

From House to Market: Women's Role and Penjor Industry in Bali, Indonesia

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From House to Market : Women's Role and *Penjor* Industry in Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract

Hindu Balinese's religion is a unique form of Hinduism, characterized by many rituals. Their daily and ceremonial rituals correspond to each specific offering arranged neatly and decorated in various shapes; one of which is *penjor*. *Penjor* is a necessity in each Galungan day, and for many Balinese, making *penjor* is an essential ceremonial activity through which they practice and embody who they are and what they believe. As people's attitude changes over the years, due to the development that has influenced people's mobility, the form of making *penjor* has also changed. What was a twice-yearly activity has evolved into a source of income for Balinese women. Nowadays, the Balinese tend to buy *penjors* rather than weave them themselves. This situation has resulted in the emergence of new virtues in the trading of *penjor*, which leads to a new form of market that brings the new system and strategies for women who utilize these opportunities. The emergence of a new market and the shift surrounding *penjor* production activity offers a comprehensive approach to shed light on the intricate workings of the current *penjor-making* industry and unpack its evolving cultural, economic, and psychological significance, particularly for Balinese women.

Keyword

Bali, *penjor*, production, women

家庭から市場へ —インドネシア・バリにおける女性の役割とペンジョール産業—

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要旨

バリヒンドゥーの宗教は数多くの儀礼によって特徴付けられるヒンドゥー教の独特な形態である。それらの日常のおよびセレモニー的な儀礼は、きれいに彩られ装飾された様々な形状の供物をともなうが、そうした供物の1つがペンジョールである。ペンジョールはガルンガンの祭日において欠かせないものであり、従来、多くのバリ人にとってペンジョールを作ることは、彼/彼女らが何者であり、何を信じているのかを実践し具現化するために必要不可欠な儀礼的活動であった。しかしながら経済発展にともない人々の移動性がより高まるにつれてバリ人の態度は次第に変化しており、ペンジョールの作製形態も変化してきた。ペンジョールの作製は、かつては1年間に2回だったが、今ではバリ人の女性にとって1つの収入源へと進化してきた。最近で

は、バリ人はペンジョールを自分で作るよりも購入する方が多くなってきた。こうした状況はペンジョールの売買という新たな価値を生み出すこととなり、そうした機会を利用する女性に新たなシステムと戦略をもたらす新たな形態の市場につながっている。新たな市場の出現とその周辺でのペンジョールの生産活動は、現在のペンジョール産業の複雑な作用に光を当て、とりわけバリ人女性にとってのペンジョール産業の文化的、経済的、心理的な意義を明らかにするための包括的なアプローチを提供するものである。

キーワード

バリ, ペンジョール, 生産, 女性

Introduction

Travel and tourism are amongst the world's largest industries, and the Asia-Pacific region is the world's fastest-growing tourist destination. Tourism as an 'economic engine' has become an alternative source for growth, contributing substantially to developing economies in the global south. It is also a labor-intensive industry, which in Bali has been encouraged and justified for its potential to increase employment opportunities and thus develop the island economy. Bali's rapid economic growth since the mid-1980s is mainly the result of mass-tourism (Tajeddini et. al, 2017). In Bali, a small island with about 3.9 million population, tourism accounts for about half the economy and employs more than half of the workforce. Labor migrants account for about ten percent of the population, and about two and a half million tourists from all over the world visit the island every year. Tourism began in Bali with the Dutch colonization of the island in 1908, but it developed during the New Order period of President Suharto (1966–1998). Dutch orientalist viewed Bali as a 'living museum' of the Hindu-Javanese civilization that had been swept away from Java by the coming of Islam (Atmaja, 2017).

Social mobility increased through the

emergence of new ways to earn a living. Consequently, there has been a shift from agriculture to wage-labor. Such transformations are common throughout Indonesia when local villagers utilize the changing economy by becoming entrepreneurs, taking on new kinds of work, or reshaping traditional work forms to gain an income. During the economic boom, some new enterprises prospered because economic growth stimulated their products' demand (Manning, 1998).

The primary data on which the base of discussion in this paper was in a village called Bosa (a pseudonym) in Bali's central part. Its population was a little more than 4600 in 2018–2019¹. Although agriculture, both wet rice cultivation and dryland farming, is a significant productive activity of this area, as in most other parts of Bali, many households in Bosa derive a substantial proportion of their income from off-farm employment. Bosa is famous for one of the handmade offerings² industry, which is *penjor* production. It has grown into a notable home-based cottage industry during the past two decades. The making of *penjor* provides the village women and, to some extent, men with important income-generating activities.

Throughout Bosa, it is common to see women of different generations working on weaving³ the ornamentation parts every day meanwhile

men making the more prominent parts of *penjor* side by side. Typically, they work on the elevated ground of an open pavilion (*balé*⁴) or the veranda in front of their house. Some weavers work on the premises of the workshop, though the majority weave in their compound. By studying the case of the *penjor* industry in Bosa, we can learn about society and how they use their locality to their benefit through a new industry's emergence and development.

Cultural roots of *penjor* in Bali

The Hindu Balinese religion, Agama Hindu Dharma, is a unique form of Hinduism resulting from contact between indigenous Balinese thought and practices and Indian thought and practices that came to Bali for more than a thousand years. Hindu Balinese is a praxis-oriented religion that involves constant gift-giving to their gods, ancestors, and spirits to maintain a balanced way of life and a good relationship between micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos (Atmaja, 2017). They conducted rituals frequently, and there is an intensive ceremonial and the sacrificial practices, described by three Balinese calendars and by events in the life cycle such as births, deaths, and marriages. In Hindu Balinese religious practice, no worship act is complete without handmade offerings (*banten*), required daily as essential for Balinese rituals. Every material used to make *banten* has a particular meaning and is part of daily life and a form of gratitude. The philosophy behind them is self-sacrifice, as they take time and effort to prepare.

Banten comes in an enormous number of varieties, with differences in content, size, shape, and function, depending on the specific producers, recipients, and ritual context.

Collaborative work sessions were organized for temple rituals or large-scale life passage rites. The world of *banten* is a domain for women because they learn about offerings by making them, which begins as a young girl helping her mother and other women of the community, particularly those of her kin group (Nakatani, 1997). A girl first learns the simplest tasks, such as weaving the essential palm leaf containers (*canang*). Gradually their skills increase by learning through practice, and she learns the basic repertoire of offerings necessary for the most frequently held ceremonies. They do as they taught, and variations of offerings are endless.

The focus of this paper is one variation of *banten* called *penjor*. *Penjor* (fig.1) is a tall bamboo pole whose upper-end curves downwards, including an attached small shrine to put the produce of the rice fields, coconuts, palm leaf decoration, and other essentials. Only used for rituals for deities and deified ancestors, a *penjor* erected beside the gateways of homes and temples where ceremonies were enacted (Covarubias, 2012). It is a sign that a ritual is being held, and it serves as a kind of invitation to the invisible powers to witness the ceremony and enjoy the offerings (Atmaja, 2007). By far, the most massive range of different *penjor* can be seen at its very best every Galungan



Fig 1. *Penjor* on Galungan day

festive day. Galungan is considered as one of the significant rituals, which during this holiday period is often called *kemenangan dharma* (victory of justice or order), the entire island of Bali is decorated with *penjor* twice a year (every 210 days). All Balinese should make offerings and place a *penjor* outside all house compounds (Brinkgreve, 2017).

Penjor is formed from several parts of sections. The hanging top, the big and round middle, and the small shrine in the bottom. The making of *penjor* is the responsibility of men, though women weave the palm leaf artefact hanging from the top and the other palm leaf decorations (Brinkgreve, 2017). Demand was consequently limited because people usually make it themselves, so there was no sizable market for *penjor* in the past. The members of the household made them for their use and sometimes with help from neighboring people. They had enough time to weave *penjor* and did not need to rely on the market. The *penjor* was a self-supplied good then, but now, the *penjor* industry has developed against a backdrop of infrastructure improvement and developing the tourist industry on Bali's island. Now *penjor* has become a commodity in Bali as many shops selling ritual objects (*toko yadnya*) specializing in *penjor* emerged in almost every part of the island, especially along the main roads. Due to better transport facilities, these *penjor* are often not locally made anymore. From the findings at the market in Denpasar, the majority of the *penjor*'s ornamentations were brought to them by middlemen from Bosa in the central Bali.

Development of *penjor* as a trade in Bosa

Bosa was famous for its people's arts and crafts; one of the most notable ones is the

woven hat made from the coconut leaves (*janur*), which originated from Bosa in the 1930s. Back then, most of the villagers worked in the agriculture industry, and the other villagers, mainly women, who did not work on the farm weave the *janur* leaves instead. In the 1950s, when many villagers did not work on the farm anymore, they continued to weave other handicrafts made from *janur* leaves such as woven bags, fans, and sandals for sale to tourists coming to the area. This situation began to change in the 1980s, because of the high production of silver jewelry in the neighboring regency, the villagers in Bosa suddenly received a high demand for woven packaging⁵. The women in Bosa can weave the woven packaging at the same time when they make the daily offerings for their household.

Penjor was also made from *janur* in the past, but in around the 1980s, several villagers from Bosa moved to Sulawesi as part of the transmigration⁶ program. The *janur* were hard to find there, and instead, the Balinese found very durable *lontar*⁷ leaves, which thrive on dry land. As a substitute for *janur*, they use *lontar* leaves to make offerings in Sulawesi. *Lontar* is thicker, have a darker color, and can stay fresh longer than *janur*. The news about the durability of *lontar* leaves which can be used as a substitute for *janur* spreads out to Bosa.

As a small island, Bali is experiencing the increasing shortage of the natural materials necessary for ritual objects, due to the ever-expanding building activities on the island. Balinese needs to make *banten* every day and almost all the raw material to make *banten* is mostly imported from outside Bali. For example, *janur* (young coconut leaves), mainly imported from Java, and *lontar* leaves imported from Sulawesi and Sumba by the truckload. Because

of its darker color, the *lontar* leaves are treated by soaking in hydrogen peroxide chemicals (H₂O₂) to make them appear whiter in color. But it turns out that the process can make *lontar* leaves more durable and can reduce the mold caused by lengthy shipping to Bali. After it dries, the *lontar* leaves durability can last up to 3 to 6 months and even years, if stored well.

In Bosa, a first shop emerged because of the demand for *penjor* from another regency. Once there was demand from other regencies, more people came to Bosa for *penjor*. As the number of such people increased, Bosa villagers began to make a *penjor* for sale in a cluster⁸. *Penjor*, as commercial production, began by having advantages associated with a cluster, reduced transportation costs, local availability of specialized labor, and public sector investments. Moreover, some women's groups were established to weave the *penjor*'s ornamentation. The number of households engaged in weaving *penjor* also increased gradually, with nearly half of the households in Bosa engaged in production. In this way, information about the *penjor* produced in Bosa spread all over the country. The information relies on word of mouth among the buyer, and orders for *penjor* from Denpasar, Tabanan, and other regencies increased. In some tourist spots, *penjor* used as decorations to tourists, from international and domestic.

These changes impacted the production of the *penjor* on both the demand and supply sides. The demand-side effect arose through purchasing power, which increased the demand for *penjor* for personal use and commercial use. People no longer needed to spend their time making a *penjor* when they could buy with the income from other sources. On the contrary, for Bosa, the production of *penjor* became profitable

because of the increasing return to scale due to rapidly increasing demand. The problem was the rapid increase in demand to translate to the rapid increase in the shop selling *penjor*. The increased number in shops nowadays has led to several shops experiencing a sudden decrease in sales since last year due to the competition between the shops to offer lower price of *penjor*.

The system of penjor production in Bosa

Bosa has been famous for its woven *lontar* industry. *Lontar* leaves have always been essentials for people in Bosa, particularly for the weavers. Only after the Indonesia economy began its rapid growth in the 1990s did the labor division of *lontar* leaves weavers begin. In this period, the woven packaging production cluster responded to the expanding demand of silver jewelry by establishing labor division within their family and neighbors. The rapid economic growth increased income, but when the demand for *penjor* gradually started in 2000s, the weavers in Bosa shifted their woven packaging industry to become *penjor* production. Even though the *penjor* production was on high demand, within a few years the weavers experienced several obstacles in the production process. The first bottleneck was the shortage of *lontar* leaves. As mentioned in the previous section, the *lontar* leaves are supplied from Sumba (a province in East Nusa Tenggara) and Sulawesi island, which needs to be shipped in a significant quantity. Processing the *lontar* leaves, so it becomes durable, needs time. Therefore, the supply of *lontar* leaves could not increase so elastically according to the demand. The way to eliminate this bottleneck was to stock up the *lontar* leaves every time it arrives from Sulawesi or Sumba's supplier.

The second bottleneck was the cost of

shipping *lontar* leaves. The investment needed for weaving *penjor* is limited mainly to the cost of *lontar* leaves. Another material, such as bamboo, is available at low cost in the area; meanwhile, *lontar* leaves are more expensive. It has become a risk factor for the weavers if they buy a small number of *lontar* leaves, make some parts of *penjor* and sell them on the market by themselves. Usually, weavers do not want to weave at their own risk, preferring to rely on someone else with an immense capital to take the risk when they make a *penjor* on a commercial basis. In the case of *penjor*, these risk-takers are the *penjor* traders living in Bosa.

The penjor's traders in Bosa

The traders in Bosa are entrepreneurs who took the role of organizer, managing the *lontar* leaves supply and distributing it to their weavers, and simultaneously taking the risk of producing *penjor* on a larger scale. There are two kinds of *penjor*'s traders in Bosa. First is through a weaver becoming a trader. These traders are mostly women because of the history of offerings made in Bali. Due to women who only engaged in the production of offerings, the traders emerged from among these weavers. Some of them became pure traders, giving up weaving by themselves after transacting to Denpasar and other regencies; they established a market network for selling. These traders are enlarging their network as the market for *penjor* grows while commissioning others to make it. The second is through traders becoming weavers. This situation occurs when a trader realizes that it is cheaper and more profitable to weave and sell the goods herself than to employ others to make it. The trader became a trader-weaver when they decided to reduce parts of *penjor* they stock in the shop,

making it easier to manage. These shops vary from small one-person kiosks, smaller shop with two to five weavers, to larger workshops where six to as much as ten weavers are employed. The weaver's income varies from the skills and the number of weavings they can produce in a week. The highly skilled weavers who can make the big and intricate weavings can get around Rp. 500.000,- (\$34) for each order they receive. Meanwhile, the weavers who make smaller weavings for ornamentation get less, even though the quantity of the ornamentations they produce is slightly larger.

Most female residents of Bosa, regardless of age or social status, are now extensively involved in this sector even though *penjor* making is work for both women and men. The tools, technique, and skill needed to weave a smaller part of *penjor* is simple, which is a share of women's work. Meanwhile, the men weave a more significant part, which is more complex and takes time to acquire the necessary skill and creativity. Both women and men labor carry out the whole process by themselves except the material they acquired from the shop's trader. When the weavers finish weaving their parts, they will sell it to the shop. Their net income is the price they put for the finished product, minus the price of the raw materials they acquire from the shop. Some *penjor* shops in Bona apply this kind of calculation, but other shops will pay their weavers' commission daily.

Women's role in the penjor industry in Bosa

Case of Mrs. Kade and Ms. Madi

In Bali, women's daily labor for the household has received less social recognition than male activities (Nakatani, 2003). The *penjor* industry was one-way Balinese women felt empowered to



Fig 2. Mrs. Kade's *penjor* shop

bring a handful of money to their household, just like Mrs. Kade's (this and all the names that follow are pseudonyms) case. She runs a little shop (*warung*) in Bosa, where she, amongst others, sells parts of *penjor* and Balinese snacks on the side (fig.2). She opens the shop every day after she finishes her domestic chores at home, including making the trip to the local market and buying ingredients for offering-making and the meals for the day. Then she cooked a meal for her family, washed clothes by hand, and swept the yard in front of her house in the compound.

Mrs. Kade used to sell *canang* in the Gianyar market. "I have been making *canang* every day for years as an additional way to bring in money for the family. About twenty years ago, nobody bought *canang*. There was no place to buy them. However, now many women are selling premade ones." She quit selling *canang* in 2014 after generating some profit to rent a place to sell *penjor's* ornaments, as she saw the high demand for *penjor* would bring more benefit than selling *canang* every day. She can stock up the *penjor's* ornamentations because of its durable characteristic, different from *janur*, the material for *canang*, which can only last for two to three days before it rots.

Mrs. Kade's husband and daughter will come

to the shop after school finishes. Mrs. Kade's 10-year-old daughter will stay in the shop while she does homework, watch cartoons on the TV, take a nap, or play until it is time to close the shop. Her husband, Mr. Puta, works as a self-employed driver for some hotels in the neighboring regency and hangs around in the hotel lobbies or the security guard stalls in the hotel parking lots and waits for customers. It is not an easy way of making a living because he competes with the taxi companies, which often are preferred by both the tourists and the hotels for security reasons. For Mr. Puta to get customers, he depends on his relations with the hotels' employees. The security guards and other hotel employees know to inform the guests of Mr. Puta's services, and when he gets customers from their referrals, he pays them a commission. Sometimes tourists prefer to take a guided tour with him rather than a cab, and then Mr. Puta tries to make a deal to be their driver for the days they are staying in the area. Mr. Puta will pick up their daughter from school and help Mrs. Kade tend the shop. On quiet days he spends his entire workday in the shop talking with passers-by and the people in the neighboring businesses. He explained that although he also has a job as a driver, he is the shop business manager while his wife runs the shop.

Mrs. Kade always brings her basket of offering-making equipment to the shop, as most women who work in shops do. The offerings she makes between her work tending shop and the snack kiosk are to be placed in her husband's car, in the shop, in her house-yard, and the house-yard temple every day. During the day in the shop, several regular customers will come to the shop to stock up on the *penjor's* ornamentations, and a small

number of people will stop by to buy some snacks. Her main customers are women traders who resell Mrs. Kade's product in the morning market in Gianyar regency and surrounding local markets. This kind of system is shared between the traders' who own a shop. They will buy what they need from other shops, preferably at the shop located in the regency's rural part. Traders from Denpasar bought up large quantities of *penjor's* ornamentations in Mrs. Kade's shop once in every three months, which they transported by pickup truck to their shop or retailers throughout Denpasar as intermediaries. Mrs. Kade even supplied *penjor's* ornamentations to Balinese living in Surabaya, who then distributed it to his community. Mrs. Kade said that the offerings' trade is a relatively recent practice but is now generally accepted in ordinary households as a convenient way for women to save time.

Mrs. Kade has around ten *penjor's* weavers that sell their products to her shop. All of these weavers are her relatives and neighbors. More than half are women, and they weave from 25 to 75 ornamentation by themselves daily, while others commission the weaving of the more significant *penjor's* parts to men in the neighborhood, who bring a fixed number every week. Ms. Madi is Mrs. Kade's neighbor. She has been working as one of the *penjor's* ornamentation weavers since she finished three years of secondary education (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*). After experiencing a harmful environment to work in Denpasar, she returned to Bosa in 2006 and helped her older sister's *penjor* business. When her sister's shop is out of business due to her health, Mrs. Kade suggests Ms. Madi to keep making *penjor* and sell it to her shop. Ms. Madi agrees to it as she feels she will keep getting additional income

while doing what she can. Even though Ms. Madi feels that weaving *penjor's* ornamentations are time-consuming, she feels proud to keep what she is good at while helping her family with additional money every week.

Ms. Madi spent her days, mostly by herself but sometimes with her nieces, in her home, weaving several ornaments out of the leaves of the *lontar*. Often, she had stacks of them made in advance for the upcoming Galungan day. She weaved non-stop on her orders every day, sometimes until night. Occasionally she received a bonus in compensation for working overtime in the evenings to finish an order. She started weaving on the orders after she finished having breakfast in the morning. She then made her way to the veranda in front of her house, opened the bunch of *lontar* leaves she gets from Mrs. Kade, took several *lontar* leaves, cut them to the right length, then weaved them out of the separate leaves, and fastened them with staples. The veranda floor, only about two by three meters, was covered with bundles of *lontar* leaves, some dyed in bright colors, and plastic bags full of completed weavings. When she finished the week's order, Ms. Madi will bring all the *penjor's* ornamentation to Mrs. Kade's shop to receive her commission and another supply of *lontar* leaves for the next order.

Case of Mrs. Koma, Mr. Ketu, and Ms. Waya

From descriptions overview above, the *penjor's* ornamentations were made to order, and in this home industry usually, more than one person was involved in the production, as in the case of Mrs. Koma, Mr. Ketu, Ms. Waya, and their family business in Bosa. According to Mr. Ketu, in the early 1980s, his mother Mrs. Koma (fig.3) started to make ready-made offerings and ritual decorations in her home.



Fig 3. Mrs. Koma and Mr. Ketu in the shop's workshop

Soon after, she got orders to make all kinds of other ornamentations to be used on a *penjor* by people in Denpasar and Gianyar regencies. So she started to make them herself in her workshop and they became very popular. Mrs. Koma opened the workshop in 2007 on the main road in Bosa. She decided to start this small business, first to have something to do besides being a housewife and make a bit of useful extra income, but also because she always liked making all kinds of offerings, and she is rather good at this craft. The shop is open to the street, where she had a variety of ritual objects in stock. It was located opposite her house yard, where she made the ornamentations together with her family. At first, she worked only with family members, but after a few years, she also took on paid employees. Due to Mrs. Koma's health issue, now Mr. Ketu manages the shop's daily production and sales. He bought the material, mainly *lontar* leaves, at the nearby market town. Mr. Ketu mentioned that since 2018 they could not get more profit due to the decrease in sales and the high price of *lontar* leaves.

Ms. Waya, Mr. Ketu's cousin (fig.4), has been working as a weaver in Mrs. Koma's shop for four years but has stopped working there in 2018 because she wanted to set up her own

penjor business. Ms. Waya could make up to 20 varieties of *penjor's* ornamentations a day, and she always busy made them well before Galungan. She mentioned that she had to learn from scratch, since at home, her mother usually made all the offerings, while Ms. Waya helped with other aspects of daily offering making. She found making offerings very difficult in the beginning, especially with the rather tough *lontar* leaves. According to her, *lontar* leaves were also more expensive than the coconut leaves, although *lontar* lasted longer and so the offerings could be made longer in advance.

Ms. Waya learned by copying the work of others while also collecting booklets with drawings, photographs, and practical information about how to make different offerings, especially for *penjor*. In 2019, Ms. Waya earned around Rp 1.800.000 - Rp 2.000.000 a month from her stall, which was equivalent to \$120 - \$135. She mentioned how she worked every day, tending the stall from seven in the morning until five in the afternoon, except on public holidays when shops in town are closed. Although her income was small, Ms. Waya still contributed to the family income. Her father, who used to be a driver on a mini-bus, lost his job because of illness, and her mother tried to make ends meet selling homemade rice porridge



Fig 4. Ms. Waya in her stall

at the market in the morning. However, she mentioned insufficient regular customers to keep the shop open and pay the rent. Ms. Waya had no other source of income because she only went to primary school; hence she started to sell the palm leaf container (*canang*) because this kind of offerings is needed daily by the Balinese, in her stall and to people from her neighborhood.

Conflicting life roles for Balinese women in Bosa

The idea of women's income generation as supplementary to men, which was the Indonesian state's central idea of women's work during President Suharto's rule, is still prominent in Bali. Taking on wage workplaces a heavier workload on most Balinese women as their other kinds of work, domestic and ritual, add up to create 'three shifts' (Nakatani, 1997). Whereas women's 'triple roles'⁹ elsewhere in Southeast Asia have been described in terms of household production, reproduction, and community maintenance (Milgram, 2003), women's extensive ritual work must be added as a crucial dimension in Bali.

The precedence of the women's role as *penjor* weavers, traders, and mothers influences their productivity and their primary motivations as weavers. They shared that one of the benefits of weaving is that they can accomplish other tasks required of them as mothers at the same time. For them, weaving is something that is done during free time and in between household chores, such as cooking and rearing children. Furthermore, these weavers in Bosa expressed that they aspire for jobs other than weaving for their children. This thought demonstrates that the weavers' idea of a good life often prioritizes their role as mothers and involves better lives for their families. This situation means that

their role of being a mother competes with their role of being a weaver and even determines their weaving goals in the first place. Several interests are at play here: the woman herself in her role as both mother and weaver and her family's interests. The dynamics of this relationship is complex and varies. Most of the time, the most significant factor in this situation is the family relationship. Any intervention must then consider and respect both these roles while optimizing productivity and income.

Still, this article argues that women's role as economic producers has been strengthened by recent economic development, as women have found new opportunities for waged labor or entrepreneurship, utilizing new means of production for self-employment. Moreover, this development has not diminished the significance of women's other kinds of work, particularly their ritual work (Nakatani, 1999), although there are broader changes in ritual practices tied to ritual objects' commoditization, services, and ceremonies.

Domestic work is considered women's work, and women do most of the household chores while men are excluded or exclude themselves (Connor, 1983). Women's domestic work is comprehensive and includes the responsibility of taking care of their children and parents-in-law, cooking, laundry, sweeping the yard, bringing the children to school and buying the groceries, while the men's responsibilities in the household is to bring in money and to teach the vital skill to their children in the public domain of social life (Fagertun, 2013). When not working, men tend to 'take the day off' and spend time with friends at the local *warung* (kiosk) Alternatively, hang around chatting, smoking, and drinking coffee at the nearest *balè*. Women, on the other hand, when

finished with their wage work or in between, do domestic labor such as cooking, cleaning or tending children and preparing offerings for ritual sacrifices. Women's domestic work is directed towards the nurturing of members of the family or house-yard cluster, while men's domestic work is directed towards the public sphere of village life and the mastering of inter-household relationships.

The notions of women as mothers and nurturers (Parker, 2003; Devasahayam and Yeoh, 2007) and managers of social and cosmic relations, direct and shape a particular female agency in the economic field, while, likewise, the notions of men as masters and breadwinners of the family, direct and shape a particular male agency. Traders in Bosa demonstrate the gendered division of domestic work through the fact that women spend their day at home, or near the home, and can do these chores while their husbands work elsewhere and bring money into the household. Husbands might help their wives with their domestic duties and the wives might help their husbands by taking on some form of remunerative work. Connor (1983) finds that the gendered division of labor in households in Bali gives men a greater flexibility in seeking more lucrative employment away from home, as is the case in Bosa.

Much of women's work is construed as "helping out others"; their actions thus produce social and economic effects. The notion of 'helping out', indicative of encompassment, is also operative in women's wage work on Bosa. Their entrepreneurial activities are construed as 'helping out husbands,' and work often takes a 'flexible form', which accommodates women's other unremunerated work-duties (Seligman, 2001). If a woman has income, whether from wage work or her own business, she is still

expected to perform her domestic and ritual work, which weighs on her as 'women's work'.

Sustaining flexibility during the uncertainties

Because people in Bosa knew about the high profit of *penjor* trading, the number of *penjor* shops in Bosa increased significantly in the 2017–2018. Many people want to become a *penjor's* trader, which becomes a problem due to competition. The conflict between the traders in getting the customers by offering the lowest price and the weavers' consequence are two big problems. The weavers could not get their usual amount of commission due to the traders putting the price of the *penjor's* ornamentations too low. Bosa weavers hold the most interest in this context as their products, and in relation, their time and energy are attached. Because of this, buyers, including traders and end customers, hold the most powerful as they have the purchasing power. The traders, in particular, stand to benefit the most. The lack of control weavers have over these prices directly affect the kind of livelihood they can earn and the quality of life they can attain.

Other problems emerged when the findings revealed that the pricing for a *penjor* is often dictated and controlled by the raw material's price. Most of the *lontar* leaves came from other islands due to its shortage within Bali, which leads to suppliers powerful enough to decide the price. The high cost of the *lontar* leaves and the shipping cost make the *lontar* leaves valuable. Those justifications culminate in why *penjor* traders cannot offer to cut down the price of the *penjor* if they want to get profit selling it. Because all *penjor* traders in Bosa know one another, it becomes hard to compete because they are afraid of its dissatisfaction effect for their friends and family members

and, consequently, affected their sales and relationship with their customers. So the traders feel like walking on the eggshells doing the *penjor* trading. So, they try to maintain the sales in their shop and their relationship with their regulars by giving them exclusive treatments. The traders' strategies are the customers can pay later (usually at the end of the months or when the ritual is finished) and give their customers, mainly the shop owner in another regency, privileged to exchange some *penjor* parts they need in their shop after. Those uncertain situations significantly impact each agency in the *penjor's* production industry in Bosa, through how it hinders or enables what they envision to be a good life, such as having the capacity to support their family.

Balinese actions seem to be influenced by a gendered cosmology that accord women culturally positioned in ways that attribute a secondary quality to their engagements in the market. Women's agency seems fundamental to be directed towards the collective, the social and ritual reproduction of relations, networks and groups, and their entrepreneurial engagements. The power of women traders in the market domain is restricted by domestic duties and broader socio-cultural forms of the production industry. They have to play an essential role as organizers of production and decide the price, so it is equal for all parties. The traders need to maintain the heavy burden of their responsibilities and uphold the weavers and the customers' significance in the *penjor* industry. Women's role as income-generating workers has not diminished the socio-cultural significance of their ritual work. They can take pride in enhancing the social status of their households, if not their self-esteem.

Conclusion

Once a solitary act to create offerings for the family rituals at home or ceremonial rituals at the temple, the impact of trade has transformed the function of offerings making to economic activity. When offerings were integrated into an economic system and production in Bali, it evolved into a source of rural economic employment and income for women. *Penjor* making provided a good income source, but it was also regarded as a respectable job for women. The production of *penjor* started when the improvement of road networks and other infrastructure made it easier to obtain imported materials and market the finished products. The development as a home-based industry and its expansion within Bali facilitated the changing regional economy, which penetrates the money economy into the villages.

Some local traders assumed a role in the village under study by providing materials to local weavers and selling finished *penjor's* ornamentations in their shop. The production's initial stage was dominated by many women, who experienced handweaving the offerings for their household daily rituals, gradually got involved both as traders and weavers, regardless of their status. The village women, both young and old, increasingly engaged themselves with this handweaving industry. However, this situation has an impact on the Balinese women's role in daily life. Culturally, women's wage work is conceived of as supplementary, while socially, their position in the kinship system and public domains also contribute to enforcing female structural subordination. All these factors together arguably shape a particular female agency in the labor market on Bosa.

Although we find all over Asia that women are increasingly involved in wage employment, women's partaking and all their negotiations, 'balancing acts' (Devasahayam and Yeoh, 2007) and flexibility, have not destabilized gender norms. Women's economic role as the traders and weavers are contested due to challenges that continue to surface, including barriers to growth, pricing, income instability, access to market, and other skills to capacitate the weavers. Concerning the sphere of the *penjor* industry in Bali is negotiated and reevaluated, this paper elucidate how the *penjor* industry emerges, maintains, and preserves under the unfavoured conditions that could bring the new position meaning to the women's role.

Notes

- ¹ The data based on the interview with the Bosa's local municipal staff in 2019.
- ² This article has used the term 'offerings' as a convenient shorthand for what Balinese generally call *banten*.
- ³ The term 'weaving' is a common term to Balinese 'mejejahtitan' and 'metanding', a method to make offerings by forming a shape by interlacing leaves.
- ⁴ A *balè* is a platform on bamboo poles with a roof but with only one wall (or sometimes no walls). There are many kinds of *balè* placed in different settings, such as temples, house-yards, or community halls in Bali. The ones referred to here are those found alongside roads, which people use as places to meet, to rest from the sun, or even sometimes to sleep.
- ⁵ The data based on the interview with the local residents in Bosa.
- ⁶ The Indonesian transmigration program is the world's most extensive program for assisted migration. Since 1905 more than 2.5 million people

have moved from the crowded islands of Java, Madura, Bali, and Lombok, to new settlements in the less densely populated outer islands such as Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Sumba. It intended to spread the population more evenly over the region and integrate its entire population by promulgating a homogenizing national culture (Hoey, 2003). This integration process was part of the President Suharto government's "New Order" agenda for rural development (Anderson, 1983).

- ⁷ The *lontar* palm in English usually called *Palmyra palm* (*Borassus flabellifer*).
- ⁸ The term 'cluster' here is defined by Sandee (1994) as the concentration of horizontal and vertical linked enterprises in a local area. These enterprises specialize in the same type of business. The development of a cluster helps improve both the local economy and the socio-cultural identity of the area.
- ⁹ 'Triple roles' is a concept suggested by Mosser (1989) where he groups women's roles into three: reproductive role (within the domestic sphere), economics role (within the productive sphere), and social role (within the community and its *adat*). For Balinese women, these roles mean that they are involved in the cultural value system, gender role socialization, domestic, economic, social roles, conflict settlement strategy, and how to do those roles.

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