

FROM TRADITION TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP: GENDER TRANSFORMATION AND WOMEN'S AGENCY IN GIRILOYO BATIK VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes in depth how gender transformation and women's entrepreneurial agency developed in Giriloyo Batik Village, historically bound by traditional gender norms confining women to the domestic sphere and lacking recognition of economic value. The aim is to understand how external factors trigger social change, women's role negotiation strategies, and the cultural impact on household gender relations. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, the study employs in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs and participatory observation to identify social change patterns. Key findings reveal two catalysts: (1) the 2006 earthquake crippling men's public livelihoods, and (2) UNESCO's batik recognition granting global legitimacy. Women in Giriloyo employed subtle negotiation, transforming batik-making into institutionalized economic production via independent businesses and cooperatives, bolstered by Javanese work ethic. This led to greater bargaining power and limited autonomy in family decisions. The novelty argues that the double burden can become an effective strategy for social and economic recognition without challenging patriarchal norms directly.

Keywords: *gender transformation, women's agency, role negotiation, giriloyo batik, double burden.*

INTRODUCTION

Batik, which comes from the words “*mbatik*” and “*titik*,” is not just a visual art form. More than that, batik is a cultural symbol rich in philosophical meaning and moral messages, including social norms and gender relations in Javanese society. Since its inception, batik has been closely tied to the royal court and social status, where its production process has become a means of symbolic reproduction of gender norms. For example, the parang motif, which symbolizes power, may only be worn by male nobles, while the lereng or truntum motif, which symbolizes loyalty, is associated with women. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), the tradition of batik is a very strong culture, especially in the Kampung Batik Giriloyo area, which is famous for its batik. Since the 16th century, batik in Giriloyo has been produced with delicate, intricate, and meaningful techniques and patterns to meet the clothing needs of the royal palace (Septianti, 2020)

Before the changes took place, women's perspectives in the batik tradition were often invisible and limited to the domestic sphere. Before the revival of Giriloyo batik, more than 1,000 artisans, the majority of whom were women, joined the Bima Sakti Hand-drawn Batik

Group, but this work was not recognized as a significant economic activity (Nursaid & Armawi, 2016). Structurally, women were positioned as the main workers in batik production, but they had no control over the economic value of the batik produced. Dependence on middlemen and limited market access meant that selling prices were determined by intermediaries, not by the artisans themselves. Gender inequality in Giriloyo shows a gender division of labor, where women are culturally associated with reproductive work in the domestic sphere, while control over distribution and marketing is held by men. As a result, women's fundamental contribution to production often does not receive equal economic recognition.

Significant changes occurred after the 2006 earthquake struck Yogyakarta. The economic crisis caused by the disaster led women in Giriloyo to take proactive steps, especially in marketing batik independently. This change became a form of women's agency that was not always in the form of resistance, but rather through concrete actions that allowed them to negotiate space and power within the social structure. By entering the public sphere through entrepreneurship, they succeeded in carving out a new identity as economic actors and part of the community. Therefore, the identity of women in Giriloyo is no longer limited to the role of craftswomen, but also as business owners and cultural innovators.

This study aims to analyze how the cultural practice of batik influences the transformation or shift in women's gender and examines how this transformation affects the dynamics of gender relations within families and communities. By focusing on the experiences of women in Giriloyo, this study seeks to answer key questions about how the tradition of batik has become a tool for women to negotiate their identity and agency in entrepreneurship, while also understanding its impact on gender relations within their social sphere. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the study of gender and economic anthropology, particularly regarding the narratives of women who reposition themselves in traditional social structures through culture-based entrepreneurship.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative methods with a focus on ethnographic approaches. This approach was chosen to achieve a holistic and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of gender transformation that takes place in the specific social context of Kampung Batik Giriloyo. Ethnography specifically allows researchers to accurately capture the process of gender change through observation and interpretation of the speech, writing, and behavior observed from individuals or social groups. The main data was collected through in-depth interviews with three

key informants conducted in August 2025. The data collection process was reinforced with field documentation. The data collection process was reinforced with field documentation in the form of photographs and supporting data records. All documentation activities were carried out in accordance with ethnographic research ethics, namely by ensuring the consent and permission of informants regarding the use of documentation for scientific writing purposes. Through the qualitative ethnographic method, this study aims to produce a comprehensive and in-depth description of the dynamics of interaction and social change in Giriloyo.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Overview: Wukirsari Village and Batik as a Symbol of Giriloyo Women's Identity

Geographically, Kampung Batik Giriloyo is located in Wukirsari Village, Imogiri District, Bantul Regency. Wukirsari Village has a dualistic landscape consisting of fertile lowlands in the north to west, and hilly areas in the center to southeast. Topographically, Wukirsari has two main characteristics, namely lowland areas dominated by agriculture and hilly areas that are the center of dense settlements and home industries.

Wukirsari has an area of approximately 1,530 hectares, with land use dominated by agriculture in the form of 305.7 hectares of rice fields and 192.3 hectares of dry fields, as well as 860.7 hectares of residential land. The lowland area of Wukirsari is dominated by traditional agriculture that produces crops such as corn and cassava. In contrast, the hilly areas have soil that is less fertile for agriculture, so they have developed as densely populated residential areas and productive spaces for local household-based economic activities, particularly batik crafting (RPJMKal Wukirsari, 2018–2026). The adaptation of communities in hilly hamlets such as Giriloyo, Cengkehan, and Karangkulon to these land constraints has been to make batik their main livelihood. This condition reflects Clifford Geertz's (1963) concept of agricultural involution, in which there is intensification of work within the family, including household work such as batik making, as a form of social reproduction and community sustainability, not merely for economic gain. In this context, batik is seen as part of the production of meaning and collective identity, not merely a commodity.

Based on data from the 2024 Wukirsari Village monograph, most of the livelihoods of Wukirsari Village residents are dominated by two main sectors, namely agriculture and livestock, which involve 2,840 people, and home industries, which employ 2,223 workers. The Home Industry sector in Wukirsari includes batik, bamboo, and leather puppet crafts, which are the region's unique potential. Specifically, the batik industry is concentrated in the hamlets of

Giriloyo, Sindet, and Karangkulon, where batik is considered the lifeblood of the local economy for the women of Giriloyo. The dominance of women in the batik industry is driven by a combination of complex sociological and demographic factors. Demographically, the life expectancy of women in rural areas tends to be higher (73.6 years) than that of men (70.4 years) (Central Statistics Agency, 2022). In addition, the migration of male workers to urban areas has required women who remain behind to take care of the household while also actively participating in local economic activities. In the context of rural communities, this factor is reinforced by local traditions and patriarchal culture, which expect women to remain in the village to fulfill their roles as mothers and homemakers, thereby naturally creating more opportunities for them in the local economy, such as traditional batik craftsmanship. As a result, these factors have significantly positioned the home industry as the main livelihood for women, which has ultimately succeeded in creating a local economy and giving birth to independent entrepreneurs from among the craftsmen themselves.

Batik, which developed in Yogyakarta, has its roots in the history of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom, with a cultural turning point occurring after the 1755 Giyanti Agreement, which divided the Mataram Kingdom and bequeathed the collection of traditional batik to the Sultanate of Yogyakarta. Initially, batik was an intimate practice in the education of royal princesses, aimed at teaching aesthetic values and inner conduct, which later became a cultural ritual that required patience and precision. Batik in Java itself is divided into two types, namely Keraton Batik (Vorstenlanden) and Pesisiran Batik (Koko Sundari, 2002). The symbolism in Keraton Batik gave rise to batik with “Larangan” motifs, a type of batik whose use is strictly regulated by the Sultanate of Yogyakarta because it has high sacred and philosophical value (Septianti, 2020). The establishment of these noble motifs has been in place since the era of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono II (1792-1810) (Himpunan Wastaprema, 1990). Some examples of larangan motifs are Parang Rusak, Semen Gede, Udan Riris, Kawung, and Huk. These motifs contain profound philosophies; for example, the Huk motif symbolizes noble character and tactical leadership, while the Gurdha (Sawat) motif symbolizes power and might, and may only be worn by the king as a symbol of protection. All of this symbolic and historical richness forms the cultural foundation that has been inherited and preserved by batik makers, including those in Giriloyo.

Batik in Giriloyo is a form of local genius whose preservation is firmly upheld by women (Maharani & Halim, 2023). They not only master the technical skills of batik making, but also bear responsibility for the noble values and philosophies contained within it. The women of

Giriloyo function as agents of cultural transmission, ensuring that the royal motifs and their philosophical meanings continue to exist. The uniqueness of the batik tradition in Giriloyo lies in the matrilineal system of skill inheritance, from mother to daughter, which effectively affirms the central position of women as guardians and preservers of culture. For the women of Giriloyo, batik itself is a spiritual practice and a lens through which to understand their spiritual journey. The calm and meticulous process of batik is considered a daily ritual that reflects Javanese values, such as patience, diligence, perseverance, and *nrimo ing pandum* or sincere acceptance (Magnis-Suseno, 1985). The complex process of *canting* requires extraordinary patience and diligence, often reaching a meditative state, in line with the view of religion as a symbolic system that shapes the ethos of society. The spiritual values applied by female batik artisans also include *Sangkan Paraning Dumadi* (awareness of origins) and Harmony with the Universe, which can be seen in their adherence to natural cycles and use of natural dyes. Thus, a piece of traditional Giriloyo batik is a visual narrative of the values of life that shape the soul of Javanese society.

The Tradition of Batik Making in Gender Negotiation: The Lives of Women in the Pre-Industrial Era of Giriloyo Batik Development

The Concept of Gender & Gender Inequality

When discussing the tradition of batik making, it is closely related to gender values in social communities. The concept of gender is often misunderstood as merely an issue of female nature, whereas an inadequate understanding can trigger gender inequalities. Mansour Fakih (1996) defines gender as characteristics inherent in both men and women that are socially and culturally constructed, in contrast to sex, which is a biological division that is natural and cannot be replaced. Gender, as a social construct, has negotiable dignity and status that can change at any time, and often creates norms that can be detrimental to one party, especially women. Conversely, sex is a division created by God, applies at all times, and creates values of perfection for both parties (Widyasari & Suyanto, 2023)

Today, gender differences are prone to becoming problematic when they lead to injustice or inequality. Although gender injustice can affect both men and women, in reality, the impact is more often felt by women. By nature, women have reproductive organs that enable them to conceive, give birth, and breastfeed, which then gives rise to the gender role of caring for and nurturing children (Rohman, 2023). These roles are often associated with traits such as gentleness, tenderness, and compassion, which are considered inherent to their nature. This view

believes that anatomical differences inherently limit women's participation in the public sphere (Jalil & Tanjung, 2020). To overcome this imbalance, gender equality is needed. In a social context, gender equality is defined as equal conditions for men and women to obtain equal rights and opportunities as human beings. This is to enable both to participate and contribute equally in the public, economic, social, and cultural sectors within the traditional community.

Social Structure, Gender Norms, and Traditional Division of Labor

Traditionally, social structure and gender norms have strictly separated the roles of men and women as a concept known as gender division of labor, which is the division of labor based on gender. Anthropologist Sherry Ortner (1974) explains that women are associated with the domestic sphere or household, while men are associated with the public sphere. This theory highlights how social norms form hierarchies, in which the public sphere is often valued more highly than the domestic sphere. In traditional societies, patriarchal cultural orientations limit women's roles to reproductive and maintenance tasks such as housekeeping, washing, childbirth, and childcare. These tasks are often labeled as unpaid care work because they are considered to have no economic value and are a natural part of women's "nature," even though their volume and intensity are very time-consuming and labor-intensive (Purnomosidi et al., 2022). Ironically, this work is not recognized as productive work within the legal framework, such as Labor Law No. 13 of 2003, because of its invisible and economically immeasurable nature (Zuhdi, 2018)

Conversely, the public sphere has traditionally been dominated by men who are identified as the main breadwinners, leaders, and participants in socio-economic activities outside the home. Men's work in this sphere, such as farming, labor, or employment, is recognized economically because it generates wages, thereby conferring higher social status and authority both within and outside the household. This unequal recognition of value reinforces the gender hierarchy and perpetuates the idea that men's work is more important and valuable. For the Giriloyo community, strong cultural norms internalize the view that domestic work is the natural domain of women and public work is the domain of men, creating a hierarchy of power and value. This social construct limits women from fully participating in the public sphere and even creates negative labels for men who participate in domestic tasks. In fact, an equitable division of roles and teamwork are essential for maintaining family balance.

In general, the concept of gender division of labor centers on the dualism of men as culture and women as nature, which reinforces the hierarchy of power. However, the reality in the Giriloyo community shows that there is subtle negotiation carried out by women as

craftswomen. The practice of batik allows women to continue to play their main roles as wives and mothers in the domestic sphere, while transforming their private sphere into a productive space. Instead of directly challenging entrenched norms, the women of Giriloyo use batik as a tool to create agency and slowly change their position without leaving the boundaries of prevailing norms and culture.

Negotiating Roles Through Batik Making by Women

Batik making by women in Giriloyo is not just a job, but a subtle strategy for negotiating deeply rooted patriarchal norms. Women in Giriloyo are less likely to challenge norms head-on because they believe that such resistance will only provoke conflict. Instead, they choose to reconfigure these norms by blending domestic work with productive work. This choice is a form of effective agency, whereby they succeed in expressing themselves without having to break out of the traditional framework.

First, the shift in gender roles and from the domestic to the public sphere. The domestic sphere has traditionally been associated with “nature” and reproductive tasks, which place women in a subordinate position. Initially, batik was considered a flexible activity that allowed women to continue performing domestic tasks. According to Mrs. Giyarti, as batik developed in Giriloyo, the activity of batik became closely integrated into daily life and became the “life” of women in Giriloyo because it had been learned from generation to generation since childhood. In fact, even though their daily lives revolve around batik, they still balance their domestic duties and private sphere as a form of freedom. For example, they prioritize domestic work such as preparing breakfast and taking care of the house while batik making. After their domestic work is done, they often continue their batik making activities in between household chores. With the development of the times, the popularity and increased selling power of batik cloth, as well as the development of market trends in clothing needs, the intensity of batik craftsmen has also increased. Ultimately, this has forced batik artisans to work more intensely to complete their batik work. This phenomenon has practically transcended the boundaries of the domestic sphere. Instead of going into the public sphere, they have turned their homes into vital and economically valuable production bases. These natural and personal skills have been drawn into market-oriented economic activities, transforming homes that were originally only spaces of consumption into spaces of production.

On the other hand, this phenomenon somewhat contradicts Ortner's (1974) view, which positions women as nature and men as culture. In Giriloyo, the domestic sphere is no longer

passive, but a combined space where reproductive, economic production, and cultural agency functions interact. The practice of batik, starting as domestic work, has evolved into a significant economic practice, blurring private and public spheres. Women thus bring the “cultural” sphere of power, economy, and social status into the “natural” or domestic realm, proving productivity and economic value can emerge from home. The domestic sphere is no longer merely the opposite of the public one, but a renegotiable space. This shift is bolstered by batik's transformation into a market commodity—from family identity symbol to exchange medium, valued by price, production speed, and profit. For Giriloyo's women, it offers financial contribution and economic autonomy, alongside market demands challenging cherished traditional values.

Second, negotiations within authority and changes in gender relations within the household. Women's subtle negotiations through batik-making brought significant changes to the dynamics of power within the family. Although it did not challenge male authority head-on, women's financial contributions from batik-making became clear evidence that the value of their work was beginning to be appreciated. According to Mrs. Khibtiyah, the money earned, although initially considered supplementary, gradually changed the power dynamics within the household. This change did not occur through debate or demands for rights, but rather through a limited yet significant shift in authority, changing perceptions within the family. As market interest in clothing began to increase, women as craftswomen gradually began to contribute to daily expenses. Having their own income gave them slightly more authority, especially in matters related to household affairs and children's education. Tilly (1998) noted that when women began to earn an income, they tended to gain control over family resources.

The increase in authority and gender relations was evident in several aspects; (1) Household Financial Management. Women as craftswomen began to have a say in determining financial direction, allocation of funds for basic needs, and emergency expenses. According to Mrs. Giyarti, this can be seen from the separation of funds allocated for household needs and batik-making needs, which illustrates control over family resources. Although ideally decisions are made through deliberation, this economic contribution positions husbands and wives as equals. (2) Children's Education. Many women invest their income in providing better formal education for their children as a reflection of a new priority born out of their autonomy, namely the desire to ensure that their children have opportunities outside the world of batik. This shift in values also reflects the awareness that the roles and responsibilities of men and women are equal (gender relations), even though they are biologically different. This partnership leads to a

positive shift in family values, where husbands and wives support each other. In anthropology, this change in authority is relevant to the concept of the gender contract (McDowell, 1999), a metaphor that describes how social norms about gender roles are renegotiated, even though the basic framework of patriarchal hierarchy does not disappear completely.

Through the *Giriloyo* phenomenon, the traditional gender contract of men as breadwinners and women as domestic managers can be renegotiated. Women contribute financially, giving them new, albeit limited, areas of authority (financial management and children's education). Despite progress, this renegotiation does not always result in full equality, as major strategic decisions such as asset purchases or larger matters remain the domain of men. Tilly (1998) notes that women have power within limited spheres but remain marginalized from broader structures. Successful negotiations are often non-verbal, but are reflected in the husband's attitude of beginning to appreciate his wife's work because it lightens the economic burden (Tilly, 1998). These negotiations show that gender change can occur through adaptation and reconfiguration of roles without total confrontation, but the consequence is a doubling of the workload.

The Reality of Double Burden: Is it an Obstacle and a Personal Burden?

The transformation of *Giriloyo* women through batik making, although providing economic change, comes at the cost of the reality of double burden (Rohman, 2023). This concept refers to a condition in which women bear a double workload: paid work (batik making) and unpaid work like a taking care of children, cooking, cleaning the house, serving their husbands (Rahmayati, 2020). This double burden is not a theory, but a real burden that overlaps throughout the day. Women must be skilled at managing their time and energy extraordinarily well (Purnomosidi et al., 2022). The batik production process must adjust to the rhythm of domestic life. According to Mbak Ayu, this means that they are forced to steal time to do batik after their housework is done or at night. However, although flexibility in batik-making time should be positive, in practice it actually adds to the workload. This is relevant to feminist criticism (Friedan, 1963; Firestone, 1970) that domestic flexibility often becomes a new trap that expands the burden rather than liberating women.

Physically, women batik makers face tremendous fatigue (Yani et al., 2020), especially in the eyes and pain in the back and neck due to the bent position when canting. This double burden also causes mental stress due to the pressure to balance family responsibilities and social expectations. The lack of rest time, especially when orders are high, makes them prone to mental

fatigue. This multiplied workload is often the reason why women's participation in social spaces is limited. This limitation is not due to restrictions, but rather due to limited time and energy, which men do not face. Although batik provides economic agency, the reality of the double burden limits their social mobility.

Interestingly, despite all the physical, time, and mental limitations, the women of Giriloyo do not see this double burden solely as a debilitating obstacle. Instead, they use it as a negotiation strategy. By taking on two roles at once, they are able to demonstrate a tangible contribution that cannot be ignored, which in turn gives them a stronger voice as active participants within the family sphere. This adaptive strategy allows women in Giriloyo to create positive change towards economic independence without having to openly challenge patriarchal cultural norms.

Gender Transformation and Women's Agency in Giriloyo

Gender transformation in Giriloyo, especially for women, is not an instant phenomenon. This profound change is a series and combination of various factors such as nature, society, and culture, which then influence the way the community builds their power and agency.

First, natural disasters. Particularly the earthquake that struck Yogyakarta on May 27, 2006, were crucial natural factors that triggered fundamental social changes for the Giriloyo community. This disaster not only caused massive physical damage, with infrastructure losses estimated at trillions of rupiah and 216,804 houses in Bantul severely damaged, but it also shook the traditional social and economic structure. Data shows that thousands of hectares of agricultural land in Bantul were damaged, and 70%–80% of craftsmen (around 1,328 people) went out of business due to loss of assets and debt (Kedaulatan Rakyat, 2006). This impact caused batik activities in Giriloyo to come to a complete halt because their homes and workspaces were destroyed.

Another significant social impact was the loss of livelihoods for men, who were generally involved in public activities such as farming and construction work. The destruction of land and workplaces effectively crippled the main source of income for families. In this difficult situation, the women batik makers of Giriloyo could not remain idle. The disaster overturned rigid social norms, whereby batik making, originally considered only a side activity or domestic work, transformed into the sole source of income. As expressed by Mrs. Khibtiyah, limited access and the need to survive compelled women to return to batik making and marketing, labeled as a condition of being forced. This phenomenon shows how extreme external conditions can change social boundaries. Women in Giriloyo not only participated in the economy but also

began to take full agency over their livelihoods, transforming from mere batik makers to drivers of the family economy (Handrianus Vianey Melin Wula, 2022). After the disaster, the women in Giriloyo showed remarkable resilience or social endurance. As expressed by an informant;

“Even though they had to be evacuated and survive in refugee tents, they continued their batik-making activities because batik became a means of survival and a source of income amid the limitations.”
(Mbak Ayu).

This spirit of revival received positive responses and support from various parties, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the government. One crucial form of assistance came from IRE AusAID through the Jogja Heritage Society (JHS) in the form of the construction of a gazebo to support the continuity of batik activities. This assistance was not only physical but also encouraged the creation of a new social structure. According to reports, there has been an increase in the number of batik artisan groups in Giriloyo, from only 5 groups after the earthquake to 12 groups after 2007. According to Mrs. Khibtiyah, a member of the Giriloyo Handmade Batik Association, this increase in batik groups has also been accompanied by an increase in the number of batik makers, reaching around 300 people.

The peak of this spirit of revival and social resilience was evident in the extraordinary achievement on May 27, 2007, exactly one year after the earthquake. The Giriloyo batik artisans broke the Indonesian World Museum (MURI) record in the event “Batik on the Longest Cloth,” which stretched 1,050 meters and involved thousands of batik makers, most of whom were women (Nurficahyanti, 2015). This event serves as tangible evidence of the affirmation and positive change that emerged from suffering. To unite and harmonize the 12 newly developed groups, the Giriloyo Batik Association was formed on June 28, 2008. This association serves as a guardian and aims to minimize service inconsistencies and ensure the continuity of the batik tradition for the Giriloyo community.

Second, social actors. Revival of batik in Giriloyo has also encouraged intensive social interaction and the formation of strong social solidarity among female batik makers (Wahidin, 2019). In contrast to the previous individualistic atmosphere surrounding batik making, the activity has now become more open to others in a communal space.



Figure 1. Giriloyo Batik Gazebo
Source: Author's Documentation

The women of Giriloyo no longer work in their own homes, but gather in a communal space, specifically at the Giriloyo Batik Gazebo, to help each other and exchange knowledge. This situation naturally creates a close-knit social network, where they share challenges, solutions, and provide moral support. Generally, these artisan women gather between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. This form of social interaction, which fosters a sense of solidarity, transcends the professional sphere and is rooted in a shared sense of destiny and suffering due to natural disasters, thereby cultivating a spirit of mutual cooperation characteristic of Javanese society. In other words, starting from physical destruction, the women of Giriloyo have succeeded in creating a strong new social foundation.

In the context of social society, the changes experienced by women in Giriloyo show that they have equal standing at certain levels. The revival of Giriloyo batik also shows that women in villages that are considered marginalized still have active participation in sustainable development through self-help groups (Handrianus Vianey Melin Wula, 2022). As mentioned briefly in the previous discussion regarding the formation of a community group that later became the Giriloyo Batik Village Service Cooperative, it eventually became a collective forum for the craftsmen. Although the position of cooperative chair is still held by a man, women have the opportunity to become active members to participate in decision-making and cooperative activities as a whole. This reflects the negotiation and adjustment of traditional gender roles.



Figure 2. Organizational Structure of the Giriloyo Batik Village Service Cooperative
Source: Giriloyo Batik Village Service Cooperative

On the other hand, the development of Giriloyo batik, which has now become a tourist destination in the city of Yogyakarta, has opened up new opportunities for synergy between men and women. Men, who previously dominated the public sphere, are now collaborating with women who are active in production and marketing, creating a space for dialogue. However, the structural dynamics of the formal management of the Giriloyo Batik Village Services Cooperative are still dominated by men due to the stigma that women tend to be irrational and emotional in public leadership. This discrepancy has implications for the stigma that still clings to women's ability to lead. Another obstacle is the skepticism of a small portion of the community and women's lack of experience in the public sphere. Nevertheless, women's roles in village organizations such as BUMDES, Pokdarwis, and PKK are crucial in developing quality, creativity, and cultural preservation. The gender phenomenon in Giriloyo indicates that patriarchal culture can be negotiated, but it is not easy to eliminate.

The solidarity built by the women of Giriloyo is manifested in the form of concrete collaboration, where the practice of individual batik making has become communal. Communal spaces such as gazebos have become venues for sharing knowledge and skills, from techniques to marketing strategies, and even helping each other in difficult processes such as canting or dyeing. This solidarity has created a close-knit social network where each individual feels a sense of ownership and responsibility for mutual success. Gender relations in Giriloyo now show a more complex and dynamic pattern, where the roles of men and women complement each other and interact in building the community, even though their traditional roles have not completely disappeared.

Third, cultural factor. The popularity of batik in Indonesia, which has become an integral part of everyday life, has raised concerns about claims from other countries. This situation prompted the Indonesian government and various related parties to work together to submit batik as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) to UNESCO (Evita et al., 2022). This recognition process culminated in a meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, where on October 2, 2009, UNESCO officially recognized Indonesian batik. This decision was made by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which approved the inclusion of batik in the representative list as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Widadi, 2019)

The UNESCO recognition of Indonesian Batik (2009) as Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was a vital external catalyst for awakening the agency and active role of women in Giriloyo. This recognition, based on the 2003 Convention, emphasizes safeguarding actions like identification, documentation, promotion, and transmission through education. Batik was listed because it embodies the Indonesian people's philosophy of life and ensures the future preservation of ICH. This global "official stamp" significantly boosted the pride and status of Giriloyo women as batik makers, motivating them to innovate, form collaborative business groups, and expand their market reach. Achievements, such as breaking the MURI record, highlight their collective agency, proving they are the main drivers of the Giriloyo batik revival rather than passive workers. This international recognition aligned with national efforts to strengthen batik's position. Under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), the government established National Batik Day on October 2, 2009, and launched the "Batik Friday" program, mandating its use as a civil servant uniform. This synergy between global endorsement and national policy empowered the women's entrepreneurial success.

The impact of this policy was strongly felt in Giriloyo. According to a report from the Giriloyo Batik Village Services Cooperative, after UNESCO recognition and the government program, artisans' turnover jumped by 30% and batik prices increased. Mrs. Giyarti, one of the informants, confirmed that orders had skyrocketed, especially for ASN uniforms, allowing her to complete 20-30 batik fabrics in a single day. Thus, UNESCO's recognition served as an external catalyst that reinforced what the women of Giriloyo had already built. This recognition transformed local enthusiasm into a globally recognized and supported force, changing batik from merely a response to disaster into a promising profession with a strong economic foundation.

Women's Agency and Power in Giriloyo Batik Entrepreneurship

In an ever-evolving society, the role of women in Giriloyo has shifted significantly, transcending domestic boundaries into the economic and public spheres. Their identity as entrepreneurs is the result of subtle negotiations that transform past challenges into opportunities.

Manifestations of Agency: Establishment of Showrooms and Collective Entrepreneurship

A tangible manifestation of women's entrepreneurial agency in Giriloyo is the establishment of batik showrooms. According to Mbak Ayu, this idea arose from individual and collective awareness of chronic marketing difficulties. Before having a showroom, women artisans only functioned as producers who were highly dependent on middlemen or outside marketers, who often bought products at very low prices. This situation created economic injustice, where the greatest profits were not enjoyed by the batik makers themselves.

This bitter experience encouraged the women to take full control of the value chain from production to sales. They realized that having their own place of sale would allow them to interact directly with buyers, explain the stories behind the motifs, and set fair prices in line with their hard work. Showrooms such as Batik Sungsang, which was established one year after the earthquake by Ibu Giyarti and Mbak Ayu, are a physical manifestation of women's agency. This showroom is not only a gallery, but also displays the tools and processes of batik making, transforming the image of batik from a mere home craft to a high-value art product (Wahidin, 2019).

The process of establishing the showroom involved careful planning and collective discussion (among the immediate family and community), searching for a strategic location (in front of the Batik Village Secretariat), and designing the interior with a Javanese cultural concept (limasan). As business owners, it is important for them to take care of the legality of the business, as shown in the Batik Sungsang “Company Profile.”

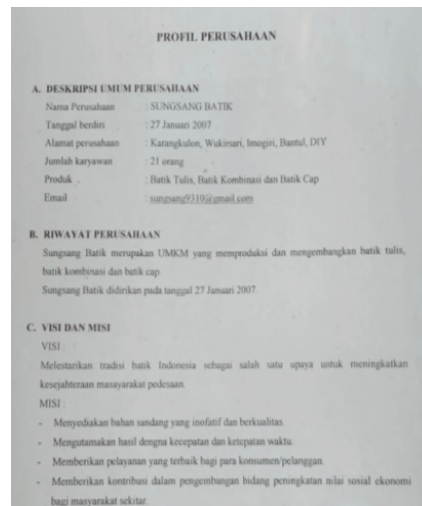


Figure 3. Legality of Batik Sungsang Company in Giriloyo
Source: Author's Documentation

The business profiles as shown in the image above socially place them within the formal economic system. This document is a public declaration that confirms their status from “craftswoman housewives” to “female entrepreneurs” whose existence is recognized.

In addition to independent businesses, collective entrepreneurship is also a mainstay for women in Giriloyo who face limitations in their circumstances. According to Mrs. Khibtiyah, although conditions in Giriloyo have improved significantly, there are still artisans who face material and capital constraints. In this context, Mrs. Khibtiyah is referred to as the “Maestro” by the batik makers. This is due to her great empathy for empowering other crafters. To provide concrete solutions, Mrs. Khibtiyah ultimately included crafters with limited capital so that they could have access to the Joint Business Group (KUB). In addition, to demonstrate solidarity and concern for other batik artisans, she provides and facilitates batik artisans to improve their skills through training and socialization to ensure that their high enthusiasm is not hampered by the limitations of KUB to become an important forum for sharing knowledge and embracing others. The types of training provided are mostly related to innovation in production and product diversification.

Reframing the Identity of Giriloyo Women Through Traditional Work Ethos

The successful redefinition of identity among Giriloyo women as entrepreneurs is fundamentally underpinned by a work ethic rooted in traditional Javanese values and proverbs. This ethos, which Geertz (1982) defines as a foundational evaluative attitude towards the world, guides their business principles. Foremost among these principles is discipline and exemplary

behavior, encapsulated by the adage "Jer basuki mawa beya" (achievement requires sacrifice or hard work). This necessitates persistent effort and serves as the basis for their never-give-up spirit, reflected in "Aja leren lamun durung sayah" (don't stop before you are tired). This ethos enables batik makers to overcome physical ailments such as neck pain and eye strain and work intensively, often from morning until night, to meet deadlines.

Furthermore, their optimistic outlook is instilled by "Ana dina ana upa" (there is a day, there is sustenance), promoting the belief that diligence and positive thinking will be rewarded. Entrepreneurial resilience and courage are reinforced by "Rawe-rawe rantas, malang-malang putung" (all obstacles will be overcome), which encourages them to face challenges for business continuity. This reframed work ethic yields significant social and cultural consequences alongside material profits. The persistence, discipline, and cooperative spirit of these women have successfully shifted the perceptions of their families and the broader community. Consequently, the roles of Giriloyo women have expanded beyond "natural" domestic tasks into the economic and social spheres. Their substantial financial contributions, a direct result of this work ethic, have significantly increased their bargaining power in family decision-making, thereby repositioning women and fundamentally altering gender relations within the community's economic and social structure.

Reflections of Giriloyo Women: Between Tradition, Modernity, and Personal Well-Being

The journey of Giriloyo women reflects a nuanced balance between preserving the batik tradition (their cultural "soul") and adapting to modern economic demands. Their transformation is not a rejection of the old system but a complex synthesis of cultural values and contemporary needs, often viewed as a strategy to gain bargaining power within the family. By transforming their homes into economic production bases, a shift aided by events like the 2006 earthquake and UNESCO recognition, they leverage their traditional work. Supported by Javanese philosophies like "Jer basuki mawa beya," they embrace the double burden (domestic and production work) and limited digital literacy challenges. Their well-being is measured not just by profit but by increased autonomy and a stronger voice in family decisions, demonstrating a resilient fusion of tradition, adaptation, and dignity.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of women in Batik Giriloyo Village embodies intelligent agency, triggered by the natural disaster of the earthquake and the legitimacy provided by UNESCO's

recognition of batik as an Indonesian heritage. The Giriloyo women have successfully reconfigured patriarchal norms through subtle negotiation, transforming batik-making from a domestic activity into a vital economic production base, and turning their homes into legally registered showrooms. This agency is rooted in collective solidarity and a strong Javanese work ethic. The most tangible change for the women in Giriloyo is an improved bargaining position and limited autonomy at the family level, particularly in financial management and children's education. Nevertheless, this success comes at the cost of a double burden and the challenges of adapting to digital modernity. Ultimately, in the broader social sphere, the Giriloyo women demonstrate that tradition can serve as a liberating force, repositioning themselves from invisible workers to socially, culturally, and economically recognized female entrepreneurs.

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