



Toni Harsono's Capital in Strengthening His Position in Indonesia's Wayang Potehi Cultural Production Arena

Santi Andayani^{1*}, Emma Rahmawati Fatimah¹, Clarinta Gaby Wijaya¹
Nando Petra Setyo Prakoso¹

¹ Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, East Java, Indonesia
santi_andayani@ub.ac.id

Abstract. *Wayang Potehi* is a form of traditional performance art rooted in Chinese culture, but it has assimilated into Indonesian culture. This art form faces various social, political, and economic challenges in maintaining its continuity. In response to these challenges, Toni Harsono, a *Wayang Potehi* activist from the Fu He An community, has not only been involved in the performances of *Wayang Potehi* but has also introduced this art to a broader audience. Toni Harsono's success in revitalizing *Wayang Potehi* is closely linked to the capitals he has accumulated. Therefore, this research aims to analyze how Toni Harsono, as an activist and preserver of *Wayang Potehi*, accumulates and utilizes social, cultural, and symbolic capital to strengthen the position of *Wayang Potehi* in the Indonesian cultural arena using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production. Through in-depth interviews with Toni Harsono, this study finds that he has successfully accumulated social capital through his network with the Chinese community and cultural institutions. His cultural capital is reflected in his deep knowledge of *Wayang Potehi*, acquired from his father, a *Wayang Potehi* puppeteer, and from seeking knowledge from various *Wayang Potehi* experts both in Indonesia and abroad. Toni Harsono's symbolic capital is gained from public recognition and awards received from various institutions, both domestically and internationally. He has effectively utilized these capitals to strengthen the position of *Wayang Potehi* by organizing touring performances, training a new generation of puppeteers, and establishing collaborations with various parties.

Keywords: *Wayang Potehi*, Cultural Production Arena, Capital

1. Introduction

In traditional performing arts, one form that remains relatively unknown to the wider Indonesian public is the art of *Wayang Potehi*. This traditional puppet performance, which uses cloth puppets as a storytelling medium, has its roots in Chinese culture. Potehi was brought to Indonesia by immigrants from China around the 16th–17th centuries, particularly in the northern coastal regions of Java. However, over time, it has not only narrated Chinese mythology and history but has also absorbed various local Indonesian elements. Today, many new stories have been created according to consumer demand. As mentioned in Kuardani (2018), the Potehi

puppet performance is for worship, a noble ritual intended to please the gods, so that the gods will protect them from the complexities and dangers of life, and continually bestow them with fortune.



Fig. 1. Potehi Stage



Fig. 2. Potehi puppets

One of the *Wayang Potehi* communities still actively performing today is the Fu He An community. The foundation of this community was initiated by Tok Su Kwi, an original puppet master (*dalang*) from China, hailing from the city of Coan Ciu in the Hokkian Province (the birthplace of *Wayang Potehi*). In the 1920s, Tok Su Kwi came to Gudo, Jombang, East Java, to spread the art of *Wayang Potehi*, with the center of activities at the Hong San Kiong Temple. Unlike his grandfather, Tok Su Kwi, and his father, Tok Hong Kie, who both became *sehu* (Potehi puppet masters), Tok Hok Lay, better known as Toni Harsono (55 years old), chose to become an entrepreneur. However, his love for *Wayang Potehi* did not deter him from making efforts to popularize the art among the wider public.

The difficult economic life his father experienced as a *sehu* led Tok Hong Kie to forbid his three children from becoming *sehu* as well. Toni, with the help of his older sibling, eventually opened a gold shop as his profession. Thanks to his dedication and leadership, Toni is now entrusted as the head of the Hong San Kiong Temple and the leader of the Fu He An community.

From its early journey, *Wayang Potehi* faced significant challenges, both socially, politically, and economically. One major obstacle was the political changes in Indonesia in the mid-20th century, especially during the New Order era under President Soeharto. During this time, Law Article 14 of 1967 was enacted, which prohibited all forms of Chinese cultural arts, rituals, and celebrations. This had a significant impact on Chinese culture, including the performing art of *Wayang Potehi*. According to Kuardhani (2018), all traditional Chinese performances were conducted without sound systems and without the noise of musical instruments. As a result of this regulation, *Wayang Potehi* experienced a decline in popularity and was nearly extinct from the arts scene in Indonesia.

However, an interesting aspect of this political change is that, despite the ban and suppression of Chinese cultural expressions by the government for several decades, *Wayang Potehi* in Gudo did not experience a significant political impact. This was due to the strong sense of tolerance between the people of Gudo, the local security forces, and the Hong San Kiong Temple. Furthermore, after the Soeharto era ended, specifically when President Gus Dur issued Presidential Instruction No. 6 of 2000, the Chinese community in Indonesia regained the freedom to practice their religion, conduct religious rituals, traditions, customs, and other expressions of Chinese culture (Mustajab, 2014). This period marked the resurgence of Chinese culture in Indonesia, including the art of *Wayang Potehi*. One of the key figures in the preservation of *Wayang Potehi* was Toni Harsono. Through his role, Toni Harsono successfully reintroduced *Wayang Potehi* to the wider public and brought this art not only to the national stage but also to the international stage.

Research on *Wayang Potehi* has been conducted extensively, one of which is by Chandra Halim (2021) with the title "The Existence of *Wayang Potehi* in the Era of Industry 4.0" in the journal *Historia Vitae*. His research aims to highlight the life of *Wayang Potehi* in the era of Industry 4.0 and describe how productive *Wayang Potehi* is in this modern era. The research method used in this study is predominantly qualitative with a descriptive narrative approach. The results of the research show that Potehi has become quite dynamic, where a fusion between Potehi and technology has taken place, resulting in Potehi performances through IT-based social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and even live streaming. Public enthusiasm is increasing, and Potehi enthusiasts believe that this Chinese puppet art will continue to thrive and develop in society.

Another article was written by Josh Stenberg, titled *Wayang Potehi: Glove Puppets in the Expression of Sino-Indonesian Identity*, which explores how the traditional glove puppet theater, originating from southern Fujian, China, has been adapted and integrated into the cultural life of Sino-Indonesians, particularly in Java. The research traces its historical journey from Fujian to the Indonesian archipelago and highlights how it has maintained its Hokkien roots while evolving in response to Indonesia's cultural dynamics. The study examines *Wayang Potehi*'s role in performing a distinct Sino-Indonesian identity, particularly within non-Chinese-speaking communities in East and Central Java. By adopting local cultural practices and blending traditional elements with Indonesian contexts, Potehi serves as a medium for expressing integrationist strategies while preserving Chinese heritage. Additionally, modern Potehi performances increasingly incorporate technology and social media platforms, helping to sustain and even revive interest in this unique puppet tradition, especially among younger audiences.

These studies primarily focus on the existence and history of *Wayang Potehi* in Indonesia, while research on how Toni accumulates capital to maintain his position in the arena of *Wayang Potehi* art in Indonesia has not yet been conducted. Toni Harsono is an intriguing subject for research due to his success in reviving *Wayang Potehi*, which relies not only on his role as an arts activist but also on various forms of capital that he accumulates and utilizes. Therefore, this study will explore in

greater depth how Toni Harsono uses social, cultural, and symbolic capital to strengthen the position of *Wayang Potehi* in the cultural arena of Indonesia.

To understand Toni Harsono's strategies in acquiring and converting the forms of capital he accumulates, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production arenas will be used. According to Bourdieu, an arena is a system of relationships. An arena cannot be separated from social space. Social space is an integral arena, meaning it is a system of arenas. An individual's social space is connected over time (life trajectory) with a series of arenas where people compete for various forms of capital (Harker, 2009: 12). In each arena, specific interests are at stake, even though these interests may sometimes be denied by the actors involved, or there is certainly some form of 'investment' even if it is never acknowledged as such; in the cultural production arena, trust becomes a determining factor (Bourdieu, 2010: xxi).

Within an arena, there is a struggle for the acquisition of resources (capital) and efforts to gain access to power. This competition is aimed at obtaining a position within the arena. The position of agents depends on the amount of capital they possess, the composition of that capital, and the changes in quantity and composition over time (Bourdieu, 1984: 114). Bourdieu identifies four types of capital that are at stake in the arena. First, economic capital, which includes material resources (income and objects), money, and means of production (machines, land, labor). Second, social capital, which encompasses various types of relationships that serve as resources useful for determining and reproducing social positions. Third, cultural capital, such as all forms of intellectual qualifications produced formally or inherited from family, diplomas, knowledge, cultural codes, ways of speaking, demeanor, writing skills, social circles, etc. Fourth, symbolic capital, which comprises prestige and social status (Jenkins, 2004: 125). Capital is accumulated through investment, can be inherited by others, and can provide benefits according to the opportunities that the owner has to operate its placement (Mutahir, 2011: 68).

Two forms of capital that are very important in the cultural production arena are symbolic capital and cultural capital. Symbolic capital refers to the degree of accumulated prestige, fame, honor, and is built upon the dialectic of knowledge (*connaissance*) and recognition (*reconnaissance*). Cultural capital highlights forms of cultural knowledge, competencies, or specific dispositions. Bourdieu states that "a work of art contains meaning and significance only for those who possess cultural competence, that is, the codes and the place where the work is encoded." Ownership of these codes is accumulated through a long process of acquisition or calculation that includes pedagogical actions by the family, members of educated social formations (widespread education), and social institutions (institutionalized education). Meanwhile, economic capital does not automatically imply ownership of cultural or symbolic capital and vice versa. The cultural production arena is a 'reversed economic world' based on the logic of 'the loser wins,' because economic success can serve as a barrier to achieving consecration and certain symbolic power (Bourdieu, 2010: xx). Recognition cannot be measured by commercial success but rather by social consecration, such as membership in academies, receipt of awards, etc. Using these concepts, research on how Toni Harsono strives to maintain or strengthen his position

in the art of *Wayang Potehi* through the accumulation and utilization of various forms of capital is conducted using these concepts.

2. Research Methods

This research is qualitative. The data collection techniques are conducted through literature study, observation, and in-depth interviews. The sources of data are interview results and other relevant data for the research. The following are the steps for data collection:

1. In-depth interviews in the form of semi-structured interviews with Toni Harsono as the central figure of the study.
2. Direct observation by attending *Wayang Potehi* performances led by Toni Harsono. The observation includes aspects such as the audience, the performance venue, and Toni Harsono's interactions with the public and the artistic community.
3. Documentation by collecting archives or documents related to Toni Harsono's activities, such as awards, media coverage, and photos of *Wayang Potehi* performances.
4. Collection of secondary data by reviewing literature and accessing articles, interviews, and media documentation about Toni Harsono and *Wayang Potehi* published online.
5. Identifying other relevant participants for interviews, including members of the Fu He An community who can provide insights into Toni Harsono's influence in Indonesia's cultural arts arena.

For data analysis techniques, descriptive qualitative analysis is used. The steps of analysis are as follows:

1. After the interview data is collected, all interviews are transcribed and data coding is performed.
2. Analyze the data descriptively to organize it into categories of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital, which are further divided into smaller subcategories, and conduct thematic analysis to find patterns in the data and identify the relationships between the forms of capital held by Toni Harsono.
3. Validate findings by conducting data triangulation, comparing the interview results with observations and secondary data.
4. Draw conclusions.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Economic Capital of Toni Harsono

In Pierre Bourdieu's theory, economic capital is one form of capital that can be transformed into social, cultural, and symbolic capital through various means. According to Bourdieu's theory, other forms of capital—such as cultural capital and

social capital-play a crucial role in cultural production alongside economic capital. Cultural capital, which includes knowledge, skills, education, and tastes, enables individuals to navigate and contribute to cultural fields effectively. Social capital, consisting of networks and relationships, facilitates access to opportunities and resources within those fields. These forms of capital interact dynamically, shaping the power relations and hierarchies within cultural production and consumption. To preserve and promote *Wayang Potehi*, Toni uses almost all of his personal funds. Toni Harsono's wealth comes from his gold shop business. Other funding for *Wayang Potehi* comes from performances, donations, sponsorships, and the sale of *Wayang Potehi* puppets, though the revenue from these sales is relatively small.

As the head of the Hong San Kiong temple foundation, Toni allocates funds from both regular and incidental donors to the temple, with part of it being used to fund *Wayang Potehi* performances, which are currently held daily at the temple. These expenses include paying the *sehu* or puppeteers and musicians. According to Kuardhani (2010: 62), it is customary for *sehu* to borrow a set of *Wayang Potehi* puppets from Toni, who stores them in his museum in Gudo and at his home in Pare, for a 10% rental fee if the *Potehi* is performed at the invitation of a temple or institution. If a *sehu* earns IDR 5 million from a performance, the puppet owner will receive 10%, or IDR 500,000. However, Toni does not charge rental fees, especially for puppeteers who are part of the Fu He An community. In fact, Toni often helps by sending stages, puppets, and musical instruments to out-of-town performances. In cities like Jakarta, which regularly hosts *Wayang Potehi* performances, Toni stores stages, musical equipment, and puppets at the Teluk Gong Temple, so that puppeteers have easy access to them (Kuardhani, 2010: 62). For Toni, a *sehu* performing means that the continuity of *Potehi* performances will be maintained. The more people or *sehu* who borrow puppets from Toni, the more popular *Potehi* will become.

Toni also made financial sacrifices at the beginning of his journey in collecting *Potehi* puppets. He would borrow puppets from senior *sehu* (puppeteers) in other cities and even abroad, such as from China and Taiwan, to deepen his understanding of *Potehi*. Not all *sehu* were willing to lend their puppets due to concerns about potential damage or other reasons. Therefore, Toni sometimes agreed to barter or even use his own puppets as collateral to borrow puppets from other *sehu* as models for the puppets he would produce (Kuardhani, 2010:59).

Regarding sponsorship, Toni typically received support only when holding performances out of town or abroad, and usually just for accommodation or transportation costs. Only a few sponsors provided actual performance fees. As Toni explained in an interview about receiving an invitation from UNESCO in Paris, "When performing abroad, the tickets are sponsored, but daily expenses (while in the city) are my own responsibility."

Additionally, the economic capital accumulated from selling *Wayang Potehi* puppets was not frequent, as it was conducted through private sales—only serving specific customer orders and not open to the general public. Consequently, the profits were not as substantial as they could have been if the puppets were commercialized. The profits Toni did earn were often reinvested into puppet production costs or used to cover other expenses, such as paying the *sehu* (puppeteer) and his team, and for

accommodation and transportation when attending volunteer or unpaid performances both within and outside the city. The funds were also used for training new *sehu* and musicians. As mentioned by Herlambang, a musician in the Fu He An community, when asked about the costs incurred during the UNESCO invitation.

“I’m not too sure about that because when Mr. Toni invited me to go to Europe, I was still in my KKN (community service program). Mr. Toni just told me to quickly process my passport because we were leaving for Europe next month. He ended up covering the cost of getting my passport and even drove me to Caruban to take care of it. A month later, Mr. Toni said to quickly arrange for a visa, which he also paid for. Two weeks later, we left for Italy and France.”

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that, in terms of accumulating economic capital, Toni did not gain financial benefits—in fact, he had to use his own funds to support *Wayang Potehi* performances. According to his statement, Toni does not seek to generate economic capital from his involvement in *Wayang Potehi*. He does everything out of his love for the art form, and whenever there is an invitation to perform, Toni will fulfill it, even if it requires personal financial contributions. As Herlambang noted, “Mr. Toni is an incredible figure because he is willing to finance the *Potehi* team selflessly and generously, without calculating the costs. And if there’s a job opportunity, he immediately hands it over to the younger members of the team.”

Toni Harsono’s personal financial investment has allowed him the freedom to remain independent in many aspects of managing *Wayang Potehi*. This independence has enabled Toni to maintain the authenticity and quality of the performances without having to conform to the interests of sponsors or external parties. While he may not have been able to accumulate significant economic capital, Toni’s financial sacrifices have successfully converted his economic capital into symbolic capital in the form of recognition and trust from the members of the Fu He An community. This economic independence has given him greater freedom in shaping the direction of the art he develops and has helped protect the integrity of *Wayang Potehi* from commercial influences that could conflict with his vision of cultural preservation. Additionally, his financial sacrifices have also fostered social capital by expanding Toni’s social network, both on an individual level and institutionally (such as with temples and educational institutions).

3.2 Toni Harsono’s Social Capital

According to Bourdieu, social capital refers to the resources generated through social relationships and networks. This capital can include access to information, support, and influence gained from connections with others. In the realm of arts and culture, social capital is crucial because it allows individuals to access opportunities, collaborations, and support from relevant communities or institutions. Here are some examples of the social capital Toni has cultivated:

a. A Strong Social Network within the Chinese Community

The social network between communities or associations includes the Chinese communities involved in temple foundations and the *Wayang Potehi* community. During the time of Toni's father, the *Fu He An* community experienced a hiatus due to the political situation under the Soeharto government, which banned Chinese culture from being openly displayed. When Toni became the chairman of the Hong San Kiong temple foundation, he planned to revive the community established by his grandfather and father after noticing that many *sehu* (puppeteers) lacked musicians. According to Kuardani (p. 61), Toni invited *sehu* and *Wayang Potehi* musicians from areas like Jombang, Kediri, Tulungagung, Tuban, Surabaya, and Semarang to collaborate in rebuilding the *Fu He An* community.

The *sehu* who joined the community could borrow *Wayang Potehi* performance equipment without any rental fees, and even *sehu* who were not members were allowed to use it. This social capital strengthened Toni's position within the Chinese community, especially after being appointed the leader of *Fu He An*. The community now consists of 20 members with diverse backgrounds in terms of jobs and ages. All members greatly respect Toni for his dedication and generosity in helping and fairly distributing performance jobs among them. Under Toni's leadership, *Wayang Potehi* performances are held daily, serving as an opportunity to train new puppeteers or musicians. Toni said, "We started this program last January, where we train new performers. So, from January 1st to December 31st, we stage *Potehi* every night. The performers are motivated because they receive an honorarium, so two new puppeteer groups have already formed." Toni also utilizes the network of temple members who provide both regular and incidental donations to support *Wayang Potehi*. According to Toni, many of these donations come from temple members outside the city, such as Surabaya.

As Toni became known as a *Wayang Potehi* advocate, his social network within the Chinese community expanded. He received numerous invitations to perform *Wayang Potehi* not only during the Chinese New Year but also at funerals, wedding anniversaries, hospitals, and other Chinese cultural festivals. This indicates that the Chinese community has become the main audience and participant base for *Wayang Potehi* and a partner in preserving this art across various regions.

b. Social Network with the Surrounding Community

Although during Soeharto's era, freedom to express Chinese culture was restricted, this was not strongly felt at the Hong San Kiong temple due to the good relationship with the local community. According to Toni, *Potehi* performances and other Chinese cultural arts were still allowed in Gudo. Especially after Gus Dur succeeded in liberating the Chinese community and was regarded as the "Father of the Chinese," the relationship with the Muslim community, especially with NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) members, strengthened in Jombang. As is known, President Gus Dur was previously the head of the Tebuireng Islamic boarding school, and after his passing, he was buried in the complex of that boarding school. According to Toni, in the last two

years, the Chinese community has started regularly participating in Gus Dur's memorial events. For example, members of the temple community from Semarang would stop by the Gudo temple and together visit Gus Dur's grave to offer tributes.



Fig. 3. Toni, temple members and NU members together bring offerings to Gus Dur's grave



Fig. 4. Toni and others praying together at Gus Dur's grave

Another social network formed is that NU members are also free to borrow buildings in the Gudo temple complex. According to NU Online Jombang, the PMMI (Pergerakan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia) Hasyim Asy'ari branch held a Basic Cadre Training in 2021 as a form of implementing one of the principles of Tasamuh (tolerance) at the Hong San Kiong temple. According to Toni, almost every year this

event is held at the temple and is attended by students from various campuses in East Java. Another example of a social network formed through visits includes one from young entrepreneurs of the Majapahit Hotel, which resulted in a collaboration displaying Potehi puppets and performances at the hotel.

c. Social Network with Art Practitioners

One art practitioner who has had a significant impact on the development of Potehi puppet theater, according to Toni, is the dance artist Didik Nini Thowok, who is also a close friend in his artistic endeavors. Didik's insights into managing Potehi puppets contributed ideas for designing a display cabinet for Potehi puppets at what is now Toni's Potehi museum. Kuardhani (2010:75) also mentions that Didik Nini Thowok always invited Toni to Chinese New Year events in the Yogyakarta Chinatown area of Ketandan. Apart from Didik, Toni often received visits from Sinuwun Tedjo Wulan, the queen of the Kasunanan Surakarta Palace, Solo, at the Gudo temple. From these visits, Toni also received invitations to perform Potehi puppet theater at the Surakarta Palace during cultural festivals held at the palace.

d. Social Network with Educational and Cultural Institutions

From observations and Toni's statements, the social network formed with educational and cultural institutions is extensive. This can be seen not only from the recognition given to Toni as a Potehi puppet theater activist but also from the number of articles or writings that study Potehi puppetry in Gudo. Examples of domestic collaborations include Toni serving as a research resource for lecturers and students from universities like UI, UGM, UNAIR, UNESA, UNTAG, UB, and others. Beyond research collaborations, there are also partnerships in the form of participation in festivals or cultural events organized by educational institutions both domestically and internationally, such as Sinofest VIII at UI, the Chinese Cultural Festival at Tarumanegara University, the Carnival of a Thousand Cultures at the Hasyim Asy'ari Islamic Institute, and the Machung Chinese Cultural Festival at Machung University. At the school level, examples include events like the 30th Anniversary Carnival at MTS Tribakti in Kediri and Imlek Day at TKK and SDK Santa Maria in Pare. Internationally, Toni and his team were invited to events such as the Asian Glove Puppet Theatre: Potehi from Taiwan and Indonesia in Japan in 2014 in Tokyo, Yokohama, Nara, Japan, Tenri University Sankokan Museum in 2015 in Nara, Japan, and The 62nd Tong Tong Fair & Festival in 2022 in The Hague, Netherlands.

The social capital that Toni has built has been able to involve many individuals, especially the younger generation, in training for Potehi puppet theater. His good relationships with various art communities, schools, and educational institutions have allowed Toni Harsono to attract a new generation interested in learning to become Potehi puppet masters. Networking with community members and schools has also led to the training of young puppet masters, from kindergarten to junior high school students, as part of a regeneration plan. Interestingly, most of the children interested in becoming puppet masters are Javanese.

e. Social Network with Journalists and Media

One of Toni's social networks with journalists led to his invitation to appear on the television program *Kick Andy* in 2016. According to him, this was a memorable experience as it was his first time on television. More recently, Toni was also featured when he was interviewed as a representative of the Confucian community during Pope Francis's visit to the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta. At that time, Toni's group hoped to present a Potehi puppet depicting Pope Francis, produced by Toni, directly to him.

Toni's efforts in preserving *Wayang Potehi* have also attracted attention from major media outlets like *Kompas* and *Gramedia*, which earned him an award at the *35 Years of Bendera Budaya* event in 2017. This demonstrates how Toni has successfully leveraged his social capital to increase media exposure for *Wayang Potehi* performances through television coverage, print and online media, and other social media platforms. This increased visibility has become a key strategy in strengthening Toni Harsono's position as a central figure in the *Wayang Potehi* art scene and popularizing this art form to a wider audience.

3.3 Toni Harsono's Cultural Capital

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital includes the knowledge, skills, and understanding of culture possessed by an individual or group. This capital can be acquired through both formal and informal education, as well as through life experiences.

Toni Harsono is the third-generation descendant of his grandfather, Tok Su Kwi, who was a *sehu* (puppeteer) from China. Growing up with modest economic means, Toni spent most of his childhood in the Hong San Kiong temple, where his father, Tok Hong Kie, and mother lived. Due to the frequent performances and rehearsals of *Wayang Potehi* at the temple, from an early age, Toni was exposed to various technical, symbolic, and philosophical aspects of *Wayang Potehi*. He learned the intricacies of puppet manipulation, narrative delivery, and the historical and moral values embedded in the performances. Much of this knowledge was self-taught through books or records passed down by his father and grandfather, as well as from his interactions with senior puppeteers and other *Wayang Potehi* practitioners. As mentioned in Kuardani (2010: 41), during his childhood, Toni often watched Tan Soen Bing, a Potehi musician and skilled puppet maker. Young Toni would often imitate the puppet-making and painting process. Whatever Tan Soen Bing did, Toni would try to replicate. Sometimes, he also emulated *sehu* Gunawan, who was equally adept at making puppets (Kuardani, 2010: 44).

His interest in making Potehi puppets eventually led Toni to develop a keen sensitivity to the distinctive styles of puppet sculptors, the physiognomy (character) of the puppets, and the painting techniques specific to Potehi puppets. This sensitivity is now reflected in his work, with Toni having painted thousands of Potehi puppets. In addition to learning from those close to him, Toni expanded his knowledge through a relentless search for other Potehi practitioners, a journey that required significant effort and perseverance.

Researcher: "How about making the puppets themselves, Sir? Were you taught, or how did it go?"

Toni: "Not at all, my father didn't even learn from my grandfather. So, it was all self-taught through existing records or from puppeteers in other regions. I searched for puppet models to use as references for Potehi puppets."

Researcher: "How many years did that search take?"

Toni: "It was quite a challenging journey. For example, I had to leave on Friday afternoon for Semarang, return the same night, and from that search, I would only find one or two puppet samples."

Toni sought to produce puppets not based on Chinese opera references but rather on the original puppets brought by Chinese immigrant *sehus* (puppeteers). This meant he had to travel to different cities to gather information. One of the most influential figures in providing Toni with insight and lending him Potehi puppets was Mr. Thio, a *sehu* from Semarang. Mr. Thio, whose full name is Thio Tion Gie, became a puppeteer at Tay Kak Sie Temple in Semarang. Due to his extensive knowledge of Confucian spirituality, Thio earned the title of wense (Confucian religious teacher) and once held the position of chairman of MAKIN (Indonesian Confucian Religious Council) for two terms in 1990 (Insriani, 2015).

Toni also conducted searches abroad, including to the origin city of Potehi in Fujian, China, and Taiwan. Unfortunately, in China, the Potehi puppet performances had been modified and were no longer as authentic as the puppets from his grandfather's era or the ones Mr. Tio owned. According to Toni, the puppets from Taiwan were closer to the originals than those from China.

With the cultural capital he possessed, Toni gained legitimacy among the Chinese community, the arts community, and the general public as one of the authorities in the art of *Wayang Potehi*. The Gudo Museum, founded by Toni, has become a reference center for authentic Potehi puppets. Moreover, Toni didn't just use his cultural capital to advance himself but also to foster the next generation of *Wayang Potehi* puppeteers and musicians. With his extensive knowledge of the characteristics and history of *Wayang Potehi*, Toni has opened opportunities for young people to learn and deepen their understanding of this art form.

Toni has introduced innovations in *Wayang Potehi* performances without abandoning its traditional essence. One example is adapting the performances to suit modern audiences by introducing stories that are more relevant to daily life and occasionally using the Indonesian language in performances. This strategy aims to ensure that *Wayang Potehi* remains relevant and accessible to younger generations and a broader audience.

These cultural assets have provided Toni with the tools to redefine the position of *Wayang Potehi* within the context of modern Indonesian culture. His knowledge of *Wayang Potehi* has also enabled him to represent Indonesia in the traditional arts at various international cultural events and festivals. Toni consistently emphasizes that *Wayang Potehi* is not just part of Chinese culture but has become an integral part of Indonesian culture. By promoting this narrative, Toni has successfully positioned

Wayang Potehi as part of Indonesia's national cultural heritage, not as an art form exclusive to the Chinese community.

3.4 Toni Harsono's Symbolic Capital

In Pierre Bourdieu's theory, symbolic capital includes recognition, honor, legitimacy, and social status granted to an individual by society or official institutions. This capital is often manifested in the form of awards, public acknowledgment, and prestige, which provides a person with moral or symbolic authority in a particular field. Symbolic capital not only solidifies an individual's position in the social or cultural arena, but also opens up access to new opportunities, thereby strengthening their position in the competition or dynamics within that field.

Toni Harsono has gained symbolic capital through various forms of recognition, both domestically and internationally, for his contributions to preserving *Wayang Potehi*. These accolades have granted him legitimacy and authority as one of the key figures in the revitalization of *Wayang Potehi*. Over 30 certificates have been archived since 2008, although many more have yet to be archived, such as recent awards he received from UNESCO, National Geography, Universitas Machung, and others. The awards Toni has received can be categorized into several groups, including educational institutions like universities and schools; government recognition from the Ministry of Religion, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and the National Agency for Pancasila Ideology Development (BPIP), as well as regional governments; community organizations like NU and the Chinese community; the service industry, such as from Hotel Majapahit in Surabaya and Hotel Tugu in Malang; print and online media, such as from Gramedia and the Kick Andy show on MetroTV; and international institutions, such as the Asian Glove Puppet Theatre Potehi from Taiwan and Indonesia in Japan (September 17-23, 2014) in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Nara, Japan, the Tenri University Sankokan Museum (March 19, 2015) in Nara, and his contribution to The 62nd Tong Tong Fair & Festival (September 1-11, 2022) in The Hague, Netherlands.

Toni has also gained recognition due to his cultural capital, becoming an authoritative figure in determining the authenticity of Potehi puppets. According to Toni, Potehi experts both in Indonesia and abroad, such as in Taiwan and Japan, acknowledge that his Potehi puppets are more authentic compared to those from Fujian, the original birthplace of Potehi. This public recognition enables Toni to be the main representative of *Wayang Potehi* at various art forums, festivals, and cultural events both nationally and internationally. This legitimacy is crucial because, in the world of traditional arts like *Wayang Potehi*, a person's position is not only determined by technical skills or knowledge but also by the social recognition they receive from society, cultural institutions, or art critics. This symbolic capital also assures those working with Toni, such as the government, art institutions, sponsors, or the media, that he is a competent and trustworthy figure to lead the revitalization of *Wayang Potehi*. Official recognition in the form of awards or media coverage provides Toni with access to larger platforms to introduce the art of *Wayang Potehi*. Toni Harsono's symbolic capital plays a key role in increasing the visibility and

appeal of *Wayang Potehi* in the eyes of the general public, both nationally and internationally.

Furthermore, as a figure possessing symbolic capital, Toni Harsono's reputation plays a vital role in recruiting and training a new generation of puppet masters to learn and delve into this art under his guidance. Public acknowledgment of his expertise reassures prospective puppet masters that they will receive quality training, ample job opportunities, and the chance to participate in prestigious performances or art festivals.

In the cultural arena, traditional arts like *Wayang Potehi* compete with various other art forms, both traditional and contemporary. Toni Harsono faces this challenge by leveraging his symbolic capital to strengthen the position of *Wayang Potehi* in Indonesia's art scene. The recognition he receives adds weight to *Wayang Potehi*, allowing it to be seen not only as a marginalized Chinese cultural heritage but also as part of the national cultural legacy worthy of appreciation.

4. Conclusion

Toni Harsono has successfully strengthened the position of *Wayang Potehi* in Indonesia's cultural arena through the accumulation and conversion of various forms of capital—economic, social, cultural, and symbolic. In the context of Pierre Bourdieu's theory, this conversion of capital is influenced by Toni's habitus, shaped by his family background, experiences, and social networks.

Toni's economic capital, largely derived from his gold shop business, has been utilized to fund *Wayang Potehi* performances and training. This capital not only supports operational aspects but is also transformed into symbolic capital in the form of recognition and trust from the arts community and the general public. Through his social capital, Toni has built an extensive network with the Chinese community, educational institutions, art practitioners, and local society, fostering broad support for the preservation of *Wayang Potehi*.

Toni's cultural capital is reflected in his deep knowledge of *Wayang Potehi*, inherited from his family and acquired through self-directed learning. This knowledge enables Toni not only to maintain the authenticity of *Wayang Potehi* but also to adapt it to remain relevant to modern audiences. His symbolic capital, manifested in awards and recognition, further solidifies his position as a central figure in the revitalization of *Wayang Potehi*, both nationally and internationally.

Toni's habitus plays a pivotal role in the conversion of these capitals within his social space in Indonesia's cultural production arena. This habitus guides his practices, from managing resources to building networks and leveraging symbolic recognition to ensure the sustainability of *Wayang Potehi*. Thus, Toni's success lies not only in the accumulation of capital but also in his unique ability to convert and optimize each form of capital in his efforts to preserve *Wayang Potehi* as an integral part of Indonesia's cultural heritage.

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