

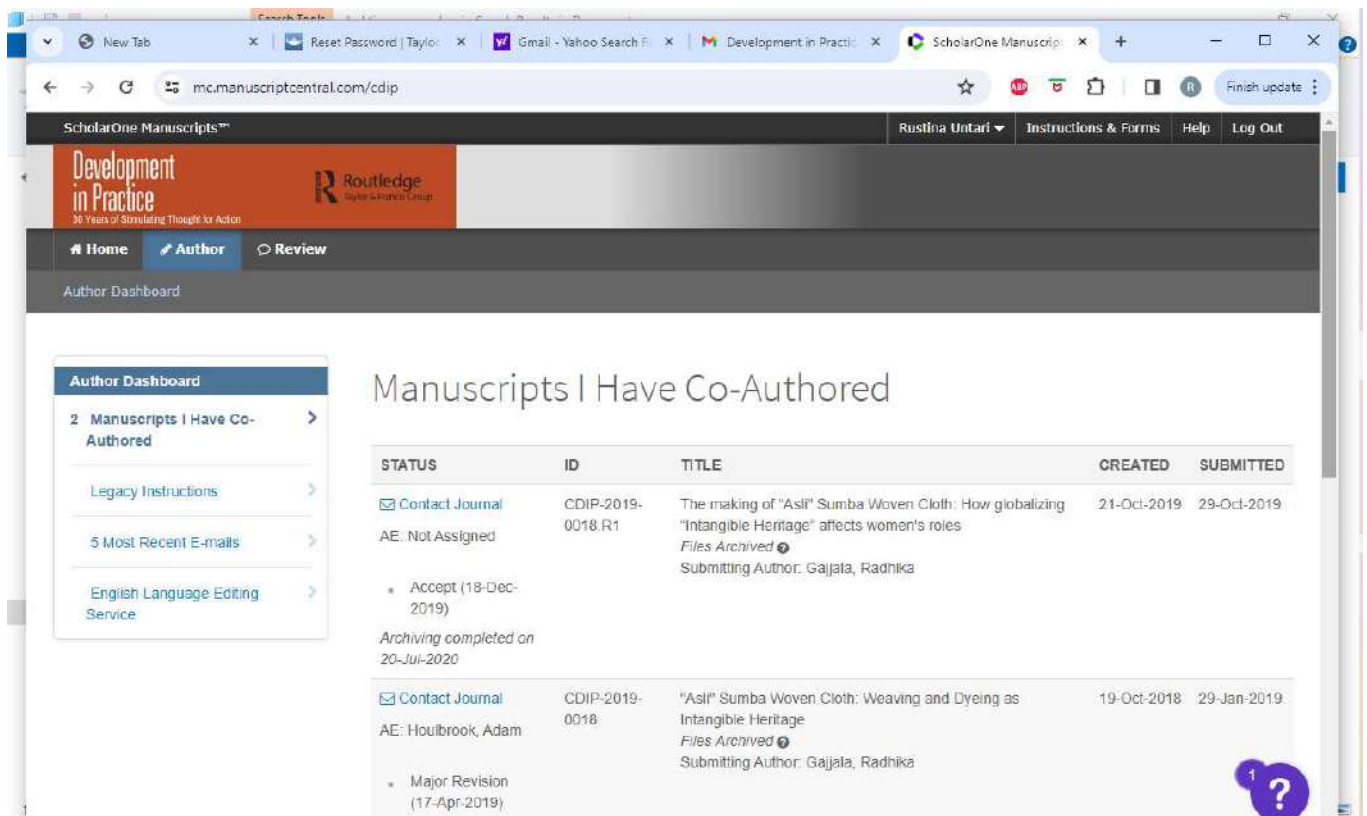
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18-Dec-2019

Dear Dr. Gajjala,




I am writing about your revised paper entitled 'The making of "Asli" Sumba Woven Cloth: How globalizing "Intangible Heritage" affects women's roles' which you recently submitted to Development in Practice. On behalf of the Editor, I am happy to tell you that we would like to accept it for publication.

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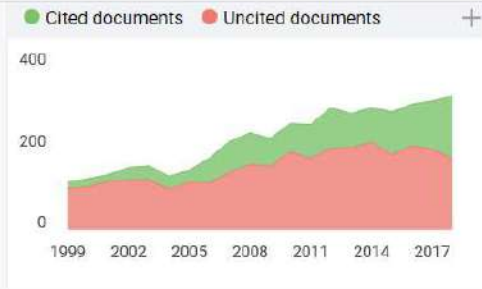
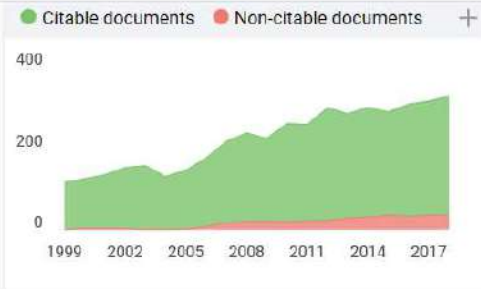
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"Asli" Sumba Woven Cloth: Weaving and Dyeing as Intangible Heritage

Journal:	<i>Development in Practice</i>
Manuscript ID	CDIP-2019-0018
Manuscript Type:	Article
Keywords:	Technology, Labour and livelihoods, Globalisation (inc trade, private sector), Gender and diversity
Abstract:	In this article the co-authors examine a case study of Sumba woven cloth through field research and interviews with weaver community members in Lambanapu, located in Waingapo, Capital of East Sumba. Our field work was done in summer of 2018 and the work we draw on to examine the themes from our field work is based in the emerging visibility of Sumba woven cloth in the context of post 1990s globalization in Indonesia. We examine shifts in traditions of weaving in response to a global tourist desire for the product.

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Introduction

Sumba is a remote island in the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara – “Nusa Tenggara Timur” (NTT) – closer to Perth, Australia in location and climate than to what is normally thought of as “Indonesia”. While economically it is a poorer region of Indonesia and weaving itself is not a significant portion of the region’s gross national produce, Sumba weaving is known internationally and desired by tourists and art/craft collectors worldwide.

Historically, the weaving has been done by women of the community mostly in connection with community rituals and storytelling and for use value. Some researchers have suggested that the recognition and restoration of indigenous women’s weaving knowledge through support of their efforts to pass it to future generations would enhance sustainable use of natural resources (Mikkelsen 2005). At the same time, the role of women as leaders in weaving communities is receding as men enter as business leaders and designers in order to introduce new marketing practices for a global market. Even so, the narrative about authenticity – which also serves as a neocolonial tourist gaze – is produced through the telling of stories about how these women are keepers of “asli”¹ (original) knowledge, and how they reproduce these through tacit

¹ Asli means Original or Genuine in Bahasa Indonesia. It is used as an adverb for the object.

The “ASLI” sumba weaving is defined as weaving which is processed according to the production process that has been taught from generation to generation. Based on this, the original sumba weaving has four criteria of authenticity:

1. The basic material is cotton that is the result of Sumba harvest
2. The process starts from spinning cotton into yarn. It is colored and woven in a particular way.
3. Coloring is done with natural colors (natural dyes) using plant coloring agents, roots, seeds, soil and others that are processed naturally following the rules used by ancestors for generations.
4. Design, motifs traditional motifs transferred from generation to generation.

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3 practice. Even as these processes and stories about women and their tacit practices as well as
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5 community traditions are narrated (and even staged) as a way to attract tourism – the epistemic
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7 foundations of how this knowledge is reproduced through community praxis are displaced. Thus
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9 in a manner similar to that of traditional midwifery in much of the global north, the women’s
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11 knowledges and expertise are slowly being displaced in a process of exoticization and re-
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13 narration (for a westernized tourist gaze), where these women’s skills will no doubt eventually
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15 be characterized as unscientific “old wives tales” (Dalmiya and Alcoff 1993, 218).
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19 This paper therefore examines how the contradiction of implicit devaluing of women’s
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21 knowledges as “old wives tales” happens even as traditional knowledges and processes are
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23 considered essential for the authentication of local knowledges and processes as authentic
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25 (“asli”). This article therefore opens up questions for further discussion and consideration
26
27 leading to the need for a critical evaluation of the process of commodification of “asli”. The
28
29 implications of labour shifts with regards to women and their position in relation to the
30
31 production of Sumbanese woven natural dyed cloth must be taken into consideration. Trying to
32
33 make “asli” into a globalizable process through guidelines from UNESCO definitions of
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35 "intangible product" might actually contribute to potential further marginalization of the women
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37 in this community.
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42 Our field work was done in summer of 2018. The work we draw on to examine the
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44 themes from our field work is based on the emerging visibility of Sumba woven cloth in the
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46 context of post 1990s globalization in Indonesia. One co-author is an Indonesian citizen and the
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48 other is a US citizen of South Asian/Indian descent with a history of having spent some time in
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50 Indonesia as a teenager. One of us is a critical feminist researcher with a background in
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54 However, in contemporary times, “Asli” comes to mean mostly the natural dying and
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56 design process.
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3 researching both digital media and hand crafting communities in the global north (mostly in
4 USA) and in the global south (in India and now in Indonesia). The other is from a business
5 school with a research focus on entrepreneurship, technology and gender. In previous research in
6 the Indian context it has been noted that the revival of natural dye in modern society can be
7 viewed as a form of new technology. For instance, in India, non-governmental organizations
8 (NGOs) have been working to reintroduce

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19 “older technologies such as natural dyeing for yarn and handloom fabric. In actuality, what such
20 an NGO does is to reintroduce such technologies and processes into urban space through their
21 attempts to link existing rural communities of weavers to urban, transnational and global markets.
22 The mainstream often views what they are doing as acts of preservation of “tradition” and
23 authenticity rather than as “innovation” of technologies and of production and marketing
24 processes” (XXX 2012, 102).
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33 In the Sumbanese context there is no need for a very obvious and conscious “revival”,
34 since it appears that the communal modes of transferring tacit knowledges have preserved most
35 of the knowledge of process. Rather there are efforts to record, make explicit and to standardize
36 the processes of dyeing of the threads for the woven fabric so as to make the process identifiable
37 as “asli” natural dye process.
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44 The main research question in this article, therefore, concerns the shifts in traditions of
45 weaving and in gender roles around the weaving and dyeing of Sumba cloth that has happened
46 mostly in response to a global tourist desire (that of eco tourists and of patrons of
47 international/exotic arts and crafts) for the Sumbanese woven product against a backdrop of
48 national and international emphasis on preservation of intangible heritage products. As Timothy
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3 and Nyaupane point out, “Heritage is a source and symbol of identity. Both tangible and
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5 intangible heritage plays an important role in creating individual, community, and national
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7 identity” (2009, 35). However, when intangible heritage is the focus of national and international
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9 interest – as particular traditions and processes get categorized officially as “intangible heritage”
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11 – this leads to a focus on trying to not only preserve but also commodify this “intangible
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13 heritage.” The focus becomes on “intangible heritage [that] is transported from one place to
14
15 another without losing all semblances of authenticity” (35). This raises issues concerning the
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17 production of an “authentic” process (or “asli”) that can be standardized so that all Sumbanese
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19 weaving businesses are required to adopt this explicitly described standardized process. The
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21 contradiction that emerges here is that once we talk of this sort of official authentication and
22
23 standardization, the traditions of transfer and preservation of tacit knowledges from generation to
24
25 generation of women weavers are disrupted. Even as these processes and stories about women,
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27 their tacit practices as well as community traditions are narrated (and even staged) as a way to
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29 attract tourism – the epistemic foundations of how this knowledge is reproduced through
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31 community praxis are displaced.
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38 The discussion and analysis is done in two sections. In section one of this paper, we start
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40 with a description of the Sumba weaving community’s contemporary (2018) processes of
41
42 making of the Sumba woven cloth through a definition of “asli” natural dye and design processes
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44 that are considered to be embedded in local community traditions and which have been adapted
45
46 to make the process more visible to tourists and other consumers in a move to prove that the
47
48 product is authentic. In connection to this, we examine how this process leads to gendered labour
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50 shifts as modern tasks associated with management of transactions (business, advertising and
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52 marketing), and standardization for the market (requiring the role of a designer and
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3 manager/controller of quality and standards). We follow this discussion by laying out three
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5 salient themes emerging from our field work as related to discussions about the national value of
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7 this craft as intangible heritage.
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10 Section two takes up a discussion of intangible heritage. We end the article with a
11
12 discussion of how attempts to include Sumba weaving as part the UNESCO intangible heritage²
13
14 list further contribute to shifts in the gendered work within this weaving community. In the
15
16 discussion section of this paper, we also raise questions regarding such heritage projects in
17
18 relation to local livelihoods.
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21 Before proceeding to these two sections of the paper however, we briefly describe the
22
23 location and context of “Sumba” and also our methods.
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28 **Research context and methods**

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31 Sumba does not have a tropical climate or fertile volcanic soil as do several other islands
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33 in Indonesia. In fact, it is a land fragment that was separated from the main Australian continent
34
35 about 20 million years ago (Fowler 1999, 107) and “consists of hilly and low-lying grassland,
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37 coastal terraces and limestone plateaus” (Vel 2006). It is comparatively sparsely populated and
38
39 the per capita income in 2005 was 18% of the national average in West Sumba, and in East
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41 Sumba it was 28%. Agriculture is the source of income for a majority of the population (87% in
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43 2005). However, most activities on the island are subsistence activities. Shifts we see now are
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45 continuations of what scholars such as Jacqueline Vel noted in the 1990s.
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49 “The economy of these urban areas comprises the commercial sector of the island.
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55 ² In 2003, the UNESCO convention for the “Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural
56
57 Heritage” was put forth; it was adopted in 2008
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3 This commercial sector includes many activities: building and road construction, import of
4 manufactures, motorized traffic and transport, export of agricultural and home industry products,
5 and a very limited amount of tourism. All these economic activities are dominated by ethnical
6 groups other than the Sumbanese. Amongst them, the Chinese are the most important. The main
7 principal for infrastructural enterprises on Sumba is the government. The role of the rural
8 Sumbanese population in this commercial sector is very limited. Young men can find employment
9 as a casual labourer or contract labourer, though it is usually temporary employment. The rural
10 population supplies the town's traders with agricultural products. The traders sell food to the urban
11 dwellers, and also export cash-crops, such as coffee, beans, copra, and candle nuts to Java" (Vel
12 1994, 5)

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25 Another important difference between Sumba and the bigger and more well-known
26 islands of Indonesia (such as Java) is that the Sumba island was colonized for a very short while.
27 While there, Dutch missionaries successfully converted a majority of the island's population,
28 there was not much commerce since the Dutch East Indies Company mostly just kept watch over
29 the island in the eighteenth century so that other colonizers would not move in. In this mostly
30 subsistence economy, weaving of cloth continued mostly in a use-value logic until fairly recently
31 when the island became more exposed to the global market than before. Cloth is no longer
32 woven for everyday use but for traditional rituals that have survived the influence of Christianity
33 and modernity. The Sumba motifs and woven cloth as well as the natural dye-based colors have
34 also caught the interest of patrons of arts and crafts in the western world. The creation of motifs
35 had an interesting interplay of gender hierarchy in that, as Jill Forshee (2001, 32) notes:

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50 Historically, women have been the primary producers of textiles— although new design
51 motifs apparently often came about through the suggestions of high-ranking men. As men
52 encountered new images through interactions with outsiders, they introduced novel
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3 design ideas to makers of cloth. Thus motifs from a variety of foreign fabrics, pottery,
4 jewelry, printed matter, and coins were adopted into Sumbanese textiles. In present times,
5
6 men increasingly create designs for fabrics, continuing their historical influence upon
7
8 imagery.”
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12 The process of creating motifs and coloring the Sumba cloth is unique and draws on natural dye
13 and ikat techniques. This article looks mainly at the weavers in the region of Lambanapu of East
14 Sumba and observes the shifts in cloth making and dyeing processes that have occurred and
15 continue to occur as the weavers respond to a global tourist market.
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21 For our field research we visited two villages – Lampanapu and Prailiu. Both of these
22 villages are located in Kampera District East Sumba Regency. In Lampanapu village, there are
23 two main groups of crafters. The first is Ori Angu Studio and the second is Pluanda Lama Hamu.
24 The leader of Ori Angu Studio is Yuli Lindi Djawa, while the leader of Paluanda Lama Hamu is
25 Kornelis Ndapakamang. Studio Ori Angu is also a place where Sumba traditional dance
26 traditions are taught to next generations. We interviewed several designers, business owners and
27 weavers who belong to these two groups. In the Prailiu village we encountered many more
28 tourists as this village also displays relics of the kingdom, including an ancient
29 stone tomb. Weavers also display their products at the royal house and compound so that they
30 might sell to the tourists who come there. Some weavers actually weave on location and exhibit
31 their design and weaving process to the visitors.
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51 **Methods and methodology**

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3 Our methodology of co-researching and co-writing draws on feminist traditions of
4 collaborative research and writing similar to that adopted in prior publications where the second
5 author of this article and other co-authors dialogue around and through complex access and
6 translation issues as well as through a problematization of theory and praxis binaries (XXXX
7 2008). While in this instance we are both academics – and do not include practitioners as co-
8 authors – we have had a continuous dialogue (even through tools such as WhatsApp and
9 Facebook) with some of the lead practitioners and community members we interviewed as we
10 were writing this article. Therefore, section one of this article – which is based on the actual field
11 work done – is written in the distinct voices of each of the co-authors rather than as a combined
12 single voice.
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26 As noted in XXXX 2008:
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31 “Methodology is not merely a scholarly activity to be reproduced and disseminated, but a tool by
32 which we can facilitate shifts and interventions in praxis through framing and re-framing problems
33 in an effort to articulate solutions. By being clear about where each researcher's or fieldworker's
34 accountability lies ... and by choosing methodologies that facilitate dialogue and (theoretical)
35 displacement, we expect that our work will reveal epistemic ruptures by showing where the
36 processes of globalisation intersect with our personal and professional locations to produce new
37 spaces from which we can speak in relation to this project. This will further assist us in working
38 with the weavers and others in order that they gain voice in global market spaces.”
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46 The first author of this article (RU) has made several visits to Sumba island and built a
47 relationship with a local family through a colleague at her university who is part of this family.
48 She has been observing this community for a few years now and has been in continuous
49 communication via Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp as well as mobile phone calling with
50 various weavers. Thus, her methodological approach is ethnographic. Collaborative dialogues
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3 also form a part of our methods. The second author (RG) has spent several years researching
4 with members of a handloom NGO in India. She has been on several field trips to particular
5 weaving communities in south India and has co-authored with some of the NGO members about
6 the issues raised by the revival of natural dye and attempts to preserve what was then – between
7 2003 and 2008 – the second largest livelihood in India, handloom weaving. She has continued
8 dialogues with some of the collaborators and also continues to interview crafts people, small
9 entrepreneurs, NGO workers and leisure crafters, weavers and spinners in India. In addition to
10 the continued interviewing in the craft context of India, she has been working on a project that
11 involves extensive interviewing of do-it-yourself fiber crafters in USA since 2007. All this feeds
12 into her methodology for understanding the context of weaving and crafting in Lambanapu.
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14 Collectively, our methods include interviews with weavers, spinners and dyers as well as related
15 cultural observation and fieldwork in Lambanapu and Prailiu.
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33 **Section one**

34 **RU:**

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38 Sumba weaving is known as “tenun Ikkat” which means “tied weaving” because the yarn
39 has to be tied before dyeing. While Ikkat is a technique that exists in several other parts of
40 Indonesia and the world, motifs found in the woven cloths of Sumba are fairly distinct. These
41 motifs and colors (earthy browns, oranges and indigo blue mostly) are the visual distinctions that
42 help tourists/customers recognize the cloth as being from Sumbaⁱ. On the island, it is used for
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3 Marapu³ cultural activities such as weddings, funerals and also for group celebrations and
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5 parties.
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10 **RG:**

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12 So based on what we've seen on-site and based on interviews – it does appear that some
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14 of the weaving is definitely for cultural traditions that are being maintained – even as conversion
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16 to Christianity and the adopting of certain kinds of modern ways of living have shifted the details
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18 of how the woven cloth is used in these traditions. It also appears from what we saw – which
19
20 affirms existing research we reviewed (for instance Forshee 2001) – that the Sumbanese woven
21
22 cloth is marketed globally as a unique artisanal product from the region. Thus, it seems that
23
24 while in earlier times weaving mainly had use value – now it also has commercial value as it is
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26 marketed locally, nationally, and internationally. This became very clear to me during our
27
28 interviews of the older women weavers, each of who brought out her “kindi” (spindle) and
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30 reaffirmed her opinion that it would be impractical if the yarn were to be handspun for the woven
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32 cloth that must be sold. They also told us there was not enough cotton growing locally that could
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34 be used for such handspinning.
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40 **RU:**

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43 The processes resulting in the end product – Sumbanese woven and dyed cloth – include
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45 the growing of cotton, indigo, moringa and other plants for natural dyes; spindle and loom
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47 making; handspinning of yarn, natural dyeing of the yarn, designing of motifs (that tell a story
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49 and serve as historical records for the community), and handloom weaving, among others. Some
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51 relevant local knowledges include:
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54
55 ³ Marapu is the ancestral religion the cultural practices from which are still practiced in
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57 Sumba.
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1. Preparation of threads to make them ready to be woven
2. Designing /drawing motifs
3. Thread binding technique
4. Natural dyes
5. Colouring technique
6. Weaving season
7. Planting and harvesting of cotton and natural dye plants in ways to ensure they are renewable.

The local knowledge is shared quite openly with tourists. The knowledge of weaving, dyeing and creation of motifs has been passed down from generation to generation of women where children get oral instruction from their elders and by following the practice as they help and learn. They do not learn the craft processes through written documentation. What is transferred from generation to generation within the community, therefore, is tacit knowledge.

Knowledge transfer has traditionally mostly been done by women. Women either invite their children to help them in the weaving work or children voluntarily approach and help their parents/mothers or neighbors by doing weaving work. Therefore, weaving production is learned by the younger generation through observation, participation, and imitation. It is taught informally and with a woman as a mentor. A mentor has always been considered one who draws upon a deep knowledge base to teach and guide. Mentoring as an important transfer mechanism for knowledge within organizations has grown significantly in the past couple of decades (Leonard 2011).

Since a long time ago, weaving production has been divided by gender. The boys help their parents in work that is considered heavy/masculine, such as digging the soil to get the roots

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3 of noni⁴, pounding the roots, making designs and so on, while girls help their parents in work
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5 that is considered "female" such as weaving.
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8 Women thus play an important role in what we now term informal education. They serve
9
10 as primary educators in these indigenous communities and have sustained local knowledge
11
12 systems for millennia, even while undergoing major social upheavals as a result of
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14 transformative forces beyond their control (Zobolo and Mkabela 2006). It has been noted by
15
16 researchers that the recognition and restoration of indigenous women's knowledge through
17
18 support of their efforts to pass it to future generations would enhance sustainable use of natural
19
20 resources (Mikkelsen 2005). Girls, for instance, have to learn to weave by helping their mothers.
21
22 The elders emphasize the need for a girl to learn to weave – just as she must learn to do
23
24 housework, cook and take care of children. The Sumba girls gradually learn by doing ancilliary
25
26 work such as helping remove the strings attached in the yarn, rolling the yarn and then *menghani*
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28 (set yarns in a loom).
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33 **RG:**
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36 However, more recently, in response to consumer demand from outside Sumba, the
37
38 knowledge of tie dyeing and of designing motifs is being coded into explicit step-by-step
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40 processes in order to include men in the process. With the exception of indigo dye making, most
41
42 other processes can also be done by men in contemporary Sumba. In our field work, we noticed
43
44 that standardized design of motifs is most widely prevalent. We saw several men working on the
45
46 process of laying out design templates on to the threads that were warped earlier onto a warping
47
48 frame by women and children. The motifs therefore seemed fairly standardized. In the
49
50 workshops we visited, we saw the process of colouring through a tie and dye method, and saw
51
52 the process of making natural dyes from plants and roots –this too was being done by both men
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⁴ noni is a small evergreen tree - *Morinda citifolia* – also known as Indian Mulberry.
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3 and women. However, the process of fermenting indigo was still strictly a female domain. We
4 will return to this point later in this article as we discuss how the notion of “asli” is authenticated
5 via the natural dye process. Even so, a majority of the routine weaving is still done by women.
6
7 Men mostly manage the business and the design process. They also take part in the tie and dye
8 process as they do the designing. The women are given the designed and pre-coloured threads on
9 the loom and several of the women weaving also do this as a part-time activity as independent
10 contractors. Men also produce most of the weaving implements (Forshee 2007).
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22 **Discussion/themes**

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24 After each day of field work, team members (including the co-authors of this article and
25 all those listed in acknowledgements) would spend time discussing their observations and
26 unpacking themes. Some major themes noted by us include:
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30
31 1. The shift from domestic weaving to weaving for a small business which in turn has
32 necessitated the shift from use value to global market value.
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35 In the 1980s the need for woven fabrics increased, first because there were tourists who
36 visited Sumba and there were Sumba people who traded woven cloth in Bali. This means that the
37 need for weaving is insufficient if it is only fulfilled as a part-time business within household
38 activities. Then they started to develop cultural groups that conducted heritage activities (such as
39 dance). It was at this time that men started to get involved in woven cloth production as a
40 business opportunity. The building of relationships and networking with people from outside
41 Sumba island led to the growth of woven cloth businesses that began to emerge. Thus, the
42 demand and need for weaving now went beyond the local community. As the demand for the
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3 product increased, more and more men from the weaver community started to set up Sumba
4
5 woven cloth businesses.
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8 In our field work, we learned from Agustina (who is the mother of a well-known Sumba
9
10 cloth designer and businessman Kornelis) that they started getting requests for weaving from
11
12 outside of Sumba since the 1970s and 1980s. From that time on, threads made by factories have
13
14 begun to be used in the weaving process because of insufficient local cotton. Agustina received
15
16 many orders for weaving and so Kornelis stepped in to help his mother. After he finished high
17
18 school, he decided not to go to college (because there was no money) but stayed at home to help
19
20 his mother, learning and developing the weaving technique further. Kornelis is now a leader
21
22 amongst local weavers who have all worked to build their local weaving into small businesses.
23
24 He continually networks with outside parties such as NGOs and commercial marketers. Titus is
25
26 another weaving business leader. He works in a collective. He noted the role of the church in
27
28 providing assistance in the form of raw material (mostly yarn) to the crafts people.
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33 In general, Sumbanese men began to get involved in the weaving business as they first
34
35 started helping their mothers as children; and/or helping their wives after marriage. After being
36
37 involved in the processes, they took over business activities (trade and networking with outside
38
39 parties). The economy or financial arrangements in the household are more controlled by the
40
41 wives; men only ask for money if needed. The reason for this is that money will run out quickly
42
43 if the men control it. The women hope that money from the weaving business can be saved for
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45 their children's educational needs. This point was revealed in focus group discussions with
46
47 women weavers in Sumba.
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51 2. Gender role shifts in the production process of the cloth contributes to potential shifts
52
53 in cultural assumptions around gendered roles and process. Before the outreach towards global
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3 (outside Sumba) markets – the whole process of designing and weaving the Sumba woven cloth
4 was the responsibility of women. Men helped them to do some tasks such as digging up noni
5 roots or making wooden frames (to string yarns). At that time, woven fabric was made to fulfill
6 the needs of traditional local ceremonies. There are 42 steps in the Sumba weaving process. In
7 the past, all these steps were carried out by a woman – from the beginning to the end of the
8 process – alone. At some stages they were assisted by their children, for example for “menghani”
9 (rolling threads on a wooden frame) which always has to be done by two people. Now in the
10 Paluanda Lama Hamu Group there are only two women who can do the whole weaving process
11 alone - Ruth Babang Riu and Anita Keita Kephir.
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24 3. Regarding the global outreach and marketing, we also observed the use of mobile
25 phones and social media by several younger generation women and men. Internet access is
26 getting better on Sumba, although it is limited to certain cellular telephone operators. Also, there
27 are many mobile phones that come at a cheap price (many of them made in China). The use of
28 mobile phones and social media draws younger generations into the business and marketing side
29 of the Sumba woven cloth business. Almost of them have Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp
30 accounts. Some of them also have accounts on YouTube and Vlog to upload their activities.
31 Since they use these tools in their personal social life for leisure, they seamlessly begin to
32 experiment with marketing for the small businesses run by their families.
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44 **Implications of these three shifts**

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47 These shifts work to shift women’s roles more to the margins of the small businesses
48 while at the same time mobilizing younger generations to be more actively involved in marketing
49 through social media. Younger women with children are either relegated to social media
50 marketing and to just the task of making the indigo dye (which is still restricted to women
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3 because of local beliefs that ban men from being involved) and to weaving mechanically onto a
4 frame where the design has been preset. Women's labour is implicitly subordinated and made
5 invisible as ancilliary work – women's weaving work is “outsourced” piecemeal – they cannot
6 depend on weaving as a source of steady income and must have day jobs or recede into a
7 domesticity that is restricted to home care, spousal care, child care and elder care. Women's
8 agency as designers, artists and keepers of community memory (through telling stories in woven
9 form and through transfer of traditions of motif making etc) is reduced. In the next section we
10 discuss how this shift that also implicitly redefines “asli” – is commodified as intangible heritage
11 at the same time as it shifts the epistemic foundations of transfer of tacit knowledge through a
12 process that favors a replicable and transferable commodified “asli.” This paper is a critical
13 evaluation of the process of commodification of "asli" and of the implications of labour shifts in
14 regards to women and their position in relation to the production of this cloth – and how actually
15 trying to make this into a globalizable process through guidelines from UNESCO "intangible
16 product" is actually contributing to the potential further marginalization of the women in that
17 community.

40 **Section two**

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42 In 2003, the UNESCO convention for the “Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural
43 Heritage” was put forth; it was adopted in 2008⁵. According to the UNESCO website that
44 describes what intangible cultural heritage is for the purposes of UNESCO's convention, as of
45 January 2019:

56 ⁵ see treaty text at <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

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3 “Traditional craftsmanship is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural
4 heritage. However, the 2003 Convention is mainly concerned with the skills and knowledge
5 involved in craftsmanship rather than the craft products themselves. Rather than focusing on
6 preserving craft objects, safeguarding attempts should instead concentrate on encouraging artisans
7 to continue to produce craft and to pass their skills and knowledge onto others, particularly within
8 their own communities.”
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18 Since then several Asian countries have worked towards getting crafts from their region
19 onto this list because of various perceived benefits from the listing. For instance, in the case of
20 Indonesia, batik being included was considered to be a very significant achievement (UNESCO.
21 2019. “Indonesian Batik.”).
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26 The technologies of weaving and of natural dye have epistemological foundations based
27 on transfer of tacit knowledges from generation to generation of women in the community.
28
29 Particularly, we examine issues around standardization of the design and (natural dye) coloring
30 process in the pre-weaving stages and how this process is labelled as “asli” (authentic, original)
31 when it meets certain conditions specified through tacit community knowledges handed down
32 from generation to generation, and how these processes must now be made into explicit,
33 standardized processes in order for Sumba woven cloth to be classified as an intangible heritage
34 product.
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45 While talking with local weavers, watching them work, doing field work and continued
46 ethnographic research about handloom weaving and natural dye processes, we also wanted to
47 understand how and why a case should be made, and was being made, for Sumbanese
48 handwoven cloth to be inscribed as an intangible cultural heritage project through UNESCO.
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54 “Heritage consists of material, natural, and intangible aspects of culture that are felt to be
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3 permanent and transmittable” (Jamal, T., and Robinson, M. 2009, 45). Thus, after looking at the
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5 context through field work and interviews, we also ask why the Indonesian government and
6
7 associated non-governmental organizations are motivated to make a case for this product as a
8
9 UNESCO certified intangible heritage product.
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12 It was our understanding from Indonesian government officials and some of the more
13
14 visible Sumba cloth designers that the attempts to get the cloth (and process) certified under the
15
16 UNESCO intangible heritage program are motivated by perceptions that getting Sumbanese
17
18 woven cloth to be classified in this way would serve not only to brand it as something worthy of
19
20 Indonesian national pride, but it would also contribute to the preservation of traditional ethnic
21
22 Sumbanese community practices and knowledges by continuing to make weaving and natural
23
24 dye processes viable as a livelihood for a portion of the Sumbanese population. In addition to
25
26 Indonesian national pride, there was also an element of territoriality and competition with
27
28 Malaysian crafts. There is a desire on the part of Indonesians to trademark NTT (Sumbanese)
29
30 Ikkat as a national intangible heritage product. In the case of batik, for instance, this same sense
31
32 of competition with Malaysia is visible as noted in a New York Times article (*The New York*
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34 *Times*, September 14, 2009). Thus the struggle puts into question assumptions about tradition
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36 and authenticity, while also raising concerns about what livelihood promotion and capacity
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38 building framed by such an aspiration would look like. What community dynamics –
39
40 interdependent ecologies of social roles and processes of making the cloth – would shift and
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42 what would be viewed as authentic traditions. We saw the contestations emerge through
43
44 discussions of whether all weavers produced “asli” (original, authentic) natural dyed Sumba
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46 woven cloth and how the consumer might recognize an “asli” product. As we know, Indonesian
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48 batik was included on the list in October 2009. This recognition of Indonesian batik by UNESCO
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3 as a cultural heritage came after various stakeholders in Indonesia spent time and energy
4
5 strategically arguing the case that batik was authentically a part of Indonesian cultural heritage.
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7 A certain standardization of process needed to be revealed and maintained across the country in
8
9 order to certify one way of batik making as the authentic Indonesian process. Thus interestingly,
10
11 the struggle to get UNESCO to authenticate an intangible cultural heritage product reveals
12
13 struggles around the definitions of the very terms “authenticity”, “tradition” and “culture.” Thus,
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15 for instance, Jill Forshee (2001, 6) has pointed out that:
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21 “Eastern Sumbanese villagers cleverly play with notions like “ethnicity,” “tradition,”
22
23 “primitivism,” and “authenticity” as they fashion culture in meetings with outsiders.¹⁰ The sound
24
25 of an approaching tour bus often sends men racing to change from modern slacks to traditional
26
27 hinggis, which colorfully wrap their bodies as they welcome awestruck foreigners to their homes.
28
29 Women present “antik” textiles to tourists, while anticipating and often capriciously responding
30
31 to their demands for “meanings” in designs. T-shirts now flaunt motifs formerly the prerogative of
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33 village-woven fabrics, asserting an ethnicity with a stylishly modern cachet. And people
34
35 sometimes plot themselves in the symbols and stories their textiles convey, affecting social
36
37 schemes in the spaces surrounding cloth.”
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41 Even as arguments are being made by local and national units for the certification of a
42
43 product as “intangible cultural heritage” – the process of production must of necessity shift and
44
45 become more understandable in the contexts of modern epistemological conditions of knowledge
46
47 production. Further, there are various hierarchies of nation – economy and culture – that come
48
49 into play in this struggle. The move to make a case for batik as cultural heritage product, for
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51 instance, was viewed not just as a nationalist move but as a very important economic move. As
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3 Evi Steelyana notes, therefore, batik “is not only a cultural heritage but it also provides
4 livelihood for millions of people of Indonesia.”ⁱⁱ
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8 In the case of Sumbanese ikkat, informants that we spoke to told us that a few
9
10 unsuccessful attempts have been made to classify it as intangible heritage through UNESCO. It
11
12 is clear that there is national interest in describing Sumba ikkat as intangible heritage. Regardless
13
14 of whether or not it is given the status of UNESCO cultural heritage product, Sumba woven cloth
15
16 has come to represent Sumbanese culture through a particular kind of aesthetics based on
17
18 weaving and natural dye processes and there is local Indonesian national move to categorize this
19
20 process in the framework of “intangible heritage.”
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26 **Conclusion**

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28 In a larger world context of globalization, maintaining the weaving community and
29
30 natural dye process as a local needs-based activity proves unsustainable. This paper also touches
31
32 on questions around the economic sustainability of Sumbanese weaving and natural process in
33
34 relation to livelihood in the context of increasing globalization and the associated shifts in
35
36 community activities around attempts to sustain this artisanal product by selling in a global
37
38 market with a focus on handloom weaving and natural dye process. The process of producing the
39
40 cloth, while spoken of as “traditional”, does not maintain all aspects of the traditions of making
41
42 this cloth. Thus for instance, the yarn is mostly not handspun anymore and the motifs are not
43
44 developed from the tacit knowledges and community memory as retained by the women weavers
45
46 of the community. The reasons for continuing to weave this cloth and the process of natural dye
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48 while also telling stories through the woven motives have shifted as we have noted in this article.
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ⁱ For some images and description of Sumbanese cloth see

<http://threadsoflife.com/textile-archive/sumba/>

ⁱⁱ steelyana w, Evi. (2012). Batik, A Beautiful Cultural Heritage that Preserve Culture and Supporteconomic Development in Indonesia. *Binus Business Review*. 3. 116.

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Pembuatan kain tenun “asli” Sumba: bagaimana globalisasi “warisan takbenda” berdampak pada peran perempuan

Rustina Untari, Radhika Gajjala & Ridwan Sanjaya

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Rustina Untari, Radhika Gajjala dan Ridwan Sanjaya

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas bagaimana produksi komoditas "asli"/"asli" melalui dialektika lokal/global dalam mendefinisikan "warisan takbenda" dan bagaimana tenun Sumba yang dihadapkan pada pasar global berkontribusi terhadap pergeseran dan kontradiksi dalam peran gender seiring dengan pembentukannya. secara bersamaan melalui kebutuhan komunitas lokal dan melalui etos bisnis patriarki yang bersifat kebarat-baratan. Meningkatkan integrasi komunitas produksi global selatan ke dalam pasar dunia misalnya, mengarah pada maskulinisasi manajemen dan kepemimpinan global yang disertai dengan feminisasi dalam proses produksi lokal. Bukti observasi kami diambil dari lebih dari 50 wawancara mendalam dan observasi lapangan selama kunjungan lapangan ke lokasi.

SEJARAH PASAL

Diterima pada 29 Januari 2019
Diterima 18 Desember 2019

KATA KUNCI

Teknologi; Tenaga kerja dan mata pencaharian; Globalisasi (termasuk perdagangan; sektor swasta); Gender dan keberagaman

Perkenalan

Dalam komunitas tenun Sumba kontemporer di Indonesia, kain tenun (kain) dan proses produksinya diglobalkan sebagai sebuah karya seni. Meskipun kain terus memiliki nilai lokal melalui tradisi lokal yang masih hidup, dampak permintaan global terhadap produk artisanal yang unik telah mengakibatkan pergeseran peran perempuan dan laki-laki dalam proses produksi. Secara historis, kain ini telah berfungsi dalam kerangka nilai guna baik sebagai barang yang dapat dikenakan maupun sebagai cara untuk mendokumentasikan sejarah komunitas dan pengetahuan artisanal tentang proses yang telah diwariskan dari generasi ke generasi perempuan dalam komunitas. Kerangka pembangunan neo-kolonial dan kerangka pasar neo-liberal, menurut kami, melakukan reorientasi makna seputar kain melalui dialektika global/lokal dan kontradiksi seputar produksi "asli" yang dicap asli. Perempuan penenun Sumba seringkali digambarkan sebagai pemimpin komunitas tenun baik di tingkat lokal maupun global, dan narasi mengenai perempuan sebagai pusat proses produksi secara implisit merupakan bagian dari branding suatu komoditas sebagai asli (asli). Namun kenyataannya yang kita lihat adalah pergeseran dan kontradiksi peran gender seiring dengan keinginan masyarakat agar proses produksi kerajinan tangan diklasifikasikan dan dilindungi oleh UNESCO sebagai warisan takbenda (Pokasta News, 17 April 2012). Asli distandarisasi dan dikomodifikasi.

Artikulasi asli sebagai keaslian yang diperbarui ini bergantung pada komodifikasi peran perempuan dalam prosesnya.

Temuan-temuan ini mempunyai implikasi bagi para pembuat kebijakan yang menegosiasikan kontradiksi konteks lokal dan global dalam pemberdayaan perempuan. Artikel ini mengkaji studi kasus produksi kain Sumba di Lambanapu, yang berlokasi di Waingapo, ibu kota Sumba Timur, dalam upaya untuk memahami bagaimana komodifikasi peran perempuan ini secara bersamaan juga mengusur mereka dari posisi pemimpin di usaha kecil tenun yang sudah ada. muncul sebagai respons terhadap permintaan global.

Konsep-konsep seperti "komodifikasi" (Hearn 2017), "keaslian" (Banet-Weiser 2012), "pandangan turis" (Urry 1992) dan "warisan takbenda" (UNESCO) digunakan dalam artikel ini dan merupakan konsep kunci

dengan argumen yang kita buat. Penting untuk menyatakan dengan jelas definisi yang kami gunakan untuk istilah-istilah ini karena definisi tersebut merupakan kunci argumen kami secara keseluruhan. Komodifikasi adalah proses dimana objek, orang, ide, proses dan jasa dijadikan dapat dipasarkan dan dijual (Hearn 2017, 43). Keaslian yang “diproduksi” melalui gagasan asli di sisi lain didasarkan pada diskusi seputar bagaimana dalam etos pemasaran kontemporer kita melihat “transformasi budaya kehidupan sehari-hari menjadi budaya merek” (Banet-Weiser 2012, 5). “Tourist gaze” adalah sebuah konsep dari studi pariwisata dan dikaitkan dengan sosiolog Urry, yang mendefinisikannya sebagai “visi unggulan dalam mengatur pengembangan pariwisata Barat sejak akhir abad kedelapan belas” (Urry 1992). Terakhir, konsep warisan takbenda yang kami gunakan diambil dari definisi online UNESCO yang mencakup “tradisi atau ekspresi hidup yang diwarisi dari nenek moyang kita dan diwariskan kepada keturunan kita”.

Komunitas kerajinan global Selatan dan pekerja perempuan

Pakar feminis pascakolonial seperti Mohanty (1997) dan Mies (1982) telah mencatat bagaimana pergeseran dalam hubungan produksi akibat “integrasi [komunitas produksi global selatan] ke dalam pasar dunia menyebabkan diferensiasi kelas/kasta dalam komunitas tertentu, dengan maskulinisasi semua pekerjaan non-produksi (perdagangan) dan feminisasi total dalam proses produksi”. Artikel ini mengkaji konteks komunitas tenun tangan di Sumba dan integrasinya ke dalam logika pasar neo-liberal untuk melihat bagaimana kondisi komunitas tenun Sumba Timur yang unik dan terus berubah berdampak pada peran gender dalam komunitas produksi tersebut.

Kain tenun tangan dan permadani Sumba diminati oleh para kolektor seni dan penggemar tekstil di seluruh dunia. Kami mencatat bahwa melalui proses produksi yang dianggap unik dalam konteks Sumba, kain tenun “asli”/asli Sumba divalidasi keasliannya. Kain dan proses produksinya memperoleh nilai moneter di ruang pasar global sebagai teks otentik dan komoditas otentik dalam etos pasar neo-liberal kontemporer. Sosok perempuan penenun digambarkan berkuasa melalui narasi sejarah komunitas tenun dalam budaya Sumba dan dimobilisasi secara visual dan tekstual. Namun selama kunjungan lapangan kami, terlihat jelas bahwa terdapat perubahan yang kontradiktif dalam peran perempuan dalam komunitas produsen.

Pada saat yang sama ketika perempuan penenun dan produsen pewarna nila dipuji sebagai penjaga budaya, mereka juga menjadi tersubordinasi dalam struktur organisasi usaha kecil yang lebih besar.

Pengamatan teoritis kami dalam artikel ini diperoleh dari banyak wawancara yang kami lakukan di Sumba Timur. Kain tersebut kini diminati oleh wisatawan dan kolektor seni di luar Sumba – di wilayah lain di Indonesia dan global – yang menghargai estetika sentuhan dan visual dari produk tersebut. Namun, proses produksi kain tenun Sumba yang ditunen dengan tangan dan diwarnai secara alami memerlukan waktu (walaupun sebagian besar penenun tidak lagi menggunakan benang tenunan tangan) dan sangat padat karya.

Artinya, harga produk tenunan tangan dan pewarna alami – asli atau asli – sangat mahal.

Dapat ditebak, permintaan internasional telah memunculkan salinan buatan mesin yang menggunakan pewarna kimia. Seperti yang diungkapkan oleh salah satu warga Sumba yang kami wawancarai pada tahun 2018,

Saat ini kain Sumba sedang menjadi tren di Jakarta, banyak masyarakat yang memiliki fabrikasi kain berkualitas tinggi, namun pasarnya tidak begitu besar dan tidak mudah untuk dijual (high value, low volume product). [Sekarang ada saran agar kami menjual] produk bernilai rendah dan bervolume tinggi... [yang telah menggunakan] pewarna kimia.

Namun, pada saat daya tarik pasar komersial tampaknya menyarankan bahwa peralihan ke “volume tinggi, nilai rendah” adalah pilihan praktis menuju penjualan yang lebih baik, organisasi internasional dan LSM yang berupaya untuk mendukung dan membantu memasarkan produk ini secara khusus memperhatikan hal ini. menegaskan bahwa keaslian produk ini hanya dapat dibuktikan jika proses produksinya asli. Lebih lanjut, karena aliran nilai global (ekonomi dan budaya) menuju konteks Dunia Selatan bergantung pada visibilitas modernisasi dan pelestarian warisan budaya yang didukung secara internasional melalui organisasi seperti PBB dan UNESCO, pemerintah Indonesia juga telah (pada tahun 2013) telah

tertarik untuk menjaga keaslian proses produksinya agar kerajinan Ikkat Sumba dapat dimasukkan oleh UNESCO dalam daftar warisan takbenda.

Oleh karena itu, kita melihat adanya pergeseran global yang lebih besar dari epistemologi (dinamis) yang terkait dengan komunitas dan pengetahuan perempuan (Alcoff dan Potter 1993) ke standardisasi, reproduksi, pencatatan dan penyimpanan pengetahuan yang statis (datar). Pergeseran ini terjadi melalui pengistimewaan logika berdasarkan teks tertulis berbahasa Eropa dan estetika keaslian yang divisualisasikan/dikomodifikasi/branding (Banet-Weiser 2012). Hal ini didasarkan pada hak istimewa atas replikabilitas produk yang lebih sesuai dengan proses mekanis dibandingkan dengan proses produksi yang mengandalkan teknik kerajinan tangan. Selain itu, nampaknya ada aspirasi dari beberapa pihak yang mendukung para penenun dan beberapa perwakilan pemerintah Indonesia agar kerajinan tersebut diklasifikasikan dan dilindungi oleh UNESCO sebagai warisan takbenda. Pedoman untuk dimasukkan dalam kategori ini juga tampaknya mempunyai pengaruh terhadap proses produksi berpindah. Dibingkai melalui gagasan modernitas dan globalisasi sebagai jalan ke depan bagi kemajuan ekonomi, terdapat artikulasi ulang praktik produksi asli yang berbasis komunitas lokal dan ekologi alam ke dalam pola standar yang dapat direproduksi untuk keasliannya. Artikulasi asli yang diperbarui ini sebagai subordinat keaslian dan komoditi perajin perempuan.

Kerajinan lokal yang otentik

Sumba adalah pulau terpencil di provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur – Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) – lebih dekat ke Perth, Australia dalam hal lokasi dan iklim dibandingkan dengan apa yang biasanya dianggap sebagai “Indonesia”. Meskipun secara ekonomi wilayah ini merupakan wilayah termiskin di Indonesia dan tenun sendiri bukanlah bagian yang signifikan dari produk nasional bruto wilayah tersebut, tenun Sumba dikenal dan diminati secara internasional.

Secara historis, perempuan di Sumba Timur telah memainkan peran utama dalam komunitas pengrajin kain tenun Sumba, melakukan pemintalan benang dengan tangan, pewarnaan alami, merancang motif dan menenun. Bahkan ketika dipengaruhi oleh informasi dan rekomendasi dari laki-laki, anggota masyarakat setempat mengaitkan kepemilikan desain kepada perempuan karena merekalah yang bertanggung jawab atas ingatan masyarakat dan praktik reproduksi motif pada kain tenun. Dalam proses pembuatan nila (salah satu pewarna alami yang digunakan dalam produksi kain), bahkan tidak ada laki-laki yang diperbolehkan berada di ruang produksi karena kehadiran laki-laki diyakini akan mengganggu proses fermentasi. Ini adalah praktik dan keyakinan yang berkelanjutan. Kain tenun digunakan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari – dalam kaitannya dengan ritual masyarakat dan penceritaan serta untuk nilai guna. Perempuan telah mewariskan pengetahuan artisanal (diam-diam) ini dari generasi ke generasi. Mereka telah mendefinisikan apa yang “nyata” – yaitu asli – pengetahuan dan praktik produksi kain tenun dan pewarna alami di komunitas mereka. Mereka telah memegang dan melestarikannya sepanjang waktu. Dengan demikian, perempuan secara historis mempunyai peran utama dalam produksi kain tenun di Sumba.

Pada saat yang sama, peran perempuan sebagai pemimpin dalam komunitas tenun semakin berkurang karena laki-laki menjadi pemimpin bisnis dan desainer sambil memperkenalkan praktik pemasaran baru. Meski begitu, narasi tentang keaslian – yang juga menarik perhatian wisatawan neo-kolonial – dihasilkan melalui penceritaan tentang bagaimana para perempuan ini adalah penjaga pengetahuan asli. Dalam bahasa modern, asli dengan mudah diterjemahkan menjadi keaslian budaya, namun dalam mengartikulasikan proses asli untuk mendorong standarisasi proses, konsep tersebut dikomodifikasi sementara prosesnya dimodernisasi ketika epistemologi diam-diam diterjemahkan ke dalam pengetahuan proposisional (Dalmya dan Alcoff 1993).

Konsep asli kemudian digunakan sebagai salah satu cara untuk mengautentikasi produk tenun tersebut. Menurut penenun lokal yang kami wawancarai, tenun Asli Sumba diartikan sebagai tenun menurut proses produksi yang diajarkan secara turun temurun. Mereka menggambarkan proses ini mencakup empat kriteria keaslian. Bahan dasar yang digunakan sebaiknya kapas yang diambil dari panen kapas di Sumba. Kriteria kedua mencakup pemintalan kapas (tangan) menjadi benang. Kemudian benang tersebut diwarnai dan dirancang melalui proses pengikatan dan pewarnaan khas tenun Sumba. Pewarnaannya dibuat secara lokal dengan menggunakan tanaman yang ditanam di Sumba. Pewarna alami terbuat dari bahan pewarna tumbuhan, akar, biji, tanah dan lain-lain

diolah berdasarkan pengetahuan nenek moyang yang diwariskan secara turun temurun. Motifnya juga unik dalam kesenian Sumba dan juga ditransfer.

Namun, karena kurangnya panen kapas lokal dan menurunnya pemintalan tangan di zaman sekarang, asli kini berarti pewarnaan alami, reproduksi motif Sumba, dan penggunaan proses desain ikat dan pewarna Ikat Sumba. Banyak hal yang dianggap asli juga bergantung pada apa yang dianggap sebagai pekerjaan perempuan. Oleh karena itu, bahkan saat ini proses menenun diautentikasi dengan menekankan betapa bagian-bagian tertentu dari proses tersebut – khususnya proses memproduksi nila – dibatasi hanya untuk perempuan. Oleh karena itu, pada saat kami mengunjungi kandang indigo pada tahun 2018, para laki-laki yang menemani kami ke lokasi kelompok penenun tidak diperbolehkan memasuki area produksi indigo. Namun, karena dua dari tiga penulis artikel ini adalah perempuan, kami berkesempatan menyaksikan prosesnya sambil berbincang dengan para perempuan yang bekerja di gudang.

Proses dan cerita tentang perempuan dan praktik diam-diam mereka, serta tradisi masyarakat, dinarasikan (dan bahkan dipentaskan) sebagai cara untuk menarik pariwisata (Jakarta Post, "Telling Stories of Indonesian Fabric for Internet: Savvy Generations", 31 Juli 2018). Misalnya, organisasi ClothRoads, yang merupakan bagian dari jaringan Artisan Alliance untuk organisasi-organisasi berkembang di dunia yang bekerja dengan pengrajin, menyatakan di situs web mereka pada tanggal 17 Agustus 2018 bahwa "ketika Anda membeli dari ClothRoads, Anda membantu kami membangun dan mengembangkan pasar baru. yang memungkinkan pengrajin dan komunitas, terutama perempuan dan anak perempuan, untuk berkembang".

Fondasi epistemik tentang bagaimana pengetahuan ini direproduksi melalui praksis komunitas telah tergeser. Dengan demikian, dengan cara yang serupa namun berbeda (karena terdapat kontradiksi yang muncul) dengan bidang tradisional di sebagian besar negara-negara Utara, pengetahuan dan keahlian perempuan perlahan-lahan digantikan dalam proses eksotikisasi dan narasi ulang (untuk jangka waktu tertentu). pandangan turis yang kebarat-baratan), di mana keterampilan perempuan ini tidak diragukan lagi pada akhirnya akan dianggap sebagai "kisah istri-istri tua" yang tidak ilmiah (Dalmyia dan Alcoff 1993, 218).

Dalam tulisan ini kami membuat klaim, dengan secara teori bekerja melalui bukti-bukti yang dikumpulkan dari lokasi penelitian kami di Sumba Timur, bahwa kontradiksi dari sikap implisit yang merendahkan pengetahuan perempuan sebagai "dongeng istri-istri lama" terjadi bahkan ketika pengetahuan dan proses tradisional dianggap penting untuk autentikasi. pengetahuan dan proses lokal sebagai asli. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini membuka pertanyaan-pertanyaan untuk dipertimbangkan lebih lanjut yang mengarah pada perlunya evaluasi kritis terhadap proses komodifikasi penduduk asli. Namun, dengan mengkritisi komodifikasi yang berkaitan dengan peran perempuan, tujuan kami bukan untuk menyatakan bahwa proses pewarnaan alami atau tenun tangan itu sendiri bermasalah atau harus diberantas dan digantikan dengan produk buatan mesin – namun tujuan kami adalah untuk mengkritisi komodifikasi tersebut. menunjukkan bagaimana upaya untuk menyesuaikan proses tersebut ke dalam logika konsumen dan pemasaran yang mengutamakan produksi massal menciptakan masalah dan kontradiksi sosial lainnya. Implikasi pergeseran tenaga kerja terhadap perempuan dan posisi mereka dalam produksi kain tenun Sumba dengan pewarna alami harus dipertimbangkan. Upaya menjadikan adat sebagai proses global melalui pedoman definisi UNESCO mengenai "warisan tak benda" mungkin justru berkontribusi pada potensi marginalisasi lebih lanjut terhadap perempuan dalam komunitas ini.

Berbeda dengan beberapa pulau lain di Indonesia, Sumba tidak memiliki iklim tropis atau tanah vulkanik yang subur. Ini adalah pecahan daratan yang terpisah dari benua utama Australia sekitar 20 juta tahun yang lalu (Fowler 1999, 107) dan "terdiri dari padang rumput berbukit dan dataran rendah, teras pantai dan dataran tinggi batu kapur" (Vel 2008, 24). Jumlah penduduknya relatif sedikit dan pendapatan per kapita pada tahun 2005 adalah 18% dari rata-rata nasional di Sumba Barat, dan di Sumba Timur sebesar 28%. Pertanian merupakan sumber pendapatan bagi sebagian besar penduduk (87% pada tahun 2005) (Vel 2008), namun sebagian besar aktivitas di pulau ini adalah aktivitas subsisten. Pergeseran yang kita lihat sekarang merupakan kelanjutan dari apa yang dicatat oleh para sarjana seperti Vel pada tahun 1990an, termasuk di sektor komersial dimana kegiatan ekonomi mencakup konstruksi, pembangunan jalan, impor barang-barang manufaktur dan ekspor produk pertanian dan industri skala kecil dalam negeri. . Terbatasnya pariwisata yang diamati pada tahun 1990an tampaknya telah meluas pada tahun 2018 dan 2019, jika tidak sebesar pariwisata di Pulau Bali. Misalnya, jelas dari percakapan kami dengan manajemen hotel dan anggota keluarga mereka serta wisatawan, serta paket wisata yang ditawarkan, bahwa lokasi di Sumba diposisikan sebagai lokasi yang lebih damai dan ramah lingkungan bagi wisatawan.



wisatawan yang ingin menjauh dari hiruk pikuk dan keramaian di Bali. Komunitas penenun serta penampilan keaslian dan budayanya juga menjadi daya tarik wisatawan yang berkunjung ke Sumba Timur.

Perbedaan penting lainnya antara Sumba dan pulau-pulau besar dan terkenal di Indonesia (seperti Jawa) adalah bahwa pulau Sumba hanya dijajah dalam waktu yang sangat singkat.

Para misionaris Belanda berhasil mempertobatkan sebagian besar penduduk pulau tersebut, namun hanya terdapat sedikit perdagangan karena Perusahaan Hindia Timur Belanda (VOC) terutama mengawasi pulau tersebut pada abad kedelapan belas agar penjajah lain tidak dapat masuk. Dalam perekonomian yang sebagian besar bersifat subsisten ini, penenun penggunaan kain sebagian besar masih menggunakan logika nilai guna hingga baru-baru ini ketika pulau ini menjadi lebih terekspos ke pasar global. Kain tidak lagi ditunen untuk keperluan sehari-hari melainkan untuk ritual adat yang masih bertahan dari pengaruh agama Kristen dan modernitas. Penciptaan motif mempunyai hubungan yang menarik dalam hierarki gender, sebagaimana dicatat oleh Forshee (2000, 32):

Secara historis, perempuan merupakan produsen utama tekstil – meskipun motif desain baru sering kali muncul melalui saran dari para petinggi laki-laki. Ketika laki-laki menemukan gambaran baru melalui interaksi dengan orang luar, mereka memperkenalkan ide desain baru kepada pembuat kain. Oleh karena itu, motif dari berbagai kain, tembikar, perhiasan, barang cetakan, dan koin asing diadopsi ke dalam tekstil Sumba. Saat ini, semakin banyak laki-laki yang menciptakan desain kain, meneruskan pengaruh historis mereka terhadap citra.

Proses pembuatan motif dan pewarnaan kain Sumba tergolong unik dan memanfaatkan teknik pewarna dan ikat alami. Artikel ini terutama membahas tentang para penenun di wilayah Lambanapu, Sumba Timur dan mengamati pergeseran dalam proses pembuatan dan pewarnaan kain yang telah dan terus terjadi seiring dengan respons para penenun terhadap pasar wisata global.

Selama kunjungan kami ke desa Lambanapu, kami fokus pada dua kelompok utama perajin yang terkenal di wilayah tersebut. Kami memilih lokasi-lokasi ini berdasarkan koneksi yang terjalin dan juga karena kami ingin mengeksplorasi dinamika gender, dengan masing-masing komunitas tenun memberikan wawasan tentang gender dan kepemimpinan. Satu kelompok yang kami fokuskan adalah studio yang dipimpin oleh perempuan (selanjutnya disebut studio OA) dan kelompok kedua dimulai oleh desainer laki-laki, KN. Ibunya kini ditugaskan sebagai pemimpin kelompok dan dia mulai membentuk kelompok lain. Namun KN masih menjadi wajah utama grup ini – dan reputasi globalnya berasal dari ketenarannya sebagai seniman/pengrajin bintang. KN telah mendapatkan reputasi internasional melalui upaya pemasaran dan kolaborasinya dengan LSM di Indonesia dan dunia barat (selanjutnya disebut PLH). Pemimpin studio adalah seorang wanita (Y) berusia di atas 50 tahun dan seorang tetua komunitas yang diakui. Kelompok ini dijalankan sebagai kumpulan yang sebagian besar terdiri dari perempuan pencelup dan penenun. Sanggar OA juga menjadi tempat di mana tradisi tari tradisional Sumba diajarkan kepada generasi penerus. Pemimpin PLH adalah seorang laki-laki berusia empat puluhan (KN) – dan kelompok ini sangat jelas terstruktur berdasarkan hierarki yang berpusat pada laki-laki meskipun kepemimpinannya dalam komunitas ini didasarkan pada keahlian yang diperoleh dari mengikuti dan belajar dari ibunya. Namun, di kedua kelompok yang ia dirikan, perempuan diakui dan dihormati sebagai satu-satunya yang diizinkan masuk ke dalam gudang nila.

Y dan KN terus berhubungan dengan kami sebagai rekan peneliti melalui WhatsApp dan cara komunikasi lainnya – tanpa kenal lelah mengklarifikasi rincian kepada penulis pertama yang kemudian ia terjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Inggris sehingga penulis kedua juga dapat mempertimbangkan hal ini saat kami bersama-sama mengembangkan tema penelitian dan analisis. Kami mewawancarai beberapa desainer, pemilik usaha, dan penenun yang tergabung dalam kedua kelompok ini.

Kami menjumpai lebih banyak wisatawan di Prailiu karena desa ini juga memamerkan peninggalan kerajaan, termasuk makam batu kuno. Para penenun juga memajang hasil karyanya di rumah dan pekarangan kerajaan untuk dijual kepada pengunjung wisata. Beberapa penenun menenun di lokasi dan memamerkan desain serta proses menenunnya kepada pengunjung. Karena pihak kerajaan sangat terlibat dalam patronase di Prailiu, kami mewawancarai salah satu patron perajin di komunitas Sumba Timur secara mendalam selama kunjungan kami dan setelah kami pergi melalui Skype dan WhatsApp. Perannya sebagai penerjemah akademis berbahasa Inggris dari konteks tersebut juga sangat berharga bagi penelitian dan penulisan kami.

Metode dan metodologi

Metodologi penelitian bersama dan penulisan bersama kami mengacu pada tradisi penelitian kolaboratif feminis (Visweswaran 1997). Penulisan bersama di sini merupakan hasil dialog yang intens antara ketiga penulis dan kolaborator penelitian lainnya ("subyek") di lokasi yang merupakan penenun dan pencelup di Sumba. Penulis pertama menerjemahkan sebagian besar masukan dari kolaborator di lokasi (baik dalam bahasa lokal Sum-ban dan Bahasa Indonesia) sehingga penulis kedua kemudian dapat mengolah kembali terjemahan tersebut menjadi tulisan akademis dalam bahasa Inggris. Kami menghadapi permasalahan akses dan penerjemahan yang kompleks yang secara implisit mengulangi problematisasi biner teori dan praksis (Mamidipudi dan Gajjala 2008). Rekan penulis terus melakukan percakapan dengan beberapa praktisi utama dan anggota komunitas yang kami wawancarai saat kami menulis artikel ini.

Penulis pertama telah melakukan beberapa kali kunjungan ke Pulau Sumba (terakhir pada bulan Oktober 2019) dan membangun hubungan dengan keluarga setempat melalui seorang rekan di universitasnya yang merupakan bagian dari keluarga tersebut. Ia telah mengamati komunitas ini selama beberapa tahun dan terus berkomunikasi melalui Facebook, Instagram dan WhatsApp, serta telepon seluler dengan berbagai penenun. Penulis kedua telah menghabiskan beberapa tahun melakukan penelitian dengan anggota sebuah LSM handloom di India. Dia telah melakukan beberapa kunjungan lapangan ke komunitas tenun handloom di India selatan dan telah ikut menulis dengan beberapa anggota LSM mengenai isu-isu yang diangkat oleh kebangkitan pewarna alami dan upaya untuk melestarikan apa yang dulu – antara tahun 2003 dan 2008 – merupakan mata pencaharian terbesar kedua. di India. Dia terus berdialog dengan beberapa kolaborator dan terus mewawancarai para pengrajin, pengusaha kecil, pekerja LSM dan perajin rekreasi, penenun dan pemintal di India. Selain itu, ia telah mengerjakan sebuah proyek yang melibatkan wawancara ekstensif terhadap perajin serat do-it-yourself di Amerika sejak tahun 2007. Semua ini menjadi masukan dalam metodologinya untuk memahami konteks tenun dan kerajinan di Sumba Timur. Secara kolektif, kami mewawancarai 50 penenun, pemintal, dan pencelup serta melakukan beberapa kunjungan lapangan yang menghasilkan observasi budaya dan kerja lapangan di Lambanapu dan Prailiu. Wawancara dilakukan pada tahun 2014, 2018, dan 2019. Empat puluh orang yang diwawancarai adalah perempuan – 12 orang di antaranya berusia di atas 50 tahun, 20 orang berusia antara 40 dan 50 tahun, sedangkan sisanya berusia di bawah 40 tahun. Wanita termuda yang diwawancarai berusia sekitar 25 tahun. Sepuluh dari keseluruhan 50 wawancara yang dilakukan untuk penelitian ini dilakukan dengan laki-laki, dua di antaranya berusia di atas 45 tahun dan lima berusia sekitar 40 tahun, sedangkan sisanya berusia di bawah 40 tahun.

Tema

Setelah setiap hari kerja lapangan, anggota tim peneliti akan mendiskusikan pengamatan mereka dan mengungkap tema. Beberapa tema utama yang dicatat meliputi:

- (1) Peralihan dari tenun dalam negeri ke tenun untuk usaha kecil yang pada gilirannya mengharuskan peralihan dari nilai guna ke nilai pasar global.

Pada tahun 1980an kebutuhan akan kain tenun semakin meningkat karena adanya wisatawan baik yang berkunjung ke Sumba maupun masyarakat Sumba yang berdagang kain tenun di Bali. Permintaan akan produk tenun meningkat – namun menenun hanya dilakukan sebagai usaha paruh waktu sekaligus menyeimbangkan pekerjaan rumah tangga lainnya. Kegiatan warisan dan budaya (seperti tari) juga meningkat dan digunakan sebagai cara untuk membangun lingkungan budaya yang ramah bagi wisatawan. Dengan adanya paparan global dan antisipasi permintaan akan produk tenun, muncul peningkatan keterlibatan laki-laki.

Tenun kini dianggap sebagai peluang bisnis global. Terbangunnya relasi dan networking dengan masyarakat luar Pulau Sumba menyebabkan tumbuhnya usaha kain tenun.

Dengan demikian, permintaan dan kebutuhan akan tenun kini melampaui masyarakat lokal. Seiring dengan meningkatnya permintaan akan produk tersebut, semakin banyak laki-laki dari komunitas penenun yang mulai mendirikan usaha kain tenun.



Meskipun laki-laki mungkin telah terlibat dalam proses tenun sebelum produksi modern yang berorientasi global dan meskipun perdagangan internasional yang melibatkan kain tenun sudah ada di masa lalu – terdapat arti penting keterlibatan laki-laki dalam bisnis global kontemporer dan etos kewirausahaan. Peran laki-laki dalam komunitas tenun – khususnya dalam konteks menghadapi bisnis global – mulai lebih selaras dengan ekspektasi patriarki Barat. Meskipun dalam konteks keluarga setempat perempuan dan pengetahuan tradisional mereka dihormati (dan pengetahuan perempuan yang lebih tua dihormati), peran manajemen bisnis dan kepemimpinan semakin banyak dialihkan ke ranah laki-laki.

Dalam kerja lapangan, kami mengetahui dari AN (ibu seorang desainer kain dan pengusaha ternama Sumba KN) bahwa mereka mulai menerima permintaan tenun dari luar Sumba pada tahun 1970an dan 1980an. Sejak saat itu, benang buatan pabrik mulai digunakan dalam proses tenun karena kapas lokal tidak mencukupi. AN mengaku mendapat banyak pesanan tenun sehingga KN turun tangan membantu. Setelah KN tamat SMA, ia memutuskan untuk tidak melanjutkan kuliah dan tinggal di rumah untuk membantu ibunya, belajar dan mengembangkan teknik tenun lebih lanjut. KN kini menjadi pemimpin di antara para penenun lokal yang semuanya telah berupaya mengembangkan tenun lokal mereka menjadi usaha kecil. Ia menjalin jaringan dengan pihak luar seperti LSM dan pemasar komersial. T adalah salah satu pemimpin usaha tenun yang bekerja secara kolektif. Ia mencatat peran gereja dalam memberikan bantuan berupa bahan baku (umumnya benang) kepada para perajin.

Pada umumnya laki-laki Sumba mulai terjun dalam usaha tenun terlebih dahulu dengan membantu ibu ketika masih anak-anak dan/atau membantu istri setelah menikah. Setelah terlibat dalam proses tersebut, mereka mengambil alih kegiatan bisnis – khususnya perdagangan dan jaringan dengan pihak luar. Peran laki-laki/perempuan dalam pengelolaan keuangan rumah tangga dan investasi keuangan bisnis mulai selaras dengan cara sebagian besar unit patriarki di negara barat menangani keuangan. Oleh karena itu, perempuan kini mengelola keuangan rumah tangga dengan harapan bahwa uang dari usaha tenun dapat ditabung untuk kebutuhan pendidikan anak-anak mereka, menurut diskusi kelompok terfokus dengan perempuan penenun di Sumba. Salah satu anggota masyarakat Sumba yang kami wawancarai pada bulan Juli 2018 mencatat:

Di Sumba, yang mengatur keuangan adalah ibu rumah tangga, sedangkan laki-laki berperan sebagai pencari nafkah. Namun lebih banyak laki-laki yang bertindak sebagai pengambil keputusan. Misalnya musyawarah atau perundingan adat didominasi oleh laki-laki. Contoh perundingan adat adalah penentuan besarnya mahar yang harus dibayarkan pihak laki-laki kepada pihak mempelai wanita. Dalam urusan bisnis, laki-laki biasanya memainkan peran utama, namun hasilnya diserahkan kepada perempuan untuk diatur.

Orang lain (laki-laki) yang diwawancarai menyatakan bahwa:

Dalam rumah tangga masyarakat Sumba yang umumnya mengelola keuangan adalah perempuan [ibu rumah tangga]. Dalam pertemuan adat yang berperan mengambil keputusan adalah laki-laki, namun biasanya laki-laki melakukan perundingan terlebih dahulu dengan istrinya di rumah.

Pengelolaan keuangan dalam rumah tangga berhubungan langsung dengan rasa tanggung jawab perempuan anak mereka. Jadi, seperti yang dikatakan oleh wanita lain yang diwawancarai kepada kami:

Perempuan mengelola keuangan rumah tangga. Mereka dapat menghemat uang karena tenun yang mereka lakukan – sehingga mereka dapat mendukungnya kebutuhan pendidikan anak-anaknya.

Hal ini terungkap dalam percakapan lebih lanjut dengan perempuan penenun lainnya di Sumba pada pertemuan kelompok terfokus yang kami adakan pada musim panas 2018. Kami juga diberitahu bahwa jika hasil tenunan tidak terjual tepat waktu, mereka akan menggadaikan hasil tenun tersebut agar segera mendapatkan uang, untuk membiayai pendidikan anak-anaknya.

(2) Pergeseran peran gender dalam proses produksi kain berkontribusi terhadap potensi pergeseran asumsi budaya seputar peran dan proses gender.

Sebelum menjangkau pasar global, seluruh proses perancangan dan penenunan kain tenun Sumba dianggap sebagai tanggung jawab rumah tangga, dengan sebagian besar tugas dilakukan dan diorganisir oleh perempuan. Laki-laki membantu mereka melakukan beberapa tugas seperti menggali akar mengkudu atau

membuat rangka kayu (untuk merangkai benang). Pada masa itu, kain tenun dibuat untuk memenuhi kebutuhan upacara adat setempat.

Ada 42 langkah dalam proses tenun Sumba. Umumnya diperlukan kerja sama yang erat antara tiga hingga sepuluh orang untuk menyelesaikan satu helai kain tenun. Namun di masa lalu, setiap perempuan di komunitas penenun memiliki keterampilan dan kemampuan untuk menyelesaikan 42 langkah tersebut sendirian jika diperlukan. Dulunya, semua langkah tersebut dilakukan oleh seorang perempuan saja. Dalam beberapa tahap proses menenun dan sekarat, mereka dibantu oleh anak-anaknya, misalnya untuk menghani (menggulung benang pada bingkai kayu) yang selalu harus dilakukan oleh dua orang. Namun materi pemasaran untuk wirausaha sosial yang aktif, Sekar Kawung, mencatat bahwa dalam satu kelompok tenun bernama Paluanda Lama Hamu (kelompok yang belum kami wawancarai pada saat penulisan artikel ini) hanya dua perempuan yang memiliki semua keterampilan yang diperlukan untuk melakukan pekerjaan tersebut. Keseluruhan proses menenun dan sekarat saja (Prijosusilo 2017).

(3) Penggunaan ponsel dan media sosial oleh sejumlah generasi muda baik perempuan maupun laki-laki

Akses internet semakin baik di Sumba, meski terbatas pada operator telepon tertentu.

Selain itu, banyak pula ponsel murah yang banyak dibuat di China. Penggunaan telepon seluler dan media sosial menarik generasi muda ke dalam sisi bisnis dan pemasaran bisnis kain tenun Sumba. Hampir semuanya memiliki akun Facebook, Instagram, dan WhatsApp, bahkan ada juga yang memiliki akun YouTube dan Vlog untuk mengunggah aktivitasnya. Karena mereka menggunakan alat-alat ini dalam kehidupan sosial pribadi mereka untuk bersenang-senang, mereka mulai bereksperimen dengan pemasaran untuk usaha kecil yang dijalankan oleh keluarga mereka.

Implikasi dari ketiga pergeseran ini terhadap peran gender

Pergeseran ini bertujuan untuk memindahkan peran perempuan lebih ke pinggiran usaha kecil dan pada saat yang sama memobilisasi generasi muda untuk lebih aktif terlibat dalam pemasaran melalui media sosial. Perempuan muda yang memiliki anak bekerja di bidang pemasaran media sosial di satu sisi dan tugas membuat pewarna indigo di sisi lain (yang masih terbatas pada perempuan karena kepercayaan lokal yang melarang laki-laki terlibat) dan menenun secara mekanis ke dalam bingkai di mana desainnya telah ditentukan sebelumnya. Oleh karena itu, mereka menunjukkan kemahiran teknis dalam dua tugas utama yaitu pemasaran dan pembuatan dalam organisasi. Para perempuan mengetahui hal ini dan secara lokal maupun individu merasa diberdayakan. Namun kontradiksinya adalah ketika berhubungan dengan komunikasi eksternal – yang memandang ke arah barat dan dalam bernegosiasi dengan pasar luar – sebagian besar pekerja perempuan sekali lagi secara implisit disubordinasikan dan dijadikan sebagai pekerjaan sampingan yang tidak terlihat. Oleh karena itu, meskipun peran mereka dalam kematian indigo dihormati dan disoroti baik secara lokal maupun dalam narasi pasar global, dalam kehidupan sehari-hari pekerjaan menenun yang dilakukan perempuan “dialihdayakan” menjadi potongan-potongan kecil. Mereka tidak dapat bergantung pada tenun sebagai sumber pendapatan tetap dan harus memiliki pekerjaan harian atau hanya melakukan pekerjaan rumah tangga yang terbatas pada pekerjaan rumah tangga, pasangan, anak dan orang tua – meskipun mereka mengelola sebagian pendapatan dari bisnis tersebut untuk mendukung tanggung jawab rumah tangga tersebut.

Kontradiksinya adalah perempuan – berdasarkan observasi dan perbincangan kami dengan perempuan – merasa bahwa mereka “memiliki” motif tersebut. Mereka merasakan kekuatan yang didasarkan pada peran historis perempuan dalam mengembangkan motif, meskipun hal tersebut berkembang melalui dialog dengan laki-laki yang melakukan perjalanan ke luar Sumba dan kembali dengan cerita tentang petualangan mereka (Forshee 2000). Motif-motif lama yang kini menjadi standar dan dikenal secara global sebagai motif Sumba diakui sebagai karya perempuan. Kekuatan perempuan kemudian lebih banyak diambil dari masa lalu dan dari pemeliharaan tradisi dibandingkan dari pertumbuhan bisnis global modern dan yang dimediasi oleh teknologi. Di masa lalu, keterampilan menenun dan pewarna alami bergantung pada transfer pengetahuan diam-diam dari generasi ke generasi perempuan di masyarakat. Namun upaya yang dilakukan saat ini adalah menuju standarisasi desain dan proses pewarnaan (pewarna alami) pada tahap pra-tenun dari proses asli agar kain tenun Sumba dapat diklasifikasikan sebagai produk warisan takbenda di bawah program UNESCO.



Upaya untuk mendapatkan sertifikasi (dan proses) kain di bawah program UNESCO dilatarbelakangi oleh persepsi bahwa mendapatkan sertifikasi kain tenun Sumba tidak hanya akan mencapnya sebagai sesuatu yang patut menjadi kebanggaan nasional Indonesia, namun juga akan berkontribusi pada pelestarian komunitas etnis tradisional Sumba. praktik dan pengetahuan dengan terus menjadikan proses tenun dan pewarna alami sebagai mata pencaharian sebagian masyarakat. Dinamika komunitas apa – yaitu ekologi peran sosial dan proses pembuatan kain yang saling bergantung – yang akan berubah dan apa yang dianggap sebagai tradisi otentik? Kami melihat kontestasi muncul melalui diskusi mengenai apakah semua penenun memproduksi kain tenun Sumba yang asli (asli, autentik) dengan pewarna alami dan bagaimana konsumen dapat mengenali suatu produk asli. Batik Indonesia diakui oleh UNESCO sebagai warisan budaya pada bulan Oktober 2009, setelah berbagai pemangku kepentingan di Indonesia menghabiskan waktu dan tenaga secara strategis untuk memperdebatkan argumen bahwa batik adalah bagian asli dari warisan budaya Indonesia. Standarisasi proses tertentu perlu diungkap dan dipertahankan di seluruh negeri untuk mensertifikasi salah satu cara pembuatan batik sebagai proses asli Indonesia. Oleh karena itu, perjuangan untuk membuat UNESCO mengautentikasi produk warisan budaya takbenda mengungkapkan perjuangan seputar definisi istilah “keaslian”, “tradisi”, dan “budaya”. Misalnya, Forshee (2000, 6) menyatakan bahwa “penduduk desa di Sumba Timur dengan cerdas bermain-main dengan gagasan seperti ‘etnis’, ‘tradisi’, ‘primitivisme’, dan ‘keaslian’ ketika mereka membentuk budaya dalam pertemuan dengan orang luar”.

Bahkan ketika argumen dibuat oleh unit lokal dan nasional untuk sertifikasi suatu produk sebagai “warisan budaya takbenda”, proses produksi harus berubah dan menjadi lebih mudah dipahami dalam konteks kondisi epistemologis produksi pengetahuan modern.

Selain itu, terdapat berbagai hierarki bangsa – ekonomi dan budaya – yang berperan dalam perjuangan ini. Langkah untuk menjadikan batik sebagai produk warisan budaya, misalnya, dipandang bukan hanya sebagai langkah nasionalis tetapi juga sebagai langkah ekonomi yang sangat penting. Sebagaimana dicatat Steelyana (2012), batik “bukan hanya warisan budaya tetapi juga memberikan penghidupan bagi jutaan orang Indonesia”.

Dalam kasus ikkat Sumba, informan yang kami ajak bicara mengatakan bahwa beberapa upaya yang gagal telah dilakukan untuk mengklasifikasikannya sebagai warisan takbenda melalui UNESCO. Jelas terlihat adanya kepentingan nasional untuk menggambarkan ikkat Sumba sebagai warisan takbenda. Terlepas dari apakah ia diberi status sebagai produk warisan budaya UNESCO, kain tenun Sumba telah mewakili budaya Sumba melalui jenis estetika tertentu berdasarkan proses tenun dan pewarna alami dan terdapat gerakan nasional lokal Indonesia yang mengkategorikan proses ini ke dalam kategori produk warisan budaya kerangka warisan tak berwujud.

Kesimpulan

Fokus kami dalam artikel ini adalah pergeseran peran gender dan kontradiksi seputar peran perempuan dalam produksi yang muncul dalam kelompok tenun tertentu di Sumba Timur. Melalui penelitian kami, kami mulai memahami bahwa dampak kekuatan modern dan globalisasi terhadap peran gender lokal sangatlah kompleks dan bukan sekadar cerita linear mengenai pemberdayaan perempuan. Baik terkait dengan aspirasi kewirausahaan kelompok penenun lokal, upaya untuk memenuhi kebutuhan wisatawan, pemberdayaan dan pembangunan ekonomi, atau dengan pelestarian warisan budaya tak benda dengan mengikuti pedoman UNESCO, perubahan tersebut berdampak pada kemampuan perempuan untuk terlibat dalam peran kepemimpinan bisnis bahkan ketika mereka diakui secara lokal sebagai orang-orang yang meneruskan pengetahuan tradisional dan keterampilan produksi masyarakat. Secara historis, para ahli dan pemimpin tenun Sumba adalah perempuan – hal ini dibuktikan melalui wawancara (yang juga bisa menjadi sejarah lisan) terhadap perempuan dan laki-laki anggota kelompok tenun. Para peneliti sebelumnya – baik antropolog, peneliti pembangunan atau praktisi (seperti kelompok nirlaba yang bekerja sama dengan kelompok penenun) – juga telah membuktikan pentingnya pengetahuan dan keterampilan perempuan dalam komunitas tenun secara historis dan kontemporer.

Temuan-temuan utama dari penelitian kami – tiga pergeseran/tema – memperkuat pengamatan para pakar feminis yang mencatat bahwa model-model program pembangunan modern saat ini cenderung memperkuat norma-norma patriarki Barat dalam bidang manajemen, yang mengarah pada pendelegasian tenaga kerja perempuan sebagai produksi subordinat. dan pekerjaan tambahan. Oleh karena itu, perempuan dalam masyarakat – betapapun dihormati dan dihormati karena keahlian mereka di tingkat lokal dan seberapa besar kendali dan tanggung jawab lokal yang mereka miliki – kehilangan suara dalam pengambilan keputusan organisasi yang lebih besar yang cenderung bersifat global karena laki-laki ditempatkan pada posisi tersebut. menjadi negosiator dan manajer bisnis dan organisasi.

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The making of “*asli*” Sumba woven cloth: how globalising “intangible heritage” impacts women’s roles

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The making of “*asli*” Sumba woven cloth: how globalising “intangible heritage” impacts women’s roles

Rustina Untari, Radhika Gajjala and Ridwan Sanjaya

ABSTRACT

This article discusses how the production of “original”/“*asli*” commodity through a local/global dialectic in how “intangible heritage” is defined and how contemporary global market-facing Sumba weaving contributes to shifts and contradictions in gender roles as they are shaped simultaneously through local community needs and through a global facing westernised patriarchal business ethos. The increasing global north facing integration of global south production communities into the world markets for instance, leads to a masculinisation of management and global facing leadership while along with a feminisation of the local production process. Evidence for our observations were drawn from over 50 in-depth interviews and onsite observation during field visits to the site.

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Introduction

In contemporary Sumba weaving communities in Indonesia, woven cloth (fabric) and the process of production is globalised as a work of art. Even as the cloth continues to have local value through living local traditions, the impact of global demand for the unique artisanal product has resulted in shifts in the roles of women and men in the production process. Historically, this cloth has functioned in a use-value framework as both a wearable item and as a way to document community histories and tacit artisanal knowledge of processes that have been passed on from generation to generation of women within the community. Neo-colonial development frameworks and neo-liberal market frameworks, we argue, reorient the meanings around fabric through global/local dialectics and contradictions around “authentic” production branded as *asli*. Sumbanese women weavers are often narrated as leaders of weaving communities both locally and globally, and the narrative of women as central to the production process is implicitly part of the branding of the commodity as authentic (*asli*). Yet what we see in actuality are shifts and contradictions in gender roles as the community aspires to have the craft production process classified and protected by UNESCO as intangible heritage (*Pokasta News*, 17 April 2012). *Asli* is standardised and commodified. This renewed articulation of *asli* as authenticity relies on the commodification of women’s roles in the process.

These findings have implications for policy workers negotiating contradictions of local and global contexts for women’s empowerment. This article looks at case studies of Sumbanese fabric production in Lambanapu, located in Waingapo, the capital of East Sumba, in an effort to understand how this commodification of women’s roles simultaneously also displaces them from being leaders in the weaving small businesses that have emerged in response to global demand.

Concepts such as “commodification” (Hearn 2017) “authenticity” (Banet-Weiser 2012), “tourist gaze” (Urry 1992) and “intangible heritage” (UNESCO) are used throughout this article and are key

to the arguments we make. It is important to clearly state the definitions we use for these terms as they are key to our overall argument. Commodification is the process by which objects, people, ideas, processes and services are made marketable and for sale (Hearn 2017, 43). Authenticity as “produced” through the idea of *asli* on the other hand is based in discussions around how in contemporary marketing ethos we see a “transformation of culture of everyday living into brand culture” (Banet-Weiser 2012, 5). “Tourist gaze” is a concept from tourism studies and associated with the sociologist Urry, who defined it as “the pre-eminence of vision in organising the development of Western tourism since the end of the eighteenth century” (Urry 1992). Finally, the concept of intangible heritage that we use is drawn from the UNESCO online definition which includes “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants”.

Global South craft communities and women’s labour

Postcolonial feminist scholars such as Mohanty (1997) and Mies (1982) have noted how the shifts in relations of production resulting from “integration [of global south production communities] into the world market led to class/caste differentiation within particular communities, with a masculinisation of all nonproduction jobs (trade) and a total feminisation of the production process”. This article examines the context of Sumbanese hand-woven cloth makers and their integration into neo-liberal market logics to see how the unique and shifting conditions of the weaving communities of East Sumba impact gender roles within this community of production.

Sumba handwoven fabric and tapestries are desired by art collectors and textile enthusiasts globally. We note that it is through a production process considered unique to the Sumbanese context that “original”/*asli* Sumba woven cloth is validated as authentic. This cloth and the process of production both acquire monetary value in the global market space as authentic text and authentic commodity within the contemporary neo-liberal market ethos. The figure of the woman weaver is portrayed as powerful through the narration of the history of weaving communities in Sumbanese culture and mobilised visually and textually. Yet during our field visits, it became apparent that there were contradictory shifts happening in the roles of women within the producer communities. At the same time as women weavers and indigo dye producers were being extolled as keepers of culture, they were also becoming subordinated in the larger organisational structure of the small business.

Our theoretical observations in this article are derived from the many interviews we conducted in East Sumba. The cloth is now desired by tourists and art collectors outside of Sumba – in other areas of Indonesia and globally – who value both the tactile and visual aesthetics of the product. However, the unique production process for a handwoven and natural dyed Sumbanese woven cloth takes time (even though the majority of weavers no longer use handspun yarn) and is very labour intensive. This means that the handspun and natural dye – authentic or *asli* – product is exorbitantly priced. Predictably, the international demand has given rise to machine-made copies that use chemical dyes. As one of the Sumbanese residents we interviewed in 2018 noted,

now Sumba fabric is a trend in Jakarta, many people have high-quality fabric fabrication, but the market is not so big and not easy to sell (high value, low volume product). [There are suggestions now that we sell] low-value, high-volume products ... [that have used] chemical dyes.

However, at the same time as the lure of the commercial markets seem to suggest that a move to “high volume, low value” is a practical option towards better sales, international organisations and NGOs seeking to endorse and help market this product are particular about asserting that the authenticity of this product can only be endorsed if the production process is *asli*. Further, because of how global flows of value (economic and cultural) towards Global South contexts are reliant on both internationally endorsed visibility of modernisation and cultural heritage preservation through organisations such as the UN and UNESCO, the Indonesian government has also (as of 2013) been

interested in maintaining the authenticity of production process so that the craft of Sumbanese Ikkat might be included by UNESCO in its intangible heritage listing.

We therefore see a larger global facing move from (dynamic) epistemologies associated with women's communities and knowledges (Alcoff and Potter 1993) to static (flattened) standardisation, reproduction, recording and storing of knowledges. This shift occurs through a privileging of logics based in European language written text and visualised/commodified/branding aesthetics of authenticity (Banet-Weiser 2012). It is based in a privileging of an exact replicability of product that resonates more with mechanised processes than in production processes that rely on handmade crafting techniques. In addition, there seems to be an aspiration on the part of some advocates for the weavers and some Indonesian government representatives to have the craft classified and protected by UNESCO as intangible heritage. The guidelines for inclusion in this category also seem to have influence on the shifting production process. Framed through ideas of modernity and globalisation as the way forward for economic progress, there is a re-articulation of the tacit local community and natural ecology-based practices of *asli* production into a standardised reproduce-able template for authenticity. This renewed articulation of *asli* as authenticity subordinates and commodifies women artisans.

Authentic local craft

Sumba is a remote island in the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara – Nusa Tenggara Timor (NTT) – closer to Perth, Australia in location and climate than to what is normally thought of as “Indonesia”. While economically it is a poorer region of Indonesia and weaving itself is not a significant portion of the region's gross national product, Sumba weaving is known and desired internationally.

Historically, women in East Sumba have played a leading role in artisanal communities around woven cloth of Sumba, doing the hand spinning of yarn, natural dyeing, designing motifs and weaving. Even when influenced by information and recommendations from men, local community members attribute design ownership to the women since they were in charge of the community memory and practice of reproducing the motifs in the woven cloth. In the process of making indigo (one particular natural dye used in the cloth production) no men were even allowed to be in the production space as it is believed that the presence of men will corrupt the process of fermentation. This is a continuing practice and belief. Woven cloth was used in the everyday – in connection with community rituals and storytelling and for use value. Women have transferred this artisanal (tacit) knowledge from generation to generation. They have defined what “real” – that is *asli* – knowledge and practice of production of woven cloth and natural dye in their community is. They have held and preserved it across time. Thus, women have historically had a leading role in the production of woven cloth in Sumba.

At the same time, the role of women as leaders in weaving communities is receding as men become business leaders and designers while introducing new marketing practices. Even so, the narrative about authenticity – which also serves a neo-colonial tourist gaze – is produced through the telling of stories about how these women are keepers of *asli* knowledge. In modern parlance, *asli* has easily been translated to mean cultural authenticity, yet in articulating the process of *asli* to foster standardisation of process the concept is commodified while the process is modernised as tacit epistemologies are translated into propositional knowledge (Dalmiya and Alcoff 1993).

The concept of *asli*, then, is used as a way to authenticate the woven product. *Asli* Sumba weaving is defined, by the local weavers we interviewed, as weaving according to the production process that has been taught from generation to generation. They described this process as including four criteria of authenticity. The basic material used should be cotton, taken from cotton harvesting in Sumba. A second criteria included (hand)spinning cotton into yarn. Then the yarn is dyed and the design set up through a tie and dye process unique to Sumba weaving. The dyes are made locally using plants grown in Sumba. Natural dyes made from plant colouring agents, roots, seeds, soil and others are

processed based on ancestral knowledge transferred from generation to generation. The motifs are also unique to Sumbanese art and similarly transferred.

Yet, because of the lack of sufficient cotton harvest locally and the decline of hand spinning in contemporary times, *asli* has now come to mean natural dying, reproduction of Sumbanese motifs and use of Sumbanese Ikkat tie and dye design process. Much of what is characterised as *asli* relies also on what is seen as women's work. Thus, even today the weaving process is authenticated by emphasising how particular parts of the process – particularly the process of producing indigo – is restricted to women only. Thus, while we toured indigo sheds in 2018, the men who accompanied us to the weaver group locations were not allowed to enter the indigo production area. Since two of the three co-authors of this article are women, however, we had the opportunity to watch the process while also talking to the women working in the shed.

These processes and stories about women and their tacit practices, as well as community traditions, are narrated (and even staged) as a way to attract tourism (*Jakarta Post*, "Telling Stories of Indonesian Fabric for Internet: Savvy Generations", 31 July 2018). For instance, the ClothRoads organisation, part of the Artisan Alliance network for developing world-based organisations working with artisans, noted on their website on 17 August 2018 that "when you purchase from ClothRoads, you help us to build and develop new markets that allow artisans and communities, especially women and girls, to flourish".

The epistemic foundations of how this knowledge is reproduced through community praxis are displaced. Thus, in a manner similar to yet different from (since there are contradictions that emerge) that of traditional midwifery in much of the Global North, the women's knowledge and expertise are slowly being displaced in a process of exoticisation and re-narration (for a westernised tourist gaze), where these women's skills will no doubt eventually be characterised as unscientific "old wives' tales" (Dalmiya and Alcoff 1993, 218).

In this paper we make the claim, by theoretically working through evidence gathered from our research site in East Sumba, that the contradiction of implicit devaluing women's knowledges as "old wives' tales" happens even as traditional knowledge and processes are considered essential for the authentication of local knowledge and processes as *asli*. The article therefore opens up questions for further consideration leading to the need for a critical evaluation of the process of commodification of *asli*. By critiquing the commodification in relation to women's roles, however, our goal is not to suggest that the process of natural dye or hand weaving is in itself problematic or to be eradicated in favour of machine-made products – rather our goal is to show how the attempts to fit in such processes into a consumer and marketing logic that privileges mass production creates other social issues and contradictions. The implications of labour shifts with regards to women and their position in relation to the production of Sumbanese woven natural dyed cloth must be taken into consideration. Trying to make *asli* into a globalisable process through guidelines from UNESCO definitions of "intangible heritage" might actually contribute to potential further marginalisation of the women in this community.

Unlike several other Indonesian islands, Sumba does not have a tropical climate or fertile volcanic soil. It is a land fragment that was separated from the main Australian continent about 20 million years ago (Fowler 1999, 107) and "consists of hilly and low-lying grassland, coastal terraces and limestone plateaus" (Vel 2008, 24). It is comparatively sparsely populated and the per capita income in 2005 was 18% of the national average in West Sumba, and in East Sumba it was 28%. Agriculture is the source of income for a majority of the population (87% in 2005) (Vel 2008), but most activities on the island are subsistence activities. Shifts we see now are continuations of what scholars such as Vel noted in the 1990s, including in the commercial sector where economic activities include construction, road construction, import of manufactured goods and export of agricultural and domestic small-scale industry-based products. Limited tourism observed in the 1990s seems to have expanded in 2018 and 2019, if not to the scale of tourism in Bali island. For instance, it is clear from our conversations with hotel management and their family members and tourists, and the tourist packages on offer, that Sumba locations are being positioned as more peaceful and environment friendly for

tourists wishing to be away from the bustle and crowds in Bali. The weaving communities and their performance of authenticity and culture are also part of the lure for tourists visiting East Sumba.

Another important difference between Sumba and the larger and more well-known islands of Indonesia (such as Java) is that the Sumba island was colonised for a very short while. Dutch missionaries successfully converted a majority of the island's population, but there was little commerce as the Dutch East Indies Company primarily kept watch over the island in the eighteenth century so that other colonisers would not move in. In this mostly subsistence economy, weaving of cloth continued mostly in a use-value logic until fairly recently when the island became more exposed to the global market. Cloth is no longer woven for everyday use but for traditional rituals that have survived the influence of Christianity and modernity. The creation of motifs had an interesting interplay of gender hierarchy, as Forshee (2000, 32) notes:

Historically, women have been the primary producers of textiles – although new design motifs apparently often came about through the suggestions of high-ranking men. As men encountered new images through interactions with outsiders, they introduced novel design ideas to makers of cloth. Thus, motifs from a variety of foreign fabrics, pottery, jewelry, printed matter, and coins were adopted into Sumbanese textiles. In present times, men increasingly create designs for fabrics, continuing their historical influence upon imagery.

The process of creating motifs and colouring the Sumba cloth is unique and draws on natural dye and ikat techniques. This article looks mainly at weavers in the Lambanapu region of East Sumba and observes the shifts in cloth making and dyeing processes that have occurred and continue to occur as the weavers respond to a global tourist market.

During our visit to the Lambanapu village, we focused on the two main groups of crafters that are well known in that region. We chose these sites based on connections made but also because we wanted to explore the gendered dynamics, with each of the weaving communities providing insight on gender and leadership. One group we focused on is a woman-led studio (henceforth referred to as studio OA) and the second was started by a male designer, KN. His mother has been now been assigned now as the group's leader as he has moved on to starting another group. But KN is still the main face of this group – and its global reputation is derived from his fame as a stellar artist/artisan. KN has gained a reputation internationally through his marketing efforts and collaborations with NGOs in Indonesia and the western world (henceforth referred to as PLH). The leader of the studio is a woman (Y) over 50 years of age and a recognised community elder. This group is run as a collective of mostly women dyers and weavers. Studio OA is also a place where Sumba traditional dance traditions are taught to the next generations. The leader of PLH is a man in his forties (KN) – and this group is very clearly structured around a male-centred hierarchy even as his leadership of this community is based in the expertise gained from following and learning from his mother. Yet, in both the groups he has founded the women are recognised and honoured as the only ones who are allowed into the indigo sheds.

Y and KN have continued their contact with us co-researchers via WhatsApp and other modes of communication – tirelessly clarifying details to the first author which she then translated into English so that the second author could also consider these as we together developed our research themes and analyses. We interviewed several designers, business owners and weavers who belong to these two groups.

We encountered many more tourists in Prailiu as this village also displays relics of the kingdom, including an ancient stone tomb. Weavers also display their products at the royal house and compound to sell to tourist visitors. Some weavers weave on location and exhibit their design and weaving process to the visitors. Since the royal house is very much involved in patronage at Prailiu, we interviewed one of the patrons of the crafters in the East Sumba community in depth both during our visit and after we left via Skype and WhatsApp. Her role as an English-speaking academic translator from the context was also invaluable to our research and writing.

Methods and methodology

Our methodology of co-researching and co-writing draws on feminist traditions of collaborative research (Visweswaran 1997). The co-writing here is a result of intense dialogue among the three authors and the other research collaborators (“subjects”) on site who are weavers and dyers in Sumba. The first author translated much of the input from the onsite collaborators (in both local Sumbanese language and Bahasa Indonesia) so that the second author could then rework these translations into academic writing in English. We faced complex access and translation issues which implicitly reiterate the problematisation of theory and praxis binaries (Mamidipudi and Gajjala 2008). Co-authors have had continued conversations with some of the lead practitioners and community members we interviewed as we were writing this article.

The first author has made several visits to Sumba Island (most recently in October 2019) and built a relationship with a local family through a colleague at her university who is part of this family. She has been observing this community for a few years and has been in continuous communication via Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, and mobile phone with various weavers. The second author has spent several years researching with members of a handloom NGO in India. She has been on several field trips to handloom weaving communities in south India and has co-authored with some NGO members on the issues raised by the revival of natural dye and attempts to preserve what was then – between 2003 and 2008 – the second largest livelihood in India. She has continued dialogue with some collaborators and continues to interview crafts people, small entrepreneurs, NGO workers and leisure crafters, weavers and spinners in India. In addition, she has been working on a project that involves extensive interviewing of do-it-yourself fibre crafters in the US since 2007. All this feeds into her methodology for understanding the context of weaving and crafting in East Sumba. Collectively, we interviewed 50 weavers, spinners and dyers and conducted several site visits that resulted in cultural observation and fieldwork in Lambanapu and Prailiu. The interviews were conducted in 2014, 2018 and 2019. Forty of the interviewees were women – 12 of whom were over 50 years of age, 20 were between 40 and 50 years old, while the rest were below 40 years old. The youngest woman interviewed was about 25 years old. Ten of the overall 50 interviews conducted for this research were with men, of whom two were over 45 years of age and five were around 40, while the rest were below 40.

Themes

After each day of fieldwork, research team members would discuss their observations and unpack themes. Some major themes noted include:

- (1) *The shift from domestic weaving to weaving for a small business which in turn has necessitated the shift from use value to global market value.*

In the 1980s the need for woven fabrics increased because there were both tourists who visited Sumba and Sumba people who traded woven cloth in Bali. The demand for woven products increased – yet weaving was only conducted as a part-time business while also balancing other household chores. Heritage and cultural activities (such as dance) also increased and were used as ways to build a welcoming cultural environment for tourists. With the associated global exposure and anticipated demand for woven products came increased involvement on the part of men. Weaving was now considered to be a global business opportunity. The building of relationships and networking with people from outside Sumba island led to the growth of woven cloth businesses. Thus, the demand and need for weaving now went beyond the local community. As the demand for the product increased, more men from the weaver community started to set up woven cloth businesses.

While men may have been involved in the weaving process before this modern global-oriented production and while international trade involving woven cloth existed in previous times – there is a particular significance of men’s involvement in contemporary global businesses and entrepreneurial ethos. Men’s roles in the weaving community – particularly in the global business-facing context – began to align more with western patriarchal expectations. Whereas in local family contexts the women and their traditional knowledge were respected (and older women’s knowledge revered), business management and leadership roles were increasingly being shifted into the male domain.

In our field work, we learnt from AN (the mother of a well-known Sumba cloth designer and businessman KN) that they started getting requests for weaving from outside of Sumba in the 1970s and 1980s. From that time on, threads made by factories have begun to be used in the weaving process because of insufficient local cotton. AN said she had received many orders for weaving which led to KN stepping in to help. After KN finished high school, he decided not to go to college and stayed at home to help his mother, learning and developing the weaving technique further. KN is now a leader among local weavers who have all worked to build their local weaving into small businesses. He networks with outside parties such as NGOs and commercial marketers. T is another weaving business leader who works in a collective. He noted the role of the church in providing assistance in the form of raw material (mostly yarn) to the crafts people.

In general, Sumbanese men began to get involved in the weaving business first by helping their mothers as children and/or helping their wives after marriage. After being involved in the processes, they took over business activities – particularly trade and networking with outside parties. The male/female roles in household financial management and business financial investing began to align with the ways most western patriarchal nuclear units deal with finances. Thus, women now manage household finances with the hope that money from the weaving business can be saved for their children’s educational needs, according to focus group discussions with women weavers in Sumba. As one member of the Sumba community we interviewed in July 2018 noted:

In Sumba, the one who regulates finances is a housewife while men act as breadwinners. But more men act as decision makers. For example, deliberations or *adat* negotiations are dominated by men. An example of *adat* negotiations is the determining of the amount of dowry that must be paid by the man to the bride. When it comes to business matters, the men usually play a lead role but the results are left to the women to be regulated accordingly.

Another (male) interviewee stated that:

In the household of Sumbanese people who generally manage finances are women [housewives]. In traditional meetings the role of deciding is a man but usually the man negotiates first with his wife at home.

Management of finances in the household is directly linked to women’s sense of responsibility for their children. Thus, as another woman interviewee told us:

Women manage house hold finance. They can save money because of the weaving they do - so they can support their children’s educational need.

This point was revealed in further conversations with other women weavers in Sumba during a focus group meeting we conducted in summer 2018. We were also told that if the woven produce does not get sold in time, they pawn the produce so as to immediately get money to pay for their children’s education.

(2) *Gender role shifts in the production process of the cloth contribute to potential shifts in cultural assumptions around gendered roles and process*

Before the outreach towards global markets, the whole process of designing and weaving the Sumba woven cloth was considered to be a household responsibility, with tasks mostly performed and organised by women. Men helped them to do some tasks such as digging up noni roots or

making wooden frames (to string yarns). At that time, woven fabric was made to fulfil the needs of traditional local ceremonies.

There are 42 steps in the Sumba weaving process. Generally, close collaboration between three to ten people is needed to complete one piece of woven fabric. But in the past every woman in the weaver community had the skills and ability to complete the 42 steps alone if needed. In the past, all of these steps were carried out by a woman alone. During some stages in the weaving and dying process, they were assisted by their children, for example for *menghani* (rolling threads on a wooden frame) which always has to be done by two people. However the marketing materials for an active social enterprise, Sekar Kawung, noted that in one particular weaving group called *Paluanda Lama Hamu* (a group that we have yet to interview at the time of writing) only two women have all the skills necessary to perform the whole of the weaving and dying process alone (Prijosusilo 2017).

(3) *The use of mobile phones and social media by several younger generation women and men*

Internet access is getting better on Sumba, although it is limited to certain telephone operators. Also, there are many cheap mobile phones, many made in China. The use of mobile phones and social media draws younger generations into the business and marketing side of the Sumba woven cloth business. Almost all of them have Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp accounts, and some also have YouTube and Vlog accounts to upload their activities. Since they use these tools in their personal social life for leisure, they seamlessly begin to experiment with marketing for the small businesses run by their families.

Implications of these three shifts for gender roles

These shifts work to move women's roles more to the margins of the small businesses while at the same time mobilising younger generations to be more actively involved in marketing through social media. Younger women with children work on social media marketing on the one hand and the task of making the indigo dye on the other (which is still restricted to women because of local beliefs that ban men from being involved) and to weaving mechanically onto a frame where the design has been pre-set. Thus, they exhibit technical proficiency in two tasks central to marketing and making within the organisation. The women know this and locally and individually feel empowered. Yet the contradiction is that when it comes to external communication – westward looking and in negotiating with outside markets – much of the women's labour is once again implicitly subordinated and made invisible as ancillary work. Thus, while their role in indigo dying is revered and highlighted both locally and in narratives to the global market, on a day-to-day basis women's weaving work is "outsourced" piecemeal. They cannot depend on weaving as a source of steady income and must have day jobs or recede into a domesticity restricted to home, spousal, child and elder care – even as they manage some of the income from the business to support this household responsibility.

The contradiction here is that the women seem – based on our observations and conversations with the women – to feel they do "own" the motifs. They feel the power based in the historical role of women in developing the motifs, even though they were developed in dialogue with the men who travelled out of Sumba and came back with stories about their adventures (Forshee 2000). The older motifs that are now standardised and globally recognisable as Sumbanese are acknowledged as being women's creations. Women's power then is drawn more from the past and from the maintaining of traditions than from the modern global and techno-mediated business growth. In the past, weaving and natural dye skills have relied on the transfer of tacit knowledge from generation to generation of women in the community. Yet the contemporary drive is towards standardisation of the design and (natural dye) colouring process in the pre-weaving stages of the *asli* process in order for Sumba woven cloth to be classified as an intangible heritage product under the UNESCO programme.

Attempts to get the cloth (and process) certified under the UNESCO programme are motivated by perceptions that getting Sumbanese woven cloth certified would not only brand it as something worthy of Indonesian national pride, but it would also contribute to the preservation of traditional ethnic Sumbanese community practices and knowledge by continuing to make weaving and natural dye processes viable as a livelihood for a portion of the population. What community dynamics – interdependent ecologies of social roles and processes of making the cloth – would shift and what would be viewed as authentic traditions? We saw the contestations emerge through discussions of whether all weavers produced *asli* (original, authentic) natural dyed Sumba woven cloth and how the consumer might recognise an *asli* product. Indonesian batik was recognised by UNESCO as a cultural heritage in October 2009, after various stakeholders in Indonesia spent time and energy strategically arguing the case that batik was authentically part of Indonesian cultural heritage. A certain standardisation of process needed to be revealed and maintained across the country in order to certify one way of batik making as the authentic Indonesian process. Thus, the struggle to get UNESCO to authenticate an intangible cultural heritage product reveals struggles around the definitions of the very terms “authenticity”, “tradition” and “culture”. For instance, Forshee (2000, 6) has pointed out that “Eastern Sumbanese villagers cleverly play with notions like ‘ethnicity,’ ‘tradition,’ ‘primitivism,’ and ‘authenticity’ as they fashion culture in meetings with outsiders”.

Even as arguments are being made by local and national units for the certification of a product as “intangible cultural heritage”, the process of production must of necessity shift and become more understandable in the contexts of modern epistemological conditions of knowledge production. Further, there are various hierarchies of nation – economy and culture – that come into play in this struggle. The move to make a case for batik as cultural heritage product, for instance, was viewed not just as a nationalist move but as a very important economic move. As Steelyana (2012) notes, batik “is not only a cultural heritage but it also provides livelihood for millions of people of Indonesia”.

In the case of Sumbanese *ikkat*, informants that we spoke to told us that a few unsuccessful attempts have been made to classify it as intangible heritage through UNESCO. It is clear that there is national interest in describing Sumba *ikkat* as intangible heritage. Regardless of whether it is given the status of UNESCO cultural heritage product, Sumba woven cloth has come to represent Sumbanese culture through a particular kind of aesthetics based on weaving and natural dye processes and there is local Indonesian national move to categorise this process in the intangible heritage framework.

Conclusion

Our focus in this article was on gender role shifts and the contradictions around women’s role in production that emerge within particular East Sumbanese weaving groups. Through our research we began to understand that the impact of modern, globalising forces on local gender roles was complex and not simply a linear story of women’s empowerment. Whether linked with entrepreneurial aspirations of local weaver groups, the attempt to cater to the tourist gaze, economic empowerment and development or with preservation of intangible heritage by following UNESCO guidelines the shifts impacted women’s ability to engage in business leadership roles even as they were locally acknowledged to be the ones to carry forward the community’s traditional knowledge and production skills. Historically, Sumbanese weaving experts and leaders have been women – this is attested to through interviews (which could also serve as oral histories) of female and male members of the weaving groups. Previous researchers – whether anthropologists, development researchers or practitioners (such as the non-profit groups working in collaboration with weaver groups) – have also attested to the historical and contemporary importance of the women’s knowledge and skills in the weaving community.

The key findings from our research – the three shifts/themes – reinforce the observations of feminist scholars who have noted that current models of modern development programmes tend to reinforce western patriarchal norms for management, leading to the delegation of women’s labour as subordinate production and ancillary work. Thus, women in the community – however respected and honoured for their expertise locally and however much local control and responsibility they may have – lose voice in regards to the larger organisational decisions which tend to be global-facing as the men are placed in the position to be negotiators and managers of the businesses and organisations.

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