

# Sense of Place of the Batik Trade Center in the Arab Village Sugihwaras Pekalongan, Indonesia

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## Abstract

*Sense of place is a form of physical meaning and activity connection that creates attachment and satisfaction to the environment. This study aims to build an understanding of space based on the experiences felt by the informants regarding the attachment to place to enrich the sense place theory with phenomenological research methods.*

*The 4 informants were community leaders and batik traders. The object of research are physical objects, activities and values in society. The results of the analysis show that there are different spatial themes of the connection between places, activities and meanings at the center of the batik trade in the Arab Village Sugihwaras. The finding is that there is a spatial shift in the batik trading area from Jalan Surabaya to Jalan Agus Salim. The research recommends that efforts are needed to strengthen the character, especially on Jalan Surabaya to strengthen the sense of place.*

**Keywords:** Place, Shift, Batik trade, Sugihwaras Arab Village, Spatial

## Introduction

Arab Village Sugihwaras is one of the ethnic settlements where the majority of its inhabitants are descendants of Arabs Hadramaut. Founded in 1854, by the Arab Hadramaut merchant, Sayyid Husein bin Salim bin Abu Bakar bin Achmad bin Husein bin Umar bin Abubakar Alatas, it still continues to this day and is grouped by the Dutch according to ethnicity with Vijkenstelsel politics (Dirhamsyah, 2014). Furthermore, the Arab Village Sugihwaras is also known as the center of the batik trade in Pekalongan, where the community still adheres to Islamic values and teachings (Indraswara *et al.*, 2022). Arab Hadramaut immigrants never took their wives with them when they went abroad, so they married local women; a new and different culture was born as a result of assimilation and acculturation (Berg, 1989; Kesheh, 2007; Bahafduallah, 2010).

Cultural diversity from the assimilation and acculturation of Arab Hadramaut culture with the local culture creates a new culture commonly called *genius loci* (Almuzadin, 2018). Local strength can shape the uniqueness of form and space, namely the strength of tolerance, strength in adaptation and physical character (Sudarwani, Purwanto and Rukayah, 2022).

Christian, (1980) explains that *Genius Loci* is defined as local uniqueness or local potential that distinguishes one place from another (Christian, 1980). The unique blend in the Arab village Sugihwaras forms a distinctive character, both physically and non-physically (Hendro and Sari, 2018). *Genius Loci* can be excluded from local natural resources, landscapes, and architecture (Lianto *et al.*, 2021). Changes in patterns from the beginning of the establishment to the present leave different traces and characters (Purwaningsih, Arifin and Fauzy, 2022). This strong character facilitates the orientation and identification of the Arab Village. The character and historical value of the Arab Village makes the area designated as a conservation area in the Pekalongan city regulations and has been designated as an area that has historical and spatial meanings, one of which is Jalan Surabaya.

The strengthening of the character of the Sugihwaras Arab Village carried out by the Pekalongan City Government is in line with the eleventh SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) that have been set by the United Nations, which relates to sustainable cities and communities. It includes a community engagement program with the target of strengthening efforts to protect and preserve the world's cultural heritage. Pekalongan is one of the centers of batik producers on the North coast of Java which is growing rapidly (Paramanandana, Lutfi and Ayundasari, 2021). Since October 2, 2009, batik has received recognition from UNESCO as a human heritage for oral and non-material culture (Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity) and has become the identity of Indonesia. Pekalongan City won the title of "World Creative City" from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the "Crafts and Folk Arts" category and became a member of the "World Batik City" network (Setiawati, Nursiam and Zulfikar, 2016).

The characteristics of the Arab Village as a batik trading center are still clearly visible with 16% of the businesses in the Sugihwaras Arab village running a batik business. The main trade in the Sugihwaras Arab Village are batik and garments which have become the identity of the Pekalongan Arab village, especially since 1950 as the peak of its glory until now, (Kridarso, 2017; Wasino; Hartatik, 2017). In the Sugihwaras Arab Village, it is very clear that the area is still the center of the batik trading area. This can be seen from the number of residential houses that also function as places of business which the local community calls *omahe Bos'e*, consisting of *omahe Jragan batik* and *omahe Bakul batik*. Residential houses whose activities are integrated with the place of business are usually called productive houses (Kridarso, 2019). The productive house has become a landmark in the Arab village, especially on Jalan Agus Salim.

The existence of the trade center is a manifestation of the relationship of the three main elements of the place (constituents of place), namely the physical attributes of the environment, the activities that occur, and the human conception of the physical environment which is then referred to as a sense of place (Najafi and Shariff, 2011). The form of this connection produces meaning in the form of attachment and satisfaction with the environment (Lewicka, 2013). Therefore, in this study, the formation of a sense of place in the Sugihwaras Arab Village is defined in the unity of activity (community activities related to the function of space), physical form (regional morphology) and the meaning formed (community's perception of utilizing the physical environment for activities) (Rahadiyanti *et al.*, 2019). Sense of place can be realized by using direct feeling or pictures of a place. Using photos can make people think of place and feeling about the sense of place (McCunn and Gifford, 2021).

Sense of place is related to the meaning that a place gives. Meaning in the sense of place can be done by humans by mapping a place and assessing the place by filling out a questionnaire. Research shows that small shops create a less sense of place, while recreational areas are able to create a greater sense of place (Westerholt, Acedo and Naranjo-Zolotov, 2022). Sense of place will affect human behavior towards a place. Planning a place as a place for human activity needs to pay attention to human behavior. Sense of place will contribute to improving the quality of space planning (Žlender and Gemin, 2020). Sense of place affects the quality of social relations among migrants. Migrants' desire to interact socially is influenced by sense of place, but loyalty to lifestyle does not affect sense of place. Desire and loyalty to lifestyle have different values in creating a sense of place (Xie and Huang, 2022). Sense of

place also influences a person's decision to work in a place. Lack of experts in one place can occur when the community does not want to leave their territory to contribute to other places. Recruitment of experts can be constrained due to excessive sense of place (Gillespie *et al.*, 2022).

Sense of place connects three main elements of place, namely the physical attributes of the environment, the activities that occur and human understanding of the physical environment (Relp, 1976; Canter, 1977; Groat and Wang, 2013). Determining the type of an area needs to look at the sense of place in the area. In the spatial plans of Pekalongan and the building and environment planning of the Jetayu area, the Kampung Arab area has been designated as a conservation area with an emphasis on Jalan Surabaya which has historical value and meaning and deep ties to the community, especially as a center for the batik trade, a center for community and religious traditions and the main road that represent the Sugihwaras Arab Village. Changes in Sugihwaras raise questions based on current conditions, especially in the batik trading area on three attributes, namely physical, both social and economic activities and understanding which is the result of the meaning of physical and social attributes.

## Review of Literature

In previous research on the sense of place in Kampung Kota Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a search was carried out by looking at the relationship between spatial configurations in Kampung Kota. The village area is linear in shape along the river, in addition, the existing space is adequate for activities, as well as the perception of the residents of the urban village on the understanding of space, that creates attachment to the physical and social environment, using typomorphological method (Hutama, Kuffer and Bosch, 2016). The research on sense of place in the Arab village of Pasar Kliwon was conducted with the aim of knowing the conservation efforts of the Kampung Arab area of Pasar Kliwon Surakarta, Indonesia and its application as a living museum. The research was conducted on the morphological aspects of the area, economic activities along the main road corridor, and the meaning of its socio-cultural values (Bazher, Handayani and Iswati, 2017). The research on sense of place in a home industry village in Pathuk, Ngampilan, Jogjakarta, Indonesia aims to improve the sense of place in the village using space syntax analysis, with the finding of a low level of sense of place in the border area and a moderate sense of place in the space in the middle residential area (Arfanto, 2016). Sense of place research was also conducted in Kampung Arab Malang to formulate criteria for sense of place. To strengthen the findings, the research was conducted using the case study method. It was found that the sense of place in Kampung Arab Malang is quite low, so it takes the integration of morphology, activity and understanding of space to strengthen it (Kurniasanti, 2018).

From previous research using various methods, both qualitative and quantitative, it was found the importance of sense of place in residential areas as a factor forming the character of a place. The importance of integration between places, activities and understanding of space can increase people's perceptions of places. In previous studies, in-depth research has not been carried out using phenomenological research methods that build space based on the perceptions of its occupants. The purpose of this research is to reveal the sense of place, by knowing the relationship of place attributes that are understood by the community, daily activities, values, and meanings that exist in the community in the Arab Village of Sugihwaras Pekalongan, Indonesia.

## Research Method

This study uses a phenomenological qualitative approach (Creswell, 2013), to build a conception of space based on the experiences felt by the informants, to enrich the theory of spatial transformation in Sugihwaras Arab Village Pekalongan. In this study, a grand tour was carried out to explore the object of the research, estimate the units of observation, look for samples or informants, and prepare all equipment including permits that would be required. The next stage is to do a mini tour to make observations on the units that have been set to find physical data and non-physical data in the form of interviews. The research conducted in-depth

observations and recordings to obtain phenomena for units of information in the form of values, activities and physical artifacts.

The search for resource persons used the Snowball effect so that resource persons who knew in detail the Sugihwaras Arab village Pekalongan could be gathered. The key informants selected were people who knew details about the development of the Arab Village. Some of the informants were: Mrs. Puji Astuti, Head of the Department of Batik University Pekalongan, her thesis is about Arabic houses in Pekalongan, and focused on socio-cultural factors that affect the arrangement of houses in Arab villages. Mr. Muhammad Farid, Former Head of Sugihwaras Village, Secretary of East Pekalongan District and one of the Sayyids (39th descendant of Prophet Muhammad). Mr. Naseem, 4th generation one of the founders of the Arab village (he is the 41st descendant of the Prophet Muhammad) and lives and does business in Sugihwaras Arab Village. Mr. Dirhamsyah, Historian and humanist of Pekalongan.

## **Findings and the Discussion**

### *Physical*

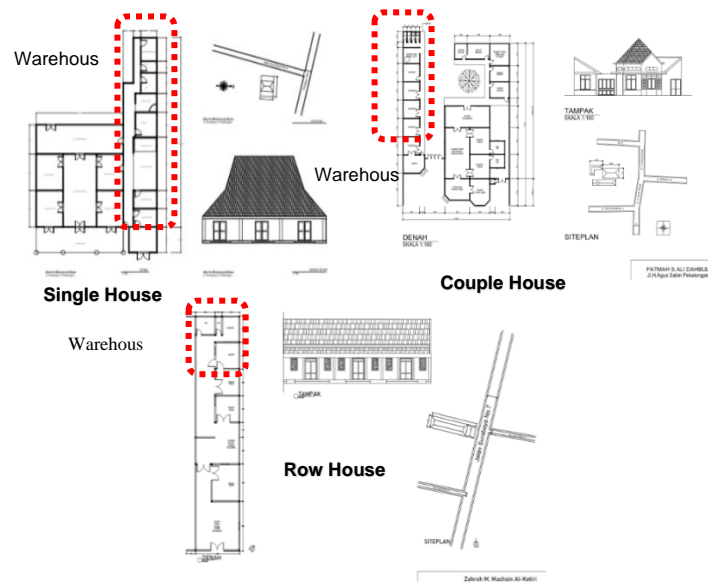
Arab settlements are located in Sugihwaras, Klego and a small part of Poncol. As said by Mr. Muhammad Farid as follows "...Actually, Arab village, that Arab village... is specifically in Sugihwaras, especially on Jalan Surabaya.... Because there are Arabs living there, because there were early clans living there...". This is confirmed by Habib Naseem's statement as follows: "So, the Arab villages are Jalan Surabaya, Jalan Semarang and Jalan Bandung. That's all..... Main Street is Jalan Surabaya..... Pekalongan Poncol is not included. Arab village is Sugihwaras, Jalan Surabaya, Semarang and Bandung."

Settlements are formed by main roads with a grid pattern and are connected by neighborhood roads and culdesac alleys. For more details can be seen in Figure 1. Settlements in Arab villages are relatively organized and dominated by trading activities along the main road. The settlements are inhabited by ethnic Hadramaut Arabs, Chinese and Javanese. The socialization of these three ethnic groups is quite good and can live side by side in one area. In general, buildings along the road have a function as a place of business other than as a residence. There are many mosques in Arab villages, which implies Muslims as the majority who live in the Arab Village area. Some of the houses in Sugihwaras, especially those on the side of the highway, have been purchased by ethnic Chinese to be used as a place for business development or as a residence. Meanwhile, ethnic Arabs moved to the Klego area near Sugihwaras.

The houses in Arab villages are functioned as warehouses, shops, shop houses and some are only occupied as household activities. The height of the building ranges from 1 to 2 floors, generally the distance between the house and the road is almost non-existent, the door of the house is right on the edge of the road. It consists of a single, row and couple housing (figure 2).



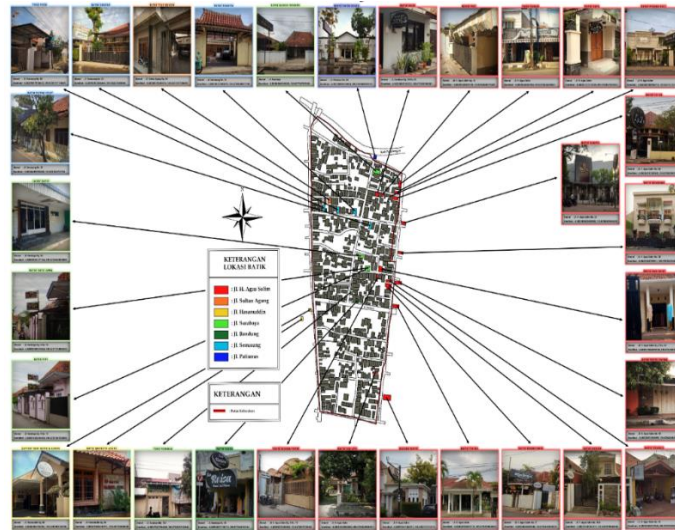
**Fig. 1:** Road Patterns in Sugihwaras Village Pekalongan  
Source: Redrawn from google earth, 2021



**Fig. 2:** Residential House in Kampung Sugihwaras Pekalongan  
Source: Redrawn from Astuti, 2002

Changes that occur in Arab villages encourage a change in the function of the residence to become a productive house. Activities and changes in trading patterns support changes in the space in residential houses. Productive houses/ *Omahe Jragan Batik* and *Bakul Batik* in Arab villages characterize the settlement area as Batik Village. Batik trading has also become the majority of people's businesses in Arab Village from the past until now. The exploration began by observing the distribution area of the batik business in the Arab Village of Sugihwaras Pekalongan. For more details, the distribution map of batik businesses in Arab villages can be seen in Figures 3 and 4.





**Fig. 3: Omahe Jragan Batik Distribution Map**

Source: Author, 2022



**Fig. 4: Omahe Bakul Batik Distribution Map**

Source: Author, 2022

### *Economy*

In general, the people of Sugihwaras work as traders, civil servants, and work in the informal sector. Groups in society have no effect on the work they do. This is reinforced by the statement of Mr. Dirhamsyah as follows: “Arabs are traders, the producers are indigenous people. Indeed, from the beginning it was used as a trading center. “In Arab ethnicity, it is women who are more successful. There are many Arabs who do batik business, the important factor is the wife. wife is the main person, but stays at home. If the man hangs out a lot, the one who manages the business is the wife...”. This characteristic is also influenced by the initial intention of arrival to spread Islam and trade (table 1).

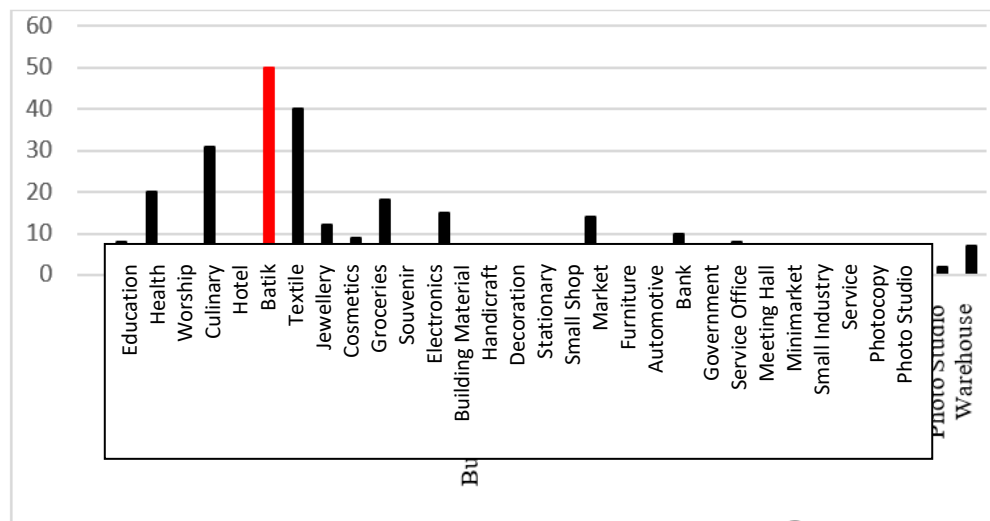
**Table 1.** Comparison of Businesses in Arab Village

Source: Author, 2022

Street	Houses	Business
Jln. Hasanudin	36 units	51 units
Jln. Agus Salim	53 units	58 units
Jln. Sultan Agung	38 units	41 units
Jln. Surabaya	41 units	24 units

Jln. DR. Cipto	5 units	19 units
Jln. Bandung	21 units	22 units
Jln Semarang	41 units	15 units
Jln. Patiunus	26 units	14 units
Gang I	12 units	3 units
Gang II	19 units	3 units
Gang III	35 units	7 units
Gang IV	14 units	4 units
Gang V	19 units	3 units
Gang VI	15 units	4 units
Gang VII	11 units	6 units
Gang VIII	17 units	5 units
Gang IX	23 units	15 units
Gang X	16 units	4 units
Gang XI dan XII	43 units	16 units
Total	485 units	314 units

The businesses in Kampung Arab are very diverse, from culinary businesses, hotels, garments, IT, furniture, etc. (figure 5).



**Fig. 5:** Types of Business in Arab Village

Source: Author, 2022

### Social

In general, Arab ethnic groups gather according to their clan or kinship in one area. Habib Naseem said this as follows: "Usually, people who come to Pekalongan go to a place where there are already Arabs, especially the same clan to make things easier. So, the Arabs of Pekalongan are looking for a place where their clans gather, or they knew in Hadramaut. They are looking for the same origin, that way they feel safe.....". In Arab villages there are social organizations that are divided into 2: the descendants of the prophet, namely Al Rubithoh and non-prophets, namely al-Irsyad. In the Arab village Sugihwaras, the social system is implicitly still divided into several groups, namely the Sayyid group, the non-Sayyid group, the Chinese and the Javanese, although in their daily life they still mix with one another. In the Arab village kinship system, lineage has a very strong influence. And affect other social systems such as marriage. Mr. Muhammad Farid in the Group Discussion Forum (FGD) stated:

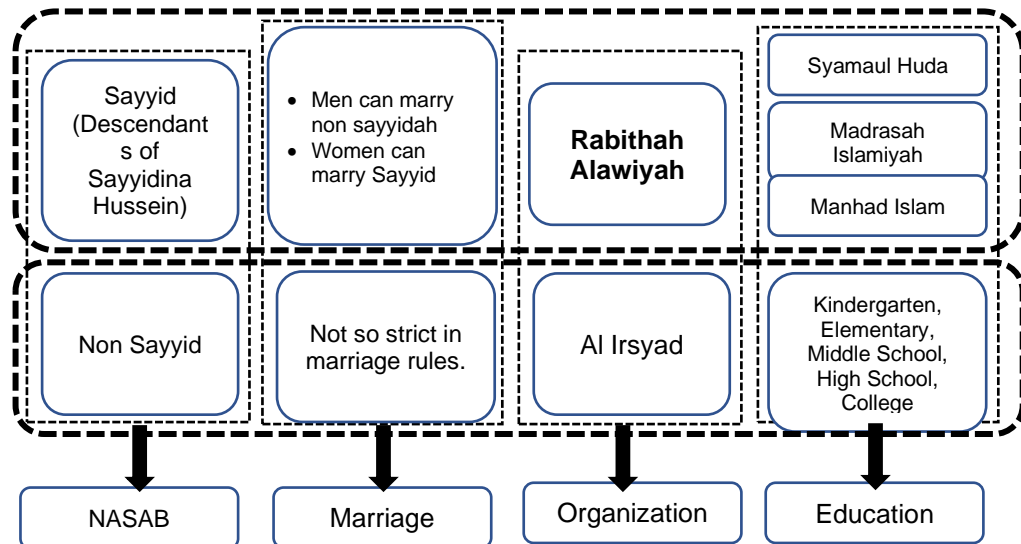
"Almost on average in Indonesia are descendants of Sayyidina Husein. Lineage is important, there is an institution called Al Maqtab Adaimi, which is the office that carries out the census as the main book of Arab descent and compiles genealogical books. Arabs

are divided into Alawite and non-Alawiyah. Alawi because grandson of Alawi. Usually, people say Habaib. The Masyayik are usually called sheikhs and they form their own association. for non-alawiyin gathered at al-Irsyad. The alawites founded the Al-Rabitoh Foundation”

Hadramaut custom in marriage is very strong. A Sayyid's daughter cannot marry a non-Sayyid, although Islam does not prohibit such marriage. This is done to maintain the purity of the descendants of the Prophet SAW. Sayyid families and women prefer not to marry than to marry non-Sayyid descendants. As for the non-sayyid group, this unwritten rule is not very binding. Habib Naseem stated in the forum as follows:

"That's what I mean, myself included. It's easier for men, for women it's different, and that's in every nation. Now a lot of families have done that (mixed up). In fact, the Arabs were the first foreigners when they came here to marry an Indonesian. Never have an Arab come here married to an Arab woman, never."

The relationship between social strata and community activities can be seen in Fig. 6.



**Fig. 6:** Community Social in Arab Village  
Source: (Indraswara *et al.*, 2022)

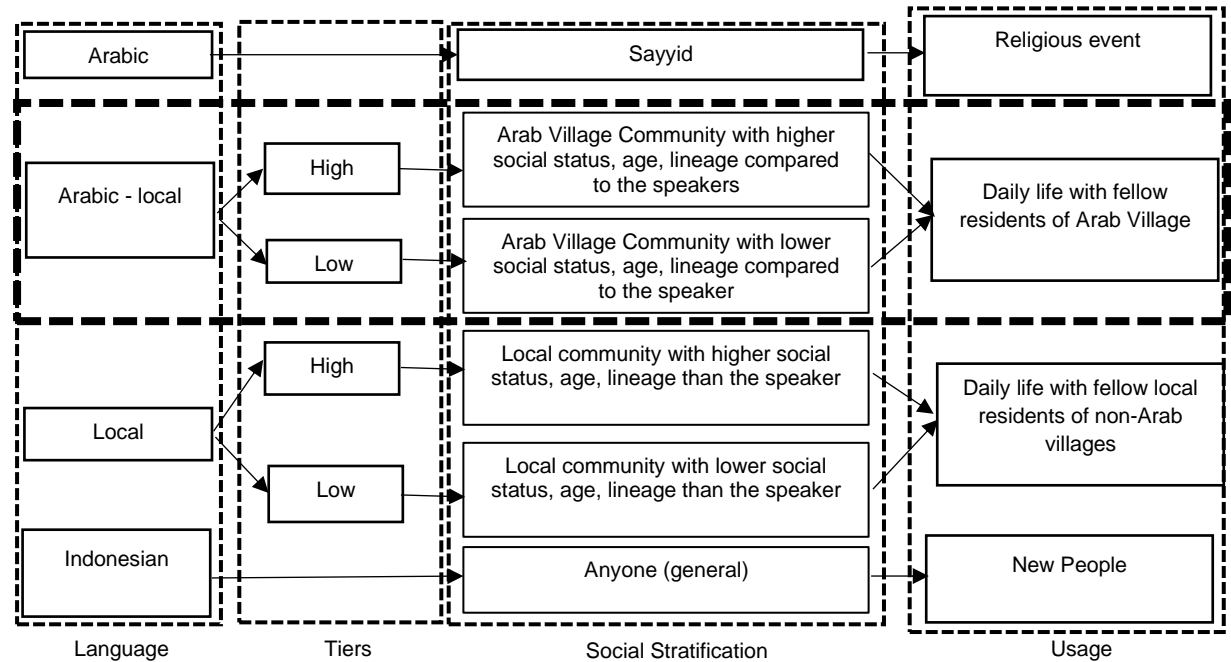
Education is the main thing in the Arab Village Sugihwaras as stated by Habib Naseem as follows:

"The most important thing for Arabs is education, so Muhammad bin Hisham founded Shama'ul Huda, he is also a newspaper editor from Yemen. He came to Pekalongan only to build a school, educate teachers and then return to Yemen. Furthermore, the *Madrasah Islamiyah* (MI) belongs to Sayyid Husein. Have you ever heard of the name Guru Tua in Palu? He has 22,000 branches in eastern Indonesia. Before going to Palu he was a teacher in Pekalongan. That's proof that education is prioritized, the last time Ma'had Islam was founded whose teachers were from "Ma'had Islam"

For education, it was first established by Muhammad bin Hisham (Syama'ul Huda). He came to Pekalongan only to build a school, educate teachers and then return to Yemen. Subsequently, *Madrasah Islamiyah* (MI) was established, whose teachers were from Syamaul Huda, and finally, Ma'had Islam, whose teachers were from MI. There are places for Al-quran education in mosques and prayer rooms that teach Islamic lessons and read the Al-quran. In addition, it also teaches knowledge for managing the environment, building design, materials and a deep understanding of Arabic culture and being able to acculturate with local culture.



“What is unique in Pekalongan is the local language. There is a mixed language of Arabic and local Javanese in Pekalongan. Arabs can't speak Arabic if they don't go to schools that teach Arabic. Unlike the Lebanese Arabs who came during the Victorian era, they can now speak Arabic. In addition, the Pekalongan Arabs outside the Indonesian language are still medok. That's why some researchers like Mr. Muhandis have researched the languages between Arabic and local languages into one. He is a lecturer at STAIN”



### *Sense of Place Findings*

**Table 1.** Sense of Place Findings  
Source: Author, 2022

Information	Theme
Colonial style imitates Dutch officials	Space as a place of self existence
There are single houses, couple houses and row houses	
Single house is the most luxurious house	
Single house has a large yard	
House turned into a place of business completely	
House sold and torn down by new owner	Space as a place of change/ Mangkliye
House follows the current building style	
House damaged because of the age factor	
House demolished or renovated because of the age factor	
Until the 1970s, trade took place on roadsides and terraces of houses	
Man offering goods by the roadside	Space as a place for changing trading patterns
Woman in the house serving sales	
Serving wholesale sales outside the island and abroad	
After 1970, many began to sell retail by opening shops to attract buyers	
Offline sales are done by the older generation	
Online sales are carried out by their children or employees	

2015s began to recognize internet technology	
The covid -19 pandemic drives sales acceleration with the internet	
The increase in sales volume was addressed by opening stores elsewhere	
Work with resellers for online sales	
There are shops that sell several brands in one place because it is a mother and child business.	
Marketing out of town or abroad through relatives	Space as a place of kinship (nasab)
Business managers are known relatives	
Buyers can buy wholesale if there is a guarantor or is a relative	
Business is a hereditary legacy from his ancestors	
One family can have different batik brands and shops	Space as a place to live and work
Accommodating relatives and being taught business	
Additional space in front of the house	
A shop attached to a house building	
The business development space for the Jragan Batik	Space as a place of acculturation
Citizens of Arabic descent who speak Indonesian or cannot speak Arabic except those who study in formal schools	
There is an art studio Cahyo Kedhaton which is a blend of Arabic-Javanese	
There are Arabs who wear Javanese clothes (beskap) and wear them everyday	
There is a gamelan and sing sholawatan	Space as a place to share
The performance is held in a public place with players from Javanese and Arab ethnicities	
Sayyid male marriage can be with all groups and ethnicities	
There is a local language as assimilation of Arabic and the local language is called Arabic-klego	
Every 15th of Ramadan, many people give alms to the poor and workers	Space as a place to share
Generally, workers serve for life or as long as they are still able because they are comfortable	
The good and bad of Arabs can be seen from how often their workers/laborers resign	
Nutupi, which is giving charity and as a sign of the Eid holiday	
Mocoki, payment of workers' wages every Thursday in preparation for Friday's holiday	
Generous attitude to workers who are kind to the surrounding community	
Live in modesty	

## Conclusions

The characteristics of the Arab Village were physically formed during the Dutch colonial era so that the spatial pattern and building style followed the style of that era. Trading was the original intention of the Arab Hadramaut to migrate and batik is a product characteristic of Pekalongan City which has been recognized worldwide. The values adopted are based on Islamic values which are the traditions and beliefs of the Arab Hadramaut ethnicity. These characters make physical attributes, meanings and activities make a distinctive space in an Arab village. Along with the times, from the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that there has been a change in the form of a shift in batik trading activities from Jalan Surabaya to Jalan Agus Salim. Place that is formed from physical form, meaning and activity will certainly change with changes in activity in the physical container.

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