

Commodification of Reyog Art in the Dynamics of Local Politics in Ponorogo, Indonesia

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Abstract: *The theory of commodification initiated by Vincent Mosco underwent a new evolution from what initially saw commodities that could not be commercialized to become commercialized. Changes in the form of commodity values are the key to how slowly the changes occur. Through the research of Irianto (2016) and Yulianto (2013), the change in commodification leads to culture as a commercialized commodity. This study tries to develop a theory by looking at the phenomenon of reyog art not only as a commercial commodity, but also as a political commodity for the power of the local elite. This research method uses a qualitative approach to the type of phenomenological research. By using purposive sampling in interviews, there were seven people who became informants. Interview data are also corroborated by observational data in the field for several months with a focus on the political campaigns of the political elite. The results showed that the local political elite used reyog as a political commodity or a means of mobilizing the masses. In addition, the role of warok as the leader of reyog arts has a major role in the success of political campaigns. So that the commodification of power is thick in local culture.*

Keywords: *Commodification, reyog art, political campaign*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study will discuss the commodification of power that is in the struggle of the local political elite by using reyog art as a commodity. In the world of democracy, the struggle between candidates for the votes of the masses makes the candidates have to recognize the characteristics of the arena in which they will hold a political battle. This political arena usually affects how political candidates conduct political campaigns. In Indonesia, several characteristics that are always synonymous with the political arena have their own criteria, including how local culture that is an icon of a region is used as a political strategy, including an approach that connects local cultural symbols. This study will present how the commodification of power appears in the narrative of reyog art which is part of political campaign activities and creates certain symbols of power.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The commodification theory was initiated by Mosco (2014) in his work entitled *The Political Economy of Communication* based on the view that there is a change in meaning from what should be free from commercial matters to things that are commercialized or traded. In a narrow sense, Mosco bases his research on objects in the form of media, workers, and the public that are more accepted by the market. This theory was then developed by Irianto (2016) and Yulianto (2013) who saw the change in the commodification of communication into the commodification of culture. The two writers in their respective works strongly find local cultural practices that transform cultural forms as art into commodities that can be commercialized. In particular, Yulianto (2013) research is almost similar to this research because it has the same location and research on reyog art. However, this research actually denies the accusation that the art of reyog Ponorogo has no correlation with power. In fact, the art of reyog, both historically until the current era, is still very thick as a political commodity for some of the elite. Of course, this will experience a change in the form of commercial meaning, not only interpreted as an exchange that is trade law. But it can be "sold" to influence the masses in a broad sense, including as a political tool.

Several studies related to the relationship between local arts, especially reyog and the ruling elite and political candidates, have not been studied much. In several previous studies, the symbol of power that is synonymous with reyog art in government has been attached for a long time. The construction of several statues of lions and tigers in several corners of the city is identical to how Regent Markum shows symbols of power. Although currently it is still a controversy, Harsono(2019)believes that the construction of icons in the form of lion statues in several corners of the city area creates a blurring of identity because the Ponorogo symbol which is the icon in Reyog should be a tiger or tiger, not a lion. But it is the political hegemony of Regent Markum Singodimejo. Symbolically, the lion statue is identical to its name which has the name Singodimejo, which is singo or the Indonesian language is a lion. In addition, the influence of hegemony has an effect on the names of reyog art groups to this day. Almost all reyog art groups in Ponorogo start with the name "lion", not tiger. Only one reyog group name uses the name "simo" which means a large male Javan tiger.

The relationship between politics and reyog is actually not only during the Regent Markum, but has existed for a long time even since the Orde Lama era, several political parties used reyog art to attract the masses. Political parties have their own reyog arts groups, such as PNI which has BREN (Barisan Reyog Nasional, PKI has LEKRA (People's Arts Institute, and NU has CAKRA, etc.). Of course the interesting is how elites can use reyog art for their campaign strategy The more important issue to be discussed is how the warok relates to the political elite. Reyog art itself is synonymous with warok leadership. Even a warok can have more than one reyog art group. Harsono & Santoso(2005)describe the role of warok in reyog art and elite is very important even warok has openly become or is used as a political elite and political party elite. This research is slightly different from (Khoirurrosyidin, 2013)who tends to separate warok as a political elite and warok as an artistic elite who has influence in supporting power. warok and reyog arts are entities non-separable bag. However, warok is a central figure who has a strategic role both in reyog art and as a tool of power. Thus, political actors tend not to separate themselves by identity with warok and reyog arts.

Nugroho(2013)divides reyog into three types, reyog obyog, reyog stage, and reyog santri. But in general there are only two dichotomies, namely reyog obyog and reyog stage (Achmadi, 2014). This is like how the narrative that is built is how the reyog stage tends to take the story of the journey of King Klonosewandono who will make a proposal to the Princess of the King of the Kingdom of Kediri. While reyog obyog took the story from Ki Ageng Kutu who came from the Wengker kingdom who satirized Prabu Brawijaya to V. Although there are different versions in reyog performances, each type of reyog has significant differences in the stage arena. When it comes to stage reog, using many and complete role actors, there are Prabu Klonosewandono, Bujangganong, Jathil, totaling 24 people, Warok totaling 24, and dadak peacock which is usually at least 2 people, and music players totaling around 10-20 people. In some performances the total number is even more than doubled because there are several actors such as Bujangganong which is usually two to four people and suddenly the peacock is likewise.

This is different from the type of reyog obyog which tends not to use many people and does not even require actors as complete as stage reyog. The roles that usually appear are 4 people jathil, one or two suddenly peacocks, and two Bujangganong. The role of Prabu Klonosewandono is not needed here because it has a storyline with a rigged stage. In addition, the role of warok is sometimes not needed because warok are only figures of art owners or elders. But sometimes the warok also dance together. Another difference is when they reog the stage before performing, they on average spend months practicing because they have their own assessment standards. In contrast to reyog obyog which does not require intensive training or even without practicing though. However, the attraction of reyog obyog is not inferior to that of stage reyog. Because reyog obyog often uses the charm of beautiful jathil and relies on body beauty rather than highlighting the ability of a dance.

In addition, reyog obyog, both in history and up to now, has always succeeded in inviting the public to enjoy not only watching, but also dancing with them. Not a few people were entertained by how the presentation of reyog obyog and it seemed as if the art belonged together. So, certain people like the show. This research will focus on how local elite political campaigns use reyog art instruments in influencing political masses.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research method approach to the type of phenomenological research. This is because this research tries to "capture" the meaning of the reality produced by the informants. Husserl (2014) in Manen Manen(2017) defines phenomenology as capturing a person's experience in depth related to his primordial origin or essence, without interpreting, explaining, or theorizing. The definitions of phenomenology offered by different scholars focus that it is phenomenology that has the potential to penetrate deep into human experience and trace the essence of a phenomenon and explain it in its original form as experienced by the individual(Kafle, 2011). Those who are used as informants are people who have experience not only in reyog art, but also participate in politics. They have witnessed for themselves even as actors in the relationship between reyog art and politics as a relationship that has existed for a long time. Although there are informants who do not admit their involvement in practical politics, the other two informants actually prove the opposite. This study uses a purposive sampling technique with a total of 7 informants consisting of politicians, warok who are members of political parties and waroks who are not members of political parties. Interview data is also strengthened by observation data carried out in the field directly. Observations were very effective during the political declarations of the waroks and during political campaigns. This is because many political narratives are raised and inserted through the reyog arts that are displayed so that data collection can be carried out optimally. In addition, the data taken by observation is very supportive of the interview data. This is because the political narrative in the art of reyog can be done when observing the phenomenon directly. In reyog art, it is held during regular performances with reyog performances during campaigns or declarations. The difference is both in the storyline, the difference in the actors, and the additional narrative provided. So from this activity it is not difficult enough to get field data because it is open to the public and becomes a public spectacle.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The political events that took place during the second times on local election, both in 2015 and 2020, were quite a fierce battle between two actors, namely Sugiri Sancoko and Ipong Mochlisoni. Although there were four candidates in 2015, the competition between Ipong and Sugiri was quite fierce when compared to the other two candidates. The reason is, Ipong's victory in 2015 over Sugiri was finally reversed by Sugiri Sancoko in the Pilkada held in December 2020. In 2020, many predicted it would be Ipong's victory for two periods. This is because Sugiri only has the little support from local senators, while Ipong controls the majority of political parties. This is what makes Sugiri have a better mass approach strategy than Ipong, one of which is a cultural approach. This discussion will explain how the cultural approach taken by local officials, especially when carried out during the campaign.

In this section we will discuss at least three main sections. First, how is the campaign culture that occurred in the 2015 and 2020 Pilkada between Sugiri Sancoko and Ipong Mochlisoni. Second, how the political symbols that appear in the campaign that appear.

4.1. Sugiri Sancoko Campaign

Sugiri Sancoko's victory was certainly not influenced by a single factor. However, the lack of support from political parties indicates how the people of Ponorogo actively participated in determining the victory of Sugiri Sancoko and Lisdyarita. The reason for getting support from Reyog artists is that it cannot be answered whether the victory was a determining effect of the group of artists that Sugiri Sancoko and Lisdyarita had mobilized or whether it was due to Ipong's failure during one period in leading Ponorogo. This research does not answer the possibility of the majority of the general vote how their vote supports Sugiri. However, this study observes that in every campaign and in leading Ponorogo, both incumbent and still a candidate, there are symbols in which the art of reyog has always been the main instrument in gaining mass sympathizers.

The political declaration which were held on Friday afternoon, August 28, 2020, was an important political momentum for the couple Sugiri Sancoko and Lisdyarita to introduce themselves to the Ponorogo masses. Before making the declaration which took place at the Bantarangin Sumoroto square, Sugiri and Lisdyarita made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Batoro Katong, who became the first regent and founder of the Ponorogo district. The tomb of Batoro Katong is an important symbol for Ponorogo because it implies the formation of one's spirituality and the desire for a strong will for the

desires to be obtained. Batoro Katong himself is a very important central figure in the world of warokan. This is because Batoro Katong is considered a Muslim warok, including the one who made the emergence of Muslim waroks in Ponorogo.

After leaving Batoro Katong's Tomb, Sugiri and Lisdyarita immediately directed their entourage to the Bantarangin square located in Sumoroto. The distance is 12 km or about 30 minutes from the tomb. The arrival which took place at half past 2 in the afternoon was welcomed by various art groups. In the field, there is Mas Wisnu HP, a young warok as well as a well-known reyog artist in Ponorogo. Vishnu was an important figure in the campaign movement of Sugiri Sancoko and Lisdyarita. His role as a creator of a culture-based campaign as a campaign instrument is an indication of his culturally influenced political attitude.

The arrival of Sugiri Sancoko was immediately greeted by four *dadak merak* and several actors from the reyog arts. Sugiri was immediately directed to rise above the *dadak merak* for several meters. Then Sugiri was lowered and changed vehicles to ride animals in the form of kebo-keboan art which was led by several people. Sugiri's arrival was like a parade, with dozens of young people in the front row carrying very large red and white flags. The position of the youth carrying the flag is in front of the Bantarangin square stage. In front of the line of youth carrying the big flag, there are several arts such as *reyog*, *kuda lumping*, *caplokan*, *kebo-keboan*, and several other arts.

Gamelan music was played several times, starting from the arrival of Sugiri and Lisdyarita, their entry into the field arena to sitting on the edge of the field with red and white tents. Then the gamelan sounds again when party representatives or each party leader come forward to give their respective remarks. Gamelan music is also played when Sugiri goes on stage and off stage.

Reyog art represented by *dadak merak* also enlivened the event. There are at least four *dadak merak*, with two of them wearing white *dadak merak*, and the other two *dadak merak*. *Dadak merak* is not played as often as gamelan. Only played three times. First, when the Sugiri-Lisdyarita couple came to the location, the four *dadak merak* in front of them and led them to their seats. Second, when the *MoU* was signed between PAN, PPP, PDIP, Hanura. Third, when Sugiri left the location.

The event actually has an important meaning. First, the declaration is located at the Sumoroto Square as well as symbolically being the center of the Bantarangin kingdom. Second, the selection of square was also carried out near the statue of Prabu Klonosewandono, the king of the Bantarangin kingdom. This meaning is also strengthened by Sugiri Sancoko's speech at the beginning of his speech which reads,

"... *this afternoon, this declaration was witnessed directly by the spirit of our ancestor, Prabu Klonosewandono, King of Bantarangin, as a witness I swear before all of you present that I will fight for the people of Ponorogo....*"

Sugiri said those words at the beginning of his speech with one hand pointing at the statue of Klonosewandono which was quite large while carrying his magic whip. This statement is very important. How Sugiri interprets his political stance requires the blessing of the famous king who mythically once ruled Ponorogo. Third, a group of dance artists was also in front of the stage as if the Sugiri-Lisdyarita couple was meant to be supported by a group of Ponorogo artists and culturalists.

Sugiri's political movement towards warok artists did not stop with a declaration attended by various elements. In one event, Sugiri attended an event where there were hundreds of waroks claiming to represent all Ponorogo reyog artists. They gathered in a simple building that was quite spacious. They were all dressed in black custom like warok. Sugiri who also wore black clothes like warok accompanied by Lisdyarita then sat down next to Mbah Pur, one of the warok elders who was very well known to almost all the people of Ponorogo. Beside him is a young warok Alex who is quite influential in reyog obyog.

Symbolically, there are two things that indicate the support of the waroks to Sugiri. First, the speech delivered by Mbah Pur which was very provocative in support of Sugiri. Mbah Pur was one of the most influential people in the art of reyog and was respected as a warok senior. Second, Sugiri received a sling that read "Regent of Reyog Artist". After receiving the sling, he also handed over the Samandiman Whip, a weapon that became the hallmark of Prabu Klonosewandono. Instantly the

reyog gamelan hummed along with Sugiri Sancoko lifting and playing the Samandiman Whip. The handover of the Samandiman Whip by the reyog artist to Sugiri Sancoko signifies that their leadership leads to the loyalty of the candidate for regent who comes from Sampung Ponorogo.

In addition, Sugiri also managed to identify himself as a warok. This is evidenced by two things. First, all black clothes with the characteristics of warok. Although Sugiri did not wear blangkon warok, not all participants did not wear blangkon warok, as did Alex's warok who did not wear a headgear at all. Second, through the content of the speech delivered. In his speech Sugiri used an interesting term that was uttered twice, "bupatine getihe dewe, wakile getihe dewe". The term "getihe dewe, wakile getihe dewe" has a strong meaning that they as a part of the warok. This is an emphasis on how the commodification of political culture is formed starting from the identity that is constructed.

4.2. Ipong Mochlisoni Campaign

Ipong Mochlisoni as an incumbent in the 2020 local election is not as prominent as Sugiri Sancoko. Ipong's political declaration was made not far from the Batoro Kathong Tomb in the north of Pasar Pon or the Kota Lama area. In the event, which was wrapped with a small festival, there were several types of arts, such as reyog obyog, caplokan, and the whipping tradition, which is typical of Jember. In contrast to Sugiri's political declaration, which was already in accordance with a well-thought-out plan, how art groups welcomed one of them as a leader in mobilizing the masses, Ipong's declaration tended to be too abstract because when he arrived, art performers such as reyog obyog tended to be "out of style" and not directed by good. This is because in the field, there is no "leader" artist who acts like Mas Wisnu who directs. In addition, the political declarations made by Ipong and Bambang, unfortunately, are not thick with the nuances of Ponorogo with their reyog identity. Ipong is unable to identify himself as a warok or interpret the location of his declaration which is in a strategic area because he is close to the founder of Ponorogo, namely Bathoro Katong. Ipong in his declaration speech tended to discuss how development in the first period as regent was in building road infrastructure and making a policy on the 11th of every month to organize reyog obyog in every village and kelurahan.

However, this does not mean that Ipong has completely failed in developing his political commodities through the art of reyog. In one of the campaigns at a tourist site located in Suko Sewu in the Sukorejo area, the deployment of reyog obyog also took place in gaining political sympathizers. The event was quite lively because it featured quite a number of catan (heads of a tiger without a peacock) with approximately 22 pieces, with two suddenly peacocks. The event was not attended by Ipong, but was attended by an elder warok who was highly respected and known by the entire Ponorogo community, namely Mbah Tobron. The event began with a speech by Mbah Tobron who was also provocative to the masses to support Ipong.

After Mbah Tobron's speech ended, the drumming and gamelan began. Then suddenly the kucingan was lifted, and all the performers danced according to the actor being played. Reyog actors are almost complete except for the role of Prabu Klonosewandono, all of which are available, from warok, jathil, bujanganong, and dadak merak or kucingan. Strangely, there is only one person who plays the role of warok. In general, in a performance, there is more than one warok actor. Interestingly, the show does not tell a story like the reyog festival plot, nor the reyog obyog in general, which tends to be abstract. But the show intentionally has its own storyline related to the 2020 local election. In the middle of the show, there are two "kucingan" who are then surrounded by other actors. The two "kucingan" initially faced off and then fought fiercely, attacking each other. Then a warok was beside the two kucingan and watched the two "kucingan" fight. After one of the kucingan fell and was injured, the warok then stopped the fight. Warok, who had a dashing body, was then in the middle of the two "kucingan" and then reconciled the conflict between the two. Along with the drama, one of the waroks, using a mic, gave the following narration of the dance drama:

"macan loro podo kerah. Macan loro podo gumerah. Gambarane tahun rongewu rong puluh ing kabupaten Ponorogo. Kabeh pancen bener, kabeh ono pengaruh. Ono satriyo, ono satriyo kang iso manunggalake petarungane. Satriyo utomo kang iso manunggalake lahir batine kekaruhan dening konco badak. Karo-karone ora loro ing ati. Sopo to satriyo kuwi? Sanjangipun Bapak Ipong Mochlisoni."

After the narration ended, and the two “kucingan” were successfully reconciled by a gallant warok, then all the actors danced together, including the jathil and all the dadak merak. But the music has lyrics that tend to be political rather than a reyog obyog art that has its own storyline. While the gamelan and karawitan were humming, they all sang, “Bupatine panggah Ipong, bupatine panggah Pak Ipong, Pak Ipong ae,” and it kept repeating over and over.

The drama is certainly interesting to be interpreted further. There are two interpretations that are relevant to this condition. The first interpretation, the battle of the two cats tells how the people of Ponorogo fight each other, argue, and have different opinions in order to welcome the Pilkada which will be held in 2020. This is according to the narrative, “*macan loro podo kerah. Macan loro podo gumerah. Gambarane tahun rongewu rong puluh ing Kabupaten Ponorogo*”. The tiger is an identification symbol of the Ponorogo community. The real icon of Ponorogo is a tiger, not a lion like the one in front of the pavilion or at four points in alon-alon. As in the past, Ponorogo is a dense forest and many simo or large male tigers always take shelter in one of the trees on which there are peacocks. So that in the drama, with the existence of two tigers fighting each other, the people of Ponorogo have been dichotomized due to the Pilkada. Then Ipong is a knight who managed to reconcile the two tigers or both sides. As the narration reads, “*Satriyo utomo kang iso manunggalake lahir batine kekaruhan dening ponco badak. Karo-karone ora loro ing ati.*” So, Ipong's victory will be able to reconcile and not hurt the hearts of both parties because Ipong is a fair interpreter who can mediate community conflicts due to the politics.

The second interpretation, the battle of the two tigers, tells of how the conflicts that have occurred so far between waroks were divided due to the policies of past regents. The existence of the National Reyog Festival (FRN) is indeed a policy that invites enthusiasm not only from the people of Ponorogo, but also outside the Ponorogo area to enliven the party leading up to one syuro. The party, which was held for approximately 4 to 5 days, which was centered in Ponorogo square, turned out to invite some of the waroks to dislike, one of which was Alex's warok. He views that the National Reyog Festival which focuses on telling stories about the Bantarangin Kingdom who wants to propose to the daughter of the King of Kediri, Dewi Songgolangit, is unable to accommodate all reyog artists in Ponorogo and tends to damage reyog obyog as he considers the original reyog in Ponorogo. His view is quite rational because he sees that not all artists can perform at their own “home” and some of the participants are from out of town. Although some artists got additional work because not all artists from outside the city were able to use the dadak peacock and portray several actors perfectly, not all reyog artists were able to participate in the folk event.

Ipong during one period of leadership as regent responded to the discontent of some waroks with the reyog obyog side. Therefore, the policy on the 11th of every month to organize reyog obyog in all sub-districts and villages is a middle way to make reyog obyog known to the wider community. In addition, it raises the economy of the reyog obyog artists in the villages, because they will get a call for every performance. One village head once said that every time he held the art of reyog obyog every month to implement the policy, he spent 5 million from the village budget. Of course, this is very beneficial for reyog obyog artists so that they are not stepchildren. Thus, the second interpretation tells how Ipong Mochlisoni's success when he was in office for one term was because he succeeded in reconciling the two warok artists of the reyog.

4.3. Reog Political Commodification

Reyog as a political commodity is a discourse on how local culture has close contact with certain powers. The relations between political elements and local culture is not a new thing in the study of political science because the tools to gain power have various instruments, including one of them using culture as a tool. However, finding the phenomenon between local culture and the struggle for regional power politics is not that easy. First, politicians must first identify what local culture is included as a mass-moving commodity and choose between these cultures. Second, politicians need to identify themselves specifically to form a common identity of the cultural actors. Third, how is the acceptance of cultural actors towards rulers who want to make them their political commodities. In the first point, it has been explained how in its history, even in the present day, reyog is still the choice of politicians as a big commodity in gaining mass. Meanwhile, in the second point, it has been explained how local politicians are competing to identify themselves so that people are able to interpret that local politicians can be integrated into a well-known culture in the region and believe

that they can perpetuate that culture. Reyog itself is a cultural commodity that is in great demand by the public, not only as a cultural symbol of the Ponorogo people. One of the village heads even said that if there was someone who wanted to lead Ponorogo, the first thing he had to do was love reyog. In his view, because this can bring the people of Ponorogo closer and do not expect to succeed in becoming a leader if they do not succeed in loving the art of reyog (Mapson, 2010).

The third point is the essence of this discussion, how art actors actually have a role in cultural commodities that turn into political commodities. The process of political commodification in the form of cultural commodities does not easily occur without a running scenario. In the case raised, the phenomenon of reyog commodities is sufficient to respond to the political activities of local authorities. The declaration of the waroks to Sugiri by attaching a slempang, "Regent of Ponorogo Artist" is an indication of how the perpetrators actually "picked up the ball" for the candidate for regent. If the hundreds of people who came were on behalf of each sub-district, then almost all reyog groups or the majority of reyog groups supported Sugiri as regent. There are 490 reyog groups in Ponorogo with each group having a minimum of 30 people. That's the same as nearly 15 thousand people from the reyog artist group. That count does not include the masses outside the group of artists who were successfully affected by the campaign organized by the reyog artists. Of course, it will get a much larger number if the reyog group manages to present a show that attracts the hearts of the Ponorogo people who like to watch reyog.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The discourse of cultural commodification with traditional art forms or local community arts has the opportunity for power intervention even though this type of power is quite broad. However, in the context of democracy, mass mobilization efforts are the basis for how many politicians use various instruments to gain large numbers of people, one of which is the traditional art of reyog. Although reyog art is a traditional art, it is still effective in creating mass crowds as desired by politicians. This can be proven by two things, first, every time a reyog show, both on stage reyog and reyog obyog, both of them always manage to gather quite a large crowd. Second, the Reyog art dance studio is growing and the number is increasing. In the past, Reyog art was only owned by a certain group of people. But now art groups are entering the world of education, starting from elementary school, middle school, to university level, and often art groups from campuses and high schools are able to win the National Reyog Festival (FRN).

The potential for large mass gains as a result of the spreading of reyog is a good opportunity that can be used to gain votes from the people of Ponorogo at any election level, especially Pilkada. The target of politicians is not only the members of the arts and their families who are successfully influenced, but also the wider community. This is what makes the change in the form of commodification of cultural economy into commodification of political culture has a different form and deserves to be studied. Although there are studies that explain the commodification of economic culture from the proliferation of art performances from what was originally reyog obyog of interest to the public, turning into stage reyog or reyog festivals which are increasingly favored by the public, the political phenomenon that is wrapped in reyog art does not mean that it does not exist or has disappeared. In fact, politicians still use the reyog obyog instrument to get the masses. The actors of reyog obyog are a floating mass and they are a group that is easy to be influenced politically. This is because the performers of reyog obyog still regard stage reyog as a threat that destroys the purity of the original reyog art. So they always need politicians and create dependence on power. On the other hand, the Reyog Obyog art group itself is able to create large crowds, even in remote villages. Although the stage reyog is increasingly mushrooming in the community, it cannot be denied that the reyog obyog community is still the dominant group in the reyog art.

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