



Madurese Soap Opera: An Industry and Madurese Culture Migration of Situbondo People

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe a variety of research problems, including the industrialization of Madurese soap opera and the Madurese cultural migration of the Situbondo community. The results showed that Madurese soap opera is a product of cultural industrialization that is produced based on the logic of mass cultures. Such as standardization, commodification, and massification. Standardization is seen from the use of local artists, Madurese dangdut music, as well as local narratives built through local phenomena in Situbondo. Cultural commodification can be seen from the changing motive of drama arts (Al Badar) to VCD films (Madurese soap opera). As a commodity, Madurese soap opera has an economic motivation that is demonstrated in terms of massification; it is produced in 10,000 pieces and distributed to the local market within East Java. Madurese soap opera is a phenomenon of the disruption of global industrial technology captured by local communities, acting as a comparison to the national soap opera industry. The contestation can be seen through both abilities in using global technology, namely television. Local television has a big role in promoting local content such as Madurese soap opera. Madurese soap opera on local television eventually became a medium that could bring people closer to their Madurese cultural identity.

Keywords: Madurese soap opera, industry, migration, Madurese culture, Situbondo

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INTRODUCTION

The development of technology today has a significant influence on the art industry at the global, national, and local levels. The art industry responded to the increasingly rapid changes as a consequence of the changing times. These conditions require the arts industry players to quickly, creatively and innovatively make adjustments (adaptation) as a survival effort in order to maintain their existence in the constellation and contestation on the stage of the arts industry.

The development of media and technology in the context of the local art industry can be explored through the production of Madurese soap opera in Situbondo (East Java). Madurese soap opera is a Madura-language film (Situbondoan) produced by local record companies in Situbondo since the 2000s, produced in the form of video CDs that are traded within the local industrial market. The emergence of Madurese soap opera in Situbondo was triggered by the phenomenon when the performing arts that were displayed live began to be abandoned by the audience. In

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the 1960-1990 era, performing arts in Situbondo was still relatively busy, as evidenced by the many traditional arts groups that were still actively performing live shows (see Hidayatullah, 2017, p. 45-121). At that time, the performing arts became a vessel for Madurese people to express and become part of the Situbondo community life. Performing arts as a form of the local expression of Madurese culture functioned as a medium of self-articulation, entertainment, and education to the community and featured in several events such as weddings, circumcisions, village and sea *selametan* (thanksgiving), and various public parties.

The emergence of the era of industrialization marked by the development of technology and media also influenced the development of art forms in local communities. Several essential periods occurred in Situbondo, especially those related to the process of industrialization and the development of art. **The first period** was the entry of the first audiovisual arts industry in Situbondo. In the 1960s, the Situbondo community was shocked by the appearance of several cinemas and film products from abroad (see Hidayatullah, 2017: 49). Indian films dominated the market at that time. The dominance of Indian films is none other than the form of Soekarno's policy of opposing Western art products. At that time, watching films was an exclusive activity for the rich; only a small portion of the Situbondo community could afford a ticket to watch a movie. Finally, art performers in Situbondo make alternative entertainment that is economical and able to reach the poor, creating the performing arts drama *Al Badar* which was inspired by the phenomenon of Indian film at the time. In this context, the performing arts are still the spectacle of people's choices, because besides being cheap, the public has no other option to fulfill their aesthetic needs.

The second period was in the 1970s to 1990s, when recording technology began to be used for the production of art in the national recording industry. In the 1970s,

some music productions in the form of cassette tapes began to be circulated through shops belonging to the Chinese community around the Mimbaan Baru market complex. Some entrepreneurs in Situbondo then established a small local record company, the aim of which was to produce local (traditional) art content circulating in Situbondo, targeting the local community market in Situbondo. Several art groups finally recorded his work both live and in the studio. The results of the recording were then circulated to several areas around Situbondo. In this era, art products in the form of tapes are not only useful to reap the benefits of local companies, but also as a means of promoting traditional arts groups. The more cassettes sold, the more and more people will get to know the art group. For art groups that record their content, they benefit from not only the sale of tapes but also the benefits of post-sale cassette promotions. In this context, the art industry run by local record companies can go hand in hand with performance art that uses live performances. The record media industry actually helps traditional artists to promote themselves and their work to the wider community.

The third period is the period where the performing arts stage begins to experience a significant setback. In the 2000s, when most of the Situbondo people already had television media and VCDs, at the same time, many performing arts groups went out of business because of the lack of performance requests. Performing arts as the only entertainment in the past is now beginning to be replaced by new media, namely television and VCDs. It was during this period that several local record companies took their part and used the momentum of the changing times. Some local companies in Situbondo, such as Handayani Record, Rahayu Record, and YA Record, carry out large-scale production through collaboration with local artists. They make new art products by "transferring the media" from live shows into recording products. Madurese soap opera is one of the media transfer products carried

out by local artists and record companies in Situbondo. Madurese soap opera production is also heavily influenced by the movements of the global and national art industry. Therefore the emergence of the Madurese soap opera is a form of openness of the Madurese local community in Situbondo in response to the discourse of industrialization, popular culture, and globalization.

The interesting thing from reading the phenomena of Madurese soap opera is how the efforts of local people who lack knowledge try to respond to modern discourses such as industrialization, new media, popular culture, and globalization. Madurese soap opera production can be read as an effort to maintain and preserve the culture of local Madurese people from the onslaught of globalization, which tends to be homogeneous and leads to Western cultural discourse. As a migrant community (Sumenep), Madurese people in Situbondo also need space to articulate themselves in their "new home" (Situbondo), where the mode of expression will be in dialogue with the new community as well. The new and different forms of expression from the Madurese community in Sumenep (place of origin) are interesting to read in the concept of cultural migration.

Some of the previous studies that also examined the problems of Madurese art and society in relation to the process of change and cultural dynamics of Madura in Situbondo is "The Dynamic Phenomena of Music from Colonial to Contemporary Era in Situbondo" by Panakajaya Hidayatullah. Published in the journal *Harmonia* vol 17 no 1 2017, this research examines the cultural dynamics of the Madurese community in Situbondo, which is contained in the form of music from the colonial era to the contemporary era. Cultural changes also influence the form of *strèkan* art from its original form, which mimics the colonial style of music to adapt to the form of dangdut music. This research shows that changes in the form of music are exciting to be examined because the arts always reflect the socio-political conditions of the

community. Besides, the changing of the form also implies a change in the natural mind of the people. This research only focuses on reading structural performances without examining any aspects of the local recording industry.

The second study was Romdhi Fatkhur Rozi's (2018) study entitled "Ji Dullah: The Dynamics of the Javanese-Madura Language Subculture in Cinema Culture in Indonesia." This study examines the dynamics of Javanese-Madura culture through narration in local films. His findings revealed that in these films, the depiction of cultural dynamics presented through the relationships and stereotypes of Madurese and Javanese people as an honest portrait of the socio-cultural phenomenon in the Jember community. It should be explained that the local films analyzed in this study are films produced by film students at the University of Jember. The approach would be completely different from the Madurese soap operas, which are produced by Madurese people who have no film school background. The assumption is that the production of Madurese soap opera will be simpler and will present a more honest narrative because, in reality, the actors in the Madurese soap opera will represent the stories of their daily lives in their work.

This study aims to answer some research questions about Madurese soap opera as a local expression of Madura culture in Situbondo. Highlights in this study will elaborate on the issues: (1) how is the mode of expression of the Madurese community in Situbondo in overcoming cultural changes, reviewed through the concept of cultural migration Edwin Jurriëns; (2) what is the process of the emergence of Madurese soap opera in Situbondo; (3) how is the process of industrialization Madurese soap opera, reviewed through the concept of mass culture Adorno; (4) what is the role of local media (television) in running local cultural agencies in the Madurese community. In the end, this study will provide a complex picture of the local expression of Madura culture in Situbondo through the Madurese soap opera, both viewed from a

review of cultural and industrial migration.

METHOD

This article is the result of an anthropological research study using James P. Spradley's ethnographic method (1997) and cultural studies perspective that discusses several research issues related to the phenomenon of industrialization of Madurese soap opera, and about the migration of Madurese culture in the Situbondo community through Madurese soap opera. Answering some research questions, the authors conducted several stages of field research, namely, (1) participatory observation, and this stage was carried out by becoming a part of the Madura community in Situbondo. The writer made an in-depth approach to several informants such as Al Badar art actors, film actors, directors, owners of local record companies, local artists, show viewers, employees on local television, cultural figures, and some local VCD traders in Situbondo. Observations were also made by watching live performances with informants, following the Madurese soap opera production process, and in-depth interviews with informants; (2) doing an ethnographic recording, at this stage, the writer in detail records all expressions, phenomena, and situations in the field, especially those related to the Madurese soap opera, such as recording audience expressions while watching soap opera, audience response, and other show dynamics. In this article, several direct quotes will be used to strengthen the findings in the field; (3) literature study, the authors conducted a literature study related to the research topic; (4) data analysis, the authors conducted data analysis using the theory of cultural migration to read the local cultural expression of the Madurese Community in Situbondo and the theory of mass culture to read the process of industrialization in the Madurese soap opera.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madura Situbondo Culture Local Expression

Edwin Jurriëns offers an exciting view of cultural reading. He distinguished the concepts of migration and cultural migration. Cultural migration is an awareness of the cultural consequences (cultural differences) of the cultural safaris that are pursued, even someone who experiences them will try to overcome these cultural changes (differences). It is different from migration, which is a migratory event without thinking about the impact of cultural safari. A tourist's cultural trip can be taken as an example of migration events; one only does physical safaris, moves one's body, meets one's consumptive needs, and returns to one's home country without questioning one's own identity (Jurriëns, 2002: 6). While migrants who have performed cultural migration, they radically change their perceptions during and after cultural safari trips, so that migrants can never return home mentally or culturally (Jurriëns, 2002, p. 6).

The concept of cultural migration can be explored through reading the phenomena of Madurese soap opera as a cultural product of the Madurese community in Situbondo. The Madurese ethnic community dominates the Situbondo community. They are migrant communities who have migrated to the land of Java (Situbondo) for a long time (see Husson, 1997). The Madurese people in Situbondo are the subject of cultural migration. They have made a long cultural safari (journey), leaving the place of origin (Madura island) and chose to settle in the land of Java (Situbondo). Being in an overseas area has created a psychological impact on the community, in order to overcome homesickness, they then create cultural products such as the Madurese soap opera as the imagination of their new home.

As a migrant, the Madurese community in Situbondo also experiences dialectics with the new culture where they live. The era of globalization and the openness

of information media that open distance, space, and time in the crossing of cultural safaris also influence the awareness of the Madura migrant community in Situbondo. It is precisely in this context that Madurese soap opera is positioned as a phenomenon of cultural migration; it was born from the crossing of local, national, and global discourse experienced by Madura migrants in Situbondo. Madurese soap opera is an empirical consequence that was born from the phenomenon of cultural migration, where migrants will continue to adapt and try to cope with cultural changes and the eras they experience.

The Madurese soap opera is an expression of the locality of the Madurese community in Situbondo that represents the natural mind of the people through local content (Madura cultural phenomenon), local languages (Madura Situbondoan), local artists (artists from Situbondo), local music (Madurese dangdut), local industry (record companies in Situbondo), and sold within the local market (Madura people in East Java). In the national context, soap opera models on national television that use serial (continued) patterns cannot accommodate the complexity or diversity of local cultures. Therefore, Madurese soap opera has a role in offering locality and is present as a comparison or alternative in the context of pluralizing soap opera models. Whereas in the global context, Madura culture has captured the development of recording technology and VCD to become a cultural product called the Madurese soap opera, one of which is also broadcast on local television (Situbondo). The following is a comprehensive explanation that discusses: (1) the history of the emergence of the Madurese soap opera in Situbondo; (2) the industrialization of the Madurese soap opera; and (3) The role of local television in developing Madurese soap operas and other local recording content.

Madurese soap opera – History and Development

Historically, the Madurese soap opera

is a form of transformation (the transfer of media) from the drama arts of Al Badar. Al Badar is a performance art that originated in the '60s in the form of drama in Madurese and told about Islamic stories (Prophets and Apostles). Al Badar is usually adapted (interpreted) from the Qur'an and other Islamic books, set in India and Arabic, with the accompaniment of Malay music (dangdut) sung on the sidelines of the story (Hidayatullah, 2017, p. 48).

At first, Al Badar was only shown live on the stage, then experienced commodification after the establishment of several local record companies in Situbondo. In the '60s to '90s, the drama Al Badar was produced in the form of cassette tapes (audio only). Only in the 2000s, the Al Badar drama could be enjoyed in the form of VCD films (audiovisual), with some modifications in it, such as changing the terminology of Al Badar to Madurese soap opera, changing the content of Islamic stories to social stories (profane), and changing the settings from Indian-Arabic into the settings and cultural background of Madura Situbondo.

Based on historical records, it can be said that the actors in the art industry in Situbondo have made several adaptations (transfer media) of art, namely from film (cinema) media as inspiration, into performance art. Then commodified into Al Badar drama in the form of cassette tapes (audio) and finally the Madura soap opera in the form of video CDs (audiovisual). The changing shape of the media is closely related to the influence of technology and the inclusion of media development in Indonesia in general and Situbondo in particular.

Audiovisual media such as some Indian films began to enter Situbondo in the '50s but were only centered in cinemas. At the same time, television was still an elitist media (Personal Communication, Imam Kutunuk, 3 April 2016). The popular entertainment for the Situbondo people at that time was only performing arts that were live performances. Artists then tackled it by adapting Indian films in theaters into

the form of performance art, until the drama *Al Badar* was created.

In the '60s, when the tape cassette technology began to be used by the national recording industry (Theodore, 2013, p. 57), in Situbondo, there was also a local record company that produced local works of art using tape cassette media to be sold in the local market (Hidayatullah, 2017, p. 96). A local record company is different from a national record company. The difference lies in the content, artist, and reach of the market share or distribution area, which is only local. It should be explained that local record companies in Situbondo generally produce local art products (Situbondoan) by involving local artists, content that refers to social and cultural situations/conditions in Situbondo, and uses local language (Madura). *Al Badar's* drama was then packaged and produced into a local recording industry product in cassette tape packaging. Until the period of the late '90s to 2000s, when VCD and audiovisual recording technology entered Situbondo, the drama of *Al Badar* was then produced in the film (audiovisual) with the label "Madurese soap opera."

Madurese soap opera is a Madura-language film produced by a local record company in Situbondo. Soap opera is the terminology that is commonly used by artists and people in Situbondo. Terminologically, the position and meaning of soap operas in the context of the Situbondo community are very different from soap operas in the context of television shows. Edwin Jurriëns (2006, p. 103) equates the term *sinetron* on television with soap opera, which on average, features sentimental and melodramatic serial/continued stories. Different from Jurriëns's view, according to Wardhana (2006) Indonesian soap operas on television were initially far from romanticizing soap opera serial models. On average, Indonesian soap operas were packaged in series (not serial) and immediately finished once broadcast, like the MTV models (movie for television) or TVM (television movie), or currently known in Indonesia as FTV (Film Television).

Madurese soap opera has a shape that is almost the same as the Indonesian soap opera in the early era, as explained by Wardhana. Still, the difference is Madurese soap opera is not produced specifically for television, but to be sold retail (VCD pieces) in record stores and street vendors.

Madurese soap operas generally narrate stories of the everyday life of Madurese people (Situbondo), usually tending to tell stories of lower-class people (poor people). The problems represented also represent the life picture of Madurese people in Situbondo, such as infidelity, debts, unemployment, orphans, household fights, gambling, occult (shamanism), and other social problems. These social themes are explicitly portrayed in the title of the film, such as "Korban Orang Tua" and "Kaya Mendadak."

Actors and actresses involved in Madurese soap opera production are local artists in Situbondo. Generally, they are Madurese dangdut singers, comedians, and some are *panjhâk* (artists) from several performing arts groups. Like the *Al Badar* drama, Madurese soap opera still applies the same form and pattern of performance, namely using Madurese dangdut music as a musical accompaniment that is sung on the sidelines of the film scene. Even some songs that are often sung in the *Al Badar* drama, such as the song "Ta 'Nyangka," still remain as the main formula in Madurese soap opera. The series of stories is also still adapted from the story of the Prophet in the *Al Badar* drama. Here's one example of the Madurese soap opera titled "Korban Orang Tua" that adapts the form of the *Al Badar* drama.



Figure 1. The cover of a Madurese Soap opera VCD entitled "Korban Orang Tua."

The Figure 1 is one of the Madurese soap opera products produced by local record company YA Record in 2012. It is packaged in VCDs in two pieces with a duration of about two and a half hours. The interesting thing about the film is the use of an “open ending” at the end of the story. This is rarely found in some films or soap operas in Indonesia. In general, FTVs (television films) with similar genres on Indonesian television always give a monotonous and predictable ending to the story since the beginning of the story, but in Madurese soap operas, these things are actually not found. The use of open ending makes the audience feel free and open to interpreting the film without being dictated and guided by a film narrative that is full of ambition and tendency.

In addition, regarding the production of popular (mainstream) soap operas, usually the capital owners (record companies that are in fact controlled by the middle and upper classes) at the national level tend to narrate glamorous, hedonic, popular, and other modern things; instead, Madurese soap opera precisely articulates different and opposite narratives. Madurese soap opera narrates the stories of the reality of the Madurese Situbondo, lower-class workers, unskilled workers, gamblers, rickshaw pullers, intoxicants, and several other social phenomena that do not appeal to the national film industry.

The Industrialization of Madurese Soap Opera

The local recording industry in Situbondo started when the tape recording technology became popular in the national recording industry in the '60s. The efficiency of recording technology and the ease of duplicating products (compared to the phonograph record era) opened wide opportunities for investors in the local regions to participate in opening a business in the world of the local recording industry. From the '60s to '90s, in Situbondo, three local record companies productively produced local works on tapes, including Sampurna Record, Diamond Record, and Rahayu Inti

Fantasi Record (Personal Communication, Arif, 23 July 2017). It was at this point that performing arts in Situbondo began to be commodified, packaged in the form of tapes (audio), and mass-traded. Performing arts in the form of theater, music and drama traditions that used to be live, are now beginning to be recorded and duplicated to be marketed in the local market, some of which are drama *Stèkan*, *Al Badar*, *Lodd-rok*, *Katoprak*, and *Topèng Kertè* (see Hidayatullah 2017; 2017).

The development of the local recording industry became increasingly crowded when the VCD technology began to be loved by the Situbondo community in the late '90s until the 2000s (see Hidayatullah 2015, p. 3). In Situbondo, many new local record companies have sprung up, such as Giant Records, Habibah Records, Ya Records, Handayani Records, HNH Records, MJM Records, and Multi Tone Records (Personal Communication, Arif and Asis, 23 July 2017). In this era, Madurese soap opera was born and began to show its existence in the community along with the booming Madurese dangdut music.

Madurese soap opera read from the perspective of the cultural industry, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, is experiencing mass production, reproduction, and distribution of cultural objects (production) for economic purposes. The culture industry claims to provide consumer needs for pleasure, but actually disguises the standardization of those needs and manipulates the desires of commodity consumption. There are three concepts of mass culture, according to Adorno, namely standardization, commodification, and massification.

Standardization, according to Adorno, is commodities that use the same formula with a few modifications. Commodities that have in common are camouflaged, so they look many and diverse. In Madurese soap opera, standardization patterns can be found easily. On the VCD cover packaging, all Madurese soap operas use the term “Madurese Soap Operas” and no longer use previous (local) performing arts

terminologies such as the Al Badar drama, *Loddrok*, *Katoprak*, or others. The title on the cover also does not use the Madurese language but is written in Indonesian, even though the story's content is actually Madurese. On the cover of VCDs generally also show photos of the performers (actors and actresses) both taken from film footage and free photos, accompanied by a description of the story and a list of actors involved. Here's an example of a cover of the Madura comedy soap opera (comedy) titled «Kaya Mendadak»

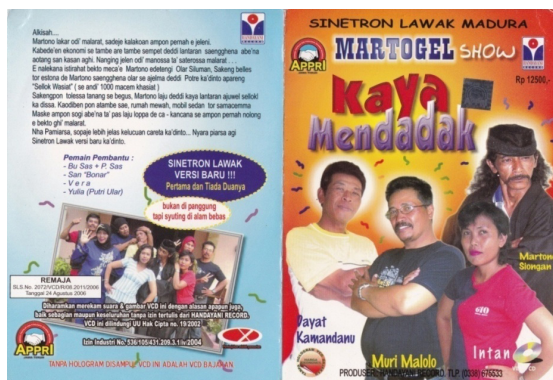


Figure 2. The cover of a Madurese soap opera VCD titled “Kaya Mendadak.”

The cover above is one of the Madurese soap opera products produced by the local record company Handayani Record in 2006. The cover has the same patterns as other Madurese soap opera covers that use the terminology “Madurese soap opera,” has the title in Indonesian, and uses specific display photos and the actors’ list.

Besides from its cover, standardization can also be seen in the film content. Generally, Madurese soap opera uses the Madura Situbondoan language (Sume-nep/Tèmor dialect), which always featuring Madurese dangdut both as a musical illustration of the film and as the main part of the film sung by the actors and actresses between the story’s scenes. As explained earlier that Madurese soap opera is an adaptation of the Al Badar drama; the form of the show is not much different from Indian films that feature songs on the sidelines of the story.

Madurese soap operas always in-

volve local artists in Situbondo, such as Madurese dangdut singers, comedians, and traditional drama performers who are usually well-known by the public through their on-stage performances. For example, in the Madurese soap opera titled “Kaya Mendadak,” the artists featured are artists from the comedy group Martono CS who are well known to the public for their existence. The same thing happened in the Madurese soap opera titled “Korban Orang Tua,” the artists involved were Madurese dangdut singers in Situbondo such as Kiki Asiska, Hadi ST Apa, and Fian TA.

The story content displayed has a characteristic that is reviewing the social phenomena of the Madurese people in Situbondo. Madurese soap opera is a representation of the nature of Madurese thought in Situbondo so that what is displayed is never far from the reality of people’s lives. Some examples are as explained earlier, such as the phenomena of infidelity, poverty, unemployment, occultism, gambling, and many more. The background and setting built by the Madurese soap opera is Madura’s culture in Situbondo; so far, there are no other backgrounds and settings displayed besides Madura’s culture in Situbondo. Based on the data above, it can be said that Madurese soap opera, as a product of the culture industry, has clear standardization. There are various titles and themes in the Madurese soap opera, but all have the same formula (standard), with minor differences in it.

Besides standardization, the industrialization of the Madurese soap opera can also be read through the concept of **commodification**. Adorno revealed that the commodification of cultural objects is cultural commodities produced by cultural industries, which are controlled by the exchange rates and materialism. The commodification of culture is based on the motives of economic profit (profit-oriented). In the Madurese soap opera, the commodification of culture can be seen from the motive for changing the art of drama into a VCD film. Cultural products in the form of drama art, which was originally a response

art performance model, are commodified by local record companies, mass-produced, and duplicated for economic purposes.

The commodification of culture (art) has consequences, which are considered to change the status of the artwork itself. According to Benjamin (2003, p. 17), the potential for work of art reproductions causes the essence of the artwork to be left untouched. Furthermore, Benjamin (2003, p. 17-18) critically said:

“Artwork is a complex of various taste phenomena that exert influence and ‘shape’ it.” The reproduction process contains something that makes it not authentic because what makes it lack is the spirit of history in it. Like human imitation, such works of art have no past. Furthermore, because of its reproducible nature, artwork loses its magical power.

For Madurese in Situbondo, performance art triggers a sense of “*dâlem*,” which touches the deepest feelings, or a means to articulate psychological conditions, escape from tensions, and reflection on social conditions. This condition can be fulfilled when the community is present in the aesthetic events of the performing arts. When culture (performance art) becomes a commodity, the industry provides alternative options to meet those needs, one of which is through the commodification of the form of drama (performance art) into Madurese soap opera.

People who usually watch the live drama (Al Badar) together and make it an everyday watch, with the Madurese soap operas commodification, people buy VCD products to enjoy it privately. Therefore, the community loses the pleasure of watching live and together. Following is the audience experience watching Al Badar’s drama (live), before being commodified in the form of VCDs,

“There was an exciting experience when Al Badar Mahajaya was invited to a wedding event. When Rasuk (the main character) began to enter the stage and sing, the bride spontaneously and hysterically descended from the *kuade* and ran up

to the stage. Seeing the incident, the bridegroom was angry and then left the wedding venue, and the event became chaotic” (Private Communication, Imam Kutunuk, 3 April 2016).

In line with the statement above, a *panjhâk* (drama player) from Al Badar Mahajaya group also gave a statement related to his experience playing and watching Al Badar’s drama as follows,

“When the drama Al Badar starts, as a spectator, it feels like our lives are brought into the drama. Al Badar’s story is a real story. Everyone cried when the scene of the Prophet Yusuf (the main character) was beaten by his brother, and everyone was angry at Rubil (the antagonist actor). Even when the Rubil’s actor was offstage, not a few mothers beat him up, even though the story was over. People who watch the drama cannot distinguish between drama life and the real-life” (Private Communication, Imam Martono, 8 April 2016).

The two statements above give a clear picture of the aesthetic experience experienced by viewers of Al Badar’s drama before its form is commodified. The statement indicates that the drama Al Badar has the power that can make the audience dive into the feeling of *dalem* (deep feeling). Through watching a drama, society is brought to a certain psychological condition, taken to escape from tensions, reflect on social problems, and the means to articulate emotions.

The experience of watching live drama is certainly different from watching Madurese soap opera via VCD media. When drama is commodified as VCDs, people no longer experience aesthetic experiences as high as live watching. The following is Wahyu Employee’s experience as a spectator and performance art observer in Situbondo when watching Madurese soap opera through VCD media,

“There is a difference between watching live and through VCD media. The difference lies in the atmosphere of the show. When we watch live, the atmosphere of the show is different from watching

through the media, such as the presence of other audiences, the response of other audiences, interactions between audiences, and interactions between the audience and the performers; therefore, we know how it looks. If, for example, we see it through VCDs media, there is a privatization of the spectacle, the spectacle is only ours to experience, so the process of appreciation between audiences do not occur. On the other hand, if the spectacle is directly witnessed, the process of mutual appreciation occurs with a different public response" (Private Communication, Aves Wahyu, 24 September 2017).

Furthermore, Wahyu gave a technical explanation regarding the experience and the differences he experienced when watching live performing arts and through local VCDs or TV media,

"There are no "hidden things" when we are watching live, but if we are watching VCDs or television, there are hidden things. Because what is presented to the audience is only what has been captured by the lens, and this lens only catches anything that needs to be there – different from when we are watching live. We can respond directly to whatever we want to captivate, maybe by selling peas (snacks), or events that may be offstage; it gives a sensation for the audience. In the aspect of player expression, in a live show, sometimes we find spontaneities that we will not find except for that day. It is way different from the recording media; spontaneous things are sometimes avoided because they may not be good by the rules" (Private Communication, Aves Wahyu, 24 September 2017).

Wahyu gives a clear picture of the difference in atmosphere when watching Al Badar's live performance by watching Madurese soap opera on VCDs or Television. Something is missing from the changing of the format; that is, the show becomes too rigid, organized, standard, and not flexible. The atmosphere of the show, which is usually loose, free, and spontaneous becomes unusual when it is packed in the form of film. Besides, the experien-

ce of watching VCDs privately or alone is rhetorical, namely one-way communication. The audience is not given enough space to interact with or having a dialog.

In the logic of the industrial world, to meet the needs of a massive society, the consequence is that commodities are mass-produced. Massification has a psychological impact on the consumer. Product massification creates desires, needs to need, hopes, and dreams of consuming these commodities continuously.

Madurese soap opera as a commodity has the same motivation as industrial commodities in general, and it is massification. Local recording industry products in Situbondo are usually produced in large enough quantities. Generally, producers duplicate VCD discs in Jakarta or Surabaya because of time efficiency considerations and the technology used. Local record companies only send master files to several partners in Jakarta and Surabaya to be duplicated at the request of the producer. As Arif's statement as the producer of MJM (Maju Jaya Makmur), "In the era of cassette tapes, I duplicated this master to Jember, there were still Pinokio Records that had sophisticated equipment. For the VCDs, I reproduce them in Jakarta because it is fast and gets good results" (Private Communication, Arif, 23 Juli 2017).

Regarding the number and distribution area, the following statement is from Asis Akbar as the producer of YA Record, which produced the Madurese soap opera "Korban Orang Tua," " I produced the Madurese soap opera more than 10,000 pieces and circulated in Situbondo, Probolinggo, Lumajang, Jember, Bondowoso, and Banyuwangi" (Private Documentation, Asis, 15 September 2017). In the Madurese soap opera production, Asis was not only a producer but also a director. The number of VCD disc production in the local industry is indeed not as much as the national industry, usually in the range of 10 thousand to 250 thousand pieces per production. Madurese soap opera has its market share as well as the local music industry (Madurese dangdut). Its marketing

target is the Madurese ethnic people in the East Java region. Regarding the distribution area, Anto and Angga explained as follows,

“Madurese dangdut VCD tapes and local locations produced by Handayani Record usually marketed, to the north, from Sumenep and around Madura, to the south, until Jember and Lumajang, and to the east, until Banyuwangi, Pasuruan, and Probolinggo” (Private Communication, Angga and Anto, 23 July 2016).

Asis acknowledged that Madurese soap opera VCD production was not performing as well as Dangdut VCD sales, so it not only produced Madurese soap opera but also produced the OSTs (original soundtrack) for the soap opera in a separate package. This pattern mimics the pattern of Indian film VCD sales. Generally, Indian films have a compilation of OST songs that are sold specifically and separate from the sale of the film’s VCDs. Here is an example of a cover of the Madurese soap opera OST VCD titled “Korban Orang Tua,”



Figure 3. The VCD cover of a Madurese soap opera OST album entitled “Korban Orang Tua.”

The cover above is a Madurese soap opera OST album “Korban Orang Tua,” produced by YA Record in 2012. This album contains Madurese dangdut songs used as the OSTs in the Madurese soap opera titled “Korban Orang Tua.” Besides getting economic benefits from the sale of Madurese soap opera VCDs, YA Record also benefits from the sale of its soundtrack album.

Local Televisions in Situbondo Broadcast Madurese Soap Opera and Other Local Content

In the early 2010s, local television stations began to appear in Situbondo, such as Situbondo TV (STV), then followed by several other local TVs such as Situbondo Vision and SMN TV. It should be known that a local TV is a TV station that only broadcasts local content, has local reach, and most of the shows use the local language. The essence of establishing one is to provide alternative shows for the local community (limited area); therefore, they could enjoy local news shows, local entertainment containing local art, local cultural insights, local tourism, and other local wisdom (Private Communication, Aves Wahyu, 24 September 2017). Among the programs, the program that dominates the most local TV in Situbondo is the display of local recording industry products that all contain local content about Situbondo, such as Madurese dangdut, Madurese comedy, Madurese soap opera, ketoprak, *topeng kertè*, and many others.

In Situbondo, there are two types of local television based on the broadcast technology used, namely local television that uses transmitter technology and local television that uses cable (network) technology. One of the examples of television stations that use transmitter media is Situbondo TV (STV), while those using cable technology are Situbondo Vision and SMN TV, as well as several other local TVs. Based on the number of enthusiasm, cable TV is the most loved media by the public, because the cable TV manager is a television broadcast service provider that subscribes to several national and international channels. Some cable TV customers choose to subscribe to the service because it is far cheaper than officially subscribing through professional service providers such as Indovision and others. Cable TV subscribers can enjoy not only national and international flagship channels but also enjoy local TV broadcasts 24 hours round-the-clock. Data in the field shows that the majority of these customers choose to subscribe because

se they want to enjoy local TV broadcasts, especially for the people who live in the village (Private Communication, Hadi, 30 September 2017). The people who live in the village do not take advantage of these facilities, so they prefer local content such as Madurese drama, Madurese soap opera, and Madurese comedy (Private Communication, Hadi, 30 September 2017).

One of the most popular local (cable) TV channels in Situbondo is Situbondo Vision. Situbondo Vision was founded in 2011, it started from a regular cable TV provider, then started to establish local TV channels to accommodate customer needs (Private Communication, Kholik, 30 September 2017). Situbondo Vision has quite several customers, around 3 thousand regular customers spread across the Situbondo area of the city and several suburbs. Its coverage area covers, to the North, all the way to North Olean Market (Olean District), to the South, until Pengkepung (South Panji District), to the East, to Ca'ing area (Kesambirampak Village, Kapongan District), and to the West, until Abdur Rahem Hospital (Patokan Village). Situbondo Vision operational costs are obtained through customer deposits every month, and requests for coverage of events to be broadcast live and delayed, while income from advertising is not much.

Situbondo Vision was founded with a passion for awakening the cultural potential of Situbondoan (Madura). This passion is reflected in the content of the program being broadcast. Almost all programs that are aired for 24 hours contain products of the local recording industry in Situbondo as well as live broadcasts of events in Situbondo. Kholik, as an employee at Situbondo Vision, said,

"In its early days of the establishment, Situbondo Vision only played local VCD cassettes using VCD players, yes Madurese dangdut, *lawakan* "jokes," *ketoprak*, and others. Now everything has been operated using a computer device. The program on channel 1 (Situbondo Vision) only contained local events such as wedding events, farewell events, recitations,

workshops, and so on. We usually offer to record those events; often, they come to us, so we record and broadcast it. Madurese soap opera, *ketoprak*, and comedy are usually played at night, whereas in the morning, Madurese dangdut music is usually played. Besides that, every Friday night, a recitation video is also played" (Private Communication, Kholik, 30 September 2017).

In this case, Situbondo Vision is a promotional media for local recording industry products in Situbondo. It is also important to realize that the presence of local recording industry products is caused by the unavailability of other content on the local television. Production of shows on television costs a lot of money and is actually not worth the earnings earned by local television. Hence, they use local recording industry products to fill the gap because they have the same passion that is to awaken local cultural potential. Wahyu as an artist who has been in the world of the local recording industry and radio stations observed,

"I see it more in the symbiotic relationship of mutualism way. One the one side, the television service provider needs content, and to produce content, it requires big production costs. On the other side, the local record company also needs promotional media and admirer. And how do they publish their work; the only way is to work with local TV to promote it, in hope to expand the market, when there are people interested in it, and they will buy it. In the world of radio, we offer the local recording industry to work with us, we give them advertisements for free, but with a note that every time there is new production, we are given several sample products. The cooperation is like that, and not with the purchasing purchase rights and broadcast rights. The average of mechanism in the Situbondo is like that" (Private Communication, Aves Wahyu, 24 September 2017).

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content, and to produce content, it requires big production costs. On the other side, the local record company also needs promotional media and admirer. And how do they publish their work; the only way is to work with local TV to promote it, in hope to expand the market, when there are people interested in it, and they will buy it. In the world of radio, we offer the local recording industry to work with us, we give them advertisements for free, but with a note that every time there is new production, we are given several sample products. The cooperation is like that, and not with the purchasing purchase rights and broadcast rights. That is pretty much the average of mechanism in Situbondo" (Private Communication, Aves Wahyu, 24 September 2017).

One of the mainstay content aired by Situbondo Vision is Madurese soap opera. Hadi revealed that the average Situbondo community likes Madurese dramas, such as Madurese soap opera, Madurese comedy, and Madurese *ketoprak*, all of which contain elements of a story (Private Communication, Hadi, 30 September 2017). Besides, the airing is also done because of the many customer requests. Madurese soap opera is present on local television as a cure for their longing for drama show that is now rarely found. Through local TV media, people no longer need to wait for a community celebration or "*selamatan desa*" to watch dramas; just by subscribing to cable TV, their longing can be remedied.

Situbondo Vision has a role in promoting local content through Madurese soap opera. In this case, Madurese soap opera can meet the tastes of the Madurese people in Situbondo. As the following story, "In the evenings after work, Sugiono always looks for channels that broadcast local content such as Madurese soap operas and *ketoprak* as a lullaby. He is doing this almost every day as a routine. When watching Madurese soap opera, Sugiono feels transported back to his youth when he loved the drama *Al Badar*" (Observation of the writer to Sugiono as the father of the writer).

The Madurese Situbondo people used to be close to art performances, such as the drama *Al Badar*, and the Madurese soap opera on the television tried to bring back experiences that existed in the past. Therefore, Madurese soap opera becomes the choice of spectacle. The Situbondo people feel they have and are closer to the cultural identity of Madura Situbondoan.

Unfortunately, the development of several local televisions in Situbondo began experiencing various problems, especially local TVs, which only relied on advertising media as capital for their operational costs, including Situbondo TV, the only local TV station in Situbondo that operates using broadcast media and relies on advertising. So far the Situbondo people are still not too close to the TV media, they are still familiar with radio media. The issue has an impact on the advertising market; currently, local TV is not getting so much advertising compared to radio. Situbondo TV anticipated the expansion of broadcasting by using online media, such as YouTube, Facebook, and other streaming services. Besides, he also invited several cable TV networks to work together, hoping that they could playback STV channels and distribute them to their networks.

The local TV crisis in Situbondo is mostly due to the lack of acceptance of television media by the Madurese people. This crisis is related to the habits of Madurese, who like to gather and joke around while working. Radio media is more desirable because it has the role of accompanying people who gather and work through their voices, in contrast to television media. In terms of watching Madurese soap opera on television, people are required to sit and focus on watching, so that this becomes less appropriate and accepted by the Madurese community.

CONCLUSIONS

Madurese soap opera is a product of the culture industry or Madurese culture which has been produced in the form of a commodity (industrialization). As a me-

dia, Madurese soap opera also constructs social norms, reproduces social values, and displays Madura cultural images in film representations with economic motivation. Madurese soap opera is a phenomenon of the entry of industrial technology that is captured by local people. As a result of this industrialization, Madura's art performances in Situbondo, which previously existed, were less competitive. Madurese soap opera can be said to be the transformation of Al Badar art performance. The consequence of the transformation is the loss of feelings experienced by the audience when watching the drama directly.

The Madurese soap opera industry created local markets, including Situbondo, Probolinggo, Jember, Bondowoso, Lumajang, Banyuwangi, and Madura. Madurese soap opera also creates a standard taste, because it produces almost the same content. Madurese soap opera uses local resources, including artists from Situbondo, Madura dangdut music, the local recording industry in Situbondo, and local phenomena in Situbondo as the primary content. In this case, Madurese soap opera acts as a measurement of the national soap opera industry. This competition is demonstrated through the ability of those who use global technology, namely television. Madurese soap opera even produces VCD cassettes.

Besides, local television stations, such as Situbondo Vision, has a role in promoting local content, such as Madurese soap opera. Through the Madurese soap opera on local television, the Situbondo people feel close to its Madurese cultural identity. Therefore, local television also has a stake in uplifting, developing, and preserving the local culture of Madura in Situbondo. But in its development, the existence of local television experienced a crisis, which was caused by sources of funds such as advertisements that could not cover operational costs, as well as the incompatibility of television media with the habits of the Madurese, who would rather hear radio than watching television.

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