

IDENTITY SHIFT ON TRADITIONAL CLOTHES FOR WOMEN IN TUBAN, EAST JAVA, INDONESIA

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Abstract Tuban, East Java, Indonesia has a long history. Since centuries ago, Tuban has playing a role as one of ancient trading ports between western and eastern world. It has been explained Sedyawati, et al (1992) that foreign people who came to Tuban were traders came from North India, South India, Sailan, Burma, Cambodia, and Campa. As an international port, Tuban has received many foreign cultures in addition to its local culture, such as culture that was brought by Tionghoa and Gujarat people. Therefore, Tuban's development that involves international relationship also impacted to the manifestation of tradition and culture that appears in Tuban until now. One of the effects is on traditional cloth products. As has been explained Achjadi, et al (2010) that the cloth's making and coloring processes performed by Tuban community has been running since a long time ago, around 1319 AD. In addition to be used as basic material for clothes, these cloths are also used to meet special needs such as: to show social status, group's identity, ritual, and is also a part of their life philosophy. But nowadays, visualization and the use of Tuban's cloth has shifted where it no longer follows traditional standard/rules, it instead is a free and dynamic creation upon economic motivation. This condition proves that possibilities of which tradition experiences transformation as the effect of cultural reception and assimilation towards foreign tradition/foreign culture emerge. Through qualitative methodology with cultural transformation and oral tradition approaches, this research focuses on the attempt on looking at the shifting process occurs to visual identity and comparison in terms of the use of cloth as traditional clothes of Tuban community back then and now.

Keywords Shift, Identity, Traditional Clothes, Tuban

1. Introduction

Tuban is located in the province of East Java, Java island of Indonesia and is a place with dry climate where most of the community's livelihood is planting beans, tubers, sugarcane, corn, rice and vegetables. In addition, most of the community is Moslem. However, they live side by side with those with different beliefs harmoniously. It is visible by the presence of a temple named Klenteng (temple) Kwan Sing Bio which is the biggest temple in East Java as the effect of Chinese culture entered through the north coastal of Java since the 10th century AD. One of typical characteristics that strongly attaches to Tuban is a tradition of making traditional cloth where the making process uses special technique of hand drawn batik and Gedog weaving.

Hand drawn batik is a technique of decorating fabric that came into Indonesia presumably through the Chinese traders, Gillow (1995), the finding of wax as a color material to create motif in China is the evidence. Another theory of batik in Indonesia was possibly taken from India which is famous for its traditional cloth since the 15th century. Explained by Elliot (2013), the word 'batik' has the closest definition the word "tik" which means point, dot or drop. In terms of language, such as Raffles, it rejects to translate the

word and merely put additional word to the word to be "tukang batik" (batik maker) which means one who makes the cloth. In line with Elliot, according to Samsi (2011) batik is derived from the word 'hamba-tik' which means making dots, and dots is the oldest motif that is ever found since it was highlighted as a piece of cloth made of cotton, silk, or organdy that has passed special process by applying wax on the plain cloth, as color resist, to make batik. And then it is dyed into color substance to give color on it. Tools that are used to draw are special canting (is a tool that functions to draw pictures on textile surface and made of cooper with wooden handle. In the middle of it to contain hot wax with small pipe with diameter starting from 0.1 millimeter to 0.5 centimeter for liquid wax to come out; and brush (to apply color uses colet technique—swipe the brush with coloring substance on desired drawing area to be colored).

Gedog weaving is a process of making cloth uses a simple weaving loom made of assembled wood to create braided cane work from two kinds of threads, vertical and horizontal threads, to create cloth. The name of gedog itself comes from the sound of "dhog" that appears during the process of weaving, as a consequence of woods beats on the weaving machine. In Tuban, this tradition of making tradi-

tional cloth passes to generations. This activity, Wardani, et al (2013) is a spare time activity performed by Kerek's women when they did not go planting. They used to work on the farm from morning to evening, therefore making batik and weaving gedog were performed at night or at the times when they did not have to go to farm such as when they wait for planting season or just finished harvesting. Cloths produced by the community has, visually, typical characteristic, i.e. "primitive cloth" alike. It has rough texture, uneven structure, dull color since it goes a natural coloring process, and untidy lines of cantingan on its motif. But that is what makes it unique and different from batik of other areas. And in daily use, there is a specific way to wear women clothes.

The use of Tuban traditional cloth as clothes and ritual instrument is visible when it is worn in a wedding occasion, as Heringa (2010) explains that in a wedding ceremony, when a women sits on pelaminan (stage alike; for the bride and the groom stand and sit), she shall wear laseman, a woven cloth uses gedog and batik technique with blossoms and flying birds motif (see Figure 1). This motif pictures a status of the bride whom has become a new member of the groom's family and will be moving to the groom's house.



Figure 1. Traditional Cloth Worn by Tuban Bride (Source: Heringa, 2010)

Meanwhile, groom wears a formal apparel (see Figure 2) with special motif that symbolize honor and greatness; a trouser named gringsing (in Javanese means "to against illness") is worn as lower clothes, of which for Tuban community it means a form of protection for the one who wears it. Entirely, these clothes as has been explained by Heringa (2010) symbolize loyalty as a partner in running life cycle.



Figure 2. Formal Apparel of Tuban Groom (Source: Heringa, 2010)

However, in this condition, where some of the com slowly composed new displays and use of the traditional cloth, it is deemed as creating something new and more popular. It comes along with motivation shift in the community where at first they make the cloth for spiritual and

philosophical purposes, now it shifts to economic purpose to fulfill economic needs.

Based on the above condition, Ciptandi (2016) explains it proves that there are possibilities where tradition has transformed. It occurs as the effect of cultural reception and assimilation of foreign culture / tradition; its surrounding environment has also changed; makes the tradition unstatic and remains moving to find new forms. Changes on tradition manifestation are also caused by the community itself, collectively nor individually. They start to make improvisation by making small composes on its traditional habits. The idea has just slightly come as the five senses responses towards the surrounding environment. Manipulation on environment or surrounding objects according to Norman (2004) performed by everyone, no one does not, includes designer. Subjectively, human give their personal touch to the environment and objects to be aware of themselves, happy and get comfortable feelings, or as a way of make a living.

2. Explanation

2.1. Methodology

This research is performed with qualitative methodology where it emphasizes the accuracy of five senses valuation on looking at culture that tends to be dynamic and changing with the time. In this approach, researcher becomes the center to collect data, follow cultural assumption, and follow data. In other words, qualitative cultural research is flexible, negotiable, reflective, and imaginative in nature. In addition, cultural transformation method according to Sachari (2002) explains that within design phenomenon, value shift is triggered by cultural openness. This cultural openness is begun with a simultaneous process of 'cultural dialog' until it reaches cultural synthesis that creates varies of 'mixed' culture. This process goes on a long period until it gets into final-established-culture.

Further, oral traditional approach method is comprehended as a verbal witness, conveyed verbally to generations. This verbal witness is performed through an in depth interview with a tradition figure or actor that has gone through a particular period. This method is performed to process data on tradition, of which its written source is difficult to find, but is visibly develops within the community.

Data is categorized in form of text, and visual material. Data in form of text comprises of personal record of researcher, literature such as books, scholar journal, flyers, poster, magazine, exhibition catalogue, Power Point file, email, and interview record. Visual material is studied through pictures, sketches and images of the product.

2.2. Literature Review

Literature review explains definitions of tradition and modernity which are parts of important elements to explain the shift context on tradition product. As refer to Nugraha (2012) that tradition has 2 main ideas. First, it refers to a

more stable definition, method, practice, belief, custom, habit, legend, or story conveyed and passed to generations, especially through oral or practiced communication. Quoted from Nugraha (2012) that tradition is a compilation of activities created in the past and is intentionally preserved by a group of people nowadays. Second, word of tradition is also used to express an old and expired condition. It is related with something in the past, pre-industrial, local wisdom, primitive, and vernacular; and it is in contrary with modernity. Thus, 'traditional object' shall be meant an object represents all old materials, old ornaments, ancient instruments and technique, old form and function, other specific place, time and cultural condition in the past usually have.

While modernity is something that has relationship with historical period from the middle century until now, it also means a modern state. Modern refers to present, contemporary or latest time, latest thing and is considered as an attempt to create something fresh and non-traditional.

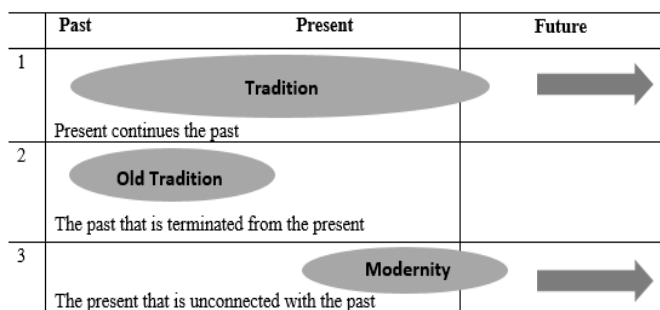


Figure 3. Modernity and Tradition Concept (Source: Nugraha, 2012)

Tradition and modernity do not work in contradiction. Each of it has its own characteristic which is flexible and related each other in nature. Modernity concept can be detached from influence of traditional element that changes along the time. Final form of the change thereafter named modernity. Modernity is oftenly related with the present time; therefore it is in contrary with the past. Precisely, working system of tradition is 'completing each other' towards development that keeps on refined from the old form. Within the development process, relevant element(s) of the tradition shall be maintained, while the element that is not, shall be replaced with new element(s). If this happens to tradition, tradition is considered as terminated from the present and also be named old tradition. Consideration whether a tradition element is still relevant or not is based on human's efforts in fulfilling basic needs and life motivation.

2.3. Traditional Cloth of Tuban and Its Transformation

Visual identity of the traditional batik and gedog woven cloths of Tuban has several important elements that make it different and has typical characteristics on its display compared to traditional cloths of other areas in Indonesia. Design on Tuban traditional cloth follows its function. It is found that main function of the cloth is as sayut and jarit (see Figure 4). The word jarit means a square shaped-cloth with 100 cm - 110 cm on its width and reaches 250 cm on its length.

Jarit is worn by women down to their ankle by round it over the body from left to right and usually some folds are added on its front. Sayut has about 60 cm on its width and reaches 300 cm on its length, worn by round it over shoulder then continue to round it over the waist. Function of this cloth is to help carry daily belongings.

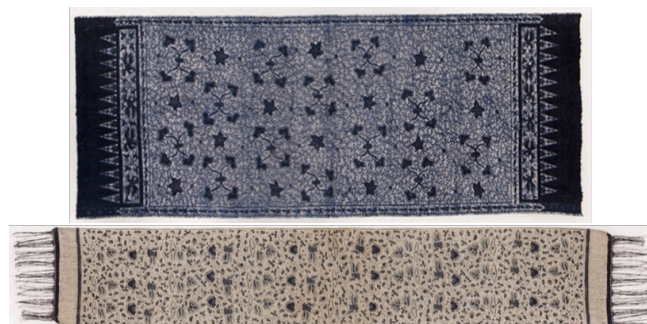


Figure 4. Jarit (above) and Sayut designs (below) of Tuban Community (Source: Heringa, 2010)

It has been explained by Achjadi, et al (2010) further and clearer that gedog woven cloth comprises of 3 standard sizes. First, sayut with fringes on both edges and used as gendongan or kemban. Normal size of this cloth is 300 cm x 60 cm. Second, jarit or usually mentioned as a rectangular fabric piece with the size of 90 cm on its width and 250 cm - 300 cm on its length. Third, is a sarong in 200 cm x 90 cm size.

In terms of form and size, sayut and jarit designs have not changed. It is just started to shift, where it is no longer common within Tuban community to wear sayut and jarit which is made of woven gedog and batik applied cloths, instead, many have replaced it to printing cloth made of printing machine for cloth. Since the community hardly can afford the price of sayut and jarit compare to printing cloth. If previously they can make sayut and jarit themselves or exchange other needed goods with the cloths, it is no longer happen now.

In other words, this shift, especially sayut and jarit, compare to other cloth, it does not have any sacred philosophy from the very beginning. Although this cloth has particular functions such as to avoid disturbance or as part of custom needs (such as maternity, death or wedding ceremony), but as clothes, this cloth does not have binding rule in terms of how to wear the cloth. There is no regulation on how to wear it correctly and there is no certain sentence if one does not wear it accordingly. For some people in the community, wearing clothes is just something that has been taught to generations. With that nature, the use of cloth for women in Kerek possibly happens to shift. It is proven nowadays where women of Kerek are freely choose their clothes and start to slowly leave sayut and jarit.

By observing the habit of women of Tuban in wearing sayut and jarit, it is found that some women in small number are still wearing it. Most of them are elderly, where they have been wearing it since they were still young. Most of the middle aged-women in Tuban are still wearing sayut when

they are going to the field (see Figure 6) or to the market, while at the other side, jarit is rarely been worn nowadays. Meanwhile, most of the young women have no longer worn it. They consciously say that they prefer casual clothes because it is more practical and stylish.



Figure 5. Appearance of women in Tuban (Source: Ciptandi, Kerek Subdistrict Tuban District East Java, 2016)

Figure legend:

- A: Camisole / bra or women top undergarment
- B: Clurit or a type of sharp tool to cut grass, inserted on the side of waist, shows her is a farmer
- C: Printing (printed/stamped) cloth, with batik motif on it, is worn the way jarit is worn
- D: Sayut of gedog woven made of batik
- E: Bakul (basket) to carry selling or purchased goods and also contains lunch box and farming tool.
- F: Kebaya or typical Javanese women wear in general.

The use of cloth for Tuban community has a function of showing social status, as Achjadi, et al (2010) explains, that traditional cloth of Tuban until mid of 1980 by traditional community is considered to be an identity and is worn to show social status of particular community. A long sleeve or frequently named sayut is worn by Tuban women in order to group them based on marital status to elderly women. Meanwhile, jarit is worn by Tuban women to show place of their origin (of which village).

Women who wear sayut and jarit, in accordance with the rules, are difficult to find nowadays. Once a woman wears it, she is no longer bound with social function of the cloth. Most women in Tuban who are still wearing sayut are farmers, they go farming while at the same time carrying seuneuk or basket contains of foods and farming tools. Some women who still wear it, also use the basket to carry their selling or purchased goods when they go to the market. Sayut they wear, is not always made of batik and gedog woven cloths, some have been turning to wear batik printing-sayut.



Figure 6. Appearance of women in Tuban as a Farmer (Source: Ciptandi, Kerek Subdistrict Tuban District East Java, 2016)

Meanwhile, there less women wear jarit. Most of them choose to appear without jarit for practical reason. Especially young women in Tuban admit that they do not like to wear sayut and jarit for it makes them look out of date. This condition shows that in terms of value, batik and gedog woven cloth have shifted, where wearing sayut and jarit at first was to represent Tuban, now it is been left by its community, not merely for practical reason, but it is also considered as out of date by its own community.

4. Conclusion

Through the study of traditional cloth of Tuban in philosophical order, it is found that traditional cloth for the community has function, meaning, and value attach in daily life as an established tradition. Cloths made by Tuban community have its own characteristic. Not merely in philosophical things, but also on its visualization and uses, it has a lot of uniqueness compares to batik and woven cloths from other parts of Indonesia. Tuban cloth tends to have an impression of “primitive cloth”. It has rough texture, uneven structure, dull color since it goes a natural coloring process, and untidy lines of cantingan on its motif. But that is what makes it unique. In terms of usage, in addition to become a social identity representation, these traditional cloths are also worn as clothes from a piece of cloth without specific pattern and tailoring.

Discussing tradition context, tradition in Tuban nowadays is transforming into modernity trend. There is nothing wrong with transformation. However, changes occur within Tuban tradition is potentially weaken its building values. Development on Tuban traditional cloth is getting more popular, but loses its values on fundamental ground of the tradition itself. The said values are important to keep recognizing its identity within. As the time passes, visual identity and way of wearing the cloth as clothes for Tuban community, by environment and other external factors intervention have allowed assimilation and causes transformation. It is found that the way of wearing traditional cloth such as sayut and jarit, that weakening each day-since there are less women wear it upon unpractical and unstylish reasons, shows that clothing tradition of wearing sayut and jarit is considered irrelevant to the modern context.

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