

Tourism Development in Bali: The Impact of World Heritage Status

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Abstract

The “Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: The Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy” was registered as Bali’s first UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) world heritage site in 2012. Although Bali is a famous international tourist destination, it faces many social problems, such as declining agriculture and subak or irrigation associations which have supported local farming for about 1,000 years. UNESCO world heritage status was expected to provide opportunities to promote alternative forms of tourism that could support the revitalization of local agriculture, and highlight, both locally and internationally, the significance of the island’s cultural and natural environment.

This research explored the impacts of UNESCO world heritage listing on Bali’s local society, to find out in what ways it has produced positive outcomes, and to examine any discernible issues relating to this world heritage site. UNESCO has previously been criticized for its tendency to pursue “pure” culture while undervaluing the trans-local cultural processes within which cultural heritage is embedded. However, I argue that the UNESCO world

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heritage system has achieved significant positive results in accelerating improvements in Bali's legal system and ministerial service as well as increasing government subsidies to subak. While Bali's social issues became more serious after Indonesia's democratization in 2001, UNESCO's role in assisting heritage preservation through international cooperation is worthy of reflection.

Key words : Bali, world heritage system, international cooperation, subak, Tri Hita Karana

Introduction

The "Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: The Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana" was registered as Bali's first UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) world heritage site in 2012. This listing was expected to provide Bali with the opportunity to revitalize its traditional irrigation associations, known as subak. This research set out to explore the impacts on Balinese society of having UNESCO world heritage designation, focusing on both the positive outcomes and the discernible issues related to the site. In order to explore these questions, it is important to first consider the UNESCO world heritage system through the particular relationship between UNESCO and Indonesia. Second, we will identify modern social issues related to Balinese agriculture to demonstrate why subak system is worthy of preservation. Finally, taking Jatiluwih in Tabanan as an example, we will explore the impacts of the world heritage site designation on local communities.

1. The UNESCO World Heritage System and Indonesia

Indonesia has had close links with UNESCO since the refurbishment and world heritage site designation of Borobudur Temple in 1991. While designation as a UNESCO world heritage site is expected to contribute to increased tourist revenue while contributing to cultural and environmental preservation, there has been some criticism of UNESCO policy. Moreover, historically the nomination of Besakih as a world heritage site generated intense debate in Bali. Therefore, the aim and purpose of the UNESCO world heritage system, why voices were raised against a previous nomination in Bali, and why the newly designated world heritage site has been favorably received by the Balinese people, all need to be addressed.

1-1 *The World Heritage System*

World heritage sites are heritages registered on the UNESCO world heritage list based on the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in 1972. World heritage sites are sorted into three categories: cultural heritage, natural heritage, and mixed cultural and natural heritage. Unique and irreplaceable monuments, groups of buildings, sites, natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of formations, geological and physiographical formations, and precisely delineated areas of outstanding universal values are subject to registration (UNESCO 1972a). The convention aims to stipulate that state parties enhance legal and administrative improvements and establish systems for international cooperation and aid mechanisms to protect heritage. This obliges state parties to make every effort to preserve their heritage with international financial, artistic, scientific, technological assistance and cooperation to make the most

of their abilities and resources. In addition, states members are required to protect heritage sites from destruction or damage, while allowing public access as part of the state's duty to transmit its heritage from present to future generations (Ibid). As of June 2019, globally there are 1,121 world heritage sites, consisting of 869 cultural sites, 213 natural sites and 39 mixed sites in 167 countries (UNESCO 2019).

It is important to remember that the idea of world heritage as the common heritage of humanity does not stand by the principles of the integration of humanity, but instead is based on the need for solidarity and cooperation among all of humanity. From this perspective, cultural diversity is valued highly, and the promotion of heritage protection involving local communities is emphasized. This concept contributes significantly to the promotion and improvement of heritage preservation activities in developing countries, as many of these countries cannot afford the economic and technical cost of heritage management.

The idea of cultural heritage protection based on international cooperation took shape from the end of 19th Century to the 20th Century. Its origin can be traced back to the 1907 Hague Convention IV, which forbade the wartime destruction of property. While the ban on the demolition of property is a relatively passive act, a more active approach to the restoration and preservation of monuments was promoted under the international Intellectual Co-operation Institute during the era of the League of Nations. This approach was inherited and institutionalized by UNESCO after World War II.

Even before the 1972 adoption of the Convention concerning Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Indonesian government had called on UNESCO for aid for the restoration of Borobudur Temple. Borobudur is a Mahayana Buddhist temple, constructed from the 8th to the 9th Century,

located about 40km northwest of the Historic City of Jogjakarta. Importantly, asking UNESCO for assistance is nothing less than making a declaration and a pledge, to both UNESCO and to the nations of the world that properties will be preserved. Following such requests for assistance, it is expected that member states will make an effort to protect sites in order to fulfill their domestic and international responsibilities.

In addition, with respect to the preservation of cultural property, UNESCO emphasizes the role of inhabitants of the area in site protection and conservation (UNESCO 1972b). Without adequate national human resources to secure effective protection, preservation is no longer an act of international cooperation but an imposed plan, or even foreign interference, by developed countries in domestic affairs. According to Kono, this risk was realized at an early stage, as a project survey conducted by UNESCO in the early 1950s confirmed that many countries suffered from insufficient manpower to preserve sites, and some had not even established domestic systems to accept specialists from foreign countries (Kono 1995: 172-173, 461-462). The Indonesian government faced a comparable challenge, which is one reason why it took more than 15 years to start the preservation project following its application for aid for the Borobudur restoration. As part of that project, numerous restoration programs, including the implementation of a study, reinforcement of the government's administrative capacity on cultural heritage preservation, creation of administrative official and engineering official roles, and the setting up, consolidation and improvement of museums, were launched to overcome these challenges. In respect to member states' responsibility for heritage protection, at the 19th session of its General Conference, in Nairobi in 1976, UNESCO emphasized that the safeguarding of historic areas should be undertaken with the closest possible participation of

the communities and groups concerned, given that historic areas are the living evidence of days gone by, it is vital for humanity and for nations to find in these sites both the expression of a way of life and the cornerstones of identity (UNESCO 1976).

Most of the early examples of world heritage sites were harshly criticized as manifestations of Western supremacy, given that most heritages registration was conferred on Western architectural styles (Ishida 2009: 21). However, UNESCO has since widened its perspective to recognize the cultural values of societies that co-exist with nature as demonstrated by the designation of the world heritage site in Bali where nature and culture are closely intertwined.

Moreover, UNESCO has also been criticized for its tendency to pursue cultural authenticity, while regarding globalization as having a negative impact on indigenous sites. Such an approach neglects a more dynamic concept of culture which sees cultural heritage embedded in trans-local cultural processes (Yamashita 2013: 64). The influence of Western colonialism was essential to the development of contemporary Balinese culture, leading to a 20th Century Balinese cultural development that Yamashita refers to as “Creole” or hybrid culture (Yamashita 2003: 37). In addition, Picard has argued that tourism has neither “polluted” Balinese culture nor killed its “renaissance,” much less simply contributed to “preserve it” (Michel Picard 1996: 198). While these views can be regarded as correct, and tourism has boosted Balinese culture and economy, it is also true that agricultural activity has been in rapid decline, rice farming being a cornerstone of Balinese culture. In 2019, this issue was addressed at the Indonesia Japan Business Forum, when Satria Naradha appealed for agriculture to be given equal footing with tourism and culture as representative of Bali Province.¹⁾ In this context, UNESCO’s emphasis on protecting unique local culture from globalization is

worth reconsidering, as Bali itself is confronted with a dilemma between creating space for tourism and the global transfer of people and rice cropping as a traditional means of livelihood.

1-2 Heritage Nominations in Indonesia and Bali

Since the 1970s, the UN and International Council of Monuments and Sites have appealed for the proper control of tourism development, considering the risks that overdevelopment poses to areas of historical importance. Under the first five-year-plan, introduced in 1968, the central government of Indonesia promoted massive tourism development in Bali and other provinces. Development occurred in the expectation that an international tourism industry would be an ideal source of foreign currency revenue. Although the Balinese provincial government appealed for balanced and properly controlled development, advancing the concept of Cultural Tourism (*Pariwisata Budaya*) whereby tourism revenue is used to protect and foster Balinese culture, massive development continued according to the Master Plan, under a 1972 presidential decree which gave tourism top priority over all other economic sectors in Bali. Since the impact on local society was not given much consideration under the authoritarian regime of Soeharto, many natural and cultural heritage sites across Indonesia, including in Bali, faced management difficulties. Then, in 1991 Borobudur, Prambanan, the largest Hindu temple compound in Indonesia, Komodo National Park, famous for its giant monitor lizards, and Ujung Kulon, a rhino sanctuary in Southwestern Java were registered as UNESCO world heritage sites, after the Indonesian government selected candidates for cultural and natural registration at UNESCO's request.

In Bali, Besakih Temple was nominated in 1990, when the then-Coordinating Ministry of Public Welfare convened a working group on cultural and natural

heritage. The Indonesia Hinduism Society (Parisada Hindu Dharma) immediately rejected the proposal, with its spokesperson, I Ketut Wiana expressing apprehension at the possibility that ritual ceremonies in Besakih would be banned. This view was a misreading of UNESCO's mission, but, as Borobudur was already widely known for its world heritage status, this helped to spread the belief that the site's heritage had been abandoned. Because of this, Besakih was removed from the working group's proposal, and its rejection was announced at the regional assembly by Ida Bagus Oka, then-governor of Bali (Hitchcock & Darma Putra 2007: 100-101).

Dispute over Besakih reoccurred in 1992 when the central government issued a national law on cultural property (Undang-Undang No.5 Tahun 1992 tentang Benda Cagar Budaya), making it possible for the temples, including Besakih, to be listed as national heritage. While more than 140 sites and temples were declared national heritage, representatives of the Indonesian Hindu Intellectual Forum (Forum Cendekiawan Hindu Indonesia) made a direct appeal to Fuad Hassan, then-Minister of Education and Culture, not to register Besakih as either national or world heritage. Eventually, the cancelation of Besaki's nomination was announced for a second time.

The final bitter debate over the Besakih nomination occurred in 2001. This time it was I Gde Ardhika, a former Balinese Minister who sought to nominate the temple. Those in favor of the nomination expected it to lead to the proper management of Besakih, with assistance from experts, as they recognized UNESCO as an arbiter of best archeological and conservation practice. Supporters also believed that being a world heritage site would be a hallmark of quality that would attract more tourists (Ibid: 102-103). Above all, Besakih itself was in need of restoration, and many of the temple's guides were thought to lack appropriate guiding certification. Therefore, ensuring the proper

management of the temple was a matter of some urgency. Opponents of the nomination, however, tried to persuade I Gde Ardika to resign from his ministerial position, accusing him of a lack sensitivity for serious concerns that the nomination would transfer authority for Besakih from Bali to the central government (Ibid: 101-103, 105).

As a result of government decentralization in 2001, most competence and financial resources were delegated from the central government to local regencies and cities, causing the administration of Bali to be divided into eight parts and Denpasar to embark on its own development activities. In this context, the role of Besakih as Bali's mother temple should not be underestimated. In addition, which authority would be granted control of Besakih constituted an important issue for the Hindu minority Balinese in predominantly Muslim Indonesia. As a result, in contrast to the Besakih, other parts of Bali, including Taman Ayun and Jatiluwih, were registered in 2012, with no dissenting voices.

2. UNESCO World Heritage Site in Bali

While a newly registered Balinese UNESCO world heritage site, "The Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the subak system as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy," has been warmly welcomed in Bali, author Richard Mann has written that, "The UNESCO Cultural Landscape of Bali Province is perhaps the last chance to save some of Bali's wet rice fields and its central lakes by protecting and conserving..." This suggests that Balinese agriculture faces certain problems that the UNESCO designation is expected to resolve. The next section examines the agricultural situation in detail.

2-1 Bali Subak System and Tri Hita Karana

A “cultural landscape” refers to a combined natural and human landscape that expresses a long and intimate relationship between communities and their natural environment, and is based on “the combined works of nature and man” in Article 1 of the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The concept of cultural landscape was positioned as a part of cultural heritage after the 16th ordinary session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Santa Fe in 1992 (UNESCO 1992). This development reflected the extension of the concept of cultural heritage to non-Western architectural forms and lifestyles, such as landscapes where culture and nature are mutually dependent, nomadic cultures, homes build from natural materials, such as mud and thatch, and so on, thus valuing cultural diversity. This extended the conceptualization of heritage from tangible heritage and real estate to the idea of landscape, and the lives of local resident as “living culture” and “living tradition.” This enabled a greater diversity of sites to be regarded as heritage without distinguishing between natural heritage sites and cultural heritage sites (Kakiuchi 1999: 53-58).

In Sanskrit, *Tri Hita Karana* means the prosperity brought about by balanced relations between gods and humans, nature and humans, and humans and humans. The phrase is composed of Tri (three), Hita (safe, prosperity), and Karana (reason, cause) (Ashrama 2005: 24). The collapse of the Soeharto authoritarian regime in 1997 was followed by a period of rapid democratization, and expectations and needs shifted to a desire for sustainable tourism in Bali. This resulted from conflicts between Balinese and non-Balinese caused by a social structure in which foreign investors and workers received the lion’s share of tourism revenue, while most Balinese remained in low paid jobs, even though it was local Balinese who attracted most of the

tourists by creating and sharing their culture. Frustrations over this socioeconomic disparity led many local residents to attack resort hotels and government offices at the end of the Soeharto regime. Because of this, the concept of Tri Hita Karana that places a high value on harmony among people has come to be emphasized in the era of democracy (Bali Travel News 2004).

Subak is a traditional Balinese irrigation system believed to have originated in the 11th Century (Windia & Alit Artha Wiguna 2013: 32). In 2009, there were 2,345 subaks in Bali, irrigating 1,546 paddy fields and 779 plantations (The Jakarta Post 14 Apr. 2009). A subak is composed of landowners who each have an equal share in irrigation water. The subak is different from a customary village (*desa pakraman*²⁾) or an administrative village (*desa dinas*). Some subak are composed of members of Bali's smallest administrative unit, the *banjar*, while others are composed of members of multiple *banjars*. Members are duty-bound to participate in communal work, such as managing and patrolling the canals. They also engage in maintaining local infrastructure, such as small paths for transporting harvested produce and connecting paths to other subak areas, assembly halls, temples and grain warehouses. The work rate is determined on the basis of the amount of water allocation to each farm.

A subak is an autonomous community that abides by customary law (*Awig-Awig*). While Bali has rich and stable water resources from the base of its central volcanic mountain, it often experiences dry season water shortages. For the optimal use of limited water, *Awig-Awig* lays down the fundamental principles for sound agricultural activity, which are fair distribution of water resources, preservation of farm land, knowledge of vermin control, seasons and times for activities such as cropping, seeding and planting for each variety of rice. In addition, it prescribes basic collaborative activities and events, such as engaging all members in cleaning and repairing irrigation canals. While *Awig-*

Awig penalizes violations, water theft and rice planting violations receive the most severe punishment. A subak is a type of congregation that owns its own temples with gods, it is also believed that acting contrary to Awig-Awig can bring disaster on community members and crop production (Yoshida & Nakamura 1995: 75; Izawa 2011³⁾). Subak members pray to Berata Wisnu (water god) and Dewi Sri (paddy god) for grain productivity during various ritual ceremonies held at subak temples (Nagano 2009: 186-187).

2-2 Declining Agriculture in Bali

The newly registered UNESCO world heritage site covers an area of 19,500ha across the five regencies of Bangli, Gianyar, Tabanan, Buleleng and Badung. Figure 1 shows regional paddy production and reveals that approximately 80% of production is in these five regencies. The world heritage

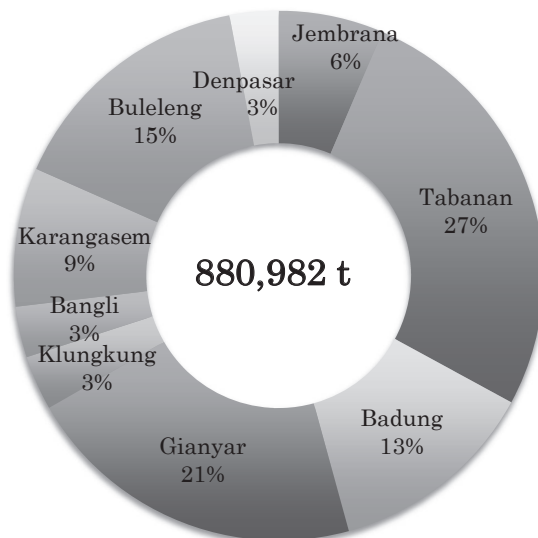


Figure 1: Rice production by regency in 2013 (BPSPB 2014)

listing is expected to enable people to rediscover the uniqueness of the about 1000-year old subak society, with the potential to revitalize subak not only within the boundary of the heritage site but throughout Bali (Mann 2013: 32).

One recent social issue in Bali is active conversion of agricultural lands. There is widespread concern that the declining agricultural sector will, in turn, weaken the tourism sector, since Balinese culture, the core of the tourism resource, is closely related to agriculture. As shown by Tri Hita Karana, Balinese Hindu-based culture values harmony between people and nature. While the tourism sector has contributed to regional poverty alleviation by replacing the agricultural sector which led the Balinese economy until 1970s, it has brought about dramatic changes to the landscape. This problem has grown more serious since decentralization in 2001, which requires local governments to be financially independent. While Badung is highlighted as an example of successful financial independence in the era of local autonomy, other regencies have also accelerated tourism development in order to increase revenue from hotel and restaurant taxes. Since the northern parts of the regencies, which had been excluded from tourism development during the Soeharto era, also embarked on development activities through close collaboration with outside investors, it is anticipated that decline in the agricultural sector will accelerate (Izawa 2019).

According to the Bali Central Bureau of Statistics (BPSPB: Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Bali), each year between 2005 and 2009, areas of rice field greater than 1,000ha were converted to other commercial purposes. The conversion has been especially rapid in southern Bali, with areas of rice field as large as 43ha in Kuta and 198ha in Denpasar disappearing annually (Bali Post 24 Sept. 2013). While Law No.41/2009 on the Protection of Sustainable Food Crop Farmland in Indonesia (Undang-Undang No.41 Tahun 2009 tentang

Perlingungan Lahan Pertanian Pangan Berkelanjutan) stipulates farmland preservation, according to I Gusti Agung Ketut Sudaratmaja, former head of the Forestry and Plantation Agency of Badung, this law has not been upheld in Bali, where strict laws against the unpermitted diversion of agricultural land have not been established (Bali Post 17 Jan. 2013). To improve this situation and implement tourism which preserves local culture and nature, the provincial government issued Bali Provincial Regulation No.16/2009 on Spatial Planning of the Province of Bali for the Year 2009-2029 (Perda No.16 Tahun 2009 tentang Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah Provinsi Bali Tahun 2009-2029) and required the regencies of Badung, Gianyar and Denpasar to refrain from constructing new tourist accommodation. This law was, however, criticized for not reflecting local conditions, and hotels and other accommodation continue to be actively constructed in southern Bali to meet growing demand (Bali Post 26 May 2011).

A rapidly declining population of farmers is also an issue in Bali. In 2003, there were 492,394 farm households, and 408,233 in 2013, representing a 17% decline in a decade. Farming population decline is particularly noticeable in popular tourism regencies. For example, there has been a decline of 26% in Badung, 28% in Gianyar, and 47% in Denpasar (BPSPB 2013). In addition, approximately 64% of farmers own less than 0.5ha, with Buleleng and Karangasem each home to more than 50,000 small farm households. According to Wayan Windia, head of the Subak Research Center at Udayana University, a 1ha plot of farmland requires 70 to 80 days of agricultural labor per year, with 110 to 120 days until grain threshing. In addition to the government farming fund of 3 million rupiah, farmers must deal with risks such as crop disease, work-place accidents, natural disasters, and so on. Therefore, younger generations have sought employment into the tourism sector to avoid the risks

and unstable income associated with farming (Windia & Alit Artha Wiguna 2013: 34-46).

Not only farmers, but the subak system itself, has lost momentum, with a decrease in number from 1,600 in 2003 to 1,546 in 2009 (Sumiyati et al. 2012: 294). The Sedahan Agung, which once played a key role in instructing the Pekaseh, or head of the subak, no longer has a leadership role in subak preservation, as it has become the follower of the district income office (dispenda: dinas pendapatan daerah), which is more focused on hotel and restaurant revenue than on subak. Some Sedahan Agung are already in ruins, leading to more frequent problems in the subak. Other problems, such as the depletion of water resources, unfair distribution of water, and conflicts over agricultural water use have increased, especially close to tourist areas, yet many subaks cannot afford to pay for canal repair or holding ritual ceremonies (Windia 2013: 153-155).

The tourism sector also has an impact on subak. First, there is competition between the tourist sector and the agricultural sector for limited water resources. Water is not shared equally between households, agricultural land and tourist facilities, with the tourist sector consuming the largest share of water. At Ubud, a famous tourist destination in Gianyar, rafting is a very popular tourist activity that requires huge amounts of water. In addition, illegal dumping into rivers by nearby hotels is a major contributor to water pollution. Although the unity of the subak is essential to water resource management, subak, Sedahan Agung and even Awig-Awig are losing their social vitality (Ibid: 154-155). As a result, it is anticipated that the Balinese agricultural sector will face increasingly challenging circumstances in the near future.

3. UNESCO world heritage System and Subak Preservation

It is clear from the previous section that declining agriculture is a serious problem in Bali. What has been the impact on local society, therefore, of UNESCO world heritage designation? Have expectations of site preservation been met? A case study of Jatiluwih will help to understand the achievements and challenges of this world heritage site.

3-1 Case Study of Jatiluwih, Tabanan

Jatiluwih in northern Tabanan, is 47km from Denpasar, in the center of Bali. The town is located at the base of Mt. Batukaru, 700m above sea level, and consists of 812 households with a population of 2,680. A 303ha plot of rice terrace is managed by Jatiluwih subak, which is composed of 7 tempeks with 526 members. As the subak is a form of congregation, Jatiluwih subak actively holds ritual ceremonies to pray for a good grain harvest. These ceremonies take place at various temples, from smaller ones managed by the subak or banjar to larger temples in Tabanan, such as Tanah Lot.

Although this has long been a popular tourist destination, the number of tourists has doubled in number to 300 foreign tourists per day since UNESCO world heritage designation. The subak charges an admission fee of Rp.15,000 for domestic tourists and Rp.20,000 for international tourists, in addition to a parking fee of Rp.5,000. As the number of foreign tourists has increased from 97,909 in 2012 to 101,560 in 2013 and 165,158 in 2014, the subak has experienced a growth in revenue (Antara News Bali 30 March 2015). As Figure 2 shows, the revenue for January to July 2014 was Rp.1.4 billion. This revenue assisted with canal and other infrastructure repair (Bali Post 29 Sep-5 Oct. 2014). Tourism revenue is shared between the government of Tabanan (45%)

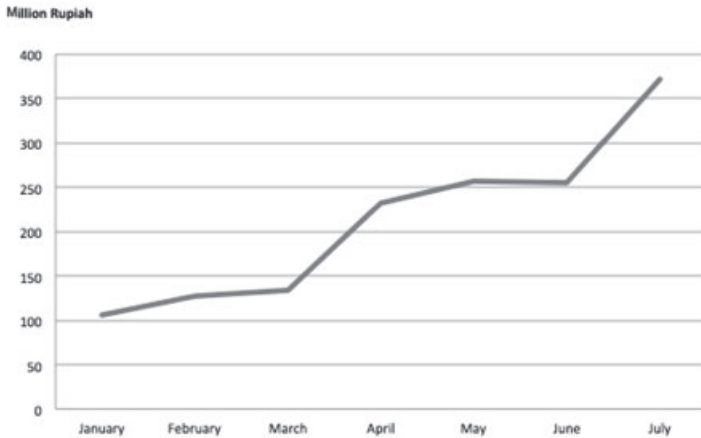


Figure 2: Changes in monthly revenues from January to July 2014

and Jatiluwih (55%). Jatiluwih dividends are then redistributed to Jatiluwih desa dinas (25%), Jatiluwih desa pakraman (30%), Gunung Sari desa pakraman (20%), Jatiluwih subak (21%), Abian Jatiluwih subak (2%), and Abian Gunung Sari subak (2%) (Indonesiana 19 June 2014).

While being on the list of UNESCO world heritage sites has contributed to revenue growth, many issues persist. According to I Nyoman Sutarna, a pekas of Jatiluwih subak, irrigation facilities in Jatiluwih, most of which were constructed from 1968 to 1969, have deteriorated. Water brought from the river through the canal system travels a distance of 40km, 70% of which needs to be repaired, as aging equipment can cause flooding as well as water shortage over large areas. Some paddy fields in Jatiluwih already face difficulties in growing crops and the proportion of such land is expected to expand in the future. Although the subak has sought support from the government of Tabanan, proper care is not exercised (Bale Bengong 5 June 2014).

Moreover, in addition to improving legislation, Windia calls for the need to consolidate and expand the agricultural and subak subsidy system to include a favorable tax regime for farmland to ensure financial stability (Windia 2013: 152, 156-157). In Jatiluwih, there has been a growing sense of crisis as investors seek to construct villas and bungalows to accommodate increasing numbers of tourists. The government of Tabanan has issued Local Regulation No.6/2014 on Green Belt in Tabanan (Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Tabanan No. 6 Tahun 2014 tentang Kawasan Jalur Hijau), which prohibits the conversion of the 303ha of agricultural land in Jatiluwih into commercial facilities. Nevertheless, illegal construction exists. Since UNESCO world heritage designation, land transactions have become increasingly risky, due to an ever-growing demand for more tourist accommodation (Bali Post 13-19 Jan. 2014). If farmers cannot afford to continue farming, they will have no other choice but to sell their land, leading to serious concerns about an even greater decline in farming and farmland.

3-2 Toward the Preservation of Subak in Bali

While every subak in Bali has received a block grant of Rp.15 million from the provincial government each year from 2006, this amount increased to more than Rp.30 million from 2013 (Windia 2013: 152). Moreover, the provincial government also decided that 17 subaks located inside the UNESCO world heritage site would receive a subsidy of Rp.100 million, enabling the restoration and management of infrastructure and the practice of ritual ceremonies (Antara Bali 3 Jan. 2014).

According to the Jakarta Post, however, even after world heritage site designation, the Bali government is slow to preserve subaks. For example, a year passed without the Bali government taking any measures, while UNESCO

repeatedly requested that the government formulate a policy and compile a plan to preserve the site (The Jakarta Post 25 Sept. 2013). As revitalizing Balinese agriculture, including the subak system, is a matter of great urgency, the government is required to respond immediately. Without ensuring appropriate control of water in the upper course of a river, downstream basins inevitably suffer the impact. Indeed, while Denpasar regularly faces water shortages, some of which are caused by works in the upper courses of rivers, hundreds of hectares of paddy fields experienced drought in 2013 for more than 4 months and 650 hectares faced drought in July 2019 in conditions that were estimated to continue until October because of canal improvement projects in Badung and Gianyar, respectively (Bali Post 24 Sept. 2013; Tribun Bali.com 15 July 2019). As UNESCO regularly assesses how well its world heritage sites are maintained, it is likely that the Bali government will face international pressure to increase its efforts to preserve the site and involve local residents.

Conclusion

There are many issues to be overcome in order to revitalize Balinese agriculture. These include securing the subak system as the core of agriculture, easing the risk to farmers of unstable incomes, sustaining the number of farmers and their related traditional organizations, managing rural infrastructure, preserving water resources, and coexisting with the tourist sector. The UNESCO world heritage site listing has, at the very least, succeeded in a domestic and international reevaluation of the value and uniqueness of the subak system. Criticism that UNESCO tends to pursue “pure” cultural traditions rather than take a more dynamic approach to

cultural processes at the trans-local level should not be taken lightly. A trans-local, cultural processes conceptualization enables the identification of the flexibility of cultures and their potential for change and creation, as revealed by Balinese culture. Subak is, however, not only a form of cultural heritage but an important means of earning a living for Balinese farmers. The loss of equitable water distribution is of crucial significance to local residents. In spite of this, adequate measures to improve the financial situation of subak members have not been taken. To make matters worse, after democratization, tourist development increased in Bali, as local residents collaborated closely with outside investors. At present, competition for water is on the increase. While these problems cannot be overcome only by efforts of local residents and government, the UNESCO world heritage system, and the international cooperation associated with it, should be highly valued for its contribution to increasing local revenue derived from tourism and from the government.

Close attention should be paid to whether local farmers engaged in managing subak receive fair compensation for their work. The intentions of these farmers may not be the same as those who are not engaged in farming but who supported the nomination of the area as a UNESCO world heritage site. If preservation is promoted without reflecting the opinions of local farmers, the project becomes an imposition and an intervention by outsiders. In addition, it would also lead to a resurgence in the criticism that UNESCO prefers to pursue “pure” culture, which makes light of the changing needs and values of local residents. It is important to question to whom we refer when we use the term “local people” and to consider how their voices should be reflected in preservation of the site. How are these voices reflected when local and central governments and international organizations launch preservation plans? These are issues to watch closely when preserving this and other sites.

The Notes

- 1) The presentation was given by Satria Naradha, director of Bali Post, on 26 June 2019.
- 2) Balinese villages have a double layered structure: *desa dinas* (administrative village) and *desa adat* (customary village). The purpose of this division was to separate customary matters, such as cremation and other ritual ceremonies, from administrative issues, such as management of certificates of registration, birth notification, tax levies, and so on. Moreover, the *desa* is composed of several “*banjar*,” which is the smallest social unit in Bali. These also are comprised of *banjar dinas* and *banjar adat*. However, it is not simply the case that *desa dinas* are composed of *banjar dinas* and *desa adat* are composed of *banjar adat*. While some *desa dinas* are composed of *dasa adats*, some consist of several *desa adat*. This is the case because when the Dutch colonial government installed administrative villages for census survey and tax collection purposes it did not take seriously those *banjar* that managed both administrative and customary matters (Warren 1993: 239-241). In addition, the term *desa adat* is Arabic in origin and was renamed *desa pakraman* during the colonial era, returning to its original Sanskrit in 2001.
- 3) Interview with a Kukuh village resident in Tabanan on 14 March, 2011.

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