

# Interpreting Symbols of Cultural Identity Jatiwangi Clay

Lontar: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, 2024

Vol. 12 (1), 2024

Copyright ©2024, Liza Dwi Ratna Dewi, Eko Putra Boediman.

This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license

DOI: 10.30656/lontar.v12i1.8281

<https://e-jurnal.lppmunsera.org/index.php/LONTAR>

Article History

Submission: Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2024

Revised: June 20<sup>th</sup> 2024

Accepted: June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024

**Liza Dwi Ratna Dewi<sup>\*1</sup>, Eko Putra Boediman<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Budi Luhur

Email: [liza.dwiratna@budiluhur.ac.id](mailto:liza.dwiratna@budiluhur.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Budi Luhur

Email: [eko.putraboediman@budiluhur.ac.id](mailto:eko.putraboediman@budiluhur.ac.id)

(\* = Corresponding Author)

## ABSTRACT

*In 2012, the Central Government of the Republic of Indonesia projected the West Java Strategic Industrial Zone called the Rebana Triangle with 3 points: Cirebon City, Subang Regency, and Majalengka Regency. Since then, a large wave of modern industrialization has entered this area and threat to the existence of local cultural identity. This research aims to explore the meanings of 3 cultural symbols produced by the Jatiwangi Art Factory (JAF), a community of artists based in the Jatiwangi District, Majalengka Regency. Stuart Hall's concept of Cultural Identity serves as the reference basis, and Roland Barthes' Semiotics is used as the research analysis method. The research subjects are JAF, and the research objects are the 3 cultural symbols created by JAF. Data collection was conducted through informal discussions, field observations, internet, and literature studies from 2000 to 2023. The results of the research show that: Through the Rampak Genteng Festival, the people of Jatiwangi declare that clay roof tiles are our culture. Clay-based musical symbolize that clay is the soul of the Jatiwangi people, clay is a form of expression of the Jatiwangi people. The Terracotta City is a symbol that this region was inhabited by people with a clay culture.*

**Keyword:** Clay, Cultural Identity, Jatiwangi, Symbol

## INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Central Government of the Republic of Indonesia projected the Rebana Triangle Strategic Industrial Zone with three points, namely the Cirebon-Subang-Majalengka region. Rebana is an abbreviation of Cirebon-Subang-Majalengka. This area is facilitated by three main infrastructures: the Cirebon City Port, the Patimban Container Port in Subang Regency, and the Kertajati International Airport in Majalengka Regency. These three points are supported by the Cipali toll road. This large wave of modern industrialization has significant impacts on all aspects of community life, including threats to the original culture of Jatiwangi, namely clay.

Jatiwangi District is located in Majalengka Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. Jatiwangi District covers an area of 40.03 km<sup>2</sup>, or 3.32% of the area of Majalengka Regency with a population density of 1,205 people/km<sup>2</sup>. Jatiwangi District has the

highest population density among all districts in Majalengka, which is 2,105 people/km<sup>2</sup> compared to the average of 991 people/km<sup>2</sup> (BPS, 2019). Jatiwangi is legendary as the producer of the best tiles in Southeast Asia. Jatiwangi has been known as a tile producer since the colonial era (Setyadi, 2022). The daily economic activities of the Jatiwangi community are influenced by the spirit of the majority of the population as adherents of Islam. This is evident from their daily activities, which begin after the Fajr prayer, between 04:30 - 05:00. After that, people go to the fields or tile factories, and at Dhuhr time, they return home for lunch and rest, gathering with their families. During the afternoon to evening, people tend to livestock, gather grass, or engage in social activities.

During the independence era, from 1980 to 2000, Jatiwangi tiles were exported to Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. A major domestic project that used Jatiwangi clay industry products was the Soekarno Hatta International Airport, which is the capital city airport of Indonesia. At that time, there were around 600 tile factories locally referred to as *Jebor*. These *Jebor* factories were owned by local entrepreneurs, and the workers were also local residents. During that era, the people of Jatiwangi were prosperous (Setyadi, 2022).

This tile industry thrived in collaboration with the agricultural sector to support the economy of the Jatiwangi community. During planting and harvesting seasons, people worked in the fields, while during the off-season, they worked in the tile factories. Similarly, during the period between harvesting and planting seasons, activities revolved around tile production. From these daily activities with clay, they began calling themselves the "clay community."

Two brothers from Jatiwangi District, named Yudi Arief and Ginggi Syarief, children of a tile factory owner and from an artistic lineage, established the Jatiwangi Art Factory (JAF) on September 27, 2005. This establishment stemmed from Singaporean artists who wanted to experiment with art in an "out of the box" manner. These artists stayed for 2 weeks in village homes and performed art shows in fields, tile factories, and various unconventional places. These performances were watched by locals who didn't understand art, making these "strange" activities the talk of the Jatiwangi community. From there, people became interested in art and often gathered in one of the rooms in the tile factory area owned by the Arief and Ginggi family. In their journey, this group of artists named themselves the Jatiwangi Art Factory. The space where JAF members gather and experiment is called *Jebor*.

Since 2012 JAF seems to have been accelerated to respond to various threats to the erosion of Jatiwangi's cultural identity by the large wave of modern industrialization entering this area. Many members of the community work in factories. Working hours change according to factory rules. Women working in factories can no longer breastfeed their babies or take care of their children during working hours. Social activities began to decline. The sight of roofs in the Jatiwangi area, which used to be tiled, gradually started to show asbestos, zinc, or other materials here and there.

Every community has its own cultural identity, and every human being ideally should not be disconnected from their cultural roots and have an identity of who they are. However, not all communities are able to maintain their culture, disconnect from their cultural roots, and lose their identity. This research provides lessons, enlightenment, and real examples for various cultural communities in innovating and adjusting the symbols of their cultural identity and self in the midst of constant change. Hall, 1990, in Barker (2011), states that culture is communication, and communication is culture. Based on this understanding, the appropriate communication perspective used in analyzing cultural identity is the communication perspective in the socio-

cultural tradition. The socio-cultural tradition views symbol meanings as produced in social interaction (Littejohn & Foss, 2011). The socio-cultural tradition explains that cultural reality is created through interaction processes within groups and communities in various cultural events (Ross, 2013). Culture is something alive, present in the daily life of the group in various interactions and events.

Regarding cultural identity, Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity, 1990, is the basis of this research. Hall states that cultural identity is an ongoing process of production that will never be finished. Ultimately, cultural identity is a positioning, which is a characteristic that distinguishes it from other cultures (Barker, 2011). Hidayat (2022) highlights that cultural identity is represented in a person's daily behavior. Malik (2018) sees that cultural identity can continue to be maintained alongside modernization, which tends to standardize many things. To maintain this cultural identity, Anggraeni & Hidayat (2020) see the importance of the role of agent interactions in strengthening the cultural identity of a community. Dalil & Rahardjo (2021) see that this agent role can be held by opinion leaders in the community. As stated by Purwanto (2022), every indigenous group is a struggling group.

This research aims to explore the meanings of cultural identity symbols created by JAF in maintaining its clay cultural identity amidst the onslaught of large waves of modern industrial forces that change the geographical, economic, and cultural landscape in the Jatiwangi region. The research problem formulation is what are the meanings of the cultural identity symbols created by JAF in maintaining its clay cultural identity. This research is important because Indonesia has a wealth of cultural diversity, which is a valuable national asset in terms of both non-economic and economic value, which if properly processed will have high economic value, in addition to cultural preservation value. This research offers methodological novelty. The qualitative research, which is typically specific to certain cases or regions, in this study can be drawn to generalization. It can be applied to other communities in the same context, namely in maintaining cultural identity.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is interpretive in paradigm, where events and the use of socio-cultural symbols are based on the perspectives and experiences of the research subjects (Muslim, 2016). In the interpretive paradigm, attention to reflexivity becomes the focus of the methodology used (Kelly et al., 2017). The method used in this research is semiotics, which emphasizes the researcher's interpretation from the subject's perspective (native's point of view). Data analysis is conducted using Roland Barthes' semiotics, known as the Two Orders of Signification. In the first order, the analysis includes the interpretation of denotation, explaining the relationship between signifier and signified that generates explicit meanings. In the second order, an analysis of connotation interpretation is conducted, exploring further interactions between signs and things beyond themselves to reach the myths that operate in everyday reality through cultural studies (Iswidayati, 2006).

1. Signifier (Penanda)	2. Signified (Petanda)
3. Sign/tanda	
I. Signifier (penanda)	II. Signified (petanda)
III. Sign / tanda	

Picture 01. Two Order of Signification Roland Barthes  
Source: (Iswidayati, 2006)

Connotation is the interaction that occurs between a sign and the feelings or emotions within the cultural values of the user, making connotative meanings subjective and interpretive (Siregar, 2022). In connotative interpretation, the text or symbol speaks about things beyond itself (Rohmaniah, 2021). This second level can be layered, so that connotations reach what is called myths or the encoding of meanings and social values considered dominant truths within an ideological framework (Mitak, 2017).

The data collection for this research was conducted from 2020 to 2023 through various forms of interaction between the researcher and the research subjects. These interactions included field visits and observations, establishing friendships, informal discussions both face-to-face and mediated in various situations, as well as monitoring information through observations of mass media and social media. The research subjects are the Jatiwangi Art Factory (JAF). The key informant for this research is Yudi Arief, one of the founders of JAF. Other informants include several JAF activists such as Tedi Nurmanto, Tamtam, Dila Novita Dewi, and residency artist from Medan, Ika Nasution. The research object is the clay cultural identity symbols created by JAF.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In a struggle spanning over 10 years, JAF has produced numerous artistic products. This research focuses on 3 symbols of cultural identity products that the researcher considers to represent JAF's journey in defending the cultural identity of Jatiwangi clay, namely: the Rampak Genteng Festival, which mobilizes masses from all villages in the Jatiwangi District; Musical instruments made of clay played to accompany people singing with lyrics that express the soul and opinions of individuals/society; And Terakota City as a claim that Jatiwangi is a region of clay culture.

### 1. Rampak Genteng Festival.

The Rampak Genteng Festival was created in 2012 as the first reaction to the entry of modern industrial culture into the Jatiwangi region. Since 2012, the number of tile factories (Jebor) has continued to decrease. In the locations where Jebors and rice fields used to be, the landscape has transformed into modern factories owned by investors from outside Jatiwangi, built without Jatiwangi tiles. Many public areas are no longer freely accessible to residents due to high fences and security guards. This situation prompted JAF's initiative to create the "Rampak Genteng Festival," a colossal music festival played on tiles.

<b>First System</b>	
<i>Signifier:</i>	Rampak Genteng Festival
<i>Signified:</i>	

	Picture 02. Rampak Genteng Jatiwangi Festival Source: Nadila (2021)
<i>Denotative Sign:</i>	Thousands of Jatiwangi residents participated and pledged during the Rampak Genteng Festival.
<b>Second System</b>	
<i>Connotative Signifier:</i>	Thousands of Jatiwangi residents participated in the Rampak Genteng Festival.
<i>Connotative Signified:</i>	Tiles are a part of life for the people of Jatiwangi
<i>Connotative Sign:</i>	Tiles are a living culture within every individual and the social life of the Jatiwangi community, and their existence is worth preserving and celebrating.

### Analysis of the First Level.

The first Rampak Genteng Festival was held on November 3, 2012, in the courtyard of the former Jatiwangi sugar factory, which was the largest sugar factory in West Java during the Dutch colonial era. This festival involved 1,200 residents of all ages and various professions from 16 villages in the Jatiwangi District. During the Rampak Genteng Festival, all participants were also invited to recite the "Jatiwangi Pledge," which reads:

#### JATIWANGI PLEDGE

With the grace of Almighty God, we, as the custodians of Jatiwangi culture, pledge:

We are determined to honor the works of our ancestors and to always create, innovate, and pass them on to future generations;

We are committed to preparing ourselves as best as possible to face the development and progress of Jatiwangi in the future;

That we will preserve culture, process clay, with dignity, creativity, and respect for environmental norms;

We are committed together to maintaining comfort, tranquility, and security, based on love and mutual respect.

Jatiwangi, November 3, 2012.

Source: (Siagian, 2019)

### Analysis of the Second Level.

The Rampak Genteng Festival is a colossal musical performance with the main element of collectively sounding the tiles by thousands of participants. The use of the word "festival" carries celebratory connotations. Here, it can be connoted that tiles are symbolic objects of Jatiwangi culture whose existence is worthy of celebration. Why worthy of celebration? Because Jatiwangi tiles are an integral part of Jatiwangi culture, as historical records note that Jatiwangi tiles have been known since the colonial era, recognized as the best tiles in Southeast Asia, and have been proven to bring prosperity to the Jatiwangi community for a long time. This festival conveys the message that tiles cannot be removed from the cultural identity of the Jatiwangi community. This triennial festival is held in the courtyard of the former Djatiwangi sugar factory, which is the largest open public area in the Jatiwangi District.

As stated by Littejohn & Foss (2011), cultural reality is created through interactions within groups and communities in various cultural events. To carry out this festival, various meetings, discussions, rehearsals, and, ultimately, the Rampak Genteng festival event itself were held. This entire process can be seen as a process of cultural creation in the minds of everyone involved. Thus, the processes that occur can be seen as JAF's struggle to occupy "mind space" in every individual's and the Jatiwangi community's mind that "tiles are our culture, tiles are our culture." Rampak means collectively or simultaneously sounding. Therefore, in this context, it can be interpreted

that the Jatiwangi community collectively voices that tiles are part of our cultural identity. In the Rampak Genteng festival, each individual interacts between themselves and the tiles in their hands. As Lukito & Nugroho (2021) stated, in this festival, the Jatiwangi community associates themselves with the tiles that represent their culture. This triennial festival can be seen as a ritual and also a communication effort to preserve social meaning (Carey, 2008).

The festival, which collectively sounds the tiles along with other clay musical instruments, such as drums and tile guitars, singing various songs, and various other activities in the vast open space, also attracts passersby and spectators. Thus, creating interactions between tiles, each individual, and collectively sounding the tiles can provide perceived experiences and foster interpretations of the meaning of tiles in the minds of participants and Rampak Genteng spectators.

The Rampak Genteng festival held in the courtyard of the former Djatiwangi sugar factory also holds significant meaning. This area is the largest open space, which in 2012 was in the process of being converted into a shopping center by private parties. Through the Rampak Genteng Festival and other cultural activities, this location is created as a social area by the community (Lefebvre, 1905). Thus, the selection of this location can be interpreted as JAF's struggle to defend the geographical area for the life of the cultural identity symbols of Jatiwangi against the symbols of modern industrial life.

JAF's efforts to bring together representatives from all villages in the Jatiwangi District can be seen as a mass mobilization effort to stage a protest related to efforts to preserve this geographical area. Kolokytha (2022) emphasizes that cultural initiatives emerging from grassroots communities can replace the role of policymakers by providing cultural experiences to participating individuals. The success of mobilizing the masses cannot be separated from the political networks held by one of the JAF founders, namely Ginggi Syarief, who once served as the head of Jatisura village, one of the villages in the Jatiwangi District. As found by Fatanti & Tuti (2020), elders and opinion leaders play a crucial role in maintaining the memory and conception of a culture. Meanwhile, the Jatiwangi Pledge recited collectively at the Rampak Genteng Festival can also be seen as a "mass oration" in defending clay culture as the cultural identity of Jatiwangi.

Up to the present, this Rampak Genteng Festival has become a routine event held every three years. If in 2012 there were 1,200 participants, then in 2015 there were 5,000 participants, in 2018 there were 11,000 participants, and during the 2021 pandemic, the participants were limited to 1,000 people. In its journey, JAF has succeeded in involving local government officials from the Majalengka District, provincial governments, and the central government in celebrating this Rampak Genteng Festival. This festival, showcasing local cultural attractions, also received coverage from various mass media. JAF's success in increasing the number of Rampak Genteng Festival participants, involving government officials from the village level to the central government, and extensive media coverage have succeeded in stopping the process of converting this area into a social area for the Jatiwangi community. This can be interpreted as a success in taking over political and geographical areas in an effort to preserve its cultural identity. In addition to holding the triennial festival, in 2022, JAF also succeeded in bringing tile art to the contemporary art exhibition Documenta Fifteen in Kassel, West Germany. Documenta Fifteen is a five-year contemporary art exhibition held since 1955. This success also signifies that Jatiwangi tiles have gained a place in the international forum, which, politically, is worthy of preservation and even support from the government.



Barthes argued that myth is naturalized opinion. In this case, the myth that the Jatiwangi District, as part of the Majalengka District, projected to become a strategic industrial estate, is a projection or design that will bring the Jatiwangi community to a prosperous and happy life is questionable. Through the Rampak Genteng Festival, the people of Jatiwangi declare that clay roof tiles are our culture. We don't want to be replaced by modern culture. The Rampak roof tile festival is a symbol that the people of Jatiwangi celebrate the existence of roof tiles as their culture.

JAF juxtaposes opinions and seeks to mythologize that dignified humans are those who have cultural identities and self-awareness. Not becoming someone else and living in someone else's culture.

## 2. Clay-Based Musical Instruments.

In 2016, the largest market in the Jatiwangi District, namely the Ciborelang market, was constructed by a contractor not from Jatiwangi, and it excluded tiles from its materials. The roof of this market was designed using lightweight steel which was considered more efficient. The construction of public facilities in the heart of the country's best tile production center, without using tiles, once again spurred JAF into action. JAF initiated the "Kafilah Sadaqoh Genteng Jatiwangi" movement with the slogan "aing aya, aing masih rea" – I'm here, I'm still plentiful. In this movement, JAF successfully coordinated 32 tile factory owners to donate tiles to cover the roof of the Ciborelang Market.

The emergence of discourse suggesting that tiles are an inefficient building material challenged JAF to produce clay-based works other than tiles. In the discussions held, there was also discourse on how to voice "aing aya, aing masih rea" at all times. The Jatiwangi community, dubbed "the land community" by JAF, was renewed as the "resounding land community."

From this concept, JAF produces clay-based artworks, including musical instruments such as clay flutes, clay drums, and clay tile guitars. These musical instruments are played in various social activities within the Jatiwangi community, including weddings and informal interactions outside of work hours. These activities are carried out with the aim of ensuring that clay culture is "present" in the daily lives of the Jatiwangi community. Anyone can learn and play these musical instruments, and the most phenomenal clay-based music group is called the Lair Pantura Band.

### First-level Analysis.

Tiles, clay drums, tile guitars, and clay flutes are creative expressions of the clay-cultured Jatiwangi community. As musical instruments, their presence needs to produce sound. This aligns with the concept of "a sounding clay community." In playing them, these musical instruments are collaborated with folk music called "Tarling Pantura." Tarling derives from the words guitar-flute, making guitar and flute sounds dominant in this music. Meanwhile, Pantura comes from the term northern coast of Java, namely the regions of Cirebon-Indramayu-Majalengka, which during the colonial era were called the Cirebon Residency. This area is part of the northern coast of Java trade route, the main commercial route built by the Dutch colonial government.

<b>First System</b>	
<i>Signifier:</i>	Clay-based Musical Instruments from Jatiwangi.
<i>Signified:</i>	

	Picture 03. Pantura Band Lair with Clay-based Musical Instruments Source: Researcher's Documentation
<i>Denotative Sign:</i>	Forms of Musical Instruments as Symbols of Clay Culture.
<b>Second System</b>	
<i>Connotative Signifier:</i>	Forms of Musical Instruments as Symbols of Clay Culture.
<i>Connotative Signified:</i>	Clay is Our Medium of Creativity. Clay is the Medium that Expresses Our Souls.
<i>Connotative Sign:</i>	Clay is our soul.

Tarling Pantura music combines elements of pop and dangdut, creating an exotic rhythm. Tarling Pantura is played in a diatonic scale and accompanied by other musical instruments, such as drums, kecrek, and tutukan (Hidayatullah, 2015). Tarling music is usually played at night for listening or dancing entertainment, providing a break from work for both local residents and truck drivers on the coastal trading route.

To refine both the form and sound of these clay musical instruments, in 2016, JAF successfully sent a young activist with musical talent named Tedi Nurmanto to the OneBeat program. OneBeat is an international music exchange program organized by the U.S. Department of State to foster creativity and social engagement for building dialogue and people-to-people diplomacy. After spending 4 months as an artist-in-residence in the United States, Tedi then created various works related to clay musical instruments. His artistic creations include organizing the Ceramic Music Festival, compiling organology of clay flutes, and several others. Among the various clay music creations he made, the most prominent is the "Lair Pantura Band."

In addition to Tedi Nurmanto as the leader, this music group consists of Aap Paujan, Kiki Rasmadi, Tamyiz Ramadan, Pipin Kaspin, and Ika Nasution, a residency artist from Medan. "Lair" is taken from the Cirebonese language, which means "birth." This signifies that the birth of the Lair Pantura Band represents the birth of contemporary tarling music. In addition to sending its activists outside the region and abroad, JAF also frequently hosts residency artists from various countries and collaborates in various clay culture activities.

### **Second-level Analysis.**

As Hall suggests, cultural identity is a constantly evolving production process that never ends. Ultimately, cultural identity is a positioning, distinguishing it from other cultures (Barker, 2011). From Hall's perspective, the emergence of the Lair Pantura Band with the slogan "music from the earth" can be interpreted as individuals being able to evoke forms of creativity that still characterize their culture, namely clay. Creating symbols that can be perceived by various senses in various events is also an important consideration in efforts to voice opinions and instill the myth that clay is the cultural identity of Jatiwangi that can go global (Sujai et al., 2017).

With the concept of "music from the earth," Lair Pantura Band, besides playing various clay-based musical instruments, also creates songs whose lyrics express the experiences and feelings of grassroots communities in the northern coastal areas of Java, including Majalengka. One song that truly reflects the "pantura soul" is titled "Roda Gila." This song narrates the hustle, heat, and dust that are part of the daily life of truck drivers on the northern coast of Java. Thus, clay musical instruments can be seen as a medium for communities to voice their experiences through the lyrics of their songs and in the rhythm of tarling music, which has become part of the culture of



Majalengka's society. From the perspective of social-cultural tradition, which explains that cultural reality is created through interaction processes within groups and communities in various cultural events (Ross, 2013), what Lair Pantura Band does is a process to gain "mind space" in every individual and community in Jatiwangi about clay culture.

In reviving Jatiwangi's clay culture, this music group interacts in various situations with the community. Lair Pantura Band plays and sings at various community events, such as coffee shops in the evenings, weddings, integrated health posts (posyandu), and various other activities. With artists from various countries frequently participating in residencies at JAF and joining in singing and music, singing and dancing to tarling pantura music with "bules" (foreigners) becomes a memorable experience for the people and leaves a strong impression on their minds. Lair Pantura Band also plays music by traveling to various places in Majalengka Regency using various vehicles that are usually used to transport tiles in Jatiwangi's brick kilns. Old bicycles, motorized carts, or traditional tourist vehicles called "odong-odong" are used. Because culture is something alive, it exists in the daily lives of the group in various interactions and events. Lair Pantura Band's efforts to play music and sing in various regions can be seen as an attempt to mark the geographical areas where this clay culture thrives. Throughout its journey, Lair Pantura Band has successfully elevated the dignity of original Jatiwangi clay culture by embarking on a "1000 km World Tour ++" to eight countries in March - May 2022 by invitation from various parties. This achievement certainly attracts the attention of local governments, thus obtaining political territory. Thus, the meaning of clay culture is recognized worldwide.

To elevate cultural identity to the level of myth, enjoyable experiences about clay become important to always remember, as stated by Boyer (1994) that memory is always related to experience. This clay cultural identity needs to be instilled and continually revived in every soul of Jatiwangi's community in various ways. Cultural identity also needs to be positioned with dignity. Clay-based musical instruments symbolize that clay is the soul of the Jatiwangi people, clay is a form of expression of the Jatiwangi people. As expressed by Yudi Arief, there are two important words that will always be repeated in the lives of JAF and the Jatiwangi community: clay and dignity.

### **3. Terakota City.**

Amidst the contestation of geographical, economic, and cultural landscapes in Jatiwangi, JAF had the opportunity to organize The 5th Indonesia Contemporary Ceramic Biennale (ICCB) in 2019. ICCB is an event that positions ceramics as a human creation in contemporary art. Because terakota culture exists in various cultures in Indonesia (Rangkuti, 2001), participants from all over the country attended this event. Not wasting the opportunity, JAF used this moment to assert "aing aya, aing masih rea" more assertively. JAF chose Terakota City as the theme. The term "terakota" comes from the Italian word terra cotta, which means "cooked earth" or "baked clay" (Yustana, 2011).

#### **Analysis of the First Level.**

Terakota City is a city design with a distinctive appearance of terakota material in its buildings. The creation of terakota building designs was targeted to be realized in the Majalengka area. This design was created by JAF, led by Ginggi Syarief, one of the founders of JAF who is an architect graduate from Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) leading up to the organization of ICCB 2019. Terakota City was established to strengthen the cultural identity of Jatiwangi's clay. The idea of Terakota City with

several iconic Terakota buildings was targeted to be presented to the Governor of West Java, who was planned to attend ICCB 2019.

During ICCB 2019, JAF successfully hosted Governor of West Java Ridwan Kamil, who is also an architect known for designing iconic buildings in Indonesia, various Asian countries, and has previously worked as an architect for 5 years in the United States. At this moment, the idea of Terakota City was eloquently voiced to the holder of power in the West Java region, who also has an interest in revitalizing local entrepreneurs. The terakota icons were approved by the Governor at three strategic points in West Java province, namely: the West and East Gateways of Kertajati International Airport; the Tourist Information Center building and the town square of Majalengka Regency.

<b>First System</b>	
<i>Signifier:</i>	Terakota City
<i>Signified:</i>	 <p>Picture 04. Governor of West Java and Majalengka Town Square Source: (Johny, 2021)</p>
<i>Denotative Sign:</i>	Region characterized by the appearance of fired clay building materials (terakota).
<b>Second System</b>	
<i>Connotative Signifier:</i>	Region with the distinctive feature of buildings made of fired clay material (terakota).
<i>Connotative Signified:</i>	This area is inhabited and built by people who have a civilization rooted in clay culture.
<i>Connotative Sign:</i>	The Terakota City is an expression of the clay culture civilization of its inhabitants.

### Analysis of the Second Level.

ICCB 2019 serves as a significant milestone for both JAF and the people of Jatiwangi in their struggle to preserve their clay cultural identity. The town square with the grand mosque as a vital social area for recreation, religious activities, various community events, and governance serves as a strategically important geographic area for the defense of cultural identity. Various experiences occur in this area at all times. As Boyer (1994) states, memory is always associated with experience, and research Heller (2001) indicates that collective memory is a socially constructed idea in building and preserving identity. The community also has the experience that the town square is built from the products of their labor. The West and East Gateways of Kertajati International Airport will be seen by visitors coming for business or tourism to Majalengka and its surroundings. Here, the gateways seem to mark: You are entering the terakota cultural region. The Tourist Information Center building is a strategically geographic area that will build imagination and narrative experiences of enjoying terakota culture in Majalengka.

With the Governor's approval of the Terakota City theme and the approval of terakota icons in these 3 strategic points, it can be connoted that JAF is steering

Majalengka's city branding, which currently uses the slogan "Exotic Sundaland," towards "Terakota City." City branding is obtained, among other things, due to its distinctive appearance (Soltani, Ali; Pieters, Johannes; Young, 2017). Even what JAF has created, namely the Genteng Rampak Festival, Clay Music, and other symbols, are elements of city branding because brands are related to tangible and intangible aspects (D. Hidayat et al., 2019). Although Terakota City has not yet been designated as Majalengka's city branding, by assisting the Majalengka district government in realizing and formulating city branding, JAF continues to strengthen the political space for defending the terakota cultural identity of Jatiwangi. This is said because the established city branding will control various procedures that can change and communicate the city's image (Romli & Romli, 2020). Thus, the Terakota City theme in ICCB 2019 can be connoted as a symbol created by JAF to maintain cultural identity in the political realm.

Three large government projects, each worth billions of rupiah, have spurred the economy of the terakota industry in Jatiwangi owned by the local community. The terakota industry in Jatiwangi, which reached its peak between 1980 and 2000 with 600 kilns, saw a decline to around 100 kilns by 2018, but now slowly revitalizes one by one. With the acquisition of these major projects, nine new kilns have also emerged, creatively producing various terakota cultural objects to meet the needs of buildings beyond just roofing tiles. In addition to securing major government projects, in 2022 JAF successfully designed and handed over the Terakota Embassy Taiwan model, which is expected to be constructed using materials derived from Jatiwangi's terakota culture. Consequently, JAF has established the significance of Jatiwangi's terakota culture being recognized by other countries. With the gradual revival of kilns producing roofing tiles and the emergence of nine kilns producing various terakota products, it can be inferred that JAF is defending economic and social space against the encroachment of modern industries.

Bennett (2007) states that cultural production involves "formatting the social for distinctive kinds of activities through the working surfaces on the society." This is because the social life in kilns differs from the social life offered in modern industrial factories. Kilns are constructed by combining work and social arenas where the children of kiln workers can play in the open air. Kilns also have working hours and rules that are highly compatible with the spiritual (Islamic) and social life of the Jatiwangi community. Thus, the theme of Terakota City in ICCB 2019 can be construed as a symbol created by JAF to preserve the identity of terakota culture in the realms of politics, economy, and society.

When viewed from the history of Jatiwangi, Terakota City represents the current position in the journey of Jatiwangi's terakota cultural identity. The beginning of Jatiwangi's terakota culture involved cultivating the land into rice fields. Then came the largest sugar factory in West Java, which brought with it a factory culture. As the prominence of this sugar factory declined, the terakota and factory cultures blended into the traditional terakota factory culture known locally as "jebor." With the development of building technology, these kilns began producing not only roof tiles but also various terakota products. As Hall (1990) stated, identity is a process, not an object of discovery. Cultural identity is related to "becoming" and "being"; and the positioning of terakota cultural identity has been successfully maintained and continuously revitalized by JAF (Barker, 2011). The Terracotta City is a symbol that this region was inhabited by people with a clay culture.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through the Rampak Genteng Festival, the people of Jatiwangi declare that clay roof tiles are our culture. Clay-based musical symbolize that clay is the soul of the Jatiwangi people, clay is a form of expression of the Jatiwangi people. The Terracotta City is a symbol that this region was inhabited by people with a clay culture.

Through these three symbols, JAF shows cultural identity in the realms of thought, geography, politics, social dynamics, and economics. The terakota culture of Jatiwangi has evolved over time. It began with the cultivation of land in rice fields, then evolved into the terakota tile industry, and now encompasses various forms of working with clay. From Stuart Hall's perspective, this terakota culture will continue to evolve in response to environmental changes.

Based on the analysis of the three symbols of clay cultural identity created by JAF, this research recommends:

1. Local cultural identity can be preserved and revitalized through creative and dignified means that adapt to environmental changes.
2. To ensure that cultural identity thrives in the mind space, geographical space, political space, social space, and economic space, community creativity and government policy support are necessary.
3. The concepts, methods, and findings of this research can be utilized to conduct research and efforts to preserve and elevate the dignity of various cultures in Indonesia and around the world.

## REFERENCES

- Anggraeni, F. D., & Hidayat, R. (2020). Penguatan Identitas sebagai Strategi Bertahan Warga Adat Sunda Wiwitan. *Indonesian Journal of Sociology, Education, and Development*, 2(2), 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.52483/ijsted.v2i2.27>
- Barker, C. (2011). *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice (Google eBook)* (P. Willis (ed.)). Sage Publications.
- Bennett, T. (2007). Making Culture, Changing Society: The Perspective of “Culture” Studies. *Cultural Studies*, 21(4–5), 610–629. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380701278988>
- Boyer, M. C. (1994). *The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Carey, J. W. (2008). *Carey\_JW\_2008\_Communication as Culture* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203928912>
- Dalil, F., & Rahardjo, T. (2021). PERAN SESEPUH ADAT DAN MEDIA KOMUNITAS MASYARAKAT KASEPUHAN CIPTAGELAR DALAM MENJAGA IDENTITAS KEBUDAYAAN ASLI. *Jurnal Interaksi Online*, 7(3), 2013–2015. <https://ejournal3.undip.ac.id/index.php/interaksi-online/article/view/24030>
- Fatanti, M. N., & Tuti, S. N. T. (2020). Interpretation of Nyadran Sonoageng Ritual as the Form of Ritual Communication of Sonoageng Villagers, Nganjuk Regency. *Komunikator*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.121036>
- Heller, A. (2001). Cultural memory, identity and civil society. *Internationale Politik Und Gesellschaft/International Politics and Society*, 2, 139–143.
- Hidayat, D., Hafiar, H., Anisti, A., & Suhartini, T. (2019). Tofu Product Branding for Culinary Tourism of Sumedang, Indonesia. *Komunikator*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.112022>
- Hidayat, S. (2022). Identitas Budaya dan Representasi Islam dalam Novel The Translator Karya Leila Aboulela. *Hidayat, Syarif*, 3(2), 231–240. <https://jlist.publikasiindonesia.id/index.php/jlist/article/view/364>
- Hidayatullah, R. (2015). Seni Tarling Dan Perkembangannya. *Calls*, 1(1), 52–66.

- Iswidayati, S. (2006). Roland Barthes Dan Mithologi. *Imajinasi - Jurnal Seni*, 2(2). [https://www.academia.edu/33516518/ROLAND\\_BARTHES\\_DAN\\_MITHOLOGI](https://www.academia.edu/33516518/ROLAND_BARTHES_DAN_MITHOLOGI)
- Johny. (2021, April). Gubernur Jawa Barat Resmikan Alun Alun Majalengka. *Harapan Rakyat Online*. <https://harapanrakyatonline.com/gubernur-jawa-barat-resmikan-alun-alun-majalengka/gubernur-jawa-barat-resmikan-alun-alun-majalengka-1/>
- Kelly, M., Dowling, M., & Millar, M. (2017). The search for understanding: The role of paradigms. In *RCN Publishing*. NUI Galway. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2018.e1499>
- Kolokytha, O. (2022). Bottom-up cultural diplomacy in the Greek periphery: The city of Chania and Dance Days Chania festival. *City, Culture and Society*, 29(July 2021), 100448. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2022.100448>
- Lefebvre. (1905). The Production of Space. In *College English* (Vol. 53, Issue 3). <https://doi.org/10.2307/378107>
- Littejohn, S. W., & Foss, K. A. (2011). *Littlejohn\_Foss\_2011\_ Theories of Human Communication* (10th ed.). Waveland Press.
- Lukito, Y. N., & Nugroho, R. S. (2021). Fabricating Culture through Spatial Practices: Rampak Genteng Festival in the Former Jatiwangi Sugar Factory, West Java, Indonesia. *ISVS E-Journal*, 8(3), 17–33. <https://scholar.ui.ac.id/en/publications/fabricating-culture-through-spatial-practices-rampak-genteng-fest>
- Malik, A. (2018). Cultural Identity and Social Interaction of Indigenous Peoples in the Middle of Modernization (Case Study of Indigenous Peoples of Kasepuhan Banten Kidul). *Jurnal The Messenger*, 10(1), 34. <https://doi.org/10.26623/themessenger.v10i1.649>
- Mitak, C. N. C. (2017). Wacana Iklan Televisi Rokok Djarum 76 Versi “ Pengin Eksis ”: Analisis Tanda Menurut Roland Barthes. *Jurnal Ilmiah Kebudayaan SINTESIS*, 11(2), 95–107.
- Muslim. (2016). Varian-Varian Paradigma, Pendekatan, Metode, Dan Jenis Penelitian Dalam Ilmu Komunikasi. *Wahana*, 1(10), 77–85.
- Nadila, M. (2021). *Keramik Musik Festival (Rampak Genteng) 2021*. Parekraf.Info. <https://parekraf.info/d6/2021/12/04/ceramic-music-festival-rampak-genteng-2021/>
- Purwanto, S. A. (2022). Cultural Policy: Some initiatives and trends to manage cultural diversity in Indonesia. *ETNOSIA: Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia*, 7(2), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.31947/etnosia.v7i2.24827>
- Rohmaniah, A. F. (2021). Kajian Semiotika Roland Barthes. *Al-Ittishol: Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Penyiaran Islam*, 2(2), 124–134. <https://doi.org/10.51339/ittishol.v2i2.308>
- Romli, R., & Romli, N. A. (2020). Implementasi strategi komunikasi “Bandung Juara” sebagai bagian dari city branding Kota Bandung. *Profesi Humas Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 4(2), 263. <https://doi.org/10.24198/prh.v4i2.23547>
- Ross, M. (2013). An Alternative Path: The Intellectual Legacy of James W. Carey [University of South Carolina]. In *Theses and Dissertations*. <http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/1504>
- Setyadi, P. (2022, May). Geliat Wajah Jatiwangi. *Kanal Desa*. <https://kanaldesa.com/artikel/geliat-wajah-jatiwangi>
- Siagian, B. (2019). Kota Terakota. In *ICCB* (1st ed.). Yayasan Daun Salambar.
- Siregar, I. (2022). Islamic Values in Palang Pintu Procession in Semiotic Perspective. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal*, 5(1), 5326–5335. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i1.4239>
- Soltani, Ali; Pieters, Johannes; Young, J. S. Z. (2017). Exploring City Branding Strategis

- And Their Impacts on Local Tourism Success, The Case Study of Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(2), 158–169. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2017.1410195>
- Sujai, A. A., Sapari, Y., & Kamaluddin, M. (2017). Komunikasi Budaya Musik Tanah Liat Komunitas JAF. *JIKE: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Efek*, 1(1), 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.32534/jike.v1i1.49>
- Yustana, P. (2011). Gajah Dalam Terakota Majapahit. *Dewa Ruci: Jurnal Pengkajian Dan Penciptaan Seni*, 7(1), 102–114. <https://doi.org/10.33153/dewaruci.v7i1.979>