MAINTAINING CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH GONG WANING IN MAUMERE SOCIETY

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Abstract

One of the traditional musical instruments originating from Maumere, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, is the Gong Waning. The noble values of this instrument are an important part of the culture of the Maumere community. This research investigates the Maumere community's efforts to maintain local cultural identity through gong Waning. The research was conducted by studying literature and interviewing important informants in Maumere. The results showed that the Maumere community has made several efforts to preserve gong Waning, such as: (1) maintaining customs and traditions related to the use of the gong Waning; (2) providing training and instruction to the younger generation on how to play the gong Waning; (3) recording and promoting the gong Waning through various media; and (4) building cooperation between the government, artists, and the community to keep the gong Waning functioning. This study found that these efforts are clear evidence of the Maumere community's commitment to maintaining the local cultural identity embodied in the Waning gong. The preservation of gong Waning is an effort to maintain tradition and pass on noble cultural values to future generations.

Keywords: Gong Waning, Cultural Identity, Cultural Preservation, Maumere Customary Tradition

Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago that has a variety of ethnic music spread across various regions in the archipelago. In the diversity of music in Indonesia there are also various kinds of tools used to express themselves. Speaking of ethnic diversity and traditional musical instruments in Indonesia, each has its own uniqueness. Each region certainly has traditional musical instruments that must be maintained and preserved. Music can be defined as an expression or thought that is issued regularly in the form of sound. The origin of the word music comes from the Greek word mousike which is taken from the name of the god in ancient Greek mythology, Mousa, who leads the arts and sciences (National Encyclopaedia of Indonesia, 1990: 413). Traditional comes from the word Traditio in Latin which means habits that are hereditary. The word traditional itself is an attribute that means clinging to customs that have been passed down from generation to generation (Salim, 1991: 1636). According to Sedyawati (1992: 23) traditional music is music that is used as a manifestation of cultural values in accordance with tradition. Traditional music according to Tumbijo (1977: 13) is a cultural art that has lived and developed in certain areas for generations. So it can be concluded that traditional music is community music that is passed down from

generation to generation and is sustainable in the community of an area or its supporting community. According to Purba (2007: 2), traditional music does not mean that a music and various elements in it are conservative, ancient or outdated. However, traditional music is music that is distinctive and reflects the culture of an ethnic or community. Traditional music, whether it is a collection of compositions, structures, idioms and instrumentation as well as styles or basic compositional elements, such as rhythm, melody, modes or scales, are not taken from a repertoire or musical system that comes from outside the culture of a society that owns the music in question. These traditional musical instruments certainly add to the value of cultural diversity in Indonesia. Traditional musical instruments are one of Indonesia's cultural treasures that are still maintained today, such as traditional musical instruments in various regions of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Traditional musical instruments in NTT have an important role in various traditional events, weddings, welcoming guests and so on. In the NTT area, there are several musical instruments that are quite famous among the community including Sasando, Gong Waning, Heo, Leku Boko, Foy Doa, Foy Pay, Suling, and so on.

Traditional musical instruments from each region are very important for people's lives because people's lives will not be separated from the customs of the people in that area. Culture must be maintained and preserved regional characteristics and functions of these traditional musical instruments. However, the factors of development and modernisation greatly affect the sustainability of a region's identity. So the cultural identity of a region is greatly influenced because it has an impact on the preservation of traditional musical instruments, in a society that has increasingly minimal knowledge such as the introduction of traditional musical instruments in a region to future generations or losing traditional musical instruments that have been passed down by ancestors for generations. One of the regional musical instruments in NTT whose existence has begun to be less popular is the Gong Waning musical instrument located in Kojawair Village, Hewokloang District, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, about 15 kilometres from Maumere City. Gong waning is one of the traditional musical instruments of the Sikka people, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). This instrument is a musical instrument that is played by beating. Gong Waning consists of several types of instruments such as waning (drum), gong and peli anak (saur). Waning itself is a drum-like musical instrument made of coconut wood and has only one membrane. This instrument is usually played as a dance accompaniment in both traditional events and dance performances. According to some existing historical sources, this musical instrument already existed around the 1920s. The existence of Gong Waning is the impact of the entry of traders from China, Java and Bugis who at that time brought gong musical instruments to exchange for handicrafts or crops of the people there. Before the existence of gongs in Sikka, the people there first used *lettor* musical instruments. Lettor itself is a musical instrument made of wood in the form of pieces arranged like a xylophone in Javanese musical instruments. However, after being introduced to the gong instrument, they replaced the lettor with the instrument, this was done because the sound produced was similar to the lettor. Since then, the people there have used gong as a companion to the waning musical instrument and call it Gong Waning. This musical instrument used to be used by the community to accompany processions and dances at traditional

ceremonies of the Sikka community. This *Gong Waning* musical instrument consists of three main types of instruments, namely *waning*, *gong* and *peli anak/saur*. Waning itself is a *drum-like* musical instrument made from coconut trunks and dried cow/goat skin. This one drum has a different shape from drums in general and only has one *membrane*. Waning used usually consists of two types, namely large drums and *dodor* (small drums).

The gongs used have different tones, from low to high tones. The gongs include gong *Ina wa'a, gong Ina depo, gong lepe, gong Higo-hagong,* and *gong Udong*. For gong higo-hagong usually consists of two different gongs but played simultaneously, if one of them is missing then the resulting music will sound confused. As for the *peli anak* or *saur*, it is a piece of bamboo approximately 1 metre long. Peli anak is usually used to stabilise the rhythm of *Gong Waning's* blows. As with other traditional musical instruments, Gong *Waning* is also played simultaneously and harmonised to produce a rhythm that is pleasing to the ear. Basically, *Gong Waning* music is only used to accompany dance performances, and cannot be performed orchestrally like gamelan. So the rhythm played is also adjusted to the dance movements. The *rhythm* of the Gong Waning game consists of *todu rhythm, bedu blabat rhythm, glebak rhythm,* and *lake rhythm*. Each rhythm usually represents a different tempo, from the fastest to the slowest.

Initially, Gong Waning was performed by the people there as an accompaniment to folk dances at traditional ceremonies or rituals. To accompany these dances, the rhythm usually played is more free, because it is a folk dance so that dance movements tend to follow the rhythm of Gong Waning music. However, this looks different when accompanying a performance dance. In performance dance, the rhythm usually follows the dance movements and must be harmonised. Because dance performances prioritise the beauty of movement combined with accompanying music, so that harmony must be considered. In its development, the existence or existence of Gong Waning is gradually extinct and its existence is not maintained both in terms of musical instruments and their use. The existence of Gong Waning is only found in a few areas such as in villages or several studios, and even then the equipment is less complete. This is due to the development of modern music that is more favoured by young people and there are also recordings of Gong Waning music so that people no longer want to play directly but only play recordings. Exploration of traditional music learning is an effort made by processing musical space with imagination to find possible games that are suitable for developing motifs or rhythms as learning material. This exploration prioritises activeness and creative power by the players in order to create novelty but not leave the original pakem of the Gong Waning music game so that it becomes more dynamic and can continue to develop and be of interest to all groups or generations, especially young people. From this background comes a formulation or research question How is the existence of traditional Gong Waning music in Maumere, Flores? And how is the exploration strategy of Gong Waning traditional music? The purpose of this research is to study the role and function of Gong Waning in maintaining the cultural identity of the people of Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara. In addition, this research also examines the efforts of the Maumere community to preserve Gong Waning as a form of their local wisdom.

Methodology

This research uses the Qualitative Method so as to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups related to social and cultural phenomena. This is what can provide in-depth information about the role, function, and cultural values of Gong Waning. The approach that will be taken is to use an Ethnographic approach. This is what will make researchers conduct participatory observations and in-depth interviews in the Maumere community environment. Researchers can see thoroughly how Gong Waning is used, interpreted, and preserved in everyday life. allows researchers to understand the cultural context from a broader perspective. The data collection techniques that will be used are Participatory observation In-depth interviews with key informants (such as community leaders, Gong Waning players, etc.) Documentation studies (such as archives, photos, and videos) Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Theoretical Foundations

Rahyono (in Wibowo and Gunawan, 2015:17) defines local wisdom as an intelligence possessed by a particular ethnic group, gained through the ethnic group's experience of grappling with its environment. This local wisdom will be very strongly attached to a particular community/ethnicity. This is because the values of local wisdom are tested and go through a long process, even almost as old as the existence of a particular community or ethnicity. Local wisdom is an ancestral heritage related to the value system of life. This value system is integrated not only in the form of religion, but also in culture, customs. When a community adapts to its environment, they develop a wisdom in the form of knowledge or ideas, tools, combined with customary norms, cultural values, activities to manage the environment to meet their needs (Suhartini, 2009: 1). In line with Suhartini, Putu Oka Ngakan (in Akhmar and Syarifuddin, 2007) mentions local wisdom as a form of wisdom as well as a way of attitude towards the environment that exists in community life. Local wisdom comes from two words: wisdom, and local. In general, local wisdom can be understood as local ideas that are wise, full of wisdom, good value, which are embedded and followed by members of the community. Local wisdom is formed as a cultural advantage of local communities and geographical conditions in a broad sense. Local wisdom is a cultural product of the past that should be continuously used as a guide for life. Although local in value, the values contained therein are considered very universal (Panjaitan, et al, 2014):

The existence of this local wisdom has several functions. Sartini (2006) in (Panjaitan, et al, 2014: 115) states that the functions of local wisdom are as follows:

- a. Conservation and preservation of ala resources
- b. Human resource development
- c. Development of culture and science
- d. Advice, beliefs, literature, and controversies

Forms of Local Wisdom According to Muchtar, et al (2016) the form of local wisdom can be categorised into two aspects, namely tangible and intangible local wisdom.

a. Tangible local wisdom can be categorised into two aspects: tangible local wisdom includes the following aspects: textual some types of local wisdom such as value systems, procedures,

- special provisions are set forth in the form of written records such as those found in traditional books of primbon, calendars, and prasi (culture written on palm leaf sheets).
- b. Intangible Local Wisdom In addition to tangible forms of local wisdom, there are also intangible forms of local wisdom such as petuah that are conveyed verbally and passed down from generation to generation which can be in the form of songs and chants that contain traditional teaching values. Through petuah or other intangible forms of local wisdom, social values are conveyed orally/verbally from generation to generation (Muchtar, 2016).

Traditional Music

Traditional musical instruments are musical instruments that come from the vibration of the instrument itself, not electronic engineering created and made to play traditional music (Kemdikbud, 2017, p. 19). Broadly speaking, a variety of traditional musical instruments are grouped into several categories, namely string, wind, string, hit, clap and rocking instruments. Here are some examples of Indonesian traditional musical instruments based on how they are played.

In general, the characteristics of traditional music are as follows:

- 1. Musical ideas for both vocals and instrument use are transmitted directly or memorised, and are not written down.
- 2. A hereditary tradition that is passed down from one generation to the next.
- 3. Using simple musical instruments.
- 4. The lyrics use the local language.

Function of Traditional Music

For Indonesian people in general, there are six functions of traditional music, including the following:

- (a) means of traditional ceremonies (rituals);
- (b) dance accompaniment;
- (c) means of entertainment;
- (d) means of communication;
- (e) a means of self-disclosure;
- (f) economic means (Kemdikbud team, 2017, p.).

In addition, according to Meriam in (Sarapang, 2013, p. 22) there are several functions of traditional music in people's lives as follows:

- 1. As a means of entertainment, especially for listeners without exception, the players are also
- 2. As a means of communication, this communication is not just communication between players and spectators, but can be religious and belief communication, such as communication between the community and the spirits of ancestors or ancestors.
- 3. As a symbolic offering, it means that music functions as a symbol of the state of a society's culture and can be one of the benchmarks to see the extent of a society's cultural level.
- 4. As a physical response, it means that music serves as an accompaniment to rhythmic activities such as dance, gymnastics, dancing, and so on.

- 5. As a harmonisation of societal norms, music contributes to the formation of social norms within a culture.
- 6. As a social institution and religious ritual, this means that music contributes to social and religious activities, for example as an accompaniment in worship or certain traditional ceremonies.
- 7. As a means of cultural continuity and statistics, it means that music also plays a role in preservation for the continuation and stability of a nation.
- 8. As a form of community integration and identity, music influences the process of social group formation, meaning that different music will form different groups.

Types of Traditional Music

The grouping of traditional music types is generally related to the position of the music in certain traditional events, activities or ceremonies. Each region, culture, ethnicity or tribe has its own distinctive musical styles for traditional celebrations.

Therefore, the division of traditional music types can be divided into:

- 1. traditional music for ceremonies related to the cycle of life and death;
- 2. traditional music for ceremonies to care for natural resources and environmental sustainability;
- 3. traditional music of social and state celebrations, etc.

In addition, the type of traditional music can also refer to the division of each musical culture between regions as in the various traditional music of the archipelago, which among others are as follows.

Gong Waning Traditional Music

Gong Waning is a traditional musical instrument typical of the Sikka people, East Nusa Tenggara that has existed around the 1920s, this musical instrument developed at the beginning of the entry of Chinese, Javanese, and Bugis traders who at that time brought gong musical instruments which were then used as a means of exchange with the crafts and crops of the Sikka people. this musical instrument was once played only during Sikka people's ritual events. however, since the times, this musical instrument has become a musical instrument that is often played in the activities of great events from the village to the international level. The Gong Waning instrument is divided into 3 instruments, namely gong, waning, and sa'ur. gong itself is divided into several types, namely gong inan, gong anak, gong udong, gong beit, and gong lepen. then waning which consists of waning inan, and waning anak. Sa'ur is a musical instrument made of bamboo pieces that are about 1.5 m long. The existence of the traditional musical instrument gong waning has been around for a long time among Sikka district residents. Long before the existence of gong waning, Sikka residents played a traditional musical instrument made of bamboo slats with the same tone as the current Gong Waning. the musical instrument is called "wala". This wala is made of bamboo. After the wala, it was replaced by the letor. Letor is a traditional musical instrument played by beating, made of wood or bambo made in such a way that it can produce sounds that resemble gong waning. It was only later that the community recognised the gong. Gong Waning that exists today has only

changed its shape and name from wala and letor. In this case, it is the rhythm that characterises the traditional music of the Sikka people. "Even though we use gong and waning, the rhythm is still played the same, the sound also remains the same, Gong Waning consists of three main types of instruments, namely, gong, waning, and peli anak/sa'ur.

Findings and Discussion

Gong Waning is part of the local culture that must be maintained and preserved in Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara. Gong Waning is a set of traditional musical instruments consisting of various sizes and tones of gongs. It is played in various rituals and celebrations of the Maumere community, making it one of their unique cultural identities. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, the existence of Gong Waning is getting closer to destruction. Cultural values have changed due to modernisation and globalisation. As a result, Maumere's younger generation does not seem interested in learning and preserving Gong Waning.



(Figure 1. Source Photo Travel Kompas)

1. The Role and Function of Gong Waning in Building and Maintaining the Cultural Identity of the Maumere Community.

Gong Waning is an important component in building and maintaining the cultural identity of the Maumere community. This traditional musical instrument has many roles and purposes within the local community.

A. As a Means of Ritual and Ceremony

Gong Waning is an integral part of the various ceremonies and rituals of the Maumere community. In ceremonies such as Penti (grand guest welcoming ceremony), Sua (death ceremony), and Deta (marriage ceremony), the presence of Gong Waning is an important component of the ritual. It is believed that the sound of the Gong Waning has magical and spiritual powers that can influence the supernatural realm and enhance the sacredness and solemnity of the ritual. Selected Gong Waning players are usually considered to have deep indigenous and spiritual knowledge. Not only are they required to be adept at playing the instrument, but they are also required to understand the philosophy, meaning and procedures of each ritual. Gong Waning skills are usually inherited by certain families or customary groups. Gong Waning strengthens the cultural identity of the Maumere people through its ritual role. It serves to showcase the unique things in local culture that distinguish it from other cultures. The presence of Gong Waning in traditional rituals shows that the traditions and principles of the local community remain.

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(Figure 2. PDBI Photo Source)

B. As a Vehicle for Art and Cultural Expression

Besides being used in rituals, Gong Waning also serves as a way for the people of Maumere to express their art and culture. Local artists, musicians and culturists use this traditional instrument as a medium to express their creativity and cultural identity. Gong Concerts In addition to musical performances, Waning features traditional dances, poetry and cultural stories. These performances can convey messages, values and life philosophies that the Maumere people have long embraced. It enables the transfer of culture from the older generation to the younger generation. Gong Waning performances are also often played at local, regional, and national cultural events. This allows the people of Maumere to show their cultural identity to others. The Gong Waning performance is a symbol of local cultural wealth that should be proud of and preserved.



(Figure 3. Photo of Gong Waning)

C. As a Shaper of Social Cohesion

The existence of Gong Waning has cultural value and plays a major role in shaping the social cohesion of the Maumere community. Gongs are used in various traditional ceremonies and ceremonies. For residents, waning becomes a unifying and communal bond. The community works together to carry out the process of preparing, performing and maintaining the Gong Waning. For example, people usually gather to prepare musical instruments, set up the stage, and play the Gong Waning in the Penti ceremony. Activities carried out by everyone make social relations stronger, make people feel closer to each other, and help strengthen the communal identity of the Maumere community. Gong Waning is also a tool to communicate and interact between generations. When Gong Waning plays the process of skill inheritance, knowledge is transferred from the older

generation to the younger generation. In addition to transferring the principles, customs, and local wisdom contained in the Gong Waning tradition, it also passes on musical expertise. Maumere's cultural identity is preserved and maintained during this process.



(Figure 4. Photo Source VoxNtt)

2. Maumere Community Efforts in Preserving Gong Waning

One of the traditional musical instruments originating from Maumere, Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province, is Gong Waning. Gong Waning has noble values and is an important part of the culture of the Maumere community. Some of the efforts made by the Maumere community to preserve gong Waning are as preservation of Customary Traditions can be seen People in Maumere still perform customs involving the use of gong Waning in religious ceremonies, weddings, and other cultural celebrations. The younger generation is educated to understand the meaning and benefits of the tradition of using gong Waning. On the other hand, Gong Waning Learning and Training is in an effort to provide the younger generation with the skills to play the gong Waning through formal and informal courses. Training and workshops are held at various educational and cultural institutions in Maumere so that Gong Waning artists and maestros actively provide instruction and knowledge to the next generation. Documentation and Publication Gong Waning is documented through audio-visual recordings, photographs, and writings. To increase public awareness and appreciation, publication and promotion of gong Waning is conducted through various media at the local, regional, and national levels. Support from Government and Community Organisations The Sikka Regency government and cultural organisations support gong Waning with funds, facilities, and preservation programmes. To maintain its sustainability, the government, artists, and the community work together. These efforts demonstrate the commitment of the Maumere community to preserve the gong Waning as an important cultural heritage. In addition to maintaining tradition, this preservation introduces and passes on Gong Waning's noble values to the next generation.

Conclusion

By considering what is mentioned above, we can identify some of the efforts made by the Maumere community to maintain their cultural identity through gong Waning. Maintaining the Adat dakam Tradition Gong Waning is still used by the Maumere community in various events and rituals, including religious ceremonies, weddings, and other cultural celebrations. The younger generation is educated to understand the meaning and benefits of the tradition of using gong Waning. Preserving Skills and Knowledge so that Through formal and informal learning, there are efforts

to impart the skills of playing the gong Waning to the younger generation. Waning gong artists and maestros actively share their knowledge and skills with the next generation. Documenting and Promoting so To safeguard this cultural heritage, efforts are made to document the gong Waning through audio-visual recordings, photographs and writing. Promotion of Gong Waning is done in many media to raise awareness and be recognised by the community. Building Collaboration where to maintain the sustainability of the gong Waning, the Sikka Regency government and cultural organisations offer support in the form of funds, facilities, and preservation programmes. Through cooperation between the government, artists, and the community, the preservation of the gong Waning will enable the Maumere community to maintain its local cultural identity.

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