

Batik Bomba: Kaili's Cultural Identity in Artwork

Samsul Alam^{1*}, Addriana Bulu Baan², Indar Sabri³, Dicky Hidayat⁴

^{1,4} School of Creative Industry, Universitas Telkom, Indonesia

² Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia

³ Faculty of Language and Art, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

*Email: samsulalam@telkomuniversity.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Kaili ethnic in Sulawesi Tengah has different characteristics from other ethnic groups in Indonesia. One characteristic that is different from other ethnicities is present in one of the artworks, namely *Batik Bomba*. The difference between *Batik Bomba* and batik from other regions lies in its motifs so *Batik Bomba* is one of the cultural identities of Sulawesi Tengah. The purpose of the study is to describe the cultural identity of the Kaili Ethnic in *Batik Bomba*. The method used is a descriptive method whose data comes from searching documents such as articles and archives about *Batik Bomba*. Cultural identity is one of the identities of a society resulting from the creative process of its people so it makes these community groups different from other community groups. The motifs in *Batik Bomba* describe the characteristics of Sulawesi Tengah, such as the natural environment, as well as socio-culture. The main motifs of *Batik Bomba* are the “*Taiganja*” motif and the “*Sambulugana*” motif, *Taiganja* and *Sambulugana* are wedding ceremony equipment that has certain mythology and gives a special meaning. Therefore, it can be concluded that *Batik Bomba* is a representation of the cultural identity of the Kaili ethnic in the artwork.

Keywords: *Batik Bomba, Cultural Identity, Motif Batik, Taiganja, Sambulugana*

1. INTRODUCTION

An area must have the identity and personality to retain an existing characteristic, which can defend the identity of other cultural influences. The identity of each region with each other will be different because the local customs of each region are different. This cultural identity can be said as a character inherent in a culture so that it can be distinguished between one culture with another culture (Kayam, 1981).

Cultural identity is formed through the cultural structure of a society. Cultural structures are patterns of perception, thinking, and feeling. Cultural identity can be interpreted as a reflection of the historical similarities that form a group of people into one even though from the outside they look different. This means the historical similarity that unites them. Therefore the cultural identity of a region is a character or identity of an area of culture that will be the work of a region. Cultural identity functioned to introduce an area to other areas.

Understanding the identity associated with the place and the associated cultural heritage requires identification. Cultural heritage is essential; 1) as a mental construct; 2) as a value-added to reality; and; 3) as a foundation for building something special discourse such as identity. The delivery of this identity aims to make people aware of their identity or to strengthen the identity they have realized so that in turn it can generate confidence that they have the potential to be able to develop themselves (Magetsari, 2009).

Cultural identity is one of the identities of a particular society resulting from the creative process of a society that makes the community different from other community groups. The result of the creative process can be in the form of dance, music, theatre, and also can be a daily life pattern of the community group that became the custom and finally become the traditions of tangible customs, ceremonies, or other activities which by society is regarded as a cultural heritage that has been generated by his ancestors. Various kinds of cultural products of this society then a community group or a nation can be known by society or other nations.

Cultural identity is a relational concept relating to self-identification and social origin or specific socio-historical conditions. This process can last for centuries. Even the identity is not only inherited vertically from the ancestors (vertical inheritance) but also formed by the influence coming from the surrounding environment horizontally (horizontal inheritance).

Kaili ethnic in Sulawesi Tengah has cultural characteristics that are different from other ethnic in Indonesia. One of the characteristics and different cultural characteristics with other ethnicities present in one of the works of Kaili society is Batik Bomba that is one form of culture Kaili. As Koentjaraningrat suggests that three forms of culture are; 1) the form of culture as a complex of ideas, ideals, values, norms, and rules; 2) the form of culture as an act of man in society; and; 3) the form of culture as objects of human works (Koentjaraningrat, 2000).

As one form of culture, Batik Bomba has several dimensions such as ideas, behaviour, and artefacts. In terms of ideas, Batik Bomba was born from a certain value system. In terms of behaviour, there are certain ordinances inherent in the batik culture of the bomba itself. Meanwhile, in terms of artefacts, Batik Bomba as a cultural object has explained himself. Batik Bomba is not solely used as the main human need in fulfilling the aspects of clothing only, but it has the value of intrinsic, aesthetic values both intrinsic and extrinsic that should be known by the community.

In general, Batik Bomba is used as clothing or clothing that is destined according to utility. Batik Bomba is not only used for ceremonial activities only but can also be used for formal events and non-formal. Clothing is one of the tools of communication as revealed by Umberto Eco, that humans can communicate through various mediums. Through clothing, man can communicate identity, social class and culture owned (Vera, 2014).

Batik is a communicative and cultural phenomenon used by a group to build and convey its identity because batik has a nonverbal way to produce and exchange meaning and values. Batik is not only an artwork, but batik is used as a symbol and cultural identity that brought. This paper is an analysis of how Batik Bomba construct cultural values as an identity of Kaili society.

2. METHODS

The method used in this study is descriptive research. This research was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding and analysis of why Batik Bomba has become Kaili's cultural identity. The authors collect data from various reference sources such as articles, books, and papers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Batik as Cultural Product

Batik is an ancient and traditional dress that is mostly only worn by the Javanese people, meanwhile, some Indonesians wear it only for party purposes. Batik as one of the cultural arts of the Indonesian nation has developed over time. The developments that occur prove that batik is very dynamic and can adapt well to the dimensions of space, time, and form.

Batik is a beautiful work of art. The beauty of this batik art is depicted in traditional batik motifs and colours. Batik motifs are created with messages and hopes that are sincere and noble, hopefully, they will bring goodness and prosperity and happiness to the wearer (Parmono, 2013). Batik is an original Indonesian product that is beautiful in terms of art and the manufacturing process. Indonesian Batik is one of the oldest drawing arts in the world. Batik is a cultural icon that is rich in symbols and philosophies of the human life cycle, from birth to death.

Batik is one of the cultural products that have been known since their ancestors. Batik is highly admired not only for its complicated process but also for its unique and beautiful motifs and colours, which are full of symbolic meaning (Indarmaji, 1983). Traditional batik motifs are mostly monumental from nature and the surrounding environment. This is the imagination of the artist's religion and beliefs, which are usually anonymous (Indarmaji, 1983). In addition, batik motifs also contain symbolic-magical values that are intended for religious/belief functions and aesthetic values that are used as decorations.

When it was created, batik could not be separated from the influence of customs, regional culture, immigrant culture, beliefs and culture in religion. Talking about traditional batik cannot be separated from its symbolic meaning. According to Ernst Cassirer, humans are animal symbolicum, creatures who can understand

and use symbols (signs). Humans can also create and understand the meaning of these symbols so that they can be used as norms, and guides (instructions) toward good behaviour and deeds (Cassirer, 1966).

Batik Bomba as a Representation of Kaili's Cultural Identity

Cultural identity arises from the existence of culture and habits that have been passed down from generation to generation in an area and become a habit in the community. The personality that is inherent in an area cannot be separated from habits formed from the environment and culture which will eventually form cultural identity (Kayam, 1981). Cultural identity is also multifaceted. In a given situation, we sometimes have many components that make up our cultural identity. For example, at the same time, a person can see himself as a disciple, a worker, a friend, a woman, a southerner, a child, a member of the Methodist Church, a nanny and so on. In short, various facets make up our cultural identity (Lustig & Koester, 2002).

Understanding cultural identity is not only about determining physical characteristics or characteristics, but also about examining the cultural identity of a group of people through the order of thinking, feeling, and acting (Liliweri, 2007a). Cultural identity is a characteristic shown by a person because that person is a member of a certain ethnic group. It includes learning about and accepting traditions, innate traits, language, religion, and descent from a culture (Liliweri, 2007b). In simple terms, cultural identity is a breakdown of the characteristics or characteristics of a culture that is owned by a group of people whose limits we know when compared to the characteristics or characteristics of other people's cultures (Liliweri, 2007b).

Cultural identity includes seven characteristics (Iskandar, 2004).

1. Self-perception; either in the form of self-description (avowal) or self-description by others (ascription), for example through stereotypes and naming (attribution).
2. The way of expression through the core symbols that contain definitions, premises, and propositions about humans and nature. They express cultural beliefs; show central ideas and concepts and everyday behaviour, for example, how to dress or labels or norms formed by symbols.
3. The form of identity can be seen from the point of view of the individual.
4. The quality of identity includes its sustainability and change. Change can occur due to economic, political, social, psychological, and contextual factors.
5. The effective, cognitive, and behavioural components of identity. Affective components (emotions and feelings) affect cultural identity because it depends on the situation. Sometimes a strong self-recognition can be seen as a threat. The cognitive component is a belief about that identity which is manifested in a core symbol, for example, the name of an organization or a group name. The behavioural component focuses on the verbal and nonverbal actions of group members.
6. Content and relationships. That is, the message communicated not only contains information but also has implications about who is in control, how close or far the conversation is, how far their mutual trust is and the level of inclusion and exclusion.
7. Differences in prominence and intensity depend on context and time.

Cultural identity is the characteristics or identity attached to an area, individual or group that originates from daily habits. Cultural identity becomes a symbol or symbol that can characterize an area, individual or group. That is, by looking at the symbols or symbols that become the cultural identity, people will know it better.

The difference between Batik Bomba and batik from other regions lies in the pattern of motifs. Batik Bomba motifs are made based on the natural environment and socio-cultural conditions in Sulawesi Tengah. The motifs in Batik Bomba are compositions or stylizations of environmental objects. Objects that are distilled into Batik Bomba motifs include maleo birds, moringa leaves, bamboo, and cloves. This object is a natural product that is often found in Sulawesi Tengah. In addition to natural objects, objects that are community traditions or habits are also distilled in the form of motifs such as the *Sambulugana* tradition (betel nut and betel nut in the proposal ceremony) which is distilled in the form of motifs.

The batik motif is a basis or principal of an image pattern which is the base or centre of an image design, so that the meaning of the sign, symbol, or symbol behind the batik motif can be revealed (Wulandari, 2011). The motif is a picture frame that embodies batik as a whole (Susanto, 1980). Batik motifs are defined as designs

or designs made from parts of shapes, various kinds of lines or elements, which are sometimes strongly influenced by the stylized forms of nature, with their style and characteristics (Suhersono, 2004).

Batik Bomba motifs are divided into three types, namely; 1) motifs originating from flora; 2) motifs originating from fauna, and 3) motifs originating from the traditions of the people of Sulawesi Tengah.

1. Motifs from flora

Various flora that is used as a source of stylization for the Batik Bomba motif is the flora that is often found in Sulawesi Tengah. There is even a flora that is a leading commodity. In addition, there is also a rare flora, it is said, this flora lives only one in Sulawesi Tengah, namely the Lekatu Tree. The motifs originating from flora include moringa leaf motifs, clove flower motifs, bamboo motifs, creeping flower motifs and lekatu motifs.

2. Motifs that come from fauna

One of the many faunas in Sulawesi Tengah is the maleo bird, so the distilled maleo bird is one of the typical motifs of Batik Bomba.

3. Motif comes from the Kaili ethnic of Sulawesi Tengah

Various kinds of traditions exist in Sulawesi Tengah, including the "*Sambulugana*" tradition. *Sambulugana* is a package of plants, namely areca nut and betel, which are brought in the procession of proposals. Therefore, this tradition is then called "*Sambulugana*". In addition to the *Sambulugana* tradition, one of the dowries or dowries in Sulawesi Tengah society is the *Taiganja* pendant. This tradition then inspired the birth of the *Sambulugana* motif and the *Taiganja* motif

Batik Bomba has a very important role for the Kaili people of Sulawesi Tengah, not because it functions only as clothing but also as a tool to express oneself about one's identity. All cultural practices depend on the meanings formed by signs. As stated by Barker that various batik motifs have their standards that can have the function of building a sense of ownership in-group ties, ethnicity and political identity (Barker & Jane, 2016).

Batik Bomba represents the culture of the Kaili people because each motif in Batik Bomba describes the uniqueness of Sulawesi Tengah, both in the natural environment and in the socio-cultural environment. Batik Bomba is one of the complementary traditional weddings that has magical powers. The main motifs of Batik Bomba, namely *Taiganja* motifs and *Sambulugana* motifs as wedding ceremony equipment, have certain mythologies that give special meanings. These motifs have symbols and symbols that have certain meanings. Traditional symbols can act as institutions because with the symbolic meaning, each recipient of the symbol will be aware of the meaning conveyed.

Batik Bomba as a representation of Kaili's cultural identity is a batik that is identical to the habits and traditions of the Kaili people. This is following what Tilaar stated regarding the concept of identity (Tilaar, 2007):

1. Identity means being identical to others

This concept leads to the similarity between one individual with another individual. Similarities between individuals can occur because, in essence, these individuals are human beings who have similarities in their humanity. However, of course, there are also differences between them.

2. Identity means being yourself

Humans are born as individuals who have no duplicates, even though they are twins. The education process is a process of liberating a person to fill and give meaning to his life.

3. Identity means to be identical to an idea

This concept in the end eliminates the value of the individual. An idea was independent of individual power. An idea is something transcendental. The idea should be born from the choice of the individual himself.

4. Identity means realistic individuals who live with other individuals

The process of being oneself cannot be separated from the existence of others in the context of living together. The process of being yourself is inseparable from living together. Even living together, is also inseparable from the environment that lives together in the world, both the natural environment and the cultural environment.

The *Taiganja* motif is very popular in Sulawesi Tengah. The word "*Taiganja*" comes from the Kaili language which consists of two words, namely "*Tai*" which means stomach and "*Ganja*" which means appearance or shape, thus it can be interpreted as loose as an object that resembles the stomach. The term

stomach here can mean figuratively which means genitals and can also be a heart which involves feelings. The depiction of *Taiganja*'s form as a whole is a manifestation of the human form or the symbol of its owner.

Taiganja in Sulawesi Tengah is also used as a "dowry" in a wedding, as well as symbols in traditional rituals. *Taiganja* also symbolizes the status of its owner, which is obtained by a certain customary and generative procedure only. Based on this, the ownership of *Taiganja* is not only based on the ability to obtain financing, but also on the customary and generative authority it has.



Figure 1. “Taiganja” Pendant and “Taiganja” Motif on Batik Bomba Fabric

Furthermore, the *Sambulugana* motif, this motif comes from one of the traditions that exist among the people of Sulawesi Tengah. This tradition is a customary provision carried out by the community to continue the relationship between a man and a woman to the level of marriage. In the implementation of *Sambulugana*, the man who will propose to his future wife will bring a package of plants, namely areca nut and betel. Therefore, it can be said that *Sambulugana* is a symbol of the proposal ceremony so Batik Bomba with this motif is only suitable for use during the proposal ceremony.



Figure 2. *Sambulugana* Motif on Batik Bomba Fabric

A symbol is something that is used to show something else based on the agreement of a group of people (Mulyana, 2013). Batik Bomba is a product or the work of humans as cultural creatures full of symbols. This confirms that human culture is full of symbolism, namely understanding that follows patterns that are based on symbols. Likewise, a piece of Batik Bomba does not only store the aesthetic values of a series of decorations and colour combinations. However, it also stores a system of values, symbols, and strategies for the Kaili people.

Batik Bomba as a symbol made by individuals and agreed upon by the entire Kaili community is a non-verbal symbol. Non-verbal symbols are symbols created to convey meaning or communicate through an object, movement, or sound. Pateda states that symbols or symbols created by humans can be distinguished from verbal or non-verbal symbols (Pateda, 2001). Verbal symbols are symbols used as communication tools produced by

speech tools, while non-verbal symbols can be; 1) symbols that use limbs; 2) sound; 3) symbols or signs created by humans to mark time; 4) objects that have cultural meaning. Therefore, it can be said that Batik Bomba is an object that has cultural meaning (Sobur, 2013).

The symbols in Batik Bomba serve to visualize concretely the natural and socio-cultural conditions of the people of Sulawesi Tengah, in this case, the Kaili ethnic. The function of symbols is to bridge objects or things that are concrete with abstract things and more than just what is visible, namely something that exists in the world of values, meanings, beliefs, and other things.

In general, Batik Bomba has two functions (Prasetyo, 2010):

1. Batik that functions as clothing or clothing is commonly referred to as profane batik, including shirts, kebaya, t-shirts, blouses, kimonos
2. Batik functions as a craft, including bed linen, tablecloths, pants, sandals, bags, and home decorations.

The identity constructed through Batik Bomba represents the cultural identity of the Kaili ethnic. The Kaili ethnic is one of the indigenous ethnics in Sulawesi Tengah who inhabit the Palu Valley, Parigi, Tomini Bay, and the coasts of Tojo, Ampana, and Poso. The Kaili people or also known as To-Kaili are the largest ethnic group scattered throughout the region in Sulawesi Tengah (45%). The spread of this ethnic is related to traditional traditions in the past from the nobility who spread their descendants to other areas through marriage (Raden, 2011).

Identity is generated by a representational system (representative) and includes practices and symbolic systems (Watson, 2007). Batik Bomba as clothing is a real picture of Kaili culture. As stated by Sarmini that clothing can connect what is inside a person with the outside world so that clothing becomes a language (Sarmini, 2009). Certain clothes or clothing are also often used as symbols of nationalism and religion. Clothing is one of the most obvious ranges of significations of outward appearance, by which people set themselves apart from others, and are further identified as a particular group.

Batik is never separated between motifs, decorations and techniques. From the process of making it to the symbolic decoration and procedures as well as the events when batik is used, it is an integration of various cultural values that are used as guidelines for daily life. The process of batik is the process of educating a person to learn, be patient, and have self-control, besides the decorations chosen must be following their meaning with the background of the events of using batik. Batik is not just an aesthetic object, but has a spiritual and translingual dimension, which shows the very high level of Indonesian culture (Widagdo, 1997).

Clothing can also show the expression of personal identity and collective identity. Batik clothes represent this, for example when batik is used as Korpri's batik clothes among officials. This not only evokes esprit de corps among them but also implies the success of the ideology of uniform taste in fashion and the formation of collective identity from the social class of bureaucrats who feel they are at the top of the social strata (Darmaputri, 2015).

Based on the description above, it can be stated that Batik Bomba is a representation of the cultural identity of the Kaili ethnic. Cultural identity is a social construction and can be expressed through various forms of representation that can be recognized by others. So that identity can be interpreted through signs such as tastes, beliefs, attitudes, lifestyles, and even political involvement (Barker & Jane, 2016).

Signs are the basis of all communication (Littlejohn, 1999). Batik Bomba is a symbol that represents Kaili culture in the form of a symbol or sign, which is a means of conveying information or messages to other people or objects. It can be said that in cultural interactions, many are dominated by the use of non-verbal signs compared to direct communication (verbal signs) using words in the language.

4. CONCLUSION

Batik Bomba as Kaili's cultural identity is a form of culture in the arts that is inherent in the Kaili community in Sulawesi Tengah. Batik Bomba has become a cultural symbol or cultural symbol of Sulawesi Tengah, especially for the Kaili people. That is, by seeing Batik Bomba, people will remember or recognize that Batik Bomba is the cultural identity of the Kaili people.

Based on the results of the studies that have been carried out, it is highly recommended to all Indonesian people be proud to wear batik-patterned clothes because it is a characteristic of Indonesia. If this is done well, then Batik may become a global product of Indonesian culture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are very grateful to various parties who have assisted in writing this article, especially Universitas Telkom Bandung, Universitas Tadulako Palu and Universitas Negeri Surabaya who have facilitated this collaborative writing.

REFERENCES

- Barker, C., & Jane, E. A. (2016). *Cultural Studies: Theory And Practice* (Fifth Edition). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Cassirer, E. (1966). *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. London: Yale University Press.
- Darmaputri, G. L. (2015). Representasi Identitas Budaya dalam Simbol-Simbol pada Batik Tradisional dan Kontemporer. *Commonline*, 4(2), 45–55. <https://journal.unair.ac.id/COMN@representasi-identitas-kultural-dalam-simbol-simbol-pada-batik-tradisional-dan-kontemporer-article-9334-media-137-category-8.html>
- Indarmaji. (1983). *Seni Kerajinan Batik*. Yogyakarta: Dinas Pariwisata Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta.
- Iskandar, D. (2004). Identitas Budaya dalam Komunikasi Antar-Budaya: Kasus Etnik Madura dan Etnik Dayak. *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya*, 6(2), 119–140. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v6i2.208>
- Kayam, U. (1981). *Seni, Tradisi, Masyarakat*. Jakarta: Sinar Harapan.
- Koentjaraningrat. (2000). *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Liliweri, A. (2007a). *Dasar-Dasar Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Liliweri, A. (2007b). *Makna Budaya dalam Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Yogyakarta: PT. LkiS Pelangi Aksara.
- Littlejohn, S. W. (1999). *Theories of Human Communication* (Sixth Edition). California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2002). *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication across Cultures*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Magetsari, N. (2009). *Pemaknaan Museum untuk Masa Kini*. Jakarta: Direktorat Museum Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata.
- Mulyana, D. (2013). *Ilmu Komunikasi, Suatu Pengantar*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya.
- Parmono, K. (2013). Nilai Kearifan Lokal dalam Batik Tradisional Kawung. *Jurnal Filsafat*, 23(2), 134–146. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.13217>
- Pateda, M. (2001). *Semantik Leksikal*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Prasetyo, A. (2010). *Batik Karya Agung Warisan Budaya*. Yogyakarta: Pura Pustaka.
- Raden, S. (2011). Pelaksanaan Upacara Mematua Dan Mandiu Pasili Dalam Perkawinan Adat Suku Kaili (Suatu Tinjauan Hukum Islam dan Hukum Adat). *HUNafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, 8(2), 363. <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v8i2.369.363-396>
- Sarmini. (2009). Pakaian Batik: Kulturisasi Negara dan Politik Identitas. *Jantra: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Budaya*, 6(8), 674–688.
- Sobur, A. (2013). *Semiotika Komunikasi*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya.
- Suhersono, H. (2004). *Desain Bordir Motif Batik*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Susanto, S. (1980). *Seni Kerajinan Batik Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Balai Penelitian Batik dan Kerajinan.
- Tilaar, H. A. R. (2007). *Mengindonesia, Emisitas, dan Identitas Bangsa Indonesia: Tinjauan dari Perspektif Ilmu Pendidikan*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Vera, N. (2014). *Semiotika dalam Riset Komunikasi*. Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia.
- Watson, S. (2007). *Museum and Their Communities*. New York: Routledge.
- Wulandari, A. (2011). *Batik Nusantara Makna Filosofis, Cara Pembuatan, dan Industri Batik*. Yogyakarta: CV. Andi Offset.