

Topic: Culture

## HYBRIDITY, CREATIVITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PATROL MUSIC IN JEMBER, EAST JAVA

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out how patrol music has been developing in Jember and what challenges were faced by local musicians in sustaining the life cycle of patrol music. Informed by the literature and based on the results of semi-structured interviews, this study found that patrol music serves as not only a musical but also a social instrument that has changing functions among the society in Jember. Movements of local people from and to Jember had made patrol evolve in its musical elements, such as addition of musical instruments and the choice of contemporary songs to be performed. Despite criticisms addressed by earlier generations of musicians, this hybridity of this traditional music indicated creativity of younger local musicians who intended to show that patrol music can adapt to new cultures brought by new comers in Jember. However, the sustainability of patrol music has been impeded by lack of funds, insufficient support from the regional government, limited communication among musicians, and problems in regeneration of patrol musicians. Responding to these challenges, recommendations for the local government and musicians are discussed.

### Keywords

*Patrol; music; Jember; hybridity; sustainability.*

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### 1. Introduction

In the history of Indonesia, traditional music has rooted in the culture of society. Traditional music of Nusantara is defined as “music that is developed in the Indonesian archipelago area and is part of the inherited traditions that are still performed in the society” [1]. Generally, local traditional music has four characteristics. First, the simplicity of society is reflected in the form, materials of musical instruments, and how to play them. Second, traditional music has regional characteristics as it is influenced by the geographical conditions in every region. The third characteristic is it is passed down to next generations because the existence of regional music originated from the formation of social groups and the music is usually tied to certain forms or patterns that are inherited from the ancestors. Lastly, similar to regional songs, traditional music is created anonymously or the writer is rarely known [1].

Jember is a regency that is located in East Java Province. This regency has patrol music which is an ensemble music consisting of five elements of instruments: *mbok-mbokan* (bass), *tengahan* (contrabass), *titir* (rhythm), *tik-tuk* (contrarhythm), and *thek-kethek* (slap-iris percussion) [2]. This form of performing art initially functioned as the alarm of society in night round and to wake people

up to eat before fasting in Ramadan. Patrol music was then developed into the entertainment of society that plays traditional songs of Banyuwangi and Madura [3].

Jember's patrol music is categorized as people's music because it is not originated from a certain kingdom in Nusantara (another term for Indonesian archipelago). People's music is developed in the rural area and is usually spontaneous, responsive, and simple in patterns of rhythms and melody [3]. Even when it is usually considered as raw and suburban art, people's music is very intimate with the society that owns it because it is considered as a representative of the character of the society and has the function for bonding the society's solidarity. This is different from fine arts that is originated from the circle of palace and the centers of arts and considered as fine (*finisse*) and soft (*politisse*) art [3].

Even when it is so close to the life of local people, traditional music of Nusantara has its ups and downs in its development. At least there are three factors that affect this development. First, traditional music usually uses local language so the lyrics are harder to be understood by people outside of the region. Second, there is an ethnocentric tendency in performing the arts. In other words, usually the society in the region does not feel owning the traditional music from another region. The third is as a part of culture, traditional music always follows the socio-cultural conditions in the region, so the culture that comes from outside of the region or from abroad can affect the development of traditional music in a region [1]. As far as observed by the researchers, this last factor also happens to patrol music in Jember.

Based on the above explanations, author formulized the following problems:

1. How has patrol music developed as a socio-cultural heritage in Jember from time to time?
2. What are the challenges that are faced by patrol music to survive and become the medium to preserve the culture of Jember's society?

## 2. Contents

This paper consists of four sections. The Introduction elucidates the background of the study and the research questions. Contents and research methodology are discussed in the second section. The Findings explained, the history and development of patrol music in Jember as well as the challenges faced by local musicians. This paper is concluded with Discussion and Conclusion that relates findings to relevant theoretical concepts, sums up the study, and gives recommendation to the stakeholders. The approach of the present study was qualitative. The instruments used for data collection were semi-structured interviews and literature review. Interviews were conducted with the leader of a patrol music group called "Redblocker", a patrol music coach in Jember, and a local journalist who was also an observer of traditional cultures and an alumnus from Universitas Jember. In addition, an existing body of literature, including newspaper and online articles, was consulted to gather information on patrol music, Patrol Music Carnival, and other events which involved a performance of patrol music.

Data collected were analyzed qualitatively. First, from descriptive data compiled in the researcher's notes, keywords were selected and then grouped into themes, such as "development of patrol music" and "challenges". Next, conclusions were drawn for each group of theme and matched with related theoretical concepts. Any missing information was completed by referring to the literature.

### 3. Findings

The cultural origin of patrol music is hardly known. The term “patrol music” was initially used in the city, especially in the sub-district of Jember Kidul, Kaliwates district. From this place, patrol music was spread to other sub-districts, whether it is the administrative area of Jember, or outside of it [4]. Looking at its main musical instruments, this music belongs to percussion music, which is one of the oldest types of music in the world. The status of *kenthongan* and flute as traditional musical instruments originally from Jember was still disputable, as both are made of bamboo, which comes originally from China, and are developed into percussion (*kenthongan*) and wind instruments (flute). At first *kenthongan* functioned as a traditional communication device in the society who made use of certain communication codes which were set in consensus. *Kenthongan* had different functions, which were as: 1) a sign of danger or a crime, especially after the historical event of G30S which turned the relatively safe situation of Jember into a critical moment, 2) a sign of an emergence of a natural disaster, 3) a call for dwellers to gather in a designated place to carry out teamwork, 4) hints about rhythms for dancers, and 5) an accompaniment during night patrolling activities in villages [4]. This last function of patrolling was after which patrol music was named, originating from the word *matrol*, which in Maduranese language means the act of watching and guarding villages by patrolling. Besides for patrolling, the musical instruments of patrol had long been used by people of Pandalungan cultures to accompany the tradition of releasing doves or so-called *nyatha*, a hobby that was particularly prestigious for people from Madura. The accompanying music for *nyatha* was known as *totak’an*, *dhung-dhung*, *thek-thek*, *kethekan*, and *kothekan* music [2, 4], taking onomatopoeia as the name of the music, especially since at that time, the music was just a series of percussion without any melody.

Patrol music had now been more developed compared to its earlier generations. As time went by, more instruments were added to this music, such as flutes, tambourines, and singers, all of which shaped the characteristics of patrol today. Patrol music has also undergone shifts in social functions from an accompaniment for patrolling, an alarm to wake people up during Ramadhan, accompanying music for celebrations, i.e. Independence Day, to entertainment for ceremonies and other formal events [2]. When patrol first turned into people’s music, patrol music groups performed mostly songs from Madura and Banyuwangi, and the song that was performed the most often was a Maduranese song titled “Tanduk Majeng” [2]. Later on, globalization had its effects on patrol music as the cultures of Pandalungan were in contact with other cultures, shifting people’s behaviors, including in playing patrol music. While earlier patrol music groups seemed to be bound to stagnancy for playing in similar patterns, today’s groups did arrangements to the music and chose different songs to perform. Traditional songs were still played, but the groups included as well songs which were trending, for example, English songs, pop songs, *dangdut*, and *keroncong*, as a strategy to expand the market of patrol music.

Although the new arrangement of patrol music was met with disapprovals from senior musicians who considered it distorting the originality and violating the ‘rules’ of playing patrol, the hybridization of patrol music demonstrates the ability of people in Jember and of patrol to adapt to the arriving cultures. This can be called as a phenomenon of hybridity, which reflects the dynamics of creativity among a plural society, as well as the capacity to affiliate with more universal values without weakening the existing traditions [5]. By innovating the music, it was hoped that patrol music would not have limited audience as it did in the past, such as those from lower-middle income background, but also a wider scope of listeners from communities of other music genres to collaborate in performing and music-making.

As additional information, Jember now had at least 26 patrol music groups, which were “Putra Tanggul”, “Idola”, “Putra Cempaka”, “Ardatim”, “Redblocker”, “Hastra”, “Irama Kenanga”, “Kantra”, “Simpatica”, “Camledez”, “Tourist”, “Khaller”, “Arpai”, “Arsela”, “Kharisma”, “Tertona”, “Repastra”, “Putra Jenggawah”, “Annisa”, “Suara Indonesia”, “DKLH”, “Jareta”, “Ken Arok”, “Putra Perkasa”, “Setan Jalanan”, and “Sotalisa”. This list does not include patrol music groups which had culturally existed in village and emerged during Ramadhan, or the fasting month for Moslems, to wake people up before dawn.

The development of patrol music in Jember cannot be separated from challenges it has faced from time to time. The most crucial problem is the limitation of funds (leader of Redblocker group, 2013). In the case of Redblocker Patrol group, the group was formed in 1984, personal money was used to buy the instruments, maintain the instrument’s condition, and try to increase the musicians’ prosperity. When the group was preparing for a festival or a big show, a professional flute player and a vocalist were hired due to lack of human resources or the limited time to coach the existing players whose skills still needed much polishing. Even if there was none in Jember, a flute player from Banyuwangi would be hired (leader of Redblocker group, 2013).

The limitation of funds is related with the second challenge, which is the lack of attention from the local government of Jember, which, in this case, is the tourism department. The attention from the government was considered as just for formalities. For example, patrol music is only shown on the Birthday of Jember Regency, which is once a year. Patrol music group usually performed in festivals or competitions, wedding ceremonies, and other government’s ceremonial events from April to October. For the rest of the year, the group had no activity (leader of Redblocker group, 2013). A local journalist remarked that, “It is so naive that patrol music is only shown in the opening of events, while patrol is in fact the music of the people.”

Patrol musicians had been trying to advocate that issue to the Office of Tourism, and the representative of government said that they would give their support (Member of Patrol Music Group Gerbang Indah, 2013). However, until now, the support had not yet been realized. The condition of patrol music was thus considered ironic since they were not the ‘prima donna’ in their own home land. *Bulan Bekunjung ke Jember* (BJB), literally translated as the month to visit Jember, that became the ultimate program of the local government in promoting the tourism of Jember usually exhibited pop music or *dangdut* on their music stage, instead of patrol music. Attention that was lacking was not only from the local government, but also from the committee of Jember Fashion Carnival (JFC). Patrol musicians had never been involved in the event that had successfully brought Jember’s name to the national and international arena. Rather, performing arts from other regions or countries seemed to get promoted in that event. For example, Sampang music from Madura had been the accompanying music of the JFC even though, according to a patrol music coach, patrol music was equally good (Remark from Traditional Music Observer & Journalist, 2013).

Despite lack of attention from the local government, patrol musicians still tried to maintain this traditional music by promoting it to those outside of Jember, for instance, by joining Istiqlal Festival, a traditional music competition that was held annually. Patrol music from Jember was the winner of the festival in 1990s. They also got a chance to perform at Taman Ismail Marzuki (TIM), while at that time not many traditional musicians had have the honor to perform at TIM (Patrol Music Coach, 2013). Besides musicians, the initiative also came from university students who joined Students’ Unit of Arts at Universitas Jember. They held Patrol Music Festival (Patrol Music Carnival from then on)

every year since 1995. Nevertheless, according to informants, this festival was not quite well-organized (Remark from Traditional Music Observer & Journalist, 2013).

Moreover, jealousy of artists in Banyuwangi, where art-related activities were facilitated by the local government was felt by Patrol musicians in Jember (Remarks from Leader of Redblocker, Patrol Music Coach & Member of Gerbang Indah, 2013). Meanwhile, the development of arts in Jember, including patrol music, largely depended on the artists. It is believed that if facilitated by a governmental agency to coach and realize the musicians' potentials and aspirations, patrol music would be more developed (Remarks from Leader of Redblocker, Patrol Music Coach & Member of Gerbang Indah, 2013). In Jember, patrol music groups were organized under one association called AKOR (Association of the Artist of *Kendang* Patrol Music), but the association did not run as intended. Besides AKOR, Jember also had Jember Art Council that actually got funds from the regency government but never communicated with artists in Jember. Some artists even did not know the existence of Jember Art Council (Leader of Redblocker group, 2013). Malfunction in both organizations was coupled with the relationship that was not synergized between patrol musicians in Jember. Furthermore, there seemed to be a sense of competition among patrol music groups (Leader of Redblocker group, 2013). As one of the most achieving group, Redblocker took the initiative of sharing the prize they got after winning a festival with other groups who also participated in the festival but did not win. This was done to motivate other groups to keep trying.

The last challenge deals with regeneration of players. There is difficulty in finding new patrol musicians who were skilled but at the same time did not expect much about the salary, which was unexpected (Patrol Music Coach, 2013). He asserted that the enthusiasm of local people to learn or become a patrol musician was quite high, but only certain people were talented (for example, to play the  $\frac{1}{2}$  beat) and they could rarely be found. He added that patrol music could not just be taught to anyone who did not have talents and that not all coaches of patrol music in Jember were skillful (Patrol Music Coach, 2013). One of the necessary competencies of a coach was to teach improvisations and beats which were relatively difficult to be copied by other patrol music groups (Remarks from Leader of Redblocker, Patrol Music Coach & Member of Gerbang Indah, 2013). Nevertheless, the lack of quality coach and players could be overcome by regular rehearsing (Remarks from Leader of Redblocker, Patrol Music Coach & Member of Gerbang Indah, 2013). One initiative that was already done in coping with the issue of regeneration was to teach patrol music to kindergarten and elementary school students in Jember (Remarks from Leader of Redblocker & Patrol Music Coach, 2013).

#### **4. Discussion and conclusion**

Massive migrations, mass transportation, and tourism have led the cultural composition of many countries to considerable changes. The movements of people from place to place have brought about intercultural interaction among them, which results in either assimilation or acculturation. Assimilation occurs if individuals or groups involved in the social interaction attempt to eliminate cultural differences among them and form new cultures. In this case, the minority tends to merge with the majority and lose the cultural features of their origin. In contrast, acculturation still provides room for individuals or ethnic groups to maintain their cultural identities [6].

Tracing back the history, hybrid identities turn out to be found among the first people in Jember. Jember before the year 1859 was estimated to be a vast area of forests with giant trees and marshes which were home to many diseases, such as cholera outbreaks and dysentery. Nevertheless, this area was fertile and had tobacco plantations and good irrigation systems. Additionally, the

transportation and communication infrastructures were relatively developed. These factors attracted a Dutch company called LMOD (*N.V. Landbouw Maatschappij Oud Djember*) to establish tobacco plantations in 1859. Due to the small number of local people in Jember at that time, the company, led by George Birnie, Matthiasen, and Van Gennep, invited people from Madura to work in the plantations. However, the strong character and resilience of Maduranese people appeared as challenges to the company in terms of management that the company then brought in people from inland East Java who tended to be more obedient [7].

The flow of immigration to Jember increased, especially after the train lines between Surabaya-Probolinggo-Jember opened in 1912, in occurrence with road work that would connect remote areas in Jember. Since then, Jember had been more developed in its infrastructures and ethnic heterogeneity. This marked the starting point of the formation of Pandalungan cultures as a result of acculturation, particularly of cultures from Java and Madura. Cultures of a society are always re-interpreted and re-formed by each generation [8], and this re-interpretation of cultures also happened to patrol music in Jember through hybridity.

Hybridity can be understood as a form of cultural creativity. Creativity is an expression of frictions of values which allow for dialogues between cultures that are interacting with each other, and is needed by each generation to re-interpret the cultural identities of a society [5]. Hybridity is the means by which cultural products are combined with new elements to create different effects in different situations. The concept of hybridity exhibits the ability of individuals and communities to actively create new meanings and signs from cultural products that come from afar [10]. There are two factors that enable the hybridization of patrol music. First, patrol music is by nature flexible and easy to re-arrange. Second, the personnel of earlier patrol music groups were predominantly adult, while in today's groups, the personnel were mostly university and school students. A group named Annisa even consisted of housewives. This variety of patrol musicians has somehow showed that the attempts to make patrol music embraced by a wider audience in Jember had succeeded.

Hybridity can also be seen as a means for cultural regeneration so that patrol music can be more dynamic in its development and suitable for the present cultural context and so that today's and later generations can readily accept it as a cultural product of their own, as has happened to the group Jogja Hip-hop Foundation who perform songs with Javanese lyrics in hip-hop style and the group Bossanova Jawa who sing songs from Semarang and other regions in Central Java in bossanova style. This, however, does not necessarily mean that hybridity is the only route to regeneration of patrol music since the roles of parents, schools, and peers are all central in re-interpreting and promoting this cultural product.

It can thus be concluded that patrol music is not an original culture of Jember but a cultural product resulted from acculturation between the cultures of Madura and East Java. Patrol music has been through changes in its instruments, songs to perform, and social functions, all of which show that this traditional music has cultural endurance and flexibility in adapting to cultures that come to Jember through hybridity. This strategy also seems to be successful in expanding the market of this music. Nonetheless, local musicians of patrol in Jember reported challenges which can impede patrol's further development, for example, limited funds, lack of attention from the regional government, minimum cooperation among the musicians, and difficulties in regeneration of musicians.

Recommendations are proposed for patrol music groups in Jember to sit together and formulate a common goal to share. Without a collective vision, patrol music groups will not have clear directions

and strategies ahead. External help is also called for. For instance, academicians at Universitas Jember can do continuous research in ethnomusicology to examine the main features of patrol music, while local media in Jember, such as radios, magazines, and newspaper, can regularly broadcast or publish critical reviews on this music. On the part of local young people, the same initiative can be undertaken by capitalizing on the power of social media.

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