

FROM SACRED RITUAL TO CULTURAL SPECTACLE: NEGOTIATING THE MEANING OF SEBLANG BAKUNGAN IN BANYUWANGI CULTURAL TOURISM

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received October 2026

Revised October 2026

Accepted October 2026

Available October 2026

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ABSTRACT

The incorporation of local cultural traditions into tourism increasingly brings ritual practices into contact with new forms of public representation, tourism consumption, and digital media. This article examines the negotiation of meaning surrounding Seblang Bakungan, an Osing ritual in Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia, as it becomes increasingly integrated into cultural tourism. Rather than assuming that tourism transforms a sacred ritual into a spectacle in a linear process, this study asks how the meaning, boundaries, and representation of Seblang are negotiated among traditional authorities, local residents, government actors, tourists, and media. The study employs a qualitative ethnographic

approach conducted in Bakungan Village, Glagah District, Banyuwangi. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, documentation, digital-media observation, and literature and archival research. Three key informants represented different positions: a traditional authority, a representative of the Banyuwangi cultural tourism government, and a local resident involved in economic activities around the ritual. The findings demonstrate that Seblang has expanded from a primarily community-based ritual space into tourism calendars, festivals, public performances, social media, photographs, and videos. Nevertheless, this expansion does not eliminate its sacred position. Negotiation occurs through the regulation of access, the distinction between ritual substance and supporting tourism activities, the positioning of tourists as spectators rather than ritual actors, and differing understandings of documentation. Local residents also negotiate tourism through a simultaneous acceptance of its social and economic benefits and concern over overcrowding and the continuity of customary values. The article argues that Seblang is best understood as existing between sacredness and spectacle, where both can coexist. Spectacularization does not necessarily signify the disappearance of sacred meaning; instead, it produces new layers of cultural representation while local actors retain significant authority over ritual substance and boundaries.

Keywords: Seblang Bakungan; Osing culture; cultural tourism; ritual; sacredness; spectacle; negotiation; Banyuwangi

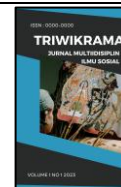
1. INTRODUCTION

Across Indonesia, local cultural traditions are increasingly incorporated into tourism development. Rituals, performing arts, festivals, and other cultural practices are presented through tourism programs, public events, promotional materials, and digital media. This process creates new opportunities for cultural visibility and local economic activity, but it also raises questions about how cultural meanings are maintained when practices originally embedded in community life become accessible to broader publics.

The relationship between culture and tourism has long been associated with questions of authenticity, representation, and commoditization. Cohen (1988), for example, demonstrates that the encounter between tourism and local culture can transform the ways cultural practices

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are presented and experienced. Bruner (2005) similarly emphasizes that cultural performances in tourism are not simply reproductions of an unchanged cultural reality; they are shaped through processes of representation and performance. Cultural practices entering tourism therefore encounter multiple interests, including the interests of governments seeking to develop destinations, communities seeking to maintain traditions, tourism actors seeking to attract visitors, and tourists seeking cultural experiences.

This encounter is particularly significant when the cultural practice involved is a ritual. A ritual may possess meanings that extend beyond its visible performance. Its significance can be connected to beliefs, ancestors, social relationships, sacred spaces, objects, knowledge, and obligations that are not necessarily accessible to outside observers. Consequently, transforming or presenting a ritual within tourism does not simply involve deciding how a performance should be displayed. It also involves determining which aspects may be opened to the public, which should remain within the customary domain, and who possesses the authority to make such decisions.

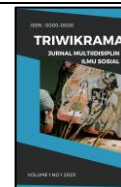
This situation can be observed in Banyuwangi, East Java, where local culture has become an important component of regional tourism development. The Banyuwangi government actively incorporates local cultural traditions into tourism agendas and festivals. The development of tourism has consequently created spaces in which local traditions encounter government programs, visitors, businesses, cultural performers, and digital media. According to the Banyuwangi Regional Government, tourist arrivals reached approximately 3.4 million in 2024 (Pemerintah Kabupaten Banyuwangi, 2025). Within this broader tourism development, Osing cultural traditions have increasingly become visible as part of Banyuwangi's cultural identity.

One tradition situated within this transformation is Seblang Bakungan. Seblang is an adat ritual associated with the Osing community of Banyuwangi, particularly in Bakungan and Olehsari. In Bakungan, the ritual is closely connected to community life, gratitude, safety, health, fertility, prosperity, protection from misfortune, and respect for ancestors. According to Jayanto, the traditional authority interviewed in this research, Seblang is also connected to the historical agrarian life of the community and the practice of village cleansing. The ritual is therefore not simply a dance performance. It forms part of a broader sequence involving ancestral pilgrimage, visits to a water source, activities at the traditional hall, Ider Bumi, communal thanksgiving, and the main Seblang ritual.

The sacred dimension of Seblang is also reflected in the relationships among ritual actors, spaces, objects, and inherited knowledge. Certain processes remain more restricted to community members and traditional authorities, particularly those associated with the preparation of the dancer and the trance or *rasukan* process. Such boundaries demonstrate that the ritual has never been entirely equivalent to a public performance.

At the same time, Seblang Bakungan has increasingly entered the tourism space. Government attention to Seblang became more visible around 2012, and the ritual subsequently became part of the Banyuwangi Festival agenda, including festival programs in 2014, 2015, and 2016. By 2026, Seblang was situated within a broader multi-day program involving cultural performances, community activities, UMKM activities, a market, and a creative video competition. These activities created a wider public space around the ritual and attracted local and international visitors as well as content creators.

The expansion of Seblang into tourism also occurs through digital media. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube enable photographs, videos, promotional materials, and visitor-generated content to circulate beyond Bakungan. As a result, Seblang can be encountered not only through direct participation or observation but also as a mediated cultural representation.



Previous studies have examined Seblang from various perspectives, including sacredness, religious values, social functions, symbols, historical development, regeneration, and cultural change (Anggraini, 2018; Saputra, 2014; Wahyuni, 2017; Yashi, 2018; Serfozo et al., 2018; Yuliatia et al., 2025). Research has also begun to address the relationship between Seblang and tourism, including cultural commodification in Seblang Olehsari (Isnaini, 2025). However, there remains room to examine more specifically how the actors surrounding Seblang Bakungan negotiate its meaning when the ritual becomes increasingly visible within tourism and digital media.

This article therefore moves beyond the question of whether Seblang has become commodified or whether its sacredness has been lost. Instead, it asks how different actors negotiate the boundaries and meanings of Seblang when the ritual enters tourism spaces. The central argument is that the transformation of Seblang cannot be understood as a one-way movement from sacred ritual to tourist spectacle. Rather, tourism expands the spaces through which Seblang is seen, represented, documented, and consumed, while the community and traditional authorities continue to maintain important boundaries concerning ritual substance and participation.

The article addresses three questions: (1) How is Seblang Bakungan positioned and represented within Banyuwangi's cultural tourism development? (2) How do local residents understand the involvement of Seblang in tourism? and (3) How is the meaning of Seblang negotiated among traditional authorities, government, local residents, tourists, and media?

To address these questions, the article brings together the concepts of staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1976), cultural performance (Bruner, 2005), and spectacle (Debord, 1967). These concepts are not used to suggest that tourism automatically destroys ritual authenticity. Instead, they help explain how a ritual can simultaneously retain its sacred significance while becoming increasingly visible as a cultural experience, representation, and spectacle.

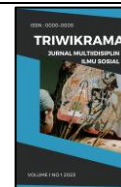
2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to understand Seblang Bakungan as a living cultural practice situated within the social life of its supporting community and its encounter with cultural tourism. An ethnographic approach was selected because the research focused on meanings, experiences, practices, and relationships rather than measuring tourism development quantitatively.

Fieldwork was conducted in Bakungan Village, Glagah District, Banyuwangi, East Java. The research observed spaces associated with the ritual, including the traditional hall, the ritual area, the grave of Buyut Witri, the Mata Air Penawar, and public spaces used for tourism-related activities. The research also considered digital spaces, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, as sites where Seblang was represented and circulated.

Field observation was conducted from 29 to 31 May 2026. Observation covered both the ritual sequence and tourism-related activities surrounding the event. These included the opening of the market, UMKM activities, cultural performances, community activities, the presence of visitors, and the main Seblang ritual. Attention was given to the relationship between ritual actors, residents, tourists, government representatives, and people documenting the event.

Three principal informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge and involvement in Seblang and tourism. The first was Jayanto, 47, a native resident of Bakungan and traditional authority of Bakungan Village. His testimony was used to understand the meaning of Seblang, ritual sequences, customary rules, ritual boundaries, and the relationship between Seblang and tourism.



The second informant was Ervin Inggar Lestari, S.Sos., 38, from the Banyuwangi Cultural and Tourism Office, particularly the cultural division associated with Banyuwangi Festival and Attraction. Her perspective provided information concerning government approaches to cultural tourism, festival development, public representation, and the relationship between government and customary actors.

The third informant was Sulikanah, 29, a native resident of Bakungan who works as a trader. Her position provided insight into community experiences concerning sacredness, tourists, economic opportunities, crowding, cultural continuity, and the changing position of Seblang within tourism.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with these three informants. Questions concerned the meaning of Seblang, ritual practices, sacredness, tourism development, tourists, government involvement, economic effects, documentation, and customary boundaries. The interviews were compared with observations and documentary materials.

Documentation included photographs, field notes, event posters, promotional materials, ritual documentation, festival activities, UMKM activities, and visitor activities. Digital-media data consisted of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube content related to Seblang Bakungan. These materials were examined to understand how Seblang was visually and narratively represented beyond the immediate ritual space.

Literature and archival materials were also used to provide historical and cultural context. The data were analyzed thematically by organizing material around the position of Seblang as a ritual, sacredness, tourism, representation, visitors, government involvement, community responses, and digital media. Data from the three principal informants were compared according to their different social positions. Differences between their perspectives were not treated as inconsistencies but as evidence of the different positions from which Seblang was interpreted.

Triangulation was conducted through comparison among interview data, field observation, documentation, digital media, literature, and archival materials. This process allowed the research to examine not only what informants said about Seblang but also how the ritual was practiced and represented in different spaces.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

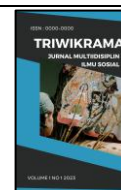
3.1 Seblang as a Sacred Ritual in Bakungan

For the people of Bakungan, Seblang is embedded in community life rather than existing as an isolated performance. Its meaning is associated with village cleansing, gratitude, safety, health, fertility, prosperity, protection from misfortune, and respect for ancestors. Jayanto emphasized that the ritual is related to the historical agrarian life of Bakungan and remains connected to the community's customary life.

The ritual is also characterized by a sequence of activities preceding the main performance. These include visiting the grave of Buyut Witri, visiting the water source, activities at the traditional hall, Ider Bumi, and communal thanksgiving. Such practices demonstrate that the ritual cannot be reduced to the moment when the dancer performs.

The sacredness of Seblang is therefore relational. It is produced through the connection between people, spaces, objects, actions, knowledge, and ancestors. Ritual objects such as offerings, perapen, gamelan, costume, and omprog form part of this larger ritual system. The dancer's trance state further distinguishes Seblang from an ordinary dance performance.

This understanding is important because it establishes the point from which the transformation toward tourism must be understood. Seblang does not enter tourism as an empty performance waiting to be packaged. It enters tourism already carrying meanings and rules that have developed within the community.



This is consistent with previous studies that position Seblang as a sacred and socially embedded practice within Osing society (Anggraini, 2018; Saputra, 2014; Wahyuni, 2017). The present study extends this understanding by examining what happens when this ritual is increasingly made visible to outsiders.

One of the most significant findings concerns the existence of boundaries. Although visitors may observe parts of Seblang, not every part of the ritual is equally accessible. Preparatory processes, *rasukan*, and aspects of the dancer's trance remain associated with a more restricted ritual space. This distinction demonstrates that public visibility does not automatically equal complete public access.

Thus, sacredness in Seblang is not maintained simply by preventing outsiders from seeing the ritual. Rather, it is maintained through the community's capacity to distinguish between what can be publicly encountered and what remains within the customary domain.

3.2 From Ritual Space to Tourism Space

The integration of Seblang into Banyuwangi's tourism agenda has expanded the social space through which the ritual is encountered. Seblang appears in tourism calendars, festival programs, posters, promotional materials, and digital media. It has therefore become visible even before visitors arrive in Bakungan.

Government involvement became more visible around 2012 and subsequently developed through the Banyuwangi Festival. Seblang entered the festival agenda in 2014 and appeared again in subsequent years. Through the festival, Seblang became part of the broader narrative of Banyuwangi's cultural identity.

The 2026 event demonstrates the scale of this expansion. The Seblang program was accompanied by market activities, cultural performances, UMKM activities, and a creative video competition. On 29 May, the program began with a market opening attended by the traditional leadership and tourism authorities, followed by Kuntulan Caruk. On 30 May, the program continued with UMKM activities, performances, *gending*, *Jaranan*, and other supporting activities. Visitors from outside Banyuwangi, international tourists, and content creators were also present.

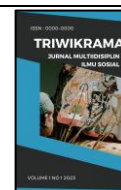
These activities demonstrate an important distinction: tourism activities were developed around the ritual rather than simply replacing the ritual itself.

This distinction is crucial to understanding the negotiation process. The government has an interest in making Seblang more widely known and in creating tourism opportunities for the community. However, the main ritual remains under the authority of the community and traditional leaders.

Ervin's account indicates that tourism development should be undertaken alongside the protection of customary values. When tourism interests conflict with ritual substance, customary interests are prioritized. Jayanto similarly emphasized that the sequence and substance of Seblang should not be changed simply to meet tourism requirements. Public information, promotion, and methods of communicating the event may change, but the ritual itself remains governed by customary rules.

This arrangement can be understood through MacCannell's (1976) concept of staged authenticity. Seblang increasingly appears within spaces designed for public cultural consumption, but its integration into tourism does not mean that its entire ritual structure is reconstructed according to tourist expectations. Instead, tourism creates a public layer around an existing ritual structure.

The result is therefore not a complete replacement of ritual by performance. Rather, tourism creates additional spaces through which the ritual can be encountered.



3.3 Negotiating Access and Ritual Boundaries

The clearest form of negotiation concerns access.

As Seblang becomes more popular, tourists and outsiders are able to enter its public environment. They can watch the ritual, photograph certain activities, and experience the atmosphere surrounding the event. However, they do not acquire the same access as community members or traditional authorities.

This distinction is important because it demonstrates that tourism does not necessarily flatten differences between ritual actors and spectators. Tourists remain primarily observers.

Jayanto emphasized that the presence of tourists is not the reason Seblang is performed. The ritual would continue even without outside visitors because its primary function is connected to the customary life of Bakungan. Tourists are therefore accommodated within an existing ritual structure rather than becoming the central reason for its existence.

This produces a negotiated relationship between openness and restriction. On the one hand, opening certain parts of the ritual allows Seblang to become more widely known. On the other hand, maintaining restricted spaces protects aspects of the ritual that the community considers significant.

The negotiation is therefore not necessarily expressed through formal meetings or explicit conflict. It occurs through everyday practices: where visitors may stand, what they may observe, which parts they may document, and how the ritual itself is allowed to proceed.

This finding challenges an overly simple opposition between preservation and tourism. The community does not simply choose between rejecting tourism and opening the ritual completely. Instead, it develops selective openness.

3.4 Tourists as Spectators

The presence of tourists changes the social atmosphere surrounding Seblang. During the 2026 fieldwork, the researcher observed local residents, domestic tourists, international visitors, and content creators around the ritual area.

Visitors came to watch, take photographs, record videos, and experience the cultural atmosphere. Yet they remained spectators rather than ritual actors.

This distinction corresponds with Bruner's (2005) understanding of cultural performance as an encounter in which culture is represented and experienced through particular forms. Tourists encounter Seblang through what is made visible to them. Their experience is therefore meaningful, but it is not identical to the experience of community members who participate in the ritual as part of their customary life.

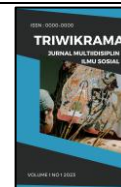
The distinction also becomes visible in the spatial organization of the event. Visitors may observe the ritual from permitted areas, while preparation, *rasukan*, and other restricted processes remain outside their full access.

Consequently, the tourist experience is partial by design. What visitors encounter is a culturally meaningful segment of a larger ritual system.

This does not make the tourist experience meaningless. Rather, it demonstrates that the community continues to exercise authority over the conditions under which the experience becomes possible.

3.5 Tourism, Community Economy, and the Problem of Crowding

The expansion of tourism also produces tangible benefits for local residents. Sulikanah, who works as a trader, described the opportunities generated by the increasing presence of visitors. Tourism activities provide opportunities to sell food and other goods, while the surrounding festival activities create additional economic interaction.



The tourism environment therefore becomes more than a space for cultural consumption. It becomes a social and economic space in which residents interact with visitors and benefit from increased activity.

However, community acceptance of tourism is not unconditional.

Sulikanah also expressed concern about increasing visitor density and overcrowding around the ritual. When too many people gather, the ritual environment can become crowded and uncomfortable. This concern demonstrates that the community evaluates tourism not simply according to the number of visitors or economic benefits but also according to its effects on the ritual environment.

This produces another layer of negotiation. Residents can support tourism because it creates economic opportunities while simultaneously demanding that tourism development respect the ritual and community environment.

Such a position complicates the idea that local communities either resist or embrace tourism. The Bakungan community occupies a more nuanced position: it accepts certain benefits of tourism while retaining concerns about its intensity and consequences.

Tourism is therefore negotiated according to its compatibility with customary values and everyday community life.

3.6 Documentation and the Digital Spectacle

The expansion of Seblang does not stop at the physical tourism space. Digital media creates another arena in which the ritual is represented and consumed.

During the fieldwork, visitors and other participants used mobile phones and cameras to photograph and record the event. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube allow these materials to circulate beyond Bakungan. Jayanto explained that documentation has developed over time, from simpler forms of recording to media coverage and online video. Seblang has increasingly become available for viewing even after the ritual has ended.

This development changes the temporal and spatial character of the ritual. Previously, encountering Seblang required physical presence in the community. Digital documentation allows people who were not present to encounter fragments of the ritual through images and videos.

Debord's (1967) concept of spectacle is useful here because spectacle is not limited to a crowd watching a performance in a physical space. In the context of this study, spectacle also emerges through the production and circulation of images, videos, promotional materials, and mediated cultural experiences.

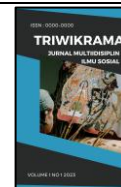
Yet the digital spectacle remains incomplete.

What circulates online does not necessarily represent the entire ritual. Certain aspects remain restricted, while publicly circulating images tend to emphasize what can be seen: the dancer, costumes, performances, crowds, cultural atmosphere, and festival activities.

Digital representation therefore produces a selective version of Seblang.

This does not mean that the digital representation is false. Rather, it represents one layer of the ritual's existence. The community continues to experience Seblang through customary meanings, while outside audiences increasingly encounter it through visual and mediated representations.

This is where MacCannell's notion of staged authenticity becomes particularly relevant. What tourists and online audiences see is not necessarily the entirety of cultural life. Instead, they encounter a publicly accessible layer of the cultural practice.



At the same time, Bruner's concept of performance helps explain how Seblang becomes meaningful through representation. The ritual is increasingly encountered not only as an event but as an image, video, story, and cultural narrative.

3.7 Negotiating Documentation: Different Understandings of the Sacred

Documentation also reveals that negotiation does not always produce a single, uniform boundary.

Ervin explained that, from the government's perspective, certain parts of Seblang should not be freely documented, particularly processes associated with *rasukan*, concentration, and ritual communication. This understanding emphasizes protection of the ritual's more restricted aspects.

Jayanto, however, expressed a relatively more open position. From his perspective, there is not necessarily an absolute prohibition against photographing or recording particular parts of Seblang as long as documentation does not interfere with the ritual and respects its process.

This difference is analytically significant.

It shows that the boundaries of sacredness are not interpreted identically by every actor. Rather than treating this difference as a contradiction that must be resolved, it can be understood as evidence that the meaning and boundaries of Seblang are continually negotiated.

For the government, protection may emphasize restricting documentation of sensitive ritual moments. For the traditional authority, appropriate behavior and respect may be more important than an absolute prohibition.

The negotiation therefore does not produce one fixed rule that eliminates all differences. Instead, it produces practical boundaries through which the ritual interacts with visitors, media, and tourism.

This is consistent with the broader argument of this study: cultural meaning is not simply transferred from community to tourism. It is continually produced through encounters among actors with different positions and interests.

3.8 From Sacredness to Spectacle—or Sacredness and Spectacle?

The central finding of this study is that the phrase "from sacred ritual to spectacle" should not be understood as a linear transformation.

Seblang remains a sacred ritual for the people of Bakungan. Its connection to gratitude, safety, health, fertility, prosperity, ancestors, and customary life remains significant. Its ritual sequence continues to be organized according to customary knowledge.

At the same time, Seblang has become increasingly visible as a cultural spectacle. It is included in tourism calendars and festivals, promoted through posters, witnessed by visitors, recorded by cameras, and circulated through digital media.

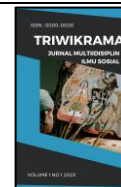
These two positions coexist.

For local residents and traditional authorities, Seblang remains a ritual. For tourists, it can simultaneously become a cultural experience and something to watch. For the government, it represents cultural heritage and a tourism resource. For digital audiences, it becomes an image or video that can be consumed outside its original location.

These meanings do not necessarily cancel one another.

Instead, the coexistence of sacredness and spectacle creates the condition for negotiation.

The concept of spectacle is therefore not used here as a synonym for cultural degradation. It refers to the expansion of Seblang into a space in which the ritual becomes visible, represented, watched, documented, promoted, and consumed by wider publics.



The key question is consequently not whether Seblang has become a spectacle. It clearly has a spectacular dimension within tourism and digital representation. The more important question is whether this spectacularization has displaced the community's ritual authority.

The evidence suggests that it has not.

Traditional authorities and local residents remain central to the ritual's continuation. Tourism activities are developed around the ritual rather than replacing its substance. Visitors can observe but do not determine the ritual's timing or sequence. Government promotion expands visibility but does not acquire complete authority over ritual content.

This is why the transformation is better understood as negotiated spectacularization.

The ritual becomes more publicly visible without necessarily losing the meanings that make it sacred for the community. Its public representation expands, but its customary core remains protected through access restrictions, authority, spatial organization, and community practice.

3.9 The Community as an Active Negotiating Actor

The findings also demonstrate that the community should not be understood merely as a passive recipient of tourism policy.

Residents actively evaluate the consequences of tourism. They recognize opportunities for economic activity, interaction with outsiders, and broader recognition of Seblang. At the same time, they remain attentive to crowding, ritual respect, and cultural continuity.

This is particularly visible in Sulikanah's position. Her perspective combines economic participation with cultural concern. The increasing number of visitors can provide economic opportunities, but excessive crowds can disrupt the ritual atmosphere.

The community therefore occupies a strategic position between continuity and change.

This position also concerns generational transmission. The continuation of Seblang depends not only on protecting a ritual performance but also on transmitting knowledge and practices to younger generations. The involvement of younger people in cultural activities demonstrates that preservation does not necessarily mean reproducing every historical form without adaptation.

The community can adopt new forms of participation, including digital technologies, while maintaining the ritual's fundamental meaning and authority.

This finding is important for understanding cultural sustainability. Sustainability cannot be reduced to keeping a ritual visually unchanged. It also depends on whether the community retains the capacity to define its meaning, transmit its knowledge, and determine the acceptable forms of change.

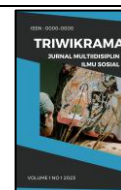
3.10 Negotiated Authenticity in Cultural Tourism

The findings can be further understood through MacCannell's (1976) concept of staged authenticity. Seblang has clearly entered a tourism environment in which cultural experience is organized for broader audiences. However, the case does not demonstrate a complete transformation of the ritual into an artificial performance created solely for tourists.

Instead, a distinction emerges between the ritual itself and the tourism environment surrounding it.

Festival activities, UMKM activities, cultural performances, promotional materials, and digital representations create a broader tourism setting. The main ritual remains governed by customary rules.

This arrangement suggests that authenticity in Seblang is not simply a binary distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic." It is negotiated through boundaries of access and authority.



Bruner's (2005) perspective complements this interpretation by showing how cultural meaning is produced through performance and representation. Seblang is represented differently by different actors: as sacred heritage by community members, as cultural identity by government, as an experience by tourists, and as visual content by media users.

Debord's (1967) concept of spectacle then helps explain the increasing visibility of Seblang within contemporary media and tourism. The ritual becomes something that can be repeatedly seen, recorded, circulated, and consumed.

Yet spectacle does not necessarily eliminate the ritual's original meaning.

Instead, Seblang demonstrates how sacredness can coexist with spectacular visibility when the community retains the ability to establish boundaries.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study demonstrates that the incorporation of Seblang Bakungan into cultural tourism does not constitute a simple transformation from sacred ritual into tourist attraction.

Seblang remains an adat ritual embedded in the social and cultural life of the Bakungan community. Its meanings continue to involve gratitude, safety, health, prosperity, fertility, protection from misfortune, and respect for ancestors. Its ritual sequence and customary rules remain important to its continuation.

At the same time, tourism has expanded the spaces through which Seblang is encountered. The ritual has entered tourism calendars, festival programs, promotional materials, public spaces, photographs, videos, and social media. Visitors increasingly encounter Seblang as a cultural experience and spectacle.

The central finding is therefore that sacredness and spectacle coexist rather than simply replacing one another.

This coexistence is made possible through ongoing negotiation. Traditional authorities maintain authority over ritual substance and customary boundaries. The government expands tourism promotion and creates supporting activities while recognizing customary authority over the ritual itself. Local residents accept tourism because it provides opportunities for social interaction and economic activity, while simultaneously expressing concerns about overcrowding and cultural continuity. Tourists participate primarily as spectators and are accommodated within boundaries established by the community.

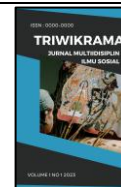
Documentation provides another important arena of negotiation. Digital media extends the reach of Seblang beyond its physical and temporal setting, but the representation circulating publicly does not encompass the entire ritual. Differences between government and traditional authority regarding documentation further demonstrate that the boundaries of ritual visibility are themselves negotiated.

The concept of spectacle in this study therefore does not signify the disappearance of sacredness. Instead, it describes a new mode of visibility in which Seblang becomes increasingly watched, documented, promoted, represented, and consumed by wider publics.

The transformation of Seblang Bakungan can consequently be understood as a process of negotiated cultural visibility. Tourism creates new layers of meaning and representation, but local actors continue to shape the boundaries of what may change and what must remain.

Rather than moving from sacredness to spectacle, Seblang exists between sacredness and spectacle, with both dimensions operating simultaneously.

This case demonstrates more broadly that cultural tourism should not be understood only as a process through which local traditions become tourist attractions. It is also a social process through which communities negotiate authority, visibility, representation, economic opportunity, and cultural continuity. The sustainability of ritual within tourism therefore depends not simply



on limiting change, but on ensuring that communities retain meaningful authority over how their cultural practices are interpreted and represented.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the people of Bakungan Village, Banyuwangi, particularly the traditional authorities and community members who shared their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives concerning Seblang Bakungan. Appreciation is also extended to the Banyuwangi Cultural and Tourism Office for providing perspectives on the development of Seblang within the region's cultural tourism agenda. The author also acknowledges the academic guidance and support received during the completion of the research at the Master's Program in Anthropology, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada.

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