

The Existence of Surakarta (Vorstenlanden) Esuksore Style Batik

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Abstract

The existence of *esuksore* style batik is a long record of a dynamic or various changes that occur in a certain period of time. *Esuksore*-style batik, as a noble cultural artifact, its existence is related to the various events behind the emergence and recognition of batik. This study aims to identify and describe the existence of inland *esuksore* style batik (*vorstenlanden*), especially Surakarta for three time periods. The findings of this study are used to reconstruct the form of *esuksore*-style batik as a development concept in the present. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method by collecting various artifacts of long cloth batik *esuksore* style from the pre-independence period, the Japanese occupation to the post-independence period. The findings show that the existence of *esuksore*-style batik did not only arise because of very limited socioeconomic factors, but also emerged as a trend or style that was in demand by the market at that time. This research contributes to a dissertation research on the existence of *esuksore*-style batik in Indonesia.

Keywords: esuksore style batik, existence, inland.

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1. Introduction

As a nation that has hundreds of ethnic groups spread from the tip of the island of Sumatra to Papua, Indonesia has cultural diversity that other nations do not have. One of them is batik which has been recognized by the world community through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on October 2, 2009 as a noble work full of local wisdom values (Supriono, 2016: 4). As a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity, batik is able to cross boundaries through space and time accompanying a number of historical events that are full of dynamics and noble values of national culture.

Indonesian Batik grows and develops along with the dynamics of the life of the supporting community. Since the pre-modern era, the colonial era, the era of independence to the millennial era, batik has always had a dialectic with the development of community culture. During that period, batik was always present, faithfully accompanying people's lives, along and in line with the pulse of people's lives from the start of their supporters. Batik is always present from before birth (prenatal) until the last breath as a cloth covering the corpse before being shrouded.

Existence or existence comes from the Latin word *existere* which means to appear, exist, arise, have an actual existence (Ministry of National Education, 2005: 253). *Existere* is composed of *ex* which means to come out and *sistere* which means to appear or appear. There are several meanings of existence which are explained into 4 meanings. First, existence is what is. Second, existence is what has actuality. Third, existence is everything that is experienced and emphasizes that something exists. Fourth, existence is perfection (Lorens, 1996: 182–183). From some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that what is meant by the existence or existence of *esuksore*-style batik is the presence of the *esuksore*-style batik in the midst of society related to its functions and uses. The discussion about the existence of *esuksore* style batik focuses more on things that are

visual or visible, while the essence is more on things that are not visible, or invisible such as philosophical meanings, symbols and so on.

1. 1. Inland *Esuksore* Style Batik

The development of batik techniques in Java has developed very rapidly, in fact almost all regions in Java are familiar with batik techniques, both inland and coastal areas. Batik has a variety of history based on its function and existence. Various styles, decorations, motifs and colors of batik vary greatly. This is due to differences in background and several factors that underlie the process of creating batik, such as geographical conditions, lifestyle and the beliefs of the people who support it.

Inland Batik is batik that developed in the palace or royal environment which is closely related to the philosophy of Javanese culture. The history of the development of inland batik cannot be separated from a very important event called the Palihan Nagari or the Giyanti Agreement on February 13, 1755 AD which divided the territory of the Mataram kingdom into two (Supriono, 2016: 59). The western part was reserved for Prince Mangkubumi who later founded the Ngayogyakarta Adiningrat Sultanate, with the title Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwana I. While the eastern part was for Paku Buwana III to establish the Surakarta Hadiningrat Sunanate with its king Sri Susuhunan Paku Buwono III.

The impact of the separation of the Mataram kingdom into the Surakarta Hadiningrat Sunanate with the Ngayogyakarta Adiningrat Sultanate was very influential on cultural products such as batik, wayang, dance, and other arts. This is because all the cultural products of the Mataram kingdom were brought entirely to Yogyakarta as the successor of the Mataram dynasty to be preserved and developed. As for the Surakarta Sunanate, Paku Buwono III made a new one, which was different from Yogyakarta, including the batik motif, which later became known as the Surakarta Hadiningrat gagrak motif.

1.1.2. Surakarta

Surakarta is the official name of the new royal area which was originally located in an area called "Kartasura" (approximately 20 km to the southeast of Kartasura). The history of the Surakarta palace begins with the gray incident in Batavia "the Chinatown commotion", namely the massacre of ethnic Chinese in Batavia on October 9, 1740 by the Kongsu Dagang or the Dutch East India Company or commonly known as the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) (Ricklefs, 2005: 139). It is estimated that about 10,000 Chinese people died in the riots. From this incident, the survivors fled eastward along the coast. They armed themselves to fight the VOC from Batavia to Mataram. The resistance movement received sympathy from the indigenous (Javanese) ethnicity who also disliked the VOC's arrogance and arbitrariness. Because the legitimacy of the Mataram kingdom based in Kartasura also felt threatened, Paku Buwono II as king of Mataram in August 1741 declared a coalition with the Chinese rebels in Semarang, to fight the VOC by sending troops and artillery to Semarang. In November 1741 the VOC post in Semarang was besieged by 20,000 Javanese and 3,500 Chinese. This universal war, which was intensified by the Mataram-Chinese coalition forces, even comered the VOC to their defense in Semarang (Ricklefs, 2005: 140–141). However, the incident did not last long, because the VOC received assistance from Madura led by Cakraningrat IV. They succeeded in repelling the attackers from Semarang and killing all the Chinese in the area. Seeing such conditions, Paku Buwono II turned around to ask for forgiveness and formed a coalition with the VOC.



Figure 1. Witness of the history of the "*geger pecinan*" which is located in the south of Fort Sri Menganti by the community dubbed the "*jebol Pacinan*" wall where there was a coalition rebellion between the Chinese and the anti-VOC indigenous people to occupy the Kartasura palace which was considered pro VOC in 1742 (Photo : Kuku Himawan, 2019)

Paku Buwono II's policy to change his attitude by forming a coalition with the VOC caused anger from the people who no longer believed in their king. In early 1742 the rebels appointed a new Susuhunan named Raden

Mas Garendi (grandson of Amangkurat III) who was later given the title "Sunan Kuning" for leading the yellow-skinned Chinese against Paku Buwono II to seize the power of the Kartasura Palace.



Figure 2. One of the artifacts from the past is the Kartasura Palace Fort which is a cultural heritage building protected by the State (Photo: Kukuh Himawan, 2019)

At the end of June 1742 the Kartasura palace was successfully captured and occupied by K.M. Garendi. Paku Buwono II and Captain Johan Andries Baron von Hohendorff fled to the east asking for Cakraningrat IV's protection from the Madurese kingdom. However, in December 1742, Cakraningrat IV's troops were able to retake Kartasura and repulse the rebels, and returned the reins of power to Paku Buwono II (Ricklefs, 2005: 142).

After successfully regaining control of the Kartasura Palace. Sunan Paku Buwono II decided not to repair the destroyed Keraton. According to Javanese belief, the palace that had fallen into the hands of the enemy made it lose its 'revelation' or sacredness so that the palace had to be moved to a new place. For this purpose, Tumenggung Hangawangsa, Tumenggung Mangkuyudha, and Van Hohendorff were ordered to find a new palace construction site.

Finally, a location was chosen which was about 20 km to the southeast of Kartasura, namely in the village of Sala. The location is not far from the Bengawan Solo River so it is very strategic for the flow of trade flows¹. Before the palace was built, the area belonged to a lurah named Ki Gede Sala. After the construction was completed, Sunan Pakubuwono II began to occupy his new palace on February 17, 1745 (Winarti, 2004: 17). The Boyong Kedaton event or the move from the old capital from Kartasura to the Surakarta Palace was held grandly accompanied by various convoys. The new palace was named Surakarta Hadiningrat². In Javanese the word "sura" means courage and "karta" means prosperity.

Historically, the existence of the Surakarta inland *esuksore*-style batik can be classified into three periods, including:

1.1.2.1. Pre-Independence *Esuksore*-Style Batik

The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) proclaimed its independence on August 17, 1945. The Pre-Independence period in this discussion is the period before the formation of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, formerly known as Nusantara (Kusrianto, 2013: xxi). Long before Indonesia's independence, there were several large kingdoms on the island of Java which had jurisdictions outside the island and even to the Malacca peninsula. Several major kingdoms such as Tarumanegara, Ancient Mataram, Kadiri (Panjalu), Singhasari, Majapahit, Pajang to Islamic Mataram have their own records about the history of batik development, especially on the island of Java.

History records that the use of resist materials that use beeswax has been known since the 10th century to replace pasta from sticky rice porridge and more water-resistant gum. Along with that, the development of tools for incising beeswax also experienced development, which initially only used a brush made of bamboo, replaced by the discovery of a tool made of metal with a hollow tip called canting, as stated by Dutch archaeologist G.P. Rouffaer in the 12th century in the Kediri area, related to the existence of the Gringsing pattern (Kusrianto, 2013: xvii).

The tradition of batik in Solo or Surakarta began to grow and develop during the Pajang Kingdom³ around

¹ At that time, the river was still one of the main means of water transportation, even to East Java (it empties into the Java Sea near Gresik). The existence of the Bengawan Solo River has long been used as a means of transportation and commerce since the Majapahit era until the Mataram kingdom, during the Paku Buwono IV and V era, even as a means for state visits to other kingdoms such as to Sampang and Bangkalan in Madura. (Interview with KPA Winamo Kusumo, Deputy Pengangeng of Sasana Wilopo Kraton Kasunanan; Surakarta, 21 January 2018)

² The incident of "*Boyong Kedhaton*" on February 17, 1745 was made a decision by the Surakarta local government as the anniversary of the city of Surakarta or Solo.

³ The Pajang kingdom was the forerunner of the Islamic Mataram kingdom, which was originally the center of government in Demak Bintoro, then moved to Pajang. Since being led by Danang Sutowijoyo, the command center was then transferred to Mataram in 1586 AD

1568 AD (Supriono, 2016: 74). Then when the Pajang kingdom began to recede and collapse during the reign of Prince Benowo (1586 – 1587), Panembahan Senopati declared the Sultanate of Islamic Mataram with its administrative center in the Kotagede area of Yogyakarta (formerly the Mentaok forest) which is a very fertile agricultural area (Ricklefs, 2005: 60–63). Along with this, the tradition of batik in the royal or palace circles still exists, considering that the resulting product in the form of long cloth has a sacred value related to ritual ceremonies that are often carried out by the community at that time.

Most of the Kraton batik patterns reflect the Hindu-Javanese influence (the period of the Pajajaran and Majapahit kingdoms) which is still alive and well believed among the Javanese people. In its development, when the teachings of Islam began to enter, slowly many changes occurred in the depiction of animate creatures with styling or stylization techniques. However, the dominance of Islamic teachings does not necessarily change the cultural behavior of the people, but what appears is a mixture of syncretistic beliefs (Hinduism, Java and Islam) that gives rise to cultural products, including batik.

When the Mataram Kingdom was divided into two as written in the political events of the Giyanti Agreement on February 13, 1755, Sri Susuhunan Paku Buwono III designed new clothes and traditional clothes for the Surakarta Palace which were different from Yogyakarta (Supriono, 2016: 75) which gave birth to the term Gagrak Surakarta Hadiningrat batik. and Gagrak Ngayogyakarta Adiningrat⁴. This was done considering that prior to the division of the territory and at that time Paku Buwono III had not yet become king, his father Paku Buwono II had a will to "*mbesuk menawa pamanmu Mangkubumi hangersakake ageman, paringna*" ("in the future if your uncle Mangkubumi wants clothes, just give it")(Kusrianto, 2013: 38).

Starting from this incident, the tradition of batik in the palace became more and more developed until it reached the classical level. Batik as a long cloth is not only a complementary ageman for the bottom of the clothing or has practical functions, but also has a ritual function and a social function as a marker of social strata or the position of the wearer in the palace environment. This is reinforced by the release of the "Maklumat Solo" issued by Sri Susuhunan Paku Buwono III which contains rules or regulations for the use of motifs among palace officials to courtiers. From here, the term "*batik larangan*" emerged, meaning batik cloth with certain motifs (sawat motifs, parang, cemukiran, modang, Bangun tulak) which should not be worn by other than the royal family and royal officials. (Kusrianto, 2013: 39).

Along with the changing times, batik which was originally only done by courtiers in the palace as a fulfillment of the needs of the royal family, from making motifs to final dyeing has expanded to the outside of the palace walls. This has an impact on the interest of ordinary people outside the palace walls to make batik imitate certain patterns other than the forbidden pattern to be developed.

Naturally, in accordance with market demands, several areas outside the palace walls appeared batik centers such as in the Kratonan, Kusumodiningratan, Kauman, Pasar Kliwon and Laweyan areas. In subsequent developments, batik activities became a home industry managed by merchants outside the palace as well as independent activities carried out by people in rural areas.

There are not many *esuksore*-style batiks in the inland of Surakarta before Indonesia's independence or the pre-independence period, this is because in the pre-independence period the batik makers in Surakarta or Solo mostly made batik with classical motifs such as machetes, ceplok, and cement (Kusrianto, n.d.).

From the results of the search, it was found that one long cloth of three countries *esuksore* was made in 1930 with fine primissima cotton material or cap cent and made with synthetic dyes.

Around 1940, people of Chinese descent in Surakarta often used a long, *esuksore*-style cloth to be used as a tool to "*menggendong*"⁵ their children who were still toddlers. Because batik cloth with certain motifs and colors is often used to carry toddlers, then by convention the batik cloth with *esuksore*-style is called "adik bayi" batik, which means cloth to hold "baby sister" or child. children who are still under five years old (toddlers).

(Supriono, 2016).

⁴ The term "gagrak" in Javanese is a term that is difficult to find its equivalent in Indonesian which has meanings such as version, or model or style.

⁵ *Menggendong* is a habit among Javanese people to carry children who are still toddlers (under five years) when the child being carried is about to be fed, or at bedtime, or invited by their parents or assistants to do other activities such as sweeping the yard, shopping for kitchen needs. etc. The tool is used for carrying it is usually a long cloth, *jarit* or scarf.



Figure 3. *Tiga Negeri esuksore* style batik measuring 252 x 107 cm with *tabur bunga* and fish motifs for the right body, and *kawung kamboja nitik* background for the left body. Flower twig border motif and *sushomoyo*, made in 1930 (Photo: Tumbu Ramelan Collection, 2010)



Figure 4. Long cloth of Surakarta inland *esuksore* style size 237 x 104 cm, Motif: *Buketan Puspo warno* with *lereng baris* background and *Buketan Puspo warno* with *tralis* background, made in the 40s, commonly called "*Adik Bayi*" cloth because it is usually used to carry babies (children small) (Photo: Hartono Sumarsono Collection, 2021)

1.1.2.2. *Esuksore*-Style Batik during the Japanese Occupation

According to historical records, the Japanese occupation of Indonesia occurred from 1942 to 1945, a relatively short period of history. Starting from the Kalijati agreement on March 9, 1942 which contained provisions for the transfer of power from the Dutch royal government to the Japanese Empire over Indonesia, it resulted in various revolutionary changes in government policies at that time (Jati Purnomo, 2012: 1). One of the changes was the replacement of terms or names that smelled Dutch-Dutch replaced with terms that were more familiar to the people of Indonesia (Lombard, 2005: 86).

In the field of batik, the Japanese occupation in Indonesia has a phenomenal record with the emergence of the term "*Djawa Hokokai*" batik in the batik area on the north coast of Java, precisely in Pekalongan. The emergence of "*Djawa Hokokai*" batik was in line with the formation of a Japanese government propaganda organization replacing POETERA (Poesat Tenaga Rakyat) in 1944 which was named "*Djawa Hokokai*" which means the Javanese People's Service Association (Jati Purnomo, 2012: 4).

The visual characteristics of the *Djawa Hokokai* batik are that it has a head, body, border motif, and *sered* on the very edge of the head. In addition, the shape is always in the form of a long cloth with two different sides or what is commonly called the *esuksore* or *pagisore* style (Iswara, 2011: 94–95). The main motif of this batik is in the form of various large flowers such as peonies, chrysanthemums, cherry blossoms and flowers that existed before the Japanese era. Ornaments are naturalist, such as butterfly motifs with colorful wings, peacocks and fans. Another main characteristic of the *Djawa Hokokai* batik is the presence of a border motif that is similar to the traditional Japanese "Kimono" clothing called *sushomoyo*.

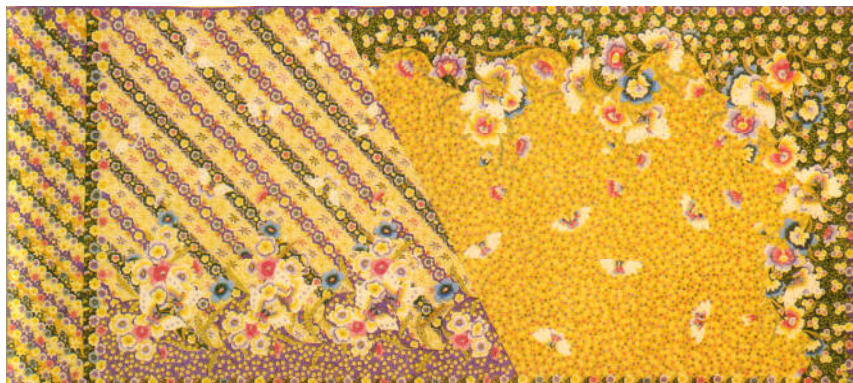


Figure 5. The long cloth of *Djawa Hokokai* batik which is an *esuksore* style batik that was booming during the Japanese occupation of Surakarta, size 250 x 107 cm, with slope and bouquet motifs. Made in the span of 1943's. (photo: Repro Collection of H Santosa Doellah, 2003)

In the Surakarta area, during the Japanese occupation, it was almost impossible to find long cloth batik in the style of *esuksore*, given the very limited situation and conditions, both in terms of the availability of materials or fabric materials and dyes which had to be imported from Europe. In addition, the people's economic system is in a very bad state, where it is very difficult to buy the main basic needs in the form of food, especially to buy cloth.

A long cloth with a size of 248 x 104 cm in the style of *esuksore* was found appearing in Surakarta during the Japanese occupation with a pattern similar to the "baby sister" batik which had appeared before the Japanese occupied Indonesia. It is alleged that this long cloth is actually a long cloth ordered by Peranakans or Chinese descendants who just finished when Japan occupied Indonesia. This *esuksore*-style long cloth has one characteristic that is usually owned by *Djawa Hokokai* batik, namely the *sushomoyo* fringe motif which resembles the border motif on a typical Japanese kimono. Visually, although the existence of this long cloth appears in the Surakarta area, the influence of the coast with its *buketan* motif still seems to dominate.



Figure 6. Batik cloth similar to baby sister's batik with a size of 248 x 104 cm. *Buketan* motif with the background of the *lereng gambang* and *Buketan* of the *banji* background made in 1943 (Photo : Hartono Sumarsono Collection, 2021)

1.1.2.3. Post-Independence *Esuksore*-style batik

What is meant by post-independence at this time is the period or period after Indonesia's independence, precisely in the range of 1945 to now. After Indonesia's independence, the condition of the country at that time was in a very bad position, especially in terms of the economy after previously being exploited by Japan. This situation was exacerbated by the unstable political situation, until various rebellions emerged in various regions to shake the legitimate government. Such situations and conditions certainly do not support the development of batik as a commodity or a promising business.

In Surakarta at this time, several *esuksore*-style batiks appeared with visual appearances that showed their distinctiveness as inland batik, such as the dominance of sogan colors and the motifs were still thick with nuances of traditional inland motifs. The Surakarta *esuksore*-style batik in this discussion is not only made in Surakarta or its existence appears in Surakarta, but also includes buffer areas in the former Surakarta Residency

such as Sukoharjo (Bekonang) and Wonogiri, as well as several other areas such as Sragen, Klaten and Boyolali. In the map of the development of batik, the existence of a buffer area is very important considering that this buffer area is the support for the economic cycle in terms of batik in the city center. The existence of various batik centers in the buffer area of the Surakarta region for each region has a different character between one buffer area and another, such as the level of subtlety in batik, as well as the character of the quality of the night. However, even so, the general character of Surakarta inland batik still seems to dominate visually, such as the use of Surakarta's typical *sogan* colors. Some of the long *esuksore*-style batik cloths are as listed below.

As is the character of a region or buffer zone, not all buffer areas around Surakarta or Solo as cultural centers are able to produce quality colors and fine batik techniques. This relates to the geographical location of each buffer zone, in this case the distance between the area or batik center from Surakarta. It has become an unwritten rule or record that areas far from the center of culture, the rules related to skills and culture will be dwindling and diminishing. Likewise with the buffer area in Surakarta. There are some areas that do have the character of a level of refinement in batik making, such as Sukoharjo (Bekonang) and Klaten (Bayat). Some of the long *esuksore*-style batik cloths are as listed below.



Figure 7. Long batik *esuksore* style Surakarta (Bekonang Sukoharjo) with a size of 248 x 106 cm, *peksi kembang jeruk* motif on nitik background made in the 1950s, collection of Mr. Owen Joe (Photo: Muh Arif, 2019)

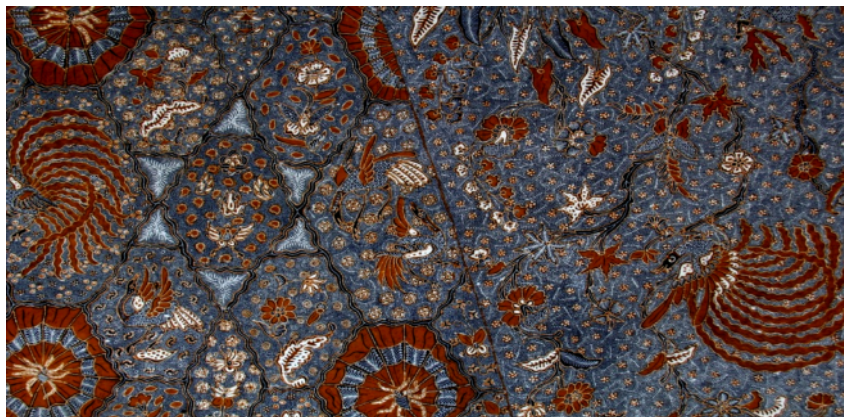


Figure 8. Long cloth batik *esuksore* style Surakarta (Bekonang Sukoharjo) size 256 x 107 cm, *peksi ron tales* motif on the background of *nitik gringsing*, made around the 1950s, collection of Mr. Owen Joe (Photo: Muh Arif, 2019)

4. Conclusion

The existence of interior *esuksore*-style batik, in this case Surakarta, appeared in the inland of Surakarta in line with the situation of the times which were heavily influenced by various cultural, political and geographical backgrounds. The condition of Surakarta which is far from the coast, especially the northern coast of Java, which is believed to be the center of the development of *esuksore*-style batik, is able to display a slightly different character from the *esuksore* style that appears in coastal areas. The existence of Surakarta *esuksore* style batik is not necessarily related to the limitations of the main material or materials for batik makers that have been

believed, but emerged because of the growing trend at that time which was triggered by Chinese peranakan women who used to use the long cloth as cloth to carry small children or baby.

In terms of form, the esuksore style batik that developed in the inland, especially Surakarta is not much different from the esuksore batik that exists in the coastal areas. The difference is in the color scheme that appears typical inland colors such as *soga* and *wedel* (indigo) colors that are very strong in dominating colors. For typical inland motifs such as *machetes* and *fried rice*, they appear as a background or background combined with a typical coastal bouquet.

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