

Factors that Threaten the Continuation of Simalungun Vocal Music Tradition

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The growth, development and increasing frequency of the use of popular music genres in various social cultural activities of the Simalungun community in the Raya District, Purba District, and Silima Kuta District have narrowed the space and continuity of local vocal music traditions that are rich in local wisdom and constitute the identity of the Simalungun community in North Sumatra. This condition is caused by the low musical energy provided by the community towards their local vocal music traditions. This research is descriptive-comparative and by applying ethno musicological and ethno history approaches, this paper will first, map and document local vocal music traditions that still exist in the Simalungun community; next, will examine what factors are causing the change and continuity of the vocal music tradition. The results of this study indicate that the poor effort of inheriting vocal music traditions in the community and the narrowing of the 'space' of the context of use and changes in community musical behaviour as a consequence of the popular culture development, information technology, education, economics and politics in the midst of Simalungun society, are the main factors of becoming the agent of change as well as a threat in the continuation of the local vocal music tradition of the Simalungun community.

Key words: *Vocal music, change and continuity, Simalungun.*

Introduction

The Simalungun community is one of ethnic groups in North Sumatra. They inherited the rich cultural heritage of their ancestors, which can still be seen, practiced, and enjoyed in the context of daily life. One aspect of the cultural heritage that they inherited was the rich

musical culture, namely the art of instrumental music (*gonrang*) and the tradition of vocal music (*doding*). The discussion in this paper will focus on issues related to the cultural traditions of the Simalungun vocal music, *doding*.

There are various types (genres) of local vocal music in the Simalungun community which, until a few decades ago, were still fresh in the memory of the Simalungun community and are often used in various social life activities of the community. Vocal music in this context means the human musical behaviour in the format of the spoken word, and text. The type of Simalungun vocal music which is widely known among the community are: *taur-taur*, *tangis-tangis*, *urdo-urdo*, *manjetter*, *manalunda*, *inggou turi-turian*, *mangmang* and *marsiarangoi*. In this vocal music, words become an integral part of a series of notes that have a rhythm, which is referred to as a melody. The words or texts are hummed together and become the character of the vocal music itself (Hodges, 2009); (Jansen); (Kartomi, 2018); (Kartomi, 2012); (Sahab, 2002).

It is said that it is something very logical when a society experiences social changes, then the community members will reinterpret their culture, including the performing arts (Harnish: 1992). Such conditions certainly cannot be avoided by the people of Simalungun, that in the past four decades they have experienced many changes caused by progress and development in various aspects of their lives, both in the socio-economic, educational, technological, political and in the field of religious orientation. Various studies conducted by music experts in North Sumatra did not miss information about these changes. The result is a change in various aspects of Simalungun people' life, including their attitude or behaviour towards their musical culture, one of which is the vocal music tradition.

In the past three or four decades, it turned out that the invasion of various popular cultures, such as various cultural products from outside the Simalungun area in the form of ideas, knowledge or also in the form of information technology and other goods and products, entered the cultural area of the Simalungun community through various channels and agents. The invasion of popular culture has given a new colour in the cultural development of the Simalungun people which ultimately triggers a change and at the same time the continuity of Simalungun culture. The research highlights aspects of changes in musical cultural material, namely the vocal music tradition.

Music, including the vocal music genre, is a public identity. In the vocal music text as well as in the context of the traditional vocal music usage, there are always values of knowledge which is the local wisdom of the community of vocal music owners. Likewise, Simalungun *doding* is also the identity of the Simalungun community. Based on the description of the phenomenon above, the focus of the problem that will be discussed in this article is, first, to study, map and document the local vocal music traditions that still exist in the Simalungun

community. Then, examine what factors are the main causes as well as the agent of change and continuity of the vocal music tradition in the community. Whether the poor effort to inherit vocal music traditions in the community and the narrowing of the 'space' in the context of the use and changes in community musical behaviour is a consequence of the development of popular culture, information technology, education, economics and politics in the Simalungun community. Could it be said that the factors mentioned above are agents of change as well as a threat in the continuity of the local vocal music tradition of the Simalungun community? (Merriam, 1974); (Nazir, 1999); (Nettl, 1983); (Nettl, 2015); (Nurmalena, 2014)

Research Method

This research uses the descriptive method. This method is a method for examining a society's status, an object, a condition or a system of thought, and its purpose is to fully describe the facts, properties and relationships between the phenomena under the study (Nazir 1999: 63). In this study, the authors used two types of data, which are primary and secondary. The first is obtained from interviews and observations made in the field. Primary data includes the characteristics of the informant, vocal music genre, context of presentation and vocal music agreement style. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through literature study, audio video recording and other music recording formats.

The informants of this research are those who are vocal music actors, both those who work as music artists and those who are only ordinary members of society. Those who pay attention to the sustainability of local vocal music traditions, both those who work as government employees, teachers or farmers, are included as informants.

Literature Review

The Vocal Music Genres of the Simalungun

Vocal music is human musical behaviour in a humming speech format, using text. In vocal music, words become an integral part of a series of notes that have a rhythm, which is referred to as melody. Words or texts that are hummed (with melody) become something that is unified and is the character of the vocal music itself.

Broadly speaking, there are two genres of the Simalungun arts that associate with music, namely: (i) *doding* and (ii) *hagualon* and *tortor*. *Doding* is vocal music. This includes *ilah*, *taur-taur*, *tangis-tangis*, *doding* and *doding-doding*. *Hagualon* is about an ability of performing musical instruments, where *tor-tor* is a dance; however, as it is always performed together with music, thus it is never separated from music. *Ilah* is a vocal music genre which is always performed in a group, and in a happy atmosphere. There are different *ilahs*, such as

ilah bolon, ilah mandogei, ilah hinalang, ilah martonun, ilah manogu losung (Purba, 2014); (Purba, 2010); (Purba, 1998); (Purba, 2005); (Purba, 2008).

Taur-taur is a vocal music genre that relate to individuals' expression of sadness in the form of melody filled with texts. Or, it could also be an expression of someone's life experiences that is sung by someone, or in the form of call and response between two persons. There are different *taur-taur*, such as *taur-taur simbandar, taur-taur sibuat gulom, taur-taur simananggei, taur-taur sitarak galunggung* (or sometimes called *taur-taur Ranto Alim, or taur-taur Sitarak Lingga Talun*), *taur-taur palopah-lopah urung*, and *taur-taur balok ganjang*. Words after the term *taur-taur* explain where the *taur-taur* originated from or what it is sung for.

Tangis-tangis is a form of lament. *Tangis-tangis* is always performed in the context of someones' death, or in the context of remembering people who have already passed away. There are different *tangis-tangis*, such as *tangis-tangis namatean* (a lament for a dead person), *tangis-tangis boru laho* (a lament by a mother for a bride who will soon leave for her own life), *tangis-tangis pambalbal bagot* (a lament by a person who takes liquid from the coconut trees)

Doding is a simple folksong. It is always referred to as melodies that are sung with a special Simalungun way of singing technique, known as *inggou*. There are numbers of *doding* that their authorships are unknown. To name some of the *doding Simalungun* are *Ija Juma Tidahan, haporas ni sinlokkung*, and *Serma dengan-dengan*.

Different from *doding*, the other term *doding-doding* is a term that designates the performance of certain pure melodies without texts. These melodies are always performed on musical instruments such as *sarune bolon* (double reeds-oboe), or *sarune buluh* (*single reed-idioglot* - bamboo flute), or *surdam* (*endblown bamboo flute*). Other than these genres, there are still vocal music genres that are always performed as part of social life, namely *urdo-urdo, mang-mang* and *tabas*. *Urdo-urdo* is a lullaby song, whereas *mang-mang* and *tabas* are songs sung in the context of healing ceremonies (Purba, 2005); (Purba, 2005); (Purba, 2005); (Purba, 2004); (Purba, 2002).

Cultural Contact: Process and Consequence

In the context of analysing the various changes and continuity of the Simalungun local vocal music tradition, researchers used the theory of cultural contact. There are various agents in the event of cultural contact, which are well known, including cultural contact because of the activities of war, trade, school, tourism, the spread of religion, to marriage between different ethnic groups / communities. Kartomi (1981) said in her article "*The Processes and Results of*

Musical Culture Contact: A Discussion of Terminology and Concepts" in the *Journal of Ethnomusicology* that various concepts from various scientific disciplines have been used as analogies to explain cultural contact events, which are: *hybrid, cross-fertilised, pastiche, transplanted, exotic, fused, blended, integrated, osmotic, creole, mestizo, synthesized, acculturated, double-acculturated*. However, the whole process, according to Kartomi, can be summarised in three terminologies: *transculturation, synthesis and syncretism*. Furthermore, Kartomi explained the results of the process of cultural contact that under certain conditions, cultural contact can form unexpected musical processes that cause, for example, the loss of a part of the repertoire, the reduction of 'musical energy', i.e. the time and energy used to make / play music, the loss of some or all elements of a musical tradition. Therefore, some terminologies are needed to describe responses to contacts that occur and should not be seen as a static entity, but as one thing that can change at certain times, including: *virtual rejection of an impinging music, transfer of discrete musical traits, pluralistic coexistence of music, nativistic musical revival, musical abandonment, and musical impoverishment* (Kartomi 1981)

Change and Continuity

Change and continuity are process and outcome events that occur as a result of cultural contact. In other words, both are integral parts of the contact process outcome itself. 'Change' is the result of a contact process in which there is a change of circumstances from what was before; this change may involve the mindset or behaviour of a person or society as well as matters related to the system of values and/or norms that exist in a society (KBBI 1990: 981). Meanwhile, 'continuity' is a word from the English word 'continuity'. In other words, continuity can be interpreted as a continuation of something. Continuity is also an attitude in determining 'something' to be able to live and be supported by the actions of people who want something to continue (Nurmalea 2014). Furthermore, it is emphasised that the continuity of 'something' is very dependent on history, because history narrates various elements of life from the past which are then retained by the people of today as their identity (Purwanta 2007) (Purba, 2002); (Purwanta, 2007); (Selo, 1981); (Sibarani, 2012); (Simon, 1987).

Results and Discussion

The Existence of Simalungun Vocal Music Today

The existence of local vocal music means that it concerns the use of the music in the daily life of the Simalungun community today. This certainly concerns the frequency of the vocal music genre use, time and place, and the context of its use in the community. Existence also concerns the mapping of regions or users of the local vocal music tradition.

The existence of local vocal music in the Simalungun community has shifted in recent decades. This shift occurred due to the people of Simalungun, who have experienced quite dramatic social changes so far. The invasion of various popular cultures that entered the cultural area of the Simalungun people through various channels and agents has given a new colour in the cultural development of the Simalungun people which in turn triggered the social change of the Simalungun people. Social changes in Simalungun society have an impact on their behaviour as a concrete expression of their culture (local vocal music) that is in accordance with their understanding. This change resulted in a change in mindset and musical behaviour of the Simalungun people.

Based on the results of research conducted, the use of local vocal music today is not a habit in the daily lives of the Simalungun people. The use of local Simalungun vocal music is now seen as an ancient tradition and is not up to date anymore in the Simalungun community. Thus, to understand the existence of the Simalungun local vocal music genre, the researchers divided the existence of the Simalungun local vocal music genre into 3 (three) periods, namely the pre-independence period, the post-independence period 1950-1999, and the reformation period, 2000 - until now.

The existence of local vocal music of the Simalungun community in the pre-independence period is a tradition that is very attached to the Simalungun community. Some local vocal music even used the name of the village, where the song was developed or used. For example, the song titled *Taur-taur Beam Ganjang* and *Taur-taur Sibandar*. *Taur-taur Sin Bandar* is a song that contains stories about the life experiences of the singer who came from the village of *Bandar*. This then becomes the characteristic and identity of the *Bandar* Village community. Local vocal music during the past, is also a tradition that is usually done by young people in one village to greet each other and know each other. Young people usually present this local vocal music with mutual consideration between women and men in the village hall. The tradition of local vocal music in the past is also common to do when the Simalungun people carry out their daily activities on the river. Usually, before reaching the river bank to take a bath or do other activities, someone will ask if there are other people who are bathing in the river by singing. This song is performed with reciprocity. This kind of vocal music activities is known as *martaur-taur*.

Another local vocal music tradition used in the past is when one community member experiences grief. Simalungun people have different ways of managing their emotions towards the grief they experience, such as the death of their husband or wife or their closest people. When experiencing grief, the cries of the Simalungun people are not ordinary cries like most people are crying, but cries that are hummed by the use of words meaning grief. This cry is an expression of the heart's content of someone who is experiencing grief or losing someone close to him. This cry is usually done in the middle of the night when the

funeral home situation is no longer crowded and the bereaved family can do the crying in front of the body. Crying like this is one form of local Simalungun vocal music known as *tangis-tangis*.

Another habit of the Simalungun community in using local vocal music can also be seen when holding a baby. Usually, when holding a baby, the Simalungun people do it while singing a song with words meaning affection. This kind of chant is usually called *urdo-urdo*. One of *urdo-urdo* songs, which is famous in the Simalungun community, is a song called *itolol*.

Some examples of local Simalungun vocal music expressed above indicate that in the past, local vocal music of the Simalungun community was a tradition or practice that was carried out in the daily life of the Simalungun community. Most of the Simalungun people activities in the past were performed with meaningful songs in accordance with the context of their activities. Local vocal music in this era was not taught by a special teacher, but was learned through habits that were carried out in the daily life of the Simalungun community. Thus, the existence of local vocal music in the past was a tradition or habit that became the characteristics of the Simalungun community at that time, especially the characteristics of each village there.

The existence of local vocal music in the period 1950-1999 experienced a significant shift. Local vocal music in this era did not become a habit of the Simalungun people again like in the past. Local vocal music in this period is a commodity that is only mastered and performed by certain people. In this period, local vocal music was only sung by local Simalungun singers who had the ability to sing with certain tones or melodies.

In this period, local vocal music must be learned not from the community's habits but through a teacher who has expertise in singing local Simalungun vocal music, for example the famous legendary singer of the Simalungun area is Lina Damanik, Sarudin Saragih, Tondang Park, Benjamin Purba, Trio Pargotong, Hotmaria br Sitopu, Tursini Saragih, Elni br Damanik. This is a Simalungun community singer around the 1970s. Lina Damanik learned doding from Alm. Bone Jasiman Saragih Sembayak and Bone Mariaman Saragih Simbayak. At that time eight teenagers formed an art group and Lina Damanik was one of the members and she was more focused on vocals and dance. The other teacher Lina Damanik is Mr. Uak-uak or his real name is Saiman Purba. The name Uak-uak is derived from a sentence in the poem song of the Simalungun people which is usually sung by the Simalungun people, but now it has begun to disappear or is no longer sung.

According to Lina Damanik, she had studied coding since she was a teenager, around the 1960s. The doding he learned was doding titled "Horja Harangan" which means a call not to

take or cut wood in the forest. At that time in Raya, there was a lot of illegal logging or theft of wood in the forest for sale. Other local vocal music studied by Lina Damanik is Martandang, Itolol (singing songs for children or urdo-urdo), and Horjaharangan (doding).

The existence of local vocal music in this period was only used in certain events, such as official events conducted by the Government of Simalungun Regency, the inauguration of the Church, the Rondang Bintang event, and grief. In the early 19970s, Lina Damanik was also often invited to the meetings of community organisations in Parapat to sing the local vocal music of Simalungun as a performance. Lina Damanik was also often invited to church builders to sing local Simalungun vocal music using words that had spiritual meaning. Local vocal music in this period is also usually only sung at traditional festivals. In this traditional party, local vocal music is not sung by all participants but only sung by specially ordered singers. Even the local vocal music of Simalungun in this period was also sung in competitions organised by the Government such as the race that took place in the 1970s in Simalungun

The existence of Simalungun local vocal music in this period is no longer used according to the context. Local vocal music from the 1980s - 1990s has become music that has a commodity value in the Simalungun community. Local vocal music of this period only became a historical / history of the Simalungun community which was preserved as a heritage from the ancestors. But it is not a habit of the Simalungun people anymore. This indicates that the local vocal music of Simalungun experienced a good shift in mindset, that is, the Simalungun community saw the local vocal music of Simalungun as history (something outside of themselves and is not their habit anymore) and musical behaviour (musical behaviour), i.e. not performed as a habit in accordance with the context of the Simalungun community again but only becomes a mere performance.

The existence of Simalungun's local vocal music in the third period, from 2000 until now, has changed greatly both in terms of function and in terms of the performance context. During this period local vocal music was considered to be ancient and traditional music. Local vocal music in this period is music that is only performed during the Rondang Bintang party and matches or competitions organised by the Government. Local vocal music is now out of context. According to Lina Damanik, many of the cries that are being carried out now are experiencing changes. Mar's tears that are being carried out at midnight now are no longer sung as the original. In fact, the tears should be different if presented when the person who died was a father, a mother or a child; the cry text in the context of these three deaths must be different. Today the presentation of tears in death no longer has to be presented by the family. That is, a bereaved family may invite (pay) someone to present tears. Lina Damanik explained that she was often asked to sing tears on a sad night. After Lina Damanik sang crying, she received payment from a bereaved family. This indicates that local vocal music

currently has a commodity value in the Simalungun community, so that it is no longer a characteristic of the Simalungun community.

Furthermore, as the original singer of the song Itolol, Lina Damanik explained that now the song (Itolol) has been sung by other singers by changing the tone and text of the song, so the meaning of the song has also changed. This change is caused by the Simalungun people changing their mindset towards Simalungun music. The Simalungun community is very influenced by pop music so that the local vocal music is changed in tone like pop music so that it is easy to hear by the Simalungun community today.

During this period, most of the Simalungun people were no longer familiar with their local vocal music. Even the local vocal music of Simalungun is unknown and is known by some Simalungun community students. This is a very bad reality for the existence of Simalungun's local vocal music. Thus, the local vocal music of Simalungun today is only an ancestral heritage that can only be remembered as history but does not become a habit or a characteristic even the identity of the Simalungun community today.

The Documentation of the Local Vocal Music Genres Still Used

Local vocal music that is still used by the Simalungun community until the present day is no longer how it used to be. Various types of local Simalungun vocal music genres such as *taur-taur*, *tangis-tangis*, *manjetter*, *urdo-urdo*, *manalunda*, *inggou turi-turian*, *mangmang* and *marsiarangoi* are still heard and remembered by the Simalungun community for decades, but today all are almost unrecognised by the Simalungun people. Based on the research conducted in three subdistricts: Raya Subdistrict, Silima Kuta Subdistrict and Purba Subdistrict, in Simalungun Regency, most of the people only recognise the vocal music genre of *taur-taur* and *tangis-tangis* meanwhile the others are still unrecognised. This indicates that Simalungun vocal music is no longer well attached to the Simalungun community because of all the many genres, only two are well known. Even today, *taur-taur* and *tangis-tangis* can only be heard at traditional parties and grief events.

The results of the research applied on students in three different schools in three sub-districts in Simalungun District also revealed the same thing: the students only knew two types of local Simalungun vocal music genres, which are *taur-taur* and *tangis-tangis*. These two Simalungun local vocal music genres are also often heard only at traditional parties and grief. Even the students' knowledge about Simalungun local vocal music is very insignificant. When the students were asked a question, 'Have you ever studied one of the eight types of Simalungun vocal music genres?' Most answered not yet. This proved that the use, the transmission or the inheritance of local Simalungun vocal music to the Simalungun

community, especially students is very minimal or poor. This indeed is a threat to the continuation of the vocal music tradition in the Simalungun community.

The vocal music that is still used today can only be found or heard at traditional parties or grief events. The use of Simalungun's local vocal music is no longer used according to the context. The context in question is the human musical behaviour in a speech format that is hummed using textual. Texts are words that are hummed by using a melody and blending with the vocal music character itself. According to Lina Damanik, people singing taur-taur or tangis-tangis in the present day are using many modifications both from the words and from the tone (melody). The way to sing in tones or melodies doesn't fit the way to sing the original song. Textually, most of the taur-taur are not sung correctly when people carry out their various daily activities. But today it is used as a venue for competition so that vocal music is only understood in the context of the match rather than the context according to the character of the musical actors. This is also proof that the Simalungun local vocal music currently used is incompatible between text and context of use.

The same thing also happened in the local vocal music genre, Simalungun, called Tangis-tangis. Tangis-tangis is a song of grief that is usually sung during the night before the funeral. Tangis-tangis is a song that has a deep feeling of people experiencing grief. Even the melody used is different between a deceased child or a deceased husband / wife. Nowadays, tangis-tangis is almost always sung by paid singers so that the feelings of the grieving person are not released through that ritual of tangis-tangis because it is not done by the person who is supposed to be doing it. This also proves that the text and context of tangis-tangis being carried out today is no longer in coordinate.

Factors That Cause Change and Continuity in Local Vocal Music Tradition of Simalungun People

Social change is any change in social institutions in a society, which affects its social system, including the values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour among groups in society. According to Soedjito, social change is a social phenomenon, which is a picture of the dynamics of a society that experiences traditional values. Davis states that social change is part of cultural change. Kartomi said that socio-cultural changes occurred due to cultural contact in the form of transculturation, synthesis and syncretism. In the tradition of local vocal music, the people of Simalungun also experience socio-cultural changes.

Based on the results of the study, the factors causing changes in mindset in the local vocal music tradition of the Simalungun community are:

(1) the entry of Christian missionaries into the Batak Land. During the period of contact with the missionaries it was shown that missionaries who entered the Batak Land brought their culture from Europe so that the culture of the Batak people was considered negative, namely as idolatry and not in accordance with Christian teachings. History also records that the Dutch government and missionaries from Germany left a monumental footprint in the continuity of the culture of the Batak people including the Simalungun people. They introduced new teachings and beliefs (Christianity) to the people of Simalungun. In fact they also introduced new cultures such as the education system, law, lifestyle, commercial goods, and musical instruments that are different from the music of the Simalungun people. This had a great influence on the Simalungun people so that the habits of the Simalungun people who were alive at that time were eroded by the views and teachings of these missionaries. This is the transformation experienced by the Simalungun people when there is cultural contact between European culture and Simalungun Culture.

(2) The development of Information Technology Systems is growing rapidly in the Simalungun community and it now makes the Simalungun people experience changes in their habits. Simalungun society is now patterned in an instant and practical habits because now the information system is developing rapidly so that any information can be known easily. This habit has an impact where the local vocal music of Simalungun is considered old-fashioned, impractical and can be replaced with a more practical song such as Simalungun pop music today which is the music that is preferred by most members of Simalungun community. The results of research from the Simalungun community in three districts stated that most of the Simalungun people often listen to Simalungun Pop music via the Internet / You Tube compared to listening to local Simalungun vocal music.

(3) The rapid development of technology has also led to changes in the behaviour of the local vocal music in Simalungun. Usually the local vocal music of Simalungun is accompanied by traditional Simalungun musical instruments. Today, local vocal music can be accompanied by only one instrument such as a keyboard. This is a reality that occurs in the Simalungun community so that local vocal music can be done practically and simply. According to researchers, the use of keyboard in replacing the role of a *gonrang* music ensemble does not necessarily eliminate local Simalungun vocal music, but instead enriches Simalungun vocal music.

(4) The development of education in the Simalungun community is also one of the factors in the change in the existence of Simalungun's local vocal music. Simalungun local vocal music is no longer a part of the curriculum in the administration of education in Simalungun district so students now no longer know and learn

Simalungun local vocal music which is the cultural heritage of the Simalungun people. The results of the research conducted on students in three schools in three districts in Simalungun Regency stated that the students had never studied or taught one of the eight local Simalungun vocal music genres available.

Thus, some of the factors revealed above have a profound impact on changes in the Simalungun community, especially in the local vocal music tradition of the Simalungun community. This condition also makes local wisdom (including Simalungun local vocal music) in the Simalungun community inherited by their ancestors experience a shift or change because of the influence of European culture (Simon, 1984); (Simon, 1985); (Siregar, 2015); (Sumatra); (Sumatra, 1987).

The existence of local vocal music in the Simalungun community has led to the experience of significant changes. The change is not eliminating the local vocal music but the change is the impoverishment of Simalungun's local vocal music. The process of impoverishment of local vocal music in the Simalungun community coincided with cultural assimilation which was finally absorbed by the dominant community. This happens because the culture of the dominant community (way of life and feels) is valued more than the local culture and placed at the highest position. Simalungun people are now more comfortable with culture or traditions that are easy, instant and practical so that local vocal music that is considered too convoluted does not become a public consumption anymore. The Simalungun people prefer pop music because it is more simple and practical and is well-known in various circles of today's society. This process is called transculturation. This is one form of cultural contact experienced by the Simalungun people. This cultural contact had an impact on the change in mindset and musical behaviour of the Simalungun people. Today, the Simalungun people no longer consider Simalungun's local vocal music as their cultural identity or expression. The Simalungun people see their local vocal music only as their cultural heritage but it does not become a habit of their daily lives anymore. In fact, at present they have never learned about one of the eight types of Simalungun's existing local vocal music because local vocal music has been deemed not up to date and is not relevant to the current era.

The change in mindset of the Simalungun people towards their local vocal music tradition has resulted in changes in the music behaviour of the Simalungun people. This is proven by the results of research to the community in three districts (Raya sub-district, Purba Tengah sub-district, and Seribudolok sub-district) in Simalungun Regency. It was found that the community currently only listen to local Simalungun vocal music at home, at school, on social media and in traditional parties or Rondang Bintang events. They listened to local vocal music some time ago so nowadays it is very rare to listen to local vocal Simalungun music. As Simalungun doding, it is rarely heard and sung. Most of the doding known to the public are taur-urdo, urdo-urdo, and tangis-tangis, while others are almost unknown to the

public. This indicates that the local vocal music tradition of the Simalungun community does not become the tradition of the Simalungun community today.

Simalungun people are now more likely to hear Simalungun pop music, especially at weddings. It is rare at a wedding for local vocal Simalungun music to be performed. Even pop music such as Maumere, Sajojo or pop songs that are popular nowadays are sung at the Simalungun community wedding party this present day. This indicates that the Simalungun people are now more delighted with pop music than their local vocal music. In fact, music ensembles used in traditional parties (marriages or misfortune) are now wind ensembles, keyboards, and musical instruments. It is no longer using a gonrang bolon or gondang sidua-two. The keyboard is now more often used because it can accompany the Simalungun tortor and doding in a practical and up to date manner.

The changes in mindset and musical behaviour of the Simalungun community have a significant impact on the Simalungun regional music industry today. Simalungun local vocal singers today are very difficult to find because Simalungun singers today prefer to sing Simalungun pop music than their local vocal music because Simalungun pop music is very popular today in society.

The process of social change of the Simalungun community which has an impact on the change of mindset and musical behaviour of the Simalungun community to their local vocal music traditions leads to continuity of the Simalungun local vocal music tradition residing in other texts and contexts. Simalungun local vocal music is not as it used to be anymore but Simalungun vocal music is only used as one of the historical parts of Simalungun society that once existed. The continuity of Simalungun's local vocal music is currently not so apparent in the Simalungun community. Most of the Simalungun people do not preserve their local vocal music, but the Simalungun people prefer to choose Simalungun pop music as their current cultural expression.

The next issue is: is there a possibility of continuity (continuity) in the vocal music tradition of the Simalungun community going forward? As explained above, that continuity is an attitude in determining 'something' to be able to live and be supported by actions from people who want something to continue (Nurmalea 2014: 251). It is emphasised that the sustainability of 'something' is very much dependent on history, because history narrates various elements of life from the past which are then retained by today's society as its identity (Purwanta 2007; 14).

Therefore, if the question: "Is there any possibility of opportunity for the traditional vocal music of Simalungun to survive today?" The answer is, yes there is! Of course there is always an opportunity for that. As mentioned above, context is an important thing for the

tradition to survive. It is also said that in order to be accepted among the people, thus a tradition should be tune in with the needs of the people (Nettle and Behague 1990). When it is not, than the people usually fix the contexts, so that it would be in line with their needs.

At present the local government has been giving a small amount of attention to the continuity of the tradition in question. The government realises that the traditional vocal music of Simalungun consists of values of the Simalungun culture. This means that the vocal music traditions is also part of the Simalungun identity must be maintained. Thus, in many cultural events sponsored by the local government, they usually present performances of traditional vocal music. It could be just an ordinary performance, or it could be in a form of competition, where singers from the regency as well as those who live in cities such as Medan, Pematang Siantar, Lubuk Pakam, etc would compete with one another. As I observed in the last couple of years, the local government used to asks local singers of Simalungun Regency, to perform *taur-taur* in the event, called *Medan Fair*, a fair that exhibited and sold the local products of the people of North Sumatera.

The same attitude has been performed by the local people of the Simalungun Regency. Although it was not in the real context of performances, people are now thinking that they have to survive their own tradition, or else the tradition would be vanished or forgotten and soon or later, it will die. As the informants said that the vocal music tradition is their identity that they must maintain; thus they would perform it whenever they feel right to do so. Thus, as the government did, they also performed the vocal music tradition in the events that usually involved people of the villages. This could happen in the festivals called *pesta rondang bintang*, or *marsombuh sihol* or else in conjunction with the celebration of national days. Besides, people of Simalungun also performed some genre of the vocal music tradition, especially *taur-taur* in church festivals. Performing *taur-taur* in the church festival is now very much seen in the regency. This encourage people to learn the vocal music, even though their attention are limited to the genre of *taur-taur*. Nowadays, singing *taur-taur* in a wedding ceremony is natural. Wedding ceremony actually was not the place for people to sing *taur-taur*. Usually, singing *taur-taur* was in the time of bathing at river, where a man would sing his *taur-taur* when he wanted to know whether someone (usually a girl) is still taking a bath in the river because he wanted to bath, or when somebody would like to express his personal grief alone in a house or in the rice field. So, performing *taur-taur* in a wedding ceremony at the present time is not wrong, but more or less is something that people want to listen to. The ability of persons expressing his/her self in the *taur-taur* is important. Being able to perform *taur-taur* would sometimes benefit them; if they are invited to wedding ceremonies and asked to sing *taur-taur*, then, they may earn money.

The Musical Energy given to Popular Music and Sustainability of Local Vocal Music Today

The Simalungun society today has a new character in their local vocal music. Simalungun local vocal music such as taur-taur or usually known as *doding* is no longer popular with Simalungun children today. Local vocal music is considered traditional and irrelevant. Simalungun people are now more inclined to use popular music in traditional parties and even grief events. The popular music used is music that comes not only from Simalungun but also from other regions such as pop songs from eastern Indonesia.

Researchers see that the musical energy of the people of Simalungun until now is directed towards their vocal music but not limited to their local vocal music. This is evident in the Simalungun community socio-cultural activities, where they are more delighted with Indonesian pop songs or Regional Pop than their local vocal music. Simalungun's local vocal music is currently used only in competition activities, while in traditional and grief parties, most Simalungun people have used pop music.

The Simalungun people are now also experiencing transculturation which has made them more dominant in using popular music traditions that are developing and well-known today in various regions. The Simalungun people are more dominant in choosing popular music than their own local vocal music which is their cultural heritage. This can occur because the musical energy of the Simalungun community is influenced by the impact of cultural contact, namely transculturation so that the Simalungun community is more dominant to popular music than the local vocal music of Simalungun. Thus, the Simalungun community experienced a reduction in musical energy towards their local vocal music.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study it can be concluded that up to this stage it was found that the Simalungun people experienced social changes that significantly impacted the change in their attitudes towards their ancestral traditions, especially on their vocal music traditions, the Simalungun *doding*. The development of technology, education, economics, politics and popular culture had an impact on the change in mindset and musical behaviour of the Simalungun people, especially in their local vocal music traditions. The change caused by cultural contact formed an unexpected musical process, resulting in the loss of part of the local vocal music repertoire of Simalungun (forgotten). This condition causes a reduction in 'musical energy', which is the time and energy used to make / play the local vocal music of Simalungun.

Simalungun people prefer to make / play Simalungun pop music compared to local Simalungun vocal music. Such conditions illustrate the situation that the local tradition of Simalungun's vocal music is experiencing musical impoverishment. This happens because the



Simalungun people are more dominant in choosing or using popular music or pop music than their own local vocal music culture. As in the use of local vocal music today, it is found that sometimes the repertoire changes or local vocal music Simalungun is played with new technologies such as keyboards so that local vocal music Simalungun can be played practically and simply. In addition, the poor effort of inheritance of tradition - especially inheritance to the younger generation -, the reduction of 'experts and artists' in the field of vocal music (due to death) in the community and the narrowing of 'space' in the context of the use and changes in community musical behaviour as a consequence from the development of popular culture, information technology, education, economics and politics in the midst of Simalungun society are the main factors that are agents of change as well as threats in the continuation of the local vocal music tradition of the Simalungun people

In the end it was suggested that the local government and the people of Simalungun wake up and realise the use of Simalungun local vocal music as the identity and cultural expression of the Simalungun people. Simalungun local vocal music still needs to be sung because Simalungun local vocal music is one of the local wisdoms of the Simalungun people and the music contains values of social and moral education. One of the things that the Government needs to do to preserve Simalungun's local vocal music is to include Simalungun's local vocal music lessons in the school curriculum, so that the transmission process can take place naturally.

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