

Ikat as a Living Tradition

Visual Expression, Meaning,
and Artistic Transmission in Eastern Indonesia
(19th –21st Century)

JULITA OESANTY OETOJO



Volume II

Visual Plates, Figures, and Analytical Appendices

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Visual Plates, Figures, and Analytical Appendices

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Volume II: Plates, Figures, and Appendices

This volume presents the visual and documentary materials that accompany and support the analyses developed in Volume I. It includes photographic plates, catalogued tables, extended appendices, and comparative collections of ikat textiles from Timor and related regions. These materials provide detailed visual and contextual references for understanding motifs, ritual practices, material processes, and museum collections discussed throughout the dissertation. Volume II begins with Appendix IV, as Appendices I–III are included in Volume I together with the main text. Together, the plates and appendices in this volume highlight the aesthetic, symbolic, and historical dimensions of ikat that form the foundation of the dissertation’s argument.

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Appendix V: Plates and Figures



Plate 1: Map of Indonesia showing the location of Timor.

Source: PAT (Public Domain Maps), "Indonesia map," compiled by Ian Macky, available at <https://ian.macky.net/pat/map/id/id.html>. Public domain.

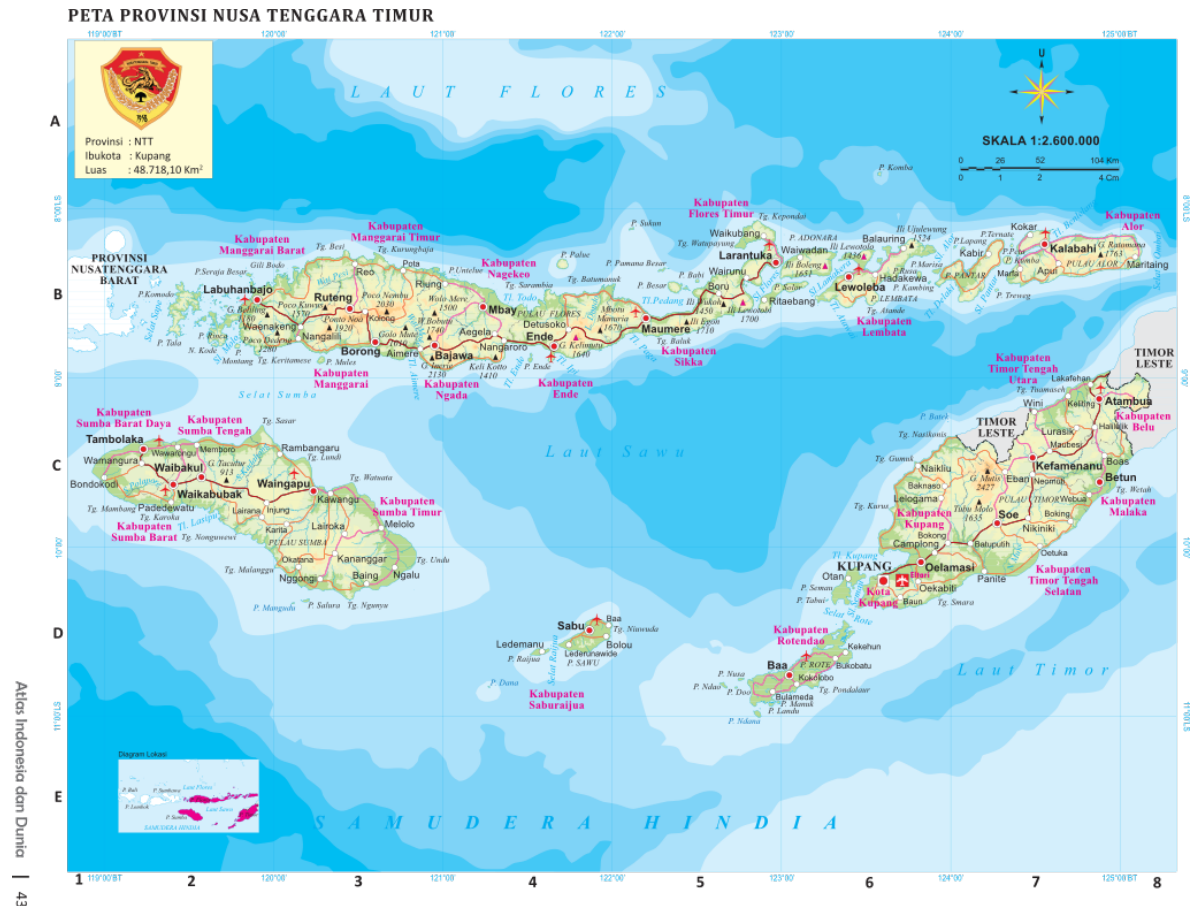


Plate 2: Map of East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur).

It highlights the Belu and Malaka districts and the city of Kupang. Source: Badan Informasi Geospasial (BIG), Atlas SMP, via Wikimedia Commons.

(File: Atlas_SMP_BIG_-_Nusa_Tenggara_Timur.svg, CC BY-SA 4.0).

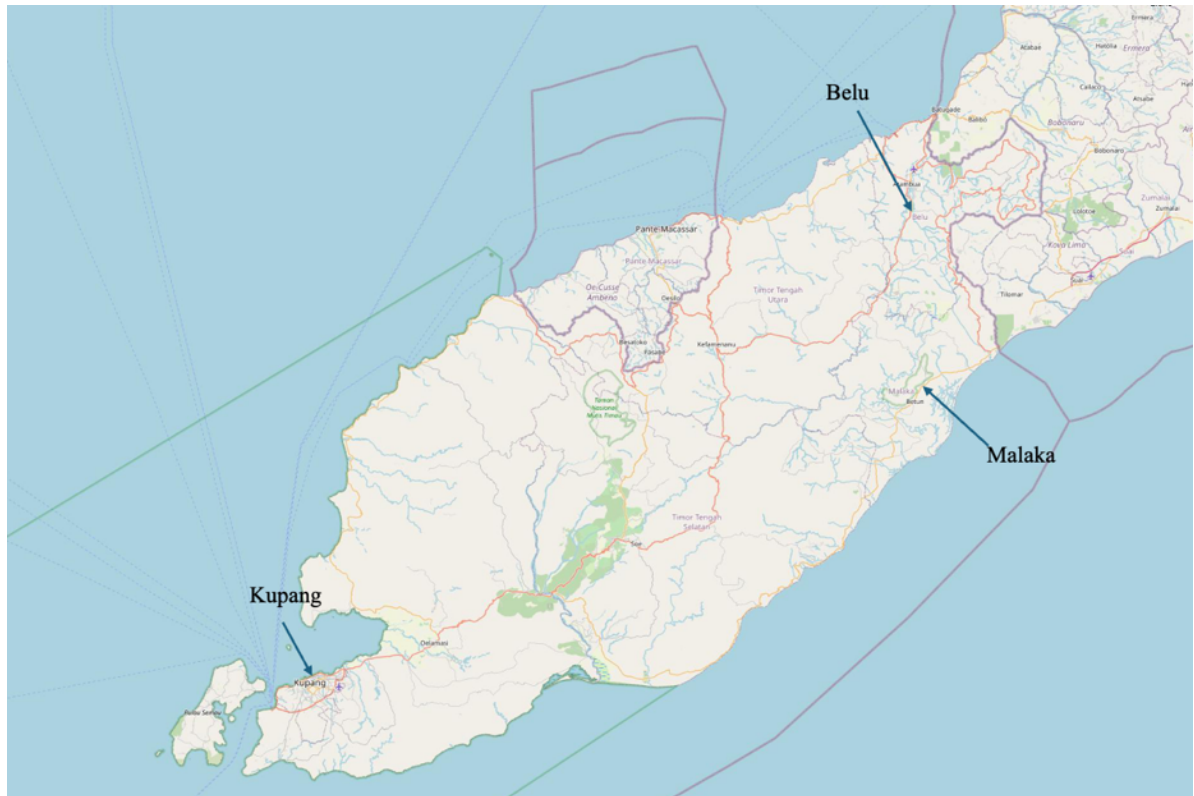


Plate 3: Map of West Timor showing Kupang, Belu, and Malaka.

They are the central research locations of this dissertation. Source: OpenStreetMap contributors, exported at zoom level 10 (<https://www.openstreetmap.org/#map=10/-9.5811/124.6207>), licensed under ODbL.



Plate 4: Mahājanaka Jātaka mural, Ajanta Caves, Cave 1 (c. 600 CE.).
It is showing early depictions of ikat-like patterns. Source: Jataka Stories in Art Project,
University of Edinburgh,
<https://jatakastories.div.ed.ac.uk/stories-in-art/cave-1-mahajanaka-jataka>



Plate 5: Steps in the ikat weaving process from binding to weaving.
Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 6: Artisan weaving on a traditional loom in Malaka.

This image highlights the integration of labour, spirituality, and technical skill involved in producing ikat. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 7: Step-by-step Ikat Production Process in West Timor.

This sequence illustrates the significant stages of ikat weaving, including thread preparation with tied motifs, application of natural dyes, drying of dyed threads, preparation of pigments, and final weaving on a traditional loom. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 8: Artisan weaving on a traditional back-strap loom in Malaka.

The image illustrates how the artisan maintains thread alignment and pattern precision during weaving, demonstrating both technical skill and the embodied knowledge required in ikat production. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 9: Men's selimut with *buna* ornamentation from Amanatun, South Central Timor. Handspun cotton; plain weave with supplementary weft (*buna*) and alternating warp float, decorated with crocodile motifs. Collection of Museum Tekstil Jakarta. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 10: *Sotis* textile with *no'e riu* motif from Oekabiti, West Timor.

This textile features a warp-faced weave with narrow white bands on a black background, incorporating the *no'e riu* motif, a central symbol of Oekabiti clan identity associated with ancestral geography and ritual authority. Source: Dr Peter ten Hoopen's Ikat Collection, ikat.us (accessed 2022).

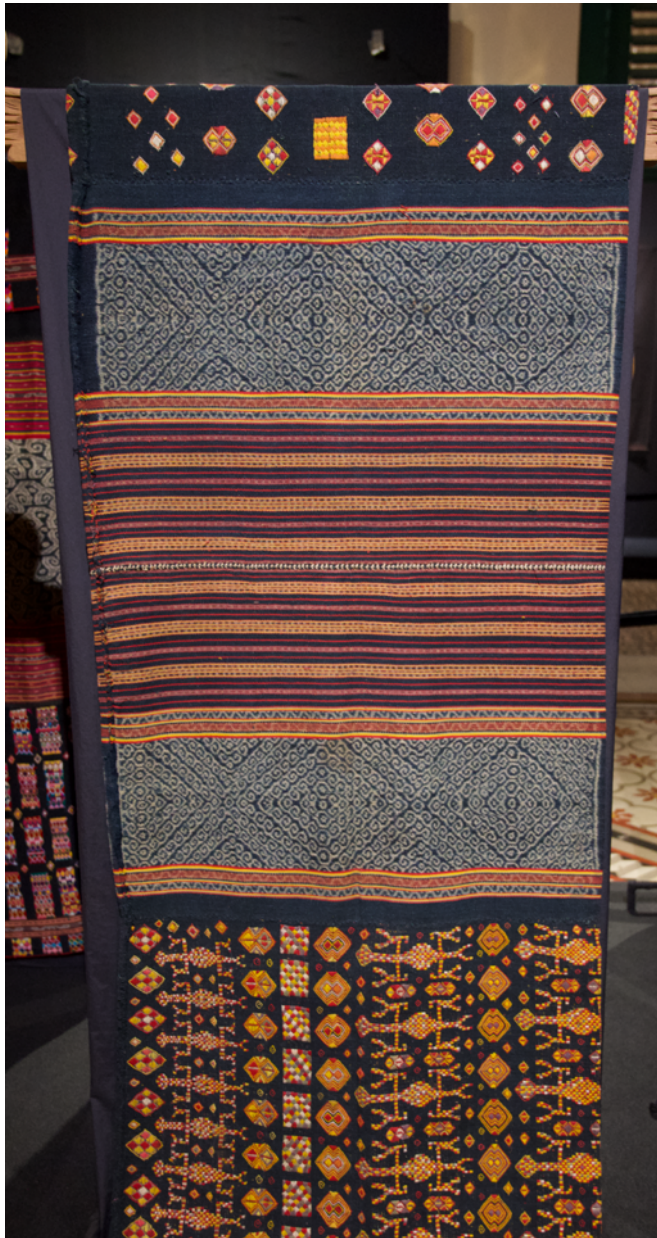


Plate 11: *Tais Feto*, Malaka, West Timor, 1960s.

This textile features crocodile motifs combined with geometric patterns, illustrating the integration of sacred symbols with simpler decorative elements. The composition reflects the interdependence of ritual practice, ancestral memory, and practical use. Source: Collection of Museum Tekstil Jakarta from Rumah Wastra Jo Seda (2022).



Plate 12: Textile from Rumah Wastra Jo Seda collection, c. 1950–60.

This textile embodies the Celestial–Earthly duality, featuring star motifs that symbolise the celestial realm and human figures that present the earthly realm. The composition visualises Timorese cosmology, highlighting the balance and interconnection between spiritual and social worlds. Source: Rumah Wastra Jo Seda.

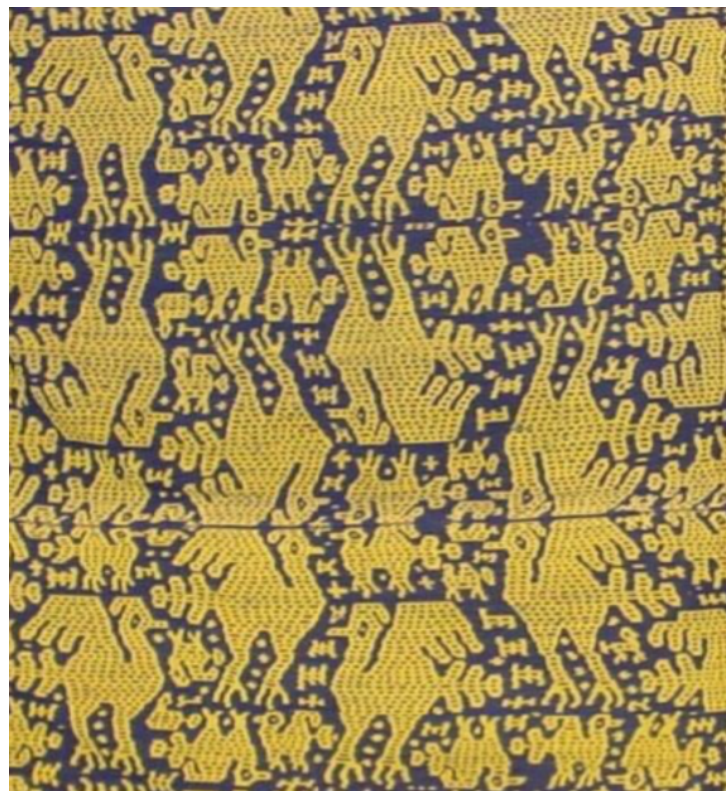


Plate 13: Ceremonial shoulder textile (*schouderdoek*) from Central Timor, before 1940. Warp ikat with repeated bird motifs symbolising the duality of Ancestors and the Living. Birds act as spiritual intermediaries, while the symmetrical design reflects beliefs in regeneration, ancestral presence, and social continuity. Cotton; warp ikat. Source: Collection of Georg Tillmann, Tropenmuseum (TM-1772-1121).



Plate 14: Woman carrying a child wrapped in a handwoven textile, documented by B.A.G. Vroklage in Flores, 1937–1938.

The image illustrates the protective and nurturing role of textiles in early life, while also reflecting colonial-era ethnographic approaches to maternal and childcare. Source: Collection: Wereldmuseum, RV-A245-1940, CC0 1.0.



Plate 15: Mother wrapping her newborn in ikat, Rote.

The red, white, and black patterns symbolise vitality, spiritual protection, and ancestral connection. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 16: *Helketa* ritual before marriage.

Families gather at the river to present offerings of betel leaves, rice, palm wine, and ikat textiles to ancestral spirits. The ceremony seeks purification and harmony before marriage, reaffirming the link between humans, nature, and ancestors. The presence of ikat in the offerings reflects its role as a vessel of prayer and blessing, connecting ancestral protection with future fertility. Source: Author's own (2023).



Plate 17: Ikat textiles from West Timor with the *dikur* (buffalo horn) motif. This motif symbolising vitality, strength, and ritual authority. One textile uses natural dyes (indigo, morinda, *jati*, mahogany), while the other is synthetic; yet both serve in ceremonies such as hair-cutting and the *Likurai* dance. Source: CCD-NL Collection (2022).



Plate 18: Woman weaving on a backstrap loom, Timor, ca. 1910.

This photograph captures the communal setting of weaving, where the loom is not only a technical device but also a cultural space that links women to ancestral narratives and ceremonial obligations. Source: KITLV 404989, Leiden University Libraries.



Plate 19: *Patola* textile from Gujarat, India, 1900-1950.

Double-ikat silk textile featuring red, black, and natural tones, produced in Gujarat and traded widely across South and Southeast Asia. *Patola* fabrics like this one influenced later Southeast Asian ikat traditions, including Timor, through the adaptation of geometric and symmetrical motifs. Collection: Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (formerly Museum Nusantara, Delft), inv. no. 7082-S-451-3897. Source: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/1036621>.



Plate 20: Woman in Timor seated at a loom, spinning yarn by hand with local tools. The image reflects the continuity of weaving traditions in times of hardship, highlighting the resilience of artisans and the central role of yarn preparation in sustaining ikat production. Source: KITLV A903, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies.



Plate 21: Fieldwork in Rote: Artisan weaving on a backstrap loom, 2022.
Her choice reflects cultural continuity and the spiritual value of ancestral techniques, highlighting the persistence of weaving knowledge within contemporary practice. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 22: Artisans in Sumba (2018), Rote (2021), and Kupang (2023) using horizontal and backstrap looms.

The images show how weaving communities balance market-oriented production with traditional sacred practices, demonstrating the coexistence of economic adaptation and cultural continuity. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 23: *Kasuri* ikat textile fragment from Japan, 20th century.

The fragment features geometric and floral resist-dyed motifs that reflect Japanese aesthetics of precision and simplicity, demonstrating a regional variation of the ikat technique within East Asian textile traditions. Source: Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, Inventory Number: WM-27355.



Plate 24: Ikat textile fragment from Afghanistan, early 1980s. Made of silk using the single ikat technique, the textile features bold motifs and vibrant colours that reflect Central Asian design traditions and the region's historical link to the Silk Road. Source: Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, Inventory Number: RV-5309-1.



Plate 25: Canopy bed adorned with *telas de llengües* ikat fabric from Mallorca. The textile features distinctive wavy patterns characteristic of locally adapted ikat weaving techniques and reflects the vibrant colour palette and decorative use of ikat in European domestic interiors during the 18th and 19th centuries. Source: *Flàmules* Exhibition Catalog, 2009.



Plate 26: Display of Toraja ritual ikat textiles at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Germany. The installation includes long banners and funerary wrappings arranged with ceremonial stools. While the museum label notes their ritual function, the display emphasises visual symmetry and typological categorisation over original spiritual meanings. Source: Author's own (2023).



RJM 49809



RJM 56030

Plate 27; Ritual ikat textiles from the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne (RJM 49809, RJM 49813).

The left textile (RJM 49809) retains complex, naturally dyed motifs linked to ritual use, while the right textile (RJM 56030) shows simplified patterning and synthetic materials reflecting later market adaptation. Source: RJM collection records.

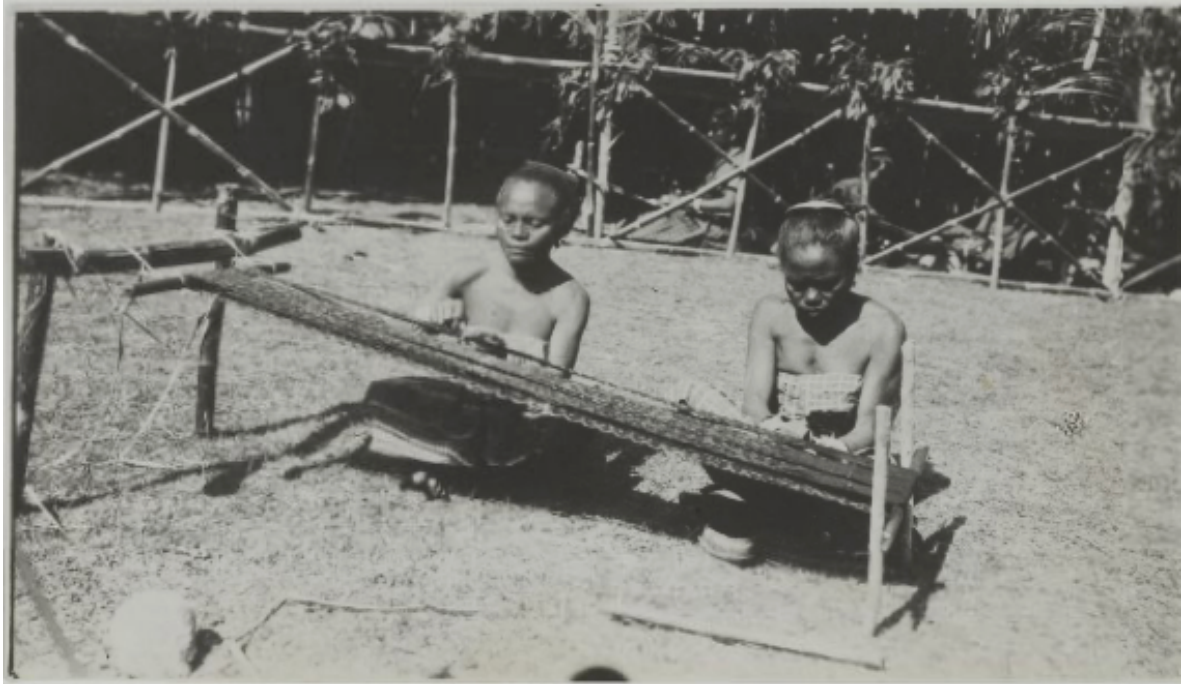


Plate 28: Timorese women weaving with a back-strap loom, ca. 1925.

The act of weaving was carried out under ritual sanction, making the practice itself a medium of ancestral presence and cultural continuity. Source: Collection of KITLV, Leiden University Libraries (KITLV 5613).

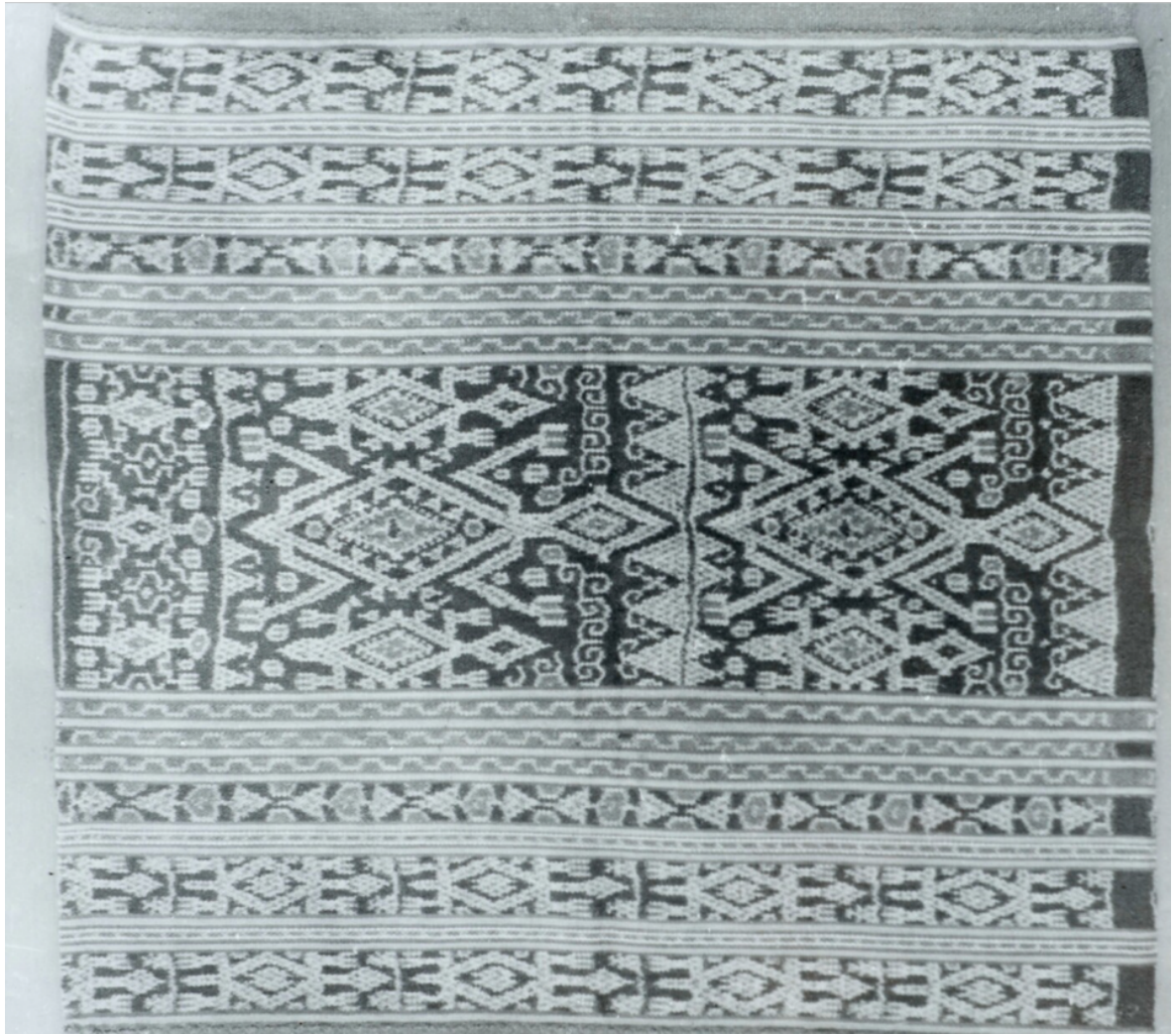


Plate 29: Ikat textile with crocodile motif, Belu Regency, West Timor, 1937.

In Tetun cosmology, the crocodile symbolises fertility, protection, and ancestral bonds, reflecting its role as a primordial ancestor. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage SVD. Source: Collection of the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (RV-A245-2580).



Plate 30: Offering ceremony in Gililok Daman, Belu Regency, West Timor, 1937. Ritual participants stand beside offering posts adorned with ikat textiles as part of the ceremonial display, showing the textile as a mediator between humans and the spiritual realm. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage SVD. Collection of the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (RV-A245-2575).



Plate 31: Naturally dyed ikat textile from Belu, West Timor.

Woven by an artisan born in the 1920s using morinda and indigo, the textile was made for marriage and funerary ceremonies. Collected by fashion designer Vivi in 2005, it reflects early twentieth-century ritual dyeing traditions. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 32: Tetun-speaking woman weaving on a backstrap loom, Belu Regency, 1937. The image documents women's central role in sustaining weaving traditions and highlights the ritualised dimension of textile production during the colonial period. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage SVD. Collection of the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (RV-A245-1443).



Plate 33: Ritual carving used in the *buka dalan* (path-opening) ceremony, Naitimu, 1937. The carving formed part of ritual preparations to safeguard participants during transitions, reflecting the integration of material objects with cosmological beliefs. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage. Collection of the National Museum of World Cultures, RV-A245-183.



Plate 34: Sacred boat carving used in ancestral rituals, Belu, 1937.

This wooden sculpture, carved with human figures, symbolises ancestral guidance and cosmic journeys in Tetun belief. The boat functions as a medium connecting the living with the spirit world, echoing cosmological motifs also found in ikat textiles. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage. Courtesy of the National Museum of World Cultures, RV-A245-181.



Plate 35: Sacred offering posts in a ritual compound, Belu, 1937.

These posts served as fixed ritual anchors linking the living and the dead in Tetun ceremonies. In contrast to ikat textiles as portable carriers of memory, they remain as enduring markers of ancestral presence within ritual spaces. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage. Courtesy of the National Museum of World Cultures, RV-A245-184.

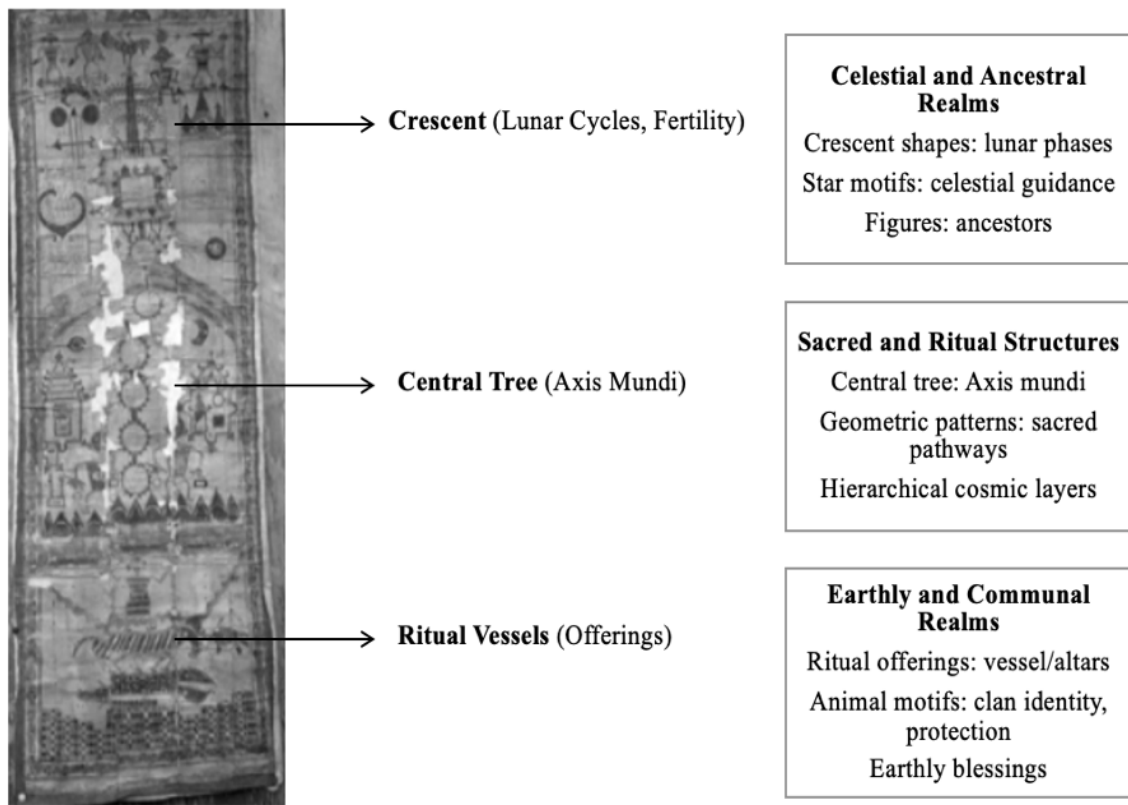


Plate 36: Ritual carved offering post from Belu, 1937, showing a tripartite cosmological structure.

The carving combines celestial symbols (crescents), a central axis (tree), and earthly offerings (vessels), embodying the hierarchy of celestial, ancestral, and earthly realms. Used in Tetun ancestral ceremonies, especially buka dalan rites, it reflects the integration of material form with ritual cosmology. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage. Collection of the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (RV-A245-1).



Floral and Vegetal Motifs



Architectural Motifs



Circular Medallions Motifs



Floral and Vegetal Motifs

Plate 37: Ritual carved offering post from Naitimu, Belu, 1937, associated with *buka dalan* ceremonies.

The motifs, crescents, axis designs, and vessels, reflect the Tetun cosmology of heaven, ancestors, and earth. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage. Collection of the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (RV-A245-2).



Plate 38: Ritual specialist wearing a sacred ikat textile, Naitimu, Belu, West Timor, 1937. Photographed by B.A.G. Vroklage. The draped textile signifies spiritual authority, while the composition with two attendants bearing spears reflects ritual hierarchy and ancestral protection. Source: Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (RV-A245-34); Vroklage, *Ethnographie der Belu* (1953), Pl. LXVIII.



Plate 39: *Tais* (sarong) with *kaife'ne* motif, Amarasi, West Timor, c. 1930–1950. The motif signifies ancestral presence and continuity, with mirrored panels symbolising unity. Dyed with morinda red and incorporating *sotis* bands and commercial yarns, the textile was likely used in life-cycle rituals. Source: Peter ten Hoopen, *Ikat Textiles of the Indonesian Archipelago*, Gallery 191.

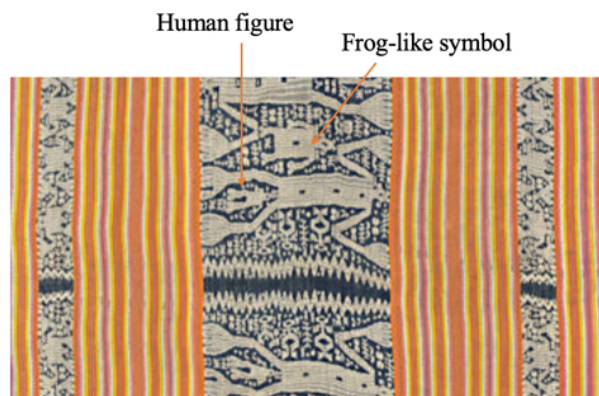


Plate 40: Ceremonial men's wrap (*tais*) with human and frog motifs, Amanatun, 1955. Human figures signify ancestral presence, while frog motifs symbolise fertility, regeneration, and the water cycle. Originally worn by men, such textiles were also used in life-cycle rituals, including birth, placing the newborn within the cycles of fertility and growth. Source: Peter ten Hoopen, *Ikat Textiles of the Indonesian Archipelago*, Gallery 005.



Plate 41: *Mau naek* (men's wrap) with zoomorphic motifs, Amanuban, West Timor, c. 1950–1960.

The textile features crocodiles, scorpions, birds, and chickens, each symbolising ancestral strength, protection, and fertility. It was used in ritual contexts including birth and initiation, where such motifs acted as material guardians for human life. Source: Peter ten Hoopen, *Ikat Textiles of the Indonesian Archipelago*, Gallery 005.



Plate 42: Children wrapped in ceremonial textiles, Naitimu, Belu, 1937.

Photographed by B.A.G. Vroklage during *buka dalan* (path-opening) rituals, the image shows ikat textiles used as protective coverings and as symbols of communal belonging. Source: National Museum of World Cultures, RV-A245-395.



Plate 43: Corpse or coffin wrapped in sacred ikat inside a Tetun house, Belu, 1937. Photographed by B.A.G. Vroklage, the image shows funerary ikat with complex motifs likely reserved for death rites. Hanging textiles and ritual items in the background emphasise the sacred setting, underscoring ikat's role as a conduit between the living and the ancestral realms. Source: Collection: Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne (Inventory no. RV-A245-432).



Plate 44: Ritual leader in invocation, West Timor, 1930s.

The figure wears a traditional ikat sarong combined with a European coat, embodying both ancestral legitimacy and colonial influence. Source: Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage during the 1930s, Collection Wereldmuseum.

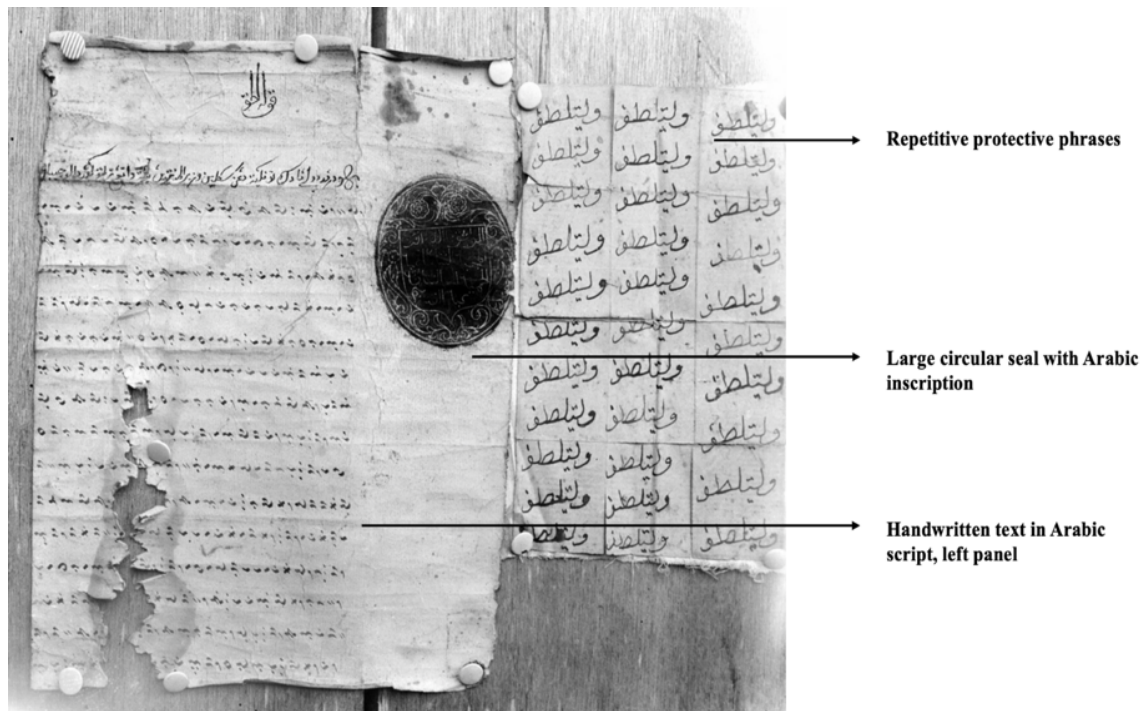


Plate 45: Ritual manuscript with Arabic script, Timor, 1937.

The manuscript contains repeated invocatory phrases and a central seal and it was probably used in protective or oath-taking rituals. It shows how Timorese ritual practice incorporated Islamic textual forms alongside local traditions. Source: Photograph and document by B.A.G. Vroklage. Collection Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam (Inventory no. RV-A245-20); see also Vroklage, *Ethnographie der Belu* (1953), pp. 278–280.



Plate 46: *Hanematan* (woven food cover), Belu, before 1908.

Made from *lontar* palm leaves using three-directional weaving techniques, the cover is decorated with geometric and figurative motifs resembling those in ikat textiles. Its use reflects the continuity of design knowledge across both functional and ceremonial domains. Source: Wereldculturen Museum, Netherlands, Inventory No. RV-1647-996.

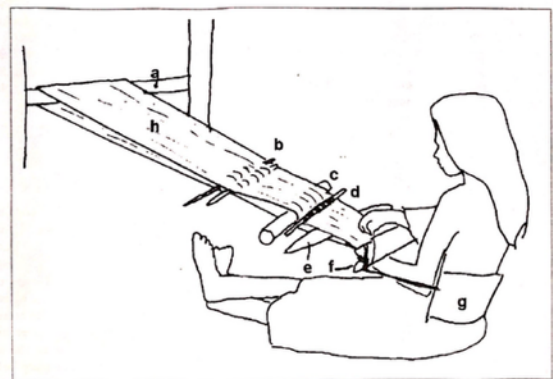


Plate 47: Traditional backstrap loom in use.

A master artisan in Fatululik, Timor, works with a backstrap loom, illustrating the embodied technique required to maintain warp tension and precise ikat patterns. Alongside, a diagram outlines the loom's structural components, such as the warp beam and heddle rod, showing how balance and posture are integral to weaving. Source: Yeager & Jacobson (2002, p. 112), *Textiles of Western Timor*.



Plate 48: Ikat textile from Belu, 1960s. Private collection of Vivi (Belu).

The textile shows a dense arrangement of geometric and figurative motifs, including diamonds, hourglass forms, and stylised figures, woven in bright contrasting colours against an indigo ground. The symmetrical, banded composition reflects clan identity and ritual function, illustrating how mid-20th-century ikat textiles served both as aesthetic objects and as vessels of cultural transmission. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 49: Portrait of a Tetu nobleman, Belu, West Timor (1937).

The nobleman is shown wearing a finely woven ikat textile with a ceremonial belt and headdress, paired with a white colonial jacket. This combination represents a hybrid visual strategy of authority, grounding leadership in ancestral legitimacy while signaling adaptation to colonial expectations. Source: Wereldculturen Museum, Netherlands, Inventory No. RV-A245-439.



Plate 50: Portrait of a man in ceremonial ikat, Belu, West Timor (1937). The man is dressed in a bold ikat textile, a wrapped headdress, and a ritual sword (*belati*). Unlike the nobleman in Plate 49, his attire excludes European elements, emphasising an internal authority rooted in martial protection and spiritual guardianship. Source: Wereldculturen Museum, Netherlands, Inventory No. RV-A245-434

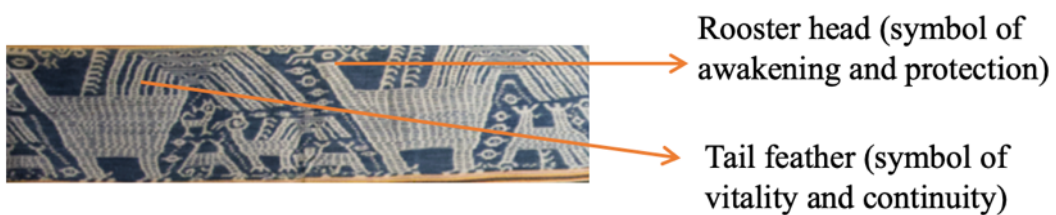
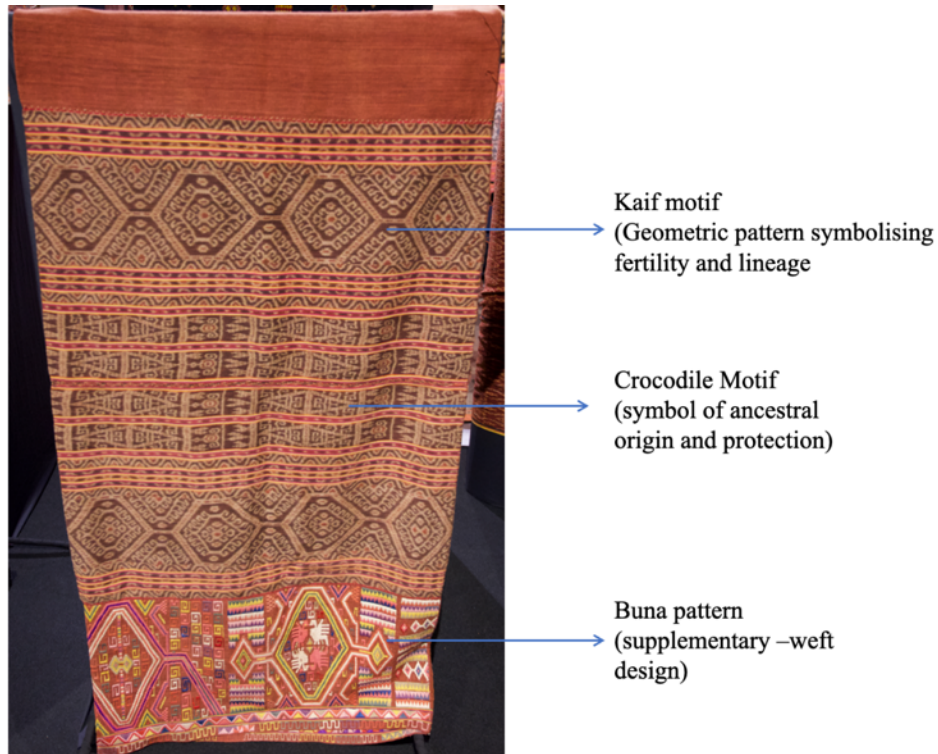


Plate 51: Comparative motifs in Timorese ikat from Malaka and Insana.

The *Tais Feto* from Malaka combines crocodile and *kaif* motifs with geometric *buna*, while the *Bet Naek* from Insana features chicken motifs dip-dyed in indigo. Both illustrate regional adaptations of sacred and figurative symbols that express lineage, fertility, and ancestral legitimacy. Source: Property of Rumah Wastra Indonesia.



Plate 52: Contemporary ceremonial ikat textile, Malaka, 2022.

The textile features elongated anthropomorphic motifs rendered in a double-ikat technique, framed by geometric borders and ancestral symbols. Produced by a local heritage advocate, it was made specifically for ritual use, showing the continued authority of sacred motifs despite shifts in materials and modern influences. Source: Author's own, 2022.



Plate 53: Master artisan Mama with Vivi, Belu, 2018.

Mamah, a renowned artisan from Belu who lived to nearly 100 years old, was recognised for her mastery of ikat weaving, preserving natural dyeing techniques and complex motifs carrying ancestral meaning. Her collaboration with Vivi, then head of the Belu Malaka Art Council, reflects the intergenerational and institutional efforts to safeguard sacred weaving traditions in Belu. Source: CCD-NL Collection (2018).



Plate 54: Serafina weaving as ritual practice, Benus, Belu Regency, 2022. Serafina, a senior artisan, demonstrates ikat weaving as both technical process and sacred act. Her precise preparation of motifs shows how ancestral practices are sustained while adapting to contemporary conditions. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 55: Serafina teaching her niece.

Serafina, a senior artisan, guides her niece in interpreting ikat motifs using historical charts, photographs, and motif drafts. The session combines oral instruction with visual aids, reflecting a hybrid method of knowledge transmission that preserves both technical continuity and symbolic meaning. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 56: *Tais Feto*, Manuela, Malaka, Timor (NTT).

Cotton; plain weave, warp ikat. The red *sarung* shows mirrored human figures with raised hands, surrounded by horses, chickens, and kaif motifs. Dyed with *Morinda citrifolia* root, its red hue and motifs express fertility, social alliances, and ritual blessing, making it a representative Malaka textile. Source: Rumah Wastra Jo Seda.



Plate 57: Wedding ceremony, Belu-Fatuaruin, 1958.

Loro Bot Ignatius Asit Soe Bertek (1931–1964), second from left, affirms the authority of traditional rulers in ritual life. The mix of Western jackets, ikat sarongs, and *kebaya* blouses reflects colonial-era hybridity, with ikat serving as both ceremonial dress and symbolic gift. Source: Sultans Indonesia Blog.wordpress.com, accessed 16.02.2024. Original archive unknown.



Plate 58: *Likurai* dancers, Belu, ca. 1940.

Women perform the dance wearing handwoven *tais* with intricate motifs, likely made with supplementary weft. The textiles function as ceremonial attire and visual archives of cultural memory, their meanings activated through synchronised movements that reflect social structure and ritual storytelling. Source: Private Collection, courtesy of the Belu Cultural Archive.



Plate 59: Timorese ceremonial participants wearing *tais* with bird, crocodile, and *mata* (eye) motifs, ca. 1920.

The motifs symbolise ancestral protection, territorial guardianship, and ritual authority. Although shown in monochrome, the textiles were likely dyed in morinda red, indigo blue, and white, colours tied to Timorese cosmology. Source: KITLV 154799, Leiden University Libraries. Public domain.



Plate 60: Intergenerational weaving practice, Kupang, 2023.

Women in a household setting in Kupang engage in weaving-related activities, surrounded by children and family members. The scene illustrates how weaving knowledge is transmitted in communal domestic spaces, where technical skills are interwoven with prayer, memory, and shared responsibility. Source: Author's own (2023).



Plate 61: Young artisans in training, Kupang, 2023.

Adolescent girls practice weaving on backstrap looms in a semi-formal learning context, assisted by visual pattern guides and observation. The image highlights the continuity of weaving knowledge into younger generations, showing how transmission adapts from household apprenticeship to new educational settings. Source: Author's own (2023).



Plate 62: Timorese ikat artisans in a communal village setting, ca. 1925.

Women weave side by side on backstrap looms in an outdoor space, illustrating the cooperative nature of ikat production. The photograph shows how weaving was embedded in shared labour, intergenerational learning, and community participation, long before the formal organisation of weaving groups in the late 1960s. Source: KITLV 5612, Leiden University Libraries. Public domain. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:784278>).



Plate 63: European pattern books (17th–19th centuries) containing embroidery and lacework designs.

Brought to Timor through colonial trade and missionary networks, these grid-based patterns influenced ikat production, as local artisans adapted symmetrical and bordered motifs into indigenous traditions. Source: Compiled by the author from public domain archives.



Plate 64: Colonial-era sarong from the Frans Seda Collection.

It combines Timorese zoomorphic symbols, representing ancestry and protection, with floral medallions inspired by European lacework. The framed, symmetrical composition reflects colonial aesthetic preferences while still preserving local weaving traditions. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda, published in *Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra* (Jakarta: Ery-Nessa Seda, 2017).



Plate 65: Wall hanging with hybrid European Timorese motifs, featuring angel figures inspired by Baroque ornament.

The symmetrical composition, framed borders, and use of metallic yarns reflect the adaptation of European ecclesiastical designs into Timorese weaving traditions. From the residence of the Vice-Regent of Malaka. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 66: Wall hanging with floral urns and Christian cross motifs, illustrating European influence on mid-20th-century Timorese ikat.

The symmetrical composition, framed borders, and bright synthetic dyes reflect the shift toward standardised designs made for colonial markets, while still retaining elements of local weaving traditions. From the official residence of the Vice-Regent of Malaka. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 67: Hybrid Timorese ikat with European religious and heraldic motifs. Kneeling angels flanking a central emblem reflect Portuguese and Dutch colonial artistic influence, introduced through missionary networks and trade. The symmetrical layout, framed borders, and detailed colorwork show the adaptation of European lace and embroidery into local weaving traditions. Source: Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne. Inventory number: RJM 59758 / RJM 2001/19.

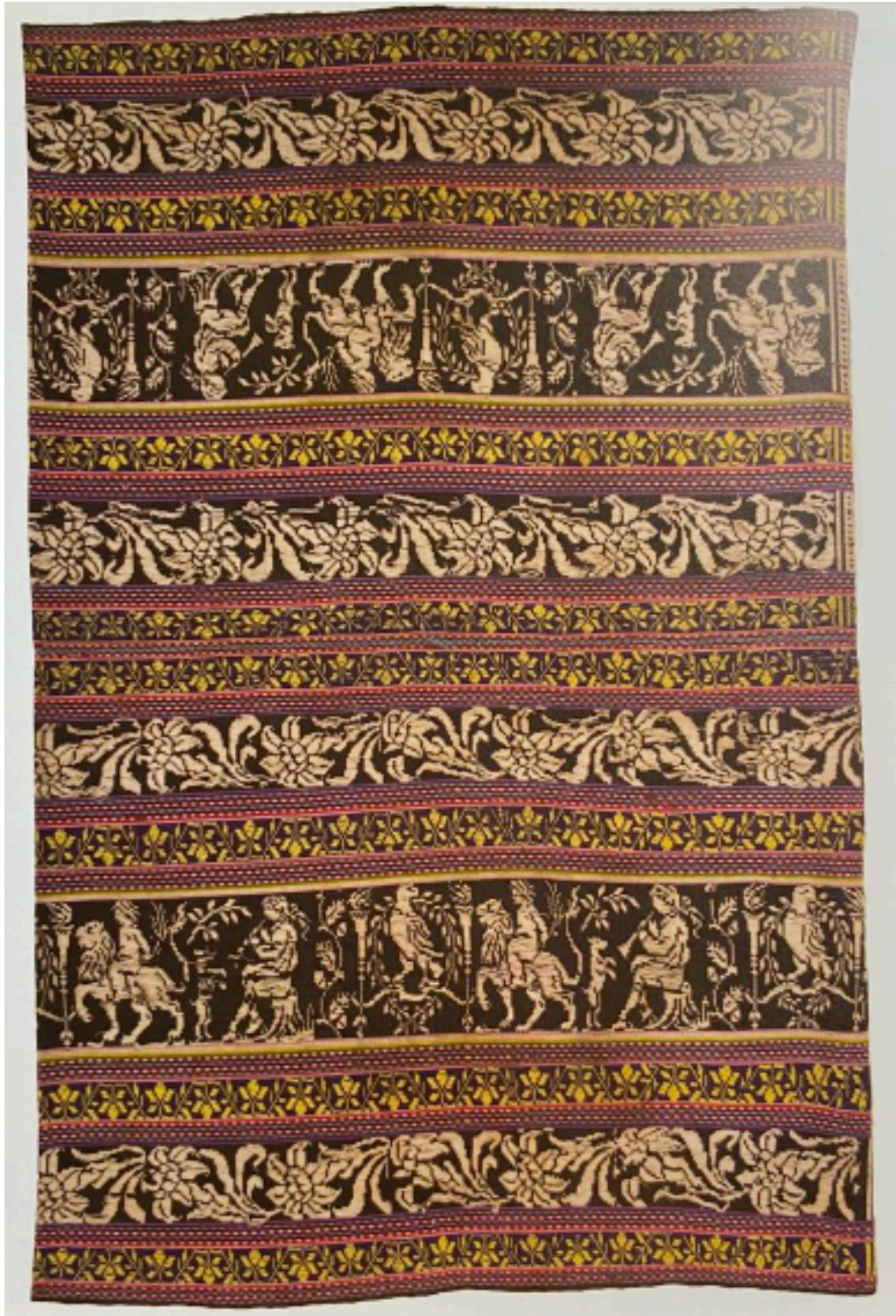


Plate 68: Sarong from Timor-Leste, early 20th century.

Woven in cotton with floral and figurative motifs, including an angel holding a trumpet, the textile reflects the colonial-era shift toward finer, more uniform structures. The inclusion of Christian iconography alongside decorative floral bands shows the influence of European religious and ornamental patterns introduced through missionary and trade networks. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda, published in *Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra* (Jakarta: Ery-Nessa Seda, 2017).



Plate 69: Sarong from Timor-Leste, mid-20th century.

Made with factory-spun cotton and synthetic dyes, it features Christian motifs of angels and a trumpet player framed by floral borders. The symmetrical layout and vivid colours reflect European religious influence and colonial-era preferences for order and clarity. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda (*Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra*, 2017).



Plate 70: Men's blanket from Timor, mid-20th century.

Woven with factory-spun cotton and synthetic dyes, the textile shows a symmetrical layout with formal borders, reflecting adaptation to colonial domestic formats. While aligned with European preferences for order and ornament, the motifs retain elements of Timorese symbolic tradition. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda (*Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra*, 2017).



Plate 71: Timorese blanket with factory-spun cotton and synthetic dyes, mid 20th century. The textile features a structured and repetitive motif arrangement within a symmetrical layout, reflecting European preferences for visual order. Despite these influences, the motifs preserve Timorese symbolic traditions, showing how local identity was maintained within colonial-era formats. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda (*Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra*, 2017).



Plate 72: Men's blanket from Timor, mid-20th century. Made with factory-spun cotton and synthetic dyes, it shows a symmetrical layout with borders and rows of colourful bird motifs. The design blends European order with Timorese traditions, where birds symbolise connection, fertility, and protection. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda (*Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra*, 2017).



Plate 73: *Tais Feto* from Malaka, mid-20th century.

Woven with warp ikat and alternating warp floats, the textile combines floral and geometric motifs with traditional meanings. Its ordered, repetitive layout reflects colonial-era influence, showing continuity alongside external pressures. Source: Collection of Johanna Maria Pattinaja Seda (*Untaian Nilai dalam Wastra*, 2017).



Plate 74: Comparative examples of synthetic and natural dye use in ikat weaving.

Left: Artisan in Kupang working with synthetic-dyed threads in vivid neon colours, reflecting market-oriented production. Source: Author's own (2023). Right: Artisan in Belu participating in CCD-NL's natural dye training program, producing softer, layered tones typical of plant-based colours. Source: CCD-NL (2022).



Plate 75: Clutch bags by the brand Laras.

It created in collaboration with CCD-NL, repurposing Timorese ikat into contemporary accessories. By incorporating handwoven textiles into modern product design, these pieces extend ikat use beyond ceremonial contexts while maintaining its distinctive visual identity. Source: CCD-NL (2019).

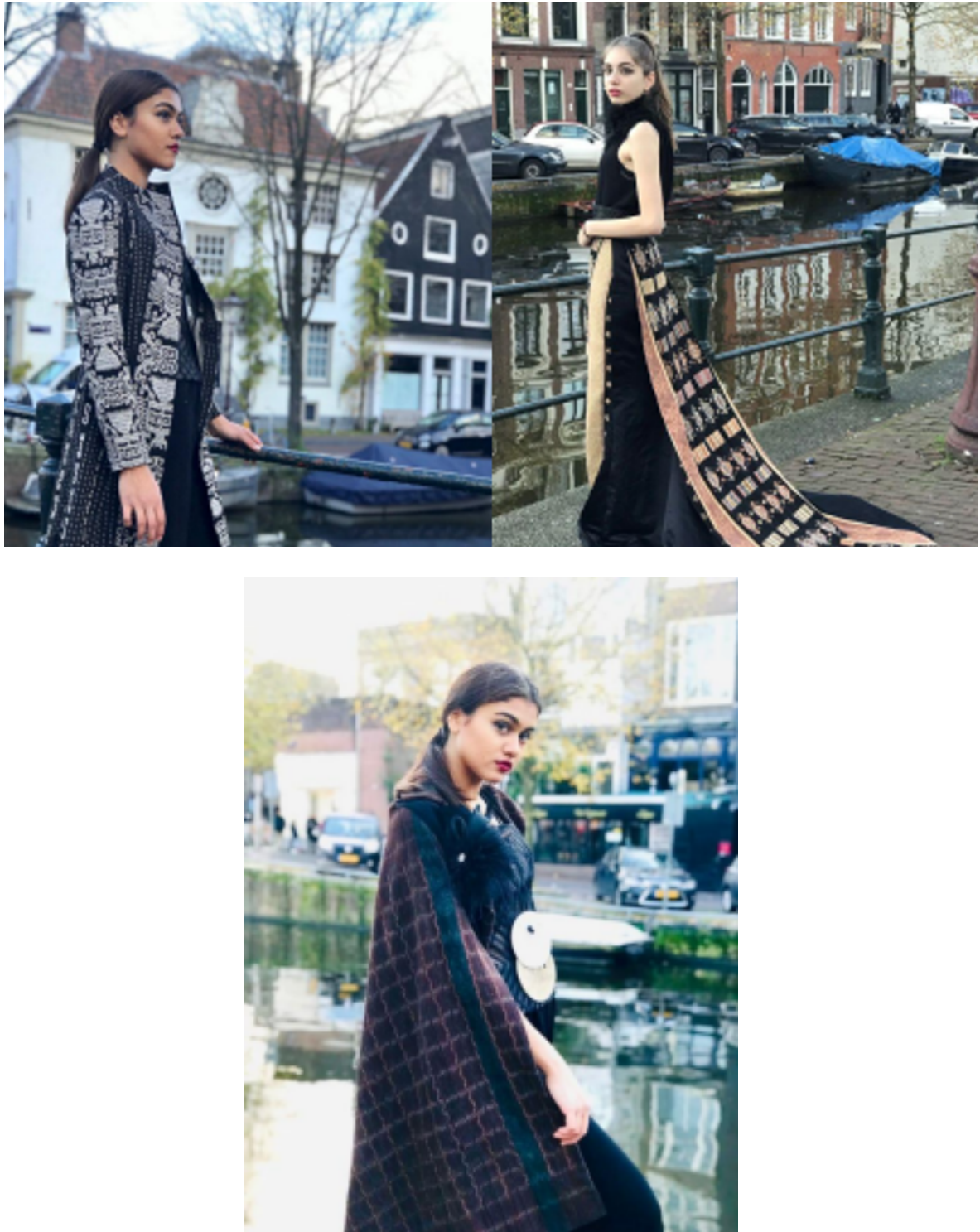


Plate 76: Fashion pieces by designer Vivi from Belu, integrating Timorese motifs. The tailored coat features the *Manu Tasi Laran* (sea bird) motif from Lasiolat (Belu), linked to protection and guidance. The evening gown incorporates the *Mandeu* (horse) motif woven by artisan Mina, associated with prestige and ceremonial value. Both garments reinterpret Timorese motifs for contemporary fashion while keeping their symbolic meaning visible. Source: CCD-NL (2022).



Plate 77: Ikat textile from Belu, woven in 2005 using plant-based dyes. The textile shows layered geometric and floral motifs made under ritual rules, including prayers and the timing of dye harvests. Later collected by designer Vivi, it is now part of her private collection and has been reused in heritage-based fashion work, showing how sacred knowledge can continue in new settings. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 78: Ritual leader in Malaka overseeing a textile-related ceremony in *rumah adat* (traditional ancestral house).

The *rumah adat* serves as both sacred ritual space and communal house. The elder's role as guardian and host shows how ikat traditions remain tied to spiritual authority and social life, even as some ritual practices have declined. Source: Author's own (2022).

STICKS CHAIR

"We agree to use hard wood stick instead of bamboo stick. It's more stable and durable. The straight lines also fit the minimal style of the design.

We prefer rattan rope to bamboo rope for the binding of the sticks. It is a little bit more expensive, but stronger and easy to find. Rattan goes well with hard wood as rattan plants grow together with trees in natural habitats."

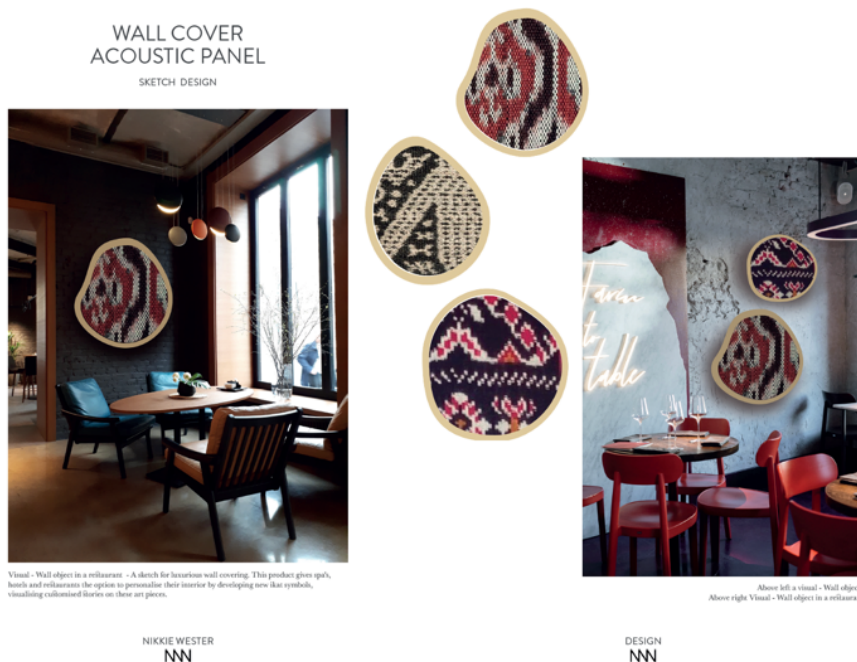


STICKS FRAME HANGING LAMP INDONESIAN PATTERN

by Jacob de Baan

Plate 79: Sticks Chair and Sticks Frame Hanging Lamp, integrating Timorese ikat into furniture design.

This project, led by Jacob de Baan together with CCD-NL, involved artisans from West Timor. It combines hardwood and rattan forms with woven ikat panels. The pieces place traditional textiles inside a modern interior, showing that ikat can be used in new settings while keeping its cultural meaning. Source: CCD-NL (2022).



Design by Nikkie Wester

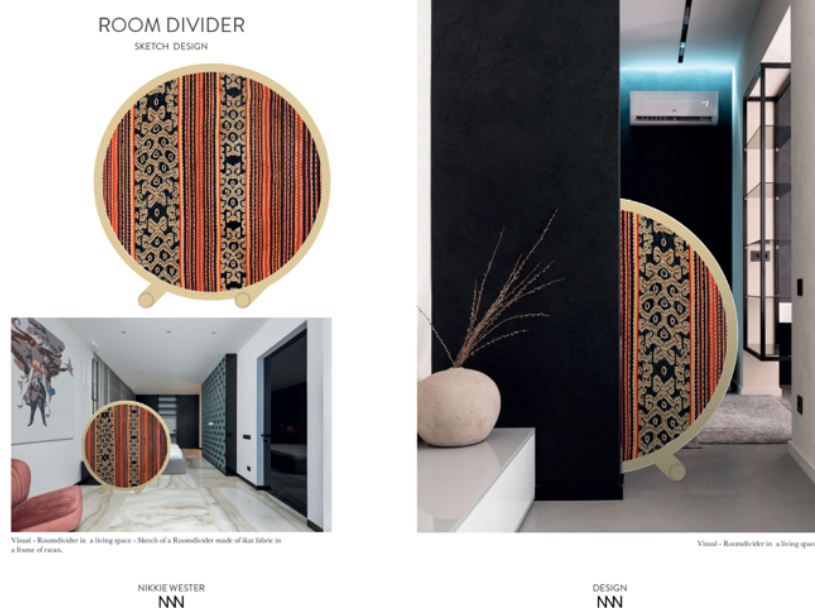


Plate 80: Wall Cover Acoustic Panel integrating Timorese ikat.

Made in collaboration with designer Nikkie Wester, CCD-NL, and artisans from Belu, Malaka, and Kupang. The panel shows how ikat can be reused in modern interior design, working as both an acoustic surface and a cultural element. By placing traditional motifs in a new setting, the piece keeps its identity while serving a new purpose. Source: CCD-NL (2022).

'SUN' PATCHWORK PILLOW

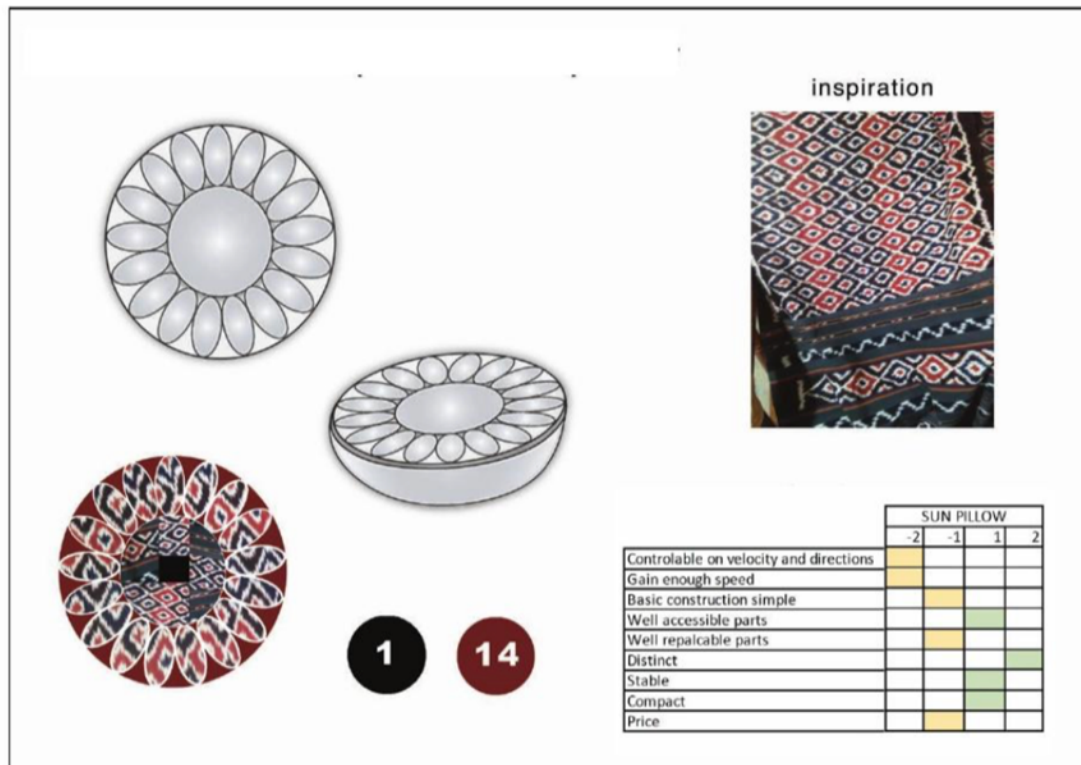


Plate 81: "Sun" Patchwork Pillow made from upcycled ikat fragments.

Created through collaboration between Dutch and Indonesian designers, CCD-NL, and artisans from Belu, Malaka, and Kupang. The project demonstrates how textile fragments once considered waste can be reassembled into new functional objects, extending the cultural biography of ikat. Design by Fristine Ameylia and Jacob de Baan. Source: CCD-NL (2022).



Plate 82: Comparison of naturally dyed and synthetic-dyed (bottom) ikat textiles from Rote. Naturally dyed ikat, made with plant colours, carries older meaning but takes more time and money to produce. Synthetic-dyed pieces are brighter and cheaper, so they are used more for daily selling. Seen side by side, they show how artisans keep some traditions while managing today's practical needs. Source: Author owns (2022).



Plate 83: Marian devotion ceremony in Kupang, 2023.

Reused ikat textiles are placed around a statue of the Virgin Mary. The textiles still work as sacred objects in church settings. The practice keeps older ritual habits alive, but it also fits into current Catholic worship. It shows how ikat continues to move between local heritage and Christian devotion. Source: Author owns (2023).



Plate 84: Women in Malaka preparing natural dyes together, 2022.

The communal preparation of plants such as morinda and indigo reflects not only ecological knowledge but also the cooperative and ritual structures embedded in ikat production. These shared practices highlight how dyeing remains a collective process, linking environmental care with cultural continuity. Source: Author owns (2022).



Plate 85: Weaving group in Kupang setting up a traditional loom, 2023. The collective process highlights the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, the technical precision required in loom preparation, and the social dimension of ikat weaving as a shared community practice. Source: Author owns (2023).

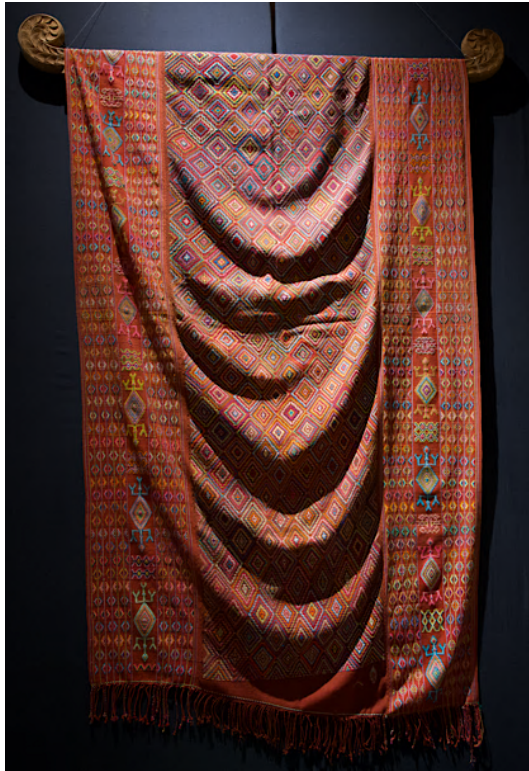


Plate 86: *Tais Mane* from Malaka, Timor (NTT).

Cotton, plain weave with supplementary *buna* weft wrapping. The red *selimut* is richly decorated with rhomboid patterns and flanking crocodile motifs, symbols of power and protection. Traditionally worn by aristocratic men, the textile reflects both social prestige and cultural continuity. Source: Rumah Wastra Jo Seda.

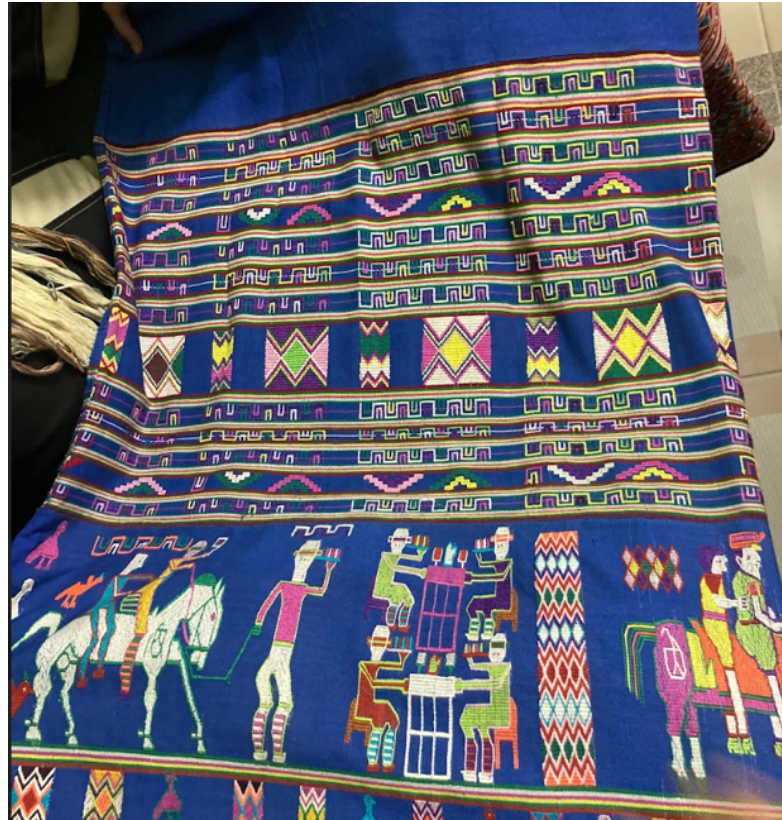


Plate 87: Ikat textile with synthetic dyes, Malaka, mid-20th century.

The textile combines animal motifs and geometric bands within a simplified, symmetrical layout designed for rapid production. Its bright palette reflects colonial-era and global preferences for order and clarity, yet the motifs retain local symbolic meaning linked to ancestry, protection, and identity. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 88: Contemporary ikat textiles displayed in Rote.
The display shows natural-dyed ikat textiles in soft reds and blues next to brighter synthetic-dyed pieces. Natural dyes are mostly kept for ritual cloths. Synthetic colours follow everyday market needs. Seen together, the textiles show how some older practices remain while production also shifts. Source: Author owns (2022).



Plate 89: Selviana holding her family's wedding comb.
It is an heirloom used in traditional marriage ceremonies, shown here together with an ikat textile inspired by its form. The comb carries ideas of lineage and ancestral duty, which Selviana reworks into vertical line motifs in her weaving. This example shows how older objects continue to influence motif design and the meanings attached to cloth today. Source: CCD-NL (2022).

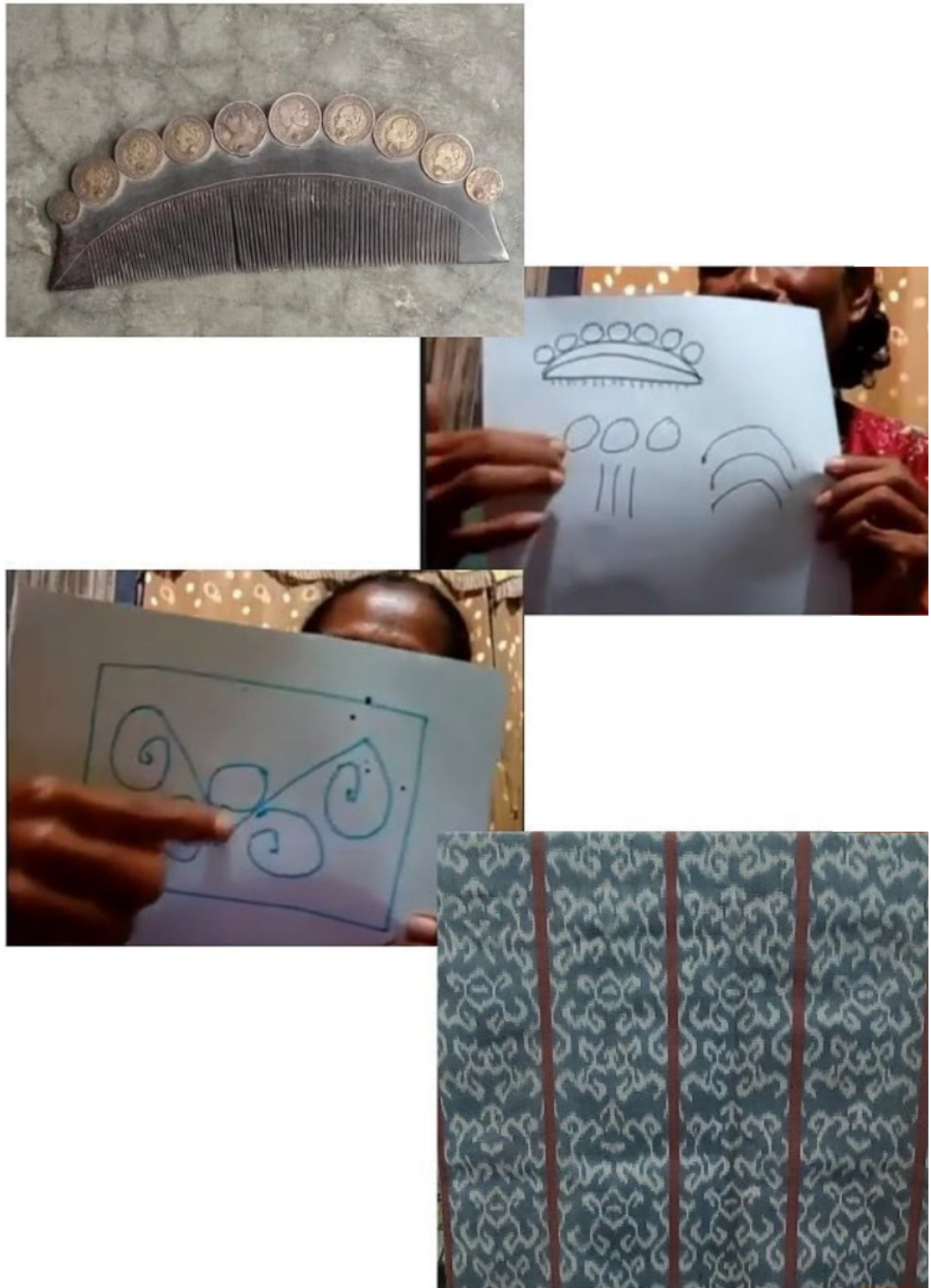


Plate 90: Visual sequence of motif development based on Selviana's wedding comb. The top left shows an heirloom comb used in family marriage ceremonies. The top right and bottom left are Selviana's sketches from a motif workshop, where the teeth of the comb were reworked into vertical and curved lines. The bottom right shows the finished ikat textile she wove, bringing the comb motif into the textile. Source: CCD-NL (2022).



Plate 91: Marsha holding her mother's Bible, accompanied by her sister Asmawet. The Bible, passed down through three generations, inspired Marsha's weaving motif that echoes the rhythm of printed text through fine lines and cross-like shapes. On the right, a close-up of the Bible's worn pages shows the material source of inspiration. Source: CCD-NL (2022).

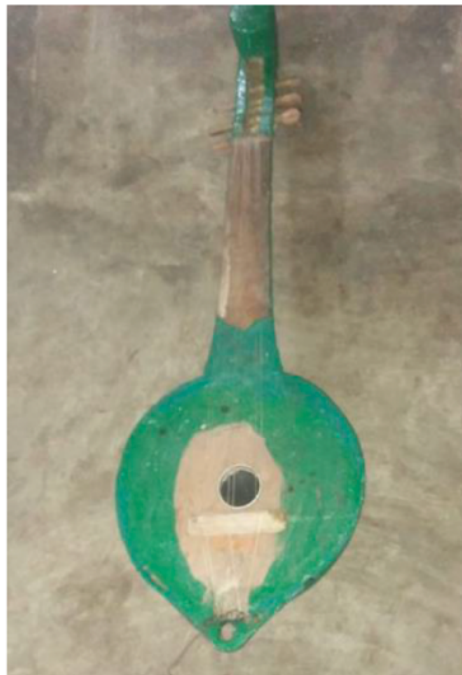


Plate 92: Sariat holding her late father's *gambus*.

It is a traditional string instrument that inspired her woven motif, shown alongside detailed images of the instrument. The taut strings of the *gambus* visually parallel the linear structure of ikat, illustrating how auditory memory and rhythm are translated into textile form. Source: CCD-NL (2022).



Plate 93: Weaving group in Malaka, 2022.

Women from various age groups participate in a small workshop on motifs and practical skills. A row of ikat cloths hangs behind them. Some pieces use natural dyes, others synthetic colours, showing how older methods continue while production also adjusts to present needs. Source: Author's own (2022).



Plate 94: Fashion show at the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague 2019. Part of the Binding with Ikat project, the event featured contemporary designs combining ikat motifs from Belu with other Indonesian textiles, showcasing collaborations between West Timorese artisans, Indonesian designers, and Dutch creators. Source: CCD-NL (2019). Photos by www.jorismaasvisuals.com.



Plate 95: Interior setting in Mallorca decorated with *teles de llengües*.

It shows how the textile was used in aristocratic homes and later placed in European heritage displays. Today, it is presented as a regional symbol and as decoration. Its older links to long-distance trade are often left out, which makes the broader cross-cultural history behind it hard to see. Source: *Catàleg Flàmulès* (2012).



Plate 96 : Ritual ikat (*Mau Ana*) from Amanuban, South Central Timor. Cotton, warp ikat. Motifs include large and small crocodiles, birds, and geometric forms, created using a highly detailed warp ikat technique. Such designs reflect ancestral protection, cosmological balance, and ceremonial authority. Source: Rumah Wastra Jo Seda.



Plate 97: Commercial ikat textiles from Malaka (left) and Belu (right).

Both employ simplified motifs, synthetic dyes, and symmetrical banding structures designed for surface appeal and market use. While preserving basic weaving techniques, their emphasis on clarity, colour brightness, and repetitive composition reflects adaptation to external demand rather than ritual use. Source: Author's own (2022).

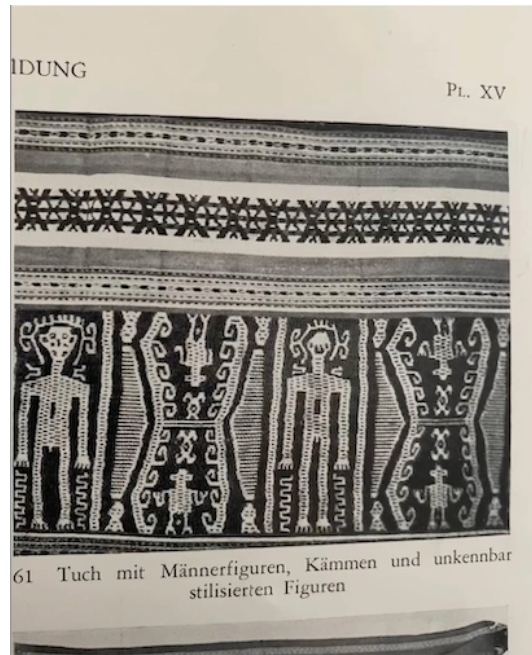


Plate 98: Archival ikat textile from West Timor.

The textile features anthropomorphic figures combined with geometric and protective motifs, arranged in registers that reflect ritual and cosmological order. The design illustrates the continuity of ancestral symbolism in early Timorese weaving traditions. Source: B.A.G. Vroklage (early 20th century).



Plate 99: Contemporary reinterpretation of anthropomorphic motif, Belu (2022).

Contemporary reinterpretation of the anthropomorphic motif by Vivi, an artisan-designer from Belu (2022). In this piece, the older human-shaped figures are rearranged into a more even layout, with synthetic dyes and firmer borders. It is a small example of how she works with what she learned from her elders while trying out ideas that feel right for her own work. Source: Authors's own (2022).



Plate 100: Selvi, an artisan from Belu, working on an ikat textile (2019).

The textile combines traditional weaving techniques with features tailored for the market, illustrating how artisans balance ancestral knowledge with contemporary production. Its design pairs geometric borders in synthetic threads with inherited pattern structures, indicating a subtle yet steady blend of continuity and change. Source: CCD-NL (2019).



Plate 101: Artisan in Kupang (2023) weaving with synthetic dyes and modern tools. While the textile employs older warp-ikat methods and familiar motifs, its bright colours and simpler layout demonstrate how it has been adapted for commercial purposes. It shows artisans trying to keep some of the older knowledge while also meeting what people want today, working within the materials available now. Source: Author's own (2023).

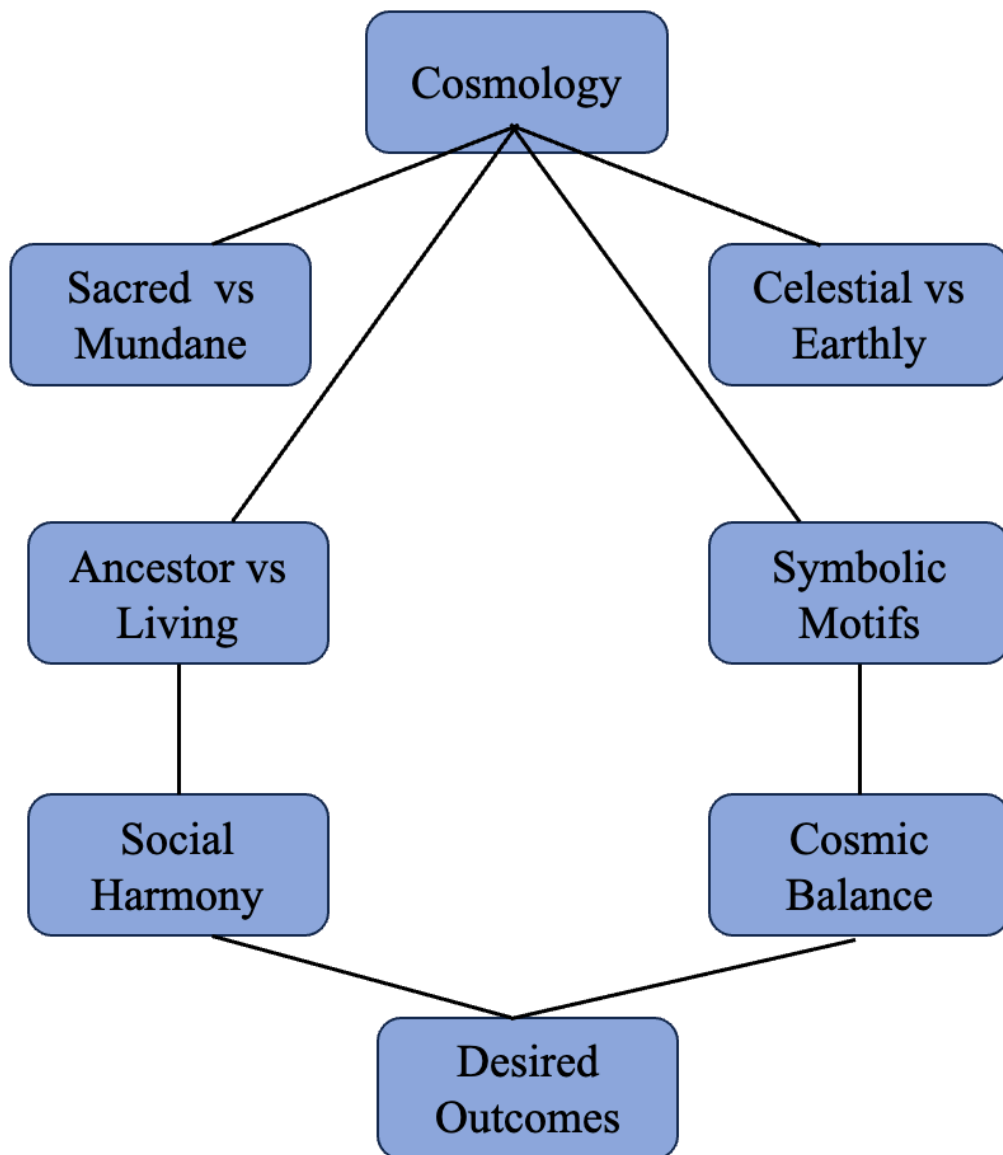


Figure 1: The Web of Significance in Timorese Ikat Cosmology.

The figure illustrates the symbolic relationships in Timorese ikat. It visualises how oppositions: such as Sacred vs. Mundane, Celestial vs. Earthly, and Ancestors vs. Living, are embedded within a broader cosmological framework. These relationships generate layered meanings, guiding motif design and linking spiritual, social, and moral dimensions. Source: Compiled by the author.

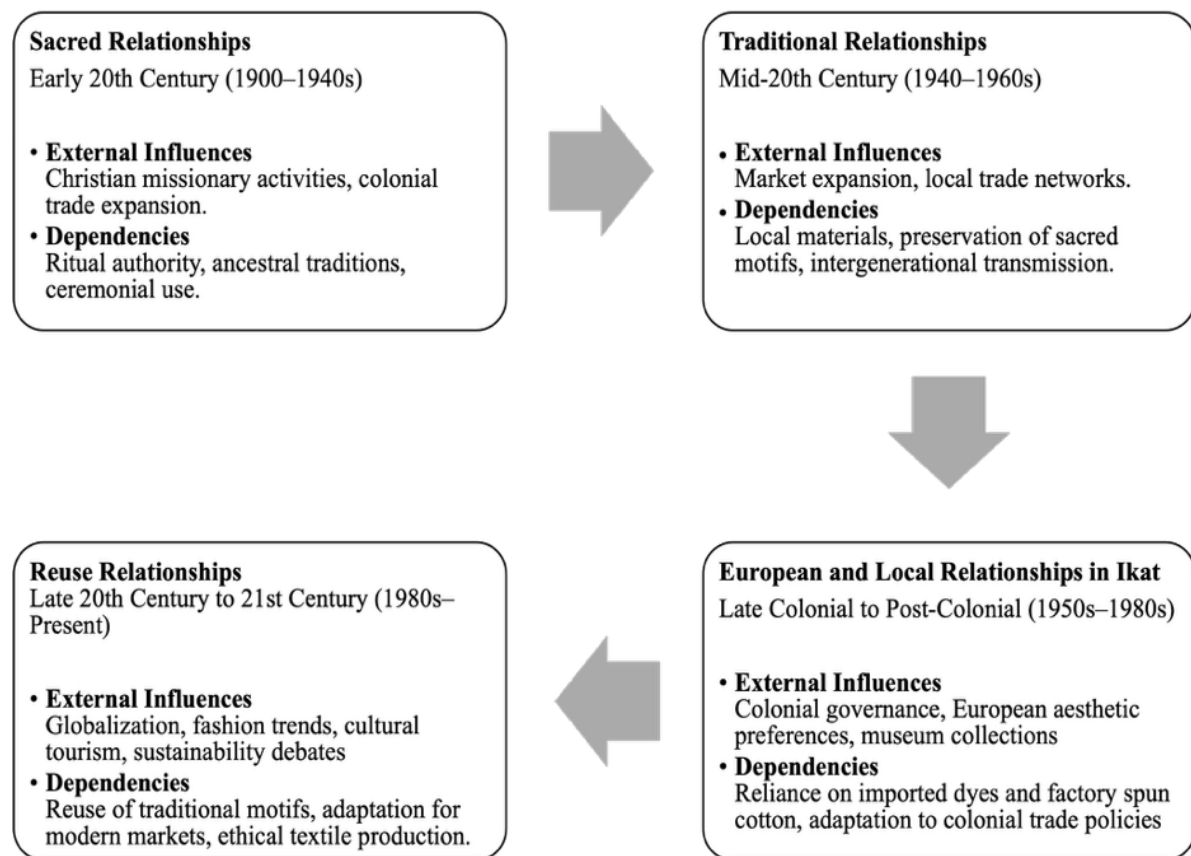


Figure 2: Diagram illustrating four interrelated forms of dependency in ikat production in Belu, Malaka, and Kupang.

These include sacred, traditional, colonial/European–local, and reuse, each reflecting different external influences and forms of reliance. The diagram shows how artisans negotiated shifting systems of power and meaning from the early 20th century to the present. Source: Compiled by the author.

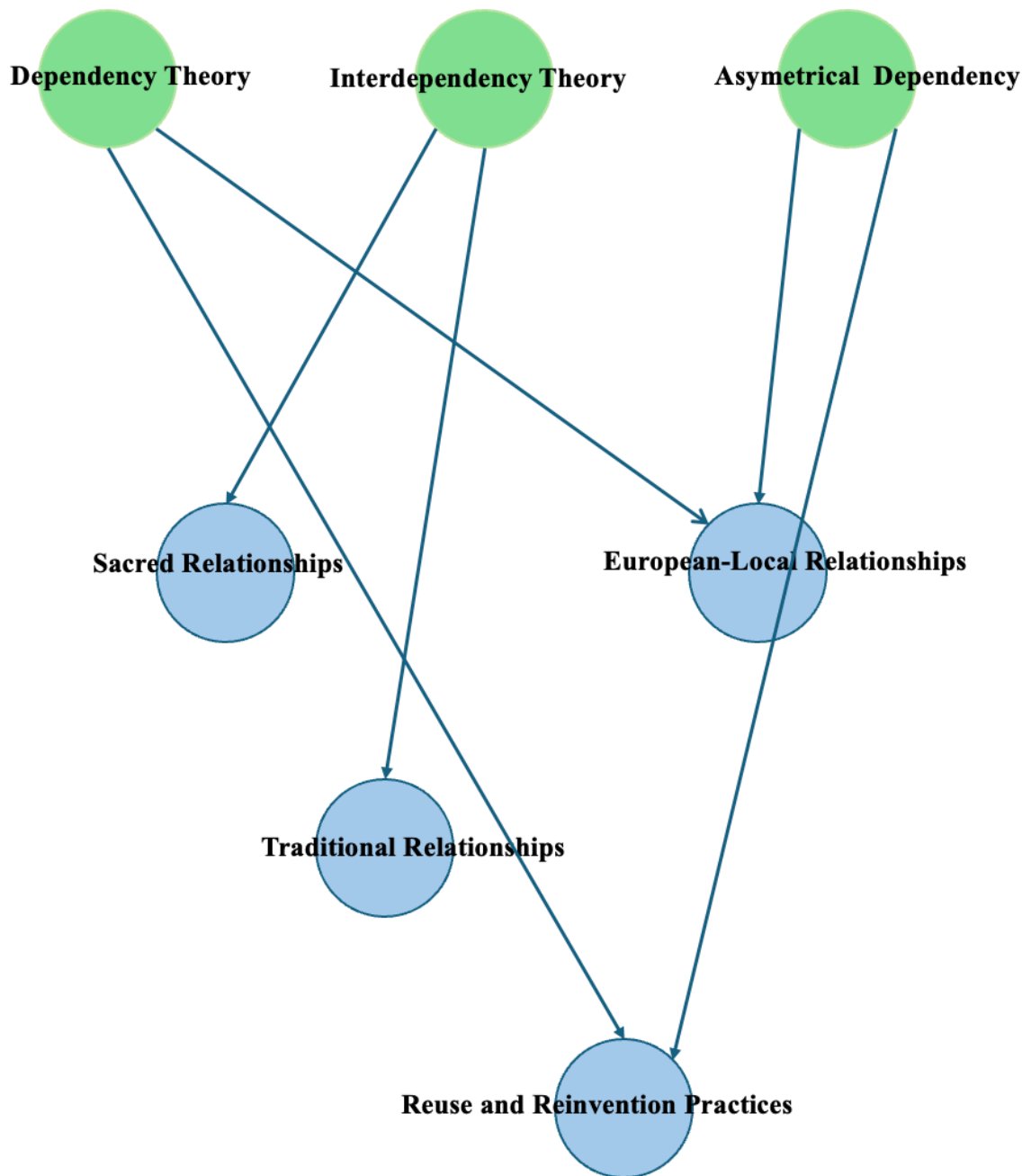


Figure 3: Theoretical diagram linking four types of ikat relationships. They are sacred, traditional, European–local, and reuse, to the key frameworks used in this study: Dependency Theory, Interdependency Theory, and Asymmetrical Dependency. The arrows indicate how each relationship is shaped by specific theoretical lenses, illustrating the analytical connections between empirical material and theoretical interpretation. Source: Compiled by the author.

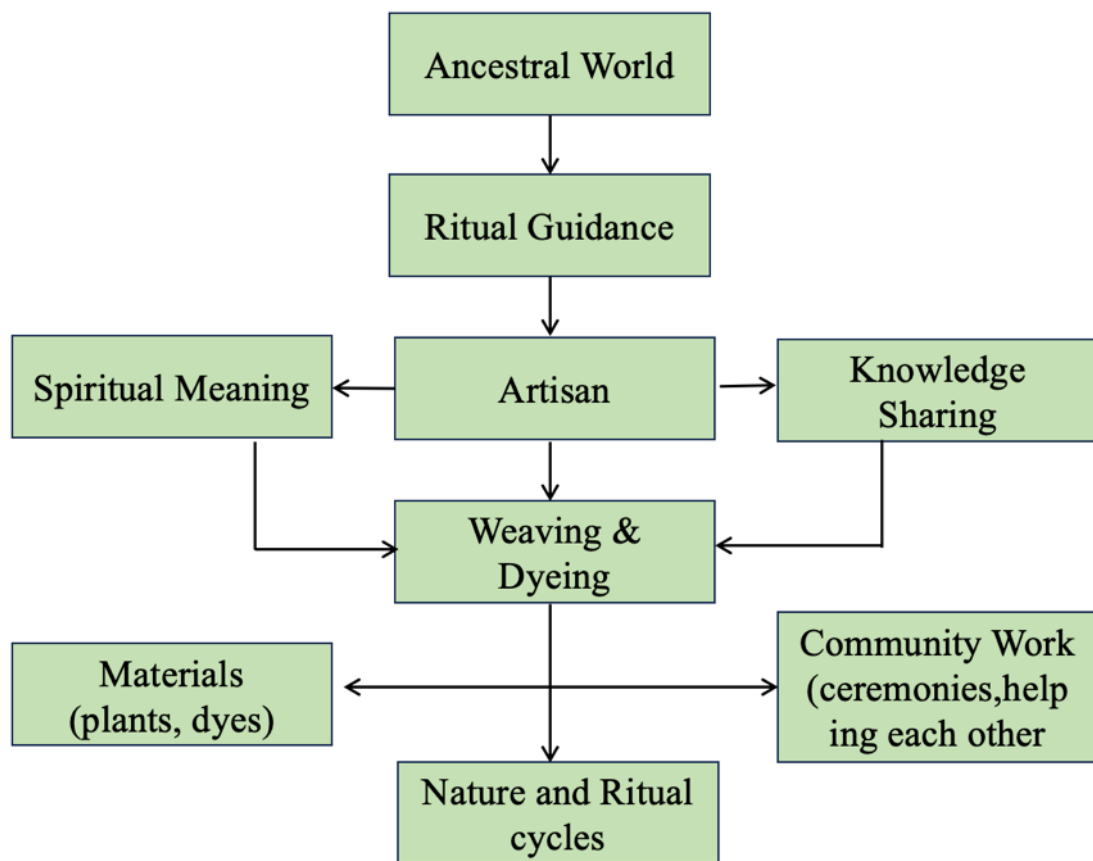


Figure 4: Diagram of Sacred Dependencies in Ikat Weaving, West Timor.

The diagram illustrates the interconnected roles of ritual authority, artisans, materials, and communal labor in the production of sacred ikat. Each element operates within a wider system of ancestral belief and responsibility, showing how weaving is embedded in both social and cosmological structures. Source: Compiled by the author.

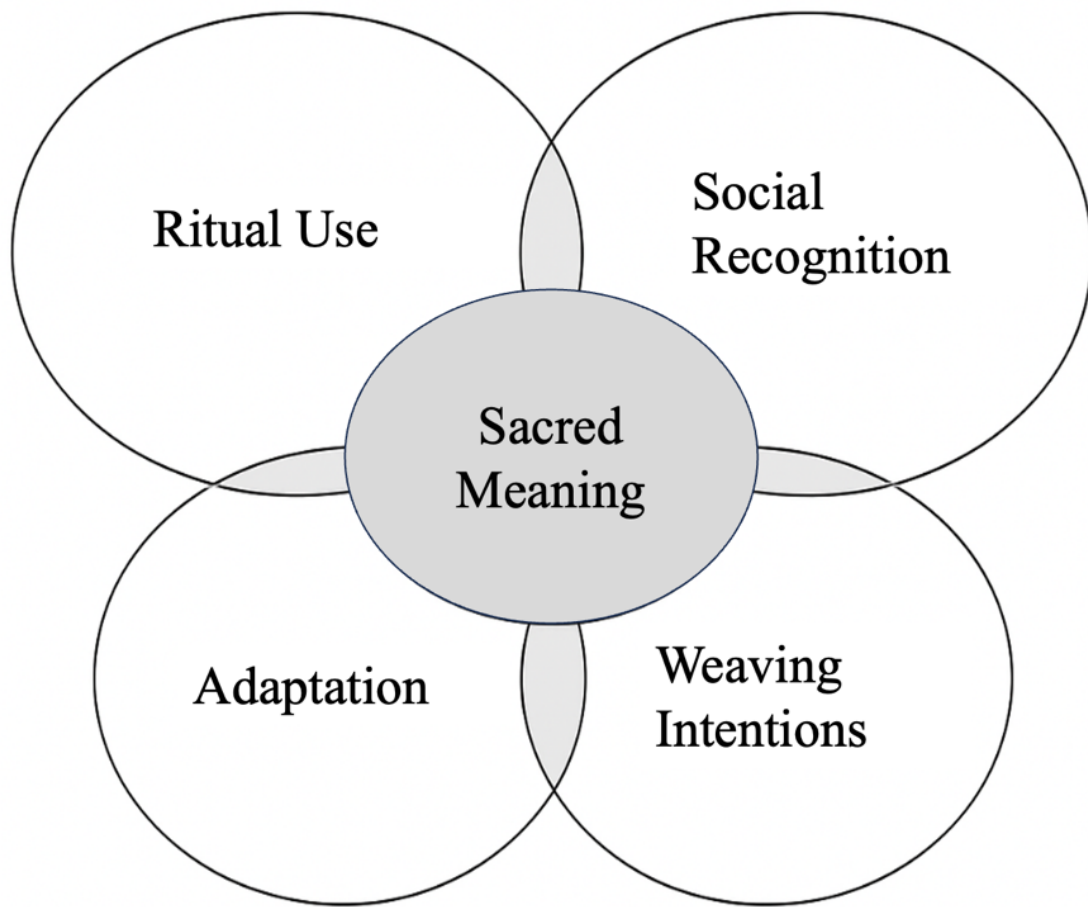


Figure 5: Diagram of Sacred Meaning in Ikat Weaving.

The diagram illustrates that sacred value is formed through several overlapping factors, ritual use, social recognition, adaptation, and the intentions behind the work. No single element carries the meaning on its own. It develops gradually through practice, as people understand the textile and the care that guides how it is made and used.. Source: Compiled by the author.

TIMELINE OF MATERIAL ADAPTATION IN IKAT WEAVING (1940S–1970S)

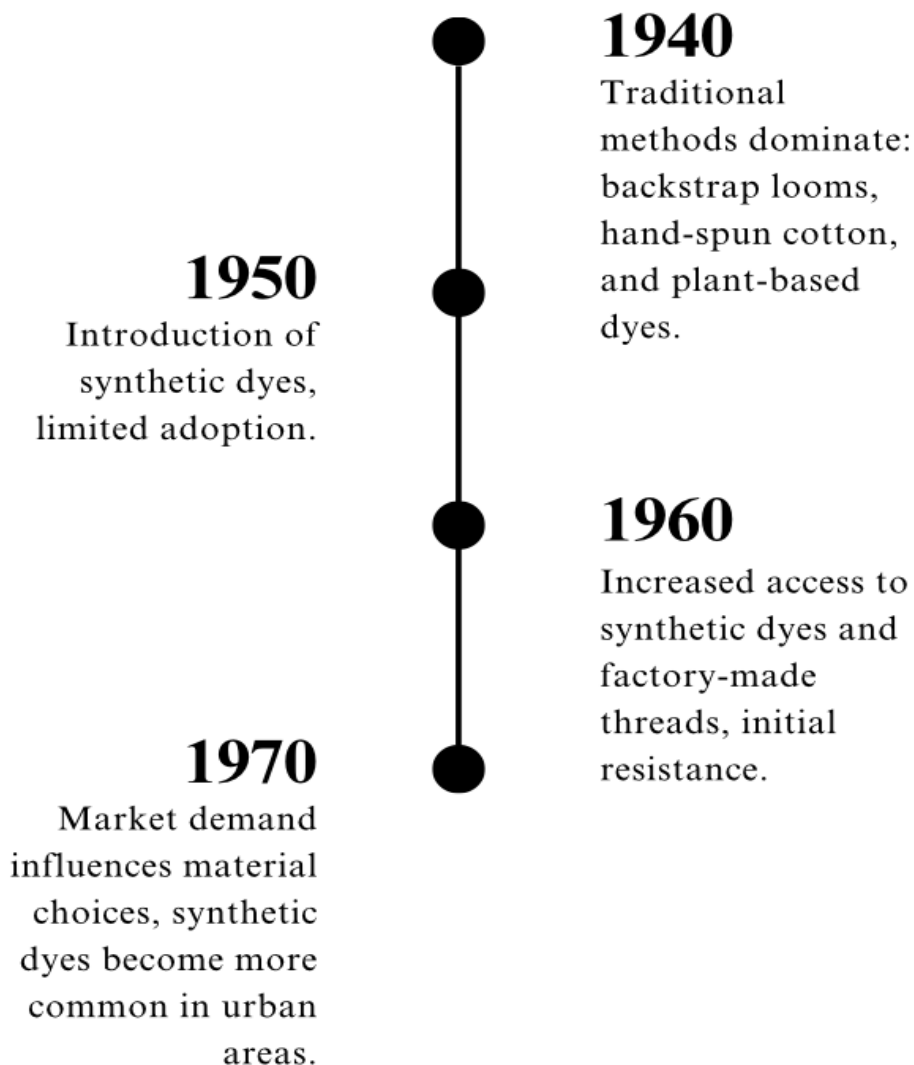


Figure 6: Timeline of Material Adaptation in Ikat Weaving (1940s–1970s).

The diagram illustrates the shift from hand-spun cotton and plant-based dyes with muted ritual tones in the 1940s to the gradual adoption of synthetic dyes and factory-spun threads in the 1960s and 1970s. By this period, a dual system had emerged: natural dyes continued to be reserved for sacred use, while brighter synthetics were increasingly employed for market-oriented textiles. Source: Compiled by the author.

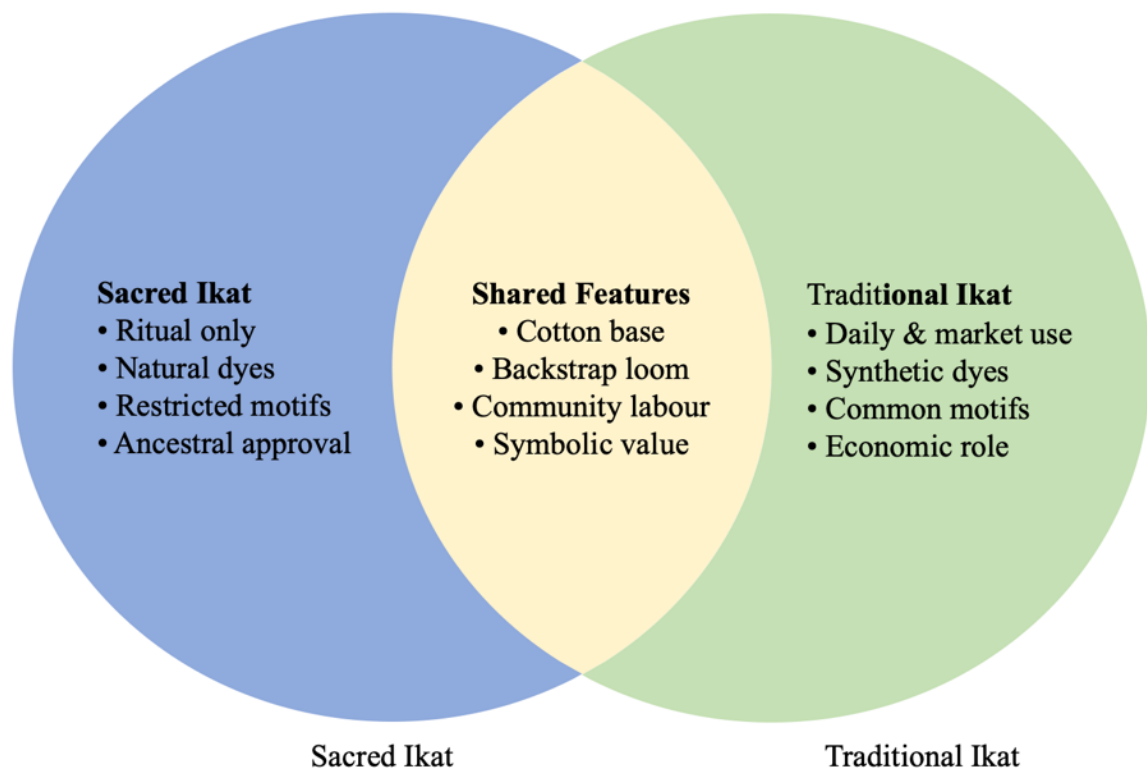


Figure 7: Venn diagram of sacred and traditional ikat in West Timor, mid-20th century. It shows their shared features, such as backstrap looms and intergenerational learning, alongside differences in ritual authority, materials, and economic roles. Source: Compiled by author.

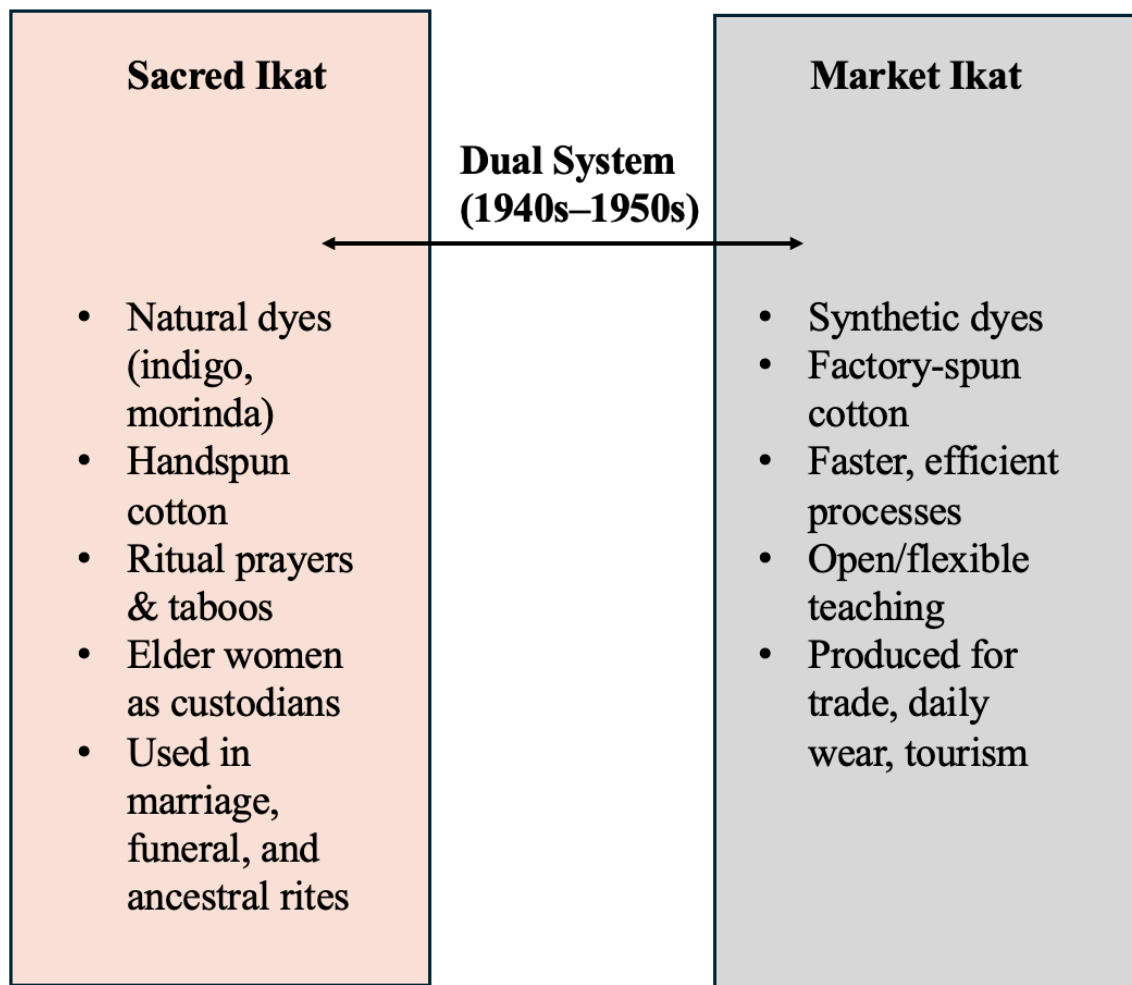


Figure 8: Dual Production Systems in West Timor (1940s–1960s).

Schematic comparing sacred ikat: natural dyes, handspun cotton, ritual prayers, restricted knowledge, with market ikat: synthetic dyes, factory threads, faster methods, open transmission. It shows how weaving communities balanced ritual continuity with economic adaptation. Source: Compiled by author.

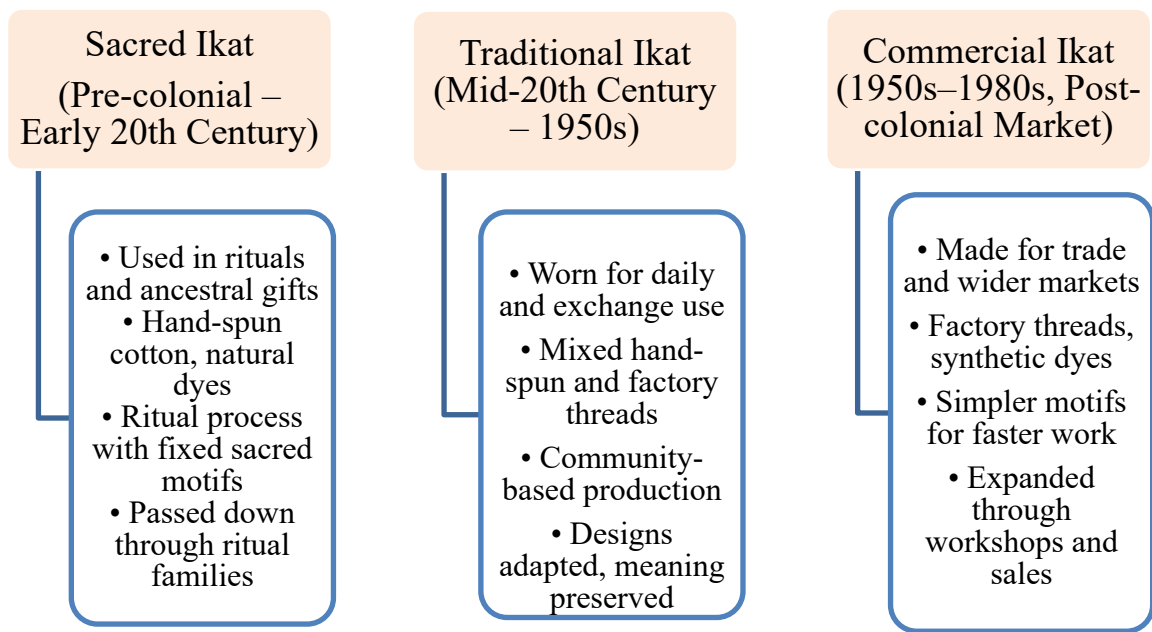


Figure 9: Changing forms of ikat production, from sacred to traditional and commercial types. Sacred ikat used hand-spun cotton and natural dyes for ritual use; traditional ikat mixed inherited methods with factory threads for daily exchange; commercial ikat after the 1950s focused on efficiency and simplified motifs for markets. Source: Compiled by the author.

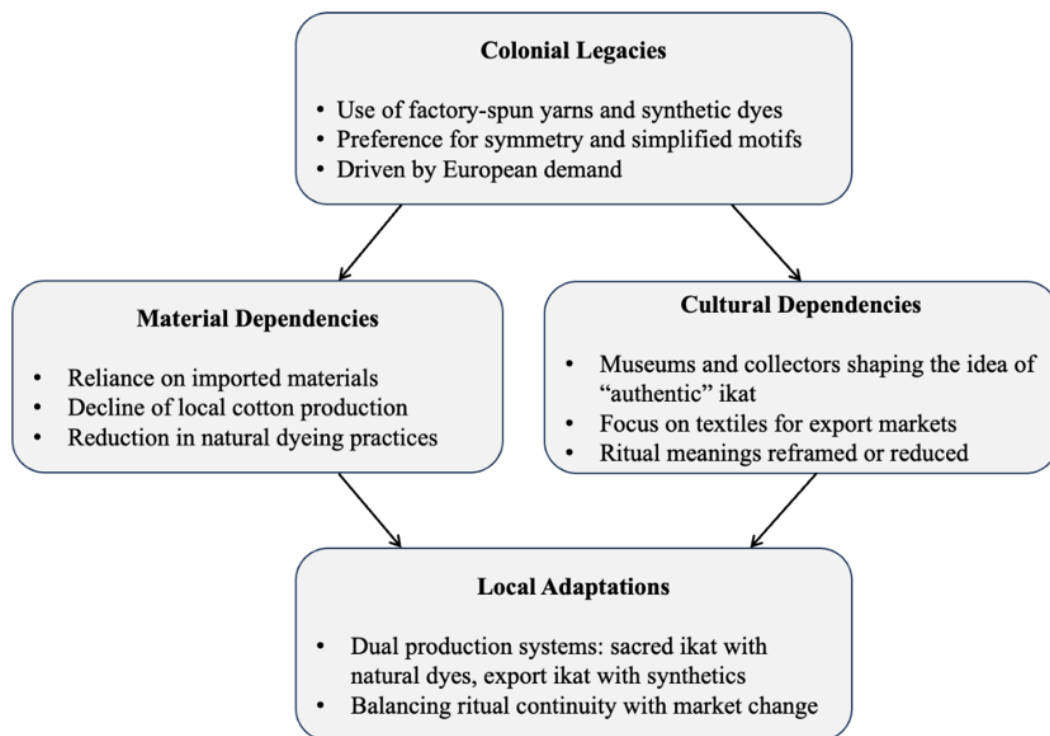


Figure 10: Colonial legacies and local adaptations in Timorese ikat (1950s–1980s). The flowchart illustrates how factory-spun yarns, synthetic dyes, and European aesthetic preferences created both material and cultural dependencies that tied Timorese weaving to global markets and museum systems. Despite these pressures, women artisans safeguarded ritual textiles using natural dyes and ancestral motifs, while also adapting textiles for commercial purposes. Source: Compiled by the author.

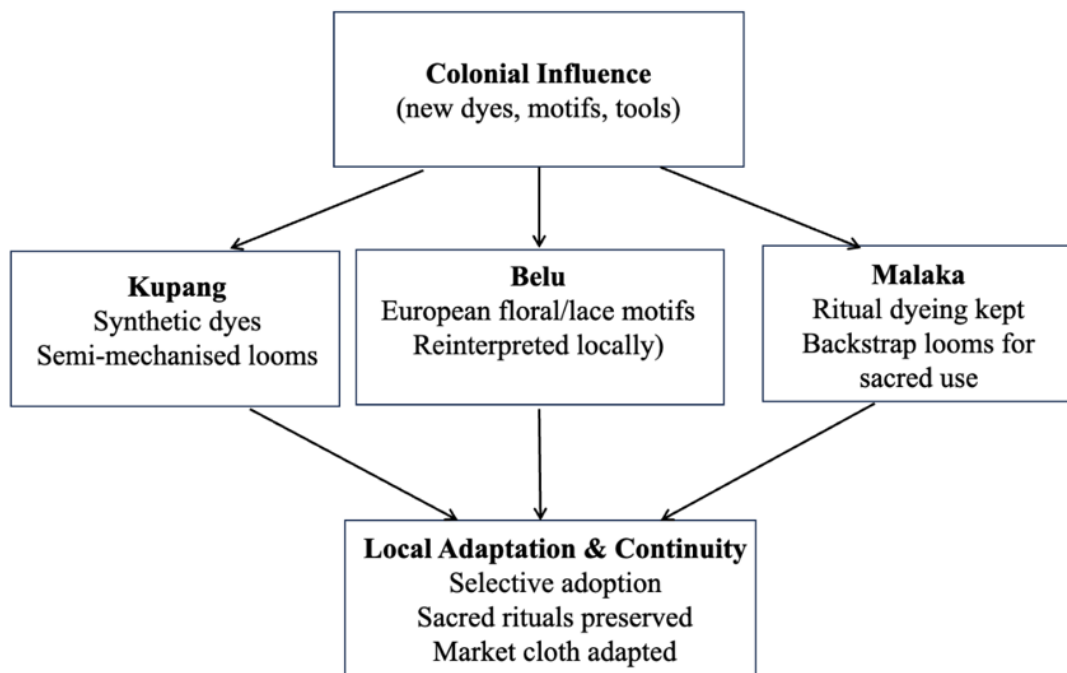


Figure 11: Colonial influence across regions (Kupang, Belu, Malaka).

The diagram shows how colonial legacies were absorbed differently: Kupang adopted synthetic dyes and semi-mechanised looms; Belu integrated European floral and lace motifs through trade and missions, reinterpreting them locally; Malaka retained ritual dyeing and backstrap looms for sacred textile while using new tools for commercial textiles. Despite pressures, women artisans preserved sacred practices and ancestral symbolism. Source: Compiled by the author.

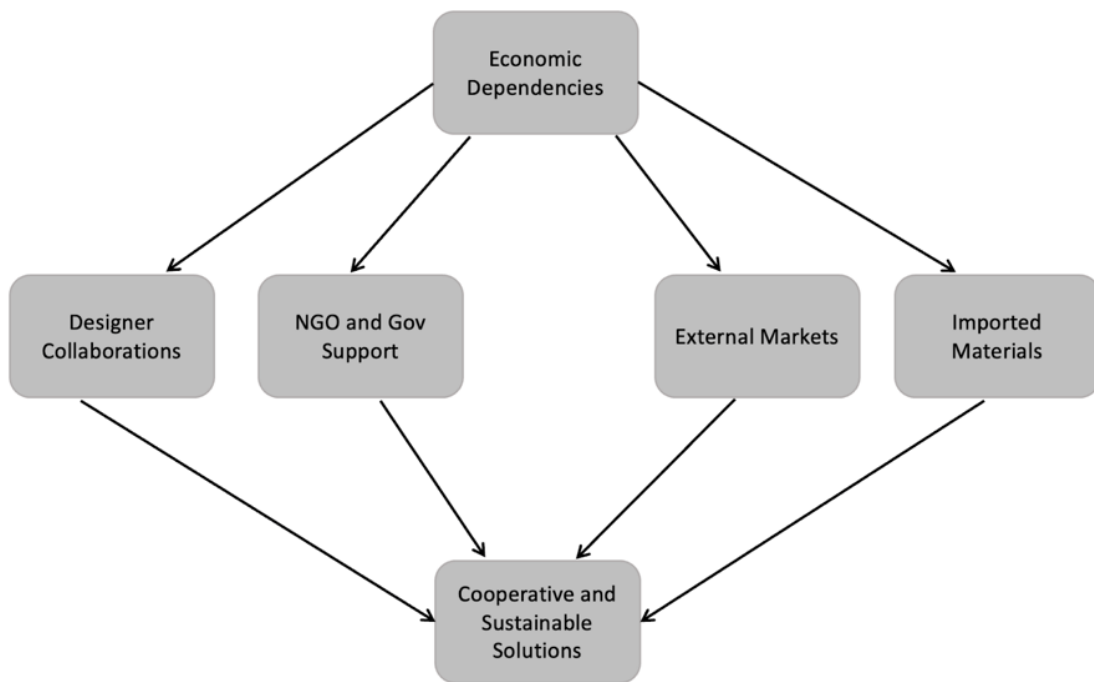


Figure 12: Economic Dependencies in Ikat Weaving.

Diagram showing the main external influences on ikat production in West Timor, including international markets, imported threads and dyes, support from NGOs and local governments, and collaboration with designers. It suggests how artisans try to hold onto familiar practices while also responding to market requests and the needs of their weaving groups. The figure points to both the pressures they face and the choices they can still make. Source: Compiled by the author.

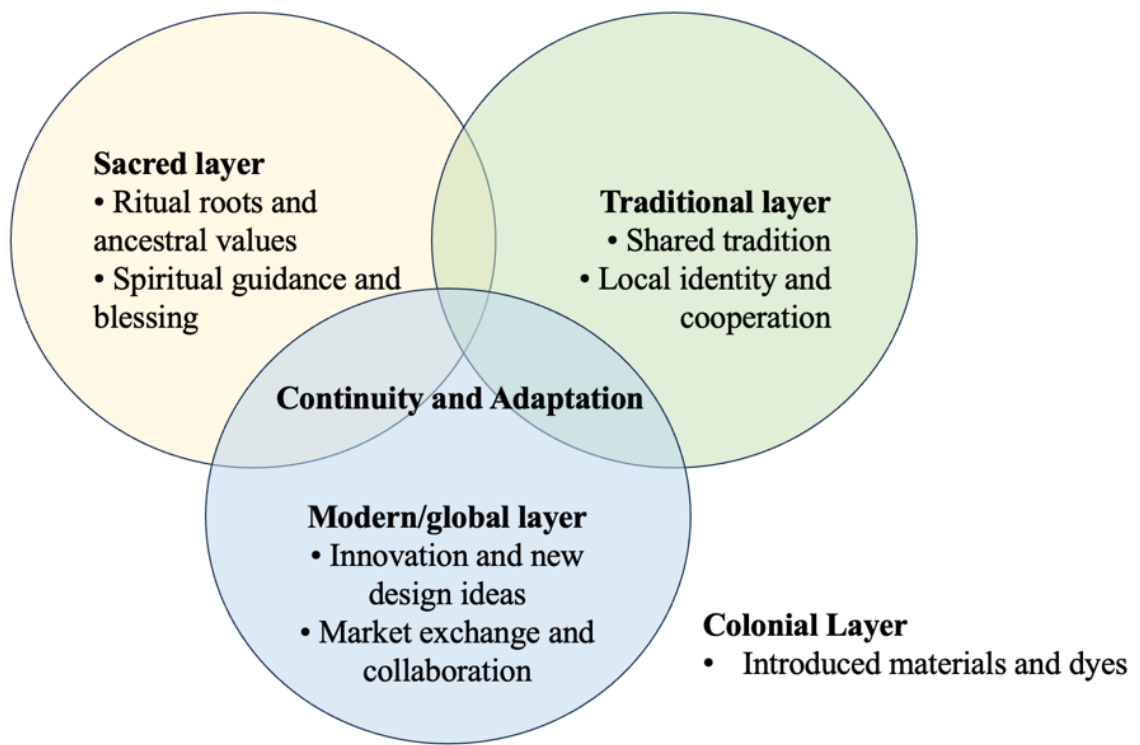


Figure 13: Overlapping layers in Timorese ikat reuse, visualised as a Venn diagram. The three main spheres, sacred, traditional, and modern/global, meet at the centre, where continuity and adaptation occur. The colonial layer sits outside the main overlap, marking external influences such as introduced materials, synthetic dyes, and missionary motifs. The diagram illustrates how contemporary ikat weaving combines multiple histories and practices that coexist, intersect, and continue to evolve. Source: Compiled by the author.

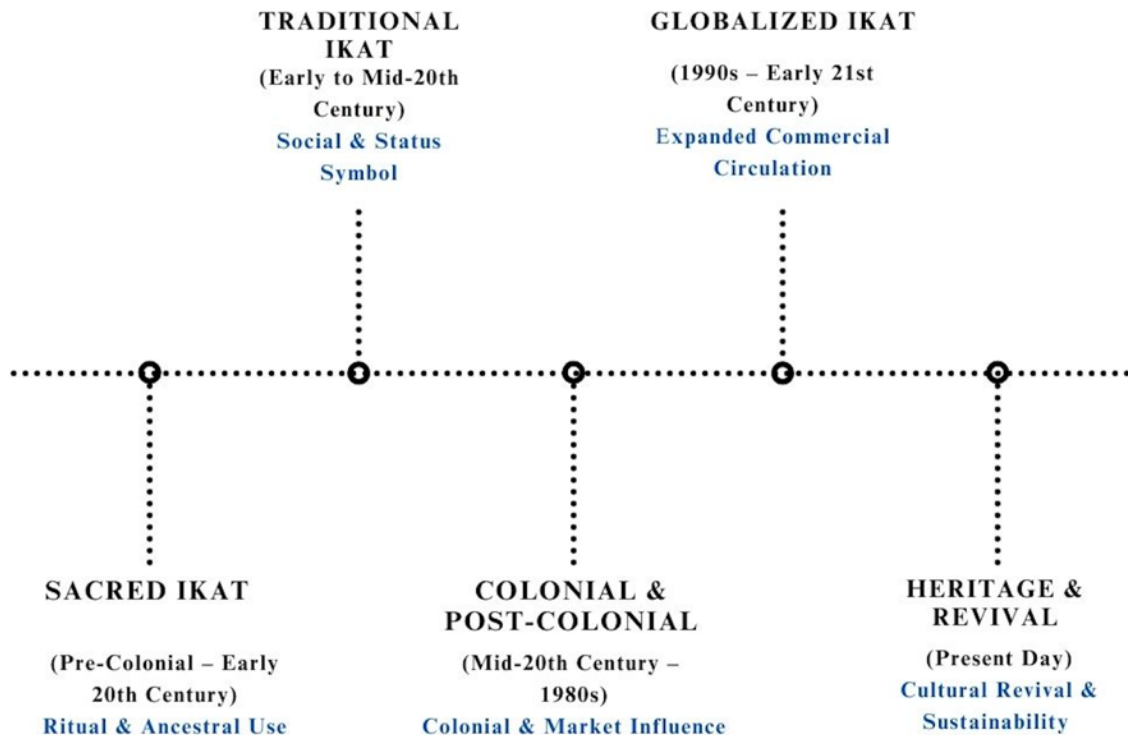


Figure 14: Five-Stage Model of Ikat Transformation in Belu, Malaka, and Kupang (Pre-Colonial to Present).

The model illustrates the historical phases of ikat: Sacred Ikat, Traditional Ikat, Colonial & Post-Colonial Adaptations, Globalised Ikat, and Heritage & Revival, highlighting shifts in material practices, symbolic values, and social roles. Source: Compiled by the author.

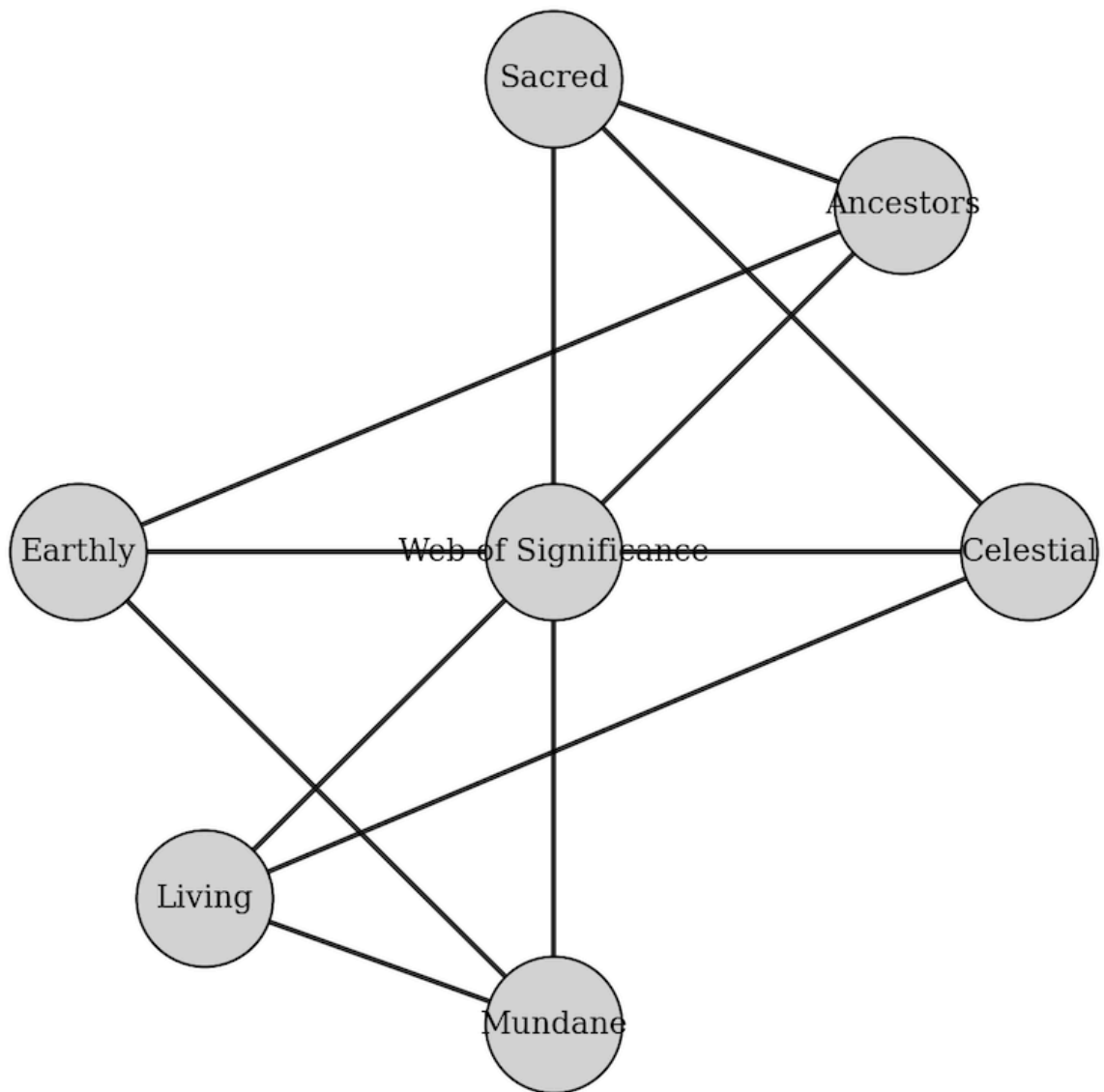


Figure 15 : Web of Significance in Timorese ikat.

The diagram illustrates how motif meanings emerge from their position within a broader symbolic framework. At the centre are key contrasts, sacred and mundane, celestial and earthly, ancestors and the living, which shape how motifs relate to one another. Instead of carrying fixed meanings on their own, motifs gain significance through these relationships and the broader mix of cosmological, social, and material links in which they appear. Source: Compiled by the author.

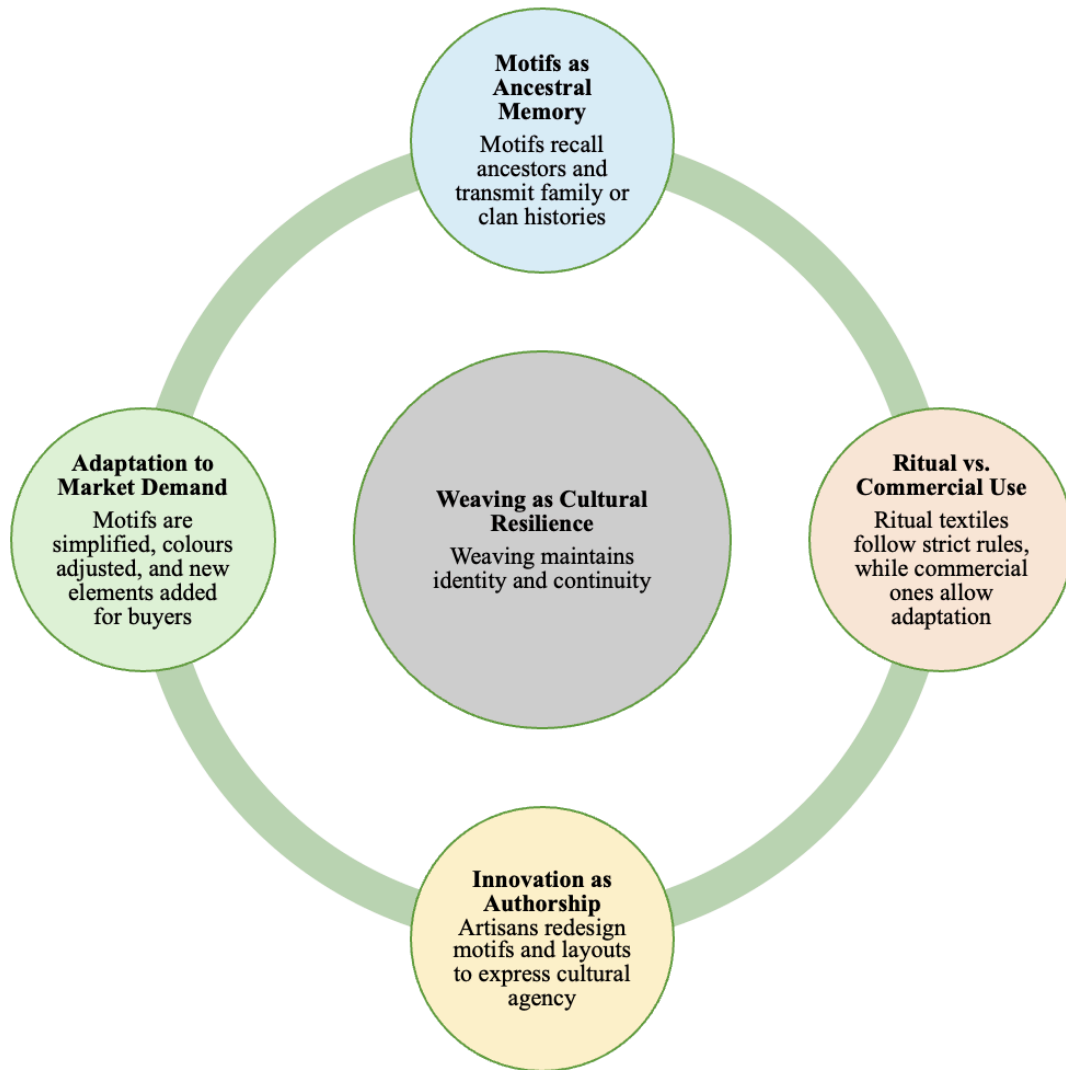


Figure 16: Thematic patterns drawn from interviews with artisans in Belu, Malaka, and Kupang (2022–2023).

The table brings together recurring points: how motifs carry ancestral memory, how ritual textiles differ from those made for sale, and how colours and patterns are adapted for buyers. It also highlights the role of innovation in everyday weaving and the way weaving supports cultural resilience. Taken together, these themes show how artisans work with inherited values while responding to present needs, keeping older ideas alive without being bound to them. Source: Compiled by the author.

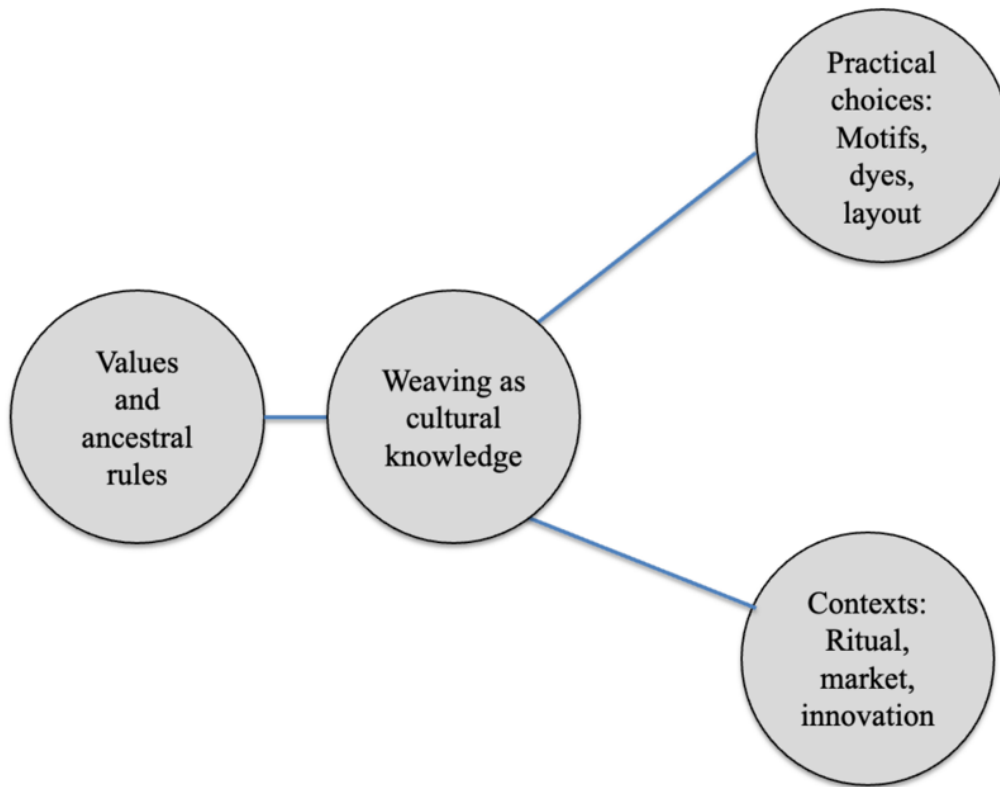


Figure 17: Web of decision-making in ikat weaving.

This This diagram illustrates how artisans balance inherited knowledge with current needs when selecting motifs, colours, and layouts. These choices are shaped by ritual expectations, family roles, market demands, and the space they have for new ideas. Weaving becomes cultural knowledge learned through practice, a process that involves ongoing adjustment rather than repeating older forms exactly. Source: Compiled by the author.

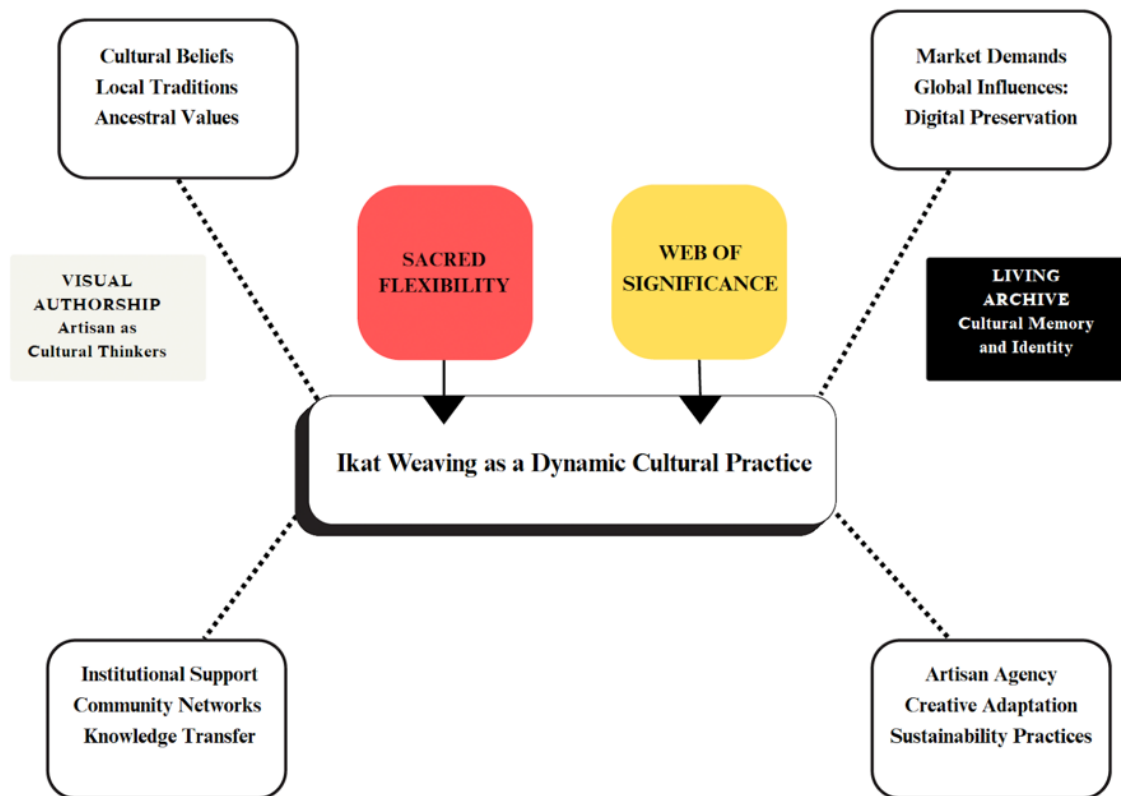


Figure 18 : Conceptual model of ikat as a dynamic cultural practice.

The diagram integrates the concepts of Sacred Flexibility and the Web of Significance, showing how ikat weaving is shaped by the interplay of cultural beliefs, artisan agency, markets, and institutions. It visualises ikat not as a fixed heritage form but as an evolving practice of negotiation, resilience, and creative authorship situated between ritual meaning and global exchange. Source: Compiled by the author.

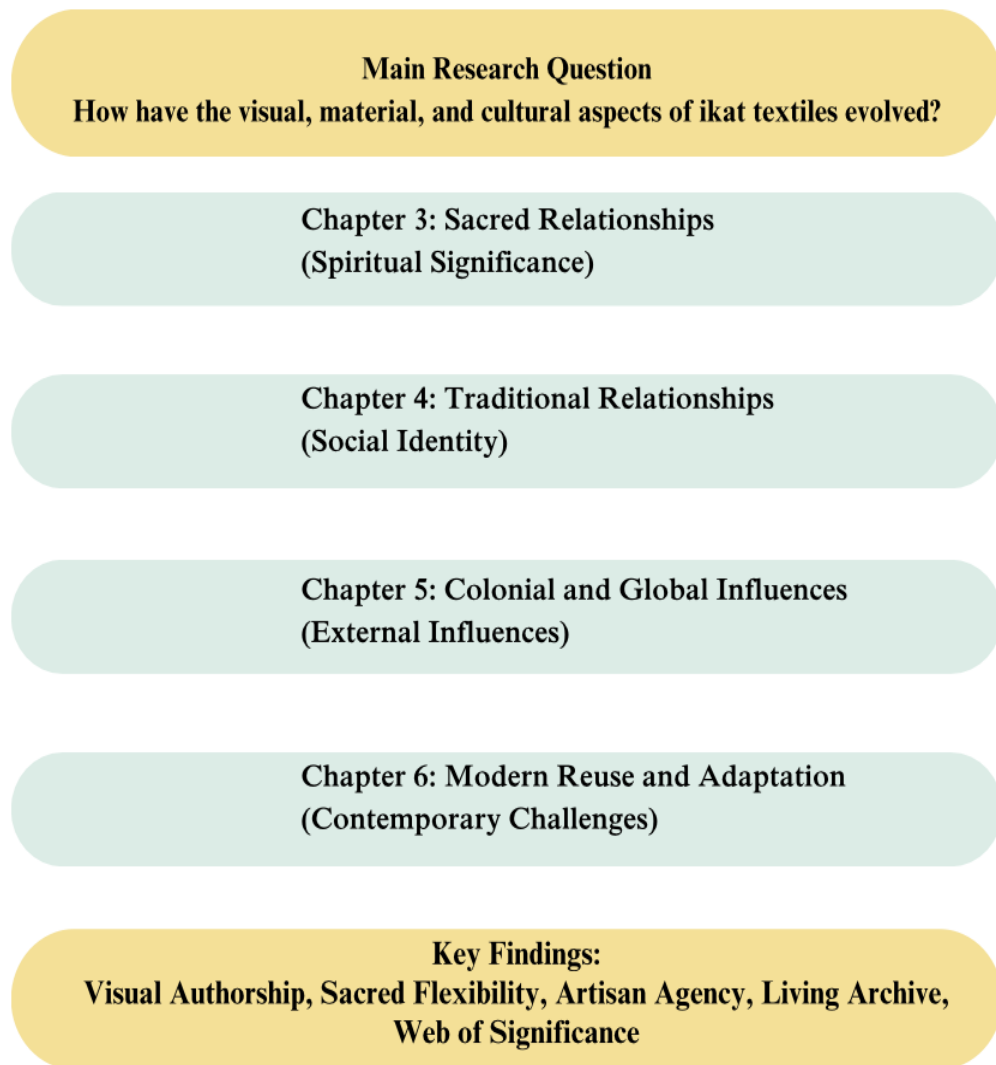


Figure 19: Analytical Framework of Ikat Continuity and Transformation

The diagram links the main research question with the four thematic chapters : Sacred Relationships, Traditional Relationships, Colonial and Global Influences, and Modern Reuse. It shows how these parts build on each other, moving from ritual foundations to contemporary adaptation, and leading to the key ideas of the study: visual authorship, sacred flexibility, artisan agency, living tradition, and the web of significance. Source: Compiled by the author.

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Appendix VII: Tables

Region	Technique	Materials	Cultural Significance
Belu	Warp Ikat (dyeing of warp threads before weaving)	Cotton, Natural Dyes	Represents clan identity, used in key rituals marking life-cycle events.
Malaka	<i>Sotis</i> (warp-faced reversible weave)	Cotton, Natural Dyes	Symbolises clan identity, geometric precision reflects social order.
Kupang	Warp Ikat	Cotton, Natural and Synthetic Dyes	Every day and ceremonial use reflects continuity and adaptation.
Amanatun	<i>Buna</i> (supplementary weft resembling embroidery)	Cotton, Natural Dyes	Expresses ancestral myths, notably crocodile motifs as protectors.
Oekabiti	<i>Sotis</i>	Cotton, Natural Dyes	Clan identity, <i>no'e riu</i> motif references ancestral geography.

Table 1: Techniques and Materials in Ikat Textile Production by Region.

This table summarises the diversity of weaving techniques and their associated materials across Belu, Malaka, Kupang, Amanatun, and Oekabiti, highlighting how each method reflects cultural symbolism and social identity. Source: Compiled by the author.

Technique	Description	Materials Used	Cultural Significance
Warp Ikat	Dyeing of warp threads before weaving to create patterns.	Natural and synthetic dyes; yarns	Represents cultural identity and heritage.
Weft Ikat	Dyeing of weft threads before weaving; less common in NTT.	Natural and synthetic dyes; yarns	Reflects diversity in ikat practices across regions.
Double Ikat	Simultaneous dyeing of both warp and weft threads; complex.	Natural and synthetic dyes; yarns	Showcases intricate craftsmanship and cultural stories.
<i>Sotis</i>	Warp-faced floating weave; reversible fabric quality.	Natural fibres, often cotton	Adds versatility to textile use and design.
<i>Buna</i>	Discontinuous supplementary weft resembling embroidery.	Various fibres	Enhances textiles with decorative motifs and meanings.

Table 2: Natural dye materials and regional usage in ikat textiles.

This table provides an overview of the primary dye sources and their applications across various regions, highlighting the relationship between materials, technical practices, and cultural symbolism in ikat weaving. Source: Compiled by the author.

Motif	Symbolic Meaning <i>(Iconographic Analysis)</i>	Semiotic Function	Region	Practices
Kaif Motif	Connection to ancestors; spiritual protection; central symbol in Amarasi textiles	Reinforces ancestral reverence and ceremonial hierarchy	Amarasi, Belu, Malaka	Used in life-cycle rituals such as funerals and initiations
Animal Motifs	Power, fertility, and protection (e.g., crocodiles, birds, frogs)	Symbolise leadership and cosmological identity	Amanuban, Amanatun	Worn by high-status figures in rituals for protection and power
Buna Motifs	Prestige and refined craftsmanship	Communicate social status in ceremonial exchange	Malaka, Belu	Used in weddings, funerals, and social ceremonies
Makaif Motif	Ancestral reverence and ritual continuity	Marks generational connection and identity	Malaka Timur, Tetun communities	Worn during ancestral commemorations and gatherings
Human and Frog Figures	Fertility, cyclical time, and spiritual ties	Encode life-cycle transitions and ancestor ties	Amanatun, North Amanatun	Used in men's ritual textiles for fertility and ancestor worship

Table 3: Semiotic and symbolic functions of key ikat motifs in West Timor.

The table summarises how motifs such as kaif, animal figures, *buna*, makaif, and human or frog figures operate across regions and ritual practices, highlighting their role in reinforcing cultural memory, identity, and social continuity. Source: Compiled by the author.

PERIOD	EXTERNAL INFLUENCES	KEY DEVELOPMENTS
Pre-1600s	Indian Chinese trade networks	Adoption of Indian Patola double ikat aesthetics; early regional motif adaptations.
1600s–1700s	Portuguese and Dutch colonial expansion	Introduction of commercial tools; spread of cotton trade and missionary motifs.
Late 1800s	Arrival of synthetic dyes and factory-spun cotton	Synthetic dyes replace natural dyes; expansion of colour palette.
Early 1900s	Indian <i>Patola</i> and colonial motif influence	Formation of hybrid motifs; symbolic integration of foreign aesthetics.
1945–1960s	Post-war industrial shifts	Mass production techniques; weaving shifts from ritual to market production.
Market Influence	Cultural heritage movements	Artisan cooperatives emerge; emphasis on continuity of sacred and material knowledge.
Production Scale	Global fashion and digital marketplaces	Contemporary reinterpretation of ikat for sustainability, fashion, and identity.

Table 4 : External influences on ikat weaving in Eastern Indonesia, from the pre-colonial period to the present.

The table highlights key turning points in materials, techniques, and meanings, showing how external contacts and interventions shaped the development of ikat over time. Source: Compiled by the author.

Inventory No.	Date	Origin	Function	Material	Technique	Size (mm)	Notes
RJM 49809	c. 1900	Atoin Meto, Timor	Men's shoulder or waist textile	Cotton, natural dyes	Ikat, plain weave	2270 x 790	Ritual textile, associated with sacred practices
RJM 49813	c. 1900	Atoin Meto, Timor	Men's shoulder or waist textile	Cotton, natural dyes	Ikat, twining	2015 x 840	Hybrid motifs, possible colonial influence
RJM 56030	c. 1950	Atoin Meto, Timor	Men's wrap textile	Cotton, natural dyes	Ikat, patterned warp	1900 x 900	Transitional textile, shift from sacred to commercial use
RJM 51756	c. 1960	Atoin Meto, Timor	Men's wrap textile	Cotton, natural dyes	Ikat, patterned warp	2500 x 1280	Late colonial period, market-driven adaptation

Table 5 : Selected ikat textiles from the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne. The table lists inventory numbers, functions, materials, and visual characteristics, providing an overview of how these objects were documented and classified within the museum collection. Source: Compiled by the author based on RJM collection records.

Period	Visual Features	Symbolic Function	Cultural Context
Pre-20th Century	Ancestral figures, animal motifs, celestial shapes	Protection, fertility, cosmological balance	Animist ritual practice
Early 20th Century (1900s–1940s)	New line arrangements combined with older motifs	Continued ritual use, subtle adaptation	Missionary contact, early colonial encounters
Mid-20th Century (1940s–1960s)	Crosses, floral patterns, decorative borders	Syncretism, spiritual negotiation	High missionary presence, Dutch colonial rule
Late 20th Century (1950s–1980s)	Simplified designs, re-use of older local patterns	Cultural identity, heritage affirmation	Nation-building, village-level autonomy
21st Century (1980s–Present)	Hybrid motifs, new scales, modern colour combinations	Heritage branding, spiritual reinterpretation	Global markets, tourism, and urban craft revival

Table 6: Chronological transformation of symbolic motifs in Timorese ikat, from the pre-20th century to the present.

The table outlines shift in motif design, meaning, and use across different historical periods, showing how artisans negotiated continuity and change in relation to sacred, social, and external influences. Source: Compiled by the author.

Aspect	Sacred Ikat	Traditional Ikat
Context of Use	Reserved for ritual and life-cycle ceremonies (birth, marriage, death).	Worn in daily life, at markets, and during community gatherings.
Materials	Hand-spun cotton and natural dyes (morinda, indigo, turmeric, mango bark)	Factory-spun cotton or rayon, synthetic dyes (introduced after the 1950s).
Production Process	Produced with prayers, ritual offerings, and guidance from ritual elders.	Made in a more flexible and faster way, mainly to meet everyday needs and local exchange.
Knowledge Transfer	Restricted to selected ritual families; transmitted through matrilineal teaching	Shared more openly within families; shortened apprenticeships for efficiency
Motifs	Clan-specific, linked to cosmology and ancestry (e.g., <i>Kaif</i> , <i>Belis</i>)	Mix of inherited motifs and new designs reflecting social and economic change.
Social Function	Reinforced ritual authority, social hierarchy, and ancestral legitimacy.	Expressed community identity; functioned as textiles for exchange and social use.
Economic Role	Not made for sale; used as ceremonial exchange or offerings.	Produced for local trade, household, and small inter-island exchange

Table 7: Comparison of sacred and traditional ikat in West Timor, mid-20th century. The table contrasts their use, materials, processes, motifs, and social functions, showing how sacred textiles remained tied to ritual authority while traditional textiles adapted to daily life and markets. Source: Compiled by the author.

Region	Dye Adaptation	Function of Ikat	Knowledge Transmission
Belu	Synthetic dyes introduced for trade textile; natural dyes preserved for ritual use	Ritual and trade uses kept separate	Family apprenticeship: ritual knowledge guarded
Malaka	Natural dyes retained for marriage and ritual textile; chemical dyes gradually adopted for trade	Used in dowries and trade	Passed on by elders; ritual dye knowledge declining
Kupang	Rapid adoption of synthetic dyes; ritual use marginalised	Mainly for trade, ritual use reduced	Shorter training; informal or group-based learning

Table 8: Regional Variations in Dependencies (1940s–1960s).

Comparative table showing how Belu, Malaka, and Kupang adapted ikat weaving under new materials and trade pressures, balancing ritual integrity with market demands. Source: Compiled by the author.

Aspect	Locally Sourced Materials	Factory-Produced Materials
Fiber Type	Cotton spun by hand	Cotton or rayon spun in factories (brought from Java, Bali, and other centres)
Dye Sources	Morinda (red), indigo (blue), turmeric (yellow)	Synthetic chemical dyes
Tools Used	Backstrap loom, handmade weaving tools	Few mechanised looms (mainly in towns)
Cultural Usage	Textiles for rituals and ceremonies	Textiles made mainly for the market
Economic Role	Supported local trade networks	Helped expand market reach

Table 9: Locally sourced and factory-produced materials in West Timorese ikat (1940s–1960s).

The table contrasts fibres, dyes, tools, and cultural uses, showing how ritual textiles relied on hand-spun cotton and natural dyes, while market textiles adopted factory threads and synthetics. It highlights how artisans balanced ancestral values with adaptation to new conditions. Source: Compiled by the author.

Aspect of Production	Pre-Colonial Ikat (Before 1900s)	Colonial-Influenced Ikat (1900s–1960s)
Dyes	Natural dyes from plants (morinda, indigo)	Synthetic dyes from Europe and Java
Thread Material	Hand-spun local cotton	Factory-spun imported cotton
Weaving Tools	Traditional backstrap looms	Mechanised looms introduced
Motifs & Patterns	Asymmetrical, spiritual designs	Geometric, repetitive, bordered designs
Production Purpose	Ceremonial use, social identity	Commercial production for colonial markets
Market Influence	Local community, ritual exchange	Export trade, European market preferences

Table 10: Comparison of pre-colonial and colonial ikat in West Timor.

It is showing shifts in materials, tools, motifs, and functions. The table highlights the move from hand-spun cotton, natural dyes, and asymmetrical ritual designs to factory-spun yarns, synthetic dyes, and symmetrical motifs for market use. Source: Compiled by the author.

Aspect	Sacred Ikat	Traditional Ikat	Commercial Ikat
Purpose	Rituals, offerings, clan identity markers	Customary exchanges, everyday wear	Trade and export production
Materials	Hand-spun cotton; natural dyes (morinda, indigo)	Mix of hand-spun and commercial yarns; some synthetic dyes	Factory-spun yarns; synthetic dyes (Naphtol, Wantex)
Production Process	Highly ritualised; prayers and spiritual oversight	Community-based with moderate flexibility	Efficiency-driven; often workshop-based
Motifs	Inherited, sacred, cosmological meanings	Modified for practical use; partial symbolic retention	Simplified or altered for buyer preference
Knowledge Transmission	Passed down through families and ritual leaders	Family teaching; adapting to economic needs	Expanded through trade networks beyond family
Social Structure	Extended families and ritual specialists	Community-based, cooperative	More individual, income-focused
Spiritual Connection	Strong; rituals accompany production	Reduced but still present	Minimal; production driven by market demand
Visual Characteristics (Art Historical)	Asymmetrical, irregular compositions with layered symbolic depth	Balanced integration of traditional and new layouts	Symmetrical, bordered, and repetitive patterns influenced by European design aesthetics

Table 11: Comparative aspects of sacred, traditional, and commercial ikat in West Timor. The table highlights changes in materials, tools, motifs, and functions across three phases: sacred ikat with hand-spun cotton and natural dyes for ritual use, traditional ikat combining old and new practices for daily and customary exchange, and commercial ikat using factory-spun yarns and synthetic dyes for trade and export markets. Source: Compiled by the author.

Colonial Legacies	Material Dependencies	Cultural Dependencies	Local Adaptation
Factory-spun yarns and synthetic dyes introduced during colonial period	Increased reliance on imported yarns and chemical dyes	European museums and collectors define “authentic” ikat according to foreign aesthetic standards	Ritual ikat retains traditional techniques and natural dyes
European market demand for symmetrical, simplified patterns	Decline of local cotton cultivation and natural dyeing traditions	Export-oriented ikat loses connection to ritual significance	Export ikat adapted to external market preferences

Table 12: Interconnected legacies in West Timorese ikat (1950s–1980s).

This The table shows how colonial legacies shaped ikat production through factory-spun yarns, synthetic dyes, and European design tastes, creating new material and cultural dependencies. It also notes how artisans kept natural-dye rituals and ancestral motifs while adjusting some textiles for colonial and later global markets. Source: Compiled by the author.

Aspect	Early 20th Century (1900–1940)	Mid 20th Century (1940–1960s)	Late Colonial & Post-Colonial (1950s–1980s)	Late 20th to 21st Century (1980s–Present)	Key Changes Observed
Materials	Natural dyes (morinda, indigo), hand-spun cotton ¹	Machine-spun cotton introduced, but natural dyes remain common ²	Imported threads and synthetic dyes change colours and production ³	Greater use of recycled fabrics, synthetic dyes, and eco-friendly materials ⁴	Shift from fully natural to mixed and synthetic materials
Techniques	Hand dyeing and manual ikat binding ⁵	Traditional tools improved; slight mechanisation ⁶	European looms influence local weaving methods ⁷	Digital printing, eco-dyeing, and hybrid weaving techniques ⁸	Traditional methods merged with modern textile production
Motifs	Strong spiritual and ancestral meanings ⁹	Symbolic motifs kept, with minor aesthetic changes ¹⁰	Hybrid motifs mix local and European designs ¹¹	Abstract motifs shaped by global fashion trends ¹²	Shift from sacred/cultural to commercial/aesthetic motifs

Table 13: Evolution of reuse and reinvention in ikat textiles across time periods (1900–present).

The table outlines how materials, techniques, and motifs have shifted in response to changing historical contexts, colonial and postcolonial influences, and contemporary sustainability practices. It highlights the continuity of ancestral symbolism alongside innovations for modern fashion and global markets. Source: Compiled by the author.

¹ Natural dyes such as morinda and indigo were essential to early 20th-century ikat production (Maxwell, 2003; Gittinger, 1979).

² Introduction of machine-spun cotton reflects early material adaptations (Forshee, 2001).

³ Imported threads and synthetic dyes transformed colour palettes and production methods (Niessen, 2013).

⁴ Use of recycled fabrics and eco-conscious materials reflects modern sustainability efforts (Barnes, 2023).

⁵ Traditional manual techniques emphasised hand-dyeing and ikat binding (Forshee, 2001).

⁶ Tool refinements allowed slight mechanisation without losing artisanal character (Tamburini et al., 2020).

⁷ European looms increased efficiency but altered local techniques (Schneider, 2006).

⁸ Digital printing and hybrid techniques reflect integration of modern production (Maxwell, 2009).

⁹ Early motifs carried strong spiritual and ancestral meanings (Geertz, 1973; Appadurai, 1986).

¹⁰ Slight modifications emerged to suit aesthetic trends (Barnes, 2007).

¹¹ Hybrid motifs blended European and local designs for colonial markets (Veldhuisen, 1993).

¹² Contemporary motifs are influenced by global fashion (Niessen, 2013).

Region	Reuse Practice	New Design Elements	Cultural Focus	Market Involvement
Belu	Reuses older motifs and adapts them into new textiles	Mix of natural and synthetic materials; changed motif layout	Mix of ritual and Christian use; still used in ceremonies	Medium; some tourism, mostly local use
Malaka	Uses old textiles for fashion and household items	Bright colours, simpler motifs to fit consumer preferences	Combination of Catholic rituals and traditional weaving	Medium; some tourism and church-related use
Kupang	Combines ikat with Christian ceremonies and home décor	Flexible use of motifs; applied in furniture and wall panels	Strong expression in Catholic spaces and art scenes	High; active in urban design and creative reuse
Amarasi ¹³	Reuses textiles within families, not for sale	Keeps original motifs, hand spun yarn, natural dyes	Very strong connection to ancestors and family traditions	Low; weaving mainly for family and rituals

Table 14: Reuse and Redesign of Ikat Textiles.

Comparative Overview Based on Case Studies in Belu, Malaka, Kupang, and Amarasi.

The table compares how the four regions balance tradition and change. Belu and Malaka link weaving closely with Catholic ritual life; Kupang adapts ikat for urban settings and church use; and Amarasi keeps a more conservative focus on natural materials for family ceremonies. Seen together, these patterns show how reuse and redesign help ikat remain both heritage and innovation. Source: Compiled by the author.

¹³ Amarasi is a highland region in the southern part of Kupang Regency, West Timor. It is known for its strong adherence to ceremonial weaving traditions. Ikat textiles produced in Amarasi are rarely sold and are used primarily in family rituals such as weddings, funerals, and ancestral ceremonies. See Yeager and Jacobson (2002, pp. 146–147); interview with artisan group, Kupang, 2022.

Phase	Period	Key Characteristics	Symbolic Values
Sacred Ikat	Pre-colonial – early 20th century	Hand-spun cotton, natural dyes, ceremonial protocols regulated by specific lineages, motifs as spiritual media	Ancestral authority, fertility, protection, social reproduction
Traditional Ikat	Early mid 20th century	Expanded production, parallel use for status exchange, some imported yarns, design conventions intact	Kinship alliances, distributed agency in social relations
Colonial & Post-Colonial Adaptations	Mid 20th century – 1980s	Synthetic dyes, factory yarns, symmetrical patterns, missionary and market influence, heritage policy interventions	Selective authenticity, resilience through adaptation
Globalised Ikat	1990s – early 21st century	Cultural tourism, ethical fashion, heritage branding, external aesthetic/ethical standards	New regimes of value, commodification with creative reinterpretation
Heritage & Revival	Present day	Natural dye revival, motif diversification, collaborations foregrounding indigenous epistemologies	Cultural authorship, sustainability, rearticulation of ancestral values

Table 15: Summary of Ikat Transformation Phases.

The table outlines five key phases of ikat development, from sacred ritual production to contemporary revival movements. Each phase is characterised by distinct materials, techniques, and social meanings, showing how ikat has evolved through changing historical, cultural, and economic contexts while maintaining its symbolic connection to ancestry and identity. Source: Compiled by the author.

Period	Materials & Technology	Symbolic Value	Impact on Motifs
Pre-colonial – early 20th century	Hand-spun cotton, natural dyes (indigo, morinda), wooden looms	Strong ritual meaning; textile used as sacred link to ancestors	Motifs connected to lineage and cosmology; often asymmetrical and detailed
Early mid 20th century	Natural dyes continue, small amount of imported yarn	Both sacred textile for ritual and valued gift for social exchange	Designs mostly stable; some changes for showing status
Mid 20th century – 1980s	Factory-spun yarns, synthetic dyes, more standardised patterns	Sacred role weaker in some areas; heritage shaped by colonial trade and missionary style	Shift to symmetry and simpler motifs for outside buyers
1990s – early 21st century	Mixed materials, NGO-certified natural dyes, synthetic blends for market	Seen as heritage product; used in ethical fashion and tourism	Hybrid motifs combining local and global styles
Present day	Revival of natural dyeing, new designs, mixed techniques	Heritage used for cultural pride and economic benefit	Traditional motifs reinterpreted; more experimental layouts

Table 16: Timeline of Material and Technological Shifts.

The table traces key developments in materials, dyeing techniques, and weaving technologies from the pre-colonial era to the present. It shows how changes in production methods influenced both the symbolic value and visual composition of motifs, reflecting the balance between continuity, adaptation, and innovation in ikat traditions. Source: Compiled by the author.

Key External Influence	Description	Contextual Examples
Ethical Fashion	Promotes fair trade and sustainability, but “authenticity” is often defined by global markets, not local culture.	Binding with Ikat and Threads of Life link artisans to markets but follow international ideas of tradition.
Synthetic Materials	Factory yarns and chemical dyes make textile cheaper and brighter but weaken ritual and symbolic value.	A Belu artisan: “We use natural dyes for ritual textile, but buyers want synthetic because they last longer” (2023).
Contemporary Design	Ikat motifs are used in fashion and interiors, sometimes without credit to artisans.	Some designers use motifs freely; the <i>Tenun</i> Project works directly with communities.
Cultural Preservation	Artisans keep natural dyes and handlooms despite costs, to protect cultural and ritual meaning.	Collectives continue traditional methods even with limited market access.

Table 17: External Influences on Ikat Weaving.

The table summarises key external factors shaping contemporary ikat production, including ethical fashion, synthetic materials, contemporary design, and cultural preservation. These influences demonstrate how global markets, design collaborations, and local resilience intersect, revealing both opportunities and tensions between tradition, creativity, and sustainability. Source: Compiled by the author.

Key Finding	Explanation	Relevant Chapters
Visual Authorship	Ikat is not only a craft but also a form of visual authorship. Through the way motifs are composed, arranged, and coloured, artisans create visual narratives that speak of social identity and spiritual belief.	3, 4, 5, 6
Sacred Flexibility	Sacred values in ikat are adaptable rather than fixed. Even with modern materials, artisans preserve sacred meaning by keeping the iconographic motifs, colour symbolism, and ritual context that give the textile its spiritual weight.	2, 3
Artisan Agency	Artisans work as active agents, making creative choices between inherited visual traditions, outside artistic influences, and the needs of the market. These decisions shape how ikat forms and styles evolve over time.	3, 4, 5, 6
Living Tradition	Ikat is a living tradition that continues to adapt while preserving its cultural depth. Each textile also serves as a visual record of ancestral narratives, cosmological symbols, and historical events, carrying these meanings across generations.	3, 6, 7
Web of Significance	Ikat motifs work as dynamic symbolic codes, carrying layers of meaning that connect ancestral iconography with contemporary readings and uses. (<i>Adapted from Geertz, 1973</i>)	3, 4, 5, 6
Interdisciplinary Analysis	This study combines art historical methods, such as visual analysis, iconography, and stylistic comparison, with historical, ritual, social, and economic perspectives to give a fuller picture of ikat's evolution.	All chapters (2 to 7)

Table 18: The table summarises six key findings.

Drawing on historical analysis, field interviews, and theory, the table highlights six points: Visual Authorship, Sacred Flexibility, Artisan Agency, Living Tradition, the Web of Significance, and the Interdisciplinary Approach. Together, they show how ikat works as visual knowledge and how artisans in Belu, Malaka, and Kupang keep continuity while adapting to present needs. Source: Compiled by the author.

Appendix VIII: Sacred Objects and Tetun Ritual Life (Vroklage, 1937)

This appendix brings together archival records and documentation of sacred objects recorded by B.A.G. Vroklage in 1937 during his ethnographic research in West Timor. It illustrates the ceremonial use of ikat and related ritual objects, while also providing a systematic overview of their functions and symbolic meanings. By combining visual material and tabulated data, the appendix offers a fuller picture of the role of ikat within Tetun ritual life.

VIII. 1 Visual Records and Analysis

The following archival images were taken by B.A.G. Vroklage during his 1937 ethnographic fieldwork in West Timor. These images, preserved as part of Dutch ethnographic collections, show the ceremonial use of ikat textiles, carved panels, body markings, and ritual masks in Tetun life-cycle rituals such as funerals, healing ceremonies, and communal rites. Each object shows how material forms embodied ancestral and spiritual symbolism, revealing how ritual artefacts became sacred expressions of power, protection, and identity.

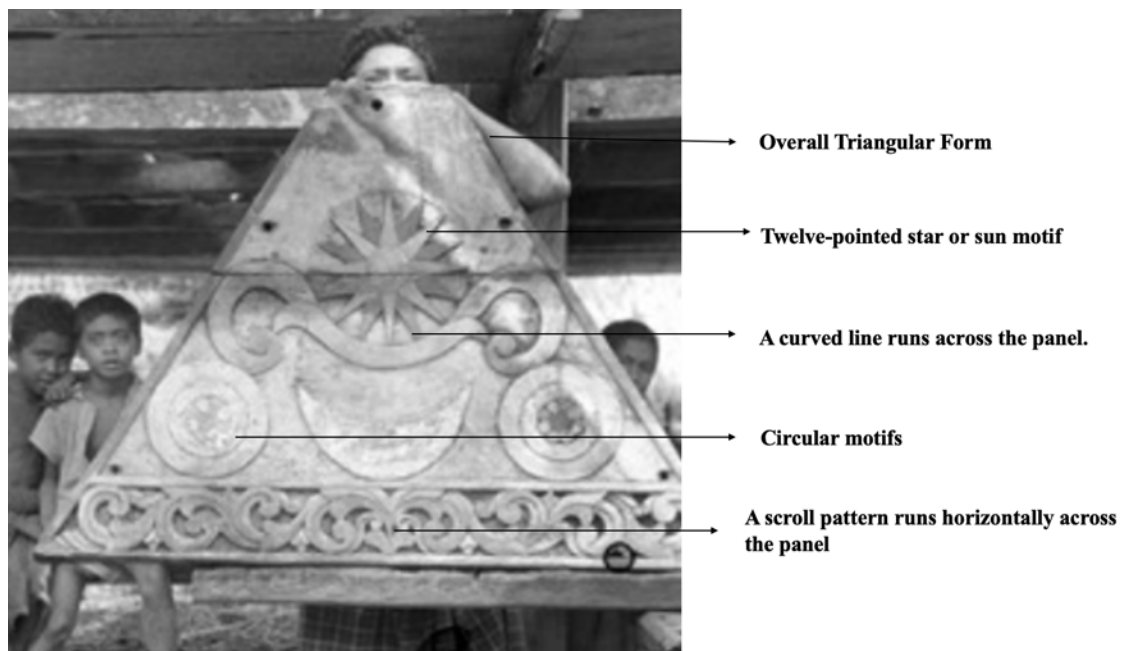


Plate V1.1 Triangular Ritual Panel from Naitimu (1937)

This carved wooden panel from Belu, photographed by B.A.G. Vroklage in 1937, reflects the structure and meaning of the *uma lulik* (sacred house) in Tetun ritual practice. Its

triangular shape suggests a mountain or ancestral axis, and the star-like motif at the centre points to ideas of the sun and cyclical time. The curved lines and round elements are linked to fertility and protection, while the scroll pattern at the base signals continuity. Panels like this were used in life-cycle rituals and worked as visual links between ancestors and the living. This diagram marks the main formal and symbolic features within the composition. Source: Wereldmuseum Collection, Inv. No. RV-A245-174; Vroklage (1953, pp. 278–280).

This object supports a central argument of this dissertation: that ikat textiles and their visual vocabulary are part of a wider ritual and cosmological system that includes architecture, carvings, and ceremonial acts. The carved panel photographed by Vroklage works not only as a sacred architectural element but also as a visual parallel to ikat motifs. The twelve-pointed star, curved lines, and scroll motifs echo the symbolic language found in warp-ikat designs from Belu and Malaka, where similar forms relate to ideas of order, fertility, and protection. This overlap suggests that ikat should not be studied on its own but understood within a broader network of ritual forms, a material and visual system of meaning. In this sense, the panel strengthens the view that sacred knowledge in Timorese communities is passed on through linked visual and material practices, described in this study through the ideas of the web of significance and sacred flexibility.

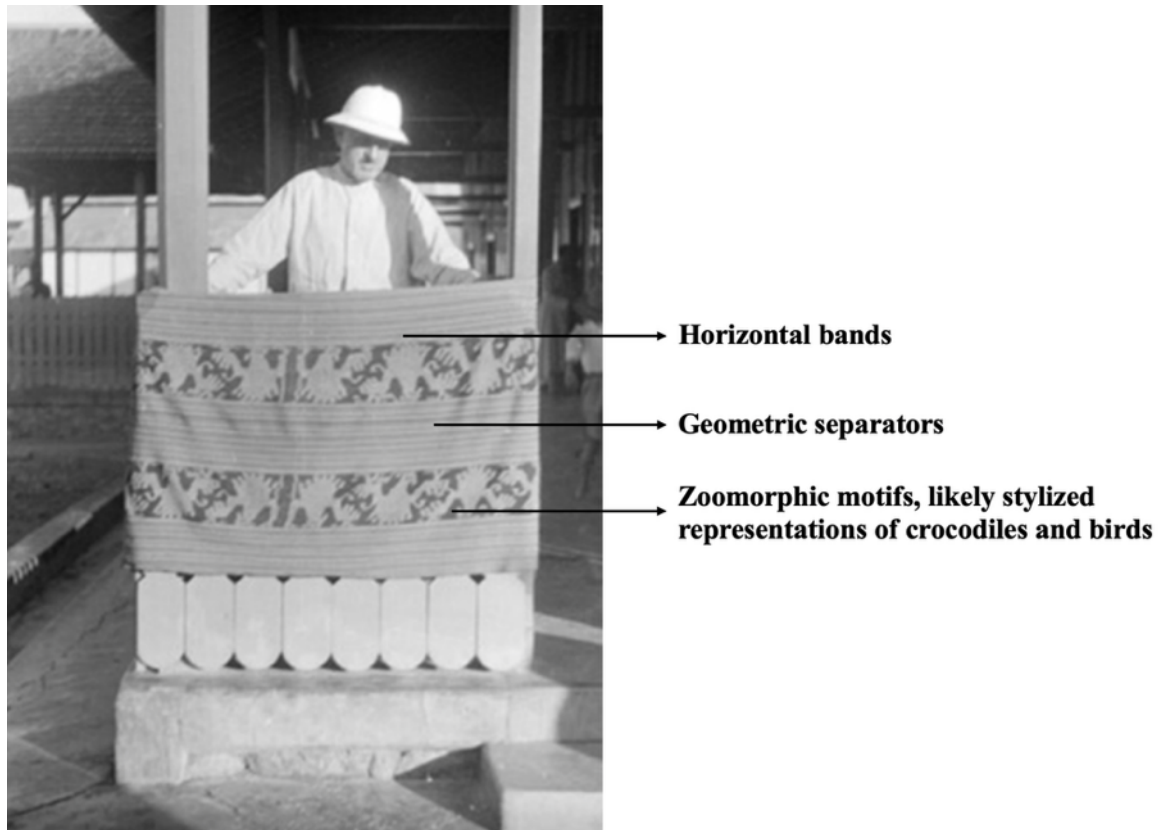


Plate V.1.2. Timorese ikat textile with horizontal bands, geometric separators, and zoomorphic motifs (crocodiles and birds)

This photo shows a man, likely European, holding a Timorese ikat textile. The textile displays clear horizontal bands, geometric separators, and stylised animal motifs, most likely crocodiles and birds. These forms are not merely decorative. They carry layers of sacred meaning connected to ancestral protection and cosmological power. The crocodile appears in many Timorese origin stories, while birds often point to spiritual movement or the ability to travel between different worlds.

This object supports a central argument of this dissertation: that ikat functions as a form of visual knowledge. The motifs on this textile belong to a long tradition of sacred symbolism and show how artisans expressed spiritual ideas through woven forms. Through these patterns, textiles became a medium for transmitting memory, protecting the wearer, and maintaining links with ancestral presence. Although the photograph was taken in a colonial context and shaped by the viewpoint of an outside observer, the textile itself communicates local authorship, cultural intention, and the continuity of sacred meaning. By presenting this image, the discussion foregrounds how sacred understandings were preserved through design, even when represented within colonial documentation. The ikat shown here therefore

stands both as an ethnographic photograph and as a sacred object with its own cultural depth and significance. Source: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Wereldmuseum Leiden) Collection, Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage, 1937; Vroklage (1953).



Plate V.1.3. Ritual leader performing a ceremonial invocation, Belu (1937).

This photograph, taken by B.A.G. Vroklage in 1937, shows a ritual leader in Belu during a ceremonial invocation. His raised hand is a gesture of offering, but it also works as a sign of authority, making spiritual presence visible through the body. His clothing is striking: a traditional ikat sarong with Timorese motifs worn together with a European jacket. This pairing is not simply stylistic. It shows how local and colonial meanings came together in one figure, revealing a form of negotiation rather than replacement. The ritual leader stands in the foreground, while villagers appear behind him, showing that authority is both personal and recognised by the community. From an art-historical perspective, the image is more than ethnographic documentation. It records how ritual authority was displayed and understood at a time of political and cultural change.

Using Hans Belting's (1994) idea of likeness and presence can help to understand this photograph. The ritual leader's clothing makes his body appear almost like a "living image" of power, something that carries meaning beyond the gesture itself. The combination of ikat cloth with a colonial jacket places him in an in-between position, where ancestral authority and the realities of historical change meet in one figure. Here, the clothing does not work only as decoration. It becomes a visual way of showing authority, making sacred legitimacy visible inside the ritual space.

In this photograph, the textile takes on a different role once it is worn. It is no longer just a cultural object but part of how power is expressed on the body. Through this, the image shows how cosmological ideas and historical experience overlap and become visible in ritual life, shaping how authority is seen and recognised. Source: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Wereldmuseum Leiden) Collection, Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage, 1937; Vroklage (1953). References: Belting (1994); Forshee (2001); Barnes (1989).

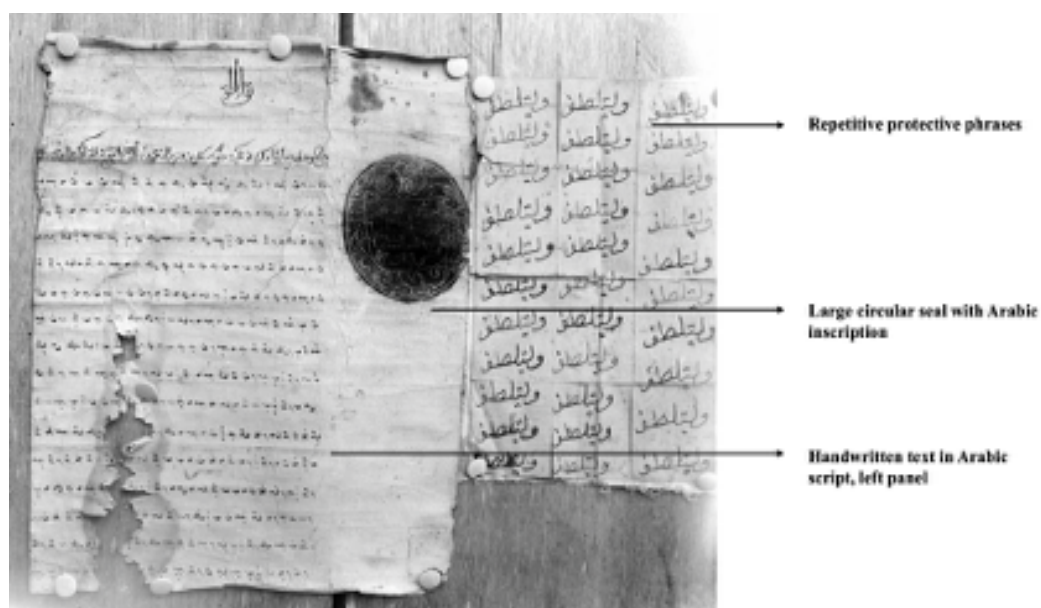


Plate V.1.4. Ritual manuscript with Arabic script, Timor (1937).

This ritual manuscript, photographed by B.A.G. Vroklage in 1937, offers a clear example of how sacred authority in Timorese ritual life could also be expressed through writing. The page contains handwritten Arabic script arranged on parchment-like material. On the right side, short protective phrases appear in a strict grid pattern, creating a rhythm of visual repetition. On the left, a longer prose passage is written in flowing script. At the centre,

a large circular seal dominates the composition, giving the manuscript a strong sense of ceremonial weight. Even without reading the text, the layout communicates order, authority, and protective intent. The central seal anchors the page visually, while the repeated lines of script create a protective surface like the repeated motifs found in ikat textiles.

From an art historical perspective, this manuscript can be read as more than a written document. It functions visually in ways that parallel Timorese ritual objects. The repetition of the script recalls the patterned repetition of motifs in ikat textiles, where visual order carries spiritual meaning. Just as a repeated crocodile or bird motif encodes protection and ancestral presence, the repeated Arabic phrases establish a surface of power through rhythm and design. The circular seal, with its bold black form, resembles the use of central medallions or shield-like figures in Timorese textiles, concentrating force at the centre of the object. In this way, the manuscript demonstrates how text could operate as an image, transforming words into a visible medium of sacred authority.

The presence of this manuscript in Belu also points to wider historical exchanges. Arabic writing and Islamic amulets reached Timor through networks of Muslim traders, scribes, and intermediaries, most likely connected to Java or other Islamic centres in the Indonesian archipelago. Yet once present in Timor, the manuscript was not treated as an alien form but absorbed into local ritual practices. Oral testimonies and comparative sources suggest that such texts were used for healing, oath-taking, or protective ceremonies, serving functions like ritual textiles or carved objects. What is striking is how Timorese communities reinterpreted these foreign visual forms within their own cosmological framework. The Arabic letters and the seal were granted sacred force not because of their foreignness, but because local people recognised in them the qualities of repetition, order, and authority that resonated with their own ritual aesthetics.

This This process reflects what this dissertation terms sacred flexibility. Rather than rejecting outside elements, Timorese ritual culture was able to absorb external forms and reinterpret them within its own symbolic system. The manuscript did not replace ikat textiles or carved ritual objects; it existed alongside them, expanding the range of sacred media. In this way, the document shows how visual languages of power could move across regions, be adapted, and take on local meaning in ritual life. The manuscript therefore functions both as a record of cross-cultural contact and as an example of how sacred authorship was negotiated through different materials, threads, carvings, or written texts. Source: Rijksmuseum voor

Volkenkunde (Wereldmuseum Leiden) Collection, Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage, 1937; Inv. No. RV-A245-20; Vroklage (1953). References: Gell (1998); Forshee (2001).



Plate V.1.5. Chest Tattoo (Belu, 1937).

This image, taken during Vroklage's 1937 fieldwork, shows a Tetun man with symmetrical tattoos across his chest, one of the most intimate expressions of ritual identity in West Timor. Tattooing in Tetun culture was not merely decorative but a ceremonial act that joined the body to ancestral power. Designs placed on the chest, the site of breath and vitality, signified protection, courage, and adulthood. They were often made during rites of passage or after acts of social distinction, marking both achievement and belonging within the community. The motifs themselves, geometric and balanced, reveal the same visual logic that structures ikat textiles and carved ritual objects: repetition, bilateral symmetry, and rhythmic patterning. In this sense, the tattoo may be viewed as a "portable" form of sacred art, an inscription of cosmological meaning carried on the living body. The skin becomes both surface and archive, a material record of identity that binds the individual to collective memory.

From an art-historical perspective, such body markings extend the domain of material culture beyond artefacts into the realm of the embodied. They translate the spiritual order of the community into visual form, reinforcing the idea that in Tetun cosmology, sacred knowledge is expressed through multiple media, cloth, wood, stone, and skin. Like the woven or carved designs of ritual objects, the tattoo embodies the dual purpose of beauty and

protection, serving as a visible sign of continuity between the living and their ancestors. Source: Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (Wereldmuseum Leiden) Collection, Photograph by B.A.G. Vroklage, 1937; Vroklage (1953). References: Gell (1998); Forshee (2001).



Plate V.1.6. Ancestor Mask (Belu, 1937)

This ancestor mask from Belu, recorded by B.A.G. Vroklage in 1937, shows the close link between material form and ancestral belief in Tetun ritual life. The mask was used in communal ceremonies to call or represent ancestral spirits, bringing protection and balance to the community. Its carved face, with deep eyes and a straight nose, presents a simplified human image that connects both worlds, the visible and the spiritual. Ikat textiles were wrapped around the head and neck, giving the mask a human quality and linking it to the role of textiles in ritual life. Sometimes the mask was fixed on a post; in other cases, it was worn by a ritual participant who acted as a medium for ancestral presence. In Tetun belief, masks like this mark the boundary between the human and spirit worlds. During ceremonies, they make the ancestors visible and present among the living. The carved face becomes both an image and a vessel of ancestral power, linking the living with their ancestors. The use of ikat to cover or decorate the mask also connects it to the world of weaving, where cloth expresses ideas of continuity, fertility, and spiritual protection.

From an art historical view, the mask shows that simple forms can carry deep meaning. Its geometric shape is not only an artistic choice but part of a visual language that values spirit more than appearance. Like the motifs in ikat, repetition and symmetry suggest ideas of balance and order in the world. Through its physical form, the ancestor mask connects art and ritual, serving as a reminder of ancestral protection within the community. Iconographically, the mask shows a style that is common in the region, where the face is reduced to only a few clear lines. The long, straight nose and the small rectangular eyes resemble the shapes often carved on ritual posts and ancestor houses, and even some ikat motifs share this kind of simplicity. Here, the simplified form is not about avoiding detail but choosing what is most important for ritual use. By keeping only these basic features, the carver draws attention to the ancestor's ability to watch and to protect, rather than to any natural likeness. In Belu, visual forms often follow this approach, where spiritual meaning matters more than realistic representation. Because of this, the mask serves not only as a carved face but also as a sign of the ancestor's presence in the ceremony. Source: Wereldmuseum Collection, Inv. No. RV-A245-176; Vroklage (1953). See also Gell (1998) on the agency of ritual objects and Forshee (2001) for parallels between mask and textile symbolism.

VIII. 2 Tabulated Documentation of Sacred Objects

This section presents sacred objects documented by Vroklage in 1937, with details on their materials, ritual functions, and symbolic meanings, together with archival photographs. It provides cultural context for understanding the role of ikat within Tetun ritual practice, while keeping the main text focused on analysis.

Photo	Artifact & Name , Origin & Material	Ritual Function and Symbolism
	House Door (<i>Oda matan</i>) RV-2380-267 Belu, West Timor, Southeast Asia; Wood	Marks boundary between male and female space; entrance to the inner female domain of the house. Represents the female body and fertility; round forms suggest breasts

	Naitimu, Belu, Timor, Southeast Asia; Sacred Post Finial RV-A245-46	Placed on ceremonial posts to show guidance from spirits and open ritual pathways Symbolises protection and authority; double heads may represent two ancestors or guardians.
	Timor, Southeast Asia. Ritual Post Carving RV-A245-52	Placed during rituals to start <i>buka dalan</i> (opening the path); linked to guidance and communication with ancestors. Symbolises ancestral authority and the opening of ritual space; seen as a call to ancestral spirits.

	Timor, Southeast Asia. Ritual Object – “<i>Buka Dalan</i>” (Path- Opening) Carving RV-A245-79	Used in ritual openings (<i>buka dalan</i>) to ensure communication with ancestors. Symbolises ancestral presence, ritual transition, and guidance; carved forms may represent cosmological figures or guardians.
	Timor, Southeast Asia. Material: Bronze Ritual Drum (<i>Moko</i> or Ceremonial Bronze Drum) Inventory Code: RV- A245-180	This bronze drum is used in ceremonies like marriage exchanges, ancestral offerings, and initiations. It symbolises status, spiritual power, and ancestral ties; motifs may show fertility or protection. Such drums are sacred heirlooms, passed down to keep ancestral presence and ritual continuity.

	Timor, Southeast Asia Culture: Tetun Female Ritual Dancers Tetun Community Inventory Code: RV- A245-183	Photo of two women in ceremonial dress, likely in a ritual dance for fertility, protection, or ancestral honour. Such dances are part of life-cycle rituals, linking the living with ancestors. The image shows gendered ritual roles and women's part in sustaining sacred traditions through movement, dress, and symbolic objects like a fan or headgear.
	Belu, West Timor	Photograph focusing on the bare feet and lower garments of Tetun individuals, showcasing traditional textile patterns and lack of footwear. Cultural representation and identity

	Belu, West Timor	Photograph showing Tetun men in elaborate ritual attire, wearing headdresses, circular chest ornaments, and sashes, with a central figure holding a ceremonial staff. Symbolises unity, authority, and reverence for ancestors; reinforces community bonds and cultural pride
	Ritual Specialist with Sacred Objects Belu or Malaka, West Timor, Southeast Asia. Human subject with ritual implements (basket, stone, and roots)	Used in healing, purification, and protection rituals. The basket contains a sacred stone and medicinal roots, symbolising the healer's role in maintaining balance between physical and spiritual health. The act of holding these objects reflects ancestral knowledge and the transmission of ritual authority.



Belu, West
Timor,
Southeast
Asia.
Ceremonial
Ikat Dress
RV-A245-
328

Worn during ceremonial
gatherings and social
events marking rank and
alliance.

Represents marital and
social harmony; textiles
signify status, ancestral
connection, and
communal identity.



Belu, West
Timor,
Southeast
Asia
Ikat Textile
with
Zoomorphic
Motifs
RV-A245-
386

Used in ceremonial
contexts to invoke
ancestral protection and
social identity.

Depicts animals and
human figures
symbolising fertility,
harmony, and the link
between nature and the
ancestral world.



Belu, West
Timor,
Southeast
Asia
Ikat Textile
with Human
and Animal
Motifs
RV-A245-
386

Used as a ceremonial
textile in ancestral and
social rituals, often
displayed to affirm
lineage and communal
identity.

Figures of humans and
animals represent the
connection between the
earthly and spiritual
realms, expressing
fertility, balance, and
ancestral protection.

Appendix IX: Extended Motif Analysis of West Timor Ikat Textiles

This appendix offers extended discussions of the five key motifs introduced in Chapter 2.2: *kaif*, animal figures, *buna*, *makaif*, and the anthropomorphic–frog hybrids. Each motif is described in terms of its form, symbolism, and ritual use. The section builds on Table VI.1 and supports the brief analysis in Chapter 2.2 by giving fuller descriptions, local variations, visual examples, and art-historical readings. Through this approach, motifs in West Timor ikat can be seen not only as decorative patterns but also as visual texts that carry ancestral knowledge and express cosmological ideas.

IX.1: Table Extended Iconographic Analysis of Key Motifs

Motif	Region	Iconographic Meaning	Ritual / Social Context
<i>Kaif</i> Motif	Amarasi, Belu, Malaka	Shows ancestral connection and spiritual protection; a central symbol in Amarasi textiles that reinforces ceremonial hierarchy.	Used in life-cycle rituals, especially funerals and initiations.
Animal Motifs	Amanuban, Amanatun	Represent power, fertility, and protection (crocodiles, birds, frogs); associated with leadership and cosmological order.	Worn by high-status figures in rituals for protection and authority.
<i>Buna</i> Motifs	Malaka, Belu	Indicate prestige and skilled craftsmanship; mark social status in ceremonial exchange.	Used in weddings, funerals, and other social ceremonies.
<i>Makaif</i> Motif	Malaka Timur, Tetun communities	Expresses ancestral reverence and continuity; affirms generational ties and identity.	Worn during ancestral commemorations and community gatherings.
Human and Frog Figures	Amanatun, North Amanatun	Symbolise fertility, cycles of time, and spiritual ties; reflect life-cycle transitions and ancestor bonds.	Used in men's ritual textiles for fertility rites and ancestor worship.

IX.2: Extended Narrative Analyses

Kaif Motif in Amarasi Textiles

In the Amarasi region of West Timor, located west of Kupang and bordering Belu, the *Kaif* motif serves as a central element in ritual textiles, embodying values of ancestral protection, social distinction, and spiritual alignment. Characterised by a nested diamond or rhombus pattern, the *Kaif* design often occupies the central field of ceremonial textiles, forming a visual anchor that expresses layers of ancestral presence. This placement reflects the belief that the motif acts as a conduit between the living and ancestral realms, particularly in textiles used during funerals, birth ceremonies, and initiations. Within these contexts, the *Kaif* motif does more than adorn; it functions as a symbol of generational continuity and affirms the wearer's ritual position in the community's social hierarchy (Maxwell, 2003, p. 240; Forshee, 2001, pp. 22–23). This interplay between motif, meaning, and material is exemplified in a ceremonial *tais* woven by the Oekabiti clan around 1950 (see Appendix Plate VI.2.1). Here, formal balance and chromatic choice reinforce symbolic content. The red ground, achieved through morinda dye, conveys vitality and spiritual potency, while the white *Kaif* motif signifies purity and protective strength. The textile's symmetrical layout reflects Atoin Meto cosmological principles in which harmony between human and spiritual realms underpins all ritual order. Rather than merely aesthetic, this symmetry is part of a visual cosmology that embodies metaphysical beliefs through structured composition (Yeager & Jacobson, 2014, pp. 65–66).

The production of this textile needs careful work and steady skill. The *Kaif* motif is made with warp ikat, so the threads must be tied and dyed before any weaving begins. This step requires patience and an ability to judge the design in advance, because mistakes cannot be corrected later. Even today, when commercial threads and synthetic dyes are easy to buy, many Amarasi artisans still prefer hand-spun cotton and natural dyes for ceremonial cloth. Their choice shows more than personal taste. It reflects a wish to stay close to older practices and to keep a sense of ancestral authenticity, even when market demand pushes them toward faster and cheaper materials (Gittinger, 1979, pp. 23–25). In Amarasi, weaving is not only a technical activity. It is also a way to think about change and continuity. When artisans decide which thread or dye to use, they also decide how much of the past they want to carry into the present. These decisions shape the meaning of the cloth. For this reason, the *Kaif* motif represents both discipline and resilience. Through the motif, artisans continue to protect and

express the values they learned from earlier generations. Their work keeps these meanings alive, even as the social and economic environment around them continues to shift.

From an art historical and semiotic point of view, the Kaif motif can be read as a cultural sign with several layers of meaning. It is not only a decoration. It carries ideas about cosmology, family lines, and ritual authority that are important in Amarasi society. Its continued use in ceremonial textiles shows how ikat functions as a kind of visual memory, where knowledge and values are kept and passed on. The motif also shows how ancestral meanings can survive even when social conditions change. In this way, the resilience of Amarasi visual culture becomes visible in the cloth itself. The *Kaif* motif can therefore be seen as both a sacred sign and a form of cultural authorship. Through it, artisans use weaving to remember, to act within their ritual world, and to preserve elements of Timorese identity that remain important today.



Plate VI.2.1 Ikat textile featuring *Kaif* motif, characterised by nested diamond patterns. The red ground (morinda dye) symbolises vitality and spiritual potency, while the white *Kaif* design represents purity and protection. Symmetrical layout reflects Atoin Meto cosmological principles of balance between human and spiritual realms. *Source: Collection of the Wereldculturen Museum, Timor, 1900–1950.*

Animal Motifs in Amanuban Textiles

In Amanuban, a highland region of West Timor located east of Kupang and connected to the Belu and Malaka areas, animal motifs serve as potent expressions of cosmological and social ideas. Common figures such as crocodiles, birds, and frogs are more than decorative forms; they operate as visual signs embedded within ritual and leadership contexts. The crocodile, for instance, is interpreted as a guardian spirit, representing ancestral authority and protection, while birds often symbolise movement between worlds, evoking spiritual leadership and transformation. Frogs are emblematic of fertility and life cycles, linked to agricultural rhythms and the generative power of the land. These motifs are frequently found

in ceremonial textiles, especially men's wraps used in community leadership rituals, and they visually reinforce the spiritual responsibilities of their wearers (Forshee, 2001, pp. 33–36; Maxwell, 2003, pp. 82–84). In Amanuban weaving, such motifs are composed with remarkable technical skill using the warp ikat method, which demands foresight and precision. Plate 50, a *mau naek* (ritual men's wrap) from the mid-20th century, exemplifies the deliberate placement of animal motifs across an indigo-dyed ground. The dark blue symbolises the spirit realm, while the white motifs, carefully positioned, communicate purity and sacred power. Despite the increasing availability of synthetic materials, many artisans in this region continue to rely on natural indigo and hand spun cotton for ceremonial use, underscoring the link between material choices and spiritual meaning (Yeager & Jacobson, 2014, p. 133).

From a semiotic perspective, these motifs function as markers of social hierarchy and ancestral legitimacy. The crocodile design signifies leadership and moral obligation, while the bird invokes wisdom and intergenerational connection. The frog represents communal hope for fertility and renewal. These meanings are not arbitrary but are embedded in the formal visual vocabulary of the textile, resonating with Geertz's (1975, p. 91) argument that symbols condense complex cultural meanings into recognisable forms. Thus, Amanuban artisans are not merely preserving a stylistic tradition but are actively encoding and transmitting a worldview through their craft.

The ongoing use of animal motifs demonstrates how visual language in ikat acts as a cultural archive, one that affirms identity, preserves memory, and sustains spiritual continuity across generations. In this sense, the Amanuban tradition shows how textiles are not static objects but dynamic carriers of meaning, shaping both ritual practice and social order. By integrating technique, symbolism, and cosmology, animal motifs in Amanuban ikat embody the resilience of cultural memory and the continuity of ancestral presence in daily and ritual life.

***Buna* Motifs in Malaka Textiles**

In Malaka, a district in West Timor east of Belu and home to many Tetun communities, *buna* embroidery is known as one of the most demanding and symbolically rich textile practices in the region. The technique produces a raised, textured surface with detailed geometric forms. *Buna* is used mainly in ceremonial cloth that accompanies

important life events, and its motifs in red, yellow, and white threads carry meanings that go beyond decoration. In Tetun belief, red is linked to life-force and female fertility, while yellow is associated with wealth and the power of the sun, ideas that remain central in ritual cosmology and everyday material culture (Gittinger, 1979, pp. 61–63). Plate 110 shows a men's ceremonial textile (*tais mane*) from the mid-20th century, made in Malaka using both warp ikat and *buna* embroidery. The balanced arrangement of red and yellow bands on a dark indigo background reflects a preference for harmony in Tetun visual aesthetics. The order and repetition of motifs are intentional, as they signal prestige and social standing, especially in marriage exchanges or mortuary rites. Technically, *buna* offers more freedom than ikat because the embroidery is applied after the weaving is finished. This gives artisans room to adjust or refine the design while keeping to the recognised iconography of the community (Yeager & Jacobson, 2002, pp. 89–91) (Yeager & Jacobson, 2002, pp. 89–91).

From a semiotic point of view, *buna* motifs work as objects that do more than decorate. They take part in the act of exchange, especially in ceremonies where families show respect, obligation, and social ties. The complexity of the motif's signals both skill and the responsibility of higher-status families to keep older practices alive. In Tetun communities, these textiles are part of a broader ritual economy, where giving and receiving cloth help maintain alliances. Geertz (1975, p. 112) notes that material symbols express the structure of social life, and this idea fits well with *buna* textiles. Even though new materials are easier to find today, many artisans still choose hand spun cotton and natural dyes when the cloth is meant for ancestral offerings. This shows a conscious decision to maintain cultural continuity. The endurance of *buna* motifs reflects a clear commitment to Tetun values. These textiles act as visual records of the past, but they are also active in the present, carrying memory across generations through their forms, colours, and ceremonial use.

Makaif Motif in Malaka Textiles

In East Malaka, a district in West Timor near the Belu border and closely connected to Tetun-speaking communities, the *Makaif* motif holds strong spiritual and genealogical meaning. The pattern, usually formed with interlocking diamonds or rhombus shapes, appears often in textiles for weddings, funerals, and rituals that honour the ancestors. In Tetun understanding, red from morinda root stands for vitality and kinship, while indigo blue refers to the spirit world and forms of protection. These colours are not chosen simply for visual

effect but follow the ritual logic that guides how cloth is made and used (Yeager & Jacobson, 2002, p. 92; Khan-Majlis, 1984, p. 64).

Plate VI.2.1 (Appendix VI.2) shows a woman's ceremonial *sarong* (*tais fetu*) from the 1950s that illustrates the relationship between form and meaning. The textile has three leading *Makaif* bands, placed between red and blue stripes that repeat across the surface. The symmetrical layout echoes Tetun ideas about spiritual balance and harmony in social life. The continued use of hand spun cotton and natural dyes, even when synthetic options became available—shows that artisans made a conscious choice to preserve the ritual strength of the textile. For many communities in East Malaka, material authenticity is directly tied to cosmological legitimacy, and this connection remains important (Gittinger, 1979, pp. 58–59).

Beyond its visual symmetry, the *Makaif* motif also carries a story about ancestral continuity. In ceremonial textiles, its appearance marks the passing of obligations from one generation to the next and shows the wearer's position within a wider ritual genealogy. The motif works as a link between the living and the dead, making the textile part of a larger spiritual exchange. Geertz's (1975, p. 112) idea of culture as a "web of significance" is visible here, because the *Makaif* binds symbolic, spiritual, and social meanings inside a single visual field. The making of this motif through warp ikat demands both technical skill and an understanding of ritual rules. For this reason, the textile becomes a material expression of cultural resilience. When Tetun communities continue to weave and use *Makaif* motifs, they keep their commitments to ancestral values. At the same time, they also adjust quietly to changes in material choices and economic pressures, showing how tradition and adaptation can exist together.





Plate VI.2.1 Tais Feto with Makaif and *Buna* Motifs, Malaka Timur, West Timor (c. 1950s). Cotton, warp ikat with supplementary *buna* embroidery. The interlocking diamond (*Makaif*) patterns symbolise ancestral continuity and balance, while *buna* motifs add prestige and visual emphasis. Source: Peter Ten Hoopen Collection.

Human–Frog Figures in Amanatun Textiles

In Amanatun, a highland region in southern West Timor located between Amanuban and Malaka, human and frog figures are among the most prominent motifs in men’s ritual textiles. These textiles are especially used in birth, fertility, and agricultural ceremonies, where visual forms carry symbolic meaning tied to the life cycle, transformation, and ancestral invocation. The human figure, often depicted with raised arms, is interpreted as a posture of spiritual summoning or protection, embodying the community’s desire for continuity and security. In parallel, the frog, long associated with rain, crops, and regeneration, expresses the cyclical rhythms of nature and the metaphysical connection between earthly and spiritual realms (Maxwell, 2003, pp. 82–84; Yeager & Jacobson, 2014, p. 133). 49, a *mau* textile from circa 1955, vividly illustrates these motifs. The warp ikat design features alternating bands of indigo and white, with a central panel containing stylised human figures surrounded by frog emblems. The composition adheres to a clear symmetry,

reinforcing the ritual principle of balance between cosmic forces. Indigo as background conveys spiritual depth, while white denotes ritual clarity and life-force. The visual clarity of these motifs depends on precise pre-dyeing and careful tension control during weaving, a testament to the artisan's technical expertise and ritual discipline (Gittinger, 1979, pp. 23–24).

From an art historical point of view, these motifs show how textile design can hold complex symbolic ideas. The human–frog pair is not used as separate icons; instead, they work together as a single unit of meaning. In Amanatun, this pair expresses ideas about communal responsibility, fertility, and the continuation of ancestral lines. Their presence in ritual textiles also shows that artisans do not simply follow commercial taste. Weaving remains a way to protect and carry cultural values. Geertz's (1975, p. 94) view that symbols actively shape how people understand the world can be seen clearly in these motifs. The human and frog figures act not only as images but also as carriers of cosmological ideas. When artisans weave them with care, they keep alive a sense of spiritual presence that is shared across the community. This connection forms part of how Amanatun people understand their identity and their place in the wider cosmos. Although materials and economic conditions continue to change, the textile still works as a living document. It records older meanings but also participates in daily and ritual life. In this way, the cloth remains both archive and active agent of cultural memory, ancestral authority, and historical continuity.

IX.3: Comparative Collections

This section introduces comparative material from museum and private collections to supplement the motif analysis of West Timor. The table reproduced here (Plate VI.3.1) is based on the Peter ten Hoopen Collection, one of the most extensive private archives of Timorese ikat textiles. It presents a selection of thirteen key motifs, from a larger set of forty reviewed in this study, including *makaif*, animal figures, and anthropomorphic forms, and illustrates how these motifs function within broader social, ritual, and symbolic contexts. While the textiles in this collection are not part of the author's fieldwork data, they serve as valuable comparative evidence that highlights continuities and regional variations. Their inclusion emphasises the dynamic and evolving character of Timorese ikat, linking past traditions with contemporary interpretations.

Motif	Detail	Motif and meaning	Ritual and Social Context
	 Amanuban, West Timor (Hoopen #335)	Central panel with eight horses, two with anthropomorphic riders; symbolises power, nobility, and high status	Worn by men of high status in ceremonial contexts; faded pastel indigo tones

	 Amanatun Utara, West Timor (Hoopen #349)	Large and small human figures with upraised hands; symbolises ancestor worship, generational continuity, gender roles	Used in rituals to affirm cultural identity; indigo ground with red/yellow bands
	 Bokong, North Amanatun, West Timor (Hoopen #360)	Central band with six river fish, secondary bands with human figures wearing warrior's headgear; symbolises ancestral crocodile legends and paradox of fish motif in mountains	Worn by men; expresses regional identity and warrior values; natural dyes in blue tones with irregular yarn texture

	 Malaka Timur, West Timor (Tetun people) – Hoopen #285	Ceremonial sarong (<i>tais fetu</i>) with complex <i>makaif</i> and <i>buna</i> motifs; deep indigo with coral stripes. Symbolises craftsmanship, social status, fertility, and protection	Used in weddings and major rituals; natural dyes (indigo, morinda) highlight ritual importance
	 Ama-natun, Bokong village, Oinlasi area, West Timor – Hoopen #159	Centre field with large nested kaif motifs in white on indigo; symbolises ancestral ties and continuity. Indigo = life force, white = ancestral protection	Worn by men to represent ancestral ties and social status; natural dyes (indigo, pale coral-red)

	 Amarasi, Baun people, West Timor – Hoopen #206 (Ex-Dutch Coll.)	Plain red bands with rows of half-kaif motifs; symbolises ancestral connection and protection. Warp ikat in Baun minimalist style	Likely used in daily life and possibly in community or ancestral ceremonies; faded pastel red with natural dyes
	 Malaka, Tetun people, West Timor – Hoopen #031	Central field with human and animal figures in white on indigo; crocodile motif with one-eyed figure symbolises ancestral ties and mythological origins.	Worn in rituals and ceremonies Symbolising ancestral and mythological ties.

	 Subun, Western Insana, North Central Timor, West Timor – Hoopen #081	Wide indigo panel with kaif-like and crocodile motifs; indigo signifies depth, crocodile symbolises ancestral ties.	Worn by men, symbolising strength, depth, and ancestral authority.
	 Timor, West Timor; Amanuban, Niki- Niki region – Hoopen #112	<i>Kai nanan</i> design with rhomb and hooks motifs, small crocodile motifs as fillers; symbolise ancestral protection and ties	Worn by men, reflecting ancestral ties and cultural heritage

	 Timor, West Timor; Amanuban, Pusu/Lakat/Ofu/Nai me hamlet – Peter ten Hoopen #157	Asymmetric men's wrap with horse motifs; horses symbolise nobility, leadership, and power	Worn by leaders or high-status men, reflecting authority
	 Timor, West Timor; Semaui or Kupang region (Hoopen #162)	Three-panel man's shoulder textile with dove motifs in white on morinda red. Doves likely symbolise peace or spiritual ties; design shows Dutch needlepoint influence.	Worn by men, reflecting intercultural adaptation and symbolic connections.

	 Timor, West Timor; Molo or possibly Amanuban Barat, specifically Nusa – Hoopen #296	Lozenges with kaif motifs in warp ikat and <i>buna</i>, fused across the textile; symbolise ancestral connection and high craftsmanship	Likely made for the court of Molo, reflecting social status
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	 Timor, West Timor; Amanuban, likely Niki-Niki (Hoopen #244)	Eight double-headed crocodiles (<i>lafake</i>) with warrior headdress (<i>pilu saluf</i>); crocodile for protection and transformation, headdress for nobility and strength.	Worn by high-status men in ceremonies; hand-spun cotton signals ritual importance.
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Appendix X: Selected Ikat Textiles from Museum Collections in Indonesia and Germany

This appendix presents selected ikat textiles documented through direct museum visits in Kupang, Jakarta, and Cologne. The materials include collections from Museum Negeri Kupang, Tekstil Museum Nasional Jakarta, and the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum, Cologne. Only collections accessed in person or through permission are included here. Other museum holdings, such as those consulted online, informed the analysis but are not listed in this appendix

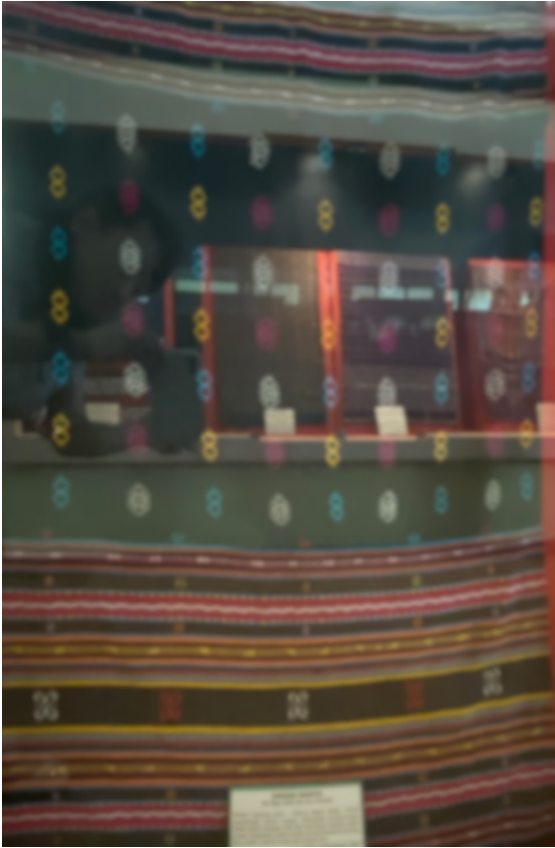
Catalogue Number, Photo	Catalogue Number and Year Collected and Region of Origin	Textile Type Original Function / Notes
	RJM, Cologne RJM 49809 c. 1900 West Timor (Atoin Meto)	Men's shoulder textile Used in sacred rituals; symmetric cosmological motifs

	Museum Negeri Kupang Timor / Alor region	Decorative Hair Comb Metal comb decorated with colonial coins. Worn by women as ceremonial hair ornament, symbolising wealth and status.
	RJM, Cologne RJM 49813 c. 1900 West Timor (Atoin Meto)	Men's waist textile Hybrid motifs suggesting early colonial influence

	RJM, Cologne RJM 51756 Mid-20th century West Timor	Textile panel Produced for trade; simplified symbolic motifs
	RJM, Cologne RJM 56030 Mid-20th century West Timor	Textile panel Commercial use; retention of some traditional patterns

	RJM, Cologne RJM 29147 c. 1900 West Timor (Atoin Meto)	shoulder or waist textile (wrap) Used in ritual and social contexts; plain weave ikat
	RJM, Cologne RJM 49818 c. 1900 West Timor (Atoin Meto)	Men's shoulder or waist textile Ritual textile for men; sacred motifs linked to status, ancestry, and protection

	RJM, Cologne RJM 56029 c. 1950 West Timor (Atoin Meto)	Men's shoulder textile Transitional textile: simplified sacred motifs adapted for post-ritual use or local exchange
	Museum Negeri Kupang Reg. 653 No. Inv. 03.487 East Sumba Regency	<i>Lawu Pahikung</i> Sarong (Women's Sarong) Composed of three woven parts; <i>pahikung</i> means "to be leveraged." Embroidery with twin-dragon motifs symbolises women's grace and dignity, traditionally worn by noble women (<i>maramba</i>) in rituals.

	Museum Negeri Kupang Reg. 3265 No. Inv. 03.2148 Alor Regency	Women's Sarong Black ground with <i>lungs</i>i weaving, floral <i>songket</i>, rhombus motifs, hooks, and narrow stripes. Borders in yellow, blue, white, pink, and scarlet; worn by women in ceremonies.
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	Museum Negeri Kupang Timor (likely Belu)	Male ceremonial dress (ikat with accessories) Complete ritual attire including ikat textile, metal chest plate, belt with ornaments, and sword. Used in formal and ceremonial contexts to signify status and identity.
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	Museum Negeri Kupang Alor Regency	<i>Pakaian Palima Perang</i> (Warrior's Dress) Complete warrior attire with ikat textile, metal breastplate, and belt ornaments. Used in ceremonial displays and symbolising martial power and cultural identity.
	Timor	<i>Lipa Prenggi</i> (Men's Sarong) Ceremonial sarong of nobles, now used for weddings and festivities. Complex to weave; features swastika for prosperity and sunflower motifs for devotion to the Sun God.

	Manggarai, Flores	<i>Lipa Songke</i> (Men's Sarong) <i>Songket</i>-woven cotton with natural dyes; motifs of triangles, spider, flowers, and lines symbolise harmony of life. Worn by noble men in ceremonies.
	Museum Tekstil Jakarta Molo, South Central Timor (NTT)	<i>Pilu Saluf</i> (Headdress) Hand spun cotton, commercial thread, beads; plain weave and tapestry. Traditionally worn by Meo (soldier) who proved heroism, as a community honour. Geometric decorations made with slit tapestry technique.



Museum Tekstil
Jakarta

Biboki, North
Central Timor
(NTT)

Tais Hae Mabuna
(Women's Sarong)

Warp ikat and
supplementary *buna* w
eaving on hand spun
cotton with
commercial thread.
Wide bands at both
ends decorated with *fut*
biboeksa, a motif
reserved for Biboki
aristocrats.
Characteristic of
women's sarong from
Biboki.

	Museum Tekstil Jakarta Timor	Men's loinc textile (<i>tais</i>) Hand spun and commercial cotton; plain weave with supplementary weft wrapping and tapestry. Decorated on both ends using <i>buna</i> or tapestry weaving with colourful yarns. Traditionally displayed in front of the wearer's body.
	Museum Tekstil Jakarta Timor	<i>Selendang</i> (scarf/shawl) Cotton, plain weave with warp ikat and supplementary weft wrapping; ends with <i>buna</i> motifs, sometimes with small bells. Used as belt or shoulder textile in ceremonies.

Appendix XI: Hybrid Ikat Motifs

This appendix presents several examples of contemporary ikat motifs documented during fieldwork in Belu, Malaka, and Kupang between 2022 and 2025. The textiles come from the collections and recent works of local artisans. They show how older motifs continue to be used, but also how they are changed or combined with new elements such as floral borders, revised geometric layouts, or the use of synthetic dyes. Some pieces maintain earlier patterns with natural dyes, while others include hybrid forms or European-influenced imagery with stronger colours. Taken together, these textiles reflect how ikat weaving in Timor today remains connected to ancestral ideas while also adapting to new cultural expectations and market pressures.

XI. 1: Plates



Plate XI.1. Contemporary ikat with anthropomorphic and animal motifs, Belu (TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025).

This contemporary textile reinterprets earlier Timorese compositions: rows of standing human figures (frontally posed with outstretched arms) alternate with animal forms (notably horses and birds) and small geometric separators. The design is organised in symmetrical, lengthwise registers with repeated units and narrow band dividers, an ordering that recalls early-20th-century Belu textiles, but here executed with sharper outlines and a brighter palette enabled by synthetic dyes. Details such as headgear, patterned garments and border ornaments suggest selective adoption of European decorative idioms, while the iconography retains local meanings linked to ancestry, protection and social identity. The piece exemplifies contemporary hybrid authorship, balancing traditional figures with updated colour and layout for present-day aesthetic and market contexts.



Plate XI.2 Ikat textile with continuous geometric registers, Belu (TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025).

This textile preserves one of the most established Timorese patterns: alternating bands of geometric diamonds, hooks, and small separators, arranged in carefully repeated registers. Such motifs, documented in early twentieth-century Belu textiles, have been continuously woven until today, marking them as enduring visual codes of identity and continuity. The symmetrical order of the bands and the controlled rhythm of repetition recall cosmological associations with balance and protection. Unlike recent textiles that often employ synthetic dyes, this piece is made with natural dyes, retaining the muted reds, browns, and indigo blues that historically characterised Belu weaving. Its persistence in both motif and colouring demonstrates cultural resilience, an active preservation of ancestral aesthetics even as hybrid styles have developed in contemporary practice.



Plate XI.3. Ikat textile with Garuda Pancasila emblem, Belu (TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025).

This textile features the *Garuda Pancasila*, the national emblem of Indonesia, woven in indigo-blue and white using a single-weft ikat technique. The central motif shows the eagle with outstretched wings, bearing a shield with the five symbols of Pancasila, and holding a banner inscribed *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (“Unity in Diversity”). Surrounding floral rosettes frame the composition in a symmetrical order. The adoption of this modern national icon into ikat weaving illustrates a striking departure from ancestral animal and geometric forms, marking an appropriation of state symbolism into local textile practice. While the Garuda motif represents national unity and sovereignty, its production through a traditional weaving method embeds it within Timorese material culture, producing a hybrid form that negotiates between state identity and regional artisanal authorship. This example demonstrates how ikat continues to adapt as a medium of cultural expression, merging political symbolism with inherited techniques.



Plate XI.4. Ikat textile with repeated bird motifs in vertical registers, Belu (TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025).

This textile shows rows of large bird figures with outstretched wings and stylised feathers. They are placed in vertical registers, each section divided by narrow geometric borders. The repeated bird motif, set out in clear panels, follows Timorese preferences for symmetry and orderly layout. However, the shape of the birds suggests outside influence. Their upright, almost heraldic posture, the extended wings, and the decorative details are closer to European design models, possibly adapted from colonial pattern books or imported cloth. Even so, the vertical structure of the composition and the indigo-white colour scheme remain consistent with local weaving practice. The textile therefore reflects a form of hybrid authorship. Older systems of symmetry and panel-based composition continue, but they are combined with visual elements that appear to come from European sources. The result is a design that incorporates foreign ideas while still being shaped by local interpretation.



Plate XI.5. Ikat textile with stylised bird motifs and synthetic yellow dye, Belu (TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025).

This textile shows large bird figures with open wings, arranged in vertical registers that are bordered by narrow geometric bands. The indigo-and-white ground follows older Timorese weaving practice, but the posture and detailing of the birds point to European heraldic influence, like motifs that were taken from colonial pattern books or imported decorative cloth. Along the side borders, the use of bright synthetic yellow adds a modern colour note that differs from the softer tones produced by natural dyes in Belu. The textile brings these elements together in a way that shows both continuity and change. Local principles of structure and symmetry remain in place, yet they are combined with imagery that seems to come from outside sources and with industrial colourants that belong to a more recent period. In this sense, the design reflects how ikat weaving continues to move between ancestral formats and contemporary materials.



Plate XI.6: Hybrid ikat textile with European decorative influence, Belu, mid-20th century.
Source: CCD-NL Documentation, 2018.

This textile shows how West Timorese artisans combined local and outside elements in their weaving. Indigenous motifs such as deer, trees, and flowers appear together with imported features like stars and geometric borders, which were influenced by European embroidery and lace pattern books that entered the region through colonial trade. The symmetrical layout differs from the more flowing style typically seen in pre-colonial ikat, suggesting that new visual systems were being introduced to local practice. Even so, the

meanings remain grounded in Timorese thought: the deer stands for protection, and plant motifs relate to fertility and renewal. These older ideas sit inside a design that also carries foreign influence. The strong synthetic blue background reflects the material changes of that time, when factory-made yarns and chemical dyes became available through trade but were still used in connection with ancestral symbolism.

From an art-historical perspective, the textile exhibits a form of hybrid authorship. Artisans did not directly copy European motifs. Instead, they reworked them to fit ikat's own symbolic language and technical limits. The result is a design that adapts to new influences while keeping its link to earlier traditions. By incorporating European imagery into a West Timorese structure, the artisans created a visual language that remains vibrant, demonstrating how ikat continues to evolve as both a living art form and a marker of identity.



Plate XI.7. Ikat textile with spearhead (*ujung tombak*) motifs and natural dyes, Belu Selviana, Belu, Author's own, 2022

This textile features repeated spearhead motifs (*ujung tombak*) arranged in vertical bands, a design that has been sustained in Belu weaving for many generations. The pointed forms symbolise protection, strength, and ancestral guardianship, linking present-day practice with long-established symbolic codes. The composition, with central patterned panels flanked by narrow side borders, reflects a Timorese aesthetic preference for symmetry and balance. Dyed with natural indigo and other plant-based materials, the textile preserves the deep blue-and-black palette associated with older traditions of Belu. The continued use of natural dyes, despite the availability of synthetic alternatives, underscores the resilience of ecological knowledge in weaving communities. The spearhead motif, meanwhile, remains one of the most enduring visual symbols of cultural identity in Belu, expressing both continuity with the ancestral past and the persistence of protective values in contemporary weaving.



Plate XI.8. Ikat textile with geometric and multicoloured supplementary motifs, Malaka (Author's own, 2022).

This textile from Malaka combines traditional warp ikat patterns with brightly coloured supplementary motifs arranged in horizontal registers. The central section features diamond-based ikat designs in muted natural tones, while the lower band displays vivid geometric figures executed with contrasting threads, creating a layered visual effect. The coexistence of subtle ikat fields with striking, multicoloured ornamentation reflects both continuity and innovation: ancestral motifs are preserved, yet their presentation is adapted to contemporary taste through expanded colour palettes and supplementary weaving techniques. The result is a hybrid aesthetic that bridges ritual symbolism with decorative appeal, illustrating Malaka's role as a site of experimentation in West Timorese textile production.

XI. 2: Summary Table of Hybrid Motifs

Plate No.	Region	Description (Motif + Hybrid Elements)	Source
XI. 1	Belu	Anthropomorphic figures and animal motifs (horses, birds) in symmetrical registers; brighter palette with synthetic dyes; selective European decorative influence	TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025
XI.2	Belu	Geometric diamond and hook motifs in symmetrical registers; continuity from early 20th century to present; natural dyes retained	TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025
XI.3	Belu	Garuda Pancasila emblem with shield and banner <i>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</i> ; woven in indigo and white ikat; hybrid of state symbolism and traditional weaving	TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025
XI.4	Belu/Flores	Rows of stylised bird motifs with outstretched wings in vertical registers; heraldic posture suggests European decorative influence; continuity in indigo-white palette	TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025
XI.5	Flores/Kupang	Stylised bird motifs in vertical registers; heraldic European influence; bright synthetic yellow in borders	TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025
XI.6	Belu	Spearhead (ujung tombak) motifs in vertical bands; symbol of protection and continuity; natural indigo and plant dyes	TenunNTT_Galeri collection, 2025
XI.7	Malaka	Warp ikat diamond motifs with multicoloured supplementary patterns in horizontal registers; continuity and innovation combined	Author's field documentation, 2022
XI.8	Malaka	Geometric diamond and multicoloured supplementary motifs in horizontal registers; blends traditional warp ikat with bright supplementary designs; hybrid aesthetic reflecting ritual symbolism, continuity, and innovation.	Author's field documentation, 2022

Appendix XII: Fieldwork Documentation (2019–2023)

This appendix presents a selection of photographs from field activities conducted between 2019 and 2023 in Belu, Malaka, Kupang, and Rote. The images document collaborative training sessions, storytelling practices, and community workshops with local artisans. Several of these activities took place in hybrid or online formats during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting the adaptive methods required to sustain dialogue and exchange when in-person contact was limited. These encounters formed an integral part of the research process, revealing how artistic knowledge and cultural memory are shared and sustained through conversation, demonstration, and collective practice. The photographs are presented as contextual documentation rather than analytical plates. They reflect the researcher's engagement with artisans as co-creators of knowledge and highlight the performative and narrative dimensions of ikat-making as a living artistic tradition. All photographs in this appendix were taken by the author.



Plate XII. 1 Participatory storytelling and drawing session with artisans in Kupang (2023).

These photographs show a participatory session led by the researcher with around thirty women artisans in Kupang. The activity combined storytelling, discussion, and drawing exercises that helped participants turn their memories and experiences into visual motifs. The session encouraged artisans to share personal and collective stories about weaving, rituals, and ancestors, which were later expressed through shapes, lines, and colours. This workshop was important for the study because it revealed how artisans think visually and give meaning to their designs. It also allowed the researcher to analyse how stories and cultural memory are translated into motifs, showing that weaving is not only a technical skill but also a form

of reflection and storytelling. By leading and analysing this session, the researcher ensured that artisans' own voices became part of the interpretation of ikat as a living cultural tradition



Plate XII. 2 Weaving, selling, and community interaction in Rote (2023).

These photographs show different aspects of weaving life in Rote. The first image captures a family-based weaving activity near the coast, where the mother weaves while her husband and son help untie dyed threads. The second image shows roadside stalls where women sell ikat textiles alongside food or drinks, combining weaving with small trade to

support their families. The third and fourth photos were taken during discussions with local artisans in front of the *Dekranasda* office and at the local market, where the researcher exchanged views with artisans about design, dyeing, and current challenges in production and sales.

These scenes are important for the dissertation because they document how weaving is embedded in the social and economic life of Rote. They show that ikat continues through both family collaboration and women's entrepreneurship, bridging tradition and modern livelihood. The interactions also allowed the researcher to observe artisans' perspectives directly and to analyse how cultural knowledge is sustained, negotiated, and shared through everyday practice. Together, these images highlight weaving as a living activity that connects home, market, and community, reflecting the adaptive strength and creative agency of Rote's artisans.



Plate XII. 3 Collaborative field activities and expert consultations in Belu (2023).

These photographs document collaborative sessions between the researcher, local artisans, and members of the regional Art Council (*Dekranasda*) in Belu. The upper images show discussions held in the homes of artisans, where the group examined motifs, natural dyeing processes, and regional variations in technique. These meetings provided

opportunities to learn directly from artisans and to document local terminology and practices related to colour preparation and symbolic design. The lower-left photo shows the researcher receiving information from a local textile expert about the history and classification of Belu ikat, while the lower-right image records a study visit to the private collection and library of Vivi, a local collector. This visit allowed the researcher to compare archival photographs, older textile examples, and contemporary weaving styles. Together, these interactions were essential for understanding how knowledge about ikat is transmitted, interpreted, and preserved at different levels, from household practice to institutional expertise.



Plate XII. 4 Collaborative engagements with artisans and textile experts in Malaka (2023).

These photographs document a series of field activities and collaborative exchanges in Malaka. The top-left image shows the researcher presenting her work and discussing with a local textile expert, who is also the wife of the deputy regent and a collector of ikat textiles from Belu and Timor-Leste. The meeting provided valuable insights into regional textile

styles, local dyeing traditions, and the symbolic meanings of motifs. The top-right image captures a direct interaction between the researcher and artisans working collectively in a home-based setting, where weaving, dyeing, and discussions about motifs took place in a participatory manner. The bottom image depicts a group of women artisans who collaborate daily to prepare natural dye materials, spin threads, and weave textiles. The process extended over several days, allowing continuous dialogue and shared learning between the researcher and artisans. These interactions are significant for this dissertation because they illustrate how weaving in Malaka is sustained through community cooperation and knowledge exchange. They also demonstrate how artisans' expertise and collective practice contribute to the preservation of natural dye traditions and the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations.

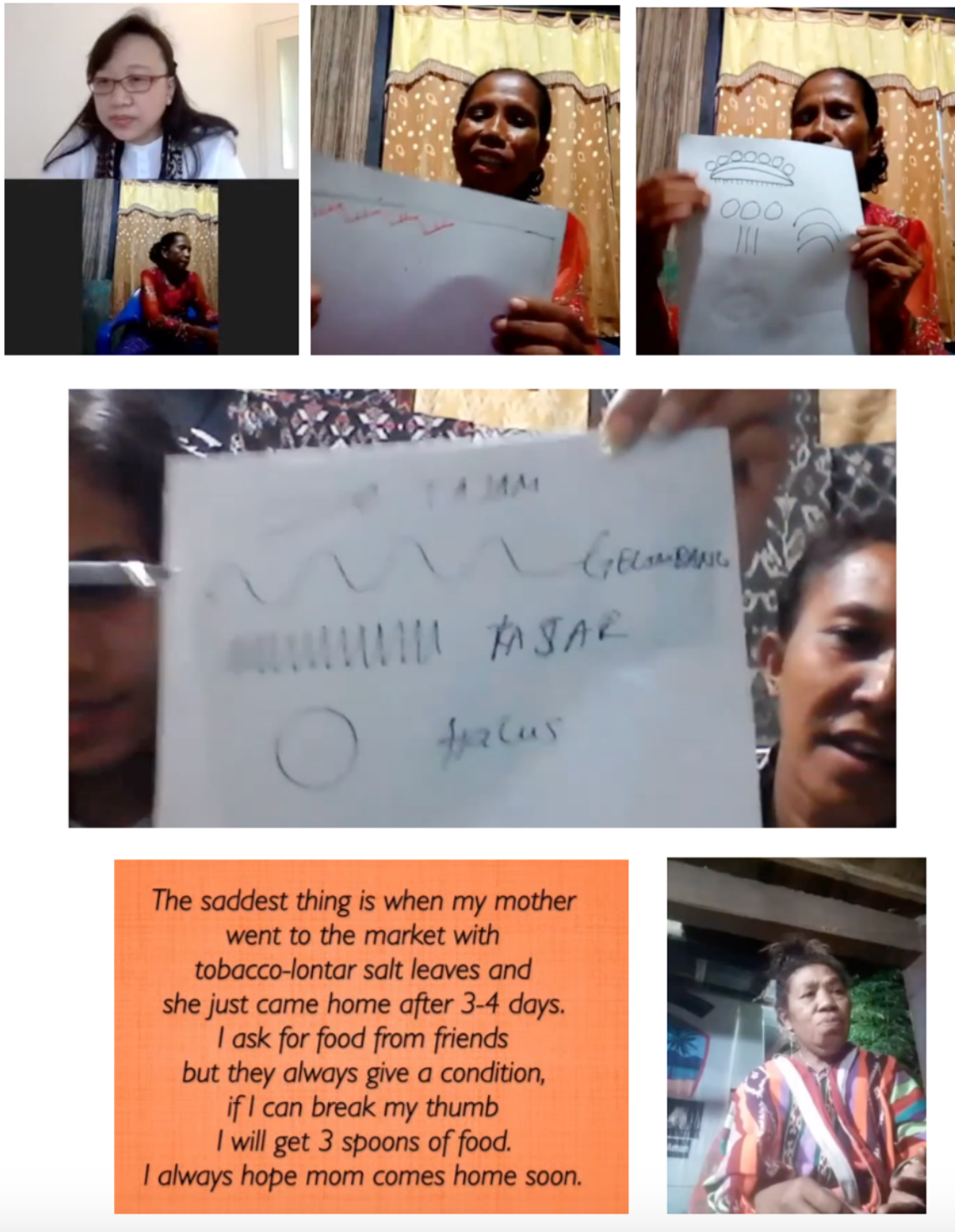


Plate XII. 5 Online storytelling and visual interpretation sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021).

During the early months of the pandemic, fieldwork had to shift to online contact through Zoom, WhatsApp, and phone calls with artisans in Belu, Rote, and Alor. These

sessions included simple storytelling exchanges, where participants talked about their memories and everyday experiences of weaving. Afterwards, many of them translated these stories into drawings that reflected emotions, motifs, or scenes from daily life. The drawings became a small form of visual storytelling and offered a way to share cultural ideas even when meeting in person was not possible. These online interactions helped keep the research process moving and showed how artisans express memory and creativity through both spoken narratives and images. By combining digital communication with traditional storytelling, the sessions revealed a quiet resilience and an ability to adapt during a time of global restriction. They also show that weaving communities continued to engage with their cultural practices, even under very limited conditions.