The Empowerment of Women in Contemporary Indonesia: Progress and Challenges
About the Conference

UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies hosted academics, activists, researchers, and graduate students conducting research about the empowerment of women in contemporary Indonesia. The conference highlighted research and work that analyze the various socioeconomic, religious, or legislative changes that have advanced or hindered the empowerment of women in Indonesia in recent decades. The goal of this conference was to address not only the progress made through policy, education, and activism in elevating the position of women in Indonesian society but also the challenges that remain.

The conference was co-organized by Dr. Juliana Wijaya (Indonesian Studies Coordinator, UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies), Nguyet Tong (Assistant Director, UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies) and Melany Lintuuran (Indonesian Women Alliance) and sponsored by the UCLA Indonesian Studies Program, funded through a gift from Julia Gouw, with support from the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in Los Angeles.

Read More: “International conference highlights women’s issues in contemporary Indonesia”

Special Thanks

- Julia Gouw
- Consulate General of Indonesia in Los Angeles
- UCLA International Institute
- Ms. Parwati Surjadija and Ms. Sonita Lontoh
- Elemental Productions: Dr. Robert Lemelson and Chisako Yokoyama
- Professor Helga Leitner and Professor Cindy Fan
- Indonesian Women Alliance
- Melany Lintuuran, Carol Kussoy, Nana Firman, Agnes Muljadi, and Jennifer Kussoy
Friday, February 8, 2019

9:00 Opening Remarks

- Professor George Dutton (Professor, UCLA Department of Asian Languages and Cultures; Director, UCLA Center for Southeast Asian Studies)
- Ms. Julianty Dwieliza (Acting Consul General of the Indonesian Consulate General in Los Angeles)

9:15 Panel 1: Women in Economy and Industry

- Women’s Empowerment in Fisheries: The Study of Indonesian Fisherwomen Sisterhood (Ms. Annisa M. Ratri, Indonesian Institute of Sciences and Ms. Susan Herawati, People’s Coalition for Fisheries Justice/KIARA)
- Women’s Environmental Leadership in Urban Culture (Ms. Janice Jap, University of Indonesia)
- Women-led SMEs in Creative Industry in Indonesia: Opportunities and Challenges to Advance Socioeconomic Development (Ms. Naimah Talib, Australian National University)

Panel Chair: Ms. Dita Cahyani (UCLA)

11:00 Invited Speaker’s Panel

- Ms. Parwati Surjaudjaja (President Director and CEO of OCBC NISP Bank)
- Ms. Sonita Lontoh (Global Technology Marketing Executive, Thought Leader and Angel Investor)

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Panel 2: Women in Trade and Labor

- Women’s Leadership in Indonesia Trade Union: Women’s Agency in Bi-Causal Pathways (Ms. Andi Cipta Asmawaty, Erasmus University Rotterdam)
- Border Struggles and the Political Subjectivity of the Indonesian Domestic Workers (Ms. Tri Murniati, University of Arkansas)
- Repairing (and Exploiting) the Underclass Image: Indonesian Women Abroad Under the State’s Eye (Ms. Michelle Philips, University of California Berkeley)

Panel Chair: Ms. Triwidyaningsih Harjito (UCLA)
3:30 Panel 3: Women in Arts, Education and Media

- Women in Higher Education in Indonesia: Policy, Changes and Challenges (Mr. Iskhak Fatonie, University of California Berkeley)
- Mutik Nida, Drum Queen: Claiming Space for Women in Dangdut (Ms. Rebecca Selin, University of Michigan)
- Looking at Women Artists’ Works in Indonesian Visual Art Past to Present (Ms. Farah Wardani, National Gallery Singapore)
- The Power of Emak-Emak as New Digital Political Influencers in Indonesia’s Disruptive Era (Ms. Ken A.G. Satiti and Ms. Nurry Aidawardhani, University of Gadjah Mada)

Panel Chair: Ms. Kimberly Clair (UCLA)

5:00 Film Screening: Bitter Honey (2014)

- Question and Answer with Director and Producer Mr. Robert Lemelson and Editor Ms. Chisako Yokoyama

6:00 Reception and Dinner
Saturday, February 9, 2019

9:00 Panel 4: Women in Islam

- *Muslimah Bela Islam*: Conservative Muslim Women’s Activism across Social Networks (Ms. Moniek van Rheenen, University of Michigan)
- (Un)veiling Tarbiyah’s Hijab Symbolization: Feminism against Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia (Ms. Ayu Regina Yolandasari, Northwestern University)
- Indonesian Female Ulama: Education, Movement, and Networks (Ms. Nor Ismah, Leiden University)

Panel Chair: Mr. Zezen Mutaqin (UCLA)

10:30 Break

10:45 Panel 5: Women Empowerment and Activism

- Unlocking the Potentials of Women’s Economic Empowerment through Joint Land-Titling (Ms. Mirisa Hasfaria, UNDP Indonesia Country Office)
- Legalizing Gender Equality: The Indonesian and Thai Women’s Movements (Ms. Sabina Satriyani Puspita, Northwestern University)
- *Sultanah* Yogyakarta: Women’s Justice in Feminist Legal Theory Perspective (Ms. Linda Sudiono, University of Atma Jaya Yogyakarta)

Panel Chair: Ms. Dian Tri Irawaty (UCLA)

12:15 Lunch

1:30 Invited Speaker’s Panel

- Ms. Jennifer Kussoy (Federal Reserve Bank of Los Angeles)
- Ms. Nana Firman (Green Faith)
- Ms. Agnes Muljadi (Ballerina, Actress and Photographer)

3:30 Indonesian Women Alliance Presentation
Women’s Empowerment in Fisheries: 
The Study of Indonesian Fisherwomen Sisterhood

Abstract

This paper examines findings from a case study of Sisterhood Indonesian Fisherwomen Organization (PPNI) and their innovative action to address multiple problems of women in the fisheries. In the fisheries and the fishing community, women make an important contribution. Unfortunately, the role of women in the fisheries sector has long been underestimated, invisible, and particularly marginalized. Moreover, women are also facing multiple burdens in terms of poverty, climate crisis and socio-political challenges. By using qualitative approach, this paper focuses on the empowerment strategy and initiative conducted by PPNI and its members to resolve the problems faced by the fisherwomen.

PPNI consisted of sixteen local artisanal fisherwomen organizations in the islands of Indonesia. In most cases, the livelihoods of fisherwomen are often constrained by poor access to market and limited entrepreneurial skill for producing value added products, as well as limited participation on the regulation process. PPNI also provide activities including livelihood diversification, community education, advocacy, coastal meeting, and capacity building from local to international level program. This paper also explores the innovative action of PPNI’s members in Central Java and East Java to struggle in order to get recognition and legitimacy as fisherwomen and obtain a legal identity. This paper argues that members’ deliberation is the key success of PPNI’s initiatives. Further, to tackle their problems and to handle common interests, PPNI establish norms to be followed and use their social, economic, and knowledge capital. PPNI also massively builds engagement with other non-governmental organizations and the government to work cooperatively in order to provide social acceleration and social protection for women in the fisheries sector.

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Women’s Environmental Leadership in Urban Agriculture

Abstract

Urban agriculture can be as strategy of urban development to solve poverty and achieve food security in a city that faces the impacts of climate change. Climate change causing floods and droughts increases the vulnerability of citizens with limited access to natural resources in the city. The benefits of urban agriculture are not only for household livelihoods, but also to develop the urban economy with local production and environmental sustainability in the city. Citizens can use small areas of land for vegetable production. Women’s involvement in farming activities can empower female leadership within the sustainable livelihood approach and urban agriculture strategy. Women have potential roles as agents of change to network between communities.

The aim of this study is to describe the model of women’s environmental leadership in developing urban agriculture in the city. The contribution of this study is to highlight an alternative strategy in community building and increasing women’s leadership in urban agriculture. This study used qualitative method, with in-depth interview, observation, and documentation studies. The female participants for stakeholder analysis were selected based on their roles as leaders in the development of urban farming in their communities, staff in NGOs that foster community farming in the city, representatives of academics who had competency and conducted research on urban agriculture, and local government officials involved in city planning decisions.

The results show that women’s environmental leadership needed collaboration with other stakeholders to develop horticulture with family home gardens and crop production. Besides that, awareness on natural resource management and knowledge about farming were foundational to raising women’s environmental capacity. Community empowerment through women’s leadership in agricultural activities will be able to support the sustainability of the city. The urban agriculture activities are related to greening, organic waste management, and water management for environmental management in the city. Implications of this study affect environmental municipal planning policy and the gender aspect within sustainable livelihood approach to increasing climate resilience and environmental justice in the city.

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Women-led SMEs in Creative Industry in Indonesia: Opportunities and Challenges to Advance Socioeconomic Development

Abstract

World Bank estimates that there are 11 million women-led Small and Medium Enterprises (WSMEs) in Indonesia, which has contributed to approximately 10 per cent of the country’s GDP in 2013. Almost half of that number is concentrated in the food and fashion industries, two emerging sectors in the creative economy cluster. Women-led SMEs provide a huge potential for socioeconomic development as a vehicle for Indonesia to realize the SDGs of ending poverty, achieving gender equality, providing decent work and stimulating economic growth. This research aims to investigate the nature and characteristics of women-led SMEs in creative industry in Indonesia; the opportunities and challenges women entrepreneurs face to expand their businesses; and the extent of which exposure to entrepreneurial activities could empower women entrepreneurs.

This research deploys qualitative methods, through literature review and in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs in creative industry and impact investing consultants in Indonesia. Using the Timmons’ Model of Entrepreneurial Process, the majority of the WSMEs who participated in this research are operating their businesses in lifestyle mode (growth-phase that allows to cope with other/unpaid domestic responsibilities), and only a few WSMEs running their businesses in Gazelle mode (aiming for rapid growth). Common opportunities are the positive shift in social norms, more access to initial resources, and the emerging domestic market. There are shared challenges that women entrepreneurs faced, including lack of entrepreneurial and business skills, lack of options and access to financial products, lack of professional networks, and inadequate government supports (taxation system, hygiene and halal certifications), especially at the regional level. Women entrepreneurs indicated that they are more empowered throughout the process as shown by an increase level of access to and control over income and assets, increased level of confidence and self-worth, and increased level of responsibility and power in the public sphere.

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Women’s Leadership in Indonesia Trade Union: Women’s Agency in Bi-Casual Pathways

Abstract

Gender equality leads to generating economic development, and vice versa, economic development can bring gender equality. Economic growth, as an indication of economic development, generate full employment conditions where men and women are able to participate in labor market. This research focuses this interconnection between gender equality and economic development by using the importance of women trade union leaders in Indonesia who make this bi-causal relationship happen.

To illustrate this, this paper presents Ibu Endang Laksanawati, a woman worker who has been working with Rose Brand, a national rice flour company in Indonesia, for over ten years. She is also a leader in Democracy Trade Union Federation (FSBK), East Java, Indonesia, where she successfully negotiated for the demands from women workers, resulting in the company providing maternity leave, day care, and long-term contracts. She also trained women members to be aware of violence and harassment. She does not only participate in labor market but is also an agent striving for women workers to have equal job opportunities and better employment conditions.

Women trade union leaders can build the bi-causal relationship between gender equality and economic growth. Feminization of the labor force in Indonesia was due to economic growth, creating more opportunities for women to be involved in labor market as well as in trade unions. Due to their persistence in pushing for the interests of women workers, unions can influence companies and the government to create better working conditions for women. As agencies, they also make other women workers aware of their rights to enjoy their wellbeing, pursue equality, and fight gender discrimination.

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Border Struggles and the Political Subjectivity of the Indonesian Domestic Workers

Abstract

The transitory lives of Indonesian domestic workers (IDWs) portray the challenging nature of borders. It is true that this challenge is not only embodied as the physical ‘international border,’ but also the metaphorical—cultural, political and social—‘local borders’ which draw a line between IDWs and their employers. This article extensively explores the creative writing of IDWs—in the form of short stories and memoirs—in relation to the challenges they face in crossing abstract borders and how those challenges situate IDWs in such disadvantaged situations. It also examines and analyzes IDWs’ responses and views toward the challenges faced, as well as their strategies to solve the problems caused by the various abstract borders. The linguistic barrier, for example, seems to be the standard border problem for all migrants. However, in the world of domestic employment, this barrier turns out to be a crucial problem to be solved since it affects coherent communication between employers and employees. I argue that through the process of crossing abstract borders, IDWs have gained a deeper understanding of the effects of borders and developed critical thinking. In crossing these borders IDWs experience a renewed sense of confidence which allows them to see beyond the label of “maids.” This new perspective transforms their roles as maids into that of “doers” who are capable of intellectual thinking. IDWs are not merely ‘maids’ attending to their employer’s needs and cleaning houses. Their narratives show that these women have an innate capacity to evaluate their positions and their environment. They critically evaluate their lives in their narratives. Writing about the difficulties in assimilating to their new environment, and coping with the challenges of their service, their narratives expose the harsh realities of the IDWs’ migratory experiences, a perspective that is unknown to the public.

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Repairing (and Exploiting) the Underclass Image: Indonesian Women Abroad Under the State’s Eye

Abstract

With news of their abuse making headlines worldwide, Indonesian live-in maids working abroad have been aptly described as “modern-day slaves.” The ILO found that Indonesian domestic workers know their rights less than half as much as Filipinas (who have an experienced home state speaking for them), and have notably higher rates of overcharging, underpayment, and human rights violations. In my doctoral study, I seek to draw out the conditions of lower status female maids, comparing the treatment of Indonesian and Filipina maids and the differential importance of both host and sending states in perpetuating or changing their conditions. Specifically, I ask how inequalities between states (particularly sending and receiving states) affect migrant labor outcomes, how those policies interact with interstate relations of power and perceptions of migrants like Indonesian domestic workers, as well as the real effects this has on divergent migrant experiences by nationality. Not all sending states (or host states, for that matter) are equal – these governments as well as their workers bring vastly different experience and bargaining power to the table. Each sending state must negotiate and reposition its authority against that of receiving regimes, which affects how employers and agencies treat migrants in each host country, and even impacts policy enforcement – a fact that the Indonesian government has been known to take advantage of, sometimes to the detriment of Indonesian women. This interaction between sending and host states and the mechanisms through which migration outcomes are achieved are new variables in academic debates, which I expect will adjudicate between myriad theories of migrant maid empowerment and abuse.

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Women in Higher Education in Indonesia: Policy, Changes, and Challenges

Abstract

This paper examines the public policy process at the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education in the formulation of gender-sensitive research grant guidelines. The paper explains the roles of top bureaucrats as a key factor in how to demand the evidence from senior policy analysts and other policy research institutes for informing policymaking process. The paper explores the challenges of policy changes agenda in the implementation process. The ministry developed the policy guideline for government research grants for researchers at the universities. It puts the aspect of women and gender on the universities’ research agenda since they are not prioritized in the Indonesia National Research Master Plan for 2015-2045. As the ultimate audiences of this policy, more than 4,000 university research centers across Indonesia have used this guideline. The paper shows that the number of women in Indonesia higher education in 2016-2017 has reached 43 percent of academic staff. However, women have difficulties gaining position in the top management and senior academic position in universities. Therefore, the Government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education intends to improve the inclusiveness of universities in mainstreaming women and gender in university research.

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Abstract

Simultaneously maligned and adored, dangdut music and its performance have become lightning rods for discussions of women’s morality, sexuality, and class status in a conservatizing Indonesia. While dangdut, an Indonesian popular music with hybrid roots and an enduring association with the lower class, generally features scantily clad women singers backed by male musicians, an increasing number of women are choosing careers as instrumentalists with local and regionally active dangdut bands, or OM (Orkes Melayu). In the summer of 2018, I travelled to Semarang, Central Java, to carry out preliminary research on the Islamic genre of qasidah modern, which is played by large all-women groups and shares both musical influence and listenership with dangdut. While connecting with qasidah modern musicians, I discovered that the rapidly popularizing “Drum Queen of Indonesia”, Mutik Nida, also hails from Semarang and began her musical in qasidah ‘girl bands’. Mutik freelances with both dangdut and qasidah ensembles, making veiling and religiosity as much a part of her performed persona as her trademark of singing while drumming. Drawing from conversations with Mutik and members of Mudalovers Kendal, a branch of her fan club, as well as live and recorded observation of her performances, I propose a revisitation of discussions of women’s experiences in dangdut both as performers and audience members. Rather than following a dichotomy between exploitation and empowerment of women in dangdut, I examine Mutik and her fans’ conceptualizing of veiling and instrumental virtuosity as creating “intracorporeal space” between performer and audience members. This physical and imagined space both ensures Mutik’s propriety on stage as a pious woman and reflects itself in an audience which respects the spatial autonomy of Mutik’s, usually veiled, female fans as they dance.

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Looking at Women Artists’ Works in Indonesian Visual Art
Past to Present

Abstract
Currently at National Gallery Singapore, we have been conducting research on women artists in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, mainly to develop the museum collection and exhibitions. But most importantly, we hope to improve the Indonesian and Southeast Asian art historiography with deeper recognition and inclusion of women artists’ contribution, especially in the field that has been mostly dominated by men as canons and placing women as art objects rather than subjects.

I will focus my presentation by presenting archives of 5 key women artists in Indonesia spanning the period from 1930s to the present:

- **Emiria Soenassa**: a pioneer artist originated from Eastern Indonesia, often overlooked in the history of Indonesian Modern Art, was one of the first members of Persagi (*Persatuan Ahli Gambar Indonesia* – Indonesian Painters Association) in 1938;
- **Kartika Affandi**: daughter of Indonesian maestro Affandi and long-time patron of Indonesian women artists;
- **Hildawati Sumantri**: abstract painter and educator, professor at Bandung Institute of Technology in 1960s-1970s;
- **IGAK Murniasih**: Balinese artist whose provocative works pushed the envelope in Indonesian modern Balinese art;
- **Melati Suryodarmo**: an internationally acclaimed performance artist whose works speak about gender, identity, body and their relation to contemporary social issue.

By presenting case studies of these 5 women artists, I would like to show and raise discussions on how women have been contributing to art history, as well as reclaiming their position in the art world by choosing to become the active subject instead of objects, speaking about diverse range of topics such as modernism, gender equality, social justice, humanity and politics. From here, I hope to increase awareness on the importance of women artists works in shaping the Indonesian contemporary culture and artistic practice of today.

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The Power of *Emak-Emak* as New Digital Political Influencers in Indonesia’s Disruptive Era

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze how *emak-emak* (Indonesian domestic mothers) have taken over social media to reproduce their political position based on *emak-emak* political narratives in PEPES (*Emak-emak* Supporters of Prabowo and Sandi Party) during the Indonesian nationwide presidential election campaign. *Emak-emak* used to be viewed as domestic working mothers with low education level—considered ‘blind’ in technology and politics. However, recently *emak-emak* have included themselves to the once masculine political debates in public. Their public sphere transformed from traditional markets to social media groups with numbers huge enough to attract many political candidates to begin targeting *emak-emak* as their political support groups.

This study attempts to analyze the *emak-emak* narrative influences in Indonesian political landscape using qualitative methods with data collection technique through Drone Emprit Network Analysis and desk studies. Preliminary observations found that the contents with private economic issues, such as the rising price of basic needs, and the down-to-earth propaganda in support of Prabowo-Sandi have been dominating PEPES. After analyzing the contents and their media movement, Gender Discourse Analysis will discuss the underlying meanings within contents. Finally, post-structural feminism will be used to argue about women’s position within the narrative. Initial findings show how *emak-emak* (and Indonesian women in general) as subjects is a categorization full of contesting ideas and interpretations through its legitimization and glorification of motherly characteristics within the masculinity-hegemonized society. The political narratives are produced by and for women in their own channel and yet have been engaged with mainly men spectators, showing how women are seen as only capable of addressing ‘domestic’ political matters due to their ‘motherly’ approach.

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Muslimah Bela Islam: Conservative Muslim Women’s Activism Across Social Networks

Abstract

This paper is part of a new project investigating the social, religious, and linguistic dilemmas that conservative Indonesian Muslim women encounter as active agents of *dakwah* (a performative genre of Islamic proselytization meant to strengthen one’s faith). Clearly, women play a prominent role in the contemporary upsurge of middle-class Islamic piety in Indonesia. While these women are fervent consumers of Muslimah fashion (Jones 2007; 2010), televangelism (Howell, Fealy, and White 2008), and popular culture (Heryanto 2011), the role of Indonesian women as active agents in producing piety is notably on the rise. As such, women are becoming increasingly vocal participants in *dakwah*, which is historically associated with performative public preaching. Nevertheless, the linguistic qualities of the female voice point to the social and political dilemmas that women encounter as active agents of *dakwah*. In certain exegetical traditions, the Qur’an and hadith include prescriptions for regulating women’s voices in coed spaces that valorizes ‘appropriate’ even-toned speech and discourages softness and seductiveness. By this interpretation, the female voice is included in a woman’s *aurat*, or the intimate parts that must be covered as part of modesty. How, then, do conservative Indonesian Muslim women participate in *dakwah* in a way that is commensurate with Islamic doctrine?

My preliminary investigation probes into women’s roles in organizing the *Aksi Bela Islam III* (the December 2, 2016 demonstration against former governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok) and the 2018 reunion in Jakarta, which drew thousands of Muslims to participate in a self-described peaceful demonstration to defend Islam. I argue that the affordances of social media create new sites of social interaction that allow women to be simultaneously agentive and pious. In one particular WhatsApp group, Mothers for Allah, I argue literal and figurative discourses of motherhood are part of an emergent register of feminine language that make piety and empowerment commensurable.

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(Un)Veiling Tarbiyah’s Hijab Symbolization:
Feminism against Islamic Conservatism in Indonesia

Abstract

Indonesia is well known as the most populous Muslim country. However, historically, dress had never been a major focus of Islamic practice (Salim, 2015). The promotion of Islamic veiling, or hijab, was started in the early 1980s. Since the Reformasi in 1998, the wearing of hijab has grown significantly along with the spread of the Tarbiyah movement, a transnational Islamist movement affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt, on campuses. Moreover, the rise of Islamic conservatism has targeted women to be controlled through their dress (Wierenga, 2015) and caused Indonesian women to lose their freedom to decide to veil or unveil. To fully understand this controlling mechanism, it is important to explore how the Tarbiyah movement especially has constructed and utilized the symbolization of hijab. It is also important to explore the weakness of the movement in socializing women to its conservative values. Such exploration may direct us to a counter strategy against the values. Reflecting on in-depth interviews with four former Tarbiyah activists who have since been active in feminism, this paper suggests not only the ways in which Tarbiyah controls its women activists through the hijab symbolization, but also how feminism has helped the activists to detach themselves from the movement. Thus, this paper aims to make an important point on how feminism may contribute in the battle against conservatism in Indonesia.

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Abstract

The reformation era in Indonesia has provided space for individuals and groups to express their aspirations and identities in the public sphere. Among the organizations and movements expressing a more masculine religious identity, the female ulama movement (gerakan ulama perempuan) has emerged. Female ulama (ulama perempuan) refers to Muslim women who possess Islamic traditional knowledge and capabilities to become ulama. This movement insists on the use of ulama perempuan to distinguish themselves from the word ulama referring to the male gender.

This movement is significant because it succeeded in holding the KUPI, the Congress of the Indonesian Women’s Ulama (Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia), in Cirebon on April 2017. The congress was attended by 519 Islamic scholars, 90% of whom came from an Islamic background, or work for Islamic institutions, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), and majelis taklim (Islamic congregation), while 10% were secular activists, academicians, and journalists. There were also 1,500 other participants and observers. This congress produced fatwas (Islamic legal opinions) and recommendations on social, religious, and environmental issues related to women. Secondly, this movement succeeded in elevating the religious role of women into Indonesian public debates by offering concepts about ulama perempuan and ulama-ness (keulamaan) of women and frameworks of gender-sensitive approaches to Islam.

My paper attempts to answer three basic questions: How and why does this movement emerge? What has this movement brought to the public debate on Islamic authority in Indonesia? What are the challenges and barriers in achieving their goals? I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Java, Indonesia including Cirebon, Demak, Yogyakarta, and Bondowoso.

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Unlocking the Potentials of Women’s Economic Empowerment through Joint Land-Titling

Abstract

The Indonesian government made a huge step forward in September 2006 when it announced that land must be registered in the names of both women and/or men (married couple) or orphaned siblings in areas acquired by the BRR (Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh-Nias) for resettlement. The policy guarantees women and men equal rights to access and control over land as a physical asset. Having equal access and control to the land broadens and strengthens the potential earnings derived from such ownership.

Women have been restricted in controlling land ownership/assets by positivists Indonesian law (Indonesian Civil Code and its legislation), which are dominated by the structural relation between men and women. However, the initial reading of related existing regulations also shown that there is legal foundation for joint land-titling. However, this is not widely known. Therefore, the initiative must be captured in a sound knowledge-to-policy research, so that it can serve the purpose of being an indirect form of social security for widows, widowers, orphans or even married couples.

Joint land-titling could change relative bargaining positions within the household, which equally share the right of land ownership between women and men. For women, this would mean obtaining something of worth to use as collateral to help them get income-generation opportunities.

This research will be using the feminist approach, hoping to demonstrate how joint land-titling can enact structural changes in the social world to provide women with equal access and control to land, combined with socio-legal theory to look at the intertwine of law, legal phenomenon and the wider society when making rights real for women.

The research will carry out a review on existing literatures. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with relevant informants (among others are the National Commission on Violence against Women) will also be conducted to capture the potential of the initiative for wider audiences -when it is adopted as gender-responsive action.

Mirisa Hasfaria
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Legalizing Gender Equality: The Indonesian and Thai Women’s Movements

Abstract

Theories of democratization mostly attribute gender equality largely to democracy. Such line of thought has generated prevailing assumptions about democratic regimes as the less challenging terrain, compared to nondemocratic regimes, for making policy changes aimed at advancing the conditions for gender equality. This project addresses a puzzle that serves to partially answer this larger question of whether democracy advances gender equality by framing it within the social movement literature and asking: Why do we see varying outcomes in movements’ capacity to affect policy change? I argue that the level of political violence in a movement’s historical relations with the state has an effect on the movement’s capacity to affect policy change. The relationship between this level of political violence and the movement’s capacity to affect policy is mediated by a key mechanism referred to as “proximity to key policymaking authorities.” Through a comparative analysis of the establishment of the Gender Equality Act in Thailand during a non-democratic regime and the impasse of the Gender Equality Bill in Indonesia during a democratic regime, I show that extreme political violence in a movement’s historical relations with the state influences the movement’s ability to gain close proximity to the ruling regime and, in turn, to affect policy change. Because historically the Thai women’s rights movement never experienced extreme political violence in its relations with the state, it is more able than the Indonesian women’s rights movement to gain close proximity to key policymaking authorities and, consequently, to affect policy change by way of gender equality legislation.

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Abstract

In Indonesia, the legal system which generally includes a combination of state law, customary law or tradition, and religious law, which tends to be dominated by social hierarchies and patriarchal practices of power, has begun to be questioned about providing a basis for equal participation for women, after the reformation era. The purpose of this research is to examine the implementation of Feminist Legal Theory in the practice of policy formation in the Constitutional Court Number 88/PUU-XIV/2016 concerning the requirements for filling in the position of Governor and Deputy Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta that legitimates women to occupy the position of Sultan of Yogyakarta. This is expected to produce legal discoveries in the legal practice of gender justice in the form of improving the theory of feminist law in Indonesia. The results showed that in the Feminist Legal Theory perspective with Formal Equality approach, the decision of the Constitutional Court is a progressive step in realizing legal justice for women. On the other hand, in anti-essentialism approach, the efforts to realize equality of access for women to occupy the position of governor do not necessarily guarantee the realization of justice for women. This is because there is a considerations based on the analysis of women's specific experiences as a praxis effort to achieve gender justice in the field of law which is ignored by dominant legal theory, which tends to be influenced by the practice of power dominated by patriarchal culture, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Dialectical interaction between theory and practice is expected to produce and enrich the theory of feminist law and resulted in efforts to create an innovative and gender equality law in Indonesia.

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