

REGIONAL ICON MOTIFS: RECENT TRENDS IN INDONESIA'S BATIK FABRIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: Batik is a traditional textile that has developed in Indonesia. UNESCO's recognition of Indonesian traditional textiles (batik) as a cultural heritage is driving the development of batik trends in Indonesia to become not only a fabric, but also a regional identity. This study aims to explain how the identity of the region is manifested in a specific motif in each region in Indonesia that can be identified from fabric and clothing products. This research employed artistic research approach with multiple-case study design in five batik industry areas, namely Semarang, Kudus, Cirebon, Surabaya and Malang as the center of the people's batik industry. The research was carried out through the steps of: a) visual data collection and batik creation process, b) visual analysis, c) synthesis and d) verification. Product data were collected through batik product documents and were corroborated through observation. The data were then analyzed using an interactive model. Batik motifs are based on guiding elements and design principles. There are findings of the structure of motifs from the regional icons during batik making both in the form of cloth and clothing. This has become the trend of Indonesian batik today

Keywords: batik, icon, identity, motif, textile.

1 INTRODUCTION

This article was written based on the results of a research in the past year about Indonesian Batik. Batik is a traditional Indonesian textile art that has developed since the 18th century. Batik as a traditional textile has been handed down from one generation to the next for centuries [1]. Batik is a traditional textile which was originally only worn by the royal or aristocratic groups in Java. The tradition of making batik textiles is considered a sacred thing that can only be done inside the palace and the results are for the clothes of the king, his family and his followers, which are symbols of Javanese feudalism [2]. Javanese feudalism appears in the types of batik that can only be worn by kings and aristocrats, which distinguishes batik from those used by ordinary people or ordinary people.

UNESCO's recognition of Indonesian traditional cloth (batik) as a cultural heritage on October 2, 2009 became a booster of the growth of the batik industry in Indonesia [3]. As one of the traditional arts and culture, Indonesian batik is currently increasingly has its own attraction for foreign communities. The success of batik textiles attracted international attention [2]. The application of batik design that is increasingly developing shows the creativity of batik designers in the traditional textile industry that is in line with the target audience [4]. Batik developed rapidly in Java Island, which was integrated in the north coast culture.

Batik in the north coast of Java, besides being popular for its creativity and uniqueness, also has a strong historical background of traditional textiles, started from the regions of Cirebon, Semarang, Kudus, Surabaya, to Malang. The phenomenon of the development of batik today is not only as a piece of cloth with a sprinkling of ornaments or motifs, but has developed into a legitimacy or identity of an area. In Indonesia, nowadays, creations of batik products have now begun to appear, including Semarang Batik (Semarang-style batik), Kudus Batik (Kudus-style batik), Cirebon Batik (Cirebon-style batik), Surabaya Batik (Surabaya-specific batik) and Malang Batik (batik typical of Malang citizens). Thus, research is needed on the development of Javanese batik which is becoming the current trend. Research related efforts to develop the batik industry sector, which can be said as an effort to lift the image of traditional textile art based on local culture [5].

Currently, the research related to batik has been done, but there is no research that discusses the batik textile industry from the perspective of regional identity which is becoming a clothing trend in Indonesia lately. This research has a novelty in the form of empirical disclosure about the perspective of regional identity in the process of traditional textile production and its implications in the form of regional clothes. The construction of regional identity is inherent in the depiction of iconic motifs.

This research is useful as it does not only conserve monumental batik in Indonesia, but also emphasize the difference between traditional batik textiles in Indonesia and other countries that contain educational values based on traditional culture. Indonesian textile batik is not only a textile material product in the form of cloth, but also it has cultural values in the form of knowledge, attitudes and skills that are passed on from one generation to the next through the educational process in society. Additionally, this study is useful to: 1) improve the reproduction of motifs, fabrics and batik clothes based on regional identities; 2) publish batik as a cultural heritage, especially the noble values in it; and 3) encourage the development of the batik industry as a medium for visual arts education.

2 METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on field research which is oriented to empirical and theoretical analysis of educational values in batik textile works as a product of local culture, therefore the research approach employed artistic research [6]. It relates to the specific purpose of the research which is to analyze the design of Javanese batik motifs and the construction of identity that is contained. This research was conducted with a multiple-case study design [7] in five traditional batik industry areas studied, namely Cirebon Batik, Semarang Batik, Kudus Batik, Surabaya Batik and Malang Batik. The object of research is batik textiles in the form of fabric or clothes. The research locations are five traditional batik industry centers, namely: 1) CV Cipta Karya Mandiri, 2) Kampung Batik Semarang, 3) Kampung Batik Trusmi, 4) Virides @ Batik Collection and 5) CV Batik Antique Malang.

The research was carried out through the following steps: a) visual data collection and batik creation process through observation of the creation process, b) mapping of motif specifications from various regions in Indonesia, c) aesthetic visual analysis of batik motifs, and d) verification. Product data were collected through batik product documents and corroborated through observation. Data analysis used qualitative approach using an interactive model. The analysis of batik motifs is carried out based on the guidelines of the elements and design principles.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Process of batik creation

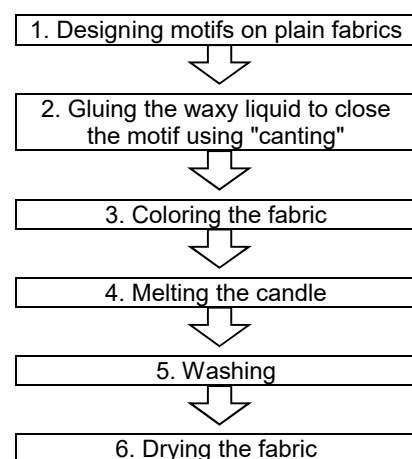
Indonesia has many popular batik industries in the form of small and medium businesses. The batik industry in Indonesia is generally a small and medium industry which is the livelihood of some people [8]. Widespread batik art belongs to the people of Indonesia and Javanese, especially after the end of the XVIII century or the beginning

of the XIX century. The batik industry in Indonesia is spread in several regions on the island of Java which later became the name of the types of batik [9].

Traditional batik which is still continuously preserved and developed openly are Batik from the Cirebon (West Java Province), Semarang (Central Java Province), Kudus (Central Java Province), Surabaya (East Java Province) and Malang (Central Java Province). Four of the five regions are in the northern Javanese cultural region. The characteristics of traditional textiles in the north coast of Java are open, dynamic and creative in terms of motifs and patterns [9]. These characteristics differ greatly from traditional-classical textiles in the interior (Solo and Yogyakarta) which are very rigid and obedient with very strict motive structures, because they were influenced by the power of the Javanese kingdom in the past [10].

In the current development, iconic motifs in Indonesia are sourced from cultural and philosophical backgrounds also come from physical buildings. The existence of regional icons becomes the main source of ideas in making motifs. Palace Gate and the vehicle of the king of Cirebon are specific form icons in Cirebon, Central Java. The building of Lawang Sewu and the Tugu Muda monument are the icon of Semarang, Central Java. Monument of Kudus Tower is the icon of Kudus, Central Java. While on the eastern part of Java Island there is the Surabaya Monument as the Surabaya icon and the Monument of Malang as the icon of the city of Malang, East Java.

The process of making batik is very unique and different from the traditional textile creation in other countries. The process is done for many times, at least five times. Making motifs is done on a piece of cotton or silk fabric using a pencil. The sticking process of wax liquid that has been heated to 59°C on a piece of cotton or silk cloth by following the motif functions to cover up the motif. Coloring process can be done naturally or chemically.



Natural dyes are produced from the colors that we can get from a variety of plants, for example fruit, roots, leaves, or tree bark [11]. Chemical dyes are processed / produced chemically by industry. These chemical dyes can be classified into seven color ingredients namely Napthol, Indigosol, Rapide, Ergan Soga, Soga Couplings, Soga Chroom and Procion. The next process is to melt the wax by boiling it in boiling water. The motif part that is covered by wax will be seen after the wax is dissolved with boiling water. The last process is washing the fabric using water. Water has an irreplaceable role in the textile industry. Every textile production depends on water and the adequacy of good quality water. Washing is one of the most important activities in the process of making textiles [12]. Figure 1 shows the photos of the batik making process.







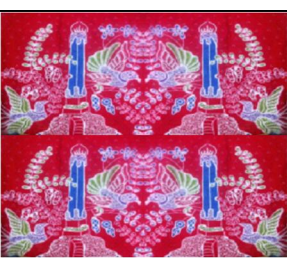





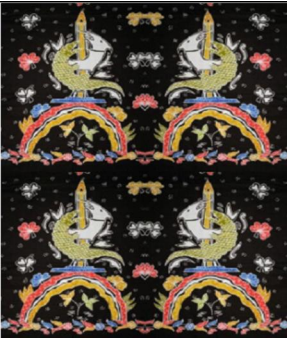



Figure 1 Process of making batik traditionally

3.2 Iconic motif structure as regional identity

Batik motifs are analyzed based on their forming structure, namely the main motif, companion motif, and filler motif (*isen-isen*). Table 1 explains how batik regional icons were analyzed for their shape and structure.

Table1 Visual analysis of motif designs with regional icons

No	Developing Batik Motif	Analysis of Motif Structure	Icon Description	Regional Icon
1	 Batik Motif of <i>Gapura Keraton</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: palace gate and veranda (Kingdom of Cirebon) • Companion motifs: cloud motifs and fence motifs. • Filler motif: line and point elements • Motif structure uses parallel-repeat technique • Using white fabric as background and brown color on the motif 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The source of the idea of motifs is the Cirebon area icon, which is the palace gate of Cirebon in Central Java • The gate is a landmark in Cirebon, Central Java 	 Palace Gate of Cirebon Central Java
2	 Batik Motif of <i>paksi naga liman</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: <i>paksi naga liman</i> • Companion motifs: bird and soil motifs • Filler motifs: line and point elements • Motif structure uses opposite-repeat technique • Using white fabric as background. Brown, yellow and black on the motif 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The source of the idea of motifs is the traditional vehicle of Cirebon Palace in the past • The shape of the vehicle is the imagination of the <i>paksi naga liman</i> (a combination of elephants, eagles, and dragons) • The icon of <i>paksi naga liman</i> vehicle is the identity of the Cirebon area 	 The vehicle of the king of Cirebon in Cirebon, Central Java
3	 Batik Motif of <i>Lawang Sewu</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: lawang sewu • Companion motif: Javanese tamarind plant motif (<i>Tamarindus Indica</i>) • Filler motif: line and point elements • Motif structure uses diamond-repeat technique • Use <i>sogan</i>-brown color as background. White color is used in the tamarind motif outline and orange in the motif 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea source of the motif is the Lawang Sewu building, an icon in Semarang, Central Java area • This building is a building with a Dutch architectural style that is in the center of Semarang City as the icon of Semarang City 	 The building of Lawang Sewu in Semarang, Central Java
4	 Batik Motif of <i>Tugu Muda</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: Tugu Muda • Companion motif: Javanese tamarind plant motif (<i>Tamarindus Indica</i>) and bird motif • Filler motif: line and point elements • Motif structure uses opposite-repeat technique and red as a background. Green and blue colors are on the main motif 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea source of the motif is the Tugu Muda building which is also an icon of Semarang Central Java and is located besides Lawang Sewu • This building is located in the center of Semarang City, as one of the icons of Semarang City 	 The monument Tugu Muda in Semarang, Central Java

5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: Kudus Tower • Companion motif: tobacco leaf and tobacco flower motif (<i>Nicotiana Tabacum</i>) • Filler motif: point elements • Motif structure uses quarter-drop technique • It only uses one main color which is blue as background • The white color of the fabric is used for outline motifs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea source of the motif is the Kudus Tower which is an icon of Kudus City, Central Java • This building is a protected historical building (artifact) in Kudus City • This building is a religious symbol of Islam in Java 		Monument of Kudus Tower, in Kudus, Central Java
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: monument, shark and crocodile • Companion motif: flora motif (leaves and flowers). • Filler motif: point and line elements • Motif structure uses parallel-repeat technique • It uses five color variations, including black on the background, white, green, blue, and red on the motif 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea source of the motif is the Surabaya monument, an important icon of Surabaya City, in East Java • The word "Surabaya" comes from the Javanese language, consisting of the words "suro" and "boyo", meaning "shark" and "crocodile" • This building is located in the center of Surabaya City, East Java 		Surabaya Monument
7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main motif: Malang Monument • Companion motif: tendrill motif • Filler motifs: points, lines, square • Motif structure uses parallel-repeat technique • It uses black on the background and brown on the motif 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea source of the motif is the monument of Malang city, an icon in Malang City, East Java • This monument is located in the center of Malang City, East Java 		Monument of Malang City

When in the beginning of batik, depicted in particular motifs, served as the identity of the Royals, later on it has evolved into a medium to showcase one's regional identity [13]. The trend of batik motifs that are developing in Indonesia at this time shows many local icons. The phenomenon is actually motivated by the interests of one region's identity with each other. The strong importance of identity (brand image) in several regions has implications for creativity in developing the iconic motifs of each region. Basically, the motifs that are developed originate from the idea of regional landmarks (physical environment or artifacts).

When we refer to the historical view, batik was originally an art form from the Javanese kingdom which later became popular among the people, not only the nobles but also ordinary people. Through a piece of batik fabric, the cultural meaning is conveyed and preserved. Through visual forms and symbols, batik also conveys cultural meanings handed down from generation to generation. Batik *keraton*, batik *paksi naga liman*, batik *lawang sewu* and batik *malang* were made with a repetitive

stamp technique through laying wax with a stamp, coloring and removing wax. The stamp technique was chosen because the motif has symmetry so that it can be produced faster when stamped. Different from the *kudus* motif and *suro-boyo* motif made with written techniques. This technique uses a canting tool (a traditional stationery containing wax ink). This process requires a longer duration, but the result of motives is more dynamic.

3.3 Application of regional icon motifs on clothes or uniforms

Here is an example of the application of batik fabric with motifs on formal clothes presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3. The applications can be presented on the collar, arms and body on formal clothes for men and women.

Batik cloth with regional icon motifs is more appropriate to be applied to formal clothes or uniforms. The application of motifs on formal clothes for women is usually in the form of formal dresses, while for men it is usually in the form of a shirt with short and long sleeves. People wear

formal clothes in various situations, such as at work, meeting someone new, or in a job interview [14]. Formal dress is often worn to follow the norm, gain respect, signify professionalism and maintain social distance [15].



Figure 2 Example of motif placement on long-sleeved pattern of menswear



Figure 3 Example of motif placement on womenswear

For the Javanese, batik is a traditional cloth which is integral to their cultural identity [16]. The application

of motifs and fabrics to clothing is very flexible and varied [17]. The examples in Figures 2 and 3 apply to the Surabaya monument motif, which can also be applied to other batik motifs. The batik motifs that will be applied to the fabric are adjusted according to the design of the clothes. Based on the results of visual analysis, the application of batik motifs on clothes adjusts the structure of the collar, arms and body. The shape of the clothes, which can be produced from the application of the regional icon batik motifs, can be broader for other motifs (motif of *gapura kraton*, motif of *paksi naga liman*, motif of Lawang Sewu, motif of Tugu Muda, motif of Kudus tower, motif of Surabaya monument and motif of Malang monument). The fabric can also be applied to dresses or skirts by adding plain cloth as a complement. Additionally, the size of motifs can be further reduced so that the composition of the motif can be more complicated and complex. The application of colors, especially women's clothing, can use bright colors as another variation.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the research discussions, it could be concluded that the phenomenon of batik from the regions of Cirebon, Semarang, Kudus, Surabaya and Malang, which illustrates motifs in the form of regional icons, shows a growing trend at the moment. Regional identity was depicted in specific motifs in each region in Indonesia which can be identified from fabric and clothing products. The motifs are the *paksi naga liman*, *Gapura Cirebon*, *tugu muda Semarang*, *Lawang Sewu Semarang*, *Kudus tower*, *Surabaya monument* and *Malang monument*. The developed motif structure consists of the main motifs, companion motifs and filler motifs (*isen-isen*) originating from the idea of the environment of physical icons or local area artifacts. Development of basic motifs into patterns employs parallel-repeat technique, opposite-repeat technique and diamond-repeat technique. After the motifs and patterns are arranged into batik fabric, that's where it starts to be considered how to apply it to clothing aesthetically.

The admission of batik as one of the world's intangible cultural heritages had an impact on extensive development in several regions in Indonesia (Java). The trend of developing the motifs is motivated by the interests of the identity of one region against another. The importance of identity in some areas of Java has implications for creativity in developing iconic motifs.

This research can be significantly used as a theoretical reference and practice of batik motif design and its application in formal menswear and womenswear. The pattern of its application in clothing design is done by considering the collar model, the shape of the arms and the shape of the body parts.

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