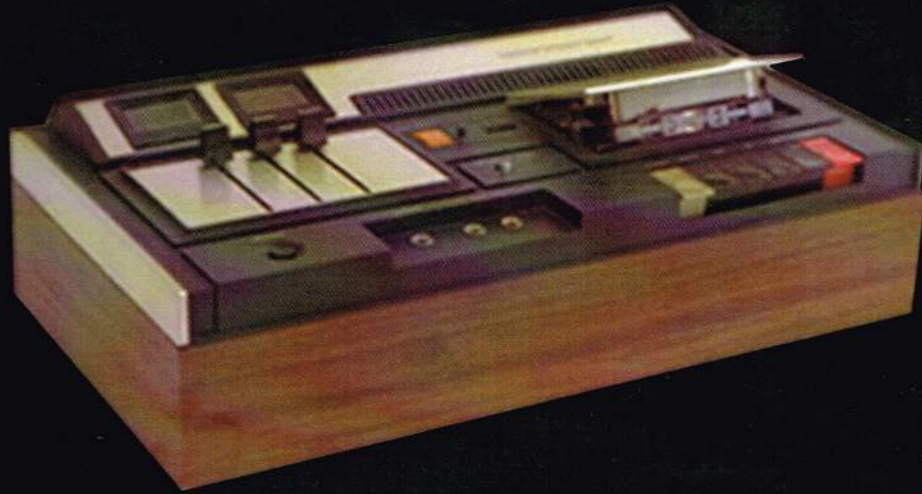


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ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS



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THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN A MATRILINEAL SOCIETY: A CASE STUDY IN WEST SUMATRA, INDONESIA

Selinaswati

Abstract

This paper looks at the tradition of *matrilinialism* in West Sumatra, Indonesia which influences the women's movement in this area. West Sumatra is predominantly made up of the *Minangkabau*, who have a matrilineal tradition that provides significant opportunities for women in terms of property ownership, land heritage and non-household activities. To some extent *matrilinialism* in this area has inspired some women's activists to empower themselves against discrimination. The presence of the women's movement in this area can be seen through women's activities in the field of education, politics, and journalism. It was assumed that women who are involved in local politics, education and journalism in West Sumatra up to the present would be affected by the traditional cultural values of the region. This study employs three main theories of social movements: political opportunities, framing process and resources mobilization. The data were collected using in depth interviews with eight informants. The results indicate that women in politics, education and journalism in West Sumatra are to some extent influenced by *Minangkabau* cultural values and enjoy significant support from their extended family.

Key words: matrilineal, *Minangkabau*, women and movement

Introduction

One of the most significant current discussions in social movements is about women's movements. Sociologists describe a social movement as a collective action of people or a group in order to bring about change in a social system. Social movements have elements such as solidarities, collective consciousness and members' participation in organizations that want to change the situation in their society (Roth, 2014). There are many kinds of social movement, including environmental movements, labour movements, peace movements, separatist movements, women's movements and so forth. A women's movement is defined as a women's organization attempt to achieve equality, justice, and liberation (Suguna, 2009). The concept of women's movement that is used in this paper refers to a situation where women have engaged in specific activities, organized people or established institution in order to change the situation of women who are discriminated against and where women have lacked of opportunities in the public sphere as well as to achieve equality between men and women.

The past decade has shown that injustice and unequal treatment among men and women can still generate discussion in developed and developing countries. Discrimination can be seen in the field of education, politics, economics, culture, religion and certain professional jobs in many layers of societies which have a patriarchal system. West Sumatra, which is largely composed of the *Minangkabau* ethnic group, has a matrilineal system which is likely to have influenced the experience of women. The democratic and egalitarianism values in this matrilineal

system gave opportunities to women to be a leader in their clan. Additionally, the society believes in the value of the process of development and that progress is important in their life. This can be seen in the opportunities for both men and women in *Minangkabau* to participate in education since the Dutch Colonial Era. However over time, the *Minangkabau* region and their way of their life within their specific traditions was to some extent affected by surrounding areas which have patriarchal systems. This is because West Sumatra is one of 33 provinces in Indonesia and administratively conforms to the regulations of Republic of Indonesia.

Thus even though *Minangkabau* society recognizes the privileged status of women, there is a kind of tension that can be seen in the phenomenon of women who have faced obstacles when in engaging in activities outside of their home. There is an idea that public spaces are not the best place for women. This idea has had consequences for the involvement of women in the political arena, in education and in professions such as journalism. These impediments have brought about the women's movement in some parts of the region. This seems similar to the problems of women's activists in many countries that have patriarchal systems. A patriarchal system is one that is based on the idea that the interests of men should take precedence over those of women in many aspects of human life (Lerner, 1986). Further, Paxton and Hughes (2007) suggest that a patriarchal system describes a social system where men dominate over women, which may be manifested in social, political and economic institutions. Although the matrilineal system in West Sumatra might be assumed to have had a positive impact on women in this area, the fact is that women's activities are undervalued by some people, and some women have experienced different treatment from men in their profession. These experiences led to the formation of a women's movement.

The first women's movement in Indonesia was starting in 1912. This movement paralleled the establishment of a women organization. Arivia (1998) described this organization affiliated with *Boedi Oetomo* and was called *Putri Merdeka* or free women. Political participation of women was seen in the 1920s in line with the formation of the *Sarikat Islam* organization and the Indonesian National Party (*Partai Nasional Indonesia-PNI*) which had women's division. In West Sumatra, women's activities were already in existence at this time. This paper will focus on women's activities and movement in the *Minangkabau* region which played an important role in empowering women to achieve justice and supporting equality for women and for people in their region. This paper is organised as follows: a discussion about the setting and context which is the matrilineal system in the *Minangkabau* region or the province of West Sumatra is followed by a description of women's activities in three different periods with emphasis on activities in politics, education and the profession of journalism. These are discussed in relation to social movement theories, including political opportunities, framing process and resource mobilization.

The Matrilineal System and Women in West Sumatra

Several researchers have suggested that the *Minangkabau* ethnic group of West Sumatra Indonesia is the largest community in the world with a matrilineal system (Nasroen, 1971; Kato, 1978; Hakimy, 1978; Goettner-Abendroth, 2012). The research of Goettner-Abendroth (2012) indicates that the characteristic matrilineal

system can be seen at four levels. These include economic, politics, social structure and the cultural level. Further, she notes that there are few societies in the world with a matrilineal system and most of them have a decreasing population and may die out. Nonetheless the *Minangkabau* society in West Sumatra maintains its matrilineal system and is not under threat. The matrilineal system in *Minangkabau* has its own system of customs or traditional law that is called *adat*. Their social structures, behaviour, and way of their life as *Minangkabau* are determined by *adat* which dictates four aspects of the social context. These four aspects are, first, the type of settlement and lineage or kinship levels (social structural); second, the people entitled to lead the clan and consensus of all male and female leaders within their extended family (political); third, the way communal property will be inherited (economic); and fourth, all aspects of culture, including religion, exogamy, community.

The social structure can be seen in its kinship levels of which there are three; nuclear family, extended family, and clan. Extended family consists of three generations including a grandmother, mother and daughters who lived in a single traditional big house (*Rumah Gadang*). The clan's members are people who are related by blood or by adoption. Several clans who lived together in one or several villages made up a *Nagari*. At the level extended family, there would be two leaders; the *Bundo Kanduang*, commonly an older women and the *mamak*, a male leader who is the brother of the female head of the household. At the level of *Nagari*, where many clans are living together, the group of *mamak* from different *Rumah Gadang* are referred to as *Datuk* or *Penghulu*. These leaders represent their families within the *Nagari*. The group of *Datuk* or *Penghulu* in one *Nagari* have a council that represents the politics and democratic aspect of the matrilineal system as all members have the same power and none is higher than the others.

The economic aspects of *Minangkabau* can be seen through their communal property, land inheritance and other customs associated with matrilineal society. They have traditionally relied on consensus in the management of communal property that is distributed based on the maternal line. Women control communal assets and have authority over all properties. Finally, the cultural aspect of the society includes the practice of Islam, which is strong, and an appreciation of the natural surroundings. At the end of the eighteenth century, Islamic teachings were viewed as contradicting the nature and values of the *Minangkabau* people. The Paderi War occurred as a result and represented an attempt to purify Islamic teaching in *Minangkabau*. Nonetheless, Islam and the *Minangkabau* culture are generally perceived to be compatible and to enjoy a reciprocal relationship. In practice, there is a mix of ideas that derive from *adat* and Islamic teachings and had an impact on people in *Minangkabau* such that they practice their *adat* which is governed by matrilineal precepts but also believe in Islamic teachings which have a patriarchal outlook. This mix has sometimes led to tension in the role of women, especially women's activities in the public space.

These four levels reflect the society's philosophy, customs, religion, and nature. In *Minangkabau* custom and philosophy, women are mentioned and centrally positioned as *Bundo Kanduang* who is described as *limpapeh Rumah nan Gadang* (the butterfly of the big house). Another privilege for women is that they are among the elite leaders of society. Wierienga (1995) noted that no decision in the extended

family can take without permission of the older women or *Bundo Kandung*. The change from the colonial era, the Old Order Era, the New Order Era and the Reform Era has impacted on the culture of the *Minangkabau* matrilineal system as well as on local politics in West Sumatra, including women's activities and the women's movement in this area.

Women's Activities in The Colonial Era

The political activities of *Minangkabau* women can be seen during the struggle for Indonesian independence. In this period, there were female public figures that were active in politics, such as Sitti Manggopoh and Rasuna Said. In this era, there were also prominent women who were active in education and the social arena, such as Rahma El Yunusiah and Rohana Kuddus.

Sitti Manggopoh (1880-1965), started a social movement by persuading people in the area near Manggopoh, now a district in the Agam Regency, to rebel against Dutch policy. According to the Directorate General of Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2013), on 21 February 1908, the Dutch colonial government instituted tax regulations. These taxes included head tax, custom tax, employment tax, land tax, profit tax, household tax, abattoir tax, tobacco tax, and traditional house tax. This tax regulations was enacted on March 1, 1908 and was enforced without exception by the Dutch government on people who had land, property and companies. These taxes policy hurt the *Minangkabau* people since their land and traditional houses were held as communal property and were passed down from generation to the generation without any tax obligation. Because the land was inherited from their own ancestors, people felt that their property rights were being violated. For this reason, they fought against this economic policy. As a result, resistance movements emerged in Kamang and Manggopoh and are referred to by the *Minangkabau* people as *Perang Pajak* or *Perang Belasting* (tax war, where *belasting* is the Dutch term for 'tax'). The tax war in Manggopoh was led by a woman named Sitti. She was popularly called Sitti Manggopoh as she was born in this region in May 1880. She organized people in the area and persuaded them to rise up against the Dutch. The organization consisted of 17 men. They would meet at night, practiced martial arts and trained to fight the Dutch. They developed strategy and started a social movement against the unjust system of the Dutch government. On 15-16 June 1908, she led people in Manggopoh to attack the Dutch central military headquarters that resulted in 53 of 55 soldiers being killed in that fort. The history surrounding Sitti Manggopoh has been discussed in several sources (Abeltasman, Arifin, Bakry, 2004). She had five older brothers and was the youngest and the only daughter, so Sitti was special as the *Minangkabau* culture values woman and families need daughters to maintain the maternal line. She was treated the same as her brothers, was involved in martial arts, took part in Qur'anic recitals, and studied *Minangkabau* proverbs and traditional rhetoric. These three skills are seen as part of the capabilities of a leader by the *Minangkabau* people. Sitti Manggopoh had a family and a child. Her husband supported her activities as he also opposed the Dutch colonial government.

Rasuna Said (1910-1965) was involved in organizations aimed to empower women and also in political parties in order to defend against Dutch Colonialism. Born in Maninjau in 1910 into a noble family, she was raised in the modern *Minangkabau*

tradition. She went to an Islamic boarding school and first joined the *Syarikat Rakyat* organization in 1926 as secretary and then as a member of *Soematra Thawalib*, an organization that focused on the reform movement - influenced by Turkish-Islamic thinking epitomized by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In 1930, she became involved in an organization called the Union of Indonesian Muslims (*Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia-Permi*) that stood against colonialism and was founded by members of the *Soematra Thawalib* organization. Her activities in this organization led her, as a good speaker, to criticize Dutch policies openly at public meetings. She was jailed in Central Java in 1932 as speaking out against Dutch colonialism was a violation of the law. Even though she was in prison, her desire to achieve independence, fight colonization and empower women did not diminish. In 1935, she became chief editor of a magazine, and then in 1937 founded a school for women in Medan, and published a magazine *Menara Putri* (girl tower) which aimed to raise awareness of women's issues by discussing topics like the role of women, equality and Islam in print. All her activities involved organizing people, working together to empower women through education by giving them skills.

During the Japanese occupation, Rasuna Said was involved in an underground movement against the occupiers. She joined an organization called *Gyu Gun Ko En Kai* that was formed by the Japanese to unite all of movements and organizations in Indonesia to support Japanese interests in the East Indies, as Indonesia was then called. Even though she joined this organization, she did not work for the Japanese and tried to use her position to achieve independence for Indonesia. After Indonesia became independent in 1945, she continued to be involved in many organizations and committees, until finally becoming a Member of Parliament (MPs) representing the island of Sumatra in Jakarta.

The activities of Sitti Manggopoh were remarkable. She was a woman who was involved and led people to defend their customs and culture and tried to protect people in her area. She also aimed to change Dutch policies that forced them pay taxes which were seen as unjust. Further, her activities seem to have enjoyed family support and gave her opportunities comparable to those of *Minangkabau* men. Her background as a *Minangkabau* woman, who was raised in an egalitarianism system with the same treatment as her siblings resulted in her having self-confidence and improved her skills in self-defend. These all affected her ability to start a social movement. Similar to Sitti Manggopoh, Rasuna Said who was raised in democratic and progressive family ignored the high risk associated with activism. She acknowledged that her activities led her to be exiled and imprisoned. Nonetheless, she kept continued these activities and voiced her opinions in the public space. As a speaker and political activist, she took risks when she spoke at public meetings. She struggled for change in the colonial context and for the independence of Indonesia.

Both Sitti Manggopoh and Rasuna Said responded to the political situation and colonial policy in their area by forming organizations based on common goals and ethnic identity against the Dutch. These organizations and political parties became a field for them to act in ways which were supported by their family, leaders and elites in their community. This suggests that their activities were facilitated by people, matrilineal culture, and religious and community leaders who were bound by political constraints. These elements reflect the theory of political opportunities in social movements. Scholars (Adam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001) define political

opportunities as one influential factor for the emergence of social movements. Change in the social and political situation produces political constraints, instability or transition in the social and political context, and some elites may create associations whose members share an identity. This is similar to what happened in the *Minangkabau* region as these two women engaged in their political activities. They had opportunities to be involved in parties, organizations and then persuade people in these organizations to participate in social action. Both Manggopoh and Said organized activities that eventually became social movements against injustice in their areas.

Rahma El Yunusiyah (1900-1969) was a woman who was active in the field of education. Born in Padang Panjang, she was the daughter of well-known Ulama in this region. Yunusiyah was educated through a combination of Islamic and modern schools. At that time, Padang Panjang, the town where she lived, was a centre of dynamic movements that combined Islamic teaching and progressive modern education. These included the youth movement (*gerakan kaoem muda*) of Soematra Thawalib. Her ideas about the importance of education, especially for women and girls, led her to found an institution to educate women. With the support of her older brother who was an Ulama and public figure, Zainuddin Labbai El Yunis, she founded *Diniyah Putri*, a school for girls and young housewives in Padang Panjang in 1923. At that time, some people in the community doubted the value of her efforts to educate young women. She ignored these comments however. Research (Stuers, 1992) shows that her efforts to educate and empower women benefitted from her persistence and allowed the school to develop independently without funds from the Dutch. She travelled to North Sumatra and Aceh with her maternal uncle in order to raise money for her school. Another form of family support came from her mother, who gave her communal property, namely land, where the school still stands. Her achievement in developing an Islamic boarding school for women and empowering women was recognized by Al Azhar University in Cairo which gave her the title 'Syaikah.'

Rohanna Kuddus (1884-1972) was an activist who was involved in social and charity activities from an early age. She was educated by her father, who worked for the Dutch colonial government. Her father, Mohammad Rasjad Maharaja Soetan, brought reading material for her from his office and taught his daughter how to read and write at home. At the age of 12 years, according to Fitriyanti (2001), she had mastered Dutch, Arabic, and Latin. Her reading and writing skills were shared with her friends in the neighbourhood. As people in some parts of the *Minangkabau* region did not approve of sending girls to public elementary schools provided by the Dutch colonial government, most of them were illiterate. Sitti Rohanna, Rohanna Kuddus' nickname, voluntarily taught them and became a teacher for her friends. Her curiosity to learn other skills was satisfied when her family was living close to Dutch officials. She learned a lot about women's traditional skills such as sewing, embroidery, crocheting and knitting from the Dutch women. She was also introduced to the Dutch language through magazines. Rohanna then married Abdul Kudus. Her intentions to empower women in her area continued as her husband fully supported her. She realized that education was important for women. Thus, with her skills that she had, in 1905 she gathered the women in her village, Koto Gadang, to come to her house and tried to share the skills that she had. Further

she founded a school focusing on teaching girls and women called *Sekolah Gadis* (school for girls) but in 1911 changed it to an association called *Keradjinan Amai Setia* (Faithful Women's Group) which taught its members arithmetic, reading and writing besides needlework (Wierienga, 2001). During this time, she encouraged women to study even though people in the area did not value her efforts to empower women. At this time, she also went into business, competing with Chinese traders in supplying sewing machines for her school and her pupils. Having some skill in making handicrafts and sewing that they learned from the school of Rohana Kuddus, some women in Koto Gadang became able to support themselves. This became a starting point for a home industry in the *Minangkabau* region of which all participants were women, and up to now, the *Kerajinan Amai Setia* in Koto Gadang still exists.

Other efforts of Kuddus to enlighten women included establishing women's organization and newspaper for women. *Sarikat Kaum Ibu Sumatra (SKIS)* or Union of Sumatran Women was an organization founded in 1911. As described by Wieringa (1995), in 1925, all women's organizations were united in SKIS and the organization had branches in seven cities in this region by 1928 and sent representatives to the First Indonesian Women's Congress which was held in Yogyakarta in that same year. In *Minangkabau* region there were some newspapers, but they did not discuss about women's issues much. Thus, in order to create opportunities and avoid discrimination against women in seeking knowledge, she asked the owner of a newspaper of *Oetusan Melayu (Malay Messenger)*, Datuk Maharaja, to set up a newspaper related to women's issues. Her proposal was accepted and led to her founding the first newspaper that was concerned with women's issue. Together with another women's activist, Ratna Juwita, she managed the newspaper, which was called *Sunting Melayu (Malay Crown)*. The newspaper highlighted women's problems and campaigned against polygamy in addition to discussing religious, education for women, and colonial domination. These publications all aimed to encourage people to support women's education and avoid discrimination toward women.

The activities undertaken by Rohana Kuddus and Rahmah El Yunusiah occurred at almost the same time. This demonstrates that women's activities in West Sumatra during the colonial period, not only in the political arena, but also in the field of education, were aimed at improving women's skills. The activities and movement were inspired by other social movements in the *Minangkabau* region which at that time had a *Kaoem Moeda* Movement (Young People's Movement). As colonialism in this area produced discrimination and injustice, people established movements either underground or openly. In this region, the importance of education and leadership for women was significant as *Minangkabau* culture gave privileges to women in inheritance and as central figures in their extended family. Further, development and progress as values of the *Minangkabau* community led some people in this region to realize that education was important for women as well as encouraging some women to improve and empower themselves. The way both Kuddus and Yunusiah established educational institutions and founded newspapers can be seen as efforts against discrimination toward women. Their actions were intended to offer the same opportunities and equality for both women and men. They also showed that they wanted to enlighten, improve people's knowledge,

and employed matrilineal values, which included egalitarianism, progress and development which were seen as important for human life. This situation fits with the perspective of the framing process in social movements. According to Adam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) the individual's cognitive and personal knowledge is an important dimension in the framing process. A framing process perspective focuses on the interests and values of people who feel powerless, but people in this situation may also be optimistic that they can change the situation by taking social action and participating in a movement. They need to share their beliefs and understanding in order to reach their goal within these social movements. In this framing process, aspects of knowledge, ideas, culture, terminology and symbols derived from the matrilineal culture that portrayed women as *Bundo Kanduang*, the 'true mother'. By empowering women through schooling, women who attended Diniyah Putri and IKAS gained confidence in their own abilities.

Women's Activities in Old and New Order Eras

Following the Dutch colonial period and Japanese occupation, Indonesia gained independence in 1945 and the *Minangkabau* region became part of the Republic of Indonesia and the province of West Sumatra. In the first ten years of independence, the values of matrilinealism such as egalitarian and democracy were strong among the *Minangkabau* people. This can be seen in the rebellion of some *Minangkabau*, who were not satisfied with the policies of the central government. The rebellion of *Minangkabau* people, as Kahin (2005) discussed, related to a perception that the central government was ignoring the main goal of independence for Indonesia. The movement against the central government started on 15 February 1959 and was referred to as the Revolutionary Government of Republic of Indonesia (*Pemerintahan Revolutioner Republik Indonesia-PRRI*). This was not a separatist movement but demanded for regional autonomy for the *Minangkabau* region and the *Minangkabau* people saw this as a guerrilla war. During this insurgence, women were involved in the PRRI that can be seen in various ways. These include a woman who participated in the war directly against the enemy. Nuryanti (2011) noted that some women fled with other protesters to the jungle and attacked the central military command at night. Some of them helped supply food to the guerrilla fighters. Others became agents for the members of the revolt (Midawati, 1989). Since the central government sent its military to West Sumatra, the rebels fled to the jungle, left their families, wives and children at home, and some of them left as refugees to other places that were safer. In this situation, most women were under pressure because of the behaviour of the military. The women left at home had to protect their children from inappropriate sexual behaviour of the military and had to lead their families to safe locations. Other women helped refugees by giving them food.

During New Order Era, women's activities and the women's movement entered a vacuum. The central government under the Soeharto regime encouraged women to activities based on government control. At this point, the authoritarian nature of the central government dominated women's activities. The government formed women's organizations called the Civil Servant's Wives Association (*Dharma Wanita*) and Family Welfare Guidance (*Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga- PKK*). Membership in these two organizations included women in urban and rural areas

throughout Indonesia who were mostly wives of civil servants. They met once a month in district halls or the homes of members. However, their activities centered on the household and domestic issues such as caring for children and attending to their husband. They ignored political issues including workplace equality for women, justice, the problems of poor women, education and any kind of oppression of women. Women's activities just tended to support their husband's career and carry out government policies. This women's position, as supporting her husband and families of the Soeharto government, has been called 'State Ibuism' (Suryakusuma, 2004). State ibuism refers to the central position of motherhood in government policy; *Ibu* means 'mother' in Indonesian. Suryakusuma (2004) noted that, politically, socially and psychologically, 'state ibuism' failed to socially acknowledge the autonomy of women and deprived Indonesian women of their agency. This created women who were dependent on their husband and other men. Wieringa (2010) suggested that the New Order regime successfully demolished women's movements and women's activities in Indonesia by slandering the Indonesian women's movement (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia-Gerwani*), a women's organization that was very active at the end of the 1950s and tried to empower women by giving them an awareness of issues like polygamy, education, illiteracy and promoted women for seats in parliament. The organization was accused of involvement in the rebellion of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965 which was associated with the 30 September movement of the Indonesian Communist Party.

This situation also affected women in West Sumatra. At that time women in West Sumatra were involved in these two organizations, PKK and Dharma Wanita. There were no activities related to women's political participation or women's organization that independently focused on women's issues. The centralized system of the New Order Era and the traumatic experience of the PRRI in West Sumatra in the 1950s contributed to the decline of women's activities and women's movements in West Sumatra. Since becoming part of Indonesia, matrilinealism still existed in Minangkabau but could not be static and to some extent is still being modified. This was seen during the New Order era, when central government regulations replaced the concept of *Nagari* with villages (*desa*-Indonesian). This affected the way Minangkabau people practiced their customs, including their treatment of women and their opinions about women's activities. Women's activities in West Sumatra during the New Order Era were limited to the Civil Servant's Wives Association (*Dharma Wanita*) and Family Welfare Guidance (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, PKK).

Women's Activities in the Reform Era

After the end of the Suharto government in 1998, governance in the Reform Era changed from a centralized to a decentralized system. The new system was established by Law No.22/1999, which called for an autonomous government system that was legally binding beginning in 2000. This law gave authority and opportunities to provinces to make their own regulations. Within two years (2001-2002), the number of regulations created by local government increased. Unfortunately, some regulations tended to discriminate against women. In West Sumatra, the draft local regulation triggered the women's movement that can be seen in the organization of women journalists called the 'Nagari Crown Communication Forum

for Women Journalists' (*Forum Komunikasi Wartawan Suntiag Nagari-FKWIS*). This organization was established in May 1998, as the Reform Era offered new opportunities for the publication of various kinds of newspapers which resulted in an increase in the number of journalists (male and female) in West Sumatra. Membership in this organization includes women journalists in West Sumatra, who numbered approximately 20 at that time.

An interview with the head of this organization revealed that the establishment of FKWIS was initiated by a perception of different treatment for male and female journalists. For example, in this profession, some men thought that women journalists could not cover 'hard news' effectively. One female journalist who had been in the field for six years said: '*Actually, I want to have lots of experiences by covering variety of new; hard news and events that challenge my capabilities. But I feel I have few opportunities since my chief editor makes me to cover soft news such as ceremonial events...*' The statement suggests that female journalists may be relegated to subordinate positions and are treated differently in the workplace. This woman's experience may relate to a fear of the editor that she would not be able to handle a situation like a riot that occurred during the coverage of a sensitive event. Another view came from a male journalist:

'It is all right if women have good jobs outside the home. I have no problem with women colleagues but I would encourage my wife to stay at home and take care of our children. It would make me more comfortable at work if there is someone taking care of my children...'

This indicates the presence of a double standard in how women are seen in the public space. Women's original role was in the domestic area. As a result, it is difficult for women to act in the public sphere. It seems likely that the different treatment and double standard toward women has become institutionalized in the policy of newspapers in West Sumatra. There is a policy at one of the five local newspapers that required women journalists to leave the office by 8 pm. The reason the *Singgalang* Newspaper has this policy is because the company feels it cannot guarantee the safety of women if something happens to them on the way home. At that paper, almost 80% of the journalists are male and normally work until midnight. It is uncommon in the *Minangkabau* culture for women to have activities around men who are not their '*mahram*'¹. Many people in *Minangkabau* society think that women are unsafe around men who are not *mahram*. This situation is a combination of traditional culture and Islam that controls women in the public domain. This demonstrates the interrelationship between matrilineal values and patriarchal Islamic teachings. This impacted the mindset of some decision makers in the regional parliament. Since autonomy in the Reform Era, the local government has the right to propose draft regulations to anticipate social problems in West Sumatra. The idea is to pass laws that come from the local context that have the ability to lessen crime, prostitution, and other social problems in West Sumatra. Article X, clause three of a proposed draft states that women should be prohibited from going out at night between 10 pm and 6 am without their *mahram* or husband.

These issues triggered the establishment of a specific identity for female journalists. Through the FKWIS organization, they want to change the way society

1 In Islamic law, *mahram* is defined as a blood relationship which does not permit the people involved to marry.

thinks about women's roles. Women journalists through FKWIS have refused the draft that would limit their ability to work at night. The emergence of social action and a social movement in this case can be seen in terms of the theory of resource mobilization. In defining resource mobilization, McCarthy and Zald (1979, p.vii) suggested that 'resource mobilization approach emphasizes grievances and focuses upon societal supports, constraints of movements, tactical dilemmas, social control and media usage and interplay of external support and elites'. Thus, there are three core components in the perspective of resource mobilization including grievances, a mobilization process and social movements. As an organization, FKWIS has many members who work as journalists. Thus, they can easily gain access to the public and shape public opinion by writing articles in newspapers, conducting talk shows and presenting national experts to speak about discrimination of women. They hoped that through their opinions in the mass media, people would have similar views to FKWIS and reject the draft act that ignores women's rights in West Sumatra.

FKWIS succeeded in building networks with other women's organizations. They invited other women's organizations and held a roundtable discussion. This activity was intended to support a similar view among women about the act by portraying the legislation as an attempt to prohibit women from doing activities at night that would prevent them from using their capabilities and creativity. They also spoke with traditional leaders from the *Bundo Kanduang* organization. *Bundo Kanduang's* leader has been quoted as saying:

'The reason for the legal draft is to prevent prostitution. But this act will not do this just by preventing women from going out at night, because it is not only prostitutes who go outside at night, but also respectable women who have activities at night. Thus, the legal draft will be ineffective in preventing prostitution...'

Her statement shows that one of cultural elites, a community leaders in West Sumatra disagree with this legal draft. The efforts of FKWIS in creating public opinion through the mass media had an important role in this. It can be said that the main goal of the FKWIS movement to refuse the draft act succeeded. This achievement was related to the role of the media and to societal support. Zald and McCarthy (1979, 92) noted: "Media and movement are dialectically bound, always in motion and alert to one another's motion". In professions such as journalism, there was a movement of women during the Reform Era. In the politics, however, women in this matrilineal society have not yet made the same effort their predecessors did one hundred years ago.

Conclusion

The paper describes how women in West Sumatra participated in the public arena over the past hundred years. They were active in the field of education and politics, including in the movement to gain independence and in a local guerilla war in 1959. The dynamic of movements in West Sumatra slowed during the Soeharto government. In 1998, the women's movement reemerged through FKWIS. The change in governance from a centralized to a decentralized system triggered an increased awareness of the women's movement in West Sumatra.

Women's activities and movements in the *Minangkabau* region of West Sumatra can be seen from the perspective of social movements which includes political opportunities, a framing process and resource mobilization. Political opportunities

can be used to analyze the mobilization of people in opposing taxes levied by the Dutch colonial government. Led by Sitti Manggopoh, the resistance of people in Manggopoh was called the Manggopoh War. Then, Rasuna Said organized people in her area against the Dutch also in the frame of political opportunities. In these two movements, the contribution of matrilineal culture can be seen through the experiences of the main actors, Sitti Manggopoh and Rasuna Said, who were raised with the egalitarianism of their culture and had the same treatment as men.

A framing process perspective was used to understand the social activities of Rohana Kuddus and Rahmah El Yunusiah. The values of the matrilineal society, such as progress and development of people, led them to establish educational institutions and newspapers in order to empower women. By providing women with knowledge and ideologies, women did not have to be subjugated by men. Women could have the same position as men in terms of knowledge and education that allowed them to be independent. This idea was similar to the matrilineal system, but some *Minangkabau* ignored education for women and prioritized education for men. For this reason Rohana Kuddus and Rahmah El Yunusiah set up institutions to organize and educate women. Now almost one hundred years later, the institutions they founded) still exist and are run by professional educators.

In the case of FKWIS in the Reform Era, resources mobilization theory was used to understand the emergence of a social movement. The components of resources mobilization, such as social movement organization and media usage to form societal networks, occurred in the case of the women journalists. The concept of social movement organization is applied to the emergence of a women's movement in the form of FKWIS. The concept of media usage involves shaping public opinion, gaining access to networks and building networks through the media. All of these activities influenced people's mindset towards a draft act and raised gender awareness.

The dynamic of FKWIS related to the people in this organization as a component of resources. Commitments, solidarity, opening discourse, taking action to oppose the draft, and a willingness to take risks as well as the historical context of women's activities in the public space almost one decade ago caused female journalists to start a social movement. They were persistent in their opposition to the discrimination they perceived. FKWIS members acted and continue to act against the Draft act in order to achieve justice and equality. Their movement was supported by many elements in *Minangkabau* society and finally resulted in the failure of the Draft Act that would have prevented women from going outside at night alone.

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