

## **CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN PRESERVING THE MACAPAT TRADITION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

There is a phenomenon of urgency in the local cultural order, which causes the interaction between traditional values and cultural influences to become stronger. Globalization can accelerate the hybridization process, but it is feared that it will give rise to new challenges. The role of mass media is very large in ultimately creating popular culture, popular culture in each era determines the formation of hybridity. The theories used and relevant according to the research focus to answer research questions are Cultural Hybridation (Bhaba). This study aims to explore the hybridity of macapat culture in the form of presentation of the macapat tradition so that it becomes an art with a hybrid identity. So, the research question is formulated as follows: How is the hybridity of the macapat tradition in the special region of Yogyakarta? This research used the qualitative data gathered from primary and secondary sources, in order to critically examine the issue of cultural hybridity in Macapat communities Yogyakarta.

**Keywords:** Macapat Tradition, Community, Cultural Hybridity

### **INTRODUCTION**

The current condition of global society culture is undergoing very complex modifications at various levels of society. The world today is a representation of time to time, where tradition and modernity are seen as opposing forces. History shows that Indonesian culture is the result of world influences (Budiman, 2012). Thus, Indonesian culture no longer stands alone but is rather a combination of various cultures that have been integrated into all aspects of Indonesian society. One of the cultures that make up Indonesian culture is Javanese culture.

One example of a Javanese cultural phenomenon that attracts our attention is the

macapat tradition, a form of ancient Javanese poetry that is currently undergoing a process of change in its practice and appreciation. The condition of macapat development in society can experience several changes, starting to be eroded and eroded by the intervention of global wisdom. The macapat tradition is included in one form of community activity that, in its development, certainly cannot stand alone, meaning that the development of an art depends on the community itself (Hadi, 2012).

The problem faced by the macapat community is that traditional cultural activities actually have to coexist with pop culture, considering that the macapat tradition is still very popular in Yogyakarta. The emergence of the macapat community, whose members are macapat song lovers, is a form of resistance to popular culture that is direct. When tradition becomes something that is highly maintained, the context of development with modernity becomes a concern with changes in behavioral patterns in society that still maintain it as a standard (Rahim, 2019). However, on the other hand, the role of the mass media is quite large and ultimately creates popular culture.

In theory, popular culture is the culture that is most enjoyed by society today. Whatever is liked and desired by many people is pop culture. This popular culture is indeed attractive because the concept is light, interesting, and fun. Making everyone want to be a part of it. This popular culture has invited criticism because it is too easy, instant, and tends to be of low quality but has massive power in influencing society so that trends are formed.

Pop culture is exposed to society instantly and massively, while traditional culture is known to society in a traditional way (word of mouth) with few enthusiasts. Therefore, the culture that is popular in every era determines the formation of hybridity. There is a phenomenon of urgency in the local cultural order, which causes the interaction between traditional values and cultural influences to become stronger. Aspects of culture and tradition clash with current social principles (Prasetya, 2018).

Globalization can accelerate the hybridization process, but it is feared that it will give rise to new challenges. There is concern that globalization can produce new forms of cultural domination, where local cultures are threatened by the forced homogenization of global culture. The Macapat tradition shows signs of resistance to cultural homogenization and struggles against the dominance of modern culture. Several symptoms appear in the context of society, including resistance and dynamics.

In order to be able to critically examine the issue of cultural hybridity in the macapat community, the research was conducted in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The

research location chosen in this study is the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), Central Java. This study aims to explore the hybridity of the macapat tradition in the form of the presentation of the macapat tradition so that it becomes an art with a hybrid identity. So the research question is formulated as follows: How is the hybridity of the macapat tradition in the special region of Yogyakarta?

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to analyze hybridity in the macapat tradition in Yogyakarta. This study is expected to be used as an effort to develop science and add new information about the hybridity of the macapat tradition as a combination of local culture and modern culture, so the theory of hybridity is the basis of the study in this study. Focus on the analysis of the hybridity of the macapat tradition for local communities in Yogyakarta in general.

## **METHODS**

Qualitative research methods in Bryman (2012:36) are research strategies that usually emphasize words rather than quantification in data collection and analysis. According to Blaikie (2000), the most significant aspect in the research process is related to data collection techniques, namely how data is collected and transformed (obtained and manipulated) for analysis. Observation (both semi-structured and unstructured), group interviews, and document content analysis are examples of qualitative research methodology (Blaikie, 2000).

In order to critically examine the issue of cultural hybridity in local communities, this research used the qualitative data gathered from primary and secondary sources. The main data sources were gathered directly from the field and informants, while the secondary data sources were obtained from books in the library, publications presenting the online and offline findings of the study, and sites or websites linked to the topic under discussion. The informants were carefully chosen based on previously established criteria. The data were gathered via observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

The essential topic in data collection was the researcher, who was assisted by an interview guide including basic questions that were then developed during dialogues with informants. A camera, hand phone, stationary, or notebook were also available as assistance equipment. The data were evaluated interactively, which comprised data reduction, data presentation, conclusion withdrawal, verification, and interpretation (Miles and Huberman, 1992).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Values are not spread and internalized suddenly or without continuous effort. According to Article 30 of Law Number 5 of 2017 on Cultural Advancement, “(1) The Central Government and/or Regional Government are required to develop Cultural Advancement Objects; (2) Everyone can develop Cultural Advancement Objects; (3) Development of Cultural Advancement Objects is carried out by disseminating, studying, and enriching diversity.”

The issuance of the Cultural Advancement Law by the central government in 2017 had an impact on efforts to preserve local culture in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. With the issuance of this law, the administrative region of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province issued various policies and regulations to support cultural preservation as a real step in advancing culture. However, policies and regulations related to the Special Region of Yogyakarta have existed since before the issuance of the Cultural Advancement Law but complement and support each other as a legal umbrella for cultural preservation efforts in the Special Region of Yogyakarta province.

The form or manifestation of the policy and regulations of the Special Region and the Law on the Advancement of Culture can still be felt by various parties to this day. Especially from artists and the general public in channeling regional arts and culture facilitated by the central and regional governments through related agencies. The related agencies in question are the Department of Culture, the Center for the Preservation of Cultural Values and the Language Center in the Yogyakarta region. With the regulation of the Law on the Advancement of Culture, the Indonesian government also supports changes to the regulations financially through the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia.

Law No. 13 of 2012 on the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) covers the Central Government's Special Fund (*Dana Is*). The DIY Special Fund is a fund originating from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget. The Special Fund, hereinafter referred to as the *Dana Is*, comes from the central Ministry of Finance and is then distributed to the Department of Culture through various procedural processes to various parties. Then, the Department distributes the *Dana Is* to carry out various activities to support cultural preservation in the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

The goal of the central government in this case is none other than as a concrete step so that local culture which is one of the identities of the Indonesian nation is not lost due to modernity. The dichotomy between modern and traditional becomes a very difficult

homework if the preservation of "traditional" culture is not started. The phenomenon of modernity becomes a new era by offering things that did not previously exist such as science, morals, knowledge, culture, politics and art in a process called modernization (Smart, 1990). One sign of modernization is the breaking of traditional values (Featherstone, 1988).

One of the efforts of the Yogyakarta Special Region Government in strengthening local identity refers to the 2017 Cultural Advancement Law policy. This step is a strategy for introducing and strengthening local Indonesian cultural identity in the postmodern era. The birth of the Cultural Advancement Law and Special Regional Regulations in Yogyakarta triggered the birth of a community struggle movement. This community movement was formed based on the dominance of modernity and the subordination of traditionality. The community movement works together to elevate local culture and eliminate global domination. This means that local culture, which is considered subordinate in the binary contradiction of modern-traditional, is equated with the importance of popular culture that is currently developing globally.

Popular culture is the identity of modernism itself; modern is considered superior, and traditional is considered subordinate. Therefore, every agency and community engaged in the field of Macapat songs also has its own color in efforts to advance local culture, which includes the preservation and development of the Macapat oral tradition. The phenomenon of the fusion of tangible and intangible cultures in the Special Region is one of the strengths of the local identity of the Indonesian nation. This needs to be done by the central and regional governments as an effort to reduce the dominance of the development of the popular culture industry, which is one of the indicators of modernity. This popular mass culture is more popular with the younger generation because it continues to be introduced and promoted globally, thus potentially encouraging local Indonesian culture. The following is information about the Macapat performance conducted in this study:

Table 1. The Macapat Performance Special Region of Yogyakarta

No.	Year	Event	Location
1.	2022	Macapat Senja	Malioboro 2
2.	2023	Macapat Senja	Ndalem Pojokusuman
3.	2024	Macapat Senja	Taman Budaya Embung Giwangan

Yogyakarta was chosen for this study because it is a vibrant cultural area that contributes to cultural growth. As a result, many cultural and art festivals (traditional and

modern) continue to emerge in varied surroundings on the outskirts of Yogyakarta. Every Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. WIB, the Yogyakarta Palace in Bangsal Srimanganti hosts regular art performances. There are macapat performances. Macapat Senja has been hosted at Teras Malioboro 2 since 2022, then at Ndalem Pujokusuman in 2023, and again at Taman Budaya Embung Giwangan in 2024 by the Yogyakarta City Cultural Office (Kundha Kabudayan) in partnership with the Macapath Project community.

The concept of hybridity is used to study the macapat tradition; with the help of this theory, it is hoped that answers can be found regarding the discourse of hybridity in the presentation of the Macapat Tradition. The beginning of the macapat tradition itself is a performance that is sung in a song without musical accompaniment; then there is a novelty by presenting the modern side. The elements in the presentation of this macapat tradition are different from the early macapat. Its formation is based on a mixture of modernity.

This struggle is not limited to being interpreted in the dichotomy between modern and traditional; both merge into one and mix with various versions of the development of society. Similarly, each resource has a unique approach to conserving and expanding the Macapatan oral heritage. The community is not inspired by Macapat's traditional nature but rather develops its own dynamics. Members of the Macapath Project, the Yogyakarta City Literature Champion Community, the Pamulangan Sekar Macapat Kridhamardawa Kraton Yogyakarta, the Pamulangan of the Children's Puppeteers of the Yogyakarta City Culture Office, and the Pamulangan Sekar Macapat Puro Pakualaman all worked together to organize the macapat festival.

Macapat narratives frequently convey societally accepted moral and ethical lessons. Macapat writings contain themes of integrity, honesty, loyalty, and behavior that are seen as excellent and essential enough to serve as guides for human behavior in daily life. Macapat song fans have worked hard to retain the lovely philosophical idea of "being a good human being" that is embedded in the macapat song text.

The Macapat tradition was purposefully created in order to achieve cultural progress. Its nature no longer confronts modernism, but rather the reverse. Some Macapat are traditional, but others have been transformed into hybrid goods that mix in with contemporary itself. Modernity is not fully acknowledged while traditionality is being carried out. The community's fight in the field of Macapat does not diminish its original form but rather adds modern touches that young people are actively working on. As a

result, the presence of Macapat songs in the community's fight represents a new form of a traditional product degraded by modernism.

The resulting hybrid product is a site of struggle in which there is a struggle of cultural interests that each party involved in the space and cultural process that are increasingly blending with each other wants to negotiate, articulate, and fight for. In the space between, the space that brings together colonial power and culture and local traditions, colonized and postcolonial humans can practice mimicry, mockery, and hybridity that become their political and self-strategy in the midst of foreign cultures (Bhabha, 1994: 86).

The concept of cultural hybridity offered has a complex and dynamic perspective on identity in the modern world. Identity is seen as something that is always in the process of formation, not something that is fixed or pure. In a world that is constantly changing due to globalization and migration, the idea of hybridity becomes increasingly important to understand how we define ourselves and others in an increasingly complex and interconnected cultural landscape.

Hybridity in this study is related to the macapat tradition carried out in local communities related to cultural orientation amidst the influence of modern culture today. The object of this study is the macapat tradition where the existing macapat tradition is developed to be combined with other cultures. The combination of the rules itself is an effort to form cultural hybridity. Hybridity is not just a mixture of two cultures that produce a new form of culture, the macapat tradition becomes a hybrid product that can open up space to accept pluralism and multiculturalism, appreciate differences, and expand the reach of knowledge and understanding of a complex world.

Hybridity sometimes over-romanticizes the fusion of cultures and ignores the harsh reality of the power imbalances that often accompany the process. Hybridity can also hide the fact that some cultures may be more dominant than others, so that the hybridization process does not always occur in a balanced way. Hybridity can be seen as a tool of resistance to global domination, emphasizing that identities do not have to follow uniform patterns but can be continuously formed and reshaped through creative mixing processes. It is with this hybrid awareness that local community culture, mixing local forms into modernity, will continue in the context of an era that is always transforming, as well as to resist the influences of outside cultures.

Macapat, which was previously only song quietly without musical accompaniment, has now changed its form with contemporary musical accompaniment. The texts used are



existing texts and new texts while still paying attention to the form of the rules of writing macapat texts. It can be said that it does not abandon the rules, only adding new elements to make it easier for young people to absorb and more enjoyable for all groups. Hybridity is a sign of cultural dynamics, where cultural boundaries merge and transcend each other in the third space. In addition, forms of cultural creativity will always develop beyond the boundaries that exist between existing cultures. These are all blended cultures that combine new technologies with existing social practices and cultural values.

In the macapat tradition, there is a form of cross-communication that is seen between cultural identities; it does not mean merging the identities between cultures that are owned, such as macapat that has been created by Paksi Raras Alit and Macapat Project, which has been transformed into a new form for cross-pollination between cultures as cross-culture fertilization. The crossing process involves adjusting cultural identities, such as macapat groups with their identities, and also adding new cultures that will be passed on to future generations. So, this cultural hybridity is accepting new cultural identities but still maintaining the original identity. Hybridization is indeed an inevitability that occurs in society and in the end is able to cross space and time.

## **CONCLUSION**

Nowadays, it is very difficult to find the roots, identity, and cultural meaning that are essential in a particular society or community. The strength of the cultural roots that used to be attached to the identity of a particular community and applied through rituals and traditions, from day to day, increasingly fades or transforms into an inevitable hybridity. Bader (2001: 256-261) places culture as a multidimensional concept. The macapat tradition as a process is interpreted as creation, change, performance, and an endless process. The hybridization process in the macapat tradition creates new forms of identity that combine elements of modern and local culture. In the end, hybridization creates a hybridity of the macapat tradition that can be accepted from the upper levels to the lower levels of society.

Traditional communities certainly want to continue to carry out and carry out local cultural practices that they inherited from their ancestors, but they also cannot completely turn a blind eye to the presence of global culture, which is increasingly diverse, interesting, and dynamic from day to day. Hybridization ultimately shows the ability of local communities to synthesize local culture (macapat) and other cultures to produce hybrid cultural practices and meanings in different forms. Local culture can no longer use the



essential paradigm that views macapat and local communities as noble entities. For the sake of their political identity interests, macapat and local communities will always negotiate traditional culture in the midst of modern culture. Knowledge of locality is a mistaken perspective because it negates aspects of hybridity and cultural dynamics that are clearly ongoing and will continue to occur.

Mixing and merging cultures becomes an important point for hybrid cultural analysis. The purpose of this blending is purely for entertainment, public acceptance of the concept of mixing or merging elements between cultures. Therefore, the macapat tradition, which is basically a pure art, can be accepted and welcomed by the community. The concept of hybridity found in the macapat tradition is read as an effort to explore the macapat tradition to be more contextual with the tastes of today's society. Hybridity is a way taken to continue to exist the macapat tradition. In this research, there are still many other gaps in problems that would be very appropriate to be used as material for further research.

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