

Local Wisdom in Traditional Batik Design

Sarwono¹, and Desy Nurcahyanti^{2*}

^{1,2} Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract. Globalization and system changes bring wide implication, particularly toward the existence of tradition piece of work such as tradition batik industry. Globalization contributes to the infiltration of global culture into local society through various media. Thus, it pushes and affects the local culture. On the other side, it allows local and and global culture to have a mutual interaction. Loc . Results of this study directl cultural heritage, such as tradition batik in its varieties becomes society's treasure containing valuable knowledge and local wisdom. The research is trying to inventory the arts heritage of Javanese tradition batik which is still develop, so that it can be an intellectual property of the local. The focus of the research is the kind of motifs and local wisdom of tradition batik to mantain and develop the batik's design identity and to increase the economical value of the creative product in global era. The reserach is qualitative research in single study case with hermeneutic approach. The source of data is the work of tradition batik of Surakarta. The results of this study have an impact to maintain and preserve kind of tradition batik motifs and design of Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia, which can be used for developing basis for increase batik products quality, based on cultural tradition through the design approach.

Keywords: batik motif, design, local wisdom

1 Introduction

Javanese culture ---both its psyche and mindset--- cannot be separated from philosophical values. This cornerstone that in many discussions of Javanese psyche culture is called as "Kejawen" [1]. The elements of Javanese culture cover literature livelihood system, kinship system, pattern of living and its architecture, rituals, and arts. Kejawen stands againts the backdrop of what is called as "ngilmu" (knowledge), so that it si able to break from a narrow environment through common and universal characteristics [2]. Although its scope is narrow, its reach could be as far human's life and nature. The philoshopical Javanese culture has goal of truth and perfection lied on symbolical values which exists from human's connection with microcosms and macrocosms and from outer life with inner life.

It is seen the psyche of Javanese culture, that there is an effort to make human to be virtuous and pure in their soul and behaviour, which is closely related to outer and inner life. The values arises from the universal connection between human and *Sang Hyang Illahi* (God) [3]. Human's life cannot be separated from its nature, laws and God. Thus, principle that should always be considered are the nature of life and its nature, humanity, nationality, freedom, and

* Corresponding author: desynurcahyanti@gmail.com

culture. The nature means that human being should be able to meet all their material and spiritual needs. Mastering science is not the ultimate goal, but a medium to achieve life's perfection based on its nature.

Javanese culture shows a balance of conscience's interaction with nature and the God based on intellectual reasoning of "ngelmu". Conscience, human's spirituality, and the God is closely related seen from the works of arts, such as tradition batik which contains philosophical meaning in its symbols. Human's deeds seek the balance of human and nature and the perfection of life. According to Tjetjep Rohendi, tradition in a society could change; but valuable and symbolic cultural values are preserved in Surakarta's tradition batik [4].

2 Tradition in Batik Design

Work of tradition batik is a cultural creativity result, initiative, and sense of community Javanese process accordance with personality. Culture is actually derived from the Sanskrit word meaning *buddhayah*, favor or sense, so that culture can be interpreted to the reason of matters [5]. He further said that the notion of culture, especially tradition batik is result of the mind power in creativity form, initiative and sense. Bronislaw Molinowski have another opinion, that process of human culture formation confronted with issues for solution and breakdown, especially the human effort to sustainable life (survive) in cultural forms [6].

Van Peursen explained that culture as a process of a precipitate and human activities work, such as our way to die, ceremonies to welcome events, ways of agricultural process, hunting, tools making, clothes, how to decorate the residence, religion, science and art [7]. In short definition of culture as Koentjaraningrat said that a whole system of ideas, actions and results of human work in the frame of human life, through the learning process [8]. He further said that culture is divided in three states. First, a cultural form as a complex of ideas, values, norms and regulations. This form is abstract. The location are in the minds of the society concerned, that culture is alive. When societies express their ideas in writing, in other view location of the ideal form of culture are in essays, books of paintings, and community batik works. Secondly, as a complex pattern of activity and action of man in society. This form as a social system which involves the pattern of human action. A social system that consists of human activities that interact, relate and get along with one another. This system always according to certain patterns are based on custom, code of conduct. As the activities of human behavior in a society, the sisten is concrete and happening around us. The third form is a physical culture in the total results of activities, actions, and work of people in tradition batik society.

Tradition batik world for the Javanese is not a new thing as well as foreign in cultural life, because this type of art is now considered as a part of life, that can not be separated in everyday life. Tradition batik has been recognized as a cultural in complicated symbolic system that full of values. It is a discourse, about everything that indicate called artists, artworks and public art, so that art is a social product [9].

Batik works in the tradition of supporting community, a source of inspiration that never runs explored and developed its values. Getting into the works studied, the more amazing the contents in it. Amazed by the aesthetics and meaning sombolis implicit or explicit in the artwork. Culture form shaped batik artwork, not only in Java, but almost there in some other areas outside of Java, batik art has a long and hereditary. The people use batik art as a medium for a variety of interests, whether they are religious, educational, metaphysical, ethical-aesthetic, even as a medium of expression. Therefore, the art of batik also be regarded as cultural art that is intrinsically kosmopolis and universal, so the art of batik can appear anytime, anywhere as long as humans still exist.

Batik art tradition also included the teaching of ethics and beauty berbetuk visual appearance and the symbol of life that basically can lead humanity towards perfection and

true identity. This rule is possible, given that the art of batik is the embodiment of the soul in life that always embodies action and reaction as well as continuously to acquire problem solving wise and well fit the culture that has formed. Through this batik art, things will appear and laden with ethical, beauty is also its symbol.

Batik art is loaded with meaning symbols, including clothing in puppet plays an important role in showing the position and character of the figures that are put on. Also each of the clothing worn implies symbols contained therein. Such as clothing of a king, in addition to look more complete, meaningful symbols when compared with others. Clothing leaders could have various shapes and motif. This motif varies, of course, have a symbol meaning of each character wearing it. For example Parang Barong motif, the motif Parang Kusuma, Klithik Parang motif, the motif Kawung, Ceplok, Ganggong and others. Batik motifs are applied in a fashion Surakarta, is also a work that was wrought in context of Javanese culture and is one of the many fashion implies a relationship with life that had adopted in the Java community.

By Looking at the local wisdom as the form of culture, particularly tradition batik, it is expected to be reinforced continually to be better. Ali Moertopo added that humanization is an ideal process and goal [10]. Thus, local wisdom as culture manifestation arising along with the reinforcement is one of human humanization in shaping culture. In other words, the manifestation of human humanization and local wisdom is considered as good, so it reinforced repeatedly. However, whether it stays without change or not, culture clash will answer in the form of tradition batik design.

The dynamics of culture is a necessity since it cannot be separated from human activity with their mind roles. The dynamics or changes of culture may happen due to many reasons. The increasing population, migration, foreign migrants, influx of new equipments, easy access to a region can cause changes in tradition batik. Cultural changes are also influenced by relationship among human and relationship of individual and group.

Development and changes always happens. According anthropologists, there are three significant pattern in cultural changes; evolution, diffusion, and acculturation. The foundation of these entire three patterns is innovation [11]. The changes in *Nusantara* culture i sa broad perspective due to the broad understanding and realm of their own culture.

On its way, *Nusantara* culture of tradition batik, both in the area and outside of palace, is not static. It moves along the time. Dealing with culture, diffusion, assimilation, and acculturation, the cultural changes in society looks significant. One of studies on the changes in javanese society and the changes in their structure and aspects of the culture is written by Mulder (1985) entitled *Pribadi dan Masyarakat di Jawa*. Soerjanto added how cultural changes is as the effect of the cahanging cultural values orientation and policy actions yo deal [12].

3 Research Method

Based on the research problem on the background, motifs, symbolism of tradition batik which stem from local wisdom of javanese culture, the method of the research is hermeneutic approach on single study case.

In this research, hermeneutic approach refers to interpretation of expression and of interpretation done by individual or group of society in Surakarta towards their own situation to understand the symbolism of tradition batik. Expression meaning in a piece of work is bond to the context. Therefore, to understand the problem, the researcher should understand individual interpretation. In relation to qualitative research, the researcher can only presents an interpretation of subject interpretaion,; and the research based on value, interest and objective of the researcher [13].

Source of data the research is a work of art in the form of tradition in Surakarta, process archives, and document. The informants consist of puppet artists in Surakarta, masters of

classic batik in Surakarta.

Data collecting technique is conducted with open-ended and in-depth interview, purposive sampling with criteria based selection. Qualitative research uses data validity by data triangulation [14]. In analysis process, there are three main components to be conducted; data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification.

4 Discussion

Cross-culture and globalization toward tradition batik affects on value conflict and cultural relativity based on individual and group of people embracing owns value. When there is an encounter of one with another and they do not seem to match, one will feel right and blame another. As one is considered as wrong, it shows that cultural action is not subjective, but intersubjective. An individual does not act alone because action means is meant to be responded by other individuals based on cultural action assumptoins. Thus cultural valuation becomes relatives, even though in ethical context, there is a side taking position of ethical relativism and moral absolutism. Moreover, according to theological view in Sartini's *Menggali Kearifan Lokal*, above all relatives, God's truth is absolute. In certain culture, one ought to glorify himself in public to encourage people, but in other culture, it might be considered as arrogant or even prohibited [15]. From this explanation, it is understood that in diverse culture with their values, there is an understanding that is not always the same about the valuation of things.

What makes individual or group different and value things differently is the orientation. The different background and orientation of cultural value. Understanding different cultural value can be done in be done in various ways including dialogue. A complete orientation of cultural seen on quantum model of individual, social, and cosmos are used to understand the undrstanding and concentration of each individual and group on certain cultural orientation [15]. Thus, different orientation determines different valuation. In the scope of local wisdom, this description allows each local culture to be specified and discoursed.

Globalization is not only a condition, but also in action which covers life activity of both locl of a countray and worldwide. For example, there is a term of global economics for massive economics transactions performed across country. In the field of communication, global is the term used talking about the use of internet as the means of communication to access information from all over the world without a strict regulation.

Globalization is not a new symptom. Develop countries have already been familiar to the term of globalism. Nevertheless, for Indonesia and other Asian countries, it is a new experience. As a change symptom in society, globalization which occurs to most countries is considered as thread and challenge towards the integrity of a country. Thus, a country having a certain local cultural identity, in this case local wisdom in tradition batik, cannot be separated from the effect of globalization.

In a pessimistic sphere, globalization causes global phobia, a fear of the wave of globalization so the individual or the institution should be serously alert by taking actoins and certain policies. However, the emergence of globalization cannot be avoided. The important thing is how to respond and take advantage the effect based on life goals and expectations. In the scope of Nusantara local wisdom of tradition batik, it si how maintain and develop batik without being outdated. How the locdom goes along the global changes with maintaining local identity allows it to be alive and reinforced. Local wisdom in tradition batik should be able to collaborate with any cultural development without getting drawn and to maintain the identity.

Above description is expected to illustrate that there is a big possibility to dig cultural local wisdom in Surakarta particularly tradition batik. The wide range of the culture and the possibility of its development is a new challenge. Beside, the perspective of changes either

from the internal elements or external elements such as cross cultural and globalization is a chance to be traced. In ethical value perspective, what is considered as good in the past does not mean the same as today. For example, in responding how to dress, people nowadays consider revealing clothes as proper. In contrary, revealing clothes is considered as impolite by people in the past. Likewise, the definition of culture nowadays is different from the past. These examples show that local wisdom faces challenges from foreign culture. The chance to discover and analyze can be seen from the other values below.

Looking at the rapid cultural development factors, there are many opportunities to develop the discourse of Indonesian local wisdom, particularly in Surakarta, from the many forms and functions. Besides, local wisdom can be approached by values embraced, such as religious, ethical, aesthetical, intellectual, economical, technological, values, etc.

Local genius is also called as cultural identity which means the nation's cultural characteristics/ identity enabling the nations to absorb and cultivate foreign culture adjusted to own characters and capability. Local wisdom can be understood as local thoughts which are wise, valuable, embedded and followed by the society. Social system is one of cultural forms manifested in the system of human behavior occurring as a result of human's particular thought (cultural value system). Reinforcement is a strengthening or acceptance of cultural value repeatedly in society because it is considered as good or becoming better in order to preserving tradition batik.

The art of batik is created based on interpretation of the unity of quality, power and standard at the moments as the work of art to legitimate the position and the existence of kingdom as the ruler. For example, batik *Parang Barong* is worn as king's attire [16].

At the beginning, every batik motif was created with symbolism in Javanese philosophy. The aim in creating batik motif was to give prosperity and social status for the wearer. Hence, not everybody was allowed to wear any motif due to social status. There was a punishment for anyone who violated the prohibition. The motif is named as *Larangan* which means prohibition, yet it is now owned by society. Nevertheless, the usage procedure at the formal tradition ceremonies in the palace of Surakarta is still taken into account.

The motif of tradition batik which is related to social status of a person can be worn only for a certain people in Java due to the symbolism and philosophical meaning prevailing in the culture of Hindu-Buddha at the moment [17].

Tradition batik appears and moves because of the urges to preserve and develop local wisdom. Batik is often multi-dimension and interactive towards the shaping environment. The work of tradition batik with local wisdom can be used for more than one objective of cultural contents. It is important to make integrated solutions of tradition batik for the condition that should be preserved to be accepted in global market. Problem pattern consists of all interactions among conditions that limit actions to be taken to create tradition batik specifically and generally in Indonesia due to its diverse structure and the characteristics to act based on the influencing structure in society and not against the will.

Tradition batik in its presence should not be put in distance from the society because batik lives among certain values needed by the society. The aesthetical value of form and symbolic meaning of tradition batik are influenced by ethics, social, and moral which are discourse and considerations in creation in order of society and not to be collided with each other.

Social and cultural aspects affect the interpretation batik work of art in Surakarta because those aspects are dominant problems arising in everyday activity of the society. Therefore, it is expected to be able to solve the problems in tradition batik. The problems can be examined from various social status, hierarchy, and value system that comes along. The scope of the problem is in the form of social relationship, customs, behaviour, social hierarchy and life style that occurs in tradition batik in Surakarta. Cultural theme has problem that should be preserved and developed in all regions and along with other lives. For example, preservation concept, identity, cultural diplomacy, mentality culture, western culture

influences, cultural alienation, tradition batik protection, cultural industry, and cultural potentials are to interpret the form of local wisdom in tradition batik, particularly in Surakarta.

5 Conclusion

Tradition batik in Surakarta is apart of javanese cultures that cannot be separated from the wave of globalization and the changes of system which affects works' existence lied on local wisdom. Global influence in one side gives colors to local society trough various media, so it pushes and affects the elements of local culture to change or even to be taken over. On the other side, it allows for a dialogue between local and global cultures, so it is able to gain a mutual cultural dialogue. Local culture of tradition batik art in its various forms has unique symbols in Javanese culture in Surakarta, such as batik pattern of *Parang*, *Ceplok*, *Kawung*, *Sidomukti*, *Semen*, etc. Those patterns become social wealth that contains valuable knowledge and local wisdom. The result of the research is to inventory the art heritage of Javanese tradition batik to be local intellectual property that should be preserved and develop according to local wisdom. It is because the cultural heritage that develops until nowadays.

Tradition batik appears and moves because of the urges to preserve and develop local wisdom. Batik is often multi-dimension and interactive towards the shapping socio-cultural environment. The work of tradition batik with local wisdom can be used for more than one objective of cultural contents. Based on the interpretation in tradition batik, it is found that cultural symbols should be preserved to be accepted in global market. Problem pattern consists of all interactions among conditions that limit actions to be taken to create tradition batik spesifically and generally in Indonesia due to its diserve structure and the characteristics of local wisdom. A good tradition batik should depend on the ability of local characteristics to act based on the influencing structure in society.

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