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*Article*

# Goyor Sarong: The Symbolic and Cultural Meaning of Gloved Contemporary Society

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**Abstract:** Goyor sarong is a cultural heritage of Tegal, Central Java made using Non-Machine Looms (ATBM) with characteristic motifs that describe the character of the Tegal people. This study aims to analyze the symbolic meaning of the goyor sarong and its existence in the gloved culture of contemporary Tegal society. The approach used in this study is qualitative with the type of research is descriptive qualitative. The informants interviewed were gloved cultural actors from diverse professions and socio-cultural backgrounds. Data were also obtained from literature studies including online media. The results of this study show that the typical motifs on the goyor sarong include lung, bottled, ceplok, prilik, and balian motifs. Goyor sarong are viewed from a symbolic point of view, have a symbiotic understanding between humans and symbolic objects, and understand the cultural meaning of goyor sarong to shape social life. The motifs in the goyor sarong are increasingly developing according to the times and consumer needs in the modern era. This is closely related to the gloved culture of contemporary Tegal society. The use of goyor sarongs in contemporary society usually indicates the strata and events attended. In the era of orientation development, the goyor sarong has more meaning than just symbolic elaboration. Sarong goyor as a culture has an important role for the community that depicts local fashion life in line with the issue of zero waste in the latest international fashion industry.

**Keywords:** contemporary; goyor sarong; symbolic

## 1. Introduction

The Tegal community as a contemporary society has recently begun to be reintroduced to the use of gloved culture both within the government, civil servants, teachers and the community. The use of goyor sarong, for example, for teachers and civil servants in Tegal district has begun to be carried out every Wednesday. Goyor sarong is a trend that was revived through Wednesday Goyor as official official clothing in Tegal regency. This is in line with the tradition of dress in Indonesia, which stipulates that March 3, 2019 as National Sarong Day.

Barthes (1973) Mentioning that clothing is a form of collective identity so that it contains meaningful symbols and signs. Moreover Barnard (2002) explained that the function of clothing is not only as body protection, but also as a means of communication. Every traditional clothing has a motif and character of traditional clothing that cannot be separated from the manufacturing technique. One of the techniques for making goyor sarongs is tie weaving. In contrast to the canting technique in moor batik which produces a variety of lines both straight and curved with clear contours like other drawing tools.

Ikat weaving according to Suherman (2009) is a woven fabric made using weaving techniques by means of weft yarn (basic yarn) or warp yarn (colored yarn) dyed before weaving. The threads that have previously been tied cannot be exposed to color, so after removing the fastener will appear

the desired patterns Called goyor sarong because the fabric chosen is soft and falls. The choice of cloth is very appropriate for use by the people of Tegal in the tropics. Goyor sarong are made from rayon yarn which has smooth and cold characteristics, this causes the sarong to be soft and fall off when used. Rayon yarn is made from cellulose or plant cell walls from dissolved cotton and wood pulp. Rayon yarn on the goyor sarong has high absorption, so in the coloring process it is easy to absorb, so that the color display on the goyor sarong looks bright. Fitrisari & Suryadi (2020) explained that the Goyor Sarong is a woven sarong made using a Non-Machine Loom (ATBM) or wood that is adapted to the procession of each step of making the Sarong. There are square frames that tie perforated wire through which warp or warp threads pass in ATBM.

Goyor sarong has several names, namely sarong ikat, sarong botolan, sarong balian, sarong alusan, sarong kasaran and sarong toldem (Fatmawati et al., n.d.). The first motif made by the people of Tegal is the Kembangan motif, and is a typical motif of the goyor sarong produced by the people of Tegal. The philosophy of the Kembangan motif according to Ambarwati (2013) adapted from the aesthetic art of flower arrangements that have charismatic value and are able to make connoisseurs of goyor sarong feel happy.

The goyor sarong is viewed in symbolic terms as having a symbiotic understanding between humans and objects. Specifically, the symbols in the goyor sarong reveal how the cultural significance of the goyor sarong is transmitted, received, and produced to shape social life. Through the understanding of the symbolic goyor sarong allows us to understand the content of the meaning of an object and its relation to the social world, but it can also be a method of analysis of understanding oneself: behavior, choices, tendencies, ideologies, tastes, etc. Through this study people can better understand themselves and if needed, evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the use, so as not to be trapped in simply consuming the construction of meaning for the sake of self-existence.

There are three basic things that are important in changing the culture of society, according to Taylor (1994) These basic things include: Modern education, Modern religion, and Colonialism. Colonialism certainly left a cultural imprint throughout the world (Barker, 2013). One of the impacts that led to changes in traditional clothing included the sarong culture that was almost abandoned by the contemporary Tegal People and switched to foreign clothing, this resulted in the growth of the same culture and the disappearance of local diversity. In the case of the goyor sarong, there are several motifs created due to the influence of modern religious presence and activity. The hegemony of power during colonialism also influenced the fashion industry.

Goyor sarong craftsmen not only create beautiful works, the resulting motifs also give meaning to their philosophy of life as Tegal people. Each region has its own characteristics in making sarongs, as well as in the craft of goyor sarongs. The inventiveness, taste, and charsa of the people of Tegal can be seen starting from weaving techniques, colors, patterns, and raw materials, as well as the usefulness of goyor sarongs. Goyor sarong is not only used as clothing in religious rituals, but has a function in various aspects of life such as showing the social status of the community which is also associated with beliefs and activities that are considered sacred. The ornamental variety elements in the goyor sarong are a form of expression of recognition of the existence, majesty, and greatness of God. So that each goyor sarong implies a deep meaning about life and everything.

This article explores matters related to the goyor sarong as a symbol and gloved culture in contemporary Tegal Society. Goyor sarong as a cultural symbol, the sarong is seen in terms of the social dimension and meaning attached to the sarong. Goyor sarong also have a fundamental value that distinguishes them from other sarongs. In addition, the goyor sarong also shows that the Tegal Community is a religious society. In this study, the application of the Tegal icon in the goyor sarong motif which functions as a cultural symbol and problems related to gloved culture in the Tegal Society which today has become a contemporary society is a novelty. The previous study only examined the manufacturing process and motifs on the goyor sarong without opening up the broad meaning of material culture and the current problems that occurred in the Tegal Community in preserving the goyor sarong. This study adopts Tegal-centric art, an ethnographic-based approach, influenced by Tegal's potential and natural resources that characterize the Tegal region as a city that has seas and mountains, giving a visual identity to the goyor sarong motif which will certainly help

this peeltian to be able to explore more broadly the meaning of material culture and gloved cultural problems in contemporary Tegal Society.

## 2. Results





### Goyor Sarong Motif

Goyor sarong in the process are not easy. Expertise and accuracy are needed in making the motif, besides that the meaning and philosophy of each motif stroke and color makes the goyor sarong quality in the result. The motifs made on the goyor sarong are always in line with the reality of life and the environment around the craftsman, the culture of the community is strongly reflected in the results of the motif.


The selling value of a goyor sarong can be seen from the motif, because the motif in a piece of cloth shows the value of art and philosophy. The goyor sarong motif always experiences development according to the times and consumer tastes. The goyor sarong motif focuses more on geometric and floral motifs. The color of the goyor sarong has various colors, dark colors influenced by the Islamic religious background which is quite strong and light colors that are adapted to the times and consumer demand (Nur Azizah, 2016).

Initially, the goyor sarong motif was only in the form of geometric motifs such as hook shapes, straight lines, triangles, quadrangles, rhombuses and flora motifs in the form of roses. Along with the times, the goyor sarong motif developed into an abstract motif that depicts the shape of an object, free and modern (Rosiviana, 2013). However, geometric motifs and flora (Kembangan) are still being developed by the ikat weaving craftsmen of the Tegal community to this day along with time and development. The various Goyor Sarong Motifs will be described in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Goyor Sarong Motifs.

No	Motifs	Name of Motif	Description
1		Lung	It is a goyor sarong motif in the form of flora, with the shape of flowers and leaves. Lung motifs are usually marketed specifically for the Bali area used at semshadow events.
2		Botolan	Lung's motifs are relatively small and more complicated, the manufacturing process is longer so the price is more expensive. The shape of the motif is a combination of geometric motifs and flora motifs. Bottled motifs can also be called eastern motifs.
3		Balian	Balian motifs look bigger, the process is easier and shorter, so the price is cheaper than other motifs.
4		Prilik	This type of motif is relatively small and spread on the surface of the sarong evenly and regularly, usually there is a more striking motif as the focus of attention (in the middle).



5		<b>Ceplok</b> The ceplok motif is not evenly distributed on the surface of the sarong, but only in certain parts with the direction of the motif lengthwise, the shape of the motif tends to be medium in size. This type of sarong is cheaper than other types of sarongs.
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**Symbolic Meaning of Goyor Casing**  
**Symbolic Meaning of flora motifs**



**Figure 1.** Goyor Sarong Flora Motif.

The flora motif in the goyor sarong has another archery called the development motif by the people of Tegal. The Kembangan motif consists of leaves arranged in such a way as to form a flower. The arrangement of leaves that are squeezed together to form a neat and harmonious arrangement of leaf blades.

Flora motifs that are generally found in goyor sarongs are rose motifs, ylang ylang, jasmine, and so on. These flowers are not only a symbol of beauty, but a symbol of elegance and purity. It can be described that the Tegal People are known as Javanese people who are friendly, polite, and also authoritative. These flower symbols are expected to always be remembered and implemented in every life of the wearer.

The flora motif on the goyor sarong usually consists of several geometric shapes stacked on top of each other in such a way, sometimes plus other lines such as zigzags on the stalk, and points on the pistil. So as to form a complete and beautiful flower to look at.

**Symbolic Meaning of Geometry**



**Figure 2.** Goyor Sarong Geometry Motif.

The shape of various rectangular or geometric archetypal motifs on the goyor sarong has a special meaning. Djoemena (2020) Argues the meaning of geometric shapes in the form of rhombuses, triangles, and rectangles in the goyor sarong which is built on vertical straight lines and transversely horizontally and intersects each other. The line means the strength and firmness of the rule order in Tegal society that governs vertical relations between people and their leaders, and horizontal relations between fellow people. In addition, there is a good relationship between the people of Tegal and the creator (God). The people of Tegal call the intersecting lines as fences that have the following functions: (1) guarding and protecting the house from external threats, (2) the fence serves as a separator between rights and bathil, a separator of one unit. Geometric shaped goyor sarongs can

serve as guards and protectors of honor for the wearer. In addition, by seeing people wearing goyor sarongs, a person's social strata will be known (Ki Haryo Enthus Susmono, February 20, 2023)

The opinion of the resource person provided an analysis that the meaning of geometric motifs is the relationship between good relations between fellow humans, as well as the vertical relationship between humans and their God. This statement is a manifestation of human existence as social creatures, religious beings in society with the aim of maintaining harmony in the environment, and is a dignity in culture.

Geometric motifs as a form of simplicity motifs on the sarong are built between vertical and horizontal straight lines that form a small and large square. This symbolizes the soul of the community who live an upright life through halal efforts according to their beliefs. Firm and tough stand, dislike of luxury (Madjid, 1983).

This opinion represents the character of the tegal community that is as it is and firm. This is in line with what was stated by Teguh Puji Harsono (Supervisor of the Cultural Council of Tegal Regency, January 10, 2023) who argued that the Tegal People are famous for their blakasuta attitude, blakasuta is the attitude and character of the Tegal People who are what they are and cannot pretend, have a firm and firm opinion.

Drs. Sisidiono as the DPRD of Tegal City (interview December 12, 2022), strengthens the opinion by explaining that the shape of the geometric motif originally came from long before the Dutch colonial period and before the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. This form of motif has a philosophical meaning, namely simplicity. The form of the motif is included in the goyor sarong motif with the name bottled or eastern. This quadrangle has the meaning of the essence of meaning in the fundamental culture of the four ethnicities in Tegal, namely the culture of mikul dhuwur mendem jero (respecting ancestral culture by taking the positive side and removing the negative side). The culture is framed in geometric motifs wrapped in four basic character things that humans need to have (justice, honesty, firmness, and simplicity).

This opinion emphasizes the moral value of humans as cultured beings who have the obligation to uphold good human values in society and avoid things that are prohibited in the rules of society. This meaning aims to return to human nature as a cultured being. The four basic values (fairness, honesty, firmness, and simplicity) are framed on the geometric motif of the goyor sarong, it is hoped that the people of Tegal always remember these moral values when wearing the goyor sarong.

The application of the meaning of the rectangular shape in developments in Tegal society is not limited to the goyor sarong. This geometric motif shape is known by another name timuran. Its application is found on the gate and logo of Tegal regency. This application as a symbol and identity of the Tegal community in particular.



**Figure 3.** Application of Geometric Motifs at Slawi Gate in Tegal Regency.



**Figure 4.** Application of Geometric Motifs to the Tegal Regency Logo.

### Symbolic Meaning of Abstract Motifs



**Figure 5.** Goyor Sarong Abstract Motif.

Abstract motives are free imaginations realized from an unusual form, or the embodiment of forms that have nothing in common from various objects, both natural and man-made objects. An abstract form is a shapeless or unreal form design (Suhersono, 2005).

Abstract motifs are younger in age than other motifs, this is closely related to the times in Tegal society which is increasingly modern in recognizing the beauty of art. Abstract motifs in making are classified as complicated motifs and require a long time, it is comparable to the price which is relatively expensive compared to goyor sarong with other motifs.

### 3. Discussion

#### Gloved Culture of Contemporary Tegal Society

Clothing is an important part of people's lives in culture. Clothing is no longer limited to the primary need to wrap the human body, but as a means of expressing symbols, identity, wealth, power, and so on (Barnard, 2002). Clothing is an important commodity that has been bought and sold privately for centuries (Gupta, 2019). Berkenaan dengan kebutuhan fashion, pernyataan Umberto Eco tentang "I speak through my cloth" With regard to fashion needs, Umberto Eco's statement about "I speak through my cloth" (Hebdige, 2002). Fashion is defined as a way of humans in creating a symbol and identity, this statement means that through clothes made humans can relate to each other human beings. This is in line with Barnard (2002) which states that the function of clothing is not limited to body armor but also a means of communication. When sarongs become part of community clothing in carrying out traditional events, religious rituals to weddings, sarongs have played an important role in community activities, so it can be stated that sarongs are part of the daily cultural practices of the local community.

The goyor sarong produced by the people of Kaladawa Village, Tegal Regency is a reflection of the symbol, identity, social strata, tastes, income, regional trade patterns, and religiosity of the wearer. Gloved culture in Indonesia cannot be separated from the culture of santri, this is in line with the many Islamic boarding schools in Tegal, both districts and cities of Tegal. Goyor sarongs have long been represented as part of Tegal's Muslim men's clothing tradition, especially since the influx of Islamic influence. This is the same as the explanation related to the sarong in Madurese culture as the oldest source says Islam began to be embraced by Javanese people in the 15-16 centuries (Pribadi, 2020)

The santri is identical to the sarong, the sarong is worn together with koko clothes (long shirts) and peci as a symbol and identity of the students when wearing sarongs in the lives of students is closely related to moral and intellectual values, The word 'intelligent' in the understanding of pesantren is a way for sarong culture to become a cultural movement for the development of science and civilization, not just an attribute of worship. The use of sarongs for students is still maintained today, even though they have finished learning from pesantren and still apply them in the outside

world (society). "pokokean denggo pas lagi neng sawah tok, work, ari lagi neng umah ya enakan sarungan, kaya dewek kiye balik maring umah ya sarungan" (Ki Atmo Tan Sidik interview on December 12, 2023).

Sarongs began to be introduced to children since they first learned to read the Quran around the age of 4-5 years, according to Ki Haryo Enthus Susmono (Dalang Tegal and Chairman of the Cultural Council of Tegal Regency. He had studied at a pesantren around the age of his teens and today sarong goyor remains a tradition of dressing both at home and during puppet performances. The wearing of goyor sarongs is often distinguished during prayer and during other activities (interview Ki Haryo Enthus Susmono February 20, 2024).

"The culture of wearing a goyor sarong in Tegal is different, the motifs on the goyor sarong have deep symbolic and philosophical meanings of life. Therefore, many people are jor-joran, mutual prestige, good, goyor sarongs that are identical to the residents of Tegal, namely prilik, bottled and Kembangan motifs. As well as the materials used are different, there are coarse materials and usion materials, both materials and motifs show different classes and prices. The finer the cellulose yarn made, the more complicated the prilik motif made, the more expensive the price of the goyor sarong, which is what becomes prestige and social strata in the Tegal Community. Not only because of good motives and materials, this certainly illustrates meaningful symbols and philosophies of life as well" (interview Ki Haryo Enthus Susmono February 20, 2024).

In the practice of religious rituals, the Tegal people wear dark goyor sarongs with simpler motifs, this has a philosophy symbolizing religiosity. However, some people who attend Tegal Community activities such as umah horses, village ruwat, weddings, usually Tegal People wear sarnung goyor with more crowded patterns and bright colors, this means about cheerfulness and togetherness (Teguh Puji Harsono Interview, January 10, 2023).

In addition, sarong is a very important and sacred clothing in Islamic tradition in Indonesia, especially in the Nahdatul Ulama (NU) group they are called 'sarongs' which is someone who is accustomed to wearing sarongs in everyday life (Abdio, 2019). This is also in line with the statement Zuhry (2018) that sarongs are identical to students in pesantren. Sarongs are believed to change a person's behavior to be better at behaving because of the fear of God and this is associated with the habit of Kyai NU who is accustomed to wearing sarongs. This gloved NU tradition was seen in the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia Prof. Dr. Ma'ruf Amin when he was present at the official event to commemorate Santri Day. Given that the symbol and identity of Islam in Indonesia are santri or sarungan, it is implied that both are interrelated with this context.

In line with research conducted by Kuntowijoyo (2017) regarding Madurese society which incidentally is similar to Tegal society with Muslim society, states that Madurese people are said to be able to leave Madura Island but cannot leave their sarong culture. Traditional Islamic ideology is deeply attached to the mental structure of Madurese society (Priyadi, 2020). This provides a view of life of the Tegal People that is inseparable from the value of Islam. It can be concluded that Islamic identity is an important component in society, obedience in carrying out Islamic rituals is reflected in their clothing, namely samper (long cloth), kebaya, and burgo (veil) for women and sarong (sarong) and songko (skullcap or peci) for men, have become symbols of Islam in rural areas (Wiyata, 2013).

But along with the times, the use of goyor sarong is not limited to men or women. Sarongs can be worn freely without being bound by gender identity and so on. The use of goyor sarong to the body is increasingly diverse and creative to the form of clothing designs and other accessories. Goyor sarong is matched with a variety of tops ranging from long and short sleeved shirts, t-shirts, Muslim clothing with modern fashion styles, sexy alluring, pop and others. For modern groups, the goyor sarong is not tied to any particular symbols and beliefs. The visual motif on the goyor sarong is the attraction in being creative in the fashion world.

Based on an interview with informant Drs. Sisdiono Ahmad (Tegal City DPRD), the use of goyor sarongs to be sewn as shirts or tops as official clothing, began to be implemented again, indeed it has not been fully realized, but in Tegal Regency every Wednesday civil servants and teachers are required to wear goyor sarong shirts as mandatory official clothing. This is a fairly new habit since the 2023 election. The elected regent Badrut Tamam also issued a circular dated May 27, 2023 ordering



his staff to wear goyor sarong clothing in the work environment. The letter was addressed to all heads of agencies/agencies/agencies, BUMD leaders, and school principals at all levels throughout Tegal Regency, including to appeal to the wider community, this aims to introduce goyor gloves and advance Tegal MSMEs (interview with informant Drs. Sisdiono Ahmad, December 12, 2022).

Goyor sarong are increasingly popular lately because of the variety of models and interesting ways to sell live on Tiktok, let's call it the name of the Instagram account @sarunggoyoralfajri sell directly from their factory, the TikTok live audience is presented with a view of the production of goyor sarong directly, where the process of making goyor sarong is carried out by Non-Machine Looms (ATBM) which have been inherited by ancestors for generations in Tegal. He sold live with his weavers and the weavers were seen wearing goyor sarongs during the live sales session. This shows that gloved culture is still attached to the people of Tegal. From sinilai, Goyor sarong was introduced to various countries.

#### 4. Materials and Methods

The approach used in this study is a qualitative approach with a type of qualitative descriptive research oriented to semantic theory and semiotics. Qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written words and observable behavior of a person (Bogdan, 1990). The results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2009). The characteristics of the qualitative approach are: (1) carried out in natural conditions, directly to the data source and the researcher is the key instrument; (2) qualitative research is more descriptive (Arikunto, 2006). The collected data is in the form of words or symbols so that it does not emphasize numbers; (3) qualitative research puts more emphasis on process than product; (4) qualitative research emphasizes meaning more (Creswell, 2014)

In this study, data collection was carried out by: (1) interviews, researchers held questions and answers with goyor sarong craftsmen in Kaladawa Village, Tegal Regency to obtain clear information about matters related to the problem studied; (2) observation, direct observation in the field of activities related to the problem raised; (3) documentation, researchers documented photos and pictures of goyor sarongs as evidence of Tegal's typical sarong from Kaladawa Village, Talang District, Tegal Regency.

Data analysis conducted in this study is: (1) data collection, researchers collect data that will be used as material for research (goyor sarong shape from Kaladawa Village); (2) data reduction, researchers reduce data in accordance with the problem studied, namely symbols on the goyor sarong motif and gloved culture of the Tegal people; (3) data presentation, the researcher presents data in the form of a goyor sarong in Kaladawa Village which has 5 (five) motifs, namely lung, bottled, balian, prilik, ceplik motifs; (4) drawing conclusions, namely the researcher examined the results of the five forms of typical motifs of goyor sarongs in Kaladawa Village, then found the meaning of each of these sarongs. Checking the validity of data is carried out with diligence of observation, discussion with peers.

#### 5. Conclusions

Goyor sarong is a cultural heritage from the Tegal area, Central Java, Indonesia. Goyor sarong is a type of ikat woven sarong made using Non-Machine Looms (ATBM), and has other names, namely tie sarongs, bottled sarongs, balian sarongs, alusan sarongs, rough sarongs and toldem sarongs. The motifs produced on the goyor sarong of the Tegal community include lung, bottled, ceplik, prilik, and balian motifs. Goyor sarongs are viewed from a symbolic point of view having a symbiotic understanding between humans and symbolic objects, as well as understanding the cultural meaning of the goyor sarong, transmitted, received, and produced to form social life. The motifs in the goyor sarong are increasingly developing according to the times and the needs of consumers in the modern era. This is closely related to the gloved culture of contemporary Tegal society. The use of goyor sarongs in contemporary society usually indicates the strata and events attended. The people of Tegal along with the times still exist to wear and preserve goyor gloves in their daily lives, as evidenced in local regulations passed for government environments, educators,

civil servants, and government officials carried out on "Wednesday Goyor" which is an obligation to wear uniforms made of goyor gloves during working hours. Awareness of the meaning of sarong was reintroduced by the people of Tegal, especially fashion lovers. In the era of orientation development, the goyor sarong has more meaning than just symbolic elaboration. Goyor sarong as a culture has an important role for the community that depicts local fashion life in line with the issue of zero waste in the latest international fashion industry.

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