

# Historical study on the development of the weaving motif of Bima, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

## Kajian sejarah perkembangan motif tenun Bima, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia

Nursyahri Ramadhan <sup>a \*</sup> , Tri Karyono <sup>b</sup> ,  
Zakarias Sukarya Soeteja <sup>c</sup> 

<sup>a, b, c</sup> Art Education, Graduate School, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to trace the early history of the Bimanese to identify the weaving and its 10 motifs defined in the Bima Land Customary Law as part of the Bima ethnic characteristics. The study used a qualitative approach with data triangulation (observations, interviews, and documentation). The research result showed that the activity of spinning yarn was known by the Bimanese before the expedition of Sang Bima to the land of the rising sun (Satonda Island, a volcanic area on Sumbawa Island), which became the ancestors of the Bimanese. They used weaving to make clothes, using similar procedures of Javanese weaving. Initially, the motifs of Bimanese woven were only in the form of stripes and rectangles, but the acculturation with Javanese culture during the heyday of Majapahit influenced the development of motifs in the Bima Kingdom during the 11-13th centuries. Subsequently, there was also acculturation with Bugis and Malay culture after the Bima Kingdom turned into a Sultanate. For instance, in choosing a leader, the Bima people should adopt the principle in the *nggusu waru* (octagonal) motif or that the Bima people must always bring benefits and noble characteristics like the scent of a flower in the Satako flower motif.

### KATA KUNCI

sejarah,  
motif-motif,  
tenun,  
Bima

### ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menelusuri sejarah awal masyarakat Bima mengenal tenunan dan motif-motif yang diterapkannya hingga terbentuk 10 motif yang ditetapkan dalam Hukum Adat Tanah Bima (HATB) sehingga menjadi ciri khas etnis Bima. Metode yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan triangulasi data (observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumen). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan pemintalan benang telah dikenal oleh masyarakat Bima sebelum pengembaraan tokoh Sang Bima ke negeri matahari terbit (Pulau Satonda, wilayah vulkanik di pulau Sumbawa) yang menjadi cikal bakal orang Bima dan untuk membuat pakaian, menerapkan seperti cara orang-orang Jawa dalam hal menenun. Motif awal yang dikenal oleh orang Bima hanya berbentuk garis-garis dan segi empat, namun akulturasi budaya Jawa pada masa kejayaan Majapahit ikut mempengaruhi perkembangan motif-motif di kerajaan Bima pada abad ke 11-13, selanjutnya, terjadi akulturasi budaya Bugis dan Melayu setelah kerajaan Bima berubah menjadi kesultanan sehingga penerapan motif-motif dalam lingkungan masyarakat Bima mengacu pada Hukum Adat Tanah Bima yang sesuai dengan Syariat Islam. Seperti memilih pemimpin berdasarkan makna yang terkandung dalam motif *nggusu waru* atau dalam berkehidupan sosial, orang Bima harus selalu membawa kebermanfaatan dan akhlak yang mulia sebagaimana aroma bunga sekuntum dalam *motif bunga Satako*.

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\* Corresponding author: syahrilramadhan@upi.edu

## **Introduction**

Every region in Indonesia has local wisdom, which is the product of people's thinking, consisting of excellent values, wisdom, and principles that people adhere to and live by (Prasetyo & Kumalasari, 2021). Aside from being observed in people's lives, the local wisdom is also found in art objects, such as the traditional Aesan Gede clothing (Shanie et al., 2017), Javanese Batik (Putri & Dewi, 2021), and the Papuan noken. As the central part of Indonesia, the island of Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara, is inhabited by two main tribes, namely the Samawa tribe, who live in most part of the Sumbawa island, and the Mbojo (Bima) tribe living in the eastern part of the island. The Mbojo tribe consists of the Bima people and the Dompou people. Additionally, the practice of spinning yarn, weaving cloth, and sewing clothes have become the customs practiced by humankind for a very long time. The weaving tradition has been known in almost all over the world, from African civilization to the American continent and Asian region, including in the archipelago. Although the track record of the weaving technique's initial inventor is unknown, but this tradition has developed even in the smallest remote areas.

The motifs found in woven fabrics are very diverse. The motifs in woven fabrics are similar to the motifs and colors of batik art, which represent the pluralistic nature following the identity and character of each region. By unifying imagination in cultural and religious rituals, batik has a symbolic meaning, while its plurality of motifs contains philosophical aesthetic-magical values (Takdir & Hosnan, 2021). However, with these various woven fabrics from indigenous peoples in certain areas, many of them still do not understand the different types, colors, and forms of motifs representing their identities (Suwandi & Sunarya, 2021). Therefore, an in-depth study that scientifically examines past civilizations starting from the beginning is required. Such investigation can be extracted from the community to realize woven fabrics as a commodity for the global economy. In this regard, the woven fabrics do not only serve as cultural heritage, but they can improve the economic welfare of craftsmen simultaneously. With the increasing number of studies on regional woven fabrics, it is expected that their results complement each other and generate common threads from past relationships, to produce great influences on the historical motifs from each region that interact with each other.

In Songket woven cloth, its decoration is the embodiment of human and natural beauty. The decorative variety created on woven fabrics is based on human knowledge about the environment, expected to stimulate humans to formulate various forms of motifs. Natural objects, such as plants, animals, humans, and other natural elements, along with religious values and beliefs, are presented in a harmonious embodiment of beauty which is later translated into decorative motifs (Sila, 2013). The motifs in each woven fabric have various meanings. Malay society considers that this racial supremacy can be seen from the songket cloth and its motifs, representing the animist beliefs, Hindu-Buddhist, and Islamic beliefs. The understanding of growth and development, as well as unity and human spirituality related to animism, is expressed in songket motifs (Bahauddin & Abdullah, 2003).

Intersecting human relations also carries an influencing role in each region's culture and art development. The cultural acculturation in the territory and local trade routes carried out by the Malays, Javanese, and Bugis people had arrived at nations outside the archipelago, such as China and Arabia. Meanwhile, at the beginning of the 16th century, European nations began to land in the eastern Indonesian areas in search of gold (spices), including Bima (Parimatha, 2002). Van Braam Moris said, "Bima was an important trade center area in the small Sunda region with their woven fabrics being an export item at that time" (2014, p. 38). However, recently, the reputation of Bima weaving has been difficult to restore as the community and craftsmen have abandoned Bima weaving for more economically promising occupations, tarnishing the understanding of historical values and life philosophy from the weaving (Suwandi & Sunarya, 2021).

The research on Traditional Weaving Fabrics of Nusa Tenggara carried out by (Kartiwa, 1973) concerning the Rehabilitation and Expansion Project of the Central Museum of Jakarta was an effort to rehabilitate research and publication activities in the Central Museum. Meanwhile, our study only describes the process, technique, and decoration of Nusa Tenggara weaving in general. Therefore, more detailed research is needed to obtain scientific literature material to highlight the crucial role of Bima weaving motifs. Meanwhile, other studies (Horvath & Barrangou, 2010; Mubin, 2018; Rosmini, 2018; Wijaya et al., 2014) discussing the Bima weaving motif mainly focus on the philosophical meaning of the symbols contained in the Bima weaving motif. In this study, the explanation related to its development no longer refers to the development of the Bima weaving motif's distinctive motifs, but it examines the procedure of creating the weaving and documentation of the weaving. Thus, this study comprehensively examines the history of the Bima weaving motif development from pre-Islamic to the Islamic period (Sultanate) when the Bima sultanate was established.

This research is considered essential to maintaining the preservation of regional culture, especially in Bima, as there is a need for a thorough study in maintaining local wisdom in Indonesian culture since the traditional art has been abandoned by the community as a result of the massive influence of modern art so that the postmodern art has dispelled our regional identity (Tabrani, 2012). The phenomenon of losing self-identity (regional), primarily the traditional clothing motifs, has been widely reported, such as in the Dayak tribe (Usop & Usop, 2021) and Malay songket cloth (Lestari & Riyanti, 2017). The same phenomenon is also clearly observed in the Bima community, where the people no longer recognize various types of Bima weaving motifs, along with the disappeared philosophy of life embedded in Bima's customary law. This phenomena is worsened by the minimum knowledge of weaving craftsmen, who should play an essential role in maintaining the cultural values contained in Bima's weaving motifs (Suwandi & Sunarya, 2021). Therefore, to resolve these problems, local history, such as the Bima weaving motif, should be scientifically reported to replenish the literary sources for the younger generation to understand traditional arts.

## **Method**

The method used in this research was a qualitative approach, while its data were collected through data triangulation, consisting of observation, interviews, and docu-

mentation. Our first observation was carried out at the Asi Bima Museum on April 24, 2021, to obtain preliminary information based on evidence of the Bima woven cloth motif, which was still well inventoried, and verbal information from local officials. Our further observation conducted in Rabadompu, Bima City, the center of weaving craft, as well as in Kale'o and Simpasai villages, Lambu sub-district on May 27–June 11, 2021, suggested that most Bima people used MNWE (Non-Machine Weaving Equipment) and almost every house had weavers, representing information to initiate tracing of the history of Bima weaving motif's development. After the observation and obtaining criticism from the participants, interviews were conducted with the historian (the writer), who also serves as the head of the Asi Bima museum, Mr. Ruslan Muhammad or better known (as Alan Malangi). Then, after the observation in Kale'o and Simpasai villages, we interviewed two weavers, Mrs. Nurseha (Kale'o) and Mrs. Haninah (Simpasai). Those weavers were considered experts and derivative craftsmen in the areas by the local community, thus becoming resource persons in this research to obtain information related to Bima's weaving motifs. In the document study, literature studies were carried out involving journals, proceeding articles, books such as *Bo' Sangaji kai* (a Bima history script) and origin stories of all the Jin nations (Bima's historical manuscripts) and other supporting related documents, books, theses, and dissertations. The linkage of verbal sources and literature sources was expected to complement each other.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *History of Bima weaving*

The transcription of the Schoemann V3 script, entitled 'The Story of the Origin of the Jinn and all the Gods', tells the story of Sang Bima after conquering all the kingdoms on the island of Java. He and his three younger brothers, Sang Arjuna (Arjuna), Sang Kula (Nakula), and the God (Sahadeva) wandered in their boats to the land of the rising sun. On that voyage, they stopped at Satonda island, a volcanic island off the coast of Pekat (Tambora, Sumbawa Island), and then married a local woman named Putri Tasi Naga and had 2 children who became the forerunner of the Bima kingdom (Sjamsuddin, 2013, pp. 5–7). The two children were named Indra Komala and Indra Zamrud. Meanwhile, in the story of their birth, after giving birth to them, Putri Tasi Naga's mother put her in a bamboo basket and covered it with pearls, and then carried it into the sea and drifted to the land of Dompou. The two children were found by a Ncuhi (tribal leader) named Pata Kula. After the two sons of Sang Bima grew up, they were asked to become kings by the Ncuhi and the people. Indra Komala served as the king of Dompou, and Indra Zamrud was given territory in Bima. On his departure for Bima, Indra Zamrud was accompanied by Ncuhi Parewa, wearing a red woven cloth with gold inlay and a white, golden turban decorated with air bird feathers and holding a golden staff (Chambert-Loir, 2004, pp. 103–105).

The above transcript shows that the indigenous people of Bima have long understood the weaving tradition. Ever since before the king of Bima founded the Bima kingdom, the native of Bima had already settled in the area, in small communities scattered around the mountains of the Bima bay called the Donggo/Dou Donggo (Hitchcock, 1987). During that period, the Ncuhi were already wearing woven cloth. Another relevant source estimated that the Bima people began to recognize the tradition of making

clothes to protect their bodies from environmental and weather conditions in Bima, which is very hot during the day but very cold at night (Van Braam Moris, 2014). The people of Bima believed that the beginning of the weaving tradition was in the Naka era (the oldest era in Bima's history).

Outsiders began to acknowledge weaving in Bima during the trading activities in the Archipelago in 1512 AD, where traders who wanted to go to Banda and Maluku would stop at Bima Port and bought cloth made from local residents to be resold to Banda and Maluku" (Pires, 2018, p. 247). The trade route connecting Malacca and Maluku is very crowded since it carries particular attractions in the Bima port. Geographically, Bima is bordered by the Flores Sea and the Indian Ocean, in the north and south, respectively. This position designates Bima as an essential point in the archipelago's shipping route map. In all seasons, especially in the west monsoon season, Bima bay is the safest place for ships and boats to dock. For traders who travel from the Malacca Strait to Banda or from Banda to Malacca in the west monsoon season, they regularly encounter heavy storms. Thus, their ships and boats sailed to Flores bay for weeks until the storm subsided. During the north monsoon, Bima port endured the busiest activity. According to Kenneth R. Hall, in that season, the shipping lanes of China, Java, Nusa Tenggara, and Maluku utilize the north and southeast monsoons as these ships and boats generally require a port to fill supplies or take shelter from strong winds and also engage in trading (Taufiqurrahman, 2012, pp. 15–18). The ideal position of Bima port introduced this area to Europeans, rapidly increasing the trading commodities at Bima port, especially the trade of Bima woven cloth, which became the *prima donna* and was greatly admired by the people of Banda and Maluku due to its excellent quality (Pires, 2018).

According to Noorduyn, around 1618-1619 was the initial arrival of Islam in Bima, brought by the Gowa kingdom. However, after fifty years of governing the kingdom, Bima had to submit to the power of the invaders. At that time, the people and kingdom of Bima experienced crucial changes. The boats that arrived in Batavia and in Ambon were recorded by the Dutch. Those boats carried goods from Bima, such as rice, sapan wood, wax material, sandalwood, tamarind, sulfur, cinnamon, Javanese sugar, and enslaved people (see: *Daghregister 1624-1664*). From these records, Bima was already in contact with Ambon, Banjar, Makassar, Banten, Palembang, and even China. Another note mentioned that the ships also brought woven cloth, horses, buffalo, onions, green beans, and ganitri seeds (Chambert-Loir & Salahuddin, 2012).

Our data suggest that Bima woven cloth has always been regarded as an attractive item by outsiders. Even Van Braam Moris also described that traders who wanted to sail from Maluku to Malacca or vice versa always stopped to trade at the Bima port and surrounding areas because Bima offers various commodities, such as Bima cloth, horses, honey, sapan wood, and candles. However, after the seventeenth century, the bustling trading activity at the Bima port led to the proliferation of imported goods as they offered better quality, such as more refined fabrics from China. In contrast, the yarn spinning in Bima still used coarse yarn, resulting in generally rough-looking plaid cloth texture with red, white, or blue stripes worn by the ordinary Bima people, which tempted them to make clothes using materials from Europe, Selayar, Singapore or those that come from Indonesia (Java and Makassar) (Van Braam Moris, 2014).

The initial motif of Bima woven cloth is still the dominating clothing in Bima, as observed in the weaving villages in Bima, namely Simpasai village, Bima. Based on information from the weavers, the people of Bima have long been well known for their spinning yarn tradition. Haninah, on May 27, 2021, and Nurseha, on June 11, 2021, expressed that the Bima community had started practicing weaving since the Naka era. Historically, as people in the past were not familiar with the recent trendy clothing, they did spinning activities using natural materials such as roots and bark to protect themselves from the weather and animal bites. After a while, with the more easily obtained raw materials, especially with the abundant cotton trees in Bima, the weavers started using cotton as a material to make yarn. The cotton was made into coarse threads, then used as material for weaving. Initially, unlike today, the fabrics were made very rough. In Kale'o and Simpasai, the Bima woven motif still maintains the types of geometric motifs, such as straight lines and boxes (nggusu upa motifs).

Those motifs were maintained because their manufacture requires a shorter time compared to the manufacture of woven floral motifs. In addition, the demand for geometric motifs from Bima woven fabrics devotees is also higher. Thus, to maintain economic resilience, they conform to consumer needs while preserving their ancestral heritage. Interestingly, the Simpasai village still practices the old weaver inheritance tradition, where women are implanted with a suggestion that their inability to weave induced them to be considered immature women (not ready to marry). The concept was instilled by parents who have worked as weavers for generations to preserve the weaving culture in Simpasai village. Consequently, children in Simpasai village are able to make a piece of cloth the size of one Sarong at the age of 12.

Van Braam Moris (2014) described that, in the mid-19th century AD, the handicraft industry in Bima was small-scale and limited to the traditional spinning of yarn for generations. They did not even use fine cotton. They weaved using cotton from their own gardens or the forest because the mountains in Bima were mostly planted with cotton (one of the trade commodities). Thus, the Bima people only produced woven sarongs and scarves made from rough cotton. The Bima people regarded the weaving business as a distraction between the planting and harvesting seasons, while weaving work was only vital for those living in remote villages (Parimarta, 2002).

The elements of weaving history in the archipelago are thought-provoking to be researched using a historical approach. The motifs reflect the values of regional philosophy (Purwanti & Siregar, 2016). Although the weaving method is the same, the shape of the generated motifs is different from one another. Historians believe that weaving has been known since the Srivijaya Kingdom (7-14 AD). However, up to now, there is no archaeological, historical evidence that justifies this opinion. Therefore, there is no archeological evidence to support the aforementioned ideas on the early history of spinning yarn in the archipelago, more specifically in Bima.

#### *The motifs of Bima weaving*

Similar to the general early ornament history in human civilization, the people of Bima initially only recognized straight-line weaving motifs produced from natural colors. Chambert-loir illustrated in "The Story of the Origin of the Jinn and All the Gods" that when escorting Sang Bima's son, Indra Zamrud, to the Bima region, the accompa-

nying Ncuhi Parewa wore the original woven clothes in red color with gold (Chambert-Loir, 2004). In that era, the motif was very simple, only striped and made roughly using leather and wood roots, as well as using natural dyes found in the Bima Region. Noorduyn noted that Bima was heavily planted with sebang or sapan wood trees, and they became the export commodity during the trade period. Sapan wood was vital as they are appealing for Europeans.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, sapan wood from the island of Sumbawa had emerged as a vital commodity and was sent to Malacca, then passed on to China. As a result of the fall of Makassar (1667), the trade in sapan wood on the island of Sumbawa was monopolized by the Dutch, giving the Dutch special rights to buy sapan wood from these islands. With that monopoly, this sapan timber trade only benefited the kings while having little to no benefits for the trading community. Although not widely reported, until around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the sapan timber trade was still monopolized by the Dutch. This wood trade was only surrendered by the Dutch after the emergence of synthetic materials for dyes in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the sapan wood materials were no longer sold in Europe (Parimartha, 2002). Thus, presumably, in the early period, the motifs produced were only limited to straight lines with natural coloring. Although archaeologically, the remains have not been clearly found in Bima.

The initial development of various decorations in Bima was observed during the Majapahit kingdom expansion to the East. This incident occurred around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as (Riana, 2009, p. 100) described in the Wirama Pthiwitala, stanzas of the Majapahit kingdom's poetry that mentioned the kingdom's area in the East:

*In the East of the land of Java is also mentioned,  
Bali is the most important Be predecessor, and Goa Gajah,  
The most important deserts are Breadfruit, Taliwang, all Dompō,  
Sang Hyang Api Bhima, Seran, Kadali Forest gathered*

Apart from mentioning the names of the royal areas on Sumbawa Island, the Majapahit kingdom wanted to control the Bima kingdom and its surroundings. The territory of the kingdoms on the island of Sumbawa was vital as its trade routes attracted Nusantara traders. So, in the *amukti palapa* oath sworn by Mahapatih Gajah Mada, he said that to unite the archipelago, all of the kingdoms, one of which was in Bima (Dompō), would be conquered so that he could rest in peace (Suartaya, 2011). The history of acculturation between Javanese (Majapahit) and Bima culture is explained by (Susetyo, 2014), a National Archaeological Researcher, who found that the motifs adorn the Sultan of Bima necklace have similarities with the symbol of the Majapahit kingdom. The symbol is known as Surya Majapahit.



Figure 1. Sultan Bima necklace decoration

(Source: Ministry of Education and Culture Repository)



Figure 2. Surya Majapahit 'Trowulan Museum collection (left) and National Museum Collection (right)

(Source: National Archaeological Center Documents)

The motif of the Sultan Bima necklace contains flower petals similar to the Majapahit solar symbol. This motif confirms the influence of Javanese culture in Bima. In its application in Bima weaving craft, this symbol was developed in the form of the *Nggusu waru motif* (octagonal) and floral motifs, as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. Aside from Surya Majapahit, the altered motifs were also found on the Sultan's Keris Sarong. In the Sarong, there is a Garudeya image similar to the temples in Java, decorated with a sprig of flower motif, symbolizing the Sultan. Philosophically, the motif signifies that a leader must show noble character and live in harmony (Susetyo, 2014). This finding was amplified by the head of the Bima Museum (Asi Nae Mbojo), Alan Malangi, on April 24, 2021, who said that the flower motifs found on the carvings of the Sultan's Kris sheath in the Bima kingdom were the result of the Javanese culture influence, along with the accessories in Bima's palace, including the motifs on the woven cloth. This finding indicated that Majapahit culture during the Hindu-Buddhist period had influenced the color, patterns, and shapes of the motifs found in Bima woven fabrics.



Figure 3. *Samobo* flower motif (a bunch flower)

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 4. *Satako* flower motif (a sprig motif)

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 5. *Aruna* flower motif (pineapple)

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 6. *Kakando* motif (bamboo shoots)

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 7. *Line* motif

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 8. *Nggusu tolu* motif (triangle)

(Source: Author's Document)

The resemblance to the Majapahit Surya Symbol, representing the eight directions of the compass, was observed after the Bima kingdom adopted Islamic law. Later, that philosophy was adopted into the philosophy of the ideal leader contained in the *nggusu waru* (octagonal) motif. Based on the Customary Law of the Land of Bima "*Hukum Adat*

*Tanah Bima*” (HATB), during the establishment of the Bima Sultanate (1640-1950 AD), a regulation prohibiting the application of human and animal motifs was enacted due to the concern that the Bima people would believe in worshipping animals and spirits again. That regulation somehow also affected the production of clothing motifs. Consequently, Bima weaving only applies floral and geometric shapes (Ismail & Malangi, 2010). The illustration of these symbols has been stylized in such a way that the naturalist realist form is disguised, such as in the *kapi keu* (crab claw) motif. Up to now, these motifs are maintained as a reflection of the identity of the Bima people. Meanwhile, according to an interview with A. Malangi on April 24, 2021, the Bima woven cloth motifs consist of 10 motifs.



Figure 9. *Nggusu upa* motif (square)

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 10. *Pado waji* motif (parallelogram)

(Source: Author's Document)

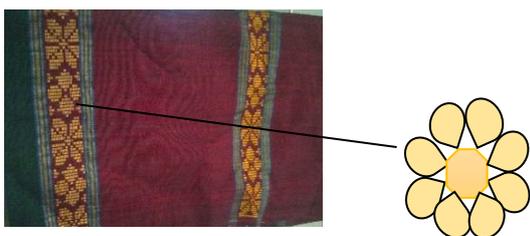


Figure 11. *Nggusu waru* motif (octagonal)

(Source: Author's Document)



Figure 12. *Kapi keu* motif (crab claw)

(Source: Author's Document)

The first motif, as presented in Figure 3, is the *samobo* (flower) motif that symbolizes humans as social beings who should be useful in carrying out social life. Thus, similar to flower scents, humans are always expected to give a positive impact and pay attention to noble character. The second motif is the *satako* flower motif, presented in Figure 4. This motif symbolizes harmonious family life, like a flower that always grows together every season. The third motif is the *aruna* or pineapple flower, as illustrated in Figure 5, which exemplifies the 99 scales of Asma Ul-Husna (the names of Allah SWT). This motif highlights that humans, within their limitations, must understand the 99 attributes of Allah SWT and use them as guidelines and examples in this world and the hereafter. The fourth motif is *kakando*, or bamboo shoots, illustrated in Figure 6, which signifies patience and tenacity in facing every trial and challenge, just like bamboo shoots that can grow in the middle of a dense grove. The fifth motive is the stripe motif illustrated in Figure 7. This motive reflects the firm attitude of the Bima people in carrying out their duties as a representation of the common attitude of the maritime community. The sixth motive is *nggusu tolu* or triangle. The shape of the acute angle contained in the motif illustrated in Figure 8 suggests that the highest law and power in human life is in the hands of God. Meanwhile, the seventh motive is *nggusu upa* (square), as shown in Figure 9. This motive describes the four directions of the compass,

which symbolizes the attitude of the Bima people, who should be open and friendly with immigrants from various directions. The eighth motive is *pado waji* motif (parallelogram), as presented in Figure 10, which signifies the first level parallelogram symbolizing the supreme power of God. The second level parallelogram symbol indicates the power of the leader, while the third level parallelogram symbol represents the lower level class. The ninth symbol is *nggusu waru* (octagonal) motif, as shown in Figure 11. This motive is related to the philosophical meaning in choosing a leader, which consists of *macia ima roma taqwa* (who has strong faith and piety to GOD Allah SWT); *ma ntau ro ma ntau bade* (who is knowledgeable, experienced, and broad-minded); *ma mbani ro ma paja sara* (having patience and tolerance); *ma ndinga nggahi labo rawi* (upholding their commitments); *ma taho hidi ro tohona* (who is strong in body and mind); *londo ro mai dou ma taho* (coming from a good lineage); and *ma taho mori ra wokona* (life in physical and spiritual prosperity). The last motif is *kapi keu* (crab claw) motif, illustrated in Figure 12, which symbolizes the attitude of a beautiful and feminine girl with graceful movements similar to the slow motion of a crab. Additionally, the primary color of the fabric is usually dark blue, yellow, and red. The dark blue color signifies peace with friendly strands, while yellow represents prosperity from gold threads, and red represents courage (Horvath & Barrangou, 2010; Rosmini, 2018).

Essentially, Bima woven fabric has the same functions as the gotya Bali woven fabric, but no source explained the caste differences of the people wearing Bima woven, while the Bali woven fabric has personal, social, and physical function values (Prayatna et al., 2021), but has a symbolic value. Besides, Bima woven cloth motif is different from Javanese batik motifs. During the 8th Sultan Hamengkubuwono leadership, the symbolic meaning of classical batik motifs was used as a guide and order of life derived from the aesthetics, work ethic, and way of life of the Javanese bourgeoisie. Classical batik motif names, types, colors, and patterns represent a function and meaning in the past palace system. During that period, batik even becomes a symbol of the legitimacy of power that differentiates social status in society. Therefore, Java was adored by common people as splendor and social control (Roykhan et al., 2019). Although Van Braam Moris (2014) once mentioned the differences in clothing between ordinary people and the bourgeoisie in Bima, he only revealed Bima people's weaving was still straightforwardly rough and worn only by ordinary people. However, he did not explain the detailed differences in motifs.

Even the informant's sources cannot provide certainty on this different social status because the application of motifs to Bima's woven cloth was not venerated by anyone. Even though in the circle of the palace, the commonly used symbols or motifs was *satako* flower motifs (a sprig), but the same motif was also worn by ordinary people. The observed difference between the *prijaji* and the common people were only in their clothing quality during both eras of the Bima kingdom and Sultanate. Essentially, there is a prominent classification in the social life of the Bima community, namely at the first level occupied by the Sultan and officials from the nobility level known as *Ruma* and *Rato*. The second level is village heads, religious leaders, and independent residents, while the last is a group of people who are pawned. These pawned people were originally free people, but they engaged in crimes or violations of the law, so they were subjected to fines, but as they were unable to pay the fines, they were pawned and worked as enslaved people (Haris et al., 1997).

In the 21st century, the Bima's weaving motifs have advanced from their patterns, types, colors, and decorative patterns. Also, Bima's socio-political changes have influenced the Bima people's philosophy of life. As customary law based on Islamic law no longer serves as a guide in social life, animal and human motifs can now be seen in Bima's woven cloth as found in Kale'o and Ntobo villages, Bima city. The development of this ornamental variety is strongly influenced by the growing interaction between the Bima community and foreign cultures, as observed from the use of decorative patterns obtained from the widely circulated modern motif books in Bima. Additionally, the weavers' lack of knowledge of the motifs' types and their philosophical values, along with easily accessed images from the internet, mainly become the influencing factors in the transformation of Bima's woven fabric motifs.

## **Conclusions**

Sumbawa Island appears like a suburb on Indonesia's map. This island is known for its multicultural variety of cultures and has been widely known since the arrival of traders on international trade routes. Since the Dutch, Chinese, Arab, Bugis, Malay, and European (Portuguese) traders started anchoring on the island of Sumbawa, precisely at Bima Harbor, Bima had more direct contact with these explorers. The primary commodities in Bima include cloth, sapan wood, cotton, wax, horses, and honey. Bima's woven fabrics are especially adored by the people of Banda and Maluku. Initially, the motifs of Bima woven cloth only had geometric shapes or primitive images like straight lines and squares. However, after the acculturation of Javanese culture around the XI-XVI centuries, the Bima community started to recognize the motifs of living beings (realists and naturalists). Thus, they began to adapt animal and plant motifs in woven fabric motifs freely. At first, due to their belief in the myth that spirits and objects were deemed to have supernatural powers, those living things were prohibited from being adopted in Bima woven. After the beginning of the XVII century, Bima officially embraced Islam (the Sultanate) and implemented laws based on customary law and Islamic law. Along with these changes, the application of weaving motifs also transformed. The changes in Bima's culture were observed in the Sultan's Keris Sarong motif, which illustrated the image of Garudeya (similar to temples in Java), decorated with a sprig of flower motif (a symbol of the Sultan). The motif reflected that, as a leader, the Sultan must show noble character and live in harmony. He also had set geometric motifs and stylized plants to prevent the Bima people from returning to worshiping ancestral spirits through images of living things (fetishism). The results of this study indicate the presence of minimum historical evidence left in Bima. The historical evidence was mostly obtained from old literature. For this reason, in-depth research examining historical facts through archaeological remains and a hermeneutical approach that methodologically allows us to interpret, offer, and understand the content of all existing sources should be carried out. This study provides an understanding of the Bima community, primarily on the philosophical values contained in the Bima weaving motif showing the typical red thread or differences from other regional weaving motifs.

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### List of resource persons/informants

- (1) Haninah, Haninah (73 years old), a hereditary weaver of Bima cloth, interviewes on 27 May 2021 at her home, Simpasai, Lambu, Bima, West Nusa Tenggara.
- (2) Malingi, Alan (48 years), Bima historian and writer (Head of ASI Bima Museum), interviewed on 24 April 2021 at the Bima ASI Museum, Rasa Nae, Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara.
- (3) Nurseha, Nurseha (51 years old), a hereditary weaver of Bima cloth, interviewed on June 11 2021 at his home, Monta Baru, Lambu, Bima, West Nusa Tenggara.