons, and up to reinforcing traditional arts. With the framing that is being constructed, there is an attempt to reconstruct the narration of Kampung Budaya Polowijen.

Polowijen Village once emerged as an area of expertise on crafts and dance during the Dutch colonial era in the 1900s. It can be seen in the monograph records of Polowijen Village. In the 1900-1940s, Polowijen was famous for its traditional mask dance. The name Polowijen is always attached to the existence of Mbah Reni as the most prominent craftsman and dancer of Malangan Mask; thus, Polowijen Village is known as the Village of Reni.

Mbah Reni was a wealthy farmer who lived in Polowijen and led one of the best wayang mask performers in the 1890s, Adipati Suryo Hadokusumo. Mbah Reni was not only famous in the Adipati Malang circle; many myths are circulating about Mbah Tjondro or Mbah Reni. It was believed that Mbah Reni could perform at four different Kadipaten in one night. Mbah Reni died in 1935 and was buried in Polowijen. This myth was the beginning of the mask tradition in Polowijen Village today.

Based on the history of the origin of Malang Mask, *Kampung Budaya Polowijen* has revived and explored Malang Mask art's potential as one of the cultural icons of Malang City by actively organizing Malang Mask dance show as well as making Malang mask crafts.

Exploring the unique potential of Polowijen Mask from Malang City is challenging because Pakisaji and Tumpang already have distinctive mask icons.

Malangan Mask is a typical culture of Malang people, which is full of religiosity and spirituality. Several pieces of literature show that masks in Malang date back to 760 A.D during East Java's oldest kingdom. In the past, the use of masks was closely related to politics and the king's power. The masks were made of gold and were used to cover the kings' corpses. The mask was known as the Puspo Sariro (flower from the innermost heart), used as a symbol of worship of the king and the king's ancestors.

According to Kuswadi Kawindrasusanta and Rahmadi Ps., masks in Indonesia are used as a medium for summoning ancestral spirits, referred to as requests for summoning ancestral spirits into mask users. This special ceremony was performed by King Hayam Wuruk of Majapahit when he commemorated the 12th anniversary of Sri Raja Patni (his grandmother) death. The ceremony was called *Shraddha*. *It* was carried out at a funeral, and a mask called Sang Hyang Puspasharira was made [8]. After leaving the old tradition, the mask is used in art as a dance property. It has led to many dances using a mask as a property, one of which is the Malangan Mask art.

Based on the history of the Malangan's Mask art, the mask was created in the Polowijen area by Ki Tjondro Suwono (Mbah Reni) during the reign of Adipati Suryo Hadokusumo in 1890. At the time, mask art gained its glory. Mbah Reni was famous in Malang and several East Java districts.

The character's model and features of the Malangan Mask are strengthened by coloring with a combination of five primary colors: red as a symbol of courage, white as a symbol of purity, black as a symbol of wisdom, yellow as a symbol of pleasure, and green as a symbol of youth and peace. It is not merely a carving made from sengon wood, but Malangan Mask is also a dance.

Padepokan Asmorobangun is a hermitage that actively shows Malangan Mask performances from generation to generation. The Malangan Mask dance show always plays the Panji story, telling the love story of Raden Panji Asmorobangun (Inu Kertapati) with Putri Sekartaji (Candra Kirana) accompanied by Bapang and Klono Mask. This story is the inspiration for the mask dance existing for hundreds of years and has become part of traditional ceremonies or ancient stories' retelling. Each Malang Mask has a different character and dance moves. Usually, during a performance, the actors only change their masks to portray the characters being shown. However, the basic make-up, such as cloth, trousers, and sampur (shawl), did not change. Dancers only change masks and irah-processions (headdresses).



Fig 2. Collection of Masks from the Polowijen Cultural Village Mask Craftsmen Source: Personal Documentation

Figure 2 shows several masks made by the village's mask artisans. The mask of Dewi Ragil Kuning is a typical character of *Kampung Budaya Polowijen*. The next mask is Klono Swandhana; he is the Sabrang kingdom king who desires Dewi Sekartaji. The most famous green mask, Panji Asmorobangun, depicts virtue's main character; the green color is strongly related to the *Manunggaling Kawulo Gusti* (a union with God) process. According to Mas Yuli, the word 'Panji' means *Mapan eling sing siji* (remembering God). The next mask in the picture is Raden Gunungsari, which has a connection with the story of Dewi Ragil Kuning. There is also the mask of Dewi Sekartaji, which is related to the Panji mask.

The claim of the Malangan's Mask culture and the discovery of the tradition or invented tradition in *Kampung Budaya Polowijen* is related to the motivation of maintaining tradition with innovations. According to Hobsbawn [4], "invented tradition" is an act of re-emergence of "old" or traditional culture. The view is explained as an act of returning the tradition to a specific group of people. In describing his theory, Hobsbawm asserted that:

'Invented tradition' [which] is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past....[it] is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition [4].

The innovation is called cultural tourism. The development of tourism and cultural escape in this context becomes material in the commodification of culture. The relationship between culture, tradition, and tourism occurs when people owning the culture harmonize cultural values with tourism. Traditional innovation and the formation of traditions based on the past are possible to carry out. It is Different form the contextualization of "Festival 1000 Tumpeng" (Tumpeng is a cone-shaped rice dish typically served in a ceremonial-traditional event in Indonesia, particularly in Java), there was no change or addition in values since the event was held for the first time. The festival appeared as a commodification of a cultural rite, which was initially held under specific, sacred, and non-tourism purposes Through the society, the government did not create new traditions but modified existing ones and presented them differently [9] [10].

The scheme of reviving culture in the Malangan's mask tradition in the Polowijen area is related to modern elements; it fully represents the act of "invented tradition". The "invented tradition" pattern is not only in the traditional form but is also inverted into a modern form. The "invented tradition" collided with the emergence process and a gradual creative process through the festival.

In examining the efforts of the people of Polowijen in reconstructing themselves into a cultural village, the situation cannot be removed from the activities of the tourism industry in East Java. On a broader scope, what occurs in Polowijen is actually a phenomenon that occurs extensively in many villages in this province. This is linked to the tourism industry in East Java, which has continued to experience massive developments from year to year and provided significant contributions to regional development [11]. In many places, there are communities, villages, or traditional events that are then reformed into attractions that can then draw in visitors.

The discussion regarding the issue of "cultural tourism" is important in this case in order to provide the context that this kind of tourism is very much related to the efforts of cultural reconstruction that is being performed by the people of Polowijen. This kind of tourism more or less offers a sensation of experiencing a certain culture that is "different", for which if considering the global cultural situation of today, the culture refers to attractions of traditions that are "exotic", "traditional", "ancient", and so on [12].

Culture in the context of the tourism industry in this way is not the reality of everyday life, or as the entirety of the ways of life of society or certain communities with all their dimensions of living [13] [14] [15] [16]. Culture in the tourism industry, as is the case in Polowijen, is what goes through a process of "selecting tradition" to choose and decide which parts can be presented and enjoyed as a cultural performance. What is meant by "cultural performance" is in line with the idea possessed by Lowell Lewis [17] regarding "special events" that he compares with events of everyday life in the culture of the people. These special events may be rarely or often held, but are usually explained in detail and conducted in a formal manner. These kinds of events are framed as being special through naming, rules, practices, and even certain behaviors.

In this process, the selection of cultural expression as is the case in Polowijen covers what is considered precious in the context of the tourism industry, as the mask dance, the myth of Ken Dedes, the *panji* art form, and so on, and eliminating elements that are uninteresting or inappropriate such as the prior practice of offerings, the disarrayed situation of villages, and others. In other words, culture in the context of tourism is situated as an object or appeal [16] [18], because not all of the everyday lives of people in the 'eyes of tourists' are considered appropriate and interesting [19].

The selection process for the cultural form that is reconstructed as in Polowijen is in line with the paradigm that is offered by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger [4] regarding "the invention of tradition". This viewpoint of "(re)invention of tradition" is a process of how traditions that seem to have occurred in the (ancient) past is created for contemporary purposes (including tourism) and is quickly accepted as part of the history of certain communities. There is an intentional process by the local people to choose and select stories, myths, and traditions that may be accepted by the members of the society themselves as well as outsiders (tourists).

From the indicated cultural scenario, it can be seen that the results of the creative process eventually comes into contact with a new cultural identity through reference of the old

culture of Polowijen. The development of a cultural identity in the discourse of "invented culture" has been expressed by Hobsbawm as the following:

"Yet it may be suggested that where they are invented, it is often not because old ways are no longer available or viable, but because they are deliberately not used or adapted... [thus] ...consciously setting itself against tradition and for radical innovation..." [4].

This indicates that traditions do not have to be displayed in the same manner that they once existed; instead, traditions can be placed into a setting in order to create other traditions that are more modern and innovative. In agreement with Hobsbawm, Stuart Hall (1990) also affirmed the argumentation of Hobsbawm regarding the old culture that characterizes a dynamically developing identity. This process explains that the innovation of created tradition correlates with existing historical characteristics and cultural adaptation.

4 Conclusion

In the context of tourism development in Kampung Budaya Polowijen, there is a process of socio-historical narrative reconstruction based on the archeological discovery of the *sumur windu* (well) as the tomb of Ken Dedes and the discovery of the grave of Mbah Reni as the *empu* of Topeng Malangan. Considering the potential of tourist appeal development, the selection process was then conducted with the cultural claim of Topeng Malangan that is distinct to Polowijen in the City of Malang. The cultural claim of Topeng Malangan and the invention of tradition in Kampung Budaya Polowijen cannot be removed from the motivation of maintaining traditions with new innovations. These innovations are present in a series of ritual activities that are related to Topeng Malangan. The selection process and tradition are then framed. According to Hobsbawm [4], "invented tradition" is an act of bringing back "old" or traditional culture. The view regarding invented tradition is that it is explained as an act of returning traditions to certain groups of society. Thus, in this context, tourism can become the media for the development of cultural values and preservation of local traditions.

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