

COMMODIFICATION OF CRAFTS IN BALI

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe types of Balinese craft, and cause of commodification, especially regarding crafts that has experienced dynamics from its original as a result of order (made to order) since the process of commodification occurs. A qualitative approach relying on observation technique and in-depth interview in all three study sites, namely (Kedisan, Ubud, and Celuk) was applied in the collection of data and information. Theories relating to the commodification used to analyze the data of this paper.

Types of crafts that have become commodity today is sculpture consisting of: statue of eagle, elephant, giraffe. In addition, there are also mirror, panel, jewelry, and painting. Some aspects undergoing changes are shape, material, size, coloring, and making method.

The changes or commodification made to the craft products by Balinese artists are as a result of the order (made to order) resulted from two factors: external and internal factors. Externally, it is caused by *made to order* from customer which is generally in line with market tastes. Besides, there is also pattern of production and effect of tourism. As for the internal factors, the artisans in the village of Kedisan, Ubud, and Celuk use their imagination to innovate creatively in order to create new designs of statue, panel, mirror, jewelry, and painting produced by artisans in the three villages. They seem to always follow the tastes of market making their products favored by consumers so that they produce the products massively. In addition, the artisans aim to change their socio-economic life and they produce crafts as commodity that is marketable to benefit them as much as possible.

Keywords: commodification, crafts, market, product

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Introduction

This paper is the result of a study entitled 'Implikasi *Made to Order* dalam Autentisitas Kerajinan Bali' the Implications of Made to Order in Balinese Craft Authenticity (2015). Local regulation No. 2, 2012 mandates that the development of Balinese cultural tourism is oriented on the involvement of harmonious and balance relations between tourism and culture. The aim is to introduce, utilize, conserve, and enhance the quality of objects and attractions; to maintain the norms and values of cultural, religious and natural life of Bali environment inspired; to prevent and counteract the negative effects of tourism activities (Ardika, 2008).

However, consistent with the opinion of Burns and Holden (1995: 112-113) on the influence of commodification on local culture, result of a paper by Ardika, et al (2012) showed that the commodification aspects of Balinese culture, particularly in the form of craft items is dominated by the tastes of tourists buying through the process of reservations. It tends to be in opposition to the mandate of local regulation and the purpose of the development of cultural tourism in Bali as mentioned above. Therefore, this trend is clearly a problem to be anticipated so that cultural tourism in Bali does not imply an identity crisis of Balinese culture. In regard to this, the paper discussing deeply about commodification in relation to tourism needs to be implemented, in particular by analyzing problems which are described as follows: (1) what types of Balinese craft are experiencing the dynamics from its original as the result of the order (made to order)? ; and (2) why do Balinese artists commodify the craft products as the result of the order (made to order)?

Data Source and Method of Writing

The data of paper was collected from interview to the craftsmen and entrepreneurs in Kedisian, Ubud, and Celuk applying qualitative research approaches relying more on methods of observation and literature in the collection of data and information. The method applied was the participatory observation, and its implementation was done of which the researchers participating by staying in place where the activities of respective perpetrators were conducted. However, it should be noted here, that in the observation, interview was also conducted by asking something that has been seen and heard related to the issue being studied in order to gain further knowledge and understanding. They are usually done in participatory observation, it results in the experts' say that participatory observation is a direct observation along with other methods in collecting

information (Mulyana, 2006: 162), or as an observation characterized by the interaction occurred among researchers and their subjects (Satori and Komariah, 2009: 117). The examined aspects in the observations were (1) the circumstances / situations and informants' home; (2) those who participate in the situation, including gender, age, profession, place of origin, and others; (3) activities that people do in such situations; (4) objects existing in that place as well as the location and their use; (5) action, it is the action of actors in the process of activities occurred in the situation being observed; facial expressions that can be seen as a reflection of feeling and emotion.

Analysis of data / information was conducted interpretively, especially by emic and ethics, so as possible problems with informants who have done certain action but not able to inform its meaning are able to be avoided as stated by Brian Vay (2004). This analysis process can be in line with the process of interview and observation, implying that the analysis was performed alternately with the interview and the observation in one package of time. The concrete mechanism is that each important information obtained from informants was directly analyzed to formulate small hypotheses used to create the next questions. Therefore the analysis techniques and the interview by referring to Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 128) called as term 'go hand-in-hand'. The data collected in this study were mainly in form of qualitative data. The data were analyzed by following the procedure of qualitative data analysis as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1992), namely data reduction, data presentation, data interpretation and conclusion drawing.

Data were analyzed by applying commodification theory developed by Barker (2005: 517), and Turner (1992: 115-138). The commodification is the process associated with capitalism in which the object, quality, and signs turn into commodity, ie something which is mainly purposed to be sold in the market. Turner (1992) and Barker (2005) stated that due to economic factors (money) whose orientation is on the spirit of profit seeking as much as possible resulted in the emergence of commodification. Commodification can be extended to all sectors of tourism and the capitalist system in general, because the commodification in the world of tourism can not be avoided.

Results and Discussion

Here, the types of crafts that undergo process and the cause of commodification are described.

Type of Crafts Experiencing the Commodification Process

In this paper crafts refers to handicrafts, such as sculptures, paintings, ceramics, etc. Results of research conducted by Sutjiati Beratha, et al. (2015) about the implications of Made to Order in Balinese Culture showed that the number of artisan especially traditional Balinese carving artisan can be simply counted by fingers, which means very, very few. In Kedisan, Tegallalang district, Gianyar regency there is a very famous traditional sculptor named I Made Ada. I Made Ada is the only one sculptor of garuda bird (eagle) who still maintains his tradition (carving without using machine), and his carving artisans have their respective expertise, such as artisan making the base of the statue of eagle (garuda bird), artisan carving the wings of the eagle, sculptor of the eagle, artisan working with sandpaper, coloring artisan etc. Currently, most of sculptors use machine to finalize the order. It is caused by several factors, namely time, the number of orders, price, type of wood (material), etc. To explore the traditional Balinese carving artisan can be surely made possible by founding , and the making of wooden sculptures on the theme of animals: elephant, cat, horse, etc; tree or plant: banana, lotus, etc; comb, clothes hanger, medicine container, mirrors etc which must be functional.

In Bali, cultural industry has been growing, this condition is difficult to avoid because of tourism. Graburn (2000) has conducted a study on Inuit sculptures as outlined in his article entitled 'The Nelson Graburn and the Aesthetics of Inuit Sculpture' since 1959. The study showed that the human sculptures of Inuit were created to be sold and exported. Further Graburn said that the statues ordered by the tourists underwent changes (commodification) to be in accordance with the tastes of the market it is who the buyers are, and from which country they are originated from. According to Graburn, from 1980 to 1990, the work of Inuit artists (tribes in South Canada) was strongly influenced by western culture through tourism, television, and other media. The Inuit artisans began to create complex composition of the craft. It aimed to introduce non Inuit handicrafts as a result of social issues. The main purpose of the process of commodification was to have the craft sold. Its success was possibly proven considering those buyers who bought the non-Inuit handicrafts. Something similar happened also in the culture of Bali particularly on the sculpture through typical 'made to order' order. According to one

informant who is also a young entrepreneur from the village of Mas, Gianyar regency, saying that the artisans of statues in various villages in Bali, are not sculptors and simply rely on machines to finalize all the orders to have them done quickly. By simply giving sample of the statues, their size and type: statues of elephant, giraffe, cat, or generally a quadruped, and then the statues have now become a commodity. The village of Mas, in Gianyar regency seems to have evolved into a village of cultural industry. Entrepreneurs in this village have always received the order through 'made to order' of statues of giraffe, elephant panel, mirror, painting and other hundred functional craft objects, and even thousands are marketed to Europe and America. According to the informant, his business partners are owners of shops in the countries in Europe and America. The artisans of statue will finalize the orders at their respective home by using machine. This condition causes the diminishing of traditional sculptors so that preservation steps should be considered.

Ryan (2005) wrote an article entitled 'Who Manages Indigenous Tourism Product - Aspiration and Legitimization'. The article stated that the tourism industry always provides different products for different market segments. This phenomenon resulted in the commodification of the products sold by the artisans, so that the craftsmen often manipulate their products since they are forced to follow market demand, it is tourists as the buyer. In the village of Celuk, jewelery is now made of brass or alpaca with casting (molding) technique so that there is a switch of technology from manual by using wire and, quest to make jewelry to printing techniques. Such situation aims to acquire benefit from the sale of craft items for living of those who only earn revenue from the tourism sector so that the process of commodification of the handicrafts will be done. So far, the artisans will produce craft items that the market demands. Today, the art seems no longer appointed for art but for the economy as stated by Ryan because of the influence of the tourism industry.

Ardika (2008), in a writing under the title *Periwisata dan Komodifikasi Kebudayaan Bali* 'Tourism and Commodification of Balinese Culture' stated that tourism can cause the process of commodification of the local culture since culture is considered an object with an attraction for tourists to consume, which then it undergoes process of commercialization. This reality, both directly and indirectly degrade the quality of Balinese culture. In Ubud, the artists use computers to paint and the results are reflected by LCD to canvas, then colored according to customer tastes. By this technique, the painters are able to complete 40 paintings a day. This is evident that

the painting also often undergoes process of commodification. Ardika (2008) also stated that in the world of tourism, the commodification is an unavoidable thing. Conscious or unconsciously, commodification of tourism has changed the meaning of Balinese culture. Watson and Kopachevsky (1994), also found that commodification has penetrated throughout the tourism sector and the capitalist system generally as disclosed by Britton (1991). Ardika (2008) exemplified, Barong dance performance in Batubulan has underwent Balinese culture commodification because it has the following characteristics: (1) its packaging associated with duration for about one hour, (2) the use of barong clone (simulacra) and (3) ceremony during the show is made very simple. Barong dance performance for tourists is promoted through marketing by the various components of tourism industry (Pitana, 2006: 266-267).

To avoid and minimize the process of commodification, commercialization, consumerism, and degradation of Balinese culture in relation to the development of cultural tourism in Bali, Ardika (2008) proposed: (1) to increase public awareness of Balinese in exploring local wisdom and preserving the values of religious and aesthetic culture of Bali, (2) the rules need to be made in form of local regulation as legal framework that should be followed to protect, conserve, and prevent the commodification of Balinese culture, especially relating to the tourist attraction, (3) provision of information to tourists or parties in relation to tourism industry about the values of religiosity and aesthetics of Balinese culture, and (4) the craftsmen or artists to patent their work, or to register copyright in order to avoid impersonation or forgery because property right is on the buyer (someone who orders).

Causes of Commodification

The 'made to order' affects the authenticity of Balinese crafts in particular. This chapter will describe the causes of the dynamics of Balinese handicraft which was originally not a commodity and is now a commodity. According to Ardika (2008: 4-5), commodification is generally caused by two factors: external and internal. From interviews conducted to number of informants consisting of artisans, craft businesses also seem to support the notion Ardika (2008) declared that there are two main factors leading to the commodification process of crafts either external or internally. Both of them will be described in detail as follows.

External Factor

Tourism developed in Bali is cultural tourism aiming to introduce, utilize, conserve, and enhance the quality of objects and tourist attraction, maintain norms, cultural values, religion, and Bali's natural life that is environmentally inspired, prevent and counteract negative effects caused by tourism activities (Bali Provincial tourism Department, 2000). Expectation implied in local regulation is not fully implemented, as the dynamics occurred leading to the commodification process of Balinese crafts. Burns and Holden (1995: 112-113) said that tourism could lead to the commodification process of local culture because culture is considered as an object and attraction to become tourism consumption.

The external factor causing dynamics or changes to occur is due to consumer demand, tastes (trend) of market, tourism, and economic conditions. Interviews conducted to the entrepreneurs and the craftsmen in all three study sites showed that the making of crafts in the form of statue, panel, mirror, and jewelry craft in the company or industry was started with the orders of the consumers in large quantities. Such orders can be both directly and indirectly. Directly means an order that the customers come directly to order to the company as the producer of the desired craft. While indirectly is when the consumers order the products they want at a trade show conducted by the company both in the county and abroad. At the trade show, the industry and the company will market its products in accordance with market trends so that there is meeting between the seller and the buyer.

The consumers generally come from a company expecting to provide satisfaction for its customers so that quality, price, and variety of the products to be ordered are considered primary goal. Orders of the craft product through made to order is very innovative, the buyers usually give idea for change (innovation) of form that the artisans and entrepreneurs must do by providing samples, or making hybridization to the craft product. Elephant statues have various forms and variations ordered via made to order and are functional since the statues are not only as a decoration but also can be used as container for name cards. Giraffe statues are hybridization of Indonesian and African giraffe. The success of creating new forms with diverse variations of an art product is the result of joint innovation between the seller (the company that will realize it to the artisans) and consumers in order to get orders in large quantities and to gain profit as much as possible. In addition, the trend of market is also a major consideration in determining order of the consumer. For example, prior to feast, the consumers desire to look dainty so definitely

wearing jewelry is needed, then it makes high demand for adornments occur. This condition is followed by the increase of the price of precious metals causing the jewelry raw materials originally made of gold and silver were then replaced with brass or alpaca and use casting system 'print'. This condition is an external factor on which the process of commodification of the art products can not be avoided.

In addition, the development of tourism also greatly affects economy of the world. If the world economy is stable (no global crisis), the production of craft products developed in Kedisan, Ubud, and Celuk runs well, delivery of orders through made to order can be performed every month according to the number of orders that is always in large quantities (over a thousand) to be delivered to Europe and America. According to the owner of Dharma Siadja company, in 2009 there had been a financial crisis so that it had been impactful until 2010, the order went greatly reduced, but since 2012 orders began to revive (demand began to increase). The global crisis is characterized by a decreased number of orders or requests, and it might be caused by the collapse of the industry of their trading partners in Europe and America so that the production process became disturbed. The consumer (buyer) of the company is the owner of the importer handicraft stores or the store owner. The decline of tourist quality can also affect the production of handicrafts because although the number of tourists coming to Bali remains abundant, but their purchasing power is very low, the condition also becomes a cause of the lack of orders for products marketed through made to order.

Order of the Consumers

According to I Made Ada, the owner of Dharma Siadja company, in Celuk Design Centre (CDC), the craftsmen (from the interview) said that orders from consumers can be direct and indirect. Direct means that the buyer (the one who orders) the statue of Garuda (eagle), elephant, giraffe, panel, mirror and jewelry comes directly to the craft industry where the products are able to be produced in retail, and also in mass. While indirectly, made to order of the products is made at the time entrepreneurs or artisans holding trade fair both in the country and abroad. The entrepreneurs of the industry or the company will market their products adjusted to tastes of the market. At the trade fair, the transaction between the buyer or consumer with the seller takes place, and their meetings are always organized by prior appointment (arranged by appointment).

The consumers of Dharma Siadja company consist of trading partners of the company from Europe and America expecting that the products ordered through made to order indirectly have good quality although they are always ordered in large quantities, the innovative designs, the varied products (statue, mirror, panel, jewelery are available) are at affordable prices. To meet the consumer expectations, the industry or the company should be able to work hard in order to create products fitting their tastes both from the aspect of culture and non culture. From the aspect of culture, the ordered products can be functional, for instances, a statue besides as a display, it could also possess other functions such as a container for medicine, card, candle holder, makeup, cloth hangers, and others. From the aspect of non-culture, the company should also consider about temperature, and the weather of the country the consumer is coming from. It becomes a major consideration in selecting the type of material (wood) to be used to make the order, so that the product does not get cracked after arriving in the consumers' country or not in a state of getting eaten by termites resulted from poor drainage system in the production. The company and the industry have always thought of this condition because the consumers order the products that undergo a process of commodification in mass. The consumers and the industry refuse to have loss, they both maintain trust and communications to gain profit as much as possible.

After the deal made in the trade fair, the next process immediately will be the production begun definitely with a signing of Trade Agreement letter of the company and the consumer. The production process will be described in the following sections.

Mass Production Process

The production process is handled by a department in a company. A production department has a very important role to maintain a facile production process of a product. The craft products ordered through made to order are always mass-produced because they have undergone a process of commodification of the form (varied and innovative as results of the hybrid of Indonesia - Europe / America, etc.), raw materials (such as wood, plywood (MDF), brass, nickel (alpac), size (large, medium, small), natural coloring system or color of dye factory. These commodities are resulted from a highly innovative and creative imagination of the artisans producing new products that suit the tastes of the market so that they become saleable. The production department manages all human resources involved in producing the orders of the

customers. In addition, this department must also manage equipment such as various types of machines (because there has been a change in technology from manual (hand) to machine to support the stages of production in order to be in accordance with the target to be achieved.

The making of craft products ordered in mass would have to pay attention on a few important things. For example, mass production will begin after the buyer or consumer agrees on (the commodity: material, size, price, etc.). Once the two parties deal signified by the Letter of Agreement. Under the Agreement, the making process of the ordered commodities (statue, panel, mirror and jewelry) begins. The stages are preparing the raw materials, process of making according to the type of products ordered, the drying process using a dryer (dry killn) especially for the types of products that use materials from Albesia wood, next is smoothing with sandpaper, and the final process is finishing by painting or polishing if necessary, and the last stage is the packaging. At this final stage, the company will pack the craft products ordered by customers into a packing according to the agreement stated in the Letter of Agreement between the two parties, namely the company and the consumer.

Distribution Channels

This sub-chapter will discuss distribution channels of the commodity especially crafts ordered through made to order. The distribution channels have a very important role so that these products get into the hands of consumers. From the interviews with the entrepreneurs, craftsmen, and the observation conducted in the three study sites in Gianyar, apparently, the distribution channels consist of two they are direct and indirect distribution. The direct distribution means that the industry or the company will directly carry and deliver the products ordered by the consumers (they can be domestic or foreign tourists, or domestic or foreign companies). The direct distribution is possible for large and small quantity orders. While indirect distribution is when the industry or the company appoints a third party, namely cargo company to take care of the distribution process (can be from transportation service company).

The distribution either directly or indirectly has the goal to have the craft products ordered (statue, mirror, panel, and jewelry) can be on consumers' hands safely (either company, or individual). Cargo companies generally handle the shipping and also the distribution of the craft product ordered through made to order, ranging from choice of transportation, processing of documents such as price list (invoice), Certificate of origin of the products, and so forth

according to the agreement written in trade agreement when the product is shipped abroad (exported). Indirect distribution of craft products ordered are usually already in a packed condition so that the designated cargo company must handle the distribution in order to be arriving at the destination safely.

However, if the order is to be delivered to the areas in the country, the company only prepares the Letter of Travel, and other supporting data, such as lists of mass as proof of amount of the product shipped. The distribution channel emphasizes the consumers' orders both from individuals and companies who have made mass transactions (whole sale) or retail to be delivered to them because they have done made to order through the previous trading partners.

Consumption Pattern

Interviews conducted to companies in Kedisan, Ubud, and Celuk showed that the products of craft industry is consumed by the company as a trading partner both in the country and also abroad with mass consumption patterns. The craft companies in Kedisan, and Celuk are classified as small and medium industries with 25 to 75 workers, while Dharma Siadja company is classified as a large-scale industry with 400 people of workers. The companies in the three villages produce crafts (statue, panel, mirror, jewelry) through a process of commodification. The companies always use imagination creatively and innovatively to create new designs. They make changes of technology from manual (by hand) to machine. The companies have made changes in shape, size, material, coloring systems, and others, so that they produce new commodities in mass. This is done to gain as much profit as possible caused by commodification process as a result of changes in consumption patterns, that is from individual to mass consumption (by the companies as consumers through made to order). To achieve this goal the company must continuously be able to produce products according to market demand (following the market trend).

Each company has designer having responsibility to design new products, such as various types of sculpture in accordance with the demand (order), panel, mirror, or jewelry. The designers working in these companies are required to create new artworks in accordance with the power of imagination, creativity or ability they have, but they may not be apart from the parameter (grip) containing the value of Balinese culture and art which is taksu (inner beauty) that only Balinese culture possesses.

The results of interviews conducted with the artisans of crafts in Kedisan village, Ubud, and Celuk showed that apparently similarities are often found in the designs of statue, panel, mirror and jewelry the artisans produce. To anticipate the process of commodification, commercialization, consumerism, plagiarism, and degradation of Balinese culture in relation to the development of cultural tourism in Bali, Ardika (2008) proposed: (1) to increase public awareness of Balinese in exploring local wisdom to preserve religious values and aesthetic culture of Bali, (2) it needs to formulate a rule in the form of Local Regulation (Perda) as an umbrella law that must be followed to protect, conserve, and prevent the commodification of culture of Bali, especially those linked to the tourist attraction, (3) provision of information about the values of religiosity and aesthetics of Balinese culture to tourists or parties related to tourism industry (4) the craftsmen or artists to patent their work, or to register copyright (Intellectual Property Rights) in order to avoid impersonation or forgery. According to the entrepreneurs of crafts in all three study sites, it seems handicraft industry in Bali generally has close links with tourism and global economic conditions. It is caused by the fact that the produced craft products are exported to foreign countries such as Europe, America, Australia, and others.

Internal Factors

The internal factor is the craftsmen's own desire to innovate by using imagination in creating new designs creatively from their original products to avoid boredom or burnout. In addition, economic factor is also a trigger for the artisans to continue to innovate, to be creative creating new designs of a work of craftsmanship so that these products are sold in the market.

Crafts, namely statue, panel, mirror and jewelry becomes commodity because it has undergone a process of commodification, a change (generally a simplification) of technology (hand to machine, form (various types of form), size, raw materials (from the hardwood to soft), coloring (from natural colors to using dyes).

Ardika (2008), in a writing entitled *Periwisata dan Komodifikasi Kebudayaan Bali* (Tourism and Commodification of Balinese Culture) stated that tourism can cause the process of commodification of the local culture since culture is considered as an object possessing attraction to be consumed by tourists, which then undergoes a process of commercialization. This reality, both directly and indirectly degrades the quality of Balinese culture.

Conclusion

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the type of Balinese crafts experiencing dynamics from the original as the result of the order (made to order) and a process of commodification is sculpture consisting of the statues of eagle (garuda), elephant, and giraffe. In addition, there are also mirror, panel, jewelry, and painting.

The Balinese artists make changes or commodification of the craft products as a result of the order (made to order) resulted from two factors: external factors and internal factors. External factors are caused by made to order from customers who generally follow the market tastes. In addition, there is the pattern of production, and the effect of tourism. As for the internal factors, the artisans in the village of Kedisan, Ubud, and Celuk use their creative imagination to innovate in order to create new designs of statue, panel, mirror and jewelry. They seem to always follow the tastes of the market so that their products are preferred or chosen by consumers causing the products produced in mass. In addition, the artisans want to change their socio-economic life and they produce craft into a commodity that is sold in the market at a low price.

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