



Hybridity and Popularity of West Sumatran Folk Music the Gamat

Martarosa^{1*}, Rozalvino², Endrizal³

^{1,2,3}Indonesia Institute of the Arts of Padangpanjang, West Sumatra, Indonesia

| Received: 15.09.2023 | Accepted: 17.09.2023 | Published: 20.09.2023

*Corresponding author: Martarosa's

Indonesia Institute of the Arts of Padangpanjang, West Sumatra, Indonesia

Abstract

A form of folk music performance that gained so much popularity among the community of West Sumatra is known as the gamat. It is a hybrid music in which local musical elements has been mixed up with that of Portuguese musical instruments that also can be found in many other folk music of Indonesia in general. This article will describe both issues of popularity and hybridity in a sense of how local musical culture should adopted musical trend and taste of modern life style during the postcolonial era of early twenty-first century.

The hybridity elements found in the music of gamat are musical appropriation which can be classified as follows: (1) the Western influence (from Portuguese and from the Dutch) can be found in the use of diatonic scales, the use of Western musical instruments such as violin, accordion, and tambourine, as well as song title known as *Kaparinyo* which is believed to be derived from Portuguese *Cafrinho*; (2) the Malay expression which is more local in its own musical style especially that of singing styles as well as in its musical form and structure; (3) the adaptation of *pantun* in its texts is also astonishing in which local terminology being used to identify it as the so-called *garitiak* and *gayo* musical phare and singing style.

Keywords: *gamat* music, popularity, hybridity.

INTRODUCTION

This article guides a stepwise walkthrough by Experts for writing a successful *Gamat* is a folk tradition music of the people of West Sumatra Coastal which provides us with local culture flavors. These local flavors are highlighted in a form of the so-called *rabab pasisir* which is played in a style of recitation of *dendang pauah*. These local music idioms are processed in form of melodic cultivation for both instrumental and musical music vocal music. For instrumental music, deep playing techniques melodic form is called *garitiak*, while for vocal music called *Gayo*. This melodic playing technique seems contain another different aesthetic than that of Malay music known as *dondang sayang* (Malacca), *ghazals* (of Riau Province), and *ronggeng* (of Deli of North Sumatra).

Gamat is a form of musical performance of Malay genre that grows and develops as a cultural art community of port cities (*bandar*) on the coast of West Sumatra. Etymologically, the word *gamat* believed to be deriving from the word "*gamit*", means of touching someone with a finger to engage in conversation or for specific purposes. *Gamat* usually performed along with the dance

performance artist of that day. If a scarf or handkerchiefs are given to those present at the performance it means that the person is respectfully asked to participate for the next dance and singing too. This was the meaning of *gamit* someone to make the performance more profoundly and enjoyable by many people.

Historically, *gamat* of Minangkabau possibly introduced by the Portuguese sailors who reached mainland Minangkabau (*Darek*) sometime in early 16th century. *Gamat* was known as the art of cosmopolitan because it was very popular among the people who leave in the city, near the port where the ships docking and the activities of singing and dancing as well as drinking were quite a normal as nightly entertainment of the sailors and the ship workers. The musical instruments used in *gamat* normally consists of only of violins and drums.

But further development of style of *gamat* then also utilizing other musical instruments such as accordion, guitar, saxophone, and tambourine. In addition to the instruments used, there is also a Portuguese impression marked by the existence of a *gamat* song entitled "*Kaparinyo*" (*Cafrinho*). Viewed from an aesthetic point of view, the term *garitiak* is a deep form of playing musical

instruments in the *Darek* area (*Luhak Nan Tigo*) in Minangkabau. But this term of singing expression called *garitiak* is also commonly mentioned in music improvisation traditions, found in the playing of *rabab* (traditional string instrument), *saluang* (traditional flute), and *talempong* (traditional gong chimes instrument). In so many traditional vocal music of Minangkabau, known as *dendang*, the expression is called as *garinyiak*, a kind of vocal technique employing variations of the melodies typical of local singing styles.

However, generally the term *garinyiak* is also used in composing instrumental music by traditional musicians in the *Darek* area of Minangkabau. Both terms, *garitiak* and *garinyiak*, are music expression that cannot be separated from Minangkabau traditional music players as they are indeed as of the art of expression necessary to perform its style and expression. It is indeed a real challenge of any musician to master the art of *garitiak* and *garinyiak* in their music playing and singing.

Accordingly, *garinyiak* is a playing technique for violin in the *gamat* which is relatively similar to that of a trill (*tremolo*) found in music Western music. However, a trill normally played a second above the original tone in Western music, meanwhile in *gamat* it is played moving with a distance of a second lower its original tone. In another form, *garinyiak* is also includes a *mordent* (a tone played a step higher of the intended tone), an *appoggiatura*, and sometime a double *appoggiatura*.

From this point of view, it certain that *gamat* is a local popular music of 20th century with its blends of local musical expression with that of Portuguese musical instrument (violin). To put it in common, hybridity is simply of a mixture between local and foreign element, but here is further elaboration of the meaning of hybridity in order for us to catch the wider idea of its meaning.

First of all, according to Kraidy (2005: vi) hybridity is an association of ideas, concepts, and themes that at once reinforce and contradict each other. It is reinforcing the style of *gamat*, but at the same time, it is contradicted to it, for instance the local musical expression with that of foreign technique of musical instrument playing. The varied and sometimes contradictory nature of its use points to the emptiness of employing hybridity as a universal description of culture. Indeed, we learn very little when we repeat glibly that every culture is hybrid or, as happens too often, when fragments of discourse or data are cobbled together and called hybridity in several registers— historical, rhetorical, existential, economic, and so on. It is therefore imperative to situate every analysis of hybridity in a specific context where the conditions that shape hybridity's are addressed.

Furthermore, he keeps on saying that Hybridity must be understood historically in a triple context: (a) the development of vocabularies of racial and cultural mixture from the mid-nineteenth century onward; (b) the historical basis of contemporary hybrid identities; and (c) the juncture at which the language of hybridity entered the study of international communication. [Kraidy 2005: vii] But this is in fact what make it that *gamat* is more interesting and suitable to the local people to enjoy it as their daily entertainment.

According to Prabhu (2007: xii), The hybrid is a colonial concept. This is not just to say that the term was coined during the period of high colonialism, but that it served certain interests, which were central to the colonial enterprise. Hybridity, then, is first and foremost a "racial" term. In describing its theory, Prabhu mentions

that prominent theories of postcolonial hybridity recuperate the notion of agency while somehow eliding the very conditions within which hybridity as a concept emerged: the stunning inequality of two groups of people locked into a relationship of domination that is upheld and perpetuated by a system that operates in the sphere of the psychological and the symbolic as much as in the economic and the structural. [Prabhu: xiv]. In fact, *gamat* also serves not only as psychological and cultural symbolic, but also providing economic values and structural significance for the society. What can be noted here is that only in music that hybridity means perfectly melted two elements of locality and foreign musical entity (more frequently in terms of musical instruments).

Furthermore, when we regard hybridity in postcolonial theory, the following three broad positions according to Prabhu (2007: 11) can be explained: first, hybridity is everywhere which is represents in many instances the triumph of the postcolonial which is appropriates the local cultural processes as its own purposes. Second, hybridity is not everywhere when it is only elite who can afford to talk about it. For many others, there is no investment in concept whatsoever. Third, hybridity considered as material reality which reveals itself to actually be a history of slavery, colonialism, or sometime as racialism. With the history of *gamat*, it is likely that the first position is suitable to be implemented. It is the result of the triumph of local cultural process with the purpose to enrich the traditional performing arts that the hybridity has been accepted by the society.

With a reference to the development of musical histories, it can be exemplified the distinction between the two forms of hybridity. First as the great hybrid musics of colonialism and its aftermath – jazz, tango, salsa' are, as results of non-foreseeable contacts and negotiations (such can be found in the related history of the early *keroncong*), other examples are of the former, today's aesthetically oriented world-music, such as the co-operation of Ry Cooder and Ali Farka Touré seeking to unite blues with the musics of West Africa, are intentional hybrids. According to Kuortti and Nyman (Eds., 2007:7), cultural hybrids of the latter kind – which are typical of postmodernism – pose certain problems for post-colonial studies: 'The resulting encounters may produce versions of hybridity that are aesthetically pleasing, as it is found in *gamat*, but they are quite unable to sustain the political and cultural weight and energies that can be assigned as the "unintentional" histories of that process.

Moreover, according to Brah and Coombes (Eds., 2000:1), the concept of 'hybridity' has now acquired the status of a common-sense term, not only in academia but also in the culture more generally. It has become a key concept in cultural criticism, in postcolonial studies, in debates about cultural contestation and appropriation and in relation to the concept of the border and the ideal of the cosmopolitan. The phenomenon that the term 'hybridity' seeks to address produces varied responses. At times it has resulted in an uncritical celebration of the traces of cultural syncretism which assumes a symbiotic relationship without paying adequate attention to economic, political and social inequalities. On the other hand, recent work on the music industry, as it can be seen in *gamat*, for example, argues that music is one of the more productive sites for hybrid interactions which could be described as both cultural exchange and commodification without being reduced to either one or the other. Obviously at another level,

'hybridity' signals the threat of 'contamination' to those who espouse an essentialist notion of pure and authentic origins.

To probe the fundamental question of hybridity – the focus of this study of *gamat* – is like journeying into the soul of our civilization. Hybridity or *métissage* in its various shades (biological, cultural, religious, political, technological) has been a feature of all societies, from the Sumerians and Egyptians through to the Greeks and Romans down to modern times. Yet, in contemporary criticism, as Acheraïou stated out, more particularly in postcolonial scholarship, hybridity is usually addressed from a theoretical and historical perspective that rarely extends beyond the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. [Acheraïou 2011:1]

In the academic world, Latin popular music, for instance, has similarly emerged as a primary object of study across the disciplines. With the impetus granted by cultural studies, race theory, gender studies, ethnic studies, and theories of postmodernism and postcolonialism. Different views can be found in *gamat* with the attention on its style of popular music has been visible in an increasing number of disciplines. Traditionally, popular music like *gamat* was deemed folklore, primarily worthy of the exoticizing curiosity of anthropologists and ethnomusicologists.

Hybridity, in this sense, can also be an index of the new semantics produced by the transnational circulation of music in (post)colonial contexts [Aparicio, Jaques, and Maria, 2003:7]. Interestingly, the internationalization of popular music studies that took place in the early 1980s paralleled similar developments in the music industry, which was also beginning to extend its definition of and its attention to popular music beyond the traditional orbit of U.S./Western European rock. As it also can be seen in the performance of *gamat*, however, an extraordinarily diverse range of musics originating in multiple international contexts was becoming available and being marketed as "world music," an ethnomusicological construct that basically referred to everything that could not be identified as "Western" music. A related construction, "world beat," referred to a subset of world music that included styles intended for urban dance floors.

Research methods

This study employs a descriptive analysis as well as interpretive methods of qualitative data in which the researcher must be able to explain all necessary significant information regarding the subject of *gamat* as a genre of music. Most persistently emphasis should be given to the elements of hybridity and popularity of the genre. As a consequence, it is likely that a speculative account should also be taken when necessary. According to Watanabe (1967:5), a speculative account is an elaboration of a philosophy or a theory that should be formulated. Hegel, on the other hand, tends to use "speculative" to describe the form of his Logic, because the dialectical aspect (of contradiction) only makes sense in light of the speculative aspect (of resolution) that completes it. It can be interpreted as that Hegel's entire account of speculative thinking – and of the logical progression that defines it – is grounded in his understanding of what is required to make sense of the fact that we can know the world (Werner 2017:5). –ANDREW TIMOTHY WERNER, 2017. HEGEL'S SPECULATIVE METHOD. DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, University of Chicago. P.5).

Interpretive method in this sense is to the challenge of responding to the sorts of questions that might existed in all sciences—natural,

physical, and human or social. Moreover, the interpretive processes for analyzing texts in what might be called literary social science, such as what can be found in *gamat*, normally done by historians, political theorists (or political philosophers), and feminist theorists, overlap with those used, for example, in analyzing contemporary governmental and organizational documents. "Interpretive" methodologists make no claim to conceptual exclusivity in their use of that term. (Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. [Eds.]2006. Interpretation and Method Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe. P. xi).

Meanwhile, as according to Creswell (2014:64), researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective research, which provides an overall orienting lens for the study of questions of gender, class, and race (in this case, the hybridity of *gamat*, a music genre of the people of Minangkabau, writer). This lens becomes a transformative perspective that shapes the type of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for action or change, including what issues are important to examine.

Discussion

Most of the supporting data of this study has been collected from the data related to the social aspects which was analyzed based on a sociological approach and of that of an anthropological lens. However, in this research object also assisted by using historical approach as supporting data to reveal when do the symptoms of musical appropriation occurred and existed and developed in the genre of *gamat* music. In this case the concern of the period when the music was performed or broadcast, presented or demonstrated to the community of appreciators, i.e., the Minangkabau Coastal community of West Sumatra. This investigation referring to Gilbert J. Garraghan's book *A Guide to Historical Method*. [[Gilbert J. Garraghan, *A Guide to Historical Method* (New York: Forhman University Press, 1957), 3.] It was explained that at the outset of the historical meaning is closer to a result than "record or narrative of the results of the investigation".

Furthermore, it is might correspond or imply to one of three things: (1) investigation; (2) object of investigation; (3) results record investigation, respectively appropriate for: (a) history as research method (method of inquiry), is a process or techniques of researching history and writing up theresults; (b) events relating to humans that occurred in the past (the record of events); (c) an account of what happened in the past (history as past actuality).

The emergence of musical appropriation in the performing arts of *gamat* in the Minangkabau Coastal community in West Sumatra that is found today is an event of the past which is very possible for change and develop over time with the support given by the community. This leads to allegations of musical appropriation from the process of adjusting elements of cultural arts received from outside elements that fits in as an element local people own culture.

The formation of *gamat* is thought to have occurred from the process of appropriation with the element's music hybridity of Western, Malay, and tradition music of the people of Minangkabau. The process can be shown by this illustration below.



Illustration: Group of music of the city of Padang, believed to have been existed in early 16th century (Portuguese era). (Taken from a book entitled *Padang Riwayatmu Dulu*, p. 316).

This illustration shows the historical background the arrival of Westerners (Europe) to the archipelagoport with a mission trade namely to the West coast of Sumatra includes: Padang, Pariaman and Tiku, Inderapura, Bandar Ten and Barus. Through its historical approach it can be drawn the appropriation of Portuguese and Dutch culture by the West Sumatra Coastal community group as *gamat* music community. The following sequence describes the emergence of Arab culture and Malays on the Minangkabau

Coast, which happened long before the arrival of the Portuguese and the Dutch in the 7th century up to 12th century. This is in line with the inclusion of Islamic religious symbols introduced by Islamic traders throughout the region The Minangkabau coast through the port cities of Pariaman and Tiku.

Even though the relationship between the Minangkabau people and Peninsular Malay society have long existed and they might have lived together in the region ever since. This illustration has also shown the growth and the development of *gamat* as a popular music of the people of West Sumatra Coastal City. It is assumed that there is appropriation musical in the form of adjustment and acceptance between many cultural forms as the elements that fit in to the local culture as it is becoming his own. In this process of hybridity of the musical elements of various interactions includes: *Rupik* of Tamil "Portuguese", the Dutch, Malay, and *Pesisir* (coastal) Minangkabau.

Amal (2010: 5-6) describes that the city of Malacca was also the target of the Portuguese at the beginning of the 15th century. Initially the city was a settlement of fishermen and then became the territory of the pirates and places of international market operations in the Straits. Before this city fell into the hands of Portuguese, Malacca is the city (port city) most strategic position and become a trade center for China, Indonesia, India and the kingdoms around it.

Loeb (2013: 9) provides us with an account that in 1511 the Portuguese captured Malacca and by the leading of captain Afonso d'Albuquerque's Portuguese expedition comes up to the north coast Sumatra, to be precise, landed at Pedir and Pasai. Port city is a place of lodging and transit of two maritime lanes covering the west coast and east coast Sumatra. He goes on to say that, previously through the west coast of Sumatra there were recorded seven locations visited by the Portuguese, namely Pedir, Pansem, Aceh, Kampar, Indragiri, Minangkabau, and Aru.²⁹ In Pedir and Pasai Initially their group was well received, but eventually the Muslims captured twenty of his sailors. Then in July 1511 Afonso d'Albuquerque came to Malacca through the east coast of Sumatra

and in the following August to the city he has mastered, as well as a start European power in India.

Despite of trade activities, the Portuguese had introduced some musical instruments that later on to be included in the genre of traditional *gamat* with 2 violins, 2 flutes, 1 tom-tom drum, 1 drum, and 1 *castagnet* or 1 tambourine. This fact has proven to us that since the early of the 16th century there were native musicians of *gamat* appeared and mixed with some European music players including how to dress up in the performances. They no longer wear suits and tie as seen in the illustration above. It is by then that it can be stated out that *gamat* is one of the oldest genres of popular local music cultures in Indonesia other than *keroncong* and popular Malay songs.

Normally, the musical instrument serves as an affirmation of rhythmic accentuation in musical form of dance accompaniment or other forms of instrumental music. It is also possible that *gamat* performances as the forerunner of the appearance of the accompanying music for the social dance. This dance developed among the urban community by the people of Nias immigrants in Padang City. Observed from various musical instruments which were utilized in the accompanying music for the social dance, it can be assumed as the beginning of the form of *gamat* existence which until now is steadily growing in the community natives and Nias on the coast of the city of Padang.

It is known that the beginning of the music accompanying a form of the social dance that is might derived from music accompaniment characterized by March rhythms, which consists of several musical instruments including: drums, sets drums, cymbals, violins, and wind instruments. However, in the near future it has been a newly added musical instrument so-called an accordion. Music repertoires thus can be widened to the many forms of melodic, harmonic, and rhythm patterns for Western songs as well.

Then afterward it is followed by the appearance of a song entitled *Kaparinyo* which functions as a musical accompaniment also to the social dances by the community of Bandar in the city of Padang which is held in pairs between female and male dancers adapted to Islamic law and custom of Minangkabau. It is undeniable that the role of the community is quite large in developing the social dance in Bandar Kota Padang. They took an active part in adapting the dance to their traditional dance of the *Kaparinyo* which is performed by the musicians and dancers from the city.

Subsequent developments are also supported by the number European women in the city of Padang during the colonial period participated in those social dances. Especially during various events and official celebrations, then over time the dance turned into a pair social dance between men and women. Further elaboration of this information can be found in Martarosa and Ganap who have analyzed this genre from music documents of the 60s that then was reproduced by Tanama Record of Padang in the 90s.

It is known that the song of *Kaparinyo* is one of the opening songs when every *gamat* performance will be started. It has become a culture of *gamat* performances in the community on the coast of West Sumatra. Navis told us that that the term *Kaparinyo* comes from a word of *Caprecciol* or *Capreccio* that means agile or playful. Agusli Taher (2006: 5) has another account that melody of *Kaparinyo* is very similar to the rhythm or rhythm pattern of the Spanish, especially that of *Kaparinyo Pulau Batu*, even the melody

of the song it is very similar to the song *Katakam-Takam*, a Filipino folk song of the Philippines.

Dondang Sayang, on the other hand, was of Malay song of reciprocal singing rhymes that are never forgotten by the people of Malacca. *Dondang Sayang* is the music of pride for the people of Malacca who always presented at any events as ceremonial customs of the people, including in introducing Malacca as a historic port city to the people who come to have a visit. As well as the dance of the *lambak* that also be presented, these two types of music have the relationship of very strong tied in the sense that this type of music cannot be separated, as usually that forms of Malay music rhythms that are always presented in characterized by style and dance of Malaccan.

Conclusion

It can be concluded interestingly, that the phenomena of *gamat* is that of the internationalization of local popular music that took place in the early 16th century and which paralleled similar developments in the music of early *keroncong* and that of Malay songs, which was also beginning to extend its definition of and its attention to popular music beyond the traditional orbit of Western European music. An extraordinarily diverse range of musics originating in multiple international contexts was becoming available and being marketed as “world music,” an ethnomusicological construct that basically referred to everything that could not be identified as “Western” music but *gamat* as hybridity of local popular music genre with the elements of Western musical instruments. A related construction, “world beat,” referred to a subset of world music that included styles intended for urban dance floors like that one of Madam Balance dance of Minangkabau. Since the single most important element of dance music is rhythm, it is no accident that most world beat musics—*gambus*, *dondang sayang*, *mak inang*, *ghazal*, etc. to name a few—emerged from Sumatran and Malay as well as its diaspora, where percussion instruments have become the most consistently and successfully cultivated over time. Hybridity of *gamat* as we already discussed, contains a mixture of Portuguese musical instruments with that of local popular music culture that fitted in as an appropriate of the music tradition for the local people. It is in fact that the newly hybridity was appropriate and has been accepted by the local community of Minangkabau of Sumatra. It was then formed by the people of Minangkabau as part of their own habits, customs, or knowledge, as it is well influenced by natural elements as it processes, grows, and develops as the art of music. The formation and the form of this art of music created by the community have approved the theory that serves as a symbol of pride and will always characterizes a specific area but as to its diaspora all over the world as well.

Associated with the development of community culture of Minangkabau which is part of the Malay Archipelago, it is very possible for the mutual influences that occur between one cultural area and another. Although there are doubts by some cultural observers who might in doubt about the existence of the Minangkabau people's cultural linkages or its relationship with *Serumpun* Malay, as it is viewed from another perspective, i.e., the genre of Malay music in a socio-cultural perspective, *gamat* will always be related to the formation and of processed culture that has long been managed by the people of Minangkabau in the past.

Bibliography

1. Acheraïou, Amar. 2011. *Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
2. Amal, M. Adnan. 2010. *Portugis dan Spanyol di Maluku*. Jakarta: Published by the Komunitas Bambu in cooperation with Ternate Local Government.
3. Aparicio, Frances R., Jáquez, Cándida F., and Cepeda, María Elena (Eds.). 2003. *Musical Migrations Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in Latin/o America*. Volume 1. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
4. Brah, Avtar and Coombes, Annie E. 2000. *Hybridity and its Discontents Politics, science, culture*. New York, NY: Routledge.
5. Creswell, John W. 2014. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London, UK: SAGE Publication Ltd.
6. Ganap and Martarosa. 2016. *Penelitian Dosen Sekolah Pascasarjana Universitas Gadjah Mada*. Yogyakarta: PSPSR Sekolah Pascasarjana Universitas Gadjah Mada.
7. Garraghan, Gilbert J. 1957. *A Guide to Historical Method*. New York, NY: Forhman University Press.
8. Kraidy, Marwan M. 2005. *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
9. Kuortti, Joel and Nyman, Jopi. 2007. *Reconstructing Hybridity Post-Colonial Studies in Transition*. New York, NY: Rodopi Press.
10. Loeb, Edwin M. 2013. *Sumatra dan Masyarakatnya*. Yogyakarta: Ombak Publisher.
11. Navis. A.A. 1982. “Seni Minangkabau Tradisional: Sumbangan Budaya dalam Pembangunan Nasional”. Dalam *Jurnal Analisis Kebudayaan*. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
12. Prabhu, Anjali. 2007. *Hybridity: limits, transformations, prospects*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
13. Taher, Agusli. 2016. *Perjalanan Panjang Musik Minang Modern*. Cirebon: LovRinz Publishing. Usop, Ahmad. 2000. “Dondang Sayang, Seni Tradisi Malaka dalam Media dan Seni Warisan Melayu Serumpun”, dalam *Gendang Nusantara*. Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Pengkajian Media Universitas Malaya.
14. Watanabe, Ruth. 1967. *Introduction to Music Research*. New Jersey, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Inc.
15. Werner, Andrew Timothy. 2017. *Hegel's Speculative Method*. A dissertation submitted to The Faculty of the Division of the Humanities in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Department of Philosophy. The University of Chicago.
16. Yanow, Dvora and Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine. [Eds.] 2006. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe.