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Social qualities of time and space created in performing arts of West Java

The implications for safeguarding living culture

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ABSTRACT

Collective representations of “time” do not passively reflect time, but time and space are mediated by society. By our social practices, such as making music and dancing, we create time. Different cultural groups may experience and perceive time in different ways, and also within one cultural group the quality of time is not always experienced in the same way. Anthropological studies have shown that in each cultural group different perceptions of time co-exist. For instance, time generally tends to be perceived as both a linear flow and as repetitive. We should not confuse metaphysical and sociological arguments about time: time in music and other performing arts operates at the social and not at the metaphysical level. The essay discusses a variety of social qualities of time and space as it becomes manifest in some performing arts of West Java and the implications for their safeguarding.

KEYWORDS

Time and space, performing arts, West Java, Baduy, *angklung*, *pantun* story, safeguarding, UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage.

1 INTRODUCTION

Time is an essential part of human existence. However, the way we perceive and conceptualize the experience of time varies with cultural and historical contexts and with the position of individual members of a society (according to age, gender, position in the social structure). Hence different cultural groups may experience and perceive time in different ways and within one cultural group time may be experienced in a variety of ways. Time is created by human

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