

The Identity of Socio-Cultural Dynamics in Sangiran Batik

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.802152>

Received: 08 January 2024; Revised: 13 February 2024; Accepted: 20 February 2024; Published: 21 March 2024

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine one type of batik that developed around the Sangiran Museum Building, Sragen Region, Central Java Province. The method used is a field study method by means of observation, interviews, and document analysis.

Sangiran has a museum that stores ancient objects from the past, including ancient human remains. Sangiran is often referred to as The Land of Java Man. This condition also affects the background of batik forms in Sangiran and its surroundings. The archaeological museum and ancient human remains have become a source of inspiration for the creation of batik. Batik in Sangiran is often referred to as Sukawati batik. Sukawati is the name of Sragen region before 18th century in the time of Pangeran Mangkubumi.

The influence of ancient human remains and ancient objects appears in batik motifs such as *batik motifs of human evolution*, batik motifs of carved ivory because there are elephant tusks from ancient times were found in Sangiran. There are also batik motifs derived from the myths of the local community, namely the motif of Dewi Sri or the Goddess of fertility. Batik has become the hallmark of the Sragen region and gave rise to the dynamics of batik life such as batik creation competitions, batik uniforms, and so on.

Keywords: Batik, Sangiran, batik motif.

INTRODUCTION

In essence, batik is a traditional cultural artwork that was admired by the nations of the world long before batik was appointed by UNESCO as a world cultural heritage. In its development, batik as a masterpiece of the Indonesian nation is inseparable from various influences, both from outside cultures and environmental influences. Changes in the times and environment are undeniable and inseparable from the process of batik development until whenever, so that these influences trigger the presence of batik that is in line with its development (Dullah, 2002: 7). The wide variety of forms and patterns of batik that are integrated with the techniques of making them as well as a reflection of the traditional background and the content of local cultural aspirations make batik have a cultural heritage identity. This is what makes batik not always beautiful, but melts with moral and customary rules.

A piece of batik cloth made through the process of research, dyeing and pelorodan makes it a traditional wastra. Batik technique is an original skill possessed by the ancestors of the Indonesian people since centuries ago. Batik activities, especially in Java, have grown and developed to produce diverse types and ornamental varieties that are rich in color. Although there are differences between Yogya and Solo batik and coastal batik, it shows that Indonesian batik is rich in various patterns. Likewise, batik that develops around Soloraya has its own characteristics, because it is motivated by its environment. One of them is the batik style that developed in the Sragen area, especially around the Sangiran site in the form of a museum.

Currently, the museum is understood as a place of storage, maintenance, security and evidence of human cultural artifacts, nature and the environment. This is intended as an effort to support the protection and preservation of the nation's cultural wealth. In the new paradigm, museums are also seen as a forum for debate and controversy about the material and content presented. With the existence of museums, it is very easy for someone to study and observe historical relics in the past. An archaeological museum such as the Sangiran Archaeological Museum in Sragen Regency can be an effective tool in helping the process of changing times.

As one of the museums listed in the UNESCO world heritage, Sangiran archaeological museum has the potential to be developed. Various efforts have been made by the local government and the surrounding community to introduce this potential through preservation and promotion. This is related to the image of Sragen City, which has the power to brand its identity. Sragen is one of the regency cities in Great Solo (Region of Surakarta, Sragen, Wonogiri, Klaten, dan Karanganyar) that launched its city branding tagline as The Land of Jawa Man, tying its leading tourism potential to the Sangiran museum. In the industrial sector, the Sragen regional government combines industrial zones in the form of batik small and medium business units.

Based on this fact, it has raised problems that need to be studied to reveal the potential of the region in the search for identity and image of Sragen Regency. Among these is the basis for choosing the potential of Sangiran batik craft as the identity of the city's image. The extent to which the Sragen local government in developing Sangiran batik craft and the efforts it has developed. Therefore, it is necessary to know about the public perception of the development of Sangiran batik as part of the search for Sragen's city image identity.

DISCUSSION

Batik and its Making

Batik is one of the cultural objects that has philosophical and symbolic values typical of the archipelago. In its development, batik has traveled from time to time in its processes, techniques and motifs in various regions. Therefore, batik develops with a basic artistic view based on the local cultural background according to the demands of the times. In the context of tradition, batik has a complete understanding that cannot be separated between the motif and the process related to fine work and beauty.

The batik process requires precision and patience in controlling oneself as well as concentration and a relatively long time depending on the desired style and color. Batik, besides being an aesthetically pleasing object of use, also has a spiritual dimension that shows a high level of culture. It has long been rooted in Indonesian culture, and can highlight the distinctive nature of Indonesia (Koentjaraningrat, 1985: 16).

Batik cloth whose motifs are made using canting tulis or cap tools and malam (wax) as a color barrier has manifested various types. Batik technique is an original skill owned by the Indonesian people since centuries ago. Batik activities, especially in Java, grew very fertile and produced two types of color varieties. The existence of different types of Solo and Yogya batik with the types of batik in the north coast of Java island shows that Indonesian batik has a variety of styles. Both types of batik are determined by their cultural background and environment, so they have their own characteristics. In its development, various types of batik were born based on the local environment.

Historically, batik is a method of decorating on the surface of cloth known as Surface design. The batik process begins with the drawing of motifs through the application of wax (malam) using canting tulis or cap. Then dyeing is done with natural dyes according to the desired color, ending with the pelorodan process. The end of this process is the removal of wax (malam) on the cloth, after which the motif and color appear.

In the past, stamped batik was not seen as batik in the true sense and was limited to written batik only. However, this has now changed, although stamped batik originally existed solely on the basis of commercial considerations, even recently a type of batik-patterned cloth called “batik printing” has been recognized by the printing process.

By the end of the 20th century, the use of traditional batik seemed to diminish. Batik is seen more as a color blocking technique that has visual advantages over the ikat dyeing technique. The actualization of modern batik is when we are able to study the historical background, philosophy, symbols, techniques, expressions and all aspects of its creation. Today we are faced with the phenomenon of written and printed batik being pushed out by other types of textiles, since 1970, batik has begun to shift its position as a fashion material, then developed into other functions such as interior or household furnishings and souvenirs. The standard wide variety has been modified with a variety of new motifs in freer colors. In batik there are various creative or innovative possibilities which include fabric raw materials, dyes, processes and techniques, refinement to the development of its functions. It is natural that batik has a commercial dimension and innovation, namely through side effects and diversification of batik products with various needs and interests. Its development towards contemporary use has entered the realm of collaboration with science and technology by producing new products. Various parties have tried to explore batik that can be applied and utilized to enrich the diversity of Indonesian batik. Its development will expand the scope of acceleration in the world of batik. With the expansion of the field of batik use, it has opened up new opportunities in the user community. One of them is batik as an expression in promoting the Sangiran museum site in Sragen, Surakarta.

Batik as a Medium of Expression and Creativity

As a material cultural product, batik is an inherent part of national culture and the identity of the Indonesian nation. Batik has grown and developed in various dimensions through the passage of time and space to meet the needs of society. Currently, batik is in the spirit of the times, when creativity becomes the dominant factor amidst various challenges and obstacles that hinder it. The relationship between creativity and the source of ideas that gave birth to the phenomenon of a creative expression, as a concept that stems from the utilization of environmental assets. In the current condition, it is not only a question of its existence but also of the order and repositioning of batik in its various dimensions. Batik is not just a cultural object but also a means to convey the message of a community's identity.

Historically, Solo and Yogya Palace batik, called Vorsenlanden batik, has shown this with strict rules in its use (Djoemana, 1990: 8). Along with the development and changes of the times, the influence of the environment has motivated the creativity in the creation of batik today. Then there are Batik Saudagaran (trader batik) and Batik Petani (farmer batik) styles that developed outside the palace, in the form of prohibition styles with a combination of business tastes and community aspirations. In its development, batik styles emerged that involved external influences such as Dutch, Chinese and Indian. Some batik works are known as the ‘three countries’ and with the discovery of canting tools and synthetic dyes around 1850, the development of coastal batik in the archipelago began. Batik is no longer just a “Javanese” product, but has become a cross-ethnic cultural instrument with the application of batik as formal clothing since 1970. since then it has actually become an industry and economic power. Thus batik has shown its strength in the aspects of creativity and economy as well as a medium of expression of local identity.

Local Identity of Batik Parang Sukawati

Sangiran is an archaeological site (ancient human site) of Central Java, located north of Solo City about 15 KM precisely in Krikilan Village, Kalijambe District, Sragen Regency. The gate of Sangiran site is located on the Solo-Purwodadi highway near the border between Gemolong and Kalioso district (Karanganyar Regency). The gate is a sign to the Sangiran Site in Krikilan Village, which is located in two districts and

four sub-districts. The site is located in Sragen Regency, which covers parts of Gemolong, Kalijambe, and Plupuh sub-districts, and Karanganyar Regency, which covers parts of Gondang Rejo sub-district. Sangiran is one of the most important ancient human sites in Indonesia and even the world's foremost because it is one of the few Hominid sites in the world. In 1996 the Sangiran Site was designated as World Heritage by UNESCO under the name Sangiran The Early Man Site. This designation was based on the recommendation of ICOMOS, which had reviewed and recognized the potential of Sangiran Site, which has values as a cultural heritage. Sangiran is one of the key sites for understanding human evolution through human and animal fossils. This site depicts the evolution of homo sapien from the Pleistocene to the present. After its designation as a world cultural heritage, the government has the consequence of conducting regular management. One of them is to maintain and develop the values that are universal and inherent in the Sangiran Site.

Generally, the community around the Sangiran Site is still characterized as a rural community with a simple life. They are very friendly, help each other and are still close to the tradition of gotong-royong (Local genius). Their houses have wooden or woven bamboo walls, pyramid-shaped roofs and zinc ridges, often decorated with puppet figures. In addition to their daily activities as farmers, some communities around the Sangiran Site also engage in craft activities. Among the various handicraft products are souvenirs made of stone that are unique to Sangiran. In addition, batik making and coconut shell handicrafts developed later. Batik is considered a handicraft that has high artistic value and beauty, and has been part of Indonesian culture, especially Java for a long time (Rizali, 2013: 7).

In its development, Sangiran-patterned batik is then used as a city imaging identity based on the main icon of Sragen Regency. The city has a potential tourism sector, namely the mainstay of the Sangiran Ancient Human Site, which holds an interesting mystery to be uncovered. In 2012 a Sragen Batik Design competition was held, this was a new breakthrough about Sangiran as its icon. In the competition, the motif depiction is dominated by the evolutionary pattern of ancient human development that illustrates the existence of Sangiran. Batik as a cultural heritage is one way to revive the nation's culture by giving birth to local identity and environmental potential that has the community around Sangiran. In this case, Batik Sangiran is a batik work with a distinctive motif identity of the Sragen region, which contributes to the treasures of Indonesian assets in the development of science. Local government support prior to 2016 for batik designs full of local symbols was implemented in elementary school, junior high school and senior high school clothing. In addition, it is also used as the identity of all ranks of civil servants in Sragen Regency, as an effort to explore and recognize the potential of Sragen city. This is not only special for the local area, but also a promotional introduction for the world, especially in the development of archaeology, geology, paleometropology and biology. This condition has been going on since the establishment of the Sangiran Site as a World Heritage area by UNESCO and has been highly considered in its development.

According to textile design theory, there are two important elements in its appearance, namely the motifs and colors that are characteristic as well as a symbol of its local identity. To know its existence, we can explain its motifs and colors that have philosophical and symbolic meanings as follows;

1) Batik Sangiran Motif

- a. Human Evolution Motif, depicts the shape of a human figure undergoing development or evolution (Charles-Darwin theory) which according to Islamic understanding has fallen. This motif is a sign that Sangiran batik symbolizes the place where traces of ancient humans were found. Therefore, since the beginning of 2017 it has not been used anymore.
- b. The Carved Ivory Motif, is one of the findings of stegodon or ancient elephant fossils that represent artifacts in Sangiran. Although the elephant is not depicted in full, the carved ivory is a symbol of Sangiran batik.
- c. Dewi Sri motif, the figure of Dewi Sri is believed to be the Goddess of Fertility according to Javanese

mythology. The shape is combined with yellowing rice plants and scattered grains of rice as happens during harvest.

2) Colors of Sangiran Batik

Various color compositions in Sangiran batik have philosophical and symbolic meanings with bright tones. Some of these colors include green which means fertility. In addition, there is brown as the color of the soil which means fertility, and red as a symbol of splendor. Sangiran batik-patterned cloth was then applied to the uniforms of school students at various levels and civil servants in Sragen Regency during the 2012-2016 regional government period. The uniform is worn on study days with different types of models and colors at each level, while for civil servants it is worn on certain days and at flag ceremonies, although not all fabrics are made through the batik process, but are also done with printing techniques. The local government's policy in developing the tourism potential and craft of Sangiran batik as the identity of Sragen city imaging. This is intended to foster a sense of pride and realize to the public that the concept of batik design that has a historical philosophy can become an icon of depicting identity. Thus, Sangiran batik has become a medium of communication and local identity of Sragen Regency.

Sangiran batik has become a phenomenon that develops according to the times, changing from time to time. There are efforts made by the local government of Sragen Regency to display its identity as an industrial and tourism city. Since 1996 when the Sangiran site was designated as a world heritage by UNESCO, it has been known throughout the world. In addition to the Sangiran site, Sragen city has long developed a furniture and batik industry, which later became a supplier of batik products in Solo. In their search for identity, batik entrepreneurs and craftsmen in Masaran and Plupuh sub-districts have always produced classic batik sourced from Surakarta Palace batik. The batik makers try to develop their creativity by creating innovative new ideas. With the aim of finding a local identity of sragen as an icon in Sukowati earth.

Since the beginning of 2017, after going through the exploration process, it has resulted in the incarnation of Sangiran batik into what is called "Parang Sukowati" batik. Philosophically, this batik design originates from the idea of combining the traditional motifs of the Surakarta Palace bati with decorative abstraction motifs. Characteristic of Sangiran site and Sragen icon. The combination results in the harmonization of a batik work that is easily recognized. Some of the icons found in 'Parang Sukowati' batik as a development or change of Sangiran batik include:

1. Liukan Parang Modern (development of parang motif in classical Surakarta Palace batik) depicts the dynamic life of the Sragen people.
2. The ivory gate of Ancient elephant is the the entrance gate of Sragen regency, which is a historical and ancient historical and archaeological tourism in the Sangiran area.
3. Pendopo (hall building) is the center of government of of Sragen Regency.
4. Plants depicting flora and nature as a typical icon of Sragen Regency with black colorBranjangan bird depicts one of the one of the fauna icons in Sragen area.
5. People making batik that depicts Sragen Regency which is one of the batik industries, especially in the Kliwonan subdistrict.
6. Fresh or brown color base depicts the fertile agricultural land of Sragen city (source; Sukowati Museum Catalog, Sragen Regency 2017)

Batik Parang Sukowati is the development of

Sragen's local identity in the form of a harmonious blend of traditional elements of the Surakarta culture of the Surakarta Palace and the potential of the Sragen region, while changing the comprehensive impression of Sangiran batik.of Sangiran batik. The development of a regional product related to its local identity is

inseparable from the policies of the governing regional head officials. The development of Parang Sukowati batik in Sragen Regency is an effort by the local government to find its local identity. Beginning with the existence of Sangiran batik, which only depicts elements of the Sangiran Museum site, which was then developed into Parang Sukowati batik, it is a model of batik development as a traditional culture of the Indonesian nation.

CLOSING

Since the 2012 batik competition, batik has been made with a creative approach, while responding to aspirations and changing times. Batik has also developed in the diversification of coloring and certain functions in modern society. As a material cultural object, batik is an inherent part of national culture and the identity of the Indonesian nation. Batik has grown and developed in various dimensions through the passage of time and space in people's lives, both in the field of functions and other socio-cultural needs. Since its establishment by UNESCO, batik has become a world heritage as a work of Local genius original to the archipelago. This condition has helped to revive batik in various regions, including in Sragen Regency in the Soloraya section of Central Java.

The creative process in imaging batik is not just decorating a piece of cloth, but also as a container of life values and beliefs. In its development until the cloth has been born a variety of styles, ranging from traditional motifs to the creation of modern batik (new creations). its presence is caused by various factors and needs. Consumers who continue to grow, as well as the development of communication technology as a more effective and efficient medium of expression, the concept of imaging the city of Sragen Regency with the slogan The Land of Java Man reminds one of the superior potential, namely the Sangiran Museum through the development of batik motifs. The Sangiran Ancient Human Site and then developed the Ancient Elephant Ivory which has become an icon in the field of tourism by processing the Sangiran batik motif now becomes Batik Parang Sukowati as an identity that is full of symbolism and meaning.

To spread the meaning of urban imaging for the people of Sragen Regency itself, socialization should be carried out, especially to its users. The perception of the community towards the influence of the tourism potential of Sangiran and its batik has not been fully realized. By packaging motifs taken from the Sangiran Site icon on an ongoing basis, it produces regional batik products that can become one of the local cultural images, as well as the identity of Sragen Regency. In terms related to the theory of Human Evolution by Charles Darwin, the Sragen Regional Government reviewed considering that the image built from the basic idea of the initial creation of humans was no longer relevant. Therefore, since the beginning of 2017 there has been a change in the identity of Sragen Regency by appointing Batik Parang Sukowati as its icon.

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