

Mekepong Jembrana Tradition As a Source of Creation of Documentary Film

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ABSTRACT

The Mekepong tradition in Jembrana, Bali, particularly in the form of buffalo racing, is a deeply rooted cultural spectacle representing joy and celebration for agrarian communities. This research aims to explore this tradition and create a documentary film to preserve and promote its significance. Employing a qualitative descriptive method and utilizing the documentary film structure approach, the study incorporates observation, interviews, and documentation to gather authentic data. The documentary follows a three-part story structure, capturing the essence of Mekepong through genuine visual presentations and a well-structured narrative flow. Embracing a performative documentary style, the film emphasizes captivating packaging and meticulous craftsmanship. The creation process encompasses pre-production, production, and post-production stages. Ultimately, the Mekepong Jembrana documentary not only showcases buffalo racing but also serves as a vital tool for cultural preservation and awareness for future generations, ensuring the continuity of this cherished tradition.

Keywords: Documentary, Mekepong, Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Traditions in Bali, commonly known as *dresta*, are cultural practices and ways of life that have been passed down through generations within a family, group, tribe, nation, or a specific region. The theme of traditions is an intriguing subject to be explored in a documentary film. The diversity of cultural forms and local wisdom provides a source of ideas that have yet to be extensively explored and can be captivatingly conveyed to the public through a documentary film. One such tradition is Mekepong, a buffalo race attraction that has become a customary practice for agrarian communities in the western part of Bali, particularly in Jembrana Regency. Mekepong derives

from the Balinese word “mekepong-kepungan,” which translates to “chasing each other.” I Made Mara, the coordinator of Mekepong in Jembrana, states that “This tradition originated from the joy of farmers in Jembrana Regency while plowing their rice fields and during the harvest season of rice until it has evolved to the present day” (interview, December 27, 2022).

In Bali, agriculture faces challenges such as unsustainable land use, water limitations, and urbanization pressures. The Central Statistics Agency of Bali Province reported that the area of rice fields in Bali was 78,626 hectares in 2017, which decreased to 74,723 hectares in 2020. This data continues to change with a decreasing trend, primarily due to the massive land

use conversion driven by the demands of tourism development. In this context, Mekepong establishes a close relationship between communities and agricultural land, serving not only as a cultural art but also playing a practical role in environmental preservation. Preserving Mekepong is not only about safeguarding cultural heritage but also about sustaining the foundation of farmers' livelihoods, bridging the gap between the past and a sustainable future. However, the development of Mekepong towards tourist performances, with the creation of specialized circuits, requires strategies to ensure that Mekepong circuits located in rice field areas, as the birthplace of Mekepong, do not undergo land use conversion in the future.

Despite advancements in agricultural technology that have made it easier and quicker for agrarian communities to complete their tasks, the use of buffaloes for plowing fields and transporting harvests has become increasingly rare. However, this does not signify the end of the tradition. Various efforts have emerged within the community to preserve and maintain the Mekepong tradition while retaining its inherent values. These efforts include organizing periodic competitions, introducing Mekepong to children at an early age, and building better-accessible circuits or arenas for Mekepong events. Consequently, Mekepong has thrived and become an integral part of the dynamic tourism in Jembrana Regency. The development of Mekepong offers an interesting idea for a documentary film focusing on Mekepong in Jembrana.

Culture needs to be gathered because it has the potential to disappear or become extinct, which could mean the breaking of the historical chain of a civilization, the loss of wisdom, knowledge, and beauty, as well

as its uniqueness. After being gathered, culture also needs to be preserved to maintain its existence (Anggariyana, 2019). Over the past two years, the author has actively witnessed various traditional practices from different regencies in Bali. Each tradition possesses its distinct characteristics and meanings. Mekepong, as a tradition and cultural heritage of the Jembrana community, is not merely a buffalo racing competition.

Through observation, the author has come to realize that Mekepong carries numerous local wisdom values, such as sportsmanship, democracy, mutual cooperation, brotherhood, aesthetics, honesty, hard work, entertainment, showcasing bravery, and serves as a platform for farmers to share knowledge about agriculture and livestock, which are all compelling aspects to be explored in a documentary film. Through an interview with I Gusti Putu Eka Oktaviawan, a buffalo owner involved in Mekepong, Mekepong serves as an avenue for exchanging ideas and a rare gathering of people who seldom meet during the implementation of this tradition.

The documentary film "Mekepong Jembrana: Beyond Buffalo Racing" differs significantly from previous documentaries, such as "Indonesia Bagus Net TV Episode: Jembrana Regency," which only briefly touched on Mekepong and covered other topics like Jembrana's cuisine, surfing on the beaches, chocolate processing, and tourist villages. Additionally, this documentary will not only rely on narration but will directly feature competent narrators to deliver information. Furthermore, it distinguishes itself from previous work like "Mekepong Tradition: Aesthetics of Essay Photography through EDFAT and Skin Media Transfer," which utilized Mekepong

as an idea for creating photographic essays. Instead, the current project will present the audio-visual form encapsulated in a documentary film.

Documentary films represent an evolution from the concept of non-fiction films where facts and the subjective perspectives of the creators intertwine. They can depict various situations and conditions within a community (Nugroho, 2007). Recognizing these aspects and leveraging technology in the digital era, the author acknowledges that Mekepong in Jembrana is a tradition that must be preserved to prevent it from vanishing, and one way to achieve this is through a documentary film. The documentary film "Mekepong Jembrana: Beyond Buffalo Racing" plays a vital role as both a promotional medium and a means to raise awareness about the cultural heritage of this tradition for future generations.

METHOD

This study on the tradition of Mekepong as an idea for creating a documentary film employs a qualitative descriptive approach using the structure of a documentary film (Fachruddin, 2012). Data collection techniques involve direct observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations are conducted on-site in the Jembrana Regency, precisely where the Mekepong tradition takes place, while documentation is done during the actual implementation of the tradition. Interview data is obtained from the Mekepong coordinator in Jembrana, I Made Mara, and Mekepong enthusiast, I Gusti Putu Eka Oktaviawan. The data sources also include existing audio-visual works, books, and e-journals related to the Mekepong tradition and documentary film creation. The documentary film creation process is the primary focus of this research,

encompassing several stages such as pre-production, production, and post-production, which are standard stages in the filmmaking process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are divided into two parts: the first part consists of field observations regarding the Mekepong tradition, which the creators utilized as inspiration in designing the concept for the creation of the Mekepong documentary film. The second part comprises the analysis of the documentary film's results and its aesthetic aspects.

A. The Process of Data Collection

According to Mursal Esten (1999: 54), tradition is the product of a traditional society formed through a lengthy process. Tradition arises from long-standing customs within a community, based on the cultural values of the respective group.

Mekepong tradition is an attraction ritual of buffalo racing that serves as a social rite for agrarian communities in the western part of Bali, specifically in Jembrana Regency. The term "Mekepong" derives from the Balinese word "mekepong-kepungan," which means "to chase each other." The tradition originated from the joy of farmers in Jembrana while plowing the fields and during rice harvest seasons, and it has evolved and continued until today. According to I Made Mara, the coordinator of Mekepong in Jembrana, there are two types of Mekepong, namely "Mekepong Lampit," which involves plowing muddy fields cooperatively using buffalo-drawn wooden plows before planting rice, and "Mekepong Cikar," which takes place after the rice harvest, where farmers collectively transport the harvested rice using "cikar" (traditional carts). (Interview, December 27, 2022).

The decision to highlight Mekepong as the main idea for the creation of the documentary film is based on the observation that there is still a lack of detailed documentary films that explore Mekepong as a tradition and cultural heritage of Jembrana, which goes beyond merely a buffalo racing competition. This tradition holds numerous local wisdom values, such as sportsmanship, democracy, mutual cooperation, fraternity, aesthetics, honesty, hard work, entertainment, skills competition, and as a platform for farmers to share knowledge about agriculture and animal husbandry. I Gusti Putu Eka Oktaviawan, the owner of buffaloes and a Mekepong jockey, expressed that "besides being a buffalo racing event, Mekepong serves as an avenue for exchanging ideas even with people from other communities who rarely meet outside of this event." (Interview, June 11, 2023).

The documentary film "Mekepong Jembrana, not merely buffalo racing" is the result of the approach and references used by the film creators. They drew inspiration from existing documentary films such as "Indonesia Bagus Episode Jembrana, Bali" from NET TV, "Baduy, The Simple Life" by SEA Today, and "Behind a Variety of Differences" by M. Pamungkas from DAAI TV. Additionally, books like "Mekepong dari Tutar ke Tutar," "Grammar of the Shot" by Roy Thompson, and "Dasar-dasar Produksi Televisi" by Andi Fachruddin were utilized as references in the making of this documentary film.

In this article, the documentary film "Mekepong Jembrana, not merely buffalo racing" is produced through an approach and references utilized by the film creators. This approach involves various documentary films and books related to the Mekepong tradition and documentary

filmmaking, contributing to a more in-depth exploration of the Mekepong tradition in Jembrana.

According to Gerzon R. Ayawaila (2008: 11), a documentary film should document or present reality. In other words, what is recorded is based on existing facts, but its presentation may include human thoughts. Hillier (2001), as stated in the book "The Film Studies Dictionary," mentioned that a documentary film involves subjects that genuinely exist in the real world, outside of the cinematic realm, such as communities, events, or situations.

Several storytelling styles are found in documentary films, including expository, observational, interactive, reflexive, and performative documentary. The creation of this documentary film follows the performative documentary style, which primarily focuses on creating an engaging narrative and emphasizing storytelling (Fachruddin, 2015). By recording both Mekepong Lampit and Mekepong Cikar, presenting them through storytelling, narration, and conducting interviews with relevant individuals involved in the Mekepong tradition, this documentary film aims to present the spontaneity of the recorded objects without manipulation, making the researched objects the main driving force. The choice of performative documentary is deemed to represent reality since it is based on existing facts observed on the field.

Discovering Phenomena The habit of observing a specific activity or event can spark an idea and lead to the discovery of phenomena during the observation of Mekepong tradition in November 2022 in Jembrana. The process began with capturing images and video footage during the Mekepong tradition. After obtaining the images, initial research was conducted.



Figure 1 . Mekepong Lampit
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)

As Hebding and Glick (1992), as cited by Sudiarta (2011:12), elucidate, culture can be observed in both material and non-material forms. Material culture manifests in tangible objects produced and utilized by humans. For instance, from the simplest tools to more intricate items such as hand jewelry, necklaces, household utensils, and clothing. Conversely, non-material culture encompasses elements such as norms, values, beliefs, and language.

This can be proven true, and the creator can witness it during the documentary filmmaking process. The creator made an effort to capture all the elements present during the Mekepong Lampid event, including the ambiance at the circuit or venue, the attending community, Mekepong jockeys, accompanying music, buffaloes, and the utilized attributes, as well as the entire procession from the beginning to the end.



Figure 2. The Accompanying Music
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)



Figure 3. Enthusiasm of the community
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)

In Image 2, it presents the documentation result of Jegog traditional music, which is a distinctive musical feature of Jembrana regency, showcased during the Mekepong tradition. The auditory and visual aspects of this musical instrument serve as inspiration for inclusion in the documentary film. Jegog mebarung is participated in by representatives from both the western and eastern blocks of the Ijo Gading River, as a form of participation in the Mekepong competition to make the event more lively and to increase public enthusiasm for watching the Mekepong cultural competition (Meila, 2019). Image 3 depicts the atmosphere during the Mekepong tradition, where the enthusiasm of the attending community showcases the spirit of the populace in upholding this tradition.

After collecting images and video clips, the authors also conducted a few interviews with relevant parties, such as the Mekepong coordinator and the owner of the buffalo featured in the images. These interviews served as preliminary research to formulate the ideas to be pursued. The data obtained from these sources became the foundation for the initial research in shaping the concept to be taken.



Figure 4. Child Jockeys
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)



Figure 5. Mekepong Coordinator
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)



Figure 6. Buffalo Owner
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)

In image 4, 5, and 6, photographs of interviewees are presented, who were interviewed on-site, representing key information sought after. These interviewees include the Mekepong coordinator, providing insights into the execution of this tradition and detailed explanations thereof, the buffalo owners who actively participate as practitioners of this tradition, and the young buffalo jockeys conveying messages regarding the continuity of this tradition.

Along with the development of the Mekepong tradition in Jembrana Regency, the community has turned this tradition into a cultural attraction. Another aspect of this tradition is the land Mekepong. Usually, after harvesting or *mekajang*, farmers with cekar carts carry the harvested rice, walking hand in hand with a pair of buffalo across a plot of rice fields. These fields belong to the landlords where the farmers work as rice transporters, traveling along the Subak roads they usually take (Arthanegara, 2022). In addition to the data collected in November 2022, the authors conducted another data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation during the Mekepong Cekar tradition held in December 2022.



Figure 7. Mekepong Cekar Circuit
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)



Figure 8. Mekepong Jockeys
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2022)

Image 7 depicts the location where the Mekepong Cekar tradition takes place, highlighting the contrast with Mekepong

Lampit, which is conducted in muddy rice fields, whereas Mekepong Cikar is held on dirt race tracks. In Mekepong, there are four lexicons of attributes used by the buffalo jockey, namely: bongkol, saput, senteng, and udeng. Bongkol is a tool used to beat the buffalo, saput is used as the second layer of the jockey's pants, senteng is used as a belt, and udeng is a headscarf (Darmawan, 2023). Since the Mekepong with cikar began in 1959, buffalo races have used specific decorations to make them look more beautiful and attractive, matching the cikar they pull. Additionally, these decorations make the buffalo races appear more festive (Suaka and Dharmika, 2012:43). This was also confirmed by Gusti Eka Oktaviawan (image 8), a Mekepong Cikar jockey, during the interview process when the researcher met him.

By increasing the data collection, including during the Mekepong Cikar tradition, the author sought comparisons and gained insights into both Mekepong Lampit and Mekepong Cikar traditions. The creation of this documentary film involved a combination of observation, exploration, and improvisation. Following its concept, the documentary film production was divided into three stages: pre-production, production, and post-production. The fundamental elements of the documentary film consisted of three storytelling stages: the beginning (introduction/background), the middle (issues/crisis and conflicts), and the end (conclusion/climax/anti-climax). These three segments formed the sequence of shot images that comprised a scene.

B. Analysis of the Documentary Film Creation Results

A collection of scenes made up a sequence that contributed to the overall narrative of each segment. The structure of the documentary film encompasses

aesthetic, psychological, and visual language meanings (cinematography). The three segments are then further divided into eight sequences, each of which interrelates and conveys a specific message.

Sequence One: Introduction to Bali and its Natural Beauty. The documentary film "Mekepong: Beyond Buffalo Racing" commences with an introduction to Bali as a captivating tourist destination renowned for its natural splendor. This includes its enchanting beaches, verdant rice fields, and majestic mountains. Additionally, Bali's rich cultural heritage and unique traditions make it a primary attraction for tourists worldwide.

Sequence Two: Challenges of Tourism on the Agricultural Sector. This sequence depicts how the rapid development of the tourism industry in Bali has complex implications for the agricultural sector, particularly in the Jembrana region. Despite the economic benefits brought by tourism, it also poses challenges to local agriculture, such as changes in land use and community lifestyles.

Sequence Three: The Resilience of Jembrana Community in Preserving Mekepong Tradition. This sequence highlights the resilience and determination of the Jembrana community in preserving the Mekepong tradition as an integral part of their cultural identity. From the origin of the tradition to the high enthusiasm of the local community, this sequence emphasizes the importance of the traditional values embedded within Mekepong.

Sequence Four: Economic, Social, and Tourism Development of the Mekepong Tradition. Focusing on the economic, social, and tourism development resulting from the Mekepong tradition, this sequence elaborates on its evolution from a local tradition to a significant cultural festival.

It discusses the substantial impact of Mekepong on the development of society and tourism in Jembrana.

Sequence Five: Mekepong as a Premier Tourist Attraction. This sequence highlights Mekepong's status as a primary attraction in the tourism industry, particularly after the official opening of the all-in-one Mekepong circuit in Jembrana. The introduction of this circuit marks a significant step in strengthening Mekepong's position as a major tourist draw.

Sequence Six: Challenges in Sustaining the Mekepong Tradition. The film discusses the challenges faced in preserving the Mekepong tradition, particularly in maintaining traditional circuits in rice field areas to prevent them from being repurposed or replaced by other developments. It underscores the importance of ensuring the continuity of this culturally rich tradition.

Sequence Seven: The Importance of Preserving the Mekepong Tradition. This sequence underscores the significance of preserving the Mekepong tradition amidst various developments to ensure its relevance and appeal to tourists. It emphasizes the importance of safeguarding the traditional values embedded within Mekepong, thereby maintaining its authenticity and cultural significance for future generations.

Sequence Eight: The Role of the Younger Generation in Sustaining the Tradition. Concluding the narrative, this sequence emphasizes the crucial role of the younger generation in perpetuating the Mekepong tradition for its sustainability. It highlights the hope and expectation that the youth will continue to cherish and uphold this cultural heritage, thus ensuring its continuity and vitality within the Jembrana and Bali communities.

The creator of this documentary film served as the producer, director, scriptwriter, and camera director during the production, allowing for easier expression of the desired visual imagination. According to Andi Fachruddin (2012:317), this role is often referred to as a "one-man show." Following Gerald Millerson's three stages (2012:10), the process consisted of pre-production, production, and post-production. In pre-production, several activities were conducted, including finding the story idea or premise for the documentary film, ultimately choosing the Mekepong tradition as the subject of creation. The ideas were then developed into a film statement and treatment.

Data research included interviewing several sources such as organizers, participants, and various aspects related to the tradition, as well as researching locations for shooting the Mekepong tradition and interviews. Budget calculation, shooting list preparation, contacting informants for designing the shooting schedule, preparing a list of questions for the informants, and setting up equipment and visual aspects for camera arrangement were also part of pre-production.

The film design to be produced is a documentary film with a performative documentary style, as it is considered suitable and capable of conveying the desired information. The documentary film is planned to have a duration of 25-30 minutes, aiming to provide sufficient information. The title of the documentary film to be produced is "Mekepong Jembrana, Not Just Buffalo Racing" with an Aspect Ratio of 16:9 and 2K resolution, which prioritizes both information and technical quality of the produced documentary film.

During the production stage, several aspects required careful planning, including

setting arrangement or set construction, which provided a background for image capture. As this is a documentary film that portrays real-life situations, the setting does not always involve decorative buildings but emphasizes creating a supportive atmosphere and highlighting the background of the events to make the narrative engaging. In terms of sound arrangement, the use of suitable and high-quality microphones is crucial for producing good sound. In this documentary film, clip-on wireless microphones were considered suitable for capturing clear sound during the production.

Camera arrangement during the production significantly influenced the angles or perspectives of image capture. The camera setting ensured consistency in aspects like Iris, Shutter, Color, and video quality. Composition framing was essential for obtaining visually appealing and meaningful images, adding life to the visuals, and making them more dynamic and less monotonous. Framing also directed the audience's focus to the subjects being recorded and their actions. Supported by camera movement, the visuals became more dynamic and varied. Lighting arrangement during the production significantly affected the quality of the film. This documentary film aimed for a natural atmosphere, so the lighting arrangement was kept relatively simple. However, attention was given to the contrast between highlights and shadows to avoid high contrast, ensuring a comfortable viewing experience. The characteristics of lighting arrangement were also tailored to the camera being used, adhering to the minimum recommended lighting in the camera instruction. Exceeding the limit or forcing it could lead to a noisy image or an underexposed appearance.

The post-production stage involved several activities, including editing,

scoring, previewing, and appreciation. Editing aimed to organize and enhance the documentary film into a coherent and enjoyable visual presentation. The editor reconstructed the footage captured by the camera director. Scoring involved adding original music to accompany the visual elements of the film, serving as soundtracks, dialogues, sound effects, or instrumental pieces to enhance the dramatic impact of scenes. The scoring concept or nuance aimed to portray the situation, location, time, and character emotions within a scene.

After completing the documentary film production, internal screenings were conducted for review and evaluation of the editing. If any deviations or shortcomings from the initial plan were found, immediate corrections could be made. The review process was vital in achieving a perfect final result for the documentary film. The appreciation stage involved assessing the documentary film by watching, analyzing, and evaluating it. The film was screened to a wide audience, both offline and online, utilizing various audiovisual media and current technology platforms to reach a broader audience. The plan was to publish the documentary film on platforms like YouTube, removing restrictions so that anyone can watch and be introduced to the Mekepong tradition through the documentary film.

The writer analyzes the aesthetics of the work based on each sequence in the film "Mekepong: Beyond Buffalo Racing." The theory used in analyzing is the "Elements of the Shot" theory by Roy Thompson, which includes motivation, information, composition, sound, camera angle, and continuity (Thompson, 2019). There are eight sequences, each containing aesthetic values.



Figure 9. Sequence One visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2023)

Motivation: The motivation behind Sequence One is to dramatically showcase the natural beauty of Bali and captivate the audience's attention. By featuring landscapes such as beaches, mountains, rice fields, and other natural elements, the sequence aims to depict the island's natural splendor. Traditional dances and religious rituals are utilized to enrich the audience's visual experience and highlight Bali's cultural richness.

Information: The sequence delivers information about Bali's natural beauty, traditional culture, and ongoing ritual or religious activities. The visual depiction also reflects the life and joy inherent in Balinese culture, as well as showcasing tourists who come to experience the island's beauty and culture.

Composition: Composition arrangements adhere to aesthetic rules such as the rule of thirds or balanced symmetry to create visual harmony. Negative space is used around the main subjects to emphasize and make them stand out. The dominance of bright and natural colors reflects the vibrancy and joy present in Balinese culture.

Sound: Background music plays a crucial role in creating a deep atmosphere and enhancing the audience's visual experience. Coupled with narrated descriptions of Bali's beauty and cultural richness, it enriches the audience's understanding of the information conveyed in this sequence.

Camera Angle: Various camera angles are utilized in this sequence, from aerial bird's-eye views to low or close angles to highlight details such as dances or rituals. The chosen camera angles provide dramatic perspectives on Bali's natural beauty and cultural activities.

Continuity in imagery includes seamless transitions between natural landscapes, dances, rituals, and other activities. The camera movements play a vital role in smoothly connecting different scenes and maintaining consistency in theme and atmosphere. Some scenes or objects may have deeper symbolic meanings, such as the sunrise symbolizing hope or traditional dances symbolizing joy and peace.



Figure 10. Sequence Two visually (Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2024)

Motivation: The motivation behind sequence Two is to highlight the contrast between the prosperity generated by the tourism sector and the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in Bali. Visualizing the economic benefits of the tourism sector alongside the issues encountered by agriculture aims to convey the significant disparity between these two sectors in providing welfare for the Balinese community.

Information: The sequence delivers information encompassing land conversion from rice fields to residential or industrial areas, as well as the food-related challenges faced by the agricultural sector. News clips

and visualization of graphs or statistics are used to provide strong context regarding the challenges encountered by the agricultural sector in Bali.

Composition: Utilizing aesthetic elements such as strong visual composition, color, and contrast between the conditions of the tourism and agricultural sectors helps effectively convey the intended message. The selection of visual elements such as landscapes, cities, buildings, or human activities plays a crucial role in message delivery.

Sound: The selected background music aligns with the overall tone of the sequence, which may be more serious and reflective to mirror the challenges faced by the agricultural sector. The use of news clips or additional narration can also provide strong context regarding the challenges encountered by the agricultural sector.

Camera Angle: Capturing footage from intriguing angles, such as aerial shots, can add an engaging visual dimension for the audience and help highlight the contrast between prosperity and challenges. Appropriate camera angles also aid in delivering information clearly and effectively.

Continuity: Integrating news clips or additional narration seamlessly within the sequence maintains cohesive image continuity. Consistency in visual style and theme helps create a more meaningful viewing experience for the audience.





Figure 11. Sequence Three visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2024)

The primary motivation is to showcase the beauty and joy within the Mekepong tradition while highlighting the spirit of the Jembrana community in preserving their cultural heritage. Dynamic movements, traditional costumes, and captivating camera angles aim to capture the essence of joy, competitive spirit, and cultural richness of Bali. Information conveyed through this sequence includes details about the Mekepong tradition, such as the participation of the Jembrana community in the races, their dedication to the event, buffalo selection, the origin of the tradition, the execution of Mekepong, and the values embedded within the tradition.

Visual composition incorporates traditional costumes, attire, and decorations with Balinese motifs to enhance the visual beauty of the sequence. Emphasis on dynamic movements and details in the Mekepong tradition adds an engaging and enchanting visual dimension for the

audience. Creative and dynamic framing techniques, such as close-ups to highlight participants' facial expressions or wide shots to showcase the beauty of the Mekepong tradition's scenery.

Sound: The use of traditional Jembrana musical instruments such as Jegog, as well as local natural sounds and audience cheers, enhances the depth, joy, and authenticity of the sequence. The use of sound strengthens the atmosphere and emotions being conveyed, adding a sensory dimension to the viewing experience.

Camera Angles: Capturing footage of the Mekepong tradition with intriguing and dynamic camera angles such as bird's-eye views, to low angles, aims to capture the essence of joy, competitive spirit, and cultural richness of Bali. Cinematic techniques such as slow motion are used to highlight movements and details in the Mekepong tradition, providing deeper focus on crucial moments.

Continuity: Carefully selected scene sequences combined with good narration help create a strong visual narrative flow, aiding the audience in better understanding the Mekepong story. Narration is used in documentary films as the main narrative to connect the story according to the director's direction, ensuring that the information conveyed does not stray into other topics (Dwi Puspita Sari, 2021). Good continuity of images and sound ensures that the viewing experience remains seamless and cohesive.





Figure 12. Sequence Four visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2023)

The primary motivation of this sequence is to highlight the development and changes in social, economic, and tourism aspects related to the Mekepong tradition in Jembrana. Footage of festivals, related events, and everyday scenes featuring Mekepong activities aim to enhance the audience's understanding of the social and economic impact of this tradition on the local community. Additionally, it aims to showcase the popularity and significance of Mekepong in Jembrana's culture.

Information: The information conveyed through this sequence includes the development and changes in social, economic, and tourism aspects related to the Mekepong tradition in Jembrana. Effective montages of various festival scenes, celebrations, and the participation of local and international tourists convey the message about the popularity and significance of Mekepong in Jembrana's culture.

Visual Composition: Visual composition combines various images of individuals or

groups involved in Mekepong, as well as footage of festivals and everyday scenes, to illustrate Mekepong-related activities and their impact on the local community. Emphasis on the expressions and reactions of both foreign tourists and local residents aims to capture their admiration and enthusiasm during the Mekepong tradition, as well as to convey the message about the popularity and significance of this tradition in Jembrana's culture.

Sound: Sound in this sequence, including interviews with Mekepong coordinators and recordings of Mekepong-related daily activities, aims to communicate the joy, hope, and perspectives regarding the development of Mekepong and tourism in Jembrana district through this tradition.

Camera Angles: The use of various camera angles helps convey different aspects of the Mekepong tradition more effectively. For example, low camera angles enhance dramatization and highlight the speed and competitive spirit involved. Floating or following camera angles from behind Mekepong participants can provide a deeper experience of the joy and spirit of participation in the tradition.

Good continuity of images allows for a smooth and consistent narrative flow throughout the sequence. For instance, seamless transitions between festival recordings and everyday scenes help maintain visual coherence and tell the story systematically.





Figure 13. Sequence Five visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2023)

The primary motivation of this sequence is to highlight the peak of the Mekepong tradition as a significant tourist attraction in Jembrana Regency. Emphasis on key moments, such as the inauguration of the all-in-one Mekepong circuit by the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, aims to draw the audience's attention and demonstrate full support from the government and local community for this tradition.

Information conveyed through this sequence includes an overview of the grandeur of the all-in-one Mekepong circuit, details of facilities such as spectator stands, spacious parking areas, vending areas, and well-maintained tracks, showcasing the seriousness in making the Mekepong tradition an attractive tourist attraction.

Visual Composition depicts the grandeur of the all-in-one Mekepong circuit with spectacular natural surroundings, such as mountains and beaches. Emphasis on

facility details, including spectator stands and tracks, provides a clear understanding of the infrastructure available at the Mekepong circuit.

Sound in this sequence includes narration describing the excellence of the all-in-one Mekepong circuit, as well as cheers from the community, adding a spectacular atmosphere to the scene. Majestic background music can create an epic and captivating atmosphere, providing additional emphasis on the grandeur and importance of the event in the local culture and tourism industry.

Camera Angles: The use of dramatic camera angles, such as aerial shots or low-angle perspectives, to highlight the grandeur of the circuit and Mekepong as a tourist spectacle, helps create an engaging and captivating atmosphere. Camera angles focused on key moments provide strong visual emphasis on those events.

Good continuity of images ensures a smooth narrative flow throughout the sequence, from the inauguration of the circuit to the depiction of the surrounding natural scenery. The selection of interconnected scenes helps maintain visual coherence and convey a message of strong support for the Mekepong tradition.





Figure 14. Sequence Six visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2023)

The primary motivation of this sequence is to highlight the contrast between the grandeur of the all-in-one circuit and the condition of the traditional circuits in the rice field area threatened by land conversion. Through the visual selection of circuits in the threatened rice field area and interviews about the legal status of the Mekepong circuit, this sequence aims to emphasize the urgency and importance of preserving the traditional circuits as part of the agrarian ecosystem and cultural heritage in Jembrana.

Information conveyed through this sequence includes the condition of traditional circuits in the rice field area threatened by development, legal uncertainties regarding the status of the Mekepong circuit, and land conversion threatening the agrarian ecosystem in Jembrana. Visuals in Mendoyo District, Jembrana showing land conversion for development highlight the complexity of challenges faced in preserving the Mekepong tradition and agrarian ecosystem sustainability.

Visual Composition showcases the contrast between the grandeur of the all-in-one circuit and the traditional circuits in the rice field area threatened by development. Careful use of visual composition, such as strong framing, appropriate depth of field, and color usage, helps highlight the contrast between the grandeur of the all-in-

one circuit and the condition of traditional circuits in the threatened rice field area. Different framing for each location provides different dimensions to the scenes. Sound in this sequence includes narration with a more serious tone explaining the challenges and threats to traditional circuits, as well as interviews about the legal status of the Mekepong circuit that has not been officially patented.

Camera Angles: The use of dramatic camera angles helps highlight the urgency and importance of preserving traditional circuits, as well as emphasizing the contrast between the all-in-one circuit and the circuits in the surrounding rice field area, which are already close to residential areas. Dramatic perspectives also add a strong visual dimension to the narrative, reinforcing the message about the importance of maintaining the sustainability of the Mekepong tradition and agrarian ecosystem in Jembrana.

Good image continuity helps convey a strong message about the importance of preserving traditional circuits in the rice field area. The selection of interconnected scenes, such as the visualization of land conversion in Mendoyo District, helps maintain visual unity and cohesion in conveying the challenges faced in preserving the Mekepong tradition and agrarian ecosystem.





Figure 15.
Sequence Seven visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2023)

The motivation behind this sequence is to highlight the importance of maintaining a balance between the Mekepong tradition and tourism development in Jembrana. Its goal is to demonstrate that these two sectors can coexist without conflict while emphasizing the cultural values and local wisdom embedded in the Mekepong tradition. Sequence seven depicts the balance that should be maintained between the Mekepong tradition naturally and the development of tourism in Jembrana without blaming either sector, so they can coexist harmoniously.

Information conveyed through the visuals shows Mekepong activities on the village roadsides and in the mud, reflecting the life of the local community and the compatibility of the tradition with the natural environment. Depicting Mekepong as an attractive tourist attraction also provides information about its crucial role in the local tourism industry.

Visual composition strengthens the message by focusing on Mekepong activities in the authentic natural environment, highlighting the community's intimacy with their surroundings and their traditional way of life. The use of strong composition and contrast in framing helps highlight the values of local wisdom and the importance of preserving the agrarian ecosystem. Supporting sound adds an additional layer in conveying the message about the importance of maintaining the Mekepong tradition and its compatibility with tourism development.

Camera angles, the selection of appropriate camera angles helps highlight Mekepong activities in a dramatic and engaging way, providing a unique perspective on the lives of the local community and their traditions. Camera angles also help showcase the beauty of the natural surroundings where this tradition originates, providing an authentic and genuine atmosphere to the visuals.

Good image continuity ensures that the visual narrative flows smoothly, helping the audience to connect with the story being consistently conveyed. Continuously arranged visuals help convey the message of the importance of maintaining the balance between tradition and tourism development seamlessly.

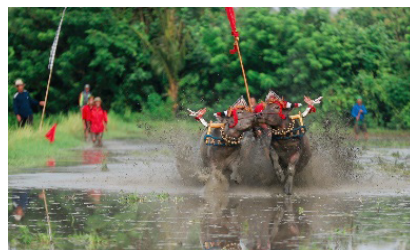




Figure 16. Sequence Eight visually
(Source: I Wayan Arfian, 2023)

The primary motivation behind the visuals in sequence eight, serving as the conclusion, is to highlight the strong involvement of the younger generation in the Mekepong tradition as a symbol of cultural sustainability in Bali. The participation of children, teenagers, and young adults as jockeys underscores the importance of the younger generation in preserving cultural traditions.

The visuals convey information about the learning process and the transmission of knowledge from older generations to the younger ones in the Mekepong tradition. This emphasizes the importance of maintaining intergenerational relationships in preserving cultural heritage and creates a depiction of a united community in carrying on their traditions.

Dynamic visual composition and the use of bright colors create a positive and inspiring atmosphere, emphasizing the enthusiasm and joy of the younger generation's involvement in the Mekepong tradition. The use of color and dynamic composition helps highlight the unity and solidarity among generations in preserving and upholding the Mekepong tradition. Sound elements, including uplifting music or cheers from the audience, can further reinforce the positive message about the spirit and joy of the younger generation's involvement.

Utilizing diverse camera angles can provide a comprehensive perspective on the younger generation's involvement in the Mekepong tradition, highlighting their roles in detail. These visuals create a message of hope for the future of the Mekepong tradition and the overall cultural sustainability of Bali.

Good image continuity follows a strong narrative about the unity and solidarity among generations in preserving and upholding the Mekepong tradition.

CONCLUSIONS

The concept of creating the documentary film "Mekepong: Beyond Buffalo Racing" is divided into eight sequences that depict the journey and richness of the Mekepong tradition in Bali. By delineating the captivating natural and cultural background of Bali, as well as the economic challenges faced by the agricultural sector due to tourism dominance, this film highlights the spirit of the Jembrana community in preserving their cultural heritage. In-depth investigation within each sequence reveals the origins, development, and significance of the Mekepong tradition as a reflection of the cultural resilience faced by the local community.

The creation process employs a performative documentary method with pre-production, production, and post-production steps to present a compelling and profound story about Mekepong. From initial research on the cultural richness and challenges faced by the Jembrana community to the creation process, each step in making this film is designed to clarify the essence and values embedded in the Mekepong tradition.

The final result of the documentary film "Mekepong Jembrana" is a powerful representation of the cultural heritage and traditions of the Balinese community,

particularly the Mekepong tradition in the Jembrana Regency. Through visual cultural analysis, the film successfully portrays the beauty of Bali's nature, the complexity of the Mekepong tradition, and the challenges and developments faced by the community in preserving their cultural heritage. By combining captivating aesthetic elements with a strong and profound narrative, the film successfully explores the complexity of the Mekepong tradition while considering the social, economic, and cultural implications inherent within it. Through the involvement of the younger generation and active community participation in preserving this tradition, it reaffirms the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage as an inseparable part of valuable local identity.

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