

1 Introduction

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Gender ideologies, representation and contestation

The *reformasi* era of the past twenty years has ushered in many changes that have simultaneously progressed and challenged gender equality. At the end of the Suharto era, gender equality was a major political demand that underpinned democratic reform. Many legislative changes were made, and with these changes the dismantling of the ‘gender order’ that the New Order established began to be disrupted. However, with every legislative change came also contrary moves that sought to challenge progress towards gender equality. The political ideology of the New Order seems difficult to dismantle completely and has found new expressions and contestations.

The ‘gender order’ that underpinned the political ideology of Suharto’s New Order had heteronormative, binary and static understandings at its core. This period saw ‘male’ and ‘female’ defined more clearly according to a specific set of appearances, social roles and spatial distinctions that privileged the family or *kekeluargaan* as the foundation on which development—*pembangunan*—took place. Motherhood for example, was the basis of citizenship for women and assumed subordinate to men in what Julia Suryakusuma (2011) termed ‘state ibuism’. Repressive and restrictive representations of women and circumscribed female roles in public life underpinned the political system. Its binary counterpart, *bapakism*, heralded the construction of fathers of the nation, as well as the household. These binary constructs were underpinned by *kodrat* (biologically specific nature), assumed to be God-given and sanctioned by Islam.

Kathryn Robinson (2008, and this volume) developed an approach that identified ways in which this gender order mapped on to specific areas of power during the New Order. Drawing on social theory of gender from R.W. Connell, Robinson's analysis reflected that 'gender relations are present in all types of institutions. They may not be the most important structure in a particular case, but they are certainly a major structure of most' (Connell 1987: 120). Gender relations can be understood as foci for the exercise of social, political and economic power in society; as a multidimensional structure operating in a complex network of institutions. As Kathy Robinson updates in her contribution to this volume, these institutions include, for example, marriage, political representation, laws on domestic violence and sexual violence, and employment settings. Changes to these institutions and processes over the past twenty years have provided room for gender equality gains to be made.

The gender order and norms in the public and domestic sphere also continue to be shaped by the currents of Islam. Eva Nisa illustrates two competing articulations of gender by the online engagement of the gender-just network initiated by gender-just *ulama* of the 2017 Indonesian Congress of Women Religious Scholars (Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia, KUPI) as a response to the resurgence of piety in contemporary Indonesia, referred to as *hijrah* (religious renewal) activity among young Muslims within various Islamic movements, including Islamist groups who articulate gender orders in everyday activism. While they are active in the media landscape, the loudest voices in the field belong to conservative voices. Nisa concludes that despite an increasing online presence of gender-just *ulama* and their opponents, digital activism remains gendered and does not weaken the influence of patriarchal norms.

The work of the New Order's gender order in prescribing was never complete or whole. As Benjamin Hegarty notes in his contribution on public gender, the ways that masculinity and femininity have been regulated is both a matter of public concern as well as a way to define the boundaries of full belonging to the nation. Public gender has also been a way to contest these boundaries. The spaces that Indonesia's transgender population have occupied and claimed are symbolic of the ways in which they were able to contest the limits of belonging; however, these claims were always contingent. The ways in which LGBTIQI communities in Indonesia continue to be marginalised and used as scapegoats to progressive legislative changes, for example, are clear ways in which public gender continues to inform boundaries of national belonging.

Legislative changes have allowed women into parliament. As Ella Prihatini charts, the number of Indonesian women legislators is higher than the average for Asia. However, foreign ministry and ambassadorial

positions lag behind. The gendered patterns of ministerial constitutions apply to Indonesia, as elsewhere, with more women holding 'feminised' portfolios such as health and education.

Economic aspects of gender equality

The changing economic conditions of Indonesia in the past two decades have significantly affected economic aspects of gender equality, while traditional gender ideologies and norms still play an important role in shaping economic outcomes for men and women.

In her chapter, Sri Mulyani Indrawati points out the important connection between human capital development and gender equality in Indonesia. Improving human capital is one of the highest priorities of the current Indonesian government, and Sri Mulyani argues that improving gender equality and utilising women's talents are crucial in achieving overall improvement and use of human capital in Indonesia. She also analyses how policy endeavours in the past twenty years that were designed to improve human capital, in the areas of education, health and social protection, are connected to gender equality advancement in Indonesia.

Sarah Dong and Nurina Merdikawati map the changing trajectory of various economic indicators of gender equality in Indonesia in the past twenty years. They show that increases in education level and decreases in the number of children, coupled with an increase in labour market opportunities for women driven by an increasing middle-class and changing consumption patterns, have resulted in more women working in the formal sector and in highly paid professional jobs. Nevertheless, there are still signs that traditional gender norms limit women's ability to take advantage of these new labour market opportunities, especially after they marry and have children. The authors also find that the youngest cohort of women in Indonesia are getting married and having children earlier than their immediate previous cohorts, most likely driven by recent more conservative attitudes towards dating and marriage.

Looking at more specific aspects of economic gender equality, Niken Kusumawardhani uses novel data and evidence to analyse the opportunities and challenges digitisation brings to the advancement of gender equality. She argues that while digitisation has the potential to bring more economic opportunities to women, both in terms of the number of jobs and the flexibility of jobs, there is still a large gender gap in access to the internet and in digital skills. Furthermore, the flexibility of working arrangements brought by internet use could add to women's burden, as they are expected to do housework while working.

Atnike Sigiro looks at an important but poorly understood aspect of economic gender equality: care work. Without systematic data collection on care work in Indonesia, she uses various data sources to trace evidence on how much care work Indonesian women carry out and how they are rewarded. She estimates that 41 million individuals in Indonesia do unpaid care work as their main activity, and 97 per cent of them are women. The scale and intensity of unpaid care work done by women in Indonesia is tremendous and the gender inequality in this realm is also huge. Atnike also looks at the remuneration of paid care work, mainly in the form of domestic workers, who are mostly women, and finds that most of these workers earn below the minimum wage and have no formal labour protection. All this evidence suggests a dramatic change of the treatment of care work both in terms of policy framework, and research and data collection, is needed.

Social policy reforms and agendas

The changing political landscape and democratisation process that began in 1999 gave rise to new opportunities to promote women's rights. The government responded to calls from the women's movement and established the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) to address gender-based violence. In 2004, the government passed the Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, which criminalised domestic violence, and in 2007 gender mainstreaming was strongly stated as an agenda item in long-term development planning, which was aimed at promoting gender equality in all aspects of development. Despite the formulation of these policies, challenges to their implementation still exist. One of the most significant challenges is that persistent stereotypes and norms continue to perpetuate, and have been rearticulated in parallel with repressive customs and religious laws such as the infamous Pornography Law, issued in 2008. Andy Yentriyani in her chapter takes us through the long power struggle in the trajectory of policies and by-laws regulating sexual violence and sexuality in Indonesia. She argues that *reformasi* creates 'deficits' as indicated in contradictions and setbacks in the agenda of better fulfilment of women's rights.

While the political agenda seemed preoccupied with trying to regulate women's bodies/privacy, lawmakers have made efforts to bring gender equality into broader social policies that affect women's welfare. Social protection systems have slowly improved post-New Order. Programs have been created that specifically target women as beneficiaries. However, as Vania Budianto highlights, most social assistance programs have positioned women as an instrument in achieving social development

objectives, and are less concerned with achieving gender equality goals. Such targeting perpetuates conservative socially acceptable gender roles. The prioritising of social assistance programs for those considered 'deserving' meant that only mothers were constructed as targets. This approach means that women's vulnerability over her life cycle is often overlooked, and also leads to insufficient recognition of female heads of households and elderly women.

Some progress has been made in improving the welfare of women and girls. The amendment of Law 1/1974 on Marriage was the hallmark achievement of the women's movement in combating child marriage. The new law increases the minimum age of marriage from 16 to 19 years old for all women and men. However, the pathways in reducing child marriage face challenges from gender norms and socioeconomic disadvantage. Santi Kusumaningrum, Ni Luh Putu Agastya and Andrea Adhi describe court decisions about marriage dispensation as a way the state actually facilitates child marriages, often exercised under the thin veil of children's agency. The chapter also invites deeper thinking in mitigating child marriage and its consequences, by investing in prevention of child marriages performed secretly and using marriage formal registration as a way to protect children from the risk of child marriage.

New feminist movements

Women in the arts have challenged traditional gender roles prescribed by the New Order regime by reclaiming their agency as creators and decision-makers in literary, music, film, performance and visual art scenes. Wulan Dirgantoro discusses how creative practices by individual artists and art collectives, by women and non-binary artists, have demonstrated innovation, resilience and hope in the face of democratic decline in Indonesia. Intan Paramaditha in her contribution traces the currents of two prominent trajectories of feminist thought, liberal feminism and Islamic feminism, which have shaped the discussions around women, gender and feminism, and these influences have continued to thrive in the subsequent decades. In more recent times, new articulations of feminism are also being drawn. In response to the free market focus on *kerja* (work), the Jokowi administration focuses on women leaders in digital economy and creative entrepreneurship. In response to this focus on the individual breaking the glass ceiling, a promising new movement is forging connections with collectives across the *nusantara* (archipelago) to reshape the value of artistic endeavour towards Java-centric decoloniality. A critical part of this decoloniality work has been

not only in the production of visual arts but also in its reception, which has often been framed through the lens of gender politics.

Indonesian gender politics after the onset of *reformasi* is also seen on the 'silver screen'. In her chapter, Evi Eliyanah describes filmmakers' efforts to challenge the hegemony of *bapakism* by presenting a 'new man' masculinity that displays a compromise between the male-breadwinning role and sharing care and domestic work. Despite its bias towards middle-class men, the silver screen in Indonesia has attempted to critique the hegemonic ideal and promote an alternative ideal masculinity.

The 2002 gender-focused Indonesia Update edited volume brought together a group of women leading the forefront of struggles at the time of the democratic transition. They pushed issues of gender and politics to the forefront of the public agenda, and there have been many changes to representation, policy and debates since. Still, gender ideologies of the past are being revamped and finding new articulations. Twenty years later, in 2022, a younger generation with renewed energy and focused attention are driving change towards equality and gender diversity.

References

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