

THE IMPACT OF “CONSERVATIVES TURN” ON WOMEN ROLES AND STATUS IN INDONESIAN MODERN FAMILY: THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN JAKARTA

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INTRODUCTION

As part of Asia's democratization in the 21st Century, Indonesia has also transformed into new stages since the reform era in 1998. The resignation of Suharto in May 1998 from his office marked this shifting. Reformation and democratization in Indonesia have provided wider room for progressive perspective on gender equality in politics, societies and within the family. Nevertheless, democracy has also facilitated the rise of Islamic fundamentalism which promotes conservative values to bring back Indonesian women's progressive roles and positions to the domestic realm (Munir, 2003; Qibthiyah & Utomo, 2016). These new challenges have affect women everyday life within the family as well as in the society.

THE STUDY AIMS

To explore the view of working women in Jakarta on their roles and status in domestics and public spheres.



METHODOLOGY

Information for this paper mostly derived from a larger study on “Socio-economic and political change and family pattern in Reformasi Indonesia”, involved conducting 100 semi-structured interviews of women in Jakarta (October 2013-January 2014). The respondents are women age 30 years and older. The participants are 60 married and 40 single women. For this paper, only information from married women were used. In addition, to obtain more update information, 15 working women were interviewed in October- November 2019.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- Women participation in the labor force has changed womens' traditional role as care givers to providers, nevertheless regardless how much they earns, majority women in this study considered themselves as 'the second earners'.
- Reformation in Indonesia affected power relations in the family to become more democratics, including husband involvement in taking care of the children. It is common for husbands taking turn to off from works or bringing their children to office when their wives are not available because of works.
- Nevertheless democracy in Indonesia also provided wider rooms for the rising “conservative turns” that advocating strongly patriarchal values and practices. This study found to some extends, conservative religious views have affected women roles within the family regardless their education and social status.



- Women who share different views with their spouses or parents on religious preaching regarding gender roles have caused marriage and family instability.
- Arranged marriage involving religious leaders are more common than before. Some women said that this marriage practices has often lead to divorce.
- One of interpretation of sharia law is women obligation to wear 'jilbab' (head covering). Moslem respondents who were not wearing 'jilbab' said in a way have received pressure from family as well as their social milieu to cover their hairs.

CONCLUSION

This study over a preliminary understanding on family dynamic in modern Indonesia family. Democratizations, development and social change have facilitated profound changes in women's education and occupation and, accordingly, in societal attitudes to gender roles in marriage. Nevertheless, Indonesian women are also facing a new challenge that come from the “conservative turn” which promotes fundamentalist values to bring back Indonesian women's progressive role and position to the domestic realm. For many women this new challenge have affect their life within the family as well as in the society, which in turn affect their marriage stability. Further study on gender relations, family dynamic and ‘conservative turn’ need to be developed. Improving women autonomy as well as gender equity within the family will promote social stability.

Related literature

- Setyoneluri, Diahhadi. 2014. Women Interrupted: Determinants of Women's Employment Exit and Return in Indonesia, Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, 50:3, 485-486, DOI: 10.1080/00074918.2014.980387
- Munir, Lili Zakiyah. 2003. Islamic Fundamentalism and Its Impact on Women. Paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies (AAS) Forum, The Hilton Hotel, New York, March 27-30, 2003
- Qibthiyah, Riatu & Ariane J. Utomo (2016) Family Matters: Demographic Change and Social Spending in Indonesia, Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, 52:2, 133-159, DOI: 10.1080/00074918.2016.1211077.

