



Representation of Cultural Identity of Bangkalan Community through Semiotic Analysis of Halal Culinary Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Bangkalan is one of the preferred tourist destinations in East Java because of its culture and culinary diversity. However, discussions about culinary are inseparable from culture. To raise public awareness of the cultural heritage richness of Bangkalan halal culinary, an analysis related to culture and culinary has to be carried on. This research aimed to analyze the semiotic and philosophical meaning of Bangkalan's halal culinary (*Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Topak Ladeh*), which represents the cultural identity of Bangkalan people. This research is qualitative descriptive with a semiotic analysis approach of Charles Peirce's triadic model to analyze the visual composition of food. Data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out by processing signs and symbols in words into meaningful information. From the result analysis, it can be affirmed that each culinary has a variety of meanings that represent the value of community unity, prosperity, friendship, togetherness, and cultural heritage richness of Bangkalan people. The strengths of the three culinary arts are in the form of historical content, philosophical values, and religious beliefs so that they can foster public interest in visiting Bangkalan.

Keywords: semiotics, philosophy, halal culinary, Bangkalan



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

One of the best things about traveling is experiencing the culinary tastes of a particular region. Nowadays, food tourism, also known as culinary tourism is a growing trend; people come to some places to explore or to find authentic food culinary of local areas. The term culinary is

defined as something related or related to cooking (Utami, 2018). Furthermore, cooking is defined as turning food ingredients from nature into culture. The link between food and culture is an expression that states that cooked food is a medium for people to show who they are. This is supported by Gabaccia (2009), who states, "What we eat tells us about *who we are*." It means what we consume represents a strong cultural identity. Based on this statement, food can be interpreted as a symbol of social life and cultural identity for community groups in certain areas. Furthermore, cultural identity and culinary cannot be separated from the philosophical history of a community.

According to Soenarno (2021), culinary tourism is a tourist activity by enjoying a variety of typical foods in a particular area. Besides eating food that has been planned to be visited, tourists can get to know the food's character and the local culture. Moreover, Bangkalan has several unique cuisines, including *Topak Ladeh*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Tajin Sobih*. *Topak Ladeh* is served during *Ketupat Day*, seven days after Eid Al-Fitr, precisely on the 7th of Shawwal. *Topak Ladeh* contains pieces of *Ketupat*, long beans, and beef in a sauce containing coconut, which is roasted until it turns black. Another Bangkalan specialty is *Nasi Serpang*. This rice wrapped in banana leaves has several side dishes, including fried clams' sauce, prawn crackers, fried *Empal*, and a gravy containing beef skin crackers mixed with thick coconut milk. There are also *Pepes*, salted egg, and *Serundeng* to complement this dish. In contrast to *Topak Ladeh* and *Nasi Serpang*, *Tajin Sobih* has its characteristics, and this food has a sweet taste. There are three filling colors for each serving of *Tajin Sobih*: pink, brown, and white. On top of this colorful *Tajin* filling, it is then doused with brown sugar that has been cooked thickly. This brown sugar mixture on top of the *Tajin Sobih* creates a sweet taste but still tastes savory on the tongue.

In addition to the delicious and distinctive taste of the dish, *Topak Ladeh*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Tajin Sobih* have a history and philosophical meaning that is closely related to the culture in Madura. So that this Bangkalan culinary can be studied using a semiotic approach. The semiotic approach itself is an approach that has a sign system. Thus, the study of semiotics assumes that social phenomena in society and culture are signs of semiotics. The signs learn the systems, rules, and conventions that allow them to have meaning. The study of semiotics in this study is used to explore, find, and describe the purpose, history, and philosophy by analyzing signs, signs, and translating symbols in Bangkalan specialties' composition.

The semiotic tradition consists of theories about how signs present objects, ideas, states, situations, feelings, and conditions (Littlejohn, 2009). Furthermore, Sobur (2006) explains that semiotics is a science or method of analysis to study signs. Semiotics wants to explore how humanity sees things to make meaning. It can be concluded that semiotics studies the meaning

contained in the symbols of human culture; semiotics reviews how various elements interact with human knowledge to produce meaning.

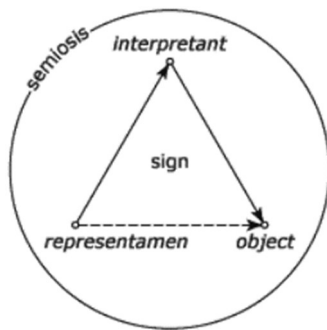


Figure 1. Semiotic Model (Triadic Model) of Peirce, C.S. (1931).

Wibowo (2013) explains that Charles Sanders Peirce is known for his triadic model and trichotomy concept, which consists of the following:

- a. Representamen [R] is the form received by the sign or functions as a sign.
- b. Object [O] is something that refers to the sign. It is something represented by the representamen that is related to the reference.
- c. Interpretant [I] is a sign in a person's mind about the object to which a sign refers.

Following the explanation of the triadic concept, semiotics, according to Peirce has three areas of study:

- a. The sign itself. The study of different signs, how they convey meaning, and how they relate to the people who use them.
- b. System or code is the study of how different codes are developed to meet a society's or culture's needs.
- c. The culture in which codes and signs operate depends on the use of codes and signs.

Concerning the triadic concept of semiotics, Darmastuti (2013) states that cultural identity is an understanding of something identical or an image related to culture. Moreover, cultural identity is a person's feeling (emotional significance) to belong (sense of belonging) or affiliate with a particular culture. Darmastuti (2013) explains the theory of cultural identity as follows:

1. Individuals negotiate identity in discourse.
2. Intercultural communication occurs through discursive assumptions and the recognition of different cultural identities.
3. Intercultural communication competence includes coherent management of meaning and relatedness in following rules and positive or effective outcomes.
4. Intercultural communication competence involves negotiating shared meanings, rules, and positive outcomes.

5. Intercultural communication competence involves validating cultural identity.
6. Cultural identity changes a function of scope (how common identity is), salience (how important identity is), and intensity (how strongly identity is communicated to others).

There are only a few studies that discuss the semiotic meaning of food. Here are some previous studies that examine the same topic. Subahri (2020) research entitled *Pesan Semiotik Pada Tradisi Makan Tabheg di Pondok Pesantren* discusses the study and analysis of the meaning of semiotic messages in *Tabheg* eating tradition in Islamic boarding schools in East Java. This study reveals that *Tabheg* consists of 1). Representamen: Something that functions as a sign; in this study, the representamen is the *Tabheg* itself. 2). Object: something that refers to the sign in the form of something real outside the sign. And 3). Interpretant: something that refers to the meaning of the sign. In this case, it refers to Islamic religious recommendations: togetherness in simplicity. The character of *Santri* is built from the meaning implied in the symbolic messages of togetherness and simplicity (interpretant), which are internalized in the form of peace-loving behavior as the modality of *Pesantren* in realizing world peace. Thus, the social construction built from the daily activities of these *Santri* can be part of the behavioral output in personality and character.

The second study, entitled *Makna Pesan Dibalik Makna Adat Dalam Prosesi Perkawinan Adat Batak Toba Studi Semiotika: Makanan Adat Daging Babi Dan Ikan Mas* (Calista and Aswati, 2020) this study aims to find out the meaning contained in the traditional food rituals of pork and goldfish in the *Toba Batak* traditional marriage procession. From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the meaning contained in the traditional pork and goldfish food follows the analysis of signs, objects, interpretants, and sign categories, namely icons, indices, and symbols, which can draw meaning from the parts of traditional food, namely a) Head (ulu) which is made into three parts, namely: 1) right upper jaw (*na marngingi parsiamun*), 2) left upper jaw (*na marngingi parhambirang*), 3) lower jaw (*osang*), b) tail (*ihur-ihur*), c) neck circle (*aliang-aliang*), d) circular back to ribs (*somba-somba*), e) groin (*soit*), and goldfish (*dekke mas*) according to the division in *Dalihan na tolu*.

Meanwhile, research that discusses cultural identity was conducted by Weichart (2004) entitled *Identitas Minahasa: Sebuah Praktik Kuliner. Penelitian ini membahas sejarah singkat Minahasa, ciri-ciri kuliner Minahasa dan hubungannya dengan identitas budaya Minahasa*. The Minahasan body, for example, has become accustomed to the taste of pig, rat, and dog meats that their Muslim neighbors would not touch. Furthermore, using large amounts of chili peppers in Minahasan cuisine demands a physique that can endure the spicy taste. Eating, for example, is an

activity related to biological and social identity. It demonstrates Minahasan attachment to their ancestors and the land they live on, and they belong to a Christian community. Food is the medium marker of Minahasan identity that distinguishes them from others who do not share the same traditions.

Thus, as a reflection of pride for the Madurese culture, this study intended to reveal the representation of the cultural identity of the Bangkalan people through a Semiotic analysis of regional culinary. Furthermore, the semiotic analysis of *Topak Ladeh*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Tajin Sobih* will also reveal many interpretations of meaning that also reflect the plurality of Indonesian society. Thus, this research aimed to find the semiotic and philosophical meaning of Bangkalan culinary and to analyze the typical Bangkalan culinary that represents cultural identity.

1.2 Research questions

Based on the background of the problems above, this research was conducted to answer several questions as follows:

1. What are the semiotic and philosophical meanings of the typical Bangkalan culinary?
2. How does the typical Bangkalan culinary represent cultural identity?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to enrich the study of literature, especially semiotic studies. Thus, this research will help philosophical documentation of local culture, specifically halal culinary of Bangkalan. It is wished that readers will see this research as a reference to know Bangkalan culinary information based on semiotic studies.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This research design is descriptive qualitative, which aims to understand, explain and describe the phenomena that exist descriptively in the form of words and language about social reality and various phenomena that occur in the community that is the research subject. This phenomenon can be in the form of forms, activities, characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities and differences between one phenomenon and another (Sukmadinata, 2006:72). Furthermore, Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics analysis approach with Peirce's Triadic concept (Triangle of Meaning); signs, objects and interpretants are used to answer the formulation of the problem so that characteristics, traits, characters and philosophical meanings of Bangkalan cuisine will be found. The semiotic approach of Charles Sanders Peirce is used because this model

provides a detailed depth of analysis when interpreting Bangkalan culinary based on the meaning of visual compositional elements of food.

2.2 Data Source

The data from this research are taken from visual composition elements of Bangkalan culinary. The first culinary is *Tajin Sobih*, which contains marrow porridge, pearl porridge, brown sugar sauce, *lupis*, and *cetter*. The second is *Nasi Serpang*, which consists of steamed rice, *pepes tongkol*, clams, salted egg, beef jerky, vermicelli, peanut/shrimp crackers, *serundeng*, chili paste, and tofu and shrimp paste, and beef skin crackers mixed with coconut milk. The third is *Topak Ladeh*, it is culinary that consists of beef, *ketupat*, *esoh* or beef intestine, tripe or other beef offal, and boiled chicken eggs. Those selected culinarians consist of elements and signs that can be processed to become meaningful information. Meanwhile, the supporting data in this study is information about the philosophical history of Bangkalan culinary (*Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Topak Ladeh*), it is obtained directly through interviews with food culture expert in Bangkalan.

2.3 Data Collection Technique

In this study, several steps are used to collect research data. First, find out the visual composition of Bangkalan culinary (*Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Topak Ladeh*). Second, analyze the semiotic signs found in the visual composition of Bangkalan culinary. Third, interpret the meaning or the message conveyed by the visual composition of Bangkalan culinary. Fourth, interview the food culture expert in Bangkalan to ask about the philosophical history of *Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Topak Ladeh*. The data in this study comes from the analysis result of visual compositions of Bangkalan culinary and information from the interview. Last, documentation is carried on to find related literature, this is obtained by taking photos, and searching for books, journals, and articles related to the literature needed in research.

2.4 Data Analysis

In managing the research data that has been collected, the data is identified using Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics analysis with Peirce's Triadic concept (Triangle of Meaning), namely, representment [R], objects [O], and interpretants [I], which are used to understand the meanings contained in Bangkalan culinary. In addition, words from interviews and various documentation in the research area are elaborated into meaningful information.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

3.1.1 Semiotic Meaning of Bangkalan Culinary

The art and culture of food or culinary are attractions for domestic and foreign tourists who travel to enjoy various types of culinary specialties of the intended area. Bangkalan Regency, which is located on the west of Madura, is a developing tourism area. Bangkalan has various tourism potentials, such as religious/spiritual, beach, cultural, historical, and culinary tourism. Since Bangkalan is a district with vast tourism potential, the development of tourism in this area will bring many benefits to the local community; economically, socially, and culturally. *Dinas kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Jawa Timur* shows that Bangkalan has a variety of culinary that can be explored regarding its potential in the tourism and culinary fields. The following are the findings related to semiotics and the philosophical meaning of some Bangkalan culinary.

3.1.1.1 *Tajin Sobih*

Tajin Sobih is culinary with a sweet taste, usually served as a dessert or comfort food. This cuisine comes from Sobih Village, Tonjung Village, Burneh District, Bangkalan, Madura. *Tajin Sobih* can be found in almost all areas of Bangkalan in the morning until late afternoon. The basic ingredients of this food are similar to marrow porridge (*bubur sumsum*), which is made from rice flour. The difference between *Tajin Sobih* and marrow porridge, in general, is the component in its supporting composition. A marrow porridge has two elements, white and reddish-brown elements. The white color comes from rice flour which is processed until thickened with coconut milk, and the brown color comes from brown sugar, which is processed until it melts into a gravy. While the main components commonly found in *Tajin Sobih* are marrow porridge, pearl porridge, brown sugar sauce, and several other preparations such as *lupis* and *cetter*. The taste element of this porridge is a combination of savory and sweet flavors. In the Madura area, *Tajin* itself is a typical dish of the Madurese community, which is usually identified as a symbol of expressing gratitude to God. When viewed from the study of semiotics and culture, each element in *Tajin Sobih* has a different meaning and message. Charles Sanders Peirce defines the trichotomy concept, which consists of the following:

- a. **Representamen [R]** is the form received by the sign or functions as a sign.
- b. **Object [O]** is something that refers to the sign.
- c. **Interpretant [I]** is a sign in a person's mind about the object.

The following are some of the elements contained in *Tajin Sobih* which can be analyzed using the semantics model:



Figure 2. *Tajin Sobih*

This data shows a picture of a complete dish of *Tajin Sobih*. First, there is a white porridge in the picture called *representment* [R], also known as marrow porridge. The *object* has the meaning of purity [O]. The relationship between *representment* [R] and *object* [O] produces interpretant [I]. When it comes to color and its philosophical meaning, the appearance of the white color in the porridge is related to the bone marrow. Because bone marrow is usually white, consuming this porridge is believed to increase and increase stamina/energy in the body. In addition, this white porridge has a lumpy and sticky texture which symbolizes the close relationship between people. This porridge is also often present at sacred events or celebrations because these events require large amounts of people and energy [I].

The second, the white gravy element [R], is made from a mixture of flour and coconut milk, all white [O]. Coconut milk gives a savory and creamy taste to the processed *Tajin Sobih*. The dominant function of coconut milk here is to unify all the ingredients because it functions as gravy. So that, coconut milk symbolizes balancing and unifying [I].

The third, the pearl porridge [R], is made from tapioca flour with a characteristic small round shape similar to pearls [O]. As seen from the shape after processing, these small spheres resembling pearls become attached or “sticky” to one another. This can be interpreted as a symbol of diversity in society; however, this difference will not cause division but keep society “sticky” or close. Thus, the community is expected to establish good relations in the differences that exist in the social environment [I].

The fourth, the brown oval element [R], is commonly referred to as brown oval porridge, made from several types of flour, including glutinous rice flour, starch, and rice flour, made in an oval shape [O]. Slightly different from some areas in Madura and Java, which are spherical, in the

Bangkalan area, the appearance is oval. This oval shape has the appearance of a grain of rice, which can symbolize the prosperity and welfare of the community. Meanwhile, processed brown sugar and water melt into glue, representing the closeness of community brotherhood [I].

The last element, the brown sugar gravy element [R], comes from a lump of brown sugar that has been melted first [O]. The sweet and legit taste of *Tajin Sobih* comes from brown sugar, commonly called *Guleh Gentong (brown sugar in barrel)* by the people of Bangkalan. The dominant sweet taste in this brown sugar sauce is believed to symbolize tenderness. Because behind the tough and strong character that is identical to the Madurese community, there is also the nature of love for others [I].

3.1.1.2 *Nasi Serpang*

Nasi Serpang is a savory food with a dominant savory taste, usually served as a culinary dish for breakfast. This culinary comes from Serpang, Arosbaya, north of Bangkalan, Madura. However, this culinary can be easily found in almost all areas of Bangkalan from morning until late afternoon. Not only in stalls or at home, *Nasi Serpang* sellers usually hold their wares on the front porch of shop outlets, with simple chairs and tables with umbrella roofs.



Figure 3. *Nasi Serpang*

Nasi Serpang may sound unfamiliar to people outside Madura Island, but this culinary dish is famous for the Madurese because it is typical of Bangkalan Regency. Briefly, *Nasi Serpang* is almost similar to *Nasi Campur*. The elemental composition of this meal is steamed rice with side dishes. The difference between *Nasi Serpang* and *Nasi Campur* is the variety of components of the side dishes. In making *Nasi Serpang*, there are also special spices of Madura. This culinary becomes more special by combining ingredients from land to sea, from marine fish to land animal or meat. A serving of *Nasi Serpang* consists of warm steamed rice with a small portion like a size

of a fist, as well as various side dishes, namely *pepes tongkol*, clams, salted egg, beef jerky, vermicelli, peanut/shrimp crackers, *serundeng*, chili paste, and tofu and shrimp paste, and beef skin crackers mixed with coconut milk. To enhance the culinary flavor, *Nasi Serpang* is wrapped in banana leaf (*pincuk*), with an outer wrapping of oil paper.



Figure 3. Composition of Side dishes in *Nasi Serpang*

Based on the semiotics views, some of the side dishes in *Nasi Serpang* have meaning and message. The following are details of the elements in *Nasi Serpang*, which have philosophical implications. The first feature of *Nasi Serpang* is using ingredients from the sea to land. The *Pepes Tongkol* element from the marine resource [R] is made from savory tuna with subtle spices that have a slightly spicy taste. Tuna fish seasoned and then wrapped in banana leaves [O]. The presence of *tuna pepes* in *Nasi Serpang* can be interpreted as the abundant marine wealth of the Madurese community. At the same time, the red color of delicate spices describes the character of the Madurese community, who is brave and strong. The shrimp element and oyster represent the wealth and potential of Madura's marine resources [I].

The second, beef jerky is a land element [R] in *Nasi Serpang*. The beef jerky element is processed beef with special spices that have a savory and delicious taste. This beef jerky also symbolizes the wealth of the Madurese community, which is known as *Pulau Sapi* [O]. This is because the Madurese community usually raises cows. Moreover, the elements of tofu and cowhide crackers represent the ground ingredients found in *Nasi Serpang*. This element also interprets the wealth of the Madurese community because Madurese culinary is famous for its processed beef dishes [I].

The third, salted Egg [R] is a composition of land elements found in *Nasi Serpang*. The White and yellow color has a tender texture [O]. It interprets the land wealth of the Madurese community, especially poultry farming [I].

3.1.1.3 *Topak Ladeh*

Topak Ladeh is a typical food of Bangkalan Regency. This dish is generally served at the time of Eid *Ketupat*, seven days after Eid al-Fitr. *Topak* is the Madurese language of *Ketupat*. *Ladheh* (or someone who wrote it: *ladeh*) means soupy dishes. Thus, *Topak Ladeh* is a diamond shape that is given gravy. *Topak Ladeh* with beef broth cooked with *genak* or whole spices, meaning that almost all herbs are used to season this dish.

Topak Ladeh sauce is very distinctive and unique. In addition to the *genak* seasoning, there is roasted coconut in this sauce. Making this coconut requires a long process and a long time. First, the coconut is grated, then roasted with spices using low heat, so it does not burn. During the roasting process, the grated coconut must be continuously stirred and inverted so that it cooks evenly and does not burn. After the coconut flashes ripe and dry, then it can be pounded. There are two ways of mashing: a traditional pounder or a blender. Coconut is pounded until it releases oil.

Making this food gravy is quite simple. The meat is boiled first, and then the boiled water is discarded. Then the meat is cooked again using new water. After it is tender, the spices are added. After that, roasted coconut that has been pounded is put in it. Apart from *Ketupat*, there are quite a several other food elements in this *Topak Ladeh*. For protein, there are several pieces of beef, and some additional pieces of *esoh* or beef intestine, tripe or other beef offal, and boiled chicken eggs. There are also vegetables in this *Topak Ladeh*, five details of long beans that are tied together, then some additional pieces of chayote, or sweet. Some also sprinkle short sprouts on top of the *Topak Ladeh*; if it is not spicy enough, slices of cayenne pepper are added to this dish.

Sambal *Topak Ladeh* is also very distinctive, in the form of cayenne pepper and candlenut steamed and then mashed using a traditional hand pulverize. Another complement is in the form of small slices of potato that have been fried, then pounded with fried shrimp and other spices. This food is called *Sambel tampes*. *Espaes* or *pepes udang/teri* with grated coconut also complement this traditional dish. Soybean that has been fried and then ground is also a complement in this *Topak Ladeh* dish. The soybeans are sprinkled on top of the complete *Topak Ladeh*.



Figure 4. *Topak Ladeh*

Based on the semiotics views, some of the side dishes in *Topak Ladeh* have meaning and message. The following are details of the elements contained in *Topak Ladeh*, which have philosophical implications. The main ingredients of *Ketupat* [R], formed by steamed rice and young coconut leaves [O], have a special meaning. They range from the shape of the webbing to the side dish of the *Ketupat*. The intricate plaiting of the wrapper indicates a human mistake. Meanwhile, the contents of the *Ketupat*, white rice, reflect the cleanliness and purity of the human heart after forgiving others [I].

The second beef element [R] symbolizes luxury and social class [O]. Therefore, dishes made from beef are considered unique. In Bangkalan society, cows are animals that help them with their work in the fields and rice paddies. Although there is a slaughterhouse, beef consumption in the community is low because they rarely consume beef. Not only shows social class but beef preparations are only served on certain occasions because of their value of money [I].

The third, the chicken egg element [R], symbolizes life. The essence of life is in the yolk. At the same time, the white egg symbolizes human nature. So symbolically, the egg represents life wrapped in human nature [O]. Because of this nature, human life is not always perfect, and there is always a gap in making mistakes. The existence of eggs in *Topak Ladeh* means that because of human imperfection, humans need each other [R].

3.1.2 Cultural Philosophy of Bangkalan Culinary

The variety of traditional Indonesian cuisine reflects the country's historical and cultural wealth. From Sabang to Merauke, each region has its distinctive cuisine, which serves as its

identity. In Bangkalan, traditional cuisine serves as a bridge for teaching wisdom. It is not astonishing that each conventional dish in this town has its philosophy that is rich with meaning.

Sea flavors can be found in *Nasi Serpang* cuisine. Seafood dominates this traditional cuisine. Bangkalan is a small city located on the Indonesian island of Madura, which means the sea surrounds it. Most of the various supporting components of *Nasi Serpang* come from seafood, specifically cob, shrimp, scallops, and shrimp paste in the sambal. These seafood components are what give *Nasi Serpang* its signature flavor. It is possible to conclude that the people of Bangkalan prefer foods derived from the sea. Both *Nasi Serpang* and *Topak Ladeh* tend to have a very spicy taste. Both the broth of the *Topak Ladeh* dish and the sambal have chilies. In *Nasi Serpang*, chili is also present in the *pepes tongkol*, stir-fried clams, and chili sauce. It can be stated that Bangkalan people enjoy spicy foods.

Additionally, the legacy of unity and kinship is inextricably linked to the Bangkalan people and their culture. They consistently cooperate in everything they do. *Tajin Sobih* and *Topak Ladeh* are excellent examples of how this heritage can be observed in its purest form. People in Bangkalan typically collaborate when preparing *Topak Ladeh* because there are a lot of steps involved in the process of creating it. All the components that make up *Tajin Sobih* are meant to represent coming together as a community.

As in *Topak Ladeh* cuisine, which is offered exclusively on Eid Ketupat. In Madura, Eid Ketupat (*Telasan Topak*) occurs six days after Eid al-Fitr, on the seventh of Shawwal. As a sign of appreciation for the implementation of sunnah fasting after the month of Ramadan. Ketupat is a symbol of both passion and conscience. In other words, human beings must be able to resist worldly desires with their conscience. The supporting components of this particular dish are likewise laden with Islamic religious significance.

According to the interviewee, Ibu Supik, a food culture expert in Bangkalan, *Tajin Sobih* is originally made by a villager of Sobih village occasionally on a certain event, such as a wedding party, birth, and other sacred ceremonies. This food is served to neighbors who are helping (*longnolongih*). Thus, the spirit of carnival and togetherness is represented by consuming this food. Nowadays, this porridge develops as a comfort food that can be found every day in the morning around Bangkalan.

Then for *Nasi Serpang*, Ibu Supik said that the historical background of this culinary is served for a sick person to increase the appetite and improve interest in eating, as it consists of a variety of side dishes with small portions. Another philosophical background about this culinary is the representations of Madurese natural richness. It demonstrates the variety of food that can be

found on farms, ranches, in the water, and in other natural settings. Thus, a plate of *Nasi Serpang* can represent the abundance of Madura's natural resources.

The last is *Topak Ladeh*, Ibu Supik stated that the philosophical of this culinary is relate to the social value. In the past, due to the exorbitant cost of meat, *Topak Ladeh*, which uses beef as its main component, is hardly served. Even though farmers raised cows in the past, Madurese people rarely ate beef. Since it can be said as luxury not everyone can afford consuming this beef culinary. Then, the traces of Islam are discovered in this culinary. Now, *Topak Ladeh* is offered exclusively after Eid al-Fitr on six days after Eid al-Fitr, on the seventh of Shawwal. It symbolizes gratitude and appreciation for the implementation of fasting after Ramadan.

3.2. Discussion

This study found that Bangkalan food and culinary (*Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang* and *Topak Ladeh*) represent identity and reflects the Madurese people's cultural philosophy, especially Bangkalan. In this regard, the presence of food in all forms of composition and the way it is presented and consumed is closely related to the natural resources of the environment that the community can utilize. Religion also plays an essential role in culinary development, which means that Madura's culinary traditions are also strongly influenced by Islamic teachings. It indicates that three delightful foods that have been described have Islamic influences. The concept of community and close family ties is fundamental to the way of life in Bangkalan. Relationships between people from different cultures can be established by having an open dialog over a meal together. In line with this statement, Wijaya (2019) states that food culture is shaped by multi factors, such as belief (religion), natural resources, ethnicity, and technological advancement (farming, agriculture, fishing).

Based on the analysis, *Tajin Sobih* represents a colorful life and the spirit of solidarity. *Nasi Serpang* shows the natural richness of Madura, from marine to land resources. However, *Topak Ladeh* is related to the religious celebration, showing the social value of Bangkalan people. The statement above is strengthened by the interview statement from Ibu Supik. She said that those three traditional foods represent the cultural heritage richness of Bangkalan People. Furthermore, she explained that *Topak Ladeh* was served only to the nobility. Because of the variety of food elements and the complexity of making it, *Topak Ladeh* is a special food that can only be consumed by the elite and only during *Lebaran Ketupat*. On the other hand, *Tajin Sobih* is a portion of comfort food; it gives people a comforting feeling when they consume it.

Muliani (2019), in her research, reveals that porridge is believed as a symbol of equalization in society. It means that cooking porridge can evenly distribute meals to serve many people. This statement is in line with the findings of this research that *Tajin Sobih* was initially meant to be consumed by all helpers (*oreng longnolongih*) in marriage celebrations. Another cultural richness of Madurese people is shown in *Nasi Serpang*. As it is explained, many dishes are composed in a plate of *Nasi Serpang*, each of which is presented in a small portion. It shows the diversity of food obtained from farms, ranches, oceans, and other natural landscapes. Thus, Madura's natural sources wealthiness can be depicted in a plate of *Nasi Serpang*.

In the old days of Madurese society, even though farmers raise cows, they rarely ate beef. Thus, eating beef is believed to increase the prestige of social status in society because not all people can afford beef. *Topak Ladeh*, with beef as the base ingredient, can only be served occasionally because the meat price is high. This research proved that culinary could reflect the social value of food and its social function. Based on the social value of food, consuming certain food ingredients can symbolize social stratification. Moreover, Suroto (2014) and Calista and Aswati (2020) stated on their research that the existence of particular food influences community culture, wealth, economic, social, and ritual symbols. In line with this statement, the relationship between food that related to social stratification is also revealed in this study. Madurese people also use meat to commemorate a particular occasion. Thus, food as a cultural product in the culinary philosophy emphasizes the distinctiveness of a society's identity.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Conclusion

Based on the descriptions in the previous findings that have been analyzed and discussed, the researchers can conclude that the meaning of semiotics in Bangkalan culinary, namely *Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Topak Ladeh* can represent the cultural identity of the Bangkalan people. *Tajin Sobih* is a food symbol of gratitude for the people of Bangkalan. Because of its long history, this culinary dish was served during a celebration or special event, so this *Tajin Sobih* is a symbol of community unity and harmony because it is a comfort food for people who consume it. Furthermore, *Nasi Serpang* represents the prosperity and natural wealth of Bangkalan, because this dish has a variety of side dishes from sea to land. Meanwhile, the last Bangkalan culinary dish, *Topak Ladeh*, is a special Eid dish medium for friendship and togetherness. Judging from the philosophical and cultural meanings they have, these three Bangkalan specialties can be used as icons for Bangkalan halal culinary tourism to attract tourists to visit Bangkalan. The strengths of

the three culinary arts are in the form of historical content, philosophical values, and cultural acculturation. From this, they can foster tourist interest in visiting Bangkalan. If *Tajin Sobih*, *Nasi Serpang*, and *Topak Ladeh* continue to be promoted as attractions of Bangkalan culinary tourism, it can improve the surrounding community's economy.

4.2 Suggestion

Since the researchers focus on semiotics analysis of Bangkalan culinary, which can represent the cultural identity of the Madurese people, it is suggested that future researchers could investigate other food culinary from different regions and tribes using semiotics analysis. Hopefully, readers will see this research as information references of Bangkalan culinary based on semiotic studies.

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