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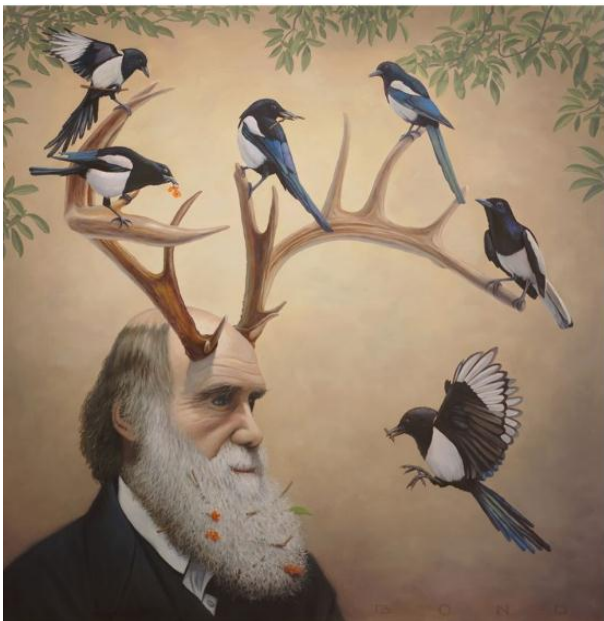
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Marginalization And Subordination Of Women Workers At The Home-Based Batik Industry In East Java

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Abstract

Handmade batik production in Indonesia has been a part of community lives for centuries, mostly involving women. Nevertheless, the life of women crafters is very apprehensive and in poor condition. This paper is intended to analyze the marginalization of women in the handmade batik home-based industry. This paper also aims to reveal the subordination of women workers in the community of the handmade batik home-based industry. Using a sociological and feminist perspective, this paper focuses more on social interaction and gender relations in the community of handmade batik home-based industries. The focus of the study is to reveal how women workers in the home-based batik industry have been put in subordinate and marginalized positions. This paper is based on research conducted in two Villages of East Java Province, namely in Bangkalan and Tuban Regency. The subjects of this study were all women involved in the batik home-based industry. Data collection techniques applied in this study were in depth interview technique on 20 informants and interview using questionnaire technique on 210 respondents chosen purposefully. The study reveals that the work of women crafters was marginalized toward the type of low-paid work. On the other hand, the types of work with a bigger wages were held by men, including marketing. This paper also argues that, although women hold a core position in the whole process of handmade batik production, they are in a subordinate position in the workplace and in the family. Women batik crafters do not get any work protection since the home industry is categorized as informal work and they are only considered as additional earners in the family.

Keywords: Handmade Batik, Marginalization, Subordination, Feminist Perspective, Home-Based Industry

Marginación Y Subordinación De Las Trabajadoras. En La Industria Del Batik En El Hogar En Java Oriental

Resumen

La producción artesanal de batik en Indonesia ha sido parte de la vida de la comunidad durante siglos, involucrando principalmente a mujeres. Sin embargo, la vida de las mujeres artesanas es muy aprensiva y está en malas condiciones. Este documento tiene como objetivo analizar la marginación de las mujeres en la industria artesanal de batik en el hogar. Este documento también tiene como objetivo revelar la subordinación de las trabajadoras en la comunidad de la industria artesanal de batik en el hogar. Utilizando una perspectiva sociológica y feminista, este documento se centra más en la interacción social y las relaciones de género en la comunidad de las industrias artesanales de batik en el hogar. El objetivo del estudio es revelar cómo las trabajadoras en la industria del batik en el hogar han sido ubicadas en puestos subordinados y marginados. Este documento se basa en la investigación realizada en dos pueblos de la provincia de Java Oriental, concretamente en Bangkalan y Tuban Regency. Los sujetos de este estudio fueron todas mujeres involucradas en la industria del batik en el hogar. Las técnicas de recopilación de datos aplicadas en este estudio fueron una técnica de entrevista en profundidad con 20 informantes y una entrevista con la técnica del cuestionario en 210 encuestados elegidos a propósito. El estudio revela que el trabajo de las mujeres artesanas fue marginado hacia el tipo de trabajo mal remunerado. Por otro lado, los tipos de trabajo con salarios más altos estaban en manos de hombres, incluido el marketing. Este artículo también argumenta que, aunque las mujeres ocupan una posición central en todo el proceso de producción artesanal de batik, están en una posición subordinada en el lugar de trabajo y en la familia. Las artesanas de batik no obtienen ninguna protección laboral, ya que la industria doméstica se clasifica como trabajo informal y solo se las considera personas adicionales en la familia.

Palabras clave: Batik hecho a mano, marginación, subordinación, perspectiva feminista, industria doméstica

1. INTRODUCTION

The tradition of batik making is found in various countries; however, the batik of Indonesia may be the best-known. Batik in Indonesia contains the treasures of Indonesian culture through various shades and types of traditional batik with its own specific characteristics (LUSIANTI & RANI, 2012). In October 2009, UNESCO designated Indonesian batik as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2009). Traditional homemade batik originated from Indonesia is characterized by a technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to whole cloth, and is made by drawing motifs and a tool called a canting. As a cultural product, the handmade batik production process has been taught informally for generations and has been practiced for centuries. Indonesian batik made in the island of Java has a long history of acculturation, with diverse patterns influenced by a variety of cultures, and is the most developed in terms of pattern, technique, and the quality of workmanship.

Previous studies on Batik focus more on the design and motif of batik (QUA CHEE & EM, 2005; SUMARSONO ET AL., 2013; TRESNADI & SACHARI, 2015) while others focus on management and marketing (BUDIONO et al., 2010). A study on batik in Java shows that the handmade batik production process involves the majority of women (and children) in the home-based industry. This is inseparable from the influence of the kingdom in ancient times which involved noble women who learned batik and brought knowledge to batik outside the palace (PINTA, 2015). Meanwhile other previous study describes how the banking industry and batik industry get along together in Indonesia, especially in the financial sector, to enhance economic development and to preserve a national culture (STEELYANA & PATRIANA, 2010). Another study on batik aims to describe the relation of tourism and batik as Indonesian's art (Reichle, 2012).

Currently, the existence of handmade batik of Indonesia is in the midst of competition among similar products - factory-made batik with cheaper price (DJATMIKO, 2011). Indonesian batik exports have decreased due to buyers preferring batik printing at lower prices so that exports are reduced by 40% (NURAINUN, HERIYANA, & RASYIMAH, 2008). As a world heritage, the existence of Indonesian handmade batik is less developed and replaced by manufactured batik products. Contemporary batik is markedly different from the more traditional and formal styles in which the crafters may use etching, discharge dyeing, stencils, different tools for waxing and dyeing, wax recipes with different resist values and work with silk, cotton,

wool, leather, paper or even wood and ceramics.

This study is intended to uncover the existence of the handmade batik home-based industry, mainly to reveal the life of women as batik crafters for generations since hundreds of years ago. Different from previous studies on batik, this study is more focusing on gender issues and the continuity of handmade batik home-based industry in the villages. This paper focuses more on social interaction and gender relations in the community of the home-based batik industry, in particular to reveal how women workers have been put into subordinate and marginalized positions. A deep understanding of the life of women crafters is very important to maintain the existence of handmade batik as well as to seek its development.

2. METHOD

This study was conducted in the community of the handmade batik home-based industry in East Java Province whose existence has been known since tens of years ago. The 'social setting' and locations of this study were; 1) 'Tanjung Bumi' handmade Batik Village in Bangkalan Regency and 2) 'Gedog Kerek' handmade Batik Village in Tuban Regency.

The subjects of this study were women workers in the handmade batik home-based industry. Data collection techniques applied in this study were interviews using questionnaires on 210 respondents chosen purposefully, they were 109 respondents in Tanjung Bumi Village, Bangkalan Regency and 101 respondents in Gedog Kerek Village, Tuban Regency. The interviews used semi-structured questionnaires and face-to-face interviews on 210 respondents and were conducted by eight research assistants who were students of the Sociology Department. This study also applied in-depth interview technique on 20 informants; 10 informants in Tanjung Bumi Village, Bangkalan Regency and 10 informants in Gedog Kerek Village, Tuban Regency. The in-depth interviews were conducted by five research assistants who were students of the Sociology Master Degree Program. All the interview process was under my supervision in the location of the study and was audio recorded and transcribed in local and Indonesian language. Duration of the questionnaires interview sessions varied from 20 to 30 minutes, and in-depth interviews varied from 50 to 100 minutes.

The data analysis of 210 questionnaires was processed using Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) technique and translated into frequency tables. The transcripts from 20 informants of in-depth interviews were abstracted and coded and sorted into categories and subcategories. The categories were revised by the research team members and were formulated as the latent content of the text. This study employs triangulation with multiple data collection. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and, to maintain anonymity, participants' names were changed to pseudonyms.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Subordination of Women Workers in the Handmade Batik Home-Based Industry in East Java

Subordination refers to the act of placing in a lower rank or position, the act of subordinating, or of making dependent, secondary, or subservient, the condition of being subordinated, or made dependent, secondary, or subservient (SULTANA, 2012). Subordination relations reflect situations where gender is a characteristic as well as work is differentiated by sex, men as bosses and women as secretaries (WHITEHEAD, 2009). Thus, the refusal to allow women to be educated was part of society's subordination of women to men.

The process of handmade batik production starts by drawing using hot wax (malam) using canting over the cloth, and the cloth is then dyed. The parts covered in wax resist the dye and retain the original color. The use of malam (wax) is intended to cover up or block the entry of color into the pattern (NURHAIDA, et al. 2015). This process of waxing and dyeing could be repeated to create more elaborate and colorful designs. After the final dyeing, the wax is removed and the cloth is ready for wearing or showing. This study shows the subordinate position of women workers / women batik crafters in the batik production process. The process of producing handmade batik consists of six (6) steps where all the steps are mostly done by women. They work in the household scale batik industry is the demands of the family, especially on poor families (SUSANTI, 2017).

The steps of making handmade batik could be described as follows: 1) Cutting the cloth and soaking in warm water, soda or peanut oil; 2) Drying the cloth which has been soaked for two days then drawing patterns in

accordance with the design of the previously planned motif; 3) The cloth is drawn using canting with heating wax; 4) Washing the cloth using boiling water so that the remaining wax is lost; 5) Ironing the cloth by hitting the soaked cloth to remove the existing 'kanji' using a large wooden hammer (kemplong and loyor) 6) The cloth is stained and soaked in boiling water to remove the remaining wax and to maintain the solidity of the color. Batik making can use free motifs and innovative creations to enrich the variety of batik patterns (SITUNGKIR, 2008).

Of these handmade batik production process, only the 'kemplong' and 'loyor' (step 5), is mostly done by men, especially in Bangkalan Regency, while in Tuban Regency, it is mostly done by women. The gender division of work in the handmade batik production process is very clearly dominated by women. This refers to situations where women are considered to be more agile and can carry out work with a high degree of accuracy for repetitive tasks (SAPTARI, 2000). On the other hand, the study implies that the subordinate position of women batik crafters was visible in the production process of the handmade batik home-based industry.

Table 1. Women Batik Crafter's Income per Month

	Bangkalan Regency	Tuban Regency
	%	%
< 500 IDR (= 50 USD)	6%	4%
501 – 750 IDR (= 51 -75 USD)	23%	18%
751 – 1000 IDR (= 76 -100 USD)	33%	46%
1001 – 1250 IDR (= 101 -125 USD)	28%	19%
1251 – 1500 IDR (= 126 -150 USD)	2%	8%
1501 – 1750 IDR (= 151 -175 USD)	4%	1%
1751 – 2000 IDR (= 176 -200 USD)	4%	2%
Total	100%	100%
	(N=109)	(101)

Source: Field Data

The result of the study shows that the highest income of women crafters was equivalent to 200 USD, although the income of some was equivalent to less than 50 USD. The lowest income is received by young women crafters who are often still in high school and working as part time workers in the home-based batik industry. The majority of women batik crafters receive 76 USD - 125 USD (61%). Their income is based on each batik production process. For example, one women batik crafter takes 10 pieces of batik cloth to be given a batik motive according to the order, which will be done within a period of one month. One piece of batik cloth is priced at Rp. 30,000 to Rp. 50,000 depending on the level of difficulty. So, in one month, the respondent will get Rp. 300,000 up to Rp. 500,000 by working on a batik pattern from 10 pieces of fabric taken. The work of producing batik or known as the Putting Out System (POS) brings losses to women workers because it puts the risk of the product being rejected and requires the worker to be responsible for the failure of the product (HANDAYANI, 2018).

The income of men working in the home-based batik industry is higher than that of women, they get 125 USD per month. In Tuban Regency, men's income is greater than that in Bangkalan, and reaches 300 USD per month. From interviews conducted with women workers in the home-based batik industry, it was revealed that male workers did jobs that were rarely done by women, namely *kemplong* and *loyor* (ironing the cloth by hitting the soaked cloth to remove the existing 'kanji' using a large wooden hammer). This division of wages by gender is due to technological changes in the field of production processes that require technology to focus on men and increase opportunities for men to earn more income (HITCHCOCK & KARLOGUE, 2000). Furthermore, the majority of men work on the marketing side of the home-based batik industry. Men bring batik to the showrooms in the cities or some become *Pengepul* (batik collectors). Thus, men can determine the selling price and can obtain relatively large profits. As conveyed by a woman batik crafter;

‘... sometimes I only get a small profit since the price of batik is sometimes very low but, I still sell it because the collectors say this time there is not many buyers I choose to sell it though only get small profit rather than let it pile up at home (Mrs. Ari, 45 years old, Kabupaten Bangkalan)

Meanwhile, there are some risks to the health of women at every stage of the handmade batik production process. Health problems that were often

complained of were sores (38% in Bangkalan Regency and 11% in Tuban Regency), damaged skin caused by heating wax heat (46% in Sidoarjo Regency, 26% in Tuban Regency), and itchy skin and wounds due to the staining process (16% in Bangkalan Regency and 23% in Tuban Regency). Even more, 10% of women batik crafters in Tuban Regency have been experiencing eye pain, such as watery eyes, blurred vision, and 13% of women batik crafters have been experiencing dizziness. Some complaints made by batik workers as a result of the batik production process are carried out repeatedly without adequate work facilities at least preventing pain to the body (AGUSTINA & MAULANA, 2012).

This risk of illness was not experienced by men since their involvement in handmade batik production was very small. The most frequently experienced by batik workers is musculoskeletal disorders which are disorders of the skeletal authority part caused by muscles receiving static loads repeatedly and continuously for long periods of time (UMAMI, HARTANTI, & DEWI, 2014). This study confirms previous study that the high risk of illness among women batik crafters was not always experienced by women working in other home-based enterprises (FROST, 2000; SUSANTI & MAS'UDAH, 2017). Although women are experiencing various health risks in producing handmade batik, this batik home-based industry still exists. The handmade batik has been a handicraft since their ancestors.

This study shows that the role of women was visible in the handmade batik production. Nevertheless, women did not in themselves have authority and power in the family and community life. This is the life of a Javanese woman in addition to working as a housewife as well as her obligations while she is at home (HAYATI, 2006). Although women are very busy working, they also do domestic work and prepare family meals at home. As could be described by the narrative below;

My husband works in the fields from morning until afternoon, I wash my husband and children's clothes, take care of children and cooking, when my husband comes home from work I stop working on batik and prepare lunch for my husband, and also prepare coffee in the evening ... Mrs. Min, 40 years old, Batik Crafter, Tuban Regency).

This paper argues that, although women hold a core position in the whole process of handmade batik production, they are in a subordinate position

in the family. The economic contribution of women batik crafters in the family's lives was important despite their income being under the minimum wages of East Java Province. Women work in the handmade batik home-based industry with flexible working hours, meaning that the work could provide the flexibility to meet family responsibilities. In other words, the study implied that women workers in the handmade batik home-based industry were in subordinate positions with multi-burdened roles. However, women's participation in making batik aims to help their husbands and provide for family needs (SEPTIA, AFRIDA & KUSUMA, 2017). Similar previous study on Indonesian home-based enterprises also shows the flexibility in working time and space for the workers (FROST, 2000).

This study shows that the majority of women handmade batik crafters in Tuban Regency and Bangkalan Regency have mostly been involved in the handmade batik home industry for more than 10 years (in Tuban Regency 70%, and in Bangkalan Regency 62%). This indicates that the handmade batik home-based industry in the villages has long existed. Nevertheless, from the narratives of some women batik crafters, the handmade batik home-based industry in their village has not much developed in the last ten years. This is influenced by the absence of a significant correlation between the creative industry and the national economy that accommodates competition among the batik industry (BUDIONO & VINCENT, 2010). Little development is felt by the handmade batik village community, especially in terms of design, style, coloring, marketing and earnings.

The development and advancement of the handmade batik home-based industry has been supported only by the local community. The support felt by the women batik crafters was from the neighbors, relatives, as well as the customers. This study reveals that women batik crafters were put in a subordinate position since the community of batik home-based industry was a patriarchal society. The term patriarchy describes the power relationship between men and women. In this patriarchal community, people give absolute priority to men and, to some extent, limit women's human rights also. Patriarchy refers to male domination both in public and private spheres. As happened in Sumenep, Madura, that the work of making batik is women while men are tasked with marketing, this is a form of local culture that considers women unfit to trade (SUTOPO & WIDHYHARTO, 2014).

3.2. The Marginalization of Women Workers in the Handmade Batik Home-Based Industry in East Java

The concept of marginalization could be defined as the process of making a group or class of people less important or being relegated to a secondary position. When one class of people is grouped together as second class citizens, this is an example of marginalization. Marginalization experienced by women is a condition where the neglect of women's human rights and does not guarantee equality for women (CHINKIN, 1995).

The position of women batik crafters has been marginalized in the workplace. Women batik crafters do not get any work protection, since the home-based industry is categorized as informal work and women are only considered as additional earners in the families. Owners or managers of home-based industries do not treat workers like manufacturing workers, where they must fulfill the obligations of industrial work such as in the case of leave, being more flexible, and ,when there is a problem in relation to debt owners, providing soft loans amicably. Batik industry owners do not think about the batik crafters at risk of exposure to candle smoke which can cause asthma (MUNTHER, et al. 2014).

Table 2. The Age Women Start Learning *Membatik*

Categories	Bangkalan	Tuban
	Regency	Regency
	%	%
< 7 years old	34	36
8 - 12 years old	54	45
13 - 17 years old	8	6
> 18 years old	13	13
Total	100	100
	(N=109)	(N=101)

Source: Field Data

This study shows that the majority of women spend more than seven hours per day in batik production (43% in Bangkalan, 51% in Tuban), some women even spend more than 10 hours per day (10% in Bangkalan, 14% in Tuban). This means that mostly women batik crafters do not have time to do other work. It is fulltime work.

The amount of time spent on batik does not necessarily secure a woman's important position in the workplace. Instead, the type of women's work is marginalized by the type of work held by men, namely the work of 'batik cap'. For 'batik cap' the same process is used, but the motifs are drawn on the cloth using a stamp or copper stamp. The cloth is held on a long table, then the stamp is dipped in wax and pressed on the fabric back and forth. The process of using a copper stamp is men's works and is higher paid compared to women's works in the handmade batik home-based industry. The process of making printed batik is carried out by men because it deals with holding copper and the products are easily sold because they are cheap (SULIYANTO, WULANDARI & NOVANDARI, 2010).

Table 3. Time Allocation to Finish 1 Sheet of Traditional Handmade Batik Production

No.	Categories	Bangkalan Regency		Tuban Regency	
		F	(%)	f	(%)
1.	0-2 days	35	35	41	41
2.	3-5 days	38	38	51	51
3.	> 5 days	27	27	8	8
Total		100	100	100	100

Source: Field Data

Compared to the manufacturing batik industry, this handmade batik home-based industry is not recognized and its economic significance is assumed to be minor. This home-based batik industry has not been able to make improvements to the system and production techniques to be more productive and efficient so that they are no less competitive with the rush of imported Chinese batik (SUDANTOKO, 2011). Previous study on home-based business in the United Kingdom also implied the similar condition, that this economic sector was invisible (Mason . et a., 2010). This study reveals that the condition of women batik crafters in the home-based industry is invisible and their income is assumed to be minor.

The marginality of women workers in the handmade batik home-based industry is visible, as seen from their low income. The study shows that the majority of women batik crafters earn under the lowest average wages in East Java Province, which is below IDR 1.5 million, equivalent to US\$ 100 per month (49% in Bangkalan, 59% in Tuban). The provision of low wages is intended so that the batik industry can accommodate a lot of jobs for the surrounding population (ANWAR, et al. 2013). Although women received low income, importantly women contribute to support their families' lives. The income of women batik crafters is allocated for family needs, such as for meals and children's schooling.

This study found that, although women spent much time working in the handmade batik home-based industry, the position of women was not dominant. The position of women batik crafters is marginalized in the types of low paid jobs, so that women batik crafters only earn a small income. This study reveals that, although there was marginalization of women batik's crafters, women were also invisible victims of discrimination. In this home-based batik community, the concept of marginalization of women refers to the process of making women crafters less important or being relegated to a secondary position since women who produce handmade batik only earn a small income compared to other works done by men.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that women crafters in the handmade batik home-based industry are in a subordinate position in the workplace and in the family. Moreover, it is obvious that women workers in the handmade home-based industry also experience marginalization in their work and their lives.

Despite the enormous role of women in the handmade batik home-based industry, women do not have more authority and power over men. Women's role is multi-burdened, doing domestic work, public work and community lives.

It also argues that, although women hold a core position in the whole process of handmade batik production, they are marginalized in the work-

place. There is no protection for women workers in the handmade batik home-based industry since the home-based industry is categorized as informal work and only considered as additional earning in the family.

While the lives of women batik crafters are in subordinated positions and marginalized conditions, the handmade batik industry cannot be developed optimally and women crafters still live in poor conditions. This suggests a need of the government to consider a gender perspective policy and program to develop the handmade batik home-based industry.

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