
On Resistance and Resilience to Hegemonic Power: A Study of American Guitar Replicas in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a participation-based study conducted in Indonesia, focusing on the regions of Yogyakarta and Solo. Situated within the field of American Studies, the research adopts a postcolonial framework, particularly drawing on Homi K. Bhabha's concept of mimicry in relation to multiculturalism and hybridity. The study primarily examines forms of resilience and resistance to hegemonizing power within the guitar industry and market in Indonesia, using counterfeit American-brand guitars, specifically those associated with Fender Musical Instruments Corporation, as its main object of analysis. This investigation focuses on the replica of two Fender company's ever most widely used guitar products: the Stratocaster® and Telecaster® guitars. This research is somehow not dealing with the legal aspect of the counterfeiting practices, but it academically searches for and examines some proves underlying a premise that to imitate the hegemonizing power, which in certain circumstances is done illegally, might be considered as an instance and manifestation of resilience and resistance mainly performed by the hegemonized society in global capitalism. This can also be seen as the way the society sustains its existence, by performing adaptation or adjustment, and fighting back the hegemonizing power which is previously believed to be insurmountable.

Keywords: *guitar; hybridity; mimicry; replica; resilience; resistance*

Article information
(Filled by Editorial
Management)

Received: 28 Feb, 2026

Revised: 14 Apr, 2026

Accepted: 15 Apr, 2026

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v13i1.117271>

Available at <https://journal.ugm.ac.id/rubikon/article/view/117271>

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INTRODUCTION

The American-brand guitars, Fender, have been the most popular guitar products in Indonesia. Due to the increasing price, notably after the 1998 economic crises, the circulation of imitation musical instruments in general has become a notable socio-cultural and economic phenomenon. The widespread availability of locally produced or imported counterfeit guitars, especially those bearing the iconic designs and logos of the famous brand such as the Fender guitars, by Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC), reflects not merely issues of intellectual property infringement, but also broader dynamics of globalization, consumer aspiration, and uneven access to cultural capital. For many Indonesian musicians, especially beginners and semi-professional players, original Fender instruments remain financially inaccessible due to their high price and import costs. Consequently, replicas of the branded products have proliferated in local markets, ranging from informal street vendors to online marketplaces. These instruments frequently imitate the visual aesthetics of models such as the Fender Stratocaster® and Fender Telecaster®, while varying

significantly in terms of material quality and craftsmanship. Rather than being understood solely as acts of piracy, the popularity of these replicas can also be read as a form of cultural negotiation, in which local producers and consumers engage with hegemonic global brands through processes of adaptation, imitation, and, at times, subtle resistance. It is within this socio-economic and cultural landscape that the presence of Fender-inspired guitars in Indonesia becomes both pervasive and analytically significant.

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) is the world's foremost manufacturer of guitars, basses, amplifiers, and related equipment. Everyone from beginners and hobbyists to the world's most acclaimed artists and performers, such as Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Yngwie Malmsteen, and young generation guitarists such as John Meyer, have used Fender instruments and amps, and legendary Fender instruments such as the Telecaster, and Stratocaster guitars, the two types which are the most popular ("About Fender", 2016).

The earliest electric guitars were made in the 1920s and 1930s, but these were very

primitive prototypes of the modern solidbody electric guitar, such as the Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster. As stated by Pinch (2006), the very first "electrified" guitar was said to have been invented by Paul H. Tutmarc. Inspired by the inner workings of the telephone, which employed magnetics to create vocal vibrations, Tutmarc experimented on the Hawaiian guitar, building a magnetic pickup out of horseshoe magnets and wire coils that amplified the vibration of the instrument's strings (Pinch, 2006: 11). While according to Mike Duffy (2014) in his article entitled Fifteen Strat Players for the Ages, "the Strat" [Fender Stratocaster®] is the type of all-around guitar that is widely used as the go-to weapon for artists in rock, blues and country, and even pop, metal and jazz". In this article he listed 15 famous guitarist whose "main artillery" is Fender Stratocaster® guitar, such as Jeff Beck, Ritchie Blackmore, David Gilmour, George Harrison, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan and so on. Those guitarists have become a great and constant inspiration to younger guitarists worldwide ("Fifteen Strat Players for the Ages", 2014).

FMIC has been producing not only guitars, but numerous types of musical instruments such as

acoustic and electric guitars, resonators, ukuleles, mandolins, banjos, harmonicas, amplifiers, effect units, and audio equipment. However, this research focuses only on its two biggest variants of its mass-produced guitars, the ones which become so widespread and considered as the most copied and counterfeited electric guitar, i.e. the Telecaster and the Stratocaster models. These two models also have several sub-variants that differ from one another in each production time.

In Indonesia, some famous guitarists are also known to use Fender guitars in most of their shows, such as Eross Candra, the guitarist and composer of a famous Indonesian band from Yogyakarta named Sheila on 7, who has played Fender since his early career. Starting with a customized replica, Eross was then endorsed by Fender Company with Fender Squier®, a less costly, market-oriented product from Fender Company. The guitar was then called Squier®, Eross Candra Signature. On one occasion, Eross talked to his fans at a café in Yogyakarta, explaining how he started using Fender guitars. The video was documented and posted by Helmy Prastowo Budi in his Youtube channel uploaded on Jan 5, 2016 (Budi, 2016).

According to Fender official website, Squier® guitars have similar types and styles to Fender guitars. It also has faithful fans, in spite of the fact that it is commonly regarded as the second-class Fender guitar. However, Squier® guitars and basses are sometimes also used by such international great players as Jim Root of Slipknot and Matt Freeman of Rancid ("About Fender", 2016). According to Guitar Gopher on the Spinditty website entitled Guitar Review: Is Squier by Fender a Good Brand?, Squier guitars and basses are among the most popular instruments sold online and in guitar shops around the world. A couple of things account for this. For one, they are inexpensive instruments, with many models costing under \$200. This makes them accessible to beginning guitarists, or even experienced players looking for a solid foundation for a project guitar (Guitar Gopher, 2017).

Another reason that makes Squier guitars so popular is the prestigious Fender name, which is attached to the headstocks. Since Squier is owned by Fender, arguably the most successful guitar company in the world, people know that Squier is something more than an average beginner's guitar. But, other people may say "Squier is just Squier, not a Fender". That is

why the number of fake Squier in Indonesia is smaller than that of Fender, based on quick observations; at least, this is what was frequently found before the Indonesian official producer of the brand launched the Eross Candra Squier Signature Series in January 2013.

Other famous Indonesian guitarists, such as Parlin "Pay" Burman Siburian (former guitarist in the most famous Indonesian Rock 'n Roll band, Slank), Stevi Item (Deadsquad and Andra & the Backbone), Tohpati, Denny Chasmala, and many others, also use Fender occasionally. It depends on the genre they are playing, though basically the Stratocaster is supposed to be versatile in performing music in all genres, but for some, other types of guitar such as Ibanez, Jackson, Schecter, ESP, or Gibson Les Paul will be considered more applicable to perform very high-gain metal songs due to the humbucking pickups that have become "the norm" in those types of guitar. There are Fenders who also use humbuckers, even two humbuckers, such as in Telecaster Thinline designed by German luthier Roger Rossmeisl; but some people may say that any Fender guitar using single coils just looks more common and "feels right".

Whereas, Chrissy Mauck, in his article The Great Country

Telecaster Player, suggests that "throughout modern music history, the Fender Telecaster has played a huge part in the evolution of country music. From Western swing in the 1940s and '50s, the Bakersfield and Nashville sounds in the '60s, the Outlaw movement in the '70s, and the country rockers that top the charts today, the Telecaster is the sound of country." In this article, Mauck listed some other great guitar players who almost always play Fender Telecaster, such as Waylon Jennings, Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Phil Baugh, Roy Nichols, Redd Volkaert, Brad Paisley, Vince Gill, Marty Stuart, and James Burton (Mauck, "The Great Country Telecaster Player", 2013).

This historical and cultural prominence of the Telecaster in global music traditions provides an important backdrop for understanding its transnational circulation. Although American country music is not as popular as other genres, it makes a significant contribution to the development of Rock 'n' Roll and pop music. Therefore, the Telecaster is also popularly used in Indonesia, not to mention the fact that this Fender variant is relatively cheaper than its "brother", the Stratocaster.

METHODOLOGY

This theoretical lens becomes clearer when situated within Bhabha's own formulation of mimicry. Homi K. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, suggested:

... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled. ... mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically (Bhabha, 1994).

Following this conceptualization, mimicry can be interpreted as a strategic and partial resemblance rather than a simple act of imitation. From the above quotation, there is a premise that mimicry is to some extent dissimilar to a harmonization process. It is more like a deliberate attempt to create a shape or form that resembles an object, which may be different in nature. These "fake" forms may be defensive and feature just a part, not the whole, or metonymically. In mimicry, the more identical the result after the camouflage, the more successful the camouflage will be. Therefore, the researcher is supposed to be looking for the best and the most identical Fender replicas that nobody is scarcely able to

tell the differences. The mimicry process is an effort to perform adaptation, adjustment, or transformation to survive the harshness of the circumstances. In certain situations, its nature can be resilient in that it does not perform aggressively, merely flowing or drifting downstream. Yet, in other situations, it can be so aggressive that it is able to resist the pushing power, repelling it just as strongly as it is pushed.

Those illustrated matters may be found in the Fender guitar replicas, either Telecaster or Stratocaster, which may not be very identical or precise. These nonidentical features may result from the player's intention, i.e., in creating a customized instrument. He or she may use different wood, different hardware (frets, bridge, tremolo), different material of the guitar strings (steel or nickel), different gauges of the strings, different electronic components (preamps or pickups), or different finishing, polishing, and painting techniques (e.g., with nitrocellulose or polyurethane paints).

Bhabha's theory of mimicry, and other related theories by post-colonialists, are believed to be versatile in interpreting and analyzing the replica guitar phenomena in performing such an

adaptation to the soaring price of the genuine products. It is because those perspectives do not only view hegemony in the other way around, but it also sees the "replica" as something that protects, resists, or even attacks. In addition, the hegemony discussed in this research is the immensely influential and noticeably ruling culture of the Americans, while the hegemonized is the local Indonesian traditions, such as music, performances, handicrafts, and other forms of cultural products. In addition to Bhabha's, it might also be useful to adopt Spivak's idea, as quoted by Thomas Kent in his article entitled "Talking Differently: A Response to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak", which states that:

Spivak emerges as someone who shows us how to talk in a different way and to say more interesting things about language, literature, and culture. Clearly, her kind of talk employs a vocabulary that we do not associate readily with the vocabularies employed by most contemporary rhetoricians--vocabularies steeped in cognitivism, Kantian subjectivism, and Kuhnian constructionism. So Spivak's vocabulary--derived from a tradition represented by Nietzsche, Dewey, Heidegger, the later Wittgenstein, Quine, Rorty, and, most of all, Davidson and Derrida--often sounds

strange to internalist ears
(Spivak in Kent, 1991: 190)

Extending this framework, Spivak's thought further complicates the question of how resistance is articulated within hegemonic systems. As discussed by Thomas Kent in his reading of Spivak, her work encourages scholars to "talk differently" about language, literature, and culture by employing a vocabulary that departs from conventional Western epistemologies (Kent, 1991). Rather than simply describing domination and resistance in fixed terms, Spivak foregrounds the instability of representation and the difficulty for subordinated groups, whom she addressed as the "subaltern", to fully speak within dominant discourses.

In relation to the replica guitar phenomenon, this perspective suggests that imitation is not merely a transparent act of copying, but a complex discursive practice. The production and circulation of "fake" Fender guitars can thus be read not only as economic necessity or aesthetic imitation, but also as an attempt to "speak" within a global cultural language that is not entirely one's own. In this sense, while Bhabha's mimicry emphasizes resemblance and ambivalence, Spivak's framework draws attention to the

constraints and tensions involved in such acts of articulation. Therefore, it may highlight and focus on how local producers navigate, appropriate, and subtly reconfigure hegemonic forms without ever fully escaping them.

Moving from questions of representation and articulation to broader processes of cultural interaction, the discussion can be further enriched by the concept of hybridity. According to Kraidy (2005), hybridity involves the fusion of two relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities, cross-cultural contact up to this time, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries. The theory of cultural hybridity assumes that the hybrid culture has the power to challenge and break the dominant culture of national states, and that hybrid culture is richer, more resistant, democratic, diverse, and heterogeneous than cultures of national states (Kraidy, 2005).

By integrating these perspectives, the present study positions the phenomenon of replica guitars within a broader framework of resistance and cultural negotiation. This research uses the assumption that a fake replica of a famous, globally successful product is a

form of counter-hegemony, a form of resistance to a hegemonizing power. Whereas this is not merely about an unlawful deed committed based on commercial purpose, nor even on economic motive. For instance, a custom music gear used by a local musician can be costlier than the original version, after undergoing several kinds of modifications and improvisations. On the other hand, this study does not examine product imitations of other brands, such as Fender-like guitars in their look, but it investigates fake products using the same product brand, "Fender"—the fake Fender.

This research collects data from field observation and interviews. The field observations are conducted in Yogyakarta and Solo regions. This focuses on observing Fender guitar instruments among guitar craftsmen, repair shops, retailers, and music communities. The interview targets the local musicians, campus musicians, and performers in cafes or hotels. It is also considered very important and relevant to conduct an interview with the local guitar craftsmen.

The researcher is interested in choosing the guitar as the material object of the study because it can be seen as a form of music technology through which dominant socio-cultural

and musical discourses are frequently enacted and challenged. Guitar technology experienced a significant metamorphosis in the 20th century in the move from acoustic to electric instruments, thanks to the invention of amplifiers and other electrical equipment supporting music instruments. As Carfoot (2006) suggests, in the first half of the 21st century, the guitar continues to develop through its interaction with digital technologies; however, the Fender guitar remains in its classical style. The classic styles, the Stratocaster and the Telecaster, remain the two most powerful and most widespread guitars in the world (Carfoot, 2006). Whereas Darryl Martin, in his article entitled "Innovation and the Development of the Modern Six-String Guitar," stated that the post-war years up to 1963 probably mark the greatest number of innovative changes to the guitar. Almost all of them that have survived and, in many cases, define the guitar today (Martin, 1998).

The earlier period of development concerned the American popular instrument. Shortly after the First World War, people saw the development of the first electric solid-body Spanish guitar built for major commercial production, the Fender Telecaster. It was not

the earliest solid-body Spanish guitar built in California. Rickenbacker had been making solid body guitars in the 1930s, and other individual luthiers also made solid body instruments, most notably Les Paul, the guitar performer. The Telecaster was developed in 1949 (as shown by the prototype) and was first sold to the public in 1950.

In 1952, the Gibson company introduced the "Les Paul Model", their first solidbody, built with a carved maple top glued to a mahogany base. In 1954, Fender introduced the Stratocaster, the first electric guitar with three pickups with a distinct configuration and a tremolo arm. The Telecaster, Stratocaster, and Les Paul models are the three standard designs that are copied or form the basis of design for almost all solidbody electric guitars built today. However, this research will exclude Gibson guitars since they have a certain distinctive history and characteristics that deserve further analysis.

As previously stated, both Telecaster and Stratocaster belong to the solidbody type, which is relatively easier to craft, as suggested by some of the informants in the data collection process. This is in accordance with a statement given by Ron Mielzynski in "How to Build a Solidbody Electric

Guitar". According to Ron, making an electric guitar solidbody guitar, is relatively easy compared to a hollow body. Mielzynski is a professional luthier, a graduate of the Chicago School of Violin Making, and a woodworker with more than 20 years of experience. Additionally, Mielzynski stated

I love the fact that many different materials are acceptable in making a solidbody guitar. They may all respond differently but sometimes the least expensive alternative gives surprising results. Brian Mays Red Special guitar was made from mahogany veneered blockboard (plywood). Make sure it is dry wood having a moisture content between 9 and 15%. This can be checked with an electronic moisture meter. The body can be one large piece of wood or comprised of pieces of different types of wood. Most guitar bodies are made from 2 pieces of wood glued together ("How to Build a Solidbody Electric Guitar").

The statement might be an additional explanation why the Stratocaster and Telecaster are frequently copied in Indonesia using materials which have commonly lesser quality than the genuine. They are prestigious but simple in design and materials. The craftsmen nowadays have easy access to information on anything about guitars, thanks to modern

computer technology and the Internet. However, the traditional small-scale process cannot be compared to the modern automated system in the Fender Company. It can be seen in the two videos to compare the processes; one from a workshop in Yogyakarta uploaded by *bengkel_gitar_jogja* entitled "Guitar Build, and one from the Fender Company in California uploaded by Brandmade entitled "Making a Fender Stratocaster Guitar - Brandmade.TV". From those videos, the latter has a much more mechanized system, such as the CNC system used to build the guitar body. In some other high-tech processes, they have even used a laser for the cutting process. This somehow creates unfair competition between small and large-scale companies.

Since the emergence of digital technologies, there have been widespread uses of Fender replicas all over the world, and Indonesia is no exception. Starting from the 1990s, the guitar replica industries grew notably in Yogyakarta and Solo regions, where the population of musicians is as numerous as the population of the guitar craftsmen, sometimes called "luthiers". This phenomenon deserves a careful study and examination, which is supposed to be more critical and open to a new perspective as to

deconstruct how counterfeit and fake product from the prevalent and existing common perspective. In addition to Bhabha's theory, it is also considered useful to employ Spivak's theory on what she called "subaltern", though the application of the two theories is not as rigid as that in its origin. Spivak's subaltern refers to the marginalized groups that were previously silenced or at least overrepresented by the dominant group. Having a limited chance to represent themselves, the marginalized group only has a very small opportunity to "exercise power". Thus, the word "speak" can signify a much broader sense, more than just restricted to linguistic aspects.

In a subchapter of his article "Hybridity without Guarantees: Toward Critical Transculturalism", Kraidy (2005) suggests that hybridity as a characteristic of culture is attuned with globalization because it helps globalization rule, through a diversity of local capitals. Hybridity entails that traces of other cultures exist in every culture, therefore offering foreign media and marketers transcultural wedges for forging affective links between their commodities and local communities.

Chew (2020) conducted a study and found that replica guitars

are not just economic choices, but cultural practices shaped by power relations. Based on his findings, he argued that counterfeit consumption should be understood as a culturally and socially embedded practice through which individuals actively negotiate identity and meaning within structures of global economic and symbolic power (Chew, 2020). While Chang (2004) previously found that counterfeit industries reproduce global capitalist structures while also reflecting Western (Euro-American) cultural dominance. He suggested that counterfeit products are not simply illegal imitations, but part of the global cultural and economic system since they both reproduce and expose the inequalities of globalization, especially Western (Euro-American) dominance (Chang 2004).

The present writer starts from the assumption that Indonesian society is an inseparable entity to its global counterparts and is one of the "remnants" of imperialist and colonialist eras (of Dutch, British, Japanese, and Portuguese). Another assumption is that there are multinational and global companies keeping their economic hegemony over this country. It influences many aspects, from economic to

political, ideology, and culture.

DISCUSSION

When discussing the replica Fender in Indonesia, one interesting current case to point out as an example is the phenomenon of Meliani Siti Sumartini, a fifteen-year-old girl at that time, wearing a hijab, covering a song from a death metal band, Lamb of God, with her electric guitar. Meliani uploaded it herself with a screen name MelSickScreamoAnnie on Mar 3, 2014, entitled Lamb of God "Hourglass" covered by Meliani Siti Sumartini (MelSickScreamoAnnie, 2014). This phenomenon has become so viral. Her uploaded video is now watched by more than 1.7 million viewers all over the world. After being viewed by so many people on the internet, Meliani was also invited by some local television programs. One of the TV shows presenting Meliani was a popular talk show program named Hitam Putih, hosted by a former mentalist-magician, Dedy Corbusier. Although there were actually many aspects to talk about regarding the phenomenon, the researcher is more interested in discussing the guitar first used by Meliani in that initial YouTube video, which was also brought to the Hitam Putih talk show, an 850,000-rupiah [\$53.125]

"Fender Stratocaster", which is highly likely to be a fake Fender.

During the interview on *Hitam Putih* talk show, Meliani's father revealed that the guitar was a second-hand one. He gave it to Meliani as a birthday present after purchasing it from his friend living in Yogyakarta (Tam Lamour, 2015). While, of course, nothing can be ruled out, in the Indonesian context it would be rather miraculous for an authentic Fender Stratocaster to sell for under 6,000,000 rupiahs (around \$375), unless the seller happens to be exceptionally kind-hearted, or perhaps nervously glancing at the door because a debt collector has promised to return tomorrow. To be honest, however, Meliani is hardly an exception: in Indonesia, such "Fender" guitars are everywhere, played by many, sold by many, and, quite industriously, crafted by many as well.

The "Fender Stratocaster" guitar used by Meliani to perform in her first YouTube video and in the talk show can be easily recognized from the logo attached to its headstock, from its bridge, and from its paint. There was a noticeable defect in its paint. It cracked on the upper part of the body, but not the one usually seen on an old, genuine Fender "relic". Nevertheless, the easiest way to

tell if a Fender guitar is fake or genuine is by its price, according to Wedlrocks (2011) in his YouTube video entitled How to spot a fake Fender Stratocaster ("How to spot a fake Fender Stratocaster", 2011).

Equally, some experts can tell the differences from the sound it produces, but it is quite difficult because there will be numerous factors affecting the sound quality of a guitar, such as the strings, hardware, amplifier, and its settings. The sound quality of Meliani's Fender guitar, as can be heard in her YouTube videos, is quite good somehow. Another sample of a fake Fender sound quality can be heard in a video uploaded by someone whose screen name is Ryadyawan Acakadut, strongly perceived as an Indonesian from the screen name and the language he uses, on May 30, 2013, entitled Fender Stratocaster Replica Test (Ryadyawan Acakadut, 2013). It shows a guitarist performing various kinds of music genres with a Fender Stratocaster replica. Then, one more sample video entitled Fake Fender Sound Test (HD) was uploaded by Nah Studio last year on February 23, showing an even better sound quality than the previous uploaded fake Fender video (Nah Studio, 2015).

Yogyakarta and Solo regions, notably Salatiga, Sukoharjo, and Baki regions, are famous for their talented carpenters and craftsmen, not only guitars but also other types of wooden merchandise, such as furniture, handicrafts, including musical instruments in general. As stated earlier, Indonesian people, notably those who are from Java Island, as it is known, commonly use the word "custom" to refer to the fake or replica guitars, but with a different sense from when this word is spoken in English. This naming is by no means the same as the term Fender "customshop" officially issued by Fender Company. This could be seen in local daily conversation and from some online advertisements in several Indonesian market forum websites since the era of Kaskus, Olx, Bukalapak, to the era of Facebook marketplace, Shopee, and Tokopedia, advertising those replica products; some of the sellers often referred to replica products as "custom".

In other situations, they could also use words such as "copy", "supercopy", or the unique word "KW" [pronounced as: /ka:we/], which signifies "second-rate qualities", which can also be true for other replica products such as watches, smartphones, branded shoes, clothes, or jewelry. The

widespread use of those terms may signify the high prevalence of fake products in society, yet further research would be needed.

The first place visited by the researcher, together with two assistants, to obtain the data was second-hand stuff shops in Yogyakarta. The shops sold many kinds of used things, including guitars. Here, the researcher obtained many samples. Secondly, the researcher visited a guitar repair shop in Pogung area in Yogyakarta and in Malioboro area. From the interview conducted with the craftsmen, it was found that there had been so many replicas of Fender Stratocaster and Telecaster ever made, either repaired or crafted, from shops and craftsmen in Yogyakarta and its surrounding region. The informant said that there were "like hundreds" of them. Thanks to places like this, teenagers, like Meliani at that time, who could not afford a guitar worth as much as a motorbike or even a car, could exercise their skills and talent, playing electric guitar.

Replicas are also, to some extent, more desirable than local brands. This is also true from the perspective of other players who want quality guitars at an affordable price. The quality of the replicas is

excellent, as said by some respondents. They can even ask the luthier to customize it with specific hardware and wood, so the guitar will produce a unique characteristic, still with a prestigious brand attached to it.

This research has gained some valuable data from the in-depth interview. According to some of the informants in Salatiga and Yogyakarta, materials that go into the construction of the electric guitar can include well-seasoned hardwoods such as maple, walnut, ash, alder, and mahogany for the solid body, though not all types of wood are easily obtainable in Indonesia. If the customer insists on using a certain type of wood, they have to import it.

One of the fames that Yogyakarta has is due to its status as "City of Culture". The world culture here means the traditional culture that the city has preserved for a long time. Solo is also rich in traditions, considering that there are also royal Palaces, Kasunanan Surakarta, and Kadipaten Mangkunegaran, which have influential roles in preserving traditional culture. There are also many carpenters and craftsmen, making handicrafts, carvings, and furniture. As stated earlier, Yogyakarta and Solo have abundant wood supplies that

support the sustainability of wood-related businesses in the regions. Though electric guitars are not only made of wood, this situation also helps them to flourish. The guitars are also necessary to accompany traditional music, such as dangdut music, keroncong, and campursari. In dangdut music, for instance, the presence of electric guitar sound with distortion or fuzz effect is almost inevitable, for it can be a substitute for other basic musical instruments such as flutes, rebab, or violins, being able to produce long-sustain melodies.

Generally, as stated by our informants, the most common wood combination used in most types of Fender Stratocaster and Telecaster crafted in Yogyakarta and the surrounding areas is Maple, Mahogany, and Rosewood. Maple is commonly used for the neck, rosewood for the fretboard, and Mahogany for the body. In Indonesia, Mahoganies are abundant, and the Asian Rosewood (Sonokeling) can be a perfect substitute for the American rosewood with little or even no difference in their flexibility, durability, hardness, and color. They can probably have a rather significant difference in the wood density, but this will only be recognized by a few experts.

In Yogyakarta area people would easily see the presence of mahogany trees; for instance, where they have a trip along Jogja-Wates street, Jogja-Bantul, Jogja-Wonosari, or Jogja-Solo Street, they will find the trees used for road shading trees along the streets, which signifies that this type of trees can be grown easily in the regions; yet, the maple is quite rare. However, the craftsmen interviewed here said that it is not difficult to have maple wood plank supplies for their guitars. The rosewood is somehow quite rare in Yogyakarta and Central Java, but it is not as rare as maple and is still obtainable. Therefore, it is not really a serious problem for craftsmen to get rosewood supplies in Yogyakarta and Solo regions. There is a quite big wood supplier specialized in guitar bodies located in Baki, Sukoharjo area, according to an informant working at a music studio in Solo, Central Java.

The question then arises: from the consumers' perspective, what motivates the use of counterfeit instruments? Responses gathered through online questionnaires suggest that the reasons are far more complex than mere economic constraint or reluctance to invest in more expensive equipment. While affordability is certainly a factor, many

respondents emphasize the creative and stylistic possibilities afforded by replica guitars. Some report that modifying or assembling "fake" Fender Musical Instruments Corporation guitars enables them to develop a distinctive musical identity, one that may not be achievable through standardized original products. Indeed, in some cases, customized replicas can even exceed the price of their genuine counterparts due to extensive modifications and craftsmanship.

Viewed through the lens of postcolonial theory, these practices can be understood not simply as imitation, but as forms of mimicry and hybridity. Drawing on Bhabha's notion of mimicry, the replication of Fender guitars reflects a desire to resemble the hegemonic "original," yet never fully coincides with it. This partial resemblance produces an ambivalent space in which imitation becomes a strategy of negotiation rather than passive copying. At the same time, the modifications introduced by Indonesian players and craftsmen, whether in design, sound, or material, point toward hybridity, in which global and local elements are fused into new cultural forms.

Insights from in-depth interviews further complicate

this picture. Some respondents (both guitarists and craftsmen) describe their practices in terms of being "smarter" than foreign (particularly American) producers. They refer to the Javanese concept of "ngakali", loosely translated as outsmarting or creatively circumventing constraints. In this sense, producing or using replica guitars is not merely an economic decision, but also an assertion of agency within a hegemonic global market dominated by American brands. It becomes a subtle form of resistance, which signifies an effort to appropriate and rework dominant cultural symbols on local terms. From this perspective, even the use of "decals", special stickers affixed to the guitar headstock to reproduce the Fender logo, can be interpreted as a form of strategic mimicry. While such practices undeniably involve legal risks, including potential copyright infringement, they also demonstrate a form of ingenuity that operates within, against, and beyond the structures of hegemonic power. Rather than simply reproducing the original, these acts of imitation reveal how local actors creatively engage with, reinterpret, and at times challenge the authority of global cultural products.

This phenomenon might be comparable to what happened with many other globally-marketed products such as sports fashion, video games, and computer software. Until recently, brands, such as Nike, Adidas, and Reebok, have been the most counterfeited in China, as quoted in ABS-CBN News on Feb 24, 2015 ("Over 150,000 pairs of fake Nike, Adidas shoes destroyed", 2015). While in Indonesia, people might easily find those kinds of fake shoes, whether imported or locally made. The Windows operating system from Microsoft Corporation, as another example, has been pirated and illegally copied by countless people in Indonesia. However, it is quite clear that it is the economic reason that commonly becomes the main cause of that.

Observation and interview with some guitar luthiers (craftsmen) and shops have been conducted in Yogyakarta and Solo regions. The researchers have also designed online questionnaires for musicians using Fender Stratocaster and Telecaster replicas. There are 30 responses, which is the same as the target. The results of that questionnaire are not used for primary evidence. This research focuses mainly on the in-depth interview with our informants. The interviews are conducted covertly (mostly by

voice recorders). This is done, therefore, to achieve more reliable information.

The first observation that was conducted in some music instrument stores in Yogyakarta was an initial process to check the population of the Fender guitar replica in Yogyakarta and Solo areas. As previously assumed, the researchers found many samples. Then, having finished with music-store observations, the researchers went to a music repair shop, which also reportedly makes limited numbers of custom and replica guitars. In that shop, the researcher tried to ask them to give him a Fender brand guitar, which had no brand previously. Firstly, they said they are unable to do it, but later they said that it can be done using a special sticker called "Decal", and then it will be covered by transparent acrylic paint. The craftsman in the shop said that he has done it "thousands" of times, which can be heard in the recording. So, they said that custom and replica handmade guitars can be crafted there, but it is relatively more expensive than some Chinese mass-produced Fender replicas, which are also readily available in the shop.

Then once again, Bhabha's notion on the "power" of camouflage, and other theories by post-colonialists, are seen

as resourceful and helpful to be employed in this research, since it not only sees hegemony the other way around. It even sees the "replica", the "copy", the "hybrid", and even the "fake" one as something that defends, protects, or even attacks the genuine and the dominant.

According to one informant in the interview at that time, there had been a decline in locally produced guitars. This was closely tied to the hegemonic power exercised by major global manufacturers such as Fender Musical Instruments Corporation and Gibson. Therefore, due to the hegemonizing power and domination by a huge company like Fender and Gibson, the local products are dying. Those local products were somehow frequently marginalized. Luthiers such as Mr. Sri Hadi Waluyo from Yogyakarta and Mr. Hadi Wiyono from Baki, Sukoharjo, Central Java, have made sustained efforts to develop and promote their own instruments; however, they often find themselves at a disadvantage when competing against the global reach and symbolic capital of these large corporations.

Mr. Hadi Wiyono is a famous luthier from Baki, Sukoharjo. He employed several workers who formerly worked as peasants. Since the farmlands in that area

were decreasing, they began working as guitar craftsmen for Mr. Hadi Wiyono. Most of the guitars crafted in Mr. Hadi Wiyono's workshop are acoustic guitars, but they also make custom electric guitars. Some younger luthier who previously worked for Mr. Hadi Wiyono developed their own guitar workshop, such as Mr. Kasino. With his two brothers, Sumarno and Sumardi, Kasino then began to launch Piranti Laras guitar workshop in the 1970s. After long research and improvement, Kasino started to customize guitars and any other stringed instruments until late 2008. In 2009, Kasino retired from the business then continued by his son, Hari Kristianto, with his PILAR label in Ngrombo, Baki, Sukoharjo. In the new management of his son, with his sibling, Andrias Sulistyono, PILAR Guitar Workshop then concentrated its business on custom guitars and any other stringed music instruments, either acoustic or electric. Under this new management, the workshop shifted its focus toward custom-built instruments, both acoustic and electric, thus demonstrating an ongoing process of adaptation and innovation within local production practices.

From the perspective of hybridity, such workshops can be seen as sites where global and local elements intersect and

recombine. Rather than producing purely "traditional" or purely "Western" instruments, these luthiers engage in a process of cultural fusion, integrating globally recognized guitar designs with locally available materials, techniques, and aesthetic sensibilities. In line with the notion of hybridity proposed by Kraidy, these practices generate new cultural forms that are neither wholly derivative nor entirely original but instead occupy an in-between space that challenges rigid cultural boundaries.

Likewise, Mr. Sri Hadi Waluyo from Yogyakarta, familiarly called "Pak Hadi", is a celebrated guitar luthier in the region. Mr. Hadi Waluyo is the luthier who built a Fender replica for Eross Candra from Sheila on 7. As stated previously, this can be seen in the YouTube video uploaded by Helmy Prastowo Budi.

Mr. Hadi Waluyo has developed his own brand, Zianturi. Many people say that Mr. Hadi Waluyo is really a friendly person. Below is an example of a cheerful and funny conversation by Jatu Raya, a reporter of online media BeritaJogja, when visiting Mr. Hadi Waluyo's workshop:

Bajigur enak tenan Pak gitare," puji seorang anak muda berusia 20-an usai

memainkan "Gravity" John Mayer. Hadi pun menanggapi dengan tawa (Jatu Raya, 2016).

["Oh man, this guitar feels damn good", said a 20-year-old boy after playing "Gravity" by John Mayer. Hadi responded with laughter (Jatu Raya, 2016).]

Such moments, while seemingly anecdotal, also reveal the everyday cultural negotiations that underpin mimicry. The act of producing Fender replicas, down to the meticulous reproduction of logos and design features, can be understood through Bhabha's concept of mimicry, in which the colonized subject imitates the dominant form while simultaneously introducing difference. These replicas are "almost the same, but not quite," embodying both admiration for and ambivalence toward the hegemonic original. In this sense, mimicry becomes a strategy that allows local craftsmen to participate in global cultural circuits while subtly asserting their own agency.

Mr. Hadi Waluyo may be regarded as a relatively successful figure within this field; however, many other luthiers are less fortunate in navigating this uneven and often harsh competitive landscape. Consequently, some

openly acknowledge their intention to continue producing imitative instruments as a means of economic survival. Within a hegemonic framework, this persistence can be interpreted not as mere submission but as a form of negotiated resistance. By imitating the products of dominant corporations, these craftsmen simultaneously reproduce and destabilize hegemonic authority. Mr. Hadi Waluyo is so famous and can be seen as a fairly successful luthier in Indonesia. Yet, there are many others who are not so lucky to compete in this harsh, unfair competition. Thus, some of them firmly say that they will keep on making those kinds of products, imitating the giant company products, to sustain their life. In Bhabha's perspective, those craftsmen are not seen as someone who is inferior; they are superior instead. It is caused by their ability to perform camouflage, just as a chameleon, deceiving its prey and predators, or like a soldier on a battlefield.

CONCLUSION

Replica or counterfeit guitars, therefore, cannot be reduced merely to matters of economic necessity or commercial opportunism. Rather, they must be understood within a broader cultural and ideological

framework shaped by hegemony, hybridity, and mimicry. Attitudes toward legal frameworks, particularly copyright law, vary considerably among individuals; some do not perceive their actions as transgressive, while others consciously engage in such practices. In both cases, the production and use of replica guitars may be interpreted as forms of negotiation with, and at times resistance to, the hegemonic power of global corporations such as Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC). As a dominant force in the history and standardization of electric guitar production, Fender has exerted a profound influence on design conventions, ranging from body shape to technical components such as the headstock, truss rod, and tremolo system, thereby establishing itself as a global benchmark that many other manufacturers, including Gibson and Ibanez, have had to negotiate with in different ways.

From a postcolonial perspective, particularly by employing Bhabha's concept of mimicry, replica guitars can be seen as "almost the same, but not quite", in that they imitate the dominant form while simultaneously introducing difference. This ambivalence disrupts the authority of the

original, revealing that hegemonic cultural products are neither fixed nor immune to reinterpretation. At the same time, the practices of modification, customization, and local production reflect processes of hybridity, in which global designs are rearticulated through local materials, skills, and aesthetic preferences. Such hybrid forms challenge the notion of cultural purity and demonstrate that cultural production is inherently dynamic and negotiated.

Moreover, for many users and producers, replica guitars function as symbols of non-conformity, identity formation, and creative autonomy. Some respondents express a desire to cultivate a distinctive musical style without being dictated by corporate standards, while others are motivated by economic considerations. These motivations are not mutually exclusive. They might, on the other hand, coexist within a complex field of cultural practice. In this sense, the act of replicating or modifying a Fender guitar can be understood as both an accommodation to and a reworking of hegemonic structures.

Ultimately, despite the pervasive global influence of Fender, the persistence of replica production and use in Indonesia, at least in the

period when this research was conducted, demonstrates that hegemony is never absolute. Instead, it is continuously contested through everyday practices that appropriate, transform, and re-signify dominant cultural forms. The phenomenon of "fake" guitars thus exemplifies how local actors engage with global power not only through compliance, but also through creative adaptation and subtle forms of counter-hegemonic action and resistance.

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