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TIGO SAPILIN CONCEPT: SIJOBANG SONG IN MUSICOLOGICAL AESTHETIC STUDY

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Abstract

This research intends to examine the notion of Tigo Sapilin in the song Sijobang from a musicological aesthetic viewpoint to comprehend how Minangkabau (Indonesian) cultural values are expressed through traditional musical practices. Sijobang, as a form of sung oral narrative, is not only as a medium of entertainment but also a means of conveying social, ethical, and spiritual principles. Musically, Tigo Sapilin's concept encompasses 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8 rhythms, which play a significant role in shaping the aesthetics of Sijobang performances in terms of melodic structure, rhythm, and the presentation of narrative texts. The research approach employs a qualitative musicological framework that integrates ethnographic research, musical analysis, and comprehensive interviews with musicians and cultural representatives. The study involves investigating the musical framework of Sijobang, the connection between lyrics and melody, and the influence of local aesthetics on shaping performance. Primary data were collected through firsthand observation of the performance, while secondary data were analyzed from existing literature on musicology and the anthropology of Minangkabau art. The study's findings suggest that Sijobang's aesthetics are shaped by the combination of three key elements: (1) recurring melodies symbolizing the persistence of tradition, (2) adaptable rhythms that align with the story's narrative and dynamics, and (3) regional intonations that enhance emotional subtleties and cultural identity. The idea of Tigo Sapilin serves as an aesthetic framework that preserves a harmony between tradition, spirituality, and the personal expression of the artist. Therefore, Sijobang can be seen not just as a creation of performing arts, but also as a depiction of the vibrant and evolving Minangkabau cultural value system

Keywords: Tigo Sapilin, Sijobang, musicological aesthetics, Minangkabau, traditional music

INTRODUCTION

Minangkabau traditional performing arts (ANDAR et al., 2024) exhibit a profound aesthetic depth grounded in cultural philosophy, including Sijobang, (Fox, 1983) an oral tradition sung to narrate stories of bravery, traditions, and ethical principles. Within musicological aesthetics, Sijobang embodies not just musical expression but also acts as a means to uphold the Minangkabau value system rooted in the principle of Tigo Sapilin,(Arif et al., 2024) which promotes the balance among adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah, and the relationship between humans and nature (Amir, 2011).

Tigo Sapilin can be seen as a moral and aesthetic framework that directs the creation and performance processes in art. In Sijobang,

this idea manifests itself through narrative text, musical performance, and the relevant social environment. From a musicological perspective, this aspect is expressed through rhythmic and meter patterns that indicate the dynamics of the performance. The three primary rhythmic patterns frequently employed in the Sijobang tradition are 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8, each offering a distinct aesthetic quality and illustrating the richness of Tigo Sapilin's values

The 2/4 rhythm in Sijobang is frequently employed for introductory parts or narrative segments that highlight the clarity of the storyline. Its clear, steady, and rhythmic nature signifies the strength of the expression of traditional values. From a musicological aesthetic viewpoint (Hardjana, 1983), 2/4 meter offers a musical framework that evokes a sense of discipline and



balance, in accordance with traditional principles serving as life guidance (Kartomi, 2012). Therefore, the 2/4 aesthetic transcends music, acting as a symbolic embodiment of order within the Minangkabau social structure.

On the other hand, the 3/4 rhythm expresses sadness and poetic subtleties. In Sijobang performances, sections that express conflict, sadness, or spiritual reflection often utilize a 3/4 meter. Visually, this rhythm embodies the syarak aspect of Tigo Sapilin, highlighting the religiosity and spiritual consciousness central to the Minangkabau perspective. The 3/4 time signature, with its more expressive rhythm, enables the vocalist to manipulate intonation and melody with greater freedom, allowing for the expression of profound emotional subtleties. In a musicological framework, the 3/4 aesthetic reveals the strong link between sacred texts, ethical themes, and musical interpretations present in the performance itself (Griswold, 2000).

Meanwhile, the 6/8 time signature offers a lively and vigorous rhythmic aspect. This structure is usually employed in climaxes or sections highlighting bravery in the Sijobang story. The 6/8 aesthetic embodies the connection between humanity and nature; it reflects the third dimension of Tigo Sapilin. Its rhythmic, flowing quality appears to imitate nature's pulse, fostering a feeling of movement and continuity. In musicological examination, the employment of 6/8 illustrates the communal dynamics and vibrancy of the Minangkabau society, where the performing arts not only animate the narrative but also strengthen social unity through musical vitality (Sutton, 1996)

Consequently, the focus on 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8 rhythms illustrates how Sijobang musically represents the Tigo Sapilin aesthetic. Musicological aesthetics emphasizes melodic, rhythmic, and intonational aspects while also exploring the role of musical elements as a means to convey cultural values. The 2/4 beat highlights traditional order, 3/4 expresses spirituality and emotion, whereas 6/8 reflects the energy of humanity's connection to nature

Employing a musicological perspective, the study of rhythms in Sijobang demonstrates that traditional musical practices are interlinked with aspects of performativity, social interaction, and ritual and customary settings. Sijobang transcends mere text or music; it embodies a dynamic "aesthetic event" rooted in Tigo Sapilin's philosophy. Consequently, the topics explored in this article, such as the examination of 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8 rhythms through a musicological aesthetic lens, help illuminate how Minangkabau traditional art connects musicality, cultural values, and community spirituality

METHODE AND APPROACH

This study of the Tigo Sapilin concept in the song Sijobang employs a qualitative ethnomusicological approach (Nasution, 1988), focusing on structural, performative, and contextual analysis (Setyoko et al., 2022). Field research techniques encompass participatory observation, audio-visual recording of performances, and comprehensive interviews with Sijobang singers and

Minangkabau cultural leaders. Data analysis takes place in three phases: (1) musical transcription to recognize rhythmic structures in 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8; (2) aesthetic evaluation grounded in musicological theory that links musical structure with the articulation of cultural values; and (3) hermeneutic interpretation aimed at revealing the philosophical significance of Tigo Sapilin in relation to custom, syarak, and connections with nature.

The musicological perspective highlights the connection between rhythmic composition and its artistic purpose. The 2/4 rhythm is seen as a depiction of traditional structure; 3/4 as a manifestation of spiritual and emotional sentiment; and 6/8 as a representation of the flow of natural existence. By integrating the viewpoints of musicology, (Setyoko et al., 2022), anthropology, (Simatupang, 2010) and aesthetics, (Sastra, 2025) this research situates Sijobang not merely as a form of musical expression, but also as a vibrant cultural knowledge framework. This approach enables a thorough understanding of how Sijobang integrates musical elements and the philosophical principles of Tigo Sapilin, thereby enhancing the academic study of traditional Minangkabau music

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2/4 Rhythm as the Foundation of the First Sapilin

Sijobang is a classic art style of the Minangkabau that integrates storytelling with musical performance. This custom is typically enacted within traditional settings and folk entertainment, acting as a means to convey values, knowledge, and shared identity. In a musicological aesthetic context, Sijobang demonstrates a unique musical structure, characterized by the 2/4 rhythm serving as the rhythmic foundation, representing the initial sapilin within the Tigo Sapilin concept. The Tigo Sapilin concept in Minangkabau culture represents a unity of values consisting of: (1) custom, (2) syarak, and (3) relationship with nature. In the realm of Sijobang, the 2/4 rhythm acts as an aesthetic basis that expresses order, balance, and the legitimacy of tradition within a musical framework. To put it differently, the 2/4 rhythm acts as a portal that enables oral stories to manifest in a musical style that is pleasing to the audience (Amir, 2011)

Tigo Sapilin generally consists of three sections, or musical cycles, that serve as a melodic and expressive cycle for singing the Sijobang tale. The performance's beginning establishes the atmosphere and engages the audience's focus. This initial part employs a 2/4 time signature and a free rhythmic tempo.

The first part is the performance's introduction, presented at a free rhythm pace, establishing the atmosphere and captivating the audience. The sung lyrics contain a story introduction, admiration for the audience or the depicted character, and a greeting. Musical traits consist of lengthy, smooth melodies and intricate vocal embellishments.

Soprano



Oi . . . ei sa bu . ah . la de k to . . . o . .

7

S.



la . . . n i ba raik pan tun si ma lang ko Pu lau pandan . . jo pu lau

12

S.



so . . ri so kah la da un . . ka la nga tan ka tung kek ra . jo . ka tan ju ang . .

The 2/4 rhythm in the Sijobang tradition features a consistent double beat: one strong and one weak. This design evokes a steady sensation that is solid, straight, and definite. In musicological analysis, the 2/4 meter is viewed as a musical symbol of discipline and order because its beat arrangement reduces undue free variation (Nettl, 2005) The aesthetic features of 2/4 can be described in three aspects.

1. Temporal Framework; the consistency of the two beats establishes a distinct timeline, enabling the Sijobang narrative text to be conveyed in an orderly and systematic manner.
2. Symbolic Function; the strong-weak pattern demonstrates the balance between traditional authority and the individual's position in society.
3. Aesthetics of Performativity; it enables the vocalist to preserve a steady tempo and ensure narrative-musical unity.

Consequently, the 2/4 rhythm serves not only as a technical tool but also as an artistic formation that links music to Minangkabau cultural principles.

In the Tigo Sapilin framework, the initial sapilin signifies the traditional aspect that supports all social and cultural practices. (Navis, 1984) Customs in Minangkabau serve as a normative framework that governs interactions among individuals and groups. The implementation of 2/4 rhythm in Sijobang illustrates this traditional principle, as this rhythm's characteristics highlight order, stability, and balance (Sjah, 2010). As the primary sapilin, 2/4 rhythm appears in the early section of a Sijobang performance, when the vocalist starts to present the story or initiates the narrative. This section typically includes a welcome message, a sign of esteem for the audience, and a presentation of the narrative. The power of 2/4 rhythm is found in its capability to offer a robust musical framework, allowing the narrative to achieve both aesthetic and normative validity

The aesthetics of 2/4 as the initial sapilin can be examined through:

1. Textual Dimension – the initial text is typically formulaic, highlighting reverence for tradition and forebears.
2. Musical Dimension – the consistent rhythmic pattern establishes a distinct narrative space, facilitating the audience's ability to track the storyline.
3. Philosophical Aspect – the 2/4 beat symbolizes societal structure, specifically "adat nan sabana adat" (genuine customs)

Narratives in Sijobang frequently feature stories of bravery, societal struggles, and the reinforcement of traditional values. Backed by a 2/4 rhythm, these narratives acquire a stronger musical structure. In this scenario, a 2/4 rhythm helps to uphold the harmony between music and lyrics (Kartomi, 2012). For instance, when a vocalist presents a part on traditional guidance, the consistent 2/4 rhythm enhances the feeling of formality and gravity. The audience feels a unifying framework, much like customs bind community life. This illustrates how the aesthetic aspect operates not just for beauty but also to enhance the narrative's significance.

A key feature of Sijobang performances is their communal aspect. The audience is not just a passive listener but also engages through both verbal and non-verbal reactions. The steady 2/4 beat enables coordination between the vocalist and the crowd. In musicology, this concept is known as entrainment—the rhythmic synchronicity between performer and audience (Clayton, 2000). The 2/4 rhythm strengthens the shared aesthetic experience through entrainment. For the audience, the consistency of the rhythm fosters a feeling of safety, unity, and harmony, embodying the idea of tradition as a societal adhesive.

While 3/4 and 6/8 rhythms are present in Sijobang, they fulfil distinct purposes. The 3/4 rhythm often conveys emotional and religious aspects (second sapilin: syarak), whereas 6/8 is utilized to reflect the dynamics of natural existence (third sapilin: alam). Consequently, the 2/4 rhythm acts as the primary basis that equips the audience for the next two sapilin. The emergence of the 2/4 rhythm as the initial sapilin signifies a hierarchical aesthetic framework: transitioning from the order of tradition (2/4), to spirituality (3/4), and to the vitality of the natural world (6/8). This sequence illustrates that custom serve as the foundational essence of every aspect of Minangkabau existence

Musicological Aesthetic Implications: The examination of the 2/4 rhythm in Sijobang presents several significant implications:

1. Epistemological Dimension – illustrates how conventional Minangkabau music serves as a knowledge framework that preserves custom values.
2. Ontological Aspect – the 2/4 meter underpins Sijobang's aesthetic reality, validating the role of custom as the cornerstone of culture.
3. Axiological Dimension – showcases an aesthetic experience that is not just visually appealing but also carries social and ethical significance.

From a musicological standpoint, the 2/4 rhythm is seen as a conduit connecting text, music, and traditional philosophy. Therefore, the beauty of Sijobang is intertwined with the context of its foundational values

3/4 Rhythm as a Dynamic Variation of the Second Sapilin

Sijobang shows, as a Minangkabau musical narrative art, feature a unique and complex rhythmic arrangement. The Tigo Sapilin concept consists of three aesthetic foundations represented through music: the first sapilin (the foundation of traditional order), the second sapilin (spiritual and emotional elements), and the third

sapilin (balance with the environment). The 3/4 rhythm plays an essential role as a vibrant variation of the second sapilin, enhancing the musical flow and intensifying the audience's aesthetic experience. This rhythm is not just a technical decision but also reflects the philosophical values of the Minangkabau community, highlighting the harmony between spirituality, emotion, and narrative expression.

The 3/4 meter is commonly referred to as the waltz meter in Western musical practices, highlighting a three-beat structure with a prominent emphasis on the initial beat. Within the context of Sijobang, this pattern is not only technically modified but also filled with a unique cultural significance. Sijobang vocalists employ this triple rhythm with varied tempos, dynamic vocals, and melodic embellishments that adjust to the story's themes. From a musicological perspective, the 3/4 time signature in Sijobang introduces a fluid and vibrant sensation, unlike the steady rhythm of 2/4 found in the initial sapilin. This variation allows for enhanced emotional expression, particularly when the narrative moves into dramatic moments, including character conflicts, intense dialogue, or scenes that require spiritual reflection.

The second Sapilin within the Tigo Sapilin framework represents the aspects of syarak (religion) and spirituality, which are consistently integral to the lives of the Minangkabau community. In Sijobang, the 3/4 rhythm acts as a means to express this emotional and religious subtlety. Visually, the three-beat pattern creates a "swinging" effect that correlates with the cycle of prayer, dhikr, or the recurring rhythms of everyday life in a spiritual framework. This structure also allows room for the singer's emotional expression, such as through vocal squeaks, particular emphasis on sacred texts, or melodic improvisations that enhance the mood. Consequently, 3/4 rhythm functions not merely as a technical variation but also as a means to enhance the audience's shared emotions during the performance.

From a performative standpoint, employing 3/4 rhythm generates a distinct dynamic compared to 2/4. In the 2/4 section, the audience are enveloped in the organization and consistency of custom (tradition), but as the shift to 3/4 takes place, the mood transforms into a more vibrant, flowing, and passionate one. The audience interprets this change as a transition in internal mood from structure to spiritual contemplation and emotional articulation. The relationship between the Sijobang vocalist and the audience in 3/4 time tends to be more intense, as the emotional subtleties produced allow the audience to engage more deeply in the story. In many instances, 3/4 time is employed to signify intense climaxes in the narrative, when suspense peaks and demands emotional resolution.

In the Tigo Sapilin framework, the 3/4 rhythm may be interpreted as a depiction of the syariah dimension. The three-beat rhythm illustrates the relationship among humans, God, one another, and the natural world. Philosophically, this highlights that Sijobang goes beyond storytelling, imparting life lessons grounded in religious and social balance. The 3/4 rhythm can be seen as a representation of a spiritual harmony, where each cycle of three beats emphasizes to the audience the significance of balance

among the material, spiritual, and social realms. Therefore, the beauty of this rhythm includes didactic values that enhance Sijobang's role as a tool for cultural education.

59
S. $\text{po . ka gu no . nyo lai Tu an oi ju o jan .}$

65
S. $\text{nyo de . . . nai . ra mi pa a . sa nyo . . . pa yo ku . m . buah . Ra ni .}$

71
S. $\text{dek a nak . ko to nan a m pek ha ri . nan . sa}$

76
S. $\text{dang . . . pu . kua . du o . ta ka . lo . . . pi pik . . ta}$

- **Rhythm Pattern:** In performances, the fundamental 3/4 rhythm pattern is frequently enhanced with syncopation or vocal embellishments that align with the narrative (storytelling). This generates dynamic diversity that avoids tedium.
- **Melody:** Melodies in 3/4 time usually are extended and flowing, allowing the vocalist to deeply convey feelings.
- **Pace:** The pace is adaptable, capable of being quickened or slowed based on the story's intensity.
- **Vocals:** Techniques like vibrato, glissando, and improvisation are frequently employed to highlight emotion.

The 3/4 rhythm in Sijobang serves as a cultural connector, showcasing the Minangkabau's skill in blending global musical influences with local customs. Though the 3/4 beat is familiar in many musical cultures, in Sijobang, it is adapted based on local beliefs. This shows that traditional music is not static; it is always dynamic and receptive to change, provided that its essential cultural values are preserved. Consequently, the 3/4 rhythm illustrates how Minangkabau aesthetics consistently embrace innovation while retaining their traditional foundations.

6/8 Rhythm in Improvisation and the Climax of the Third Sapilin

Sijobang, as a Minangkabau folk art tradition, exemplifies the integration of storytelling, music, and performance. The Tigo Sapilin concept acts as a philosophical framework that organizes the performance: the initial sapilin is based on customs or tradition (2/4 rhythm), the second sapilin highlights syarak or spirituality (3/4 rhythm), and the third sapilin symbolizes harmony with the cosmos. In this framework, the 6/8 rhythm plays an essential role as the improvisation and climax of the third sapilin, effectively ending the performance with vibrant energy while highlighting humanity's bond with the cosmos.

The 6/8 time signature features polyrhythmic, dynamic, and fluid rhythms, incorporating multiple accentuations that enable several layers of expression. Within the framework of Sijobang, this pattern is recognized not merely as a technical mechanism but also as a cosmic emblem representing the life cycle of the Minangkabau community. The 6/8 rhythm is recognized as a compound rhythm, made up of two sets of three beats (1-2-3 | 4-5-6), resulting in a



smooth yet driving sensation. In Western music, this motif is frequently associated with lively jigs or folk dances. In Sijobang, 6/8 is reinterpreted to build dramatic tension and provide emotional release at the conclusion of the performance.

Several significant musicological elements of the 6/8 rhythm in Sijobang:

- **Polyrhythm:** permits the vocalist to adjust tempo between double-beat stresses (2x3) and extended triplets (6 complete beats).
- **Melody:** is often decorative, allowing significant space for vocal creativity.
- **Dynamics:** varies, frequently transitioning from quiet to loud, generating a climactic sensation.
- **Improvisation:** is an essential element, allowing singers to introduce melodic variations, adjust tempo, or engage in spontaneous vocalizations to highlight the text's meaning.

The third sapilin in Tigo Sapilin represents unity with nature (alam takambang jadi guru).

The 6/8 rhythm, embodying a vibrant and adaptable quality, mirrors the inherent rhythm of existence: sea swells, stream currents, the whisper of the breeze, and life's continuous cycle. This rhythmic arrangement fosters an ambiance that links individuals with their surroundings, enabling the audience to experience a cosmic bond through the melodic essence of Sijobang. Visually, the 6/8 rhythm creates a dramatic climax that conclude the performance. In this part, the story typically finds closure, either through a character's triumph, the settlement of a conflict, or the endorsement of a moral principle. Consequently, 6/8 is not just a technical difference, but instead a sign of emotional peak, guiding the audience towards a cathartic moment.

A notable feature of the 6/8 rhythm in Sijobang is its generous space for improvisation. Vocalists have the liberty to elongate phrases, modify dynamics, or introduce vocal embellishments based on the feelings and reactions of the audience. This corresponds with the dynamic and flexible character of the performative oral tradition. Improvisation enhances musical diversity and highlights the interactive essence of the performance. Vocalists can modify their energy based on the audience's responses, fostering a distinctive shared experience. Within the scope of musicological aesthetics, this improvisation illustrates that Sijobang is not merely a fixed piece, but instead a dynamic, creative endeavor.

Dramaturgically, the 6/8 rhythm is positioned at the culmination of the narrative. Once the audience experiences the stability of 2/4 (first scapular) and the emotional flow of 3/4 (second scapular), the 6/8 rhythm comes to offer resolution. This culmination is marked by elevated vocal intensity, changing tempos, and elaborate ornamentation. At this moment, the audience frequently undergoes a shared emotional eruption: they aren't merely hearing the narrative but are enveloped in a musical essence that surpasses

language. This is what renders the 6/8 rhythm a representation of aesthetic climax in Sijobang

The 6/8 rhythm in Sijobang embodies the philosophy of alam takambang jadi guru, with every natural phenomena serving as a source of wisdom and creativity. The dual pattern in 6/8 represents the harmony between dualities: day and night, land and sea, life and death, as well as humanity and nature. Additionally, the six-beat cycle can be seen as an emblem of life's unending flow that perpetually advances in a dynamic manner. Consequently, the musical climax in 6/8 not only serves an aesthetic role but also expresses the cosmological message that life is a cyclical journey that continually strives for harmony



- **Rhythm:** The double emphasis pattern (1-4) establishes a rhythm, whereas the triplet divisions produce a smooth sensation. This blend generates a tension between stability and fluidity.
- **Melodic improvisations** frequently utilize melismatic methods, including glissandos and repetitions of phrases, to elevate the climactic ambiance.
- **Pace:** Adaptable, it can be accelerated to heighten tension or decelerated to evoke a sacred atmosphere.
- **Vocals:** A signature characteristic of the third sapilin is the application of extreme dynamics (ranging from soft to piercing).

The existence of 6/8 rhythm exemplifies the Minangkabau's local knowledge in adapting global music elements into traditional forms. The 6/8 pattern, acknowledged globally in different musical traditions (Irish, African, and Indian), in Sijobang carries a local significance grounded in Minangkabau cosmology. Additionally, improvisation in 6/8 showcases the democratic principles of Minangkabau culture: performers enjoy freedom of artistic expression while adhering to the guidelines of tradition and syarak. Therefore, the 6/8 rhythm illustrates the balance between personal liberty and communal connection

CONCLUSION

The 2/4 rhythm in the Sijobang performance symbolizes the initial sapilin in the Tigo Sapilin concept, specifically tradition. The stability, solidity, and rhythmic harmony of 2/4 create an aesthetic base that underpins narrative and performance structures. Moreover, employing this rhythm showcases how music serves as an epistemological and axiological tool in preserving and perpetuating Minangkabau traditional values. In other words, Sijobang, with its 2/4 rhythm, showcases not just a performing art but also illustrates the Minangkabau philosophy of existence. This musicological aesthetic research illustrates the strong connection

among music, text, and culture, thereby enhancing our comprehension of how traditional art contributes in the reproducing of local value systems.

The 3/4 rhythm, as a lively variation of the second sapilin in the Sijobang performance, is crucial in creating musical dynamics and enhancing the audience's aesthetic enjoyment. From a musicological perspective, it delivers a fluid and emotive atmosphere; aesthetically, it symbolizes the aspects of sharak and spiritual essence; in terms of performance, it fosters a profound emotional connection between performer and audience. Consequently, the 3/4 rhythm is perceived not merely as a rhythmic structure but also as a philosophical emblem of Tigo Sapilin, highlighting the equilibrium between tradition, spirituality, and nature. This research highlights the necessity of comprehending Sijobang not just from a technical musical viewpoint but also from an aesthetic angle and the cultural values that underpin it.

The 6/8 rhythm serves as the third improvisation and climax of Sapilin in a Sijobang performance, holding significant importance in musicology, aesthetically, and philosophy. From a musicological perspective, it showcases polyrhythms, dynamics, and significant freedom for improvisation. Aesthetically, it serves as a dramatic culmination, providing a cathartic experience for the audience. Philosophically, it evinces the balance with nature and the life cycle that is central to the Tigo Sapilin idea. Consequently, the 6/8 rhythm serves not only as a technical variation but also as a cosmological and aesthetic medium that highlights Sijobang's role as a vibrant, dynamic, and significant traditional art form.

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