

Contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” to Build the Image of Surakarta as a City of Culture

*By Azzah Anzilah Aljabbar**, *Dra. Christy Damayanti, M.Si.*** & *Sritami Santi Hatmini, S. IP, M.A****

**Universitas Slamet Riyadi Surakarta (Indonesia), Department of International Relations, Indonesia*

***Universitas Slamet Riyadi Surakarta (Indonesia), Department of International Relations, Indonesia*

****Universitas Slamet Riyadi Surakarta (Indonesia), Department of International Relations, Indonesia*

Abstract

This research aims to explore the contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” in building the image of Surakarta City as a cultural center using a city branding and cultural diplomacy approach. Surakarta City has a rich cultural heritage, such as Wayang Kulit which is an integral part of the city's identity. This study uses a qualitative approach by collecting data through interview methods and analysis of related literature. With a city branding approach, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” integrates Surakarta Wayang culture in strengthening the city's branding and emerges as a Wayang Kulit culture destination in Surakarta. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”'s contribution received a positive response from the Surakarta City Government, with that Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is often involved in cultural events at local and international levels. Through cultural diplomacy, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” establishes relationships with local and international communities, increasing exposure to Surakarta Wayang culture at the global level, therefore this research results show that Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” through various innovations and creativity in its comprehensive work and activities functions as an instrument of Indonesian cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Surakarta Cultural City, City Branding, Cultural Diplomacy, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, Culture

Introduction

The city of Surakarta, or Solo, is a rich cultural center with a heritage of batik, weaving, carvings, keris, gamelan and Wayang performances. The support of kings in the past enabled craftsmen to create quality work. In line with the vision of the Surakarta City Government as written in Surakarta City Regional Regulation Number 6 of 2021 concerning the Medium Term Regional Development Plan for the City of Surakarta for 2021-2026, namely "Realizing Surakarta as a Modern, Resilient, Agile, Creative and Prosperous Cultural City" (surakarta.go.id, 2022). The Department of Culture and Tourism of Surakarta City began to promote Surakarta as a cultural city with tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The vision of the Surakarta City Government is to make this city a modern and creative cultural center (surakarta.go.id, n.d.)

In this context, Sanggar Wayang "Gogon", as a Wayang Kulit production center, plays an important role by creating innovative and creative Surakarta style Wayang, as well as providing various comprehensive art training to the younger generation. Sanggar Wayang "Gogon" is also active in introducing its comprehensive work through various art festivals and workshops. In the era of digitalization and globalization, opportunities to introduce local culture to the international world are certainly increasing (Agustin, 2017). In this case, Sanggar Wayang "Gogon" presents its works that are comprehensive and prioritize quality so that they can become one of the instruments that can build the image of Surakarta as a City of Culture. Therefore, research on the contribution of the Sanggar Wayang "Gogon" in building the image of Surakarta as a cultural city needs to be done, in order to find out the extent of the contribution of the works produced by the Sanggar Wayang "Gogon" in improving the image of Surakarta as a cultural city.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach to examine the contribution of Sanggar Wayang "Gogon" in building the image of Surakarta City as a City of Culture. Qualitative methods are used to explain social phenomena from a subjective point of view. A qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena

(Sugiyono, 2013). Qualitative methods help to understand the social, cultural and historical context in which Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” operates, as well as to explore the factors that influence the process of building a cultural image and international market expansion.

This research uses primary and secondary data sources (Arikunto, 2019). Primary data was obtained from field interviews with the founder and direct observation at Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, while secondary data came from articles, journals and related literature. Data collection was carried out through document study and literature study. Document study includes monitoring phenomena and related moments, while literature study involves searching for relevant and credible literature (Darmalaksana, 2020). Data analysis was carried out by preparing the data, reducing the data into themes, and presenting the data through narratives and then verifying the data to ensure the validity and credibility of the secondary data used.

Research Results

- *The Establishment and Development of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”*

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is the fruit of the love and dedication of an artist, Margono Prasetya S. Sn, who has strong roots in the lineage of Ki Dalang Panjang Mas, a figure who made a mark in the history of the art of Wayang Kulit Purwa. Ki Dalang Panjang Mas not only left behind legendary stories in Wayang performances, but also an invaluable legacy in transmitting and enriching the art of ancient Wayang Kulit, becoming an inspiration for the next generation. Ki Margono, who is fondly called "Gogon" found his natural calling in Wayang art. Ki Margono's natural talent and perseverance led him to achieve this dream. Ki Margono studied at the Indonesian Arts Institute (ISI) Surakarta in the field of puppetry. During his college days, Ki Margono often received orders for Wayang from his friends and lecturers. In fact, the orderers entrusted Ki Margono from the initial idea. This was a good first step for his budding artistic career. On August 13 2008, after completing his education at ISI Surakarta, Margono with determination founded Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. This studio is not just a place to revive the art of Wayang Kulit Purwa, but also a place for Margono to express his talent and develop his works. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” 1 is located on Jl. Halilintar No.140, Ketingan, Surakarta, Central Java. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is a center for Wayang Kulit production with innovative marketing and sales strategies.

The initial journey of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” was not easy. Starting from receiving orders from colleagues in the area, the works of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” began to attract the attention of various other art connoisseurs. This success brought Ki Margono and his studio to the national and international stage, paving the way for wider interaction with the wayang art-loving community. The journey of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” took a global step in 2012, when Margono was invited by the Ministry of Tourism as an ambassador for Wayang Kulit to America for 3 weeks with a series of events, namely an introduction to (wayang) culture, workshops and wayang performances. This experience expanded the network of international artists and brought recognition to the art of Wayang Kulit purwa. The peak of pride came in 2013 when Margono and his team created the largest semar wayang work in the world (Semar Gombak Pat Jupat Limo Pancer) which was then presented to the Governor of DKI Jakarta at that time, Joko Widodo, as an award for his achievements. This is the starting point of the Semar journey before reaching the 69th point and will continue.

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” continues to grow and develop. In 2016, this studio was partnered with the Department of Manpower and Industry as a representative of the industrial sector, which marked a new step in the studio's journey. Then the Indonesian Ministry of Industry facilitated the Semanggi Harmoni IKM Center building, or better known as Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” 2 to become a place for developing the works of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. This is certainly an important milestone for Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. After carrying out complete paperwork, in 2019 the Semanggi Harmoni IKM Center Building began to be used by Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. 2022 marks another big step when Margono founded Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” 3 Oemah Djowo Gallery & Resto in Tasikmadu, Karanganyar, Central Java. The growth and achievements of this studio are quite significant. Activities at the three studios are increasingly diverse, including puppeteer training, dance training, souvenir making and Wayang performances. Several times Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has succeeded in penetrating the global market and participated in various prestigious events such as the Indonesian G20 Presidency, participating in puppet exhibitions at the Borsang Umbrella festival in Chiangmay, Thailand, the 2023 INACRAFT Exhibition, as well as providing U-20 World Cup Souvenirs. This is clear evidence of the long journey and extraordinary achievements that have been achieved. With digital transformation, this studio has opened the door for wayang art to reach a wider community, making achievements as an instrument of Indonesian cultural diplomacy.

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” continues to inspire and enrich Indonesia's cultural heritage with the sustainable beauty of Wayang Kulit art.

- *Contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” in building the Image of Surakarta as a Cultural City*

1) Innovation and Creativity of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” emerged as a center for innovation and creativity in enriching the traditional art of Wayang. By combining traditional elements with a modern touch, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” creates works in the form of Wayang Kulit that are relevant to today's times. Through the use of social media and technology, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” brings Wayang into the digital era to expand its reach and impact. Not only focusing on making Wayang Kulit, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” also acts as a forum for education and training for young artists, ensuring the continuity and development of Wayang art in the future so that it remains relevant and appreciated in modern society.

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has made achievements in presenting comprehensive and high quality works in the traditional art of Wayang Kulit. With full dedication and innovation, Ki Margono, S.Sn, as the founder and leader of the studio, has set high standards in producing Wayang Kulit purwa, making his products sought after by art connoisseurs and puppeteers. The first advantage that characterizes Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is careful attention to the quality of its products. With care, this studio ensures that the shape and details of the wayang match the typical Surakarta style. Ki Margono, S.Sn, has collected references and benchmarks from various sources to ensure the best quality in making wyaang kulit purwa. The combination of aesthetics, depth of story, and international recognition makes the work of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” superior and different from others.

Furthermore, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” pays special attention to the comfort of the puppeteers in playing their puppets. The manufacturing process is carried out by paying attention to techniques and materials that enable the puppeteers to play Wayang smoothly and comfortably. This is done on the basis of their experience as puppeteers so that they can adapt the product needs of a puppeteer so that puppet show lovers can enjoy it with pleasure. The materials and materials used by Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” are also of high quality. Starting from detailed

motifs, colors and buffalo leather which are specially ordered from customers in Gunung Kidul because the supplier already understands the criteria for the leather that Ki Margono wants. Ki Margono, S.Sn, has tried hard to choose the best materials and ensure that every part of the wayang has high aesthetic beauty and good durability.

Innovation and creativity are important cornerstones for Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. Apart from maintaining traditional standards, this studio also presents new creations in Wayang Kulit purwa, both in terms of larger sizes, detailed and interesting motifs, and stories that are relevant to the times. This creative process allows the studio to keep up with the times and appeal to a modern audience. On the other hand, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” succeeded in presenting innovation in design that reflects a modern style. Even though it still maintains its cultural roots and local wisdom, this studio is able to present products that suit the tastes of the times and arouse the interest of the younger generation.

2) The Comprehensive Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”’s wayang show and dance

In building Surakarta's image as a City of Culture, the contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is very significant. This studio not only preserves the Wayang Kulit tradition with its creative and innovative works, but also develops the potential of local arts and culture through various initiatives, festivals and collaborations. Through its various activities in educating children in the field of puppetry and dance on a regular basis, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has presented puppet and dance performances at various national and international events. So the Wayang performances and dances of the Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” support the city branding of the city of Surakarta.

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has performed its dance several times with dozens of child dancers at several events. Apart from that, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is also active in involving its young puppeteers in events or puppeteering competitions. This is done to preserve culture and instill a love of culture in children as the next generation.

3) Collaboration between Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” and the Surakarta City Government

The contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” which has had a positive influence on the City of Surakarta and its good relationship with the government has had a positive impact on the response of the Surakarta City Government. Ananto Pratikno, lecturer at the University of Indonesia, defines City Branding as a process of introducing a city that is represented by icons, ambassadors or events held in the city concerned so that the city will be known as a unique city and different from other cities (HARAHAP, 2008). Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” in terms of City branding builds a positive image of the city of Surakarta in the eyes of local and international communities.

In the context of Surakarta as a City of Culture with a focus on Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, government support is very important to support the development of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. The Government's positive response is a form of acceptance and recognition of the contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” in strengthening Surakarta's City Branding as a City of Culture. Some concrete forms of the government's positive response are as follows:

1. The Surakarta Culture and Tourism Service has a budget for studios in Surakarta. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has been selected several times as an ambassador for Surakarta to take part in art events so that the Department of Culture and Tourism can provide financial support to Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” in the form of transportation costs, logistics and to ensure the continuity of the traditional art activities carried out.
2. The Indonesian Ministry of Industry, through the Department, is developing infrastructure that supports Wayang Kulit production, puppetry and dance training, namely through the Semanggi Harmony IKM Center building (Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” 2). The IKM center building was built with the aim of becoming the main facility, facilities and infrastructure as a center for developing the creativity of IKM players.
3. The government is actively promoting Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” as a tourist attraction. Use social media platforms and government websites to introduce performances, workshops and special events held by the studio.

4. The government organizes cultural events and festivals involving Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. This can attract tourists and provide direct experience in getting to know the richness of Surakarta Wayang culture. Events such as Wayang Kulit performances, puppet making workshops, and traditional arts festivals can attract the public.
5. The government organizes collaboration with the private sector to support Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, such as holding joint events with local companies, hotels and other businesses to expand promotional reach.
6. Encourage community participation in the activities of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” through participatory programs such as workshops, festivals and other art competitions.

The Surakarta City Government has a big responsibility to continue to develop and promote this cultural heritage. Through active collaboration with local communities, involvement of tourists, and continuous efforts in supporting Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, with this joint effort to build a positive image will bring Surakarta to the global stage.

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” received appreciation and visits from the Surakarta Culture Service, the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Trade, the Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Industry, the Surakarta SME and Industry Cooperative Service, the Ministry of Investment BKPM, the Regent of Bangkalan Madura, the Director General of Culture, Hilmar Farid and many more.

4) The role of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” in cultural diplomacy

In this era of globalization, cultural diplomacy plays an increasingly important role in strengthening relations between nations. In the midst of geopolitical complexity and the dynamics of international relations, art and culture become a bridge that connects various societies and countries, across political and ideological boundaries. Cultural Diplomacy can be carried out by all communities, both official and unofficial, government and non-government, towards the target country (Mukti, 2023). In this context, traditional works of art, such as Wayang, have become a strong instrument in carrying out cultural diplomacy. In this context, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is able to display its innovative and creative works. Wayang, with

all its complexity, is not just a performing art, but is also a reflection of the cultural values, history and identity of a nation.

The works of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” are not only a means of entertainment, but also a symbol of local wisdom that is able to penetrate international boundaries. Through Wayang performances, universal messages about brotherhood, justice and the struggle against crime can be conveyed. Cultural diplomacy through the work of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” is not only limited to local stages, but has also penetrated international stages. By taking advantage of art festivals, cultural exhibitions and international artist exchanges and continuing to expand the reach of Indonesian cultural influence to all corners of the world. For example, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has been asked several times by the Indonesian Ministry of Industry to become an ambassador for Wayang culture at international events in the United States and Thailand.

In the context of international relations, the works of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” Studio are an important tool for strengthening bilateral relations and promoting mutual understanding between nations. By making Wayang art a universal language. As a result, the work of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” not only received appreciation for its beauty, but also became a symbol of peace, brotherhood and cultural diversity at the international level. In a world often filled with political tension and conflict, Wayang art has emerged as an instrument for peace and cooperation across countries.

Conclusion

Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has played an extraordinary role in building Surakarta's image as a cultural city and opening up broad potential in cultural diplomacy. In its journey, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” preserves and promotes the traditional art of Surakarta style Wayang Kulit, which is a characteristic of Javanese culture, especially Surakarta. Through the comprehensive performances and works displayed by Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, it has attracted the attention of visitors and tourists. Apart from that, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” also functions as an educational forum that forms young talents in the art of Wayang Kulit, through various activities in dance training, Wayang or making Wayang Kulit themselves. In terms of cultural

diplomacy, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has become a cultural ambassador for Surakarta, establishing relationships with local and foreign arts and cultural groups at various prestigious events. Through its multifaceted role, Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has helped strengthen Surakarta's image as a cultural city and opened up opportunities to increase cultural diplomacy at the national and international levels. With continued support from the Government, the contribution of Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” can support the creation of a wider positive influence on wayang culture throughout the world.

It is important for us to care for and support culture as an integral part of building a city's identity. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”, as a custodian of cultural heritage, can be a real example of the preservation and promotion of local culture and can contribute to the positive image of a city. The city of Surakarta has significant potential for cultural diplomacy through Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”. Through traditional Wayang Kulit art performances and its efforts to preserve, develop and promote Javanese culture. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon” has the potential to become a cultural ambassador for the city of Surakarta on a national and international scale. Sanggar Wayang “Gogon”'s contribution in preserving and revitalizing traditional arts opens the door to wider cultural dialogue and collaboration with cultural communities throughout the world.

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