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# Unveiling the Local Cultural Identity of Cirebon through the Uniqueness of Motifs and Natural Colors of Ciwaringin Batik

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**Abstract**

**Objectives:** Batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. Batik is one of the results of cultural acculturation that reflects multiculturalism, which is seen through the use of language (names of batik motifs), a variety of motifs, and colors. One of the centers of batik is Ciwaringin Regency, located in the Cirebon area. These characteristics describe the typical values of local culture that are the identity of the region. This study focuses on revealing the uniqueness of motifs and the use of natural colors as a strategy to express local cultural values.

**Methods:** This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Data were obtained through field observations, interviews, and documentation.

**Results:** Based on the results of the study, it was found that the Ciwaringin batik motif pattern describes the life of a community that is one with nature. In this case, batik is not just a cultural product, furthermore, the meaning and values contained in it are expressions of empirical experience and the daily life of the community that form a cultural unity.

**Conclusion:** The expression of the names of motifs, motifs, and 'natural' batik is a characteristic of the Ciwaringin Regency, which has unknowingly been attached to the character of the local culture and expresses the cultural identity of its people.

**Keywords**: Ciwaringin Batik; motifs; natural colors; local cultural values; cultural identity.

# الكشف عن الهُوِيَّة الثقافيَّة المحليَّة لسيربون عبر تفرد تصميمات وألوان باتيك سيوارينغين الطبيعيَّة

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**ملخّص**

**الأهداف:** يُعَدُّ الباتيك تراثًا ثقافيًّا إندونيسيًّا يستلزم المحافظة عليه وصونَه؛ حيث إنه أحدُ نتائج التلاقح الثقافي الذي يعكس التعدديَّة الثقافيَّة، ويظهر عبرَ استخدام اللغة (أسماء زخارف الباتيك)، وتنوُّع التصاميم، والألوان. وَيُعَدُّ إقليمُ سيوارينجين أحدَ مراكز إنتاج الباتيك الواقع في منطقة تشيربون. وتعكسُ هذه الخصائص القيم النموذجيَّة للثقافة المحليَّة، التي تُعَدُّ هُوِيَّةَ المنطقة. تركِّزُ هذه الدراسة على الكشف عن تفرُّد الزخارف واستخدام الألوان الطبيعيَّة كاستراتيجيَّة للتعبير عن القيم الثقافيَّة المحليَّة.

**المنهجيَّة:** تستخدم هذه الدراسة منهجًا وصفيًّا نوعيًّا؛ إذ جُمِعَت البياناتُ عبر الملاحظات الميدانيَّة، والمقابلات، والتوثيق.

**النتائج:** بناءً على نتائج الدراسة، تبيَّنَ أنَّ نمط زخارف باتيك سيوارينجين يعكسُ حياة مجتمع متجانس مع الطبيعة. في هذا السياق، لا يُعَدُّ الباتيك مجرَّدَ منتج ثقافي، بل هو أيضًا تعبيرٌ عن التجربة الحياتيَّة اليوميَّة للمجتمع، التي تشكِّلُ وحدةً ثقافيَّةً متكاملة.

**الاستنتاج:** يُعَدُّ التعبيرُ عن أسماء الزخارف، والزخارف نفسها، والباتيك "الطبيعي" سِمَةً مميِّزَةً لإقليم سيوارينجين، التي ارتبطت -دون وعي- بشخصيَّة الثقافة المحليَّة وتعبِّرُ عن هُوِيَّة أفرادها الثقافيَّة.

**الكلمات الدالة**: باتيك سيوارينجين، التصاميم، الألوان الطبيعيَّة، القيم الثقافيَّة المحليَّة، الهُوِيَّة الثقافيَّة.

## 1. Introduction

Batik is one of the intangible cultural products that have various processes, both coloring techniques and motifs. Indonesian batik is included in the intangible cultural heritage of humanity that has been recognized by UNESCO, so that its existence is a national asset that must be maintained and preserved (Arni & Ciptandi, 2021; Dewi, 2012; Eskani et al., 2023; Hakim, 2018; Soemardi, 2023). Making batik requires special skills due to the various complicated motif and coloring techniques. The journey of batik in Indonesia has been a long history. Its emergence is not only as a cloth that has motifs and colors, but more than that it has beauty, techniques, processes and even stories, meanings and backgrounds of the cultural values of the batik. Although it has the same process stages, it can be found that each particular region has special characteristics such as different color characters and motifs. The background of determining the motifs in batik is usually hereditary or based on the background of local stories, existing decorative motifs and patterns, their functions and uses, and can even come from the innovation, expression or creativity of the craftsmen themselves (Machdalena et al., 2023a; Nursalim & Sulastianto, 2016; Putri HK. & Wulandari, 2019; Sahara et al., 2024; Woelandhary et al., 2024).

The discussion on batik has been carried out by various researchers, both in terms of motifs, coloring techniques, characteristics, processes, and innovations of batik itself. This research is based on the development of batik, which is increasingly diverse in production and innovation. The development of motifs and coloring has largely not used local techniques or values, some call it a shift in local cultural values in batik. According to Widagdo (1997) this is a common occurrence in historical stages, namely the tug-of-war between tradition and modernization. This shows that development and change are inevitable, but it is still important to maintain and preserve traditional cultural heritage as the identity and wealth of the nation. Although certain values may no longer be relevant, with a good understanding of traditional culture, we can choose and adapt values that are still valuable and relevant today. Thus, the conflict between tradition and modernization can be resolved in a balanced way, and both can be respected. The advantages of traditional batik remain a special attraction with irreplaceable cultural values.

Research on modern batik with new techniques has been widely carried out. Some of them use algorithmic and computerized features. The advantages are increasing accuracy and reducing time complexity (Nurhaida et al., 2020). In addition, similar to other batik competition techniques, namely designing fractal batik motifs using the Julia set technique, the results of which can help batik designers in creating fractal batik motifs (Isnanto et al., 2020; Sahara et al., 2024). Traditional batik research has also been widely conducted, deepening the meanings of the motifs, the appearance of the batik motifs, and the process and coloring of the traditional batik itself. One of these studies is the statement that classic palace batik is made as a manifestation of Javanese cultural values with the provisions of batik patterns and their use. In addition, the study explains more deeply the decorative variety of Cirebon palace batik motifs, which combine elements of various religions and cultures (Nursalim & Sulastianto, 2016). The identity of traditional batik, especially those originating from Java, is still a special attraction for urban communities. However, in its development, there are also motifs that have shifted the function and form of batik, which have also been adjusted to their use (Woelandhary et al., 2024). The development of the Conservation Batik concept is also important because traditional batik is starting to shift as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The existence of stamped batik, the pollution process, and new designs are consequences of the transformation of the batik industry towards a creative industry. Conservation Batik is proposed to answer all threats to traditional batik in terms of technique, process, and motif (Syamwil, 2018). Various studies are also a way to maintain the existence of batik, in addition to encouraging young batik craftsmen initiated by young academic activists from art schools or universities as a step to maintain batik as a cultural heritage of the nation (Hakim, 2018).

Of the various batik motifs mentioned above, batik from Cirebon remains an attraction that is inseparable from the origin of the development of batik motifs in Indonesia. This is because Cirebon has a cultural diversity with influences from various countries such as China, Arabia, India, the Netherlands, and others. This interaction also brings various elements of foreign culture such as language, food, clothing, and customs. However, despite acculturation, Cirebon maintains the authenticity of its culture and combines it with outside influences to create a unique culture that is different from other regions in Indonesia. Cirebon batik patterns are heavily influenced by foreign cultures, including China, India,

Gujarat, and Arabia. With the presence of the palace as the center of government (sultanate) in Cirebon, two cultural patterns were formed, namely the Palace and the Coast (general public). Based on the history of the palace, several classic Cirebon batik designs emerged such as the *Mega Mendung motif, Paksinaga Liman, Patran Keris, Singa Payung, Singa Barong, Banjar Balong, Ayam Alas*, and others. Currently, Cirebon batik tends to follow the tastes of consumers from various regions, so that the colors of Cirebon batik are more attractive and dynamic (Handayani, 2018).

Unlike the motifs and colors of Cirebon batik which is famous for its center in Trusmi, Ciwaringin batik has different motifs. This difference is clearly visible in the motifs and colors. In general, Trusmi batik has classic and modern motifs. Classic motifs generally reflect palace batik, while modern batik motifs follow consumer tastes with rich and diverse motifs adapted to the present. Ciwaringin batik motifs have distinctive characteristics, including Ciwaringin batik motifs that do not depict living creatures in their entirety and use natural dyes, so the colors of the batik are soft and appear messy.

This study focuses on Ciwaringin Batik, which is one of the centers that makes batik that uses natural dyes. Ciwaringin Batik plays a role in maintaining the existence of Cirebon batik. Approximately 220 Ciwaringin batik artisans are the main human resources producing quality batik. These Ciwaringin Batik artisans come from Ciwaringin District, Cirebon Regency. Although part of Cirebon and influencing the existence of Cirebon batik, Ciwaringin motifs have different characteristics and can express the local cultural values of Ciwaringin especially. The purpose of this study is to reveal the local cultural identity of Cirebon, especially Ciwaringin District through the names of motifs, batik motifs and natural colors of Ciwaringin batik.

## 2. Research Methodology

Using qualitative with a descriptive approach, this study was based on the phenomena, thoughts and social activities of Ciwaringin batik craftsmen. The initial step in collecting data was through literature studies related to the research topic. Literature studies were also conducted in various libraries and government agencies related to basic information about batik and the conditions of the local community. Furthermore, field data tracing was carried out through observations in Ciwaringin District, Cirebon, by conducting various interviews and documentation. This field study was conducted to see the factual conditions of the Ciwaringin community and to describe the conditions of society and the development of batik in Ciwaringin.

In the interview process, the first stage carried out was through a retrospective interpretation approach, namely an effort to reconstruct the true meaning or truth. The second step was prospective interpretation, which explicitly accepts the uncertainty of meaning. In relation to the study of the philosophical and symbolic meaning of palace batik motifs, both can be used as study approaches. Nursalim & Sulastianto (2016) stated that the approach is absolute truth, while prospective interpretation has a freer understanding without being bound by dogma. The informants in this data collection were selected based on the research needs who had the capacity to answer the research questions. After conducting the interview, the author made a transcription of the interview to be further analyzed and developed in written form. At this stage, the author conducted source criticism to avoid subjectivity, so that the data obtained tended to be factual. When experiencing a lack of data, the author conducted several additional interviews to strengthen the description and explanation. After all the data was collected and analyzed, the author synthesized the data to be described in written form.

The results of this study are expected to enrich the literature related to batik in Ciwaringin Cirebon, Indonesia. In addition, the information in this article is also expected to provide a factual picture of batik in the Ciwaringin community and show the cultural identity of its people.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### *3.1 Cirebon and Batik*

Ciwaringin batik cannot be separated from Cirebon batik because the geographical locations of Cirebon and Ciwaringin are close together. However, both areas have their uniqueness in batik crafts.

The geographical location of Cirebon on the north coast of Java gave birth to inevitable shipping and trade activities.

With the rapid development of Cirebon Port in the late 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century, Cirebon Port in that period emerged as the heart of the city and the driving force of the economic development of the Cirebon region. The existence of Cirebon Port is one of the four largest ports on the island of Java. Another factor is that many nations and religions visited Cirebon as a center of trade in the past. So that there was acculturation and fusion in social and cultural life that formed a new identity. The results of cultural acculturation from the trade route in Cirebon also influenced the style of the building, one of which was the Keraton Kesepuhan Cirebon building. The results of cultural acculturation in the style of the building also have a role as inspiration for Cirebon batik motifs. The Kasepuhan Palace building in Cirebon has various ornaments that blend Javanese, Indian, Arabic, Persian, European and Chinese. The buildings in Cirebon generally come from the reign of Islamic kings (Kartika et al., 2020; Nurdiyanti & Na'am, 2020; Indonesian Cultural Partners Foundation Team, 1982).

The Cirebon batik motif itself is one of the results of the acculturation of various cultures. The Cirebon batik pattern has palace and coastal batik patterns. The influence of various cultures makes Cirebon batik unique and depicts Cirebon culture itself, both in terms of intra-aesthetic and extra-aesthetic aspects (Casta, 2018). The decorative motifs of Cirebon batik are adapted from the combination of imaginary animals in the Cirebon carriage. In Cirebon, there are two carriages, namely the Singa Barong carriage in the Kesepuhan Palace and the Peksi Naga Liman carriage in the Kanoman Palace. These two chariots symbolically represent the fusion of Chinese, Arabic, and Hindu cultures which are manifested in the form of an imaginary animal with a dragon's head, lion's hooves and horns or Liong (Chinese culture), a winged horse's body or buraq (Islamic culture) with a trunk that resembles an elephant or Ganesha (Hindu culture). If the term Singa Barong is taken from the word *barung* which means mixture, combination, or blend, then Peksi (barong) Naga (Liong) Liman (elephant), is taken from the combination of its forms (Djumena, 1990).

The characteristics of Cirebon batik take the form or image of the surrounding nature, folklore; and reflection of local beliefs or views. The background of the motif has a large area, and the shape of the thin outline motif is the same. The batik pattern generally uses an ivory yellow background color which is the typical color of Cirebon. This happens during the melorod process so that the base color of the fabric is not clearly white (Djumena, 1990; Nursalim & Sobandi, 2020). Cirebon batik craftsmen are found in the Trusmi area. He is a supplier to meet the needs of the palace with batik motifs that have philosophical meaning. In addition to the needs of the palace, Trusmi batik also produces coastal batik styles that are more dynamic and follow market tastes (Handayani, 2018).

### *3. 2. Ciwaringin Batik*

In Cirebon, several batik centers still survive to this day. The survival of batik in Cirebon cannot be separated from the strength of human resources as batik craftsmen. Ciwaringin Village itself is located in Cirebon Regency which borders Majalengka Regency. According to (Kudiya et al., 2016), in Cirebon Regency itself there are two sub-districts that focus on the batik industry, namely Plered District and Ciwaringin District. Batik in Ciwaringin was introduced by scholars from Babakan Ciwaringin. Islamic boarding schools were also established, and their students were taught to make batik until this batik activity spread throughout the Ciwaringin area (Machdalena et al., 2023a). This widespread batik activity is carried out by the Ciwaringin community as a side activity besides farming (Casta, 2015).

The advantage of Ciwaringin batik is in the manufacturing process which uses natural dyes and motifs that are also adapted from nature. According to Casta (Casta, 2015), the characteristics of Ciwaringin batik motifs look straightforward and simple, with natural dyes making the batik look softer.

#### *3.2.1. Naming of Ciwaringin Batik*

One factor that characterises a region's culture is the use of language. From a linguistic perspective, everything needs to be named. To name objects, phenomena, events is done using language (nouns). Batik is the same, every time a batik motif is created, its creator gives a name to his work. The naming of this batik motif is adjusted to the theme, philosophy, and region where the batik was created. The name of the batik motif as a mediator of culture, language (name) can also indicate socio-economics that refer to individuals, status, and the dynamics of the society they represent which are

reflected in the name of the batik motif.

One of the uniqueness of Ciwaringin batik is the names of batik motifs which are named using the local language (Cirebon language), for example the names of batik motifs *Dlorong Bunga* (floral motif with diagonal lines), *Rajeg Wesi* (Iron Fence), *Gribigan* (woven bamboo or wood motifs (symbolizing the structure of the *gibrikan* (building for drying seafood) )), *Pring Sedapur* (bamboo that grows in one clump), *Desa Ciwaringin* (Ciwaringin Village), *Motif Jatira* (teak tree), *Motif Babakan* (region ), *Motif Merak (*Peacock*), Motif Ikan Cupang* (a type of fish called betta fish), *Motif Raga Sawangan* (self-reflection/view on life), etc. The creator of this batik motif gave his batik work a name using Cirebon language because that language is the everyday language of the Ciwaringin people. In socializing, the people of Ciwaringin Village use the local language, namely *Basa Cerbon* (Cirebon Language). Cirebon itself is a language spoken on the north coast of West Java. Although some names refer to objects in the vicinity, the language of the name of the object is Cirebon so that it will be a different name from the names of objects in general and characterizes the local identity. According to Machdalena (2022), naming batik motifs is often based on the place, language, nature, environment, culture where the batik motif is located, and can even be different in each village even in the same province.

This naming is one of the most important factors that determines the need for a name for an object to appear is the influence of the surrounding environment and the creator's desire to increase the exclusivity of his work. When choosing a name for an item, a person often does not invent something new but simply gives a name and tries to immortalize it. The use of names on certain products is one of the most ancient traditions that has long been practiced (Tkachenko, 2019). Tkachenko further stated that there are appropriate names for these unique objects to create a background for the creator and his life that distinguishes individual details, reflecting his thought processes, hobbies, customs, and observations; depicting objective reality; revealing the inner world of the creator and his creativity. Thus the creation of the name of this batik motif is inseparable from the culture, the language of the creator which can be said to show the cultural identity of the creator.

*3.2.2 . Motifs and Symbolic Meanings of Ciwaringin Batik*

Each region has its own characteristics in batik motifs. Likewise, Ciwringin has its own regional motifs. The process of discovering the symbolic meaning of the Ciwaringin Batik motif was carried out through an interview process relying on two main informants who are experts in the field. These selected informants are craftsmen as well as retail owners who market Ciwaringin's typical batik. The journey and experience of the informants as craftsmen and batik entrepreneurs are able to represent in seeing the background and meaning of the emergence of batik motifs and become witnesses in the development and phenomenon of Ciwaringin batik. The informants participated in the community environment whose social activities were predominantly as batik craftsmen. Based on an interview with the owner and artisan of Ciwaringin batik, Muhamad Sujai (December 2023 at the Ciwaringin Batik Studio), it was stated that the distinctive motif of Ciwaringin batik lies in its ornamental images. The images painted on the plain cloth are ornaments found around the artisan, which are seen by the artisan every day, so that these objects have crystallized in the artisan's mind. Chernyh argues that ornaments are considered one of the means that can provide "perfection" to objects seen every day, thus forming the artisan's worldview that has accumulated over a long time (Chernyh, 2020). Therefore, when making batik, the artisans no longer use patterns but they directly draw ornaments on the plain cloth. The motifs painted based on the surrounding environment are what eventually become local identities because they indirectly depict the conditions of the Ciwaringin Village area and are expressed in batik motif works. The community, especially craftsmen, recognize the shape of their surroundings and indirectly become a distinctive concept for Ciwaringin motif works. In general, the main motif in a batik has a shape that resembles a symbol in the form of flora and fauna, places, or other objects (Jumariah et al., 2022).

Basically, every batik motif has an implied and explicit meaning both in the motif and the color. In general, batik has motifs and patterns that have philosophical meanings. According to Kudiya (Kudiya & Atik, 2020), these philosophical meanings are symbolic, mythological, and spiritual. Some of the motifs above can be found and made directly in Ciwaringin. The featured motifs include *Pring Sedapur*, and so on. The motif elements used are nature and plants, places, events. Ciwaringin Batik motifs reflect the aesthetic-symbolic, moral-philosophical, and creative economic values of the

supporting community (Putri HK. & Wulandari, 2019). The motifs used in Ciwaringin Batik are not only for visual beauty but also reflect the relationship between humans and nature and plants. These aesthetic-symbolic values teach us about the natural wealth and biodiversity around us. In addition, Ciwaringin Batik also has moral-philosophical values that symbolize the values of goodness, purity, and harmony in life. In the context of the creative economy, Ciwaringin Batik provides opportunities for its supporting communities. The philosophical meaning of Ciwaringin batik that will be analyzed are the batik motifs that are characteristic of Ciwaringin batik, and are only found in Ciwaringin. Although there are similarities in terms of the name and batik motif, these motifs are different from other batik motifs. The motifs and symbolic meanings of Ciwaringin batik that will be analyzed are the motifs, *Gribigan* (woven bamboo/*bilik*), *Pring Sedapur* (a clump of bamboo trees), *Desa Ciwaringin, Motif Jatira* (teak tree), *Motif Babakan*. These motifs are only found in Ciwaringin.

3.2.2.1 Symbolic Meaning of *Pring Sedapur* (a clump of bamboo trees) and *Gribigan* (woven bamboo/*bilik*), Batik Motifs

These two batik motifs are batik with bamboo ornaments, the *Pring Sedapur* (a clump of bamboo trees) and Gribigan (woven bamboo/*bilik*) batik motifs are made from bamboo. The symbolic meaning of bamboo for the Ciwaringin community is togetherness. Spices are plants that grow in clusters, bamboo trees cannot grow alone. The Ciwaringin community lives by helping each other, respecting each other and solidarity in family or society. This term is often used to describe close relationships between siblings, friends, or communities who always support each other in any situation. Although in the village every house produces batik they help each other, one of which is if they run out of dyes or anything for batik needs they will come to their neighbors to borrow which is then returned according to the agreement. They provide information to each other if there are batik exhibitions in various cities. For craftsmen and entrepreneurs who can participate in exhibitions, they always participate in exhibiting their works. Not all craftsmen who have studios can participate in exhibitions. Entrepreneurs and craftsmen who participate in exhibitions will bring batik from their neighbors who are unable to participate in exhibitions.

The Sundanese word for bilik is a woven material made of bamboo. The bamboo is cut thinly along the bamboo. These thin pieces of bamboo are woven into a woven shape, forming a large square according to the length of the bamboo. Then, this ruangan is beautified by smoothing its surface so that it is not sharp and polished. The results can be used as house floors, walls, and ceilings. In general, the residents' houses of Ciwaringin Village are made of ruangan and have black tile or injuk roofs. Although currently such houses no longer exist, because permanent and beautiful buildings have replaced them, this ruangan remains crystallized in the minds of the craftsmen. According to Sujai (interview at the Ciwaringin Batik Gallery in December 2023) and Ella (at the batik studio on April 26, 2024 in Ciwaringin), there is a lot of bamboo growing around their homes in Ciwaringin Village. The craftsmen's memories of bamboo trees are so deep that the Gribigan batik motif was created. Craftsmen who are generally aged over 55 years from childhood to 30 years old live in houses where the house's floors, walls and ceilings are made of wood. Therefore, the room is very close in their lives.



**Figure 1. *Gribigan* Batik Motif**



**Figure 2. *Pring Sedapur* Batik Motif**

Source: Researchers
taken at Batik Studio Ella
on December 2023

Source: Researchers
taken at Batik Studio Ella
on December 2023

3.2.2.2 Symbolic meaning of *Batik Ciwaringin* (Ciwaringin Village) batik motif.

The word Ciwaringin consists of two words ci short for *cai* (water) and *waringin* (banyan tree). The village was named Ciwaringin Village formed from these two words. The symbolic meaning that is the basis of this motif is that water is very vital for human needs and the shady banyan tree is associated as a tree for shelter from the scorching rays of the sun that shine brightly so that the weather is very hot. Both water and banyan trees come from the Creator who created both for the welfare of human life. Therefore, humans who need safety in life both in the world and in the hereafter really need guidance, cooling, and protection from the Almighty. The creator of this batik motif associates his work with the greatness of God who has given him the idea to create this batik motif.



**Figure 3. Ciwaringin Village Batik Motif**
**Source: Researchers taken at Batik Studio Sujai April 2024**

3.2.2.3 Symbolic Meaning of *Raga Sawangan Motif* (Seeing the Soul)

The word raga means soul, while the word sawangan according to the Tegal Javanese dictionary means to see. Thus the word raga sawangan can be interpreted as seeing the soul. The symbolic meaning of the *Raga Sawangan* batik motif is that the inner elements of humans can only be seen with the eyes of the heart. Therefore, humans who practice their religion well by doing everything that God commands and avoiding His prohibitions. All of these things are done routinely, then the person will reap the results. He will be devout, have a good relationship with God and humans, and live a peaceful life. This shows the attitude and character of the Ciwaringin community, which is steadfast in practicing their religion.

Ciwaringin Batik was born from a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) community with strong Islamic values. Therefore, an important finding in this study is that in Ciwaringin batik there are no ornaments of living creature motifs, which are drawn in their entirety. This is what distinguishes it from batik motifs from other regions. Fauna motifs are drawn vaguely or incompletely (Machdalena et al., 2023). Casta argues that craftsmen who work like this certainly cannot be separated from the cultural value system that covers their lives as individuals and as batik creators. The system of ideas as a tool of knowledge inherent in their minds is an effort to avoid depicting living creatures in a realistic visual way. This is natural because this batik grew from the *pesantren* tradition. The batik makers in Ciwaringin were originally from the *kyai* (religious leader) circle which was then continued by the craftsmen in the Kebon Gedang Block, because the number of students and pesantren activities was increasing. Although batik was continued by the craftsmen, the Islamic spirit in their work is still maintained to this day (Casta, 2015).



**Figure 4. *Raga Sawangan* Batik Motif**
**Source: Researchers taken at Batik Studio Sujai April 2024**

3.2.2.4 Symbolic meaning of the *Ikan Cupang* (Betta Fish) batik motif

The Betta Fish batik motif depicts fertility, well-being, and prosperity. Cupang Village. This village is a village whose population is mostly farmers. Therefore, the people of this village try in various ways to maintain soil fertility so that the harvest is good and will bring prosperity to its residents. The symbolic meaning in creating this motif is to represent several Cupang Villages which illustrate that to achieve fertility, well-being, and prosperity, it is necessary to continue to strive. In trying, it is necessary to base these steps in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

From the results of an interview with Sujai (at the Ciwaringin Batik Gallery in December 2023), most of the people of Cupang Village are Muslim, but in this case, some people practice other belief systems, for example: providing offerings (ngukus) when they are about to harvest rice, the aim is so that their harvest is abundant and does not fail. In other lives, the people of Cupang Village still carry out ceremonies related to the human life cycle, such as marriage, pregnancy, birth, and death.



**Figure 5. Betta Fish Batik Motif**
**Source: Researchers taken at Batik Studio Sujai April 2024**

### 3.3 Natural Color

In the past ten years, the enthusiasm for developing traditional batik using natural colors has increasingly emerged and is increasingly being carried out in several corners of the traditional batik craft industry. Likewise, producers and sellers of natural dyes have begun to mushroom in various corners of the city, so there is no reason for difficulty in using natural dyes or materials used as basic ingredients for natural dyes (Kudya, 2019).

Ciwaringin batik is unique in its coloring and decorative motifs compared to Batik Trusmi batik. Typical Ciwaringin coloring is produced from natural dyes, a batik tradition that has long developed in the Cirebon Coastal batik culture. Another finding is that Ciwaringin batik artisans transform nature as a source of philosophical ideas and care about environmental issues. Concern for the environment is proven by developing coloring techniques using natural dyes and avoiding synthetic (chemical) dyes (Prawira et al., 2020). The use of natural dyes in Ciwaringin batik can be said to be more environmentally friendly and utilizes resources so as to minimize related waste that does not pollute the environment (Tresnawati, et.al, 2020).

One of the natural dyes created by the artisans of Ciwaringin batik is derived from the bark of the mango tree. Initially, the process involves creating natural dyes, which necessitate the use of components such as bark, roots, flowers, fruit peels, or leaves, along with extraction techniques. The batik-making process encompasses seven distinct stages. These include the creation of batik patterns through canting, the application of wax known as nyanting, immersion in tro water, the dyeing of colors, the fixation of those colors, the pelorodan stage for wax removal, the drying of the fabric, and the implementation of environmentally sustainable waste management practices. Additionally, an IPAL system is utilized for waste disposal through filtration, ensuring that the use of natural dyes in batik production remains environmentally friendly. (Margareth, et.al, 2024). Table 1 shows the process of making natural dyes from mango peel and mahogany bark.

**Table 1 Shows the process of making natural dyes from mango peel and mahogany bark.**

| No | Stages of natural coloring agents | Process Stages | Picture |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The mango peels designated for use is to be sliced into small fragments. | Mango peels are sourced from various wooden furniture stores located in the Cirebon region. The processing of this waste material requires careful selection, as the production of natural dyes is most effective when utilizing fresh mango peels.<br><br>The chosen mango peels will serve as a natural dye, yielding a brownish-yellow hue, while mahogany bark will provide a brownish-red color. | <br> |
| 2 | The chosen mango peels is subjected to a soaking procedure. | The soaking of mango bark and mahogany bark is conducted over a period of one day, utilizing clean water for this process. It is essential that the bark is fully and uniformly submerged in the water. |  |

| No | Stages of natural coloring agents | Process Stages | Picture |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | After soaking for one day then do the boiling process | During the boiling process, which lasts for eight hours, the bark can be removed until the water solution is reduced to one-quarter of its original volume |   |
| 4 | The solution is extracted and distinguished from the pulp. | The mixture is passed through a sieve to eliminate any staining, ensuring that all utilized bark is effectively removed. |   |
| 5 | Ready to use dye solution | The dye solution is prepared for fabric dyeing, having been isolated from other dyes to prevent any mixing. |  |

**Source: (Margareth, Tresnawati, Putri, 2024)**

According to Table 1, the procedure for producing natural dyes from mango peel and mahogany bark consists of five distinct stages. This method is unique compared to other dyeing processes, as it initiates with a soaking stage (Kholila et al., 2020).

The natural dyes used to color Ciwaringin batik are the same as the natural colors used in Yogyakarta. Although it must be admitted that not all natural dyes are found in Ciwaringin. They are forced to look for them from other areas. The natural dyes that are often used by Ciwaringin batik craftsmen include the following.

**Table 2. Natural Coloring Table**

| Local plant names | Latin Names | The resulting color | Parts of the plant used |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indigo | *Indigofera tinctoria* | Blue | Leaf |
| Mahoni | *Swietenia mahagoni* | Brown | Stem and leaf |
| Mangga | *Mangifera indica* | Green | Bark and leaf |
| Mengkudu | *Morinda citrifelia* | Red | Root bark |
| Secang | *Caesaslpiana Sapapan L* | Red | Bark |
| Tingi | *Ceriops candolleana arn* | Brown | Bark |
| Tegeran | *Cudraina javanensis* | Yellow | Bark |
| Jambu biji | *Psidium guajava L* | Dark Green | Bark and leaf |
| Nangka | *Artocarpus integer* | Yellow | stem |
| Alpukat | *Persea Americana Mill* | Green, Brown | leaves, bark, fruit |
| Kembang sepatu | *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis L* | Purple | Flower |
| Manggis | *Garcinia manggostana L* | Light Brown | bark |
| Rambutan | *Nephelium lappaceum* | Light Brown | Rambutan fruit bark |
| Jengkol | *Pithecellobium jiringa* | Brown | bark |

**Source: (Achjadi, 2013; Casta, 2015; Kudya, 2019).**

The color produced from the fermentation process of Salaon leaf extract with the addition of lime can produce indigo paste which is used in batik coloring. Salaon plants (Indigofera tinctoria L) are used to produce blue color from the extraction of salaon leaves (Gultom et al., 2017). Indigofera leaf extract contains leuco indigo compounds, which have better quality than chemical dyes. Coloring with natural indigo dyes has better fastness results than chemical dyes. Coloring with natural indigo dyes has better coloring results because natural indigo dyes when entering the fabric fibers and oxidized which initially indigo is dispersed indigo turns into large molecules that are not easily released from the fibers so that the higher the fastness which results in quality (Gultom et al., 2017). The following can be seen the results of coloring using indigo plants.

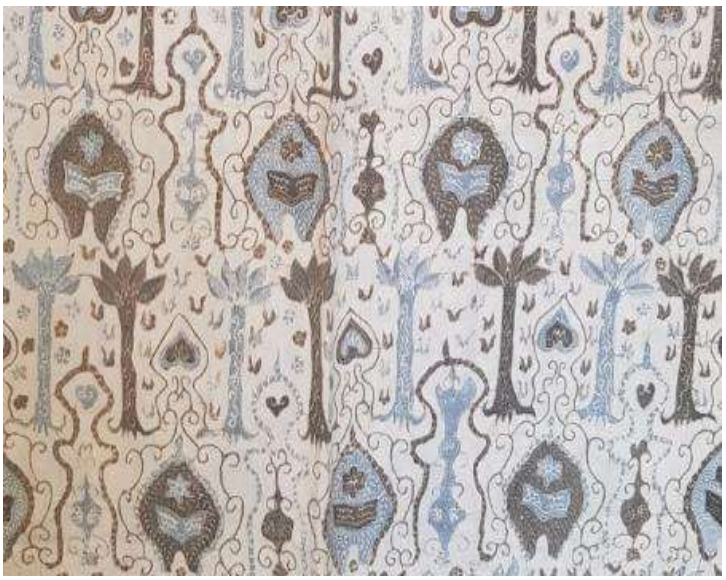


**Figure 6. Jatira Batik Motif using natural colour**
**Source: Researchers taken at Batik Studio Sujai April 2024**

## 4 Conclusion

Ciwaringin Batik, more than just visual beauty. Each motif produced is not merely a decoration, but a narrative that contains philosophy and values reflected in the lives of local communities that become their identity. Ciwaringin batik motifs that are taken from plant forms and without complete depictions of creatures (animals) are the uniqueness of Ciwaringin batik motifs. This uniqueness also makes it different from other types of batik in other areas. Each pattern and motif produced has a deep symbolic meaning, reflecting the lives of the community and the values they believe in. In this batik, there are flower motifs, such as the sun which symbolizes joy and friendship, and leaf motifs that symbolize balance and life that continues to move. Every line and color in it represents a story and philosophy that is closely related to tradition. The naming taken from the local language and the motifs consistently does not have ornaments of living creatures drawn in their entirety. This is in accordance with Islamic teachings which prohibit drawing living creatures exactly as they are. Ciwaringin batik embodies values that significantly benefit human existence. Furthermore, it is anticipated to cultivate positive traits, such as an appreciation for culture as a form of local wisdom and a commitment to cultural preservation, which in turn supports the conservation of the surrounding natural resources.The colors on the batik cloth will also have different characteristics from other regional batik because the colors produced are softer. In the process, education on natural dyes and Ciwaringin batik motifs can continue to be preserved both for batik enthusiasts as knowledge and as a step to protect nature and increase the creative economy for the Ciwaringin community.

The uniqueness of Ciwaringin batik in the naming, motifs and coloring make these three things the cultural identity of the Ciwaringin community, which continues to be maintained to this da

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