

# The Degradation of the Gendang Lima Sendalanen in the Ceremony of Gendang Guro-guro Aron of the Karonese Community

Lamhot Basani Sihombing<sup>1</sup>, Pulumun Peterus Ginting, Yakobus Ndonga, Frinawaty Lestarina Barus, Fillinlife Ginting, Anton Sitepu, Feri Gunawan Tarigan

{lamhotsihombing51@yahoo.com<sup>1</sup>}

Literature education study program, Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to determine the degradation of gendang lima sendalanen (five drums of sendalanen) in the ceremony of gendang guro-guro aron (drum of guro-guro aron) of the Karonese community. The research method is a qualitative approach. The data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation. The location of this research is Barus Jahe Village. The results of the study indicate that the original gendang lima sendalanen still consists of five instruments, sarune, singindungi drums, singanaki drums, penganak, gong. The change occurs is that Sarune as the melody carrier is replaced by kulcapi. The continuity of the rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic aspect continues even though the instrument usage has changed by using a keyboard.

**Keywords:** Degradation, Gendang lima sendalanen, Gendang guro-guro aron

## 1 Introduction

When one culture and another meet, an imbalance often occurs. In today's civilization, western culture often shifts the values of eastern culture. Rationality and modernity have become icons of global cultural change that indirectly change the meaning of something in a product owned by a particular ethnic group, Ginting (2015: 1). Indonesia also has a diversity of customs, religions, and regional languages which is called Nusantara. The Karonese people are similar to other ethnic groups in the archipelago who have their own language, culture, characteristics, and music.

The Karo tribe always upholds a kinship system called *merga silima, rakut si telu, tutur si waluh, dan perkade-kaden sepuluh sada tambah sada*. The Karo people have the view that humans must be civilized. This shows that customary rules must be obeyed in social life. The Karo people believe that humans must be civilized, and customary rules must be obeyed in social life. Their philosophy is that those who do not comply with traditional rules are considered worse than people who do not have a religion, Ginting, dkk (2021).

Indonesian which has cultural richness, should be the main strength and has become a weakness instead, causing deeper degradation along the time. Degradation is one form of weakening of a cultural value owned by a group of ethnic groups or communities that clash so that it presents a new culture. People always correlate with morals as a representation of behavior in accordance with customary rules, so that moral degradation is the behavior of groups

or individuals that causes a decline in cultural values because they are not in accordance with the customs and habits in the society, Sofyana (2023: 224).

Change and sustainability are part of degradation. Without being realized, the rapid flow of globalization has more or less threatened the cultures existence that have undergone very significant changes, Ermawan (2017: 7). This influence also has an impact on the degradation of the *Gendang lima sendalanan* (five drums of lima sendalanan) ensemble in the cultural events of Karonese community.

*Gendang lima sendalanan* (often also called *gendang sarune*) is the most well-known musical ensemble in Karo traditional music. The term *gendang* in this case can be interpreted as "musical instrument", Lima means "five", and *sandalanan* means "in line". Thus, the five sandalanan drum contains the meaning of "five musical instruments played in line or together". Based on the number of musical instruments, the five sandalanan *gendang* consists of five musical instruments, namely (1) *sarune*, (2) *gendang singindungi*, (3) *gendang singanaki*, (4) *penganak*, and (5) *gung*, (Ginting, 2015) .

Each musical instrument in *gendang sandalanan* drums is played by a player. Every player who plays a musical instrument in a Karo traditional ceremony is given the name *sierjabatan* (one who has a position). If it is outside the context of a traditional ceremony, then each musical instrument played has its own term. *Sarune* players are given the name *penarune*, *pengual* are given to players of *gendang singindungi* and *gendang singanaki*. Players who play the *penganak* are called *simalu panganak*, while *gung* players are called *simalu gung*, (Ginting, 2015)

*Gendang guro-guro aron* (drum of guro-guro aron) is usually performed for a whole day and night or can also be continued the folowing night (two nights). *Gendang lima sendalanan* is used throughout the event of *guro-guro aron*, which contains various forms, functions and meanings for the family and for the sustainability of the existence of Karonese culture, Pasaribu (2004: 5).

The presentation of the *Gendang lima sendalanan* has undergone many changes from various aspects in it such as the changes in accompanying music, and the changes in musical instruments. The role of *Gendang lima sendalanan* in the *gendang guro-guro aron* ceremony is quite influential because *Gendang lima sendalanan* has a very large role in meeting the needs of sound accompaniment as a basis for singing and dancing. The changes that occur have a very big impact on the sustainability of the Karonese community's cultural life. The aim of this study is to analyze the degradation of the *Gendang lima sendalanan* in the Karonese community's *gendang guro-guro aron*. Referring to the formulation of the problem in this study, it focuses on the change of the *Gendang lima sendalanan* consisting of five instruments into one instrument. This change absolutely has a significant impact on the musicians in Karonese culture because the musicians who are five people in the five instruments can be replaced by one instrument that consists of only one person. One aspect that is seen in both change and sustainability is the form of music itself. Art has a form that has many meanings. According to Prier (1996: 2), art is an idea that seen in the processing or arrangement of all musical elements in a composition.

When talking about composition, especially musical composition, there are characteristics that can be seen from the composition. In the *guro-guro aron* drum, the elements involved are *Gendang Lima Sendalanan* drum ensemble players, *perkolong-kolong*, and also dancers. Of particular interest in this research are musicians and singers. Both musicians and singers cannot be separated from the characteristics of Karonese which they call *rengget*. This *rengget* then became the focus of attention in this research on how to make it happen so that the players understand according to these characteristics.

## 2 Method

All objects or artistic events contain three basic aspects; they are form or appearance, content, and appearance. A.A.M Djelantik, (2004: 15). Related to this, form is one of the things that must exist or be able to be presented in the creation of art works. The symbol aims to understand whether there is a philosophical meaning of its own, Cassirer, (2007: 1). The *Gendang lima sendalanan* in this study are the drums as an ensemble used in the training of the *Gendang lima sendalanan*, *perkolong-kolong*, and also the dancers. The method in this study is a qualitative approach with the data collection techniques are through observation, interviews, and documentation. The location of this study is Barus Jahe Village.

This research uses a qualitative approach by collecting natural object data, where the author is the key instrument, Sugiyono, (2017: 8). With the theory above, the type of research approach used is a qualitative descriptive approach which produces logical and systematic data. The research was carried out on training activities for the five sandalanan drum instruments and *perkolong-kolong* which have *rengget* characteristics. Carrying out data collection techniques and instruments, namely by carrying out observations where the observer is also a recorder in sequence of the object being studied, interviews by preparing a list of questions given to the resource person, and documentation which is a copy of the activities that have been carried out can be in the form of pictures or writings from someone.

## 3 Result and Discussion

As a tribe with a high civilization, the Karonese people also have a culture that reflects an aesthetic soul, in the form of musical art. Cultural activities that are still carried out by the Karonese people, such as the year work which includes the *gendang guro-guro aron*. The changes occurred in the Karonese people have become a major weakness in the preservation of their culture. The statement above is supported by Malem Ukur Ginting as a Karonese traditional expert who stated that until now if someone dies or gets married, every community must still hold a traditional party as a cultural requirement in the Karonese people.

The Karonese people have several cultural events such as *simate-mate*, *nereh-empo*, *mengket rumah mbaru*, *guro-guro aron*, and *perumah begu*. All these types of art basically use the *Gendang lima sendalanan* as an accompanying ensemble in a ceremony, especially in the *guro-guro aron* which usually performs arts based on local wisdom such as dances, theatrical, folklore, and others as one form of cultural preservation.

In the context *kerja tahun* ceremony (annual party) which is usually held once a year with a *gendang guro-guro aron* (young people's party) involving *bapa aron* (boys), *nande aron* (girls), musicians, and *perkolong-kolong* as entertainment for the community. *Perkolong-kolong* are singers and dancers who function as entertainment at work ceremonies that year. They are professional artists (men and women) who are invited and paid by the community. They sing (sometimes while dancing) accompanying the traditional *guro-guro aron* (young people) dance. There, the function of the *perkolong-kolong* is the same as that of the musicians and they are called *sierjabatan* to create an atmosphere so that the aron or whoever is dancing feels satisfied.

Degradation in terms of change and sustainability are two different things that are related to each other. The following will discuss the original forms of the *Gendang lima sendalanan*. The first instrument is the *sarune* which is a kind of flute instrument which has a double reed aerophone. The tube of this musical instrument is conical, similar to the didgeridoo musical

instrument from Australia. The length of the *sarune* is approximately 30 cm. This instrument consists of five parts of the instrument that can be separated and made of different materials. First, *dilah-dilah* which is *anak sarune* (reeds) made of two small pieces of dried green coconut leaves and the two pieces of coconut leaves are tied to a *katir* (a small pipe made of silver) as a connection between the *anak sarune* to part of the *tongkeh*. The coconut leaves for *dilah sarune* must not be selected. The coconuts must grow on high surfaces, free from sunlight and wind. In addition since they are used as the *dilah sarune*, the Karonese people believe that the coconut fruit is very good for mixing traditional medicine. In fact, there are *guru sibaso* (shamans) who require their traditional medicine to use coconut water. Based on the explanation above, it is known that *sarune* is one thing that is needed by the Karonese people beside the interests of their musical instruments. Second, *tongkeh* is made of tin. Its shape is like a small pipe that functions as a connection between *anak sarune* and the next part. Third, *ampang-ampang* which is a round plate made of *baning* animal skin (pangolin) and placed in the middle of *tongkeh*. This *ampang-ampang* functions as a lip holder for *sarune* player when blowing the instrument. Fourth, the *kramong* or *sarune* stem which is made of *selantam* wood. The wood must be shaped to be conical, and the inside is also perforated to be conical as well. There are eight holes in *sarune* stem. Fifth, *gundal* which is also made of *selantam* wood placed at the bottom of *sarune*. This *gundal* is a funnel (bell) at the end of *sarune*, Ginting (2015).

*Gendang singanaki* and *gendang singindungi* are two percussion instruments that have membranes made of skin on both sides of the instrument. The front/top side or the part that is hit is called *babah gendang*, while the back/bottom side (not hit) is called *pantil gendang*. Compared to the drum musical instrument found in Sumatra, the two Karonese drums are small in size, about 44 cm long, the diameter of *babah gendang* is 5 cm, and the diameter of *pantil gendang* is 4 cm. Both musical instruments have similarities in terms of material, shape, size, and how they are made. The difference is that on the *singanaki* drum there is another (tied) "mini drum", called *gerantung* (11.5 cm long), meanwhile on *singindungi* drum there is none. The *singindungi* drum can produce an up and down sound through certain playing techniques, meanwhile the sound of the *singanaki* drum cannot go up and down. Both musical instruments are made from *tualang* and jackfruit trees. The holes or cavities inside are formed following the construction of the outside of the musical instruments. The skin stretched on both sides of the face (head drum) of the musical instrument which comes from the skin of a mouse deer whose skin has been dried and smoothed first. On the outside (from end to end) of this musical instrument, a rope made of cowhide is wrapped around the entire body of the drum. The rope wrapped around the entire body of the drum functions to tighten the skin/drum membrane. Each drum has two 14 cm long drum mallets or drum sticks. The two *singanaki* drum mallets and one *singindungi* drum mallet are the same size (small), meanwhile the other *singindungi* drum mallet is larger than the others. The parts of the *singanaki* drum and the *singindungi* drum are the same, the difference is in the size and aesthetic acoustic function. The parts of the drum are as follows: (1) *Tutup gendang* or drum cover, which is the upper part that surrounds the drum membrane. It is made of bamboo, which is then covered with *napuh* skin (a type of mouse deer), (2) *Babah gendang* or drum membrane is also made of bamboo covered with *napuh* skin (mouse deer). The part of *Babah gendang* is what to be hit with a stick to produce a rhythmic pattern, both the *singanaki* drum and the *singindungi* drum. (3) *Badan gendang* or body of the drum which is made of *tualang* or jackfruit wood. (4) *Tali/tarik gendang* or the drum string is made of cow skin that is not too young and not too old. This drum has specifications of 9 m in length, 0.4 cm in width, and 1.5 mm in thickness. It crosses the circumference of both covers (top and bottom) vertically against the length of the *babah* through ten rope holes on each cover (the position of the rope on the rope holes in relation to the *bingke* and the edge of the skin is visible

from above, side, and vertically symmetrically split). This part also traces the entire bamboo with a V-shaped pattern that is connected to each other. The function of this drum pull is as a mechanical control device. (5) *Pantil gendang* which is the lower part of the lower cone (second cone). It is also made of bamboo, which has previously been coated with *napuh* skin (a type of mouse deer), Ginting (2023). (6) *Gerantung*, which is a small drum located on the side of the *singaki* drum. In terms of construction, all parts and materials used are no different from the *singaki* drum. The difference is in the size in which the *tutup gendang* has a diameter of 6.5 cm, the *pantil gendang* has a diameter of 6 cm, the length of *badan gerantung* is 11.5 cm, and the length of *tarik gendang* is 2 m. The drum beater (stick) is made of purut lime wood. The *singanaki* drum beater is the same length, size, and shape, meanwhile the *singindungi* drum beater is different in size and shape. The length of the stick is 14 cm, Ginting (2023).

*Penganak* and gong have similarities in shape, they have *pencu* like gamelan protrusions that are generally found in Nusantara music culture. The difference is in the size (diameter) of the two instruments which are so contrasting. Gong has a large size (68.5 cm in diameter) and *penganak* has a small size (16 cm in diameter). In the past, gong and *penganak* were made of brass, but now they are made of iron plate. The hammers (sticks) of gong and *penganak* are made of wood, but what is in direct contact with the *pencu* of the two musical instruments is the wooden part that has been coated with raw rubber.

The evolutionary changes are slow and take a long time that occur based on the needs of the society in accordance with technological developments, and revolution changes means the speed of change that is not realized and has been created by capitalists who finally control cultures whose people do not know their own culture. *Kulcapi* drums are ones of the traditional Karonese musical ensembles, the *telu sendalanen* drums which consist of three instruments, *kulcapi*, *keteng-keteng*, and *mangkok*. *Kulcapi* is a Karonese musical instrument played by plucking both strings. The original *kulcapi* strings are from the roots of the sugar palm tree which have now been replaced with guitar strings. *Kulcapi* functions as a melody carrier in a drum in the Karonese community. The drum referred to here is a drum as an ensemble with a single instrument form where the *sarune* as the melody carrier instrument has been replaced with *kulcapi*.

The entry of keyboard instruments into the Karonese tradition was initially around 1991. Initially, keyboard musical instruments were used when approaching a Karonese traditional music performance or after finishing performing arts such as the *guro-guro aron* drum ceremony which gradually because in their activities as musicians, this musical instrument was favored by the supporting community.

Initially, this keyboard was used (pioneered) by Djasa Tarigan, a well-known Karo traditional artist. However, recently new keyboard players have appeared, some of whom have no background at all as traditional Karo musicians. The keyboard is known to the Karo people as the *gendang kibod*, which is a modern musical instrument from Western musical culture that has various musical programming facilities that can imitate the sounds of Karo traditional music by programming.

Initially, the keyboard was combined with the *gendang lima sendalanen* by utilizing the rhythmic elements contained in the keyboard to add musical nuances in the context of the *gendang guro-guro aron*. This combined music quickly became very popular among the Karo people. Through various creations and experiments carried out by Karo artists on keyboard musical instruments, in the end a rhythm program was created that resembles the Karo drum so that the keyboard can be used to accompany the songs and dances found in the Karo community.

The situation over time like this becomes a habit and the process does not take long so that the Karonese people who often use the *gendang lima sendalanen* ensemble ask for a keyboard

to serve their needs, especially for the *gendang guro-guro aron* (youth party). This has a positive side because one player can create various drum rhythms needed for dancing. Only a few Karonese people have not accepted the presence of the keyboard. This happens because some people say that the drum is *laradat* (not customary). The use of the keyboard in the Karonese people's musical tradition was initially in the context of the *guro-guro aron* which was played only on the *patam-patam* drum (a repertoire of fast-paced songs in the *aron* youth dance). The use of the keyboard on the *patam-patam* song is only to provide a certain accent to the composition. This is performed because the dancers and the audience are starting to get tired. As a result of hearing the sound of the keyboard, the audience gets new enthusiasm so that the *guro-guro aron* performance lasts until morning. The application of experiments to transfer the sound of the *gendang lima sendalanen* by imitating various melodic patterns of *sarune* and rhythmic patterns of the *singanaki* drum, *singindungi* drum, *penganak* and gong. Over time, a musical pattern was created that was programmed into the keyboard so that it could replace the position of the *gendang lima sendalanen* as a single keyboard in the Karonese music ensemble.

The songs in the Karonese community is divided into three. First is , *Simelungen Rayat* which is one of the mandatory repertoires in cultural events. *Simelungen rayat* has a slow tempo and is one of the difficult repertoires to play. But it can be a foundation for learning other repertoires. The relationship between *Simelungen rayat* and the Karonese community is very close because this repertoire is usually used in ceremonies in the Karonese community. Second is *odak-odak*, a repertoire that is often used by the Karonese community which has a moderate tempo and at wedding parties. All relatives who attend the event will dance together as a form of their joy and gratitude. Third is *Patam-patam*, a repertoire used after *odak-odak* and has a fast tempo as an accompaniment for the dancing community where after the keyboard entered this repertoire has changed significantly because currently in the *gendang guro-guro aron* ceremony this repertoire is the most awaited by the community because the dancers on stage will dance freely according to their hearts' desires by following the rhythm of the music from the keyboard.

The continuity in the rhythmic section where the changes experienced by the rhythm in the *gendang lima sendalanen* are not so different because the rhythmic sounds on the keyboard have the same sound as the original one, only the resulting sense of feeling is definitely different and there is no sound dynamics because it uses the brain of the electronic program system. The aspect of melodic form has quite significant changes in the *gendang lima sendalanen* because the keyboard player has a technique and sense of feeling that is very different from the *sarune* where the *sarune* has an inner connection with the Karonese community. The harmony form, before the presence of the keyboard, was no element of western harmony in the *gendang lima sendalanen* because the *sarune* and *perkolong-kolong* players who sing have different basic tones and do not have the same chord weave but that was eliminated by the keyboard which using a western music system by harmonizing all the sounds according to their rules.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the research data collection from the degradation of the *gendang lima sendalanen* in the *Gendang guro-guro Aron* ceremony of the Karonese community, the original *gendang lima sendalanen* still consists of five instruments, they are *sarune* drum, *singindungi* drum, *singanaki* drum, *penganak*, and gong. The change is transformed into a *kulcapi* drum where the role of *sarune* as the melody carrier is replaced by the *kulcapi* instrument. The song which

consists of three thins, they are *simelungun rayat* which has a slow tempo, *odak-odak* which has a medium tempo, and *patam-patam* which as a fast tempo. The continuity in rhythm, melody, and harmony continues even though the instrument usage has changed by using a keyboard in which the sound result is more or less the same.

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