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Decoding Community Murals as Visual Representations of Multiculturalism in Suryatmajan Tourism Kampung

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ABSTRACT

Community murals, as participatory public art projects, express local identities and cultural influences within society. Situated in the heart of Yogyakarta, the community mural in Suryatmajan tourist village conveys a visual message about unity in diversity while promoting a multicultural ideology. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the signs on these community murals as visual representations of multiculturalism. Employing Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, this research decodes the signs and layered meanings in four murals placed at the different entrance gates. These murals visually represent four distinct cultural influences, from local to global: Javanese, Chinese, Japanese, and American (popular culture). These cultural influences are identified through images of prominent figures or icons associated with each culture. They generate denotative and connotative meanings for each mural according to its story. As a manifestation of community engagement, the diversity in this mural representation reflects social conditions, cultural history, and residents' preferences. These murals also demonstrate the community's tolerance for cultural differences and foster multiculturalism. By prioritizing the value of harmony (*guyub*), Suryatmajan tourism kampung emphasizes unity in cultural diversity as a mural narrative. This research concludes that the community mural in tourism kampung is more than simply decoration; it serves as a collective expression, attracts tourists, and fosters multiculturalism within the society.

Keywords: *Multiculturalism, Mural, Visual Representation, Semiotics*



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1. Introduction

Yogyakarta is a prominent tourist destination in Indonesia, renowned for its rich Javanese cultural heritage, which serves as a significant resource for tourism development. In its development, the diverse history and background of the communities also contribute to the potential for cultural tourism in Yogyakarta. Since the 18th century, Yogyakarta's society has become more multicultural, with many migrants coming to work, trade, study, and settle (Juningsih, 2015). Therefore, appreciating cultural diversity is essential to ensure solidarity in contemporary Yogyakarta society. In the context of urban diversity, multiculturalism is an ideology that is fundamental to accepting cultural diversity (Wibowo & Wahono, 2017). By embracing cultural diversity, the tourism potential of Yogyakarta can benefit all elements of society engaged in the tourism sector, including tourist villages that involve the local community.

In recent years, the Yogyakarta government has continued to increase local tourism attractiveness through community-based tourism programs. One such initiative is the establishment of the Suryatmajan tourism kampung in Danurejan's subdistrict (*Kemantren*), founded in early 2023 by a Tourism Awareness Group (*Kelompok Sadar Wisata*) called 'Sat Surya Wirawisata' (Oentoro & Wiyatiningsih, 2024). As part of the community-based tourism approach, the tourism awareness group and creative communities in this village have collaborated to decorate the residents' walls with beautiful and colourful murals. Driven by the 'SuryARTmajan' movement, they collaboratively designed the mural to boost the village's attractiveness for domestic and international tourists. The creation of these murals is also a community empowerment strategy,

particularly by involving the youth as participatory art in urban areas (Lasiter, 2016; Susanto et al., 2017).

As a form of public art, the murals that decorate the neighborhood's alleyway become an artistic medium for communicating visual messages to the broader community, which can raise public awareness and shape ideological perspectives on contemporary issues (Ismoyo, 2025; Jabaril, 2024). When co-created by the community, murals in public spaces become collective and symbolic expressions that serve to nurture social values (Mendelson-Shwartz & Mualam, 2022). Therefore, the community murals in the Suryatmajan tourism kampong serve as visual communication to promote cultural identity and diversity. This is also closely related to the national motto that grounds the ideology of Indonesian society, '*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*,' which means unity in diversity.



Figure 1. The mural artworks in Suryatmajan tourism kampong, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
(Source: Author's documentation)

Previous research on urban murals as visual communication in public spaces has examined social functions, including serving as a medium for social criticism (Wicandra, 2005), expressing myths of resistance in urban communities (Pramudita et al., 2018), revitalising slum areas (Sarli et al., 2020), and communicating cultural identities (Astuti et al., 2023). However, a gap remains in understanding how community murals in the tourism village contribute to the construction of multicultural representations. Besides their aesthetic value, murals are a powerful medium for visual communication in public spaces that create interpretations, meanings, and myths (Pramudita et al., 2018). Therefore, this study aims to decode the signs and layered meanings in the community murals as a visual representation of multiculturalism in Suryatmajan tourism kampong. By employing a semiotic analysis, this study examines the visual elements of community murals as signs that represent different cultural identities. This research also contributes to understanding community murals in appreciating local and global cultural identities as a strategy to enhance the attractiveness of urban tourist destinations.

2. Literature Review

The mural, derived from the Latin word '*Murus*', meaning 'wall', has become the oldest form of painting, dating back to cave paintings (Yohana, 2022). In contemporary life, murals have transformed from artworks in private living spaces to visual communication in public spaces, involving the broader community as creators. Consequently, murals within community contexts play a role in strengthening identity and social bonds (Li et al., 2024), creating learning experiences and fostering cultural pride (Razak et al., 2025), and serving as a medium for creative and educational communication (Mohammad et al., 2025). Community mural art is also collaborative within society and involves residents actively in the creation process as public artworks (Li et al., 2024). As a public expression, mural creations also reflect various social, political, and cultural conditions in a particular place (Mendelson-Shwartz & Mualam, 2022). In the field of tourism, community murals linked to street art tourism highlight the cultural experience from the visitor's perspective and the community development from the creator's perspective (Ainsworth, 2011). Therefore, interpreting the signs and their meanings in community murals requires a comprehensive perspective, supported by relevant literacy. In the context of Yogyakarta, this contributes to the enrichment of narratives in art and culture-based tourist villages.

In this study, semiotics and visual representation become the theoretical framework for analysing the signs on community murals in tourist villages. The term semiotics originates from the Greek word '*semeion*', meaning sign (Wahjuwibowo, 2019). According to Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, analysing signs involves identifying the system of signs, the levels of signs, and the myths (Antokusuryo, 2015; Piliang, 2004; Wahjuwibowo, 2019). Myths represent an ideology constructed through communication within community groups (Fiske, 2010), which can include traditional myths of the past or contemporary myths of the present. In communication theory, verbal and visual signs are constructed based on social conventions to refer to specific objects or concepts (Piliang, 2010; Wahjuwibowo, 2019). Therefore, decoding signs involves interpreting messages, ideologies, and cultural references (Iskanderova, 2024). Signs in murals also become a form of

representation of an idea that the message recipient interprets. Social, institutional, and historical conditions influence the interpretation of the meaning of signs (Babel, 2025). In line with the semiotic approach, representation in Stuart Hall's theory stands as a concept for understanding meaning within a culture, thereby linking it closely to language and identity (Radja & Sunjaya, 2024). Consequently, representation in semiotic studies relates to the specific practices, objects, and forms that exemplify the dynamics of ideological concepts (Herwendo, 2014).

As an ideology, multiculturalism recognises and celebrates the diversity of cultures within a society (Agustin et al., 2023; Mappaenre et al., 2023), advocating for equal recognition and respect for all individuals. In Indonesia, the spirit of multiculturalism is rooted in the ideology of Pancasila, which guides the nation to foster tolerance in a modern society characterized by diversity in traditions, languages, religions, and cultures. Based on previous research, multiculturalism can be represented through various verbal and visual objects in contemporary society, including memes on social media (Dianastiti et al., 2020), novels (Lestari, 2017), football teams (Athalarik & Susanto, 2020), and design works (Agustin et al., 2023). However, the representation of multiculturalism on community murals in tourist villages remains uninvestigated.

3. Methodology

The semiotical study of multiculturalism visual representation in community murals in the Suryatmajan tourist village was conducted through three main stages, including (1) the community data collection to understand the situation and conditions of the tourist village, (2) the visual data selection stage to map and document the murals, and (3) the semiotic analysis stage to decode the signs, meanings, and myths in the community mural works.

The community data collection utilized three qualitative research methods to build a comprehensive understanding of the Suryatmajan tourism village context: document reviews, field observations, and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Researchers began by studying relevant documents, such as the Suryatmajan Medium-Term Development Plan 2019-2023 (Suryatmajan, 2018), to collect secondary data on the community's official vision and tourism strategies. As primary data collection, field observations involved participating in walking tours of the Suryatmajan tourist village to observe the murals in their natural setting. This field observation was complemented by interviews with the head of Tourism Awareness Group as a key informant, providing primary data on the mural project's purpose, locations, and the broader historical, social, and cultural context of the community.

The visual data was collected by documenting murals in the Suryatmajan tourism village area. The key informant accompanied the visual data selection process to explore murals in locations around the village and identify community murals. To select specific points from the larger collection of murals identified in this village area, the visual data selection is based on two main criteria: the strategic placement of mural sites within tourist villages and the images of murals that have a strong connection to specific cultural differences. These criteria refer to two aspects that are considered in a mural in a public space, which are its placement and its creation (Mendelson-Shwartz & Mualam, 2022). Moreover, placing murals in strategic spaces can make them a point of interest for visitors (Sungkar et al., 2021).

Language	Signifier I (Material) Mural (Physical Artwork)	Signified I (Mental Representation) “Mural Image”	
	Signifier II (Denotative Sign) Visual elements depicting iconic figures or objects in mural (physical artwork & images).	Signified II (Connotative Signified) The concept of cultural identity or cultural impressions caused by mural images.	Myth
	Signifier III (Connotative Sign) Narratives in specific culture or socio-history relate to the visual elements of mural images.		

Figure 2. Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis Model for Decoding Community Murals in a Multicultural Context

(Source: adapted from Roland Barthes's semiotics (Bouzida, 2014; Piliang, 2010))

The analysis phase required the use of Roland Barthes' semiotic approach to decode and interpret a system of signs within selected community mural artworks. The semiotic approach is also employed to explain how

cultural identity is constructed in each mural, based on history, cultural narratives, and social conditions in the Suryatmajan tourism kampung (Babel, 2025). As a structural semiotic approach, a system of signs consists of three levels (Bouzida, 2014): the relationship between the sign (signifier) and its meaning (signified), the meaning in denotation and connotation, and the myth embedded within systems of signification (Figure 2). At the first level, the relationship between the sign as a visual language is divided into two inseparable fields (Piliang, 2010): the signifier, which is a material or tangible element, and the signified, which is a concept, idea, or mental representation. In Roland Barthes' structural semiotics (Barthes, 2004; Piliang, 2010; Senja et al., 2024), a sign contains two meanings at the second level: denotative meaning (explicit, direct, or literal) and connotative meaning (implicit, indirect, or associated). The third level of sign in Roland Barthes' semiotics is called myth, which represents an ideological or cultural interpretation derived from both denotative and connotative meanings (Barthes, 2010). Myths in society arise from the connotative meanings of signs that evolve from their denotative meanings (Antokosuryo, 2015). Furthermore, Barthes perceived myth or connotative sign as a form of communication that uses language to convey a message, often naturalising or distorting the original meanings of objects or phenomena (Barthes, 2010; Piliang, 2010).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Field Observations and Community Data Collection in The Suryatmajan Tourism Kampung

Suryatmajan Tourism Kampung is strategically situated in the centre of the Yogyakarta Special Region government. Located near Malioboro Street and the traditional Beringharjo market, it is also a hub for trade and the economy, which makes this area densely populated and multicultural. These socio-cultural characteristics are highlighted in the Suryatmajan tourism kampung's profile document. In addition to being within the Cultural Heritage Area of Malioboro, the Suryatmajan tourism kampung is also part of Yogyakarta's Philosophical Axis, as recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2023). This geographical potential is further supported by the local government of Suryatmajan, which has made community empowerment through the tourism sector an official shared goal. To develop a tourist village program that attracts visitors, one of the non-physical official programs in Suryatmajan's government focuses on improving residents' skills through mural painting (Suryatmajan, 2018).

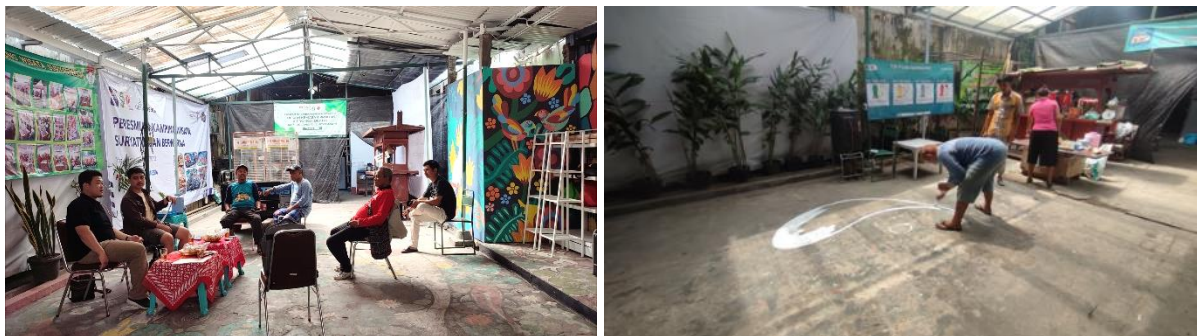


Figure 3. The interview and process of drawing the mural in the Suryatmajan tourism kampung.
(Source: Authors' documentation)

Interviews with the management of Suryatmajan Tourism Kampung (Figure 3) revealed that the initiative to create murals was the first community-based program to increase tourist attraction in the village. Funded by the private sector in collaboration with the government, the mural creation initiative promotes community engagement by enabling residents to participate in decorating the village creatively. This initiative aligns with Community-Based Tourism (CBT) principles, emphasising community empowerment through tourism activities (Perwal Kota Yogyakarta No. 115, 2016). Therefore, the community mural-creation process involves collaboration among muralists, homeowners willing to paint their walls, and residents who help with the mural-painting process. The mural designs on the walls of residents' houses were also decided through a participatory approach involving residents. Rooted in Indonesia's cultural value of mutual cooperation, known as *gotong royong*, muralists and residents voluntarily and spontaneously participate in creating mural works in public spaces.

4.2. The Selection of Visual Data on Community Murals in The Suryatmajan Tourism Kampung

The results of visual data collection show that the community in the Suryatmajan tourism village program creates 12 main murals. Besides these main murals, other supporting murals were created through different programs. Based on two main criteria, researchers and key informants selected murals: (1) placed at the

entrance gate to the tourist village as strategic locations; and (2) murals depicting a character or figure as an icon of a specific cultural identity. While there are alternative access points to enter the Suryatmajan tourism village, the study mapped four main entrances from different directions, decorated with murals. Each of these main entrance gates is also decorated with murals featuring characters or figures associated with specific cultural icons, including Gatotkaca, dragons and tigers, koi fish, and SpongeBob. These four murals at different entrances to the tourist village of Suryatmajan are expected to attract tourists to explore other murals and local potential within the village. The mapping results in Figure 4 show the four locations and mural documentation at the main entrances to Suryatmajan tourism kampung.

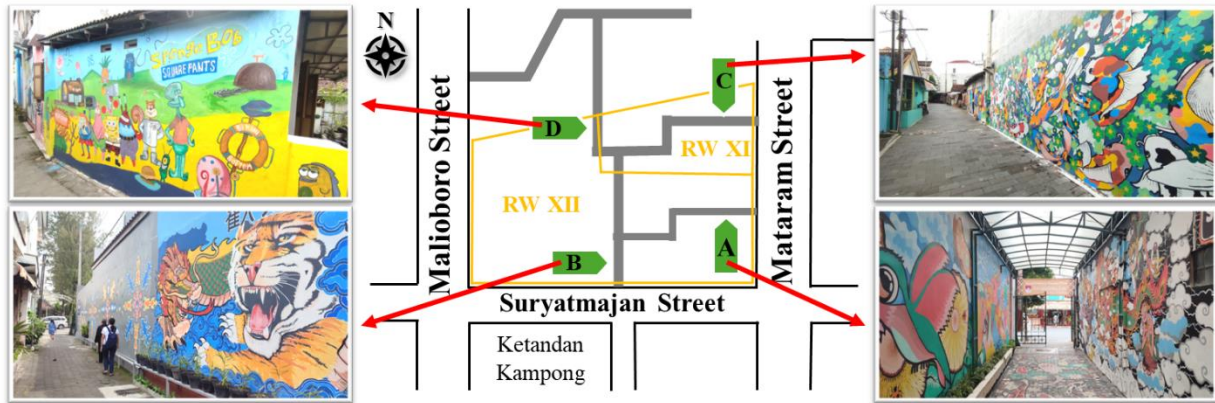


Figure 4. Four selected locations of community murals in Suryatmajan tourism kampung, Yogyakarta (Source: Authors' documentation)

Point A is the east gate entrance (south side) from Mataram Street, providing access to the creative workspace for tourist activities at the Suryatmajan Tourism Village. The iconic mural image selected at point A is the figure of Gatot Kaca, a famous puppet character in Javanese culture. Point B is the southern entrance gate from Suryatmajan Street, serving as the main entry point and bordering Kampung Ketandan, a Chinatown area that developed in the 18th century. The dragon and tiger figure, a symbol of Chinese culture, is chosen to be the iconic mural image at point B. Point C is the east gate entrance (north side) from Mataram Street, serving as the second alternative entrance with the broadest access street to the Suryatmajan tourist village. The selected iconic mural features an image of a koi fish, which has its origins in Japanese culture. This mural, the largest around point C, is expected to create an oriental atmosphere in the tourist village of Suryatmajan. The koi fish mural also dominates this village because its creation process is considered easier than that of other figures or icons. Point D is the north gate entrance from Malioboro Street leading to the vegetable alley (*lorong sayur*) as a tourist attraction. The area around point D showcases several murals depicting the popular pets for children, including pictures of cats, birds, and fish. Among these murals, the SpongeBob mural was chosen as an iconic symbol of American popular culture (Suwandi et al., 2021). The SpongeBob mural, which is well-known in this area, was driven by demographic factors and residents' choices. Based on discussions with key informants during the visual data selection process, the four mural designs in Suryatmajan tourism kampung were influenced by location, cultural history, and residents' preferences as part of community participation.

4.3. The Semiotic Analysis: Decoding Community Murals in The Suryatmajan Tourism Kampung

Point A: Mural of the Gatotkaca represents Javanese Culture

The mural's representation of Javanese culture through the Gatotkaca puppet character is denoted by visual elements, such as a muscular man in a gold, red, and black costume featuring a star symbol on his chest. As illustrated by the sign map in Figure 5, the semiotic analysis of the first level of signs (denotative meanings) in the Gatotkaca mural consists of signifiers I and signified I. At the second level of signs with 'connotative signified', the mural image of Gatotkaca flying in the sky indicates the presence of Javanese cultural nuances at the entrance gate leading from the east to the Suryatmajan tourism kampung. According to Javanese mythology (Saptodewo, 2013), there are two versions of the Gatotkaca puppet character story that are very popular in Yogyakarta, originating from Java (Baratayuda) and India (Mahabharata). In Javanese society, the tale of Gatotkaca has evolved through traditional puppet (*wayang*) performances, where he is also known as Bambang, or "Jabang Tetuka." According to traditional *wayang* stories (Saptodewo, 2014), Gatotkaca is the son of the puppet characters Bima (Wrekudara) and Arimbi. In Javanese culture, "Bambang" means warrior,

while "Jabang" refers to a newborn. Known for his strength and magic from birth, Gatotkaca grows into a powerful character gifted with various divine heirlooms.

Signifier I (Material) 	Signified I (Mental Representation) An image shows a muscular man against a blue sky, dressed in a costume of gold, black, and red, featuring a star at the center of his chest.
Signifier II (Denotative Sign) The wayang character 'Gatotkaca' is depicted against a backdrop of sky and clouds.	Signified II (Connotative Signified) The presence of Javanese culture is reflected through the wayang character.
Signifier III (Connotative Sign) Gatotkaca is a brave and powerful knight in Javanese folklore, with the motto 'muscles of wire and bones of iron.' As a tourist village situated in Yogyakarta, Gatotkaca symbolizes strength and local cultural identity.	

Figure 5. The semiotic analysis of signs in the Gatotkaca mural

(Source: Roland Barthes's semiotics (Bouzida, 2014; Piliang, 2010) & authors' documentation)

The visual appearance of the Gatotkaca on the mural in the Suryatmajan tourism village is a special attraction that introduces the wayang figure as part of Javanese culture. Regarded as a traditional myth among the Javanese people, the story of Gatotkaca connotatively signifies a powerful man, featuring the motto "muscles of wire and bones of iron" (Javanese: *otot kawat, balung wesi*). As a connotative sign in the east gate entrance of Suryatmajan tourism village, the mural depicting the Gatotkaca figure is a symbol of strength and represents Javanese culture.

Point B: The Mural of the Dragon and Tiger represents Chinese Culture

Ketandan Kampong, the oldest Chinatown in the center of Yogyakarta, is situated on the southern border of the Suryatmajan tourism area. This Chinese settlement in the Malioboro area has been regulated since the era of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I, a regulation that remains in place today (Halim, 2021). In the Suryatmajan tourism kampong, the dragon and tiger mural serves as a symbol representing the presence of Chinese culture and the closeness to Chinatown. According to a semiotic analysis (Figure 6), the dragon and tiger mural features a blue sky background along with Chinese characters (歡迎), pronounced *huān yíng* (English: welcome), which translates to *Selamat Datang* in Indonesian. This first-level sign, consisting of the mural image and the word 'welcome', transforms into a second-level sign (connotative signified), indicating that the Suryatmajan tourism kampong is warmly welcoming to Chinese tourists.

Signifier I (Material) 	Signified I (Mental Representation) An illustration depicting a dragon and a tiger against blue clouds, with Mandarin characters reading <i>huān yíng</i> (歡迎).
Signifier II (Denotative Sign) The picture of dragons and tigers, along with Chinese words of welcome (歡迎).	Signified II (Connotative Signified) Presenting a Chinese cultural impression, and warmly welcoming Chinese tourists.
Signifier III (Connotative Sign) Dragons and tigers are displayed at entrances and exits to prevent misfortune in Chinese philosophy (<i>feng shui</i>). In this mural, images of dragons and tigers symbolize good fortune and closeness to Chinatown.	

Figure 6. The semiotic analysis of signs on dragon and tiger murals

(Source: Roland Barthes's semiotics (Bouzida, 2014; Piliang, 2010) & authors' documentation)

The figures of dragons and tigers in Chinese culture are deeply entangled with traditional myths that have persisted for thousands of years. A semiotic analysis at the connotative sign level is supported by literature indicating that dragons are considered spiritual beings believed to be human ancestors (Yoswara et al., 2011),

as well as symbols of wisdom, luck, and power (Zaman, 2022). In contrast, the tigers symbolize courage and strength. According to Chinese philosophy, known as *feng shui* (Kustedja et al., 2012), dragons and tigers are often paired together and displayed at entrances and exits to help protect people from problems. Images of dragons and tigers are frequently found near the doors of Chinese places of worship, such as temples and pagodas (*klenteng*). Therefore, the placement of dragon and tiger murals at the entrance of the Suryatmajan tourism kampong conveys a connotative sign: it is hoped that tourists will avoid troubles (symbolized by the tiger) and experience good fortune (symbolized by the dragon) during their visit. The dragon and tiger figures also represent the Chinese culture that contributes to the cultural diversity of the local community around Suryatmajan Village.

Point C: The Koi Fish Mural represents Japanese Culture

Koi fish murals can be easily found in the Suryatmajan tourist village area, especially on floors and walls, similar to fish pond paintings. At Point D, the Suryatmajan mural community paints koi fish as decorations with an oriental or Asian theme in their tourist village located in the Malioboro and Chinatown areas. Historically, it has been closely linked to Fuji Shop, the largest Japanese store in the Malioboro area, which was also a significant trading center (Fauziah, 2018). In the Suryatmajan tourism kampong, the koi fish mural serves as a denotative signifier, showcasing images of different colors and types of koi fish. As a connotative signified, the koi fish mural visually represents a second-level sign that indicates oriental impression and Japanese cultural influence within the Suryatmajan area (Figure 7). In Japanese mythology, the koi fish (known as *Nishiki-Goi*) symbolize human prosperity and happiness due to their ability to survive and live long lives (Moore, 2022). Often found in ponds within the gardens of the Japanese Emperor's palace, the koi fish became a national symbol of Japan before it was officially introduced to Indonesia in 1991 as a gift from Emperor Akihito to President Soeharto (Yusuf & Lentera, 2002). In the Suryatmajan tourism kampong, the mural depicting koi fish became a connotative sign of good luck in life. This meaning is based on the social and historical narrative constructed by the leader of the Tourism Awareness Group and the literature about the story behind koi fish. Therefore, these murals were painted on the main gate to welcome guests and at other points in the tourist village area. Beyond appreciating the aesthetics of shapes and colors, the koi fish mural is also hoped to bring 'good luck' to tourists visiting the Suryatmajan tourist village. As explained by the origin of koi fish, this mural also represents Japanese culture.

Signifier I (Material) 	Signified I (Mental Representation) Pictures of various colors of koi fish, including white, yellow, red, and black, with a pond background.
Signifier II (Denotative Sign) An image showing a group of koi fish with different types and colors.	Signified II (Connotative Signified) Presenting a beautiful oriental impression, along with Japanese cultural influences in the tourist village.
Signifier III (Connotative Sign) Koi fish are believed to bring happiness and prosperity in Japanese mythology. The koi fish mural at the entrance to this tourist village symbolizes a good luck for visitors.	

Figure 7. The semiotic analysis of signs on koi fish murals

(Source: Roland Barthes's semiotics (Bouzida, 2014; Piliang, 2010) & authors' documentation)

Point D: The SpongeBob SquarePants Mural represents American Popular Culture

A mural depicting SpongeBob SquarePants, cartoon characters from the iconic American animated series, is displayed on a wall of a resident's house in the Point D area. Some murals with children's themes were also painted because many children live in the middle of the Suryatmajan tourism kampong. As one of the most successful animated films in American history (Suwandi et al., 2021), SpongeBob SquarePants is also a popular cartoon among children in the Suryatmajan tourism kampong. Therefore, the SpongeBob SquarePants mural was created by the muralist and the local community as a decoration for their own village and for tourists. Although this mural is not rooted in the local history and culture of the Suryatmajan tourism kampong, the picture of SpongeBob SquarePants serves as a visual representation of current social conditions influenced by American popular culture. As a sign in the Suryatmajan tourism kampong, the SpongeBob SquarePants mural acts as a denotative signifier (Figure 8). At the first-level sign, it signified nearly all the main characters from

the series, including SpongeBob, Patrick Star, Squidward, Mr. Krabs, Sandy Cheeks, and Plankton. As a second-level sign, this mural is a connotative signified that indicates the vibe of American popular culture on the local community. Referring to the narrative theme developed by the Suryatmajan tourism kampong, the SpongeBob SquarePants mural as a connotative sign also symbolizes 'the pleasure' of this area. There is also an association with SpongeBob, the main character, who has a cheerful personality, and the story is featured in a comedy film. Additionally, the connotative sign of 'the pleasure' is also supported by some murals in this area that signify the residents' hobbies, such as the murals of cats, birds, and fish, which are popular pets among the residents. The appearance of the SpongeBob SquarePants mural in the middle of a tourist village has shaped public perceptions of an open-minded society towards Western popular culture, as well as representing the influence of American popular culture.

Signifier I (Material) 	Signified I (Mental Representation) A group of cartoon characters, including the words SpongeBob SquarePants and Bikini Bottom.
Signifier II (Denotative Sign) Cartoon characters in the film 'SpongeBob Squarepants' (SpongeBob, Patrick Star, Squidward, Mr. Krabs, Sandy Cheeks, Pearl Krabs Gary, Mrs. Puff, etc.)	Signified II (Connotative Signified) Presenting the vibe of American popular culture and Western cultural influences on local communities.
Signifier III (Connotative Sign) As a popular Western cartoon character, SpongeBob features cheerful characters and comedic stories. It symbolises 'the pleasure' of this area and an open-minded society towards popular culture.	

Figure 8. Analysis of signs in the SpongeBob SquarePants mural

(Source: Roland Barthes's semiotics (Bouzida, 2014; Piliang, 2010) & authors' documentation)

Through semiotic analysis of the four selected murals, the diverse cultural influences of Java, China, Japan, and American popular culture are collectively showcased to represent the multiculturalism in Suryatmajan tourism kampong. The signs of cultural diversity are constructed by each figure or icon in the mural that is associated with a specific cultural identity. At the east gate entrance (south side), the mural of Gatotkaca represents Javanese cultural identity. Introduced as a local superhero, it carries connotative meaning about 'strength'. The mural of the dragon and tiger at the southern entrance gate represents Chinese cultural identity. Intended to welcome guests (*huān yíng*), the mural has a connotative meaning of bringing good fortune (as *feng shui*) to visitors to the tourist village. The mural of koi fish at the east gate entrance (north side) further represents Japanese cultural identity. Besides strengthening the oriental impression, the koi fish mural is also a connotative sign of good luck in life. At the north gate entrance, the mural of a SpongeBob SquarePants represents American popular cultural identity. As indicated by the demographic and social conditions in the area, this mural has become a connotative sign of pleasure, intended to provide a cheerful impression.

5. Conclusion

The study of community murals in the Suryatmajan tourism kampong reveals harmonious social conditions (*guyub*) that foster the development of community-based tourism. The creation of murals involving the community also demonstrates collaboration through mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*). This mutual cooperation is also reflected in the participation of residents who are willing to provide walls for murals and paint them voluntarily, together with mural artists. In line with Suryatmajan's slogan 'Gumreget' (*Guyub Masyarakat Regeng Agawe Endahing Tatanan*), the mural projects in the Suryatmajan tourism kampong reflect the community's movement and spirit to beautify the village landscape. Furthermore, the collective decision of mural artists and the local community to create images that showcase different cultural identities is a representation of the multiculturalism promoted by the Suryatmajan tourist kampong. In summary, community murals in the Suryatmajan tourism kampong function not merely as decorative elements but also as tourist attractions and collective expressions that foster multiculturalism.

As a tourist village situated in the heart of the city, the community mural strives to demonstrate tolerance towards cultural differences, both local and global. As denotative signs, the different characters or icons in these murals are based on: local culture, such as Gatotkaca, Naga, and Macan; historical stories, such as koi fish; and socio-demographic factors, such as SpongeBob. These murals also have their own connotative

meanings depending on the selection of figures or icons that represent specific cultures. Based on this semiotic study, the murals in Suryatmajan village could be grouped according to four cultural influences and their symbolic meanings, which are (1) Javanese culture with the figure of Gatotkaca as a symbol of strength, (2) Chinese culture with the dragon and tiger as symbols of welcome and good fortune, (3) Japanese culture with the Koi Fish figure as a symbol of good luck, and (4) American popular culture with the character SpongeBob as a symbol of pleasure. Located at the entrance to Suryatmajan tourism kampung, these murals feature cultural figures and icons, aiming to attract both domestic and international tourists. This semiotic study, which decodes the signs on community murals in this tourist village, also offers a framework for interpreting visual messages related to identity and cultural influence in the development of contemporary society. This study also helps to gain a deeper understanding of signs as visual messages and enhances the narrative of cultural diversity in mural-based tourism village services.

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