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NEW MYTHS IN URBAN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the form of new myths as the foundation of Lamongan city's identity in Indonesia. This research is a qualitative descriptive study using an ethnographic research design. The research data consists of stories in myths that have become the beliefs of traditional communities as well as forms of culture that are still preserved. Data sources were obtained through interviews with community leaders, gatekeepers, and local government officials. Based on the findings from the field, data was obtained regarding the transformation of old myths into new myths that shift the community's paradigm about myths. According to traditional beliefs, myths serve as sources of binding values that are trusted and thus become part of one's identity. Meanwhile, for modern society, myths are interpreted as cultural heritage that holds life values and serves as a global identity. For example, the myth of the taboo against eating catfish has now become a regional symbol in the form of an icon and batik motifs. The myth about the Paduraksa Gate, which was originally believed to be a mystical gateway, has now transformed into a symbol of the grandeur of the city's border gate as a marker. Additionally, the Jaran Jenggo art has now become a symbol of cultural wealth for the community.

Keywords: Myths, New Myths, City Identity, Local Wisdom.

INTRODUCTION:

Urban identity represents the uniqueness inherent to a city, serving as a distinguishing feature among other cities. According to [1] urban identity primarily refers to the identity of a place. A combination of characteristics and elements shapes the character and identity of a city. These elements may include built components that act as critical factors influencing a place's identity. In addition, the formation of identity is shaped by the interpretation of symbolic components [2]. Europeans, for instance, have historically constructed their national identity through elements such as history, language, culture, folklore, geographical traits, traditional costumes, local cuisine, and animal symbols.

Developing a regional identity presents its own challenges as society progresses toward modernity [3]. Urban identity, much like a home, functions not only as a dwelling place but also as a symbol of pride for its inhabitants [4]. The identity of a city is shaped not merely by physical infrastructure or government policies, but also by the evolution of communal beliefs and traditions that have developed over time, reflecting the social behaviors of its residents [5]. These beliefs and traditions are often actualized through local wisdom, such as folklore, legends, and myths, which serve as symbols of a community's values, convictions, and worldviews [6]. Myths, as part of culture, play a crucial role in shaping a community's social and cultural identity while bridging the past and future [7].

Local wisdom reflected in folklore and myths holds significant potential in contributing to urban identity formation [8]. Myths do not merely function as inherited stories but also form the foundation for developing new values that are relevant to the challenges of modernity, work ethics, and social equality [9]. In this context, new myths can emerge to enrich and renew a city's identity, making it more adaptive to contemporary changes while still adhering to inherited local values.

The development of urban identity through new myths is not solely about preserving old stories or introducing new paradigms; it also entails contextualizing local wisdom within a modern framework. Through such narratives, identity is formed without abandoning traditional knowledge [10]. For example, folklore that embodies values such as honesty, solidarity, or leadership can be revitalized through the creation of new myths that resonate with technological advancements and current social challenges. In this way, new myths connect communities with a dynamic local identity, simultaneously serving as a foundation for shaping urban identity.

There are two temporal classifications of myths: traditional (old) myths and modern (new) myths. According to [11] traditional myths are constructs oriented toward the past or historical formations that are static and enduring, thus inherently historical in nature. The traditional component reflects that communities are part of an ongoing cultural history, living within and through these myths. In contrast, [12], describe new myths as iconic signs that function as identity markers. These new myths are based on pre-existing traditional myths within Indonesian society and reflect broader cultural, social, and technological changes [13]. Moreover, new myths can serve as strategic tools to promote a city on a larger scale. In various regions, a strong cultural foundation can become part of city branding strategies, attracting tourists and enhancing the city's image at national and international levels.

Over the past two decades, the concept of city branding has emerged as a critical strategy for local governments aiming to shape urban identity and competitiveness amidst globalization and interregional competition. City branding has evolved beyond mere tourism promotion to become an integral component of urban development policies, encompassing social, cultural, economic, and ideological dimensions. Recent studies emphasize that building a strong urban identity directly impacts investment, tourism, and civic participation in city development [14];[15]. In Indonesia, studies on city branding include [16], which examines Surabaya's branding strategy, and [17], which explores identity strategies through folklore.

Challenges arise when urban identity is understood solely as a product of marketing communication strategies, neglecting the narrative, mythological, and symbolic dimensions embedded within communities. In post-industrial societies, as noted by [18] and reinforced in contemporary studies by [19], the formation of collective identity is strongly influenced by modern myths disseminated through media, festivals, modified folklore, and narratives constructed by local elites. Hence, urban identity should not be viewed merely as a bureaucratic outcome but as a contested arena of meaning involving collective memory, local symbols, and socially constructed new myths.

This study emerges from the need to understand how new myths—whether consciously created by local governments or organically developed through citizen participation—play a role in shaping contemporary urban identity. The primary focus is on interpreting urban identity through narrative and cultural approaches, emphasizing how new myths function as symbolic strategies in framing a city's distinctive identity. The study aims to enrich city branding discourse from a

cultural perspective, offering an alternative approach to understanding urban identity formation as a dynamic and participatory process. The original contribution of this research lies in integrating the study of myths, urban narratives, and local identity branding, positioning urban identity not merely as a promotional label but as a continually negotiated construction of meaning.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Concept of Myth

A myth is a narrative through which a culture explains and provides understanding of natural aspects and realities [20]. Based on its function, [21] identifies two primary roles of myths: first, as a means of education, and second, as a stimulus for fostering creativity and new ways of thinking in humans. Myths that develop within communities, particularly those related to moral order within a specific belief system, can have positive impacts on society at large.

As an integral part of culture, myths are inseparable from the social system. Therefore, to determine the function of a myth, functionalism is required—a method that seeks to connect cultural phenomena with the consequences arising from the cultural process itself [22]. Based on this perspective, the functions of myths can be summarized according to systems of action, including social functions, cultural functions, educational functions, environmental functions, and religious functions [23].

First, the educational function aims to develop human personality, encompassing both behavior and attitude [24]. [25] explains that the educational function of myths is related to teaching sacred norms and ethics while strengthening communal belief. Within society, myths serve as justification and explanation for natural phenomena by the community, enabling timely consideration of appropriate responses [26]. Second, the social function acknowledges humans as inherently social beings who depend on one another [24]. Communities express this through traditions as a collective medium, facilitated by interactions among individuals or groups. In this context, myths serve to validate and interpret natural phenomena, guiding communal understanding and responses [11].

The Concept of Urban Identity

Urban identity can manifest physically or non-physically, through social activities, economic value, or political representation. A city's identity is formed from understanding and interpreting the elements inherent in the city or recognizing both physical objects (such as buildings and other structures) and non-physical objects (such as social activities) that have developed over time [27]. Physical urban identity includes all tangible elements that can serve as identifiers of a particular area [28].

Furthermore, identity can also be understood in relation to ethnic boundaries. [29] explains that in interethnic interactions, ethnic boundaries are rigorously maintained because they also constitute social boundaries. [30] describe identity as part of an individual's self-concept, derived from their knowledge of belonging to a social group, along with the emotional significance and value associated with that membership.

[31] outlines four concepts of identity: (1) identity as similarity with others, referring to the commonalities between individuals; (2) identity as selfhood, where an individual is born with a unique self connected to processes of personal liberation; (3) identity as alignment with an idea, which transcends individual power, with the idea being a form of transcendence; and (4) identity as a realistic individual living in relation with others.

Symbols within an identity indicate the existence of power held by a community to be recognized, creating cultural phenomena that extend beyond purely emotional human relationships. Intercultural and intergroup relations form social structures. According to [32], culture constitutes a social formation similar to economic power, involving a series of meaningful practices, including social relations of production, consumption, and marketing. Symbols and culture are central to human activity, serving as essential tools in positioning culture as a key to life. Hence, symbols occupy the highest level of civilization. [33] asserts that the creation of symbols represents the pinnacle of human civilization, inherently connected to beliefs in imaginary or mythological forms. It is therefore unsurprising that myths, beliefs, and convictions are integral to the conceptualization and creation of symbols. These references are not merely conceptual but encompass something imaginary, greater, elevated, absolute, with meaning, belief, and reality. The creation of symbols is thus invariably linked to myths.

Myths in Urban Identity

Identity within any group or individual is inseparable from the effort to be recognized by others, and such recognition occurs through various processes until it becomes identified as group or individual identity. [30] describe identity as part of an individual's self-concept, derived from awareness of membership in a social group, along with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.

METHODOLOGY:

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, aiming to obtain an accurate and natural depiction of both traditional and new myths that serve as the foundation for urban identity formation. Qualitative descriptive research involves objectively describing observed phenomena or conditions [34]. In general, qualitative research is applicable to studies of community life, history, behavior, concepts or phenomena, and social issues occurring within society, emphasizing processes and meanings from the subject's perspective [35].

According to [36], qualitative descriptive research examines naturally occurring social actions, emphasizing how individuals interpret and understand their experiences to comprehend social reality, thereby enabling them to solve their own problems. Qualitative research is based on the interpretation of the researcher or author, conducted in natural conditions [37].

In this study, the qualitative approach is combined with an ethnographic methodology. Ethnography is a research method within the social sciences that aims to present an account reflecting cultural realities [38]. Research using an ethnographic approach relies on personal experience, community participation, and involves more than mere observation; it encompasses engagement across multiple interdisciplinary studies [39]. Ethnography focuses on studying a community, but not strictly limited to geographical boundaries; it can also consider occupational patterns, unemployment, and other social aspects [40].

Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and content analysis. Observation is conducted directly to examine the behaviors of community members as inheritors of local wisdom. Interviews are carried out in depth with parties associated with myths, including cultural practitioners, local and central government officials, and relevant agencies, aiming to obtain information on the relevance of myths to Lamongan city's identity. Content analysis is used to understand specific myths in reflecting cultural values, beliefs, and the social identity of the community [41].

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Manifestation of New Myths in Urban Identity Development

The City Branding program in Lamongan Regency, Indonesia, is considered one of the ways to materialize the plans for the future. This program consists of themes and messages to be conveyed to the public. The theme of Lamongan's City Branding is "Lamongan Megilan." "Megilan" itself means extraordinary, special, and exceptional. It symbolizes hope for the prosperity of Lamongan Regency. This tagline emphasizes that Lamongan is extraordinary in terms of culture, tourism, and cuisine (Purnomo. Disparbud Lamongan 2024).

The Lamongan Megilan logo consists of six (6) elements: bandeng (milkfish), lele (catfish), water, non-volcanic hills or mountains, beach or sea, and keris (traditional dagger). These six elements can be seen in the following image:

Figure 1. Lamongan Megilan: Exploring Marine Wealth, Natural Landscapes, and Cultural Heritage

Source: Google Drive, City Branding of Lamongan Regency

- Lele (Catfish) represents perseverance, patience, and endurance against suffering. Lele is also the main ingredient in Lamongan's famous culinary dish, pecel ikan lele (catfish salad).
- Bandeng (Milkfish) represents Lamongan as one of the largest freshwater fish-producing areas in East Java. Bandeng symbolizes the region's potential commodities. Fish-based dishes like bandeng asam jawa (tamarind milkfish) are also popular in Lamongan.
- The sharp upward and downward curves symbolize the broad landforms and small waves of the beach, indicating that Lamongan is rich in beautiful tourist destinations such as Lamongan Marine Tourism (WBL), Kutang Beach, Maharani Cave, Gondang Reservoir, and other attractive spots.
- The sharp tip at the top represents the region's hills, showcasing the rich natural resources and agricultural potential in Lamongan.

The urban identity of Lamongan Regency is deeply rooted in local wisdom, including folk tales, myths, culture, and arts.

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1. The Myth of the Taboo of Eating Catfish

The myth of the taboo of eating catfish in Lamongan has become part of the local wisdom, deeply ingrained in the community and contributing to the economic development of the region. Lamongan uses the catfish and milkfish as icons for city branding, introducing the area's local wisdom, economic sectors, and culinary offerings to a broader audience.

The origins of the catfish icon trace back to the myth of the taboo against eating catfish, which later expanded into the economic and culinary sectors. Many people in Lamongan have developed catfish farming businesses and pecel lele culinary enterprises.

The myth of the catfish taboo in Lamongan originates from Barang Village in Glagah Subdistrict, Lamongan Regency. The manifestation of this new myth in Lamongan's identity development is a creative and adaptive process, involving elements of culture, history, and local innovation to strengthen the city's image. The Lamongan government's adaptation includes the myth of the catfish taboo.

Table 1. Transformation from Old Myths to New Myths in the Catfish Myth

Aspect	Old Myth (Confirmation)	New Myth (Transformation)
Purpose	To preserve culture, values, and wisdom	To strengthen Lamongan's identity
Function	Conservative, preserving culture	Innovative, adapting to social and cultural changes
Paradigm of the Community	Catfish is viewed as sacred or linked to mystical powers. Eating catfish is believed to bring bad luck.	Catfish becomes a symbol of resilience, adaptability, and perseverance, reflecting the character of the people of Lamongan.
Form	Passed down through oral folklore	Manifested through symbols such as monuments, badges, batik, culinary items, and city branding logos.
Symbolism	Associated with negative or undesirable things like bad luck or taboos.	Represents independence, innovation, and success in the fisheries sector.
Impact on Society	The old myth led people to follow customs, avoid eating catfish, and fear undesirable consequences.	The community becomes more open and pragmatic, seeing catfish as an economic opportunity and symbol of transformation. This change leads to greater prosperity and regional development through the fisheries sector.

The catfish represents resilience, patience, and endurance. It also symbolizes the dynamic, adaptive character of Lamongan, whose people are known for their ability to thrive in various environments. The catfish has become an important symbol for Lamongan, reflecting both the identity and characteristics of the area, which is rich in fisheries potential. Lamongan is known as one of the largest catfish farming centers in Indonesia, meeting local market demands while also supplying other regions. Therefore, the catfish is an integral part of Lamongan's culture, economy, and daily life. It is no surprise that the catfish has been chosen as a monument representing Lamongan's urban identity.

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Figure 2. Catfish Monument in Lamongan

Beyond the economic and culinary aspects, the catfish also plays a significant role in shaping Lamongan's cultural identity. Various festivals and cultural events often feature the catfish as a central symbol, emphasizing its importance in the community's social life. These festivals not only promote the region's potential but also serve as a platform for Lamongan's people to express pride in their city.

The presence of the catfish monument in public spaces serves as a powerful visual reminder that the catfish is not just an economic commodity but an icon representing the city's dynamic and adaptive character.

The new myth surrounding the catfish has evolved with the inclusion of catfish symbols in statues and traditional batik patterns. Initially known solely as an economic commodity and the subject of a sacred taboo, the catfish is now a symbol of pride and cultural identity for the people of Lamongan. Catfish statues placed around the city, such as at intersections, parks, or town squares, not only act as visual markers but also embody the community's perseverance, resilience, and determination to face life's challenges, much like the catfish's ability to adapt to various environmental conditions.

In addition to statues, the catfish symbol has become an integral part of Lamongan's traditional batik designs. The catfish motif strengthens the symbol's roots in daily life, transforming the catfish from merely an economic asset into an icon that unites the community around values of togetherness and sustainability.

The Bandeng Lele motif reflects the hardworking, adaptive, and dynamic nature of Lamongan's people. Like the catfish, which thrives in various water environments, the people of Lamongan are known for their determination to overcome challenges, particularly in agriculture and fisheries.

Figure 3. Catfish Motif in Batik Crafts

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Through batik with the catfish motif, this symbol becomes deeply rooted in the daily life of the community, transforming the catfish from merely an economically valuable commodity into an icon that unites the community with values of togetherness and sustainability.

The Bandeng Lele (milkfish and catfish) motif reflects the hardworking, adaptive, and dynamic character of Lamongan's people. Just like the resilient catfish, which easily adapts to various aquatic environments, the people of Lamongan are known for their spirit in facing challenges, especially in agriculture and fisheries.

2. Paduraksa Gate Culture as a Symbol of Lamongan Regency's Identity

The Paduraksa Gate in Sendang Duwur, Lamongan Regency, is a historical architectural heritage with significant cultural and spiritual value. This gate serves as the main entrance to the complex of the tomb of Sunan Sendang Duwur, a respected cleric in the spread of Islam in East Java during the 16th century. Located in Sendang Duwur Village, Paciran Subdistrict, this gate features traditional Javanese architectural styles influenced by Hindu-Buddhist elements, along with Islamic cultural motifs, reflecting the process of acculturation that occurred in the past.

From a cultural perspective, the Paduraksa Gate symbolizes the harmonious fusion of local traditions and Islamic teachings, which are distinctive to Lamongan's identity. Javanese culture, which values religious and aesthetic symbols, is preserved, even though Islam has become the majority religion. This gate not only serves as a physical symbol of a wali's (saint's) tomb but also represents the long history of how the people of Lamongan accepted, adapted, and integrated new values without losing their traditional roots.

Figure 4. Paduraksa Gate

Historically, the Paduraksa Gate is part of the Sunan Sendang Duwur tomb complex, a prominent cleric who played a significant role in the spread of Islam in East Java. Sunan Sendang Duwur is not only known as a spiritual figure but also as a wise leader who successfully integrated Islamic values with local traditions. This is reflected in the architecture of the gate, which combines Hindu-Buddhist symbols, such as floral and faunal ornaments, and the use of red bricks and andesite stones, common in traditional Javanese buildings. The arching shape of the Paduraksa Gate also symbolizes the spiritual journey, implying that this place serves as a gateway to the sacred and divine dimension.

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In terms of the origins of Lamongan's identity, the Paduraksa Gate represents the openness and cultural flexibility of the people of Lamongan, who are able to adopt new values without abandoning their old traditions. The gate reflects the fusion of spiritual and local aesthetic values that shape the community's character and stands as a representation of the long historical journey that Lamongan has experienced. Lamongan's identity, which is open to external influences while still preserving its local essence, is clearly seen in the design of the gate, which features traditional ornamental elements within the framework of Islamic symbolism, such as the spiritual concept of a journey toward eternal life.

Figure 5. Modern Paduraksa Gate

The presence of the Paduraksa Gate in Sendang Duwur has also inspired the development of modern Paduraksa gates in Lamongan and surrounding areas. The characteristic of this gate, with its curved shape and traditional Javanese architectural elements, is often adapted in the construction of city gates, monuments, and even modern building designs that aim to represent Lamongan's identity. The modern Paduraksa gate not only serves as a physical gateway but also as a symbol of regional identity, reminding the community of their rich cultural roots. For instance, many government buildings, city parks, and tourist attractions in Lamongan now incorporate elements of the Paduraksa gate in their designs, reflecting the continuity of this cultural heritage.

Below is a table showing the differences between the ancient mythology associated with the Paduraksa Gate in Sendang Duwur and the new myth surrounding the Paduraksa Gate as a symbol of Lamongan Regency:

Table 2. Differences Between the Old and New Myths Regarding the Paduraksa Gate

Aspect	Old Myth (Paduraksa Gate in Sendang Duwur)	New Myth (Paduraksa Gate as a Symbol of Lamongan Regency)
Historical Aspect	Originates from the era of the spread of Islam by Sunan Sendang Duwur in the 16th century. The gate is part of a sacred tomb complex.	Developed in the modern era as a symbol of Lamongan's cultural and architectural identity.
Main Function	Religious and spiritual function as a gate to the tomb of Sunan Sendang Duwur, a prominent figure in the spread of Islam.	Representational function as a symbol of Lamongan's culture and identity, honoring its historical heritage.
Mythological Elements	The myth that the gate was built overnight by Sunan Sendang Duwur with spiritual help and is believed to have originated from the Majapahit Kingdom.	The modern gate is more symbolic, reflecting the spirit of cultural revival and the economic strength of Lamongan, without strong mystical elements.

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Spiritual Dimension	Believed to be a spiritual gateway that separates the material and spiritual worlds, with a mystical aura that blesses the pilgrims.	The modern myth emphasizes local pride and cultural continuity without a deep spiritual dimension.
Role in Social Life	A sacred pilgrimage site believed to bring blessings to those who visit with sincere intentions.	An urban icon used in various aspects of social life, such as architecture, tourism promotion, and cultural symbolism.
Cultural Acculturation	Reflects the acculturation between Hindu-Buddhist traditions and Islam, with ornamental and architectural influences.	Represents Lamongan's identity, combining traditional values with modern aesthetics, without strong influences from religion or ancient traditions.
Pride Value	Considered a sacred and mystical historical heritage, passed down through generations as part of the spiritual tradition of the community.	Honored as a symbol of regional pride, modernity, and the economic and cultural development of Lamongan Regency.
Role in Regional Identity	Represents Lamongan's long history in a religious and spiritual context through the spread of Islam.	Serves as a symbol of modern strength for Lamongan, used to promote tourism and strengthen local cultural identity.

3. Jaran Jenggo Art

a. Origin of Jaran Jenggo Art

Jaran Jenggo is a traditional art form in the form of a procession for circumcision ceremonies, where participants ride a horse that nods its head, accompanied by the sound of the jedor music. This art originated in 1907 in Solokuro Village, Solokuro District, Lamongan Regency. The art was created by H. Rosyid, the head of Solokuro Village at that time.

Jaran Jenggo serves as an art that boosts the confidence of boys undergoing circumcision. This art has been passed down through generations to ensure its continued existence in the community. Just like any other cultural heritage, Jaran Jenggo has been passed down to the younger generation who demonstrate independence and leadership qualities. This art has continued to thrive, now entering its seventh generation.

b. Elements of Jaran Jenggo Art

Before undergoing further development, Jaran Jenggo involved 12 performers, consisting of 2 horse guides, 9 jedor musicians (4 rebana players, 2 kendang players, and 3 jedor players), and 1 wedding coordinator. The two guides' roles were to lead the horse during the procession, direct the horse to perform the sungkeman (a ceremonial bowing gesture), and encourage the horse to nod its head. Becoming a Jaran Jenggo guide requires special skills, as the guide must be patient in training and directing the horse. Regular training sessions were conducted bi-weekly before performances.

Figure 6. Jedor Music Performance in the Jaran Jenggo Parade

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The music played during Jaran Jenggo performances, prior to its development, involved rebana jedor music, which included 2 jedor (small drum-like instruments), 6 rebana (a type of drum), and 2 kendang (large drums). This music accompanied sholawatan (praise songs) from the Barzanji or Diba' books written by Syaikh Ja'far bin Husin bin Abdul Karim bin Muhammad Al-Barzanji.

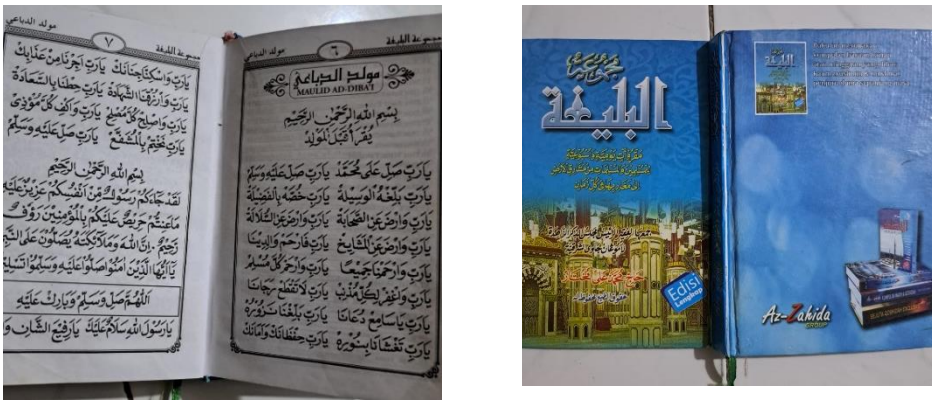

Figure 7. Religious Texts: Maulid Ad-Dibai and Al-Balqah Book

The jedor is a small drum-like instrument resembling a bedug, but smaller. The music in Jaran Jenggo was influenced by the youth of Solokuro Village, many of whom were graduates of the Sunan Drajat Islamic boarding school in Lamongan, thus bringing santri (Islamic boarding school) arts, including rebana jedor, to their hometown.

Figure 8. Traditional Parade: Drummers in a Cultural Procession

Before development, the costumes for Jaran Jenggo performers were simple: for the circumcised child, they wore a kokoh shirt, black sarong or pants, and a peci (a traditional cap). All the performers wore batik or kokoh shirts with a peci and black trousers.

c. Forms of Jaran Jenggo Art in Lamongan Regency

Jaran Jenggo performances consist of two distinct stages: 1) Sembah Sungkem Stage: In this stage, the circumcised child performs a sungkeman (a respectful bow) to their parents to ask for forgiveness and blessings for a smooth procession. After the child performs the sungkeman to the parents, the horse also performs a sungkeman to the child and the parents of the event owner, led by the guide, three times. The horse's front legs are bent, and its head is lowered to a cushion and mat that have been set in front of the child and their parents. After the sungkeman ceremony, the parents send their child to start the procession around the

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village; 2) Arak-Arakan Stage: In this stage, the circumcised child is paraded around the village and stops at each relative's house or the home of respected individuals. The first house to visit is the village head's house, followed by visits to relatives' houses. At each relative's home, the child gets off the horse and is greeted by the relative, who waits in front of the house. The circumcised child asks for blessings, and then the horse performs a sungkeman to the relative, done only once. Afterward, the circumcised child gets back on the horse and continues the procession, accompanied by jedor music and sholawatan, until reaching the next house.

When the procession ends, the parents greet their child in front of the house. The circumcised child gets off the horse, is given a drink, and then performs a sungkeman to their parents, signaling that the child has returned safely. After the sungkeman, the horse also performs a final sungkeman to the child and the parents of the event owner, completing the Jaran Jenggo art performance.

d. Presentation of Jaran Jenggo Art

The movements performed in Jaran Jenggo art include the Jaran Jenggo greeting gesture, the traditional marriage greeting, the nodding movement, horse-riding tricks, moves involving the horse's feet, the horse stepping on the horseman's head, the horse sitting on a chair, the horse's death act, the "death-like" trance of the horseman, and the horse dance. These movements are relatively simple, focusing on hand gestures and circling the horse. The most emphasized movements are those interacting with the horse.

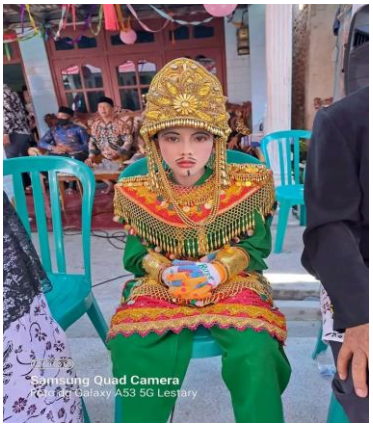

Figure 9. A Young Performer in Traditional Jaran Jenggo Costume

Makeup and costumes in the Jaran Jenggo Aswo Kaloko Joyo art are essential for personal identity during performances. Therefore, makeup and costumes play a crucial role in this form of art. The costumes or outfits in Jaran Jenggo Aswo Kaloko Joyo are intended to serve as an identity for the performers in the various roles they play, such as the horseman, the groom in a traditional circumcision ceremony, or the horse itself, known as Jaran Jenggo.

The setting is usually in the yard of a house, as Jaran Jenggo is a ritualistic farewell ceremony where the child seeks the parents' blessing before the procession begins, ensuring their safe return home. If one wants to hold a Jaran Jenggo performance, a dedicated space or area in front of the house hosting the event must be provided for the performance.

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Figure 10. Traditional Jaran Jenggo Performance with a Colorful Horse Costume

The components used in the Jaran Jenggo art performance, known as properti, are essential tools and equipment directly related to the performers. The properties include keris (traditional dagger), pecut (whip), chair, jarik/sewek (traditional cloth), red cushions, and mats, all of which are used throughout the performance.

In addition to the performers and artists, the Shohibu Baiti (host) also prepares certain properties as part of the Jaran Jenggo performance requirements. These items include a red cushion, pandan mat, seven-flower garland, and jarik/sewek. These items are used during rituals or performances, and if the host fails to provide them, the performance cannot take place.

The audience of the Jaran Jenggo performance consists of the local community, usually those involved in a khitanan (circumcision ceremony). The audience plays a role in ensuring the success of the performance. At the end of the Jaran Jenggo Aswo Kaloko Joyo performance, the audience typically gives saweran (money offerings) to the jaran (horse), which is placed on a mat or klasa before the pawang (handler) performs the Mati Suri (death act) on the Jaran Jenggo. The offering is given before the pawang enacts the ritual of the horse appearing to "die."

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the formation of Lamongan City's identity does not occur in a linear fashion but through a process of meaning negotiation between the old and new myths. The old myth functions to uphold values, maintain norms, and preserve traditional belief systems. However, in a modern context, this myth does not vanish; instead, it undergoes a transformation into a new myth that is more adaptive, symbolic, and strategic within the framework of city identity development.

The transformation of the catfish taboo myth into an economic, culinary, batik motif, and even public monument icon reflects a shift from the sacred to the productive symbol. The catfish is no longer positioned as a taboo object but as a representation of the resilient, adaptive, and competitive character of the Lamongan people. This change emphasizes that the new myth acts as a mechanism for cultural reinterpretation, driving economic growth while also fostering the formation of a collective image. Similarly, the reinterpretation of the Gapura Paduraksa highlights the shift from its mystic-religious dimension to a representational symbol of regional identity. While initially the gate was understood as a sacred spiritual threshold, in the

contemporary phase, it has been adopted as an architectural element and visual icon that asserts historical continuity and local pride in the context of regional branding.

Meanwhile, the Jaran Jenggo art demonstrates that myths live not only in static symbols but also in performative practices passed down through generations. This art form serves as a space for reproducing social, religious, and community solidarity values, while strengthening Lamongan's cultural identity amid the forces of modernization.

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