



SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: A MINORITY LOCAL CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the social meaning of Tongtek artistic practices and identify factors contributing to the normalization of sexual violence against female artists. The research design uses qualitative research with snowball sampling techniques. Informants in this study consist of: 1) art connoisseurs (users); 2) cultural organizers; 3) female artists in Tongtek art. The results of the study indicate that Tongtek artistic practices are local traditions and cultures that have adapted to contemporary cultural conditions. Although they have historical and aesthetic value, these practices also harbor complex problems, especially related to gender and power relations. Factors contributing to the normalization of sexual violence against female artists in this context include: 1) the still-strong patriarchal cultural construction; 2) the unequal power relations between female artists and art connoisseurs; 3) the lack of regulation and legal protection for female artists; and 4) the internalization of cultural norms that consider sexual violence as normal in certain contexts. However, in reality, this phenomenon has not been able to be analyzed and explained so that it becomes one of the local cultures that contributes to the development of culture in modern society. It is hoped that the research findings will provide critical reflection for stakeholders on preserving local culture without compromising the rights and dignity of female artists. Thus, Tongtek art is viewed not only as a cultural heritage but also as a medium for promoting social justice and gender equality in society.

Keywords: local culture; sexual violence; tongtek art; tradition

INTRODUCTION

Tongtek is a traditional art form that is developing in the northern Pati area, Central Java. This art uses bamboo musical instruments that are played together with dangdut koplo music. In its development, Tongtek not only became part of village celebration activities such as carnivals and earth alms, but also began to be integrated into other people's celebrations. As time goes by, Tongtek's artistic performance increasingly resembles a drumband equipped with entertainment elements, including female dancers who dress up attractively and dance along the way according to the rhythm of the song played.

However, the new phenomenon that accompanies this art is attracting attention. Women who are part of the art of Tongtek often receive inappropriate treatment from the audience, including actions that lead to sexual violence. For example, the act of money saweran is a tradition of giving gifts to entertainers that is often accompanied by physical abuse, such as pinching or touching inappropriately. Although these acts seem to be part of the culture, they raise profound questions about society's understanding of sexual violence and how female artists in Tongtek's art perceive it.

The implementation of Tongtek art basically aims to preserve local culture. However, there is a shift in values in practice, where harassment of women artists is considered normal, pointing to a fundamental problem. It is still unclear whether this is due to a lack of public literacy about sexual violence or a normative acceptance of the act among perpetrators and art connoisseurs. Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply whether this phenomenon is a form of covert sexual violence, as well as how the understanding related to sexual violence among the people who connoisseur of Tongtek art. The research aims to examine aspects of local culture in the context of minority groups of Tongtek art connoisseurs, particularly related to the treatment of women artists as part of the local creative economy. This research is expected to provide a better understanding of the social and cultural dynamics surrounding Tongtek art and uncover the problems of sexual violence that arise in this context.

Furthermore, research on sexual violence in cultural contexts also shows similar phenomena in various parts of the world. For example, in China, studies have found that the majority of victims of sexual violence are women and children, with risk factors related to patriarchal structures and cultural values that emphasize women's chastity, as well as a lack of support for victims (Chan, 2009). Other research shows that rural communities often have low knowledge and attitudes regarding acceptance of sexual violence, especially among women, which is influenced by age, marital status, and education level (Abeid et al., 2015). In the context of the music industry, deep-rooted sexism and misogyny, as well as a lack of regulation, contribute to gender inequality and sexual harassment. Labor competition, patriarchal industrial culture, and gender-based power relations contribute to the normalization of sexual harassment among arts workers (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017; McCarry et al., 2023). Public discourse on sexual violence scandals is also increasingly prominent with the role of celebrities, who play an important role in revealing the social dynamics related to sexual violence in the entertainment industry (Adolph, 2016).

This research aims to fill the knowledge gap about the relationship between traditional Tongtek art and sexual violence against women. The novelty of this research lies in an analysis that combines local art with the issue of sexual harassment, which has not been widely discussed in academic studies. This research can contribute to understanding the social and cultural dynamics behind public acceptance of sexual violence in art. In addition, the results of the research can trigger efforts to formulate policies to protect women artists and encourage awareness about the importance of maintaining ethics in preserving local culture.

METHOD

This study uses an ethnographic study approach with snowball sampling techniques. This technique was chosen because it allowed the researcher to identify the relevant informant gradually through recommendations from the initial informant. Thus, information can be collected in-depth from social networks that are related to the phenomenon being studied, namely Tongtek culture and its interaction with the issue of sexual violence against female artists. The informants in this study consisted of three key groups, namely: 1) Art connoisseurs (users), namely individuals or groups who actively follow and enjoy the art of Tongtek. They are instrumental in providing perspectives on behaviours and attitudes that emerge in the context of cultural celebrations; 2) Cultural organizers, namely those responsible for designing and organizing Tongtek art events. They provide insight into how events are organized, as well as the social dynamics that occur during the celebration; 3) Female artists in the art of Tongtek, who are directly involved in performances and are often subjected to sexual harassment. Their perspective is important to understand personal experiences regarding the treatment received during the performance.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with selected informants. Each interview focused on the informant's personal experiences, perceptions, and interactions related to the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the context of Tongtek culture. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, providing the freedom for informants to explore their experiences in depth, while retaining a focus on issues relevant to the research. The results of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. This technique aims to identify patterns, themes, and categories that emerge from qualitative data. The analysis was carried out iteratively, paying attention to the social and cultural context surrounding Tongtek's art practice, as well as how the community understands and responds to the issue of sexual violence. With this approach, the research is expected to be able to dig deep into the hidden social meaning behind Tongtek's art practices, as well as identify the factors that contribute to the normalization of sexual violence against women artists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research highlights the role of local culture in shaping and developing regional art, particularly through the tradition of "Tongtek," a traditional bamboo-based music performance that flourished in Pati, Central Java. The findings of the study show that Tongtek has two main functions in the context of past cultures, namely as a means of communication between residents and as a social media to maintain community cohesion. In the past, the limitations of communication technology made the sound of Tongtek an important means of conveying messages and building social interactions. However, with the development of the times and the emergence of modern communication technology, the role of Tongtek as a communication tool began to be replaced by advanced tools. Its traditional function has also undergone a transformation, more directed towards the preservation of culture and entertainment. On the other hand, the adaptation of traditional Tongtek art in the context of modern art actually presents new challenges, especially related to gender exploitation. In some cases, female performances are often used to show off certain body parts, which then trigger acts of sexual harassment from male audiences.

The transformation of the Tongtek function from a means of communication to a modern performing arts shows the dynamics between cultural preservation and adaptation to the development of the times. On the one hand, innovation in traditional arts helps to maintain cultural sustainability and enrich the diversity of local arts. But on the other hand, gender exploitation in the Tongtek performance shows the degradation of cultural values that lead to harassment of women. This condition becomes a dilemma for local communities and artists, since on the one hand, they want to preserve the local culture, but on the other hand, they have to face the ethical problems that arise from the representation of women in the performing arts. This emphasizes the importance of regulation and supervision in the implementation of traditional art performances, to keep the essence of culture from being tainted by inappropriate commercial interests or sexuality.

Informant 1 (Art Connoisseur):

"As a spectator, I really enjoy Tongtek as part of the region's cultural heritage. However, I feel like something has changed now, especially in the way this show is presented. It used to be simpler and full of traditional values, but now sometimes there are parts that feel inappropriate, especially the way some women are shown on stage."

Informant 2 (Cultural Organizer):

"We strive to preserve Tongtek as part of the cultural tradition, and it is also important to attract the interest of the younger generation. However, we face challenges in maintaining a

balance between innovation and maintaining its original values. We are aware of concerns about the exploitation of women in some of the performances, and that is a serious concern for us in the organisation of the event."

Informant 3 (Female Artist in Tongtek Art):

"As a woman directly involved in Tongtek's performances, I often feel pressured by the way I and other women are portrayed. There are expectations from the organizers or the audience that make us feel uncomfortable, as if we are being noticed more for our performance than our musical ability. We want to continue to work without feeling exploited."

The quotes reflect the different perspectives of each informant regarding how Tongtek is perceived and how gender issues and sexual harassment are part of the discussion on the preservation and modernization of the arts. Culture that has taken root and is ingrained in all joints of society, especially in Central Java, is able to have a community between art lovers and art connoisseurs in particular, but over time the level of socio-cultural development of the people in Indonesia with the entry of the digitalization era, makes every culture that annuls modern culture increasingly erode the local culture with its various ornaments. This is due to the growing level of public knowledge and requires participation from various sectors. The Education Sector plays an important role in this case being able to educate the public that the emergence of the digitalization era is not something that needs to be feared by art lovers but is enough to be accepted with a moderate mindset so that traditional arts are able to progress and develop together.

Tongtek is a traditional art that not only has aesthetic value, but also holds a long history in people's lives. With sustainable preservation efforts, this art is expected to remain sustainable and become part of Indonesia's cultural heritage that can be enjoyed by future generations. Tongtek art is one of the cultural heritage that reflects the creativity and traditional values of Indonesian society. Despite facing challenges in the modern era, with various innovations and preservation efforts, Tongtek can still survive and become an important part of the nation's cultural identity. Therefore, cooperation between the government, the art community, and the wider community is needed so that this art remains sustainable and can be passed on to future generations.

The novelty in Tongtek's art lies not only in the modification of musical instruments and playing techniques, but also in the use of digital technology, integration with modern music, and its role in the creative industry and tourism. With this innovation, Tongtek not only survives as a traditional art, but also thrives as a relevant form of cultural expression in the modern era. Along with the times, Tongtek art has undergone various innovations to remain relevant and in demand by the public, especially the younger generation. The novelty or novelty in Tongtek art can be seen from several aspects. In addition to using traditional bamboo kentongan, some art groups have begun to combine Tongtek with modern musical instruments such as drums, guitars, or keyboards to create a more contemporary feel.

Artists are now developing new playing techniques, such as the combination of more complex rhythmic strokes or the use of additional sound effects to create richer harmonies. The typical rhythm of Tongtek began to be combined with popular or traditional songs that were rearranged to make it more interesting. With various innovations made, Tongtek art not only survives as a cultural heritage, but also develops into a more dynamic and relevant performing arts in the modern era. Modification of musical instruments, collaborations with other music genres, and the use of digital technology have opened up new opportunities for Tongtek to reach a wider

audience, including the younger generation and the international community.

In addition, Tongtek's role in the tourism, education, and creative industries sectors further strengthens its position as part of the region's cultural identity. With workshops, festivals, and competitions, Tongtek is now not only a traditional art, but also a medium of expression, innovation, and creativity for the community. For this innovation to continue to develop, support from various parties, including the government, the arts community, and the world of education, is needed to ensure that Tongtek is preserved and can be passed on to future generations. With an adaptive and creative approach, Tongtek's art has great potential to continue to develop as a cultural asset that is not only of historical value, but also has global appeal. With various innovations made, Tongtek's art is now not just a local cultural heritage, but has undergone a transformation into an art that is more dynamic, adaptive, and relevant to the times. Various modifications in musical instruments, exploration of playing techniques, and integration with modern music make Tongtek more attractive to the younger generation.

In addition, the use of digital technology in the preservation of Tongtek such as audio-visual recordings, social media, and Tongtek-based music applications helps to expand the reach and increase appreciation for this art. The existence of Tongtek in cultural festivals, tourism attractions, and traditional art competitions also proves that this art can be part of the creative industry with economic value. In the context of education, Tongtek has also begun to be used as an educational medium that teaches cultural values and local wisdom to the younger generation. With training in schools and art workshops, Tongtek can be a means for children and adolescents to express their creativity, as well as build a sense of pride in the local culture.

However, despite positive development, Tongtek still faces several challenges, such as the lack of player regeneration, lack of support from the government, and competition with more popular modern music. Therefore, collaboration is needed between the art community, academia, government, and the community in developing a sustainable Tongtek preservation strategy. As a final conclusion, the novelty in Tongtek art proves that traditional art can continue to exist and develop in the modern era if given the right attention and innovation. By retaining its traditional elements while adopting new and relevant elements, Tongtek not only becomes a sustainable cultural heritage, but also becomes part of Indonesia's contemporary art identity that is able to compete at the global level.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, it is shown that the art practice of Tongtek, which is an integral part of local traditions and culture, has experienced affiliation with contemporary culture. However, this adaptation also has a negative impact in the form of normalization of sexual violence, which is a consequence of changing cultural values. Although this phenomenon has been identified, until now there have been no effective efforts to comprehensively describe and explain the problem. As a result, Tongtek art has not been able to make a significant contribution to the development of a healthy and ethical culture in modern society.

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