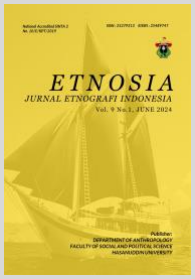
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The Resistance of the Warga Desa Adat to the Reclamation of Benoa Bay, Bali

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ABSTRACT

Reclamation is not inherently problematic and can yield positive results when well-planned, compliant with environmental standards, and mindful of social impacts. However, many reclamation projects have caused problems and sparked public protest. While most studies on reclamation plan typically examine social movements as a collective entity, this study explores the individual reasons for engagement through the lens of the actors subjective lived experiences in regard to social resistance against reclamation plan of Benoa Bay. The long movement to reject the plan (2013-2019) depicts the struggle of the Balinese people to uplift their traditional existence in the modern day. Using phenomenological qualitative approach, this study was conducted in Tanjung Benoa Traditional Village. Data collection was based on the narratives produced by series of long and frequent interviews with five main actors of the resistance, consisting of a local fisherman, two youth leaders, a traditional leader, and a hamlet head. This study indicates that the actors defend their subjective significance of the Benoa Bay in various claims and stories which significantly becomes the driving force of their personal engagement of rejection. The public contest against reclamation was related more to people's cultural belief and social-environmental solidarity with each other than to political-economic interests. The Balinese rejection as a whole is not a single movement that is well-organised. The social resistance against the plan of reclamation, in the context of Balinese people, consists of multiple layers of the individual and existential motivations and beliefs. The Balinese beliefs not only sophisticatedly display the local religion, but also the existential struggle of the *adat* villagers against the onslaught of capitalism that offers modern progress. Myth and modern science are not only competing, but also intertwining. The conceptualisation of the resistance varies in terms of individual engagement.

1. Introduction

Situated in the southern region of Bali Island, Benoa Bay encompasses an area of 1,988.1 hectares, with its waters spanning approximately 10 km by 5 km from the outer coastline Benoa Bay shares borders with 13 traditional villages. From a geo-economic perspective, it is located in a strategic position on the route of the tourist industry center, namely Sanur, Nusa Dua, and Kuta areas. Benoa Bay functions as a reservoir of seven rivers that flow into the bay. It plays an important role as flood control for the surrounding areas. However, the ecological and strategic significance of this area became the focal point of a major socio-cultural struggle when a reclamation plan was proposed for the bay.

The rejection of the *warga desa adat* (traditional villagers) to the reclamation plan of Benoa Bay (2013-2020) is unprecedentedly phenomenal in terms of the large-scale socio-cultural impact across Bali Island and the Indonesian archipelago. Previously, there had never been a coalition among customary villages within a resistance movement organization. Almost all traditional villages along the coast of Benoa Bay (12 out of 13 customary villages) declared their opposition to the Benoa Bay reclamation. Opposition to the reclamation plan was also voiced by 27 other traditional villages that did not share a direct border with Benoa Bay. They actively participated in mobilizing their customary community members to carry out visible collective actions, particularly throughout 2016.

Chronologically, the rejection movements of the reclamation plan started with the governor's decree No. 2138/02-C/HK/2012 which granted permission of utilisation and development of Benoa Bay as the economic area. The decision was supported by a giant business agent as an investor who planned to create about 17 artificial islands as a new tourist destination. The investor (PT. TWBI) claimed that the project would surely provide more than 200,000 jobs for local communities.

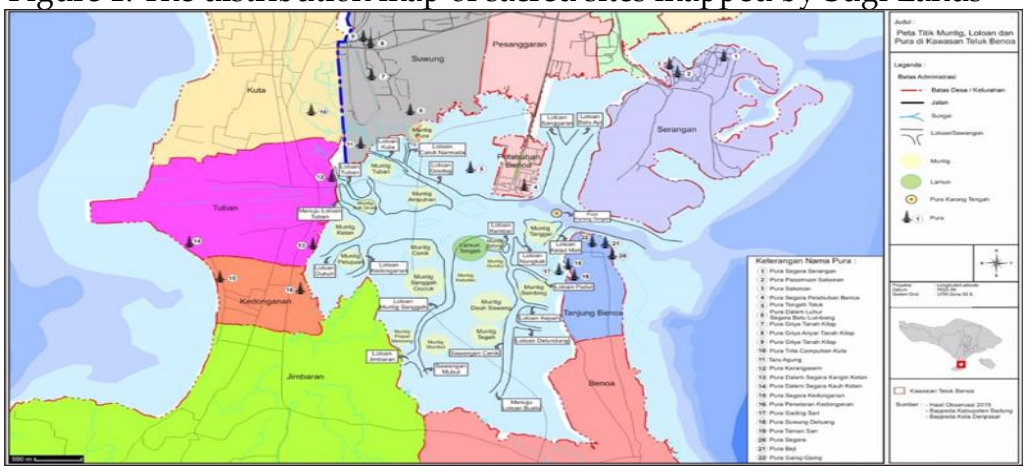
Opposition to the reclamation of Benoa Bay began with criticism from WALHI (the Indonesia Forum for Environment) of the planned project, particularly regarding the Bali Governor's Decree Number 051/03-L/HK/2012 granting a nature tourism business permit for a 102.22-hectare utilization block within the conservation area surrounding Benoa Bay. After expressing criticism of the Bali Provincial Government's policy, the director of WALHI Bali Chapter was beaten brutally by the unknown people in the end of 2012. That act of intimidation did not deter WALHI from mobilizing its efforts to protest the Bali Provincial Government's policy.

Mass protests against the governor's decree started by showing solidarity with the leader of WALHI (Compare Bräuchler, 2020). On July 3, 2013 the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries granted Decree No. 17/PERMEN-KP/2013 allowing reclamation of Benoa Bay. In response to the Decree, people formed various civil associations along with existing Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to reject the reclamation plan. There are GEMPAR (youth movement against reclamation), AMB (alliance of the Balinese people), JALAK (networking

to reject reclamation), the *adat* villagers, the gatherings of the *Bendesa* or leaders of the traditional villages or *Pasubayan,* Balinese musicians and artists, activists and sympathisers of the environments, ForBALI movement, scholars, and so forth. The scholars from Udayana University released the draft of the feasibility study indicating that the reclamation in Benoa Bay could be executed. It was most probably financed by the investor on August 19, 2013. But, only a day later, August 20, 2013, there was a serious challenge from an independent team of reviewers from the research department of the same university that strongly opposed the draft. On September 2 and 30, 2013, Udayana University finally released an official stance to reject the reclamation plan. On the same day (September 30) the *adat* village of Benoa Bay declared public opposition against the plan. This was the start of the sporadic demonstrations in the streets, music concerts, as well as community meetings, public religious rituals and the like; all activities were due to the anti-reclamation propaganda. However, there were also demonstrations from the pro-reclamation party in the streets. The conflicting situation was then unavoidable across Bali.

President Susilo Bambang Yudoyono granted Presidential Decree No. 51 of 2014 officially allowing reclamation in the conservation area of Benoa Bay on May 30, 2014. This presidential decree triggered hundreds more demonstrations as well as dozens of music festivals everywhere in Bali against reclamation. On November 6, 2014, Sugi Lanus, a scholar, and his team presented their research about the holy spheres around the Benoa Bay based on readings of the old *lontar* manuscripts which are foundational to the Balinese cultural Hindu (see Figure 1 below). In front of the *prajuru* (official administrators) of the *adat* villages, he claimed to discover 70 sacred points in Benoa Bay. The PHDI[1] (Hindu's organisation) created a team of nine *Pandita* (senior priests) also to study about the holy spheres in the bay on October 25, 2015. Based on the results of the study, PHDI then officially support the discovery about the sacred points.

Figure 1. The distribution map of sacred sites mapped by Sugi Lanus



Source: Mongabay, 2016

On 29 January 2016, for the first time, there was a joint collective action of the *adat* villages on the coast of Benoa Bay. They held a big demonstration in front of the

[1]PHDI stands for Parisadha Hindu Dharma Indonesia.

Bali Governor's office against the reclamation. This event was a milestone in the involvement of traditional villages in Bali in the movement to reject the reclamation plan. In March 2016, the *Pasubayan,* the gathering of the *adat* villages was created. The Pasubayan consisted of 26 villages at the beginning, and it increased to include 36 villages by May 29, 2016. After this, the *adat* villagers actively took collective actions very intensively throughout 2016. This year marked for the first time the massive unity of the *adat* villages to support the anti-reclamation movement. From 2016 to 2018 there were hundreds of demonstrations with thousands of people involved. Political and frequent negotiations were also held in the central government in Jakarta, but the conflicting situation in the Island did not seem to be improved. On August 27, 2018 the leaders of ForBali launched a press-release claiming victory after the long-lasting protests by informing that the investor's reclamation permit expired on August 26, 2018. However, it could be a false victory, since the Presidential Decree No. 5 of 2014 remains active; consequently, new permits of reclamation are still likely.

The case eventually seemed to halt with the decree of the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Mrs. Susi Pudjiastuti, declaring the status of Benoa Bay Waters as a Marine Conservation on October 4, 2019. The decree was made following the letter of the Governor of Bali based on public consultation on September 6, 2019, which was attended by groups of researchers, NGOs, *Sulinggih* (Hindu senior priests), and *Bendesa*.

The phenomena of resistance against the reclamation of Benoa Bay have been an important theme of studies for scholars from various perspectives. Dana (2024) discusses the contestation over spatial control between proponents of the tourism industry, who drive economic growth, and networks of traditional village actors, who defend ecological conservation. Dewi (2015) states that the project is against the cultural legacies of the ancient heroes of Bali who defended the purity and beauty of the land. Wardana (2017) regards the reclamation of Benoa Bay as a process of privatisation produced by the so-called neo-liberalisation of the environment. Within this framework, he concludes that people's resistance against the reclamation is a battle against capitalism. Priadarsini S. et al. (2018) considers rejection movement against the project as an immense endeavour to strengthen the Balinese cultural identity. The rejection is still regarded in the corridor of fight against global capitalism. Cabasset et al. (2017) views the resistance movement in Benoa Bay in relation to the *puputan* (fight till the last blood). The long resistance reminds us the history of Balinese resistance against the Dutch colonialists, *puputan,* depicting courage, heroism, and exemplary sacrifice of the Balinese soldiers. This movement is also seen from the context of the New Order regime which suppressed Balinese Hindu culture and turned it to commercialisation of tourism (Cabasset et al., 2017).

Bräuchler analyses the resistance from an ontological approach, highlighting "the worldview that is based on human-non-human relations." From this approach, as a result, we get "diverging notions of the nature of being and becoming in order to grasp the irreconcilability of ecologies" (Bräuchler, 2018:363). However,

despite not elaborating ecology as an "isolated wholes" as she says, in our view, the "ontological ecologies" is more regarded as one of the strategies of the resistance. With this she then criticises the effectiveness of this strategy in terms of machinery of the movement (Bräuchler, 2018:386-387). The rejection of the plan started in 2013, but in Bräuchler's reportage, only in 2016 the *adat* villages joined the ForBali movement. Her criticism is related to the "delay" of the engagement of the *adat* villagers (Bräuchler, 2018:373). *adat* involvement could have shaped the resistance more effectively, as the leaders of the ForBali have also frankly admitted (Bräuchler, 2020:629). With this, Bräuchler deals with the involvement as a whole related to strategies of rejection (Bräuchler, 2020:634). Bräuchler and other researchers view this resistance movement as collective action, hence they do not particularly focus on the subjectivity of the lived experiences of the actors. Thus, they ignore the intensity of the actors' motives of engagement, regardless of knowing that this long-lasting resistance is unlikely to be understood, unless we listen to their personal stories of the "lived-experience". This paper explores in depth the personal narratives of their lived experiences within the social movement. The unit of analysis in this study is not the collective entity of the social movement itself, but rather the individual actors and their existence within the social movement. Drawing on Heidegger's methodology, human beings are always situated within their world (Being-in-the-World). The term "world" here does not refer merely to physical objects or a geographical location, but also to an existential space (Heidegger, 2001:93). Accordingly, this study focuses on the interaction between individuals and their world, which includes movement organizations and other social structures.

This article does not examine social movements as collective entities, rather it explores the meaning individuals attach to their experiences and the motivations that lead them to become involved in collective actions against reclamation plan. We believe that individual narratives and interpretations are important to be explored in their social engagement.

2. Method

The methodology of phenomenological hermeneutics is utilised here to unfold the various layers of the individual experience in involving oneself in the social resistance against the reclamation of Benoa Bay. Smith (2013) characterizes phenomenology as the investigation of experiential essences from a first-person viewpoint. Rather than treating reality as something detached from human existence, this approach centers entirely on an individual's subjectively lived world. Phenomenological research asks, "What is this experience like?" in an attempt to uncover the meanings embedded in everyday human existence (Laverty, 2003:4).

Smith et al. (2022: Chapter 3) emphasize that the focus of interpretive phenomenological analysis is to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences. Thus, the quality and depth of understanding are more important than the number of participants. What matters more is selecting participants who have truly experienced the phenomenon under study and obtaining rich descriptions of those experiences, enabling the researcher to uncover the

structure or essence of the experience. According to Smith et al. (2022), as a general guideline, a sample of about three to six participants is considered appropriate for interpretive phenomenology analysis.

Interviews were conducted from June to December 2018. Data analysis was carried out in 2019, and the analysis was updated using the latest literature review in 2024. This study utilizes primary data collection, specifically through in-depth interviews. The subjects serving as data sources were five members of traditional villages in Bali who participated in the social movement opposing the Benoa Bay reclamation.

The first criterion is the traditional village experiencing the greatest impact from the Benoa Bay reclamation, namely the Tanjung Benoa Traditional Village. In this village, the residents and their livelihoods would be the most severely affected by the reclamation. This traditional village was the first to mobilize its traditional village masses for collective action, starting in 2013. Furthermore, Tanjung Benoa Traditional Village possesses a strong tradition regarding its religious-magical relationship with Benoa Bay. Two subjects were interviewed from this village: the primary figure who mobilized the traditional village movement, and a local resident working as a fisherman whose livelihood depends directly on Benoa Bay.

The second criterion focuses on the role of a traditional village acting as a catalyst for the power dynamics within the traditional village movement opposing the reclamation. The village that met this criterion is Kuta Traditional Village. The involvement of Kuta Traditional Village in the movement arena on January 23, 2016 was subsequently followed by other traditional villages. Three subjects were interviewed in this village: the *Bendesa Adat* (traditional village chief) of Kuta at that time, a traditional resident who also served as a hamlet head and a youth leader who spent a year urging his traditional village to take a stand against the reclamation. The crucial role played by the Kuta Traditional Village is reflected in the fact that its *Bendesa Adat* served as the Chairperson of the *Pasubayan* (coalition) of Traditional Villages Opposing the Benoa Bay Reclamation.

Data was analyzed by combining the analytical techniques of van Manen, (1990) and Miles et al. (2014). *First*, investigating the experience as it is lived rather than conceptualizing it by interviewing the subjects. In the interviews, subjects were asked about the meaning of Benoa Bay to their daily lives, their motivations and reasons for opposing the Benoa Bay reclamation; the personal experiences that led them to use their Balinese traditional identity in the resistance movement; and their feelings and the meaning of their experiences in being involved with the movement's collectivity. *Second*, reflecting on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon through thematic coding techniques. Six themes emerged from the subjects' narratives: violation of the sanctity of Benoa Bay; threats to livelihoods and quality of life; distrust toward investors, the government, and scientists; the desire to demonstrate tangible opposition; expressions of solidarity; and the dynamics of emotions and mental states. *Third*, balancing the research context by considering both the parts and the whole. This

is the hermeneutic cycle, which is understanding through a reciprocal relationship between the whole and the parts. Van Manen (1990:182) states that a phenomenological researcher needs to constantly measure the overall design of their study against the significance of the text. The parts must contribute to the total textual structure. Based on the hermeneutic cycle, the discussion of the subject's narrative moves circularly from their specific answers regarding their experience as an indigenous resident participating in the anti-reclamation movement, to the context of their life history. The discussion of the subject's narrative also moves in the opposite direction, from their life history to their specific experiences in opposing the Benoa Bay reclamation. *Fourth*, engaging in discussions using theoretical perspectives and previous research.

To uphold research ethics, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to interviews. Subjects agreed to audio recording with the assurance that their privacy and data confidentiality would be strictly maintained. At the request of the subjects and to avoid possible inconveniences related to their stories, names of the actors of the resistance or research subjects here are referred by pseudonym.

3. Result and Discussion

- **Disturbance of Lifeworld**

Lifeworld refers to the concrete, everyday reality experienced by humans, such as home, streets, work, language, tradition, and the surrounding environment. Humans construct (constitute) meaning through their consciousness when interacting with the lifeworld. This formation of meaning occurs intersubjectively, namely through interactions between subjects (Husserl, 1970). For the people of the Tanjung Benoa Traditional Village, Benoa Bay is their lifeblood. The reclamation of Benoa Bay directly threatens their economic livelihood. Wayan Badra, one of the residents who also a local fisherman, relies on fish from Benoa Bay for his family's daily consumption. The reclamation also disrupts his group's business, which rents out glass-bottom boat services to take tourists to see underwater views and transport guests to Turtle Island, located on the west side of Tanjung Benoa Village. According to him, the reclamation of Benoa Bay will block the sea route to Turtle Island.

Another direct threat felt by the resident is seawater flooding and abrasion. The construction of reclaimed islands in Benoa Bay will reduce the bay's function as a reservoir for river water. Consequently, during the rainy season, the five subjects worry that the water in Benoa Bay which is the intersection of seven rivers will overflow into surrounding areas, including Benoa Bay Traditional Village and Kuta Traditional Village. Wayan Surya (the then head of Kuta Traditional Village) refers to a study conducted by the NGO Conservation International, which states that although the sea lanes in Benoa Bay would be dredged, the area cannot be comparable to the area of reclamation (K. Sudiarta, Hendrawan, Putra, & Dewantama, 2013). Researchers from IC conducted a modeling study to estimate the impact if Benoa Bay was reclaimed. Their research proves that hypothetically, there would be inundation in the hinterland

caused by backwater events. The reclamation of Benoa Bay waters will directly reduce the volume of flood storage. The results of this study were presented to the leaders of the Kuta Traditional Village on January 23, 2016, before Kuta Traditional Village decided to reject the Benoa Bay reclamation.

The subject from Tanjung Benoa village, the local fisherman Wayan Badra, also learned from the case of Serangan Island reclamation in the 1990s. The island is a small island located in Benoa Bay. The size of this island was extended from 101 ha to 481 ha through a reclamation project starting in 1994, which was then claimed by an investor to create a new tourist destination. The project was suspended during the monetary crisis of 1997. It has then damaged the coastal habitat in the area (Sudiarta, 2018; Segara, 2019). Since the reclamation of Serangan Island, Wayan Badra and other fishermen see that the sea current in Benoa Bay started to swirl and became harder when hitting the coast. They believed that the abrasion in coastland was caused by the Serangan Island reclamation project. Perhaps this is what is called "simple reasoning," i.e., what occurred in Serangan (Cf. Segara, 2019) is what would surely happen to Benoa Bay as well if the reclamation was carried out.

The development of tourist facilities in Bali has always been communicated to the people with the promise of giving economic opportunities to the local workers. However, in reality, the promise was not consistently well kept. According to Kadek Dharma, if Tanjung Benoa became an economic area, in his personal calculation, the surrounding areas would definitely be changed. Many residents would sell their lands, because the investors would woo them with high offers. However, if the Balinese sold their lands and houses, they would be uprooted from their place. Further, evidently it would also cause the sacred area, Benoa Bay, as the center of the religious culture to disappear. Our identity of religion and culture would certainly be eroded away.

The ecological arguments of the actors vary beyond scientific frameworks. There seems to be diverging ecologies based on religions or Hindu Balinese cultures circulating in the indigenous communities in order to fight against reclamation of their sacred lands as discovered by Bräuchler (2018:376-378). In fact, when being asked if there has already been booming sale of lands around Benoa Bay, Kadek Dharma replied, "It has started. Some people do not live around Benoa Bay anymore. And, if all the people did this, who would take care of the sacred points around the bay?" In short, in his personal view, if the reclamation was done, the religion would also be trampled down because there is *pura* (temple) inhabited by the gods whom the people strongly believe in.

- **The Sacredness**

The sense of "sacredness" designates relationship with the divine. In Balinese culture the "sacredness" is associated with nature, *lontar* texts, and mysterious presence of the non-human with the religious-cosmological narratives. Some narratives would refer to simply one's own experience in the wider sense of orthopraxis of Balinese Hindu. To borrow Heideggerian terminology, what constitutes the idea of sacredness is also the daily experiences of the person as

being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 2001:149-150). The sea or mountain are sacred, because beside being home of the gods or goddesses, they are also the world of everyday life of human beings. The bay is sacred, because human beings go there for fishing to support the families.

Personal or communal narratives of the sacredness of Benoa Bay were in compliance with the resistance of the traditional communities to the reclamation plan. Bräuchler affirms that the defence of Balinese society was an attempt to declare the actuality of ontological harmony between the human world and non-human beings. The cultural-religious narratives of the sacred area were constitutive parts of the resistance movement against reclamation (Bräuchler, 2018; 2020).

Kadek Dharma, youth leader in Tanjung Benoa Traditional Village believes that there are 70 sacred points in Benoa Bay. He believes that in the bay there is *Pudut* island, in which there are a number of *pura* (temples), i.e., Segara Pura, Suwung Deluang Pura, and Beji Pura. The temples are all used for the sacred *pemelastian* (purification rituals in the sea) and *penghanyutan* (ritual of throwing ashes of bodies in the sea) as well as looking for *tirtha yatra* or pilgrimage to sacred place with sprinkling of the holy water. There is also a temple named Karang Tengah Temple in Benoa Bay. This temple is invisible during high tide. During low tide, the *pelinggih* of the temple (the sacred place of the gods), which is a naturally-formed pile of stones, will be visible. The community does the rituals and offerings there. It is also believed that there is a *muntig-muntig* (submerged land that appears at low tide), which is the meeting point between water and land.

Kadek Dharma's personal belief in the sacred sphere is influenced by Sugi Lanus, an old Javanese philologist who found 70 sacred sites in Benoa Bay based on ancient manuscripts. However, he also realised that his knowledge of the sacredness of Benoa Bay existed even before he met with Sugi Lanus. During Sugi Lanus' presentation in front *prajuru*[2] in May 2015, he assured us with tears in his eyes that Bali would be destroyed if the reclamation of Benoa Bay was to be executed.

Based on the recollections of Kadek Dharma and Wayan Surya (the then Head of Kuta Traditional Village), the *Pasubayan* started to join demonstration against reclamation after listening to Sugi Lanus' presentation. The resistance movement is possible only if there are convincing proofs of the sacred area. To the *adat* villagers, the scientific discovery of Sugi Lanus and his team helped to strengthen their motivation to join the resistance. *Pasubayan*[3] which means "we promise to be together" is the coalition of the traditional villages. The creation of the *pasubayan* was the fruit of collaboration of the *bendesa* (leaders of villages). The *pasubayan* marks the robust unity of the Balinese *adat* villages to reject the reclamation of Benoa Bay.

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[2] *Prajuru* is the administrative officials of the *desa adat* which consists of the leader or *bendesa,* vice-*bendesa* or *petajuh,* finance officer (*petengen*), and general maid (*kesinoman*).

[3] The *pasubayan* is a sort of public gathering of the *adat* villages with the purpose to deal with common issues of preservation of the environment, culture, and religion.

Nyoman Puja, a movement actor and also a chief of sub-village in Kuta Village stated that "We are part of the *adat* village. When the *pasubayan* declares the official rejection to reclamation, yes we were all in unity with our *bendesa.*" To Balinese people, *bendesa* brought a different energy to the movement. The community appeared to be obedient to the traditional rules of conduct. The *adat* village movement mechanism allowed for greater involvement and provided an atmosphere of unity among the actors. The language they shouted in the streets was also not harsh, but peaceful.

To Nyoman Puja, cosmology means human's relationship with the universe, which is based mainly on the beliefs and traditions of Balinese Hinduism. Nyoman Puja convincingly states, "I once heard *pawuwus* or a sacred message from the spirit through a person tranced in a religious ritual." If there was reclamation in Benoa Bay, this [situation] would be like a person whose legs are *beteg* (very hard to move). It would be difficult to feed the family, it would be very hard to find food. There would be spiritual and material destructions. Nyoman Puja contends that Bali would experience food shortage if Benoa Bay disappeared. The belief of Nyoman Puja is an example of what is called cosmological narratives.

The cosmological narratives do not presuppose any other ideas than the subjective relationality of the human beings with their own world; and this realm of relationship is always a narrative for the one who experiences the event (Riyanto, 2018:139). In the cosmological narratives, there is no objective truth as such. The truth means a process of objectification of the subjective beliefs. Thus, it lies in the stories being narrated. Human beings do not merely live in the world as a place, but also pursue the subjective knowledge and understanding of the world in cultural-cosmological, religious, as well as personal narratives. As Heidegger states, the "being-in" (the lived-experience of human being) is discourse, stories, and knowledge (Heidegger, 2001:169-203). The subjective knowledge is possible simply because of human's relationality with the world as phenomena (Riyanto, 2018:139).

Wayan Surya, one of the movement's actors, emphasised some related concepts, such "the awakening of Nusantara," "the integrity of the archipelago," "the harmonious relationship between humans and nature as a whole." The universe consists of mountains, seas, lakes, forests, and rivers. Mountains "give birth" to forests. Lakes, rivers, and springs are "offsprings" of the sea. This is the concept of the universe of *rwa bhineda*: *purusha*, and *pradana*. The visible symbol of *purusha* is the mountain; that of *pradana* is the sea. These are the energy of the universe. When we talk about the archipelago (*nusantara*), we will definitely talk about two components, namely mountain and sea. We conceptualise our faith in this sort of understanding of the nature of the archipelago. If we take care of them well, the mountains and seas become beneficial to human life. If we develop them socially, culturally, and religiously, the bay and sea become the holy spheres of civilisation. In addition, if we preserve the water of Benoa Bay, it is not just a matter of rejecting reclamation of the particular place, but of upholding the concept of the so-called *Pembangkitan Nusantara* itself (the Awakening of the

Archipelago of Indonesia). Thus, the civilisation of the archipelago (Indonesia) is based on all energies and everything that reflect the existing mountains, seas, rivers, lakes, bays, and the like. "What is Benoa Bay? It's sea, right? To maintain the holy order that exists in Benoa Bay is a "must" to each one of us.

Do the actors of the resistance not believe in the scientific discoveries of the area? Wayan Surya, one of the *bendesa*, replied that "Scientific studies of ecological problems often contradict one another, depending on who pays whom. When the results of scientific research vary, we will certainly pick the trusted ones, namely those scientists who listen to the *adat* people who already have in-depth knowledge of nature, universe, and its holy spheres."

Benoa Bay is believed to be an ancient node of civilisation of the islands of Bali and Java. It is also the stopover for the Balinese ancestors from Central Bali to Uluwatu. We asked a question to Wayan Surya, whether Benoa Bay is a sacred area because of the position as "intersection" of civilisations of the past life? He replied, as follows:

> Do you have a piece of paper with you? I want to make a sketch of my cosmological belief of the area. This is simply my belief. Don't ask me for scientific proof. Our historical tradition says civilisation originated from the West [from Java] to the East [Lombok]. If our ancestors sailed across from Java, arrived and stopped over in Benoa Bay. From Watu Dodol, Segara Rupek (Segara Rupek in Sumber Kelampok) to the north, there is the Sukawana Kingdom in Kintamani. Sukawana had kings such as Jaya Pangus, Masula Masuli, Mayadenawa, Udayana, and so on. During the Singhamadawa Dynasty, the harbour was in Les Penutukan. On the right side there is a rock hump. From here he just went to the mountains to the village of Madenan. This is Toyaanyar (Tianyar). For people from Blambangan, going through the north part of the Island was difficult. So, they sailed and passed through here, the Benoa Bay. From this way (Kuta) they could go to the south around Uluwatu. It's very likely that this Benoa Bay was the intersections of the past civilisations. So, is it wrong to say that Benoa Bay is the center of civilisation? This is the very reason why Benoa Bay is culturally important. To us, the center of the past civilisation has to be regarded as holy area too. No human power should destroy it (Wayan Surya, a movement actor).

Wayan Surya's words express a belief that Benoa Bay is an important ancient crossing route for various types of activities. For the Balinese, an area that has become the lifeblood of their ancestors' lives is a sacred area. The cosmological narratives of the actor seem to be different from the philosophical framework of cosmology as in the ancient Greek philosophy. To the Balinese Hindu, the notion of the cosmos seems to be meaningful in phenomenological framework, i.e. the world as the lived-experience that entails traditional belief, historical account, religion, personal claim of the sacredness, of the ancient civilisation, and of his everyday life threatened. The personal aspects of the movement, thus, do not merely consist of particular understanding of experience, but also of the "world" as conceived, perceived, and believed (see also Heidegger, 2001:383-400).

- **The Struggle**

The movement's actors have personal reasons for deciding to join the movement to reject the Benoa Bay reclamation. Wayan Badra, a movement actor and a local fisherman in Benoa Bay, recalled his personal struggle when he joined the demonstration against reclamation for the first time, he said that: "As a fisherman, reclamation is indeed a fatal decision. Also, as a resident of Benoa Bay, this is a disaster. We must fight till the end. It's indeed like a *puputan* (fight till the last blood)."Similarly, Wayan Surya, convincingly told us, as follows:

> When we were labelled "separatists" [by Minister Luhut Panjaitan, sic.], I immediately affirmed this resistance against reclamation is like *puputan* of Badung. The Badung *puputan* is very much well known for the Balinese, since historically it tells us about the war against the Dutch colonialists that resulted heroic sacrifices of the Balinese soldiers in Badung (Wayan Surya, (a movement actor, the then *bendesa* of Kuta Traditional Village, the head of *Pasubayan).*

The Balinese people observe the traditional customs to go to *pura* (sacred temple) to perform rituals. We asked a question, what does it feel like when the actors go to *pura* during the resistance? Nyoman Puja replied, as follows:

> What we felt, our Gods wanted us to fight fearlessly against the reclamation plan. Otherwise, this will inevitably lead us to catastrophic disaster in life. For us, the damage of nature is the same as the destruction of the various aspects of human life as well as other living beings at once (Nyoman Puja, a movement actor from Kuta Traditional Village).

Have the actors ever felt fear during the movement against the investor and state's apparatus? How did they manage perseverance in the long-lasting demonstrations and cope with intimidation? Putu Dana, a youth leader in an *adat* village, answered that:

> I have friends from various circles, there are Walhi, ForBali, NGOs, and especially *adat* people. I once experienced my physical condition dropped badly. Fresh blood flowed from my nose while on the streets. But it doesn't matter. At that time, I was handling ten of the *adat* villages in demonstration. The intimidation I experienced was still merely verbal threats, but I heard Gendo, one of the leaders, was beaten badly by unknown people (Putu Dana, a youth leader).

Putu Dana recalled, he was persistent because he has already been deeply involved in the movement for a long time, saying that: "When I heard there was intimidation, there is no point of return, not even to self-surrender. No matter what might happen in my life, I would be ready."

Kadek Dharma was threatened since the beginning of the movement. In fact, before "ForBali" was formed in 2013, he already experienced intimidation, as he said that:

> It was by phone call. It came to me from an unknown number asking if I was in the anti-reclamation movement, I replied, yes. He asked me again, what's your reason. I told him, it's simply in accordance with my pure conscience. Then immediately I switched off my cellular. Besides threats by phone, our meetings were also spied by the officer. *Babinsa* (military officer in villages) often came to us and checked us up. *Babinsa* did not dissolve our meeting, but we were obliged to report what we decided in the meeting to him (Kadek Darma, a movement leader).

As a movement leader in Tanjung Benoa Traditional Village, Kadek Dharma, who has a family was not immune to fear, as he further stated that:

> Because my father was afraid. He was worried that his grandchildren would be kidnapped, and the family would be intimidated. However, I gradually became fearless, when my beloved wife encouraged me to go on with the resistance movement (Kadek Darma, a movement leader).

Kadek Dharma recalled his own persistence by saying that:

> I am *Juru Sungging Rangda*.[4] I have to defend my religion, culture, and sacred area. I believe that every time the goddess Ida Ratu Gede Mas Mecaling visited Bali or anchored in Benoa Bay, she took bath in that area. So, Benoa Bay is a holy place. I have to defend our traditional religion that seems to start to be degraded (Kadek Darma, a movement leader).

The preference of religious-cultural matters becomes the existential motivation of the engagement. Bräuchler notes that the Balinese people are very tolerant, but when it comes to the sacred areas, tolerance reaches its limit (Bräuchler, 2020:629-630). To them, the defense of the sacredness depicts their being as the true, genuine, and fearless Balinese. In respond to this, Putu Dana, stated that:

> Have I ever experienced fear? Yes, surely and often. Especially when we were in the streets, in the midst of thousands, we were surely afraid that our peaceful demonstration would turn to riot with fatalities. In fact, we were often confused with T-shirts/shirts because there were those with the writing *Bali Tolak Reklamasi* (Bali Rejects Reclamation), but many were not. I once felt, we, the Balinese people, would be dramatically in conflict with each other. I was afraid, the secret police would infiltrate and divide us in conflictual situation (Putu Dana, a youth leader).

Why the protest occurred across the Island of Bali, not just in Kuta, the region of Benoa Bay? According to Wayan Surya, which could represent the traditional villagers' voice, Balinese people have the sense of unity between humans and the "land of Bali." Balinese believe in the *Tri Hita Karana*, the solidarity of the Balinese people who stepped in the same land that we are obliged to take care of the holy spheres and defend the sacred points. For, in our belief, the holy area will also provide comfort and well-being to all citizens, including the migrants, not just the Balinese people.

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[4] *Juru Sungging Rangda* is the chosen person who carries the *Rangda* mask during sacred ceremony.

The long-lasting and persistent engagement of the *adat* villagers against the reclamation plan shows that there is malfunction of the existing political system. This protest was not a single entity of movement. It has been systematically or momentarily supported by activists, researchers, religious leaders, and non-governmental organisations. This movement also displayed the actors' distrust toward the existing political parties of Bali which, in their view, failed to defend the common interests of the *adat* communities. They did not reject the development of the tourism industry *per se,* but the way it should be conducted. They expected the government, business investors, and experts to listen to the local communities, particularly the residents of the coast of Benoa Bay. According to them, the investor and the government never came to the *adat* villagers to consult the plan.

According to Melucci, social movement is usually "homeless" in the sense that they cannot easily be politically represented by the existing parties, local councils, and other political mechanisms (Melucci, 1989). However, in the case of resistance against the Benoa Bay reclamation, the *adat* villagers feel that they found support from various groups of activists. But, as they believe, they remain independent and autonomous in the continuous struggle to defend their cultural and religious identity as the Balinese *adat* villagers. Consequently, their personal narratives mirror the notion that individual agency and social dissent can be preserved through the establishment and broadening of autonomous public spheres, which are legally protected within civil society (Melucci, 1989; Melucci, 1996b); (Reedy at al. 2016). As suggested by the theory of new social movement that contemporary resistance is the counter reaction to the social formation in post-industrial society in which dominant institutions become invasive to the individual lifeworld (Touraine, 1981; Habermas, 1987; Melucci, 1996a). The actors seek spaces in which they could think and act independently as well as actualise their personal or collective traditional identity. For this reason, they do not voice their rejection of the reclamation through the existing political institutions which, they believed, are malfunctioning. Instead, they find the space in the *adat* villages movement. The unity of *adat* villages or *pasubayan* was the only forum that, they thought, was relatively free from co-optation of the powerful investor, and can provide independent space to participate in political policies to their own terminology (Compare (Eroğlu & Florek, 2018). The *pasubayan* also fit with the cultural identity of the actors. The contest of contemporary movements deliberately distinguished its struggle from that of political organisation and proposed the increasing autonomy of the actors (Melucci, 1996b) Identity of the social movement involves a cognitive definition of goals, intentions, and arenas of action (Melucci, 1996a;Fominaya, 2010). The collective identity was revived as the Balinese *pasubayan* reinforced the boundary between "we" who reject and "those" who support the reclamation of Benoa Bay (Wiranata & Siahaan, 2019).

The protest of the *adat* villagers reflects what in the modern world is called resistance to the capitalist system which plunders lands in the name of economic progress and sophisticated tourism facility. The persistence of the movement actors might not be enough yet to finish the case. However, their movement

illustrates how important it is for the government to pay more attention to the sense of justice and protection of the local-religious values (see also Bräuchler, 2020). Local wisdoms in the form of religion, narratives of the sacred, cultural beliefs, and human relationalities with nature and others are the necessary components in resistance. Human relation to the world and its phenomena is basically narrative (Riyanto, 2018). In this context, the resistance against the reclamation perhaps is still ongoing, but it has already been exemplary so as to be one of the heroic and historical narratives in the modern time for the Balinese generations.

4. Conclusion

The personal aspects of the reason why the actors involved themselves in the anti-Benoa Bay reclamation movement are based on the interweaving factors between their awareness as independent agents and cultural-religious dimensions of the everyday life. The sense of social solidarity of the actors started to emerge when they received more information about the Benoa Bay reclamation plan, which according to them, would disrupt their traditional-religious interests, environmental security, sacred sphere, and cosmic equilibrium of the nature. The sense of resistance of the *adat* villagers began to play a significant role when there was a cultural-religious discourse about the sacredness of Benoa Bay.

Within the religious-cultural-personal narratives they believe that the sacred spots in Benoa Bay have links with their villages. To the participants, the proposed reclamation represented a grave danger to both local economic survival and the spiritual conviction that the bay constitutes a sacred zone. The meanings generated by these activists are deeply rooted in their ties to their cultural-spiritual domains and their shared identity as Balinese Hindus.

In light of the phenomenological philosophy of "being-in-the-world" (human relation with religious-cultural-natural context) and "being-with-other" (human beings in solidarity with others), this study finds that the resistance of the *adat* villagers against reclamation was determined by the personal meanings of the world and existential relations of one another within the cultural and religious tradition as they perceived in everyday life (Cf. Heidegger, 2001:182-188). This study shows that the actions of the *adat* villagers in the movement were due to their existence as authentic members of the traditional village and of the Balinese traditional-religious people.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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