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# RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Santri-Entrepreurs and Development of Community-Based Batik Industry at Laweyan, Solo, Indonesia

Sahruddin Lubis<sup>1</sup> ⊠and Hari Zamharir<sup>2</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Sahruddin Lubis, E-mail: sahruddin.lubis@civitas.unas.ac.id

# | ABSTRACT

Though studies on the relationship between worldly asceticism and economic progress is an old thing, this study presents a revisit of Boeke's Indonesia dual economy as a result of the presence of a mixture of such a duality performed by Santrientrepreneurs at Laweyan, Solo, Indonesia. Industrialism as a way of life is commonly linked to the transformation from agricultural societies into industrial in modern West nations, with the crucial roles of industrial entrepreneurs who were among the few in the respective societies having distinctive personal qualities. The most well-known thesis was Weber's thesis on the relationship between the Protestant ethic and economic development by the few entrepreneurs possessing worldly asceticism—homo economicus who were working hard for achieving material well-being but at the same time develop religious ascetic life. The paper makes an account of Islam-based Santri-entrepreneurs in Kampung Batik Laweyan (KBL), Solo, Indonesia, employing a critically theoretical perspective of Max Weber and Boeke; the study takes into account political context and socio-cultural setting. It is our findings that Santri-entrepreneurs at KBL developed worldly asceticism, but political context has made the unstable growth of the business; contemporary steady growth has been made possible by the provision of the concept KBL as Cultural Heritage and facilitation by the local government, especially the establishment of deliberation forum among several parties that gives ample room for their steady growth.

# **KEYWORDS**

Kampung Batik Laweyan, Santri-entrepreneurs, concept of Cultural Heritage, local government, deliberation forum

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#### 1. Introduction

Studies on themes like religion and economic development are already old-fashioned; however, studies on industrialism in Kampung Batik Laweyan (KBL), in the Municipal City of Solo, Indonesia, seem to continue to be relevant especially given the respectable status as a cultural legacy by the U.N. that connotes the need to preserve and develop religious dimensions of the phenomenon. Many studies on the glory of the past of KBL have been done, of which special attention was also played to the significance of the role of Muslim-entrepreneurs. But hardly any studies touch upon the phenomena that employ critically theoretical perspectives of Max Weber and Boeke; Weber's theory is on the relationship between religion and economic development, whereas Boeke's theory is on the dual economy in Javanese societies.

The paper discusses the crucial roles of industrial entrepreneurs at KBL, Solo, Indonesia. Roughly, Laweyan-industrialism develops within Islam doctrine of worldly asceticism, and most interesting is that the undertaking is centering around Market and mosques that are separated itself from the rest of Javanese culture at that time—that was centered on Palace. Running batik industry by the mainstream Muslim-entrepreneurs then was followed by the counterpart of Abangan or as Hefner (in Putro, 2015, p. 90) calls Javanist Muslims. The Muslim-entrepreneurs are of, borrowed Geertz's term, Santri segments among the Javanese societies—and in this paper, they are called Santri-entrepreneurs. In contemporary Laweyan, two big modern mass organizations exist—Muhammadiyah and NU; the santri-segments from NU, inhabiting the eastern part of Laweyan, has re-oriented the worldview that is compatible with worldly asceticism (Wijaya, 2012, p. 64).

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In the contemporary situation, in consonance with the more facilitative approach by the government to developing the local economy, KBL has benefited from various public goods. One main public good is the setting up of a deliberation forum, FPKB or *Forum Pengembangan Kampoeng Batik Laweyan* (Forum for the Development of Batik Village of Laweyan), in which the industrialists in the locality, the government, NGO, and Market sit together discussing (economic) development in the locality. As revenues from export, the batik industry across Surakarta, including Laweyan, has also been promising. Putri et al. (2019), quoting from the government Office of Dinas Perindustrian & Perdagangan of the Municipality of Surakarta, reveals the sharp increase of the export: In 2006 export value of batik from Surakarta was almost two and half billion US dollars; in 2010 it becomes the US \$ 10.196.173.

Entrepreneurs are among the few in the respective societies that are associated with having distinctive personal qualities of what in Weber's term worldly asceticism, generated from religious values—homo economicus who were working hard for achieving material well-being but at the same time develop religious belief. Weber's well-known thesis was The Protestant Ethic & the Development of Capitalism (Berger, 2010). But long before modern history—it was in the 7<sup>th</sup> century—material well-being along with worldly asceticism had taken place also, for example, in the early history of Muslim society in the Arab context—a phenomenon that was generated from the Quran. Our approach of the study is in the opposing stance to Weber's notion that only Western social systems may produce value rationality—as was the case in Western Protestantism in the past.

From a theoretical perspective, two approaches to understanding the emergence of a few entrepreneurs in a given society—one is internal factors or psychological, i.e., inherent in one's personal traits with religious doctrines being well-known as in the case of Max Weber conception of Calvinism, and McClelland's type of hierarchy of needs for achievement (popularly called n-Ach). To McClelland, it is the n-Ach that steers individuals to be prepared for undertaking calculated risks by doing business. And another one is the external factor—political and cultural setting.

## 2. Methodology

While a lot of criticisms of Weber's theory of psychology have been expressed, still many have been employing Weber's model of the relationship between religion and economic development across the world. Among such studies is the current work of Berger (2010), "Max Weber still Alive and Well, and Living in Guatemala: The Protestant Ethic Today", published in *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*. Such a model has been too much inclined to only single causality, which undermines complex factors. Especially given the political systems and cultural setting, this study takes political variables along with the cultural setting into consideration. Meanwhile, Frey's work *Does n-Achievement Cause Economic Development? A Cross-Lagged Panel Analysis of the McClelland Thesis* (1984) reflects the debate over McClelland's thesis.

The study is qualitative research, employing meta-analysis: results from previous studies—findings and conclusions—are to be analyzed again within the theoretical perspective that is used in the study. Data used in the study are of secondary data, mainly electronic data being accessed especially through Google Scholar medium. Data collecting on an online basis is justified as far as references are mentioned as requested (Bungin, 2007, pp.127-130). Interesting facts found through field studies by scholars are to be constructed and interpreted to gain more insights into reality. Following the procedure in the qualitative research method, data are categorized using certain norms of the degree of relevance employed in the study, and eventually, conceptualization and empirical generalization are made.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The widely known thesis that there are two different modes of production in the society of Indonesia—agricultural in rural areas vs. coastal areas/business/entrepreneurs—seems to have to be revisited. The former are stereotypes as traditional less progressive; the latter is *budaya pesisir* or maritime culture of the coastal regions that are more progressive and cosmopolitan. In between the two, there is an exception; the industrial-mode of production at Kampung Batik Laweyan, Solo, Indonesia. Here, the mode of production is neither *budaya pesisir* (maritime culture) nor agricultural. While geographically, Laweyan is within the agricultural areas, Laweyan is associated with "budaya pesisir" or Santri sub-culture—where the residents have not been engaged in farming, but rather, in weaving activities and eventually in batik/garment industry. It is located in the eastern part of Central Java, within the District of Laweyan with its neighboring District of Boyolali, District of Karanganyar, and District of Sukohardjo. Of the size of the land of Laweyan village, which is 24.83 ha, the size for the big batik makers ranges from 1.000 to 3.000 ha; for the medium size is 1.000 – 300 ha. And for the small ones, the land is 300-100 ha; for very small ones is 24-100 ha (Widigdo, 2010,p. 107).

#### 3.1 Brief History

First, mention should be made concerning the role of elites in the transformation of the community of Laweyan. Widely known, Ki Ageng Henis, the descendant of the 5<sup>th</sup> Brawijaya, was formerly a Java-Hindus. When Sunan Kalijaga took a visit at Laweyan-Pajang, Ki Ageng Henis converted to Islam (Shodiq, 2017, p. 2521). Mlayadipuro in (Setiawati & Abdullah, 2011, p. 238) found the fact that before Ki Ageng Henis moved in, the villagers possessed a marketplace named Lawe as a clothing market—with good (water)-

port at Kabanaran river. Such "big business" of cotton weaving and later on garment industry of batik was linked to the God-given rich natural resource—cotton trees that have been growing across Laweyan.

Lombard (in Nugroho, 2013, p.19) observed that:

"Historically, the initial establishment of community entrepreneurship in Kampung Laweyan was triggered by an abundant supply of cotton plants around. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were large cotton plantation areas stretched along Bengawan Solo River, including the river banks of Kampung Laweyan settlement".

Also, Nugroho (2013) is of the opinion that batik was produced for the royal family of Majapahit, that later on was called *batik keraton* or court batik. As the residents embraced Islam, eventually experiencing business contact with foreigners, Santrientrepreneurs made their own by modifying and developing it. "In this sense, Laweyan batik was not competing against court batik. In other words, no dichotomy between Palace and Market. Rather it came out to fulfill the increasing demand of ordinary people" (Nugroho, 2013, p.10). In **Java** socio-cultural setting, the garment industry of batik at Laweyan in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century until the colonial era had no precedence.

Next is the process of transforming Laweyan into Market-centered Santri-entrepreneurs. The transformation reflected more equality and more deliberative democracy resulting from its autonomy from Palace. Such transformation may be similar to the way transformation in Europe during Industrial Revolution, with the emergence of the community public sphere— town hall meetings, salons, and café. (Carpini et al., 2004). These places for deliberation amongst varied segments of society coming from different social statuses follow the shift of political life from Palace-centered to more public-centered. By Santri-entrepreneurs, it is meant that there are other entrepreneurs: the 18<sup>th</sup> century Kotagede, in Java, had had two types of entrepreneurs or bourgeoisie—*Kalang* and Santri, both are of the same Javanese ethnicity; for this, Effendi (2017) made a list of the profiles of the two types—in which four entrepreneurs of *Kalang* and nine men of Santri-entrepreneurs are mentioned. In Banyumas Regency, Central Java, a few village residents are identified as *Kalang* community and claim to be descendent of *Kalang* community in Kota Gede. They are engaged in business. They have spiritual beliefs different from the syariah-centered Santri community; they adopt an endogamy system in marriage (Mulyanto, 2008). The overall Islamization among most Javanese has been best represented by the practice of political Islam among the kings across Nusantara Islam, with the special crowning of *Khalifatullah Panatagama* for Sultan Yogyakarta—until its abolition by the 10<sup>th</sup> descendent of Sultan Yogyakarta in 2015 (Hadi in Zamharir, et al., 2020)

The growth of the way Laweyan people lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century reflected a typical Santri sub-culture, i.e., centering around the marketplace and *masjid* (building for praying) with the homes/workshops located around it. Santri segments—borrowed from Geertz's trichotomy of Javanese society—is the segments or communities with a strong sense of religion of Islam; the other two are Abangan segments (peripheral Muslims or Javanist Muslims) and *priyayi* class or aristocrats. From the design of the building at Laweyan, the sub-culture makes its difference: while the overall Javanese society put *keraton* or palace of a kingdom the center of people's lives with *joglo* houses as the symbol, at Laweyan, joglo types are limited. One interesting fact that reflects Laweyan as a unique sub-culture is the building construction:

Aspects of traditional Javanese building structure identified in the Kampung Laweyan area consist of joglo (16%), limasan (64%), and kampung (20%). This shows that the buildings in the Kampung Laweyan area are unique because most of the buildings are characterized by traditional Laweyan architecture, with the roof of the building mostly using a pyramid roof instead of a joglo.<sup>1</sup> (Pratomo, et.al., 2006,p. 97).

The 18th century marked the transference of colonization from VOC to the state government of Hindia Belanda or the Dutch Indies. Among the policies was one on economic development that harvest consequences of giving bad bargaining position for the local traders: "the condition of the people's economy was very bleak. This lousy situation also includes Indonesian batik traders in Surakarta City (Kutoyo, in Mustakif & Mulyati, 2019, p.8)

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Java, the social strata put businessmen low status, falling into the category of *wong cilik* class. However, in terms of economy & wealth, batik entrepreneurs had much higher income even compared to the noble people. Quoting Soedarmono, Hastuti (2011) notes that *saudagar* or businessmen constructed homes as luxurious as possible in order for them to enter a higher class in the society (Hastuti, 2011, p.141). To make Santri-entrepreneurs different from mainstream palace-centered society, they had had the solution in designing their homes. It is interesting to note (as far as Islamic orientation is concerned) the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Joglo house, two buildings--one in front of the main building, for welcoming guests/leasure, called pendopo. The main house is named ndalem. Limasan is a house for families of higher status. Rather similar with joglo's main building. But without pyramid-type dome. Kampung houses are of simple design, for common people

solution was the adoption of design from Europe—Art Nouveau & Art Deco—to combine with the cultural symbolism of Java (Hastuti, 2011, p. 159). About this growing Santri-entrepreneurs in terms of wealth, Setyaningrum et al. (2013, p. 2) described:

"Along with the trading success, Laweyan community became very rich.... known by the city society as a new wave of society class, a native Javanese middle-class society. This social class is either aristocrats (bangsawan/priyayi) (n) or commoners (wong cilik) .... considered as... a deviant lifestyle that (is) only known in Chinese and Arab people."

It was also in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the *saudagar Laweyan* or Santri-entrepreneurs of Laweyan took the initiative to set up a cooperative. They established *Persatoean Peroesahaan Batik Boemipoetra Soerakarta* (PPBBS) in 1935 (Anggraini, 2010, p. xxiii).

After independence, Setyawati & Abdullah (2011, p. 235) note that in the 1960s, 90 percent of residents at Laweyan village were engaged in batik makers. Then in the 1970s (early New Order government of Suharto), this gradually changed; there was a decrease in the number of producers because of the fact that printed batiks were made on a massive basis. The year 1998 marked the turbulence as a negative impact of the 1998 economic crisis, and in 2004 the re-birth of Batik Laweyan took place (Majah, 2015).

#### 3.2 Community-based Institution

The growth of batik industry at Laweyan has been closely linked to the residents living in the Sub-District or Kelurahan Laweyan in District Laweyan. And within such a setting, the industrialism of Laweyan has been community-based. This includes the facts that (1) the units of the undertaking are based on extended family; (2) increase of sense of cooperation, making use of Javanese values like *ojo dumeh sugih* (do not behave because of the pride of being rich), *tumindakake lali karo wong ringkih* (the deed is bad, neglecting the poor) (Wijaya, 2012, p. 66). The following is the development in contemporary Laweyan (Nugroho, 2013,p. 11). First, the general simple has been an operation of the workshop at the back of the homes, with the husband being responsible for the production processes while the wife plays the role of management and sales. The next one is the construction of larger homes and the provision of the living room for display. Such format is in use by Santri-entrepreneurs whose businesses are bigger and bigger. It is this development nowadays that people now can find luxurious homes of the juragan-s as one of the attractive tourist spots at Kampoeng Batik Laweyan. The community enjoys working for the Santri-entrepreneurs. Widigdo's empirical data on womenworkers aged 26 and over show that they work on a part-time basis and express their preference to keep on working there; they earn extra income along with performing their household chores (Widigdo, 2010, p. 109). This indicates a high expectation that their employees sustain their undertakings. The more complex institutionalization by big businesses is building a network with traders as middlemen who do the expansion of sales by way of having more access to the larger size of customers outside Laweyan.

The more developed is the fact that as the entrepreneurs are getting wealthier and wealthier, general wong cilik in the community began to give the higher rank of social status by calling the Bapak Pak Mase and the Ibu, mbok Mase. Large numbers of studies have already mentioned the new middle class of Mbok Mase, the noble person of wealthy Santri-entreprenuers at Laweyan. Eventually, there is first generation, second generation, and third generation of mbok Mase. A very brief explanation about this is worth making: A woman of wong cilik is called mbok or si mbok (mother)—that has the connotation of low status. Whereas Mas is used for the higher rank of males. Mbok Mase is then a combination of low status and higher status to name the mother—reflecting a gradual move from low class to higher class addressed to the Santri-entrepreneurs. Mbok Mase in Laweyan and Mbok Semok in Girilaya, Karanganyar, Central Java, are given new interpretation of Javanese women—that is women with modern ethos (Nurcahyanti, et.al., 2021).

#### 3.3 Contemporary Externalization

In contemporary Laweyan, there has been externalization of facilitation and partnership in development which involves A—B—G (academics—Business—Government), whereby efforts have been underway to ensure further progress of economic and socio-cultural development. The deliberation forum (FPKBL) has been instituted with the full support of the local government. Thoughtful ideas are expected to come up freely in deliberative democracy instead of domination by the local authority.

The impacts of re-birth of the industry have been observed by Wulandari (2013), who made an analysis of innovation—with four factors influencing it, i.e. (a) structure of the society, (b) norms, (c) opinion leader. From the gradual development from 2000 up to 2004 onward with contemporary impacts in the last ten years such as mushrooming of the batik making, the greater inflow of visitors and buyers, and the emergence of support businesses like hotels and restaurants.

Chart 01: Innovation in Laweyan Batik Industry & Its Impacts (2000 – 2013)

2000-2003	2004	2005—present (2013)	Impacts	
The youth's demands for	Setting up a deliberation	Revitalizing public utilities (in	Mushrooming of batik	
revitalizing the	forum: FPKBL	2007);	making; greater numbers	
undertakings; Alpha		setting up an institution for	of visitors coming to KBL;	
Fabela Pryatomono as the		(environmentally friendly Laweyan	further the construction	
opinion leader; concept		River (2006-7); detailed design of	of public facilities (hotels,	
of Heritage Tourist Spot;		KBL along with legal basis;	Resto, and home-stay)	
actions take: seeking		construction of Tugu Laweyan;		
financial support; loans		construction of the Haji Samanhudi		
		Museum by Yayasan Warna Warni;		
		preserving the Laweyan classical		
		homes (in 2010)		

Excerpted from Wulandari (2013, p.100)

An account of the above sustainability of KBL is worth making here from a theoretical perspective.

Chart 02 Santri-entrepreneurship Seen from Three Theories

Santri-entrepreneursing Seen from Three Theories				
	In the	West:	Santri-entrepreneurs at Laweyan	
	Calvinists/Protestantism's			
	entrepreneurs			
Weber's value rationality	Exists		Exists	
Weber's idea that value rationality	Only in the	West:	Eastern culture can exist	
can only be present in Western	Protestantism/Calvinism			
culture				
McClelland's n-Ach	Exists		Exists	
Boeke's theory of duality of the	Modern economy		A Mixed Modern—traditional economy.	
economy in Java				
Boeke's basis of sociological theory	Early theory of modernis	m: only	Boeke does not touch upon the revisionism	
	modern society can	have	theory of modernism: not only can modern	
	"modern" psychological tr	aits	societies have "modern" psychological traits	
	, _		but also "traditional" societies	

Some other positive impacts include these facts: (1) *Ndalem Gondosuli* is an example of a 1921 luxurious two-story house that was renovated. This building was reported to possess a bunker—used to be the place for putting the wealth and also for preventing the owner from the shooting of the Dutch weapons; and (2) the coming of college students studying entrepreneurship, as part of the complementary subject of life skills for undergraduate students.

Among the challenges include: (1) how the external input from the business sector is managed by FPKBL, the case of CSR program by PT Telkom to assist entrepreneurs in new technology invites the question. Kurniastuti et al. (2017) observed that the CSR program by providing training and some products to assist the entrepreneurs in improving in the digital industry at Laweyan are beneficial but more for bigger producers. The smaller makers of batik are encountered by costs to be borne; and (2) trademark for the products. Sardjono et al. (2015) look into the cultural lag that occurs among the entrepreneurs concerning trademark requirements and lack of information or lack of knowledge about government regulation on this matter. They also indicate the endangering status of local batiks as a consequence of the presence of bulk, cheaper products of importation of "seemingly" batiks that are coming mainly from China (Setiawati & Abdullah, 2011, pp. 34-35).

"This is an irony since the imported 'batik,' and the local batik products have an essential difference...., those imported ones are only 'textile' with batik pattern/motifs, and they do not possess the cultural characteristics and qualities which batik Indonesia has. Stating the textiles as batik will undervalue the prolonged existence of batik Indonesia's culture and traditions."

Next, it is the interplay between the dynamic of the business sector and power politics. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the time when the *Hindia Belanda* government or the Dutch Indies underwent economic crises as the impact of global crises: to maintain its

power of colonizing. One policy was weakening the social movement of indigenous people; one regulation was making blockage of access of batik material for BKL, mainly to split or divide strong collaboration between Sarekat Dagang Islam (DI) and Chinese traders (Mustakif & Mulyati, 2019). Soekarno's Program Benteng in 1950-1957 (under the jargon of self-reliance economy)—though generally unsuccessful—was successful in empowering and affirming batik traders: a good supply of material by the designated cooperative, GKBI, mushrooming new units, and mediating its market; all these resulted in making Pasar Klewer the center of batik business in the 1960s (Wijaya, 2012, p. 67). In contemporary Laweyan, in political contestation during the New Order government, Golkar (Party) had never won the election—thanks to the strong autonomy of the industry and relatively high level of political literacy. As to the local politics, there has also been a rivalry between Santri-segments and Javanist Muslims; within Santri-segments, Putro's data in 2009 reveals that the Santri-segments have managed to unite, burning parochial, conflicting matters (Putro, 2015, p. 91).

Nowadays, the government of the Municipality of Surakarta has been more facilitative, giving way for KBL to develop better. Facilitation and empowerment seem to be mandatory because of international recognition of the cultural legacy of KBL. One best practice in market-driven bureaucracy may be the presence facilitative mayor.

#### 4. Conclusion

The sustainability or steady growth of BKL is the result of the interplay between the dynamic of the business sector and power politics. It is evident that government policy can have positive or negative impacts on the industry. BKL had undergone a discouraging policy during the rule of the Dutch colonial, resulting in the decline of the batik industry at Laweyan. In the 1950 Soekarno' era, the government policy to facilitate economic development once had been made the batik industry to make steady growth. Nowadays, the government of the Municipality of Solo has been more facilitative, giving way for KBL to develop better. Facilitation and empowerment seem to be mandatory because of international recognition of the cultural legacy of KBL. One best practice in market-driven bureaucracy may be the presence facilitative mayor.

In Java-Laweyan, with the existence of Santri sub-culture, Santri-entrepreneurs manage to run business co-existing with their counterparts from Abangan and Priyayi segments—who are the society centering around Palace or State. The growth of Santri-entrepreneurs eventually makes up the duality of middle classes—one centering around the Palace and another on (local) Market/mosque. Typical change in urbanism and industrialism in the west industrializing nations is this: the belief in science and technology had replaced the belief in religion. But in Java-Laweyan, its industrialism incorporated modern values of Islam into its progress.

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The limitation of this study rests on our reliance on library research, and therefore further studies on the topic should incorporate empirical data into the accounts

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ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0279-3548

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