

Bridging the Gap between Women's Wounds and Freedom towards Policy Change

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Abstract

This article charts my journey of becoming a human and women's rights activist through an autoethnographic lens, situating my personal experiences within broader political struggles. Using autoethnography, I weave my life narrative with cultural critique to highlight how individual experiences are entangled with social structures. I consistently opposed the militaristic regime of the New Order and the patriarchal legal system and kept fighting for women's empowerment. Traumas from my youth, when I helplessly watched some of my friends being trapped in forced and abusive marriage practices, motivated me to study law. In this sense, my story affirms the feminist principle that the personal is political: intimate experiences of violence and injustice became the ground for political resistance and legal activism. After graduation, I worked in the fields of human and women's rights and co-founded several organisations, including Solidaritas Perempuan, APIK, and KPI. I also participated in two major tribunals: the Tokyo Women's Tribunal in 2000 and the IPT in 1965. Both within parliament and outside it, I drafted and fought for several laws defending women's rights, including the Domestic Violence Law. Through collaboration with feminist bureaucrats and academics, I found that personal stories of trauma, when connected to collective feminist knowledge, could transform the social and legal system and contribute to gender, social, and ecological justice.

Keywords: autoethnography, activism, women's rights, forced and child marriage, feminism, people's tribunal, legal reform, and policy change

Introduction

Reflecting critically on my journey as a women's activist in the context of resistance against the New Order reminds me of the traumatic childhood experiences of two friends and playmates of mine, who were forced into marriage in their fifth year of primary school. This experience became a political and constitutional awareness that fuelled my anger and anxiety, which became the main driving force behind my journey into feminism and my activities in the human rights movement. I have lived as a feminist for almost two-thirds of my life. This trauma has also motivated me to uphold truth and justice, regardless of whether the state, society, or individuals violate them. I do this for the sake of humanity and to promote peace. My father, R. Katjasungkana, always told me that "loving your country means fighting for justice". I have written these words in my notebook since I was in secondary school, whenever I was bored with listening to lessons. Meanwhile, my mother, who has memorised the Qur'an, has taught me more about Islamic values, especially the prophetic characteristics of *siddiq* (truthfulness and honesty), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *fathonah* (intelligence and wisdom), *tabligh* (conveying and

building understanding), and concern for my fellow human beings, especially the poor. This is because my mother came from a much simpler background than my father.

This trauma haunts me even now when I see similar images of oppression as a triggering factor. In January 1998, when I watched the opera *Les Misérables*, the lyrics of the song "I Dreamed a Dream", sung by Fantine, one of the characters based on Victor Hugo's novel, affected me deeply, despite being in a different context. The faces of my two childhood friends, who were victims of forced marriage, appeared as the song was sung. The following excerpt from the lyrics is particularly heartbreaking:

I dreamed a dream in time gone by
When hope was high and life worth living
I dreamed that love would never die
I dreamed that God would be forgiving

Then I was young and unafraid
And dreams were made and used and wasted
There was no ransom to be paid
No song unsung, no wine untested

But the tigers come at night
With their voices soft as thunder
As they tear your hope apart
As they turn your dream to shame

I had a dream my life would be
So different from this hell I'm living
So different now from what it seemed
But life has killed the dream I dreamed

Moreover, at that time, I was preparing a presentation on the Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. One section of the report addressed the issues of forced and child marriage. Reading the full lyrics of the song moved me even more, especially when I heard Susan Boyle sing it again. She was a village girl who was often bullied by her friends, fellow villagers and even her teacher because of her appearance and academic ability. However, thanks to her singing talent and golden voice, Susan became famous and wealthy through her best-selling album. I am sure that, if they had had the opportunity, my two friends from primary school would have achieved their dreams too. The same happened to several women who were victims of forced, child, and contract marriages in the five villages of Pasuruan Regency, where I grew up and which were my constituencies when I was a member of the House of Representatives (2004-2009). I still remember one female victim who became a midwife, and another who recently told me that she had graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Law and Education. She has served as the village secretary for several years.

I interpret the third verse of the song, which I have translated as "a tiger's voice, though soft, roars like thunder", as a metaphor for the patriarchal socio-cultural and legal regimes that have destroyed girls' dreams and hopes, turning them into prolonged shame and pain. The song "I Dreamed a Dream" clearly haunts me as a metaphor for the brutal reality experienced by women who suffer violence and discrimination because of patriarchal culture, even within the legal system. Reflecting on these traumatic experiences, I realise that it was my experiences and observations in Parelegi, the village where I grew up, that sparked my feminist consciousness. It was also there that I first wrote about my dream of studying law in a short essay for my Composition and Indonesian language class. Initially, I

aspired to become a judge. I took the exam and passed all the stages up to the interview with the Supreme Court justices, including the first female Supreme Court Justice, Sri Widoyati Wiratmo Loekito. However, I failed and ended up working as a human rights advocate, specifically for women's rights.

From the age of ten until graduating from Airlangga University's Faculty of Law, I continued to harbour that sadness and anxiety. After studying law, I worked as a public lawyer at LBH Jakarta, where I engaged in political and legal empowerment for female migrant workers. I also promoted political empowerment to increase women's political participation and representation with the Indonesian Women's Coalition for Justice and Democracy (KPI). I was the first Secretary General of KPI from 1998 to 2003. Furthermore, I founded, led, and developed APIK/LBH APIK from its establishment in 1995 until today.

These organisations, which I set up with friends, were founded on the vision of dismantling structural injustices resulting from patriarchal culture and New Order policies. They also took the form of individual membership organisations. This structure was adopted to resist the New Order's corporatist politics, which sought to control all social movement organisations under a single umbrella, governed by Law No. 8 of 1985 on Societal Organisations. Following the dissolution of *Gerwani* in 1966, which was an individual membership organisation, and the use of propaganda involving insults against women (such as dancing naked while gouging out the eyes and cutting off the genitals of generals), almost all non-governmental women's organisations established during the New Order period took the form of foundations. This form is regulated by the Civil Code (KUHPerdota), a legacy of Dutch colonialism. It is a legal entity intended to be a charitable organisation with a feudal leadership structure. The dissolution of *Gerwani* itself was a setback for the women's movement in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, *Gerwani* is still recognised today as a highly progressive women's organisation that campaigned for women's rights, equality, and social justice (Wieringa 2010; Wieringa 1996; Suwondo 1981; Wieringa 2002, pp. 81-82). Women's organisations established under the New Order regime, such as *Dharma Wanita* and *PKK*, were continuations of *Fujinkai* from the Japanese era. The concepts and organisational structures of *Dharma Wanita*, *PKK*, and other organisations for military wives follow the rank structure of their husbands' organisations (including

the police). This pattern was actually already applied to women's organisations during the Japanese occupation under the name *Fujinkai*. Essentially, these organisations were used to mobilise support for the New Order.

At the regional level, I helped establish the Kartini Asia Network (KAN) and served as its first coordinator. The network focuses its activities on researching gender and women's sexual rights (Wieringa & Katjasungkana 2012; Wieringa et al. 2016; Hidayana et al. 2007). At a meeting in Manila, the decision was made to use the name R.A. Kartini, following a proposal by Sister Mary John Mananzan, which was then approved by representatives from other countries. This demonstrates that R.A. Kartini is a well-known figure among feminists across Asia. The Kartini Asia Network held its first conference in Bali.

I am also an active member of the Asia Pacific Women and Development's (APWLD) Steering Committee, which was based in Kuala Lumpur and then Bangkok. I co-founded *Imparsial*, an organisation focusing on security sector reform, which often deals with the military and police, who are sensitive to criticism. My environmental conservation activities with *Kelompok Sepuluh*¹ and my work defending environmental cases led to my election as Chair of the Presidium of the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (*Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia/WALHI*). Together with Nur Amalia, one of the founders of APIK, I represented WALHI in filing a lawsuit against President Soeharto in the State Administrative Court concerning the transfer of reforestation funds to the Indonesian National Aviation Industry. WALHI won this lawsuit.

I carried the anxiety and anger from my childhood with me for years, and these feelings shaped my character and determination. Ultimately, they gave me the strength to work with friends to develop strategies and activities by building organisations such as SP, KPI, APIK, and KAN. My 13 years of legal practice at LBH Jakarta (1980-1993) helped me consolidate my thoughts, strategies, and movement activities to defend women and girls. In addition to eviction and termination of employment cases, I handled several cases involving women's rights at LBH Jakarta, including: Dahlia Nasution's case; the mother of the late Ari Anggara, who won custody of her children; Asri's case (not her real name), in which her husband, the singer Farid Harja, divorced her on the third day of their marriage because the reason that she was not a virgin; Dewi's case (not her real name), in which her fiancé, Ellyas Pical, ended their engagement without official notification because he

had found a new partner; and cases involving women workers striking for menstrual and maternity leave, fair wages, and shorter working hours. I also defended two cases of violence against women due to violations of their sexual rights.

These cases led me to delve deeper into the issue of sexual diversity as a human right. At that time, violations of women's rights, especially those related to sexual orientation, were still hidden and not recognised as human rights issues. Because of this, I was reprimanded by a YLBHI advisor who, at the time, believed that defending women's and family issues was beyond the scope of LBH's advocacy work. During my time as a member of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) from 1999 to 2004 and the House of Representatives (DPR) from 2004 to 2009, both as a member of the National Awakening Party (*Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa/PKB*) faction, I had more opportunities to advocate for various laws, including those that ratified important international conventions such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Similarly, in discussions in Commission III and various Special Committees on general laws, and in other meetings with female members, especially those with an activist background, such as Eva Sundari, efforts were made to ensure that the perspectives of women and marginalised groups were considered when formulating the various laws under discussion.

Research Methodology

This article is written from a feminist perspective that emphasises the slogan "the personal is political". This principle, popularised during the second wave of feminism, reveals that women's personal experiences, such as forced marriage, domestic violence, and legal discrimination, are not merely private matters but rather the result of patriarchal social and political structures (Harnisch, 1970, 2006). Thus, the traumatic experiences I witnessed from a young age provided me with insight into how state policies, laws, and customs control women's bodies and lives.

The slogan "the personal is political" originated from the second wave of feminism that swept through the late 1960s and 1970s. This marked a period of fierce resistance to patriarchy and family values, and was also important for other social movements. Radical feminist activist Carol Harnisch popularised the term in an essay of the same title. However, in her revised writing, she stated that the term was not hers and that she did not even use it in her article. Instead, it was attributed to her

by two editors of *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation*, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt.

I also refer to Catherine MacKinnon's feminist legal theory, which asserts that the law is not neutral but is shaped and enforced within a male-dominated system. The law is fundamentally sexist because it reflects and perpetuates patriarchal cultural values, meaning that seemingly private relationships are in fact arenas of politics and power (MacKinnon 1989). This perspective clarifies how the standardisation of women's roles in the 1974 Marriage Law, the Dual Role of Women policy, and the state's ideology of *ibuisism* are concrete examples of how the law functions as an instrument of patriarchal politics.

The feminist autoethnographic approach reinforces this framework by transforming the author's life experience into a dual form: a personal record and a cultural analysis. Autoethnography enables reflection on vulnerable experiences and connects personal narratives with social structures, revealing the layers of consciousness between the self and culture (Ellis & Bochner 2000). Through this method, personal experiences can be interpreted as political data, revealing how state control and patriarchy operate in women's daily lives.

By integrating the principle that "the personal is political" with the feminist autoethnographic method and feminist legal theory, this paper asserts that women's personal experiences reflect not only individual trauma but also serve as an arena for political resistance. From this standpoint, personal experiences can be transformed into strategies for advocacy, organisational formation, and legal change towards gender, social, and ecological justice.

Traumatic Experiences: A Starting Point

Many people may know what friendship means, but they may not fully understand what it means to lose a friend. This is not due to physical death, but to the fact that her childhood was stolen and patriarchal customs and culture destroyed her dreams and hopes. On a day that I no longer remember, but will never forget, my small world was shaken as if there was an earthquake in my chest. That day, when I heard that my little friend Patria was going to be married off, I felt as though I was watching the yellowish-green leaves of the *Jaranan* tree (Latin name: *Lannea Coromandelica*) around my parents' house being forcibly cut from the tree (*diprunthes* in Javanese, which sounds more tragic). There was pain in

my chest and anger in my head. The news meant that I would lose my playmate and companion on the way to school. We would no longer play together at the river, catch *gathul* fish behind the house, or climb the big *Rukem* tree in my parents' garden. We would not cook together or exchange lunch boxes anymore: the bread and butter I brought would be swapped for the boiled cassava, tempeh patties (*mendol*), or salted fish that she brought. More importantly, I would no longer have a friend to learn Javanese with. Learning Javanese had already been challenging enough when my family and I moved from Pamekasan in Madura to Parelegi Utara, a tiny village on the outskirts of Pasuruan. This small village was home to just 14 families. The families were generally poor, living in bamboo houses with dirt floors. Their main occupation was farming or working on farms. Rice fields surrounded the houses, and in the mornings, I would see women walking along the footpath to the fields to plant vegetables or rice and weed them before harvesting. Some of the women also traded goods at the market.

One day, I learned that my friend and neighbour Patria was finally marrying an older man. I watched the villagers prepare food and drink for the wedding party, including slaughtering a cow, as Patria was the first child in her family. Although she looked beautiful in her wedding dress, Patria did not appear happy, whereas her husband looked strong and sturdy. Three days later, however, her husband returned to his village on the edge of the forest in a place called *Lambau* (Dutch: *landbouw*, meaning agricultural village). It was not suitable or "*ora patut*" in Javanese, meaning that the divorce had been finalised. During those three nights, Patria had tied her body from her feet to her chest with a wide, long *stagen*, which her mother usually used after giving birth. I did not know where she got the idea from, but she had certainly prepared for it. When her husband tried to touch her, she struggled and kicked him until he fell off the bed. Whenever I remember Patria's story and have to retell it, I always shed tears.²

Around the same time as Patria's marriage, my senior classmate Karsiti was also forced into marriage. Her dreams of becoming a village midwife were shattered, although she later became a traditional birth attendant. Tragically, her husband remarried without divorcing her. When his new wife fell seriously ill, he took her to live with him, and Karsiti cared for her until she died. Karsiti's marriage took place just before the national exams at the end of Year 6. My teacher, SKY Darsana, informed us of this in Year 5. His aim was to give students in his class

the opportunity to take Karsiti's place in the exams. "Come on, who dares to replace Karsiti? Win or lose, it's worth a try," he said. I did not know where the energy came from, but slowly, my hand went up. My teacher shook my shoulder. "Really?" he asked, as if he could not believe it. But actually, I was hesitant because I had to study maths for Year 6. To help me catch up, my teacher increased my study hours and even moved me up a year while I waited for the exam. I passed the exam with fairly good marks: 84 for Indonesian, 70 for History and Civics, and 64 for Maths. There were some questions that I could not answer because they were only taught in Year 6.³

Meanwhile, in Pamekasan, the town where I lived until I was almost six, I often saw child brides married to much older men. Usually, forced marriages and child marriages were carried out to relieve the economic burden on the family and escape poverty. In *Madurese*, this type of marriage is known as "*ngala' tumpangan*" (*tapel*), which literally means "taking a ride", in the sense of entrusting the life of one's child to an older man. Often, the match is made while the children are still in the womb to cement the friendship between their parents. Parents forced their daughters to marry to avoid the shame of having an unmarried daughter, even though she was still a child. Another traumatic experience I had in Pamekasan was witnessing the circumcision of a baby girl. I was only five years old when I saw a midwife cutting the labia or clitoris of a baby girl with scissors and gauze, then simply throwing the bloody gauze in the bin. I was horrified, and even now, when I remember that bloody event, I get goosebumps and tears come to my eyes.

In addition to witnessing forced marriage, child marriage, and female infant circumcision, another traumatic experience was the violence that later became known as the 1965/66 Genocide (Wieringa & Katjangsungkana 2018). This event caused me to lose a neighbour's child, who I later learned was a member of the *Pemuda Rakyat*. Our village head, who was a member of the Indonesian Communist Party, also disappeared without a trace. His son, Bambang, who was also my senior at school, fled to save himself and returned 27 years later. He searched for his father every day in every corner of Jakarta after reading in 1979 that all prisoners on Buru Island had been released. Based on the testimony of my senior classmate, who witnessed the massacre firsthand for a month, as well as Bambang's testimony, I learned that prior to the implementation of the 1965 International People's Tribunal (IPT), there had

been a mass grave in the Purwodadi Botanical Garden, just two kilometres from my village. It is estimated that 600–800 people were killed there. Together with friends from *Kontras* Surabaya, I visited the graves, which stretched for approximately 15 metres in the middle of the tropical botanical garden. As a result of the genocide of 1965/66, I also missed out on opportunities that could have helped me achieve my dreams, as my father was suddenly dismissed from all his jobs in 1967. Why was this? Simply because he was a supporter of President Soekarno.

The victims of the 1965/66 genocide were not only PKI and its affiliated organisations, but also pro-Soekarno nationalist groups. Consequently, the judges of the 1965 IPT provided a new interpretation of the term "national" in Law No. 26 of 2000 on Human Rights Courts, which includes articles on crimes against humanity and genocide as defined in the Rome Statute. I witnessed a group of *Ansor* members from Parelegi Village approaching my father and asking him to take down the large photo of Bung Karno in the dining room. With air rifles pointed at him — my father was a member of the Indonesian Shooting Association — he refused their request, stating that Bung Karno was still president. As a member of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS), he was refused entry to the special session of the MPRS that impeached President Soekarno, despite having received an official invitation to attend the session. After being denied entry to the session room, he was investigated by Adnan Buyung Nasution, the Attorney General. My father was declared a member of the Soekarno faction and dismissed from all his positions. Later, President Suharto awarded my father the "Bintang Maha Putera Utama" medal in recognition of his contribution to the creation of the 1928 Youth Pledge. He was buried in the Kalibata Heroes Cemetery.

I also lost a member of my extended family and his wife. While working at LBH Jakarta, I defended former political prisoners (*tapol*) in Group C who were demanding their pension rights. Instead of obtaining their pension rights, however, one of my clients was tortured, and the letters "ET" (meaning "former political prisoner" or "*tapol*") were added to his identity card. In 1991, Putu Oka Sukanta — a poet and *tapol* who had been detained for ten years without trial — visited my office to ask for help. The Acupuncture Foundation that he had established had been frozen simply because he had proposed that there should be no additional "ET" designation on the ID cards of former *tapols*. Anyone with

an ID card bearing the ET designation is highly vulnerable to persecution. The story of Tejabayu, a former political prisoner from Buru Island, who was also my colleague at LBH Jakarta, is even more heartbreaking. When we appointed him as head of the LBH Jakarta library, Adnan Buyung Nasution (the director at the time) and I had to meet General Sudomo (the Commander of the Security and Public Order Command), as we had received a letter stating that we were prohibited from employing former political prisoners.

Soeharto's militaristic system of government caused great suffering to those who criticised the regime, including the *Petisi 50 Group*. Together with Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara and Luhut Pangaribuan, I advocated for A. M. Fatwa, who was also a member of the *Petisi 50 Group*. General H.R. Dharsono, another member of the group who played a role in the suppression of the Indonesian Communist Party, was imprisoned by the Suharto regime,⁴ as were even loyalists who criticised him. While serving as Coordinator of the International People's Tribunal on Crimes Against Humanity 1965/66 (IPT '65), I received death threats at Soekarno-Hatta Airport while accompanying victims returning from the tribunal. I also received threats of violence when representing women who had experienced domestic abuse and were filing for divorce.

Gender Equality in the Family

I was born into a large family and am the eighth of fifteen siblings born to two mothers. My first mother died, leaving behind four children. Then my father married my mother, Maimunah, a Betawi woman, despite being from Madura himself. I was therefore born in Jakarta on 7 April 1955, alongside my ten siblings. In addition to being from different ethnic groups, we were also from different social classes. My mother came from a modest background, but her father was a well-respected merchant, and her son was an Islamic scholar who founded an Islamic elementary school in Kampung Melayu, East Jakarta. My grandmother was a housewife who had sixteen children. Meanwhile, my father was the son of R. Sosro Danoekoesoemo, a district head in Sampang who had graduated from MOSVIA, a civil service school in Probolinggo. He was also a translator and writer, a member of the Java Institute, and an activist with the Islamic Union (Kuntowijoyo 2002). My father's grandfather, who was from Palembang, was a doctor. He was among the first cohort to graduate from STOVIA in Batavia, after which he founded Muhammadiyah in Sampang. My father attended the *Algemeene*

Middelbare School (AMS), the Indonesian equivalent of high school, and was a pioneer of independence. He also founded and administered Pemuda Indonesia in Solo, representing the organisation at the 1928 Youth Congress where the Youth Pledge was adopted. Previously, he had been Editor-in-Chief of the Dutch-language newspaper *Bintang Timoer*, had written articles and poems, had compiled the Indonesian Language Terminology Dictionary, and had taught at *Taman Siswa* in Yogyakarta. He established the Indonesian Shipping Association and the Surabaya Zoo Management, and served as Inspector of the State Plantation Company Units 24-25 Dwikora in the East Java region. He was also a member of the National Council and was later appointed to the MPRS as a regional representative of the Indonesian National Party in East Java.⁵ My father's three brothers and his younger sister, who belonged to a different political party, were also members of the House of Representatives. My father's family also intermarried with various ethnic groups, including foreign nationals.

From my father, who was born in 1908, I learned about politics, and from my extended family, I also learned about tolerance and the importance of respecting diversity. He also worked at British American Tobacco, but left because he protested against the company's discriminatory treatment of Indonesian workers. My father's family, including his nephews and nieces, as well as his older and younger siblings, often visited our home. They would chat and debate about the books they had read, whether about languages, literature, world poetry and prose, art, economics, or politics. These discussions often lasted until morning. Although I did not fully understand everything due to my young age, I would often listen to them. My father had a small home library, but I could not read the books in his collection as they were in foreign languages. However, my father taught me that books and magazines are windows to the world. Most notably, there was always a copy of the book *Door Duisternis tot Licht* on his desk, a legacy from his father. It was not until later, when I read my father's commemorative writing for the 50th anniversary of the Youth Pledge⁶ that I learned how valuable the book containing R.A. Kartini's letters to her friends in the Netherlands was. It was like a holy book chronicling her struggle and had inspired other independence fighters.

Although my father was somewhat of a "patriarch" (in that household matters, including serving his daily needs, were entirely taken care of by my mother), he did not discriminate between his daughters and sons when it came to their education. The children were

free to choose their field of study. This background was very important to me because it enabled me to fulfil my childhood dream of becoming a legal expert — either a judge or an advocate — to provide legal and social defence for the weak and marginalised, especially women. However, achieving this was not easy, given my family's economic situation after my father lost his job under the Soeharto regime while my siblings and I were still at school. Fortunately, my older siblings, who were already working, helped pay my school fees and those of my younger siblings. In my second year at university, I received a Supersemar scholarship, which enabled me to complete my studies. In Year 5 of primary school, I wrote an essay in Indonesian about my dream. At the end of the school year, my teacher SKY Darsana replied to my essay in a letter, which I still have today. In it, he wrote, *"Nur, it is unlikely that we will meet again. This letter is to remind you of the dream you shared with me. I hope you can achieve your dream of becoming a lawyer. Remember, too, that Asians are often humiliated by Aryans, and it is your duty to fight against all forms of discrimination."* I did not fully understand the meaning of my teacher's words at the time, but I grasped the importance of eliminating discrimination.

My mother was born in 1926, at a time when Indonesia was under Dutch colonial rule and subject to discriminatory policies based on race and gender, particularly against local people and those not from noble families. Consequently, she only had the opportunity to attend an *"Ongko Loro"* school. She could only sign her name and read a little of the newspaper. However, as a Betawi child, she learned to read and memorise the Qur'an from a teacher in her village. This teacher later became her mother-in-law. Nevertheless, my mother strongly emphasised the importance of education for girls. Perhaps it was so that they would not end up like her. Due to the situation under Dutch colonialism, she was unable to attend school. Under the customs of a patriarchal society, she was also married off at only 16 years old. Forced marriage and child marriage again! Although I know that, in my mother's view, a woman's main role is as a mother and housekeeper, she never emphasised this to her daughters. From my mother, I learned life's values and cooking, a hobby of mine. She often expressed her pride in her daughters. Often, when watching TV and seeing me in an interview, she would proudly exclaim, *"That's my daughter!"*

Rejecting the Concept of "Women's Dual Role"

My memories of the women in the village of Parelegi, as described above, helped me understand the "Dual Role of Women" policy set out in the 1978 State Policy Guidelines (*Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara/GBHN*). One morning, while waiting for my graduation announcement at my boarding house in Wonokromo, Surabaya, I read about the policy in Kompas, a daily newspaper. The policy was formulated by two mothers, Astrid Susanto and Suwarni Salyo, who were members of Team IX GBHN and were proud to have successfully included the dual role of women in the GBHN. The policy was created in response to the World Bank's "Women in Development" concept during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). Tien Soeharto also encouraged women to "pursue a career" so that they could implement the Five Principles of Women (*Panca Dharma Wanita*). This concept was formulated in 1974, coinciding with the establishment of *Dharma Wanita* on 5 August 1974. Essentially, alongside their roles as mothers and wives, women were encouraged to work outside the home. This ideology was also instilled in organisations established pre-independence that were members of Kowani. I was shocked by this news.

I thought of the poor women in my village who played multiple roles: as housewives, working in the fields or on farms, either for wages or unpaid, and going to the market to sell their crops and other produce, or to trade. My thoughts then turned to 1974, when the government and the House of Representatives passed the Marriage Law. Articles 31 and 34 set out very rigid gender roles for husbands and wives: the husband is the head of the family and the breadwinner, while the wife is the homemaker. This standardisation of roles in the Marriage Law seemed to be "softened" by the concept of "women's dual roles", which in fact placed an additional burden on women. In 1970, the National Population and Family Planning Agency (*Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional/BKKBN*) was established, and the Family Planning (*Keluarga Berencana/KB*) policy was issued, which targeted women. This was based on the assumption that children are born from women's wombs. The implementation of the policy was often coercive, even involving the use of military force. However, even with in vitro techniques, women can't conceive without the role of men. Furthermore, in 1972, the government formed the Family Welfare Empowerment (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/PKK*) programme, aimed at grassroots women in rural

areas. The chairperson of *Dharma Wanita* was also the chairperson of the Action Team. Thus, the concept of *Panca Dharma Wanita* — the five main roles of women as a wife, a housekeeper, a mother, an educator, a social worker, and a citizen — was also socialised to grassroots women. This concept has been referred to as “housewifisation” by Mies and “ibuism” by Djayadiningrat, as quoted by Wieringa (1985). These concepts were later developed by Suryakusuma (2011), who explained how the New Order used gender ideology to control women for political purposes and maintain power. She termed this the ideology of “state ibuism”.

Examining the publication of state policies that domesticated and standardised women’s roles, it is evident that 1974 was a pivotal year for the emergence of various New Order policies that re-domesticated women, notably through the legalisation of standardised women’s roles in Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974. Women were confined by culture, law, and policies, which also gave rise to various discriminatory policies against women. There was a major clash between established legal and social norms and the social reality of women’s roles throughout history. This often led to conflict and violence within the family unit, eventually resulting in divorce. Women in my village, who already fulfil multiple roles, are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities, while men continue to fulfil a single role. In fact, the law gives men the authority to be the head of the family and the main breadwinner, which gives them the power to make household decisions. In my village, when mothers go to the market to sell produce or trade, their husbands are often seen taking care of the children, cooking rice, and fetching water. It is women from feudal families and the urban middle class who actually feel the impact of discrimination and subordination the most. Wives who wish to fulfil multiple roles are often hindered by the provisions of Articles 31 and 34 of the Marriage Law. If they disobey their husbands’ prohibition on working, their husbands can divorce them on the grounds of “*nusyuz*”, or disobedience to their husbands. I have handled many such cases.

Seeing the Problem from Women’s Experiences and Perspectives

My ability to analyse laws and policies, as demonstrated in my reading of the policy on the Dual Role of Women in the 1978 GBHN, was acquired through the Law and Social Change course taught by Soetandyo Wignyo Soebroto. I also learned about critical legal

theory from this course. This theoretical approach essentially seeks to understand law in a more critical, contextual, and sensitive manner with regard to power, as well as issues of equality and justice, including gender, social, and ecological justice. In other words, it rejects the idea that law is neutral, objective, and separate from politics and power. In reality, however, law is a product of political and economic systems that are inseparable from the struggle between various interests, which often only benefits the stronger parties and harms the weaker ones. At the time of my studies, I was not yet familiar with feminist theories, including feminist legal theory, as an integral part of critical legal theory. My association with the founders of Kalyanamitra and its regional and international networks enabled me to learn more about feminism and feminist legal theory. I mainly learned about the latter through training courses organised by Asia Pacific Women’s Law and Development (APWLD), which was based in Kuala Lumpur at the time. The trainers were Ratna Kapoor and Madhu Mehra, two renowned feminists from New Delhi.

Kalyanamitra library, with its thousands of books on feminism, was invaluable in broadening my knowledge. Dr. Syarifah Sabaroedin (deceased), one of its founders, was kind enough to give me books on feminist legal theory as gifts. One such gift was a copy of Catherine MacKinnon’s “*Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*” (1989). This book discusses how the state and the law perpetuate patriarchal cultural values and how feminist legal theory can be employed to transform the social, economic, and political structures that are prejudicial to women. Reading this book reinforced my understanding that the legal system is fundamentally sexist due to male dominance throughout the legal process, from drafting to implementation. The law should protect and promote women’s rights. Consequently, women must be empowered to utilise these rules to resist discrimination, subordination, marginalisation, and violence. At Kalyanamitra Library, I also found an article entitled *Kuntilanak Wangi* (a translation of *The Perfumed Nightmare: Some Notes on the Indonesian Women’s Movement* by Saskia E. Wieringa, 1985). I used this article as a reference and guide when training women’s movement activists.

MacKinnon’s opinion really impressed me. During the *Feminist Legal Theory and Practice* training organised by APWLD, we learned how to determine whether a rule or law benefited women or men, which social class of women was advantaged or disadvantaged, and how to defend women against unfair laws. In other

words, critical and feminist legal theories enable us to dismantle the basic assumptions of a rule or law by deconstructing and tracing its origin to see whether the past has influenced current legislation, providing a basis for advocating change.

Struggle Strategy: The Personal is Political

From my reading about family planning regulations largely aimed at women, the formation of *Dharma Wanita* and *PKK*, the policy of women's dual roles, and the standardisation of gender roles in the Marriage Law, it is clear that these were related to the political will of the New Order government under Suharto at that time. The goal was clear: to subjugate women for political purposes, particularly electoral ones, in order to maintain power. The proposition in critical legal theory that I learned in college and from various literature is that the law is often used to maintain the status quo and to support groups that hold political and economic power, and that this is an inevitability.

MacKinnon's thesis that the legal system is sexist because it is dominated by the political system that created, dominated, and implemented it shows that personal arrangements in the private sphere are political matters. The idea that the law is neutral, objective, and aims to achieve justice is self-defeating.

My thoughts, traumatic childhood experiences, and 13 years of experience working at LBH Jakarta have strengthened my determination to realise my dream of defending women's and children's rights. Encountering the concept of structural legal aid (*Bantuan Hukum Struktural/BHS*), which was developed and implemented at LBH Jakarta, as well as meeting friends from Kalyanamitra, Asia Pacific Women Law and Development, IRAW Asia Pacific, and Women Law and Development — particularly Madhu Mehra and Ratna Kapoor — as well as other feminist organisations and academics, has strengthened my vision of feminism, human rights, the legal aid movement, and the women's movement. My fellow feminist advocates from India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Malaysia have been instrumental in helping me build the organisation's foundation and formulate the APIK/LBH APIK framework. APIK (Indonesian Women's Association for Justice) was founded by seven women advocates: Tumbu Saraswati (deceased), Dwi Ria Latifa, Rita Serena Kolibonso, Apong Herlina, Nur Amalia, Dewi Iriani (deceased), and myself. I became the Secretary/Executive Director of LBH APIK, which was the first pilot project. APIK is an organisation

with individual membership, whereby each member is required to establish an LBH APIK office in their respective region. In 1998, twelve LBH APIK offices nominated me as a candidate for the People's Consultative Assembly from the Delegate Group Faction, representing NGOs. Currently, LBH APIK has grown to 18 offices. In 2010, these offices decided to form an umbrella organisation called the Indonesian LBH APIK Association. I was elected National Coordinator until 2019, after which I was elected Chair of the Board.

Prior to the establishment of APIK/LBH APIK, Prof. Sylvia Tiwon from the University of Berkeley and Drs. Fauzi Abdullah (deceased), an ideologue and labour activist at LBH Jakarta, assisted me in formulating the APIK/LBH APIK framework. This framework is known as Structural Gender Legal Aid (*Bantuan Hukum Gender Struktural/BHGS*). BHS is fundamentally based on Galtung's theory of structural violence (1969). As LBH focuses on defending the poor, the poverty they experience is structural. Therefore, legal aid must address the structural root causes of their poverty and empower the community legally, enabling them to participate in the process of legal change. APIK/LBH APIK developed this concept by adding a gender analysis dimension, ensuring that gender inequality in relations between women and men, as well as in other social relations, including those with the environment and natural resources, is considered by every legal aid worker within the organisation.

In addition to the concept of structural legal aid, the BHGS framework incorporated gender analysis and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Various concepts were adopted, including the Triangle of Women's Empowerment and the Triple R (Rights, Recognition, Redistribution), developed by Wieringa et al. (1997) and Fraser & Honneth (2003), respectively. The implementation strategy was formulated with the assistance of Wiladi Budiharga, who also developed transformative social science. Together with him, I established the *Semarak Cerlang Nusa Foundation*, focusing on developing transformative social science through training and publishing a transformative social science journal. He also helped APIK/LBH APIK develop a strategic plan for the first six years after launching its office on 18 April 1996. He supported APIK/LBH APIK throughout the first 15 years of its development. One of the strategic plans agreed in 1996 was to advocate changes to the Marriage Law. However, the large number of domestic violence cases handled in the first

two years of APIK/LBH APIK's existence meant that the reform of the Marriage Law was overshadowed by the urgent need to draft the PKDRT Bill in 1997 and advocate for its passage into law in 2004.

Encounters with feminists, including activists and academics from around the world, such as Saskia E. Wieringa from the University of Amsterdam, Abha Bhaiya, and Kamla Bhasin, prominent Indian activists, Nighat Khan from Pakistan, Zainah Anwar, founder of Sister in Islam in Malaysia, and many others, have enriched my knowledge and understanding of feminism. Other organisations whose books I have read and learned from include Walhi. I was once the Chair of the Walhi Presidium and the Advocacy Division Coordinator at the Convention Watch Working Group at the University of Indonesia. I was also briefly a member of Prof. Omas Ihromi's teaching team at the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of Indonesia. Established in 1994, the Convention Watch Working Group is an institution that promotes the Women's Convention and strives to enforce women's human rights and achieve gender equality. It works through policy advocacy, influencing law enforcement and legislators by developing educational modules and strengthening the capacity of stakeholders, particularly law faculty lecturers, through the "Engendering Law Faculty Curriculum" programme.

Additionally, it reviews Indonesian legal regulations and initiates new ones that lead to the fulfillment of women's human rights (Kusuma & Irianto 2023). This has been a valuable opportunity to learn more about various aspects of gender inequality in Indonesia and other countries. I also co-founded *Imparsial*, which focuses on security sector reform. All of these experiences have helped to refine the BHGS's working concepts. Participating in the Beijing Conference shortly after the foundation of APIK/LBH APIK on 4 August 1995 expanded my network and enhanced my knowledge and skills in advocating for women's rights.

Engaging with friends from the Philippines, Japan, and Korea broadened my understanding of policy advocacy, teaching me how to raise important issues such as *Jugun Ianfu*⁷ through the *Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japanese Sexual Slavery* in 2000. At the "Women's Tribunal", I served as "Chief Prosecutor", preparing the indictment (Katjasungkana 2021). I also gained valuable experience organising the *International People's Tribunal on 1965 Crimes against Humanity (IPT '65)*, and serving as a judge in the *Permanent Peoples' Tribunal on Myanmar State Crimes against Rohingya* and

Other Minorities and the International People's Tribunal on Iranian Atrocities. My traumatic childhood experiences of witnessing and indirectly experiencing the effects of forced/child marriage, female genital mutilation, and the 1965/66 genocide have shaped my life and social and political activism to this day.

Bringing the Hidden to Light: Turning Cases into Policy

The establishment of APIK/LBH APIK has enabled me to expose long-hidden crimes that have gone unpunished. Cases involving marital rape, domestic violence, and exclusion and violence due to sexual rights and orientation have often been overlooked due to a strong culture of silence in society and the isolation of the victims themselves. In line with the strategic plans formulated in 1996 and 2014, APIK/LBH APIK submitted an academic paper, a draft amendment to Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, and a policy brief on the establishment of family courts to the House of Representatives. These were included in the 2014-19 national legislation programme. One of the most crucial articles for the abolition of forced and child marriage is Article 7, which concerns the minimum age for marriage. It stipulates that the minimum age for marriage is 16 years for women and 19 years for men. However, this provision clearly legitimises forced and child marriage. Efforts to amend the Marriage Law have not made any progress to date. However, following the issuance of a Presidential Regulation in Lieu of the Law in 2019 to raise the minimum age for marriage, the House of Representatives amended Article 7 with Law No. 16 of 2019. This sets the minimum marriage age at 19 for both men and women. This minimum age limit is intended to prevent and eliminate forced and child marriage. Nevertheless, more systematic and measurable efforts are required in practice. The trauma and sadness of my childhood often resurface when I encounter many cases of child and forced marriage in the implementation of APIK/LBH APIK programmes.

In addition to proposing reforms to the Marriage Law regarding the minimum age of marriage, in 2014 APIK/LBH APIK also submitted a report on Early and Forced Marriages in Indonesia (A brief submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Women's Rights and Gender Section (WRGS) at the 26th session of the Human Rights Council (10-27 June 2014). APIK/LBH APIK believes that the fundamental challenges causing high rates of forced and child marriage include the persistence of patriarchal institutions and religious interpretations

that discriminate against women, as well as customs and traditions (such as *merariq* and *kawin tangkap*). Other challenges include poverty, limited access to education, varying legal ages of adulthood, weak law enforcement, and laws that allow marriage dispensations for minors. In collaboration with LBH APIK NTB, the Indonesian Association of LBH APIK has conducted extensive

policy advocacy to eliminate forced and child marriage as part of the “Rule of Law in the Eyes of Poor Women and Vulnerable Groups” project. With the assistance of Saskia Wieringa, APIK/LBH APIK developed the concept of the Gender Justice Index (Wieringa & Katjasungkana 2019) as a result of these activities.



Figure 1: A view of a child victim of forced marriage/child marriage carrying her baby. The photo is used for educational purposes and does not reveal the identity of any individual.

Documentation: LBH APIK NTB

Other policy advocacy activities relate to the practice of female circumcision. At a National Seminar held in Yogyakarta and organised by the National Family Planning Coordination Board (BKKBN), the Population Studies Centre at Gadjah Mada University, and the Ford Foundation, I presented my personal experiences and those of a female labourer. The final version of this paper, entitled “*Sunat Perempuan dan Trauma yang Ditimbulkannya*” (Female Circumcision and the Trauma it Causes), was referenced in research on female circumcision conducted by Lies Marcoes (UNFPA, 2025; Katjasungkana 2025).⁸ In addition to writing papers, I have participated in various campaigns organised by other organisations to abolish female circumcision. Clearly, there is no legal basis in the Qur’an or Hadith that can be used to justify the circumcision of girls. Amidst the controversy, the Indonesian Ulema Council issued a *fatwa* that legitimised the practice of female circumcision.⁹ The controversy surrounding the interpretation prompted the Indonesian Ulema Council to issue a *fatwa* that prohibited female circumcision (No. 9A/2008). However, the title is misleading as it seems to prohibit female circumcision when, in fact, the *fatwa* prohibits the use of hadiths — which some scholars consider to be weak — as a basis for its prohibition.¹⁰ In other words, the MUI *fatwa* actually legitimises the practice of female circumcision. The *fatwa* considers

various differences in scholars’ interpretations of female circumcision. However, an encouraging development occurred in 2022 when the Indonesian Women Scholars Congress (*Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia/KUPI*) issued a *fatwa* at its second congress, stating that female circumcision is haram (forbidden).

Rather than rejecting the practice, however, the Minister of Health issued Minister of Health Regulation No. 1636/MENKES/PER/XII/2010 on Female Circumcision, despite stating that female circumcision is not a medical procedure. This regulation contains protocols for performing female circumcision and can therefore be seen as legitimising the practice. It essentially contains instructions on how to perform female circumcision. Female circumcision has become more popular due to its medicalisation, and now involves not only girls, but also adult women who were not circumcised as children. Based on religious interpretations and under pressure from their husbands, these women go to doctors to be circumcised.

Recently, the Minister of Health issued Regulation No. 6 of 2014, which revoked this regulation. In implementing Health Law No. 17 of 2023, the government issued Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024, which sets out the regulations for its implementation. Among other things, Article 102(a) of Government Regulation No. 28

of 2024 states that “Health efforts for the reproductive system of infants, toddlers, and preschool children, as referred to in Article 101(1)(a), shall at least include: ‘eliminating the practice of female circumcision.’” Ultimately, we all know that female circumcision is a form of control over women’s bodies, representing yet another instance of subjugation (Prastiwi 2017). As APIK/LBH APIK, I have advocated for several other important laws and policies, particularly during my time as a member of the MPR/DPR. These include the Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Katjasungkana & Damanik 2004; Katjasungkana 2013; Katjasungkana 2014) and the Citizenship Law (Katjasungkana 2025).¹¹ APIK/LBH APIK initiated the drafting of these two laws, which were then socialised and advocated alongside the Working Network for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Pro-Women Prolegnas Working Network. As KPI Coordinator, I also supported a sexual minority group known as Sector 15, a KPI member. They later established the Ardhany Institute, focusing on research, education, advocacy, and publication. I am also a founding member of this organisation.

My advocacy for victims of the 1965/66 genocide, including those who are still experiencing persecution, and Group C members who are denied pension rights, led to the establishment of the IPT ‘65. I became its coordinator. IPT ‘65 was held to mark the 50th anniversary of the events and the 2013 release of Komnas HAM’s report on crimes against humanity committed in 1965/66. The IPT ‘65 was significant in that it opened the eyes of the Indonesian and international communities, a process also triggered by Joshua Oppenheimer’s film “The Act of Killing”. The panel of judges, chaired by Zak Yacoob — a former judge of the South African Constitutional Court, Mandela’s comrade-in-arms, and someone imprisoned by the apartheid regime — concluded that the crimes committed in 1965-66 constituted genocide. The state must be held legally accountable (Wieringa et al. 2019).¹² The establishment of the IPT ‘65 prompted the government to hold a symposium on crimes against humanity for the first time and invited hardline groups to challenge narratives about genocide and crimes against humanity. Despite threats and raids on the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Jakarta) office on 17 September 2017, the 1965 Victims’ Families Forum went ahead with its symposium to rectify the history of 1965. As director of LBH APIK, I investigated important events in the country. For example, I was a member of both the Timor-Leste Human Rights Commission and the TGPF in 1998. Together with Apong Herlina, I also founded APIK. I acted as advocate for Karlina Supelli, Gadis Arivia,

and Wilasih Noviana when they were arrested by police while demonstrating on behalf of *Suara Ibu Peduli* in 1998.¹³

Conclusion

I contributed to APIK/LBH APIK’s work, particularly in terms of building democracy from the ground up. This work was based on the experiences of women who were most severely affected by poverty, vulnerability, and unfavourable policies.

As Dr. Karlina Supelli stated in her reflection on 30 years of APIK/LBH APIK, “The understanding of justice used and fought for by APIK/LBH APIK goes beyond the classical understanding of the concept of justice (distributive, retributive, and attributive) by referring to the meaning of ‘justice as enabling conditions’”. Therefore, APIK/LBH APIK’s struggle aims to dismantle socio-political and cultural structures that create or allow poverty and violence against women, hinder, prevent, or suppress women from speaking out and taking action. APIK/LBH APIK promotes justice as structural and institutional conditions that enable women to live their lives according to their own values. APIK/LBH APIK also promotes the discourse that the right to one’s body, reproductive justice, and protection against violence are matters of democracy, not just women’s issues. APIK/LBH APIK has successfully revived the values of justice, democracy, and human rights from a women’s perspective, based on women’s experiences — especially those of victims who have been most severely affected by state policy implementation.”

Karlina’s statement aptly describes the work of APIK/LBH APIK, in which I have been involved for the past 30 years, except for the 10 years I spent in parliament. APIK/LBH APIK’s approach to justice, as expressed through the BHGS concept, differs significantly from traditional philosophical and societal conceptions of justice and democracy. Most people understand democracy in terms of formalities, institutions, and mechanisms rather than its essence, which is to benefit the wider community. They use the logic of power rather than the logic of advocacy, and they disregard the ethics of caring for the vulnerable.

My understanding of, and involvement in, the feminist and human rights movements has come from intensive conversations with women who came to me and APIK/LBH APIK for help, as well as with victims of violence who appeared in the media and at community legal empowerment events. Conversations

and the books I have read, especially R.A. Kartini's letters in various editions, have shed light on issues hidden and/or concealed by a strong culture of silence and patriarchal values, particularly those that use a masculine interpretation of religion. I also advocate for policy change by writing books and articles for various media outlets, appearing on television talk shows and podcasts, and using other social media platforms. Using these new platforms enables social media advocacy without being bound by organisations' specific norms.

My experience of resisting the New Order regime for more than 45 years, particularly its patriarchal legal regime, which is still in force today, cannot be conveyed in a short time or within the confines of limited writing space (Luviana et al. 2025).¹⁴ However, I clearly carried out this resistance systematically in terms of organisational form and the framework of feminism and human rights used. Almost all of my advocacy, books, and writings have aimed to reject patriarchal socio-political and legal policies, both nationally and globally, to ensure the creation of a just and equitable society and a sustainable environment.

The Hague, 25 June 2025¹⁵

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Footnotes

- 1 The Ten Group, founded by Erna Witular and her friends, aims to preserve the environment by planting trees and mangroves in various locations in Jakarta and Jakarta Bay, among other things.
- 2 This happened in April 2025, for example, when I was interviewed by Adreena Media on the programme "Selendang Pandang", *Di Tanah yang Mengajari Nur Diam, Ia Justru Belajar Berteriak*, YouTube, 13 April 2015, <https://youtu.be/Q6h1DXWY5z0?si=HMG5VH4Kss87DTCW>, and read also the story on Adreena Media, 2025, <https://medium.com/@adreenamedia.official/di-tanah-yang-mengajari-nurdiam-ia-justru-belajar-berteriak-26d9e07fe2b9>.
- 3 Source: Personal communication and <https://swarapendidikan.um.ac.id/2016/05/17/impian-supartinah-pakasi-mewujudkanmanusia-indonesia-yang-pancasilais-dan-berkemampuanmembangun-tanah-air-melalui-pendidikan-dasar/>, accessed on 19 June 2025.
- 4 Read also <https://tirto.id/tragedi-hr-dharsono-kala-soehartomenistakan-pengkritiknya-fDBa>, accessed on 20 June 2025.
- 5 For a more complete profile of R. Katjasungkana, see: Detik Jatim 2023, *Profil R Katjasungkana, Tokoh Sumpah Pemuda Asal Pamekasan Madura, Detik*, 27 October 2023, accessed on 19 June 2025, at <https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-7004804/profil-r-katjasungkana-tokoh-sumpah-pemuda-asalpamekasan-madura>. Read also Isnaeni in *Historia 2012: Dari Politik hingga Bahasa*, accessed on 19 June 2025, at <https://www.historia.id/article/dari-politik-hingga-bahasa-p1llv>.
- 6 For a more complete profile of R. Katjasungkana, see: Detik Jatim 2023, *Profil R Katjasungkana, Tokoh Sumpah Pemuda Asal Pamekasan Madura, Detik*, 27 October 2023, accessed on 19 June 2025, at <https://www.detik.com/jatim/berita/d-7004804/profil-r-katjasungkana-tokoh-sumpah-pemuda-asalpamekasan-madura>. Read also Isnaeni in *Historia 2012: Dari Politik hingga Bahasa*, accessed on 19 June 2025, at <https://www.historia.id/article/dari-politik-hingga-bahasa-p1llv>.
- 7 *Jugun ianfu* (從軍慰安婦) or comfort women is a term used to refer to women who provided sexual services to members of the Japanese army in Japanese colonies and war zones during World War II. Between 1942 and 1945, *jugun ianfu* satisfied the sexual needs of Japanese soldiers in Indonesia and other Japanese colonies, accessed on 10 August 2025 at <https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ianfu>.
- 8 To be published.
- 9 K. H. Hussein Muhammad, a feminist scholar, quoted al-Hafiz ibn Mundhir (d. 309 AH), who stated that no hadith can be used to legitimise female circumcision. This is because the hadith is considered weak. Source: <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/3693009/yayasan-puan-amalhayati-khitan-perempuan-harus-dihentikan>.
- 10 https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Sunat_Perempuan_Haram!_Diputuskan_di_Kongres_Ulama_Perempuan_Indonesia II, accessed on 19 June 2025.
- 11 To be published.
- 12 For the full arguments and content of the decision, see: Final Decision of the IPT on the 1965/66 case, *Ultimus*, Bandung, 2016. Also see the website on the Indonesian Genocide at: <https://genocideindonesia.org/>.
- 13 Read also: <https://www.tempo.co/tokoh/karlina-supellireformasi-98-1542999> and Subono (ed.) 1999, *Catatan Perjalanan Suara Ibu Peduli*, Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, Edition No. 19, and Jurnal Perempuan's website, accessed on 12 August 2025, at <https://www.jurnalperempuan.org/demosuara-ibu-peduli.html>.
- 14 To be published.
- 15 This manuscript is an autoethnographic reflection and activist memoir written by the author. It is a personal account intended to document feminist experiences and knowledge in the struggle for legal and social advocacy in Indonesia.