



**TECHNIUM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL**

**Vol. 12, 2020**

**A new decade  
for social changes**

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

## **Implications of cultural commodification of sinden on authenticity of local culture: a case study in Jimbe Village, Blitar District, East Java, Indonesia**

### **Andiwi Meifilina**

Postgraduate Doctoral Program, Departement of Sociology at Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia  
[Andiwimeifilina1@yahoo.co.id](mailto:Andiwimeifilina1@yahoo.co.id)

### **Darsono Wisadirana**

Departement of Sociology at Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia  
[Darsono\\_wisa@ub.ac.id](mailto:Darsono_wisa@ub.ac.id)

### **Anif Fatma Chawa**

Departement of Sociology at Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia  
[anif\\_chawa@ub.ac.id](mailto:anif_chawa@ub.ac.id)

### **Siti Kholifah**

Departement of Sociology at Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia  
[ifah\\_sosio@ub.ac.id](mailto:ifah_sosio@ub.ac.id)

**Abstract.** This article is a critical review of the impact of tourism that causes the commodification of local culture. Through a study in the Sinden Village in Jimbe Village, as the pioneer of the development of the Sinden art in Blitar District that has been established as pioneering village by the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport Services (DISPARBUDPORA) of Blitar Regency, this article attempts to discuss the cultural commodification of Sinden art as one of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This article uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Therefore, the data in this article was obtained by the researcher by using the interview techniques and direct observation. The findings show that the commodification of the Sinden culture does not completely change the authenticity of the Sinden culture. It is because the people of Jimbe village only commodify the supporting facilities of the Sinden culture, such as songs, the use of musical instruments, and wardrobes. Whereas, the authenticity of the Sinden culture itself is not determined by those, but rather from the delivery of messages and special singing techniques.

**Keywords.** Authenticity, Cultural Commodification, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Tourism.

## 1. Introduction

In Indonesia, culture is one of the potential tourism products. It is because Indonesia has a variety of cultures. In 2010 the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) showed that Indonesia has 1,331 ethnic groups and 652 different regional languages. Central Bureau of Statistics in 2018 reported that Indonesia has 819 intangible cultural heritages (Pusat Data dan Statistik, 2019). According to the UNESCO Convention in 2003, the intangible cultural works are traditions and oral expressions, including language as a method for intangible cultural heritage. In addition, there are performing arts, community customs, rites and celebrations, knowledge and habits of the behavior of nature and the universe, as well as traditional skills and handicrafts. Therefore, the statement of UNESCO can be specified in more detail in BPS's statement which shows that in 2018 has reported there are 102 Traditions and Oral Expressions, 209 Community Customs, Rites, and Celebrations, 41 pieces of knowledge and Habits of Behavior Regarding the Universe, 271 Performing Arts and 196 Skills and Traditional Crafts. Based on this figures, UNESCO established eight lists of intangible cultural heritages and a list of security practices.

However, when the discussions about the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) grew in 2003 after the UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) officially began, the tension between shelter and commodification of ICH became a new issue in the interdisciplinary sector of cultural heritage tourism. The tension was intensified between shelter and commodification of intangible cultural heritage in deciding whether it is considered as a protected heritage or a source to be commodified (Boyu, Hui, & Schippers, 2015; J. Su, 2019). The study of the tense situation between shelter and commodification of heritage will usually lead to a discussion about authenticity. The annual Cultural Tourism Festival in Domboshaba shows the loss of authenticity of the Ikalanga traditional music culture in Bostwana because of the commercialization of tourism. The commercialization of Ikalanga music has brought several changes in the way the music is played (Mokgachane, Basupi, & Lenao, 2019). Meanwhile, a study in China shows a different response, as a signatory to the ICHC in 2004, China has established a comprehensive ICH management system to protect the critical elements of ICH. However, even though China encourages the use of ICH for commodification, but conflict could not be averted. For example, Feng Jicai, Director of the ICH National Protection Expert Committee of China, distinctly opposes the commodification of ICH and claims that the cultural commodification is a serious issue in ICH protection (J. Su, 2019). Where as in Indonesia, Bali is one of the tourism locations that always offer performing arts as a tourism attraction that causes many local people to commodify several cultures such as Balinese *Wayang Kulit* (Shadow Puppet) performances, Kecak dances, etc (Pradana, 2018).

In line with the thesis above, this paper will discuss the implications of the commodification of traditional culture for tourism purposes. This paper takes a case study in *Sinden* Village in Jimbe Village, Kademangan District, Blitar Regency, which promotes the traditional culture of *Sinden* as a tourism show. *Sinden* itself is part of the intangible cultural heritage that is integrated in the Javanese *Wayang* (Shadow puppet) show. Jimbe village is the pioneer village of the development of the *Sinden* art in Blitar Regency, which currently has a status as a developed village by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (DISPARBUDPORA) of Blitar Regency. Under the management of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (DISPARBUDPORA), this village is prospected by the local government as one of the cultural tourism objects in Blitar. In the aspect of structure, the paper starts with a general introduction. Next, the author reviews the relevant literature by explaining the key concepts to answer the three objectives of the article, namely; shows the commodification that occurs in *Sinden* culture, explains the implications of the

commodification of Sinden culture and closes with a discussion of how *Sinden* of Jimbe maintains the authenticity of *Sinden* culture after commodification.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Cultural Commodification in Tourism*

Theoretically, commodification is a concept used to describe the process where something that has no economic value is given a value, and hence how the market value can change other social values. As a commodity, it is not only useful but also has a selling power (Fairclough, 1995). Based on the statement of Fairclough that stated that a commodification is a process, meaning that commodification is not only based on the production of goods and services for the traded commodities but also on how the distribution and consumption of these goods exist. Social domains and institutions do not only focus on producing the commodity within narrow economic purpose about the goods/ things to be sold but also on how to organize and conceptualize them in the aspects of production, distribution and consumption commodities (Burton, 2008).

The concepts of commodification, culture and space are not new in tourism impact analysis. There is some confusion about what a tourist commodity is, that is the process of converting space into goods. Although there is general agreement that it is an exchange rate in the form of tourism space commodities, no author has presented a convincing explanation for what 'tourism experience' actually produces and sells. The cultural commodification itself is a concept used to denote a process in which certain aspects of a particular culture are packaged and available for "purchase" by tourists. It includes activities, artifacts and something special/unique for some cultures. The packaging and selling of these aspects give them market value that comes automatically without their command until now. As Cohen said, this is a 'thing' which is created to gain status as the selling value of an item expressed at the market price. However, this has both positive and negative impacts when commodities can cause a loss of cultural authenticity.

Authenticity is another concept that is frequently used in tourism literature related to cultural commodification. However, Xie (2003) insisted that commodification and authenticity that are often discussed concurrently do not necessarily represent two sides of the same aspect, considering that something new does not always destroy the value of cultural aspects for both either residents and visitors. Whereas in the perspective of a critical approach to intangible cultural heritage (ICH), inheritance must be considered as a discourse (Smith, 2006), as well as a discursive practice (Hall, 1999) which is built in the process of making inheritance, instead of static 'objects' that have previously existed. In this situation, experts argued that ICH should be recognized, identified and managed especially by practitioners or local communities who build and represent their 'personal or local discourse' of ICH based on their expectations and needs. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage cannot be understood as an inanimate object that is still authentic, but it is changed from time to time by the discourse of the local community in the ICH environment. UNESCO explicitly considers that authenticity is irrelevant to be used in identifying and preserving intangible cultures because ICH is constantly being recreated.

This is different from the criticisms of some scholars to the discourse of tourism that has caused tourism consequence, namely the existence of cultural market space. First, because for most people the value of tourist attraction is in the experience (for example sightseeing), the emphasis is put on the 'tourism view' as a form of symbolic consumption. The emphasis is understandable because it hinders the material processes that produce tourism space as a commodity. The value of the symbolic use of tourist destinations is the focus of analysis, not as the spatial and economic processes where this value of its use is brought into a capital product

(Lefebvre, 2003). Second, the understanding of the 'value' of tourism space as a commodity has been misleading, because it is equated with its ability to produce tourist experiences (Dean, 1973). This then lead to a critical tourism study project that ignored the political economy agenda related to the commodification and production of value, instead there was an attempt to analyze the meanings and experiences that were manifested through the use of values.

Indeed, the effect of the commodification of tourism is often considered as an external force that will damage the original or authentic meaning of the relevant culture and human being (Greenwood, 2004; Tilley, 1997) and eliminate the importance and benefits of local communities (Greenwood, 2004). However, scholars also argued that there is a positive influence on the commodification of tourism. For example, scholars noted that in the economic benefits and promotion of culture (Cole, 2007; Picard, 2008), the cultural or ethnic identity of the cultural observer is improved (Finn, 2009; X. Su, 2011; van den Berghe, 1995; Xie, 2003), as well as cultural pride (Cole, 2007; van den Berghe, 1992; Xie, 2003), which is the centre of the ICH value itself. At the micro-level, several aspects of indigenous culture are also improved into the commodification of tourism through creativity, spontaneity and artistic freedom (Daniel, 1996), cultural uniqueness and skills (Cohen, 1988).

The discourse on the commodification of ICH in the tourism discourse outside the discussion of authenticity and integrity is still rare. Behind the discussion about authenticity, integrity and commodification, a more fundamental issue is how the change of ICH must be understood. This is because ICH is a concept that theoretically not only represents a new category of inheritance but also a new understanding of inheritance (Ruggles & Silverman, 2009). Furthermore, 'the concept of change lies at the heart of the definition of intangible inheritance' (Smith, 2006). Therefore, instead of discussing the debate about authenticity and integrity Junjie Su (2019) offers to understand the characteristics of the commodification of ICH into tourism product. This usually involves the efforts of the local community in making changes to the value of art products so that they do not only depend on the technical characteristics used by cultural actors, but also depend on the cultural enthusiasts themselves. In other words, the result of art and culture are the result of the relationships between effective interpersonal and social needs. This social need then develops according to the taste of cultural enthusiasts who are called users, or in this case are called tourists. As users of cultural performances, tourists are the mediators who have the role to provide the first capital or like a real estate seller in an exhibition activity. Mediators who mediate between cultural products and their audiences are a method of dependable cultural expression (Caturwati, 2009).

## *2.2. Development of Pesindenan Culture in Jimbe Village as a Tourism Product of Blitar District.*

The development of Pesindenan culture in Jimbe Village began with the establishment of a school or art studio called "Karawitan Campursari Supo Kusumo Art Studio and Training Center", or "Mbah Jombor Art Studio". The establishment of a school or the "Karawitan Campursari Supo Kusumo Art Studio and Training Center" in Jimbe village was aimed to empower the local community because the economic conditions in Jimbe Village in 1960 were still very difficult and many children were illiterate as they did not receive a formal education. From those, Mr Wiro Jayadi or often called Mbah Jombor was very concerned, therefore Mbah Jombor took the initiative to invite children who dropped out of school or were illiterate to practice Sinden so they have the skills of Sinden culture art. That way, those children who dropped out of school or who were illiterate could have jobs as Sinden in the future and were expected to be able to make money to fulfill their needs and their family daily needs. Until the

1970s the Karawitan Campursari Supo Kusumo Art Studio and Training Center or Mbah Jombor Art Studio trained around 100 Sindens, all of them were residents of Jimbe village.

Furthermore, in 2010 the Sinden Sukarmi's school was also established and led by Mrs Sukarmi, a senior Sinden in Jimbe Village. The Sinden school system is free of charge and is hoped to be of great interest to the younger generation. Sukarmi built this school to teach Sinden culture to elementary, junior high and high school children. The number of the empowerment centers of Sinden culture has made Jimbe village got many achievements in the Sinden cultural arts. In 2016 - 2019 sequentially this village won the Sinden competition in the Regent Cup events. Since 2016 this village has also been named the Sinden village, as a place to study about Sinden without school fees and was managed/ developed by the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Services (DISPARBUDPORA) of Blitar Regency. In addition, this village was later created as one of the cultural tourism destinations in Blitar District. Local and foreign tourists can visit this village to learn about Sinden culture. Sinden shows are also presented for tourists who want to see directly how the culture of Sinden is performed.

### **3. Method**

This study was conducted in Jimbe Village, Kademangan District, Blitar Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Blitar Regency is an area that has many cultural arts including shadow puppet (Wayang Kulit) so that in Blitar Regency there are many Dalang (puppeteer narrator) who are members of PEPADI (Indonesian Puppeteers Association) Blitar, East Java. Until now, Blitar has the most of dalang members in Indonesia, which are around 750 puppeteers. The large number of people who still enjoy Wayang Kulit art has led to the emergence of the young generation of Sinden in Blitar Regency. Wayang itself is one of 8 intangible cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO. Therefore, Blitar has made Wayang Kulit culture which includes the Sinden culture as one of the cultural tourism products of Blitar Regency. Jimbe village was selected as the study site, because of the high contribution of this village in creating new candidates of Sinden. Besides, this place is also used as the spearhead/ pioneer by the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Services (DISPARBUDPORA) of Blitar Regency to promote tourism activities in Blitar Regency.

The data investigation of this study used a qualitative method with a case study approach. The data in this article were taken directly by the researcher using interview techniques and direct observation. Observation was done by observing the activities of the Sinden of Jimbe Blitar, East Java and other art actors involved in every Sinden art performance. In particular, the observation was focused on collecting an overview about the commodification aspects of the Sinden Jimbe performing arts in East Java, for example; observed the existence of modern music such as Campursari, Dangdut, disco in the art performance of Sinden in Wayang Kulit performances. Meanwhile, the interview was done by using a purposive technique, where the researcher has selected the criteria for the informants to be interviewed previously. Thus, the researcher has decided which sources should be asked for information through in-depth interviews.

### **4. Result and Discussion**

#### *4.1. Form of Cultural Commodification in Sinden Performing Arts*

The cultural commodification of the *Sinden* of Jimbe performing art in Blitar, East Java, has led to changes in the appearance and performances of the *Sinden* on the *Wayang Kulit* performance stage. This change is a reflection of efforts to make the culture of *Sinden* so attractive to visitors/ tourists of Jimbe village so that in the end the *Sinden* culture must be able to adapt to the tastes of visitors/ tourists. Some of the changes that appear were several things,

including the song, the use of musical instruments, and the wardrobe worn by the *Sinden* of Jimbe Blitar.

The changes were so visible in songs, when the *Sinden* often sang *Campursari* and *dangdut* songs rather than classical Javanese songs (*Gendhing*). *Campursari* and *Dangdut* songs were sung more because the *Sinden* followed the demand of the audience, fans and Wayang Kulit renters. Meanwhile, the classical Javanese songs (*Gendhing*) were only sung at the opening chapter. The function of *Gendhing* in a *Sinden* show was to accompany a shadow puppet show. This section mostly discussed the meaning as an expression of prayer, for example; *Ladrang Slamet* or *Ladrang Wilujeng* which means safe. The purpose of this song sung was to make the event runs well and safely, both during the event and after the event. But in fact, these classical songs are now rarely sung and replaced by *Campursari* songs and *dangdut* songs instead which are more requested by the audiences and become booming songs (read: popular *dangdut* songs) in the community.

Some of the *Campursari* songs that were often sung in the show were popular *Campursari* songs liked by the community or the audience, such as the *Campursari* songs from Didi Kempot. As for *dangdut* songs, *Sinden* usually depended on the audience's request when performing the show. However, when it was compared with *dangdut* songs, the song list in the shadow puppet show was mostly *Campursari* songs. This was because the *dalang* (puppeteer) himself often requested the *Sinden* to sing the *Campursari* song.

"... The *dalang* (puppeteer) always asks me to sing *Campursari* songs according to the renter's request or those who have the celebration, and also request of the audience or my fans on the shadow puppet show..." (Interview, 15 September 2019)

Basically, in every puppet show, the puppeteer has selected songs list to be performed by *Sinden*. These songs were classical Javanese songs such as *Sinom*, *Pangkur*, *Dandanggula* and others. But now, to attract the attention of the audiences, the puppeteer prioritized *Campursari* songs that were more attractive for the audience. Therefore, the puppeteer now divided the song list into two parts. The first part was the songs list for senior *Sinden*, which were classical Javanese songs adapted to the puppet theme/ story. This senior *Sinden*, according to the puppeteers, was a strengthener who would show the authenticity of *Sinden* cultural performing art in the puppet show. Meanwhile, the second part was a songs list for junior *Sinden*, which was popular with *Campursari* and *dangdut* songs. The puppeteer would ask the junior *Sinden* to sing the *Campursari* songs while standing and dancing like a solo singer. Thus, it could be seen that here the *Dalang* put the junior *Sinden* as a pure entertainer in *Wayang* performances. Because based on its history, a *Sinden* has never performed stage acts. *Sinden* was just a companion on the puppet show who just sat silently beside the puppet show. However, for now, *Sinden* was not only given the task of singing but also dancing. This was done to make the atmosphere of the show more festive and was expected to attract the attention of the audience or visitor/ tourists of the puppet show. In addition, this stage performance also served to make the puppet show not too boring for the audience to enjoy.

*Sinden*'s challenge to perform this stage action also pushed *Sinden* to change the way they put on the clothes or costume. *Sinden* who usually wore old *Kebaya* began to switch to modern *Kebaya*. This was because if *Sinden* still wore the old-style *Kebaya*, it would be difficult for the *Sinden* to move. After all, the old *kebaya* was designed only to control the wearer's movement and to make them look elegant. However, the demand for the *Sinden* to dance forced them to change into the modern *Kebaya*. The design of modern *Kebaya* used brocade cloth and gauze, or organdy or tile fabric, with a more stretchy skirt. This was different from the old *Kebaya* design which only used *Jarik* and *Kemben* fabrics. This modern *kebaya* design made the *Sinden*

easier to move than the old design so that the modern *Kebaya* was more suitable for the *Sinden* of Jimbe so they could perform stage acts well.

In addition, the presence of *Campursari* music in *Sinden* performances also led to changes in musical instruments. This was because the *Campursari* music itself was made from a combination of modern musical instruments with Javanese musical instruments. Whereas in *Sinden* culture, the only musical instruments used was only the *Karawitan* (a type of gamelan music with singing) musical instruments, namely musical instruments with *slendro* and *pelog* musical chord that was played and followed by 12 musical instruments such as *Kendang* or Drum; *Gong*; *suling* (Flute); *Gambang* (Xylophone); *Bonang*; *Siter*; *Rebab* (Fiddle); *Kenong*; *Kempul*; *Kethuk*; *Kempyang*; *Gender*. However, the existence of *Campursari* music made every *Sinden* performance also equipped with several modern musical instruments such as drums; keyboard; guitar and bass. That way, now these modern musical instruments has become the main musical instruments in the *Sinden* and *Wayang Kulit* performances.

#### 4.2. *Implications of the Cultural Commodification of the Sinden of Jimbe*

The commodification of the *Sinden* of Jimbe performance has caused a polarization effect for the *Sinden*. This polarization occurred between senior and junior *Sinden*. Finally, the discrepancy between the two groups should be based on age, which related to knowledge of songs. Senior *Sinden* was a *Sinden* who was quite old or mature and has sufficient knowledge of classical Javanese songs. Meanwhile, junior *Sinden* was a teenage *Sinden* who was still young and did not yet have enough knowledge of classical Javanese songs but has a lot of knowledge about hit songs. Therefore, the *Dalang* distributed the tasks between the two groups of *Sinden*. Senior *Sinden* was given the task to sing classical Javanese songs and songs that followed *Wayang* performances, while junior *Sinden* was given a task to sing songs that were of interest to the audiences.

The polarization was increasingly apparent when nowadays the *Sinden* show performed more *Campursari* songs than classical Javanese songs so that the senior *Sinden* only has a smaller portion of the appearance compared to the younger *Sinden*. Moreover, their seating positions were also sorted by appearance portion. The seating order of the *Sinden* of Jimbe Blitar from the left side was positioned by the senior *Sinden*, while the right side was positioned by the junior *Sinden*. According to the *Sinden* Jimbe Blitar, the sitting order of the senior *Sinden* was on the left because they were old and were only have to sing classical Javanese songs and sat down most of the time. This was different from the sitting position of the young *Sinden* who was on the right side because they have to sing the *Campursari* songs while dancing, thus this position made it easier for junior *Sinden* to stand and perform stage actions. The following was the order of sitting position for one of the *Sinden*:



Figure 1: Sitting Position of *sinden Jimbe*  
(Source: Researcher)

"For the order of the sitting position of the *Sinden* in the puppet show, the senior *Sinden* or the older *Sinden* sits on the most edge of the order and usually in the most left side because the senior *Sinden* or the older *Sinden* only sits and sings classical Javanese *Gending* during the shadow puppet show." (Result of an interview, 15 September 2019)

Eventually, this polarization has caused competition between senior and junior *Sinden* in terms of popularity. Because this popularity consequently has an impact on the economic sector, it means that if a *Sinden* is more famous, the pay will be more expensive. However, this competition was considered inappropriate, because both of them have different roles in each show. Some senior *Sindens* also considered that the competition was unfair, because in fact what happened was not a competition on quality, but a competition on physical appearance based on age instead. *Sinden* often relied on physical appearance to get the audience's attention to increase her popularity. For some senior *Sinden* this was unfair competition because senior *Sinden* has an older physical appearance than junior *Sinden*.

#### 4.3. Discussion about the authenticity of culture after commodification

The polarization that occurred between the junior and senior *Sinden* eventually led to market competition. In other words, this polarization has divided the market segments of each *Sinden*. Senior *Sinden* tried to present herself the preserver of the distinctive characteristic of the *Sinden* culture through her knowledge about classical Javanese songs. However, Junior *Sinden* has become the vanguard who brought *Sinden* culture so that it can be enjoyed by various groups and not only Javanese people by performing non-classical hits songs. The competition between the two groups of *Sinden* finally caused a debate about where the *Sinden* culture should be taken. This has involved a substantive debate about how a *Sinden* culture should be. Therefore, we must also look at the history of *Sinden* in Java.

Culturally, *Sinden* is the name to call female singers in Java. In some old literature, *Sinden* is described as a figure that must be presented in every *Gamelan* performance. Besides singing the classical Javanese songs, *Sinden* also has a job on telling supporting narratives in a *Wayang* show. Due to their crucial role in traditional Javanese music performances, they are always given solo parts that attract all special attention to them (Cooper, 2000; Poedjosoedarmo, 1988). Even a senior *Dalang* in Java said that *Gamelan* show is meaningless without *Sinden's* presence. Nyi Gitotenoyo explained that the *Pesindhèn*/Traditional Javanese Singer (*Sinden*) were trained

to automatically recognize the song they should sing by listening to the melody played on softer-sounding instruments, especially the sound of *rebab* (a single string violin), a bent instrument (S. Walton, 2007). In other words, *Sinden* means "sings with feeling", because they are required to feel where the melody will go even before the melody is played. Therefore, in the process of becoming a *Sinden*, they are trained to deepen their comprehension of music by closing their eyes while singing. Their unconsciousness does not separate them from their musician partners but increases the comprehension of their music instead.

The first important finding that we could see in the history of *Sinden* is the fact that *Sinden* is a word that refers to the singing techniques, not to the songs that are sung. The voice becomes an important characteristic of someone called *Sinden*. The ability to control and master the chest voice, head voice, and a voice that sounds clear on high notes and soft on low notes is an important thing that must be mastered by *Sinden*. Thus, the presence of modern music in *Sinden* as a form of cultural commodification would almost certainly does not affect the authenticity of *Sinden* culture. *Sinden* culture still stands alone with the special singing techniques and methods, so what happens is the mixing of two genres, such as a modern music that is sung in the *Sinden* singing style. This happened at the Banyuwangi Jazz Beach Festival performance, where *Sinden* collaborated with modern jazz singers (Setiawan & Subahianto, 2020). The collaboration of *Sinden* and jazz singers is a form of neo-exoticism that is oriented towards bringing cultural tourism products to the national and global levels. In addition, the Jogja Hip Hop Foundation also uses *Sinden* singing styles and techniques in producing Hip Hop music (Mora, 2020).

The statement above is also similar to the case of commodification that is carried out by *Sinden* of Jimbe Blitar. *Sinden* only includes and adds new hit genres to make it easier for tourism promotion activities. It means that they do not change their singing technique at all, but instead perform hit songs with a *Sinden* style. Also, the *Sinden* of Jimbe Blitar tries to maintain authenticity by always singing classical Javanese songs. This then becomes important for them to maintain the existence of senior *Sinden* because they are considered as the vanguard that maintains the authenticity of *Sinden* culture. The statement below is stated by one of *Sinden* of Jimbe when she was asked about the authenticity of *Sinden* culture after commodification.

"... Therefore, senior *Sindens* or those who are older are needed as an icon in performance. We can feel the authenticity of the *Sinden* when the senior *Sinden* sings ancient Javanese songs. With that, it is hoped that the guests or the elderly audience will also enjoy the old Javanese or classical songs they like, such as *Jangkrik Genggong*, *Pangkur*, *Sinom* songs and others ..." (WW2, 10 September 2019).

However, *Sinden's* statement above must be discussed again, is it true that the authenticity of the *Sinden* is very much determined by singing classical Javanese songs? Or is it sufficient to just maintain the vocal technique? This requires a very long reinvestigation, but we could see a little through the goals of the message of the *Sinden* culture itself because the understanding of cultural authenticity is also often becomes a notion that an authentic culture has some kind of message. *Sinden* is also the person in charge of interpreting messages and supporting narratives in *Wayang Kulit* (shadow puppet) performances so that they have a powerful and important role in each show. Therefore, in every *Wayang* show, *Sinden* is assigned to open the show by singing the *Gendhing Petalon* song, which the opening song to start a show so that it runs well and safely (Sutton, 1984; S. Walton, 2007; Weiss, 2006).

In addition, classical Javanese songs contain messages and pieces of advice on noble and sacred values. In some kinds of literary works, it is explained that *Sindens* often consciously sing songs to communicate their spiritual feelings, thus the original purpose of its music style resonates with Javanese spiritual practice. The goal is to reveal hidden inner truths (feeling) and

cooperate with others to create harmony and composure. The slow singing style of *Sinden* is purposely used to create a feeling of *Sumeleh*/calm/happy. "*Sumeleh* is a good feeling, like surrendering all problems to God, a feeling of tranquility" (S. Walton, 2007; S. P. Walton, 1996). In the end, it is to be noted the second important thing that marks the authenticity of the *Sinden* culture, that *Sinden* uses the phenomenon of music to show spiritual language. Thus, *Sinden* of jimbe has done the right thing to pay attention in preserving the authenticity of the *Sinden* culture, because only by singing classical Javanese songs a *Sinden* can unite into their spiritual language in a musical performance.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper discussed the cultural commodification that occurred in intangible cultural heritage as a result of tourism. However, the previous debate that involves scholars in making sure about the authenticity of culture as a result of cultural commodification does not occur in the case of the commodification of *Sinden* culture in Jimbe village, Blitar. This is because the commodification of the *Sinden* culture that occurs in Jimbe village only involved the existence of modern music arts. Meanwhile, the *Sinden* culture itself is a culture that focuses on singing methods and techniques, so that the existence of modern music arts does not cause the change in the authenticity of the *Sinden* culture. Instead, it exactly produced a combination of modern music arts that was sung with *Menyinden* techniques or *Sinden* voice style. Besides, the *Dalang* in the Jimbe village also maintained the authenticity of the *Sinden* culture by assigning the task to the senior *Sindens* to sing classical Javanese songs in every performance, to maintain cultural messages.

In conclusion, the cultural commodification could produce positive results as done by the people in Jimbe village who took the right way to increase tourism promotion. Although on the other hand, cultural commodification has the potential to negatively disrupt the continuity of culture that leads to the disappearance of local culture. However, this situation is not desired by tourism and society in general, so carefulness is needed to face the issue of the commodification of local culture for tourism purposes.

Finally, considering the exploratory character of this study, as well as the limited condition related to the use of qualitative methods, it may be useful to undertake a broader study using a quantitative approach to make possible, for example, a test of attitude changes with regard to the commodification of music. It may also help to use continuity theory in future research with a purpose/goal to show whether observed changes could either harm or promote the future of *Sinden* as a musical genre.

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