

Mabarung Jegog Contestation in Music Competitions in Jembrana, Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract

This research analyzes the role of the Gamelan Jegog as a distinctive gamelan instrument in Jembrana Regency, Bali, which reflects the competitive spirit embraced by its community. The research adopts Huizinga's perspective on play, recognizing five key elements that differentiate it from everyday activities: freedom, temporality, closedness, order, and tension.

The research employed a qualitative method, with an interpretative analysis approach to dissect the Mabarung Jegog competition events. Data was gathered through interviews and observations of the supporting community and aspects related to the Mabarung Jegog competition.

The findings reveal that Mabarung Jegog is not merely a musical performance. Still, it reflects the identity and character of the players, evident in their movements and body positions while playing. This competition is also closely tied to the context of place and time, with spatial limitations set by the organizers. The paper thus concludes that Mabarung Jegog exhibits specific traits such as order, systematicity, and high aesthetic value while fostering a sense of tolerance among the players. The tension that arises affects the psychology of the players, ranging from pride and self-esteem when winning, and feelings of disappointment and shame in the face of defeat. The competitive performance of Mabarung Jegog also encourages the emergence of contestation, where differences of opinion or conflicts may arise among the involved parties.

The novelty of this research lies in the in-depth analysis of Gamelan Jegog's role in reflecting the Jembrana community's competitive spirit and the interpretation of cultural context in the Mabarung Jegog competition.

Keywords: Gamelan Jegog, Competitive Spirit, Jembrana Regency, Music, Tradition, Cultural Expression, Huizinga's Perspective on Play

Introduction

Bali, as an integral part of the Indonesian state, has a global presence more recognized than the country itself (MacRae, 2018). This is due to Bali's strong allure, attributed to its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage (Pratiwi et al., 2017). One prominent aspect is Bali's excellence in traditional arts, such as dance, theater, visual arts, and music (Vickers, 2011). Music, in particular, captivates audiences with its energetic performances, especially when combined with the captivating movements of the performers (as seen in Gong Kebyar and Kecak)

(Pradana et al., 2023). This artistic phenomenon piques the interest of tourists to witness it firsthand (Wiweka & Pickel-Chevalier, 2022).

As an integral part of the tourism industry, the richness of traditional Balinese music is packaged and presented to tourists in various accommodations and strategic venues for art performances (Pratiwi et al., 2017). Almost every region in Bali has its characteristic traditional music, including the Jembrana Regency (Saihu, 2020). One of the captivating music performances in Jembrana is the Jegog gamelan. As described by De Zoete and Spies (1973) in their work "Dance and Drama In Bali," Jegog gamelan performances offer the beauty of the music and incorporate elements of martial arts and dance. In its development, this art form has transcended beyond mere music performances and has evolved into combat art in preserving the artists' existence (Komang & Gede Mahendrayana, 2023).

The term "*Jegog*" as referring to this art form can encompass several meanings, such as the following.

- (1) The name of the instrument in the Bali gamelan ensemble that uses large bamboo bars and has the lowest pitch, known as Jegogan;
- (2) The name of the most prominent instrument in the Jegog gamelan ensemble;
- (3) The Balinese word "*Jegog*" (Bali = *Nyegogog*), which carries the meaning of something large.

However, regardless of the origin of the name of this gamelan, the musical ensemble has become a recognition and source of pride for the Balinese community in general and a distinctive feature of the Jembrana region (Dunbar-Hall, 2016). When this gamelan ensemble is encountered in other areas, it may feel unfamiliar to those unfamiliar.

The Jegog gamelan is a traditional musical art form that plays a central role in performing religious and customary ceremonies in Bali (Sugiartha, 2015). In the governance of the arts, the Jegog gamelan falls under the category of *Balih-balihan*, a type of art often performed in official events organized by local governments to provide entertainment and promote tourism in Bali (Saihu, 2020).

According to Nyoman Rembang, the Jegog gamelan emerged in the early 20th century in Jembrana (Sukerna, 2001). Initially, this gamelan was used to communicate to gather the community for the *nyucuk* activity, which refers to making the roof of a house. As part of the strategy for the development of the tourism and cultural sector, the inaugural performance of the Jegog gamelan has been curated and presented as an entertainment show by the Suar Agung Foundation in the Sangkaragung Village (Wirawan & Beratha, 2016).

The Jegog gamelan has initially been initiated as entertainment, but over time, it has been transformed into a performance showcasing high skills and expertise (Setiawan & Maryati, 2018). This has been aimed at solidifying the existence of artistic groups and establishing them as a unique socio-cultural reality within the societal structure of Jembrana (Sarjana & Anshori, 2023). Abdulsyani (1994) reveals that customs (folkways) in society are one of the implementations of social norms. Therefore, developing Jegog gamelan performances into competitions can be considered a part of the living social norm in the Jembrana society. In it, virtuosity is a determining factor in establishing the status of an artist within the Jegog gamelan performance culture (Mahendra et al., 2022). Not only that, the status of an artist is also influenced by the performance space, the stage, and the parameters used to evaluate the quality of their performance.

In the competitive atmosphere of this musical performance, Jegog Gamelan artists face the demand to demonstrate exceptional musical proficiency in various performance situations. In line with this skill level, an individual's achievements in fulfilling their role for the community play a crucial role in shaping their social identity (Hndropuspito, 1989). Therefore, social identity can be formed through responses and evaluations regarding the quality provided by various parties, including fellow artists involved in the performance and the audience. Virtuosity in the performance of Gamelan Jegog encompasses technical skill and an ability to convey emotions and nuances in the music, creating a profound experience for the audience. This strengthens the artist's contribution to enriching the cultural life of the Jembrana community.

Theoretical Framework

Huizinga's perspective on games provides an essential theoretical foundation for understanding the essence and characteristics of a play activity (Huizinga, 1998). Huizinga emphasizes five critical elements in the concept of games: freedom, temporality, closure, regularity, and tension. Freedom refers to the courage to play without limitations or external pressures, while temporality highlights the specific time dimension in games (Öcek, 2021). Furthermore, closure and regularity create internal frameworks and rules that depict limitations and organization in the game (Daniel-Wariya, 2019). Finally, tension builds emotional dynamics that color the playing experience (Lambrow, 2021).

In the context of this research, Huizinga's perspective is used as a lens to analyze the *Mabarung Jegog* competition in Jembrana, Bali. *Mabarung Jegog* is considered a form of game that meets these criteria. Players can experience freedom in participating; the competition time has a specifically regulated dimension, closed rules and regularity apply during the performance, and emotional tension arises along with the competition. This research can more profoundly understand how game elements inform and shape the *Mabarung Jegog* competition by detailing these aspects.

The interconnection between Huizinga's perspective and the *Mabarung Jegog* competition also allows for a richer interpretation of the role of games in Jembrana society. How freedom, temporality, closure, regularity, and tension are implemented in the context of local culture becomes the central analysis point to highlight the uniqueness of *Mabarung Jegog* as a manifestation of play that reflects the community's competitive spirit. Thus, a better understanding of the role of games in the local cultural context can be obtained by applying Huizinga's concepts in the analysis of *Mabarung Jegog*.

Next is the theory of contestation. The theory of contestation, as a creative dynamic, provides a profound understanding of how conflict or competition can catalyze artistic innovation (Avelino, 2021). In this framework, competition is not a hindrance but a force that drives positive change (Wiener, 2017). In the context of *Mabarung Jegog*, competition among players creates a dynamic atmosphere where each individual or group can showcase their uniqueness and skills. The potential for this contestation provides a foundation for artistic experiments involving the development of gamelan playing techniques, the arrangement of more innovative choreography, and the use of other creative elements that may emerge during the competition.

In line with this theory, *Mabarung Jegog* can be interpreted as a stage where new ideas are explored and developed. Competition among players motivates them to strive harder, think creatively, and create a more profound artistic experience. The potential for contestation involves competition among players and includes competition against oneself to improve the quality and innovation in their continual performance. In this dynamic, every element of *Mabarung Jegog*, from playing techniques to visual presentation, becomes an experimental field that creates diversity and artistic progress.

Review of Literature

Through his writing titled "Balinese Aesthetics" (2007), Davies provides an intriguing explanation of the social relationship of the Balinese community with the aesthetics they adhere to. The Balinese community engages in numerous religious rituals (oriented towards Hinduism), and these rituals are conducted using art as their primary medium, with gamelan holding a significant position in this context. In other words, the artistic aesthetic produced by Balinese artists and communities is a genuine implementation of their daily lives (Goris, 1960). Almost all traditional arts, especially music, can be traced within their cultural context (Sugiarta, 2015). These artistic expressions do not emerge spatially but have strong roots within the historical framework of human life in Bali. Davies's explanation is crucial in clarifying how the context of the *Jegog Mabarung* relationship with its community owners is established. The aesthetic of *Jegog* music is constructed within the space of play and contestation, where the latter (contestation) is an actual social ceremony of the Jembrana community.

Because it is built within the space of contestation, the sound of Jegog gamelan music becomes highly dynamic and loud. One group constantly strives to produce louder music than the other. In connection with this, Setiawan and Maryati (2018) conducted a detailed study on the influence of the noise made by the Jegog instrument on the hearing quality of its musicians. The sound range of the Jegog instrument, when played together, is between 85-105 dB, and this sound exceeds the average threshold. The research results from Setiawan and Maryati state that approximately 35.1% of Jegog musicians experience hearing impairment.

Interestingly, even though exposure to Jegog gamelan may disturb the sense of hearing, almost all musicians enjoy the dynamic and loud sound without ever considering its consequences for ear health. The louder the sound, the better it is assumed (Sudana, 2015). The loud and dynamic sound signifies an image of Balinese society as active, energetic, and spirited (Pratiwi et al., 2017). The climate of contestation makes the Jegog music even more fascinating, in other words, louder and more impactful. Not only musicians but through their research, Setiawan and Maryati found a similar trend in the surrounding community and Jembrana in general, where loud and dynamic sound in Jegog music becomes a marker and cultural identity. This sound is enjoyed without resistance, as the noise is seen as the pinnacle of aesthetics and is always sought after in every *Mabarung Jegog*.

Alexander and Bowler, in their article titled "Contestation in aesthetic fields: Legitimation and legitimacy struggles in outsider art" (2021), explain how contestation in the art world is necessary to create a continually growing creative environment. In many cases, contestation is considered part of resistance or defeating others, resulting in disharmonious relationships (Qodir, 2011). However, this differs in the art world, especially in music, where contestation is essential for artists to keep creating better works than their previous ones (Handayani & Swazey, 2018). In the context of *Mabarung Jegog*, contestation is intentionally introduced, with two or more groups facing each other, attempting to make the music creativity better than the others. This contestation has been maintained until now, creating a continuously developing creative ecosystem. The atmosphere of tension in the contestation concludes when the performance ends, and players from different regions communicate, embrace, and interact very intimately. In other words, contestation in the art world, especially *Mabarung Jegog*, exists within its limited and segmented scope.

The views of Alexander and Bowler are reinforced by Rovisco (2019) and Vidal (2021), who explain that contestation in art is crucial to affirming group or cultural identity. Not all cultures (musical traditions) incorporate contestation in every performance, so the presence of contestation in the art world is worth celebrating and appreciating. *Mabarung Jegog* has endured for a considerable time, and contestation remains a prominent feature still used today. Therefore, the presence of contestation in *Mabarung Jegog* serves as an ideal example of how musical creativity is celebrated with joy. Thus, *Mabarung Jegog* becomes a perfect platform for presenting Bali's dynamic and evolving culture. Contestation in *Mabarung Jegog* exists within its limited space, shown at specific times and places. This reflects the awareness of the Balinese community that contestation should be positioned within appropriate values. *Mabarung Jegog*, on the one hand, strives to defeat each other between groups, but on the other hand, it becomes a bridge for mutual understanding and showcasing musical abilities.

Research Methods

This research accepts that within the cultural context of Jegog Gamelan performances, an element of competition fundamentally involves a form of play activity carried out by the artists to express art through music. In the context of this play element, this research adopts Johan Huizinga's perspective, who regards play as a manifestation of a specific quality of human behavior. This can be seen as separating from everyday activities (Huizinga, 1990). In a game, five characteristics differentiate it from the regular activities: freedom, temporality, spatial and temporal limitations, the presence of rules or order, and the creation of tension or challenge (Huizinga, 1990).

This research is qualitative (Mohajan, 2018). The study employs descriptive analysis and interpretative methods to delve into the competitive aspects of *Mabarung Jegog*'s

performances (Thorne et al., 2004). As emphasized by Sugiyono (2005), qualitative research is related to the study of natural objects where the researcher acts as the primary instrument (Kawulich, 2005). Data collection techniques use triangulation (combination) methods, with inductive data analysis emphasizing meaning rather than generalization.

As this research emphasizes exploring competition based on cultural realities in the Jembrana community, ethnography is considered the most relevant approach (Sharma & Sarkar, 2019). This method allows the researcher to describe artistic practices in-depth (Madison, 2020), especially in the context of competition within the Mabarung Jegog. Ethnography involves the written recording of customs, behaviors, and field data findings (Denzin, 2020). The primary goal of ethnography is to understand what is observed and heard and conclude from the information gathered from the individuals involved (Achmad et al., 2020). Conclusions are drawn from three primary sources: what people say, how they act, and the artifacts used in the context of the Mabarung Jegog competition (Spradley, 1997).

The author observed the characteristics of the game through the acknowledgment and actions of the supporting community, as well as the objects or properties involved in the Mabarung Jegog competition events (Angadi, 2019). The data collection involved open-ended interviews (Mathers et al., 2000), and the research is conducted in an informal environment. This approach allows respondents to express their views freely (Young et al., 2018). Moreover, in the research context, such interview procedures will enable the researcher to ask more probing questions (G, 2019). As a result, the questions posed become more focused, and the information obtained becomes more detailed and profound (Khan & MacEachen, 2022). Informal interviews were conducted with several Mabarung Jegog players and cultural figures. The Mabarung Jegog players chosen to be interviewed were the group leaders, namely Kadek and Wayan Diana. Meanwhile, the cultural observer is Made Bandem, an academic and observer of Balinese culture. Interviews were conducted in several places, namely in Denpasar and Jembrana in 2021-2022.

The data collected from field research and literature survey are then categorized based on their respective topics of discussion (Saulnier, 2000). Subsequently, this data is processed and analyzed considering the established framework of thought and approach (Nasir & Sukmawati, 2023), particularly about the play aspect in Mabarung Jegog performances. This phenomenon is understood as a socio-musical occurrence in Jembrana society manifested through performance activities that exhibit competitive elements. Therefore, the essential question this research tries to answer is how Mabarung Jegog as a musical performance can accommodate the cultural dynamics of its people, Jembrana, Bali.

Findings and Discussion

The Case Study

This case study delves into the distinctive role of Gamelan Jegog, a traditional Balinese musical instrument, within the context of the Mabarung Jegog competition in Jembrana Regency, Bali. The primary focus is on how this musical tradition mirrors and embodies the competitive spirit embraced by the local community. The theoretical framework for this research draws upon Huizinga's perspective on play, identifying five key elements—freedom, temporality, closedness, order, and tension—that distinguish playful activities from everyday routines.

The chosen research methodology is qualitative, utilizing an interpretative analysis approach. The study employs interviews and observations to gather data from the community involved in and supporting the Mabarung Jegog competition and various aspects related to the event. The study's findings reveal that Mabarung Jegog extends beyond being a mere musical performance; it reflects the identity and character of its players. This is evidenced by the dancers' intricate movements and body positions during the competition. Moreover, the competition is intricately tied to the spatial and temporal context, with organizers setting specific spatial limitations.

Mabarung Jegog, as uncovered by the research, displays distinctive traits, including order, systematicity, and high aesthetic value. Notably, it fosters a sense of tolerance among the

participating players. The tension inherent in the competition significantly impacts the players' psychological state, leading to emotions ranging from pride and heightened self-esteem in victory to disappointment and shame in the face of defeat. The competitive nature of Mabarung Jegog also gives rise to contestation, where differences of opinion or conflicts may emerge among the involved parties. This dynamic interplay of emotions and interactions among participants contributes to the richness of the competition. The significance of this research lies in its in-depth analysis of Gamelan Jegog's role in reflecting the Jembrana community's competitive spirit. Furthermore, it provides valuable insights into the cultural context of the Mabarung Jegog competition, highlighting the intricate connections between traditional art forms, cultural identity, and communal values in Jembrana, Bali.

Jembrana community's agility competition culture

In the Jembrana region, consisting of forested areas, plantation fields, and agricultural land, the Balinese community has long developed advanced agricultural patterns (Budiarta & Sujarwo, 2017). They are familiar with two types of rice fields, namely irrigated fields (known as subak) and dry fields (Prastyadewi et al., 2021), as well as gardens. These agricultural practices involve a series of activities, such as plowing (*mluku*), planting (*atanem*), and weeding (*amantun*), which are carried out regularly to ensure the fertile growth of rice (Raka, 1993).

According to the interviews, with Bandem (March 10, 2021), in daily life, particularly in the context of agrarian activities, farmers generally collaborate in working on the fields (Reuter, 2022). This collaboration is structured within an organization known as subak (Risna et al., 2022). Every agreement within this organization becomes a decision that governs the ethics of farming, which must be adhered to by all the members. Within these regulations, sanctions are also agreed upon for members who violate them. Agreements within the subak organization regarding irrigation (Wahyuni et al., 2023), for instance, become norms to regulate the fair distribution and use of water, determining planting seasons, and specifying the types of crops to be planted, be it rice or nutmeg, among other aspects. Members who violate these regulations are typically subjected to sanctions such as fines or suspension of access to water supplies, and so forth.

Farmers in Jembrana rely on buffaloes as their primary agricultural tool, especially during the rice planting season (Dewi Ayu Warmadewi et al., 2022). From plowing to the final stage of leveling the land before planting, all these activities are carried out collectively and in turns. Due to the vastness of the rice fields, farmers often work with more than one pair of buffaloes to accomplish these tasks. Among these activities, as Kadek said (interview, 2 May 2021), farmers also usually insert jokes and banter to entertain themselves and alleviate fatigue. In working on agricultural land, there is sometimes a spirit of competition to complete tasks faster and produce more refined work. Therefore, farmers strive to demonstrate their skills and talent to complete the job well.

Over time, the habit of competing in the process of land cultivation in Jembrana has been elevated into a race held in a competitive arena. When plowing the fields using a plow pulled by buffaloes, in the context of the race, a tool called "*cikar*" is used, adorned with bright flags depicting strength and agility, aiming to motivate its owner. In this race, the *cikar* is pulled by two buffaloes and steered by one person. The rule to determine the winner is the buffalo that can be driven quickly and reach the finish line. This tradition of speed and agility competition is known in the Jembrana community as *Makepung* (Negara et al., 2022).

To this day, *Makepung* races are still prevalent among the people of Jembrana. Every time a *Makepung* event is held, people flock to the race arena to enthusiastically witness the event. To ensure the continuity of the *Makepung* activity, the local government and businesses in the Jembrana region provide financial support through sponsorship. This is aimed at preserving this valuable tradition in the midst of the community.



Fig.1: Makepung in the Jembrana Bali community

Sumber: <https://www.detik.com/bali/berita/d-6504534/aneka-cara-melestarikan-tradisi-makepung-di-jembrana>

Makepung activities are typically held in the morning, before sunrise, where participants, along with their two buffaloes, gather at the designated location to prepare themselves (Darmawan, 2023). The race arena is shaped like a 'U' with a track length of about 800 meters. Participants compete to showcase their abilities and strive to reach the finish line to become the winner (Negara et al., 2021). The dynamics of competition that occur in *Makepung* have also influenced traditional arts, especially the Jegog gamelan. This is reflected in the high spirits of the Jegog gamelan players. In *Makepung*, the drive to reach the finish line is the motivator and determinant of the winner, while in Jegog gamelan art, the spirit to deliver the best performance is the achievement and pride of the artists.

Competitions in the realm of arts, particularly in Jegog gamelan within the culture of Jembrana society, are accommodated through a competition called *Mabarung* (Komang & Gede Mahendrayana, 2023). Therefore, it can be concluded that *Mabarung* is the result of the development of the *Makepung* tradition. The competition model of *Makepung* is also applied in various other types of artistic activities, including *Jegog Mabarung*, *Kendang Mabarung*, and so forth.

Jegog Gamelan Instrument

In its initial development phase, the bars of the Jegog gamelan have been designed using wood with bamboo as its resonator. The common types of wood used are *Pungal Buaya* and *Bayur*. Each set of Jegog gamelan instruments consists of 3 *barangan*, 3 *kancilan*, 2 *undir*, and 1 *jegogan*. In its developmental stages, the Jegog gamelan have gone through a challenging period. The bars of the Jegogan instrument, as a part of the Jegog gamelan, have used giant bamboo known as *petung* bamboo, which is a variety of bamboo with exceptionally large dimensions. This indicates that the purpose of creating this gamelan has been to preserve its uniqueness and irreplaceability by other forms of musical art (Setiawan & Riska Maryati, 2018). In its original function as an accompaniment to dances, the Jegog gamelan ensemble also includes *kendang*, *cengceng*, *suling*, and *tawa-tawa*. This showcases the evolution of instruments in the Jegog gamelan to meet the needs of more complex music and to support dance performances with greater dynamism and harmony.

The addition of extra instruments in the Jegog gamelan aims to provide accents that support dance movements (Negara, 2016). Prior to the use of additional instruments, the compositions in the Jegog gamelan did not have distinct accents to support dance movements. The introduction of the *tawa-tawa* instrument with its rhythmic patterns provides clear rhythmic structure, which is crucial for a dancer to follow the rhythm of the accompanying gamelan. Similar to the *kendang* and *cengceng* instruments, its rhythmic patterns strengthen accents and provide support for various movements performed by the dancer. Additionally, the *suling* instrument adds variations in musical expression and serves as an element that enhances the allure of Jegog gamelan music (Sudana, 2015). Therefore, the addition of these extra

instruments enriches the experience of the performing arts and strengthens the close relationship between music and dance movements in Jegog gamelan performances.

The Jegog gamelan ensemble consists of several instruments, including *barangan*, *kancilan*, *celuluk*, *suwir*, *under*, and *jegogan*, all made from bamboo. Meanwhile, the instruments used to accompany dances in the Jegog gamelan include *kendang*, *cengceng*, *suling*, and *tawa-tawa*. Each instrument in the Jegog gamelan has two main components: the bar and the resonator. Based on Wayan Diana's explanation (interview, 4 June 2021), the bar is the instrument's part that produces sound when struck or played. In the Balinese gamelan tradition, there are several types of bars used, including:

1. Split bamboo or wood bars, commonly used in Gambang, Rindik, and Gandrung gamelan ensembles.
2. Bars made of iron or bronze are used in Slonding, Saron, Gong Gede, Gong Kebyar, Gender Wayang, Semar Pagulingan, Angklung, and similar gamelan ensembles.
3. Bamboo tube bars are used explicitly in Joged Bumbung and Jegog gamelan ensembles.

To achieve a more melodic sound, the bars in gamelan instruments are often equipped with resonators made of bamboo tubes, zinc, or sometimes plastic PVC pipes. These resonators are usually placed beneath the bars, allowing the reflected sound to produce smoother, longer, vibrating, and beautiful tones. The selection of high-quality bamboo material, resistant to pests and not easily breakable, is crucial in making Jegog gamelan instruments. Therefore, during the bamboo harvesting process in gardens or forests, as well as throughout the Jegog gamelan instrument-making process, the Jembrana community in Bali follows the traditional *ala ayuning dewasa* calculation (Sujana & Djiwandono, 2022). This involves considerations of auspicious and inauspicious days.

The Jembrana Bali community firmly believes in avoiding certain days for bamboo harvesting (Bhattacharya et al., 2019). Two of the calendrical systems in the Balinese calendar that serve as references are *saptawara* and *triwara* (Putra et al., 2022). *Saptawara* is a weekly calendrical system in Bali consisting of seven days: *Redite* (Sunday), *Coma* (Monday), *Anggara* (Tuesday), *Buda* (Wednesday), *Wraspati* (Thursday), *Sukra* (Friday), and *Saniscara* (Saturday). Meanwhile, *triwara* is a three-day weekly calendrical system: *Pasah*, *Beteng*, and *Kajeng*. Based on field observations, These calendrical systems ensure the quality and auspiciousness of the bamboo material used in making Jegog gamelan instruments.

Calculations regarding sacred days are a deeply ingrained belief in the culture of the Jembrana community, as held by the Balinese people in general (Donder, 2021). The day of *Redite* (Sunday) is considered less favorable or best avoided for tree felling, especially trees with joints, including bamboo. This belief is rooted in an inherited tradition of faith. The proof is that until now, the Balinese people, who still adhere to traditional solid values, have never cut down trees on Sundays. *Kajeng* is one of the components of the *Triwara* system that is highly revered, particularly when the day of *Kajeng* coincides with *Kliwon*, which is also part of the *Pancawara* system. *Pancawara* is a five-day weekly calendrical system consisting of *Umanis*, *Pahing*, *Pon*, *Wage*, and *Kliwon*. The day that aligns with *Kajeng Kliwon* is considered propitious for holding religious ceremonies (Nova, 2020). This day is deemed highly sacred and is believed to possess powerful energy.

On that day, people prepare various offerings and perform prayers for safety (Gatriyani, 2022). Therefore, *Kajeng* is considered a less suitable day for engaging in tasks deemed crucial for human needs. Instead, *Kajeng* is a special day for preparing and offering offerings and conducting worship ceremonies to the Almighty. It is essential to select the correct type of bamboo in making Jegog instruments, in addition to considering auspicious days for harvesting. The selection of bamboo must consider factors such as size (large or small), thickness, age, section of the bamboo, and quality to ensure that the instrument is formed according to its respective characteristics (Grame, 1962).

Typically, the type of bamboo used for making Jegog gamelan bars is chosen from the best section of mature bamboo, which is approximately one meter from the bamboo base, and only three meters of the bamboo joints can be utilized. In the preservation process, bamboo pieces are soaked for about a month and then dried by leaning them against a place not directly exposed to sunlight. After the bamboo pieces are dried, the next step is creating *gerantang* (the length of the bamboo is related to the desired pitch).



Fig.2: Gerantang on Jegog Gamelan
Source: Sukerna, 2021



Fig.3: Pelawah (painted red) where the gerantang is hung
Source: Sukerna, 2021

The process of creating *gerantang* begins after the bamboo undergoes the drying process. The bamboo is cut to the required length to produce the desired pitch. The section of the bamboo that produces high-pitched sounds will be used as the bar, while the section with low or deep sounds will be used as the resonator (Raharja & Darmawan, 2021). Typically, about three-quarters of the length from the high-pitched section of the bamboo is cut lengthwise, creating a curvature of approximately half its size.

This cutting process results in the remaining bar section, about half the original length, and the intact bamboo tube section that will serve as the resonator. The distance between the bar and the resonator is precisely measured to ensure high-quality or resonant sound. This is done by extending the bar (by reducing the length of the resonator) or shortening the bar (by cutting the bar's size). After the *gerantang* is completed, two holes are drilled to hang it on the *pelawah*. This process of creating *gerantang* is also applied to all types of *gerantang* used in various Jegog gamelan instruments.

Jegog Gamelan Repertoire

In the Mabarung Jegog performance, a collection of music is known as a repertoire, which encompasses all the musical material owned by a gamelan ensemble. In the context of the Jegog gamelan, the common term for all types of its musical material is "*tabuh*" (Sentana et al., 2022). Therefore, in this context, the term *tabuh*, used to refer to the music collection, has the same meaning as the *gending* described earlier. Over time and with changing generations, the repertoire of *tabuh* in the Jegog gamelan continues to grow due to the creation of many new types of *tabuh*. However, the kinds of *tabuh* that were first created when the Jegog gamelan emerged are generally referred to as "classic *tabuh*" or "*tabuh tempo dulu*" (Suardana, 2023). Meanwhile, the *tabuhs* created later are called "*creative tabuh*." However, even in creative *tabuhs*, musical structures are similar to those in classic *tabuhs*.

Until now, numerous *tabuhs* have been created as part of the repertoire of the Jegog gamelan, and their number has even reached hundreds (Ardana, 2020). Some of the names of these *tabuhs* include *Tabuh Pengungkab Sabda*, *Tabuh Trungtungan*, *Tabuh Gegenderan*, *Tabuh Sulingan*, *Tabuh Sekar Jepun*, *Tabuh Sekar Kadula*, and so on. The Jegog gamelan repertoire is extensive. Alongside many *tabuhs* inherited by predecessors, many more were created by successive generations. Among the *tabuhs* above, when observed based on their names, many draw inspiration from animal names like *Macan Putih* (White Tiger), *Merak Ngelo* (Dancing Peacock), *Cerukcuk Punyah* (Bird Chirp), *Goak Ngolol* (Laughing Crow), *Cangak Merengang* (Croaking Heron), *Manuk Nguci* (Chirping Bird), *Capung Manjus* (Graceful Dragonfly), *Kidang Dengkleng* (Leaping Deer), and *Lindung Semara* (Guardian of Love). Some also use flower names, such as *Sekar Jepun* (Frangipani Flower), *Sekar Kadula* (Tuberose Flower), and *Sekar Wangi* (Jasmine Flower).

Others take words from wayang characters like Subali and Sugriwa. There are also names inspired by legendary figures from Balinese folklore, like *Layonsari*, *Jaya Prana*, and *Saunggaling*. Names derived from places, such as *Ndeng Bangli* and *Ndung Griya*, are also present. However, among these *tabuhs*, *Tabuh Pengungkab Sabda* holds an extraordinary place in the Jegog gamelan. From its name, "*Pengungkab Sabda*," where "*pengungkab*" means opening and "*sabda*" means sound, it signifies the opening sound. Therefore, this *tabuh* is presented to inaugurate every Jegog artistic performance. Jegog artists believe this *tabuh* holds excellent significance; it is shown at the beginning of the performance to invite the audience to seek safety from the Almighty, ensuring that the performance runs smoothly and achieves success (Aryani, 2017).

Contestation

Literally, "*mabarung*" is derived from the word "*barung*," which means a set or ensemble of gamelan instruments, with the prefix "*ma*," signifying a gamelan competition (Meila, 2019). In practice, this can be seen in examples like "*Mabarung Jegog*," which means a Jegog gamelan competition (Komang & Gede Mahendrayana, 2023). In the Jembrana region, the term Mabarung is known not only for referring to Jegog Mabarung but also for denoting a specific form of art called Kendang Mabarung, which refers to a large-sized kendang instrument (Harnish & Lewiston, 1990). Mabarung Jegog competitions can proceed with a minimum of two Jegog gamelan groups participating. Typically, each group prepares an average of five pieces of music, presented alternately, and there is a time for collective performance. However, in its development, Mabarung Jegog competitions can be joined by participants from more than two groups.

As mentioned earlier, in the Mabarung Jegog competition, there is a manifestation of a "game". As Huizinga pointed out, a game has characteristics that differentiate it from ordinary actions: freedom, temporality, closure, order, and tension. In the Mabarung Jegog competition, there is the freedom to act outside of the usual with its purpose, borrowing the term from Gadamer (1975), which states that in a game, there is autonomy that can be interpreted as "the to-and-fro movement." This concept is fascinating to adapt, where in the Mabarung Jegog, it becomes a part of the complete representation of the Jegog player (Komang & Gede Mahendrayana, 2023). This freedom can also be observed in the players' posture. While in the

presentation of Balinese gamelan, it is usually played by musicians in a seated cross-legged position, in *Mabarung Jegog*, the gamelan instruments are played by musicians sitting on *dingklik*, a type of three-legged wooden chair. The seated posture of the players in *Mabarung Jegog* is used to support the freedom of expression in their aesthetic performance when playing. Thus, during the performance, the musicians often play while standing.



Fig.4: Performance of musicians in *Jegog Mebarung*
Source: Sukerna, 2021

The *Mabarung Jegog* competition is a practice of artistic expression characterized by its temporality and closed nature. Temporality is manifested through temporary actions (Huizinga, 1990). This means that the competition is an expressive stance that, once finished, returns to everyday activities. The performers will go back to their original professions. In the *Mabarung Jegog* competition, a closed nature tends to be linked to the context of place and time. In line with Huizinga (1990), the *Mabarung Jegog* game can start and end within the boundaries set by the organizers. Therefore, in practice, in every *Mabarung Jegog* performance, whether in the context of a competition for ceremonial purposes or to liven up a traditional ceremony, it usually takes place in an open field, a courtyard, or even at a street intersection. The size of the space used is adjusted to the event or form of the performance. For instance, the *Jegog Mabarung* performance utilizes a more extensive area because multiple *Jegog* groups are present. Once the performance is over, the space used is returned to its original function.

In the *Mabarung Jegog* competition, there is also an element of order. Huizinga (1990, 14) states that games require order within the game itself. In the *Mabarung Jegog* competition, there is an absolute, structured, systematic, and valuable order. As seen in the *Mabarung Jegog* performance, there are etiquette rules observed during the performance, with players paying attention to each other, maintaining the game, and growing awareness among players to tolerate each other in playing their repertoire. The audience also supports order by refraining from activities that may disrupt the atmosphere of the performance.

In *Mabarung Jegog*, there is also an element of tension experienced by the players (Selfana et al., 2023). The situation can be likened to a gambler who stakes their fate in a gambling arena. Every *Jegog* gamelan player feels excitement when participating in the *Jegog Mabarung* event to determine whether they will emerge as winners or losers. In the *Mabarung Jegog* competition, specific rules are employed to assess the players' abilities. The competition arena serves as a space to showcase strength, intelligence, teamwork, skills, and optimism and to realize the ambitions of the *Jegog* players. As previously explained, the *Mabarung Jegog* activity involves elements of sports, art, the supernatural, martial arts, and technique. The ethical rules used as evaluation parameters significantly influence the players' mentality and serve as a mental burden for every competition participant. This is because, in addition to the

sense of pride and high self-esteem experienced when successfully winning a match, there are feelings of disappointment, shame, and pain felt when facing defeat.



Fig.5: Mabarang Jegog at Bali Cultural Week 2021

Source: <https://balihbalihan.com/2021/06/15/gemuruh-jegog-mebarang-di-pkb-xliiii/>

The Mabarang Jegog event has become a tradition, and participants know their challenges after engaging in a competition. With a high spirit of sportsmanship, all Jegog players enter the arena. The principle and determination to win is the unanimous resolve of all participants, as it brings pride, admiration, and a good reputation from the audience when declared the winner. However, not all participants are prepared to accept defeat. Those who lose naturally feel disappointment and bear a sense of shame, but they view the event as motivation to train harder and improve their skills for better performance in future matches.

In addition to upholding sportsmanship in Jegog Mabarang, aesthetics play a significant role in the event. Notably, the sound produced by the Jegog gamelan instruments is also considered in winning a competition. A Jegog instrument with a louder sound that can outperform its opponent is a winning point. The loud sound of Jegog can influence the opponent's mental state (Setiawan & Riska Maryati, 2018). Skill in mastering and presenting a piece or "gending" is also a crucial factor. Players who have mastery over the repertoire can match or even surpass the musical presentation of their opponent.

In this regard, participants who are creative in composing new pieces can be formidable competitors. Therefore, in the Mabarang Jegog competition, it is inevitable that each event will bring forth various new repertoires. Furthermore, unity in playing rhythm and techniques in presenting collective drumming patterns is also essential.

Physical endurance is another equally important element in preparing for Jegog Mabarang (Thakur & Yardi, 2013). As this activity involves moments when all groups play together, the focus is determining who can play harder and longer without stopping or losing track of the melody. Sweat starts to pour, soaking through shirts, demonstrating their ability at the maximum limit to earn the honor. This part usually takes quite a long time, so if not supported by the condition and physical stamina of the players, it can have negative consequences, and there's a possibility of stopping in the middle of the performance due to exhaustion (Ackermann et al., 2002). Therefore, to acquire additional energy, they also engage in 'supernatural' activities besides holding regular training sessions. This involves seeking assistance from the 'guardians' in sacred places (temples or *pura*) in their surroundings.

Contestation in Competition

In the competitive game of Mabarang Jegog, the audience's presence holds significant importance (LeBlanc et al., 1997). The judgment and evaluation, whether a win or a loss, are left to the spectators and the Jegog players. The criteria for evaluation and the excellence of participants who can dominate the performance are evident from the presentation and

performance of the participants in the competition. The audience's presence in the Mabarung Jegog competition greatly influences the mentality of the Jegog players (Moelants et al., 2012). The audience is an active and discerning subject that provides appreciation and assesses the quality of the Mabarung Jegog performance (Toelle & Sloboda, 2021). The audience's active participation in observing a Mabarung Jegog match is akin to that of a boxing or football match. The inclination to judge the quality of each Jegog group's performance can be observed through their behavior as they focus on enjoying the performance. The performance quality assessment activity is based on the players' skill in presenting the Jegog drumming patterns and is also influenced by their previous experiences.

In the Mabarung Jegog competition, the audience can also be an active subject influencing the player's psyche or self-confidence (Trehub et al., 2015). In the performance situation, small interactions expressed by the audience, such as cheers or shouts to the players when presenting the Jegog repertoire, are exhibited by each supporter of the Jegog group. If the player has mental solid and self-confidence, it encourages them to perform their best. However, when the player cannot control the audience's reaction, it can undermine their mental state while presenting the Jegog repertoire (Bergeman, 2019). Therefore, emotional mastery and self-defense are crucial for every Jegog player in Mabarung. This is considering that physical confrontations between players are very likely to occur during the performance and at the end of the competition.



Fig. 6: Spectators at Jegog Mabarung

Source: <https://metroali.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ae1250c9-5bf1-4731-82f1-d9dd89e139cf.jpg>

This event occurs due to heightened emotions, the refusal to accept opponents' taunts, and the actions of opposing supporters, which sometimes can provoke emotions. Consequently, the Mabarung Jegog competition also gives rise to the emergence of contestation as a consequence of the competition. This entails a situation of disagreement or the emergence of conflicts between the two parties. Contestation implies a dispute between opposing parties, resulting in a clash of arguments caused by differences in facts, values, and policies, thus motivating actions among the Mabarung Jegog groups. In line with this, Vancil (1993) states that contestation presents issues from various perspectives and competes with one another.

Conclusions

This paper concludes that, Gamelan Jegog initially served as a means of communication to gather communities for collective activities. However, over time and driven by aesthetic needs, its purpose has evolved towards cultural tourism and entertainment, showcasing musical artistry and incorporating dance elements. The virtuosity displayed in the Mabarung Jegog competition has become a crucial factor in determining an artist's status within the Jegog Gamelan performance culture in Jembrana. Additionally, an artist's position has been

defined through the performance space, which acts as a platform, arena, and parameter for evaluating the quality of their performance.

The *Mabarung Jegog* competition allows freedom to engage in actions beyond the ordinary, embodying a sense of autonomy referred to as "the to-and-fro movement." This dynamic becomes an integral part of the *Jegog* player's complete self-representation. The expression of this freedom is evident in the players' posture, where they sit on elevated platforms. This seated position supports the expansive expression of their aesthetic interpretation during play, allowing them to perform even while standing. The *Mabarung Jegog* competition is a practice of expression characterized by its transience and exclusivity.

Transience is reflected in the action's temporary nature, as players return to their daily activities once the competition concludes. It is intertwined with the context of time and place, beginning and ending within the defined boundaries set by the organizers. Absolute, structured, systematic, and valued order is fundamental in the *Mabarung Jegog* competition. Ethical guidelines are observed during the performance, with players attentively maintaining the integrity of the game and fostering mutual awareness for tolerating each other's repertoire. Likewise, the audience contributes to upholding order by refraining from activities that may disrupt the performance's ambiance.

The tense atmosphere in the *Mabarung Jegog* event can be likened to gamblers trying their luck in a gambling arena. The *Jegog Mabarung* event is decisive, determining whether one emerges as the winner or the loser. The tension experienced significantly impacts the players' mentality and becomes a mental burden for every participant. Alongside the pride and high self-esteem felt upon winning, there are feelings of disappointment, shame, and pain when facing defeat. The competition in the *Mabarung Jegog* performance gives rise to contention as a consequence of the competition. This involves situations of disagreement or conflicts arising between the opposing parties. Contestation manifests disputes caused by differences in facts, values, and policies, motivating actions between the *Mabarung Jegog* groups. This dynamic arises from the audience's tendency to evaluate the quality of each *Jegog* group's performance. These reactions are fueled by emotions triggered by opponents' taunts and opposing supporters' actions.

Overall, the *Mabarung Jegog* competition is a multifaceted event encompassing art, sport, and cultural expression elements. It serves as a platform for artists to showcase their virtuosity, express themselves, and compete for recognition and prestige within the *Jegog Gamelan* community. The competition's significance extends beyond the physical act, delving into the cultural identity, social dynamics, and emotional experiences of its participants and audience members.

Although this study provides profound insights into the evolving purposes of *Gamelan Jegog*, transitioning from community communication to cultural tourism and entertainment, and highlights the complex dynamics within the *Mabarung Jegog* competition, several strengths and limitations must be considered. One of the key strengths of this research is the in-depth exploration of the changing purposes of *Gamelan Jegog* from communicative aspects to a focus on aesthetic needs and cultural tourism. A profound understanding of the role of the *Mabarung Jegog* competition as a platform for artistic expression and competition enriches the literature on traditional performing arts and their functional changes in society.

However, alongside these strengths, this research also has some limitations. Firstly, the study may be limited in generalizing its findings due to its focus on a specific location, namely *Jembrana*. Secondly, although the research covers social and emotional aspects, there may be room for further exploration of the social and psychological impacts of the *Mabarung Jegog* competition on the local community. Thirdly, alongside the emphasis on *Mabarung Jegog* as a form of performing art, the research could enrich its analysis by considering the economic implications of the shift in the function of *Gamelan Jegog* towards cultural tourism. Considering these strengths and limitations, this study still provides a valuable contribution to understanding the role of traditional performing arts in cultural and societal evolution while laying the groundwork for further research that can complement and expand upon the findings presented.

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