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Production of Everyday Environment As Tourist Territory: Performing A Narration of Domesticity in Laweyan Batik Merchant's House

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Manusia berwisata dan menjadi wisatawan untuk melepaskan diri dari rutinitas kehidupannya sehari-hari. Dengan menjadi wisatawan, mereka mencoba mengalami dan melihat berbagai tempat, yang tentunya berbeda dari tempat lingkungan hidupnya sehari-hari. Kebutuhan untuk menyediakan pengalaman wisata yang unik mengakibatkan menjamurnya aneka bentuk objek daya tarik wisata. Teritori hunian merupakan salah satu objek daya tarik wisata yang saat ini cukup unik dalam menarik wisatawan. Dengan mengunjungi teritori hunian dari suatu kelompok masyarakat, wisatawan dapat merasakan pengalaman budaya yang sesungguhnya (otentik), dengan manusia yang benar-benar tampil apa adanya sebagai perwujudan aktor dalam atraksi wisata. Dengan kata lain, teritori hunian telah dikonstruksi atau dikomodifikasi menjadi destinasi wisata. Ruang wisata yang dikomodifikasi menjadi destinasi wisata tersebut, merepresentasikan identitas budaya masyarakatnya. Kampung batik Laweyan di Surakarta pada kurun waktu 10 tahun terakhir telah menjadi salah satu komoditas wisata budaya di Jawa Tengah. Beberapa bagian dari rumah direkonstruksi menjadi tempat yang menarik untuk atraksi wisata. Artikel ini akan menunjukkan bagaimana budaya Jawa setempat direpresentasikan ke dalam setting teritori rumah Jawa Laweyan yang dikonstruksi sebagai ruang wisata, khususnya pada pemanfaatan sebagai tempat wisata belanja. Setiap teritori wisata yang terkonstruksi di Laweyan, bagaimanapun juga akan menarasikan karakter khusus lingkungan domestik masyarakat setempat yang berawal dari pandangan hidup mereka. Dalam hal ini, narasi karakter domestik pada organisasi ruang rumah Jawa diciptakan sedemikian rupa untuk menciptakan pengalaman wisatawan terhadap 'yang lain' (the other).

Men do travelling and becoming tourists to release themselves from their everyday routines. By becoming tourists, they experience and see places, which are whatsoever, different from their everyday environment. The need to provide unique tourist's experience had been resulted to the production of various tourist destinations. Home territories, has become one of unique tourist attraction. Through visiting home territories, tourists might experience more authentic feel of one culture, with real people within as the authentic actors. Hence, home territories have been constructed or commodified as tourist destinations. The tourist space constructed in the home territories, are being representation of its society cultural identity. Laweyan batik merchant houses have been constructed for the past ten years as one of tourist destination in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Part of the rooms within these homes, are re-constructed to be tourist territories. The paper will show how territorial setting created for tourist territories represent Javanese cultural identity, specifically on the commodification of these houses as retail space. Each tourist territories created in Laweyan merchant houses, were somehow narrating specific part of the community domesticity, which came from the Javanese worldview. The narration of domesticity on the space organization, have been constructed to create cultural 'othering' tourist experiences.

Keywords: Javanese traditional houses, representation, Javanese culture, territory, and tourism.

Nowadays, travelling has becoming a new trend. Evenmore, the travelling activities has becoming a lifestyle, so it could be identified as culturization (Urry, 2002). It could be called culturization

because men do the travelling activities as their cultural strategies. Van Peursen (1988) stated that modern men is now on the functional cultural stage, in which they are struggling to find relation between

himself and the surrounding environment. Through travelling activities, men visits new different places other than his everyday environment (experiencing personal displacement) in order to reflects the travelling values to his own life. Therefore travelling is understood as a valuable experience of life, not only just become the activity to freshen up from daily routines. When men sees the life of others, he will reflects the values into his own life, and therefore improving his values in understanding the world.

Alongwith the culturization of tourism, tourist destinations have been differentiated into various type of tourism products. They are constructed to provide unique and authentic feel of experience for the tourists. Some of these constructed products are found in the territories of everyday environment. Homes, as everyday environment, have recently been constructed or commodified as tourism attraction to show the uniqueness of one's culture.

Surakarta, as one of the cultural centers of Java with the Kasunanan palace as a patronage, has a number of potential residential tourism in the form of artifacts that are considered to represent the identity of Javanese culture. It has many cultural artifacts, including traditional Javanese houses from each classes of society, which represent Javanese cultural identity. Formerly, tourists only came for the palaces to see Javanese culture. But in the past ten years, the need of tourism has been expanded. They are no longer satisfied with the beautifully constructed view of Javanese palaces. Tourists want to see the authentic reality of Javanese culture in a modest society. Therefore homes of common people have been constructed as new tourist destination. The rooms in home territories that are constructed as a tourist attraction is being commodified in such a way, so tourists can 'experience' atmosphere typical Javanese Surakarta. Through this type of construction, a new territory for tourists emerged in the private territory of the merchant houses.

This paper is a review of the production of tourist territory arising in Kampung Batik Laweyan merchant houses, Surakarta. The aim is to descriptively defined the tourist territories produced in the merchant houses, alongwith the development of cultural tourism in Surakarta. The data are

collected based on the condition of Kampung Batik Laweyan merchant houses today, which are being performed as a tourist cultural tourist attraction. Focusing the analysis on the activity as tourist attraction that occurs, further investigation was done on the architectural setting that was created to support the attraction. These architectural setting were then being interpreted by tourists as signs of cultural representation of Java. There are similar transformation of home territoriality found in the merchant houses, that will be analyzed by defining: 1) The architectural setting, which includes the furniture and other visual element as the territorial domain for tourists, and 2) Each physical elements that created territorial boundaries, such as the wall, ceiling, and floor as the definitive territorial boundaries for tourists.

Through the description of each tourist territories produced, further analysis will be made with proxemic analysis to reveal the represented meaning of each territories that are being performed.

ANALYSIS

Representation of Javanese Identity in the Tourist Territory

In each territory, meanings of social relation are embedded within. Altman (1975) defined territory as one concept of defensible space, which might appear in various scale and type of space. The territory is not necessarily a fixed location, as it follows the movement and human existence. Territoriality generally been used as a mechanism for the privacy and accessibility of the other party to an object or place. In addition, territoriality can support multiple functions, including social functioning (identity, status, family stability) and physical function (area children, food storage, etc.). While Edney (1976) states that the function is to maintain the identity of the territory and set up a social system. Through the territory, boundary articulation occurs between an individual or group with the other individual or group. Thus, it can be interpreted that the meaning of territoriality is closely related to the identity of a person or group that is in a territory. Embodiment of territorial identity in the form of a set of images has different meanings for each individual as a consequence of experience each. This identity is perceived collectively and symbolically reflected the desired ideal conditions in the community.

About the territorial boundaries as the spatial practices of territoriality, Heidegger stated that the limits (boundaries) is not just a location or place where a substance ends, as it is defined in Greek philosophy, but it is also a location or place where a substance began to assert itself to the environment. Thus, the construction of Surakarta Javanese home territories as a tourist attraction, should represent the meanings of cultural identity of the residents. The meanings of cultural identity then are being identified by the tourists visiting the home territories. MacCannell (1973) stated that in a setting of tourist attractions, there are three important components, which are sights, markers, and tourists. In the activity, tourists will interpret the meanings of signs and visual elements of social interaction they experienced (sight) as an identity marker points (markers), which will then be interpreted as a representation of the local cultural identity.

Seen from the socio-cultural point of view, research on tourism believed that each tourism spot (or destination) area actually socially constructed place. Indeed, a destination is constructed in the intersection between the tourism industry-tourist-local culture through processes of conflict, reciprocity, and negotiation. Therefore in analyzing tourism space, researcher should consider the space as an inert place into which different elements are added to a center of meaning (Ker, 2009). Tourism space is shaped through the processes of globalization, modernity, and mythology. It shall be a historically dynamic place where peculiarity of place and people contributed to physical and social present day process (Ringer, 2005).

The Dynamics of Laweyan Merchant Houses

Kampung Batik Laweyan which is located in Surakarta, Central Java, is well-known for its batik industry. It grows as a center for batik production and trading since 1500s, the era of Pajang dynasty, before Mataram ruled in Surakarta. The name "Laweyan" means threads made from twisted cotton. Formerly, people in Kampung Laweyan were instructed by the palace aristocrats to produce batik exclusively for them. But in the development, Laweyan also produced batik to be worn by the commoners. Laweyan grew as a rich batik industry because the community's creativity to create various alternative batik patterns and techniques,

and sometimes were created against the rule and philosophy of batik. Laweyan people were called 'saudagar' which means rich merchants. Most of them are 'abangan moslems', which is a religious conviction came from the acculturation of Moslem and Javanese philosophy.

Laweyan people clustered exclusively, so that they formed a new society class, a native Javanese middle class society, that is neither aristocrat (*bangsawan, priyayi*) or commoners (*wong cilik*). The rest of Surakarta community considered them as odd people because within Javanese belief, the activity of trade, to make a living from commercial activities is abstinence; a deviant lifestyle that only known in Chinese and Arabian culture. In the development of batik industry and trade, the women of Laweyan (*mbok mase*) in each families played an important role. It is also a deviant character that is not common in Surakarta society, where women were always put in second place after men. Even there was a spreading rumor in the society, that women of Laweyan used black magic power to accomplish their wealth and should be avoided.

Laweyan community different way of life made Laweyan more isolated from the town native community, but grew more solid inward until the 1900s. Laweyan batik merchants built very large houses with high-rise wall surrounding them which accomodate their living and working space. It is important for the merchants to show off their wealth and status, though they were not aristocrats, through their residential appearance. They even copied the palace aristocrats lifestyle, from the clothes they wore to the use of residential decorative elements to affirm their status.

The rise of mass printed-batik production on the 1970s to 2000s led Laweyan batik industry into a fall-down. Many batik companies were closed down and sold out to Chinese people. Laweyan younger generation then preferred to do other jobs rather than continuing their family batik business. There were only few companies left in the rough time. Then in the 2000s, one of the descendant of batik company owner, Batik Mahkota, encouraged the other Laweyan businessman to rebuilt the splendour of Kampung Laweyan past as batik industry district. They formed *Forum Budaya Kampung Batik*

Laweyan (FBKBL) in 2004 which aimed to promote Laweyan as cultural heritage tourist destination and also batik shopping center in Surakarta. These entrepreneurs has been gradually revitalizing Laweyan based on the community strength and potentials to a batik village for tourists consumption. In 2009, Kampung Laweyan community received *Upakarti Award* from the government for their hard work in revitalizing the district.

Kampung Laweyan district now has liven up with the flourish of showrooms, galleries, workshops, and a few homestays. The community welcomes small group tourists to large groups such as school field trip groups and international symposium participants. Most tourists trip to Kampung Laweyan is half-day trip, since it can be easily reached from other districts because its location at the center of the town. Most tourists come to shop Laweyan batik products and to earn knowledge about batik production. Recently, FBKBL begin to

promote their buildings as cultural heritage objects, to give some narration to the shopping experiences. The remaining residential spaces is being renovated to restore its appearance in past times.

Tourist Territory: Narration of Domesticity in Laweyan Merchant Houses

There are two types of residential buildings in Laweyan, bigger houses commonly owned by merchant, while smaller ones owned by batik workers of Laweyan. Former residential buildings in Laweyan oriented inward, with several masses: *pendapa*, *dalem*, *sentong*, *gandok*, *pavilion*, *pabrik*, *beteng*, *regol*. They have large front yard surrounded by high rise walls which sometimes being used to accomodate the neighborhood social activities. The buildings use north-south axis orientation, with limasan roof. Dutch colonialism influence had changed the traditional Javanese facades to Indische-Tropische style in merchant houses (Priyatmono, 2004).

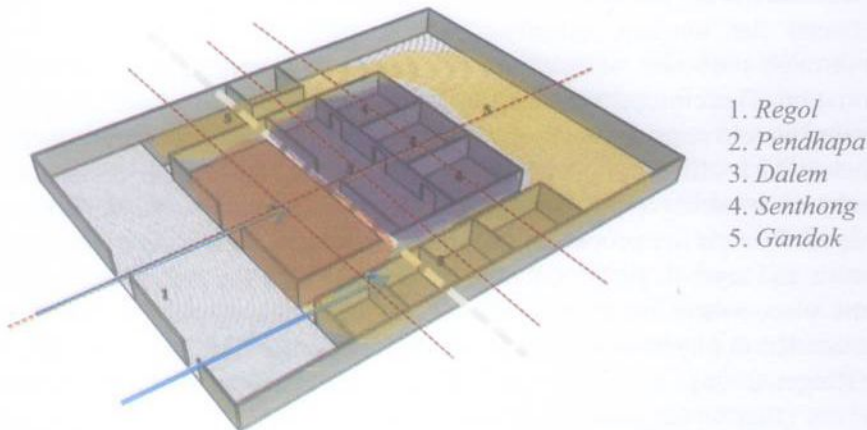


Figure 1. General plan of Laweyan residential building (Modification drawing from the source: Priyatmono, 2004).

The merchant house buildings functioned as living spaces for the batik company owner (*pendopo*, *sentong*, *dalem* for primary living activities; right and left *gandok* for domestic utilitarian activities) and working space for their batik production (*gandok* at the back of the house). In order to accomodate tourism needs, these residential spaces in Laweyan had been converted to several commercial functions, such as showrooms, galleries, homestay, convention/gathering purpose, and cafe resto. Meanwhile, the

workshops that exist today have the same function as batik production working space.

Tourist territories in Laweyan merchant houses has typical characteristic: performing the narration of batik production and trading in Laweyan as the community way of make a living. This performances include the evolving history and urban culture, and also the value and symbolic meanings attached to the Laweyan batik production and trading activities.

This activities had long been considered as domestic sphere of Laweyan community, since the batik production and trading has always been their only way to make a living for hundreds years. The analysis of the space used as tourist territories, then will be correlated with the dimension of cultural universal, which are adapted from Koentjaraningrat

(1985) notion on the seven basic element of culture. Focusing on the merchant house buildings with the commercial function as batik retail shop, there are two major tourist territories that are found that is discussed in this paper: the retail space as the narration of batik trading activities, and the workshop space as the narration of batik production activities.

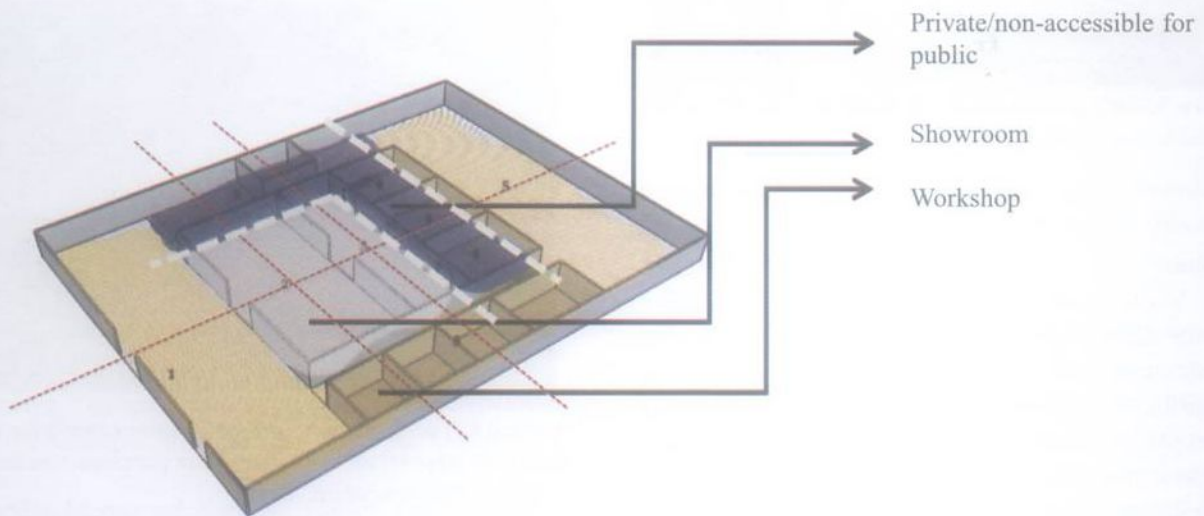


Figure 2. Typical spatial pattern in the retail function of Laweyan batik merchant houses (Source: Setyoningrum, 2013).

The Retail Space: Performing Batik Trading Activities

Retail showrooms (or galleries) are now exist in most of 'tourism-commodified' Laweyan merchant houses. These showrooms display various batik garments and fashion products. This tourist territory typically used the 'pendapa' and dalem area of the houses. The addition of retail showrooms, which is formerly absent, had impacted on the transformation of *room* usage in the houses. Though the room usage has been transformed, the Laweyan families prefer not to change the building structures. Instead, the existing solid walls were kept and utilized as boundaries of each zone segmentation of the product display.

'Pendapa'

The 'pendapa' areas used to functioned as a public gathering place, where the residents greet and meet their guests and occasionally functioned as a family ceremonial gatherings. Hence, the activities and social interaction within the traditional 'pendapa' are considered public. This area is center-oriented,

clearly defined by furniture setting for social interaction. Outsiders who are considered as formal guests or have less intimate relation with the residents are welcome in this area.

After the 'pendapa' is being commodified as a retail showroom, the access for tourists in this area is created along the central axis of the room, connecting the *regol* to the *dalem* area. Clear entry pathway is created to let the tourists gaze around the domain (the clothing displays) and the room boundaries (the walls, commonly covered by a traditional Javanese carved wooden wall-panel). The boundaries are the preserved existing four-walls surrounding the room. These walls are solid wall construction, following the *Indische-Tropische Style* of Laweyan merchant houses. The opening to the 'dalem' area is often stylized with Javanese traditional gate (*kori*) adapted from the Javanese palace architecture. While the openings in the building facade, such as windows and doors are existing openings, adapting Dutch Colonial Style.



Figure 3. Showroom appearance in the “*pendapa*” area of Batik Mahkota, Laweyan (Source: Setyoningrum, 2013).

‘Dalem’

The ‘*dalem*’ areas that are formerly used for private domestic activities for families have been transformed to display areas, which are accessible for public view. Hence, the public use of these houses has expanded for the sake of tourist gaze. The ‘*dalem*’ area in former traditional Javanese houses, is valued as the most important social private area. It is where families gather for semi-private domestic activities and where they put private domestic artefacts such as daybed (*bale-bale*) for a social relaxed interaction as the center of the room domain.

This area is center-oriented, with centered high ceiling called ‘*joglo*’ which stands on the symmetrical construction of four wooden column. In this area, traditional Javanese families often display their family inheritance large objects such as spears (*tombak*) and swords, which they considered as the representative of their spiritual guardian. Furniture setting is also centered in the middle of ‘*dalem*’, marking the main activities in the room, usually focused on the male resident of the house, as the center of microcosmos. The access to the ‘*dalem*’ area is formerly prohibited for outsiders. Only people whom the family knew well enough would get permission to enter this area. Therefore, ‘*dalem*’ has enclosed room setting, with four solid walls and small windows connecting the room with the surrounding environment.

The ‘*dalem*’ setting after it is being commodified as retail space is likely extrovert. The domain setting is still preserve centered, but now the activities and

social interaction within it is public. Though the setting of ‘*dalem*’ now is extrovertly public, the owners of the retail showroom keep the space for top priority trading activity. Some of the showroom owners use the ‘*dalem*’ area to display luxurious, expensive, and limited collection of batik garment and clothing; some of them allocate the space for the purchase transaction.



Figure 4. The domain of ‘*dalem*’ displays low wide table on a low-raised floor used to do batik purchase transaction (Source: Setyoningrum, 2012).

CONCLUSION

The narration of batik production and trading in Laweyan merchant houses has been the major attraction that is being performed for tourist consumption. These urge of needs have impacted to the creation of tourist territories, which somehow excluded and at the same time included only partial representation of Javanese culture. The most representation captured in the physical setting in Laweyan houses are about their residents’ way of life regarding economy and materialistic worldview, into which differentiate the Laweyan community from the other Javanese culture. The Laweyan batik merchants have been putting more values on the material culture and the kinship in the hierachial community, than the other Javanese. It can be shown on the arrangement of the tourist territories in each room described above, and also on the negotiation on the cultural values that is being exposed. Somehow, there are still many resources of cultural elements that still can be explored to improve the tourist setting in Laweyan batik merchant houses, such as the power relation with the authorized Surakarta Javanese palaces, the moslem teaching, or the

national movement for independence of Republik Indonesia.

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