

# The Meaning of *Metindor* Process Symbols in Mandar Traditional Wedding

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**Abstract.** Mandar traditional weddings are one of the cultures or customs still well preserved. The Mandar people consider that marriage deserves to be respected; indeed, it has sacred values in every procession. Therefore, the humanists in Mandar or religious leaders and the local community manage well and carefully. Indeed, the Mandar people think that marriage is not only a husband-and-wife bond that is united in a marriage procession but also unites two families who were not previously part of each other's family. Marriage is an important thing; consequently, it is also necessary to know the meaning of every symbol in the traditional Mandar wedding procession. One stage of the Mandar traditional wedding procession is the *metindor* procession (following) several Mandar traditional wedding procession stages. This *metindor* is one of the stages that need to be understood by all levels of society. *Metindor* is carried out on the D-day of the wedding to escort the prospective groom to the residence of the prospective bride to carry out the marriage contract under applicable customs. In the *metindor* procession, the groom will bring some gifts for the prospective bride. Some symbols need to be understood in this *metindor* procession, such as oil, wardrobes, etc. The symbols mentioned above have meanings according to the beliefs of the Mandar people who carry out the culture. The objective of the symbols contained in this *metindor* procession is nothing but a good meaning for the life of the household to be built. The research method was descriptive qualitative using a symbolic interaction theory approach. The research results reported that there were symbols that were interpreted by Mandar cultural figures in the *metindor* procession in Mandar traditional marriages.

**Keywords:** *Mandar Traditional Marriage, Metindor, Meaning of Symbols*

## 1. Research Background

The wedding ceremony is a system of cultural values that gives direction and views to maintain life values, especially in maintaining and preserving offspring and uniting two larger families, namely the groom's family and the bride's family.

Parents who successfully marry off their children, both male and female, feel happy and lucky because they have been separated from other responsibilities as parents. Marriage is a life instinct for humans, a must, and even an obligation for everyone who can carry it out. When analyzed in-depth, marriage is vital where one's marriage can form a *sakina*, *mawaddah*, *warahma*, happy, and prosperous household. Therefore, marriage is highly

recommended in Islam for those who have the ability. Marriage is an order from Allah and the Messenger of Allah. Allah SWT says in the surah (QS.Ar-Rum/30: 21):

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

Meaning: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought". (Q.s. Ar-rum:21)

All religions and cultures set a specific path for male-female relations in the form of marital relations. Everyone must adhere to these ways. Otherwise, they are considered misleading. Thus, the relationship between men and women in any society is not only tied to sexual motives but also specific cultural and religious norms. Marriage is a life instinct for humans, a must, and even an obligation for everyone who can carry it out. The wedding ceremony is a system of cultural values that gives direction and views to maintain life values. The marriage occurs assimilation of local culture to Islamic teachings in Mandar, which results in spiritual and cultural assimilation.

Marriage in the Mandar community must go through several traditional processes to get married. Indeed, marriage is not just an ordinary event but is a very high customary value, as is the case with the wedding procession carried out in the Mandar community (Abbas, 2015: 15).

Mandar community needs to understand every process carried out, starting from the initial procession called the traditional wedding ceremony procession of the Mandar community in Polewali Mandar Regency, including the stages, asking if there is a way (*messisiq*), applying (*mettumae*), delivering the offerings to the women at once, determining the date (*maccandring*), inviting (*mappapeissang*), sauna bathing (*mappasau*), henna-giving ceremony (*malattigi*), accompanying (*metindor*), marriage contract (*nikka*), bridal sitting (*me'oro tosiala/situdangan*), the first meeting of the legal bride and groom (*mappasita*), blowing fire (*mappi'dei sullung*), and the bride's visit to the groom's house (*mapparola*). Marriage needs to pay attention to the inherent values, especially Mandar is known as a tribe that upholds its cultural values (Ansaar, 2013: 50).

*Metindor* is a part of the traditional Mandar wedding procession series. This *metindor* is the culmination of the ceremony in a mandated traditional wedding which leads

the prospective groom to carry out the wedding or marriage contract directly at the bride's residence. In the *metindor* procession, they will not only bring themselves with their family, but they will come with some belongings in this procession, including *lomo* (oil), *masigi-masigi*, or *peputiq cina* (mosques), *kappu bunga* (flowers wrapped in cloth), *paollong* (man with umbrella), *sitto* (paper container), *lamari* (wardrobe). Each of these is a symbol with meaning and is trusted by the local community.

## 2. Research Method

The research method was descriptive qualitative, where this research described the meaning of the symbols in the traditional Mandar wedding *metindor* procession. The data collection method used qualitative data analysis obtained directly by the researcher during observations, interviews, and documentation. The observations and interviews involved direct safeguards by the informants. When conducting the interview, the informants explained each meaning of the symbol of the *metindor* procession in the traditional mandar wedding tradition. Furthermore, the documentation in this research was undoubtedly a complement to the research. There were three informants in this research, and the technique used was purposive sampling. The research informants were Mandar culturalists or those who understood Mandar culture so that the research could be answered and provide new knowledge to the entire community.

## 3. Results and Discussion

One of the tribes that has much cultural diversity is the Mandar tribe. Marriage is a tradition that is considered very well preserved until now. In the traditional Mandar wedding, there are several series and symbols in the tradition. The *metindor*, as one of the processions in the Mandar traditional wedding, has symbols that all people need to know.

*Metindor* is an activity that highlights the event in a wedding where the procession takes the prospective groom to the bride's residence to witness the *Ijab Qabul* procession, which will be pledged directly by the groom. However, the point of attention in this *metindor* procession is some of the gifts from the groom's family to the bride as a complement to the procession. Several symbols are believed to be in this procession, so until now, the Mandar people believe in every symbol to bring goodness to the bride and groom who will build the household ark.

### *Metindor* (Delivering the groom)

As a complement to the data in this research, the researchers visited one of the museums in Majene Regency, where all the baggage of the prospective groom or the form of clothing used in the traditional Mandar wedding procession was primarily depicted in the museum.



Figure. 1; Source: *Researchers*

*Metindor* is the culmination of traditional Mandar wedding events by escorting the prospective groom and bringing the agreed gifts at the *mettumae* procession. All of them are brought in this procession for the prospective bride.

The essential things that are considered symbols that have meaning in a series of Mandar traditional wedding processions include:

- a. *Lomo* (Oil)



Figure. 2; Source: *Researchers*

Oil is intended to make the pickle run smoothly. If there are difficulties in the event, everything will be "*malomo*", meaning that it is easy to solve. As stated by Thamrin:

*"Oil in Mandar language is derived from the word lomo, commonly called malomo, which means easy 'jari, mua' diang masalah di lalang di pamboya-boyanganna malomo' I urusanna." If there is a problem in the household, it is easy to solve the problem. Marriage in the age of corn is also very vulnerable to being faced with a problem, not only old brides who are often faced with problems. However, because of the existence of this oil symbol, it is believed that many consider it capable of making it easier for a husband and wife to deal with problems that will occur."*

The other opinion is expressed by Ridwan Alimuddin that:

*"Oil has a fatty nature. It is identical to everything fatty, so the meaning of oil in this metindor procession is that the bride*

*and the man who will marry will have much sustenance like the characteristics of the oil, which is fatty a lot and many clots.”*

Meanwhile, Abba Tammalele revealed that: *“The oil symbol in this metindor procession is a depiction of softness. The soft nature of the oil will always describe the household that is willing to be built so that the bride and groom are soft and easy to forgive each other. Of course, oil does not just come into use immediately but requires a process so that humans, frying, can use it. The process of oil brought in the metindor procession is not packaged oil in general but special oil made by the Mandar people. The meaning of this symbol is that to become an oil requires a long process, just as a household life requires a long process to build a household ark and recognize each other. Thus, the nature of the softness in the oil can also be possessed by someone who is getting married by describing a soft heart, not hard.”*

The traditional Mandar wedding procession with many symbolic meanings is the *metindor* procession as the culmination of the D-day of the wedding being held.

b. *Masigi-masigi* (mosques)



Figure. 2; Source: Researchers

The purpose of the *masigi-masigi* symbol is that the prospective bride and groom who are about to get married have the same goal, direction, and have the same vision, and mission, as a symbol that those who are married are human beings who are Muslim to each other. *Masigi-masigi* is also known as *"peputiq Cina"*, or a wrapper from China. It is called *peputiq Cina* because, in the past, the contents of this *masigi-masigi* were tobacco. It is very influential in determining the inheritance for the prospective bride. If there are only two, it indicates that the person married is a woman who has descendants of *"Tau Samar"*. It means ordinary people, whereas if the woman to be married is a woman of noble descent, thus there will be three numbers.

It occurs due to the customary provision and, until now, still applies to the Mandar community, especially in Polewali Mandar Regency.

Ridwan Alimuddin also revealed the meaning of the *masigi-masigi* symbol, namely:

*“Masigi-masigi used to seem to contain tobacco. Functionally, this symbol does not exist but is more about social status. The Mandar people will appreciate whom he will marry a woman. This masigi-masigi which is determined in number can greatly influence whether or not a marriage is made. The number of three masigi-masigi indicates that the person married is not an ordinary descendant but has blood or noble descent. It was legal a long time ago, and now it is sometimes replaced with cigarettes. Tobacco has a special smell, or in the Mandar language, is sarombong. The meaning is that masigi-masigi, an object resembling a mosque, symbolizes a place of worship for Muslims. Hence, the household is always close to the creator; as for the contents of the masigi-masigi, the household-they build is always good.”*

The interpretation of the *masigi-masigi* symbols is also interpreted by Abba Tammalele, who has the same perspective as other humanists:

*“Masigi-masigi, known as "peputiq cina", is a symbol of worship. It is called peputiq cina because tobacco is usually the content of this symbol. If thinking more deeply, tobacco is identical to the products made by the Chinese. However, along with the development of culture, the shape of the peputiq cina is the same as the mosque. Therefore, it is called masigi-masigi or small mosques. Mosques symbolize Muslims. In Mandar, most of the residents are Muslims and carry out traditional Mandar weddings, which are considered wrapped by a touch religion.”*

If each symbol has a different meaning for each person, everything depends on everyone's point of view. However, the meaning cannot be separated from the meaning of goodness from the interpretation of existing symbols, as also expressed by Thamrin:

*“In traditional Mandar weddings, those who marry with traditional and religious ceremonies never remove the masigi-masigi symbol in a traditional Mandar wedding, although whether the marriage is legal or not is not determined by all the symbols present at the wedding. Nevertheless, the presence of each symbol includes this masigi-masigi has a prayer that describes the shape of the masigi-masigi. All those who are married always make the number one religion in their household so that those who are married are always given peace in facing the wheels of life in a household.”*

Apart from *masigi-masigi*, there is also a symbol of *kappu bunga*, which relates to the number of *masigi-masigi* that the prospective groom will bring to the residence of the prospective bride.

- c. *Kappu bunga* (flowers wrapped in cloth)



Figure.3; Source: Researchers

*Kappu bunga* is also the *ussul* with symbolic meaning and is believed. The number of *kappu bunga* and *masigi-masigi* has the same ratio. The count of one *masigi-masigi* produces a total of four *kappu bunga*. Therefore, when the *masigi-masigi* are two, the total number of *kappu bunga* brought is eight. In comparison, if the number of *masigi-masigi* is three for women of noble descent, the number of *kappu bunga* brought is twelve.

Surya, in his description found in the museum, states:

*“The ussul or belief in this kappu bunga symbol is that the married household always smells fragrant like flowers. It is as the contents of the kappu bunga contain flowers that are considered fragrant and can motivate brides who are getting married. Thus, the household built is far from bad things that can tarnish each other’s good name.”*

Symbols that are parts of the *ussul* (belief) held by the Mandar community can occur, so every mandatory series in the procession needs to be realized from one another. Thamrin also sees that there is a symbolic meaning in *Kappu Bunga*:

*“Kappu bunga” iya disanga flower simata sarombongi tu’u” means that the so-called flower will always smell good. The flower wrapped in this cloth or kappu bunga symbolizes the fragrance present in the bride’s household who is about to marry and is shunned from bad stories and labor problems. Thus, it is believed by the community or commonly called ussul, that kappu bunga can influence married life.”*

*Kappu bunga*, which are identical to fragrances, make informants who often attend weddings in Mandar have the same perspective as Ridwan Alimuddin said:

*“The kappu bunga, which is in the amount according to the masigi-masigi count, is also a symbol that needs to be presented and understood, especially for the entire Mandar community. Even though the existence of traditional marriage is more modern, the symbols that are presented always participate because it has become a belief for the local community. Kappu bunga or flowers wrapped in cloth are flowers or fragrances. If there are two masigi-masigi, then the kappu bunga brought is eight. The effect of this kappu bunga is also a social symbol for women who are married to other people. The Mandar people can see who the woman is married whether the offspring is mediocre or not. However, the flowers wrapped in this cloth as the meaning of the household symbol are always fragrant and kept away from evil.”*

If the two culturalists say the same thing, the flower wrapped in cloth is a symbol so that the household to be built can become a household that is always accompanied by good things, far from evil. Abba Tammalele, a humanist, also expresses the same thing, namely:

*“The kappu bunga, a symbol of social strata for a woman who is about to get married, provides conditions as the Mandar community believes. Flowers containing the cloth are among the leaves of sight, and flowers with a pungent smell symbolize people who are married to present good things, far from everything that is dirty and smells bad. Hopefully, married people will always get good stories from those around them about the goodness they spread as ordinary people who live in a society.”*

Not only *kappu bunga* but many more symbols will be explained in this procession.

- d. *Paollong* (man under an umbrella)



Figure. 4; Source: Researchers

This *paollong* is not included from something requested by the bride, even though it is crucial specifically in the wedding tradition. All of these are mandatory things

that cannot be absent. The *paollong* symbol is considered necessary even though the bride does not request it, but due to awareness and understanding of culture. Therefore, this *paollong* is always present amid the Mandar people who will get married in the *metindor* procession.

Ridwan Alimuddin's expression about the symbol of this *paollong* is:

*“Paollong, under an umbrella, is overlooked even though it is important. The importance of being under an umbrella is that the person carrying the object is not the prospective groom. If the groom is also under an umbrella, it also indicates that the married person is a descendant of nobility. The contents of this paollong are spices and coconut tree buds. This paollong symbol means that spices have many children, and coconut buds symbolize fertility for the bride and groom who will get married. The spices in the contents of the paollong wrapped in this cloth symbolize the meaning of many children and that those who are married will be given much sustenance. Likewise, the coconut shoots are not only a symbol of fertility but so that the love they build always grows and becomes an example for everyone.”*

Meanwhile, there is an opinion from another humanist, Thamrin:

*“The white cloth on the paollong symbolizes holiness, that "diang nia' pole dibawa lao in boyanna towaine". It means that an intention is brought to the woman's house. This symbol illustrates that a good, holy nawaitu is a picture that the bride and groom men are ready to marry with the intention of Allah SWT, as well as the tree found in the paollong. It signifies a fertile symbol for the two people who will marry hopefully "napamsigai pammasena pole di puang Allah ta'ala" means accelerated destiny that comes from Allah SWT.”*

As stated by Abba Tammalele who said:

*“This paollong becomes very important in the metindor tradition. The tree symbol depicts the layers of Hindu-Buddhist culture Islamized, but the tree always has the meaning of growing. Therefore, it is hoped that in the household, "simata' tuoi dai cinna na" means that the love they built always grows. It is precise with the tree's characteristics and describes fertility so that they are blessed with offspring that grow and develop well. The tree brought in this wedding procession is paollong; e.g., the coconut tree will usually be planted and cared for by a woman's family so that later it can also be used for the family. The male-*

*female party will carry the tree for women who will marry in the future. This paollong is also a symbol that the family will always marry in a good way, as religion and customs are carried out in the wedding procession.”*

*Paollong*, one of the elements in this procession, is quite influential and is highly trusted by local people who hold weddings in a traditional procession.

e. *Sitto* (Paper Container)



Figure. 5; Source: Researchers



Figure. 6; Source: Researchers

*Sitto* is something that must be in a Mandar traditional wedding. This object is not specified in number, as is typical of *masigi-masigi* that functionally is not too much of a reason. However, because there is a belief in *ussul* that the Mandar community believes, Mandar culturalists describe the meaning of the *sitto* symbol as stated by Thamrin:

*“In the household, sometimes there are more dominant, e.g., a man who must always want to be heard and a wife who may be selfish. We always find Sitto objects in the metindor procession; regarding the number of sittos, it does not matter if some carry two or three, or even four sittos. The symbolic meaning is "iya ri' o sitto messulapa' appe'I' means that sitto is rectangular. It means that the household must balance each other out. Some things cannot be covered up, so join hands and support each other by do not defend each other's ego.”*

The Mandar people make *sitto* a mandatory thing that must be innate in the *metindor* procession. However, the number is not stated. It is incomplete when the marriage is carried out. There is no one thing, namely *sitto*. Another humanist, Ridwan Alimuddin, also expresses it:

*“Sitto is a square, which both supports not being one-sided. Just like sitto in marriage, sitto is symbolized as a form of mutual balance, which is expected in a household. It is undeniable that something will happen, whether a small problem or a big problem. With this sitto form, something unwanted will not happen. A household needs complementary and balanced with each other.”*

Meanwhile, other informants did not describe the symbolic meaning of the *sitto* form, as said by Surya:

*“It is the same as with kappu bunga. What needs to be paid attention to in the meaning of this sitto is the content in which there is Sabuh or which has fragrance. Thus, it describes household life which is always fragrant like the contents of this sitto.”*

If other humanists give more meaning to the form of *sitto*, other culturalists assume that the focus of the *sitto* is the contents that are often contained in the paper container. Abba Tammalele also revealed the symbols of this *sitto*:

*“The square-shaped sitto certainly has a meaning so that the built household does not attach importance to ego and does not work independently. The shape of this square sitto contains soap, powder, or other things in it. Sitto is only a symbol of material, which contains soap, powder, etc. Therefore, this sitto illustrates the social ability of people to get married. In the household, women need money to take care of themselves, so the man who is the head of the family must prepare himself carefully to earn a living to meet his wife's needs.”*

Based on the opinion above about the meaning of the *sitto* symbol, there are still other symbols that exist in the *metindor* procession.

f. *Lamari-lamari* (Small Wardrobe)



Figure.7; Source: Researchers

A wardrobe is a place to store clothes or other objects. In a house, there is a wardrobe and the *metindor* procession. The wardrobe is not an absolute thing but has become a hallmark of Mandar traditional weddings, especially in Polewali Mandar Regency, which includes a wardrobe, although sometimes when only *erangerang* is found. In contrast to the Mandar people, the wardrobe has always been a feature of the symbolic meaning of the wardrobe in this *metindor* procession as expressed by Thamrin:

*“I often find a wardrobe for weddings in Polman. Then, the meaning that can be taken from the wardrobe symbol is the meaning of readiness for marriage. Every house has a wardrobe in it. It can be in the form of a wardrobe for cosmetics, clothes, etc. Thus, one of the gifts from the groom is a wardrobe in which there are women's underwear, sandals, hand and body lotion, shoes, etc. It is also a sign that the prospective groom is ready to provide externally for the woman he will marry.”*

There is also an expression from another humanist, namely Ridwan Alimuddin, who says:

*“It is not a lamari or a wardrobe, but a lamari-lamari which means a small wardrobe. Therefore, the wardrobe contents are women's underwear and equipment for women in the form of perfumes, sandals, etc. It illustrates that the wardrobe symbolizes marriage and readiness to build a household ark, so all the contents in the wardrobe are the needs of women. It indirectly sends a message that all the needs of dominant women are pretty expensive, starting from make-up tools, underwear, and perfumes will be the responsibility of a husband. Thus, a married person needs to be well-established in material, physically capable, and physically necessary when planning to marry, especially men.”*

The offerings that a woman needs in a traditional Mandar wedding do not only apply in Mandar, but the Bugis are the same. They do not have a wardrobe, which is the center of attention for the Mandar community, which is considered different, as stated by Abba Tammalele:

*“The wardrobe that participates in the metindor procession as a complement to this procession has a function for people who are getting married. The wardrobe is a symbol of the household. Everyone needs a wardrobe to store clothes or cosmetics. The symbol's meaning has no influence on the social strata someone married but has many functions and certainly describes the*

*figure of a man ready to provide for his household needs in the future.”*

Other tribes may be different from the Mandar tribe. The wardrobe, which is also one of the differentiators from other wedding processions, cannot be separated from the meaning of building a household.

#### 4. Conclusion

Culture is part of the nation's wealth that needs to be appropriately preserved. A culture that is increasingly eroding to be preserved makes the Mandar community negligent in preserving existing cultures. However, it is different from the culture that is still close and thick in the Mandar tribal community, which is still well preserved, namely a series of traditional Mandar wedding processions in the *metindor* stage that are considered symbolic of each element contained in it. Based on the analysis results, it is suggested that the meanings of the symbols depicted in the *metindor* procession on Mandar traditional marriages need to be further improved. Therefore, relevant references or

research can provide knowledge for the Mandar community.

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