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## CULTURAL STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival as visualization of tradition: The policy of culture and tradition revitalization through enhancement of innovation and locality-based creative industry

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe Banyuwangi Regency's strategies in revitalizing Using culture through Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival (BEC) as visualization of tradition. Ethnographic method with cultural studies perspective was used to explain the existing power relation among parties. Data analysis was started in data provision stage by interpreting the relationship among indications found in field to reach comprehensive conclusion. The traditions include *Damarwulan*, *Gandrung*, and *Kundaran*, and also *Seblang* and *Kebo-keboan* rituals. Traditions and rituals in modern package of fashion such as Gandrung Sewu and BEC. BEC as the ultimate innovation takes local art tradition to global sphere. The policy stages themselves sequentially show continuity since the regime of Banyuwangi Regent T.S. Sidik (1995–2000), S. Hadi (2000–2005), A.R. Lestari (2005–2010), A.A. Anas (2010–2015), and A.A. Anas (2015–present). Some public figures and humanists in Banyuwangi also stated that the achievements are the accumulation of previous continuous and sustainable policies.

**Subjects:** Asian Studies—Race & Ethnicity; Ethnic Identity; Events Behavior/Experience; Events Planning; Tourism Planning and Policy; Visual Culture; Popular Culture; Subcultures

**Keywords:** tradition; policy; revitalization; art tradition; visualization

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Novi Anoegrakjetti is active as a speaker in various activities in the field of literature, culture, and women's studies. Her interest in culture and performing arts has resulted in several studies funded by Kemenristek Dikti (The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education), the Toyota Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Japan Foundation, and the Education Fund Management Agency (LPDP). Some of her books are *Optimizing Performing Arts: State, Market and Religious Contest* (2016); *Using Culture: Construction, Identity, and Development* (2016); *Tracing the Step Changes: From Using to Indonesia* (2016); *Literacy Power: Digitality of Language, Literature, Culture, and Learning* (2015); *the Dynamics of Indonesian Culture in the Global Market Whirl* (2014); *Cultural and Creative Industries Excellence* (2014).

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

We are interested in offering a model of carnival development that also supports the creative industry. We have been doing research for almost 2 years to study the issue. We assume that the findings of this research can be compared with similar phenomena in other countries.

## 1. Introduction

*Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival* (BEC), which is now in its seventh year, has unique history since it began with political battle between the government and Banyuwangi's artists and humanists. The latter saw BEC as commodification of tradition marginalizing art tradition that was not brought up as the carnival theme. The government allayed public's protest, especially the artists and humanists, by arranging Gandrung Sewu festival that involved students in Banyuwangi Regency, art studios, as well as artists and humanists.

It is common that world-class carnivals have a long history. A carnival in Brazil was held all over the country, but the spectacular one was the one in Rio de Janeiro. A similar case happened to a carnival held in Pasadena, California. Carnival tradition in Indonesia also has a long journey in history. However, as a series of events held in many places, it is usually held in a commemoration of national, religious, and regional holidays. In the New Order era of enthusiastic development programs, *Pawai Pembangunan* was held annually on Independence Day to showcase development results to the public. Today in Indonesia, carnivals are held to promote each region's uniqueness. Solo has batik carnival, Malang has flower carnival, Pontianak holds *khatulistiwa* (equator) festival, Jember the city of migrants arranges Jember Fashion Carnival,<sup>1</sup> while Banyuwangi with abundant rituals, traditions, and natural beauty arranges BEC.

The art traditions of Banyuwangi (*Gandrung*, *Damarwulan*, and *Kuntulan*) and rituals (*Seblang* and *Kebo-keboan*) stand and survive by the local values that they carry. The three art traditions have different histories but were once used as BEC's theme,<sup>2</sup> while the rituals once also became BEC's theme root from rural-agrarian culture.

Those five encounter the demands of rationality, modern appropriateness, and economic survival. Those aspects determine whether the arts have a chance to survive in the future. The long history of *Gandrung* leaves a record that this Using art is always confronted with energies coming from the outside. As an art tradition, *Gandrung* is given juridical power upon appointment as Banyuwangi's tourism mascot and *tali jejer Gandrung* as the welcome dance of Banyuwangi through Decree of Banyuwangi Regent number 173 year 2002 and number 147 year 2003. It indicates that there is a legal power strengthening the status. Nevertheless, *Gandrung* and other art traditions still have to face the power of market, bureaucracy, and religion that have been suppressing them for a long time (Figure 1).

Using people in Banyuwangi are known to profoundly appreciate arts, including rituals, even more than other ethnic groups in Banyuwangi. Almost all arts of the area are produced and appreciated by Using people. Many authors of Banyuwangi's arts such as Scholte (1927), Sudjadi (1986), Murgiyanto and Dan Munardi (1990), Puspito (1998), Wolbers (1992, 1993), Anoegrjeki (2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2016), and Talapessy, Setiawan, and Subaharianto (2017) agree with it since the end of nineteenth century to the end of the 1950s up until today.

The social-cultural changes in Banyuwangi people caused by population growth and mobility, village modernization (capitalization), spread of popular culture, and politics play significant roles in generating two interrelated situations. First, Using and Banyuwangi people generally start leaving most of the meanings, values, norms, ideas, and even cultural structures related to *Gandrung* from the past and capture or formulate the new ones. Second, as a result, it can be assured that art traditions are influenced by market and become pure commercialized entertainment. The latter situation can be seen in all art tradition shows today.

The Regents of Banyuwangi generally put their concerns on Banyuwangi's traditional arts. The various forms of art are enlivened, preserved, and developed by the community through art studios, art associations, and art organizations. Besides, shows are also held as part of Art Festivals and big events organized by Banyuwangi Regency such as BEC and Festival Kuwung.

**Figure 1. Barong Kemiren dance at Kemiren Banyuwangi East Java Indonesia, 16 June 2018. Researcher's documentation.**



The above description suggests that the arrangement of BEC is multifunctional as it (1) extends multicultural spirit, (2) enhances quality and productivity of art/ritual performers and their supporters, (3) supports tourism industry, (4) promotes Banyuwangi's culture to international community and persuades them to come, and (5) reinforces Using people's and Banyuwangi people's identity. In the extent of carnival promotion and activity, Zois Dan Dimitrios Koukopoulos (2017:31) discussed the chances of the application of information technology. They presented a prototype of system to implement efficient carnival dissemination and exploitation. The writers did comprehensive evaluation of the proposed system to offer users various kinds of service compared to other applications for outdoor audiences.

This paper focuses on the attempt of art tradition revitalization through enhancement of innovation and creative industry. The subject of enhancement in this study is the doer or performers of art traditions. Innovation in this study is to generate attempts in strengthening the bargaining position of art traditions and ritual within social-cultural changes, mainly through creative industry mechanism that can empower the artists. In terms of contribution of Banyuwangi art show to the economic and social life of the artists, in general, arts has not become the mainstay of income in fulfilling daily needs. Most of the artists have main job as their main source of income.

Meanwhile, speaking of the possibility and potential of art traditions and ritual in creative industry framework that supports realization of creative economy, artists of associations see that recording industry is a pending income. Associations should have capital for shooting, permission, and marketing. Given the level of difficulties and complexity, they still do not have a design to enter recording industry. *Gandrung, Damarwulan, Kuntulan, Seblang, and Kebo-keboan* as the pioneers in entering recording industry usually use outright sale agreement mechanism without royalty system so that they only receive income once as per the agreement.<sup>3</sup> It indicates that the creative industry is dominated more by financiers. Therefore, advocacy from the government through the related Office or profession organizations is considered important as it will create negotiations so that the artists can optimally savor their hard works.

## 2. Literature review

Market, tradition, and religion have served as power that prioritizes interests and brings up social and cultural authorities through art traditions. Conversely, those three aspects also show fight within the sphere with different positions and categories or, as Williams (1977:121) stated, in an incorporation with the status of dominant culture, residual culture, and emergent culture. Market with the longest lasting and most intensive relationship with *Gandrung* art tradition is the

dominant culture; bureaucracy and Blambangan Art Council in their attempts to revive *Gandrung* art tradition belong to residual culture; and Islam, which is new in *Gandrung* context, belongs to emergent culture.

Market domination upon art tradition and Islam can be seen in every *Gandrung* show, which is entirely market-patterned. *Gandrung* is very likely to present several things as tradition conservation and sing songs like *Shalatun wa Taslimun* as well, or do one of them. At the same time, shows are open events, commercial, and are filled with scent of alcohol. Each *Gandrung* show has those three elements of power, although market is the biggest and most dominant element (Figure 2).

In the incorporation, relationship among hegemonic powers is alternative, but it also has opposition, making the power relationship and position unstable, dynamic, and changing. The instability lasts not only because the hegemony itself is a cultural process that connects (construction and reinterpretation of) the past and (fantasy of) the future, but also because the most contested “item” by market, tradition conservation, and Islam is the representation of identity, something that contains possibility of meanings.

According to religious leader, Using people should be consistent in religious teaching that prohibits *munkar* (disobeying God) and immoral behavior. Art traditions, rituals, and also women art traditions should follow teachings of Islam. The adjustment does not allow *Gandrung* to present erotic and coupled dance, show *aurat* (parts of human body that should not be shown off), and provide alcoholic drinks.

Meanwhile, bureaucracy and Blambangan Art Council see Using as an ethnic community separated from Java (with their own language and customs), as object of stereotypes and stigma, marginalized from political and economic arena, and have proud historical experience. These identifications are the basic formulation of a hegemony saying that “*Gandrung* show as a representation of a community’s (Using) resistance against various physical threats and negative image-making happening frequently throughout Using people’s history.”

As a concept referring to political regulation, the government’s policy in preservation and development of local culture in New Order era saw a change into serving as a management of adjusting it to meet the development demands, namely to increase regional income. In this circumstance, arts and rituals were seen more as objects and were expected to adjust themselves to the consumerist development demands. Today’s policy has changed and ruined culture and art traditions through exaggerated intervention and policies oriented to commodification (Hall, 1997; Howkins, 2001; Kahn, 1995).

**Figure 2.** *Gandrung* with *pemaju* (male dancer) (left). *Gandrung* in the society (right).  
Researcher’s documentation.



The above situation is related to style and culture of leadership as an act of leading in the cultural field<sup>4</sup> applied by the bureaucracy. Indonesia applies regional autonomy and lets regional government handle cultural development, which allows each region to explore existing cultural potentials to elevate community's productivity and independence.

The cultural development autonomy is then followed up by application of systemic approach done by among others collecting cultural events in one Banyuwangi Festival Calendar. This systemic approach also has impacts on development of other sectors, enabling them to support development of cultural destination to allow tourists to reach tourism objects easily, such as roads, transportation, and accommodation. All of them would affect the economic field and enhancement of public welfare. Presence or protection from the government has several possible measures, yet the primary need of living alongside popular culture is protective government.<sup>5</sup>

According to Shan (2014:116), there are two main priorities in culture preserving and reformation. First, the government differentiates their attitude toward commercial culture, i.e. permission of its relatively free operation in the market and control over the cultural services. Second, privatization of cultural institutions operating in commercial culture sector. Another measure already implemented by local artists is development in art studios for professionalism projection.

So far, art traditions tend to be a battle arena of authorities to artificially show the State's power (bureaucracy), religion, market, and representation of communal interests, including cultural community. That way, regional policy on culture is made bias for the sake of economic interest and local political authority that apparently erodes the very preservation of art traditions and rituals. This condition is similar to Banyuwangi's culture whose development is projected to support tourism. It is expressed in the welcome speech of Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas in a ritual event of *Barong Ider Bumi* in Kemiren Village on 26 July 2017 as follows:

Kemiren is one of the villages with amazing development in its cultural sector. Therefore, on behalf of Banyuwangi regional government, I thank you. There have been homestays opening around here, Mr Minister, growing from the inland. So are coffee shops. You won't see them in the roadside, Sir, but if you look to the alleys, you will see people preparing themselves to be cultural tour destination or cultural village of Banyuwangi.

The above excerpt suggests Regent of Banyuwangi's appreciation toward the cultural development of Kemiren Village, homestay, coffee shops, and unquoted items such as art traditions, rituals, house architecture, culinary, and Using's customs. The Regent said all of them as a state of Kemiren Village's readiness as cultural tour destination.

The festival arrangement throughout the year scheduled and published online becomes the marketing strategy of preparing Banyuwangi as a city of festival. Previously, Banyuwangi has been promoting with a jargon *Sun Rise of Java*. Those measures, according to Sudaryanto (2015:1172), are promotion strategy to improve the area's image. Other areas also use the same strategy, such as Yogyakarta with *Never Ending Asia*, Bandung *Paris Pan Java*, and Solo *The Spirit of Java*.

Cultural development projected to support tourism development is highly reasonable due to the tourists' tendency of interest in cultural sector when they visit Indonesia. It was stated in the welcome speech of *Barong Ider Bumi* in Kemiren Village on 26 July 2017 as follows:

*Alhamdulillah* (Thanks to God), I have arrived in Banyuwangi and I am *Lare Osing Asli* (Original Using man) [while showing the shirt he is wearing, a black shirt with "Isun Lare Osing" text]. Okay, as the cadres probably have met, congratulations on the implementation of *Ider Bumi*. For your information, tourism comprises of two packages. Kemiren is good, there is a cultural tour. Sixty percent people come to Indonesia for its culture, 35 percent for nature, and only 5 percent for artificial stuff. I want to say that culture is a wonderful modal

for tourism. I have said earlier to Mister Regent that this culture has to be developed and preserved because the more we preserve the more we are prosperous.

In the quoted greetings above, Minister of Tourism Arif Yahya delivered quantitative data on tourists' tendency of interest of visiting Indonesia. Most of them (60%) come to Indonesia for its culture. Therefore, Kemiren Village's readiness as cultural tour destination in Banyuwangi received appreciation from Regent Azwar Anas.

Based on such consideration, this paper develops policy model and strategy of revitalizing Using culture through BEC as visualization of tradition. With ethnographic findings and multidisciplinary analysis, the model is expected to meet the demands and problems of art traditions and creative industry development in the local level. Although it is designed to be applicable for developing innovation and creative industry potentials in Banyuwangi, it is still possible that this research model can be developed in other areas with art show potentials. This research is expected to enhance the development of art traditions, rituals, and resource of artists to provide welfare and independence for art traditions talents and supporting community. Several new findings can be used as a formulation of public policy applicable in several areas.

### 3. Method

This research was conducted in Banyuwangi from 2011 to 2017. The government, community, artists, and humanists were aware that Banyuwangi has its attributes as the city of arts. It was evident when we entered the Regency of Banyuwangi. If we come from Jember, a statue of *Gandrung*, poster, and billboard will welcome us. From Situbondo, posters on the roadside will be guarding the entrance way. People coming from Bali who pass through the harbor will be welcomed by a large *Gandrung* statue standing firmly in Ketapang harbor.<sup>6</sup> In Banyuwangi, there are a couple of icons that represent the city of arts such as the statue of *Gandrung*, *Gandrung paju* (male dancer), and King of Blambangan Menakjinggo and his loyal servant Dayun. The developing information technology is also utilized to strengthen the identity as displays of video are installed in strategic locations.

The result of previous studies shows tendency of art tradition talents' innovation and creation. It can be seen from arts that have some changes or metamorphosis from their original form such as *Gandrung*, *Kuntulan*, *Barong*, and *Mocoan*. *Gandrung* sees several changes from the art of struggle to art of society and ends up as art of entertainment. Besides, there are also changes in artists who were first male and now are female. *Kuntulan* is a metamorphosis of *hadrah* or repertoire that shifts to *Kuntulan* and then becomes *Kundaran*. *Barong* is a metamorphosis of ritual that then brings up group of *barong tuwa*, *barong cilik*, and *barong lancing* with various stories.

*Mocoan*, which was the first religion education by telling Prophet Yusuf's story, now has developed into a performing art combined with comedy and song named *Mocoan Gaya Baru Campursari*. These attempts for innovation show the openness of artists of Banyuwangi and their abundant creativity in their adaptation to market demands. Artists such as Ice, Asri, Mia, and Wulan treat the audiences as part of the show. Therefore, audience's presence becomes the determinant and motivation to give the best for the show. It becomes the reason behind their lack of interest in entering recording industry as the main activity.

This study used ethnographic method with cultural studies perspective to elaborate power relation among the involved parties. Analysis was started in reference inventory stage with references from varied sources such as news, articles, research reports, and books about art tradition, in general, and Banyuwangi, in particular. Interpretation was done for further access to some naturalized domains and characteristic activity of the artists of the objects of the study (Eriksen, 1993; Spradley, 1997; Barker, 2000:27). Identity as a construction is discursive, cracked, and changing along with the time and space changes. Fights and conflicts can be comprehended as proportional, as a social and cultural struggle in life dynamics, and as an encouragement and

motivation to develop skills of negotiation with the next politics of culture. Accordingly, recording and interpretation on each history material cultural policy need to be consistently done as a measure of understanding and determination of the next policy to be more functional, involving, and prospering, as well as providing independence for the community.<sup>7</sup>

Data analysis was continuously done since data provision stage, followed by identification, classification, and data interpretation. Data inventory was conducted by literature review, interviews, and field observations. The validity of the data in this study is achieved by determining the respondents selected that are competent in their respective fields, namely artists, humanists, bureaucrats, and art connoisseurs. Identification was carried out by treating data in accordance with its characteristic that refers to homogeneity and heterogeneity. The data concerned the policy and revitalization of Using culture, innovation, and creative industries. In ethnographic research, respondents were considered to be able to categorize indications in different domains. However, to ensure the validity of the data, selected respondents were selected from artists (gandrung, damarwulan, kuntulan), cultural Banyuwangi, bureaucrats (Culture and Tourism Office and Industry, Trade and Mining Agency), and art community lovers (Paguyuban Pecinta Seni Gandrung Professional Banyuwangi). The identification result then served as the basis of classification making. While the interpretation of data is done semiotically by looking at the relationship between the whole data. Semiotic interpretation puts each symptom as a sign of an interconnected culture as a whole. This is done to obtain a comprehensive conclusion.

The above process helped to reach the purpose of the study, which is the formulation of policy of culture and revitalization of innovative art tradition, so that *Gandrung*, *Damarwulan*, and *Kuntulan* grow and develop along with the development of culture and community around them. The strategy and program is mentioned in the policy of The Regency of Banyuwangi in cultural aspect.<sup>8</sup> Revitalization as an effort to bridge local cultural heritage and contemporary culture also becomes other developing countries' concern, such as India, which focuses on low populated society.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. Results and discussion

The interview results show that the cultural policy of Banyuwangi Regency tends to be macro. According to that macro policy, each SKPD (Satuan Kerja Perangkat Daerah) takes part in their respective sector. Therefore, the comprehension of revitalization and innovation of *Gandrung*, *Damarwulan*, and *Kuntulan* is related to popular arts. It can be seen in some legal products introduced by The Regency of Banyuwangi.

Some cultural policies siding in artists and community are applied by the implementation of *Gandrung* lesson, Gandrung Sewu and Gandrung Paju, participation of Grup Damarwulan in some traditional theater festivals, and expansion of *Kuntulan* show domain.<sup>10</sup> Those policies and the other policies need thorough researching on their relation with life and development of art tradition while the art tradition itself is part of cultural policies. However, putting it in the policy of art tradition sector is also possible to support cultural policies in the wider scope as it was conveyed in the Regent's speech in *Kebo-keboan* ritual in Alasmalang 2 November 2014.

This *kiling* (wind mill) is very nice, let's give applause. And this *omplong* (metal cup), what is this? Guess it's a mixture! Hopefully we will add more *kiling* to equal Banyuwangi's anniversary number. This is really amazing, and with God's permit, next we will organize this event better, more or less after the road is finished. Budget is ready. I called PU (Public Works Office) chief and he said that they are short of manpower, so they take turns, despite the available budget. I also asked that roads in Aliyan and Alasmalang should be finished by the year end, or two months from now.

The above quote indicates that the government supports *Kebo-keboan* ritual in Alasmalang by executing road repair to allow visitors enter the location. The statement about the lack of manpower repairing the road opens an opportunity for people to run a business in construction. An invite to add

more *kiling* enables chances in recycling metal containers as *omplong* for the *kiling*. Aside from that, a good road will allow smooth transportation and crops transit from village to the city.

The appointment of Using tour site location in Banyuwangi Regency Level II<sup>11</sup> is of government's attention to tourism, especially cultural tourism. Kemiren Village, a place with concentrated population of Using people, was appointed, opening opportunities in expressing local culture to be presented in the tour package. There are several groups of art tradition in Kemiren such as *Gandrung*, *Barong*, *Kuntulan*, and *Angklung*, and also some traditions enlivened by the community such as *Mocoan*, *Tumpeng Sewu*, *Mepe Kasur*, and *Barong Ider Bumi*. These traditions serve as powerful support to Using tour village. On the contrary, Kemiren's appointment as Using village of tour also supports the continuity and development of art traditions and rituals in Kemiren Village. This policy was introduced in the era of Regent T. Purnomo Sidik.

Other policies include the stipulation of *Gandrung* as Banyuwangi's tourism mascot in 2002,<sup>12</sup> followed by another policy stipulating *Tari Jejer Gandrung* as a welcome dance in Banyuwangi Regency in 2003,<sup>13</sup> and appointment of *Umbul-umbul Belambangan* song as spirit enhancement song of developing Banyuwangi 2003.<sup>14</sup> These three policies were introduced during Regent H. Samsul Hadi's leadership. These policies provide a chance of expression for art tradition artists and support preservation, development, and utilization of art traditions in the society.

The next policy, introduced in Regent Ratna Ani Lestari's regime, was Banyuwangi Ijo Royo-Royo movement that focuses on creating clean, fresh, beautiful, lovely, and comfortable natural environment as a supporting aspect in tourism development in Banyuwangi. The movement was followed up by Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas with a Regulation of Regent of Banyuwangi on guidelines of Banyuwangi Green and Clean movement implementation in Banyuwangi Regency.<sup>15</sup> Clean and green environment will create healthy and useful life to support tourism. Other legal products such as *Shodaqoh Oksigen*, clean and healthy toilets, and foreign-language courses in village or subdistrict basis.<sup>16</sup>

This phenomenon suggests that the government's policies are complimentary and sustainable to each other. Hence, it can be said that some continuation policies on culture are accumulation of the previous policies applied by former Regents. It is parallel with one of the public figure's opinion named Purwadi in an informal discussion with the writers. In his perspective, big events like BEC, *Gandrung Sewu*, *Tour de Ijen*, and *Ijen Summer Jazz Festival* in Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas's era are supposed to happen at this moment. He is reaping what was sowed by his predecessors.

### 5. Accumulation of policy

The term of Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas's government in 2010–2015 and 2016–2020 periods sees an accumulation of policies culminating in big events as a means of promoting and introducing Banyuwangi's tourism and cultural potentials. The direction of these policies could be seen in the end of his 2010–2015 period reign, when he said that the target of culture sector is increasing attempts of preserving and developing local culture. The strategies applied include (1) developing public's interest in local culture; (2) strengthening groups and communities of culture preservers; (3) providing training, cultural festivals, and local arts; (4) stipulating local curriculum (culture, arts) in education; and (5) developing chances of appreciation for local culture (2015:59).

Targets of the mentioned macro policies are expressed in a detailed and comprehensive manner in five directions of policy. They are considered comprehensive as they aim at four areas, namely (1) society as agent of culture, (2) cultural preservers, (3) space of arts and cultural expression,<sup>17</sup> and (4) arts and culture education.<sup>18</sup> Society as agent of culture needs to be paid attention as community support guarantees the survival of their own culture. Additionally, in terms of genetics, society will keep growing along with its cultural dynamics. Culture conservationists generally pay attention and interests in certain cultural sector, such as art tradition, ritual, costume, culinary, and traditional technology, and they live in self-help concept. However, they need protection and



advocacy to survive in today's popular culture. It can be in a form of management training, traditional to modern technology shifting, and business diversification. The spirit of such protection was expressed in Regent of Banyuwangi's greetings in an opening of Banyuwangi Regency development plan discussion year 2013 as follows:

In some opportunities, I have said that if we haven't managed to increase society's welfare, we need to minimize expenses. Coconut workers, sweepers, and parking officers should be protected. So should small traditional traders as no matter how high the capital is, we will not survive without well-protected society. (2013:11)<sup>19</sup>

Despite being nonexplicit, artists who have brought Banyuwangi to the hall of fame suffering from financial shortage are certainly the ones who need attention and well-being improvement. Until today, a *Gandrung* dancer named Temu is still getting attention, performing opportunity, and reward. He even established "Sopo Ngiro" studio in Kemiren and in August 2015 had a chance to perform in Frankfurt, Germany. Temu the *Gandrung*, with his loyalty to art tradition and consistency in using *Gandrung* principals, is still a role model for young *Gandrung* dancers. He still receives abundant rewards, responses, and attention from the society, scientists, and governmental and private institutions. His intention of establishing and completing the studio's facilities is supported by scientists who make him a respondent of their research on *Gandrung* art tradition.

The above situation is different from that of *Gandrung* dancer Poniti and Kusinah, who accepted rewards from The Regency of Banyuwangi in *Gandrung Sewu* event (26 September 2015) as a form of government's attention and recognition for art tradition preservers in Banyuwangi. Poniti was known as the star of *Gandrung* in 1968 until the 1980s. She is living in Tegalmoyo, Gambiran District, Banyuwangi Regency. Poniti lives in a very simple house with heartbreaking financial condition. She spent the rest of her life working on the remaining two patches of rice field while waiting for an offer to sing as a *sinden* in *Gandrung*, *Kuntulan*, *Jaranan*, or *Damarwulan*.<sup>20</sup>

The previously mentioned award is therefore a recognition, respect, and attention to art tradition artists who made the name of Banyuwangi. Meanwhile, the government shows attention and modesty in attempting society well-being by confessing that they have not managed to prosper the whole society including *Gandrung* Poniti and Kusinah. The government invites the society to pay attention to poor people. In this respect, the government functions as medium which invites and connects those in need with financial donors and those who can help and support to elevate society's well-being and independence. It was conveyed in the Regent of Banyuwangi's greeting in the following quote.

Our Regional Budget is limited, so not all is financed by Banyuwangi's Budget. The society's role in regional development, intensive synergy and coordination with Provincial and Central Government should be enhanced to get supports from the National and East Java Provincial Budget. Synergy with stakeholders is also needed to actualize Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and government-private cooperation in *public private partnership* concept. (2013:12)<sup>21</sup>

The realization of such policy clearly is the task and responsibility of Social Service that handles public welfare. Social Service can coordinate with Culture and Tourism Office in the agenda of aid giving and attempts of prospering the life of deserving art tradition artists.

Moving on, cultural and artistic expression space is a means of socialization and marketing of community's creative products. It can be implemented by holding events that invite a large number of people in locations where people gather such as harbor, terminals, stations, airport, restaurants, hotels, traditional markets, malls, and recreational sites. Education of art and culture that is mainly formal demands the availability of curriculum, materials, methods, evaluations, and media. Including art and culture as part of educational content will allow the documentation of

various arts and culture in written and verbal form. It is also a medium of storage and inheritance that can possibly be developed by the upcoming generations (Figure 3).

The success in cultural sector can be seen in the policy of combining various cultural events in one agenda of Banyuwangi Festival held since 2013 with 15 festivals, 2014 with 23 festivals, 2015 with 36 festivals, the next year with 53 festivals, and the most recent one, 2017, with 72 festivals. It is an implementation of systemic approach carried out by Regent of Banyuwangi Abdullah Azwar Anas. The policy puts various cultural activities that were initially spread across many places as separated individual events into unity through publication in The Regency of Banyuwangi's WEB. The WEB comprises types of festival and performance dates throughout the year. Through such media, tourists can pick which festivals to see among art tradition, ritual, sports, modern art, and religious festivals. The success indicators of the policy can be seen in general in the greeting of Regent in *PKJ Bupati Banyuwangi Akhir Masa Jabatan Periode 2010–2015* as follows:

Implementation of cultural affairs is considered successful when Banyuwangi Festival has positive effects on domestic and international tourists' visit as well as increasing micro-economic activities, art and cultural performances in many areas; and partnership with PHRI and all agencies related to performing of art, culture, and customs. Other expected positive impacts are the increase in Banyuwangi's art and culture shows in various events inside or outside Banyuwangi and also the international ones; and in cultural promotion through website/electronic and print media. The improvement of tourism potentials is shown by the increased society's participation in tourism development, proven in the escalated number of artists from the targeted 652 studios to the realization of 685 art studios. (2015:62)<sup>22</sup>

The agenda of Banyuwangi Festival indeed elevates the number of visitors in each festival. Some cultural shows such as Seblang Olehsari, Seblang Bakungan, Keboan Aliyan, Kebo-keboan Alasmalang, Gandrung Sewu, and BEC see a significant increase in the number of spectators at five times more than the previous number. This substantial increase is an opportunity to socialize and market creative products starting from culinary, souvenirs, accessories, toys, and entertainment art. It is all under the responsibility of Industry, Trade, and Mining Office, which then conducts socialization to creative industry businessman and businesswoman, including via youth organization and association.

This good news is an opportunity to improve people's economic activities such as parking officers, traders, travel agents, hotels, and restaurants that potentially elevate society's living standards. Nevertheless, increasing living standards should be paralleled by improvement of life quality that is of people's ability to earning and adding more sources of income and limiting expenses of nonprimary needs. In addition to alleviation of poverty, development also led to mental-spiritual, religious, cultural, and nonphysical aspects to bring into reality people with physical and mental prosperity and good attitude, as the following quote implies.

Figure 3. Poster of BEC I year 2011 (left). Poster of BEC III year 2013 (center). Poster of BEC VI year 2016 (right). Downloaded from The Regency of Banyuwangi's Website.



Life quality improvement will be focused more to the attempts of poverty alleviation, so that it would simultaneously improve community welfare, develop business and economic climate in other society groups. It is necessary to emphasize that the expected developments are not only physical and economical, but also related to mental-spiritual, religious, cultural, and non-physical dimensions to have community with physical and mental prosperity and noble attitude. (2015:33-34)<sup>23</sup>

The above statement shows that development is projected for whole community development and prosperity.<sup>24</sup> Specifically in cultural sector, further study on development parameters is considered necessary, given the modification that increases the number of visitors and also causing the events less sacred. This is an important matter that deserves serious attention in order to maintain sanctity and meaning of the occurring rituals enlivened by the supporters.

The policy of revitalizing art and culture applied by The Regency of Banyuwangi also positions culture as a means of enhancing and bringing community well-being into reality. It is in line with the views of Directorate General of Culture Hilmar Farid, who said that it is time to stop seeing art and culture as decorations (2016:xix).

#### **6. BEC as visualization of tradition**

BEC has been in existence from 2011 to 2016. In chronological order, BEC I in 2011 was under the theme of *Gandrung, Damarwulan, Kundaran*; BEC II in 2012 was under the theme of *Barong Using*; BEC III in 2013 was under the theme of *Legend of Kebo-keboan*; BEC IV in 2014 was under the theme of *Seblang Ritual*; BEC V in 2015 was under the theme of *Using Wedding*; and BEC VI in 2016 was under the theme of *the Legend of Sritanjung-Sidhopekso*; meanwhile, BEC VII in 2017 is under the theme of "The Majestic Ijen."

Historically, some sources suggest that *gandrung* is an art of struggle, which implies that the Using community has been the target of invasion of bigger kingdoms in Java and Bali. During such struggles, the Using community conveyed inter-fighters communication by means of secret codes concealed within the *gandrung* dancers, which explains why *gandrung* dancers were males.

Damarwulan is a folk theatrical art with flow of stories originating from the history of Majapahit, especially that of the end of the kingdom. The stories start from an episode of the childhood of Joko Umbaran followed by another episode under title "Bambang Menak," which depicts the life of Joko Umbaran as a teenager. The third story portrays inauguration of Bambang Menak as Adipati Blambangan, who takes the noble name of Prabu Urubismo Menakjinggo. The fourth story depicts the death of Prabu Urubismo Menakjinggo in Damarwulan's hand. The name Menakjinggo is a combination of his father's name Menaksubali and mother's name Jinggowati. Being a verbal tradition, the story of Menakjinggo is known to have several versions to the people.

Kundaran is a metamorphosis of *hadrah*, which then becomes *kuntulan* and later on called *kundaran*. The metamorphosis is closely related to its characteristics, players, and functions. The *hadrah* originally conveys Islamic teaching with a companion of Malay tambourines. All players used to be males with simple gestures. The Islamic teaching is verbally conveyed in the form of religious praises (Figure 4).

Barong Using, the theme of BEC II in 2012, is a living legend among the people of Kemiren. Therefore, the original *barong Kemiren* is considered sacred and is only performed on the second day of the Idul Fitri festival. The original *Barong* is not allowed out of the village of Kemiren. Legend has it that the Barong depicts the romance of Buyut Cili with Barong Tuwa, which happens when the barong is in trance.

The *kebo-keboan* ritual, which was the theme of BEC III in 2013, originates from the rural agricultural culture. The ritual depicts oxen being the farmers' best companion in keeping paddy

fields and which are simply the major source of living to people. The ritual remains alive and conserved by the people of Aliyan, who call it *keboan* ritual, and Alasmalang people, who call it *kebo-keboan* ritual. The *kebo-keboan* ritual is also closely related to the legend of Dewi Sri, the paddy goddess known to the peasant community.

The *Seblang* ritual, which was the theme of BEC IV in 2014, is alive up to the moment within the people of Olehsari to be performed after the Idul Fitri festival and by the people of Bakungan after the Idul Adha festival. The ritual originates from rural agricultural tradition as can be seen by the equipment, offering materials and stage accessories. Both are rituals performed for being granted with blessing, which is normally called by the term “bersih desa.” The *bersih desa* is a sort of thanksgiving for the abundant harvest and a wish for secure living, and for the prevention of natural disasters, diseases, pests, and other life misfortunes.

Pengantin Using, which was the theme of BEC V in 2015, is a living tradition practiced by the referral community. A series of rituals during which traditional outfits are worn serves as a sacred part of Using traditional wedding. Lastly, the legend of Sri Sritanjung, which was the theme of BEC VI in 2016, is a legend closely referred to as the origin of the name Banyuwangi. Sritanjung, who is a descendant of angels, is to steward Sidopekso. Legend has it that King Sindureja Sulakrama fell in love with Sritanjung and plot to take her away from Sidopekso. The king sent Sidopekso to a difficult mission for which he has to go far away from the palace. While Sidopekso is away on duty, King Sindureja Sulakrama approaches and proposes Sritanjung. Sritanjung rejects the king. When Sidopekso is back home, the king says that his wife has attempted an adultery to the king. This angers Sidopekso. He kills Sritanjung. Later on he realizes that his wife is innocent. The king’s deception is revealed when the flow of water in the river basin, where Sritanjung’s dead body is laid, smells fragrant. This has become the legend that leads to the origin of the name of Banyuwangi known to the people in several versions. The six BEC themes were based on arts, traditions, rituals, and beliefs, while the theme for BEC VII in 2017 is based on nature, namely “Majestic Ijen.” Mount Ijen is presenting a beautiful and unique panorama with a blue flame, the flame emanating from the molten sulfur in Ijen crater. Ijen Mount offers a uniquely spectacular view with blue fire, one of the two found worldwide. This attracts foreign tourists.

Figure 4. Barong Kemiren.  
Researcher’s team document.



Owing to the fact that the annual big event only takes one theme, at the beginning of BEC, worries were expressed by other traditional art doers, fearing that they would be put aside with no further room for their proportional art expression. The Regency of Banyuwangi responded to the concern by organizing annual *Kuwung* festival to accommodate various Banyuwangi traditional arts, while *gandrung* was confirmed as tourism mascot of Banyuwangi with ample space for expression in the annual *gandrung sewu* festival. This way Banyuwangi reserves the capability of representing modern culture events originating from traditional roots; the invented package is meant to bridge the local to global tradition.

The above analysis suggests that for future projection purposes the people of Banyuwangi, especially art doers, have been naturally nurtured by the given situation for sustainable innovation with continuous creation and adaptation with the cultural development within the local, national, and international environment. Owing to the rigorous development of Banyuwangi traditional arts, it is not impossible that the BEC will at the long run turn Banyuwangi into a world-class local cultural festival city. A shift of theme to the nature has been applied to BEC VII, which indicates that the nature-based theme has been universally acceptable compared to that of tradition-based themes. Still, the city's capability of sustaining tradition themes up to BEC VI deserves high appreciation for its success of bridging traditional locality to modern international stages.

## 7. Conclusion

The description above suggests that the Banyuwangi Regency's policy in terms of culture development, especially that of traditional art, has shown a certain level of sustainability. Up to the BEC VI, themes were centered on traditional arts, rituals, local wisdom, and legend of Banyuwangi. 2017 BEC VII takes the theme of nature, namely "*Majestic Ijen*."

The systematic cultural approach undertaken by Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas has come as comprehensive effort to unify various traditional events in various places and different time schedules into the *Banyuwangi Festival*, which is published online through the Regency of Banyuwangi's website. Such publication gives a rich choice of festivals for people to enjoy, ranging from traditional arts, rituals, sports, and modern music. The given policy has proven to be significantly effective in elevating number of spectators for each festival. Realization of policy for the introduction of Banyuwangi culture and tradition to the world has also been successful as can be seen from the number of visitors of each Banyuwangi cultural events. Such realization has been a work of synergy among related institutions and other related regental work units.

In terms of welfare, it appears on the increase in income per capita, which experienced an increase of 80%, and Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) increased 85% (2010–2015). which is one of the buffers of the tourism sector. Researches on traditional art will be complete with more comprehensive exploration on traditional art industry domain and its real contribution to financial earning of respective doers. This will require careful promotion and marketing strategies. Therefore, it is necessary to establish interdisciplinary collaboration in which cultural economic, especially management, information technology, and legal issues are synergized. By means of a more comprehensive research, such innovation will potentially lead to the creation of related products that can be proposed to interested investors under a work agreement that is mutuality rather than predatory in nature.

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#### Notes

- In 2011 Jember Fashion Carnival was ranked 4 out of 7 of the world's biggest carnivals. See Lois Denissa, Pribadi Widodo, Nuning Damayanti Adisasmito, Yasraf Amir Piliang, "Public Engagement and The Making of Carnival's Place at Jember Fashion Carnival," *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 184, 2015, p. 99.
- Gandrung* was a metamorphosis of *Gandrung lanang* as a dance of struggle, then became society dance and ended up as entertainment dance. *Damarwulan* was designed as entertainment art that rests on Majapahit's history. However, the story developed based on legends and national history. *Kuntulan* was a metamorphosis of *Hadrah* (repertoire) played by a male and it chanted praise from Berjanji holy book and is now performed by female with popular songs.
- Temu Misti, whom we met in her house, 1 July 2017, said that when entering the recording studio she felt like she was given response. After the project's payment, there was no more commitment. When the CD sold out and demands increased, CD sellers would also be concerned since singers did not obtain proper appreciation. CD sellers suggested that artists do one-door agreement so that the CD sales can increase their welfare.
- Cultural leadership is the act of leading the cultural sector. See <http://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org>. Downloaded 7 September 2017.
- See Novi Anoegrakjetti, *Optimalisasi Seni Tradisi Seni Pertunjukan: Kontestasi Negara, Pasar, dan Agama* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2016), pp. 10–24.
- An interesting phenomenon happened in 1995. A *Gandrung* statue with 1.5 m height was installed on a 2.5-m-high obelisk in Ketapang harbor, opposite to Jami' Mosque. The installment was under the government's instruction as part of tourism development project that set *Gandrung* as Banyuwangi's tourism mascot. Worshipers of the mosque sent a protest as they viewed the statue as "contamination" of a holy place. Finally, an agreement was set to move the statue to a beach, out of the sight of people passing the road. See Novi Anoegrakjetti, *Podho Nonton: Politik Kebudayaan dan Representasi Identitas Using* (Yogyakarta: Jogja Bangkit Publisher, 2015), p. 2.
- It was then made possible by "Sayu Sarinah" Dance Studio chaired by Supinah in Olehsari Village, Glagah District, Banyuwangi Regency. The Studio did business diversification, i.e. training of dance, vocal, music, *Gandrung*/carnival costume accessories, canteen business, *Gandrung* costume rental, marketing of traditional musical instrument *gamelan* and *angklung paglak*, provision of lodging, and meeting room. The making of *Gandrung* accessories and costume involved youth in Olehsari Village. They were also involved to welcome the large number of guests visiting, also participated by local community in parking, cooking, and room and environment cleaning. See Novi Anoegrakjetti, *Optimalisasi Seni Tradisi Seni Pertunjukan: Kontestasi Negara, Pasar, dan Agama*, (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2016), p. 31.
- Sources of information from the bureaucracy include Legal Bureau, Industry, Trade, and Mining Office, Education, Youth, and Sports Office, and Culture and Tourism Office. Other sources are respondents from The Regency of Banyuwangi, Glagah District, Olehsari Sub-district, and Singojuruh Sub-district.
- See Saptarshi Kolay, "Cultural Heritage Preservation of Traditional Indian Art through Virtual New media," in *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 225, (2016), p. 319.
- In 2013, *Kuntulan* took part in Indonesian Independence Day Ceremony, performed along with TNI (Indonesian National Army) skill showcase.
- Decree of Regent of Banyuwangi Number 401 year 1996.
- Decree of Regent of Banyuwangi Number 173 year 2002.
- Decree of Regent of Banyuwangi Number 147 year 2003.
- Decree of Regent of Banyuwangi Number 148 year 2003.
- Regulation of Regent of Banyuwangi Number 34 year 2011 on Implementation Guidelines of Green and Clean Banyuwangi in Banyuwangi Regency.
- Regulation of Regent of Banyuwangi No 46 year 2013 on *Shodaqoh Oksigen*; Regulation of Regent of Banyuwangi No 188/113/429.011/2015 on Committee of Clean and Healthy Toilet Movement; Regulation of Regent of Banyuwangi No 22 year 2015 on Foreign Language Course Program in Village/Sub-district of Banyuwangi Regency Basis.
- Space for cultural expression is provided in physical form of show stage such as Taman Blambangan and Amphitheater in Boom Beach, as well as some performing stages built in several districts. Space in the form of events is provided in various cultural activities included in Calendar of Banyuwangi Festival, such as *Gandrung Sewu*, *BEC*, *Festival Kuwung*, *Student Jazz Festival*, *Festival Sholawat* (Festival of Praises to The Prophet), *Festival Anak Yatim* (Festival of Orphans), and *Festival Film Pendek* (Short Film Festival).
- Culture education has a chance to be developed through formal education in schools and higher education, nonformal in art studios, community college, art associations, social organizations, and youth associations. Presence of government in several periods is realized through facilities, art rewarding, and sending of art groups to festivals outside Banyuwangi.
- Regent of Banyuwangi (2013). "Pokok-pokok Sambutan Bupati Banyuwangi pada Acara Pembukaan Musrenbang Kabupaten Banyuwangi Tahun 2013." Banyuwangi.

20. See Novi Anoegrakjetti, "Ketika Poniti dan Supinah Berbicara: Identitas Budaya dan Ruang Negosiasi Penari Gandrung." in *Kebudayaan Using: Konstruksi, Identitas, dan Pengembangannya*, (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2016), pp. 1–28.
21. Regent of Banyuwangi (2013). "Pokok-pokok Sambutan Bupati Banyuwangi pada Acara Pembukaan Musrenbang Kabupaten Banyuwangi Tahun 2013." Banyuwangi.
22. The Regency of Banyuwangi. 2015. *LPKJ Bupati Banyuwangi Akhir Masa Jabatan Periode 2010–2015*. Banyuwangi.
23. Pemerintah Kabupaten Banyuwangi. 2015. *LPKJ Bupati Banyuwangi Akhir Tahun Anggaran 2015*. Banyuwangi.
24. In terms of welfare, statistical data shows that Banyuwangi's per capita income over 5 years is 80%, from Rp 20.8 million (2010) to Rp 37.5 million (2015). Meanwhile, GRDP rose 85%, from Rp 32.4 trillion (2010) to Rp 60.2 trillion (2015) (surabaya.tribunnews.com). Downloaded 21 June 2018.
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