

# **EMBRACING NEW PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION**

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## EMBRACING NEW PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION

This book provides a collection of articles resulting from the International Conference on History, Social Sciences, and Education (ICHSE), which was held on 11 September 2021. The Department of History of Malang State University choose “Embracing New Perspectives in History, Social Sciences, and Education” as the main topic, and elaborates on five subthemes: 1) new trends in historical research; 2) formulation of new perspectives in history, social sciences, and education; 3) transdisciplinary research in history, social sciences, and education; 4) innovations in historical and social science learning during pandemics; 5) New ideas in the research and practice of social sciences and education. This seminar was open to international academics.

This book presents new perspectives on methodology, methods, theory, and themes on history, social sciences, and education research from various perspectives on methodology and historiography. Now, history is not only about politics, economy and military, but also about environment, social, education, culinary, and so on. This book will be useful for students, historians, and the general public, in recording the development of Indonesian historical writing perspectives.

## Three profiles of working women of the post-independence war in the “Suka-Duka” rubric of Sunday Morning magazine in 1945–1959

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**ABSTRACT:** The narrative of Indonesian women in 1945–1959 is still vague and incomplete. That certain period was identified with masculinity which was reflected in the preparation period, the youth revolution, the armed forces, and the treaties. While, the 1950s were closely related to decolonization, elections, and rebellions. Whereas, post-war anxiety was not only limited to prominent themes and conceived masculinity but also other aspects such as marginal and feminine groups. This article aims to describe the lives of three working women in Java as examples of post-war anxiety. These women’s profiles in the non-formal sector can illustrate the construction of the media at that time, declaring that these women were fighters for sustainable life after the war. This study employed the information derived from the Sunday Morning magazine in 1945–1959. From the discussion, the drawn conclusion is that the media promoted the construction of the working women narrative after the war. The women narrated not only became the breadwinner of their family but also of their country.

*Keywords:* History, Working women, Post-war

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In writing the history of Indonesia, especially in 1945–1950, the narrative is mainly dominated by the story of the independence war (Hasan 2002), politics (Elson 2009), military (Samson 1971), treaties, social revolution (Kahin 1995), and others. Meanwhile, the historical narrative/literature of Indonesia in the 1950s is dominated by decolonization (NORDHOLT 2011), democratic experiments (Feith 1962), elections, and rebellions (VAN DIJK 1981) which rarely present a narrative about women.

Even if there is a narrative discussing the women, it revolves around women’s role on the political stage (Blackburn 2013) or their narratives representing masculinity. The absence of women’s narratives in Indonesian historiography or historical literature is not something new. The limited opportunity for women to be present in the past was at least influenced by the dominance of patriarchal culture that was accepted as something common and natural in Indonesia (Amini 2018).

To a certain degree, gender bias frequently happened in history, where only the winners deserve to be narrated (Subekti 2021). The status and contribution of women are often defined by the male worldview. In other words, their status and contribution remain biased by the existence of a patriarchal culture that unconsciously dominates almost all lines of life (Lerner 1975). The solution offered to break through this problem is first, the use of the critical history method (Amini 2018). Second, historians must be able to find historical sources that are free from gender bias. For that reason, this paper intends to provide an alternative for historians who are interested in writing the history of women by using alternative sources derived from magazines.

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This article attempts to present women's narratives in Indonesian history in the 1945-the 1950s by using alternative sources derived from magazines to minimize gender bias in women's history writing. The final aim of this article is to obtain an overview of the lives of Javanese women as an example of post-war anxiety. Therefore, the historical narrative of women in the 1945-the 1950s will not be described from the masculinity perspective only.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research was the historical method using relevant sources such as magazines and journals. The magazines were used as sources of women's history writing in the 1945-the 1950s because they used rubrics that provided space for women to tell their life experiences. Thus, the women's narratives were written using the perspective of women. However, gender bias was still frequently seen even if it was relatively light.

The daily life of women can be observed in the track records of several magazines/newspapers such as in *Sunday Morning* (Minggu Pagi). The newspaper was used to be a local Yogyakarta magazine published by the *Kedaulatan Rakyat* newspaper. This magazine was a "supplement" to the *Kedaulatan Rakyat* newspaper, where the news published was "lighter" than in the *Kedaulatan Rakyat* newspaper. The daily life of Yogyakarta people can often be read from the rubrics presented in the magazine, such as the community sketch (sketsa masyarakat) rubric or the ups and downs (suka-duka) rubric. The rubrics included a person's experiences of ups and downs in living their daily lives. Some of them were written directly by themselves, while the rest were edited by the editorial staff without reducing the substance. From here, the media also took participation in building the narratives of how women should be in a society which sometimes created irony in women's life.

The ups and downs rubric did not only specifically discuss women's work but also men's. However, the information obtained about women's work cannot be ruled out when we place the rubric as a historical source in reconstructing women's history.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The depiction of the women's narrative in the Sunday Morning magazine*

As published in *Sunday Morning* magazines, post-independence Indonesian women were characterized by women who were not only struggling with domestic life but also those who had jobs to make ends meet. Their professions were diverse. Some jobs were closely related to women's domestic life such as being a "maid" or "batik artist". There were also other jobs that most likely received a negative stigma such as working as a "Taxi Girl" or commonly known as a call girl. For that reason, using the rubric of ups and downs can explain the various types of job choices for women at that time. However, other supporting, relevant sources are also necessary.

A batik artist wrote about her daily life which was later entitled "a batik artist" by the editor. In the article, she said that the job of being a batik artist was quite tedious. She told that she always did the same routine every day from morning to evening, where she had to struggle with the batik utensil facing the batik cloth while sitting next to the brazier and a wax liquid holder. The smoke was suffocating and smelled bad. Although the job only helped her make ends meet and supported her two children, she kept doing the profession. Since her husband left her, she was the only breadwinner. There was no holiday for batik artists (Anonymous 1950) (*Sunday Morning*, No. 32 Th II). From this article, there was at least an overview of a batik artist's daily life.

The daily life of working women was also illustrated in the ups and downs rubric, where a story about the work of an old maid was published. The maid explicitly narrated her life experience as a maid in her own nation's household. She was different from the maid who worked in Dutch households. The Dutch distinguished the maids into "babu dalam" and "babu tjutji". The cooks were not under this term. Babu dalam had an obligation to take care of things in the house, such

as sweeping the floor, cleaning the bed, etc., while, the *babu tjuji* simply washed the clothes. On the other hand, the maid in Indonesian households was different from that in a Dutch family. The *babu* had double responsibilities as a chef and maid. In addition, they also had the responsibility to babysit the children. Even though it was hard, that person kept working as a *babu* or *rewang* (maid) because the job helped her survive (Sunday Morning, No. 35th II). What is interesting in this article was the illustration of working in different households, working for a Dutch and Indonesian master.

If the two articles above were written using a woman's perspective, it would be different from the story of a woman who had a job as a "Taxi Girl". She said that she used to be a student from East Java. During the Japanese occupation, schools were closed, thus forcing her to work in one of the Japanese offices. Her love of dancing on "*dansloever*" led her to get acquainted with Japanese people. From here, she became the wife/concubine of one of the Japanese officials. One day, she was kicked out of the house leaving her with only a few suitcases of clothes. She was in confusion because she had no courage and felt very ashamed to return to her hometown. Finally, she ventured to move to Jakarta. In Jakarta, she worked at a brothel named "*Rakutentji*". Due to the demands of everyday life, she ended up getting entangled in the nightlife of prostitution. After the Japanese left Jakarta, then the British came. She entered a military hotel and began to "dance" there. It turned out that her love of dancing attracted the attention of the British officials. After that, she was accepted to work there as a "Taxi Girl" or a call girl, however, her job was only to accompany guests to dance. She was no longer a prostitute. When asked why she wanted to take up the taxi girl profession, she said that the job was one of her ways to earn a living.

"What is the point of being someone's wife ... What am I you going to do if the community already knows that I was once a taxi girl? There are even worse nicknames for me. What is the point of being someone's wife if the man is suspicious of her, just because she's a taxi girl? After all, as long as there are men in this world who need women like me, why do I have to go back to society? It is evil, cruel, and not mindful if they put the faults on the women only. The only thing I did was providing ...."

"... Well, Japan was defeated. But I wasn't afraid. As long as there are men on this land who need me ...." (Sunday Morning No. 33 Th 11, 12 November 1950)

#### 4 CONCLUSION

In the national history of Indonesia, the 1945-the 1950s was dominated by major themes related to nationalism and how Indonesia as a country was formed. The reason was that Indonesia was a newly independent country forming its identity and nationalism at that time. However, the absence of women in the narratives of the 1945-the 1950s is not something that can be justified because women with their problems still had contributions to the newly independent country.

Although it seems that the contribution that women made to the country was invisible, it became an important part. The narratives of women presented in the ups and downs rubric are narratives about everyday life after independence. As many of the husbands died on the battlefield, some women eventually became the breadwinner who ultimately ensures the daily survival of their family, the Indonesian people.

The women took the courage to pursue a livelihood in any way and as best they could offer. Some of the professions received an unfavorable stigma in society. Even so, the aforementioned stories about the four professions proved that women's history can not only be written when "she was close to power". In conclusion, the daily life of women during the war deserves to be one of the historical narratives.

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