



The *Poleng* Motifs in Balinese Women's Clothing

Bali Kadın Giyiminde *Poleng* Motifleri

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Abstract

This article aims to find the meaning of the representation of the *poleng* motif in Balinese women's clothing. The issues are as follows: 1) How is the *poleng* motif represented on Balinese women's clothing? and 2) Does the *poleng* motif in Balinese women's clothing have a symbolic communication meaning?. In traditional Balinese culture, the *poleng* motif in Balinese women's clothing has a bad meaning. Most Balinese women note that *Poleng* patterned clothing is used in a cultural context, not because it has a bad meaning. Qualitative methods were heavily relied upon in writing this article, starting with collecting primary data

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from informants such as *pecalang* and community leaders. Secondary data sources were obtained from ancient Balinese literature and research journals through library research. Data analysis uses symbol theory and reception theory, which are operationalized qualitatively and interpreted. Results from the study show that: 1) The way the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing representation is sacred, sets forth a task identity, and is the identity of Balinese fashion identity; and 2) The *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing always has a symbolic communicative meaning in traditional ceremonial activities. Balinese women who use the *poleng* motif prioritizes the representation of fashion identity rather than profession or *kawisesan* in symbolic communication in a cultural context.

Keywords: *meaning, representation, poleng motif, balinese women's clothing.*

Öz

Bu makale Balili kadın giyiminde *poleng* motifinin temsilinin anlamını bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Konular şu şekildedir: 1) *Poleng* motifi Bali kadın giyiminde nasıl temsil edilmektedir?; 2) Bali kadın giyimindeki *poleng* motifinin sembolik bir iletişim anlamı var mı?. Geleneksel Bali kültüründe Bali kadın kıyafetlerindeki *poleng* motifinin kötü bir anlamı vardır. Balili kadınların çoğu, *Poleng* desenli giysilerin kötü bir anlamı olduğu için değil, kültürel bir bağlamda kullanıldığını ifade ediyor. *Pecalang* ve topluluk liderleri gibi kaynak kişilerden birincil verilerin toplanmasıyla başlayarak, bu makalenin yazılmasında büyük ölçüde niteliksel yöntemlere güvenildi. İkincil veri kaynakları, eski Bali literatüründen ve araştırma dergilerinden kütüphane araştırması yoluyla elde edildi. Veri analizi, niteliksel olarak işlevselleştirilmiş ve yorumlanmış sembol teorisini ve alımlama teorisini kullanır. Çalışmanın sonuçları şunları göstermektedir : 1) *Poleng* motifinin Bali kadın giyimindeki temsil biçimi kutsaldır, görev kimliği ve Bali moda kimliğidir; ve 2) Balili kadın kıyafetlerindeki *poleng* motifi, geleneksel törensel etkinliklerde her zaman sembolik iletişim anlamı taşır. *Poleng* motifini kullanan Balili kadınların kültürel bağlamda simgesel iletişimde meslek ya da *kawisesan*'dan çok moda kimliğinin temsilini ön plana çıkarmasıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *anlam, temsil, poleng motifi, bali kadın giyimi.*

1. Introduction

The *Poleng* motif is very familiar in Balinese society. *Poleng* is the name of the checkered pattern. The *Poleng* motif is a checkered pattern. According to Hasan (2015), the *Poleng* motif consists of at least two contrasting colors that are composed regularly and in balance. The dominant colors of this checkerboard pattern resemble those of a chessboard, namely black and white. In Balinese, "poleng" refers to objects that have a checkered pattern and are black and white in color. Therefore, the game board of chess can be called "poleng" in Balinese. Motifs resembling a chessboard on large trees, *pelinggih*, and statues in Bali are called *poleng*.

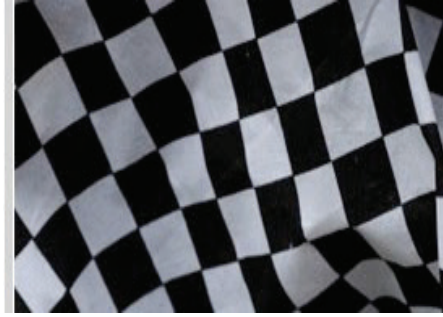


Figure 1. *Poleng* Motif
(Source : Pageh, 2021)

From the picture above, you can see a *poleng* motif. *Poleng* in the *Pulasari* chronicle has a relationship with the *Samprangan* prince. Historically, *I Dewa Bagus Dharma* is said to have wanted to find the king of *Samprangan* outside the palace. Prince *Samprangan*'s wish stems from his mother's answer about the whereabouts of his father. According to *I Dewa Bagus Dharma*, the answer to the whereabouts of his father was ambiguous and still unclear, so the prince of *Samprangan* decided to look for the whereabouts of the *Samprangan* king together with the royal soldiers outside the palace. Outside the palace, a wanderer told the prince that the king of *Samprangan* was a handsome, tall, well-built, and dignified man with a *poleng*-patterned cloth who lived in a village. It was mentioned by the nomad that not a single villager dared to wear a *poleng*-patterned dress except for the king of *Samprangan*. The *poleng* motif in the chronicle of the *Pulasari* is shown as a clothing motif that is forbidden to the public. This is clearly reflected in the attitude of the village people, who do not dare to be presumptuous and are reluctant to wear *poleng* patterned clothes to honor their king.

Poleng motifs in the Balinese cultural tradition represent the stability and clarity of the relationship between *purusha* and *prakerti* elements. The white and black colors, which have the same proportions, are synonymous with the ideal relationship of *purusha* and *prakerti* in the Balinese cultural tradition. According to Sancaya in Wiasti (2006), when *prakerti* is a physical body, then *purusha* is a subtle body (*jiwatman*), and when *purusha* is a characteristic of the stable nature of the universe, then *prakerti* is a characteristic of the changing nature of the universe. When men are *purusha* and *prakerti* are women, it is expected that men and women have an irreplaceable, sustainable, and clear relationship in terms of status and roles (Wiasti, 2006).



Figure 2. *Poleng* motif on traditional Balinese clothing
(Source : Pageh, 2021)

From the picture above, you can see the use of the *poleng* motif in Balinese traditional clothing. *Poleng* as a clothing motif is more often used by men than by women in a cultural context. This cannot be separated from the influence of patriarchal ideology and the patrilineal kinship system in the Balinese cultural tradition, which prioritizes men as agents of the preservation of Balinese culture, agents of local culture, and agents of customary law. According to Astiti, Wiasti (2006) reveals that the preservation of Balinese culture cannot be separated from efforts to preserve *Hindu tattwa*-based culture, *awig-awig* support in the customary law system, and family inheritance, which are useful for controlling patrilineal relations.

Maintaining patrilineal relations is the main mandate in every patrilineal kinship system. According to Holleman and Koentjaraningrat in Sudarta (2006), the patrilineal kinship system in traditional culture has the following characteristics: 1) Kinship is calculated through the father's lineage, children become the father's right; 2) family property or parental wealth is inherited through the male lineage; 3) the newlyweds live permanently at the residence center of the husband's relatives in accordance with patrilocal customary provisions; 4) married women are considered to have severed ties with their own family and are not entitled to family inheritance; 5) the position of men is higher than that of women in managing the household and building community relations.

In securing and fostering relations between indigenous peoples, this *poleng* motif is often used by *pecalang* in Bali. According to traditional Balinese culture, *pecalang* is a man with the identity of a *poleng* patterned dress. Based on the regional regulation of Bali Province No. 4 of 2019, the obligation of the *pecalang* is to maintain order and security in traditional villages. In another sense, the *poleng* motif, as part of the *pecalang* identity, emphasizes the function of the social structure's security guard in Bali. Taking into account the patriarchal ideology and patrilineal kinship system, it is appropriate that the order and security of traditional Balinese cultural activities are borne by the men in each traditional village.

Apart from the *pecalang*, the *poleng* motif on Balinese clothing is often used by performers of traditional ceremonies at temples. Basically, Yasmini (2022) says that the traditional attire for men to wear in the temple is *udeng/destar*, clothes, *kamen*, *saput/umpal* while for women's traditional clothes, they use clothes/*kebaya*, cloth/*kamen* and shawls. Wahyuni et al. (2021) explains that the complete traditional attire for the temple for women is a headdress in the form of an ordinary bun or a hair bun decorated as needed, decorations on the body in the form of a *kebaya*, *sesenteng*, *wastra*, belt, *stagen*, and footwear. It is interesting to note that the *poleng* motif on men's clothing tends to have a good meaning, while the *poleng* motif on women's clothing tends to have a bad meaning. The good meaning of the *poleng* motif in men's clothing is greatly influenced by patriarchal ideology, patrilineal kinship systems and has a strong correlation with the functions of order and security in traditional Balinese cultural activities. Meanwhile, the bad meaning of the *poleng* motif on women's clothing has a strong correlation with mythology and mythical representations. According to Dewanti and Kameswari (2019), the representation of the *poleng* motif is grand, respectful, shy, and scary.

It is interesting to note that most Balinese women do not wear *poleng* motifs when carrying out activities in a cultural context. The representation of "spooky" is closely related to the bad meaning of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing. The growing stereotype that women wear *poleng* motifs to make them look scary is another obstacle. However, several Balinese women who wear *poleng*-patterned clothing admit that they do so not because it has a negative connotation. This phenomenon shows that there is no longer the influence of myth in symbolic communication, and there is the possibility of a new representation regarding the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing. This phenomenon raises a problem of symbolic communication in relation to the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing in the Balinese cultural tradition. The questions are: 1) How is the representation of the *poleng* motif in Balinese women's clothing? 2) What is the meaning of the symbolic communication of *poleng* motifs in Balinese women's clothing?.

2. Research methods

This article was successfully completed based on research that is oriented towards symbolic communication between *poleng* motifs and Balinese women in Bali. Qualitative methods are used in this study, bearing in mind that problem-solving descriptions require descriptive and visual data. Qualitative methods are known to be suitable methods for seeking the truth based on qualitative data (Kumar, 2019). All of the research's primary data on the meaning of the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing was collected based on interviews with informants and observation of the *poleng* motif. Berg & Lune (2018) explain that observation is a careful way of recording visual data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) say that obtaining qualitative data can be done with the help of interview guidelines and meeting informants. *Pecalang* and community leaders are the data sources in this study. Informants were selected as data sources based on purposive sampling. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), purposive sampling is a technique for determining informants in a planned manner from the start of the study based on certain qualifications. In addition, snowball sampling

was used. Berg and Lune (2018) revealed that snowball sampling is useful in determining informants based on continuous instructions until saturation is reached. In contrast to ancient Balinese literature and research journals, secondary data sources are related to the analysis of this research data. The secondary data for this research was successfully collected through a literature study. Kumar (2019) revealed that secondary data in qualitative research can be obtained through literature studies. Using reception theory and symbol theory, the entire set of successfully collected data was analyzed qualitatively and interpretively. Qualitatively, data elaboration can be assisted and clarified by using theories (Neumans, 2014). The representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is explained by symbol theory and further explained with the help of reception theory, whereas the meaning of symbolic communication in connection with the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is interpreted based on reception theory and explained with the help of symbol theory.

Results & discussion

4.1. Representation of *poleng* motifs in balinese women's clothing

After research, it can be stated that the *Poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing has a number of representations of magic, task identity, and Balinese fashion identity. The description of the explanation can be seen as follows :

4.1.1 *Sakti* as a Representation of Balinese Women's *Poleng* Clothing

For the Balinese people, Balinese culture is very thick with symbolic language. The expressive culture that characterizes the Balinese people formulates a lot of symbolic language. The expression is manifested configurationally, which includes the basic values. Dominant values include religious values, aesthetic values, solidarity values, and balance values. The value upheld is accumulated in the form of local wisdom. The *poleng* motif is one of the motifs that is valued and respected by the people of Bali. For the Balinese, the *poleng* motif has a very deep religious meaning.

In general, Balinese people associate the *poleng* motif with the concept of *rwa bhineda*, which is symbolized by black and white as a different duality. *Rwa bhineda* consists of two words, namely *rwa*, which means two, and *bhineda*, which means difference. As a result, *rwa bhineda* refers to the concept of difference that God Almighty created in order to create harmony and balance in the universe. According to A.A. Putu Sutarja, in an interview on August 7, 2021, he said that:

“.....the *poleng* motif symbolizes strength and is also a symbol of *rwa bhineda*...”.

Based on the informants above, the *poleng* motif refers to the relationship between *rwa* and *bhineda*. *Rwa bhineda* has a very deep meaning. As expressed by I Wayan Sukayasa in an interview on August 6, 2022, he said that :

“...the *poleng* motif actually has a very deep philosophical value...the philosophy of the *poleng* motif itself is about duality, where the white represents *purusha*, which is the spiritual

aspect, and the black symbolizes *prakerti*, which is the material aspect of the universe. The combination of spiritual and material aspects creates a magical effect that results in creation and religion. It is this aspect of spirituality that gives rise to the religious power that is realized in cloth for troop officers. “Magical power as part of the power of spirituality is expected to increase courage for those who use the *poleng* motif...”.

From the statement of the informant above, it can be seen that the meaning of the *poleng* motif is intended to increase the user’s courage in carrying out activities. As mentioned about the relationship between courage and the role of the troop apparatus, it can be observed that the soldiers of the *Mengwi* kingdom used the *poleng* motif because it represents courage (*wira-rasa*). In contrast to the *poleng* motif used by women’s clothing, it has a sacred meaning that tends to be negative. The meaning of *Sakti* here is synonymous with black magic, the myth of *Calonarang*, and *Kawisesan*. In traditional Balinese culture, *Kawisesan* refers to clever wizard and someone who is good at using magic for worldly purposes, so it is very rare for women to wear traditional clothes with *poleng* motifs during traditional ceremonies at temples.

The mythology of *Calonarang* in traditional Balinese culture is a myth about a powerful female character who is able to use supernatural powers for evil, a female character who is sacred and receives a gift from the Goddess *Durga*. The *Calonarang* of Balinese traditional culture is a figure to be feared. Therefore, the *Calonarang* performance involves many offerings and long rituals for the safety of the dancers. Thus, the Balinese who watch abstain from leaving the performance before it is finished, among others, for fear of harm. Apart from respecting their courage, they become legendary figures who are feared because of their magical powers.

The story of *Calonarang*, however, is a symbol of the struggle for human life in the engineering frame of Javanese history and culture. According to legend, this *Calonarang* myth has existed since the reign of King *Airlangga* with the title *Abhiseka Sri Maharaja Rakai Halu Sri Dharmawangsa Airlangga Anantawikramottunggadewa* in 1009–1042. Apart from *Negarakertagama* and the *Turun Hyang II* inscription, the *Calonarang* text mentions the event of King *Airlangga* dividing his kingdom into *Daha*, which was ruled by *Samarawijaya*, and *Janggala*, which was ruled by *Mapanji Garasakan*. The beginning of the story of *Calonarang* in Bali can be seen in *Prasraya*’s Snake Ejection. In the *Ularan Prasraya* ejection, it is stated that the king of *Gelgel*’s fleet succeeded in seizing the *Calonarang* text in several of his compositions in the form of art items such as masks after *Blambangan* was conquered by *Dalem Waturenggong* as king of *Gelgel*. Since the reign of *Dalem Waturenggong* as King of *Gelgel*, *Calonarang* texts have been performed in Bali. According to *Wirawan* (2019:12–13), evidence of *Calonarang* performances began to be found during the reign of the *Gelgel* king, *Dalem Waturenggong*.

Calonarang Mythology in Balinese traditional performing arts is always performed sacredly with a mystical atmosphere and seems scary. The staging of the story about this character is synonymous with *Leak*’s action as a perpetrator of black magic and death. On the one hand, in this show there are key figures as saints, spiritual practitioners whose role is to neutralize or dissolve the influence of evil forces from black magic actors. The importance

of neutralizing the influence of evil forces, the *poleng* motif has become a feature of the ritual aspects of traditional Balinese culture. *Poleng* cloth is used in *pelinggih*, in *sanggah*, *merajan* and yards, but no one has used it for clothing. In line with that, the *Calonarang* myth developed in traditional Balinese culture that when the *Poleng* cloth motif on women's clothing represents the supernatural power of the female figure, this is sacred.

Supernatural powers become an important part of the spiritual world of society, as represented by the abstract concept that always underlies religious practices in Balinese traditional culture. Their communication relationships with forces that are invisible to ordinary people have a large impact on his life's success and well-being. It is believed that in traditional Balinese culture, everything is influenced by the power of the *Niskala* universe. According to Clifford Geertz in Ardhana et al. (2015: 71-72), such beliefs have placed irrational thoughts or actions into a cultural context. There is a stereotype that Balinese men use *poleng* cloth to be brave and Balinese women use *poleng* cloth to make them powerful. On the one hand, the meaning of cultural protection from the *poleng* motif is believed to be more effective when used by Balinese men than by Balinese women. As the belief system is an integral part of traditional Balinese culture, it can be understood that the *poleng* motif is taboo when used as a material for women's clothing in the context of traditional Balinese cultural activities.

This cultural heritage is preserved patrilineal in Bali. Patriarchal ideology has a major influence with respect to forms of cultural activity in the traditional Balinese kinship system. This hierarchy places a greater form of responsibility on Balinese men than Balinese women in relation to cultural activities within the traditional Balinese kinship system. However, this position is inversely proportional to every implementation of Hindu religious rituals in Bali. Balinese women have a central position in making offerings and ceremonial facilities for the benefit of offerings and rites of life in Balinese traditional culture. In every ritual in the context of traditional Balinese culture, Balinese women are always busy with the burdens during the rituals and before the traditional ceremonies are carried out. According to Darmayoga (2021), not just any woman is allowed to take care of offerings and offerings because they are needed for the sacredness of the ceremony. Therefore, Balinese women have obligations and positions that are no less important than Balinese men in traditional Balinese ceremonial activities.

4.1.2 Representation of Task Identity in Poleng Patterned Balinese Women's Clothing

Since the heyday of the kingdom era in Indonesia, there have been quite significant changes in the culture of traditional Balinese society. Intensive communication between Balinese people and migrants from within and outside the country has had an impact on cultural acculturation events, cultural inculturation, and changes in Balinese people's thinking about the meaning of the *poleng* cloth myth. As a result, there has also been a change in the motive and meaning of using *poleng* cloth, especially for Balinese women.

In the modernization of Balinese society, Balinese women want gender equality in various contexts of Balinese life. Balinese women are sharing tasks with men such as carrying out income-earning activities to supplement family income, educating children, caring for homes including custom traditional activities. As was done by Balinese women in the village of Wangaya Gede, Penebel, Tabanan, Bali. Balinese women in the village of Wangaya Gede wearing clothes that are usually worn by *pecalang* in Bali. It turns out that their tasks are the same, but their clothes with *poleng* motifs are different. *Pecalang* is a Balinese man dressed in *poleng* cloth with a *pecalang* identity such as a name tag assigned to ensure the smooth running of traditional ceremonies. During the traditional ceremony in the village of Wangaya Gede, Penebel, Tabanan, a Balinese woman was assigned to ensure the smooth running of the traditional ceremony by using a uniform *poleng* motif on the neck of the *kebaya*, shawl, and the edges of the *kamen*, complete with name tags as *pecalang*.

The inappropriateness of Balinese women wearing *poleng* clothing during traditional ceremonies can be an exception based on traditional conventions that refer to the concept of *loka dresta* in Balinese traditional culture. *Loka dresta* is one part of the concept of *catur dresta* in Balinese traditional culture. According to Subanda in Gunawan (2014: 10), *loka dresta* is one of the traditional views that is upheld for community manners besides *purwa dresta*, *desa dresta*, and *sastra dresta*. All *dresta* are social ethics guidelines for Bali's indigenous peoples. In the customary convention in Wangaya Gede Village, the *loka dresta*, which supports gender equality through the similarity in meaning of wearing the *poleng* dress, seems to be stronger and more functional in fostering social ethics than the *purwa dresta*, which emphasizes the different meanings of wearing the *poleng* dress between Balinese men and women. In addition, the assignment of Balinese women as *pecalang* in traditional ceremonial activities in Wangaya Gede Village is a form of legitimacy for the appropriateness of Balinese women in *poleng* clothing in a cultural context. This confirms that Balinese women dressed in *poleng* clothes who serve as *pecalang* are not showing tolerance, but have become a mandate from the local culture that ignores stereotypes, making them powerful but less effective at protecting the *Calonarang* myth in Balinese traditional culture.

4.1.3 Representation of Balinese Fashion Identity from Balinese *Poleng* Women's Clothing Motifs

Apart from being an attribute of Balinese women's traditional clothing in connection with the task of securing traditional ceremonial activities, the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's traditional clothing can be a Balinese fashion identity. The Balinese fashion identity of Balinese women in traditional activities uses *kamen* with *poleng* motifs. The fashion meaning of identity representation in Balinese women's traditional clothing can be seen from the pattern of the *poleng* color combination.



Figure 3. At the *Pusering Jagat Pejeng* Temple in Bali, some of the Balinese women wearing patterns from the *poleng* cloth.

(Source : I Wayan Rai S., 2022)

Based on the picture above, it can be seen that there are Balinese women wearing *poleng* motifs when they are at the temple. The *poleng* color scheme used by women in traditional Balinese dress in the picture looks more beautiful than usual. Aesthetically, the *poleng* motif as a Balinese fashion identity is not only limited to the black-and-white gingham motif, but has developed into a black-and-white gingham motif with additional colors.

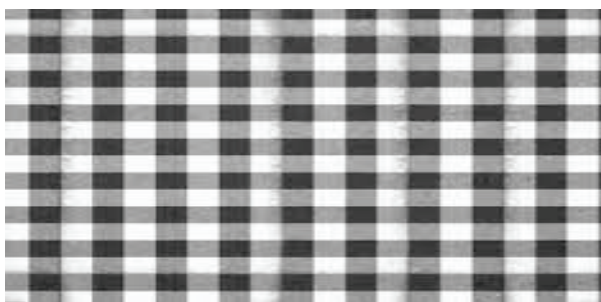


Figure 4. *Poleng* Cloth Motif with an Additional Color

(Source : Pageh, 2021)

Through the picture above, it can be seen that a model for developing *poleng* cloth motifs has become an innovation in traditional Balinese cultural activities. The development of the *poleng* motif as part of the Balinese fashion identity no longer seems to be a problem for

Balinese women who wear *poleng* clothing. This view was expressed by Cokorda Abhinanda Sukawati on August 17, 2021, at Pusering Jagat Temple :

“...actually, it is not a problem for women to use the *poleng* motif. The *Poleng* motif has an extraordinary beauty value, so it is suitable for anyone to use. “From a philosophical standpoint, the *poleng* motif has the meaning of protection...”

From the statement of the informant above, it can be seen that the *poleng* motif has been seen as appropriate to be the traditional fashion for Balinese women. The additional colors in the *poleng* motif on Balinese women’s clothing have more aesthetic meaning than the desire to show off their supernatural powers.



Figure 5. Red as an Additional Color in *Poleng* Motifs
(Source : Pageh, 2021)

Based on the picture above, it can be seen that there is a red color between black and white as an additional color in the *poleng* cloth motif, which can be used by users in a cultural context. The *poleng* motif with an additional color variant also differentiates them from the *pecalang* as a security unit for traditional activities. Thus, the meaning of protecting against the *poleng* motif as a Balinese fashion identity refers more to the function of clothing in general than having a magical meaning or professional identity. In other words, the *poleng* motif as a Balinese fashion identity in women’s clothing is a decorative pattern chosen based on the user’s taste to support cultural activities. According to Swandi et al. (2020), the characteristics of cultural elements can contribute to specific patterns of practice.

4.2 The Meaning of *Poleng* Motifs in Balinese Women’s Clothing as Symbolic Communication

Symbolic communication is communication that is carried out using certain symbols. Symbolic communication can be interpreted as a process of exchanging symbols that have been given meaning. According to James Lull in Jaeni (2012: 54), symbolic communication is the construction of meaning through the exchange of symbolic forms, where these symbols are the result of social action. The symbolic communication that occurs between users, *poleng* motives, and observers is as follows:

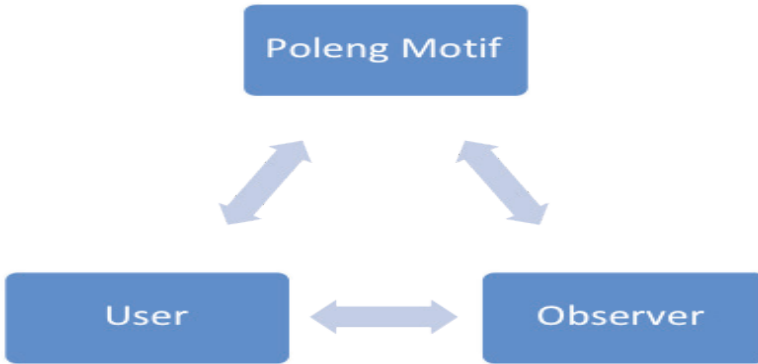


Figure 6. Symbolic Communication Chart

Communication that takes place between users and observers-users who have *poleng* motifs and observers who have *poleng* motifs- Communication that occurs has meanings that are channeled into behavior. Culture refers to communication behavior that is formed and patterned in order to give birth to habits with distinct and distinguishing characteristics. Therefore, the communication activities of members of a particular cultural community are a representation of the attitudes, basic values, and views of the culture they have. In addition, communication also strengthens these values and attitudes in their existence. Communication between users uses *poleng* motifs as a form of identity. These identities are present in the cultural sphere that surrounds them. In this case, the user is a woman. Users and observers constitute face-to-face communication. Communication between observers and the *poleng* motif presents an interpretation based on their culture. Interpretation is a type of cultural experience gained through interaction. Some of the meanings derived from the experiences experienced during the interaction process are translated into meaning.

Meaning is a form of response to the stimulus obtained by the communicator in accordance with the associations and learning outcomes that have been established. The meaning of denotation is a universal or general meaning based on direct designation. The meaning referred to by these various meanings is the most basic meaning (Sudaryat, 2008:23). It is called denotative meaning because this meaning is centered on or refers to a particular reference, concept or idea of an object. The meaning of denotation is objective because it directly refers to the object. The objectivity of the meaning of denotation depends on facts and can be separated from the context of meaningful events. The denotative meaning is called the proportional meaning because this meaning can be clearly understood through factual statements. In contrast to the connotative meaning, the figurative meaning does not directly show the subject, thing or object it refers to. Connotative meanings usually contain feelings, social memories, and character interpretations of objects. The objectivity of connotative meaning depends on the facts and the context of meaningful events. Connotative meaning is

a special meaning, ambiguous and even figuratively related to important events. The clarity of connotative meaning often depends on context, events, community and discourse. This meaning is often also called contextual meaning. Sudaryat (2008:25) says that connotative meaning can be said to be contextual meaning. Contextual meaning arises from the relationship between speech and the user's situation (Sudaryat, 2008:25). The integrity of meaning is a combination of four aspects, namely sense of understanding, feeling, tone, and intention of message.

Understanding aspects of the integrity of meaning in all contexts is part of the effort to understand meaning in communication. Therefore, it can be said that meaning is concluded from a statement, so the meaning and the object are very intertwined and integrated with each other. If a word has no relation to certain objects, events or circumstances, then its meaning cannot be obtained. Barthes in Baldwin (2019) uses the term "orders of signification" in understanding meaning. The orders of signification are divided into two, namely the first order of signification, which is the first order that includes the relationship of signifier, signified and sign. This first order is known as meaning. Next is the second order of signification, which is a mentality attached to signs or markers under genealogical influence. This new use then becomes a representation. According to Baldwin based on Barthes ideas (2019), representation is synonymous with ideological operations, which are recognized as myths. Myth is built by a chain of pre-existing meanings. Myth is a secondary level of meaning. In myth, a signifier can have several signifiers. Myth functions to reveal and provide justification for the dominant values prevailing in a certain period.

Since ancient times, the *poleng* motif on Balinese clothing has meant "daring to protect." The meaning of "daring to protect" is contained in the *poleng* patterned clothes when used by the soldiers of the *Mengwi* kingdom to protect the king and when used by the *pecalang* to maintain the security of traditional activities. The meaning of "daring to protect" does not seem to apply when the *poleng* motif is used for women's clothing that is oriented towards fashion and crimes based on black magic practices. As a fashion, the *poleng* motif on women's clothing can add praise to users, ward off stereotypes, eliminate boredom in monotonous social activities, and build a positive image for Balinese cultural activities. As a representation of supernatural powers, the *poleng* motif on women's clothing connotes crime, heresy, and threats to the security of social activities in a cultural context. The negative representation of this *poleng* motif correlates with the *Calonarang* myth that people fear in traditional Balinese culture.

The negative representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is increasingly fading along with the modernization of Balinese society. Many Balinese people who think rationally have failed to prove that the existence of crime, misguidance, and threats to cultural activities is the cause of the waning of magical meanings and the strengthening of the meaning of identity associated with the use of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing. The meaning of the Balinese fashion identity from the *poleng* motif on women's clothing strengthened after various innovations in women's clothing with the *poleng* pattern became available. In its development, the symbolic interaction

between the Balinese, who use the *poleng* motif, and the immigrants has intensified. Cultural inculturation and acculturation of Balinese people with immigrants have had a significant impact on changing perspectives, which have further strengthened the meaning of Balinese identity while obscuring the magical meaning in relation to the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women’s clothing. However, it turns out that there are still a few Balinese women who wear clothes with *poleng* motifs in a cultural context. As I Wayan Sukayasa said in an interview on August 6, 2022:

“...rarely do Balinese women use the *poleng* motif...”.

Based on the informant’s statement above, it can be seen that Balinese women rarely wear *poleng* patterned clothing because it can be understood that it is caused by the influence of more and more choices of Balinese fashion identity motifs that are more aesthetically pleasing, apart from the problem of stereotypes and belief in the *Calonarang* myth in Balinese traditional culture. Based on this description, a matrix of the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women’s clothing can be compiled as follows:

Matrix 1. Changes in *Poleng* Motifs in Balinese Women’s Clothing

Indicator	Past Period	Current Period
Symbol	The motif has a checkered pattern resembling a chessboard with a mix of black and white.	The motif has a checkerboard pattern resembling a chessboard and involves a combination of black and white colors, which are sometimes interspersed with gray or red between black and white.
Representation	<i>Kawisesan, Sakti</i>	Professional identity, fashion identity
Meaning	Criminality, delusion, magical threats, Balinese cultural identity	Balinese cultural identity

Based on the matrix above, it can be seen that the *poleng* motif on Balinese women’s clothing has a meaning as a symbol of Balinese cultural identity. Since ancient times, the *poleng* motif has been sacred and is known to consist of symbolic patterns based on a checkered pattern with a combination of black and white colors that have magical meanings. In *kawisesan*, Balinese women who wear the *poleng* motif on their clothing are often communicated as having frightening powers or being clever. The magnitude of the influence of this stereotype in symbolic communication has resulted in the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women’s clothing, which has the meaning of evil, criminality, misguidance, and magical threats when used in women’s clothing. The meaning of criminality, evil, misdirection, and magical threats fades in the current period of secularization and the strengthening of the meaning of Balinese cultural identity in connection with the development of fashion and profession in symbolic communication. The change in the meaning of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women’s clothing is accompanied by a change in the *poleng* motif, which has a richer color combination.

The negative meaning of the *poleng* cloth motif on Balinese women's clothing is increasingly fading with the development of symbolic communication. According to Pradana (2019), meaning fading can be understood as a result of social interactions that fail politically, economically, culturally or in terms of symbolic interactions. The disappearance of magical threats is a very normal result of secularization and profanization. The disappearance of magical threats and heresy is positive for the industrial revolution, modernization, and urbanization, and is an advance in secularization and profanization. Losing the magical element or growing distrust of the effects of magic is progress and is positive when accompanied by better and clearer rationalization (Pursen, 2018). In another sense, the meaning of Balinese cultural identity from the *Poleng* cloth motif on Balinese women's clothing is far more positive for users in the development of symbolic communication in the cultural context.

4.2 Discussion

The meaning is implicit in the function of components and elements to establish relationships for form (Dharmika and Pradana, 2021). The form of a simple relationship between two opposite but inseparable elements such as day and night is a reflection of the proportion of black and white in the form of the *poleng* cloth motif (Dewanti and Kameswari, 2019). The characteristics of cultural manifestations cannot be separated from the crystallization of strategic action patterns amid the effects of social change (Atmaja et al., 2019; Pradana, 2021; Dharmika et al., 2022). The process of symbolic communication between Balinese who use the *poleng* motif and immigrants in modernization has had an impact on changes in motifs, representations, meanings, and attitudes of Balinese women towards the characteristics of *poleng*-patterned clothing. The *poleng* cloth motif became the inspiration for developing the *Batik Sekar Jagad* motif (Rokhani and Haryanto, 2020). Furthermore, according to Ferindra (2020), the *poleng* cloth has become an inspiration for repurposing old white shirts and dresses to create new models by redesigning with patchwork techniques. Sonhaji et al. (2017) revealed that the quality of this *poleng* cloth motif is increasingly visible when it is based on the actualization of *mulat sarira*.

Poleng cloth motifs remind us of the importance of equality and balance in life. Dewanti and Kameswari (2019) say that the *poleng* cloth motif has been sacred because it is needed to maintain balance through ceremonies and reminds of the practice of *rwa bhineda*'s values of equality. The combination of the equal relationship between the values of *rwa bhineda* and the balance of ceremonies can be useful in preventing anxiety disorders. Similar to Mastiningsih's (2020) statement, cultural stimuli can be useful in reducing the perpetrator's anxiety and fear of life's problems.



Figure 7. The use of the *Poleng* Cloth Motif for Ceremonial Balance and Equality for *Rwa Bhineda*
(Source : Pageh, 2021)

Specific practices can emphasize the nature of cultural values (Arniati et al., 2020; Atmaja et al., 2020). From the picture above, it can be observed that the *poleng* cloth motif is used to mark the privileges of sacred objects and sacred objects in temples. In temples, checkered motifs with red or gray accents are used to distinguish the glory and balance the vibrations of sacred objects, in addition to black and white checkered motifs. However, the picture does not show women wearing *poleng* motifs. Actualization of Balinese women's activities in *poleng* clothing is also very rarely found in a cultural context. Meanwhile, women who wear *poleng* clothing in a cultural context prioritize symbolic communication as a fashion identity rather than task and *kawisesan* identities.

The cultural context is a conducive domain for the sovereignty of textual truth, which involves social practices based on cultural capital (Rai S., et al., 2019). Cultural representation can become a cultural identity when it is empowered by actors in a cultural context (Ruastiti and Pradana, 2020). The representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is communicated through sacred texts, symbols of task identity, and Balinese fashion identity patterns. *Sakti's* representation of the *poleng* motif is influenced by the actors' beliefs about the *Calonarang* myth in Balinese traditional culture. Stereotypes based on the *Calonarang* myth of women dressed in *poleng* clothes in a cultural context are sacred. In addition, the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing can represent task identity and Balinese fashion identity. As a task identity, the representation of the *poleng* motif is supported by *loka dresta* and customary conventions, as well as cultural traditions in the villages of Wangaya Gede, Penebel, Tabanan. The stigma that was built on the activities of women in *poleng* clothes who served as *pecalang* was based on customary

emancipation and gender equality. Meanwhile, the representation of Balinese fashion identity through the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is influenced by fashion tastes and the aesthetics of the *poleng* motif. The superiority of the *poleng* motif image as a Balinese fashion identity lies in the color combination pattern.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from research on the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing: 1) the representation of the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is *sakti*, task identity, and Balinese fashion identity. *Sakti*, as a representation of the *poleng* motif, is influenced by beliefs about the *Calonarang* myth in Balinese traditional culture. The stereotype of women wearing *poleng* clothes in a cultural context based on the *Calonarang* myth is to be considered sacred. In addition, the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing can represent task identity and Balinese fashion identity. As a task identity, the representation of the *poleng* motif is supported by *loka dresta* and customary conventions, as well as cultural traditions in the villages of Wangaya Gede, Penebel, Tabanan. The stigma based on the activities of women dressed in *poleng* clothes who served as *pecalang* was built on emancipation and gender equality based on custom. Meanwhile, the representation of Balinese fashion identity through the *poleng* motif on Balinese women's clothing is influenced by fashion tastes and the aesthetics of the *poleng* motif. 2) The process of symbolic communication between Balinese people who use the *poleng* motif and immigrants in modernization has had an impact on changes in motifs, representations, meanings, and attitudes of Balinese women towards clothes with *poleng* motifs. Actualization of Balinese women's activities in *poleng* clothing is rarely found in a cultural context. Meanwhile, women who wear *poleng* clothing in a cultural context prioritize symbolic communication as a fashion identity rather than task and *kawisesan* identities.

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