

The Ikat Weaving Industry in Kediri: Characteristics and Strategies for Development, 1966-2014

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Abstract

This article analyses the developments and strategies experienced by the ikat weaver in Kediri, especially in the Village Bandar Kidul, District Mojoroto. This study used the critical history method. It emphasizes primary sources in the form of written sources from newspapers and the oral history method. According to the result, ikat weaving in Bandar Kidul began to develop when a Chinese resident, Freddy Jie, in the 1950s opened the ikat weaving business which affects the livelihoods of the residents of Bandar Kidul. They have depended on one sector of livelihood and the industry has begun to grow. Due to its motifs and production tools, the ikat production from the village of Bandar Kidul has a good and potential market demand. However, the monetary crisis in 1997-1998 hit the industry and began to down. From the end of the 1970s to the late 1990s, the Bandar Kidul ikat craft began to experience a downturn due to being unable to compete with factory-made woven fabrics and the absence of successor regeneration after most of the business' founders died. However, entering the mid-2000s, the future of the ikat industry was bright because the local government intervened in the industry. Some pieces of training had been held to improve the capabilities of the ikat weaver under dominated by modern equipment.

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Introduction

The history of ikat weaving in Bandar Kidul Village, Kediri, began to develop when a resident of Chinese descent named Freddy Jie opened an ikat weaving business in the 1950s. The ikat craft of Bandar Kidul, Kediri City, began to experience a downturn due to not being able to compete with factory-made woven fabrics and the absence of successors after the founder of the business died. In the mid-2000s, the Government of Kediri City tried to revive the area and turned it into a center for traditional crafts, hoping that it would help boost the revitalize the economy and boost tourism. The Department of Industry and Trade (Disperindag) of the City of Kediri held several events aimed at introducing ikat cloth in Bandar Kidul Village. In addition, the Kediri City Government also established a souvenir shop that sold products from the ikat

weaving craft centre. However, the effort achieved little success as it attracted very few buyers (Lauer, 1993).

A lack of regular income for craftsmen made young people reluctant to take up the craft and help preserve the ikat cloth in Bandar Kidul Village. The passage of Law Number 20 of 2008 on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) encouraged the city government to maintain the woven fabric craft center (Pratama, 2016). An MSME advocacy group was then formed on Jalan KH Agus Salim Gang VIII, Bandar Kidul Village. Thanks to good cooperation between the government and the community, one of the ikat cloth business units, the UD Medali Mas, was given the Upakarti Award for the category of pioneer and poverty alleviation (Pro-Poor Award) at the East Java Province level in 2012. By 2014 Bandar Kidul Village had given birth to three generations of ikat craftsmen, a sign that the ikat craftsmen have managed to rise from adversity. Thirteen ikat business units have fairly large production volumes, making them a center of economic activity for the local community. Many locals have turned to the craft for livelihood, with each place employing between 10 and 30 workers (Hakim, 2012). The weaving process did not have to be carried out in the centre. Business owners empowered locals to get involved by giving them the freedom to do weaving in their homes with the tools they have (.

The ikat trade business in Bandar Kidul Village produces ikat fabrics with various motifs, colors, and fashion products that follow the latest styles. By sticking to manual looms, following the latest fashion trends is another effort to maintain the existence of ikat fabrics. Considering that weaving skills are increasingly scarce, it is necessary to develop a creative economy in the form of capacity building (training and coaching) to pass the craft from skilled and proficient weavers to the next generation.

Method

This research paper employed the critical historical method following historical scientific principles. The critical history method was applied through four stages - heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Heuristics is the stage of collecting data in the form of written and oral sources from past events, both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used in this research are articles in newspapers, contemporary newspapers and magazines, archives related to Bandar Kidul ikat weaving, and photos/documentation related to the object of study. To complement the primary sources, the author also used the oral history method to make up for a lack of information in written records or verify information from primary sources. This method includes two stages - the selection of informants and oral history interviews.

The Early Establishment

In 1950 several residents of Chinese descent led by Freddy Jie took the initiative to establish a home textile industry in the Chinatown area at Jalan Yos Sudarso, Kediri City. During the political turmoil of 1965 (Permatasari, 2020) the businesses experienced a setback, with many closing after some of them were accused of being

communist agents. Because of the situation, some of them returned to China and some became political prisoners.

In 1966, some of Freddy's workers started to set up their own businesses in Bandar Kidul and others in an area west of the Brantas river (kidul, 2016). The Bandar Kidul ikat craft center is located about 1 kilometer west of the river. In 1966, similar businesses emerged along Jalan KH Agus Salim Gang VIII, Bandar Kidul Village (Wiratama, 2014). Over time, the majority of the people of Bandar Kidul made a living making ikat. (kota, 2020)

In 1966-1976, the home industry expanded, with raw materials imported from China. The need for materials and equipment such as dyes, yarns, spinners, skeers and reeks (thread winders) and *colet* tools grew. Many woven products were ordered from collectors outside Kediri, who were then sold to other areas (Atmoko, 2015). In the production process, there was a need for a large number of workers because of the use of manual and non-mechanical looms, making the production process take a relatively long time.

Woven Fabrics in 1970-1980

In 1970-1975-1976 the development of woven fabrics experienced an increase in interest in sarong products with checkered motifs (*palekat*). In the 1980s, the Bandar Kidul weaving industry experienced a deflation. There were 2 (two) factors that caused it, namely, first, this industry could not compete with factory-made woven fabrics. Secondly, the absence of the next generation to continue the business and the amount of salary they earned was much lower (Andriani, 2013).

This condition changed in 1987 when the Sinar Barokah Trading Company (UD) established a weaving company. The products produced are sheets of cloth and sarongs made of woven fabric. On February 27th, 1989, a resident named Munawar also established a home-based business on woven fabrics on KH. Agus Salim VIII Number 54C Street with the name "Medal Mas". This company encourages the enthusiasm of the people to get up to cultivate woven fabrics. The Medal Mas home industry for weaving from 1989 to 1998 had grown significantly.

In an effort to mobilize the existence of woven fabric, the government of Kediri began to provide guidance in 1980. In 1989, the number of small industrial centers that had been fostered by the local government in Kediri reached (Banadar Kidul ikat Handicraft Center Branding, 2013). From 1987 to 1998 the textile industry developed, the existence of woven fabrics in Bandar Kidul could compete.

Production Tools and Motifs

The Bandar Kidul Kediri Weaving is unique in the type of tools used and the variety of motifs. The production equipment used is in the form of Non-Machine Weaving Equipment (ATBM). The production equipment used to make woven fabric is a non-machine weaving tool (ATBM) (Islam, et al, 2015; Nanik, 2013). This tool is made of wood which is fitted with several equipments so that it becomes a single unit. The way

this ATBM works is almost the same as *gedogan*, namely the weavers weave a fabric in a sitting position (Suwati, 1987).

ATBM is shaped like a table with wooden slats that stretch both transversely and longitudinally. As for what distinguishes it from "*gedog*", namely, the use of ATBM can produce woven fabrics faster with a much wider size, according to the size of the ATBM. The size of the product can be about two meters without any connecting stitches with other weaves (Budiastuti, 2018). Usually one or several ATBMs are placed in a special room because these tools cannot be carried anywhere.

The production process is carried out in stages before the yarn is woven. The yarn is dipped in dye first. After dyeing, the yarn is dried in the sun for approximately 45 minutes with the aim of strengthening the colouring. With this colouring, the fabric will be colourful with various motifs. The products produced are *gombyor* sarong, misris fabric (ordinary), semi silk, and silk.

The Bandar Kidul woven fabric's motif uses a plaid motif. This motif is the easiest motif to make for sarong products. The presence of factory textile products in the 1980s made sarongs with checkered motifs easy to imitate by modern machines. In 1989, craftsmen brought up new innovations in the form of naturalist motifs such as flora and fauna motifs including orchids, bud magnolia, and peacocks. In addition, other types of motifs such as "mountains", "diamonds", and symmetrical motifs also appeared (Kurniawan, 2018).

The development of the Bandar Kidul woven fabric's motifs is divided into two categories. First, the Palekat motif which is divided into two types, namely Tumpal Palekat and Tumpal Kembang. The Palekat motif is a motif that has been preserved from generation to generation. This motif is taught from generation to generation by parents or grandparents. Second, the motifs resulting from the innovation of the weavers along with the progress of the times and fashion trends (Hariyanto, 2020).

Ups and downs of Ikat Woven Crafts during 1997-1998

The Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 had an impact on all sectors. In August 1997, the rupiah fell to around Rp 16,500 to the dollar. As a result, hundreds of small- and large-scale companies collapsed. This made it difficult for small entrepreneurs to survive (Wiguna & Permana, 2019).

The years 1997-1998 was the peak of the decline in the Bandar Kidul ikat business. At that time, raw materials were subject to high taxes due to the low exchange rate of the rupiah against foreign currencies (Aljalandi, 2016). As a result, craftsmen have difficulty getting raw materials. This made it difficult for the Bandar Kidul ikat industry to meet market demand for woven fabric products. In 2005, the efforts to save the Kediri City Government on the sustainability of weaving did not show significant results (Yudianto, 2010).

Various efforts continue to be made to revive the glory of the Bandar Kidul ikat, including the establishment of MSMEs in the village, collaborating with the media to help them marketing their products, and other activities.

Factors Influence the Weaving Industry Development

Both internal and external factors, as the important role in determining development and become one of the determinants of industrial growth. The availability of human resources encourages increased productivity and makes the industry more competitive. Education plays an important role in the formation of human resources in order to produce competent industrial workers according to industry (Oktaviany & Ridho, 2018).

The second factor is the skills of the workers and their ability to complete the task. Skills are many, varied, and can be inspirational. Ikat weaving is a skill possessed by the Indonesian people (Ismanto, 2017, p. 124). The third factor is business competition - the imbalance between one industry and another. The fourth factor is management. Management determines the success of a business. Poor bookkeeping, documentation, administrative data management, strategy, tactics, planning, development, programs, and clear directions will hamper the development of a business. The fifth is community support. People prefer fashion items that follow the latest trends. Imported fashion products are preferred because they are practical and up to date.

Meanwhile, there are 7 external factors. There are 7 external factors. The first is government policy. In 1985, the government issued a policy to import hundreds of modern weaving machines, a policy that had an impact on the ikat industry. The second is the fluctuating prices of raw materials. Prices of finished products are influenced by the price of raw materials and in turn, affects people's purchasing power. The increase in the price of woven products was caused by two factors, the first being an increase in the price of raw fabrics. The raw material used by the craftsmen in the form of silk thread is imported from China. The second factor is an increase in employee wages (Kurniawan, 2018).

The third is marketing. In 1990, entrepreneurs in the ikat textile industry waited for customers to come to their shops or homes. Passive marketing like this is less effective because the number of customers is limited. In 2000, entrepreneurs made a breakthrough by selling their products to various markets and participating in government-sponsored activities in and outside the city of Kediri (Darmanto, 2020).

In the 2000s, entrepreneurs began to use information technology as a means of marketing their products. Ikat cloth products began to be advertised on various social media such as Facebook. One of the entrepreneurs who took advantage of technology is Sudarman. He advertised his products on Facebook using someone else's account (Sutrisno, 2020). Over time, business people have begun to understand how to operate social media independently and not depend on others.

The fourth factor is technology. The ikat industry still uses non-machinized looms, also known as ATBM. This tool is only capable of producing 20 sheets of woven ikat cloth per day (Sudarman, 2020). When demand increases, the businesses using such looms are not able to meet it. The fifth factor is the economic crisis, which affected

various economic sectors. In 1998, when the Asian economic crisis occurred, many craftsmen and women were not able to survive and if they did, they had other jobs.

The sixth is competition with traditional fabrics from other regions. Indonesia is a country that is rich in cultural heritage, as can be identified by the number of crafts made (Hermansyah & Dahmiri, 2019). Weaving products elsewhere include Flores ikat, Balinese ikat, *karawo* embroidery fabrics, Bugis silk, *sasirangan* fabrics, tapis and ulos. The last factor is training. The role of the government and the outside community is very influential in improving the skills of the workers. Overall, the training provided by the government has not been maximized. Entrepreneurs feel that they have never received any kind of training from the government of Kediri or from other parties.

Government Intervention: Trainings and Capital's Stimulation

In 1984 the New Order government took steps to upgrade industrial technology by importing textile machines. In 1985 the presence of textile factories caused the prices of ikat products to decline. This is because textile machinery technology is faster and is able to meet market demand in large quantities at lower prices. In 1986, the government provided guidance to craftsmen through counselling and coaching to improve the quality of production to allow them to compete with the modern industry (Atmoko, 2015).

The government provided training on the process of dyeing synthetic colors and making motifs to weaving craftsmen. As a result, new motifs began to be developed in 1990. During this period, the *tumpal palekat* and *tumpal* flower motifs were in demand by consumers. In 1970 the government provided support through the Credit Agency. Through this assistance, craftsmen could take loans to purchase Non-Machine Weaving Equipment (ATBM). Through the use of ATBM, ikat motifs grew to become competitive with machine weaving (Kurniawan, 2018).

In the period 2000-2014, the government issued a Regulation of the Mayor of Kediri No. 59 of 2009 that stipulated that that 6% interest per year was collected up front with a period adjusted to the type of business a maximum of 24 months (2 years) from the realization date (Rochmawati, et al, 2015).

The government has also built a Waste Water Treatment Plant (IPAL) at Badri's house. Conservation efforts were also introduced to the younger generation. It was hoped that early introduction to the younger generation of the production process they could practice the skills.

This effort was supported by the provision of an MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) clinic building at the Office of Cooperatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Kediri City. This clinic building was used for training for MSME workers, including those in the weaving business. The training was stopped in 2014 (Rochmawati, et al., 2015). In 2011 the craftsmen received orders for the procurement of 70,000 uniforms for typical ikat weaving (Hendarti, 2017). The government also protected the copyright of the Kediri traditional ikat weaving. Craftsmen were encouraged to register trademarks to obtain trademark rights free of charge. The money came from the Government of Kediri (Wiratama, 2014).

Entrepreneurs also participated in exhibitions for MSME products, with the aim of expanding market reach. They took the initiative to participate in the exhibitions of woven products independently. TIB AAM Putra workers held their own exhibition on car-free days every Sunday on the Dhoho Kediri road. The company also collaborated with fashion designers from Jakarta to make various woven products. (haryati) The weaving company TIB Sempurna 2 cooperated with several shops in Tulungagung, East Java. TIB Sinar Barokah 1 and 2 carried out promotions outside the island and abroad, including Sulawesi and the Middle East. Entrepreneurs including TIB Medali Mas used blogs and websites, WhatsApp, Blackberry messenger, and telephone.

Conclusions

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that Bandar Kidul in Mojoroto, Kediri City, is one of the areas in East Java Province which has a very strategic geographical location to support the development of trade and service flows, both locally and nationally. Bandar Kidul has supported the development of the flow of trade and services because the people there have socio-cultural characteristics and expertise as ikat craftsmen. However, even though it is strategically located and supported by the expertise of the craft community, it is by no means free of ups and downs. Based on the findings in the field, Bandar Kidul has had its ups and downs, especially during the New Order era, at which time the Indonesian government issued a policy to import machine looms which lead to the demise of many ikat businesses there. The local government has issued a policy to save various small to medium businesses in various sectors, but the Asian financial crisis meant that many in the ikat fabric industry could not survive. During that period ikat weaving attracted little interest and as a result, many craft workers switched professions, including becoming migrant workers overseas. The socio-economic situation the people in Bandar Kidul turned for the better during 2009-2013 thanks to the government's program to rescue industries initiated since the beginning of the Reformasi era.

The existence of the ikat weaving business in Bandar Kidul Village began with the effort to establish a woven fabric industry in 1950. In the same year, the ikat industry emerged with the pioneering work by several residents of Chinese descent. This was led by Freddy Jie, who opened a business in the Chinatown area at Jalan Yos Sudarso, Kediri City. During 1966-1970, ikat weaving became more and more popular with the arrival of 100 non-machine weaving tools (ATBM). During 1966-1976, the business grew rapidly as it moved to the home industry. Businesses imported raw materials from China. Weaving needs such as dyes, yarn spinners, skewer and reek (thread winders), and others grew in numbers along with the development of weaving.

The development of the Bandar Kidul weaving industry in the city of Kediri has had its ups and downs due to internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include, the first factor is poor quality of human resources due to poor public education, resulting in the low level of marketing productivity. The second factor is the shortage of skilled workers, which resulted in low productivity. The third is

inability of ikat businesses to compete with industrial manufacturers, in terms of capital and other resources. Fourth is poor management, with many small ikat weaving industries still not documenting their business activities using accounting principles. And finally, a lack of public support. The community still did not understand the importance of ikat fabrics and instead opt to follow the latest fashion trends. At the same time, ikat weaving was slow in adapting to the latest motifs and time of execution. External factors include government regulation/policy factors, fluctuating prices of raw materials, marketing, slow adoption of technology, the economic crisis, competition with other ikat businesses and poor training.

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