



Visual Capital Translation: Habitus, Field, and Multimodality in Bugis Pinisi Representation

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ABSTRACT

The Bugis Pinisi, formerly the pinnacle of traditional Nusantara maritime technology, has evolved from a practical sailing craft into a cultural symbol and aesthetic component in the visual communication design of South Sulawesi. This alteration encompasses not just aesthetic aspects but also reflects social, economic, and political dynamics, wherein the Pinisi symbol serves as a medium for negotiating meaning and the struggle for symbolic power. This study employs Pierre Bourdieu's framework of field, habitus, and symbolic capital to elucidate how the visual depiction of the Pinisi is shaped by the interactions among various actors, including the government, designers, tourism stakeholders, and artisan groups. The maritime habitus of the Bugis people serves as an essential foundation, augmented by qualitative visual analysis techniques grounded in multimodality within Visual Communication Design theory. The results show that Pinisi pictures experience stylization, deformation, and alteration to align with contemporary marketing requirements, frequently altering historical values into market narratives. The preeminence of governmental and economic entities reinforces the hierarchy of symbolic authority, whilst the participation of traditional groups is constrained. The innovation of this research lies in the concept of Visual Capital Translation, which entails transforming cultural-symbolic capital into visual capital that is versatile in both local and global contexts, while preserving its inherent legitimacy. This research highlights the importance of inclusive design choices in preserving the authenticity and relevance of Pinisi

INTRODUCTION

The Pinisi phenomenon as a dominant visual discourse in South Sulawesi, particularly in Makassar, demonstrates the shift in the function of this traditional vessel from a mere means of navigation to a complex cultural symbol (Nurabdiansyah, 2019). In the modern context, the Pinisi frequently appears in various visual communication design mediums government logos, event identities, public installations, and even architectural adaptations often within a framework of cultural conservation that is intertwined with practices of capitalization (liebner, 2019). This shift demonstrates that the Pinisi has undergone a significant transformation: from a functional maritime technology to an aesthetic and commercial object imbued with symbolic meaning.

The dominant narrative positions the Pinisi as an ancestral heritage that must be preserved. However, reality shows that communities that still actively build and use Pinisi especially for artisans in Tanah Beru, Bira Regency are often marginalized in this discourse (Druce, S. C, 2021). Representations of the Pinisi are primarily shaped by outsiders who possess economic, social, and political capital, allowing them to control the cultural narrative. Within Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework, this illustrates a process of struggle for position within the field, where various forms of capital symbolic, cultural, and economic interact to shape new perceptions and functions of the Pinisi.

This study traces these changes through historical data and visual analysis from the 18th to the 21st century. In the past, the Bugis people's maritime technological advancements stemmed from a strong maritime habitus, giving rise to a new social class with significant symbolic capital. In the 21st century (Pelras, 2006), the Pinisi was recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2017), cementing its status as a national icon and opening up opportunities for re-contextualization in the global realm. However, this recognition also raises questions about who controls and benefits from its use in commercial and aesthetic spaces.

The transformation of the Pinisi into a visual commodity reflects broader power dynamics. The dominance of the government and commercial sector in regulating the visual form and narrative of the Pinisi demonstrates practices of symbolic power that neglect the full participation of traditional communities. Meanwhile, the adaptation of the Pinisi's visuals in design often emphasizes stylized forms, distinctive colors, and compositions that align with modern branding needs, but separate them from their inherent historical and social values.

From a visual communication design standpoint, this phenomenon can be interpreted through the concept of multimodality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), where the representation of the Pinisi is shaped by a combination of various modes form, color, typography, layout that collectively construct meaning. This multimodality allows the Pinisi to appear flexible across various media, but is also vulnerable to a reduction in meaning when directed solely to market interests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research gap is evident in the limited number of studies linking Pinisi's visual transformation to the concepts of symbolic capital and habitus within Bourdieu's framework, as well as in the lack of visual communication design analyses that explore the transformation of local culturally based visual identities. Previous studies focus on the technical aspects of shipbuilding or maritime history, rather than on contemporary visual constructions and the power relations that shape them.

This research combines Bourdieu's theory with visual communication design analysis to uncover how the Pinisi visual design field operates. This field encompasses the interaction between the government, designers, the tourism industry, and local communities, each with distinct capital and competing interests. The maritime habitus of the Bugis people serves as the cultural backdrop that shapes the initial value of the Pinisi, while symbolic capital determines its appeal as a representation of identity at the local, national, and global levels.

Based on this context, two main questions drive this research. First, how the visual construction of the Pinisi is shaped through the principle of multimodality in the realm of visual communication design, and to what extent this principle influences the shift in meaning from a maritime artifact to a symbol of cultural branding. Visual representations of the Pinisi, spread across various media, often combine modern aesthetic elements with stylized traditional forms. However, this process does not always maintain its historical and social values. A multimodal analysis is necessary to examine how composition, color, typography, and form intermingle to construct visual messages, and how these combinations are shaped by the interests of those who dominate the field.

Second, how does the interaction between symbolic capital, cultural capital, and economic capital in the field of Pinisi visual design influence the dominance of narratives and the distribution of symbolic power? In this field, actors with greater economic and social capital such as the government, the tourism industry, and business actors often regulate the form and use of Pinisi visuals for promotional and commercial purposes. Meanwhile, the artisan community, as the authentic owners of the Pinisi tradition, is often subordinated, with limited involvement in decision-making regarding design. This situation creates tension between inclusive cultural preservation and the use of cultural symbols for economic gain, and raises questions about the fairness of representation in visual communication design based on local wisdom.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative methodology, focusing on multimodality-based visual analysis, to examine the development of Pinisi representations in visual communication design. This methodology was selected as it facilitates a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between visual form, social context, and the allocation of symbolic power within that framework. This study examines the Pinisi not merely as an aesthetic object, but also as a cultural entity situated within the social field, as conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu (1986). The

qualitative method is pertinent since it investigates the significance inherent in the symbol, while also examining the processes of its manufacture, diffusion, and societal acceptability. Data gathering was conducted using a combination of visual document analysis, field observations, interviews, and literature reviews. The document analysis encompassed the compilation of visual resources with Pinisi representations, including government logos, event identities, architectural adaptations, public installations, and commercial product designs.

Meanwhile, field observations were conducted in Makassar City and Bulukumba Regency, particularly in Tanah Beru, recognized as the hub of traditional Pinisi production. These observations not only documented the visible presence of the Pinisi in public settings but also examined the community's engagement with the symbol. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with designers, policymakers, tourism sector stakeholders, and artisans to gather insights into their perspectives on the significance, objectives, and strategies related to Pinisi representation. The data were further enhanced by a literature review on the history of Pinisi, symbolic capital theory, and the theories of multimodality and visual grammar, as articulated by Kress and van Leeuwen (2020).

The data analysis was performed in three interconnected phases. The initial phase involves multimodality analysis, which examines the linkages and interactions among diverse visual modes form, color, composition, and typography employed to convey cultural meanings and identity. This theory is based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) concept that visual meaning is socially constructed through the interplay of modes, whereby each visual aspect contributes to the overall meaning. The second stage is field mapping, as articulated by Bourdieu (2020), which situates actors such as the government, corporate sector, designers, and artisan groups within frameworks of rivalry and collaboration. In this context, economic capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital interact to establish who possesses the authority and legitimacy to define the representational form of the Pinisi. The third level involves contextual interpretation, which involves linking visual findings to the relevant social, historical, and political context.

The theoretical framework integrates two primary foundations: Pierre Bourdieu's theory and multimodal visual communication design theory. The notions of field, habitus, and capital mainly symbolic capital derived from Bourdieu, are utilized to comprehend the social dynamics behind Pinisi representation. A field is defined as a domain where individuals possessing various forms of capital vie for the validity of representation. The visual depiction of the Pinisi is not impartial; it emerges from the interplay of factors that shape its form and significance. Habitus denotes the historically developed maritime cultural dispositions of the Bugis people, which previously facilitated the emergence of Pinisi sailing technology. In contemporary times, this habitus engages with market logic and current aesthetic requirements, producing visual shapes that often diverge from their original significance. Symbolic capital is important as it elucidates the selection of the Pinisi as an emblem in diverse

circumstances, whereas cultural and economic capital affect the degree to which a party may govern its narrative and visual representation (Bourdieu, 2006).

This study employs the notion of multimodality, derived from visual communication design theory, to analyse the representational techniques of Pinisi. Multimodality perceives visual communication as the interplay of diverse semiotic modes, including images, text, typography, colour, and layout, which together constitute a message (Forceville, 1999). This method facilitates an analysis that evaluates both the aesthetic dimensions and the rhetorical and ideological purposes of the representation. Visual grammar concepts, including framing, composition, vectors, contrast, and salience, facilitate the identification of the visual methods to influence the public perception of the Pinisi.

This integrated methodology enables the examination of the Pinisi as a symbol situated at the confluence of tradition and modernity, as well as preservation and commodification. According to Bourdieu's concept, the representation of the Pinisi in the realm of visual communication design is the result of a symbolic struggle, in which various actors seek to maximize their existing capital to gain recognition and legitimacy. The government can utilize the Pinisi as a symbol of capital to enhance the region's image at national and international events, while tourism industry stakeholders can leverage it as a branding feature to attract visitors. Conversely, the artisan community, custodians of the tradition, is frequently marginalized in the design and decision-making processes.

This approach facilitates the exploration of how changes in the Pinisi's visual representation, via stylization, deformation, or metamorphosis, can affect public perception of South Sulawesi's cultural identity. This research integrates visual analysis with social structure mapping to elucidate both the use of the Pinisi symbol and the rationale behind the selection and preservation of specific forms. This comprehension is essential for developing more inclusive design techniques that engage the tradition-holding community in the creative and decision-making processes.

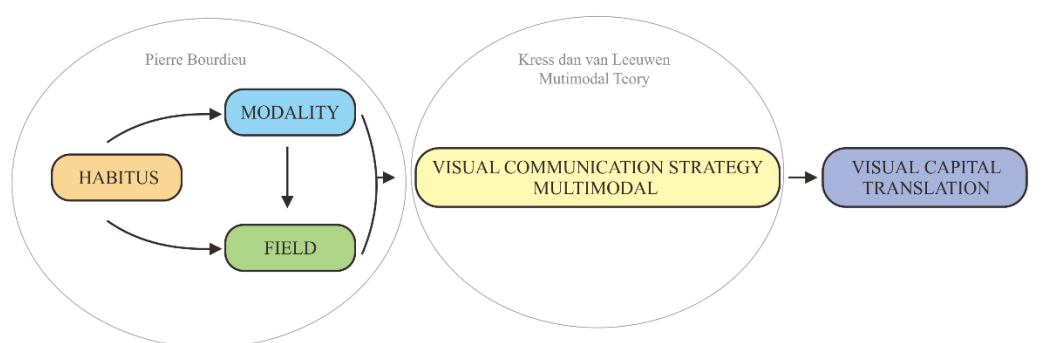


Figure 1. Theoretical Analysis Concept

Thus, the research methodologies and theoretical frameworks utilized in this study provide an in-depth comprehension of the Pinisi visual phenomena. The combination of multimodality analysis and symbolic capital theory clarifies

not only the visual structure but also the power dynamics that shape it. This project aims to enhance local wisdom-based visual communication design studies and deepen our understanding of cultural symbol negotiation within globalization and the modern creative economy

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The transformation of the Pinisi from a traditional sailing technology into a visual icon and instrument of cultural identity cannot be separated from the dynamics of habitus, capital, and field as outlined by Pierre Bourdieu, which then interact with Visual Communication Design strategies in the modern era. The Bugis people's habitus is shaped by their long history of connection to the sea. Since the 18th century, the sea has not only been an economic resource but also a space for social and cultural interaction that shapes maritime skills, mindsets, and values passed down from one generation to the next (Akhmad, P. 2022). In the context of Pinisi making, this habitus encompasses specific technical skills from hull construction techniques to sail shape determination and navigational knowledge that are taught not only technically but also through the inheritance of symbolic values associated with Bugis pride, honor, and identity (Suparman. S, 2022).. This habitus ensures the continuity of the Pinisi-making tradition despite the changing times.

Habitus as Modality

The Bugis are known for their maritime expertise and have historically depended on the ocean for their sustenance. This resolve is evident in their daily existence, which is intricately connected to the water. Maritime activities significantly shape their daily consumption, commerce, and social connections. In response to the necessity for extended maritime journeys, the Bugis people invented dependable and effective maritime technology, notably the Pinisi. This drive has become a fundamental aspect of their habitus, influencing mindsets and skills transmitted over generations.

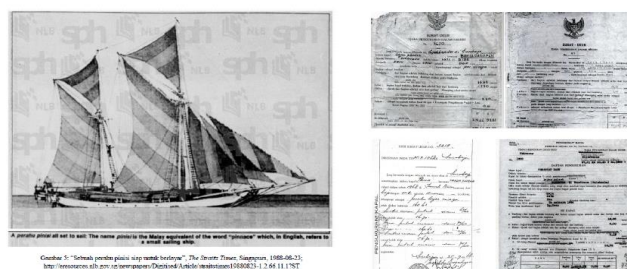


Figure 2. Legal Ownership Records of Pinisi Vessels in South Sulawesi & the Pinisi Boatbuilding Tradition

Source: Wahyuni & Sadik, 2022, Liebner, H. H, 2018

Bugis culture places a strong emphasis on the strict transmission of knowledge and skills. This tradition ensures that each generation acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to build and navigate a Pinisi (Ammarell,1999). The inheritance process includes both the transmission of technical abilities and the associated cultural values. Children are taught from an early age about the importance of the Pinisi in their lives and how to respect and maintain this tradition. The determination to maintain and preserve this tradition is part of the Bugis habitus, which shapes their identity.

The strategic geographic position of Sulawesi enables the Bugis people to engage with various cultures and technologies from other Asian regions, such as China and Thailand. This transfer of knowledge enriched the Bugis boat-building skills, including iron-making technology that developed in Sulawesi as early as the 5th century BC. This knowledge was then internalized and adapted to local needs and conditions, resulting in a unique and distinctive Pinisi technology. These skills become part of the Bugis habitus, which continues to be passed down and refined over time.

Habitus plays a crucial role in preserving the Pinisi-making tradition. Through the processes of internalization and externalization, individuals and communities shape and are influenced by their habitus. This habitus encompasses the knowledge, skills, and values associated with making the Pinisi, which are continuously passed down and reinforced through daily practice. The Pinisi is not merely a technology or a means of transportation, but also a profound symbol of cultural identity for the Bugis people (Akhmad, P. 2022). This process of inheriting the habitus ensures that the Pinisi tradition remains alive and relevant in Bugis life to this day.

The Pinisi has become a powerful symbol of identity for the Bugis people. The tradition of making and using the Pinisi is part of the habitus that shapes and identifies the Bugis community (Akhmad, P. 2022). From generation to generation, knowledge and skills related to the Pinisi are passed down, keeping this tradition alive and thriving. This habitus reflects how the Bugis people value and preserve their cultural heritage, making the Pinisi an integral part of their lives (Wahyuni & Sadik, 2022). Thus, the Pinisi is not only a means of navigation but also a representation of Bugis identity and cultural pride.

Pinisi as the Representation

From their deep-rooted maritime habitus, the Bugis people build and maintain economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital that strengthens their position in the regional and international maritime arena (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital is evident in the profits from transoceanic trade thanks to the superior technology of the Pinisi, while social capital is formed through trade networks and cultural diplomacy that extend to Southeast Asia, East Africa, and Australia (Liebner, 2016). Cultural and symbolic capital is manifested through the prestige of the *panrita lopi* (shipbuilders) and *punggawa* (shipowners), where ownership of a Pinisi is an indicator of high social status. Within the framework of Distinction (Bourdieu, 2006), the Pinisi ship is not simply a means of navigation, but a cultural artifact that reproduces social hierarchy through symbolic distinction. This superiority continues to be utilized in visual

representations, where the Pinisi form is adapted into logos, architectural icons, product designs, and promotional media to emphasize the Bugis maritime cultural identity.



Figure 3. The Pinisi Ship, as a Symbol of Indonesia's Cultural Heritage

Source: <https://www.liputan6.com/>

As we entered the 21st century, the Pinisi evolved into an instrument for political representation and cultural diplomacy that went beyond local boundaries. The Pinisi's participation in the G20 Summit in Bali exemplifies the transformation of its symbolic value into political and cultural capital on a worldwide scale. Despite their absence from the official agenda, Pinisi graphics and miniatures are employed in delegation receptions, ancillary events, and tourism promotions to underscore Indonesia's identity as a maritime nation with a rich cultural past. This representation is multimodal, integrating historical narratives, aesthetic forms, and symbolic values to evoke national pride, as per Kress and van Leeuwen's approach to visual communication design (2020). This technique illustrates how state actors and the tourism sector exploit cultural heritage as a promotional resource, extending the contest for symbolic power from the local Bugis sphere to the global stage.

Symbolic Power Struggle through Visual Pinisi

In the context of the struggle for symbolic power, the visual representation of the Pinisi operates as an arena where symbolic, cultural, and social capital are at stake to shape image, legitimacy, and prestige. As a symbol of the maritime glory of the Bugis people of South Sulawesi, the Pinisi has transcended its original function as a traditional sailing vessel and has now become an icon adopted in various forms, from institutional logos and building designs to miniatures and even promotional materials for tourism. This phenomenon reflects the mechanism described by Bourdieu, in which cultural symbols can become instruments of social distinction, as actors compete for control of their meaning and legitimacy for their use (Bourdieu, 1986).

The use of the Pinisi visual in public spaces can be seen as an effort to strengthen the symbolic capital of a group or institution. For example, the presence of the Pinisi visual on the 100 Rupiah Indonesian banknote from 1992, despite using the nomenclature "Sailing Boat," demonstrates how the state appropriates local symbols to articulate a narrative of national identity. This aligns with the practice of hegemonic symbolic representation, where the state,

as the dominant actor, utilizes cultural symbols to establish an image of legitimacy and historical continuity (Bourdieu, 2006).



Figure 4. A Sailboat Appears on the 1992 of 100 Rupiah Currency
Source: <https://aceh.tribunnews.com/2020>

Furthermore, the historical traces of the use of the identical Pinisi sailing ship visuals on Singaporean currency and postage stamps from 1980 and 1988 reveal the transnational dimension of this symbolic capital. The image of the "Palari" sailing ship, as explained by Gibson-Hill (1949,1950), demonstrates the transnational recognition and appropriation of South Sulawesi's maritime symbol. This fact indicates that Pinisi's symbolic capital is not only recognized locally but also becomes a negotiable cultural commodity in the international arena.



Figure 5. \$10 Banknotes.-20c 'Palari' Series Stamps, Singapore, 1980 and 1988.
Source : Liebner, H. H, 2018

The struggle for symbolic power is also evident in the use of the Pinisi by social actors who have no direct connection to its history or craftsmanship. Sports institutions, educational institutions, and local governments often adopt Pinisi visuals as their visual identity to borrow cultural legitimacy and associate themselves with the narrative of Bugis glory. Within the framework of visual communication design theory, this appropriation leverages Pinisi's strong iconicity, thereby evoking positive associations and a sense of collective pride among audiences through semiotics.

The struggle for symbolic power through Pinisi visuals is a complex process, involving strategies of capitalizing symbolic capital, appropriation across arenas, and the legitimization of cultural meaning. In line with Bourdieu's thinking, this arena is characterized by the interaction between inherited Bugis maritime habitus, the capital structures held by actors, and the field of cultural

representation that determines who has the authority to define and articulate the Pinisi symbol in the public sphere.

Pinisi as Multimodal in Visual Design Space

The visual phenomenon of the Pinisi in the context of South Sulawesi society can be read as a form of visual legitimacy that operates through various multimodal channels in the realm of visual communication design. It is not alone a marine cultural artefact, but also a symbol that establishes a communal identity assertion: "My ancestors were exceptional navigators." This tale, while acquiring historical credibility from the Pinisi-making community in Tanah Beru, also functions to unify diverse ethnic groups in South Sulawesi Bugis Wajo, Makassar, Bone, Luwu, and Mandar under a singular symbolic image. The Pinisi serves as a symbol of community identity that surpasses the cultural confines of individual tribes, simultaneously overshadowing other cultural artefacts deserving of communal recognition, such as the epic *I La Galigo* or the philosophical contributions of personalities like Kajaolaliddong.



Figure 6. Pinisi as Multimodal in Visual Design Space
Source: Nurabdiansyah, M, 2019

Within a multimodal framework, the Pinisi navigates several forms and media, including three-dimensional representations of a tangible ship with its sails, deck, and hull, as well as two-dimensional representations such as logos, pictures, or decorative patterns. Liebner's (2018) study indicates that the classifications and terminology of ship components in South Sulawesi exhibit complexity, such that their stylisation, deformation, or distortion in two-dimensional representation concurrently alters their meaning. Currently, multimodality encompasses not just variations in media but also distinctions in the roles and objectives of visual communication, ranging from clear symbolic interpretation to artistic enquiries that highlight visual figures of speech, such as metaphors in verbal language. This transformation illustrates how the Pinisi is reproduced as a layered sign: a sign that refers to its original form, a narrative that produces cultural meaning, and a representation that operates within a social field (field) laden with symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1986).

Critical Examination: Pinisi Multimodality, Habitus, and Symbolic Power

The Pinisi, through the lens of three theories Bourdieu, Visual Communication Design, and multimodality demonstrates that the Pinisi visual transcends mere aesthetic value, serving as a battleground for meaning where cultural capital is transformed into transnational symbolic power. Bourdieu posits that the Bugis people's habitus, grounded on maritime values, knowledge, and abilities, serves as a generator of capital. This capital is multifaceted, incorporating economic (the advantages of marine trade), social (relational networks and maritime diplomacy), cultural (traditional heritage, mythology, and historical tales), and symbolic (the prestige associated with being an adept sailor) dimensions. The four capitals function within a realm characterised by social competitiveness, encompassing marine, cultural, and design sectors, where participants vie for symbolic legitimacy. Thus, the Pinisi not only "lives" as a ship or icon, but also as an instrument of power in the politics of cultural representation.

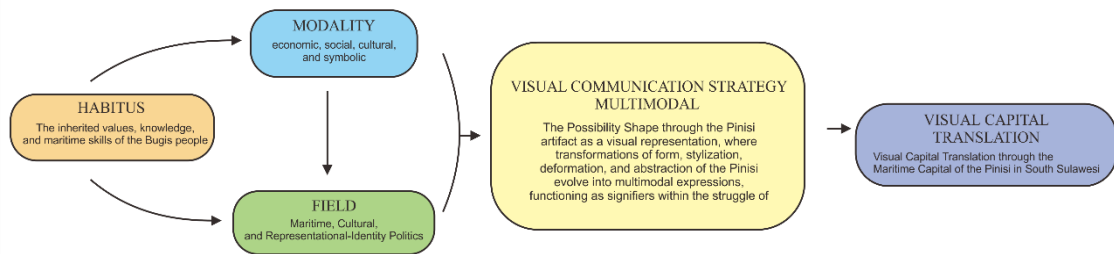


Figure 7. Critical Perspectives on Pinisi Multimodality, Habitus, and Symbolic Power

The Visual Communication Design framework functions as a transformative tool that transfigures various materials into visual capital. Visual language serves not just as an aesthetic enhancement but also as a mechanism for ideological validation. Elements of form (stylisation, distortion, deformation) and mediums (2D and 3D) function as conduits for the packaging and dissemination of ideological narratives, such as "my ancestors were sailors" or "Indonesia as the maritime centre of the world." Kress & van Leeuwen's multimodality theory enhances the analysis by illustrating that the strength of Pinisi's representation resides in the integration of diverse communication modes: the ship's original form (3D artefact), the logo or illustration (2D), verbal narrative, exhibition layout, and digital media. The integration of different modalities has a synergistic impact that enhances and broadens the message's reach.

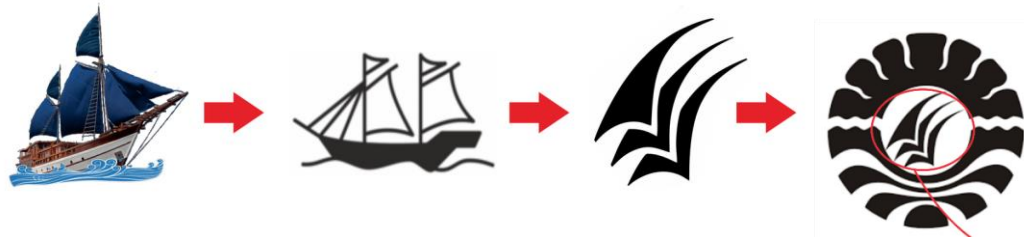


Figure 8. The Process of Visual Transformation through Multimodality, Possibility Shape, and Designers' Creativity in Shaping One of the Higher Education Identities in South Sulawesi

A novelty born from the synthesis of these three frameworks is the concept of "Visual Capital Translation," the process of converting cultural-symbolic capital into visual capital that can operate transnationally without losing its local legitimacy. This concept highlights that the depiction of Pinisi in the DKV domain is not merely a replication of form, but a deliberate approach to integrate local qualities within the global visual landscape. This situates Pinisi as an engaged participant in cultural diplomacy, national branding, and the quest for significance within the global arena of representation – an engagement that is concurrently artistic, political, and economic.

CONCLUSIONS

The visual representation of the Pinisi, in the context of South Sulawesi society, functions not only as an aesthetic symbol or cultural artifact, but also as a strategic instrument in the politics of representation. From Bourdieu's perspective, the Pinisi is analysed using the concepts of habitus, capital, and field. The Bugis marine habitus generates economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital that mutually reinforce one another in sustaining and enhancing legitimacy within the maritime and cultural domains. The four types of capital are interdependent, functioning within a social arena that serves as a battleground for symbolic power, with the visuals of the Pinisi emerging as a compelling medium for reinforcing this position.

Within the framework of Visual Communication Design, the Pinisi undergoes a transformation from cultural capital to visual capital. Visual language, with elements of form such as stylization, distortion, and deformation, as well as vehicles in 2D and 3D media, is used as a rhetorical device that articulates the narrative of identity. This visual processing preserves the symbol's legibility while enabling adaptability across several communication settings, including governmental logos, tourism promotional materials, and national branding. This creative process illustrates that Visual Communication Design serves as a conduit linking cultural heritage with a deliberate and systematic visual strategy.

The multimodality theory enhances analysis by demonstrating that the strength of Pinisi representation is in the integration of diverse, mutually supportive communication modes. The Pinisi image manifests not solely as a singular visual entity but also as a cohesive spoken narrative, geographical environment, and material experience. The original ship, as a three-dimensional

artefact, the logo illustration, as a two-dimensional medium, the historical narrative in text, and cultural exhibitions at international events, such as the G20 in Bali, collectively contribute to the construction of the Pinisi's image as a symbol that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries.

The main conceptual contribution, or novelty, of this research is the proposal of the concept of "Visual Capital Translation," which refers to the transformation of cultural-symbolic capital into visual capital that preserves its global efficacy while ensuring local legitimacy. This notion underscores that the depiction of Pinisi within the Visual Communication Design domain is not simply a replication of form, but a design approach that serves as a tool of cultural politics. Consequently, the Pinisi is redefined not only to honour local identity but also to engage in the global arena of representation, where aesthetics, politics, and economics converge in the creation of meaning..

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is needed regarding Visual Capital Translation: Habitus, Field, and Multimodality in Bugis Pinisi Representation to perfect this research and increase insight for readers and writers.

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