



Article

The Social Responsibility of Women During the New Order: Between Family and Community

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Article Information	Abstract
Received : March 20, 2024 Revised : April 2, 2024 Accepted : May 9, 2024 Published: June 24, 2024	This paper discusses the lives of Indonesian women within the confines of family and community amidst the strengthening of programs pertaining to women's empowerment that were launched by the New Order administration from 1966 to 1998. The significant questions this research addresses are: 1) How was the empowerment programs conducted? and 2) How did the programs affect the lives of women within their families and communities. The results of this study showed that during the New Order administration, it became apparent that women lost their autonomy as burdens were stacked on them within their families and communities. Through empowerment programs, women were expected to be robust and independent; however, because the New Order programs were structurally designed to be heavily centralized, they instead reinforced the existing traditional social construction. As the women subsequently bore heavy burdens to thrive accomplishment in both familial and communal spheres, the introduced programs worked instead to repressively narrow women's chances for autonomy. This historical research study utilized a variety of data in the forms of documents, both archival or memoir types.
Keywords Dharma Wanita; PKK; family; Indonesian women movement; empowerment; New Order.	
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INTRODUCTION

The study of women in Indonesia under the New Order (1966-1998) has attracted the attention of researchers because of the militaristic and structural leadership that marked this era. In addition, the New Order imposed an upsetting policy on women during the early phase, especially toward those labeled as left leaning. Because the women who became victims of this misleading accusation had no courage to speak out, this period gave a considerable amount of trauma to Indonesian women (Wieringa, 2002). The launching of various empowerment programs for women during this period mainly involved mobilizing them. This meant a growth of a tiered and organically built women's organization for the avowed purpose of empowerment scattered from the central to the regional areas (Suryakusuma, 2011). The earlier accounts of researchers are important when discussing the cultural changes that occurred when the New Order supposedly considered women as important individuals to help support the success of their programs.

The distinctive nature of the New Order with regard its view and utilization of women certainly cannot be unattached from its long period of reign. In existence for more than 32 years, the period was marked by governmental dependence on a President who ran and won in five consecutive elections Soeharto was thus the one and only President during the protracted New Order even as his deputy was changed several times during each election. The adoption

of the presidential system, by placing the President in the central role during governance, gave Soeharto a full-scale role in governance policies. The selected policy was intended to target or maximize participation of the lower class, especially those in the rural areas where peasants mostly resided. These developments during the time had serious consequences to the life of Indonesian women. Why did women become important in a traditionally patriarchal society during the period? According to Soeharto, women were important pillars of the family because they carried in their hands much responsibility to the community. What is clear is that the New Order government relied on women to measure the success of the programs.

During the New Order administration, there was a tendency to build a cult image of mother figures. As further investigated, it was revealed that there was an intention behind the tendency, which was apparently the attempt to subordinate women. The idea ascended in 1984 when Ali Murtopo, as the closest confidant to Suharto, called the President “Father of Development” (Elson, 2001), implying that he is the Father of the transformation of sovereignty. This development obviously reinforced the existing paternalistic ideas. In this sense, paternalism is understood as a form of culture manifested in ideas of freedom, welfare, and autonomy that favors the system of paternalism. This culture is common in most agrarian countries in Southeast Asia (Gibbon et al., 2014, pp. 165-189). It allows the production of a paternal leadership, which is an amalgamation of strong disciplines and patriarchal policy (*ke-bapakan*) (Suryani et al., 2012, p. 291).

This paper is a historical study that focuses on the New Order administration. This period in Indonesian history is an important phase because it is the longest administrative government in the history of the country, spanning more than 30 years under the dominance of one President who was consecutively elected five times (1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997). On the other hand, the Vice President and ministers were replaced five times over the course of his administration. Political parties as political contestants were directly controlled by him, the ruler, to maintain his dominion (Robison, 1987).

Data in this research were obtained from National Archives of Jakarta and the Secretary of State and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. These official documents recorded all activities dating back to the New Order administration, including both the decrees and the technical activities conducted by the President and his wife (as the chief advisor of the Ministry of Women's Affairs), and all relevant ministers. The supporting literature was further obtained from various libraries in country such as the National Library, Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection, and association of women’s organization that was considered as an official government organization such as the Indonesian Women’s Congress in Yogyakarta and the women’s association of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta. The libraries store a myriad of literature that took the forms of books, journals, proceedings, and memoirs, as well as newspapers and magazines.

The literature review for this study was conducted by understanding and then subjecting all the collected data to critical analysis. Some government data are considered formal such as the basic idea of the New Order itself. Whereas, by criticizing data from the literature, a deep interpretation of all the programs that were initiated can be properly documented. The literature data were then analyzed, then accomplished by extensively looking into the literary origin, the time it was produced and its author. In this case, photos and tables were also presented (Taylor, 2009). The critical task of photo analysis entailed examining the body language and expressions found in the photos. On the one hand, table analysis means a thorough categorization and gathering of numbers. Categorization is an important step because it reveals race, gender, and ethnicity that sometimes-had political implications. In addition, the categorization must be critically considered from the perspective of its archiver who made the

tables and collected all the data (Gouda et al., [2009](#), pp. 551-567). In this light, the categorization implemented by the New Order administration has assumed considerable significance. In the New Order context, this categorization can be understood from a variety of standpoints. One example is the curriculum that was centered on the recognition of Pancasila as the only basic state (Gellert, [2015](#), p. 366). The curriculum was the result of an attempt to present children with a unified view of the concept of the states through a singular system of the curriculum.

Based on said idea, this research specifically investigated the implementation of policies from the New Order administration regarding the mobilization of women in government programs, along with its implications in the development of cultural awareness among rural women. This is a significant topic considering the historical realities demonstrating the success of the New Order administration in comprehensively mobilizing women to be involved in developmental government programs, without them offering meaningful resistance. The obedience of the women during this era is an important point of inquiry within the historical framework, accomplished by using the available historical sources to identify and record strong paternalistic ideas in that period.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia: New Order

The New Order was a term defined by Nasution during the 1966 Army Seminar in the apparent move to distinguish the New Order from the Old Order. According to the seminar, the New Order was intended to establish a mental attitude aimed at creating the social, political, economic, cultural life imbued by the morals of Pancasila, especially with regard the one supreme God. The term New Order then emerged to provide distinction from the Old Order which was considered profoundly dominated by the Indonesian Communist Party and thought to be filled with abuses violating the Constitution 45 and the sovereignty of the people (Nasution, [n.d.](#), p. 22).

Prior to the hegemony of the New Order, Indonesia was led by Soekarno who exercised the system of Guided Democracy (1957-1965). During that period, Nasution referred to it as the Old Order, in which three supporting major powers existed, consisting of Soekarno as the President, the Army, and the Indonesian Communist Party. Unfortunately, during their early development, these three forces attempted to sub duct the primary role in society. Thus, the 1965 crisis occurred in this country when the three became involved in an immense conflict, eventually leading to the collapse of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In that conflict, the government blamed the PKI for being the source of the problem, and Indonesia was eventually thrust in a severe and prolonged political crisis. During the time, the activities of lower middle-class women were driven by several organizations deemed to be left leaning, such as Gerwani (Indonesian Women's Movement). With the defeat of the PKI, the leftist organizations were forcibly disbanded, and their activities discontinued. Some of its activists were later arrested and imprisoned (Wieringa, [2002](#)). As a result of this historical legacy, ideas that were developed by Suharto during his administration were considered anti-communist (National Archive, [1950-1959](#), Number 383). A traumatic event in September 30 enabled the government's severely dominant control of people's lives. Utterly concerned with the re-emergence of the Communist party within the nation's life, Soeharto justified such strong political control as means to maintain thriving political stability.

The collapse of the PKI and the left-leaning women's organizations brought Soekarno to a difficult situation. He was considered having intensely engaged in collaboration with the

PKI regarding policymaking. As consequence, Soekarno was subsequently overpowered and succeeded by the Soeharto administration. The end of the Soekarno administration brought a new government slogan in the government, which was about aiming for the economy to be at its superlative state, followed by the ideas of solving economic problems by the economists from the University of Indonesia (UI) economists. The real economic problem was in food security as the price of rice rose steeply. Ironically, rice is a staple food for most Indonesians (National Archive, [1950-1959](#), Number 383). The problem made the UI economists published a book entitled *Masalah-Masalah Ekonomi dan Faktor-Faktor IPOLSOS* (Economic Problems and IPOLSOS Factors) in November 1965 with Widjojo Nitisastro as its editor (Mas'oed, [1989](#), pp. 19-20).

After the economy was regarded as the ultimate solution to escape the crisis, the ideology of development then flourished. Therein, the ideas of development were designed from the perspective of the incumbent administration. Its goal was to raise awareness in people to become more responsible for development aimed at improving their conditions. Unfortunately, the ideology of development originally designed as an attempt to solve the problems of the public and the state became or was turned into a sanctified and glorified body of concepts, which had the effect of giving it immunity from criticisms. Critical attitudes on development were almost automatically regarded as resentment to the ideology, often stamped as anti-development attitudes and even subversive (Abar, [1990](#), pp. XIV-XV).

Widjojo Nitisastro and others originally thought that the implementation of policies relating to the ideology of development were capable of rapidly resolving economic problems; however, they later made an apparently negative assessment. They became worried when they later observed that the economic growth that was realized was less capable of effecting self-sufficiency for the country. In fact, it raised a dependency system among the community (Robison, [1987](#)).

The lower-than-expected participation of the people of Indonesia in the ideology of development programs was alleged to have been the result of the very strict social hierarchy that is culturally embedded in Indonesian society. The hierarchy of economics was based on a person's wealth or political influence and resulted in the division of *Wong Gedhe* and *Wong Cilik*, which ultimately led to lower participation by the people. This condition then became common in the practice of power within the developing bureaucracy. Among the uninformed and compliant people lived the so-called wise and gracious bureaucrats as the role models (Abar, [1990](#), pp. 184-185). This was a characteristic pattern rooted within the tradition of Indonesian society. In this case, Soeharto was a firm believer in the *Kejawen* tradition in his life. This condition created a reliance and reinforcement of a paternalistic idea that later on further advanced and developed (Robison, [1987](#), pp. 5-6).

In addition to the developmental aspects that later progressed into the great ideology of governance, Soeharto also established an ideology in terms of organization, namely the Pancasila. It consisted of five precepts that embodied all aspects such as monotheism, the community, and sovereignty. Through this ideology, the maintenance of harmony and order in the community was expected. This is because Pancasila made possible a single ideology of the Indonesian society (Fitch, [1989](#), pp. 44-51). The use of Pancasila as the sole ideology in the state was officially declared in August 1982 (Prawiranegara, [1984](#), p. 74). With Pancasila as the basis of the country, it permitted the assembly of all the policies intended for the community in accordance with its principles.

On the one hand, in running its programs, the New Order administration became overwhelmingly centralistic when it put the military in the epicenter of its power (Liddle, [1983](#), pp. 35-46). The military thus became a pivotal part in maintaining control of all the New Order

policies. The deployment of the military within the predominant power was organized in the form of a tier, from the central to regional. At the regional level, the military functioned to oversee and ensure the execution of policies, which produced a space of power that favored the military in Indonesia.

Women as major supporters of the program

Women were important individuals who became the target of the New Order administration for the running of its programs. Various programs were specifically designed for women, especially those with families. In this regard, married women were the key performers of the important New Order policy aimed at maintaining family institutions. The formalization of Marriage Law was recorded as the crucial moment of the beginning of the New Order Administration. This was considered a step-in progress to protect and bestow respect for women in the family. The provisions of the Marriage Law constituted a historically perennial issue spanning from the colonial administration to the beginning of Independence, which eventually became legal during the New Order administration, incorporated into the Constitution on October 1, 1975. Some of the New Order flagship articles from the Marriage Law was article 3 regarding the recognition of monogamous marriages by the state. It also included various regulations to provide protection for women, especially regarding marriage age restrictions, obligation for the husband to provide protection in the marriage, and the equal rights that women can obtain both in private and public spheres (Anonymous, [1979](#), p. 3).

The assertion of Marriage Law in 1975 created a positive value that elevated women's dignity. This is because traditionally, women had limited access to the public sphere. Another was the proclivity to understand the so-called public sphere for women only in terms of their domestic domain. However, because of this law, women were granted equal rights, both in public and domestic spheres. The new gender conditions essentially meant that women had access to both the public and private spheres, which put them in an advantageous position over men who only had wide access to the public sphere (Geertz, [1985](#), pp. 48-49). Regrettably, due to the deeply embedded social construction in Indonesia that was detrimental for women's rights, this wider access for them created a type of pattern comparable to that seen in the previous period.

In addition to the Marriage Law that later granted wider access for women, the New Order administration thought about the importance of the insertion of the role of rural women in government programs. The statistical data of 1961 and 1971 demonstrated that women, especially those in rural areas, constituted most of the Indonesian population, comprising more than 84% of the total population. This means that, in 1961, Indonesians who lived in the city made up only about 14.8% of the total population, growing slightly to 17.5% in 1971 (Census Population, [1961](#) and [1971](#), Series C). Recognizing the potential to tap rural women who clearly had the numbers, the New Order administration seized the opportunity. The government found three significant reasons as to why rural women were vital to the ideology of development and Pancasila. The first is, as earlier mentioned, due to the large number of rural women. Secondly, previous political turbulences often occurred in the countryside, and most members of the left leaning Gerwani were from rural areas. Third, compared to their urban counterparts, those living in the countryside has thicker communal qualities (Kartohadikoesoemo, [1984](#)).

The New Order administration's recognition of the focal role of rural women in the future success of the ideology of development is described in Soeharto's own words, as follows:

“Therefore, I am asking the ladies to prepare themselves to assume massive roles in the upcoming stages of development. If we want to improve participation among women in this development, therefore one of the priorities is the improvement of skills among rural women, because that is where the majority of them reside” (National Archive, [1978](#), Number 1260 T).

The importance of rural communities as the major supporter of the New Order was recognized by Wijoyo Nitisastro, who was one of the central intellectuals during the early-stage development of the New Order policies (Emmerson ed., [2001](#)). The emergence of this outlook was largely influenced by the fact that Indonesia was an agrarian society and most of its population lived in rural areas. Therefore, by efficiently managing rural communities, the success of the government programs could be ensured. It subsequently inspired the idea of implementing governance programs at the rural level. For this, rural women were assigned additional roles as complementary to their traditional roles that were generally confined within the domestic domain (Suryakusuma, [1981](#), pp. 3-14).

Following the recognition of the importance of involving women in crucial roles within government programs, more programs incorporating their participation followed suit. In 1982, for example, funding for women's activities was set at 20 million rupiahs for the first eight years but this was increased to 50 million from 1990 to 1991. The budget increase was granted after Suharto received an international award from United Nations Family Planning Awards for his success in suppressing the population growth rate. The decline in the population growth rate had sharply increased sharply from 5.5 in the period 1950-1954 to 3.4 in 1988 (Anonymous, [1982](#), p. 2). The award was proof that the programs aimed at women, particularly in restricting birthrate, were working (Lubis and Niehof, [2003](#), pp. 192-193).

Creating new structures for women's activities

Awareness that women, especially those residing in the rural areas, could serve as major supporters for the success of the programs created opportunities for the New Order administration to draft a surveillance pattern within the activities through the existing women's organization. In this case, the existing women's organizations were completely remodeled and transformed to a different form. Prompted by the awareness of the importance of organizing and supervising women's activities, the Ministry of Home Affairs subsequently placed all programs under its direct supervision. The development prompted the Ministry to establish the first governmental woman's organization called Pertiwi (*Persatuan Istri Karyawan dan Karyawati di Lingkungan Departemen Dalam Negeri*) as part of the efforts to support their husbands' affairs within the compound of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Pertiwi assigned its representatives in all provinces, counties, municipalities, and down to the village level. Their recorded activities comprised several meetings intended for women's empowerment and *arisan* (Manderson, [1983](#), pp. 151-153).

Having been proven to demonstrate a good pattern within the organization, this idea was then adopted by several organizations. This inspired the formation of *Dharma Wanita*, a formal government organization aimed at organizing women to provide support to the husbands' duties. It became obvious that the nature of *Dharma Wanita* was much different, reflecting a different organization pattern compared to the previous period, in which predecessor social-political organizations were established based on standalone awareness of women. In contrast, the *Dharma Wanita* was formed by the government as a support entity—to support the husbands' duties. This organization became the fusion of all women's organizations within the government compound. Because it was a government organization, the President became the advisor-in-chief, his wife as the primary advisor, while several ministers maintained advisory board functions (Oey-Gardiner, [1996](#), p. 302). According to the

household budgetary of Dharma Wanita, for example, there are several obligations and prohibitions that each member should observe, as notably found in Article 2 paragraph 3:

“Each member of Dharma Wanita is strictly forbidden to carry aspirations or becoming a member who undergoes political activities or other activities which particularly against or inappropriately reflecting the principle, the aim, the quality and the nature of Dharma Wanita” (National Archive, [1979](#), Number 976).

Prior to the formalization of Dharma Wanita as the sole governmental women’s organization, Indonesia had more than 20 women’s organizations. To centralize and facilitate communication among them, Kowani played an important role, bridging them, and with almost all women’s organizations being under Kowani. However, as Dharma Wanita came into existence, the echoes of activities from Kowani gradually declined. The stark distinction between Dharma Wanita and Kowani is apparent: the former functioned to accommodate wives’ organizations to support their husbands’ duties in the formal settings, whereas the latter functioned as the association accommodating independent women’s organizations.

During its time, the Dharma Wanita became gradually influential, prompting the New Order administration to assign a specific ministerial post to handle women’s affairs. In 1978, the government established the Novel Ministry of Women and later renamed it as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. This step made Indonesia as the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to specifically install a ministry that dealt with women. Through this institution, the New Order administration expected more maximum engagement from women in the development process (Anonymous, [1995](#), p. 3).

Aside from Dharma Wanita that was aimed at providing women’s support to husbands’ affairs, the New Order administration created a specific organization to ensure empowerment within the rural areas. The organization was called *Pendidikan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (PKK) or Education of the Welfare of the Family, which adopted a tiered managerial line system, from the central to regional. One of duties that PKK members were required to meet was to ensure programs in healthcare, then later initiated by the *Pos Pelayanan Terpadu* (*Posyandu*) or roughly translated as Integrated Post, were carried out. Its program was designed to measure children’s weight and provide them appropriate nutrition. This was a supportive program in accordance with the Planned Parenthood that reflected the Norma Keluarga Kecil Bahagia Sejahtera.

Efforts to mobilize women

The mobilization activity became a very crucial policy of the New Order owing to the government’s obsession from the very beginning to attain success in its developmental programs to improve people’s welfare in a short period of time. It can be said, thus, that the programs intended for women were designed to mobilize them, starting from the mass organization of PKK, to the *Posyandu* aimed at creating a healthcare program for mothers and children, to the Planned Parenthood, a program designed to suppress birthrate through Planned Parenthood. These three programs eventually became interrelated and complementary to each other.

The PKK, the flagship program of the New Order administration, was historically born out of a home economics seminar held in Bogor in 1950. The seminar later emerged as the PKK in 1961 in Central Java Where its core program was developed in Central Java. The core of the PKK – was the fulfillment of 10 core programs of PKK itself, starting from a deep observance and adherence of Pancasila to tackling the problems of food, clothing, housing, and education. The success of PKK in Central Java inspired the government to adopt the program

into the national level. Hence, on December 27, 1972, the PKK formally became a national program (Kurnia, [2019](#), pp. 7-12).

Through the PKK, the government designed programs with a tier-system pattern intended to establish PKK in every province and rural level. The tier-system also included assigning cadres, which consisted of general cadres and special cadres. The general cadres referred to women who had extensive knowledge in counseling and mobilization of the community. Whereas, the special cadre were those women trained for special skills (Memet, [1993/1994](#), pp. 1-2). These cadres assumed a central role in the execution of *Posyandu*, serving as the facilitators of the programs (Anonymous, [1993/1994](#), p. 2).

Echoing the establishment of PKK, the government realized the necessity to draft a regulation on suppressing birthrate, which was previously initiated during the Soekarno administration. In 1967, Soeharto as the President of Indonesia, signed the Declaration on Population along with other world leaders. Subsequently, he assembled an ad-hoc committee to advise the president on designing the plan for the distribution of contraceptives in the regions of Java and Bali, as part of its exemplary project and the formation of an institution called *Lembaga Keluarga Berencana* (Institution of Planned Parenthood) (Dwipayana dan Ramadhan, [1989](#), p. 224). Despite his firm tone, Soeharto expressed belief that this program was meant to deliver the utmost contentment in life for mothers and children in the long run (Anonymous, [1979](#), pp. 46-47).

In the early 1970s, Lembaga Keluarga Berencana was renamed to Badan Koordinasi Keluarga Berencana Nasional (BKKBN) or, roughly, the Coordinative Institution on the National Planned Parenthood. With the formation of this institution, problems regarding the planned parenthood became the sole responsibility of the government and the BKKBN reported directly to the President. Prior to the amalgamation, the program of planned parenthood received a large sum of government funding from the government. In fiscal years 1970/1971, the government granted funding amounting to 1.3 million USD for the planned parenthood at the national level, with an additional 3 million USD from foreign aid. The amount of funding steadily increased annually. The funding for the planned parenthood in 1976/1977 was 28.8 million USD and in 1977/1978, it was raised to 34.3 million USD (Dwipayana dan Ramadhan, [1989](#), p. 225). The huge governmental efforts to suppress birthrate proved to be a success as the program lowered the rate of population increase to an approximate annual birthrate of 2.1%. At the end of 1988, the estimated population was 175.6 million, which constituted a small increase from 164 million people in 1985 (The Minister of State for the Role of Women of the Republic of Indonesia, [1990](#), p. 22).

In line with the establishment of PKK and the planned parenthood, the government also reinforced the *Puskesmas*, which was a crucial move since *Puskesmas* served as an adjunct to *Posyandu* in delivering healthcare and nutritional service to mothers and children. The collaboration among the PKK, Puskesmas, and *Posyandu* has thus existed since 1985. In 1990, there were at least 5.600 Puskesmas documented in Indonesia. They expanded parallelly in every district with more than 32.000 assisting forces (The Minister of State for the Role of Women of the Republic of Indonesia, [1990](#), p. 19).

Build a new image of women and families

It was indeed an urgent necessity for the government to socialize their designated programs for women. Their first attempt at socialization was conducted through novel slogans in support of government programs. The new slogans helped in convincing rural women to embrace the new programs and to forget the old slogans. The major old slogan that enthralled women went as “*banyak anak, banyak rejeki*” or “more children, more fortune.” It was slowly replaced by “*dua*

anak cukup, laki-laki perempuan sama saja” or “two children are enough, a boy or girl is the same.” The attempt to promote the new program was assisted by doctors who worked under the presidential health advisors such as Hurustiati Soendrio, Sulianti Saroso, Koen Suparti Martiono, and several regional heads who were attentive in matters regarding population control (Lubis and Niehof, [2003](#), pp. 9-25).

Capitalizing on the effectivity of the slogan, Tien Soeharto was active in articulating the government’s concept of family, which she referred to as the Pancasila family (*Keluarga Pancasila*) (National Archive, [1970](#), Number 383). What does it encapsulate? As described earlier, Pancasila is the sole foundation and only principles of the state aiming to harmonize life based on aspects such as monotheism, civil society, and sovereignty. According to her, a healthy family would be a close-knit entity that aligns with the principle of Pancasila (National Archive, [1978](#), Number 1260 T).

The socialization of the Planned Parenthood program as one of the means to establish a Pancasila family was carried out in part through the publication of the bulletin *Warta Posyandu*. The aim was to socialize the programs in *Pesantren* or the community-based skills training. The publication of *Warta Posyandu* was meant to convey the programs directly to the rural residents; whereas the socialization program in *Pesantren* was meant to introduce and convince the rural women that Planned Parenthood was not a form of deviation from religious law. The community-based skills training was a cohort program of the PKK to hone knowledge of the PKK cadres in regard to women’s problems that needed to be addressed (National Archive, [1966-1990](#), Number 1243.3).

All programs were not easily accessible for women from the lower class. A solution was the inclusion of an instruction manual (*petunjuk pelaksanaan*), which was later integrated into the program of P2WKSS and 10 core programs of PKK. The technical instruction in operating the PKK program became a guidance for the regional chiefs to coordinate activities in their jurisdiction and also for the program administrators or sector project administrators who were included in the Integrated Program of P2WKSS at the regional-level, or for LKMD team leaders and facilitators of PKK in all levels, as well as LKMD and PKK in the rural areas. Based on the main point of the instruction manual of P2WKSS, each regional chief had to design detailed guidelines that reflected the sectoral instructions and were composed as according to the situations, conditions, capacities and necessities in the sub-district or rural level. P2WKSS was implemented in self-subsistent rural areas or in the district levels having volatile local economies in a manner reflecting the 10 core programs of PKK, with funding and expert assistance coming from various sectors (Anonymous, [1983](#), pp. v-3).

The main target of the Integrated Program of P2WKSS was the economically challenged families, accomplished by prioritizing female family members aged 10-45 years old in the rural areas with volatile local economies. The program incorporated cautious observations of the potentials of a community toward self-subsistence. The activities ranged from addressing environmental issues to discussing the Marriage Law. The participants were housewives who engaged in the rural-level PKK. They did not only receive modules on Marriage Law but also religious knowledge and training in regards to forming a jubilant family, along with maintaining their welfare and healthcare (Anonymous, [1993](#), pp. 27-28).

To support the program and attract people to actively participate in it, the government launched an award program for those who excelled in facilitating the program. One of the best-known awards was for individuals who successfully completed the Planned Parenthood program within a specific span of time. The awards given were in the forms of laudable badge and charter. The award’s tier-system was conferred from the President to his governors. From there, the governors forwarded the badge and charter to the regents, and later to the worthy

recipient individuals, such as awards for those who had been in the Planned Parenthood program for 16 years, 10 years and 5 years (National Archive, [1966-1998](#), Number 1243).

Women in two spaces: family and society

The idea of involving women in the development efforts resulted in women gaining different positions compared to the previous period. The mandatory additional roles expected from women had to be met by becoming active participants in the government programs. However, women had been the objects in the government program as well as the main subjects in the designated programs. They were the main objectives in the Planned Parenthood concept and became the subjects when required to fulfill the obligation of facilitating PKK activities and to faithfully support their husbands in the men's formal organization.

When suppression of the birthrate became a formalized program, women became the object of policies. By promising tantalizing awards from the government, rural women were forced to participate in the program. This is because of all Planned Parenthood programs offered by the government, the largest number of participants were women as they were being medically objectified, through the use of contraception and injection. This implies incapacity to resist and women were unauthorized to oppose the program. This was mainly rationalized by Soeharto when he officially issued a statement justifying this compulsory participation. In his Independence Day speech on August 16, 1967, he asserted that the state had the legal right to sanction those who obstruct the birthrate suppression program (Anonymous, [1979](#), pp. 46-47). The obedience demanded from women to execute this government program in the Planned Parenthood department was absolute, which affected the poverty-ridden rural women more since they were in the position of absent bargaining power.

In regard the social space, several obligations had to be carried out by women. One of these is active participation in womanly activities designed by the New Order administrations under the label of empowerment. These activities entailed the training and empowerment of women in performing certain social duties. The obligatory atmosphere fostered in rural women a sense of being competitive to remain active in routine womanly activities. Those who were actively engaged in the PKK, for example, were deemed as useful and active women.

Another concerns rural women who happened to be the wives of government officers. Aside from their active engagement in the PKK, they carried additional burdens, such as the obligation to be present in the activities in the Dharma Wanita where their husbands were employed. The synergy between the PKK and Dharma Wanita generated more additional responsibilities, on top of the individual responsibility burdens within the family. The New Order administration accurately defined the responsibilities shouldered by women as described below:

“Essentially, a woman has duties: as the faithful companion to husband, as the mother and educator for children, as a housewife, as the successor of the lineage, and as an active citizen who participates in the development” (Saroso, [1980](#)).

Thus, it can be said that rural women during the New Order administration were expected to possess decent social intelligence. The formulation of social intelligence was stated firmly by the minister of Women's Affairs, Lasiah Susanto who speculated that the imperative knowledge all women must possess consisted of 10 matters relating to the family, children's guidance, food, clothing, housing, healthcare, finance, household governance, safety, and healthy family planning. These ten ideas were encapsulated in the PKK. It became apparent that the New Order imposed rural women with heavy burdens both in the domestic and public spheres.

CONCLUSION

This study on women in Indonesia during the New Order showed that women carried enormous responsibilities for themselves, their families and their social surroundings. The responsibility toward their families that the government imposed on women is seen in their obligation to bear the burden of the terms of reproduction amidst Indonesia's effort to lower the national birthrate. In their social settings, women bore the responsibility to build social relationships in order to support their husbands' position within the community. All these made women substantially dependent on the top-down policies of the government.

The entire program targeting women during the New Order administration eventually created dependency of the women. Unaware of the developing dependency, women began to lose their autonomy, allowing further dependency that would take a long time to be eradicated. Although the dependency of women in Indonesia has already been culturally and traditionally embedded, it was reinforced as a centralized policy as a consequence of the New Order's adoption of the ideology of development.

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