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Editorial

The Interplay of Humans, AI and Creativity:

Shaping the Future of Art & Design

Bussakorn Binson* Executive Director

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has reverberated through the spheres of art and design, instigating a paradigm shift. The intersection of human creativity and AI has been a contentious subject, with some viewing AI as a threat to creativity, while others see it as an enabler of new creative frontiers.

Regarding Automation and Freedom, AI's capability can automate routine tasks like image editing, data visualization, and layout design could be perceived as a positive stride. It liberates artists and designers to devote their energies to the more imaginative aspects of their work. In terms of augmented creativity, AI can serve as a creative catalyst, generating unique ideas and facilitating the exploration of uncharted design territories. For instance, AI-driven software can aid in creating music, penning poetry, or crafting visual art from recognized patterns.

AI can co-create opportunities as a creative collaborator for artists and designers, providing insights, alternative viewpoints, and suggestions drawn from extensive data. It can offer pertinent recommendations and aid in decision-making.

In terms of Job Impact, the potential of AI to automate could trigger apprehensions about job loss in the creative sectors. Conversely, some argue that AI could usher in new job opportunities and transform existing roles rather than entirely supplanting artists and designers. Moreover, with the rise of AI-generated content, the issues surrounding plagiarism, determining originality and authorship can become a complex challenge

It's crucial to remember that AI, at its core, is a human-created tool heavily reliant on the

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data it's trained on. The onus is on humans to employ AI ethically and conscientiously within the realms of art and design. The influence of AI on these fields is a multifaceted and ongoing discourse requiring a balanced viewpoint and constant scrutiny of potentialities.

The incorporation of AI in the creative process doesn't inherently diminish human creativity. Though AI can assist in idea generation and artistic content production, it remains a tool contingent on human direction and programming. Related to amplification and Collaboration, AI can augment human creativity by offering insights, alternative viewpoints, and suggestions. It can help artists and designers push their creative boundaries. Also the efficiency and time saving, AI can handle routines and time-consuming tasks, freeing up more time for artists and designers to concentrate on the creative aspects of their work. This can boost productivity and allow for more artistic exploration. AI can analyze vast data sets and patterns, providing inspiration and new directions for creative minds. It can help uncover novel ideas and trends that might not have been considered.

Human creativity is deeply tied to personal experiences, emotions, and subjective interpretations. While AI can generate content based on learned patterns, it often lacks the unique human perspective and emotional depth that artists infuse into their work.

Human creativity is key in embedding personal expression, meaning, and narrative into artwork that connects with audiences on an emotional level. AI's presence in the creative process can foster new forms of artistic expression and innovative methodologies. It challenges artists and designers to adapt, evolve, and venture into new artistic possibilities, pushing beyond the confines of traditional creativity.

Art and design often encapsulate human emotions and experiences. While AI can replicate certain artistic styles or humanoid creations, it might lack the emotional depth and subjective interpretation that stem from human artists' personal experiences.

It's fundamental to acknowledge that the integration of humans and AI in the creative process is not mutually exclusive. While AI provides new tools and capabilities, it doesn't negate the unique attributes and capabilities inherent in human creativity. The secret lies in leveraging AI as a tool that can enhance and complement human creativity, instead of perceiving it as a competitor to artistic expression.

In the dynamic landscape of art and design, the interplay between humans, AI, and creativity is undeniably shaping the future. As technology continues to advance at an unprecedented pace, AI has emerged as a powerful tool, augmenting human capabilities and revolutionizing traditional artistic processes. By seamlessly integrating human ingenuity with the computational prowess of AI algorithms, new frontiers are being explored, breaking conventional boundaries and opening up a world of endless possibilities. While AI contributes efficiency, speed, and data-driven insights, it is the human touch, imagination, and emotional depth that infuse art and design with a distinct essence. Together, humans and AI forge a symbiotic relationship, encouraging collaboration, innovation, and the exploration of uncharted artistic territories, ultimately transforming the way we perceive, create, and experience art and design in the future.

Cityscape Under the Gaze of Migrant Women:

The Reimagination of Urban World in Vietnamese Independent Films

Cam Giang Hoang* (Vietnam)

Abstract

In Vietnam, since the Reform era (1986) and the government's firm urbanization policy, replacing the pre-1986 discourse of the countryside as the Garden of Eden, a myth of the city as a place of endless pleasure has been gradually built up in mass media. As a result, the urban spectacle has become the ideal symbol of the speed of development, national strength, and masculinity in state-sponsored and commercial movies/dramas. Meanwhile, through the 'slow cinema,' independent female directors such as Siu Pham, Nguyen Hoang Diep, Bui Kim Quy, Pham Hoang Minh Thy, and Pham Nhue Giang have questioned the 'urban fantasy' from the standpoint of those who are twice marginalized in the city space: the poor female immigrants. In films from these directors, women suffer slow violence from polluted, substandard living environments and endure gender prejudice and abuse in cities. From that, those films present a new strategy of social justice in contemporary Vietnamese urban areas: ecological justice is associated with gender equity and visual equity.

Keywords: *Cityscapes, Female Immigrants, Ecojustice, Gender Equity, Visual Equity, Heterotopia, Vietnamese Independent Cinema*

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Introduction

In 2021, the independent director Le Bao released his film *Vị* (*Taste*) as the Covid pandemic swept over Vietnam, devastating the nation's economic and cultural hubs - the most badly afflicted of which was Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), which served as the film's primary backdrop. (Van, 2021) The film was subjected to harsh censorship: it was not allowed to be screened domestically and was not permitted to participate in international film festivals. Its online teasers and trailers also sparked heated discussions among the Vietnamese population. Most domestic viewers notably remarked that the film (in both its content and images) perverted the image of Saigon's glamorous, busy urban area and Vietnam's landscape. They also opined that there were many images and details that "demeaned the dignity of Vietnamese women," "violated Vietnamese fine customs and traditions" (Pham, 2021), and that the film was a "miscellaneous product without a cultural root" (Nguyen, 2021).

In Vietnam, in the last ten years, such fierce debates have often erupted in response to independent art films set in big cities - considered symbols of national strength - such as Hanoi and Saigon, as evidenced in the critical and popular responses to films such as *Bi, đừng sợ* / *Bi, Do not be afraid* (Phan Dang Di, 2010), *Đập cánh giữa không trung* / *Flapping in the middle of nowhere* (Nguyen Hoang Diep, 2014), *Ròm* / *Rom* (Tran Dung Thanh Huy, 2019), and *Vị* / *Taste* (Le Bao, 2021). The conflict is between idealized visions of urban beauty and the allure of the city as a "dreamland," as well as between the demonstration of the process of Vietnam's "industrialization, modernization, and urbanization" after *Đổi Mới* (Renovation period) in TV series, commercial films, and state-sponsored films on the one hand; and on the other hand, demolished, seedy, stuffy, and gloomy scenes that conjure up images of the apocalypse in independent films. The audience is hugely divided and perplexed by such divisions. Independent films make up only 4% of the total number of films released annually in Vietnam and reach only a tiny percentage of viewers; these films are nevertheless impactful insofar as they offer a challenge to narratives of modernization and industrial progress.¹

Vietnam's urbanization is accelerating swiftly in the twenty-first century. The rate of urbanization was 40% by 2020, and according to "The Resolution of the 13th Party Congress, the intended rate of urbanization has been set to 45% by 2025 and about 50% by 2030" (Ministry of Construction, 2021). Vietnam has recently been heavily influenced by the flow of urban romantic films from China and Korea. They have helped reinforce the perception that rural youth can, like the characters in the films, successfully establish their careers in urban areas (this is mainly in office and workplace romantic films, frequently regarded as being "modern"). These entertainment products accentuate and cherish the idea of a flawless cityscape with workplace romances, peaceful and lush parks, lakes, university campuses, etc. Urban life (especially in large cities like Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, and Hue) is "beautified" through the mass media and popular arts, creating an image of the city as a place of dreams desired by people in rural areas. This strengthens the discourse of a "city dream" and "city lights" under new circumstances.

Vietnam's national cinema is separated into three parallel tendencies due to the country's distinctive development process: state-sponsored, commercial, and independent films. Since 1986, a "new myth about the city" has been subtly woven into commercial films, television series, and state-sponsored films, along with the State's aggressive urbanization

strategy. The city has become the ideal symbol of growth, prosperity, and governmental power. In addition, it serves as a romantic metaphor for young people's high commitment and masculinity as they pursue successful careers. Given that Confucianism heavily influences the nation, Vietnamese films and television series frequently depict the city as having traits like "positivity" and "masculinity" – the glorification of successful men, male heads of family, and male business owners is common. This is in addition to the city becoming a symbol of individual freedom, development, and happiness like other nations. Particularly in state-sponsored films like *Em bé Hà Nội / Girl from Hanoi* (1974), *Truyện cổ tích cho tuổi mười bảy / Fairy tale for 17-year-olds* (1988), and *Vị đắng tình yêu / The bitter taste of love* (1990), *Giải phóng Sài Gòn / Saigon's liberation* (2005), the city is idealized as the embodiment of the nation's prosperity and identity. In the commercial films, the city assumes the role of the nation's dreamer and conduit for its assimilation into the process of globalization (for example, see: *Cho anh gần em thêm chút nữa / Diary of the Fireflies*; *Sài Gòn anh yêu em / Saigon, I love you*; *Sài Gòn trong cơn mưa / Saigon in the rain*; etc.) Meanwhile, independent films directed by women – a minority of the minority – challenge the preconceived notions about the city in state-sponsored and commercial productions. Independent female directors like Siu Pham, Nguyen Hoang Diep, Bui Kim Quy, Pham Hoang Minh Thy, and Pham Nhue Giang illustrate the urban dream from the perspective of the people who are "peripheralized" and "marginalized" twice: the poor women or poor women migrating from rural to urban areas.² For those possessing more than one marginalized identity like these characters, Kimberle Crenshaw's concept of *intersectionality* provides a framework for understanding the intricacies of lived experiences and their consequences by considering the combined effects of intersecting identities (such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, caste, age, and nationality). (Crenshaw 1989) Crenshaw defines *intersectionality* as "a lens, a prism, for seeing how various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other (...) What is often missing is how some people are subject to all these and the experience is not just a sum of its parts." (Quoted from Steinmetz, 2020)

Besides, the mentioned female directors (along with several independent male directors who were particularly interested in the status of urban minorities) utilize the aesthetics of slow and everyday cinema. Through an intersectional approach to their films, combining the concepts of "heterotopia spaces" by Foucault, the "distribution of places" and "judgment of taste" by Bourdieu, and the "subject of desire" by Butler, we want to challenge discourses of eco-ambiguity and implicit gender stereotypes subtly present in films that have romanticized and idealized consumerism and urban life since the 1990s. The independent films present a new social justice strategy in contemporary Vietnam's urban areas where ecological justice is associated with gender and visual justice. This bold association is based on the unusual experience of "becoming a woman" in the urban space of female immigrants, through the tension between utopia and heterotopia and the aesthetic (and cultural, social, and political) inquiring of and the tug-of-war between the female body's narratives and cityscapes. (Beauvoir, 2011:283) (Mannheim, 1991)

"Becoming a Woman" in Heterotopias: The Unwanted Estrangement³

The stereotypical images of attractive, vivacious, self-assured, well-dressed, educated girls working in opulent offices in harmony with the utopian urban landscapes are featured in commercial films or TV series. In contrast, in independent films, we tend to encounter women who have worked themselves to exhaustion in dystopian or heterotopia spaces.

Framed by an unabashed documentary camera lens and not visually polished or ‘pretty,’ these women appear to be on an arduous journey to adjust to the city environment.

For instance, we can observe how the urban landscape oppresses migrant laborers’ eyesight and actions in the opening scene of *Lạc lối / Aimless* (Pham Nhue Giang, 2013). Tham, a rural wife whose husband has traveled to Hanoi to seek a job, first emerges through the sight of spinning bicycle wheels on the street rather than through her face. Her worn-out, ragged bike matches her worn cycling shoes, clothes, and sandals. The camera is positioned at the level of the wheels, generating a long view of a broad, flat frame that makes the movements appear even slower and heavier. It is as if, despite her pedaling, the cyclist is immobile, as she is constantly being passed by a line of cars and motorcycles traveling at breakneck speed. All of the character’s possessions, such as her briefcase, her hat, and rattan or bamboo frame, not only indicate that she is from an impoverished and forgotten village. They also imply that those rudimentary items will be the sole resources with which she will have to “fight” on unequal terms with contemporary, industrial, and urban life.

For her part, Huyen in *Flapping in the Middle of Nowhere* (hereafter referred to as *Flapping* for short) first appears lying in a small bedroom along a railroad track near a city. Huyen is awakened by the loud, dry sound of the train rumbling through the rain at night. Her face is faintly lighted, but what stands out is the train’s shadow as it passes through the door’s opening. Its rhythm causes the character to be unintentionally drawn into it as each piece of shadow glides across Huyen’s face, acting as a warning and a tingling worry that is both there and invisible. Huyen then turns to gaze at her nipples, a first indication that she is pregnant. Although the urban backdrop in this scene is less clear than in *Aimless*, it nevertheless exerts a subtle strain on the character’s body and existence, mainly through the sound of the passing train. It is a harsh, haughty sound belonging to a particularly violent soundscape; it represents modernity, a quickening of time, industry, urban mechanics, rationality, “progress,” and constant movement. The fetus is growing in her belly, and she has yet to know how to deal with it; as the days pass, Huyen is warned of the delayed and trapped status of herself and her body - as a poor student migrating from the rural countryside to the city.

Female characters in independent films are often represented visually as urban “parasites” who have been engulfed, swallowed up, and even rendered invisible by their urban surroundings and the crushing pace of city life. Like the insect that Gregor Samsa becomes in Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*, the old woman in *Căn phòng của mẹ / Homostratus* (Siu Pham, 2013) crawls on the floor of a filthy, musty room before choking on the chocolate that her son brings home as a “present from the city” after he has endured a hard day’s work. In the heart of Hanoi’s oppressively hot summer, the hair-washing girl in *Bi, Do Not Be Afraid*, struggles to achieve her goals while serving men in a dimly lit basement room of an ancient apartment building. The female character in *Cha và con và... / Big Father, Small Father, and other stories* (Phan Dang Di, 2015) works in an old metal factory, eats a light lunch in a rush, and dwells beside the Saigon River in a decrepit wooden-plank slum.

It can be seen that the lives of these migratory female workers are constantly in conflict with the places they were never a part of and which they neither own nor control but must instead withstand. The physical places in which these women find themselves often

feature enormous, industrial, opulent constructions that tower over their gaze, separating their bodies from the vast, structured mass of “urban architecture.” These include streets, buildings, construction sites, factories, shops, stores, and landowners’ private homes. Their primary vocations are street vendors, barbershop employees, and maids; their routine activities, drifting and wandering through the never-ending traffic; their gaze and motions, wearied. Accordingly, in many long shots, the structure of these films also becomes sequences of images without a central identifying element; the shots gradually blend to the point of indistinguishability, in which music is cut, leaving only the streets’ sounds that create a detached effect. After a while, as the scenes repeat themselves to demonstrate the character’s weariness and exhaustion, the audience likewise starts to get disoriented amid a confusing array of unfamiliar landmarks. In addition to making the audience feel the sensations and take on the perspectives of the female outsider to the modern urban environment, these scenes, with their close focalization on drifting characters and their use of jarring and discomfoting filming techniques, also serve as a manifesto against the “romanticized” or “sensationalized” approaches used in mainstream romantic films and action movies.

This kind of drifting is also very different from the wandering action of the “*kẻ lãng tử giang hồ*” (“globetrotter” - primarily men or women pretending to be men) in medieval swordplay or the artists and elite intellectuals in Vietnamese romantic poetry (1930-1945). Wandering, then, is a sign of romance, individualism, and a noble separation from the mundane life.⁴ Meanwhile, the drift of Tham (a scrap dealer in *Aimless*), Huyen (a poor student in *Flapping*), Mien (a maid in *Memoryland*), evokes the sense of insecure floating associated with a lack of agency. They risk giving their whole body and being to the city’s vast, unfamiliar, dangerous space to make a living without knowing the destination or outcome. A state of drift means no awareness, coordination, or mastery of one’s relationship with space: not knowing the true destination also means being vague, insecure, and not grasping their existence. They cannot establish a relatively solid social relationship (according to a residence, village, or clan as in rural areas). The concept of “urban foam,” or even heavier, “urban garbage” (as the alienated protagonist in Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* calls it) - is associated with impurity and the need for cleaning. In these Vietnamese indie movies, it is also often associated with torrential rains pouring down the streets, as if to wash away its “plankton,” like the heavy rain at the beginning of the movie *Flapping* or the end of the movie *Aimless* or the sad endless rains in *Miền kỷ ức / Memoryland* (Bui Kim Quy, 2021).⁵ The rain is no longer a symbol of city romance, as it is in commercial movies (*Sweet 20, Win my baby back, Once upon a rain, etc.*). Instead, the rain calls attention to urban squalor and the desire to return to a state of imagined cleanliness and purity.

Commercial films frequently feature the presence of prominent, open public places that are spacious and filled with lush trees (such as parks, squares, airports, and cafes) - where anybody from any class can relax and take in the city’s modern, civilized surroundings. Meanwhile, those areas are hardly present in indie films. Instead, through the stories of female immigrants, odd, unsettling, or distant “heterotopias – such as landfills, cemeteries, bars, brothels, slums, and alleys – are highlighted and accentuated. “Heterotopia” is a concept elaborated by philosopher Michel Foucault to describe specific cultural, institutional, and discursive spaces that are somehow ‘other’: disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory, or transforming. (Foucault, 1967). Moc Mien is portrayed as wandering through a

cemetery in the entire film *Memoryland* as she searches for solitude and consolation from her deceased loved ones. The film's final scene shows her body cremated in the city (after she takes drugs to kill herself), having felt the unwelcome atmosphere in the urban environment. Van in *Big Father, Small Father, and Other Stories* works at a bar and is passed around among the city men eagerly staring at her body like a cheap, dazzling product. Mrs. Ba, Mrs. Ghi, and the poor neighborhood in *Rom* live in a "no tomorrow" state in a decaying apartment complex full of "residual mud and stagnant water," waiting to be relocated. These dispersed, marginal, unclassified areas are frequently connected to migrant working women who have little control over where they live or work in the city. In the language of Vietnam's urban management, such heterotopias (as well as street vendors who do business on sidewalks) are often viewed as undesirable elements of urban life that need to be removed and cleansed to achieve "sanitary standards" and the synchronization, regularity, and order of contemporary urban planning.⁶ Therefore, as a result of their status as low-income immigrants, the characters in the indie films discussed above exhibit a "spatial injustice" that is becoming increasingly evident as Vietnam's urbanization progresses rapidly and noticeably. Relegated to "unsanitary" heterotopic spaces, they themselves come to be associated with that which needs to be reorganized, cleansed, and done away with.

The profound contrast in experiencing many places at the same site, between the place they serve/work and the place of residence/rest, between images of utopia and dystopia, will instill in them the contrast between mind and body, as Amita Baviskar argues in "The social experience of heat: urban life in the Indian Anthropocene" (Baviskar, 2022). Their minds are forced to get used to the harshness of the places they live (dystopia) and where they work (utopia). However, their bodies cannot get used to that - evidenced by the fact that day after day, their bodies are constantly struggling to be unable to sleep in their squalid boarding house (in *Aimless, Flapping*). It is an existentially irrational and incredible experience - thus causing them to be disoriented, lost, and vulnerable, causing an "identity crisis," feelings of bitterness, failure, and even extremes and disorientation in behavior. They no longer know who they are, where they belong, or their present and future. They submit and "surrender" to the city when their health is exhausted; they no longer have capital, labor, property, faith, or hope (such as Tham in *Aimless*, Mien in *Memoryland*, Huyen in *Flapping*). Moreover, most importantly, their souls become "concrete" and inert or indulge in endless melancholia - like those "strange diseases" that appear after they enter the city.

The question is whether these female characters entirely accept the hostile alienation they passively experience in that mechanized environment. At times, the female immigrant characters in the films above (such as Huyen - *Flapping*, Tham - *Aimless*, Mien - *Memoryland*) desire to *immerse their (allegedly) defective bodies into the fullness of the men* and connect with them emotionally through the "body's story." For example, after her lover Hoang leaves, Huyen (*Flapping*) shares with her boyfriend Tung the exact words Hoang used to say to her to intensify the feeling of desire when they were close: "Your breasts are full of milk now." It is interesting to note that in this instance, to draw on the language of Butler, Huyen turns into a "subject of desire" when she absorbs the authoritative male voice and discourse from Hoang and uses it to converse with another authoritative masculinity-centered discourse (from Tung) (Butler, 1987). As for Tham, though she counsels Thuat in *Aimless* to avoid depending on others, she is living like a "parasite" off of her urban lover's fictitious affluence. The subject of desire "follows a narrative of want, illusion, and failure centered on brief

moments of recognition as a source of temporary salvation” in a world in which they are empowered only momentarily and then only by appropriating the agency of another (Butler 1987:10). The image of a ball floating on a lake’s surface in *Flapping*, a mess tin drifting on a flooded road (*Aimless*), or Mien’s ashes soaring in the painter’s rented room (*Memoryland*) strongly reflects the subject’s *evanescence, ambiguity, and “brief recognition.”*

It is evident that in the hopeless and depressing process of “adapting to the city landscape,” the female immigrants have received the reverse effect from that landscape, which causes them to become other versions of “women” struggling with gender issues and having serious doubts about themselves as well as the world at large. *Becoming a woman* in a world that is neither a utopia (as they initially imagined) nor a typical or familiar environment (such as their former hometowns) is a form of entrapment. On a deeper level, it is a trauma of gender identity in a bizarre, congested society that is cut off from both nostalgic memories of the past and optimistic visions of the future, and where female identity itself is heterotopic, never fully coming into being. The uneven distribution of gender power, visual injustice, and spatial/landscape injustice all exacerbate this pain.

Landscape: The Distribution of Gender Power and Visual Injustice

According to Pierre Bourdieu, who underlined this point in his book *Masculine Domination*, the “distribution of places” is another manifestation of the social order in which male dominance exists. “It is the gender division of labor, the extremely rigid distribution of advantageous activities for each gender, the distribution of its places, times, and means” (Bourdieu 2001:21)⁷

While in romance films, interiors and exteriors are easily navigated by rural Cinderellas in search of their Prince Charmings and an escape from their unfortunate fates (*Sweet 20*, *The Aroma of Affection*, etc.), the “love-like” spaces in many independent films are frivolous and temporary, offering no ontological cohesion. Due to this spatial arrangement, the low-income female immigrants who sell their labor to urban bosses are portrayed as passive objects in everyone else’s sight, especially the urban men. The minor housemaid in *Mây nhưng không mua* (*Live in cloud-cuckoo land*), for instance, is someone who is constantly scrutinized, monitored and ordered around. Huyen (the prostitute in *Flapping*) “takes a deep entrance” into Hoang’s (who pays her) house in the mountains for the first time - like stepping into a temple to worship a god. Hoang is not present; alone in the house, Huyen sees the skull-shaped music box, the surveillance camera, and other items. Hoang (the “god” of the temple) is both present and absent in that landscape; Huyen is small, fragile, and exposed as if Hoang’s eyes are following her everywhere (both literally and figuratively).

In addition, the male protagonists in these movies are frequently individuals who are drawn to the “remote” “countryside” setting, which is where the female immigrants were originally from. For instance, Thuat drives Tham to visit the romantic suburbs of *Aimless*. Hoang also takes Huyen to her village’s gate in *Flapping*, but she refuses to cross it and see her parents since she is humiliated and reclusive due to an unexpected pregnancy. Independent filmmakers have uncovered and probed the ecological contradiction here: These young rural girls cannot own or enjoy the pristine rural environment rightfully theirs. When urbanization reaches the countryside, the land cannot be maintained and is gradually purchased by corporations to build apartments, resorts, or companies’ headquarters

(as in 2030, *Flapping*, *Live in cloud-cuckoo land*). Because their hometown is becoming progressively impoverished, they must go to the city to make a livelihood. However, once there, they must live in unkempt, polluted environments. Institutions of social welfare (such as hospitals and schools) do not support them either when the majority of the impoverished employees from peripheral provinces become undocumented immigrants.⁸

The symbols of or associated with masculinity in independent cinema are frequently industry-oriented; they are enormous, rough, and awkward but also fixed, haughty, aggressive, and out of place with the surrounding scene: the night train that rattles past Huyen's house every day; the crane of the lamp maintenance workers swinging in the middle of the street; the water pipe shaped like a phallus lying ungainly at the center of the broad field (Flapping); the Bitexco building resembling an enormous phallus that is about to collapse (Homostratus); the old factory with heavy gray machines and engines engulfing the workers (Big father, Bi). At the same time, the male characters are also associated with the central landscapes of society and high-rise, macro views, such as the public entertainment venues (Aimless), opulent hotels, tall buildings, pricey villas (Homostratus, Live in cloud-cuckoo land), and the regal school (Flapping). Women and nature, such as the four worn-out women living in the cramped, filthy slums along the Saigon River, the pig and the rat running around the four walls (Taste), the underprivileged student living next to the railroad tracks, and a small fish stuck in a broken light bulb under the rain (Flapping), the perplexed maid in the suburban wedding dress shop and the expelled cockroach (Live in cloud-cuckoo land) - all are drifting towards the periphery, the lower floors, and the minor figures that stand silently on the outskirts of the city and the fringes of the projects, removed from the throbbing scenes of pleasure and enjoyment that function as sites of patriarchal order.

Ironically, only men – or, more specifically, urban, wealthy men – seem to be able to enjoy nature's lush, vibrant vistas. Only they have enough power, money, and time to benefit from them (like in the case of Hoang's villa in Flapping, featuring a sizable pool in the center of a mountain, or a resort villa in Aimless, which is surrounded by lush trees, or an opulent residence along the Saigon River in Live in cloud-cuckoo land). In the meantime, women like Mien in Memoryland, who produce agricultural goods and food and care for the people in society, must exert their energy to work exhaustively. Additionally, like Huyen's mother in Flapping, they naturally never have the chance or the leisure to properly appreciate the scenic beauty of the land they work on. Young girls who go from rural to urban areas to study and live (like Huyen), or older women forced to live on their own in the city (like Mrs. Ghi in Rom and the four women in Taste) must put up with filthy, claustrophobic, humid living conditions, a lack of clean water and clean air, and extreme noise pollution. They have no option but to continue serving and giving themselves as objects satisfying the men's demands in the city.

As in these independent films, the systems of urban privilege and male privilege patriarchal institutions are the primary cause of the tragedies that affect both the non-human world and migrant women, a parallel of both *ecological* and *gender injustice*. For instance, in *Flapping*, Tung caresses a fighting cock in the hopes that it will win; in the following scene, the cock is brutally killed by Tung because it loses the match; in another scene, Hoang takes a Huyen to enjoy the romantic backdrop of the lake; in the following scene, he quietly departs and does not return. Noticeably, Tung treats Huyen's body like how he treats

a fish or a chicken. Just as Hoang tries to change a natural mountainous area into a site for a villa, which he can use as he pleases, he digs deep into Huyen's psyche, abuses her affection, and then abandons her without an explanation. The men in these two films appear to value the gratification of desire above all else. Their interactions with women and non-human animals are initially motivated by enjoyment, amusement, and personal fulfillment; this later evolves into what Lefebvre refers to as the "everyday life's" ultimate purpose (Lefebvre 1947:40). In a similar vein, Papastergiadis stresses the following in his book *Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place, and the Everyday*: "At the micro level of everyday existence, the person is now required to deploy intelligence, cunning, and deceit, both in order to live and to enjoy life" (Papastergiadis 2006:26). In the context of consumerism and the market, the robust patriarchal system, primarily motivated by the pursuit of pleasure, encourages the maltreatment of women or non-human species more severely and indiscriminately. Confucian patriarchal thought keeps coming up with justifications for a "new type" of a male-dominated society when men exploit women as they exploit nature, seeing each as something manipulable for pleasure.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, in independent filmmaking, the visual injustice (as well as gender and social injustice) that immigrant women experience is not only in the social differences but also in the artistic contrasts of design elements within the architectural composition of a given place - something that has long been "ignored" in commercial films. Modernism is linked to the rationalization and optimization of urban planning techniques. The most crucial factor is achieving architectural synchronization, eliminating exotic spaces, preventing disease spread, increasing labor productivity, and maintaining a representative national image (Ewen, 2015).

In the romantic films and TV shows mentioned in section 1, we can all notice an emotional surface connection between the "beautiful woman" and the "beautiful scenery," which is in conjunction with the ideal design of the city, just as Bourdieu noted: "People are fanatical about beauty (...) they want characters with attractive shapes. There is and will always be a school of thinking that believes art should only be acceptable when it lies and that nature needs to be tamed." (Bourdieu 2018:105) In a romantic film, a male character frequently recalls or defines a woman, a lover, or a wife as having a specific flawless, glittering background attached to her (such as a childhood friend sitting in a romantic garden in *Đẻ mai tình / Fool for Love* (2010) or a woman who makes a musician's heart melt as she sings in a restaurant under a green line of trees in *Em là bà nội của anh / Sweet 20* (2014). It gives the impression that everything (both nature and humans) is given a sense of (illusory) unity and balance because of the sustainable, unchanging beauty of the environment and the subject in the urbanscape.

In the urban independent films under consideration, in many cases, as an aesthetic antithesis, the filmmakers frequently demonstrate an aesthetic of everyday cinema, a "beauty of the Ugly," which contrasts sharply with the slick, eye-catching frames of the sceneries in commercial films.

Most of the actions of the four women and the black man in *Taste* occur in darkened rooms in a Saigon slum, which is presented as in prison. The interiors of the film are oppressively "dark"; this "darkness" belongs in the visual realm, but it also evokes suffocation, that is, a "sensation" of being trapped, enclosed. When the camera captures the characters' bodies, we see the decay of the bodies, the end of the world, extreme alienation, and the point of

no return concerning their original humanity. This is because they have to endure the strict confines of modern life, which, as the trailer observes, is a “one-way path where one cannot backtrack” (quoted from the trailer in Nguyen Hoang Diep, 2021; Pham, 2021). In addition to the idea of a murky, grimy, low-class living environment, the notion of the female body is also presented (through the perspective of urban, male characters) in the films as something filthy, unfortunate, terrifying, and a “bad omen” for males (as a male character says of the pregnant girl named Huyen in *Flapping*). Far from commercial cinema’s robustly healthful images of female beauty framed by the beauty of nature, here, the images of the female body and the urban environment evoke a sense of regression or deterioration.

Scrutinizing the visual/aesthetic portrayal of women and nature in the independent films discussed here, we can identify a process where the Vietnamese independent directors redefine ideas concerning “the bad,” “lowliness,” “debauchery,” “sin,” “nausea,” “disgust,” and the general sense of cursedness associated with decadence - the polluted nature - the dirty body that leads to dysmorphophobia. This seems to contradict the “body genres” when Linda William asserts that commercial films’ representation of the female body reinforces the film’s entertainment based on the male audience’s need to consume female body images. (William, 1991) In other words, this is a deliberate visual rejection of popular TV shows and commercial movies’ framing and mass-production of clichés of “beautiful bodies” in a “beautiful space.” It opposes the masculine capitalist portrayal of female bodies and other natural creations as alluring, exotic items that male audiences or clients may consume at any time.

Interestingly, by drawing on documentary filmmaking techniques, the independent filmmakers make more poignant the “visual injustice” that immigrant female characters endure as they live under the domination of mass media and popular art in the city.

This occurs primarily through the “un-Hollywood” lighting design, which gives us a fresh perspective on the city, as seen through the eyes of the female immigrants.⁹ There is nowhere for people to hide or seek sanctuary as *the electric light*, a byproduct of colonization and capitalism, reaches every corner of the city. It symbolizes the sun, the yang, civilization, masculinity, and male authority. Many scenes in the films *Flapping*, *Aimless*, *Memoryland*, *Homostratus*, *Live in Cuckoo Land*, *Taste*, and *Rom* are dark, blurry, and unseeable with the naked eye. Examples include the dimly lit corner of the rental room (in *Flapping*, *Aimless*, *Memoryland*), the distorted toilet behind the curtain (in *Flapping*, *Homostratus*), the night train track (in *Rom*, *Live in cloud-cuckoo land*), the staircase section (in *Taste*, *Aimless*), and the deserted street corner (in *Flapping*, *Aimless*, *Homostratus*). The shadows - or, more correctly, the dimly illuminated scenes - represent places as ruinous, already ruined, and as the sites of still more ruin to come rather than as splendid images of urban promise.

Contrary to state films or commercial films set in the city, Vietnamese independent films do not have wide top-down shots (as in *Bargirls*, *Bargirls 2*) or “lyrical persons” freely wandering, observing, and exploring a beautiful city, dreaming and immersing themselves in their world (as in *Tháng năm rục rờ / Go-go sisters*, *Em và Trinh / Trinh, and his muses*). The “restricted point of view” of immigrant female characters in *Flapping*, *Aimless*, *Memoryland*, and *Live in Cuckoo Land* frequently reduces the characters’ vision, which fluctuates with insecurity like the typical hand-held and jump shots. An extensive background obscures the characters’ complete outlines and is not supported or honored by it. We only see tight, suf-

focating angles where the shadows of tall buildings, erections, bridges, and so on fill, cover, and swallow the shadows of the characters (in *Memoryland*, *Homostratus*, *Flapping*)

In the films under consideration, every immigrant woman is portrayed alongside her daily activities (working, eating, sleeping, being pregnant) in a *monotonous flow* that prolongs their toil and suffering and gives the impression that it is changeless. This leads to a sense of burnout in both the characters and the audience as a whole. The slow pace and, numerous long shots and medium-sized frames create a sense of space oppressive to the actors and the audience. Viewers thus experience the film more viscerally due to the exhaustion they experience while viewing the film. The urban workers in this situation, and the enjoyment and entertainment of the audience, have been mentally encircled by the ugly and the dirty, combined with a physical and psychological sense of weariness, exhaustion, disintegration, and tediousness.

Pierre Bourdieu once said, “Taste classifies, it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar” (Bourdieu 1987:6). Therefore, the conception of any person as beautiful or ugly depends on social class, which shapes tastes and trains the subject to understand vulgarity rather than only subjective individuality. This is because a person’s social and cultural capital must have been acquired due to their family, educational, and economic background since birth. The ugliness depicted in the films, as mentioned earlier, demonstrates an “unjust distribution of value and power to the workings of gender, aptitude, color, class, beauty norms, body size, health, sexuality, and age” (Rodrigues, Przybylo, 2018:2).

Conclusion

Recent independent films in Vietnam depict a world where the power of the landscape casts shadows on the body, and architecture delves into the sensation and not just the sight. The often dystopian landscapes of this growing cinematic tradition present an intense resistance of the subject to the urban environment and a return to and rediscovery of solace in the original, primordial, and most primal. It is no accident that so many of the articles condemning *Taste* used words like “herd instinct” and “primitive” (Viet, 2022).

In contrast to the general public’s expectations, independent film directors in Vietnam often brutally expose contradictions between social values and practice and peel back all the shiny “cliches” and coatings of social relations as they are packaged in state and commercial films. They expose the oppression and brutality perpetrated by a male-dominated society towards women and animals - the weakest, most voiceless, and most defensive objects in the ranking of power and strength in society. Beauty does not lie in the splendid glazes of pristine and poetic nature; instead, ‘nature,’ which has been worked upon by the urban elite, by city authorities, and by other institutions of power, hides the silent injustices and discriminations that women and non-human animals must undergo. By portraying ugly bodies perishing in a thick, greasy space, the mentioned independent films dare to open a dialogue and question the romantic and poeticized aesthetics of urban landscapes that have long penetrated the mass audience’s acumen and become a familiar and naturalized form.

Significantly, the misrepresentation and “visual injustice” that immigrant female characters experience in the media and other popular arts in urban areas (primarily through the “beautification” and synchronization of women’s bodies and the cityscape) is made explicit by independent filmmakers through their documentary and experimental cinematic language. Additionally, the narrative of urban space in independent films is precisely the narrative of the body and how it endures, transforms, interacts with things, and resists the subtle and overt pressure of the city. Visual injustice, the asymmetrical distribution of gender power, and spatial/landscape injustice make these traumas more profound.

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Endnotes

- 1 According to our statistics, in 2020, there were 95% commercial films, 1% state-sponsored films, and only 4% independent art films (Nguyen 2020:25).
- 2 In this study, in addition to focusing on works by female independent filmmakers portraying the image of female migrant workers, we also include analysis, synthesis, and comparison with films by male directors (such as Phan Dang Di, Le Bao, and Tran Dung Thanh Huy.) It is interesting that, although immigrant women are only supporting characters in the films by male independent directors, unlike those by female directors, all share a common sentiment and perception of an aesthetic that uniquely expresses the image of cityscape and women.
- 3 This part was inspired by Simone de Beauvoir’s much-quoted phrase in her famous work *The Second Sex*: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir 2011:283). According to Beauvoir, the characteristics conventionally attributed to women are not inherent in the nature of women but are imposed on them by patriarchal power structures.
- 4 The commercial mainstream movies have inherited, or adopted, the trope of the wanderer from Vietnamese romantic poetry and do not problematize it. On the other hand, these independent films do problematize it. In commercial films, besides functionality, the cityscape becomes a stylized, decorative framing and highly visual synchronicity. This suggests that the city is a realm of entertainment and pleasure connected to the “centers” of production and consumption (such as in *The Diary of Fireflies*, *The Tailor*, *Win My Baby Back*, etc.)
- 5 As Travis Bickle (famously played by Robert De Niro) says, “All the animals come out at night - whores, skunk pussies, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies, sick, venal. Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets” (*Taxi Driver*)
- 6 For further reading about the campaigns to remove sidewalks, street vendors, slums, etc. See the following:

Dinh, Thao. “The battle to reclaim the sidewalk: looking back after 40 days of launching” (“Cuộc chiến giành lại vỉa hè: nhìn lại sau 40 ngày ra quân”) *Dan tri Magazine*. February 2017. <https://dantri.com.vn/xa-hoi/cuoc-chien-gianh-lai-via-he-nhin-lai-sau-40-ngay-ra-quan-20170226154114709.htm> (accessed June 1, 2022).

Hai, Yen and Nguyen Nhu. “The unkempt living scene in the ‘slums’ in the heart of the capital” (“Cảnh sống nhếch nhác ở những ‘khu ổ chuột’ giữa lòng Thủ đô”) *VOV Magazine*. November 2017. <https://vov.vn/xa-hoi/canh-song-nhech-nhac-o-nhung-khu-o-chuot-giua-long-thu-do-689806.vov> (accessed June 1, 2022).

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- 7 When exploring the formation of recreational landscapes in Weltevreden (now the central part of Jakarta) during the colonial age, Ellisa noted that "Recreations formulated as part of the essential elements of personal development and civilization to reflect the values of the daily life and introduce modernity. The study found that the prototypical play spaces in Weltevreden were discriminatory accessible to the public and sporadically provided." (Ellisa 2021:12) Thus, the design of recreational spaces in modern cities always contains unequal distribution possibilities.
- 8 Linh (Flapping) does not even dare to go to the hospital, fearing she has to report being in a scene of jealousy; Huyen is scolded when she goes to the hospital to find a way to solve her problems or when she goes to school to "beg for good grades in gymnastics" so she can gain a meager scholarship.
- 9 That means being unlayered, incomplete, unclear, and not brilliant as in the style of "three-point lighting" of Hollywood (Thompson 2008:129).

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Wading in the Covid-19 Pandemic: *Fate and Ways Forward for Malaysian Creative Cities*

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Abstract

Since the 2019 Wuhan outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic badly hit all sectors of the global economy. The creative and cultural sectors (CCS) are among the hardest hit. The value chain of CCS (i.e. creation, production, distribution, accessibility to contents) was severely immobilized. In cities, mitigation measures implemented to contain Covid-19 significantly downsized the CCS. Jobs, incomes and livelihoods of creative and cultural employees were threatened. These scenarios question the readiness, resilience and sustainability of CCS, particularly in cities. The fate and way forward of creative cities are now a grave concern. This paper aims to investigate the impacts, developments, reactions and policy responses of Malaysia's CCS and creative cities as Covid-19 unfolds. Based on primary (i.e. interviews) and secondary data, three emerging Malaysian creative cities (i.e. Kuala Lumpur, George Town and Ipoh) were studied. The findings revealed that while government assistance is forthcoming, there is still room for inclusive policies from all tiers of governments and across diverse stakeholders (i.e. private, public, civil society) to reach out to creative employees who are socio-spatially segregated in Malaysia. It is also an opportune time to revisit and reinstate Malaysia's CCS into national development given that these sectors were sidelined even before Covid-19.

Keywords: *Creative Cities, COVID-19, Malaysia, Impacts, Resilience, Strategies, Cultural Policies*¹

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Introduction

The outbreak of Covid-19 in Wuhan during late 2019 has altered all domains of life when it morphed into a global pandemic. The highly contagious Covid-19 virus caused countries and cities worldwide to resort to varying degrees of lockdowns contingent upon the magnitude of outbreak within the local community. Mitigation measures and standard operating procedures (SOPs) like physical distancing, wearing of masks and curtailing people in public places were quickly implemented. In many cities, hospitality businesses, tourism and other in-person activities were forced to shut down temporarily and some indefinitely. Amongst the worst hit sectors is the creative and cultural sectors (CCS) when galleries, museums, arts performances and exhibitions came to a halt. Global statistics reported that, together with the tourism sector, the creative and cultural sectors are amongst the worst impacted by Covid-19. Jobs at risk in CCS ranged from 0.8% to 5.5% of employment across OECD regions (Travkina & Sacco, 2020:2).

According to OECD, the crisis experienced by the cultural and creative sectors involves enormous loss of revenue opportunities and is felt unevenly between and across the sector, where some actors (i.e. public galleries, museums) benefit from public support while private small enterprises and freelance creatives could encounter bankruptcy. Undeniably, the Covid-19 crisis has caused a 'structural threat' to the survival of businesses and individuals in creative and cultural production. A recent European study echoed similar sentiments by highlighting that cultural jobs are especially at risk due to the sector's high incidences of structural fragmentation and dependency on live performances and the general public (Montalto, Sacco, Alberti, Panella & Saisana, 2020).

Such a gloomy scenario questions the readiness, resilience and sustainability of the CCS amidst an ongoing pandemic that does not show signs of succumbing despite the availability of vaccines. On the Malaysian front, the fate of the CCS and destiny of creative/cultural workers are being tested as well. In response to Covid-19, the Malaysian government ordered the Movement Control Order (MCO) since 18 March 2020 where full or partial lockdowns were imposed on states, cities and districts based on the statistics of infection and severity of spread. Within the CCS, in-person performances halted, and curtains drawn down. Malaysian creatives and cultural employees quickly went out of jobs, just like their global counterparts. Mirroring global trends, Malaysia's CCS recorded a loss in revenues when the Covid-19 virus began to make a firm foothold in the country. From the Cultural Economy Development Agency's (CENDANA) (2020) recent survey, it was reported that 93% of Malaysia creative employees were negatively impacted by Covid-19 and 70% reported that their incomes were adversely affected. A similar percentage (i.e. 70%) also reported that they experienced financial losses. National television also started to give airtime to creatives to voice their plights and lament how badly hit the Malaysian CCS is. The unpredictable and unprecedented pandemic has certainly threatened and made vulnerable their livelihoods.

From a broader perspective, it provokes a myriad of questions ranging from the fluidity of culture and cultural development during shocks to more contested notions of the potential (or danger?) of advocating creative and creative industries as the next mover of a nation or city's structural economic base. More pertinently, the scenario casts the ambivalent question of the viability as well as the promise and peril of a creative city as an urban develop-

ment strategy post Covid-19. These concerns and issues motivated the writing of this paper for the context of Malaysia where the agenda of creative city development and creative economy are now moving to the forefront of national and urban policy agendas. It further provokes the question of whether this is the correct strategic pathway for Malaysian cities. This paper will thus deliberate the fact (and fear?) as to whether the concept and practicalities of creative cities/creative industries will vanish after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Against this backdrop, this paper raises the following enquiry: *What is the fate and way forward for Malaysian creative cities and industries amidst and after the Covid-19 pandemic?* With the Covid-19 pandemic still unfolding, insofar, there is a dearth of in-depth academic research that have been undertaken about the fate and way forward for creative city development in Malaysia. To date, only a few preliminary studies were undertaken by local think tanks (i.e. Think City, Penang Institute) and government agencies (i.e. CENDANA) to depict quick snapshot situation analysis of the Covid-19 pandemic (Think City, 2020; Pan, 2020; Lim, 2020a). Hence, this study is timely to fill a pertinent research gap. The findings that derive from this study will go towards better informed and evidence-based policy-making for the development of Malaysian creative cities/industries in respond to the current Covid-19 pandemic as well as to increase a Malaysian creative city's preparedness, resilience and sustainability in the future.

In an overview, this paper is organized into five (5) sections. The first section introduces the paper, illustrates the problem statement and states the research gap and significance. Section two provides a systematic literature review of the conceptual framework that underpins culture and creativity vis-à-vis sustainable development, the economy and the urban setting during Covid-19. This is followed by the way global creative cities, both in the Western and Eastern worlds, were impacted, reacted and responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. Section three briefly outlines the methodology of this paper. Subsequently, section four discusses the way Malaysian creative cities and CCS are impacted and how they responded during the Covid-19 pandemic. Section five concludes the paper by drawing comparisons and lessons from global scenarios before suggesting implications and recommendations to increase the resilience of Malaysian creative cities.

Framing Culture and Creativity Within Creative City Discourse During Covid-19

The following sections will review key concepts to frame culture and creativity within creative city discourse. This will also serve as the conceptual framework for this paper.

Culture as Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development

Since the launch of the 1987 Brundtland Report, the concept of sustainable development has moved to the forefront of policy agenda underpinned by three pillars, namely, economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance. The element of culture was largely absent in the equation despite the fact that most if not all of mother earth's environmental concerns and socio-economic issues have cultural actions and decisions (i.e. people and their actions) at the core. With solutions and strategies being culturally based, the current understanding of sustainable development premised on environmental and economic matters alone might be unsuccessful without considering culture (Dessein, Soini, Fairclough & Horlings, 2015:14; see also UNESCO, 2016). Put simply, looking solely at these three dimen-

sions cannot portray the complexities of existing society (UCLG, n.d.). In response, international bodies like the Council of Europe, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) have started to advocate culture as the missing link and fourth pillar of sustainable development (Dessein et al., 2015; UCLG, 2018).

The new approach acknowledges 'dual means' in the relationship between culture and sustainable development. First, to develop the cultural sector itself (i.e. creative & cultural industries, heritage, cultural tourism). Second, to integrate and mainstream culture's role in public policy domains (i.e. the economy, environment, education, social cohesion) (UCLG, n.d.). At the city level, the UCLG has in 2004 adopted 'Agenda 21 for Culture' to be implemented by local governments where indigenous local cultures/traditions converge with new creativity in cities thus contributing to identity preservation, celebration of diversity and recognizing cultural creativity as a promising resource to develop societies and economies. However, the current Covid-19 pandemic is a testing time to deliberate culture in cities and it is contingent upon acknowledgement of culture as 4th pillar. To this end, strong 'political will' to effectuate transparent urban governance and stakeholders' willingness to incorporate cultural creativity in creative city development are pivotal without which the grandeur aspiration to mainstream culture in development can go awry if the concept and entailing processes are understood and implemented indiscriminately.

Culture, Cultural Economy and Wealth Creation

The interrelationship between culture, the economy and wealth creation has been widely contested. Despite strong disapproval of monetizing culture due to its irreproducible values, the benefits of valorizing and commodifying culture are increasing being acknowledged since the 1960s. By 1980s, the concept of 'cultural industries/cultural economy' emerged with a positive label in the discourse as a viable source of employment and income generator (UNDP & UNESCO, 2013). With the rise of the creative and cultural economy globally, there are evidence to illustrate culture-led economic dividend for sustainable development of individuals, societies and nations. For instance, UNESCO (2021) estimated the creative and cultural industries' (CCI) contribution of US\$2,250 billion to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) each year. The CCI created nearly 30 million cultural and creative jobs worldwide, generating incomes and revenues for CCI practitioners and companies in developed and developing countries.

Economically, culture contributes to wealth creation not only through its role as an industrial sector (Scott, 1999; Smith & Warfield, 2008; Throsby, 2008), but also as a catalyst towards culture-led urban regeneration. Scholars highlighted the viability of redeveloping or branding cities by leveraging local cultural and heritage identities (Gotham, 2001; Throsby, 2008; Sasaki, 2010; Landry, 2012). Asian cities within UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) have reported how culture helps in regenerating local economy albeit with varying outcomes. The current Covid-19 pandemic is an opportune time to examine the economic prowess of creative cities as they brace the pandemic and build resilience to embrace current and future shocks.

Culture, Social Cohesion, Integration and Societal Well-Being

Culture's role in the societal realm is also apparent. The 'cultural turn' in the social sciences acknowledges not only the separateness but also the interconnectedness of culture with society and/or social structures. It is argued that culture and society have to certain extent an "iterative and reciprocal relationship, in which culture constructs society but society also shapes culture" (Dessein et al., 2015:25). Scholars have highlighted culture's positive impact towards valuing individual and collective societal well-being (i.e. measured as happiness or life satisfaction) (Jeannotte, 2021:3), social cohesion and development of social capital (i.e. volunteering, participation) (Jeannotte, 2017) as well as to foster social integration through interculturality in cities (Bordisky, 2012).

The 'interculturality city' concept is a variant of the creative city with emphasis towards leveraging the benefits of intercultural exchanges, hybridity and ethnic/cultural differences derived from urban creativity and innovation (Bianchini, 2018). This syncs well with the viewpoints of UNESCO's Director-General UNESCO, Irina Bokova, that culture is integral to create a more sustainable socio-economic development through resilient infrastructures that are ingrained in local contexts and underscored by the history and know-how of the people (UNESCO, 2016:3). Clearly, the variegated notions of culture can be manifested as traditional, rigid, static (at times) and place-specific; as opposed to culture which can be fluid as it evolves and morphs to integrate, assimilate and herald new cultural modalities thus interculturality in outcome and nature. This has driven home a key point. If guided by the right conceptual notions and policy prescriptions, culture in all its forms, meanings and manifestations may result in overall social integration, cohesion and societal well-being, especially during trying times like the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Culture-led Creative City Development

The genesis of creative city as a concept somewhat started in Australia during the late 1980s when culture and the way a society's cultural turn impacted urban planning and development. The aim was to integrate cultural policy into urban planning to uplift the material well-being of citizens, particularly vulnerable groups. When the concept flourished in the United Kingdom, North America and Europe in the 1990s, variants of the concept emerged particularly Florida's notion that a creative city and the creative class are key components for innovation and economic growth. Although Florida's (2004, 2008) pro-growth notions are widely critiqued by scholars as being elitist, class-biased and exclusive (Wilson & Keil, 2008; Chatterton, 2000; Rosler, 2011), but on the flip side, a 'culture-centric' creative city model is still being advocated by scholars like Sasaki (2010, n.d.), Bianchini (2018) and Landry (2009). They championed for a socially inclusive creative city where grassroots' creative and cultural industries should be leveraged. In particular, Sasaki (n.d.) has reconceptualized the creative city notion for Japan where he recommended a 'cultural mode of production' by harnessing a city's arts, culture and heritage to drive cultural production and consumption. In the UK during the late 80s and early 90s, Landry advanced the creative city concept as the search for new strategies/solutions to challenge ingrained and outmoded urban planning and urban cultural policies. He also urged urban managers to dare to be different and redress urban issues by creatively adopting 'out-of-the-box' solutions (Bianchini, 2018). It is under these differing guises that cities around the world are now embracing and adapting the creative city concept into their local settings. While the

concept has promise, nevertheless, the downsides of the concept will need to be acknowledged and mediated holistically in the urban setting – a site that is often fraught with issues of socio-spatial inequalities and further exacerbated during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Fate of Creative Cities During Covid-19: A Global Snapshot

As culture and creativity are increasingly acknowledged as catalysts to regenerate urban areas, the concept of creative city development has moved to the forefront of urban policy agenda in many Western cities (i.e. Melbourne, London, Paris, etc.) since the 1980s (Bi-anchini, 2018; Landry, 2012 Florida, 2008). However, the current unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on all economic sectors across the global, with the tourism and creative & cultural sectors being amongst the worst hit. Cities that thrived on culture and cultural tourism witnessed unfathomable shocks and economic losses when cultural events & festivals were cancelled, all in-person live performances halted, and cultural spaces/places became empty and remained closed indefinitely. Subsequently, Covid-19 confinement measures (i.e. social distancing, health & safety guidelines) have caused economic detriments to cultural establishments/enterprises by putting 7 million jobs at risk for employees thus creating a ‘strong economic and social discomfort at city level’ (Montalto et al., 2020: 4). To compound matters, the fate of culture-led creative cities is intrinsically linked to tourism. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2021), international tourist arrival has dropped 74% globally in year 2020. When tourist arrival and receipts plummeted due to international travel restrictions, the CCS in creative and cultural cities also bore the brunt given that tourism somewhat underscores the economic performance of creative cities.

Following suit, a myriad of reports emerged to study how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted jobs in cities that have committed to invest in culture-led urban redevelopment. A recent publication ‘European Cultural and Creative Cities in Covid-19 times. Jobs at risk and the policy response’ published by the European Commission (EC) reported that in Europe alone, the EC estimates at least 190 cities across 30 different countries have invested in culture as a strategy to drive urban development (Montalto et al., 2019) (cited in Montalto et al., 2020). Key findings from the report showed that cultural jobs are amongst the most at risk of income loss due their high dependency on live events and in-person public audiences. This is exacerbated by the sector’s profound structural fragmentation and minimal entitlement to existing social protection system. The precarity of cultural occupations (i.e. freelancing, self-employment, independent contracting) have made them vulnerable where almost one-third (32%) are self-employed compared to 14% in overall employment of the 27 European Union (EU) member states. A city’s size and economic diversity are also determining factors where medium-sized European cities that are predominantly ‘arts-jobs intensive’ are very vulnerable to the pandemic due to the strong linkages of culture and arts to other sectors (i.e. tourism, food & beverage and transport), and their less diversified and smaller job markets compared to bigger cultural cities.

To bounce back, European cities and government have proposed a myriad of measures and recovery plans. For instance, medium-sized European cities that have high share of tourism jobs (i.e. 30-50% of local jobs) are introducing new strategies by shifting focus from interna-

tional tourism to regional/local tourism segment to compensate the loss. National governments also intervened by proposing four main typologies of policy measures, namely, (i) payment of grants already allocated despite closure of cultural institutions and cancellation/postponement of events; (ii) indirect financial aid such as tax and Value Added Tax (VAT) reliefs; (iii) financial support to compensate loss in income; (iv) other support (i.e. advisory services). At the city level, the scenario is rather promising where EU cities have started to support innovative, bottom-up endeavours that are driving the adoption of digital culture or facilitate the creation of new business models or event formats. Many European cities opted and promoted digital culture initiatives via dedicated web pages, organized open air performances that audiences can watch safely from home, online or from their balconies. Emotional and material support was offered to marginalized groups like reading a book over the phone. However, the support and policy responses differ quite considerably across cities of varying sizes. Though all cities have policy responses to support CCS during the pandemic, but it is predominantly European capital cities that have adopted large-scale support plans. The inequality in policy response/support needs to be addressed to deter widening gaps between arts powerhouses (mostly in capital cities) and smaller cultural cities (Montalto et al., 2020:4-5).

The plights and perils of the culture sector amidst Covid-19 is also highlighted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020). While the culture sector has provided much solace and comfort to uplift people's spirit during the difficult times of Covid-19, such cultural enrichment comes with disproportionate gains to cultural workers. The increased demand in online services and streaming for music, films, television and entertainment are not in tandem with supply of cultural production when lockdowns and confinement measures have disrupted cultural production (i.e. live performance, recorded media) thus causing closed productions and millions to be unemployed. Cultural workers are further disadvantaged by the gig nature of their occupations like employment contracts and freelance arrangements either on a part-time, on-demand or project-based basis. Though such arrangements provide flexibility and independence, but there are issues related to social security provisions (i.e. health care entitlements, paid sick leave) and the right of workers to be involved in collective bargaining which in turn implicates working conditions (occupational safety & health) and remuneration packages (ILO, 2020:1). All these challenges became more apparent and pressing during the Covid-19 pandemic where the volatility and vulnerability of the media and culture industry are heightened. Broadly, all culture sectors across the globe have been adversely impacted where workforce in the arts, entertainment and creative sectors have been furloughed and employment plummeted as seen in the United Kingdom, Australia, United States, Brazil and the Philippines (ILO, 2020: 2). In response, new business models have since emerged and these will inadvertently alter the culture labour market, their working conditions and their rights.

Similarly, the pandemic has struck CCS in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) regions too, especially the arts, entertainment and recreation industries. Covid-19 has severely immobilised the creative value chain, from creation, production, distribution to access of creative contents. Apart from CCS, non-creative sectors that support the entire ecosystem are also affected. Downsizing of CCS has led to loss of revenues and unemployment in all relevant sectors thus negatively impacting OECD cities

and regions. Cities with high concentrations of jobs and businesses in CCS, such as London, New York, Seoul, Norway and France, faced significant challenges (Travkina & Sacco, 2020:7-8). For instance, the Greater London Authority's study (2019) reported a total of 267,500 creative workers in London, supported by 203,200 creative supply chain employees in 2017. According to New York City Comptroller (2019), New York's creative sector provided 293,000 jobs and accounted for 13% of its total economic output. In Korea, the creative content industry has long been the country's main economic engine. It created over 650,000 employments, supporting the creation of over USD 9.5 billion worth of Korean cultural content for export (UNESCO, 2021). These statistics may well reflect the severity of the impact of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods in the CCS and the local economy in these creative cities. Beyond the immediate impact on jobs and incomes, the deprivation and downsizing of CCS would undermine the vibrancy of cities and communities which ultimately affects citizens' well-being (Travkina & Sacco, 2020:11).

To brace through this period, OECD governments have responded through policy interventions. Broadly, they are divided into four key strategies, namely, (i) Public Funding (i.e. grants & subsidies for CCS firms & individual practitioners/self-employed professionals; compensation for losses; loan provision & guarantee; and investment incentives); (ii) Employment Support (i.e. job retention & income support; unemployment benefits through temporary contracts; (iii) Deferral of Payments & Easing Administrative Procedures (i.e. advanced aid such as reimbursements of tax returns & royalties; postponement/relief of dues; tax relief; and procedural flexibility); and (iv) Structural Change Policies towards strengthening CCS's resilience (i.e. training and employment of creative workers; raising awareness about importance of arts and culture; digitalization of creative and cultural contents; innovation for capacity building towards promoting new potentials for CCS; and copyright licensing towards protecting and supporting the creatives through earnings from copyright levies) (Travkina & Sacco (2020). Additionally, the private, non-profit and philanthropic actors supported CCS by offering short-term liquidity and funding; advance payment of royalties; investments in cultural production and distribution as well as capacity building. While supports are available, the concern is always about the inclusiveness of schemes in adapting to CCS business models (i.e. non-traditional, small-scale, or non-profit) and form of employment (i.e. non-standard, self-employed, freelance, intermittent, contract-basis or hybrid) (Travkina & Sacco, 2020:2-3). In America, commentators revealed an estimated loss of 2.7 million jobs (i.e. one third of all creative jobs) and more than USD 150 billion (i.e. 9% of annual sales) in sales of CCS goods and services during the pandemic. This, in turn, seriously affected American creative centres and cities (Florida & Seman, 2020). Across CCS, the fine and performing arts sectors are the worst hit, suffering estimated losses of nearly 1.4 million jobs and USD 42.5 billion in sales. In supporting the CCS, American federal government initiated a strategy called CARES ART which allows self-employed creative workers to access federal assistance. Additionally, scholars highlighted the need of a broad-based, substantial and sustained national creative-economy recovery strategy. It should be led by local public-private partnerships, supported by federal, state government, national philanthropy and large corporations, in addressing bottom-up needs. In adapting to the new normal, creative talents are encouraged to use their creative skills to venture into other industries and to adopt the shift of focus towards locally sourced culture for domestic-driven production and consumption (Florida & Seman, 2020).

However, not all CCS are negatively impacted during the pandemic. While outdoor leisure activities are refrained during lockdown, people opt for home entertainment such as digital or video games, radio & TV programmes. Reports highlighted that both the gaming industry and the radio & TV sector have somehow benefited from the current crisis. The main digital storefront for personal computer video games, namely, Steam has experienced over 23 million concurrent players during March 2020, surpassing all earlier records (Travkina & Sacco, 2020:23). Through digitalization or streaming online, cities and regions are encouraged to leverage the creative potential of culture in post-COVID recovery. Digitalizing culture can possibly promote greater complementarities between culture and other main policy sectors towards exploring new opportunities for local and regional development. Cross-sectoral integration such as crossover between art & culture and education or health sectors would contribute towards social value creation, well-being and health development (Travkina & Sacco, 2020: 3) as aptly discussed in 2 (c) above. However, the risk of exacerbating inequalities may arise without mindful measures to ensure inclusive digital accessibility across all levels in a society.

In building the resilience of UNESCO creative cities in particular, UNESCO (2020) encourages member cities to use UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) as a platform for inspiration and sharing of experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, cities can seek working partners within UCCN to tap into the potential of culture and creativity towards recovery from the pandemic. For example, leveraging the CCS's fundamental creativity and capability towards generating positive social impact such as well-being development, social engagement and connection as articulated in 2 (c) above. Cities such as Buenos Aires (Argentina), for instance, ventured into virtual museums, online libraries, online sharing of poetry, online concerts/shows to engage and connect broader communities in the quest to make culture and art more accessible. Besides moving online, some UNESCO cities attempted to localise cultural and creative production for local consumption, such as Rome (a Creative City of Film). Rome initiated #Cinemadacasa (Film from Home) to project classic movies on buildings across the city towards maintaining and strengthening social connections during lockdowns. During the pandemic, creativity and culture, in a way, acted as an effective medium for promoting solidarity through intercity collaborations (UNESCO, 2020). In Bangkok in particular, the Covid-19 pandemic has compelled reorganizing performances into new spaces, a bigger mediatization of the festival as well as the growth of new platforms that are site-specific and community-focused (Damrhung, 2022).

To summarize the above discussion, The table in figure 1 below depicts the impacts and strategies undertaken by organisations and creative cities globally. Additionally, the diagram in figure 2 that follows the table surmises and graphically illustrates the various impacts and strategies undertaken by these global CCS and creative cities thus far.

Impacts	Strategies	Region/ Organisation	Source	Strategies (based on themes)
Loss of Employment	# Job retention	• OECD	Travkina & Sacco (2020)	Employment support
	# Temporary work contracts	• OECD	Travkina & Sacco (2020)	
	# Training & employment # Skills development (via online workshops)	• OECD • UCCN	Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Capacity building
	# Promotion of creative talents	• UCCN	UNESCO (2020)	
Loss of Income	# Grants & subsidies	• EU • OECD • UCCN	Montalto et al. (2020) Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Financial aid
	# Compensation for loss	• EU • OECD	Montalto et al. (2020) Travkina & Sacco (2020)	
	# Loan & guarantee	• OECD	Travkina & Sacco (2020)	
	# Deferral / waiver of payment & procedural flexibility	• OECD • UCCN	Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	
	# Tax returns & royalties	• OECD	Travkina & Sacco (2020)	
	# Tax reliefs	• EU • OECD • UCCN	Montalto et al. (2020) Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	
	# Copyright licensing to protect & support through copyright levies	• OECD	Travkina & Sacco (2020)	
	# Fundraising campaigns	• UCCN	UNESCO (2020)	
	# Training allowances	• UCCN	UNESCO (2020)	
	# Donation of food & material supplies	• UCCN	UNESCO (2020)	Food & supplies aid
Downsized creative & cultural sectors	# Incentives for investments in cultural production & distribution	• OECD • UCCN	Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Financial aid
	# Adoption of digital culture # Online streaming & virtual programmes for distribution of creative & culture contents	• EU • OECD • UCCN	Montalto et al. (2020) Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Digitalisation

Figure 1. Table of COVID-19’s impacts on the creative & cultural sectors and strategies towards resilience – a global overview. Source: Compiled by authors from Montalto et al. (2020); ILO (2020); Travkina & Sacco (2020); Florida & Seman (2020) & UNESCO (2020).

Impacts	Strategies	Region/ Organisation	Source	Strategies (based on themes)
Continuation of the Downsized creative & cultural sectors	# Business advisory services # Medical Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • UCCN 	Montalto et al. (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Consultation
	# Crossover of CCS with other main sectors (e.g. education, health & technology) towards co-creation for shared values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCED • UCCN 	Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Cross-sectoral integration
	# Sharing of knowledge & experiences # Collective partnerships among cities/regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCCN 	UNESCO (2020)	Intercity or regional collaborations
	# Formation of new business models & event formats # Venturing new possibilities/opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • UK, Australia, United States, Brazil & Philippines • OECD • UCCN 	Montalto et al. (2020) ILO (2020) Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Business restructuring
	# Awareness raising about importance & appreciation of art & culture # Cultural infrastructure development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OECD • UCCN 	Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Capacity building
	# Local public-private partnerships towards recovery of national creative economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • America 	Florida & Seman (2020)	State-market partnerships
Degenerated local vibrancy	# Emphasis of local contents for local creative creation/production & consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • America • UCCN 	Florida & Seman (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Localising production & consumption
Affected social well-being	# Widening access to art and cultural contents through virtual/online platforms towards positive social engagement & connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU • UK, Australia, United States, Brazil & Philippines • OECD • UCCN 	Montalto et al. (2020) ILO (2020) Travkina & Sacco (2020) UNESCO (2020)	Active social engagement
	# Medical consultation for physical & mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCCN 	UNESCO (2020)	Consultation

Figure 1. Continuation of the Downsized creative & cultural sectors and the rest of the table of COVID-19's impacts on the creative & cultural sectors and strategies towards resilience – a global overview. Source: Compiled by authors from Montalto et al. (2020); ILO (2020); Travkina & Sacco (2020); Florida & Seman (2020) & UNESCO (2020).

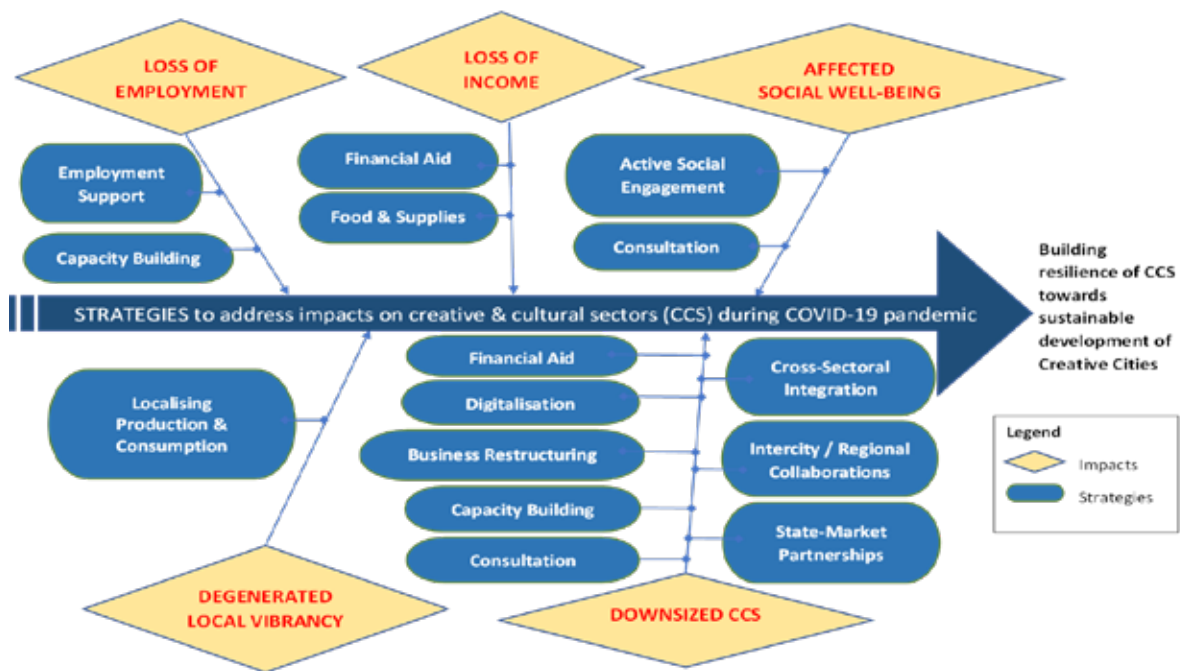


Figure 2. Global strategies to address impacts on CCS towards resilience & sustainability during COVID-19 pandemic. Source: Analysis and illustration by authors (2021).

Methodology

A purely qualitative research approach was administered to address the research question for this study. Qualitative techniques like online interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used. The interviews and FGDs involved key informants who were purposively sampled, and they comprised of stakeholders in Malaysia’s creative and cultural sector, urban managers, policy-makers, state think-tanks, urban dwellers and civil society groups (i.e. NGOs). An interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions was used for both the interviews and FGDs. The questions touched on the concepts and frameworks (i.e. Agenda 21 for Culture, etc.) reviewed in section 2.0, with specific focus on the role of culture and cultural development in Malaysian cities. Additionally, aspects and questions pertaining to culture’s role in relation to the economy, society and city in view of Covid-19 were also framed in the interview protocol. The interview protocol was vetted and endorsed by the university’s Human Ethics Committee. Written and oral forms of informed consent were obtained prior to interviewing and conducting FGDs with the key informants.

In addition, secondary data related to the latest developments, reactions and policy responses of Malaysia’s CCS and creative cities (towards Covid-19) were collected from national blueprints, government websites, reports and journals to supplement and complement the above qualitative component. Based on triangulation, the primary and secondary data were then thematically analyzed to flesh out key themes pertaining to the impacts and types of strategies that Malaysian CCS and creative cities adopted/adapted in order to be resilient in light of Covid-19.

Malaysian Creative & Cultural Sectors and Creative Cities During Covid-19: Fate and Interventions

Like cities in Europe, Australia and North America, cities in Malaysia are showing keen interest to promote arts, heritage and culture. Major Malaysian cities like Kuala Lumpur, George Town, Kuching, Johor Bahru and Ipoh have openly stated their aspirations to be acknowledged as cultural and creative cities. Increasingly, these cities are putting extra efforts to develop and promote their respective cultural endowments, heritage, cultural and creative industries. However, it is pertinent to mention that it is only in the last decade that policy rhetoric and initiatives have gradually introduced the informal use of the label ‘creative cities’ or ‘culture-led urban regeneration’ into Malaysian urban agenda. With the concept still at its infancy under the trial-and-error phase, the Covid-19 pandemic kicked in and disrupted aspiring Malaysian creative cities. The following sections will chronicle the scenario of three emerging Malaysian creative cities, namely, Kuala Lumpur, George Town and Ipoh in their quest to survive and be resilient amidst the on-going pandemic. Before discussing each city in turn, the next section will briefly illustrate national level interventions and strategies for Malaysia’s CCS where these initiatives are expected to be cascaded down to the city level.

In Malaysia, the nation’s National Creative Industry Policy (NCIP) divided the creative and cultural sectors into 14 sub-sectors under three categories: (1) Multimedia, (2) Cultural Arts, and (3) Cultural Heritage as illustrated in Table 2 below. More recently during the Creative Economy 2021 Forum, the Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DoSM) reported that a total of 45 classified industries are grouped as creative industries (CI) based on NCIP’s above categorisation. As of September 2020, there are 31,792 creative establishments in Malaysia with 859,900 employees and the industry contributes 1.94% to Malaysia’s national GDP (DoSM, 2020). No doubt, the share of creative industries in terms of establishments, employment share and GDP contribution is still relatively low compared to other industries/sectors, but Malaysia’s strategic economic vision that is gradually inclining to the creative economy is rendering the creative industries as budding industries that are fast garnering policy attention at the federal, state and even city level.

MULTIMEDIA	CULTURAL ARTS	CULTURAL HERITAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Film & TV ▪ Advertising ▪ Design ▪ Animation & Digital Content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crafts ▪ Visual Arts ▪ Music ▪ Performing Arts ▪ Creative Publishing ▪ Fashion & Textiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Museum ▪ Archives ▪ Restoration ▪ Preservation

Figure 3. Table showing National Creative Industry Policy (NCIP). Fourteen sub-sectors of the Creative Industries Classification. Source: Compiled by authors from the NCIP.

As an emerging industry that is neither economically vibrant nor socio-culturally matured yet in Malaysia, the Covid-19 pandemic has arrived at a most inopportune time and disrupted the nation’s CCS badly. Mirroring global trends, the CCS in Malaysia are experiencing similar fate like their foreign counterparts. Many are struggling to sustain a livelihood

after losing their jobs or income sources since the first Movement Control Order (MCO) in March 2020. Subsequent forms of partial/total government lockdowns and restricted movements further devastated the sector. To keep Malaysia's CCS afloat, there are interventions from the government through various agencies as illustrated below. As the government entity overseeing Malaysia's CCS, Cultural Economy Development Agency (CENDANA) was the earliest to intervene by launching funding initiatives in April 2020 to support practitioners (i.e. visual arts, performing arts, independent music, craft sectors) through the first lockdown. Later, in July 2020, the Malaysian government launched PENJANA, a plan for Creative Industries under the National Economic Recovery Plan, to support CCS towards recovery and resilience. PENJANA (National Economic Recovery Plan) allocated RM225 million funding for distribution to Malaysia's CCS through government agencies, namely My Creative Ventures Sdn. Bhd (My Creative), CENDANA and Malaysian Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) (Ministry of Finance, Malaysia, 2020).

As the government's investment arm to spur Malaysia's creative industries, My Creative focuses on 10 creative sub-sectors (i.e. Content Creation; Music; Fashion; Performing Arts; Visual Arts; Literature; Traditional & Cultural Arts; Culinary Arts; Design; and Creative Education). With PENJANA's allocation, My Creative will support the creative sectors through grants and loans. The schemes aim to support digitalization of live events/exhibition; continuation and recovery of creative content production, distribution and marketing; content partnership among local/regional/international stakeholders; revival of creative businesses and creative entrepreneurs. Additionally, complementary programmes were initiated to facilitate, advise and guide creative practitioners to enhance digital marketing through corporate collaboration with global/domestic digital or social media platforms (My Creative Ventures, 2020). Following PENJANA's allocation, CENDANA expanded its funding initiatives by tailoring nine funding programmes to facilitate the creation/development and promotion of Malaysian art and cultural contents. MDEC also offers Digital Content Grant to support industry players in the field of animation and visual effects. These assistance and support by CENDANA, MyCreative and MDEC mirror global strategies reviewed above.

In February 2021, Ministry of Communications and Multimedia launched Malaysian Creative Industry Stimulus Package (PRISMA) as a short-term initiative to further assist Malaysian creative industry players to revive and sustain their creative businesses in compliance with new normal restrictions. The package amounting RM89.2 million launched 32 programmes under four categories (i.e. film; music; digital creative content & visual arts; performances & crafts) in the form of grants, loans and broadcasting slots. The ministry expects to generate at least 40,000 job opportunities towards benefitting more than 9000 creative industry players through programmes administered by My Creative Ventures, CENDANA, MDEC, National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS) and Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) (Malay Mail, 2021; www.kkmm.gov.my). Under PRISMA, agencies like My Creative Ventures, CENDANA and MDEC have launched more initiatives to extend support to a wider scope and larger groups of practitioners.

Due to the continuous spike of Covid-19 cases, impacts to the CCS have worsened this year (i.e. 2021) despite the execution of Full Movement Control Order (FMCO) since 1 June 2021. Immediately, the Prime Minister announced the allocation of RM100 million from the total RM150 billion Package of National People's Well-Being and Economic Recovery Pack-

age (PEMULIH) as aid for local arts and creative industry. The aid will fund and incentivise creative works/digital contents, career opportunities, upskilling programmes and Social Security Organization (SOCSO) for approximately 8000 practitioners (Suraya, 2021). Besides public funding, public-private-community partnership aid initiatives are gradually emerging where CENDANA collaborated with Yayasan Sime Darby Food Aid Programme Second Cycle and local community partners to assist artists and cultural workers in need (Maganathan, 2021). The CCS, in particular, ought to be spotlighted and receive adequate support given that arts played a significant role in supporting the well-being of individuals who stayed home during the pandemic (Binson, 2021). In Malaysia specifically, the Communications and Multimedia Ministry had organized a virtual concert (#MuzikDiRumah)(Translation: #MusicAtHome), inspired by “together at home project by international artistes. The #MuzikDiRumah program comprised eight 45 minutes mega concerts, 38 half-hour mini-concerts, and 84 performances, featuring Ayda Jebat, The Rain and such, broadcasting via their YouTube Channel.² Additionally, # Commune for Arts – a free virtual programme – was formed and organized by theatre actor/director Ho Lee Ching to assist and help people cope with the pandemic and manage their mental health.³

Generally, the federal government through its ministries and agencies, assumed the leading role to support Malaysia's CCS through financial aids, capacity building programmes, advisory and networking support. The government has initiated programmes to encourage inter-industry and cross-industry collaborations and partnerships towards supporting the recovery of the entire national economy. Nevertheless, the practicality, effectiveness and inclusiveness of the support schemes are the main concerns. Although PENJANA, PRISMA and PEMULIH (Protection of the People and Recovery of the Economy Assistance Package) were promptly launched in response to the way Covid-19 impacted Malaysia's CCS, it is unknown and questionable whether the resource allocation and decision-making processes had involved effective conversations between stakeholders and the government. Without understanding the actual needs and challenges of individual practitioners or industry players in the different creative sectors or subsectors (each functioning differently), it is impossible to effectively prescribe practical solutions in an inclusive manner. This plight was noted when art and cultural practitioners highlighted the incompetency or limitations of the government's support. Some criticised CENDANA's fund as a 'short-term balm.' To ensure recovery and sustainability, they call for consistent long-term support to rebuild the fragmented and fragile CCS ecosystem (Chan, 2020). However, to successfully reach out to every creative employee can be a challenge by itself. During an interview, CENDANA highlighted the challenge of reaching out to artists, particularly senior artisans/ crafters, who are mostly living in remote areas and inaccessible to internet connection (especially those on the East Coast and East Malaysia). Creative individuals that are inaccessible to online information and application process are likely marginalized. To reach out to the marginalized group, CENDANA seeks support from local art communities across the states. No doubt, the outreach of support to all levels/sectors/groups/individuals within the CCS ecosystem at all states/districts/cities/towns/rural areas is pivotal towards ensuring quick recovery, sustainability and resilience of Malaysia's creative economy. In the subsequent sections, the case studies at the city-level will illustrate how each Malaysian city responded to Covid-19 and deliberate the state, market and civil society nexus in facilitating the recovery and enhancing resilience of each city.

Case Study 1: George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site

With a diverse array of cultural endowments, George Town (capital of Penang state) is well-positioned to be a cultural capital. This statement morphed into reality when the 2008 UNESCO inscription enhanced and reaffirmed George Town's position due to the city's rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage that fulfilled criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv) of the Outstanding Universal Value. While George Town's distinctive cultural accolades attracted global attention, they were in fact the foundations of the city's socio-economy and ecology. The year 2008, in particular, was significant for Penang. Besides obtaining the UNESCO inscription, there was also a switch in political leadership when the opposition party took over following a landslide victory. Post-inscription saw George Town heritage site gradually transforming into an inviting locale for gentrifiers and investors. Following suit, property prices spiked manifolds, tourist arrivals heightened, and the role of creative and cultural industries were fast making a marked presence in the heritage site. Former General Manager of the World Heritage Office highlighted that shophouses and everyday life in the heritage site were experiencing "*new function, new use and new life*" (Tan, 2015: viii). A renaissance of sort illustrated George Town's cultural turn that is inclined to leverage and commodify culture and subsequently cultural/heritage tourism. Culture and creativity were increasingly attached to economy, and this was further affirmed when the state transformed and rebranded their portfolio from 'Penang State EXCO Office for Tourism, Arts, Culture and Heritage (PETACH)' to 'Penang State EXCO Office for Tourism and Creative Economy (PETACE)'. The aspiration to economise culture is succinctly written on PETACE's website: "*The introduction of the Creative Economy portfolio comprising of the arts, culture and heritage reflects the Penang's direction and vision to make this industry an economic powerhouse in future.*"⁴ Though scholars have cautioned the indiscriminate economization of culture (Lim, 2020a; Galloway & Dunlop, 2007), a recent study of George Town indicated that businesses acknowledged the importance of heritage to sustain business activities, which includes tourism. In turn, this links the role of tourism in supporting George Town's economic vibrancy (Throsby & Petetskaya, 2020: vii).

When the Covid-19 pandemic set in and Movement Control Order was imposed since 18 March 2020, George Town's arts and culture sector was not spared either with economic disruptions that threatened livelihoods and sustainability of an ecosystem that is small, flexible yet fragile, disorganised and unregulated (Pan, 2020; Khoo, 2020). Given the way arts, heritage and culture are intertwined and underscore George Town's tourism (Lim, 2020a:4; see also Throsby & Petetskaya, 2020), the severity of disruption within the tourism sector has inadvertently and adversely impacted traditional and modern creative and cultural industries within the heritage site (Lim, 2020b). State-organized functions like the George Town Festival, George Town Heritage Celebration and Art Penang were cancelled. Other private arts programmes like Open Studio, Penang Youth Gender Equality Drama Competition, Penang International Wind Music Festival were also disrupted. Overnight, artists and cultural workers lost their livelihoods and had to quickly search for new business models to survive, sustain and be resilient.

In George Town, strategies to keep the cultural and creative sector afloat derived predominantly from the state. Penang Institute's (state think-tank) championed and voiced their concerns through their policy briefs by highlighting the challenges (i.e. precarious freelance work, over-reliance on state funds), suggesting possible solutions (i.e. immediate support

for individuals/groups/SMEs, subsidies, digitization of contents/processes) and a push for better policies to be formulated for a sector that is so diverse and precarious (Pan, 2020; Lim, 2020a). Additionally, the State Official for PETACE has announced an Aid Package to empower the arts sector. The package is divided into three phases. In Phase 1, RM200,000 is allocated to assist and encourage individual/group artist(s) to migrate their contents online. A Facebook page “Show Penang” will be created to promote local arts contents. In Phase 2, the state will assist local arts associations to rebuild themselves by lessening their operational costs for programmes. Strategies include subsidization towards rental of spaces (i.e. Dewan Sri Pinang, KOMTAR Auditoriums), re-commencement of contributions towards arts in a group or physically by the state, promotion of tickets from arts association in schools and to have regular dialogues between key stakeholders in the local arts industry and the state. Finally, in Phase 3, the state endeavoured to develop and promote local arts contents and ticketing by re-starting the George Town Festival and Art Penang in 2021, allowing arts association to promote via LED billboards owned by PETACE and to rope in the private sector by urging them to ‘adopt’ an arts organization.⁵ As argued by scholars (Throsby & Petetskaya, 2020), the public good-nature and non-market benefits of George Town’s cultural heritage have established a convincing case for continuous public support and investment. This is especially pertinent during such difficult times of Covid-19 where private and small enterprises and local communities in the CCS are adversely impacted in one way or another. The following quotes illustrate voices from George Town’s local communities pertaining to Covid-19, cultural development and how they were impacted in the city.

Since Covid-19 started and lasted for almost two years now, the streets in George Town heritage site are empty. Our businesses are badly impacted as there are no tourists around the city anymore. (Muslim money changer, interview, 16 Aug. 21)

Culture needs to be mainstreamed and taught to the young. We do not have a Culture Masterplan and we definitely need one. Even a Masterplan for a short timeframe will do especially during such trying times like Covid-19 now.
(Executive Secretary of Chinese Clan Council, interview, 13 Aug. 21)

The existing guidelines are more for the tangible heritage of George Town. We need policies for the intangible heritage which are the people in the city and their lifestyles and cultures. Yes, we definitely need a Culture Masterplan before all is lost and gone.
(Consultant/expert in Indian community, interview, 17 Aug. 21)

I have zero income from the shop. The whole of last year I’ve been spending money from my savings. I’m considering letting my staff off. I have been paying him (the staff) full salary until the last two months where I reduced his salary to half. I’m considering switching him to part-time from next month onwards.
(Owner of photography studio & souvenir shop, interview, 19 Aug. 21)

Case Study 2: Kuala Lumpur as the Cultural Capital of Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur (KL), as capital city of Malaysia, has been earmarked and doubled up as the nation’s de facto cultural capital. The city not only boasts its own unique cultural heritage endowments to establish national identity and character; but is also a fecund site for for-

eign investments and capital accumulation. The 1980s and 1990s, particularly, were defining moments when then premier Mahathir welcomed globalization and neo-liberalism in all development realms. Underpinned by a laissez-faire economy, KL underwent significant transformations, massive urban development and modernisation (Sirat, 1997). The city then aspired to be a global city with Kuala Lumpur orientating its material infrastructure, socio-economic activities and cultural/symbolic spaces towards a grandiose global outlook (Bunnell, Barter & Morshidi, 2002). Despite negotiating these contesting local and global forces and cultures, KL is often perceived as the cultural hub/node that is more privileged compared to other Malaysian cities due to KL's capital city status thus inherent biasness with concentration of state-of-the-art infrastructure, amenities, funding and capacity building initiatives within KL.

However, KL and the city's CCS were not spared when Covid-19 hit. In fact, with the high concentration of creative and cultural activities and employees in the capital city, it could imply that KL was bearing a bigger brunt compared to other smaller cultural cities across Malaysia. For instance, Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre's (KLPAC) management screamed out their plea for immediate support to save performing arts industry from drowning. Due to the cancellation and postponement of shows, the centre had lost more than half a million in April 2020 (Cheema, 2020). The management was forced to cut their staffs' salary, from the initial 40% to 60% during the current MCO (Hasham, 2021). Apart from KLPAC, other KL-based performing arts establishments such as Istana Budaya, ASK Dance Company, Ramli Ibrahim's Sutra Foundation also struggled to sustain (Cheema, 2020). The following quotes reflect the impacts of the pandemic on some KL's creative practitioners.

The art market is very slow now. Even though there are virtual art exhibitions here and there, the art collection market is rather less active. (Malay visual artist, interview, 10 July 21)

During every lockdown, I'm stuck in my studio, which is also the place I live. While outdoor activities are not permitted, I have stopped going out to the city to paint on walls. What I can do is merely practising my sketches and frequently post my works on social media to share with my followers. (Malay street artist, interview, 1 August 21)

To stay afloat, the CCS in KL relied predominantly on state funding though with mixed successes. KLPAC's management criticized the support schemes as 'red tape solutions,' which reacted inefficiently in securing survival of the art industry (Hasham, 2021). During an interview with a state cultural agency in December 2020, it revealed the limitation of PENJANA's allocation for the arts and cultural sectors. With PENJANA's allocation, CENDANA only managed to fund less than half (i.e. 42%, 632 out of a total 1500) of the applicants who are mostly from Selangor and KL. The following quote succinctly illustrates the scenario and issues related to support and outreach.

CENDANA initial funding programmes targeted mainly KL's applicants. However, we did receive applications from other states like Penang. With PENJANA's funding, we are now targeting practitioners across states in the country. Among all targeted practitioners, we received the highest number of applications from crafters. Crafters and also the independent musicians are far more in need of support if compared with visual or performing artists... We encountered

challenge to reach out to practitioners in rural areas, like crafters who are mainly based in kampung (villages) and not accessible to internet. We need support from intermediaries such as the local groups. One factor that challenged us to reach out more to the relevant practitioners is because many applicants are reluctant to read, to understand and to fill in the application forms. (CEO of government cultural agency, interview, 17 Dec. 2020)

In a way, KL's creative community has had the privilege of obtaining first-hand information about funding since CENDANA is based in KL. However, non-KL practitioners, particularly those living in rural areas, rely on intermediaries (i.e. local government institutions, local creative agencies/local arts and culture groups) for effective dissemination of information on support programs. Therefore, good state-private-civil society collaborations and partnerships are pivotal towards ensuring inclusive distribution of available support to target groups.

In rendering aid to artists in Klang Valley in particular, besides PENJANA's initiatives, CENDANA collaborated with the private sector (i.e. Yayasan Sime Darby) to launch COVID-19 Food Aid Programme. A total of 118 Klang Valley-based artists benefitted from the initiative. Additionally, as an initiative to engage the local public through art and culture during lockdown, the Culture, Arts, Tourism and Sports Department of Kuala Lumpur City Hall launched project "Kombo Budaya DBKL" (Culture Combo DBKL) to regularly broadcast recorded performances by local artists, including musicians and dancers who have to work from home on DBKL's Facebook. The platform serves to promote local art and cultural practitioners (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur, n.d.).

Case Study 3: Ipoh – Morphing from Old Mining Town to Creative City

Ipoh is the capital city of Perak state. The city's creative movement emerged in the old town vicinity in 2012 within a private adaptive redevelopment project called Sekeping Kong Heng at Jalan Bandar Timah. Burgeoning local creative entrepreneurs within the site has spurred creative production and consumption around Ipoh old town (i.e. artisan market, mural trail, hipster cafes, art & cultural lanes, museums & art spaces). This period marked Ipoh's cultural turn which has gradually put art, culture, heritage and creativity in the vanguard of local development. With the aspiration to regenerate Ipoh's economy, the local government (i.e. Ipoh City Council) drafted a 'Special Area Plan (SAP) of Ipoh Town-Tin Heritage City 2020' in 2014 where conservation-centric urban regeneration and creative place-making strategies were adopted (Ipoh City Council, 2014). The local council's efforts were supported by the state government and complemented by private initiatives. In 2018, Perak's State Exco for Tourism, Art and Culture committed to develop Ipoh as a creative city by capitalizing the city's local gastronomy and art as the way forward. Subsequently, the state government through its creative agency, People of Remarkable Talents (PORT), actively nurture, promote and develop the local CCS through local programmes and events. In November 2019, the state government launched Dana Kreatif Perak@PORT (Perak Creative Funds) (Khoo & Chang, 2021). During the initial phase of establishing the local creative scene, Perak encountered a change of state government in April 2020. "Art" and "culture" are now parked under the State Exco of Housing, Local Government and Tourism (www.perak.gov.my).

Similar to George Town and Kuala Lumpur, the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard on all developing CCS and subsectors in Ipoh. All physical art and cultural festivals/events were cancelled. Artisan markets, museums and art spaces stopped operations during lockdowns. Individual practitioners struggled to sustain their livelihoods while art venues were strained to maintain their spaces and businesses. The following quotes echo the struggles of Ipoh's creative and cultural workers towards sustaining their creative endeavours.

The pandemic has seriously affected my work. Some orders have been cancelled. Some foreign clients are unable to come over to collect their customized orders. Payments ended up being delayed. Also, supplies of raw materials are disrupted. (Chinese artisan, interview, 16 July 21)

I have stopped making kavadis since the pandemic. Other than kavadi, I usually supply polystyrene art creations to wedding decorators. Due to the pandemic, I have stopped all my creations. (Indian kavadi maker, interview, 19 July 21)

Since the initial MCO in March 2020, PORT has responded rapidly to support local creative communities. According to PORT's general manager, besides practitioners, people working backstage are also asking for support. The greatest impacts are seen among local musicians, buskers and performers. To ensure the creative communities continue to engage in creative production during pandemic, PORT organized online events (i.e. competitions, workshops, public forums, sharing sessions by creative workers & etc.) as platforms for showcasing local creativity. With no extra allocation, PORT initiated online charity art auctions and exhibitions to raise funds for C19 Fund@PORT as its corporate social responsibility. The fund was later complemented by a donation from a private foundation located in Kuala Lumpur. The accumulated fund is donated to local practitioners and supporting workers in need. The fund has benefitted 60 local creative workers in 2020. The support provided by PORT are further elucidated below.

We do our best to support local practitioners and their supporting workers who are struggling to survive and sustain their livelihoods now. C19 Fund@PORT is part of our corporate social responsibility (CSR). Recently, we partnered with three other Ipoh-based stakeholders to launch Books Flash Sale online. 100% of the proceedings go to the fund as donations to the local busker community.

(General Manager of state government creative agency, interview, 9 July 2021)

Through Dana Kreatif Perak@PORT 2020, PORT funded 41 art projects in the fields of music, film, visual arts and performing art with the state's allocation of RM167,000. Additionally, PORT is partnering with CENDANA and My Creative Ventures to disseminate information on federal government support to Perakians through online and offline channels. Currently, PORT is helping CENDANA to reach out to Perak claimants for the upcoming cycles of COVID-19 food assistance program. In supporting Malaysian visual artists, including young, emerging and established artists, PORT recently collaborated with nine art groups/art spaces/artist collectives based in Perak, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur to launch a social media platform, namely, Artaidartist. Artaidartist will showcase and market fine artworks through

virtual exhibitions. Fifty percent of each artist's artwork sold at the exhibition will be given to other participating artists whose artworks are not sold. The initiative demonstrates the solidarity of art community in supporting each other towards sustainability and resilience. This echoes UNESCO's aspirations (2020) that creativity and culture foster a positive social connection through collaborations during the pandemic.

Apart from PORT, the Malaysia Handicraft Perak Branch and the National Department for Culture and Arts (JKKN) Perak, under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC), play an active role in creating local awareness of national support system, recovery initiatives and support platforms to reach out to local beneficiaries. Recently, on 12 July 2021, JKKN Perak organised an online forum to invite MOTAC and JKKN (Headquarters) representatives to brief on incentives and support offered by the ministry. However, local participation was low and limited to certain groups or fields of practitioners and organizations. Not a single Chinese art group joined the forum. The lack of engagement by various ethnic groups or CCS will jeopardize the dissemination of support in an inclusive fashion. This in turn could affect the recovery and sustainable development of the local and national creative economy due to ineffectiveness of stakeholder partnership and the disconnectedness of state-market-civil society relationship.

The federal government initiatives like PENJANA, PRISMA and PEMULIH are applicable across all 13 states in the country. These initiatives are expected to cascade down to the city level. In addition to federal government support, the governments at the state and local levels have also introduced their own local initiatives and strategies towards resilience. Table 4 compares the local strategies embarked by Kuala Lumpur, George Town and Ipoh during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the pandemic persists, efforts will be continually expanded, and other viable strategies may be imposed along the way to increase local resilience of Malaysian creative cities. Thus, Table 4 is valid at the time of writing this paper and non-exhaustive in nature to spell out all initiatives and strategies at city and state level. Table in figure 4 attempted to use the similar themes derived from figure 1's table (global scenario) to analyze and map the scenario for the three case study cities. It was found that while most of the impacts and strategies found in Malaysia mirrored those globally, but two elements namely employment support and cross-sectoral integration were not particularly evident at the city level. Table 4 provides a snapshot overview by comparing and contrasting the types of local strategies provided by three Malaysian cities (i.e. Kuala Lumpur, George Town, Ipoh) in response to Covid-19's impacts.

As the federal territory and the capital city of Malaysia, KL's creative practitioners are geographically advantaged where they can instantly and conveniently gain access to all forms of federal support. In this regard, KL creatives are likely to be more dependent on national strategies provided by the federal government. This could imply that KL's local government need not play as heavy a role compared to local governments of other Malaysian creative cities which are smaller in size and further in proximity.

Impacts	Themes <i>(Similar themes derived from Table 1 were used to analyse the Malaysian context.)</i>	Local Strategies (initiated by State & Local governments)	Malaysian Cities		
			Kuala Lumpur	George Town, Penang	Ipoh, Perak
Loss of employment	Employment support		Employment support is not evident in these cities.		
	Capacity building	# Promotion of local creative talents via online platforms	✓	✓	✓
		# Upskilling programmes (via online workshops)	✓		✓
Loss of income	Financial aid	# Project grants & funding	✓	✓	✓
		# Cash donations			✓
		# Rental subsidies		✓	
		# Fundraising for setting up COVID-19 fund			✓
		# Competition awards			✓
	Food & supplies	# Food Aid Programme	✓	✓	✓
Affected social well-being	Active social engagement	# Public engagement through online broadcast of arts and cultural contents	✓	✓	✓
Degenerated local vibrancy	Localising production & consumption	# Restart & development of local art & cultural events		✓	
Downsized CCS	Financial aid	# Funding migration of contents online		✓	
		# Rental subsidies		✓	
		# State's contributions on art groups/ associations		✓	
	Digitalisation	# Showcasing & promotion of creative practitioners on digital platforms	✓	✓	✓
		# Broadcasting & promotion of local arts & culture contents on digital platforms		✓	
		# Virtualised arts & cultural events & activities		✓	

Figure 4. Table showing COVID-19's impacts on the creative & cultural sectors and strategies towards resilience at city-level: the Malaysian context. Source: Compiled by authors from fieldwork, 2021.

Impacts	Themes <i>(Similar themes derived from Table 1 were used to analyse the Malaysian context.)</i>	Local Strategies (initiated by State & Local governments)	Malaysian Cities		
			Kuala Lumpur	George Town, Penang	Ipoh, Perak
	Business restructuring	# Adaptation of digital marketing & promotion	✓	✓	✓
	Capacity building	# Awareness raising about local creative productions & contents	✓	✓	✓
	Consultation	# Local advisory & networking services on available supports & funding opportunities		✓	✓
	Cross-sectoral integration		Cross-sectoral integrations are not evident in these cities.		
	Intercity/Regional collaborations	# Inter-city partnership in distributing aids & supports	✓	✓	✓
		# Inter-city stakeholders' collaborations in creating shared supporting platforms	✓		✓
	State-market partnerships	# Promotion of events in schools		✓	
		# Promotion of private adoption of arts organisations/ events		✓	
		# Dialogues between state and industrial stakeholders		✓	✓

Figure 4. Continued. Table showing COVID-19's impacts on the creative & cultural sectors and strategies towards resilience at city-level: the Malaysian context. Source: Compiled by authors from fieldwork, 2021.

Conclusion and Way Forward

As one of the worst hit sectors during the Covid-19 pandemic, the global CCS is at a cross-roads when in-person and live events halted or operated below normal capacity causing job losses, contract cancellations, deficits and such. To resuscitate and keep the sector afloat, various forms of interventions are mobilized by governments both in the developed and developing world. In hindsight and from a theoretical and practical standpoint, the role and future of the CCS have generally taken a dichotomous route. While the public- and social-good nature of CCS is beneficial to the wider society as espoused in 2 (b) (especially during Covid where people found solace in cultural and artistic immersion), the economic viability of the sector though promising has been critiqued as being socially exclusive. Arguably, the economic impacts of CCS vary and are distributed and benefitted disproportionately across creative employees (i.e. producers, creators, extras, freelancers, etc.), institutions and creative cities within society and across geographies. With burgeoning theoretical

discourse deliberating the socio-economic value of culture and the way culture/creativity intersect with urban planning in creative city-making, this paper has attempted to investigate these claims where each of the above case study were analyzed to depict their local scenarios during Covid-19.

The above findings of budding Malaysian creative cities revealed that national and state/city level assistance (i.e. funding, capacity building, etc.) are present, but the way they cascaded down to each city is shaped by local state and civil society dynamics. The Malaysian case studies somewhat mirror global trends where there are instances of socio-spatial inequalities playing out when allocating assistance/funding where creative cities at major urban centers (i.e. Kuala Lumpur) or those cities (i.e. Ipoh) with stronger political will fare better and rebound quicker. Solo creative employees, smaller creative establishments and cities at the fringe are at risk of being side-lined and escape policy attention. As CCS braces to survive and be resilient, the element of 'creativity' has been optimized optimally with the emergence of new business models/formats and heightened digitalization of the sector which are commendable strategies. The Malaysian CCS is currently adopting and adapting to digitalization albeit in different scale, nature and magnitude. These measures, however, invite a different set of issues particularly concerning the economic and social welfare and well-being of creative employees (i.e. creators/producers/backstage workers) in terms of intellectual property rights, patents, employment rights, employee's perquisites and such. Additionally, issues of digital illiteracy and digital divide within Malaysia's CCS and across creative cities need to be addressed accordingly too. These issues will singularly or collectively impact the individual Malaysian creative employee and ultimately the social and cultural sustainability of the broader sector. Thus, recommendations like having clearer policy measures and even devising a Culture Masterplan at the city level should be duly considered by Malaysian cities that aspire to leverage on creative and cultural sectors.

With Covid-19 still unfolding, the road to recovery is anticipated to be long and rocky. With the private sector and creative employees still struggling to brace the pandemic, dialogues and policy emphasis from all tiers of governments and across diverse stakeholders (i.e. private, public, civil society) are crucial to truly fathom the hidden issues, struggles and challenges so that practical recommendations and policy changes that are inclusive and all-encompassing can be proposed. In every crisis, nonetheless, there is always an opportunity to change for betterment. In this case, the Covid-19 pandemic might serve as a blessing in disguise to revisit, restructure and give a new lease of life to Malaysia's CCS which has been largely marginalized even prior to Covid-19. As a developing nation, Malaysia has always prioritized Science & Technology over CCS thus downplaying and relegating arts, heritage and culture to the backseat. The Covid-19 crisis further degenerated Malaysia's CCS. However, with the imminent importance of culture and creativity in all spheres of development (as espoused in 2.0) coupled with global recognition of the prowess of creative cities to brace Covid-19 and to bounce back stronger, it is hoped that this crisis will be a turning point for Malaysia's CCS and creative cities alike. There is a clarion call to push the 'reset button' for Malaysia's CCS by according to them due recognition of prominence in the socio-economic and cultural realms as well as to be placed on a level playing field with other sectors/industries. A duly recognized and vibrant CCS will ensure economic and socio-cultural sustainability of the sector which in turn underscores the resilience and success of Malaysian creative cities during Covid-19 and in anticipation of future shocks in the future.

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The Sociological Approach as a Driver of Change in the Traditional Wedding Attire

of West Sumatra Indonesia: An Aesthetic Analysis

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Abstract

The rapid development of the modern era brings unavoidable concept shifts and poses challenges, especially in fashion. The objectives of this study are: 1) to examine the understanding of fashion designers, fashion stylists, clothing rentals, and customers; 2) to evaluate the aesthetics of Minangkabau wedding attire; 3) to analyze the driver's of changes in the design aesthetics elements of traditional wedding attire based on the sociological approach theory by Arnold Hauser. This study uses a mixed-method through open-ended structured questions and focuses group discussions with a descriptive approach. The findings of this study are to determine the driving force and aspects of aesthetic changes in traditional clothing. This study proposes a conceptual framework for a sociological approach of fashion adapted from Arnold Hauser's Theory. The results showed that self-concepts in fashion design, socio-cultural changes in clothing, the role of fashion and new inventions are drivers of changes in traditional clothing aesthetics.

Keywords: *Fashion Aesthetics, Traditional Wedding Attire, Culture, Sociological approach, West Sumatra, Indonesia*

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Introduction

Design and model of fashion continue to evolve from time to time. However, some cases succeeded in maintaining their original model, as illustrated in a study observing how traditional Korean culture's aesthetic characteristics from the past to contemporary fashion designs (Kwon and Lee, 2015). There is a combination of past and present culture in Korean outfits due to a mixture of western civilization, popular culture, and fashion and art. In history, styles distinguished social classes, and the appearance of ethnic and subcultural styles are among the characteristics of postmodern modes. In contrast, traditional wedding attire in the western region of Saudi Arabia, Hijaz, has a unique style and form of traditional wedding attire. The Hijazi community has succeeded in maintaining their bridal's original shape till now (Tawfiq and Marcketti, 2016). The two studies above show that design changes do not always occur.

An external factor also influences the design of traditional attire. For example, traditional Minangkabau wedding attire design influenced by other nations such as China, Arabic, Portuguese, and India during international trade (Navis, 1984). In addition, the entry of Islam into Indonesia with acculturation also affects the design of clothing such as *baju kurung* (long dress) with its characteristic do not reveal the body shape. The Minangkabau people who are predominantly Muslim have a customary philosophy, which binds the Minangkabau community inclusive in the design and manner of wedding attire according to the custom and dignity that conceived (Magriasti, 2011). Accordingly, Islam and fashion stand in a tense relationship, whereby Islam as the realm of the spiritual and the sacred, eternal values and virtues do not sit easily with fashion, which belongs to the field of surface and form, characterized by rapid growth change excellent fluidity (Moors, 2007). Culture is often taken as a historical given rather than a constructed system (Sartini et al., 2023) in which the portrait or the dress plays its constitutive part (Breward, 1998). Hence, Minangkabau's traditional attire was designed by tradition, socio-cultural norms, and Islamic concepts (Navis, 1984). However, with the rapid development towards the modern era, a shifting concept of *baju kurung* cannot be avoided and raises its challenges. The process of assimilation, such as mixing concepts in the design of traditional apparel with various customs from other regions, also becomes a challenge in maintaining the original image. The Minangkabau traditional leader states that the traditional wedding attire should not be changed or modified in any form because traditional wedding attire contains philosophical meanings and values of local wisdom. If there is a modification in its design, it might eliminate its sacred importance. Unfortunately, these changes are increasingly visible nowadays and considered as something normal.

The Minangkabau traditional leader stated that traditional wedding attire should not be changed or modified in any form. The Minangkabau traditional wedding attire contains philosophical meanings and values of Minangkabau traditional wisdom. If there is a change, it can eliminate its substance values. These changes are increasingly visible in wedding events and seem to have become commonplace and considered self-actualization that follows the times. However, the appearance of traditional Minangkabau wedding attire has been modified, according to Schein (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2012). This research analyzes how changes and aspects affect the aesthetics of Minangkabau wedding attire to maintain this tradition and not shift too far into contemporary wedding clothes. Outside cultures also influence this phenomenon through the rapid development of science and technology, like social media through Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms accelerate information to the public.

Moreover, fashion designers, fashion stylists, fashion bloggers, celebrities, and influencers also contribute to the shifting values of culture, including the concept of traditional apparel. Therefore, this study carries three objectives; the first is to examine the understanding of fashion designers, make-up artists, and traditional clothing rentals regarding Minangkabau wedding attire from the past to the present. The second goal is to evaluate the aesthetics of Minangkabau wedding attire. The third objective is to analyze the influence of cultural shifts on the aesthetics of Minangkabau traditional wedding attire with the theory of the sociological approach by Arnold Hauser.

Theoretical Framework

Concept of Fashion

Fashion is the cultural construction of an embodied identity. It includes all form-creating activities from street fashion to high fashion created by designers and couturiers. But in general, fashion is known as the style or behavior of dressing at a specific period and often has implications for changes in style and behavior (Steele, 2017). Fashion has western phenomenon since the late middle ages, but China's Tang Dynasty (618-907) and Japan's Heian Period (795-1185) have embraced the concept of fashion. For example, in eleventh-century Japanese courts, the term "priestekashi" (up-to-date or fashionable) is used. Fashion has a very intimate relationship with the physical body and even the individual's identity. Although fashion is more concerned with the clothing itself, fashion also includes fashion in furniture, cars, etc.

Fashion changes reflect social change and the financial interests of fashion designers and producers. Stanley Lieberman's (2000) research into fashion with children's first names was unaffected by commercial interests. None of the advertisers promote name choices like Rebecca, Zoe, or Christopher, but they are still in vogue. However, internal taste mechanisms also encourage fashion change even without significant social change. Aesthetics is a part of the concept of beauty; thus, aesthetics is an indicator of the beauty of art. In his book *Evolution in the Arts*, Munro, a philosopher and theorist of art states that art is a tool made by humans to give psychological effects for those who see it (Munro, 1963). Accordingly, fashion, particularly in the applied art media, where the aesthetic elements of art in fashion. Edmund Burke Feldman (Bunkse, 1981) classifies the aesthetic concept of attire according to primary, social, and physical functions. In terms of the subjectivity of a fashion designer, the natural part of traditional apparel is the fundamental value inherent in every work of art created with the concept of thought, the purpose of creation, creativity as a form of visualization cannot be separated from the design elements.

Meanwhile, the theory of fine art elements by Jirousek and Charlotte in their blog *Art Design and Visual Thinking* states that the essential elements of fine art design are points, lines, shapes, spaces, changes, colors, and patterns (Jirousek, 1995). Moreover, Verganti (2013) describes that elements such as colors, lines, and shapes are developed based on a combination of materials and structures and considered symbols or messages. Huang (2015, cited in Jung, 2011) added that analyzing the elements that form aesthetic fashion is fundamental in examining apparel styles, including ideas and concepts, creativity, materials, colors, shapes and constructions, techniques, and human elements accessories. There-

fore, Cao (2011) divides the composition of clothing into two levels, namely the formal and technical levels and the level of cultural connotation (Yen and Hsu 2017). Cultural connotations are the essential elements of fashion, while forms and techniques represent the message.

Traditional Wedding Attire of Minangkabau

The Minangkabau tribe is located in West Sumatra and is one of the provinces located along the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Initially, Minangkabau wedding attire was the royal garment of the king of Pagaruyung and traditional stakeholders. The bride and groom wear traditional clothes during the wedding ceremony to preserve Minangkabau culture (Maresa, 2009). According to Firdaus (2009), before Islam entered Minangkabau, the clothes worn by Minangkabau women looked like Javanese and Balinese clothes known as “*kemben*” (Firdaus, 2009). Then the form has changed since the Padri period of 1803 (Islamic Reform I) due to cultural acculturation with the Indians, Middle East, Chinese, and Malays with clothing in the form of robes and veils (Fatimah, 2018). The model in that period was almost the same shape as Minangkabau women's clothing which developed around 1682.

Baju kurung is a wedding dress and traditional dress considered sacred to the Minangkabau community, not just to cover the body or as a part of aesthetics, but it is a symbol of civilization of the Malay community, especially the Minangkabau community. It contains Minangkabau values and philosophy, illustrated from every line and form of the design. The original design is large and loose on the body and sleeves, which symbolize that women provide serenity and peace for themselves, their families, and society. Women are also a symbol of the existence because, in Minangkabau society, women are the heirs and successors of descendants.

In Spain, the matador outfit influences the groom's attire. The wedding dress is named *roki*, made from velvet sprinkled with gold thread, and on the edge of the seam also uses gold thread. At the end of the sleeves and on the shoulders or collar are given *batanti* lace. Before putting the *roki* on, a white shirt must be worn first, followed by a vest, pants, and outerwear. The vest has the same material and color as the trousers, made from velvet. The groom's trouser is only up to the middle of the calf, then wearing white socks up to the knees (Maresa, 2009).



Figure 1. Traditional Minangkabau wedding attire (1860). Source: KITLV Leiden/M. Joustra (Joustra 1923).



Figure 2. Traditional Minangkabau wedding attire (1984). Source: Agusthi Evi Martala.

Traditional Minangkabau wedding attire changed the design and the times, both in shape, silhouette, color, and accessories. This change leads to a contemporary/modern bridal outfit, as can be seen from the following design images:



Figure 3. Traditional Minangkabau Wedding Attire (2010). Source: AdatIndonesia.com.

Aesthetics in Minangkabau Wedding Attire

Elements of line and direction, elements of shape and size, elements of texture, elements of color are the design elements which contain in traditional Minangkabau wedding attire. The line element is made based on a combination of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines formed in line with the life attitude of the Minangkabau people through courtesy in rela-

tionships that upholds culture and local values. The motive is made freely in the form of flora and fauna diversities. The combination of lines and directions that form a motif with the stylization process creates a new model but not far from the original form, such as the motifs embroidery. A meaning that can be captured from the embroidered motifs consisting of flowers or animals and circled with gold threads (Purnama et al., 2023) is a symbol of the woman's purity which becomes the bride (Ibrahim and Yunus, 1986). A woman in Minangkabau keeps herself from anything that can reflect her perfect name and always puts herself in the customary rules oriented to Islam's teachings.

The velvet material used is shiny when viewed. It looks luxurious with additional gold cloth decorations and typical *Padang* embroidery with shiny coarse-textured bead ornaments reflecting the character of Minangkabau women as a person who is respected, valued, protected, and role models as well. The element of color in Minangkabau traditional wedding attire in Padang serves the beauty of visuals and an identity. Colors commonly used are bold colors such as red, yellow, blue, purple, and black. Color in every culture is a symbol, a metaphor, and a part of an aesthetic system (Jones and MacGregor, 2002). The red color reflects the feeling of happiness, which means bravery. It is to be a brave act to start a new life in wedding attire. Usually, red which combined with gold symbolize immortality; hence it adds a graceful and elegant impression to the bride and groom. The black color portrays maturity and toughness in dealing with life's problems.

Arnold Hauser's Theory of Sociological Approach (1951)

The sociological theory approach consists of three aspects in developing a design idea, including elements of sociology, psychology, and style as the final direction in creating a design (Hauser, 2011). Arnold Hauser's theory is essentially a cognitive theory of art. However, due to the shift in various discussions of Hauser's views, there is a conflicting relationship between art, science, and technology. At first, this created tension in Hauser's work that he had to explain his assertion that there was a link between aesthetics and the cognitive realm. The emergence of the following study on Hauser's view and refinement of the social art constitution. He is well aware of the material and technological constraints that shape the art related to the modern era's existence, which gives rise to the mutual dependence between economic and technical arrangements. The understanding is that today's society by technological change. The Industrial Revolution produced modern art influenced by technology and modernization in mechanics reproduction. According to him, it would be more complicated if only the human mind's rapid development of technical phenomena in technology, where art itself is a manifesto in the emergence of impressionism (Gelfert, 2012). Departing from this, the theory of Arnold Hauser becomes a reference in this study. Based on this suitability, this study uses the theory of sociology of art from Arnold Hauser. In addition, the role in fashion and new inventions also affect the style in shaping the changes in the aesthetic elements of design. To that end, this study also proposes a conceptual framework adapted from Arnold Hauser's theory to find answers to the driving aspects of aesthetic change in Minangkabau traditional wedding attire.

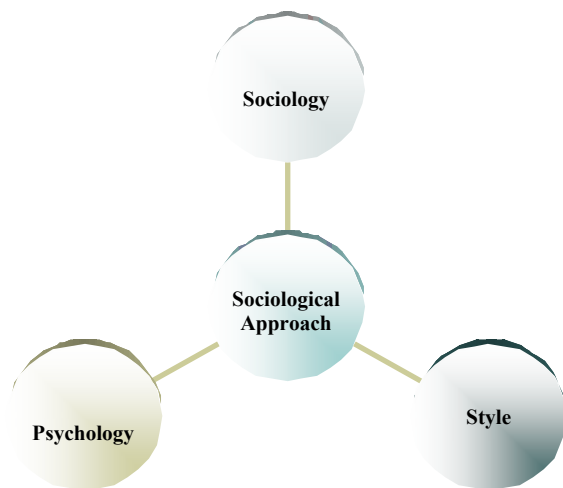


Figure 4. Three stages of the sociological approach by Arnold Hauser (1951).

Psychology

Self Concepts in Fashion Design

Elements of Psychology will explain in the form of self-concept. The self-concept is a primary determinant of people's self-presentation and the specific aspects of self that individuals wish to control and portray (McNeill, 2018). The broad topic of self-concept refers to the collection of attitudes people hold toward themselves. Self-concept includes self-esteem, or the value with which a person views him- or herself. It also provides self-image or people's perceptions of what they like. Self-concept is the sense of self-image that is of interest to marketers because many consumers select products and brands that fit or match their images (Goldsmith, Moore, and Beaudoin, 1999).

Furthermore, according to Barnard, Fashion Identity theory plays a vital role in conveying the identity and personality of each individual through what is worn, why it is not exciting, and will get a particular message or a specific image (Barnard, 2014). For example, wearing clothes that are famous with a logo that is well known and well-known will increase the confidence and social status of the wearer. It is related to how a person views himself, making him different from others. Previously, another opinion stated that various notions of self-identity from several experts. Self-identity is a concept used to express who they are and how their relationships and social status in society are; understanding what they are wearing, how they expect themselves, and choosing what is appropriate or not to wear in appearance. Mulyana is a self-presentation process that individuals usually use in impression management (Samovar et al., 2010). Weori Goffman introduces this dramaturgical approach through techniques used by actors to foster certain impressions in certain situations with specific goals. This approach is also related to controlling and projecting themselves from the image they want and present (Tseëlon, 1992). Indirectly, the social function of the dress will affect the feelings and ways of thinking of various community groups present at the party to influence their behavior when socializing (Kaufman and Feldman, 2004). A bridal dress is an art form shown to the broader community in the wedding procession. Morris classifies the function of clothing in three aspects, namely clothing for display, clothing for comfort, and clothing for modesty or appropriateness. The embodiment of apparel is by its function by paying attention to the visual elements of clothing (Morris, 2002).

Sociology

Socio-Cultural Changes in Fashion

Fashion is related to sociological discourse and empirical studies on culture, technology, mobility, etc (Kawamura, 2018). According to Davis, in the sociological interest in fashion, people communicate their personality through their outfits. Clothing symbolically represents a social structure or status claims and lifestyle attachments (Davis, 2013). Observation suggests that the world is moving towards globalization and overwhelming the national cultures and identity, pushing them farther toward the periphery of irrelevance (Bird and Stevens, 2003). Globalization generates a temporary society, where according to Crane, contemporary societies as "postindustrial" and their cultures as "postmodern," which implies a transformation in the relationship between various elements of social structure in the nature and role of culture (Crane, 2012).

Clothing is an instrument of communication; it is a social identity, not a personal identity (Noesjirwan and Crawford, 1982). Acculturation is the process of adaptation and change that occurs when two different cultures interact (Berry, 1995). The implication of the uni-dimensional approach is about acculturation and identities from heritage culture (Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000). Thus, the explanation of acculturation and cultural assimilation is also an integral part of cultural diffusion (Croucher and Kramer, 2017). Moreover, rapid communication and transportation technology developments have increased the interaction between people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ward, Bochner, and Furnham 2020). In this context, according to historical records, traditional Minangkabau bridal clothing results from the acculturation process of apparel from various countries and a combination of customs from different regions in Indonesia.

Style

Roles in Fashion Design

Numbers of aspects take part in the world of fashion. A fashion designer has an essential role in creating attire. Several factors influence clothing purchase from particular designers: aesthetic elements, better material quality, and status or image (Fogel and Schneider, 2010). So, the task of a designer in adapting trends, following trends, and pouring them into a fashion work must have a sense of responsibility. A fashion designer does not work alone, but many parties participate and synergize in socializing the fashion itself, such as a stylist whose job is to create visualizations (Ro, 2014).

Besides, the celebrity also plays quite an important role. According to Till and Shimp, when a brand endorses a celebrity, consumers perceive that it is associated with the brand and remains in their memory (Till, 1998). This concept is instrumental in influencing consumers and has been used for a long time to inspire the public with messages (Dwivedi, Johnson, and McDonald, 2015). Therefore, Blumer expresses a strong relationship between what celebrities choose, like, and are interested in, and their fans will follow for sure (Blumer, 1969). The contemporary prominence of the fashion muse can be said to represent an impulsive trend in the mix of personal inspiration and public-facing advocates, where their public image with the designers they work with effectively "embodies" communication in fashion platforms and promotional discourse (Barron, 2019). In addition, there is also the role of fashion bloggers that they declare themselves as idealized fashion subjects by producing their own fashion-centered media formats. Through quality clothing and fashion disguises, they maintain a high agency level (Titton, 2015).

New Invention

The development of Science and Technology has facilitated innovation in fashion, such as fashion trends that keep changing through the existence of Mass Media in the order of people's lives or also often called Modernization. Modernization itself appears as a result of solid globalization and, in the end, has an impact on changes in all lines of society and causes the complexity of problems (Battersby and Siracusa, 2009). Fashion trends provide an insight into the style and color direction of future products (King, 2011).

Fashion trends move fast along with the development of technology, information, and innovation; hence, anyone can immediately access the messages and targeted goals. Mass media plays a substantial role in disseminating information, especially in digital media such as television, mobile phones, and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, and other applications, thus making disseminating information even more unstoppable. According to Nayar, celebrity culture, production, dissemination, and consumption through global media have been genuinely global cultures in recent years (Nayar, 2009). Hirsch argues that we must consider the mass media as gatekeepers and the primary regulator of innovation as a counterweight. Indeed, publicized mass media reach a large audience and, therefore, can draw broad attention to progressive management rhetoric (Hirsch, 1972). Various publications can contribute directly to the spread of management modes (Abrahamson, 1996). In a new millennium era, television has a central role in circulating fashionable images and creating demand (Warner, 2014). The correlation between marketing and mass media is a kind of symbiosis mutualism (Khamis, Ang, and Welling, 2017). Media relies on advertising revenue for commercial viability, while advertisers have traditionally relied on media to address the audience (their potential consumers). To deliver messages to the audience, media organizations create interesting, engaging content, their primary objective. One type of content that has been broadly popular with audiences is a celebrity. There is a prominent marketing relationship between a brand, media, audience, and fame.

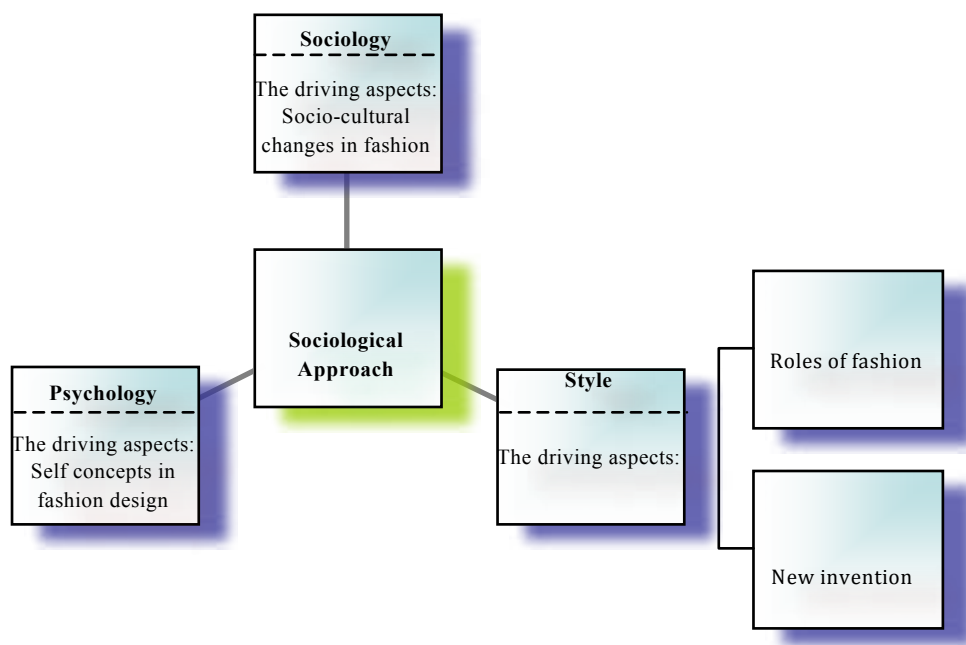


Figure 5. Proposes Conceptual Framework of the sociological approach in fashion. (Adapted from Arnold Hauser's Theory 1951).

Methodology

The method used in this research is a mixed-method with a descriptive approach. Data were gathered through open-ended structured questions and focus group discussions with a descriptive approach. To further deepen this research, additionally collect data in the form of theories and expert opinions, pictures from the literature, and documentation regarding Minangkabau traditional wedding attire to be discussed further through the interaction of experts in focus group discussions.

According to Marczak and Sewell, focus groups were initially called “focused interviews” or “in-depth group interviews,” which developed in understanding how or why people hold certain beliefs about a topic of interest. Similarly, Hollander and Duggleby describe focus group discussions as a method for collecting data and information through social interactions between communities, in which individuals influence each other (Hollander, 2004; Duggleby, 2005). One of the advantages of using the focus group discussion method is that it provides richer data and added value that is not obtained when using different data collection methods, especially in quantitative research. Likewise, focus groups that good practice of face-to-face and online focus groups can build a stimulus for group involvement to contribute (Robinson, 2020). The topics discussed in the focus group discussions aimed to evaluate changes in the aesthetics of Minangkabau wedding dress designs, including shapes, lines, textures, colors, and accessories in Minangkabau traditional wedding attire and adapting the theory of the sociological approach by Arnold Hauser.

Participants

This study involved eighty-five fashion designers, fashion stylists, clothing rentals, and customers wearers selected as research subjects for the survey. Furthermore, this study selected 15 panels based on their expertise with the criteria of having more than ten years of experience as experts, especially local Minangkabau figures, fashion critics, fashion, fashion stylists, and make-up artists, make-up lecturers, fashion bloggers, and fashion influencers.

Data Collection

This study consists of 3 sources of data—first, open-ended structured questions. The first activity in this research project was to survey preliminary understanding of the subject matter of the study that is to examine fashion designers, make-up artists, and traditional clothing rentals regarding the knowledge of Minangkabau wedding attire from the past to the present. The second data was through a literature study and documentation—the third was collected through focus group discussions. The Zoom meeting application obtained data from 15 panels in a virtual May 2020 focus group discussion.

Data Analysis

This qualitative study explored the 85 representative respondents that was purposive, the next is analyzing data obtained from literature studies and the focus group discussion results.

Participants	<i>n</i>
Fashion designers	15
Fashion stylists	17
Clothing rentals	18
Customers	35
Working experience in years (Fashion designers, Fashion stylists, Clothing rentals)	<i>n</i>
35+	5
25-34	9
15-24	10
10-14	12
9 and under	14
Age	<i>n</i>
45-54	13
35-44	22
25-34	23
Under 25	27

Figure 6. Demographic breakdown of participants.

The steps are transferring raw materials from audio-visual data types and rewriting the recording as a whole (make transcript/verbatim). Then, look for prominent issues repeatedly, categorize answers to the topics discussed and refer to notes during focus group discussions. Then, made into paragraphs, analyzing and highlighting problems/topics mentioned and discussed by the panel and categorizing all panel answers into specific themes and issues to ensure that the data obtained from the informants are valid. Following the indicators expected in this study, the focus of this study is divided into two parts, namely the analysis of the design aesthetics elements, and the second theme is what aspects are a driving force in the changes of fashion aesthetics Minangkabau traditional wedding attire. Then each of these general themes is further divided into five sub-themes based on the dimensions of fashion aesthetics: shapes, lines, textures of materials, colors, and accessories for the first theme and self-concept, socio-culture, roles in fashion design, and new inventions for the second theme. This sub-theme guide is expected to fulfill the research objectives that have been determined previously.

Finding and Discussions

The first finding from the preliminary study in a survey is that only 30% of respondents know about traditional Minangkabau wedding attire. On the other hand, 70% of fashion designer respondents stated that they made designs based on orders. Seventy-five percent of customers ordered modified wedding attire from a clothing rental. Likewise, consumer data shows that 80% use modification wedding attire.

Results	Percentage (%)
Fashion designer Knowledge about traditional Minangkabau wedding attire	30
Fashion designer made designs based on customers orders	70
Fashion designer made designs based on their knowledge about traditional Minangkabau wedding attire	30
Customers ordered modified wedding attire from a clothing rental	75
Customers choosed modified wedding attire	80
Customers choosed traditional wedding attire	20

Figure 7. Participant survey results.

The second stage discusses the opinion of the informant, who shows a statement about the factors driving force in the changes of fashion aesthetics of Minangkabau traditional wedding attire in terms of the informant's point of view according to his expertise. The points are the changes of design aesthetics elements such as shapes, lines, textures, colors, and accessories. During the Focus Group Discussion, all participants were asked about self-concept, issues of socio-cultural change, the influence of fashion trends and mass media, how role models play a role in fashion, and the specific changes to the aesthetics of traditional wedding attire Minangkabau. The following discussion summarizes the panel's opinions categorized under particular themes.

For the theme of socio-cultural change in Minangkabau traditional clothing, several respondents from the fashion designer believe that there are positive and negative sides to globalization and modernization where people tend to choose which one is more practical. Globalization has led the acculturation and influences each other to be more open and flexible. For the theme of the influence of fashion trends and mass media, almost all respondents answered that science, technology, and media are an essential part of the fashion industry. People are wiser to choose new trends because the door to access information is getting wider, diverse, and spread rapidly. Fashion seems to be a lifestyle demand and always follows things considered attractive and popular. However, some people choose not to follow the trend because of their self-concept to their style and personality.

Regarding roles in fashion, some respondents stated that digesting trends will win and always try to innovate according to the latest popular tastes. In addition, if well-known brands use their styles services, it will accelerate the spread of new trends. Regarding the role of influencers on social media, such as fashion vloggers and bloggers, celebrities, and even outstanding athletes, they have a very significant role in grounding a fashion trend because of their large following on several social media platforms. However, if the influencer does not conform to cultural norms, it will directly impact the millennial generation; moral responsibility is a need in these conditions.

The following are some explanations from the panel's opinion regarding the theme of the influence of modernization on changes in the aesthetics of Minangkabau traditional clothing. All panels agreed that Minangkabau traditional wedding attire development is increas-

ingly diverse, and it is understandable if these trends affect shape, lines, textures or materials,, colors and accessories. However, Minangkabau traditional clothing has a distinctive style and should not be changed or omitted because it is fundamental and contains traditional philosophy.



Figure 8. Modification of Minangkabau wedding attire (2016). Source: Des Iskandar's photo archive.



Traditional Minangkabau Wedding Attire (bride)	Modification of Minangkabau wedding attire (bride)
	
Shape	Shape
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has waist-dart, T-shape 2. Two pieces, Baju Kurung Basiba and lower waist with 'songket' 3. Long and big sleeves 4. It has <i>kikik</i> (seam) on the armpit 5. Has no buttons and zipper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has waist-dart (fit on the body) - L-Shape - Slim sleeves (fitted sleeves and showing arms) - Has no <i>kikik</i> (seam) on the armpit - Has buttons in the front - Transparant lace
Line	Line
- Round neckline	- Heart neckline (exposing the neck and chest)
Texture	Texture
6. Sateen silk (shiny, soft and stiff) with typical Minangkabau embroidery	- Lace (sheer and delicate fabric) with embroidery and beads
Color	Color
- Bold color	- Bold color and nude color
Accessories	Accessories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scarf on the neck selempang - Gold necklace 'pinyaram' - Medium size of headpieces 'sunting' - Simply bangles 'bapahek' - The embellishment on the edge of the shirt that is given a gold wrapped threads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simply necklace - Simply headpieces - Simply bangles - beads on lace - The embellishment on the edge of the shirt with synthetic gold thread and sequins

Figure 9. Comparison of changes in Traditional Minangkabau Wedding Attire and Modification of Minangkabau wedding attire.

The open-ended data questions show that 82% of service users prefer to wear modified wedding clothes than traditional ones. The significant findings showed the change in Minangkabau traditional wedding dress from the past to the present from design aesthetics elements in the Minangkabau traditional attire in shape, lines, texture, color, and accessories. These changes result in modification and innovation. The quite noticeable difference is the coup at the chest part, which shows the shape of the wearer's body. In addition, the shape of the neck, namely the A-line neck, reversed A-line neck, scoop, square, off the shoulder, and Sabrina has also been modified with the appearance of the three-quarter arm (bell sleeve) a slim/long fitted sleeve. Color selection has also undergone changes where previously the colors commonly used were red, yellow, blue, black, gold, silver but now the colors are white, cream, light brown, pink, and peach. It is also the result of the acculturation process of western culture and culture from other regions in Indonesia. Likewise, what happened to the groom's apparel design was a cultural acculturation process that combined Minangkabau traditional wedding designs and different cultures. Still, sometimes the basic design was no longer used and even replaced with suits characteristic of western cultural fashion (Europe and America). designs and different cultures. Still, sometimes the basic design was no longer used and even replaced with suits characteristic of western cultural fashion (Europe and America).



Figure 10. Modification of Minangkabau Wedding Attire (2019). Source: www.thebridsdept.com.

During the discussion with focus group discussions, one particular point of view where tough arguments occurred between Minangkabau traditional leaders and opinions from fashion designers. According to the fashion designer, traditional wedding attire could be modified into trends of interest to the community in terms of practicality and influenced by socio-cultural changes, self-concepts, roles in fashion, and new inventions to make a creative idea in realizing their designs. But on the other hand, the local Minangkabau figures emphasized that it is appropriate for traditional bridal attire to be preserved by the original. Therefore, this research contributes to the Minangkabau community to filter out all these changes and maintain the cultural values in traditional Minangkabau wedding attire.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, the main finding in this study is a change in the design aesthetics of the Minangkabau wedding attire. The driving aspects of this change include the self-concept of society as a form of expression and self-actualization of the ever-evolving fashion

orientation, where one's self-concept will influence behavior related to one's fashion. Another driving aspect that affects socio-cultural changes is diffusion, acculturation, and cultural assimilation both from the west and with the customs of the regions in Indonesia. The existence of role models such as fashion designers, fashion stylists, celebrities, influencers, the fashion business is also involved. In their view, it makes people quickly have new insights and want to actualize themselves into something like the results of globalization and modernization, namely fashion trends. The role of mass media in disseminating information from the roles of models or influencers is also significant.

Referring to the analysis results and discussion; the study suggests a couple of points as follows: firstly, fashion designers should design an attire, especially those that will be worn during sacred events such as wedding ceremonies, so they must pay attention to the fundamental elements that should not be omitted. Modifications may be made to other aspects, such as the decoration application, but do not change the shape of the traditional clothing so that it does not eliminate its philosophical meaning. So, designers should do some research before making a wedding dress design. Secondly, in terms of the use of clothing worn by the public, it is better to filter out the latest information and trends from the opposing side it causes. Fashion designers will create clothes according to user requests, for those users (consumers) are expected to help preserve their particular culture through traditional wedding attire.

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Culture Sustainability through Storytelling: A Study of Patricia Riley’s “Wisteria” and “Damping Down the Road”

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Abstract

In the late 1980s, the United Nations introduced a comprehensive vision of sustainable development, encompassing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental balance. However, the crucial role of culture within development has very often been overlooked. Contemporary insights emphasize that culture is integral to sustainable development. This paper, through an analysis of two short stories by Native American author Patricia Riley, sheds light on the significance of storytelling as a fundamental element of culture. It explores how these narratives emphasize the need to cultivate a culturally aware society and how ‘storytelling’ contributes to cultural preservation and identity. Focusing specifically on the Native American worldview, the article underlines the significance of storytelling as a dynamic tool that bridges cultural traditions with sustainable development, promoting cultural resilience, community well-being, and fostering awareness.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Storytelling, Culture, Native American

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Introduction

Sustainable Development is increasingly becoming the preferred mode of development at the global and local levels. The concept of Sustainable Development is multi-faceted and is defined by the Brundtland Commission Report (1987) as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Anon, 2011). Sustainable development includes society, environment, culture and economy as a whole. It has emerged as a crucial issue that necessitates prompt action and reforms on the part of governments, businesses, and society as a whole (Silvester & Tirca, 2019). The word ‘sustainability’ is often used interchangeably with sustainable development (Ruggerio, 2021). Sustainability is frequently conceived of as a long-term goal (i.e., a more sustainable planet, sustainable business), whereas sustainable development refers to the various processes and methods that can lead to it (e.g., sustainable agriculture and forestry, sustainable production and consumption, good government, research and technology transfer, education and training).

Culture and Sustainable Development

The contribution of the cultural sector to the economy and sustainable development is particularly important. Culture can be a powerful driver for growth, with social, economic, and environmental implications for an entire community. Lifestyles, individual behavior, consumer patterns, environmental stewardship beliefs, and our interactions with the natural world are all influenced by cultural variables. Non-monetary benefits of culture-led development include increased social inclusion and rootedness, resilience, innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship for individuals and communities, as well as the use of local resources, skills, and knowledge (UNESCO, 2012).

Culture can extend the scope of the present development debate and make development more relevant to people’s needs. The most effective development interventions are those that respond to the cultural context, place, and community specificities, and promote a human-centered approach to development. Encouraging intercultural discussion, preventing disputes, and protecting minority groups’ rights both within and between states can help achieve development goals. Culture helps to create vibrant cities and communities in which people may live, work, and play an important role in promoting social and economic well-being (Opaku, 2015). Culture, in this sense, aids development.

Our culture links the present to the past and the imagined future. Culture connects us in time, space, and community through creating meaning and value networks. Our culture describes how we tell our stories, comprehend ourselves, remember who we are, envisage who we want to be, rest, celebrate, dispute, raise our children, and build our own space. Our culture reflects our need to be happy, to belong, to survive, and to be creative (Sazonova, 2014). People’s connections and attitudes toward the built and natural environments are framed by culture, which is a crucial component of the notion of sustainable development. Cultural sustainability looks at how to improve people’s lives and leave a lasting legacy for future generations. If we want to give future generations the ability to meet their requirements, we cannot continue with our current approach toward resource exploitation. Cultural values impact society’s way of life, and so have the power to bring about the mindset shifts required for long-term progress.

Cultural Preservation Through Storytelling

At the core of cultural preservation is the art of storytelling. Storytelling is a universal and timeless human practice that transcends geographical boundaries and ethnicities. In ethnic minority cultures across the world, storytelling takes on a particularly significant role (Kvam, 2012). In the context of Africa in the 80s, storytelling through different means was promoted for development reasons, “by means of storytelling, dance, drama, music, and songs people were encouraged to express themselves about problems in society. This included both mainstream and marginalized groups that did not usually take part in verbal discussions and express their opinions” (Kvam, 2012:44).

Storytelling serves as a vital conduit for preserving traditions, fostering cultural identity, and passing down invaluable knowledge. (Takashima, 2016) Fernandes-Llamazers and Cabeza (2017) highlight the importance of indigenous storytelling:

Storytelling among IPs helps to forge a number of purposes, such as entertaining, passing down a repertoire of culturally built knowledge, maintaining a sense of community, and instilling moral values, all of which laid the groundwork for social collaboration. A key feature of indigenous storytelling is the intergenerational transmission of experience, allowing for human adaptation to different environments. Indigenous stories are made up of extremely complex, finely coded information on human subsistence and infused with dramatic elements that ensure their transmission, engaging the heart with the mind.

Indigenous tribes such as the Jalis/Griots of West Africa, the Shamans of Central Asia, and the T’boli people in the Philippines underscore the importance of storytelling among minority communities. These groups use storytelling as a versatile tool to safeguard their cultural legacy, intergenerational knowledge transfer, conflict resolution, and the reinforcement of communal bonds. For instance, for the T’boli, an indigenous group in the southern Philippines, oral tradition and storytelling are integral aspects of its cultural identity and heritage. Passed down orally from one generation to the next, these traditions recount narratives that contain the religious, cultural, spiritual, and ethical principles of the tribe. Among these narratives are legends such as “Lake Sebu” and “Dyali and Ukuy,” folktales like “The Monkey and the Betel Bird” and “Ulem, the Rooster,” and myths including the “Story of the Sky.” These stories often focus on the creation of the world, the spiritual beings in it, and the importance of living in harmony with nature. According to Carlo Domingo Casinto (2002).

...the recurring didactic teachings in the themes of T’boli’s oral traditions are devotion, altruism, and deference. These teachings have facilitated the assimilation of faithfulness as a religious value, generosity as a human value and respect and obedience to authority as cultural values personified in their oral traditions. Ultimately, these “collective unconscious” values form the T’boli’s worldview in terms of their cultural and religious practices and traditions. (300)

In Africa too, oral tradition plays an exceedingly significant role in cultural preservation. More specifically, among West African communities, such as the Mandinka, the Bambara, the Wolof, and other ethnic groups, “...there are storytellers and oral historians, called ‘griots,’ who hold the social memory of the community” (Stephenson). They are the living

archives of their cultures, responsible for orally passing down historical accounts, family histories, and life lessons when written records are absent. Their storytelling, including music and praise-singing, celebrates their people's achievements and fosters cultural pride and a sense of belonging. As keepers and narrators of history, Griots are "...expected to remind people of their ancestry, of events, places, migrations and traditional values which are important for shaping collective identities." (Dorsch, 2004). Their wisdom and skill are held in such high esteem that these storytellers are often called to mediate disputes, resolve conflicts, and maintain peace.

Similarly, among indigenous communities in other parts of the world including, Asia and America, "...oral narrative – storytelling - is the natural teaching medium about skills, the environment, or survival." (Rankin et.al, 2006). In Central and North Asia, for example, the role of traditional storytellers, Shamans, is deeply intertwined with their spiritual duties. Shamans are revered figures within their communities, serving as spiritual guides, healers, and intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds. They are known for their ability to connect with the spirit world to seek guidance, healing, and solutions to various problems. Their role as intermediaries with the spirit world is especially valuable in a region where spiritual beliefs and practices are deeply rooted in daily life. In fact, "...it may probably be said with safety that no other single professional class whose intellectual life is carried on without the aid of writing has extended its influence over so wide an area of the earth's surface as the shamans" (Chadwick, 1936). As storytellers, they use narratives to connect with spirits, conduct healing ceremonies, and provide guidance to their communities. Their stories often revolve around encounters with spirits, mythical creatures, and the mysteries of the natural world. Central Asian shamanism is a dynamic and evolving tradition, adapting to changing social and cultural landscapes. Despite challenges from modernization and external influences, shamans continue to play a significant role in the lives of Central Asian communities, providing spiritual guidance, healing, and cultural continuity. While some, such as Kazakhs in Kazakhstan have maintained more traditional forms of shamanism, others like the Buryats in Siberia and Uighurs in China have adapted their practices to coexist with other belief systems, such as Islam or Buddhism, due to historical, social, and cultural influences.

In terms of the Native American people who have always believed that "mankind depends on the other beings for life, and they depend on mankind to maintain the proper balance" (Hughes, 1983), the culture of storytelling has played a significant role in embedding their relationship with nature. In this respect, storytellers have been held in high esteem in Native American culture and considered educators who educate people "about the – roles of trees, the – roles of medicinal plants, and the – behaviors of animals and people when they speak about nature" (Schulhoff, 2010). They helped young people in recognizing. "...what plants might be utilized at what time of the year, how they could be utilized and what amount you could use at one time" and thereby develop a sense of how to "carry on with nature" (Saddam, W. A., and Wan Roselezam W. Ya., 2015). Moreover, storytelling carries the weight of resilience, offering a sense of continuity and strength to these groups who have had a long history of being subjugated, uprooted, and exploited. Native American stories often encompass tales of endurance, adaptability, and connection to the land. They provide a source of inspiration, reinforcing a sense of unity and pride within tribal communities. In the face of social and environmental challenges, storytelling fosters a collective spirit of re-

silence, equipping Native Americans with the tools to address contemporary issues while remaining grounded in their cultural foundations.

These examples of storytelling in minority communities highlight the versatile role of narrative discourse in cultural preservation, knowledge transmission, conflict resolution, and community cohesion. They underscore the essential function of oral traditions in preserving cultural identity and heritage among marginalized groups. However, as a consequence of enhanced globalization and the impact of the media, the practice of storytelling and passing on of sagas and village folk tales from one generation to another is dwindling in the majority of indigenous cultures (Vorreiter, 2014), including Native America. Nonetheless, many contemporary Native American writers and poets such as Joy Harjo, Paula Gunn Allen, and Patricia Riley have through their writings reiterated the importance of storytelling and underlined how culture has played a significant role in shaping the natives' relationship with nature. This paper attempts to study two such short stories, "Wisteria" and "Damping Down the Road" by Patricia Riley and analyze their significance vis-a-vis culture and sustainable development.

"Wisteria" and "Damping Down the Road"

In the introduction to the anthology, *Growing Up Native American* (2009), Patricia Riley emphasizes that as a child growing up in the second half of the twentieth century, she had never contemplated the difference between the life, and the reality she witnessed in her neighborhood and the ones projected in the history and other books about Indians that she read in her school. It was only later, through various experiences and through her attempts to reclaim the native identity that she realized that both commonality and diversity lie at the heart of the experience of 'growing up Native American.' And, the question of what it means to grow up a Native American perhaps has innumerable answers. She examines, "Certainly there are as many stories. Stories of oppression and survival, of people who grew up surrounded by tradition, and people who did not. Stories of pressures of forced assimilation and stories of resistance, of heritage denied and of heritage reclaimed. A multiplicity of stories." (Riley, 2009). It is perhaps these stories that Riley believes are essentially significant to the Native American identity and worldview. Stories as her contemporary Joy Harjo suggests, "...create us. We create ourselves with stories. Stories that our parents tell us, that our grandparents tell us, or that our great-grandparents told us, stories that reverberate through the web." (Sweet Wong, Muller and Magdaleno, 2008). The significance that both stories and storytellers hold within the Native American culture and worldview also reverberates through the two stories that this paper analyses. The former being partly autobiographical is borrowed from a childhood incident while the latter is a fictional account of a family "torn by the opposing notions of Indianness" (Sweet Wong XVII).

In 'Wisteria,' Riley's paternal grandmother is portrayed through the character of Eddie T. who is considered a 'heathen' by her daughter-in-law, Jessie. Both Eddie T. and Jessie had shared a rather calm relationship until the day the latter was attacked by flu. After the attack, there was suddenly a religious growth in Jessie wherein she had "converted to three-times-a-day Bible study and absolute churchgoing on a strict Sunday basis" (167). Therefore, now, Eddie T. who according to her daughter-in-law did not even pray to God and instead stood in the woods, "waving her hands about and calling on the sun and the moon and stars..." (168) is considered a threat for the sound development of her granddaughter,

Justine. However, despite Jessie's efforts to keep her daughter away from her mother-in-law, the two find great pleasure in each other's company, "Eddie T. always looked forward to Justine's visits. She enjoyed the little games they played together. They kept her on her toes and let her know that even though she was almost eighty-seven years old, she still had her wits about her" (168). And it is during one of these visits that Justine is told for the first time about the existence of the "little people," the *Yunvi Tsundi*. With immense excitement, her grandmother shows her the bush that the little people, the guardian spirits, had trampled when they had held one of their dances in her yard the previous night. Justine is initially reluctant to believe in what her grandmother showed but after Eddie T. narrates the stories from her childhood, Justine immediately develops a liking for the little people. She curiously enquires about everything her grandmother had known about these creatures that sang and danced in her yard. By the time Eddie T. finishes her stories, Justine had promised her grandmother to always remember the little people and just like her grandmother had she would fulfill all her duties towards them.

The story about the *Yunvi Tsundi* not only establishes Justine's belief in something which owing to her Christian mother's teachings she had grown up not believing in but also brings her in contact with her tradition, the tradition that her grandmother had always been proud of and for so long held intact. Unlike her mother, Justine's father, Tom had always believed in his mother's ability to instill faith in Justine about her people. As a young boy, Tom had listened to the "disparaging things his school teachers had said about his people and their ways" and as a result of which he had felt "ashamed of who he was and where he came from." He did not want his daughter to grow up the way he did and "he knew his mother had a lot to offer on this score" (167). And what Eddie T. offers to Justine—the story of the little people, on her last day is perhaps the most important lesson in bringing her closer to taking pride in a truth in which her people had always had conviction. For example, when Justine informs about her mother not believing in the existence of the little people, Eddie T. reasons,

That's 'cuz they let them die inside their minds a long time ago, I expect. But there's always been little people livin' in these old woods since time immemorial. That's what the old folks told me when I was a girl and I know it's true. Sometimes late at night I could hear them singin' songs. They must have been dancin' back then, too. Those old-time Cherokees always said they was there. They called them the Yunwi Tsundi (170)

Through her grandmother's memories of the little people, Justine not only acquires a new identity, that is, her Cherokee identity but also a worldview that demands forging a relationship with nature. She promises Eddie T. to remember the little people and offer wisteria flowers to them once in a while to the little people. The identity she acquires is brilliantly portrayed through the symbolism of the quilts. The narrator informs that later that night when she was "safe at home, Justine stretched and snuggled, warm beneath the quilts her grandmother had given her" (171). The 'quilts' are the lessons and knowledge about her culture and her duties that her grandmother had enlightened her with which henceforth after her grandmother's death will continue to warm her.

Stories also shape the identity of yet another of Riley's characters, Nettie. In 'Damping the Road' Riley's fictional character like herself is also a 'mixed blood.' As a child, Nettie loved

the times when her Cherokee relatives would visit the family because “that meant it was a storytelling time. She’d curl up in her Grandma Mary’s lap and listen quietly as all the aunts and uncles told their favorite stories, filling the air around her with words and laughter” (158). She would always look forward to these sessions but the joys of the storytelling sessions unfortunately end when Nettie is sent away to a Catholic boarding school. However, despite the loneliness she encounters in the new surroundings of her school these stories continue to give her solace. “She thought about the stories, and how it was when the family was all together” (158) to console herself against the solitude and interestingly enough, with time it was these stories that allowed her to forge a friendship with the other girls of the school. When the other girls found Nettie lonely and withdrawn, they began inquiring about her home and family and it was then that she began sharing her stories with them,

She told them how Corn Woman made food out of her own body. How she loved the Cherokee people so much that she gave her life so that they could live, and that she came back to life again so that she would always be there for the people to talk to and ask for help. She painted word pictures for them so that they could see the wonderful magical lake where the animals went to bathe when they were sick or injured and how they came out of the water whole and healed again. Sharing these stories with her roommates made Nettie feel closer to her home and family. (158)

Along with making her feel closer to her home and family, these stories also gave her a new identity, that of the storyteller. Nettie’s friends found immense joy in listening to the tales from her land and soon these storytelling sessions became a business that was carried out every night. However, these sessions were doomed to be prohibited. Owing to the staunch Catholic principles the school followed, these stories were considered filthy and evil by the upholders of the ‘religious standards’ of the school and therefore Nettie was thrust into detention when she was caught narrating these stories.

Paradoxically, the stories that had throughout been a constant source of joy and had brought solace even in isolation become a source of grief for Nettie after her detention. Although nobody had much knowledge as to what Nettie had to undergo in the three days of detention, the event certainly changed her drastically as “...she was a completely different person when she came back from that place. She seemed sad all the time, and nervous, jumping at every little sound...Nettie hardly smiled at all and when the storytelling session began, she ran to her room with her hands clapped over her ears. She refused to speak to anyone, or to come out again.” (160)

Stories had made Nettie but as Jefferson Currie II has argued, “When someone ceases to tell a story, part of the cultural knowledge is gone” (Currie II, 2005). And, after the detention, the absence of stories in Nettie’s life had taken away her real identity and moulded her into someone she could not identify with. Therefore, her new identity which demanded her to surrender her beliefs in the ‘Corn Woman’ and the ‘Magical Lake’ was nothing beyond a source of sorrow for Nettie. Growing up with this sorrow affected her in many ways. She had to constantly struggle with the conflict within herself, in being the Nettie she wanted to be and the one that her Catholic school principles expected her to be. The crisis she suffers due to this conflict manifests itself later in her marital life. She was mar-

ried to 'a head-in-the-clouds dreamer,' a man who had a great longing for 'home' and who took immense pleasure in narrating stories to his daughters. Nettie however detested this quality of her husband. Having now completely adopted the Catholic identity, the stories that her husband, Eli narrated to their daughters were painful reminders of the past which she had been trained to leave behind. Hence, they did not receive much appreciation from her and instead, Nettie warned her daughters against these stories and eventually made Eli stop narrating them.

The Catholic school training did not barely take away her stories from Nettie but also trained her to reject all her Indian characteristics. Therefore, unlike her husband, she later fails to appreciate the straight Indian hair of her daughters and instead prefers perms for them. And, more than anything her dislike for the road outside her house becomes telling of this. On one hand where the red soil of the road reminds her husband of home, on the other Nettie merely considers it as a 'red mess' which she wants her husband to keep away from the house. However, Nettie's hatred for the road perhaps expands much beyond it being a source of dirt for her. Her despise for the road is similar to her dislike for the stories that her husband narrated. The road too is as painful a reminder of her identity crisis as are the stories. And she is adamant in changing it. The narrator throws light on Nettie's reasons for the same,

Nettie was on a mission. It was her own private battle against the natural world. Against the way things were. Against the way things wanted to be. She was a devotee disciple of change. A true believer. To Nettie, if you didn't like a thing, you changed it somehow so that it would suit you better. It didn't matter what it was. If Nettie didn't like it for some reason it got on what she called her "bad side," she was going to change it, and that philosophy extended to everything in the world around her... there was no mistaking the fact that the road had most definitely gotten on Nettie's "bad side" (155)

The road perhaps symbolizes that part of Nettie's identity which existed before she was sent away to the boarding school and before she was forced to adopt Christian principles. It resembles the old Nettie which "had a life of its own" and "could dream." However, Nettie was forcibly changed. And since she was forcibly changed, against what she wanted to be, she had begun believing in force being the natural order of things, the principle of existence. Her training and her own experience could not allow the road to be in its natural form, that of the dreamer.

Nettie's enmity with the road had begun when its red dust had settled on her favorite Irish tablecloth. This incident brings Nettie into close contact with her complex identity. The red soil over the Irish cloth perhaps symbolizes both her mixed blood and her identity as formed by her Christian training and her Indian origin. Unable to come to terms with this, Nettie declares war against the road. She decides to tame the road by damping it down. Although Nettie religiously upholds this enmity, it is the road that ultimately helps her come to terms with her fragmented identity. For example, after her husband's death, Nettie mends the broken pieces of the turtle that he had made out of the red soil and hands it to her younger daughter, Carnel saying, "This is for you. I was wrong, Baby. I was so completely wrong." Carnel had throughout been the recipient of all the stories that her father had narrated and the red soil had given shapes to the characters that had populated not

only her father's stories but also those stories that her mother had grown up with. And, it is perhaps why Nettie never allowed those clay creatures to be placed in her room. However, by mending the turtle, which is considered a symbol of creation in the Cherokee culture, Nettie not only embraces her Indianness but also puts an end to her war against nature.

Conclusion

Patricia Riley's "Wisteria" and "Damping Down the Road" effectively underline how storytelling has been an integral part of Native American culture. Both these stories also reinstate that the Native American worldview demands an "...environmental way of seeing the world." The faith in a sentient, living environment is not merely an intellectual concept for most Native American cultures. Self-perception of most individuals is largely determined by how they perceive their surroundings. The culture and legacy of Native Americans are grounded in the land, with their lives inextricably linked to it.

Significantly, both 'Wisteria' and 'Damping Down the Road' end with the death of the storytellers, Eddie and Eli respectively. However, the authors opine that the death of these characters is justified in terms of the message that their deaths drive home to the listeners of their stories. Through their deaths, they bind their listeners to the tradition they had been holding strong for so long and encourage the newer generations to ensure its survival. This aspect is best encapsulated in the words of Eddie T. who gives the last lesson to her granddaughter, "Things got to grow old and die when their time comes, just like them wisteria... It's all a part of the cycle. What's old just naturally got to make room for them that's new... If it weren't there'd be too many things walkin' around chokin' up the earth" (170). For ages, lessons like these have been passed from one generation to another in the Native American culture. They not only help younger generations identify with their tradition and culture but also encourage them to adopt ways of conscious and harmonious living.

Culture's transformative power for social inclusion, resilience, and sustainable development is becoming more widely acknowledged as a critical enabler for Sustainable Development (Sawangchot, 2016). Culture is also an important part of human growth, serving as a source of identity, innovation, and creativity for all people, as well as providing long-term answers to local and global problems (Yoopetech, 2022). Patricia Riley's "Wisteria" and "Damping Down the Road" also reaffirm the importance of culture. Culture can contribute to both the social and economic components of sustainability, enhancing the impact on local development by responding to local conditions and requirements. Storytelling, as an important facet of culture, can turn public spaces into sites of dialogue, eliminating inequities and promoting social inclusion.

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Preserving Traditional Clothing Identity:

*An Overview of the Past and Present Uses of
Aso-Oke by the Ondo People of Southwest,
Nigeria*

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Abstract

Hand-woven fabrics such as *aso-oke* were the major clothing items especially for the commemoration of traditional ceremonies and festivals in Ondo land before the colonial era in Nigeria. Art historian review methods were adopted for this study by reviewing related literature. Data was gathered from both online sources and physical libraries. The population of the study include the inhabitants in Ondo town, Southwest, Nigeria. The study also used interview for data collection and the data collected was analyzed using the narrative method. This study surveyed the types of traditional *aso-oke* used by the Ondo people in the past and present times; and identified *Alaari*, *Sanmiyan*, *Etu*, *Petuje* and *Ogungunelu* as the major ones. Therefore, this study examined their uses in the past and recent times and considered developmental trends in the use of these types of *aso-oke*. This study dwelled more on historical records as methods of data collection. In conclusion, this study revealed that Ondo people are prominent users of *aso-oke* fabrics and also preserver of the cultural identity of the Yoruba people of Southwest Nigeria through the use of *aso-oke* fabrics.

Keywords: *Aso-oke, Handwoven, Ondo People, Clothing Identity, Textiles, Nigeria*

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Introduction

Aso-oke, an indigenous hand-woven fabric to the Yoruba people of Nigeria, holds significant cultural and historical value. Over the years, its use has extended beyond Nigeria's borders, making it a symbol of African heritage and identity across the globe. Internationally, Yoruba communities and individuals living abroad continue to wear *aso-oke* during cultural events, weddings, and other celebrations. By incorporating *aso-oke* into their lives, Yoruba diaspora communities preserve their cultural identity and pass down their traditions to future generations. *Aso-oke* is significant to the Yoruba group of south-western Nigeria. The term *Aso-oke* refers to the products from a horizontal loom made by 'Ara Oke.' According to Diyaolu and Omotosho (2020), Lagos merchants in the late 19th century called the Yoruba from hinterland as 'Ara Oke,' therefore refers to the clothe as 'Aso awon ara oke,' meaning the cloth from the upper part of the country.

Before contact with the Europeans, there were abundant uses of hand woven textiles spread across various ethnic groups in Nigeria because there were little or no clothing alternatives for use. Dresses in the Yoruba land was hand woven because there was no alternatives to cloth production. Likewise among the Tiv hand woven fabrics such as the *Anger, Tugudu, Kubeba and bnarda* among others were also sewn into different styles by men and women (Maiwada, 2001). The hand-woven textiles (*aso-oke*) have similar values and purposes among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. People used hand-woven textile as dress items ranging from everyday use (work cloth and cover cloth). Hand-woven textiles were used to commemorate traditional weddings, coronations, chieftaincy activities, passage rites, and burial rites of the aged among others, as well as for other religious and ritual purposes. The examples of these woven fabrics are *sanyan, alaari, etu, shain-shain* and *onjawu* among others are sewn into different styles. The men sew *agbada, buba, dansiki, soro, kembe and sokoto*, while the women sew *buba, iro, ipеле, iborun and gele*.

According to Eicher (1976) the production and use of traditional hand-woven textiles was evident throughout Yoruba land. Its use spanned across all social strata from the noble to the humble, especially, for use during the celebration of traditional ceremonies and festivals. However, with the advent of colonial rule in Nigeria, the use of these hand-woven textiles declined greatly in many Yoruba communities. This was because of mass importation of other fabrics from other nations of the world for general use as well as for the commemoration of special events. Akinwunmi (1912) upholds this fact by stating that, "drastic socio-economic and political changes took place with the advent of British colonial rule." Despite the decline in the use of handwoven textiles in many Yoruba communities, the Ondo people still continued to acquire and use them (especially the old types) for the commemoration of traditional events and festivals.

Scholars such as Ademuleya (2002), Aladenika (2007) and Adepeko (2008) in their different studies on the Ondo people and continuing appreciation of the hand-woven textiles (especially the old types) observed that it is traditionally appreciated by the people because of their special attachment to the fabrics. They also reveal that the Ondo people still collect and re-use the old types as dress items at important ceremonies even when their kindred all over Yoruba land had since embraced the contemporary types. However, the study observes *alaari, sanyan, etu, petuje* and *egungunelu* as the old types mainly used by the Ondo people.

Etu is a stripe patterned fabric usually made of indigo dyed cotton which is predominantly dark blue with fine light blue at its background. *Petuje*, often called junior *etu*, is almost similar to *etu* and it is made of small checks of light blue on a dark indigo background. *Sanmiyan* is another traditional handwoven fabric used in Ondo. It was traditionally made of yarn derived from silkworms. The fabrics are usually pale grayish brown in color and sometimes divided by white longitudinal warp lines. The regularity and symmetrical arrangement of the warp lines exhibit a high degree of technical skill. Chunwike (1984) affirms the production of silk yarns from wild *anaphe* cocoons are used for the production of *sanmiyan*. He stressed further that Ondo was one of the major silk weaving centres in Yoruba land. The people's continuing appreciation and use of these handwoven textiles justify this review: Preserving the Traditional Clothing Identity: An Overview of the Past and Present uses of Aso-Oke by the Ondo People of the Southwest, Nigeria.



Figure 1. From top left to right, *Alaari* and *Sanmiyan*. Middle left to right, *Etu* and *Petuje*. Bottom left, *Pabi dindu*. Sample sizes are ~ 1 x 2 inches. Source: author's collection 2006; bottom from 2018.

Research Questions

This study is paramount in safeguarding the cultural heritage and promoting cultural continuity. Therefore, it delved into Ondo people's clothing traditions, shedding light on the historical and contemporary applications of *Aso-Oke*, a culturally significant fabric. The study intends to promote the preservation of unique weaving techniques and designs, thereby safeguarding the cultural identity of the Ondo community.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the historical background of *aso-oke* in Ondo town?
2. What are the cultural uses of the different types of *aso-oke* in Ondo town?
3. What are the similarities between *aso-oke* and other traditional hand-woven fabrics?

Methodology

The research adopted a mixed method approach using a combination of review research approach and survey research method. Review research method was adopted for this research using secondary data collection approach. Interview was used as the data gathering method for the survey approach. The population of the study include the inhabitants on Ondo town in Southwest Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the samples, only the elderly among the population in Ondo town were sampled. Existing literatures relevant to the topic were carefully reviewed and discussed. The literatures reviewed were carefully selected based on the originality of their contents and relevance to the study. The interview data was presented using narrative method. The research focused on the use and preservation of *aso-oke* fabrics for cultural identity in Ondo town.

Discussion of Findings: Beginning of Weaving in Ondo

Weaving practice, production and use in Ondo especially before independence was nothing different from that of other Yoruba ethnic groups. In the past, women in Ondo planted cotton seeds which were harvested, processed and spun into yarns and subsequently woven into fabrics. A centenarian, Adeduoye, (2006), interviewed for this study revealed that, from time immemorial, Ondo women were weavers and cotton used for weaving was cultivated alongside other food crops. The cultivated cotton used for the production of *poku* – is a plain weave pattern on the vertical loom. She added that *alaari* woven fabrics were also produced centuries ago. She narrated two strange stories relating to its production. The first story goes thus:

“There was a wealthy barren woman who died and was buried in a place specially preserved. Surprisingly cotton plant of special species grew on her grave. It was nurtured because it was a strange phenomenon. When the cotton was ripe, it produced unusual red cotton, which was harvested and made into yarns, which were later woven into cloth with great admirable beauty. This turned to be the *alaari*, which gained popularity and importance among the Ondo people.”

This story was also corroborated by Akeem (2006); Femi (2006); Akinseye (2006); and Olayo (2006) during a focus group session in 2006. The kernel of the second story is that,

“more than three centuries ago the Ondo people planted cotton which was *alaari* fabrics. When it was planted on the farm, a slave was permanently placed in charge of the farm to tend and nurture it and ensure adequate care until the time of harvest. As the plant blossomed and matured, red instead of white fluffy buds appeared and it later broke open in readiness for picking. As soon as the breaking of the buds began, simultaneously, the skin of the slave also began to crack just like the way the harmattan cold-dry effect makes the human lips crack. The slave remained in the farm as long as he lived cultivating and harvesting *alaari* red cotton year in year out. The owner (who lived in town) only came when the harvest was ready for collection. This was her submission in the year 2006 during a joint oral interview with one of the authors.”

The Use of *alaari* in Ondo

All the respondents agreed that *alaari* woven fabric is paramount or the premier of all *aso oke* types used in Ondo kingdom. It is generally accepted as 'first Dress Asset' to own, most probably for the reason that it allows for more, flexible use in most important landmark occasions of social life. The use of *alaari* woven fabrics cut across all age groups but it is mostly used by the elderly. According to the interview data collected from Ogidan (2006), the reason for this is not far-fetched. It is the most expensive of all the old hand-woven textiles used in Ondo, so it is not within the reach of the young people. The use of *alaari* woven fabrics highlights the clothing culture of Ondo people across their social strata, that is, from the lower class to the wealthy ones. It counts so much in rating a family's wealth in the olden days according to some opinions. Among the Ondo people, *alaari* fabrics are assets, which appreciate no matter the age. This view probably arose from the known fact that families regard it as a heritage to be passed down from one generation to the other.



Figure 2. A man in *alaari*. Source: Author's collection 2018.

Alaari woven fabrics are of different types. They include; *gunlodo, jama, lusen, lalubasa, egboro, lita, egungunelu pupa, paba pupa, okegbeeye, elekuru, lopokan, dametu, fopelo, eleta, leya, lomolangidi, alaari petuje, alaari lubo meji, alaari pupa, opopo otun, liyonkon, lootopupa, eleta pupa, eleje aja, alaba dametu, orukope, labe, alaari layinyan, alari libuluu, alaari ligirini* and *alaari labere*. According to the interview data from Akinsulie (2006) as the names differ, so does the price, as well as the premium placed on each fabric.



Figure 3. A woman in *alaari*. Source: Author's collection 2015.

The Use of Alaari in the Yesteryears

It was noted during a focus group with Ogunye (2006), Fabiyi (2006), Fatimehin (2006) and Ogidan (2006) that the pride in *alaari* is predominantly evident in the various functions in which it appears. Though the use of *alaari* is common to all Ondo people, we can say that in the olden days because of class, it was meant for the royal, the noble, the high chiefs, the rich and the highly placed people. The use of *alaari* in burying the aged was a practice in the past. It was used for wrapping the corpse of the nobles and also used to decorate the walls of the room where the corpse was laid. During funeral ceremonies the children of the deceased were dressed in *alaari* while the invited guest would be dressed in other woven fabric such as *sanyan*.

It was also discovered from the interviews with Akinsulie & Fabiyi (2006), that it is also the culture of the Ondo people to mourn their dead, just like other Yoruba towns and villages. However, the ways and manners the Ondo people go about it is quite different from that of other towns in Yoruba land. There is what can be termed as “grave deposit.” Different members of the family and close associates of the dead would bring various traditional woven fabrics (mostly *sanyan*) for the corpse; these are also used as parting gifts for the dead. It is worthy to note, that even in contemporary times, *sanyan* is used during funeral ceremonies especially by the children and close relations of the deceased. Other mourners could wear *etu* or *petuje*.



Figure 4. Left, children of deceased in *alaari* during burial ceremony. Right, family members in *etu* and *petuje* during burial ceremony. Source: Author's collection 2015.

Alaari was also used extensively during the coronation of kings and installation of chiefs. The chief to be installed wears a big native trouser with wide mouth called *kembe* with very loose waist gathered together with a rope and ties a big *alaari* wrapper called *Iketa* (*Iketa* is bigger than a regular women's wrapper) around his waist, or wraps it around himself and ties it over his left shoulder like the old Roman prince or emperor. The wife of the chief been installed is also clad in three pieces of *alaari*, *iro*, *ipele*, and *gele*. This is called *olodemeta* (three-piece apparel).

According to the interview data collected from Akeem & Femi (2006) during betrothal, the bride and the groom wears *alaari* while the parents of the couple wear another shade of *alaari*. Also during naming ceremony, the mother of the baby wears *alaari* to distinguish her from the crowd.



Figure 5. A chief in Ondo. Source: Author's collection 2015.

There are two notable traditional festivals in Ondo, *Ogun* festival and *Odun-oba* (Fadipe and Obiana, 2021:45). The first one is Ogun Festival which is dedicated to Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron and war. Ogun is highly revered in Yoruba mythology and is considered the patron deity of blacksmiths, warriors, and hunters. The festival is usually held annually and involves various rituals, ceremonies, and performances. The second one is Odun Oba Festival, is a celebration dedicated to the reigning monarch, the Osemawe of Ondo. The festival serves as a tribute to the king and is marked by various ceremonies and festivities (Ademu-leya, 2014:141). During these festivals, the king, the chiefs and the nobles are elaborately dressed in *alaari* which serves as the royal official outfit for the day. These festivals mark the peak of traditional festivals in Ondo. When these eminent personalities are in their full *alaari* regalia, songs such as the following are rendered to eulogise them.

Ugba uli o ma mu soge
Awo uli o m mu seyan
Abata butu aso bami lo
Ma mu soge nuli o
Ma ma ya gbe o
Ma ma ya gbe
Alaari lori aso ma mu seye

Family treasurers, I will pride in it
 Family heritage, I will be proud of
 The richest attire of my father
 I will wear with dignity
 I will wear with dignity
 I will wear with dignity
alaari the chieftain of dresses (fabrics)
 I will wear with dignity

Ma mu pon mo o
Ma mu pon mo
Alaari lori aso
Ma mu pon mo

I will use it to carry my child on my back
 I will use it to carry my child on my back
alaari, the chieftain of dress
 I will use it to carry my child on my back



Figure 6. Ondo Chiefs during Odun-Oba. Source: Author's collection 2006.

The Use of Alaari in Contemporary Times

Just like the times of old, there are little or no changes in the use of *alaari* fabrics, between now and then except that *alaari* is no longer in full use for burials. The use of *sanyan* has replaced this in contemporary times (Adepeko, 2009).

However, there are some modifications in its usage in contemporary times. For example, during betrothal, the bride ties *alaari* shawl (*iborun*) round her waist over whatever attire she has on, while the groom uses a piece of *alaari* as a muffler.



Figure 7. Groom and bride during betrothal. Source: Author's collection 2006.

According to the interview data from Ogunye (2006) *Obitun* dancers also use *alaari* fabrics. They entertained the crowd during important traditional ceremonies or festival end-of-the-year school activities, both in the primary and secondary Schools, government functions and *Ekimogun* day celebration.

Traditional Premium Attached to Ondo Hand woven Fabrics

It was revealed by Ogidan & Ogunye (2006) that, in Ondo tradition, a number of factors determine the traditional premium placed on a particular hand woven fabric. These include: (a) the age of the fabric, (b) the design, (c) type of weaving yarns and (d) the dye stuff. Each will be discussed separately as follows.

Age of the Fabric

In Ondo tradition, the age of a traditional hand woven fabric is treasured and it determines the premium placed on such fabric. Age is particularly considered in rating the prominent old hand woven textiles, that is *alaari*, *sanmiyan*, *egungundu*, *etu* and *petuje*; *alaari* is prime among them. This belief is reflected in an Ondo axiom: “*aso e gbo, da ma ma wekun*” meaning “the ruggedness of a cloth does not hide its quality.” Among the Ondo people, a very old hand woven fabric is called *keleku* (see figure 8 below for examples).



Figure 8. Two examples of very old *alaari* fabric (*keleku*) – Groom and Bride during betrothal. Source: Author's collection 2016.

Designs

According to Nwanchukwu & Ibeabuchi (2012) hand woven cloths have a lot of significant designs used to decorate them. The design adds more value to the pieces of woven cloths and causes them to be appreciated by the people that own them and others. These designs are made up of motifs portrayed in different colors. Ondo hand woven fabrics are mainly stripe patterned. The only exception is *alaari*. Some *alaari* fabrics have figure motifs and some inlay design on them although, majority of *alaari* fabrics are striped patterned. The stripe patterned *alaari* fabrics are classified into two:

1. The one with the combination of *sanmiyan*, *petuje* or *etu* and;
2. The one with stripes only.

Alaari handwoven fabrics are sometimes combined with other hand woven fabrics such as *sanmiyan*, *etu* because in terms of ruggedness, *alaari* fabrics are weaker than the remaining *aso oke* types. The combination is done to support *alaari* weaker yarns in garment: *Alaari* fabric gets weaker as a result of keeping the fabrics in either tightly closed wardrobe or cupboard or the locally made wooden or metal boxes called *apeti* and *iyatinbo* respectively without regular airing or inspection of the fabric. *Apeti* is used by men while *Iyatinbo* is used by women for cloth storage. Therefore, insects such as moths destroy *alaari* yarns in garments while the other combinations are unaffected.



Figure 9. Left, *Alaari* combined with *Sanmiyan*. Right, *Alaari Lomolangidi* design. Source: Author's collection 2006.

The figure is called *omolangidi* (a Yoruba carved wooden toy). This figured motif featured prominently on *alaari* fabrics according to the weavers in the 1920s and 30s. The cube motif in the fabric was incorporated much later. This shows that the fabrics are the old time fabrics of delight in their different times of production and use. They show complex structural weaving of the Ondo people. The sample above is combined with another *alaari* type,

the reason for this might be that the *lomolangidi* design might not be enough for a woman's shawl, hence, the additional ones. *Ikat* design (known as *layinyan* in Ondo) is another old unique and aesthetically pleasing design. This design was achieved on hand woven fabrics by bunches of unique warp yarns intermittently tied and dyed before they were woven. *Ikat* design is a complex design of the ancient times which is very rare on contemporary woven fabric because most contemporary weavers lack the technique of dyeing the yarns and weaving such complex designs. Figure 10 below is an example of an *Ikat* design on an old Ondo traditional hand woven fabric.



Figure 10. *Ikat* design. Source: Author's collection 2006.

The Yarn of the Fabric

The worth of any woven fabric is also evaluated by the type of yarn used for the weaving. Those made with hand spun yarns are older in age and more cherished because hand spun yarns are not obtainable for use in contemporary times. Therefore, the existing ones need to be treasured and preserved, thus attracting higher premium. Woven fabrics made with hand spun yarns are characterized by thickness and they coarseness. Adepeko (2009) indicates the use of hand spun yarns for weaving has perhaps made possible its re-use and social renovations done to the fabrics because of thicker or heavier woven fabric which in turn responsible for its lifespan.

The Dye

The quality of dye for dyeing yarns used for weaving is also a major factor in rating a particular woven fabric in Ondo. Those fabrics that are color-fast are more expensive than those that are not. The very old *aso-oke* types whose yarns were dyed with the local vegetable dyes are most treasured (Adepeko, 2009).

Shift in the Use of Alaari

Fashion is not static, it is dynamic. The use of *alaari* hand woven fibre is gradually taking a new dimension. In recent times even the academia has embraced its use though in way that will suit their academic purpose. For example, the Management of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, as a way of identifying with the indigenous heritage sews academic gowns for the principal officers of the College with *alaari* hand woven fabrics. Academic Icons visiting the College are also presented with such gifts as way of identifying indigenous crafts. The gowns are use during land mark ceremonies such as graduation and inauguration of the institution.



Figure 11. A former Provost of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo. Source: Author’s collection 2018.



Figure 12. Left, (and right, 3rd from the left) Professor Toyin Falola, the guest lecturer during the 2018 College convocation is seen gracefully dressed in academic made with *alaari* fabrics.

Comparison Between Aso-oke and Other Handwoven Clothes

Aso-Oke is a traditional hand-woven fabric that originates from the Yoruba people of Nigeria. It is a popular textile in Nigerian culture and is known for its intricate designs and rich symbolism. According to Fadipe and Obiana (2021), when discussing the similarities between *aso-oke* and other traditional hand-woven fabrics, it is essential to consider various aspects, including weaving techniques, cultural significance, and symbolism. Among the Igbo people is the *Akwete*, mainly used by women as wrappers. Afigbo and Okeke (1982), Nwachukwu and Ibeabuchi (2012), Nonso (2021) all agreed that Igbo people are widely known for *Akwete* cloth weaving which is majorly done by women.

In the recent time, there are changes in dressing styles across the ethnic groups in Nigeria which does not exempt the Ondo people. The change was informed by the incentive to consider the modification of Ondo traditional hand woven fabrics to suit contemporary fashion trends. The attempt of change in fashion by the Tiv is witnessed in their heavily woven fabrics which are now used during winter season and also for traditional occasions. Maiwada (2001) noted that, the Tiv fabrics have been used as new designed clothing in form of 'Rainbow,' while *Anger* another form of hand woven cloth among the Tiv tribe.

1. **Weaving Techniques:** *Aso-oke* shares weaving techniques with many other traditional hand-woven fabrics from different parts of the world. These techniques include the use of supplementary weft. *Aso-oke* often features supplementary weft threads, where additional threads are woven into the fabric to create intricate patterns. This technique is common in other traditional textiles, such as *Kente* cloth from Ghana and brocades from various regions (Ademuleya, 2014:134). *Aso-Oke* is woven on narrow-strip looms. Similar looms are used for weaving fabrics like the Inca textiles from South America and the *Ikat* textiles from Southeast Asia. These looms are known for their ability to create finely detailed patterns.
2. **Cultural Significance:** *Aso-Oke*, like other traditional hand-woven fabrics, holds significant cultural importance. They are often used in ceremonies, festivals, and rituals. These textiles are considered symbols of identity, heritage, and social status. Other fabrics with similar cultural significance include *Kente* Cloth which is highly regarded among the Akan people of Ghana. It is used to symbolize cultural identity, and the patterns and colors have specific meanings (Diyaulu, 2016).
3. **Symbolism:** *Aso-Oke*, like many other hand-woven fabrics, often incorporates symbolism into its designs. These symbols can represent cultural values, history, and spirituality (Chunwike, 1984:30). For example, *Kente* cloth and other Ghanaian textiles often feature *Adinkra* symbols, each with its own meaning. These symbols convey proverbs, concepts, and beliefs. The Persian carpets are renowned for their intricate designs and symbolism. Different patterns and motifs in these carpets signify aspects of nature, life, and spirituality. Native American tribes have a rich tradition of weaving textiles with symbolism. These textiles often reflect tribal history, spirituality, and connection to the land (Seran and Rupasinghe, 2013:29).

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the interplay between cultural heritage, historical significance, and contemporary relevance. Through an in-depth exploration of the past and present uses of *Aso-Oke*, this study has provided valuable insights into the rich clothing tradition that define the Ondo people's cultural identity. The findings highlighted the importance of preserving traditional clothing practices as they serve not only as symbols of cultural heritage but also as vehicles for identity, expression, and community cohesion. *Aso-Oke*, with its vibrant colors, simple patterns and deep cultural meanings, stands as a testament to the creativity and artistry of the Ondo people.

This study also emphasized the need for proactive measures to safeguard and promote traditional textile crafts like *Aso-Oke*. As globalization and modernization continue to shape

the world, it is crucial to recognize the significance of these heritage practices in maintaining cultural diversity and fostering a sense of belonging among communities. In the face of evolving fashion trends and changing societal norms, the Ondo people, along with other communities around the world, must actively engage in the preservation and transmission of their traditional clothing heritage to future generations. This can be achieved through education, awareness campaigns, and supporting local artisans and craftsmen, ensuring that these invaluable traditions continue to thrive in the modern era.

This study also serves as a valuable contribution to the broader discourse on cultural preservation and heritage conservation. By acknowledging the importance of traditions like Aso-Oke, society can move forward in a more inclusive and culturally rich manner, celebrating the past while embracing the future.

Recommendations

In order to preserve the value of Aso-Oke in Ondo, the following are recommended:

1. oruba people should use Aso-Oke more frequently not only for special occasions like weddings and burial ceremonies but also as daily wears sown to different styles.
2. The younger generation should be encouraged to use the old Aso-Oke types especially during the celebration of traditional ceremonies as well as festivals to keep the clothing identity alive.
3. Weavers should be counsel to weave light-weight Aso-Oke fabrics so that it can be sewn into variety of styles.

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Collaborative Place-making: Some Theoretical Perspectives on *Sense of Place as a Motivation for Participation*

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Abstract

Collaborative planning is emerging as a novel approach to stakeholder participation, to create new values and products within urban planning. However, the motivations behind participating in the planning process have been limitedly addressed. Fainstein, Healey, Forester, and many planning theorists argue the necessity of public participation in urban development. Nevertheless, project-affected people may consider it a time-wasting, disinteresting and frustrating process. Therefore, the identification of significant motivation for community participation is important. This paper argues that sense of place is a significant motivator of community participation in collaborative place-making. These arguments draw upon planning theories, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and efficacy theories. This research enables researchers to perceive the benefits of sense of place in the urban planning process, offering valuable insights for urban designers, planners, and policymakers seeking to foster community participation in the realms of place-making and environmental management.

Keywords: Collaborative Planning, Motivations, Place-making, Urban Planning Theories, Sense of Place

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Introduction

Place-making is a challenging, complex, multifaceted, time and resource-consuming process that needs extra attention in the pursuit of sustainable urban futures. The collaborative planning paradigm underscores the importance of community participation in planning to foster inclusiveness, sustainable communities and governments. Further, the governments are in favor of getting community participation, given the resources and expertise that individuals bring. In recent years, a growing body of planning literature focuses on co-production, co-creation and co-financing, which has been embraced as new participatory strategies of place-making (Puerari et al. 2018; Marušić and Erjavec, 2020; Stoica et al. 2022).

The statutes advocating for community participation would be worthless if collaborative planning proves to be disinteresting for people (Jones, 2018). In most cases, community participation is voluntary and depends on their level of expertise, creativity, passion for the topic and willingness (Teder, 2019). Meanwhile, Long (2013) highlights research gap in this arena, as it neglects to delve into the reasons driving agencies to get public participation in place-making. At the same time, Voorberg et al. (2014) confirm that most research efforts have concentrated on the effectiveness and efficiency of the collaborative process, whereas less aim is on increasing voluntary community participation. Thus far, considerable attention has been devoted to collaborative networks, processes and organizations within the realm of co-production (Brandsen and Van Hout, 2006; Joshi and Moore, 2004). However, Van Eijk and Steen (2014) identify a research gap that pertains to the examination of individuals' capacity and their willingness to collaborate. Against this backdrop, this paper aims to argue that sense of place is a significant motivator for participating in collaborative place-making.

The discourse presented in this paper is part of an ongoing, long-term research effort that delves into the relationship between a sense of place and the co-creation experience. Essentially, this paper seeks to contribute to the ongoing research endeavors in the field of place-making. Firstly, it offers a fresh perspective on communicative rationality theory, which elucidates cooperative efforts and inclusive discussions aimed at understanding public matters (Habermas, 1984). This paper proposes a scenario that goes beyond considerations of inclusiveness, rights, and justice, as it underscores the need to also account for supply-side aspects. Secondly, while previous studies have discussed various motivations for collaborative activities, this study extends the literature by revealing the potential of a sense of place as an intrinsic motivator for individuals to participate in the collaborative planning process.

The remainder of the article unfolds as follows: Firstly, we delve into the theoretical underpinnings of collaborative planning. The second section explores the intersection of collaborative planning and place-making. The third section engages in a discussion about collaborative planning and motivations. Finally, we conclude our research with implications.

The remainder of the article is as follows: First, we discuss the theoretical background of collaborative planning. The second section discusses collaborative planning and place-making. A discussion on collaborative planning and motivations is presented in the third section. Finally, we conclude the research with implications.

From Rational Comprehensive Planning to Communicative Rationality

Planning is often defined as "foresight in formulating and implementing programs and policies" (Hudson et al., 1979). However, in practice, spatial planning is a complex and continually evolving activity, making it challenging to provide a single, unified definition. Hall and Tewdwr-Jones (2010) shed light on the influence of Howard and Geddes in urban planning, particularly with the introduction of the garden city concept in the late nineteenth century. Geddes' contribution included the development of a structured approach: the survey-analysis-plan sequence, which laid the foundation for the rational comprehensive approach. The outcomes of a rational comprehensive planning process are often referred to as "blueprint" plans, which have faced criticism from numerous scholars. Critics argue that planning is inherently complex due to its focus on people within an uncertain world (Faludi, 1973; Webber, 1983; Hall and Tewdwr-Jones, 2010; Lane, 2006). Hall and Tewdwr-Jones (2010:53) criticize planners who prioritize the production of static blueprints over the continuous and dynamic nature of the planning process.

In the 1960s, there was a shift away from blueprint planning, with a growing emphasis on community participation in planning. Community participation under the synoptic model was initially practiced by British planning authorities to establish the goals and objectives of planning (Lane, 2006). Hudson et al. (1979:389) note that "the real power of the synoptic approach lies in its basic simplicity." However, critics argue that synoptic planning assumes a uniform public interest, as it mainly considers participation as a means to validate and legitimize planning goals (Lane, 2006:290).

In response to criticisms and the desire to address the notion of a "universal public interest" associated with rational comprehensive planning, various alternative planning theories emerged. These include transactive (Friedman and Huxley, 1985), advocacy (Davidoff, 1965), bargaining (McDonald, 1989), and communicative actions (Healey, 1992). Transactive planning promotes interpersonal dialogue with the planning community to facilitate mutual learning and suggests decentralization of planning institutions to empower people (Hudson et al., 1979). Advocacy planning recognizes social and political pluralism, focusing on shaping the "image of society" to address unequal negotiating power and access to the political system (Mazziotti, 1982). Bargaining emphasizes that planning decisions result from negotiation among active participants in the planning process (Lane, 2006). Communicative actions emphasize the role of dialogue, argumentation, and discourse in community participation (Healey, 1996). This approach draws upon communicative rationality (Habermas, 1984), discursive democracy (Dryzek, 1990), and dialogic democracy (Giddens, 1994) to enhance communication, deliberation, and knowledge production in planning. The process is characterized as interactive, discursive, conflict-mediating, and consensus-building (Irazábal, 2009:120). Effective communication is seen as leading to better agreement among stakeholders, addressing inequalities and cultural differences (Young, 2000). Planners in this model serve as mediators among stakeholders.

Critics of communicative action theory (Forester, 1993; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Fainstein, 2000; Yiftachel and Huxley, 2000) argue that public participation is complex, leading to distrust, conflicts among stakeholders, and power struggles. Achieving consensus, as proposed by the theory, is challenging due to issues related to exclusion, difference, diversity, and identity politics (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Fainstein (2000) questions the role of planners as mediators when addressing structural inequities and power hierarchies. Additionally, critics argue

that the theory overlooks the political processes shaping cities and does not adequately emphasize the spatial aspects of place-making (Harvey, 1996; Yiftachel and Huxley, 2000). Therefore, it remains essential to understand the motivations driving community participation in collaborative place-making, even when statutory requirements are well-defined.

Collaborative Place-making

Scholars characterize place-making as the intricate process of transforming space into a meaningful, socially embedded, and functional place (Cilliers and Timmermans, 2014). A consensus among scholars prevails regarding place-making's integral connection to urban design, with a call for diverse stakeholders' active involvement (Fleming, 2007; Akbar and Edelenbos, 2021). Habibah et al. (2013) further elucidate place-making as a means of interpreting place through the lens of stakeholders' interests. Consequently, place-making emerges as a multifaceted and dynamic process, shaped by evolving places and the interests of its actors.

Conventionally, the prevailing notion perceives place-making as the purview of urban designers and governmental entities, culminating in the physical transformation of spaces. However, recent scholarship advances a different perspective, advocating for a collaborative planning approach that recognizes the residents' pivotal role in the place-making process (Cilliers and Timmermans, 2014; Adom, 2017; Ellery and Ellery, 2019; Akbar and Edelenbos, 2021).

The discourse of collaborative planning has evolved from deliberative and participatory elements within democratic governance systems. This shift arises from the recognition that past participation methods are no longer applicable to today's decision-making processes, which involve diverse and dynamic stakeholders (Abelson et al., 2003). Concurrently, collaborative partnerships and networks demonstrate greater inclusivity and promote empowerment (Lund, 2018). Agger and Löfgren (2008) emphasize that a key objective of collaborative planning is to facilitate competence building and empowerment. In essence, collaborative planning represents a governance mechanism characterized by deliberation and empowerment. Corcoran et al. (2017) assert that place-making is an outcome of the democratization of public realm design. Consequently, it rejects professionally dominated and commercially driven initiatives, prioritizing instead the co-production of places, with the aim of returning places to the people.

Gray (1985:912) defines collaboration as “the pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, e.g. information, money, labour, etc., by two or more stakeholders, to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually.” Emerson et al. (2012) define collaborative governance as,

“the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished.”

Furthermore, scholars have recognized that sustainable development is fundamentally supported by collaborative design practices. This innovative design pedagogy fosters trust among participants, facilitates innovation by harnessing local wisdom, and empowers citi-

zens to shoulder responsibility (Thompson and Prokopy, 2016). Examining the environmental impact, collaborative designs contribute to the creation of high-quality urban designs, dynamic public spaces, and the enrichment of the city's cultural fabric (Kendig et al., 2010; Amarawickrama, 2022).

Community Motivations for Collaborative Place-making

Despite planning agencies establishing platforms for community participation with a focus on social justice, rights and inclusiveness, individuals may nonetheless view participation in the planning process as a tedious, disinteresting and frustrating endeavor (Brandsen et al. 2018). Additionally, a lack of awareness can lead people to view participation as irrelevant (Borrupt, 2019). However, for a collaborative process to achieve sustainability, it necessitates more than passive user involvement (Bager et al. 2021). Nevertheless, the active and continuous involvement of stakeholders remains a subject of debate, with unresolved questions surrounding the most effective and equitable means of involving individuals who harbor concerns about the process's effectiveness and fairness.

However, Bager et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of involving a diverse range of individuals and giving voice to those in collaborative planning. Additionally, governments are keen to encourage public participation in planning, recognizing that project-affected individuals often bring alternative resources for development and offer a cost-effective means to deliver services. However, voluntary participation hinges on motivation. According to existing literature, this voluntary public engagement is primarily driven by individuals' motivation and willingness to participate (Tönurist and Surva, 2017; Borges Júnior and Farias, 2020). Chado et al. (2016:187) define voluntary participation as "an informal public participatory practice rooted in ethical or moral values attached to participation." This kind of participation typically arises informally, initiated by citizens, private sector planners, academics, and NGOs. Among the six dimensions of the Voluntary Functions Inventory (VFI), the social function appears to be a prominent factor in motivating participation for urban development purposes, as it acknowledges that volunteering can strengthen social relationships (Benjamin and Brudney, 2018).

While concepts like power, rights, and justice serve as foundational pillars for community participation, it is essential to delve into the diverse classifications of motivations to understand the driving forces behind community involvement in collaborative place-making (see Figure 1). According to existing literature, motivations can be broadly categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Deci, 1972; Van Eijk and Gasco, 2018; Puerari et al., 2018) (Figure 1). Intrinsic motivations pertain to people engaging in the co-creation process for their own sake, driven by internal factors, while extrinsic motivations involve external incentives. Examples of intrinsic values include loyalty, a sense of civic duty, and the desire to witness positive development (Voorburg et al., 2014). In contrast, examples of extrinsic motivations encompass monetary compensation and recognition by others (Puerari et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Benjamin and Brudney (2018) distinguish motivations as either egoistic (self-centered) or pro-social (community-oriented). They highlight the role of individual capacity, which encompasses human capital and social capital, in explaining decisions to participate in co-production. Van Eijk and Gasco (2018) refer to this individual capacity as individual competency or efficacy, distinguishing between internal and external efficacy. This distinction is crucial in co-production, as it involves individuals feeling capable of engaging and

believing that other stakeholders will provide adequate room for interaction. Moreover, Van Eijk and Gasco (2018) differentiate motivations based on material and non-material incentives. Material rewards encompass money, goods, and services, while community motivations are driven by non-material values, particularly altruism stemming from a sense of place with other participants and trust (Ostrom, 2009). Social trust, defined as a positive expectation of cooperative behavior with others, is central (Di Napoli et al., 2019:3). Overcoming mistrust is often the primary challenge in urban development activities focused on local empowerment (Luhmann, 1988). A lack of trust can hinder cooperation and risk-sharing (Guiso et al., 2008), causing a negative attitude towards collaboration when individuals feel mistrusted (Van Eijk and Gasco, 2018).

Description	Authors
Intrinsic- Pro-social (community-oriented)	
Loyalty, the feeling of civic duty and the wish to see a positive development	Voorburg et al. (2014)
Sense of community and sense of ownership	Anderson (2009); Talo et al. (2013); Puerari et al. (2018)
Feeling of altruism, fellow feeling, feeling of trust	Van Eijk and Steen (2014); Ostrom, (2009)
Social capital	Benjamin and Brudney (2018); Voorberg et al. (2015)
Social trust	Purdy (2012); Luhmann (1988); Guiso et al. (2008); Van Eijk and Gasco (2018)
Solidarity: sense of belonging, socialization	Sharp (1978)
Expressive: feeling of being able to express an ideology, having contributed	
Sense of fulfilment	Puerari et al. (2018)
Sense of place	Stoica et al. (2022); Puerari et al. (2018); Hadjilouca et al. (2015); Manzo and Perkins (2006); Lewicka (2011); Shamai (2005)
Place satisfaction, attachment and sense of place	Zenker and Rutter (2014), Peighambari et al. (2016) and Campelo (2014)
Sense of place and identity	Hadjilouca et al. (2015); Cumberlidge and Musgrave (2007)
Place attachment	Brown et al. (2003)
Intrinsic- Egoistic (self-centred)	
Age	Van Eijk and Gasco (2018)
Gender and education level	Bovaird et al. (2015)
Human capital	Benjamin and Brudney (2018); Voorberg et al. (2015)
Social, cultural, technical and psychological factors	Fuller et al. (2008); Puerari et al. (2018); Van Eijk and Gasco (2018)
Individual capacity as individual competency or efficacy	Van Eijk and Gasco (2018)
Extrinsic	
Monetary compensation and recognition by others	Puerari et al. (2018)
Material rewards: money, goods and service	Van Eijk and Steen (2014)
Material: goods or services	Sharp (1978)

Figure 1. Motivations for collaborative place-making.

Moreover, scholars have identified social, cultural, technical, and psychological factors that play a role in participation (Fuller et al., 2008; Puerari et al., 2018; Van Eijk and Gasco, 2018). Age, as identified by Van Eijk and Gasco (2018), is linked to willingness to engage, with young people often reporting lower levels of efficacy and, consequently, lower interest in participation. Other social factors, such as gender and education level, also influence participation, with studies indicating that women and those with higher education levels tend to participate more (Bovaird et al., 2015). Additionally, social capital plays a significant role in accelerating the co-production process, as strong social ties tend to increase willingness to engage (Voorberg et al., 2015). Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework outlining the factors that influence community participation in place-making.

Adom (2017) underscores the centrality of environmental protection within local communities. According to the existing literature, a strong correlation exists between community participation and both the sense of community and the sense of ownership (Anderson, 2009; Taló et al., 2013; Puerari et al., 2018) as well as motivation (Bager et al., 2021). Sharp (1978) categorizes motivational incentives into three types: material (related to goods or services), solidarity (related to a sense of belonging and socialization), and expressive (related to the ability to express an ideology and feeling of contribution). However, Leino and Puumala (2021) argue that material incentives are effective only for simple tasks, emphasizing the importance of intrinsic rewards for complex activities. Puerari et al. (2018) also highlight the sense of fulfillment associated with participation in Urban Living Labs.

Several scholars indicate that the sense of place serves as a significant motivator for participation in collaborative planning (e.g., Stoica et al., 2022; Puerari et al., 2018; Hadjilouca et al., 2015; Manzo and Perkins, 2006; Lewicka, 2011; Shamai, 2005; Meethiyagoda et al., 2023). Zenker and Rutter (2014), Peighambari et al. (2016), and Campelo (2014) argue for the importance of residents' place satisfaction, attachment, and sense of place in successfully promoting a place. Hadjilouca et al. (2015) explore socially engaged design practices in place-making and examine how individuals can become engaged in the redevelopment and management of contested public spaces, acknowledging the significance of a sense of place and identity in successful place-making, as asserted by Cumberlidge and Musgrave (2007). Brown et al. (2003) discovered that when people are attached to a place, they are more inclined to invest their time and resources in neighborhood revitalization efforts. They also found that higher attachment levels correlate with increased community interactions, subsequently enhancing social cohesion. Shamai (2005) introduces a scale with seven levels of the sense of place, including involvement in a place, which encompasses the investment of human resources such as talent, time, and money in place-based activities. Scannell and Gifford (2010) and Perkins et al. (1996) have established a positive connection between place identity and environmentally responsible behavior and between community attachment and participatory behavior, respectively. Lewicka (2011) concluded that individuals with a strong attachment to a place tend to trust others more, cultivate better relationships with neighbors, and maintain a more positive attitude toward their residential area, all of which are positive aspects of collaboration. Payton et al. (2007) also report that social trust mediates the relationship between place attachment and civic actions. Nevertheless, some scholars have noted a weak relationship between place attachment and willingness to engage in community activities (Lewicka, 2005; Payton et al. 2005; Perkins and Long, 2002; Uzzell et al., 2002).

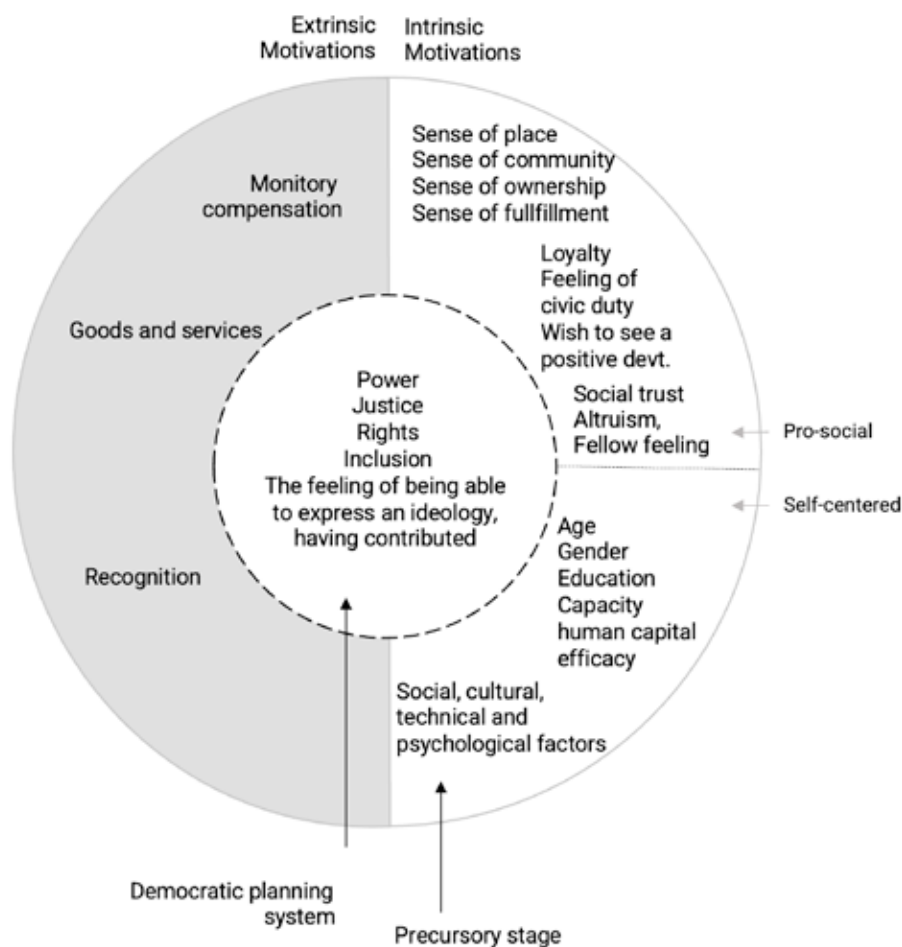


Figure 2. Influencing factors for collaborative place-making.

Within the reviewed literature, certain studies, such as those conducted by Fuller et al. (2011) and Thompson and Prokopy (2016), offer empirical insights into the connection between the sense of place and collaborative initiatives. Fuller et al. (2011) delved into the concepts of a perceived sense of community and the co-creation experience within the context of jewelry designing, affirming the positive impact of the sense of community on the co-creation experience. The authors posit that this relationship can be strengthened when managers facilitate opportunities for social interactions among participants. On the other hand, Thompson and Prokopy's (2016) research, centered on the preservation of farmlands and open spaces, underscores the role of the sense of place in collaborative planning and corroborates that the sense of place serves as a crucial predictor for developing a commitment to collaborate. Furthermore, the authors of this research note that individuals with a strong sense of place exhibit greater willingness to trust and collaborate with others in collective endeavors.

On the other hand, the literature suggests the potential for engagement in collaborative initiatives, ultimately contributing to the development of a sense of place (Bush et al., 2020; Slingerland et al., 2020; Lee and Blackford, 2020; Fang et al., 2016; Marusic and Erjavec, 2020). Correspondingly, place-making (Slingerland et al., 2020; Teder, 2019; Ellery and Ellery, 2019); place branding (Zang et al., 2019; Casais and Monterio, 2019); getting involved in

tourism activities (Suntikul and Jachna, 2016); strong partnerships and self-directed participation (Jiang et al., 2020) are important in developing sense of place.

As a result, the existing literature has acknowledged the role of a sense of place as a motivation for collaborative planning efforts, and some studies have empirically tested its impact in the context of tourism and place branding. However, empirical studies examining the role of a sense of place in place-making are limited.

Conclusion

Building upon the theoretical foundations of communicative rationality theory, this paper underscores the significance of collaborative place-making. However, current discourses tend to overlook the preliminary stages of community participation and make limited attempts to delve into the factors motivating public involvement in place-making. Understanding the motivations driving community participation is crucial for attracting a diverse, capable, genuine, and active citizenry to engage in collaborative place-making. Therefore, this study introduces a fresh perspective to the collaborative place-making literature, placing particular emphasis on the sense of place as a significant motivator for community participation while also exploring other motivating factors.

Scholarly works acknowledge that the sense of place serves as a source of motivation or commitment to collaborate, contributing to the successful promotion of a place or place-making. This manifests as participants investing in social and human resources and further enhancing social cohesion. Though the benefits are acknowledged, only non-spatial or non-urban studies empirically tested the impact of sense of place on participation in collaborative place-making. As a result, future research may address the reciprocal relationship between sense of place and collaborative place-making within urban and spatial contexts.

The discussion suggested the need to pay attention to people's willingness to participate, maintain persistent participation and participate actively throughout the collaborative planning processes, rather than merely participating to meet governmental or statutory requirements. As a result, this paper contributes to a theoretical framework that deepens our understanding of community participation in planning. Furthermore, it provides valuable insights for urban planners by emphasizing the significance of assessing the community's sense of place when initiating collaborative place-making efforts.

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Symbolic Meaning of Mantra Ujub and Kidung in

Ganti Langse Traditional Ceremony as a Guide to the Life of the People of Babadan Village, Ngawi Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

The *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony is a ritual involving the replacement of the *langse*, which covers the Palenggahan Ageng Srigati in Babadan Village, Ngawi Regency, East Java, Indonesia. During this ceremony, various mantras, specifically *ujub* and *kidung*, are used throughout the *langse* replacement procession and other related rituals. This article aims to elucidate the symbolic significance of the *ujub* and *kidung* mantras within the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony at Palenggahan Ageng Srigati in Babadan Village, Ngawi Regency, and their role in the lives of the local community. The data used for this analysis consisted of the *ujub* and *kidung* mantras, collected through observations, interviews, and written documents. This collected data were subsequently analyzed using Barthes' semiotic approach to unveil the symbolic meanings behind the *ujub* and *kidung* mantras. The study revealed that these mantras hold dual meanings within the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Alas Srigati, distinguishing between their denotative and connotative interpretations. Both of these meanings have practical implications in the social life of the Babadan Village community.

Keywords: Symbolic Meaning, Mantra Ujub, Kidung, Traditional Ceremony, *Ganti Langse*, Indonesia

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Introduction

In the Javanese way of life, people continue to uphold the positive values passed down by their ancestors. These values, inherited from their forebears, are woven into the fabric of Javanese daily life, forming cultural traditions that are cherished and safeguarded with the purpose of preserving social order. These cultural traditions have played a crucial role in promoting social harmony, from the Hindu-Buddhist era to the early days of Islamic influence in Javanese culture (Muasyaroh, Saddhono, & Sulaksono, 2021). One manifestation of cultural tradition in Javanese society is the practice of traditional ceremonies. These ceremonies are typically held to commemorate significant events and occasions within Javanese communities. A study conducted in Zambia highlighted the enduring importance of traditional ceremonies celebrated by indigenous cultural groups in preserving the country's cultural heritage (Harrison et al., 2021). In Javanese society, traditional ceremonies serve various functions, including making requests, expressing gratitude, paying homage to ancestors, celebrating important milestones, and initiating local community activities (Setiawan and Saddhono, 2017). Javanese people, especially those living in agricultural and seaside areas, hold traditional ceremonies to express gratitude to God and ask for smooth work and safety in working for the next year. One of the studies on traditional ceremonies within the Javanese community is the implementation of *Sedekah Laut* ceremonies on the Pantai Selatan located in Cilacap Regency, Central Java held in the month of Sura on the Javanese calendar to express gratitude to God and requests for salvation for fishermen on the Pantai Selatan, Cilacap Regency (Suryanti, 2017). Another study of traditional ceremonies as an expression of gratitude for abundant harvests is found in the traditional *Kebokeboan* ceremony in Banyuwangi, East Java (Efendi and Farida, 2021).

One of the cultural traditions presented is the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Alas Srigati, Babadan Village, Paron District, Ngawi Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Based on data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS), Alas Srigati, also known as Alas Ketonggo, is a forest area of 4,864 m² located in Babadan Village. The condition of the Babadan Village community, situated around Alas Srigati, means that the majority of Babadan Village people work as farmers and gardeners. The belief system in Babadan Village is quite diverse, with the majority of the population being Muslim, and this also affects the socio-cultural conditions in Babadan Village. With a variety of belief systems, it also influences the culture in Babadan Village, where the community routinely holds cultural rituals in the form of *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremonies every year. This is done as a means of expressing gratitude to God for abundant crops and as a form of respect for the ancestors of Babadan Village whose noble values are always maintained by the people of Babadan Village. The *Ganti Langse* tradition is one of the traditional ceremonies to replace the *langse* (white cloth commonly used to cover sacred buildings in Javanese society) that covers the Palenggahan Ageng Srigati. In practice, the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony is held every night of the full moon in the month of Sura based on the Javanese calendar in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, Babadan Village, Paron District, Ngawi Regency. The *Ganti Langse* tradition has been held since the 1950s and began with the discovery of a mound of earth at Alas Srigati, believed to be a *petilasan* (a place that has been visited by a person considered sacred), associated with the journey of Prabu Brawijaya V on his way to the top of Mount Lawu.



Figure 1. Palenggahan Ageng Srigati where the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony was held.

The *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony is an integral part of community life around Palenggahan Ageng Srigati and serves as a representation of respect for Prabu Brawijaya V, the last king of Majapahit. It is believed that Prabu Brawijaya V performed the “*ucul busana*” procession (a ritual that releases royal attributes and returns the king to an ordinary citizen) at Alas Srigati to erase his connections to the kingdom before continuing his journey to the top of Mount Lawu, where he practiced “*tapa moksa*” (detaching himself from the world) and vowed to become Sunan Lawu. The location where Prabu Brawijaya V performed the “*ucul busana*” ritual was subsequently used as the site for the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. Linguistically, “*Ganti Langse*” is interpreted as replacing the old white cloth with a new one. The white cloth that covers Palenggahan Ageng Srigati symbolizes personal purity to the people around Alas Srigati. Therefore, after the replacement of the *Langse*, the people around Alas Srigati can return to a state of cleanliness and holiness, mirroring the new *Langse* that has just been replaced.

The process of replacing *langse* is held by going through several ritual processes for not only honoring the ancestors but also asking for blessings from the Almighty God. These processes include; (a) *kirab langse* (parading the new *langse* that will replace the old *langse* as a tribute to the *langse* which is considered sacred or holy), (b) *pasrah panampi* (the process of handing over *langse* from caretaker of Palenggahan Ageng Srigati to the wife of the Head of Babadan Village as a symbol of respect for Nyai Srigati who accompanied Prabu Brawijaya V), (c) *Ganti Langse* (the process of changing the *langse* that envelopes Palenggahan Ageng Srigati which is symbolized as a process of self-purification and as the core of the event), (d) *wilujengan* (Or has another name *selamatan*, which is prayer together with various kinds of food offerings in Javanese Muslim society), and (e) *lorodan* (Known as *bagi langse*, the process of distributing old *langse* to visitors who believe that the replaced *langse* can bring blessings to their lives). In the process, the people around Alas Srigati believe that the old *langse* that has been replaced is not necessarily considered useless, but can be believed as a medium to bring blessings from God to life.



Figure 2. Kirab Langse and Pasrah Panampi procession in the Ganti Langse traditional ceremony.



Figure 3. Ganti Langse procession in the Ganti Langse traditional ceremony.



Figure 4. Wilujengan and Lorodan procession in the Ganti Langse traditional ceremony.

During the *Ganti Langse* procession, several *mantra ujub* and *kidung* were recited to accompany the ongoing processions. These mantras are considered a cultural heritage that continues to exist and is maintained by the community for use in traditional ceremonies. The word “mantra” originates from Sanskrit, meaning a sacred or secret sentence (Sutarsih & Sudarmanto, 2020). In its application, mantras are not solely used for worshiping God but are also employed for purposes considered non-traditional. As a result, two opposing categories emerged: “white mantras” and “black mantras.” Ultimately, a mantra is merely a medium, and its usage depends on the intentions of the one uttering or casting the mantra (Aswinarko, 2013). Mantras represent a form of local wisdom that is integral to Javanese culture. They offer insight into the lifestyles and values of the people who uphold them (Saddhono, 2016).

In Javanese society, everyday life is closely intertwined with symbols from its cultural environment. As noted by Irmawati, symbols and expressions are manifestations of Javanese thoughts, wills, and subtle tastes (Irmawati, 2013). In the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, the chanted mantra *ujub* and *kidung* in the process carry symbolic meanings. Several studies on the symbolic meaning of mantras in other countries, particularly in Hindu traditions, suggest that mantras are verbal formulations believed to possess inherent divine power when pronounced correctly, influencing reality (Burchett, 2008). During the process, the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* recited in the procession each have their own meanings. Bell (2009:71) explains that verses from the Vedic scriptures in India are transformed into ritual mantras by adhering to specific rules and usage. As mantras, these verses are taken out of their textual context and turned into a highly stylized series of sounds. This aligns with the viewpoint of Jalil & Elmustian (2001), which states that mantras mark the beginnings of a traditional form of poetry. As a form of traditional poetry, mantras possess distinct characteristics when compared to other types of traditional poetry.

A closer examination of the use of the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony reveals intriguing aspects. According to Ahmadi (in Bahardur & Ediyono, 2017: 26), a mantra is a component of magic with various purposes, including productivity (generating and increasing one's prosperity and happiness), protection (guarding against harm or detrimental influences), and destruction (intending to cause catastrophic damage). To achieve the desired effect, the mantra must be recited correctly, adhering to the appropriate *svara* or rhythm and the color or sound (Dwitayasa, 2018). On the other hand, Aswad, Nuhayat, & Said (2018) describe how traditional societies perceive mantras as integral to everyday life. For instance, a charmer or shaman seeking to cure an illness may recite a mantra as part of the healing process.

As a sign in the ceremony, the use of mantra must be done carefully so there are no errors in pronunciation when the chanting is recited. The form of communication signs in the mantras used in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony can be analyzed for their meaning by using semiotic studies. Semiotics according to Berger (2010: 4) is a systematic study of signs. Meanwhile, according to Suparmo (2017) semiotics is a science that explores the meaning of “signs” that can be made from various kinds of materials, including language, images, gestures and so on. One of the figures who is considered capable of representing the science of semiotics is Roland Barthes, Barthes' semiotics was developed with a denotative and connotative meaning approach to objects as a sign system. In representing semiotics, Roland Barthes (1915-1980) developed two levels of signification, namely the level of de-

notation and connotation. References to marked markers are often referred to as first order of signification, namely denotation references, while connotations are referred to as second order signifying systems (Sulaiman, 2005 in Asriningsari & Umayana, 2010). On the one hand, Bouzida (2014) explains that semiotic signs have an important place in the conceptual field and are included in a series of convergent concepts in Barthes' theory, namely as function signs related to the context of use because they are used and give significance at the same time.

According to Barthes' theory, every sign contains a double message, which includes aesthetic aspects, tangible elements, and concealed ideological meanings that bolster the historical significance of signs within the context of the prevailing socio-political and economic culture (Moriarty in Yan and Ming, 2015). In Barthes' theory, denotative meaning holds the primary position of signification and comprises the literal, definite, and universally agreed-upon meaning of a word, while connotative meaning operates at the level of secondary signification and encompasses the changing associative meanings of words (Yan and Ming, 2015).

Based on the understanding presented above, Roland Barthes' semiotic theory places a strong emphasis on the aspects of sign theory, explaining them through denotative and connotative/symbolic meanings to discern the meaning of an object. The application of Roland Barthes' semiotic approach in this research aims to decipher the meaning behind the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* recited during the procession of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony at Palenggahan Ageng Srigati. This is achieved through an analysis of both denotative and connotative meanings.

This study delves into the symbolic meanings encapsulated within the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* recited during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony at Alas Srigati, and it explores their significance for the social life of the community in Babadan Village, Ngawi Regency, Indonesia. The examination of the meaning behind the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* is a fascinating and in-depth study due to the religious and positive cultural values they carry, values that continue to be upheld in the social fabric of the community surrounding Alas Srigati in Babadan Village, Paron District, Ngawi Regency, East Java, Indonesia.

Research Methods

This research was conducted in Babadan Village, Paron District, Ngawi Regency, where the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony is held. The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Descriptive research aims to provide detailed, word-based, image-based, holistic, and complex insights (Moleong, 2017:6). The Roland Barthes' semiotic approach is employed to uncover the symbolic meanings within the mantras, specifically the *ujub* and *kidung* recited during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony procession in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, Ngawi Regency, East Java. The data utilized in this study consisted of procedural scripts for conducting the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, field notes from observations, and transcripts of interviews. These collected data were subsequently analyzed using content analysis techniques.

The subjects of this study were primarily the residents of Babadan Village, Paron District, Ngawi Regency, who were directly involved in and familiar with the entire *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony procedure. This approach was chosen to acquire comprehensive and

detailed information regarding the execution of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, particularly concerning the *ujub* and *kidung* mantras recited during the procession. The data collection techniques employed in this study included observation methods, which involved systematic recording of the observed symptoms (Hardani, 2020). Observation was utilized to validate the data related to the *ujub* and *kidung* mantra scripts used in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. Additionally, structured in-depth interviews were conducted with informants. Structured interviews allow interviewers to define their problems and questions in a manner that yields detailed and in-depth results (Nugrahini, 2014: 127). This was crucial in obtaining comprehensive insights into the *ujub* and *kidung* mantras recited during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony procession. The sample selection for this study followed a purposive sampling technique, where samples were chosen based on their understanding of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. The collected data was then analyzed using interactive analysis techniques, which encompassed three main components: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion.

Results and Discussion

This study examines the meanings contained in the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* used in the procession of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Alas Srigati, Ngawi Regency. The scope of the study in this research is the study of semiotics, which studied the aspect of meaning and symbols contained in the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* used in the procession of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. The following describes the meaning and function of the symbols contained in the mantra *ujub* and *kidung*.

MANTRA UJUB	MEANING
<p><i>Assalamualaikum Wr. Wb.</i></p> <p><i>Kanjeng Ibu Pertiwi ingkang rumeksa ing bumi kususipun Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, ingkang jumeneng lan ingkang dereng jumeneng. Kula nyuwun pangapunten ngarsaning Gusti Kang Maha Suci.</i></p> <p><i>Kawula ngaturaken kunjuk atur kersanipun dhumateng sukma sejati Ayang Seh Dombo, Eyang Srigati, Kanjeng Sinuwun Brawijaya. Kula among badhe nglampahaken adat lilaranipun para sepuh, badhe nggantosi langse.</i></p> <p><i>Mugi-mugi piningrana lancar lan piningaran rahayu wilujeng slamet ingkang sami nindakake.</i></p>	<p>This mantra verse is used during the <i>Ganti Langse</i> procession at the traditional <i>Ganti Langse</i> ceremony. The mantra in this verse has meaning of requesting permission from the caretaker of Palenggahan Ageng Srigati as the elder of the Babadan Village Community to all ancestors of Babadan Village to start the <i>Ganti Langse</i> procession. To start the recitation of the mantra begins with <i>Assalamualaikum wr. wb.</i> (may peace be upon you) which is a greeting in Islam that symbolizes the greeting of the majority of Babadan Village Community are devout followers of Islam.</p> <p>The form of requesting permission to ancestors during the <i>Ganti Langse</i> procession is intended because the Babadan Village Community who until now still uphold the noble values passed down by their ancestors as a guide for their lives. In addition, the mantra in this verse has a meaning as a form of asking for salvation for the entire series of procession activities.</p>

Figure 5. Mantra *ujub* which used in *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. Continued next page.

MANTRA UJUB	MEANING
<p><i>Nyuwun pangapunten ngarsaning Gusti lan para leluhur ingkang kula bekteni, dosa ingkang kula sengaja lan boten kula sengaja kula nyuwun pangapura. Sak para kadang ingkang nindakaken.</i></p> <p><i>Lan langse kula suwun daya kasiatipun kangge putra wayah ingkang sami ngginakaken.</i></p> <p><i>Sepindhah kagem keselamatan jiwa raga, bale wisma supados slamet ayem tentrem. Sageda rejeki laminta ugi piningan putra wayah ingkang drajad ingkang luhur lan utama ingkang kuat imanipun dadosa putra ingkang wicaksana, bekti dhumateng tiyang sepuh lan bekti dhumateng nagari.</i></p>	<p>This mantra verse is a continuation from the previous verse that was recited before starting the procession of <i>Ganti Langse</i>. This verse contains the meaning of apologizing to God and all ancestors of the Babadan Village Community for all the mistakes committed by all elements of the Babadan Village Community over the past year. Furthermore, this mantra verse also contains the hope that the old <i>langse</i> that has been replaced and afterwards will be distributed to all elements of the community who are present at the <i>Ganti Langse</i> ceremony can provide benefits in accordance with what is expected by the <i>langse</i> recipient.</p>
<p><i>Assalamualaikum Wr. Wb.</i></p> <p><i>Pinanggih adicara bagi langse badhe kawiwitan. Tata cara lan ginanipun langse aja kliru, semu aja kliru panemu, yen iki kususe ora dipuja-puja nanging among kanggo sarana:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Keselamatan kaluwarga lan rumah tangga supaya tentrem</i> <i>2. Sing tetanem supaya apik pametune</i> <i>3. Sing pedagang bisa lancar dagangane</i> <i>4. Sing pangkat drajat supaya luhur drajate</i> <i>5. Sing tetulung bisa kasembadan anggone tetulung</i> <p><i>Ananging panyuwunan tetep dhumateng ngarsanipun Gusti Allah ingkang Maha Suci lan Maha Agung.</i></p>	<p>This mantra verse is in the form of <i>ujub</i> or prayer and it recited before starting the <i>lorodan</i> procession or <i>bagi langse</i> which is a procession of distribution of old <i>langse</i> that has been replaced with a new one to all elements of society who are present in the <i>Ganti Langse</i> traditional ceremony. In this mantra verse there is also a warning to the recipient of the <i>langse</i> not to worship the <i>langse</i> received but to consider the <i>langse</i> received as a medium to realize the desired expectations, including for family safety, smooth harvest of farmers, smooth sales for traders, promotion for employees, and the results of helping actions. In this mantra verse, caretaker of Palenggahan Ageng Srigati reminded the <i>langse</i> recipient to keep asking for everything only to Almighty God.</p>

Figure 5. Cont. Mantra *ujub* which used in *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. Continued next page.

Denotation Meaning

Denotative meaning is a meaning that does not contain any other meaning or value and is the first goal meaning that can be assigned to a symbol (Saifuddin, 2018). Rao (2017) also stated that the meaning of the word in denotative meaning refers to the most basic or specific meaning of a word. The denotative meaning of the mantra *ujub-ujub* and *kidungan* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati are as follows.

The mantra *ujub-ujub* and *kidungan* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati can be interpreted as signs of significance at the first level. Asriningsari and Umaya (2012:32) explain that in Barthes' theory, a text is a sign that consists of expression and content. Therefore, a text is perceived as 1) a form or entity containing linguistic elements, 2) dependent on rules for its comprehension, and 3) a part of culture, which is a consideration involving the factors of creators and readers. Based on the definition above, the mantras *ujub* and *kidungan* found in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati are, in denotation, a literary entity containing linguistic elements and are integral to traditional culture in the context of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati.

Kidungan	Meaning
<p><i>Sura wulan purnama sidi</i> <i>Magut ratri tumpak manis</i> (ajusted to the day on Javanese calendar when the ceremony is held) <i>winahya gantos langse bangsal Srigati</i> <i>Linambaran panuwun</i> <i>Konjuk Gusti Kang Maha Yudi</i> <i>Wahyu mulya jinangka</i> <i>Urip sayuk rukun</i> <i>Titi tentrem kerta raharja</i> <i>Gemah ripah loh jinawi</i> <i>Murah duga lan wastra</i></p>	<p><i>Kidungan</i> is a song in Javanese culture. This <i>kidungan</i> has a meaning about the continuity of <i>Ganti Langse</i> which is held every <i>Sura</i> Month on the Javanese calendar and requests God to always be given smoothness and prosperity in community life.</p>
<p><i>Kidungan Ritual Selamatan</i> <i>Heneng hening awas klawan eling</i> <i>Heneng menebing budi utama</i> <i>Hening wening cipta rasane</i> <i>Awas raosing pandulu</i> <i>Eling Gusti Kang Hangwasani</i> <i>Nuli jangka jinangkah</i> <i>Sedyaning panggayuh</i> <i>Titi tentrem titen lan tlaten</i> <i>Hamulat kedhap kelabing batin</i> <i>Nyadhong ilham Pangeran</i></p>	<p>This <i>kidungan</i> is chanted when the <i>wilujengan</i> procession begins and has a meaning as a reminder to all mankind to always remember Almighty God in every step of their lives so that in life they are always blessed with inspiration from the <i>Pangeran</i> (One of the mentions of Almighty God in Javanese society).</p>
<p><i>Kidungan Pasrah Tawakal Garising Kodrat</i> <i>Hanacaraka carakaning urip</i> <i>Datasawala datan swaleng karsa</i> <i>Garising Kang Maha Asih</i> <i>Asor luhur puniku legawa wajibing katampi</i> <i>Nuli padhajayanya jumbuh jaba jero</i> <i>Magabathanga wusananira</i> <i>Hamung pasrah sumarah</i> <i>Pepesthing Gusti</i> <i>Sendika ngestu pada</i></p>	<p>This <i>kidungan</i> has the meaning to remind us to always walk in the way of Almighty God and always be captive to everything we do. In addition, this <i>kidungan</i> also reminds us to remain resigned to all God's decrees.</p>

Figure 6. Kidungan which used in *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony.

Connotation Meaning

Connotative meaning is an additional meaning or sense value contained in a word and is a second order meaning that can be given a symbol by referring to cultural values which are therefore at the second level (Saifuddin, 2018). Furthermore, Rao (2017) explains that connotation plays an important role in almost every type of communication and it is a word of association and implication that goes beyond the literal meaning. The connotative meaning of the mantra *ujub-ujub* and *kidungan* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati in Barthes' semiotic theory can be interpreted as a signifier of significance at the second level, which the context of meaning can be interpreted symbolically and can be seen through the following explanation:

Symbol of Religiosity

The symbol of religiosity is a manifestation of human belief in God as a guiding figure in human life. Tillich, as cited in Kubat (2019: 276), explains that the religious aspect refers to something unlimited and unconditional in human life, serving as the central object of attention that cannot be directly explained but is consistently expressed in symbolic form, embodying the highest ideals, symbolized as God himself. In the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, the symbol of religiosity becomes evident through the recitation of the mantras *ujub* and *kidung* during the procession. The act of reciting a mantra is a form of symbolism rooted in ancient rituals (Wahab, 2011). The symbol of religiosity is notably seen in the use of Muslim greetings at the outset of each *ujub* mantra recitation during the procession. Mbah Suwardi, the elder of Babadan village, explained that each *ujub* mantra recitation begins with greetings, “*assalamualaikum warrahmatullahi wabarakatuh*” (may peace be upon you), followed by the recitation of the mantra *ujub* and concluded with a prayer that represents the collective religious beliefs of those attending and participating in the *Ganti Langse* procession.

Furthermore, in the “*kidungan selamatan*” procession, before the *kidung* is sung, there is a *wilujengan* or *selamatan* procession, a type of thanksgiving ceremony that carries religious significance, involving prayers to the Almighty God. In the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, the greetings and prayers recited encompass a variety of religions and beliefs. While the specific greetings and prayers may vary across different religious and belief systems, their fundamental essence as expressions of religiosity remains constant.

The symbolic meaning of religiosity embodied in the *ujub* mantra recited during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony represents the religious element within the community of Babadan Village, Ngawi Regency. As a region predominantly characterized by a devout population, the *ujub* mantra in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, as a cultural expression, is not considered taboo or to be avoided. Instead, for the people of Babadan Village, the *ujub* mantra serves as a medium for offering prayers and hope to the Almighty God. The prayers and hopes expressed during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony procession not only provide guidance to the lives of the village residents, who hold strong religious values but also instill the belief that the coming year will bring blessings and grace while avoiding disasters, as experienced in previous years.

Cultural Symbol

The cultural symbol is a local wisdom that is guarded and preserved by the community to maintain the values contained in it. Culture is power and mind in the form of *cipta* (creativity), *karsa* (intention), and *rasa* (taste) (Koentjaraningrat, 2015:146). The form of cultural

symbols contained in the mantra *ujub* used in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony tradition in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati appears as the form of hope. Hope is a complete implementation of *cipta* (creativity), *karsa* (intention), and *rasa* (taste) that grows and develops in the life of the Javanese people. Since the old time, Javanese people have always believed that there is a spirit that inhabits an object. This form of belief is also manifested in the hope/prayer made by the Javanese people for the 'spirit' they believe through the medium of an object.

When viewed from the definition of culture as all the results of behavior and the results of regular behavior itself by the system obtained by learning (Agustin, 2019), in the mantra *ujub* or prayer that is recited it is stated that the *langse* that is distributed has several benefits for people who use it, but the function of *langse* here is only as a medium/because it is not a form of prayer because all the benefits that arise from the use of *langse* come only from Allah Swt, The Most Holy and Exalted. This is obtained by the community from the learning process, that from previous ancestors who considered an object as a means of embodiment of prayer and now after going through the learning process and a change in culture resulted in the finding that the object is only a medium. This is intended so that in its use, the old *langse* that has been replaced and given to the residents in need are not misinterpreted as granting the wishes of the community but are used only as a medium, because the only one who grants requests is Allah Swt, so there is no alliance against the Almighty God. In the use of this mantra *ujub*, there are no special conditions for those who recite it. However, usually this mantra *ujub* is recited by the caretaker of Palenggahan Ageng Srigati who is also considered as an elder in Babadan Village, Paron District, Ngawi Regency.

The preservation of cultural values in the procession of chanting mantra *ujub* and *kid-ung* during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati has been passed down through generations within the Babadan Village community. The majority of Babadan villagers, who adhere to religious principles, have not forgotten their ancestral cultural traditions. These traditions have continued to thrive and evolve in Babadan Village. The cultural relics showcased in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremonies have been acculturated harmoniously with the prevalent religious belief system trusted by the majority of Babadan Village residents. This ensures that traditional ceremonies and religious beliefs coexist peacefully, without giving rise to conflicts stemming from differing beliefs.

Symbol of Humanity

In the mantra *ujub* used in the traditional ceremonial rituals of the *Ganti Langse* tradition in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati also appears to be a symbol of humanity. This can be seen in the script of the mantra *ujub* which has sentences that indicate the equality of strata for residents who come to ask for the replaced *langse*, all of which are mentioned in the mantra *ujub* to get the same efficacy, as in the following sentence:

Lan langse kula suwun daya kasiatipun kangge putra wayah ingkang sami ngginakaken.
'Langse (which has been replaced) I ask for its strength for children and grandchildren in need.' Furthermore, the form of the symbol of humanity that appears in the mantra *ujub* is a form of respect for ancestors, as in the quote below:

Kawula ngaturaken kunjuk atur kersanipun dhumateng sukma sejati Ayang Seh Dombo, Eyang Srigati, Kanjeng Sinuwun Brawijaya. Kula among badhe nglampahaken adat lilaranipun para sepuh, badhe nggantosi langse.

'I offer our dedication to the true souls of Ayang Seh Dombo, Eyang (ancestor) Srigati, Kanjeng Sinuwun (A term for a respected person in Javanese) Brawijaya. I want to hold the tradition from the ancestral heritage, I want to change the *langse* (white cloth).'

The quote illustrates that, before taking any action, the first step for Javanese individuals is always to seek permission from their ancestors. Siswanto (2010) explains that the personality of the Javanese community falls into the category of an “Eastern personality,” which places significant emphasis on spiritual life. This explanation aligns with the practice of reciting the mantra *ujub* as a way of expressing gratitude for all the positive contributions left by their ancestors, which continue to benefit people's lives to this day.

Nyuwun pangapunten ngarsaning Gusti lan para leluhur ingkang kula bekteni, dosa ingkang kula sengaja lan boten kula sengaja kula nyuwun pangapura. Sak para kadang ingkang nindakaken.

'I apologize to God and my honorable ancestors, I ask for forgiveness for my sins which I intentionally or unintentionally. Also the sins of all the brothers who also did it.'

First of all, the caretaker as the village elder greets the Almighty God. Followed by an ask for permission to the Almighty God and the ancestors of Babadan Village to hold the *Ganti Langse* procession. This is conducted as a form of appreciation for the ancestors as well as a form of human servitude as creatures to the Almighty God. In addition, the form of the symbol of humanity in the *kidungan* is a form of tolerance between religious communities, as shown below:

*winahya gantos langse bangsal Srigati
Linambaran panuwun
Konjuk Gusti Kang Maha Yudi
'Time to Ganti Langse in Srigati Ward
All hope
Towards Almighty God'*

Based on the *kidungan* above, it is stated that all the hopes associated with the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony are directed solely towards the Almighty God, the God of the Universe who protects humanity. Mbah Suwardi, the elder of Babadan village, explained that the *ujub* and prayers recited during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony are general prayers that can be embraced by individuals of all religions and belief systems. This consideration takes into account that attendees of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony come from various religious backgrounds and belief systems, not limited to one specific religion or sect. Agustin (2019) further elucidates that a characteristic of Javanese people is their strong sense of kinship, where society is bound by norms encompassing both traditional and reli-

gious aspects. This communal adherence to traditional and religious norms is exemplified in the recitation of prayers and the melodic strains of the *kidung* during the *Ganti Langsetraditional* ceremony. These prayers and *kidung* serve as a means of seeking divine assistance that is inclusive of all belief systems and religions, with the ultimate goal of fulfilling the intentions of those attending the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony.

From the explanation above, it is evident that the recitation of the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony is closely tied to matters concerning human relationships and interactions with others. This practice has been passed down and embraced by all the communities of Babadan Village to ensure they remain connected to their heritage and origins. Additionally, through the chanting of the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, the people of Babadan Village have adopted a tradition that helps foster strong relationships between community members, promoting mutual respect and reverence for village elders who are regarded as figures capable of safeguarding the harmony of Babadan Village community life.

Symbol of Prosperity

The symbol of prosperity or continuity of sustenance is about everything that the Almighty God has given to humans since ancient times until today to fulfill the human needs. This can be seen in the quote below:

Keselamatan kaluwarga lan rumah tangga supaya tentrem
 Sing tetanem supaya apik pametune
 Sing pedagang bisa lancar dagangane
 Sing pangkat drajat supaya luhur drajate
 Sing tetulung bisa kasembadan anggone tetulung
 'For the safety of the family and household to make it peaceful
 For the farmer who can get a good harvest
 For the seller who can sell their goods
 For the employee who will get the power and degree
 For those who help each other can receive the results of their help'

Furthermore, the symbol of prosperity is also seen in the line of *kidungan selamatan* which hopes for inner and outer prosperity as in the quote below:

Urip sayuk rukun
 Titi tentrem kerta raharja
 Gemah ripah loh jinawi
 Murah duga lan wastra
 'Life is always in harmony
 Orderly, peaceful, and prosperous
 Fertile and prosperous area
 Easy to get sustenance'

The quote illustrates that in the process, whether it be through the mantra *ujub* or the recited *kidungan*, the people around Palenggahan Ageng Srigati always expect prosperity and continuity from the Almighty God. Prosperity and continuity are not only material matters,

but a life that is always harmonious and peaceful is also what is expected in the mantra *ujub* and *kidungan* that are recited. According to Santoso (2012), harmony can be achieved with the belief that the person should place the emphasis on groups interest, not individual interests. Therefore, according to Mbah Suwardi (Babadan village' elder) in every mantra *ujub* uttered in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony, there is also hope that the government and the people can work together to promote and prosper the village. Pranowo in Sartini (2009) explains that Javanese people who have a strong determination are not because of a blind faith without reasoning and consideration of feelings but it's already thought about and calculated the good and bad consequences. This is a form of humans' resignation to the Almighty God, meaning that the Javanese people in everything have considered that sustenance and prosperity have been arranged by the Almighty God in its portions. In addition, from the mantra *ujub* and *kidungan*, there is hope from the community that in the next year the Almighty God will always be given prosperity to the people and to always be grateful for all the blessings from *Gusti Pangeran* (the Almighty God) for everything he has given (Mbah Suwardi, Babadan Village's elders).

The meaning of mantra *ujub* and *kidung* which recited in the procession of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, Babadan Village, Ngawi Regency, Indonesia has symbolic meanings inherent in the social life of the people of Babadan Village which are hereditary passed down by the elders of Babadan Village as one of the guidelines for the people of Babadan Village to maintain harmony of life between fellow communities and with other elements of life in Babadan Village. Mantra *ujub* and *kidung* which recited represent the concept of religiosity that is embraced by the majority of the population of Babadan Village, but does not rule out the cultural values that have been hereditary to grow with the people of Babadan Village so that the two things can go hand in hand and cause harmony in the social life of the Babadan Village community. In addition to these two things, the mantra of *ujub* and *kidung* spoken in the procession of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati also symbolizes the relationship between human relations that have been growth and developed in the community of Babadan Village with prosperity which is also considered important for the people of Babadan Village. The form of relationship that arises in the pronunciation of mantra *ujub* and *kidung* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony is all prayers and hopes are not limited only to the people of Babadan Village, but also for all communities and visitors who attend the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in order to also get blessings from the continuity of the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony. The form of symbols that appear in the mantra of *ujub* and *kidung* which recited in the procession of *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremonies in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati eventually grows and develops with the people of Babadan Village so that each symbol that appears is then adapted by the community as good guidelines in the social life of the community in order to arise harmony in the life of the people of Babadan Village.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are two meanings in the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, Ngawi Regency; (a) Denotative meaning: The denotative meaning of the mantra *ujub* and *kidung* in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati refers to a literary entity that contains linguistic elements and is an integral part of tradition-

al culture that has been passed down from generation to generation in society. (b) Connotative meaning: The connotative meaning of the mantra ujub and kidung in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati can be further divided into four aspects:

1. Religious symbol: It serves as a religious symbol inherent in each religion and belief system through the form of greetings and prayers uttered during the recitation of the ujub mantra.
2. Cultural symbol: It represents a cultural symbol that has developed within the society. For instance, the Javanese people have a belief dating back to ancient times that spirits inhabit objects, and this belief is reflected in the hopes and prayers expressed by the Javanese people toward the “figure” they perceive through the medium of the *langse* used in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati.
3. Symbols of humanity: The ujub and kidung mantras in the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony are interpreted as symbols of humanity. This is exemplified by the use of prayers in the ujub mantra, which represents the diverse religious and belief systems held by everyone attending the ceremony, seeking blessings from the replaced *langse*.
4. Symbols of prosperity: These mantras also symbolize prosperity, both material and inner, for the people living in the vicinity of Palenggahan Ageng Srigati.
5. All these symbols, present in each meaning of the ujub and kidung mantras recited during the *Ganti Langse* traditional ceremony in Palenggahan Ageng Srigati, are embraced by the residents of Babadan Village, who host the ceremony. These symbols serve as guiding principles in community life, fostering positive relationships among the residents of Babadan Village and with other living entities in the area.

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Liminality & Festivities Facilitating Pandemic Fatigue:

Songkran and the Third Wave of COVID-19 Outbreak in Thailand

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Abstract

Asian countries were outstanding performers in preventing COVID-19 initially, but many suffered from a new wave of the outbreak in mid-2020. These countries sealed off their borders from the possible spread of the virus from outside. For more than one year, social distancing restrictions were applied and successfully kept the infection rates at a low level. Drawing on the initial findings of Chang et al. (2020) on the spread of the infectious disease intracity and intercity during festivals, this paper examines the outbreaks, with a probe into the case of *Songkran*, or the Water Festival of Thailand. The author found that pandemic fatigue coincided with the festivities. The liminality of the festival means relaxation of norms which breaks social distancing measures. This article attempts to explain the liminality of festivals facilitating pandemic fatigue and intensifying the spread of the disease throughout the country.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic Fatigue, Liminality, Festival, Social Distancing, Thailand

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Introduction

A festival is an event commemorating the history of a nation-state, a religious event or an annual harvest in agrarian societies. Many New Year Days of these societies overlap with these (post-)harvest seasons. Celebration and cultural performances for religious or entertainment purposes are commonly seen during the festive period. Unfortunately, many of these celebratory events were cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, *Songkran* Day, which is better known as the Water Festival, is the New Year of Thailand. It has been fixed on April 23 for 15 calendar days each year. But the public holiday was “post-poned,” and not cancelled, with two substitution holidays offered later in July and September. But the two substitute days with a festive atmosphere, celebrating activities, rituals and traditions left them no more than two non-working, public holidays.

The author argues in this paper that festivals together with pandemic fatigue intensified the infection. Pandemic fatigue is ignorance of infection threats and loss of self-discipline in daily life about taking precautions against this infectious disease over a prolonged period of the pandemic. The behavior itself is seen as a demotivation to continue seeking health-care information and adopting protective measures, and even complacency and hopelessness over time (WHO, 2020). Based on the study on the risk of mobility and epidemics in Taiwan which revealed the possibility of long holidays enhancing the spread of the virus (Chang et al., 2020), this paper overviews the new wave of the COVID-19 outbreaks in mid-2021 and in particular, examines the case of *Songkran* Water Festival of Thailand. The findings fill the knowledge gap of how a festival triggers the mobility of people, festive liminality intensifies pandemic fatigue opening loopholes for worsening the outbreak.

Literature Review

Existing literature on the liminality of festivals and pandemic fatigue is reviewed in this section. This paper is an attempt to explore some nature of festivity contributing to a less precautionous attitude to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.

Liminality of Festivals

Festivals are historical, religious, or special events in society; usually the events are held annually and some of them are public holidays. Many festivals last for one day or a short period, but the celebration period of some festivals may extend to several months. A New Year is the end of the calendar festival. For agricultural societies, many fall at the end of the harvest season. They are nationwide events that the whole country is involved in and celebrates. These festive activities consist of primarily outdoor activities, taking the form of formal rituals and informal celebrations.

Almost all festivals and related activities stem from domestic culture and heritage; artificially created carnivals seldom draw a critical mass to sustain the events. Several factors determine whether a festival or event can gather a critical mass, such as many artists and performances involved in the event as well as the festivities being held in a place which is easy to access and over a concentrated period (Hughes, 2001). Many modern-day festivals are used as a means to attract tourists. Even religious festivals are subsequently reduced to more for celebration. These festivities and performances feature tailor-made music, dances, and costumes, together with seasonal fruits and cuisines drawing mass spectators domestically and internationally which bring along business and public revenues. For example, one of the world’s largest events, the Rio de Janeiro Carnival in Brazil, is well-

known for its Samba Dance. About two million visitors participated in the event before the pandemic. Many international tourists take the chance to visit other places in the country which increases the return. In this regard, the author views the hybridity of the traditional festivals which consist of both ceremonial and celebration nature.

The traditional festival usually consists of ceremonies and rites which can be seen explicitly, but there should be something hidden behind the scenes (DaMatta, 1983). They are the elements of festivals which constitute part of the culture of a society which governs the social system, hierarchy, and norms. The culture serves as the dominant ideology determined by the dominant classes in a society who benefit from these social norms and order (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner, 1980). As such, festivals can be understood as the predominant elites' mechanism of social control (Daun e Lorena, 2019).

But most often, besides some formal rituals and ceremonies, there exist reverses of social roles and relaxation of norms during the celebration, in the performance (DaMatta, 1983). The "reversal" of social roles in rites can be in the form of participants or performers interchanging their gender, people playing the role of animals, and members of subordinate ethnic groups impersonating the character of the dominant ethnic group in the ritual drama (Miller, 2010). Interestingly, the contrast between the normalcy and chaos of festivities manifests when the former is widely seen as following the normative and secular order, but the latter consists of "a carnivalesque chaos," in which the two parts form "a juncture of home with the street, of the body with the soul, of desires hidden by repressions of order with the open and uninhibited manifestation of them" (DaMatta, 1983:165). These phenomena are not limited to the carnival which is a more artificially and commercially created event for fun and tourist attraction, but are also common in traditional festivals and New Year celebrations.

New Year is more than the turning point of calendar time. Many Asian countries developed their lunar calendar during ancient times following the orbit of the moon around the Earth when some agricultural periods were highlighted. Thus, these countries have their own New Year falling on a day not the same as the solar calendar widely used in Western countries though nowadays, most Asian countries celebrate both. The new year is a special festival consisting of all sorts of rites and ceremonies with an extended period of celebration. These include the aforementioned explicit or normal part as well as the rite of passage towards a reverse and extraordinary part where implicit meanings are embedded.

Many festivals involve travelling to a destination where some events and ceremonies take place. Homecoming is common but the symbolic meanings are more than just visiting relatives and left-behind family members for internal and international migrants. Religious festivals may consist of a pilgrimage to visit a sacred destination. Muslims believe that everyone should visit the holy city of Mecca at least once in their lifetime. However, a legacy trip is secular, for the common history and "personal connection with their heritage beyond a general relationship of collective ancestry" which is a search of family bloodlines for the reconnection with ancestors and the place of origin (McCain and Ray, 2003:713). As Arel-lano (2007) puts it the phenomenon "transformational pilgrimage," a pilgrimage still goes on, but the religious core is secularized into spiritualities of a symbol embedded in secular culture (Hanegraaff, 1998). For example, people go on the Inca trail pilgrimage to Machu

Picchu for the purification of their urban self and body by the nature and spirits of the ancient civilization there (Arellano, 2007). The journey, the place and the spiritual energy there lead the people to enter a liminal state (Turner, 1969) for the transformation.

Vogt (2003:202) uses Turner's (1969) "liminal period of betwixt and between" to explain the reversal of rites during the New Year of Zinacantan in Mexico where the indigenous Tzotzil Maya people reside. The reversal rites represent a transition of the year when the performers' roles are inversed, social order is revised in the drama demonstrating the "social structure is unwired, the rewired" for the New Year (Vogt, 2003:202). The bipolarities of these New Year ritual dramas using both formal and ordinary ritual as well as reversal and masquerading in participants' acts to demonstrate the contrast between the "sensory pole" (sexual, aggressive, and antisocial symbolism) and "ideological pole" (norms and values) of society (Vogt, 2003:208). The moment is a liminal period betwixt and between the old year and the new year when the system of order undergoes "unwiring, or unstructuring[...] and then rewiring or restructuring" (Vogt, 2003:209). However, the relaxing of social norms and reversing roles may only limited within this betwixt and between moment. Some may claim or desire a permanent change or want it to be an "escape valve" but a disorder may revert to order after the festival period, thus back to the status quo (Daun e Lorena, 2019).

Festivals and their ceremonies and ritual dramas represent the rite of passage from old to new, winter to spring. The process involves ongoing dialogue and negotiation between the host and guests, predominant groups, and ethnic minorities about their identities, new norms, as well as the future of inclusion and exclusion (Duffy, 2005). It provides a relaxing space for the suppressed and subordinate groups once a year to get rid of, or even reverse the normative order and roles. For all, the relaxation and chaos are also a space for brainstorming about what to do in the new year, how to make a new start, or in Turner's (1969) term, a moment before going back to the liminal or entering a liminal.

Pandemic Fatigue

Because of the coinciding of further outbreaks in the region after these festivals, this paper is an attempt to suggest the factors of festivals and likely, pandemic fatigue as an explanation. Fatigue is not limited to a physical response to ongoing actions; it can be psychological and mental exhaustion, as a reflex to the ongoing happenings and practices, in the form of negative emotions and more obviously, an escape and ignorance (D'aurora and Fimian, 1988). Pandemic fatigue emerges gradually during an extended period of high alert and precaution against the epidemic of an infectious disease. This is the behavioral fatigue of less or failing to compile the recommendations and restrictions to prevent from COVID-19 infection (Reicher and Drury, 2021). Behavioral fatigue is a "demotivation" to act (WHO, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic has been lasting for two years since its known outbreak in early 2020 it is one of the longest pandemics after the Spanish Flu in 1918. Healthcare workers and the general public, initially cautious and enthusiastic about protecting themselves against the disease, have become exhausted, and in physiology terms, a reduction from "acute to chronic stress" (Murphy, 2020:90). These protective activities are wearing a mask, applying hand sanitizers, avoiding crowded venues, and maintaining social distancing. A survey of five cities found that respondents who had generally been highly cautious during the early stage of the outbreak became less adhered to all risk-mitigation behaviors (MacIntyre et al., 2021). But Reicher and Drury (2021) distinguish "covidiot" who choose to

break the COVID-19 restrictions, from pandemic fatigue. Covidiot are usually students and young people who are blamed for their human psychological frailties who are too weak or immoral to consider the public health consequence of not adhering to these rules.

As time goes by, people become less sensitive to the threat and risk of COVID-19. The ignorance leads to the general public seeking a return to normalcy, or business as usual. According to the COM-B model (Michie, Watkins and West, 2014), individual motivation (automatic and reflective), individual capability (physical and psychological), and contextual opportunity (social and physical) are drivers and/or barriers of behavioral change. In the context of pandemic fatigue, reducing fear and rising opportunity cost contribute to the demotivation in adherence. First of all, people have become used to the disease over time leading to the weakening of initial fear. They get used to the happenings and begin to ignore the threat, or find no immediate harm upon violated some restrictions, hence resulting in complacency. “[E]ven the most outrageous circumstances become normal when experienced over long periods of time” (WHO, 2020:8).

Also, some rules are higher in compliance while others are lower. For example, some stringent behavioral regulations, especially those based on related laws remained high in compliance, such as the shutdown of premises, reducing business hours of restaurants and restrictions on the number of restaurant customers per table, and the like. But those asymptomatic individuals confirmed of infection, or those who have a contact history with infected persons who required self-isolation, are both low in adherence (Smith et al., 2021). There are also structural barriers for some vulnerable groups, including those living in overcrowded workers’ quarters, home offices not an option for the work types, and traveling from home to work relying on public transport (Reicher and Drury, 2021). Last but not least, rational choice suggests the calculation of cost and benefit before taking action. Here the preservation risk of infection reduces over time but the economic cost of lockdowns or self-isolation persist. For some people, the economic consequences of restrictions override the motive to adhere to the restrictions. “The balance may shift, and the perceived costs of the response may start to outweigh the perceived risks related to the virus” (WHO, 2020:7).

Human Mobility and Epidemics

During the outbreak of COVID-19, many countries in the Asia region rapidly sealed off their borders. Similar to many countries around the world road travel is highly reduced (Nurse and Dunning, 2020). Social distancing measures were applied within cities but not enough focused on physical, spatial, or geographical distancing (Hartt, 2020) since fewer restrictions have been enforced in intercity travel. Existing literature covers the process of epidemic transmission of various infectious diseases. Some of these studies develop a mathematical model to describe how the viruses are spread among humans (Anderson and May, 1992), while others are concerned about long-distance movement and its effects on the infection (Colizza et al., 2007). These movements, no doubt help to bring humans and the virus from place to place through contact. However, population movement varies in its frequency, speed, cause, direction and purpose. There has been a call for healthcare provision for nomadic populations, refugees, displaced persons, and migrant workers who are vulnerable during the mobility and settle down in new destinations. But these movers all bring pathogens to different places where there are less prepared (Aagaard-Hansen et

al., 2010). Also, the size of the mobile population matters; the higher the volume of mobility, the higher the probability of epidemic transmission (Brockmann and Helbing, 2013). In daily life, people contact each other in different locations within a city which facilitate the spread of viruses. Studies on mobility and epidemic focus more on intracity movement than intercity because the former was seven times more frequent than the latter (Chang et al., 2020). But intercity travel for business, sightseeing and relative-visit purpose also intensify the epidemic of infectious diseases. Loopholes in detecting the infected persons, especially those nonsyndromic, in the center of an outbreak and delaying the discovery of an outbreak or a cluster infection may result in a divergence of the epidemic to other cities and provinces. A study on the Wuhan City of China, the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, using the exponential growth model and stochastic model of human mobility estimated that 130 cities in China have over 50 percent chance of having an infection case imported from Wuhan in the first three weeks (Du et al., 2020). Wei et al. (2021) suggest a polycentric model of epidemics may help to explain the risk model of the aforementioned intercity mobility which is more interactive and concerns multiple locations, instead of the monocentric way of spreading disease from the epicenter city (Brockmann and Helbing, 2013).

The study of Chang et al. (2020) on people's mobility and the COVID-19 pandemic situation of Taiwan is enlightening. The research employed Facebook co-location data and Facebook movement data to build metapopulation models to identify the high-risk areas of disease spread. The study distinguishes between intracity and intercity movements. The study did not measure what was happening on the ground but proxied co-location to more interpersonal contacts. For locations with a higher risk of infection, such as the capital city and major city centers, "the disease transmission rate is expected to be higher." For intercity mobility, the mobility pattern is consistent with the infection pattern of Taiwan territory-wide. Well-connected cities spread the virus to other cities faster and wider. Although movement during a holiday is not the main purpose of the study of Chang et al. (2021), the study examined several popular Taiwanese festivals, namely Lunar New Year, Chung Yeung Festival and Dragon Boat Festival.

"When initial infections occurred in or around Lunar New Year, the speed of disease spread was enhanced. Because mobility during Ching Ming Festival and Dragon Boat Festival differed less from regular days and these two holidays only lasted four days, it only led to minor differences in the geographic range of infections" (Chang et al., 2021).

The risk estimation is based on the length of the holiday, for Lunar New Year it was ten days, but only four days for the rest two festivals (long weekends). Chang et al. (2020) suggested that travel restrictions could be an effective measure to curb the COVID-19 from spreading from the source of the outbreak to other cities. The findings of Chang et al. (2020) using Facebook's aggregated and anonymized movement and co-location data, provide a base for this research. In this research, the author focused on the risk areas of disease spread, people's mobility and assess the potential impacts, but not an investigation of the details of the mobility process in contributing to the spread of the virus. This paper attempts to fill the knowledge gap of how human mobility for festivals enhances the infection rate from a behavioral perspective.

Methodology

This study uses documentary research with a minor section of key informant interviews. It starts with a review of the mid-2021 outbreak of COVID-19 in South Asia and the South-east Asia region. Daily infection date and news reporting on this wave of an outbreak are reviewed. The chronology of outbreaks and festivities is briefly examined to draw a whole picture of the pandemic in the region. It then narrows down to investigate the critical event of *Songkran* Festival of Thailand. *Songkran* is the New Year of Thailand which is also known as the Water Festival. Similar New Years in the same period based on the lunar calendar are found in Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia. *Songkran* of Thailand was chosen for this study because it coincided with the third wave of COVID-19 in the country and also the Thai government's inconsistent approaches to the restrictions on *Songkran* Festival in 2020 and 2021 demonstrating not the same result in the spread of the infectious disease.

The case of the *Songkran* Festival in 2021 amid another wave of COVID-19 outbreak is identified as a critical event. The purpose of this research is not to blame the festivals for triggering or at least worsening another wave of COVID-19 in the whole region for which a survey may be more suitable to draw this correlation. Rather, the author aimed to look at the details of the process, how the festival, its nature (liminality), and celebratory activities contributed to pandemic fatigue, which subsequently facilitated the spread of the disease geographically. The consequence was an immediate rise in the daily infection rate after the festival. As such, the case study method was an appropriate tool for this study. The in-depth examination of a particular event helps to extract the complexity of the process and relationship which also catches the whole process that happened over an extended period (Lichtman, 2014). News on Thai English newspaper websites related to *Songkran* and government announcements are reviewed; the period covers March to May 2021, one month before and after the festival.

The first infected case was detected in January 2020. The infection gradually triggered the first wave of outbreak in March to May 2020 which was caused by a gathering for a sports event at a stadium in Bangkok. The second wave was around December 2020 to March 2021, happening outside the capital city but in Samut Sakhon among migrant workers. The third wave originated at nightlife venues of Thong Lo District in Bangkok, lasting from April to May 2021, throughout the post-*Songkran* period (Kunno et al., 2021). Regardless of the complete cancellation of the *Songkran* Festival and all celebrating events in 2020 (Rocha, Pelayo and Sammatid, 2021), the public holiday usually April 13-15 annually, was spread over two shorter periods which put the infection situation under control, the government allowed the *Songkran* holiday to continue without official celebration (Phoonphongphiphat, 2021). The daily new cases rose from hundreds before *Songkran* to 1,335 cases on April 14, 2021, just a day after the Thai New Year (CNA, 2021). The number of new cases peaked at 2,839 by April 24, 2021 (Rocha, Pelayo and Sammatid, 2021). The following graph shows the rapid rise in infection cases in mid-2021 during the third wave of the outbreak in Thailand, with the *Songkran* Festival (April 13-15) taken into account (Figure 1).

With the contrast in government measures on *Songkran* in 2020 and 2021 as well as the recorded post-festival increase in new cases, it is worthwhile to investigate the details of the infection situation during the third wave of the outbreak and explore its connection to socio-cultural factors of the festival.

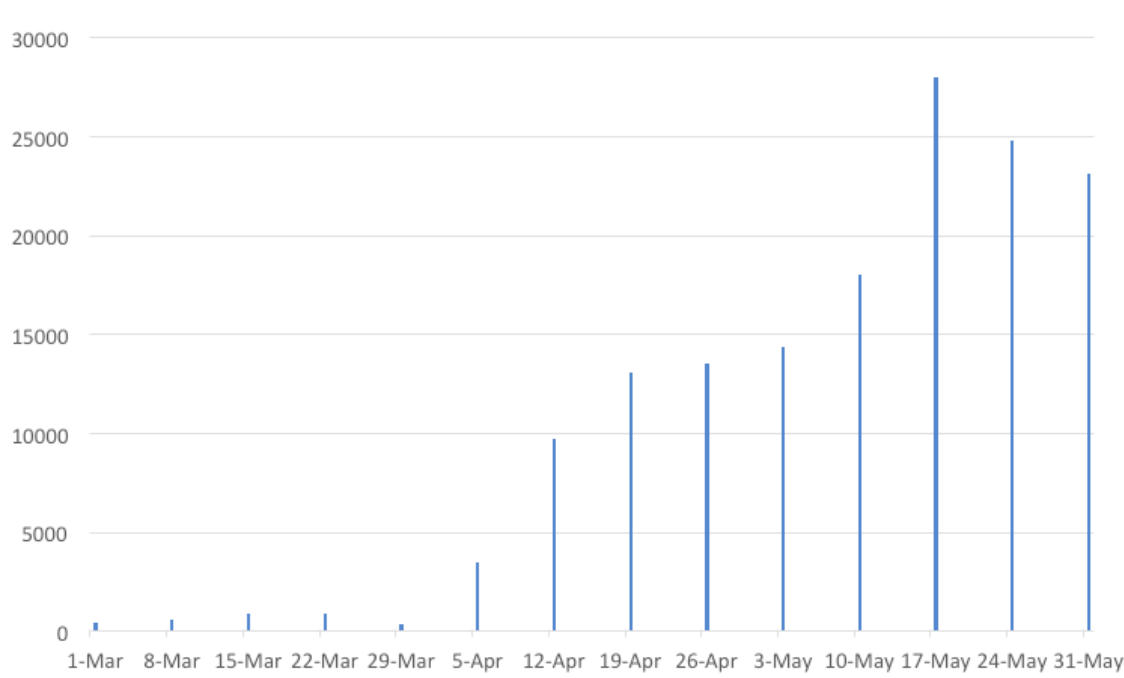


Figure 1. COVID-19 weekly confirmed cases, Thailand (Mar 1 - May 31, 2021). Source: Plotted by the author based on the data from World Health Organization, <https://covid19.who.int/region/searo/country/th>.

A complimentary informant interview was conducted to clarify the facts, share their observation, and gather relevant information. They are NGO leaders, laborers, migrant NGOs, and a *Songkran* event organizer. The author contacted them via email and SNS, without face-to-face interviews during the pandemic. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was used to deconstruct the *Songkran* festivities. Several themes are examined, namely home visits, rites, and ceremonies as well as informal gatherings.

Songkran in Thailand 2021

The findings in this paper are presented following the selected nature of the festivities of *Songkran*.

The Rite Of Rot Nam Dam Hua

Songkran is highly visible with its water gun fight everywhere on the streets with numerous Thai youths and international tourists participating. *Songkran* celebration is rich in heritage and symbolic traditions. Formal ceremonial rites include Buddhist temple visits and offering food to monks as well as home visits for family gatherings and paying respects to elderly family members. The water splashing is an example of the traditional rite of performing water pouring on Buddha statues as well as the parents and children at home. The rite is known as *rot nam dam hua* in Thai, where sons and daughters pour scented water onto the shoulders, palms, and feet of their parents and other respected elders. It represents purification and washing away sins and bad luck; the elderly gives their children blessings in return. The implicit meaning of sprinkling a bit of water on each other's shoulders is to develop a relationship with each other (Porananond and Robinson, 2008). A *Songkran* event organizer in Chiang Rai told the author:

“I visited my family’s home in Chiang Rai. At home, people follow the rite of *rot nam dam hua* to splash some water onto the senior members of the family. We all wore masks and maintained social distancing during the trip and stayed outdoors[...] but for a family gathering at home with relatives, many people might ease these precautions.”

The rite of *rot nam dam hua* and related ceremonies serve to strengthen the social hierarchy and family system of Thailand. As such, a home visit is inevitable during *Songkran*. Although public celebrations were cancelled, the government hesitated to prohibit people from traveling back home.

Extended Holiday

The official celebration of *Songkran* lasts for three days. The first day, April 13 is the last day of the existing lunar year, called *Wan Sungkan Long*, which implies the “passing of the year.” Thais clean their houses on that day, set off firecrackers to drive away bad luck and disease, and new clothes are worn. The second day, April 14, is known as *Wan Nao* which lies between the old and the new year. People go to the market to buy food prepared for religious activities on the third day. In the afternoon many people bring sand from the riverside to make pagodas in temples, representing to “replace the sand which carried out inadvertently on the soles of shoes throughout the year.” The third day, April 15, is *Wan Thaloeng Sok* marking the beginning of a new year; people generally go to temples to offer food, celebrate, and pray (Porananond and Robinson, 2008:312-313). The three days of *Songkran* are a rite of passage from old to new. The event organizer said:

“*Songkran* is both the New Year of Thailand and a Buddhist festival. People visit temples, bathe Buddha images, and offer food to monks. As people go to the temple on the same day, many temples are crowded with visitors. But we all wore masks and entry into the temples required a body temperature check.”

Official ceremonies were mostly suspended in 2021. As the three-day public holiday is still in place, and April 13 to 15 in 2021 was from Tuesday to Thursday, employees requested extended leave a day before and after to easily make it a nine-day-long weekend. An NGO leader explained the mass flow of people during the period:

“The holiday is around one week. But April is the term break of schools, and many people take this chance to go away on vacation. From the beginning, April till the third week is a period of travel [...] Family members and middle-class office workers travel in their cars; lower-income laborers from rural areas travel back home on public buses, trains, or pick-up trucks shared with a group of friends from the same village or nearby.”

Water Splashing and Parade

In modern times, *Songkran* has undergone some transformation. The big change is modernization towards commercialization and tourism (Porananond and Robinson, 2008). The Tourism Authority of Thailand is keen on promoting *Songkran* for sustainable festival tourism in Thailand (Yoopetch, 2022). Parades are widely organized in major cities of Thailand. Participants dress in Thai costumes, parading, dancing, and playing classical musical instruments along the main streets of Thai cities. Some places have *Miss Songkran* beauty contests too. There were even foam parties on Khaosan Road and Silom Road in Bangkok

to attract young people and tourists to join in. The scene of participants in costumes and some playing classical musical instruments on the streets is a crossover of tradition and modernity. Commercialization and tourism are the ways to sustain the festival. Processions are conducted in a tidy manner apart from some water splashing. As the third wave happened before *Songkran* in 2021, all parades were suspended to avoid the drawing of a big crowd.

Songkran is unique in its water-splashing activities. It distinguishes the festival from other New Year celebrations elsewhere. The act of *rot nam dam hua* of pouring a bit of water over friends and neighbors on the street has become splashing every stranger passing by with water from buckets to water hoses. Modern water canon toys from small to mega-sized ones are played with making the main streets of cities the water-splashing war zones. The “carnavalesque chaos” of water splashing temporarily relaxes the social hierarchy emphasized at home, temples, and official venues. Everyone is equal when water is splashed at each other. People who participate in the water game set themselves free, laughing, shouting, running back and forth as well as jumping up and down at the scene. Secular norms are slightly relaxed to open a space for chaos and mess. Large-scale water splashing parties were banned in Bangkok and all major cities, but some kids still held their water fights. Pictures of very small-scale “private” water wars were shared on social media secretly. It is hard to estimate how much this chaotic and rule-breaking festive atmosphere remained as the celebration was downsized.

Internal and Transnational Migrant Workers

Thailand heavily relies on the importation of migrant workers for its fishing, manufacture, and service sectors. The vast majority come from Myanmar, with some others from Cambodia and Laos. The NGO leader elaborated on the importance of *Songkran* back home for many migrant workers:

“*Songkran* is a long holiday when people who are working far away from their home can return and meet family members, party, offer things to the elderly, visit a place with friends or family[...] and for some, it’s their only break back home throughout the year.”

A labor NGO worker told the author:

“Many migrant workers left before *Songkran* along with the Thai workers who wanted to reach their home before the lockdown/restrictions during *Songkran*[...] Some were afraid of Covid-19 but some were concerned about their economic situation during the coming lockdown. Most workers went back on buses and privately hired vans.”

The second and third waves of COVID-19 in Thailand did involve migrant workers. The second wave happened in Samut Sakhon Province in December 2020. The third wave likely originated in Central Bangkok before spreading all over the country. Many migrant workers in construction sites were infected. The government sealed them off in dormitories. The distorted development biased toward Bangkok as well as some industrial zones and tourist destinations in Central and Southern regions also draws internal workers to sojourn from their home provinces to these places. The event organizer from Chiang Rai Province said:

“Most of the Lenna (northern) and Issan (northeastern) Thais work in Bangkok, and some in Phuket and Pattaya. That may have caused more infection cases of COVID-19 afterwards.”

An NGO leader from Sangklaburi said that the flow also included returning former rural-urban migrants:

“There were no tourists visiting Sangklaburi or other tourism places. The agricultural sector is less affected than urban wage workers. Many young people return to their homes in the province from Bangkok and big cities because they have lost their job.”

Drawing from the above findings on *Songkran*, the author distinguished between formal and informal festivities of *Songkran* in Thailand. The two categories of festivities were then tabulated with their explicit and implicit values (DaMatta, 1983). They are ceremonies and rituals with socio-cultural meanings embedded. The following table shows the matrix of the four items.

	Explicit	Implicit
Formal	Official speeches, ceremonies, and inaugurations by the King and Prime Minister The rite of <i>rot nam dam hua</i>	Reinforce Thai-ness Strengthen hierarchy and monarchy Maintain harmonized relationships with relatives and neighbors
Informal	Family gatherings Temple visits Water splashing parties Drinking, partying, and gatherings	Sustain family system Buddhism domination Relaxing, fun, chaos Commercial & tourism

Figure 3 Table showing the deconstruction of the *Songkran* Festival. Source: developed by the author.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

There had been a rapid increase in confirmed cases during the third wave of COVID-19 outbreak in Thailand, as shown in the data in Figure 1. The Government did not follow the precautionary measure in 2020 to cancel the *Songkran* Festival and spread the public holiday but only official and commercial celebrations, such as the water gun fighting and foam parties. The consequence was many Thais especially internal migrant workers in Bangkok and adjacent provinces (the Greater Bangkok) travelled away to visit family members in their home provinces. Some might have utilized the Saturday and Sunday making it a six- or nine-day long weekend. Some festivals involve people’s mobility. *Songkran* Festival certainly consists of no pilgrimage trip. Many followed the New Year tradition of homecoming which is more than a family gathering and relative visit. It is part of the rite for Thais to perform *rot nam dam hua*, temple visits and food offerings. These festivities both sacred and secular, are necessary steps to proceed with the rite of passage in *Songkran*. It is not a “transformational pilgrimage” but people’s self and body should reconnect to the nature and spirits of the place, which is their home to achieve transformation and purification (Arellano, 2007).

Drawn from the general model of the intercity epidemic, monocentric model (Brockmann and Helbing, 2013) and polycentric model (Wei et al., 2021), the author suggests the one-destination sojourn, divergence and convergence of festival mobility. Festival mobility becomes the flow of internal migrant workers en masse leaving the workplace, back to home towns. They stay and travel around and interact within their hometowns. At the end of the long festival holiday, they go back to their workplaces. Inter-second-tier cities or within-province movement possible for home visits to relatives is, but the frequency is negligible. The former represents a diverse flow; the latter represents a converse move. Epidemic happens in the capital which is the hub of domestic and international transportation, as well as several other first-tier cities with high population density and intensive economic activities, hence more human contacts. The author hypothesizes the festival mobility model explaining the one-destination sojourn intensity of the epidemic. The following figure shows the comparison of different models of epidemic and mobility.

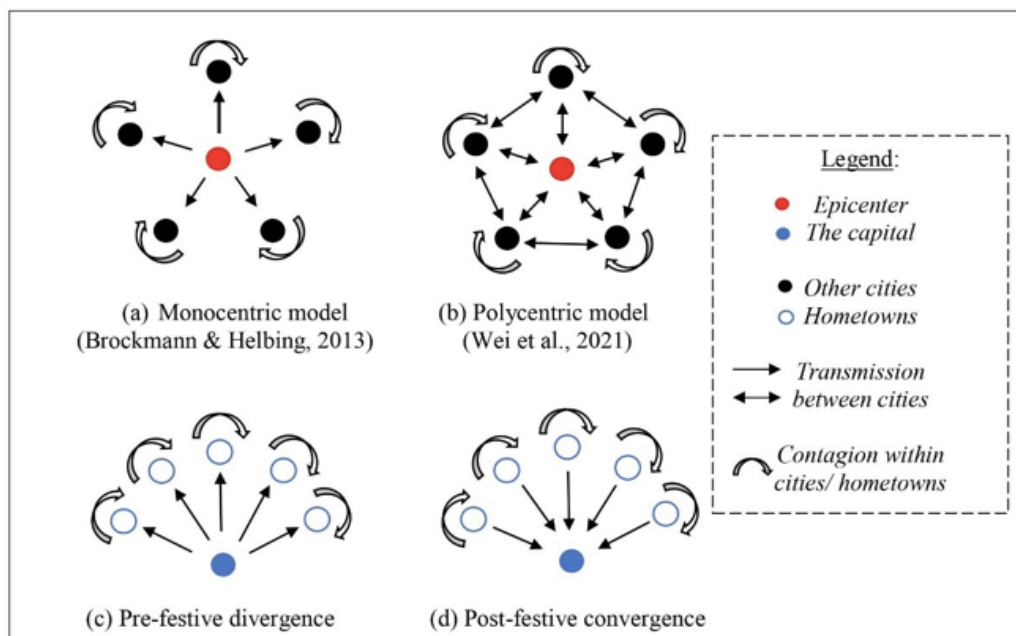


Figure 3. Festival sojourn model of mobility and epidemics. Source: Developed by the author. Note: Monocentric and polycentric models are reproduced by the authors from Wei et al. (2021:3).

This paper focuses on the contribution of cultural and behavioral factors of festivities during *Songkran* and its relation to pandemic fatigue. The author argues that the liminality of the festival is the reason. The festival is a liminal period (DaMatta, 1983; Lewis, 2013; Vogt, 2003), the urban-rural sojourners are liminal beings. The few days of the *Songkran* New Year holiday provide a break not just from work duty, but an escape from daily life, with some norms, rules, and social order being relaxed temporarily. The liminality has implications for both the government and society. For the government, festivals and especially the New Year are occasional events throughout the year when a temporary relaxation of restrictions seems to have no harm for the overall prevention and control (which was found to be a mistake later). Also, the celebration of the festival including the New Year helps to restore social norms and order for the maintaining of status quo (Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner 1980, Daun e Lorena, 2019). Since the coup seven years ago, underperformed of the pro-jun-

ta party in the election in 2019, and the rise of the student movement in 2020, the junta-turned-non-elected Prime Minister desperately needs stabilizing elements. Unfortunately, the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 forced the Thai government to suspend *Songkran* that year. As such, after the easing of the second wave of the pandemic in February 2021, the government boldly gave a green light to the celebration of *Songkran* in April 2021. All of a sudden, an infection cluster happened in Bangkok's nightclub scene triggering the third wave of outbreak a week before *Songkran*. The government this time hesitated to ban the whole festival as last year. The author argues that the liminality of *Songkran* enables tolerance of some unofficial and informal festivities to proceed, including home visits and private celebrations. Before the pandemic, water gun wars, foam parties, and drinking parties were widely organized. Roads were closed with traffic rules suspended and turned into liminal spaces temporarily for festivities and celebration. In the streets and many outdoor venues, many young people threw water towards passers-by, and rubbed white powder on other's faces. Although these festivities were banned or became less visible. In the meantime, norms and hierarchy remain not changed indoors, and rites like *rot nam dam hua* were proceeded in a proper manner.

At the societal level, the happy-go-lucky festive attitude matched the prolonged personal hygiene and social distancing harsh measures meaning that a break during the New Year is no big deal. There were no large-scale water splashing parties during *Songkran* in 2021 but home visits and gatherings, drinking, and eating went on as usual. Social distancing was temporarily reduced to the lowest level forming a point of weakness against the infection. Bear in mind that Bangkok was the epicenter of this round of outbreaks and sojourning back to provinces means spreading the disease throughout the country. Soon after *Songkran*, all 76 provinces reported some infection cases.

New Year's Day is a rite of passage between the past year and the new one. As a liminal being, a sojourner finds himself or herself in a transition state of betwixt and between (Turner, 1974). Within these few festive days, existing social structures and norms were temporarily eased so that a window was opened for carnivalesque chaos, though no official celebration and water guns not allowed, human contact still went on. For individuals, it is a liminal moment of normlessness where confusion arises including the precautions against infection such as human contact, wearing a mask and personal hygiene. Festivities during New Year should be wild and limits are supposed to be tolerated. After all, a sojourner travels out of the city, the workplace, and back home, a liminal space to celebrate *Songkran*. Home or hometown as a liminal space is actually "out of space" (Nash, 1981), away from Bangkok. Out of space implies an escape from Bangkok, the high population density city and epicenter of the third wave outbreak of COVID-19. Some degree of less adherence to prevention was expected which reinforced the pandemic fatigue.

Medical and psychological explanations of pandemic fatigue refer more to the gradual demotivation and ignorance of the risk of infection. The author provides an anthropological discourse on pandemic fatigue during a festival. The liminality of festivals and in this case, *Songkran*, the New Year of Thailand in 2021, after the extended period of harsh prevention of COVID-19, the tolerance, chaos, and easing opened a liminal moment for fatigue. No matter whether the government, society, and especially individuals, who are migrants from the provinces sojourning back home and celebrating informally, all spread the virus and

break former precautions of social distancing. The causes of the third wave of the outbreak in Thailand are complicated. The nightclub cluster, confined prisons, more infectious variants, and certainly slow vaccination process all contributed to the spread of the disease and its subsequent spiral out of control. But the author argues that festivals or *Songkran* to be exact, should be accepted as a factor that intensifies epidemics and widens the spread to all provinces during this wave of the outbreak. Given the Thai government's decisive suspension of the entire *Songkran* in 2020, there was no ceremony, no celebration, and no water splashing. The traffic away from Bangkok to other provinces was minimized. Compensation holidays for *Songkran* were offered later in July and September 2020. The festival was ruined and the compensated holidays were no more than a day off. The hesitation and partial downsizing of *Songkran* left a space for the festival to continue, and hence the liminality.

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Sorginak, Bruxas, Meigas, Bruixes... Performing Feminisms *in Spanish Folk Revival*

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Abstract

The imaginaries constructed around witches and witchcraft throughout history have reflected non-accepted social conduct and behaviors. Assuming women's bodies, knowledge, and social agency as a depiction of the savage, strange, and taboo figure. In this way, the witch linked to the feminine and negative aspects has been recently reappropriated and reshaped by feminism in the last decades.

In this study case, I examine how Spanish revival folk has reflected female gender models through musical practices. The main goal of folk revival is revitalizing a countercultural movement, which shows a context of a clash of ideologies and identities. Identities and ideologies related to feminism are acted out through the aesthetics of performance and its staging. These expressive practices could be termed feminist revival folk due to the implication of the musicians with the feminist agenda. For this purpose, it is presented an analysis of cases from different bands, all of them characterized by their bonds with tradition, modernity, and gender, as it is the case of Habelas Hainas, Huntza, Punkiereteiras, Roba Estesa or Tanxugueiras.

The witch as depicted by modern feminism, is used in this artistic and social movement as a rhetorical resource. The aesthetics are performed on stage and in music videos as a way of self-identification with these historically silenced, rebel, independent, and free women.

Keywords: *Folk Revival, Popular Music, Cultural Identity, Gender Imaginaries, Feminism*

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Introduction

This article examines the ways in which witches' imaginaries are performed in musical practices with some sort of bond with traditional music. Traditional music is a term used to denote a combination of different styles belonging to different geographical areas of Spain. Witch's representations emerge in this case as a means of identification with the feminist movement. The focus on witches in this research arises from the observation of this topic as a thematic axis in wider research on gender in Spanish revival folk.

In the last three decades, feminism and gender-related topics merged with musical practices, which according to its main features can be considered folk revival practices. The term folk revival as posed by Burt Feintuch (1993), Max Peter Baumann (1996), and Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (2014) correspond in general terms to the view of this artistic phenomenon as a way of revisiting and reinterpreting the past culturally and constantly developing. Its dynamic conception implies a social interpretation attached to it as it reflects diverse discrepancies among the society regarding the meanings and past and present contexts.

This view of folk revival as well as the artist's definitions of tradition translates into the performance through lyric contents, stage aesthetics (Zebec, 2018), musical style, performance spaces, discourse, and narratives. The changes in the different understandings of folklore and the constant interaction between tradition and modernity in these artistic practices bring about new representations constantly developing through music and music discourse (Moore, 2001). As observed during fieldwork the own standpoint of each artist around the meanings of folklore and its dynamism determines the pathways for its musical development. This view about what means folklore and its links with music also varies during the life of their musical projects. The former statement is based on the view of the musicians, belonging to different Spanish musical traditions, who were themselves approached through fieldwork carried out in Spain from November 2019 to January 2022.

The focus of this article is an analysis of the methods employed in musical witch's representations contributing to the development of the construction of alternative female models in the revival folk movement. The question that emerges from this aim is: How are these depictions and views of witches used as a means of identity construction? What is the concealed meaning of its artistic use? The precedent of this feminist turn in folk revival dates back to the sixties and the social uses and activism of Spanish songwriters (Gonzalez and Pena, 2022). The progressive development of these artistic proposals leads to the ongoing and current tendency of different fusions of musical genres all of them associated somehow with what is conceived as traditional and, at the same time, mirroring the socio-cultural background of contemporary society related to its long-term evolution. This work contributes to the ethnomusicological corpus analyzing identity reconstructions in Spanish popular music produced in the last three decades; the interest in this research comes out given the scarcity of research on current uses of traditional music in contemporary Spain (Moreno, 2013; García-Flórez and Martínez, 2020). The lack of studies on this topic is shocking if compared with the relevant literature existent based in other countries on music revivals and modern elements on it (Gall, 2008; Ronström, 2010; Adams, 2012; Ramsey, 2013; Sweers, 2014; Akesson, 2016; Magnat, 2017).

This research substantiates in the examination of ethnographic materials from different artists based in Spain and involved in the revival folk movement like Acetre, Uxía, María del

Mar Bonet, Punkiereteiras, Roba Estesa, Tanxugueiras, Huntza and Habelas Hainas. Written and recorded materials such as personal interviews, interviews in the media, music videos, festivals and concert posters, and recordings comprise the main elements of this research. Drawing from these study cases we will pose different discursive strategies where the representation of witches is depicted for the purpose of negotiating gender roles and bringing up alternative models of female identities. In addition to the ethnomusicological fieldwork carried out, it is essential the literature review of relevant theory on witch symbolism concerning popular culture artistic representations and some other works on gender, tradition, and folklore. For this reason, firstly we approach the constructions of witch imaginaries as a historically constructed figure focusing on the gender domination strategies that his constructions reflect. As we aim to analyze musical practices, it is important to pay attention to former artistic representations of the witch as a reality and as a mythological character. The existence of a continuous dialogue between tradition and modernity on the study object calls for a brief discussion on the meanings of folklore and popular music due to its ambiguity and vagueness. Both fields as part of the cultural construction of society reveal social meanings and contents. All these considerations are materialized in the examples extracted from the artists mentioned above through lyrics, aesthetics, and semiotics. The references presented in the examples correspond to different time periods where the way of recalling the witch imaginaries takes on different forms.

Revisiting the Witch's Symbolism

The concept of the witch is present in most cultures generally defined as a female magic practitioner.¹ In western culture, one of the most popular definitions of witch and witchcraft in the Middle Ages by Kramer and Sprenger in 1482 was the foundation of a historical prosecution of women who for various reasons were perceived as a danger. However, this character has been the subject of reinterpretations and adaptations to different popular cultures to reflect what were the non-desired characteristics of each society.

As the imaginaries around witches diversified, narratives about witches developed until their reconstruction and reevaluation during the feminist movement from the 1960's onwards. As a consequence of this reassessment, it is necessary to differentiate between the depiction of the witch in popular culture before and after feminist appropriations. The production and reproduction of narratives in a society have an impact on how identity is recognized and how identity models are constructed, in this case the figure of the witch can be viewed as a mechanism for maintaining and creating gender inequalities in society. In any case, what we present here is a general outline of the features associated with witches based on a literature review constructed from an interpretation of personal experiences and popular narratives.

The definition of witch was highly influenced by theology and folklore. It is a changing concept, as is a demonized representation of elements that reflect authority so popular classes would get away from them. In the case of Spain, it was grounded on Christianity as the prosecuted behaviors and rituals matched with pagan traditions (Levack, 2013). As Broedel (2003) argues a wide amount of feminine mythological motifs rely on popular culture and traditions. This argument accords with Chollet's (2020) ideas of the witch as an intellectual, artist, knower of medical herbs, midwife, healer, or atheist. The stereotypes attached to these feared women were the participation in akelarres,² orgies, and worship of the devil.

The narratives and tales from popular culture were especially present in Euskal Herria (Mantecón y Torres, 2011) and Catalonia (Granados, 2018) due to the recurrent presence of inquisitors and the strength of witch-hunts in the regions. For this reason, the presence of witches in diverse forms of popular culture increased sharply and this was reflected in literature too as Eva Lara Albero (2008) proves.

The feminist reinterpretations of this figure between myth and reality are usually set during the 3rd wave of feminism. The periodization matches with the widespread claim in demonstrations 'We are the granddaughters of the witches you couldn't burn' but we can find some musical examples that show that the process of reshaping the witch narrative and its new meanings was taking place a few years before (Quintano, 2021). This reinterpretation implies in the first place evidencing the traditional definition as a domination mechanism. In this way, the witch is now presented as a political category, a construction to re-think the relationships between femininity, sexuality, politics, spirituality, and culture.

Modern understandings of the witch suggest community participation and rituals, as it would be the case of feminist demonstrations, as processes of feminist empowerment. Empowerment is also present in a description of the witch based on the same features that were mentioned above giving them a different view of their shared knowledge as the consequence of being a feared non-formal authority, and its non-socially accepted behavior as a way of alternative femininity, and rebel model. This process is addressed by Michelle Rosaldo when mentions the anomalous situations of women in society, as an equivalent to Abu-Lughod's (1991) perspective of women as the other. In some societies, women with power have been considered witches as an illegitimate power, a way of acquiring power transcending the domestic space, introducing themselves in fields restricted to men, or creating a society among them (Rosaldo, 1991).

Some scholars analyze witch's representations in other cultural products (Sanders, 2007; Antinora, 2011, Stuever-Williford, 2021). All the research on the depiction of these figures in audiovisual supports indicates that visual sources are a platform for reshaping gender roles in modern society.

The process of taking consciousness about how the witch was historically used as a mechanism of delegitimation resulted in the recovery of this figure as an acknowledgment of past anonymous stories, evoking defiance and transgression.³

The Folk and Music

The field of folklore brings together two of the main elements of this research, witches and popular music. Both of them are cultural artifacts that reinforce collective identities through their message and meaning. As it was mentioned there are multiple and diverse definitions of the term witch and this is also the case with the term folk and popular culture which works at a conceptual level. Bearing in mind its multiple meanings, dichotomies and views we discuss the meaning or the common aspects of these meanings in the case of the participant artists. Some of these perspectives about the folk might seem opposed to each other but all of them point to a dynamic perspective on folklore as posed by Gramsci (1991).

All is folklore, all is the music of villages, with its different layers and influences. We have to use categories because capitalism, to sell, uses it in this way but it doesn't exist. All is a communal re-elaboration (...) I do folklore (Ugía Pedreira, personal interview, 16 January 2020).

The rejection of musical genre categorization is associated with the rejection of its commercial use, taking this into account, her definition of folklore is close to Gramsci's perspectives on popular culture, as an element on behalf of social classes and experiences of society. Ugía also points out the influence of the context in her artistic production as it shows how music can mirror the social system where it is framed.

Folklore is what is traditional in each place. With the triki⁴ it is always different, it is very different from what it was made in Viscay or Gipuzkoa⁵ we are just a few and we see it differently.

Also, it is a wide range, it can fit us, the most traditionalists, there is a wide variety. It implies also food, euskera,⁶ and the ways of living, not only playing triki, it is a transmission of values and knowledge that we receive progressively. We contribute with something and open new possibilities. (Maixa Lizarribar y Amaia Oreja, personal interview, 24 December 2022)

The performers of the band Amak, as well as Ugía, consider a holistic perspective of folklore, considering their artistic activity as a worthy element not only in musical terms but as part of the construction of meaning in every aspect of society.

100 years ago here only txistu⁷ was played, later Italian migrants when they were at the construction works of Urola's harbor brought the diatonic accordion, and now turns out that the diatonic accordion is traditional here, but it wasn't here for even 60 years if that with 60-year trajectory is traditional ¿will you tell me that what I do is not traditional? Tradition is a lie (Aitor Huizi, personal interview, 24 December 2019).

Questioning about tradition in musical productions leads to very diverse answers as these artists' practices are linked with tradition with different purposes. Most of them understand folklore as a musical source. In some cases, there is an interest in distinguishing their ownership, individuality, and originality of the musical product as a result of the widespread notion of "traditional" as something anonymous, collective, and referring to an undefined mythical past. Another posture that is found in these musical practices linked to the tradition, like in this case, the focus is on questioning the validity and legitimation of tradition based on the use of formal and aesthetic canons. Thus the oldest repertoire is established as a source to take ideas and result in an updated style which at the same time is assimilated as traditional without ignoring other musical style's influences.

The folk doesn't exist, it is a label used to sell something, we come from traditional music, and traditional music leads us to have many influences. Traditional music is not repeated as such, but it is in constant change, it is constantly transforming. Then when it is transformed and people create around it emerges popular music (Guadi Galego, personal interview, 16 December 2019).

Considering the four testimonies, Ugía Pedreira, Amak, Huntza, and Guadi Galego, about the meanings of folklore their answers seem contrary, "Tradition is a lie," "All is folklore," "The folk doesn't exist." However, all of them refer with these messages to folk or tradi-

tional music as a socio-cultural construction. The artists point out at the vagueness of this term, but at the same time identify their musical works as linked with folklore or traditional music. Nevertheless, folk can refer to musical practices and stylistic elements very diverse and bounded by different geographical areas with a common aim, the revaluation, and the development of local popular cultures. Henceforth we address music tightly connected to its surroundings and its social system.

Baumann (1996) states that folk revival is a stance about the past, present, and future, and each artist's perspective stabilizes or transforms traditions. From the main trends posed by Baumann, purism and preservation or syncretism, the examples we analyze are framed in the latter case. Syncretism is opposed to the usual view of folklorists who value changes in traditions as a loss, this perspective assumes the origin of traditions pointing at a fictional past. As such, revival practices are emerging sides of culture that take tradition as a symbol. In this case, the gender representations through revival are inspired by dissatisfactions with the present, this is why recontextualizations or activism seem inherent to it. Currently, the feminist perspective has been embedded in the Spanish revival folk as one of the main social concerns, which reflect contemporary interests.

Performing Witches

The singularities of the creative processes as communicative and symbolic phenomena, which are based on specific cultural codes to construct particular significations. The following cases are part of the Spanish revival folk as a reconstruction of identity, in this case, female identities. One of the multiple ways of reinterpreting and reconstructing identities through the revival movement is the use of the figure of the witch and other mythological feminine characters close to this figure. The means to perform witches in music have changed progressively from the mentions in the textual content around the 70s to their inclusion through aesthetics and audiovisuals along the 21st century.

This analysis does not attempt to show or point at the songs where witches are mentioned but to look at how witches are performed and how this character is presented, understood, and perceived. In short, there are five main portrayals of this mythological figure in the musical practice. Mythical figures which include witches and local beliefs and characters that might not be named "witches" but present the same characteristics. These cases are put on stage as an identification with the artist. Usually taking local tales and adding light changes to the stories as a tool for empowering the character. This kind of portrayal takes place mainly during the first stage of the revival folk. The first stage of revival folk in Spain, in short, focuses on textual changes with traditional melodies, which develop into compositions in the style of traditional repertoire. The second portrayal is the witch as a feared non-formal authority, which is closely related to the third model, as a knower of specific and diverse wisdoms. The fourth portrayal highlights this figure as a tool for oppression and social control as it takes as main reference witch-hunts and witch-burnings. Lastly, the portrayal of the witch as a rebellious and alternative femininity model.

The first case and probably the oldest although the date when she composed this song is unknown is Teresa Rebull's *Dona d'Aigua* (2004) this song is part of a compilation CD, *Teresa Rebull Cançons 1969-1992*. In this artist's production can be found many differences between the dates of composition and the date of recording due to the context of Francoist political repression as a woman and as a political militant in POUM.⁸ All her musical

production is in Catalan also as a way of linguistic militancy because all languages other than Spanish were prosecuted in this period. *Dona d'aigua* is a poem for which the artist composed the music. This is an example of the use of songs as a way of recovering myths with female main characters which at the same time reshapes the character. The *Dona d'Aigua* is a figure from Catalonian mythology represented as mysterious women who live in the water wearing cloaks. It is a symbol of fertility. This figure charms men and brings them wealth but if they make public who this creature is, they will lose everything. This song identifies Teresa with this character through her description of her clothes as the ones of this figure and its last phrase is «La dona d'aigua que ha eixit," "Water's woman that has come out."

Maria del Mar Bonnet is also a songwriter active since 1967, her musical production focuses on Catalonian folk songs merged with her own compositions. In her first years as a songwriter she was involved in the movement *Nova Canço*, an artistic and musical movement supporting political activism against the Francoist dictatorship and the use of the Catalan language.⁹ As part of her feminist activism through music, there are references to the association of women with witches. Her collaboration in the album *Catorze poemes, catorze cançons* [Fourteen poems, fourteen songs] (2000) which is comprised of musicalized *María- Mercè Marçal's* poems. *Cançó de la Bruixa Cremada* [Burnt witch song] is a song complemented by the poem *La bruixa de dol* [The mourning witch], where the witch imaginary is showcased as a rebel women's model and as a way to create an alternative to the stereotypes of traditional femininity comparing the history of witch prosecutions with traditional female roles as a mechanism of domination.

The recurrent use of the witch as a defiance model relates to the transgressive side of women as performers around the 1960's and 1970's and its social uses (Gonzalez-Varga & Pena-Castro, 2022). The representations of these artists in the media around the end of the 20th century looked for a depiction of vulnerability and sentimentalism focusing frequently on their personal and private life, a situation which contrasted greatly with the content of interviews with male artists focused on their professional life (Pajón, 2019; 2021).

The following excerpt corresponds to the band *Acetre* a band that started its activity in 1976. This band also took languages as a means of political activism in this case reinterpreting repertoire in dialects from Spanish and Portuguese. This repertoire was erased or translated to Spanish during the dictatorship as part of the political agenda. Among their compositions or reinterpretations, we can find songs where women are turned into the main character like *La Charramangá*, not officially recorded, *La capitana* (2003), *La alborada de Jarramplas*, *Bailes del pandero* (2003), *Mae Bruxa* (2007) or *El mercader de Zafra* (2011). *Mae Bruxa* (2007) is a song collected in Cedillo (Cáceres) it uses a dialectal variant of Portuguese specific to this village. This song presents the witch's imaginary of the feared non-formal authority. Taking Chollet's terms the witch is presented as an archetype of everything we are afraid of and as a way of delegitimization of women's knowledge (Rosaldo, 1991). It refers to the limitations of women in the public sphere. There is a Galician version of this song, *Túa nai é meiga*, which was also performed by Uxía, an activist Galician songwriter.

Que diga a verdade	Que digha a verdade	Tell the truth
Mas haja quatela	Pero con cautela	But with cautiousness
Tua mãe é bruxa	Túa nai é meiga	Your mother is a witch
Tenho medo del	Teño medo dela	<u>I'm</u> afraid of her.

Figure 1. Excerpts of Mae Bruxa and Túa nai é meiga with English translation.

In these cases, the witch presented as a vindication symbol becomes part of an attempt to acknowledge anonymous women in history and their inputs to traditional knowledge. At the same time, the artists and songwriters mentioned above were pioneers in their musical feminist activism through content and social contexts, which contributed to raising new female roles. As the above-mentioned band composed most of these songs in the last decade of the 20th century, moving to 21st-century musical practices, witch representations are focused generally on the activist appropriation of this figure, and rousing reflection around its audience on how witches have been represented and how this history means different strategies for gender oppression.

The music video and the song *Zer Izan* [What to be] (2017) by Huntza in collaboration with the bands Mafalda and Tremenda Jauría, a Basque band that mixes rock and traditional music, places the audience in a demonstration on the 8th of March International Women's Day. The song opens and closes with a background of feminist claims from these demonstrations. Through the lyrics, they refer to the Sabbath in comparison with the feminist movement, as an organized female collective. Alluding to the fear of collective action of women (Beteta, 2016) the lyrics bring up women's empowerment and the necessity of breaking traditional role models, "betraying traditions," which restricted women mainly to domestic space.

Tradizioak traizionatzean	Betraying traditions
Ileak puntan jartzean	With hair standing on air
Erratzak utzi ta mikrofonoak hartzean	Leaving broomsticks and raising mics
Hegan egitean... ez digute esango!	When flying, they won't tell!
Zer egin, nola esan	What to do, how to say it,
Nola egin ta zer izan	how to do it, and what to be.
[...] Entre hechizos y runas	Between spells and runes
Organizadas verás a las hijas del agua	You'll see organized the water's daughters
Entre sombras y lunas, su poder.	Between shadows and moons, their power.
[Excerpts of <i>Zer Izan</i> , and English translation]	

Figure 2. Excerpts of *Zer Izan* with English translation.

This song mixes Basque and Spanish lyrics, a common practice among some bands of the revival folk movement. As the artists state in this excerpt, they identify themselves with witches “leaving broomsticks and raising mics.” This statement presents them as a form of activism on stage; this idea is enhanced with the audiovisual content, which at the end of the video intersperses demonstration frames with live performance frames.



Figure 3. Images from *Zer Izan* music video (2017).

A similar use of music in reference to the Spanish history of feminist activism through arts can be found in *Heroïnes de la fosca nit* (2019). El Diluvi is a band defined as modern folk, which merges traditional music from Valencia with a wide variety of styles. This song mentions directly the poem *La bruixa de dol*, in this case, the reference pretends to showcase the poem as a benchmark for vindicating the liberation of women in diverse fields, “we are a hymn of liberation. The one that sang the mourning witches.” The author of this literary work, María- Mercè Marçal is also present in this song because she is a referent of Catalan and Valencian culture, “We are the daughters of Marçal.” Finally, it is also mentioned the popular and widespread claim of the 21st century, “We are the daughters of the witches you couldn’t burn,” which is displayed by an intergenerational female crowd.

Undoubtedly, this extensive use of the figure of the witch reappropriated by feminism in contemporary societies has a strong presence in politics and artistic spheres. For this reason, the witch means a symbol of revelry and the creation of community (Korol, 2016). In *Bruixes* (2016) by Roba Estesa, a Catalan band, in collaboration with As Punkiereteiras, a

Galician band that will be examined later, tells a story of witch burning in this case with a good end for the witches. This song imitates a popular literary Spanish form *romance*,¹⁰ which is very close to storytelling. The collaboration of a Galician and Catalanian band is especially meaningful as witch-huntings had a bigger impact in these regions as some authors pose like Lisón-Tolosana (1979) or Castell i Granados (2019).

Aesthetic Symbolism

Witches have been revisited not only through their mentions in song lyrics but also through aesthetics and the audiovisual. To illustrate this idea is presented the case of a music video, *Figa* by Tanxugueiras, and the uses of dresses, which try to recall these mythical figures, as is the case of Habelas Hainas or Punkiereteiras.

Moving towards a visual analysis it can be mentioned the music video of *Figa* (2021) by Tanxugueiras. About the meaning of this song, the artists state, “It was born as a journey for reviewing and questioning beliefs, or alleged guilts established in our society.” In this case, it also presents the musical negotiation between tradition and modernity, which appears in their other works combined with the discourse of feminist appropriation of the figure of the witch. Through two different narrative lines, the artists tackle witch burnings in a setting that brings us to a recreation of an undefined past, and the other with modern aesthetics with diverse references to tradition and popular culture merging past with the present.

In the first frame shot, modern aesthetics are merged with images of mythical characters in the background, in this case, the illustration of an Akelarre.



Figure 4. Frame shot of *Figa*'s music video (2021).

In the following sequence are presented some of the most relevant and meaningful screenshots of the narrative of the witch burning. The artists' attitudes, depicted as burning witches are completely passive and calm, in the next frame corresponding to the second image the witches are showcased without fire and coming along with other hooded women wearing black, which progressively uncover themselves. This scene represents artistically the feminist reappropriation of the witch imaginary as a way of empowering and creating a wide supporting community.



Figure 5. Sequence of screenshots of Figa's music video (2021).

Looking at the use of dance it can be appreciated how the band's purpose is to combine traditional and modern practices. In this way, along the chorus is displayed separately a dance with movements taken from modern dance focused on upper trunk movements and later on a different view is Aída Tarrío, one of the main artists of the band, using movements from Galician traditional dance, again with popular mythology pictures at the background.



Figure 6. Screenshots from *Figa's* chorus (2021).

At the end of the video, after the witch-burning scene the dance disposal changes. The representation of modern and traditional scenes is combined with performing a dance with movements coming from breakdance in a round positioning of all dancers around a soloist dancer where Aída at the end takes the soloist role with the traditional dance.



Figure 7. Dance sequence of screenshots of *Figa's* music video (2021).

This music video is a visual representation of Tanxugueiras' general approach to rethinking traditional music through aesthetics, music, and recontextualizations. Taking the topic of witch-burning as a way of historical cultural domestication with violent methods as a narrative still present in social memory to reformulate this social mechanism for supporting feminism.

Looking at the uses of aesthetics for referring to witches it is interesting the case of Habelas Hainas, a female quartet from Galicia that composes new songs based on traditional styles as a way of feminist vindication with current contents. Their multiple aesthetics on stage rejects the use of traditional costumes, which is a common feature among revival folk bands. Nevertheless, their aesthetics are also a way of identifying themselves and reappropriating the witch's imaginaries and narratives. The name of the band, Habelas Hainas refers to a Galician popular saying, which means, "I don't believe in witches but there are" [*Eu non creo nas meigas, mais habelas hainas*].

There weren't many female quartets in traditional music, we were doing something new, never done before with a horizontal working method. [...] The name, Habelas hainas... is for witches, burned theoretically for being witches but because they were free women, crazy, single... With a lot of knowledge that wasn't of interest due to powers in those times. (Patricia Gamallo, personal interview, 9 March 2020)

This is part of the band's definition by one of the artists. She also mentioned the dressings used in their performances as a thoughtful act full of meaning. These uses correspond to their effort for reappropriating the witch imaginary, which is also present in some of their songs from the album *Livres e Loucas* [Free and crazy] (2017).



Figure 8. Habelas Hainas performance on the street.

The dress we used the most for a while in our performances was totally white, each one of us in her own style but all together reminded to different aesthetics from underwear from traditional costumes “de cotío”¹¹ from 19th century or to medieval witches before being burned at the stake. (Patricia Gamallo, personal interview, March 9, 2020)



Figure 9. Performance of Punkiereteiras.

As it was mentioned before, the presence of popular beliefs related to witches in Galicia was stronger than in other Spanish regions. As well as in the case of Habelas Hainas, another Galician band already mentioned in this article, Punkiereteiras has sometimes used references to witches through their dressings on stage.

Conclusion

After analyzing a wide variety of cases where witches are depicted through different methods and techniques in musical practices linked to Spanish folk music, it is evident that all these depictions belong to musical practices that address tradition, modernity, and feminism in all cases. Each case represents shifting gender semiotics that matches with the social changes and context where it is developed. In this effort by artists to present a kind of music that constantly negotiates between tradition and modernity, witches, are a character that represents this relation with popular practices as a result of popular beliefs and mythology and modernity through the feminist reshaping of this figure. All these ties with different conceptual fields make witches an appellant resource in this artistic phenomenon.

Although gender is negotiated and contested in popular music from a wide range of musical genres, in this case the figure of the witch reinforces the alternative femininity models

raised in the revival folk movement. Specifically, the witch portrayed as powerful and wise is intertwined with pervasive narratives of modern feminism. A thorough understanding of musical depictions demonstrates how the aforementioned witch as a feared non-formal authority relates to modern practices bonded with tradition and how these artists due to the diverse meanings of folklore and tradition need to construct and justify themselves as musical authorities.

Contemporary reassessments of the meanings and depictions of witches, as it is particularly noteworthy in the fourth portrayal model, bring closer this figure to the artists analyzed enabling their self-identification with witches which at the same time engages with existing social critical discourses.

Endnotes

- 1 In this case, we focus on western representations and meanings of witches. For an outline of the presence of witchcraft in other cultures see: Kapferer, Bruce, ed. *Beyond rationalism: Rethinking magic, witchcraft and sorcery*. Berghahn Books, 2003.
- 2 Akelarre means Sabbat, this word is specially used in Euskal Herria.
- 3 Some of the relevant literature on witchcraft in Spain is written by Lecadre (2023), Morelló (2019), Moncó (2019) or Alberola (2011).
- 4 Trikitixa is a small diatonic accordion played widely in Basque Country since the 19th century.
- 5 Both of them are regions of the Basque Country.
- 6 Basque language.
- 7 Txistu is a three-hole recorder from Basque Country. Usually the performer plays txistu and a small double-sided drum.
- 8 Workers' Party of Marxist Unification.
- 9 See Novell (2009) for further information on the Nova Cançó movement and gender models.
- 10 Is a type of sung poetry which emerged from Spanish oral tradition. There is evidence of written romances since the 15th century although in oral tradition is believed to be an older tradition. This type of poems usually were sang by minstrels as a way of storytelling. This literary form is very present in traditional songs. A wide variety of topics can be found in these poems but in this case the focus is on the ones labelled as traditional, originally transmitted orally.
- 11 "popular" as opposed to formal dressings.

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The Revolution of Calder's Kinetic Sculpture to Public Art Space -

A Case Study Setting In LACMA's "Three Quintains"

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Abstract

Alexander Calder's profound influence on public art, particularly through his kinetic sculptures, remains a significant milestone in the contemporary art world. This study delves into Calder's life and artistic journey, emphasizing the transformative impact of his iconic work, "Three Quintains" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The paper explores the aesthetic and theoretical foundations of Calder's kinetic art, highlighting its delicate balance, spatial interaction, and spiritual evocations. Analyzing the sculpture's impact on visitor experiences and community engagement, the research addresses challenges and ethical considerations related to the integration of kinetic sculptures in public spaces. Furthermore, the study envisions future trajectories for public art, envisioning advancements in technology, inclusivity, sustainability, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Calder's legacy persists as a testament to the enduring potential of art to reshape urban environments and foster cultural exchange.

Keywords: Revolution, Public Art Space, Calder's Kinetic Sculpture, Three Quintains, LACMA

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Introduction

Art, functioning as a conduit, possesses an exceptional capacity to surpass temporal and spatial constraints, thereby forging an enduring bond between the creator and the viewer. Alexander Calder, a distinguished personality within the artistic sphere of the 20th century, profoundly impacted history through his exceptional creations, effectively channeling this intrinsic prowess to achieve an unparalleled pinnacle of creativity.

Alexander Calder's impact on the realm of art is profoundly transformative, characterized by his audacious challenge to the conventional norms of static sculpture and traditional public space. His pioneering introduction of kinetic elements and the integration of temporal components into his sculptural works represented a groundbreaking innovation in the art world, epitomized notably by his renowned "mobile" creations. This artistic breakthrough heralded a significant shift in the trajectory of sculptural history (Calder Foundation, 2013). Calder's artistic expressions extend beyond the confines of traditional art galleries and museums, resonating harmoniously with the collective public within shared public spaces. This testament to his unwavering artistic dedication has brought about a transformative wave, infusing the art world with a kinetic energy that has left an enduring mark on the cultural scene. It is his unparalleled advancements in the realm of kinetic art that firmly established his enduring legacy within the annals of art history.

With an adventurous spirit, this paper ventures beyond a mere depiction of Alexander Calder's artistic brilliance, delving into the intricacies of his life and the artistic voyage he embarked upon. It critically examines the theoretical framework underpinning his oeuvre, tracing the evolution of kinetic sculpture and its impact on Calder's artistic trajectory. The focus remains steadfast on unraveling the essence of Calder's unparalleled artistic odyssey, particularly highlighting the transformative impact of his renowned work "Three Quintains" in redefining the landscape of public art spaces. This notable paradigm shift has fostered an environment of increased interactivity and inclusivity, catering to a diverse and expansive audience.

Embarking on a profound journey, this study initiates an exploration into the intersection of art, technology, and the public realm, with a central focus on uncovering the ongoing inspiration drawn from Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures. Through an in-depth analysis of the intricacies embedded within his creations, the primary objective is to shed light on the revolutionary elements that form the foundation of Calder's artistic endeavors, highlighting their enduring characteristics. Consequently, this research aims to establish a comprehensive narrative framework for the forthcoming investigation into the significant impact of Calder's work on the domain of public art spaces.

At the heart of this scholarly discourse lies the substantial influence of Alexander Calder's kinetic sculpture in the realm of public art. The emphasis is placed on comprehensive case studies conducted within the esteemed premises of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), a revered institution committed to the preservation and commemoration of artistic and cultural heritage. By integrating interactive components and appealing to a wide audience, the institution offers a significant framework for the ongoing academic investigation that delves into the reconfiguration of public art spaces.

The primary objective of this academic work is to commemorate the artistic virtuosity of Alexander Calder and acknowledge the profound transformation he instigated in our com-

prehension of kinetic sculpture, ultimately leading to an unwavering integration within the public sphere. The paper is poised to investigate the legacy of Alexander Calder's kinetic sculpture, a comprehensive exploration that surpasses temporal and spatial boundaries to showcase the enduring influence of art in stimulating societal transformation.

Background

In the context of the 20th-century art landscape, Alexander Calder emerged as a prominent figure, a significant contributor to the intersection of sculpture and the avant-garde movement. Understanding the profound influence of Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures in the realm of public art necessitates a nuanced examination. To embark on this exploration, an in-depth analysis of Alexander Calder's life and artistic journey is imperative, providing the necessary backdrop against which his groundbreaking work in kinetic sculpture finds resonance.

Alexander Calder: The Artist and His Journey

Born on August 22, 1898, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Alexander Calder was immersed in a culturally rich milieu, fostering his early artistic inclinations. His family, comprising established artists and intellectuals, played a pivotal role in cultivating his artistic sensibilities. With his father, Alexander Sterling Calder, an esteemed sculptor, and his mother, Nanette Lederer Calder, a skilled portrait painter, young Alexander Calder was raised in an environment that deeply valued and fostered artistic expression (Jed Perl, 2020).

Alexander Calder's artistic evolution in the 20th century heralded a departure from conventional norms, initially beginning as a painter. "In 1922, he took evening drawing classes at the 42nd Street New York Public School. The next year he studied painting at the Arts Students League (1923-1926), with John Sloan and George Luks while working as an illustrator for the National Police Gazette. In 1926, after showing paintings at The Artists' Gallery in New York he moved to Paris. Once there, he began making the moving toys and figures that would become Calder's Circus(1926-31)" (The Art Story, 2019). A transformative encounter with Piet Mondrian's abstract art in 1930 led to a pivotal shift in Calder's artistic trajectory, as the principles of "Neo-Plastic principles" (see Figure 1), became a guiding force for his entry into three-dimensional art. The term 'mobile' gained official recognition in 1932 during two pivotal exhibitions at the Galerie Vignon, Paris, and the Julien Lévy Gallery, New York, with Marcel Duchamp coining the term specifically for Calder's moving constructions (Frank Popper, 1968). Calder himself described 'mobile' as embodying not just 'movable' but also a 'motive' or a 'reason for an act,' (Jed Perl, 2020) encapsulating the essence of his innovative kinetic sculptures. These kinetic artworks, characterized by intricate moving parts, injected a vibrant energy into the art world, forever altering its course.

During the kinetic artistic landscape of the 20th century, a profound era of artistic ferment and unparalleled experimentation unfolded, setting the stage for the inception of the kinetic art movement. Rooted in a fundamental challenge to the static conventions inherent in traditional sculpture, this movement embraced movement as a central component of the artistic experience. As the century progressed, artists worldwide embarked on an engaging exploration of kinetic art, among them Naum Gabo, Jean Tinguely, Yaacov Agam, and the notable figure of Alexander Calder. Together, these visionaries pushed the boundaries of artistic expression, daringly integrating movement, rhythm, and metamorphosis into their artistic lexicon.



Figure 1. Piet Mondrian's studio, 26 rue du Départ, Paris, 1926. Photograph by Paul Delbo. Composition No. VI (1920) and Composition No. II (1920) © 2023 Mondrian/Holtzman Trust.

The Role of Public Art in Enriching Urban Environments

The tapestry of the 20th-century narrative unfolds amid the burgeoning phenomenon of urbanization, “according to United Nations estimates the proportion of the world’s population living in the cities will rise from today’s 50 percent to 70 percent by 2030. Every week more than a million people move into the cities. Ninety percent of future population growth is likely to be concentrated in the cities” (Kjell Skyllstad, 2010). Extending its reach beyond the confines of galleries and museums, public art permeates the daily lives of urban inhabitants, wielding its influence to stir ideas, evoke sentiments, and foster a communal sense of identity and belonging. As Anjuli Solanki notes, it seeks to foster a sense of inclusivity, where individuals feel acknowledged as integral members of society, welcomed to participate and contribute (Anjuli Solanki, 2014). It is crucial to acknowledge that public art transcends the mere adornment of public spaces; it serves as a testament to the cultural character and aspirations of a city. Through careful curation and planning, public art serves as a conduit for enriching public spaces, infusing them with vibrancy and interactivity. This collaborative synergy between artists and architects materializes in the form of sculptural installations, murals, and art exhibitions scattered throughout the urban fabric, creating moments of engagement and contemplation.

In exploring the profound influence of Alexander Calder’s kinetic sculpture on the public art sphere, it becomes imperative to contextualize the broader tapestry within which the trajectory of kinetic art unfolds. Moreover, a comprehensive acknowledgment of the evolving role of public art within the urban landscape is indispensable. This foundational comprehension forms the bedrock upon which we embarked on an examination of Alexander Calder’s seminal oeuvre, particularly focusing on the transcendent influence of his iconic creation, the ethereal “Three Quintains” and its transformative imprint on the historic public art milieu of LACMA.

The Aesthetic and Theoretical Foundations of Calder's Kinetic Art

Alexander Calder's kinetic sculpture surpasses conventional artistic expression, embodying profound aesthetic principles and theoretical underpinnings that elevate his creations to a groundbreaking stature. As eloquently articulated by John Smith, "Calder's kinetic sculptures are not mere art forms but profound manifestations of aesthetic principles" (Smith, 2020). This chapter undertakes a scholarly odyssey into the core of Calder's creative brilliance, delving into the aesthetic principles and theories that form the bedrock of his kinetic art, while also illuminating the artistic spirit of his era. Additionally, we will meticulously examine the intricate interplay between kinetic art and the Constructivism and Dada movements, acknowledging the profound influence wielded by these avant-garde movements.

The Aesthetic Principles of Calder's Kinetic Art

Calder's kinetic sculptures are imbued with several pivotal aesthetic principles, as elucidated by leading scholars. According to Jones (2019:52), "One of the most salient features of Calder's work is the delicate equilibrium achieved between its various components, ensuring a sense of harmony in the sculpture."

Furthermore, Calder's creations are defined by "Movement and fluidity," aspects described by Adams (2018:76) as "an elegant, often whimsical movement akin to organic fluidity, bestowing a lifelike quality upon his sculptures." These movements captivate the observer, lending an unparalleled dynamism to his works.

Calder's kinetic art, as investigated by Brown (2021,43), fosters "Interaction and engagement" with the audience, encouraging active participation and challenging the passivity associated with traditional art forms. His sculptures enthrall viewers, inviting them to become part of the artistic narrative.

Moreover, spatial considerations, as highlighted by Miller (2019:88), are integral to Calder's works. His sculptures deftly interact with their surroundings, casting intriguing shadows and adapting to their environment, accentuating the pivotal role of the spatial context in art appreciation.

The Theoretical Foundations of Calder's Kinetic Art

Calder's theoretical framework is deeply rooted in modernism, reflecting principles expounded by leading art historians. As Wilson (2017:34) posits, "Calder's work predominantly leans toward abstraction, prioritizing shapes and forms over representational content, aligning with the broader modernist movement's endeavor to distill art to its essential elements."

Furthermore, Calder's sculptures evoke "Spiritual and mystical elements," inviting viewers to transcend the tangible world. According to Anderson (2020:62), "Through simple geometric shapes and ethereal movements, Calder creates a transcendental experience, prompting contemplation beyond the immediate."

In addition, Calder's art delves into "Space Exploration," a concept extensively examined by Roberts (2018:75). His mobile installations transcend spatial dimensions and challenge conventional notions of fixed sculpture, prompting a kinetic interaction with the surrounding space.

Kinetic Art and Its Relationship with Other Artistic Movements

Calder's kinetic art is intrinsically tied to other artistic movements, influencing and being influenced by them. This section delves into the intricate connections between kinetic art, Constructivism, and Dada:

Constructivism, a movement that emerged in the early 20th century, closely parallels Calder's kinetic art. Smith (2019:47) notes that "Both movements prioritize abstraction, using simple geometric forms and emphasizing mechanics. Calder's use of wire and metal resonates with Constructivism's focus on industrial materials and manipulation."

Conversely, Calder's work, while characterized by balance and order, exhibits an irreverent and playful undertone reminiscent of the Dada movement. According to Williams (2018:59), "Calder's sculptures manifest a whimsical and unpredictable movement that mirrors Dada's penchant for the absurd and unexpected."

By dissecting the aesthetic and theoretical foundations of Calder's kinetic art and its interconnectedness with other artistic movements, we gain profound insights into the creative genius of the artist and the broader artistic milieu of his era. This knowledge deepens our appreciation of how Calder's kinetic sculptures have redefined public art spaces and revolutionized our artistic experience (Smith, 2020).

Calder's "Three Quintains" at LACMA

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), inaugurated in 1965, serves as an exceptional setting for comprehending the profound influence of Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures on public art spaces. Nestled within LACMA's sprawling galleries and open expanse, the iconic installation "Three Quintains" stands as a testament to Alexander Calder's artistic prowess and transformative legacy in the realm of public art.

The Birth and Move of the "Three Quintains"

The genesis of the iconic "Three Quintains" finds its roots intertwined with the inception of the Art Museum Council (AMC) at LACMA. Established in 1952, the AMC stands as the museum's pioneering volunteer support council, steadfastly championing the institution's multifaceted initiatives (Wikipedia, 2013). Comprising members primarily drawn from the echelons of educated professionals such as bankers, real estate developers, and medical practitioners with an avid interest in contemporary art, the AMC played a pivotal role in the museum's journey. In preparation for the museum's unveiling in 1965, the AMC orchestrated the installation of a significant sculpture in its new Hancock Park location in 1962. To this end, a specialized "Fountain Committee" diligently evaluated numerous artists, seeking counsel from renowned sculptor Isamu Noguchi before ultimately commissioning Alexander Calder for the task. In a letter to AMC President Laurelle Burton in June 1964, Calder expressed his keen interest in designing the fountain, affirming, "I am, indeed, very much interested in designing you a fountain." Burton herself heralded the approved commission, declaring that having a luminary of Alexander Calder's stature as the inaugural sculptor for the new museum would establish a benchmark for future artistic endeavors and benefactions (LACMA Unframed, 2013).

The enduring familiarity of the narrative surrounding Hero of Alexandria (Hero, 1851) within European society or the intermittent references to the existence of mechanical fountains

by writers of the seventeenth century (Frank Popper, 1968) have indubitably contributed to the cultural milieu that inspired Alexander Calder. Whether rooted in the long-standing European tradition of creating public art in a distinctive style or simply a testament to Calder's genius remains a subject of contemplation. Notably, following his inaugural site visit to the LACMA site in Los Angeles in July, Alexander Calder expeditiously crafted the model (see Figure 2). This model comprised three towering mobiles accentuated by four water jets that choreographed an aquatic ballet within a pond encircling a section of LACMA's new edifices, occasionally referred to as a moat (Jed Perl, 2020). Fondly christened by Calder as the "Hello Girls," these masterpieces stand as a testament to his artistic vision and inventive spirit.

Amidst the historical context, there was a misinterpretation at the time regarding the nomenclature, with initial assumptions associating the designation "Hello Girls" with the entirety of the sculpture. However, insights gleaned from the design drawings reveal Alexander Calder's original intent to christen the fountain "Three Quintains." Notably, on the reverse side of the model photo, Calder inscribed in the upper left corner the instruction to name a specific section "Hello Girls" (for balcony), demarcated by an arrow pointing to a circle adorned with two capital N's, symbolizing French black (see Figure 3). Concerned about the potential lack of visibility of the standing mobiles from certain viewpoints, Calder augmented one of the mobiles with a vertical extension featuring two black disks. Notably, he affectionately labeled this section "Hello Girls" for the benefit of the spectators positioned on the balcony, a heartfelt homage to the French "Children of Paradise" as termed by the audience seated in the highest balcony (Jed Perl, 2020) (see Figure 4).

In the realm of emotional resonance, the christening of Alexander Calder's "Hello Girls" can be interpreted as a profound homage to the women's committee responsible for commissioning and funding the project.

The notable sculpture "Three Quintains," originally fabricated in 1964 at the Waterbury Iron Works in Connecticut, witnessed a significant relocation and refurbishment journey over the decades. Alexander Calder, overseeing its installation in mid-December, ensured its strategic placement at the designated site. (see Figure 5) (LACMA Unframed, 2013) Unfortunately, the proximity to the La Brea tar pits led to oil seepage, causing considerable damage to the original fountain and prompting its relocation from the Los Angeles Museum of Art building in the 1980s. The subsequent relocation and restoration of "Three Quintains" in 2009 revitalized the mobile units, reflecting the ongoing efforts to preserve this iconic piece. When the Los Angeles County Museum of Art expanded across Wilshire Boulevard (see Figure 6), Currently, as part of the extensive \$650 million campus renovation by Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, the fountain is slated to be relocated south across Wilshire Boulevard, accompanied by a modern pool designed to enhance its visual appeal and ensure structural integrity, while safeguarding it from potential environmental hazards such as strong winds and seismic activity (The Art Newspaper, 2023; Artnet News, 2017).

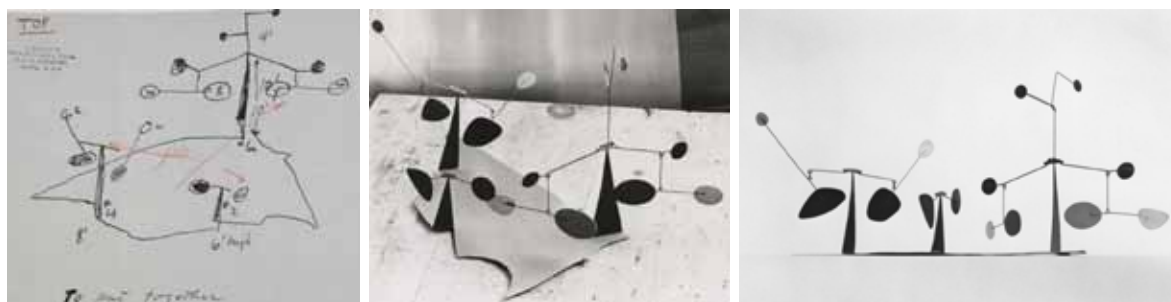


Figure 2. “Three Quintains” design sketches & maquette, 1964, Photographs by Inge Morath, courtesy of: Calder Foundation, New York Artist Copyright: ©2023 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.



Figure 3. The back side of the “Three Quintains” mock-ups.



Figure 4. Left Three Quintains (1964), Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Photo Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York Artist Copyright: © 2023 Calder Foundation, New York/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Right, Alexander Calder and iron worker Chippy Ieronimo overseeing the installation of Three Quintains (Hello Girls), 1964, © 2023 Calder Foundation, New York/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo © 2023 Museum Associates/ LACMA, photographic archives.



Figure 5. Aerial view of construction progress on the David Geffen Galleries at Lacma. Photo © Museum Associates/Lacma.

“Three Quintains”: A Distinctive Installation

“Three Quintains” situated within LACMA’s public art space, serves as a definitive representation of Alexander Calder’s artistic legacy and visionary prowess. Comprising three inter-related groups of elements, the installation draws inspiration from the medieval concept of “Quintain,” each group distinguished by vibrant hues such as red, yellow, blue, white, and black, invoking a sense of abstract, color-infused sails that elegantly converge (see Figure 6) (Gang Qin, 2023). These suspended elements exude an otherworldly aura, seemingly defying the constraints of gravity, thus adding a touch of surreal elegance to the surroundings (see Figure 7). The nomenclature “Three Quintains” pays homage to the medieval tradition of “Quintain,” historically associated with knightly jousts and characterized by a stationary object meant for lance practice (Wikipedia, 2023) (see Figure 8) (Historic England, 2019). This reference not only evokes a sense of movement and equilibrium but also reflects Calder’s distinctive approach to art, emphasizing the kinetic interplay between the various components and the ever-evolving relationship between the artwork and its audience (Carolyn Brown, 2007).

LACMA’s kinetic sculpture, characterized by Alexander Calder’s distinctive geometric configurations and captivating kinetic elements, manifests as a nuanced choreography of shapes and colors, enticing onlookers to partake in its perpetual metamorphosis (see Figure 9 & 10). Its incorporation into LACMA’s collection in 1964 marked a pivotal moment in the museum’s commitment to democratizing art within public realms.

Number	Color					
	Shape	Red	Yellow	Blue	White	Black
1	Circle	0	0	0	0	1
	Reuleaux triangle	0	0	1	0	0
2	Circle	1	0	0	0	0
	Reuleaux triangle	0	0	0	1	2
3	Circle	1	1	0	1	4
	Reuleaux triangle	0	0	0	1	0

Figure 6. Color analysis table.

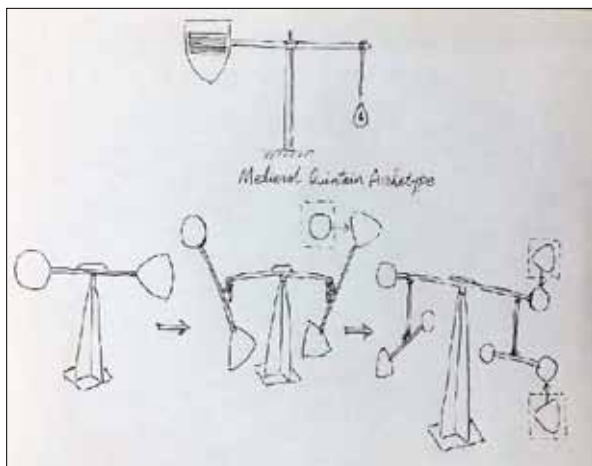


Figure 7. Hand-drawn by the author, October 23, 2023.



Figure 8. Archive image, may not represent the current condition of the site. Date: 2001-09-20. Reference: IOE01/05147/09. Rights: © Mrs Mary Winch. Source: Historic England Archive.

The Artistic, Mechanical, and Kinetic Features

Alexander Calder's masterpiece "Three Quintains" embodies the quintessential elements that define his kinetic art:

Artistic Features: The installation represents a flawless amalgamation of geometric shapes. Vibrant primary hues, including red, yellow, blue, white, and black, interplay with graceful curves, creating a striking visual contrast against the backdrop of the urban landscape. Calder's innate sense of equilibrium is palpable as the individual components seamlessly coalesce into a cohesive whole.

Mechanical Elements: Each element of the "Three Quintains" is suspended from above using a precisely engineered mechanical system devised by Calder. This system allows for meticulous and synchronized movements. The intricate engineering ensures even the gentlest breeze prompts the elements into motion, imparting an enduring sense of vitality to the sculpture.

Kinetic Properties: Renowned for their poetic, almost balletic motions, Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures are exemplified in the kinetic "Three Quintains" (Sharyn R. Udall, 2012). The interplay of the sprinkler's water with the installation induces a captivating dance of rotating and swaying elements, generating an ever-evolving symphony of shapes and colors (see Figure 10). Furthermore, the sculpture's responsiveness to surrounding air currents accentuates its athletic dimension, not only as a mechanical feat but also as an integral aspect of its aesthetic allure.



Figure 9. Jets of water strikes elements of the sculpture. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1966 Photo Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York Artist Copyright: © 2023 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Public Reaction and Interaction

Upon its debut at LACMA, “Three Quintains” signaled a paradigm shift in the interaction between museums and their audiences. The piece challenged conventional notions of art appreciation, beckoning visitors to actively engage rather than passively observe. Initial reactions of wonder and curiosity reflected the public’s fascination with the unprecedented display of kinetic sculpture within a museum context, as they found themselves drawn to the installation’s fluid movements and ever-evolving configurations.

In due course, “Three Quintains” became a beloved fixture in LACMA’s public art domain, fostering a deeper rapport between the museum and its community. Visitors transitioned from mere spectators to active participants, experiencing and contemplating the artwork interactively. Alexander Calder’s creation not only broadened but also challenged the public’s perception of art, demonstrating how public spaces can be transformed into kinetic, immersive environments through the integration of kinetic sculpture.

Standing in the presence of Alexander Calder’s “Three Quintains” within LACMA’s Public Art Space (see Figure 10) unveils the profound impact of kinetic art on the public realm. This iconic installation, characterized by its aesthetic brilliance and mechanical ingenuity, redefined the role of art in the urban landscape, sparking a revolution in the kinetic between art and its audience. It stands as a testament to Alexander Calder’s creative genius and his enduring legacy in the realms of kinetic sculpture and public art.



Figure 10. Image source: <https://lacma.tumblr.com/image/123664898991> (accessed October 23, 2023).

The Transformation of Public Art Space

Situated at the core of LACMA in Los Angeles County, the inclusion of Alexander Calder’s “Three Quintains” catalyzes transformative shifts within the domain of public art space. Kinetic sculpture, through its redefinition of public art spaces, influences the experiences of visitors and evokes a vivid ambiance within the surroundings, ultimately fostering deep-seated community engagement.

Redefining Public Art Space

Within the domain of public art spaces, Alexander Calder's "Three Quintains" serves as a beacon of change, challenging the traditional perception that art should remain static and unchanging. This kinetic sculpture introduces an element of unpredictability and interactivity that has hitherto been unprecedented in the realm of public art. The evolution of public art spaces, once confined to static displays, has undergone a remarkable transformation. No longer merely passive observers, visitors have transformed into active participants within the artistic milieu. LACMA's open plazas and courtyards, previously transitional spaces, have now transitioned into destinations in their own right, drawing individuals eager not only to view art but also to engage with it.

Influence on the Visitors' Experience

Alexander Calder's "Three Quintains" redefines the visitor's experience with art. The encounter with the installation immerses individuals in a realm where art and observers engage in a kinetic dialogue. The traditional practice of silent contemplation has yielded a vibrant and evolving interaction between the observer and the artwork. Visitors find themselves captivated by the continuously shifting movement of the installation, frequently taking moments to appreciate the nuanced complexity inherent in Alexander Calder's masterpiece. Notably, this engagement transcends the boundaries of the art connoisseurship, extending an invitation to individuals of diverse backgrounds and ages.

Impact on the Space's Atmosphere

The introduction of "Three Quintains" instigated a profound transformation in the ambiance of LACMA's public space. Formerly underutilized, these areas have now emerged as vibrant and kinetic cultural hubs. The presence of kinetic sculptures infuses the surrounding environment with vitality, fostering an atmosphere characterized by curiosity and awe. The once prevailing solemnity has given way to a palpable spirit of exploration, where laughter, dialogue, and tangible excitement prevail. Families, friends, and even strangers find themselves engaged in conversations sparked by the art. This metamorphosis extends beyond LACMA's physical boundaries, exerting its influence on the broader cultural landscape of Los Angeles, as the museum emerges as a beacon for those seeking a distinctive and interactive artistic encounter.

Community Engagement

"Three Quintains" surpasses the conventional boundaries of art and museum spaces, actively involving the community. The installation nurtures a sense of belonging among the public, often prompting visitors to return and share in the kinetic energy it offers. This feeling of belonging extends to residents, artists, and schools, who now view LACMA as a vital cultural nucleus, thereby strengthening the bond between the museum and its community.

This newly found engagement with the community is also evident in educational initiatives and outreach programs, where LACMA actively involves individuals of all age groups in discussions, workshops, and events centered around Alexander Calder's kinetic art. It has sparked a revival in public art engagement, inspiring other institutions to recognize the transformative potential of kinetic art in public spaces. In essence, Alexander Calder's "Three Quintains" has played a pivotal role in reshaping public art spaces, redefining the artistic encounter, enlivening the ambiance of LACMA's public areas, and fostering a profound sense of community engagement. It stands as a testament to the enduring capacity of kinetic art to transform public spaces and enrich the lives of those it touches.

Calder's Influence on Contemporary Public Art

The enduring legacy of Alexander Calder transcends the confines of his lifetime, echoing through the annals of contemporary art and leaving a profound, lasting impact on the realm of public art. As the artist skillfully channels his concepts and methodologies into pioneering creations, these masterpieces persist in redefining our interaction with art within public spaces.

The Legacy of Calder's Kinetic Sculptures

Alexander Calder's groundbreaking kinetic sculptures embody an innovative spirit that has left an indelible mark on the contemporary art scene. His revolutionary approach to kinetic art, underscored by interactive elements and a kinetic infusion of movement, continues to serve as a wellspring of inspiration for both artists and art enthusiasts across successive generations. Moreover, Calder's legacy extends beyond the scope of his artistic achievements, encompassing a fundamental transformation in the very concept of public art.

No longer confined to static adornments within urban landscapes, public art has evolved into a dynamic force that actively engages, stimulates, and challenges its audience. Calder's kinetic sculptures have played a pivotal role in redefining the role of public art, positioning it as an integral component of the urban milieu, fostering contemplation and inspiration, and serving as a platform for active participation.

Embracing Calder's Ideas and Techniques

The legacy of Alexander Calder has catalyzed a vibrant resurgence in contemporary public art, as artists have adeptly embraced and reinterpreted his innovative concepts. Inspired by Calder's profound emphasis on equilibrium, motion, and mechanical intricacies, these artists have infused their works with kinetic vitality.

In emulation of Calder's artistic vision, these interactive installations actively beckon the audience to engage, transforming public spaces into immersive environments where art and observers coalesce. Leveraging advancements in technology, contemporary artists have expanded upon Calder's principles of kinetic energy, integrating digital and interactive components into public art, thereby broadening the horizons for movement and viewer engagement.

Public Art as a Catalyst for Cultural Dialogue

Alexander Calder's enduring impact transcends the boundaries of art, resonating within the sphere of cultural discourse. His kinetic sculptures stimulate conversations about the significance of art in public spaces, the interplay between artists and communities, and the transformative effects of art on the urban landscape.

Inspired by Alexander Calder, contemporary public art catalyzes cultural exchange, fostering an inclusive platform for diverse individuals to engage in meaningful dialogue and cultivate mutual understanding. In this way, public art emerges as a unifying force, capable of bridging cultural gaps, nurturing harmony, and cultivating a shared sense of belonging.

Navigating the realm of contemporary public art influenced by Calder, we witness the enduring potency of kinetic sculpture in shaping and enhancing our urban environments. Calder's legacy, a testament to his artistic ingenuity, perseveres in the endeavors of present-day artists, who persist in redefining the frontiers of public art and challenging our conceptions of artistic expression within the public domain.

Challenges and Critiques

The introduction of Alexander Calder's kinetic sculptures into public art spaces, epitomized by the presence of LACMA's "Three Quintains," has indeed catalyzed a significant revolution. Nevertheless, this transformative trajectory has not been devoid of challenges within the realm of public art spaces.

Challenges in Public Art Spaces

The domain of kinetic sculpture, despite its innovative nature, grapples with several specific challenges within the domain of public art:

Maintenance and Durability: The intricate mechanical components within kinetic sculptures necessitate rigorous upkeep to ensure their seamless operation. Enduring exposure to the elements, potential damage, and general wear and tear pose substantial challenges to the maintenance of these public art installations.

Accessibility and Inclusion: Some kinetic sculptures may inadvertently fall short in providing accessibility for individuals with disabilities or fostering an inclusive experience for a diverse range of visitors. Ensuring that public art remains accessible to all continues to be a paramount challenge.

Community Engagement: While kinetic sculptures often facilitate community engagement, fostering a tangible sense of ownership and participation presents its own set of challenges. Initiatives geared towards involving local communities in dialogues about the arts may encounter resistance or apathy.

Critiques and Controversies

This kinetic sculpture has faced criticism and controversy within the public art sphere:

Aesthetic Preferences: Not all audiences align with the aesthetics of kinetic art. Certain critics argue that the mechanical essence of these sculptures detracts from conventional artistic concepts and their inherent aesthetic values.

Public Funding Allocation: The allocation of public funds for kinetic art installations has sparked debate. Skeptics may question whether public resources should be dedicated to art that not everyone appreciates or comprehends fully.

Environmental Considerations: Some kinetic energy sculptures rely on electricity or materials that potentially impact the environment. Such concerns often initiate discussions regarding the ecological sustainability of public art installations.

Ethical Concerns

The integration of kinetic sculptures into public spaces has raised pertinent ethical questions:

Ownership and Reproduction: The complex issue of ownership and reproduction of kinetic sculptures arises. Should artists maintain control over the reproduction of their work in public spaces? What measures are in place for damaged or removed installations? These concerns surrounding ownership and restoration pose intricate ethical challenges.

Expression and Cultural Appropriation: Public art must align with cultural expression and appropriation. The selection of kinetic sculptures should consider cultural contexts and potential impacts on diverse communities. Ensuring cultural sensitivity and averting inadvertent appropriation remains imperative.

Community Impact: Ethical considerations extend to the effects of kinetic sculpture on the community. Art often catalyzes transformations, sometimes leading to gentrification and displacing long-time residents. Ethical analysis should assess the consequences of such shifts.

Acknowledging these challenges, debates, and ethical dilemmas, it is crucial to recognize that Alexander Calder's revolutionary impact on kinetic sculpture in public art spaces is not devoid of complexity. As the fusion of kinetic art and public space continues to progress, it is vital to address these issues with sensitivity, adaptability, and a steadfast commitment to enhancing the public's artistic experience while honoring the diverse perspectives and needs of the communities involved.

Conclusion

The significant influence of Alexander Calder's "Three Quintains" on LACMA's public art space stands as a testament to the transformative capacity of kinetic art.

The Revolutionary Impact of "Three Quintains"

"Three Quintains" epitomizes a lively and captivating art form that fundamentally reconfigures the kinetics of public art. Alexander Calder's kinetic sculpture transcends conventional artistic boundaries, encouraging visitors to participate in a positive and emotionally evocative interaction with art in the public domain. Its impact reaches well beyond LACMA, integrating itself into the cultural fabric of Los Angeles and extending far beyond its physical manifestation.

The legacy encapsulated within this installation resonates in its redefinition of the essence of public art space. It has orchestrated a transformation that renders these spaces as dynamic, interactive arenas, where art and community seamlessly converge in an ongoing dialogue. Visitors, irrespective of their background or age, are transformed from passive spectators to active participants. The installation underscores the potential of public art to unify, engage, and provoke, ushering in a new epoch of artistic expression in public spaces.

Broader Implications for Public Art

The enduring influence of "Three Quintains" transcends its presence at LACMA, shedding light on the potential of public art as a catalyst for cultural discourse, community engagement, and urban rejuvenation. Informed by Alexander Calder's principle of kinetic energy, public art has swiftly evolved into an indispensable facet of the urban cultural milieu.

As evidenced by Three Quintains, public art is no longer a passive bystander in the urban panorama; it has morphed into an active participant, shaping and enriching the lives of those who encounter it. It fosters dialogue, nurtures contemplation, and fosters a sense of collective identity. Drab public spaces are transformed into vibrant, animated hubs that intertwine with the cultural fabric of the city.

The Role of Public Art in Urban Culture and Engagement

The narrative of “Three Quintains” serves as a beacon, illustrating the central role of public art in urban culture and community engagement. Public art surpasses mere aesthetics; it reflects the cultural tapestry of a city, serves as a wellspring of inspiration, and acts as a conduit that unites diverse communities. It enriches the urban landscape and provides a platform for reflection, festivity, and discourse.

In contemporary society, public art possesses the capacity to transcend traditional confines and embrace kinetic, imaginative expression. It stands as a tribute to the enduring legacy of artists like Alexander Calder, who not only challenged antiquated norms but broadened our comprehension of art in the public realm.

As we near the conclusion of our exploration of Alexander Calder’s kinetic sculptures in public art spaces, it is incumbent upon us to recognize that the revolution set in motion by “Three Quintains” is irrevocably underway. Public art continues to adapt in response to the evolving urban terrain and the diverse requirements of different communities. Alexander Calder’s vibrant artistic heritage calls upon us to embrace the transformative potential of public art in our cities, fostering spaces that honor art, engage communities, and ignite cultural discourse.

Future Directions

The lasting influence of Alexander Calder’s “Three Quintains” and its transformative effect on public art spaces heralds a kinetic future for this artistic genre. It is imperative to remain attentive to the diverse research and development avenues in this field, which hold the promise of exhilarating journeys into unexplored terrain.

Advancing Technological Integration

The fusion of technology and kinetic sculpture presents an avenue for novel artistic exploration. Prospective research endeavors might culminate in the fusion of kinetic art with state-of-the-art technologies, particularly augmented reality and artificial intelligence. This area holds promising potential for interactive installations that seamlessly synchronize with the audience’s intelligent feedback and the surrounding environmental kinetic. Furthermore, advancements in materials and engineering are anticipated to bolster the longevity and sustainability of kinetic sculptures within outdoor public spaces.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

The imperative to address inclusivity in public art underscores a crucial realm. Subsequent research should focus on conceptualizing kinetic sculpture that facilitates the participation of individuals with disabilities, while simultaneously embracing the cultural and linguistic diversity within the community. In this trajectory, public art endeavors to mirror the diverse tapestries of the community, fostering appreciation for all its constituents.

Environmental Sustainability

The ecological impact of kinetic sculpture plays a pivotal role in the evolving public art landscape. Research progress in materials and design should prioritize sustainability and environmental considerations. The transition toward renewable energy and eco-friendly materials is poised to guide this art form towards environmentally conscious energy sources.

Cultural Representation and Ethics

As public art undergoes perpetual transformation, ethical considerations concerning cultural expression and appropriation come into focus. Future research is anticipated to delve into the ethical frameworks governing the selection and installation of kinetic energy sculptures in public spaces. Collaboration with local communities and cultural authorities is a crucial element in fostering respect for cultural expression.

Community Engagement and Education

Enhancing community involvement through public art stands as a testament to ongoing research and innovation. The terrain illustrates a diverse array of art initiatives, workshops, and educational endeavors designed to cultivate a profound bond between the public and the art of motion. The broader role of public art in nurturing cultural comprehension and social unity represents a domain that necessitates further scholarly examination.

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

The trajectory of kinetic sculpture in public art hinges upon the scope of interdisciplinary collaboration. The amalgamation of artistic prowess, engineering proficiency, architectural insight, urban planning acuity, and social science investigation is envisioned to carve out comprehensive, site-specific installations that surpass mere embellishment of the urban landscape to earnestly grapple with sociocultural quandaries. Academics are compelled to contemplate strategies to steer and nurture this collaboration.

Preservation and Conservation

The safeguarding and conservation of kinetic energy sculptures in public spaces have emerged as a progressively crucial area of research. Formulating a comprehensive, long-term strategy to preserve the integrity and functionality of these sculptures while implementing effective measures to forestall vandalism constitutes a focal point of research.

International Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy

Acting as a conduit for international exchange and cultural diplomacy, public art possesses boundless potential. Academic avenues stand prepared to steer kinetic sculpture as a trailblazer of cultural understanding, interlinking cities, and nations through its artistic expressions.

Kinetic sculpture heralds limitless potential in the trajectory of public art, promising to punctuate urban landscapes, foster cultural dialogue, and realign public involvement with art in public spaces. In this multifaceted domain, research and development initiatives serve as guiding lights for continuous inspiration and transformation.

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Animation for Anxiety Alleviation in Pediatric Cancer Patients *During Venipuncture in the Hospital*

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Abstract

This preliminary study focused on the use of animation to reduce anxiety among pediatric cancer patients undergoing venipuncture in the hospital. It was conducted on 30 pediatric cancer patients aged 5-9 years. The Pretest- Posttest study method was applied in which the level of anxiety was measured before and after viewing the film and then it was analyzed to determine whether the animation could help relieve anxiety in the study population. The results demonstrated that with the use of the animation with visual fantasy in which a monster symbolized the pain young patients must endure during blood draws and a positive mindset toward such procedures were presented, 20 and 25 patients felt comfortable before and after viewing the animation, respectively. Four patients felt slightly anxious before and after the film. Two patients felt uneasy before viewing while no patients did after viewing. One patient experienced a high anxiety level before and after the animation. In addition, one patient was most nervous before, whereas none was after the viewing. It was concluded that by presenting the stories with a positive perspective and using symbols in the visual fantasy style, animation films can relieve anxiety in pediatric cancer patients undergoing blood sampling.

Keywords: Animation, Anxiety, Pediatric, Cancer, Hospital

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Introduction

Psychosocial problems among children during hospitalization are common. Both occasional and frequent admission due to some serious chronic illnesses often cause a crisis in children as well as their parents and family members.

Khamenkan (2011) discussed the thinking process of children who are admitted to the hospital and explained that a child's reaction to an event occurs in the way that his thoughts and feelings are affected, giving rise to his cognitive perception and behavior. This previous study on the thoughts and feelings of 93 children aged 5-9 years admitted to the hospital by self-reporting and projective techniques found that the most significant children's thoughts and fear are related to being alone in the hospital. Being solitary inevitably exposes them to horrifying, painful, frightening, and miserable situations, leading to negative behaviors such as detachment, aggression, fear, and separation anxiety.

Anxiety caused by hospitalization directly affects a child's mental state and renders treatment difficult. Also, his parents' and caretakers' mental health will worsen. With the study of various pieces of related literature, the researchers therefore attempted to find a means to improve young patients' state of mind by relieving their anxiety.

Johnson et al. (Johnson, Whitt, and Martin, 1987) investigated the effects of fantasy on anxiety in chronically ill and healthy children. The study involved 52 children aged 5-9 years. The experimental group was stimulated by listening to stories read by their parents to develop visual imagination and then compared to the control group who merely played general games. The findings are as follows: 1. The experimental group was less anxious than the control group. 2. The reading activity was less effective among the healthy children. 3. The level of anxiety in the chronically ill children not stimulated by fantasy was unchanged. 4. The anxiety level in the children with persistent diseases was significantly reduced compared to that in the healthy children.

This means that stimulating fantasy in chronically ill children could significantly reduce anxiety. Fantasy is a concept that corresponds to the theory of human self-defense mechanisms.

Boonyapraphan (2018) discussed Sigmund Freud's theory of defense mechanisms in the article entitled "Defense Mechanism Styles: The World of Unconscious Mind" and that the self-defense mechanism is a means of human adaptation at the unconscious level, usually adopted by humans of all ages to apply in daily life. It is a process of adjusting when experiencing mind-affecting challenges to help release stress and uneasiness.

Therefore, when away from their parents, a world of imagination is one of the ways children adopt to defend themselves. Not only does being away from home to unfamiliar surroundings include attending school, but also being admitted to a hospital. In the hospital, with or without their parents around, children have to face pain when undergoing various medical procedures and treatments, including injections and intravenous infusion. As a result, when admitted to the hospital, young patients inevitably experience stress and anxiety from the unfamiliar environment.

Defense Mechanism	
Repression	Denial of Reality
Rationalization	Displacement
Projection	Introjection
Reaction Formation	Aggression
Help - rejecting Complaint	Undoing
Sublimation	Substitution
Symbolization	Withdrawal
Isolation	Egotism
Attention - getting	Conversion
Identification	Compensation
Fixation and Regression	Fantasy / Day Dreaming
Intellectualization	Suppression
Humor	Work and Perfectionism
Compulsive Fun Seeking	

Figure 1. Table of defense mechanism.

From the preliminary discovery, fantasy is a form of self-defense mechanisms. Fantasy is highly related to young people. Both children's literature and animated movies contain content that is almost entirely related to children's imagination. Often time children play with toys and imagine alone or they imagine themselves as one of the characters seen in a film. In addition, some children create their imaginary friends to play with. The researchers therefore looked into all forms of fantasy to determine which one is most appropriate for young patients.

In addition to the youth literature that uses fantasy to communicate with children, it is found that an animated film is another medium that can effectively bring fantasy to children. Some successful animated films have won an internationally recognized award such as the OSCARS or the Academy Award. Those motion pictures are produced entirely through fantasy.

Amornsupornsat (2010) provided findings on the effects of concrete-objective information program on pre-operative anxiety among school-age patients undergoing cardiac catheterization using animated movies as a way to communicate with the patient. It was concluded that the level of pre-operative anxiety decreased after receiving information through such animation.

Animation films are therefore a proper medium for communicating with children as they are highly imaginative. Due to no restrictions on filmmaking, there are no limits on the imagination on display. This entertainment type furthermore never fails to capture young people's attention.

In light of the information, creating animated films to alleviate anxiety among hospitalized pediatric cancer patients was of significant interest. Therefore, this study by focusing on both the visual characteristics and the plot of the film aimed to determine whether the animation could help relieve anxiety in the young cancer patients to prevent them from developing resistance to their medical treatment, which will adversely impact their own physical health and the mental health of their parents.

Objective

To evaluate whether animated movies can be used to alleviate anxiety in pediatric cancer patients undergoing blood draws.

Methodology

The animation development was divided into two parts: content and design development. In the content development part, three components were taken into consideration 1. factors affecting anxiety in children under medical treatment to be evaluated for the creation of the story structure. 2. the background and characteristics of the characters. 3. the form of fantasy that would be appropriate for presentation. All three elements considered data sets as follows:

	Factors	Feelings	Details
1	Separation from family and friends	Separation anxiety	People whom children love or are familiar with, such as parents, siblings, and close relatives.
			Friends
			Pets or objects that children are attached to, such as dolls and blankets
2	Being in an unfamiliar place or environment	Fear or unfamiliarity	Unknown person
			Unknown place
			Medical personnel
			The smell of various liquids
		Dislike	Loud noise in the hospital
			Dark and dull condition of the children’s ward
			Lighting at night
			Too hot or too cold environment in the hospital
			No toys or playgrounds in the hospital.
			Type or taste of hospital food
3	Medical treatment	Fear	Experiencing various procedures such as injections, blood sampling, and surgery
			Medical equipment such as syringes, blood pressure monitors, ear probes, and tongue depressors
			Treatment errors
			Physical harassment
			Intimidation for better cooperation
			Disability
			Pain
			Changes in physical condition
			Death
4	Loss of freedom	Loss	Freedom because of the need to be hospitalized for treatment
			Continuous academic progress
			Activity participation such as playing outdoors, playing sports, and traveling
			Sleep and movement
			Freedom to select types and amount of food
Freedom to spend time on activities such as watching TV or playing games at their own will			

Figure 2. Table showing factors affecting anxiety in pediatric patients undergoing medical treatment. (Coyne, 2007)

1.	Child patient and parent factors	The child has a shy personality and has difficulty adjusting.
		I am a child who is easily anxious.
		The child is easily irritated and angry.
		The child has had a bad experience with medical care before.
		Young age
		Children do not understand the treatment process or various procedures.
		The child must remain in the ward alone. without parents or caregivers watching over
		Children with other psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, etc.
		Parents or caregivers are very worried about their child's illness.
		Parents or caregivers do not care or do not care about the child.
		Parents or caregivers rarely visit children in the hospital.
		Parents or caregivers scold or intimidate children.

Figure 3. Table showing characteristics and background that affect anxiety.

Fantasy genre for children	Description
Education, Entertainment and Power	This type of fantasy involves learning to use certain powers. The process of learning to control magic occurs through venturing through various lessons. Children will learn not to be attached to the power they have been given. A common obstacle is being a child faced with great magic.
Time displacement	This fantasy involves the impulse to learn and involves history or important people from the past. Stories are created from the uncertainty of certain energies. and transmission from a person who can fill in the incomplete past the fantasy created by distorting time will focus on Character changes growth and death Stories in this type of children's literature are often influenced by Contemporary concepts in science Especially the Theory of Relativity.
Animal, toy, and miniature people fantasy	It is a story that talks about animals, toys or dolls that look like humans, miniature people, or legendary creatures. The main idea of this type of fantasy is Making the child characters in the story more powerful, stronger, bigger than toys, small humans, or animals. Animal Fantasy is a subgenre that often describes intelligent animals. Sometimes they can live in their own world without having to deal with humans at all.
Alternative worlds	The structure of this type of fantasy is the creation of parallel worlds or dimensions with clearly visible boundaries. For example, a child may be stuck in a demon's magical world. and must protect the real world from dark forces The subject of God and Satan may be interwoven into the story. And sometimes parallel worlds are presented from the nodes of the mind. or even a world created from dreams.
Visual fantasy	Visual Fantasy emerged from the development of children's illustrated books. It will present characters that have fantasy qualities but must be highly fantasy-like. This type of fantasy is based on other types of fantasy. Instead, we focus on the details of the images that promote fantasy that can be connected to reality.

Figure 4. Table showing types of fantasy literature for children. (James, Edward, & Farah Mendlesohn, 2012: 51-60)

Based on the three sets of the data above, two questionnaires were developed. The first one studied issues related to hospital factors, as well as patient personalities and background which give rise to anxiety so that the study outcome could be applied in determining the story structure. The second questionnaire focused on issues regarding the types of fantasy that are appropriate to present through animation for young audience. The index of item

objective congruence (IOC) of both question sets was examined by one child and adolescent psychiatry specialist and two animation film experts. With their average IOC of 0.843 and 0.915, respectively, the results were that the two sets were accurately designed to fulfill their objectives and appropriate to apply in the production of animated films.

In the study of the first data set, hospital factors and the personalities and background of pediatric patients which affect anxiety were investigated to design the structure of the story. Data from two child and adolescent psychiatrists and one developmental-behavioral pediatrician were collected. It was discovered that factors affecting anxiety in hospitalized children included being separated from a loved one such as parents and friends, fear of various medical procedures and fear of pain. According to the second data set, factors regarding child patients and parents included that the child has a shy personality and difficult time adjusting; that the child is easily anxious; that the child has had a negative experience with medical treatment before; and that the child has other psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety disorder. These findings were then taken into consideration to identify conflict and character background in the animation story.

To determine which type of fantasy was proper to present through animation for children, the data from the same experts as the first data set were gathered and examined. The result indicated that the visual fantasy type was most suitable for use in animated films to alleviate anxiety in hospitalized children with cancer.

Once the factors affecting anxiety in hospitalized pediatric patients and the appropriate fantasy genre were determined, a four-minute animation was designed and produced for the study population.

Research Subjects

The research data were collected at the Department of Pediatrics, Siriraj Hospital. Since this was a pilot study, the formula for calculating the sample size of Viechtbauer, Smits, Kotz, Bude, Spigt, Serroyen and Curzon (2015:1376) was used as follows:

$$n = \frac{\ln(1 - \gamma)}{\ln(1 - \pi)}$$

With the confidence level (γ) of 95%, and the error level (π) of 0.10, $n = 29$. Therefore, a sample of 30 cancer patients aged 5-9 years who were admitted to the general children's ward at Siriraj Hospital was studied.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Diagnosed with cancer and currently receiving hospital treatment, with or without a history of having his blood drawn
2. Aged 5-9 years
3. Granted an approval from the treating physician to participate in the research

Exclusion Criteria

1. Having a visual or hearing impairment
2. Being Thai-illiterate
3. Having a critical illness

Withdrawal or Termination Criteria






The volunteer participants wished to withdraw, or there were difficulties that obstructed the completion of the test.

Subject Allocation

This research study was endorsed by the Human Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University, project code 572/2018 (EC4). The researchers and the research assistants who were the medical personnel of the Department of Pediatrics, Siriraj Hospital entered the ward to select pediatric patients who met the criteria. Then permission from the patient's doctor was requested before asking for consent to participate in the study from the patient and his parents. The data were collected from all those who agreed to participate. The Pretest – Posttest study method was applied with no random selection or grouping.

Research Procedure

The researcher designed a tool used to acquire data in a questionnaire by using the concept of Thai State - Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children - Revised (T - STAIC - R) of Chaiyawat (2000), devised for Thai children aged 8-13 year. However, this research project was conducted among Thai children aged 5-9 years, the researcher therefore developed an easy-to-understand questionnaire with illustrations similar to the characters in the animation.

Now I Feel				
1	2	3	4	5
				
I feel comfortable.	I feel a little worried.	I feel worried.	I feel very worried	I feel the most worried.




Now I Feel		
Very calm	Relaxed	Restless
		

Figure 5. Table showing the characteristics of the illustrations in the questionnaire.

This questionnaire was created from the tools of Spielberger, C. D., Edwards, C. D., Montouri, J., & Lushene, R. (1973), with the content validity index (CVI) of the Trait Anxiety measure (A - Trait) of 89. 5 %. Its structural validity was verified using the known - group technique,

convergent validity and factor analysis. The test-retest index was 0.58, and the Cronbach's alpha was 0.83. There were 19 items in the original questionnaire, each with three options. Each participant was asked to choose the option that best matched with his present feeling. (Kanchanarotphan, 2005)

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. In Part 1, there were seven questions regarding the participant's basic information. In Part 2, one question about his anxiety of blood collection and 19 questions regarding fear during hospitalization were originally listed. Part 3 included questions related to the respondent's preference for the animation character.

After the questionnaire was completely devised, its index of item objective congruence (IOC) was evaluated by two medical practitioners specializing in child and adolescent psychiatry and one in child development and behavior. The questions with the mean IOC lower than 0.5 were all excluded from the question sets.

Part 2 questionnaire was divided into two topics: the first one comprised one question with 10 available options asking about the respondent's anxiety, and the second was composed of 19 questions with respect to his fear during hospitalization.

In the first topic, there were five options failing to pass the selection criterion with their IOC less than 0.5 and therefore were removed: I feel most comfortable, I feel very comfortable, I feel somewhat comfortable, I feel a little comfortable, and I am quite worried.

There were originally 19 questions in the second topic, two of which yielded the mean IOC less than 0.5: I am sweating right now, and I feel uncomfortable. Those items were then eliminated from the questionnaire.

At this point, the total number of questions in the Part 2 questionnaire was reduced to 18 from 20. The average IOC of the questionnaire for the purpose of measuring anxiety among young patients with cancer during hospitalization was 0.78.

Topics in Part 2 questionnaire	number of questions
2.1 Anxiety of blood draw	1
2.2 Fear during hospitalization	17

Figure 6. Table of topics in part 2 of the questionnaire.

In the question regarding the respondent's anxiety, for the score assignment, the five-point rating scale was adopted. The score of 0.00-1.00 meant I feel comfortable; 1.01-2.00 I'm a little worried; 2.01-3.00 I'm worried; 3.01-4.00 I'm very worried; and 4.01-5.00 I'm the most worried.

For the fear-related questionnaire, the score was assessed based on the research study entitled "Factors Related to Fear in School-Aged Children Admitted to Hospitals" by Kanchanarotphan (2005). The scores of all questions were summed up to calculate the mean. When fear is high, so is the mean; whereas the mean is low as there is little fear. For the mean score interpretation, the average score of 1.00-1.66 corresponded to the low level of fear 1.67-2.33 moderate, and 2.34-3.00 high.

In this study, the pretest - posttest study method was applied as follows:

- Upon the approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee, the director of Siriraj Hospital and the head of the Department of Pediatrics were contacted and informed about the research project commencement.
- The head of the pediatric patient's ward was asked to recruit cancer patients who met the selection criteria.
- Selected patients and their parents received the document which explained the importance and procedures of the study and then were asked to sign the assent form and the informed consent form, respectively.
- The patients and their parents answered the questionnaire devised by the researcher. This questionnaire consisted of three parts:

- *Part 1 General information*

In a five-minute interview with the patient's parents, six aspects of the patient's personal information were obtained.

- *Part 2 Anxiety during a blood draw and fear during hospitalization*

18 questions were read to the patient by the researcher and then answered before and after viewing the animation (Pretest - Posttest). This lasted approximately 15 minutes each time, giving a total of 30 minutes.

- *Part 3 Preference for the film character*

After watching the film, 14 questions were read to the patient and then answered, taking roughly 10 minutes for each patient.

- The researcher ensured that each respondent understood all questions and graphics on the questionnaire when selecting his answer by reading and providing some explanation to the patient. Items found unclear to the respondent even with some explanation were noted to be discussed in the analysis of the study results.
- Each patient viewed the 4-minute animation film about hospitalization merely once.
- Data derived from the questionnaire were then analyzed to draw conclusions from the study.

Outcome Measurement / Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the general data of the research sample. Continuous data were presented as the mean, and standard deviation (SD); or median, and minimum and maximum value (range). Categorical data were shown as a number and a percentage.
- Paired t - test and Chi - square statistics were adopted to make comparison between the data derived from the questionnaire about the patient's anxiety before and after the animated movie.
- Invariable analysis and multivariable analysis were performed to identify factors that may be related to anxiety among pediatric patients such as the number of blood draws, the length of time diagnosed with cancer.

Outcome

Thirty young patients participated in this study project: 13 (43.3%) males and 17 (56.7%) females. 14 (46.7%) were diagnosed with leukemias, and 16 (53.3%) with cancerous tumors.

29 (96.7%) had been hospitalized, but 1 (3.3%) never had. 5 (16.7%) had experienced 5-10 blood draws, and 25 (83.3%) had had more than 10.

Pre-viewing and Post-viewing Anxiety

From the total of 30 patients, before viewing the film, most patients felt comfortable (20, 66.7%). Four, two, one, and three of them were slightly anxious, anxious, very anxious and most anxious, respectively. After the animation, the majority of them felt at ease (25, 83.3%). Four experienced a low level of anxiety whereas one a high level. None was found worried or most worried.

	n (%)	
	Pretest	Posttest
relaxed	20 (66.7)	25 (83.3)
a little worried	4 (13.3)	4 (13.3)
worry	2 (6.7)	-
very worried	1 (3.3)	1 (3.3)
most worried	3 (10)	-

Figure 7. Table shows the results on the level of pre-viewing and post-viewing anxiety.

1. *The research hypothesis is that after watching the film, young patients with cancer become less anxious about having their blood drawn than before the movie.*

Statistical results on anxiety for a blood collection in pediatric cancer patients before and after watching the animated movie.

	mean		Standard Deviation (SD)	
before the movie	1.77		1.33	
after the movie	1.23		0.63	
	n	Sum of Ranks	Z	sig. (1-tailed)
(after Anxiety Score (before			-2.506	0.006**
Negative ranks	9	5.72		
Positive ranks	1	3.50		
Ties	20			

**p<0.01

Figure 8. Table of Pretest-Posttest Statistical Analysis.

Nonparametric statistics by Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests were applied to compare the mean scores of anxiety before and after watching the animated movie. The Z value of -2.506 and the sig. (1-tailed) value of 0.006 were derived. With the sig. value less than 0.01, this means that after viewing the film, the young cancer patients felt significantly less worried about the blood draw at the significance level of 0.01.

Fear During Hospitalization

Pre-viewing and post-viewing fear level was found low in 18 (60%) and in 25 (83.3%) young patients, respectively, while 11 (36.7%) and 4 (13.3%) participants experienced moderate level of fear prior to and following the film. Merely one patient was found highly fearful before and after the animation.

	n (%)	
	Pretest	Posttest
Low	18(60)	25(83.3)
moderate	11(36.7)	4(13.3)
high	1(3.3)	1(3.3)

Figure 9. Table of Results on pre-viewing and post-viewing fear level during hospitalization.

2. *The research hypothesis is that during hospitalization after watching the animated movie, young cancer patients feel less frightened than before viewing the film.*

	mean		Standard Deviation (SD)	
before the movie	1.52		0.45	
after the movie	1.38		0.38	
	n	Sum of Ranks	Z	sig. (1-tailed)
Fear (after Score (before			-2.554	0.006**
Negative ranks	18	14.28		
Positive ranks	7	9.71		
Ties	5			

**p<0.01

Figure 10. Table shows the statistical analysis of the fear score during hospital admissions of pediatric cancer patients.

The comparison between the mean fear scores prior to and following the film was carried out by the method of nonparametric statistics by Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests. The Z value was -2.554 and the sig. value (1-tailed) was 0.006. This concluded that the patients were significantly less scared after the film at the significance level of 0.01.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of using animation films to relieve anxiety in pediatric cancer patients who had their blood drawn during hospital admission . Anxiety and fear are the important factor that directly affects the efficiency of medical treatment. When pediatric patients develop such feelings, resistance to treatment and loss of trust in their guardians and medical personnel arise. This study aimed to use the animation to alleviate anxiety and fear of a blood draw in hospitalized pediatric cancer patients. With the format of visual fantasy, the animated film was created with the storyline structured from hospital experience. The appearance of a monster as a symbolic representation of pain caused by medical treatment was included. Also, the characters whose personalities were properly designed to help the young patients see a positive perspective through them. 30 pediatric patients viewed the film and responded to both the pre-viewing and post-viewing anxiety/ fear questionnaire. After watching the movie, the patients showed a statistically significant reduction in anxiety and fear of having a blood draw. It can be concluded that animated films are a suitable tool for alleviating anxiety and fear of blood collection in hospitalized pediatric cancer patients.

Suggestions

Since this is a preliminary study, in subsequent studies the sample size should be increased in order to determine other factors affecting anxiety among children with cancer undergoing blood collection during hospitalization to produce research results with a wider scope. The use of animation to relieve anxiety caused by other medical procedures may be studied.

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More is Sore: A Literature Review of the Urban Morphology

Characters of Depressing Living Conditions

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Abstract

Urbanization promises a better life in cities, drawing more individuals seeking space and opportunity. However, these aspirations often result in distressing and sore living conditions. Using literature review methods, this research seeks to achieve two primary objectives: firstly, to identify elements significantly impacting mental health and contributing to stress in urban settings; and secondly, to summarize strategies within the built environment to improve the quality of life. The limitations of this research is focusing on elements discerned from existing literature and filtered by the case for high density urban. The study focuses on urban morphology elements: buildings, streets, and plots. It highlights significant factors gathered from current literature. For example, the building element delves into features like windows and sky views factor, while the street element assesses their potential role in traffic congestion. Additionally, the plot element scrutinizes the influence of green and blue spaces within urban landscapes.

Keywords: *Blue Space, Depression, Green Space, Overcrowding, Urban Morphology, Urbanization*

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Introduction

The city has always been an attractive place. A place with high ambition and hope. For thousands of years, cities have sparked innovation and lifted many from poverty to the middle class through job opportunities (Glaeser 2020). Cities keep gathering people by offering better income, job opportunities, healthcare, and many other services. It gathers all the strangers agreeing to live side by side in high density, which creates more efficient collective use of infrastructure and concentrated development (Murphy, 2017). The data from the OECD show people in the city have higher life satisfaction than people in rural areas and semi-dense urban areas or towns (OECD, 2020). That is the ideal concept of urbanization, known as the process of reducing poverty (Sridhar, 2019). Done properly city should be the happiest place in the world.

Nowadays, urbanization has moved 56% of the world's population to cities (Ivers and Fleury, 2022). It makes cities denser and denser. Back in the 19th century, London city was in the industrial revolution and had an uncontrolled rising population. It created the worst living condition, slums that were called Victorian slums. The slums were characterized as a hellish environment. Because of that, Howard Ebenezer was motivated to write the idea of Garden city in the book entitled "Garden City of To-morrow." A Garden city is the image of a city with controlled density facilitated by green open space (Howard, 2016). According to a recent perspective by Monteiro et al. (2022), garden cities are perceived as a solution to reduce urban sprawl while promoting walkability and cycling through their design.

There seems like a density threshold where a city can turn into a depressing living condition. Recently, high migration to the city (urbanization) has created competition and challenges for occupying space and overloaded infrastructure. People who lives in the city are prone to the housing problem, traffic jam, air pollution, and loud noises (Moser, 1988; Iqbal and Ali, 2022). The reality has turned the hope of million souls for a better environment into an inescapable fate in depressing living conditions. But is it the built environment or the density of the citizen to blame? Layla McCay, Director of the Centre for Urban Design and Mental Health, said, "The villain isn't density itself; it's insensitive design" (Gardiner, 2017). McLennan (2009) believes that there is a "density sweet spot," a correct setting of density for the built environment in a city.

Similar to Howard Ebenezer's story, Le Corbusier was motivated by the chaotic planned medieval cities in Europe. In his book *The City of tomorrow and its planning*, Le Corbusier said density has to be controlled and centralized in a way for better housing solutions and to spare space for transportation and open space (Le Corbusier, 2013). On the contrary, Jane Jacobs distinguish density and overcrowding. Not all city solution is remake of a neighborhood into high-rise buildings. Jane Jacob said well design neighborhood (or city in this case) is a walkable and vibrant design. Even though both Le Corbusier and Jane Jacobs have different urbanism styles, both of them agree density is not the culprit of poor living conditions. Richard Rogers (2004) in *Urban Task Force* stated that density and intensity could create a condition of urban cramming where there are too many buildings and cramped living conditions. Density needs to be managed by urban design to create a quality of life (Rogers, 2004). In summary, we can agree that depressing living conditions are not created by density but by bad urban design.

Despite the bygone eras of Howard Ebenezer, Jane Jacobs, and Le Corbusier, recent research still observes a prevailing trend in contemporary development that emphasizes constructing new settlements primarily on untouched land or greenfield. The solution to improving living standards appears to be the creation of fresh residential areas. For instance, ongoing urban sprawl in Indonesia has resulted in the establishment of exclusive "private cities" targeting affluent segments (Permanasari et al., 2023). However, these developments foster segregated communities due to heavy security measures, gated structures, and surrounding walls. Given the concerning state of densely populated cities worldwide, this literature-based research aims to achieve two core objectives: firstly, identifying crucial elements influencing mental health and contributing to stress in high densified urban settings, and secondly, summarizing built environment strategies to enhance overall quality of life, particularly in crowded or strained environments.

More Is Sore by Urban Morphology

Since the end of the 19th, urban planning practices have seen a crowded area as a "vibrant" urban space or the best living in urban habitat (Cremaschi, 2014). Crowds bring more benefits and strengthen the community, like the crowd in the city square and the crowd in the shopping center. A successful public realm is where can attract people to come so people can see people doing an activity (Jacobs, 2007). However, the crowd can change into a negative stigma and related to congestion when rapid urbanization creates concentrated overpopulation in megacities. Crowds, density, and congestion are not new problems but growing problems. Since 1979, the crowd issue has grown into a depression problem (Schwab, Nadeau, and Warheit, 1979). If not properly controlled, the crowd can be chaos, an unorganized mass with the potential for disaster. Crowds can change the new urbanity image to become "more is sore."

Urban planners and designers have the knowledge, ability, and responsibility to manage the crowd in the city away from depressing living conditions. Seeing from that perspective, this study examines the element of the city related to urban planning and urban design scopes. Studied in those scopes, urban morphology is the study of the urban form or the physical form of the city (Oliveira, 2016). The main elements of urban form are streets, plots, and buildings (Oliveira, 2016). These elements also mention by Rogers (2004) as the element that occupy the space in the city, which is building, road, and open space (see Figure 1).

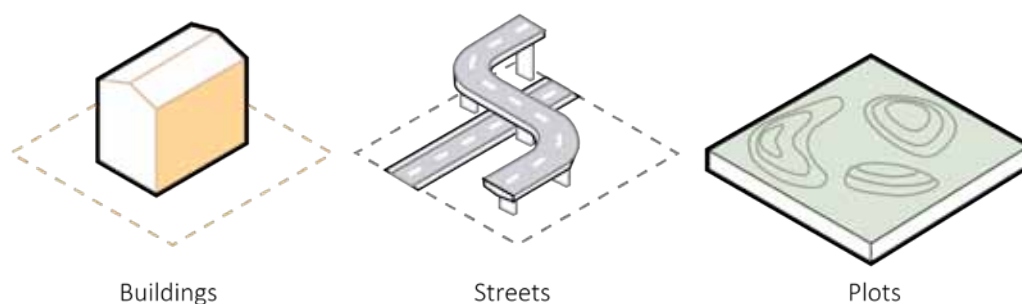


Figure 1. Illustration of main urban morphology elements. Source: illustration is created by Authors.

Recent studies found a relationship between those elements with depression. Chen et al. (2022) found that depression among the elderly is linked to environment characters like walkability, transportation, and types of greenness. Wang et al. (2020) have found the pa-

rameters of frontal area density (FAD), sky view factor (SVF), ground coverage ratio (GCR), and street coverage ratio (SCR) cause the suicide rate in Hong Kong case. Wei et al. (2016) found that sky view factor (SVF), floor area ratio (FAR), site coverage ratio (SCR), and building stories have an effect on urban microclimate in search of comfortable living condition design. Another study also found that spatial characters can detect the perceived urban stress in public areas (Knöll et al., 2018).

Methods

This study employs a literature review methodology to conduct an in-depth exploration of the relationship between urban morphology characteristics and their impact on mental health, particularly in the context of challenging living conditions. Utilizing a qualitative approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of this intricate phenomenon prevalent in high-density urban environments.

The study's content is delimited to scientific domains, focusing on various types of peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, online articles, and books. The search strategy involved systematically employing keywords related to 'depression,' 'stress,' 'mental health,' 'urbanization,' 'urban morphology,' and other related elements of the built environment. Literature was extensively sought through multiple academic databases, prioritizing studies that specifically addressed the interaction between urban morphology characteristics and mental health outcomes.

Building upon Oliveira's (2016) theoretical framework of urban morphology, this study examines elements such as buildings, streets, and plots as the variable. These exact three elements also mentioned by other urban expert such as M. R. G. Conzen (2004) and Stojanovski and Östen (2018). However, the analysis is limited to elements directly linked to depression and mental health, as supported by existing literature. Among all of elements found in the existing literature, this review highlights significant factors. For instance, the building element focuses on aspects such as windows and sky view factors, while the street element considers their potential contribution to traffic congestion. Additionally, the plot element concentrates on green and blue spaces within the urban environment.

Building Element

Building Element: Windows

A window is an opening of the building that connects the interior room to the outside environment. A window gives a view, natural light, and air circulation to the room. In the modern age, literature and research see windows as natural cooling and natural lighting to cut energy consumption. The window has a significant role in the thermal control, release of heat and indoor pollution in a room (Najafi et al., 2019). But windows are more than that. Windows are also stress coping instruments. When the covid-19 forced people to stay and work from home, suddenly, people realize the importance of windows to reduce stress. Homes with a lack of windows or openings makes the alternate workplace incomplete.

Natural light from windows is important for human health. It gives roles that cannot be replaced by artificial light. Natural light can help people sleep better and have a better mood. Natural light can be a biological clock for the human body by helping the body to produce melatonin hormone (Jordan, 2018). In contrast, artificial light decreases the production of this hormone and disturbs the sleep cycle. The interruption can have an impact

on the ability to sleep, think clearly, and regulate blood pressure. Research finds that person sleeping in a room with windows has better health qualities than a person sleeping in a windowless room (Boucher, 2015). Those measured qualities consist of sleep quality, sleep efficiency, sleep disturbances, and daytime dysfunction, which also impact productivity.

People will always choose a room with windows rather than a windowless one to stay or work. Views from the window have proven can reduce stress. A study case in china shows different view has a different level of impact. The best satisfaction view outside the windows is a waterscape view that generates great satisfaction, followed by green plant view, and lastly buildings view (Liu et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to choose the best side for opening or placing the landscape that is visible from the building window. Optimizing the landscapes outside the window can help alleviate the anxiety of people and increase mental health (Liu et al., 2019). The anxiety is reduced greater on the natural landscape than on the human landscape.

As housing prices rose in the city center, windows and openings became rare in affordable housing. For example, Seoul is the capital city of South Korea and also a megacity with 9.77 million of population. House is very expensive in Seoul, forcing immigrants and low-income citizens to stay in low-cost house. One type of the low-cost housing is a semi-basement apartment (*banjiha*). *Banjiha's* floor level is lower than the street, while half of the wall above the street. It has only one side of the façade for windows and openings facing the street. Originally, *Banjiha* was buried two-thirds underground (see Figure 2). However, due to health considerations, in 1980, the newly built *Banjiha* was only half buried (see Figure 2). Nevertheless, a portion of *Banjiha*, one-third above ground, still exist.

The lifestyle of Koreans living in a *Banjiha* was portrayed in detail in the movie *Parasite* (2019). That movie shows how a family struggle to be rich while living in a semi-apartment. The family has difficulty getting good phone signals. Rich people describe them as having the same basement smell, which is characteristic of dirty and poor. In the movie also show how the semi-basement are vulnerable to the flood due to the high rainfall and underground level. In real life, the flood had happened several times and caused great damage to the *banjih*as, and some residents died during the disaster. *Banjih*as and the community of high-stress levels in Seoul is the combination of a depressing living conditions. The window in *banjiha* barely can catch natural light. With the half elevation under the street, it is almost impossible to get a view and totally impossible to aim the view at the city landscape.

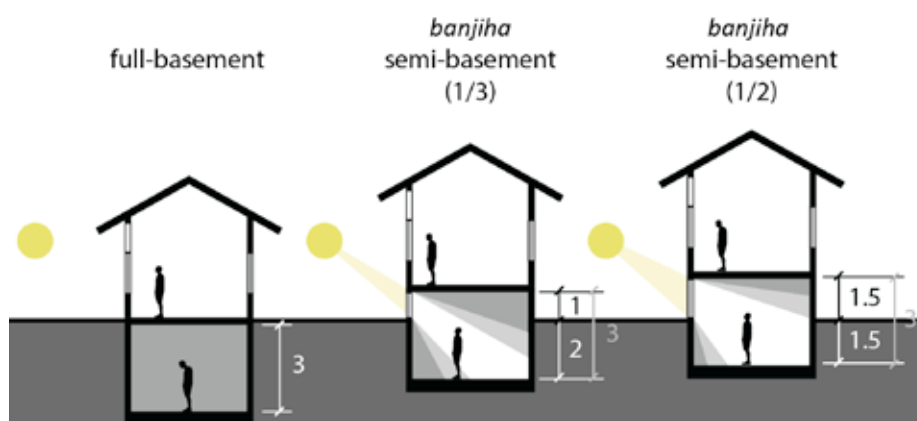


Figure 2. Illustration showing three type different type basement including full-basement and *Banjiha* (semi-basement apartment). Source: illustration is created by Authors.

Buildings Element: Sky View Factors

The sky view factor (SVF) is a fraction of the visible sky from the ground or outdoor view to the sky (Dirksen et al., 2019) (see Figure 4). High SVF means the sky is highly visible from the ground and not covered by any buildings. The equation to measure SVF is cos of arc tan of building height (H) after it is divided by half of the width between buildings (W) (see equation in Figure 3). This equation means that SVF is smaller when the building is taller and SVF is bigger when the space between buildings is wider. This fraction is first introduced as a measurement to count the fish eye lens on the digital camera (Khartwell, 2017). Nowadays, SVF is commonly used in urban studies to measure urban heat islands (UHI). SVF also reflects the plot ratio of an area. High SVF reflects low plot ratios and vice versa.

$$SVF = \cos\left(\arctan\left(\frac{H}{0.5W}\right)\right)$$

Figure 3. Equation of The Formula of Sky View Factor.

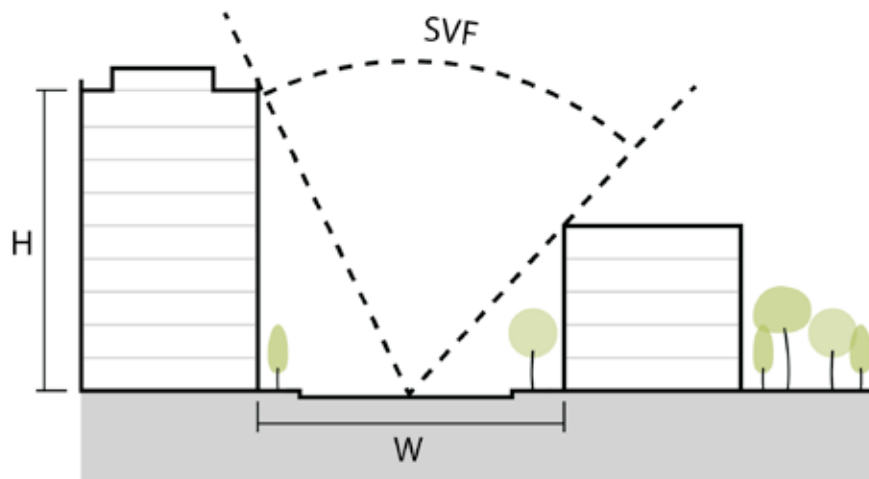


Figure 4. Sky view factor Illustration. Source: illustration is created by Authors.

The sky is a space of plenty of natural phenomena that is always characterized as beautiful. The clear sky in the day gives a peaceful and calm feeling through the azure color. A starry sky and a yellow moon at night can relieve stress (Brock, 1988). While cloud in the sky, just like the beautification of flying white cotton that usually appears in our device's wallpaper. Since ancient times, people have developed many activities of visualizing the sky, namely: stargazing, cloud watching, sunset or sunrise hunting, etc. People can see meteor showers, comet crossings, auroras, and solar eclipses on special occasions and locations.

The sky is a free feature that anyone can enjoy as long there is nothing blocking the view. It has been a natural coping mechanism since ancient times. But what happens when the city cannot provide a sky view? Several Hollywood movies had helped put a picture of how it would look like a city without the sky. The fictional city called Gotham city is a city with many high rises and a small gap between buildings, providing a little sunlight direct sunlight on the ground. Many movies with futuristic cyberpunk themes have pictured the future city with a lot of skyscrapers and some kind of bridge structure covering the upper layer, almost leaving no sky to see from the ground. For examples: the Bay City (fictional city) in the TV series *Altered Carbon*; the futuristic Los Angeles in the movie of *Blade Run-*

ner 2019; and New Port City in the live-action movie of *Ghost in the Shell*. All of these three movies often use gloomy color set to picture the environment on the city as full of crime, low life expectancy, and social degradation.

Meanwhile, the city of low sky view factor also appears in real life. The increasing population and urbanization have led several cities to be cramped space with a housing problem. Urban village in Shenzhen, China, is very popular due to the gentrification turning a lot of rural plots into a dense housing areas. This urban village took international attention due to the eyesore environmental condition (Wang, 2013). Because the distance between buildings is very tight, it leaves only one crack of space to see the sky (see Figure 5). They call it “one-line sky” (一线天 - yi xian tian).



Figure 5. The low Sky View Factor (SVF) in Shenzhen Urban Village. Source: Illustration is created by Authors, the aerial view photo from “Urban Mountains,” (2018) photographer Li Zhenxing, and the eye view photo from Zhang (2019) photographer Phoebe Zhang.

On another discussion, high SVF might cause problems because it brings direct sun radiation that heats up the city. The heat can make people feel uncomfortable and depressed. Urban heat island (UHI) is the phenomenon of rising temperature as the location is closer to the city center because of the dense population and high establishment of the built environment. Some studies found that SVF has a positive relation to UHI. High SVF can contribute to high UHI. However, when the SVF was extremely low, it created major implications for the health condition because it received higher terrestrial radiation and no heat mitigation space. In conclusion, providing high SVF in the city is a good thing to make the city less depressing. Venhari, Tenpierik, and Taleghani (2019) suggest covering half of the sky with vegetation for effective urban heat mitigation. The discussion about how green space and vegetation in the city can reduce stress will be discussed in the next section (Green space).

Street Element and Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion is a common urban phenomenon that happens in all over the world. In our perception, traffic congestion is pictured as being stuck in the road of vehicles crowding, and creating delays in daily activities. By theory, the road has a physical capacity, a normal volume for standard commuting flow and speed. Traffic can be categorized as congested when the traffic volume is above the physical capacity (Rodrigue, 2020). The possibility of traffic congestion occurring in the city is high because of the high population and agglomerated economic activities (Sheffi, 1984). Cities as a magnet for more traffic have created sore travel.

Humans do not like being controlled. Feeling under control can raise anxiety and cause depression. Traffic congestion puts humans under the control of idly moving traffic. In Toronto, Canada, traffic congestion raises thrice anxiety rate, increases 50% of depression risk and 50% percent more likely to divorced (Kwame McKenzie, 2015). While in India, Samal et al. (2020) found that 81% percent of people suffered due to traffic congestion (see Figure 6). Because of traffic congestion, 20% percent of people has the difficulty of breathing, 18% has a headache, 16% get mental stress, 10% feel tiredness, 8% feel uncomfortable sounds, and many other symptoms (Samal et al., 2020).

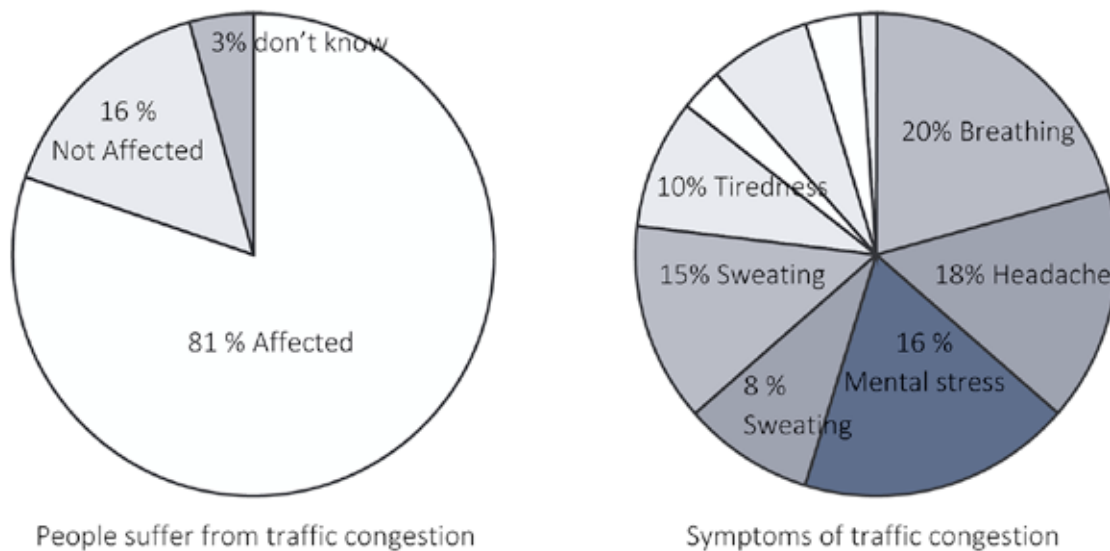


Figure 6. Diagram of the impact of traffic congestion in India. Source: Illustrated by Authors, Data from Samal et al. (2020).

The relationship between traffic congestion and stress has been carefully explained in the previous passage. But yet, the cause and solution seem vague. There is no way to live in the city without tolerating traffic jams. The title of this section seems to justify and blame the traffic jam on the morphology of the street network. The shape of the street network does have an impact on traffic congestion, but there are many other factors causing the traffic jam. Traffic jams can be reduced by providing more connectivity. Many studies suggest grid patterns like cities in America as the best street connectivity. The grid creates 90 degrees turns dan rectangular land parcels. It helps people in terms of wayfinding because they are

familiar with 4-direction orientations like in the compass (Turner, 2007). Grid pattern gives more alternative routes. It can change travel decisions and divert traffic to the road with lower volume.

Providing more connectivity, and constructing new streets, only can solve the traffic jam as the short-term solution. Sooner or later, people will be encouraged to use private vehicles, create more traffic volume and then bring back the traffic congestion. Traffic congestion cannot be solved by only fixing the road network. Encouraged by it, this study explores more the aspect of urban form.

Congestion can be easily created by uncontrolled urban form growth. When the land price in the city center and nearby is high, people will build a house in the outskirt areas, leaving the area adjacent to the city center empty. This is called leapfrog development, where the citizen jumps to the cheaper land for housing development (Corner, Ongee, and Dewan, 2014). It can greatly expand the size of the city area and create more demand for long-distance transport. Related to leapfrog development, suburbanization creates urban sprawl creating a new center settlement that depends on the city central for amenities, infrastructure, and economic activities (Abeyrathna, 2015). A research has been conducted by Mohd Noor and colleagues (2018) measuring the urban sprawl within Kuala Lumpur city, as result it found out a lot of sprawl was initiated by leapfrog urban sprawl (see Figure 7). Urban sprawl gives additional traffic volume to the city center. To solve both issue, polycentric development is the development of creating a new center settlement that has basic amenities and mixed-land use to reduce the travel to the city center. Polycentric development also can help absorb the overpopulation in the city center.

Besides leapfrog development, another scenario of urban form growth involves the 'extension' of built-up areas (see Figure 7). Since longer distances contribute to increased traffic, there is a suggestion to create compact spaces and densify areas or 'extending' the current built up area (Aras, 2022). However, densification can lead to overpopulation, causing traffic volumes to exceed the streets' physical capacity and resulting in traffic congestion within the inner-city network. This situation has occurred in Jakarta, where citizens from the entire archipelago predominantly favor one central city. Jakarta has a concentrated population that continues to expand outward from this nucleus (Abidin et al., 2009). The city's streets are primarily occupied by private motorcycles and cars, utilizing all modes of transportation, including the railway and bus systems, alongside an odd and even plate number regulation. Traffic congestion arises due to overcapacity. Transit-oriented development offers a solution by encouraging a shift from private vehicles to public transportation. This approach changes people's habits from owning cars to paying for travel. Moreover, transit-oriented development facilitates connectivity to various city nodes through mass transit systems and very effective for city with urban sprawl case (Liu et al. 2022). In Jakarta's case, prioritizing mass transportation and establishing new city nodes are crucial to distribute the population. This emphasis on public transportation has been a governmental focus over the last decade.

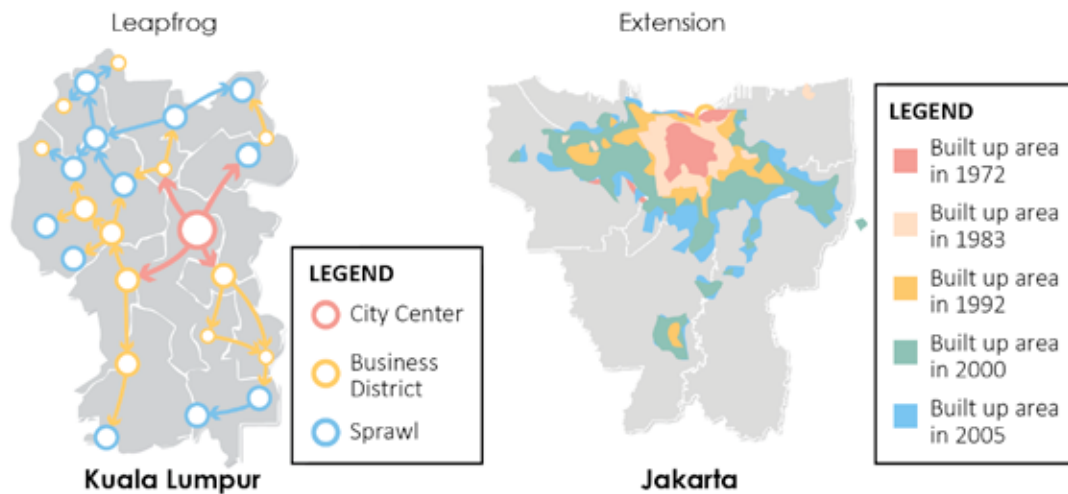


Figure 7. Two types of urban growth, leapfrog development example in Kuala Lumpur and built area extension example in Jakarta. Source: The illustration is created by the Authors, the data for leapfrog development in Kuala Lumpur is retrieved from Mohd Noor et al. (2018) and data for extension development in Jakarta is retrieved from Abidin et al. (2009).

Plot Element in Natural Context

In this section, we explore the relationship between nature and health in urban settings. Several previous studies have identified a connection between natural elements and depression. Dijkstra, Pieterse, and Pruyn (2008) measure patients' stress levels to assess the impact of natural elements in the built environment and found a significant reduction in stress levels due to the presence of natural elements. They concluded that natural elements can enhance the attractiveness of a space, leading to stress reduction. In comparison to man-made structures in urban settings, Ulrich et al. (1991) discovered that natural elements are more effective in helping patients recover from stress. Grinde and Patil (2009) found that incorporating natural elements into urban spaces can promote positive cognition and emotions, improve well-being, and reduce stress levels. It can be inferred that humans are genetically predisposed to seek out natural elements; an environment devoid of plants can evoke feelings of unease. Hunter, Gillespie, and Chen (2019) conducted a study using saliva biomarkers and found that citizens with access to urban parks for outdoor activities experience lower stress levels than those without such access. These health and medical research findings underscore the significance of natural elements in urban settings.

Within urban infrastructure, natural elements are categorized as soft spaces, comprising green spaces and blue spaces (Gledhill and James, 2008). Green spaces encompass recreational parks, forest reserves, and open green areas predominantly featuring trees and vegetation as natural elements. On the other hand, blue spaces encompass water elements such as rivers, wetlands, beaches, and canals. A current global issue is the expansion of urban areas, which leads to competition for land within cities. This often results in citizens prioritizing housing and commercial areas at the expense of open green spaces or blue

spaces. For example, the United States lost 1.4 million hectares of open space due to urban expansion between 1990 and 2000 (McDonald, Forman, and Kareiva, 2010). Similarly, in Chittagong, high population density has made it challenging to provide open spaces (Jafrin and Beza, 2018). The following section delves into the utilization of green and blue spaces in urban settings to reduce stress, as well as strategies for cities with high population density.

Green Spaces

Green spaces in urban contexts encompass areas such as gardens, parks, playgrounds, residential greenery, and other spaces adorned with grass, trees, and shrubs (Jennings and Bamkole, 2019). A common strategy involves integrating green spaces into natural and mix natural-manmade areas within cities (Gledhill and James, 2008). Beyond the environmental advantages, green spaces contribute to mental and physical well-being by offering psychological relaxation and stress relief, while also fostering social cohesion (World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe, 2016). Urban green spaces not only facilitate positive social interactions that enhance psychology and well-being (Jennings and Bamkole, 2019), but well-designed public spaces can also encourage outdoor activities and subsequently promote social cohesion, as suggested by Gehl (2007). However, green spaces can hinder social cohesion due to concerns such as crime, inaccessibility, and physical conditions such as lack of maintenance (Clarke et al., 2023).

In response to the constraints posed by urbanization and the resulting scarcity of land, many cities have experienced a reduction in green space. Hong Kong, for instance, suffers from a shortage of open spaces due to its densely populated living environment (Thilakarathne, 2019). The World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 9 m² of green space per person as the ideal standard for cities, promoting compact city design and planning to enhance community health and well-being (Russo and Cirella, 2018). This standard underscores the need for balanced and sustainable planning in the future development of public green spaces (Almohamad and Knaack, 2018).

However, achieving this standard is often impossible for overpopulated cities. For example, in Chittagong, the existing cumulative open space is a mere 0.18 square meters per person (Jafrin and Beza, 2018). In such cases, the World Health Organization suggests considering factors such as availability, accessibility, quality, and security of public green spaces as indicators of a healthy city when the minimum area standard cannot be met (Jafrin and Beza, 2018). Wen, Kenworthy, and Marinova (2020) propose that streets can be repurposed as green open spaces in densely populated urban areas with limited space, necessitating design strategies that incorporate green elements into streetscape design. This is actually a great idea since the road transport infrastructure usually take 10 percent to 25 percent of the land in the city.

The biophilic design approach offers a valuable recommendation for greening compact cities for example cities in Singapore. The concept of a biophilic city involves designing and planning cities to embrace nature extensively, enabling deep connections between urban residents and the natural world (Milliken et al., 2023). The core of this concept lies in biophilia, the idea that humans possess a natural tendency to establish connections with nature, encompassing plants and living entities (Grinde and Patil, 2009). The current

research focus on biophilic cities positions them as strategies for resilient and sustainable urban development, however there are more to look at on the benefits for mental and physical health.

Blue Spaces

Urban blue space encompasses all natural and man-made water surfaces within urban environments, such as seas, beaches, rivers, lakes, canals, ponds, and water fountains (Gledhill and James, 2008). The fact that over half of the global population lives within 3 km of water bodies - rivers, lakes, and seas - (Kummu et al., 2011) underscores the significance of blue spaces and their potential for future urban development. However, water sources can pose dangers, serving as drowning hazards and disease vectors. Often, they suffer from inadequate maintenance, rendering them unattractive and unsanitary. Moreover, rivers have a dual nature; they offer aesthetic charm but also harbor risks such as flooding and inundation. Despite these challenges, human communities persist in residing near water bodies, driven not only by survival needs but also by the river's aesthetic appeal.

The highlighted facts prompt a question: Is the appeal of blue spaces due to their mental health benefits or simply for practical reasons? A study by Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid revealed people's preference for a green environment alongside a river or lake, emphasizing the attraction of water bodies. A recent study by Poulsen et al. (2022) on the benefits of visiting blue spaces found that the frequency of visits correlates with reduced perceived stress rather than directly impacting mental health. Developing accessible blue spaces may provide restorative benefits, as water bodies hold significant potential for relaxation and social activities (Rybka and Mazur, 2018), eliciting positive emotions in humans. A comprehensive review focusing on blue spaces and mental health consistently demonstrates a positive correlation between increased exposure to outdoor blue spaces and enhanced mental well-being (White et al., 2020).

Blue spaces play a crucial role in establishing sustainable urban environments that prioritize human health, particularly focusing on psychosocial well-being (Britton et al., 2020). Amid challenges posed by expanding urban populations, blue spaces offer potential solutions to public health concerns. Worldwide regulations increasingly protect water bodies from development, emphasizing their significance. Overcoming challenges associated with construction on water bodies positions them as an ideal choice for preserving open spaces amidst urban expansion. The role of blue spaces in promoting mental well-being, especially in densely populated urban areas characterized by stress due to compact living conditions and limited open spaces, is noteworthy. As cities grapple with scarce land for traditional open spaces, embracing blue spaces emerges as a promising strategy to address the psychological well-being of citizens while maximizing available resources

Conclusion

"More is sore" is a statement to depict how bad the living condition of overcrowded environments. All urban theorists agree that the crowd is not the culprit. Urbanization is not a crime for decreasing the life quality in the city. However, it is the bad planning and bad design that has missed the density sweet spot. The study cases show that the depressing living condition is created by collective greed to maximize land utilization. In Shenzhen, China, they maximize the plot ratio leaving a small gap between buildings. In Seoul, South

Korea, they maximize the whole building floor use for low-cost apartments. While in Jakarta, people compete to have their own rights on the street.

Building, street, and plot are the three elements in urban design and planning to create a density sweet spot. Through the element of building, having natural light, a view from indoors to outside, and a view from land to the sky are important to reduce stress. In comparison, the street element is a complex matter that needs careful planning, not just the shape but also the activity and the demand. However, in simple words, the grid shape creates better connectivity. TOD and polycentric development are highly recommended to reduce traffic congestion.

On the scope of the plot, natural context is vital to generate positive emotions. Green and blue spaces such as urban recreation parks, street plantings and water features are the element that commonly been used in any development to bring nature into the urban space. Not only do they appeal to our sense of fascination and need for relaxation, but they also provide us with places for social cohesion, to get together with friends and meet our neighbour. It turns out that several studies have shown that green and blue spaces play an important role in addition to having a positive effect on our physical and mental health. There are plenty strategies to maximize the design of open space in compact cities such as green space on streetscape, biophilic cities concept, and water bodies as open spaces.

The research has identified a limitation concerning the exploration of depression within densely populated urban areas. This study primarily focuses on phenomena and strategies associated with cities experiencing high population densities, even reaching superdensification. It is imperative to acknowledge that future endeavors should concentrate on innovation and novel approaches aimed at enhancing the comfort and well-being within highly densified cities. Presently, research efforts and practical applications predominantly emphasize the creation of new developments and the integration of 'greenfield' concepts. However, the pressing global crisis urges a shift away from exploiting natural resources, presenting a significant opportunity for concentrated research on 'brownfield' areas, especially within highly densified regions. The lack of focus on these areas presents a gap in current research and practice, warranting attention to revitalize and improve the living conditions within these densely populated zones.

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Revenge Concept as Manifested in Drawings

and Narratives of Ultra-orthodox vs. Secular Israeli Jews

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Abstract

The current study investigates the revenge concept of ultra-orthodox and secular Israeli Jews, manifesting in drawings and narratives. The convenient sample consisted of thirty-three participants aged 23-61 (12 ultra-orthodox and 21 seculars). This mix-methodology study included the qualitative part, which are two sets of drawings and narratives – “draw an unjust event you experienced” and “draw what you would prefer to happen to the person who unjustly treated you;” and the quantitative part included a self-report questionnaire of the following measures: demographics, history of traumatic events, and feelings of injustice. Comparison between the two groups revealed no differences in the drawings and narratives, however, Orthodox Jews reported higher exposure to sexual abuse. The sexual abuse group showed a significant tendency to include words and physical touch between the victim and the perpetrator in the first drawing. A level of narrative organization was low in those with a history of sexual abuse.

Keywords: *Revenge, Drawings, Self-figure Drawings, Narratives, Ultra-orthodox, Secular, Israelis*

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Introduction

Revenge is conceptualized as motivated retaliation after perceived harm to one's well-being (Elshout et al., 2017). According to the biological model suggested by McCullough et al. (2013), revenge is the evolutionary response to human survival and a deterrence mechanism to prevent potential enemies from harming again. Thus, revenge is a widespread response among people who have a natural aversion to aggression and confrontation (Gintis, 2013).

Historical and cultural perspectives indicate that two lines of thought concerning revenge exist. The first is the Bible, which instructs (Exodus 21:23) that an offender should be punished: "Give life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." The second (2,000 years later and based on Christianity) is that of Martin Luther King, who said: "The old law of 'an eye for an eye' leaves everybody blind." These two perspectives often coexist within a society encompassing groups that differ in their levels of religiousness and have different ideologies even though they have the same nationality, in this case, Judaism (Carlsmith et al., 2008).

Gelfand et al. (2012) found that collectivists tend to avenge the shame of others with the same identity more than individualists because collectivists consider such shame to be an injury to themselves. As a result, "revenge is more contagious in collectivist cultures." People's preference for revenge was also illustrated by Shteynberg et al. (2009), who found that different events trigger the revenge process differently in Western and Eastern cultures. The authors found that American students are insulted when their rights are violated, whereas Korean students might feel more insulted when their sense of duty and obligation are threatened. That distinction might contribute to intercultural conflicts when one side seeks vengeance for a slight and the other does not regard it as an offense. For example, an American might be more likely to seek revenge when someone silences them or prevents them from expressing their right to voice an opinion. In contrast, public criticism might humiliate a Korean and is more likely to trigger revenge feelings.

Vos (2003) divided the desire for revenge into four elements: humiliation (damage to self-esteem), the belief that the damage to self-esteem is incorrect, the drive to restore equality of power, and the desire to cause harm, including the risk of excessiveness and the desire to elevate oneself morally above the other.

As a healthy approach to revenge may restore the psychological balance that has previously been shaken (Grobbink et al., 2015), the current study aimed to examine how revenge is perceived in two Jewish population groups in Israel, ultra-orthodox and secular, as reflected in two sets of drawings and narratives. The first drawing was of an unjust event inflicted by another person on the drawer; the second was what the drawer would like to happen (directly or indirectly) to the person who had treated them unjustly. More specifically, the study attempted to investigate the differences between these groups' preferences concerning the types of unjust events and their responses to the offenders.

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Background

Revenge is defined as an act in response to a perceived wrongdoing by another person that is intended to inflict damage, injury, or discomfort, and it can be executed actively or passively (such as by withholding support) (Frey et al., 2015). There is a consensus among researchers that the desire for retribution following the experience of being unjustly treated is a natural developmental response (DeBono & Muraven, 2014) and is embedded within the culture (Goldner et al., 2019). In the Western world, for example, as vengeance is perceived as unacceptable, individuals can only fantasize about revenge but must refrain from taking action (Haen & Weber, 2009). Revenge fantasies often serve to calm the negative feelings of frustration, humiliation, and insult, settling the score between the victim's suffering and the perpetrator's harmful deeds, thus enabling "as if" closure, comfort, and a pseudo-power over the perpetrator (Lillie & Strelan, 2016). Fiske and Rai (2014) suggest that in many cases, people see vengeance as justifiable and a social and moral obligation.

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a universal issue with long-term detrimental effects on individuals. It is defined as any behavior of sexual intent or content to the child by an adult or another child that is older than her or him. CSA may range from fondling to rape, non-contact abuse, e.g., voyeurism, exhibitionism or unwanted sexual comments, sexual exploitation, or any other sexually assaulted form (Krug et al., 2002). The victims of CSA may seek revenge on their perpetrators to regain their sense of justice, self-esteem, and equality of power, and release their desire to cause harm. (Vos, 2003).

Unjust Events, Revenge and Culture

As mentioned above, people seek revenge to redress hurt feelings brought about by perceived unfairness (Osgood, 2017). This desire for revenge is considered a universal cross-cultural personal response (McClelland, 2010) based on a subjective sense of justice. However, the desire for revenge depends on the severity of the transgression toward the victim (Morrisette, 2012), the emotional ties between the victim and perpetrator (Watson et al., 2016), and the extent to which people feel they have been morally wronged (Gintis, 2013). Therefore, the unjust events that are likely to elicit the desire for revenge are often embedded within the culture. For example, research on consumer revenge against businesses has identified that in Western, individualistic cultures, violations of procedural justice typically trigger revenge (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003), whereas, in collectivistic cultures, the desire for revenge will be heightened when there is disrespect behavior in interactional relationships or individuals perceive their group as threatened, degraded, or endangered by another group (Beck, 2002).

Historical, cross-cultural analyses have reported that vengeful disputes or individual acts of vengeance in traditional societies (Ericksen & Horton, 1992) are undertaken by people to feel good and regain self-respect rather than to release negative feelings and aggression (Chester & DeWall, 2017). Vengeance in traditional societies is often a necessary action to maintain the group status (McCullough et al., 2013; Nowak et al., 2016). For example, Chagnon (2012) indicated that most adult men among the Yanomamo indigenous people of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil committed at least one act of collective blood revenge. Honor-based revenge is another example of revenge taken in collective Eastern societies due to the intense cultural norms of maintaining one's reputation after being slighted (Cross et al., 2014).

Cultural norms also impact what should be considered as an insult that deserves revenge. Cross-cultural studies have shown that verbal insults and threats (Brown, 2016) are more likely to instigate vengeance in honor cultures than in non-honor cultures. In Western societies, the following motives were found to play an important role in whether vengeance was perceived as worthwhile: people's forecasts of how much they would enjoy revenge and whether it would repair their negative mood and restore their reputation (Chester & DeWall, 2017). It can be summarized that people see vengeance as justifiable, and even as a social and moral obligation, according to their cultural and moral norms (Fiske & Rai, 2014).

The Desire for Revenge as Expressed in Drawings and Narratives

Drawing is an artistic tool used by clinicians to evaluate an individual's experience (Malchiodi, 2012). Through drawing, people can express their feelings and thoughts towards themselves, their environment, and their inner world (Lev Wiesel et al., 2020). Drawing enables people to express hidden, and often unacceptable, material and feelings of distress in an acceptable manner and thus communicate their feelings and ideas to others (Cobia & Brazelton, 1994; Peterson & Hardin, 1997). Additionally, there has been increasing recognition of narrative and metaphor's role in social practice (Connelly & McClan-dinin, 1990; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000). There is a consensus among therapists that autobiographic memory of traumatic events leads to a fragmented narrative of the traumatic memories (Midgley, 2002). Thus, reconstructing autobiographic memory with a consistent, detailed, narrative is necessary for healing (Leiblich et al., 1998). Drawing and narrating a hurtful experience or traumatic event have been found to be useful tools that enable people to reflect on and express their emotions and thoughts and share them with others (Lev-Wiesel & Liraz, 2007). Concerning the revenge issue, a recent study focusing on drawings and narratives of adolescent victims of child sexual abuse showed that the use of these tools allowed the participants to express feelings of aloneness and loneliness within their families and their wish for retribution against the perpetrators by having them suffer and experience the same outcomes (Lev-Wiesel et al., 2022).

In sum, the above review indicates that (1) the desire for revenge and fantasy about revenge are natural responses of people who have been treated unjustly and wrongly (Lev-Wiesel et al., 2022); (2) revenge is embedded within the cultural norms and religious beliefs that determine which acts or events should be perceived as injustices that deserve a response (Goyal & Miller, 2023); and (3) human experiences can be expressed and reflected through drawings, which enrich people's narratives. Thus, this mixed-methods study aimed to broaden the understanding of the concept of revenge (events and responses) by comparing two Jewish groups with different levels of religiousness.

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

Following ethical approval from the Ethical Committee at the University of Haifa (146/19), 33 Israeli adults between the ages of 23 and 61 (mean = 30, standard deviation [SD] = 8) were recruited through convenience sampling. All participants signed a consent form. The sample was divided into two groups: orthodox (n = 12) vs. secular Jews (n = 21). There were 27 females (82%) and five males.

Figure 1 presents a comparison of the demographic information of the ultra-orthodox and secular Jews. No statistically significant demographic differences were found between the two groups. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) scale revealed that a higher proportion of ultra-orthodox Jews had been exposed to sexual abuse (50% vs. 14%, $p = 0.04$).

Variable	Secular N=21, N(%) / MED (IQR)	Orthodox /religious N=12, N(%) / MED (IQR)	P- value
Demographics			
Gender:			0.579
F	18 (85.7%)	9 (75.0%)	
M	3 (14.3%)	2 (16.7%)	
Family status:			0.703
Married	13 (61.9%)	9 (75.0%)	
Single	8 (38.1%)	3 (25.0%)	
Age	29.0 [26.8;32.2]	27.0 [25.0;33.0]	0.369
Living place:			0.107
City	13 (61.9%)	11 (91.7%)	
Village	8 (38.1%)	1 (8.33%)	
Education Level:			0.630
Academic	17 (81.0%)	11 (91.7%)	
High School	4 (19.0%)	1 (8.33%)	
Employment:			1.000
No	3 (14.3%)	1 (8.33%)	
Yes	18 (85.7%)	11 (91.7%)	

Figure 1. Comparison of demographics, drawings' indicators expression and trauma types scanning scales between ultra-orthodox Jews and non-orthodox Jews.

Measures

The mixed-methods approach consisted of two quantitative measures and a qualitative tool (two drawings). Participants filled in an online anonymous quantitative questionnaire consisting of the following measures: demographics (age, gender, family status, level of religiousness), the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), and the Injustice Experiences Questionnaire (IEQ).

The CTQ

The modified version of the CTQ short-form (Bernstein & Fink, 1998; Bernstein et al., 2003) was employed. The 28 items of the CTQ refer to lifelong abusive experiences and cover five types of maltreatment: sexual abuse, physical abuse, physical neglect, emotional abuse, and emotional neglect. Participants respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 = "never" to 4 = "all the time." The stability of the CTQ's five-factor structure, in general, and the differentiation of CPM and CPN, in particular, have been discussed in the literature (Grassi-Oliveira et al., 2014).

The IEQ

The IEQ is a 12-item measure assessing pain-related injustice perceptions (Sullivan et al., 2008) that are associated with unfairness, severity, and feelings of blame (e.g., “It all seems so unfair”; “My life will never be the same”). Participants respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 = “never” to 4 = “all the time.” The questionnaire has excellent internal and test-re-test reliabilities and construct validity for the association between the IEQ score and catastrophic thinking, fear of movement/re-injury, depression, and pain severity. The current study’s internal reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) was 0.86.

The Qualitative Tool

The qualitative element comprised two sets of drawings followed by narratives for each one. The first drawing was produced in response to the request to “draw an unjust event you have experienced” and the second to “draw what you would like to happen to the person who unjustly treated you.” Both drawings were followed by narratives. Participants were given two A4 (21 × 29.7 cm) sheets of white drawing paper and a pencil with no colors. They were then asked by social workers to draw the first and second drawings followed by a narrative for each.

The drawings were encoded using indicators regarding content and style. Content indicators regarding the unjust event included (1) type of violence (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, mixed, not specified) and whether the self is depicted in the drawing (yes/no); (2) whether the unjust event happened in the family (yes/no); (3) between whom it happened (parent–child, brothers, peers, parents, entire family, between an adult and child outside the family, others; terrors, crime, accident, no violence); (4) whether a violent scene is depicted in the drawing (yes/no); (5) whether the self is helpless in the drawing (yes/no/neutral); (6) whether there is an interaction with the aggressor (yes/no); (7) whether the drawing includes aggressive symbols, such as holding a weapon (yes/no); (8) whether the drawing includes injury symbols (physical injury, emotional injury, mixed, none); (9) the role of the self in the drawing (victim, aggressor, observer, both victim and aggressor roles, no specific role); and whether the drawings included words (yes/no).

Indicators regarding the drawing style were (1) drawing type (figurative/realistic, expressive/metaphoric, introspective, no drawing); (2) the size of the victim (tiny, exaggerated, normative); (3) the size of the aggressor (tiny, exaggerated, normative); (4) whether the drawing is dissociative (i.e., includes sweet objects, has words instead of a drawing, the drawing is not related to the instruction) (yes/no); and (5) levels of vitality (low, mid, high).

Drawings were coded by two expert therapists and researchers in the field of social work and art-based assessment of trauma. Inter-raters’ reliability was 0.82 (see Appendix 1 – pg 310, for pictorial feature distribution).

Narratives

The narratives were encoded using the following indicators: (1) narrative organization (restricted, flooded, organized); (2) whether the narrative is dissociative (i.e., the narrative does not concentrate on the unjust event or the revenge fantasy); (3) central theme in the nar-

rative, such as the drawer's fear/anxiety/lack of control; the drawer's sadness/loneliness/humiliation/guilt; the drawer's loneliness and helplessness; no emotion; and (4) resolution/solution of the narrative (positive, negative, neutral) and accordance between the narrative and the drawing (yes/no). Inter-raters' reliability of narratives was 0.85 (see Appendix 1 – pg 310, for the narrative categories).

The qualitative analysis used in this study was based on the principles of a multimodal method (for drawings and narratives) and a relational mapping interview, which was developed by Boden et al. (2019) to understand the relational context of distress and disruption. The relational context here is the experience of the unjust event as perceived by young adults and the revenge fantasy. Incorporating drawings into interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) provides a vehicle for participants to explore better and communicate their experiences. A correlational test was conducted between the narratives and drawing themes, the type of event experienced, its severity expressed by the revenge fantasy, and the quantitative measures' scores.

Results

Statistical Analysis

Continuous variables were reported by medians and interquartile range (IQR) since they do not follow a normal distribution. Categorical variables were reported by frequencies and proportions. Univariate analysis was performed using the Chi-square or Fisher's exact test or a two-sample Wilcoxon test to compare drawing indicator expressions between religious groups (ultra-orthodox vs. secular Jews). The severity of trauma types (emotional, physical, sexual, and neglect) was determined by pre-defined cutoffs of the CTQ subscales. Analysis was performed by SAS 9.4 for Windows. A P value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

A comparison of the drawings' indicators of expressions and trauma types between ultra-orthodox and secular Jews. No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups concerning drawing expressions. The CTQ scale revealed that a higher proportion of ultra-orthodox Jews had been exposed to sexual abuse (50% vs. 14%, $p = 0.04$). (See Appendix 1 – pg 310: Comparison of drawing's indicators expression and trauma types scanning scales between ultra-orthodox Jews and non-orthodox Jews).

Comparison of Drawing Indicators of Expression Between Those Who Were and Were Not Found to be at High Risk of Sexual Abuse According to the CTQ Scale

A statistically significant difference was found in drawing 1 Physical touch between victim and perpetrator, sexual abuse positive tendency to express touch (44% vs. 8%, $p=0.034$). Drawing 2 Narrative organization was less coherent in sexual abuse positive (78% vs. 33%, $p=0.047$). Borderline significance was found in drawing 1 Words included; sexual abuse positives included fewer words (11% vs. 50%, $p=0.056$). No other significant differences were found. (See Appendix 2 – pg 314: Comparison of drawing indicators expression between those who were found to be high at risk of sexual abuse to those who were not, according to the CTQ scale).

Discussion

The study's main objective was to study the concept of revenge among Israeli Jews with different levels of religiousness as manifested in drawings and narratives. The findings showed that there were no differences between the ultra-orthodox and secular groups. However, exposure to child sexual abuse significantly contributed to participants' tendency to include words in the first drawing (unjust event) and to the level of touch between the victim and perpetrator. Concerning the narrative, participants who had experienced sexual abuse tended to provide a shorter and less coherent (dissociative) narrative for the second drawing (revenge fantasy).

Surprisingly, despite their different levels of religiousness, there were non-significant differences between the groups. This could be due to that Israeli Jews share similar perceptions of justice and revenge above and beyond their social ties to either a collective (ultra-orthodox) or individualistic (secular) group as Jackson et al. (2019) emphasized, revenge is a global phenomenon. The science of cultural evolution (Brewer et al., 2017) can be another explanation. Cultural evolution theories argue that people's ecological and social contexts influence their behavior. Some cultural evolutionists propose that this occurs because people's psychological processes interact with their unique environments. Previous studies focusing on cultural influences on revenge behaviors point to mixed findings. Some work suggests that revenge is more likely to occur in collectivist (Ericksen & Horton, 1992) than in individualist cultures. Günsoy et al. (2015) explained that in honor-religious cultures such as Turkey, there is a strong concern about other people's opinions, and insults threaten personal and family reputation more than in non-honor-religious cultures. When faced with honor threats, people from these cultures try to regain the respect of others by defending themselves publicly, often even aggressively (Gelfand et al., 1967). Other research, however, finds no cultural differences in revenge intentions between collectivist and individualist cultures (Baimel & Norenzayzn, 2017). However, such research has assessed culture at the level of self-construal (e.g., individualism/independence vs. collectivism/interdependence) rather than assessing whether individual differences, such as the history of abuse or the perception of the incident as abuse (Lusky-Weisrose, 2021). This points to the difference between participants who were sexually abused and those who were not (note that the ultra-orthodox group participants reported higher exposure to sexual abuse than the seculars).

Unsurprisingly, the participants who had been sexually abused added words within the "unjust event" drawing with a less coherent and shorter narrative than those who had not been sexually abused. People who had been sexually abused often feel that the social environment fails to understand them or even grasp their horrific traumatic memories (Jacobs-Kayam & Lev-Wiesel, 2019). Thus, they must use verbal and non-verbal language to ensure that others understand. However, interferences in coherent recalling often appear when they are required to provide a narrative (full verbal sentences) (Kildahl et al., 2020). This is consistent with previous findings (Lev-Wiesel et al., 2023) showing that CSA adolescent domestic violence survivors refrained from either including the perpetrator within the unjust event drawing or provided a shorter incoherent narrative in which the perpetrator was mentioned as a "he" rather than by mentioning his role (although all perpetrators were close relatives) (see images in Figures 2 – 4).

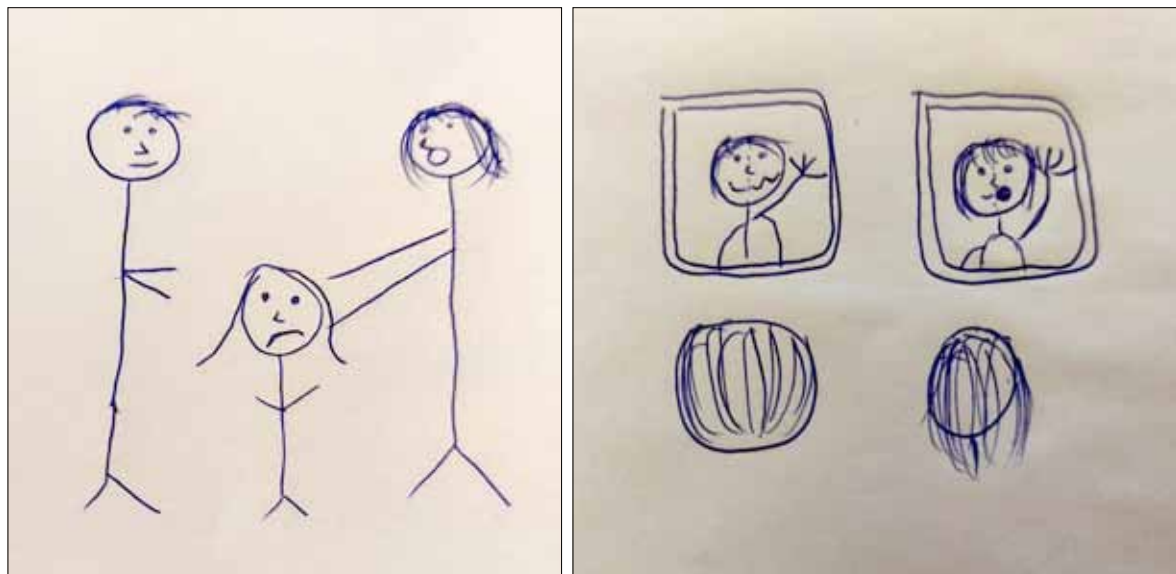


Figure 2. A female aged 30, secular, was sexually abused during childhood. **Narrative (Left image):** “Both my parents inflicted violence, and my father sexually abused me. Everyone around ignored it. You can see the physical violence in the drawing. I did not want to draw the sexual abuse.” **Narrative (Right image):** “I think the best outcome for my parents would be to look in the mirror and truly acknowledge who they are. It is something that imprisonment would not achieve, perhaps long therapeutic rehabilitation. They are not in a state of taking responsibility at present.”

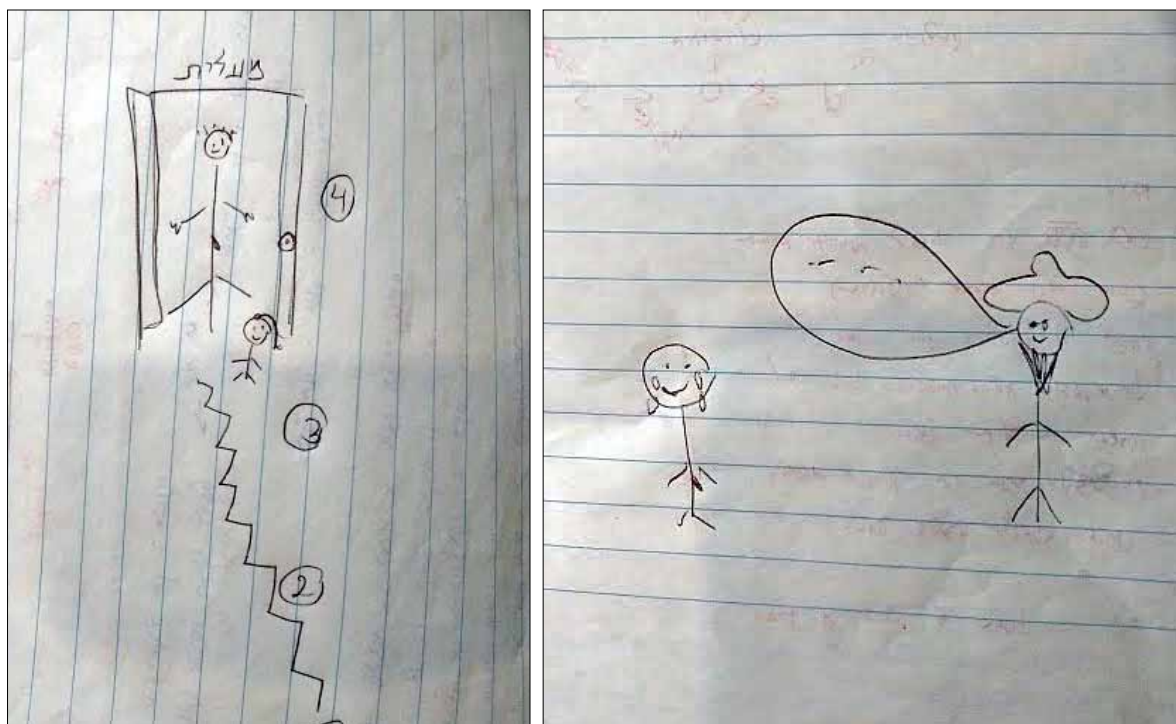


Figure 3. An Orthodox 32-year-old female survivor of CSA. **Narrative (Left image):** “When I was young, a man sexually assaulted me. Was on the fourth floor of the building. We lived on the third floor. I escaped.” **Narrative (Right image):** “The person will turn to the Rabbi, and he will explain to him the severity of his actions and what he should do to repent.”



Figure 4. A 32-year-old orthodox male with no history of CSA. **Narrative (Left image):** “I am a child. I did something which I did not think would make my father mad. He was angry, hit me on my ear, and was really hurting. I was surprised, did not understand why and how it happened. I was really scared. What scared me was the misunderstanding, the hurt, and the insult.” **Narrative (Right image):** “This time, I would like to have my father share with me his pain and allow me to share mine with him. It will ease the atmosphere; we have a kind of block and defense. But he learns how to take care of himself and to take responsibility for his actions and behaviors.”

This study has certain limitations. The sample was small and recruited through convenience sampling. Moreover, the main hypothesis (“the level of religiousness impacts the concept of revenge as manifested in drawings and narratives”) was not supported. Nonetheless, the study seems to be consistent with previous findings showing that the prevalence of sexual abuse among ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel is higher than among secular Jews. As shown by Finkelstein (2021), in ultra-orthodox local authorities, the number of cases of sexual abuse against children rose from 0.15 per thousand children in 2000 to 1.5 per thousand children in 2010 and gained to 3.7 per thousand children in 2019. In other Jewish local authorities, the number of such cases grew from 1.5 to 3 per thousand children between 2000 and 2010 and has since dropped to 2.6. In Arab local authorities, the corresponding figure has fallen from 1.6 to 1.1 per thousand children since 2000. Previous studies have indicated that many young adults who leave the religion have experienced sexual abuse (Kosarkova et al., 2020) yet refrained from disclosure. Thus, the current study’s findings concerning the association between religiousness, a history of sexual abuse, and the difficulty of directly relating to the perpetrator and allowing oneself even to fantasize about an act of revenge should alert practitioners (educators, social workers, and religious leaders) to the possible association between experiencing child sexual abuse and becoming secular among ultra-religious youth as an acting-out behavior, vengeance, or a mere survival act.

Conclusion

Although unified by religious fundamentalism, it should be noted that the spectrum of orthodoxy in Israel ranges from the secular to the ultra-orthodox: secular Jewish, traditional Jewish, modern orthodox Jewish, and ultra-orthodox Jewish. The ultra-orthodox Jews are divided into many sects and factions according to the degree of their devoutness, their leaders, and their rules. To further inquire into the concept of revenge among Israeli Jews, it is necessary to test the findings on larger and more diverse religious populations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Comparison of drawing’s indicators expression and trauma types scanning scales between ultra-orthodox Jews and non-orthodox Jews.

Variable	Secular N=21, N(%) / MED (IQR)	Orthodox /religious N=12, N(%) / MED (IQR)	P- value
Drawing 1 Unjust event			
Maltreatment abuse:			0.274
No	6 (28.6%)	6 (50.0%)	
Yes	15 (71.4%)	6 (50.0%)	
Social interaction:			0.302
No	7 (33.3%)	7 (58.3%)	
Yes	14 (66.7%)	5 (41.7%)	
Between:			0.688
Adult (not parent)-child	7 (33.3%)	5 (41.7%)	
Friends	9 (42.9%)	3 (25.0%)	
No violence	3 (14.3%)	2 (16.7%)	
Parent-child	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	
Abuse type:			0.116
Emotional	14 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	
Mixed	3 (14.3%)	2 (16.7%)	
Non specific	3 (14.3%)	4 (33.3%)	
Physically	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Sexually	0 (0.00%)	2 (16.7%)	
Self included:			0.686
No	4 (19.0%)	3 (25.0%)	
Yes	17 (81.0%)	9 (75.0%)	
Drawer’s role:			0.255
Non-specific role	1 (4.76%)	3 (25.0%)	
Victim	17 (81.0%)	8 (66.7%)	
Drawing type:			0.643
Figurative	18 (85.7%)	9 (75.0%)	
Metaphoric/expressive	3 (14.3%)	3 (25.0%)	
Schematic:			0.665
No	11 (52.4%)	8 (66.7%)	
Yes	10 (47.6%)	4 (33.3%)	
Aggressive symbols:			0.107
No	13 (61.9%)	11 (91.7%)	
Yes	8 (38.1%)	1 (8.33%)	
Words included:			0.719
No	12 (57.1%)	8 (66.7%)	
Yes	9 (42.9%)	4 (33.3%)	
Physical touch between victim:			1.000
No	17 (81.0%)	10 (83.3%)	
Yes	4 (19.0%)	2 (16.7%)	
Aggressor size:			0.549
Big/exaggerated	2 (9.52%)	2 (16.7%)	
Normal	11 (52.4%)	4 (33.3%)	
Tiny	1 (4.76%)	2 (16.7%)	
Victim size:			0.294
Big/exaggerated	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Normal	13 (61.9%)	4 (33.3%)	
Tiny	3 (14.3%)	4 (33.3%)	

Variable	Secular N=21, N(%) / MED (IQR)	Orthodox /religious N=12, N(%) / MED (IQR)	P- value
Drawing dissociation:			1.000
No	20 (95.2%)	12 (100%)	
Yes	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Narrative association to drawing:			0.364
No	0 (0.00%)	1 (8.33%)	
Yes	21 (100%)	11 (91.7%)	
Narrative dissociation:			0.610
No	19 (90.5%)	10 (83.3%)	
Yes	2 (9.52%)	2 (16.7%)	
Hurting symbols:			0.346
None	10 (47.6%)	7 (58.3%)	
Yes	3 (14.3%)	0 (0.00%)	
Yes emotional harm	8 (38.1%)	4 (33.3%)	
Yes physical harm	0 (0.00%)	1 (8.33%)	
Narrative organization:			0.093
Incoherent	13 (61.9%)	3 (25.0%)	
Short, dissociative	8 (38.1%)	9 (75.0%)	
Narrative's theme:			0.817
Fear/anxiety	9 (42.9%)	4 (33.3%)	
Lack of control	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Loneliness	11 (52.4%)	8 (66.7%)	
Human figures drawing1:			1.000
No	6 (28.6%)	4 (33.3%)	
Yes	15 (71.4%)	8 (66.7%)	
Page covering:			0.477
Full	10 (47.6%)	3 (25.0%)	
Half	5 (23.8%)	4 (33.3%)	
Minimal	6 (28.6%)	5 (41.7%)	
Missing body organs:			1.000
No	10 (47.6%)	6 (50.0%)	
Yes	11 (52.4%)	6 (50.0%)	
Family or stranger:			1.000
Family	3 (14.3%)	1 (8.33%)	
Stranger	17 (81.0%)	11 (91.7%)	
Drawing 2 Revenge fantasy			1.000
Maltreatment abuse:			
No	18 (85.7%)	11 (91.7%)	
Yes	3 (14.3%)	1 (8.33%)	
Social interaction:			0.065
No	15 (71.4%)	12 (100%)	
Yes	6 (28.6%)	0 (0.00%)	
Between:			0.614
Adult (not parent)-child	3 (14.3%)	3 (25.0%)	
Friends	3 (14.3%)	1 (8.33%)	
No violence	13 (61.9%)	5 (41.7%)	
Parent-child	1 (4.76%)	1 (8.33%)	
Abuse types:			0.113
Emotional	6 (28.6%)	0 (0.00%)	
Mixed	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	

Variable	Secular N=21, N(%) / MED (IQR)	Orthodox /religious N=12, N(%) / MED (IQR)	P- value
Non specific	11 (52.4%)	11 (91.7%)	
Self included:			0.798
No	15 (71.4%)	10 (83.3%)	
Yes	5 (23.8%)	2 (16.7%)	
Drawers' role:			0.628
Involved	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	
Non-specific role	5 (23.8%)	6 (50.0%)	
Observer	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Victim	2 (9.52%)	0 (0.00%)	
Drawing type:			0.471
Figurative	15 (71.4%)	7 (58.3%)	
Metaphoric/expressive	6 (28.6%)	5 (41.7%)	
Schematic:			1.000
No	10 (47.6%)	5 (41.7%)	
Yes	11 (52.4%)	7 (58.3%)	
Aggressive symbols:			0.523
No	19 (90.5%)	12 (100%)	
Yes	2 (9.52%)	0 (0.00%)	
Words included:			0.278
No	11 (52.4%)	9 (75.0%)	
Yes	10 (47.6%)	3 (25.0%)	
Physical touch between victim:			.
No	21 (100%)	12 (100%)	
Aggressor size:			0.070
Big/exaggerated	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	
Normal	9 (42.9%)	1 (8.33%)	
Tiny	2 (9.52%)	5 (41.7%)	
Victim size:			0.665
Big/exaggerated	2 (9.52%)	0 (0.00%)	
Normal	5 (23.8%)	2 (16.7%)	
Tiny	1 (4.76%)	2 (16.7%)	
Drawing dissociation:			1.000
No	18 (85.7%)	10 (83.3%)	
Yes	3 (14.3%)	2 (16.7%)	
Narrative according to drawing:			0.610
No	2 (9.52%)	2 (16.7%)	
Yes	19 (90.5%)	10 (83.3%)	
Narrative dissociation:			1.000
No	13 (61.9%)	7 (58.3%)	
Yes	8 (38.1%)	5 (41.7%)	
Hurting symbols:			0.862
None	16 (76.2%)	9 (75.0%)	
Yes both	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Yes emotional harm	3 (14.3%)	3 (25.0%)	
Yes physical harm	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Narrative organization:			0.488
Coherent	11 (52.4%)	4 (33.3%)	
Short	10 (47.6%)	8 (66.7%)	
Narrative theme:			0.378

Variable	Secular N=21, N(%) / MED (IQR)	Orthodox /religious N=12, N(%) / MED (IQR)	P- value
Fear/anxiety	3 (14.3%)	0 (0.00%)	
Lack of control	1 (4.76%)	1 (8.33%)	
Loneliness	2 (9.52%)	3 (25.0%)	
Human figures:			0.716
No	7 (33.3%)	5 (41.7%)	
Yes	14 (66.7%)	7 (58.3%)	
Page covering:			0.593
Full	7 (33.3%)	4 (33.3%)	
Half	10 (47.6%)	4 (33.3%)	
Minimal	4 (19.0%)	4 (33.3%)	
Missing body organs:			0.093
No	8 (38.1%)	9 (75.0%)	
Yes	13 (61.9%)	3 (25.0%)	
Forgiveness:			1.000
No	20 (95.2%)	12 (100%)	
Yes	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	
Punishment:			0.471
No	15 (71.4%)	7 (58.3%)	
Yes	6 (28.6%)	5 (41.7%)	
Scales			
Blame Unfairness	8.00 [6.00;10.2]	8.00 [6.00;9.75]	0.984
Severity Irreparability	11.0 [9.00;15.0]	12.0 [9.00;14.0]	0.984
IEQ total	20.0 [17.8;28.2]	20.0 [17.8;25.2]	0.969
Emotional abuse	7.00 [5.00;9.25]	6.50 [5.00;8.75]	0.620
Physical abuse	5.00 [5.00;5.00]	6.00 [5.00;7.25]	0.066
Sexual abuse	5.00 [5.00;6.00]	7.00 [5.00;9.25]	0.053
Emotional neglect	8.00 [6.00;17.0]	9.50 [5.00;12.2]	0.724
Physical neglect	5.00 [5.00;7.25]	5.50 [5.00;7.25]	0.693
Minimization denial:			0.765
None	13 (61.9%)	6 (50.0%)	
Possible	8 (38.1%)	6 (50.0%)	
Emotional abuse category:			0.157
Low	3 (14.3%)	1 (8.33%)	
Moderate	0 (0.00%)	2 (16.7%)	
None	13 (61.9%)	9 (75.0%)	
Severe	4 (19.0%)	0 (0.00%)	
Physical abuse category:			0.421
Low	1 (4.76%)	2 (16.7%)	
Moderate	2 (9.52%)	0 (0.00%)	
None	17 (81.0%)	9 (75.0%)	
Severe	0 (0.00%)	1 (8.33%)	
Sexual abuse category:			0.062
Low	3 (14.3%)	2 (16.7%)	
Moderate	1 (4.76%)	5 (41.7%)	
None	14 (66.7%)	4 (33.3%)	
Severe	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	
Emotional neglect category:			0.051
Low	1 (4.76%)	5 (41.7%)	
Moderate	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	

Variable	Secular N=21, N(%) / MED (IQR)	Orthodox /religious N=12, N(%) / MED (IQR)	P- value
None	13 (61.9%)	6 (50.0%)	
Severe	4 (19.0%)	0 (0.00%)	
Physical neglect category:			1.000
Low	3 (14.3%)	2 (16.7%)	
Moderate	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	
None	15 (71.4%)	9 (75.0%)	
Emotional abuse positive:			1.000
0	17 (81.0%)	10 (83.3%)	
1	4 (19.0%)	2 (16.7%)	
Physical abuse positive:			1.000
0	19 (90.5%)	11 (91.7%)	
1	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	
Sexual abuse positive:			0.044
0	18 (85.7%)	6 (50.0%)	
1	3 (14.3%)	6 (50.0%)	
Emotional neglect positive:			0.223
0	15 (71.4%)	11 (91.7%)	
1	6 (28.6%)	1 (8.33%)	
Physical neglect positive:			1.000
0	19 (90.5%)	11 (91.7%)	
1	2 (9.52%)	1 (8.33%)	

Appendix 2: Comparison of drawing indicators expression between those who were found to be high at risk of sexual abuse to those who were not, according to the CTQ scale.

Variable	Sexual abuse negative N=24	Sexual abuse positive N=9	P- value
Drawing 1 unjust event:			0.056
No	12 (50.0%)	1 (11.1%)	
Yes	12 (50.0%)	8 (88.9%)	
Maltreatment abuse:			0.107
No	11 (45.8%)	1 (11.1%)	
Yes	13 (54.2%)	8 (88.9%)	
Social interaction:			0.698
No	11 (45.8%)	3 (33.3%)	
Yes	13 (54.2%)	6 (66.7%)	
Between:			0.231
Adult (not parent)-child	9 (37.5%)	3 (33.3%)	
Friends	10 (41.7%)	2 (22.2%)	
No violence	4 (16.7%)	1 (11.1%)	
Parent-child	1 (4.17%)	2 (22.2%)	
Abuse type:			0.340
Emotional	14 (58.3%)	4 (44.4%)	
Mixed	2 (8.33%)	3 (33.3%)	
Non specific	6 (25.0%)	1 (11.1%)	
Physical	1 (4.17%)	0 (0.00%)	
Sexual	1 (4.17%)	1 (11.1%)	
Self included:			0.642
No	6 (25.0%)	1 (11.1%)	
Yes	18 (75.0%)	8 (88.9%)	
Drawers' role:			0.801

Variable	Sexual abuse negative N=24	Sexual abuse positive N=9	P- value
Non-specific role	3 (12.5%)	1 (11.1%)	
Victim	17 (70.8%)	8 (88.9%)	
Drawing type:			1.000
Figurative	20 (83.3%)	7 (77.8%)	
Metaphoric/expressive	4 (16.7%)	2 (22.2%)	
Schematic:			0.241
No	12 (50.0%)	7 (77.8%)	
Yes	12 (50.0%)	2 (22.2%)	
Aggressive symbols:			1.000
No	17 (70.8%)	7 (77.8%)	
Yes	7 (29.2%)	2 (22.2%)	
Words included:			0.056
No	12 (50.0%)	8 (88.9%)	
Yes	12 (50.0%)	1 (11.1%)	
Physical touch between victim and perpetrator:			0.034
No	22 (91.7%)	5 (55.6%)	
Yes	2 (8.33%)	4 (44.4%)	
Aggressor size:			0.695
Big/exaggerated	2 (8.33%)	2 (22.2%)	
Normal	11 (45.8%)	4 (44.4%)	
Tiny	2 (8.33%)	1 (11.1%)	
Victim size:			0.477
big/exaggerated	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.1%)	
normal	12 (50.0%)	5 (55.6%)	
Tiny	6 (25.0%)	1 (11.1%)	
Drawing dissociation:			1.000
No	23 (95.8%)	9 (100%)	
Yes	1 (4.17%)	0 (0.00%)	
Narrative according to drawing:			0.273
No	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.1%)	
Yes	24 (100%)	8 (88.9%)	
Drawing Narrative dissociative:			0.295
No	22 (91.7%)	7 (77.8%)	
Yes	2 (8.33%)	2 (22.2%)	
Hurting symbols:			0.285
None	13 (54.2%)	4 (44.4%)	
Yes both	3 (12.5%)	0 (0.00%)	
Yes emotional harm	8 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	
Yes physical harm	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.1%)	
Narrative organization:			1.000
Coherent	12 (50.0%)	4 (44.4%)	
Short	12 (50.0%)	5 (55.6%)	
Narrative theme:			1.000
Fear/anxiety	9 (37.5%)	4 (44.4%)	
Lack of control	1 (4.17%)	0 (0.00%)	
Loneliness	14 (58.3%)	5 (55.6%)	
Human figures:			0.686
No	8 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	
Yes	16 (66.7%)	7 (77.8%)	

Variable	Sexual abuse negative N=24	Sexual abuse positive N=9	P- value
Page covering:			0.172
Full	7 (29.2%)	6 (66.7%)	
Half	8 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	
Minimal	9 (37.5%)	2 (22.2%)	
Missing body organs			1.000
No	12 (50.0%)	4 (44.4%)	
Yes	12 (50.0%)	5 (55.6%)	
Family or stranger:			0.678
Family	2 (8.33%)	2 (22.2%)	
Stranger	21 (87.5%)	7 (77.8%)	
Drawing 2 revenge fantasy			
Maltreatment abuse:			1.000
No	21 (87.5%)	8 (88.9%)	
Yes	3 (12.5%)	1 (11.1%)	
Social interaction:			1.000
No	19 (79.2%)	8 (88.9%)	
Yes	5 (20.8%)	1 (11.1%)	
Between:			0.305
Adult (not parent)-child	5 (20.8%)	1 (11.1%)	
Friends	4 (16.7%)	0 (0.00%)	
None violence	13 (54.2%)	5 (55.6%)	
Parent-child	1 (4.17%)	1 (11.1%)	
Abuse type:			0.767
Emotional	5 (20.8%)	1 (11.1%)	
Mixed	1 (4.17%)	0 (0.00%)	
Non specific	14 (58.3%)	8 (88.9%)	
Self included:			1.000
No	18 (75.0%)	7 (77.8%)	
Yes	5 (20.8%)	2 (22.2%)	
Drawers' role:			0.498
Involved	2 (8.33%)	1 (11.1%)	
Non-specific role	9 (37.5%)	2 (22.2%)	
Observer	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.1%)	
Victim	2 (8.33%)	0 (0.00%)	
Drawing type:			1.000
Figurative	16 (66.7%)	6 (66.7%)	
Metaphoric/expressive	8 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	
Schematic:			0.697
No	10 (41.7%)	5 (55.6%)	
Yes	14 (58.3%)	4 (44.4%)	
Aggressive symbols:			1.000
No	22 (91.7%)	9 (100%)	
Yes	2 (8.33%)	0 (0.00%)	
Words included:			0.263
No	13 (54.2%)	7 (77.8%)	
Yes	11 (45.8%)	2 (22.2%)	
Physical touch between vict:			.
No	24 (100%)	9 (100%)	
Aggressor size:			0.176

Variable	Sexual abuse negative N=24	Sexual abuse positive N=9	P- value
Big/exaggerated	2 (8.33%)	1 (11.1%)	0.911
Normal	9 (37.5%)	1 (11.1%)	
Tiny	3 (12.5%)	4 (44.4%)	
Victim size:			1.000
Big/exaggerated	1 (4.17%)	1 (11.1%)	
Normal	5 (20.8%)	2 (22.2%)	
Tiny	2 (8.33%)	1 (11.1%)	1.000
Drawing dissociation:			
No	20 (83.3%)	8 (88.9%)	
Yes	4 (16.7%)	1 (11.1%)	1.000
Narrative according to drawing:			
No	3 (12.5%)	1 (11.1%)	
Yes	21 (87.5%)	8 (88.9%)	1.000
Narrative dissociative:			
No	14 (58.3%)	6 (66.7%)	
Yes	10 (41.7%)	3 (33.3%)	0.157
Hurting symbols:			
None	19 (79.2%)	6 (66.7%)	
Yes both	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.1%)	0.047
Yes emotional harm	5 (20.8%)	1 (11.1%)	
Yes physical harm	0 (0.00%)	1 (11.1%)	
Narrative organization:			0.557
Coherence	8 (33.3%)	7 (77.8%)	
Short	16 (66.7%)	2 (22.2%)	
Narrative theme:			1.000
Fear/anxiety	3 (12.5%)	0 (0.00%)	
Lack of control	1 (4.17%)	1 (11.1%)	
Loneliness	3 (12.5%)	2 (22.2%)	0.880
Human figures:			
No	9 (37.5%)	3 (33.3%)	
Yes	15 (62.5%)	6 (66.7%)	0.708
Page covering:			
Full	7 (29.2%)	4 (44.4%)	
Half	11 (45.8%)	3 (33.3%)	1.000
Minimal	6 (25.0%)	2 (22.2%)	
Missing body organs:			
No	13 (54.2%)	4 (44.4%)	
Yes	11 (45.8%)	5 (55.6%)	1.000
Forgiveness:			
No	23 (95.8%)	9 (100%)	
Yes	1 (4.17%)	0 (0.00%)	1.000
Punishment:			
No	16 (66.7%)	6 (66.7%)	
Yes	8 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	

Beyond Borders: A Comprehensive Exploration

*of Tumpat, Kelantan's Culture-Infused
Economic Landscape*

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Abstract

The culture-based economy holds a crucial role in rural Southeast Asian regions, yet it remains relatively unexplored. This study delves into traditional food products, handicrafts, and cultural goods, examining their factors and significance in Tumpat, Kelantan. Employing semi-structured interviews with local entrepreneurs and inductive content analysis, the research identifies two main categories: factors influencing business initiation and the significance of a clustered pattern in culture-based enterprises. Business location in Tumpat is notably influenced by familial land heritage, resource accessibility, transportation convenience, and labor availability. Businesses adopt a clustered pattern to reduce production costs, share information, and enhance market reach. Beyond comprehending the driving factors, the study advocates for increased support in developing nations, emphasizing the pivotal role of culture-based economic activities in shaping Tumpat, Kelantan's socio-economic landscape.

Keywords: *Southeast Asian Economy, Border Town Economics, Rural Economic Development, Clustered Business Patterns, Local Entrepreneurs*

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Introduction

The economic dynamics of border towns often transcend geographical confines, integrating cultural elements that shape distinctive economic landscapes. This study embarks on a comprehensive exploration of Tumpat, Kelantan, delving into its intricate Culture-Infused Economic Landscape. Situated in Southeast Asia, Tumpat exemplifies the significance of the culture-based economy, an often understudied sector in rural regions. Traditional food products, handicrafts, and cultural goods constitute the focal points of this investigation, reflecting the multifaceted dimensions of the local economy.

As globalization impacts traditional practices, understanding the unique interplay between culture and commerce becomes imperative for sustainable development. "Beyond Borders" seeks to uncover the nuanced factors influencing business initiation in Tumpat and sheds light on the strategic importance of a clustered business pattern adopted by enterprises. Through semi-structured interviews with local entrepreneurs and employing inductive content analysis, this study identifies key elements contributing to the economic fabric of Tumpat, including familial land heritage, resource accessibility, transportation convenience, and the availability of skilled workers.

In every community, there exists a unique set of customs and values encapsulated in its culture. Culture encompasses both tangible and intangible elements that mirror human perspectives, principles, and outlooks in daily life (Haviland, 2002). The coexistence of diverse cultures within a region yields positive ramifications for the economic advancement of its suburban inhabitants. Notably, the infusion of creative tourism emerges as a catalyst for generating revenue, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for the local community (Dias et al., 2021). Within the local tourism industry, culture-based economic activities, such as the production of handicrafts, traditional food, and art, play a pivotal role (Mitchell et al., 2007).

A comprehensive understanding of this industry can be achieved by employing various analytical frameworks, including the sectoral delineation of the cultural economy, the labor market and production organization approach, the creative index definition, and the convergence of formats – key defining features proposed by Gibson and Kong in 2005. These frameworks provide valuable insights into the intricate interplay of cultural elements within the economic landscape. Moreover, cultural activities and heritage contribute significantly to the formation of a distinctive regional identity (Raagmaa, 2002; Mitchell et al., 2007). As this article unfolds, it navigates through the complexities of the cultural economy, shedding light on how cultural pursuits and heritage can shape a profound sense of regional identity while concurrently fostering economic development.

The theoretical foundation of a culture-based economy, as formulated by Ray and Sayer in 1999, offers a structured framework for recognizing the natural resources and cultural knowledge essential for fostering regional economic development. As articulated by Crang (1997), the economy is intricately interwoven with cultural elements and finds expression through social media platforms. Crucial determinants influencing the choice of business location encompass the appropriateness of the locale and the accessibility of resources. Notably, the absence of adequate infrastructure and the limited availability of skilled labor pose potential impediments to the advancement of cultural industries, particularly in

developing nations. This article delves into the theoretical underpinnings of the culture-based economy, illuminating how these concepts shape the identification and utilization of natural and cultural assets for regional economic progress. Additionally, it underscores the challenges arising from insufficient infrastructure and skilled labor, shedding light on their potential impact on the growth of cultural industries, particularly within developing countries.

Tumpat, situated in the Kelantan province on the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia, is renowned for its cultural richness, abundant natural resources, local traditions, and distinctive traditional cuisine (Hanan et al., 2017). This region boasts a diverse array of cultural activities, including shadow puppetry (Yusof and Khor, 2017), kite-flying (Nihau and Radzuan, 2019), and woodcarving (Shaffee and Said, 2013), alongside musical performances like Mak Yong (Harwick, 2020) and Dikir Barat (Shuaib and Olalere, 2013). These cultural endeavors significantly contribute to the overall economic prosperity of Kelantan. Notably, Kelantan is renowned for its production of batik and songket fabrics, which hold significance in both traditional and contemporary fashion industries across Southeast Asia. The perpetuation of these industries is of paramount importance, serving as a dual-purpose mechanism by providing income to the local populace while safeguarding and transmitting cultural heritage to successive generations (Yusof et al., 2013). This article delves into the multifaceted cultural landscape of Tumpat, shedding light on its diverse cultural activities and the economic contributions of its traditional industries, emphasizing the crucial role played by these endeavors in preserving both economic sustainability and cultural legacy.

The Tumpat district stands out due to the synthesis of Malay and Siamese cultures, particularly evident in the unique cultural products, notably traditional foods (Ahmad, 2011). The close interaction between these ethnic groups has given rise to a distinctive culture, with a significant portion of the population conversing in Thai alongside a blended Kelantanese accent (Ismail et al., 2021). This linguistic and cultural amalgamation distinguishes Tumpat, attracting the attention of researchers. The artistic landscape also reflects this fusion, with some Siamese residents engaging in Thai traditions and performing Siamese dance. This cultural assimilation renders Tumpat an exceptional study location. The research aims to unveil the factors and importance of culture-based economic activities in Tumpat, shedding light on its unique cultural identity. Moreover, by promoting tourism and attracting potential investors, the study advocates for increased support from government agencies to foster the expansion of these distinctive economic endeavors in Tumpat.

The research not only seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on culture-based economies but also advocates for practical implications. By emphasizing the clustered business pattern's role in reducing production costs, fostering information sharing, and expanding market reach, this exploration extends beyond theoretical understanding to propose actionable strategies for economic development. In a global context where local economies are at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, "Beyond Borders" positions itself as a vital resource for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders, urging increased support and promotion of culture-infused economic activities in developing nations. This

study, grounded in empirical evidence and methodological rigor, aims to navigate the complexities of Tumpat's economic landscape, fostering a deeper appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between culture and economic sustainability.

Aim of This Study

This study is a follow-up to an earlier research on the border town's culture-based economy, with a focus on Tumpat, Kelantan (Yap and Ng, 2023). The earlier study, conducted between September 2019 and February 2020, laid the foundation for the current research. Notably, the current study revisits the same cohort of respondents to comprehend alterations or developments within this group in the year 2023. This longitudinal approach enables a nuanced understanding of how the cultural and economic dynamics of Tumpat have evolved over time, providing valuable insights into the sustainability and adaptability of culture-based economic activities. By exploring the changes within the same group of respondents, the study seeks to capture the ongoing narrative of Tumpat's economic landscape and the resilience of its cultural enterprises. The data collected during this period serves as a comparative lens, offering a comprehensive perspective on the trajectory of the culture-based economy in Tumpat over the years.

The research aimed to examine the determinants influencing the selection of locations for a culture-based economy and assess the significance of clustered culture-based economic activities in Tumpat, Kelantan.

Materials and Methods

In this study, we employed in-depth interviews and grounded theory techniques to gather insights and perspectives from industry entrepreneurs regarding the aforementioned inquiries. Open-ended questions were developed to elicit expansive data, complemented by observational methods to enrich our understanding of the research inquiries. Our investigation centered on Tumpat, a province within Kelantan on the eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Data collection occurred between September 2019 and February 2020. Kelantan's culture-based economy primarily emphasizes handicrafts, arts, and traditional food. To acquire pertinent data, information was sourced from the Kelantan State Economic Department and the Kelantan State Arts and Culture Department. Following data acquisition, targeted screenings were conducted within the Tumpat district to identify actively engaged entrepreneurs involved in the culture-based economy.

Subsequently, interview questions were formulated for these entrepreneurs, facilitating the interview process. From an initial pool of 25 identified entrepreneurs, 20 willingly participated in the interview phase. Utilizing content analysis, interview transcripts underwent coding and subsequent categorization based on various thematic elements. An intriguing observation emerged during the analysis: businesses within the culture-based economy exhibited a tendency to cluster geographically. Consequently, we employed coded scripts to delve into the significance and implications of these clustered patterns among culture-based enterprises.

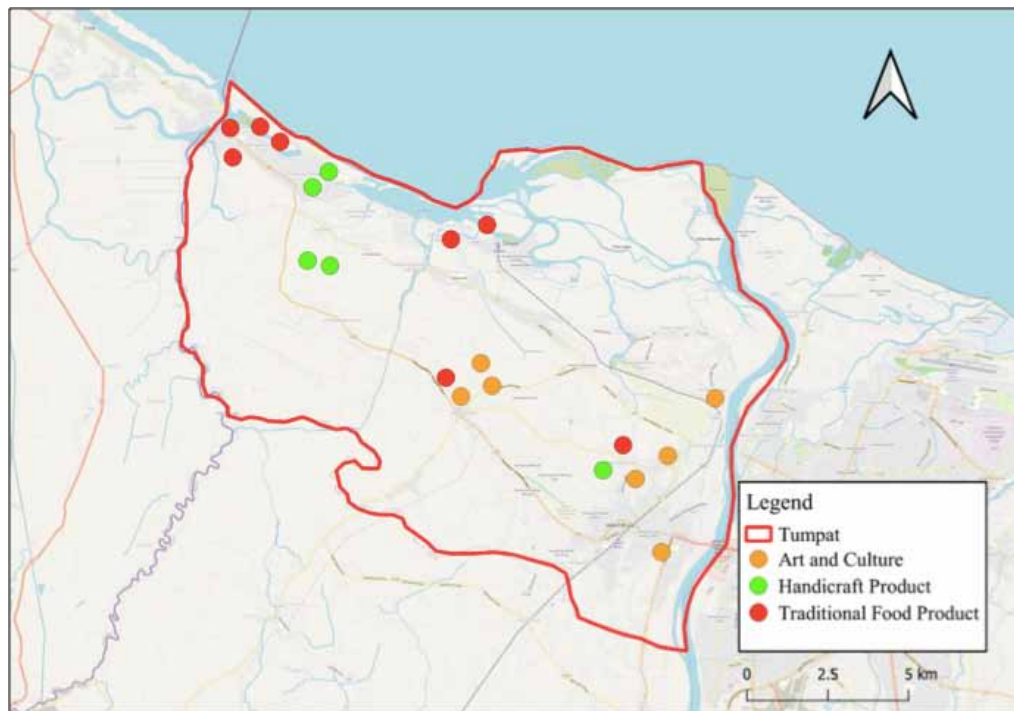


Figure 1. Geographical placement of businesses involved in art and culture, handicraft products, and traditional food products in Tumpat, Kelantan (Yap and Ng, 2023).

The study focused on Tumpat district, situated along the border with Thailand in the northern part of Kelantan, a state renowned for its distinctive culture and traditional values (Ahmad, 2011). Tumpat was selected as the research site due to its divergence from other Kelantan districts in terms of traditional and cultural practices. The 2010 census reported a population of approximately 143,793 individuals in the study area (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). The distinctive local economy, culture, and traditions of Tumpat stem from its unique geographical attributes. Notably, Tumpat's traditional foods share more similarities with Thai society in terms of types and preparation methods. Examples of traditional foods in Tumpat include lekor chips, budu, dried fish, mango glutinous rice, mango kerabu, and smoked etok salai. This selection of Tumpat as the study location facilitates an exploration of its exceptional cultural and traditional characteristics within the broader context of Kelantan.

Results and Discussion

No.	Product	Age	Education level	Reason for starting business	Net monthly income (RM)	Total worker	Reason choosing location	Satisfied to the location	Importance of location
F1	Dried fish	58	Form 3	Interest	4,000	6	Near to beach	Yes	Near to beach
F2	Dried fish	45	Form 3	Family business	3,500	4	Near to port	Yes	Customers can find this place easily
F3	Dried fish	67	No	Interest	3,700	8	Near to port	Yes	Customers can find this place easily
F4	Fish cracker	80	No	Support family	8,000	18	Family inheritance	Yes	Spacious land and there is no need to pay rent
F5	Fish cracker	76	No	Support family	5,000	7	Family land	Yes	Customers can find this place easily
F6	Budu	80	Primary school	Interest	6,000	7	Near to local villagers	Yes	No need to pay rent
F7	Budu	58	Form 3	Support family	30,000	50	Many employees	Yes	Easy to get employees
F8	Laksam	72	No	Support family	2,800	5	Family land	Yes	Near to the main road
A1	Rebana Kercing	73	Standard 6	Interest	1,000	20	Family inheritance	Yes	Near to home
A2	Traditional music instrument seller	81	Bachelor's degree	Interest	1,000	15	Near to road	Yes	No
A3	Shadow puppetry	62	Bachelor's degree	Interest	2,000	20	Near to road and industrial area	Yes	No
A4	Shadow puppetry	37	Secondary school	Family business	2,500	5	Own land	Yes	Near to resources
A5	Serunai	87	Primary school	Family business	2,000	2	Near to forest	Yes	Accessible to new machines
A6	Menora	89	Bachelor's degree	Interest	2,500	20	Labor available	Yes	Students can easy find this place
A7	Dikir barat	42	Secondary school	Interest	1,000	20	Labor available	Yes	Many charcoals and costumers can find this place easily
H1	Batik	58	Diploma	Family business	5,000	25	Family heritage land	Yes	Accessible to new marketing strategy
H2	Krat Buluh	44	Secondary school	Family business	3,000	3	Family heritage land	Yes	Easy to obtain resources
H3	Jebak Puyuh	91	Primary school	Interest	3,000	4	Near to forest	Yes	Customers can find this place easily
H4	Wau	78	Primary school	Interest	3,500	2	Near to beach	Yes	Customers can find this place easily
H5	Batik	48	Secondary school	Family business	4,000	16	Own land	Yes	Easy to get employees

Figure 2. Summary of participant's characteristics (N=20; F-traditional food product, A-art and culture, and H-handicraft).



Figure 3. Left, Ikan kering (dried fish) (Zulkiefli, 2023). Right, Keropok (fish cracker) (Ramli, 2019).



Figure 4. Left, Budu (fermented anchovie sauce).* Right, Laksam (Nadzi, 2021).*



Figure 5. Left, Rebana Kercong (traditional dance).* Right, Wayang kulit (shadow puppetry).*



Figure 6. Left, Serunai (traditional musical instrument).* Right, Menora (Azlan, 2021).



Figure 7. Left, Dikir barat (traditional performance).* Right, Batik (colored cloth).*



Figure 8. Left, Kraf buluh (Rottan handicraft).* Right, Jebak Puyuh (bamboo handicraft).*



Figure 9. Wau (traditional kite)* (Note: * Pictures taken by the authors, 2017).

Location Factors Influencing Business Location Selection

Family Heritage Land

Inheritance land, also referred to as family heritage land, denotes property passed down through generations from ancestors. Interviews with respondents revealed that the entrepreneur's choice of location is influenced by the following factors:

- a) Inheritance land/family gifted land
- b) The original site of the family business
- c) Own land

A significant number of culture-based business owners cited the selection of their business location based on family land. The rationale behind this decision lies in the inheritance of business premises within the family, facilitating a straightforward utilization of the land for entrepreneurial purposes. For instance, Respondent K4, engaged in the art business, expressed, "...this is family-owned land, so it is easy to start my own business..." [A4, 35 years old]. Another respondent, A1, aged 71, shared, "...Since childhood, I have been interested in rebana kercing following my uncle, since then I have followed his footsteps until I am over 34 years old now..." This underscores the significance of familial ties and inherited property in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape.

a. Inheritance Land/Family Gifted Land

Inheritance land, also known as family heritage land, is land passed down from ancestors to the next generation. According to interviews with respondents, the following factors influence the location of the entrepreneur. "Family heritage land" denotes the ancestral property passed down through generations, playing a pivotal role in influencing local business location selection within Tumpat, Kelantan. This factor holds significance as it simplifies access to land for entrepreneurs, facilitating business establishment and operations. The familiarity and ownership of this land by families not only streamline the process but also contribute to the preservation of cultural and economic legacies within the region.

In Tumpat, Kelantan, the selection of business locations is notably influenced by "Inheritance land/family gifted land." The importance lies in the historical and familial ties associated with the land, making it an integral factor for entrepreneurs. This type of land, passed down through generations, not only simplifies the process of acquiring a location for business but also preserves and perpetuates cultural and familial legacies. The connection to inherited land fosters a sense of identity and tradition, aligning business operations with the cultural fabric of Tumpat, thus contributing to the region's unique economic landscape.

In Tumpat, Kelantan, the preference for "Inheritance land/family gifted land" in business location selection is exemplified by entrepreneurs like F4, a 74-year-old who operates a cracker company. Choosing a location on family-owned land not only simplifies operations but also eliminates concerns about rental costs. This reflects the enduring legacy of family businesses, as seen with F2, 43 years old, who processes dried fish on family land, emphasizing the ease of continuing a multigenerational tradition. The cultural and familial significance of inherited land not only streamlines business endeavors but also contributes to the rich tapestry of local traditions and economic sustainability in Tumpat.

b. The Original Site of the Family Business

The selection of a site for culture-based economic enterprises in the study area was influenced by various factors, with the location of family businesses playing a significant role. Specifically, three respondents (F8, F4, and F2) highlighted their continuation of family businesses in traditional food sectors like laksa and dried fish due to the established business location. These individuals, engaged in businesses passed down through generations, expressed a commitment to family traditions. For example, respondent F2, aged 43, mentioned, "... I started just assisting the family, but as time went on, I got accustomed to the task of processing dried fish and carried on the family business...." Similarly, respondent F8, aged 70, emphasized, "...this business has been operating for more than 30 years and was originally family-owned...." These quotes illustrate a multi-decade legacy of family-owned enterprises, emphasizing the enduring nature of cultural businesses rooted in familial traditions.

The original site of the family business signifies the historical site where a family enterprise was initially established in Tumpat, Kelantan. This factor bears significance as it symbolizes continuity and tradition. Entrepreneurs often favor this location for new ventures due to its historical ties and established customer base. The familiarity of the locale, rooted in familial history, fosters trust and brand loyalty among patrons. Choosing to set up businesses at this original site not only honors family legacies but also leverages existing community connections, positioning the business within the fabric of local culture and reinforcing its place within Tumpat's economic landscape.

The significance of "The original site of the family business" is exemplified by a family's long-established batik shop in Tumpat, Kelantan. The family's ancestral storefront, dating back generations, remains the hub for batik production. Entrepreneurs, like Aisha, choose to open a new batik venture at this site to honor familial heritage. This location not only embodies tradition but also attracts loyal customers due to its historical prominence. By preserving the family legacy at this original site, businesses maintain cultural authenticity, fostering community ties and sustaining the legacy of batik craftsmanship within Tumpat's economic tapestry.

c. Own Land

The ownership of private land affords the landowner the flexibility to modify the business scope, facilitating potential expansions. A 78-year-old respondent (F4) emphasized this advantage, stating, "... I chose this location because it is my land, making it simple for me to expand the business size in the future...." Furthermore, some respondents considered the selection of location to be influenced by private land policies, leading to reduced land rental costs. A 74-year-old respondent (F4) elucidated, "...because the land site is our property, this location is suitable for a cracker company. We do not have to worry about the rental cost on our land site...." Despite being in an area susceptible to annual severe monsoon flooding, these Kelantanese landowners asserted that their land and property held stable values. Notably, evidence suggested that property values in flood-prone neighborhoods had, in fact, continued to appreciate over time (Abd Hamid et al., 2020).

The importance of "Own land" is exemplified by a local entrepreneur, Rahim, establishing a traditional handicraft workshop in Tumpat, Kelantan. Rahim utilizes his personally owned

land for crafting intricate woodcarvings. This ownership grants him autonomy and flexibility in business expansion. His business's strategic location on his own land minimizes overhead costs, enabling long-term sustainability. Rahim's decision not only aligns with local cultural practices but also underscores the economic advantages of utilizing personal land. The ownership aspect contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage while fostering a self-sustaining and economically viable enterprise within the unique fabric of Tumpat.

Near To Resources

The availability of natural resources plays a crucial role in fostering cultural and economic development, as highlighted by scholars like Porter (1996) and Scott (1999). The study's findings reveal that five entrepreneurs specifically cited proximity to raw materials as a key factor influencing their choice of business location. This underscores the strategic importance of geographical proximity to natural resources, emphasizing its direct correlation with entrepreneurial decisions. In essence, entrepreneurs recognize the significance of being in close proximity to essential raw materials, indicating a conscious and strategic alignment of their businesses with the geographical abundance of necessary resources. This alignment not only influences their operational efficiency but also speaks to the symbiotic relationship between the utilization of local resources and the growth of both culture and the economy.

a. Resources Are Available

Resources encompass materials originating from nature and provided by the Earth, serving as instrumental agents in the realm of economic development within the cultural economy context. Among various natural resources, both forest and marine resources stand as prime examples significantly contributing to the advancement of the cultural economy. Notably, businesses involved in traditional foods, handicrafts, and artistic endeavors heavily rely on these natural resources as their primary raw materials, illustrating their integral role in shaping economic activities.

The quote, "... I could get rattan sources in the backyard of my house..." [H2, 79 years old], reflects the accessibility and proximity of necessary resources for production. This accessibility expedites the manufacturing process, aligning with the findings of Cissé et al. (2020). Their research highlights how location choices for new primary sector businesses are intrinsically linked to the advantages derived from the availability of natural resources used as raw materials by entrepreneurs.

This circumstance showcases the strategic significance of localized access to raw materials, facilitating efficient production cycles and cost-effective operations for entrepreneurs. Additionally, it validates the premise that proximity to natural resources positively impacts decision-making in establishing businesses within the primary sector. This symbiotic relationship between resource accessibility and entrepreneurial activities underscores the pivotal role of natural resources in driving economic growth within the cultural economy domain. Ultimately, the utilization of readily available resources plays a fundamental role in the efficiency and sustainability of cultural businesses, shaping their operations and contributing significantly to the economic development of the cultural economy.

b. Resources Near the Port

The proximity of marine resources significantly streamlines the production processes for goods like dried fish and budu in Tumpat, Kelantan. Respondents M6 and M3 highlighted

that a location near a beach or fishing pier is often deemed suitable for such businesses. This strategic proximity, as emphasized by respondents F6 and F3, enables easier access to a diverse and fresh selection of fish, crucial for budu processing and dried fish businesses. This finding aligns with research conducted in Indonesia's coastal area of Kejawan, which underscores fishing ports as integral components of a centralized supply chain system for local fish businesses (Gumilang and Susilawati, 2019). In essence, the optimal business location is intricately linked to the accessibility of marine resources, enhancing efficiency in production activities.

An example of resources near a port is illustrated by a family-owned dried fish processing business in Tumpat, Kelantan. Situated close to the fishing port, this enterprise benefits from easy access to a variety of freshly caught fish. This proximity enables the business owner to procure diverse fish selections promptly, crucial for high-quality dried fish production. Being near the port facilitates cost-effective sourcing of raw materials, ensuring the freshness and abundance of resources necessary for the business, thereby optimizing production and maintaining the business's competitive edge within the local market.

Transportation Network

The analysis indicates that the accessibility of the transportation system significantly influences the choice of business location in Tumpat, Kelantan. For instance, a 79-year-old respondent (A2) involved in traditional musical instruments emphasizes that proximity to a road network streamlines product transportation for suppliers. Moreover, respondents, like K3, engaged in wayang kulit, consider infrastructure like roads and boats crucial for the promotion of their art form. According to a 60-year-old respondent (A3), locations with easy access to roads simplify audience attraction. Therefore, a well-developed road network not only aids resource transportation but also plays a pivotal role in marketing strategies, impacting the selection of economic and cultural locations in Tumpat, Kelantan.

The transportation network in Tumpat holds paramount importance for local enterprises due to its influence on logistics and market access. For instance, a handicraft business, situated near a well-connected road, efficiently sources raw materials and distributes finished products. Similarly, a traditional food stall benefits from its proximity to transport hubs, enabling easy access to diverse ingredients and attracting a broader customer base. A robust transportation network streamlines resource procurement, product distribution, and customer reach, significantly bolstering the operational efficiency and market competitiveness of local enterprises in Tumpat, Kelantan.

Availability of Labour/Students

The catalyst for advancing culture-based economic development lies in the workforce. The engagement of a local labor force, especially within operations intertwined with the community, acts as a driving force for both economic and cultural growth. In Tumpat district, Kelantan, the study reveals a prevailing practice among culture-based economic enterprises – hiring local workers residing in close proximity. This strategic employment approach not only propels economic activities but also fosters a deeper connection between the workforce and the cultural fabric of Tumpat, amplifying the symbiotic relationship between local employment and the advancement of the region's economic and cultural landscape.

a. Easy to Recruit Labour/Students

Locals and inhabitants of neighboring villages make up the labor force used in the economic and cultural activities of Tumpat. Due to the diversity of its communities and races, Tumpat has developed its own distinctive culture, particularly in its artistic endeavors. The development of Siamese villages, particularly in Kampung Kok Seraya and Kampung Jong Bakar, is a result of the proximity to the Thai border. The residents of these rural areas are mainly of low-income families, which are suitable human resources in the study area because they understand the local cultures and need a job to earn money. At the same time, these business operators need more workers to support the business.

b. Lower Labour Costs

Additionally, the lower living cost of the suburban area also causes local employees to be satisfied with a lower income compared to big cities such as Kuala Lumpur. Therefore, low labor costs influence where businesses locate their operations in the study area. For instance, the average monthly wage for employees at the budu factory is only RM650, and the maximum is no more than RM1,000.

The Importance of the Clustered Culture-based Economy

When analyzing the pattern of the location of these businesses, the researchers noticed similar types of culture-based businesses near each other. Therefore, we suspected that there could be some reasons and importance for having clustered patterns in the study area.

Reduce Production Costs

The arrangement of the concentrated cultural economy in Tumpat, Kelantan, holds importance for businesses, notably in minimizing expenses linked to the production of goods. Production costs pertain to the expenditures involved in the manufacturing process. According to H2 (42 years old), abundant forest resources, such as rattan and bamboo, are accessible in Kampung Talak, collected predominantly by elderly individuals and young men from the community. Additionally, businesses engage in sharing information and resources with neighboring counterparts, contributing to a reduction of material & production costs.



Figure 10. The Budu fermentation enterprise is situated in proximity to the port jetty.

Moreover, the concentration of traditional food businesses around the port jetty in Tumpat has resulted in increased access to marine resources such as anchovies and gelama fish at more affordable rates, as depicted in Figure 10. This proximity allows businesses to manage production costs effectively, benefiting from lower labor and resource expenses. According to F7, the favorable economics of this arrangement is reflected in an average net profit of RM1000 for producing one large budu, contributing to a monthly net return exceeding RM5000. The affordability of fish prices near the jetty, coupled with daily wages for fish processing, enhances the overall economic viability for entrepreneurs like F5, F2, and H2.

These responses illustrated that the price of fisheries is lower at the port compared to the wet market because of the logistic and human costs incurred in the price of these fisheries at the wet market. Apart from producing dried fish and other local works, they also collect edible natural resources from forests and sell them to the neighborhood that needs these forest products. They often did this in a group to save transportation costs.

Technology and Information Exchange

The dissemination of information and technology is facilitated by the accessibility of a well-connected transportation network in Tumpat. The concentrated economic and cultural activities along the road network amplify the ease of spreading information and technology. Quah's (2002) insight aligns with this pattern, emphasizing that economic clusters induce heightened competition, subsequently driving the adoption of new technology and fostering innovation. In Tumpat, the intertwined relationship between a robust transportation network, economic concentration, and the swift diffusion of information underscores the role of infrastructure in catalyzing technological advancements and innovation within cultural economies.

Due to the intense competition, business owners had to invest money to upgrade equipment and production techniques.

“...we are still using machines to make Lekor crackers after the pandemic lockdowns because of competition and more people knowing about it. Before, they used to make them by hand. Now, there are more and better Lekor crackers because of these machines.” [F4, 78 years old].

Modern machinery is capable of efficiently producing standardized food items in a short timeframe, concurrently mitigating labor costs by requiring fewer workers for operation. Quah (2002) contends that the clustering of cultural economies fosters heightened competition, incentivizing businesses to adopt new technologies and innovate. However, this competitive atmosphere also promotes collaboration, with businesses sharing knowledge, raw materials, and products among nearby counterparts. The integration of advanced technology in Tumpat's cultural economy not only streamlines production but also aligns with Quah's observations on the symbiotic relationship between competition, innovation, and the collaborative exchange of resources. This convergence of competition and collaboration within cultural clusters not only propels technological advancements but also nurtures a cooperative ecosystem where businesses thrive through shared expertise and resources.



Figure 11. The introduction of keropok lekor processing machine.

The introduction of new machinery and technology in the study area resulted in a notable improvement in production scale and revenue, as depicted in Figure 11. This advancement signifies a substantial increase in productivity and earnings, likely attributed to the efficiency and capabilities brought about by the adoption of modern equipment and technological innovations. The visualization in Figure 11 likely demonstrates the correlation between the implementation of these new tools and the subsequent growth in production capacity and financial gains within the studied cultural economy of Tumpat, Kelantan.

Modern machinery revolutionizes the production of standardized food items, significantly cutting down on time while concurrently reducing labor dependency and costs. Quah (2002) emphasizes that clustering within the cultural economy intensifies competition, prompting businesses to adopt innovative technologies. However, this competitive environment also fosters collaboration among neighboring businesses, sharing insights, resources, and products. For instance, intense competition compelled entrepreneurs, like respondent F4, to invest in machinery and innovative processes. In the case of lekor crackers, the shift from manual to machine-based production emerged due to competitive pressures and shared industry knowledge. Furthermore, consumer demands drive packaging innovations, as highlighted by respondent F6. These insights demonstrate how competition within the cultural economy of Tumpat propels technological advancements, encouraging businesses to embrace machinery and innovate in response to market demands, thereby shaping the industry's evolution.



Figure 12. The alterations in budu packaging are demonstrated by the business owner.

The uses of new machines and technology enhanced the production scale and revenue of the businesses in the study area. Additionally, the advancement of technology and information has enhanced product marketing strategies. For example, the packaging for traditional food items has been improved by using new technology, for instance, the packaging of budu was switched from bottle packaging to tube packaging (Figure 12).

When information exchange of ideas occurs, the purpose of this new packaging, according to F6, is to make it simpler for users to transport budu when traveling. As a result, the conversion of information and technology by the clustered culture-based economic distribution. Entrepreneurs have benefited from this situation in increased marketing and product production.

Increase Market Size

The findings revealed that cultural economy businesses have been in operation for more than 30 years, and their locations have long been known for their uniqueness. The specialness of this location has increased the functionality and enhanced the local economy. Traditional food businesses in the Genting Tumpat neighborhood are close to the port pier and beach area, such as the clustered distribution pattern in the Kampung Laut and Kampung Morak areas. The businessmen nearby cooperated to promote products and built friendship with each other. The region has become well-known for its distinct purpose and serves as a business marketing tool.

Establishing familiarity with a business location is a key strategy for market expansion. In Tumpat, for instance, the dried fish products industry in Kampung Genting benefits from a well-thought-out marketing plan that taps into local and tourist demand. The post-COVID-19 period witnessed an increase in local tourist traffic, boosting accessibility. Seasoned businesses, like one operating for over 30 years, leverage their reputation, drawing both tourists and locals. This familiarity not only facilitates easier navigation for shoppers but also transforms the location into a destination, enhancing the visibility and consumer reach of these enterprises. For instance, the promotion of Pak Daim's wayang kulit is strategically situated in a known area, fostering a deeper connection with the audience. Despite geographical distance, the ingrained awareness of the location among buyers underscores the significance of a well-established presence in driving sustained business growth.

As a result, this clustered cultural-based economic activity is critical to the development of the business, particularly in terms of lowering production costs, sharing information among business owners, and expanding market size. According to Porter (1996) and Quah (2002), government agencies have less influence on the economic distribution of culture in small towns such as Tumpat. State authorities, such as the Kelantan State Fisheries Department in Tumpat, only provided financial and physical assistance, such as fish and budu storage bins, and did not interfere with government policies such as zoning.

The comprehensive exploration of Tumpat, Kelantan's Culture-Infused Economic Landscape sheds light on the integral role culture plays in local economic development. The study delves into factors influencing business location choices, emphasizing family heritage land, resource accessibility, and transportation networks. The clustered pattern of businesses is revealed as a cost-effective strategy. Recommendations include improving infrastructure and advocating for regional projects. The study not only contributes to un-

derstanding Tumpat's unique economic dynamics but also calls for increased support from state agencies to sustain and promote these culturally rooted enterprises in the evolving economic landscape.

The study spotlights the influence of proximity to marine resources on businesses such as dried fish production. Respondents, like F6 and F3, underscore the importance of being near a fishing port or jetty, ensuring a readily available and diverse selection of fresh fish for processing budu and dried fish. This aligns with the coastal area research in Kejawen, Indonesia, emphasizing the centrality of fishing ports in local fish businesses.

Transportation infrastructure, including road networks, proves vital. Respondent A2, engaged in traditional musical instruments, emphasizes that a location close to a road facilitates the easy transportation of instruments, showcasing the direct impact of infrastructure on business operations. Additionally, wayang kulit practitioners, like respondent K3, stress that access to roads is pivotal for attracting audiences, underscoring how infrastructure directly influences cultural promotions.

The study's insights advocate for infrastructure improvements, demonstrating that a well-developed road network not only supports logistical aspects but also plays a crucial role in cultural and economic development in Tumpat.

Recommendations

The ongoing growth of culture-based businesses in Tumpat, Kelantan, post-COVID-19 remains slow. The pandemic likely posed challenges such as restricted tourism, supply chain disruptions, and economic slowdowns, potentially impacting these businesses. However, the resilience of cultural enterprises, innovative adaptations, and supportive measures from stakeholders might have contributed to recovery or sustained growth. To ascertain the current status, recent data, local reports, and insights from business owners or community members directly involved in these enterprises post-pandemic would provide a clearer understanding of the situation.

To enhance the growth of culture-based economies in rural areas, it's imperative for affiliated state agencies to focus on improving accessibility and enhancing infrastructure quality. This initiative aims to bridge the developmental disparity between urban and rural areas within developing cultural economies like Tumpat, Kelantan. One significant recommendation involves advocating for and supporting regional infrastructure projects, such as the expansion of the East Coast Expressway Project. This effort intends to augment the current central spine federal road and enhance coastal roads, thereby fostering increased connectivity and accessibility. By bolstering transportation networks, these upgrades aim to attract a larger influx of visitors and investors to the region. Ultimately, these improvements in infrastructure seek to stimulate economic growth, promote tourism, and incentivize investment within Tumpat and similar rural cultural hubs.

Conclusion

The cultural-based economy in Tumpat, Kelantan, is experiencing a noteworthy expansion in tourism activities, underscoring its pivotal role in local economic development. The geographical location and active involvement of local residents emerge as influential factors

shaping the existence and progression of economic growth within this cultural context. The study identifies family heritage land ownership, resource accessibility, and labor availability as key determinants influencing economic and cultural distribution. The observed significance of clustered patterns in business operations, known for reducing production costs and fostering information exchange and market expansion, further accentuates the potential for sustainable economic development. As a comprehensive exploration of the current state of the culture-based economy, this study advocates for increased support from state agencies. The hope is that robust efforts will be directed towards implementing tailored development plans, especially for smaller towns susceptible to monsoon floods, to fortify and sustain the growth of these culturally rooted industries.

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The Possibility of Using Acrylic Plates to Replace Copper Ones *in Intaglio Printmaking in Thailand*

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Abstract

This research's aim is to experiment with acrylic plates in the four Intaglio Printmaking processes of Drypoint, Hard Ground, Soft Ground and Aquatint as an alternative to the normally used copper plates, which are more expensive and must be purchased from a specialized vendor, and its processes involve the usage of chemicals that may affect health. Experiments in this research show that using acrylic plates with alternative processes can reduce intricate workflows, reduce workspace and costs involved, since this process requires less equipment and materials to be used, and more importantly reduce chemical consumption. Thus, making it beneficial for artists, art schools, the community and individuals who have an interest in alternative printmaking processes of this type.

Keywords: *Printmaking, Alternative Printmaking Processes, Non-Toxic Printmaking, Intaglio Printmaking, Etching, Thailand*

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Introduction

In Thailand, the use of various printing techniques has been used since the time of cave art i.e., Prehistoric handprint on cave wall, Mae Moh district Lampang and various aspects of the technique have been developed and used with various other artifacts throughout the history until the reign of King Rama V of the present dynasty, craftsmen devised a technique well known to printmakers today for making Woodblock to print on cloth. And then after the first National Art Exhibition was held in 1949 and annually afterwards, and consequently, Printmaking excellence prize was also included in the Exhibition since 1961.

Traditional fine art printmaking process normally consists of 4 keys types, which are:

- Relief Printing, where images are printed using the raised areas of the printing block.
- Stencil, where images are obtained through the use of cut-out stenciling.
- Planography, as in Lithography, where images are printed by using a chemical reaction of Gum Arabic with the surface of the substrate.
- Intaglio, where images are printed from the ink in the groves on the printing plate.

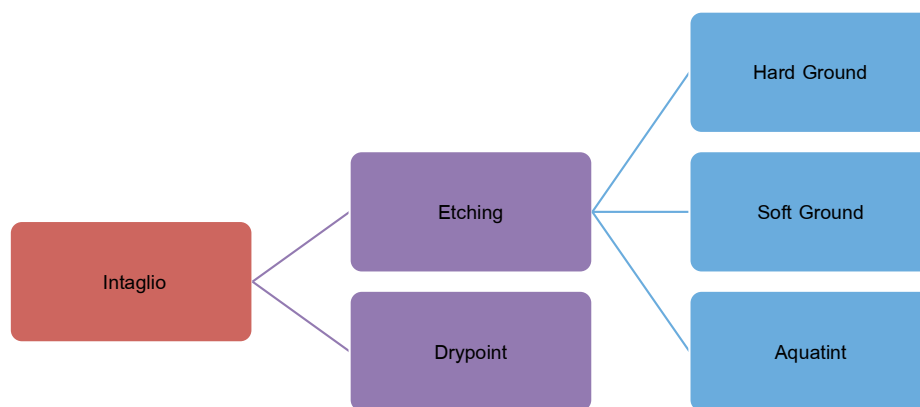


Figure 1. Diagram of Intaglio Processes, Source: Author (2022).

Modern Thai Printmaking

As a result of the formal establishment of Silpakorn University-the country's first university dedicated to the teaching of Art in 1943, Fine Art Printmaking in Thailand has officially started its first stage of development from around 1963 until 1977 and has gained more acceptance internationally from then on until the present day (Pishnu Supanimit, 2003). And since the researcher is also a part of this present-day movement as an art educator, finding ways of using less chemical and alternative printmaking process has been priority concern. Thus, various alternative materials and processes have been tried out. Especially those used in the Intaglio Process, Therefore, this article will emphasize on the alternative intaglio processes from the writer's research findings.

Etching

Etching, as part of the Intaglio process, has been traditionally done on metal plates such as zinc or copper, where asphaltum or rosin plays an important role as an acid-resistant ground (Magical Secrets, n.d.) in coating the surface. After being coated, the design is then scratched or pressed into the ground, exposing the metal in the desired areas. Then, the plate is submerged in an acid solution until the desired depth and width in the exposed areas are reached (Britannica, n.d.). Both metal plates, especially copper, have a relatively

high unit price. In addition, in the etching process, acidic chemicals of various concentrations are used, thus, requiring the proper arrangement of the operating area, and safety precautions must be taken in the process (Graver, n.d.).

In this regard, the researcher has preliminary information about the possibility of using acrylic plates in the Drypoint process (Stead, n.d.) and has experience from the experiment. Therefore, this research is an experiment on acrylic sheets used as plate, and the solubility of Dichloromethane to replace the use of acid in the etching process. Some outstanding properties of the acrylic sheets, such as the density of 1.15-1.19 g/cm³ which makes them resistant to impact, more resistant to the environment than other plastics, and can be dissolved with varieties of solvents. Moreover, the transparent acrylic sheet allows 92% of light to pass through it (ChaiCharoenTech, M.P.A.), thus, making it convenient for the Printmaker to overlay the plate over sketches or prototypes for duplication. Drypoint scratches on the plate can also be created easily because the material is flexible and not rigidly hard.

As for handling, it can be easily maneuvered around the studio during the working process since it is lighter than the copper plate. Moreover, the alternative solvent used to replace the acid used in the typical Etching process, the researcher has chosen Dichloromethane, owing to its ability to dilute the surface of the acrylic sheet effectively, and therefore, is commonly used as a solvent for binding surfaces of acrylic sheets together. Thus, making it easy to access via general acrylic sheet vendor. Apart from that, the substance is also one of the least harmful Chlorocarbon compounds, with the least toxic Chlorohydrocarbon and volatile properties (Pollution Control Department, 2008). Therefore, with the above mentioned, the researcher has further experimented with the possibility of forming various grooves on the acrylic plates by applying Dichloromethane as a dissolving solution to perform the Etching-like result made from the etching process on metal plates.

Methodology

Normally the ground in etching is any acid-resistant material used to protect an etching plate from acid. The most common grounds are wax, asphaltum, shellac, rosin, and soap. To print an intaglio plate, you fill the marks with ink and wipe the surface clean. The press pushes the paper into the inked lines (Magical Secrets, n.d.)

Hence, the researcher has applied this concept to the use of an acrylic plate for the etching. But rather than using the typical acid versus acid-resistant ground in the metal plate etching process, the researcher has applied a solvent versus an anti-solvent ground for this research. In the experiments, Dichloromethane was used as a solvent to create grooves and lines in the design on desirable areas, while it does not strip or dissolve the anti-solvent ground used to coat the plate. The use of Dichloromethane can be applied because the particles of solutes break down into tiny particles and infiltrate another substance (solvent) depending on the intermolecular force between the solvent and the solute molecules and the intermolecular force between the molecules of the solute and solvent itself.

According to the "like dissolves like" principle, polar solutes dissolve in polar solvents due to the interaction of their dipoles, however, this is not possible with non-polar solvents (Pimdee, 2017). Moreover, after trying out several anti-solvent grounds, the researcher found that Winsor screen filler (Handprinted, n.d.; Winsor Group, 2017) can resist Dichloromethane from dissolving the acrylic surface. Thus, this concept has been applied to replace the use of acid and acid-resistant ground in three etching techniques: Hard ground –

a technique which uses etching ground melted from a ball or cake onto a heated plate and spread while soft by means of a roller or dabber and draw through with a needle or sharp object after hardening. Soft ground – an etching ground usually with tallow or grease that is used chiefly to obtain textural lines and effects on the plate by pressing cloth or similar material into the ground or by drawing with a pencil on a piece of paper laid over it, and Aquatint – a method of etching a printing plate so that various tones similar to watercolor washes can be reproduced (Merriam Webster, n.d.).

In the Hard ground technique, Winsor screen filler no. 67 mixed with water was coated onto the surface and then scratched out only in the desired area. This allows Dichloromethane to dissolve the desirable space.

In the Soft ground technique, Poster color and Winsor screen filler no. 67 mixed with concentrated starch glue were used to coat the surface. Some areas of the ground would be stamped out, and some areas would be doodling out with any drawing tools and allowing Dichloromethane to dissolve the desirable opening areas on the plate.

In the Aquatint technique, Winsor screen filler no. 67 mixed with water was sprayed onto the surface thinly or thickly. This allows Dichloromethane to dissolve more or less of the desirable space between the screen filler's droplets on the plate.

Experimentation and Results

Drypoint Technique

In addition to using a needle and a soldier (Coulanges, n.d.), a 30-degree blade cutter can also be used to engrave the design effectively (figure 2). In Printmaking using the Drypoint method, the artist scratches an image onto a metal plate using a sharp instrument; the metal bits that stay attached to the surface are the burr. The burr then catches and holds extra ink during the process of printing, giving the image a soft and saturated appearance. Because the burr is made of tiny pieces of metal, the artist only can pull a relatively small number of prints that display the softness of the burr before it has worn away. (Coleman, 2017) Similarly, when working with an acrylic plate in this research, ten printing editions could be made and the degradation of tonal value from the worn burr could be observed starting from edition number 8th (figure 3). Along with this, an electric carving & marking pen can also provide acceptable quality prints in this category, as can be seen in figure 4.



Figure 2. Drypoint Processes.



Figure 3. Results of editions 1, 8, and 10 respectively.



Figure 4. An electric carving & marking pen (left), the plate (center) and printing results (right).

Hardground Technique

The researcher slightly sanded the surface of the plate with 1000 grit sandpaper before coating to enable the screen filler to adhere to the surface more effectively. According to the experiments the most suitable proportion of a coating ground made from the mixture of screen filler and water was 3:2. Brushing off the residue caused by the dilution dissolving process by Dichloromethane (figure 5) could also improve the sharpness of the prints from the desired grooves and lines from the process.



Figure 5. Scratching through the coating with a cutter (left); dichloromethane dripping (center); brushing off the residue (right).

Polishing the edge of the designated lines softly with 1000 grit sandpaper could further reduce the leftover residue from Dichloromethane dissolving as can be seen in figure 6. In this case, 33 editions were obtained.



Figure 6. Polishing softly with 1000 grit sandpaper around the design (left); the result of the first edition (center) and the 33rd edition (right).

For the doodling technique, Winson screen filler no.67 mixed with concentrated starch glue with the proportion of 1:3 was used as a soft ground to apply over the surface of the acrylic plate shown in figure 7. This substance was used as a replacement for the traditional soft waxy ground derived from the mixture of grease and/or asphaltum. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

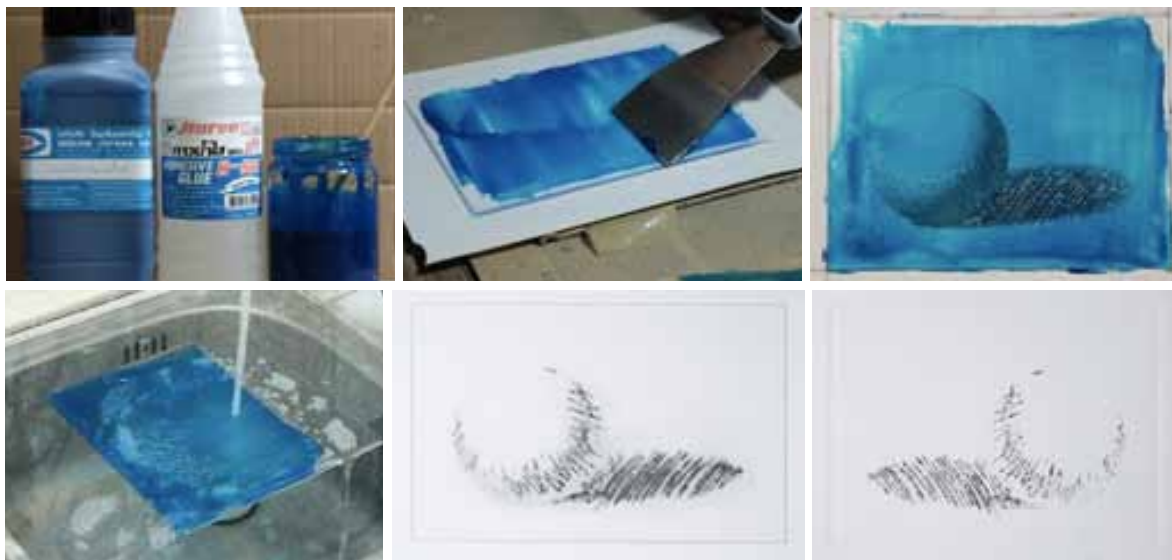


Figure 7. The mixture between Winson screen filler no.67 with concentrated starch glue for the doodling technique (top); the coating could be easily washed out by water (below left) the plate (below center); the resulting print (below right).

Another soft ground substance replacement for this research that the researcher tried out successfully was Poster Color, since one of its main ingredients is *Gum Arabic* (Kristin, 2018) which is also a good anti-solvent ground, for this matter. The result of applying the Poster Color on the plate for texture printing was favorable. The Dichloromethane partially permeates through the poster pigment and dissolves some part of the plate resulting in a similar tonal value to the Aquatint technique (figure 8). According to research conducted across several databases, Poster Color has never been the subject of an experiment. The plate from this technique can withstand the inking and printing process of up to 33 editions (figure 9).



Figure 8. The use of Poster Color as a coating substance for texture stamping.



Figure 9. The first edition (left) and 33rd edition (right).

Aquatint Technique

In the first experiment, a random aquatint effect was achieved by dripping Dichloromethane directly onto the surface of the acrylic plate, and although the tonal value from printing looked soft and appealing, however, the intensity of the value of the outcome was uncontrollable (figure 10).



Figure 10. Tonal values achieved from aquatint technique deriving from direct dichloromethane dripping on the surface of the plate (right); the plate (center) the printing results (right).

As a result, more systematic dripping of Dichloromethane was added to the experiment. While the different numbers of drops added could provide various tonal values ranging from lighter to darker values. However, it appears that the tonal intensity increased with the number of drops and was only noticeable between 1-5 drops (figure 11). Increasing the number of drops of Dichloromethane after that produced no differences.



Figure 11. Tonal values deriving from direct dripping dichloromethane on an acrylic plate (left); After the first five drops, the intensity of the printing's result remained the same (right).

Since the direct application of Dichloromethane gave uncontrollable intensity of value, subsequently, the use of Dichloromethane resistant droplets of Winson screen filler no. 67 and water with the proportion of 30:100 ml. on the acrylic plate with spraying onto the acrylic plate was tried. The initial finding was that different quantities and sizes of droplets on the acrylic plate could give an impact on Dichloromethane dissolving levels resulting in different tonal values in print (figure 12).



Figure 12. The use of airbrush in Aquatint technique (left); Dichloromethane dripping (center left) the inked plate (center right); the printing results (right).

It is found that the use of hand spray and airbrush with a 30:100 ml mixture of Winson screen filler no.67 and water together with proper timing and techniques directly impacted the Aquatint tonal value achieved. Consequently, the finished plate carried out with the airbrushing tool yielded 32 editions. The quality of the tonal value of the prints started to decline from the 11th edition and was degraded from the 24th edition (figure 14).



Figure 13. The plate coated with the mixture of Winson Screen Filler no.67 and water (left); the coating could be easily washed out by water (right).



Figure 14. Printing plate made from an aquatint technique with airbrush (left); printing editions of 1st, 11th, 24th, and 32nd (respectively).

Using a hand spray tool (figure 15) that is more accessible at a more affordable price than an airbrush machine could also produce a favorable result. Although of all the 37 editions printed, the tonal value had slightly faded from the 13th edition and apparently, the fading became more obvious from the 18th edition. Eventually, on the 28th edition, the overall saturation of the printing became substantially decreased. It can be concluded that the acrylic plate usability for printing identical editions from this technique is between 10 to 13 editions (figure 16).

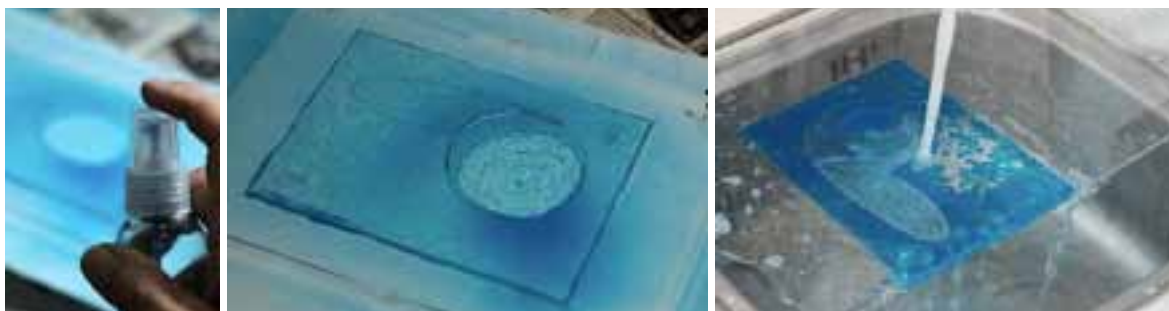


Figure 15. The use of a hand spray tool on the mixture of Winson Screen Filler no.67 and water (left); the coating was easily washed out by water (right).



Figure 16. Printing plate from a hand sprayed Aquatint (left); Printing results: the 1st, 13th, 18th, and 28th editions (respectively).

Discussion

The 2 mm acrylic plate was the most suitable thickness for all the techniques experimented on within this research. As its physical condition remained intact despite Dichloro-methane dissolving. Additionally, its lightweight is also beneficial when handling within the operation procedure.

General Attributes	
Acrylic Plate	Copper Plate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lighter weight per square unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heavier weight per square unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The price is ten times more affordable than that of a copper plate e.g., an acrylic sheet size of 122x244 cm. with 2 mm. thickness costs 1,337.50 THB (Approx. 32.5 USD) at the time of conducting this research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The price is ten times more expensive than that of an acrylic plate e.g., a copper plate size of 122x244 cm. with 1 mm. thickness costs 11,427.60 THB (Approx. 326.5 USD) at the time of conducting this research.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surface polishing is not needed as it was well-polished from the factory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Before use, properly polishing the surface is needed, since scratches from the cutting to size process from the local vendor are commonplace.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The plate can simply be cut to size with a cutter or a hand saw. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More difficult to cut manually, cutting with a machine is preferable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy to cut into any shape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More effort is needed to cut into any shape.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fewer editions can be made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A larger number of editions and more delicate designs can be obtained.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy to store since the acrylic plate has no oxidation issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Likely to have an oxidation issue if not treated properly before storing.

Figure 17. Table comparing the strength and weakness of using acrylic and copper plate for general printmaking.

Drypoint Technique

It was more convenient to apply direct markings on an acrylic plate than on a copper plate as the surface is less rigid. Direct marking on an acrylic sheet through a Drypoint technique is more convenient since its material is less rigid. Thus, it is more comfortable to scratch with a tool. As a result, the artworks are better expressed in comparison to a copper plate and give a better feel when scratching with a tool which results in better expression of the artworks in comparison to the copper plate. However, the ink clinging along the Burr of the scratched lines was worn away more rapidly than those on the copper plate.

Acrylic plate	Copper plate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since the surface is less rigid, the Printmaker may find it more tactile to control the scratching tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since the surface is more rigid, the Printmaker may find it less tactile to control the scratching tool.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The transparency of an acrylic sheet allows a printmaker to duplicate the design more easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The design duplication process is more complicated.

Figure 18. Table comparing the strength and weakness of using acrylic and copper plate for Drypoint.

Hard Ground Technique

The researcher experimented with a variety of grounds: Gum Arabic, gelatin, water-based adhesive, latex glue, screen emulsion, screen filler, etc. to resist Dichloromethane dissolving on the acrylic plate. Eventually, it was found that the mixture of Winson screen filler no.67 and water in the proportion of 3:2 gave an optimum result.

Acrylic plate	Copper plate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Due to its elasticity, the sheets can return to their original form after being twisted without being damaged, and the weight per unit is lighter than the copper plate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is difficult to return to their original forms after being twisted and the weight per unit is heavier than the acrylic plate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is unnecessary to coat the back of the plate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is necessary to coat the back of the plate for further protection.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screen filler coating is water-based. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asphaltum coating is oil-based. Precautions must be taken.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A lesser amount of chemical is needed for the process; dichloromethane for instance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various concentrations of ferric chloride solution must be used along with tedious working processes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less chemical substances and smaller working areas are needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Etching with ferric chloride needs a larger and specific working space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working safety and studio arrangement can be managed with ease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Owing to the use of ferric chloride, several working safety procedures need to be applied.

Figure 19. Table comparing acrylic plate Hard Ground technique findings to the traditional copper plates Hard Ground technique.

Soft Ground Technique

With the mixture of Gum Arabic and color pigments in Poster Color used as a ground for this technique, it was possible for the Dichloromethane to partially infiltrate through the color pigment area and dissolve some part of the surface of the acrylic plate. As a result, it gave Aquatint-like tonal value, along with the imprinted traces on the acrylic plate. Furthermore, another finding was the use of a mixture of Winson screen filler no.67 and concentrated starch glue in the proportion of 1:3 ml for coating. It was found that the doodling lines could be expressed freely by drawing directly through the coating.

Acrylic plate	Copper plate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coating the back of the printing plate is unnecessary as soaking in an acidic solution is not needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coating the back of the printing plate is necessary since soaking in an acidic solution is needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Poster color is widely accessible at an affordable price. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The soft ground solution must be prepared by printmakers or imported from abroad.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The poster color is water-soluble and can be used to coat the surface of the plate directly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To make a Soft Ground solution, various ingredients are required, and proper procedures must be followed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the use of Poster color coating, the imprinted design and desirable tonal value on the acrylic plate can be achieved simultaneously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the traditional procedures, the imprinted design must be made on the plate before the Aquatint process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The poster color is generally non-toxic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The soft Ground solution can contain potentially harmful ingredients. And should be used with care and proper protection.

Figure 20. Table comparing acrylic plate Soft Ground technique findings to the traditional copper plates Soft Ground technique.

Aquatint Technique

Dichloromethane was used as a solvent to dilute the acrylic plate surface, while several dilution-resistant grounds: Gum Arabic, gelatin, latex glue, water-based adhesive, screen emulsion, and screen filler, had been tried out as well. It was found that using hand spraying and airbrushing with the mixture of Winson screen filler no. 67 and water in the proportion of 30:100 ml, together with proper timing and techniques could provide proper aquatint tonal value for the printing.

Acrylic plate	Copper plate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coating the back of the printing plate is unnecessary as soaking in an acidic solution is not needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coating the back of the printing plate is necessary since soaking in an acidic solution is needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screen filler is water-soluble and can be cleaned easily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The traditional acidic resistant ground on a copper plate is oil-based. Thus, several types of solvents are required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The application of Dichloromethane in the process is direct and simple. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various concentrations of ferric chloride solution must be applied, along with the tedious working processes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lesser chemical substances and smaller working areas are required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Etching with Ferric Chloride requires proper preparation and specific working space.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personal protection during the process is easier to manage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various amounts of Ferric Chloride solution together with larger working space are needed owing to the more tedious working process, resulting in more working safety concerns.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screen filler and Dichloromethane solutions are simple to use, and vendors are commonplaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ferric Chloride solution is available from the specialized vendor and needs several preparation processes before use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mixture of Winson screen filler no. 67 and water is easy to use and water-soluble. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asphaltum or Rosin widely used on copper plates as an acidic resistance ground are used with an oil-based solvent. Several coating and washing away with various solvents can be troublesome at times.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spray Coating of the mixture of Winson screen filler no. 67 with water is safe for use. However, protective masks, goggles, and safety measures are recommended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most of the substances and chemicals used in the traditional Copper Plate Etching process are oil-based; thus, protective protocols are highly recommended for safety and health reasons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Screen filler is generally non-toxic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various Ground solutions for Aquatint used in the traditional Copper Plate Etching process can contain potentially harmful ingredients.

Figure 21. Table comparing acrylic plate Aquatint technique findings to the traditional copper plates Aquatint technique.

Conclusion

It was found that the use of an acrylic plate with the alternative approach replacing the traditional copper plate Etching can be beneficial if the following strength and weakness are considered:

1. For the Drypoint technique, the use of a 30-degree blade cutter can provide a favorable result, but somehow a more ergonomic design of scratching tools can be developed in the future for more practical handling.
2. For the Hard Ground technique, the tools, and materials used along with the procedure are direct, simple, economical, and safer. Nonetheless, the adhesive strength of the mixture of the screen filler and water used to coat the plate should be improved to withstand a harder scratching action. Even though an economical number of chemical substances and a smaller workspace are needed, the precautions and safety measures shall not to be neglected.
3. For the Soft Ground technique, the discovery of the two benefits of Poster color delivering both imprinted images and Aquatint tonal value simultaneously on the same plate is advantageous. Somehow, if the surface of the acrylic plate can be further strengthened, then, it would be possible to generate finer details with favorable plate surface quality. As a result, it can be used to print a larger number of editions.
4. For the Aquatint technique, using hand spraying and airbrushing with the mixture of Winsor screen filler no.67 and water (30:100 ml) over the acrylic plate before the Dichloromethane dilution, provided desirable results. Yet, again, the adhesive strength of the mixture of the screen filler with water used to spray over the plate should be improved to withstand stronger dilution.
5. For all the techniques, somehow, if the solubility of Dichloromethane can be further developed to be stronger or weaker, variations of finer or coarser details of grooves and lines on the acrylic plate from the dilution would be more apparent.
6. Since only an economical amount of chemical was applied and a smaller working space is needed, this could be an alternative approach to a greener art process.

Suggestions

1. Experiment with more alternative and safer chemical solutions, tools, and other materials to improve the quality of the process should be considered.
2. Further study of chemical reactions concerning alternative Intaglio Printmaking processes should be considered.
3. Collaboration with a chemical specialist is recommended.
4. Currently copper is recyclable whereas acrylic sheets, although can be reused for other purposes, are not that easy to be recycled (Chan, 2022). thus, proper disposal of the used acrylic plate or plastic should be considered (Wilai Asawadechsakdi and Yada Chavalkul, 2021).

5. Although it can be argued that nothing can be totally non-toxic (Graver, M., n.d.) but to the researcher direct experience in the field of printmaking, more researches and experiments for alternative (or safer) materials to be used has become widely practiced internationally, as for Thailand although the idea of Non-toxic printmaking is still relatively passive but the researcher hope that the finding in this research will encourage the lesser use of unhealthy chemical and shed light on further experimentation on this topic in Thailand.

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Reinventing Indigenous West African Fabric Design

for Contemporary Commercial Application

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Abstract

This study explores and reflects on the potential of global commercial application of indigenous West African fabric design in the middle to high-end interior textiles and surfaces. The study adopts design theory which encourages innovation and creativity in concepts for effective solutions. Theoretically, ideas have been utilized as a method of bringing to light the veiled aspects of practice in indigenous West African fabric production alongside its diverse and complex cultural connections. There is a practical component of the study utilizes a series of 'collaborations' with technology, new textile materials, color resources and global trends to generate forms or visual language that is then translated into commercial designs based on indigenous West African fabric themes. The experimentation has adapted traditional artistic and graphic aesthetics (symbols, design motifs, totems and insignia), creatively manipulating them via digital technology and using a mechanized printing process for completion. The designs exemplify a modern adaptation of indigenous West African design symbols for wider global markets which is hoped, will accelerate the transformation of such design forms for the contemporary market. It is anticipated that the new designs will continue to re-define indigenous West African textile expressions and their applications globally.

Keywords: *Contemporary Application, Indigenous Fabric Design, Cultural Conversation, West Africa*

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Introduction

This study seeks to increase the exposure and commercial application of indigenous West African fabric design. This entails experimentation with, and the production of, a range of practical textile samples and possibilities. Theoretically, the ideas of Sarat Maharaj's "Know-how and No-How: stopgap notes on "method" in visual arts as knowledge production" (Maharaj 2009) have been utilized as a method for bringing to light the idiosyncratic, or veiled* aspects of practice in indigenous West African textile production and its diverse and complex cultural connections. This concept of knowledge production in relation to indigenous West African textile production and their affiliation with culture, creates the opportunity for reflection and re-evaluation of the future of the industry. The practical component explores such cultural affiliations further by adopting new materials and processes. A broader set of unorthodox 'collaborations' with technology, new material and color resources are utilized to generate working designs and forms based on indigenous West African textile traditions. This experimentation adapts a traditional aesthetic language (textile fabrics, panels and clothing), creatively manipulating it with digital graphics techniques and using mechanized printing processes for completion. It further reflects on the mechanization and commercialisation of indigenous West African textiles through design and product experimentation.

West African textiles and clothing communicate important religious, historical and social information about the cultures to which they belong. They act as markers of status indicating wealth and conferring prestige; they identify members of specific cultural or social groups and play a significant part in ceremonies of initiation, marriage and death. Throughout history, the elite members of society, who created the necessary socio-political, cultural and economic environments for clothing practices to develop, have determined clothing trends. According to changing historical contexts, individuals and social groups, have used clothing as a form of body modification and to enhance their personal and social image and identity. Dress has also been instrumental in reinforcing images and social boundaries with outsiders; such images are both accentuated on the body itself or the clothes covering the body. According to Belting and Dunlap (2014), an image is more than a product of perception. It is created as the result of personal or collective knowledge and intention. People live with images as the result of personal or collective knowledge and intention. These associations exemplify individuals' bonds with cultural codes and conventions.

Although this research and practice mainly consider fabrics that find their application in interior decoration and architecture, it has drawn on studies concerning dress and clothing which have been the primary catalyst for fabric production in West Africa. Amongst the rich and varied forms of dress are the typical pieces of West African formal attire, including the knee-to-ankle-length, flowing *Boubou* robe, *Dashiki* and Senegalese *Kaftan* (also known as *Agbada* and *Babariga*), which have their origins in the clothing of the nobility of various West African empires in the 12th century. The traditional half-sleeved, hip-long, woven smocks or tunics known as *Fugu* in Gurunsi, *Riga* in Hausa, and worn over a pair of baggy trousers, are also a popular garment (Nordquist & Aradeon, 1975). They further noted that, in the beach-front districts extending from the southern Côte d'Ivoire to Benin, a substantial rectangular length of material is wrapped under one arm, hung over a shoulder and held in one of the wearer's hands; this dress is reminiscent of ancient Roman robes. The best-known of these robe-like articles of clothing is the *Kente* (made by the Akan of Ghana

and Côte d'Ivoire), who wear them as a symbol of national pride. Weaving fabrics and stitching them into garments have been regular customs in West Africa. The practice predates modern record keeping and historical examples can be seen in museums, archives and the documentation of different breeches, shirts, tunics and coats (Rattray et al., 1927).

Traditional activities such as festivals and celebrations of war victories and heroism, cultural symbolism and the decrees of kings, chiefs and overlords have all contributed to the shaping of fabric design and manufacture in the region. Gordon (2011) states that, for sacred celebrations, men and women clothe themselves in meaning that is alive and changing, yet anchored in beliefs. For a long time in Ghana, to appear at an important event wearing cloth in the same pattern as the most prominent or eminent chief has been considered an affront. Forward-thinking chiefs largely avoid such social blunders by commissioning new clothes from a local weaver in innovative patterns and colors for the most important occasions. This commission is then undertaken with a commitment from the weaver not to copy it until after the event when requests for replication are considered a compliment. Such cultural interactions and dynamics continue to drive creativity and innovation in textile production in the region.

At this point it should be stressed that the incorporation of contemporary digital printing techniques for the experiments should not be misconstrued in any way as superior to the handmade, traditional textile design traditions of the region; they should be complementary to those individuals and agencies that are working to protect them. The activities of such individuals and agencies that are working with some communities to produce handmade pieces using traditional textile production techniques are commendable. These initiatives must be encouraged as there is still a market for such products. Ethical fashion enterprises such as Fashion4Development (a global campaign that uses fashion-based initiatives to support the United Nations' broader issues in helping Africa) and the UN's International Trade Centre (ITC) Ethical Fashion Initiative, a project which connects the fashion business with African artisans, are bringing issues such as development, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability into wider focus. Since 2011, Fashion4Development, in collaboration with the United Nations, has been working with identifiable groups and individual designers in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and other African countries. Top fashion brands such as the British designers Vivienne Westwood and Stella McCartney, Australia's Sass and Bide and Italy's Ilaria Venturini Fendi are participating in such initiatives and working with indigenous communities to create fashion products featuring ethnic-influenced patterns, prints and designs inspired by the land and culture of the Kikuyu, Maasai, Samburu and other East African tribes (Phipps-Rufus 2013). Such efforts are very encouraging as there is enough evidence to demonstrate that these production practices are creating sustainable employment for marginalized women and disadvantaged groups.

Methodology

The Design Process

The following sections give an account of the various experiments and design outcomes undertaken during this study. The study adopts the design theory which encourages innovation and creativity in concepts for effective solutions. This further exposes textiles as a functional and decorative form based on underlining principles. It considers trend drivers and mood images, design elements, graphic compositions, print and product direc-

tions (with the theme of cultural conservations). Color has been the single most important and expressive resource for these designs. The final design produced based on the theme “cultural conversations” carried symbolic connotations or interpretations that highlight the rich culture of the people in West Africa. This theme was chosen because there is a seemingly endless cycle of dialogue between West African cultural elements used in the modern European context. It is worth noting that, this study adopted a more qualitative interpretation approach to evaluate the symbolism of the motifs, elements, and colors used in the products. Additionally, consumers were not consulted to provide any comments on the products produced in this study.

Trend Drivers and Mood Images

Trend drivers are usually catch phrases or words that underpin the designs; in this instance, words such as luxury, royalty, quality, and passion. These drivers inform material, processes, and outcome and by extension provide an opportunity to improve material efficiency and product output. Mood images can set the thematic setting for a design or explain its function in a piece of work. In this context, mood images are taken from West African culture, ecology, indigenous art, and design practices. It is a collection of textures, images and abstractions related to the design theme as a reference point. The practice tapped into the semiotics of West African fabric culture as illustrated in the ‘mood images’ in Figure 1. The selection of these images is for illustration. However, the mood images selection can vary greatly depending on the desired design outcome.



Figure 1. Mood Images (Culture). (Source: Douglas Anane-Frimpong - Photo Editor GCG, Ghana).

Design Elements

Forming the foundation for the design practice, elements were sourced from different cultural symbols. It is interesting that, these elements are rich in symbolic connotations widely cherished by the people. Figure 2 a-e shows the various design elements from different cultural symbols. These elements are either abstract or figurative shapes of animals and humans which depicts the historical meanings and symbolical significance in the culture.

Figures 2 (a-e) below, depict various design elements from different cultural symbols.

















 Funtumfunafu-Denkyemfunafu (The siamese crocodile) Symbol of Destiny	 Kae Me (Remember me) Symbol of Faithfulness	 Me Ware Wo (I shall marry you) Symbol of Commitment	 Odenkyem (Crocodile) Symbol of Adaptation
 Gye Nyame (Except God) Symbol of Omnipotence and immortality of God	 Dwanini Mmen (Ram's Horns) Symbol of Concealment	 Fofool'Folo (Seeds of Bidens Pilosa) Symbol of Jealousy	 Ntesie - Mate Masie (I have heard and kept it) Symbol of Wisdom and Knowledge
 Gyewu Ailku (The back of Gyewu's head) Symbol of Leadership	 Epa (Handcuffs) Symbol of Law and Justice	 Mmra Krado (Seal of the law) Symbol of Justice	 Nyamedua (An altar to God) Symbol of Worship and Devotion
 Hwehwenudua (Measuring rod) Symbol of Quality and Standard	 Ese Ne Tekrema (The Teeth and The Tongue) Symbol of Interdependency	 Nkyinkyini - Ohemmaa nkyinkyin (Changing oneself) Symbol of Adjustment	 Nsaa (A type of Blanket) Symbol Value and Quality

Figure 2a. Selected Adinkra symbols and their meanings.




















 Beds of Bamboo and Millet	 Grasshopper neck	 Farmers Sickle (another version)	 House of Calabash flowers
 Wealth and Luxury	 Spindle	 Fini N'Goloni Sirakele (one twisted road)	 Iguana's Elbow
 Farmers Sickle	 Wealth and Luxury (another version)	 Kolowi (Cowrie Shell)	 Iguana's Elbow
 Brave and Fearless	 Small drum	 Mali	 Yiri Boulou (tree leaves)
 Stream called the Wuwanyanko	 Mauritanian women's cushion	 Calabash Flowers	

Figure 2b. Selected Bogolanfina motifs and their meanings. (Source: National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution).

















	Adan (Bat)		Eye (Bird)		Agufon (Crested Crane)		Eye (Bird)
	Sekeseke (Cuffs)		Opolo (Frog)		Opolle Mapo (Mapo pillars)		Alangba Berekete (Fat lizard)
	Oga (Chamele)		Ejo (Snake)		Orunkun Aro Oga (Chameleon)		Ooya (Comb)
	Oobe (Smaller Bat)		Amuga (Scissors)		Kokoro (Key)		Alangba (Lizard)

Figure 2c. Selected Adire motifs and their meanings (Areo and Kalilu 2013).















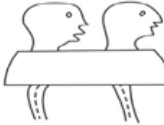
		
		
		
		
		

Figure 2d. Fon Appliqué insignias (Kent 1971).



Figure 2e. Ibadan dun – layout. (Source: National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution).

Graphic Composition

The graphic composition encompasses the various stages of design evolution and development to finished products. Most of the symbols and images referenced for the designs lack elasticity when compared with other motifs such as those found in oriental and classical designs. This is because the motifs are generally representations of humans, animals or plants and it is easy for the viewer to recognise if they are placed say, upside-down. Because of their apparent lack of elasticity, placement or composition of designs was quite challenging. For instance, when working with lines, there is some flexibility of the placing and orientation without necessarily distorting the meaning and outcome (this is illustrated in Figure 3 left, with a random multicolored line-oriented composition). However, the composition may appear distorted when some symbols and images are not placed ‘appropriately’ regardless of any innovation or alteration as in Figure 3, right.

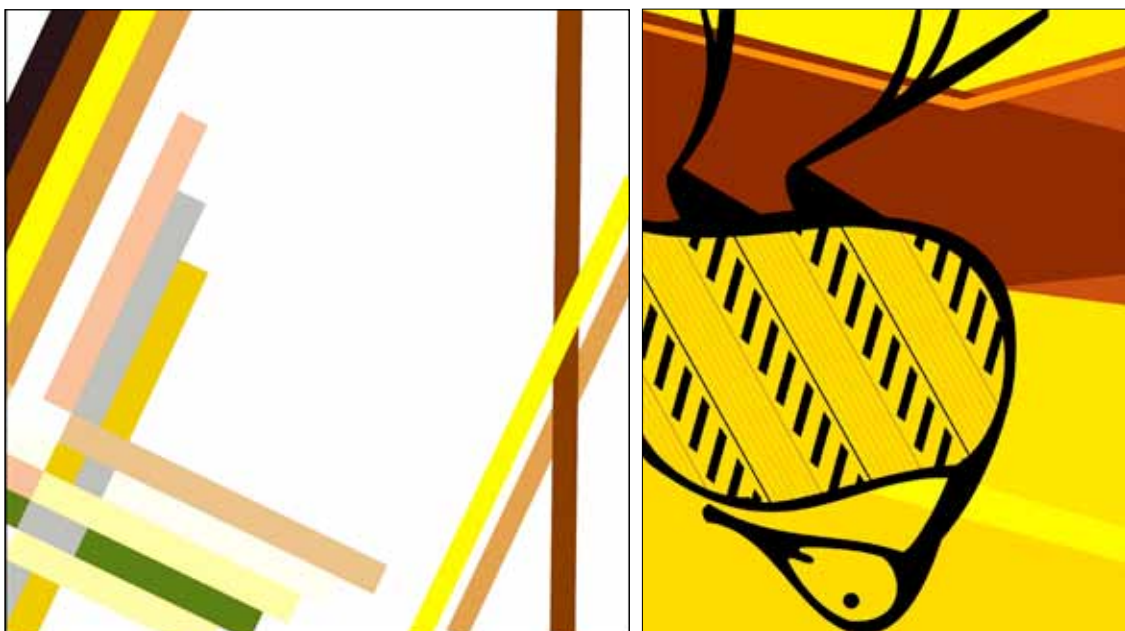


Figure 3. Left, Simple line design. Right, Motif placed up-side-down.

Figure 4 is an experimental graphic composition of multiple visuals of indigenous West African textile motifs and expressions that have been used to form one cohesive design composition. The composition could be said to be a corruption of West African symbolism because it features Adinkra symbols such as *Due Afe*, *Donno*, *Bese Saka*, *Gewu Etiko*, *Krapa*, and *Funtunfunafu* which have varied meanings and to some extent contradict each other. Furthermore, traditionally the symbols are always rendered in dark block tones, but in this instance, they are mainly mid to light tones on an uncharacteristic strong cocktail of colors as a background. This composition, and for that matter most of the designs in this experiment, reinforce the idea that this study seeks to project aesthetic appeal rather than symbolic connotation; hence the combination of unrelated motifs/symbols rendered in varied forms. In some instances, a single motif is used in the composition. The various design components including color are arranged, distributed and aligned in a way that not only has an aesthetic appeal but is also geared towards different product trajectories.



Figure 4. Graphic Composition.

The bright, vivid, colorful and animated textile fabrics of West Africa have inspired these explorative designs. The ideas were experimented with using bold drawings of traditional motifs with no textures. The strong background colors were intended to compensate for the lack of texture and to provide some space for the viewer to navigate through the composition. Bold drawings and a variety of geometric shapes have been used to make the designs elegant and rich to correspond with the end products. The bold motifs and geometric backgrounds filled with flat colors, optically contrast with the animated overlaid motifs. The concepts and design outcomes can be interpreted as filters through which one can look back in history and simultaneously look into the future for West African textile design practice. The designs are premised on conceptual art practices of West Africa and international perspectives of art and design production and the experiments migrate from traditional materials and practice into more exploratory materials and products.

Cultural Conversations

As mentioned above 'Cultural Conversations' is a general theme adopted for the series of continued experimentation with West African motifs in this study. This theme was chosen because there is a seemingly endless cycle of dialogue between West African cultural elements used in the modern European context. It is believed that the modern design context as experimented in this study can transcend time and interact with history and traditional protocols even though the outcomes are more futuristic. Manuel Castells as cited by Tardif (2002) contends that identity and the need for recognition, along with technological change, constitute the constants that create history. Cultural Conversations represent a stylistic evolution of combining indigenous designs with the new materials and technologies currently available. The designs aim to have a wide appeal and application despite the obvious references to West African design culture. There are combinations of unrelated motifs (combining motifs from different ethnic and indigenous design culture of West Africa) in the compositions. The combination of the various elements in the design composition seeks to create an amazing sensorial and semantic impact when considered in their entirety. The use of color has been an essential part of this project; the 'high impact' colored compositions have been sourced from a cross-section of global color trend forecasting and the landscape (ecology, culture and wildlife) of West Africa.

Cultural Conversations: Vortex

The range of designs in this category is a story with many interpretations. First thoughts inevitably turn to the boldness and sturdiness of designs. However, the vivid colors and their predictable associations with Bogolanfini fabric designs do not make up the full picture. Instead, blush colors, in broad vortex background shapes, celebrate a creative renaissance of design/color/technology collaboration. The colors and motifs in the designs represent this duality, soft, strong colors and radiating multicolored circular backgrounds contrasting sharply with dark veins and with the rudimentary white overlay of motifs. A breadth of colors such as canary yellow, rich salmon and sea blue has been set against a range of dark tones, including brown and grey, recalling the vast suburban sprawls of modern West African societies and their diversity in taste and preferences. The designs are characterized by bold circular color blocks, rich colors and an ornate overlay of motifs. The designs (Figure 5) could be used for products such as curtains and textile accessories.



Figure 5. Vortex - Part of Cultural Conversations Collection.

Cultural Conversations: Story Boards

Story Board is a mixed motif experimental design range inspired by the diverse lifestyles of the people of West Africa. These bright and loud panel designs encompass unusual colors such as pinks, greys, cobalt blue, sulphurous yellow, rich copper and blues. The atmosphere and responses created by the combination of images in the panels evoke a sense of mysticism. Similar to all the collection in the Cultural Conversations, the compositions comprise a collection of unrelated motifs with diverse historical and ethnic antecedence. These are designs that celebrate the many facets of life in West Africa; festivals, eating together, storytelling and belonging. Inspirations such as these are in constant flux with a blurred aesthetic coupled with subtle but solid flat colored backgrounds that are firm. Figure 6 is one of the designs in the storyboard category.



Figure 6. Story Board - Part of Cultural Conversations Collection.

Cultural Conversation Show

The design experiments culminated into a final show at the Winchester School of Art Library, University of Southampton. The show was dubbed Cultural Conversations in line with the central theme that informed the designs throughout the study. The designs for the show present an engaging examination of the textile design traditions of West Africa as a region, exploring the various design and production techniques constituting fabric creation in Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Mali, Benin and Cote d' Ivoire by analyzing the symbols and iconography of those designs, considering the cultural implications.

The show featured a cocktail of fabrics, upholstered chairs, wall panels and digital design slideshow that featured over 200 images. The fabrics that measured 3 metres each were printed in silk, cotton panama, cotton poplin, cotton sateen, jersey and soft canvas (Figure 7).



Figure 7. A cross-section - Cultural Conversation Show.

The fabric designs (Figure 8) were set in mid to dark tone backgrounds in line with the general position of the practice. The strong but flat background makes up for the lack of textures and so that the viewers will be able to navigate around and engage with the bold symbols. Most of the images used in the designs may appear the same and sometimes symmetrical, but that is an optical illusion. The contrast of images and color was superlative which gave the set-up a gray ambience and some vibrant energy.



Figure 8. Assorted fabrics – Cultural Conversation Show.

The retro chairs (Figure 9) used for the show are more complimentary but yet infuse the space with contemporary notes. These chairs were selected because of the broad surfaces to accommodate the bold and imposing images. The leg and frame are made from beech

wood, foam and the fabrics are soft velvet. The fabric has water repellent properties so that the chair can be wiped down with a damp cloth and given a regular brush to keep the fibres smooth, soft and sumptuous. Even though the chairs fit into the product trajectory of the research, their engagement and arrangement in the show are also signifiers of conversations in line with the central theme of the show.



Figure 9. Chairs and Cushions – Cultural Conversations Show.

The 300 cm by 150 cm storyboard (Figure 10) is a stylistic representation of Fon applique ideographs to tell a story. This is part of a contemporary narrative that put unlikely symbols together to bring reflection on indigenous West African history. The storyboard exhibited in the show is an important piece because it has taken the Fon appliqué imagery and storytelling practice and adapted to contemporary digital design and digital printing technique and to satirically put forth a dialogue to engage the viewer's thought and reflection on the role African leaders played during the colonial era.



Figure 10. Story Boards, *The Ambush of Agadja* - Cultural Conversations Show.

The piece encompasses *Tegbessou*, the buffalo in tunic at the top left; *Glele*, the lion at the bottom left; *Agadja*, the ship in the middle; *Kpengla*, the sparrow at the top right; at the bottom is a connection of slave shackles and a four-arm spindle showing the way on top and

both sides. *Tegbessou*, *Glele*, *Agadja* and *Kpengla* were famous kings of Dahomey, modern-day Benin. However, as indicated in the chapter three King Agadja was vicious, and he is known for trading in slaves hence the slave ship as an insignia. This story board has recreated an ambush of Agadja by the other kings. The shackles across the bottom indicate an arrest and cessation of cruelty and the three spindle symbols spread across the board signify hope in skills and dexterity which represent the future of West Africa. The *Story Boards* reinforce the concept of cultural conversations that has been advocated through the practice and is an expansion of critical reflection and development. They emerged from a range of experimentation and testing before arriving at this final composition. Typically, one composition takes up to 25 to 50 different attempts to arrive at a satisfactorily coherent piece.

Results and Discussion

The designs project the complex nature of the various propositions within the practice and research and the commercial and cultural realities within West African and global textile design as an area of practice and commercial production. It also explores the development of pan-regional design imagery that sensitively adapts symbols and patterns from the range of cultural designs. Marrying them to contemporary colors from commercial trend forecasting about upcoming fashionable color pathways, all in pursuit of creating commercially appealing textiles for use in a breadth of product within the international design industry. The long-term aims include increasing the potential for West Africa as a textile design industrial centre in the global economy, thereby enhancing the economic growth for the region, and raising the profile and increasing the prestige of West African design traditions through sensitive adaptations and updates of the same by both West African designers and designers elsewhere. It is anticipated that this allows the West African perspective to come to the fore, that is, if designers of the region themselves are engaged in creative applications and creating cultural conversations across the different culture's design traditions. This will encourage other designers to utilise West African designs as a fresh expression and hence revitalise these practices for contemporary tastes and new applications.

The designs in the entire collection are a seemingly visual abstraction over naturalistic representation. This is because almost all West African visual expressions, regardless of medium, represent objects or ideas rather than depict them. Even the portrait heads of Ile-Ife in Nigeria, usually thought of as naturalistic representations of rulers, have been smoothed and simplified to abstract and generalized stylistic norms. Design innovation for products in the various experimentations have come from art forms from various locations in West Africa. Most of the artists and designers discussed in this study use West African design forms as a way to transform society. The aspects of activism prevalent in some of their work challenge convention and reinforce the importance of creativity. The motifs used in the various compositions are signifiers, and all the experiments in this research are very much another kind of narrative and create a reference from West African themes.

Some aspects of this study, arguments and the practical component go against the grain of most established notions of conservation and the 'purity' of West African design ethics because of the obvious cultural leaps and unusual permutations, such as combining Adinkra symbols and Fon pictographs in one composition. However, all of these seeming cultural leaps create new ways for the wider world to interact with West African designs. This is so because the practical experimentation has led to a unique set of surface designs. The de-

signs exemplify a modern adaptation of indigenous West African design symbols to wider, global markets which it is hoped will accelerate the transformation of such design forms for the contemporary market. It is believed that West African cultural expression should not be restricted by legal ownership and should be available as a resource and reference for designers. This would expand the dimension of African culture globally and allow it to become a constant part of the global design discourse. Even though it has been advocated in this study that there must be access to cultural resources, this must be accompanied by adequate documentation, reasonable education and a mutual frame of reference. This recommendation is necessary as there are variations in the cultural resources that are used; some could be used without any permission; others could be used with permission and clearance from the 'owners' or custodians. There are other forms of cultural resources that are deemed as sacred or as items of worship and are therefore not permitted to be used in any commercial production. Since the design experiments in this study have a commercial dimension and potential such sacred symbols/objects have been avoided. The experimentation with different materials aims to offer a fresh and optimistic vision for textile production in West Africa.

Implications of the Study

The implications from the creative activities in this study encompass economic opportunities, cultural exchange, cultural preservation and sustainability for practice and stakeholders. The popularity of the design elements used in the textile prints will expose the various communities to economic tourism. Also, designers adopting this design concept to produce textile prints will gain great interest and recognition hence resulting in an influence of demands for these products from local and international. This will lead to increased incomes that would go along way to improve livelihoods. Secondly, the presence of these textile prints in foreign markets will promote appreciation, exchange of cultures and deep understanding of cultural backgrounds with symbolic meanings. Lastly, the practice of adopting cultural elements in textiles prints with symbolic expressions (which clearly reflects on the rich history and cultural heritage), will aid to preserve the traditions in West African cultures passed from generations to generations.

Conclusion

The West African wax print fabric is a defining metaphor of African design, fashion and expression, an immediately recognizable icon throughout the world. However, without the mechanization and marketing strategy of the Europeans, and then later, Asian traders, would wax prints exist at all? Moreover, would the perception of African design be completely different (Relph and Irwin 2010). On the back of these rhetorical questions, it is being advocated that there should be innovative ways of considering indigenous West African textile design trajectories in a very dynamic global space. Sudanese designer, Omer Asim, has suggested that West African textile fabrics could be used to produce advanced, creative and contemporary designs reflective of the limitless artistic possibilities 21st-century education, technology and multimedia provide. Omer Asim adds that African designers have to be recognized for using their heritage in a way that contributes to the evolution of their culture, by creating contemporary versions of their traditional crafts. However, contrary to this study's more liberal views on accessibility and the use of African designs by all regardless of race or ethnicity, Omer Asim believes that European designers choose certain colors or materials without necessarily understanding their value. He pushes forward the

idea that the onus falls on 'local' designers to interpret culture and mediate its interface with the rest of the world to ensure its accessibility to Western understanding. Surely, in the spirit of creativity, there can be collaborations and sharing between indigenous West African designers and non-indigenes. Such collaborations and sharing would help safeguard the 'integrity' of sacred and restricted cultural artefacts and ensure that they are not 'appropriated,' degraded or subverted. Such sharing would be mutually beneficial as West African textiles cannot make a significant global impact if it is seen through the parochial lenses of authenticity and indigeneity that bother more on excessive cultural retention.

Furthermore, contemporary art in most cases is a result of creative experimentation with the past and in the process, restructuring, and reinventing past art traditions using modern techniques for creative innovation. The experimentations have interrogated the question of how to update designs and production techniques through the use of contemporary technological advances in digital printing and design development with the use of Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, The CorelDraw software and printing by digital fabric printers. Broadening creative sensibilities to expand the use of indigenous West African textile designs would, therefore, lead to preserving ancient textile-making techniques which are on the verge of dying out, to the benefit of the current generation and the future. The designs are an essential part of a re-evaluation of existing imagery for new forms and design endeavours and in order to build a greater awareness of West African design cultures. It is intended that these designs would create a new showcase for West Africa's creative energies and reinforce the diversity of the region's design history.

Note

Omer Asim is a Sudanese designer living and working in London. He graduated from The Bartlett School of Architecture before completing a postgraduate at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He later attended Central Saint Martins specializing in creative pattern cutting. Asim learned his craft through a number of internships starting with Maurice Sedwell of Savile Row and ending at Vivienne Westwood. He launched his fashion label in 2011.

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Sacred and Profane Dialectics:

A Study of Kecak Ramayana Performing Arts at Uluwatu Temple, Bali Indonesia

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Abstract

This research focuses on the Ramayana Kecak tourist art in Pecatu Village, South Kuta District, Badung Regency, Bali. The goal is to study the sacred and profane practices in the Ramayana Kecak. In this case the practice of entertainment is accompanied by religious spiritual practices. The method used is a descriptive critical analysis using data from interviews with key informants, observations and a document review. A functional structural theory is used to study the ideas, statements, activities and strategic efforts of the Ramayana Kecak performers. The results are based on the prospective AGIL theory, which explains sacred and profane practices through: (1) Adaptation: Ramayana Kecak is adapted as a main source of livelihood; (2) Goal Attainment: the village community develops the Ramayana Kecak to improve its economy; (3) Integration: the community integrates artistic and spiritual activities; (4) Latency Pattern Maintenance: bonds of kinship, solidarity, and social tolerance are built between artists, the community, and the audience.

Keywords: *Kecak, Ramayana, Tourist Art, Tourist Performance, Local Spiritual, Indonesia*

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Introduction

Tourist art is a transformation and reinterpretation which aims to condition traditional art so that it can continue to be appreciated by society on a broader scale (Charassri, 2023). Tourist art is an attraction that involves artists, travel agents, and the government. Together, these three elements unite to present an attraction which entertains tourists and allows them to enjoy a new experience in the place they are visiting and to feel entertained at a planned time (Setiawan, 2016).

Every tourist art destination must take into consideration the type of attraction it wishes to present, as well as its characteristics, and its uniqueness (Septiyanti, Arismayanti & Ariana, 2018). It may be in the form of a culinary attraction, a ritual attraction, or a traditional art performance. The tourist art destination of Uluwatu presents the Ramayana Kecak dance (Hidajat, Pujiyanto, Prastiawan, et al., 2021), which is a dance production with a religious traditional character presenting a unique communal performance of the Ramayana story.

The *kecak* tourist art was originally created by Wayan Limbak, Walter Spies, and Beryl de Zote in 1927 (Seriasih, 2019). This colossal *kecak* performance is based on a *tolak balak* ritual known as Sang Hyang (Suharti, 2013). Visually, the *kecak* is a unique exotic and artistic performance in which the dancers also function as the musicians. They dance while producing the *cak-cak-cak* sound with their voices (I Made Agus Bayu Antara, I Komang Sudirga et al., 2018).

The performance involves between 60 and 80 male *kecak* dancers who wear black knee-length trousers and a *saput poleng* cloth (Langi & Park, 2017). The dancers are all bare-chested (Sumiati & Girsang, 2018). The *kecak* dancers are divided into four groups who together create an ensemble of canonic sounds with their mouths (Sidia, interview, 2022). In addition to the large group of male dancers, other characters in the story include Rama, Lesmana, Sinta, the golden deer (*kijang kencana*), Trijata, Hanoman, and Rahwana, who perform movements in the style of Balinese dance (Ruastiti, 2019) (Rochim & Jupriono, 2021).

Kecak performances in Bali have continued to spread and develop into a form of entertainment for tourists, amongst others by the *saka Karang Boma* organization which established the Ramayana *Kecak* performance at Uluwatu Temple (Putra Kencana, Mudana, & Ardini, 2020). The location for this study was determined based on previous research, including the article entitled Aesthetical Transformation on Ramayana Stories of Indonesia – Thailand Versions (Hidajat, Pujiyanto, Hartono, et al., 2021). This article includes a section on the Ramayana *Kecak* in Uluwatu, viewed from a symbolic aesthetic perspective which examines the unity of the story, the venue, and the function. This means that in terms of its content, the Ramayana *Kecak* performance has relevance not only in its capacity to entertain but also to provide educational motivation.

A previous article, entitled Tourism Performances Management Patterns and the Role of Maecenas in Ramayana Play Presentation as a Tourist Attraction in Indonesia and Thailand, discusses more specifically the aspect of performing arts management, focusing on the artistic management of performing arts for tourists (Hidajat, Pujiyanto, Prastiawan, et al., 2021). Another article, entitled The Dialectics of the Performance of the *Kecak Ramayana* in Uluwatu, Bali, Indonesia, emphasizes that the tourist art of Ramayana *Kecak* is a performing art which cannot be separated from the performers' internalization of spirituality,

and that the role of the spiritual leader (*pemangku*) is an important part of the implementation of this tourist art (Hidajat et al., 2023).

The Ramayana Kecak at Uluwatu Temple is both specific and unique as it is performed in the area surrounding a sacred temple that is situated at the side of a steep cliff (Adhika, 2017). Before the performance begins, the tourists who come to watch the show can enjoy the panorama of the expansive ocean from the top of the cliff (Werdistira, 2020) (Tjampan & Nugroho, 2020). The unique attraction of this performance, which is not found at other tourist destinations, is the venue itself (Liestiadre, 2019), with an open stage looking out across the ocean towards the vast expanse of the horizon.

It is the attractive nature of the location of the stage that gives the tourist performance at Uluwatu its authenticity, and allows it to be classed as a high-quality tourist product with (1) uniqueness, (2) authenticity, (3) originality, and (4) diversity (Kanzunudin, 2011). These four aspects of a cultural tourism product are at least on a par with the Hula dance performance in Hawaii (Beckwith, 2010). This exotic ritual dance has gained popularity as a tourist art performance (Rowe, 2008). Soedarsono, in his book *Indonesian Performing Arts and Tourism (Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia dan Pariwisata)*, also discusses the history, function, and uniqueness of the Hula dance, a traditional dance belonging to a local community (Soedarsono, 1999). Tourist arts such as the Hula dance and the Ramayana Kecak are known as shadow rituals (Howe, 2000), which means rituals that are an imitation, pseudo rituals.

The nature of the Ramayana Kecak as a tourist art is no longer disputed, as it is a ritual display that has been transformed into a tourist performance (Seramasara, 2021). In spite of its secular, even commercial nature (Kasman, 2013), it is interesting to note that the Ramayana Kecak performance at Uluwatu is not only a form of entertainment but also an attractive display, with distinctive characteristics that are an expression of local culture.

The problems addressed in the research are the ways the performers build their social relationships, strengthen their institution as an organization, and manage to sustain and preserve their local values that are based on the Balinese Hindu religion (Miharja, 2017).

With this in mind, it is possible that a parallelism exists between the conceptual symbolization, the social practices in the Ramayana Kecak performing art, the goals that are to be achieved, and the practice of a performing art that has the ability to maintain a condition of social balance for all those involved. If this is the case, it provides an interesting addition to existing knowledge about the practice of tourist performing arts that have a background in local culture.

Research Methodology

This research focuses on the subject of the tourist performing art of Ramayana Kecak from Pecatu Village, South Kuta District, Badung Regency, Bali. The Ramayana Kecak performance venue is in the area of Uluwatu Temple. The boundaries of Pecatu Village are Tukad Cengiling/Jimbaran village to the north, the Indian Ocean to the south and west, and Tukad Gau/Ungasan Village to the east. Pecatu Village covers an area of 2541 hectares.

The Ramayana Kecak tourist art in the Uluwatu Temple area was studied in depth through interviews with key informants, including the head of the Kecak Karang Boma organization, I Made Astra (63 years), the secretary of the organization, I Wayan Chery Antara (30 years), the Hanoman actor, Agus Suantara (38 years), former Hanoman actor and founder of the Uluwatu Ramayana Kecak organization, I Nyoman Suganda (67 years), and I Made Sidia (55 years), head of Paripurna Studio, Jalan Yudistira, Bona Village, Blahbatuh District, Gianyar Regency.

Observations were made during the performance, from the time the performers' preparations began until after the performance had finished, and a document review was also made of the leaflet containing the synopsis and outline of the story of Hanoman Obong. The research is an ethnographic study (Windiani & Nurul, 2016), which describes the thoughts, statements, and attitudes of the tourist art performers at Uluwatu Temple. The theory used is a functional structural theory (Agung, 2015), which includes four aspects of the social system, referred to as AGIL (Prasetya, Nurdin & Gunawan, 2021). These are: (1) Adaptation, (2) Goal Attainment, (3) Integration, and (4) Latent Pattern Maintenance (Adibah, 2017). This theory is the result of an adaptation from the research of Sumandiyo Hadi in his research entitled *Art in Religious Rituals (Seni dalam Ritual Agama)* (Hadi, 2006).

The AGIL theory, which was used by Sumandiyo Hadi in his doctoral dissertation analyzing the art activities of the Catholic congregation in the celebration of the Eucharist at Ganjuran Church in Yogyakarta, was adapted to include the following 4 elements: (1) cognitive symbols, (2) symbols of expression, (3) constitutive symbols, and (4) symbols of morality.

Sumandiyo Hadi's adaptation of the AGIL theory is suitable to be used in this research on the performance practices of the Ramayana Kecak at Uluwatu Temple. In the implementation of the Ramayana Kecak performance there is a sacred dialectic, namely the social capital of the group of Ramayana Kecak performers, specifically their spiritual and artistic capital, and the profane practice as a goal of improving the economy of the people of Pecatu Village.

Results

Implementation of the Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu

The subject of this research is the tourist art of Ramayana Kecak which is performed by the Karang Boma organization led by I Made Astra. From the results of the interviews, it is known that this organization was established in 1996. There were previously no well-known *kecak* dancers in Pecatu Village but I Made Astra and I Nyoman Suganda continued to gather members from Pecatu Village, in particular villagers who had kiosks in the area surrounding Uluwatu Temple. Today the organization has 125 members who participate in the daily performances.

The results of the research can be grouped into three main areas of focus: (1) the origin of the Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu, (2) the Ramayana Kecak performance, and (3) the goal of establishing a Ramayana Kecak organization in Uluwatu. The results are explained below.

The Origin of the Ramayana Kecak Dance in Uluwatu

The idea to stage a *kecak* performance in the Uluwatu Temple area began as an effort to support the traders in the temple area, with the goal of increasing the number of visitors. This idea was welcomed by all the traders and a decision was made to gather together all the young men in the village of Pecatu.

In 1996, a number of Balinese dances were already being performed at Uluwatu Temple for tourists. The venue was very simple, with performances taking place on the open ground and spectators sitting on bamboo benches. The proposed development of a *kecak* performance was set in motion by inviting a teacher from Gianyar Village by the name of I Made Didir (Chery Antara, interview, 2022).

For the first five years, the conditions did not progress much. I Nyoman Suganda felt concerned but continued to encourage his members to remain with the group. The conditions during this period made I Nyoman Suganda reluctant to leave his job as a hotel employee. However, after the first five years had passed, the situation began to change. Audiences grew as more people began to hear about the performances, and the original venue was renovated and transformed into an amphitheater with an audience capacity of over 1200 (Suganda, interview, 2022).



Figure 1. Ramayana Kecak performers and audience at Uluwatu Temple (Photo: Robby).

With the increasing number of tourists coming to watch the Ramayana Kecak performance in Uluwatu, *sakaa* Karang Boma introduced a number of special regulations, one of which was that the *kecak* performers must be officially registered as members of Pecatu Village. This was highly beneficial for the community as it improved the economic standard of families living in the village. The daily *kecak* performances provided an additional source of income that helped people to pay for their children's education and to purchase various family necessities.

Ramayana Kecak Performance

I Made Astra, the head of the Ramayana Kecak in the Karang Boma organization, explained that as an art activity, the Ramayana Kecak is made up of four aspects: religion, art, language, and tradition (Astra, interview, 2022), and that religion is the main element which provides strength, motivation, and spirit for the Ramayana Kecak performers in Uluwatu

and enables them to express their local values through the performance of the Ramayana Kecak with the story of Hanoman Obong (Hidajat, Jamnongsarn & Hasyimy, 2022).



Figure 2. The priest sprinkles holy water, circling from right to left (Photo: Robby).

Forty-two *kecak* performers, dressed in *saput poleng* cloth, create a circular formation. They make vocal sounds, sometimes in unison and sometimes alternating in turn with each other, while raising their hands, standing up, or lying on the floor. At certain points, the *kecak* dancers change their formation to portray a particular scene.

In the center of the stage, the flames from a torch stand with five prongs burn throughout the duration of the performance. The torch stand indicates the direction of the journey of the different characters, from left to right or vice versa. The protagonist characters move clockwise and the antagonist characters move anti-clockwise. There is also a separation between the upper and lower levels, in particular in the Hanoman Obong scene, which is shown by moving the torch stand to the Candi Bentar gate, thereby creating a separate space for the stage and a separate space for the audience.

The Ramayana is a popular story in Southeast Asia and contains a wealth of eastern philosophical values which are widely recognized. In each new era it has experienced a reinterpretation in order to remain actual (Charassri, 2023). This is also evident in the tourist art of Ramayana Kecak which portrays Rama and Sinta in exile. As they wander through the forest, Sinta is tempted by a golden deer (*kijang kencana*). Rama tries to capture the deer while Lesmana protects Sinta, but Sinta fears that Rama is in danger and sends Lesmana after him. Alone in the middle of the forest, Sinta is being watched by Rahwana, who approaches her, disguised as a priest. Sinta is kidnapped in spite of the efforts of the divine Jatayu bird to thwart her capture. Sinta is filled with sorrow, being held against her will by Rahwana. Accompanied by Trijata, Sinta is held in the female quarters (*kaputren*) of the palace, as she continues to refuse the advances of Rahwana. Her hopes still rest on Rama who is wandering through the Dandaka Forest.

A commander by the name of Hanoman is sent to Alengka to deliver a souvenir, as a sign of Rama's love. After meeting Sinta, Hanoman is captured and burned alive but he manag-

es to escape and subsequently burns down the Alengka Palace. A fierce battle then ensues, coming to an end only when Rama and Lesmana, with Hanoman’s help, manage to defeat Rahwana.

The Goal of Establishing a Ramayana Kecak Organization in Uluwatu

The performance of the Ramayana Kecak tourist art has become popular as a commercial art performance, which is why ongoing efforts are needed to bring together the artists in a bond and confirmation of kinship. Membership in the organization is regulated by a number of binding rules, one of which is that all the people involved in the *kecak* performance must be members of the Pecatu Village community. As a consequence, any members who move to another village are required to leave the group.

Income is shared proportionally according to the duties and responsibilities of each member of the group, with a portion also being given to support the area of Uluwatu Temple and the *sakaa* in Pecatu Village. Even the cleaning assistants at the performance venue are residents of Pecatu Village. Some of the ideas related to the income generated have been transmitted to establish kinship bonds, in order to ensure that the Ramayana Kecak tourist art can enjoy a stable and continued existence so that the goal of improving economic welfare can be realized.

Discussion

This research is based on the AGIL theory used in the research of Sumandiyo Hadi, entitled *Art in Religious Rituals (Seni Dalam Ritual Agama)* (2006), which adapts the functional structural social theory into the art discipline to become four elements: (1) Adaptation, which is equivalent to cognitive symbols, (2) Goal Attainment, which is equivalent to expressive symbols, (3) Integration, which is equivalent to artistic commitment, and (4) Latent Pattern Maintenance, which is equivalent to symbols of morality. The Ramayana Kecak at Uluwatu Temple is explained through a diagram of the results of Sumandiyo Hadi’s research which is adapted from the AGIL theory, as shown below.

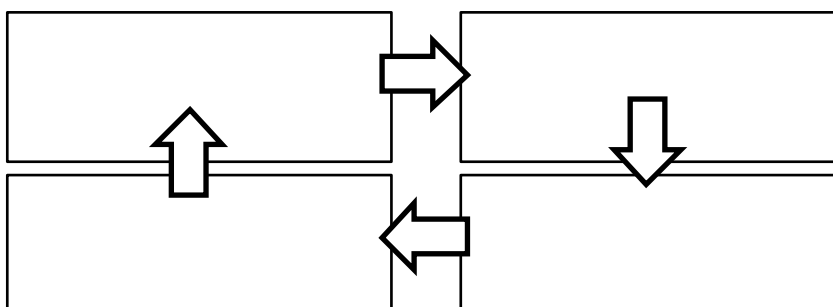


Figure 3. Adaptation of AGIL theory in the research of Hadi (Hadi, 2006).

The operational system of the diagram in figure 3 is implemented in the performance of Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu as follows: (a) creative ideas: the ideas of members of the Pecatu Village community who formerly worked as traders in the area of Uluwatu Temple and whose economic status was below the poverty line, (b) symbols of expression: the realization of the goal of the creative ideas in the form of the Ramayana Kecak performance,

(c) artistic commitment: the formation of the Karang Boma organization, and (d) symbols of morality: the establishment of a strong sense of solidarity and kinship among the members of Karang Boma.

Creative Ideas

Creative ideas are used to foster the social relationships between members of the Pecatu Village community who work as traders in the area of the Uluwatu Temple. This is an adaptation for the future existence of the Pecatu Village community, to allay any previous thoughts that they have not developed sufficiently in the field of performing arts for tourists. If they are able to involve a larger number of people as performing artists, there is a better opportunity to boost the social and economic potential of the community. The lack of involvement of community members from certain strata can be addressed and people can be encouraged to become involved. Hence, the creative ideas will provide a form of support to contribute to the community's future. Creative ideas are part of a transformative pattern of adaptation. In order to improve culture, there is a need for efforts to form intensive relationships in creative ways by involving the environment and nature (Eagleton, 2000). The creative ideas of the community of traders in Uluwatu already contain spiritual capital, cultural capital, and the asset of traditional performing arts.

Creative ideas that are founded on the environment and nature, and supported by spiritual capital, cultural capital, and traditional Balinese arts, are a powerful tool for achieving future goals, by improving social and economic relationships in the Pecatu Village community. In concrete terms, creative ideas have been manifested through the highly popular traditional Balinese performance of Sanghyang in Gianyar Village. Performances in Bali generally contain a deep spirit of sacred and profane dialectics which is found in the concept of duality known as *rwa bhineda*.

The concept of *rwa bhineda* is used as the basis of creative ideas, to recognize and align any differences in order to create a harmonious world (Ardana, 2016). From the results of interviews with I Made Astra and I Nyoman Suganda, it can be said that the social lives of the people of Pecatu Village who work as traders in the Uluwatu Temple area are generally founded on spirituality, as members of the Hindu community, although from a social perspective, their lives cannot be described as prosperous (Astra and Suganda, interview, 2022). Creative ideas are therefore used to achieve a balance between the material world and the spiritual world, by transforming the ritual performance of Sanghyang into an entertaining tourist art performance of Ramayana Kecak. The concept of duality used as a foundation is the function of the Sanghyang performance as a ritual art for social immunity (*tolak balak*) and the Ramayana Kecak as a profane art which serves as a medium of entertainment to fulfil economic needs. This is what Walter Spies, Beryl de Zotte, and Limbak did by transforming the Sanghyang performance in 1927. Walter Spies' efforts aimed to serve the needs of European tourists so that they could witness the performance of traditional Balinese art (Solehudin et al., 2023).

Symbols of Expression

The Ramayana Kecak was chosen due to its economic value, because in the 1990s, many hotels in Bali presented the Ramayana Kecak as a form of entertainment for tourists. I Nyoman Suganda formerly worked in a hotel, where he played Hanoman in numerous Ra-

mayana Kecak performances. I Made Astra saw that there was an opportunity for the tourist art of Ramayana Kecak to provide economic benefit which would improve the welfare of the community in Pecatu Village, especially people whose everyday job was selling food and souvenirs in the Uluwatu Temple area.

Welfare in the social life of a community is related to expressive symbols which can be recognized in the torch stand used in the *kecak* dance, with its five lamps. In Hindu cosmology, these can be identified symbolically as *Pertiwi* (earth), *Apah* (water), *Teja* (fire), *Bayu* (wind), and *Akasa* (cosmic space). I Made Astra believes that the relations between these symbols of expression should be balanced, as the people of Pecatu Village need the earth as a place to live, food (including water) for sustenance, fire or power or energy to work, wind to live and sustain their health, and cosmic space to channel their hopes and expectations. I Made Astra explained that human beings need a balanced life which can be expressed through spirituality and art (Astra, interview, 2022). The stage arena is divided into two sections, right and left. The area on the left is a space for the antagonist character, Rahwana, and his soldiers, and the area on the right is a space for the protagonist characters, Rama and Lesmana. Hanoman moves backwards and forwards from right to left, representing the transmission or connection between the two areas, to create balance. In this way, the Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu presents Hanoman as the main character in the performance.

The five prongs of the torch stand are spiritual symbols which honor the god, Shiva. The torch stand divides the area of the stage into two parts, the *pengiwa* (left) and the *panengen* (right), to show the balance between evil and good forces (Gami, Untara & Gunawijaya, 2020).

The interpretation of the analysis of these symbols of expression is that they represent an adaptation of spiritual values which display binary opposition between the spiritual and the profane. Spiritually, the time when the performance takes place, in the late afternoon, just before sunset, is a symbol of respect to the gods of the sun and the moon. This is closely related to the *poleng* cloth worn by the *kecak* dancers, which symbolizes the sun with the white color and the mountain with the black color, together representing a harmonious balance (Ari Dewanti & Kameswari, 2019). The profane element is the orientation towards the needs of tourists, specifically the need to enjoy the sunset in Bali, and Uluwatu is a strategic place for watching the sun set. This is acknowledged by audiences who enjoy the Ramayana Kecak tourist performances at Uluwatu. They truly enjoy a sensational experience when Hanoman is captured and burned alive. As the sun sets over the horizon, the fire that burns Hanoman is set alight.

Artistic Commitment

The Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu is devoted to two constitutive aspects: first, art for the religious life of the Balinese community, because art is tied to the religion of the performers (Parmajaya, 2020), and as I Made Astra, head of Kecak Karang Boma, emphasizes, art is an integral part of religious life; and second, art for organizational life, where the Ramayana Kecak exists as part of an organization with social ties, and one of its goals is to foster strong kinship bonds in a modern world where it is necessary to use a for-profit organization in order to be institutionally binding.

The Ramayana Kecak is an entertainment organization in the form of an institution which aims to strengthen the commitment, loyalty, and dedication of its members. *Sakaa Karang Boma* was established as an organizational institution with a head, a secretary, and a treasurer who manage the organizational side of the institution, enabling the operation of its social activities to run well.

The performance production side is managed by a director and a number of coordinators with different fields of expertise. The purpose of this is to support the process of the sacred and profane dialectics. Administrative matters prioritize rational aspects while artistic matters place emphasis on the sacred side, which means that the performers abide by artistic principles that are founded on local spiritual values. Arts that are devoted to a certain function in the daily life of the Balinese community are classified as *bali-balian* performing arts (Ratih, 2001).

Symbols of Morality

Morality in the social life of the Pecatu Village community requires a transformative effort. The Ramayana Kecak was chosen to build the morality of the members of the group, as well as the Pecatu Village community, and tourists. In the performance of the Ramayana Kecak, a number of elements of morality appear which can help to build and shape character, especially for members of the Ramayana Kecak organization in Uluwatu. Hence, the background of this tourist object, in the form of the Ramayana Kecak, is to prioritize morality and 'the victory of good over evil.'

According to I Made Astra, this morality is intended to provide a response to artistic practices in which there is a synergy between aesthetics (beauty), spirituality (religion), language (speech), and customs (ethics). This demonstrates the presence of a dialectic process in building and shaping the character of the performers and the audience (Salayanti, 2017). Tourists from India, in particular, have a deep appreciation of this. At the end of a performance, they often approach the performers of Rama and Hanoman to show their respect by reaching out their hands to touch the feet of the performers.

Conclusion

The dialectic of the sacred and profane in the tourist art of Ramayana Kecak at Uluwatu Temple is a construction of the institution of tourist art for the purpose of social balance between the Ramayana Kecak artists and the audience or tourists. The Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu supports the interests of the artists by strengthening their solidarity, kinship, spirituality, and economy.

The tourist art of Ramayana Kecak in Uluwatu is a form of art which has the function of entertaining as well as being commercial in nature. Therefore, there are two main goals: (1) to reinforce the internalization of spirituality of members of the Ramayana Kecak group and to create internal stability in the Pecatu Village community; and (2) to achieve economic prosperity for members of the Uluwatu Ramayana Kecak group as a means to attaining stability in the social welfare of the community.

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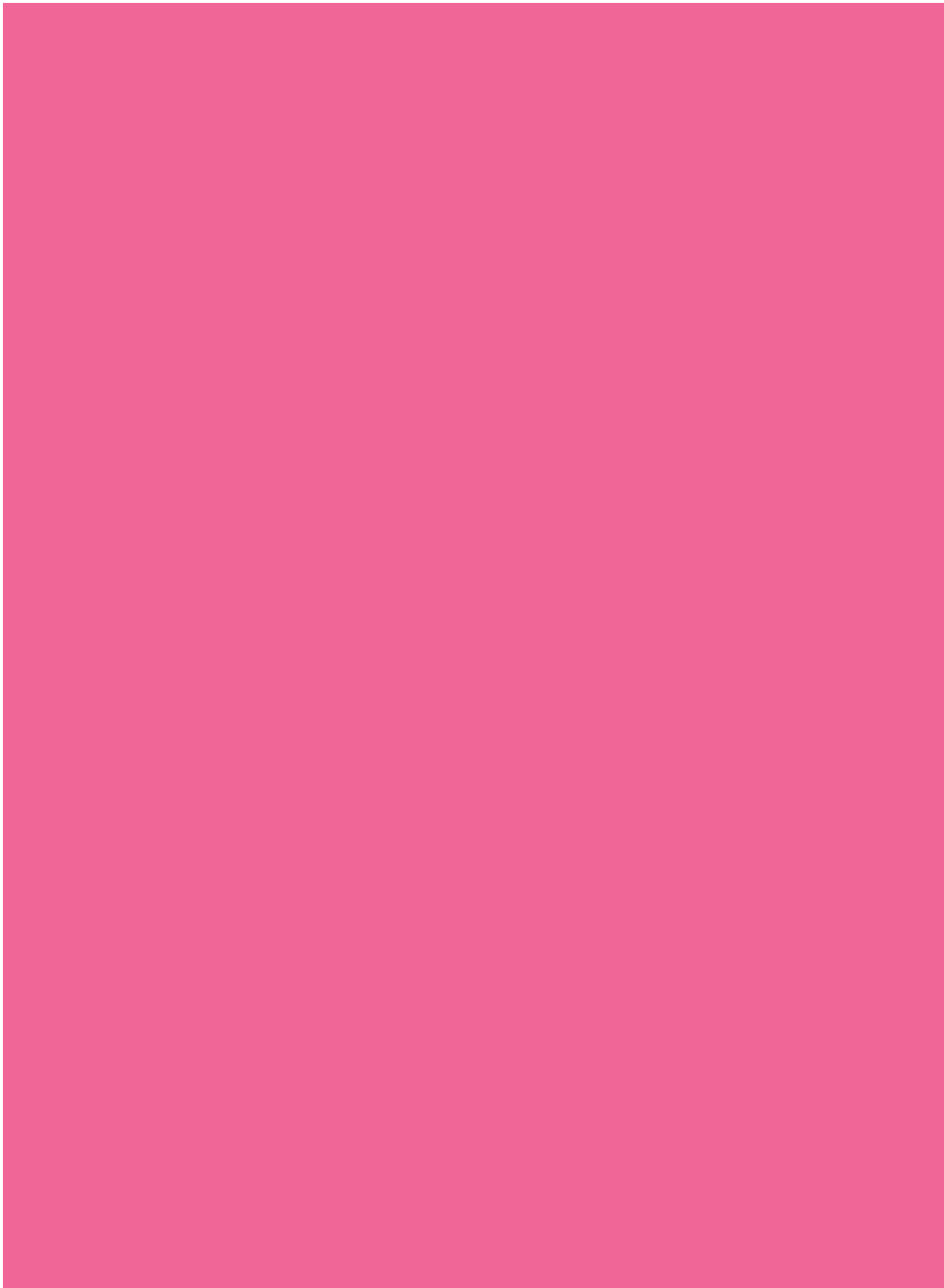
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Journal Policies

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About JUCR

The Journal of Urban Culture Research is an international, online, double-blind, peer-reviewed journal published biannually in June & December by the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts of Thailand's Chulalongkorn University in conjunction with the Urban Research Plaza of Osaka City University, Japan. JUCR offers its readers two categories of content. One is a window into the latest international conferences and reviews of related sources – books etc. along with guest articles, special features and case studies. Secondly, its main core is a range of peer-reviewed articles from researchers in the international community. No fees are charged.

The Aims of JUCR

This journal on urban culture aims at establishing a broad interdisciplinary platform for studies of cultural creativity and the arts that brings together researchers and cultural practitioners to identify and share innovative and creative experiences in establishing sustainable and vibrant, livable communities while fostering cultural continuity. The journal embraces broad cultural discussions regarding communities of any size as it recognizes the urban community's rural roots. JUCR encourages researchers and the full range of artists in visual art, design, music, the creative arts, performance studies, dance, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and related disciplines such as creative arts therapies and urban planning. Articles related to either the academic or wide vernacular interpretation of urban culture and the arts as a tool promoting community and individual well-being, health, and diversity are welcome.

JUCR has the objective of stimulating research on both the theory and practice of fine and applied arts in response to social challenges and environmental issues as well as calling for solutions across the creative realms. Moreover, JUCR supports advocacy processes, improvements in practices, and encourages supportive public policy-making related to cultural resources. JUCR intends to offer readers relevant theoretical discussions and act as a catalyst for expanding the knowledge-base of creative expression related to urban culture.

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1. JUCR promotes and encourages the exchange of knowledge in the field of fine and applied arts among scholars worldwide. Contributions may be research articles, reports of empirical studies, reviews of films, concerts, dances, and art exhibitions. Academic papers and book reviews are also acceptable. Articles are typically only considered for publication in JUCR with the mutual understanding that they have not been published in English elsewhere and are not currently under consideration by any other English language journal(s). Occasionally, noteworthy articles worthy of a broader audience that JUCR provides, will be reprinted. Main articles are assessed and peer reviewed by specialists in their relevant fields. Furthermore to be accepted for publication, they must also receive the approval of the editorial board.

2. To further encourage and be supportive of the large diverse pool of authors whose English is their second language, JUCR employs a 3-stage review process. The first is a double-

blind review comprised of 2-3 international reviewers experienced with non-native English writers. This is then followed by a non-blind review. Thirdly, a participative peer review will, if needed, be conducted to support the selection process.

3. All articles published in the journal will have been fully peer-reviewed by two, and in some cases, three reviewers. Submissions that are out of the scope of the journal or are of an unacceptably low standard of presentation will not be reviewed. Submitted articles will generally be reviewed by two experts with the aim of reaching an initial decision within a two-month time frame.

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- Accepted for publication as is.
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- Potentially acceptable for publication after substantial revision and additional reviews.
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5. In cases where there is disagreement between the authors and reviewers, advice will be sought from the Editorial Board. It is the policy of the JUCR to allow a maximum of three revisions of any one manuscript. In all cases, the ultimate decision lies with the Editor-in-Chief after a full board consultation.

6. JUCR's referee policy treats the contents of articles under review as privileged information and will not be disclosed to others before publication. It is expected that no one with access to articles under review will make any inappropriate use of its contents.

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9. The review process shall ensure that all authors have an equal opportunity for publication. The acceptance and scheduling of submissions for publication in the journal shall not be impeded by additional criteria or amendments to the procedures beyond those listed above.

10. The views expressed in articles published are the sole responsibility of the authors and not necessarily shared by the JUCR editors or Chulalongkorn University.

Submission Requirements

- Worthy contributions in the urban culture arena are welcome from researchers and practitioners at all stages in their careers. A suggested theme is announced prior to each issue.
- Manuscripts should generally not exceed 7,000 words including the abstract and references. Tables, figures, and illustrative material are accepted only when necessary for support.
- Manuscripts need to use our template for submission. Please download from our website's submission guidelines page. Details are described in the top half of the first page with sample text following. Documents not using the template will be returned for reformatting.
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- Each author should send with their manuscript an abstract of 150 words or less together with a submission form providing their biographical data along with a maximum of six keywords.
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- Authors should strive for maximum clarity of expression. This point cannot be overstated. Additionally, authors need to bear in mind that the purpose of publication is the disclosure and discussion of artistic knowledge and innovations that expands the realm of human creativity and experience.

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Criteria and Responsibilities for Editorial Board Membership

Overview

The Editorial Board is comprised of members who have significant expertise and experience in their respective fields. Editorial Board Members are appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of at least 60% of the Editors and Editorial Board.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for appointment shall include:

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- Published three or more papers in scholarly publications.
- Demonstrated excellence in the review process, based on independent evaluations of the Editors and Associates.
- Stated commitment to contribute to issues affecting the management of JUCR.

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Members of the Editorial Board are directly accountable to the Managing Editor. Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Provide input on editorial needs and review manuscripts as requested.
- Complete assigned reviews in a timely fashion. Offer mutually respectful and constructive review of manuscripts to assist in providing the highest quality of papers.
- Maintain confidentiality and objectivity with regard to manuscripts and the JUCR review process.
- Participate in the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of JUCR so as to help sustain the highest level of excellence.
- Once appointed to the Editorial Board, members are encouraged to submit at least one paper during their tenure.

Nomination Process

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When a candidate is approved by majority vote of the current JUCR board members, she/he will be invited to serve by the Editor in Chief for a specified term of three years. The Dean of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts in turn will finalize the appointment. Continued membership of the Editorial Board will be reviewed every three years by a member of the Editorial Board with a decision about candidates submitted annually. The number of Editorial Board members will not exceed 20 unless otherwise agreed upon.



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JUCR encourages researchers and the full range of artists in visual arts, creative arts, music, dance, theater together with those in urban studies and planning to seek cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural practices.

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