

THE SOUND AND MEANING IN THE MEGALITHIC TRADITIONAL VILLAGE-BENA AS A TOURISTIC

by Francisca Titing

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¹Francisca Titing Koerniawaty, ²I Wayan Ardika

¹The International Institute of Tourism and Business, ²Udayana University

koe.titing@gmail.com

Abstract

Purpose: Bena is a traditional village of megalithic located in Tiworiwu Village, Jerebu'u District, Ngada Regency, in the middle of Flores Island, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This study aims to criticize and analyze the patterns of cultural heritage of megalithic traditional village-Bena, the perceptions of international and domestic tourists towards the cultural heritage of megalithic traditional village Bena as a touristic.

Methodology: This research is a qualitative descriptive study using ethnographic approach with observation data collection techniques and in-depth interviews using purposive and snow ball sampling techniques to selected informants. The research data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman.

Findings: This analysis led to a conclusion that the patterns of cultural heritage as touristic were a traditional wooden houses-*sa'o* as medium of clan gathering and homestay for tourists, the traditional ritual-*ka sa'o* and *reba* is sacral ceremony that can be enjoyed as an authentic experience by involving on the ceremony. During the ceremony the indigenous people wear traditional costume-*ikad*, and weaving slithers of bamboo or other grasses of traditional bag-*bere* as an *attribute*, however, these *attributes* were produced as an authentic souvenir. This research also indicated that the megalithic traditional village-Bena as touristic was perceived as an authentic experience by international and domestic tourists with the indicators of pure, unique, antique, traditional, and had typical traditional village.

Keywords: *sound and meaning, cultural heritage, megalithic traditional village-Bena*

1. Introduction

Generally, this study aims were to criticize and analyze the patterns of cultural heritage of megalithic traditional village-Bena, the perception's of international and domestic tourists towards the cultural heritage of megalithic traditional village Bena as a touristic. The traditional village that is '*nua*,' located in Tiworiwu Village, Jerebu'u District, Ngada Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Central Flores. The attraction asset of megalithic tradisional village is a traditional wooden house with tached roof. The traditional wooden houses have function as a livingroom for clan's gathering as well as a homestay for tourists. This cultural heritage is still well preserved and the oldest among other traditional villages as representation of Indonesia's cultural assets that are still active and has its existance nowadays (living heritage). The existence of traditional villages as heirs, conservationists, as well as perpetrators of local wisdom, has the potential to maintain cultural identity and build awareness of cultural diversity in Indonesia. Beside it is being a national identity, cultural asset can also carry the economic

benefits because, since it is one of the attractions of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is an experience for urban tourists to experience new things and enjoy the sensation of being in a real and authentic place (Pedersen, 2002). The excessive use of culture as tourism consumption can result the cultural erosion which is able to reduce the aesthetics of products and traditions, furthermore the nature damaged. This superficial assumptions is lack of common sense, since the meaning of cultural products will not be damaged, since the tourists are accustomed to accepting them, even products can be considered to be authentic, as long as their characteristics are considered authentic, while they have been exposed by commodification transformation (Urry, 1995; Cohen, 1988; Burns dan Holden, 1995). Cohen (1998) supported that the authenticity needed to satisfy tourists, in turn, it depends on the depth of tourist experience desired by each tourist, since qualified tourists don't really need the depth.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

The previous studies which used as references is the study by Yang (2012: 59-81) entitled 'Tourists' perceptions of ethnic tourism in Lugu Lake, Yunnan, China.' Secondly, by Day et al (2015:53-67) entitled 'Perceptions of Authenticity At A Heritage Destination: An Examination Of Visitor Perceptions of Authenticity At South Luogu Alley, Beijing.' The theory of commodification, used to analyze the patterns of cultural heritage of traditional megalithic village-Bena. The authenticity theory, used to analyze the perception's of international and domestic.

2.1 Commodification

Commodification is termed as a touristic or commercialization which can be interpreted as a process associated with the symptoms of capitalism to expand the market, increase the maximum profit by making products or services that are liked by consumers (Picard, 2006). It is the process of various things and activities that are evaluated for the exchange of values in trade contexts such as goods or services. The development of exchanges such as the exchange of goods or activities is expressed as market prices (Cohen, 1988). The economic value generated through the commodification process is generally considered positive if it is in accordance with traditional, artistic aspects with modern production features as long as it is maintained at an adequate level and can contribute to the development of a community identity that helps to preserve the culture in order to survive (Proschel, 2012). The patterns of commodification involves production, distribution and consumption processes (Fairclough, 1995; Pitana, 2006; Teekaew dan Srisontisuk, 2014). This reproduction of local cultural as tourist consumption is an effort to improve the quality of life of indigenous people (Ardika, 2007).

2.2 Authenticity

The theory of authenticity was introduced by MacCannell (1973) and Wang (1999) to define the originality, reality, and reliability of museums. Authenticity as a social interpretation observed, not as a real and objective phenomenon that can be seen empirically (Bruner 1989, 1994; Cohen, 1988; Handler and Linnekin 1984; Lanfant 1989; Spooner 1986; Taylor 2001; Wood 1993). This authenticity can be negotiated (Cohen, 1988), depending on the context (Salamone 1997), ideology (Silver 1993), dreams, images, or expectations of tourist destinations (Bruner 1991; Silver 1993). The ideology and typology of authenticity as a limitation of the theory of authenticity. The first ideology is modernism or realism. Boorstin (1961) and MacCannell (1973) suggested that object authenticity can be tested or assessed

through certain standards. In tourism, artworks, artifacts, cuisine, or ritual products are usually described as authentic or inauthentic, depending on the traditions carried out by indigenous. Secondly, the ideology of constructivism contradicts modernist ideas. Authenticity as a social interpretation can be observed, not as a real and objective phenomenon that can be seen empirically (Bruner 1989, 1994; Cohen, 1988; Handler and Linnekin 1984; Lanfant 1989; Spooner 1986; Taylor 2001; Wood 1993). Thirdly, postmodernist ideology does not concern objects that are inauthentic, it is not fundamental to state between real or false, authentic or copy, reality or symbol, even Eco (1986) tried to erase the boundary between copy and authentic.

According to Cohen (1995), tourists could accept the lack of authentic origin, and reality. Postmodern tourists do not care about the authenticity and origin of the attractions as long as they can be enjoyed. If a product transformed by the commodification process maintains characteristics that satisfy tourists, it will remain authentic. Fourthly, Heidegger's philosophy claims that the term authentic can be implemented on objects that mean real, authentic, untouched, or pure. Tourists who think authentic then what is in this world is considered authentic, human power determines the essence or form of authenticity (Heidegger, 1977a, b). Souvenir production for the purpose of benefiting local people separates authentic meanings (Halewood and Hannam 2001).

The typology of authenticity as a theoretical limitation is objective, constructive, and existential authenticity (Cohen 1988; Pearce & Moscardo 1986; Waitt, 2000; Wang, 1999). Objective authenticity is used to test whether a work of art is real, thus it can measure the value and price of goods (Trilling, 1972). Objective authenticity claimed that the culture of the local community can be staged which is called the authenticity of pseudoevents (Boorstin, 1961), but this theory has the disadvantage of not being able to explain the whole phenomenon of tourism. To address this weakness, (Wang, 1999) proposed constructive authority that considers five criteria for authenticity, namely: the absence of absolute criteria for assessing authenticity, traditions built to fulfill the development needs at a certain time, interpretation of events, activities, and physical arrangements can influence perceptions of authenticity, expectations tourists are associated with authenticity, over time the authenticity of an object can change. Tourists do not pursue authenticity, most of them enjoy and accept events that are staged and reprogrammed (Bruner, 1991; Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Moscardo & Pearce, 1999; Yang & Wall, 2009). Thus it can be said that reproduction tends to be accepted if it is indeed authentic (Bruner, 1991).

Existential authenticity is different from objective and constructive. Kim and Jamal (2007), Wang (1999) define existential authenticity as authentic and independent experiences, since the tourists can get out of the routine through escaping from the pressures of everyday life not because they feel the authenticity of tourist destinations.

3. Research methodology

This is a qualitative descriptive study using an ethnography approach that analyzed in depth, in detail and holistically of this problem research, which was conducted in 2018. Primary data was obtained through passive participatory observation and in-depth interviews to the selected informants who were understood the research problem using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Secondary data was obtained through documentation studies on pattern of cultural heritage of traditional megalithic village of Bena as touristic and the perception of international

and domestic tourist towards cultural heritage of traditional megalithic village of Bena as a touristic.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 The Patterns of Cultural Heritage of Traditional Megalithic Village of Bena as a Touristic

The patterns of commodification involves production, distribution and consumption processes (Fairclough, 1995; Pitana, 2006; Meekaew dan Srisontisuk, 2012). This reproduction of local culture is an effort to improve the quality of life of indigenous people (Ardika, 2003; 2007; 2015). In accordance with this statement, it could be stated the first main pattern of cultural heritage product as touristic in Bena is traditional megalithic village, called 'nua' including the architecture and the layout of traditional wooden houses, which are called 'sao saka and sao saka lobo'. Another uniqueness of the traditional house which becomes the main attraction of cultural tourism is the spatial design consisting of three rooms namely *tedha wena*, *tedha one* and *one*. *Tedha wena* is a semi-open veranda. From the veranda, the tourists can see the uniqueness of the local population in weaving, receiving guests, relaxing, and eating or doing other public activities. The next room is the living room called *tedha one* which is functioned as a men's bedroom and dining room that can only be entered by family members and closest relatives. The core room of the traditional house is called *one* which is a private room and is considered as a holy or sacred place because it is functioned as the place where traditional ceremonies are held. Based on its function, this room has a double meaning that is sacred as a place of traditional and profane ceremonies because it is a place for the activities of women to cook, take a rest and eat with the family.

The second patterns is traditional indigenous ceremony 'ka sa'o and reba,' including several attractions such as traditional music and dance, *ja'i*, traditional clothing in the pattern of Bena traditional weaving, ceremonial attributes such as colorful plastic bead necklaces, and women and men's traditional bags. The uniqueness of local language used by the shaman in leading the ritual through prayers has a sacredness, as well as traditional food *ra'a rete*, steamed casava and *moke* drinks typical of Bena are always consumed during the ceremony.

Since the Traditional Village of Bena was established as a cultural tourism destination in 1990, the traditional houses, aside from being a place of residences, are also functioned as homestays. The total number of traditional houses used as lodging is forty-one (41) inhabited by nine different tribes. The homeowners are women, since they adhere to the matrilineal kinship system that means every house is named according to the names of the heiresses.

4.2 The perception of international and domestic Tourist Towards Cultural Heritage of Traditional Megalithic Village of Bena as a Touristic

The existential authenticity as authentic and independent experiences since the tourists can get out of the routine through escaping from the pressures of everyday life rather than their perceived to the authenticity of tourist destinations (Kim and Jamal, 2007), Wang (1999). The tourists do not need the authenticity and origin of the attractions, since it can satisfy tourists, it will remain authentic. Fourthly, Heidegger's philosophy claims that the term authentic can be implemented on objects that mean real, authentic, untouched, or pure. Tourists who think authentic then what is in this world is considered authentic, human power determines the essence or form of authenticity (Heidegger, 1977a, b). Souvenir production for the purpose of benefiting local people separates authentic meanings (Halewood and Hannam 2001). There

are five criteria for authenticity that proposed by (Wang, 1999). Those are the absence of absolute criteria for assessing authenticity, traditions built to fulfill the development needs at a certain time, interpretation of events, activities, and physical arrangements can influence perceptions of authenticity, expectations tourists are associated with authenticity, over time the authenticity of an object can change. Tourists do not pursue authenticity, most of them enjoy and accept events that are staged and reprogrammed (Bruner, 1991; Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Moscardo & Pearce, 1999; Yang & Wall, 2009). It means the reproduction tends to be accepted if it is indeed authentic (Bruner, 1991).

In accordance with the authenticity ideology and typology, it could be stated that the majority of both international and domestic tourists' perceptions towards the Traditional Megalithic Village of Bena were perceived as an authentic cultural heritage destination with the criteria of pure, unique, antique, traditional and has a characteristic of village life. The accessibility to the destination area was stated in good condition with very large parking area outside the destination area. The entrance ticket is considered reasonable for international tourists. In spite of a little interaction is given due to the communication barrier in English, the indigenous people are considered pure in welcoming tourists. There were no complaints against indigenous children who asked for money or candy when photographed or when tourists passed through the traditional wooden houses as well as a genuine player of traditional flute who entertained without asking any fees to both international and domestic tourists.

The majority of both international and domestic visitors stated that the architecture of traditional wooden houses is unique, traditional, authentic, and typically village, whereas the tourists are lack of understand to the history of the traditional megalithic village. The rest rooms as supporting facilities needed to be maintained regularly. The officers at TIC should be more friendly and should always provide much information to tourists about the stories and history of the traditional megalithic village of Bena.

The ceremonial of a new house blessing *ka sa'o* and *reba* are perceived as a unique, sacral, pure and typically village ceremonial. Both international and domestic visitors perceived the authentic experience by involving the ceremony. The uniqueness and sacredness of rituals could be perceived from its local languages and traditional instrument. The traditional dancing, wearing local traditional costume, and consuming the traditional local drink and food were perceived as an authentic experience. The minority of women tourists stated that slaughtering of sacrificial animals was not uncommon, since the way to slaughter the sacrificial animals by swinging a long knife into the pig's forehead. The host stated wisely that this ritual has been carried down and well preserved from generation to generation by ancestors for sacredness purpose than for pleasure.

The traditional food *ra'a rete*, steamed casava and *moke* drinks typical of Bena perceived as an authentic experience, since both international and domestic tourists involved with the indigenous people to consume it altogether during the ceremonial. The minority of international tourists stated that serving the traditional food with the bare hands were not hygienic, it should be served with traditional utensils to keep hygienic. The indigenous children have a positive perception from both international and domestic tourists, since they didn't ask any contribution when photographed as well as a flute player genuinely in entertaining the tourists.

The perceptions towards Bena woven cloth of *ikad* and traditional bags was stated as an authentic experience since the tourists experienced to wave the local traditional fabric at each veranda of the traditional wooden houses and also could see several women waved the local

fabric traditionally. The tourist perceived that bargaining the souvenir price with the local woman was a unique interaction. The woman in every veranda of the traditional wooden houses didn't push any tourists to buy the local souvenirs. The tourists prefer to buying organic color of the local woven than chemical color, since the organic seemed antique and unique. The local traditional woven motive was typically traditional village. The traditional bag of *bere* made of *lotar* wore as an attribute of the ceremonial costume was perceived more unique than plastic.

5. Conclusion

The patterns of commodification includes the process of production, distribution and consumption of the cultural heritage of Bena traditional village named *nua* in the form of constructing and or renovating the traditional wooden houses named *sa'o* as a place to live and gathering of all clans, as well as being used as homestays which are distributed to attract visitor's interest through brochures, local government official social media and other stakeholders' social media and word of mouth. The traditional ceremony of *ka sa'o* is a new house blessing ceremonial which was merely attended by members of the clan. However, it could be consumed as a tourist attraction. *Reba* is a sacred ceremony as a thanksgiving to the ancestors, which is scheduled on the web of the East Nusa Tenggara and Ngada, Lonely Planet and TripAdvisor tourism agencies to make it easier for tourists to get information on the uniqueness of the ceremony. The production of traditional woven cloth and traditional bags of *bere* were to fulfill an attribute of traditional ceremonial costume. It has re-produced, distributed and consumed to tourists to improve the quality of life of indigenous people.

The majority of both international and domestic tourists stated that the overall cultural product of the traditional megalithic village of Bena was distributed and consumed as an authentic experience, since the tourists have never perceived it in other cultural heritage destination and also in their country. The criteria of the authenticity experience were indicated with pure, unique, natural, traditional, and typically village life.

The minority complaint from both international and domestic tourist concerning public facilities, indigenous' hospitality, providing sufficient information about the history of the traditional megalithic village, traditional food hygienic should be considered as a positive recommendation to preserve the local culture from the commodification transformation.

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