

# Batik Sudagaran as Cultural Creation of the Laweyan's Merchants

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**Abstract.** Laweyan is the marker of the Javanese bourgeoisie's resurrection who tried to compete kraton aristocratic culture; resistance movement against feudalism (kraton) and resistance to colonialism. About batik, the rule of using batik that determined by Paku Buwana III, the variety of batik's pattern based on society rank so that they have different pattern of batik based on their society rank in kraton. The order of batik that being mentioned is called "*Maklumat Solo*". The existence of Batik Laweyan's merchants with their products shake batik kraton off. Later on, the batik which is now called Sudagaran Batik, appears. Sudagaran Batik was born from the expression of the artists outside the Keraton as a cultural match. This research aims to determine the social stratification of Laweyan's merchants and to review the characteristic of their cultural result which displayed on Sudagaran batik visual's. Qualitative descriptive research, collecting data with interviewing historian and community leaders of Laweyan. The observations takes place in Laweyan with observation of objects in the form of Sudagaran batik, as well as written documents and visual photograph. This analysis is using Weber's thoughts on social stratification based on; economy, status, and power that characterizes Laweyan's merchant.

**Keywords:** *Sudagaran batik, cultural creation, Laweyan's merchant*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of cultural heritage invariably differs from one context to another. In a broad sense, cultural heritage is a result of human processes and activities rather than a biophysical product. It will reflect either productive or material activities/ non-material activities or values such as social, religious, artistic, and traditional values [1]. Batik is the art heritage of our ancestors. The art of batik has high artistic value, a fusion of art and technology. Batik is not just see the results, but also the manufacturing process [2].

Batik is a special feature of Indonesia which has also been acknowledged by UNESCO as the Intangible World Heritage in October 2009, as well as keris and puppet. The growth of batik includes art and technology aspects which belong to former cultural heritage predated from the palace community then expanded into the outside of palace environment, and now it becomes the national culture based main industry [3]. Batik is one of the work of art and it becomes the former heritage of Indonesia. Batik is adored by many countries [4]. In the

Javanese language, the term batik is an abbreviation of the word “*mbatik*” which means to draw a series of dots (*nitik*) on a piece of cloth [5].

One of the batik that developed in Surakarta is Sudagaran Batik which grows among Laweyan's merchants. The traditional art of batik which used to be dominated by batik masters as batik business owners is still occupied by the local. Laweyan village is one of the biggest batik clusters in Solo and it is known as ‘Juragan Batik’ village. This village have a long history how it emerge and develop as one of batik industrial cluster in Solo. It was located close to Dr. Rajiman street, which is the shaft of of Keraton Palace of Solo. The architecture of Laweyan village is influenced by Javanese traditional, Europe, China and Islam. This is cultural heritage area which close to Laweyan Mosque, former Laweyan market, tomb of Laweyan, and the house of H. Samanhoedi (founder of Islamic trade unions). Laweyan village is one of heritage in Solo, since it has history and influenced to the development of Solo city until nowadays [6].

## **2. METHOD**

This research is using descriptive qualitative with a focus on studying the social stratification of Laweyan merchants, as well as the characteristics of their cultural results displayed on Sudagaran batik visuals. Data collection was done by observation and in-depth interviews with the historians, batik entrepreneurs, and community leaders of Laweyan. Observation takes place at the development of sudagaran batik, which is at the Laweyan area. Observations of Sudagaran batik, as well as the taking of documents in written and visual photographs were also carried out in the area. The study was analyzed by Weber's thought, regarding the social stratification that was based on; economy, status, and power that characterizes Laweyan's merchant civilization.

Determination of the sample is done by the technique of "purposive sampling", is the selection of samples directed at data sources that are seen as having important data relating to the problems being studied. Data that has been obtained, collected and recorded in research activities, strives for stability and truth. A method that is commonly used in qualitative research to ensure data validation is the tringgulation technique. Tringgulation is a technique based on a phenomenological mindset that is multiperspective. Tringgulation of data is obtained from information or sources that differ in position with in-depth interview techniques, location conditions and activities or events that describe community behavior, or from sources in the form of records or records and documents [7].

The process of data analysis is carried out together with data collection activities. The main components, namely data reduction, data presentation, verification, and conclusions that are interrelated and interact. A sociological analysis of any pattern of behavior, whether referring to a small or a large social system, must result in specific hypotheses, empirically testable statements [8]. Society is stratified based on economy, status, and power. The implication is that people can occupy a high level in one or two dimensions of stratification and are at a low level in one other dimension (or several other dimensions). This allows a far more sophisticated analysis of social stratification than is possible by reduced stratification (as is done by some Marxists) only to a few variations in one's economic citation [9].

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Culture is essentially the way of life of a people, which generates assets such as skills, products, expression, and insight that contribute to the social and economic well being of the community. This can be seen in the people predominating attitudes, norms, behaviors, beliefs,

value, art, craft, heritage and creative activities that characterize the functioning of a people, with respect to their inherent power to generate value by leveraging other production variables for creating incremental wealth through the use of resources at hand, which later translate into a cultural heritage that is passed on from one generation to another [10]. Traditional craft is an important representation of creative indigenous knowledge among the society. It portrays the identity and living values of one culture. For example, in Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and others are the most outstanding cultural representation is batik craft. Batik has been both an art and a craft for centuries [11].

In Indonesia the technique of drawing batik pattern on fabric is an ancient method. Batik craftsmen use traditional tools called *canting* and *cap* to create intricate designs. The main process generally consists of eight steps; *Nyungging*, sketching and drawing pattern on a paper. *Njaplak*, moving the drawn pattern on paper to the fabric. *Nglowong*, waxing pattern on fabric with *canting*. *Ngiseni*, putting *ngisen* (fill) to the main pattern. *Nyolet*, coloring some parts of the pattern using paintbrush. *Mopok*, covering parts that have been colored with wax using paintbrush. *Ngelir*, coloring the whole fabric by putting fabric into colored water. *Nglorod*, removing wax by pouring fabric into boiling water [12].

In batik trading actually there are no traders or entrepreneurs who call their batik as *Sudagaran batik*. *Sudagaran Batik* is a new type of batik that appears in the royal domains, such as Surakarta, Yogyakarta and Cirebon. The word '*Sudagaran*' comes from the abbreviation the word '*merchant*' and is given the term '*-an*'. In the book '*Batik, the Age of the Age and the Environment*' [13]. *Sudagaran Batik* began to be produced when the need for batik was increasing. The increasing demand for batik is supported by changes in social structure in people's lives. Around 1860, livelihoods in the Surakarta area no longer relied entirely on the traditional agricultural sector, but also on the plantation sector managed by European and Chinese businessmen. The diverse division of labor on these jobs, not only offered types of work for men only, but also for women and children. The payment system for day laborers in the form of salaries in the form of cash, allows them to buy items of daily necessities including batik as clothing material.

Batik craftsmen in Laweyan captured this social phenomenon and were able to accommodate well, so that the area developed into a center of batik production that was able to produce high quality batik or the equivalent of the quality standards of the batik palace. This phenomenon gave birth to a new class of social strata in the midst of society known as merchants. Economically capable people, business ownership status that forms the social stratification order, and the exclusive status of the batik products they produce. Merchants or batik entrepreneurs are people whose main job is making and selling batik. They have production sites and batik makers who work on them, supervise and coordinate the production, while mastering the distribution channels of artificial batik [13]. Discussion according to the purpose of writing is described as follows:

### **3.1. Social Stratification of Laweyan's Merchants**

The development of *Sudagaran batik* shows that every form and influence that inspires its development always appears smoother and is an amazing work. However, the taste of the merchants in displaying batik findings is very different from the appearance of elegant batik that comes from the palace batik. *Sudagaran Batik* has a characteristic that comes from the creation patterns of the merchants themselves, namely the pattern is crowded and full of complicated issues.

Basically there are two techniques to draw melting wax to the cloth. The first technique is a traditional way using *canting*, a tool like a pen that holds a small reservoir of hot wax. This

technique produces hand drawn wax-resist dyeing batik, which is known as Batik Tulis (lit: 'Written Batik'). The other technique is an automated technique; new breeds of batik, using cap or copper stamp to impress the wax design on the cloth for producing Batik Cap. This research will only discuss the production of Batik Tulis [14].

The emergence of Sudagaran batik was analyzed by the social stratification approach of Weber's view. The focus is on the orientation of the action by stating that a class is not a community. More precisely a class is a group of people, who may and sometimes often, act based on situations experienced together [9]. Weber argues that a "class situation" exists when three conditions are fulfilled; first, a number of people have the same specific causative components for their life opportunities. Second, the component is described exclusively by economic interests for the ownership of goods and opportunities for income. Third, it is described under the conditions of commodities or labor markets.

According to Nicholas Gane's research which stated; While Max Weber is commonly treated as a social theorist or theorist of social stratification, relatively little attention has been paid to the theory of the social that is developed in his work. In view of this, this article turns to one of the few places in which Weber explicitly theorizes the social: the chapter of Economy and Society entitled 'Class, Status, Party'. This small part of Weber's posthumously published magnum opus has been influential in debates about social class, class structure and social stratification since the 1950s, but through the course of these debates Weber's understanding of the term social has tended to be presupposed rather than explained. 'Class, Status, Party', however, is where Weber maps his theory of the social in relation to the orders of the economic and the political [15].

Among merchants, their main occupation has moved from the traditional trading system, increasing to become batik entrepreneurs who can describe the stratification in the economic capacity of the merchants. This social group, often said to belong to the Javanese middle class and the social system knows no class differences, which describes the status stratification of Laweyan's merchants. At first glance it looks like that, but actually there is a social reality there because it appears that social stratification is influenced by the status system in the work of the company. What happens in family companies is the employer-labor informal relations system, indirectly forming a system of social stratification in Laweyan's society. Regarding power, Laweyan was a civilization area which was exempt from taxes by both the palace and the colonial parties. Laweyan's community has autonomous power to dictate with women and their independence.

The peak of the social structure in the Laweyan community is called the employer's family, hereditary consists of Mbok Mase Sepuh (grandmother), Mas Nganten Sepuh (grandfather) is the mother's parent. Next is Mbok Mase (housewife), Mas Nganten (father, as head of the household), Mas Rara (daughter), Mas Bagus (boy) usually abbreviated as 'gus'.

### **3.2. Characteristic of Laweyan's Merchants Cultural Result which is Displayed on Batik Sudagaran's Visual**

Batik as an Indonesian cultural product is durable and not static; over time, it communicates culturally within the development of the society. Batik motifs, for instance, continues to develop to win social acceptance [16]. Along with the tastes of batik merchants who always want to be different and to be the center of attention, the sudagaran batik artists make sudagaran batik patterns different from the original pattern. They show batik that is always smoother so that it attracts the attention of anyone who sees it, it is related to the status in the use of batik cloth. They changed the pattern of the Kraton batik with complicated isen-isen and filled the background with cecek or other forms of isen to create beautiful sudagaran

batik. Changes that are applied to the pattern of prohibitions with the intention of being able to be used by the general public, among others by adding other types of patterns or removing certain parts of a pattern so that the pattern is not included in the category of prohibited patterns. In the Surakarta palace area, for example; machete patterns plus décor of bouquet, puffer, or other decoration. Change can also be done by eliminating mlinjon and replacing it with small flowers or other decorative types. The appearance of the modified patterns is often more beautiful and looks like a new pattern and the pattern that basically belongs to the category of prohibition patterns can be used by the general public.

Increasingly widespread reach of batik usage by the public has reduced the value of the ornamental variety due to the lack of clarity of regulations regarding the use of batik for kings and their families, nobles and people. The order in the use of batik cloth becomes blurred, making it difficult to distinguish the status of the wearer [13]. The community no longer cares about the correlation between the meaning of the batik decoration with the rank and position of the wearer [13]. At this point, the palace felt they need to make a rule that regulates the use of batik decorations in accordance with the hierarchy of the position of the wearer. Public appreciation of batik culture, however, is not supported by their understanding of values, meanings, and symbols which are inherited for generations in every batik ornament ever made, including the code on batik larangan [17].

Batik images and symbols have a unique value of art. The folk batik works passed down from ancient times are the carrier of history and culture of a nation. The images and the symbols serve as the testimony of national history, religion, folklores and legends [18]. The issuance of rules and regulations governing the use of batik decorations in accordance with the user's hierarchy of position actually spurred the spirit of batik merchants in creating. They try to find new motifs and patterns, and change the traditional batik ornaments and palace batik to be used by the wider community. The use of classical batik ornaments that have been changed in such a way according to the tastes of the merchants is a special sign for the presence of batik which is referred to as Sudagaran batik. The decoration is much smoother and more beautiful, and is very much influenced by the situations and cultural conditions that surround it [13].

This can be seen from the skills of Laweyan merchants to compose decorative types by adding and or removing certain parts rather than the main motives, supporting motives, and isen-isen. Sudagaran batik ornaments adopt Prohibited motifs and patterns, combined with plant motifs, such as machete patterns interspersed or boarded with plant motifs and / or animals. In Surakarta, batik with decorative ornaments is usually used as a background, then added bouquet, pufferfish, and other motifs on it. Composition can also be done by reducing certain motives and replacing them with other motives.

The colors that appear on Laweyan batik are dominated by intensities that are all dark (black, soja brown, wedelan blue) and display a lot of blank backgrounds. The coloring style of batik from Laweyan was initially influenced by the colors of Classical batik (Sulistiyati, 2016: 132). Batik that processes motifs, isen-isen, and the traditional colors of the interior, namely cream, brown soja, black, dark blue and there is the addition of light blue. Other figures that are often used as Sudagaran batik motifs are plants and birds in the style of free decorative composition. The background uses plain black or other colors, some of which place check markers as background fillers [13].

Sudagaran Batik can be identified from the pattern of giving full, neat, and tight isen-isen, even this issue also forms the main motives and supporting motifs. This is a marker of the characteristics of sudagaran batik not found in classical batik and traditional batik. Addressing

the status and social class who want to be different and be the center of attention [19]. Being a marker of economic security, and power as a determinant of the running of a batik company.



Batik which is inspired by klasik batik with lereng pattern (left) and batik which displays lereng pattern without background (right)  
Source: Museum Danar Hadi's collection



Semen latar galaran (left) and semen latar ukel (right)  
Source: Museum Danar Hadi's collection

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It appears that social stratification is influenced by the system of work status of the company, as well as its relationship with outside parties, especially the royal nobility. The family company is an employer-labor informal relationship arrangement, indirectly forming a system of social stratification in the Laweyan community. The characteristics of their cultural results which are displayed on Sudagaran batik visuals are inspired by the decorations that depart from the batik palace, then develop according to the influence of the environment formed from the reduction of internal factors and external factors. Sudagaran Batik displays detailed visuals and is different from the existence of Batik Keraton because it has the purpose of class markers and social status, as the center of attention when used. Sudagaran Batik is a marker of the ability of the economy, especially in the world of batik trade, demonstrating the ownership power of independent business management as contained in the viscosity of Sudagaran batik.

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