



Line and Color Composition in Lurik Cawas Weaving: Idea from Traditional Lurik Patterns



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Abstract

Javanese lurik is weaved fabric with striped motives, and it has very simple appearance. In the past, lurik only used two colors, namely: black and white. But, as it develops, some of lurik fabrics use more than two colors, and one of the colors usually still consists of black or white color. After lurik becomes one of the prosper trading commodities, the artisans attempt to make lurik more appealing and varying in term of appearance so that it will be favored by consumers. The objective of this research is to investigate how the artisans can develop lurik patterns to stay appealing. This paper used the qualitative research with the case study strategy and phenomenological approaches. The study aims at understanding the methods employed by artisans in Cawas Klaten in developing lurik patterns. The result of the study show that (1) lurik pattern has been developed by using various alternatives of line composition and color coherence; (2) the idea of development comes from traditional lurik patterns which already existed long time ago; and (3) line and color composition used a minimum of three colors so that it looks like a rainbow, and this kind of lurik pattern becomes the characteristic of modern weaved fabric from Cawas.

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1. Introduction

Lurik weaving in Klaten is a hereditary handicraft, which is produced by using handloom (Tenun Bendo and Tenun Gendog traditional tools) to fulfill people's self-need, whether it is daily clothes or traditional ceremony complement. In the past, making weave craft was performed to fill spare time, and it was natural if each household in Klaten owned

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weaving tools. Weaving, according to [Djoemena \(2000\)](#) is a job for women, which includes some values, such as mental education, Javanese spiritual, life philosophy, and Javanese attitude.

In Javanese faith, weaved fabric with striped patterns has the magical power of protection ([Anggraini, 2005](#)). [Rahyono \(2007\)](#) explains that local wisdom like this is a part of society intelligence which comes from experiences. Until this time, the number of female weavers is greater than that of male weavers. In Cawas, the males usually work as farmers. However, some work as weavers as to gain additional incomes.

Lurik characteristic is made of cotton yarns which are also made of cotton fibers, and they are very suitable for tropical areas. As result, there are cotton *lurik* fabrics from the roughest to the softest ones. The yarns are pure cotton and mixed cotton combined with polyester. There are two kinds of pure cotton used by the weavers, combed yarns and mercerized yarns. The former is soft cotton yarns, which are lighter and which have soft textures. The latter is stronger cotton yarns, which are shiny, which have a lower shrinkage possibility, and which are easier to absorb coloring liquids. Thus, mercerized yarns' colors always look brighter. Meanwhile, the cotton yarns mixed with polyester for *lurik* are called carded yarns. They are mixed yarns, which produce *lurik* with soft textures but give hot feeling while being worn.

Lurik manufacture process is complicated; it is not comparable with the result that only produces stripped patterns (*lorek*) and simple line composition. The meaning of motives in here is image or shape which is used to decorate fabric surface. Motives are taken from geometric, object picture, plant, animal, etc. The set of motives which covers fabric surface is called pattern. Thus, the *lurik* pattern is line composition, either vertical or horizontal. Besides the motives, the uniqueness of *lurik* also lies in the fabric texture and yarn density, which does not always look similar, but it looks natural. This is because *lurik* is made manually, with manual weaving tools, and so the density level only relies on the weaver's hand strength. *Lurik*'s quality relies on its basic materials. Cotton yarns which have a low quality will produce a low-quality fabric. On the contrary, a basic material with a good quality will produce *lurik* with a softer fabric quality.

It takes a long time to produce *lurik*. The production process of *lurik* weaving includes analysis of product design, creativity process, and marketing process. Designing process is creativity effort to fill human needs, physically and spiritually. In order to fill market and consumer demand, it is necessary to consider something which is related to economic problem, social, culture and technology. Weaving manufacture of *lurik* respectively includes preparing basic material from fiber to the yarn-making, preparing pattern design from yarns, colorings, arranging them on weaving tools, and finally producing *lurik*, which is ready for market. All of those steps are design processes that must be completed by the weavers. Furthermore, the processes of *lurik* for entering markets which begin with planning phase up to promotion, distribution, and evaluation process are parts of *lurik* weaving business activities.

The workers of handloom *lurik* weaving are usually family members and neighbors. They work together to complete weaving jobs by using their own capacity. According to their role, *lurik* artisans can be categorized into three, namely: business artisans, craving artisans, and labor artisans. Business artisans are those who understand and who are skillful enough to handle the weaving jobs, starting from fiber and its processing to production of *lurik* weaving fabric. They run *lurik* weaving business and produce *lurik*, and they also have the responsibility for a marketing project. Craving artisans are those who make a pattern on *lurik* weaving process. Meanwhile, labor artisans are those who carry out one or more jobs, like coloring the yarns, rolling yarns on *kelos* (bobbin), *penyucuk benang* (the person who thread yarn through needle hole), and yarn arrangers on *sisir* and *gun*, the parts within handloom.

In this time, *lurik* is still being produced. There are many artisans who rely their lives on *lurik* weaving. However, the market competition in the garment industry gives *lurik* Cawas weaving a hard time to survive. *Lurik* Cawas falls behind in the product marketing if compared to other garment products. One of them is textile with *lurik* patterns which are made maximally. Weaving (loom) machine can produce plentiful of textile products with line patterns along with various alternative patterns only in short amount of time. As a result, they can dominate the textile market. Hence, the artisans in Cawas who want to stay exist must find fast methods to fix every sector, such as basic material sector and textile appearance. On the other hand, if seen from the technology's point of view, *lurik* weaving is a unique belonging of handicrafts. The use of handloom is one of interesting identity, and so is the basic material; they use cotton yarns to show that *lurik* is definitely a tropical kind of fabric. Then, *lurik* Cawas artisans are trying to develop their product appearance by conducting innovation in pattern design.

The idea of the modern pattern is taken from various traditional patterns, such as the line composition toward the same direction of fabric length called *lanjuran*, line motives which cross along fabric width called *pakanmalang* pattern (crossing), and the combination of *lanjuran* pattern and *pakan malang* pattern called *cacahan* or *dam-daman* (squares pattern). Those three patterns above will be made into various kinds of line composition to enrich *lurik* patterns. Moreover, traditional *lurik* only uses two colors, black and white. Based on Javanese belief, each color has a philosophy, whether it is a single color or double colors. This kind of faith is called *Kejawen* or Javanese people's

belief. *Lurik* nowadays has brighter colors to adjust consumer taste. The colors no longer have meanings, but only aim at beautifying the *lurik*.

2. Research Methods

This study used the descriptive qualitative research method, which aims at conducting a deep and thorough description of the condition or the process, and also the correlation or relationship between the main ideas found in the research target (Sutopo, 2002).

The research objects were traditional *lurik* and modern *lurik* produced in Cawas, Klaten. The data of the research were collected through (1) interviewing the *lurik* artisans in Cawas; (2) field observation; (3) reviewing and recording the documents and archives about traditional *lurik*; (4) focus group discussion (FGD); and field note-taking.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Traditional Lurik

According to the history, *lurik* fabric has existed since more or less 3000 years ago. It was known from the discovery of terracotta statue in Trowulan, East Java which wore hand-woven *lurik*. The statue was made in the 15th century. Apart from the discovery of spinning wheels and weaving tools which showed that humans did weaving activities a long time ago, there was also a discovery which came from the inscription of Hindu Mataram reign. It was between Years 851-882. The inscription showed the existence of *lurik* with *pakan malang* pattern, and there was an inscription of King Erlangga in East Java in the Year 1033, which said something about *tuluh watu* (Djoemena, 2000). The term *pakan malang* means vertical yarns or line composition toward the same direction of fabric length while *tuluh watu* is the name of *lurik* pattern. Traditional *lurik* is *lurik* which has the same colors and patterns from the past to the present time. They can be used as daily clothes and traditional ceremony complement in Javanese society.

Basically, there are three basic patterns of traditional *lurik*. They are *lanjuran* or long straight line toward the same direction of fabric length, *pakan malang* or line which goes to the same direction of fabric width, and *cacahan* or combination both vertical and horizontal lines which form square patterns. There are various sizes of traditional *lurik*, which also explain its function. Long fabric or *jarit* is around one meter in width and around 250 cm in length. Sarong is 50 cm in width and 3 meters in length. *Ciut* fabric or shawl is 50 cm wide and 3 meters long. *Kemben* is 50 cm wide and 250 cm long. *Stegenyang* is 15cm wide and 350 cm long and also *bakal kelambi* or clothing material for *kebaya*, traditional Javanese women outfit, is 150 cm in width and 2 meters in length.

In the past, *lurik* only used two colors; they were black and white which were taken from rocks and plants. Then, *lurik* started to use various colors, which still related to nature. Indigo color and dark blue color came from soaked leaves of true indigo trees. The brown color was taken from mahogany tree's bark. Aside from that, there were the other plants like the fruit of kayu hitam tree (*diospyro ebenam*) to produce a black color, the roots of noni tree that produced a red color, *sepang* tree (*Caesalpinia sappan* L.), high tree, and leaves of the teak tree which gave red-brownish color. Turmeric produced a yellow color, mango skin produced green color, and mangosteen skin produced purple color, and besides that, there were many plants growing in Central Java.

Those colors not only beautified the fabric but also had meanings related to Javanese belief and rites. Javanese people believed that their rates had a strong correlation with the human life cycle from their birth to their death. Therefore, single color on *lurik* was a symbolist: white represented birth, red represented spirit, and bravery, yellow and orange represented human maturity in life, also black and dark blue represented the end of life or death. Double colors were used in various traditional Javanese ceremonies, like red-white on *sindur* fabric in wedding ceremony, which represented the hope of fertility and prosperity. The black-white color on *bagun tulak lurik* represented protection from danger. In *Labuhan* ceremony which was conducted by Javanese people in Yogyakarta in order to seek safety and peace, Javanese people used two green colors and red color called *klabang ngantup* (Centipede stung), and green-white colors called *godong melati* (Jamine leaves). Both of which represented sanctity.

3.2 Development of Line Composition

In the textile market, *lurik* must compete with many other textile products. Even when compared to striped pattern weaving of several other areas in Indonesia, *lurik* Cawas is the most monotonous traditional fabric. In order to draw people's attention, *lurik* artisans attempt to create variations in line composition. The idea is taken from line

composition of traditional patterns, either *lajuran* or *cacahan* patterns. Every pattern on traditional *lurik* is differentiated by the distance between one line to other lines, either vertical lines on *ajuran*, or the combination of vertical and horizontal lines on *cacahan*. Several line compositions in traditional pattern are *telu pat* (three-four), *sodo sakler* (a piece of stick), *liwatan* (jumping), *sulur ringin* (banyan creeper), *bribil*, *yuyu sekandang* (a group of small crabs), *kunang sekebon* (a group of fireflies), *dam-daman* (square) patterns.

Telu pat pattern is a repetition of three and four vertical lines composition. *Sodo sak ler* is a repetition of two adjacent lines composition. Each of two lines is spaced wider. *Liwatan* pattern is the repetition of lines in the same distance, but in the middle of the fabric, some lines are more dominant than other lines because of the difference in color. *Sulur ringin* pattern is almost similar with *liwatan* pattern, but at a certain distance from the most dominant lines in the middle of the fabric, there are another more dominant lines on the right and left of the fabric. *Bribil* pattern is a pattern with regularly spaced line composition, i.e. to adjacent lines. The variation is located at the distance of every two lines, closer and farther lines. In the pattern of *yuyu sekandang*, *kunang sakebon*, and *dam-daman*, the repetition is on the vertical and horizontal lines. The distance of lines, either vertical or horizontal lines is the same as that of the vertical line repetition on *lajuran* pattern.

These eight line compositions on traditional *lurik* above are developed by playing line repetition. The results are becoming more diverse because of the coloring. Although they are same at the first glance, but in fact the Cawas artisans can create different types of *lurik* only from the line and color. *Penyekir*, a person who has skills to create patterns for *lurik* weaving, is required to realize it. *Menyekir* or in textile terms called *menghani* (warping) becomes the determinant factor for *lurik* appearance. There are just some *sekir* artisans who are able to make the planning of *lurik* patterns. At least the artisans should be able to understand pattern design plan created by the designer.

3.3 Color Play

Traditional *lurik* originally only had two colors, namely black and white. One example is *lurik lajuran* pattern named “*telu pat*”. The vertical line composition on *lurik telu pat* is a repetition of three lines and four lines in a row. Each line is white, while the distance between three lines and four lines is black. From the idea of *telu pat* pattern, *lurik* nowadays is made by giving the other colors such as the contrast of red and white, or blue and black, etc. The white and black colors are also used by *sodo sak ler* pattern, the black color is more dominant than white so that the white color appears as thin lines and only half as thick. In the other hand, *liwatan* and *sulur ringin* patterns have more than two colors, *liwatan*: white, black, blue, and red. Meanwhile, *sulur ringin* has brighter colors, namely: white, black, green and red, black and white, and the gradation of orange.

The discriminators between one *lurik* and others are the distance of line and color composition. The difference is at distance between lines, either vertical or horizontal for *cacahan* pattern. The result is progressively enriched by color application, such as primary, secondary, and tertiary colors. The color composition on traditional *lurik* can use analog composition or match color from one of the primary colors; or complementary composition or contrasting colors of two primary colors (Wong, 1996). Traditional *lurik* still uses natural dyes from a variety of plants that exist in nature around the residences of artisans. Each plant and mixture of some plants produce gloomy colors. Moreover, they are limited.

During its development, *lurik* artisans in Cawas also use artificial dyes for dyeing *batik*. It relates also to study the development of *batik* is done with kimono (Saddhono, 2014). This development is also done for *lurik*. Synthetic or artificial dyes are made from chemicals. Compared with natural dyes, synthetic dyes give the brighter color and have unlimited color gradations, the same artificial dyes as *batik* dyes. The color of artificial dyes is brighter than that of the natural dyes. The choice of colors in artificial dyes is quite a lot so that artisans can make a sheet of *lurik* with many colors freely. There are varieties of colors ranging from primary colors, such as red, yellow, and blue; secondary colors: orange, green, and purple; to the mixture of primary and secondary colors, starting from analogous colors or family colors, complementary colors or contrary colors, to monochromatic colors or commonly referred to as gradation colors. Modern *lurik* Cawas uses a minimum of three colors and a maximum of eight colors. However, the black and white colors on traditional *lurik* weaving are still popular, and therefore black and white *lurik* also are still produced.

3.4 Rainbow Color: Characteristics of Lurik Cawas Weaving

The strength of woven *lurik* craft center in Cawas is human resources, namely: artisans who continue to produce woven *lurik* by using traditional tools such as handloom. Thus, in addition, to keeping preserving the weaving skills acquired through hereditary the *lurik* weaving activity can also be made as a promising source of livelihood. The result

of developing the pattern has been presenting woven *lurik* with a variety of alternative patterns. An interesting pattern is produced by playing not only the lines but also the bright colors. If traditional *lurik* is colored by using limited natural dyes and tend to be gloomy, modern *lurik* is using *batik* artificial dyes. The color of artificial dyes is brighter than that of the natural dyes. The choice of color in artificial dyes is quite a lot so that artisans can freely make a sheet of *lurik* with many colors.

The color is the most dominant visual element compared to the other elements. Therefore, the first thing visible to the eye on *lurik* Cawas is color. The line motive created limits the colors. If woven traditional *lurik* used a minimum of two colors, then for woven modern *lurik* uses a minimum of three colors. Various colors can be used on modern *lurik*, ranging from monochromatic, analogous, to complementary color composition on a sheet of woven *lurik* become the main attraction, which also becomes the characteristics of woven modern *lurik* in Cawas. The composition of colors made by woven *lurik* Cawas artisans is mostly based on the orders, and the rest is artisans' design.

Color and line composition on the woven *lurik* then produces various interesting patterns of *lurik* Cawas and manages to bring financial benefits to the artisans. Rainbow-like pattern *lurik* manages to reach a wider market. This indicates that *lurik* Cawas with a variety of bright colors is well accepted by consumers. One of them is the order from Prambanan sub-district for civil servant uniform which is called "Roro Jonggrang" pattern. This *lurik* uses five colors, namely black, white, red, purple, and indigo. The work of one artisan from the Cabean Village, Mlese, Cawas in early 2016 received a copyright certificate from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of Republic of Indonesia.

The effect of mode allows the artisans to produce a traditional *lurik* pattern with dark natural colors. Mode rotation makes the old patterns favored again by people. The patterns from consumer demand, especially from the fashion designers help the artisans in enriching their *lurik* product color alternatives. Consumers' background greatly affects the types of pattern that they ordered. Foreign consumers generally like traditional patterns with the colors that are not so bright. Therefore, complementary colors derived from primary and secondary colors are often found in *lurik* pattern ordered by foreign consumers. Meanwhile, a contrasting pattern with bright colors is preferred by domestic consumers who live in big cities, such as Jakarta and Bandung.

4. Conclusion

The existence of market competition actually raises the artisans to quickly make some changes so that they can still exist in the market. Therefore, they try to make the more attractive *lurik* appearance through line distance and color composition. The idea of line and color composition is taken from the pattern of woven that has existed since the antiquity. The result is a colorful *lurik* which later becomes the characteristic of woven *lurik* in Cawas. If traditional *lurik* only used a minimum of two colors, then modern *lurik* uses a minimum of three colors on a sheet of *lurik*.

Lurik with the rainbow-like color becomes the characteristic of woven modern *lurik* in Cawas. The increasing proceeds from sales of modern *lurik* encourage the artisans to seek alternative patterns. Moreover, *lurik* with rainbow pattern also draws the attention of other *lurik* artisans outside Cawas, making the bright colors as a source of the idea. Therefore, the artisans of woven *lurik* generally in Klaten District and especially in Cawas compete to produce *lurik* pattern that can meet the consumers' taste.

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Statement of authorship

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.

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