



Elevating the “*Sedekah Laut Jepara*” Tradition Towards Indonesian International Tourism: A Comparative Study with the “*Fête de La Mer*” Sea Festival Tradition in the City of Bordeaux, France

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Abstract. The *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition or *Lomban* tradition is a tradition passed down from generation to generation which is still preserved because of its existence as a symbol of gratitude to God Almighty for the abundance of marine products provided. This tradition has the potential to become an international tourism destination in the field of cultural tourism. However, this has not been realized because it faces the problem that the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition is not yet widely known by the international community. The diversity of the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition also appears in other countries such as France which has a track record of superior tourism, namely the *Fete de La Mer* tradition in the city of Bordeaux. *Fete de La Mer* is a tradition passed down from generation to generation carried out by coastal communities to honor sailors and fishermen who have provided a source of life for the community through their marine products. Through historical methods, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography as well as the methodology of the tourism history approach, this article aims to compare the track record of the international tourism destination development model that has been implemented by the French Government with the subject of the *Fete de La Mer* traditional destination, with the international tourism development model which was carried out by the Jepara Regency Government to be used as an important finding in developing international tourism in the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition

Keywords: *Sedekah Laut Jepara*, International Tourism, *Fete de La Mer*. Bordeaux, France

1 Introduction

According to the people of Jepara, the *Sedekah Laut* tradition has existed since the time when the Islamic kingdom was established in the archipelago, around 300-500 years ago, and has been preserved from generation to generation until the 21st century. The *Sedekah Laut* tradition is a tradition carried out by the people of Jepara, especially coastal communities who work as fishermen who want safety when going to sea and obtain abundant marine products. However, along with the era of globalization, the *Sedekah Laut* Jepara tradition is starting to be rarely known by ordinary people and tourists visiting Jepara. This is caused by several factors, including a lack of tourism

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promotion system, and the lack of public enthusiasm for promoting traditions as tourist attractions.[1]

This article focuses on examining the comparison of tourism models that have been carried out by the Jepara Government and the French Bordeaux Government, with the aim of providing important findings for the development of Jepara tourism. The country of France was chosen in this article's research comparison because it is known as a popular country in the tourism sector which is often visited by tourists with its main attraction icon being the Eiffel Tower which is located in the capital Paris. Various tourist attractions can be found in this country, one of which is the traditional cultural tourism of the sea festival "*Fete de La Mer*" which is held once a year at the beginning of the summer in the city of Bordeaux. *Fete de La Mer* is a tradition carried out by French people to honor sailors and fishermen who have provided a source of life for the community through marine products, and the implementation of this tradition coincides with Mass activities and laying wreaths in the open sea as a symbol of respect. *Fete de La Mer* is also a tradition with a strong Catholic religious nuance, so that many priests and local church congregations take part in enlivening this tradition. [2] Through this research, it can be seen that the *Fete de La Mer* tourism development model carried out by the French government is to contribute important findings to inspire the Jepara Regional Government in developing the *Sedekah Laut* Jepara tradition tourism so that it is known to the world community.

1.1 Sedekah Laut Jepara Tradition and Fete de La Mer

In general, the *Sedekah Laut* procession or *Lomban* party in Jepara begins with a buffalo procession along the beaches of Jepara, starting from the Ujung Batu fish auction and ending at the Kartini Beach pier, which continues with the slaughtering of the buffalo to be prepared as an offering, especially the head. sea, then followed by a pilgrimage to the grave of a sacred figure, namely *Cik Lanang* at Kartini Beach Baths and the grave of *Mbah Ronggo*. All of these activities were carried out one day before the implementation of the *Sedekah Laut* Jepara. The next day, coinciding with the peak of the *Sedekah Laut* tradition, the series of activities continued with a shadow puppet performance at the Ujung Batu fish auction in the early hours of the morning. After that, in the morning a buffalo head throwing ceremony was held into the sea as symbolic evidence of gratitude to the creator and continued with activities at Kartini Beach in the form of the *kupat*, *lepet* festival. This festival is accompanied by dance and prayer during its implementation. The series of events ended with the *Lomban* party, which means having fun until the day of the *Sedekah Laut* tradition is over.[3] In the *Sedekah Laut* Procession there was a "Gulf War" incident, namely the offerings had been released into the sea, so the fishermen threw themselves into the sea together to scramble to retrieve the offerings using “*kupat*” and “*lepet*” as bullets. This war ended with the boat landing on Kartini Beach.[4]

Historically, the *Fete de La Mer* tradition or *Fete de La Mer* sea festival was first held in 1932 at the same time as the Mass blessing ceremony.[5] The traditional procession of the *Fete de La Mer* sea festival takes place in a sacred manner, starting with a blessing for the wives of sailors and fishermen carried out by the Franciscan church priests by performing the "Virginity of Mary" to Our Lady, which is a term used to refer to proof of the loyalty of the sailors' wives. and fishermen to remain pure like Mother Mary when she was left to go out to sea.[6] This is done to protect the husband they love because they spend a long time at sea. This activity is carried out in the morning. Next, the ritual activities continued by going to the Atlantic coast along the southwest coast of France.[7]. After the people and tourists who came filled the coastal area, the Franciscan church priest invited all the congregation present to pray at Mass in the Basilica led by the Archbishop of Bordeaux.[8] The aim is to express gratitude for the marine products received. After the Mass is over, precisely at noon, people and tourists lay flower bouquets that have been prepared in advance as a form of respect and gratitude to the Creator. The types of flowers used are usually carnations, chrysanthemums, roses and daisies. After throwing various flower bouquets into the sea, the tradition is carried out by lighting firecrackers to add to the excitement with the aim of making everyone present feel happy.

2 Methods

The research method used in compiling this article uses historical methods. The historical method is a method used to research, reconstruct and analyze events in the past. The historical method includes four steps, namely heuristics (collecting sources), criticism (testing sources), interpretation, and historiography (writing history).[9] Comparative validation efforts to test the truth of the comparison of these two traditions can be found based on the tracking of sources that have been carried out (heuristic) both in the form of local news pages from each tradition that have been published in web form, both from Indonesian and French, the sources obtained are diverse, namely in the form of journal research publications, research reports, and tourism promotion reports in the form of YouTube, advertisements and posters. In addition, the factors that make these two articles comparable are the similarities in their implementation which are oriented towards the sea and both express gratitude, but there are differences in religious beliefs and symbolic objects that are washed up in the sea. If the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition is closely related to the nuances of Islam in its ritual procession with buffalo heads and agricultural products as symbolic objects, the *Fete de La Mer* tradition is closely related to the Catholic religion with flower arrangements as symbolic objects.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 *Sedekah Laut Jepara* Tourism Development Model

The *Sedekah Laut* Jepara Tourism development model (*Lomban* Tradition) carried out by the Jepara Regional Government includes, among other things, a tourism promotion system that has been implemented since the end of the 20th century, which is still mostly carried out through print media such as newspapers and magazines. However, along with technological developments and globalization in the XXI century around 2010 until the following years. Promotion is carried out in two ways, namely offline, including verbal distribution, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines, and so on.[10] Online tourism promotion can be done via internet websites including YouTube in the form of promotional videos, Google, Instagram, Facebook, and so on.[11]

The next model for developing the *Sedekah Laut* Jepara tradition to become an international tourist attraction is to collaborate with the community, especially entrepreneurs in the creative culinary and craft industries, which has been carried out since 2009 by following the president's instructions regarding the Development of the Creative Economy in Indonesia, one of which is Jepara. The aim is for visiting tourists to experience the typical culinary delights of the Jepara coast. This can also attract international tourist interest because it can only be found in one place, making uniqueness the main attraction. Examples of culinary delights that can be found during the Jepara Sea Alms Ceremony process are rice blessing, kupat, lepet, and so on.[12]

3.2 *Fete de La Mer* International Tourism Development Model

The *Fete de La Mer* traditional tourism development model is carried out in three stages, namely revitalization, commodification and tourism promotion. Revitalization is interpreted as an effort to revive or revive culture that has faded, declined in popularity or even disappeared.[13] The revitalization carried out by the Bordeaux city government towards this tradition is to continue to preserve this tradition through a cooperative relationship between the government and the local community. Apart from that, the Bordeaux city government is also trying to have this tradition recognized by UNESCO as a world cultural heritage. Through UNESCO, *Fete de La Mer* will easily become an international tourism destination.[14] The commodification of *Fete de La Mer* tourism is carried out, among other things, by serving culinary specialties from the coastal communities of Bordeaux, such as various processed foods from seafood, vegetables and fruit, in collaboration with creative culinary industry entrepreneurs and several French restaurants, so that when this tradition is implemented by tourists Various culinary specialties can be served to attract visitors' interest. Apart from that, the commodification of *Fete de La Mer* tourism is also carried out with party activities and marine attractions carried out by coastal communities with the aim of visiting tourists being entertained.[15] The way to reconcile the demystification process in

commodification with the aspect of meaning inherent in a religious activity is actually not to focus on the core aspect of its religiosity but on the aspect of cultural tourism contained in the religious aspect offered, so that the way that can be taken is to add objects of tourist attraction to participate in enlivening the traditional process without reducing the slightest religious element, for example the tradition of *Fete de La Mer* is commodified with the presence of a culinary party and performing arts at the end of the procession with the aim of increasing the popularity of cultural tourism, which in ancient times this procession did not exist, but because it was considered important, the San Franciscan priest consulted with the Bordeaux city government with the approval of the French president to add this aspect without reducing the sacredness of the traditional procession. This is not much different from the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition in Indonesia.

Apart from revitalization and commodification, the *Fete de La Mer* was also developed through promotion and marketing models, both manual and digital, at the beginning of the 21st century with creative and unique models so that when this tradition is carried out, tourists can receive information about the procession of implementing this tradition. the day before the scheduled implementation day. Manual promotions are generally carried out verbally from various people as well as through newspapers, pamphlets, and so on. Promotions carried out digitally can be found via Google, YouTube, Instagram and other social media. Thus, people all over the world can witness the traditional *Fete de La Mer* procession and make the *Fete de La Mer* an international tourist attraction.[16]

4 Conclusion

The *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition can be intensively developed into a cultural tourism destination known to the international community and the city of Bordeaux as the *Fete de La Mer* was also developed by the French government into an international tourism destination through a development model of commodification, revitalization and creative tourism destination promotion. The similarity between the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition and the French *Fete de La Mer* is that they are both oriented towards the sea as a form of respect and gratitude for the abundance of sea products received and there is a prayer ritual in the procession. The difference is that the *Sedekah Laut Jepara* tradition is thick with Islamic religious nuances with the main characteristics of being carried at sea using local agricultural products and buffalo heads as the main symbol, however, the *Fete de La Mer* tradition is thick with Catholic religious nuances with the main characteristics of being carried in the sea. The sea uses flowers that have been neatly shaped. There are various types of flowers carried, such as carnations, chrysanthemums, roses and daisies. Thus, through the findings of this research, similarities and differences between the two tourism development models for each

country can be found which are beneficial for the contribution of knowledge to both countries, especially the Jepara region, Indonesia.

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