Gender Equality in Indonesian New Developmental State:

The Case of the New Participatory Village Governance

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ABSTRACT

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This paper endeavors to understand how Indonesian new developmental state addresses gender equality and women's empowerment in its effort to institutionalize the participatory approach into the state bureaucracy. It pays attention to the way the new developmental ideology has shaped the participatory governance policy as an instrument of village development instead of an alternative mechanism for deepening democracy and reworking the structure of the traditional gender ideology. Utilizing qualitative data and results of a longitudinal monitoring study, this paper argues that the new set of participatory village governance policies under Law No. 6/2014 on Villages has a narrow focus on village economy and infrastructure, and ignores sensitive issues, such as transforming the traditional gender ideology. However, the government has room to make the law more progressive toward gender equality by revising the implementing regulations.

Keywords: new developmentalism, gender, participation, village, governance

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BPD	Village Council
BPK	Audit Board of Indonesia
BUMDes	village-owned enterprise
CCT	conditional cash transfer
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FGD	focus group discussion
GAD	gender and development
GDI	gender development index
GDP	gross domestic product
GEM	gender empowerment index
GII	gender inequality index
ILO	International Labour Organization
Komnas Perempuan	National Commission on Violence Against Women
KDP	*Kecamatan* Development Project
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
LKD	Village Community Institutions
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PKH	Family of Hope Program
PKK	Family Welfare and Empowerment
PNPM	National Program for Community Empowerment
PNPM-RISE	National Program for Community Empowerment -Regional Infrastructure for Social and Economic Development
RPJMN	national medium-term development plan
TP4D	Guard and Security Team for the Government and Regional Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VF	village fund
WAD	women and development
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	women in development

I. INTRODUCTION

The main question this paper aims to answer is straightforward: how do participatory governance initiatives address gender inequality and women's empowerment? This question is intriguing particularly in cases such as in Indonesia, where the governmental authority tries to move forward from project-based participatory development initiatives into an institutionalized form of participatory governance: a participatory approach that has been streamlined into the traditional state bureaucracy. This is intriguing for a couple of reasons. First, when the nation-wide participatory development project, namely National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM), was implemented from 1998–2014, The World Bank was the biggest supporter of the initiative. The project was even created by the Bank. While this initiative has been labelled as a "Trojan horse of neoliberalism" (Carroll, 2009), the new initiative, based on Law No. 6/2014 on Villages, is perceived as an effort to break away from the neoliberal influences. Secondly, the old initiative has been credited for a strong commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment by employing a range of gender-based affirmative action strategies in its design. While feminists are very critical to the design and impact on women, some studies show the "positive impact" on women's practical interest, mostly their well-being (Wong, 2002; Beard and Cartmill, 2007; AKATIGA, 2010; Scanlon, 2012; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014; Jakimow, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). The new participatory initiative, despite accommodating some affirmative policies, employs a kind of gender mainstreaming approach through what it calls "gender justice" in the governance steps and cycles. Thirdly, although the law on which this initiative is based was issued by the Yudhoyono presidential regime in 2014, the implementing strategies are developed by the current regime, which to many experts shows the tendencies toward the developmental state (Warburton, 2016) while keeping neoliberal-friendly economic policies. From these contexts, it seems that gender policies are facing a challenging environment because mainstreaming strategies often fail to improve gender equality, and state's affinities with developmentalism tend to ignore gender progressive policies.

To understand the issue, this paper includes several cases from the new Indonesian village participatory governance policy. The data for this paper was collected through fieldwork from April–September 2018 in three villages within three different *kabupaten* (districts) in three provinces in Indonesia. In addition, this paper also uses data from a longitudinal "sentinel village" study conducted by The SMERU Research Institute from 2015–2018 and supported by The World Bank; this study monitored the implementation of the new participatory village governance policy in Indonesia. The point this paper aims to make is that although the new initiative is trying to improve the design of participatory policy in Indonesia, it has a substantial limitation regarding the aspect of gender equality and women's empowerment. A conviction on the necessity of accelerating village infrastructure and economic development has left other issues, including gender equality, neglected.

In the following pages, the concept of participatory governance and women's empowerment policies, as well as the ways neoliberalism and new developmentalism have shaped them in the last couple of decades will be discussed. The discussion will be followed by an account of Indonesia's experiences in implementing different gender governance initiatives through various programs and projects, and their achievements. Lastly, there will be an elaboration of the findings from my fieldwork on gender policies in participatory village governance in Indonesia and their contribution to the current debate on neoliberal and new developmental gender governance.

II. PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE AND GENDER POLICIES IN THE NEOLIBERAL-DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Participatory governance is defined as the involvement of people in the decision-making process on matters that are relevant to their lives, which involves deliberation (Fung and Wright, 2003). As a practice, it has been around since the 1970s. It originated from experimentation by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as they looked for alternatives to the externally imposed and export-oriented development process (Chambers, 1992; Guitj and Shah, 1998). Not long after that, many international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), World Health Organization (WHO), and The World Bank adopted the approach. For example, United Nations Resolutions No. 5242 clearly calls for active participation of all elements of society to achieve the goals of development (Cornwall, 2006: 70). In the case of WHO, Rifkin (1996; 2009; 2014) has elaborated the prominence of participation in its approach to improving community health by accommodating community participation as a principle of primary health care since the 1970s. The World Bank, which is now overwhelmingly oriented to participatory projects all over the world, started to implement the participatory approach in their development projects from the 1960s (World Bank, 1994), although its massive support only came in the 1990s (Bhatnagar and Williams, 1992).

The 1990s and 2000s witnessed the ever-increasing presence of the participatory approach in governance and development. Some experts consider participatory governance as a potential contender for the driver of the third wave of governance reforms. According to Bevir (2011: 467–468), the two previous reforms, namely adopting the market approach in governance and then network or joint-up governance—an approach in which public services are delivered by a network of a number of different organizations (Bevir, 2011: 466)—brought the problem of traditional bureaucrats, namely the modernist expertise, and the problem of coordination. According to Bevir, participatory governance has everything to cure the disease; it bypasses the "expert" in the process and lets the people use their agency in decision-making.

Participatory governance is not only promising because it can overcome the modernist expertise quandary and improve the quality of governance. Based on many evaluations of participatory governance initiatives, scholars concluded that participatory governance is also promising to promote an inclusive and cohesive society, construct a strong citizenship, strengthen the practice of participation, and develop a responsive and accountable state (Speer, 2012; Gaventa and Barret, 2012; Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Bandeira and Ferraro, 2016). Furthermore, participatory governance, especially participatory budgeting, is also considered the best mechanism for resource redistribution (de Sousa Santos, 1998; Grillos, 2017). For economists, such as Dani Rodrik, participatory governance also has an aptitude as an institution to promote high-quality and sustainable growth (Rodrik, 2000). For Rodrik, the participatory approach enables a country to seek a genuine path for economic development instead of copying and pasting (path-dependent) routes that have been taken by developed countries, or what Peter Evans called "institutional monocropping" (Evans, 2004).

The speedy flourishing of participatory governance from the 1990s onward cannot be detached from the important role of neoliberal regimes, as fostered by The World Bank. Such institutions have helped to spread and proliferate the participatory approaches, but they are also responsible for inserting neoliberalism into participatory projects. Many studies have scrutinized the neoliberal

characteristics of the recent participatory governance initiatives (Li, 2007; Leal, 2007; Carroll, 2009). In terms of participatory institutions, Carroll (2009: 448) found that it has been tuned to "… promote a new form of neoliberal development governance … which is both a bundle of prescriptions and a set of methods and mechanisms to shape the political terrain in the underdeveloped world toward the establishment and sustenance of liberal market societies". Moreover, with regard to the technical approach, Li (2007) showed that governing through community has been a central strategy in neoliberal participatory projects. With this approach, "… communities of poor people were encouraged to take on responsibility for their improvement by engaging with markets, learning how to conduct themselves in competitive arenas, and making appropriate choices" (Li, 2007: 234).

Furthermore, neoliberalism, according to David Harvey, initially was a theory that believed humans can progress rapidly and maximally in a condition favorable to individual freedom, which emphasizes private property rights, free market, and free trade (Harvey, 2005: 2). Later on, the theory turned into an overwhelming system with the free market at the center. The free market is no longer only the logic to govern the economy, but also all aspects of human life from the economy, politics, culture to even very personal aspects such as religion and spirituality. Neoliberalism is not a monolithic entity. Neoliberalism in action, or as some scholars call it "actually existing neoliberalism," is made up of variegated realities because it is an embedded process and context-contingent (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore, 2018: 7). Countries can have very different characteristics of neoliberal policies, including, but not limited to, "an orientation toward export-oriented, financialized capital; a preference for non-bureaucratic and flexible modes of regulation; an aversion to progressive sociospatial redistribution and institutionalized social entitlements; the masking of elite power, ongoing dispossession, and upward redistribution by ideologies of competitive fairness and trickle-down economics; and a structural inclination in favor of market-mimicking governance systems, corporate concessions, and privatized monopolies" (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore, 2018: 7).

One parameter of variation in "actually existing neoliberalism" is the extent the state plays a role in economy and development. It can be very limited, just as the case of the traditional liberal state (*laissez-faire*), to a greater level, such as in the new developmental state (Bresser-Peireira, 2011; Ban, 2013; Cypher, 2015; Warburton, 2016; Gezmiş, 2018), or at a very intense level, such as in what scholars call "authoritarian neoliberalism" (Bruff, 2014; Tansel, 2017; Ryan, 2018; Fabry and Sandbeck, 2018; Bruff and Tansel, 2019). Looking at the current development in democracy in Indonesia, the subject country of this paper, which to many scholars (Hadiz, 2017; Aspinal, 2018; Power, 2018) is experiencing a serious decline in many aspects, applying the concept of authoritarian neoliberalism sounds very enticing. According to Bruff (2014: 116), authoritarian neoliberalism "operates through a preemptive discipline which simultaneously insulates neoliberal policies through a set of administrative, legal, and coercive mechanisms and limits the spaces of popular resistance against neoliberalism". This concept has been applied to explain the recent changes in neoliberal governance in several regions, such as Turkey (Tansel, 2018), Malaysia (Juego, 2018), Latin America (Jenss, 2019), and Africa (Harrison, 2019). However, evaluating the socio-political landscape of Indonesia, where democracy still exists despite its decline and has a nationalistic and liberalization/deregulation orientation as elaborated by Warburton (2016), I consider using a "milder" concept, i.e., new developmentalism, more appropriate.

As a concept, new developmentalism has a recent history. It was introduced by Brazilian economists in 2010 to refer to an alternative economic governing strategy to neoliberal orthodoxy and the old developmentalism. In many ways, it shares the characteristics of the old developmentalism (Ban, 2013), which gave more space for the state to play a significant role in the national economy, but it does not significantly depart from neoliberalism either. According to Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira, Brazil's former Finance Minister, with whom the concept was firstly associated, the concept is an

alternative to neoliberal orthodoxy, as well as to old developmentalism (Bresser-Pereira, 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2017; Bresser-Pereira, Oreiro, and Marconi, 2015), oriented to "… ensure growth with price stability and financial stability … and a reduction in social inequalities and an improvement in the living standards of the population" (Bresser-Peireira, 2017: 375). This perspective aims to depart from neoliberal orthodoxy because of the proven failure of neoliberal policies to bring economic growth to Latin America without financial fragility and social inequality. However, the proponents of this approach do not want to fully embrace the old developmentalism because it still believes that the market has a big potential as an economic governing system, though needing certain fine-tuning.

The main policy recipe is documented in "Ten Theses on New Developmentalism"[1] that has been subscribed by 34 economists. This document elaborates the ten basic arguments of the new developmentalism, which strictly speaking is about putting forward "… the national capitalist development programs meant to guide the transition of developing countries away from the Washington Consensus" (Ban, 2013: 300). To sum up, the theses affirm that economic development is a structural process with a focus more on the demand than the supply side. In the process, although the market plays major a role, state intervention is necessary to provide institutional frameworks and lay down a national development strategy. Full employment is the primary goal that every effort of economic development must achieve. While it does not refuse globalization, it aims to achieve economic stability by relying on domestic saving as a source of development funding, as well as by balancing public debt to gross domestic product (GDP) and the exchange rate. Lastly, new developmentalism commits to addressing inequality by advocating pro-poor policies, particularly minimum wage and social protection for the poor, such as cash transfers.

Just as neoliberalism is made up of variegated realities (Peck, Brenner, and Theodore, 2018), so is the new developmentalism. The countries that adopt the approach adjust the features according to their country-specific needs (Fine, Saraswati, and Tavasci, 2013; Kalinowski, 2015; Ban, 2013; Cypher, 2015; Gezmiş, 2018). However, learning from Brazil (Ban, 2013), Argentina (Wylde, 2016; Gezmiş, 2018), and Indonesia (Warburton, 2016), there are two common characteristics of the approach: pragmatism and hybridity. Brazil, the country where the concept was born, is implementing a highly hybrid policy in the form of selective financial deregulation, the dominant role of state-owned enterprise, a rigid labor market, and aggressive redistribution policies through minimum wage policies, conditional cash transfer program, and new tax policies (Ban, 2013). The case of Argentina is not so different. The hybrid policy can be seen from its financial regulation that allows it to conduct foreign exchange intervention, a trade and industrial policy that introduces tariff and non-tariff barriers in order to promote local production and export competitiveness, and the new policies in the energy sectors that force the players to primarily serve the needs of the domestic industry (Wylde, 2016; 2018; Gezmiş, 2018).

Such hybrid and pragmatic policies have also been implemented by the Indonesian government under President Joko Widodo. If developmentalism has long been an orientation in Latin America (Ferraro and Centeno, 2018), so has it been in Indonesia (Feith, 1982; Vu, 2007; 2010). The developmental state has been in the making since the Indonesian independence in 1945 but was never successful until the New Order regime took control (Vu, 2007; 2010). According to Warburton, Indonesia under Joko Widodo (2014–2019) shows an "uncanny parallel" with New Order's developmental state's orientation toward technocratic development program and statist and nationalist feature of Indonesian economic planning (Warburton, 2016: 306). The new developmentalism differentiates itself from the old developmentalism in terms of openness (less protectionism), strong commitment toward export orientation, and keeping inflation under control

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[1]The economists who subscribe to this idea have created a website, and the theses and other resources on this topic can be found here: https://www.networkideas.org/alternatives/2010/10/ten-theses-on-neo-developmentalism/.

(Ban, 2013). Since the new developmental state policy is pragmatic, it is also very conservative in its social and political agenda (Warburton, 2016: 307). It normally avoids sensitive issues, such as law reform and corruption. What is more, the Indonesian developmental state also tends to circumvent a progressive approach to deal with the issue of the civil and political rights (Warburton 2016: 307), including gender equality.

I agree with the definition of new developmentalism in Indonesia used by Warburton (2016: 307). She defines it as "ideas and practices associated with the developmental paradigm that has risen to prominence under the Joko Widodo (Jokowi) administration, which is driven by 'the idea that the task of the state is to achieve fast development to overcome … backwardness and catch up with advanced countries'". In such a dominant paradigm, other goals of national development will be subsumed under achieving high economic growth.

The conceptualization of the new developmentalism thus, to some extent, requires the powerful position of the state. How does it then respond to participatory governance ideas, which, to some extent, requires the state to share its power with the citizens?

Finding the answer requires a review of the countries that have adopted the new developmentalism as well as a participatory approach to their development. The best example for this is Brazil. As previously discussed, Brazil is among the countries whose policies show a tendency toward the new developmental state. At the same time, Brazil is a pioneer in participatory budgeting. Scholars praised Brazil's initiative in a participatory approach as an effort to truly deepen and strengthen democratic institutions (Goldfrank, 2017). However, regarding the participatory innovations that were developed at the end of the 1980s, now "… nearly all stripes are weak, stalled, disfigured, or in the process of being rolled back" (Goldfrank, 2017: 147). Participatory institutions have weakened through changing the meaning (and practice) of participation from "power-sharing" to a milder version of it as "consultation" and "dialog" (Dagnino, 2016: 160), or just being "ignored" or allowing it to be practiced at the local level and never being scaled up to the national level (Goldfrank, 2017). While the citizens are involved in various meetings and consultations, the final decision is not in their hands. Otherwise, if they can make a decision, they only decide on the options that have been provided for them.

For some scholars, the fundamental problem of the new developmental state that leads to the marginalization of the participatory approach is the contradictions inherent in the new developmentalism itself (Dagnino, 2016; North and Grinspun, 2016; Goldfrank, 2017). The contradictions are between political centralization and state domination inherited from old developmentalism, as well as power-sharing and social control in participatory innovation (Dagnino, 2016), or between aspirations to wealth and economic growth through neo-extractivist policies and the efforts to transform and deepen democracy through participatory innovation (North and Grinspun 2016; Goldfrank, 2017).

However, an important note must be made here about the contexts where there has been decreasing support for participatory governance. What scholars discussed as the weakening of the ruling government's affinity with participatory initiatives is more in the context of the deepening of democracy as a strategic and perhaps sensitive agenda, rather than participatory governance in development projects. As elaborated by Warburton (2016), in the case of Indonesia, the developmental regimes tend to be conservative and avoid dealing with any sensitive issues, such as corruption, law enforcement, and good governance. In fact, these sensitive issues are the very constituting features of participatory governance. Participatory initiatives as a development orientation fit very well with new developmental narratives on distributive policies because, as argued by de Sousa Santos (1998) and Grillos (2017) among others, the participatory approach is the best mechanism of resource distribution.

Moreover, we have seen more and more countries embrace the participatory approach in their development system, no matter what ideology those countries uphold. The authoritarian and non-democratic countries, such as China, or old-school developmental states, such as South Korea, can also implement participatory governance. They have implemented participatory projects for various purposes, such as for local-level development and poverty reduction (Zhong and Mol, 2008; World Bank, 2012a; Kim, 2016; Lee, 2017), or a totally different purpose from deepening democracy, namely to strengthen their authoritarian rule as China did (He and Thøgersen, 2010; Yan and Xin, 2017). Through what Harding (1987) called "consultative authoritarianism," the authoritarian regime developed more deliberative institutions to produce better public policy and confer legitimacy (He and Thøgersen, 2010: 676).

If the new developmental states tend to be conservative and avoid the strategic but sensitive policy moves (Warburton, 2016), we can expect that they will also refrain from making such a groundbreaking policy with gender equality and women's empowerment. Some studies on gender equality policies in Latin American countries that have embraced new developmentalism (Friedman, 2009; Boesten, 2012; Franzoni and Voorend, 2012; Gideon and Mulyneux, 2012; Gideon, 2012; Dosĕk et al., 2017) do find an inclination toward socially conservative policies regarding gender. Although those studies find that the governments in those countries have done much to improve the well-being of women (gender practical needs), they avoid touching "… areas of social policy that challenge conservative conceptions of the family, and issues of sexuality and reproductive rights …" (Gideon and Mulyneux, 2012: 297). Staab (2012), for example, showed that while the Chilean government has done a lot to improve women's well-being—such as expanding early childhood education and care services, reforming the parental leave, and the introduction of child-rearing credit into the pension system—women are absent from the policy-making process. Consequently, women's strategic needs, such as rights to land, inheritance, credit, financial service, equal opportunity to employment (equal pay for equal work), are left unheard by the government. The same inclination is also very common in conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs that are implemented in many countries in Latin America and Indonesia. A study by Franzoni and Voorend (2012) proved that CCT programs in Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador had a significant impact on reducing poverty and enhancing income equality yet no impact on gender inequality. In the Indonesian context, Syukri et al. (2010) find that while CCT programs improve the well-being of women, they do not change the traditional gender roles in the family.

The inclination to improve the general well-being of women while ignoring their more strategic interests was firstly identified by Molyneux (1985) when she researched the impact of Nicaraguan revolution on women. In the paper, Molyneux introduced the concept of gender interests, which can be strategic or practical. Moser (1993) then took the idea further by conceptualizing gender needs, instead of interests, in the context of development planning. According to Molyneux (1985: 232–233), if gender practical interests/needs are those that "arise from the concrete condition of women's positioning within gender division of labor", the strategic interests/needs arise from "the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangement to those which exist". While the former will be formulated by the women based on their experience, the latter needs external intervention to understand the situation and to formulate the alternative.

Moreover, regarding its support for gender equality, new developmentalism is almost similar to neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has been heavily criticized for the way it engages with gender issues. It is true that neoliberal states have made many efforts to address women's problems. One unique way the neoliberal regimes make such effort is through "empowerment". The empowerment projects are often delivered using a participatory approach with components such as inclusive decision-making, capacity building, facilitation, and access to resources (e.g., micro-credit support)

and markets. According to The World Bank, empowerment is "… the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives" (Narayan, 2002: 14). With empowerment, the neoliberal regimes want the poor and marginalized people, including women, to have resources and capabilities to be able "to control their lives" (Narayan, 2002: 14). A unique approach of neoliberalism with empowerment is that it shifts the responsibility of improving the life of the poor from the state to the individual poor themselves (Eisenstein, 2017).

Such focus on individual women, instead of the structural discrimination that maintains the gender inequality unchanged, persists until today and has been subject to many criticisms. In the series of women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD), the critique concerns how women have been "used" for achieving different development purposes (Molineux, 2006; Calkin, 2015; Benería, Berik, and Floro, 2016). Women have been used either by the state or by the market. The state has used the women to undertake jobs that used to be the state's responsibility, such as taking care of the poor and the marginalized citizens (Eisenstein, 2017). The market uses women as its consumers and cheap labor (Benería, Berik, and Floro, 2016). In the most recent discourse, the exploitation of women becomes more explicit in the dominant neoliberal approach to women's participation in a market economy through their slogan "gender equality as the smart economy" (World Bank, 2006; 2012b). Investing in women (and girls), i.e., to empower them so they can participate in the market economy, is a smart policy because it will increase productivity (women are assumed to be more productive than men) and they will use their income more prudently for their children to create a better next generation (World Bank, 2012b: xx). The general approach to "empower" women in order to be able to enter and contribute to the market economy (or "womenomics," a term used by *The Economist*) has been criticized by feminists as "feminism seduced" (Eisenstein, 2009), as "instrumentalizing gender equality" (Wilson, 2015), as "international business feminism" (Roberts, 2012; 2015), and as "neoliberalising feminism" (Prügl, 2015; 2017). Neoliberal approaches to women empowerment and gender equality only leave women trapped in even deeper exploitation so that some feminists suggest "to take a break from feminism" (Halley, 2006).

With these theoretical perspectives in mind, the following section will discuss how gender is governed in Indonesian participatory development.

III. GENDER GOVERNANCE IN PARTICIPATORY INITIATIVES IN INDONESIA

Speaking of traditions, Indonesia has had very diverse patterns of gender relations, considered as "gender orders" (Blackburn, 2004; Robinson, 2008; Davies, 2010). There are cultures in which gender orders are traditionally fairly equal, such as in Javanese with its bilateral social system; also those in favor of females, such as in Minangkabau (West Sumatra); or in favor of males, such as in Timor (East Nusa Tenggara); and in which the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community had its place the society, such as in the Bugis tradition (Oetomo, 1996; Blackwood, 2005; Boellstorff, 2005; Davies, 2010; Bennett and Davies, 2015). Customs (*adat*) and world religions (particularly Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism) played a significant role in structuring the pattern of the gender order. Within this context, it makes sense if the women's movement in its early forms made the customary and religious interpretations on gender roles as the targets to change in their struggle.

The first serious attempt to change the variegated gender orders was initiated by the New Order by introducing its formal state gender ideology (Suryakusuma, 1988; 1996; Blackburn, 2004; Robinson, 2008). In this new regime, the plural pattern of gender relations was homogenized into the concept of "women's status" (Robinson, 2008), and subsumed under the general "national interest", namely development (*pembangunan*) (Suryakusuma, 1988; 1996). In this homogenous concept of gender relations, women are defined as "*ibu rumah tangga*" (housewives), i.e., obedient wives and mothers who will support their spouses and raise their children. This gender ideology has been formalized in regulations, such as in Marriage Law No. 1/1974. This represents a very traditional gender ideology on women's role, a role that is based on "a moral view about the ideal division of tasks between men and women within the family pointing at male provider role and female caring role" (Stam, Verbakel, and de Graaf, 2014). These roles are institutionalized into Dharma Wanita, a state-initiated organization for the wives of civil servants, and Family Welfare and Empowerment (PKK), an institution for accommodating the traditional forms of women's activism at all levels, from the national to the village level, and through the family planning program to control women's body and sexuality (Blackburn, 2004).

When the New Order finally collapsed in 1998, the *Reformasi* (reform) era began. With the termination of the New Order, there was a hope for a better form of gender governance. Some studies conducted by Women Research Institute showed that there were some new policies made by the government to boost gender equality and women's empowerment (Noerdin, Aripurnami, and Muchtar, 2007). In 1998, Baharudin Jusuf Habibie, the first president during the *Reformasi* era, established a National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan, 2018). In 2000, Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency issued a regulation that stipulated gender mainstreaming in national development (Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000). Three years later, Indonesia also had a new election law that stipulated affirmative action policy for women's participation in politics by legislating that 30% of a political party's candidates for the parliament should be women (Noerdin, Aripurnami, and Muchtar, 2007). Among the most important policies was Law No. 23/2004 on Elimination of Domestic Violence. This is a very progressive legal product because it does not only provide protection for women and children and introduce criminal status to the domestic violence perpetrators, but also guarantees rehabilitation for the victims. In addition, after the *Reformasi* era, it has been very easy to encounter female public figures, either as bureaucrats, politicians, nongovernmental figures or executives from the private sector (Blackburn, 2004).

Although many achievements were made, old problems persisted, and new challenges came. The old problems such as women's capacity, gender inequities in job opportunities and payment, misogynistic interpretation of religious norms, and culture of bureaucracy persist. Male bias remains strong in those areas. Those factors have hindered Indonesia from achieving gender equality despite some progress in the policymaking sector—such as having ruled a female president, Megawati Soekarnoputri, from 2001–2004; having a ministry for women's empowerment since 1978; and having issued innovative policies for gender equality (Blackburn, 2004; Noerdin, Aripurnami, and Muchtar, 2007; Blackburn, 2008). The new challenges triggered by decentralization are local regulations and revitalization of the old traditions that marginalize women. In many districts, those regulations and traditions are sponsored by religious fundamentalism and social conservatism, such as regulations that limit women's mobility as well as regulation and traditions that strictly rule women's appearance in public area.

Despite some problems and challenges, one thing is obvious after the *Reformasi* era: more participation, particularly for women, has become the new "normal" in Indonesian politics and governance. In addition to gender affirmative and mainstreaming policies, the *Reformasi* era also bequeathed to Indonesians the participatory development program that gave significant attention to women's empowerment: the *Kecamatan* Development Project (KDP). The program was designed

and piloted in 1998, and in the following years, it was rapidly expanded to cover more *kecamatan* (subdistrict). In 2007, it was transformed into the National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM) and in 2009, it already covered almost all Indonesian villages. PNPM was an umbrella program under which dozens of participatory projects were implemented for different purposes, such as PNPM Rural, PNPM Urban, PNPM Green, and PNPM-Regional Infrastructure for Social and Economic Development (PNPM-RISE). Almost all projects were terminated in 2014 to make way for the new participatory governance policy concerning village participatory governance and development.

Although the projects were not specifically aimed at women's empowerment, they had a significant number of components that advocated for more participation for women in public decision-making, entrepreneurship, capacity building, and networking. This was among the first development projects in Indonesia that implemented gender affirmative policies in its design. The affirmative policies can be found in the following aspects (Wong, 2002; Decentralization Support Facility, The World Bank, AusAID, and DFID, 2007; Scanlon, 2012; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014):

a) regarding the staffing, the project affirmed that there must be an equal number of male and female village facilitators. This policy also applied to the *kecamatan* facilitator assistants, but not to *kecamatan* facilitators;

b) there was a special meeting for women in the process of development planning;

c) during the development planning, a village could propose three projects, one of which must be a women's proposal;

d) women had to be represented in *kecamatan* meetings;

e) women had to be represented in the proposal planning, verification, and selection stages;

f) there was a special module of training on gender for all consultants and facilitators;

g) the data collected by the project was gender-disaggregated; and

h) there were subprograms specifically geared toward widows and orphans, as well as programs in which they were among the beneficiaries.

Those components were not introduced at the same time in the course of the project implementation. Instead, some components were there from the beginning and others were added along the way.

As the largest project of its kind, PNPM has been evaluated widely. I was involved in at least three research projects to look at different aspects of this program (Rahayu et al., 2008; Syukri, Mawardi, Akhmadi, 2013; Syukri et al., 2014). Based on previous studies which specifically looked at the gender aspects of PNPM (Wong, 2002; AKATIGA, 2010; Scanlon, 2012; Beard and Cartmill, 2007; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014; Jakimow, 2017; 2018a; 2018b), the picture was not always as positive as it could have been. The general conclusion of those studies is that although women's participation increased significantly in decision-making in meetings, entrepreneurship, and (paid) public works, the gender components of the program were not yet intentionally designed and implemented to transform the structure of unequal gender relations. Women's participation in the general decision-making forums and women's specific meeting were more likely symbolic (AKATIGA, 2010). Women were sometimes pushed to attend decision-making forums just to meet the program's conditionality (there is a quota of women's presence in a meeting), instead of attending voluntarily (AKATIGA, 2010; Syukri, Mawardi, and Akhmadi, 2013). The domination of the elite was also apparent. In the general forums, the female participants were more likely to be silent and the meetings were dominated by elite men. Even in the women-specific meetings, elite women dominated the process and program benefits, such as microcredit funds or working opportunities, were mostly taken by the elites and people in their circles (AKATIGA, 2010; McCarthy et al., 2017).

Furthermore, those studies also highlighted that the gender components did not become successful in transforming the gender relations that confined the role of women into domestic responsibilities and subordinated them to men's/husbands' roles. Some studies even found that PNPM tended to reinforce the old gender orders (Beard and Cartmill, 2007; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 2014). In short, PNPM was more concerned with the practical needs of women, or the needs related to women's well-being, and avoided dealing with gender-strategic needs, or the needs to have an equal position relative to men. The inclination to sustain the established gender order in the society not only happened in PNPM but also in other programs, such as the Family of Hope Program (PKH), the Indonesian version of conditional cash transfers, which also had a significant component of women's empowerment (Syukri et al., 2010).

IV. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE NEW VILLAGE PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

PNPM was terminated in 2014 to make way for the new policy on participatory village governance. This policy was stipulated by a special law, namely Law No. 6/2014 on Villages. The new law in many ways is the continuation of the previous participatory development policies in Indonesia. The difference between them is that the former was a project-based initiative, implemented by non-state actors (consultants, facilitators, and community groups) and established outside the state's bureaucracy, while the latter is institutionalized into the bureaucracy, implemented by the bureaucrats, and is part of the normal activity of the bureaucracy. PNPM had been designed to be implemented outside of the state bureaucracy in order to circumvent the corrupt, ineffective, and inefficient bureaucracy, aiming bit by bit to cure the disease from the outside. However, the institutionalization of the new participatory policy into the state bureaucracy does not so much imply that the current state of bureaucracy "has been cured" and has implemented the good governance as advocated by PNPM. Instead, PNPM does not have significant impacts on improving the state bureaucracy (Syukri, Mawardi, and Akhmadi, 2012; Dharmawan, Nugraheni, and Dewayanti, 2014). Nevertheless, PNPM has undeniably contributed much to introducing and familiarizing the villagers with participatory governance. The rest of this chapter discusses the general features of the policy as well as the ways gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed and the policy works on the ground.

The law on participatory village governance is regarded as a very progressive regulation because for the first time, the central government recognizes the village as a unique entity with a specific history, traditional rights, local institutions, and culture, which will be retained in the village governance (*asas rekognisi*) (Vel, Zakaria, and Bedner, 2017). The recognition of the historical rights (*hak asal-usul*) is very important because under the New Order, the wide variations of village structure across the archipelago were homogenized as *desa* (typical Javanese village), thus removing the uniqueness of each village in terms of their governance, institutions, and local culture (Zakaria, 2000). In addition, the law is also progressive because the central government grants a certain degree of autonomy to the villages, in which the villages have "a village-scale authority." What the law means by this concept is "the authority of the village to regulate and manage its community's needs, which it had executed prior to the existence of this law or it is capable of and effective in executing, or which arises out of the village's development and the community's initiative" (annex of the law on its elucidation).

With these two principles, not only can a village be more autonomous, but there is also room for the recognition of indigenous customary villages (*desa adat*) in which the villagers can preserve or revitalize their time-honored traditions.

To some extent, the revitalization of the old tradition by recognizing the indigenous villages will allow the villagers to live according to their local culture. However, this also means that there are opportunities for traditions that marginalize women to be revived. This is similar to the case of local autonomy in 1999, in which the central government decentralized some of its authority to the local government. With the new authority, many districts issued various local regulations that were counterproductive to the national efforts to accelerate local development, including in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment. According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), until 2017 there were 421 regulations at the regional level that were classified by them as discriminating against women (Komnas Perempuan, 2018). Before the *Reformasi* era, the discriminating policies against women were fairly limited to the national policies, or local policies that were the interpretation of the national ones. The number was also far fewer than it is now because in the centralized system, the local governments had no authority to issue a local law unless it had a reference to the national policies (von Benda-Beckmann, 1990). Whether or not the growing number of regulations that discriminate women at the village level in the post-*Reformasi* era is also the case now will be discussed in the following.

The general features of the new participatory village governance are fairly similar to those of PNPM. The new policy still retains participatory decision-making for every strategic issue in the village. The Village Law strictly delimits the "strategic" issues, which now includes (i) changing village administrative status (to change the village status from rural to urban village, or to create a new village, or to merge two or more villages into one); (ii) village development planning; (iii) inter-village cooperation; (iv) investment plans in the village; (v) selling or purchasing village assets; (vi) establishing village-owned enterprise (BUMDes); and (vii) extraordinary events/incidents, such as disaster (Law No. 6/2014, Article 54). Decisions must be made at open village meetings and organized by the Village Council (BPD) (a council with 5–9 members, depending on the size of the village, which more or less functions as village parliament), and involves the "representation" of all segments of the village citizens. While the law requires only representatives of all segments, instead of all the villagers, the forum must be open to all villagers who want to participate, although not formally invited by the Council.

One aspect that has been criticized by many activists is the fact that the law does not stipulate the village executives to report the village governance activities to the villagers. Instead, the law only requires the village government to report formally to the *kabupaten* government and announce publicly the reporting documents to the community. For this reason, the regulations encourage the village government to provide public notice boards in many importance areas in the village, such as in main village junctions, in front of the village office, and in religious edifices. Furthermore, the new initiative also encourages the villagers to implement the development projects by themselves, instead of by third parties. This is particularly for projects that do not require a very specific technical expertise. This policy should ensure that villagers will get the benefit not only out of the outputs of the projects, but also from the process of developing the projects by getting paid as labor.

Another essential feature of the new participatory village governance is the village fund (VF). The new policy has secured a huge budget from the central as well as *kabupaten* governments. In total, a village can receive up to dozens of times more than before the existence of the VF. A village outside of Java that received below 100 million rupiah before the existence of VF could receive more than one billion rupiah in 2018. The fund is huge by any standards for most villages, although some affluent *kabupaten* in Kalimantan and Sumatra allocated almost the same amount of money from their budget to villages prior to this new policy.

With a larger amount of money comes bigger responsibility. The central government has issued many technical regulations with regard to the usage of the fund, including the eligible spending, mechanisms of procurement, and accountability mechanisms. Up to my fieldwork period, there were 45 national regulations regarding this new policy. From this number, we can say that this is probably among the most over-regulated policies in Indonesia. According to the participants of a workshop on Regulation of the Ministry of Home Affairs No. 20/2018 held at Millenium Hotel in Central Jakarta from August 8–9, which I attended, these technical rules are very detailed, and the mechanisms are "too sophisticated" for villagers. The government also employs many "accountability apparatuses" such as the Audit Board of Indonesia (BPK), district inspectors, Guard and Security Team for the Government and Regional Development (TP4D)[2], the police, and even the military to ensure that the fund is used properly for various purposes related to village development. Looking at these rigid policies, it is clear that the policymakers (the central and regional governments) do not trust the capability and integrity of the villagers and the village governments. Without any trust, one wonders how the central and regional governments can "empower"—which is one of the principles (*asas*) of the law—the villagers and the village governments.

What differentiates the new participatory village governance from PNPM is how it addresses marginality issues, such as poverty and gender inequality. Particularly on gender equality and women's empowerment, PNPM's approach was more progressive in that it utilized mainstreaming policies, as well as numerous components of gender affirmative action policies, as described previously. The participatory village governance, on the other hand, uses (if any) a fairly weak mainstreaming strategy with very limited affirmative action components. The law uses the terminology "gender justice" in every passage that speaks about gender. However, there is no clarification of what it means by the concept of gender justice in this law, nor in its implementing regulations. To find out how the government interprets the concept, we can review the relevant government's official documents, namely the 2015–2019 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN).

In the RPJMN, gender is one out of the three *lintas bidang* (cross-cutting themes) mainstreamed in development, the other two being sustainable development and good governance. While "gender justice" is indeed used in this document, it is also left unclarified. However, we can infer the meaning from what the gender mainstreaming efforts want to achieve. In the document, there are three main targets, namely (i) women's condition (health status, educational attainment, economic contribution) and women's position (women's decision-making role in legislative, executive, and judicial branches); (ii) women's security, particularly from domestic violence; and (iii) the quality of gender mainstreaming institutions and women's protection, particularly on regulations and their support system (such as the gender-disaggregated data, domestic violence data, and well-trained human resources)[3]. These programmatic efforts will be measured based on achievements in various indexes, such as the gender development index (GDI), gender empowerment measure (GEM), and gender inequality index (GII). Looking at these targets, we can say that the government's conception of gender justice is fairly adequate to cover either the gender practical or strategic needs. However, how does it translate into the more technical policies?

To understand how gender justice is being operationalized in the real world, we can see how it is translated into technical policies in participatory village governance. I collected almost all of the relevant rules at the national level, which amounted to 45 regulations up to 2018. Since Indonesia

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[2]A team at the district led by the district attorney, which is established to oversee the usage of the district and village budget.

[3]RPJMN 2015–2019, Book II, p. 22.

implements a decentralized government system, it will also be interesting to know how local governments translate those national regulations into their local rules. For this purpose, I have collected the local-level regulations in three *kabupaten* where I conducted fieldwork. Unfortunately, for technical reasons,[4] I could not collect all regulations. However, the 47 regulations I did collect already constituted more than 90% of the relevant regulations in each *kabupaten*.

Table 1. Gender Matrix of Participatory Village Governance Regulations

Regulations	N	Presence of Gender Awareness (%)	Gender Affirmative Policies			Occurrence of Words	
			Participation (Access and Benefit) (%)	Decision-Making (Control) (%)	Affirmative Budget (%)	Gender * (%)	Women** (%)
National	45	0	17.78	2.22	0	13.33	35.56
Local	47	0	27.66	6.38	0	12.77	40.43
Total	92	0	22.83	4.35	0	13.04	38.04

*1.5 words per relevant regulation

**4 words per relevant regulation

Although the central government claimed that gender is mainstreamed as a cross-cutting theme in the central government's programs and policies, Table 1 shows that no single regulation has straightforward gender awareness and a very limited number of them have gender affirmative action policies. A gender programmatic statement is never included in the preamble or the principal article of the regulations. Affirmative policies are also limited. Only about 23% of the regulations on village governance affirm women's participation in village governance-related activities or as the beneficiaries of village development programs. When it comes to the decision-making positions (to sit in different positions in the village organizations with decision-making power), the percentage of regulations that have affirmative action policies is even lower, only about 4%. The most important affirmative action policy made by the law is to guarantee one out of five or nine (depending on the size of the village that will be detailed in the local regulation) members of the village council must be a female who represents women's interests and is elected only by women in the village. Interestingly, although there are many options for women's empowerment-related development activities provided by the regulations, no single policy that secures a special budget will be allocated for that purpose.

Furthermore, looking at the number of words related to gender equality and women's empowerment, 40% of regulations contain on average four occurrences of the word "*perempuan*" (women) and 12% of regulations contain on average 1.5 occurrences of the word "gender." This means that while some regulations mention gender and women, they never discuss it. As each regulation contains about 10,000–30,000 words, and gender and women only appear 1.5–4 times, we can see how gender has been under-represented in the discussion by the lawmakers. Not only do the regulations miss the mission statement of gender equality and women's empowerment, but all the regulations that do mention gender issues only do so in the sections on community empowerment (as the beneficiaries) or village meetings (as participants). Other sections use a gender-blind narrative. Another aspect worth mentioning is that although some regulations contain the word "gender," we can see that the concept has been misunderstood as everything about women, or even worse as replacement word for sex. Many times, in the regulation documents and some conversations I had with my informants, "gender" was defined as "women." The lack of

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[4]The most common reason is that such a document is a "national secret" that not everyone can access.

understanding on the concept of gender is common among the parliament members and the bureaucrats and it is even worse at the local level.

Furthermore, those regulations also lack harmony. For example, while some regulations (e.g., Regulation of the Minister for Home Affairs No. 114/2014) mention the options for women's empowerment activities that a village can create, others that specify priority usage of village fund (e.g., Regulation of the Minister for Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration No. 21/2015) do not list those activities as a priority. However, for the local actors (village and district governments, and local facilitators), it has been well understood that this disharmony mostly happens in the regulations issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Villages. The strained relationship between the two ministries arose when President Jokowi decided to move the division responsible for village-related matters from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the newly established Ministry of Villages—a decision that was not accepted by some factions in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

In a decentralized system, local regulations are expected to be more than just copying and pasting the national rules into the local format, but, in fact, that is what they have done. Very rarely do local governments make innovations beyond what is required by the national rules. The lack of innovation among the local governments signals that there is something wrong with decentralization. Indeed, several studies (Aspinall and Fealy, 2003; Pepinsky and Wiharja, 2011) show that there are some problems with decentralization that hinder such innovation from the local government. With such condition, we can say that there are very few, if any, new discourses on gender equality or women's empowerment produced at the local level. The local governments are more likely just the "net-consumers" of the national discourse.

Furthermore, the local translations of national policies still have to be translated into village-level policies to reach their targets: the village government and its villagers. To respond to the *kabupaten* government regulations, the village government will develop the village development plan, either short term (annually) or medium term (every five years), and village budget. How do the village governments respond to the supra-village policies?

To answer this question, we have to scrutinize the village development plans and budget plans for at least two or three years and the process of decision-making that produces such policies. However, the three villages I visited did not produce the document at comparable times and incomparable formats: one village had only the 2015 development plan, while the others had only the 2016 and 2017 plans respectively. Some of them used a new format, while another used an older format. Therefore, it was difficult to make a comparison between them. Although the document is compulsory annually as one of the conditions to be able to access the village fund, the local government tolerates lack of compliance in the first few years of the Village Law implementation. But for the budget document, almost all villages have it in the same format, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Village Budget Components, 2015–2017

Budget	A Village in Wonogiri	A Village in Ngada	A Village in Merangin
2015			
Total budget (Rp)	803,827,000	579,177,912	375,451,431
Governance admin (%)	n.a.*	36.81	42.38
Village development (%)	n.a.*	40.57	40.98
Community support (%)	n.a.*	1.36	12.65
Community empowerment (%)	n.a.*	22.55	4.00
2016			
Total budget (Rp)	1,397,377,000	1,032,923,670	814,477,738
Governance admin (%)	31.39	36.98	24.14
Village development (%)	65.04	66.40	60.22
Community support (%)	4.07	4.03	2.07
Community empowerment (%)	0.38	1.45	13.56
2017			
Total budget (Rp)	1,396,961,000	1,345,588,842	1,317,274,624
Governance admin (%)	33.70	31.53	29.88
Village development (%)	65.32	69.87	49.20
Community support (%)	3.76	1.17	5.44
Community empowerment (%)	0.44	9.18	15.48

Sources: Calculated from each village's budget document year 2015, 2016, and 2017.

*For 2015, this village developed its budget document in a very different way that it was incomparable to the other villages'.

The new regulation on the village development plan and budget document requests the village government to divide the village development plan and budget into four big categories: (i) governance administration (village apparatus salaries, office equipment, and other related expenses); (ii) village development (mostly developing village-scale infrastructure); (iii) community support (support for community activities and organizations); and (iv) community empowerment (mostly capacity building, livelihood inputs, and other related activities for the marginalized villagers).

With regard to village development plan documents in the three villages I was able to collect, the only activity that has something to do with "women" or "women's empowerment" is support for a program for improving household welfare (PKK). This program was created by the New Order and particularly targets housewives. The main activities are teaching their members everything about being good wives and supporting their families. One of my informants, who was head of PKK, told me the activities of PKK in her village in Ngada. They were monthly meetings, an integrated health service post (*posyandu*) activity where there was a monthly health check for children under five years old, a training session for making tofu and tempeh for PKK members, a training session for making traditional sleep mattresses for PKK members, and *arisan* [5] . For many scholars (Suryakusuma, 1988; Robinson, 2008; Wieringa, 2015), this program has been the main instrument for the New Order to perpetuate the traditional gender role, to tame women's movement, and even more to "use" women for the sake of national development. Women were used for development purposes by assigning PKK a function to promote national development, i.e., through the "ten compulsory programs of PKK (Robinson, 2008: 73). Although support for PKK activities is listed in all village development plans and village budgets, in reality there were no real activities to empower women in the three villages I visited. The PKK in the villages of Ngada and Merangin were

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[5]An *arisan* is a regular social gathering in which members operate a rotating savings scheme.

in a leadership vacuum, as the leaders were new and they said that they were "consolidating the organization." A village in Wonogiri had some activities, such as *arisan* and traveling, but did not have an empowerment component in them.

According to my informants, the very limited number of activities related to gender and women's empowerment in the villages is due to a lack of proposals from the participants in the village development plan meetings. Under the regime of participatory village governance, formulating the village development plan is a participatory process that involves a series of community meetings at many levels. The process sometimes starts from the small neighborhood (RT[6]), goes up to the larger neighborhood (RW[7]) and to *dusun* (hamlet), and is finalized at the village level. At every level, the participants are free to voice their concerns and make proposals based on their needs. The bulk of proposals then will be ranked at the village level to get the list of priority proposals that will be implemented the next year. The budgeting process will follow and match the priority list. The development proposals that will be implemented are the activities that can be financed within the available budget during the year. The rest will automatically be the priority activities for the following year.

The crucial issues, of course, are about how the meetings are held, who attends, who speaks, and how decisions are made. If we look at Table 3, which is based on direct observations of various meetings by local researchers, the meetings are dominated by the participation and voices of male participants. There are no significant differences in pattern between the levels of the meetings (village, *kecamatan*, or *kabupaten*). The average number of female participants are less than a quarter of the total participants. Most of the female participants are quiet, with only 14% of speakers in the meetings at the village level and 20% at the *kabupaten* level being women. Also, those who speak are normally the female elites (village midwives or teachers). Based on the results of SMERU's monitoring, there was no effort from the moderator/facilitator to encourage the women to speak. In 2017, the central government issued a new policy to encourage village governments to organize special women's meetings for development planning. However, until 2018, no village has implemented the policy. According to the facilitators at the *kabupaten* level in Wonogiri, the focus of their facilitation in the first three years is how to ensure that the village governments can adequately manage the administration of village development. The more substantive issues, such as the quality of the development plan and the inclusiveness of the participatory decision-making, will be the priority for the years to come.

Table 3. Participation and Voice by Gender in Meetings at Various Levels, 2015–2017

Level of Meetings	Village	*Kecamatan*	*Kabupaten*
Participation			
Average number of participants per meeting	31.7	38.8	41.9
Percentage of male attendance (%)	77.4	74.5	85.0
Percentage of female attendance (%)	22.6	25.5	15.0
Voice			
Average number of speakers per meeting	3.8	4.4	7.6
Percentage of male speakers (%)	85.9	90.6	79.7
Percentage of the female speakers (%)	14.1	9.4	20.3

Source: Calculated from the village monitoring data by The SMERU Research Institute, 2015–2018.

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[6]RT, or neighborhood unit, is the smallest unit of local administration consisting of a number of households.

[7]RW is a unit of local administration consisting of several RT within a *kelurahan* (urban village).

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In the three villages I visited, most of the neighborhood and hamlet meetings are held at night, unless they invite guests from outside the village (mostly from the *kecamatan*). Each meeting is supposed to start around 8 p.m. and end about two hours later. However, since the meetings rarely start on time, they last much longer than expected. Some of the meetings I attended lasted until midnight, sometimes until the morning. The formal meetings at the village level are typically held on the weekdays, either late morning or afternoon. This is part of the effort of the central government to formalize the village governance, among others, by introducing regular working hours, uniforms, and official accessories (badge, emblems, letterhead).

Meetings at the level below the village are the ones that are attended most by the villagers. The reason is that these are the closest to them in terms of physical distance, and social and psychological attachment as well. Focus group discussions (FGDs) by The SMERU researchers showed that for the villagers, the head of RT, RW, and *dusun*, consecutively, are the closest and the most reliable actors who are associated with the village government (Syukri et al., 2018). The invitees and the participants of these meetings are (literally) all the villagers in the relevant neighborhood. For those who do not come, there is a penalty, the form of which depends on the neighborhood tradition. The meetings at the village level normally invite the village apparatus, village council, members of organizations affiliated with the village government, such as *Karang Taruna* (youth organization), PKK, and farmers' group, and "representatives of the villagers." Most of the time, the representatives of the villagers are the village elites, particularly if the meetings are on very technical issues, such as the village budget. This trend leaves most of the village meetings without lay participants, particularly women.

Village level meetings usually take place at the village hall/office. Meetings to which a limited number of participants have been invited sometimes are held at the village head's house. Meetings below the village level (RT, RW, or *dusun*) are typically held at the house of one of the villagers, or the house of the RT, RW, or *dusun* head. In Wonogiri and Ngada, the meetings at the level below the village are embedded into either (i) the regular religious gatherings, such as *pengajian/yasinan* (Quranic recitation gatherings) in Wonogiri, and *Kelompok Umat Basis* (KUB)[8] gathering in Ngada; or (ii) social gatherings, such as *tablu* in Wonogiri, which is a gathering held at the *dusun* level to discuss any problem the community has and must be attended by literally all *dusun* citizens, and *Minggu wajib* (compulsory Sunday), a social gathering after returning from the church on Sunday in Ngada. This "embeddedness" of the formal issues of village development into the traditional institution of *dusun*/neighborhood meetings is an important feature that will affect the way decisions are made and the impact on women's interests, to which we will come back shortly.

What is also important to look at is where the female participants position themselves, or are positioned, in the meetings. Based on my observation in Wonogiri and to some extent in Ngada, women participants sit at the rear end of the house, near the kitchen, behind the male participants. Before the meeting starts, those women will be busy preparing the drinks and food for the participants. In Ngada, although most women sit at the back of the house, some of them sit in the front end of the house among the male participants. In Wonogiri that is never the case. Although in those two villages male domination is apparent, it seems in Ngada women are more familiar with participation in various modern meetings thanks to the PNPM program. In Wonogiri, women are positioned at the backstage of public and domestic life. In the month of my stay in a village in Wonogiri, not once did the women members of the house where I stayed show up in the living room for dinner or breakfast. I never saw them getting their dinner or breakfast, which was probably in the kitchen, quietly. They only joined us (male household member and me) to watch the television. But they still sat a little farther back from us. My experience is supported by a

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[8]KUB is a neighborhood level of the Christian group, below *stasi*, which holds routine gatherings related to religious activities.

Javanese saying on women as *konco wingking* or "backstage friend" (van Doorn-Harder, 2006), a friend who, although very important, may only play her crucial role unseen in the domestic arena.

The description above is only valid for villages in Wonogiri and Ngada, and not for the village in Merangin. The village I visited in Merangin is totally different from the other two because there is no religious routine or social gathering there. According to my informants, there was a routine *yasinan* group meeting. However, lately, the group is no longer active due to its members being busy with artisanal mining activities. During the month I stayed in the village, there was no single social or religious meeting held in the village. The crucial meeting for development planning was only held in one *dusun* (out of three), and the ranking process meeting to determine the priority list of development proposals at the village level was only attended by a limited number of the male elite participants. The process was not transparent, as nobody knew the outcome of the meetings, including the village development plan document and budget. Even the village secretary, at whose home I stayed in for a month, has never seen such a document. According to him, the decisions about development planning, budgeting, and the use of village resources are made by the village head alone.

This village is ruled by illegal mining that destroys the natural environment of the village and triggers conflict among the villagers. A week before I came, there was a murder caused by a mining-related conflict. The problem was resolved through the *adat* mechanism (customary law), in which the murderer had to pay a huge amount of gold and money to the victim's family, as well as buffaloes and rice to the *adat* community. The village government is not working at all, and the village office is never open for service. In the period I was in the village, the office was opened once at night for salary distribution, which had been delayed for many months, to members of the village apparatus. Trust among the villagers is very low, particularly between the *dusun* dominated by the "original ethnic group" vs. the *dusun* occupied by the migrants. When talking to the "native" *dusun* inhabitants, they tend to stigmatize the migrants. One of my informants, for example, who classified himself as an *orang asli* (native), described the migrants as *kurang beradat* (ill-mannered), *kasar* (rude), and *tidak terdidik* (uncouth).

The most important thing in the process of the meeting in the three villages is decision-making. In general, the decisions are made through "*musyawarah-mufakat*" (deliberation and consensus). According to Koentjaraningrat (in Kawamura, 2011), *muswayarah-mufakat* comes from village tradition that involves the process of reaching general agreement and consensus in a village assembly, and the result appears as a unanimous decision. The unanimous decision can be made through a process in which the majority and the minority are in touch in a discussion and, if necessary, adjust their standpoint, or amalgamate their conflicting perspectives into a new synthesis. Conceptually, Koentjaraningrat believes that in *musyawarah-mufakat*, the majority will not impose its views on the minority.

However, what is ideal in theory is very different in reality. Many studies have shown that the elites and the majority do impose their view on the minority because they think that they know what the people in their community need (the benevolent elite thesis), or because they want to capture the benefit of what they are deciding (the elite capture thesis) (Dasgupta and Beard, 2007; Hadiz, 2010; Martines-Bravo, Mukherjee, and Stegmann, 2017). Based on my observation in the villages in Wonogiri and Ngada, *musyawarah-mufakat* exists. The lower the level of a meeting, the livelier it is, and the more diverse the participants who speak. However, that is not true for the marginalized people in the village. The poor and the laywomen are not only quiet in the meeting, but also are often not invited to the meeting. The meetings that the lay people mostly attend, namely meetings at the neighborhood level (RT, RW, and *dusun*) are not the decision-making meeting; they are limited to collecting and consolidating villagers' aspirations. The decision-making meetings normally take place at the village level, or at the *dusun* level for some trivial matters. Unfortunately, those meetings are not the ones the poor, women, and other marginalized villagers frequently attend.

V. TOWARD A NEW DEVELOPMENTAL GENDER POLICY

What we have been discussing shows that although there are some efforts made by the central government to improve gender equality through policies, the general tenor of my finding is that the efforts are not strong enough to transform the unequal gender relations and empower the village women. The gender aspect in the participatory village governance policy is not strong enough because from the beginning the intention was mainly to improve the "condition" of the women, not to transform their "position" and rework the structure of unequal gender relations.

The focus of the government with this participatory village governance policy is "development", particularly village infrastructure and economy. We can see this focus from its policy documents and its implementation in village activities and budget allocation, which in most villages take up more than 90% for infrastructure development and operational cost. Other issues, including gender equality and women's empowerment, are not spotlighted. The narrow focus upon village infrastructure and economy, avoidance of sensitive issues, and dominant position of the village government immediately remind us of the characteristic of the new developmental state, which tends to subsume other issues outside its focus under the primary goals through regulatory policies. These points will be discussed further in the following.

The lack of attention to gender issues can be seen from the institutional setup, which, from the gender point of view, is weak. As has been discussed, gender and women's issues are not only minuscule in terms of quantity, but also poor in quality. Not a single regulation, from the national to local level, puts women's condition or gender relations on the preamble as a guiding principle, or in the articles. In almost all regulations, these issues are only discussed briefly on the section of community empowerment (women as the object) and the participants of village meetings. This alone indicates how the policymakers perceive women's potential as merely the passive participants in meetings or as the beneficiaries of development projects. This perception seems linear with the traditional gender ideology that remains strong in society (Sears, 1996; Robinson, 2008). Thus, instead of transforming the established gender ideology, the policy of participatory village governance tends to perpetuate it.

With the absence of direct state support (through policy and regulation) for marginalized women, we now turn toward the potential for local groups and organizations to advocate for women's interests. However, in the new participatory village governance, the role of community groups is very weak. If during the PNPM era women's groups had been the main target of women's empowerment activities (Li, 2007), now those groups are abandoned and mostly have disbanded. In the three villages I visited, no single PNPM women's group remained active. The more formal women's organization that exists in villages is typically limited to PKK. In the newest regulation[9], the community organizations at the village level, including PKK, are defined as "an organ of community participation and partner of the village government …"[10], and in the section on the task of these organizations, the organization must "help the village government" in implementing village development activities. On PKK, its main task is "to help the village government to improve the welfare of the family"[11]. It is clear that, first, the regulations position community organizations as the village government's support system in implementing village development activities instead of

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[9]Regulation of the Minister for Home Affairs No. 18/2018 on Village Community Institutions (LKD).

[10]Regulation of the Minister for Home Affairs No. 18/2018, article 1, section 2.

[11]Regulation of the Minister for Home Affairs No. 18/2018, article 7, section 2.

merely civil society groups. Secondly, the government again takes a very traditional stance on women's organizations by affirming the traditional gender role of women in the domestic arena, the position that was also taken by the New Order developmental state.

The new participatory village governance policy weakens not only community organizations, but also, and most importantly, the BPD. In an annotation of the process of legislating Law No. 6/2014 on Villages, PATTIRO, an NGO that focuses on village issues, shows how the parliament members and the government focused their discussion on the role of the village council to support village development instead of positioning it as a counterbalance to the village executive government power (Yasin et al., 2015). Some of the policymakers still had a traumatic memory on the "vibrancy" of the village politics when, after the *Reformasi* era (1999–2004), the BPD had a powerful position. In this period, the BPD could impeach the village head (Yasin et al., 2015: 213–238; Eko, 2014: 183). They thought that such situation was not conducive in accelerating village development. Thus, the BPD was only given a state "cosmetic role" in the village democratic process, such as the role to supervise the village governance but without the authority to follow up upon finding any problems; the role to legislate village regulations but without the capacity to do it; and the role to channel aspirations in time of direct-participatory democracy. Because its role is only cosmetic, it only received a fraction of the salary that the village head could get—ranging from Rp100,000–Rp1.3 million per BPD member in the villages I observed; a minimal amount, if any, of capacity building; and no facilitation.

While weakening the role of community organizations and the village council, the new policy puts the village executive government and the village head at a dominant position. According to the Village Law and the regulations under it, in order to ensure that the village governance and development work smoothly, the village head is the uncontested authority in the village, responsible for the whole aspects of village governance. Consequently, the village head receives the biggest incentive and salary (ranging from 2 to 14 million rupiah a month, depending on the *kabupaten* budget; ten times bigger than what the village council could get), and becomes the main target of many programs of capacity building and facilitation. So strong is the position of the village head that in three villages I visited, only in one village were there checks and balances. In a village in Ngada where the influence of PNPM is quite strong, the village council plays quite a significant role to supervise the village governance. The tendency for village heads to have dominance over the councils and community has also been confirmed by a longitudinal study by The SMERU Research Institute (Bachtiar et al., forthcoming). The inclination to create a powerful government while weakening the horizontal checks and balances mechanism (but imposing very strong vertical accountability) is yet another characteristic of a new developmental state.

Another aspect of institutional setup that complicates gender equality policy in the new participatory village governance is the policy to allow the village governance to work through traditional decision-making institutions. On the one hand, using the existing institutions for project purposes may have some advantages considering that they are already stable and well accepted, thus has been proven effective, which can reduce the cost of learning. On the other hand, my observations in the villages show a different aspect of it. As previously discussed, all strategic decisions in the villages are made in decision-making meetings. Although the government has provided the general rules of such meetings, it leaves the details of how the meetings will be organized to the respective local village traditions.

In practice, the villages organize the meetings according to their respective decision-making traditions, which are not always gender-sensitive, or even tend to discriminate against women. For example, in terms of timing, the meeting below village level usually take place at night. Although it is normally scheduled at 8 p.m., it starts much later and finishes very late. This timing does not suit women's schedule because they have to deal with domestic chores. The traditional seating

arrangement is also gender biased. While the male participants sit at the front end of the room, close to the main speaker, the women normally sit at the rear end of the room, near the kitchen, and far away from the speaker. This arrangement does not only make the women unable to hear clearly what the debate is about, but also implies that they are not important participants. Lastly, how the roles assigned to men and women during meetings definitely undermine gender equality. While the men sitting at the center of the meeting room engage in debate and decision-making, the women are busy at the back, preparing drinks and food for the participants. All of these features contribute to the lower rate of women participating in the meetings, and fewer numbers of them being able to voice their concerns and fight for their interests. By allowing strategic decisions to be made in such circumstances, the government again perpetuates gender inequality.

Furthermore, the persistence of neoliberalism contributes to the pervasiveness of gender inequality in the new policy of participatory village governance. As previously discussed, the new developmentalism is just a version of neoliberalism. While the regulatory basis of participatory village governance tries to break away from neoliberal ideology, instilled by the PNPM, we can still trace the strong resemblance of the new policy to the general characteristic of neoliberal governance: individuation. Individuation in this context is defined as the shifting of responsibility for providing the general welfare of the society from the state to individual citizens. The individuation in this new policy is fairly different from the one we can find in other neoliberal projects, such as in PNPM. In this project, the responsibility to provide various services and produce different development outputs, such as infrastructure, is shifted from the state to the "community" (more on this, see Li, 2007). In the participatory village governance, the shifting goes even further because the responsibility is transferred to each of the villagers through a neoliberal democratic process of decision-making meetings. Everyone is responsible for her or his own life. If they need some support from the state through the village government, they have to fight for it in the meetings from the neighborhood to the village level.

The meetings are now the ultimate mechanism of policymaking at the village level, including with regard to the distribution of resources, such as the village fund. To access the benefits of the fund, the villagers must participate in the village meeting, voice their concerns, propose their needs, and fight for them further in a deliberation forum. If they have the skill to convince the participants of the meeting that their aspirations are worthy to be funded, they will get their proposal added to the priority list to be funded the next year. Those who do not master such skills, or even do not dare to speak publicly, as in the case of the women and other marginalized villagers, they will have to wait for someone else to speak for them. Such spokespersons are normally the (benevolent) community elites. Otherwise, their aspirations will never be heard and realized.

The central government has been made aware that the marginalized people in the villages will have little capacity to argue publicly at the various levels of meetings. Thus, the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration Regulation No. 22/2016 was issued, encouraging village governments to organize special meetings for women, the poor, and other marginalized groups, and to document their proposals separately. However, this is only a policy option that is not binding. Indeed, based on results of SMERU's monitoring, no villages have implemented such policy. What is more, if such meetings are indeed implemented, the output is not guaranteed to be included in the priority list of the village development plan that is normally finalized at the village-level meeting. Also, this regulation is also not synchronized with the more technical regulations on writing the village development plan issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. In short, the policy has been unoperationalizable and women still risk of having their aspirations unheard.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper discusses participatory village governance and how it deals with gender equality issues. In general, the findings show that in this new policy, the government took a very conservative position by only addressing the gender practical needs of women and left out the strategic but also sensitive issues in state policy and society. Instead of transforming those unequal gender relations, the new policy has perpetuated them. The rise of such policy can be seen as part of the government's inclination to pursue a new developmental approach in governance. Within this approach, the government focuses narrowly on infrastructure and economic development of the villages and subsumes other issues under the mission of achieving higher growth. The commitment of the government to a basic standard of democracy has differentiated it from the old developmentalism that was strong during the New Order regime, in which the developmental state was equivalent to the authoritarian state.

The inclination toward the new developmental mode of governance comes at a price: the missing opportunity to deepen democracy and to transform the unequal power relations in the village. Regardless of its limitations, Law No. 6/2014 on Villages is indeed a monumental legislative product that has the unrealized potential to intervene in and rework the structure of unequal power relation in villages. The government has much room to maneuver with the policy. While amending the law would require a very strenuous effort, reformulating the implementing regulations, such as government regulations (*peraturan pemerintah)* and ministerial regulations (*peraturan menteri*) would be much easier to do and would provide a more progressive interpretation of the law.

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