

Management, Function and Meaning of Songket BatuBara

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Abstract

Batubara songket cloth has a variety or different motifs that form aesthetics. The motifs and materials for the coal songket are made from unique and specific materials so that they are known to foreign countries. The colors and motifs in the Batubara songket show the daily life and personality of the Batubara Malay people. The Batubara people still adhere to customs that must be upheld high. The research on songket Batubara aims to manage the raw material to become a songket as well as the function and meaning of each motif in the songket Batubara by using the theory of Ferdinand de Saussure. This research used qualitative methods and descriptive research types and data collection methods by means of observation, interviews and documentation. The results of this study indicate that the names of the motifs contained in the Batubara songket are closely related to the fauna around them, for example the bamboo shoots motif, mangosteen shoots, pandanus shoots, silver shoots, betikam shoots, cape flowers, chrysanthemum flowers, jasmine flowers. All the motifs contained in the Batubara songket that describe about the characteristics of the Batubara Malay ethnicity such as the jasmine flower motif, which describes the characteristics of a polite tribe.

Keywords: Malay Batubara Songket, management, function and meaning.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is rich in ethnic groups, so that many cultural heritages that being the pride of Indonesian ethnic groups are found. One of the cultural heritages is traditional woven fabrics (Octavianna, Yessi. *et al.* 2020). The woven fabrics, among others, in the Toba Batakarea it called *ulos*, in the Karo it called *Uis*, in the Mandailing it called *Abit Godang*, in the Batak Simalungun it called *hiou* and in Malay is called *songket*. From a historical perspective, songketis only used by the nobility, the softiest of the weaving, the more complex the pattern and the songket is being heavier. This indicates that the songket is made of the genuine gold thread .

Songket is comes from the word of *sungkit* which means hook or gouge . This is related to the way how it made, namely by hooking and taking a pinch of woven cloth and then inserting the gold thread. Songket is a handicraft that has the role of showing the identity as a characteristic of the Malay people.

Songket cloth is an honorific clothing that is embedded in sacred events such as proposals for women, weddings and other events. So that the songket clothes are a matter of pride for the

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wearer. In the context of the times, customs have meaning in ritual events, this is also experiencing the developments. This ceremony is related to cultural activities such as government politics, social affairs, education, religion, economy and others. Almost all of Malay traditional ceremonies always use songket as traditional clothing (Sibarani, Robert, 2018; Sibarani, Robert. 2020).

One of the functions of songket besides being a garment that covers the body that obeys the norms of social norms is also manifested the values of beauty and ethics of the people that support it. Songket was used in various customary activities, for example marriage ceremonies, weddings, circumcision, validating the leaders such as sultans, kadi masters, the village leaders and so on (Sibarani, Robert, *et al.*2018, Sibarani,Robert, *et al.*2021).

Batu Bara Regency, which is located in North Sumatra, is currently considered capable of expressing songket culture, especially in Sumatra and the Malay world in general it because Batubara Regency is an area that produces a lot of songket. The quality of songket Malay has been known by the people of Batu Bara. Based on a written source entitled of the Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra 1823, that written by Anderson, it is written that the Batubara songket already existed in that year. Anderson is a British envoy who visited East Sumatra 22 February.—*Went to the Bindahara's by appointments, in expectation of meeting all the chiefs, who ad been summoned by Sri Maharaja Lela meet me; but this being Friday, the Mussulman Sunday, they did not come down. They however sent messages to prepare us their arrival next day. Employed collecting and purchasing all the different sorts of cloths, of which there is an infinite variety. They manufacture silk and cotton cloths, the former principally beautiful tartan patterns, and some splendidly wrought with gold thread. These manufactures consume large quantity of raw silk. I purchased one of the looms, with beautiful tartan sarong half finished in it. My raughtsman made a correct drawin of all their spinning and weaving apparatus, and other objects of interst or novelty. Although they manufactures such a variety of cloths, they prefer wearing of European chintzes, and the corse coast and Bengal cloths, principally on account of their comparative cheapness,*" (Anderson :1977)

Besides of the good quality, the songket Batu Bara is also known for its attractive motifs so that there are many orders from abroad such as Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand.

Batu Bara Malay songket is rich in cultural treasures, one of which is the motif used in the Batu Bara songket cloth. The motifs in the Batu Bara songket cloth come from nature and it be the king's favorite food such as wajik. The motifs give birth to the name of the motif according to the basic shape of the object used as the motif. The fabric motif that often adorns songket cloth is a flower motif which indicates that the activity of *menyongket* is close to the women, because weaving is doing by the women while she is waiting for a mate to arrive . The motifs of flower include the pandanus shoots give birth to pandanus shoots, bamboo shoots give birth to bamboo shoots, and so on. Thus weaving songket cloth is a work of art that is produced through stages according to the wishes or the desired motive. The motif of the Batu Bara songket cloth has a pattern and contains a certain function and meaning.

The results of the research are presented in the form of songket management, the function of the songket motifs and the meaning of the motives that exist in every songket (Sri Asi Haholongan Marbun, *et al.*2018).

2. Method

The method that used in this research is qualitative method. Data collection techniques include observations obtained in the form of an inventory of Batu Bara songket cloth both classic

and modern songket cloth, interviews with the informants who understand about the Batu Bara songket cloth, and obtaining data and documents obtained in the form of classical photos of Batu Bara songket cloth. The validity of the data in this study used triangulation by examining the data obtained by examining the data that had been obtained through several sources. The data analysis process is carried out by reducing, presenting and drawing conclusions and suggestions. Data analysis was analyzed using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotics.

In semiotics a sign is anything that communicates a meaning that is not the sign itself to the interpreter of the sign. The meaning can be intentional such as a word uttered with a specific meaning, or unintentional, such as a symptom being a sign of a particular medical condition. Signs can communicate through any of the senses, visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, or taste (Siahaan et al., 2018). Two major theories describe the way signs acquire the ability to transfer information. Both theories understand the defining property of the sign as a relation between a number of elements. In the tradition of semiotics developed by Ferdinand de Saussure (referred to as semiology) the sign relation is dyadic .

3. Results and Discussion

The main process of weaving a songket from yarn into a songket is divided into eight stages . In making songket in Batubara, the weavers must be obey the stages from the very beginning to the end it becomes a songket sheet. The eight stages include:

- 1) *Menorou*, which is the process of winding threads from large rolls into small coils and the tools used are chisels.
- 2) *Mengani*, this process is a process to determine the length of the thread and the number of strands of fabric to be loaded on this tool.
- 3) *Menoto*, this process is also known as winding the thread.
- 4) *Menyosok* to *Karab*, is the process of winding thread onto the carb board.
- 5) Inserting into the comb, namely inserting the lonseng thread into the tooth of the comb or brush, before it is attached to the *okik* loom.
- 6) Raise to *okik*.
- 7) Picking up (making motifs) which is making the desired motif which of course follows the thread path.
- 8) Weaving.

To make a woven cloth it need a special skills and the good management, because management is the art or process of accomplishing something related to the achievement of goals. In the completion of something, there are three factors involved (Wanda Kuswanda, *et al.*2020; Izwar, *et al.*2020).

- a) The use of organizational resources, both of human resources and other production factors. that is, must always adapt to the times. For that they have to develop this organization. The trick is to comply with market demand. Sometimes the market wants red songket, so they produce red songket in relatively large quantities.
- b) A gradual process starting from planning, organizing, directing and implementing, to controlling and supervising. Namely the process of grouping the tools for making songket such as *pelipiran* (dividing the upper and lower threads), *beliro* (which functions to compact the thread), *apet* (container for finished fabrics), *gonpocok* (upper thread barrier), bottom gon, comb to tidy up, *Lidi* to dividing the lower and upper threads and tracing (to form a songket motif).
- c) The existence of art in the completion of work.

The function of the motif on the Batu Bara Malay Songketcloth

Songket Batubara has a more essential contribution to Malay culture, it means that songket provides an identity for Malay culture, there are several functions that are obtained in songket weaving, these functions include:

- 1) **As the Guardian of the Continuity and Stability of Malay Culture**, which is the identity and identity of Malay culture
- 2) **As the Revealer of the Aesthetic System, through the songket**, the beauty that is emitted in the form of the songket motif is seen. The colors in the songket reflect beauty for the wearer that can be felt and communicated to others.
- 3) **As a Revealer of Values**, songket also serves as a reinforcement of social values for the Malay community. The method of placing the head of cloth can be assessed who the person is, if the cloth head is on the front it means a girl, if the songket is on the back it means that you are married, if wearing a cloth with the head on the side it means that the person concerned is a widow. This signifies as an expression of the value of decency.
- 4) **As a vehicle for integration and the entry of a person to become a Malay**, songket is also used as a tool for integrating someone who is not a Malay into a Malay ethnic group.
- 5) **As a Malay identity amplifiers**, in every custom event such as weddings, circumcisions, and feast, spontaneously songket used in the event. By using songket has helped to preserve and strengthen the identity of their maleness.
- 6) **As an expression of Love**, a Malay youth express his love to his girlfriend by present songket as a bond of love and often also found by passing a young man to a woman toward the marriage for a set of clothes and in it we can found songket.

The meaning of the motif on the Batu Bara Malay Songket cloth

Every songket weaver before weaving for all types of motifs is required to understand the meaning and philosophy contained in each of the various motifs contained in the songket, this requirement is intended so that personally the weaver can absorb and also live up to the values that exist in every songket motif to be disseminated to the public . Every motif has a meaning and philosophy that refers to local customs or culture. Islam as the religion of the Malay community also has a lot of impact on the meaning that exists in every songket motif. Before the entry of Islam, songket motifs were found in the form of animals such as dragons, namely the besaung dragon motif, the deer motif. With the entry of Islam this motive is not found because it smells of shirk for Islam.


The motifs that often adorn songket fabrics are flower motifs, flowers are a symbol of freshness, diversity of aromas and joy, this indicates that the activity of weaving has a close relationship with nature and reflects that songket is commonly used by women. Even in ancient times, songket was woven by women while waiting for a proposal or match from men. Songket has been around for hundreds or even thousands of years and has gone through various times but the songket motif has not experienced many changes and additions (Sibarani, *et al.*2020 & 2021).

The observation result in this research is that the motifs contained in the Batu Bara Malay songket cloth are taken from the natural surroundings in the form of plants, food (Silaban Immanuel, *et al.* 2020; Halimatussakdiah, *et al.* 2020). We found 16 motifs in the Batu Bara songket cloth and the 16 motifs were categorized into two motifs. The first motive is the basic

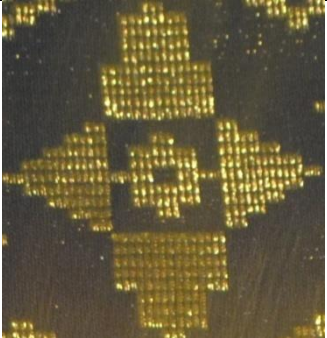


motive, the basic motive is the motif that dominates every songket weave, these motifs include the shoots betikam motif, the silver shoot motif, the pandan shoot motif and the caul shoot motif. The second is an additional motif or a motif to add to the beauty of the songket motif and its position is not the same as the basic motif, additional motifs are usually positioned at the bottom or edge of the songket cloth which is placed horizontally and vertically on the songket cloth, and additional motifs that earlier was termed the edge of the chisel. Additional motifs include shoots of bamboo shoots, mangosteen shoots, sarong flower, cauliflower, jasmine flowers, cape flowers, chrysanthemum flowers, scattered flowers, larat clouds, elbow keluang, wajiks (sweet rice), palace fences.



The meanings contained in the Batubara songket motif include:



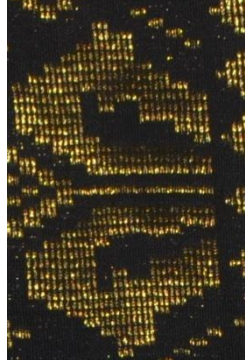
Motif Name	Motif Meaning
 <p data-bbox="240 1016 841 1119">Betikam motif: This motif is a combination of shoots of bamboo whose has opposite positions and the ends meet each other.</p>	<p data-bbox="862 674 1377 888">This motif means the nature of the Malays who are friendly and being greet to each other when they meet, this motif also means the nature of the mutual cooperation of the Malays that are still found today.</p>
 <p data-bbox="240 1415 841 1482">Silver shoots: Silver is a piece of jewelry and is considered a symbol of prosperity.</p>	<p data-bbox="862 1163 1377 1415">Silver shoots motif motive is a perfection, and this motif as a reflection of the government's success it means that the Malay kingdom that moment and the perfection of motive it also means that the waiters and waitresses are very respectful to the king's palace.</p>
	<p data-bbox="862 1488 1377 1740">The pandanus shoots motif gives the meaning to always look forward to progress and also means that the shoots of pandanus are likened to humans that always giving off fragrance as well as the Malay ethnicity of Batu Bara that always brings peace wherever they are</p>

<p>Pandan shoots: Pandanus shoots that are green in color and have a very good smell</p>	
 <p>Caul shoots: This songket with a flower motif is made with a very perfect weave.</p>	<p>The caul shoots motif indicates that ethnic Malays try to provide good things in life and social life regardless of religion and ethnicity.</p>
 <p>Bamboo shoots: Bamboo shoots are the embryo of bamboo</p>	<p>The meaning of the bamboo shoots motif, among others, is that the bamboo shoots make the body itchy when it hits the body, but if you are good enough at the processing bamboo shoots it becomes delicious to eat, so is the Malay ethnic group if you are good at getting close to any Malay ethnicity, they will give everything to us and the feeling of brotherhood gets tighter, another meaning is that bamboo shoots are plants that are not easily knocked down by the wind and this illustrates that the Malay ethnic group has a strong principle and is not easily affected by things that are beneficial for a moment, another meaning of this shoots is that bamboo shoots are bamboo trees that continue to grow and grow. Growing up means that ethnic Malay will never become extinct as there is a slogan that we encounter Malay Not Gone on Earth. Another meaning is to describe that the ethnic Malay character always thinks straight like a bamboo tree whose growth is always straight</p>

 <p>Mangosteen shoots: The mangosteen pan at the end are four, five, six and even seven on each fruit, the reap is related to one reap and another which holding another hands.</p>	<p>The mangosteenshoots motive means that ethnic Malays always live to help each other if there are neighbors who have trouble being helped and social work is always done together, and the life of their family must be harmonious and peaceful. Another meaning of the mangosteen shoots motif is that the mangosteen fruit is very tasty and sweet and the skin can also be used as a medicine which has many benefits, it means that ethnic Malays are very clever in society and always be useful people in the midst of the community where they live.</p>
 <p>Sarong flower: It is a combination of cauliflower motifs, <i>celak</i> which is an object to beautify the eyes for women and the sarong is taken as one of the songket motifs is called the flower <i>celak</i> motif.</p>	<p>The motif of the sarong flower, <i>celak</i> means that ethnic Malays always want to be beauty.</p>
 <p>Cauliflower: The cauliflower motif that used in the Batu Bara songket it because the cauliflower symbolizes the simplicity, the cauliflower after peeling one strand out another and so on until the cauliflower in one bowl it becomes small. This illustrates that the surrounding nature provides the sustenance to the community</p>	<p>The cauliflower motif means that ethnic Malays have a simple nature and that the surrounding community gives something meaningful.</p>

 <p>Chrysanthemum flowers: Chrysanthemum flowers are the same as other flowers which are used as songket motifs. Jasmine flower, a cape flower that has very good smells with chrysolite flowers.</p>	<p>This motive for ethnic Malays that really wants the beauty and always maintains politeness and really maintains the manner of getting along in the middle of society and doesn't forget to remember the Creator.</p>
 <p>Cape flowers: Cape flower is a very fragrant flower that the fragrance is said to adorn the earth.</p>	<p>This means that ethnic Malays like to be visited by guests and ethnic Malays are very friendly in welcoming their guests who come to their house.</p>
 <p>Larat clouds: The Larat cloud motif is taken from the clouds in the sky that moves when blown by the wind. Larat clouds are a series of motifs that are neatly arranged side by side and are connected. This motif is taken from the clouds in the sky that moves when blown by the wind. This motif is in the form of roots, leaves and flowers.</p>	<p>The meaning of this motif is harmony, unity of ethnic Malays and always unanimous in their daily lives</p>

 <p>Wajik (sweet rice): Wajik is the favorite food of the Malay king, the ingredients are made of pulut and brown sugar. These wajik are very difficult to separate because they are very close to each other.</p>	<p>This motif means that the Malay community lives in togetherness and is not easily broken apart or divided into squares.</p>
 <p>Palace fences: The palace fence motif is always positioned on the edge of the lower part of the songket cloth and looks like a fence.</p>	<p>This motif means that ethnic Malays are ready to maintain the integrity, peace and togetherness in daily life.</p>

	<p>The meaning of this motif which is only has one motive, means that the Malay ethnic group must be help each other, so the meaning of the scattered flower motif means that everything if done together will feel light and quickly finish in accordance with the previous parent's philosophy, namely the nature of mutual cooperation which is still attached to the Malay tribe.</p>
<p>Scattered flower: The scattering motif is a collection or combination of mangosteen shoots motif.</p>	
 <p>Elbow keluang: Has a shape that is elbow and not crooked</p>	<p>This means that the motive of ethnic Malay Coal has the nature of a strong hold in trust, obedience, and strong stance and responsible.</p>
 <p>Jasmine flower: Jasmine flower is a beautiful flower and has very good smeel.</p>	<p>The jasmine flower motif means that ethnic Malays always maintain politeness, purity and elegance in society.</p>

4. Conclusions

Based on the results of the Batu Bara songket research about the management, function and meaning of the Batu Bara songket is a cultural product of the Batu Bara Malay community, the management of songket requires 3 aspects, namely:

- a) The use of organizational resources, both human resources and other production factors.

- b) A gradual process starting from planning, organizing, directing and implementing, to controlling and supervising.
- c) The existence of art in the completion of work.

The motifs in the Batu Bara songket that found in every songket include the basic motifs and additional motifs. The basic motifs are the motives that are the basis for making songket, the basic motives include: shoots betikam motif, shoot pandanus motif, silver shoot motif and caul shoot motif. While additional motifs are motives to add to the beauty of songket, additional motifs include bamboo shoots, mangosteen root motifs, larat cloud motifs, elbow keluang, celak sarong flower, cauliflower, chrysanthemum flower, jasmine flower, cape flower, palace fence, wajik motifs, scattered flowers. Each motif has its own meaning, for example the mangosteen shoots motif, which looks like a hand holding hands, means that ethnic Malays like cooperation.

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