

Women and the State in Modern Indonesia

In the first study of the kind, Susan Blackburn examines how Indonesian women have engaged with the state since they began to organise a century ago. Voices from the women's movement resound in these pages, posing demands such as education for girls and reform of marriage laws. The state, for its part, is shown attempting to control women. The book investigates the outcomes of these mutual claims and the power of the state and the women's movement in improving women's lives. It also questions the effects on women of recent changes to the state, such as Indonesia's transition to democracy and the election of its first female president.

The wider context is important. On some issues, like reproductive health, international institutions have been influential, and as the largest Islamic society in the world, Indonesia offers special insights into the role of religion in shaping relations between women and the state.

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Cambridge University Press
0521842255 - Women and the State in Modern Indonesia
Susan Blackburn
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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2004

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Plantin 10/12 pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 84225 5 hardback

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Acknowledgments

This book has been many enjoyable years in the making. Over that time I have collected an enormous amount of information yet still feel, as a non-Indonesian, that it is presumptuous of me to write about what Indonesian women want. During the New Order period I could reassure myself that Indonesian women could not produce such a book because of the restrictions of censorship and the education system, and the lack of support for research. All this is rapidly changing, so it is high time to publish my own reflections before Indonesian women write their own books on the subject.

Many people have helped me over the years. I have had excellent research assistants and wish to thank particularly Elizabeth Martyn and Helen Pausacker. Others who have helped and stimulated me include Sharon Bessell, Barbara Hatley, Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, Lynette Parker, Kathryn Robinson, Maila Stevens and Norma Sullivan, and numerous Indonesian activists including Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, Sri Kusyuniati and Damai Pakpahan. I learned a great deal too from the information and lively exchanges on the e-perempuan email discussion list. Jean Gelman Taylor provided helpful comments on the book manuscript. I am greatly in debt to librarians at Monash University, the Kalyanamitra resource centre and the Perpustakaan Nasional in Jakarta, and the KITLV in Leiden. I also wish to acknowledge the assistance of research grants from the Australian Research Council and Monash University.

Finally, I thank my partner, Roger Spegele, for constant and loving encouragement.

I dedicate this book to my mother, Jean Blackburn, who died in 2001 but whose example remains an inspiration to me.

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Note on spelling and terminology

The spelling of Indonesian words and the naming of places and groups changed in the course of the twentieth century. To facilitate reading, this book will use current spelling, place names and terminology.

Glossary: abbreviations, acronyms and Indonesian terms

<i>adat</i>	Custom
<i>bapak</i>	Father
Aisyiyah	Women's wing of Muhammadiyah, modernist Islamic organisation
BTI	Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian Farmers Front)
Dharma Wanita	Women's Service: organisation of wives of civil servants
Gapi	Gabungan Politik Indonesia (Indonesian Political Coalition)
Gerwani	Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Movement)
Golkar	Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya (Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups)
<i>hadis</i>	Reports of the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad
IBI	Ikatan Bidan Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Midwives)
<i>ibu</i>	Mother
ILO	International Labour Organisation
Istri Sedar	Aware Women
<i>kampung</i>	Lower-class urban residential area
<i>kawin gantung</i>	Suspended marriage
<i>kiai</i>	Islamic scholar
<i>kodrat</i>	Natural character/destiny
Kowani	Kongres Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Congress)
LBH-APIK	Lembaga Bantuan Hukum – Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan (Legal Aid Foundation – Indonesian Women's Association for Justice)

LSM	Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (literally ‘Self-Reliant Social Institutions’), a term used in the New Order period to refer to some kinds of non-government organisations
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
Muslimat NU	Muslimat-Nahdlatul Ulama (women’s wing of NU)
Nahdlatul Ulama	Traditionalist Islamic organisation
P4A	Perkumpulan Pemberantasan Perdagangan Perempuan dan Anak-Anak (Organisation for the Eradication of Trade in Women and Children)
Pancasila	Five principles of Indonesian state ideology
PDI	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party)
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)
<i>perempuan</i>	Indonesian word for woman, commonly used in the first four decades of the twentieth century and making a comeback since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998.
Perwari	Persatuan Wanita Republik Indonesia (Union of the Women of the Indonesian Republic)
<i>pesantren</i>	Islamic boarding school
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PKK	Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Guidance Movement)
PNI	Partai Nasionalis Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
PPII	Perikatan Perkumpulan Isteri Indonesia (Federation of Indonesian Women’s Associations)
<i>priyayi</i>	Traditional Javanese upper class
PSII	Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia
<i>selir</i>	secondary wife
SOBSI	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (All-Indonesian Labour Unions Federation)
SPSI	Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (All-Indonesia Workers’ Union)
<i>syariah</i>	Islamic law
TBA	Traditional birth attendant
VVV	Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht (Women’s Suffrage Association)

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x Glossary

wanita Indonesian word for woman, in common use from the Japanese occupation onwards as a more 'respectable' word than *perempuan*, with connotations similar to that of 'lady' in English

WHO World Health Organisation

Yasanti Yayasan Annisa Swasti – Annisa Swasti Foundation