

## **Exertion of Cultures and Hegemonic Power in Banyuwangi: The Midst of Postmodern Trends**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to criticize the incorporation and commodification of *Using* cultures undergone by Abdullah Azwar Anas in Banyuwangi, East Java. To answer the problem, we analyze primary data from our field research and secondary data from online media related to AAA's efforts to incorporate, articulate, and commodify *Using* cultures into various carnival programs (2011-2017) by applying theories of commodification, postmodernism, and hegemony. The result of this study shows that, driven by his desire to promote *Using* cultures globally in the midst of postmodern trends, since 2011 the government of Banyuwangi has created many carnivals and festivals, such as

“Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival”, “Banyuwangi Beach Jazz Festival”, “Parade Gandrung Sewu”, and other various programs. Economically, the programs are idealized to support the regional economic growth through tourism activities, both for domestic and international tourists, by displaying traditional expressions with new styles and performances. Politically, the carnivals and festivals can support AAA efforts to negotiate its political concern in order to produce consensus. [Artikel ini hendak mengkritisi proses inkorporasi dan komodifikasi budaya Using yang dijalankan oleh Abdullah Azwar Anas di Banyuwangi, Jawa Timur. Untuk menjawab permasalahan tersebut, kami menganalisis data primer dari penelitian lapangan dan data sekunder dari media *online* yang terkait usaha AAA untuk menginkorporasi, mengartikulasikan, dan mengkomodifikasi budaya Using ke dalam bermacam program karnaval (2011-2017) dengan menerapkan teori komodifikasi dan hegemoni. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa, digerakkan oleh hasratnya untuk mempromosikan budaya Using secara global di tengah-tengah trend pasca-modern, sejak 2011 pemerintah Banyuwangi menciptakan banyak karnaval dan festival, seperti “Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival”, “Banyuwangi Beach Jazz Festival”, “Parade Gandrung Sewu”, dan bermacam program lainnya. Secara ekonomis, program tersebut diidealisasi mendukung pertumbuhan ekonomi regional melalui aktivitas pariwisata, untuk wisatawan domestik dan internasional, dengan memamerkan ekspresi tradisional dengan gaya dan tampilan baru. Secara politis, festival dan karnaval tersebut bisa mendukung usaha AAA untuk menegosiasikan kepentingan politiknya agar memroduksi konsensus.]

Keywords: *Using*; Banyuwangi Festival; tourism; post-modern; hegemony

## Introduction

In January 2016, the government of Banyuwangi, East Java, received “UNWTO Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism” in *The Innovation of Public Policy and Governance* category. This achievement is not peculiar because since the first term of his authority, precisely in 2011, Abdullah Azwar Anas (hereafter AAA) has committed to the internationalization of Banyuwangi tourism destinations to attract the coming of foreign tourists through some spectacular events such as *Tour De Ijen*, *Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival (BEC)*, *Paju Gandrung Sewu (PGS)*, and *Banyuwangi Jazz Festival*. Under the banner *Banyuwangi Festival*, since 2012 AAA and his apparatuses have created more carnival events; valorize some communal-agrarian rituals, incorporates traditional art performances, and international sport events. All those events have contributed to the leap of tourists taking vacation into some outstanding natural heritages and enjoying cultural activities in this regency. Slamet Kariyono, the secretary of the regency, claimed that during the last five year (2010 to 2015), there was the radical leap of tourists visiting Banyuwangi.<sup>1</sup> Domestic tourists increased 161 % from 651,500 people in 2010 to 1,701,230 people in 2015, while foreign tourists increased 210 % from 13,200 people in 2010 to 41,000 people in 2015.<sup>2</sup>

What interesting to discuss is that AAA has had political-economic awareness for capitalizing and exploiting the dominant ethnic cultures in Banyuwangi, *Using*. Indeed rituals and art performances for Banyuwanginese become the most significant marks of cultural identity through which they persistently construct and share common values for strengthening communal identity. For AAA, some *Using* cultures such as *gandrung* (a traditional companionship dance) and *seblang* (a fertility ritual)

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<sup>1</sup> “Empat Strategi Banyuwangi Raih Penghargaan Pariwisata PBB,” *Kompas*, January 22nd, 2016, <http://travel.kompas.com/read/2016/01/22/104123127/Empat.Strategi.Banyuwangi.Raih.Penghargaan.Pariwisata.PBB>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.

have enchanting and attractive appearances which can be incorporated and developed through tourism programs. During the New Order era, the regional government also incorporated Using identity as the strategy to establish a unique dominant culture as a regional icon which might support the existence of a national culture. However, AAA as a smart young regent who has got national and international experience has considered the New Order regime's programs and their continuity in post-Reformation regimes before him as *out-of-date* mode because the programs couldn't create spectacular events which could be promoted into national and international tourism packages. Even though, he has known that in the contemporary era, many national and international tourists want to find beautiful ethnic attraction with particular modification, besides the natural landscape.

Therefore, since 2011 he has decided to use *carnival* and *festival* mode as the aesthetic principle of "Using commodification". By commodification, following Adorno's perspective,<sup>3</sup> we mean a process of using cultural uniqueness as commodity driven by commercial formula focused on the massive and standard products. Further, the capitalist producers always mobilize the higher values of the products as the significant and useful entities for satisfying all human needs, including amusements, will to knowledge, education, and psychological escapism from the routine activities. In contemporary term, it is not only the capitalist faction who can practice the commodification principles. The state regimes with capitalistic orientation in running their development programs, particularly related to cultural and tourism programs also can create commodified products by incorporating and exposing ethnic

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<sup>3</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 96-106; Cook, "Adorno, ideology, and ideology critique," 3-5.

characteristics in popular patterns.<sup>4</sup> The commodification of ethnic cultures into industrial or tourism mechanism – not always taking massive cultural products as the model – intertwines with the popularity of postmodernity in the midst of metropolitan societies and the hegemony of neoliberalism in the contemporary political economy conducted by post-colonial countries. Such condition and political-economy system becomes important consideration, at least discursively, in talking about various carnivals and festivals in Banyuwangi, because AAA has been clever enough in incorporating *Using* identity as well as understanding its economic potency. By focusing on such perspective, we have different academic position with other researchers who have the same topic about *Using* cultures. Some previous studies focused on traditional cultures and their problems<sup>5</sup> and *Using* songs in relation with ethnic identity.<sup>6</sup>

This article aims to criticize the incorporation and commodification of *Using* cultures undergone by Abdullah Azwar Anas in Banyuwangi, East Java. To answer the problem, we analyze primary data from our field research and secondary data from online media related to the paradigm and the process of incorporation, articulation, and commodification of *Using* cultures into various carnival programs (2011-2017) by applying theories of commodification, postmodernism, and hegemony.

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<sup>4</sup> John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnicity Inc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Anoegrajekti, et al., "Perempuan Seni Tradisi dan Pengembangan Industri Kreatif Berbasis Seni Pertunjukan," 81; Anograjekti, "Pada Nonton dan Seblang Lukinto: Membaca Lokalitas dalam Keindonesiaan," 171; Anoegrajekti, "Seblang Using: Studi tentang Ritus dan Identitas Komunitas Using," 253; Paul Arthur Wolbers, "Maintaining *Using* identity through musical performance; *seblang* and *grandung* of Banyuwangi, East Java (Indonesia)" (dissertation thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1992), 88-132.

<sup>6</sup> Ben Arps, "Using kids and the banners of Blambangan: Ethnolinguistic identity and the regional past as an ambient theme in East Javanese town," 19-25.

## Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Many thinkers and practitioners of postmodernism consider contemporary era as the right and appropriate time to celebrate and empower various ethnic, traditional, and religious expressions in the midst of radical changing in technology which enable the simulation, repetition, crossover, mixture, and revival of them in the very sophisticated narratives or programs.<sup>7</sup> The advance of such postmodern condition makes neoliberal capitalist producers very pleasant since they have new creative resources for producing entertaining and attractive industrial products. Indeed neoliberalism in economic term idealizes the deregulation principle of the state for the public interest by which the market mechanism will take control and determine all economic, social, and cultural process, so all individuals will get the same chance in the competition for getting a better life.<sup>8</sup> However, in cultural logic, neoliberalism is 'a sacred thesis' to end the *unfinished job* of modernism, namely its rejection to traditionalism, such as irrational, magic and exotic discourses and practices. Therefore,

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<sup>7</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv-xxv; Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 7; Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), 31-47; Ashley, "Postmodernism and Antifoundationalism," 53-55; Simon Malpas, *The Postmodern, the New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2005), 19-22.

<sup>8</sup> Rachel. S. Turner, *Neo-Liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 115; Clarke, "The Neoliberal Theory of Society," 50-51; Lapavitsas, "Mainstream Economics in the Neoliberal Era," 30-35; Duménil and Lévy, "The Neoliberal (Counter-)Revolution," 9; Palley, "From Keynesianism to Neoliberalism: Shifting Paradigms in Economics," 20-24; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 64-87; Kim England and Kevin Ward. eds., *Neoliberalization: States, Networks and Peoples* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 11-13; M.C. Howard and J.E. King, *The Rise of Neoliberalism in Advanced Capitalist Economies A Materialist Analysis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 162-189.

adopting Jameson's term of postmodernism as the condition of the late capitalism,<sup>9</sup> we see the celebration of traditional, religious, or ethnic cultures with more productive and economic sense as the bridging concept which juxtaposes the two ideological terms, postmodernism and neoliberalism. The very complicated past times of Asian and African people, for example, have been commodified into various Disney animations as the trend of postmodernity.<sup>10</sup> Even, sacred historical events, religious beliefs and teachings, and traditional rituals have been represented into various popular narratives.<sup>11</sup>

So, talking about cultural identity in the context of neoliberalism is not merely talking about the shared communal values and practices. Indeed in a romantic-but-political perspective, the concept of identity idealizes the existence of core value—based on cultural and historical roots—shared and believed by the community's members through which they can empower their sense of belonging, communalism, and solidarity as the three significant conditions for conducting collective agendas of strengthening position in the midst of dominant culture.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, some indigenous movements around the

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<sup>9</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (London: Verso, 1998), 1-20.

<sup>10</sup> Alan Bryman, *Disney and His Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 128-55; Eleanor Byrne and Martin McQuillan, *Deconstructing Disney* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 1-13.

<sup>11</sup> Mara Einstein, *Brand of Faith: Marketing Religion in Commercial Age* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 37-66.

<sup>12</sup> Alcoff et al., "Reconsidering Identity Politics: An Introduction," 1-9; Anagnostou, "A critique of symbolic ethnicity: The ideology of choice?," 94; Gimenez "With a little class: A critique of identity politics", 423; Jameson, "The Indigenous Movement in Ecuador: The Struggle for a Plurinational State", 63-73; Linda Nicholson, *Identity Before Identity Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9-34; Jimenez, "Negotiating ethnic boundaries: Multiethnic Mexican Americans and ethnic identity in the United States," 75-97; Fenelon and Hall, "Revitalization and Indigenous Resistance to Globalization and Neoliberalism," 1867-1901; Fisher, "Constitutional Struggle and Indigenous

world also use the politics of cultural identity to resist against various negative effects of globalization and ecological crisis.<sup>13</sup> However, for the government apparatuses, playing *post-colonial exotic*, a paradigmatic framework concerning on the marketing of traditional, unique, and marginalized expressions as the essential parts of cultural identity in the global tourism and cultural industries (Huggan, 2001),<sup>14</sup> is a strategic choice to get maximum financial advantages from various ethnic expressions.

In this article we will use commodification as a starting concept for discussing how AAA and his apparatuses articulate and incorporate *Using* cultures into their festival programs in which various cultural expressions and values have s been suppressed into very different-but-phenomenal patterns and forms. The commodification of *Using* cultures into carnival and festival mode, and, has produced some spectacular events through which some economic and political goals negotiated. Drawing from our field researches in Banyuwangi since 2011 until 2016 and online media news, we will analyze some significant data related to (a) AAA's paradigm in perceiving *Using* cultures in the midst of neoliberal times as the hegemonic political economy of post-Reformation Indonesia, (b) the carnival modes of *commodified* traditional rites and arts as a strategic-postmodern way to promote and sell cultural expressions in the midst of postmodern

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Resistance in Latin America: The Case of Panama," 65-78; Virkkunen, "The politics of identity: Ethnicity, minority and nationalism in Soviet Estonia," 83-89.

<sup>13</sup> Petras, "A Class Perspective on Social Ecology and the Indigenous Movement," 437-52; Powell, "Technologies of Existence: The indigenous environmental justice movement," 125-32; Powless, "An Indigenous Movement to Confront Climate Change," 411-24; Delgado and Zwartveen, "Modernity, Exclusion and Resistance: Water and indigenous struggles in Peru," 114-20; Brosius, "Endangered Forest, Endangered People: Environmentalist Representations of Indigenous Knowledge," 47-69.

<sup>14</sup> Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1-28.



and neoliberal times, and (c) the political and economic concerns of Banyuwangi Festival. We analyze the data by using the theoretical framework which juxtaposes the commodification of traditional cultures, postmodern transformation in neoliberal times, and hegemony. Using such framework is very important because all cultural programs created by AAA in post-Reformation Banyuwangi are not merely serious attempts in celebrating *Using* identity, but, further, they are creative ways in negotiating power. Finally, we will make concluding remarks on this festival with critical emphasized on the operation of hegemonic power.

### **Banyuwangi Festival: *Flexible Transformation***

Although since the New Order, Banyuwangi has been famous with its *gandrung*, agrarian rituals, and beautiful natural heritages, for getting national and international attention in media age which emphasizes on the visual attractiveness and celebration, the government of Banyuwangi still needs to make various extraordinary cultural events which will make media carrying them into their news. The inclusion of cultural uniqueness into tourism programs has been common idea since the New Order regime. For AAA, what needs to be improved, once again, is the attractive capacity of the cultural events which will bring economic beneficiary. Here we quote his *opening speech* in an art event conducted by the Board of Culture and Tourism Banyuwangi, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

'...I do hope the related boards start working to put traditional arts closer to tourism programs...In the future, our tourism sells not only the beauty of natural landscape, but also sells the richness of our traditional arts. So, we need to make an international network, we must attract global attention. Therefore, in October 22, 2011, we will conduct *Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival*. I intentionally invite the manager of *Jember Fashion Carnival* (JFC) to conceptualize our Ethno Carnival. As we know, before the holding of JFC, who

knows Jember. Nowadays, JFC has a network with 180 photographers in the world. All hotels in Jember are full-booking during JFC. We really need this network to introduce the richness of our traditional arts and cultures globally.’<sup>15</sup> (*Our translation*)

From the speech, we identify some important thinking related to AAA’s paradigm in commodifying ethnic identity. Firstly, art and cultural richness are not merely discursive factors for empowering *Using* solidarity, but also having economic potential. The word ‘sell’ indicates AAA’s awareness for the economic potency of traditional expression. Secondly, the development of traditional cultures should be integrated in tourism; a repetition of discourse in the management of cultural tourism which has been so popular since the last period of the New Order regime, although, as we will discuss in the next session, AAA has developed different model. Thirdly, creating new transformative patterns of traditional expressions with spectacular appearances is a *must*. Inviting the manager of JFC to create similar event, *Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival*, clarifies the necessity of realizing his concept. JFC is an outstanding international fashion carnival in Jember who has gained wide range publication, nationally and globally. Fourthly, the international networking is the very significant determinant factor through which the government of Banyuwangi can promote its cultural potentials. Such thinking has led AAA to conceptualize many carnivals, festivals, and parades as appropriate programs which will place the name of Banyuwangi and its cultural richness in media news.

Although getting some rejections from the local artists and communal leaders, particularly on its bad impact for siphoning the budget of traditional arts development, the first Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival (hereafter BEC I) was successfully conducted and got nationally media coverage. Following the formulaic pattern of

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<sup>15</sup> Abdullah Azwar Anas. “Opening Speech at Padang Ulan Performance”, the Board of Culture and Tourism Banyuwangi, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

JFC, BEC, since the first to the following events, has transformed the exotics of *Using* cultures flexibly in carnival mode which visually can attract the viewers' amazement. In the first BEC, for example, the colorful *gandrung* costumes were modified into luxurious and palatial fashions which were performed on the street catwalk. For accommodating the voices of the local artists and for preventing a further chaotic resistance, the committee also performed a parade of the real *gandrung* dancers with their original costumes accompanied by the live traditional music performance. Regional and national media broadcasted this event with their amazing narratives, visual photographs, and videos. In addition, the committee also made a contract with *Jawa Pos* through *Radar Banyuwangi* and *Jawa Timur TV* management to publish and broadcast the first BEC. So, it was normal when this event spent approximately 500,000,000 rupiahs.

The success of the first BEC inspired AAA and his team to produce more phenomenal events. Still in 2011, they made *Parade Gandrung Sewu* (The Parade of A Thousand *Gandrung*). *Gandrung* is interactive companionship dance which is performed lively involving female dancers and male fans with dynamic movements. In the 2000s, *gandrung* artists actually have had a problem of regeneration because the majority of young women in Banyuwangi have had no desire to become professional dancers. However, the related government apparatuses never exposed the fact before the execution date of the Parade because it would interfere the regent's dream. For succeeding this event, the Committee practiced the New Order regime's technique, *mobilizing* junior and senior high school students, both from the villages and city, to become the models who would dance some acts of *gandrung* (traditional dance) performance for giving a massive musical dance appearance. Again and again, this spectacular event was very successful; thousands viewers came to Boom Beach to view the Parade—although most of them were parents, relatives, neighbors, friends, teachers, and, only a few of

them were tourists, both domestic and foreign—and national media, both televisions and newspapers, covered it.

The flexible transformation of ethnic identity as the basis of commodification process in the midst of postmodern trends and neoliberal times is the hegemonic mechanism colored by the *celebration of cultural signifiers*. By this celebration of cultural signifiers we mean all attractions which perform superficial meanings through various—following Baudrillard's terms—*hyperrealities* and *simulacra*<sup>16</sup> refer to a particular cultural identity,. In this term, all complicated philosophical, social, and political discourses of ethnic cultures need no to expose because the significant element is providing various and colorful visual pleasure for the viewers who longed for ethnic and traditional impression in the midst of their modern life. Further, all regeneration problems experienced by the local artists also are not crucial to tell because the viewers or the tourists only want to find out happiness, not finding out data. By the flexible transformation, such as in 2011 BEC until 2016 BEC, AAA has “invested” *Using* cultures with global meaning by borrowing outward appearance to be commodified into more deluxe fashion carnival.

For AAA, his apparatuses, and his creative team, BEC and the Parade have strategic function in promoting *Using* cultural heritages in the midst of the global speed culture; one of prominent reasons for continuing such programs until the recent time. For supporting our argument, here some conceptual frameworks behind the theme of BEC II (2012), *Re\_Barong*, which exposed *Barong Kemiren*, a sacred ritual performance in Kemiren, *Using* tourism village. *Reconstruction* means re-arranging the

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<sup>16</sup> Richard J. Lane, *Jean Baudrillard* (London: Routledge, 2000), 82-100; Abbinnett, “The Spectre and the Simulacrum: History after Baudrillard,” 69-87; Taylor, “Baudrillard’s Gallic Shrug: Reality Fundamentalism and the Heineken Effect,” 273-85; Wernick, “From Comte to Baudrillard: Socio-Theology After the End of the Social,” 67-71.

physical patterns without changing their original values. *Redefinition* means formulating and righting self-understanding. *Reproduction* means maintaining identity through self-multiplying. *Re-actualization* means re-actualizing self. *Revolution* means the acceleration of the arrangement, formulation, preservation, and self-actualization. We see such frameworks as a pattern of discursive normalization—making some particular discourses become normal – for toward the modification of Barong Kemiren by which the creative team—through some discourses of local empowerment such as ‘without changing original values’ and ‘maintaining identity’—convince the indigenous leaders the spectacular fashions for the carnival will not disturb its sublime philosophical meanings.

However, the wholeness of the discursive normalcy is deconstructed by the creative team through some flexibility discourses such as ‘multiplying self’ and ‘rearrange the pattern’ and ‘the acceleration of arrangement, formulation, and self-actualization’. Why? Because such discourses have orientation towards the cultural production which still carries traditional or ethnic signifiers, but essentially it transforms their philosophical values into more global meanings with market goals; an ultimate ideal of reconstruction process. Such *construction-deconstruction-reconstruction formula* has become “an archetype” for BEC since the first until 2016 BEC; *Using cultures* have always become the roots that are uprooted. The signifiers of identity, then, are more flexible and mutable<sup>17</sup>—being transformed and incorporated by the ruling class, including the state, into more dynamic representations and performances to succeed tourism industry.<sup>18</sup>

The market goals also have driven Banyuwangi government under AAA to make many events for promoting other cultural heritages, including *Using batik*, food, fruits, and coffee. Since 2013,

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<sup>17</sup> Skoczen, “Almost Paradise: The Cultural Politics of Identity and Tourism in Samaná, Dominican Republic,” 144.

<sup>18</sup> Light, “Dracula Tourism in Romania: Cultural Identity and the State,” 748.

there have been *Banyuwangi Batik Festival* (hereafter BBF) with its spectacular complementary event 'Fashion on Pedestrian' which has performed many photo models wearing glamour fashion from *Using batik*, *Culinary Festival* which has served thematic delicious food annually, and *Local Fruits Festival* which has presented various local fruits, although not all of them are original fruits such dragon fruit. The more phenomenal one, has been *Festival Ngopi Sepuluh Ewu (Festival of Drinking Ten Thousands Coffee Cups)* in Kemiren Village. This event has become unique attraction because the visitors may enjoy drinking coffee in many glasses and cups gratis. The idea of this festival, actually, did not come from Kemiren inhabitants, but from one of rich entrepreneur who owns a large coffee plantation in the slope of Mount Ijen. He has provided coffee to be roasted by Kemiren women. Therefore, to attach the sense of communalism, Kemiren inhabitants have said this festival as the connector of brotherhood and sisterhood among *Using* communities. We should give AAA a salute for promoting such local heritages and potentials through which the development of creative-small-scale and agrarian economy being possible, although still needs more assessments.

A special emphasis should be given to BBF and 'Fashion on Pedestrian' as its complementary-but-enlivening event. Through these two events AAA has carried cultural meanings of batik into the formula of –borrowing Bella Dicks' term– *culture on display*.<sup>19</sup> This formula aims to enable the access of *Using* cultural uniqueness, especially the exotic superficial meanings, which will satisfy the desire of viewers and attract "the camera lens" of journalists and photographers, not the depth of philosophical meanings. *Using* indigenous leaders may explain that *Gajah Oling* motif has mythical and sacred values, particularly in the past times when mothers were holding and protecting their babies

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<sup>19</sup> Bella Dicks, *Culture on Display: The Production of Contemporary Visibility*, (London: Sage Publications, 2004), 7-13.

with such motif slings from the interference of supernatural beings in twilight. Similarly, the indigenous leaders also give sublime meaning for *Kangkung Setingkes* motif; the togetherness of *Using* communities bound in one cultural identity although they live dispersed in different villages. Such philosophical meanings have been not enough to increase the selling of *Using* batik, so AAA has held BBF and 'Fashion on Pedestrian' to promote it widely with the ultimate target for advancing the batik industries in Banyuwangi. The combination of batik's philosophical meanings with the culture as display formula is the investment of AAA that posits *Using* identity not merely as the form of communal pride, but, further, as the crutch of identity industry in the midst of postmodern trends and neoliberal mechanism.

The wide media coverage of BEC I, had led AAA and his team creating a national musical event, *Banyuwangi Jazz Festival* (hereafter BJF) in 2012 and since 2013 has been changed into *Banyuwangi Beach Jazz Festival* (hereafter BBJF). The concept behind this event is a musical dialogue between *Using* music and jazz—between the local and the global—through which the traditional and jazz musicians might share their skill each other, so they would get new technique for creating a newer composition. Music is a language and jazz is particularly chosen to tell Banyuwangi widely into Indonesia and the world. Why? It is because jazz has unique characteristic in communicating with its audiences. Therefore, by this event, Banyuwangi with its new spirit can show up its uniqueness and allure. Ideally, jazz will be composed different by traditional touches; opened by *gandrung* dance, traditional music, etc. One of the specific missions of this performance is making Banyuwangi outstanding place and destination through it's widely publication by mass media. In other words, jazz as the representation of the global is "invited" not merely as amusement, but, pragmatically, its musical uniqueness and large media coverage will carry the name of Banyuwangi in mass publications. The publications of BJF will disseminate Banyuwangi and its potencies as a nice regency to

visit. Unfortunately, in BJJF 2012, the dialogue of traditional and modern musical arrangement was not accomplished. From all musical compositions, there were only two compositions in which *Using* songs accompanied by jazz musical instruments, not the collaboration of traditional musical instruments. The promised musical dialogue was no more than “a sweet and beautiful lip service” to, once again, attract the coming of viewers and journalists. Ideally, there must be an instrumental mixture through which the involved local musicians could make interactive communication with the invited national jazz musicians in order to produce some ethnic-jazz performances.

In the *Banyuwangi Beach Jazz Festival* (hereafter BJJF), started at 2013, AAA asked the event organizer to make a real musical collaboration between national jazz and local musicians. AAA wanted the collaboration in BJJF 2013 would be the significant signifier of *civilizations harmony*, a conceptual bridge to explore local genius through a musical dialogue approach. Up to now, BJJF has tried giving a space for local music for fusing with jazz rhythm. Ideally, such fusion would engender an interesting musical experience, an unforgettable moment. We can criticize the epistemological base of such musical dialogue—a borrowing concept from a very popular slogan in the millennium century, *a dialogue among civilizations*—through BJJF. For the postcolonial societies, such as Banyuwanginese society, the perspective has been not something strange. Their ancestors’ encounter with Hinduism, Islam, and European civilizations had engendered many hybrid cultures, from culinary until local arts.

As a musical performance, since 2013 until 2015, BJJF were successful. Some outstanding jazz singers, such as Syaharani, Sandhy Sondoro, Tompi, and Glenn Fredly participated in 2013 BJJF. Their coming became interesting attractions on the stage and making hundreds visitors bought the expensive tickets—300,000 rupiahs for festival class, 500,000 rupiahs for VIP, and 1,000,000 rupiahs for VVIP—and watched this event. Annually media



coverage on BBJF—regionally, nationally, and internationally—has confirmed the important position of this musical event in the midst of the booming of jazz performance in Indonesia. A uniqueness commonly exposed by media was the “short-time” collaboration between jazz musicians from Jakarta and local musicians, particularly for its musical sensation. Such coverage was appropriate with AAA’s idealization.

A uniqueness of BBJF was the inclusion of local musical tradition in jazz composition. The senior singer, Syaharani, for example, after singing her song, made collaboration with a traditional female artist to sing Banyuwangi song entitled *Pethetan*. Syaharani’s voice harmonized with Mbok Temu’s voice, accompanied by musical strain and traditional dancers with full color customs. A beautiful mystique atmosphere flowed and was very entertaining. This is Indonesian Jazz.<sup>20</sup>

In the context of post-colonial society in which cultural in-betweenness, mimicry, and hybridity become the dominant color in the midst of modernity and other globalized-western arts,<sup>21</sup> such musical hybridity is not a strange case, but what should be criticized is the seriousness of AAA and the event organizer to support ‘a true musical dialogue which will produce a spectacular local-jazz performance’. In fact, reflected from 2013-2015 BBJF, the musical collaboration was pseudo collaboration, a side attraction of little importance, because the appearance of local music and singer was merely as a signifier of *Using* traditional cultures on the jazz stage. In 2013, Mbok Temu and other local musicians only collaborated with Syaharani and her group in some songs, but they did not collaborate with Trio Lestari (Glenn Fredly, Sandhy

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<sup>20</sup> “Banyuwangi Beach Jazz Festival 2013, Keren!”, *Detik*, November 20, 2013: <http://travel.detik.com/read/2013/11/20/142000/2417733/1025/banyuwangi-beach-jazz-festival-2013-keren>.

<sup>21</sup> Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 112-114; Bhabha, “Anxiety in the Midst of Difference,” 123-37; Lee, “A Phenomenology for Homi Bhabha’s Postcolonial Metropolitan Subject,” 541-544.

Sondoro, and Tompi). It means that the attendance of Mbok Temu and her friends was merely a formal signifier which shows that the national and local musicians making collaboration for the sake of BBJF, not for developing and empowering local music in advance level. In other words, we view the musical dialogue guided by AAA and his apparatuses is only a label for attracting journalists and photographers.

However, we should consider the discursive position in the dialogue. Some cultural critics argue that the postcolonial subjects should give more careful attention in the contemporary civilizations dialogue, because there has been imbalance between the East and the West in the era of globalization in which neocolonial practices become something normal in the midst of post-colonial countries.<sup>22</sup> All civilization and cultural dialogues have formed a new politics, because their formats has been standardized and incorporated into the structure of global mass culture in which the modern West has still become a determiner in such process. What has become popular in the developed countries would be hegemonic orientation in the developing countries. In the latter, there have been “translators” who are interpreting cleverly the global West cultures assumed giving beneficiary for local cultures, or, oppositely, interpreting local cultures for the sake of the modern one. It means the West has still become a discursive controller, so all dialogues, exactly, have not gave the local people and their cultures advantages. In other words, the dominant mode of dialogues has been unequal, because only giving the popular-version of the West’s self-definition in the global mass cultures. Many national and regional leaders in Indonesia have not been aware of this hegemonic

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<sup>22</sup> Nandy, “A new cosmopolitanism: Toward a dialogue of Asian civilizations,” 129; Dirlik, “Rethinking Colonialism: Globalization, Postcolonialism, and the Nation,” 439; During, “Postcolonialism and globalisation: A dialectical relation after all?,” 33-34.

operation because most of them only consider the growth of financial income through tourism activities.

Following the above perspective, at least, there are two forms of global mass cultures as the reference of cultural-commodified-festivals in Banyuwangi. The first is fashion carnival and its derivative events such as BEJ, BBF, and *Gandrung* Parade, which mimic the similar event in global sphere. The second is jazz music which has gained global popularity and transformed its ideological resistance into more fluid musical performance. The celebratory character of the two global cultures generates the lessening of comprehensive understanding of local cultures. Some philosophical values which should be configured and negotiated in the carnivals and musical dialogues losing their significances because the artificial meanings produced through simulacra chain are more interesting.

## **The Operation of Hegemonic Power**

AAA believes the two formulaic patterns will promote all potencies of Banyuwangi, including cultures, agrarian products, natural landscapes, crafts, mining, etc. It means, in Banyuwangi Festival, the goal is not the ideal-constructive one, namely empowering local actors through various attractions, but the ideal-pragmatic one, namely marketing in national and international networks many beautiful cultural expressions and natural destinations. Formally, those attempts have been successful in increasing the tourists' visiting rate to Banyuwangi, since 2010 to 2015. According to AAA, creative and tourism industry became two important sectors which contributed to the radical enhancement of regional income, from 22 trillion rupiahs in 2010 to 40,8 trillion rupiahs in 2015; exceeding the target, 35 trillion rupiahs.<sup>23</sup> One of the direct contributions of tourism sectors

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<sup>23</sup> "Abdullah Azwar Anas Bangun Pariwisata Banyuwangi", *Berita Satu*, March 2, 2015: <http://www.beritasatu.com/food-travel/253408-abdullah-azwar-anas-bangun-pariwisata-banyuwangi.html>.

toward the enhancement is foreign tourists' shopping. During 2013, for example, the total amount of foreign tourists' shopping was 31 billion rupiahs.<sup>24</sup> The operation of Santika Hotel—a national hotel network—in Banyuwangi in 2015 proved that this regency has great promising tourism potency. All those economic achievements made the Board enhancing the target of tourists' visiting in 2016. Through various events in Banyuwangi Festival and natural destinations, the Tourism and Culture Board targets 50,000 foreign tourists and 2 millions domestic tourists.<sup>25</sup>

We acknowledge AAA has been very successful in realizing economic goal through his Banyuwangi Festival. He has shown his strategic capacity in managing local cultures as “the sold identity”. Ethnic identity, once again, is not merely communal characteristics and practices for empowering the spirit of solidarity among the members, but, further, in economic term, it is a big opportunity in the midst of global tourism market which focused on natural heritages and cultural attractions. In the context of marketing, AAA has been succeeded in his efforts making breakthroughs of selling Banyuwangi's potentials by using many carnivals, festivals, and parades to invite national and international tourists. Further, the media coverage of the events, economically, have made investors interested coming and investing in various sectors, from mining, agriculture, maritime, plantation, and manufactures industries.

Therefore, in every press release and opening speech of some big events in Banyuwangi Festival, AAA has been always emphasized the successful achievements of his regime in making significant economic changes that have made him different with

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<sup>24</sup> “Turis Asing Habiskan Rp 31, 4 M di Banyuwangi”, *Okezone*, May 18, 2014: <http://lifestyle.okezone.com/read/2014/05/18/408/986573/turis-asing-habiskan-rp31-4-m-di-banyuwangi>.

<sup>25</sup> “Banyuwangi Naikkan Target Kunjungan Wisatawan di 2016”, *Liputan 6*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016: <http://lifestyle.liputan6.com/read/2407020/banyuwangi-naikkan-target-kunjungan-wisatawan-di-2016>.

the previous regents. Here is the example of AAA's opening speech in BEC, November 12nd, 2012.

'Hopefully, the economic growth of Banyuwangi becomes better and better in the future... Mr. Minister, here, we should inform important information, although I have been informed repeatedly, not because we are proud, but we want people have a pride. Due to hard working of all people, the investment interest had changed; in 2010, Banyuwangi ranked 31, now, 2012 ranks 3 in East Java, after Gresik and Sidoarjo. The realization of our foreign investment is not in number 26 anymore, through many various policies, it now is in number 2 in East Java. Hopefully, this achievement will increase over the developing agro industries. In the near future, at the latest on February 2013, it will be build a coconut milk factory, the cooperation between Europe and China... December 12, after we competed with some regency, we will start a ground breaking of the development of the biggest and most modern sugar company in Indonesia in sub-district Glenmore. This company will need 12,000 native labors.'<sup>26</sup> (*Our translation*)

Using "we" – and only once "I" – as the representation of the unity between governmental apparatuses with their people, AAA exposed such economic achievements in front of some outstanding public figures, such Surya Paloh, the owner of Media Group and mining investor. It is important for AAA to expose them because he wants to affirm the distinction of himself with the previous regents, such as Ratna Ayu Lestari and Samsul Hadi who could not make the similar achievements. Beside, AAA also tries promoting directly the primacy of Banyuwangi as the best place of investments that have attracted foreign and national investors.

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<sup>26</sup> Abdullah Azwar Anas. "Opening Speech at Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival," November 12, 2012.

What must be criticized is AAA's pride when his regime has succeeded in getting national and international investments, regardless some objections from the people in Wongsorejo industrial estate in the north of Banyuwangi and people in Tumpang Pitu, a gold mining site in Pesanggaran Sub-district. Mobilizing the growth of investments with the increasing employment and people's welfare as the first pretext is one of neoliberal perspectives. Investments supported by profitable policies have been idealized as the prominent way to give many individuals a chance of competition using their skills and physical capacities. But, based on many experiences around the world, the majority of the native who commonly unskilled labors only has had lower level positions with minimum wages. In reality, only the minority elites—from the capitalist faction and bureaucracy—will get a higher financial advantage. So, by showing off his success as the result of collective struggle and pride, AAA actually is negotiating his significant political position as the regent who is able to bring his people into prosperity as well as covering the neoliberal values of AAA and masking the people's resistances in Wonorejo and Tumpang Pitu.

Displaying commodified cultural products based on Using identity, in other words, is the suitable way to negotiate the regime's hegemonic position—following Gramscian perspective—<sup>27</sup> in the middle of Banyuwanginese society. AAA has given Banyuwanginese society various entertaining carnivals, festivals, and parades, through which most of them have perceived the government having serious attempts in promoting as well as empowering their local potencies. Many social, economic, health,

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<sup>27</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Book* (London: Lawrence and Whilshart, 1971), 206-75; Carl Boggs, *The Two Revolution: Gramsci and the Dilemmas of Western Marxism* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 161; Peter Ives, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 1-8; Howson and Smith, "Hegemony and the Operation of Consensus and Coercion," 1-15; Kate Crehan, *Gramsci, Culture, and Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 99-105.

industrial, and technological programs also have contributed to the popularity of AAA and have led most of Banyuwanginese people giving political agreement for his leadership. Nevertheless, the media coverage of Banyuwangi Festival has become 'the first gate' that has been elevating the popularity of AAA widely; regionally, nationally, and internationally. Once again, this popularity and the public acceptance of his leadership during 2010-2015 had become AAA's political and cultural capital for winning the regent election at the end of 2015. Because of such capital, AAA and his partner from the previous period, Yusuf Widyatmoko became the winners of the election. In their inauguration as the regent and regent assistant in the second period on February 2016, AAA promised continuing their programs in the previous period, including health facilities, infrastructure development, education, and tourism because they will increase people's prosperity.<sup>28</sup> And, as usual, Banyuwangi Festival still becomes the most attractive cultural event to promote tourism and other potencies. This principle, making more and more festivals and parades, since 2011 until now, has been believed as "incredible weapon" for making journalists and photographers coming.

Further, what interesting to discuss is the smart capacity of the regime in facing criticisms from local artists as the mark of its hegemonic power. In the first BEC, for example, many artists decided resisting against and rejecting it. They argued this event wasting money and spending the budget of traditional arts. Event some artists threatened by AAA; they would make a riot by mobilizing cultural actors from villages. Well, in reality, this was nonsense, because they, finally, joined the first BEC as the musicians, so there were no more stories about resistance and rejection. When we asked one of them, he diplomatically

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<sup>28</sup> "Dilantik, Bupati Banyuwangi Lanjutkan Program Lama," *Republika*, February 17, 2016: <http://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/daerah/16/02/17/o2ozk0361-dilantik-bupati-banyuwangi-lanjutkan-program-lama>.

answered, "We can do nothing, because our leader commands us joining this BEC". According to our short investigation, they drastically changed because a bureaucrat from the Cultural and Tourism Board asked one of reputable senior artist to persuade them in order to join BEC. Similarly, in the 2013 BEC with *Re\_Barong* theme, some local artists and *Using* cultural experts protested against pink as one of the custom color, because it would discord the original and sacred color of Kemiren Barong. The creative team agreed negating pink from the choice and, further, giving the protesters an honorable position, as the jurors. These two cases show how AAA and his regime are able to include and articulate the deviant voices that potentially will disturb the cultural programs and disrupt all economic and political goals. Therefore, since 2013 until 2017, there have been no challenges, resistances, and rejections from local artists and communal leaders toward Banyuwangi Festival. Instead some local actors in Banyuwangi, following the popularity of this festival and as the way to get a little economic benefit from the massive coming of tourists, have renewed and modified the dying ancient rituals. In more innovative sense, some indigenous leaders in Kemiren have made cultural tourism packages for domestic and international guests, including *gandrung* performance, eating traditional food together, and the exploration of farming field. So, besides giving AAA's hegemonic position in political sense, Banyuwangi Festival also has changed the local actors' perspective in conceiving traditional cultures and communal identity, not merely as the solidarity markers in the midst of global uniformity, but also as the commodified cultural attractions which are idealized bringing prosperity for the villagers.

In 2017, Banyuwangi Festival has 72 events with various attractions, including cultural events with carnival and festival modes, international sport competitions, agrarian rituals, fashion shows, culinary festivals, etc. This increase of the events shows that the tourism programs in Banyuwangi under AAA's regime,



through displaying and celebrating traditional expressions with new styles and performances as one of the agenda, still becomes the most popular program which are well accepted by the majority Banyuwanginese society. In addition to economic benefit, it also indicates that many local actors still idealize various cultural events in Banyuwangi Festival will give a chance to negotiate, persist and develop traditional expressions as the signifiers of *Using* identity.

## Conclusion

Celebrating identity in the midst of postmodern trends is not something strange because many countries have been capitalizing and valorizing their ethnic identities through creative and tourism industries. However, we should question Banyuwangi Festival. Indeed AAA as the regent has gotten some awards for his achievements, including in innovative marketing and tourism, but they do not guarantee the implementation of cultural empowerments. Instead, the commodification of *Using* cultures tend to obscure the elites' interests because the community's members will be buoyed by communal prides through some cultural events, as if the government has given them serious attention.

The public acceptance of Banyuwangi Festival, the absence of serious resistance against the cultural policy, and the re-election of AAA as the regent for the second term show that the operation of hegemonic power through cultural and tourism activities as one of economic and political mechanisms has been effective, particularly in gaining consensus. Although some traditional-folk art groups such as *gandrung* groups must have worked hard for negotiating *Using* cultures in post-Reformation Banyuwangi because the absence of the enlightening projects for developing and empowering their existence, there is no cultural leaders or institutions in Banyuwangi that seriously voice the problem of traditional arts preservation. Instead, many of them follow the role model of festival and try to incorporate their communal cultural

activities into Banyuwangi Festival. It indicates that they are being *hegemonized* by AAA because they assume financial gain and idealize cultural development through Banyuwangi Festival. The capacity of the regime to control media discourses also plays a role in constructing public consensus through various exotic news that bring the name and the potentials of Banyuwangi into national and international levels, although not all local artists support it.

The AAA's political and economic goals are the dominant desire behind *Using's* identity commodification, particularly for negotiating its political position and making neoliberal mechanism of cultural tourism the most important scenario to follow. Strategically, various good media discourses of Banyuwangi Festival create the hegemonic images about the great capacity of AAA in managing Banyuwangi's potentials, including traditional expressions. Furthermore, the consensus of the majority towards the superiority of AAA in running programs and the absence of the radical resistance against its policy, become its significant capital to plays an advanced strategy, especially for inviting as many as possible rich investors to invest their money in Banyuwangi.

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