

Nada-Nada Persatuan: Manifestation of the Third Principle of Pancasila in the Meugang Through Experimental Music

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ABSTRACT

Meugang is a tradition of the Acehnese people that is carried out before Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, and is rich in values of togetherness and mutual cooperation. These values are in line with the third principle of Pancasila, namely "Indonesian Unity". Previous studies have focused on meugang as a cultural and social tradition but have not explored its ideological dimension nor its potential as the conceptual basis for musical experimentation. This research fills that gap by applying a practice-led artistic research approach, integrating observation, and interviews with Meugang practitioners. This music inspired by Cage's sound philosophy and Lachenmann's concept of musique concrete instrumentale. the result is an experimental music titled Nada-Nada Persatuan (Tones of Unity), structured around three core values of mutual cooperation namely unity, harmony, and balance. The study finds that music can function as both aesthetic construction and an ideological metaphor, enabling local cultural practices to articulate national identity through sound. This research contributes to the discourse on Indonesian experimental music by demonstrating how cultural-ideological concepts can be systematically translated into sonic structures.

KEYWORDS

Meugang
Sonic Exploration
Unconventional
Instrumen
Experimental Music
National Identity

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INTRODUCTION

Meugang is a tradition of the Acehnese people that is carried out to welcome Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha (Desfandi et al., 2021). The existence of *meugang* has persisted since ancient times and it is mandatory for the community to carry it out (Abubakar, 2007). The Meugang tradition embodies social values that emphasize community solidarity (Gusmanto & Denada, 2023). This togetherness can be felt in the implementation of the *meugang* tradition, both in small and large social groups. Togetherness is fundamental to the concept of mutual cooperation. Mutual cooperation in a socio-cultural perspective is an action carried out together to achieve a common goal (Rochmadi, 2012). Thus, the implementation of the meugang tradition contains the value of mutual cooperation carried out together between social groups in Aceh.

Mutual cooperation is a reflection of the behavior of the Indonesian people as embodied in the third principle of Pancasila (Permana & Mursidi, 2020). The concept of mutual cooperation can be implemented in the form of togetherness, unity, willingness to sacrifice, mutual assistance, and socialization (Ariadi et al., 2021). These concepts are values contained in the tradition of *meugang* as a form of internalization of the third principle of Pancasila. The principle of mutual cooperation in meugang practiced by the people of Aceh can be used as capital to form social groups that strengthen national identity.

There are three aspects in realizing the principle of mutual cooperation, namely unity, harmony, and balance. Little attention has been given to its potential as a site for ideological expression, particularly in relation to the third principle of Pancasila. That aspects resonate strongly with the aesthetic principles of experimental music, which emphasize unconventional sound sources, spontaneity, and collective interaction. Meugang naturally aligns with experimental techniques that foreground everyday sounds as meaningful artistic material, because of this alignment, experimental music becomes the most relevant medium to translate Meugang into an ideological expression through sound itself.

Experimental music is basically music that actualizes new forms of expression, thereby producing its own aesthetics. The aesthetic principles in musical art contain elements of unity, harmony, and balance (Agastya & Sudhana, 2022). This is in line with the values of mutual cooperation in *meugang*. These forms of expression are manifested as representations of the basic concept of mutual cooperation in a musical composition entitled “Nada-Nada Persatuan” (Notes of Unity).

Previous research on the meugang tradition has been conducted from various perspectives, such as the DRTPM grant research by Gusmanto and Denada (2023), which reinterpreted *meugang* in the form of electro-acoustic multimedia music through the use of music technology, as well as the ISBI Aceh grant research by Putra and Ocktarizka (2023), which emphasizes family and community social interaction in contemporary music. The musical work *Kekitaan* by Gusmanto (2017) also represents multiethnic social harmony through the interpretation of *Ronggiang* art. Existing literature situates Meugang within the domains of anthropology, sociology, sociology, and contemporary art, but the intersection of Meugang, Pancasila, and experimental music remains understudied. In the broader field of experimental music, theories by Cage (1961) emphasize redefining sound beyond traditional musical constraints, while Lachenmann (1995) introduces unconventional instrumentality as a form of sonic critique. These perspectives provide a conceptual framework for transforming everyday culture soundscapes into experimental forms that contain ideological meaning.

The *meugang* tradition which is rich in values of togetherness and mutual cooperation, has a direct implication on strengthening national identity, because these values are the embodiment of the third principle of Pancasila. In other words, if *meugang* is practiced as a social tradition that fosters unity, harmony, and balance among communities, then these values can be reflected and reinforced through the medium of experimental music composition. The correlation between the principle of mutual cooperation in *meugang* and the principles of experimental music aesthetics is the basis for the argument that meugang can be elevated not only as a local cultural practice, but also as an artistic medium that reinforces the ideology of national unity.

METHOD

This research is in the field of artistic research with a practice-led research approach. This approach is also called practice-oriented research, which is a research model where practice is used to create evidence for a discovery (Guntur, 2016b). In this context, the problem will be proven in the form of a work of art. To actualize the findings into a work of music, an experimental music approach is used. Experimental music is new music created with a freer concept and is not bound by traditional rules (Andika & Muryana, 2022). The translation of this concept into the realization of this research idea is to interpret *meugang* as a reinforcement of national identity, which is worked on by actualizing musical aesthetic elements in accordance with the composer's interpretation. This actualization process is

carried out by working on various sound sources as a medium for creative expression. There are several steps or stages involved, including:

1. Formulation of Ideas

The idea for this project was obtained from field research on social phenomena in the *meugang* tradition. The research process was conducted to obtain data and information related to the research object. Several data collection techniques were used in this study, including literature study, which is a data collection technique that involves conducting a review of various literature related to the problem being solved (Guntur, 2016a). Several literature studies in this research examined several books, articles, and works of art related to social values, particularly mutual cooperation in the *meugang* tradition; Observation, which is observing the object by interacting with the actors to obtain data related to the focus of the research. Observations were conducted in several areas in Aceh; Interviews were conducted to confirm the findings of the literature review and observations. Interviews were conducted with practitioners of the *meugang* tradition, such as meat sellers and residents who carry out *meugang*.

2. Determining the Composition of Music

The composition in this study uses an experimental music model. Musical works that use this model basically process various sounds as a form of expression based on the interpretation of an object. The composition idea is actualized into three parts, each of which represents the value of mutual cooperation in the implementation of *meugang*. The first part represents the unity that occurs between sellers and buyers during the process of buying and selling *meugang* meat, the second part represents the harmony that occurs when cooking together, and the third part represents the balance that occurs during the process of eating together and giving alms of *meugang* dishes.

3. Realization of Creative Ideas

At this stage, researchers pour their ideas into works of art. This process involves the realization of the work through practice and studio work carried out at the Studio of the Karawitan Art Study Program at the Aceh Institute of Arts and Culture. The realization of the work in this study is based on the theory of work, which consists of work material, work guidance, work tools, work equipment, work determinants, and work considerations (Supanggah, 2009).

The material used in this study utilizes musical moments found in *meugang* activities. In the unity segment, the clinking sound of a spatula cutting meat and exploratory vocals are used to reflect buying and selling. In the harmony segment, the clinking sound of plates and the clinking sound of pots are used to represent the process of cooking meat. Meanwhile, in the balance segment, the sounds of eating together are used, such as the smacking of lips while chewing, burping, and chatting.

Performers are musicians involved in the process of creating musical works. The selection of musicians is very important in a creative process so that the objectives of artistic creation can be realized. The musicians selected are students of the Karawitan Art Study Program at the Aceh Institute of Arts and Culture, because these students have basic knowledge and skills in playing music.

The means of expression are the media used to convey ideas, musical concepts, and messages in musical works. The media used in this work employ unconventional instruments. Unconventional instruments are musical instruments that are not typical,

generally originating from objects that are not classified as musical instruments (Hasibuan et al., 2019). Some of the media used are adapted from *meugang* media such as wooden frames, spatulas, pots, plates, spoons, and exploratory vocals.

Performance tools are performance techniques used to process performance material and media. The performance techniques used include instrument building, interlocking, tuti, and exploration. Instrument building is used as an effort to create new media. This is in line with the experimental approach that promotes new media. Interlocking and tuti are used to interpret togetherness, while exploration is used as a form of freedom of the musician's will, which is interpreted as a basis for mutual cooperation. These tools are the main tools, but several other techniques will be used for the complexity of the work.

Determinants and considerations are two interrelated points. The process of shaping the characteristics of this work cannot be separated from the empirical and intellectual influences of the researcher. As an experienced lecturer in the creation of Indonesian music, empirical factors influence the character of the work. In addition to empirical elements, the realization of this work is also influenced by aspects of material, media, and device selection. All of these aspects are the result of creativity that stems from the researcher's instincts and intuition.

4. Music Exhibition

The art performance is the culmination of the art creation process. This stage is a presentation of research results in the form of a musical performance that has been created from the interpretation of *meugang* as a reinforcement of national identity. This music is titled *Nada-Nada Persatuan* (Notes of Unity), which refers to the symbolization of Pancasila values represented through musical elements. Musical elements are not only aesthetic in meaning, but also serve as a metaphor for social interaction in *meugang*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

The musical composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan* is the result of research that was first performed on September 13, 2025, at the Auditorium of the Aceh Institute of Arts and Culture. *Nada-Nada Persatuan* is experimental music that manifests the values of unity, harmony, and balance, which are fundamental concepts of mutual cooperation as a form of implementing the third principle of Pancasila. This musical composition is implemented in three parts with a duration of approximately 30 minutes. The first part represents unity, the second part represents harmony, and the third part represents balance. The musical composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan* can be accessed via the link <https://bit.ly/nada-nada-persatuan>.

2. Discussion

a. Creative Concepts in the Musical Composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan*

The creative concept in the musical composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan* can be examined from the material and media used. The material in this musical composition tends not to have a fixed rhythm, melody, or pattern. This means that each musician implements the third principle of Pancasila based on their own interpretation. This is a manifestation of the diversity of a society that shares a common cultural identity. Although the musical material presented is not predetermined, the structure of the composition is still arranged according to the order of the social values of mutual cooperation, namely unity, harmony, and balance.

The musical composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan* was created using unconventional musical media, namely media that are not commonly used as musical instruments (Sihombing et al., 2024). The use of this media is in line with the experimental model that processes sound as a form of interpretive expression. The media in question is a wooden frame measuring 3 meters long, 3 meters wide, and 2.5 meters high. The frame is equipped with several ropes stretched across the top that function as hangers. Meanwhile, various pots of different sizes are hung on these ropes. The form of this media can be seen in the following image:



Figure 1. Core Instruments

The media is interpreted as a meugang meat stall. In general, meugang meat is displayed by hanging it up. This is commonly found throughout Indonesia. This form is interpreted as a wooden frame as a stall, while the cauldron represents the meat that is hung up.



Figure 2. Hanging Meats

The performers of *Nada-Nada Persatuan* are divided into three groups, namely core musicians, session musicians, and dancers. The core musicians consist of three main musicians, the session musicians consist of six musicians, and the dancers consist of two dancers. The core musicians play from the beginning to the end of the song, while the session musicians and dancers perform in the third part.

The first part represents the value of unity during the buying and selling of *meugang* meat. The unity referred to here is the debate that ends in a mutual decision, namely the process of bargaining between sellers and buyers until they agree on a price. In this situation,

there is social interaction between buyers and sellers. Thus, the musical moments present in this situation become the material for the unity segment. The material includes the sounds of conversation, the clinking of knives, and the sound of cutting meat. These sounds are explored according to each musician's interpretation.

1). The First Part: Unity

The first part of the work is realized using a kazoo and spatula. Although the kazoo is a conventional instrument, the sounds it produces are the result of exploration based on the musicians' interpretations. The sounds produced by the kazoo are an interpretation of the sounds of sacrificial animals such as cows. In addition to interpreting animal sounds, the kazoo is also used to manipulate the sounds of conversation during the dialogue between buyers and sellers.



Figure 3. Kazoo

In addition to the kazoo, spatulas are also used in this section. The spatulas are explored by rubbing them together and hitting them against a wooden frame. The sound of the spatulas rubbing together is interpreted as the sound of a meat cleaver, while the sound of them hitting the wooden frame is interpreted as the sound made when a butcher cuts meat on a wooden cutting board.



Figure 4. Spatulas

2). The Second Part: Harmony

The second part represents the activity of cooking *meugang* meat. Harmony is born as a manifestation of mutual cooperation during the cooking process. The community works

together to clean, chop, and cook the meat. This togetherness creates social harmony among the community. The material used in this section corresponds to the musical moments present in the activity, namely the sounds of chatting and cooking. The music tends to produce loud noises, representing the bustle of the community working together. These sounds are elaborated and reinterpreted in the material.

The media used in this section correspond to the media used in cooking, namely pots and spatulas. Pots are explored in such a way as to produce a variety of aesthetic sounds. Various techniques are used in this segment, including hitting pots with spatulas, banging hanging pots together, hitting them with hands, and even hitting them with fingers wearing rings.



Figure 5. Cauldrons

3). The Third Part: Balance

The third part of the work represents the value of balance, which is present during the process of eating *meugang* dishes. During this process, there are two activities, namely eating *meugang* meat dishes together and distributing the dishes to neighbors or community members who have not had the opportunity to celebrate *meugang* at home. The musical moments in this process become the material for the balancing section, namely the sounds of chatting and the clattering of plates.

This section is implemented through the exploration of eating using plates and spoons. Eating in this section is not just stylized eating, but the musicians actually eat during the performance. To achieve this, there is a large pot of curry and a thermos of rice at the front corner of the stage. Session musicians explore taking food and eating it while producing sounds that are processed into musical material.



Figure 6. Plates and Spoons

b. The Creation of *Nada-Nada Persatuan*

1). Exploration and Experimentation

In the initial stage, musical material was sought through a process of exploration and experimentation. The exploration process was carried out on the kazoo instrument by processing humming sounds as if speaking from the mouth and creating tremolo sounds using the tongue. The results of this exploration became the basis for the first part of the composition.



Figure 7. Exploring the Kazoo

The experiment was conducted on the main working media, namely wooden frames, spatulas, pots, and plates. During this process, several techniques were discovered that produced different sounds on a medium, especially pots. Wooden frames were struck using spatulas, spatulas were rubbed together, pots were struck using spatulas, struck with bare hands, struck using ringed fingers, and pots were struck together, while experiments on plates were conducted by striking plates with spoons, both empty plates and plates containing food.



Figure 8. Experimental Process

2). Music Rehearsal

The rehearsal process is a step to realize and determine the integration and unification of the vocabulary forms of the material being worked on (Cufara & Gusmanto, 2024). In the initial stage, musicians are given the opportunity to explore the results of the experiments conducted by the researchers. This is done so that each musician can interpret the musical

content based on the predetermined material design. This training was conducted at the Dance Studio of the Indonesian Institute of Arts.

The training was carried out in stages based on the structure of the musical composition. In this process, the composer did not determine or provide standard material to the musicians; instead, the musicians were given the right to express their interpretations. However, there were “guidelines” that each musician had to follow, namely the structure or flow of the musical composition. The musical material will change according to the “codes” that have been agreed upon. The rehearsal does not only focus on music, but also on visual aspects. The visual aspects in question are gestures and floor patterns. Just like the musical material, the visual aspects are not regulated, but rather left to the creativity of each musician.



Figure 9. Rehearsal

3). Performance

The performance is the final stage in the process of creating the musical composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan*. At this stage, the completed musical composition is presented in a performance so that it can be enjoyed by a large audience. The performance process consists of two stages, namely:

a) Performance Preparation

The preparation process will take place on September 10 and 11, 2025. This stage includes setting up the stage, sound system, lighting, and other artistic elements. The setup will be based on the needs of the performance, including the position of the wooden frame as the main medium for this musical composition.



Figure 10. Preparation of Music Performance

The audience is one of the most important elements in performing arts. Therefore, in addition to setting up the stage, promotional activities are also carried out so that potential audiences are aware of the event schedule. Promotion is done by publishing performance posters on social media.



Figure 11. Poster

a) Performance of *Nada-Nada Persatuan*

The performance of the musical composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan* was held on September 13, 2025. The event began with opening remarks by the MC, followed by a reading of the description of *Nada-Nada Persatuan*. The musical composition was performed after the MC invited the audience to begin the performance. The music *Nada-Nada Persatuan* was performed for approximately 30 minutes.



Figure 12. Performance of *Nada-Nada Persatuan*

c. Description of Music Composition *Nada-Nada Persatuan*

The first part is presented in two sub-themes, namely the atmosphere of the qurban market and the activities of buying and selling *meugang* meat. Three musicians sit at the back, left, and right of the wooden frame. This part begins with an exploration of the kazoo instrument, which produces a sound like a cow. This exploration continues with the production of a long siren-like sound. This symbolizes that it is time to begin the *meugang* activities.

This segment continued with an exploration of the kazoo, representing the hustle and bustle of the market. All the musicians stood and walked randomly around the stage while exploring. After a while, one musician plays a long glissando as a cue to perform in unison. This unison performance ends the first session, so two musicians slowly walk off stage to retrieve spatulas, while one musician fills the void on stage with a solo kazoo exploration at the front of the stage. While the kazoo solo is playing, two musicians re-enter the stage playing with their spatulas. At this moment, the solo musician exits to retrieve a spatula and re-enters the stage. All musicians hold spatulas, while the kazoos remain in their mouths.

After all musicians explore the spatulas and kazoos, the segment continues with the second sub-theme, namely the activity of buying and selling *meugang* meat. In this segment, wooden frames begin to be explored while playing spatulas and kazoos. The musical material presented represents the interaction between sellers and buyers who are bargaining. The exploration becomes more “wild” when a musician gives a signal by producing tight rhythms.



Figure 13. Spatula Exploration Segment

This segment continues with a kazoo dialogue with a calmer atmosphere. Each musician enters the wooden frame area and sits in a triangle formation. The kazoo instruments are played by producing long melodies alternately between musicians. This represents the creation of unity in the activities between traders and buyers of *meugang* meat. The composition of the first part ends with a dialogue between two musicians on hanging pots. This dialogue is performed with a kazoo and occasionally by hitting the pots with a spatula. While the two musicians are performing their dialogue, the other musicians exit the stage. The dialogue between the two musicians ends with increasingly loud pot hitting and stops simultaneously with an accentuation, followed by them walking off stage.



Figure 14. Kazoo Dialogue

The composition of the second part represents the harmony that occurs when cooking meat together. This segment begins with a musician entering the stage carrying a small pot and spatula. The pot is explored while walking around the stage area. After exploring for a while, the pot and spatula are hung separately on ropes attached to a wooden frame. At this moment, two other musicians enter the stage and do the same while exploring vocals.

One musician then moves to the center and explores two large pots that have been hanging there from the beginning. This continues while two musicians enter and exit the stage carrying and hanging pots. After all the pots were successfully hung, the musician exploring the large pots performed a scene of banging the two pots together, then exited the stage, leaving one musician to explore all the pots using his hands. This moment was used by the two musicians outside the stage to put large rings or bolt rings on their fingers. These rings were used as a technique for striking the pots to make them sound very loud.

The exploration continued with a change of musicians. The musician who had been exploring the cauldron with empty hands left the stage, while another musician wearing a ring entered the stage and began exploring the cauldron. A moment later, two other musicians did the same. This segment of joint exploration was continued by all the musicians with a fortissimo dynamic ending in accents.

The composition continued with a dialogue between the cauldrons. This dialogue was carried out by exploring the cauldrons alternately. The dialogue was performed by slowly increasing the intensity of the sound and rhythm, thus making the game more chaotic, followed by all the players scrambling to hit the cauldrons. This caused all the cauldrons to swing, producing an aesthetic visual effect. This segment ended with a rall game followed by four accents.



Figure 15. Chaos Exploration

The next musical piece is a vocal exploration by all musicians. Each musician is given the freedom to actualize their vocals. Vocal exploration is done by chanting sounds without words (syllables). This vocal exploration segment represents the harmony when people chat with each other while cooking *meugang* meat. This vocal game is followed by hitting the pot. The beating is a transformation of the rhythm in the *rapai* game, where the rhythm is formed using the interlocking technique. The end of this segment is when all the players perform an accentuation that is greeted with a long shout. All the core musicians leave the stage.

The music in the second part continues with vocal responses by session musicians. This signals the start of the third part. The composition of the third part represents the activity of sharing *meugang* dishes and eating together. This creates a balance between social relationships within the community and relationships with God through mutual sharing.

All session musicians are among the audience while hitting plates with spoons, while a core musician from outside the stage plays the kazoo, singing the *seurune kale* rhythm to the *peumulia jamee* melody. These beats are a constant beat at a moderate tempo. The musical composition continues with two dancers entering the stage carrying a large pot containing *kuah beulangong*, a typical Acehnese meat dish. These dancers continue to improvise as they walk to the front left corner of the stage, then place the pot on the stone stove that has been provided. The improvisation of movements continues until the thermos containing rice and the pot containing beulangong sauce are in their designated positions. The female dancers leave the stage, while the male dancers call the session musicians, who represent the community.



Figure 16. Dancer Improvisation

All session musicians slowly entered the stage from the audience while continuing to hit the plates. As they walked, all the musicians conversed with each other in the Acehnese language. The dialogue was spontaneous. When everyone was on stage, the musicians improvised by taking turns serving rice and side dishes. The improvisation continued as they walked, struck their plates, and chatted with each other, until the core musicians gave a musical cue and all the musicians formed a circle around the wooden frame. This ended the first segment of the third part.



Figure 17. Taking *Meugang* Dishes

All musicians sit down. One musician leads a prayer before eating, ending with a collective “*Aamiin*.” The meal continues with eating while exploring the sounds that accompany the activity, such as the sound of plates, burping, chatting, and others. At this moment, the musicians actually eat the *meugang* dish. This represents the *khanduri meugang*

(feast). When the musicians improvise, the male dancers leave the circle. These dancers move around while preparing several dishes on plates. Some plates of *meugang* dishes are given to the audience. This is done so that the audience can experience the joy of *meugang*. Thus, Indonesian unity is created as a value of Pancasila, implemented in the form of “Nada-Nada Persatuan”.



Figure 18. Dancers Distribute Food to the Audience

After several dishes were distributed, the dancer returned to the stage. He took his position right in front of the cauldron. He was seen holding a plate of rice and *kuah beulangong* with both hands, then lifting it up in front of him. At this moment, all the musicians who were eating struck their plates on the downbeat in a decelerando, the dynamics gradually weakening until the sound faded away. The stage lights went black. This conveyed the message that the spirit of sharing must continue and will never end. This is the true manifestation of the principle of “Indonesian Unity.”

CONCLUSIONS

This study finds that the *meugang* tradition can be transformed into experimental musical compositions as an artistic medium that affirms the third principle of Pancasila through the values of mutual cooperation, togetherness, and balance inherent in it. The strength of this research lies in its contribution in connecting cultural phenomena, ideology, and artistic creation through a practice-led research approach, which presents conceptual and practical novelties and enriches the discourse of contemporary Indonesian music. However, this research still has limitations in the scope of the traditions studied and the limited involvement of participants, so further exploration of other traditions and broader collaboration is needed to produce more representative works.

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